

SARAJEVO HERITAGE FLASHBACK: Modernizing Trends in Architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Dr. Selma Harrington¹

Architect, Researcher and Policy Analyst

harrinse@tcd.ie

ORCID No: 0000-0002-2936-6482

Dr. Adi Ćorović²

International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

acorovic@ius.edu.ba

ORCID No: 0000-0003-0775-0587

Dr. Ahmed Obralić^{3*}

International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

aobralic@ius.edu.ba

ORCID No: 0000-0002-1494-1173

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ABSTRACT

This paper brings to light some more recent and previously inaccessible documents from the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on the selection of buildings listed as national heritage which signal the early modernism in the first decades of the 20th century, bridging across historic periods of significant political and administrative changeover. Cross-referencing the previous studies of architectural developments, the paper contributes to a holistic understanding of the unique and elusive regionalist vocabulary, culture of building and treatment of heritage, seen as vitally relevant to today's planning and development of the city. It advances the critical heritage discourse in examination of the architectural synergies among the European styles implanted within the older Ottoman heritage and the modernizing trends expressed in the works of the first indigenous architects in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the beginning of the 20th century. Mindful of the pressures and complexity of international and local investment in a post-conflict country, often oblivious to the long-term environmental impact, the paper

* Corresponding author.

highlights the trends from the past which are relevant for today. It argues for the holistic and cross-disciplinary approach within architecture and urban planning professions in charge of care for heritage, leading to the culture of building with a quality approach to assumptions, interpretations and expressions of local spatial identity, in the shadow of the mainstream European trends. Within the limit of architectural appraisal, the investigation points to a poor physical condition of many of the historic buildings, often aggravated by the complicated ownership issues or unattended war damage, as well as limited scope of protection and rehabilitation under the Commission's remit. The paper points to the areas of potential engagement by professionals, academia and civil society in Bosnia through study, customized architectural heritage tours and preservation campaigns, which in the past succeeded in raising the awareness and documenting heritage.

KEYWORDS

Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, critical heritage discourse, modernizing trends, Sarajevo, post-conflict.

FRAMING THE HERITAGE CULTURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The critical heritage studies approach calls for the inclusion of socio-political perspectives and an engaged dialogue with the conservation practices, arguing also for the pursuit of a post-western perspective in the field (Waterton, 2010; Winter & Waterton, 2013: 529; Winter, 2013: 536). Inspired by such concepts, this paper gazes back to the formative architectural periods of Sarajevo tracking the imprints of evolution of attitudes towards built heritage on selected buildings. These small signifiers within the architectures of historicism, through to the works of the first generations of indigenous architects and their legacy of the Sarajevo's Modern(a), allow for a fresh review of the unique Bosnian form of regional internationalism. Such review is necessary for a small, post-conflict environment and region which struggles to define itself within its immediate neighborhood, towards the EU and other international relations. The lessons of cultural understanding, accommodation and integration from the past could help better manage the actions for social, cultural and economic sustainability at present, leading to alignment with the international actions on the pressing issues of climate change, digitalisation, energy and resource security.

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Sarajevo's post-war built environment bears witness of experimentation, setbacks and resilience, which could in today's architectural parlance, be interpreted as an encounter and sometimes a clash of placemaking concepts. Placemaking is a term integrated in some national architectural policy documents and understood as a process (which has to) take account of the economic, planning, architectural, engineering, environmental, landscape and community development challenge ([Government of Environment Ireland, 2009](#)). The city's development therefore, has to be appraised through historic continuities and systemic ruptures ([Harrington et al., 2019](#)) which are visible and legible in its architecture but often analysed in a fragmented way with silence about the gaps. Visually, Sarajevo's built fabric can be read almost as a linear display of architectural historic styles which also show and disguise the historic systemic changes and collapse(s), including the targeted destruction of built heritage in the 1990s war. Much of the recent international research approach Bosnia through a post-conflict and cultural history lens, discussing it through the concepts of 'othering', orientalisng or a post-colonial discourse ([Donia 2007](#); [Feichtinger & Heiss 2013](#); [Hartmuth, 2015](#); [Ruthner, 2018](#)). Othering is also defined as a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities ([Powell & Menenian, 2016](#)). It is elaborated more specifically on how "othering" constructs a negative and repulsive image of an antagonist as fundamentally different or alien; the better to fashion a positive and attractive image of yourself or your group. The term is widely used to analyse imperial, colonial, racist and sexist stereotypes in justifying hierarchies of conquest and power ([Gillespie, 2020](#)). The domestic literature and architectural research expose the generational gaps in examination of the built environment and architecture, with some excellent older sources and monographs on the specific periods. The architectural history research has been facilitated by several solid domestic historical sources on the Ottoman and Austro-

Hungarian periods of governance (Kruševac, 1960). It has been carried out by art and architectural historians mostly from academia, during and after the socialist period (Krzović, 1987, 2004; Milošević, 1997; Kurto, 1998; Štraus, 2006), some of it published post mortem (Husedžinović, 2020).

