

**FRONT ELEVATION OF THE
REICHSTAG PROPOSAL, 1872**

FRONTÁLNY POHLAD, NÁVRH NA
BUDOVU REICHSTAGU, 1872

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and
Archives of the Department of History
of Architecture and Monuments

Imre Steindl's neo-gothic approach in the Hungarian design competitions of the 1870s

Imre Steindl a jeho poňatie neogotiky v architektonických súťažiach sedemdesiatych rokov 19. storočia v Maďarsku

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Zbierka a archívy plánov Oddelenia histórie architektúry a pamiatok Budapeštianskej technickej univerzity obsahuje hodnotné kresby a fotografie. Vlastní aj viaceré dokumenty súvisiace s Imrem Steindlom, dobre známym maďarským architektom, ktorý navrhol budovu Maďarského parlamentu.

Najvýznamnejšie predmety vzťahujúce sa k Steindlovi predstavuje štrnásť hárkov s plánmi berlínskeho Reichstagu datovaných rokom 1872 a zložka originálnych fotografií rozličných autorových projektov. Táto séria fotografií pozostáva okrem iného aj z variantných návrhov na Novú budapeštiansku radnicu, postavenú v roku 1875. Tento príspevok pojednáva o vplyve gotiky na Steindlove projekty a návrhy.

Architektúru študoval od roku 1857 do roku 1867 v Budapešti a na Viedenskej akadémii umení, kde bol študentom Friedricha von Schmidta. Schmidtov vplyv na stredo európsku neogotickú architektúru bol pozoruhodný. Mladý Steindl prevzal Schmidtove vedomosti o histórii architektúry, štruktúrach a štýle budov, čo malo počas celého jeho života vplyv na jeho dielo. Podieľal sa aj na významných pamiatkových prieskumoch stredovekých stavieb. Počas svojho neskoršieho života sa intenzívne venoval projektovaniu Maďarského parlamentu, no vo svojich raných rokoch vyvíjal v rámci architektúry rôzne aktivity. Jeho zaujatosť myšlienkou neogotického štýlu je zjavná už v prácach realizovaných v prvých rokoch jeho tvorby.

V rokoch 1866–1872 sa Imre Steindl podieľal na piatich architektonických súťažiach. Vzhľadom na skromný počet vypísaných architektonických súťaží v tomto období sa to javí priam pozoruhodné. Po rakúsko-uhorskom vyrovaní v roku 1867 nastal v Maďarsku rapidný sociálny a ekonomický rozvoj, ktorý naštartoval aj významný rozmach stavebníctva. Prvýkrát v histórii Maďarska boli vyhlásené veľkolepé architektonické súťaže, ktoré priťahovali pozornosť aj širokej verejnosti. Sprevádzali ich totiž diskusie o štýle budov, ako aj výstavy súťažných návrhov. Pozornosť verejnosti pritom v sledovanom období ustavične narastala. V šesťdesiatych a sedemdesiatych rokoch 19. storočia boli nepochybne najdôležitejšími architektonickými súťažami tie na palác Maďarskej akadémie vied, Novej budapeštianskej radnice, Budapeštianskej opery a mestského územného plánu hlavného mesta Budapešť. Vyvrcholením tohto radu súťaží bola architektonická súťaž na budovu Maďarského parlamentu vypísaná v roku 1883, ktorá je najznámejšou architektonickou súťažou 19. storočia v Maďarsku.

V roku 1867 Budapeštianska mestská rada vyhlásila otvorenú architektonickú súťaž na budovu Novej radnice v dôsledku kapacitnej nedostatočnosti starej budovy. Mali tu sídlieť aj súdne

tribunály. Po skončení súťaže dostal napokon zadanie Steindl. Vzhľadom na to, že mesto vyžadovalo neorenesančný projekt, architekt presadzujúci, naopak, neogotický, vytvoril niekoľko variantov budovy v rôznych štýloch. Napokon bola realizovaná jedinečná zmes, ktorá pozostávala rovnako z renesančných, ako aj z gotických prvkov.

V roku 1871 bola vyhlásená zjednotená Nemecká ríša a Berlín sa stal novým ríšskym hlavným mestom federálneho Nemecka. Názov nového nemeckého zákonodarného orgánu bol Reichstag (ríšsky snem). Už v roku 1872 vláda vyhlásila medzinárodnú otvorenú architektonickú súťaž na návrhy novej budovy snemovne, ktorej víťazom sa stal architekt Ludwig Bohnstedt z Nemecka. Spomedzi všetkých prihlásených projektov bol len jeden vytvorený architektom z Maďarska. Bol ním Imre Steindl, ktorý mal vtedy len 32 rokov. Do súťaže bol zaradený medzi rakúskych súťažiacich pod označením „Emmerich Steindl“ z „Pesth“. Jeho návrh nezískal žiadnu cenu ani nebol zakúpený, no záznam zo zasadania poroty obsahuje niekoľko pochvalných vyjadrení o jeho projekte. Porota ocenila najmä veľmi podrobne vypracované interiéry, zatiaľ čo skôr negatívne kritiky si vyslúžila kompozícia exteriéru. Originály týchto návrhov sú v súčasnosti k dispozícii v našej zbierke plánov. Hlavnou črtou Steindlovho návrhu je gotická kupola v tvare šestnástuholníka, ktorá pripomína kupolu Kostola Maria vom Siege vo Viedni.

