

## ARCHITECTURE UNDER OCCUPATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC AND RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN GERMAN-OCCUPIED LITHUANIA (1941–1944)

 **Evaldas Vilkončius**

*Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania*

**Abstract.** The German occupation of Lithuania, which lasted from 1941 to 1944, was a period that affected all areas of life, including architecture and construction. Thus, the aim of this paper is to present a short, yet dramatic and difficult period in the history of Lithuanian architecture – the development and transformation of public and residential structures amidst the German occupation. The research is based on the study of archival material, literature, and periodicals of that period, as well as recent works on this topic, while the text is supplemented with the design projects of public and residential structures. The article demonstrates that even under the conditions of the German occupation, there was still a strong emphasis on developing public and residential architecture in Lithuania, and the processes regarding the matter were quite actively taking place. As most of the planned structures were not realized at that time, the article assumes that architectural activity during that time can be identified only with the compilation of plans for the needed construction, the development of civil building projects, and theoretical discussions regarding the stylistic properties of Lithuanian architecture.  
**Keywords:** Lithuanian architecture; public architecture; residential architecture; wartime architecture; wartime construction

### Introduction

The beginning of the 1940s was a difficult period for Lithuania. After more than twenty years of independence, the young country was occupied by the Soviet Union in June 1940. A year later, the occupation ended when the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union began. To take advantage of the situation and try to restore independence, the June Uprising began in Lithuania. Also, the Provisional Government of Lithuania was formed, which made efforts to restore the country's structure prior to the Soviet occupation. However, Nazi Germany, which occupied Lithuania, did not support Lithuania's aspirations for independence. Therefore, in the summer of 1941, "the country, called Generalbezirk Litauen ("General District Lithuania"), became one of the four parts of the Reichskommissariat Ostland" [8]. Consequently, as the Germans began to create their own government bodies, the Provisional Government of Lithuania resigned in August 1941. It was replaced by the Administrations of General Advisers, which were subordinate to the Germans who occupied most of the country until the summer of 1944.

Despite the failed aspirations to restore independence, there was a great need to normalize the war-disrupted fields of architecture and construction, and efforts were made to develop it to the greatest extent possible. This was also decided by the need to rebuild the cities and towns, which were damaged during battles between the armies of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. Thus, it was stressed by the local Lithuanian authorities that "the war almost completely burned or destroyed about thirty cities and several dozen villages, and numerous individual buildings. To rebuild the country <...> the technical forces, resources and labor of the entire country must be mobilized at once. <...> The work is difficult, as it must be done very quickly. However, haste cannot overshadow the purposefulness and efficiency of the work" [43].

However, the architectural processes of the German occupation period in Lithuania are not a widely researched topic, but there are a number of historical sources and data to present this topic. For example, an important information for this topic is provided in the memoirs of architects and engineers who worked in Lithuania at that time [4], [21]. As well as in historical outlines covering, for example, the education of architects and engineers in the country at that time [26]. Moreover, a number of primary sources are preserved in the Lithuanian archives, covering the processes of architectural development during the German occupation period, construction plans at that time and documentation

of planned buildings. Information on this topic can also be found in the local periodicals of that time. Therefore, based on these sources, the article aims to present the still little known, yet dramatic period of Lithuanian architecture.

The article consists of the three main parts, which can provide a better understanding on how the public and residential structures were developed in German-occupied Lithuania in 1941–1944. First, the article delves into how the construction and design matters were reorganized, coordinated, and administered in Lithuania through the course of this period. Secondly, the research outlines the principal building types of public and residential architecture, which were designed and proposed to be constructed amidst the occupation and identifies the chief institutions that initiated it. Lastly, the article analyses the stylistic diversity and characteristics of the planned constructions, as well as the theoretical debates regarding the matter that arose during that period.

### Reorganization of the design and construction matters

The processes that led to the reorganization of the design and building construction matters in Lithuania began at the beginning of the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. A part of them were initiated by the Ministry of Public Utilities, which was part of the Provisional Government of Lithuania. The short-lived Ministry began operating in July 1941 in place of the liquidated People's Commissariat of Public Utilities of Lithuanian SSR, which had been established during the Soviet occupation [43]. The primary task that the Ministry sought to implement at that time, was the aspiration to establish the principal central body that could administrate the architectural and construction matters in Lithuania. It was similarly done during the years of Lithuanian independence, when the central institution, Construction and Roads Inspection, which administered the country's civil architecture and construction matters, had operated under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thus, it was planned that by establishing one "strong technical organization," the reconstruction of Lithuanian cities and the management of architecture and construction would proceed more effectively during the German occupation [43].

After the Ministry of Public Utilities was abolished at the end of the summer of 1941, the establishment of the local central architecture and construction institution in Lithuania was taken over by the Administration of the General Adviser for Internal Affairs, which was subordinate to the German-founded higher-level institution, the Chief Construction

Administration in Lithuania [21]. In the autumn of the same year, after the liquidation of the construction and design office for communal objects "Komprojektas" established during the Soviet era, the Chief Construction Board of Lithuania was established in Kaunas. The Board, which operated until the end of the German Occupation, consisted of the Urban Planning, Building Construction and Civil Engineering Directorates. Thus, according to the approved statute, the institution was entrusted with the handling of "construction, urban planning, architectural matters, urban land use, urban planning, housing management, the creation of housing colonies, construction rationalization and standardization, statistics, inventory and formation of the construction policy" in occupied Lithuania [44]. The institution was also engaged in building design and issued permits for professional work to architectural and construction specialists. Therefore, the Chief Construction Board of Lithuania had a wide competence in the field, which was valid "as long as it did not belong to German institutions" [37]. However, the Chief Construction Board itself was subordinate to the Administration of the General Adviser of Internal Affairs, later to the institution of the General Adviser of Engineering and Communications. Additionally, the institutions of architecture and construction, which operated in independent Lithuania, also began to be restored. For example, in place of the liquidated People's Commissariat of Local Industry of Lithuanian SSR, its Industrial Construction Trust and design office "Pramprojektas", the construction and design company "Statyba", which operated in Lithuania in 1935–1940, was restored [22]. The restored company which operated in Kaunas, and had branches in Vilnius, Šiauliai and Panevėžys, designed and constructed various industrial structures and large public buildings [3]. Furthermore, to reorganize the construction and design matters in Lithuanian villages and rural regions, the design office "Agricultural Construction" of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Lithuanian SSR was liquidated [22]. In place of it, the Construction Department of the Chamber of Agriculture, which operated in the years of Lithuania's independence, was restored. It was later renamed into the Agricultural Construction Direction and was assigned to the Administration for Agriculture, subordinate to the General Adviser of Agriculture [25].

