

Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

composed by national/regional working party of:

0.1 Picture of building/site

depicted item:

source:

date:

1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1 **current name of building** “Prima Ardeleana “ building

1.2 **variant or former name**

1.3 **number & name of street** 1 Piața Unirii/Unity Square

1.4 **town** Sibiu

1.5 **province/state** Romania ROU

1.6 **zip code** 550160

1.7 **country** Romania

1.8 **national grid reference** 45°48'; 24°09'

1.9 **classification/typology** RES

1.10 **protection status & date** It is protected by the national legislation as a part of the architectural site “Historic Centre” of Sibiu

2 History of building

2.1 **original brief/purpose** The archive funds and the bibliography do not contain data or information regarding the method through which “Prima Ardeleana” Insurance Company launched the competition/gave the order to architect George Cristinel. The Company, with headquarters in Cluj, must have met architect George Cristinel in this town as the architect had already designed in Cluj some important public buildings e. g.: The Orthodox Cathedral, the Academic College, the Palace of Social Insurances.

2.2 **dates: commission/completion** 1933/1935

2.3 **architectural and other designers** architect George Cristinel

2.4 **others associated with building** “Prima Ardeleana” Insurance Company (paymaster)

2.5 **significant alterations with dates**

2.6 **current use** tenement building

2.7 **current condition** good state of preservation

3 Description

3.1 general description

“Prima Ardeleana“ building is located at the south extremity of the main commercial street of the medieval town, in the proximity of the former fortification. It is a corner building, in a L-shape plan, with basement and five storeys (the last two ones are attic storeys). The Art Deco style of the building is expressed by his rectangular volume and by the architectural decoration. The ground floor has a bend of shop windows separated by pillars plated with coloured stones and glazed doors with wide travertine framing. The shop windows, the glazed doors and the two windows placed on the long side of the building are provided with wrought iron grids displaying elegant spiral or geometrized motifs. The access to the building, placed on the long side of the building, has a deep embrasure decorated with figurative bas-reliefs in geometrized style. The second and third storeys are framed by the parapet of the balcony and by the very pronounced entablement. The facades of these storeys have colossal pilasters alternating with ornamental panels with a prominent graphic character. The first attic storey has small windows, bordered by short fluted columns, with geometrized capitals. The facades of the last storey, which cannot be perceived from the street, are not decorated. Inside the building one must notice the sinuous line of the staircase, the pavement, the doors provided with wrought iron grids and the elevator. The building structure is made up of reinforced concrete. The facades have stucco plastering.

3.2 construction

3.3 context “Prima Ardeleana“ building is located in the historic centre of the medieval town. The analyzed building which was created as a result of a modernization trend of the medieval towns, is both from a volumetric point of view and the decoration, in contrast with the patriarchal image of the medieval town, generally characterized by low-size constructions and facades with restrained neo-classical decoration.

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical

4.2 social Until the end of the 18th century the Transylvanian city of Sibiu, subject to German colonization, had restrictive regulations concerning the settlement, inside its fortifications, of non Germanic people. During the 19th century, it gradually lost its closed character, both from an urban and ethnic point of view. The demolishment of fortifications and their replacement by imposing buildings to which the analyzed one belongs too, represented a spectacular modification, a real break as to the general-patriarchal image of the town, being also a landmark for the modification of the ethnic image of the Historic Centre.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

Together with some other few Art Deco buildings situated in the big towns of Transylvania (Cluj, Oradea), “Prima Ardeleana” building represents the moment of assertion of modern architecture in this region of Romania. If at the beginning of the 20th century it had represented the triumph of the *Secession* architecture of Magyar origin and in the twenties of the same century, after the establishment of the modern Romania, the national Romanian style had become the style of the official buildings and of the houses of the Romanian elite, in the thirties, the construction of the Art Deco buildings and, subsequently, of those in International Modern, was a sign of the promotion of modern architecture, *per se*.

4.4 historical

“Prima Ardeleana” building belongs to a series of Art Deco buildings designed by architect George Cristinel, which were built in the first half of the thirties of the 20th century, being remarkable for the use of the decorative figurative panels designed in synthetic plans or having a prominent graphic character. Among them the most important buildings of the kind are the former Academic College in Cluj - today the Academic College of Cluj-Napoca (1935-1937) and “Prima Ardeleana” building in Sibiu (1935). In comparison with the Academic College, “Prima Ardeleana” building is remarkable for the elegance of the facades rendered by the use of the colossal order at the second and third levels, by the use of some precious finishing, for example, the pillars plated with coloured stone, the travertine frameworks on the ground floor as well as by the luminosity conferred by the huge glazed surfaces of the same area.

4.5 general assessment “Prima Ardeleana” building is important for the history of the architecture in Romania as exponent of the Art Deco style in the period of his maximum development in Romania. It is important also as part of the work of a famous architect which designed important public buildings in Transylvania (the Orthodox Cathedral, the former Academic College, the Palace of Social Insurances in Cluj, Episcopal Library and Episcopal Chapel, Teaching School for Boys in Sibiu, the Orthodox Church, the Meeting House and the Apprentices' Home in Campia Turzii, the Orthodox Cathedral in Orastie). “Prima Ardeleana” building is also important for the history of urban planning in our country because the analyzed building together with other buildings in Sibiu, Brasov, a. o. initiated a new building and living phase by abandoning the closed medieval town, by giving up the fortifications and replacing them by buildings able to express the spirit of the Modern Town.

5 Documentation

5.1 principal references

Archives: Romania, Sibiu, The National Archives: County Direction Sibiu, Fund of „Prima Ardeleana” Company, inv. 143, file 5

Publications: Constantin, Paul. Dicționar universal al arhitecților. București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1986, p. 79-80

5.2 visual material attached

5.3 rapporteur/date

6 Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member:

date of examination:

approval:

working party/ref. n°:

NAI ref. n°:

comments:

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