



**CONSTRUCTING THE PIONEER
CAMP OF ZÁNKA IN THE BALATON
HIGHLAND IN THE FIRST HALF OF
THE 1970S**

VÝSTAVBA PIONIERSKEHO
TÁBORA, ZÁNKA V BALATONSKEJ
VRCHOVINE, PRVÁ POLOVICA
SEDEMDESIATYCH ROKOV
20. STOROČIA

Source Zdroj: Tibor Farkas's Archive

Deformations of the Vacationscape The mechanism of changing effects on the Balaton landscape after 1968

Deformácie rekreačného priestoru
Mechanizmus meniacich sa účinkov na krajinu
v okolí Balatonu po roku 1968

Domonkos Wettstein

Vývoj najväčšieho jazera v strednej Európe je spoločným námetom rozličných a často ambivalentných memoárov. Projekt zohrával kľúčovú úlohu v rámci sociálnej politiky opätovného nastolenia socialistického systému po revolučných udalostiach v roku 1956. Súbežne so spoločenskou konsolidáciou predstavoval začiatok výstavby tohto rekreačného strediska jedinečnú profesionálnu príležitosť pre architektov zaoberať sa rozvojom v regionálnom meradle a súčasne regionálnou architektúrou v rámci centralizovaného štátneho systému. Intenzívnejšia fáza výstavby sa začala až po roku 1968 so zmenenými administratívnymi podmienkami. Výstavba sa začala koncom päťdesiatych rokov, teda práve v období ukončenia éry socialistického realizmu a legitimizovania sa modernej architektúry. Poľavujúci ideologický tlak umožňoval inovatívne formálne riešenia, avšak na začiatku výstavby Balatonu museli mladí architekti, ktorí sa na scéne objavili tesne po vojne, čeliť limitovaným zdrojom, tak technologickým, ako aj finančným.

V roku 1959 prezentoval Charles Polónyi, vedúci plánovač južného balatonského brehu, na kongrese *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) v Otterloo svoje prvé výsledky ako regionálnu cestu modernizmu a o šesť rokov neskôr získali tieto plány ocenenie Abercrombie Prize udeľované medzinárodnou organizáciou *Union Internationale des Architectes* (UIA). Napriek oceňovanej prvej fáze realizácie celkové architektonické dedičstvo vychádzajúce z tohto územného plánu, ako aj súčasná situácia stavieb ponúkajú kontroverzný obraz. Konkrétne poukazuje na heterogénnu architektonickú kvalitu spôsobenú predovšetkým dlhé roky trvajúcim procesom realizácie a v priebehu výstavby aj deformáciami krajiny, ktoré nereflektovali predstavy pôvodných plánov. Historici architektúry doteraz skúmali len úspešné realizácie prvých piatich rokov plánovacieho procesu. Pre výskum tohto dedičstva celkového rozvoja lokality zo súčasnej perspektívy by však bola potrebná zmena historického zamerania na druhú časť výstavby. V snahe porozumieť dôvodom, ktoré viedli k zmenám a deformáciám pôvodných plánov, je nevyhnutné poodhaliť ich pozadie, ako aj demonštrovať takmer nezvratné efekty meniacich sa koncepcií turizmu na vysoko citlivú rekreačnú krajinu.

Témou príspevku je neskoršia realizácia projektu (*Ústredný program rozvoja Balatonu, 1969*) s ohľadom na prvý územný plán (1958). Príspevok tak porovnáva pôvodné predstavy o lokalite a ich neskorší proces realizácie po zavedení „Nových ekonomických mechanizmov“ v roku 1968. Výskum archívnych návrhov,

plánovej dokumentácie, pamäti a štatistik má viesť ku kritickému skúmaniu a porovnaniu rozličných fáz vývoja a výstavby a súčasne reflektovať protichodnosť ideálu odborníkov a reality zavádzania politiky využívania voľného času do praxe v socializme. V tomto prípade však ideál architektov a urbánnych plánovačov nepredstavovala utopická monumentálna reprezentácia, ale, naopak, „ekologické zjednotenie“ sociálnej politiky a prírodných kvalít rekreačnej krajiny, ktorá má byť chránená. V tejto vízii odborníkov vyžadovala špeciálna metodika plánovania krehké prepojenie medzi urbanistickým regionalizmom a architektonickými konceptmi využívajúc možnosti centralizovaného plánovania v rámci štátneho socializmu.

Podobne ako v ďalších európskych dovolenkových strediskách mala modernizácia a urbanizácia oblasti určenej na rekreáciu za následok negatívny dosah na krajinu v regióne. Citlivá rekreačná krajina bola v Európe vážne zasiahnutá urbanizáciou spôsobenou raným masovým turizmom v prvej polovici 20. storočia. V reakcii na tento problém sa začal uplatňovať nový spôsob uvažovania v regionálnej mierke reflektujúci odporúčania V. kongresu CIAM, ktorý z hľadiska rekreácie mal viesť k uceleným funkčným oblastiam. V týchto priestorových situáciách sa pri územnej stratégii mestského rozvoja, ako aj pri rôznych konceptoch regionálnej architektúry objavili spoločné charakteristiky, hoci tieto dva prístupy majú rôzne východiská. Na jednej strane je to hlboko zakorenená metodika regionálneho plánovania využívajúca princíp riešenia rozsiahlych území, ktorá má komplexný teoretický základ. Tento základ položil škótsky biológ a regionálny bádateľ Patrick Geddes, ako aj Lewis Mumford. Na druhej strane rané regionálne estetické koncepty rekreačnej architektúry sa zamerali na individuálnu tvorbu hľadajúc alternatívny ráz prispôbený lokálnym podmienkam. Vzhľadom na dôležitosť vzhľadu turistickej krajiny program miestnej modernizácie mohol poskytnúť príležitosť na prepojenie obidvoch týchto regionálnych prístupov.

Regionálny prístup zameriavajúci sa na koncepcie veľkého rozsahu bol založený na ideách územného plánovania Patricka Geddesa – usiloval sa zachovať „ekologickú uniformitu“ regiónu. Územný plán bol založený na jednoduchých a pragmatických princípoch ako plánovanie od veľkých celkov k menším. Prístup trojškálovej úrovne plánovania tu predstavoval inovatívnu štruktúru; zameral sa na lokálnu mierku, ktorá však mohla naďalej narábať s celým regiónom ako s organickým celkom. Centralizovaná podstata socialistického systému ponúkala špecifický

priestor na spoločné uvažovanie prepájajúce regionálne, urbánne a architektonické mierky. Tieto tri rozličné mierky boli v podstate definované princípom presunu smerom od väčšieho k menšiemu.

