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An Overview of Standard Designs Developed for Public Buildings in Lithuania During the 1920s and 1930s

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Interwar architecture, Lithuanian architecture, public architecture, standard designs, standardization.

Abstract

Standardization of Lithuanian interwar public buildings began in the early 1920s and continued throughout the 1930s. This process was mainly driven by the young state's need for various types of public buildings, especially in the provinces. To speed up the needed construction, certain types of such buildings began to be constructed according to standard design projects. Thus, the article, through the selected examples, aims to present the development of standardization practices in public architecture which were carried out in Lithuania at that time. It is assumed that despite the ambitions to expand the standardization of public architecture, this was not a smooth process. Thus, while a number of standard designs of public buildings were quite successfully used in practice, there were cases when such designs were not even implemented in practice.

Introduction

Standardization in early 20th-century architecture was a modern and rational process. This process is usually associated with the mass construction of residential houses since, after the First World War, there was a great housing shortage in many European countries [1, *83*]. Consequently, during the interwar period in various European countries hundreds of settlements, mostly of standard houses, were constructed. In addition, in some other countries at that time, other buildings, like industrial and public structures, were also constructed based on the standard designs. This was determined by the desire to speed up the construction of the necessary buildings, reduce construction costs and ensure design quality [2, *249*].

In Lithuania, at the beginning of the 20th century, standardization was not a new process, as it began in the 19th century when the country was part of the Russian Empire. Already at that time, the buildings, for example, intended for railway infrastructure, were built according to standard projects [3, *311*]. This process also continued during the first decades of the 20th century, when Lithuania became an independent country. Although during that period, most of the buildings in the country, especially in cities, were built according to individual projects, a part of the needed structures, especially in the smaller towns and in the provinces, were built using standard designs. Therefore, during the 1920s and especially the 1930s, standard designs were developed for a wide range of constructions – residential, public, industrial and military buildings, as well as bridges, water towers, etc. In the recent studies of the country's architecture of the interwar period, standardization practices, for example, regarding industrial and residential architecture, have been extensively studied [4]. However, little is known about such processes in the case of public structures, as the standardization of primary schools was studied more [5].

Consequently, the main object of this article is the standardization of public buildings in Lithuania during the 1920s and 1930s. The article delves into the evolution of standard designs for public buildings of that time, presents the main public building types for which such designs were drawn up, and identifies the institutions and organizations responsible for their materialization. Additionally, the article outlines the uneven practical use of such designs and explores the main stylistic properties which shaped their appearance.

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I. The Early Standard Designs for Public Buildings Developed During the 1920s

"The processes that led to the development of standard building designs in Lithuania began in the early 1920s. At that time, the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat, the central institution of building design and construction, was established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kaunas, the country's temporary capital at that time [6, *27*]. The Commissariat was tasked to develop individual and standard building designs for various public and residential structures which needed to be built in Lithuania [7, *5*]. Thus, in 1921, an extensive program for the development of standard designs was compiled at the institution. Based on it, it was planned to draw up several dozens of standard designs for residential as well as public buildings, including primary schools, gymnasiums, hospitals, bathhouses, hotels, and administrative, commercial and cultural structures [8, *7*]. The development of such standard designs in one central institution at that time was perceived as a rational solution to solve the building shortage in the country.

In the early 1920s, however, the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat was able to develop only a small part of all the planned standard designs for the public structures. In 1921, for example, several standard designs for 1–4 class primary schools were drawn up there, as it was the type of public building that was most lacking in Lithuania [9, *5*]. The developed standard designs were for small one-story buildings with attics. Their exteriors were designed in a vernacular style, reminiscent of old Lithuanian folk architecture, and were emphasized by the small decorative elements and traditional forms (Fig. 1). This corresponded to the stylistic norms of the time, as there was a preference for a traditional appearance in the country's new architecture [10, *204*]. The traditional character was also emphasized by the wooden structure, which was chosen for economic reasons since, at that time, the country's brick production industry was not yet sufficiently developed. In terms of function, the standard designs were developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and had to respond to its requirements for primary schools of the time [11]. Consequently, each classroom had an area of fifty square metres, which could accommodate up to fifty students. Classrooms were placed on the first floor, as well as cloakrooms and small halls, while the attics housed the teachers' apartments. After the development of these designs, they were sent to the municipalities with the recommendation of building new primary schools based on them. However, due to the lack of funds, only a small number of school buildings were constructed based on these standard designs.

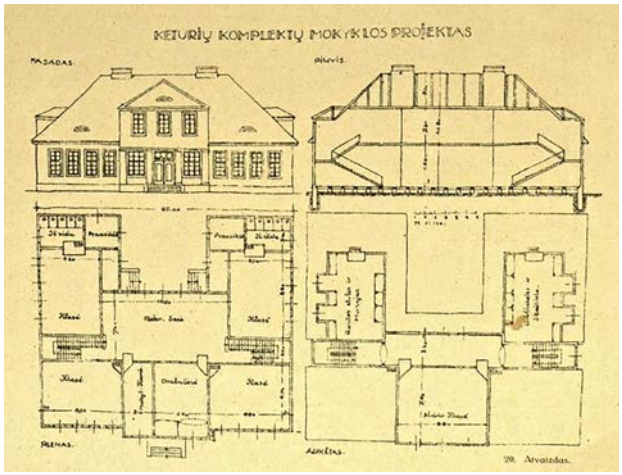

Fig. 1. Design project of a standard wooden 4-class primary school building developed at the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat (1921) [Drawing from Statybos menas ir technika, no. 1, 1921, p. 6].

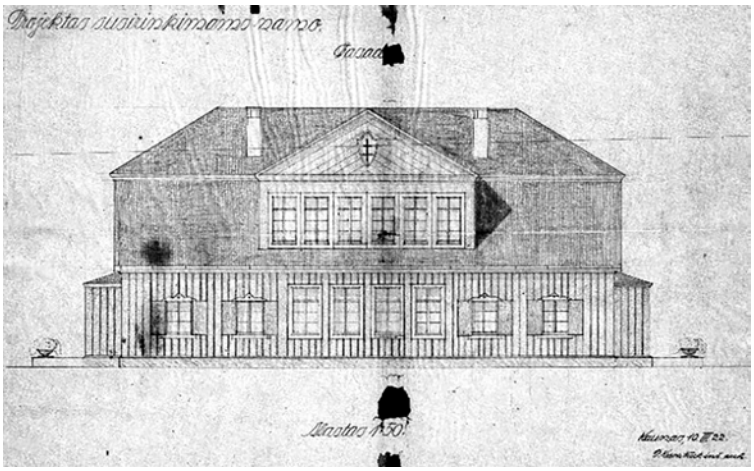

Fig. 2. Design proposal for a standard wooden building for the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (eng. arch. Paul Kresibuch of the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat, 1922) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

Another type of public structure, for which standard design was developed in the early 1920s in the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat, was for the public cultural buildings of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. The Union was founded in 1919 as a paramilitary voluntary organization, which at that time was engaged in military training and cultural education of the public, and had dozens of branches in the cities, towns and villages of the country. The wide network of the Union's branches required a type of building which could universally meet its functional needs. Since, at that time, there were not many buildings in the country suitable for that, it was decided to develop several standard designs for these new types of structures. The main requirement for this type of building was for it to have administrative rooms as well as a spacious hall suitable for cultural, educational and entertainment functions, which could be used not only by the members of the Union but also by the public. Thus, in 1922, the Lithuanian Reconstruction

Commissariat designed several standard projects for the wooden buildings of the Riflemen's Union (Fig. 2). The standardized designs were developed for the traditional-looking buildings with halls for 300–500 people [12, *27*]. However, these projects did not progress beyond the design stage, and none of the buildings based on them were constructed in Lithuania at that time. It was due to the lack of funds and initiative, which resulted in these types of structures being built only in the early 1930s [13, *172*].

