

# THE COOPERATION OF ERNŐ FOERK AND GYULA SÁNDY

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***Abstract:** Ernő Foerk and Gyula Sándy made common plans for several competitions. This study intends to show their successful cooperation as well as some of their realized buildings and awarded plans. The buildings and plans are shortly described and analyzed from the aspect of style. At the end of the study all of their common works are listed chronologically.*

***Keywords:** Ernő Foerk, Gyula Sándy, Plan Competitions, Architectural styles*

## 1. PREFACE

The cooperation of Ernő Foerk and Gyula Sándy began when they became colleagues at Hungarian Royal Public Higher Architectural Industrial School. [1] Foerk taught the architectural forms and the history of architecture while Sándy taught the architectural structures. [2] They completed each other very well, so their collaboration was obvious. According to their appointment the cooperation was not compulsory in all cases and they should have worked together only when the circumstances gave ground for it. [3] However the collaboration was so successful that they worked together even in smaller cases. [4] As the most architect pairs they also divided the tasks: Sándy made the ground-plans and the roof structures while Foerk drew the facades. [5]

Their architectural style is known in the literature on one hand as simplified Neo-Roman – Neo-Gothic, on the other hand as distribution of Ödön Lechner's Hungarian Art-Nouveau brick-band style. Their Neo-Gothic style consisted of pretty towers and high, steep-sided roofs. Attics with geometric or simplified floral ornaments were often set in front of the roofs. Geometric decorations made of brick can be found even on other parts of the facades and the pilasters, lesenes and arches were also covered by brick. Nevertheless they drew some plans in Venetian Gothic style (Hangya Consumer's Cooperative Center), Battlemented-Renaissance (Post Palace in Bratislava) Neo-Roman (Eternal Adoration Church), Neo-Baroque (Sáros Bath, Rudas Bath, Savings Bank in Bratislava) and also the Art-Nouveau can be found mainly in the details (Peace Palace in The Hague).

Some of their buildings and most important plans can be read in the followings and all their known works can be read at the end of the study.

## 2. BUILDINGS

### 2.1. *Postal Palace in Zagreb, 1901-1904*

It was one of the first plan competitions for which Foerk and Sándy applied with common work and they won it. The ground plan and the ordering of the building followed the latest principles of its age: the acceptance rooms were settled in two inner-yards covered by glass-roofs for the sake of good lighting. The glass-roofed rooms were pioneers in a postal building in Hungary, such structure was used only in bank offices previously. [6] The building has three floors and the main staircase was settled between the yards. The horizontal feature of the 82 meter-long-facade was balanced by brick bands connecting the window-arches of the first and the second floor. Also the geometrical decorations made of brick (triangles, rectangles, rhombuses) are remarkable and they are settled in the parapets and the cornices. The combination of red brick and light plaster gives some Hungarian Art-Nouveau effect for the building however it is mainly rather Neo-Gothic. The structure of the roofing confirms the Neo-Gothic style: high roofs can be found on the wings and the center is surrounded by two towers. The Western tower was higher with Neo-Gothic peak on the first plan, later the peak was missed because of budget shortage [7] and so it became an Art-Nouveau-like tower. [8] However in the end both towers got the same frusta of pyramid shape with grating on the top.



Zagreb, Postal Palace, 1901-04, Postamúzeum, Inv. No. PM 25-1993-2054, photo: Mór Erdélyi

### 2.2. *Brezno, Tower of Lutheran church, 1903-1906*

Foerk and Sándy liked planning towers, so they applied with two plans for competition of the tower of the Lutheran church in Brezno. According to Sándy's memories they drew the plans separately though after discussing them. [9] Both plans suited their surrounding very well: Sándy's plan [10] was drawn in renaissance style so it suited the convention of architecture of the region while Foerk's plan [11] suited the style of the church itself and was Baroque. The latter plan showed onion steeple, open bell-house and richly decorated gate.