Ochrana životného prostredia tu mala byť zabezpečená prostredníctvom limitovania rastu rekreačných stredísk. Vychádzajúc zo zadania územného plánu zadefinovala sa vrstva funkčnej krajiny určenej na rekreáciu charakterizovaná ako prechod medzi urbánnymi a rurálnymi kvalitami a usilujúca sa o prepojenie regionálnej, urbánnej a architektonickej mierky. Rozsiahly program modernizácie „citlivý ku krajine“ bol teda reflektovaný pragmatickou „adaptovanou“ modernou architektúrou.

Periodizáciu realizácie modernizačného plánu možno odvodit' od prebiehajúcich organizačných zmien. Vzhľadom na inštitucionálny rámec právomocí a dostupných zdrojov financovania zdôrazňuje dualistickú povahu zadania územného plánu a cieľov rozvoja. Prvá fáza realizácie prebiehala v rokoch 1957 – 1968, keď kontrolné právomoci spadali pod Hlavný architektonický útvar Balatonu. V dôsledku jeho efektívneho fungovania predmet zadania sa v tomto období dôsledne dodržiaval, avšak ťažko dostupné centrálné zdroje mali čoskoro za následok zastavenie výstavby.

Štúdia ponúka kritickú interpretáciu územného plánu. Prostredníctvom periodizácie procesu realizácie možno pozorovať aj dôsledky konfliktných záujmov na národnej a regionálnej úrovni, ktoré viedli k ukončeniu regionálnych právomocí. Tie mali za následok, že uzatvorené záhrady s chatkami rozprestierajúce sa na historických viniciach a jednotlivé ústredné projekty

rozvoja sa realizovali vo väčšom rozsahu a v nižšej estetickej kvalite. Nútená modernizácia krajiny súčasne viedla ku komplexným environmentálnym problémom. V roku 1978 presadzovala Maďarská akadémia vied prípravu nového územného plánu reagujúci na zhoršovanie kvality vody a na problémy spojené so záhradnými parcelami.

Následné rozsiahle balíčky programov sociálnej a ekonomickej konsolidácie však ešte väčšími narušili integritu pôvodnej územnej predstavy o rekreačnej krajine. Urbanistická a architektonická mierka bola v prípade Balatonu udržiavaná v krehkom vzťahu, avšak ustavičné zmeny politiky týkajúce sa organizácie turizmu a inštitucionálnej štruktúry tento vzťah postupne úspešne oslabili.

Spôsoby realizácie sa nemohli dištancovať od problému urbánnej a rurálnej identity, hoci už na začiatku tu odborníci definovali adaptovanú regionálnu modernu ako ideál. Modernizačné procesy viedli na jednej strane k urbanizovanému neskoro modernému charakteru objektov základného vybavenia situovaného na brehu jazera, zatiaľ čo na druhej strane v ich pozadí vyrastala spontánna architektúra uzatvorených záhrad. Pôsobivú a abstraktnú regionálnu modernu tu narušila lokálna vernakulárna zmes elementov poukazujúc na zmenený záujem turizmu a miznúcu územnú predstavu tak inštitucionálnej, ako aj jednotnej estetickej koncepcie. Tieto zásahy spôsobené ustavičnými zmenami koncepcií mali takmer nezvratný dosah na rekreačnú krajinu.

“Balaton’s waves brought consolidation in even wider circles” – this quote from the famous lyrics of a song entitled “The Sixties” confirms that the development of the largest lake in Central-Europe had a pivotal role in the social policies intended to re-establish the socialist system in Hungary after the 1956 revolution. In parallel with the social consolidation after 1956, the starting development of the holiday resort opened a unique professional opportunity for architects to deal with regional-scale development alongside regional architecture in the frame of the centralised state system, although the most intensive development phase began only after 1968, in changing political conditions. The quoted text, in fact, expresses the highly ambiguous situation of the period, offering restricted freedom in the framework of socialism, and refers to the different and ambivalent memories in which the common subject is the extended development program around the lake, not only in the wider public but among architects as well.

The development started at the end of the fifties, at the same time as the end of the socialist-realist era, in other words the years during which modern architecture became legitimate. Young architects appearing on the scene after the war faced limited resources, technologies and finances at the beginning of the Balaton development, yet the relaxation of ideological pressure gave them the possibility of inventive formal solutions. A later member of Team X, Károly / Charles Polónyi¹, the Chief Planner of the south shore, presented the first results as a regional path towards modernism at the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) in Otterloo in 1959 and six years later these plans won the *Union Internationale des Architectes* (UIA) Abercrombie Prize.

In spite of the prestigious awards achieved by the first phase of the realization, the broader architectural legacy of the Regional Plan and the current situation of the buildings reveal a far more debatable picture. Briefly put, the heterogeneous architectural quality resulting from the long realisation times and the damage to the natural landscape² dating from this period, do not reflect the initial planning ideas. As a result, the judgement of the era’s architecture is ambiguous both in public life and professional arguments.

From among the buildings of this area, only the Tátika Restaurant built in 1962 at the foot of the Badacsony vineyard is a protected monument, although the original structural elements have

**TÁTIKA RESTAURANT WITH KIOSK
ROWS IN THE BACKGROUND,
BADACSONY, 1962**

REŠTAURÁCIA TÁTIKA A TRHOVÉ
STÁNKY V POZADÍ, BADACSONY,
1962

Source Zdroj: Archive of
Ferenc Callmeyer



been destroyed, and vernacular elements added to the building. Indicative of the contradictory perception of this built legacy in the collective identity is how several of the buildings built in the framework of the award-winning Regional Plan have been extensively rebuilt or reconstructed, or otherwise left neglected or empty, and only a few examples are used according to their original purpose or have been expertly renovated. If we contemplate the original condition of the buildings, we can observe that although these projects were realized in the framework of the Balaton Regional Development plan, the scale and the quality of the buildings are not homogenous, hence the aesthetic and technical quality is quite variegated.

