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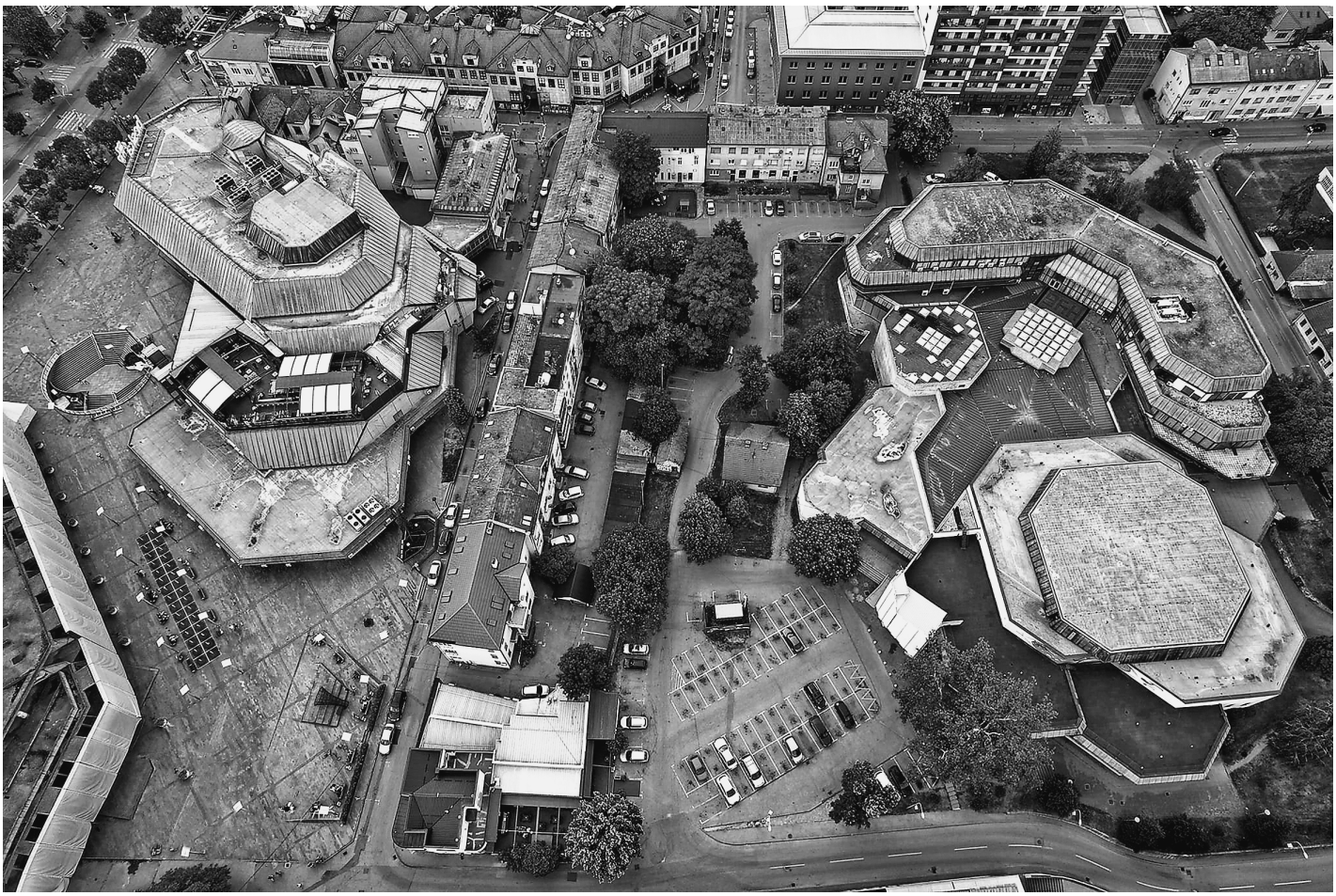

Fig. 1 Banja Luka city centre, 2022. "Boska" Department Store is on the left, and The Worker's Solidarity House is on the right. The unfinished extension of the "Palace" Hotel in the lower left corner of the photograph was recently demolished.

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Towards a New Synthesis of Architecture and City

Banja Luka's (Mega)structures from the 1970s

Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
megaform
synthesis
total space
urban traces

The "Boska" Department Store is a large building at the historical core of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Its distinctive volume dominates the main city square, and it serves as one of the city symbols. It was built in 1978 as one of the large department stores that characterised Yugoslav cities. However, "Boska" and the less famous neighbouring The Worker's Solidarity House are fragments of an extensive revitalisation project of the city centre and a new imagined megaform. This paper will portray the winning competition design project *"Grad"* ("City") from 1973 by a team of eminent Yugoslav architects who envisioned a new urban landscape in Banja Luka's centre that never materialised. The paper will interpret its design principles in the context of the period's local and international architectural culture that pursued the new spatial synthesis of fixed and transient space, architecture and the city. Qualitative research is based on analysing the design project *"Grad",* relevant journal articles from the period, and a recent interview with one of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

In the historical centre of Banja Luka, the second largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is the "Boska" Department Store. With its massive size and location on the central city square "Krajina," the building is both a cultural symbol and an urban landmark (Fig. 2). However, "Boska" is the 'face' of a much larger urban complex of late modernism, which also includes two significant but less studied and presented buildings – a composite of the new and 'old' "Palas" Hotel designed by architect Dionis Sunko in 1933, and the cultural centre called The Worker's Solidarity House (Fig. 1). This urban ensemble resulted from the Yugoslav competition for the urban design of the city's central area, known as Banja Luka's "Center I" competition, in 1972. The authors of the first-prized project under the code name *"Grad"* ("City") were architects Jasna Nosso, Ljerka Lulić, and Velimir Neidhardt from the "Medveščak" Architectural Bureau from Zagreb. Only the "Boska", which opened in December 1978 and included a cinema hall and a shopping arcade on the underground level, represent the realisation of the award-winning project to a large extent. The authors received the "Viktor Kovačić" award for this realisation in 1979 – a measure of architectural excellence in Croatia, one of Yugoslavia's constituent republics at the time. The Worker's Solidarity House was reprogrammed and transformed inside during construction. It opened in 1982, while the "Palas" Hotel extension remained incomplete and inhabitable until recent demolition.

