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## THE UNIQUENESS OF RZHEPISHEVSKY'S CONSTRUCTIONS IN ART NOUVEAU STYLE ILLUSTRATED WITH BUILDINGS ALONG DARVINA ST. IN KHARKIV CITY

## NIEPOWTARZALNOŚĆ SECESYJNYCH BUDYNKÓW ALEKSANDRA RZEPISZEWSKIEGO NA PRZYKŁADZIE OBIEKTÓW PRZY ULICY DARWINA W CHARKOWIE

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### ABSTRACT

The architecture of the XIX-XX century turn was marked by the flourishing of Art Nouveau style. The important point was that the style had its own features in different regions. The individual interpretation of Art Nouveau style methods was given by the outstanding architect of Poland, Russia and Ukraine A.I. Rzhepishevsky. This is clearly illustrated by the example of three objects located on Darvina Street in Kharkiv city.

Keywords: architecture of Art Nouveau, A.I. Rzhepishevsky, researches, regional features, Northern Art Nouveau.

### STRESZCZENIE

Architektura przełomu XIX - XX wieków odznaczyła się rozkwitem secesji. Ważnym punktem było to, że ten styl w różnych regionach miał swoje charakterystyczne cechy. Jego techniki były w szczególności traktowane przez wybitnego architekta Polski, Rosji i Ukrainy Aleksandra Rzepiszewskiego, co najbardziej uwidoczniło się na przykładzie trzech obiektów znajdujących się na ulicy Darwina w Charkowie.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura secesji, Aleksander Rzepiszewski, badania, regionalne cechy, północna secesja.

## 1. INTRODUCTION. THE VALUE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL ART NOUVEAU HERITAGE IN UKRAINE AND THE NEED FOR ITS STUDY AND CONSERVATION

The European Parliament declared 2018 the Year of Cultural Heritage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [19], International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) [12], International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) [6] contributed greatly to the preservation, revival and protection of the cultural heritage of our planet. Similar government projects are operating in Ukraine - "Community-Led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns" (COMUS) (2015-2018) [2], "UNESCO World Heritage in Young Hands" (2016-2017) [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Moscow/pdf/WH\\_Youth\\_kit\\_rus.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Moscow/pdf/WH_Youth_kit_rus.pdf) [20] Thereby we are paying more and more attention to the issues of reviving and preserving of the heritage of Art Nouveau era. A high level of interest is beheld, both in the world community and in Ukraine.

The architecture of Art Nouveau is one of the brightest pages in the development of world architecture. Secession, Jugendstil, Liberty, Art Nouveau, Modernismo - such names this style has received in different countries. And it was not a simple replication. In each title, the features of a particular country or region were laid. Despite of the large number of scientific studies devoted to this topic, the research of the peculiarities of this architecture continues in various regions even today.

The directions of studies of Art Nouveau architecture are very diverse. In 2007, research on Otto Wagner and his work in Art Nouveau "Otto Wagner dan Jugendstil" was carried out by Bimo Hernowo [5]. The outcomes of the diagnostic materials examination of the restored Art Nouveau buildings in Italy, Portugal and Poland were presented in October 2011 in the work "Materials and Technologies in Art Nouveau Architecture: Façade the decoration of cases in Italy, Portugal and Poland for a consistent restoration" by Franco Sandrolini and Alice Franzoni [3]. "Innowacyjny charakter twórczości Victora Horta" (Innovative nature of architectural creation of Victor Horta) was described in February 2015 by Barbara Wieder [22]. The Belgian architect Victor Horta was one of the first, and also one of the most outstanding representatives of Art Nouveau architecture. The innovative nature of his work has had a significant impact on the development of architecture of the XXth century. "The Liberty Style - Italian Art Nouveau Architecture", here Vasily Goryunov has described Italian architecture of the end of XIXth – beginning of XXth century [21]. In Poland there are many studies devoted to local features of secession architecture: Stanisław Łukawski, «Secesja w Łodzi», Maria Krysiak «Secesja w Katowicach», Anna Szkurłat «Secesja w architekturze Warszawy», Maciej Gutowski, Bartłomiej Gutowski «Architektura secesyjna w Galicji», Jan Skuratowicz, Leszek Szurkowski «Secesja w architekturze Poznania» others [1,9,15,16,23]. This determines the origin of the term "architecture of Italian liberty", its main centers, its features and the buildings of its leading representatives. In France, there were works revealing the regional features of authentic architecture for example Nancy as a Center of Art Nouveau Architecture, 1895-1914 made by Peter Clericuzio in December 2011. Nancy in Art Nouveau style has been described by Peter Clericuzio [1]. The city was an example of authentic architecture, which was determined by regionalism. Some of the latest research works are devoted to the study of Art Nouveau in China. The work "The influence of natural landscapes and Chinese traditions in the transformation of architecture and national and romantic architecture in China" was represented in December 2017 by N. M. Demin, Yu. V. Ivashko, Shuang Li [13].

