Reflection of Project in Relation to Discourse

As the title suggests the project rises the question of typology, in particular, the Grand Hotel type as a tradition of social rituals of elite, originated in a form of the first-class hotels in Europe in the nineteenth century, and the Motel type as an American pop-culture tradition of a road trip boomed as a reaction to the automobile’s adoption as a preferred way of travel in the beginning and second half of the twentieth century. Both types share some important characteristics of a larger Hotel group, which represents a wide range of buildings for temporary living. It is explicitly suggested by its name, as the etymology of the word stems from the French “hôtel particulier” — an aristocratic urban residence for a short-time stay. However, differently from its roots, hotel type is mainly a public building where semi-private cells are at disposal of changing guests. This combination of two realms is inscribed in the hotel type as a basic geometrical logic, where the most public — lobby — and the most private — room — share services, performed by operations of the ‘back of the house’.

The evident possibility of certain categorisation of hotels as a whole according to their form and function, is however vague when it comes to different location and class. Aldo Rossi clearly advocates this idea in his book “The Architecture of the City”, where he emphasizes the importance of time and context (the city) in construction the memory of the ‘constant’ type. As follows, the Grand Hotel belongs to a hotel type as a destination. Its breakneck grandeur spaces always contain vast leisure facilities and diverse services which allow client to stay in a designed microcosm for a long time without a need to move anywhere else — like an ocean liner, as it is represented by Le Corbusier in Aménagement de Paquebot Ille de France, in 1936. Impressive wide façade, large lobbies and wide corridors, restaurants and ballrooms — these displays of socialisation and spectacle — are of the same importance for the Grand Hotel as its efficient but invisible service. “Make sure that window shades are drawn halfway down in winter and tree-quarters of the way down in summer. Make sure that lace curtains, draperies, window shades and pictures hang straight and even, and that lamp shades are on straight” — these procedures from the Waldorf Astoria shows the role of staff operations in contracting a luxurious setting for a patron.

In contrast, the Motel type promotes the notion of mobility — which comes with a private automobile — and thus, the building itself provides only minimal facilities for a short-time stay. The mobility of the client is paradoxically controversial to the motel’s dependance on a larger range of car oriented facilities, such as gas stations, car services, drive-in restaurants — ingredients of a linear Strip element. Motel’s fundamental language is thus, unlike the Grand Hotel’s, based on outdoor elements such as a sign — which outweighs the meaning of the façade and parking lot (sometimes combined with the swimming pool) — to which the main public areas of the hotel are reduced. This roadside architecture — as well represented in case of Las Vegas Strip of 1940s — in the first place, is “designed to be seen from the highway and accessed by car”, what on territorial level give it a shape of the de-centralised urban sprawl.

The foregoing discussions have highlighted the exceptional architectural features of two types. In quantitative commercial terms: the type of a Grand Hotel has always been considered as for a finest stay in a majestic self-contained world, while the type of a Motel, even though served a noble objective of a shelter for a long-distance road trip, has taken a negative form in the memory of a man. The Grand Motel speculates on how to operate with a notion of type as a tool in a situation when the status of one has to be used in a mode on another, it tries to reconfigure two types in the relationship with different territory, landscape and different time.