The institutional care of heritage protection (and rehabilitation) has undergone a major overhaul since the socialist period and after the 1990s war, with a complicated and fragmented structure of delegation among the federal entities (Bosnia and Herzegovina has two entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, and, Brčko District, as an autonomous administrative region), cantons and municipalities (79 in FBiH and 64 in RS). Figure 1 and Figure 2 give an overview of the delegation of responsibilities for heritage, nominally under the umbrella of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This state body is established under the Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace signed in Dayton (1995) with a task to record and protect national heritage, which was recognized as a vital element of reconciliation and return of population (Dayton agreement, 1995). The scope of the Commission's work relates to declaration and register of national monuments, including sites, natural/urban/architectural assembles, immovable and movable heritage of historical and cultural importance to the whole country. At the top of its structure are three expert members representative of the three main ethnicities, which, with some concern, have replaced the earlier composition which included four other international experts. This group provides guidance on the inclusion on the list of national monuments in collaboration with the executive structure of the Commission in charge of administrative management and technical expertise. There are currently ten advisers employed to manage the built heritage database, one those being among the authors of the paper.

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STATE LEVEL INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING HERITAGE

COMMISSION TO PRESERVE NATIONAL

MONUMENTS BIH

Legal basis: Annex 8 of the General Framework Peace in BiH; Law on the Implementation of Agreement for Decisions of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of BiH

MINISTRY OF CIVIL AFFAIRS BIH

Legal basis: Law on the Ministries, and Other Administrative Bodies

ENTITY LEVEL INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING HERITAGE (FBIH, RS, BD)

REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

1. Ministry for Regional Planning, Engineering and the Environment

Legal basis: Law on the Implementation of Decisions of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments

2. Ministry of Education and Culture

Legal basis: 1995 Law on Cultural Properties

3. Republic Institute for the Protection of the Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage with local branches

Legal basis: Law on Cultural Properties

4. Institutions for heritage protection (archives, museums, galleries, film libraries, libraries)

Legal basis: Law on the Protection of the Cultural

FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. Federal Ministry of Regional Planning and the Civil Environment

2. Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport

Legal basis: 1985 Law on the Protection of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage

3. Institute for the Protection of Monuments, part of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport

Legal basis: 1985 Law on the Protection of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage

4. Organizations for heritage protection (archives, museums, galleries, libraries)

Legal basis: Law on Cultural Properties Historical and Natural Heritage

BRČKO DISTRICT BIH

Department for Town Planning and Property Law Affairs and Economic Development of the Government of Brčko District BiH

Legal basis: Law on the Implementation of Decisions of the Annex 8 Commission to Preserve National Monuments

Figure 1. Institutions responsible for protecting heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina-State and entity levels.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a signatory of several international conventions concerning heritage and the Commission's criteria follow the principles of the international charters ([URL-1](#)) but there is still a long way to depoliticise and professionalise the heritage management, and capitalise on the academic and public engagement. Other countries, such as Ireland, with comparable historic experiences of colonialism, conflict and conflicted heritage could potentially provide a valuable experience in compiling a modern, digitalised, accessible and user-friendly open source with inventory which engages professionals, academia and public to partake in care for heritage. National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is an initiative of the Government of Ireland as part of its commitment to Granada Convention signed in 1985. It was legislated in 1999 as part of the

Planning and Development Act 2000, with over 65000 digitalised records for buildings and gardens (URL-2).

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HERITAGE PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS AT THE CANTONAL LEVEL

1. SARAJEVO CANTON

Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage of Kanton
Law on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage 2/00

2. WESTERN HERZEGOVINA CANTON

Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage of Western Herzegovina
Law on the Protection and Use of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage 6/99 and Decision for the on the formation of the Institute

3. UNA-SANA CANTON

Institute for the Protection of the Cultural and Historical Heritage
Decision to form the Institute has been adopted, but the Institute is not in operation

4. TUZLA CANTON

Zavod za zaštitu kulturno- historijskog i prirodnog naslijeđa Tuzla
Zakon o preuzimanju prava i obaveza osnivača prema Zavodu, 10/00

5. ZENICA DOBOJ CANTON

No Institute in this Canton, although the law Canton allows for the formation of one (Law on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage 8/99)

6. HERZEGOVINA-NERETVA CANTON

Cantonal Institute Protection of the Cultural Historical and Natural Heritage Mostar
Regional institute under the 1985 Law. No details of assumption of rights of the founder.

Cantons Una-Sana, Posavina, Central Bosnia, Hercegbosna, Tuzla, Herzegovina-Neretva and Goražde Bosnian Podrinje do not have their own laws in this field, as a result of which the 1985 Republic Law on the Protection of the Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage is applicable in their territory.

Figure 2. Institutions responsible for protecting heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina-Cantonal level.

Overall, in the 20 years since the establishment, within the complexity of the post-conflict governance, technical and financial limitations, the Commission and its team have made a significant progress in compiling the data and lists of protected structures, animating foreign donations and facilitating rehabilitation of heritage buildings and sites. Its work is complicated by the gaps in local and regional area planning strategies and undermined by the lack of technical means to produce accurate survey information, drawings database and photographic records. The research undertaken internally is of limited scope. However, the existing Commission's archive is a good base for further research to document, appraise and consolidate the information on the built heritage leading to the full inventory in the country. It's work and remit points to the

opportunities and pathways for external engagement and collaboration, to which this paper seeks to contribute.

FACETS OF HISTORICISM IN BOSNIA

The four centuries of Ottoman cultural dominance marked Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns mostly as provincial trading centres, but following the Austro-Hungarian Occupation in 1878 and subsequent Annexation of Bosnia in 1908, they undergo a rapid transformation. A standard primary reference for the intense building activity and architecture of this period is the original research by an art historian Ibrahim Krzović (1987; 2004). In his view, the first thirty years the Austro-Hungarian administration (and its architects) largely ignored the values of the existing built heritage in the country, which only more-or less changed towards the end of the rule. The change manifested in the application of the stylistic elements on the building facades, perceived to be sympathetic to the Bosniaks and Islamic architecture of the place.

