

2.2 Adaptive hospitality design in heritage buildings: strategies for contemporary use

In modern architectural practice, the trend of turning to the existing architectural environment, in particular to historical buildings that have lost their original function or are in a neglected state, is becoming increasingly noticeable. In the context of urban transformation, the development of sustainable strategies and the growth of the tourist potential of cities, architects are increasingly working not with a “blank slate”, but with the material heritage of past centuries. In this context, the concept of revitalization is gaining particular relevance - a process that involves not only the physical restoration of an architectural object, but also giving it a new function.

Unlike restoration, which seeks to preserve the authenticity of forms and materials, revitalization involves rethinking the building in a modern context, as well as integrating new user needs. One of the promising areas in this area is the adaptation of historical objects to hotel functions. This approach allows not only to preserve valuable examples of architecture, but also to make them economically feasible, ensuring the sustainable development of cultural space.

The typology of historical buildings that can be adapted as hotels is extremely diverse. Among them, castles stand out - massive, often defensive structures with a unique historical and landscape context. Their transformation into hotels is usually aimed at the elite tourist segment, as it requires significant financial and technical resources. Another type is palaces, which come from an aristocratic environment and have rich decor, a ceremonial structure and clear zoning. Palace hotels are now actively operating in France, Italy, and Austria, giving guests the opportunity to "touch history" in the literal sense.

A separate category is made up of city mansions that emerged in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries as residential buildings for wealthy families. Their compact size and convenient location in the city make them suitable for conversion into boutique hotels. This group also includes commercial buildings typical of urban

development in large cities in Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and other Central and Eastern European countries. Such buildings, often with large apartments, can be adapted as apart-hotels or middle-class hotels, which allows preserving both the architectural shell and some interior elements.

Monasteries, former churches, and other sacred buildings are no less interesting from the point of view of revitalization. Their transformation requires a delicate approach, taking into account cultural and religious sensitivity, but examples of successful adaptation, such as the conversion of monastery cells into hotel rooms, prove the potential of such facilities in the context of tourism.

However, any intervention in historical architecture, especially when it comes to changing its function, is impossible without taking into account legal aspects. In many countries, including Ukraine, objects that have the status of architectural monuments are protected by the state, which imposes a number of obligations on designers and developers. In particular, all work must be coordinated with the relevant cultural heritage protection authorities, and even the smallest changes - such as replacing windows, reconstructing the roof or redeveloping interior spaces - require special permits. This process involves an expert examination of the project, drawing up a historical and architectural reference plan, as well as coordination with local government bodies. In this sense, an architect working with revitalization appears not only as a designer, but also as a mediator between the past and the present, between cultural heritage and market mechanisms. His task is not simply to "adapt" an old building to a new function, but to do it in such a way that it does not lose its identity, but on the contrary - gets a second life. And it is the hotel, as a public and open space, that in this case becomes an extremely apt function: it allows you to attract a wide audience to history, to make architecture not only visible, but also tangible - through space, material, light and time.

Designing a hotel within a historic building is always a game on the edge of the possible. On the one hand, there are clear requirements for comfort, engineering, and safety, which a modern hotel guest is accustomed to. On the other hand, the architect finds himself in a situation where he needs to combine the incompatible — to fit the

modern into the old without destroying its character. One of the biggest problems is the integration of engineering networks. A hotel building needs ventilation, air conditioning, water supply, sewage, elevator shafts, fire protection systems, etc. And all this infrastructure must work flawlessly, remaining as inconspicuous as possible — especially when it comes to interiors that have historical or decorative value. It is often impossible to lay communications in the usual ways: ceilings — wooden or brick vaults, load-bearing walls 80 cm thick, ceilings — under 4 meters and higher, windows — arched, or with colored stained glass. This is not an environment where every opening can become a problem at the level of monument protection legislation.

The next level of complexity is preserving authenticity, where all historical details must coexist with modern hotel comfort - with a bathroom in each room, with a level of noise insulation, with inclusivity. Often you have to work not just with old architecture, but with its constructive specificity. For example, high ceilings on the one hand are an advantage, on the other - difficulties in heating, lighting and sound insulation. Or the lack of a typical layout - in old mansions or palaces, rooms often do not have a regular grid, but "flow" into each other, losing clear functional zoning. This is great from a space perspective, but causes serious difficulties when placing identical rooms or distributing service areas. It often turns out that one room is perfectly suited for a suite, and the other is too narrow even for a standard single room, and all this within the same floor.

In addition, modern regulations require taking into account inclusiveness. And here again the architect is forced to look for compromises: how to integrate an elevator if the staircase is too narrow, and in the building it is strictly forbidden to demolish the ceilings? How to make an inclined ramp at the entrance if the facade is guarded and has marble decoration from the 19th century? Similarly - with fire safety: evacuation exits, sensors, fire-resistant doors, fire dampers - all this must be included without violating the aesthetics and without affecting authentic elements.

That is why the adaptation of historical buildings as hotels is never standard. There are no templates or ready-made solutions. Each object is a separate study, a set of challenges and a kind of architectural diplomacy. It is a constant dialogue between

preservation and functionality, between new comfort and old character. And this is precisely the main value of such design: it teaches to respect space and work with it as a living, informal environment.

