

Article

Modernist Heritage versus Contested Legacy: The Case of “Radio City”

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Abstract: The industrial legacy of the Soviet period in Lithuania has become an object of social tension. Even though the industrial heritage of the Soviet period is not directly related to the crimes of the occupying authorities, the conversion of industrial objects in the historical parts of cities or of buildings with symbolic significance is contentious among members of the public. For this reason, the conversion of industrial areas in Lithuania has become not only an economic challenge, but also a problem of adapting to society’s needs, changing society’s attitude toward this type of heritage, and organically integrating that heritage into the city structure. The “Radio City” conversion project is being developed in the context of this social tension but has become an example of adaptation in harmony with the architectural heritage that occupies a dominant position on the block, which is located in one of the historically formed residential districts of Kaunas city.

Keywords: architectural; heritage; modernist; urban; industrial; conversion

1. Introduction

After the restoration of Lithuania’s independence on 11 March 1990, much of the industry that had been created while Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union was no longer up to the standards of the Western orientation chosen by the state. For many factories, the transition from the planned economic system of the USSR was not smooth. The inability to compete with market economies gradually drove most factories into bankruptcy. Former industrial areas in cities were left to vegetate or were completely abandoned.

To improve the architectural and urban appearance of cities, one of the possibilities is the conversion of industrial areas. However, the issues of conversions in Lithuania remain quite complex; the problems are not only caused by the financial challenges of adapting these areas and their facilities to new functions.

Much of Lithuania’s industrial heritage is a legacy of the Soviet occupation period. As a result, such heritage is not protected by the state and is viewed negatively by parts of society. Such heritage falls under the definitions of dissonant or contested heritage [1,2], which usually bears witness to the direct or indirect crimes of the occupying regime.

Although the industrial heritage of the Soviet period is usually not directly linked to crimes committed by the Soviet authorities, individual cases confirm the tendencies to morally erode society and attempts to destroy intangible heritage. Buildings that had previously served certain functions were demolished by the occupying authorities or adapted to other functions, arguably with the deliberate aim to deny the society’s national identity, religious beliefs, or other signifiers of culture outside of the centrally sanctioned Soviet modes.

In the case of Kaunas, the Soviet government had built and developed a significant number of industrial buildings in the historically established parts of the city, next to buildings of cultural or symbolic significance. Architectural, landscape, or historical value is not assigned to most Soviet-era industrial sites. The dissonant heritage significance of these areas makes it problematic to integrate them into the modern urban fabric. Most often,



Citation: Tranavičiūtė, B. Modernist Heritage versus Contested Legacy: The Case of “Radio City”. *Buildings* **2023**, *13*, 246. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings13010246>

Academic Editor: Morten Gjerde

Received: 30 November 2022

Revised: 30 December 2022

Accepted: 13 January 2023

Published: 15 January 2023



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the redevelopment of these areas is based on economic considerations. Since the restoration of Lithuania's independence, the conversion of industrial areas in Lithuanian cities has been intensified by the initiatives of private capital. However, initially, the aim was not for convenient and urban redevelopment, but to establish a foothold in convenient public spaces through the construction of business or residential properties [3]. Based on the most successful examples of industrial conversions in Lithuania, these buildings have been found to be particularly attractive for investment. The conversion of the industrial buildings has become a valuable basis for the design of the living environment and public spaces, and the most effective conversion of these kind of buildings is into loft-type apartments [4].

According to Marta De La Torre, in time, the notion of heritage and the practice of conservation have changed by expanding the scope of heritage in type and scale and in relation to the time interval between creation and preservation [5]. Cultural heritage values are mutable qualities that are affected intergenerationally [6]. Heritage can have a dissonant nature, due to its attribution to the heritage of atrocity category. Dissonant heritage is most often associated with the legacy of totalitarian regimes and traumatic experiences [7].

Strategies for managing dissonant heritage differ. One example of mitigating the traumatic experiences of totalitarian regimes can be seen in the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, when “the reconstruction of a monumental edifice framed as a victim of World War II and socialism both depends on and enacts the fantasy that historical loss can be undone” [8].

Most post-Soviet countries have opted for a strategy of de-Sovietization, with the aim of cleansing public spaces of Soviet symbols [9]. In the case of Soviet heritage, it is not only monuments with a direct ideological meaning that take on a dissonant significance, but also the buildings of the socialist architecture in general [10]. However, some Soviet heritage sites have been protected in order to exploit them for tourism purposes [11]. The conversion of dissonant heritage by adding economic value to it could “generate numerous beneficial externalities and positive impulses for local and regional development [12]”.

2. Materials and Methods

The issue of heritage having a symbolic value with the dissonant objects was raised, and a revision of the industrial territories of Kaunas city was carried out. Within the framework of the study, a block was found that would meet the following criteria: an industrial area to be classified as having a dissonant legacy and symbolically significant buildings.

In the selected block between Savanorių Avenue and Žemaičių, Astronomijos, and Aušros streets (in the article we use the streets' current names; for street name changes, see Table 1), the main objects are identified as Christ's Resurrection Church built during the interwar period as modernist heritage and the buildings of the former radio factory built in the Soviet era as dissonant heritage. The block is located in one of the historically formed residential districts of Kaunas city—Žaliakalnis (literally—Green Mountain; Figure 1).

Table 1. Street name changes.

Period	Street-Name Changes			
19th century	-	-	Peterburgskoje shosse; Vilkomirskoje shosse	Nagornaja
Interwar period	Astronomijos	Aušros	Ukmergės plentas; Savanorių Avenue	Žemaičių
Soviet period	Astronomijos	Aušros	Raudonosios Armijos Avenue	Žemaičių
After 1990, current name	Astronomijos	Aušros	Savanorių Avenue	Žemaičių