Krzović (1987) illuminates three broad stylistic architectural trends evident in the buildings of the period: *historicism*, *secession* and *search for Bosnian style*. Compared to the historicist styles that dominated architecture across Europe at the time, historicism in Bosnia stands out by its various facets, from neo-renaissance, neo-gothic and romanticism, to pseudo-Moorish. These variations emerged concurrently during the three decades of intensive construction and were embodied in many works of the two most prolific architects of the period, Karl Paržik and Josip Vancaš whose contribution is well documented in the regional research (Božić, 1989; Dimitrijević, 1991). Whilst it was actively promoted in Bosnia, there was a general departure from historicism in European centres in favour of functionalist trends in architectural design and construction (Krzović, 2004). The “pseudo”, the term used for this style in Bosnia up to the 1990s or “neo-Moorish” style was perceived to be culturally compatible with the Bosniak cultural traditions. The neo-Moorish forms of historicism

demonstrated the intention by the imperial authority to appeal to the Bosnian majority Muslim population (Kraljačić, 1987; Odluka KONS, 2006). This variant of historicism was typically articulated as an eclectic composition of elements from the Northern African Islamic architectures and applied in many large public buildings throughout Bosnia. The most prominent example of this style is Sarajevo's Vijećnica (1896), designed by Aleksandar Wittek and Ćiril Iveković. Vijećnica was severely damaged during the targeted destruction of Sarajevo's infrastructure in 1992 and fully reconstructed in 2014, with the help of international donors. Other lesser-known examples are the Town Hall in Brčko (1892) designed by Iveković, Gimnazija in Mostar (1898-1902) designed by František Blažek, and Madrasa, as Islamic school in Travnik (1895) designed by Iveković and Wittek (Pašić, 2015: 18).

According to Krzović (2004: 156) the Islamic religious buildings from the same period remained devoid of the neo-Moorish appearance, possibly due to the fact that they were often built without architect's input and relied on the traditional skills of local craftsmen who followed geometric forms inherited from the Ottoman period. In the design of Ulema Medžlis Palace from 1910, architect followed the design principles and proportions of the original building in the Ottoman tradition, rather than the imported motives from far-away Islamic lands (Krzović, 2004). The neo-Moorish stylistic trend steadily declines after the 1900s, with some notable exceptions, such as the Public Bath (1913-14) in Musala ulica in Mostar, designed by Rudolf Tönnies and the Ashkenazi Temple in Hamdije Kreševljakovića ulica in Sarajevo, designed by Wilhelm Shiasny (1896) and completed by Karl Paržik (1902) (Krzović, 2004: 148-155). The fact that the Ashkenazi Synagogue and other public or educational buildings featured elements of the neo-Moorish destabilises the argument that this style was a result of an overarching intention to express the Bosnian (or Bosniak) identity through architecture. Instead, it supports the views that this was driven more by capitalism in general (Hartmuth, 2018) or a fascination of

the European elites elsewhere with Islamic, Byzantine and Asian architectures (Pašić, 2015), as evident, for example, in the Indo-Saracen design of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton (1815-1822) (Historic England, 1998).

SECESSION AND THE SEARCH FOR BOSNIAN STYLE (BOSANSKI SLOG)

As the Secession in art and architecture emerged in the Habsburg metropolis Vienna towards the end of the 19th century as a rejection of academism, similar ideas began to resonate with many professionals, architects, engineers and technicians who came to work and settle in Bosnia from other provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There was a technical personnel who arrived in Bosnia firstly as part the military engineering crews in 1878 and then gradually as entrepreneurs or civil service employees in the new governing structure. They originated from Austria, Hungary, Moravia, Czechia, Slovakia, Galizia (Poland), Croatia and Slovenia. Only a small proportion of technical cadre was born in Bosnia. They were sometimes perceived pejoratively by the locals, who labelled them colloquially as “kuferasi”, or “suitcase architects” (Krzović, 2004). By then, Sarajevo and other urban centres have undergone an extensive transformation fuelled by the opportunities for profit and development and the self-proclaimed civilizing mission of the Habsburg Empire (Kruševac, 1960; Donia, 2007; Ruthner, 2018). The scale of change had a profound impact on the integrity, value and quality of the older built context in Bosnia. Only belatedly, some architects began advocating the need to protect and preserve the uniqueness of place and to halt the damage and loss to local heritage.

Exceptionally, the sketches by Viennese architect Ernst Lichtblau, show deeper sensitivity and appreciation of the local vernacular architecture. A disciple of Otto Wagner, he undertook a sort of a gentleman’s *grand tour*, visiting small Bosnian towns and making records of “the cascading and

cubic forms of roofs, simple and strong house forms, modelled with light and with fine tones of black, white and brown colours” (Krzović, 2004: 191-192). Among these there are recognizable contours of the Bosnian Medieval capital Jajce as well as studies of house forms and typologies and first conceptualisation of new house types derived from traditional architecture. The developed house type concept by Lichtblau, incorporates all the components of the old architecture conceived with a contemporary functional construction and carefully landscaped surroundings. While the house design respects the traditional vertical distribution of a two-storey space, with a high-pitch pyramidal roof and sympathetic proportion of fenestration, the drawing style and presentation are executed in a typical manner of a pure, highly stylised Secession, characteristic for the Wagner School. Lichtblau’s standalone project for a Bosnian house from 1904 might be considered as an initiation of the Bosnian Style (*bosanski slog*) which predates Josip Vancaš’s formal initiative and definition.

