

CREATING THE BELGRADE WATERFRONT IDENTITY THROUGH A PRISM OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING COMPETITIONS

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The architecture and urban planning competitions are a form of architectural activity that bring creative ideas important for parts of cities or territories, and they can precede the creation of future planning documentation. At the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century, the competitions were occasionally used for solving the most important problems in urban structure of cities. In this respect, Belgrade joined many important European cities. The great urban planning competitions influenced the urban planning solutions and the creation of the waterfront identity. This paper analyses three examples of great public urban planning competitions that were organized at the time of important turning point in the development of waterfronts of the rivers Sava and Danube. This research opens up the question of a specific role of competitions that marked the theoretical and practical problems of their time. Investigating the views of the city, authentic ambiances and recognizable images of the city, the participants provided numerous answers that have influenced the existing identity of the Belgrade waterfront area over time.

Key words: waterfront, identity, urban structure, competition, Belgrade.

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, the processes of planning and designing the Belgrade Waterfront included the professional community, both domestic and international, through conducting the public architecture and urban planning competitions. The international competitions organized at that time are a specific testimony to the fact that Belgrade sought the international exchange of ideas and that the commitment to link the city with other world centres in times of great ideological differences is undisputable. At the same time, the competitions were a testimony to a desire to find quality solutions, as well as to an awareness of their importance for urban development.

In the course of the 20th century, over the period of forty years, the City of Belgrade underwent the process of transformation from a city on one river bank into a city on two river banks. The Belgrade waterfront is a rare example of a city divided into two parts by the river. These two parts of the city have opposite characteristics: the one has emerged on the principles of a traditional matrix of European cities and different historical layers, while the other was built on the consistently applied principles of modern architecture

of international style and the so-called Le Corbusier's architecture and urbanism. The construction of several important buildings in the post-war period marked a turning point in a new attitude towards planning according to which the city should extend to its riverbanks.

The great urban planning competitions opened up, formulated and imposed the ideas about the development of cities for many years and decades in advance. The decisions that followed marked a turning point in directing the shaping of the cities. Belgrade, as a capital city of the newly formed state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was amongst the first cities in which international competition was organized as a conceptual basis for a new master plan of the city.

URBAN WATERFRONT REGENERATION

Global discourse

Until the first half of the 20th century, the ports had great importance as transportation and commercial places (Radosavljević, 2006). With the development of technology, the ports were extended, but later stagnated (Stupar, 2009). The abandoned industrial buildings and complexes have become a barrier between the river bank and the city centre. The main driver of renewal and regeneration

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of waterfront zones includes the need for opening the city to the river. The renewal and change of purpose imply the physical and functional transformations that will change the physiognomy of this part of the city, thus significantly influencing its visual identity.

Today, due to the increasingly faster development of technology, new spaces for recreation, entertainment and culture are being sought, and they are located on the former edges of the city, the waterfront zones. The river banks represent a new chance for populists and a real possibility for developers. The culture of public open space is gaining increasing importance and role in the social integration and joint activities of different cultural groups.

The reaffirmation of waterfront is today topical throughout the world. The process began already in the seventies of the 20th century (Radosavljević, 2006). It was preceded by the changes in economy, society and technology that brought about the changes in people's needs. The technological progress brought the stagnation and reduction of port functions. This process first began in the Great Britain in the sixties of the 20th century, and then spread to other countries. Certain successful renewals have initiated a series of great urban projects all over the world. The waterfront renewal has become a way for the city to get new original buildings, attract investments and get people back to the abandoned areas. The waterfront renewal has generated its own discipline (Marshall, 2001).

Belgrade as a concept of two river banks

The specificity of Belgrade lies in its exceptional geographic position and specific topography that make the city unique. In the second half of the 20th century, the rivers Sava and Danube were the borders between two empires, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. The city was frequently passed on from the Ottoman to Habsburg rule through wars. The territory on the hill where the historical core was formed, with its physical structure reflecting different patterns, as layers of time, is determined by the line of the river flow as a clear boundary at the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube.