Contrary to the appearance of these three buildings as spatially and functionally separate and aesthetically significantly different from the context, the *"Grad"* project is a spatially conceived whole. The project considers urban space a product of various relations (between the historic and the new, the inside and the outside, the architecture and the topography) rather than a formal composition of separate volumes. As part of the structuralist architectural culture, the *"Grad"* design endorses relations and time, rather than objects, in search of a new humanism on a large scale. It is one of the visions of urban structures that could grow, adapt, and embrace the living city.

This paper presents the fundamental features of the *"Grad"* project from 1973 and its imagined architecture and the city synthesis – the urban form different from the realised and fragmented one. The city centre's recognised design principles are interpreted in the context of the critical theoretical determinants of change and continuity relevant at the time, with the aim of better understanding this large-scale project and its avant-garde position in the local, Yugoslav, and international architectural culture. The project analysis is based on the competition design drawings and architectural documentation related to constructing the "Boska" Department Store. The research through architectural drawings is complemented by an interview with one of the authors and an examination of pertinent articles from Yugoslav architectural periodicals published in the 1960s and 1970s.

The paper contributes to the history of late modern architecture in Yugoslavia and Bos-

1 The city's urban area had about 42,000 inhabitants after the war and about 98,000 in 1971, with the most significant increase between 1960 and 1970 (Paštar et al., 1975).

2 Besides 15 human lives lost, the earthquake destroyed and damaged over 36,000 apartments and over 400 buildings for other purposes (Karabegović, 1974).

3 In 1975, the first urban plan was adopted, after several drafts and programs since 1952, as a planning synthesis and conclusion of over 20 years of consideration of city integration.

4 Thirty-three projects were submitted. The first prize was not awarded, and the second prize was shared equally between Project "27" (authors Jurij Kobe, Matjaž Garzarolli) and Project "13" (authors: Rafail Vlcevski, Dimče Vanov; Novaković, 1971: 86-91).

5 The first prize-winning projects from both competitions were exhibited at the Ninth Zagreb Salon in 1974, a traditional Croatian manifestation of fine arts (*** 1974: 43).

nia and Herzegovina, focusing on the design of large-scale projects and their relation to the urban context. The research results, in the form of a description and interpretation of the spatial characteristics of Banja Luka's city landmark and its influence on the structure and everyday life of the city core, could contribute to the definition of the values and conservation principles of this unlisted modern heritage.

Banja Luka: Towards the Synthesis of Urban Fragments

After the Second World War, Banja Luka was a small town on the Yugoslav periphery that would enter the process of more intense urbanisation after the 1960s.[1] With the establishment of the city's Urban Planning Institute in 1961, a systematic planning activity began, which resulted in the draft of the general urban plan in 1968. However, a turning point in city life came with the devastating earthquake in 1969, significantly changing its physical condition and returning the planning process to the beginning.[2] The specificity of the moment and the need for an immediate reaction would open a design viewpoint on the urban space that needed a new synthesis after the earthquake. The urban design perspective brought in discourses about space not inherent in urban planning and put forward the various scales of space contemplation. Moreover, placing the city in the broader Yugoslav context through architectural competitions and professional assistance created a unique moment for the peripheral city and its architecture.

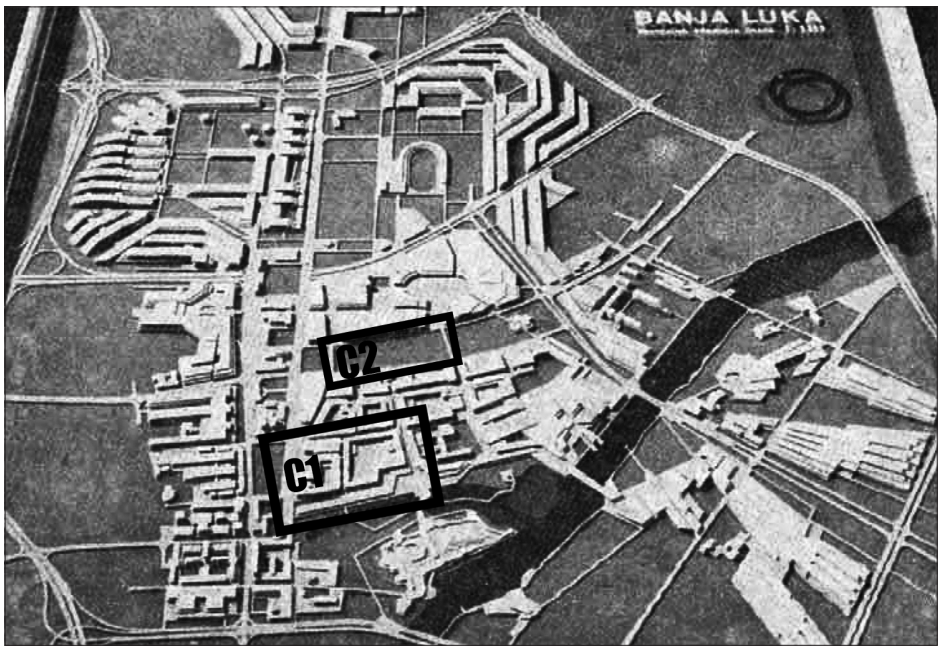
The city administration announced the Yugoslav competition for the urban design of Banja Luka's larger central area in 1971. Among others, eminent architects Živorad Janković, Jahiel Finci, Neven Kovačević, Stanko Mandić, Božidar Milić, and Vladimir Dobrović took part in the jury made of a great number of members (*** 1971: 35). The competition program was aligned with the renewed program for the general urban plan.[3] At the time, the city was characterised by low building density, longitudinal development along the main street (then Maršala Tita Street), and the juxtaposition of urban patterns from different historical periods. The nine awarded projects had varied approaches to city design.[4] Nevertheless, contrary to modernist open compositions, the first three projects demonstrate a tendency towards elongated structures in which architecture framed the primary directions of movement through the city. The third prize-winning design by the Zagreb architects Ivan Čižmek, Ivo Domjen and Dinko Milas stands out for its extravagant form, in which

Fig. 2 "Boska" Department Store on the 1980s postcard, along with the "Čajavec" office skyscraper from the 1960s.

the city centre is almost entirely a new large-scale fabric, a layered megastructure supported by an exaggeratedly developed road infrastructure (Fig. 3). What was realised from these awarded projects is a topic for a separate study.

