

## TWO SIDES OF THE GALLERIES SQUARE IN NOVI SAD

Ksenija Hiel<sup>1</sup>  
Ivana Sentić<sup>2</sup>

УДК: 711.61(497.113Novi Sad)

DOI:10.14415/konferencijaGFS 2015.083

**Summary:** *Civic squares are the oldest developed public spaces in cities. Spontaneously grouped houses around the place where the main roads were crossed in settlements formed empty and unbuilt areas recognized as squares. The main functions of these squares throughout the history of all civilizations were places for gathering, trading and socialization for all citizens. The typology of squares can be defined by studying the function of free public spaces and the function of the ground floor of surrounding facilities. The Galleries Square in Novi Sad is unique in its content of surrounding ground floor facilities from which it took its name. This paper examines two sides (the obverse and reverse) of this public space with three galleries and other public facilities that form the physical structure and the functions of the free space of the square. The aim is to explore the impact and correlated functions of the ground floor of buildings with the available space of the square which create a certain experience and particular identity.*

**Keywords:** *Square, function, identity*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Civic squares as one of the basic elements of urban form represent a permanent area of research. In a similar way to streets, squares are public spaces of socialization and democracy. A number of books and studies are dealing with these topics and according to Đokić (2009), the typology of squares “based on the function is the most impressive one.” [1] He also underlines the important classification related to the morphological characteristics of the square as a formal approach which is the main parameter for classification of squares for Zucker. Looking at the functional transformation through history, Zucker (1970) concludes that “the archetypes are structural, that they are spatially, and not functionally, defined.” [2] Tepavčević (2008) explains how morphogenesis is making the significant influence for origin and development of squares in Vojvodina towns. [3] Considering the role of functions on the open spaces Moughtin

<sup>1</sup> Ksenija Hiel, PhD, dipl.inž. arh., University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agriculture, Trg Dositeja Obradovica 8, Novi Sad Serbia, tel: ++381 485 34 60, e – mail: [ksenija.hiel@polj.uns.ac.rs](mailto:ksenija.hiel@polj.uns.ac.rs)

<sup>2</sup> Ivana Sentić, dipl. inž. pejz.-master, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agriculture, Trg Dositeja Obradovica 8, Novi Sad Serbia, tel: ++381 485 34 60, e – mail: [ivanab@polj.uns.ac.rs](mailto:ivanab@polj.uns.ac.rs)

(2003) states that, “activity in a square is important for its vitality and, therefore, also for its visual attraction.” [4]. From the last decades of 20th century until today, the restoration and revitalization of urban spaces are the most interesting topics for urban planners, architects, landscape architects, economists and sociologists. Because of the new technologies which are spreading rapidly all over the globe, the social life in public spaces has changed over the last two decades. Even with these recent changes, the public open spaces are the places of every day meetings, gatherings and social life. Different squares in each town are used for diverse purposes from cultural activities, festivals, holidays, concerts, fairs, exhibitions, performances to green areas as parks, or traffic points, stops for public transport systems and parking places. To provide adequate functions for any square apart from its form, shape, size and proportion, these public spaces have to have properly maintained hard and soft landscape. The final perception of the square people will form depends on feelings such as atmosphere, safety, smell, colour, comfort and cosiness.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following aspects were researched on the Galleries Square in Novi Sad: the functions in the surrounding buildings, the physical urban space, the dimensions and proportions of the square, elements of functions on the square, and landscape elements. Peoples’ safety of being in the open space, functions, perception and utility of the square were also analysed. A period of 80 years of existence of the square was observed through series of photos, drawings, plans and different text documents. To achieve the main goal of public open spaces as places for socialization, the present situation on two sides of the square were analysed. The results of analysis suggest the possible directions of transformation of this square in order to keep this place as open public space in front of the galleries and adjusted public buildings for different activities during whole year.

## 3. RESULTS

The Galleries Square in Novi Sad is located in the centre of the town and dated from late 1920 when several buildings were built. The first is Gallery Matica Srpska, originally designed by Lazar Dunderski in 1926 as the Novi Sad Commodity Exchange. The main facade and dominant entrance with the stairs and four rustic half columns is oriented towards square. After the Second World War in 1956 the original function was changed into the gallery. The second south corner building, “Hagab”, was built in 1929 designed by architects Oskar Pakvor and Filip Šmit. [5] This corner building is the highest on the south corner of the square with its dominant motive on the corner. The entrances into the building are in the middle of both facades, one from Vase Stajića Street and the second from the Galleries Square. During the Second World War, the building was significantly damaged and after reconstruction its main design was slightly changed. A new ascent on the building was created with a balcony added on the corner of the first floor. The third building shaping the south corner of the square is a villa designed by Filip Šmit in 1923. In 1972 the reconstruction of villa converted it from residential building to the memorial

collection of Rajko Mamuzić art works. Among all three corner buildings only the villa has a proper relationship with the corner of Vasa Stajić and Mika Antić Street. This covered entrance with balcony above the main door supported by two columns is designed as an angled corner. The sculpture is protected by a green low fence with the symmetry and proportion of all details of the main angled facade is supported with two candelabras. The third Gallery, by Pavle Beljanski, closes the south part of the square by forming the edge of this open public space. This building is originally designed to be a gallery by Ivo Kurtović. [6] The last building, with its main entrance faced towards the Galleries Square, is a three story high residential building. The ground floor has several public premises with their entrances in the middle of facade. These three galleries and two buildings collectively form the façade of the Galleries Square. (Figure 2)

