

## Conference Paper

# «Birth of a Citizen»: Avant-garde Architecture and Transformation of Social Experience

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## Abstract

The authors describe the transformation of the perception practices of the avant-garde architectural object in the urban space. In the article, the avant-garde object is represented not only as an architectural or artistic phenomenon, but also as a social phenomenon forming a city identity. The purpose of the article is to identify and describe the specific character of the transformation of the avant-garde architecture object symbolic content understood as an element of urban identity. The object of analysis in the article is the *Scientific Research Institute (SRI) of Maternity and Infancy*, which is viewed both as a monument of the constructivist architecture and as an institution whose functioning cannot be adequately understood without the regard to a unique architectural project designed specifically for it. The historical analysis shows that the *SRI of Maternity and Infancy* is transformed from an avant-garde object associated with the industrialization of public life, into a significant monument of the past, which is due to the internal logic of the development of a modern city. In addition to the analysis of scientific literature and secondary sources, the methodology of the study includes data collection through interviews with the staff of the *Scientific Research Institute of Maternity and Infancy*.

**Keywords:** avant-garde, constructivism, city, social history of architecture, architectural heritage, city identity, industrialization, the *Scientific Research Institute of Maternity and Infancy*.

## 1. Introduction

The architectural heritage of Soviet constructivism has found itself today at the intersection of different research approaches: historical and architectural analysis, the analysis of problems and strategies for the development of the post-Soviet city; the study of everything Soviet in the context of a utopian project; the correlation of the heritage

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Received: 26 April 2018

Accepted: 25 May 2018

Published: 7 June 2018

Publishing services provided by  
 Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ISPS Convention 2017 Conference Committee.

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of Soviet constructivism with the world trends of the avant-garde architecture appropriation.

There are different approaches to the study and interpretation of the constructivist heritage. It can be studied within the framework of art history (Cohen 1992; [3]), in the logic of style changes in architecture (Cohen 1981; [16, 22, 23, 30, 31]; Uymin, Shelushinin 1974), transformations and continuity in the evolution of architectural style (Khazanova 1980, 1984). We can talk about constructivism within the framework of the general social shift in the early twentieth century ([6], Lubbe 2016; [12, 17, 18]) and in this case avant-garde architecture is considered as one of the elements of this shift. All these issues are currently the subject of scientific discussions.

The architectural avant-garde acts as a marker of a bygone era, it requires its comprehension through the new contextualization and by inscribing it into the new discursive fields and practices. For the conclusions to be more explicit, it is necessary to take into account both the social context of its emergence and the nature of the social tasks to be solved, as well as the needs of the present day. Being a product of a bygone era, the architectural avant-garde remains the part of a vibrant dynamic urban environment, subordinated to its special rhythms and pragmatics (of human life, of the city development, of the cultural heritage preservation).

In the work "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life" Friedrich Nietzsche divided historical science into three types: antique (collecting attractions of the past), monumental (oriented to the great deeds of the past) and critical (liberating from the dogmas of the past). The choice between them is the choice of registers for dealing with the past, as well as the way to design one's own identity [15]. The past is understood as a set of mythological schemes, patterns and injuries or as a resource for life?

Therefore, working with the historical past is the choice of a specific way of dealing with it, actualizing its specific contents, forming a new context for its comprehension. Mythologized or traumatic past often acts as a limitation of the present (and as a set of political, manipulative techniques in describing the past). It can also act as a resource for the present, when by reconfiguring the historical narrative (Paul Ricoeur), opportunities for productive dialogue with historical experience have been opening up.

In the view of this dialogical work with the past, we will consider a monument of avant-garde architecture as a phenomenon of urban identity. We understand urban identity as the existing system of citizens' ideas about the identity of the place where they live, the meanings that determine its uniqueness and a set of basic stories and

narratives significant for them. Offering the analysis of avant-garde architecture in the modern context, we focus on the specificity of the city and modern urban civilization phenomenon. They have formed a special type of a person with new forms of corporeality and social ties. This practice of urban life is analyzed in the Soviet and post-Soviet contexts, which is due to the time of the emergence of avant-garde architecture and its status problematization in our days.