The Renaissance plan had a graceful steeple that was set on a sgraffito-decorated tower with semicircular flourish-decorated battlement. The Baroque plan won the first prize of the competition while the Renaissance plan was ranked for second. [12] However the leaders of the Church were not agreed which plan should be built, so Sándy offered to combine the advantageous parts of both plans and so create a third one. [13] Sándy was pleased with this opportunity because some of his ideas could be realized in this way. [14] The tower kept the decorated gate and the open bell-house of the Baroque plan as well as the sgraffito decoration and the high graceful steeple of the Renaissance plan. The merge of the two plans could be seen best on the stair-cases: their location on both side of the tower derives from the Baroque plan while their onion steeple came from the Renaissance plan.



Brezno, Lutheran church, 1903-06, photo: Krisztina Bélavári

### **2.3. Nagykőrös, tower of Calvinist church, 1906-1907**

Foerk and Sándy won the plan competition for the new tower of the Calvinist church in Nagykőrös in 1906. The old tower was used also as fire watchtower, but in the course of time the surrounding buildings became higher, so the tower also had to be heightened by about ten meters. [15] The new tower had to contain a room for the observer staff and an ambulatory. Sándy planned the structure of the tower while Foerk drew the plan of the steeple as well as the restoration plans of the originally Gothic tower. The new tower got to be 63.5 meters high and had a roofed ambulatory in the height of 29 meters. [16] The room for the observer staff was situated above this ambulatory and the tower became slightly narrower from here. The staff room was surrounded by an open ambulatory that had a Hungarian-style-cut wooden banister. This technique was familiar in the town as there were several similar wooden headboards in the local cemetery. [17]

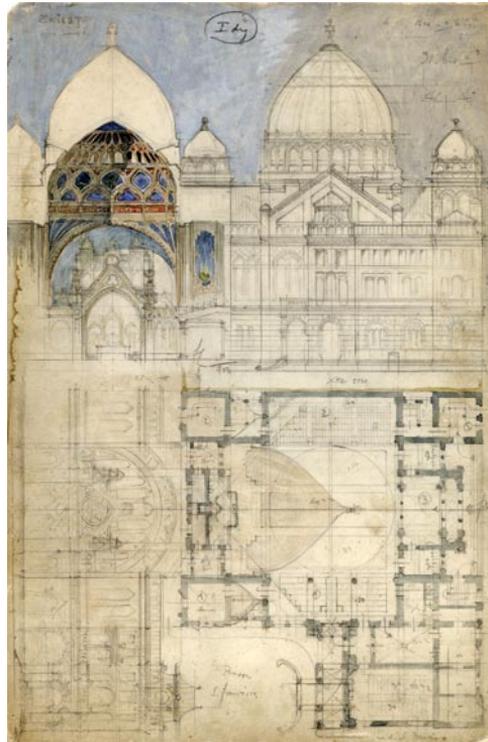
The banister was covered by copper layer for the sake of durability and it soon became rusty so its brown colour suited the wooden parts of the tower very well. The architects planned a Baroque steeple over the staff room. Later Sándy taught his experiences that he gained here: the table No. XXVI of his series called *Épületszerkezzetani mintalapok* depicted a very similar steeple to the one in Nagykőrös.



Nagykőrös, Calvinist church, 1906-07, photo: Krisztina Bélavári

#### **2.4. Diósszentpál, Mrs. Tüköry's mansion, 1904-1905**

Widow Mrs. Tüköry (née Paula van Falkenberg) commissioned Foerk and Sándy with planning a mansion on her recently inherited land near Daruvar in spring 1904 due to Jenő Radisich, director of Museum of Applied Arts. [18] Mrs. Tüköry called the land Diósszentpál and it still has this name. The architects drew unique historical-style-plans so they avoided to copy any typical historical styles but also avoided the that time favoured Art-Nouveau. [19] The patterns of the plans were probably the Borgo Medievale castle in Turin that was built for the word exhibition in 1884 [20] as well as the castle of Louis II. Bavarian king in Neuschwanstein. [21] The mansion has two battlemented rampants [22] and an outside situated, tower-like staircase leads onto the larger one. The ground plan of the mansion is centralized: the center of the building is a vast, 9.5 meters sided quadratic hall, that determines even the first floor. [23] The walls of the hall were covered by Neo-Roman decoration and a Neo-Roman fireplace also could be found in it that Mrs. Tüköry bought from the famous furniture factory owner Maximilian Schmidt. [24] The large-sized split semicircular window over the main entrance also must be mentioned that was decorated by a glass-painting showing Saint George.