In 1911, architect Vancaš, supported by a group of architects, formally petitioned the Bosnian Council in Sarajevo, stating the importance of the older Bosnian built heritage and calling for its adequate survey, recording and protection. This included a proposal for a regulation of types of permissible interventions within the existing ensembles, and request for a provision of preferential treatment through financial incentives and tax relief for new structures to be built in the Bosnian Style (Krzović, 2004: 189-190; cf. Vancaš, 1928). In reality, this significant and innovative motion was a belated initiative (Imamović, 2013: 123) with little impact on regulation and practice, other than prompting the architect Josip Pospišil to complete the survey and record of several older structures in Herzegovina (Harrington, 2019). There were older surveys of Bosnian towns initiated by military campaigns and administration’s eagerness to document the newly acquired land, for example, Edmund Stix (1887: 18-19) provided one of the first traditional house surveys from Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Occupation by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1878, showing the

ground and first-floor plans of the Sadullah Eff. Šabanović's house in Sarajevo (Arnautović, 1984). At least among a few prominent architects of the Monarchy, such was architect Dr Hans Berger, who joined the Construction Department of the Government, Zemaljska vlada before World War I, this showed a heightened sensitivity and respect for the local urban forms, with some attempts to express these in the design of new buildings, most notably in projects by Vancaš, Pospišil and Rudolf Tönnies, just before the outbreak of World War I. More than a hundred years on, this is now echoed in the Davos Baukultur Quality system, which includes the categories of context and sense of place among the eight proposed quality criteria. "The Davos Baukultur Quality System proposes a multidimensional approach to defining the holistic concept of high-quality Baukultur and to assess the Baukultur quality of places. It is a contribution to the ongoing Davos Process, which began in January 2018, when the European Ministers of Culture adopted the Davos Declaration "Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe". The Davos Declaration stresses the central role of culture for the quality of the built environment. Baukultur encompasses all activities with spatial impact, from craftsmanship details to large-scale urban planning and development of landscapes. The present paper builds on the Davos Declaration and deepens it in a scientific and political discourse.

According to Krzović (2004: 193), the Hotel Stari Grad building (1909) in Mula Mustafa Bašeskija ulica in Sarajevo, likely to be Pospišil's design, is the first to confidently articulate the Bosnian Style (Odluka KONS, 2008a). Originally this building was built as travellers' accommodation (Han) for the Gazi Husrev-Bey's Waqif, judging by the façade drawings and similar elements noted in his other projects, it was most likely designed by Josip Pospišil (Krzović, 2004). This three-bay corner infill building features an undulated two-storey central bay-window and veranda suspended over the recessed street entrance level. The spatial distribution and materialisation

draw direct inspiration from the traditional Bosnian Ottoman architecture, still legible at the near-by hilly neighbourhoods of Logavina and Kovači ulica (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. *Hotel Stari Grad, Mula Mustafe Bašeskije ulica, Sarajevo (1909) (The Commission to Preserve the National Monuments of BiH, 2018).*

Two other projects by Pospišil from 1912, which have been recently listed as National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, deserve some more scrutiny here. Both were submitted for publication in the Viennese technical journal *Der Bautechniker XXXII* the same year, thus signaling the innovative trends of architectural practice in Bosnia. On the one hand, the designs were rooted in the local tradition (Hrasnica, 2003: 161), and on the other, in the new functionalism, thus displaying the evolution of the concept of “modern”, understood as “the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new” (Habermas & Ben-Habib, 1981).

The first project, the Fire Brigade Station (1912) in Sarajevo is ambitiously modern for its time, with the prominent structural façade brick-clad columns stretching from the ground up to the roof soffit and abstracted

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minimal decoration, making a token reference to the design vocabulary of the Bosnian Ottoman heritage. The building was modelled on the similar structure in the 10th municipal district of Vienna (Hrasnica, 2003: 161), with the pioneering use of the reinforced concrete ceiling and construction details which anticipated modernist methods. The morphology and functional design of the building resulted from the creative experimentation with “a simple cubic form [...] and visible vertical structure comprising the simple brick-clad pilasters stretched from the ground up to roof level” (Bakrač, 1979; Krzović, 2004: 180-181; Odluka KONS, 2008e; Husedžinović, 2020: 1015-16). Somewhat over-enthusiastically, Hrasnica opined: “The pronounced wreath-reminiscent external walls, and particularly the shallow-relief geometric decoration of wall cassettes which delineate the fenestration, suggest that the designer sought the support in the Secession while opening a dialogue with the surrounding environment by a timber oriel situated on the western elevation, inspired by the *divanhana* of the Bosnian Ottoman house” (Hrasnica, 2003: 161-162) (Fig. 4a and 4b).