The administration and management of architectural and construction fields in German-occupied Lithuania were also conducted by the county and city municipalities that operated during the years of independence, which began to be restored in the summer of 1941 [21]. As before, the local Construction Departments began to operate within the restored municipalities, which carried out design work for municipal and private buildings, issued building permits in counties and cities, and supervised the local civil construction [37]. In some instances, the departments were headed by the same local architects and engineers who had held these positions in the late 1930s.

Thus, at the end of 1941, the principal institutions responsible for the administration and implementation of civil construction matters were established in occupied Lithuania. Although they operated under individual statutes, their activities were supervised by the German institutions, such as the General Commissioners' Administration and the Chief Construction Administration in Lithuania. Therefore, the Lithuanian architectural and construction institutions had to coordinate their activities with the orders and decrees compiled by the German institutions, the early ones of which related to these matters were issued during the first months of the occupation [34].

However, throughout the German occupation, these institutions operated with a great shortage of qualified specialists. This was due to both the deportations of Lithuanians initiated by the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the anti-Semitic policies imposed by Nazi Germany later that year. For example, in September 1940, almost eight hundred architects, civil engineers and construction technicians were registered in Lithuania. However, in June 1941, almost 250 of them were deported by the Soviets and a few dozen fled from the occupied country. Additionally, after the Holocaust conducted by the Nazis, Lithuania had lost more than 160 specialists of Jewish origin as well [40]. Thus, in 1942 there were only around 380 architects, civil engineers and technicians registered in Lithuania who were allowed to engage in professional architectural practice. Around one fifth of them were employed by the Chief Construction Board, while the rest worked in other institutions of architecture and construction. During the occupation, their numbers were slightly increased by a few dozen architects and civil engineers, who graduated from Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas [26]. Additionally, from 1942, dozens of graduates of Kaunas Higher Technical School, civil technicians, with at least two years of professional work experience, began to receive qualifications in architecture and civil engineering [7].

#### **New construction initiatives and difficulties of their implementation**

One of the principal tasks, which was aimed at implementing at the beginning of the German occupation of Lithuania, was the preparation of new reconstruction plans for war-damaged cities and towns (Fig. 1). Already at the end of 1941, the Chief Construction Board, in cooperation with local German and

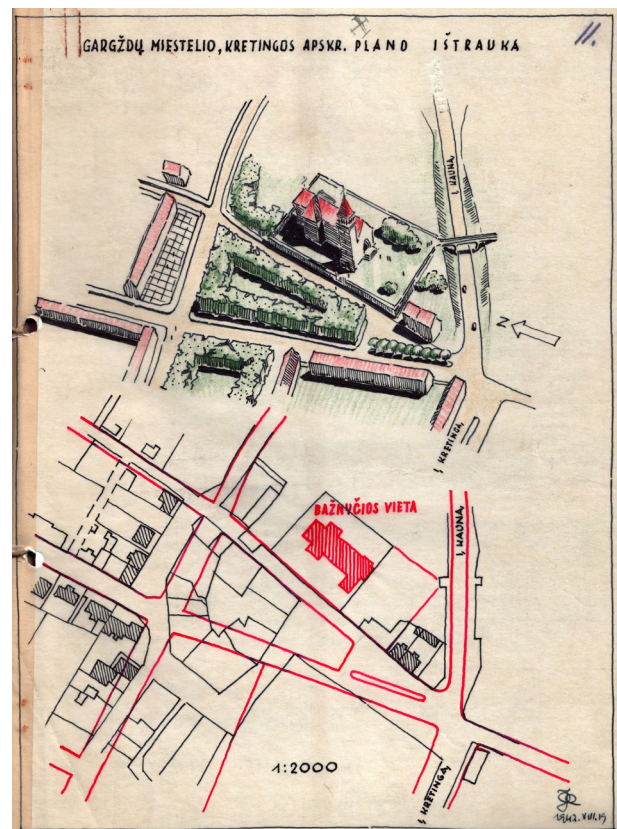


Fig. 1. An excerpt from Gargždai town plan displaying the proposed redevelopment of the central part (civ. eng. Algirdas Dauginas, 1942). [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1342, ap. 1, b. 11, l. 11]

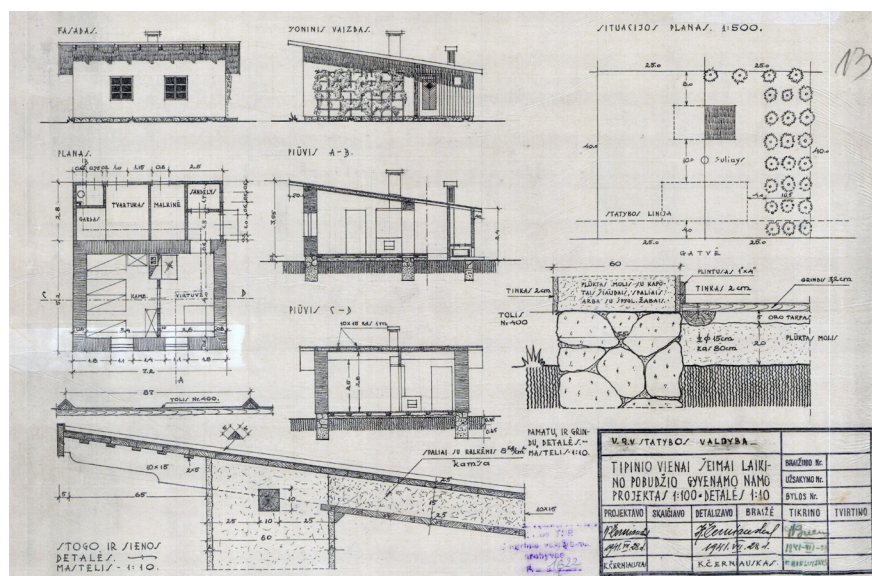


Fig. 2. Project of a standardized temporary one-story shack (civ. tech. Kostas Černiauskas, 1941) [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1622, ap. 7, b. 131, l. 13]

Lithuanian authorities, began to work on this matter. This also became a pretext for changing the urban environment of Lithuania's cities and towns: "The new city redevelopments must be conducted in accordance with the latest urban planning requirements. For this purpose, the streets need to be straightened and widened, the main squares and recreation areas should be created, and suitable conditions for further urban expansion should be prepared. And since there are also streets and buildings in the burned cities that were not completely destroyed by fire, this complicates the task" [49]. Additionally, it was also planned to reorganize the urban environment of the larger Lithuanian cities that had suffered less from the war. For example, in Kaunas, the temporary capital of Lithuania of the interwar period, it was planned to demolish a larger part of its old town, leaving only the several most significant "historical buildings" [27]. Similar urban reconstructions were planned in smaller cities as well, in the main squares of which it was proposed to construct the new city halls and to demolish "all unhygienic, unsuitable buildings" [31]. The proposed reconstructions were to be conducted following the example of Nazi Germany's cities, where large-scale urban transformation had begun in the 1930s [19]. It was planned that while new general plans were being prepared, only temporary buildings, such as single-story clay shacks, would be allowed to be built in Lithuanian cities and towns (Fig. 2). However, at the end of 1942, due to the lack of resources and labor, the implementation of the plans for the reconstruction of Lithuanian cities was postponed until the post-war period, with exceptions made only in rare cases [10]. Therefore, most of the planned radical urban reconstructions were not realized in practice.

