

**INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT  
DESIGN OF THE FACADES OF BUILDINGS SITUATED BETWEEN THE STREETS KING PETAR I  
KARAĐORĐEVIĆ, PATRIARCH MAKARIJE SOKOLOVIĆ, THEODORS KOLOKOTRONIS AND PATRA  
IN BANJA LUKA**



## INTRODUCTION

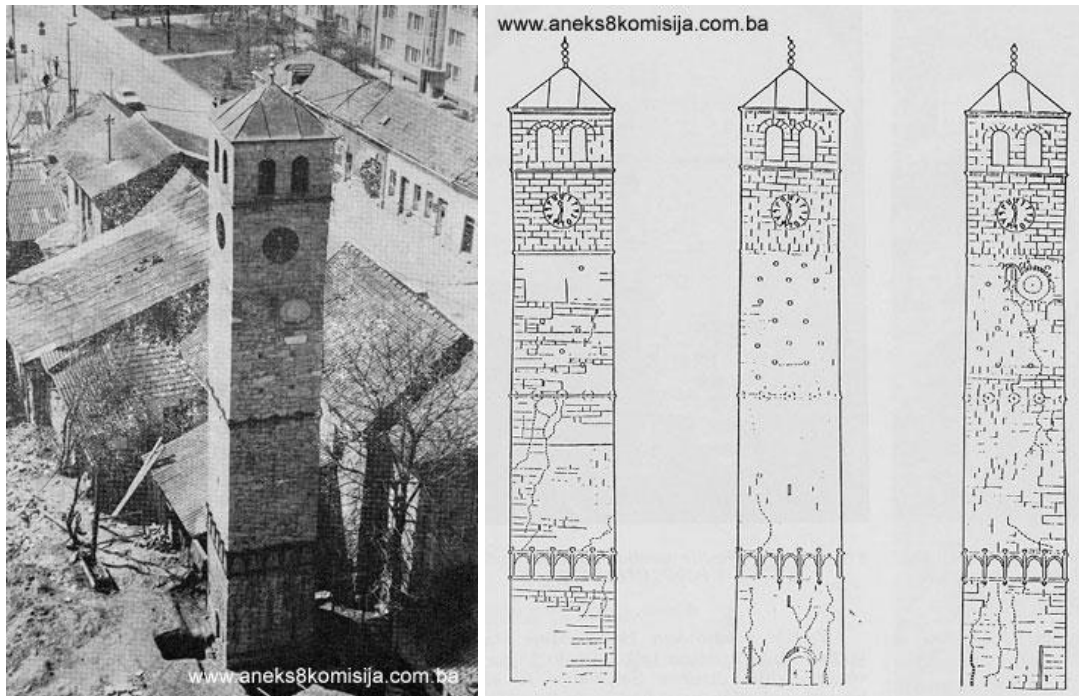
The spatial coverage, as the subject of this competition, is an important site in the wider central area of Banja Luka. The long period of its existence, and its former ambient qualities in particular, are not visible on the current buildings. Modifications that followed the demands of time, purpose and content conditioned the current situation, which is predominantly characterized by the inconsistency of architectural expression. Today, the space represents a group of objects of heterogeneous character in terms of aesthetic quality, materials and construction (permanent / temporary). The structure of this unit is the result of many influential factors, which have acted over a long period of time. For decades, its spatial matrix has been exposed to the legacy of ownership relations and their changes, investment power and the aesthetic level of its tenants and business users, as well as flows of capital. All this had mostly negative impact on the facades of the entire architectural ensemble, which, naturally most directly participates in the ambience of the street, where it is located, the zone to which it belongs and, after all, the whole city. Hence, this competition wants to get *an idea* how the facades should look like and what is the character of the architectural language that should be respected by architects-designers, who will be hired to develop its individual parts in the future. The result of this competition should, therefore, develop, at the level of the conceptual design, *a value system* that the management will rely upon, when issuing location conditions for future construction, extension and reconstruction of the complex. It is about finding a clear definition of an architectural design that should be taken into account so that, despite the heterogeneity of its spatial structure, the future environment will be urban, architecturally "literate" and aesthetically acceptable. A specific goal in this case, as a traditional authorial challenge, is to express the connection between the present and the past in architectural language; such a connection, if successfully established, is the highest quality and, for beneficiaries, the most acceptable "substance" of the urban environment.