Triest, Plan of Synagogue, 1904, Magyar Építészeti Múzeum, Inv. No. 69.024.216

### 3. IMPORTANT PLANS

#### 3.1. Szeged, plans of the votive church, 1904.

Foerk and Sándy made two plans for the competition of the Votive Church in Szeged. Many years later Foerk became the architect of the church, so it is worth looking at his original plans. One of their plans – entitled *Dicsértesség* that won third prize on the competition [25] – is a three-aisle Neo-Gothic church. The main facade is determined by a very wide and high tower thickly decorated by gables and the main gate made of orders of arches is situated under it. There is a large-sized rosette above the main gate and all the other pointed arch windows also have tracery. The church has long side-facades in the middle of each there are one-one lower towers, too. The jury praised the coherent rhythm of the inner decoration drawn by Foerk. [26] Their other plan entitled *Szebb lesz* is also a Neo-Gothic church, but with a pair of towers on the main facade which surround a huge rosette. This plan however had an inadventagous ground plan: starts with three aisles, but gets two more aisles and even a transept in the middle. [27]

#### 3.2. Triest, plan of synagoge, 1904.

Foerk and Sándy won the second prize on the international competition for the synagoge in Triest but the first prize was not given to anyone in the lack of absolutely proper plan. [28]

Foerk and Sándy used one of Foerk's earlier plan as a pattern that he and Ferenc Schrömer drew in 1898 for the competition of the synagogue in Leopoldstadt district of Budapest and what was awarded with the first prize. This plan anyway might have based on the structure of the Saint Mark Basilica of Venice, so it was planned for the demands of the assimilated Jews: the ground plan is a stretched Greek cross with a vast quadratic hall in the middle. Aisles surround the hall of the synagogue of Triest from all the four sides, the main entrance is situated on the Western end and the chancel can be found on the Eastern end. The choirs for the women can be found over the main entrance and over the Northern and Southern aisles. [29] The building is covered by a pointed onion dome just like in the plan of the Leopoldstadt synagogue, though it is not such large in size. Lower towers with onion dome can be found on all the four corners of the building. Foerk drew the facade in his typical simplified Neo-Gothic style with brick bands but the dome has orientalist features as well as Venetian effects so it is adapted to the Italian atmosphere of the town. These plans were exhibited on the Biennale of Venice in 1905. [30]

### **3.3. *The Hague, Plan of the Peace Palace, 1906.***

The competition of the Peace Palace in The Hague was very popular and 216 plans were applied for it. Foerk and Sándy made a common plan that was sorted among the best 16 plans and it was a great success.<sup>31</sup> According to the programme of the competition the building had to contain not only the Peace Palace but also a library, so Foerk and Sándy made an H-formed ground plan for the building. The Peace Palace was involved in one of the wings of the H, and the library in the other. Both wings had two floors while the connecting building was only ground-floored though the main entrance was situated there. [32] As the building had to be planned into a park Foerk and Sándy avoided to use not only high towers and domes but also classical colonnades because they fitted rather a building in a city center. [33] Nevertheless they wanted the plans to get considerable look so used high roofing just like they did on their earlier works. Besides a lower tower can be found on the right wing. The facade was drawn basically in Neo-Baroque style but it was richly decorated with Art-Nouveau statues. [34]