Existuje mnoho kníh venovaných medzinárodnej otvorenej súťaži na návrh budovy Maďarského parlamentu. Do uzávierky súťaže v apríli roku 1883 bolo doručených devätnásť návrhov, z ktorých porota rozhodla o udelení štyroch rovnocenných prvých cien. Spomedzi týchto štyroch kandidátov to bol práve Steindlov projekt, ktorý napokon získal najviac hlasov. Pritom jedine jeho návrh bol vytvorený v neogotickom štýle, ostatní kandidáti zaslali klasické projekty hlásiace sa viac k etablovanejšiemu štýlu. Celková kompozícia jeho projektu bola výrazne pozdĺžna reagujúc na potreby prevádzky dvojkomorového parlamentného systému. Steindl umiestnil snemovne doprostred dvoch pozdĺžnych ramien, ktoré boli prepojené veľkou centrálnou kupolou. V ďalšom, treťom, krídle, situovanom kolmo na dve predchádzajúce, bolo umiestnené spektakulárne reprezentatívne schodisko. Na hlavnom reze budovou pritom možno vidieť, že sled priestorov v interiéri je riešený prakticky rovnako ako na návrhu Reichstagu. Najdôležitejší rozdiel v oboch projektoch spočíva v priestore pod kupolou, ktorý sa stáva nielen zhromažďovacou sálou, ale symbolicky aj kľúčovým priestorom celej budovy. Rozhodnutie poroty vyhlásené v roku 1883 však obsahovalo aj pripomienky a požiadavky o vykonanie zmien

v Steindlom pláne. Tieto zmeny mal predstaviť na jar roku 1884 porote i parlamentu a následne boli tieto prepracované plány aj schválené. Hlavná zmena súťažného plánu spočívala v pridaní ďalšieho medziposchodia do hmoty stavby. Upravené boli aj nízke nárožné veže striech snemovni – na vyššie a štíhlejšie. Vďaka tomu sa kompozícia celého objektu, tak v exteriéri, ako aj v interiéri, zvýraznila aj vo vertikálnom smere. Budova získala na monumentalite, no súčasne na ľahkosti a väčšej grációznosti.

Prostredníctvom skúmania detailov neogotických plánov týchto troch budov môžeme objaviť charakteristické črty Steindlovho neogotického štýlu, ktorý uplatňoval v priebehu celého svojho produktívneho života. Napríklad medené galantné figúry inšpirované severonemeckou gotikou umiestňované na vrcholoch veží možno nájsť na všetkých neogotických plánoch, o ktorých sme sa v tomto príspevku zmienili. Tento druh plastík bol napokon umiestnený aj na budove Maďarského parlamentu. Takisto rámovanie veľkého erbového znaku nad hlavným vstupom je rovnaký na návrhu na Reichstagu, ako aj na realizovanej budove parlamentu. Toto nás vedie k ďalšiemu uvažovaniu o používaní týchto elementov v celom Steindlovom diele.

Gotická kupola Maďarského parlamentu je kľúčovým bodom celkovej štruktúry priestoru, usporiadania exteriéru, ako aj symbolického obsahu celej budovy. Je to vlastne najspektakulárnejšia architektonická črta stavby. Architektonické riešenie, ktoré sa tu realizovalo, je najesenšialnejšou manifestáciou charakteristických črt historizmu. Koncept interiéru vstupnej sály, reprezentatívne schodisko a sála s kupolou, ktoré sa objavujú na projektoch Reichstagu, boli rovnako použité aj na návrhoch

Maďarského parlamentu. Štruktúra a usporiadanie jednotlivých krídiel je tu rozdielna, vzhľadom na odlišné zadanie, no idea hlavnej línie usporiadania priestorov sa kontinuálne rozvíjala už od súťaže na Reichstag. Na pôvodných projektoch Maďarského parlamentu sa usporiadanie reprezentatívneho schodiska od plánov Reichstagu príliš nelíši, no na neskorších Steindlových plánoch už bolo výrazne pozmenené. Ak sa pozrieme na hlavný rez budovou na pozmenených plánoch z roku 1884 pozornejšie, môžeme si všimnúť, že reprezentatívne schodisko je tu skôr pozdĺžne, barokizované, je zdôraznené smerom k sále s kupolou. Celkovo možno povedať, že zmeny víťazného projektu sa týkali predovšetkým vzájomných pomerov menších častí, ako aj ich vzťahov, než by sa zameriavali na detaily ako také.

Prostredníctvom Steindlových projektov na Reichstag, Budapeštiansku radnicu a Maďarský parlament môžeme sledovať metódy navrhovania charakteristické pre historizmus. Architekt síce pôsobí v medziach obmedzení, ktoré tu predstavujú tradičné prvky ako osovosť jednotlivých priestorov a foriem, no súčasne prináša nespochybniteľne inovatívne riešenia využívajúc najnovšie technologické možnosti svojej doby. Kompozícia hlavných priestorov interiérov Maďarského parlamentu sleduje najvycizelovanejšiu tradíciu barokovej a renesančnej architektúry. Táto kompozícia predstavuje priestorový typ, kde sa pozdĺžnosť miestnosti z jedného miesta otvára smerom do hĺbky priestoru. To má na diváka dynamizujúci vplyv, pričom mu zároveň poskytuje príležitosť k pohybu. Spoločne sú tieto plány autentickým dokladom analyticko-intelektuálneho prístupu a spôsobu tvorby historizujúcej architektúry 19. storočia.

Introduction

The *Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments* at the Budapest Technical University possesses many valuable drawings and photographs,¹ including several documents related to Imre Steindl.² The most significant pieces of Steindl's are the fourteen sheets of the Reichstag proposal plan of 1872,³ and a folder of original photos presenting his plans,⁴ in this case consisting of plan-variations of the Budapest City Hall. The Reichstag plans were first published by Alice Horvath in 1988.⁵ Her paper appeared in German in the *Periodica Polytechnica Architecture*, and one year later also in Hungarian in the *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*.⁶ One sheet of the Reichstag plans was displayed at the exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts (Budapest) in 2000.⁷ A brief description was also added to this plan in the exhibition catalog.⁸ Jozsef Sisa's book on Steindl gives a short description of the Reichstag plan-series – based mainly on the paper by Alice Horvath.⁹

The oeuvre of Imre Steindl

Imre Steindl was born in Budapest in 1839.¹⁰ He studied architecture from 1857 to 1859 in Budapest, and then from 1859 to 1860 and from 1861 to 1867 at the Vienna Academy of Arts, where he was a student of Friedrich von Schmidt.¹¹ Schmidt's impact on Central European Gothic Revival architecture was notable for his fifteen-year involvement with the most prominent project of the era: the restoration of Cologne Cathedral. He designed some remarkable gothic revival buildings such as the Vienna City Hall and the Maria vom Siege church in Fünfhaus. The young Steindl assumed from Schmidt his knowledge of architectural history, structures and building styles, which had a lifelong impact on his work. During his university years Steindl, besides studying design and theory, also studied stone masonry and took part in major monument surveys of medieval buildings as well. Several of these surveys were published in the *Wiener Bauhütte*.¹² He finished his studies in Vienna in 1867. Soon after his return to Hungary, he started lecturing at the József Polytechnikum¹³ and

won his first commissions,¹⁴ with his first realized projects in the late 1860's. Later in his life he was primarily occupied with the design of the Hungarian Parliament, but in his early years he had various activities in architecture. His commitment to the idea of the Gothic Revival style was apparent already in his first years of work. From 1866 to 1872 he participated in five design competitions.¹⁵ Considering the relatively restricted number of competitions at that time, this involvement seems to be notable.¹⁶

General state of construction and architectural design competition around 1870

After the *Compromise of 1867*,¹⁷ Hungary underwent rapid social and economic development, likewise involving a significant boom in the building industry. For the first time ever in Hungary's history, there were spectacular design competitions that attracted the wider public's attention. Moreover, the competitions sparked debates about building styles and led to exhibitions of proposal plans, matched by a continual rise in attention from the general public.

