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REFITTING WORKS AT THE CEC BANK, LIPSCANI BRANCH,

BENEFICIARY: CEC BANK SA

Stamp:
Romania, the Ministry of Culture
Arch. Laura Ilie
EXPERT no. 160 E

Palace of the Dacia – Romania

former insurance company



HISTORICAL STUDY

November, 2016

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1 OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Location of the immovable asset

The building that this study refers to is located in the historical center of the city of Bucharest, at the intersection of the most important streets, Lipscani and Smârdan.

The current Old Center of Bucharest, also known as the Historical Center, began to form around the year 1600, when the first inns and stores opened in the area of the Prince's Court. The later development of the area was due to the concentration of political and economic power in Bucharest, when, after 1660, the city became the only capital of the Walachia.

The period of greatest blooming was recorded during the reign of Prince Constantin Brancoveanu, when the Voivod's Palace and the nearby buildings were developed and got new looks. The current Franceză Street is the oldest street in Bucharest. In 1692 it was already paved with oak beams. At the time, the area was frequented by the merchants who brought their goods from Leipzig, Germany or from Gabrovo, Bulgaria. This is why we now have two streets that are called Lipscani and Gabroveni.

From the very beginning, the area of the current Old Center of Bucharest, developed near the Court of the Prince, was thriving in terms of commerce, having many inns and shops. This feature remained true between 1944 and 1990. During the period of 1944-1989, the commercial character of the area was maintained, as already mentioned. Lipscani Street was home to specialized shops (for linen, garments, shoes, haberdasheries, book stores, etc.) famous workshops where tailors, shoemakers, fur makers and hat makers used to work, as well as shops for plastic artists and art galleries, etc.). The Gabroveni Street and the street currently called Franceză hosted many consignment shops that attracted countless collectors of vintage art. A very important venue was the Performance Hall of the Rapsodia Română Ensemble, where very appreciated artistic events were staged for the general audience.

At the end of the communist period, in the 1980s, more precisely in 1984, the building at 18 – 22 Lipscani, the former Dacia Palace, was refitted to host a fashion house, a luxury store, where garments of the finest quality could be bought. The tailor workshops were also there.

All of these stores meant that the Lipscani area was always full of buyers coming from all

over Bucharest and from the province in order to make special-occasion purchases.
Immediately after 1990, the Old Center lost its importance. The liberalization of trade and the emergence of private shops with similar products to those in the Lipscani area, which were now available in all parts of the city, including the many goods brought from Turkey, meant that the area gradually lost its importance and was abandoned. The very old buildings were abandoned and fell into disrepair.

The infrastructure rehabilitation works in the area, started in 2005 with EBRD funds (the European Bank for reconstruction and Development), which entailed the replacement of utility networks, led to the closing down of stores in the area. Given the works for the replacement of the utility networks, they could no longer be supplied and buyers could no longer get inside easily. This situation lasted a long time, since archaeological vestiges were discovered during the time of the works, and they had to be kept and used in the best possible way.

After the end of the rehabilitation works and after best using the archaeological vestiges, a slow renovation process began. Taking into account the changes made in the way the town operated, in connection with the construction of large commercial centers of interest, also known as malls, the area of the Old Center received a new function: besides the small specialized shops, numerous cafes, bars and pubs appeared, as well as a theater and the Cartureşti book store. Thus, Lipscani and the streets of the old center are now one of the tourist attractions of the capital.
Here are some of the most important buildings of the old center:
- The Stavropoleos Church, which began to be built in 1724, designed according to the Brâncovenesc style and restored by Architect Ion Mincu, in 1899;
- The National Bank of Romania, built between 1883 and 1885;
- Manuc's Inn, built in 1808,
- The Linden Tree Inn (Hanul cu Tei - 1883),
- The Beer Wagon restaurant (Carul cu Bere - 1899),
- The National Museum of History (the former Palace of the Post) built at the end of the nineteenth century

Lipscani is one of the streets in Bucharest that has quite a lot of assets belonging to the List of monuments of historical importance (over 30), reunited under the title the "Lipscani Street" architecture ensemble (between Lipscani, Calea Victoriei and Jacques Elias Street). These words are significant for understanding the complex profile of this street: artisans, tradesmen and even bankers operated there, at one point. Most of the assets in this list are the many shops, built at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which was a period of intensive economic development of Romania. Their styles are common for their times, i.e.

neoclassic and neo-baroque"

The Lipscani street is not only in the middle of Bucharest, but also in the middle of the country, since it was from there that all trade routes to the counties of the Walachia started, as well as those going to the East and to the West of Europe.

As of the first centuries of life of the town, the "lane" that would later become Lipscani Street, was one of the most important routes of the city. Even before the generally acknowledged date when Bucharest was officially founded (in fact, when it was officially mentioned for the first time, this area was in the heart of the city. It is not by chance that it was called the "Large Lane", starting from the Higher Gate of the Prince's Court and going to Târgoviștei Road. The first documentary mention of the street dates from 1589. At the time, there were numerous workshops and shops, with various profiles (hat makers, jewelers, fur makers or shoemakers), as well as several inns. The area was populated by Romanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Jewish, Albanian and Austrian merchants, which gave the place a truly international profile. During the 17th century, this lane extended a lot, starting from the center, around the Saint Gheorghe Nou Church (the "Inner Fair"). After Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu decided to build the "Mogoșoaiei Bridge" (Victoriei Avenue), the other end of the street reached it. This made the Lipscani street even more important.

But the first official mention of the Lipscani street was made in a document dated 1750, having taken its name from the linen brought from Leipzig, Germany. In fact, at first, this trade was made only by Saxons from Transylvania, and the supply centers were Danzig, Breslau, Flanders and Venice.

George Potra, one of Bucharest's most famous historians, rightly considered that the merchants of Lipscani Street contributed to the modernization and westernization of the country.

Lipscani was the only area of the city which did not have residential areas, but, in older times, shops (stalls, as they were called at the time), inns, workshops and institutions. As seen in the documents and illustrations of the time, most shops sold fabrics and linen, other "accessories", being grouped by type, (from weavers to jewelers).
The shops in Lipscani were small, always having a display window towards the street. In fact, the façade was often narrow. These were rather solid buildings with brick vaults and cellars, as found while digging. Unfortunately, those who dug there often led to the disappearance of these vestiges. Most of the time, the family of the merchant also lived there.

Later on, these stores expanded and became more diverse, as numerous witnesses, even from abroad, referred to the existence of luxury shops, which, given their size and

appearance, could have been compared, for example, to Viennese shops. At the same time, during the interwar period, people in general and even foreign visitors considered that Lipscani was not only a beautiful, but also a cheerful street. The most coveted places were: the Rosenthal shop ("Everybody wanted something from the Rosenthal store, but it was accessible only to the rich"), the Garibaldi pharmacy (name given from one of the sellers, not from the historical character), numerous shops, "for fashionable ladies", the "Dermata" shoe store, the "La papagal", "Voaleta", "Dinescu and Ionescu" stores (which later became the Bucharest universal store). At the same time, so that "buyers" may have satisfied other needs, there were several restaurants (including the "Automat", opened in 1934, a precursor of the later "self-service canteen"), as well as famous pie shops.