Thus, we will consider the architectural avant-garde as a monument and the phenomenon of city life, in the dynamics of social relations and interaction with the past. We also abandon the purely aesthetic view on the avant-garde and set ourselves the task of inscribing it into the social context and revealing the mediating links between the architectural object and social experience at the content level.

There are three research strategies for describing an architectural object. With regard to the SRI of Maternity and Infancy, they will be:

1. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a phenomenon of avant-garde architecture.
2. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a phenomenon of constructivism in terms of the social content of discussions about constructivism.
3. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a phenomenon of urban history.

All of them are equal in rights as different types of "language games" (L. Wittgenstein). But they do not coincide with respect to their heuristic possibilities and pragmatic goals, this being due to a different understanding of the phenomenon of avant-garde and avant-garde architecture and the difference in approaches to working with the present and the past. The problem of "how we should talk about constructivism and avant-garde", in fact, raises the question of *who* says it, *what* is being said and *why* (These questions refer to various discussions about the nature of the avant-garde and the content of such terms as avant-garde, constructivism and modernism. In particular, these problems were dealt with at the International Interdisciplinary Conference Modernity Junctures: Avant-garde as a Cultural and Anthropological Project (April, 27-29, 2017, Ekaterinburg, Russia) in Ural Federal University).

We are motivated by the need to clarify the specifics of the avant-garde phenomenon as a historical experience, to describe constructivism as a concrete phenomenon of the past, occupying a very short segment on a historical scale, from 1920 to early 1930s. Thanks to this, we are moving away from the problem of the avant-garde description plurality, the questions of its definition and the identification of its stylistic features [19].

*The understanding of the avant-garde as a social experience focuses the researcher's attention on the problems of understanding the connection between the present and social history, determining the forms of its influence on the present, revealing the possibilities of its reconfiguration in the context of working with the past*

Thus, our attention focuses on the variability of the relationship between the architectural object understood both as a physical place in the urban space and at the same time as a symbolic place on the semantic map of the city.

The first part of the article will describe the specificity of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a constructivist architectural object. Then we will turn to the historical socio-cultural context of the Institute development. In the next part, we will analyze the process of the transformation of the advanced avant-garde object into a monument and a sign of the urban past.

## **2. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a Phenomenon of Avant-garde Architecture (Constructivism)**

The building of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy (architect G. Golubev) was built in 1936 at the then outskirts of the city. It is a part of the Medical Village, which includes the Medical Institute, the Institute of Physiotherapy and Occupational Diseases and a number of other medical facilities. As a phenomenon of avant-garde architecture, the building of the Scientific Research Institute of Maternity and Infancy is remarkable in the expressiveness of its appearance and the functionality of the internal layout. The broken elongated form of the building, the ribbon glazing of the entrances, the bay windows, the round windows at the entrances to the offices, the network of corridors, the large assembly hall (conference room), the large operating room with panoramic glazing - all this creates a unique architectural appearance of the building and allows it to be stylistically attributed to Constructivism.

Constructivism can be perceived as a special architectural style or as a way of organizing life [19, 23, 30, 31]. According to style features, constructivism is close to the architecture of functionalism or to the architecture of the Bauhaus school. If we consider constructivism as a specific phenomenon in relation to functionalism, its content could be determined by taking into account the Soviet sociocultural context. Constructivism as the ideology of the UCA (the Union of Contemporary Architects of 1925-1930, the main figures are M. Ginzburg, A. A. Vesnin, V. Y. Vesnin, M.A. Kornfeld, etc.) and its followers implied an attempt to create a new society and a new person with the help

