







MATEVŽ  
ČELIK

NEW  
ARCHITECTURE  
IN SLOVENIA

SpringerWienNewYork

#### Matevž Čelik

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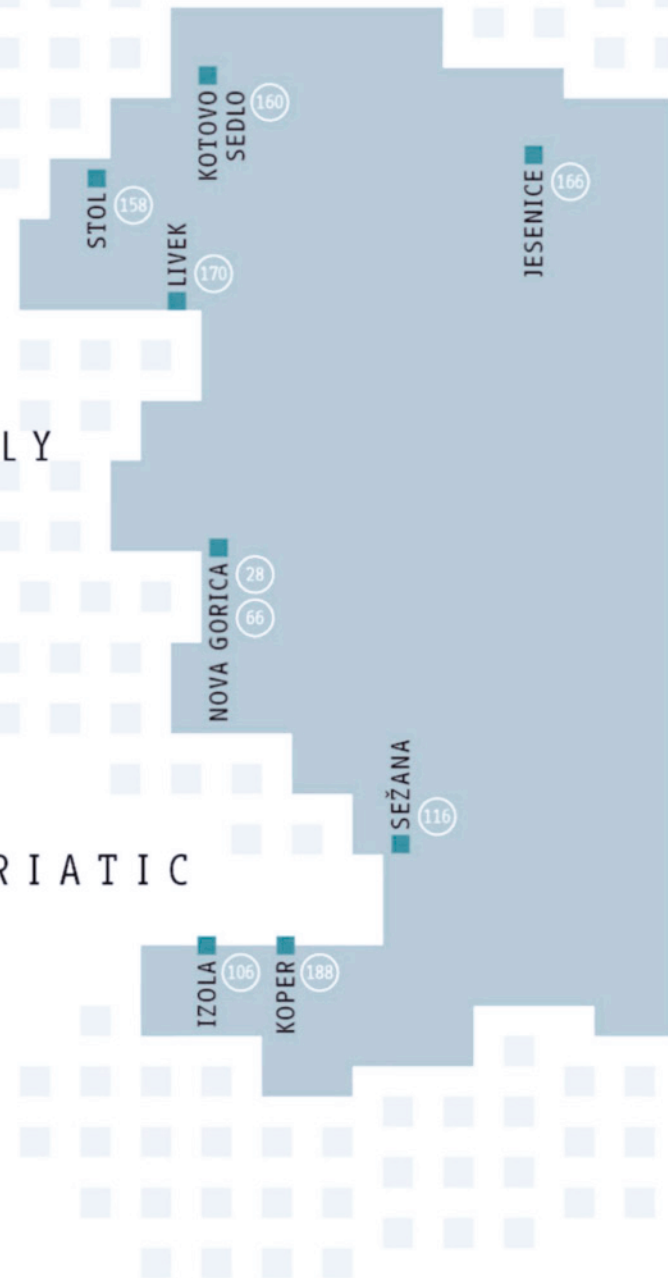
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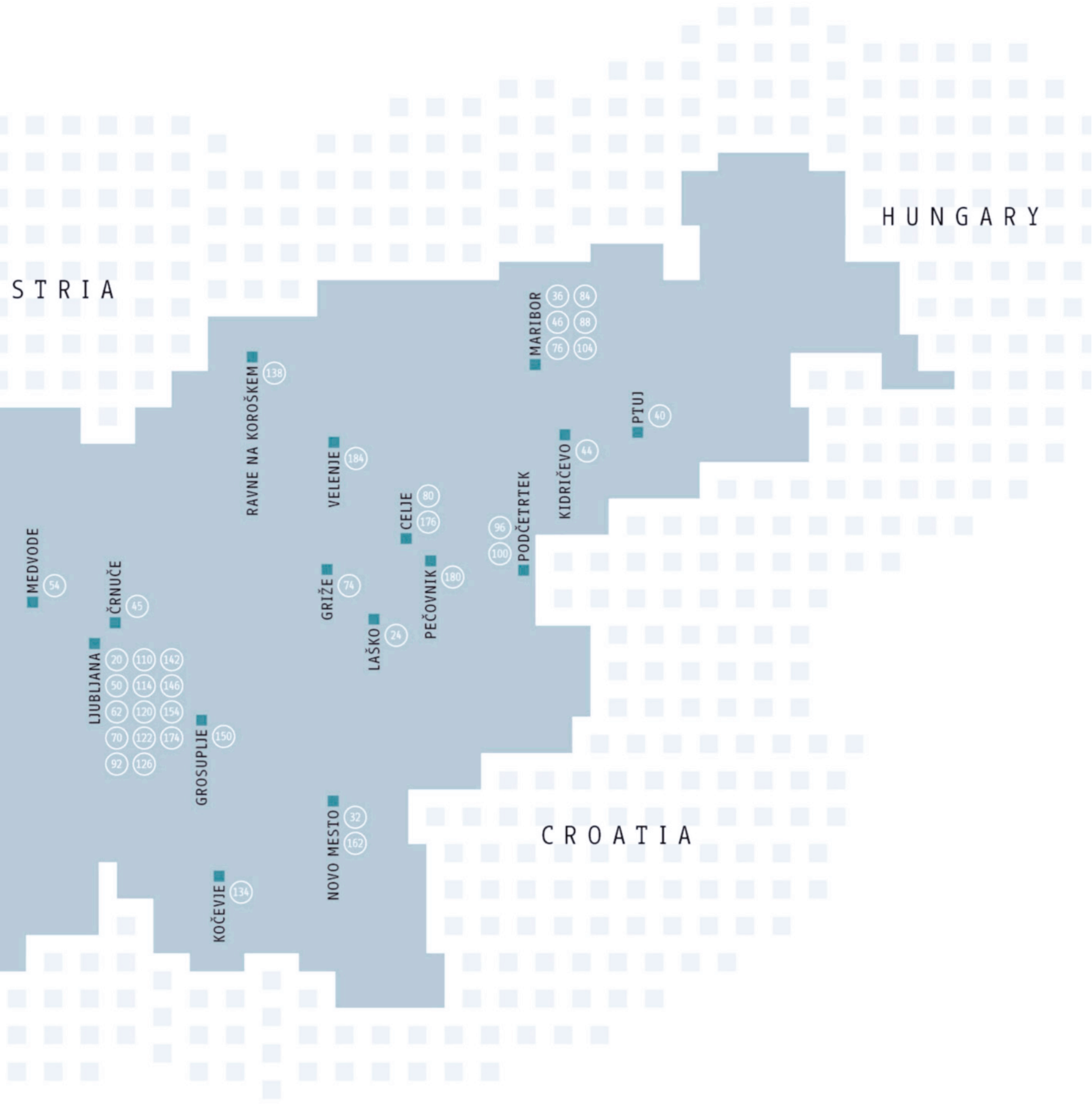
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STRIA

HUNGARY



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# INTRODUCTION



Only after WWII has the territory of the relatively tiny Slovenia, that cradles between the Alps, the Adriatic and the Pannonian Basin, been united within its present borders and under its present name. The Socialist Republic of Slovenia represented one of the constitutive republics of the socialist Yugoslavia, and the most economically developed part of the former country. Later in 1991, Slovenia was the first to declare independence after negotiations on transforming Yugoslavia into a modern democracy failed. In 2004, Slovenia joined the European Union and in 2007, adopted the Euro. Ever since declaring independence, Slovenia has strived to become a recognizable country, distinct and different. With a language that, for a non-expert, is hard to distinguish from Polish, Czech or most any other Slavic language, and a flag that looks very much like that of Russia, this task is not particularly easy. The name of Slovenia and its geographical position is often wrongly attached to other countries of similar name. Even history is no help here. For most of its history, the territory of modern Slovenia has been ruled by its powerful neighbors the Habsburgs and the Italians. Only after WWI, when most of its territory became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, did Slovenes become the nation of people which – at least in name – lived in their own country.

## **How Slovenia might be distinguished from other countries constitutes a question that today is hard to answer not only for a less-informed outside observer, but for Slovenians themselves in particular.**

Since 1991 Slovenia has been faced with new realities and a new identity that is only now emerging. Today's living environment, which has come to be formed by both past and present architectures, certainly represents one of the important elements of this identity. The economic and political transformations that have taken place in Slovenia over the past fifteen years are reflected in the country's physical space. While during the first years of independence most people didn't seriously question spatial identity, this issue has now become considerably more common. Slovenian cities are small, with only Ljubljana and Maribor boasting a population of more than 100,000. The pattern of urbanization at work here is traditionally rural. The built environment in urban areas consists of small fragmented structures, with each new development effecting a strong visual change. As it is, the country's exceptional natural landscape still represents Slovenia's main attraction



for visitors. Today 56% of the country is covered with forests; and since 2004, no less than 23% of the land area belongs to the special protected areas of the European ecological 'Natura 2000' network. Despite a thin urban tradition and a history in which Slovenia has served largely as a province administered from other cultural centres, contemporary architecture here is now taking a shape that is attracting attention both here and abroad and is contributing to the formation of a redefined national identity.

Slovenia grew to become one of the small architectural centres that developed a near-unique architecture by establishing its own architectural school in Ljubljana immediately after the fall of the Habsburg Empire. The present faculty for architecture in Ljubljana is still the only architectural school in Slovenia and represents the successor of the Department of Architecture that began operating at the Technical Faculty back in 1920. Though he cannot be credited with establishing the Department of Architecture, Jože Plečnik is considered to be the spiritual father of the architectural school in Ljubljana. He arrived at the school in 1921 from Prague, where he had been appointed chief architect for the reconstruction of the Prague Castle, aimed at converting it into the national presidential residence. Plečnik designed the

old building of the Technical Faculty where the first architects actually educated in Slovenia took their lectures. Above all, however, the architectural school in Ljubljana has been characterized by Plečnik's methods in teaching architecture that employ teaching methods he himself experienced under his Viennese professor Otto Wagner. He conceived the school as a series of workshops – collectives of professors and students that experienced the entire design work process together. The system of workshops – later referred to as seminars – survived and is still in effect today. The teaching – based on architectural composition and skillful drawing – defined the architectural school in Ljubljana as more artistic than it was technical. This specific way of study and the roots that extend beyond Plečnik back to his teachers Wagner and Semper, helped the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana to become one of the important architectural schools in Central Europe.

Plečnik inarguably laid a strong foundation for the development of architecture in Slovenia, just as he did in the ambitious town planning and architectural concepts he applied in transforming the provincial Habsburg city of Ljubljana into the Slovenian capital, and through his pedagogical work. At the same time, however, celebration – even glorification

– of Plečnik and his work in recent decades (including a recent nomination procedure by the Catholic Church to have him made a saint) often represents an obstacle in objective discussion on the development of contemporary architecture in Slovenia. Nevertheless, Plečnik is one of those few Slovenian architects whose work had a genuine impact on the development of world architecture. His playing with classical forms that often resulted in iconographic architecture became a source of inspiration for the world's postmodernists of the 1980s and 1990s.

Plečnik's student Edvard Ravnikar was one of the young architects who, after WWII – together with the help of political connections – took over the leadership of the Department of Architecture. Plečnik's devout Catholicism and his commitment to classical architecture did not represent an appropriate world view for the communist authorities. As a result he was marginalised both as teacher and as architect. Already in the 1920s and 1930s, Plečnik's determination to follow a traditional teaching of architecture evoked dislike among those of his students that had become interested in contemporary architectural movements. No less than seven of them left to work at Le Corbusier's office in Paris, including Edvard Ravnikar. Come the late 1940's, Ravnikar

deftly applied the knowledge and experience he had gained with Le Corbusier to turn the development of Slovenian architecture away from the socialist realism that had been promoted by the communists. Ravnikar also benefited from the simultaneous development of Tito's break with Stalin's Soviet Union, which resulted in any style coming from Moscow being politically questionable. Under Ravnikar, the architectural school leaned toward the contemporary architectural movements in Western Europe and the critical discourse that prevailed inside CIAM. Together with his students, Ravnikar took over the key role in the process of post-war reconstruction in Slovenia and across the far wider Yugoslavia.

**Slovenian architecture of the 1960's and 1970's became characterized by good application of materials, thoughtful spatial organisation and a particular detailing of fittings, joints and cladding.**

On the one hand, architects were forced to invent details anew, since there was little in the way of prefab building products. On the other hand, however, detailing represented a logical continuity of the craftsmanship brought to the country's

architecture school earlier by the proverbial architectural father Plečnik.

After Edvard Ravnikar's retirement in the 1980's, the last generation of his architecture students emerged as the critics of the modern utopia and the apologists of the postmodern theory of "the architecture of the city" as promoted by Aldo Rossi. The quality of work in the Department of Architecture was not to be equaled following Ravnikar's departure and the school's role in guiding the architectural discussion in Slovenia tangibly diminished. The postmodernists gathered around the magazine Architectural Bulletin (AB). By organizing symposiums, exhibitions and an active media presence, the members of AB's editorial board, the postmodernists – usually referred to as the "AB generation" – established themselves as the leading opinion makers. Alongside a weakened and unfocussed Department of Architecture, they easily assumed the role of alternative leaders of current practices and developments in Slovenian architecture – until many were promoted to professorships at the Faculty of Architecture in the mid-1990's. Despite their early critical approach and the changes they provoked, Croatian architect and critic Tomislav Odak propounds that Slovenian architecture of this period did not represent "any-

thing new, surprising or shocking to Slovenes, nothing that would interrupt the continuing line of architectural development." The most active representatives of the "AB generation" – Aleš Vodopivec, Vojteh Ravnikar, Jurij Kobe and Janez Koželj – still actively contribute to what today is widely presented as contemporary Slovenian architecture. Even today – just as they did in the 1990's – they maintain the position that architecture should exist as an autonomous, creative discipline, where the architect, involved in any intervention in space, should be held morally and ethically responsible to society as a whole.

The young architects that finished their studies at the faculty in the 1990s, after Slovenia gained independence, faced an entirely new situation. These years represent the beginning of the "transition", the period in which economic and political power – formerly firmly in the hands of the state – together with the practice of architecture underwent a significant shift in ways and directions very different from those known in Slovenia previously. The process of privatization and the restitution of nationalized properties have preoccupied the country for some time now. The new market economy has been forced to open up to new markets in the face of the transformation from socialist self-management

to late capitalism and with it, the loss of the country's traditional markets in the former Yugoslavia. During the first half of the 1990s, construction activity was extremely low. Adapting to the new rules of the free market proved difficult for the country's established architects. Working by and under the conditions set by the new private clients was largely incomprehensible for the "AB generation" that claimed autonomy for the architectural profession. Former large national architectural offices wound up operations or were privatized. The work of architects now unfolded within the irregular, sometimes conflicting, legal and administrative conditions that held big sway over town planning and the holding of architectural competitions. The new generation of architects only just embarking on their careers had nothing to lose. Instead of criticising or confronting the past practices of their teachers, the new architects established and positioned themselves through strategies that took into account the new reality. Describing the architecture of Ofis arhitekti, Dutch critic Roemer Van Toorn claims the Ofis arhitekti bureau "make the road while walking, by experimenting with images, organisation and connections." These architects administer architecture as objects of attraction, free from the big tasks of changing the world, from

creating something eternal. Slovenian critic Tomaž Brate talks about the work of Sadar Vuga arhitekti as architecture which no longer represents "a continuous arc of development of a type of architectural language, but a sequence of forms that substitute for the 'style'."

While Slovenian architecture communicated predominantly with itself for roughly half a century, the practice of architecture in this newly opened architectural market was supposed to abolish this incestuous condition. The international companies that came and opened branches in Slovenia were expected to bring new architects from abroad. But the Croatian architectural office Njiric+Njiric (since 2002, Njiric+) remain one of the rare architectural practices with international recognition that realized two of their most important projects here in Slovenia. Miha Dešman, present editor of Architect's Bulletin, writes that the work of Njiric+Njiric in Maribor marks an instance of design that "manifests Slovene architectural identity at the end of the 20th century".

The new architecture in Slovenia is the result of far-reaching economic and social change that has taken place in the country over the last fifteen years. Today the answers to questions dealing with maintaining quality of life and the identity of




cities, villages and the landscape in this small territory are diverse, yet are probably not particularly different from other parts of Europe that have faced and undergone the same transition. By the same token, however, upon examining prevailing design approaches we sense a considerable difference regarding the relationship to tradition and past practices. These are reflected in dealings with the relationship between the public and private domains, in architectural form, and in the articulating of the subject and matter of architecture.

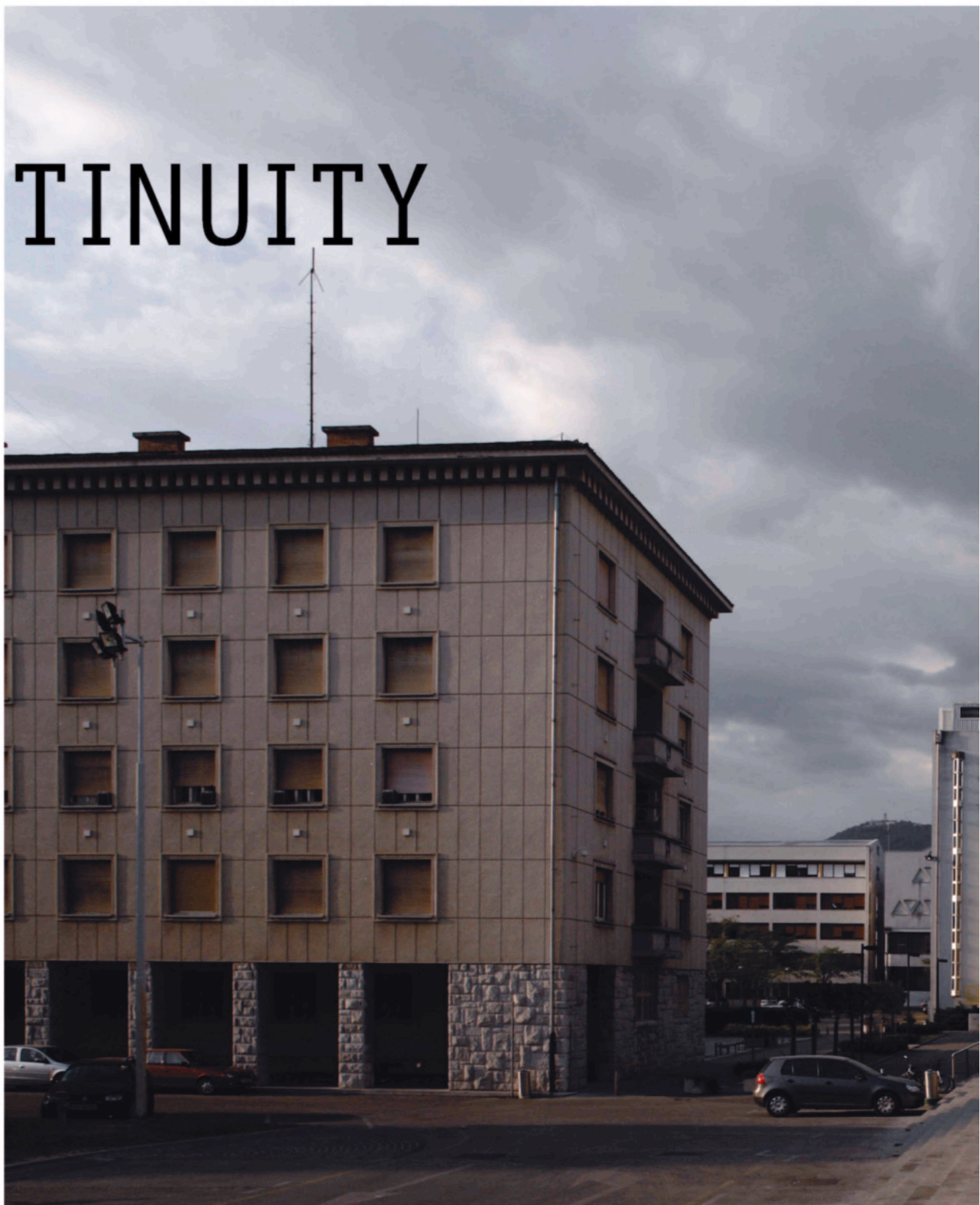
## **Architecture in Slovenia today presents a curious coexistence of the concepts of continuity and re-formulation.**

The defenders of continuity present something Roemer Van Toorn refers to as “critical practices”. These are those architects that established themselves in the period of postmodernism but now strive to continue their architecture on the basis of the modern school of Edvard Ravnikar of the second half of the 20th century. The younger generation boldly faced the new reality and develop design strategies that re-formulate architecture according to the new conditions. According to Van Toorn, re-formulating the established approaches of architectural design

belongs to the realm of “projective practices” that try to engage the real present-day potential they identify in the local environment. A third group is represented by those architects that strive to accommodate both – the critical and the projective approach. They focus on the quality of living and, in an operative way, try to reestablish a harmonious relationship between the inherited and the newly-created, or that between the buildings and their surroundings.

In any case, all of the different architectures emerging in Slovenia today only serve to represent the ongoing re-writing of the identity of space. While some of the projects may appear more powerful now, today, others remain in the background, yet endure. Almost nothing is ever entirely erased. In his project ‘Uncertain States of Europe’, Stefano Boeri strives to present the European space “as an open, available context: a surface composed of heterogeneous, continually changing geographical environments, acted on by multiple energies”. In the future, a particularly thoughtful approach to the management of space, together with the continued promotion of different architectural practices offers Slovenia an opportunity to become recognised as a place that represents a specific combining of innovative built environments with largely uncorrupted natural surroundings. 

# CONTINUITY







The architects committed to maintaining a continuous development arc of a specific type of architectural language in Slovenia were among the last generation of Edvard Ravnikar's students. They won recognition through their editing of architectural media in the 1980s and 1990s as postmodern critics of the established modern practice. Today they support the position that architecture in Slovenia should develop as a generic continuum of the modern movement from the time the architecture school in Ljubljana was steered by Edvard Ravnikar. The values sited as representing the modern movement are reserve, material modesty, simplicity and "honesty" in terms of the relationship between appearance and construction. These architects now hesitate in the face of these new conditions; and represent the practices that insist on confrontation with reality.

**Half a century of living under a system wherein the collective held absolute priority and sway over the private strongly characterized the relationship between the public and the private in architecture.**

For those upholding the modern tradition the public deserves privilege, while the private is often roughly treated as something trivial. While in the 1960's and 1970's expression of the collective was reflected in the uniform appearance of modern buildings, today it presents itself through the organizing of the spatial relationship between the public and the private. Public space receives particular attention when defining the public areas in buildings and connecting them to open public space. Across all of the periods, however, this different approach to the public-private relationship is most apparent in housing. Housing architecture of the late 1980's in Slovenia saw the theory of Aldo Rossi arguing to re-establish the mutual relationship between the city as totality and the building as its fundamental structural part. Practitioners of the modern tradition understand housing firstly as installing private spaces into public space that stretches beyond the limits of the plot and includes practically all of the surrounding urban structure.

This architecture treats the existing urban structure as an historical fact that needs to be



considered and preserved as a geometric code in the space. On the other hand, however, the architects believe that their work substitutes for the historic matter equally. This refers also to the subject of the context that is supposed to assure the enduring quality of the buildings. But the context for these architects represents merely physical qualities of the space into which new architecture is being installed – the *genius loci*. Their buildings appear either as artistic reinterpretations of the physical code of the space or as a geometric continuance of the existing structures. Often the design concept presents itself as a sentimental story drawn from the space. But the very poeticizing of the space makes this kind of architecture alienated from everyday reality.

Buildings are conceived as simple geometric bodies. By composing them into totality, architects take into consideration proportion and try to achieve some sort of artistic harmony. In order to achieve this they use different compositional axes. They find it important to control all parts of the project, from the basic concept to the choice of materials, fittings and the detailing of particular elements. The

classical elements of architecture such as entrance, corner, column or wall still deserve special attention. Here light is regarded as a material, with the architecture strongly based upon materiality. It employs traditional materials such as stone, concrete, wood and steel. At the same time, expressive design of the volumes and intensive colors are rejected. Detailing, a precise working out of the edges, surfaces and the harmony between the part and the whole is essential. The task is to create a neutral space that will gain colour and individuality only once it is inhabited by the users.

MC







**SECONDARY NURSING SCHOOL**  
client: Ministry of Education and Sport  
site: Ljubljana • year: 1998  
design team: Dominika Batista, Maja Ivanič, Lenka Kavčič, Sandra Faturo  
**architects:**  
**Jurij Kobe, Milena Todorič Toplišek**



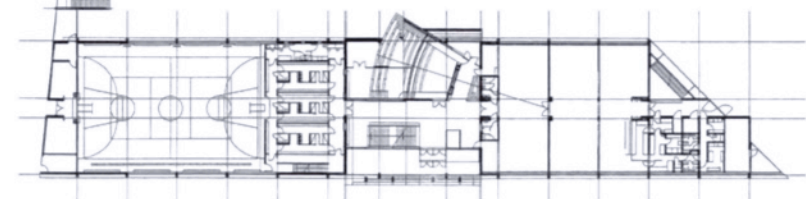
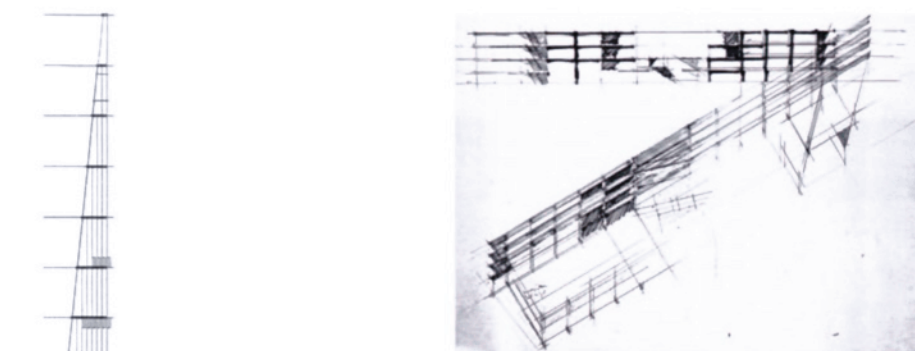
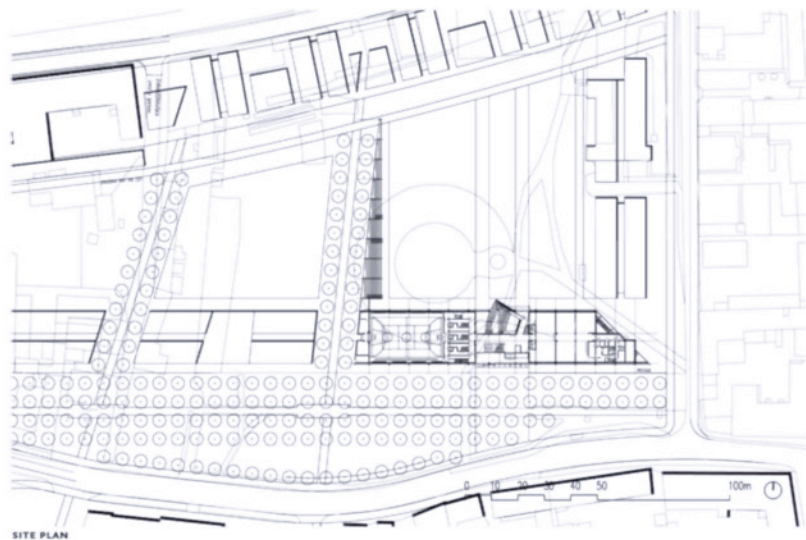
The complex of the university clinical centre occupies an extensive area along the left bank of the Ljubljana River, on the eastern side of Ljubljana city centre. This densely constructed site continues to be filled with new clinical departments and hospitals. The more sparsely populated right river bank appeared as a more appropriate site for the new secondary nursing school.

The new school building has been placed along the small park planted with '88 trees for comrade Tito', during one of a number of political actions organized by the Yugoslavian authorities in the early 1980s in an attempt to fill cracks in the system that became increasingly apparent after Tito's death.

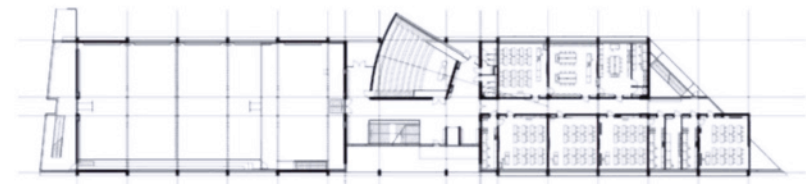
**The trees planted here for Tito became, after all, a pleasant public space. After the construction of the school, they also came to act as part of the school garden.**

The building has been conceived behind the park as a longitudinal volume facing the street. The volume is divided, in the classicist manner, into the central core and the side wings. The supporting concrete frame exposed on the frontages is filled with different rooms for education. The central part is designed as a multi-storey school lobby with staircases overlooking the park. Attached to the lobby are the most important spaces of the school: the large lecture theatre, the library and the gym. The main lecture theatre which is drawn out of the construction frame is refreshingly distinct on the rear front.

The inverted construction frame constitutes the rough concrete frontage. The vertical structure of the concrete columns is moderated by the long horizontal windows. Using an additional layer of glazing protects the lecture rooms from the street noise via the windows protruding out of the concrete surface. The continuous strips of glass are projected over the main frontage as balconies and fire escapes, referring to the school's fragmentary environment. The yard in the back is designed as the school's sports grounds, framed on one side by the school building and by the spectator stands on the other.



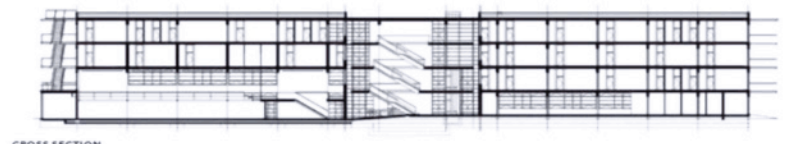
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



CROSS SECTION







"The longitudinal concrete block of the Secondary Nursing School continues the tradition of masterly works in concrete which appear simultaneously contemporary and timeless. The rational spatial concept and carefully studied compositions and materials – concrete, metal and glass – resulted in a modest but expressive building," Petra Čeferin & Maja Vardjan, *City Fragments*, A10, 2006, no. 7, pp. 68





**TOURIST OFFICE PAVILION**  
client: Tourist Association Laško  
site: Laško • year: 2000

architect: **Andrej Kemr**  
design team: Mario Babojevič, Martina Nemaninč









The city of Laško became a well-known spa resort in the mid-19th century after the construction of the Südbahn, the southern trunk line of the Imperial Austrian State Railways that connected Vienna and Trieste. Following the economic transition of the nineties, the thermal spa in Laško started with ambitious development plans once again.

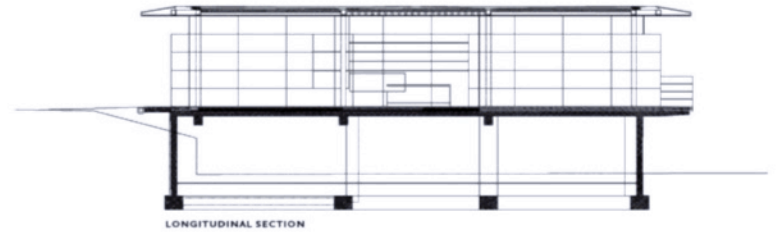
The new tourist information centre has been constructed to welcome growing numbers of tourists who come to enjoy the healing waters of Laško. It occupies a strategic point on the margin of the small park between the bus and railway stations. The old town lies just over the bridge, over the river Savinja. Because the Savinja is prone to flooding, the pavilion is raised on a concrete plinth, enabling visitors to enter from the station level.

**The pavilion in Laško is a derivative of modernist spatial experiments. Employing but a few elements the concept is clear and simple.**

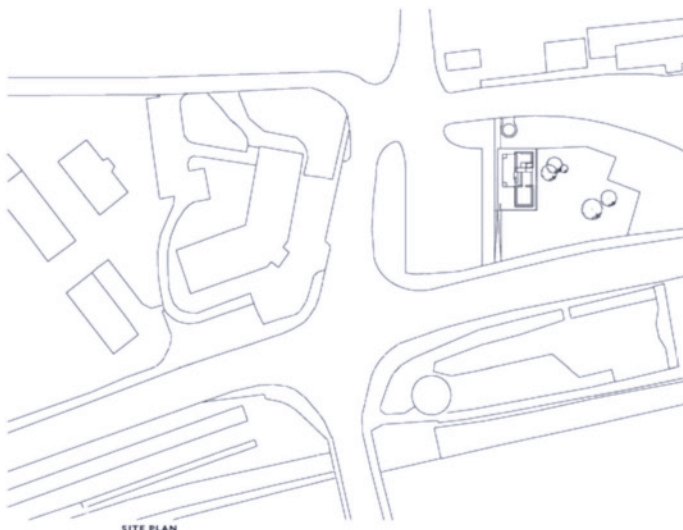
The flat roof is supported by twelve thin steel columns and floats over the wooden panel walls that envelop the rooms without touching the ceiling. The glazed front with information office, exhibition area and a small terrace faces the public space and the old city. Meanwhile more intimate spaces, a conference room and offices overlook the park in the background. Spaces are divided simply by furniture and panel walls. This light structure, together with big display windows, dissolves the border between interior and exterior.