Architecture historians³ have only studied the successfully realized first five years of the planning process. Examining the entire regional development legacy from a recent perspective, it would be worth shifting the historical focus to the second part of the implementation. In order to understand the reasons for its distortion, it is necessary to reveal the background and to demonstrate the almost irreversible effects of changes in the concept of tourism on the highly sensitive recreational landscape. The subject of the paper is the late implementation project (Balaton Central Development Program, 1969) in the framework of the first Regional Plan (1958). The paper compares the initial regional idea and its late implementation process after the introduction of “The New Economic Mechanism” in 1968. Drawing upon archived design and plan documentation, memoirs and statistics, the examination should be a critical investigation and comparison of the different development phases, and should reflect the contradiction of the professional ideal under socialist economics and the reality of leisure policy implementation. Nonetheless, we should remember that in this case the ideal for architects and urban planners did not mean utopian monumental

representation but an “ecological integration” of social policy and the natural qualities of the recreational landscape to be protected. In this professional vision, the special planning methodology needed the fragile connection between urbanistic regionalism and architectural concepts using the opportunity of the centralised planning framework of state socialism.

Early Concepts of Recreational Landscapes in Europe

Similar to other European holiday resorts, processes of modernisation caused issues towards the landscape in the region. The sensitive recreational landscapes in Europe were severely affected by emerging urbanisation ensuing from early mass tourism in the first half of the 20th century. As an answer to this problem, a new regionally scaled way of thinking appeared reflecting the Fifth Congress of CIAM recommendation,⁴ which resulted in integral functional regions based on the aspect of recreation. In these spatial situations, both the regional urban development strategies and the different concepts of regional architectural characteristics appeared, although these two regional methods have different origins. On the one hand, the multiply rooted regional planning methodology used large-scale territorial approaches, with a complex theoretical background established by the Scottish biologist and regional researcher Patrick Geddes and the American theoretician Lewis Mumford.⁵ On the other hand, in the case of leisure architecture, the early regional aesthetic concepts focused on individual creations searching for alternative characters adapted to local conditions.⁶ Because of the importance of the landscape’s appearance for tourism, the regional modernization programmes could provide an opportunity for these two regional trajectories to be connected.

The special connection of planning scales was reflected by the Balaton Regional Plan and as a pioneer project, the plan won the UIA Abercrombie Prize in Paris in 1965. Earlier development of the aesthetic aspects had a major role in this success, however, the initial design distortions were already criticised by international experts. The justification for the prize emphasised the self-reflecting relationship between urbanism and architectural regionalism, further amplified by “architecture and landscape harmony”.⁷

Due to its individual characteristics and the specially integrated design system for both architecture and regional development, it is difficult to compare the project in an international context. The prize description clearly shows that these design features were considered novel, even in an international context. If we wish to establish some similarities, we need to differentiate between the design and planning systems of eastern and western countries. Regional plans to develop a holiday resort area were integrated into the centralised long-term economic planning system of the Eastern Block. The Balaton plan’s success⁸ is confirmed by the fact that coordination of the regional development methodology of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was given to Hungary. Though there are certain examples of holiday resort planning in other CMEA countries with similar socio-political connotations, these regions were of different scales and geographical situations than the Balaton region (High Tatra Mountain Range, Black Sea coastline, Adriatic Sea coastline).

The primary aim of Western countries was to address resort urbanisation with the tools of settlement and coordination, although the Franco era in Spain, with its centralised state, also invoked a political connotation for tourism development.⁹ However, without urban planning tools, the chaotic processes in the Costa Brava (Spain) pinpointed the necessity of territorial conceptions for coastline planning and, as shown in the publication of the French urban design journal *Urbanism*,¹⁰ the Balaton Regional Plan served as a forerunner for the French Riviera plans. Development of the French Languedoc-Roussillon region was launched in 1964; the plans were to build 5 centres with a capacity of 500,000, stretching along approximately 180 km. These centres were designed by the Team 10 members Georges Candilis,¹¹ Jean Baladour and Jean Le Coureur reflecting a structuralist way of thinking. Comparing the Balaton project with the coastal plans and initiatives, the international significance of the Balaton Plan stems from its careful management of the urban and the architectural scales.

Foreseeing the Problems: Sharp Borders of the Idea

In order to gain a deeper insight into the process of decay, it is necessary to examine the main urban-planning and architectural features of the initial design idea, and to emphasize those areas exposed to the most intensive distorting effects during the implementation phase. Economics and political changes after 1968, in the first place, overrode landscape protection aspects, population limitations, and as a result, the fundamental guidelines of architectural scale and characteristics.

BALATONI RÉCÍÓ

NÉPESÉC TERVE



UNIQUE LANDSCAPE
DEVELOPMENT: BALATON
REGIONAL PLAN, 1957

JEDINEČNÝ ROZVOJ KRAJINY:
ÚZEMNÝ PLÁN BALATONU, 1957

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas

Having anticipated these trends in advance, a key factor of the harmony between development and structured design was the unique planning framework, which merged different regional development phases of different scale in a complex and comprehensive manner. As already mentioned, no methodology history was available to prepare such a plan, hence the architects of the design bureau VÁTERV¹², under the supervision of Chief Architect Tibor Farkas¹³, had to devise plans for this purpose.

Analysing the large-scale concept from 1957, we can note how the regional idea was based on the early regional planning methods of Geddes and Mumford¹⁴ – it aimed to preserve the environmental integrity of the region.¹⁵ This environmental way of thinking meant preservation of protected natural areas, and structuring of resort facilities integrated into the landscape as well as into settlement patterns.

The designers were aware that the special layout and landscape of the holiday resort required the harmonisation of development initiatives and land protection, therefore, the regional plan included, in addition to the development concept, strict urban planning features. Regulations attempted to curb the urbanisation of the emerging resort area; the plan aimed to embed villages and towns into green areas, and as such, to stop them from fusing together.¹⁶ These initiatives attempted to establish a unique and modern aesthetic character for the holiday resort areas, features which brought the area close to the surrounding nature. Here, the aim was to stop excessive urbanisation, in parallel with attempts to modernise rural areas to meet the quality demands of town holiday resorts.

Environment protection was to be implemented by limiting the spread of holiday resorts. Protection zones were established in between the continually expanding villages and towns along the lake shore, and a ban on building was issued to these spots. Optimum regional area utilisation allowed precise calculation of capacities. In the Fifties, around 200,000 people lived around the lake in the summer. The plan, for a 20-year period, capped this figure at 574,000, such that the permanent population, with a 50 % increase, would have been 155,000, and weekend inflow was to be at maximum 92 – 118 thousand. As we will see in the implementation phases, the capacity figures had a fundamental impact on the relationship between architecture and urban development.