of architectural design. Unlike other countries where the architecture of functionalism and the Bauhaus was a fragmentary phenomenon, in the USSR constructivism became almost an official style for a short period, and its ideologists and creators had the opportunity to implement their projects on a large scale. In the case of Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg), this attempt was particularly ambitious and was based on a general spatial concept of the city's development. Sverdlovsk architects created their own branch of UCA (Created in 1928 under the leadership of I.I. Robachevsky. Report on the establishment of the office. "Soviet Architecture" 1928 № 4 [http://www.books.totalarch.com/magazines/ca/1928\\_04](http://www.books.totalarch.com/magazines/ca/1928_04)). Most of the city was transformed within the framework the Large Sverdlovsk project in terms of constructivism (Sverdlovsk: construction and architecture 1980). According to it, the old district town turned into a large industrial center, the capital of the huge Ural region. Constructivist "villages" and neighborhoods created a coherent urban space of a new type. Like most radical Bolshevik projects, the plan for a Large Sverdlovsk was implemented just partially, but it created a specific image of modern Ekaterinburg / Sverdlovsk [33].

As the phenomenon of constructivism, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy is the embodiment of the industrialization strategy in the design of the medical space. The functional division of the services of obstetrics, treatment, training of students of the medical institute and research activities, laid down at the project level, allowed for effective control over each operation and procedure due to its constructive solutions. The system of corridors with glass inner partitions in the neonatal department can be a vivid illustration of this. These glazed corridors ensured the uninterrupted care of newborns with a minimum staffing. In this regard, we can talk about the connection of the social content of the urban object with the architectural form that sets the regimes for control and interaction and creates hierarchy. The building and the ways of organizing life in it assume the existence of an authority that looks through all its segments and technologically subordinates the daily life of patients and personnel.

As a constructivist object, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy is included in various guides and books about Sverdlovsk constructivism (Ekaterinburg. Architectural guide 2015; [23, 30, 31]).

### 3. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as a Phenomenon of Urban History

The city (as a polis) with its mobility and diversity resists the traditional archaic society, in which the existing social ties and relations are inherent. The city implies the

individualization of a person, as well as the formation of abstract rules, along with the dynamism of relations and the mobility of literal and social boundaries. The growth of the city generates diversity and increases a degree of freedom of its inhabitants ("cities are, first of all, centers for the greatest development of labor division") [21].

A citizen is a person born in civilization, and this birth is not just an event within the family, clan and village. It involves the interaction of technologies, rules and regulations, medical structures, legal frameworks and power and ideological languages and implies the relationship of parents, doctors, officials, economic, political and architectural environment.

The fact of the emergence of a maternity hospital as a medical and social institution is itself a phenomenon of "civilization" and the result of achieving a certain level of the urban community development. In traditional society, a woman gave birth at home and was in the care of the family, and medical assistance was provided by visiting doctors and midwives. The first prototypes of maternity hospitals were established in Ancient Rome for female slaves. In the New Time, maternity homes appear in the 18th century. England saw the first maternity hospital in 1739. In Russia, the first maternity hospital (for "secret birth" of women giving birth outside of marriage) was opened in 1764 in Moscow (Chistovich 1870). As a common practice of the Russian city life, the maternity hospitals appeared in the second half of the 19th century with the development of the *zemstvo*' institute (*Zemstvo* - elected body of local self-government in the Russian Empire).

The urban maternity hospital embodies the sophistication of city life and some autonomization of the medical sphere, which goes beyond the limits of family relations. As a social institution, the hospital is located at the intersection of the interactions of the parturient woman, the family, the society, the city and the state, and must have a *place*: firstly, the place in social sense, that is, the position occupied in the hierarchical and semantic field, and secondly, the place in its literal sense, located in a certain building, that is, be included in the urban space. The combination of these "places" sets the dynamics of the existence of the maternity home in the context of the dynamics of the city development.