## BACKGROUND

Revitalization of space, as the main goal of this competition, should enable the existing structures and public areas that have monumental and ambient significance, to last in the forms that recognize the value of cultural goods, and which arose as a result of long and complex processes of their historical development. In the complex perception of this issue related to the area that will be covered by this competition, it is inevitable to know the historical sequence of spatial development, as the cause and basis of its origin, modifications and current status of this urban unit in space and time. The site that is the subject of this competition is a space where the presence of human activities from prehistory to the present day has been confirmed through sporadic archaeological findings, charters, records, travelogues. It represents the area from which the modern city has developed, and which is located on a naturally elevated terrain between the coasts of the rivers Vrbas and Crkvena. It got its contours and basic appearance during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, more precisely under the seat of Ferhad-Pasha Sokolović, who in the short period from 1579 to 1587, built a large number of buildings, among which the most important are the *Ferhadija* mosque, clock tower (*Sahat kula*), two bridges (one over the river Crkvena, other across the river Vrbas), as

well as other facilities that define the trade and craft cities of that period. Photographs of the area as defined by the scope of the competition enable examining the changes in this part of the city, especially during the Austro-Hungarian rule. The loss of the attributes of the Ottoman down town (*čaršija*) is visible, especially in the materials of the buildings. Construction of solid buildings was popular at the time, with ground floor or first floor, of modest architectural value, with simple decorative ornaments. The ground floors are intended for trade or craft activities, while the first floor was used for living. In the following historical periods, only indications remain in the form of a small number of buildings around the clock tower (*Sahat kula*) from the former down town area. Clock tower (*Sahat kula*) does not currently exist. It was built at the same time as Ferhad Pasha mosque, and conceptually it is in close connection with it. The purpose of this structure was to be a public clock. The structure with a square base measuring 3.2x3.2m, made of hewn tufa and had undergone several reconstructions and modifications over time. The last modifications were made during the reconstruction of the damage caused by the 1969 earthquake. Two pointed arched openings above the clock on all four sides of the facade, including decorations under the eaves of the hipped roof were not restored, which reduced the height of the tower. Since the reconstruction and renovation of this structure is planned and the required technical documentation for the works is currently being prepared, it is necessary to take into account its visibility and primary function, and to include in the concept design an adequate access to it and landscaping. Since the area and the remains of the structure are protected as a national monument, more information can be found at:

[http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba/kons/public/uploads/odluke\\_srp/Sahat%20kula%20BanjalukaSR%20cirilica.pdf](http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba/kons/public/uploads/odluke_srp/Sahat%20kula%20BanjalukaSR%20cirilica.pdf)



There are several important buildings in the immediate vicinity of the area, that enjoy the highest protection status, such as the fortress "*Kastel*" and the Ferhad Pasha Mosque, and

more information on their protection can be found at <http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba/kons/public/nacionalnispomenici>

Authors should consider reshaping the facades of the existing structure in their competition entries in a way unobtrusive to the cultural and historical context, meaning that interventions on the concerned buildings do not degrade and compromise the undisputed values of national monuments.