Additionally, in late 1941, the plans for wartime and post-war civil construction began to be compiled by the Lithuanian institutions, such as the Administrations of Healthcare and Education, as well as municipalities. The German institutions did not directly intervene in the compilation of such plans. However, the Germans recommended that the plans should meet the principles of economic wartime construction imposed by them, as rapid construction and low costs were to be the essential priorities of that time [35].

Thus, in the case of public buildings, the Lithuanian institutions planned to start constructing only the most needed educational, healthcare, and cultural structures [15]. For example, in 1942–1943, around thirty new primary school buildings and several gymnasiums were planned to be

constructed in Lithuania. Also, in the towns of Biržai, Kretinga, Ukmergė and Vilkaviškis it was proposed to build new county hospitals with several hundred beds, while a new 400-bed Red Cross hospital building was planned to be constructed in Kaunas [30]. Some of the hospitals, like the one in Biržai, were designed aesthetically and functionally progressive, following "the best examples of modern hospitals of the time, such as German, French, Swedish" [23]. It was also planned to complete the construction of several school and hospital buildings that had begun prior to the occupation. [23]. In smaller towns, the plans were made to build a dozen public baths, dispensaries, laundries, and infectious disease barracks. There were also proposals to construct cultural structures, such as new opera houses in Kaunas and Vilnius, and theater buildings in smaller towns [46]. These construction plans were not entirely new, as they were more an attempt to continue the aspirations that arose during the period of independence to provide Lithuanian cities with new public buildings for various purposes, the need of which became particularly acute during the wartime period. There was also a surge to build religious buildings as well. Since the Germans proclaimed themselves as the liberators from the Soviet Union, using this aspect new churches and chapels were often started to be built with a symbolic meaning, favorable to the Germans as monuments to commemorate the Lithuanians deported and executed by the Soviets and the end of the Soviet occupation [36].

As in the period of independence, a part of the planned structures, such as primary schools, and public baths, were to be built based on the standard designs, which were developed at the Chief Construction Board [13]. While the larger public structures, such as hospitals, gymnasiums and theaters were to be built based on the individual design projects, which began to be developed by the architects and engineers of the Chief Construction Board, the company "Statyba" and municipal construction departments. In 1942, the construction plans of public buildings were supplemented by an order from the Chief Construction Administration in Lithuania to municipalities to start the construction of about one hundred disinfection stations in cities and towns [45]. This was intended to combat the spread of diseases, such as spotted fever. Most of the stations, on the instructions of German and local authorities, were to be placed in the former Jewish bathhouses, schools and synagogues, the conversion projects of which were

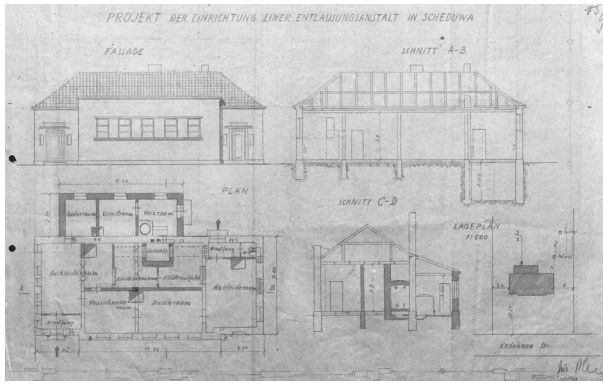


Fig. 3. Conversion project of the former Jewish bathhouse into disinfection station in Šeduva (civ. eng. Petras Lelis, 1942) [Kaunas Regional State Archive, f. R-961, ap. 1, b. 97, l. 9]

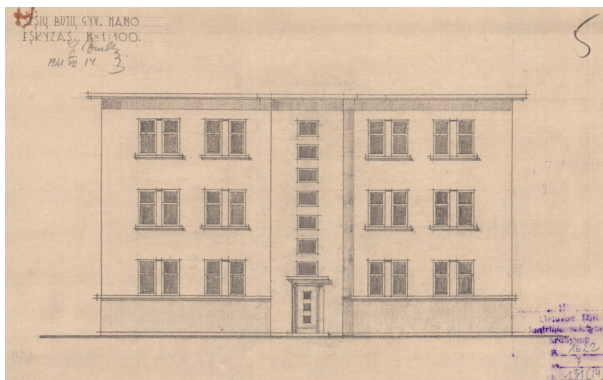


Fig. 4. Sketch project of a six-apartment residential block (civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1941) [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1622, ap. 7, b. 131, l. 5]

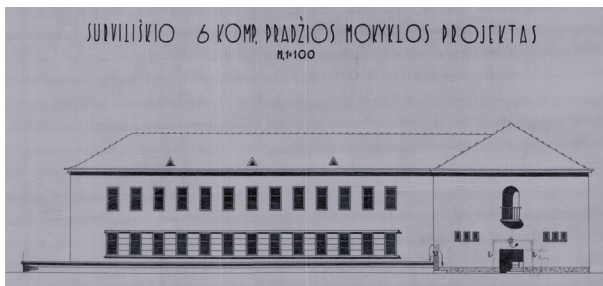


Fig. 5. Project of a 6-class primary school in Surviliškis (civ. eng. Jonas Jankūnas, 1941–1942) [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1622, ap. 7, b. 33, l. 4]

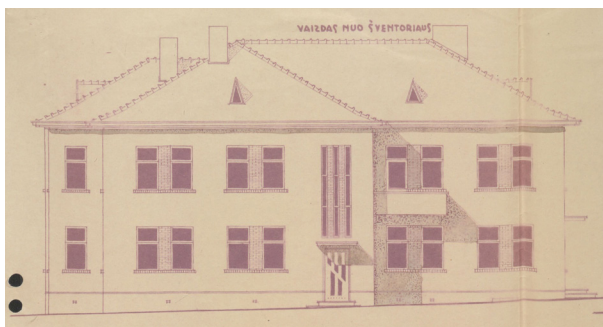


Fig. 6. Project of a parish house in Eržvilkas (civ. eng. Algirdas Kuprys, 1942) [Klaipėda Regional State Archive Tauragė Branch, f. 697, ap. 1, b. 23, l. 2]