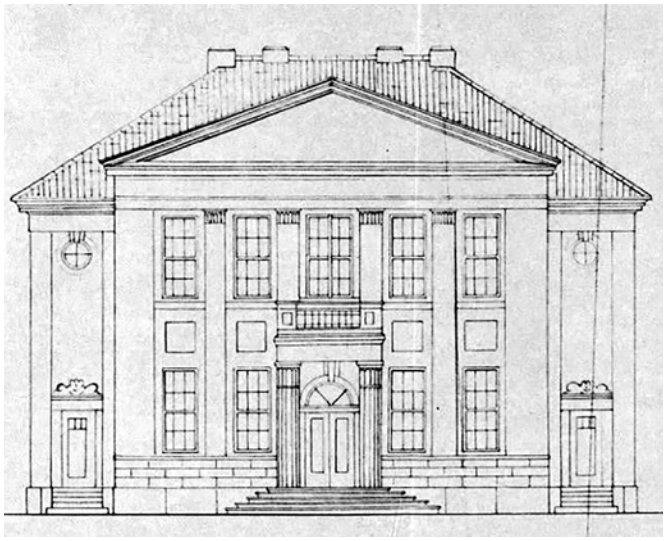

Fig. 3. Design project of a standard masonry 2-class primary school building for construction in small towns (civ. eng. Jonas Salenekas, 1925) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

Despite the cessation of centralized development of standard projects for public buildings, they were needed. Thus, the design competitions for the project development began to be held. In 1925, for example, the Lithuanian Railways Board held an international design competition for the standard railway stations [17, *6*]. However, there is no knowledge of whether the awarded proposals progressed beyond the design stage. Moreover, in 1925, the Ministry of Education held a national design competition for a standard design of a masonry 2-class primary school building [18, *7*]. Only seven proposals were submitted to the competition, as the contestants were given only over a month to prepare them [19, *23*]. Two of the proposals were awarded. The first prize was given to the proposal by civil technicians Grigorijus Mazelis and Mikas Grodzenskis, while the second one was given to the proposal by civil engineer Jonas Salenekas. The latter one was chosen as a basis to develop the new standard design. The new design was for a building with a simple rectangular plan. Inside, there were classrooms with an area of around fifty square metres, cloakrooms and apartments for teachers, which, if needed, could be converted into two additional classrooms. The exterior of the standardized design significantly differed from previous standard school designs due to a classically inspired monumentality, emphasized by the massive pilasters, columns and a pediment (Fig. 3). However, due to the high construction costs, buildings based on this standard design were built only by the Ministry of Education and not by the municipalities [20, *178*]. Consequently, the use of this standardized design in practice was limited.

Additionally, at the end of the 1920s, other country's institutions also began to be involved in the development of standardized public buildings designs. In 1929, for example, a private press distribution company "Spauda", based in Kaunas, started developing designs for its own small standard kiosks (Fig. 4) [21, *13*]. The construction of these kiosks was wooden, and the standard designs ensured that these structures had a simple, uniform and distinguishable form. By the early 1930s, the company constructed dozens of identical kiosks based on these two standard designs in various Lithuanian cities and towns.

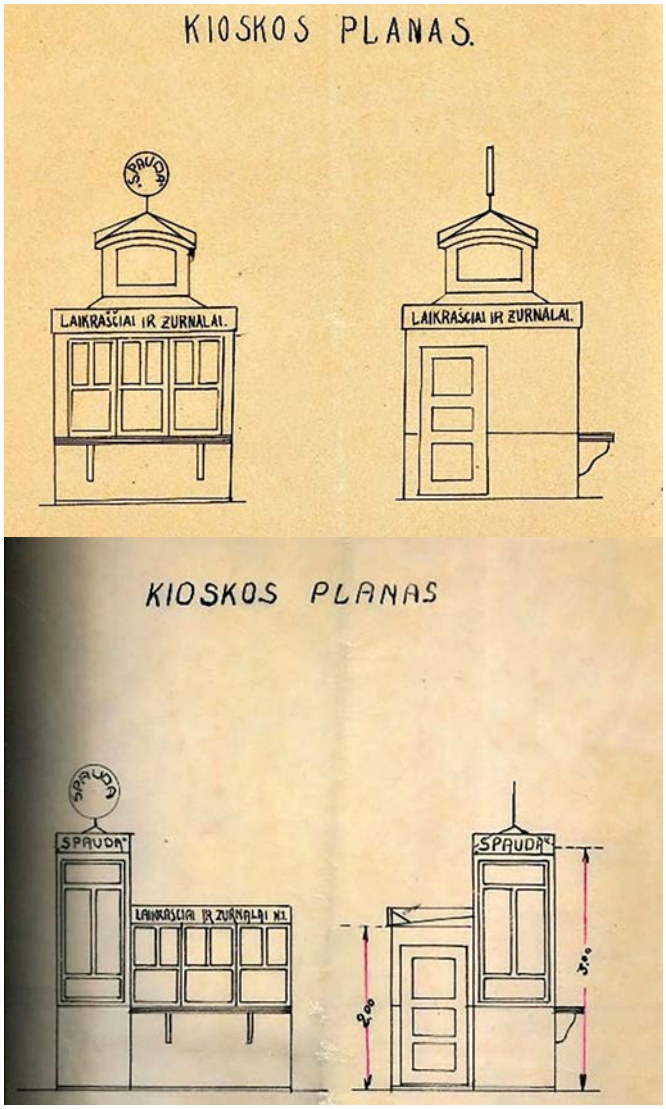

Fig. 4. Design projects of standard wooden kiosks of the press distribution company "Spauda" for construction in cities and towns (1929) [Drawings from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

II. The Aspirations to Develop New Standard Designs for Public Buildings in the Early-mid-1930s

Despite the not-so-smooth implementation of standardization of public buildings in the 1920s, in the following decade this process was still carried out in Lithuania. However, at that time, there were no plans to significantly expand this process, but only to develop new standard design projects of just a few types of public buildings and expand their use in practice. Most of them were intended for rural areas and provinces of the country. In the early 1930s, for example, the Lithuanian Railways Board, while carrying out the construction of new standard-gauge railway lines, compiled design projects of standardized masonry station buildings [3, *312*]. Their appearance reflected the modernized forms of historical styles (Fig. 5). New standard designs for small, narrow-gauge railway stations were more modern-looking. In the early 1930s, when planning to build new narrow-gauge railway lines Žeimelis–Pasvalys and Pasvalys–Panevėžys, two designs of standard one-story masonry station buildings were developed (Fig. 6). The buildings, based on these designs, were planned to be constructed in provincial towns and villages situated along the proposed railway lines. The designs were for cubic-shaped buildings, whose exteriors were to be emphasized by the wide horizontal windows and decorated with several narrow bands surrounding the entire volumes. However, when it was decided not to build this railway line at that time, the modern-looking standard station designs were not realized.

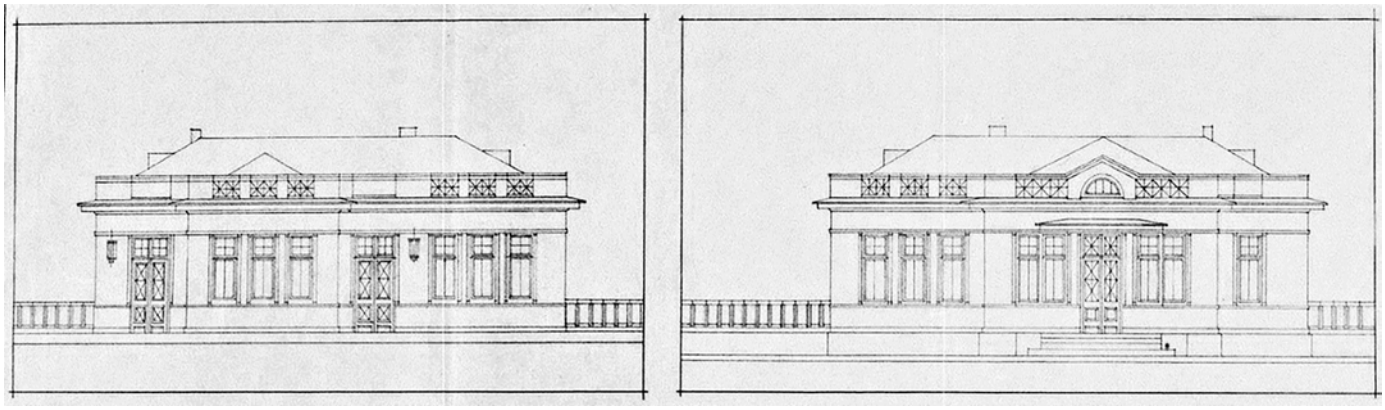

Fig. 5. Design project of a standard masonry railway station (civ. eng. Vincas Pūkas of the Lithuanian Railways Board, 1930) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

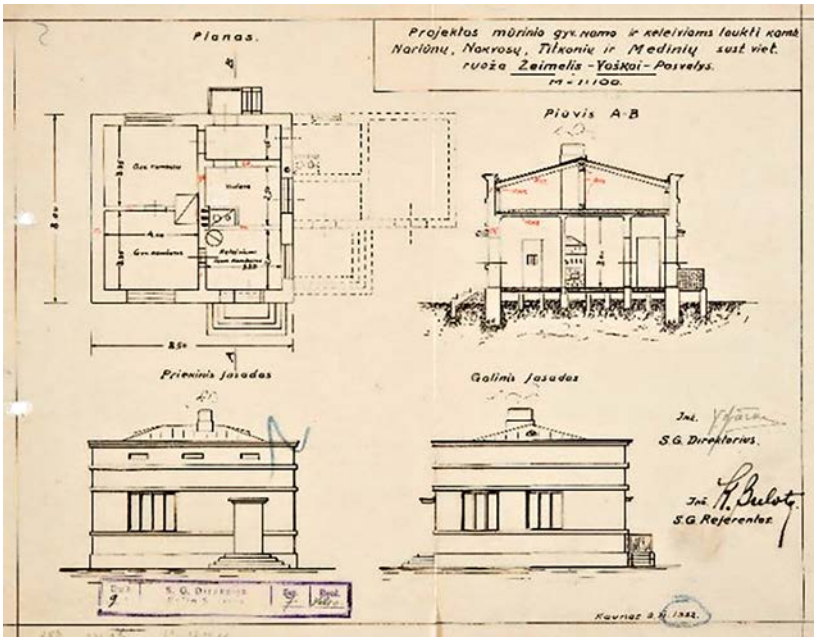

Fig. 6. Unimplemented design project of a standard masonry narrow-gauge railway station (civ. techn. Albinas Vosylius of the Lithuanian Railways Board, 1932) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