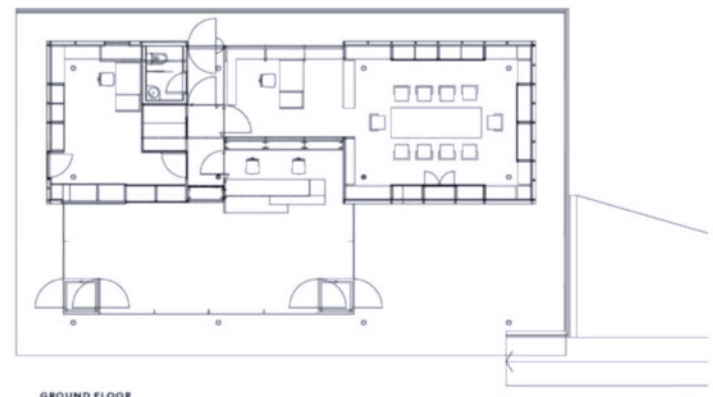
CROSS SECTION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR





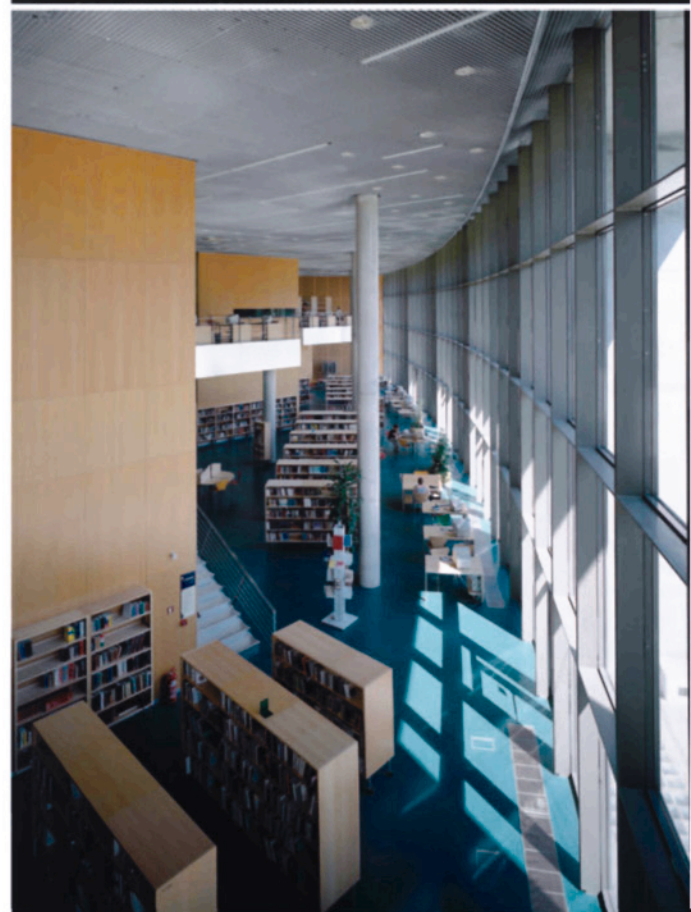
"The architecture of Kemr's pavilion is distinguished by its tactility, precise execution of the details and a particularly self-evident elegance that results from the unity of design, well considered proportions and an equilibrium among the parts with the whole..." Miha Dešman. Less is more. Architect's Bulletin, 2001, no. 151-152, pp. 122-125













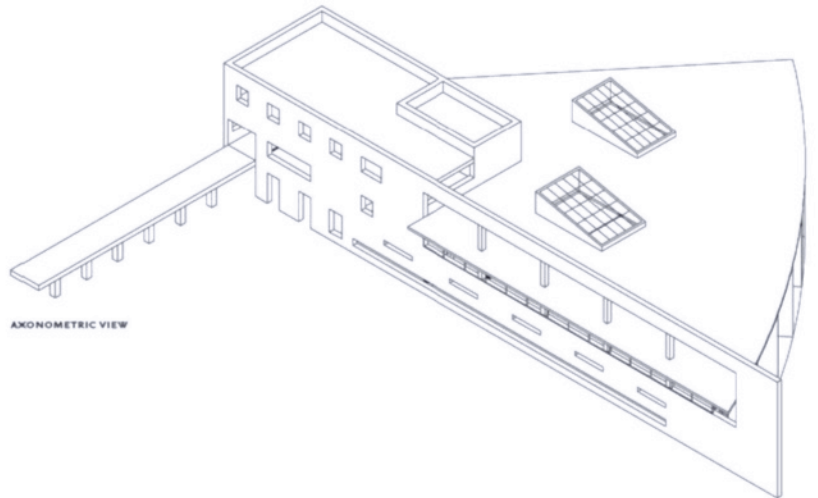
The city of Nova Gorica was constructed after WWII as a political response to the decision of the Allies to consign the old city of Gorica to the Italian side when defining the new border between Italy and Yugoslavia. Edvard Ravnikar designed the master plan for the new city as a new quarter of the old city of Gorica. He stretched one of the streets over the new border into the new, modern grid in Slovenia. The city was never actually completed according to the original master plan, but since construction began in 1947 it has grown into a town of 20,000 inhabitants.

**The new library in Nova Gorica forms a part of the complex of public buildings around the main square, together with the monumental socialist town hall and the postmodern theatre.**

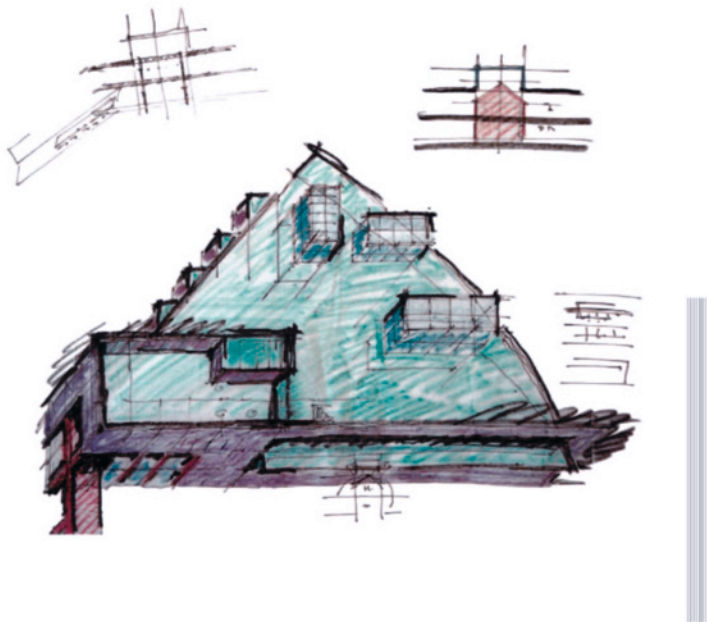
The main square is placed on the axis of the diagonal street that connects the old and new cities. The library is designed on a fan-like ground plan defined by the angle between the diagonal and the new grid of Nova Gorica. The building is conceived as a contact point between the urban structure and the natural environment. From the corner of the square it spreads towards the park on the back. The massive corner passes over into the thin wall covering the structure of the library behind.

Most of the books are openly accessed on the two floors of the lending library. The ground plan is open, with only the rooms of special departments standing in the middle like boxes. The wooden bookshelves separate the differently organized reading courts.

While the front faces the square as a regular, white plastered geometrical volume the park side is designed as a curved glass membrane, sheltered with massive concrete slabs standing in front of them. This double storey working space where the interior merges with the greenery represents the most attractive part of the library scheme.



AXONOMETRIC VIEW



GROUND FLOOR

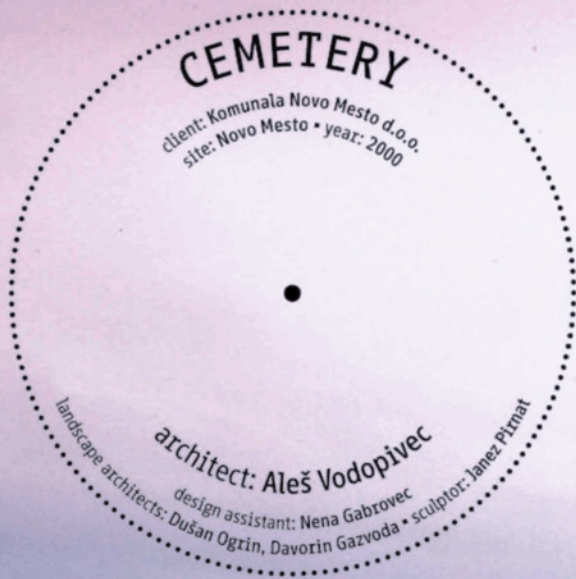




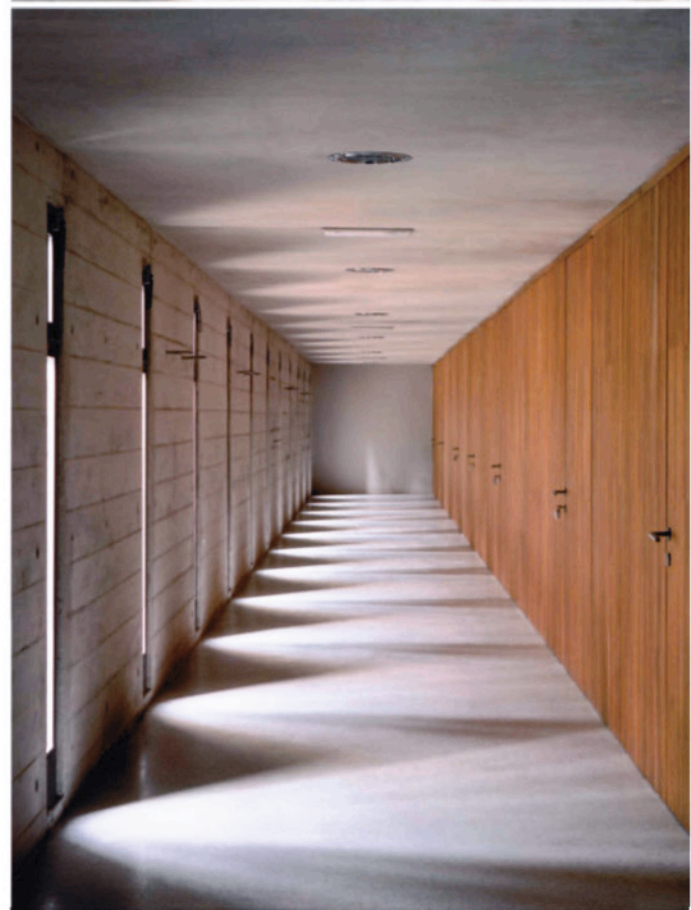
"The setting of the building demonstrates an Aalto-esque touch, while the elevations respond harmoniously to the distribution in the interior. The alignment of the facade with the line of the municipal building sets forth the dialogue Ravnika is engaged in by means of fenestration." Francesco Dal Co. Vojteh Ravnika, Arhitektura. Edited by Staša Gaber, Nika Grabar, Ranko Novak, Ljubljana: Ustanova Fundacija Piranesi, 2003













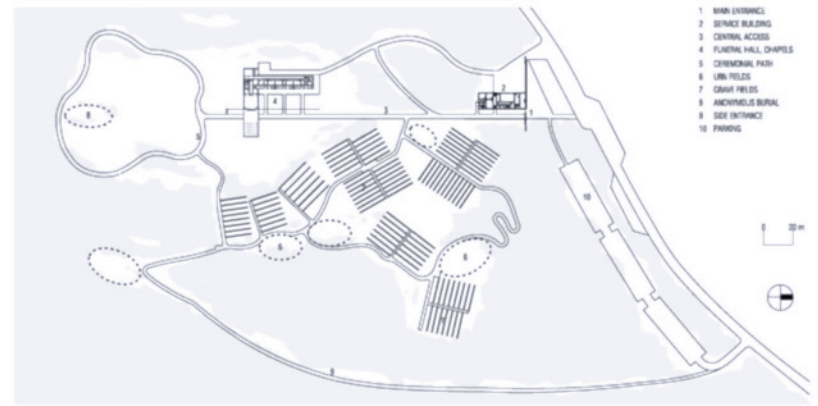
The intimate nature of death makes planning of a new cemetery an exacting task. In the city of Novo Mesto a survey was taken among the public to decide on the site and specific natural surroundings in which they would like to see family and relatives buried. In response, they decided on a garden cemetery in the forest. Later a design competition was organized, but only ten years later was the winning solution built. The landscape of the site is characterized by gently folded ground and the vertical lines of pine trunks that surround the clearings in the forest.

**The buildings inside the new cemetery in Novo Mesto are designed as a simple horizontal line that takes the visitor from the entrance to the farewell chapel in the forest.**

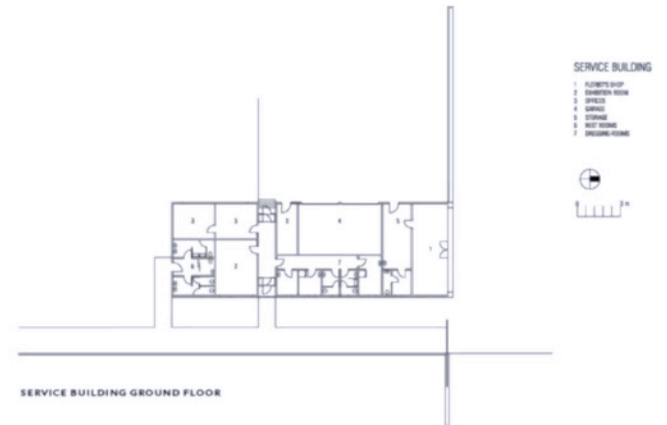
Along the path that represents the cemetery spine, different spaces are arranged according to a simple scheme: the entry gate with the flower shop and service facilities, and the farewell chapel with the mortuary.

The farewell chapel at the end of the path certainly represents the most outstanding element of this composition. A portico standing over the path symbolically indicates the transition to "the other side". The glass walls of the chapel unite the interior and the surrounding forest. On the other side, the portico is supported with densely standing columns that imitate a part of the forest and create an intimate shelter for the mourning.

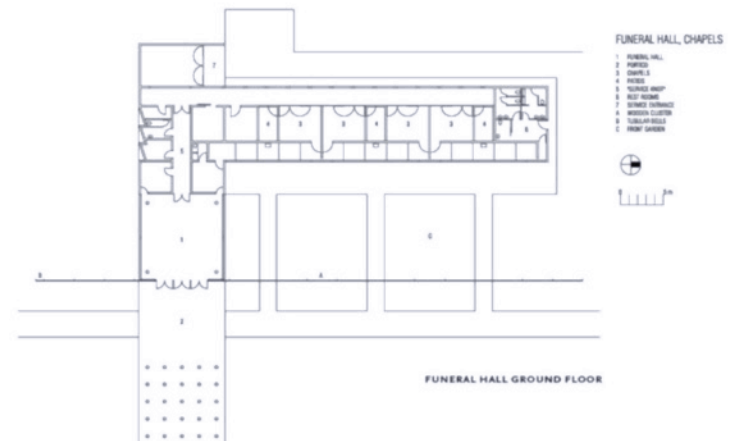
The mortuary is separated from the path by greenery and a long wooden fence that ends on the other side of the portico with a simple death knell. The rooms in the mortuary are separated by shafts of light. The sculptures in front are made of stones that have been found during the construction process and have been worked out with only the simple strokes of the sculptor.



SITE PLAN



SERVICE BUILDING GROUND FLOOR



FUNERAL HALL GROUND FLOOR







"The Novo Mesto Cemetery is literally a built ashes-to-ashes-dust-to-dust poem, a place where you might feel better than anywhere else in this world." Cristoph Luschinger. *Conceptual Experiments in Recent Slovenian Architecture. Territories, Identities, Nets. Slovene Art 1995–2005.* Edited by Igor Španjol, Igor Zabel, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2005













Slovenia's second largest city offers a host of living qualities one rarely finds in a single place. Central Maribor boasts one of the longest riverfronts in the country. The southern suburbs touch the forest and nearby ski slopes, while the view north offers up the vineyards that play an integral part in the city skyline. One of the nicest quarters of the city, celebrating a mixture of 19th century villas and 20th century housing lies just below these vineyards. And a new housing complex has sprung up within this heterogeneous urban structure.

**This ambitious project tries to take into consideration the demands of users that would like to live in the city but enjoy all the advantages of a single house with a garden.**

The apartments are settled in ten blocks that imitate the proportions of the neighboring classicist suburban villas. The blocks stand close to each other and are connected with open-air entry terraces. Separate entrances into the apartments and plenty of open space are intended to create a sense of spaciousness, airiness and privacy for the complex's residents.

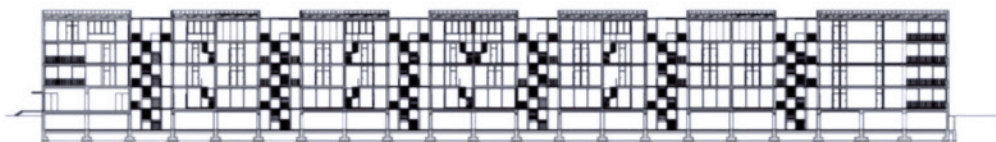
The supporting construction enables the dividing or joining of the apartments to adapt them to the changes over the lifetimes of individual households, and is designed as transverse walls that bear all of the installations. The apartments here are alleviated of their materiality: white-plaster frontages with light aluminium windows and shades produce the effect of a neutralized mould, which will only be given character by its inhabitants. In opposition, the entrance areas, designed as voids in the master plan, are filled with materials. Substantial usage of stone and wood both creates a sense of solidity and subscribes to the concept of individualized villas, connected by an open space.



SITE PLAN



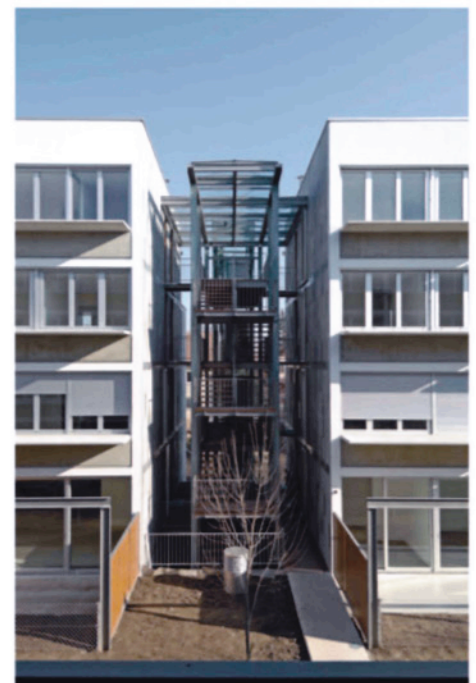
GROUND FLOOR



LONGITUDINAL SECTIONS



CROSS SECTION







"Artists know that the autonomy of their work demands a space as neutral as possible. But a man is at least as autonomous as a work of art, and we never speak of housing architecture as a space that reduces our autonomy." Aleš Vodopivec. *Sodobno stanovanje. Nove perspektive stanovarijske gradnje*. Edited by Anja Planišček, Aleš Vodopivec. Ljubljana: Stanovanjski sklad Republike Slovenije, 2004









# GRAMMAR SCHOOL

client: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  
site: Ptuj • year: 2000

architect: Zadavec Arhitekti

design team: Janko J. Zadavec, Stanko Arnuš



The grammar school in the ancient city of Ptuj was already founded in 1869. Since that time the territory of Slovenia has experienced several governments and school reforms. One of the reforms adopted in the nineties re-introduced the concept of the grammar school as a secondary school that provides the most comprehensive education to students planning to attend university.

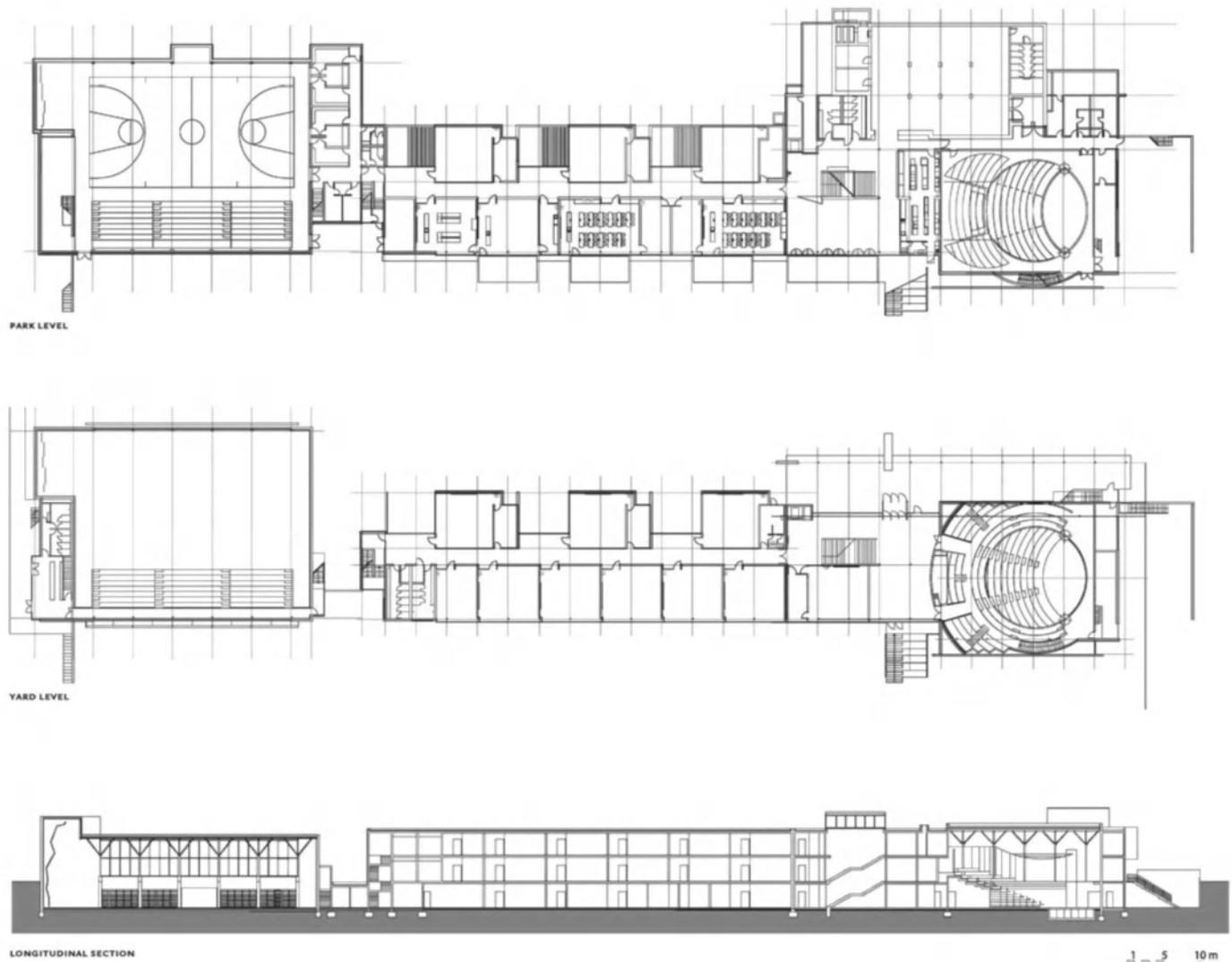
Trends indicate that the number of young people considering attending university is increasing, as are the number of students studying at grammar schools.

**In Ptuj the new grammar school had to be constructed to address both needs – the growing number of students and contemporary teaching methods.**

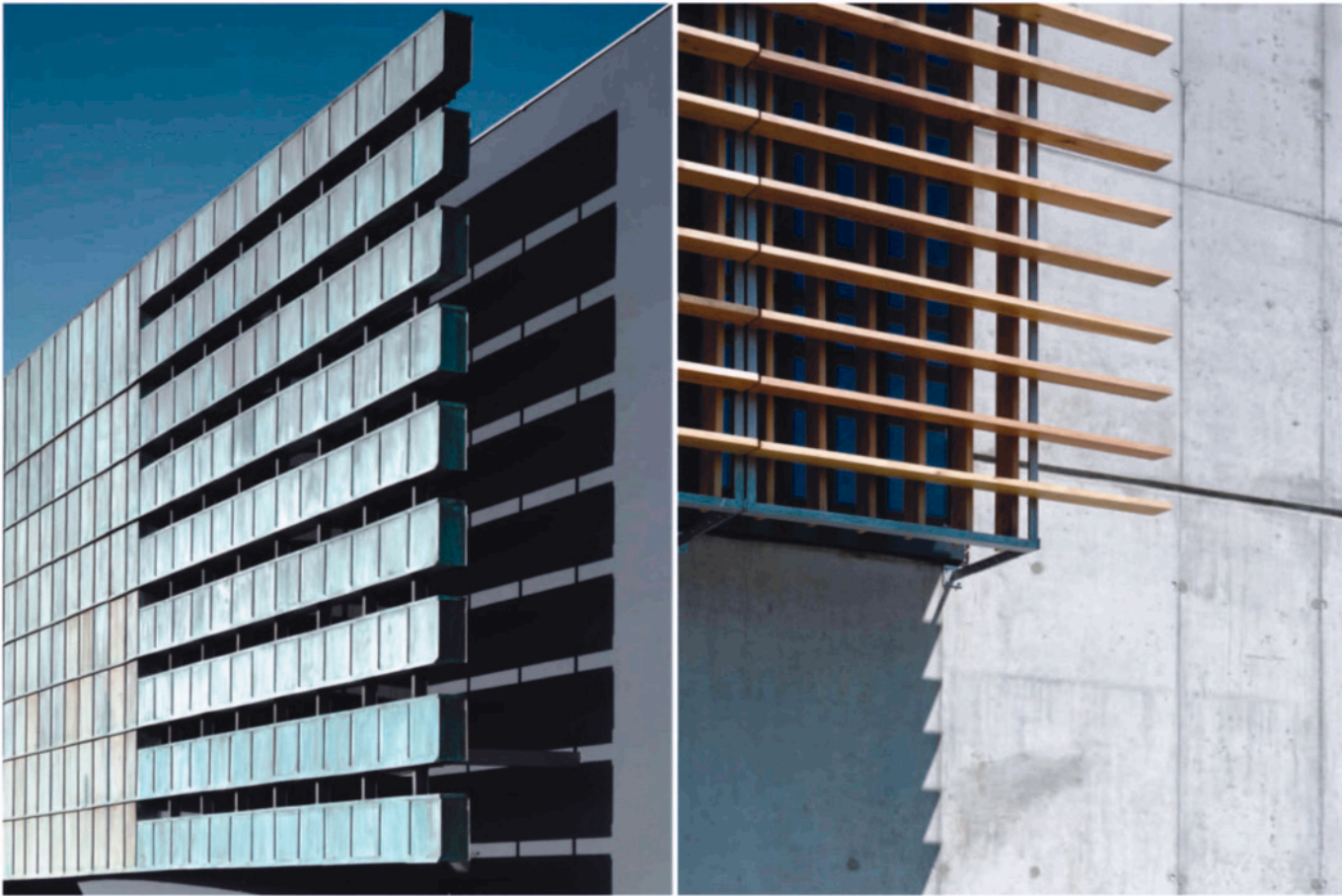
The site for the new building was identified in the area of an already existing school centre, between the old, medieval city and a complex of suburban housing blocks from the 1980s. The site for the new school is characterized by a stream that winds its way through a range of untidy green plots.

The new building has been placed along the stream. The terrain that sweeps down to the water bed has been used to organize the surrounding open space on two levels: the school yard on the upper part and the public park on the lower. The school is designed as a longitudinal composition of three volumes: the classroom wing in the middle, the gym on the west and the entrance wing on the east. While on the southern side the classrooms appear as a compact wing, they are organized, on the upper side, around the three atriums that provide daylight to the lower floors. The main school entrance is organized on the upper level and designed as a portico, with the school administrative offices above.

The main body of the building is constructed in rough concrete, but heavily fragmented by applying different architectural elements and materials on each side. The office wing is designed as a box clad with red composite panels, while the southern frontage of the multipurpose hall is covered with a copper screen-like structure. The special wooden sun shades have been designed for each side of the gym, and the classroom wing is glazed with a graphite-coloured aluminium structure.







"The distribution of areas opens a deliberate dialogue between the inside and outside world and clearly delineates the introverted school area for student gatherings in the open, separating it from the public area along the erstwhile stream, which – thanks to the building – has now been convincingly redefined and promoted to a public green area."  
Uroš Lobnik. A Building in the Twilight Zone. Oris, 2004, Vol. III, no. 11, pp. 68–77







PORTER'S LODGE

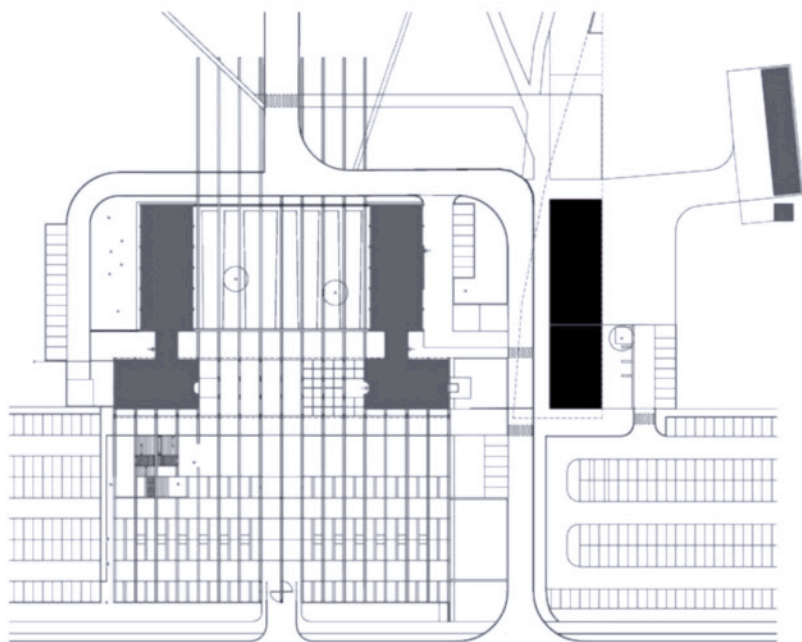
client: Talum d.d.  
site: Kidričevo  
year: 2004



architect: Zadavec Arhitekti  
design team: Janko J. Zadavec, Stojan Skaličev, Olga Tomarjenko







SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR



ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

The town of Kidričevo is a curious place, named after the first president of Slovenia's socialist government. The origins of the town date back to 1942 when the Third Reich's 'Vereinigte Aluminium Werke' started construction of a bauxite factory. After the war the Slovenian government took over the construction and completed the factory in 1954, associating the project with an entirely new industrial city that today numbers some 1,500 residents. The factory, employing nearly 1,000 workers, grew to become one of the world's most successful aluminium producers.

The factory administrative building has been conceived according to the master plan by the architect Danilo Fuerst, dating back to the end of 1940's. The edifice was designed as a monumental block, supported by pillars on the ground floor, thus marking the entrance to the factory. The colonnade on the ground floor was actually the front gate of this large industrial complex.

After the reorganization of the factory in the 1990s, the gates were moved out of the administrative building, which now has been renovated according to the original design of the 1940s. The new factory gates have been placed besides the building along the driveway. The shift demanded the construction of a new porter's lodge.

**In actual fact, the new porter's lodge in Kidričevo has come to appear as a large shelter, with the control room, the factory fire station, health centre and bicycle shed beneath.**

The footprint of the new building takes the dimensions of the old administrative building's side wings. The roof is projected out over the driveway as a large cap which sweeps over the bicycle shed into the greenery, where it is pinned to a sculpture-like concrete wedge. The aluminium frontages are mute with only one window placed on the corner facing the driveway.



"The renewal of the office building in Kidričevo resulted in a complex solution that should in no way be regarded by the experts as something ordinary. The project met three main goals: It preserved the original urban plan and architectural design, restored the original, and useful, office space in the old urban fabric, and rearranged the entrance scheme to form a gateway to the large industrial complex that is born technically and functionally state-of-the-art." Uroš Lobnik. Več kot sodobna priredba klasične slovenske socialistične arhitekture. Večer, Arhitekturna beseda, 28. december 2006, Vol. LXII, no. 300, pp. 15











Here the Pohorje mountain range comes down to the city, with this area developing into the city's most important sport and recreational region, with ski slopes, mountain trails, thermal spa and a golf course in the planning. Since the south of Maribor boasts well preserved nature, pleasant old houses and one of the most important sources of the city's water supply, every larger project here opens fierce debate about the extent and quality of construction in the area. The discussion over how to weave the urban and the natural environments together is well justified.

The suburb of Radvanje has always been an attractive place to live. This otherwise quiet place is now faced with a growing demand for the development of new housing.

**The new project situated immediately below the ski slopes of Pohorje had to tackle the question of how to build on the border between the built and natural environments.**

Along the main street that connects the cable car of Pohorje with the city centre, the neighborhood is walled in by higher blocks of flats. On the back side of the blocks the low terraced houses are composed into parallel rows that end on the bank of a small stream. Every house is entered from the north side. Living areas open southward toward woody slopes and ski trails. There are two apartments in every house but these can be joined together to form a larger residence. The intention here was to provide equally pleasant open air living area for all residents alike, regardless of the floor they lived on. Therefore the upper apartments include a spacious roof terrace that is supposed to replace the garden on the ground floor. Living areas on both floors are extended outside onto wooden decks that are covered with lattice.

The garden side of a row appears like a unified slab with big windows. Only wooden railings in the garden indicate different properties. On the front side the row is visually separated into houses by a trapezoidal roof and entrance design. Allotting the rows to particular volumes opens the view to the forests for the houses in the back rows.



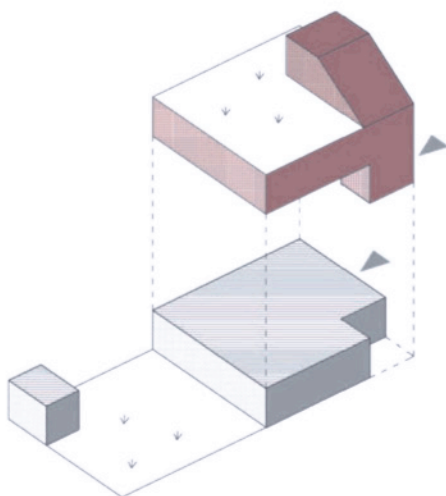
SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

TERRACE



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



CROSS SECTION





"This settlement is one of the first examples of middle-sized low and condensed housing construction that is distinguished by diversity of building types. Likewise it represents an example of a new building type in the city and an ambitious architectural concept."  
Uroš Lobnik. Preurejanje Maribora. Urbana. Hiše, 2005, Vol. 6, no. 27, pp. 84-88











**OFFICE BUILDING**

client: Linde MPA d.o.o.  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2002

architect: **Matej Vozlič**

design team: Vesna Vozlič Košir, Tomaž Slak, Klemen Vodnik



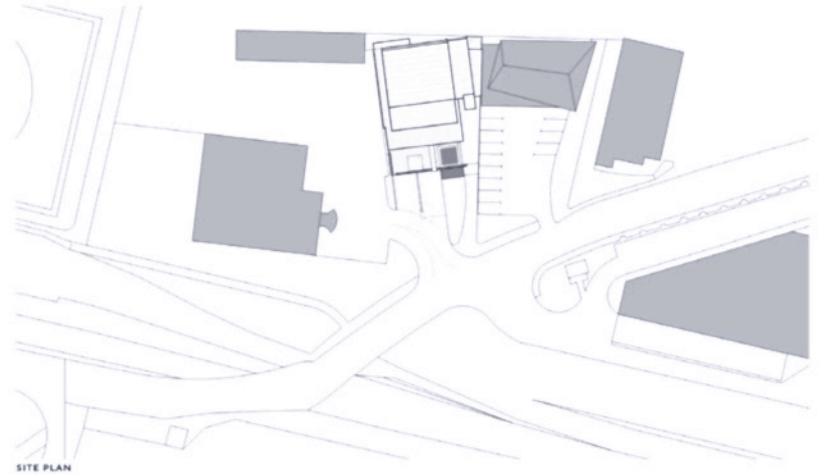
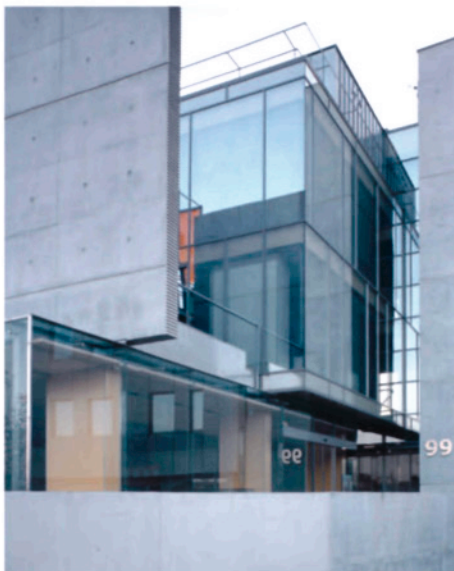
Since the decline of the socialist industrial giants, a part of the large industrial complex in the north of Ljubljana has been resettled by small and middle-sized companies that have now assumed a more important role in the development of the Slovenian economy. An automotive and transportation importer has moved into one such area. Lately, these new, successful entrepreneurs are increasingly coming to the realization that their economic success has a close correlation with the business culture they practice.