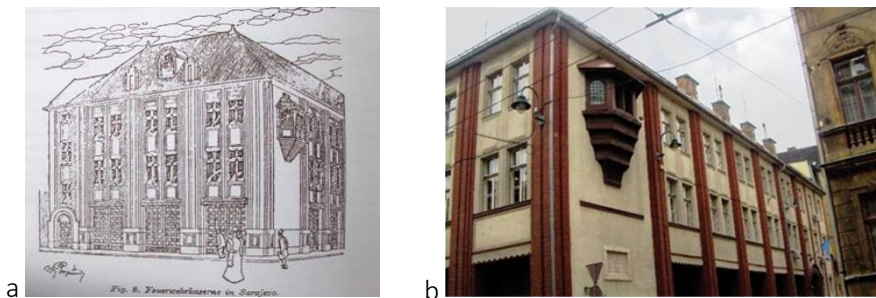


Figure 4a. *The Fire Brigade Station (1912), corner Hamdije Kreševljakovića, 4b. Fehima efendije Čurčića ulica, Sarajevo (Source: Hrasnica, M. (2003). Arhitekt Josip Pospišil: život i djelo. Sarajevo).*

Divanhana (Slavenised Turkish) is typically a semi-open part of the Bosnian Ottoman house, formed from structural timber as a bulk which projects from the façade, allowing view and ventilation to the inside, but privacy

and screening from the outside (Arnautović, 1984). Oriel, on the other hand, features both in Islamic and western architecture, generally as a smaller box-type bay window located in higher position on the main façade or corner of building.

The second project published by Pospišil advances the Bosnian Style further, featuring an elegant three-storey residential block for the Hadim Ali Pasha Waqif (Odluka KONS, 2007), which is located opposite of the former Provincial Government complex. Its steep roof pitch, in a mixture of Alpine and Central Bosnian tradition, a two-storey bay-window and veranda facing Mis Irbina ulica, with subtle references to proportions and fenestration rhythm of the Bosnian Ottoman house, demonstrate a transposition of its volumetric principles into a multi-unit four-bay rental apartment block (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. *Hadim Ali Pasha Waqif Building, corner Džemaludina Čauševića and Mis Irbina ulica, Sarajevo (The Commission to Preserve the National Monuments of BiH, 2019).*

Both examples give clues that the Bosnian Style formally might have emerged through the evolution of the Geometric branch of architectural Secession combined with the functionalist principles. Conceptually, its significance lays in the heightened awareness of the regional cultural context and subsequent integration of its elements in the new architectural language with a reductionist modernist approach. Regarding the impact on the urban environment, such processes predate the considerations for

genius loci, or a sense of place and placemaking, as emerged in the more contemporary parlance.

The Bosnian Style was not limited to Sarajevo, as can be seen in the architecture of the local branches of the Zemaljska Banka, designed by Vančaš in Derventa, Banjaluka and Bosanski Šamac. Dating back to 1910, this architecture has already moved away from the neo-classic historicist styles but was equally restrained from the over-bearing localism (Kurto, 1998: 265). Kurto deems that the design of such buildings embodied the elemental signifiers of modernism integrating the functional requirements with construction and materialisation, as a carefully calibrated reinterpretation of a regional vernacular tradition. That argument effectively emphasises the significance of these early 20th century modernising experiments and their connection with the mainstream of architectural modernism in the 1920s which resumed after World War I. It is noteworthy, that many of the architects who practiced in Bosnia and Herzegovina were of Czech origin, which paved the way to future synergies and confluence of modernist ideas.

INTERWAR ARCHITECTURE IN SARAJEVO

As part of a newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941), which comprised various lands populated predominantly by Southern-Slavs, with a complex mix of Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman legacies, Bosnia and Herzegovina was politically and administratively undermined. The Kingdom proved to be a complicated and unstable political construct. The King's suspension of the Constitution in 1929 and an imposed new administrative-territorial division of the whole country meant that the Bosnian geographic identity was over-ruled for the first time after four hundred years. There was very little state investment in Sarajevo's infrastructure, which became a "forgotten city", almost unchanged since the Habsburgs left (Donia, 2006: 175; Cf. Spaho, 1927). For example, it was only in 1936 that the High Technical School which trained skilled technicians moved into its purpose-

built new structure in Sarajevo's Marijin Dvor, having operated from various premises since 1889 (Kebeljić, 1991: 104).

However, the first local generations of architects, engineers and technician progressively contributed to the societal, urban and rural transformation in the region. Propelled by the post-war reconstruction and industrial development, the modern movement in architecture in European centres, provided a source of inspiring ideas, new concepts and education for several generations of Bosnian architects who were eager to engage locally upon return from studies abroad. Linked through education and practice to Vienna and Prague, and to a lesser extent the Bauhaus school of architecture, their projects and activity added a new layer to modernisation of the urban environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A detailed survey of the interwar urban and architectural developments in Sarajevo by architect Predrag Milošević (1997), illuminates the work of key personalities tracking the formative influences and connections with Central European centres (Harrington, 2020: 129-132).

THE PRAGUE LINK

The students from Bosnia, with prior training typically at the High Technical School of Architecture in Sarajevo, founded in 1889 (Kebeljić, 1991: 101; Harrington, 2020: 129) could not access the already established schools of architecture in three other centres of Kingdom of Yugoslavia unless they had completed gymnasium (Milošević, 1997: 41) and therefore had to seek further study abroad. The Architecture School in Prague, České Vysoké Učeni Technické, was often preferred destination over Vienna as it proved advantageous to study through another Slavic language. Prague, the capital of another new country that emerged after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, attracted several generations of Bosnian students who could relate with the aspects of transition, accelerating urbanisation and industrialisation in a post-colonial society and gain experience working with Czech practices (Harrington, 2020: 130).

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The architectural scene in Prague in the 1920s was dynamic and generally marked by two opposing trends. The proponents of the “Cubist architecture,” under the umbrella of the Club for Old Prague, claimed that the modern constructivist architecture could not fit into the existing urban matrix of the city. In opposition, the radical architecture historian Karel Teige, informed by the work of Adolf Loos and Jan Kotera, argued that the members of the Club for Old Prague misunderstood the essence of cubism. For him, the architecture, as a form of construction, was conditioned by purpose and therefore could not tolerate “formalism”, but instead, had to be led by “rational forms” (Janković, 2007: 35-40). The extreme form of such thinking, expressed as anti-ornamentalism, provided a theoretical backing for the radical changes to the historic city cores. However, Teige later softened his views (Janković, 2007: 36-37) and grudgingly credited the Club for Old Prague members for successfully promoting the cubist architecture and its interpretation of the Prague’s baroque genius loci (Harrington, 2020).