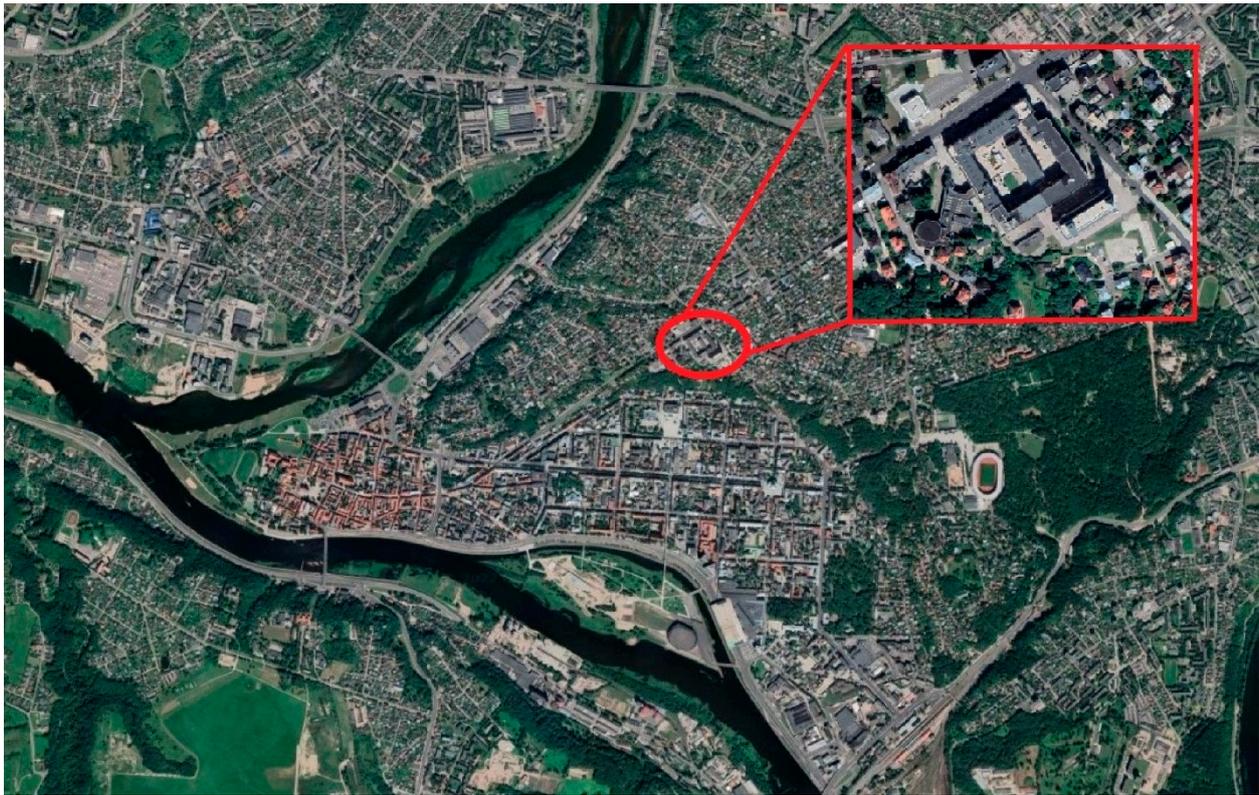


Figure 1. The location of the selected block in Kaunas city (source: Google Earth, modified by the author).

This study utilizes a series of qualitative methods combined with a descriptive analytical method.

A descriptive content analysis of data collected through the analysis of various block planning and construction documents as the primary sources was used. Qualitative methods were used in collecting and analyzing object and site plans, aerial and object photographs, and illustrative schemes.

The analysis process involved two steps: 1. Establishing the historical background by examining written sources on the development of the block and correlating the information obtained with the preserved illustrations; 2. Collecting data relevant to the factory conversion process. The aim of this phase was to establish the circumstances of the exploitation of the factory buildings and the motives for conversion.

3. Historical Background

At the beginning of the 20th century, most of the territory of present-day Lithuania belonged to the Russian Empire, which tried to stifle any political aspirations of its inhabitants to become an independent state, and systematically suppressed the inhabitants' cultural and religious freedoms. During the First World War, Lithuania was the scene of intense hostilities, which resulted in the German occupation of the territory. After the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence on 16 February 1918, the political situation in the country remained tense, as the German military administration remained on the territory, and the country faced attacks by the armies of other countries, which resulted in the loss of the historical capital of Vilnius [13].

Kaunas became the provisional capital of Lithuania, where all the central state institutions were relocated, and the city began to develop not only as the political but also as the cultural center of Lithuania.

From a confessional point of view, most of the Lithuanian population in 1918–1940 was Catholic, i.e., almost 86%. Other religious communities, including Orthodox, had a

small number of members. The latter numbered approximately 1.13% of the Lithuanian population [14]. Kaunas as the provisional capital was developing rapidly, and this included not only the growth of the city's housing estates. The complicated political past inspired the construction of buildings with cultural and religious functions.

Like other European countries with a similar historical past, in order to remove the imperial symbols and architectural legacy, Lithuania started to erect new buildings or monuments with symbolic significance for the strengthening of statehood [15]. A whole network of buildings and monuments with symbolic significance emerged in the urban structure of Kaunas, such as the Lithuanian Officer's Club, The Vytautas the Great Museum, and the Statue of Liberty, erected in its garden in 1928, as well as Christ's Resurrection Church.

Although in the 1920s and 1930s the administrative center of the city was located in Naujamiestis (literally—New Town), the position of Žaliakalnis gradually grew stronger. Christ's Resurrection Church was built, and plans were made for a new Town Hall, Presidential Palace, and other buildings [16]. However, in Žaliakalnis, a residential function based on elements of garden city planning prevailed [17].

Despite the dissonant objects built during the Soviet era, the urban framework of Žaliakalnis has preserved its authentic character—the shape of the plan and the network of streets and paths. Most of the houses were built between 1924 and 1940. The authentic homestead-type built-up development and landscaping structure have remained. The most important and valuable features of Žaliakalnis are considered to be the geometric structure of the plan and the homestead-type planning resembling a garden city [18].

The development of the study area changed considerably over different historical periods. During the period of the Tsarist Russian Empire, in 1871, the wooden Edinoverie Church of St Andrew was built on the corner of Žemaičių Street and Savanorių Avenue on this block [19] (Figure 2). In 1913, a project for a brick church was drawn up, but it was never realized [20]. In 1921, the wooden church went to the Orthodox parish [19].



Figure 2. Edinoverie Church of St Andrew (source: Kaunas Public Library).

In 1873, the inhabitants of Žaliakalnis, claiming that there were already more than 1000 houses in the quarter, appealed to the Kaunas city authorities to open a market there [21]. However, no market was set up. In 1893, the inhabitants of Žaliakalnis repeatedly applied for the opening of a market. A site for a market was proposed on a vacant lot in front of Edinoverie Church [22].

However, the market was not set up at this time either. The above-mentioned plot was acquired by the merchant Leiba Markus in 1894 under a contract with the city of Kaunas [23]. He undertook to build wooden barracks and other auxiliary buildings necessary for the garrison of Kaunas Fortress. In 1903, Markus had already built a barracks on the adjacent plot to the south of Edinoverie Church [24] (Figure 3). After the First World War, the shoddy buildings did not remain.