During the early years of the 1930s, standardization also took place in the case of primary school buildings since several hundred such buildings needed to be erected, mostly in the rural regions. At that time, the local municipalities were mainly entrusted with the building matters of such structures and began compiling ambitious plans for their construction [22, *8*]. As the municipalities needed to construct small buildings of 2–3 classrooms, it was considered irrational to develop separate individual projects for each of these buildings, not on a larger scale as it had been done until then. A simpler solution was to build these buildings based on the same designs [23, *223*]. This was also influenced by the problematic construction of primary schools carried out by the municipalities in the provinces. Up until then, it was not uncommon for primary school buildings to be constructed on not entirely appropriately drawn up designs by the municipal engineers. This resulted in the fact that there "was no uniformity in [their] design, there was no proper layout of classrooms <...>. The projects of primary school buildings were often carelessly designed, the construction itself was carried out without proper technical supervision, and as a result, a number of shortcomings appeared in newly built school buildings <...>. To eliminate these problems, it was decided to introduce standard design projects for the construction of primary schools" [24, *55*]. Thus, the aim was to ensure that the construction of much-needed rural primary schools would take place in an orderly manner based on properly drawn-up standard design projects developed for the entire country and approved by the Ministry of Education.

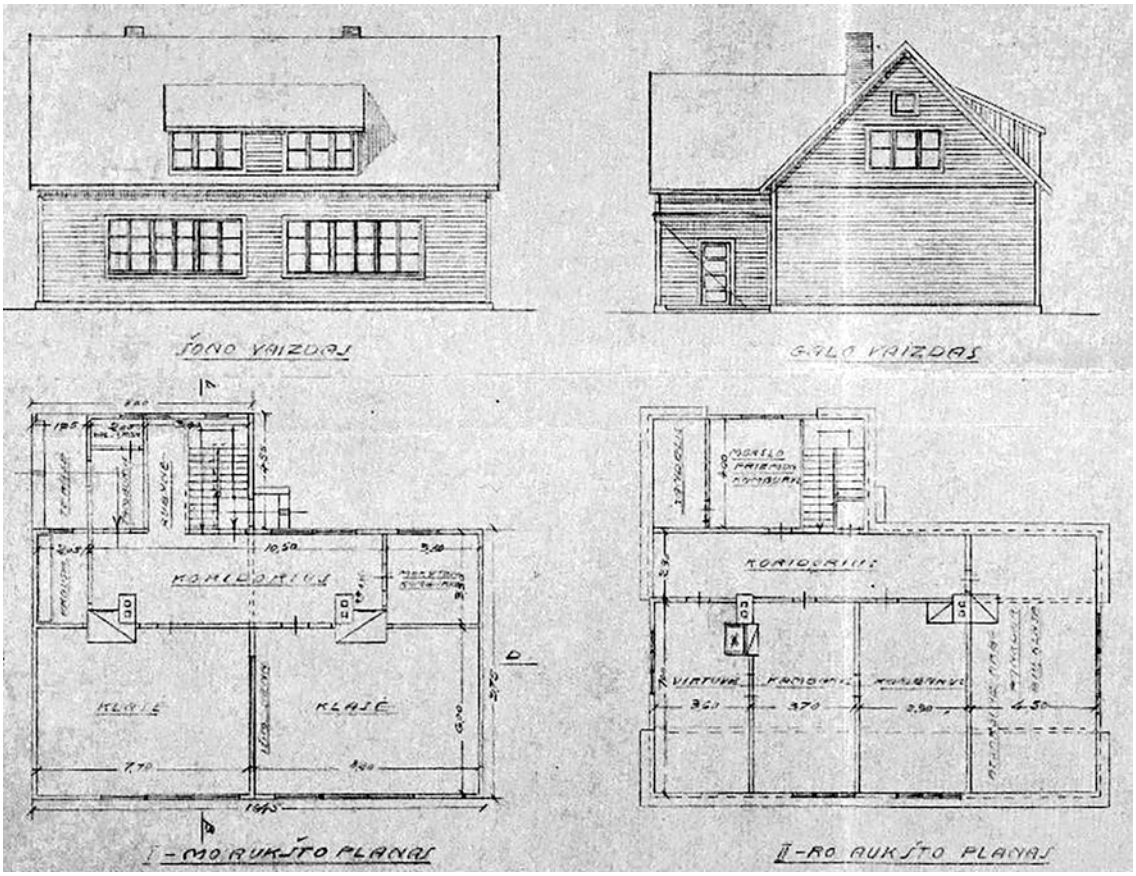

Fig. 7. Design project of a standard wooden 2-class primary school building developed on the initiative of the Ministry of Education for construction in small towns and villages (1932) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

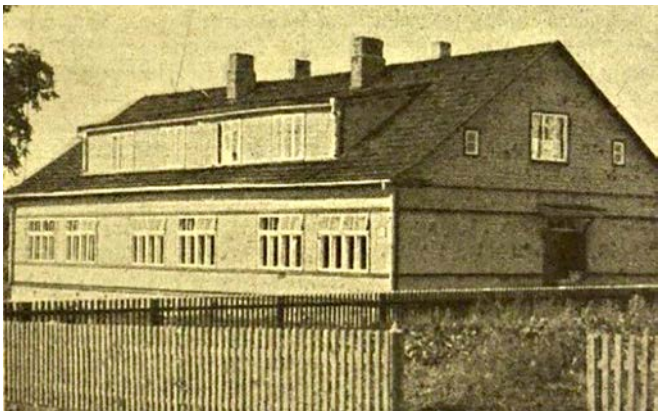

Fig. 8. Standard wooden 3-class primary school building constructed in the small town of Plateliai [Photo from Jaunoji karta, no. 52, 1937, p. 1071].

Therefore, in 1931–1932, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, an interdepartmental commission consisting of experts from the Ministry, the Chamber of Agriculture, and the Construction Inspection developed two new designs for standard 2-class and 3-class primary school buildings for the construction in rural areas [25, *9*] (Figs. 7–8). The designs were for one-story wooden buildings with attics. On the first floor, there were classrooms connected by narrow corridors, while the attics housed the teachers' apartments. Based on the designs, the buildings' exteriors had a rational appearance. It was emphasized by undecorated flat walls and wide classroom windows, which ensured sufficient indoor lighting with natural light since it was recommended to construct the buildings with the classrooms facing the southwest. These features also gave the buildings a distinctive and moderately modern look, which was combined with traditional vernacular forms of sharply pitched roofs covered with shingles. The development of these new standard designs was considered to be a positive aspect in the general context of the modernization of primary education in the country: "Such [standardized] buildings, although inexpensive and without any major embellishments, will give schools more suitable working conditions, more light and hygiene" [26, *5*].

The two standard designs were widely used in practice since the municipalities were instructed to construct new primary school buildings based on them. This resulted in dozens of identical-looking primary school buildings being built throughout the country by the mid-1930s. Despite the mass use, the designs had shortcomings. For example, they were criticized for being too traditional in appearance [27, *4*]. There was also criticism regarding an improper inner layout, as the buildings were designed without a recreational hall for the students, had a small corridor which was insufficiently well-lit with natural light, and had only one entrance to reach the classrooms on the first floor and the teachers' apartments located in the attic [28, *35*]. Also, in 1932, the Construction Inspection drew up another new design project for a standard masonry 2-class primary school building, which did not have the corresponding shortcomings (Fig. 9). This design was developed for the municipalities, which could construct more expensive masonry school buildings.

