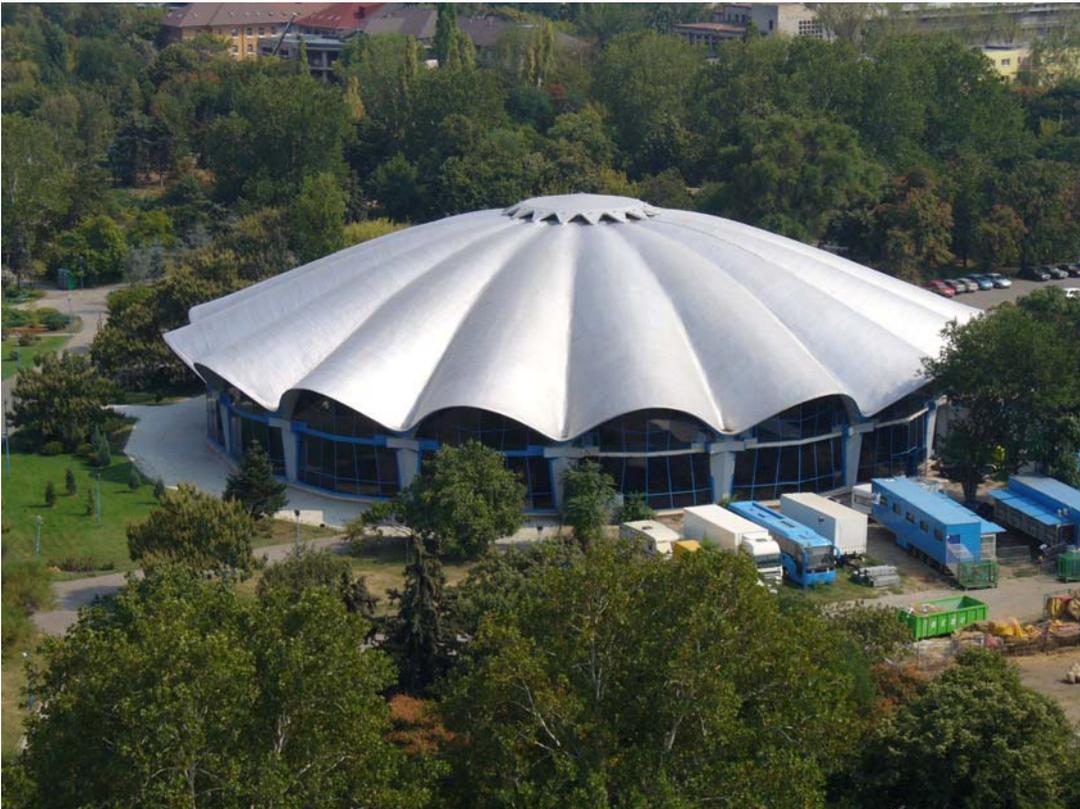


0.1 Picture of building/site

depicted item: The State Circus

source: Aurelian Stroe

date: 2008



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

1.1 current name of building

The State Circus

1.2 variant or former name

The State Circus/Globus Circus

1.3 number & name of street

No. 15, Circului Alley

1.4 town

Bucharest

1.5 province/state

Bucharest, Sector 2

1.6 zip code

021103

1.7 country

Romania

1.8 national grid reference

-- Lat: 44°27'23.73"N

- Long: 26° 6'33.83"E

1.9 classification/typology

REC – Social and cultural buildings, Hall for Circus performances

1.10 protection status & date

listed as national level/by Order of Ministry of Culture and National Heritage no. 2241/2010 – listed A group

2 History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose

“The State Circus” was founded in 1954, under the influence of the Soviet culture which raised the circus performance to the highest form of art, together with the ballet and the opera. Unique in the country, the current circus building in Bucharest was finished and inaugurated in the year 1961.

2.2 dates: commission/completion

1958-1961

2.3 architectural and other designers

Architects: Nicolae Porumbescu (design chief), Constantin Rulea, Sanda Bercovici, Nicolae Pruncu.

The team of construction engineers: A. Progreseanu, I. Dumitrescu, E. Simu, O. Verşescu and of installation engineers: V. Cvaşa (ventilation and heating installations), D. Manasia (electrical installations), I. Benghiuş (sanitary installations), all of them working in “Proiect Bucureşti” Institute.

2.4 others associated with building

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2.5 significant alterations with dates

By means of the listing procedure the modifications of interior partitioning and carpentry changing and the raising of very high buildings in the adjacent park to the circus building were stopped.

2.6 current use

The building kept its original function.

2.7 current condition

The building is in a good state of preservation. The investments made here along the years did not modify the initial concept of the design.

3 Description

3.1 general description

The project was built during the sixties and was contemporary with a series of design achievements, that announced the return of modernism. It has an exceptional architectural, artistic and urban value due to the coherence of the architectural conception and the unique structure achieved in Romania, the proportions and the modeling of the facades as well as the spatial composition, the balance of the building achieved through the organic form of the covering system and the reduced height. It belongs harmoniously to the natural landscape of the park, being a symbol for the architectural culture of the post war period.

3.2 construction

The performance hall which is the main object is a perfectly circular body, with a capacity of 2,500 places. It overtook the traditional idea of the itinerant circus which focuses the whole attention on the space of the performance, while the secondary functions which are grouped around this nucleus are less obvious. The interior diameter of the arena of the performance hall is of 13 meters while the diameter of the performance hall is 44.36 meters.

The adjacent annexes are linked to the circular body of the performance hall by a linking corridor. The circulation in the amphitheatre is achieved by two separated continuous circuits which are also linked between them. The first circuit assures the entrance of the public directly into the hall from the cloakrooms` corridor. The second circuit brings the onlookers directly from the foyer without passing through the cloakroom. These two circuits are linked together through the continuous slope of the amphitheatre.