When an architect takes on the task of designing in a historical environment - especially when it comes to creating a hotel, where functionality should be as saturated as possible - the first thing that should come to mind is not the layout of rooms, but a sense of tact. Because you are not working with a blank sheet of paper, but with an object that already has its own value, its own language, its own history.

One of the fundamental principles is minimal intervention. This means that any changes - even those that are absolutely necessary for the functioning of the hotel - should be implemented carefully, without destroying what can be preserved.

Another important principle is the reversibility of changes. That is, each new insert, partition, design element or engineering should be made in such a way that in the future they can be dismantled without harming the original structure. In a nutshell, a new hotel room in a monastery's cells should exist as a time capsule that can be cleaned up and the building left "clean" again. This approach is important from both an ethical and technical perspective: it preserves the possibility for future generations to see the building closer to its original state.

Another question that often causes discussion is contrast or stylization? Should a new element "disguise" itself as old architecture, or vice versa, clearly differ, showing the boundary between eras? Both approaches have the right to life, and both have their brilliant examples. Contrast is, for example, the insertion of a modern glass volume into the courtyard of a medieval palace, which is read as a separate, autonomous story. Stylization is, on the contrary, an attempt to "fit in" so delicately that the new is not read as an intervention. The main thing is not to falsify, not to "fake" the old, but to preserve the integrity of the material and idea. And here it is worth mentioning the newest materials that are increasingly used in historical environments - glass, steel, sometimes even polycarbonate or corten. Their advantage is in lightness, manufacturability, transparency or expressive texture. If done correctly, they do not conflict with antiquity, but on the contrary - emphasize it. One example is the Hotel

Castell d'Empordà in Spain, where a transparent glass gallery acts as a transition between parts of a medieval castle, without touching the stone walls and almost "disappearing" into space. Another is Das Stue in Berlin, where the historic neoclassical facade of the 1930s is complemented by light interiors made of steel, brass and glass, and there is no dissonance between eras.

All this confirms a simple idea: architectural intervention can be sensitive, but at the same time modern. Not to copy the past, but to engage in a dialogue with it - honestly, consciously, with respect. This is how real hotels are born in historic buildings: those that do not just rent out rooms, but tell stories.

One of the most interesting tasks facing an architect working with a historic building as a hotel is to create comfort in a space that, by and large, was not intended for this. In such cases, ergonomics becomes an art. Often, creative solutions have to be used: for example, building bathrooms into deep niches or placing shower cabins in closets. The layout of the rooms turns out to be non-standard, but unique. The main thing is not to go against the logic of space, but to work with it, adjusting the function to the form, and not the other way around. As a result, the guest gets an experience that cannot be recreated in a typical hotel: it is a different geometry, a different atmosphere, a different sense of space.

Interior design plays a big role here, because it is responsible for preserving the spirit of the era. It is important that the interiors retain something of the authenticity that makes the building unique. This is the preservation or even emphasis of authentic elements - such as stucco molding, ancient mosaics, wooden floors, shutters, old furniture. These elements can "work" in dialogue with modern details - lighting, textiles, new partitions. If everything is done delicately, the old and the new do not conflict, but form a living, harmonious composition. As for functional zoning, a special approach is also needed here. For example, it is not always possible to create a large lobby - then part of the living room of the former mansion performs its function. Or the SPA is placed in the dungeon of the monastery - and this is not only an effective use of space, but also the creation of a unique atmosphere. Restaurants are often set up in old dining rooms, banquet halls or conservatories, preserving high ceilings, tiled

stoves or authentic fireplaces. Lounge areas can be located in former libraries or winter gardens - and this is what gives hotels character.

An example of such zoning is the Palacio de los Patos hotel in Granada, Spain: a historic palace has been converted into a hotel, where the lounge is a former hall with marble columns, and the restaurant is in an enfilade space with painted ceilings. Or the Hotel Pulitzer in Paris, where the ancient structure is combined with a new minimalist design, without violating either the layout or the spirit of the building.

The Hôtel de Crillon is, without exaggeration, a benchmark for adapting historical architecture to modern hotel functions. Located on the Place de la Concorde in the heart of Paris, this building was built in 1758 by architect Jacques-Ange Gabriel as part of an ensemble of royal administrative buildings. Its history alone sets the tone - Marie Antoinette, Napoleon, and American ambassadors have visited here in their time. In 1909, the Crillon first became a hotel, but its real architectural transformation began only in the 21st century.

The restoration and transformation of the Hôtel de Crillon into a luxury hotel took several years (2009–2017). The main challenge was to combine the extremely refined heritage of the 18th century with the highest standards of hotel comfort of the 21st century. All technical networks were completely updated, ventilation and air conditioning systems were installed, and modern elevators were integrated, without disturbing either the decor or the spatial logic.

The work with the interiors was particularly difficult: authentic ceilings, carvings, parquet, stone portals - all this was restored by hand, with the participation of masters of stone, wood, and fabrics. At the same time, modern design solutions appeared in the rooms and recreation areas that do not compete with history, but only emphasize it.