The most important cityscape transformations took place after the abolition of borders on the rivers. This initiated ideas and plans for building Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava river. Shortly before the Second World War, in 1937, the Belgrade Fair complex was built. The new political conditions after the war changed the status of Belgrade. From the city on the hill, Belgrade became a capital city of a new federation, as a political, economic, cultural and administrative centre of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. The need to form an administrative centre contributed to the decision to build a completely new part of the city on the left bank of the Sava (Đorđević, 1995). New Belgrade was built on the then latest principles of modernism in architecture. The Belgrade waterfront is characterized and shaped by the contrast of two different concepts of the city.

The Master Plan of Belgrade 1950 promoted new goals, and one of the most important amongst them is that the Sava river, the former border and periphery to which the city has turned its back, has become a central motif of the city and, as such, it should represent a first-class factor in the

formation of a new image of the city (*ibid.*). The fact that the CIAM principles were to a great extent embedded in the attitudes, theory and practice of new Yugoslav architects was demonstrated when a design competition for the following large public buildings was announced in 1947: the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the building of the Presidency of Government of the FPRY (Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia) and the building of a representative hotel. The concept is read through the recognizable orthogonal matrix of the New Belgrade blocks and the disposition of key buildings. It has essentially determined the current scheme of New Belgrade and influenced the development of the city as a whole (Bogdanović, 1986). The contemporary principles in the architecture of the completion designs reflected the latest tendencies in architectural creativity. The competition practically marked the beginning of works on the construction of New Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava. This was one of the greatest competitions in Yugoslavia. All of these important buildings were built in the waterfront area. This fact proves the belief that the post-war period was a turning point in the new attitude to planning the waterfront since the emergence of the tendency to open the face of the city to its rivers.

The accelerated growth of the modern city on the left bank of the Sava, designed and built on uncompromising principles of modern architecture that developed fast and was realized in conditions of socialist economic system, was supported by industrial development of Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Today, the reflections about the renewal and reanimation of the right bank of the Sava river mainly include a series of different individual sites that should follow the existing parcels, also implying individual concepts of independent units in which a single urban landscape should be formed in a macro plan. On the other hand, there were reflections about the future development of Belgrade - the New Belgrade side, in which the issue of its function and shaping in new conditions, when there was a need for higher density of urban structure and more rational land use imposed itself as the most important issue.

TREATMENT OF THE WATERFRONT IN THE GREAT ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING COMPETITIONS FOR BELGRADE

The vision of the waterfront development given in the 1922 International Competition for the Master Plan of Belgrade

The economic ambience after the First World War, in the period from 1919 to 1929, that spawned the Master Plan of Belgrade, was reflected in a rapid population growth and, at the same time, in a rapid progress of trade. After the First World War, Belgrade as the capital of Yugoslavia, had an important role as a political and economic centre, while the riverbanks became a prospective territory of the city (Maksimović, 1983).

The Competition was held in 1922. The second prize that was awarded to the master plan designed by an architect from Vienna included the left bank of the Sava. The first prize was not awarded, but three second prizes, out of which the work under the code "Singidunum Novissima" (by architects

Rudolf Perco, Ervin Ilz and Ervin Bock) represented a megalomaniac aestheticized form that expressed the tendencies of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Blagojević, 2004). Almost unrealistically, the proposed physical structure extended over a large area on the right bank of the Sava river, and particularly on the left river bank.

According to the concept of the "Singidunum Novissima", the banks of the rivers Sava and Danube should be built up to the very line of the river flow, particularly to the side towards the Danube, and the area should contain strictly regular conventional blocks. The area between the bank of the Sava and the rail tracks, in the parts called Bara Venecija (Venice Pond) and Savamala, were proposed for building the blocks. Only a strip of the former railway land covering a wide area was excluded. The efforts of the awarded master plan to extend the Savamala part of the city to the banks of the Sava are respectable considering that this was difficult to accomplish due to the existing rail tracks. The authors used compact blocks to emphasize the need for developing this area. This problem has remained unsolved to this day.

