

## MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AS URBAN LANDMARKS IN NOVI SAD

Aleksandra Milinković<sup>1</sup>

Milena Krklješ<sup>2</sup>

Dijana Brkljač<sup>3</sup>

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**Summary:** *Multifamily residential buildings represent today the largest part of built structures when it comes to the use of the land in the city of Novi Sad. Incorporated in multi-functional urban blocks, housing typology dominates in both functional and spatial sense, but in the last decade, architectural expression gets more and more importance, giving a form itself an equally important role in the formation of urban landmarks as structures that stands in relation to the immediate environment. In the city of Novi Sad large urban transformations at the end of XX and at the beginning of the XXI century have influenced building of numerous multi-family residential buildings that are accentuated by their morphology, architectural elements and/or with colouring schemes. However, massive buildings or whole urban blocks with multi-family residential buildings that are designed to become the dominant visual landmark of neighbourhoods make the overall image of the city that was formed in this period of intensive urban transformation. This paper will analyse architectural and urban factors that impose multi-family residential buildings to become visual landmarks. Evaluation and discussion of results will point out the possibility to use architectural elements to influence the changes in the silhouette of the city and how to take advantage of the most common building typology to create the modern image of the city.*

**Keywords:** *multifamily residential buildings, urban landmarks, urban transformation, Novi Sad*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The city, as human artefact, has a great ability to "adapt itself to the powerful economic, technological, environmental, political and cultural forces in the time." [1] Its urban transformation as a long-term and complex process causes interventions that change the society, its lifestyles, needs and environment. The importance of all influences as well as

<sup>1</sup> MArch, Aleksandra Milinković, teaching assistant, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Trg Dositeja Obradovića 6, Novi Sad, Serbia, phone 021 485 2462, e – mail: [aleksandrabandic@gmail.com](mailto:aleksandrabandic@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> PhD, Milena Krklješ, assistant professor, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Trg Dositeja Obradovića 6, Novi Sad, Serbia, phone 021 485 2462, e – mail: [milenakrkljes@gmail.com](mailto:milenakrkljes@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> MArch, Dijana Brkljač, teaching assistant, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Trg Dositeja Obradovića 6, Novi Sad, Serbia, phone 021 485 2462, e – mail: [dijana\\_apostolovic@yahoo.com](mailto:dijana_apostolovic@yahoo.com)

responsibility of all actors in this process are significant, since changes in the urban network have a noticeable impact on the overall quality of life, including acceptance of the environment and development of sense for collective or individual memory. Urban transformations and design changes implemented on the territory of Novi Sad at the end of 20th and the beginning of 21st century, have resulted with today's image of the city with main boulevards as the most significant urban axis, becoming a traffic and environmental routes that dominate the urban matrix, thus transforming still unbuilt spaces on these routes in to the most wanted one on the land market. Visual, spatial and morphological design of the aforementioned areas must be such as to create a consistent picture of the already existing neighbourhoods, but also to adequately represent the period in which it was built and emphasize the importance of the built structure and good location. This indicates that the "urban design from the very beginning has to be a three-dimensional" [2] in order to create new city landmarks by good policy and cohesion of urban morphology and architectural typology. The network of high and massive residential buildings with expressive forms, different architectural elements, materials and colours that were built in previous 20 years, as architectural structures have become common examples of spatial landmarks along boulevards in Novi Sad. Although their incorporations in previous built structures are not always carefully done, their positions as landmarks have easily become in to the first plan.

## 2. USE OF MORPHOLOGY AND COLOUR IN DESIGN OF EXPRESSIVE URBAN STRUCTURES

Embedded buildings in a linear street often become less observed from both pedestrians or drivers and therefore the final decision about morphology and colour scheme has important role in its design process. Morphological characteristics of structures (shape, dimensions, proportions) as well as their colours have domination on the visual sense of observer and in the process of identification. "With the unveiling of the artist's individual creative impulses, evaluating the aesthetic intentions can be extremely difficult" [3] since it depends on a number of factors and skills that form a final expression of the built structure and on the impulses generated in the eye of the observer.

