

Architectural Competitions in Latvia (1860–2013)

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Abstract – Architectural competitions are traditionally considered as a method of research and innovation in order to create esthetical and technical solutions, define social values and develop critical approach to the implementation of architectural projects. These competitions initiate debates on the balance between artistic quality and market demand, individual work and cooperation, creative solutions and legislation – tradition. During the last 150 years Latvia has seen more than 700 competitions dedicated to architecture and urban planning. The aim of this article is to provide an overview of architectural competitions in Latvia from their historical beginning in 1860 until 2013.

Keywords – Architecture, architectural competitions, history, urban planning.

Over time, architects in Latvia started to develop a tradition of architectural competitions, their types and approaches to organization, defining different sets of objectives and tasks for each type, setting guidelines for the eligibility criteria of participants and jury composition. The value of the competitions can be estimated in the intellectual heritage that potential architecture creates, thus becoming an indicator of social and economic state, instrument of political progression.

Previous publications dedicated to architecture competitions in Latvia seem to be fragmented – they were devoted to individual competitions or separate aspects of individual competitions. So far, consistent collections with in-depth analysis have not yet been gathered. The article analyzes the historical and theoretical aspects of Latvia’s architectural competition process (see Fig. 1 and 2), the article also provides consistent and comprehensive information about the types and kinds of past architectural competitions. This article covers the themes that will be described based on characteristic examples:

- buildings for religious purposes (churches, parsonages);
- public buildings (theatres, museums, schools, train stations, etc.);
- cultural objects;
- open-air structures (incl. open-air stages, exhibition pavilions, markets);
- administrative and office buildings (incl. administration, society, bank, savings-and-loans bank buildings);
- residential buildings.

The article has been developed analyzing professional literature of Latvian origin, collecting visual materials, studying periodicals, archives and classifying the obtained information.

There are many reasons for organizing architectural competitions, e.g. the desire of investors (private, the state, municipality) to obtain various views and ideas about the question they are trying to resolve, legal requirements (for example, the requirements stipulated in the Law On Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga for open architectural competitions). It is possible to distinguish several types of both

local and international competitions held in Latvia in all historical periods (see Fig. 3):

- open competitions;
- closed competitions (with invited participants or organized within the framework of designing authorities);
- open competitions with anonymous participants, with participation of client-invited competitors.

The competitions are also organized in one or several stages following different project development procedures: sketch-idea and sketch-draft stages. It is characteristic of Latvian architecture competition practice to have various forms of jury evaluation and results:

- distribution of all awards;
- not awarding the first place but choosing the second, third or lower place winning projects for further development;
- not awarding any prizes, which means that the competition was not successful;
- procurement tenders after draft competitions (in separate cases also without a draft) (from the end of the 20th century until the beginning of the 21st century), negotiation procedure (usually with the winners of the first three places), during which the ultimate winner is determined (which can be any of the three first place winners).

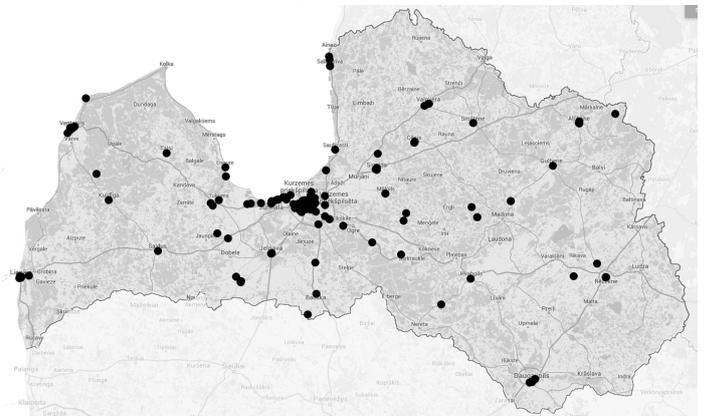


Fig. 1. Architectural competition places in Latvia.

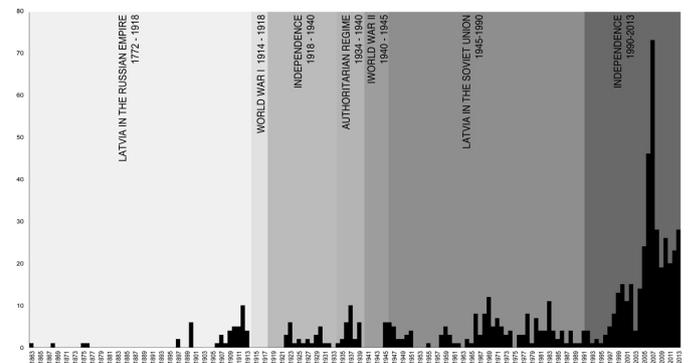


Fig. 2. Overview of architectural competitions during several political system periods.