The new office building had to be designed in such a manner as to provide as much working comfort as possible in the office space and enable the employees to enjoy their work there. The company was prepared to sacrifice as much as one-third of the planned office surface, where instead, employees can spend breaks and recreational time. Naturally, this simple concept is intended to increase productivity and efficiency. Because the rather shabby surroundings offer little in the way of pleasant views, the building faces inwards.

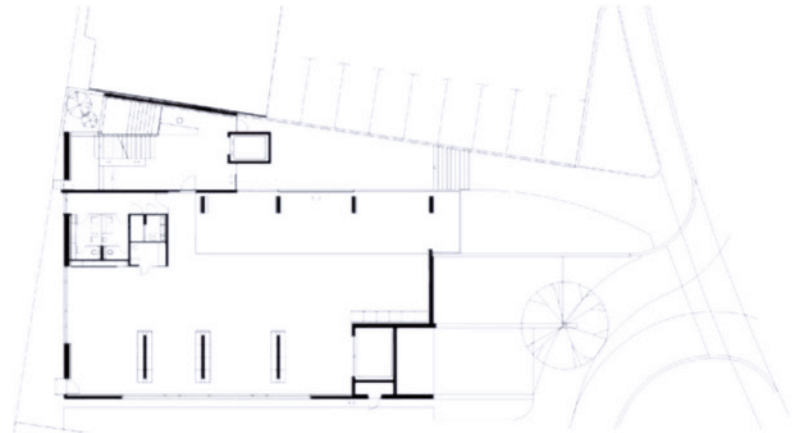
**The nature that is conspicuously missing in the neighbourhood is brought into this building as a designed surrogate – an open space, which forms a component part of the office space dispersed over three floors.**

The concrete frontage fences an atrium designed as a wooden deck with a pool and greenery; in addition, the upper floor contains two squash courts.

Because of the perfect working and detailed design, the edifice appears exposed in a neighbourhood where the value of space is usually reduced to maximum-usage floor space arrangements for all description of business activity. The concrete panelling has been designed to leave particular prints on the sides, making the walls appear as monoliths that enclose the space in a kind of primal manner. The humdrum shell, made of concrete walls and perfectly detailed glazing, is only enlivened by the colourful accessories on the front side.



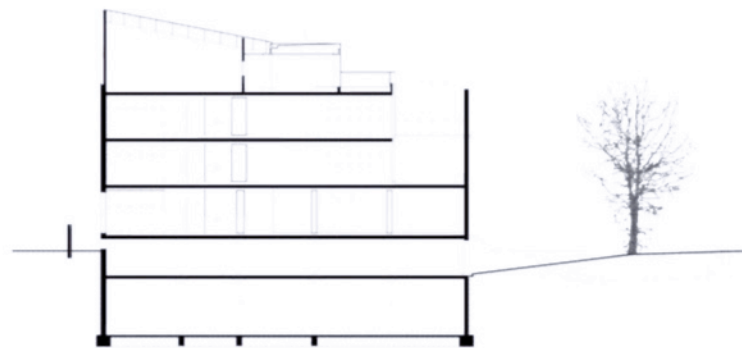
SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



CROSS SECTION





"What is evident in the realisation of the Linde MPA Office building is a sovereign control over architectural procedures related to the materials, the interior design and the structuring of the layer-like nature of the building." Permanent: Vacation – Permanent Work. Vera Grimmer. Oris, 2003, Vol. IV, No. 18











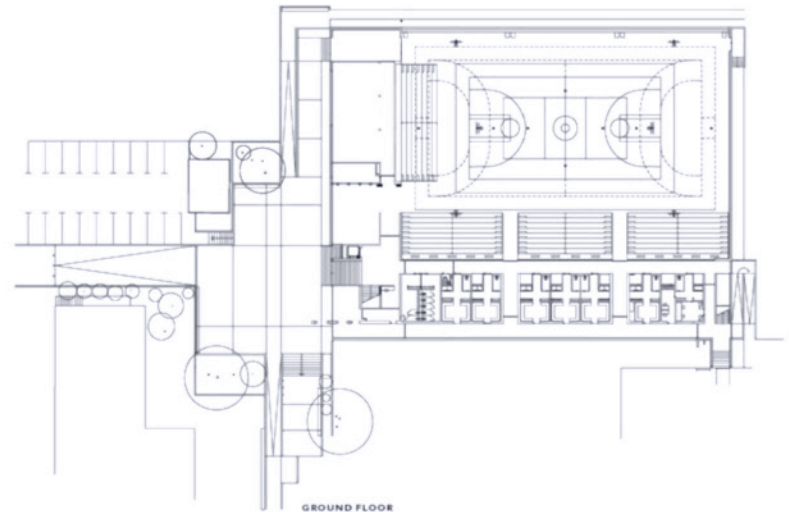
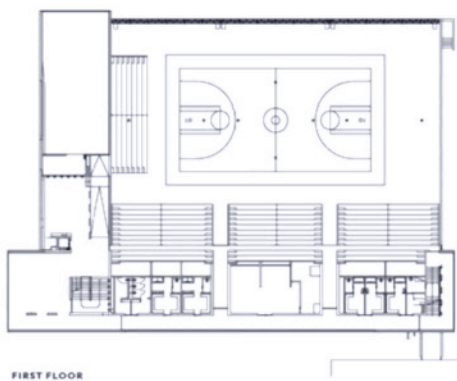
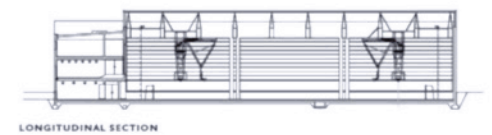
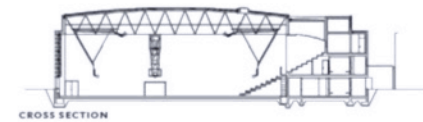
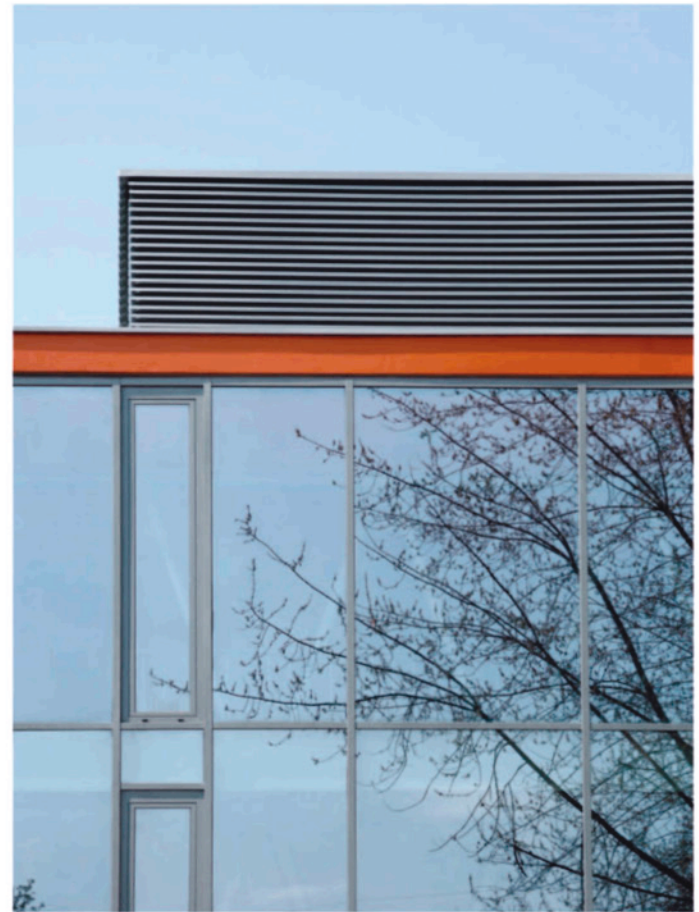
Despite not having been planned for this purpose, elementary school gyms in small towns often serve as a venue-space for different social events. The school gym in Medvode became too small to suit the increasing need for such programmes. Despite not having been planned for this purpose, elementary school gyms in small towns often serve as a venue-space for different social events. The school gym in Medvode became too small to suit the increasing need for such programmes.

**Medvode is one rare exception among small satellite towns around Ljubljana that have experienced recent population growth. As a result, the new building, constructed on the site of the old gym, is not designed as a school gym but as a multipurpose municipal hall.**

Alongside its role as a school gym, it serves as a venue for different kinds of recreation for all manner of people, sport, cultural and other events. The front side of the new building faces the school to which it is connected by a passage. To fit into the surroundings, this large construction has been sunk into the ground. It is essentially defined by three main volumes: the main sport hall, its longitudinal rear side with dressing rooms, and the transverse smaller gym. Both side volumes are designed as blocks that embrace the sport hall, one floating above the dressing rooms and the other closing the sport hall on the front.

The main sports hall can be separated by curtains to form three exercise fields for school sport practice. The design enables different access to the spectator stands according to the different kinds of events staged. When the lower part of the stands is pulled out, visitors enter on the ground floor; when it is put together they enter on the top floor, where the lobby also serves as an exhibition space.

The fronts are designed as rough concrete walls slashed with long windows. Only the front of the main sport hall is designed as large glazing that uses the surrounding fields as the scenery for events in the hall. The two smaller gyms are conceived as compact volumes with one side completely glazed. These big windows with orange painted frames are projected out of the concrete fronts and lend the building its particular character.







"Vesna and Matej Vozlič belong to the body of architects that know how to compose with volumes, understand the meaning of light, are familiar with materials and respect the genius loci. In short, they belong to those who design in harmony with the environment to the extent that their work becomes a part of a broader universum." Vesna Teržan. Slovenski Magazin. Last modified March 13 2007 [cited March 18 2007]. Available from World Wide Web: <[www.tvslo.si/slovenskimagazin](http://www.tvslo.si/slovenskimagazin)>









# RE-FORMULATING



The buildings that reflect more thorough re-formulation of the Slovenian architecture are designed by those architects who came of age during the period of political change and a major global shift in values towards individualism. Most completed their studies in the mid-90's, when "fraternity and unity" had already come to be replaced by individuality and political pluralism. Their careers began with them thrown into an entirely new situation. The stable, reliable working conditions enjoyed by previous practicing generations had disappeared in the process of transition. These young architects then had nothing to lose. Instead of criticizing the past practices of their teachers they boldly faced the new reality and developed design strategies that responded to the new conditions resulting from the recent economic and political transformation. They represent the practices that look forward and work towards offering alternative solutions.

Under the new conditions the initiative is on the side of the private sector and the capacity of the public sector is limited. Projective architecture

takes this as a fact. Architects in this new reality search for the positive things that could contribute to the development of a contemporary society. For them, understanding the needs and wishes of the new clientele can also bring external benefits. Administrative restrictions are considered to be a part of the creative framework. This architecture strives to break the stereotypes of living and working in an urban environment that, for decades, served and were taken as the only possible avenues. By fragmenting volumes, creating diverse ground floors, shifting windows to different sides of every floor and intensive colouring, the housing schemes designed by the practitioners of the new form reflect the tendency toward individuality. The general emphasis is on the diversity and flexibility of the rooms. When applying the supporting construction and floor layouts they leave schemes open for change, for different usage in the future. The user-public for this architecture does not appear as something homogeneous but something diverse, composed of and from different individualities.



**The starting point for this new design is not imposed by the aesthetic nature of the existing matter in the surroundings but by the new technology, by the needs and wishes of the users.**

The buildings appear as objects with their own visual identity kept distinct from the surrounding unarticulated urban environment. By applying intensive colours and unusual form they establish new spatial relationships and new identities in order to define the space anew. This architecture appears as relatively uncompromising in the face of tradition. It asks traditional questions of design anew with a critical distance to the past. While everything contemporary, experimental and unusual is considered something positive, the quality and meaning of existence of past things should be questioned again each individual time.

The architects who strive to re-formulate architecture pay more attention to aesthetics, decoration and ornamentation. The context of their

aesthetics represents the social reality. Architects strive for new forms and express the belief that any technological limits can be overcome. The concept of decoration deals with texture, surface and the fragmenting of volumes. Facades are designed as wrappings that contribute to the appearance of the buildings and do not necessarily reflect the logic of the construction. The purpose of the aesthetics employed by this architecture is to create icons that are easily remembered. The architects strive to address a broader public by employing tools and practices that are common in the fashion world: varying colours and textures, the folding of surfaces. They test colours and materials that, until recently, were not common. The shape and scheme of the building must astonish, enthuse, even provoke. The invisible detailing merely supports the aesthetic concept or approach; it is employed to provide the totality of the building's appearance. What appears to be essential is the clarity of the volumes and the perfection of the craftwork employed.

MC







# CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

client: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia  
site: Ljubljana • year: 1999–2003

design team: Jure Sadar, Boštjan Vuga, Josip Konstantinovič, Aljoša Dežleva, Tadej Zaucer, Simona Muc, Peter Šenk • architect: Sadar Vuga arhitekti • landscape architect: Ana Kučan

gospodarstva



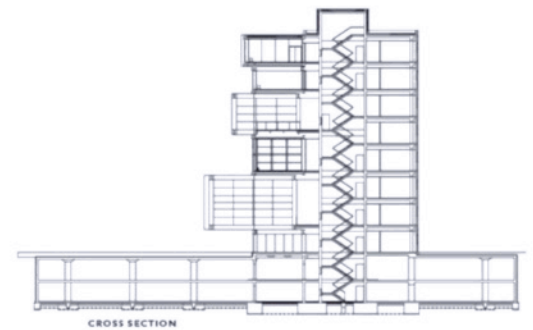
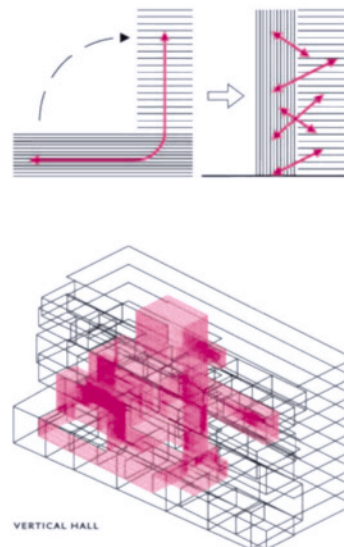
During the nineties, legal proceedings related to restitution of nationalized properties to pre-WWII owners forced many companies and institutions to relocate. This was the reason the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) had to move from their location in the heart of the city elsewhere.

**As one of the first public buildings of national importance constructed after independence, the CCIS building has often been employed as an icon to promote the new and successful Slovenia.**

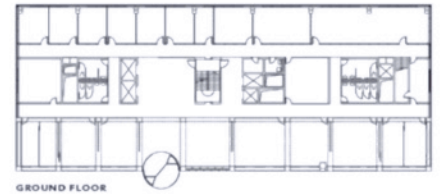
The Chamber's new building represents a positive result of one of the first architectural competitions held in independent Slovenia. The functional concept of the building is different than of similar office buildings. The public tract, usually organized as a broad ground floor beside the building, here stands upright by the common office block. This enables shorter and more efficient connections between the Chamber's public area and the offices. On the other hand, instead of a broad ground floor that would have occupied most of the plot, the space in front of the building has been left open to create a plaza.

The plaza spreads out below the full view of the lecture rooms, the library, the restaurant and other public rooms of the Chamber above. This public area is connected by "the vertical hall", an atrium-like space that penetrates all the floors and connects the lobbies on different levels. The front is designed as five steel frames irregularly piled one atop the other and filled with rooms. The office block on the back side is dressed with an ordinary glazing pattern. This duality of design is merely the reflection of the construction scheme. The office block is designed as a heavy concrete core supporting the light steel frames on the front that actually hang above the plaza.

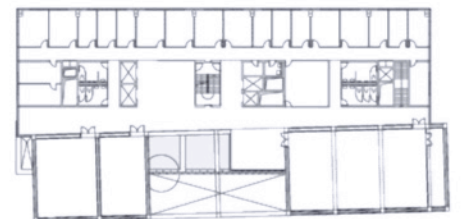
Inside just four years, the administration of the Chamber decided to glaze the large summer banquet terrace and create a new business club. The new structure atop the building's front has been designed as simply yet another room that fits into the steel frame, although deliberately applying different materials and structure.



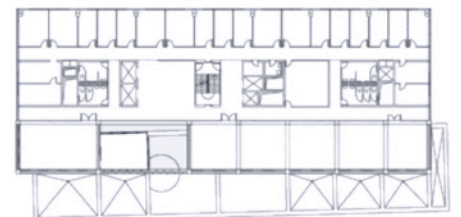
CROSS SECTION



GROUND FLOOR



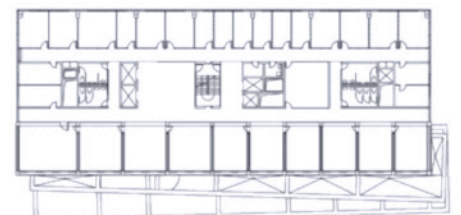
FIRST FLOOR



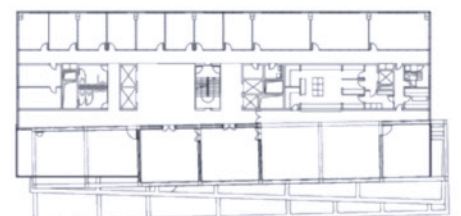
THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH & FIFTH FLOOR



SIXTH FLOOR



SEVENTH FLOOR





"The Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia building provides the most concentrated story of SVA architecture. The beginning is a radical cut from the methodology of the eighties and therefore, with the paradigms of its direct teachers: in an actual emptiness of space, in the obvious ruin of a city, SVA entered by forming a metropolitan motif of a plaza and "vertical hall". Instead of the sacred elements of entrance, corner, etc., one finds a complex structure of a business 'Raumplan.'" Sadar Vuga Arhitekti. Formula New Ljubljana. Introduction by Tomož Brate. Actar, Barcelona, 2006, pp. 7





SHOPPING CENTRE

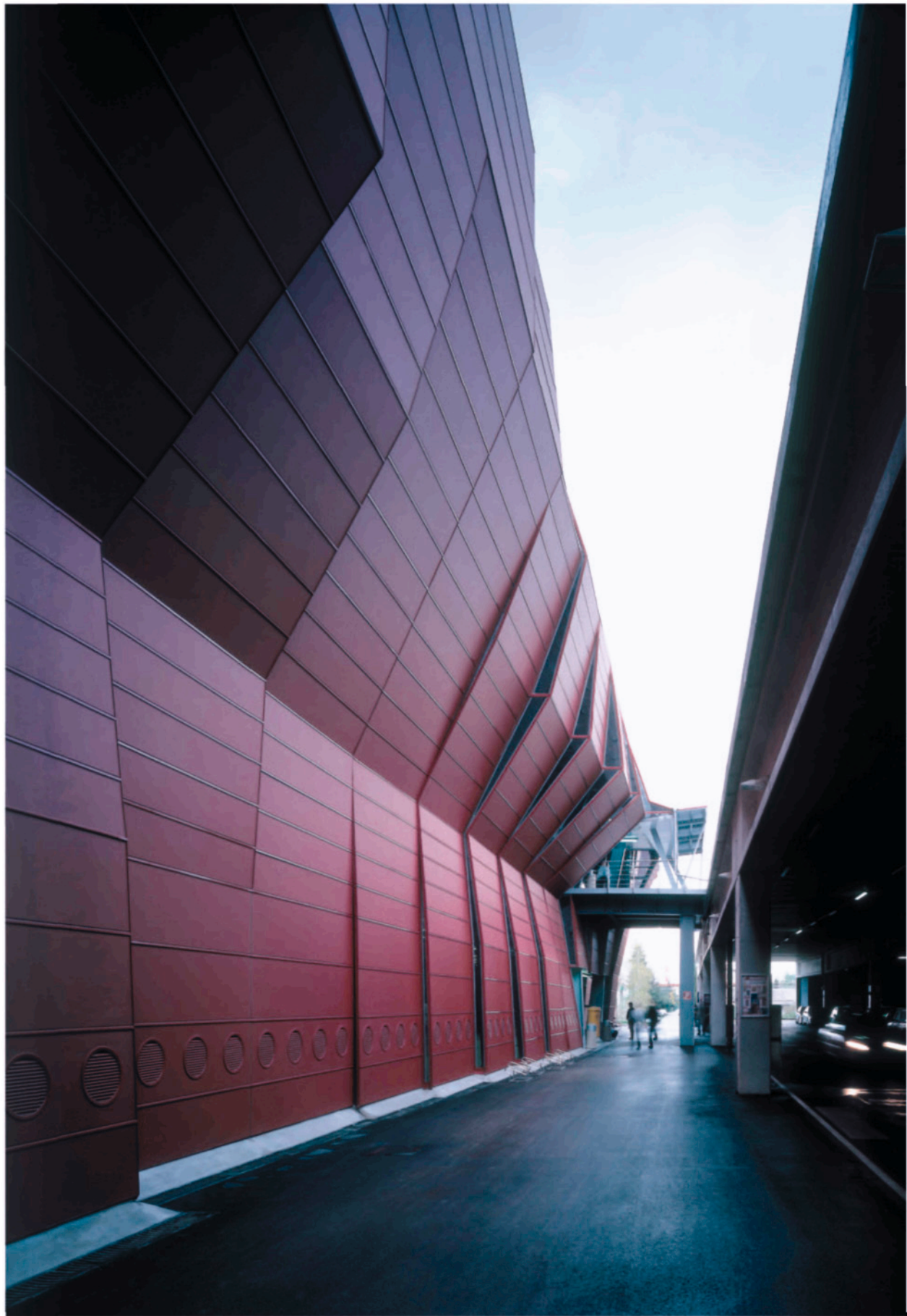
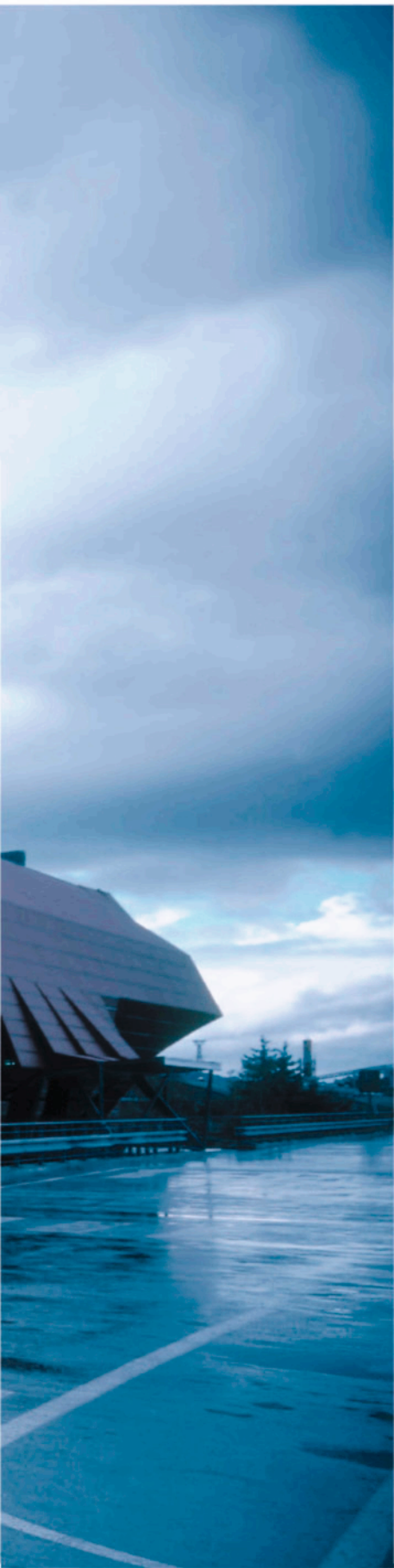
client: Mercator d.d.  
site: Nova Gorica  
year: 2001

design team: Jure Sadar, Boštjan Vuga, Dimitrij Mirah, Marjan Poboljšaj, Tadej Žaucer, Gasper Blejčec, Tina Hočevar, Klemen Pavlin • landscape architect: Matej Kučina

architect: Sadar Vuga arhitekti

Shopping Center





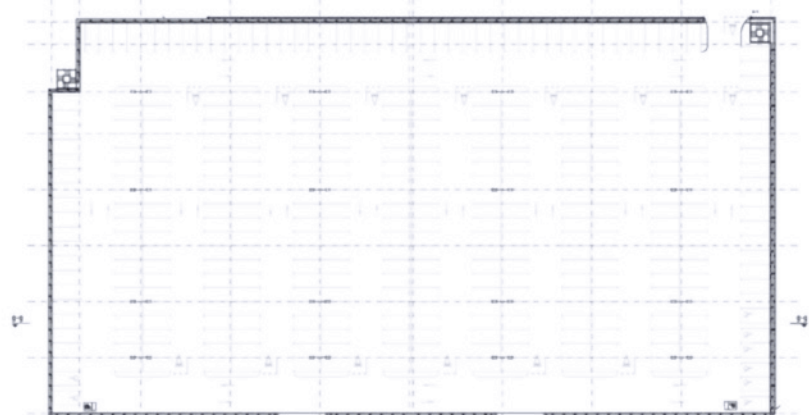
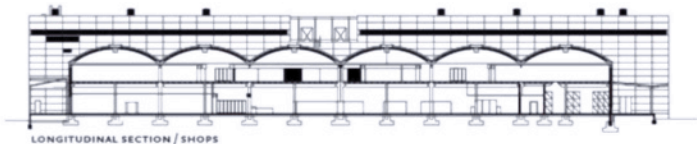
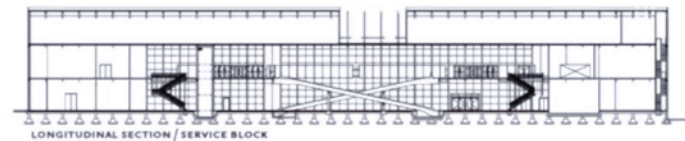
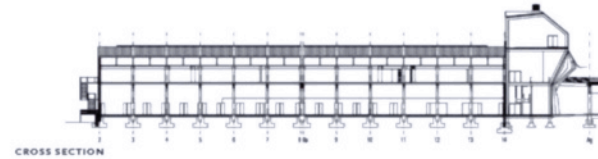
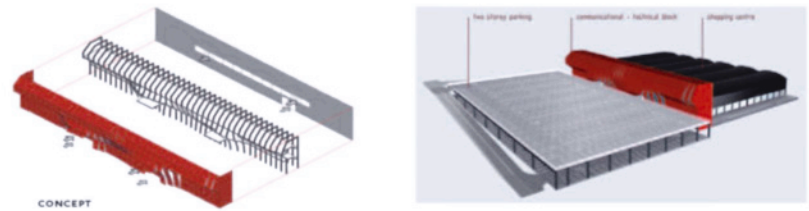


The industrial area of Kromberk in Nova Gorica should originally have been constructed according to the Ravnikar's modern master plan of the new city that saw sections of the old Gorica cut away in the redrawn borders following WWII. Later the master plan met with failure and the construction of factories planned in the area from early on followed a new layout.

**The collapse of the socialist industrial giants in the nineties coincided with the expansion of retailers. Nova Gorica, too, saw empty industrial plots posted along the regional road appear convenient for new applications like shopping centres.**

The retailer coming to this area decided to settle in a two-storey warehouse building from the 1970s. The generic concrete grid of the warehouse proved suitable to house practically anything. To make both floors of the shopping centre equally accessible and attractive, the new parking facilities had to be organized on a two-level platform in the front. The new technical and communication block installed between the old warehouse and the parking plaza definitely marks the most interesting part of this project. It has been designed as an interface that would enable easy circulation between the two levels and provide a new and more absorbing face for the building.

The service block has been designed as system of red composite bands of different profiles that follow the organization of the floor plan. They fold out according to the surface required for the entrance, lobby and the machine rooms. This way the service block assumes the shape of its contents. The structure of the service block is supported by steel frames with different sections. The rifts between the bands provide natural light in the foyer with staircases and moving walks. Yet inside, the rough steel frames combined with rough fittings and ventilation ducts, create the impression of a brutal machine swallowing up the shoppers.







"A casual observer is stunned by the brutality of the apparition – a strange 'object' (not a building, since there is not a single reference to the 'building' in this case – no window, no door, no roof, no wall), lying in a field of asphalt, swallowing its devotees (equipped with shopping trolleys, ready to sacrifice their credit cards) by the hundreds, as if from some long forgotten ritual." Vasa Perović. St. Supermarket. Oris, 2001, Vol. III, no. 12





# APARTMENT BUILDING

client: Begrad d.d.  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2004

architect: Sadar Vuga arhitekti

design team: Jure Sadar, Boštjan Vuga, Blaž Horčevar, Miha Pešec,  
Tadej Žaucer, Mojca Kocbek • landscape architect: Andrej Stigter









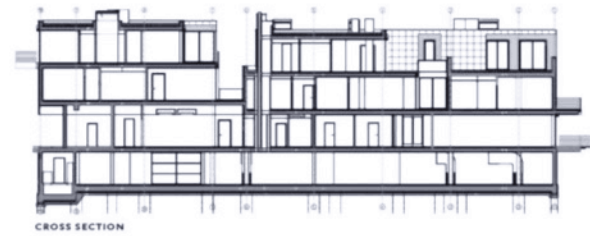
The 1990s in Ljubljana in particular saw the need for larger and more luxurious dwellings became more evident.

**The building in Trnovski pristan is one of the first, where the design of apartments for the nouveau-riche is associated with a different lifestyle and social experience.**

The real estate market in Slovenia is satiated with apartments built in past decades that were designed to assure a “basic means of existence” for the working class. Due to the population’s low purchasing power, however, the old worker apartments still represent the most common standard. But this very specific type of dwelling is connected to a lifestyle that today belongs to the past.

The plot for the new luxurious apartments in Trnovski pristan itself offered enough quality, being located on the river bank close to the city centre. The edifice is placed in the middle of the plot and surrounded with a lush garden. The entrance – instead of the most common dark and narrow corridor – is designed as a spacious, light and colorful lobby. The building is conceived as a conglomerate of 15 entirely different apartments that are composed in a unified volume. The starting point of the scheme was to fragment the housing block and provide diverse qualities for each dwelling. To make the volume appear even more fragmented, windows are shifted to different sides and the design of the cladding blurs the edges between the window and the solid surface with different tones of gray and black.

The ground plan of each of the apartments is different. To avoid the uniformity of apartment types, the logic of composing apartments into a steady construction opposes the logic of imposing the supporting structures one atop another. While the lower apartments are extended into the tidy garden, the upper units boast spacious terraces with a lot of greenery. Despite the short distances between neighboring dwellings, many indentations among them offer a fair level of intimacy.



CROSS SECTION



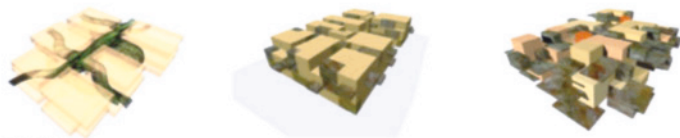
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



CONCEPT







"The fact is that in today's visual culture, it is no longer possible to pretend that architecture has nothing to do with decoration. Yet we have to understand that the idea of decoration can be entirely different. Not only are we confronted with a kind of pop-art facade in Slovenia – when program requirements don't allow for any transformation; but we also come across a kind of interface – or deep surface – in front of the building or even within buildings themselves which the users move through." Roemer van Toorn. *International Architecture*. Sixpack, *Contemporary Slovenian Architecture*. Edited by Andrej Hrausky and Sixpack architects, Ljubljana: Vale Novak, 2006, pp. 23–40





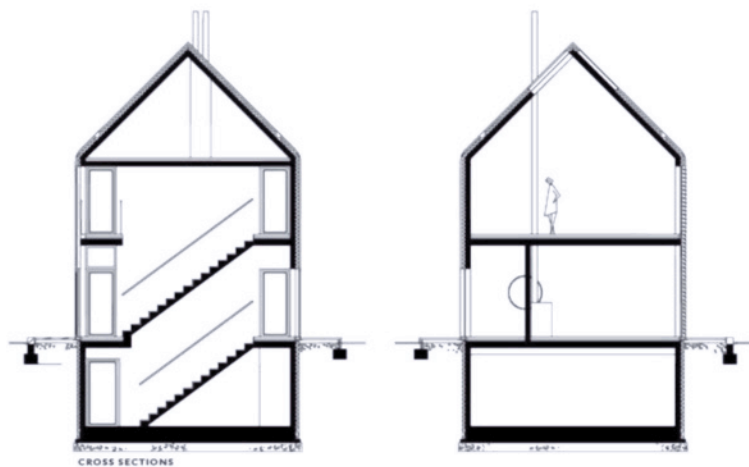
FAMILY HOUSE

client: private  
site: Grife  
year: 1999

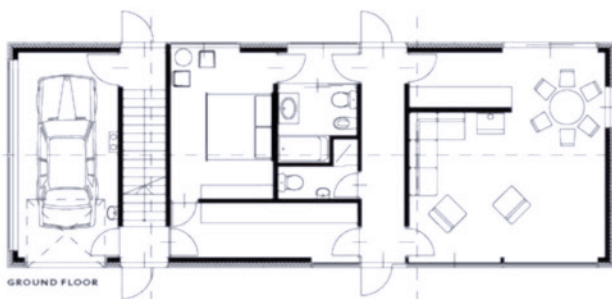
architect: Nande Korpnik  
design team: Herman Jelen, Uroš Traunet



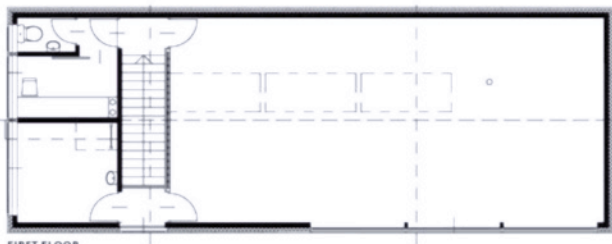




CROSS SECTIONS



GROUND FLOOR



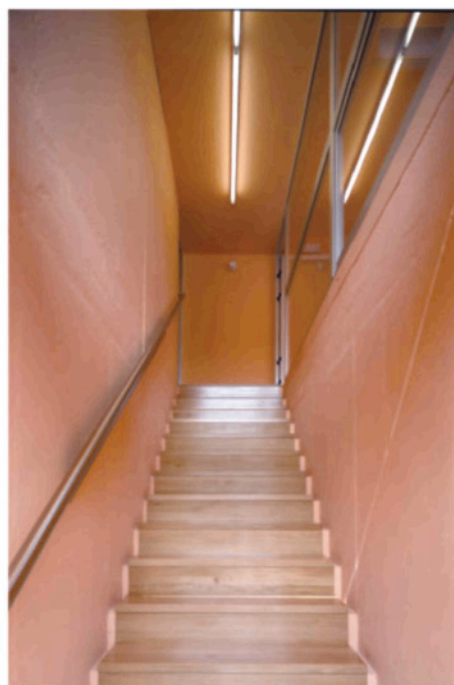
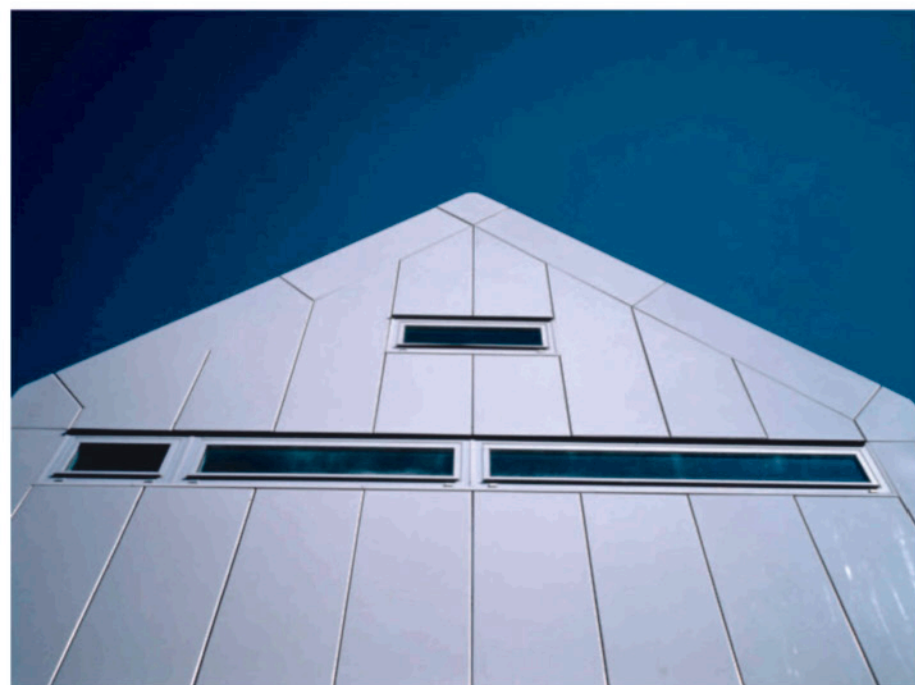
FIRST FLOOR

The village of Griže presents the image of the typical Slovenian rural environment, comprised of a mixture of self-constructed new family houses, old farms and stables together with indigenous characteristic hay-racks. Usually new construction in such areas is regulated by urban planning conditions that desperately strive to homogenize the appearance of the villages, prescribing standard sizes and the exact inclinations of pitched roofs.