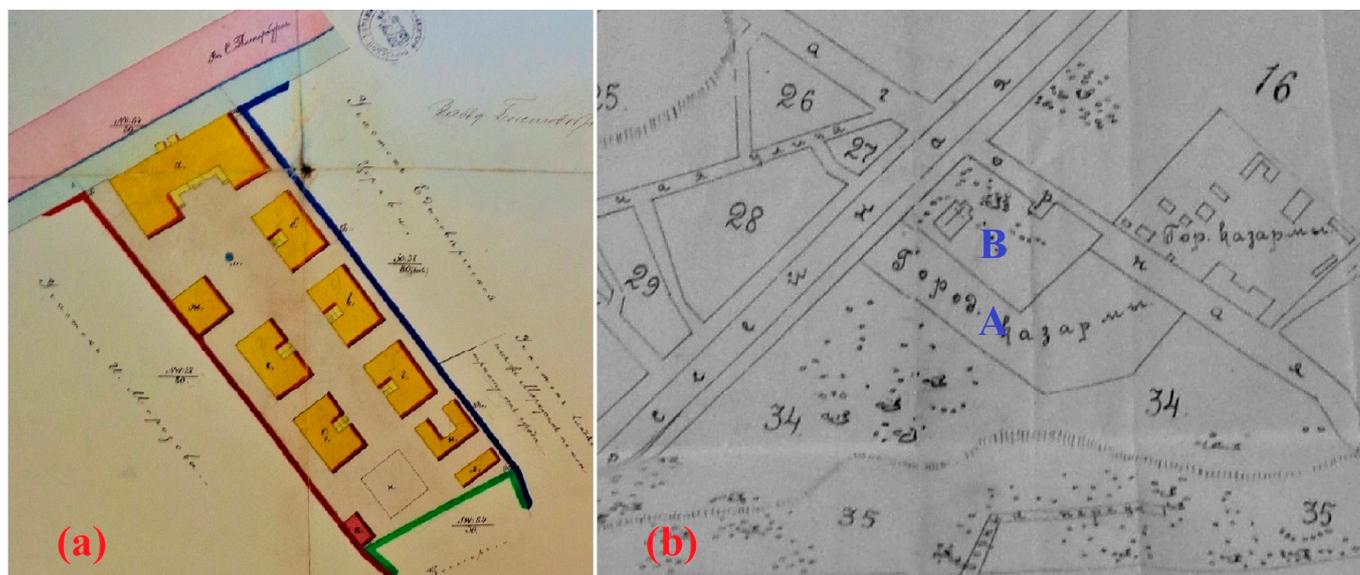


Figure 3. (a) The plan of the plot where Leiba Markus built wooden barracks. (source: Lithuanian State Historical Archives). (b) Plan of the block in 1913. The location of the wooden barracks is marked with the letter A and the location of Edinoverie Church with the letter B (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).

The marketplace in Žaliakalnis was built in the early 1920s on the site of the former barracks. Livestock and then food and other produce were traded at this marketplace [25]. Around 1930, it was planned to pave the market square and build a hall there, because the market square had only one entrance from Savanorių Avenue, which made it impassable in spring and autumn [26] (Figure 4).

Eventually, the municipal authorities began to think that the market was not a good neighborhood for the combination of Christ's Resurrection Church and the modern public buildings planned for the adjacent plot and decided to relocate the latter [25]. The market square there was finally abolished in 1937 [27].

On a plot of land on the eastern side of the marketplace, a shelter for poor and orphaned girls, run by the Society of the Child Jesus, had been in operation since 1920 [28]. On 26 September 1925, a permit was issued for the building of a craft school for girls of this society [29]. In the late 1920s, a social–educational complex of several buildings managed by the society was formed (Figure 5).

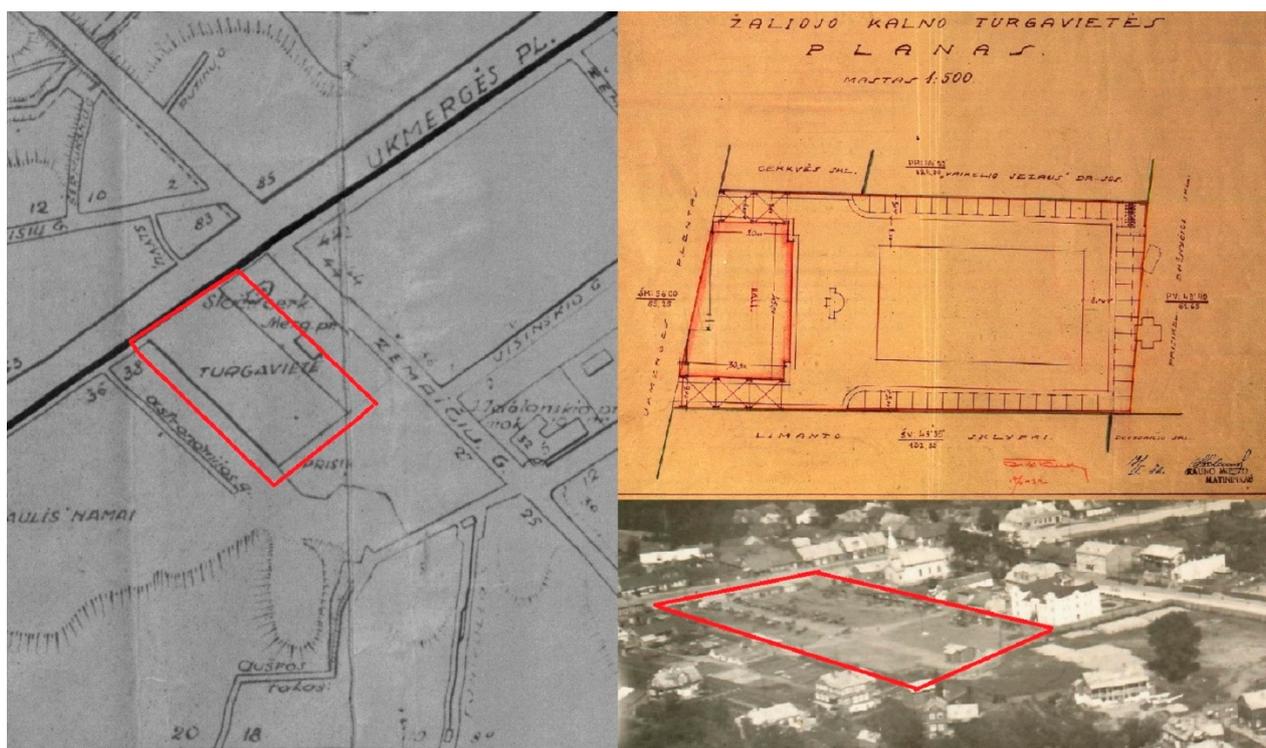


Figure 4. The location of the marketplace is marked with red lines (source: Kaunas Regional State Archives).

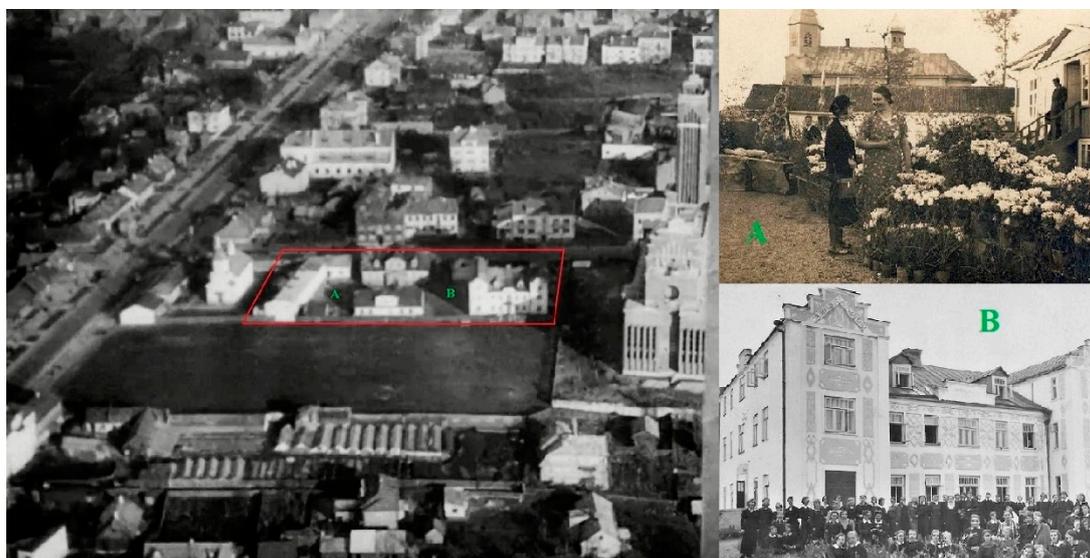


Figure 5. The plot of the Society of the Child Jesus is marked with red lines, and the buildings are marked with the letters (A) and (B) (source: Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum).