In the 1860s and 1870s the most important design competitions were undoubtedly those for the Budapest City Hall, the Budapest Opera House, and the urban masterplan of the capital Budapest. The culmination of this series was the 1883 design competition of the Hungarian Parliament building, which is the most well-known architectural competition in 19th-century Hungary.

In 1861 there was a selected design competition for the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.¹⁸ Miklos Ybl¹⁹ and Imre Henszlmann²⁰ were invited, but Antal Szkalnitzky²¹ also presented a proposal plan of his own. Henszlmann was the leader of the faction that argued for a neo-Gothic building because they thought this style was more worthy for such a prestigious edifice.²² Ybl had promised Henszlmann that he would create a Gothic design, but instead produced a neo-Renaissance one, which he withdrew a day after the deadline. The building committee was not satisfied with the result, and consequently announced a new competition, for which Friedrich Stüler²³ and Leo von Klenze²⁴ were invited. Stüler's plan won, and the building was finished under Ybl's supervision in 1865.

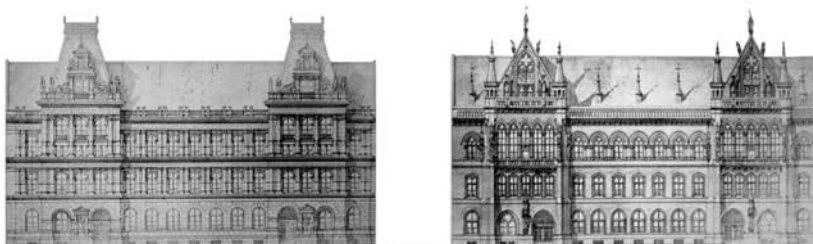
Next in line was the design competition for the new City Hall of Budapest in 1867 – 1868. Of considerable significance regarding the issues of scale and building style, this competition will be discussed in greater detail at a later point in the present paper.

For the Opera House, an internationally selected design competition was announced in 1873.²⁵ The tender particularly mentioned the Italian neo-Renaissance as the required style for the building. Six architects were invited: Miklos Ybl, Imre Steindl, Antal Szkalnitzky and Istvan Linzbauer²⁶ from Hungary, the team of Ferdinand Fellner²⁷ & Hermann Hellmer²⁸ from Vienna and finally Ludwig Bohnstedt²⁹ from Gotha, Germany. Ybl's proposal won by a 7:1 vote in the committee. Ybl made several changes to the plans later, and it was only in 1884 that the Opera House was finally completed.

One of the first tasks of the city council of newly unified Budapest was the urban rearrangement of the whole city. In 1871 an international open design competition was held for the city's master plan.³⁰ Its purpose was to find the best form of the city's main roads and the location of the most important public buildings. Lajos Lechner³¹ won first prize, Frigyes Feszly³² was second in the contest. This is considered to be the first grand master plan competition in Hungary.

Question of building style in the plans of the New City Hall in 1868 – 1870

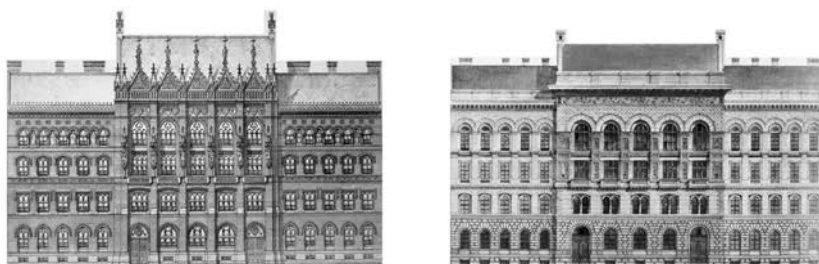
The city council of Budapest announced an open design competition for the new City Hall due to the insufficient capacity of the old building. For a plan that would also have housed the courts of justice,³³ a tender was announced in 1867. Up to the deadline (March 1868), three proposals arrived from two architects. Antal Szkalnitzky presented an Italian neo-Renaissance plan, while Imre Steindl submitted both a French Renaissance and a German Gothic-styled design.³⁴ The first prize was awarded to Szkalnitzky, yet it was Steindl who was summoned to modify his neo-Renaissance version for construction. Steindl, however, prepared the neo-Gothic construction plans instead and had them approved by the building committee, so that construction work could. In fact, the city council was not aware of this and was very surprised by the Gothic appearance of the plans, so they warned Steindl to change. In response, he prepared two new versions: a Gothic and a Renaissance one, both of them with calculations of estimated costs.³⁵ As the neo-Renaissance version was slightly cheaper, it was the one approved by the city council; the building was finished in 1875.



1868



1869



1870

**FACADE VARIATIONS
OF THE CITY HALL**

VARIÁCIE FASÁDY RADNICE

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments

Szkalnitzky's design is now lost, but both versions of Steindl's plans are known.³⁶ The later plans by Steindl are also documented, consisting of three different alternatives of the first modified plans and the alternate Gothic plan for the final Renaissance design.³⁷

In the competition plans and the modified designs (in both stylistic versions) we can see a 1-3-7-3-1 rhythm facade, where each 3-axised parts make an avant-corps by protruding slightly forward in the narrow street.