The SRI of Maternity and Infancy starts its history from the first hospital in Ekaterinburg, which was founded in 1877 on the initiative of the enthusiastic physicians (A.F. Petrov et al.) and *zemstvos*, for which the maternity hospital was perceived as an element of some social policy of assistance to women who were out of habitual and approved social ties. Its appearance is an indicator of the beginning of the urban culture

development in tsarist Russia. In the twentieth century, its history was associated with the emergence of an industrial society in the Soviet version.

The Soviet power fulfilling the Utopia of the new Enlightened society, armed with Knowledge, and violent methods, organizes a radical reorganization of all spheres of life, including family, medical and gender. In the course of these reforms, the provincial Ekaterinburg is transformed into the capital city of Sverdlovsk, the city with large industry, large urban population and large-scale constructivist engineering.

The system of protection of maternity and infancy embodied the Soviet policy in the field of procreation childbearing and pediatrics. It originated in Soviet Russia (then the USSR) in the 1920s. The modern SRI of Maternity and Infancy building, built in Sverdlovsk in the first half of the 1930s, was the result of the implementation of these plans in the Urals.

Sverdlovsk SRI of Maternity and Infancy as an advanced institution for those times, located in a particular avant-garde building, clearly reflects the phenomenon of connection of avant-garde and industrialization. The newspaper "Ural Worker" wrote about the opening of one more object of the Constructivist complex of the Medical Village - the Institute of Physiotherapy and Occupational Diseases that another "factory of health" was put into operation [5].

The use of industrial metaphors in describing the work of a medical institution; an industrial, mechanized approach to managing medical processes; the rational design of urban space in the Large Sverdlovsk project - all this indicates a link between the transformation of the city, medicine and everyday human practices.

In this perspective, the process of organizing medical work in the SRI of Maternity and Infancy is of special interest. As noted above, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy is housed in a functionally zoned constructivist building of an asymmetric shape. This ensured the autonomous functioning of different departments and the streaming of people (staff, patients and healthy people) inside the control system like a factory conveyor. As already mentioned above, the glass partitions inside the building also served to the control function. *"It was convenient. I can see everything, everything is under control"* (from interview with the staff member, w., 70 years old). *"Everything is visible behind the glass how the mothers and the child feel"* (from the interview with the staff member, w., 70 years old).

One of the most revealing aspects of control were the standards of care for newborns developed by Dr. K.P. Gavrilov who was an outstanding pediatrician at the SRI of Maternity and Infancy. These standards became universal Soviet practice for several decades ahead. They suggested the separation of the mother and child immediately

after birth and maintaining very strict hygiene standards. *"Here I remember. Hungry children are crying. The time of feeding comes. They put them on a cart in a row. And this train goes to the mothers for feeding. They ate and there is silence"* (from interview with the staff member, w., 65 years old).

Such principles of management and control, the tactic to form an "obedient", disciplined body subordinated to the order (Foucault 1998, 1999), reduced the incidence of disease and were the part of the technology for the formation of a new person in the industrial world. Functionality, control and accounting, the disjunction of the obstetrical process into autonomous segments are embodied both in the structure of the building and in the practices of organization of intrahospital life. The constructivist complex still keeps in itself an "imprinted" history, both architectural and social.

#### 4. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy in Urban Topography

The SRI of Maternity and Infancy is located on a specific territory in the city. It is not only a form of "organization and control" of the process of childbearing, it is also a way of both functional and symbolic organization of urban space. The history of this relationship has passed through several periods [2].

Until the mid-1950s, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy, along with the scientific and educational functions that distinguished it from a number of other similar institutions in the region, was the maternity home of the Upper-Iset (at that date - Molotov) district of Sverdlovsk (to be precise - all the most complicated medical cases were dealt with at this maternity hospital, therefore according to statistics of that time the greatest mortality, both for women and children, was also in the SRI of Maternity and Infancy) (On the work of the Molotovsk consultation (now Upper-Iset) district of Sverdlovsk. Annual summary report on the work of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy for 1955. Archive of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy).