The theme of the city centre was revisited soon in smaller-scale architectural competitions. At the end of 1972, two competitions were announced for two vital places in the historic core, directly connected by the pedestrian street (Gospodska Street) – "Centre I" and "Centre II".[5] The competition area of

Fig. 3 The third prize-winning design by the Zagreb architects Ivan Čižmek, Ivo Domjen and Dinko Milas, photography of model, 1971. Black marks added by the research authors: C1 – "Center I" competition area, C2 – "Center II" competition area.



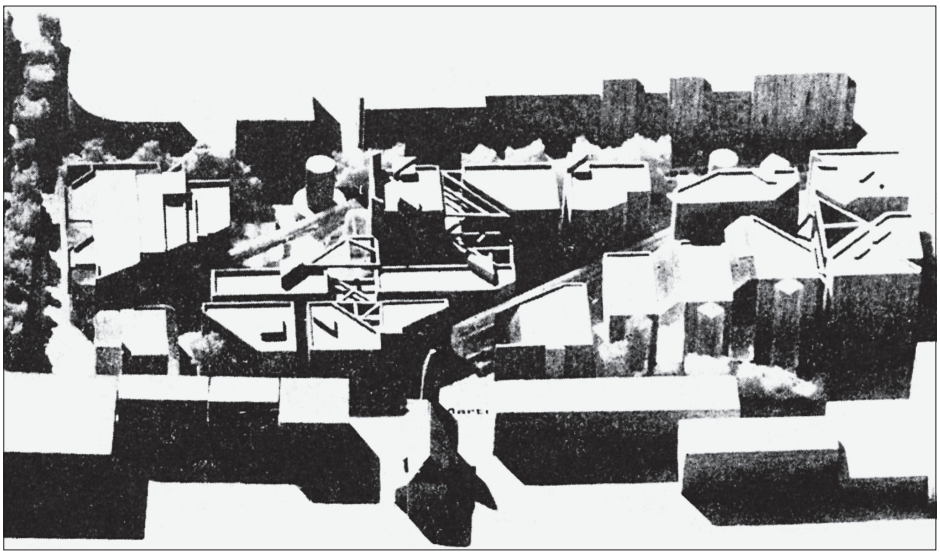


Fig. 4 The first prize-winning project by Zagreb architects Edvin Šmit and Vladimir Šobat for the "Centre II" competition, photography of model, 1973

the "Centre II" is smaller, with solid boundaries, and represents the continuation of the monumental ensemble from the 1930s – the province's seat buildings from the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The new structure needed to accommodate administrative, commercial and cultural activities. The first prize-winning project by Zagreb architects Edvin Šmit and Vladimir Šobat is an extensive form with a partially visible spatial grid, almost filling the competition area, and diagonally cut by pedestrian circulation paths (Fig. 4). The project is late modernist in concept and overall aesthetics but, at the same time, anticipates the postmodern visual expression of the next decade, mainly by solid street fronts and formal geometric application in design. The project was never built.

The competition "Centre I" focuses on a delicate central area where a department store, cultural venue, and Hotel "Palas" extension need to be integrated. The urban context is highly open, damaged by the earthquake, and imbued with the heterogeneous architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries, often in a loose spatial connection. At the same time, the competition's spatial scope adjoins the strong urban axis on the east and the area of the medieval fortress "Kastel" on the south. A particular challenge in the integration of the new fabric was posed by the voids in the place of buildings that were damaged by the earthquake and demolished – the Realgymnasium building from the 19th century, which stood at the edge of the competition area towards "Kastel", and the "Titanic" residential building designed by Ibrahim Salihagić in 1953 at its centre. According to the jury's decision, the *"Grad"* project offered the best answer.[6]

Urban Traces: Towards a Synthesis of Space and Time

Even after a cursory look at *"Grad"*, the first prize-winning project, it is clear that its theoretical roots and understanding should be sought in late modernist ideas that reject functionalism and monumentality, therefore, in the captivating 1960-70 period. The decade is characterised by the crisis of comprehensive urban planning and functionalism ideology, heavily criticised by social researchers and the new generation of architects, most notably Team 10 members, as unadapted to social heterogeneity and dynamic societal changes.

Architecture was dislocated from its urban milieu, and the question of architectural approach to larger spatial scale came to focus. Architect Fumihiko Maki, in his 1964 seminal book *Investigations in Collective Form*, called for rethinking the design of an urban spatial whole through single buildings. Architecture and urban design should strive to create a coherent urban unit in which the relationship between articulated smaller spatial units and the relationship to the form of the city is visually and functionally comprehensible (Maki, 1964). Yugoslav art historian Grgo Gamulin would call it the problem of integration in structure (Gamulin, 1969).

Nevertheless, considering the structural problem of space also addresses the dimension of time as a crucial oversight of high modernism. The architectural culture started questioning the compositional approach to design – fixed geometrical arrangements of building masses whose features are supposed to remain unchanged over time – and explored principles and patterns that enable flexibility, adaptability, and growth. However, although cities should change following social and economic dictates, they must not be 'temporary' in the worst visual sense (Maki, 1964: 4). This means that the other side of the space-time relationship should be observed – not only the capacity of space for change but also its capacity for duration or continuity. Strategies of change and continuity in the design of the urban segment were important preoccupations of late modernist architects and Team 10 members.