What is also important for this paper is the fact that the area on the left bank of the Sava (today the New Belgrade side) was treated in a plan for the first time. The authors proposed an extremely radical move, namely to dig a channel linearly through the terrain of the left bank of the Sava from the tip of the existing Ada Ciganlija island to the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube, thus forming another big river island. A radical move concerning the linear channel would to a great extent change the image of the Bežanija fields (left bank of the Sava) and the existing and until then intact urban landscape at the confluence of two rivers. The bold engineering undertakings that characterized certain master plan designs indicate a great influence of trends in urban planning that existed in the then Europe. Considering the extensive works that this concept would require, it was not realized in the present conditions in spite of all praises it already won by being awarded the second prize for the master plan design (the first placement). In spite of the high-quality and visionary solutions it offered, this master plan design was not embedded in future plans to a greater extent, partly because of the weak economic power that was disproportionate to the megalomaniac conventional concepts of this master plan. On the other hand, this plan encountered resistance from the progressive Belgrade architects because of the powerful influence of modernism in architecture and urbanism that followed, and that was promoted at the first CIAM Congress in Switzerland held in 1928. This is the reason why this competition was forgotten in the early decades after the Second World War. The enthusiasm for new aesthetics of modern and international movements has also thrown into oblivion the useful proposals that would open new views in the old part of the city, as well as other useful proposals that would be appropriate to the old core of the city.

Undoubtedly, this competition was also very important as a cultural event in Belgrade. At the same time, it was a part of turbulent flows on the then architectural scene: on the one hand, it was a reflection of the European influences and principles of solving the conventional parts of the city based on the experiences of Neoclassicism and Neo-Baroque, and



Figure 1. International Competition for the Master Plan of Belgrade, the first-placed master plan design "Singidunum Novissima" from Vienna, (Source: *Der Städtebau* (Berlin), 1922/23, Tafel 48)

on the other, it represented the penetration of new concepts of modern architecture, functioning of cities, Athens Charter, under the powerful influence of the architect Le Corbusier. The proposals for a radical reconstruction on the right bank of the Sava in the historical core of Belgrade recalls breakthroughs in the famous Haussmann's plan for Paris (1852) (Stojanović, 2012), which is understandable given that it is a very remarkable example of planning and realization of the planning-based prediction of the future of an important European city such as Paris. This can represent a confirmation of the fact that economic growth in the new state provided the hope of a prosperous future, and gave the reason for the megalomania in the coverage, as well as for the surprising ambitions of this competition master plan design. However, although this competition was a bright spot in the Serbian urban history, it was abandoned and almost forgotten in the years to come. Obviously, the solutions that were typical for a conventional city, Belgrade, arrived with a delay of about half a century.

The Jury Report concluded that Zemun and Belgrade would be connected after building the bridges and wharfs. The issue of opening Belgrade to the left bank of the Sava was thus initiated for the first time. The Jury gave proposals for further work on the master plan based on the main awarded master plan designs (Maksimović, 1983).

Obviously, the remarks of the Jury speak in favour of the assumption that the first-placed master plan with its conventional composition came with delay concerning the issue of the development of the central zone of Belgrade. On the other hand, the proposals for interventions in the waterfront carry far bolder and more advanced ideas that have opened up new possibilities of the city's relationship with the river banks.

Competition for the first public buildings in New Belgrade held in 1947

In 1947, an important task was set before the renowned Belgrade architects: the locations and programs for the most important buildings in Belgrade and Serbia had to be determined in a short time. The extensive works, speed and high quality of architecture of buildings were

required. In such circumstances, one of the most important competitions for New Belgrade was announced in 1947. It was the Yugoslav public competition for conceptual designs of the buildings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Presidency of the Government of the FPRY and a representative hotel in New Belgrade (Macura,1995). In addition to the architecture of buildings, the competition requirements emphasized that the urban design was also required. The "Sketch for the regulation of Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava" - Figure 2, designed in 1946 by the architect Nikola Dobrović, was enclosed with the competition requirements. The Dobrović's Sketch was based on the solutions for the road directions that determined the urban matrix of the new city. He positioned a new railway station in the centre, and also included new buildings for which the competition was announced. He based his concept on the modernist development of the city. The competition requirements treated the enclosed Sketch as tentative and non-binding. At the same time, the program of the competition announcement suggested that the basis for the urban plan should be the "commitment that New Belgrade should be conceived as an administrative centre of the Federation" (Tehnika, 1946).

