

Sarajevo is a structurally linear city, spreading from its valley towards vast fields on either side. Because of its topography, it can be viewed from different perspectives: at street level, moving through the fabric of the city, or from above, atop its surrounding hills. Within each of these perspectives, a specific and clearly readable heterogeneous picture of the city can be seen, resulting from the permeation of different cultural and sociopolitical influences. The traditional part of the city consists of the Ottoman matrix, upon which it was founded, and diametrically opposed Central European block structures. Together these form the base upon which the significantly larger new part of the city was constructed after World War II.

Optimism for urbanity

■ BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA — TEXT: ELŠA TURKUŠIĆ JURIC, ILLUSTRATION: SYLVAIN TEGROEG

Today, the complex architectural image of Sarajevo is threatening to turn into chaos, or at least unaligned diversity. Following its stagnation during the 1990s as a result of war and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, a variety of opportunities opened for Sarajevo's development on the threshold of the 21st century. The process of transition from a socialist to post-socialist society has created an unstable system of trade laws and social and aesthetic values, which have for two decades prevented the establishment of a clear and realistic vision for the city's future development. Consequently, there is growing discord – both in functional and aesthetic terms – between constructed/inherited urban spaces and new structures.

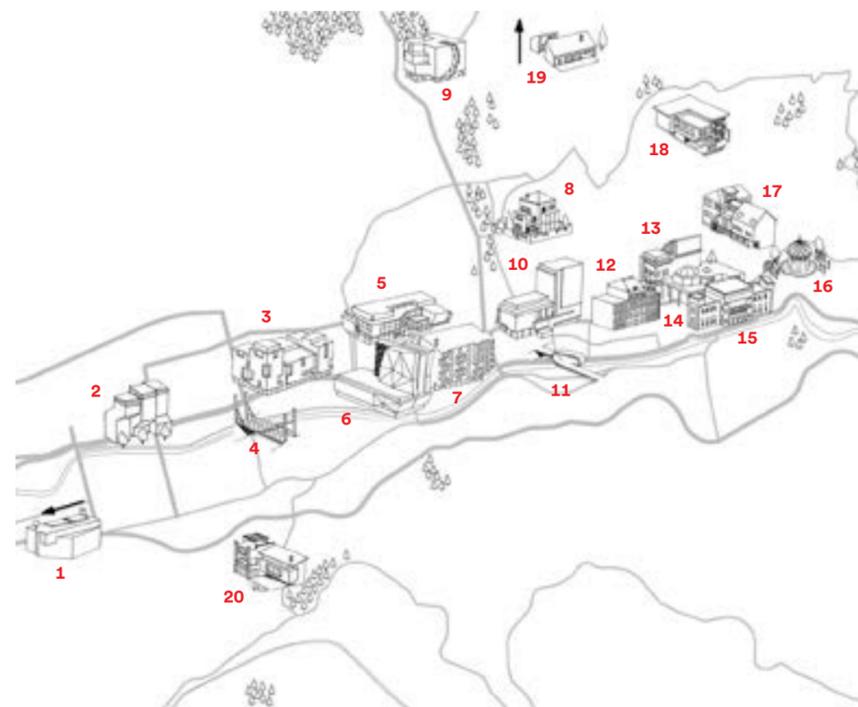
This tour guide provides a brief overview of architectural examples that seek to mitigate the resulting cracks in Sarajevo's morphology and restore the dynamics of city life. Among those analysed here are some that have imposed themselves through their spectacular appearance, irreversibly changing certain parts of the city. The aim of this review is to offer not only a comprehensive understanding of multifaceted urban morphology, but also of its vulnerabilities. The tour begins atypically, travelling from the new part of the city to the historical, from west to east, from the field to the slopes. Since the first phase of planned cycle paths has recently been implemented, our route can also begin by bicycle.