The alterability of the Gothic and Renaissance cladding of the structure of the building reveals Steindl's extensive knowledge about historical styles and his ability to apply new technical solutions with flexibility. He dealt with the functional demands and structural possibilities in an innovative way, making use of cast-iron structural elements, water closets and gas lighting. The evolution of the very structure of the city hall building was continuous under the often changing styles of its decoration. Notably, the neo-Gothic variations had a similar facade composition to the later Reichstag designs. In addition to the restrained window casings, there were only light string courses on the facades. The strong verticality of the two avant-corps and the structure of the galleries and spires were virtually the same.

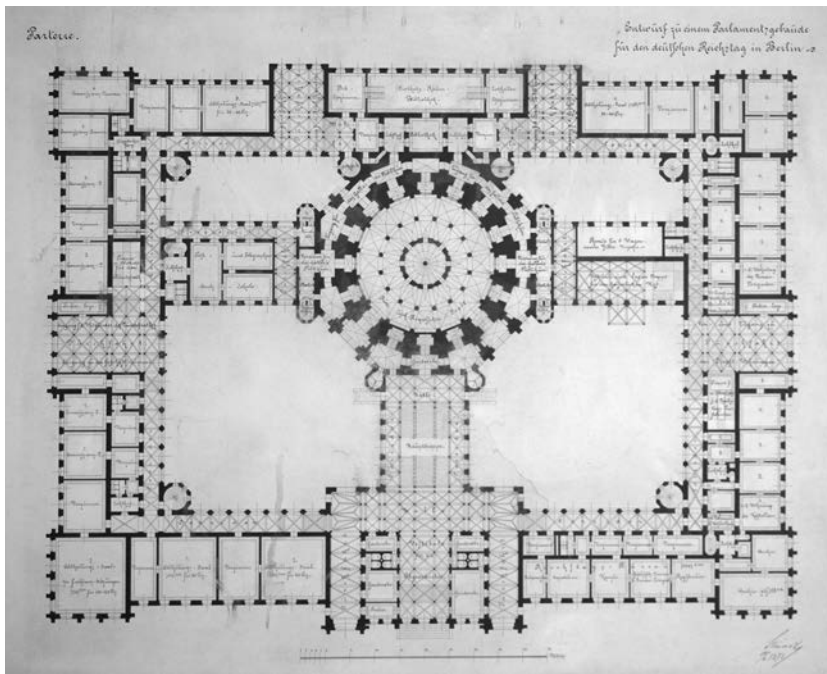
The avant-corps of the Renaissance versions had steep mansard roofs, while the Gothic ones were crowned by pediments in North German style. In the proposal plans we can see a three-storey building but in the later altered versions there are five storeys. This alteration was caused by governmental decision on the national level, granting municipal governments greater authority and thus requiring more office space in the planned city hall building. We can observe on the alternate facade versions that the first two storeys and the balustrades are the same, only the third and fourth storeys are different. One version consisted mansard roofs above the avant-corps and connected the top two storeys with grand pilasters. On the other two versions all the storeys had string courses, and only the third and fourth levels had different decoration. The window casings and the vertical elements were also diverse: one of the versions had pilasters while the other one had quoins. The first of them showed the impact of Alberti's palace architecture while the second one was inspired by Michelangelo.³⁸

The Gothic versions were basically identical, differing only in detail. The early versions had two large identical pediments with heavy ornamentation and spires on the edges. Later, these elements were replaced with smaller pediments in a coordinated row. In this case, the overall impact was rather different because the reticulated setting was more apparent compared to the early versions. All of the Gothic versions employed spires on the edges of the pediments, in the early plans much more solid, almost bastion-like forms, yet in the later versions quite delicate spires of lesser height. Steindl used specifically consoled niches for statues on the pillars at the level of the piano nobile; with added tracery, similar niches with tracery were specific features of Steindl's gothic revival style. As for the statues that they contained, these always had a historical program, referring to the building's function – after the principles of 19th-century historicism. In one early Gothic design variation, we can see pointed arches on the main floor's facade. On the avant-corps, the windows were higher and thinner, while the other ones were rather squat. The main floor windows on the early versions, as well as the twin and triple windows of the later designs, had Gothic tracery at their tops. While the early versions had only windows with pointed or segmented arches, the later plans showed straight-lined window surrounds, in which two thinner gothic windows were framed together into a rectangular shape. Although the realised neo-Renaissance version had a perfectly classical rusticated ground-floor plinth and a classical entablature as well, Steindl made an effort towards creating a sort of Gothic impact. Such a sensibility is visible in the entablature without architrave, or the arches of the top floor windows that appear semi-circular, but in fact are slightly pointed. All of these details reinforced the Gothic impression in the viewer.

Steindl's proposal for the 1872 Reichstag competition

On 18th January 1871 the unified German Empire was proclaimed, and the former Prussian king Wilhelm became emperor. Berlin was chosen as the new imperial federal capital of Germany. For the design of the new parliament building, the 'Reichstag' (imperial assembly), the government announced an international open design competition in 1872 – soon after the state's official proclamation.³⁹ The competition winner was Ludwig Bohnstedt⁴⁰ from Germany – amongst 103 competitors. Seventy proposal plans were sent from German architects, indicating the exceptional interest of the German public. Amongst the plans there was only one by a Hungarian designer: this being Imre Steindl, then aged 32, listed amongst the Austrian competitors under the name 'Emmerich Steindl' from 'Pesth'.⁴¹ His plan, of course, was neither built nor even awarded any prize, yet the jury report offered a number of compliments for the plan. In particular, the jury appreciated the highly detailed interiors, though the exterior composition received some negative words.⁴² Judging the proposals, the German architectural press valued the application of functionality, the impact of the exterior, the harmony of the details and the visible display of the *German spirit*. They did not discuss the question of the building style itself,⁴³ although the predominance of the neo-renaissance style designs was undoubtedly far higher than the Gothic ones. Therefore, we can presume that the new German state considered the Prussian flavoured neo-Renaissance as the most appropriate building style. Later this became a kind of official style in the Second German Empire.⁴⁴

The key element of Steindl's design was the enormous sixteen-axial Gothic cupola, the interior space of which would have been the great assembly room of the Reichstag.⁴⁵ The floor plan outlined an almost square rectangle, while the dome was connected by inner wings to each outer wing. The most specific phenomenon of the floor plan arrangement was the placement of the cupola not precisely at the intersection point of the main axes. It was closer to the back side wing,



GROUND FLOOR OF THE REICHSTAG, 1872

PRÍZEMIE BUDOVY REICHSTAGU, 1872

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments



SIDE ELEVATION OF THE REICHSTAG, 1872

BOČNÝ POHĽAD NA BUDOVU REICHSTAGU, 1872

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments

because in front of it there was a grandiose staircase, which connected the entrance hall with the assembly room. This composition of interior spaces was the main idea of Steindl's proposal plan. Without question, he subordinated the exterior shape to this interior structure, and its result was the the cupola being set back from the middle point,⁴⁶ therefore making the side facades notably asymmetrical.