The main provisions of scientific sources were used during the research.

In Ukraine, studies of Art Nouveau were handled by D.V.Sarabyanov [15], V.S.Goryunov and M.P.Tubli [4]. The heritage of Russian Art Nouveau is analyzed in E.I. Kirichenko's works [8]. The most thorough study of the principles of restoration and reconstruction of Art Nouveau Ukrainian buildings is considered in M.M. Stakian's work [18]. Nowadays, a huge amount of factual material on the architecture of the late XIXth - early XXth cen-

ture is accumulated. However, the monuments of Kharkiv school of Art Nouveau have not been studied enough. Among the works that reveal the features of this architectural school, one can name the recently appeared scientific works devoted to coloristics in Art Nouveau. This is a thesis, which was made by I.I. Selischeva and called "Colouristics in compositional means system of modern architecture in Ukraine" [16]. "Ukrainian national-romantic trend of Art Nouveau in Kharkiv architecture" was explored by B.I. Bozhinsky. Y.V. Ivashko's work "Fundamentals of Art Nouveau in Ukrainian architecture (late XIXth - early XXth century)" is fundamental in this field [7]. However, the issues of regional features of the architectural heritage of this era in Ukraine are not sufficiently studied.

The purpose of the paper is to draw public attention to the heritage of architectural structures of Art Nouveau made by Alexander Ivanovich Rzhepishovsky. It is vital to evaluate objectively and realize the significance of this heritage, executed at the level of the best examples of European Art Nouveau style and to preserve it in its original form for descendants

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was carried out on the basis of the system approach, which allows examining the objects under investigation as a system formed with the help of interconnected elements. The system approach is applied both to the consideration of individual objects of the architect Rzhepishovsky, and to the study them as the part of his creative heritage. In the work, general scientific methods of research, such as observation, comparison, analysis and synthesis, analogy, generalization, were also used.

## **3. VITALITY OF THE RESEARCH OF KHARKIV ART NOUVEAU SCHOOL**

The relevance of the research of regional schools of Art Nouveau in Ukraine is conditioned by the need for preservation, restoration, reconstruction and new adaptation in accordance with the needs of the present time. However, the monuments of Kharkiv school of Art Nouveau have not been studied enough.

One of the most interesting architects who worked in Kharkiv in Art Nouveau style is Rzhepishovsky A.I., who simultaneously belongs to the cultures of Poland, Russia and Ukraine. The study of his creative method and the features of his works is relevant both from a scientific and practical points of view.

Kharkiv at the end of XIXth - beg. XXth century was a city in which people of many nationalities lived. It was primarily Ukrainians, Russians, Jews. The Germans had their settlement in the area of the present Pushkinskaya Street, which was then called German. There were many Polish who made a huge contribution to Kharkiv city development, as an outstanding center of science and art.