The organizers of competitions are:

- the state, municipality (which mostly organize competitions for design of socially important, cultural, administrative buildings, rarely residential buildings),
- privately organized competitions (commercial buildings, residential buildings, etc.).

In the Soviet period, privately organized competitions were not held. In separate cases the state and municipality cooperated with privately-organized competition organizers, helping prepare the competition regulations and participating in the jury.

I. ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS IN 1860–1918

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, active social change and urbanization processes took place in the territory of Latvia. Riga was the third largest industrial city in the Russian Empire by the number of workers (after Moscow and St. Petersburg), as well as the fourth largest by the volume of industrial production. During the period from 1897 to 1914 the number of inhabitants in Riga increased twofold, reaching 530,000. For many towns the changes were accomplished by removing fortification structures. For example, in Riga in the second half of the 19th century rings of boulevards were constructed instead of fortifications. A number of new building types appeared – factories, railway stations, ports, hydro-technical and engineering structures, educational, cultural and commercial buildings, commercial institutions, public and healthcare buildings. The territory of Latvia was under rule of the governing institutions of the Russian Empire and local municipality institutions – Governorate of Livland and Kurland. Being part of the Russian Empire meant there was a considerable influence of architectural styles from St. Petersburg, Germany, France and Finland.

A. Administrative Buildings

One of the first architectural competitions took place in 1863, when **the Livonian Knighthood** (*Livländische Ritterschaft*) announced the competition for the construction of a new building – current Parliament building (Saeima) in Old Riga. The first place was awarded to the architects Robert Pflug and Jānis Frīdrihs Baumanis (at the time the student of St. Petersburg Imperial Academy of Arts). The construction lasted from 1863 to 1867. The building is situated in the location of the old Knighthood Building built in 1750, which was partially included in the new construction. In 1921, 1927 and 1932, the inner room reconstruction was done by Eižens Laube, adapting the building to the needs of the Parliament of Latvia. Several decades later, in 1900, remarkable architects' attention was focused on **Riga City Hall** construction project – an internationally announced competition with 24 participants. The building was meant to be constructed in Old Riga, instead of Jēkaba Barracks – between Torņa Street and Basteja Boulevard. The building project was not implemented, although the first place was won by an architect team from Helsinki (Ernst G. Hedmann, Knut Wasastjerna, Karl Gustav Grahn and Gustav Lindberg) [3].

B. Cultural Objects – Museums, Theatres

In parallel to the growth of the construction rates, the conservative views of the society created obstacles to the implementation of more daring innovations. This was illustrated

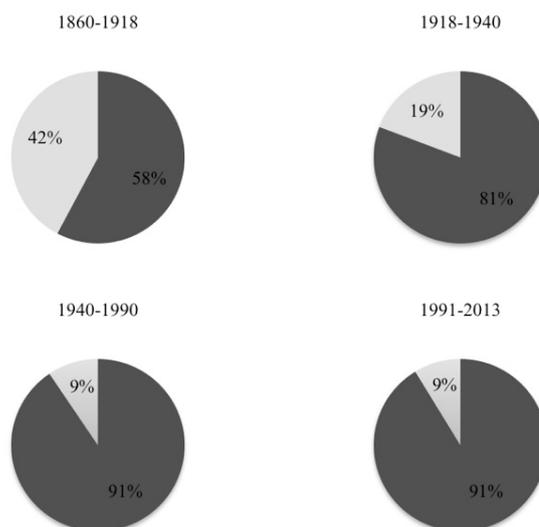


Fig. 3. International (darker colour) and local (lighter colour) competitions over several periods. Total competition count from 1860 until 2013 is 700.

both by the outcomes of architectural competitions and public building construction in the beginning of the 20th century. One of such examples was **the City Museum Competition** announced by Riga City Council in 1876 [12], in which the first place was won by an architect of German descent Rūdolfs Špērs. 11 years later, in 1897, a repeated competition took place [21], where the winner was Maksis Kitners, however the building was never constructed. The jury of the competition consisted of the chief Riga City architect Reinhold Georg Schmaeling, Karl Johann Felsko, Johann Wilhelm Carl Neumann and others. The building of the City Museum (currently – Latvian National Museum of Art) was built from 1903 to 1905 according to the project of the aforementioned member of the competition jury, the first director of Riga City Art Museum, Wilhelm Neumann. The museum was closed for visitors in 2013 for reconstruction, restoration and expansion following the project that won the international competition held in 2010 – a work by Lithuanian architectural company “Processoffice” that competed among 28 participants. Currently the project is under construction and is planned to be put into service in 2015–2016.

Within ten-year time, three competitions for the construction of a theatre were announced in Riga. The first one was the competition for the design of **Riga City second (Russian) theater** [9] (now Latvian National Theater) in 1897 on Puškina Boulevard (currently Kronvalda Boulevard), in which the first place was awarded to the work of Augusts Reinbergs, the project was built in the time period 1899–1902. In 2000 Riga City Council organized a competition for the **reconstruction of this theatre**, in which only 2 participants took place. The architecture firm “Graf-X” was announced the winner. However, in 1909, 52 architects participated in the international competition for **Riga third (Latvian) theater**, 10 works were disqualified. The first place was awarded to the architects from Riga and Stuttgart Max von Ozmidoff and Georg Eser. Riga City Council repeated the competition in 1911; there were only 5 contestants that all received awards of equal value [7]. None of the projects was built though.