For the two-storey exterior facades, Steindl imagined red brick covering with light-coloured stone pedestals and casings. The avant-corps on the corners had high steep roofs and strong vertical decoration elements: statue-niches, spires, galleries and pediments with various regional heraldic insignia. The plain parts of the facades had only string courses besides the window casings. The tambour of the cupola had a similar crowning by a gallery and spires, only on a bigger scale.



CROSS -SECTIONS OF THE REICHSTAG DESIGN AND OF THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT PROPOSAL PLAN

REZY, NÁVRH NA BUDOVY REICHSTAGU A MAĎARSKÉHO PARLAMENTU

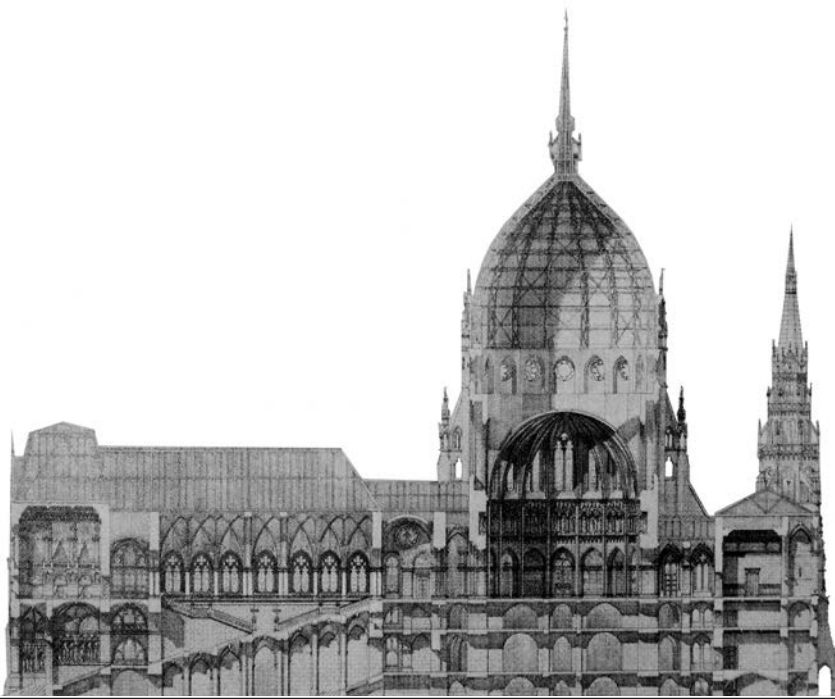
Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments

The proposal was mainly inspired by the Maria vom Siege church in Vienna, built from 1868 to 1875, designed by F. Schmidt, which has a very similar neo-Gothic cupola. Schmidt's proposal plan of the House of Lords⁴⁷ in Vienna must have been also inspirational for Steindl. However, the placement of the rose windows onto the tambour was undoubtedly Steindl's own innovation, and moreover originates from the Italian Renaissance⁴⁸ rather than the contemporary examples designed by Schmidt.

The selection process was eventually cancelled. In 1881 a second competition was held only for German architects. Paul Wallot won first prize and his design was built with some major alterations. The final building was completed in 1894; after its rebuilding in 1999,⁴⁹ the Reichstag is the seat of the German federal parliament (Bundestag) again.

The winning competition plan of the Hungarian Parliament building design competition – 1883

An extensive range of literature discusses the international open design competition of the Hungarian Parliament building.⁵⁰ Nineteen proposals arrived by the deadline in April 1883, and the evaluating committee decided to award four equal first prizes. Amongst these four candidates, it was, in the end, Steindl's design that got the most votes. His proposal was the only one in neo-Gothic style,⁵¹ whereas the other three candidates offered classical designs in a rather conventional spirit.⁵² The general arrangement of the proposal plan was mainly longitudinal due to the two-chamber parliamentary system. Steindl placed both chambers into the middle of the two longitudinal wings, which in turn were connected by a huge central cupola. A third wing, laid perpendicular to the two other wings, accommodated the spectacular grand staircase. In the main cross-section, we can see that the line of interior spaces was virtually the identical to the Reichstag proposal. The most important difference was that the space under the cupola became a sort of symbolic ceremonial room of the entire building, rather than merely an assembly hall.⁵³ With this gesture, Steindl wanted to express the idea of the constitution, which stands above each chamber of the parliament.⁵⁴ The two stone towers on the riverbank of the Danube and the corner towers of the roofs of the chamber rooms were also emphatic elements of the entire external appearance of the building. These central elements were surrounded by the general wings of two floors – similar to the Reichstag proposal plan. One delicate gesture lay at the heart of the design: in order to conform to the line of the slightly curved riverbank, the long building had a refraction of its angle at the central point.