We understand that the name and surname of a person, his religion or place of birth can not always be a sign of nationality. Looking back, we see that most of Kharkiv architects belong to the St. Petersburg Architectural School. They are A.N. Beketov, A.I. Rzhepishovsky, I.I. Zagoskin, Yu.S. Tsaune, B.G. Mikhalovsky, B.I. Gershkovich, V.Kh. Nemkin, V.V. Velichko, N.V. Vasiliev. All these masters brought Northern capital features to the look of Kharkiv city and left unforgettable architectural monuments. The diversity of representatives who worked in Art Nouveau style led to a large concentration of buildings of this style on the streets of Kharkiv city.

Studying the creative biographies of masters allows to reveal features of their time. By the time of the heyday of Art Nouveau style, the beginning of the creative activity of the architect Rzhepishovsky, which was one of the most outstanding figures in Kharkiv architecture of this period, is related. A.I. Rzhepishovsky's buildings and projects clearly

show the main features, different shades and semitones of architecture of the turn of the XIX-XX century, amazing diversity and strength of his creative potential.

A.I. Rzhepishovsky's grandfather, Grigory Moiseevich Rzhepishovsky, came to Russia after the Warsaw Uprising of 1830, when many Polish preferred to leave the rebellious land. In 1882, the son of Grigory Moiseyevich, Ivan Grzegorovich Rzhepishovsky, the father of the architect, served in the Izmail police. Before that, he had already served in Iasi and Balti. A.I. Rzhepishovsky himself was born in Izmail, studied and lived in St. Petersburg, trained in Paris, and in 1910 he came to Kharkov, having won a tender for the construction of the Astoria Hotel and the Kupechesky Bank. Here he built 27 buildings, 20 of which are architecture monuments. The Northern Art Nouveau style of St. Petersburg, the Northern Capital of that time, was typical for the architect. Kirikov described this style like this [9]: "The true language of natural materials - wood and stone, pointed stylization of the medieval motives and folk architecture of the North, the organic relationship with the landscape environment - these are the main features that determined the regional originality of this style direction". Rzhepishovsky combined the characteristic features of this style and the southern Kharkiv color inherent in his works.

The difficult time period in which Rzhepishovsky's life was going on included economic crises, the First World War, Civil War, and Revolution. It was after the revolution when the master left Kharkiv and tried to emigrate, but the fate decreed otherwise. He met a woman whom he passionately fell in love with and left the family. He moved to Moscow with her and continued his work.

In the current period of rapprochement between Ukraine and Poland, when the history of two countries evokes mutual interest, much attention is paid to the work of Rzhepishovsky as an architect with Polish origin. Many studies were conducted for the International Symposium "Ukrainian-Polish Architectural Visions. A glance through time and epochs" in 2016. The work "Creativity of Architects with Polish Origin in the Art Nouveau era in Kharkiv" was presented by the author [10]. This topic was also studied by Yu.Yu. Polyakova in the paper "Kharkiv Architects with Polish origin" [14] The rapid upsurge of the master's work in 1910 and its fruitful architectural life in Kharkiv is described in A. Leibfreid's works [11].

#### **4. THE UNIQUENESS OF RZHEPISHEVSKY'S CONSTRUCTIONS IN ART NOUVEAU STYLE ILLUSTRATED WITH BUILDINGS ALONG DARVINA ST.**

Let us consider building details along Darvina Street numbers 4, 15, 29 made by A.I. Rzhepishovsky. Darvina Street is an architectural heritage of Kharkiv city and a number of architecture monuments are located on this street. They were built in a variety of styles. (Fig. 1)

The street itself appeared on the Kharkiv map at the beginning of the XIXth century and was laid on the territory of a garden. The garden's landowner was M.P. Kulikovsky. Hence the name of the street was Sadovo-Kulikovskaya. Mass building on the street began in 1885, when the Technological Institute was opened nearby. Significant interest was shown to this street, when part of it was separated into a singular street on which the house and the office of the governor was erected. This street was called the Governor's. Such attention to this part of the city served as fast and very diverse building of th Sadovo-Kulikovskaya Street by famous Kharkiv architects. There we can see the buildings made by A.N. Beketova, V.V. Velichko, M.I. Dashkevich, I.I. Tenne and others.

