

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHANGING THE PURPOSE OF SOME HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN NIŠ

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ABSTRACT

In Niš and the surrounding villages, there are a significant number of famous historical sites, buildings and monuments that are reminiscent of significant events. The city has been lost dozens of valuable monuments, but despite the destruction, cultural assets of Niš are numerous and significant. Seven of these are categorized as cultural property of great importance, including the building of the old Pasteur Institute, the building of the old District Offices, now the University, and the building of the old Officers Club. These buildings were built in the late nineteenth century, shortly after the liberation of Nis from the Turks, when they symbolized the city's aspirations for contemporary architecture of that time, but they also had great historical significance. At the beginning of the First World War, Officers Club became the seat of parliamentary and political life in Serbia. Of many decisions voted there the most important was the Niš Declaration which proclaimed the decision on uniting Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into one state – The Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The University building is of great historical importance for the city of Nis and Serbia because the city of Nis was the war capital of Serbia at the beginning of the First World War, from July 26, 1914 to October 16, 1915, when the Serbian Government headquarters was located in this building, as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The building of the old Pasteur Institute was built in 1900 for the needs of the first preventive medicine facility in Yugoslavia. The paper deals with these buildings.

During the turbulent history of the city, the purpose of these buildings changed over time, but they always served to the social needs of the citizens of Niš. The occasional revitalization of these valuable cultural and architectural monuments has contributed to their conservation, as well as to their significant role in the contemporary life of the city.

Keywords: Architectural heritage; revitalization; change of purpose; city of Niš;

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1. INTRODUCTION

Niš has long been a crossroads between East and West. After about 400 years of Ottoman rule, the city was liberated in 1878 and became part of the Principality of Serbia. Today Niš is one of the most important economic centers in Serbia,

In Niš and the surrounding villages, there are a significant number of famous historical sites, buildings and monuments that are reminiscent of significant events. The city has been lost dozens of valuable monuments, but despite the destruction during the turbulent history, cultural assets of Niš are numerous and significant.

In 1979 and 1983, a number of protected monuments of Niš were proclaimed in the Serbian Parliament as cultural property of exceptional importance [1]. These are: the Mediana archeological site - an ancient settlement with villas; Early Byzantine tomb in a high school dormitory in Jagodin Mala; Scull Tower, a monument built of the heads of killed Serbian rebels in 1809; Cegar, a historic site from the First Serbian rebellion; Bubanj Memorial Park, a site of fascist terror from the second World War; and memorial museum "12th February ", concentration camp from the second World War. [3]

Seven are categorized as cultural property of great importance: the prehistoric archeological site near the village of Hum; the medieval Latin church near Gornji Matejevac; monastery in the Sicevo gorge with the church from 17th Century; Niš Fortress; the old Pasteur Institute building; the building of the old District Offices, now the University, and the building of the old Officers Club [3]. These buildings were built in the late nineteenth century, shortly after the liberation of Nis from the Turks, when they symbolized the city's aspirations for contemporary architecture of that time. They are of great historical significance, but thanks to successful revitalizations they play a significant role in the life of the city all the time.

2. BUILDING OF THE OFFICERS CLUB

A building of the tavern then named "Bulevar" was built in the center of the city, beside the park near the Nišava River in 1890 and it became the center of social and cultural life in Niš by the end of the 19th century. At the beginning of 1903, the Military Authorities of the City bought the building and named it Officers Club [4].



Fig.1. Officers club in Nis when it was built as tavern "Bulevard" [4]

At the beginning of the First World War, Officers Club became the seat of parliamentary and political life in Serbia. Of many decisions voted here, the most important was the Niš Declaration which proclaimed the decision on uniting Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into one state – The Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

It is located near Nisava Park, 28 Orlovica Pavla Street. It was built in 1890 as the "Boulevard" tavern, owned by Milan Radosavljevic Raponja. Designer is the architect Ivan Kozlić, district engineer in Niš

from 1883 to 1884, who originates from Vojvodina. The cafe space, from March 1891 to April 1892, was used as the scene of the restored Niš theater "Sinđelić". During 1892 and 1893, the "Boulevard" tavern was used for similar purposes by the traveling theater groups Foti Iličić and Nikola- Bate Simic, followed by concerts of military music and singing societies "Brank "I" Cornelius. " Since 1903, when the City Command purchased the tavern, it has been used as the Officers club until 1941.