## **THE ACCESS AREA**

The urban matrix of the city of Banja Luka is a place of accumulated layers of urbanity, an imprint of the historical circumstances that have shaped one, always promising, habitat, capable of creating, even today, a favorable framework for quality and humane living. The appearance of the matrix does not reveal at first sight all the mutual opposition of the layers from different periods; the current urban situation is the result of duality - the wider city center is a trace of the period of planned construction between the two world wars, and the period of socialism, whereas some peripheral zones are a consequence of transition and its unstable development formulas. Described historical changes are noticeable in its physical manifestations, but also in the intangible aspects of city life. The culture of living, manners of the inhabitants, the matrices of everyday life and its micro and macro rituals are especially important for revitalization of the space encompassed by the competition.

With regard to the block area between the streets King Petar I Karađorđević, Patrijarch Makarije Sokolović, Theodors Kolokotronis and Patra, the structures in the existing complex have possibility to be reconstructed, upgraded and extended in order to achieve more favorable vertical and horizontal regulation and landscaping, which is currently at a very low level given its central city position. Due to the complexity of the issue and a need to define a certain visual identity, it is necessary to create for this ambient unit an integral concept design of facades before issuing permits for reconstruction or construction of individual buildings. In the graphic part of the plan, three zones are defined as architectural units 1, 2 and 3, for which it is necessary to first make an integral concept design of the facades, in order to treat individual buildings within these units later on. Considering that this zone is a very complex unit in terms of property and legal relations, with a very fragmented parceling, the plan envisages a maximum degree of flexibility in order to obtain high quality and feasible architectural urban concept design and detailed conditions.

In this way, the construction / revitalization of the city center would continue in the spirit of the existing matrix. Such a procedure has many impacts: introduces new life to this part of the city, enhances the areas for visitors, conforms a number of currently neglected sites with the designated use with an optimal approach to the heritage matrix. An obvious semantic act is established that enhances the atmosphere of a particular place. The task of this competition is to affirm the presented settings with urban and architectural tools.



Historically, the main characteristic of the scope of the competition is related to the designated use of the space - *čaršija* (down town)<sup>1</sup> - the center of every small town in Bosnia, which was usually located at the major crossroads.

Until the end of the 19th century, the Banja Luka down town (*čaršija*) was located on both sides of the Vrbas river, as the large and small *čaršija*, and was connected by a bridge. *Čaršija* is characterized by accentuated horizontality with public buildings (mosque, clock tower, ...) as vertical benchmarks. At the beginning of the 20th century and with the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian administration, the buildings within the scope of the competition were replaced, which resulted with a loss of the characteristics of an Ottoman down town. This area did not only have the role of a trade, but also a craft center, which has survived to this day. Facilities within the scope are organized as a combination of trades, workshops and warehouses.



- 1 CLOCK TOWNER (SAHAT KULA)
- 2 FERHAD PASHA MOSCUE
- 3 FACULTY OF ELECTRICAL  
ENGINEERING
- 4 SAFIKADA'S TOMB

The concerned area, as the subject of the competition, which includes a part of the central city zone and the immediate surroundings of several national monuments, faces the streets Patra, King Petar I Karadjordjević and Patriarch Makarije Sokolović, has an extremely valuable potential to form an image of the Banja Luka's inner city. The space forms a functional unit eligible for business purposes.

What makes this space important is the ambience, whose architecture of buildings facing the mentioned streets with their front facades, currently does not have adequate architectural quality. The intertwining of architectural layers, historical significance and the function that not only buildings but also open public spaces have today, represent a unique combination in a relatively small space, important for the presentation of the historical development of the city.

## COMPETITION TASK

The challenge for the participants of this competition and the primary task and goal is to produce with their creative ideas a high quality concept design, which will communicate *genius loci*, sense of integrity, historical stratification, and awareness of the needs of the city's modern functioning and living. This concept design should incorporate facades and a space that is "between", which connects, separates, directs, welcomes, and as such, completes a coherent, harmonious image of the entire urban structure of this extremely valuable part of the city.

Facades of buildings planned for reconstruction are the central theme of this competition, which will adequately respond to the position and functions of this attractive part of the city with their architecture, and which should be accepted by different groups of beneficiaries.