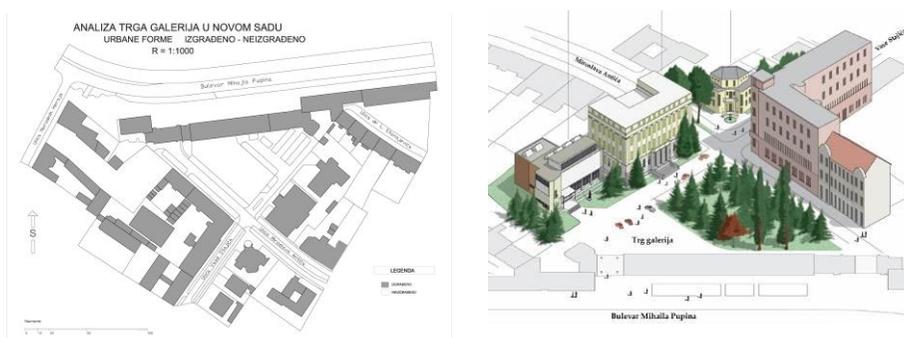


Figure 1 and 2. Plan and 3D View [7] of the Square of Galleries in Novi Sad [8]

The rest of the buildings are facing the Galleries Square with their back facades forming the closed triangular form of the square. All of them built during 1970; there are two banks, different companies with their headquarters and administration, and one insurance company. The very first concept in the design process of these buildings was to have the main entrances oriented to Boulevard Mihajlo Pupin. On both ends of this strip of six and seven storeys administrative buildings (east and west) are passages allowing pedestrians to get from the Galleries Square to the main Boulevard Mihajlo Pupin. (Figure 3)

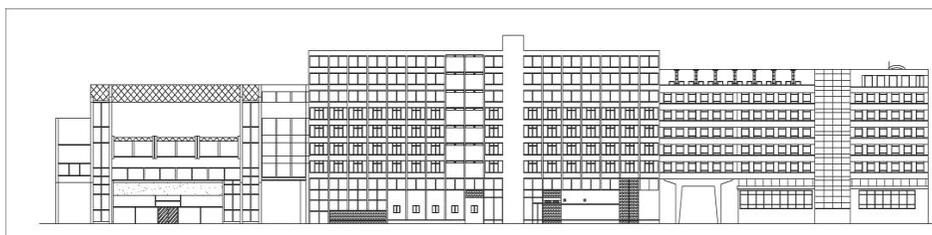


Figure 3. Facades on the north part of the Galleries Square [7]

These described buildings are forming the physical shape of the Galleries Square. With this concept of differing buildings' entrances orientation, the Square got its "front and back" facades and view. The plan shape is a clear triangular with the right angle on the south side. (Figure 1) The size and proportion of the square is determined by the free open space as well as by the highs of the surrounding buildings. In the case of the Galleries Square, these parameters are in balance. The highest buildings framing the square on the north side have the shade of the boulevard and leaving the space of the square lit by the sun. The south angle of the square is open with the lowest building, Gallery Rajko Mamuzić, reducing the shade reaching the free space of the square. The rest of the buildings are oriented to the south-east and south-west side of the edge of the square leaving the square with enough sun-light most of the time - even during the winter days.

Analysing the functional organisation of the square the space can be clearly defined into two parts. One is green space designed as park and the other is parking space on both sides of the green area. In front of the Matica Srpska Gallery is bicycle parking space and toll gates for car parking lots on the east part of the square. Looking at the area of these spaces on the plan it is noticeable that they are occupying almost the same amount in square meters. (Figure 1) Comparing the photos from the 1940 with the present one (Figure 4 and 5), two obvious facts are clearly visible. The first one is green space and second one is rest of the free space used as parking plots. The main space in front of the Matica Srpska Gallery is still designed as green park space. From the original idea to have pleasant atmosphere sheltered by treetops and soft elements of landscape, this area is now turned into a green closed area without any entrance to this space. The green fence is enabling any visitors to enjoy in shadows of trees and grass carpet below them.