CROSS-SECTION OF THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT, 1884
REZ BUDOVOU MAĎARSKÉHO PARLAMENTU, 1884

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments

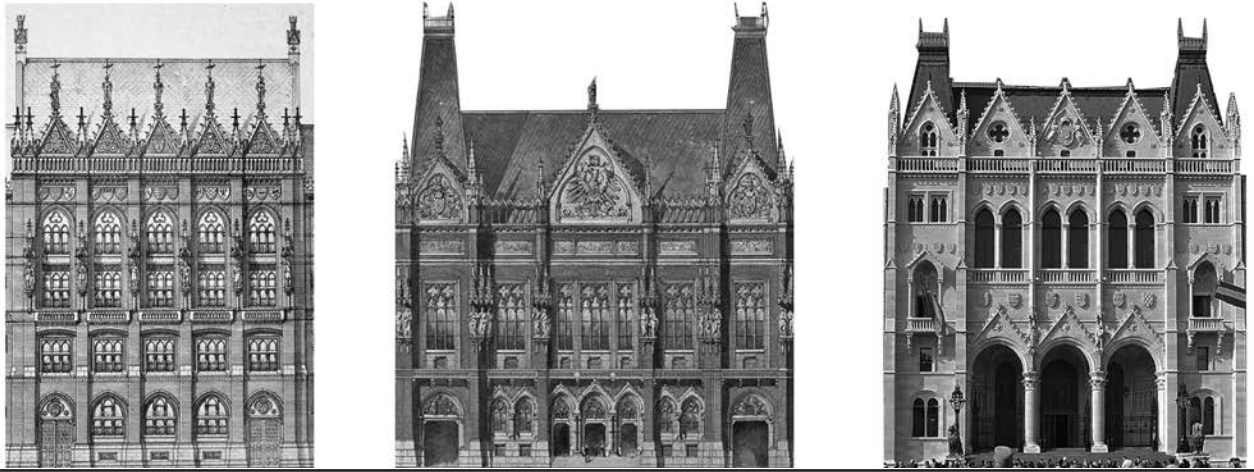
Later plan variations and final design of the Hungarian Parliament building

In 1883, after the committee announced its decision, it also suggested alterations to Steindl's plans, which he had to present to the building committee in spring 1884, as well as to Parliament itself. Both of these institutions approved the plans. The one major change to the competition plan was the addition of an extra mezzanine floor, as well as the replacement of the squat corner towers of the chamber-room's roofs to thinner and higher ones. As a result, both the interior and exterior composition became more vertically attenuated, giving the building greater monumentality at the same time as increased lightness and grace. Moreover, in the modified plans from 1884, we can already see the refraction in the floor plan, but in the 1886 finalized plans it was abandoned, and the Danube facade is absolutely straight. Smaller alterations involve Steindl's adjustment of the shape of the foyers of the two chambers, with the Gothic rib vaults seen on the proposal replaced by barrel vaults, presumably because those could provide surface for ceiling frescos. The pediments on the roofs of the chambers were also altered. In the proposal, there had been a single emphasized one in the middle of each side, but on the final design we see three smaller pediments beside each other. Steindl also changed the rhythm of the windows of the main floor. We know more variations made in the same time, so presumably the architect was making experimental variations. Steindl made some minor changes to the plans during the construction, which mainly concerned the interior arrangement and the supply systems of the building.

Features of Steindl's Gothic Revival style

Observing the details of the neo-Gothic plans of these three buildings, we can discover the characteristics of Steindl's Gothic Revival style, which he drew upon throughout all his working life. For example, the North German inspired heroic figures made of copper on the top of the spires can be seen on all the neo-Gothic plans discussed above in this paper, eventually achieving final realization in the Hungarian Parliament house as well.³⁵ Regarding the structure of the facades, the main similarity is that the sections between the avant-corps volumes are less heavily decorated – though their evolution is more moderate.

The internal facade sections in the City Hall and Reichstag designs were decorated only with string courses and window casings, invariably with an unmistakably medieval profile. The pedestals mainly adhered to the classical model, with only the outline of the ornamental parts offering



**THE AVANT-CORPS VOLUMES OF
THE CITY HALL, THE REICHSTAG
AND THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT**

RIZALITY NA BUDOVÁCH RADNICE,
REICHSTAGU A MAĎARSKÉHO
PARLAMENTU

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and
Archives of the Department of History
of Architecture and Monuments

Photo Foto: Márton Székely

something of a medieval impression. In the case of the Reichstag and the Hungarian Parliament building plans, Steindl even used classically rusticated stones on the base of the facade. On the top of the facades as a crowning, he applied Gothic-style galleries in most of the designs. We can see this type of crowning on all the three discussed buildings, used most specifically on the emphasized parts: the avant-corps volumes.

On the avant-corps of the Reichstag and Hungarian Parliament plans, we see an almost identical Gothic gallery. In both plans, there are some smaller pediments interrupting the line of the galleries, where Steindl inserted windows with tracery or heraldic insignia. The Budapest Parliament building has vertical elements on the internal facade sections: thin half-pillars that give rhythm to the facades. On these parts there are rectangular windows as well as windows with pointed or segmented arches. In the emphasized axes, we see twin and triple pointed arched windows, in some cases with tracery on their upper part.

The most important sections of the facades, the avant-corps, always display elements that emphasize the sense of verticality, and thus these parts show instead a reticulated set rather than an arrangement where horizontality is emphasized.

All the three buildings had thick pillars attached to the avant-corps volumes, continuing up to the very crowning gallery with spires at the tops that also served as mini-pillars of the gallery. Both in the last Gothic version of the City Hall and the final design of the Budapest Parliament, there was a row of coats of arms right under the gallery. The framing of the great coat of arms above the entrance is exactly identical in the Reichstag proposal and in the realised Parliament building, a finding that can allow us to assume a conscious employment of these elements across Steindl's entire oeuvre.

The Gothic cupola is the key point of the internal space structure, as well as the external arrangement and the symbolic import of the building. It is also the most spectacular architectural attribute of the edifice. The architectural solution realised here is the most essential manifestation of the characteristics of 19th-century historicism, in that the cupola as a structural item is fundamentally in contradiction with the tectonic sense of the Gothic style. Giving a Gothic skin of authentic appearance to the Renaissance idea of the cupola is a highly complex problem, yet in response to it Steindl's solution gave us a uniquely valuable space and form in Hungarian historicist architecture. Observing the Reichstag competition plan alongside the proposal and the final design of the Hungarian Parliament, we can see how the cupola becomes smaller and smaller, and simultaneously rises higher and higher with the increase of the height of the tambour. Through this transformation, the interior space under the big dome also changed, as it became extended vertically and therefore turned out to be far more transcendent in its aesthetic impressions as well.