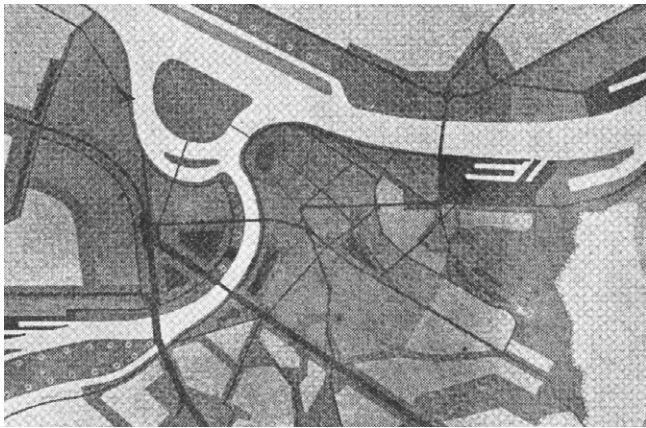


Figure 2. Preliminary Land Use Plan for Belgrade 1946, Nikola Dobrović (Source: Urbanistic Institute of Serbia, Belgrade, 1946)

The competition for the first public buildings in the still unbuilt New Belgrade significantly influenced the future directions, and, indirectly, the development of the city as a whole, too. The competition results put out of force the radial scheme of streets proposed in the competition announcement, which was previously proposed by the architect Nikola Dobrović (Figure 2). A great number of similar proposals by the participants, indicated that the orthogonal scheme should be used, according to which the urban matrix was conceived, and it has not been changed to this day. Prof. Bogdanović concluded that the competition master plan designs practically determined a new urban matrix that was simpler and more rational. (Bogdanović, 1986) Yet, bearing in mind the importance of river banks, Bogdanović opened a dilemma that the radial scheme proposed in the Dobrović's Sketch would to a greater extent open the space of the new part of the city to the river.

Three second prizes were awarded for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia building design. The prizes went to: Ravnikar from Ljubljana,

Dobrović from Belgrade and Segvić with Augustinčić from Zagreb. The first prize for the design of the building of the Presidency of Government was awarded to a group of architects: Potkonjak, Najman, Urlih and Perak from Zagreb (Macura,1995). The awarded designs, as well as the materialized buildings, had a great influence on further development of modern architecture in the country. The representative hotel designed by the architect I. Horvat from Zagreb was built on the bank of the river Danube. The hotel is an example of high-quality architecture in the spirit of modernism. The supreme architecture in the country developed in conditions of the new social system, the new ideology. It is particularly interesting to emphasize that a great number of very important buildings were built, or at least only planned, in the immediate vicinity of the waterfront.

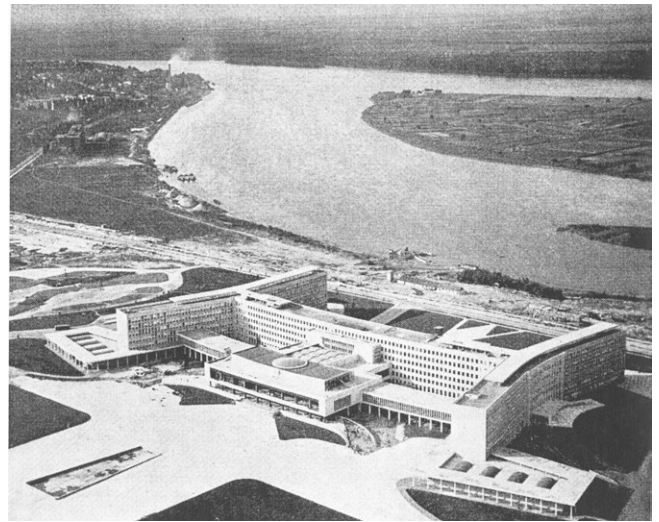


Figure 3. The Federal Executive Council building (Source: Source: Journal Arhitektura Urbanizam, No. 2, 1960)