The area on the western side of the market square was the site of private plots with houses dating back to the late 19th century [30]. The largest of them belonged to Pranas Limontas, who built a two-story wooden house in 1922 next to the late 19th century houses [31]. In 1924, Limontas leased part of the plot to Mikalojus Kvašninas. The latter set up a vegetable- and plant-breeding farm, which included greenhouses and hotbeds [32] (Figure 6).

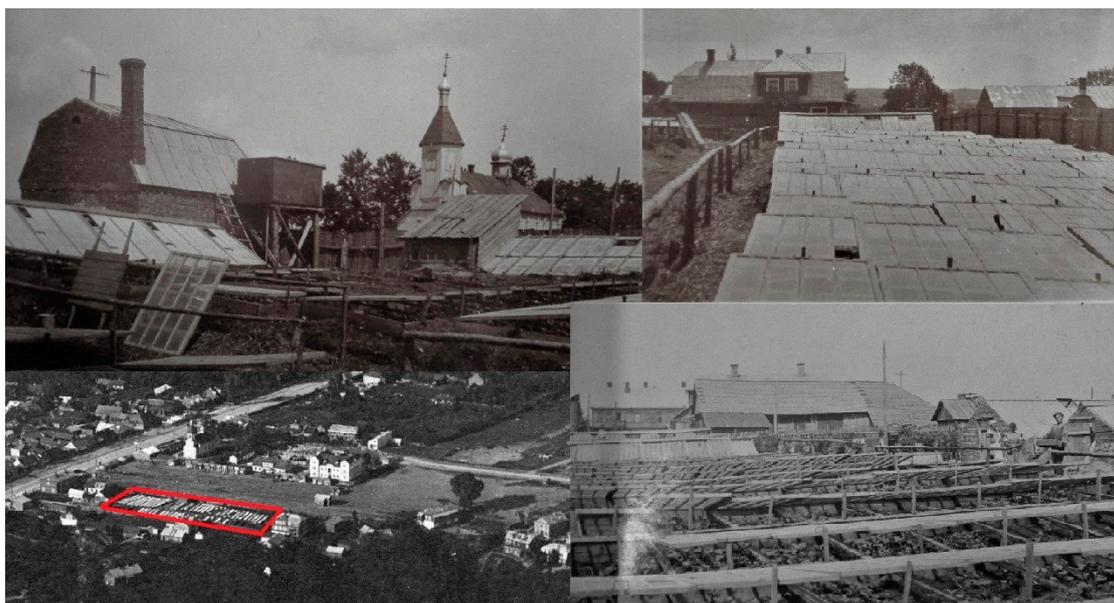


Figure 6. The plot of the greenhouses and hotbeds is marked with red lines (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).

The most prominent landmark of the block became Christ’s Resurrection Church, which was built in the 1930s. The idea to build such a church in Kaunas had been conceived soon after the restoration of the State of Lithuania on 16 February 1918, with a clear notion also to symbolize the resurrection of the Lithuanian nation [33]. In 1922, the priest Pranas Bučys wrote that it would be appropriate for the whole nation, feeling its unity and power, to build a remarkable monument—a church that should stand in Žaliakalnis and dominate the whole of Kaunas and its surroundings [34].

In 1928, the Kaunas city municipality donated a plot of land at the corner of Žemaičių and Aušros streets for the building of this church. In 1933, the project plan of the architect Karolis Reisonas was approved, and the construction of the church started in the same year [33].

The press of the time stressed that the design of the church “harmonizes the modernist, ecclesiastical and monumental spirits” and that the building would not only dominate the whole of Kaunas and its surroundings, but would also “look particularly imposing from the city centre” [35] (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Christ’s Resurrection Church. View from the city’s lower terrace. (a) 1930s (source: Kaunas City Museum); (b) 1960s (photographer Stanislovas Lukošius, source: Kaunas City Museum); (c) 2020 (photo courtesy of Arvydas Pakštalis).

The construction of the church was slow because it was carried out with public donations. The structure was completed in 1940, but the interior remained unfinished, the tower's staircase was not yet assembled, and the exterior was still unrendered [36].

During the construction process, further work on the church's surrounding environment was also discussed and continued. A square was planned to replace the marketplace. However, this idea was also criticized. It was argued that the space in front of the church should not be left empty, as it gave a very bad impression when viewed from Savanorių Avenue, and the shanties and the Orthodox church on Žemaičių Street and Savanorių Avenue should be demolished because the buildings were in poor condition. Part of the cleared site should be given over to Christ's Resurrection Church, and the other part should be developed with large modern buildings on the frontage on Savanorių Avenue [37]. However, the criticism was not considered. The project plan for the square prepared in 1938 was confirmed in 1939 [38] (Figure 8).

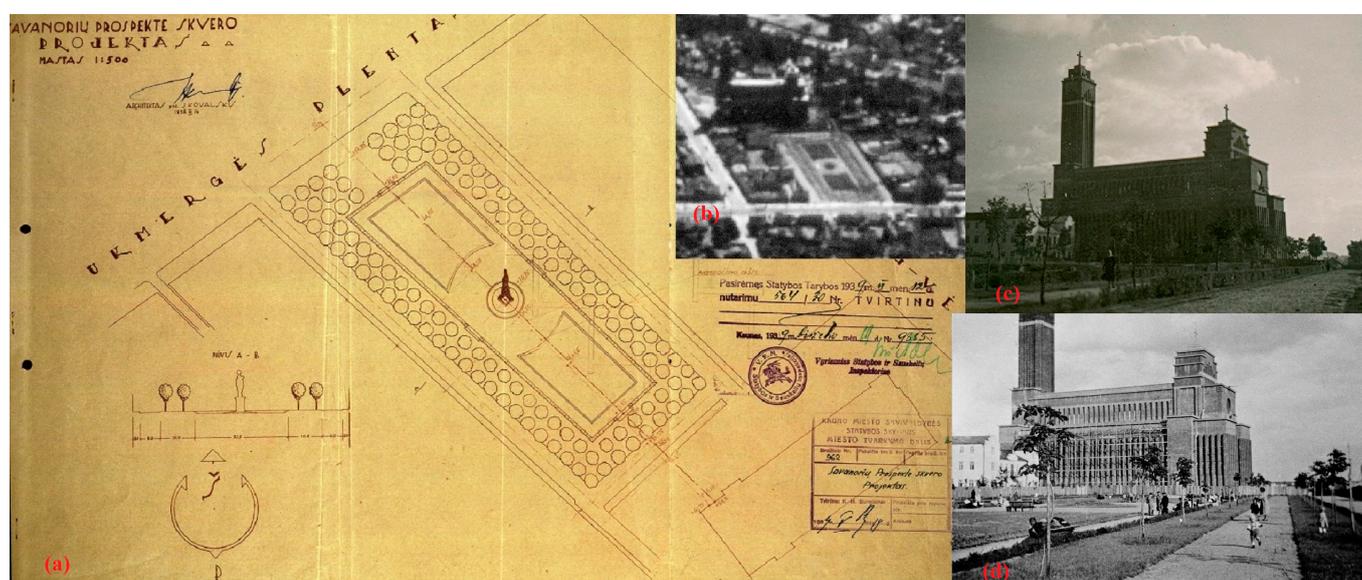


Figure 8. The square. (a) The project plan, 1938 (source: Kaunas Regional State Archives); (b) aerial photo from 1939 (source: Kaunas Regional State Archives); (c,d) 1940 (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).