In order to better respond to the problems of this space, the competition design sets the following goals:

- Produce an architectural design of facades and common space / areas with an aim to establish a high quality urban environment and to protect heritage and *genius loci*;
- Define architectural language of the entire environment, taking care of individual cultural monuments;
- Designate flexible access to the space in terms of property structure and stages of construction and reconstruction;
- Consider purpose and content as a combination of tourism and services;

Additional tasks that support the central theme are:

- Competition concept design requires spatial and design articulation of public and common areas of the block, which need to become a significant link in the tourist offer of the city. With regard to the subject area, it is necessary to provide functional and harmonious interweaving of the inherited and built parts of the urban matrix and physical structures along with the esthetic and environmental design of the facades;

- While designing the facades, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the public space and the quality of architecture of the buildings *that surround it*, as well as the architectural ambient macro-unit of the existing architectural heritage. Entire area needs to be approached with special care, appropriate for individual and wider context, purpose and manner of use, as well as a need for individual spatial elements to be aimed at all categories of beneficiaries, who will be able to use this space every day. In this sense, it is necessary to propose development of parterre, type and method of paving, landscaping, and the palette and design of urban furniture, lighting, as well as to specify other elements that will contribute to enhancing the environment (fountains, sculptures, etc.).
- The structure that needs to be regarded as the building with ambient value and to maintain it, is the structure at the corner of the King Petar I Karađorđević and Patriarch Makarije Sokolović streets.

	Објект на углу Краља Петра I Карађорђевића и Патријарха Макарија Соколовића 44	Послије 1878. год.	Амбијентална вриједност	III	Рестаурација, текуће одржавање
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Excerpt from the study “Conditions of preservation, maintenance, use of cultural heritage and definition of protection measures” for the Urban Planning Document of the City of Banja Luka.

- Spatial matrix of the buildings is not the subject of this competition. It is necessary, in principle, to follow the primary metrics and construction elements of the existing structures.

## Recommendations

- To make a concept design of the facades within the competition scope in modern architectural language and *metaphors*, with the aim of creating an urban ambience.

The approach to this task should not be formalistic or banal-eclectic, and one should not insist on direct visual recognition of the historical model, but follow analytical creative process instead, which relies on the author’s impression and interpretation of the heritage communicated in contemporary architectural language. It is required to rely on the past, but not in the manner of "idolatry", but as a *value criterion*, that achieves fundamental transformation - the connection between the past and present time within the contemporary cultural sensibility.

- Reconstruction should be the anticipated result, meaning that the future visual expression of the complex should represent today's (modern) vision of this space. Since the complex was created over a very long period of time, its appearance reflected a diachronic matrix of scenes, facade sequences and details that bore the "mark" of their time and its aesthetic values, as well as the financial power of investors who participated in its construction. The stratification of various stages of site development and the fragmentary nature of its composition should be understood as a valuable attribute of its image. Hence, diachronic and synthetic presentation of various periods in the development process of the complex, communicated by a modern and *authorial* approach, should be the basis for solving this competition theme.

Facades of the complex buildings should be designed in compliance with the spatial structure and metrics of the street and courtyard fronts as well as with the floors of the buildings and in accordance with the excerpt from the planning documentation. Concept design must define conditions so that, in the future, individual buildings can be designed in detail as separate units, while their facades share aesthetic values and visual key with other facades of the complex as their integral part, which have been created in the past or will be created in the future. Maximum height of the planned buildings is defined by the height of the ridge of the tallest building in the block.

- Concept design of the facade and the applied architectural language should have the following two diachronic capacities:
  - *Visual*, which refers, as already said, to the expression of the synthesis of different development periods of the *čaršija*, but communicated in author's contemporary architectural language.
  - *Fragmented*, which refers to the potential of individual parts / facades in the complex, which, emerging in different periods of time, form, not uniform, but coherent architectural unit and high quality urban ambient.