

TRANSFORMATION OF THE NEW BELGRADE URBAN TISSUE: FILLING THE SPACE INSTEAD OF INTERPOLATION

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This paper points to current transformations of the New Belgrade architectural and urban space identifying the process of filling the empty undeveloped areas within the New Belgrade blocks under the pressure of new commercial facilities. Given that these changes are not regulated by plans in an appropriate way, they are manifested in the space as problem situations leading to the production of space which is appropriate for the narrow interests of capital holders, while interests of direct users, as well as interest of a wider public, are most often neglected. The paper presents a critical analysis of the existing conditions and identifies problems emerging in the development and planning of the New Belgrade urban tissue. The space transformations have been explored at the level of urban and physical structure, urban landscape and user's life. Identified problem situations are indicative for further consideration of strategies for urban-architectural planning and design of New Belgrade.

Key words: *New Belgrade, open block, urban tissue, transformations, commercial facilities*

INTRODUCTION

During the past decades, gradual transformations of Belgrade urban tissue have taken place, basically changing the city's physical and spatial structure, urban landscape and life in the city. Over time, these transformations have assumed a characteristic form which primarily indicates a certain type of relationship between the economic and spatial development², which has not been consolidated by regulation plans in a proper way, thus producing spaces which are appropriate for narrow interests of capital

holders, while interests of direct users, as well as interest of a wider public, have been neglected and even often jeopardized. New forms of connections in space, new types of physical structure, have emerged completely changing the image of the city and everyday life in it, whereas insufficiently articulated relationship between demand and supply has been observed as being the only regularity in this development. The role of capital and market law in the production of space in the city is not questioned, and it has already been elaborated in studies and theory of space which emphasize social component of space deriving from the assumption according to which every society produces its specific space as a specific form of relations of production (in this case, capitalism). The problem arises when, in producing space, economic interests are allowed to be developed without appropriate or often any intervention of the state control and with a minimum of professional regulation ("laissez-faire" capitalism). On the one hand, we observe that a basic concept of design and planning of the city, which implies a

harmonious and scientifically developed relationship between the developed and free spaces in the city, is disturbed. By neglecting the real needs of the existing users and existing models of life in the city, the unsparing usurpation of every empty space in the city occurs. On the other hand, the physical structure in a densely developed city tissue has unsystematically been replaced, in which process a care is taken neither of the existing and future ambiances, nor of living conditions, which are in this way disturbed and/or created.

In both cases, it is a matter of interpolation in its widest sense, the methodological procedure of urban redevelopment which implies the issues of context, fitting in of the new and the old, anticipation of future and spatial framework absolutely respecting and simultaneously systematically reexamining the existing state.

However, the observed transformations of Belgrade city tissue are not consistent with this definition of interpolation it as much as they neglect the existing state in a specific way, at the same time also problematizing the future

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² More detailed investigation of this relationship would certainly call for a comprehensive study, which would gradually, starting from general hypotheses on a notion and role of capital in shaping society, through analysis of such society shaped by capital in "production of space" (see Lefebvre, 1991), lead primarily to the issue of the city as a "projection of a specific society" (Blankar, 2003), and then to the specificities of urban development which are typical for Belgrade and New Belgrade.

state, thus becoming such physical framework in which both current and future models of life have to be fitted into by force.

This paper deals with one of the forms of Belgrade urban tissue transformations which is manifested in the New Belgrade area as filling of free spaces within the blocks under the pressure of development and emergence of new central functions, primarily commercial facilities. The paper first points out the discontinuity in planning and developing New Belgrade, as well as the results of the researches conducted to date which have identified the problem of open, free spaces in New Belgrade and their inert filling. Then, it shows the changes in its urban structure which have taken place as a result of emergence of new commercial vernacular³ in the form of shopping and business centers which are becoming new urban landmarks restructuring relationships in space. In the next part, the attention is focused on the changes in perceiving New Belgrade, which take place in line with changes in its urban structure. Finally, although perhaps the most important issue, the existing state and consequences of these changes in inhabitant's life, primarily the present inhabitants of New Belgrade, are discussed.

NEW BELGRADE AS APOTHEOSIS OF A CONSUMER CITY

One of the manifestation forms of powerful role of capital in shaping Belgrade architectural and urban space to be shown here is an accelerated, most often uncoordinated construction of shopping and business centers as a new commercial vernacular, which has become typical for some parts of the city, primarily those with potential availability of free space for development, like in the case of New Belgrade. Primarily developed as an antithesis of capitalism, which has essentially determined the concept and strategy of its development, New Belgrade today represents an illustrative example of how the market law is manifested, a space of capital. Current urban transformations are colored by specificities of the post-socialist development in which unbalanced role of actors in the development process is still noticeable, which is, amongst other things, reflected in unpromptness

³ The term "commercial vernacular" is here used in the sense as used by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown to indicate a new type of vernacular architecture – commercial vernacular in Las Vegas. See Venturi et al., 1990, pp. 2-14.

of political actors in the process of modernization of the building and urban planning regulations, prevailing influence of economic factors, and marginalization of town planners, by which illegal strategies and undesired directions of development are encouraged, such as illegal housing development or, as in the case of New Belgrade, imposition of a new image of "Belgrade Manhattan".⁴

⁴ See Vujović and Petrović, 2007. Authors make difference between four types of actors in the development process: political actors who define development goals and strategies, economic actors who use urban resources, spatial experts who operationalize development strategies, and city's inhabitants-users.