**AN INTEGRATED RECREATION UNIT
FITTED TO THE TIHANY LANDSCAPE**

INTEGROVANÁ REKREAČNÁ
JEDNOTKA PRISPŮSOBENÁ PRE
LOKALITU OBCE TIHANY

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas

Not only ecological and environment aesthetic principles were the result of the notion of a uniformed region, as this concept means establishing an integrated co-existence for various social classes along the lake shore. In the designer's words, the objective was not to establish grand resorts like in Romania or in Bulgaria,¹⁷ but to create a common meeting place for various social strata.¹⁸ The initial period favoured the working class, and lake shore development had to serve the demand of domestic tourism. Due to the international isolation of several years after the 1956 revolution, international tourism was less significant, and only after 1962 did it start to intensify, assisted by internal policy changes.

Although the administrative background was constantly changing during the course of realization, the centralised nature of the socialist system after the revolution gave specific space for the integrated thinking, by linking regional, settlement and architecture scales. These three different scales were fundamentally defined by the principle of moving from the bigger to the smaller. Searching for the regional architectural conceptions, the most significant problem was to find the proper scale and size, because there were no local samples for designing buildings serving the needs of mass tourism. As Tibor Farkas wrote: "In terms of scale, size and approach, we strive to remain moderate, yet we endeavour to be as modern as possible. We do not want to compete with the sizes used on the seaside, as we want to preserve the intimate and personal character of the lake, and we aim to develop its calming atmosphere into a modern and intimate environment."¹⁹

To cater for the ever-increasing infrastructural demand, Charles Polónyi planned a flexible structural system that allowed for the construction of seasonal buildings to match local characteristics and demand. The main construction materials were reed, wood or fishing nets; the construction processes employed local workers. Local adaptations of the regional concept appeared on the international horizon as well, with the interest of the architecture team TEAM X in structural matters being clearly reflected at the last CIAM Congress. In addition to pre-manufactured beach houses, hotels, motels and other facilities were also built. Small-scale architecture concepts integrated landscape topography, local material and archetypal features with the expressive tools of modern architecture, and as such, formulated a unique and abstract character for the seasonal functions of a holiday resort area. In these terms, regional architecture kept its distance from both urban character and from local, vernacular architecture as designers used folk architecture features in holiday resort areas strictly for abstract inspiration.²⁰ In the wake of the successful implementation of the first development units, the growing need for higher infrastructure capacities intensified the issue of regional characteristics and architectural scale.

CAMPING STRUCTURE

KEMPINGOVÁ KONŠTRUKCIA

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas



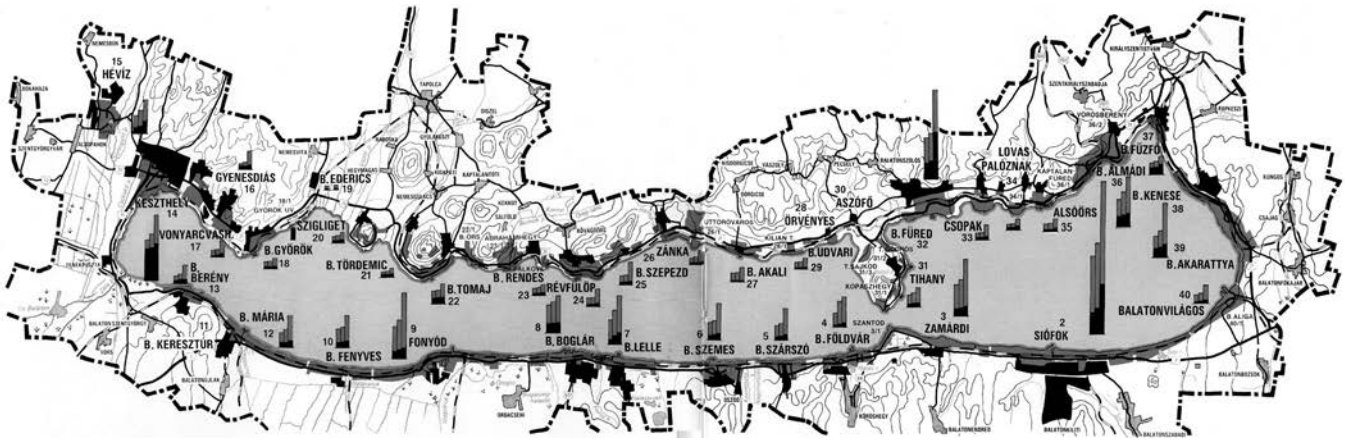
Regarding the regional planning idea, definition can be given as as the functional landscape layer for recreational areas that keep a distance from both the urban and rural identities. The integrated methodology attempted to link regional, settlement and architectural scale conceptions. The large-scale, “landscape-sensitive” modernization programme was reflected by the pragmatic, regional modern architecture, although it was not a clearly specified quality. As Tibor Farkas wrote: “The entire Balaton region is just like a piece of grand art, a monumental and long lasting masterpiece. Architectural solutions, therefore, will have to implement modern features as well as proportional functions, and will have to be able to integrate into the environment at all times.”²¹

Increasing Numbers in the Background

In order to review the implementation process, we need to examine the changes that had an influence on the effectiveness of the regional plan remaining in force until 1979. These changes primarily include a different approach to tourism, economy and politics, and, as a consequence, the reorganising of the institutional regional framework. Even though the development initially strove to serve domestic tourism to reinforce socio-political consolidation, at the beginning of the sixties the state attempted to prioritise its economics interest by opening to foreign tourists as well. “*Internal conditions in the People’s Republic of Hungary are good enough to present them proudly to our friends and critics. We have nothing to hide. In addition to developing our tourism relations with our socialist partners, we aim to improve our tourism relations with several capitalist countries as well.*”²² The 8th Party Congress in 1962 opened the gates and welcomed foreign tourists, and wished to transform Balaton’s lakeside development into a showcase, a sort of display room of a booming socialist economy. However, due to the resulting increase of the foreign currency flow into the country, this change had other interests as well.

The background of this sudden change was that the European tourism in general was intensifying, and the ban on travelling for citizens of socialist countries was partially lifted. Hoping to meet their East German relatives and friends, especially West German citizens arrived in big numbers. The duality of domestic and international tourism remained in the programme, and it placed an increasing emphasis on the national economy’s role of acquiring foreign currencies: “In the first place, to facilitate domestic trade union tourism, to help foreign tourists and to boost foreign currency flow into the country, and to foster responsibility for our common values, among them our special lake.” The number of international guests grew rapidly. At the beginning of the seventies, as Balaton began to win a reputation across the wider European context, instead of further encouraging mass tourism, local regional potentials were about to be recognised. “The Southern shore with its sandy lake bed and 30 – 40 cm deep water should be a European holiday destination for families with small children.” – such was the plan established at the programme’s start.