C. Buildings for Religious Purposes (Churches, Parsonages)

The introduction of Orthodox belief in the middle of the 19th century corresponded to the russification policy carried out by the tsarist Russia. It is worth noting that religious buildings of other confessions were actively constructed only in the period until the beginning of the WWI, however, only a few of these structures were built according to competition projects. In 1875, Emperor Alexander II announced a closed competition for **Birth of Christ Cathedral** (currently Nativity of Christ Cathedral at Brīvības Boulevard 23, in Esplanade), the winner and the performer of the project was Robert Pflug. At the turn of the century, in 1900, two religion-themed building competitions took place – **St. Gertrude Evangelical Lutheran New Church**, and **Dvinska (currently Daugavpils) Lutheran church school** (first place – Hermann Hartmann) [23]. The winner and design implementer of the competition for St. Gertrude Evangelical Lutheran New Church (1903–1906) was the professor of Riga Polytechnical Institute (currently Riga Technical University) Wilhelm von Stryk [22]. The administration of St Peter's church announced a closed international competition in 1910 for **parsonage and school building** at Vaļņu Street 22, Riga [6]. The first place was awarded to the Belgian architect Henry Clemens Van de Velde. The building was destroyed in 1944 and currently instead of it there is hotel "Riga". After this period, the competitions for religious buildings did not happen anymore in Latvia, with the exception of the beginning of 1990s after Latvia regained independence.

D. Society, Bank, Savings-and-loans Bank Buildings

After the revolution of 1905, Latvians gained more influence in the governments of Latvian cities. More organizations that required representative buildings appeared, such as banks, agricultural and savings-and-loans associations. As a result, architecture sketch competitions were organized on a regular basis. In 1912 an international (27 participants) competition for **Riga Craftsmen Society Building** [32] at Ķēniņu Street 30 (currently on the corner between Vaļņu and Audēju Streets) was held. The first place was taken by the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen. During further development of the project, architect K. Felsko did not recommend any of the works presented by the participants. The project was further developed by architects Max von Ozmidoff and N. Herbergs. Saarinen reworked his suggestion; however, his work was never implemented. In 1868, Craftsmen Society organized a competition for this location, which was won by J. Dīce, however, following the advice of the professor of Riga Polytechnical Institute – Gustav Hilbig, J.F. Baumanis project was accepted for implementation instead. The building was lost during WWII. Similar competition results were a characteristic practice during this period. Further project development after competition was entrusted to local Latvian architects, usually those who took second or third places, sometimes to the authors of repurchased works. For example, in such fashion the **Tradesmen Mutual Credit Union treasury house** was built in 1909, at Tērbatas Street 14, Riga. It was built by the project of Eižens Laube, who won the third place in the competition. In 1910, an international competition was held for **Riga 4th Mutual Credit Union bank building** at Brīvības Street 38, Riga. The building was constructed by the 4th place winner Ernests Pole. Also in 1912 **Riga 5th Mutual Credit Union bank**

building on Smilšu Street 1, in Riga (currently State Treasury) was constructed following the project of the 2nd place winner Jānis Alksnis and in the same year **Riga Mortgage Bank building** at Krišjāņa Valdemāra Street 3, in Riga was built based on the project of the 3rd place winners Heinrihs Kārlis Ēmke and Augusts Vite.

E. Apartment Buildings

After the abolishment of serfhood and other agrarian and urban reforms in the 70–80s of the 19th century, the migration from the countryside to the cities increased. Worker districts appeared in the industrial areas with barrack-type buildings that provided low quality accommodation. In 1907 in the office of Konstantīns Pēkšēns, Eižens Laube developed and was awarded the first place in two competitions – **two-family and one-family residential housing projects for workers**; the competition was organized by Riga Architect Society [8]. The two-family house was built for "Worker and people provision exhibition" in Riga. The rental houses became the most abundant type of buildings, their construction was powered by constant growing demand for new living area, as well as the owners' hopes to gain profit. Until 1940 open competitions for apartment buildings that were announced in press were rarely seen. Until now the first known open competition was organized by a private businessman, contractor and master craftsman of masonry Krišjānis Ķergalvis in 1909 for an apartment building at **Nikolaja** (currently Kr. Valdemāra) Street 33, in Riga [29]. A year later, in 1910, J. Ozoliņš in cooperation with Architect Society organized an open competition for an apartment building in Riga, Brīvības Street 88 (**Ozoliņš Arcade**) [30]. Further research is necessary to obtain information about the existence of closed competitions for private apartment buildings, the number of participants and the authors of implementation. However, the first and only competition for city apartment building before WWI was organized in 1912 for **Forburga Block**. Both the first and second places were taken by a team of authors Wilhelm Roman Roessler and E. Zörrer [33].

II. ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS IN 1918–1934

The events of WWI influenced economic activity. Both architectural and art activities became scarce. From the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Latvia in 1918 until the establishment the authoritarian regimen of Kārlis Ulmanis in 1934 architectural competitions were a rare occurrence dominated mainly by buildings of public utility type. Until that moment the announcement of public building project competitions was still topical. In 1928 an international competition for the **Folk House** took place (currently the building of the labor unions) at Bruņinieku Street 29/31, Riga. The building was constructed in *Art Deco* style by the winners of the third place Alfred Karr and Kurt Baetge [19]. In 1934, a closed competition for the **Daugavpils Latvian Society House** was organized [34].

The representation of the existing regimen was realized by announcing numerous competitions for monuments and memorials dedicated to the soldiers fallen in the WWI (for example, the competition for **the Cemetery of the Brethren** in 1923, competitions for the **Freedom Monument** (1922, 1924, 1925, 1930)). The periodicals did not publish any announcements

for open competitions organized by private businessmen for residential or rental buildings. The only competition for residential buildings – **workers' residential building construction** – was organized in 1925. Similarly, there were no more competitions dedicated to religious buildings. Several internationally organized competitions still took place; however, their numbers were significantly lower than before. For example, Riga City Council announced a competition in 1923 [28], it was recognized as one of the most interesting ones, having a record number of participants (60) for projects for construction of **Riga Market** in Moscow Forschtat (construction from 1924 to 1930). In 1998, the area of the market was included in UNESCO World Heritage List. From 1920–1937, 212 train station buildings were built, mostly following individual competition projects. For example, the competition of bids for the lowest cost was announced orally and in writing by Railroad Supreme Board in 1922 for the construction of **Skrīveri train station** building half-build (the development of project for Skrīveri train station facade design), where 10 competitors participated [24]. The first place was taken by Jānis Neijs.

III. ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS IN 1934–1940

Authoritarian regime in Latvia was established after the coup led by the Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis on 15th May 1934 until the occupation of Latvia on 17th June 1940. The change of government influenced the manner of construction and architecture, including architectural policy and competition organization procedure.

A. Administrative Buildings

In this period of time, several administrative and government organization competitions were announced (for example, the competition for **Victory Square buildings** held in 1938, which was never constructed [20]). During this period, the projects for public and administrative buildings could be characterized as searching for the objects representing power and policy, reverting back to Neo-Eclectic types of architectural expression. Once in power, K. Ulmanis started a campaign against historical and German-style architecture in Riga in attempts of making it more Latvian. A competition for **Riga City Municipality building in the ring of boulevards** [16] was organized following his initiative in 1935. The suggestion was not carried out and a decision was taken to purchase land for building purposes in the Riga Town Square, to demolish the existing structures there and to construct **Riga City Council building**, for which an international competition was announced in 1937. Riga City High-Rise Building Directorate was established in order to develop the design, which started to be implemented in 1938 with demolishing of historical buildings between the House of the Blackheads and 11. Novembra Embarkment [16] in Old Riga, at 13. Janvāra Street, between Vaļņu Street and Alberta Square. **The Post and Telegraph Department** of the Ministry of Transport needed a new building to house the offices of the ministry as well as a **Savings Bank**. The concept of the building was similar to that of Riga City Council building – the six story building complex to be complemented by a high-rise silhouette. Neither of these projects was accomplished because of the WWII.

In the 30s of the 20th century, an Old Riga reconstruction plan was developed, **the building of the Ministry of Finance** was built in 1936 according to the competition project of Aleksandrs Kinklāvs. **The Army Economy Shop** in Old Riga was built according to the project of Colonel Artūrs Galindoms (1936–1940). The order for design of this building was given to the Building Department of the Ministry of Defense by the Minister of Defense, although in the competition of 1935 three identical prizes were won by architects Ansis and Emma Kalniņi, Nikolajs Voita and Mihails Česno [2]. In 1936 A. Galindoms was also appointed to implement the project for the **Latvian War Museum**. [26] In this competition a divided first place was awarded to Alma Dunga, Valters Dambrāns and Georgs Dauge. The new buildings were so large that it was necessary to unify and demolish historically developed parts of Old Riga.