Figure 1. Preliminary Urban Plan of New Belgrade, elaborated by the Group for New Belgrade in 1948, led by architect Nikola Dobrović. (Stojanović, 1975, p.200)



Figure 2. The first urban plan of New Belgrade, elaborated within the Master Plan of Belgrade of 1950, led by architect Vido Urbanić. (MP, 1950)

Discontinuity in planning and developing New Belgrade

Historical development of New Belgrade has been marked by discontinuity in developing and planning, where period of stagnation due to political or economic crises have taken turns with periods of adopting new plan concepts. Only during the first ten years of the development, three plans were adopted based on basically different concepts (Figures 1-3).⁵

⁵ Despite all differences in planning concepts, it is observed that they are linked by the fact that they are all developed relative to the principles derived from the Athens Charter. For more details, see Blagojević, 2007, pp. 121-154.

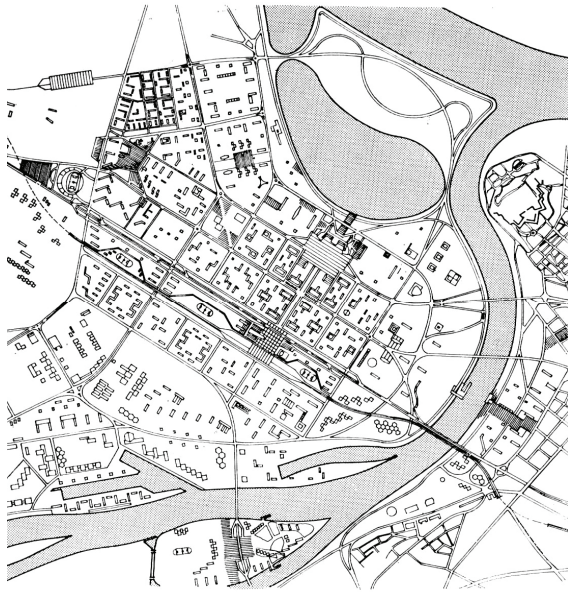


Figure 3. Master Plan of New Belgrade, elaborated in the Town Planning Institute of Belgrade in 1958, led by architect Branko Petričić. (Stojanović, Martinović, 1978)

However, it is important to emphasize that until the 1980-ties (Figure 4.) New Belgrade was planned as an integral entity based on the Regulation Plan adopted in 1962, which is considered the end of the planning phase followed by the “inert filling of space”⁶. Construction of residential buildings in Block 24, which was carried out in the period 1984–1989, represents the first deviation from the Regulation Plan, as well as from the central zone plan which, through the entire period so far, has been a pillar of the development of planning concepts (Figure 5.). At the same time, the construction of the Block represents the beginning of the New Belgrade partial-development practice which culminated in the past two decades. This paper illustrates examples of block 12, built on the space earmarked for greenery, and block 16, which is analyzed in detail later in this paper. The pressure of commercial facilities has resulted in a series of dispersedly distributed shopping and business centers (Figure 6.).

Scientific studies dealing with phenomenon of New Belgrade agree that its architectural and urban concepts are unique. On the one hand, they start from the fact that it is one of the rare cities built in the spirit of Athens Charter and its typical functionalism. The initial enthusiasm and

⁶ Ibid, p. 249. The author states that the end of the New Belgrade planning phase, which was followed by inert filling of empty spaces, is actually the Central Zone Plan of 1960 and Regulation Plan of 1962, which have prevented further consideration of planning and design strategies (p. 209).

consistency in implementing plans⁷ has also been indicated. However, these plans were soon replaced by planning strategies which were not based on scientifically proved and real processes of urban development. This resulted in “discontinued construction of buildings, however, neglecting economical parameters in reserving critically big areas of land equipped with municipal infrastructure for the future needs of urban functions”, where the physical growth of the city has been carried out through “mechanical addition of identical units” on the fringe of already developed tissue. The final result is a too dispersed and monotonous city, static relative to the development processes and changes that have taken place over time (Perović, 2008).