At the same time, facilitated by the enviable economic, industrial and technological developments, Prague became the centre of Avant-guard architectural experimentation, sparked by the construction of the Weissenhof residential complex in Stuttgart (1927), which opened the practical application of new ideas for contemporary urban housing design. Same year, the exhibition of the contemporary culture of living in Brno signaled the implementation of innovative structural organization and spatial distribution, which was implemented in a model individual housing Baba district in Prague, built between 1928-1932 (Janković, 2007: 38). These developments strongly informed the pioneering work of Sarajevo’s early modernists on their home turf.

FORGING SARAJEVO MODERN(A)

Two of the first generation of Bosnian graduates from Prague School, architects Helen Baldasar and Dušan Smiljanić went on to design the Damić

House (1926) at No. 10 Radićeva ulica in Sarajevo, which is considered to be the first of a kind. Milošević (1997: 136; Odluka KONS, 2009b) asserted that this relatively modest urban infill “with façade articulated as a deep geometric relief and an underlying dynamism derived from the new sculptural ideas of cubism,” was deeply infused with the ideas of the Prague School of architecture, as well as the evident influences of the Art Deco. However, it can be argued, that by proportion and vertical distribution of space, with an elongated two-storey bay-window over a recessed entrance, the architectural vocabulary of this building also pays homage to the traditional Bosnian house design (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. *Damić House, No. 10 Radićeva ulica, Sarajevo.*

The building has a characteristic functional detail around fenestration, designed as a pronounced continuous dripstone at lintel and windowsill levels, as can be seen at Smiljanić’s Logavina School (1927) and Baldasar’s Red Cross building (1929), which could be considered a signature detail of both architects.

Both Smiljanić and Baldasar taught at the High Technical School in Sarajevo and worked in private practice, since 1924, making a pioneering impact on the generations of younger architects in Bosnia which shaped the

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modernist architectural practice. Smiljanić's design of the elegant residential block for the Waqif Jakub-Pasha, Obala Kulina Bana in Sarajevo, completed in 1935, was according to Milošević (1997: 152), inspired by Czech architect Ludvik Kysela's Bata Store in Prague (1929). The building façade features for the first time the continuous ribbon-windows, with glazed corner returns, with the recessed ground and top floor level, designed as an elongated glazed roof-light protruding from the pitched roof. The connection to the municipal gas supply was a technical novelty in housing design at the time (Fig. 7a).

Smiljanić designed several other multi-storey residential blocks in Sarajevo, applying the volumetric variations of the elongated multi-storey bay-window facade bulk as a recognizable design theme which harks back to the traditional house forms, but adapted to each specific location, as can be seen in the residential infill on the northern aspect of Mis Irbina ulica, adjacent to the crossroad with Augusta Cesarca ulica (Milošević, 1997: 137) (Fig. 7b).

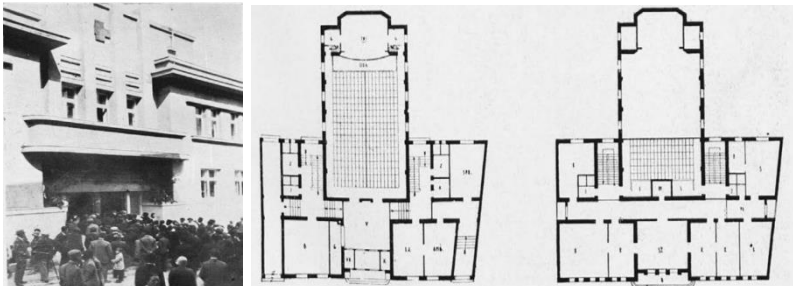


Figure 7a. *Waqif-Jakub-Pasha Apartments (1935), Obala Kulina Bana (Photo: Authors), 7b. Residential infill (the 1930s), Mis Irbina ulica (Photo: authors).*

Most of the early modernist buildings in Bosnia date from a short period between 1926 and 1941, a time of a very complicated political situation caused by the autocratic centralism of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Majstorović, 1980: 21), marked by poor investment, practical neglect of

Sarajevo (Donia, 2006: 175) and loss of identity for Bosnia. However, the first issue of the first architectural magazine *Arhitektura* (1932) from Ljubljana showcased the completed projects from the main urban centres of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, included three newly completed buildings by Sarajevo's architects Helen Baldasar, Mate Baylon and Isidor Reiss, effectively showcasing the arrival of new architecture trend to their city. The appraisals of this period in the early 1970 point to controversy provoked by the review "Architecture of Yugoslavia in XX Century" by Belgrade architect Mihajlo Mitrović for the Larousse Encyclopaedia (1971-1973; Cf. Milošević, 1991: 35) which described Sarajevo Modern period as a "veiled in Prague eclectic" (Mitrović 1971, cf. Baylon 1974: 257; Milošević 1997: 35; Harrington 2020: 125-126). This provoked a lengthy polemic ensued in the magazines *Čovjek i Prostor* (1974: 26-27) and *Arhitektura i urbanizam* (Belgrade), led by architects Mate Baylon (1974: 10-12; 1975), Branko Bunić (1971; 1974) and Dušan Smiljanić (1973), which merits a further examination outside of this paper.