B. Health Care Buildings

The first currently known competition for healthcare institution building took place in 1926. The competition with 32 contestants for **Tuberculosis Hospital in Biķernieki** (Riga, Šmerļa Street 2), was organized by Riga City Council [25]. The construction of the building lasted from 1926 to 1930 under the supervision of the architect Alfrēds Grīnbergs, although the first place was awarded to the architect Erich Gramtz. In 1930 Latvia's Red Cross also announced an international competition for the new building of **Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Tervete**. In this competition the first and second places were divided between Ē. Gramts and N. Kalniņš [35]. However, the author of the building constructed (1932) was Augusts Kinklāvs. In the 30s of the 20th century it was the biggest and most modern tuberculosis sanatorium in the Baltic States. In 1931, the Construction Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced a competition for **Ķemeri resort hotel** in Jurmala, Emīla Dārziņa Street, 28. It is important to note that such architects as E. Laube, E. Štālbergs, and other were also present in the jury. The project for the resort hotel “Ķemeri” in 1933–1935 was developed by E. Laube as one of the most notable examples of Neo-Eclecticism in the Latvian architecture.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS IN 1940–1991

Due to WWII, many architects emigrated and the construction process stopped. In the post-war period, one of the primary tasks was the recovery from the consequences of war and the renewal of the housing stock.

A. Urban Planning Competitions

After WWII, a closed competition for **Riga city center ensemble construction project** was among the first ones held in 1946 with 3 local authors, 3 participants from Moscow and 2 from Leningrad. Already in 1945 reconstruction works were initiated in the square and the projects for construction of the Victory Monument were presented. In 1951, a competition for a detailed project of Town Hall Square was organized, which was a continuation of ideas from the competition plan for **Old Riga reconstruction project** of 1947 [27]. In 1951, the Town Hall Square project competition was won by the architect Kārlis Plūksne, although the project was developed by Osvalds Tīlmanis simultaneously with the Republican Party school project, which was built in this square. In 1966, a competition for **Latvian Red Riflemen museum and monument** was organized.

The project was executed by the sculptor V. Albergs, architects Dzintars Driba and Gunārs Lūsis – Grīnbergs) [1]. After the restoration of the independence of Latvia, countless competitions for renovation of the Town Hall were announced. For example, in 1990 an exhibition of **conceptual projects for the renovation of House of the Blackheads building complex** was organized by the Culture Fund of Latvia. In April 1992, the Executive Committee of Riga confirmed the preparation plan for the renovation of the House of the Blackheads building complex [16]. The next competition for **recovery of Riga Town Hall Square buildings** [15] was announced in 1997. The ideas of the competition were not realized, and that is the reason why in 1998 the architect offices “Sestais stils”, “Rigers”, “Nams”, “Konvent” were invited to develop the building plan on the foundations of the old Town Hall. Later, Riga City Council invited the architect office “Sestais stils” for further development of the project and realization of the project, which was implemented.

At the end of 1960s, a construction fever began, which prompted the announcement of competitions. During this period the statistical majority of the competitions announced were for public and cultural buildings, the number of international competitions diminished (they were restricted to important cultural buildings and urban planning solutions). Closed competition for 4 teams organized in 1966 for **Riga Center reconstruction project** became a basis for the new Riga City general plan developed in 1969. In the 70s of the 20th century, small town center development and reconstruction as well as parish general planning competitions were actively organized. The aim was to obtain original solutions for perspective buildings (for example, in 1968 for the reconstruction of the central part of Talsi City, in 1971 the best plan for Alūksne Region Pededze Parish, in 1973 – the project for collective farm “Enkurs” in Limbaži Region, in 1974 – a collective farm “Uzvara”, etc.).

B. Culture Buildings

Under the Soviet regime, participation in architecture competitions provided the escape from routine, planned design, regulations and ideology. This, for most part, encouraged the development of artistic quality and skill. The Song Festival Stage in 1955 was developed by architects V. Šņitņikovs, G. Irbīte following an international competition project. In 2007, an international competition for the reconstruction of Song Festival Stage was announced where between 17 competitors the first place was taken by “Poga/ Mailītis A.I.I.M” (Juris Poga, Austris Mailītis, Ivars Mailītis and Matīss Mailītis) [39]. In 1959, a competition for **Jānis Rainis Latvian SSR State Daile Theater building** at Brīvības Street 75 in Riga took place (2nd place was won by Marta Staņa, Tekla Ieviņa) [5]. In 1960, a competition for **the development of the Memorial for Victims of Fascism Terror and Salaspils Concentration Camp sculpture design project (Salaspils Memorial)** was held [17]. Both Dailes Theatre and Salaspils Memorial are included in the Latvian Cultural Canon and are the only important Soviet period cultural buildings that were built after the announcement of the competition. In 1974 **Vilis Lācis Latvian SSR State Library Project** competition was announced that was won by the architects Modris Ģelzis, Viktors Valgums, and Normunds Pavārs. Four years later a repeated competition was held, it was announced internationally and was separated in 2 stages, there were 3 works submitted for **Vilis Lācis Latvian SSR**

State Library in Pārdaugava, from which 2 were not sufficiently developed [13]. The verdict of the jury and a recommendation to the Culture Committee was to entrust the further fate of the library to “Pilsētprojekts” architect group led by M. Ģelzis. At the beginning of the national awakening at the end of the 80s of the 20th century, the work on the development of architectonic concept project of the new National Library building was entrusted (without competition) to an internationally recognized architect of Latvian origin Gunnar Birkerts (the technical part of the project was developed by the architect office “Ģelzis – Šmits – Arhetips”). In 2014 the building of the Latvian National Library was put into service.