On the other hand, the uniqueness of the New Belgrade urban concept is considered from the standpoint of its ideological and political background as a key fact of its emergence and

⁷ See Perović, 2008, pp. 175–176. Perović identified two phases of historical development of New Belgrade. The first one which lasted from 1946 until 1948 and was marked by plans made by Nikola Dobrović (1946), Edvard Ravnikar (1947) and Nikola Dobrović (1948) which were characterized by being in line with the world trends. The second phase lasted much longer and “still lasts” (the first edition of the book was published in 1985, although some of the conclusions may be applied to current conditions) and was characterized by non-critical application of modernism formula, as well as application of halfway results in researches. The author also emphasized that this change in attitude towards the principles of Athens Charter coincided with the changes which derived from the activities and conclusions of the CIAM Congress.

development (Blagojević, 2007). Although conceived on the basis on the “universal” Athens Charter and thus predetermined to represent universal values of modernism, New Belgrade developed during the time of socialism, which also essentially determined its concept and development strategy. It was conceived as a modern city on the left bank of the Sava River which had to play key role in transformation of image of the city from capitalist into socialist one. However, we are witnesses of how it has, from the concept of primarily aesthetic structure of socialist state, become a city colored with humdrum existence, because of which it has often been identified as urban dormitory. Furthermore, New Belgrade has developed as a city in social ownership, “without inner economical dynamics”, “deprived of conditions for own reproduction”, where everything depended on the intervention of the state, which resulted in inert filling of empty spaces with residential buildings, where the flat was not considered as goods, but rather as use value.

Both studies criticize lack of diverse activities, attractiveness and dynamics, this being a consequence of the strategy of mechanical (Perović), namely inert (Blagojević) filling of space, as well as disproportional and inactive relationship between the developed physical structure and big open areas separating them. The studies problematize the character of urban structures and entities emerging in the New Belgrade space described as monotonous and dispersed, uncompleted.

A remark that the created space acts like a scheme, a sketch (Perović, 2008, p. 177), has indicated the possibility of various development directions, given that it represents a neutral framework, spatial potential with lots of “reserved” areas prone to various experiments and application of various urban theories. Amongst them, particularly favored are “more complex and refined forms of growth of the city, inner growth... by extensions, matching of needs with sporadic spontaneous creation of greater concentration of urban tissue and various activities” which bring the New Belgrade urban structure closer to the traditional concept of the city.⁸

⁸ See Perović, 2008, p. 174. Another study leaves an open issue of its further irreversible extending – possibility that “it extends in accordance with the lessons from the past, whether to leave its extending to the market policy or to put a complex discourse of modern city to the test of contemporary conditions of modernity”. See Blagojević, 2007.



Figure 4. Layout of New Belgrade. The state in 1980.



Figure 5. Layout of New Belgrade, the state in 1990. Deviation from the central zone plan due to construction of block 24.

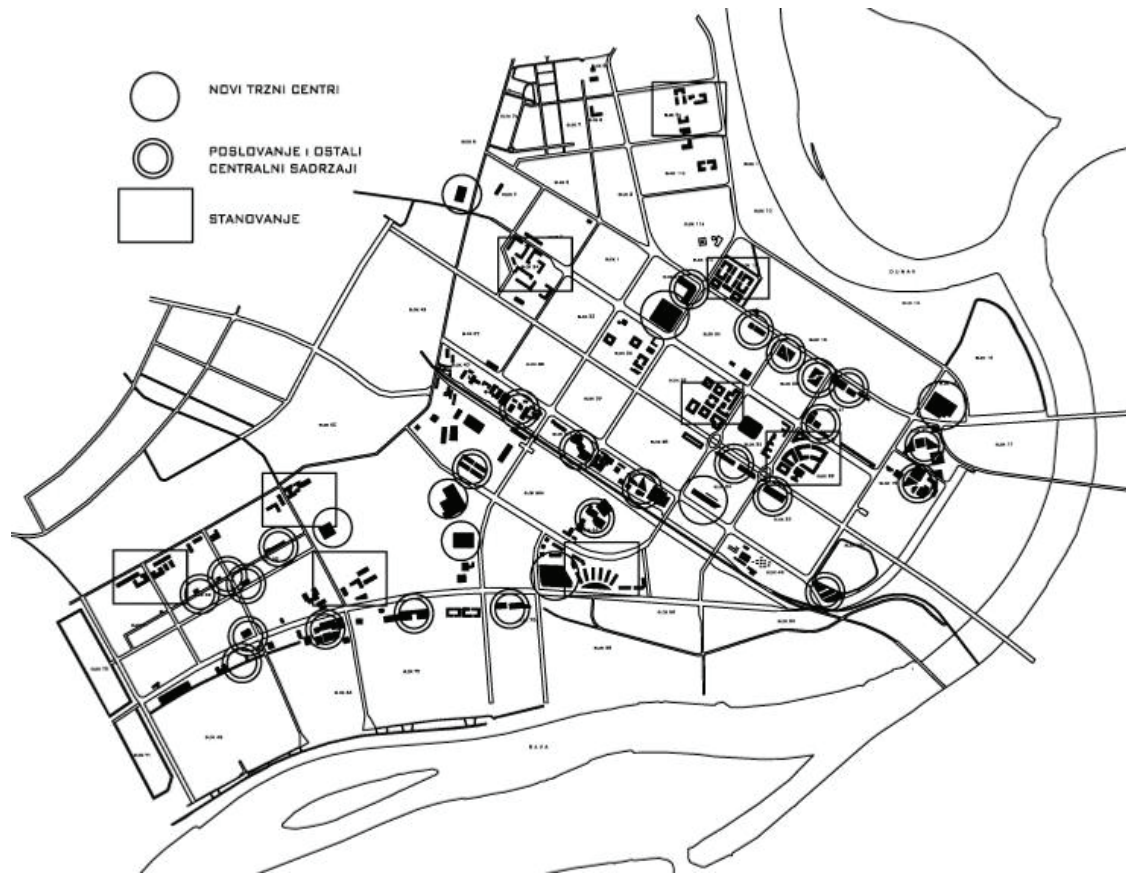


Figure 6. Layout of New Belgrade today. Dispersedly distributed commercial facilities.