The composition of the street is irregular. That part of the street, which was laid along the Kulikovsky gardens, has a much larger width. In addition, the attention is paid to the fact that one side of the street is built up with low storey mansions, and the opposite part consists of tall buildings. All the greenery of the former gardens remained in

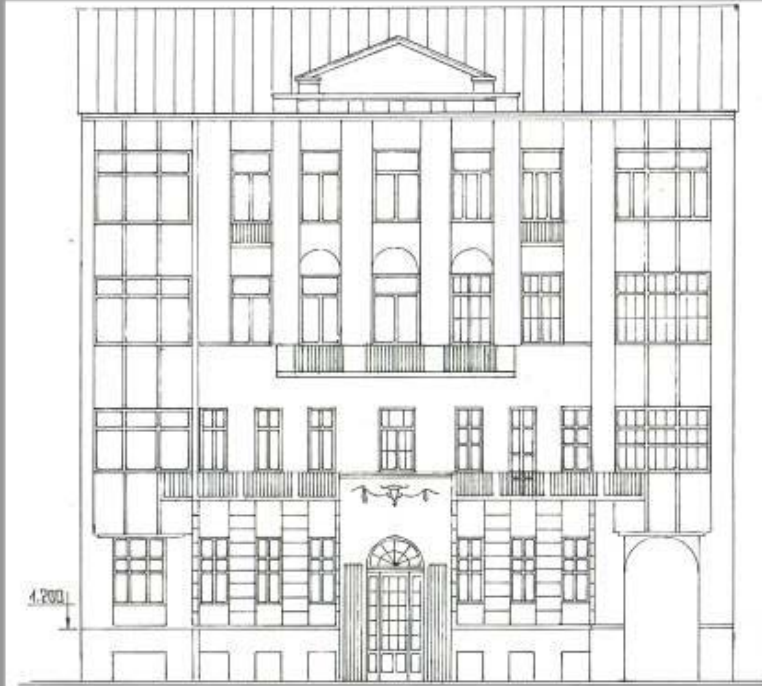
the yards of the mansions and the facades of the historic buildings appear completely open to us. The other side of the street, built in the 30-40 years of the XXth century, has a lawn with trees and buildings located deep, far from the 'red' line. Rzhepishevsky's projects were realized on it in 1912, 1913 and 1915. All the buildings belongs to Art Nouveau style, but they are different in composition and layout. Mastery of the architect was manifested in an individual approach to each of these buildings. It shows how skillfully Rzhepishevsky used a palette of artistic means and techniques of Art Nouveau, masterfully and accurately choosing the necessary solutions for each specific task [17].



Figure 1: The scheme of Darvina St. with the researched objects. Source: scheme/photo by A. Korovkina

A house № 15 on Darvina Street was erected in 1912 at the peak of architect's creative activity (Fig. 2). This is a gaudy example of a tenement building in Art Nouveau style. The building had grandiose dimensions for that time. It measures 18 m by 15 m and is 14.5 m high. The house has four floors and a basement. It is represented with two connected heterogeneous rectangles. One of them is the main frontal part of the building, and the second, smaller, attached auxiliary part of the building. The building has a central main staircase and a "black" entrance with a staircase from the yard side. Such layout is typical for luxury housing and allowed servants and handyman entered the house from the "black" staircase, brought food during ceremonial events and used it as an additional entrance to the building for different household needs.

The house was built from the traditional for that period brick and had a pronounced constructive appearance. The facade of the building is decorated with two semi bay windows, lined with plaster without color additives. This fact again confirms the author's attachment to the Northern Art Nouveau traditions, in which the polychrome facades were not widespread, in contrast to Kharkiv region buildings. The decor of the facade is stucco molding in the form of garlands, flowerpots and sculpture figures. These elements were white. The deep gray color of the facade dissolved in the surrounding space, but at the same time emphasized the severity and seriousness of the building. Against this background, the white stucco decors looked festive and elegant, but they did not arouse opposition from excessive bombast. The structure of the building's facade is strictly symmetrical and geometrically sustained. At the same time, it has an asymmetrical accent. This accent is the entrance arch to the courtyard. It gives dynamism to the strict construction of the facade. Moreover, it is a compositional node and an entrance to the inner courtyard of the building.



