

Title:

The National Theatre in Subotica, Serbia - enveloping the building after 20 years

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Abstract:

This paper refers to an issue of the current and obsolete in the architectural design process of complex programs in specific situations. As an extraordinary example we present a project of National Theatre building extension in Subotica, Serbia.

The project of adaptation, reconstruction and designing annex of the building of National Theatre in Subotica is currently the biggest investment in the field of culture in the Republic of Serbia. Narodno pozorište - Narodno kazalište - Népszínház¹ is an institution with the long tradition of corresponding with the multiethnic society of its inhabitants through performances in all three different languages. It was designed in 1854 by János Scultety.

In 1990 the big architectural contest, announced by the Ministry of culture, for building's reconstruction and extension, resulted in no winning entries. However, two teams shared the second award and later merged into one team - YUSTAT - that was selected to do the task. It was not until 1997 that the architectural brief was accepted, and the designing process has begun. Starting from that point, till today, when the design processes are not yet over, the politics and finances dictated the dynamics of the work, but the time that passed and needs that evolved also increased to the level of being main factors in making design decisions. A clever architect's thought - that all designs concerning styles and manners, where the new building will address the town, should be left aside until the time for realization comes - saved the town from getting the monumental obsolete structure 20 years later.

Now - 20 years later the team from Faculty of Technical Sciences, led by professor R. Dinulović is finishing the main projects of facades of National Theatre in Subotica building. This paper will present all phases that led to final decisions of adopting different design approaches for different faces of the building - from clean and strict glass façade facing the main promenade, which allows the look inside the administrative part of the building, through technically demanding inversion of the stage architecture and fly tower applied onto concrete façade - resulting in huge steel structure that serves both as fire escape and vertical public space, to appliances of the new green wall technology on façade that represents "the house of actors" - facing the town from the actors' dressing rooms. It will pose questions of increasing and changing needs of both the town, and the theatre; questions about architectural approaches and questions of making connections between reconstruction and appliance of new technologies.

¹ The full Title of the National Theatre in Subotica consists of titles in three languages (languages of nationalities that inhabit the North of Vojvodinian province) - in Serbian, Croatian and Hungarian.