In any case, big areas, despite not being integrated in the urban tissue, are a privilege of the New Belgrade's inhabitants, because they are realized as the very space of air, sun and greenery, which is conceived by original Athens Charter as a contribution to improving the dwelling conditions in the city. Besides, the so called New Belgrade spirit has become present not only in everyday life, but also in literature, movies, and music, indicating coexistence of the New Belgrade's inhabitants with their environment. Despite all scientifically identified deficiencies, New Belgrade has become reality as a spatial framework, and it is necessary to adjust all future interventions to its character which is closely connected with the life of its inhabitants. It is necessary to densify the New Belgrade urban structures by fully respecting its present character, and to reduce big open spaces to smaller ones, primarily having in mind their relations with the existing physical structures and users of space.

However, the current building and urban planning practice does not take into account any of these facts, or historical development of New Belgrade, or basic principles of its formation either. Inert

filling of space in the period of New Belgrade formation exists even today as a form of its urban growth, but in the form of inert filling of space of already formed New Belgrade blocks, under the pressure of new urban functions of central and recreational character, primarily trade as the most vital branch of economy. Restaurants, hotels, shopping and entertainment represent important habits of mankind and activities in a consumer society, resulting in spatial concepts and structures which announce the today's commercial vernacular which is becoming ever more present and dominant element of urban landscape.

Master Plan of Belgrade 2021

The current Master Plan of Belgrade 2021 (MP 2021, 2003) adopted in 2003 is a basic urban plan document for the territory of Belgrade and the only one covering the entire space of New Belgrade. The critical analysis of this plan shows that the issues of New Belgrade development and transformation as a unique and specific urban-architectural entity have not been recognized as a current problem (MP 2021, 2003, 1.7.1.). At the same time, New Belgrade is considered as an

important location which is to be activated as a new business city, thus bringing the future commercial functions in the fore and favoring them in relation to other central facilities (MP 2021, 2003, 2.2.9.).

The New Belgrade area is divided into urban entities belonging to different spatial zones and thus it is not treated as integral one⁹. In order to secure ambience unity and continuity of planning character of New Belgrade, it is envisaged to make regulation plans which should not cover the areas smaller than a block. However, it is not required to consider this entity in the context of a wider surrounding, thus calling into question the realization of desired results.

The plan emphasizes the New Belgrade urban structure based on the type of open block as its basic specificity based on which the allowed

⁹ Urban entity 2 – "Original New Belgrade", in one of its parts is out of the Central Spatial Zone framework, which means that different rules of building construction apply to it. See Chapter 7. "Spatial zones and urban entities", point 7.1.4. dedicated to New Belgrade

urban parameters are determined, as well as rules of construction, and insists on the continuity of this type of development. However, the plan does not accept these spaces as a part of specific urban concept, but they are, depending on the theme under consideration, treated in the same way as other urban entities which are, at the same time, very different both from them and from each other. On the one hand, New Belgrade is, according to the criteria of urban block type, classified in the same group with other new settlements regardless of its particularity. On the other hand, urban entities called “New Belgrade Central Part” and “Original New Belgrade” belong to the Central Spatial Zone and they are subject to the same rules of construction valid for other urban entities belonging to this Zone¹⁰, albeit they are, according to their genesis and concept, completely opposed to the concept of New Belgrade. The Plan also recognizes their particularities in historical, functional and ambience sense. Also, the Plan criticizes lack of traditional forms of public urban space (MP 2021, 2003, 5.2.), while free open spaces are recognized as possible fields for building in traditional forms of public urban spaces, which is opposite to insisting on development of blocks of open type, thus negating the original urban concept.

Therefore, despite a declarative attitude that the ambience of New Belgrade as a city of the Modern should be preserved, according to the permitted urban parameters and other provisions of the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021 it is clear that New Belgrade open spaces are recommended for intensive development following the logic according to which more free spaces enable greater scope of new development, not accepting specific character and originally important percentage of plot usage on this territory.

A study entitled “Ways of protecting areas with contemporary architecture and important individual buildings”¹¹, which identified valuable

¹⁰ Permitted maximum percentage of plot usage is the same for the center of the old Belgrade, center of Zemun and center of New Belgrade – 3.5, while permitted maximum plot ratio in New Belgrade is somewhat smaller relative to the other two mentioned central zones and is 60% (point 4.5.6. “Central zone and main city center”, Table 49), which is still greater compared to the values existing before urban transformations which are the subject of this paper.