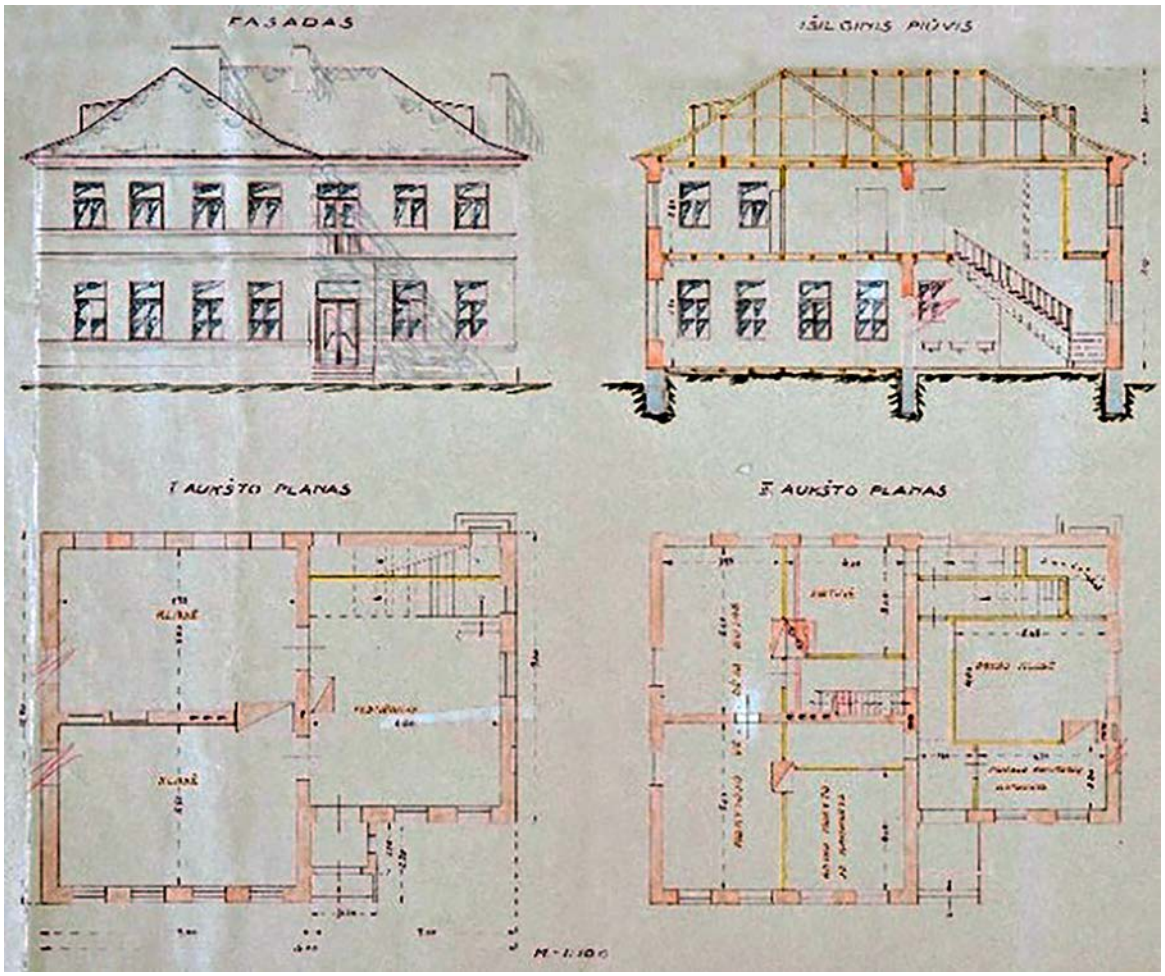

Fig. 9. Design project of a standard masonry 2-class primary school building (eng. arch. Algirdas Šalkauskis of the Construction Inspection, 1932) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

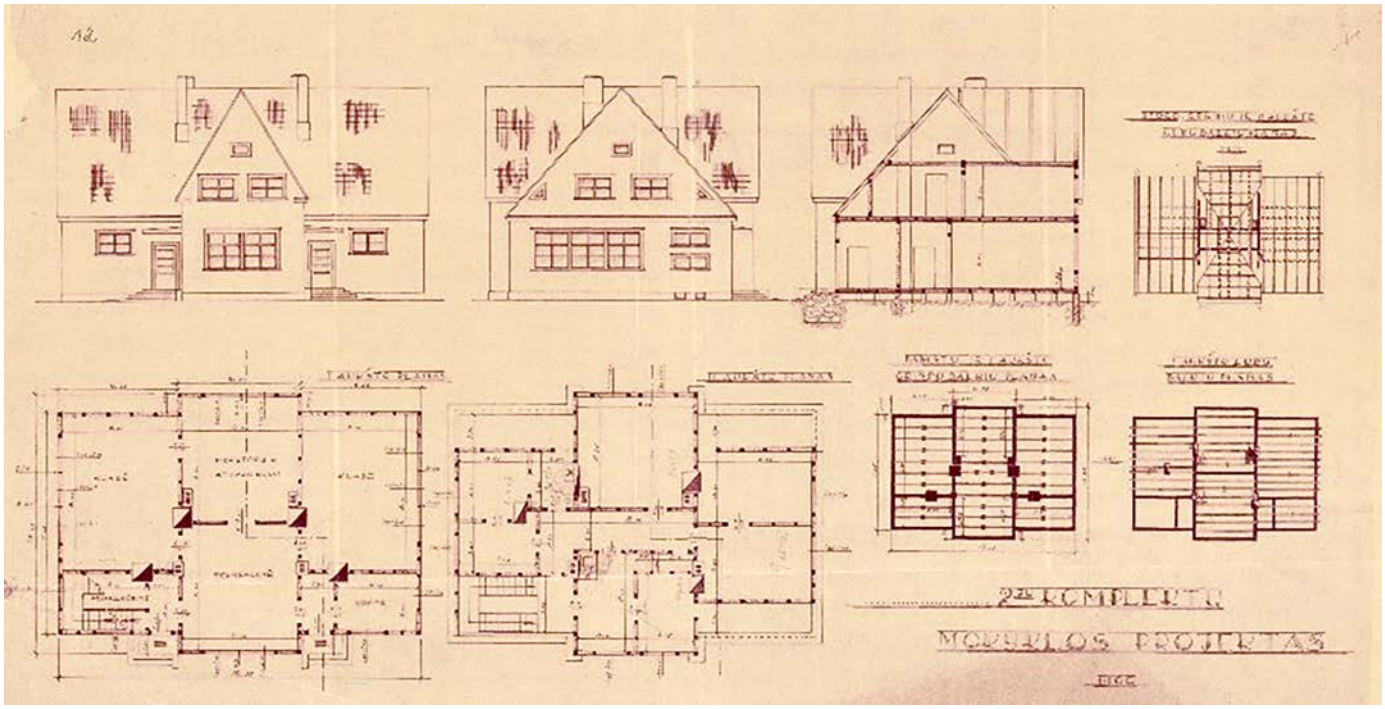

Fig. 10. Design project "Type 1936" of a standard wooden 2-class primary school building for construction in Panevėžys County (civ. eng. Kazys Germanas of Panevėžys County Construction Department, 1935) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

Fig. 11. Standard masonry 2-class primary school building constructed in the village of Kalviai (civ. eng. Antanas Liorentas of Šiauliai County Construction Department, 1934) [Photo from Tautos mokykla, no. 22, 1935, p. 505].

Since the new standard school designs had shortcomings, they did not become mandatory in the country, as expected, but only recommended. This encouraged various municipalities, which by that time began to allocate more funds for primary schools, to independently develop their own standard designs for such buildings. Thus, from the early 1930s such standard designs also began to be drawn up at the municipal construction departments [23, *223*]. In terms of appearance, these standard designs differed a little from the ones recommended by the Ministry of Education (Fig. 10). However, they had a more convenient internal layout that better suited the local conditions and needs and had more roomier spaces. For example, the standard designs of 2- and 3-class school buildings developed at the Construction Department of the then Panevėžys County Municipality, in addition to the usual classrooms, had additional spaces: "a recreation room and a spare classroom which were divided by a removable partition. This attribute made it possible to use the school premises for lectures, meetings and even plays" – a convenient feature that standard designs recommended by the Ministry of Education did not have [23, *223*]. In this way, primary school buildings built by the municipality were intended to be used for a dual function – for education and for the cultural use of the villages.

There were also attempts by other municipalities to develop standard designs for more expensive but more durable and modern-looking masonry buildings. Their internal layout did not differ much from the ones recommended by the Ministry of Education. Their exteriors, however, were composed in a more modern manner merging traditional vernacular forms with modern architectural features, such as the division of walls horizontally with wide windows (Fig. 11). Thus, a wide range of standard designs developed in the early mid-1930s demonstrate that primary schools were the most important type of public buildings that were standardized at that time.

In the early mid-1930s, standardized designs also began to be developed for other types of public structures, i.e., for the ones which were planned to be constructed by the branches of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. Such aspiration was influenced by the fact that not all

individually drawn-up designs for these structures met the aesthetic and functional requirements of the Union [29, *135*]. This often resulted in design projects being corrected repeatedly, which delayed the start of their implementation. The solution to this problem was considered to be uniformity of design, achieved with the re-introduction of standard building projects for these types of public structures. Thus, in the early 1930s, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union commissioned the Construction Department of the Chamber of Agriculture in Kaunas to draw up several standard designs for such buildings. The designs were for wooden buildings as they could be built cheaper and faster than the masonry ones. The wooden construction also influenced the aesthetics of such buildings, as on the outside, their modest-looking elongated volumes were decorated with small carved elements (Fig. 12). Such a traditional architectural language also suited the aesthetic requirements of the Union and the locality of the rural regions where these buildings were planned to be built. Inside the buildings, there were rooms for the administrative use of the Union's branch and a large hall with several hundred seats for the use of the riflemen and the public. Therefore, these standard designs fully met the needs of the Union's branches, and buildings based on them continued to be built in the country up until the late 1930s [*30*, *49*; *61*; *64*].