The constructivist buildings of the Medical Village, to which the SRI of Maternity and Infancy belonged, adjoined the barracks and dugouts, reflecting the gaps in the social body of the Soviet city, being the result of the uneven urban development. The visible symbol of these specific relations is the phrase from the annual report of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy for 1955 that often in winter, only a red flag raised over a snow-covered dug-out helped the doctor find it (Ib. On the work of the Molotovsk (now Upper-Iset) region consultancy of Sverdlovsk. The annual summary report on the work of SRI of Maternity and Infancy, 1955 SRI of Maternity and Infancy archive).

The flag above the dug-out served as a location mark for the doctor, but it can also be understood as a symbol of the social structure, hierarchy and relations between different social segments. This is also a sign of a gap between the advanced (at that time) building of the institute and the realities of life of those to whom it served: the building of the institute itself and the technologies of obstetrics and nursing developed in it belonged to the future, while the way of life in dugouts belonged to the past.

To date, not only the Upper-Iset district dugouts have been demolished, but the SRI of Maternity and Infancy itself has become a sign of the past, primarily because of the nature of the living conditions for patients (obsolete infrastructure that doesn't meet modern medical standards, toilets in the corridor and other manifestations of "communal" "socialized" way of life), but for tourists, local people and the staff it has become a significant *symbolic object of urban history*. The avant-garde object remains a part of city life and simultaneously turns into a memorable sign of the past, i.e. into a polysemantic *monument*.

## 5. Transformation of Status and Transformation of "Territory"

In the early fifties of the last century a new period began in the history of SRI of Maternity and Infancy, connected with the arrival of the director Rufina Aleksandrovna Malyshova (1951-1988). Thanks to her leadership, the institute strengthened its position, rectified the accumulated organizational problems and, most importantly, increased its status. Since 1955, it has ceased to be a district maternity hospital and has become a scientific and methodological center supervising the work on obstetrics in the Urals and the Siberian region. As a scientific and methodological center, it began to specialize in nursing preterm infants, taking advanced positions in this area of medicine.

By the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, a special ethos of professional responsibility and elitism was finally formed among the staff of the Institute. This feeling was broadcast and supported by the atmosphere of the "place", including the architectural sense. *"When we came to apply for a job with my father, when my father entered, and he was the director of the factory, he was not an ordinary man, but when he saw it, he was stunned. Well, Galya, you've got it"* (from the interview with the staff member, w., 67 years old). *"The appeal was only by name-patronymic, no Manyatanya to us twenty-year-old girls"* (from the interview with the staff member, w., 67 years old). *"Have you seen what kind of operating room do we have - 9 meters? There's such a high ceiling that it's even easier to give birth (laughs)"* (from the interview with

the staff member, w., 67 years old). *"When I first got a job, I did a report on the morning line and gave diagnoses in medical slang. And NN said to me: "Girl, where are you from?" Everything had to be said, as it should be in official medical terms"* (from the interview with the staff member, w., 65 years old).

So, by the end of the Soviet period of history, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy was still an elite medical center in the avant-garde building. The architectural features of the building allows us to effectively combine medical, scientific and pedagogical activities, however, the constructivist building itself "is not visible" in the public field of the city. After decades of its existence as an effective "health factory" it does not have a specific visible meaning. In interviews with staff members, symbolic meaning exists as a background, it is not grasped by consciousness. The "invisibility" of the avant-garde building for the SRI of Maternity and Infancy staff is directly related to the lack of understanding of the significance of the constructivist objects among the citizens and the city authorities.

A new stage in the history of SRI of Maternity and Infancy and changes in the meanings of the "place" begins in the late 1980s. The end of the directorate of A. A. Malysheva coincides with the era of Perestroika, and the beginning of radical transformations in the country. There is a radical change and problematization of the "place" of the SRI of maternity and infancy in the social field. The Institute has been undergoing a dramatic history of changing conditions of its existence and lack of funding.