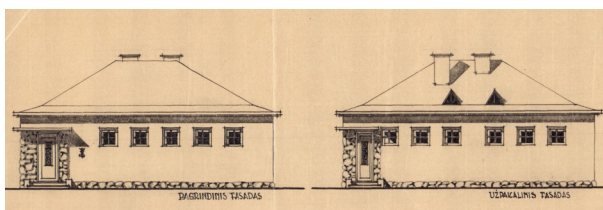


Fig. 7. Project of a standard bathhouse (arch. Boguslavas Liugaila, 1942) [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1622, ap. 7, b. 133, l. 1]

drawn up by the municipal Construction Departments (Fig. 3). Although by late 1942 most such projects were developed, many were not realized due to lack of materials, labor, and low initiative of the municipalities. As Petras Lelis, who was a civil engineer in the Construction Department of the Panevėžys County Municipality during the that time claimed, “we turned a blind eye to these constructions, as it was an unrealistic task <...> We did not start building new buildings anywhere, but instead chose abandoned masonry buildings, in which we installed the necessary disinfection equipment. But we did not finish them” [21]. Due to the anti-Semitic policies imposed by the Germans, more Jewish buildings (schools, synagogues, etc.) were planned to be adapted for other uses as well, for example, to be converted into labor camps, industrial facilities or even sports halls [5]. Plans were also made for the construction of residential buildings in the areas where it was not forbidden to build temporary buildings. Therefore, following the experience of Nazi Germany and other countries, the construction of numerous residential blocks was considered, as it was estimated that to meet the housing demand in post-war Lithuania, “about 25,000 apartments would be necessary to build annually in the countryside and in the cities” [42]. Preparations for this were planned to start during wartime and design projects for standard residential blocks were developed (Fig. 4). However, due to the lack of resources, these ambitions were not further developed and only the construction of the few residential blocks, which began during the years of independence and the Soviet occupation, sought to be continued [40]. It was also planned to develop the construction of residential structures on a private initiative, a process which was almost non-existent during the Soviet occupation due to the mass nationalization of private property. Thus, from the end of 1941, the local design institutions began to develop the standardized and individual projects of private houses for construction in the cities and in the country. It was also planned to develop the industry of construction material production in Lithuania, by establishing new enterprises, such as brick, plaster, and cement factories. Thus, for example, in 1942, the construction and design company “Statyba” had designed several of such factories, which, however, were not built by the end of the German occupation [9]. The planning and implementation of construction work in occupied Lithuania was complicated by the “Order on construction bans,” effective as of April 17, 1943, which was issued by German institutions [32]. The ban lasted until the end of occupation. Similar orders had been established in other countries occupied by Nazi Germany as well, where “building activities were to be stopped until Germany’s “final victory” [12]. Thus, most of the construction plans compiled by Lithuanian institutions had to be postponed. The ban, however, had exceptions. For example, it was allowed to continue the construction of disinfection stations, which were considered priority objects by the German authorities [21]. It was also allowed to conduct small construction and repair work, costing up to five thousand Reichsmarks, as well as to construct temporary buildings. Exceptions were also made for construction crucial to the war effort, such as industrial enterprises. To start other types of construction and receive the necessary materials, special permission had to be obtained from the Chief Construction Administration in Lithuania [47]. Construction conducted without a permit was considered illegal and was therefore treated as a criminal act by the German authorities. The impact of the ban was not uniform in Lithuania. For example, in some of the more seriously war-damaged

provincial towns, due to the “lack of building materials, capital and labor,” the building activity had practically come to a standstill even before the ban and only “temporary shelters” were constructed there [2]. However, there were also places where the ban was occasionally ignored and understood as a formality. For example, in several cities and rural regions, “despite the strict construction ban, residential structures, farm buildings, churches, rectory houses, etc., were nevertheless continued to be built, although the builders did not have any building permits.” The local institutions were obliged to “take all possible measures to prevent this prohibited action” [47]. However, they themselves often ignored the ban, and sought to use the existing limited building materials for the necessary Lithuanian constructions, and not for the ones ordered by the German authorities, like the disinfection stations. Thus, according to the memoirs of architect Edmundas Arbačiauskas, who at that time worked in the Vilnius branch of the company “Statyba”, despite the construction ban, “we [the company] secretly built a Red Cross hospital in Vilnius, a printing house “Švyturys”, renovated a theater destroyed by fire in Vilnius. We also gave the Karaites in Trakai materials for the repair of their church. We decorated the church of Lentvaris in the sgraffito technique, <...> We constructed a nail factory in Lentvaris” [4]. The municipalities often ignored the ban as well, and “used the materials obtained through the Construction Board for the construction of new schools, even though this action was prohibited” [21]. Thus, the construction of the necessary civil structures while ignoring the ban, was understood by local architecture and construction specialists as “proof of the Lithuanians’ desire for freedom” and dissatisfaction with the German occupation [21]. Consequently, the so-called illegal constructions continued until the end of the occupation.

### **The stylistic diversity and national identity in the architecture of the planned constructions**

When the plans for the new constructions began to be compiled, local architectural specialists began to look for paths to follow when designing new buildings. At that time, Nazi Germany had an established hierarchy of architectural styles, which ranged from the simplified neoclassicism to vernacular and modernist designs, the application of which in practice varied from the functional requirements of buildings to the preferences of builders and users [28]. It is known that local Lithuanian specialists were sought to be introduced with German construction, as the trips to cities of Nazi Germany were organized for them [38]. Additionally, they attended the lectures regarding the principles of German wartime construction [41]. However, the German institutions did not take any concrete steps to directly influence the Lithuanian architectural style. Therefore, it can be suggested that this matter was left to the aesthetic aims and preferences of the local Lithuanian specialists. This resulted in a stylistic diversity in the building designs, which in this respect did not differ much from that prevailed in Lithuania in the 1930s.

One of the main stylistic trends, which was sought to be continued during that time, was the local variant of modernism that prevailed in Lithuanian architecture in the 1930s. Therefore, local architects and engineers, drawing from their previous aesthetic experience, aspired to maintain progressivity in architecture, giving a priority to the function and utility, which were the key aspects when designing the needed structures, such as primary schools, bathhouses, and parish houses (Figs. 5–6). A number of these types of buildings were designed with asymmetrically balanced, undecorated, and simple-looking volumes rhythmically divided by ribbon fenestration. The local character of these

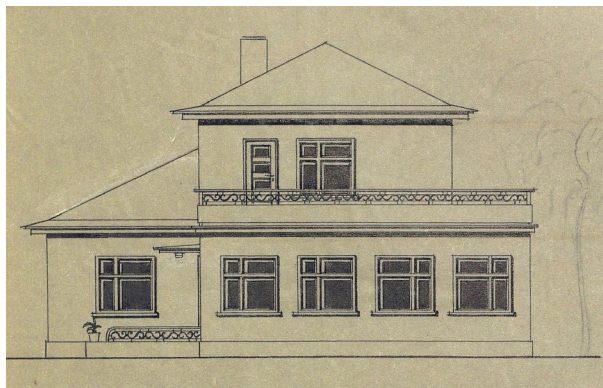


Fig. 8. Project of a single-family house in Petrašiūnai (civ. tech. Mečys Cichanavičius, 1943) [Kaunas Regional State Archive, f. 17, ap. 1, b. 106, l. 22]