To a large extent, in the decades of the Communist regime, the Lipscani street kept its commercial profile, tailored to the needs of the time. In a way, this was a more privileged area, given that, in those stores, one could find a slightly larger variety of goods. Most buildings have retained their look and integrity, which cannot be said about the period after 1989, when new shops opened upon the site of the old ones. Unfortunately, the new "merchants" were only interested in immediate gains, so that they no longer took care of them. In fact, the ones to be blamed most of all are mayors and local authorities, including people of culture, who could not save this part of the Historical center, despite the many projects that were (or not) implemented, some even with funding from abroad. This probably means that it will no longer have a chance at having its own history...

Of course, given the fact that this was a trade area, as well as given the presence, besides the clients, of some merchants who often came from abroad, it was necessary to have some places that provided accommodation, food, as well as leisure activities. I am referring to the inns, which later became hotels. In the list published by Gheorghe Ionescu-Gion in his *History of Bucharest*, we can find the main inns before the 1800's, such as Ștefan Cantacuzino's Inn, Filipescu’s Inn, Tănase’s Inn, The Linden Tree Inn (on both sides of its courtyars, it hosted many stalls), the Greci Inn, the Greceanu Inn - on the site of the Nifon Palace.
Of course, the oldest and largest such place was the Gabroveni inn built in 1739, behind the Old Court. Bulgarian merchants from Gabrovo, who gave the name to the adjacent street, used to spend the night there. Its time of glory was between 1825 and 1850. This was also the place where foreign dignitaries who had "business" in Bucharest used to stay. The inn burned a few times, but survived. In 1900, it was transformed into the "Hotel Gabroveni-Universal". The building, erected on the site of the old inn, is quite solid, as demonstrated by the brick walls and vaults, but is no longer operational after 1989. At this time, it is a "preserved" ruin which waits to be saved.



(Archive photo: Victoriei Avenue, Lipscani St., Zlătari St.)

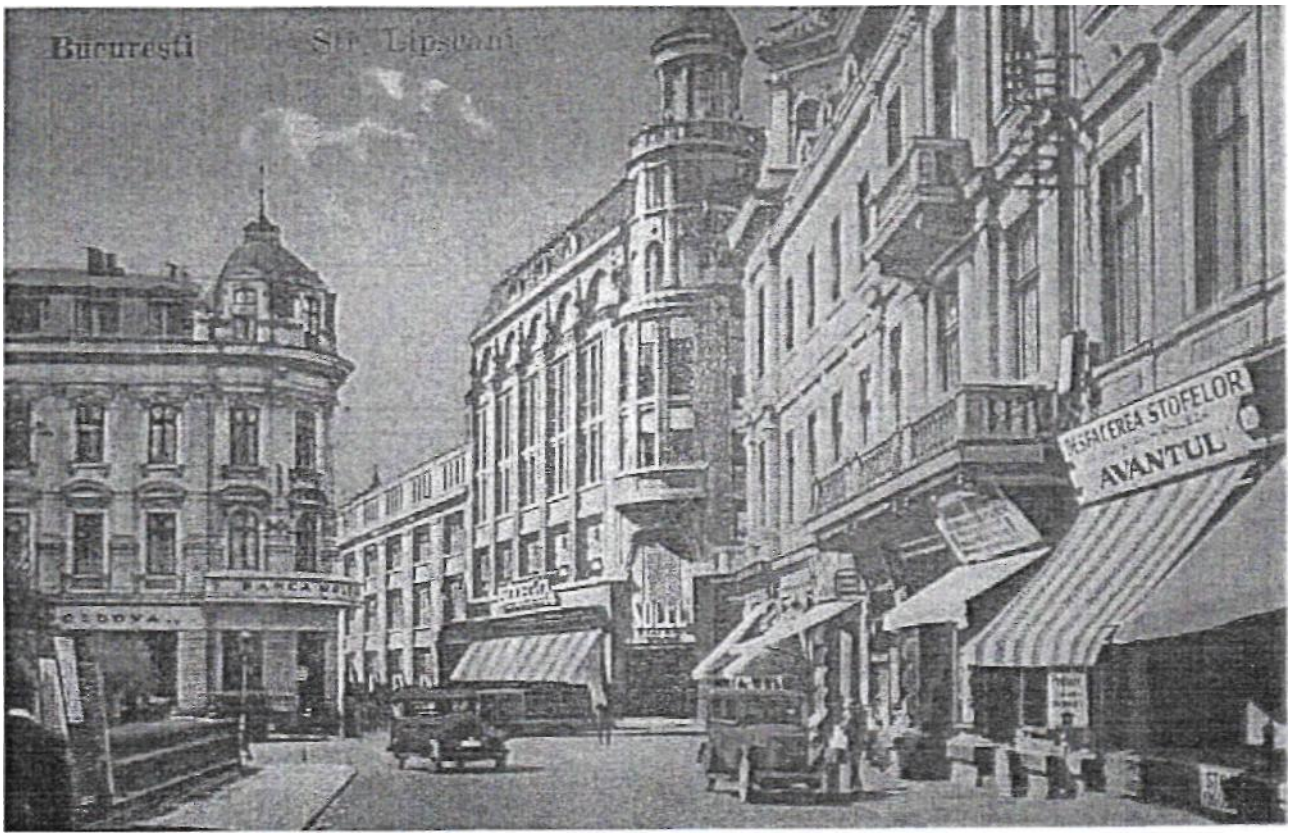
Just as the Lipscani Street was born due to economic and commercial expansion, this street will turn, as other neighbouring streets, into a bank area, as a result of the financial boom of the early 20th century. Indeed, Lipscani is one of the streets of Bucharest that hosted very many banks (about 13, in 1920), some of them being famous:The National Bank of Romania (the old building, erected between 1883 and 1885), the Chrissovelloni Bank, the Romanian Bank of Commerce, the Palace of the former Dacia Insurance Company, as well as branch offices of foreign banks, such as the "Berliner Gesellschaft Bank", built in 1910-1913. Lipscani Street also has buildings where important administrative institutions operated, such as the main Post / Customs Office.