Christ's Resurrection Church completion work was halted by the first Soviet occupation in 1940. The unfinished building “turned into a symbol of the loss of statehood” [39].

After the Second World War, with the start of the second Soviet occupation, restrictions on religious freedom prevented the church from carrying out its direct functions. Like many buildings of this kind, the Soviet authorities converted the church into an auxiliary warehouse, but later decided to set up a factory for radio devices there.

On 8 February 1952, the Council of Ministers of the USSR ordered the preparation of a project plan for the construction of the Kaunas Radio Factory. The project was prepared by the Gosudarstvennyy Institut Kompleksnogo Proyektirovaniya in Leningrad (now St Petersburg). The construction documents for the factory state that it would be a specialized manufacturing plant for radios and televisions [40]. In 1953–1955, Christ's Resurrection Church was reconstructed into a factory building. Slabs were laid on reinforced concrete frames, dividing the side aisles into three floors and the middle aisle into five floors. Every second pilaster in the outer walls of the side aisles was dismantled; the windows were widened, and a tambour was added in front. The building was commissioned as a factory in 1955 [36]. A radio antenna was installed above the tower after the demolition of the cross [41] (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9. The Kaunas Radio Factory construction, 1953 (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).



Figure 10. Christ's Resurrection Church reconstructed into a factory building (photographer Stanislovas Lukošius, 1964, source: Kaunas City Museum).

The basement and five floors of the building housed various manufacturing workshops, designers, technologists, and administrators, along with a buffet. In the early years of the factory, the building was used for both metal stamping and galvanic work, as it was the only factory building. In the 1980s, the basement of the church housed archive rooms, the first to third floors housed tool rooms, and the fourth and fifth floors housed engineering offices [42].

Despite the reconstruction of the church building, the Kaunas Radio Factory was planned to be expanded with the construction of new buildings in an existing block, which,

as already mentioned, contained a school, an Orthodox church, greenhouses, and several private houses (Figures 11 and 12).

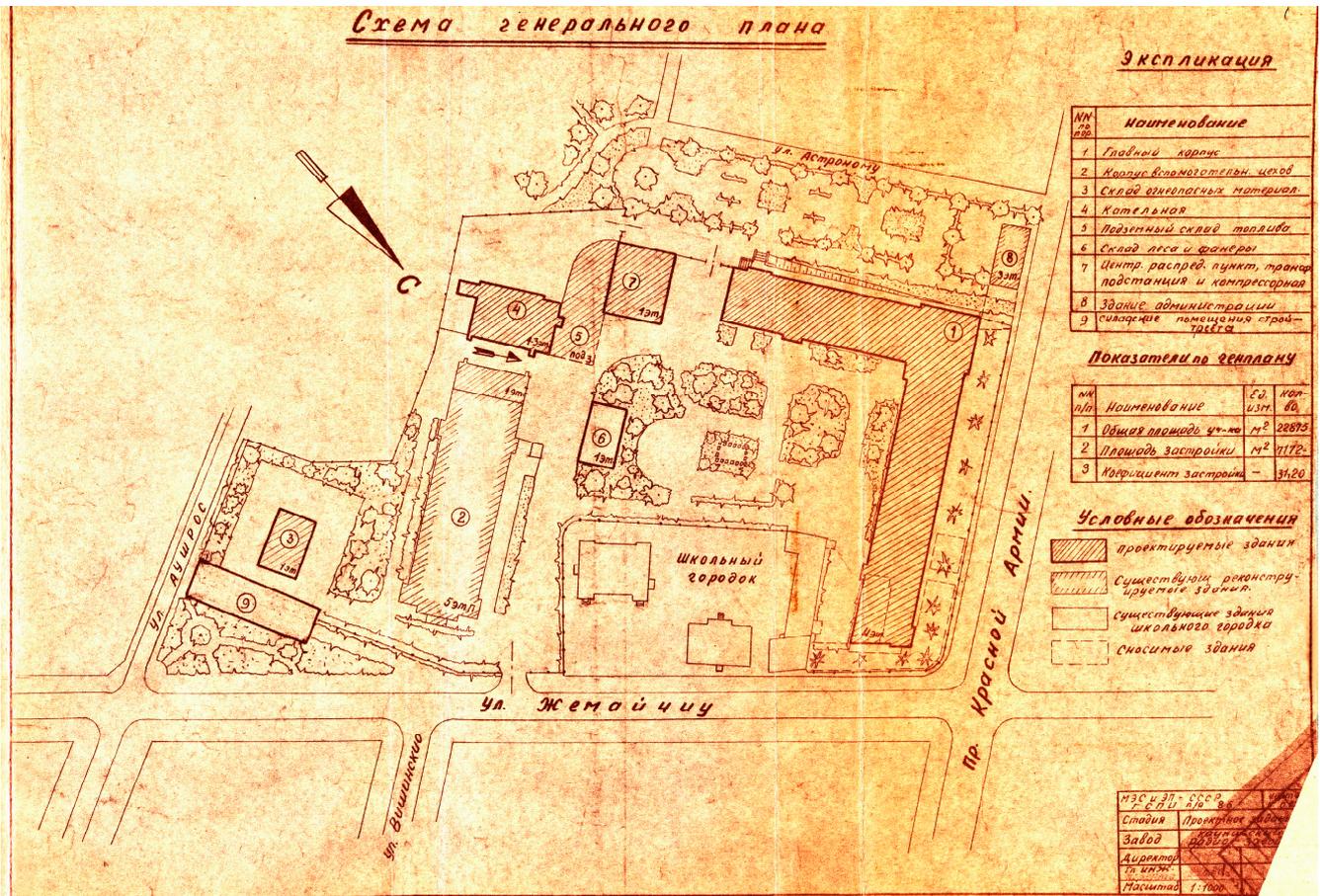


Figure 11. The General Plan scheme of the Kaunas Radio Factory, 1957. (1) Main factory building; (2) Building of auxiliary workshops; (3) Flammable material storage; (4) Boiler room; (5) Underground fuel storage tanks; (6) Plywood warehouse; (7) Electrical substation; (8) Administration buildings (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).



Figure 12. The project plan of the Kaunas Radio Factory, 1950s (source: Kaunas City Museum).

On 20 March 1952, by decision of the Executive Committee of the Kaunas City Council of People's Deputies, the land on which the buildings of the Kaunas St Andrew's Orthodox Church community stood was handed over for the construction of the Kaunas Radio Factory [43]. In 1953, the decisions of said committee, in preparation for the expansion of the factory, ordered the eviction of the inhabitants of three buildings on Savanorių Avenue and Astronomijos Street. (Figure 13) The greenhouses and the boiler house of the Teaching Farm of the Academy of Agriculture, which were located in this area, were also to be demolished [44,45].



Figure 13. View of the wing along Astronomijos Street (source: Lithuanian Central State Archives).

On 11 June 1958, again by decision of the Executive Committee of the Kaunas City Council of People's Deputies, considering the further needs of the development of the Kaunas Radio Factory—the construction of production, cultural, and administrative buildings—it was decided to take over the buildings of the Kaunas I Auxiliary Boarding School on Žemaičių Street [46] (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Žemaičių Street, around 1960 (photographer Stanislovas Lukošius, source: Kaunas City Museum).