Due to its circular form, the main body actually has just one façade, marked by the waves of the roof and the special design of the exterior wall. The main entrance is not particularly marked. The annex bodies of the main building have neuter facades and are not a direct part of the "shell" composition.

The main hall is equipped with ultramodern installations which assure the staging of impressive performances, some of them developing on water or on ice. Due to

its specific functions, the building of the circus has special and various installations: from the common sanitary installations or those specific for the menagerie to special technical installations for aspersing the cupola or for supplying water to the pool meant for water performances or for creating artificial rain. At the same time it is provided with electric and mechanic equipments used for achieving different light effects or for acrobatics. The air distribution in the hall is made through canals introduced in the frame structure, through the 16 pillars which support the cupola. This technical solution was applied for the first time in our country.

3.3 context

The District of the Circus is today a famous architectural building complex situated outside the protected built area of Bucharest, but adjacent to a protected architectural complex, the Colentina Hospital.

The urban building complex known under the name of State Circus is conceived along two compositional axes which form two access esplanades towards the circus itself, one starting from Ștefan cel Mare Road, and the other one, from the junction between Lacul Tei Boulevard and Barbu Văcăresu Street. These esplanades lead towards the weight centre of the whole complex – the performance hall. The annex bodies (artists' cabins, workshops, warehouses, linking body, rehearsal hall, administration and social group, stables and menagerie) are subordinated to the central composition, joining the two axes and the aligning to the row of apartment buildings which form the urban-architectural background of the Circus' volume. The green areas made of small and medium altitude plantations mark the two axes of urban composition.

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical

The structural solution for the covering of the cupola – *a cupola with parabolic waves* – is not original in itself but the choice was well-inspired for the architectural expression which has been achieved, being an exceptional engineering success.

A special kind of reinforced concrete and a spongy membrane for the protection of "the waves" were used. The structure joins two relatively simple forms: "a concave body" with a diameter of about 45 meters, of a hyperboloid-parabolic form and a "shell-cupola" which is independent from the concave body – with an opening of 72 meters. The medium height of the circus is 14 meters. The cupola, spread on a circular surface with a diameter of 60.60 meters is a waved "cloth" built in reinforced concrete which is supported by 16 strong pillars.

The structure of the concave body has been divided into 16 sectors whose soffit generated a surface of a rotation hyperboloid on which the seats of the amphitheatre are placed in a continuous, circular plane. The concrete plate of the 16 waves with a double curvature has 7 centimeters towards the key and 10 – 12 centimeters to the birth while the resisting force of the vault is taken over by a

polygonal tie bar situated at the upper side of the pillars, made of pre-stressed concrete. The amphitheatre and the foyers are covered by the unique cupola. The upper level of the amphitheatre is served by a continuous gallery and a smoking room which form a split level in the foyers.

4.2 social

The circus building has an exceptional symbolic value for the memory of the community, at a local and national level, as being the unique building in Romania which functions as a circus.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

The design and the construction of the Circus were achieved during 1958 – 1961, belonging to a series of important buildings in Bucharest which were built after the abandon of the architecture of the socialist realism and beginning with the return to modernism. It has an exceptional architectural, artistic and urban value due to the coherence of the architectural conception and the unique structure achieved in Romania, the proportions and the modeling of the facades as well as the spatial composition, the balance of the building achieved through the organic form of the covering system and the reduced height. It belongs harmoniously to the natural landscape of the park, being a symbol for the architectural culture of the post war period.

4.4 historical

In 1954 “The State Circus” was founded, under the influence of the Soviet culture, which raised the circus performance to the highest form of art, together with the ballet and the opera.

The design and the construction of the Circus were achieved during 1958 – 1961, belonging to a series of important buildings in Bucharest which were built after the abandon of the architecture of the socialist realism and beginning with the return to the European modernism.

4.5 general assessment

At national level, it is a unique object, its architectural value is recognized by the professionals and the large public as well. The technical solution represented an innovation of that certain period. The image of the “shell” became a symbol of the capital and of the country in the eyes of the Romanian society. This building is one of the first to be built in the margins of the communist block, this typology was built throughout the communist region after the seventies.

5 Documentation

5.1 principal references

Articles

Team of authors, *Noua construcție a Circului de Stat din București*, in "Arhitectura" Review, no. 1/1961

The archive of the Town Hall of Bucharest Municipality, fund of the Town Hall of Bucharest Municipality, File 1959

Bucharest Guide Book, "Meridiane" Publishing House, 1962

Books

Ionescu,, G. Derer, P., Theodorescu, D. – *Arhitectura în România, perioada anilor 1944 + 1969*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1969.

Curinschi Vorona, Gh. *Istoria Arhitecturii în România*, Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981.

Virgiliu Onofrei, Tudor Grădinaru, Nicolae Porumbescu, *O viață în arhitectură*, Publishing House of "Mateiu Teiu Botez" Academic Society, Iași, 2003

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5.2 visual material attached

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

1. lay-out plan, overview
2. drawings, epoch images in "Arhitectura R.P.R." Review.
3. drawings, epoch images in "Arhitectura R.P.R." Review.
4. scale model photograph, overview
5. photographs of the building execution period

recent photographs and survey drawings:

6. Overview photographs, 2008, author Aurelian Stroe
7. Detail photographs, 2008, author Aurelian Stroe
8. Interior photographs, 2008, author, Aurelian Stroe

5.3 rapporteur/date

Nemțeanu Ruxandra
2012.

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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