**Despite this rigid frame that had to be used for the design of the house in Griže, the solution is a substantial departure from the usual.**

The family that commissioned the house deals in dressmaking. The house contains the work space for a fashion designer on the first floor and the apartment on the ground floor. The new house respects the planning conditions that actually called for the building of another house that would stand equal to the others around it. It has been constructed on the site of the old stable and, according to urban planning stipulations, had to be designed in exactly the same size and proportion.

But the standard building volume is clad with shiny silver aluminium plates, smoothly rounded where the walls touch the roof. It appears like a prefab object, bought from a shop, brought home and placed on the site. The front yard of the house is not fenced but connected to the street by an asphalt platform. Within a single compact envelope, the floors and the roof do not behave as particular and autonomous parts of the house. The simplified volume acts as an abstract archetype of the house, particularly when seen from the back together with the old wooden hayrack.



"With this project the architect solved, in a very simple and witty manner, the antagonism well known to all architects, which is: that people who like to drive the most contemporary cars want to live in the most old-fashioned houses. The search for a compromise between the progressive and conservative is of even greater importance in the relatively suburban Slovenia, where a more urban culture just cannot find its way in." Janez Koželj, *New Objectivity of the House in Griže*, Architect's Bulletin, 2003, Vol. XXIX, no. 145-146, pp. 10-13





OFFICE BUILDING

obst. Menoča d.o.o.  
1000 Ljubljana  
let. 2003

arhitekt: Nade Korpnik

izvajalec: podjetje Korpnik, Borde Bjelebrk, Jurneje Kapne







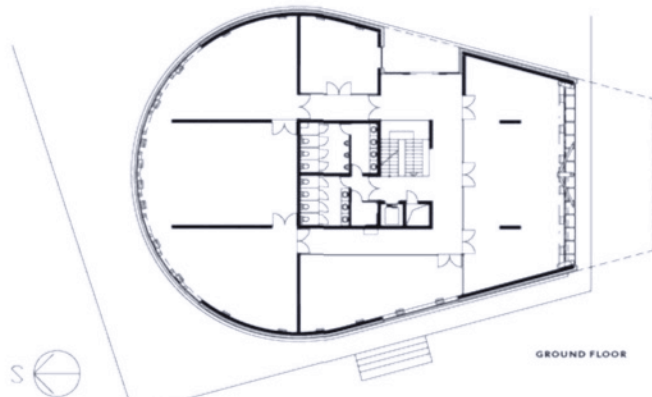
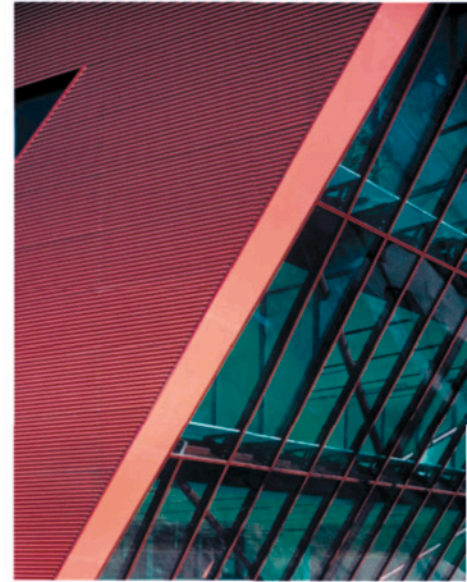
The large complex of a bankrupt industrial giant on the east side of Maribor has come to be resettled by smaller, more dynamic enterprises. A company that deals with the planning of sustainable energy systems occupied the greenery at the entrance of the ex-factory area. The design of the new headquarters demonstrates all of the technological concepts the company stands for. The edifice is distinguished by its exemplary low energy consumption.

**Although the red colour of the metal cladding characterizes this building as an obviously artificial object that stands in contrast with nature, the construction is actually largely environmentally friendly.**

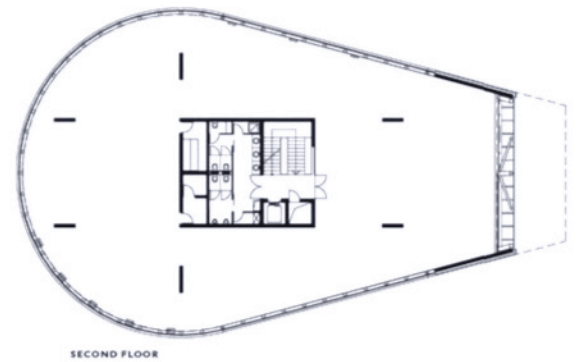
The architectural design scheme is, besides progressive heating, cooling and ventilation systems, also one that contributes most to the building's efficiency. The supporting construction is designed as a reinforced concrete frame surrounded by concrete walls. The walls

and the slabs are thicker than usual. The construction contains tubes for the thermal activation of the concrete core. During the winter, the concrete construction acts as a heating body while in the summer, it acts as a cooling element. On the roof and facades, thicker insulation layers have been used to prevent energy loss.

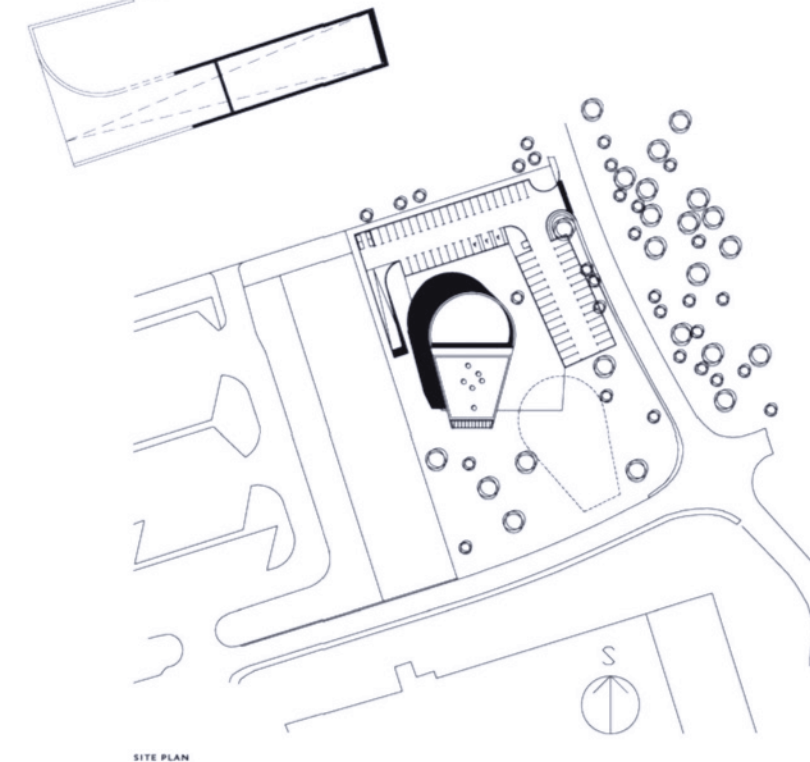
In the compact and attractive volume, the service core is placed at the centre, freeing up all possible stretches along the windows for work space and reducing the use of artificial lighting. The round, northern side contains the engineers' offices, while the administration is placed to the south. The southern front is glazed to collect the warmth of the sun in winter. But the front is inclined forward, hanging over the entrance and protecting the offices from over-heating that could be effected by the sun's radiation in the summer. The highly efficient use and control of sun radiation and internal energy sources allows for the possibility of not using heating until late in the autumn, while operation in winter is particularly economical.



GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



SITE PLAN



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

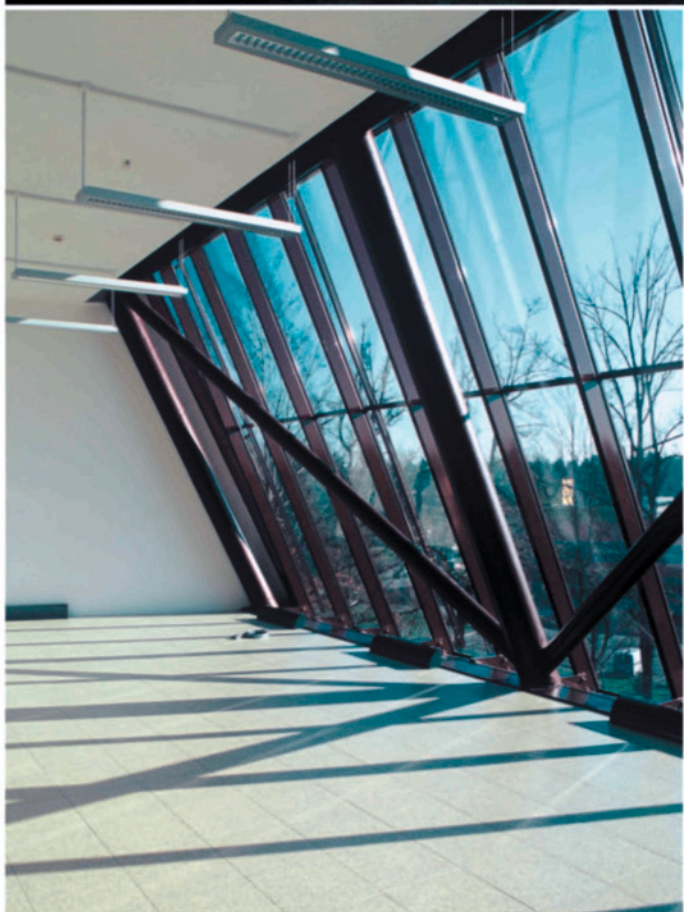


CROSS SECTION





"While the architecture of the developed western world experiences an expansion of forms, overcomes almost any technological limit – and when the rise of new expressive forms is almost necessarily associated with a new technology that the progressives used to put their developmental preferences into force – I can't get rid of the feeling that our architecture still falls exclusively into a formal framework. The context of the environment is understood as beautifying the building elements of visible composed structures outdoors." Nardè Korpnik. *Nov pristanek arhitekture v Mariboru*. *Architect's Bulletin*, 2003, Vol. XXXIII, no. 161–162, pp. 14–17











OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

Client: Maksimiljan d.o.o.  
Site: Celje • Year: 2005

architect: Nande Korpnik  
design team: Tina Škrinjar, Matej Kainz, Crj Reberšak, Helena Krempuš



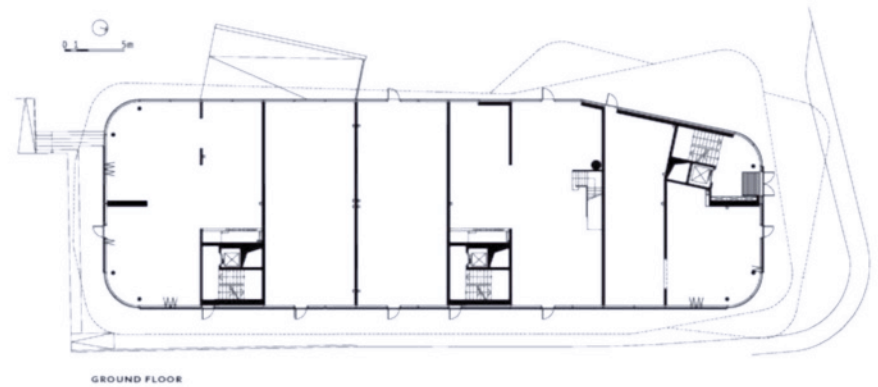
The city of Celje well deserves to be called the industrial capital of Slovenia. Even though the development of the city, from the time of postwar reconstruction through the early 1970s has been focused on the construction of new factories and worker housing, the city has never forgotten its medieval glory. In the 15 century the counts of Celje, who controlled half of the territory of modern Slovenia and acquired large estates in southern Hungary, Croatia and Slavonia, represented one of the important political powers in Europe.

**Now after the process of de-industrialization the city of Celje has seen in recent decades, the developmental initiative has re-focused on the neglected medieval heart of the city.**

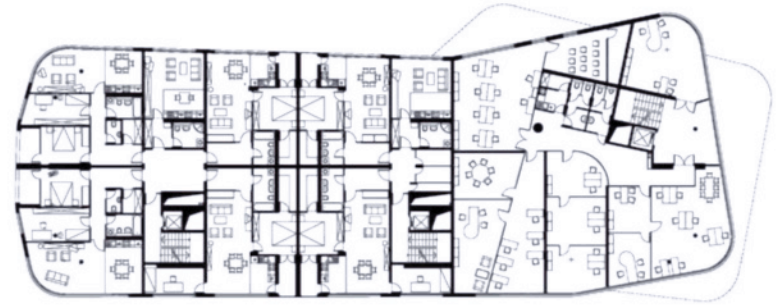
Properties on the outskirts of the still very attractive medieval town centre have turned out well suited to a different brand of investment. One such project is the new office and residential building that has sprung up close to the ancient city gates, confronting a busy junction with its boldly expressive elevation. The site represents an important point on the entrance to the old city, from which streets lead to the bus and railway stations, to the city's residential neighborhoods and the park along the Savinja River.

On this point constructions of different heights and densities come across. The new edifice follows the historical lines of the street entering the old town. It's composed in the classical manner of three levels: the ground floor, the solid central floors, and the glass penthouse that is placed on the roof as an autonomous volume facing the centre of the junction. With the penthouse hanging out over the street the building creates an attractive city corner.

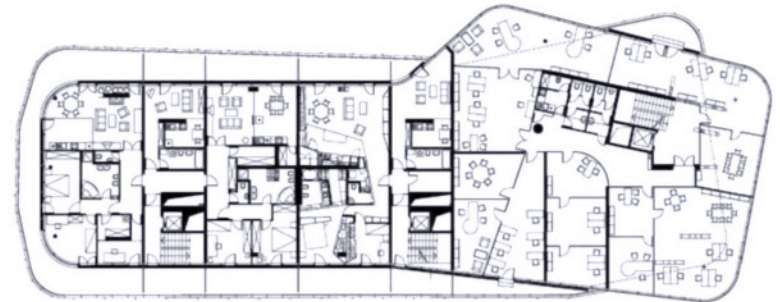
While the elevations are characterized by the horizontal division of the floors the building is actually separated in the middle, with the offices facing the junction and the residential section disposed further along the street. Both parts of the building are also clearly distinguished by different window openings. The long stripes of glazing in particular, which twist around the offices together with their rounded corners, contribute positively to the appearance of this building.



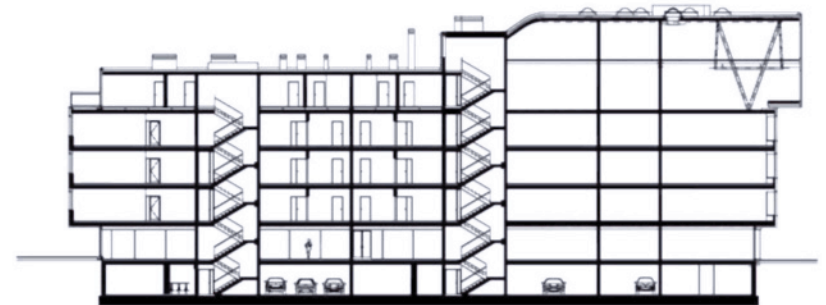
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



TOP FLOOR



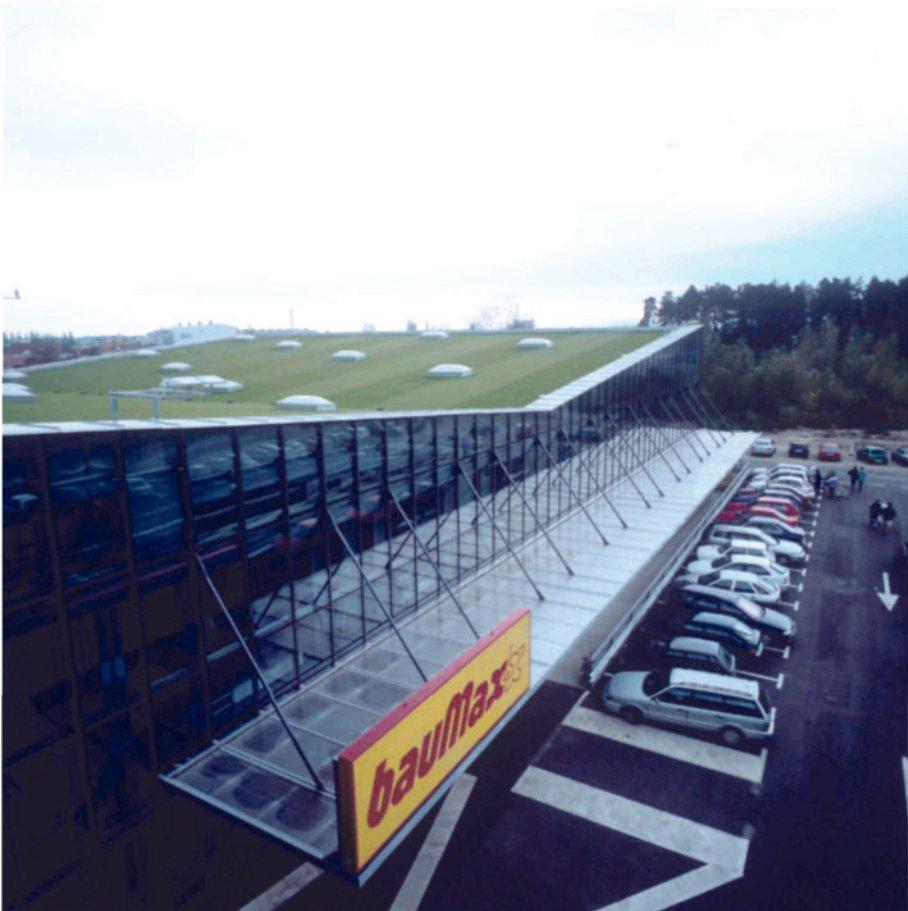
LONGITUDINAL SECTION





"Maksimiljan makes a characteristic urban structure also by virtue of the way it is installed into the urban context as by reflexively changing and reestablishing this context." Petra Čeferin. *Arhitektura tega trenutka*. *Hiše*, 2006, Vol. VII, No. 34, pp. 44-48









# HYPERMARKET

client: Baumaxx d.o.o.  
site: Maribor  
year: 1999

architect: Njirić+Njirić arhitekti  
design team: Hrvoje Njirić, Helena Njirić, Alan Kostrenčić,  
Goran Tomas, Miljenko Stanić, Siniša Glušica, Ivana Knez



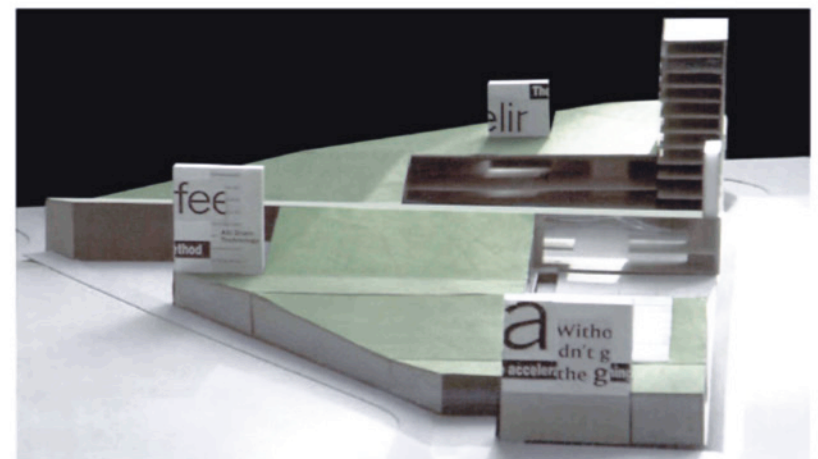
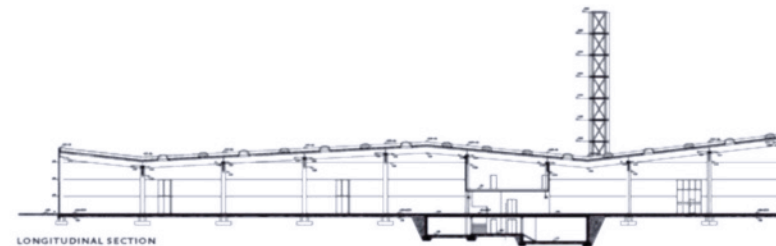
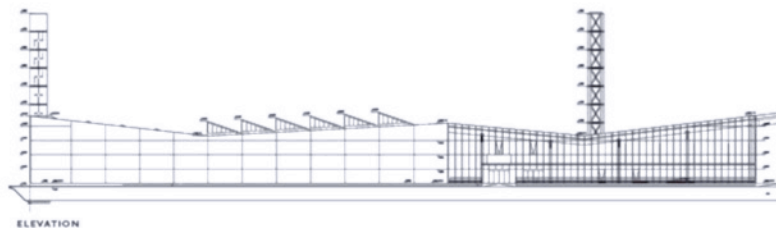
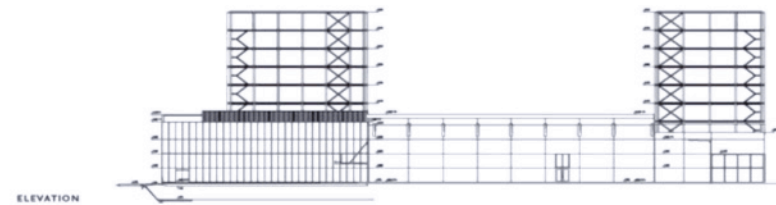
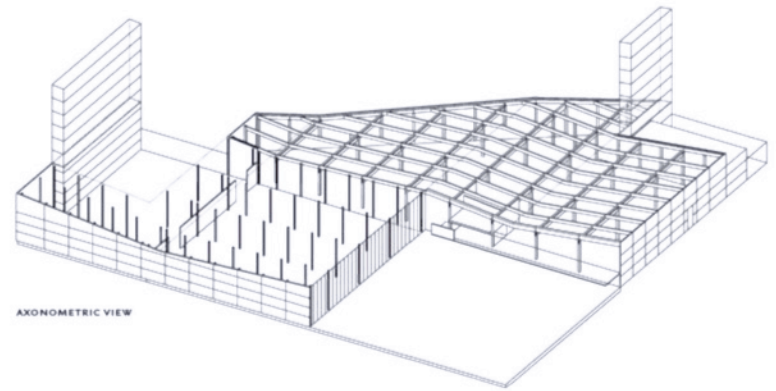
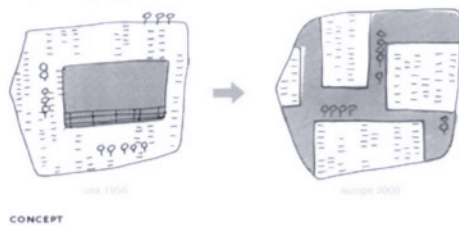
The early 90s still saw Slovenia as something of a virgin land in terms of shopping. But soon the cities gave themselves up to the alluring offers of the shopping centre developers. Usually sites available for development in the cities of former socialist countries were far more attractive than those in western cities, seeing as the non-competitive socialist economy left many good plots in the cities unoccupied – even in the city centre.

**At the hypermarket in Maribor, a new strategy was developed to install a large structure with extensive parking areas into the existing urban fabric.**

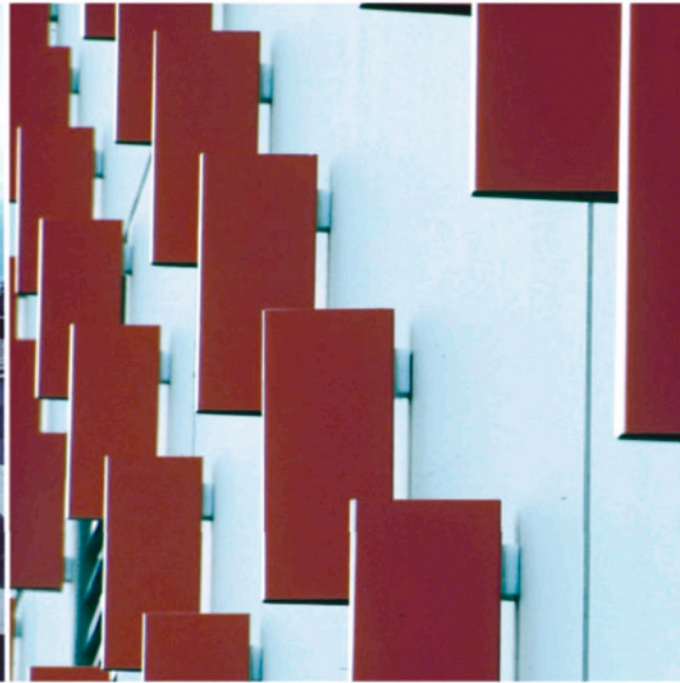
The new shopping mall sprang up at an important traffic junction in the middle of Maribor. It has been conceived as a large complex occupying the entire building plot; only half of this scheme has, however, been constructed.

Instead of being designed as an island in the middle of a large parking lot, the Maribor hypermarket represents a block, following the shape of the irregular contours of the plot. The parking lots are cut out of the building volume. Since all of the available open space around the shopping centre is occupied by traffic, the initial proposal treated the roofs of the building as a new publicly accessible elevated ground. Unfortunately this solution was not approved and the roof landscape covered with artificial grass can now only be observed from the ground.

The building is particularly characterized by the overdoing of the elements of contemporary consumer society. Big billboards are placed on the roof ends facing the traffic streams. While all inward-bound elevations are completely glazed, all perimeter elevations are clad with prefab concrete panels pierced with custom-made traffic reflectors in signal red and silver. By night the building glitters and reflects car headlamps, suggesting to the drivers that they swing into the complex and do some unnecessary shopping.

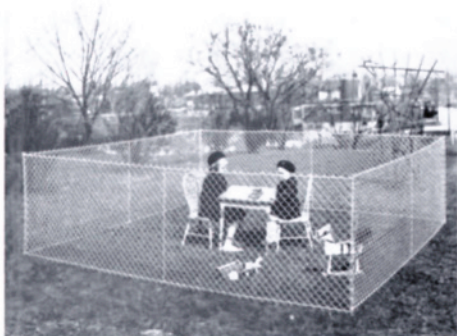
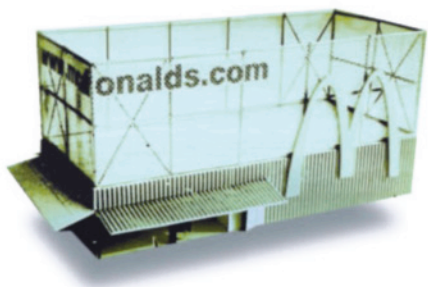






"The new architecture is distinguished by solving the installation of the object into urban space, and by addressing the question of its formal design in multiple layers and by particular fragments. In no way does it tend to unify the urban space but instead finds and restores individual relationships with surrounding fragments of urbanity." Uroš Lobnik. Ikona individualnega urbanizma. AB Arhitektov bilten, 1999, Vol. XXIX, No. 143-144, pp. 28-33









**DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT**  
client: McDonalds d.o.o.  
site: Maribor  
year: 2000  
architect: Njirić+Njirić arhitekti  
design team: Hrvoje Njirić, Helena Njirić, Iva Bedenko, Miljenko Stanić

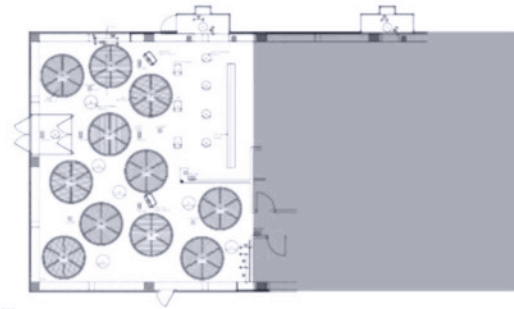


The main traffic arteries feeding Slovenian cities appear much different today than they did 15 years ago. While previously they were merely boring traffic gutters, lined with factories, workshops and warehouses, now they pulsate with the rhythm of any kind of consumption. For these grey and dull routes, drive-in restaurants were something completely new in the 90s; perhaps that's just the reason why in Maribor it was possible to approach one of these projects in such a manner that is actually highly critical of the fast-food proprietors.

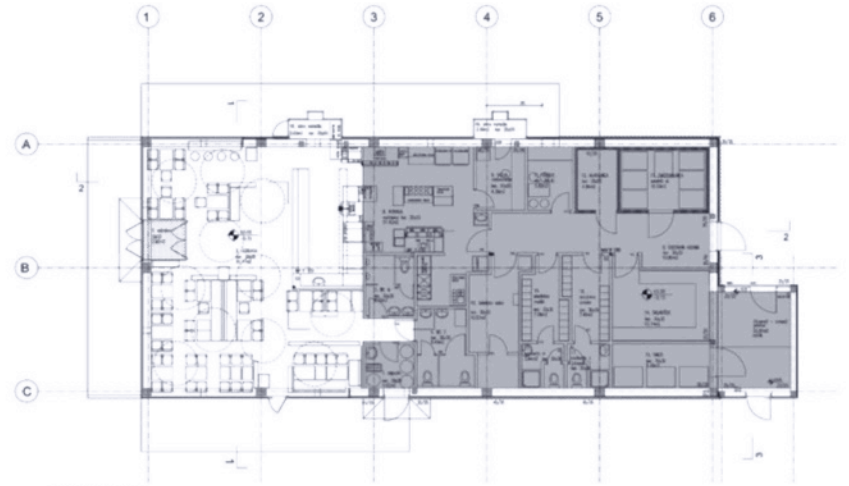
**The drive-in restaurant in Maribor is an attempt to reformulate the existing typology that continues to be imposed on most any site anywhere in the world.**

Initially it was conceived as a standard McDonalds shed, but topped off by a fenced basketball court. Due to time constrictions, approval for the basketball court never arrived from the company's headquarters in Chicago. As a result, the backboards and baskets have never been fixed, unfortunately, atop the roof. The only function of the cage above the restaurant is now to indicate the way in for the drive-in public.

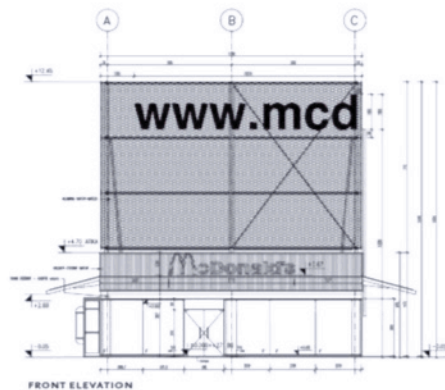
The 9m-high golden arches are meant to question the theme-approach of size or bigness and its acceptability. The selection of materials stands in opposition to the usual manufactured domesticity in these restaurants. Instead the building is clad in corrugated fiber-cement plates and wire mesh, and the interior is dressed in synthetic materials.