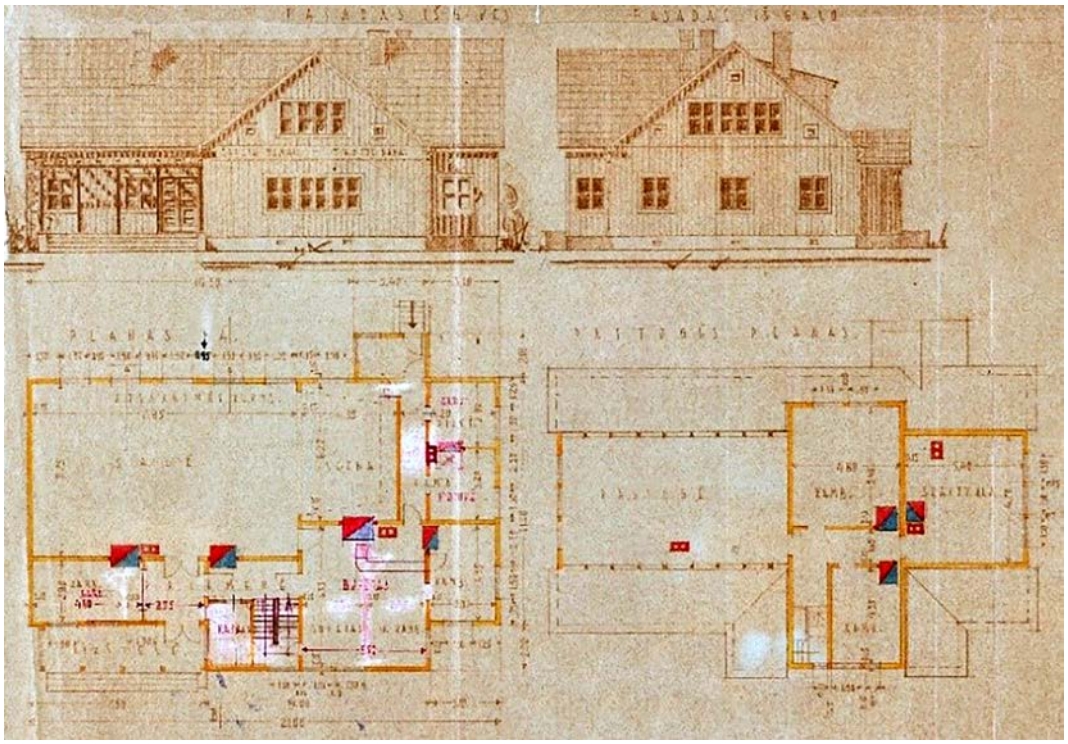

Fig. 12. Design project of a standard wooden building for the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (civ. techn. Juozas Markauskas of the Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture, 1933) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

III. Plans to Further Expand Standardization for Public Buildings in the Late 1930s

Efforts to expand the scope of standardization of public buildings in Lithuania intensified in the last years of the 1930s when there were plans to develop new standard designs for more types of public buildings. Such aspirations were especially supported by the country's municipalities, as well as by other institutions.

For example, as early as 1936, the Building Commission of Šiauliai County Municipality stressed that "for the construction of schools, shelters, public toilets, kiosks and some other public structures, standard designs, mandatory for the entire country, with standard construction specifications should be developed so that the local workshops and sawmills could mass produce the construction parts. Rural construction and its parts should also be standardized. Standardization of the structures would make the construction cheaper, <...> resulting in better-looking buildings" [31, *122*]. In the late 1930s, such aspirations were also supported by the country's Construction and Roads Inspection, whose specialists suggested the development of standard designs for more types of public structures, including administrative, cultural, educational and healthcare buildings. It was suggested because the design projects of most of these buildings, especially those built by the municipalities, were still drawn up individually, which was not considered

a rational way: "Every municipal civil engineer is forced to develop individual designs for public buildings in each specific case; the design project is corrected at the [Construction and Roads] Inspection and returned to the engineer with corrections. In this way, the work of a small group of [municipal] engineers is unproductively divided" [32, *72*]. Thus, it was emphasized that if more "types of [public] buildings could become standardized", at least those constructed by the municipalities, then "the local municipal civil engineers would only have to supervise their construction" [32, *72*]. Processes regarding the expansion of standardization were planned to be implemented not only by the municipalities but also by the other state institutions, various public organizations and enterprises which were involved in the construction of public buildings.

The planned expansion of standardization was considered by Lithuanian architectural specialists as "the only way out of a very bad situation" – a shortage of buildings, mostly in the country's rural regions [33, *124*]. Thus, the planned expansion of standardization was positively perceived as a rational and "only a temporary" stop-gap measure to quickly build many necessary types of public buildings, especially in small towns and in the country [33, *124*]. It is likely that once this was done, this process could have declined in the following years, as there was no aspiration to start building absolutely all public structures based solely on standardized designs, only the most necessary types.

However, it can be assumed that the plans to further expand the scope of standardization of public buildings in Lithuania at that time did not fully materialize. Since such plans only began to be discussed in the late 1930s, there was simply not enough time for their successful materialization because in June 1940 Lithuania lost its independence. Nevertheless, during the last years of the country's independence, standardization of public buildings slowly began to gain momentum as standard designs started to be developed for more types of public buildings than previously.

What also changed in the late 1930s, in the case of standard designs of public buildings, was the approach to their architecture and general aesthetics. At that time the influence of style modernization was evident in the country's architecture. Additionally, during that time it was planned to move towards the mass use of masonry construction on a national scale when building new public structures both in cities and provinces. Thus, it was thought that "the architectural features of wooden construction are not applicable at all" to the exteriors of modern masonry buildings [34, *32*]. A similar notion was formed in the case of buildings for the provinces, as at that time, it was thought that the provinces needed more modern-looking new buildings to modernize their locality [35, *11*]. Accordingly, in the late 1930s, a stylistic modernity began to be sought when developing new standard designs for public structures.

At that time, as before, standardization was advanced in the architecture of primary schools since even by the late 1930s, the country's rural areas still needed dozens of such buildings [36, *5*]. Thus, in 1936, the Ministry of Education launched a national design competition for the new standard designs of wooden 2- and 3-class primary school buildings [37, 65]. Twenty-two proposals were submitted, and several of them were awarded. For the design of a 2-class building, the first prize was awarded to the proposal by engineer-architect Vsevolodas Kopylovas. For the design of a 3-class building, the first prize was given to the proposal of civil technician Jurgis Okunis. However, for the basis of the final building designs, the two similar-looking proposals by engineer-architect Karolis Reisonas, which were awarded the two second prizes, were selected (Fig. 13). Since the designs were for the wooden buildings with distinctive features of vernacular architecture, as the competition guidelines required, contemporaries considered them outdated both in style and construction, as they no longer met the changing architectural standards of the time [38]. Therefore, some county municipalities that wanted to build schools according to these new standard designs adapted them for masonry construction, thus partially modernizing their traditional appearance [39, *6*].

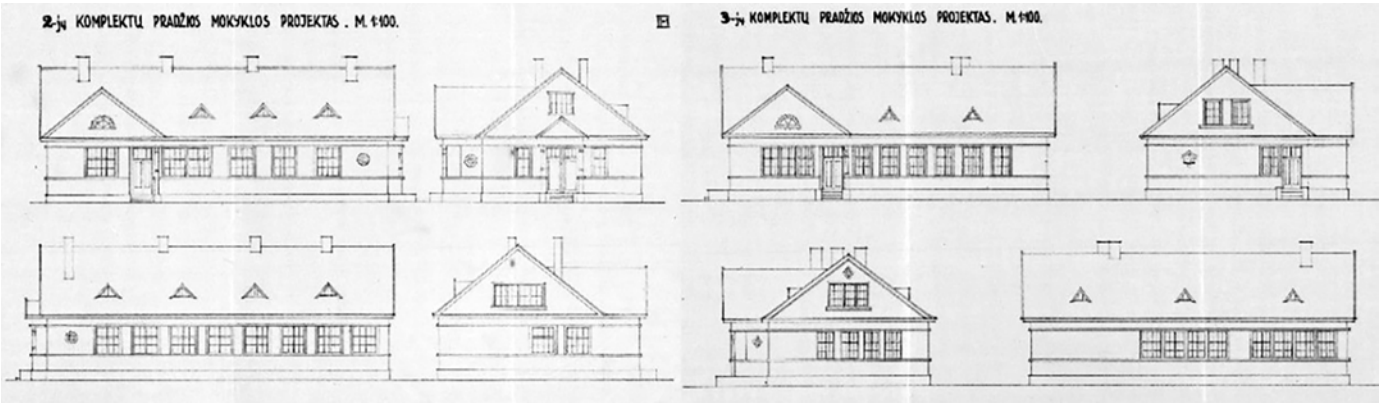

Fig. 13. Design projects of a standard wooden 2-class (left) and 3-class (right) primary school buildings (1937) [Drawings from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

In 1938, the Ministry of Education held another national competition for the standard designs for masonry 2- and 3-class primary school buildings. Since the guidelines no longer strictly required to design buildings based on vernacular architecture, the contestants were not limited by strict stylistic requirements [40, *63*]. The competition, however, did not receive much attention, as only seventeen proposals were submitted. The first prize for the design of a 2-class building was awarded to the proposal by civil technician Antanas Paškevičius, while the corresponding prize for the design of a 3-class building was awarded to the proposals by civil engineer Eugenijus Manomaitis and civil technician Juozas Tulaba. After the competition, the two new standard design projects were developed, which were based on the awarded proposals, and the construction of buildings based on them began in various counties of the country. The internal and functional structure of the buildings, which were constructed based on these new designs, was not innovative: "On the first floor, only classrooms, cloakrooms, a corridor-hall, and a washroom were placed, while on the upper floor – the attic, there were apartments for the teachers". Despite that, the nature of such a simple structure fully "met the pedagogical requirements, rural conditions and frugality" of that time [41, *4*]. Greater originality was sought in the exteriors of these building designs, as the high-pitched traditional-looking roofs covered with tiles, small-scale symmetrical rectangular volumes without any embellishments, and horizontal rows of ribbon-like classroom windows were their most distinctive external features. The combination of these features gave an impression of a distilled and modernized tradition, which was sought after when drawing up these designs (Fig. 14).