An international closed competition with 27 invited participants (22 works were submitted), competition for **concepts for the concert hall in Citadele and Republikas Square** was organized in 1986 [18]. The first place was won by V. Kadirkovs, J. Paegle, and I. Jākobsons. The repeated closed competition for **Riga acoustic concert hall** with 11 teams of participants took place in 2006. The first place was awarded to architect office from Latvia – “Sīlis, Zābers un Kļava” with the work “Lineamentum”. None of these projects have seen daylight because of the lack of funds.

C. Neighbourhood Units

One of the tasks of the planned economy was provision of living accommodations for local inhabitants, workers of the newly-built factories and military personnel. The standard-type building principles introduced by western urban planners were further developed by Soviet urban planning specialists. The industrialization of construction methods provided the basis for construction of large-panel apartment blocks in Riga at the beginning of 1960s around the historical center of Riga on both sides of the River Daugava. However, in order to avoid standard-type planning, several competitions for new apartment blocks were held in Latvia from 1960s to 1970s, in which local specialists from planning institutes could offer their versions for creation of new city districts – apartment blocks. The shape of the mega-structures simultaneously included constructions for housing, transportation, engineering supply, services (such as buildings for retail trade, social services and public needs, schools, kindergartens, etc.) [14]. One of the first open competitions **Plan for Jugla apartment block** – 1958 was organized by Riga Executive Committee, the first place was taken by the National Institute of Urban Development (S. Andersone, D. Danenberga, A. Titmane and O. Krauklis). In 1976, a closed local competition with 5 architect teams for an **experimental apartment unit for 10 000 inhabitants in Krasta Street, Riga**, was organized by Riga Executive Committee together with the Latvian SSR State construction committee and the Union of Architects. The first place was awarded to M. Medinskis, E. Fogels, I. Millers, V. Kadirkovs, *et al.* The competition for **experimental apartment building block in Mežciems** was organized in 1978. The project development was continued by the new generation of architects under supervision of M. Ģelzis – Andris Kronbergs, Zaiga Gaile, and Juris Paegle.

V. ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS IN 1991–2013

Since the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia (1991) in the 90s of the 20th century, the competitions were-organized often – at an average of 5–10 annually, reaching

up to 20–30 at the beginning of 2000s, however, at the peak of the economic development of the country, in 2007, the number of competitions organized per year reached more than 70, with the majority of organizers being private companies. After the economic crisis of 2008, the number of the announced competitions went down with a tendency to grow again (see Fig. 2). In comparison with the previous decades, a new concept has entered the competition – “procurement tenders”, which mostly applies to competitions organized by the state and municipalities. The last 5 years are notable because they have been dominated by procurement tenders, and open competitions organized by private companies are seldom. Inadequate procurement procedures are characteristic of the existing system of architectural competitions, with prioritizing project costs over the creation of quality cultural environment. In order to have a possibility to control and adjust the course of the architecture competitions, several regulations, laws and recommendations have been developed over the last 10 years for the competition procedure: Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No325 “On the Procedure for Organization of the building design and spatial planning contests” (of 07 November, 1995); the Latvia **Association of Architects “Best - Practice Regulation for Competitions. Recommendations”** (of 12 May, 2010); Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga (of 10 July, 2003).

The provisions of private investor capital and the financial support of banks have resulted in more than 50 new multifunctional buildings (offices+apartments) during the competitions in the last 10 years. The competitions for apartment buildings are most often held for Riga historical center and center peripheries. In 2008, under the influence of global economic crisis only a small fraction of multifunctional and apartment building competition projects were continued, which means that a certain stage of technical project and construction was reached. Currently more information should be obtained about closed architectural draft competitions for apartment buildings organized by the state, municipalities and private investors. In the last 20 years, the apartment building construction on the same scale as that during the Soviet times has not happened. Several procurement tenders have taken place for new social home buildings following standard-type projects, as well as renovation of Soviet time apartment blocks.

In order to avoid uncontrolled construction and obtain examples of quality architecture in the Riga historical center, a Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga was passed in 2003. The Article 14 of the said law requires that the construction of new buildings in the public outdoor space of Riga historical center is allowed only following the projects obtained during open architecture competitions, after they have been publicly evaluated and considered by the Council and reconciled in the regulatory order with the State Inspection for Heritage Protection [36]. It is important to note that in the context of Old Riga, apartment buildings are not the dominating functional variety of construction and competitions are held mostly for public buildings (hotels, offices, etc.).