According to Rudolf Arnheim "physical shape of one object is determined by its borders" [4], and exactly the same principle applies to the silhouette of the Novi Sad that had changed due to insufficiently controlled urban changes that have affected the city at the end of 20th century. Nowadays construction is still under the strong control of the city government, but the influence of the "increased wealth of individuals" resulted in a large number of private investors who aesthetically influenced new look of Novi Sad, and it can not be said with certainty that such construction "is not restricted by money resources or limited by traditionalism." [5] Any intervention in the built environment requires meaningful strategy. It is necessary to reconcile the urban context and need for such new structures in creative design that will make architectural expressions corresponding to the time and the society for which are created.

"Buildings that differ in height, proportions and used materials... still can be ... harmonized with the neighbouring buildings" [6] and also become prominent urban landmarks. Although the harmonic design is most appropriate principle in urban design,

it is usual nowadays that architects decide to emphasize the colour of objects, which is "causing involuntary reaction and association" [7] to the observer. Each colour causes different feeling and opinion that is in the collective consciousness linked to perceived or experienced space, but in urban design inadequate choice of shades strategy can cause negative effects. Moderate combination of colours and morphological elements in the final expression of form, have the best synergy since it is impossible to precisely determine "... where begins uniqueness of urban area: whether in its form, its function, in its memory, or in something else." [8]

### 3. VISUAL LANDMARKS ALONG THE BOULEVARDS OF NOVI SAD

Housing is one of the most dominant uses of the spaces in urban blocks of Novi Sad, particularly along the newly built boulevards that are connecting old city centre with new areas. The concept of habitat as a "centre of arrival in the landscape" in sociological terms can be transposed to the view that the "house is a centre of personal life", which implies that housing typology itself is one of the most important for existence of society. [9] A man experience the concept of home in a personal, emotional and biologically specific way, and therefore its orientation, identification and acceptance of the settlement is often directed exactly from that standpoint further to the rest of the surrounding areas. Modern society has imposed attitudes related to the concept of housing and spaces in which it takes place. "The idea of architecture unity in different places" [8] in the city, resulted in more and more residential structures that are incorporated into multi-functional urban blocks with tendencies towards decentralization, having a positive effect on the image of the city. Housing in certain neighbourhoods and apartments in residential buildings that are landmarks has become more a question of prestige, comfort and luxury.



Figure 1. and Figure 2. - Perception and position of the "Alexander-centre Boulevard".  
along the Oslobodjenje Boulevard

Wide cross sections of boulevards require massive and multi-storey buildings with accented architectural design and elements to clearly articulate the physical framework of the street. Construction of massive and complex residential buildings that occupy a

larger part or even the whole urban block became common examples how investor in housing production becomes at the same time the visual creator of urban landscape. What is even more notable is the fact that the buildings, which were first created as urban landmarks, carried the investor's name, such as residential and commercial building "Zoned", "Dalton" - residential and business centre, "Alexander-centre Boulevard". Today the very notion of such a construction of urban landmarks took on a different dimension. A series of buildings that create the visual composition, are built in stages forming a single, coherent and meaningful structure, becoming landmarks named by terms that should represent high living comfort, such as "The Lagoon" and "The Garden". These buildings are most often residential and commercial complexes with a large number of housing units different in size, orientation, comfort and technical performances. "The visual chaos of the contemporary city" [10] is primarily visible on the differences between central and peripheral areas, and between varieties in design of individual buildings in same urban blocks. Even more it is obvious that "only a visual differentiation of buildings does not provide their visual attractiveness" [6], but the construction of large residential buildings different in design, materials and colours has an impact on the identification and collective memory of Novi Sad. The largest number of these objects was built on the newly formed Europe Boulevard and Sombor Boulevard, where the single-family housing typology is replaced with multi-family one, providing with this urban transformation the modern concept of boulevards in the city. Buildings positioned along the Oslobodjenje Boulevard, the longest and the most frequent traffic direction in Novi Sad also dominate in urban structure.