(Archive photo: Lipscani, Blănari streets - the Dacia Palace is on the left)

Although it mainly had a commercial profile, cultural institutions operated in this street, as well. For example, one of the first book shops of Bucharest opened here, in 1854, called the "National School Book Store". Its main purpose was to send school textbooks in all regions inhabited by Romanians. Later, it became the "George Coșbuc Book Store", but it was closed down after 1989 and the building has fallen into an advanced state of disrepair.
Of course, those who lived in the interwar period still remember the Roxy Cinema. Later on, the "Romanian Rhapsody Ensemble operated there. It was recently renovated and a theater is operating there. This is one of the few examples of "survival".

Fortunately, one of the symbols of the area and of Bucharest, in general, came back to its initial location. I am referring to the copy of the "Capitoline Wolf", offered to Bucharest by the authorities of Rome in 1906. It is located at the end of the street near the Sf. Gheorghe Nou square. This event took place on the occasion King Carol I 40th reign anniversary.
After numerous moves to various points of Bucharest, the statue returned to its initial location.



(Archive photo: Hotel Lafayette (Hotel de France), Socec and the Dacia Palace)

Today, all new stores show their colorful logos, replacing the old, rusty or dusty ones. This fact has revived the Lipscani Street once again, as hundreds of people walk on the newly paved streets. Numerous cafes or restaurants, night clubs, bars and pubs are yet another reason for people or tourists to visit the so-called 'old center'.

On the other hand, very many buildings there face a high risk in case of earthquake and are marked with the "red dot", which makes one feel that, without a consolidation and restoration program, this street is 'dying'.

The Lipscani Street has adapted to our contemporary, often purely commercial needs, but we shall see for how long.



(Photo archive: Hotel Lafayette (Hotel de France). Socec and the Dacia Palace)

1.2. Purposes and method of study

This analysis is meant to establish the value of the building on Lipscani Street in terms of its construction period, based on specialized criteria.

• Assessing the historical, architectural and urban features of the monument, in order to find the valuable parts of the building;

• Identifying and determining the conditions to be met by the intervention required for the respective property.

The reconstruction of the development stages is based on:
• Information contained in primary literature - archive documents -.

• Information from the archive of the National Heritage Institute

• Information contained in secondary literature - materials of specialized literature (the history of architecture, art history, etc).

• The analysis of the current situation, approached by making a sketch to scale and taking detailed photographs of the building parts.

2 LEGAL PROTECTION STANDARD

The Palace of the former Dacia Insurance Company is a historical monument of national value, included in the List of historical monuments of the city of Bucharest at position B - II - m - A - 19021 and is part of the "Architectural ensemble of the Lipscani Street" (between Lipscani Street, Victoriei Avenue and Jacques Elias Street).

Taking into account the above, the legal standard in place for the asset is both that of protection for a monument of national value, and that of protection for the architectural ensemble it belongs to, including the protection zone of the other monuments in the area.

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH OF THE BUILDING. ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

(SOURCE: BUCHAREST, FASHION HOUSE, 18-20 LIPSCANI, THE INP (NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HERITAGE) ARCHIVE, DMI COLLECTION, FILE 1973)

3.1. History / Description

The **Dacia Palace**, built in 1874, is located at the intersection between Lipscani Street and Victoriei Avenue, which are two of the most famous streets of Bucharest.

The edifice was built at the end of the 19th century at the site where the (Greek) Ghiorma Banul Church and the Grecilor Inn used to be. It was rehabilitated between 1977 and 1983, having been refitted out to operate as a fashion house – a store for luxury items.

Occupying the corner between the Lipscani, Smârdan and Stavropoleos streets, the building also has a long façade towards the Stavropoleos Street. The richly ornamented façades are neoclassic, combining elements of the Renaissance. The windows of the 1st floor have pediments supported by Ionic columns; the entrance is highlighted by Doric

columns at the ground floor and by Ionic columns at the first floor. They are framed by high Corinthian columns. The entire facade is adorned with busts inside the medallions, with groups of characters, all being embossed. The corner of the three streets is marked by a dome with a group of characters on top.

The interior of the building is as sumptuous as the exterior: the central lobby, open on three floors, is covered in marble, with stained glass and gilded ornaments; the light passes through an octagonal skylight having the same shape as the lobby.

Currently, the building is only partially used, being divided among several owners.
The area covered by the refitting project belongs to CEC Bank and is located at the ground floor and basement of the building, i.e. the side from 16 Lipscani Street. In fact, it is the only part of the building that is currently used. This is why the edifice is not used to full potential, as it is eclipsed by other, better known buildings in the capital.

An interesting historical reference is that this building used to be the headquarter of the Timpul newspaper, published during the 19th century, where poet Mihai Eminescu worked for several years.

The Dacia Palace is a beautifully decorated historical monument, in the style of Renaissance glamor. A medallion that displays Mihai Eminescu's image reminds not only of the time when the poet used to work here, but also of his major contribution to the history of Romanian literature.

After the earthquake on March 4, 1977, the building face several situations of degradation. As a result, the authorities of the time took steps to renovate and to refit it in order to use it as a Fashion House.

In March 1979, the Socialist Council of Culture and Education approved the plan to make a new design for a Fashion House, which proposed to keep the architecture of the interior and the most important decorative elements: the lobby, the exhibition area and the two stairways.
(from the INP archive, the DMI collection, File 1973)
The project was carried out by the Carpați Institute of Design (IPC), the man designers being architects C. Rulea and M. Rădulescu.
The furniture and adornments were designed by arch. O. Nicolae and Arch. V Vrejoiu.

The opening of a fashion house in the building based at 18-20 Lipscani Street was decided by the Permanent Bureau of the Political Executive Council of the Romanian Communist Party, according to the memo of the CC Chancellor of the PCR, series H, no. 1812/1977.

The restoration project of the former Dacia Palace included the following works:

• The façades of the building were cleaned and restored, but their authenticity was kept; wherever changes had been made over the years (the area where a self-service restaurant used to operate) restorations in the façades were proposed, having reached their initial look.

• Inside the building, wherever there are valuable architectural assets, such as the central lobby and the staircase with the two access ramps – interventions were made and their authenticity was preserved.

• The changes made to the interior have not affected, in any way, the appearance of the valuable architectural areas and adornments. On the contrary, the idea was to make them more visible. Thus, the traffic to the several stores at the ground floor, the 1st floor and the fashion house, at the 1st floor, was improved in such a way that it is evenly distributed from the central lobby, which is of real architectural value.

The open space on two floors was used by a self-service restaurant at the time. It was separated, at the level of the gallery, by a continuous flooring: thus, the upper floor was able to host a permanent exhibition of products made under the guidance of the Ministry of Light Industry.

The confinement of the adjoining areas used as a kitchen, in the space of the nearby building, as well as the renunciation of the rooms that were occupied at the ground floor of former Chrissoveloni Bank, were decided out of respect for the building erected by G. M. Cantacuzino and at the request of the BNRSR (National Bank of the Socialist Republic of Romania), for security reasons.
The architecture of the central lobby was preserved over time. It was also preserved from the very first interventions that were made at the building. The area of the stairs, with four ramps with plaster decorations, is less preserved – as we learned from the technical expertise report drafted in 1979 (according to the INP ARCHIVE, THE DMI COLLECTION, FILE 1973), but they were reconstituted on the occasion of the works performed in the 1980s.