The 'new', or socialist, part of the city was developed between 1960 and 1980, during the region's greatest building boom, which predominantly comprised the construction of social housing settlements built according to the principles of modernist urbanism. The wide boulevard, separating housing from industrial/work areas, was conceived as the main arterial for traffic. Unsurprisingly, the boulevard is dominated by the imposing brutalist architecture of the Radio-TV Centre (M. Kušan and B. Bulić, 1968–1983). In the last two decades, liberalization of the market and additional freedom allocated to municipalities for the management of spatial resources have allowed facades along this boulevard to feature a range of business facilities. This is especially true in the neighbourhood of Alipašino Polje, where the **ASA Group Headquarters (1)** stands in contrast to a newly created series of colourful and spectacular architectural forms. A ten-storey glass prism, its concise elegance reintroduces a spatial order.

Further east are residential areas, built on either side of the boulevard from the neighbourhood of Otoka onwards. What were once public green areas within these modernist settlements now give way to residential and commercial buildings. A high demand for housing has led to the recent completion of the **S2 residential and commercial complex (2)**, immediately adjacent to the boulevard. Three sculptural glass towers introduce vertical rhythm to the grey tonalities of the facades next to the linear, monochromatic mass of the Elektroprivreda headquarters (I. Štraus, 1978).

The most representative example of a hybrid object, in aesthetic and functional terms, is the **Importanne Centre (3)**, which comprises housing, a hotel, a shopping centre, office space, and an underground garage. Of its eight planned cubes, six have been completed to date, concentrated

‘There is growing discord between constructed / inherited urban spaces and new structures.’



1 ASA GROUP HEADQUARTERS (2006)
Architect: ADS STUDIO
Address: Bulevar Meše Selimovića 16



2 S2 RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX (2015)
Architect: BUTMIR - DOM
Address: Zmaja od Bosne 47



3 IMPORTANNE CENTRE (2010)
Architect: Studio nonstop
Address: Zmaja od Bosne 7-7A



4 ARS AEVI BRIDGE (2001)
Architect: Renzo Piano Building Workshop
Address: Vilsonovo Šetalište / Zmaja od Bosne



5 SARAJEVO CITY CENTRE (2014)
Architect: GRUPA. ARH.
Address: Vrbanja 1



6 ALTA SHOPPING CENTRE (2010)
Architect: Studio nonstop
Address: Franca Lehara 2



7 DVOR HOUSING (2014)
Architects: AHAKNAP and SAAHA
Address: Kalmija Baruha 1



8 PRIVATE VILLA (1933, 2015)
Architects: Mate Baylon (original design); GRUPA. ARH. (restoration)
Address: Koševo 40



9 RODITELJSKA KUĆA (2015)
Architect: Normal arhitektura
Address: Betanija



10 BBI CENTRE (2009)
Architect: GRUPA. ARH.
Address: Trg djece Sarajeva 1



11 FESTINALENTE BRIDGE (2012)
Architects: Adnan Alagić, Bojan Kanlić, Amila Hrustić
Address: Obala Kulina bana / Radičev



12 GALLERY 11/07/95 (2012)
Architect: MecoLada
Address: Trg fra Grga Martića 2



13 TURKISH CULTURAL CENTRE (2003)
Architect: Studio Zec
Address: Mula Mustafe Bašeskije 31/33



14 KIBE MAHALA RESTAURANT (2012)
Architect: Studio Zec
Address: Vrbanja 164



14 GAZI HUSREV-BEG LIBRARY (2013)
Architect: Kenan Šahović
Address: Gazi Husrev-begova 46



15 VIJEĆNICA CITY HALL (1896, 2014)
Architect: Alexandar Wittek and Ćiril Iveković (original design); studio URBING (reconstruction)
Address: Obala Kulina bana



16 KOVAČI MEMORIAL COMPLEX (1998–)
Architect: Aida Daidžić and Namik Muftić
Address: Širokac 22



17 PRIVATE HOUSE (2013)
Architect: Muhamed Hamidović
Address: Ocaknanum 58



18 KIBE MAHALA RESTAURANT (2012)
Architect: Studio Zec
Address: Vrbanja 164



19 NHRV HOUSE (2014)
Architect: FILTER
Address: Nahorevska



20 THE SMART HOUSE (2007)
Architect: Argentarium
Address: Husinjska 41

(Optimism for urbanity)

‘For more than half a century this area was a substantial and spatial vacuum.’

around two atria. With a polychromatic and dynamically articulated facade, and carefully balanced volume ratio, the centre has created a new boulevard identity in the place at which the main city centre of Marijin Dvor begins.