### **3.4. *Vienna, Plan of Ministry of War, 1908.***

Foerk and Sándy won the third prize on the plan competition of the Ministry of War. [35] Their plan shows a uniquely conceived Neo-Gothic style that can be seen on the upper parts of the facade and the roofing. Its mass system resembles the building of Parliament in Budapest: both the corner projections and the center projection also can be found on it. [36] Furthermore tower-like superstructures are can be found on both wings but the real similarity to the Parliament are the proportions and the situation of the two towers of the center projection. Only the lack of dome is the big difference from the Parliament, instead of what they drew a high roof with arched sides. Foerk and Sándy actually used even domes on the plan that had a similar pointed shape, but they are situated on the corner projections. Due to their honour to Imre Steindl architect of the Parliament in Budapest, it is probable that they deliberately used similar parts on their plan. [37]

## 4. SUMMARY

The cooperation of Ernő Foerk and Gyula Sándy was very successful. Though only six of their buildings were realized they won several prizes on plan competitions. Most of their plans showed a unique Neo-Gothic style, but they also could adopt their plans to the different circumstances or prescriptions and made Neo-Roman, Battlemented Renaissance or Neo-Baroque plans, too. Despite of the successful collaboration they did not have a common office and at the end of the 1900s Foerk worked more often with Gyula PetrovácZ while Sándy made some works with Ferenc Orbán. However their friendship did not break and after the death of Foerk it was Sándy to hold a beautiful speech about him in the Association of Hungarian Engineers and Architects. [38]

## 5. LIST OF COMMON WORKS

- 1900. Braşov [RO], Enlargement plan of Roman Catholic Grammar School, no prize
- 1901. Rijeka [HR], plan of The Hungarian Maritime Academy, no prize
- 1901-Zagreb [HR], Postal Palace, I. prize, built
- 1902. Bratislava [SK], plan of Postal Palace, no prize
- 1902. Zagreb, plan of Croatian-Slavonian Credit Bank, bought
- 1902. Koşice [SK], Studio of Young Offender Institution, built
- 1903. Four plans for settler churches, all are bought
- 1903-1906. Brezno [SK], tower of Lutheran church, I. and II. prize; their combination is built
- 1903. Budapest, plan of the Elisabeth Eternal Adoration church, no prize
- 1903. Békés, Basket Weaver School, built
- 1903. Nagykanizsa, plan of Grammar School, built
- 1904. Budapest, plan of the Hangya Consumer's Cooperative Center, II. prize
- 1904. Trieste [IT], plan of synagogue, II. prize
- 1904. Budapest, plan of the Sáros Bath, no prize
- 1904. Budapest, plan of Rudas Bath, no prize
- 1904. Szeged, two plans of Votive Church, III. prize; no prize
- 1904. Bratislava [SK], plan of Savings Bank, II. prize
- 1904. Dioş [HR], Tüköry-mansion, built
- 1905. Budapest, plan of the Ministry of Culture, no prize
- 1906. Nagykőrös, tower of Calvinist church, I. prize, built
- 1906. Palić [SRB], plan of bath buildings, III. prize
- 1906. The Hague [NL], plan of the Peace Palace, no prize
- 1906. Bratislava [SK], plan of the Redout, built
- 1907. Budapest, plan of a business center, no prize
- 1908. Vienna [AT], plan of the Ministry of War, III. prize
- 1908. Újpest, plan of the Boarding School of the Hungarian Railways, no prize
- 1909. Arad [RO], plan of the Cultural Palace, no prize
- 1909. Sárospatak, plan of the State Boarding School of Teachers, bought
- 1911. Budapest, Ideal plan of the Kálvin Square, bought
- 1913. Sofia [BG], plan of the Palace of Justice, II. prize

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[2] **KOLBENHEYER GYULA** (ed.), *A Budapesti M. Kir. Állami Felső Építő Ipariskola értesítője az 1899/1900. iskolai évről*, Budapest. 1900. pp. 26.

[3] **GYULA SÁNDY**, *Hogyan lettem és hogyan voltam én templom-építő, -tervező és művezető építész?* *Lapis Angularis VI. Források a Magyar Építészeti Múzeum gyűjteményéből*, Budapest: Magyar Építészeti Múzeum. 2005. pp. 205.