At that time, apart from a few plaster decorations at the round edge towards Smârdan Street, which had an oval hall on two levels, the remainder of the building no longer presented interior decorations.

The documentation drawn up in 1979 provided for the entire building to be fitted up as a commercial area of the Fashion House for women and men, as creation and production rooms. The distribution of the rooms was meant to keep, restore and best use the areas that had a clear architectural value.

The plan was to have the main access door into the central hall as a distribution point for the main routes: at the ground floor and on the newly made monumental stairway, going to the top floor stores. The fashion house was to be reached through a gallery that showcased the products, together with the nearby exhibition.

The first floor also had an exhibition hall on two levels, as well as areas for the creation workshops.

The 2nd floor hosted the production rooms.

For the restaurant, works were planned in compliance with the requirements of the

beneficiary – The Commercial Department of the CPMB (Retirement Fund of the Bucharest Municipality); as a self-service unit. The plans provided for floorings to be made at the level of the balcony and to organize it in such a way as to give over the space under the outline of the bank.

The areas of the building were as follows:

Basement:	1035.38 sq. m.
Ground floor:	1397.73 sq. m.
1st floor:	2066.35 sq. m.
2nd floor:	1951.15 sq. m.

In total, the spread surface was 6450.61 sq. m. fitted out for the activity of the M.I.U. (Ministry of Light Industry)

The main works of refitting the building for the new purposes included:

- setting the heating unit in the basement;
- Rebuilding stairway no. 1, between the ground and first floor, also changing the direction of ascent;
- Building stairways no. 2 and 4;
- Full restoration of stairway 3 and mounting an elevator, nearby;
- Placing a reinforced concrete ceiling in the area of the restaurant, at the level of the ground floor ceiling (in order to obtain space for the presentation hall);
- Building four large areas adjoining the central hall, both on the ground and first floors;
- building the stairway no. 5 and 7 for access to the basement;
- Making way to empty spaces for circulation;
- Mounting the elevator for materials, from the basement to the ground floor;
- Making a walkway at the floor over the ground floor.

Apart from the already mentioned works, which were necessary for the new functions, it was necessary to make reinforcing works, given the absence of bearing capacity in the case of some of the elements of the building, and to restore the building at the strength level for horizontal loads as it was before the earthquake of March 4, 1977.

(from the INP ARCHIVE, DMI COLLECTION, FILE 1973)

The whole building was thus meant to be used in the fashion industry and for advertising the newest creations, as well as for satisfying the most demanding requirements of certain categories of buyers belonging to the internal market

The technology behind the design of the workshops was based on the following "items" as they were called in the specialized papers:

- Footwear with glued insoles, that includes: trimming and preparing parts, stitching sides, assembling and finishing;
- Leather processing included: trimming and preparing the parts, assembling the parts by sewing and finishing;

The footwear was made of high-quality leather and the insole was glued by using the Romarta procedure, just like for any other leather item.

The raw materials and all necessary materials for the production process was available in the country.

3.2. Utilities

In terms of utilities, they were provided in accordance with the norms in force at the time. I found the following features in the archive document:
- The water supply was made from Smârdan Street, amplified by 100 mm; for the restaurant the water supply was made from Stavropoleos Street.
- The hot water supply was made by using a 2000 liter boiler, mounted in the new central heating room.
- Waste water was discharged into the public sewer, through the two connections towards Smârdan and Stavropoleos Streets.
- The electrical power supply was low-voltage, by underground cables;
- The building was heated by a new central heating unit. It was located in the basement; the gas installations used by the restaurant, which remain in operation, had a lower consumption than the approved threshold.

3.3. Modifications of the building in terms of function, general structure, adornments

The archive documents also include a recommendation of the Vice President of the People's Council of Bucharest, I. Tulpan:

”Having been reported that the immovable asset at 18-22 Lipscani Street is about to have refitting works in order to host the fashion house and the "Lipscani" restaurant, when making the design and preparing the construction works, consider the possibility of giving over the immovable asset that belongs to the National Bank of the Socialist Republic of Romania, at 16 Lipscani Street, which is currently used as an annex building of the kitchen of the "Lipscani" restaurant.

The annex area of the restaurant kitchen was given this use when the place hosted the canteen of the people working in our institution.

The reason we ask for this area to be given over mainly refers to guarding and security aspects, since we know that the treasury of the National Bank is located in the immediate vicinity of this perimeter and the interior walls are not proper, as far as security is concerned.

By giving over the area which is currently used as an annex to the kitchen of the restaurant, the initial situation of the back's construction would be restored, as it included the outline walls of the building, which have a proper dimension and are made of reinforced concrete, this being in compliance with our safety requirements and makes it impossible for someone to break into the perimeter of the bank's treasury.

Moreover, the area used as annex room to the kitchen of the restaurant is an integral part of the bank building (the former Chrissoveloni bank), this building having been declared a monument of architectural relevance and special measures are required for protecting and restoring such assets. At the same time, the designer of the restaurant must pay attention when planning the compartments of the restaurant so as to remove the current sources of smell that persist in the kitchen, including steam, smoke sources, etc. which affect the labor conditions of the bank staff (nearby the restaurant), as well as the inside of the bank, which was built and adorned in line with architectural styles of great artistic value (halls in Florentine, Byzantine styles, etc.)

We require these needs to be circulated to the designer of the refitting works, as well as to be informed about your decision on giving over the area that belongs to the National Bank of the Socialist Republic of Romania and is currently used as an annex room of the kitchen of the Lipscani restaurant."

The building went through countless modifications, given the various uses it had over the years, including new compartments with waddle and dab walls or improvisations at the attic.

In particular, it can be noted that a part of the restaurant kitchen functions took place at the ground floor of the neighboring building, the former Chrisoveleni Bank, an architectural monument designed by G. M. Cantacuzino.

The proposal of the Carpați Design Institute was based on earlier studies, which revealed the need to extend the refitting project to the entire building, in order to have a unitary set of installations, the same type of structure and architectural restoration works.

The project was drafted on the basis of the previous design stage, approved by the beneficiary, which mentioned the development of trade venues, of a fashion house for men and women, of a creation space, as well as a production space.

In the distribution of functions, the designed considered the need to keep, restore and, at the same time, to best use of areas where architectural elements of high value were preserved.

Thus, the central lobby will be the focal point of the main routes inside the building. From there, one can access the four stores at the ground floor. A newly-built monumental stairway (by reversing the direction of an earlier stairway, which actually is the result of a later intervention) allows access to the four stores at the first floor. These were different from the ground floor stores in terms of commodity they sold and their interior design.