One of the featured projects was the Red Cross building in Sarajevo (1929) (*Arhitektura*, 1932: 13; Odluka KONS, 2009a), designed by Baldasar with a brief for a mix-use public space comprising healthcare, administrative, social and cultural functions. The Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina occupied the first floor, with the centrally located Cinema Hall which featured films with healthcare and educational content, whilst a public bath and a public kitchen were located in the basement (Fig. 8).



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Figure 8. *The Red Cross building in Sarajevo, designed by Helen Baldasar, completed in 1929 (Arhitektura, 1931).*

The architecture of the building bears some elements of the modernist “steam–liner design,” but Milošević (1997: 170) deems that it significantly encapsulates the formal concepts of the Czech Cubism, where the structural elements of the construction, particularly the central hall, provide a basis for the overall building modelling. It was severely damaged in the 1990s war and reconstructed between 2013–2017, after which the Red Cross Society of BiH returned to its historic headquarters (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. *The Red Cross building, Kranjčevića ulica, Sarajevo; After the full reconstruction (2013-2017).*

In contrast, the renovation of the historicist-style Hotel Zagreb building by Isidor Reiss in Sarajevo’s Marijin Dvor district in 1932, shows the application of the radical modernism, in line with Teige’s beliefs and Adolf Loos’s slogan that “ornament is a crime,” whereby the architect took to rid the existing façade of its original external decoration to make it modern (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. (1) Original Hotel Zagreb building, corner Maršala Tita and Valtera Perića; (3,4) Photos made in 2007, 2019 (Photo: authors).

According to the contemporary heritage preservation standards such an intervention might be considered a vandalism, but the building was listed as a National Monument (Odluka KONS, 2008c) precisely because of this unique embedded narrative of modernist radicalism.

Reiss worked in the office of Kamil Roškot in Prague between 1927-1929 after which he opened his practice and worked in Sarajevo until 1941 before he was taken to the concentration camp Jasenovac in 1941, where, tragically, he was killed in 1945 (Milošević 1997: 294-295). Among his numerous projects, Reiss designed the first high-rise building in BiH constructed in 1938 in Sarajevo's Marijin Dvor. Commissioned by the Railway Savings Union, this residential tower is built as a reinforced concrete structure and comprises the Basement with central heating and plant room, the Ground level with nine levels above, public and a service elevator, phone installation and fully fitted public shelter with electric lighting, sanitary facilities and other ancillary services (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. *The Railway Savings Union Residences (1938), corner Augusta Brauna and Dolina ulica, designed by Isidor Reiss (Photo: authors).*

At the same time, closer to the old historic core Baščaršija, on the left bank of Miljacka River, Reuf Kadić designed and oversaw the building of the mix-use residential block Waqf Čokadža Hadži Sulejman, in today's Austria Square in Sarajevo (Kadić, 2010: 6; Odluka KONS, 2011). The building completed the southerly aspect of a complicated cross-road delineated by structures from Austro-Hungary period and older Bosnian Ottoman residential micro-rayon in the background, which is no longer legible in the urban matrix. The values of Kadić's original design are the spacious light-filled apartments, and a structure which synthesises form and function that define the modern culture of living. While inspired by the Czech functionalism, its materialisation subtly paid homage to the older housing traditions (Fig. 12).



Figure 12. *Waqif Ćokadža Hadži Sulejman, today the Austria Square in Sarajevo's Bistrik (Kadić, 2010).*

Belatedly appraised as an original contribution to European modernism of its time (Ibelings, 2011) based on the quality of design, fit-out and technical innovations, the local appraisal goes further to highlight its functionalist character and form which emerged from its structural skeleton, as a clear departure from the hybrid styles of the past (Finci, 1963: 42). However, these architectural qualities are all but obscured at present time, due to deterioration of built fabric, inadequate repairs and interventions, and overall lack of maintenance.

Two other high-quality residential projects for the Waqif Hovadža Kemaludin (Mekteb) (1940) and the Pension Fund Residences (1940) in Sarajevo, by Reuf Kadić and Muhamed Kadić show a particular attention to the internal spatial organization of the apartment units managing to maximise the location and daylight aspects.

The first one, Mekteb (Fig. 13), built on a tight location at the corner of Ferhadija and Ćemaluša ulica, provides generous apartment layouts and, at the time, novel utilities such as the telephone line and the Municipal gas supply, which powered the built-in cooker in the kitchen and the hot-water

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storage in the bathroom (Kadić, 2010: 86-88; Odluka KONS, 2012; Harrington 2020: 137-138).



Figure 13. *Waqf Hovadža Kemaludin (Mekteb) (1940) (Photo: Authors).*

The second, the Pension Fund Residences (Fig. 14), an elegantly sculpted corner block facing both Hamza Humo and Titova ulica (Štraus, 2006: 3; Janković, 2007; Kadić, 2010) was designed as a mix-use development. Its semi-cylindrical corner bulk overhangs the recessed glazed commercial ground floor level forming a terrace for the three upper levels, to accentuate the functional change from public to private use (Odluka KONS, 2008d; Harrington, 2020: 138-139). The Residences, with several types of units, were originally designed for retired couples who wished to downsize. They benefit from the east-west orientation and daylight which deeply penetrates into the functionally connected circular flow of rooms whose internal glazed partitioning and openings allow for flexible use and adaptability.