The possibility of the competition visions to influence the creation of the waterfront identity became evident on the examples of these great competitions from 1947. As Blagojević (2004) concluded, the previous Sketch designed by Nikola Dobrović was offered to the contestants only tentatively. The contestants were also invited to develop an urban plan for New Belgrade in addition to their proposals for buildings. Instead of Dobrović's railway station in the centre of a radial urban matrix, the competition practically directed the development of New Belgrade to the construction of its first building. It was the building of the Presidency of the Government of the FPRY.

Considering the difference between the radial urban matrix scheme proposed by Dobrović in his Sketch from 1946 and the awarded competition master plan designs that proposed the orthogonal urban matrix scheme, as well as the mentioned conclusion that there was a clear commitment to the concept of New Belgrade as the centre of the Federation administration, it can be concluded that the competition requirements directed contestants to choose the solutions that bring in the fore the idea of an administration centre (centre of the Federation - FPRY) with dominating buildings of the Federation instead of a functionalist concept with the railway station. The Jury thus made an important shift in the

future street matrix of New Belgrade based on the forms and recognizable dominating positions of buildings that symbolically expressed the power of the new social system. The competition solutions were a basis for the future Master Plan of Belgrade 1950 as the most important document for the future development of New Belgrade. The attitude towards the importance of analysing the great competitions proves the abovementioned opinion, but also the dilemma of Prof. Bogdanović.



Figure 4. Master Plan of Belgrade 1950
(Source: Historical Archives of Belgrade)

The waterfront and the International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement (1984-86)

The striving for the improvement of the space of New Belgrade through the extension and reconstruction emerged in the eighties of the 20th century in the atmosphere of doubt and fear that the tendencies of uncontrolled construction, which was already in full swing, might repeat. The need to establish a new comprehensive concept resulted in the decision to announce the "International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement". The idea to organize an international competition was accepted

at the meeting of the Association of Belgrade Architects (DAB) held in 1984. The Assembly of the City of Belgrade and the Municipality of New Belgrade were responsible for announcing the competition. Besides the Association of Belgrade Architects, the Competition was also under auspices of the International Union of Architects (UIA) (Bogunović, 1986).

Ninety four work competition entries were submitted. They were considered as a treasury of ideas, while the competition was considered as an undertaking without equal in the urban planning practice both in Belgrade and Yugoslavia. The competition arose from a desire to develop and gradually transform New Belgrade in line with new reflections on urban planning (Stojkov, 1986). The two works winning the first prize, the work from Czechoslovakia and the work from Poland, offered two completely opposite concepts. The work from Czechoslovakia inclined towards the improvement and harmonization of urban structures of New Belgrade, Zemun and the old part of Belgrade. On the other hand, the work from Poland solved the problems by making small moves, by introvert romantic ambiances, introducing a harmony in the surrounding area. All this indicates the rich array of ideas offered by the competition. The importance of the competition also lies in the possibility to determine the trend that prevailed in the world concerning the urban thought (*ibid.*).

Prof. Bogdanović's observations that the competition works "advised" a more serious tackling of contact zones on the left bank of the Sava are also important for this research. Furthermore, based on numerous works with the same orientation, Prof. Bogdanović highlighted the conclusion that the central axis of the city was not: Palace of the Federation – Railway Station as thought, but luckily the preserved open space of the AVNOJ Boulevard. According to this, the competition resulted in a new idea that the previous plan of the New Belgrade "nine squares" (the core of nine orthogonal blocks in New Belgrade) should turn to the old core of Belgrade, to the other bank of the Sava, and not to the Palace of the Federation (Bogdanović, 1986). The effects deriving from a great number of competition