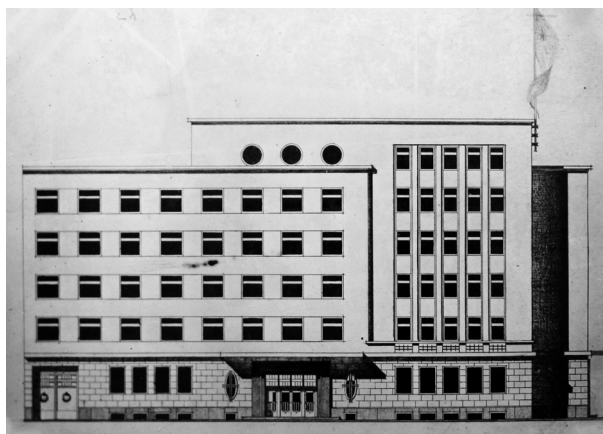


Fig. 9. Diploma project “Hotel–restaurant in Kaunas” by Algirdas Gaigalis of the Vytautas Magnus University’s Construction Faculty, 1943 [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 631, ap. 19, b. 64, p. 6]

structures was to be emphasized by the high-pitched tile roofs and local building materials. There were also examples of public structures designed, the simple-looking exteriors of which were complemented by the inclusions of fieldstone and clinker tiles (Fig. 7). For dwellings, which were planned to be constructed in cities and towns, as well as industrial structures, modernism also continued to be preferred architectural language (Fig. 8). Moreover, the asceticism of these structures corresponded well to the general requirements regarding the wartime construction, issued by the German authorities, which stated that the buildings, for reasons of economy, should be designed as simple looking as possible, without unnecessary “architectural embellishments” [10]. Additionally, the influence of interwar modernism was also evident in the diploma projects of graduates from the Faculty of Construction at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas during that period (Fig. 9).

There were also buildings designed with exteriors, which reflected the influence of past styles to give them a more monumental looking appearance. For example, in the projects of several healthcare and religious buildings, the modern-looking exteriors were designed accentuated with the popular motifs of classicism and historicism, such as arcades, pilasters, and the imitation of rustication (Figs. 10–11). In other cases, while the buildings were designed with radically reduced, and almost unornamented exteriors, their monumentality was to be given by the massing, such as the classical division of the front into three regular parts, articulated with central Avant-corps or symmetrically placed entrances (Figs. 12–13).

There was also an aspiration to develop a national style in Lithuanian architecture, which was not new, as it was aimed at developing it in the 1920s and 1930s [33].

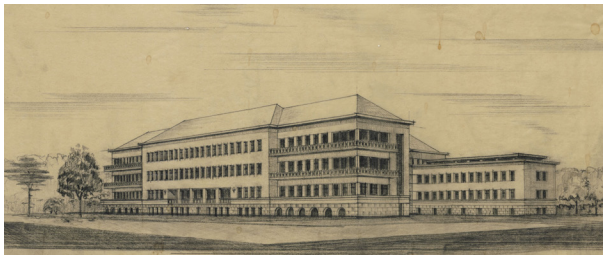


Fig. 10. Design proposal for a county hospital in Biržai (civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1943) [Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Centre Heritage Preservation Library, f. 6, ap. 1, no. 14237]

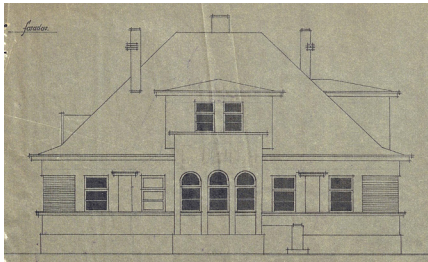


Fig. 11. Project of a rectory in Kalviai (civ. eng. Vladas Ambrazevičius, 1942) [Kaunas Regional State Archive, f. R-381, ap. 1, b. 12, l. 25]

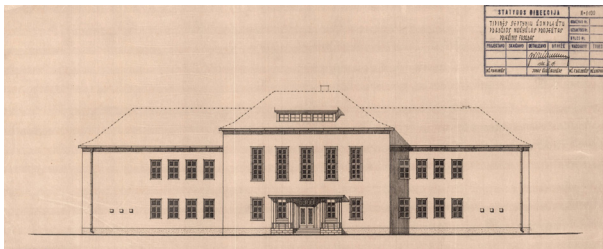


Fig. 12. Project of a standard 7-class primary school building (civ. eng. Feliksas Bielinskis, 1942) [Lithuanian Central State Archives, f. 1622, ap. 7, b. 13, l. 11]

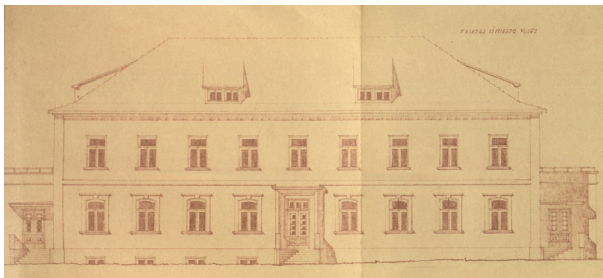


Fig. 13. Project of a county hospital in Vilkauskis (arch. Kazys Mioldažys, 1942) [Kaunas Regional State Archive, f. R-961, ap. 1, b. 46, l. 23]

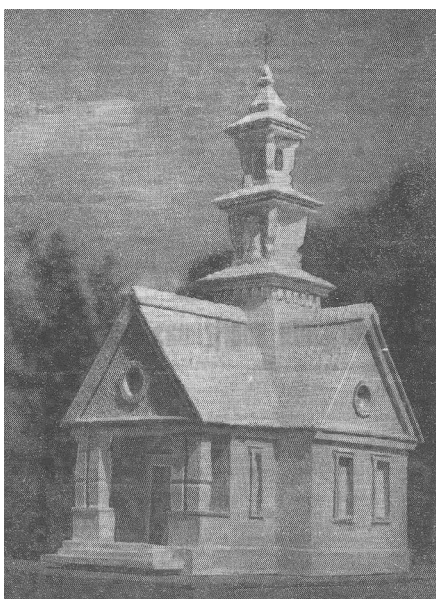


Fig. 14. Model of Rainiai chapel (arch. Jonas Virakas, 1942) [Panevėžio apygardos balsas, 1942 October 10, p. 5]

The idea was revived by the national design competition of a chapel for construction in Samogitian village of Rainiai, which was held in 1942. The chapel was to be dedicated to commemorating several dozen political prisoners killed by the Soviets in 1941, thus the competition guidelines strictly required that the building's "architectonic motifs should be Lithuanian–Samogitian, symbolizing the struggle of the enslaved Lithuanian–Samogitian for freedom" [14]. Out of only nineteen submitted proposals, the design project by Jonas Virakas was awarded the first prize. In this proposal the chapel was designed with the forms and motifs of the old traditional architecture of Lithuania: the bell tower was in the form of a highly ornamented pillar–chapel, the façade was accentuated with columns of folk forms, and the volume was covered with a sharply pitched roof of wooden shingles (Fig. 14). The competition and the possibility of developing a national architectural style in Lithuania provoked theoretical discussions among its cultural representatives, the texts of which were published in the official periodicals of that time.