In the opposite direction from this access path, after passing through a gallery where showcases would later be installed, one could reach by stairs the fashion house at the first floor. Another stairway had to be used for this.

The only store that had direct access from the street was located towards the narrow side of the building, and it was possible to enter it both from the Stavropoleos St. and from the "Lipscani" Street.

After reaching the first floor, one could enter the two fashion houses (for women and for men) and could also circulate through the four stores round the lobby, by using centrally refitted walkways. From the same point, one could get to the exhibition placed into the volume of the restaurant room by introducing another flooring.

The upper end of the first floor had a small composition room, on two levels, and a series of spaces for the creation workshops.

The second floor was reserved for the production areas that the beneficiary drew up the technological project for.

At the level of the attic, only the technical areas that were strictly needed were maintained, as the other improvisations would be dismantled

Apart from the areas where the designer proposed solutions to best use the valuable architectural elements still preserved, in the other areas, especially in sale areas, the project proposed to create a modern ambience with nice furniture and interior decorations, so that the products would "have a display and advertising system in a new ambience, in harmony with the mounting of the products "(according to the architectural memo, the INP ARCHIVE, DMI COLLECTION, FILE 1973)

The building included the following areas:

COMMERCIAL VENUES:

1. Footwear for men and women (including warehouses and annex rooms)

2. Fabrics, silk, linen and hemp

3. Cotton fabrics
4. Knitwear

The 1ST FLOOR
5. Shoes for women
6. Shoes for young people
7. Shoes for men
8. Leather goods
9. Ladies' fashion house
10. Men's fashion house

THE RESTAURANT

The self-service restaurant had its dining room on two levels, with a narrow, unused balcony all around the floor. The kitchen and all its annexes extended to the ground floor of the neighboring building (the former Chrissoveloni Bank). Their size and location were the result of improvisations used over the years, and the operation of the restaurant was quite slow, in fact.

Meanwhile, the management of the Bank expressed their will to be given back the area found in the outline of the building, due to the acute need for space and for security reasons.

Even in the previous design phase, proposals were made to reorganize this unit. Given the large surface of the basement and its architecture that had masonry vault's, the proposal was to refit the basement as a specific service unit, with double access from the Lipscani and Stavropoleos streets. It was rejected by the beneficiary; a new proposal was then made, which, given the improvement of the discrepancy between the configuration of the area and the function of the restaurant stair, it provided the building of a flooring at the level of the balcony and to change the services of the unit, by opening a snack bar at the ground floor and a café at the first floor.

This variant was not approved by the beneficiary, either. The variant presented in the project was proposed, instead. It provided the building of a flooring at the level of the balcony, keeping the profile of the self-service unit and reorganizing it so as to give over to the bank the area of the building's outline. This proposal entailed a substantial improvement in the operation of the restaurant, obtained the approval of the Commerce Department of the CPMB and also complied with the recommendations of the National Heritage Directorate.

Thus, by following up on the proposed project, several areas became available:
In the basement: warehouses, technical premises and locker rooms; on the ground floor: public spaces (entrance, hall, wardrobe, toilets), the dining room, cooking areas (cooking rooms, kitchen and lavatory), storage facilities.

3.4. Technical description of the building

The construction of the Dacia Palace began around 1885, as all the buildings in the Lipscani, Smârdan area that closed the fronts of the narrow streets of that time.

The layout shape is trapezoidal, with a width that varies between 12 and 35 meters, and a length of 35 meters, without expansion joints. The general basement has a height of 4.10 m, 4,30 and 4.20 m, respectively. The roof has a wooden structure covered with folded tin sheet, a few local areas being used for storage.

The built area is of approx. 2200 sq. m. and its uses were diverse in time. Nevertheless, it was mostly used as a bank office. Later on, the ground floor went through changes, in order to be used as commercial areas and restaurants. The upper floors were used as offices. The immovable asset has undergone a number of interventions and transformations, which were partially identified by the team that drafted the first expertise report, in 1973.

These refer to closing the old door empty spaces and making new ones, interventions at the façade of the ground floor, in the restaurant area, making local empty spaces, fitting up toilets, together with all necessary interventions, gas heating installations, electrical installations, etc. they were very worn out at that time, as well, as the building was not maintained properly. For example, most of the supporting elements of the parquet flooring, small girders and curved floorboards – were rotten. Most of the dividing walls that were introduced later, for various uses, were made of waddle and dab.

3.4.1 Structure of the building

The structural analysis of the building reflects its situation after the earthquake of 1977. The structure is made my means that were specific to the age in which the building was erected.

As far as the materials are concerned, the approach of the builder was superior to that of other buildings erected at the same time (e.g. the building based at 111 Victoriei Avenue, the Cotroceni Palace, etc). It is close or equal to the level of representative buildings in the old center of the capital.

The vertical structure is made of an assembly of longitudinal and transversal walls made of massive bricks, having a thickness of 70, 56 and 42 cm. Very seldom, it is 20 cm thick.

Usually, longitudinal wall are the ones that support the floorings, except for the round area towards the east and the flooring of the self-service restaurant, which is made of two levels.

The transverse walls are self-bearing, making up the wind brace of the building in this direction.

Note that some of the longitudinal walls are supported on metal girders at the level of the flooring over the ground floor. Also, a few stiffening transversal walls have metal girders at some levels.

Studies reveal that the brickwork is of a remarkable quality, both in terms of used materials (high-grade bricks and mortar), as well as in terms of the work proper (uniformity of the horizontal brick layers, filled-in empty spaces, correct intertwining, etc.)

Floorings

They were checked only to some extent, given that the ground floor of the building is in use. They were made in the following way:
- Floorings made of arches and massive wall vaults, sometimes supported by metallic structures;
- Floorings over the ground floor, made of brickwork vaults on metal structures, filled with rubble;
- Floorings over the 1st and 2nd floor, made of main metal girders and secondary wood girders with rubble filling;

Both the metal structure and the wood girders are well preserved in the places that were checked. We did not see biological decay; usually, the metal structure lean onto the brick walls by means of stone bearing bushings. They take the load to the pillars of the façades, in some places and, in other places, they take the load above the empty spaces placed in the most solid part of the brickwork. Outer or inner walls also have steel band rods.

3.4.2 Earthquake response

During the earthquake of March 4, 1977, the building had an overall good behavior. The damage was local, and its stage "can be characterized as early".

One could see some cracks in the transversal walls, especially in the area of stairway no. 2, as well as in other isolated walls of the building. They typically started at the corner of door empty spaces and they varied in length from 0,5 to 3 m.

Also, some of the parapets at the eastern end of the building had insignificant cracks. As far as the remainder of the building is concerned, damage was limited to the collapse of some chimneys and the damage to finishing elements, especially at the ceilings.