*Figure 3. - Perception of the residential and commercial building "Zoned" along the Europe Boulevard*

In addition to being visually dominant, multi-family residential buildings along boulevards in Novi Sad have become the new city's landmarks. "Locus, the relationship that exists between certain local site and buildings" [8] clearly reflects the main idea that has formed an urban fragment. For one part of inhabitants these buildings are only urban landmarks by which some areas are easy to remember, visual help for orientation in space or distinctive architecture. For those who live there, those buildings are primarily a

home, a safe place to identify with, because it offers privacy, security, warmth, comfort, but at the same time unique and morphologically atypical. It is noticeable that the same concept of massive buildings is constructed in also central parts of the city, but there is a question of ecological and environmental conditions in these urban blocks, since the cross section of assembly and access streets does not support the construction of that type of residential buildings which do not contribute to a pleasant and healthy atmosphere. There is certainly a doubt are those structures still landmarks of architecture, concerning the fact that most of good architectural principles are missing in narrow and darks streets, with absence of sun light and air, and with very small pedestrian streets or parking lots.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

"The house is one of the appeals to our consciousness of verticality" [11], but multifamily residential buildings that are among the highest in the city, provide a symbolic link between the home as a personal place and morphological characteristics of the building. Their meaning is undoubtedly multiplied in contemporary city. In addition to the basic existential meaning that housing typology has for the individual, the construction of this massive buildings plays an important role in the creation of the urban structure of the city and its image, but also the role of urban landmarks for both the individual and the collective memory of residents and visitors in the city. Contents that these buildings have, in addition to their primary function of housing, shall include more other functions that are necessary for everyday life, to prevent these objects to become only a dormitories for a large number of inhabitants. However, one should not forget that morphological characteristics, the use of colours, modern materials and the pursuit of visual experience can not be the only reasons for their construction in areas that are not proper for such a large structures and which would therefore lead to worse housing conditions as well as of all other functions in the city. The question of overall quality of the city's structure should be considered through both physical and sociological sense of its existing.



*Figure 4. and Figure 5. - Construction of complex "The Lagoon" and residential-business centre "President"*

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## ВИШЕПОРОДИЧНИ СТАМБЕНИ ОБЈЕКТИ КАО ВИЗУЕЛНИ РЕПЕРИ НОВОГ САДА

**Резиме:** Вишепородична стамбена типологија обухвата данас највећи део изграђених објеката када је у питању употреба земљишта у граду Новом Саду. Инкорпорирана у полифункционалне урбане блокове, стамбена типологија доминира и у функционалном и просторном смислу. Међутим, у последњој деценији, архитектонски израз добија све већи значај, те је и сама форма објекта подједнако битна у формирању градског репера, као структура која се издваја у односу на непосредно окружење. Нови Сад је, на крају XX и почетком XIX века, претрпео велике урбане трансформације које су утицале на настајање низа вишепородичних стамбених објеката који су наглашени морфологијом, колоритом и/или употребом разноврсних архитектонских елемената. Међутим, масивне зграде или читави урбани блокови са вишепородичним стамбени објектима који су дизајнирани као доминантни визуелни симболи у насељима чине укупну слику граду која је формирана у овом периоду интензивног урбане трансформације. У раду ће се анализирати архитектонско-урбанистички фактори помоћу којих стамбени објекти постају визуелни репери, а вредновање и добијени ставови указаће на могућности којима пројектантска струка може да утиче на измене у силуети града и искористи најдоминантнију намену објеката као артефакт у формирању модерне слике града.

**Кључне речи:** стамбена типологија, градски репер, урбане трансформације, Нови Сад