During the period of perestroika struggle against bureaucracy, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy faced the threat of merging with other institutions, as was the case with the Institute of Occupational Diseases and the Institute of Physiotherapy. This threat was stopped, but over time, new problems appeared, connected not so much with the bureaucratic "place" in the hierarchy as with the place in the literal sense of the word. This is a struggle for territory within the urban space. This struggle has several stages: the attempt of the governor Eduard Rossel to relocate the institute to a new place was opposed successfully by the Institute team at the beginning of the new century. The next stage was the reconstruction of the stadium for the 2018 FIFA World Cup next to the building of the SRI of the Maternity and Infancy and the new city highway that has being laid in close proximity to the big operating room. This construction raises the question of the very possibility of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy existence in the former regime.

## 6. The SRI of Maternity and Infancy as an Architectural Monument

The threats to the traditional of existence of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy are accompanied by the parallel process of finding its own *place on the symbolic map of the city* - as a monument to the architecture of constructivism. The other side of this change is the formation of a layer of active citizens who are interested in preserving the city sights. G. Lubbe writes on such processes and their connection with the modern society: "The protection of monuments is in no small measure expanded in the temporal relation, which corresponds to the time structure of modern civilization.... The more rapidly the urban development environment changes under the influence of innovations, the more important are the architectural achievements of yesterday (as mediators for the formation of continuity experience), which we protect today as historical monuments" (Lubbe 2016, 11).

The phenomenon of the emergence of a monument requires the appearance of a detached view on the past, from a historical distance, with the gradual expansion of the circle of those who look at the object as a monument. Otherwise, this can be called a process of "designing" a citizen, creating a subject of city life that has a "significant" past in one's memory. In this context, the thesis of having a past means a process of moving towards a past (meaningful past) in which the citizen himself (the actor) is formed. At the basis of the process is the ability of the citizen to detach himself / herself from the direct relationship with the past and simultaneously assign it through symbolic forms and narratives. Let us consider the stages of this process of mastering the past taking the constructivism of Ekaterinburg / Sverdlovsk as an example.

In the 1970-80's, the question of constructivism in the Urals is being discussed in the narrow circles of art historians and architects. The first books and guides to local constructivism appear, including the building of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy into the list of objects [27-29]. By the 2000s the topic of constructivism has become familiar to the artistic and academic sphere of the city. The publications on constructivist objects of urban history in general, and the building of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy in particular, focus, first of all, on the artistic value of objects (1 and 2 types of discourse on the avant-garde architecture).

Then the question about the building as a cultural monument arises [30, 31]. The number of people interested in the fate of the monument is growing and goes beyond a narrow number of experts. As a result, during the Days of Constructivism in the Urals in 2016 it turned out that a large number of people wanted to visit the SRI of

Maternity and Infancy within the framework of the excursion program and the media paid great attention to the Institute, thus showing that for a significant number of citizens constructivist buildings become sign and significant objects of urban history and identity. Civil activists organize various events and signed petitions in defense of the Institute building because of the threat to its existence, appealing to the value of the building as a monument of Russian and urban history. For the Institute, this discovery of its own importance becomes a resource in the struggle for its survival.

It is interesting to note that the perception of the building as a monument comes to the Institute's employees from outside - from city planners, architecture specialists and historians. *"I've been working here for twenty years. And now I've talked with you and now I'm walking and thinking about the building, I did not realize it, I only felt intuitively, I felt something"* (from the interview with the staff member, w., 65 years old). Through the activities of urban activists, the place (the SRI of Maternity and Infancy) acquires the meaning, and the townspeople have an understanding of the uniqueness of the city (Participants of the curatorial group of "Days of Constructivism in the Urals" began to take excursions to the Medical town. After them, other guides started to take excursions to the Medical town, but before they "haven't been seeing" it) as a place of *their* experience (*our city, our monument, our interest, our pride and concern*).