There were opinions which supported the competition and positively evaluated a proposed revival of a national style, based solely on the old Lithuanian village architecture, as it was thought to be closest to Lithuanian identity. Thus, it was advocated that all Lithuanian architecture should recourse to a traditional style: "Only in our wooden architecture, which in Lithuania has created a truly unique style; both homesteads, our wooden churches, and pillar–chapels are completely original Lithuanian folk art. <...> Therefore, our wooden architecture is the only source of inspiration for our architects" [39]. Such an approach was also perceived to preserve Lithuanian identity and legacy of its cultural traditions [6].

The aspiration to develop a national vernacular style was also perceived by the idea's supporters to eliminate foreign influences in Lithuanian architecture, such as modernism. Critically assessing its internationality and aesthetic monotony, it was proposed to value national individuality more in architecture, insisting that "our architects need to be inspired by the spirit of our nation, and not by the models of architectural journals" [24]. Thus, it was reasoned that in the future architectural modernity would gradually give way to "beauty and nationality" [24]. In this way, a national style was also perceived as an antithesis of modernism, which embodied a national identity and tradition, which the latter, as was thought, did not have.

Such aspirations in Lithuanian architecture were also supported by the Germans. In articles published in their periodicals on the topic of Lithuanian architecture, it was declared that only a vernacular architectural style was suitable for Lithuania, as, in German opinion, a solely agrarian region [29]. It was critically assessed that such a style was not fully developed during the independence when, as a result, Lithuanian architecture was more influenced by international trends, such as modernism: "The truth is that there was not enough creativity in a nation of three million farmers to develop an architectural style based solely on the character of its nationality and landscape. It was necessary to urgently look for examples abroad, and they were sought not only in the relevant European cultural areas, but also among the Yankees" [1]. Such an attitude corresponded well to the Germans' own anti-modernist rhetoric and aspirations to create a national style, based on their own architectural traditions, since in Nazi Germany "traditional, vernacular designs were generally preferred" for the buildings constructed, for instance, in rural regions [11]. However, there were also skeptics of the proposed recourse to vernacular architecture in Lithuania, which questioned the concept for its artificiality and appropriateness, arguing



Fig. 15. Project of a rectory in Inkūnai (civ. eng. Jonas Rasinskas, 1942)  
 [Lithuanian State Historical Archives, f. 1650, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 52]

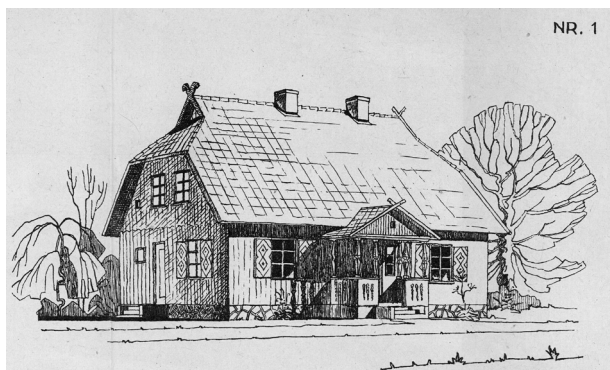


Fig. 16. Project of a standard homestead house, variant for wooden construction (civ. eng. Viačeslavs Daugėla, 1942)  
 [Vilnius Regional State Archive, f. 1171, ap. 4, b. 626, l. 1]

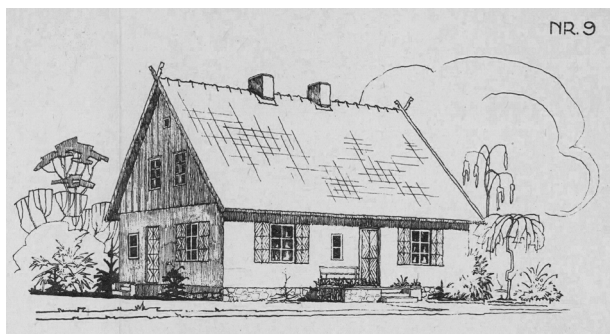


Fig. 17. Project of a standard homestead house, variant for masonry construction (civ. eng. Juozas Markauskas, 1942)  
 [VRVA, f. 1171, ap. 4, b. 626, l. 3]

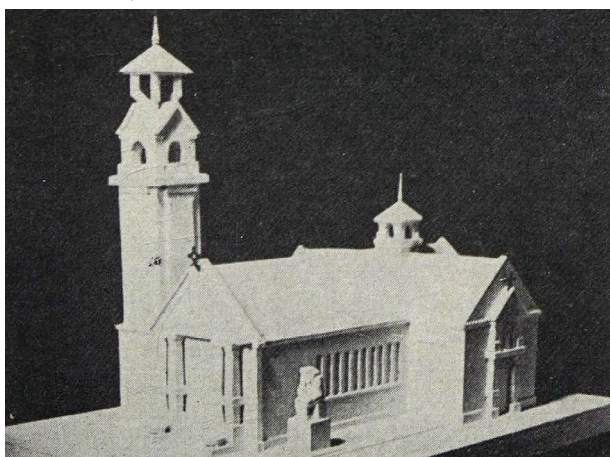


Fig. 18. Project of the Holy Spirit church in Šiauliai  
 (arch. Jonas Ladyga, 1942) [16]

that "the use of motifs of Lithuanian wooden traditional architecture and sculpture, their details and ornaments is of dubious value and, most importantly, they will not instill a true Lithuanian spirit in the building" [18]. There were also opinions, which insisted that the national style should not be developed from the traditional village architecture: "Lithuania is rich not only in wooden crosses and chapels, but also in

monumental, world-famous architectural works. So why should such a one-sided recommendation be suggested to the creators of our national style? We must not forget that not every chapel and cross found in Lithuania can be judged from the point of view of creativity and national originality" [20]. There were also pragmatic opinions of the matter, which declared that "the architectural progress must arise and develop freely, unfettered by outdated traditions and personal whims" and that there was no need to follow any style at all [17].