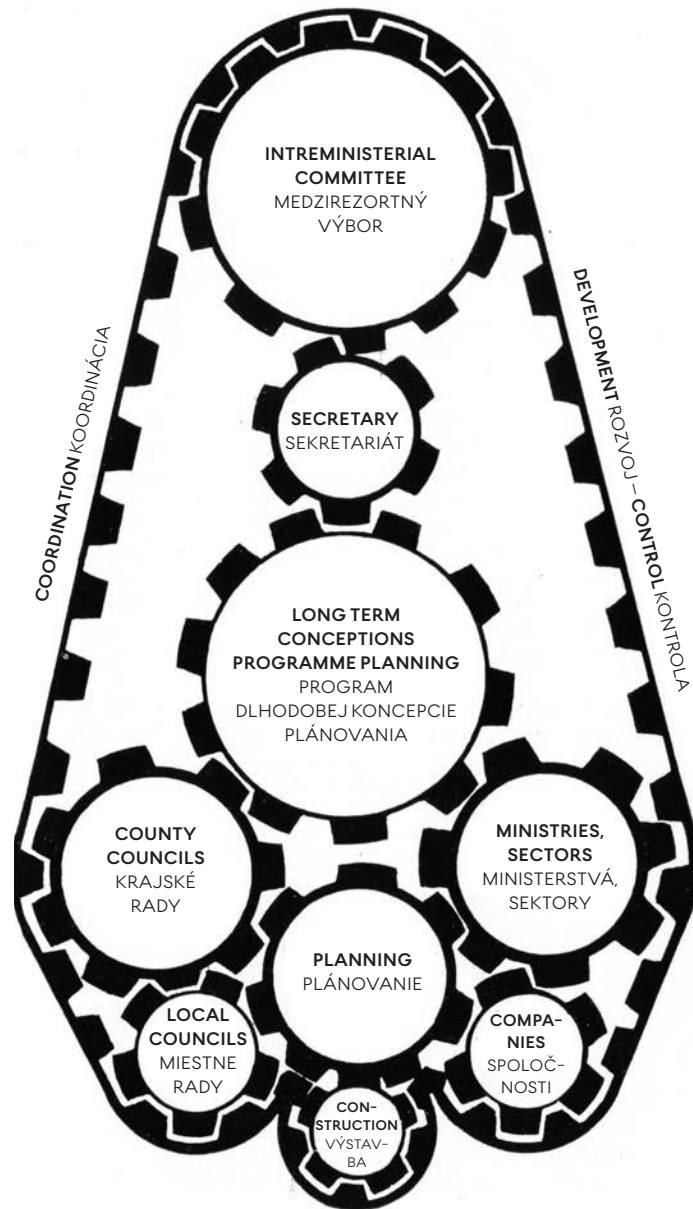
Besides the intensifying international tourism, an increasing number of domestic citizens visited the body of water often termed the “Hungarian sea”. Population figures were on a sharp rise on both shores between 1960 and 1967. Data from 1968²³ show that the summer population was about



BALATON CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ÚSTREDNÝ PROGRAM ROZVOJA BALATONU

Source Zdroj: Development project of Lake Balaton / Balaton-fejlesztés. Budapest, VT Idegenforgalmi Propaganda és Kiadó Vállalat 1975, pp. 20 – 21



INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE BALATON MANAGEMENT
INŠTITUCIONÁLNA ŠTRUKTÚRA MANAŽMENTU BALATONU

Source Zdroj: Development project of Lake Balaton / Balaton-fejlesztés. Budapest, VT Idegenforgalmi Propaganda és Kiadó Vállalat 1975, p. 29



ROW OF HOTELS, SIÓFOK
RAD HOTELOV, SIÓFOK

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas

300,000, a figure half of the planned maximum value for 1980. One-third of this figure is constant population. Moreover, the findings state that the growth during the preceding period was a result of a deliberate campaign, and which, due to development lagging behind, resulted in overcrowded beaches and inferior hygienic conditions. “The technical background for quality development is not provided.”

The population growth on the lakeshore continued unstoppably in the seventies, and the problem was further aggravated by the change of the characteristics of tourism. Behind the increase in the seventies was primarily the change in lifestyle. The introduction of every second Saturday being free meant the amount of free time increased, and the quality of life improved. The trend is readily confirmed by the growing number of cars. Statistics show that while in 1970 213,000 vehicles were on the roads, for 1975 this figure increased to a whopping 550,000,²⁴ which in turn meant that more people had a chance to drive to the lake for the weekend. The gap between infrastructure capacities and demand, due to the rapid growth in the number of tourists, widened.

Shrinking Circles of Authority

Implementation of the Regional Plan can be periodised according to organisational changes. In terms of the institutional scope of the state authority and available resources, it underlined the dualist nature of the regional plan layout and development objectives. The first implementation phase was between 1957 and 1968, in which the Chief Architect of Balaton had control. As a result of its effective operation, layout issues were consistently addressed, yet the lack of available central funding soon resulted in cancelled development. Efficient implementation of the plan was made possible by a complex three-level regional organisational structure. While regional plans were drafted in the state urban planning institute, to help technical development co-ordination, the management committee *Balatoni Intéző Bizottság* (BIB)²⁵ was set up. Implementation of the regional plan and the activities of the architect authority were supervised by Chief Architect Tibor Farkas. This position had no precursors or history in Hungary, yet the new institution of Chief Architect provided the state with the possibility to control architecture quality and preserve the boundaries of protected natural areas.

Examining the second part of the realization, the legislative and economical context of the Regional Plan was changed. From the middle of the sixties, the National Design Bureau gave fewer resources to BIB, while the existing infrastructure was increasingly incapable of meeting the demand of the intensified tourism. A new Councils Act was introduced, the national network of the chief architects was terminated, and as such, Tibor Farkas's authority over the Balaton area ceased.²⁶ Co-ordination was primarily handed over to the ill-prepared local government officials, who instead of regional aspects favoured local ones, and thus the regional plan concept became a thing of the past. The problem was further aggravated by a new Land Act, which allowed the formation of small plots on external areas which were previously strictly limited.