At the beginning of the First World War, the building of the officers club became the center of political and parliamentary life in Serbia. From July 27, 1914 to October 16, 1915 a war session of the Serbian Parliament was held in it. Of the numerous Assembly decisions passed in this building, the most significant is the "Niš Declaration" of December 7, 1914. This declaration is one of the foundations on which the Yugoslav community was built.

In addition to the Serbian government and the Assembly, the Yugoslav Committee acted in the pursuit of the goals set out in the Declaration. On May 6, 1915, in the building of the officers club the Yugoslav Congress was held, with representatives from all over the country. The congress adopted the Nis Resolution, which emphasized the struggle of all Yugoslav peoples for liberation and unification. The building of the officers club served some period of time as the Youth Center in Nis. It was placed under the protection of the law on February 25, 1971 and was declared a cultural property of great importance by a decision of the Serbian Parliament of April 7, 1979. [2]

Recently the building interior was renewed and it is used as gallery space and administrative building.



Fig.2. Present-day building of the Officers club in Nis [5]

3. BUILDING OF THE UNIVERSITY IN NIS

The construction of today's building of the University of Nis was started four years after the liberation from the Turks in 1878 for the needs the administration of Nis Region, Captaincy and Court. It was in its time the most representative building of the former Niš, located in the center of the city, on the right bank of Nišava, facing towards the river, near the main entrance of the Fortress. The monumental building is built in a Neo-renaissance style, according to the project of an unknown Vienna architect, and hence it resembles the magnificent buildings of the "imperial" Vienna. In 1886, it got its original size, consisting of the corner part of today's building with ground floor and first floor, with entrances to Kej Mike Paligorića for the administration of Nis Region, and Dobrička Street for Captaincy and Court. In today's part of the building in Šumatovačka street there was a stable for horses and carts.

The building is of great historical significance for the city of Nis and Serbia, because the city of Niš was the war capital of Serbia at the beginning of the First World War, in the period from July 26, 1914 to October 16, 1915, when in this building was head office of the Serbian government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [6].

After the First World War, the building continued to belong to the Nis Region, where at that time there were five more counties besides Nis. The increase of the entire administrative apparatus led to the

need for expansion of the office space, within the existing dimensions of this building, so between 1925 and 1935, the building was gradually upgraded, for the needs of the administration of the Moravian Banovina whose headquarters became Niš. Construction of another story over the old part of the building was completed in 1931, and the building was given today's appearance by construction of the part along the Šumatovačka street and the semicircular entrance section on the University Square, towards the Fortress, in 1935. All works of the second phase of construction were carried out according to the project of the Belgrade architect Petar Gačić [7].

After the Second World War, it was the head office of the Nis County, and since 1966 the University and other institutions have been located there. The building was declared in 1979 as a cultural asset of great importance by the decision of the Serbian Parliament.

In 1986, the last revitalization of the whole building was completed, where the rectorate of the University of Niš, the University Library, the Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, the Student Cultural Center, the Department of the Republic Institute for Statistics of Serbia are now located.

3.1 Extensions and reconstructions

In the first phase (two tracts with ground floor and first floor corner) this building was constructed for the purposes of District offices in Niš, Police and Court in Niš. Originally, the building consisted of a ground floor and first floor, with tract length of 65 meters and 50 meters. Building represented at that time, undoubtedly the first and unique building built at Niš, with massive walls, and in a solid way solved floor structure. The building of the old district offices in Niš was visibly stood out from the oriental architecture of the former Niš's architecture, with its western-europien style. Carpentry at building was constructed at one of Vienna's workshop, as evidenced indicate by the lettering on the windows with the tag "VIEN".

At the entrance vestibule today stand preserved, although is hard to see, the four coats of arms with symbols of the Kingdom of Serbia, carried at Seko technique. Tendencies at architecture, which were influenced by Renaissance, at the ground level was expressed on the facades of the rustic mortar, designed as an imitation of wide joints predominantly at horizontal rows. The ends of the facade avant-corps from all sides remained largely emphasized and processed at imitation of the massive blocks. The building has accentuated details of the avant-corps with prominent triangular tympanums. The roof was made in the form of a mansardly solved truncated cone, with a particularly emphasised roof attic, in relation to the axis of the tract itself, vertically. In the central zone there is a national coat of arms, embossed in relief [8].