Even though there was no unanimous opinion on the concept of a national style, experiments were still made to embody this vision in various building designs. For example, there were buildings designed with the exteriors which had no ornamentation but displayed highly simplified and synthesized forms of vernacular architecture (Fig. 15). Furthermore, the concept of national style was particularly embodied in the several standardized projects for the single-story homestead houses, developed by architects and civil engineers of the Agricultural Construction Direction. The buildings were designed to be traditional and decorative: the exteriors were accentuated with an abundance of small decorative elements in shutters, doors, porches, and rooftops (Figs. 16–17). The concept also influenced the design of religious buildings as well [16] (Fig. 18). Since most of these buildings were designed to be built using traditional materials: timber walling, wooden ceilings and roofs covered with tiles or wooden shingles, such elements could have contributed to the traditionalism of their appearance as well. The idea of a national style was planned to be developed further in practice, when in early 1944, a few months before the end of the German occupation, it was decided to announce a national design competition for the new standard designs of homestead houses, the proposals of which were required to be based on "Lithuanian homestead planning traditions" [48]. Yet these examples demonstrate the main contradiction of the idea, that it was more suited to the buildings planned to be constructed in rural regions, where traditional building methods still prevailed and where such buildings could suit the overall locality. In Lithuanian cities, this idea, except for isolated cases, did not spread, and buildings with a simplified modern appearance were continued to be designed until the end of the occupation.

## Conclusions

At the beginning of the German occupation of Lithuania, the aim was to normalize architectural and construction matters, to begin the reconstruction of cities and towns destroyed by the war, and to develop these fields in general. Therefore, new design and construction institutions were set up, and those that had operated during the years of Lithuanian independence were restored. Since at first the German authorities did not make direct efforts to forbid the development of civil architecture and construction in the occupied country, the shaping of this matter remained predominantly a Lithuanian field. Consequently, it was managed and supervised by the local design and municipal construction institutions. The most important of these was the newly established Chief Construction Board, a central body that administered and coordinated the principal matters of civil architecture in occupied Lithuania. The architecture and construction fields were also managed by institutions and departments operating within the Administrations of General Advisers and Municipalities, whose decisions were partially influenced by the orders and directives of the German authorities regarding the construction requirements of the wartime period.

Since the Germans did not have a specific civil building

program developed for Lithuania, this matter was managed by the local Lithuanian institutions. They had ambitions even during the wartime to start building the most needed civil structures in Lithuania. Most of them were to be cultural, educational, healthcare buildings, as well as religious and residential structures. Thus, in 1941–1944, numerous designs of such buildings were developed by the local architects and civil engineers. However, in practice the implementation of the planned constructions made little progress. It was due to the shortage of building material, labor and the building restrictions imposed by the German authorities during the last years of the occupation. Consequently, only a small part of the planned structures was built by the end of the German occupation. In addition, the architectural activity in Lithuania during that time was enlivened by several national design competitions which were held at that time, as well as theoretical discussions among the community of local architects and art historians about the most appropriate architectural style in Lithuania.

During the years of the German occupation of Lithuania, the architectural character of the planned constructions was to be diverse, as there was no single stylistic trend to be followed. Thus, there were buildings designed with exteriors influenced by the interwar modernism, as well as by the interpretation of forms and motifs of both the historical styles and vernacular architecture. Such a stylistic diversity, even if it was mostly manifested in the unimplemented designs of the planned structures, did not display a radical deviation from the development of styles during the years of Lithuanian independence. However, there was a strong emphasis on continuing the idea of developing a national style based on the romanticized tradition of old Lithuanian vernacular architecture, that had its origins in the 1920s, which was believed to best suit the Lithuanian locality than the other styles. During that time, this emphasis had a strong nationalist character and was influenced both by the nationalist sentiments stimulated by the German occupation and its policies, and by the aspiration to preserve an architectural tradition in Lithuania.