The year 1968 saw the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism reforming the central planning in Hungary, which understandably as well reshaped the framework of Lake Balaton's development.²⁷ Tibor Farkas, deprived of his office, initiated a new central programme to implement the lacking development of the Regional Plan.²⁸ The programme slogan “complexity and concentration” revealed that the programme only focused on highlighted towns by primarily aiming to complete missing infrastructural development and preparation of construction areas.²⁹ However, development experts had no authority over the region as a whole in terms of supervising construction and layout design. This resulted in planning and development objectives taking two different paths, and ended up distorting the environment.

The New Economic Mechanism also brought about a change in the regional institutional background. The Chief Architect's Office was not restored, and the BIB's role concentrated on tourism only. The new co-ordinating body was *Balatonfejlesztési Tárcaközi Bizottság* (BTB)³⁰, under the supervision of relevant ministers. *Balaton Fejlesztési Alap*, the development fund, provided the necessarily central funding for the development. Although the UIA award-winning Regional Plan continued to be in force, it was modified to meet the changing needs, and it was also altered in the wake of local demand. Since the holiday resorts were owned by the local councils, they were the bodies tasked with operative development implementation and management.



HOTEL TIHANY
HOTEL TIHANY
Source Zdroj: Fortepan Image ID: 69885



**LANDSCAPE MODERNISATION
IN KESZTHELY**

MODERNIZÁCIA KRAJINY
V KESZTHELY

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas



BLUEFIELD INVESTMENT
VÝSTAVBA NA „MODREJ LÚKE“

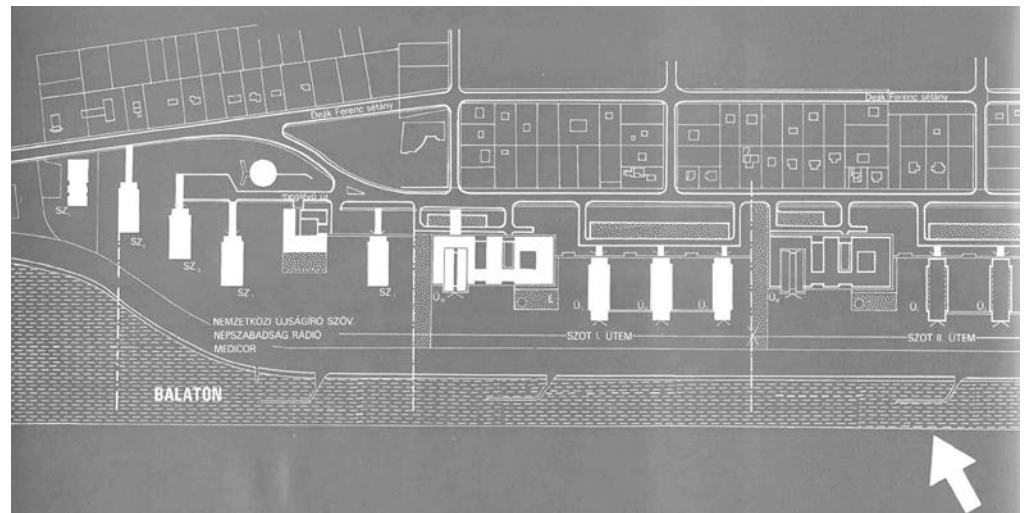
Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas

The link between the nationwide New Economic Mechanism and the regional institutional system was represented by a programme leaflet, showing an allegoric drawing of a cogwheel gear system, and listing the organisations participating in the development. To emphasise the role of BFT³¹: “The entire Balaton holiday resort system is only lacking a couple of small cogwheels, however, these little parts are indispensable for the proper operation of the organisation as a whole.” A close examination of this figure reveals that these cogwheels actually turn in the opposite direction, and as such they block the system. These contradictions are not only of a visual graphical nature: eventually, the development confirmed the longstanding presence in the region of significant issues of segmented and contradictory interests. The programme was approved by the government in 1969, and its first phase was implemented between 1971 – 1975, under auspices of the fourth “five year plan”.³²

MODERNISATION PLAN OF THE SIÓFOK EZÜSTPART

PLÁN MODERNIZÁCIE EZÜSTPART V SIÓFOKU

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas



ROW OF HOTELS IN SIÓFOK EZÜSTPART

RAD HOTELOV V EZÜSTPART, SIÓFOK

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas

Impact on the Landscape: Forced Modernization

The first small hotels and motels, along with beaches and city centres, reflected the plan's integrated nature, yet contradictory domestic economic interests soon resulted in a weakening development curve.³³ Large hotels, such as the row of hotels in Siófok and the massive single structure in Tihany were built to accommodate the foreigners. New hotels usually had a capacity of 270 beds, with up to six floors, and represent the European medium level. The sixties saw the construction of still bigger hotels, with a capacity of 400 – 800. They used different technologies, and were made from pre-fabricated panels and materials. In a 1967 report of the Chief Architect's Office, the office urged the construction of manufacturing plants to facilitate the building of corporate and trade union holiday resorts. All these demands required a change in scale and technology which had

its influence on the quality of architecture as well.³⁴ Though earlier regional patterns prevailed in material use and shape, new units appeared as monumental and abstract elements.³⁵

After 1968, the second phase of the realization meant a significant change in the landscape; 170 hectares of new holiday area were prepared up to 1975, providing construction space for 9,700 individuals.³⁶ A new and free 6 km long patch of land was established along the lake. The programme promoted intensive modernisation that overwhelmed the previous environmental-aesthetic aspects. Besides infrastructural development, it required the filling and parcelling of new lake shore areas. Behind this peculiar “bluefield investment” was the intention of reaching the previous century’s shore line which lay farther away into the water than the current shore line, such that land recaptured in this way could provide an opportunity for dense structures and population. In harmony with the designers’ vision, the image of towns and villages around the lake was intended to undergo a major change: “As a result of well-established public utilities, especially along the Southern shore line, the area available from the railway tracks for building will be doubled. The new spots will be occupied by multi-storey holiday resorts, hotels, and residential homes. This process will give priority to holiday resorts over the heterogeneous building structures.”