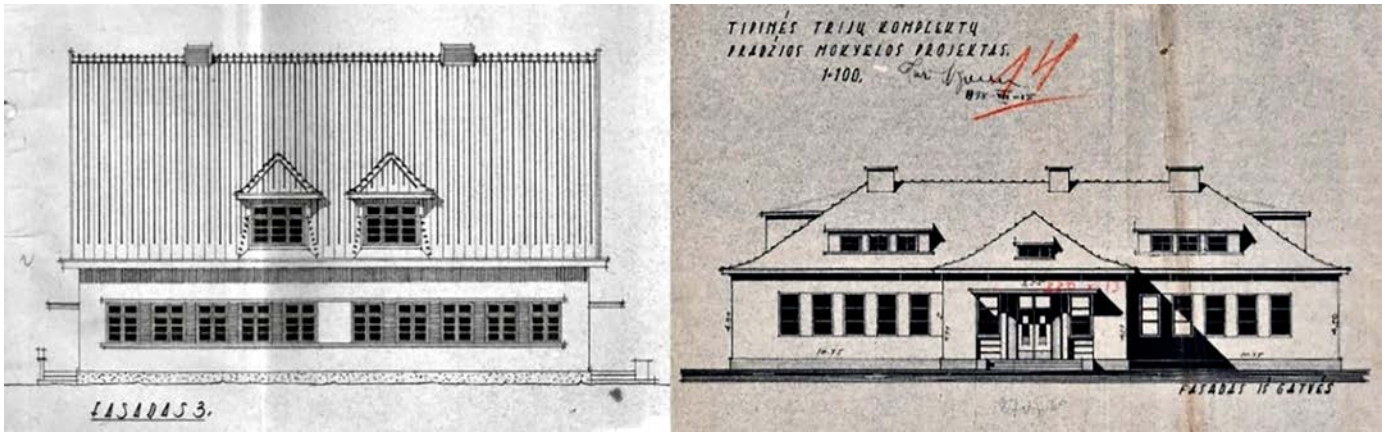

Fig. 14. Design projects of a standard masonry primary school buildings (left: for 2-class building by civ. techn. Antanas Paškevičius; right: for 3-class building by civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1938) [Drawings from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

In the same year, on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, several other standard designs for primary school buildings with larger numbers of classrooms were also drawn up for construction in small towns. Since the designs were for larger buildings, their exteriors were more monumental looking (Fig. 15). However, as the new Ministry's designs were still only recommended and not mandatory for the construction of primary schools, the county municipalities continued to be engaged in independent development of standardized designs of such buildings. In terms of function, such designs, along with the ones recommended by the Ministry, had similar internal layouts where classrooms for up to fifty students were connected by long corridors and were placed on the first floor, while the attics housed the teachers' apartments and auxiliary rooms. On the outside, however, such designs, due to the asymmetric volumes, simple-planned facades, glazed staircases, and continuous rows of windows, were still much more modern-looking than the ones recommended by the Ministry of Education (Fig. 16).

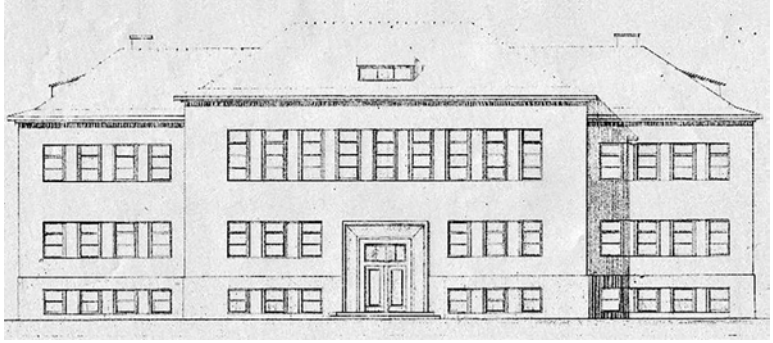

Fig. 15. Design project of a standard masonry 6-class primary school building for construction in the towns of Palanga, Onuškis and Vievis (civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1938) [Drawing from Vilnius Regional State Archives].

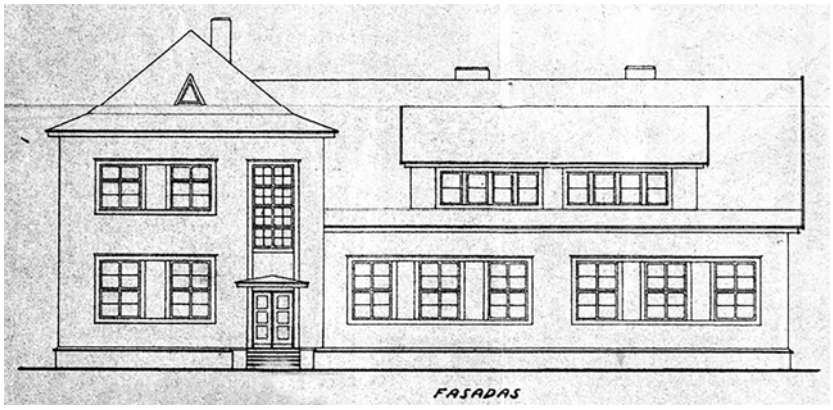

Fig. 16. Design project of a standard wooden 3-class primary school building for construction in Kaunas County (civ. eng. Visvaldas Mačiūnas and civ. techn. Abromas Šusteris of Kaunas County Construction Department, 1938) [Drawing from Kaunas Regional State Archives].

During that time, small-scale standardization also began to be implemented in the architecture of the country's healthcare buildings. While there were plans to develop standard designs for small provincial hospitals, as emphasized earlier, these ambitions did not gain momentum. Consequently, in the case of healthcare buildings, standardized designs were only drawn up for utilitarian structures. In 1939, for example, when new tuberculosis sanatoriums for the teachers were established in the forests near Jurbarkas and Varėna, the buildings for them (28-bed barrack sanatoriums and 4-bed tuberculosis huts) were constructed based on the standardized designs drawn up by the personnel of the Construction and Roads Inspection [42, *47*]. These standard designs were for wooden, utilitarian-looking structures for quicker and cheaper construction (Fig. 17).

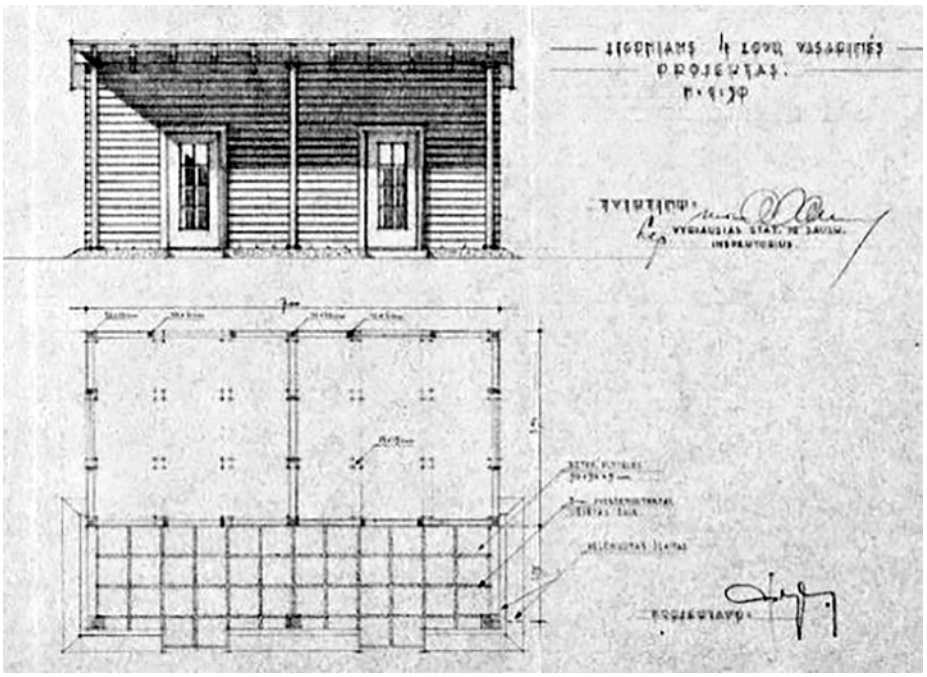

Fig. 17. Design project of a standard wooden 4-bed tuberculosis hut for the teachers' sanatoriums in Jurbarkas and Varėna (civ. eng. Jonas Alyta of the Construction and Roads Inspection, 1939) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

At the end of the 1930s, the Lithuanian Railways Board was also engaged in the processes of standardization, as the engineers of its Construction Department continued to draw up standardized designs for small provincial railway stations. For example, during the construction of the new narrow-gauge railway lines in northern Lithuania and for the modernization of standard-gauge railway lines in the eastern part of the country, new railway stations based on standardized designs were planned to be built in towns and villages situated along these railway lines [34, *35*]. However, the appearance of these building designs was not uniform. For example, the standard designs of larger two-story buildings for construction in provincial towns were composed in a modern manner – in simple and minimalist-looking rectangular forms (Fig. 18). Thus, they were perceived as being "beautiful, comfortable, rationally

planned and well-suited" for their function [43, *377*]. The smaller, one-story standard stations for construction in villages, despite their masonry construction, were designed with traditional architectural forms that gave them a vernacular-looking appearance (Fig. 19). This was determined by the fact that these stations housed not only the passenger waiting rooms but also the apartments for the railway personnel, thus their traditional appearance was probably created to resemble more that of a country house and not a modern rural station.