These strategies were often derived from tentative investigations of existing cities and villages' spatial and social structures that were considered knowledge bases. Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods studied the dwellings in Chad and Casablanca, Alison and Peter Smithson investigated the old city of Kuwait and the working-class London neighbourhoods, and Giancarlo De Carlo historical tissue of Italian cities (Avermaete, 2006). Fumihiko Maki, affiliated with the Jap-

anese Metabolist group and present at several Team 10 meetings, defined his "group form" concept from investigations of Japanese traditional villages. The Candilis-Josic-Woods partnership was explicitly interested in recognising the perennial structuring elements in the urban fabric's development throughout time. Moreover, this interest did not come from the belief that the city must be a stable entity but rather from the conviction that perennial urban elements encompass the capacity to structure change and growth (Avermaete, 2003: 246).

Recognition of the perennial structuring elements in existing cities led the partnership and other architects associated with Team 10 to establish a design approach based on the relationship between long-term and short-term elements as fundamental to the flexibility and continuity of the city. The relation between the *longue durée* of the European city and the new time rhythms of mobility, mass distribution and mass consumption was one of the main questions for post-war urban planning (Avermaete, 2003: 247). The approach is articulated in a general spatial strategy of the time that integrates two opposite and complementary considerations – the formalisation of fixed primary structure and the contingency of transient elements that can be replaced and appropriated. The concept of megastructures – an extensive architectural framework or 'skeleton' that accommodates different urban functions and activities – embodied this duality. The long-term structure consisted of infrastructural, transport and exploitation systems, whereby spatial elements of smaller scale and shorter lifespan were 'connected' to the primary body. If the need arises, these elements are replaceable and subject to transformation and appropriation (Maki, 1964).

However, certain architectural concepts included intangible elements of urban space as permanent elements of interest – existing spatial practices. Candilis-Josic-Wood called these non-physical elements urban *tracé,* which primarily implied the dominant movement routes through the city. Team 10 members considered mobility a critical subject of reflection and creation of space – a part of everyday life and its rhythm, part of social associations, and connections of spatial scales (Smithson, 1963). Woods, who conceptually elaborated the working methods and designs of the partnership in articles such as "Stem" (1960) and "Web" (1962)[7], thought about the possibility of a linear *tracé* operational as a conceptual instrument of urban planning. Instead of designing by volume of buildings, Woods proposes *a stem* – a spatial manifestation of movement, articulated into a pattern of mobility, a kind of reinterpretation of the street in urban design, which enables changes and growth.

In conclusion, the post-war generation of architects embraced the fragment approach against the tendencies that arose from the CIAM culture before the Second World War, according to which modernity requires a rupture with the historical city (Avermaete, 2003). Peter Smithson described the general line of this thinking: "Change made by one generation to the general scene in terms of building and engineering works is relatively small, and no matter how large the area of development may be, it cannot stand alone, and its effectiveness must also be measured in its interactions with what exists and with what it calls into being, both socially and plastically… Buildings should be thought of from the beginning as fragments; containing within themselves a capacity to act with other buildings; be themselves links in systems of access and servicing." (Smithson, 1966: 21, cited in: Avermaete, 2003: 247). This urban fragment approach considers the urban realm as a whole – encompassing both the historical and the new. Therefore, the positioning and insertion of a new is the sensitive architectural task that modifies the existing urban realm. Traces of use, association, and movement are critical elements of synthesis.

With a time distance of twenty years to the structuralist decade of the seventies, Kenneth Frampton described *the megaform* as a design concept for considering urban continuity used by late modernism architects. Frampton notes Japp Bakema's urban plan for Tel Aviv (1963) and the plan for Rotterdam (1965) as specific examples of the megaform. The concept focuses on the spatial dimension of synthesis, which results in an urban form in which one can no longer discriminate between the building and the landscape. "Megaform is an element which, due to its size, content, and direction, has the capacity to inflect the surrounding landscape and give it particular orientation and identity (Frampton, 2021: 21)." These are large-scale forms that expand more horizontally than vertically; complex forms, articulated spatially, not with mechanical aids; forms of strong topographic expression that changes the existing landscape; forms that are not freestanding, but represents topographic continuity; forms

6 The competition had two cycles. The second cycle was the presentation of four selected projects in front of the jury (Neidhardt, 2013), which included architects Feđa Košir and Ahmed Đuvic (*** 1972: 33). In the archives of the city institutions, there is no preserved data on other competition projects.

7 Articles were published in *Architectural Design* (1960) and *Le Carré Bleu* (1962).

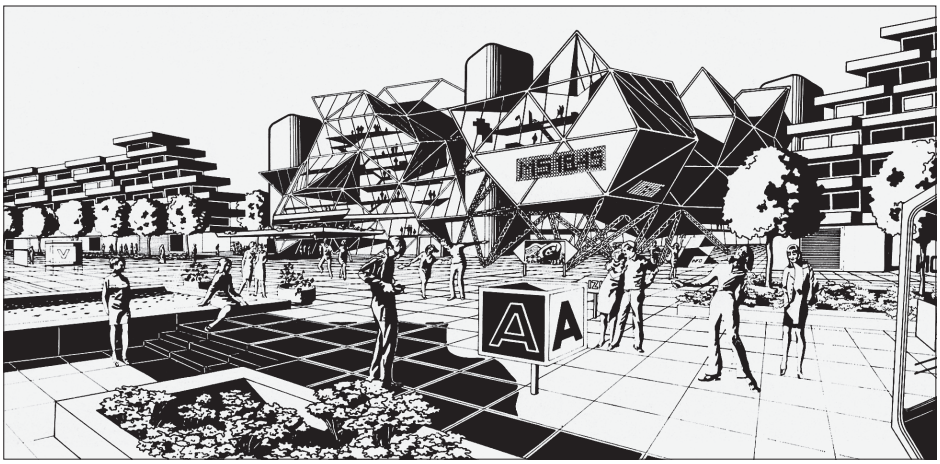


Fig. 5 The first prize-winning competition project for Memorial Youth Center *"Boro i Ramiz"* in Priština, 1970

that dense the urban fabric (Frampton, 2021: 17). Frampton distances the concept of the synthesis of architecture and the city from spatial practices and immaterial elements of duration, observing the synthesis through the visual and spatial continuity of landscape and topography. In this way, the author anticipates a more abstract environmental view of the urban space that will rise in the coming decades.