The contradiction of the growing numbers and the “intimate scale of units” in the initial planning idea of the 1957 Balaton Regional Plan soon became clear within the programme: “hotels of smaller capacities should be built.”³⁷ As the planners diagnosed, large hotels with capacities of 700 – 800 were only acceptable from an economic point of view, to ensure that a large number of places would be made available in a short time. At the same time, smaller units should also be built, in order to facilitate a change of holiday resort types. Reflecting these intentions, small units were erected in Földvár and Siófok’s Ezüstpart. “It is more natural to host tourists in structures which are closer to the water and to the ground.” Though building sizes were similar to those of structures built at the beginning of the sixties, their aesthetic characteristics were different. Modernisation meant that hotels built along Siófok’s Ezüstpart³⁸ used steel and glass frontal elements, reflecting the main features of late modern architecture. The second half of the seventies witnessed the return of large-capacity hotels built from pre-fabricated panels³⁹ – thus breaking away from the “adapted” regional modern way of the initial planning ideal. Eliminating the chief architect’s position in the new realization programme, the central committee was responsible only for the development management and the assignment of built scale, and had no direct impact on the architectural qualities.

“The holiday resorts lack space” – this sentiment was frequently voiced during the co-ordination of the private construction, as an increasing number of private holiday resorts were built, with the resorts becoming densely populated and acquiring a more urban look. The favourable change in the standard of living during the seventies resulted in growing savings, and simultaneously, a marked increase in the demand for Balaton properties. The “intensive and modern construction” scheduled by the plan was primarily of an economic nature, yet in its function as a “partition wall” on the lakeshore, aesthetic functions were also assigned to it. The program also supported holiday apartment constructions by communities.⁴⁰ “This way we could enforce the regional plan on the Southern shore to prioritize the new social holiday culture along the waterfront over the current and low quality areas.” Although apartment constructions implemented by communities made the establishment of public utilities and financing more economically viable, the process resulted in still higher density on the lakeshore, and once again giving an even more urbanized character to the recreational landscape.

Emerging Enclosed Garden Areas

Nonetheless, the major goal of the regional plan in force until 1979 was still the preservation of the green areas along the lake, especially in the northern region, even though after the elimination of the chief-architect’s position there was no authority with the power to defend the buffer zones. The increasing demand for plots of land brought about an increase of private construction as well. Regrettably, these constructions often ignored local regulations. Unsupervised allotment of land plots was motivated by the fact that the local councils allowed to extend the lots, and agricultural associations were also eligible to segment land that was uneconomical for farming. And as such, some of the areas indicated as green spots in the layout plan were also built on.

The original plan had strict measures that in “construction area VI”, no plots smaller than 2 000 m² could be established. This ruling was instrumental in preventing the fragmentation of



**SPREADING URBANISATION NEAR
KENESE IN 1971**

ROZŠIRUJÚCA SA URBANIZÁCIA
VEDĽA KENESE V ROKU 1971

Source Zdroj: Archive of Tibor Farkas



**BAZAAR NEXT TO THE TÁTIKA
RESTAURANT IN BADACSONY**

BAZÁR VEDĽA REŠTAURÁCIE TÁTIKA
V BADACSONY

Source Zdroj: Archive of
Ferenc Callmeyer and
Archive of Domonkos Wettstein

historic vineyards, and at least this amount of land had to be owned to be eligible to erect a new building.⁴¹ When in 1971 Tibor Farkas submitted his resignation as the chief Balaton development co-ordinator, he explained his move by highlighting the contradiction between, on the one hand, the exemplary plans and strict regulations to co-ordinate central development, and on the other hand, councils arbitrarily chopping apart areas of land, which leads to irreversible damage.

The rapid increase in the number of cars made it comfortable to reach spots as far as 5 – 10 km from the lake. The majority of Balaton garden plots were built on the land of historic vineyards. In comparison to the first military survey of 1780, showing that most of the land was covered by vineyards, these areas are now occupied by garden plots, the bulk of which occupy a favourably exposed slope. With these garden plots unfortunately occupying the best vineyards, they endangered the historic heritage of viticulture in the Balaton Highlands, while the ignoring and neglecting of this environment accelerated the erosion of the slopes.

Besides soil erosion due to the lack of cultivation, environmental and aesthetic issues also emerged. In these areas, a significant proportion of buildings were no longer built to serve as a wine house or a wine cellar, but a holiday home. For extant structures, facelifts used solutions different from the original ones, as the rules did not specify the material to be used for building, but only defined the area and number per lot, and the requirement “to match the environment” was to be interpreted individually.⁴² In order to dodge the ruling that only allowed the construction of small tool sheds, a range of even less congruous structures - decommissioned railway cars, caravans, buses - started to serve as buildings. When Charles Polónyi in his memoirs examined the problem of private constructions, in the light of Bernard Rudofsky’s album *Architecture Without Architects*,⁴³ he interpreted the problem as an ever-widening spectrum of building methods: “The house-form and the settlement pattern of spontaneous vernacular architecture is very strongly determined by the climatic conditions, availability of building material, construction skill and the common behaviour pattern of people. In our age there is a wider variety of options at hand.”⁴⁴

In order to remedy the problem, in 1975 the urban planning institute VÁTI started a review of the Balaton Regional Plan.⁴⁵ The result of the examination demonstrated that 16656 hectares were internal area, a figure representing 149 % of the target value set forth by the 1957 Plan. The process not only started along the shore, but inland as well. Confronted with the apparent contradiction between cultivation and recreation reflected by these aesthetic problems, attention turned towards examining other solutions beyond architecture. The landscape architect József Laposa drafted his theoretical solution⁴⁶ to support landscape cultivation: “Holidays and resorts should be considered to be the end product of our social development, and should be interpreted as a new link between the environment and the people.” Planning and organisation was therefore of a bilateral nature. It was established that garden areas should be reduced, and cultivation should be encouraged. József Laposa suggested the promotion of a new form of relaxation, which he termed the “active holiday”. His objective was not to restore the old, conventional way of cultivation, but to make weekend gardening more popular, which besides being a healthy activity, could have solved the cultivation and aesthetic problem as well. “Domestic farming and weekend gardening have recently become significant in our socialist present.”

From Development to Rehabilitation

The forced modernization of the landscape resulted in complex environmental problems. In 1978, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences urged the preparation of a new regional plan to address the worsening water quality and problems associated with garden plots. Instead of development and modernisation, the plan drafted by the urban planner Lajos Kotsis, emphasised rehabilitation: “This plan has to mean the rehabilitation of a severely impacted, rapidly deteriorating and massively overcrowded area with only a limited amount of land available for modern recreation facilities.”⁴⁷ The plan drafted a 30-year rehabilitation of the area while taking the natural deterioration of structures into consideration. Simultaneously, it limited population growth, yet it used a peak figure of 800,000 instead of the previously indicated top figure of 600,000.