Outline drawing of the facade made by student I. Kotlyar, gr. Ae-2002



The house number according to the national register of architectural monuments is 11600, the number according to the regional lists is 163

Figure 2: An architectural monument on Darvina St., 15. Source: scheme/photo by A. Korovkina

Building's apartments are 3m 20 cm high and are quite spacious. Window apertures of considerable size allow to talk about sufficient insolation of premises. The second, third and fourth floors have balconies, forged fences which are made in the style of flowing fluid lines of Art Nouveau. Columns are adorned with sculptures, located near the entrance portal. Furthermore, the upper part above the entrance is adorned with a vase of abundance and garlands of flowers. The building's gable is also decorated with garlands of flowers and sculptures of boys with flowerpots.

In all appearance of the building, the author's adherence to the features of the Northern Art Nouveau is traced. However, unlike the decor of northern latitudes, such as owls, spruce branches, cones Rzhepishvsky applied flora inherent in the design of buildings in our region, which are more common for southern nature.

A house № 29, which is also located on Darvina Street, is made in Art Nouveau style, but has Gothic features (Fig. 3). The mansion was erected in 1913 for the famous theatrical figure M.M. Sinelnikov. Here A.I. Rzhepishvsky embodied completely different principles of compositional construction than in the construction of the house №15. Though, in both buildings features of the Northern Art Nouveau is clearly visible, but they are expressed in different forms and ways.

The building is a two-story mansion with an attic floor. The composition of the facade has a visible asymmetry. It emphasizes the right-angled front pediment of the building with its semi bay windows located under it. An interesting element of the facade, which attracts attention, is a triangular spire, inside which is a window.

The arch, which leads to the patio, only slightly exceeds the height of the person. The beautiful wooden frames of the windows and the lower semi bay window, which are represented in various carved forms, even more give the building features of a national-romantic trend in architecture. This combined element creates an emphasis in the visual perception of the facade and the silhouette of the building as a whole. In the left part of the building also there is a semi bay window. It is two stories high and is located above the entrance arch to the inner courtyard.

A characteristic technique, used by Rzhepishvsky in his buildings, is a combination of the facade windows of completely different shapes. From semi bay chopped windows he went to the oval windows above the entrance, which first develop horizontally, and higher along the vertical axis. Even higher are the attic windows that give the building the features of medieval Europe.



Figure 3: An architectural monument on Darvina St., 29. Source: scheme/photo by A. Korovkina

Much attention is attracted to the pitched roof, which goes with its large section to the facade of the building and turns into a balcony. The plasticity of the exposed bay windows, the sinking openings of the loggias and the upwardly angled pediments of the facades, combined with the pronounced wooden vertical stands, all this gives the building the dynamism of the mountainous forest tracts. As the house was built for a creative person, its appearance also differs from the others because of the expression and individual character. Today the building is decorated with a memorial plaque with the inscription "An outstanding actor, director and teacher, People's Artist of the USSR Nikolai Nikolayevich Sinelnikov (1885-1939) lived in this house in 1913-1939".

Another A. I. Rzhepishvsky's architectural work which is located along Sadovo-Kulikovskaya Street, was the house of the merchant Moldavsky E.D. (Figure 4). The building was constructed two years later in 1915 according to A.I. Rzhepishvsky and I.I. Tene's project.