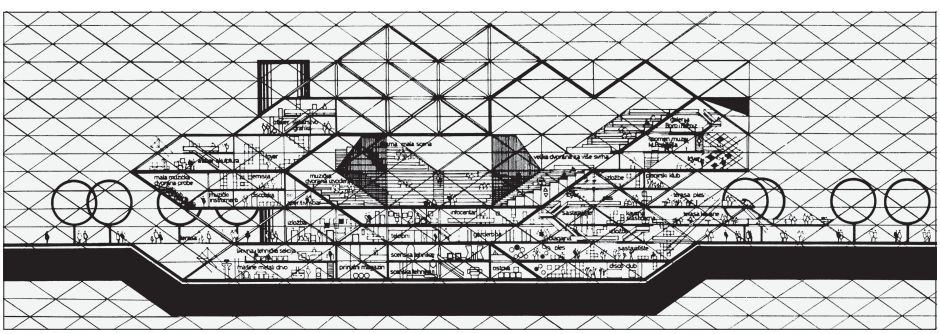
"Grad": The Design Principles

The three-member author team could confidently approach the competition project *"Grad"* at the end of 1972 Jasna Nosso and Ljerka Lulić, in co-authorship with Dinko Zlatarić, won first prize at the Yugoslav competition for the project of the Memorial Youth Centre *"Boro i Ramiz"* ("Boro and Ramiz") in Priština in 1970. The impressive three-dimensional illustration of the design was published on the front page of the Yugoslav magazine *Arhitektura* in the same year (Fig. 5). Velimir Neidhardt received the purchase prize at the Yugoslav competition for the New Zagreb Centre in 1971, together with Lujo Schwerer and Branimir Velnić (Premerl, 1990: 11). A large-scale development project of modular character, the project for New Zagreb contains colossal architectural units anchored to the infrastructure network. Neidhardt expressed a tendency towards thinking and designing a large spatial scale – "cityscape architecture" through his oeuvre (Vukić, 2001: 9) and competition projects from the beginning of the seventies, especially the Shopping Center in Skopje (1970) and the New Zagreb Center (1971), have a distinctly structuralist appearance – generic repetition of spatial modules, anchored to circulation tubes and joints.

The Memorial Youth Centre *"Boro i Ramiz"* was an undoubted echo of the epoch, namely the "Plug-In City" project by the London Archigram Group, which hit the magazines in 1964[8] and radically altered the style and tone of megastructuralism for the rest of the decade (Bahnam, 2020: 82). Architect Krešimir Rogina vividly described the global tendencies of the period: "...[T]he superiority of the idea of transience and consumption over the category of eternity, and adaptability and changeability over the permanence of form – they inaugurate the process of ephemerisation of the monumental, and this is the basic feature of the architecture of that time" (Rogina, 1989: 21). His brief review of the Yugoslav contribution to the ephemerisation of the monumental from 1989 especially highlights the first prize project Memorial Youth Center *"Boro i Ramiz"* in Priština from 1970, designed by the two *"Grad"* project authors.

The jury unequivocally recognized the change capacities of the megastructure: the fluidity of the space vertically and horizontally (visual and circulation connection); the universality of space in addition to many specific purposes; the convertibility of space using mobile partitions; the expansiveness of space towards the outside and the possibility of phased extensions. (*** 1970: 55; Fig. 6). According to the authors' description of the project, the basic premise of the building is the possibility of accepting and even stimulating the unplanned, unexpected and new. Architecture is a game of balance between programs and new possibilities. "The volume of the building is simultaneously 'centrifugal'

Fig. 6. The first prize-winning competition project for the Memorial Youth Center *"Boro i Ramiz"* in Priština, 1970. The section depicts the fluidity of space, the central convertible amphitheatre as the project's core, and the Archigram's visual vibe.



8 The article "Wonderful Archigram" was published in *Čovjek i Prostor* in 1965 as a translation of an article from the famous architectural journal *Aujourd' hui*, no. 50 (*** 1965).

9 The closed architectural competition was organised in 1974. As a result, the more sober but high-quality design by architects Živorad Jankovic, Halid Muhasilović and Sretko Ešpek was built during 1976-82.

The authors, especially Janković, were already established in the large-scale sports and cultural architecture built in the different parts of the former federation territory.