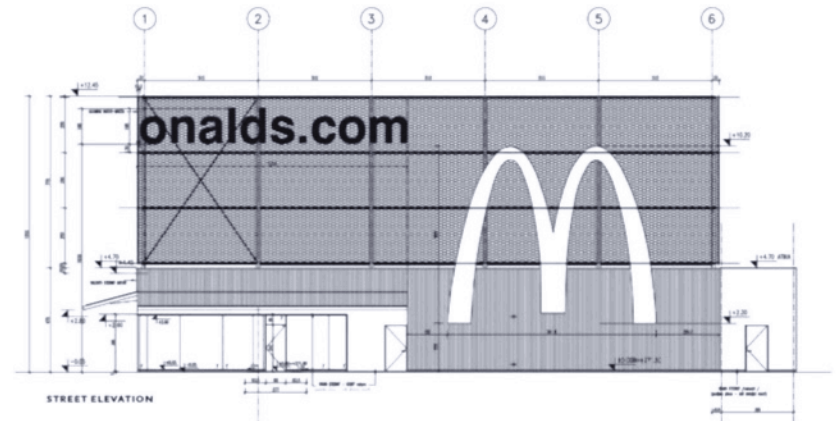
CEILING PLAN



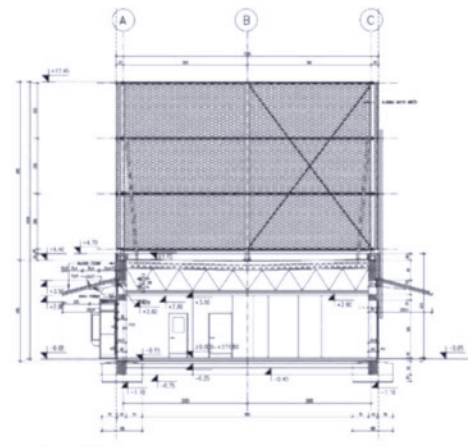
GROUND FLOOR



FRONT ELEVATION



STREET ELEVATION



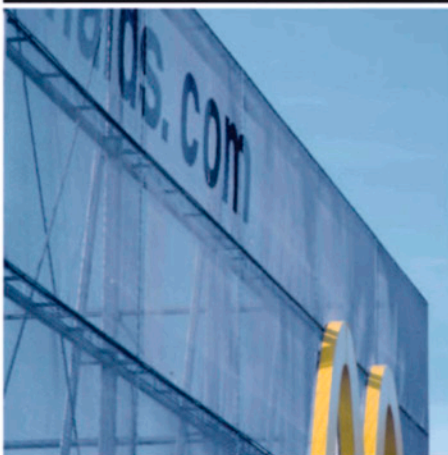
CROSS SECTION







"It may be a paradox, but it is exactly the Acman family house by Nande Korpnik, the Chamber by Sadar and Vuga, and the Baumax and McDonalds by the Njirić+Njirić, that comprise the Slovenian architectural identity at the end of the 20th century. This witty, critical, polyvalent architecture is a live pop-icon, as opposed to the dead ones (pretentious villas with fake columns, glass pyramids, over-designed snack bars, or decorations for the Pope's visit and numerous new churches)." Miha Dešman. *The Countdown*. AB Arhitektov bilten, 1999, Vol. XXIX, No. 145-146, pp. 86









COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE BUILDING  
client: Borger d.o.o.  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2003  
architect: Jože Peterkoč





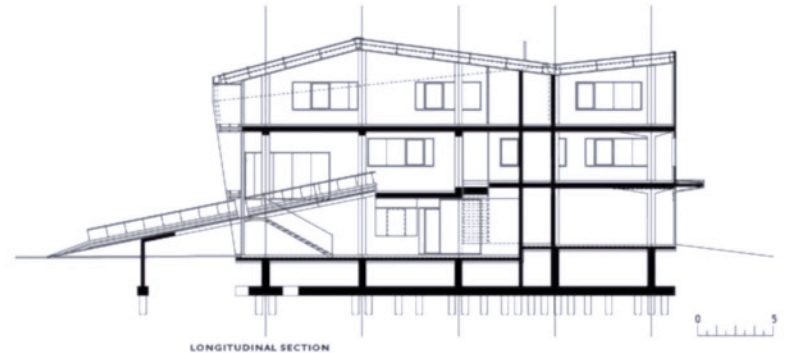
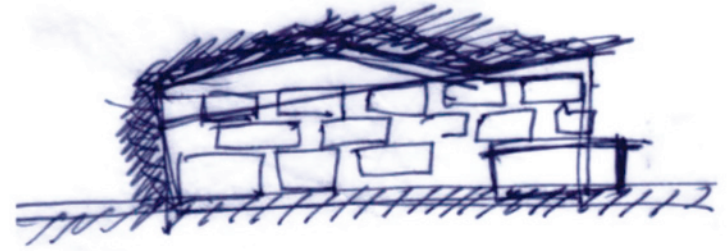
The district of Rudnik certainly represents that Ljubljana city quarter where urban sprawl is most symptomatic. This area consisting largely of self-constructed single houses rising out of the parched ground of the swampland that extends south of Ljubljana. Only recently has this largely residential area, characterized by small channels and random wisps of reed come to experience development in terms of suburban commercial and business activities.

Despite the contingent strings of construction on the street front, the road that runs along the new 'Multipa' commercial and office building represents the backbone of the area, connecting the new commercial area with the city centre.

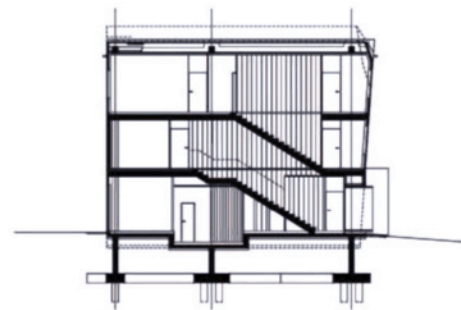
**In the fragmented space of Ljubljana's southern suburb, 'Multipa' serves as an exception with its particular appearance and design.**

The street front was initially designed as a car showroom occupying two floors. The entrance in the form of a road section makes a point of this car-oriented space and brings the customers straight to the shop on the first floor. The back side of the building is conceived as an office space that can be used for various business activities. The envelope of the building forms a compact car-body that opens out to the street through a large display window. The irregular folding of the black metal shell is intended to bring a sense of dynamics to the indifferent suburban environment.

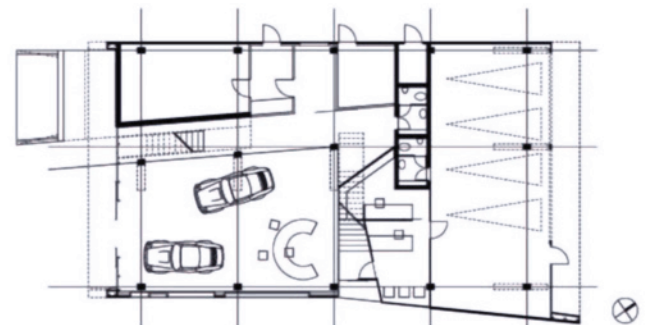
The glazed staircase shaft in the centre of the ground plan represents the core that links the different work spaces on the floors and brings additional light into the middle of the building. The supporting concrete structure bears the light metal façade, perforated with randomly dispersed windows that direct the views to the swampy suburban surroundings.



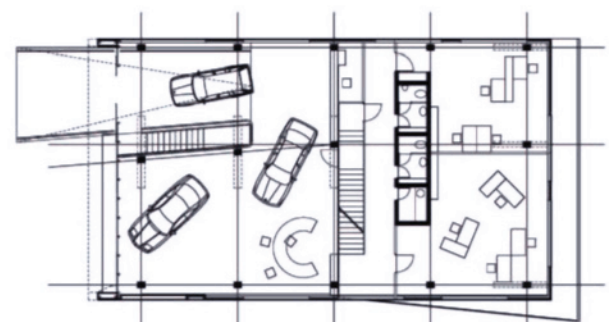
LONGITUDINAL SECTION



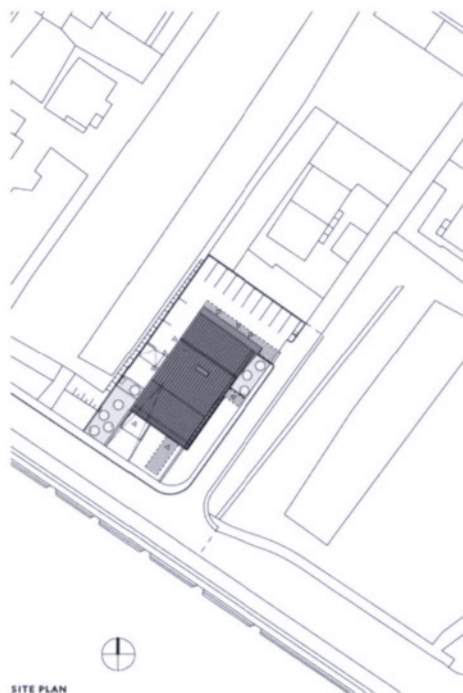
CROSS SECTION



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SITE PLAN





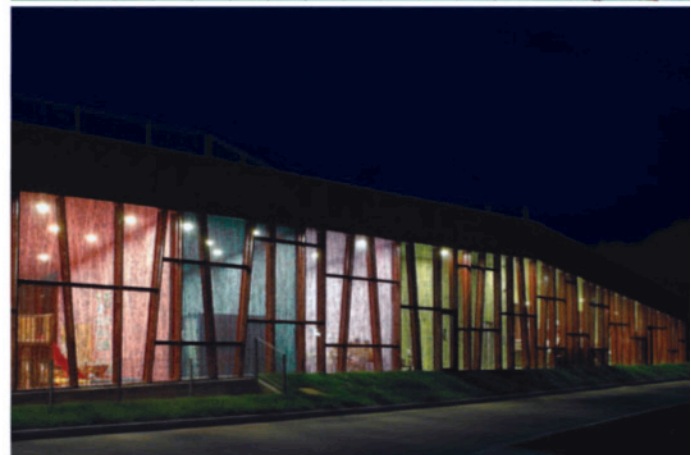
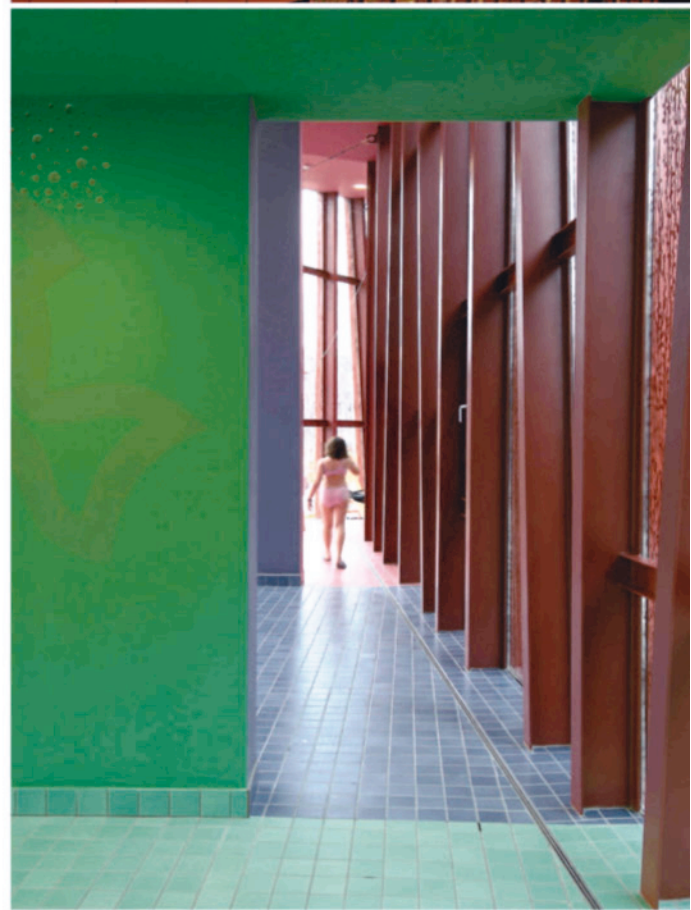
"The structure is inhabited like an anthill; there are a few defined instances of correspondence between the space and its use. But it works surprisingly well, simply because there are no architectural obligations as to what is put on stage in the building, and at the same time, the designed architecture is still there, smiling about the fuss, grinning and bearing it." Christoph Luschinger. *Conceptual Experiments in Recent Slovenian Architecture. Territories, Identities, Nets.* Slovene Art 1995–2005. Edited by Igor Šparjol, Igor Zabel, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2005, pp. 121–123



SPA  
client: Terme Olimia d.d.  
site: Podčetrtek  
year: 2004  
design team: Dean Lah, Milan Tomac,  
architect: Enota  
Tinka Prekovič, Gregor Tramite







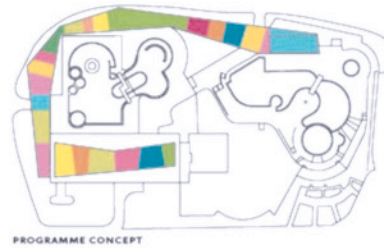


Podčetrtek is a municipality with only 3000 residents. Designing an innovative and extensive project in a small local environment is a task that demands responsibility. A product of the tourism industry is a combination of panorama and services. The infrastructure that needs to be built to develop the services might have unwanted effects on the panorama. This is particularly important when dealing with small urban structures and the surrounding landscape of Slovenian resorts.

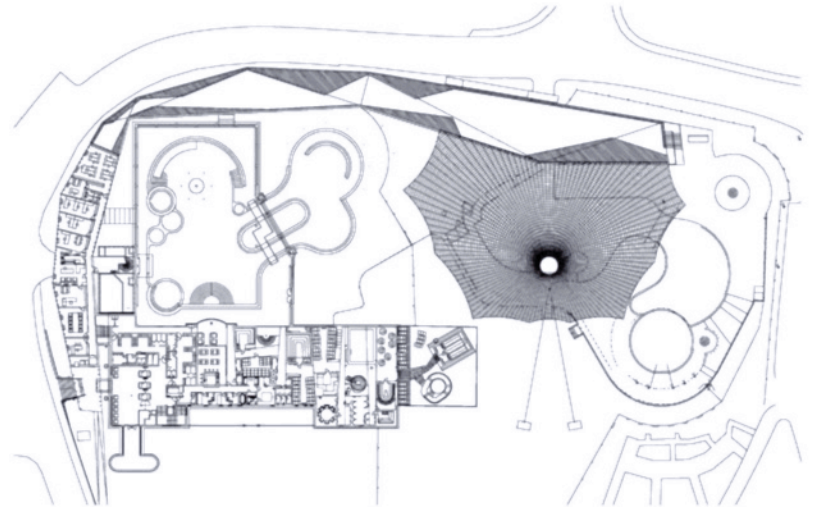
In times of socialism, thermal spas that used to attract high society from the cities have been degraded, now resembling something closer to a hospital than a global tourist resort. Companies that took over the spas in the nineties wanted to improve this image by building water parks with slides, waterfalls and whirlpools. But this brought the spas dangerously close to amusement parks.

**“Termalija” represents the latest generation of spas. It combines a spa and wellness centre, bathing in thermal waters and relaxation in saunas, solariums or massage studios.**

Before the new wellness wing was built, the spa complex in Podčetrtek had both an outdoor and an indoor pool. The architects decided not to concentrate the new relaxation services into the compact core but to spread them around the old pool



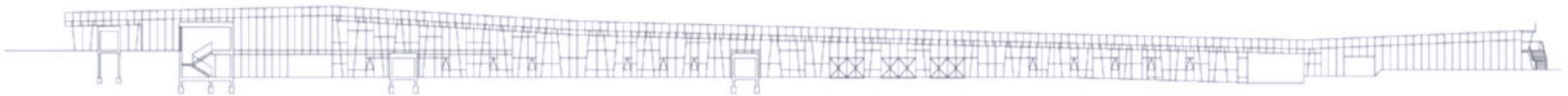
PROGRAMME CONCEPT



GROUND FLOOR



STREET ELEVATION



POOL ELEVATION

platform and adjust them to the ground. The decision to organize a new programme on the margin of the site lent the project new, extra qualities. The new wellness wing created a kind of atrium that contains the pools. Bathers now enjoy privacy and are not disturbed by road traffic. On the other hand, the new building creates a more homogeneous image of the spa by enveloping the various older structures on the site.

The long street facade is a result of arranging spaces in a linear order and adjusting them to the site and to the ground. The design, characterized by cutting edges and broken outlines, makes sense for the local environment. The folded green roof leans on randomly displaced supports. The reddish-brown coloured structure goes well with the hilly, wooded landscape in the background. In the evening, the lively colours of the interior shining through the screen-printed glass enhance the compelling view of the spa by night.



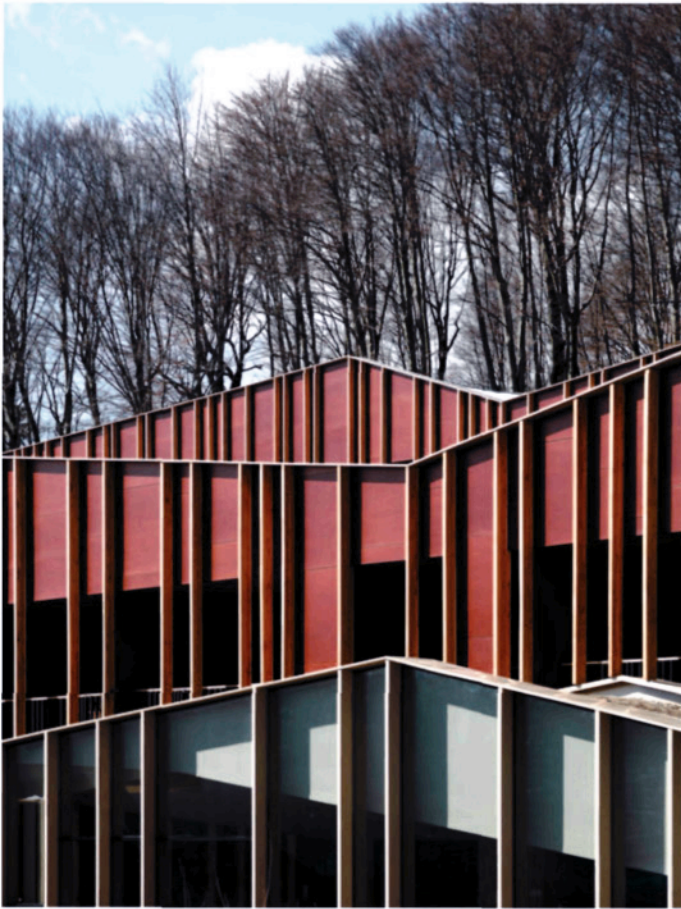




"Making architecture for tourism is interesting. For architecture, tourism is a territory of opportunities. The clients expect experiment, they expect freshness, development, changes... They expect the creation of new worlds, something the world hasn't seen before... But it's wrong to just copy the worlds we already know from elsewhere. You find yourself in a situation where a client expects you to create something new, and on the other hand, he's convinced that this is - let's say - a pirate ship." Dean Lah. Mikrolokacija in stik z naravo. Interview with Enota. [online]. 10.05.2006, [cited 28.02.2007]. Available from World Wide Web <<http://www.trajekt.org/?tid=1&id=539>>











# HOTEL

client: Terme Olimia d.d.  
site: Podčetrtek  
year: 2006

design team:  
Darko Vasiljevič, Dean Lah, Milan Tomac, Petra Ostanek, Anže Zalaznik, Eva Matjašič,

architect: Enota

landscape architect: Bruto, Matej Kučina



Places and scenes along the Sotla River represent an iconic vision of the Slovenian landscape: hills crowned with castles and churches interspersed with fields and villages in the valley below. Sources of thermal spring waters which issue forth here have encouraged locals to supplement their farming incomes. Now these people count primarily on tourism, which is slated to become a crucial economic driver in the region.

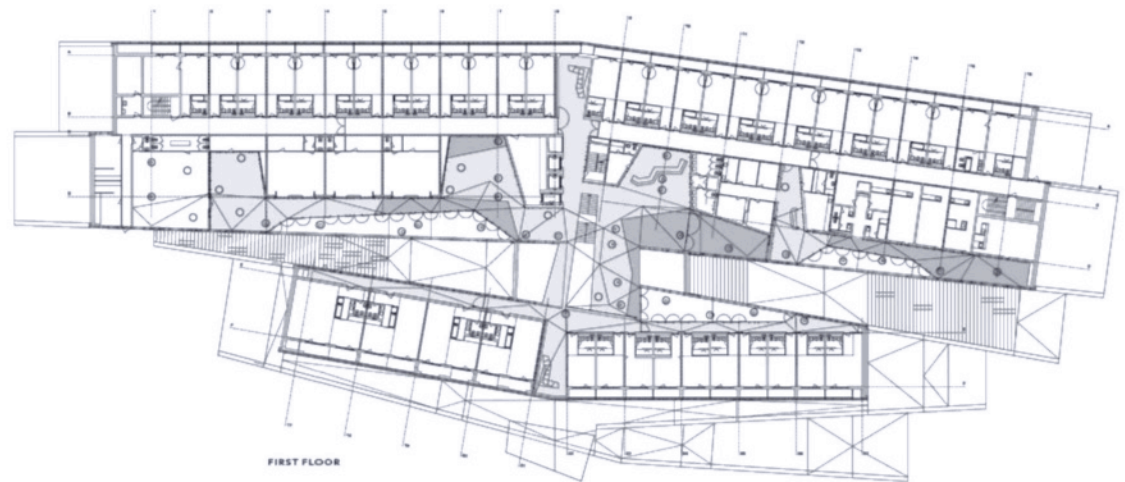
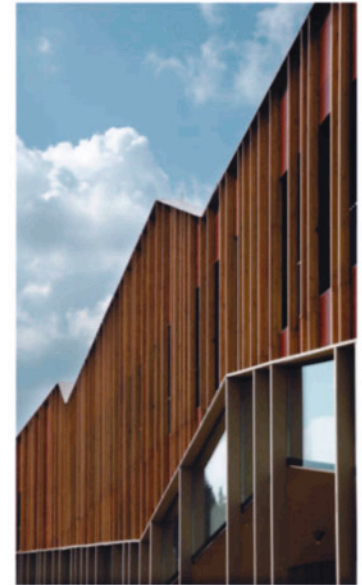
The spa resort in Podčetrtek has been constructed away from the old village along the main road overlooking the Sotla River, so it can develop without disturbing the idyllic, historic setting.

**The starting point the architects set themselves when designing the new hotel was based primarily on linking the new development with the beautiful surrounding countryside.**

The front of the hotel is dressed in wood and is done in natural colours. The roofs of the hotel are designed to appear part of the green hills nearby.

The structure appears relatively small for a hotel with a capacity of 300. The building is slashed into three wings which stand in front of the forest, one behind another. The design principle employed creates volumes by cutting the land up into strips and by raising these above the elevations as green roofs. The only things we see when we approach the hotel are the nearly parallel frontages that create a sense of stage scenery.

As a result, the hotel is effectively and sensitively interpolated into the natural environment. It has practically grown together with the surrounding nature. All of the roofs are covered with greenery and drop to ground level at the edges. The lobby area extends on to different levels with the bar, the restaurant and the convention halls. This topography of different levels creates a kind of artificial inner landscape in which to pamper the hotel guests. And though the rooms here lack not a single electronic device, the hotel's biggest luxury feature remains the beautiful views of the lush greenery beyond.







"The exposed and aggressive development of Slovenian spa resorts have, until now, shown very few projects that have succeeded in staying away from mediocre and largely kitschy ideas... with the new hotel Sotelia, we can speak about brave, reasonable and above all, most welcome aspirations." Plečnik Award Jury, Ljubljana, 2006



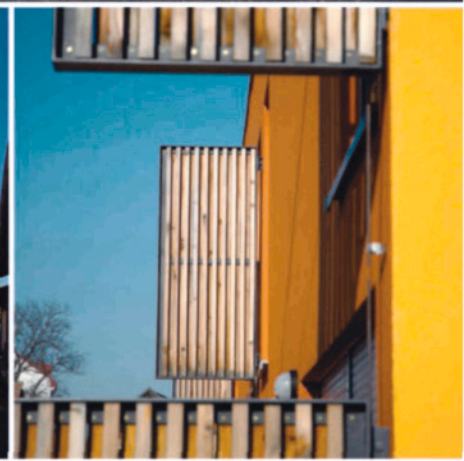




TERRACED HOUSES

client: Poloplus d.o.o  
site: Radvanje, Maribor  
year: 2004

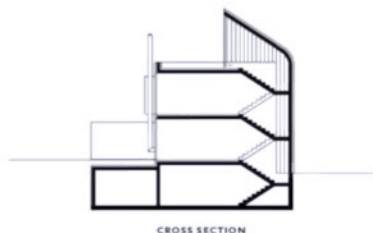
architect: Gašper Medvešek







Situated on the southern outskirts of Maribor, Radvanje used to be a village with a strong tradition of agriculture. When the city expanded after WWII, Radvanje became a suburb of Maribor. Today it remains a popular place to live because of the nearby forests, mountain trails and ski slopes of nearby Pohorje. Instead of being used to grow various crops this former farmland has become well suited to the cultivation of real (estate) assets.



CROSS SECTION

**The scheme of the five new terraced houses in Radvanje had to adapt to the long and narrow shape of the plot inherited from the typical parcelling of the fields. In fact, part of the success of this scheme is using the shape to advantage.**

The houses face westward with gardens and open-air terraces. The eastern side of the plot is used as a driveway to an underground garage.

On account of the long and narrow floor plans, all of the rooms get plenty of light and air. And since the supporting construction is limited to the outer walls, the floor plans are entirely flexible. Residents are able to arrange the rooms in the house according to their own needs or even use the ground floor and first floor as separate apartments.

Positioning the staircase in the centre of the floor plan makes the use of space in each house even better. The glazed staircase towers also make for one of the distinguishing characteristics of the houses. Projected out of the frontage and over the roofs they mark the entrances and bring light into the underground garage.



BASEMENT FLOOR

GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

"Economical architecture comprises a more thoughtful use of materials and building technology, more modest and restrained forms and a limited selection of architectural elements. The essence of ecological and economical construction is, however, realized as efficient management of land usage, contingent on a well-considered positioning of the house and out-buildings." Janez Koželj. Contemporary Family House. Hiše, 5 Year Edition. Edited by Maja Ivanič. Ljubljana: Zavod Big, 2005, pp. 34





**SUBSIDIZED HOUSING**  
client: Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia,  
Municipality of Izola • site: Izola  
year: 2005

architect: **Ofis arhitekti**  
design team: Rok Oman, Špela Videčnik, Martina Lipičec,  
Nejc Batistič, Neža Oman, Florian Frey, Marisa Baptista













"In opposition to projective autonomy, absolute aesthetics generates effects that appeal to the general public. It's a technique of dressing architecture as fashion; where the colours, the many foldings, what's translucent, hidden or transparent, what's background or up-front, generates sex-appeal and understanding. It disturbs and satisfies desires." Roemer van Toorn. Gizmo Architecture, Or How Ofis arhitekti Re-work the Idea of Aesthetics in Architecture. 2G, 2006, no. 38, pp. 8











**HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
client: Gradis Skupina G d.d.  
site: Ljubljana • year: 2006

design team: Rok Oman, Špela Videčnik, Martina Lipicer, Mejc Battistič,  
Neža Oman, Marisa Baptista, Karla Murovec, Neli Ouzounova, Florian Frey, Špela Uršič

**architect: Ofis arhitekti**



District housing in Ljubljana's slaughterhouse area started to become interesting in 1991, when the food-processing industry in the area was shut down. The Ljubljanica River, the castle hill and old industrial buildings represented exceptional attractions in the heart of the city. The Poljane Embankment is starting to take shape with plans for new apartments, a shopping mall on the site of the old slaughterhouse, new art academies and well-regulated embankments along the river channel. The area is planned to become a vital part of the new Ljubljana with a particularly urban character.

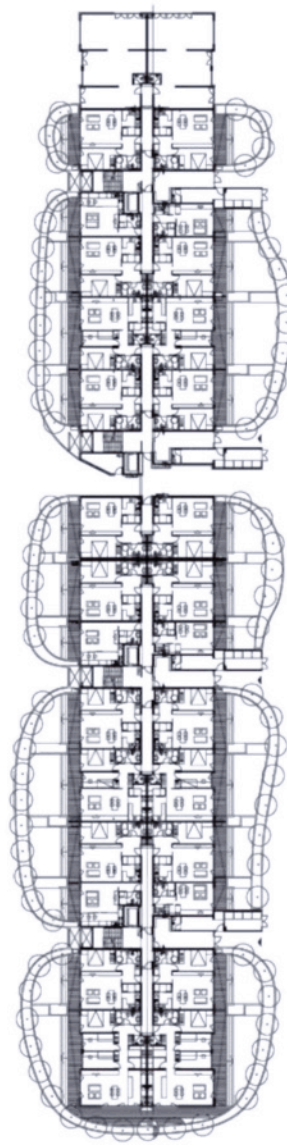
The apartment blocks, designed by Ofis Arhitekti, represent one of the biggest new housing developments in Ljubljana. Their vision of a master urban plan was chosen the winning entry in a recent competition project. Composed of four long blocks with yards that open fan-like towards the river channel, they rise up from behind older suburban houses as square stones in dark grey and reddish colours.

**In opposition to the protruding balconies and terraces typical of most Slovenian housing, these new apartment blocks on the Poljane Embankment produce the effect of a matrix-block with apartments cut out of it.**

The prism-like tops of the buildings look like roofs, but are simply a part of a uniformly-designed composite shell that surrounds the apartments, the balconies and the enclosed porches. Patches of composite panels, glass and window openings are folded into many layers. This design concept results in a particular pattern effect on the elevations, reflecting the logic of the spatial arrangement in the apartments, and creating the exciting effect of serving as both a thin shell and a solid cover at the same time.



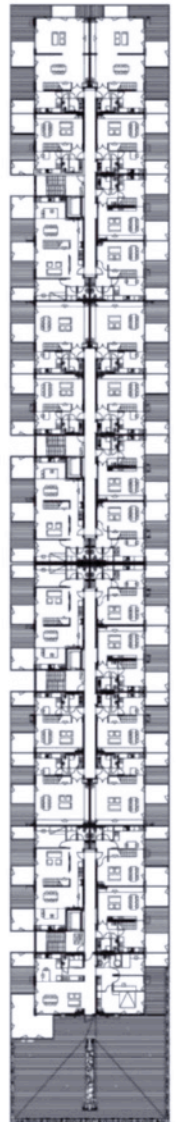
SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



TOP FLOOR





"The 3-D facades – or deep surfaces – wrapped around the 650 apartments in Ljubljana, with their individual variations within an overall system of repetition, give the block its urban scale, while on the other hand, allowing flexible choices for each inhabitant when choosing his/her own open or closed balcony. In so doing, the presence of the block is both urban as well as an expression of individuality." Roemer van Toorn. Gizmo Architecture, Or How Ofis arhitekti Re-work the Idea of Aesthetics in Architecture. 2G, 2006, no. 38





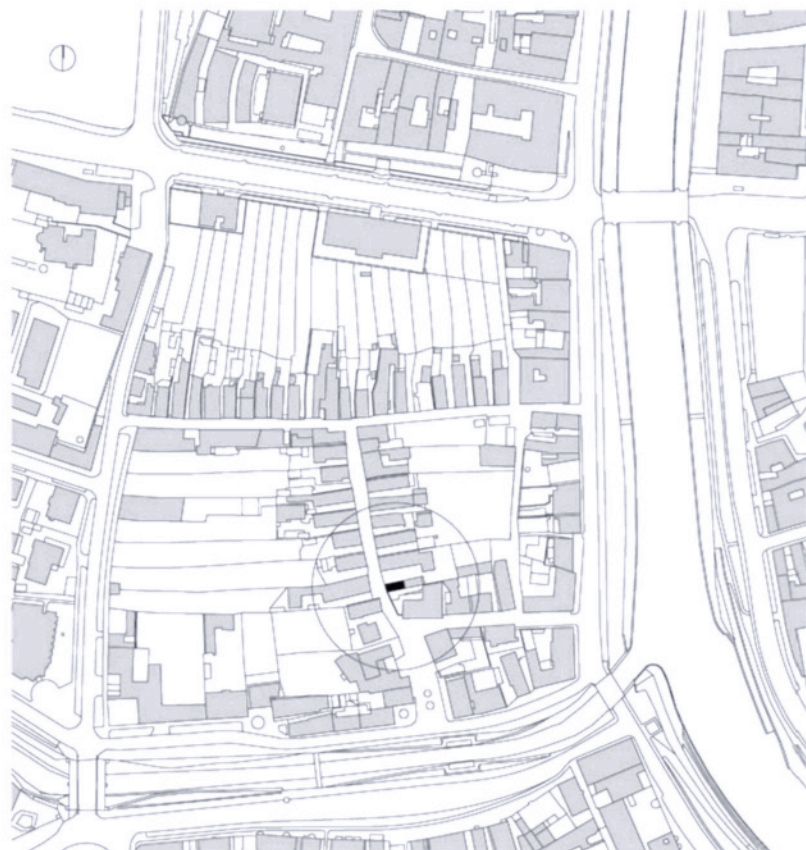
URBAN HOLIDAY HOUSE

client: private  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2004

architect:  
Dekleva Gregorič arhitekti  
design team: Ajloša Dekleva, Tina Gregorič







SITE PLAN

Ljubljana's old village-like quarter of Krakovo, in the heart of the city, used to be one of the medieval suburbs. Because of its well-preserved medieval image, parcelling and houses, the entire area was declared a national heritage site back in the 1980s. Though an integral part of the city centre, it retains many qualities of rural life. The fact that city real estate prices are among the highest here indicates this is one of the most desirable areas in the capital.

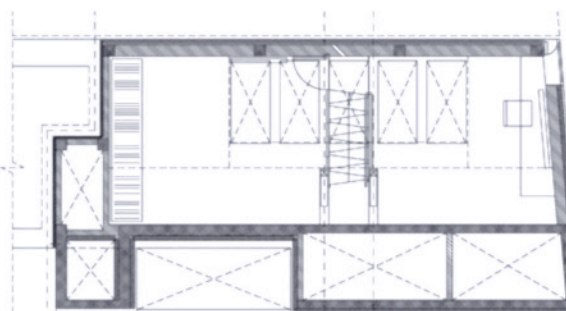
**This small new house in Krakovo has been constructed on the site of a pre-existing outhouse. It is used as an urban holiday-home for a couple living in the countryside.**

The basic dimensions of the new house were already defined according to the strict regulations of the body responsible for heritage protection. All necessary residential functions had to be incorporated into an extra-small volume; thus it was important to make very good use of the very limited space available.

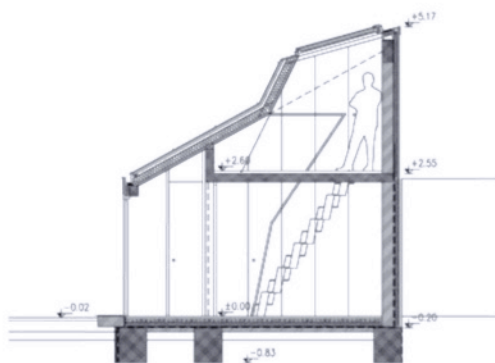
The floor plan is open, with no partition walls. The kitchen and living area are separated by a carefully-designed origami-like steel staircase that leads to the bedroom in the attic. Since the house faces north, light enters through the raised dormer that makes the attic high enough to move around in. The roof and walls are designed as a unified shell covered with fibre-cement plates. Using rough, neutral materials the house preserved the image of the service building that once stood on the site.