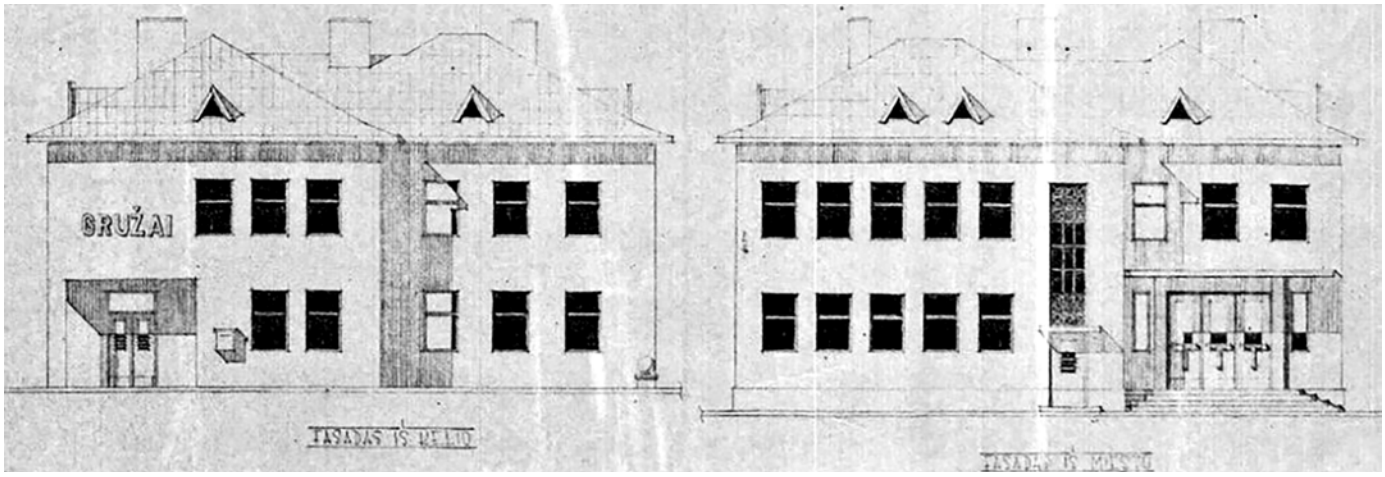

Fig. 18. Design project of a standard masonry narrow-gauge railway station building for construction in Mažieji Grūžiai and Lauksodis (1940) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

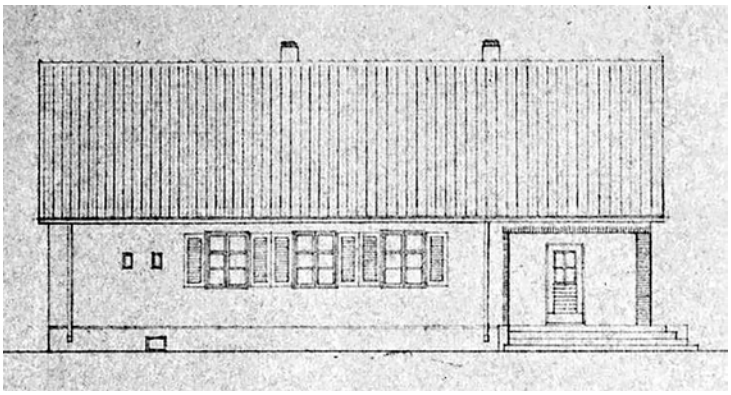

Fig. 19. Design project of a standard masonry standard-gauge railway station building for construction in villages (eng. arch. Vytautas Peldavičius of the Lithuanian Railways Board, 1938) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

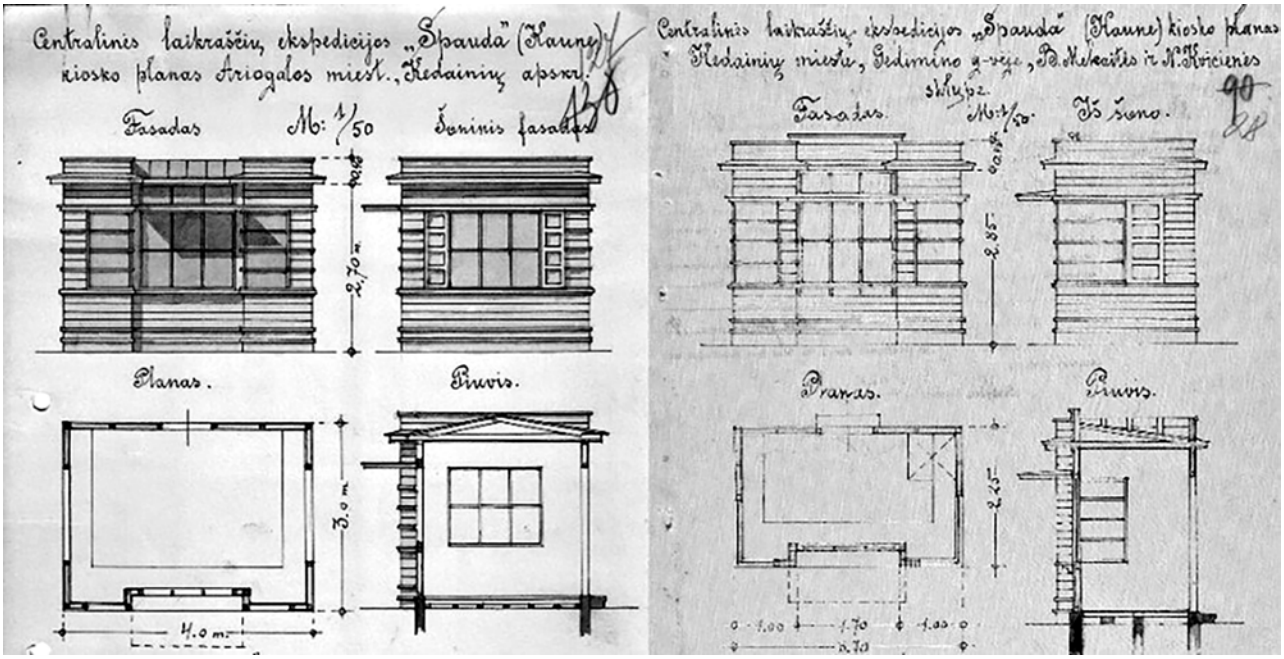

Fig. 20. Design projects of standardized wooden kiosks of the press distribution company "Spauda" for construction in towns of the then Kėdainiai County (civ. eng. Juozas Tyško, 1937) [Drawings from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

In the late 1930s, the press distribution company "Spauda" also continued the standardization of its kiosks for construction in various cities and towns. For example, to aestheticize the appearance of the kiosks built by the company, civil engineers and technicians were commissioned to develop several new standardized designs for these small buildings. In the architecture of new standard kiosk designs, stylistic features inspired by modernism were applied – wide functional-looking corner and display windows, small canopies in front and fine division of the rectangular, low-roofed volumes with narrow horizontal lines (Fig. 20). Since kiosks were temporary structures at the time, their construction continued to be wooden for economic reasons.