The interior concept of the entrance hall, the grand staircase and the cupola hall known from the Reichstag competition plan was also applied in the designs of the Budapest Parliament. The structuring of the wings displays differences, due to the different set requirements, but the idea of

this main line of spaces had evolved since the Reichstag competition. We can observe in the Reichstag plans that the ceiling of the grand staircase was plain with coffering, but on the Hungarian Parliament proposal we see a sexpartite ribbed vault system. In the Gothic Revival era, the simple gothic rib vault was the most common. Steindl's choice of this more complicated form is unusual, though its causes might be found out by later research. In the initial competition plans of the Hungarian Parliament, the arrangement of the grand staircase is not much different from the Reichstag plans, but in Steindl's later versions it was altered significantly. If we examine at the main cross section of the 1884 modified plans, we see that the grand staircase is more longitudinal in the Baroque fashion, as its gravity towards the cupola hall is stronger. The baroque character is more apparent because of the use of a cloister vault instead of the sexpartite ribbed vault. Originally, this vault had a huge screen in its middle, later replaced by a monumental fresco, and surrounded by distorted fake rib vaults. In total: the alterations of the winning proposal design concerned mainly the ratio of the smaller parts to each other and to the whole, rather than the details themselves. Through Steindl's plans of the Reichstag, the Budapest City Hall and the Hungarian Parliament, we can gain a sense of the designing methods of historicism. The architect held on with the limitations of the traditional axiality of the spaces and forms, although he reached an undoubtedly innovative result by using the newest technical possibilities of his age.⁵⁶

The composition of the main interior spaces in the Budapest Parliament follows the finest traditions of the Baroque and Renaissance architecture. This composition is a spatial typology where the longitudinality of the room is revealed from one viewpoint towards the depth of the space,⁵⁷ giving the viewer a dynamic impact by providing the opportunity of the movement. These plans are all together authentic indications of the analytical-intellectual creation manner of 19th-century historicist architecture.

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1 KRÄHLING, János et al.: Architectural drawing and education – Principles to the evaluation of the historic plan collection at Budapest University of Technology and Economics. In: *Architectura Hungariae*, 2015, 1, pp. 7 – 18.

2 A well-known Hungarian architect (1839 – 1902). Designer of the Hungarian Parliament building.

3 Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture

and of Monuments (further: ÉRT) numbers: 104023-104034 .

4 ÉRT numbers: 102003-102089.

5 HORVÁTH, Alice: Entwürfe Imre Steindls zu dem ersten Architekturwettbewerb 1872 für das Gebäude des Berliner Reichstags. In: *Periodica Polytechnica Architecture*, 1988, 1 – 2, pp. 19 – 46.

6 HORVÁTH, Alice: Steindl Imre terve a berlini Reichstag első építészeti pályázatán. In: *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 1989, 1, pp. 52 – 65.

7 *Az Ország Háza/The House of the Nation, Buda-pesti országháza-tervek 1784 – 1884/Parliament plans for Buda-Pest 1784 – 1884*. Exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts organised by the Hungarian National Assembly, the Hungarian National Archives and the Museum of fine arts, Budapest, 2000.

8 *Az ország háza: Buda-Pesti Országháza-tervek 1784 – 1884*. Eds. Mária Verő – Eszter Gábor. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts 2000. 160 p.

9 SISA, József: Steindl Imre. Budapest, Holnap Kiadó 2005, p. 26, 30, pp. 58 – 61.

10 Modern day Budapest was de jure created in 1873; before this date, Buda, Pest and Óbuda were separate towns.

11 Austrian architect (1825 – 1891).

12 The Wiener Bauhütte was a self-study group founded in 1862 by Friedrich Schmidt. Their albums published between 1902 and 1917 presented the medieval Austrian landmarks with survey plans attached. Several of these drawings were made by Imre Steindl. The Plan Collection and Archives consists some sheets of this series, their ÉRT numbers: 101152-101157.

13 Founded in 1782 it was the predecessor of the present day Budapest Technical University (BME). KISS, Márton: *BME Milleniumi évkönyv*. Budapest, BME 2000. 20 p.

14 ISTVÁNFI, Gyula: *Az építészettörténet oktatásának formái és kiemelkedő személyiségei 1918-ig*. In: *Építés-Építészettudomány*, 2010, 3 – 4, pp. 193 – 206.

15 It is less known that the town of Arad announced a design competition for the city hall, but only one proposal arrived. This was Steindl's neo-Gothic design, but it was not realised at all. The city hall eventually was built fp;pwomg a new competition held later. SISA, József: 2005, p. 42.

16 An article from 1894 regards the 40 – 50 competitions per year of the 1890's as a significant growth compared to the 1870's, when only 20 – 25 design tenders were issued per year. *Építő Ipar* 1894, p. 257.

17 The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 established the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

18 KEMÉNY, Mária: *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia palotája*. Budapest, Osiris Kiadó 2015.

19 Hungarian architect (1814 – 1891).

20 Hungarian art historian, archeologist (1813 – 1888).

21 Hungarian architect (1836 – 1878).

22 In the 1850s in London the same question emerged during the designing of the Westminster Palace. Finally a neo-gothic plan was realised according to the design of Augustus W. N. Pugin. This choice of style (as a moral issue) was similar to what happened in Hungary, and it is possible that the British events might have affected the Hungarian process. (GÁBOR, Hajnóci: *Nemzeti építészettünk stíluskérdései az akadémia székházára kiírt pályázat körüli vitában*. In: *Építés- és Építészettudomány*, 1985, 1 – 2, pp. 81 – 98; KEMÉNY, Mária – VÁLINE POGÁNY, Jolán: *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia palotájának pályázati terve 1861*. *Bewerbungspläne für den Palast der ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Budapest, MTA Művészettörténeti Kutató Intézet 1996.