On 24 September 1958, by a further decision of the executive committee, three plots of land on Žemaičių and Aušros streets were allocated for the construction of an administrative–cultural–residential building for the expansion of the Kaunas Radio Factory [47]. By expropriating the plots and evicting the inhabitants and institutions, the territory of the Kaunas Radio Factory was expanded and reshaped, opening the possibility of constructing new buildings.

In 1957, the wing along Astronomijos Street was exploited. The production workshops were moved there from the church building. In 1958, construction began on the wing on Savanorių Avenue. The metal stamping presses and other machines were moved to this building [42] (Figure 15).



Figure 15. View of the wing along Savanorių Avenue, 1959 (photographer Stanislovas Lukošius, source: Kaunas City Museum).

In 1962, the construction of the building located in the factory's inner area was completed. A year later, two large wings on Žemaičių Street were exploited and the construction of the Kaunas Radio Factory in this block was finally completed [48]. Later, when new factory buildings were built in another part of the city, the building of the church served a more auxiliary function.

4. Prologue to Conversion

During a period of active industrial activity, vibrations severely damaged the former church building [36]. In 1985, the Kaunas City Construction and Architecture Research Institute was commissioned to prepare reconstruction works for the building. After receiving suggestions on what should be performed first, the tower was glazed and the metal structures inside were reinforced [49].

In 1988, when the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Lithuanian: Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis) began, Kaunas believers began to demand that Christ's Resurrection Church be returned to them. The press published a proclamation by Professor Alfredas Smailys: "We want to have a sanctuary that symbolizes our Resurrection, which began on 16 February 1918, and which we have lived again after 50 years of slavery and oppression" [50]. A Church Restoration Committee was formed, which was legally legitimized in March 1989 [51]. Henrikas Žukauskas was invited to join the committee as chief architect. Discussions began on whether it was worth rebuilding the church and returning it to the believers [52]. When Žukauskas commissioned an assessment of the condition of the church, it was found that the masonry of the building had deteriorated in many places and that many of the vertical windows were bricked up and would have to be removed. There were also vertical cracks in the walls. Despite this, it was decided to renovate the building [53].

On 14 February 1990, Christ's Resurrection Church was returned to the faith community by a resolution of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania. An agreement was concluded with the factory management to vacate the church building and to move the factory's tool workshop. The factory was obliged to restore and hand over the building in the condition it was in when the factory had been founded, at its own expense including for building materials and to do so by 1993 [54]. However, the factory's bankruptcy meant that the church could not be restored to its former state, and further work was carried out on the initiative of the authorities and the public.

As early as 1993, Christ's Resurrection Church was included in the Register of Immovable Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Lithuania, recognizing its architectural, historical, sacral, and landscape values. The last named was recognized for the authenticity of the cultural landscape of the immediate surroundings—the historically formed urban development of Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis [55].

In 1993–1997, due to a lack of funds, only the most necessary works were carried out to protect the church building from further decay. In 1997–1998, the strengthening of the main structures of the building was completed, the masonry of the pilasters and side balconies was finished, the small tower was rebuilt, and other works were done. By 1999, the main tower, which was in a state of emergency, was reinforced with metal structures. The church had been practically restored to its pre-World War II state [55].

The restoration of the church was initially carried out by the architect H. Žukauskas. Later, this work was continued by another architect, Prof. Algimantas Sprindys, who had to assess not only the changed urban situation, but also the functional requirements of the church; the space of the church needed to be used not only for sacred ceremonies, but also for cultural activities [51]. The reconstruction of Christ's Resurrection Church was completed in 2004 [33].

This church is probably the only building in Kaunas which, by virtue of its tall tower, is visible from any side of the city. It is also one of the most characteristic examples of modernist architecture in Kaunas. The exterior of the building is geometric, with rectangular shapes. The graduated silhouette, the dashing main tower, and the dense tall windows emphasize its verticality [56].

The restoration of the church became a noteworthy aspect of the image of Kaunas, giving it both symbolic and architectural significance. The church occupies a dominant position in the cityscape and gives impetus to the conversion of the industrial area on the block (Figure 16).



Figure 16. View from Kaunas center, 2022 (photo courtesy of Arvydas Pakštalis).

5. From Ideas to “Radio City”

After the restoration of Lithuanian independence on 11 March 1990, the Kaunas Radio Factory was reorganized into four independent state enterprises. One of them became the inheritor of the factory's debts and liabilities [54]. The company was privatized in 1993 and

declared bankrupt on 25 April 1995 [57]. After the bankruptcy, the former factory buildings housed several small private companies in need of premises at the time. Despite having some functional use, the former factory buildings had become something of an architectural blight on the city. Christ's Resurrection Church, which had become the visual axis of the city, was under restoration, and the redevelopment of the former factory buildings and the quarter would need to be carried out in a comprehensive manner, taking into account their functional use for public and business purposes. In 2005, the former buildings of the Kaunas Radio Factory and a 2-hectare plot next to the church were acquired by the company Nuova 5. Although the intention had not been to undertake any radical conversion of the buildings when they were acquired, it was decided, after consultation with specialists, that the conversion of the factory was essential. The original vision for the conversion was to demolish the building inside the complex. The possibility of slightly increasing the height of the buildings in the factory complex was also considered, but without overshadowing the nearby church. Discussions were held on the facade of the building in front of the church, the possible height of the building, and the shape of the roof. The architect Audrys Karalius, who took part in the discussion, stressed that "The first thing we have to do is to achieve a dialogue between Christ's Resurrection Church and the building to be reconstructed" [58].

In order to find the best conversion idea, in 2008, Nuova 5 together with the Kaunas branch of the Architects' Association of Lithuania launched an open competition for the redevelopment of the block. The only condition of the competition was that the buildings to be planned could not be taller than the terrace of the church. Proposals were submitted by six groups of architects [59] (Figure 17).

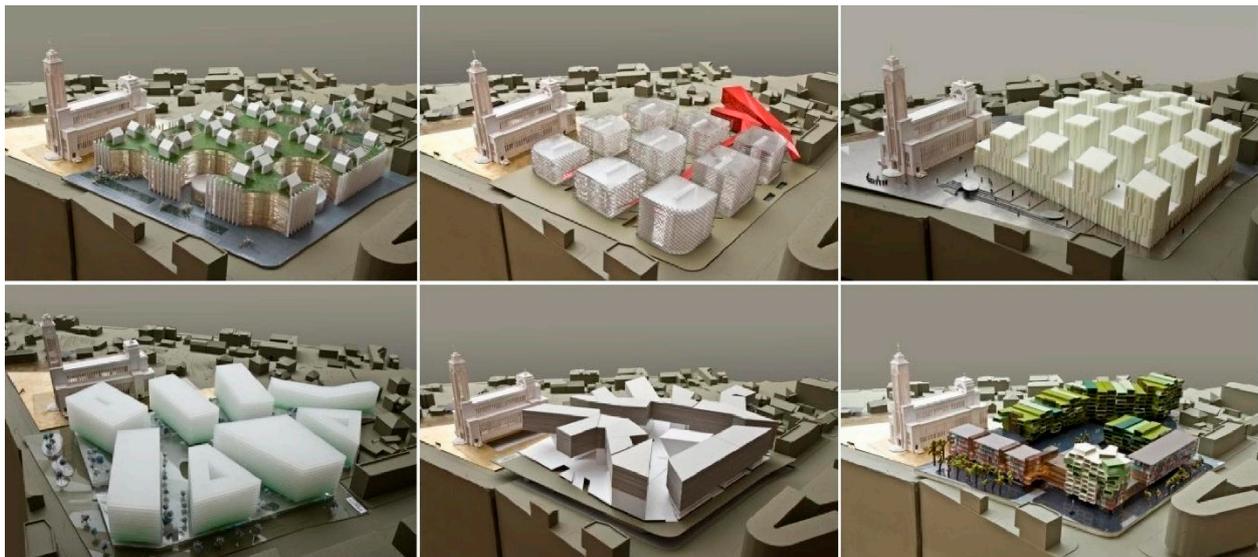


Figure 17. The project proposals for the conversion, 2008 (source: Architects' Association of Lithuania).