The entire interior of the first floor has been designed in a dignified and representative way. On this way was solved the entire entrance hall, stairs, offices of the central government, and even a luxuriously designed apartments, build for governor and his staff. By the depth of the tract, going at direction of the yard, is located the central hall for official gatherings, modeled like an amphitheater. As for the exterior, compositional architecture repeated itself, with the same motifs, there is on the building, on existing tracts. The entrance porch of the building is emphasized, and can be reached by a staircase at shaped an amphitheater. The building consists of high ground floor, and two additional floors, with a basis in the form of elongated trapezoid, with a central courtyard. The building was academic composed, with the Renaissance approach to horizontal gradation of elements on wall canvas (from the rustic to the lower zones until the finely machined surfaces, rows of pillars, tympanum, portal, balcony, porch, on emphasized angular avant-corps). The interior, especially the large hall for meetings, owns a rich decoration with luxury items.

After the First World War, in 1925, the building has been extended for one more floor. During the upgrading of the building, care was taken not just about fitting a new part at the existing architecture, but also on consolidating at within the existing whole. The present appearance of the building dates back to the 1935th year, when Niš was the center of Morava Banovina. The works were carried out according to the project of the engineer Petar Gačić [9].



Fig. 3. Three major phases in the construction of the building: The original building, consisting of two tracts with ground floor and first floor, from 1886 (up left); After the First World War, in 1925, the building has been extended for one more floor (down left); Main entrance to the part of the building used by the University of Niš (right)

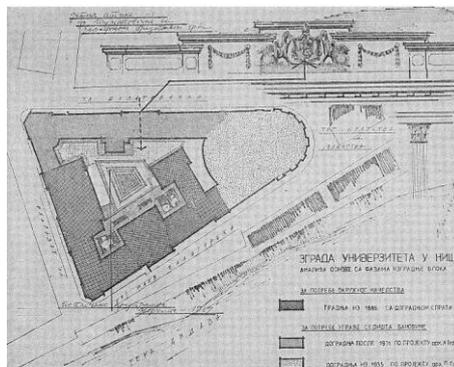


Fig. 4. Blocks of the building of the University of Niš

Works on the reconstruction and restoration of the exterior of the building facade, beginning in 1976, ten years after the institution of the University of Niš begins to work. Before that, the facade was restored in a mid-fifties, and it was done very poorly, so the new reconstruction was inevitable. Wreath on the roof which is along with a storied upgraded in 1925, and is located in the old part of the building, it is worn out and deformed. As part of the finishing works on a building, there is an emphasized the institution caption "The University in Niš" together with the symbol sculptured in bronze. [9]

In 1977. works continued on the building facades, along the entire quay, including the old part of the building, all the way to Dobrička street corner. Surface at the old part of the building are finished with painted darker shades, compared with those of the previous phase of work. In that way are sufficiently prominent the phases of the construction of the block as a whole, while at the same time is emphasized the symmetry of the oldest part of the building.

In 1986 works are continued on the sector from the Dobrička and Šumatovačka street, which include both street tracts, respectively the entire blocks of 68 + 90 (158m). The works were here also performed by the same principle as well as the sections of the previous phase. It can be concluded that reconstruction of facade elements was carried out on the 70% surface of the building. The restoration was completed by processing of the facades. The restoration has included a replacement of old sheet metal, then recovering of the roof area, worn out sheet metal in every even the most inaccessible parts of the building, around roof area.

University of Nis, as a legal entity, invested in conducting of works on polishing the external appearance of the building, including with the restoration of facades, from the very beginning of work

in 1976 until the very end in 1986. As supervision during construction works in all sectors was the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš [6].

Construction work that include yard decoration and interior decoration were completed in 1987. The works were performed in the area of the closed part of the yard, in total surface area of about 740 m². Also should be singled out a representative decoration of internal hall of the university library and the Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Fig. 5. The present appearance of the University of Niš building

Nowadays, in this most memorable and most representative monument of the Niš City Architecture, the rectorate of the Niš University is located, as well as the University Library "Nikola Tesla", the Regional Chamber of Commerce (for Administrative Districts: Nišavska, Pirotška and Toplička), the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš, the Student Cultural Center, and the Niš Department of the Republic Institute for Statistics of Serbia.