Today, the Crillon is not just a hotel, but a demonstration of how careful, skillful intervention can breathe new life into an old structure without destroying its authenticity. And this is exactly the case when the architecture of the past and the present find a common language.

The Gritti Palace is another impressive example of how a historical building can be adapted to modern hotel functions without losing its cultural value. The palace was built in the 15th century as a private residence for the family of Doge Andrea Gritti and is located right on the Grand Canal, overlooking the church of Santa Maria della Salute. The location itself already suggests that this is not just a building - it is part of the historical heart of Venice.

In the 21st century, the palace was converted into a luxury hotel, which also functions as a museum. It is a very fine line - to make a comfortable hotel and at the same time not to lose the museum value of the interiors. The Gritti Palace managed to withstand it. Ancient frescoes, handmade wooden ceilings, tapestries, Renaissance furniture have been preserved here - all this not only decorates the premises, but also sets the tone for the entire space.

But behind this beauty lies a very serious architectural work. For example, each room has a modern bathroom, climate control system, electronic locks, and none of these elements fall out of the overall style.

The system of engineering networks required special attention - due to the limitations associated with the humid Venetian climate and old structures.

As a result, The Gritti Palace became a symbol of how you can live inside history - in the literal sense. This is not just a hotel in an old building. This is a hotel where the building itself is the main character, and modern comfort is just a tool to make this history accessible to the guest.

11 Mirrors Design Hotel is an interesting case of a modern interpretation of hotel space in a historical urban environment. Located in the center of Kyiv, near the Opera House and St. Volodymyr's Cathedral, the hotel occupies one of the typical buildings of the early 20th century. Although the building itself is not a monument of national architectural significance, its context is the classic Kyiv modern and eclecticism that shape the face of the historical center.

Against this background, 11 Mirrors works as a contrast. This is an example where the architects did not seek to stylize in the style of antiquity, but on the contrary - created a very modern, almost futuristic interior. The author's design is built on clean

lines, mirror surfaces, minimalist forms. The name "11 Mirrors" is not accidental - mirrors here are not just a decor, but a functional element of space, which blurs the boundaries and creates a feeling of lightness even in quite compact rooms. In this case, the preservation of the historical facade is combined with a complete reconstruction of the interior space. This allowed the integration of modern technologies without the strict restrictions that are usually found in architectural monuments. At the same time, the hotel does not fall out of the urban context - its discreet facade does not conflict with the surroundings, and the contrast is felt only when you go inside.

Hotel Indigo is an example of a network approach to adapting historic buildings, but with an unexpected respect for local context for hotel chains. There are several such hotels in London (for example, in the areas of Kensington, Paddington, Tower Hill), and each of them is located in buildings of historical significance - from Victorian and Edwardian townhouses to former banks or post offices.

The philosophy of Hotel Indigo is built on the principle of "locality through design". This means that each hotel does not just operate in a historic building - it tells the story of the area through its architecture and interior. For example, at Hotel Indigo Kensington, the interiors are stylized as 19th-century English offices with modern accents, and at Hotel Indigo London Paddington, the space is built around the theme of rail travel, which has shaped the area for centuries.

Hotel Indigo shows how a network approach does not necessarily mean standardization. In this case, architects and designers create not just comfortable hotels in old buildings - they convey the spirit of the place, allowing the visitor to feel not just in a hotel, but in an urban context that has its own depth and character.

Hotels located in historical buildings have a significant impact on the urban environment and cultural heritage of cities. They increase the tourist attractiveness of cities, provide guests with the opportunity to experience a unique atmosphere that is impossible in ordinary modern buildings - this is direct contact with history through the space itself. Staying in an old palace, castle or mansion becomes not only comfortable, but also a unique, memorable experience. This is important for tourists,

because it forms an emotional connection with the city and stimulates the desire to return again.

The second important aspect is the actualization of forgotten or neglected historical buildings. In many cities around the world, old buildings have been lying vacant or inefficiently used for years, leading to their gradual deterioration. Investing in converting such facilities into hotels is often a way to save them from destruction. Reconstruction and revitalization restore buildings to their function and significance, which in turn helps preserve the integrity of the city's historic environment. Another positive effect is the stimulation of the development of surrounding areas: improving infrastructure, increasing the number of jobs, and developing small businesses - cafes, restaurants, and souvenir shops.

Another important point is an example of effective synergy between business and cultural heritage protection. In this cooperation, each party receives its benefits. Business is the opportunity to create a unique product that differs from typical hotels, due to the authenticity of space and history. For owners and investors, this is a competitive advantage in the tourism services market. On the other hand, the preservation of historical buildings is ensured precisely thanks to the financial resources of business, which go to the restoration, maintenance and adaptation of buildings. This is an effective model of sustainable development, where economic activity does not destroy, but on the contrary, supports cultural heritage. Thus, hotels in historical buildings are an important socio-cultural phenomenon that helps preserve and transmit cultural values, increases the attractiveness of cities and contributes to their development in the face of modern challenges.