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

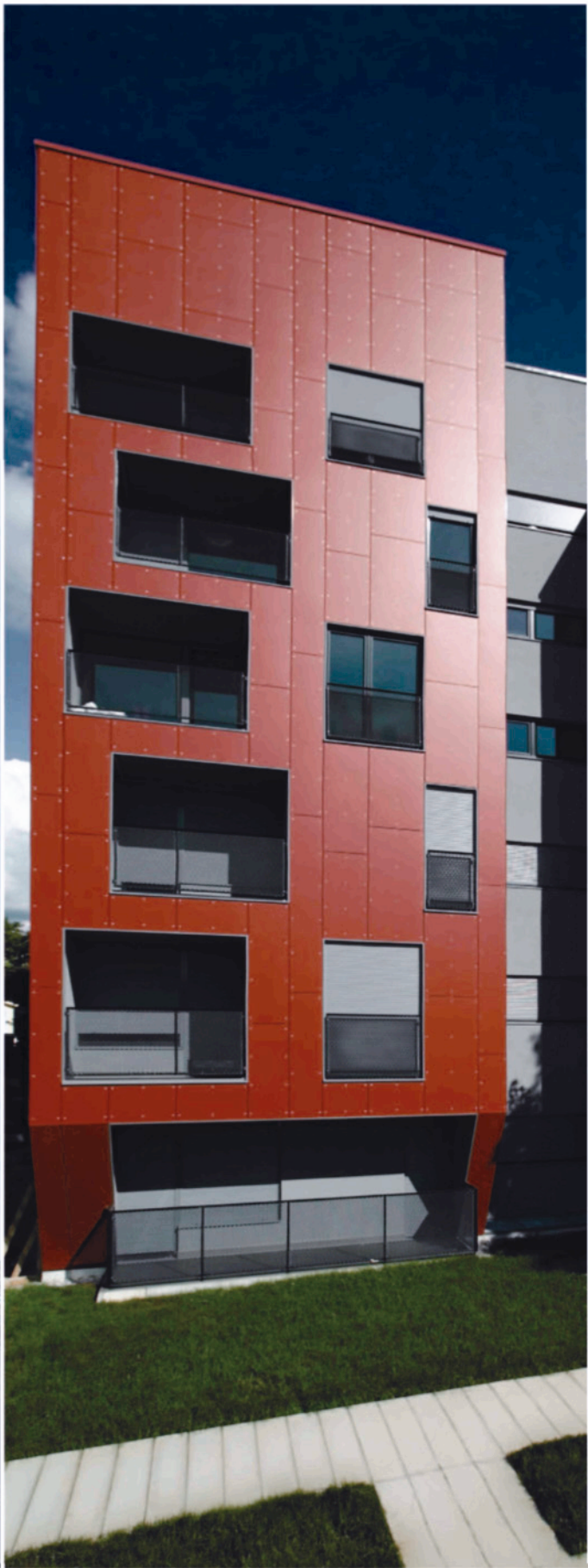
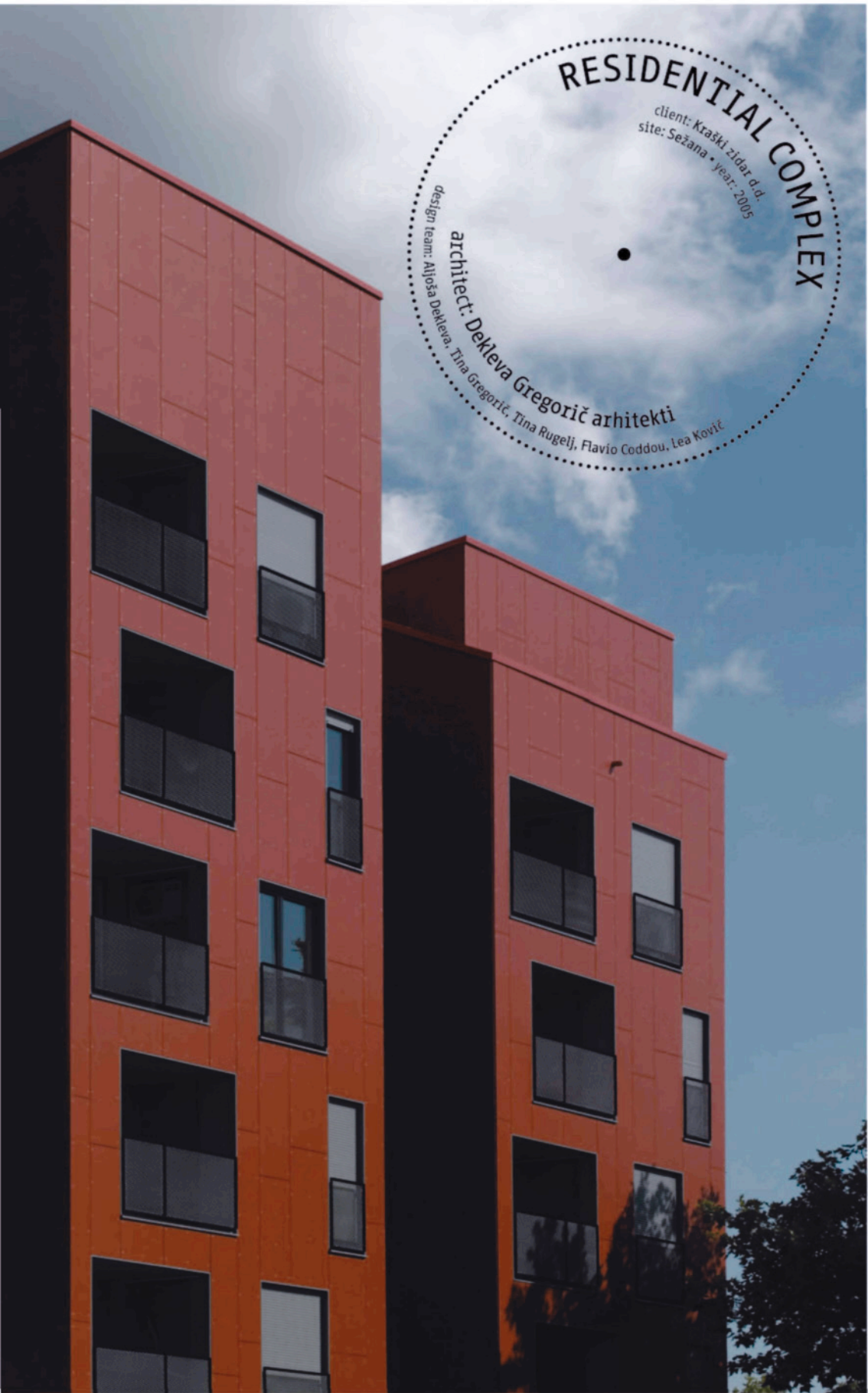


CROSS SECTION



"There is in this house, even if the architects don't claim any specific relation, a connection with the architecture of John Hejduk. From the first glance, the neutrality expressed in the materials and the form makes us think of those two buildings the American architect built in Berlin in the 1980's (particularly the house of the quadruplets). The simplicity, the almost schematic shape of the house (the inclined roof, we live on the ground floor with a big window, we sleep on the upper floor...) are perfectly assumed." Thibaut de Ruyter. *XXS House à Ljubljana, Slovénie. Maisons Individuelles. L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 2005, no. 357, pp. 52-55











The small city of Sežana is an important border hub, situated on one of the most important traffic corridors between Slovenia and Italy. The socialist regime in Yugoslavia deliberately developed the city as a substitutive centre of the Karst region that was cut off from Trieste by the new border agreed after WWII. Once a rural area that supplied the city of Trieste with crops, it gained a few small factories and warehouses, a large customs house and the border police.

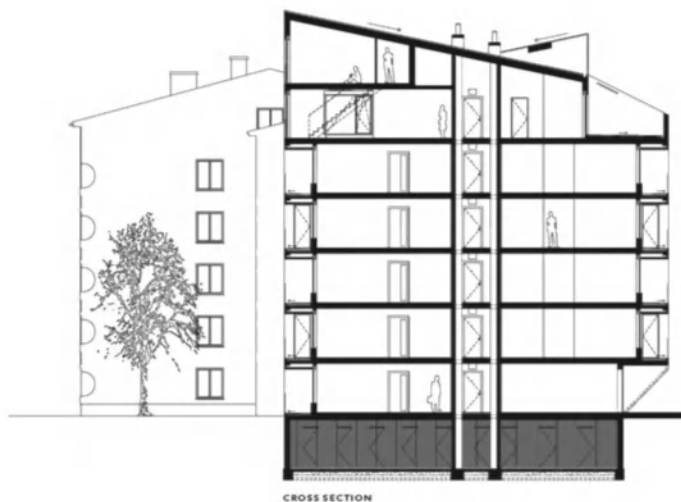
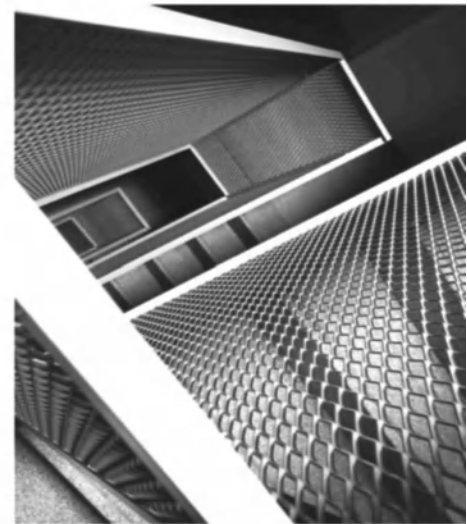
Today, when internal borders within the EU no longer exist, the city of Sežana counts heavily on trade, transport and tourism. On the other hand, for many people, the idyllic Karst landscape has become a highly popular place in which to settle down.

**The new residential complex, situated along the western junction with the Ljubljana-Trieste motorway, represents an extension of existing housing that was constructed in the 1970s.**

New blocks follow the spatial characteristics of the existing ones, and are similarly structured as several vertical volumes. The pitched roofs form the individual identity of every volume.

The apartments are compact, opening to an introverted, small loggia with integrated storage spaces. The loggias on the elevation appear shifted or staggered as a result of the varied organization scheme of the entrances from the living- and bedrooms. The shiftings of shady balconies in compact and saturated coloured volumes appear as a refreshing mistake.

The envelope of the building responds to the construction scheme. While plaster covers the supporting concrete walls, the brick walls are clad with fibre-cement plates in a specific, vertical pattern. The single, intense red of the plaster and cladding creates a strong contrast to the older, existing housing in the area and the greenery behind.







"The red colour puts the question mark on the usual division of buildings into those that form the urban tissue (particularly residential premises) and the distinct ones, that represent monuments within the tissue (such as churches and public buildings). Red is a festive colour, inappropriate for everyday dwelling activities. But in this case it proves to be legitimate, because it acts in a way as to raise the status, inject the vitality and provide the identity of anonymous housing..." Miha Dešman. Stanovanjski blok Leniuec. Architect's Bulletin, 2006, vol. 36, no. 169-172, pp. 44-47



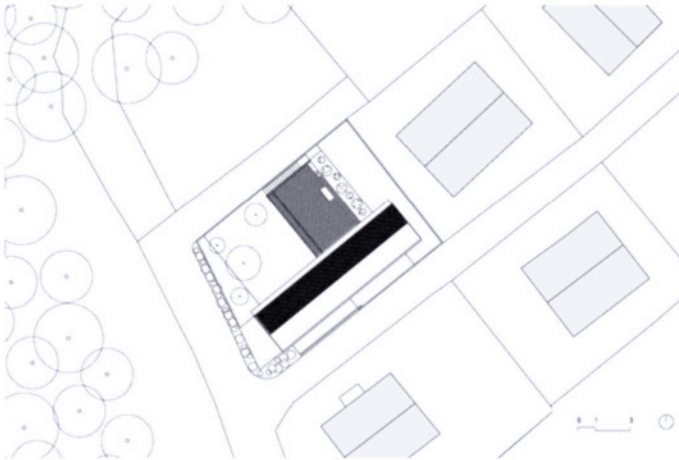
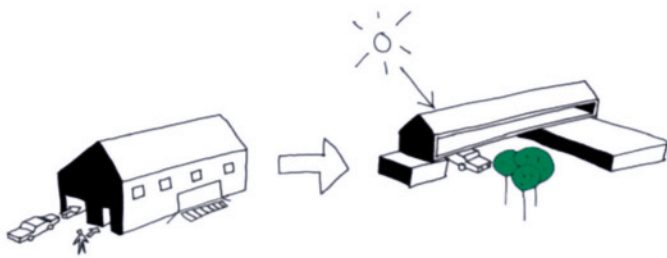




**FAMILY HOUSE**  
client: private  
site: Črnuče, Ljubljana  
year: 2004  
architect: Bevk Perovič arhitekti  
design team: Matija Bevk, Vasa J. Perovič, Blaž Vardus



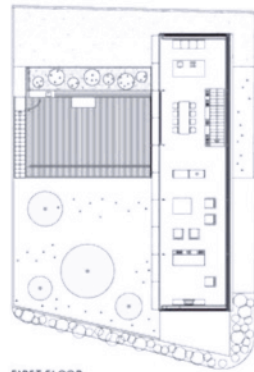




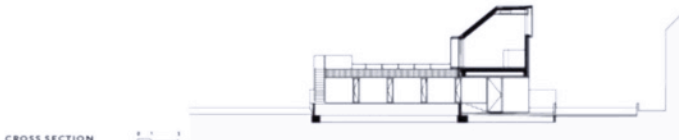
SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



CROSS SECTION

The suburban settlements on the outskirts of Ljubljana consist largely of single-family houses, constructed between the 1960s and 1980s. During this period, the opening up of extensive new areas where people were allowed to construct catalogue family houses themselves represented an unwritten programme the socialist regime used to meet a large part of the country's housing needs. Control over this kind of construction was little, with people constructing their homes over a period of ten years or more. The quality of design and construction is to be expected under the circumstances. A plot facing the forest, on the margin of one of these settlements, had been left empty.

**This new house has been placed on the confines of the plot to enclose a spacious garden behind and separate it from the street. The house is conceived as two wings, living and sleeping. But the usual arrangement has been turned upside down.**

The living area is raised to the upper level, creating a bridge over a car port. Bedrooms on the ground floor extend deeper into the garden. The entire house, including the pitched roof and the terrace, is clad in larch wood planks. Only four large windows open out of the compact wooden volume.

The sleeping area consists of bedrooms and bathrooms for children and parents. The children's rooms are designed as units that can be connected or separated with sliding panels. They are linked with a wide corridor that can be used as a workplace, extending into the garden through a window.

The living area is designed as a single long and narrow volume with two large windows along the longitudinal sides. The southern window is raised high under the roof preventing views in from the street. The northern window opens the living area to the garden and the forest behind. In this way the living wing becomes a kind of periscope, catching the sun on the south and directing the views to the nature on the north.



"Initially regarded as a deliberate provocation, House SB has been accepted by the public. Many people celebrate its functional simplicity. Designed for the specific needs of a family, it acts as a silent protest against the sea of monstrous catalogue houses." Maja Vardjan, House SB, Ljubljana. A10, 2006, no. 9, pp. 48-51

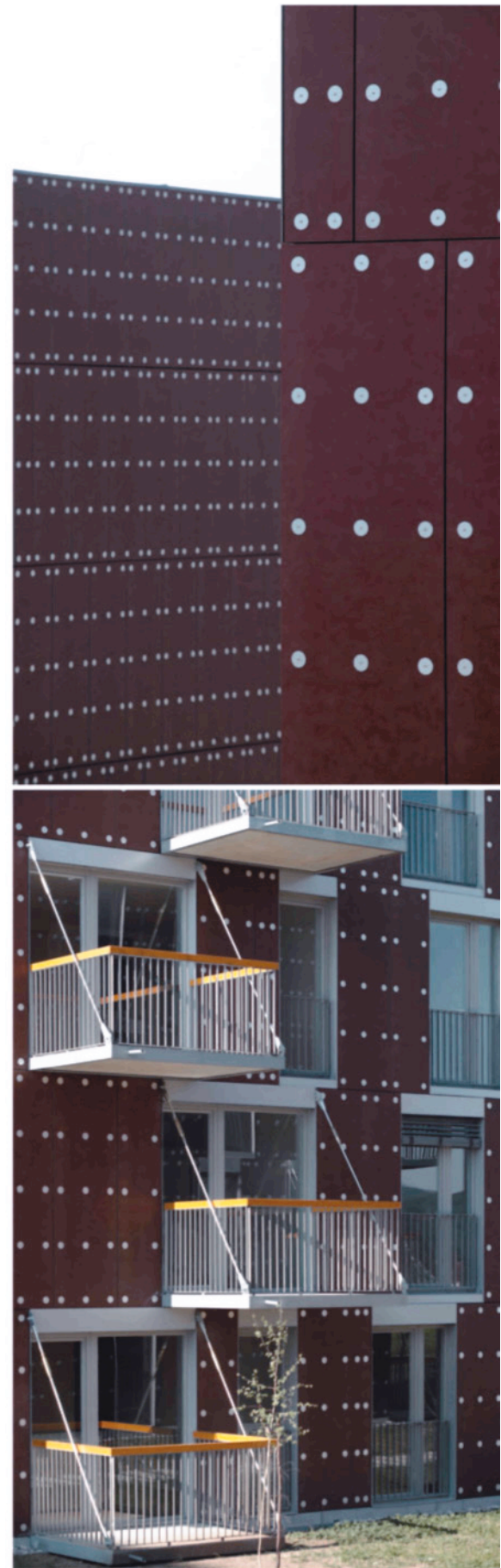


**SUBSIDIZED HOUSING**  
client: Public Housing Fund of the City of Ljubljana  
site: Polje, Ljubljana • year: 2005

architect: **Bevk Perović arhitekti**  
design team: Matija Bevk, Vasa J. Perović, Mitja Zorc, Davor Podvanešek









In 1991, the Slovenian parliament adopted the new Housing Act to stimulate private initiative and re-establish the real estate market. The aim of this act was to turn the approach of housing policy away from providing toward enabling.

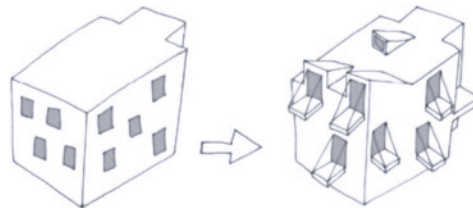
One of the measures taken by this act enabled people to buy from the public housing stock at unreasonably low prices. All municipal housing stocks were sold and today, the private housing stock in Slovenia represents some 90% of the whole. Municipalities now work hard to provide new social and non-profit housing.

The housing settlement in Polje, on the outskirts of Ljubljana, is one of the largest schemes of the municipal housing fund in Ljubljana constructed in recent years. It was conceived on the existing master plan that proposed six blocks, placed on the site in a symmetrical pattern without any regard for the surroundings. The site faces fields to the east, individual housing settlements to the west, and busy railway tracks to the north.

**In this project the landscape has been treated as an important part of the housing scheme. The open space between the blocks has been designed as a small park with artificial hills and a carefully designed children's playground.**

Much attention has been paid to the design of the block volumes. The pitched roofs, defined in the master plan, have been transformed with windows projected over the eaves, creating higher spaces in the top floor apartments and contributing to the interesting skyline of the new settlement.

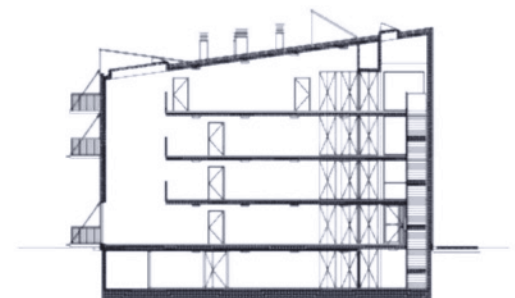
Open hanging balconies act as spatial extensions of the small apartments. The fibre-cement panels with enlarged aluminium attachment plates, and the metal cables that anchor the balconies create a kind of industrial iconography that, in the unexpressive city area, make the new blocks appear as something of a curiosity.



FIRST FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



CROSS SECTION





"The new housing schemes have a fresh and contemporary look, but will this new Slovenian housing truly be able to transform traditional housing stereotypes. Have any new concepts of living been developed?" Maja Vardjan. House SB, Ljubljana. A10, 2005, no. 6, pp. 35-37









**STUDENT RESIDENCE**  
client: Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology  
site: Ljubljana • year: 2006  
design team: Matija Bek, Vasa J. Perović, Ana Čeligoj, Uršula Oitzl, Davorin Počivašek  
architect: **Bek Perović arhitekti**



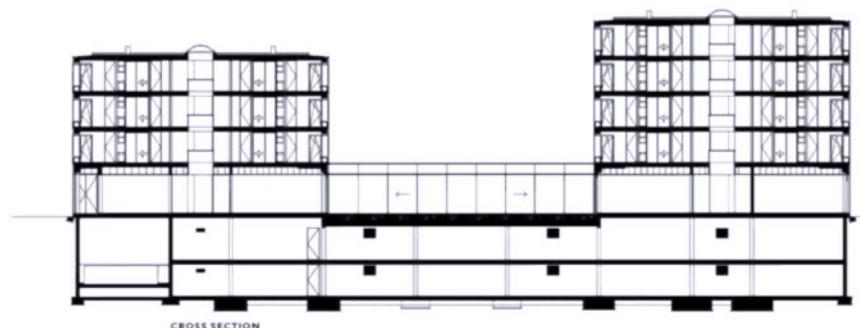
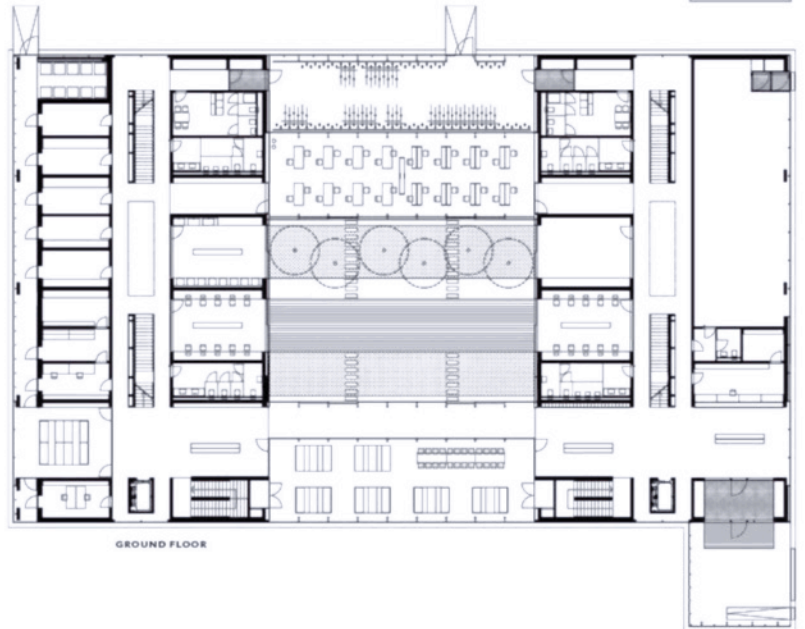
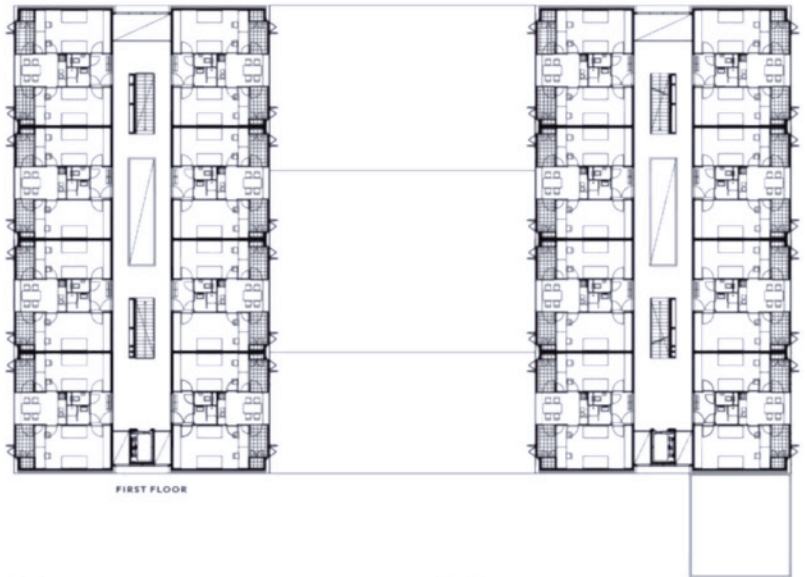
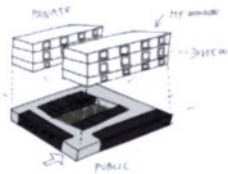
Some 36,000 students study at the University in Ljubljana. Roughly 20,000 of them look to remain in the city while studying. Unfortunately, however, there are only a total of about 7,500 beds available in student residences. The university in Ljubljana, together with the government and the city, is looking to provide more beds by organizing a network of private entities and by constructing new residences.

The new student residence is situated on the margin of the city centre, close to the area where new art, film and music academies are planned to be built in the near future. The building stands in a park, with one side facing onto the street, and the other overlooking the river.

**The visibly high standard of the new student residence in Ljubljana is something new in the prevailing Slovenian student residence landscape.**

In addition to the costly materials, fittings and furniture seen here, students enjoy the benefit of their own underground parking garage. Common spaces: study rooms and leisure spaces occupy the ground floor, which is organized around an open air atrium. The ground floor is designed as a glazed pedestal that supports two metal slabs containing the student dwelling units. The residence contains 56 units designed for four students. Each unit is designed as two bedrooms with a connecting service core, which contains bathrooms, a kitchen and a dining room.

The layout of the floor plan is reflected on the elevation. The dining rooms appear as large windows while bedrooms are screened by folding perforated aluminium shutters. The facades are designed as a homogeneous envelope. The girdles, glazing, window openings and shutters are precisely worked out and flattened to the same planes and edges.







"I have always been very surprised how much money, time and attention is invested in presenting yourself as immaculate in Slovenia. In the Netherlands you go to the carwash when your car is dirty, in Slovenia you go to the carwash to preserve the immaculate look of your car leaving the showroom. Following the latest trends, being in fashion – not being out of line or against the status quo – being superclean and being perfect is essential in Slovenia." Roemer van Toorn, International Architecture. Sixpack, Contemporary Slovenian Architecture. Edited by Andrej Hrausky and Sixpack architects, Ljubljana: Vale Novak, 2006, pp. 23–40





# ADJUSTMENT









Alongside the defenders of continuity and the pleaders of re-formulation are the architectural practices that, via a process of adjustment, combine both. The adjustment acknowledges the search for a compromise with the new reality and the re-establishment of the values central to the modern movement. The quality of living connected with an experience of nature and the built environment represents the main starting point of this approach. According to this position, the architecture is intended to establish a harmonious relationship with its surroundings independently from any abstract aesthetic concepts. It strives to create new relationships between particular and diverse fragments of urbanity. What matters is the contact of the users with the nature and the history of the space into which the architecture is installed. To achieve a harmonious relationship, buildings must be passable and open, connecting the interior space with the exterior.

The relationship between the public and the private is not exclusive. The public areas are favoured but the hidden, private spaces are identi-

fied as equally important. Architects try to change only minimally the topography of the plots on which they build. One important starting point is the using of space effectively by a thoughtful setting of the building on the site. Much attention is paid to the organization of space, stressing the connection of the building and the landscape. The exterior constitutes one of the component parts of this architecture, contributing essentially to the quality of life and work in the buildings. The orientation of particular rooms and windows is employed as a tool designed to provide genuine contact between the user and the surrounding nature or the built environment. Windows and rooms are pointed in different directions where interaction is anticipated.

**This architecture often appears to be a collective project that employs strategies that are supposed to alleviate unwanted social and economic impacts or to change spatial relationships.**



Different partners contribute to the project, including artists and art historians. These different expertises are intended to bring additional quality to the projects. Since the surroundings constitute a part of the architecture, the landscape architect appears as a common member of the design team.

Practices that adjust the concepts of continuity and re-formulating cultivate a particular relationship towards the existing built environment. This architecture respects the physical context of the space and should be developed in a manner to complete the existing built environment. But the new is presented as an element with distinctively different aesthetic measures. The pre-existing environment is understood as a historical layer that has served out its purpose but now presents a useful structure that could be employed anew and given new value without sullyng its past identity. The old structures are cleaned to be presented as autonomous compositional parts. A completing of built environment is effected as a loading of new structures into the pre-existing. The new structures appear as a contrast to

the old and infuse the pre-existing buildings with new life, allowing them to live again.

The choice of materials as well as the building techniques employed, is thoughtful. Form is limited to simple geometric models and recruits a limited set of architectural elements with minimal aesthetics. Materials are largely traditional and are used in a manner that corresponds to the quality of a particular material in order to create an attractive texture and surface.

MC



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
client: Municipality of Kočevje  
site: Kočevje • year: 2002  
architects: Nicholas Dodd,  
Tadej Glazar, Vasa J. Perović, Arne Vehovar  
landscape architect: Ana Kučan









Around the town of Kočevje, virgin forests still cover more than 90% of the landscape and the area is sparsely inhabited. Development in this region was neglected after WWII, as the wild forests in the area proved very convenient for various military purposes. In 1994, the Slovenian parliament adopted an act that provided for an educational programme named "School Tolar". As a part of this programme, a number of architecture competitions have been launched for new elementary schools.

**The competition brief for the school in Kočevje asked for a building that would be one of the first to be specifically designed to run lessons according to the newly-reformed elementary school programme.**

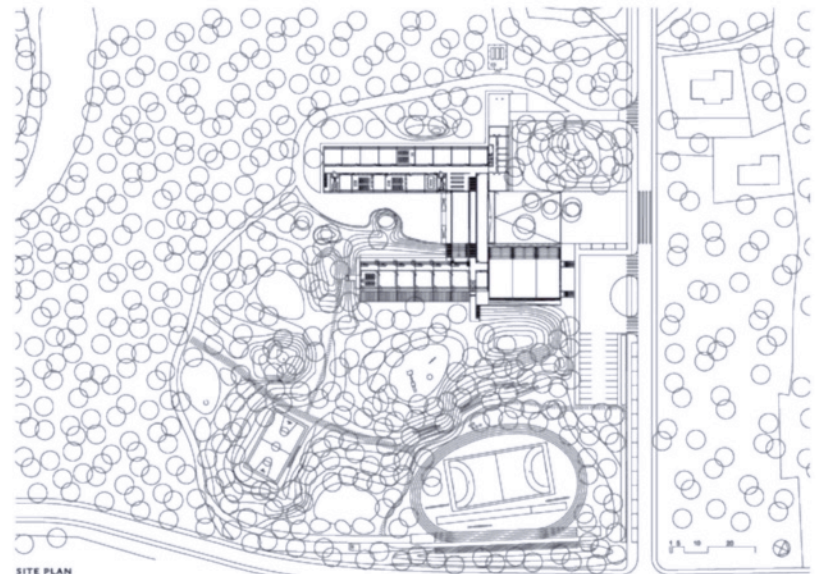
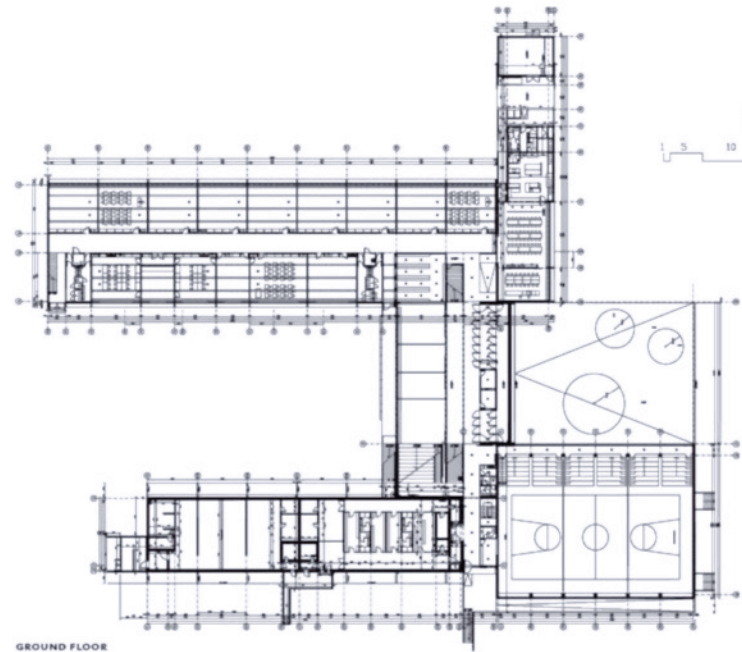
The landscape in the school area is characterized by rough, typical Karst ground full of deep sinkholes. The school is situated on the outskirts of the town, along the road dividing the urban area and the forest. The building, together with its surroundings, is designed as a total learning environment.

According to the new elementary school programme, lessons are organized in triads. Lessons in the first triad, designed for the youngest children, lay stress on play and the experiencing of nature. As a result, classrooms for them are designed as family units incorporating dressing rooms and toilets. Each classroom has its own open air terrace and can be expanded into the school corridor by opening the sliding panel walls.

The entrance area of the school hosts the common programme: school management, hall, dining room and library. The library is designed as a bridge over the entrance, connecting the first triad with the second and third.

Construction observes the organisation of the classrooms and teachers' cabinets. The supporting concrete walls and floors, filled with larch window frames, create the particular image of the school's elevations. Rough wooden boards have been used for panelling, leaving the prints of the wood structure on the concrete walls.

The school garden is designed as separate playground and learning units which are connected with existing forest paths. The units are installed in the forest and are meant to be inhabited by children yet still manage to preserve their wild or organic character.







"It is, in fact, very impressive to experience the way in which the woods in Kočevje literally dialog with the interior spaces and give them a very archaic connection to the mysterious life in the dark forest. Being somehow at the edge of civilization seems to reinforce the loveliness of education, of the bringing in of knowledge, of culture, of understanding the wonders of the world."

Cristoph Lusching. Conceptual Experiments in Recent Slovenian Architecture. Territories, Identities, Nets. Slovene Art 1995-2005. Edited by Igor Španjol, Igor Zabel, Ljubljana; Moderna Galerija, 2005











**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Municipality of Ravne na Koroškem  
Ravne na Koroškem  
Slovenia, 2004

architects: **Maruša Zorec, Maša Živec**  
design team: Matjaž Bolčina, Mitja Novak, Domen Mozetič, Jure Zavrtanik,  
Spela Jerin, Katja Florjanc • landscape architect: Ana Kučan



Although it is situated in a central urban area, the mansion in Ravne has always appeared remote, as it occupies a strategic point on a terrace above the city. Renovation of the mansion and its transformation into a central regional public library suddenly infused the area with a new vitality and connected the surrounding parts of the old industrial city together. The design is the result of a public competition that proposed installing the entire library programme into the existing mansion complex according to the guidelines of the local Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

**The library in Ravne na Koroškem is conceived as a fluid open space, branching out into the different volumes of the mansion that were constructed in different periods, the oldest of them dating back to the 16th century.**

The library is arranged in two complexes. The exhibition and event halls, the cafeteria and the main reading room represent the most important space accessible to the public. They occupy the renaissance core of the mansion where the building has been restored as closely to the original as possible. The main part of the library is placed in the wing that was added at a later date; here heritage protection guidelines allowed for new interventions.

The interior of the wing has been designed entirely anew. On this side, the building has been extended by pavilion-like structures. The two extensions create opposition to the existing historical complex, yet they are added to it in a largely restrained manner. They act as interfaces that open the old structure up into the natural environment. Both pavilions are fenced with vertical iron blades that support the floors and the glass shell behind. The blades also act as shades that protect the interior from the sun and provide intimacy in the library rooms.

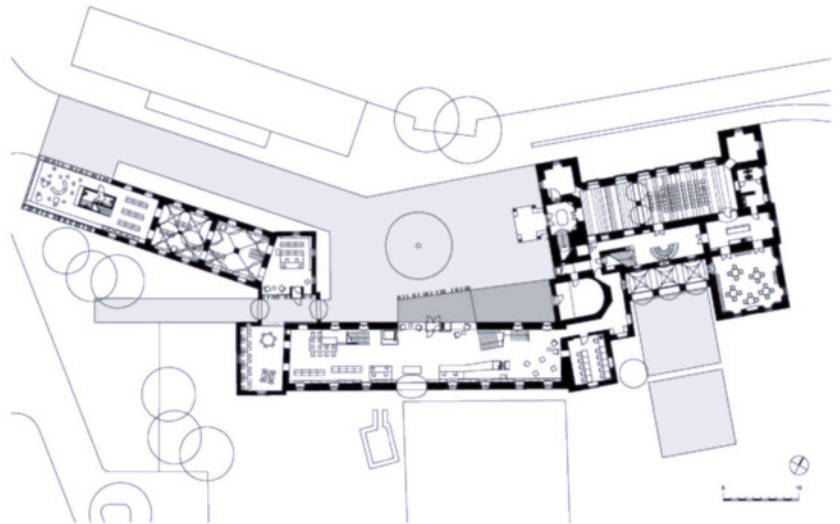
The open space around the mansion has been treated as an equally important part of the project. The main task has been to design the courtyard as a new public square that links all of the new and old buildings into a single complex. The park has been rearranged to open the views from the mansion along its baroque axis. The granary foundations found during construction in the park have been reformulated as a new bench that floats above the lawn.