*Figure 4 and 5. The image of the Square around 1940 [8] and today [7]*

From a safety point of view, most of the space in the square is pedestrian unfriendly and presents a serious threat. Along the north part of the square, along the administrative buildings, there are no footpaths or paved roads for pedestrians. The same situation exists with the east part of the square which is parking plots without any convenient routes for pedestrians to safely walk from the Gallery Pavle Beljanski through the passage to the boulevard. The whole green area is without any lights, benches, litter bins and other elements of urban furniture. Furthermore the green area is unreachable for any users – citizens or employers from adjacent buildings since the green fence divides this "park"

from the rest of the open space on the square. Since there are no functions which will attract citizens, the Galleries Square is most of the day occupied by cars and by-passed by pedestrians. During late afternoon and in the evening, the square is empty only being used as shortcuts connecting Boulevard Mihajlo Pupin with the Mika Antić and Vasa Stajić Streets.

The value of this space is not only in its potential as serving the Galleries but also in the historical buildings forming this as a positive public space. The interesting variation of architectural languages from classicism through modern movements to international style gives this square an unique opportunity to create a special urban atmosphere and contribute a positive addition to the town.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Looking at the Galleries Square in Novi Sad based on the plans, photographs and other documents, from its inception to the present date, there are no noticeable changes. The central space is park organised as green area but very modest comparing to its beginnings with several trees and small piece of the lawn. As traffic has evolved and spread all over the town during the observed period of time, the rest of the square was occupied by cars. The immediate space in front of the three galleries and two buildings on the southwest part of the square is a pedestrian path while the rest of the space is car traffic roads and parking plots (which is a big transformation from its beginnings. The first step of transformation from a parking area to an open public space will be requiring the relocation of car traffic. With this intervention the Galleries Square can be linked to the network of pedestrian areas on the other side of Boulevard Mihajlo Pupin. The second step will be the conversion of ground floor administrative buildings along the north edge of the square as well as on the south east. This transformation could lead towards different contents such as coffee shop, restaurant, souvenir shop, sales galleries of arts and crafts, book shop etc. These functions would relate better to the open space in front of each shop as part of the square as much as weather conditions allow. Urban furniture has to follow the concept of exhibitions, festive, performances and other events on the open space which can be an extension of internal gallery functions i.e. flexible open free space of the square. New elements of hard and soft landscaping need to support different possibilities of social life on the Galleries Square to maximise its urban landscape potential to Novi Sad.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the above research of the Galleries Square, a few conclusions can be set out. The observed controversy and conflicting demands between the different building functions and open spaces uses, results in an unsatisfactory civic public space. If we wish to have a more successful Galleries Square to serve the needs of citizens, and support a social life appropriate to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some radical changes have to be considered. Given the universal conflict of preserving traditions on one hand and improving cities to meet the needs of contemporary urban life on the other hand, the

Galleries Square in Novi Sad is an ideal case-study and, if successfully converted, could be a great exemplar for others.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Đokić, V.: Urban Typology: city square in Serbia, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade, **2009**, pp.34
- [2] Zucker, P.: Town and Square, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, **1970**. pp 8
- [3] Tepavčević, B.: *Trgovi u Vojvodini – morfogeneza, fizička struktura i funkcije*, Fakultet tehničkih nauka, Novi Sad, **2008**.
- [4] Moughtin, C.: Urban Design, Street and Square, Architectural Press, Oxford, **2003**, pp87
- [5] Mitrović, V.: *Arhitektura XX veka u Vojvodini*, Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine, Novi Sad, **2010**.
- [6] Stančić, D.: *Novi Sad od kuće do kuće*, Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Novog Sada, Novi Sad, **2005**.
- [7] Authors drawings and photography
- [8] <http://www.pavle-beljanski.museum/trg-galerija.php>, download 12.02.2015.

## ЛИЦЕ И НАЛИЧЈЕ ТРГА ГАЛЕРИЈА У НОВОМ САДУ

**Резиме:** *Тргови су најстарији јавни уређени простори у градовима. Спонтано груписање кућа, око места на којима су се укритали путеви, формирало је слободне празне и неизграђене просторе препознатљиве као тргови. Према функцијама које су тргови кроз историју свих цивилизација имали ови простори су били места окупљања, размене добара и социјализације свих грађана. Посматрајући функције самог трга кроз функцију слободног јавног простора као и функцију приземља окружујућих објеката могу се дефинисати функционалне типологије трга. Трг Галерија у Новом Саду је јединствен по свом садржају приземља окружујућих објеката по чему је и добио назив. У раду се сагледава лице и наличје овог јавног простора са три галерије и осталим јавним објектима који формирају физичку структуру као и функцијама слободног простора трга. Циљ рада је истраживање утицаја повезаности функција приземља објеката са слободним простором трга на стварање одређеног доживљаја и идентитета.*

**Кључне речи:** *трг, функција, идентитет*