In assessing the stability and strength of the building, one took into account the internal and invisible micro-degradation of the masonry materials, highlighted by the fissures and cracks in the plaster of the walls.

The relatively good behavior of the building during the seismic action of 1977 can be explained by a number of factors that worked in favor of the building, such as:

- the general compliance of the architecture and structure, as the walls have a proper layout and density, with the exception of the eastern corner, on a transversal direction;
- the quality of materials and work, as mentioned, was among the best for the era;

4 GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE MONUMENT OF HISTORICAL RELEVANCE

4.1 Value in terms of age - authenticity

The value in terms of age – authenticity is **average**, as the construction dates back to 1885, the end of the 19th century, just like most of the buildings in the historical center of Bucharest, which closed the fronts of the most important streets, including Lipscani, Smârdan or Stavropoleos.

- The initial use of bank headquarters, was later changed to that of fashion house, with creation workshops, fabrics, both for men and women. The ground floor later became a

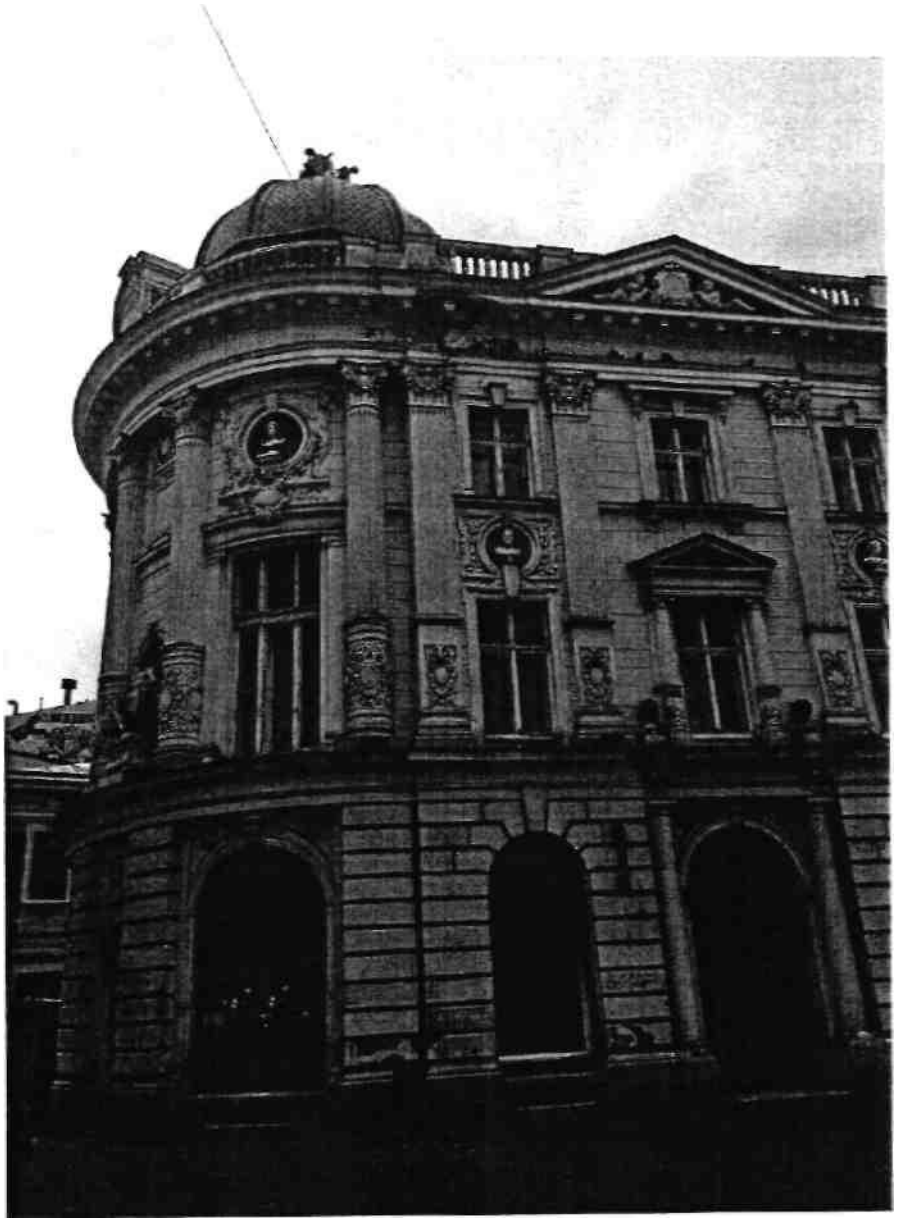
a self-service restaurant. Its points of sale then returned to the former use, that of a bank branch.



The **hall and monumental stairway** of the inside were preserved as an **element of uniqueness** of the time, while the façade still flanks the main promenade area of the town. They also kept the same proportions and the filled-empty spaces ratio, which is a feature of classical architecture.

- The general function were modified over time, while the attic went through several compartmentalization interventions;

The interior decorations of the walls and ceilings no longer exists. Only a few plaster adornments were preserved in the oval hall towards Smârdan Street, at the round side.



4.2 Memorial symbolic value

The studied building has symbolic value for the city, being located at the intersection of the most frequented walking area of Bucharest - at urban level. It is part of the old historic center of the town, developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, which was preserved until current times.