[4] János Bobula mentioned that it seemed Foerk and Sándy had made a commercial appointment because they work even in small plans together which they could have done separately. Bobula's evoking cause for it must have been the plans of the tower of the Lutheran church in Brezno that were exhibited on the Spring Show in the Art Hall in 1904. Bobula later affirms that he regards both of them as talented artist but he thinks such cooperation deprives the artwork of individuality. János Bobula, *Tavaszi tárlat a Múcsarnokban*. In: *Budapesti Építészeti Szemle 13 (1904), 7. szám, 94.*

[5] **ANDRÁS HADIK**: Foerk Ernőről és a Magyar Építészeti Múzeumban lévő dokumentumanyagáról. *Lapis Angularis II. Források a Magyar Építészeti Múzeum gyűjteményéből*, Budapest: Magyar Építészeti Múzeum. 1998. pp. 14.

[6] *Építő Ipar 27 (1903) No. 15. pp. 95.*

[7] *Építő Ipar 27 (1903) No. 15. pp. 95.*

[8] Postamúzeum, In. No.: D22-401.0, D22-401.1, D22-401.2

[9] Sándy 2005. pp. 211.

[10] Magyar Építészeti Múzeum és Műemlékvédelmi Dokumentációs Központ (further MÉM MDK), Ernő Foerk legacy, Inv. No.: 69.024.346.

[11] MÉM MDK, Ernő Foerk legacy, Inv. No.: 69.024.347.

[12] *Magyar Pályázatok I (1903) No. 11. pp. 29-30.*

[13] MÉM MDK, Ernő Foerk legacy, Inv. No.: 69.024.432.

[14] Sándy 2005. pp. 212.

[15] Sándy 2005. pp. 214.

[16] MÉM MDK, Ernő Foerk legacy, Inv. No.: 69.024.380

[17] Sándy 2005. pp. 214.

[18] Sándy 2005. pp. 88.

- [19] *Magyar Mérnök és Építész Egylet Közlönye* 39 (1905). No. 12. pp. 501.
- [20] And Mrs. Tüköry knew it very well.
- [21] Sándy 2005. pp. 88-89.
- [22] MÉM MDK. Gyula Sándy legacy. Inv. No.: 2002.10.10.3.
- [23] Sándy 2005. pp. 89. And MÉM MDK Ernő Foerk legacy, Inv. No.: 91.09.5.1.
- [24] Sándy 2005. pp. 89.
- [25] The first prize was not awarded to anyone because there were not any really proper plans. *Magyar Pályázatok 4 (1906) No. 10. pp. 4.*
- [26] *Építő Ipar* 28 (1904) No. 33. pp. 239.
- [27] *Magyar Pályázatok 4 (1906) No. 10. pp. 18-19.* The jury remonstrated that this plan does not satisfy all the prescriptions of the programme. *Magyar Pályázatok 4 (1906) No. 10. pp. 26.*
- [28] However the common plan of the Viennese architects Ernst Lindner – Theodor Schreier was also awarded with second prize. Sándy 2005. pp. 207.
- [29] MÉM MDK. Ernő Foerk legacy. Inv. No.: 69.462.1; Photo Storage 70.410 fot. sz.
- [30] *Magyar Mérnök- és Építész Egylet Közlönye*. 39 (1905) No. 2. pp. 34.
- [31] *Magyar Mérnök és Építész Egylet Közlönye* 41 (1907) No. XI-XII. pp. 301.
- [32] *Építő Ipar* 31 (1907) No. 17. pp. 161.
- [33] *Építő Ipar* 31 (1907) No. 17. pp. 163.
- [34] *Magyar Mérnök és Építész Egylet Közlönye* 41 (1907) No. XI-XII. pp. 306.
- [35] Sándy 2005. pp. 112.
- [36] MÉM MDK. Gyula Sándy legacy, Inv. No.: 2002.10.11.
- [37] Foerk was Steindl's assistant for several years. András Hadik 1998. pp. 13.
- [38] The performance was held on 1st April 1935. MÉM MDK. Gyula Sándy documents, box No. 3, folder No.78.