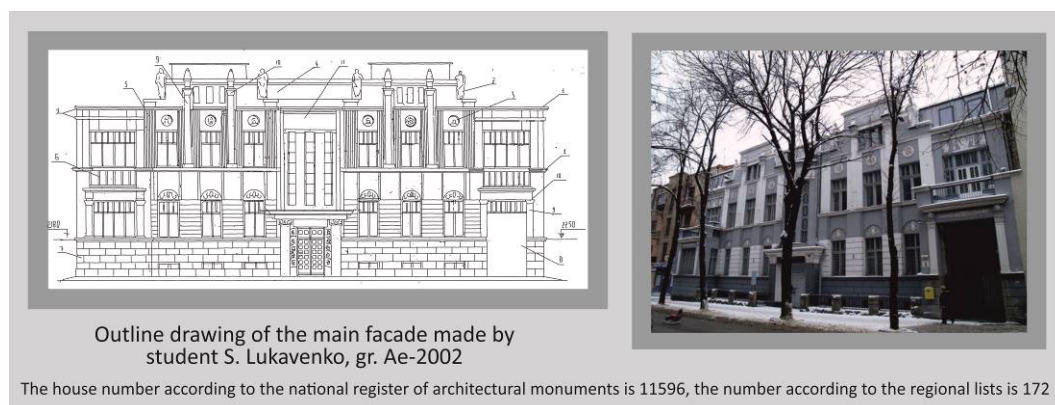


Figure 4: An architectural monument on Darvina St., 4. Source: scheme/photo by A. Korovkina

It is a house with a high ground floor, with an expressive facade plastic, in the design of which the elements of Art Nouveau and Classicism are combined. In the early XXth century, the house was distinguished by a high level of comfort. It was a former four-apartment house. Until now, only some elements of the original interior have survived: the staircase and stucco decoration of the ceilings in some rooms. At the moment, there is a bank in this building. The features of the Constructive Art Nouveau are clearly traced in the building. It was a transitional moment to Constructivism itself. The building has strongly pronounced sections of structural vertical elements, a metrorhythmic pattern of rustic half-columns, pilasters, between which there are high reliefs with images of people's heads in medallions. A dynamical step structure of the building is achieved with the help of protruding rectangular bay windows on the sides, changing on the second floor into the balconies. They are decorated with lion masks and flowers' ornament. The strictness and grandeur of the building is diluted by the floral decoration of the garlands and flowerpots. This method of facade's decoration, Rzhepishvsky also used in the building on Darvina St., 15. The main entrance is framed with a molded panel from decorative flora. The pomposity and expressiveness of the building is given by magnificent sculptures that complete the vertical of the facade and give the unique silhouette lines. Moreover, there are a peculiar glazing element above the entrance, which has a semicircular shape and vertical division. Window bindings resemble the Venetian ligature and are an important accentuating element. Unfortunately, today authentic bindings are replaced by modern glazing.

Taking into account the years in which the researched monuments of architecture were erected, it is possible to say that the existing buildings influenced greatly on the formation process of their appearance. There were buildings made in 1887 next to the house № 29. They were made in brick style and were two floors in height. They had facades with carved porticoes, turrets on the final elements, protruding fragments of balconies and bay windows, all this gave the buildings a fabulous view and involved to the Middle Ages' atmosphere. Rzhepishovsky fully supported this idea and created a mansion in the style of the Gothic medieval castles of the Baltic region. He supported a coherent composition of the street, striving for historicity and openness, and also applied modern methods and technologies in design and construction.