At this point, be sure to visit the Historical Museum (B. Magaš, E. Šmidih, R. Horvat, 1963), Sarajevo’s pearl of modernist architecture, subtly echoed by the National Museum complex (K. Pařík, 1909). Plans for the Ars Aevi museum of contemporary art were first conceived in 1992. The project for the museum building was designed by Renzo Piano, and intended for the free space between the white cuboid Historical Museum and Vilsonovo Šetalište (Wilson’s Promenade, running alongside the Miljacka river). While the construction of this facility is still pending due to a lack of financial resources, there is a rich collection of contemporary art on display in the Ars Aevi Art Depot (Skenderija Centre). To date, only the **wooden footbridge (4)**, which connects the museum complex, the riverside promenade, and the housing settlement of Grbavica (built in the 1960s), has been realized. Vilsonovo Šetalište (approximately 2000 metres long) itself represents a recreational green oasis in the heart of the city, particularly attractive in the afternoon and on weekends, when motor traffic is banned. It is undeniable that the construction of the planned Ars Aevi museum would contribute greatly to the quality of urban life, both in the location itself and beyond.

The historical and new parts of Sarajevo are connected by the main city centre of Marijin Dvor, yet for more than half a century this area was a substantial and spatial vacuum, as plans for its development changed over time. It was originally designed with cultural, educational, and administrative facilities (see the National Assembly by J. Neidhardt, 1956–1982), and then as a ‘downtown’ (see Unis Towers by I. Strauss, 1986). Today, it is being developed exclusively as a commercial centre, dominated by the hybrid complex of **Sarajevo City Centre (5)**, with its spectacular and striking form. The centre is arranged along the main transport intersection, where the boulevard ‘disappears’ into the network of streets in the historic town. Directly opposite is the **Alta shopping centre (6)**, whose designers nurtured a completely different architectural expression. Its reduced and interrupted white horizontal form is a symbolic reference to the ‘transport knot’, but is functionally derived from the dynamic network of its internal communications.

Continuing towards the sports, cultural, and business centre Skenderija (Ž. Janković, H. Muhasilović, 1969), the six-storey **Dvor apartment building (7)** attracts attention with its logically designed facade, which seeks ever better views and insolation (see A10 #62). Yet the design goes a step further, referencing the legacy of early modern housing in Sarajevo. A similar **modern villa (8)** was recently restored at the end of Koševo Street, modestly expanded with the clear distinction of newly added elements that do not in any way undermine its original value and authenticity. Koševo Street is part of the wide transversal axis of the Koševo valley, which descends from the north of Sarajevo towards Skenderija. Its largest part is occupied by a recreational sports complex, where the XIV Winter Games were opened in 1984. The complex of the Department of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology is situated on a hill above the valley, and opposite its imposing central building (B. Kurpjel, 1977), the **House for Parents of Children with Cancer (9)**, comprising ten apartments, is under construction. Once it opens towards the end of the year, it will be the first of its kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Transversal axes are extremely important in Sarajevo, due to the city’s linear structure, and their introduction has allowed for more efficient traffic flow and easier everyday life. The conception of the **BBI Centre (10)** as a ‘transparent shopping gallery’ and its accompanying square, along with the **Festina Lente pedestrian bridge (11)** (which features a covered rest area above the river) revived the green, pedestrian-friendly transversal connecting the Veliki Park (Great Park) with the Mak Dizdar riverside promenade (see A10 #48).