¹¹ The study entitled “Way of protecting the territory with a contemporary architecture and important individual buildings”, the second working material for the phase of Draft Master Plan of Belgrade, Belgrade, April 2002, elaborated by: Igor Marić, Aleksandar Stjepanović, Darko Marušić, Bojan Kovačević, Dijana Milišinović-Marić and Eva Vaništa-Lazarević.

buildings and architectural-urban entities of the Modern epoch in the regime of partial or full protection, was made for the needs of the Master Plan. The preservation of the existing values of important New Belgrade entities, on which the Chapter 5.3 entitled “The protection and treatment of modern architecture” insists, is precisely the result of this study, while a concrete measure included in the Plan is an obligation to announce a competition for some entities. At the same time, however, the “Recommendations for plan interventions in ambience complexes of urban spaces” (MP, 2021, 5.2.1.) do not refer to the territory of New Belgrade. This leads to the conclusion that individual attitudes are not integrated in other parts of the Plan during the synthesis procedure.

Case of Block 16

Genesis of the process of uncontrolled construction may be observed through the analysis of construction in Block 16, which, by its scope, character of its location and development represents an outstanding example and illustrates the essence of many interventions which have been carried out in New Belgrade urban tissue to date. After the change in ownership of the “Ušće” office building and on the initiative of the investor, who wanted to build new buildings on the empty part of the plot, a general and invitation poll competition was announced in 2003 for preliminary urban-architectural design of the “Ušće” Multifunctional Center. The competition was announced by the Belgrade Land Development Public Agency and “European Construction” company in cooperation with the Association of Belgrade Architects and the Town Planners Association Belgrade, at which both local and foreign architects participated. The obligation of announcing competition for preliminary design has derived from the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021¹², as well as from the need for defining additional urban indicators for elaboration of a regulation plan. Competition requirements were not rigorous given that it was a poll competition, but the continuity of the idea of planning the New Belgrade blocks was required as an important element of the future concept.

¹² It was planned to preserve the character of the Block, with the possibility of extending the appendage part (which was also planned earlier). See part 5.3.6. “Urban planning recommendations for particular entities in the regime of partial protection”.



Figure 7. Relationship between the undeveloped and developed areas of block 16 according to the competition concept which won the first prize.



Figure 8. Relationship between the undeveloped and developed areas of block 16 according to the Detailed Regulation Plan of 2007.

The work which won the first prize offered the concept by which a great part of the block was preserved as a green area, a supplemented and strengthened vertical accent, and the new construction was matched with the existing one and got a contemporary expression. Based on the work which won the first prize, an urban plan was made (DRP, 2004). However, during the construction, the deviations from the adopted plan concepts occurred and the investor commenced the construction of the building on a considerably bigger area than permitted. The City Assembly adopted a new plan (DRP, 2007) in order to accommodate the “necessary increase of capacity of the Multifunctional Center” (DRP, 2007, 1.2), thus subsequently legalizing illegal construction and, at the same time, making senseless all previous efforts of professionals in achieving a quality concept for the subject space. Figures 7. and 8. show the relationship between the undeveloped and developed areas of the block according to the competition concept which won the first prize (Figure 7.), and according to the Detailed Regulation Plan (Figure 8.).

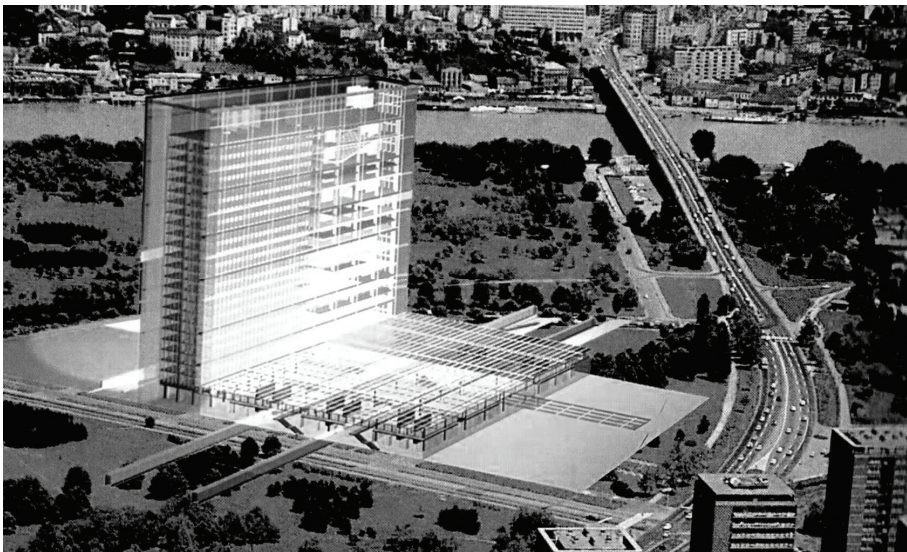


Figure 9. The concept which won the first prize at the Competition for Preliminary Urban-Architectural Design of the "Ušće" Multifunctional Center.