CROSS SECTION



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



SITE PLAN





"The extension of the library consequently operates with some cautious interventions that function as if the insides of the villa were spilled out and the surroundings cleaned up. The intervention thus respects the glory of the architecture of the mansion and at the same time dissects its components, as though it criticised the background of its wealth, but still upheld the aesthetics of the complex." Cristoph Luschinger. *Conceptual Experiments in Recent Slovenian Architecture. Territories, Identities, Nets. Slovene Art 1995-2005.* Edited by Igor Španjol, Igor Zabel, Ljubljana : Moderna Galerija, 2005







**MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING**

client: **Adriatic d.o.o., Primorje d.d.**  
site: **Trzin, Ljubljana** • year: 2002

architect: **A.BIRO**

design team: **Miloš Florjančič, Marej Blenkuš,**  
**Primož Hočevar, Matjaž Zorc, Jernej Fischer-Knap**







After the completion of the northern section of the ring motorway around Ljubljana in 1998, Šmartinska Street became one of the primary traffic arteries entering the city; the street also links the city centre with one of the biggest and fastest developing shopping and commercial areas. The largely residential area of Šmartinska Street is marked by the eternal cemetery architecture by Plečnik on one side, while the other is characterized by the more ephemeral structures of the shopping malls, recreation grounds and extensive parking platforms.

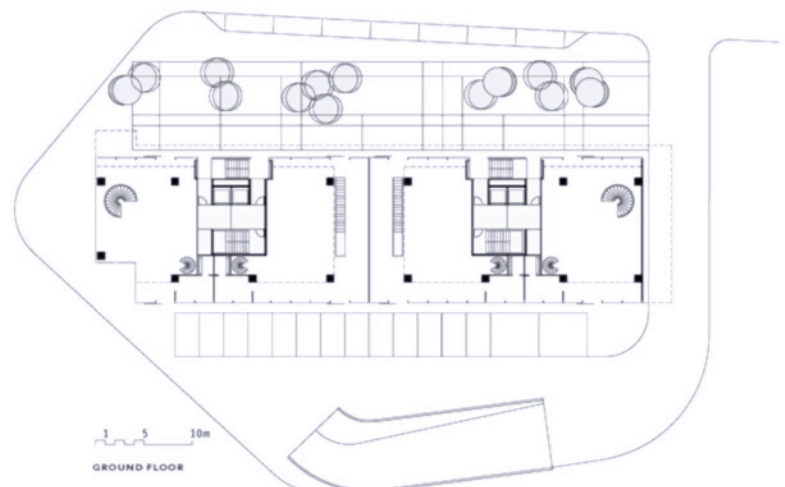
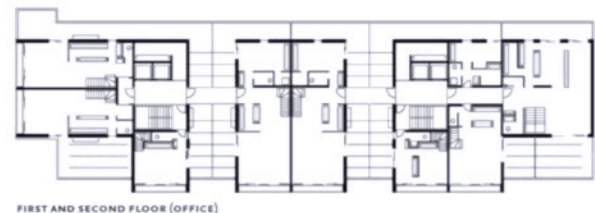
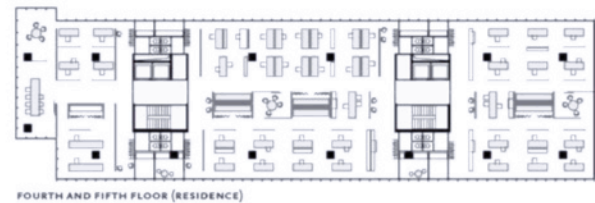
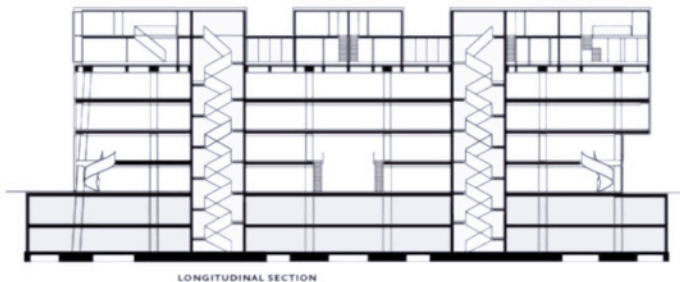
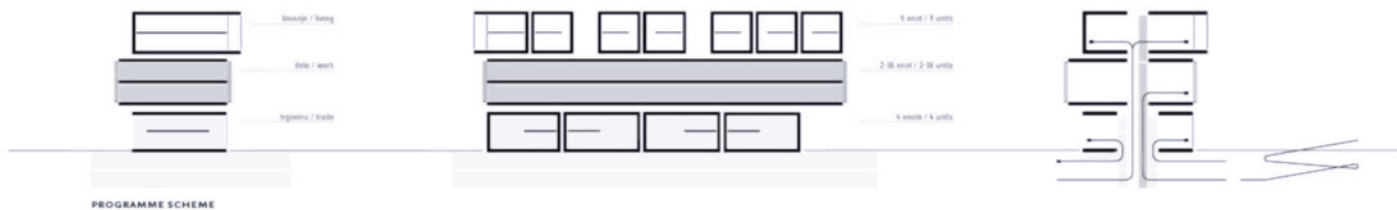
**Here the architects were challenged to provide a diverse programme of shops, offices and apartments, arranging them into an attractive architectural composition.**

Locating the shops in the lower floors, offices in the middle and apartments on the roof proved to be the most logical. This tripartite composition is reflected on the outside and gives the building a particular character.

Since the particular end-users of the property were unknown at the time of planning, the commercial part of the programme had to be designed as flexibly as possible. Floor plans were left entirely open, for organization at a later date in any way possible.

While the shopping and office spaces can be identified by the different densities of the glazing system, the residential units on the roof are exposed with an entirely different treatment. These are placed on the roof terrace as three autonomous houses. Other than the service cores, they haven't much in common with the design of the building below. Projecting them out over the lower floors further emphasizes their independence.

Residents can thus enjoy all the privacy they want and get magnificent views of the city. The space between the apartments is designed as spacious terraces with the possibility of being converted into pleasant roof gardens.



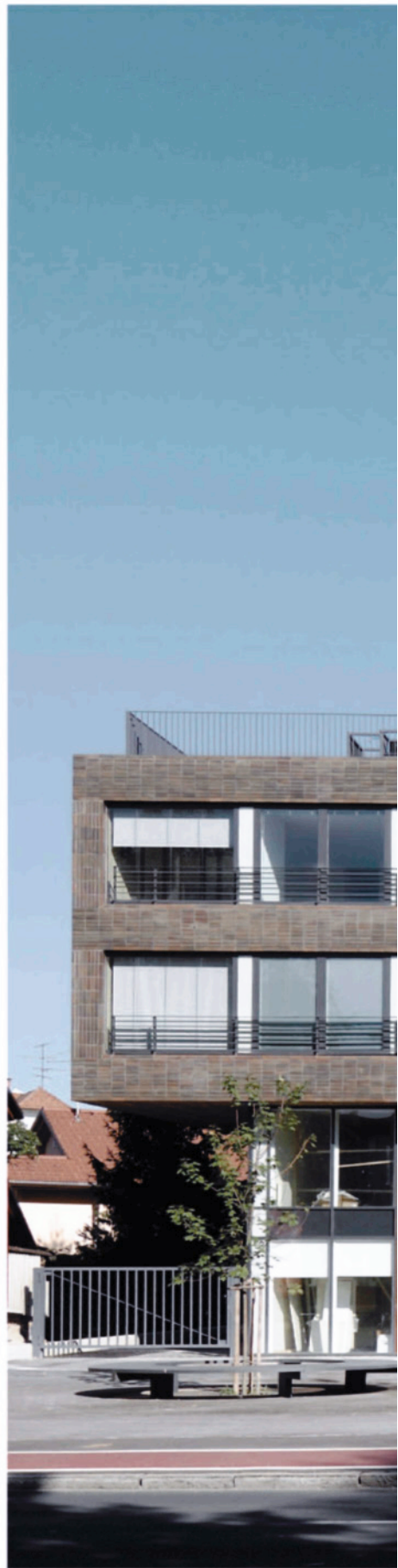




"While the new national housing policy and competitions have opened up new prospects for Slovene architects, some private investors are becoming aware of the importance of architecture as a key component of corporate image-making. The glossy architecture of the Šmartinka residential and commercial building is typical of this rapidly changing area on the outskirts of Ljubljana." Petra Čeferin & Maja Vardjan. *City Fragments*. A10, 2006, no. 7, pp. 68









RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDING

client: Mreža Jit d.o.o.  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2006

architect: A.biro, Scapelab  
design team: Matej Blenkuš, Mišo Florjančič,  
Marko Studen, Jernej Černe, Blaž Rupar, Katarina Štok





Typical suburban Ljubljana looks very much as it does in other European cities. Moving from the downtown area to the suburbs Ljubljana breaks into fragments comprised of individual housing, car showrooms, isolated office buildings, petrol stations and undefined patches of greenery. These are spaces that overnight undergo transformations that seem to develop without any master plan – or at least follow no common goals.

Yet there is a master plan in Ljubljana. During the 1980s, the main streets entering the city were planned as broad avenues surrounded with high-rise buildings that would hide the small-scale neighborhood housing behind. The resulting effect would be that of a larger and denser city than Ljubljana really is.

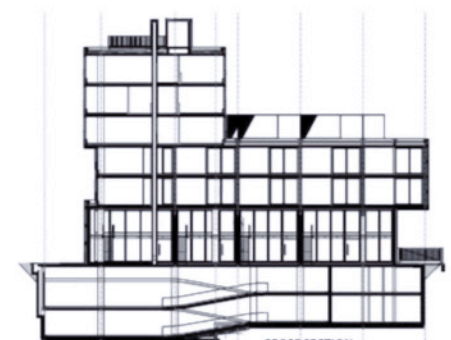
**Along Dunajska Street – which is one of the main city axes – urban planning documents call for more detailed design regulation. A new building on the corner of a junction with one of the transverse streets is the first to follow these standards.**

The building has been drawn back from the road which is intended to be broadened by a tram line. New construction is planned to create a new street-front with the lower floors running along the street and the upper floors across. This scheme is intended to provide morning light to the street.

The new corner building houses offices on the lower floors and apartments above. When mixing flats and offices, the architects tried to make use of the advantages inherent in the design regulations. They piled up an attractive composition of working and living spaces. Intertwining brick and glazing on the one hand, and the upper and lower volumes on the other, they created an attractive street corner.

Despite having the character of an office building, most of the floor area is occupied by apartments, which face the street through glazed loggias. Loggias and window openings are designed as continuous glazed strips that wrap around the building. Such an approach makes the building appear compact and gives it a stronger, more solid appearance, with an acute sense of Nordic severity.

At the moment, the building is projected over the surrounding carpet of low-rise construction in the area. This may, however, soon change, seeing as Dunajska Street is one of the most attractive and fastest developing areas in Ljubljana.







"The very refusal to indulge a false splendour and instead search for a more profound truth regarding the standards of contemporary architecture has re-established the "Dunajski vogal" commercial building as an expressive definition of space, where it is quietly yet actively installed." Plečnik Award Jury. Ljubljana, 2006













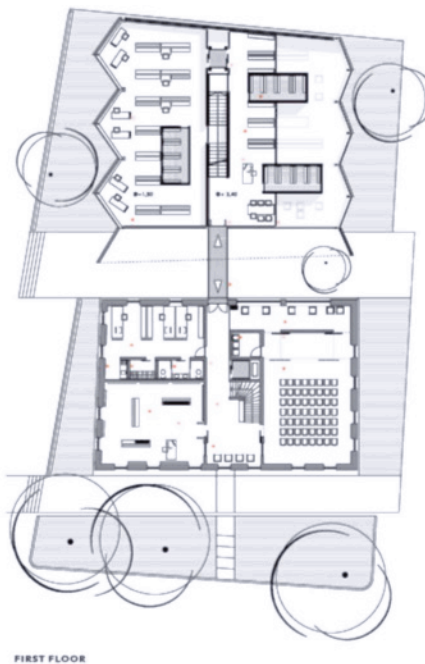
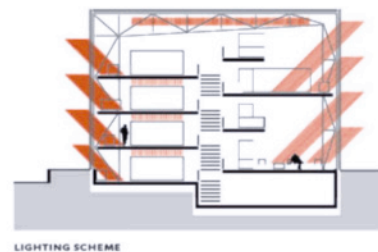
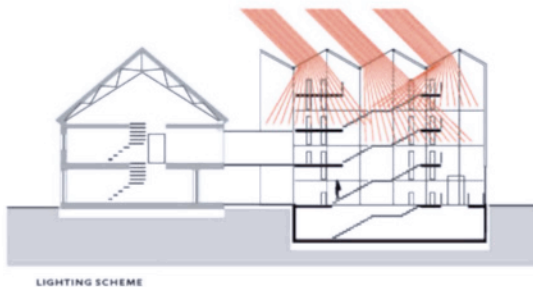
It's a mere 15-minute drive from Ljubljana to the town of Grosuplje, which lies along the motorway to Zagreb. The proximity of the capital together with an authentic countryside milieu has been driving this small municipality's growth of 30% over the past 15 years. This country town had mutated into a small city in a relatively short period of time and was suddenly facing many new problems. Like many other public buildings, the library also became too small once the town began to experience rapid growth.

**Back in the 1970s the library in the small town of Grosuplje was installed in a large house that had been confiscated from a local entrepreneur following the Second World War. The easiest way to get more room for the library as quickly as possible was to build an extension of the old country house on the back yard.**

The old edifice that houses the library dates back to the end of the 19th century and represents one of the few well-preserved historical buildings in the city centre that is protected as a heritage site. It stands on the top of the hill, right on the axis of the street that

on the opposite side ends at the railway station. The front of the house is distinguished by four mighty linden trees. As a part of the library extension project, this historical complex had to be carefully renovated.

The entire lending area of the library is placed in the new pavilion-like wing, leaving the space in the old house free for a cafeteria, lecture rooms and an event space. Compared to the old house, the new wing is twice as big. It is detached from the old house and drawn out like an accordion bellows. The old and new parts of the library are only connected through the glazed gallery that spreads out over the back yard. This way the dominating features of the old building have been preserved. The design of the bellows-shaped pavilion provides good light, with the sun coming through the half-muted and half-glazed folds of the bellows. The interior of the new library is open and fluid. The extension is conceived as a single large and bright room, fitted out with clusters of wooden bookshelves and reading courts among them. Particular attention has been paid to the department for children and young people.







“We speak here inarguably of a valuable sociological contribution, the restoring of a certain “city living room” without curtains, without hiding or covering. All the views to the city are opened; all the gazes into the library from the city are uncovered. The employees, the users and passers-by make a part of a permanent visual show that – intentionally or unintentionally – speaks about the role of the media in contemporary society. For the libraries – apart from the traditional meaning of this expression – have outgrown the category of a mere book; now they are simply mediateques.”  
 Tomaž Brate. *Harmony*,  
 harmonica. Oris, 2007, Vol. IX,  
 No. 44









**YOUTH HOSTEL**  
clients: City of Ljubljana,  
Student Organisation of the University of Ljubljana  
site: Ljubljana • year: 2003

architects: Janko Rožič, Ira Zorko  
design team: Aleksander S. Ostan, Nataša Pavlin, Gašper Dražler,  
Nadja Obesnel, Primož Gasperšič • artists: Vesna Krmelj, Iri Kočica, Žiga Okorn

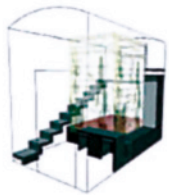
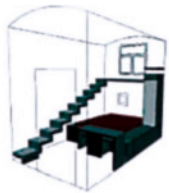


For the various powers that have governed Ljubljana over past centuries, the city has represented a point of strategic military importance. Therefore numerous barracks were erected in the city and the surrounding area, from the Habsburg monarchy onwards to the socialist Yugoslavia. Most of these barracks in the city were demolished after Slovenia became independent in 1991. In the early 1990s, companies with good political connections did very good business by acquiring inexpensive building sites for the construction of new apartments and offices on some of these sites.

Demolition has long seemed the destiny of the old barracks in the city centre, constructed by the Habsburgs at the end of the 19th century and later housing the Yugoslavian military command until 1991. This military complex was extremely unpopular because one of the ugly buildings within served as a prison that, since the Italian occupation during WWII, was used for political opponents of the regime. But these buildings have been preserved by a loose collective of artists and activists, who began squatting the barracks back in 1993.

Later an agreement was reached between the city and the artist-activists to convert the former military prison building into a youth hostel.

**The newly-named 'Celica' hostel, together with the squatted buildings behind, have become one of the most vital focal points of cultural life in Ljubljana, and one of the main new city sights that visitors are determined not to miss.**



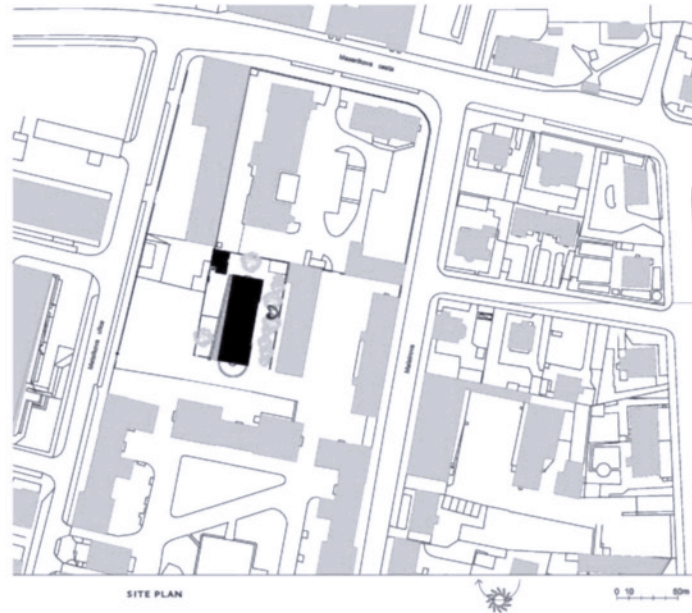
CELL REARRANGEMENT

The transforming of prison cells into hostel rooms was effected via a cooperative of artists and architects. As a result, visitors can now enjoy a stay in a building whose every room represents a work of art. The cells have been preserved with their strange proportions and even the iron lattice-work on the doors and windows. The prison corridor has been transformed into a street-like public space and the prison courtyard turned into an open air terrace café/bar, where guests can meet and socialize. The building was also painted in far friendlier colours, with the only new element to appear on the outside being a few glass elements – the dormers on the roof and a winter garden in the courtyard.

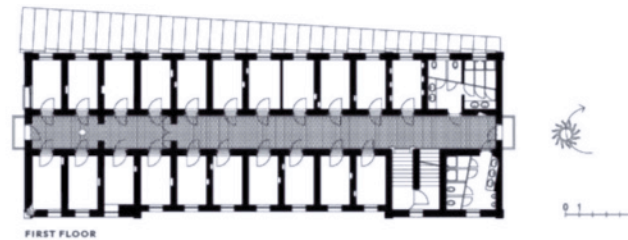
The new youth hostel treats young backpackers to artfully modernized cell-rooms, but goes further in making a small cultural centre, offering exhibition and event spaces on the ground floor.



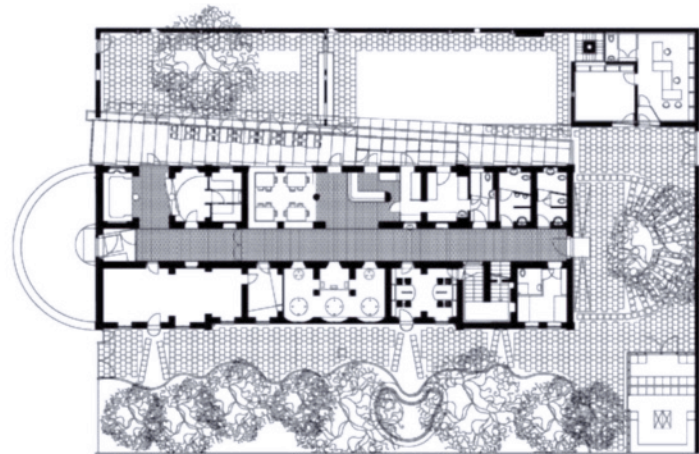
CROSS SECTION



SITE PLAN



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



LONGITUDINAL SECTION





"Hostel Celica represents a tangible conversion of "the bad" into "the good" by combining different kinds of art in coordination with an architect, that creates a conceptual experience through space and time. With the interdisciplinary work of more than 80 artists and architects, 20 prison cells have been reorganized into useful 'exhibition bedrooms' with a table, a closet and a bed." Uroš Lobnik. *Hostel Celica*. *Architect's Bulletin*, 2006, vol. 36, no. 169-172, pp. 132-135





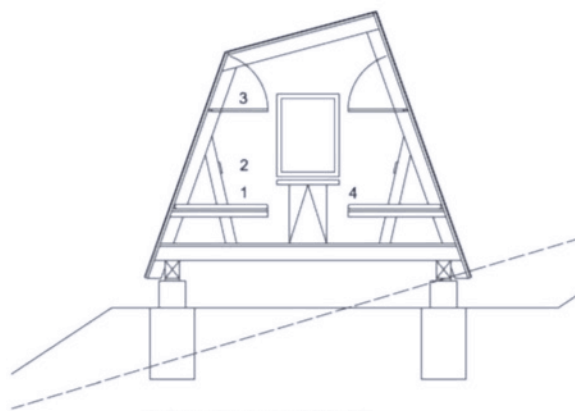


# BIVOUAC 1

client: Tourist Development Association of Breginja  
site: Stol mountain ridge (1600 m), Julian Alps  
year: 2002

architect: Miha Kajželj





- 1 lower sleeping level (4 beds)
- 2 removable back of the bench
- 3 upper sleeping level (4 folding beds)
- 4 removable table

CROSS SECTION

Life has never been easy in the mountain villages around Breginj, situated in one of the most remote valleys in the west of Slovenia. The population there has long been in decline and the number of residents today represents a mere quarter of the number that lived there at the turn of the 20th century. The strong earthquake of 1976 only dealt yet another blow to these remote places. On the other hand, however, the remoteness and only moderate outside investment makes for an area of genuine, near-untouched landscapes and intact nature surroundings attractive for visitors.

The chance to raise funds from European resources from the 90s onward offered an opportunity for new projects that would help these remote villages remain populated and go on developing sustainably. One of the most important ongoing projects is the re-design and layout of the border-area panoramic mountain trail. A part of this trail runs along the mountain ridge above the villages.

### The new bivouac has been constructed as a part of the 30 km trail section on the top of Stol mountain ridge running along the border to Italy.

The bivouac is conceived as a refuge in case of summer storms, avalanches and snow storms; but it can also be used for lodging by hikers and climbers making longer trips.

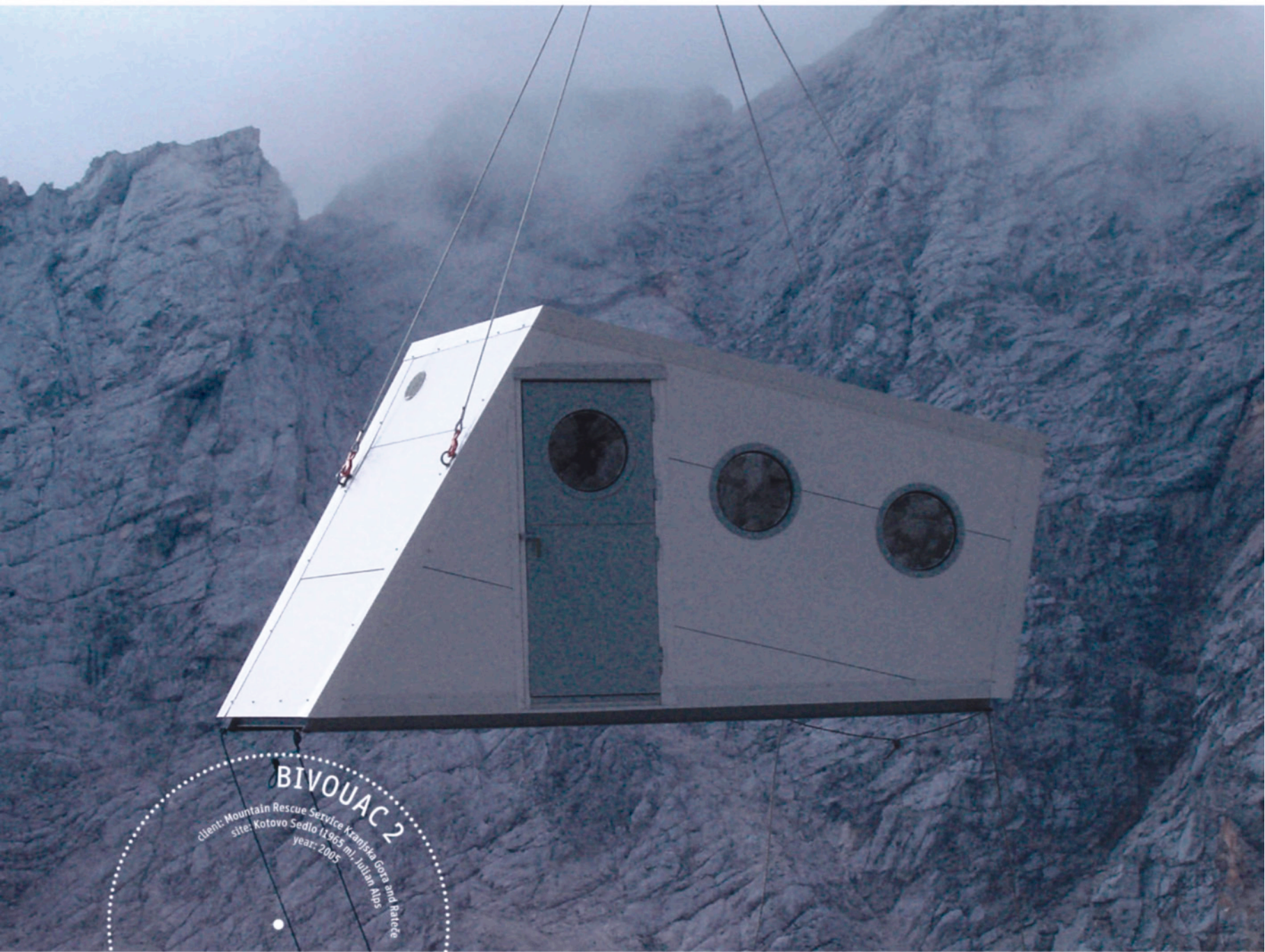
The bivouac has been placed on a pre-excavated terrace on the mountain saddle. The terrace provides a suitable shelter for the small building. The construction is designed as a tent that fits into the natural topography. The pitched roof lies along the ridge with the inclination following the slope of the mountain. This way the bivouac can withstand occasional difficult weather conditions with strong winds and drifting snow.

In the bivouac, the rough wooden ribs and planks create the sense of a warm shelter. The sun coming through the gable window provides enough light. The room is fitted out with two simple wooden benches and a table that can be used as shakedown. The wooden construction covered by aluminium metal sheeting is simple enough to have been raised by only two climbers who camped on the mountain ridge during the construction process.



"Which value assumptions were deployed and which design strategies used by the architect who succeeded in creating numerous architectural qualities in the handling of a task so seemingly insignificant? In the first place, he transformed the given site minimally. The landscape was unobtrusively conceptualised so as to create harmony. The architecture condensed nature within itself so it became an object, an artificial ridge, a sculpture, and a bivouac at the same time." Janez Koželj. Bivouac: Minimal Architecture. Oris, 2003, Vol. V, no. 19





## BIVOUAC 2

client: Mountain Rescue Service Kranjska Gora and Rateče  
site: Kotovo Sedlo 11965 m., Julian Alps  
year: 2005

architect: Mitja Krželj





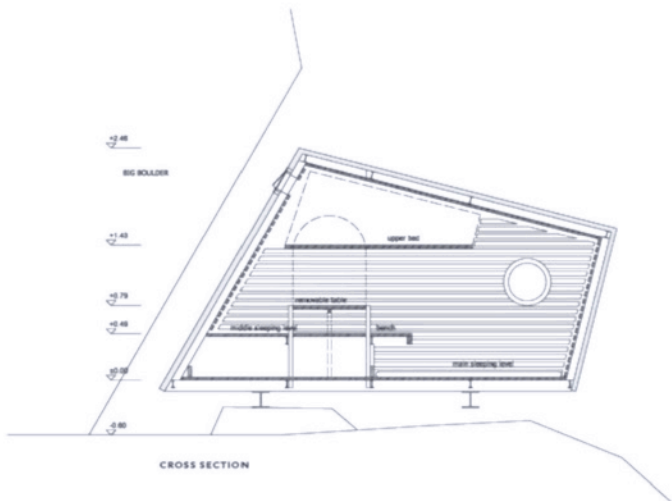
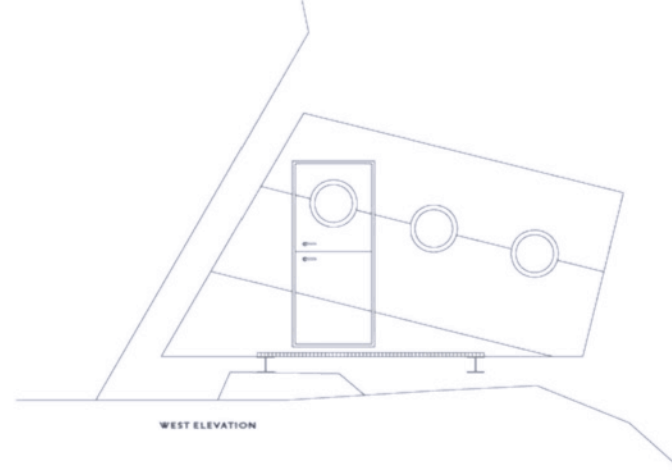
The mountain landscape in the north-west of the Julian Alps is wild, dramatic and still virgin. Trails here are demanding, and even experienced mountaineers must give proper consideration to long tours without stops in mountain huts. On the other hand, the remote nature of the setting makes these trails even more attractive. Kotovo sedlo is a mountain pass with a fine view: mountaineers stop here before they climb Mt. Jalovec (2645 m). During the winter, skiing from the pass is one of the most popular adventures available to tour-skiers.

**Faced with the growing number of visitors here, the construction of an emergency shelter on Kotovo sedlo became necessary to ensure the safety of visiting mountaineers.**

The shelter was set here as a refuge from storms and a place to rest. But most importantly, it serves as an emergency station for injured hikers and skiers that need to be taken to the valley.

Finding the right site for the bivouac in this rocky, mountain terrain, exposed to extreme weather conditions, wasn't easy. Kotovo sedlo is covered in large blocks of broken rock. The bivouac is set below one of them, and looks like a metal pin preventing the rock from rolling down the mountain. It's merely one of the many rocks scattered over the mountain. The small building adapts to the physiognomy of the surface, which it uses as a shelter.

In spite of these organic characteristics, the bivouac appears as an obvious artefact. The reflection of metal cladding in the rocks proves a reasonable choice of material, which acts as reassurance of its durability and also enables easy transport to the site. Prism-like shapes are intended to help the materials and the structure as a whole endure bad weather as long as possible. Its sharp edges and round windows remind visitors that the bivouac is something that fell from another world. It was, in fact, constructed in the valley and airlifted to the mountain by helicopter.