23 German architect, Berlin (1800 – 1865).

24 German architect, Munich (1784 – 1864).

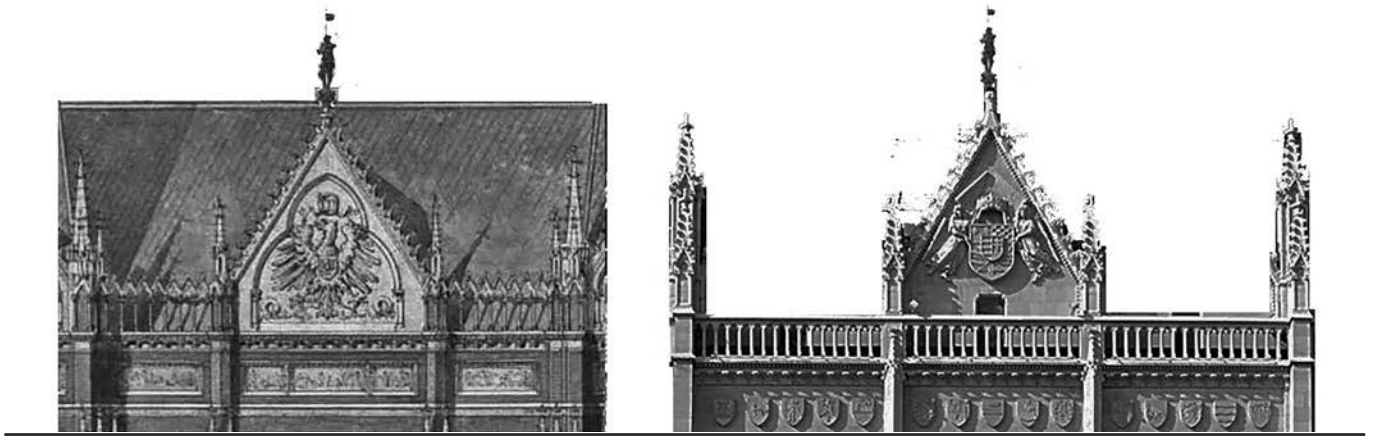
25 BORSA, Miklós: *Az ismeretlen Operaház*. Budapest, Műszaki kiadó 1984.

26 Austrian architect (1838 – 1880).

27 Austrian architect (1847 – 1916).

28 Austrian architect (1849 – 1919).

29 German architect (1822 – 1885).



**FRAMING OF THE COAT OF ARMS
ON THE REICHSTAG AND THE
HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT**

RÁMOVANIE ERBU NA BUDOVÁCH
REICHSTAGU A MAĎARSKÉHO
PARLAMENTU

Source Zdroj: Plan Collection and Archives of the Department of History of Architecture and Monuments

Photo Foto: Márton Székely

30 PREISICH, Gábor: Budapest városépítésének története Buda visszavételétől a II. világháború végéig. Budapest, Terc Kiadó 2004. 140 p.

31 Hungarian engineer, urbanist (1833 – 1897).

32 Hungarian architect (1821 – 1884).

33 SISA, József: 2005, p. 44.

34 SISA, József: 2005, p. 45. (Original 19th-century photos of the plans can be found in the Steindl collection of the National Technical Information Centre and Library (OMIKK), and the neo-renaissance version in the Plan Collection and Archives as well. ÉRT number: 102076.)

35 SISA, József: 2005, p. 48.

36 The numbering of the versions is 1., 2. and 4. so there must have been a fourth version in this series numbered as 3. ÉRT numbers: 102084, 102086, 102088.

37 Original 19th-century photos of the plans can be found in the Steindl collection of the OMIKK, and in the Plan Collection and Archives as well. ÉRT number: 102022.

38 The window casings of the third and fourth storeys were inspired by Michelangelo's Farnese-palace in Rome.

39 CULLAN, Michael S.: Der Reichstag. Berlin-Brandenburg, Be.bra verlag GmbH 2015.

40 He also participated the competition of the Budapest Opera house in 1872 (see reference 26).

41 FRITSCH, Karl Emich Otto.: Sammel-Mappe hervorragenden Konkurrenz Entwürfe. In: Berlin, 1886, 6, p. 12.

42 FRITSCH, Karl Emich Otto: Die Konkurrenz für Entwürfe zum Hause des deutschen Reichstages. In: Deutsche Bauzeitung, 1872, 6, pp. 228 – 229.

43 Ibid, pp. 140 – 260.

44 Most of the prominent secular public buildings were built in this style. For example: Berlin – Technical University (1878 – 1884, Friedrich Hitzig and Julius Carl Raschdorff), Leipzig – Imperial Supreme Court (1888 – 1895, Ludwig Hoffmann and Peter Dybwad).

45 The German legislature was unicameral, so there was no need for merging two chamber rooms into one structure, and hence the assembly room could be placed into the center point of the floor plan.

46 The contemporary press reports were mostly critical of this failure in positioning the cupola. (FRITSCH, Karl Emich Otto: Die Konkurrenz für Entwürfe zum Hause des deutschen Reichstages. In: Deutsche Bauzeitung, 1872, 6, p. 227.)

47 SISA, József: 2005, p. 25.

48 For example there are rose windows on the tambour of the Florence cathedral.

49 Sir Norman Foster designed the reconstruction adding a modern glass dome replacing the destroyed original.

50 A budapesti Tömő téren építendő állandó országgház tervezési programja. Budapest 1882; CSÁNYI, Károly: Az új Országgház. Budapest, Pátria kiadó 1902; EGRY, Margit: Az Országgház. Budapest, Képzőművészeti alap kiadóvállalata 1956; Az országgháza: Buda-Pesti Országgháza-tervek 1784 – 1884. Eds. Mária Verő – Eszter Gábor. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum 2000; CSORBA, László: Az Országgház. Budapest, Képzőművészeti kiadó 2001; TIHANYI, Bence: Az Országgház. Budapest, Magyar Könyvklub 2001; SISA, József: Az Országgház: történelmi séta. Budapest, Corvina kiadó 2013.

51 In this year, Hungary celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian state. Many people regarded the medieval (Gothic) age as the most glorious days of the nation's history, and it was their will, and their influence, that eventually prevailed when the Parliament voted for the Gothic plan.

52 The other three first prize winning candidates were: Alajos Hauszmann, Otto Wagner and the Albert Schickedanz – Vilmos Freund couple.

53 Today the Holy Crown of Hungary (which is most important symbol of the Hungarian State) is displayed in this hall.

54 Detail from Steindl's original technical description: "(...) The cupola emerging from the middle of the building articulates the inaccessible existence of the constitution." SISA, József: 2005, p. 112.

55 We can see these heroic statues on the Reichstag plans but not on the proposal neither on the modified plans of the Hungarian Parliament. They appeared only on the final plans and still are present on the top of the riverbank towers.

56 SZENTKIRÁLYI, Zoltán: Válogatott építészettörténeti és építészetelméleti tanulmányok. Ed. Katalin Marótyy. Budapest, Terc Kiadó 2006, p. 346.

57 Ibid, p. 396.