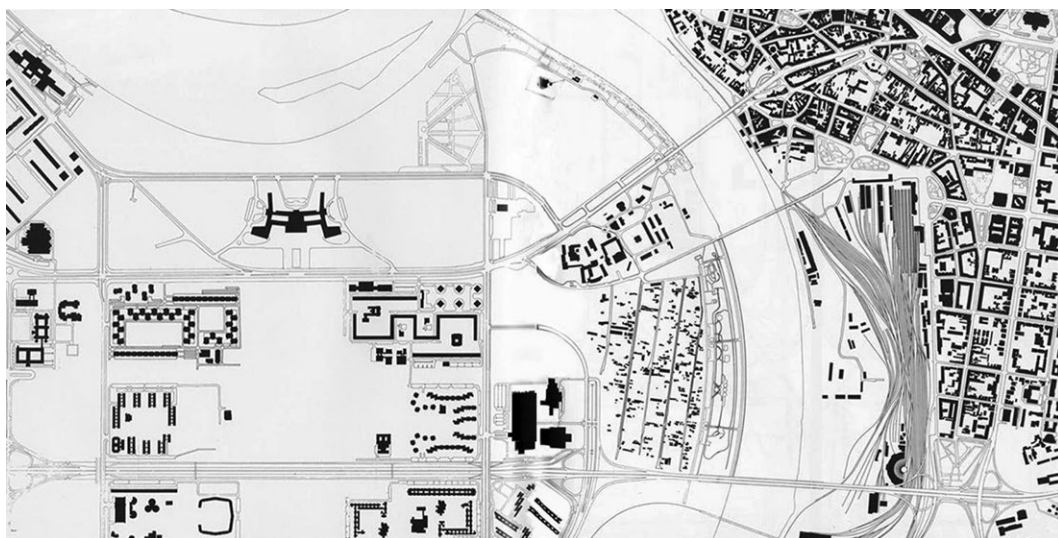


Figure 5. The existing status of the built structures and infrastructure in 1979
(Source: Perović, 1985)

concepts indicate the strengthening of the contact between the old and the new city including the contact zones of the river banks. The competition works unambiguously indicated that the physical structure of two banks of the Sava should be shaped as a synthesis and that it should allow a maximum communication in the visual and functional stretches.

The first-awarded work from Bratislava by Jaroslav Kachlik was characterized by the Jury's report as a concept that offers an optimum integration of the city with all of its parts from Zemun to the hinterland of the old Belgrade. A **new centre of Belgrade on the Sava**, on the very river bank between the railway station and New Belgrade, was the main new element. By introducing the new directions for the purpose of integrating the space, this concept contained a series of interesting and attractive ideas for the contact area between the city and the Sava, as well as for a visual and functional linking of the Kalemegdan Terrace to New Belgrade, thus introducing a new potential direction emphasizing a **new connection over the river to Kalemegdan** as a provocation. The Jury report concluded that this work was an excellent starting point for planning and shaping New Belgrade, thus also for the future of Belgrade in general (Stojkov, 1986). By implementing the idea of integrating the two river banks, this work introduced new directions for passengers, but also new bridges.

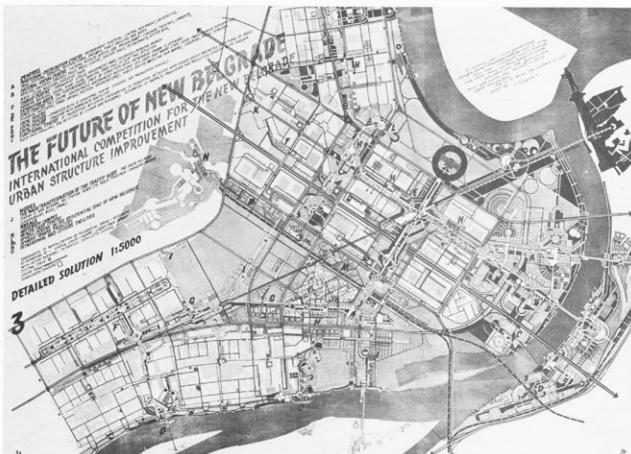


Figure 6. International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, joint first prize, Czechoslovakia (Source: *Journal Arhitektura Urbanizam*, special issue, 1986)