The area of the city most attractive to tourists begins at the BBI Centre and follows the streets of Maršala Tita and Ferhadija to Baščaršija, the old bazaar (built in the 15th century). Facing the square of the cathedral at the historic centre’s heart, it is worth visiting the **multimedia exhibition space (12)**, which was created from a converted apartment unit. Constructed as an interpolated ‘single facade’ object, the **Turkish Cultural Centre (13)** provided a demanding task in the reshaping of a house in one of the oldest streets. However, its extremely long and narrow lot did not prevent the architect from creating a rich and colourful indoor atmosphere. Less successful is the interpolation of the new buildings of the **Gazi Husrev-beg Library (14)**, due to the dominance of its dome in the spatial composition of Baščaršija. However, the main entrance is well-resolved, with its pedestrian galleries and facade facing the 16th-century stone building of the Gazi Husrev-beg Madrasa.

In June last year, the reconstructed **Vijećnica City Hall (15)** was officially opened after suffering heavy wartime damage during its incarnation as the university library. The restoration of this most recognizable of urban landmarks, on the very edge of Baščaršija, lasted two decades. Today, the edifice serves once more as a municipal seat, with newly added museum and gallery facilities.

Departing Baščaršija, our tour climbs the street of Kovači, which occupies the central part of a **memorial complex (16)**, consisting of old and new cemeteries, a museum, an auditorium, and an open-air theatre, and integrated with the walls and towers of the fortification system of the old settlement of Vratnik. Due to the sensitivity of the location, restoration and archaeological excavations are carried out gradually, with work on the stage and auditorium of the open-air theatre currently nearing completion.

From the northern slopes of the city stretches perhaps its most diverse and attractive vista. It was on these slopes that single-housing neighbourhoods (*mahallas*) were developed during the Ottoman period, and many remain to this day with their original character preserved, despite the constant transformations taking place around them. Among the winding network of narrow streets, it is possible to find a few inspiring examples of the integration of old and new. For instance, a modest upgrade to a **single-storey residence (17)** can be rich in architectural narrative, both in terms of its facade and interior. Through the architect’s sensibilities, narrative elements are skilfully composed in an unobtrusive and discreet whole, thus participating in the preservation of the current spatial harmony without losing integrity. The adaptation of the **Kibe Mahala restaurant (18)** rejects a literal reproduction of traditional elements, instead basing itself on an analogous interpretation of *genius loci*, to the smallest detail.

This tour concludes with a visit to two suburbs, Nahorevo and Vraca, which contain examples of eco-friendly residential architecture. The archetypal form, natural materials, and functionality of the **NHRV House (19)** together aim to incorporate local characteristics, and its reduced architectural vocabulary emphasises the intensive urban-rural landscape. Meanwhile, a **private villa in Vraca (20)**, with its playful composition and rich use of materials, achieves energy efficiency through the latest technological devices and installations. ◀

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

EUROVISION: POLAND

Poland is currently building the largest number of prestigious cultural projects in its history. Throughout the nation, these investments in public space have either already been completed in recent years or are taking place right now. Interest in architecture is growing. Yet, despite the great demand, there is hardly any public housing, and myriad unsolved problems regarding urban planning remain. The latter has spurred a boom in civic initiatives aiming to resolve the spatial questions. In the next issue, we investigate these and other issues relevant to this complex situation.



↑ Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre by Renato Rizzi

INTERCHANGE

ROTOR (BE) works on projects, events, and installations throughout Europe that question the value of existing materials and the meaning of such concepts as sustainability. Now the office has started its own demolition business, which recovers valuable materials and components, mainly from 20th-century buildings. It is a gap in the market that is also financially gainful. Maarten Gielen explains how it all came together.



↑ Rotor Deconstruction, 2015

OUT OF OBSCURITY

On the side of the mountain that overshadows Vaduz (LI) is an office building and art gallery by Richard Porro (1925–2014), a contemporary Cuban architect who resided in France. Designed for a private collection, it is his first work of architecture built in Europe. The building uses hanging elements of anodized aluminium, which should have oscillated in the wind (but was prohibited by the city council), and that today create movement with their reflections on the golden glass.



↑ Office building and art gallery by Ricardo Porro

SECTION

Light

...and much more. A10 #67 will be published 1 January 2016.