Figure 10. "Ušće" Multifunctional Center opened in 2008.

Source: <http://www.kombeg.org.rs/Komora/OpstaA.aspx?veza=299>

The "Ušće" Shopping Center was opened in 2008. Compared to the competition concept by which a connection of communication direction within the building was realized with the surrounding space up to the Park of Friendship and a park surrounding the Museum of Contemporary Art, the realized design is turned towards inner space and does not communicate with its surroundings. In addition, the realized building has greater

surface area and volume than envisaged by the competition design which won the first prize and by the Plan of 2004, so that it, to great extent, obstructs the view of the "Ušće" palace tower and visually competes with it as a new landmark, whereas the competition work of the authors winners of the first prize envisaged an integral whole with a business tower and also affirmed its existing values.

NEW URBAN LANDMARKS

New commercial vernacular in the form of shopping and business centers, hyper-markets, mega markets, supermarkets, and shopping malls, according to the structuralist theory of the city, represents introduction of strong elements¹³ which have fully redefined and reconfigured the space which was till then neutral, namely the New Belgrade structure. They also represent strong and attractive centrifugal elements at the level of the entire city as well, restructuring the usual directions of movement of people towards the new consumption and production centers. These new zones of attraction are the product of the globalization process which, in our conditions, has taken a specific form. However, they do not improve overall urban and physical structure of the city since, due to concentration of attractive facilities in certain buildings, the uniform distribution of tertiary activities on the wider territory has not been achieved. Therefore, they cannot be considered as global zones of connection which, by their attractive architectural envelopes and multi-layered facilities, define a specific position of the city in a global and regional hierarchy (Stupar, 2009).

The frequency of movement of people towards New Belgrade, number of daily visitors who do not live and work in it, in particular the number of visitors who spend their leisure time in it, indicates a new function of New Belgrade within the Belgrade metropolitan area. It could be concluded that exceptional location advantage of New Belgrade, deriving from its position between the two formed city cores - Belgrade and Zemun - has been finally realized, so that New Belgrade no longer represents an inert housing tissue, but rather an attractive zone of social happenings. It may further be concluded that the role of connecting city tissue, which once had to be

¹³ According to Roland Barthes, a city is a tissue which is not formed of equal elements whose functions we can enumerate, but of strong and neutral elements which create rhythm, and which further, analogue to the opposition between the sign and absence of sign, between the full degree and the zero degree, constitutes one of the major processes in elaboration of signification. See Roland Barthes, 'Semiology and urbanism', in Miloš R. Perović, town planner, *Antologija teorija arhitekture XX veka*, translated by Irena Šentevska (Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, 2009.), pg. 422-429. [Roland Barthes, "Semiology and Urbanism," [1967] Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988), pp. 191-201]

taken over by the planned New Belgrade center, has finally become reality in this alternative way¹⁴. However, despite the integrated urban functions which have become reality in the formed physical structures, it may be concluded that an adequate spatial framework, in which primarily current and then future models of life may be included, has not been developed. In its original form with big city blocks and "uncritically large areas equipped with municipal infrastructure for future needs of urban functions" (Perović, 2008, p. 168), New Belgrade has offered a chance and opportunity for application of modern theories of urban growth and development. Today, when these large areas are being filled without a strategy and come into collision with the existing housing tissue and life of inhabitants, we cannot speak about possibilities but about certainties, primarily in terms of problems imposed by a new spatial and physical framework.

The competition of 1986 (International competitions for improvement of New Belgrade urban structure – 1986) has been an attempt to prevent an uncontrolled and partial development of a new urban layer in New Belgrade. Unfortunately, social interest to make a new urban plan based on the competition results which would enable further development in a methodological and conceptual way, was lacking.

FROM THE NEW SPATIAL-TIME CONCEPTION TO THE LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

Aldo Rossi identifies three typical phases in transformations of cities and urban entities in whose basis is industry, and which are primarily reflected in the change in relationship

¹⁴ Miloš Perović realized an exceptional location advantage of New Belgrade which derived from its positions between the two formed city tissues – Belgrade and Zemun – and stated that these advantages were not even partially exploited, primarily in terms of establishment of new relationships in the system of the Belgrade center. "...the central part of New Belgrade, despite enormous location potential and comparative advantages, has a very low level of vitality out of many reasons, so that its impact on other centers within the Belgrade metropolitan area is still negligible. Should the problems of its functioning, identified in this paper, be overcome by a directed action, namely, should a regulatory and physical framework be created that would support natural processes of growth and development and processes of creating a critical population mass for initiating centers and processes of extension and transformation of the existing structures, then one of the possible scenarios of developing the system of centers of the Belgrade metropolitan area could take a form..." (Perović, 2008, p. 197).