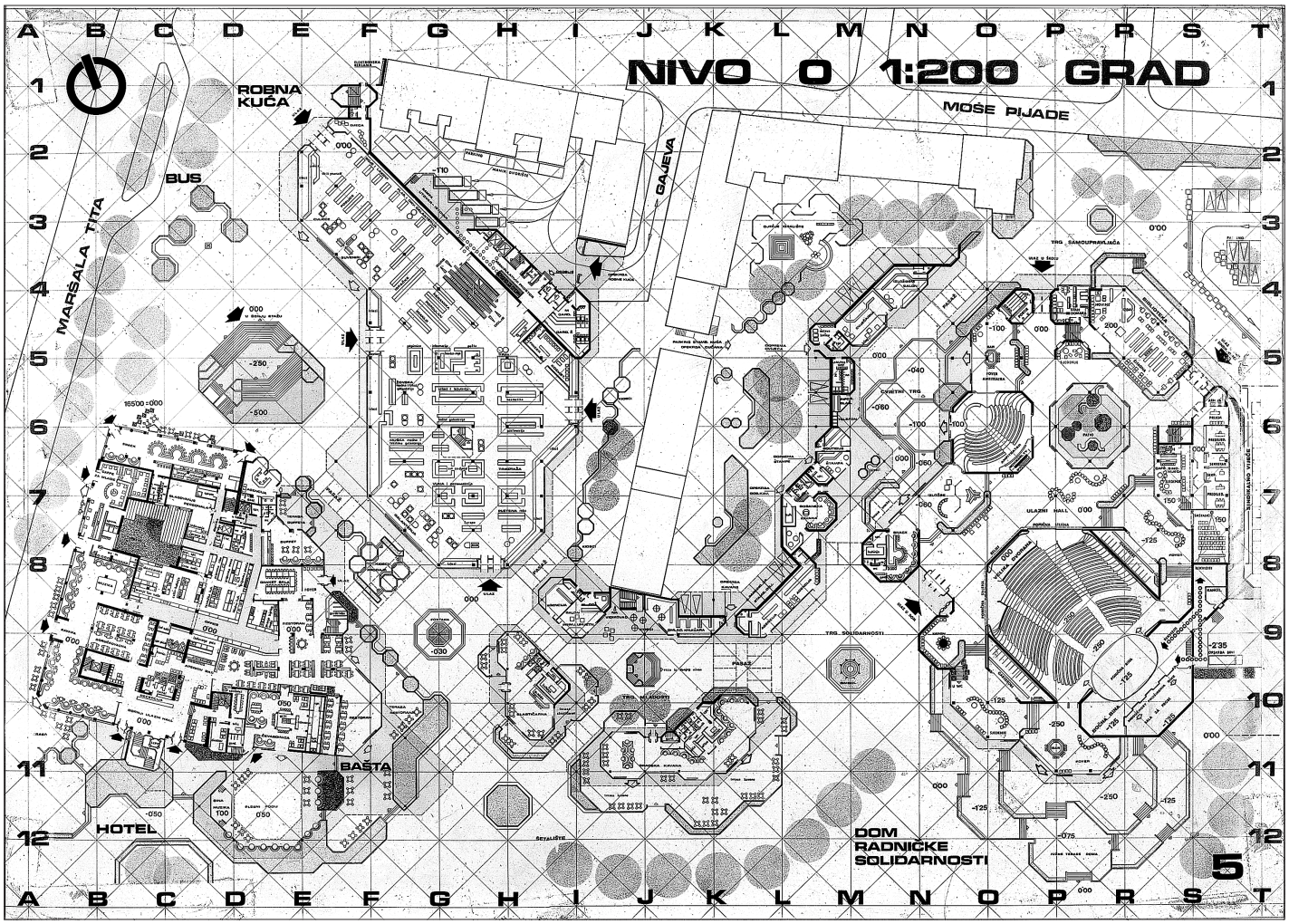


Fig. 7 *"Grad"* competition project, ground-level drawing, 1973

and 'centripetal', complete and multifaceted, and a result of internal events. However, its plastic definition, plastic character, is related to those works of contemporary art that we call 'open', not only because it offers a large and almost incomprehensible number of possible images but also because any possible change in the structure of the object would manifest itself with a new plastic effect." (*** 1970: 56). The design was never executed.[9]

When the "Centar I" competition was announced, Nosso, Lulić and Neidhardt were part of the same architectural office in Zagreb and participated as an author group (for the only time). An authentic *"Grad"* project resulted from different architects' sensibilities, experiences, and new place, but also a common structuralist worldview. In the project, they applied several primary design principles – structuring the space through a regular grid, the horizontal layering of the form, and the independence of the envelope concerning the construction system.

• **The expansive grid** – In the graphic presentations of the *"Grad"* design, a regular orthogonal grid of 15×15 m is visually dominant, extending approximately in the north-south direction. It is the essential device of geometric and spatial order. The primary grid, marked in both directions, is supplemented by a secondary orthogonal grid rotated by 45 degrees. The two grids do not grow into uniform modules that multiply (as in the Shopping Center in Skopje) or grow into a three-dimensional constructive grid (as in the case of the Memorial Youth Center in Priština). The grid has several other roles in design.

A grid is a two-dimensional substrate from which a concrete skeletal structural system grows at the intersection points of the lines. It is also a geometric scheme that directs the envelope lines of large and small volumes. The primary volumes are generated from the primary grid. The secondary grid serves for their additional shaping – cutting corners (Fig. 7). Simultaneously, the grid is an instru-

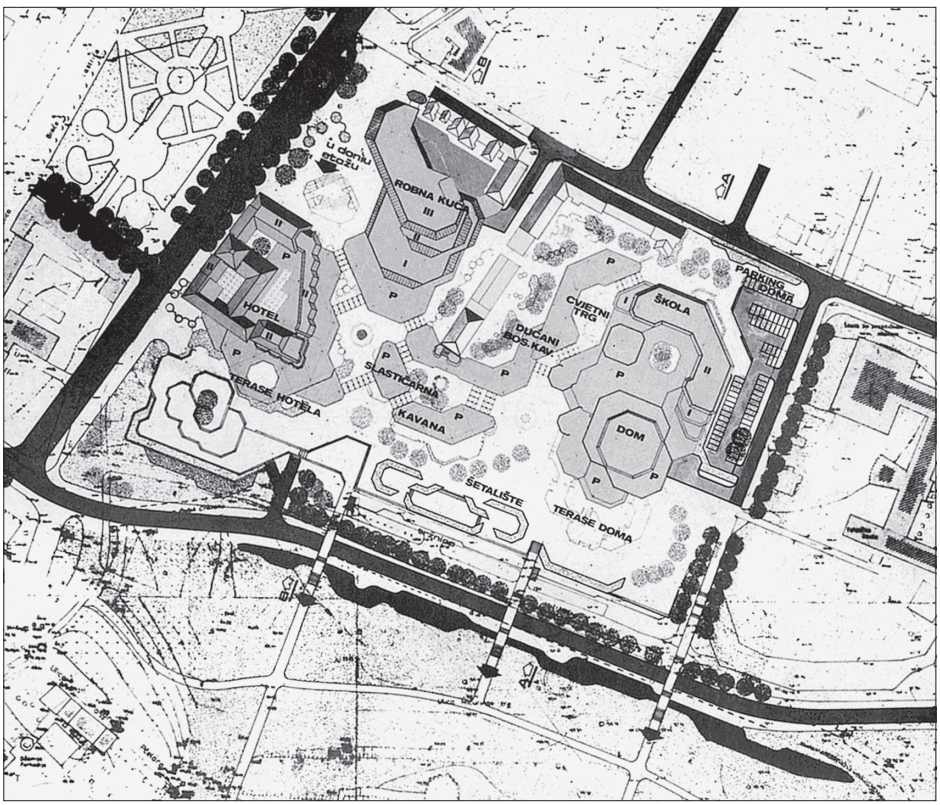


Fig. 8 *"Grad"* competition project, part of the situation drawing, 1973. The ramparts of the "Kastel" fortress are visible in the lower part of the drawing.