Sl.6 Great Festive Hall (amphitheater) and Multimedia room of the University in Niš



Fig.7. Entrance to the library, Hol Library, Library Readings

4. THE PASTEUR INSTITUTE BUILDING

It was built in 1900 for the needs of the first health care institution of preventive medicine in Yugoslavia. The attempt to establish the Pasteur Institute in Serbia began in 1886. At that time, the Ministry of the Army trained the experts in Vienna to run such a preventive institution, because no agreement was reached between the Ministry of the Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs on financing the construction of the Pasteur Institute building.

A new initiative to establish the Pasteur Institute was launched in 1898 by Dr. Mihajlo Markovic. He introduced the proposal to King Milan Obrenovic, who advocated the establishment of such an institution, noting that as early as 1895, neighboring Bulgaria established the Pasteur Institute in Sofia. At the beginning of 1899 it was decided to build a Pasteur Institute in Nis. The proposal for the "establishment of the Pasteur Institute" was adopted at the 63rd session of the National Assembly of Serbia, held on January 8, 1899. In Nis. In the spring of that year, the Nis municipality provided a site for the building, which began to be built in August and in April 1900. was completed. The project was completed in the Engineering and Technical Department of the Ministry of Defense in Belgrade in October 1898 [1].

The building is a ground floor building, P-shaped in the original central dimension. The central hall is joined by two rooms, for examinations and one spacious laboratory. In the spirit of eclectic understanding with the decorative elements of the Renaissance, the building is academically composed with classicism in the system of decoration and the strict geometric structure of the masses. [10]

At the beginning Pasteur Institute building had only a narrow, central part, in whose eastern part, in May 1900, a Viennese mechanic Chokor installed apparatus for the production of an animal lymph (vaccine). It was the first vaccine production department. It consisted of two rooms and a vaccination room for calves.



Fig. 8. The Pasteur institute old building

This department began operating on January 1, 1901, when the Pasteur Institute officially began operating. The complete plumbing was introduced into the Pasteur Institute building in the spring of 1902, and electric lighting seven years later.

Animal lymph production began in October 1900, when 11,540 units of this serum were produced by the end of the year. In December 1900, the first recruits were vaccinated with the Serbian rabies serum, at the Pasteur Institute. In the first year of the work, 225 bitten people were cured of rabby animals. Between 1901 and 1915, when the Pasteur Institute of Nis was the only institution of its kind in the country, 9,580 persons were vaccinated. After the First World War, in 1919, the first Permanent Bacteriological Station was established in Belgrade, and by 1922 there were 6 in Serbia, and 15 in Yugoslavia [1].

In 1923–1926, lateral wings were added when the building was transformed into the Epidemiological and later the Hygiene Institute. In 1930, two more side wings were added to the old Pasteur Institute building.

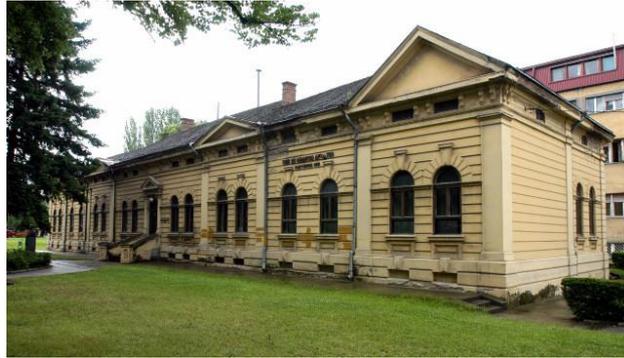


Fig. 9. The present appearance of the Pasteur Institute building

The building was placed under the protection of the law in 1964, and a decade and a half later, in 1979, the Serbian Parliament declared it as cultural property of great importance.

Restoration work was carried out during 1978–84, after which the building became the home of the Museum of Health Culture and the seat of the Serbian Medical Society and the School of Health Education.

5. CONCLUSION

The building of the old Pasteur Institute, the building of the old District Offices, now the University, and the building of the old Officers Club in Niš are declared as cultural properties of great importance for the Republic of Serbia. These valuable monuments of Niš's architectural heritage keep a part of his past, as well as his original character. During the turbulent history of the city, the purpose of these buildings changed over time, but they always served to the social needs of the citizens of Niš. The occasional revitalization of these valuable cultural and architectural monuments has contributed to their conservation, as well as to their significant role in the contemporary life of the city.

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