Figure 14. *The Pension Fund Residences (1941-42), architects Reuf and Muhamed Kadić (Photo: Authors).*

Another smaller-scale project for a single-family dwelling, Kopčić House (1939) in Savfet Beg Bašagić ulica, deserves mention here as an example of the successful integration of modern structure within an older residential district Kovači in Sarajevo (Kadić, 2010: 60; Janković 2007: 51-52; Harrington, 2020: 139) skilfully referencing the volumetric characteristics of the Bosnian Ottoman house. Its composition and materialisation are inspired by the Bosnian vernacular house, which is skilfully interpreted through the modernist vocabulary. This is legible in the separation of the ground and first floor levels and the barely visible structural pillars which creates a hovering effect and in ribbon fenestration and geometric recesses which create shadow and playfully contrast the white walls, balcony and windows (Fig. 15). Unlike many other buildings designed by Reuf and Muhamed Kadić (Štraus, 2006: 3) this individual dwelling is well maintained and preserves its original features.

The creative collaboration between two brothers Kadić and the outputs of their emerging practice were disrupted by the World War 2. They both continued working on various tasks assigned to them during the post-war reconstruction of Sarajevo's infrastructure and on many industrial and housing complexes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most notably, the residential scheme Džidžikovac (1946) built in Sarajevo's central hillside

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area shows the continuity of the authors' functionalist approach in design and apartment layouts, characteristic also by the resourceful engineering solutions for non-weather-dependent construction (Odluka KONS, 2008a; Harrington, 2020: 142-143).



Figure 15. *Kopčić Family House (1940), Sarajevo (Photo: aAuthors).*

The scope and impact of their work, in the interwar period and beyond, was at the heart of progressive modernising architectural trends are still understudied. Their urban interventions and architecture, including post-war projects, demonstrate the vitality of the finest principles of early Modernism adapted to the local context, thus representing the continuity of search for the expression of identity and place-making in the Bosnian context (Harrington, 2020: 144).

CONCLUSION

The Commission: The task of protecting older architectural heritage while at the same time enabling a balanced and sustainable new developments in Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia is enormous, despite progress made in the thirty years after the 1990s war. The Commission to Preserve National

Monuments has compiled a significant inventory of protected structures and sites with some success in generating external funding and support for rehabilitation of specific structures. Its worthy efforts on systemising the existing information from literature and archives need to be matched with professional methods and accuracy of surveying and recording the architectural heritage; and proactive in engagement with urban development plans in each respective local authority. It is unclear how the general digitalisation trends are enabling the collaboration and information update, and what are the plans to consolidate the records and make them more publicly accessible. There are many interested and engaged professionals within academia and civil society, whose campaigns and targeted actions have prompted or helped the Commission to complete its remit, as for example the action for the inclusion of the Crni Vrh urban settlement on the list of national monuments. The question remains, how will the monuments be protected in reality and what time and resources will that require; and, what other necessary platforms need to be established for better knowledge exchange and management.

Heritage and planning: The Commission's work, and the work of other responsible institutions at entity, cantonal and municipal levels would be more effective if there is a longer term clear structure and coordination of responsibilities and resources. That work is hindered by systemic gaps and disconnects from the planning and development programmes and overall lack of strategic planning, without which it is difficult to adequately prioritise and resource. It would be beneficial to better channel and utilise the good will of donors, professionals and civic society, by creating knowledge exchange platforms to inform future programs and actions.

Contextual modernism and the building control: The review of historic buildings and evolution of their designs shows a fragile but persistent tendencies to maintain and express the values, scale, elements and forms of the local heritage, which includes not only vernacular, but also public,

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commercial and industrial architecture. What is the relevance of connecting the narratives of the Bosnian Style/Bosanski slog and the early Modern(a) in focus here? Firstly, because it tracks the appearance of respectful attitudes to heritage in encounter with the new-built and new construction technology, similar to today's challenges in many places in Europe, where the urge to build has to be balanced with the existence of many historic structures and ensembles. In other words, there has to be less (or more controlled) new building and less demolition, and the new has to be integrated with the old, in a sustainable way. Secondly, the historic review referencing the original field surveys, study trips and projects inspired by the Bosnian vernacular, shows the evolution of thought and intellectual maturing of the profession, which is applicable in any location and is particularly relevant when the pressure of large-scale investment threatens to over-rule the considerations for basic quality principles, generated by the architectural modernism. The phenomenon of the Bosnian Style represents also a missing link for the later generations of regional architects who aspired to affirm the proto-modern qualities of the Bosnian Ottoman architecture and urban forms thus destabilising the East-West modernist divide. The ambition, concepts and architectural quality of the number of interwar spatial concepts match the concurrent trends and achievements of the early Modern movement in the rest of Europe.

Forms of engagement: A solid and well-documented inventory in making, located in the Commission to Preserve National Monuments provides a baseline reference which needs to be supported and exported to the maps and local area plans, as a body of accomplished study and a resource which will be a holistic pretext and background for future developments. To achieve such goal, there has to be a role and place of professions and civic society to supplement the resource and to fill the consensus-making gaps between the institutions, which can be facilitated by the digital and information technology, within a well-defined procedural platform.

Reminiscent of the professional activism of the past, some recent examples, such as the inclusion of the urban ensemble Crni Vrh on the list of national monuments, upon successful campaign mounted by the civic society and profession, shows the way. The Commission's work could be enhanced by the stronger links with academia, which in turn would inform the direction and evolution of research within architectural education in five schools of architecture in the country, enriching the Commission's outreach not only to external donors but also with the domestic external expertise.

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