between the place of dwelling and place of work. The first phase is characterized by the end of household economy as a unity of production and consumption, disintegration of the basic structure of medieval town. The second phase is generated by a progressive industrialization which separates dwelling from work, disintegration between neighbors takes place, as well as concentration of mutually dependent services in one place, as the first "cities". The third phase has developed with the development of traffic in terms of individual vehicles, when the dwelling becomes independent of place of work and connected with it by the function of time (Rossi, 2000, p. 249). In this way, first the industry and then traffic have forever changed the image and spatial structure of a city, thus becoming a fact which cannot be ignored in an attempt to simply return to the concept of pre-industrial town and its traditional values. New spatial-time conception¹⁵ in architecture and urbanism implies application of a new and broader criteria in urbanism, which is, on the one hand, reflected in integration of traffic lines into a city "organism" as constitutive elements and, on the other hand, in finding out such relationships between the "high buildings in free space" which would correspond to "dynamic changeable view of our time", namely observing the city while moving through it, primarily by car (Giedion, 1969, pp. 484-513).

The post-industrial society in which mass media have become new industrial plants for production, dissemination and presentation of information, while the so far world, a big supermarket for circulation of information models, introduces a new dynamics in urban system. "From the distance of thirty kilometers, traffic arrows direct you towards

¹⁵ "Around 1910, something happened which was, to great extent, crucial: discovery of spatial concept in art. Painters and sculptors have, in their ateliers as laboratories, investigated ways in which they would sensitively revive space, volume and material." (Giedion, 1969, p. 46.) Giedion wrote about changed conception of space which resulted from introduction of time as the fourth dimension. Primarily in painting, in which the objects are broken down, observed transparently, by actualizing the conception of simultaneousness which the objects simultaneously present when observed from different angles, and then in sculpture and architecture, in which the essence of space is in the infinite possibilities of its inner relationships, where the form of space changes depending on the point of observation. New spatial-time conception has its origin also in urbanism. See the next note.

these big centers which are hyper-markets, the hyper-space of goods where a new form of sociability is being developed. It should be seen how these hyper-markets centralize and redistribute entire space and population, and how they concentrate and rationalize time flows, routines – creating enormous movement of people there and back..." (Bodrijar, 1991, p. 79) This may be an explanation of how it was possible "that in the period of one month, November 2007, by not finding one's way, and not finding one's way even today, in New Belgrade, about 1.2 million citizens visited the new city in a part called 'city'?" (Blagojević, 2008).

As an apotheosis of a consumer city with wide boulevards well-suited to high-speed city traffic and landscape in which a sign dominates over architecture, New Belgrade reminds us of lessons of Las Vegas (Venturi et al., 1990), representing, just like Las Vegas, an urban heterotopia, to use the Foucault's term describing an "other space", the structure different from other structures, but connected with them. At the same time, in the context of heterochronism, the principle of heterotopology which indicates that heterotopia is related to small parts and pieces of time, namely, that they completely enter into the function when people find themselves in some kind of break with the traditional time, it represents a heterotopia limited by time (Fuko, 2009). Besides, the "new" New Belgrade represents a realized concept of a place of pleasure in the same sense in which Roland Barthes analyses the role and connectivity of the city center as a space in which subversive forces act and meet, the forces of interruption, ludic forces and all that is not the center: family, flat, identity (Bart, 2009). Venturi and Scott Brown concluded that Las Vegas represented a structuralist conception despite banality of marketing messages, as they say, a context which is new and indicates the need for matching new models with the models of life which it presents (Venturi et al., 1990, p. 9).

THE EXISTING STATE AND RIGHT TO THE CITY

Absence of human dimension is at the basis of criticism of cities based on the principles of Athens Charter (Perović, 2008, p. 176). The phenomenon of "disintegration of relationships between neighbors" identified by Aldo Rossi as a consequence of progressive industrialization, gets its most extreme form within a modern, functional city which is disintegrated,

compared to the traditional city and its humane dimension, by wide roads as a basic constitutive element of an urban structure. Additional departure from the principle of a man as a measure of all things has resulted from plan concepts which consist of "reservation of disproportionately large spaces for future development of certain activities" (ibid., p. 177). Such concepts derive from an aspiration towards "realizing an ideal urban environment by a series of concepts determined beforehand..." (ibid., p. 177) but, in case of New Belgrade, precisely these concepts have today become an impetus to growth which has not been considered in the long term, and which is reflected in an unsystematic filling of these large areas, by hyper-production of space satisfying momentary appetites both of investors and beneficiaries of space, but lacking a vision of a wider and more complex future development.

Uncritical and non-scientific approach in transforming these free areas into developed spaces precisely indicates the domination of economic interests and absence of multiple professional control of growth, where real needs and interests of the existing beneficiaries have been neglected, as well as a democratic principle of contemporary society according to which "the right of individuals and the right of the community are mutually conditioned" (Giedion, 1969, p. 508). The theory of needs, as an "elaborated system of state and the 'everyday' in all phenomena" represents a necessary starting point in the procedure of investigating new forms of environment. In this way, an often situation in which sociology decodes the world only when it has already been constrained by its physical limits, can be avoided¹⁶.