The first-awarded work from Warsaw, by Domaradski, Dziekonski and Garbowski, was characterized as a work that provides a rich and humane environment for the future of New Belgrade. The work envisaged new activities along the existing large streets and a new park on stretch: the Federal Executive Council building – railway station. The work directed the development almost entirely to the Sava Amphitheatre, the waterfront on the right bank of the Sava, turning the faces of Belgrade and New Belgrade to each other.

It could be said that the competition was organized in the period of stagnation and glutted with ideas of modernist architecture, so that works revealed the influence of the postmodernist discourse that followed as response to the problems brought by modernist principles.

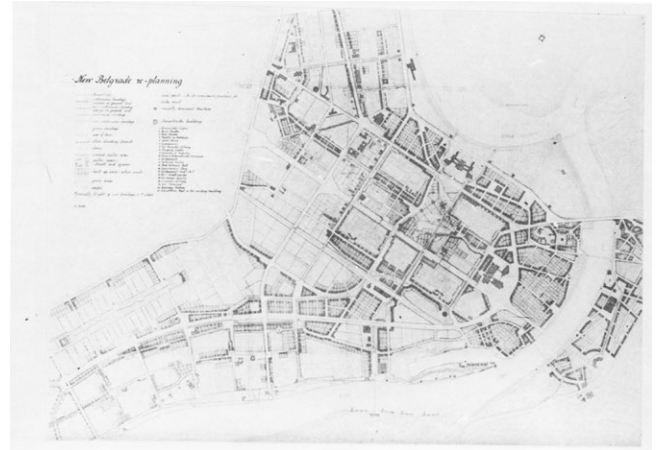


Figure 7. International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement, joint first prize, Poland (Source: *Journal Arhitektura Urbanizam*, special issue, 1986)

The competition activities in developing the right and left banks of the Sava by 2016

After the 1986 competition, the significant changes took place in the political and economic system, while wars that caused the dissolution of Yugoslavia brought problems. This has contributed to an increased uncontrolled construction and increased unplanned construction activities in the city, so that today, in addition to once clear concept of modernist architecture of New Belgrade, we are also witnesses of a new development that is disturbing the existing spirit of the place. The processes of urban transformations in New Belgrade have created a different city which is no longer built on the principles of humanism and social equality, but a city which is, on the wings of neoliberal capitalism, getting "new neighbourhoods" with which it fills empty spaces. The new development represents "a new strategy and ideology of Serbian turbo-capitalism, economy based on the sale of national wealth,...on dominance of corporate power over the state, and on excessive consumption." (Dimitrijević, 2009).

In the early 21st century, there was an increasing interest in, but also the need for developing the Belgrade waterfront. An architecture and urban planning competition for the Block 18 on the left bank of the Sava, the New Belgrade side, was announced in 2016. The location in New Belgrade that was an imagined connection to the Sava Amphitheatre got a chance to be developed as a new contemporary part of the city.

The Sava Amphitheatre on the right bank of the Sava, traditionally considered as one of the main resources of Belgrade for many years now, has become a place of many social and cultural activities, but also a subject of the planning activities of different study groups that have continued reflecting on the development and visual connection between the left and the right river banks as an expression of aspiration to open the city to the river.