The change in the conception of tourism is highlighted by the incorporation of the cultural heritage of the Balaton Highland, as an alternative to lake-shore holidays, thus enlarging the region to encompass 114 villages and towns instead of the earlier 40. “Inclusion of background areas enables us better to exploit our national heritage, our environmental, natural and cultural benefits, and to extend the variety of holiday options.”⁴⁸ Utilisation of areas in the hinterland based on ver-

naacular culture did not lead to major change: resorts did appear in internal areas, but no new holiday resort areas had to be allocated as a result. However, quite a lot of private citizens purchased old and derelict buildings around the lake with the intention of using them as holiday resorts or a personal hideaway. Moreover, as traditional local heritage moved further into the past, vernacular architecture gained a new position in the region as a source of stylistic inspiration.

Concluding the processes, the even wider circles of social and economic consolidation programmes eroded the integrity of the award-winning initial regional ideal for the recreational landscape. Urbanistic plans and architectural scale had a delicate relationship in the development of Balaton, yet the constant changes in tourism policies and institutional structure succeeded in weakening it further. During the protracted processes of realisation, recreational landscape development could not keep its necessary distance from both urban and rural identities, even though the specialized regional modernity for recreation had been defined as a professional ideal at the very beginning. On the one hand, the forced modernization process resulted in an urbanised, late modern character of the lakeshore facilities, while, on the other hand, the spontaneous enclosed garden architecture emerged in the background. Distortions caused by the ever-changing conceptions had a nearly irreversible impact on the recreational landscape.

1 Charles / Károly Polónyi (1928 – 2002) was an architect and town planner, later a member of the TEAM 10. He worked for the Balaton Executive Committee as chief-engineer of the Southern Shore of Balaton (1957 – 1960). Parallel to the Balaton project, he worked in the Design Bureau for Industrial Buildings (IPARTERV). Between 1963 – 1969 he worked for the Ghana National Construction Corporation as architect and he was a professor in Kumasi. From 1969 to 1980, he worked in Nigeria, Algeria and Ethiopia. After his return to Budapest he was leader of the Urban Design Bureau of Budapest and professor at the Technical University of Budapest.

2 The Chief Architect Tibor Farkas mentioned the notion of “deformations” for the period in his memoirs. FARKAS, Tibor: *Ahogy én látom a Balaton-ügy 30 évét I. rész.* In: *Magyar Építőművészet* 37, 1988, 2, pp. 44 – 47 and FARKAS, Tibor: *Ahogy én látom a Balaton-ügy 30 évét II. rész.* In: *Magyar Építőművészet* 37, 1988, 3, pp. 10 – 13.

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5 Patrick Geddes (1854 – 1932) was a regional researcher and planner, professor of biology at the University of Dundee. See MELLER, Helen: *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner.* London, Routledge 1993. 384 p.

6 Thematic issues SÖRGEL, Herman: *Das Haus fürs Wochenende.* Leipzig, J. M. Gebhardt's Verlag 1930. 80 p. and ARTRIA, Paul: *Vom Bauen und Wohnen.* Basel, Wepf 1948. 184 p. and Fontanet, Jean-Claude: *Maisons sans etages villas de week-end.* Paris, 1955. 36 p.

7 The UIA Abercrombie Prize in 1965 was shared by Colin Buchanan (Oxford Street Plan). See 'Abercrombie Prize' UIA Journal 34, 1965, p. 12.

8 The first international reflections on the plan were received in 1958. At the first regional development congress in Liege, a plan named Plan Regional Du Balaton Hongrie was introduced, involving a 4 metre long plan document.

9 BAIDAL, Josep A. I.: *Tourism Planning In Spain. Evolution and Perspectives.* In: *Annals of Tourism Research* 31, 2004, 2, pp. 313 – 333.

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11 CANDILIS, Georges: *Planning a design for leisure.* Stuttgart, K Krämer Verlag 1972. 144 p.

12 *Városépítési Tervező Vállalat (VÁTERV, in English: Urban Planning Institute)* was founded in 1950 as a state owned planning bureau for urban, regional and landscape planning. The name was changed to VÁTI (Városépítési Tudományos és Tervező Intézet, in English Urban Research and Planning Institute) in 1967.

13 Tibor Farkas (1922 – 2015) was an architect and urban designer. He worked in VÁTERV (City Planning Bureau) starting 1951, and his first regional work was the flood restoration works of Mohács. Between 1957 – 1971 he was a key member of the Balaton Executive Committee and led the regional planning process. In 1965 his planning group won the UIA Abercrombie Prize in Paris.

14 Geddes was the pioneer of regional planning and his works were republished in 1954, on the 100th anniversary of his birth. VOLKER, M. Welter: *Post-war CIAM, Team X, and the Influence of Patrick Geddes.* Available at <http://www.team10online.org/research/papers/delft1/welter.pdf>. Accessed 15 October 2015.

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18 Balaton. Ed. Gábor Vályi. Budapest, Corvina 1962, p. 177.

19 FARKAS, Tibor: *Rövid áttekintés a Balatonkörnyéki regionális munkáról.* Manuscript without date. Source: Personal archive of Tibor Farkas.

After the change of regime, the erosion of the plan and the landscape has only continued. The economic and political alterations led to the spread of urbanisation and resulted in an even more confused appearance of the scenic framework of leisure. Contemplating the recent state of the whole development legacy, the large-scale units of the late realization process seem to be resistant against the changes, but the UIA-awarded small buildings constructed during the first development phase stand in a vulnerable position. Privatisation, lifestyle changes and the new tourism concepts, in many cases, resulted in changes to the original function, in reshaping the architectural concept, and in some cases, the demolition of buildings. The only protected monument from the era, the Tátika Restaurant⁴⁹ built in 1962 located at the foot of the Badacsony vineyard, originally reaching over the water, was built to accommodate international tourists. In the meantime, the patch underneath the cantilever was filled with soil, and a night club opened on the top floor. The original structural elements were destroyed, and vernacular elements were added to the buildings.⁵⁰ Next to the restaurant, two kiosk rows were designed also by the same architect, Ferenc Callmeyer. Nowadays the shops are empty and one of the rows has already been destroyed. And above all, the unique style of a light and abstract regional modernity was eroded by the new local-vernacular mixture of elements reflecting the changing interest of tourism and the disappearing regional idea as both institutional and aesthetical conceptions.

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