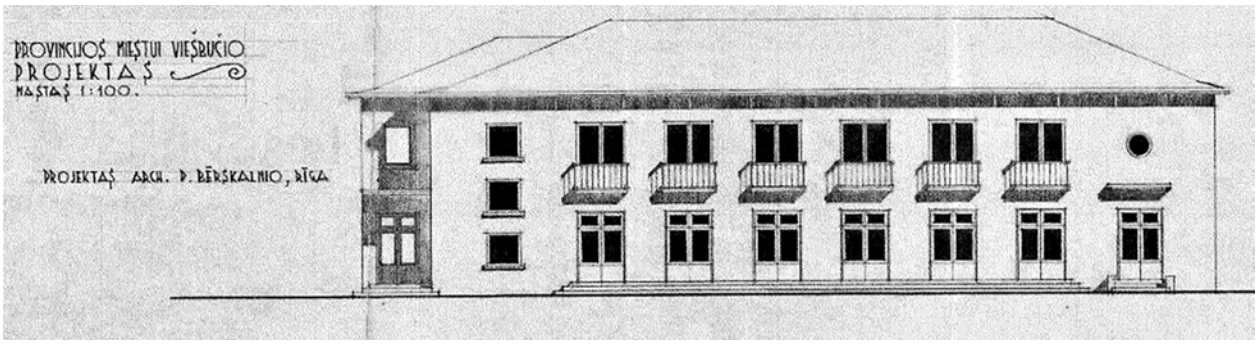

Fig. 21. Design project of a standard masonry provincial hotel building for construction in Lithuanian cities and towns (arch. Pēteris Bērzkalns, c. 1937) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

However, despite the increased development and implementation of standard design projects for public buildings, there were cases when such ambitions were not realized in practice. One of the more characteristic aspirations of the late 1930s, which was expected to be realized through standardization, was the planned construction of new hotels in Lithuania. At that time, most of the hotels operating in the country did not always meet hygiene standards and were not well adapted to tourists, the numbers of which were gradually increasing in the country. Therefore, in 1937, an ambitious plan for the construction of no less than 20 new masonry hotel buildings in Lithuanian cities, towns and resorts was drawn up at the Ministry of Internal Affairs [44, *6*]. Based on the plan, most of the hotels were scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1940 and their construction was planned to be carried out by the municipalities and private enterprises. The need to construct new hotel buildings in just a few years was also influenced by the Summer Olympic Games, which were planned to be held in Finland in 1940. It was hoped that, for the event, its guests "will stop in the Baltic region on their way to and from Finland" [45, *1*]. Thus, a tourist boom was expected. The hotels were planned to be built according to standard designs, for them to share similar principles of external design and internal layout [46, *1*]. To assist the Lithuanian institutions to quicker construct such buildings, the Union of Latvian Cities provided them with an exemplary design of a small provincial hotel (Fig. 21). The design project, drawn up by Latvian architect Pēteris Bērzkalns, was for a masonry two-story hotel with a reception room and a restaurant placed on the first, and with 15 rooms for the guests on the second floor. It was suggested that based on this single design, new identical-looking hotels could be built in Lithuania [47, *52*]. Yet the hotel project did not progress beyond the design stage, and not a single building was built based on it. This was probably determined by the later decision that each Lithuanian municipality and private enterprise would build larger, individually designed hotel buildings. However, at the beginning of 1940, due to a lack of funds and the ongoing war in Europe, the country's hotel construction plan was indefinitely postponed [48, *8*].

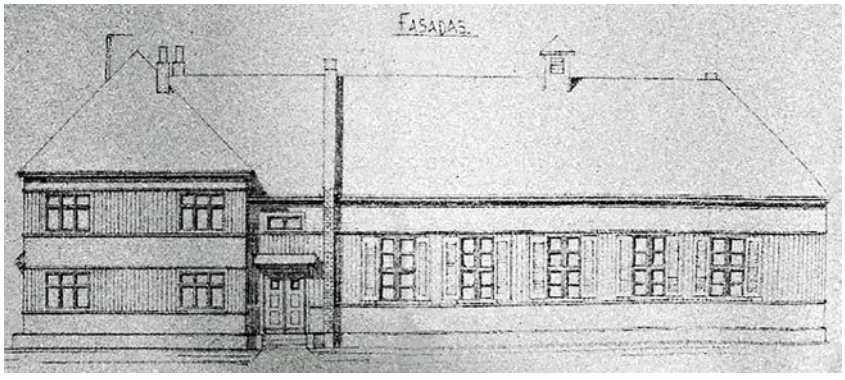

Fig. 22. Design project of a standard wooden public building of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (civ. techn. Mykolas Triponis of the Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture, 1937) [Drawing from Lithuanian Central State Archives].

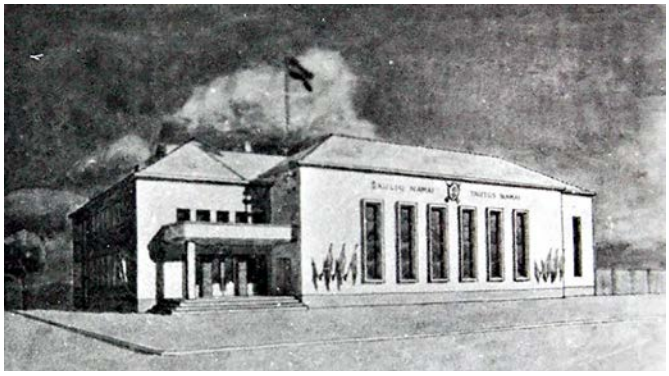

Fig. 23. Competition project of a standard masonry public building of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (eng. arch. Vladimiras Zubovas, 1938) [Drawing from Vilnius Regional State Archives].

At the end of the 1930s, an attempt to expand the standardization of public cultural buildings, which were planned to be constructed by and for the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, also failed. In the second half of the 1930s, the Union continued the cooperation with the country's Chamber of Agriculture for the development of the new standard designs for the Riflemen's buildings (Fig. 22). Standard designs, as before, were offered to the Union's branches so that they could construct the needed buildings based on them. However, still more new standard designs were needed. This was probably due to two reasons. Firstly, while a certain number of these types of buildings were constructed based on the previous standard and individual designs, in general, there was still a shortage of them, especially in rural areas [49, *140*]. Secondly, at that time, the Union's attitude towards the previous standard designs changed, as their wooden construction and traditional-looking appearance began to be considered outdated. Thus, it was thought that the new standard designs needed to be for masonry buildings, the exteriors of which should share some "similarity with the buildings built by the military", i.e., to be simple and modern-looking [50, *40*].

Consequently, in 1938, the Union launched a national design competition for the new standard designs of the Riflemen's buildings. The competition guidelines stated that the proposals had to be for a masonry building, which should be as simple in structure and appearance as possible, without unnecessary architectural nuances that could make the construction more expensive. Functionally, the proposals had to meet the general requirements of the Union – to accommodate a large hall of 250–300 seats with a stage for various cultural events and to have room for the use of the administration of the Union's branches [51, *100*]. A total of twenty-six proposals were submitted to the competition, which ended in early 1939. The first prize was not awarded, while the second prize was awarded to the proposals submitted by engineer-architect Vladimiras Zubovas and civil engineer Kazimieras Šadauskas. The proposal by Zubovas, for example, was for a modern-looking building of two stories, L-shaped in construction, which had an external composition composed of two rectangular volumes connected at an angle (Fig. 23). The asymmetric angular composition of the façade, emphasized by the recessed corner entrance and the simple, undecorated exterior, divided only by elongated vertical windows, displayed an influence of modernism. Yet this and other proposals did not progress beyond the design stage, as none of them fully met the Union's functional and aesthetic requirements [52, *5*].

CONCLUSIONS

Standardization in the architecture of interwar Lithuanian public buildings was a process that lasted almost two decades. The main factor that led to the development of standardized building designs in the country at that time was the lack of certain types of public buildings, especially in the provinces. Therefore, the standardization of building designs was a rational solution, as it allowed to speed up the needed construction. At first, the standardized public building designs were developed centrally at one institution, the Lithuanian Reconstruction Commissariat. However, from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s, they were drawn up at the initiative by several institutions (the Construction and Roads Inspection, the Chamber of Agriculture, the Railways Board, the Ministry of Education, and the municipalities), as well as organizations (the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union) and private enterprises (the press distribution company "Spauda"), which were also responsible for their implementation. Additionally, it was not uncommon for such designs to be chosen through design competitions.

Up until the mid-1930s, standardized designs were developed only for a limited number of types of public structures. The most common types were primary schools, railway stations, the buildings of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and small kiosks. Even though not mandatory on a national level, these types of standardized designs of public buildings were used widely in practice both in small provincial towns and in the country. Additionally, by the late 1930s, plans to further expand the standardization of public buildings were considered. Therefore, in addition to the already standardized public building types, it was planned to start the development of standard designs for healthcare, administrative and commercial buildings. However, this was partially unsuccessful, since a part of standard designs for these types of public structures were not even realized in practice.

When developing standard design projects for public structures, the aim was to find uniformity for each type of building in terms of appearance, construction and functionality. This, however, was difficult to achieve, as a part of the standardized designs proved to be quite successful, while the other part did not always meet the aesthetic and functional requirements of the institutions for which they were developed. Such a problem resulted in a number of different standard designs being drawn up for some types of public buildings.

The architecture of the developed standard designs was also influenced by the national trends of the country's architecture of the 1920s and 1930s. Up until the mid-1930s, most of the standard design projects were developed under the strong influence of architectural tradition, which was emphasized by the wooden construction and vernacular décor elements. However, from the late 1930s, when a more modern stylistic approach began to influence the country's architecture, a number of standard designs began to be developed for more contemporary and ascetic-looking masonry buildings, the appearance of which was more influenced by the modern simplification of external forms. Furthermore, there were also examples of standard designs for public buildings, whose exteriors were designed by merging these two stylistic trends, thus creating a synthesis between traditional, almost vernacular forms and modern-looking exteriors.

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