A. Urban Planning

Competitions for apartment and office buildings (for both new buildings and reconstructions) can be divided into several categories:

- freestanding buildings;
- development of new areas, where the dominant function, apart from commerce and offices, is also residential (for example an international competition in 2007 for the development of **the Financial and Business Center “New Hanza City”** in Riga [42] on Hanzas Street, in the territory of former Riga goods depot);
- fillings in the corners of the existing blocks of buildings (2007 – **Office and apartment building at Miera Street 2, Riga**);
- continuation of construction works on the city center perimeter (2006 closed plenary – **competition for the development of architectural concepts for Skanstes Street in Riga** [43]);
- renovation, reconstruction and extension of existing apartment buildings.

B. Culture Buildings (Theatres, Libraries, Concert Halls)

In the last decade, cities have played a more important role in strengthening competitiveness of the regions both on the EU and national level. The cities are the places where the potential for development and innovation is concentrated (human resources, higher education institutions, businesses, etc.), which is necessary to create the centers of regional development. Unlike previous periods, the beginning of the 2000s was remarkable due to active organization of competitions for regional cultural structures and construction thereof. It is important to note that the regulations for cultural building competitions at the beginning of the 2000s often called for a “new symbol”, an iconic structure. In 2003 an international closed competition with 5 invited participants was organized for construction of **Liepāja Concert Hall**, Radio Street 8, Liepāja. The first place was won by German architecture firm “Giencke & Company” (Prof. Volker Giencke) [38]. Currently, “Lielais dzintars” is under construction with an estimated completion date in 2015. The Council of Rēzekne organized an open procurement tender for sketches of **the Creative Services Center of Eastern Latvia Municipalities** at Krasta Street 31, Rēzekne, in 2007. The winner in competition among 7 contestants and the project implementer was an architecture firm from Riga “Saals”. A year later the Department of Culture of Rēzekne City Council organized another open international procurement tender **East Latvian Regional Multifunctional Center**, Pils Street 4, Rēzekne. Among 12 participants, the first place was awarded to “Vizuālās modelēšanas studija” and the building was constructed according to their project.

The announcement of competitions for library projects in the regions was just as intensive. One of the most outstanding examples is **Pārventas Library in Ventpils**, Talsu Street 40/42 [37]. The procurement tenders for this project were announced twice, in 2006 and 2007. Both times the architecture firm “India” was announced the winner (architects Pēteris Bajārs, Ivars Kalvāns, Dina Soņņikova and other). The project was constructed in 2008–2009. In 2009, the project won the annual prize in architecture granted by the Latvia Association of Architects.

No new theatres have yet been built since regaining the independence of the Republic of Latvia. The competitions that are organized with theatre theme in mind are for reconstruction, restoration and extension of the existing theatre buildings. For example, in 2007 Riga City Council Procurement

Committee organized **the competition for the restoration and reconstruction of M. Čehov Riga Russian Theatre building complex**. In 2013, state-owned limited liability company “Valsts Nekustamie Īpašumi” organized an international open procurement tender for the **reconstruction of the New Riga Theatre building complex**. The negotiated procedure of this procurement tender is still ongoing, the winner would be known only in the middle of 2014. From 19 participants, there were no first places awarded, however 3 architecture firms were invited to the second stage of the competition – the negotiations procedure. The winner of the negotiation procedure of procurement tender is “Zaigās Gailes birojs un Partneri” who are currently working on technical project.

C. Health Care Buildings

At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, competitive dialogues were held for education and healthcare institution procurement tenders, procurement tenders with architectural draft stages were rarely announced:

- Reconstruction, without changes in building volume, by the insulation of the building, replacement of windows. The majority of such procurements are competitive dialogues.
- Reconstruction of the existing building volume or renovation and extension (the extension of the building usually means construction of a new sports hall). For example sports complex and high school building extension sketches and technical project in Baloži in 2007; reconstruction of Liepāja regional hospital in 2009.
- Projects for new public building complex, when the building volume must combine several functions – school (music, art), library, public center, etc. Such combination of functions provides municipalities with a larger number of visitors and it also is financially beneficial. In 2010, the competition for **the architectonic development of state-owned Ltd “Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital” building complex** was held, the project is currently under construction. In 2007, the procurement tender was organized by Saldus Regional Council for **the architectural solution for the new buildings of Saldus Art School and Saldus Music School in Saldus, Avotu Street**. 5 contestants submitted their works but the jury evaluated only 4, the first place was won by “Made arhitekti” [40], the construction was completed in 2013 and in the same year the project won the annual prize in architecture granted by the Latvia Association of Architects.