Promoted in 2014, as a future plan for the development of the Sava Amphitheatre, also including the traditional part of the city in the contact zone known as Savamala, the Belgrade Waterfront Project was presented to the general public as an already completed project. However, the location of exceptional importance, based on which

concept a future urban identity of Belgrade depends, must be conceived and planned through an architecture and urban planning competition. This is the only legitimate way to verify the CONCEPT through knowledge and experiences of the profession. Numerous appeals of professional associations have remained unanswered: The solutions for the development of the part of Belgrade along the Sava river should be selected at republic or international competition, as the Association of Architects of Serbia insists (Marić, 2014). In the professional journal *Izgradnja*, the architect Branko Bojović emphasizes the fact that the initiative concerning the Belgrade Waterfront Project is “dilettantism as urbanism” and that it has been developed in a semi-hidden way without qualified professional information (Bojović, 2014). The professional association, the Academy of Architecture of Serbia, has published “Declaration on the Belgrade Waterfront” addressing the institutions of Serbia, Belgrade, professional community and the wider public. The Declaration emphasizes that the Belgrade Waterfront Project is imposed in an inadequate way and points out the humiliating fact that one scale model that does not bear the name of the author has become the main matrix for developing the spatial plan (Declaration on the Belgrade Waterfront, 2015). Architect Kovačević appeals and warns that the damage and consequences of such a project will be far-reaching and irreversible (Kovačević, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The Belgrade waterfront identity is essentially linked to the fate of the urban structure of the city. In the 20th century, the urban landscape of the Belgrade waterfront underwent radical changes that turned the city centre towards the rivers, so that the processes striving to connect the river banks and the central zones of the city are still on-going. The city centre has been gradually moved to the waterfront, thus strengthening the links between the old and new parts of the city.

The competition activities that started at the beginning of the 20th century were necessary as a previous study that influenced the later decisions on the further planned development of the city. At the same time, this was the way to encourage the local professional community to openly reflect on the space of the city and to check their reflections through foreign experiences. The plans that followed used the ideas from the completion solutions. They have been discussed and decisions on the space have been made based on them. Although the competition solutions have not been consistently implemented, they have contributed to the sharpened reflections within the given programs.

Due to the political and economic problems, they have determined the direction of the city's development without including the competition solutions to a greater extent. As for the competition solutions, the fierce competition and publicity in work contributed to the formation of new concepts. Thus, the 1922 competition affirmed the ideas about the development of the left bank of the Sava and partly directed the decisions related to the old part of the city. The 1947 competition for positioning the important buildings contributed to a radical change in the New Belgrade urban matrix, which was important for the contact zone of the

waterfront and connection with the old Belgrade. The competition proposals from 1986 were considered as a treasury of ideas that indicated the possible solutions to the problems of New Belgrade. They considerably treated the contact zone of the two banks of the Sava. The results of the 1986 competition were published in a special issue of the journal “Arhitektura Urbanizam”. On this occasion, a professional discussion was organized and the collection of competition works was published. The enthusiasm and the competition procedure is an example of how to act today when it comes to the locations of great importance for the city.

Contrary to the rise of the post-war modernism on the left bank of the Sava river, the current technological development is not keeping the pace with the development and renewal of the right bank of the Sava river in a way that would be in accordance with foreign experiences and with the needs of the city. Due to the political and economic circumstances in the country undergoing transition and the new neo-liberal economy in this region, the important progress in the comprehensive planning concepts of space has not been achieved. The potential mechanisms that should be set in motion through partnership of the private capital and government instruments are present only in partial actions. The professional community is not adequately included in the decision making process on space, so that direct interest of capital has the exclusive right. The non-developed, neglected parts of the city have become sites for alternative and temporary solutions, which actively indicates the spatial problems. In search for potential development of all neglected, but representative sites in the Belgrade Waterfront, it appears that the investigation of documentation on the large architecture design competitions can bring some precious pieces of information and point to the need for a transparent and creative planning.

Amongst the analysed competitions, the 1947 competition had the greatest influence on planning as a basis for drawing up the Master Plan in 1950, as well as a decisive influence on the formation of the New Belgrade urban matrix. The selected competition designs have also determined the main directions that today link the two banks of the Sava river by bridges. On the other hand, the right bank of the Sava river is a specific potential which is not yet sufficiently used, this being a special challenge today. Nowadays, the dominating transition processes and a new neo-liberal discourse that emphasize the importance of investor's intentions have unjustifiably distanced the professional architectural community from urbanism and architecture as a creative act and as the only instrument that could contribute to the future Belgrade Waterfront identity.

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