This situation is typical for New Belgrade and has been a subject of recent interdisciplinary studies, such as annual project of the Center for Visual Culture (Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade) entitled "Differentiated Neighbourhoods of New Belgrade" which deals

with "exploring various meanings of the term *neighborhood* in the context of urban, architectural and sociological language, as well as with the analysis of historical development and current progress of neighborhood urban transformations in New Belgrade" (Erić, 2009). The results of these researches are divided into three thematic fields. The first one deals with the analysis and realization of original concept of New Belgrade. The second one addresses current urban transformations which are manifested through "introduction" of neo-liberal capitalism in New Belgrade empty spaces, while the third thematic field explores the possibility of regenerating the neighborhood by creating new places of gathering which produce a feeling of belonging and identification with the environment. One of the basic hypotheses of these researches is that the city must be given back to its (New Belgrade) inhabitants, namely, to fulfill their "right to the city" or "spatial justice". However, before mentioning jeopardizing of these rights, and they relate to the issues of identity and belonging, higher existential level, and should represent attainment of contemporary society, we lay stress on that the elementary right to sun, air and greenery is in jeopardy, actually the right that has been granted by the original concept of New Belgrade which has derived from the Athens Charter, and which, in this sense, represents conception which is certainly more advanced from everything in the realization that followed afterwards.

CONCLUSION

The Belgrade urban tissue is a rewarding polygon for various comparative researches of its urban structure considering that, on the one side, there is a planned urban matrix of New Belgrade mega-blocks, the part physically separated by natural river flow, and, on the other side, a densely developed urban structure of the old part of the city. It has been shown herein that, in the case of New Belgrade, the main problem of its current and probably future development is a process of filling undeveloped parts of blocks under the pressure of new commercial facilities which basically change the character of space. By the deviation from the Central Zone Plan and Regulation Plan of New Belgrade of 1962, actually by the construction of block 24, a phase of its development which was dominantly marked with absence of such regulation plans which would consider this area as a unique and specific urban-

architectural entity, has begun. However, this phase continues even today, which is obvious from the analysis of the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021. New Belgrade open blocks as a basic particularity of its urban structure are considered by regulation plan in the same way like other new parts of the city, and their construction according to permitted urban parameters is recommended.

Scientific studies which problematize the concept of New Belgrade and its open blocks indicate over-dimensioning of free areas compared to the developed structure, which is reflected in the final effects of the development of the new city which lacked "many layers" in order to become a "real" city meeting all complex needs of contemporary life. Complexity, layeriness, compactness, hierarchical structure, visuality and humane dimension are presented as important factors of urbanity which characterize the cities and parts of the cities developing through time, by choosing, in a given historical moment, appropriate plans and rules of construction. Problems that we are facing today in analyzing urban tissue development and transformations derive from insufficiently developed vision of the future development of the city in the context of contemporary consumer society. Economic factors, which lie in the basis of society, are not in balance with other elements and factors in the city design and planning system, this resulting in space which satisfies only primary capitalist appetites for safe investments and quick capital turnover, while long-term goals in space development have not been considered. Space, which is still the greatest social and state resource of Serbia and a challenge to big capital (Vujošević, 2003), by proper strategy for planning and creating an adequate spatial and physical framework of life in the city, is becoming a capital itself, which should be continuously emphasized as an argument for stronger implementation of designer's recommendations in plan documents.

Globalization process brings about changes in the notion of city which no longer implies a compact entity, but an urban point in wider, existing and evolving regional and global networks. One of the imperatives of the future development of Belgrade is also inclusion in these integrations and new networks, coming out of the position of isolation on the global scene, in which the creation of its new urban identity and image plays an important role. At the same time, the conception of identity and

¹⁶ Branislav Milenković observes a practice relevant in the context of considering New Belgrade urban structure, according to which large areas occur as a technical response to the needs of society, while the studies of sociologists and psychologists with alarming titles, primarily about the fact that the cities are not built according to the measure of man appear only afterwards. He emphasized the importance of prior sociological researches which provide coexistence of the model of life with the model of space (Milenković, 1980).

image in the today's world of consumer society, global networks and global market is replaced with a notion of brand of the city, the term implying its market value resulting from the fact that the cities themselves are becoming a product in great or small demand in the context of various forms of tourism (Stupar and Cenk, 2006).

In this sense, the analysis of Belgrade urban tissue transformations is a contribution to exploration of possibilities for improving Belgrade urban structure through identification of the problem of environment. In further steps, it is necessary to consider the existence of paradigmatic models which may be a starting point of planned transformations, and also successful examples of regulation plans by which the identified problems, as well as concrete consequences of current urban and construction practice in Belgrade in terms of investigation of typology of new vernacular, may be eliminated.

The presented transformations are only one of the forms of capital-space interaction which has brought about transformation of Belgrade urban tissue. The changes which take place in a wider city center in function of dwelling, neglected and abandoned spaces of once industrial areas in the city center and problem of the city expanding outside its center are also essentially influenced by economic factors and indicate the problems which arise from uncontrolled domination of economic interests and absence of plan and legal regulations and, as such, they may be a subject of further researches.

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