ment for integrating existing fabric and new structures. In the graphic presentation of the site, the buildings from the first half of the 20th century are marked as a reference context, along with "Kastel" and the bazaar around the "Ferhradija" mosque towards the south, all the way to the Vrbas River (Fig. 8). The orientation of the primary grid is set concerning this historical context, that is the medieval fortress.

The essential function of the secondary grid is structuring the open space. It supports the dominant diagonal directions of previously existing pedestrian movement through the external and internal space of the complex and influences the shaping of the primary volumes. These routes develop into wide, fluid spaces filled with different urban activities, covered enclaves, passages, and squares of different characters permeated with greenery. Pedestrian flows merge at the three pedestrian crossings over the busy city road in the southern part of the complex, connecting the new centre's plateau with the 6 m lower plateau of the "Kastel" fortress.

• **The layered form** – *"Grad"* is a complex form assembled through a horizontal layering of the built structure and the simultaneous shaping of built and open space. Each floor is a visually separate form derived from the grid, smaller in size at each higher level, and perceptible and geometrically individualised in the overall form of the complex. The ground floor level is a continuous space configured with transparent or solid screens that enclose larger or smaller spaces and direct movement and views. Smaller indoor spaces intended for shops, restaurants and cafes give an impression of scaled-down large volumes. They are dispersed within the grid and connected by canopies. Pedestrians are, therefore, provided with a network of covered paths between buildings, and the entire structure gives an impression of one unified tissue (Fig. 8).

The authors use topography in many ways. The new structure does not exceed the height of the surrounding buildings and has four floors above ground. The areas intended for automobile traffic are reduced to the delivery branches of the streets from the north and do not cross the complex. However, a two-story technical and parking space is planned under the main plateau, accessed from the south lower level. The principle of vertical growth is layered and terraced, with open views towards the historical core on the south. This panoramic manner enables exceptional orientation towards the wider environment, a rare case in densely built urban centres. The height difference between the plateaus is overcome gradually with the unobtrusive integration of footpaths, stairs and ramps into the green belt around "Kastel" and the Vrbas River (Fig. 9).

• **The floating envelope** – The complex is defined structurally by horizontal concrete slabs supported by concrete columns placed at the intersection of the secondary grid's lines (with a span of 10.6 m) and, in the case of underground floors, at the intersection of the secondary grid's diagonals (with a span of 7.5 m). A free plan develops between concrete elements and specific rooms such as theatre and cinema auditoriums. "Floating envelope" (Neidhardt, 2013), a facade surface made of sheet steel with bearing construction of its own, is designed three-dimensionally and displays the horizontal layering of inner space. In the second phase of the competition, the project received a modified envelope solution because the original design was considered technically demanding. The new "Boska" facade combines stripes of stucco concrete in a warm earth colour, glass and dark-brown sheet metal on the roof levels.[10]

10 Architect Lujo Schwerer from *Medveščak Architectural Bureau* from Zagreb was the consultant for implementing the "Boska" Department Store project. The construction was built according to the elaboration of civil engineer M. Mišic and architect P. Želalić from the "Prednapregnuti beton" office from Belgrade. The construction works were carried out by the company "Kozara" from Banja Luka (*** 1982).