The plan "Žalias kalnas", by a team led by the architects Gintaras Balčytis and Linas Tuleikis, proposed to preserve the built-up area of the former Kaunas Radio Factory and to harmoniously blend into the nature of Žaliakalnis and the homestead-type built-up environment (Figure 18). Further, a two-level underground car park was planned under the entire plot.

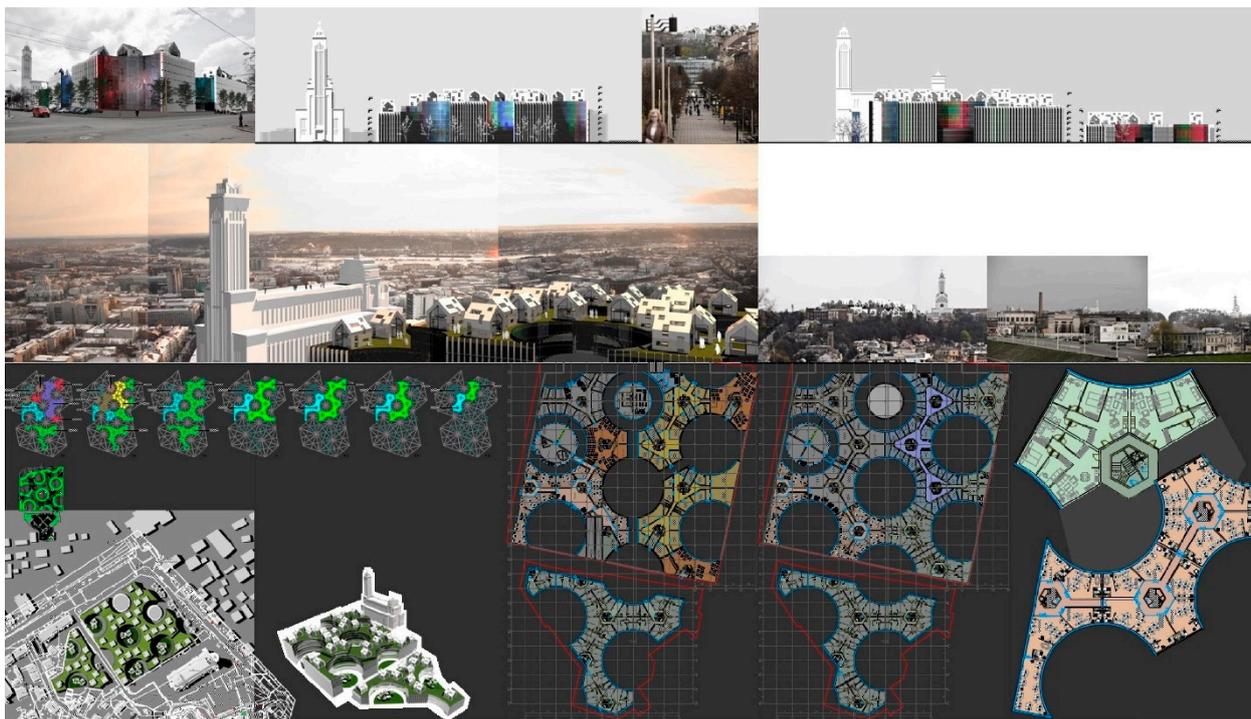


Figure 18. The presentation of the proposal “Žalias kalnas” (photo courtesy of Linas Tuleikis).

According to the authors of the proposal, the main idea of this project was the inherent right of human beings to work and live in a quality environment, to live in a large complex, and to feel nature around them, because “the extending slopes of Žaliakalnis that are growing into a building next to the Resurrection Church are not a construct, but a continuation of nature. The building has been designed to preserve the semantic codes of the site—maintaining the established constructions of the former factory—but closely linked to the sensitive environment—the slopes of Žaliakalnis with its fragile homestead buildings, and the national monument—the Resurrection Church. To achieve a corrective relationship with the church, the base of the complex has been created in white with a vertical graphic similar to the church’s pilasters, serving to reinforce the church’s strange location and orientation. The base of the main building, which descends in terraces toward the hillside, as if merging with the terrain of Žaliakalnis, had become a natural playground with greenery for the homestead buildings, creating a special quality of life: to live in the centre yet to have a green plot outside the window [60].”

According to this project, the building would be divided into circular courtyards, which would serve as a dividing line between spaces with different functions. The plan was to locate public spaces—a hotel, a conference center, and offices—along Savanorių Avenue. The building was planned with terraces to allow for good views from the windows. On the terraces of the building, small two-story houses were used to create intimate spaces that create the mood of living in a cozy village with richly greened courtyards [50]. The authors of this project considered the historical urban development of Žaliakalnis, which is based on the ideas of garden city planning. This is confirmed by the desire to be in harmony with the principles of the farmstead built-up character of Žaliakalnis and its natural environment.

In another proposal submitted to the competition, entitled “Parkas” (Park), the authors aimed to create an image of a park open to the public. The proposal was to preserve the buildings of the Kaunas Radio Factory on Žemaičių Street and to create spacious lofts. A covered car park would also be built, above which pedestrians could walk. A business center and a hotel were planned for Savanorių Avenue. The third proposal submitted, entitled “Želdynai” (Greenery), proposed the construction of nine similarly scaled buildings

with green roofs, of which seven would be for apartments and two for offices. The adjacent elongated, broken-shaped structure would provide space for a hotel, a restaurant, and a conference center. A fourth proposal, “Kubas” (Cube), involved 19 similarly shaped cubes on a plane several floors high. The ground floors would be used for public use, commerce, and offices. A fifth project, “Laisvas” (Free), envisaged a free-form development of the building complex. Offices and public facilities were planned for Savanorių Avenue, and residential buildings were planned for the slope of Žaliakalnis. Lastly, the sixth project in the competition, “Atsigrežė” (Turned Back), proposed to turn the residential buildings toward the church. To avoid obstructing the city’s skyline, the ground floors of the buildings were raised [59].

After the architects’ jury evaluated the submitted proposals, it was decided not to award the main prize to any of them. None of the projects were considered to have fully met the conditions of the competition. This was because the authors of the proposals did not pay enough attention to the urban analysis, the traffic flow system, and the parking situation. In addition, the projects proposed would have been in competition with Christ’s Resurrection Church in terms of their independence and originality. All the buildings planned in the projects were too high and the intensity of the development too great. Even though no winner was chosen, the second prize was awarded to the project “Žalias kalnas” by the group led by the architects Linas Tuleikis and Gintaras Balčytis [61].