D. Administrative Buildings

The procurement tenders for state and municipality administrative office buildings are organized locally (for the most part international competitions are not announced). One of the examples is a procurement tender for **the new building of Riga District Court at Brīvības Avenue 207** organized in 2009 by the state-owned limited liability company “Valsts nekustamie īpašumi”. The first place was awarded to the architecture firm “Mark”, but the building was not constructed. At the beginning of the 2000s, the decision was made concerning the location of Riga City Council and state administrative apparatus authorities in one

building complex. This is why already in 2005 the plenary to generate the ideas for the new Riga City Council administrative building solution was organized. In 2007, the site chosen in the plenary was used when announcing the international competition for **the new Riga Center in Torņakalns, Riga City Council and State Administrative Complex**. The first place among 17 contestants was won by the architecture firm from the United Kingdom “Fletcher Priest Architects” [7]. The results of the competition were included in the development of the detailed plan. Currently, the only structure in technical project stage is **the building of the Academic Center of Natural Sciences of the University of Latvia**. Such a procedure of territory development planning – first, an open international competition with broad publicity in order to look for ideas, specification of details in detail planning, inclusion of public in the planning process – is recognized as a very successful method to obtain successful results. However, if the territory development, actual construction of buildings and infrastructure is not to be implemented for longer periods of time (15–20 year period), it would be necessary to take into account the changing political and economic situation and appropriately revise the project.

E. Infrastructure

The end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st is significant for the proposals of large public complex development. Private investors reluctantly invest financial resources in competitions and implementation of the objects of public interest. One of the examples of significant private investments is “Linstow Warner” (at the end of 1990s Riga City Council lent the train station square to this company for the period of 50 years). Competition for **the reconstruction of Riga Central Station and Square** was held in 1998 [4]. The winner of the first place was “Vizuālās modelēšanas studija”, the project was not implemented. Repeated competition for **the reconstruction of Riga Central Station and Square** was organized in 1999. The first place was awarded to “Zenico projekts” (Viktors Valgums, Ģirts Pētersons, Ēriks Grūbe). However, the architecture firm “Sarma & Norde” was chosen to be the author of the complex development project (Visvaldis Sarma, Gunta Grikmane) [11]. The competition of similar scale and volume was organized in 1998 – **the open competition for Riga passenger port terminal** in 2 stages. “Arhitekta J. Gertmaņa birojs” were nominated as the relatively best authors [10]. In 2007, the architecture firm “Graf-X” developed a detailed plan for the said territory; it was one of the master documents to be used in further territory development and as source data for the next competition. In 2012, an international competition in two stages was organized for **Riga Passenger Port Terminal** to obtain the best architectural solution for terminal building and urban silhouette solution for the vertical accent – 9 story public building and the development of the territory in superior urban environment – the right bank of the Daugava [41]. After qualifying for the second round (45 applicant firms), 7 firms participated, the first place was awarded to the architecture firm from Riga “NRJA”, which currently continues the development of drafts for Andrejsala Yachts Harbor Port on Eksporta Street and is performing the feasibility study and predesign works in the territory of the passenger terminal.

CONCLUSIONS

The realization of competition objectives greatly depends on the political situation, power and economical possibilities of the state. The participation and cooperation of the public in architectural processes shows the level of democracy in the state. Authoritarian leadership or completely opposite Neo-liberal expressions can be observed also in architectural methods and object construction projects. One of the mechanisms of carrying out the “democratic” values announced by the Soviet government was architecture competitions. Also in this period political and ideologically important objects were constructed. The competitions for administrative and governmental building projects were most actively organized in the 60s of the 20th century, mostly in the form of closed competitions in the framework of development institutes.

The last 20 years since the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia (1991) have been marked as the time of change in the Latvian architecture. The changes affect not only the scale of architect work – from large designing institutes to small offices and private businesses, there have also been changes in the state economy policy, privatization and openness to Western markets. Being open to Western markets meant that competitions were announced on the international scale, and participation of foreign architecture firms means that the local architects should offer competitive ideas on the international level. If competitions are defined as international, organizers should meet higher requirements and develop more detailed regulations. Schooling of the new generation of Latvian architects abroad and active information exchange (architecture publications on the Internet, wider accessibility of books and periodicals compared to the Soviet years) have introduced changes also in spatial solutions. The newest architectural trends and experience of foreign architects (mostly North-European and Central-European) were adopted and integrated in local solutions. The existence of private clients is essential for professional activity, this sector has also experienced changes. There is a shift from explicitly public (state, municipality) to active private (both local and foreign investors) development.

Statistically, at the beginning of the 21st century the competitions are replaced by procurement tenders, where participants are required to show previous experience and provide a cost estimate for developing the project. Technically, there is no more competition for the best idea and solution; instead the winner is the business that lawfully implements the procedures of the technical project design and construction.

During the last decades architectural competitions in Latvia have been institutionalized, i.e. they have become a technical and professional norm. When defining the tasks of the construction, the importance is given only to its functionality, which should be demonstrated by the competition participants, it becomes a routine task. However, the participant of the competition, disregarding local customs and legislation, does not dare to push the limits and produces a predictable result. On the state level, **Latvia needs architecture competitions** as tools, as innovative and conceptual aspects, new solutions for urban space and architecture problems to redefine the views, context and space identity offering something new and unseen, creating new situations and landmarks in the city.

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