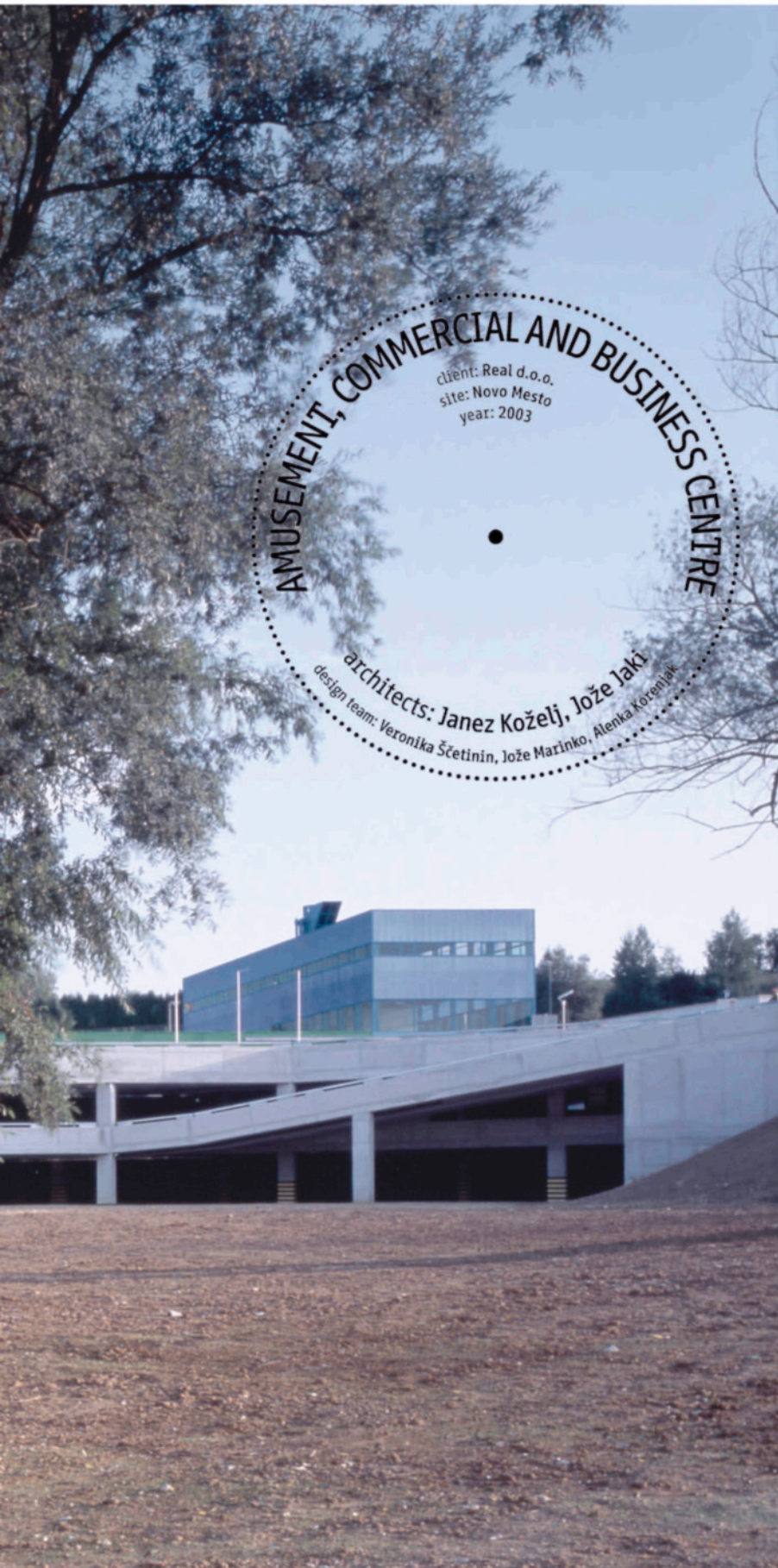


"For Kajzelj the harmony in the environment represents a value of top priority. The effort to create and preserve this harmony for him represents an ethical category. He strives for a refined relationship towards natural and urban context." Bogo Zupančič. Arhitekti na obzorju – Miha Kajzelj, Arhitektura Bivaka. Delo, May 7 2003, pp. 17











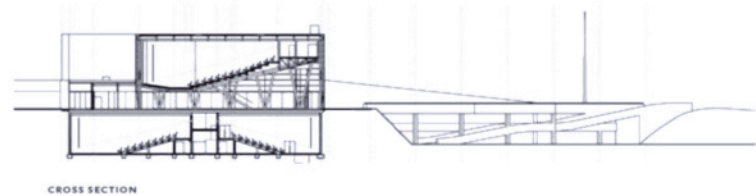
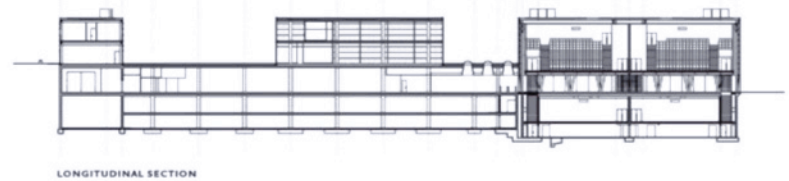
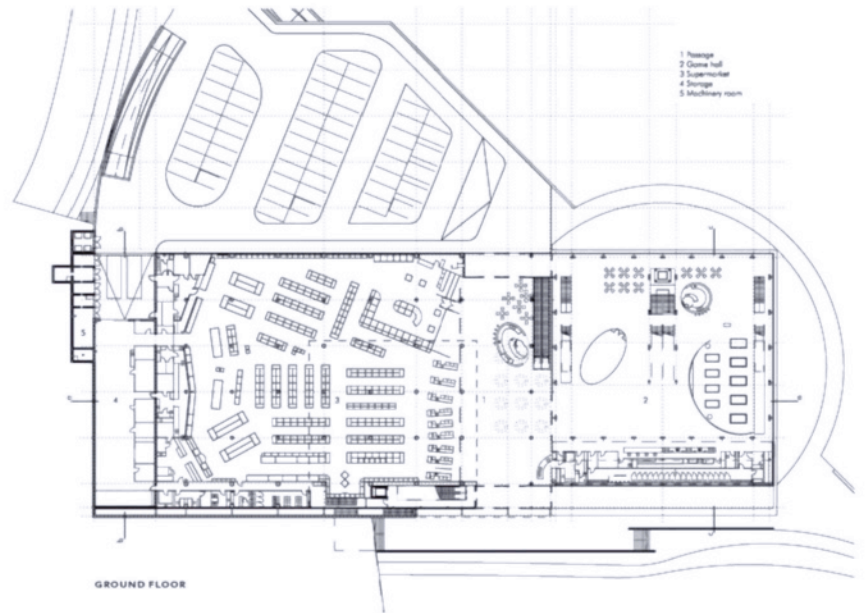
Novo Mesto, a city that boasts strong car manufacturing and chemical industries also enjoys pristine forests and a picturesque old town situated on a bend of the Krka River. The river bank just opposite the old town has been partially occupied with sports grounds. On this attractive site, between the old city and suburban housing neighbourhoods, a new commercial and entertainment centre has now also sprung up.

The new heterogeneous programme of offices and retail spaces, together with a cinemaplex, seems appropriate for an area intended to enhance the vitality of the old town and bring it closer to the residents of the outlying suburbs. To this end a new pedestrian bridge linking the old city with the sports grounds has also been constructed as a part of the project.

**The scheme of the commercial complex in Novo Mesto sets out to make good use of the ground that sweeps gently down to the river by staggering shops, offices and cinema halls over different levels and using flat roofs as new urban platforms.**

The lower level is designed as a compact pedestal hiding the underground parking garage. The shops, offices and cinema halls are projected over the platforms, creating three pavilions enveloped in translucent yellow, green, blue and red polycarbonate plates. The spacing between the pavilions is intended to bring the natural environment from the park up to the street. The street and sport grounds are connected by a passage that acts as the hub between the cinemaplex, the shops and the underground parking garage.

Because of the relatively small plot, the cinema halls had to be piled one above the other, even though they are sited in the lower section of the plot. The red-coloured cinemaplex pavilion is partially sunk into the ground to meet the demands of height regulations and to avoid obstructing the view of the old town's skyline. The light steel construction made possible the designing of the ground floor of the cinemaplex as an entirely open space, creating an attractive lobby characterized by the big volumes of the cinema halls floating above the ground.







"In this building you will, strangely enough, feel embraced by a space which has no craft, even if it is entirely artificial. It may, somehow, be a cynical distinction from the "reality" of the picturesque surroundings of Novo Mesto that makes an event out of its shopping center." Cristoph Luschniger. *Conceptual Experiments in Recent Slovenian Architecture. Territories, Identities, Nets.* Slovene Art 1995–2005. Edited by Igor Španjol, Igor Zabel, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2005, pp. 121–123





# SQUARE

client: Municipality of Jesenice  
site: Jesenice • year: 2003

architect: Scapelab  
design team: Matej Kucina, Marko Studen









The history of the city of Jesenice is tightly knit with ironworks and metallurgy, since these have been, until only recently, the driving forces of Jesenice's development in essentially all respects. Only 20 years ago the city was still wrapped in a cloud of red dust.

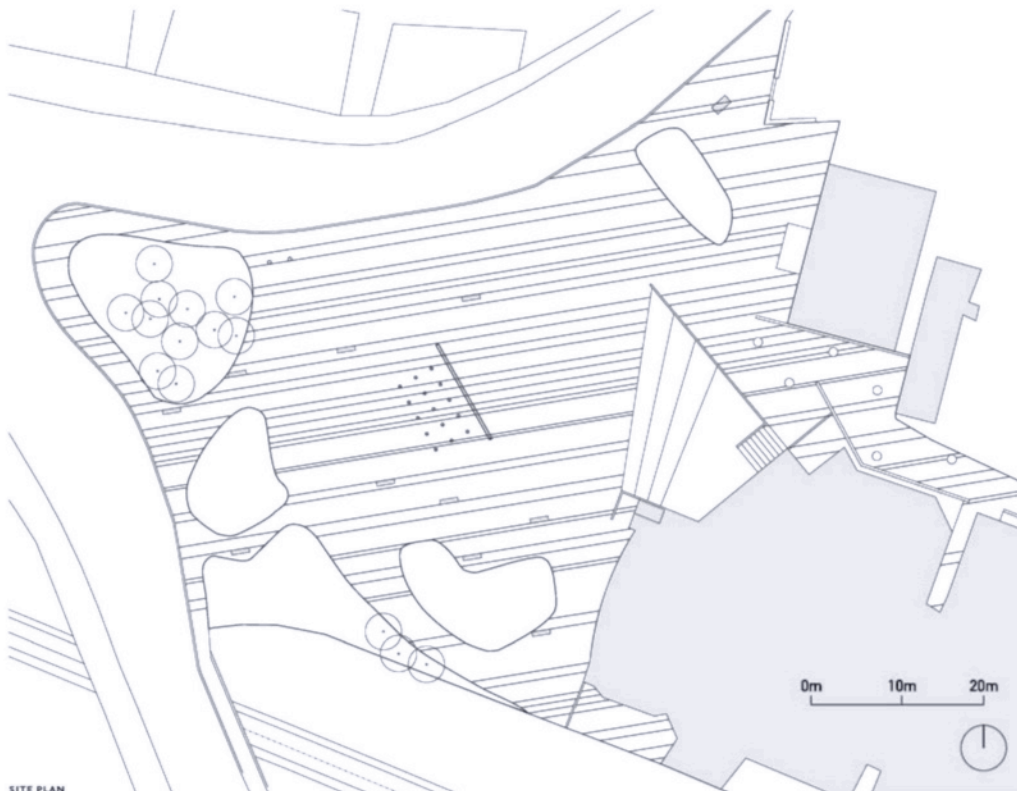
The city has been through a lot since the 1980s, when it hit rock bottom. The old ironworks in the city centre has been torn down. Surrounded by ruins, a shiny new supermarket stands where great furnaces once stood. Jesenice simply don't want to be associated with chimneys any more, and the people are slowly getting used to a new life which is not dictated by the factory.

The city is presently undergoing massive urban reconstruction with the help of EU resources. Well-designed public space proved to be a key component of urban regeneration here.

**The new square in Jesenice bespeaks the restored, positive relations between the citizens of Jesenice and their urban space.**

It enables them to meet and interact with each other differently than what they were used to before. The neighboring buildings of the grammar school, library and theatre are irregularly displaced on the square, yet they make it one of the most vital parts of the city. The design for the new square had to find an answer to the question of how to change an undefined surface surrounded by traffic arteries and untidy green plots, and link the entire area together.

The solution applied a simple asphalt surface lined with white stripes. At the centre, jets of water splash away according to a computer-controlled choreography. The wide-open space, together with the stripes and the water attract people. The water creates a focal point and drowns the noise of the traffic on the street. The striped surface has become the scene of a different activity altogether. The margins of the square are now occupied by new bars and their open air terraces. In the shadow of the ironworks this is now the spot to take in the sun and socialize.







"In applying a suitably creative approach, the architects succeeded in uniting the unarticulated built environment. Employing a limited number of measures they created a compelling environment that attracts people to visit the area. They injected new energy into the area, which had suffered from a lack of ambition in previous interventions in the urban space. Here they proved how the standard municipality's regulation of public space can be improved with a minimal planning effort." Plečnik Award Jury. Ljubljana. 2005









# MOUNTAIN RETREAT

client: Katja & Bojan Roš  
site: Livek • year: 2003

architect: Rok Klanjšček  
design team: Klemen Pavlin, Aljaž Lavrič, Irena Brecejl





Until recently, the Soča River Valley was known for active, adventure holidays and various adrenaline sports. But some local tourism-entrepreneurs found that these remote places without noisy tourist resorts represent the perfect place where people can come to escape from too much activity. In any case, the dramatic, largely untouched landscape here definitely constitutes an attraction-destination that sells well on the tourism market.

**The mountain retreat of Livek has been designed as a residence that would host the most demanding of guests ready to unplug from the rush and engagements of everyday work and social life.**

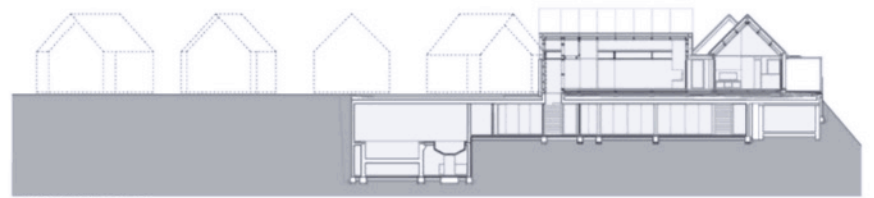
A group of five houses has been placed below the peak of Mount Kuk (1243 m), on a plateau projected out above the Soča Valley with an astonishing view of the peaks of the Julian Alps rising out of the opposite side of the valley.

The retreat is designed as a cluster of Alpine chalets placed on the edge of a plateau that has been extended into a terrace. The largest house has been designed for the owner, with the smaller four units rented out to guests. One of the chalets has been organized as a social space for the guests. The level below the front ground level floor of the chalets is devoted to rooms for light recreation and relaxation: a swimming pool, saunas, a small gym and a wine cellar.

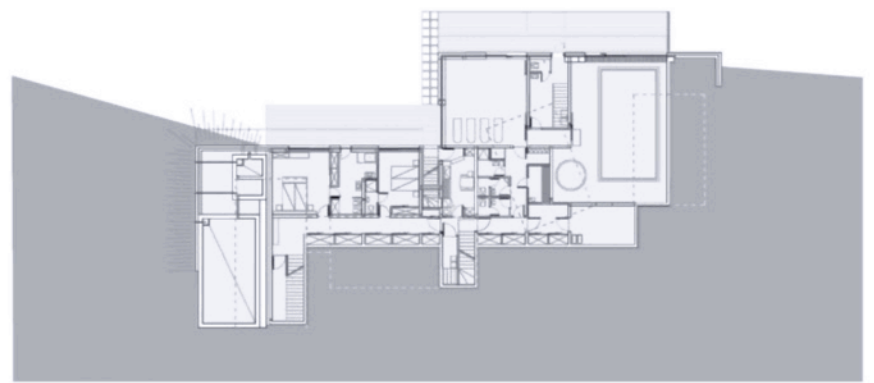
With the small windows facing the yard and the steep pitched roofs, the chalets refer to local vernacular architecture. Up-to-date steel construction is combined with traditional larch wood planks and local stone. Each chalet is pointed in a slightly different direction, designed as a box which opens on one side to face a specific view. Each residence-unit is organized as a single space with a large living room facing the valley and a service core in the back. The bedroom is built as a loft atop the service core. On the north side every house extends through a glazed front to an open-air veranda, where guests can enjoy striking views of the mountains opposite.



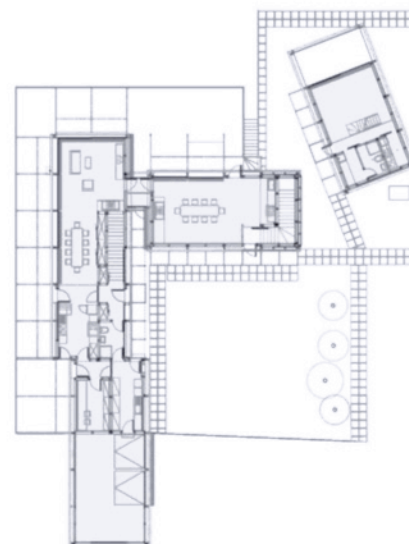
ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN







"It is an architecture that personifies potential users: well-formed and accentuated musculature, apparent mimicry of the local that is above all used as appearance, nearly on the border of dandyism; but a precisely balanced level of sight/interest, and finally a living standard in the interior that is at least equivalent to a "no-leisure" place." Tomaž Brate. Under a Happy Sky. Oris, 2005, Vol. VII, no. 32, pp. 50-57



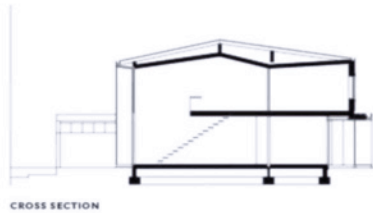




**STUDIOS**  
client: private  
site: Ljubljana  
year: 2005

Vanja Gregorc, architects:  
Rok Klanjšček, Aleš Vrhovec  
design assistant: Peter Ličen





CROSS SECTION



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

Rožna dolina is one of the most prestigious districts in Ljubljana. This area of worker housing began, at the end of 19th century, to become popular with the wealthier classes who started building luxurious villas here.

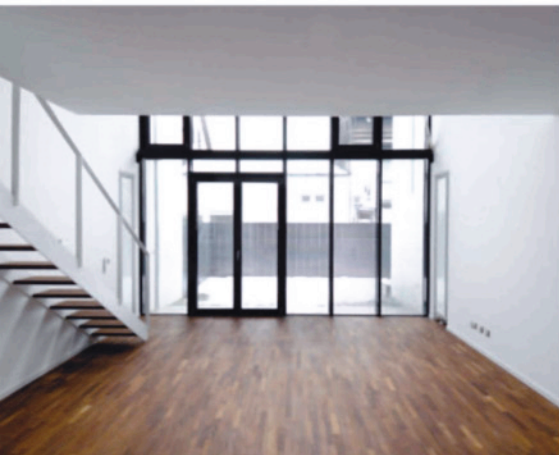
After WWII, the main student campus was constructed in the middle of this quarter, and many villas have been turned into social/public housing apartments. Today these old villas are being resettled typically by nouveaux-riches or are now occupied by embassies. The area has succeeded in retaining the charm of a wealthy old suburb with its lush gardens and impressive homes.

**The new studios have been placed in the area of former worker housing. Five housing units are composed into an oblong slab that separates the common courtyard on the entrance side from the private gardens in front of the living rooms.**

The courtyard is accessed either from the street at the front or via the driveway at the back. To provide more privacy, every second unit is shifted inside the garden, creating niches in front of the entrances and living rooms.

The complete volume together with the roof and the frontages is dressed in a dark shell made from stone-coated steel. Particularly on the entrance side the cladding creates the impression of a solid, unified shell. The five apartments are amalgamated with a long window on the first floor and a cantilever that forms a veranda in front of the entrances. The light larch wood planks on the veranda create a contrast to the dark frontages marking the entrance area with a homey touch.

The rooms are arranged in a classical manner: living on the ground floor and sleeping on the top. The garden side is characterized by totally glazed frontages that can be shaded with sun screens. One of the main advantages of every studio is the tall, bright living room with a staircase, and a gallery on the upper floor.



"The project of terraced studio houses does not build its efficiency "on the account" of privatizing the public domain, but it recreates the new public domain out of the private. And this is the quality that points the way out of the present crisis that is represented by the captivity of individualism." Miha Dešman. Bivalni ateljeji Rožna dolina. Architect's Bulletin, 2005, Vol. XXXVI, no. 169-172, pp. 40-43





RESIDENTIAL AND OFFICE BUILDING

client: Ingrad VNG d.o.o.  
site: Celje • year: 2004

design team: Tomaž Krušec, Jena Krušec, Marko Apollonio, Nina Crljenko, Rajko Bajc

architect: Arhitektura Krušec









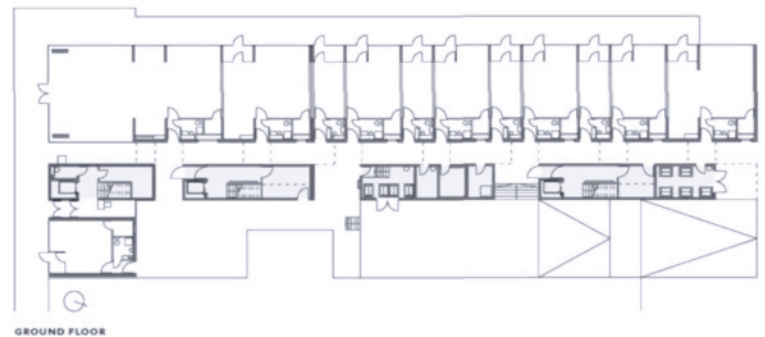
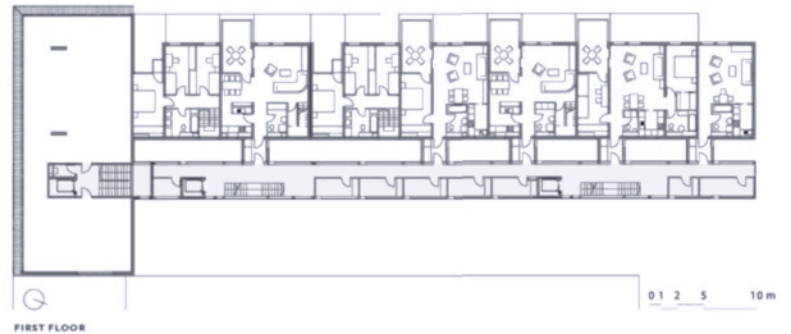
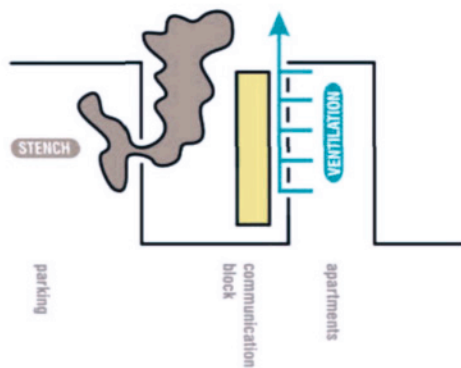
The city of Celje represents the fastest developing city in Slovenia over the past ten years. However, the resultant changes are far easier perceived in the city's suburbs than in the centre of the historic city.

**The small housing projects in Celje has proven to be very successful, turning unfavorable plots into pleasant urban nooks.**

While in the 1990s the new shopping, entertainment and sport centres on the outskirts drew much of the population out of the downtown area, the focus has now returned to the quality of life in the heart of the city.

The new residential building with a small office block is situated on a busy traffic artery leading to the old city through the vibrant quarter of Glazija. The edifice is placed along the busy parking garage covering its carelessly worked out side frontage. As a result, the site is exposed to both the noise from the busy street and the parking garage. Taking this into consideration the layout for the new building proposed the design of a service slab that would act as a buffer between the apartments and the garage, and put the offices on the street front. The service slab contains the staircases and storage. The apartments are entered through galleries that bridge the light shaft between the corridors and the dwellings. The rear of the apartments is occupied with kitchens and bathrooms, while the living and bedrooms look over the school park.

The three different compositional parts of the building can be understood on the frontages. Here the offices are dressed with fine glass blinds, the service slab is glazed with cast glass, and the apartments are plastered in glowing white. The residential part of the frontage is characterized by balconies protruding far out from the apartments into the park.







"The apartment block is a schoolbook example of good quality housing construction in the city centre. It acts convincingly as both typological innovation as well as an object of design and living quality." Miha Dešman. *Med belo moderro in sodobrim. Hiše*, 2005, Vol. 6, no. 27, pp. 69-71











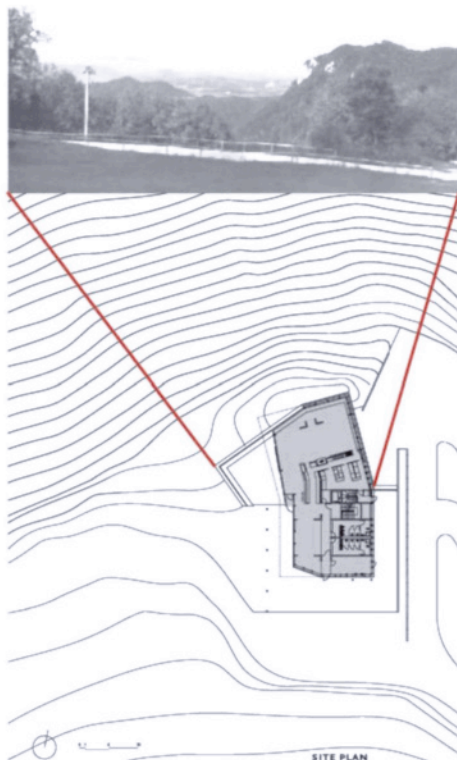
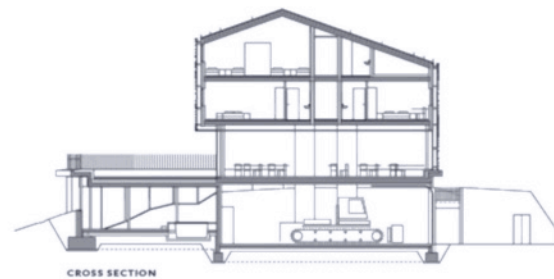


The slopes of Grmada Mountain (718m) above the city of Celje became famous for skiing in the 1920s. Later they developed into a small but popular ski centre that represents an attractive recreation area for the people of Celje throughout the year, and also affords a nice view of the city.

**The panoramic views to the valley were used as one of the starting points for the winning competition design of the new mountainside hotel.**

The new hotel has replaced the old mountain hut that was in poor condition and had to be demolished. The building is designed as a dominating feature in the landscape. The compact hotel volume follows the direction of the slopes. The bend in the middle points out the peak of the mountain. The backside is designed as a courtyard for slope and trail preparation vehicles.

The supporting structure is conceived as a backbone of eight concrete pillars placed at the core of the building. The ground floor layout is conceived to serve both the skiers and the hotel guests. The belvedere restaurant extends out into a terrace that in winter is accessible on skis. The simple hotel rooms on the upper floors can accommodate 75 guests. While the ground floor is glazed all around, the floors are designed as a wooden box using the principles of Slovenian vernacular architecture, and the different density of the wooden lattice is used to conduct the views out of the rooms.







"All the required functions are composed into one single, very condensed building, that is placed perpendicularly to the incline. In such a manner the ski area is least narrowed, all the rooms exposed to the rays of the sun and offer far-reaching views along the hills. The roofs that in every aspect adapt the surrounding slopes make one of the most interesting artistic solutions. The appearance of the building is artistically pure and at the same time – despite the heavy application of the wood – communicates a very urban impression by the cantilever and continuous glass surface design on the ground floor." Competition Jury, Celje, 2004









**CITY LIBRARY**  
clients: Municipality of Velenje, Toming Consulting d.o.o.  
site: Velenje • year: 2005  
architect: Uroš Reiter





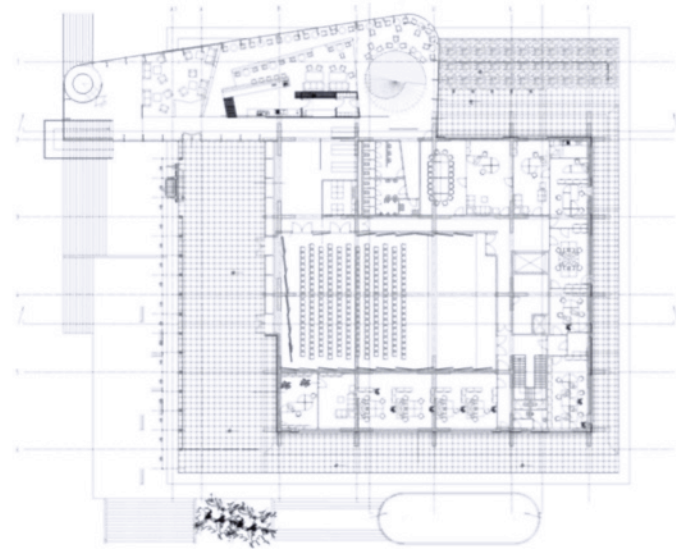
The coal mining city of Velenje sprang up in close proximity to the village of the same name. The master plan, designed by architect Janez Trenc in the 1950's, proposed a new city for 30,000 people. By virtue of this fact, the city of Velenje represents the most extensive modern urban development in Slovenia which, with a population of only 36,000, ranks as the 5th largest city in the country.

Since the decline of the coal mining industry that represented the origin and indeed the reason for the city's existence, Velenje has been forced to search for a new identity. Even here, in the quintessential modern city, the new shopping centres on the outskirts of town are sucking the people out of the city centre. As a result, the old department store in the city's deserted pedestrian area has stood empty for years. However, it was recognised as a new opportunity for the regeneration of the city centre. The private developer who stepped in bought the building and subsequently sold half of it to the municipality that was looking for a space to locate the new library.

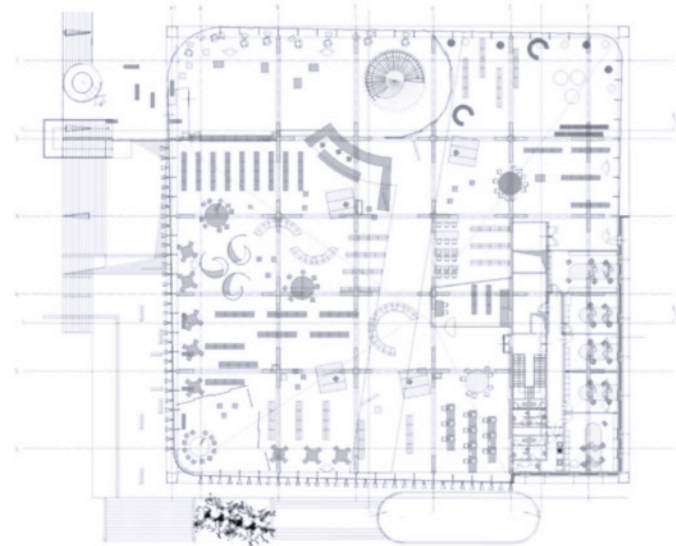
**The newly-named "Center Nova" in Velenje became a case study in successful joint public-private partnership.**

While the ground floor is still occupied by shops, the upper floors saw the city gain a contemporary library, a multipurpose hall and an attractive cafeteria with a view to the street. The new entrance has been designed as a plug connected directly to the pedestrian area, with a staircase and elevator housed in a glass tube. The library and cafeteria are connected with an additional spiral stairway inside the building.

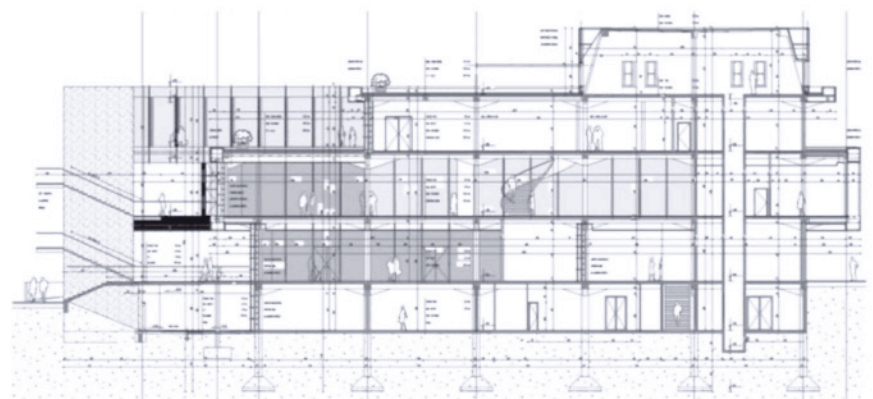
The old brutal concrete cladding has been ripped off the ex-department store's exterior. The new frontages of the library are designed as a flat metal frame that floats above the shopping windows topped by the mute dark box of the multipurpose hall. The frontages are shaded with undulating bands of sunscreens. These significant changes gave the building its entirely new visual identity. On the other hand they brought noticeable improvements to the public space here.



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



CROSS SECTION







“Without a doubt, the very supplementing of the content that has transformed the shopping mall from the period of functionalism into a city library for the 21st century deserves praise. The way architecture addresses its surroundings indicates the dialogue with the neighboring buildings and public space in the manner of an urban collage.”  
Plečnik Award Jury, Ljubljana, 2004













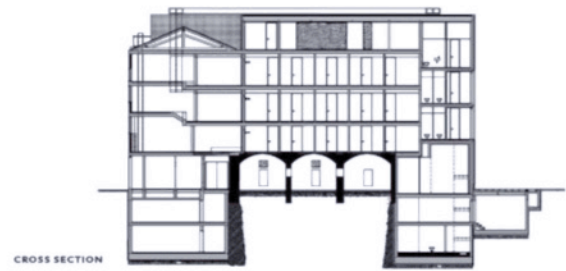
With the changes in the political and administrative systems, and following the exile of the local Italian population, cities on the Slovenian coast experienced remarkable changes after WWII. Many buildings in historical centres have been left empty and have been falling into ruin for decades. Furthermore, the old city of Koper, formerly situated on an island, has been cut off from the sea by the new docks of the ever-expanding port. Therefore the historical centre of Koper has not, until recently, been considered as particularly attractive. But in 2003, the Slovenian parliament founded a new university and chose Koper to host its headquarters. This decision offered a new opportunity to link the urban regeneration in the old city with the planning of the new university.

### The new university complex in Koper inhabited abandoned buildings on the main square, dating back to the period of the Venetian Republic.

The old buildings have been restored and a new wing with the main lecture theatres and teaching spaces has been added on the back. The old Venetian facades facing onto the main square represent the main entrance to the university buildings, but the disposition of the rooms and the new wing treats a typically narrow Mediterranean street at the back as equally important space. The new construction is pushed away from the street, creating an atrium that is open to the public space. The new red volume is pinned to the old white architecture with a glass gallery that acts like a large window shifted out of the frontage. This way the new structure is not amalgamated with the old walls but only lightly touches them with a glass membrane.

The red composite frontage in the atrium covers the studies that can be completely closed with sliding panels. The lecture rooms on the other side are enclosed with densely dispersed concrete columns that represent the supporting framework and the front wainscot at the same time. On the street side, the volume appears compact but, despite massive concrete columns, acts like a woven fabric that allows the students to observe dramatic coastal sunsets from the lecture rooms.

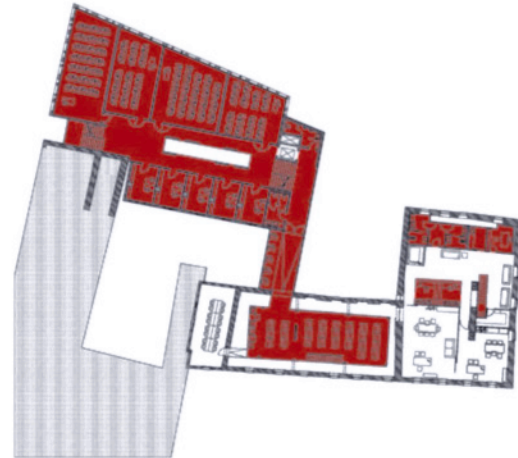
The interior design of the historical buildings was carefully overseen by restorers and conservators. In the restored rooms, one can find old baroque stucco as well as painted gothic ceilings, art nouveau fittings and a contemporary addition to the baroque staircase. Despite precise measurements, probing and a precise conservation programme prepared in advance, many interesting discoveries emerged only during the construction process.



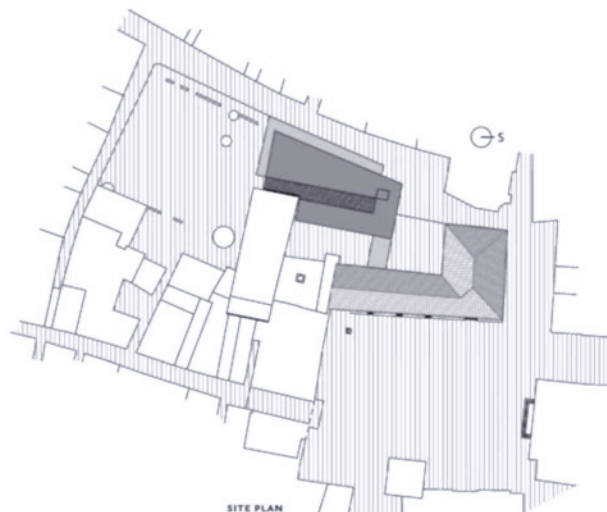
CROSS SECTION



FIRST FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



SITE PLAN





"The architecture is simple, it can be embraced all at once as an inseparable spatial and material totality. In keeping with the heritage of the area, the architectural language is appropriately restrained. Exterior and interior spaces are designed comparatively. The solution constitutes a clear statement about the renewal that is transmitted from the general definitions into a contemporary and relaxed architectural composition." Competition Jury, Ljubljana, 2003









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