Perhaps it was the project proposals submitted to the competition that led to the inclusion of a provision in the 2013–2023 Kaunas City Municipality Master Plan regarding the preservation of the dominance of Christ’s Resurrection Church in the field of its visual influence, without creating perceived competitors [62].

A new idea for the redevelopment of the former Kaunas Radio Factory buildings was proposed by the real estate project management company Citus. After acquiring the property, Citus presented a unique multifunctional conversion project plan “Radio City” in 2020 (Figure 19). The main idea of the project was that people could live, work, create, develop, relax, and entertain in one place. The total area of the project was set at 15,000 m², of which 13,000 m² were allocated for lofts, microapartments, common working spaces, and recreation and leisure areas, with a total of 330 lofts planned, ranging in size from 20 to 44 m². A large rooftop space was created for various leisure activities, with different areas, such as a green lounge, children’s activity spaces, relaxation zones, and a city observation deck. The architectural part of the project has been implemented by the team of architecture studio Archas: Gintaras Čepurna, Tomas Kuleša, Laimis Savickas, and Neringa Sobeščukaitė ir Jolita Slendzoka [63].

The conversion project by Citus is divided into four parts and is being implemented in two phases. The first phase was completed in 2022 and included the creation of spaces in a wing called “Nida”, (the buildings are named after radio factory products) on Astronomijos Street and a wing called “Banga” on Savanorių Avenue. In the second phase, scheduled for completion in 2024, the reconstruction works will include the “Daina” wing on the side of the church and the “Minija” wing on Žemaičių Street (Figure 20).



Figure 19. “Radio City” conversion project by Citus, 2020 (visualization courtesy of UAB Citus).

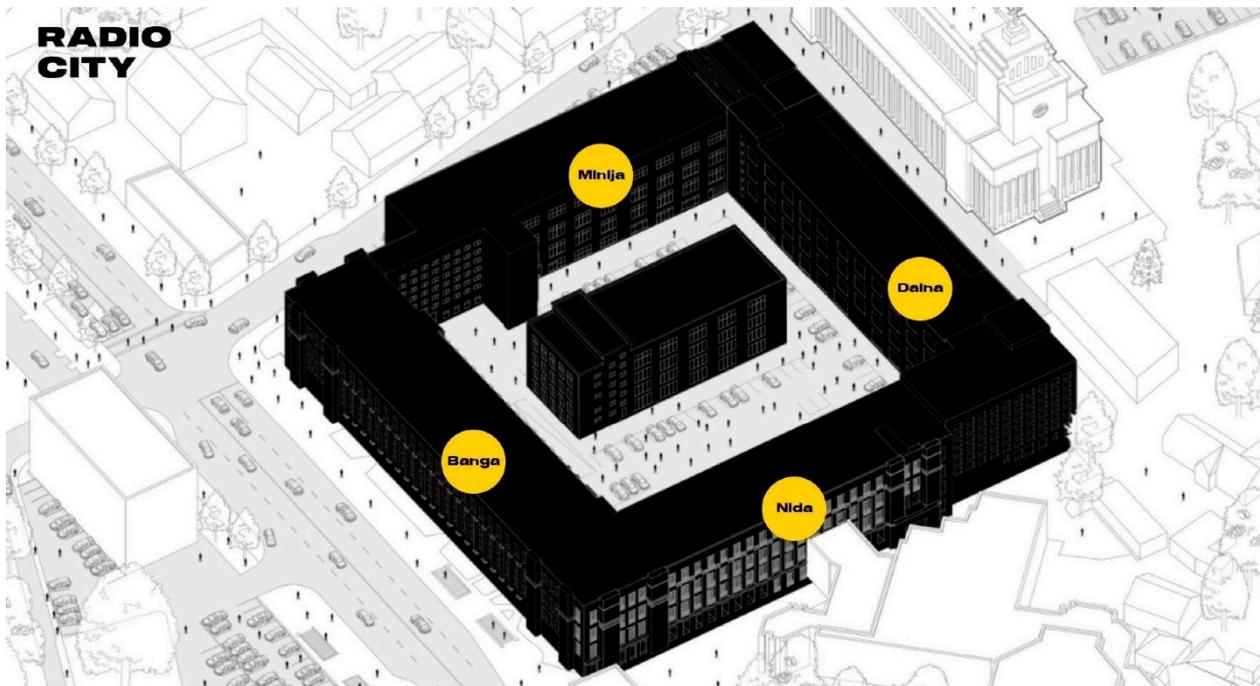


Figure 20. Massing diagram of “Radio City” (source: UAB Citus).

The facades of “Nida” and “Banga” have been coated with coarse decorative plaster to give them an industrial modernity. The industrial identity of the buildings has been complemented by balconies with rough metal structures (Figure 21). “Daina” is planned to be clad in a matt mirror finish reflecting the architecture of the church, giving a sense of wider space (Figure 22). Inside, the original staircases have been refurbished, while the commercial areas combine metal and decorative concrete elements. The common areas have been kept authentic in their light fittings, filing cabinets, information signs, chairs, and finishing details [63].



Figure 21. The facades of “Nida” and “Banga” (visualization courtesy of UAB Citus).



Figure 22. The facade of “Daina” (visualization courtesy of UAB Citus).

The “Radio City” project reveals the intangible aspects of the former radio factory and the history of the people who worked and created there. Aspects of the former cultural activities of the factory workers, such as the factory choir, the dance group, the museum, or the film studio, reflect the ideas of the workers’ drive and creativity at the time, and have been incorporated into the concept of the conversion. Mindaugas Vanagas, the founder and shareholder of CITUS, claimed that “the history of the former factory, its creative aura and ideas, were far ahead of their time and provide a great impact which we wish to resurrect and highlight further. So all spaces, architectural and design options, cooperation with artists and the creative community—people full of ideas—everything is focused on implementing this idea and bringing the centre of attraction back to the top of Žaliakalnis [64]”. The building has become not only a former industrial space, but also a space for the realization of future creative ideas.

In a sensitive part of the city, the conversion of a contested industrial legacy has transformed the complex into something nondissonant with the symbolically meaningful

Christ's Resurrection Church. The former factory building no longer competes with the church. The bright color of the facades of "Nida" and "Banga" creates the illusion of a reduced building and gives the impression of a unified complex with the church, which retains its dominant position. The new mirrored facade of the "Daina" wing, which used to limit the church's dominance of the space, would visually accentuate the church even more.

6. Conclusions

The conversion of the factory complex smoothly avoided exacerbating the problem of the factory as dissonant heritage. The priority given to the reconstruction of the church avoided competitive tensions between the church—which has symbolic significance for the nation's rebirth—and the factory building, built during the occupation period. The reconstruction processes of the two opposing objects, which took place at a chronologically wide interval, showed that because both the political authorities and most of the citizens preferred the reconstruction of the church, a more objective field of discussion could be formed regarding the conversion of the former radio factory. The long-term, progressively intensifying debate on conversion enabled the crystallization of an efficient solution for the use of the factory complex. The call for a competition for the conversion of the factory, launched in 2008, revealed conceptual gaps that could have led to the deterioration of the urban cityscape. In the end, the final project for the conversion of the radio factory was implemented by avoiding confrontation with the symbolic architectural heritage objects on the block but highlighted its industrial function by preserving authentic details in the interior and adding new accents to the exterior.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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