## References

1. "Warschauer Zeitung" apie Kauną. (1943, October 22). *Ateitis*, 4.
2. A. G. (1942, July 31). Ūkio trobesių atstatymas Šiaulių apskrityje. *Tėviškės žiburiai*, 3.
3. AB "Statybos" Vilniaus skyrius – pagrindinė statybos įstaiga Rytų Lietuvoje. (1942, November 11). *Naujoji Lietuva*, 4.
4. Arbačiauskas, E. (1990). *Architekto E. Arbo–Arbačiausko biografiniai šikiai*. Vilnius Regional State Archive (f. 1171, ap. 1, b. 682, l. 20), Vilnius, Lithuania.
5. Atliktų remonto darbų buv. žydų sinagogoj patikrinimo aktai. (1942). Lithuanian Central State Archives (f. 1264, ap. 1, b. 829, l. 20), Vilnius, Lithuania.
6. B. B. (1943, May 30). Lietuvio sodyboje – lietuviška dailė. *Naujoji sodyba*, 103.
7. Baigusiems Aukštesn. Technikos Mokyklą Kaune išduodami inžinieriaus pažymėjimai. (1942, March 25). *J laisvę*, 6.
8. Buttar, P. (2014). *Tarp milžinų. Mūsų dėl Baltijos šalių 1939–1945*. Vox Altera, 116.
9. Drėmaitė, M. (2022). *Arno FUNKcionalizmas. Architekto Arno Funko (1898–1957) gyvenimas ir kūryba*. Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, 213.
10. Generalinio tarėjo vidaus reikalams aplinkraščiai, nurodymai ir kt. statybų, statybinių medžiagų ir kt. klausimais. (1942). Lithuanian Central State Archives (f. 1361, ap. 1, b. 487, l. 40–50), Vilnius, Lithuania.
11. Hagen, J., & Ostergren, R. C. (2020). *Building Nazi Germany: Place, Space, Architecture, and Ideology*. Rowman & Littlefield, 42.
12. Hořejš, M. (2021). Relics of Nazi Architecture in the Czech Republic. Current Research, New Evidence, and Its Planned Integration into a Geographic Information System (GIS). *Journal for Culture and History of the Germans in Eastern Europe*, 2, 113. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110759891-005>
13. Iš Statybos Valdybos veiklos. (1942, January 19). *J laisvę*, 3.
14. Iš visos Lietuvos. (1942, January 23). *J laisvę*, 5.
15. vairių įstaigų statybos ir išlaidų sąmatos. *Kauno regioninės valstybės archyvas* (KRVA). f. R–961, ap. 1, b. 64, l. 48–51.
16. Jonynas, V. K. Lietuviškoji architektūra. *Aidai*, 1954, No. 8, p. 349–351.
17. Jurėnas, P. Architektūros konkursai. (1944, June 14). *Ateitis*, 4.
18. Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniene, H. (1942, May 15). Žemaičių kankiniams atminti koplyčios projektų paroda. *J laisvę*, 4.
19. Kas daroma miestų atstatymo reikalui. (1943, January 13). *Ateitis*, 3.
20. Landsbergis-Žemkalnis, V. (1942, July 25). Tautinės architektūros pradmenų beiškant. *J laisvę*, 3.
21. Lelis, P. (1973). Lietuvos keliu. 1910–1973 metai. *Litho-Art*, 218–220.
22. Lietuvos Laikinosios Vyriausybės įstatymų, nutarimų ir potvarkių nuorašai. (1941). Lithuanian Central State Archives (f. 1075, ap. 2, b. 5, l. 17–31), Vilnius, Lithuania.
23. Ligoninių statybos klausimais. (1941–1943). Lithuanian Central State Archives (f. R–627, ap. 1, b. 114, l. 17; 54–56), Vilnius, Lithuania.
24. Maceinienė, J. (1942, August 8). Kai naujus miestus statysime. *J laisvę*, 3.
25. Mačio Vlado asmens byla. LCVA. f. 392, ap. 3, b. 822, l. 38.
26. Matukonis, A. Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto technikujų fakultetų veikla vokiečių okupacijos metais. *Nuo Aukštųjų kursų Kaune iki Kauno technologijos universiteto, 1920–1997*. Kaunas: Kauno technologijos universitetas, 1997, p. 100–108.
27. Miesto Komisaras Cramer apie Kauno perplanavimą. *J laisvę*, 1942, No. 4 (165), p. 6.
28. Miller Lane, B. (1986). *Architecture and Politics in Germany 1918–1945* (New ed.). Harvard University Press, 215.
29. Naujas "Ostlando" numeris apie lietuvių statybos namus. (1943, January 22). *Ateitis*, 3.
30. Naujos Kauno chirurginės ligoninės projektavimo byla. (1940–1943). Lithuanian Central State Archives (f. R–978, ap. 2, b. 85, l. 17), Vilnius, Lithuania.
31. Panevėžio miesto tvarkymo darbai. (1942 January 10). *Panevėžio apygardos balsas*, 6.
32. Parėdymas dėl draudimų statyti. (1943, June 1). *Amtsblatt des Generalkommissars in Kauen*, 129.
33. Petrulis, V. (2015). Tautinio stiliaus paieškose. In V. Petrulis (Ed.), *Lietuvos tarpukario architektūros palikimas: materialumo ir nematerialumo dermė* (pp. 77–87). Technologija.
34. Potvarkis dėl darbo jėgų užtikrinimo valstybinių ir ūkiniu atžvilgiu svarbioms statyboms. (1941, December 24). *Amtsblatt des Generalkommissars in Kauen*, 249.
35. Pranešimai dėl statybos uždraudimo ar apribojimo, pažymėjimai, išduoti piliečiams norintiems pirkti miško medžiagą, pareiškimai ir leidimai statyboms. LCVA. f. 805, ap. 1, b. 464, l. 10.
36. Rudenįjančiame Panevėžyje. (1943, September 1). *Naujoji Lietuva*, 4.
37. Savivalda statybos srity. (1942, April 8). *J laisvę*, 8.
38. Statyba karo metu. (1943, June 13). *Ateitis*, 4.
39. Stulginskis, S. (1942, July 3). Lietuvių tautinės architektūros reikalui. *J laisvę*, 3.
40. Susirašinėjimas su Finansų Vadyba, Žemės ūkio vadyba, Pavenčių cukraus fabriku, apskričių valdybomis ir kt. statybos klausimais. LCVA. f. R–617, ap. 1, b. 39, l. 18; 202.
41. Susirašinėjimas su Vyr. Statybos Valdyba ir kt. statybos draudimo, aprūpinimo ir kt. klausimais. LCVA. f. 1361, ap. 1, b. 552, l. 52.
42. Tarulis, A. (1942, January 18). Laikas ruošti plataus masto pokarinei statybai. *J laisvę*, 3.
43. V. Landsbergio-Žemkalnio – LLV Komunalinio ūkio ministro – veiklos dokumentai. *Lietuvos literatūros ir meno archyvas*. f. 81, ap. 1, b. 1248, l. 121–159.
44. Vidaus Reikalų ministro aplinkraščiai ir statybinės taisyklės. KRVA. f. R–961, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 76.
45. Vyr. Statybos Valdybos cirkuliarai apie dez. punktų statybos kontingentinių medžiagų paskirstymą ir susirašinėjimas su savivaldybių departamentu apie išutėlinimo įstaigų išlaikymą.

KRVA. f. R-961, ap. 1, b. 4, l. 12.

46. Vyr. Statybos Valdybos posėdžių protokolai ir susirašinėjimas su įvairiomis įstaigomis administraciniais klausimais. KRVA. f. R-961, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 44.
47. Vyresnybės aplinkraščiai, parėdymai, kiti raštai žinoti, vadovautis ir pildyti. LCVA. f. 1567, ap. 1, b. 507, l. 147.
48. Žemės ūkio sodybų projektams paruošti konkurso sąlygos. Naujoji sodyba, 1944, No. 52, p. 52.
49. Žemėtvarkos darbai miestuose ir kaimuose. *J laisvę*, 1941, No. 158, p. 2.

#### Author

**Evaldas Vilkončius.** Doctor of Humanities (History and Theory of Arts, 2022), Researcher at the Institute of Architecture and Construction of Kaunas University of Technology; Tunelio st. 60, LT-44405 Kaunas, Lithuania. E-mail: evaldas.vilkoncius@ktu.lt  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9492-5328>

#### Kopsavilkums

Vācijas okupācija Lietuvā, kas ilga no 1941. līdz 1944. gadam, bija periods, kas ietekmēja visas dzīves jomas, tostarp arhitektūru un būvniecību. Līdz ar to raksta mērķis ir atspoguļot īsu, taču dramatisku un sarežģītu posmu Lietuvas arhitektūras vēsturē – sabiedrisko un dzīvojamo ēku attīstību un transformāciju Vācijas okupācijas apstākļos. Pētījums balstīts uz arhīvu materiālu, literatūras un tā laika periodisko izdevumu analīzi, kā arī uz jaunākajiem darbiem, kas veltīti konkrētajai tēmai. Teksts papildināts ar sabiedrisko un dzīvojamo ēku projektu paraugiem. Rakstā parādīts, ka pat Vācijas okupācijas apstākļos Lietuvā joprojām tika pievērsta ievērojama uzmanība sabiedrisko un dzīvojamo ēku attīstībai, un šajā jomā procesi norisinājās diezgan aktīvi. Tā kā lielākā daļa plānoto būvju tajā laikā netika realizētas, pētījumā secināts, ka arhitektūras aktivitātes šajā periodā galvenokārt saistītas ar nepieciešamo būvju plānu izstrādi, civilās būvniecības projektu attīstību un teorētiskām diskusijām par Lietuvas arhitektūras stilistikajām iezīmēm.