The SRI of Maternity and Infancy, thus, "participates" in the construction of the city identity, integrating social experience into its symbolic field as a synthetic and vivid embodiment of past, whose marker in the urban environment is a peculiar architectural form, in fact, the building itself.

## 7. The Avant-garde Building in a Post-industrial Context

By the beginning of the 21st century, the SRI of Maternity and Infancy, located in the building embodying an industrial way of treating a person, found itself in a postindustrial social context. In accordance with the new requirements, the Institute switched to modern standards for the care of newborns (the "Mother and Child" system, which involves a return to a joint stay of a mother and a newborn) and a family-oriented approach, suggesting the possibility of the future father's participation in the process of a child birth. All this demonstrates the movement from the industrial "mechanistic" world of the early 1930s to "medicine with human face".

The building capabilities allowed the staff of the Institute to switch to a new system without significant problems. Although the organization of the space with shared toilets and washbasins now looks obsolete, nevertheless, the 80-year-old design allows it not only to function effectively but also to exceed modern medical facilities in some ways: *"Due to the large volumes - high ceilings, wide corridors - there is enough natural ventilation to prevent nosocomial infections effectively. We do not need special equipment for air purification as other maternity hospitals do. Although we are now lagging behind modern medical centers in terms of comfort, we have still something to be proud of"* (from the interview with the staff member, m., 62 years old).

The level of medical technologies development (intrauterine surgery technologies, high achievements in nursing of preterm infants) ranks the Institute among the few leading medical centers of this kind throughout the world till nowadays (The SRI of Maternity and Infancy is one of the few institutions of obstetrics in which efforts to save life are applied to every newborn child, regardless of his/her medical forecast. In 2012, the Ministry of Health of Russia issued a decree on the registration of newborns (meaning at the same time the recognition of newborn as a person) according to which premature newborns born at the 22nd week of pregnancy or weighing from 500 grams must get a birth certificate. Before that, the formal limit was the weight of 1000 grams. Therighttolive. 23.03.2012 // TheRussiannewspaper. <https://www.rg.ru/2012/03/23/deti.html>).

Thus, the history and contemporary activities of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy can be interpreted as a vivid and convincing, symbolically significant example of the frontier inherent in the very essence of urban culture in its desire to constantly push the existing boundaries, and combines the history of architecture, medicine, education, science and urban identity.

## 8. Conclusion

The analysis of the avant-garde monument of architecture as a single particular phenomenon of the beginning of the twentieth century in a certain social context allows one to speak about and "work" with the subject of history, with its past and its actual forms. In this case, the analysis of the genetic connection of the architectural object with the place (symbolic, topographical and social) that it occupies in city life becomes meaningful and symbolically loaded.

Avant-garde architecture is inextricably linked with the experience of transition to the industrial world, to industrial technologies and the ways of organizing life and

control over corporality and ways of organizing space. It is associated with leaving the traditional rural society and moving towards urbanized forms of organizing life (the birth of a citizen).

The history of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy is structured as a story about the transformation of an industrial and advanced medical center into a phenomenon of urban history, but in this case an institution understood in the unity with architecture expressing its history and spirit does not become a museum phenomenon (in the interpretation of Nietzsche), but still remains at the forefront in the city life.

At the same time, this is a story about mutual construction. On the one hand, avant-garde specialists open up the meaning of the SRI of Maternity and Infancy to the city and the staff. As a result, this value (in the form of a narrative, a myth) becomes a resource for the Institute in the real-life problem situation, when the question of demolishing or preserving the building is raised. On the other hand, the Institute itself, which is "open" to the citizens, is included in the city history and turns into an important monument. It becomes a resource for determining urban identity through participation in the urban narrative and the symbolization of the place and the awareness of the inextricable links between the architectural space, everyday practices and the "spirit" of the city.

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