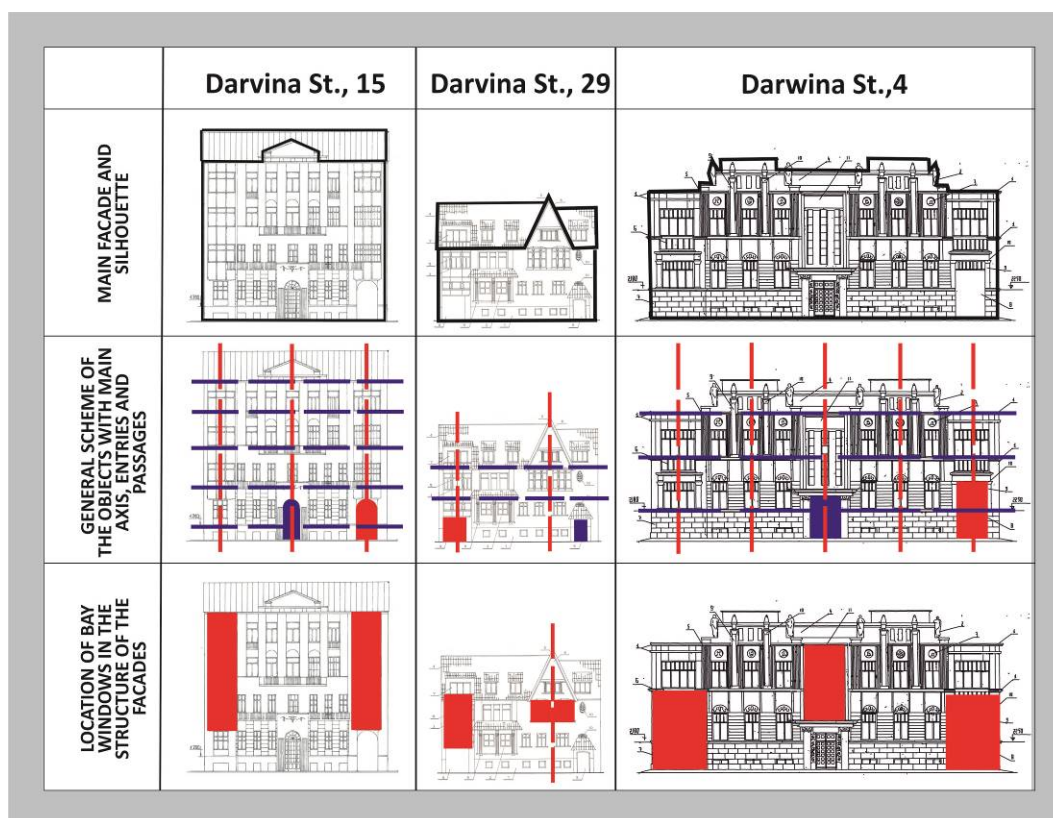


Figure 5: Regularities in facades' making of buildings 4, 15, 29 on Darvina St. Source: scheme by A. Korovkina

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In each structure described in this paper, it is possible to note common authorial features. In all structures, the tectonics of masses and volumes are underlined. The gravitation to geometric regularity of large planes, to rigor is traced (Fig. 5). The author sought to reveal the frame structure of the building and emphasized this in the external appearance of the building. The Northern Art Nouveau direction took an important place in A.I. Rzhepishovsky's works. Nevertheless, he brought in it his rationalistic features, southern color and decor, features of the regional trend of Kharkiv architecture.

Despite the large number of generalizing moments in all Rzhepishovsky's buildings, such as the massive form of the building, the absence of small decor, nevertheless, in each building the author managed to find an individual approach to the solution of the problem.

In the building on Darvina St., 29 were skillfully selected combinations of finishing materials, each of which benefits from neighborhood with another. Contrast combinations of textures, planes, shapes, and a variety of window openings underscore the author's ability to combine various elements into a holistic composition. In buildings № 4 and №15 ornament elements are used in the decoration. They were inspired by nature, folklore, images of southern flora and fauna. In the building №15 the decoration is more realistic. There are roses, buds, leaves and wine-hail. Cupids, adorning the entrance, hold garlands in their hands as a token of prosperity and well-being. On Darvina St., 4 identical elements on the facade have a more decorative and applied character. They are stylized and generalized. The general plastic of these buildings facades have much in common. At the same time, each building has its own unique individual character (Fig. 6).

	ENTRY NODES	BAS-RELIEFS	DECORATIVE ELEMENTS
Darvina St., 4			
Darvina St., 15			

Figure 6: Architectural Details. Source: scheme/photo by A. Korovkina

Initially all buildings had a housing function, but one building is a mansion, and two other are tenement buildings. At the same time, the peculiar features of each house depended on the personality and preferences of the customer: - the architect, guided by the tastes and wishes of the owners, still found professional and artistic solutions to the buildings, because he wanted to give an individual look to each object. This manifested itself brightly within the limited territory of one street. As much attention was paid by the author of the neighboring buildings and was taken into account during designing the scale and styles of future buildings.

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