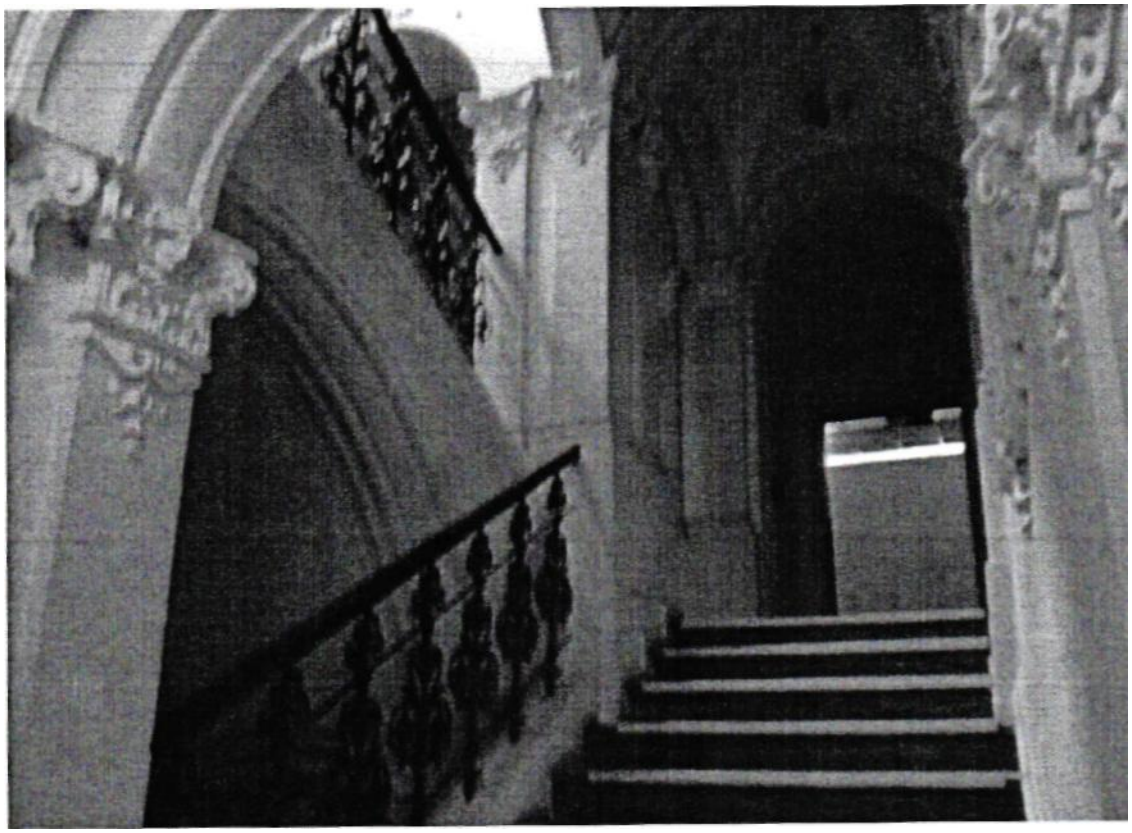
It is also worth mentioning the memorial value of the building, as it hosted the editing team of the "Timpul" newspaper, where poet Mihai Eminescu worked as a journalist.

4.3 Architectural value

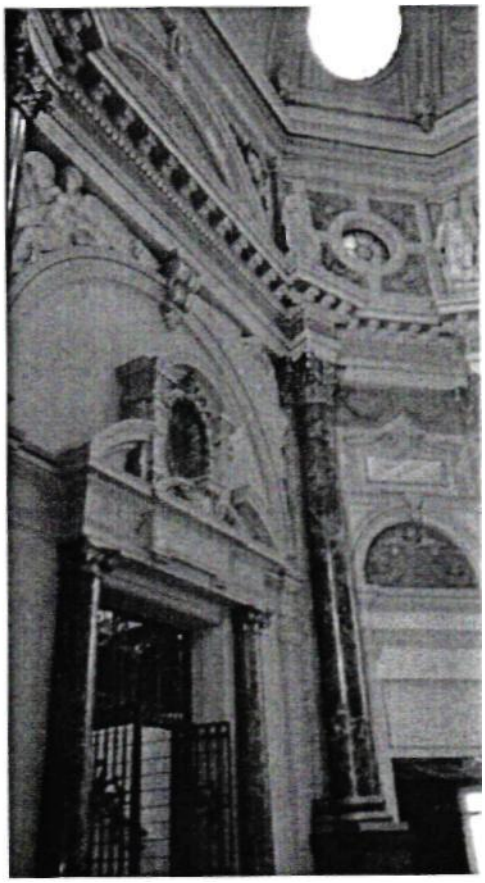
The architectural value of the Dacia Palace is undeniable, as the monument of historical relevance has typical elements of the late 19th century, but also unique elements, such as the four ramp stairway and the monumental access hall with plaster adornments.

The building was restored in March 1979 by the Carpați Institute of Design, but it has many degraded elements today, because it has not been used for a long time or has been misused.

The classical façades have a clear and stable balance on all sides, a high base, columns with Corinthian tops, horizontal strips, corniche details and window frame details.







4.4 Value in terms of rarity – uniqueness

The value was appreciated by taking into consideration: the architectural program, the location of the building and the fact that it belongs to an ensemble of architecture, the exterior adornments and especially the unique interior decorations, the stylistic design, the ingenious and high standards solutions when considering the age it was erected, the building materials that were used, as well as the techniques and the structural system.

5. POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

After the building was repurposed and restored in the 1980s, the Dacia Palace no longer went through extensive works of consolidation and restoration, and only the strictly needed works and current repairs were made.

After 1990, the Banca Comercială Română operated in the building. Currently, CEC Bank is using the area from 16 Lipscani Street. The remainder of the building is not being used. A part of the property of the CEC Bank at the ground floor, in the whole depth of the building towards the Stavropoleos Street, as well as a small part of the basement, will be refitted.



The proposed intervention will be limited **only** to the refitting of the area that belongs to CEC Bank, without performing restoration works of the artistic components.

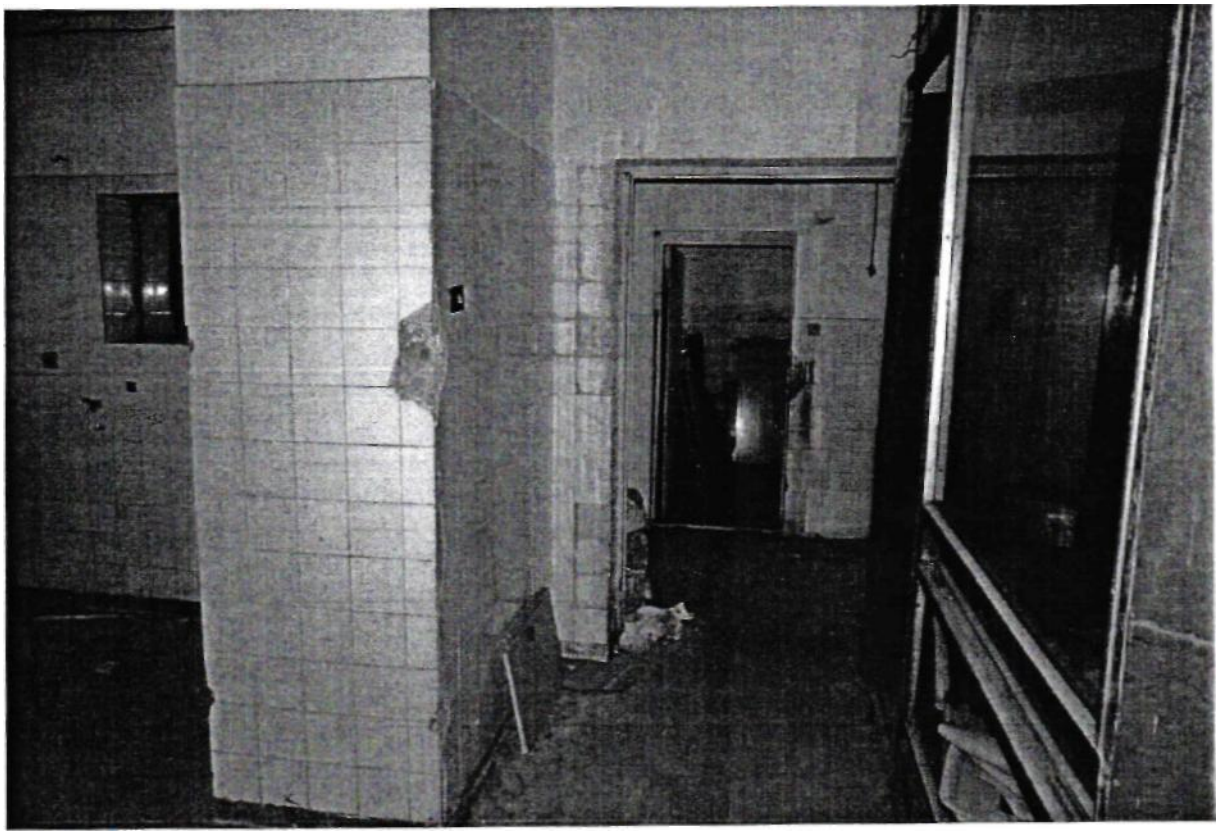
Given that the intervention will be carried out only on the area held by CEC Bank, the façades will not be modified in any way, as well as the shape or dimensions of the empty spaces or the used materials.