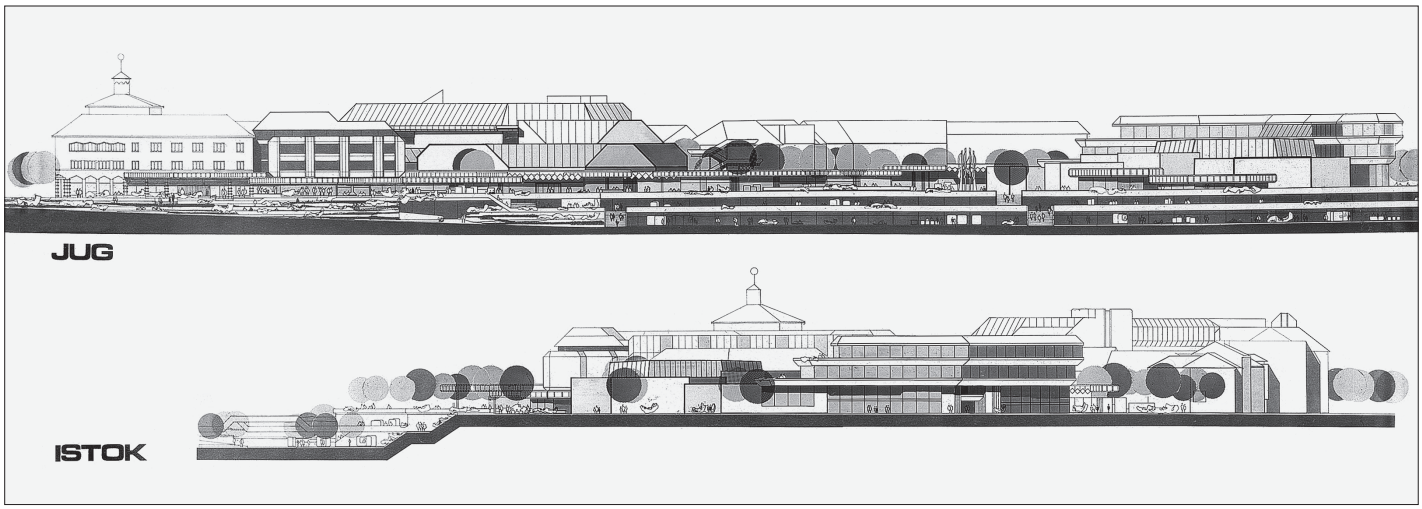


Fig. 9 *"Grad"* competition project, south and east elevation, 1973

The envelope's contour appears fluid, without long straight surfaces and rigid boundaries. Non-porous and solid borders are set exclusively toward the existing buildings, thus creating more intimate residential community spaces or blocking the view toward the service areas. The continuous glass surfaces, their 'bellied' penetrations into external space, and the unique floor and paving treatment (realised in "Boska") contribute to the visual unity of the external and internal space on the ground floor level. Moreover, focus is needed to distinguish the spatial boundary between outside and inside on the ground floor plan drawing. Open and closed spaces alternate smoothly around the branched spine of pedestrian paths, so the entrances to the interior space are not architecturally prominent. The culmination of the experience is an open view of "Kastel" and a gentle descent into its green surroundings.

Total Space: The Approach to the Synthesis of Architecture and City

The *"Grad"* project is a paradigmatic large-scale, urban, and multi-functional design of late modernism. Its architecture goes beyond the compositional form of free-standing buildings, as appears today in its incompleteness. It grows from the relational design of opposing categories of the new and the historic, the large and the small, the interior and the exterior.

A design strategy that gives the new space the capacity for change is expressed through organic abstract design analogous to biological growth patterns. This design emerges dominantly from the tight relation between the regular grid and the form. A geometric grid as a means of spatial order can be understood as an essential pattern of tissue expansion into the near environment. The design already demonstrated how to integrate the existing buildings into a new organism appropriately. Connections with existing buildings are made physical, as in the case of residential slabs, or latent, as in the case of "Kastel".

The capacity for change also manifests through the indetermination strategy – accommodation of changes through loose physical determination of space organisation. The interiors can be subdivided according to future demands unrelated to the expression of the outward envelope. They can also accommodate new smaller units arranged in the free space according to needs. In the exterior, pedestrian paths are structured wide as general directions of movement through urban tissue, allowing the pallet of choice and appropriation in walking and experiencing the urban.

The continuity of the urban space by inserting a new structure was conceived through the recognition and support of the dominant existing traces of pedestrian movement through the city centre. Thus, the design supports spatial practices as elements of continuity in space. However, the new structure was also created respecting the spatial perennial elements. The orientation and horizontal shaping of the form were means of the visual and physical connections with the historical structures in the immediate context. The new structure is, therefore, a link in systems of movement, access and servicing, but also the experience of city endurance.

Both change and continuity principles are contained in the theoretical concept that Velimir Neidhardt calls *total space*. The concept is described as a connection of the interior of the building into a more extensive urban circulation system, with the possibility of new

FIG. 10 *"GRAD"* COMPETITION PROJECT, PHOTOGRAPHY OF MODEL, 1973

articulations as desired by users (Vukić, 2001: 34). According to Neidhardt's words, total space is "a creative intervention on the totality of the living environment of modern man (environmental design), whereby the total has all, seemingly contradictory, democratic connotations in the sense of a broad possibility of choice, rather than the standardisation of the living environment." (Žunić, 2018: 226-235). Therefore, the concept argues that new urban tissue needs to be inserted in the totality of existing city form and life but also encompasses the capacity of space for change and choice.

The concept largely corresponds to the total space concept defined by famous structuralist Jaap Bakema in the 1960s. In his view, architectural design had to help make people aware of the larger environment to which they belong and in which they operate. Architecture is not independent of urbanism and the social sphere. Therefore, the point of departure is interactive networks rather than discrete objects (Heuvel, 2016: 5). At the time, this relational and ecological understanding of architecture and urban planning meant their radical redefinition sensed in a technological and epistemological, but most of all cultural terms (Nieuwe Instituut, n.d.).

While the aspiration towards total space could be read in the design, *"Grad"* can be described more precisely through Frempton's theoretical concept of megaform as a specific manifestation of urban space's spatial continuity and relation to existing tissue. The essential characteristics of the *"Grad"* project are the large-scale and complex form that expands horizontally and a form of strong topographic expression that changes the existing landscape and represents topographic continuity. It is a form that makes the urban fabric dense (Fig. 10).

Unfortunately, the concepts of total space and megaform in the *"Grad"* design are lost in the fragmentary realisation of the project. The "Boska" Department Store, The Worker's Solidarity House, and the "Palas" hotel are three distinct buildings visually and functionally separated by open space and historical structures. The renewed elongated Market building obscures the view and cuts the landscape connection between the *"Grad"* plateau and "Kastel". The qualities of relational design in individual buildings have deteriorated with urban and architectural interventions in the last decades.

CONCLUSION

The "City" *("Grad")* project was conceived as an urban whole integrated into city life. It was never fully built and, in its incompleteness, was reduced to a static composition of buildings instead of a dynamic total space. However, the competition project and the existing buildings of the "Boska" Department Store and the Worker's Solidarity House contain spatial qualities and universal values nurtured in the 1960-70s international architectural culture. They focus and consider the integrity, flexibility, and continuity of urban form in the times of rapid social, cultural and economic changes. The design of this central urban space has a readable spatial and practice-oriented relation of new architecture to the existing urban landscape. In the contemporary context of rapid and dispersed urbanisation, where the urban plan is usually obsolete and incremental and construction methods rarely produce a culturally satisfying space, these landscape-related megaforms could still be considered a potent urban design strategy.

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Illustration sources

Fig. 1	© Tomas Damjanović, 2022
Fig. 2	A postcard from 1978 from the personal archive of the authors
Fig. 3	Novakovic, 1972: 88
Fig. 4	*** 1974: 43
Figs. 5, 6	Lulić et al., 1974: 68
Figs. 7, 8, 9	© Ljerka Lulić, Jasna Nosso, Velimir Neidhardt, 1973
Fig. 10	Karabegović, 1974: 101

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