Only minor repairs and current maintenance works will be done (cleaning the exterior adornments, fixing cracks, locally cleaning the graffiti, equalization of the finishing layer) so as to keep the unitary character of the façades.

At the facade from the Lipscani Street, the project proposes to remove the bars at the level of the exterior structure and to mount new glass panels. The exterior joinery of the façade towards the Stavropoleos St. will be replaced, but the current metal structure will be maintained. The tin panels and bars will be replaced with glass panels.

The proposed works will not affect the strength structure of the building. Inside the building, finishing restoration works will be performed, as well as the review, modification and enhancement of indoor installations, but no large-scale works will be performed. Interventions will not affect the areas and installations that belong to the other beneficiaries, even if they go through the area belonging to CEC Bank. The finishing of the ceilings will be remade, and plasterboard and HPL composite boards will be used at the walls. Some of the current floorings will be examined and new floorings, clad with natural stones / prefabricated stone, carpet and ceramic gritstone will be used.

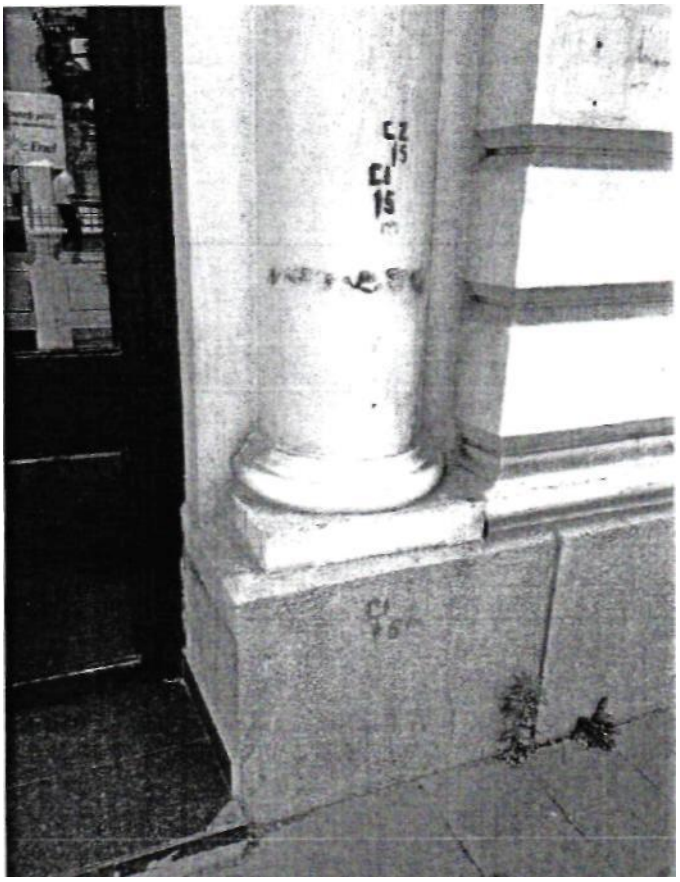
Intervention works will also be performed at the central skylight area, both inside and outside of the building (in the inward courtyard of the building), in order to ensure the needed interior comfort for people to work there.



(ground floor spaces, the area towards the Stavropoleos Street, to be refitted)

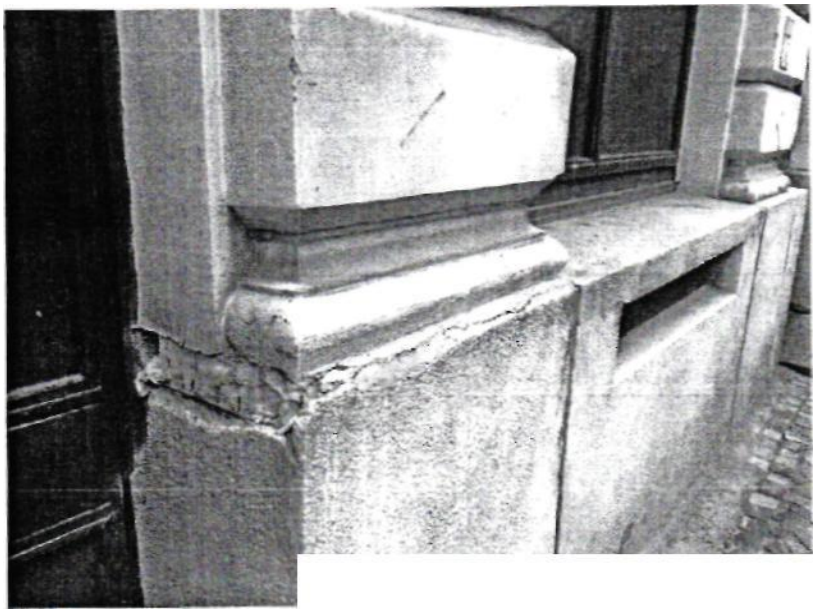


(Detail of the bank headquarters door from Lipscani St., to be renovated by making local repairs and the current maintenance of the façade)





(Detail of the façade from the Stavropoleos Street, which will be subjected to local repairs: the frame will be rehabilitated by fixing the posts and crossbeams, as well as by replacing tin panels with glass. The plasterwork will be repaired, as well)



In conclusion, the following elements will be left unchanged:

- The shape and dimensions of the empty spaces
- The shape and finishing of the joinery, including the original doors and windows.
- Current exterior adornments
- Current interior adornments
- The color of the façades
- The current finishing materials, exterior decorations, the material they are made of (the supporting core) and their finishing.

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