

## POST WAR URBAN RECONSTRUCTION – MEANING OF PEDESTRIAN STREET IN HISTORICAL CITY CORE AND ITS TRANSFORMATION IN MODERN CONTEXT- FEJIC STREET IN MOSTAR

### INTRODUCTION

What is the street? What is its importance in the development of historic city cores? Why do we take street as main unit of urban structure? How they were built and what was their influence on the further development of the cities?

Answers on those and similar questions I would try to give through the example of the Fejic Street in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

City of Mostar has long history and continuity in development through different periods. Spatial formation of Mostar in the Ottoman period had ended in the middle of 17th century. Until 1878 and Austro-Hungarian monarchy, there were no important changes.

Cultural heritage from ottoman period has special value characterized by ambiental and architectural values. During the Austro-Hungarians urban development continued, based on integration in already existing urban structures. Fejic Street was one of the products of this development

Some streets are more attractive for some certain reasons that we come to see or do there. Street is the most important urban unit in social life of human being. It is more than infrastructural element or physical communication. It is true that street is used as communication, but from the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century its function is much wider from the social point of view.

The street is there to see someone or to be seen. The existence of society is automatically existence of the city, and street is probably the most important element in the urban structure of the city.

If we want to develop respect for such an important element, we need to upgrade the concept of the street and make it spatially more attractive so that people will come and spend free time there.

### OPEN SPACES

City life has two shapes - one of them is public and social, which is happening mostly on the open spaces, squares and street and in public buildings. The other one is more concentrated to private life isolated from the city center and social activities.

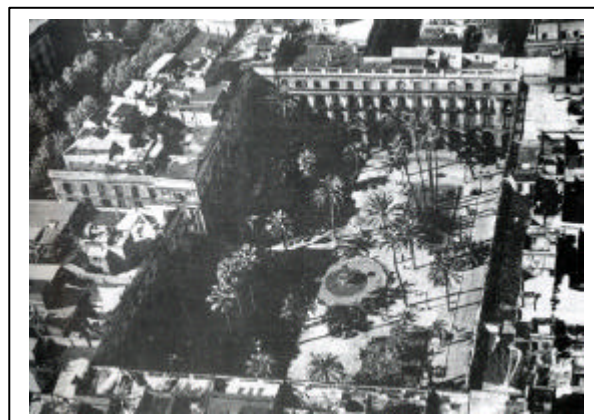
For us this first aspect is more interesting. City open spaces are different with wide specter of activities that are happening there. Traditionally speaking we have two main formations: square and street.

### SQUARE

It is high probably, that square is the first human discovery of an open space. It appeared by grouping houses around certain free space. This configuration permits full control from inside as well as good protection from outside. For its yard shape it was chose as symbol for many sacral and cultural objects (agoras, forums, monastery's yards, mosque's yards, etc...). It also helped in discovering house with the yard (atrium).



Via Giubbonari, Rome



Piazza Real, Barcelona

## STREET

Street is the main urban unit. It is a product of lack of space where square was tightening with surrounding houses. But however street has stronger character than square. It is planned in human scale, and nowadays it is not so easy to transform them for car uses (especially in historic city cores). Street is an element that we understand as part of old urban structures.

## PROBLEMATIC OF STREETS TODAY

Main problem that we are facing nowadays is about adapting already existing streets for the present needs and purposes. It is very common case that streets are used for the activities that were not predicted for them. Many open spaces are used for parking places, instead for pedestrians and for children's playgrounds. This started happening in the big cities but today it's a common fact even in the smaller settlements. The phenomenon that is happening is that people are losing the sense for how much of an open space they physically need, but for example they are very aware of how much of space they need for the dog hat or parking.

It seems that very small percentage of people does know the real problem and can define how much of an open space we physically need to fulfill our personal lives. This problem is very present in the cities such as Mostar where surfaces that use to serve as an open space or pedestrian street where transformed into people's storages and parking spaces.

People did lose the sense for an open space and organized public life, mostly after war, in the era of poor reconstructions and patch. But if we go through the history of this city we can see that it had a long and harmonious tradition in the urban development.



Scheme of the transformation of an open space predicted for social life of people into parkig place

## AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF MOSTAR

Prior to the Ottoman period, Mostar was a small village pressed against a key Neretva River crossing. Modest dwellings around a chain bridge, its bastions, and the roads north and south of them. Mostar did not become a monumental urban center until its transformation into an Ottoman colonial administrative center designed to harness commercial traffic to and from the Adriatic.

The name **Mostar**, first recorded in **1474**, which does not refer to the Old Bridge building but still has meaning of Bridge Keeper. Before Ottoman times the urban center grew up around the Neretva River near to the wooden bridge along the principal road from Bosnia to the Adriatic coast. *"It was made of wood and hung on chains."* The Ottoman geographer Katib Celebi later wrote *"and...shook so much that people crossing it did so in mortal fear."*

As Mostar's economic and administrative importance grew under the Ottomans, the wooden bridge required replacement. During the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, the wooden Bridge was replaced by 'immortal' Old Bridge (1557-1566). Its construction was a critical step in the transformation of the city of Mostar from a modest settlement into a vibrant colonial crossroads.

The Old Bridge was designed and executed by Mimar Hayruddin, disciple of the famed architect Sinan, and supervised by Karadjoz Mehmet Beg, brother of Rustem Pasha and patron of Mostar's the most important Mosque complex.

Many poets wrote about the Bridge and its beauty. Evlija Celebi, the famous Ottoman traveler, wrote in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that it

*"Is like a rainbow arch soaring up to the skies, extending from one cliff to the other... Let me be known that I, a poor and miserable slave of God, have passed through sixteen countries but I have never seen such a high bridge. It is thrown from rock to rock as high as the sky."*

At the beginning of Ottoman period Mostar was composed of less than two dozen houses; by 17<sup>th</sup> century Mostar had 24 residential neighborhoods (mahalas). The Ottoman period was the beginning of Bosnian multi-culturalism, as it is known today. The Ottomans brought with them strict laws regarding religious toleration among Muslims, Christians and Jews; these laws provided for the formation of multi-ethnic communities a source of pride and identification for all of the religious and ethnic groups in Mostar. Ottoman Empire was still strong during 18<sup>th</sup> and three-quarters of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy takes over Bosnia in 1878. At that moment Ottoman Empire was weak enough to make this transition. The new rule brought new visions and new lifestyle.

A lively program of urban development was introduced in Mostar with the change of imperial administration in 1878. The new government saw the city's past and present on east bank and city future on west bank of River Neretva. By spring 1895, Mostar had 17.010 residents. New monuments and architectural styles reflected the aspirations of Mostarians and the Austro-Hungarian administration. Monolithic neo-renaissance buildings were complete opposite to what existed until then. One of this kind is an old Municipality building designed by Sarajevo architect, Josip Vancas. That was the period of new urban and architectural ideas (That was the period when Fejic Street got a new look, which is kept until nowadays in few segments. It is very important to underline the fact that Fejic Street didn't get only new objects in Austro-Hungarian period, but the idea of street in the context of being main urban and social element didn't exist until then).

By the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century elements of Art Nouveau and Secessionist appear in Mostar's historical buildings.

The First World War had started. Most Bosnian remained loyal to the Austro-Hungarians during this war. From 1914, more precisely since beginning of First World War until the end of Second World War many transformations had happened and Mostar have passed through difficult times. As any other war this one has brought a lot of evil and damages.

Between 1948 and 1974, Yugoslavia evolved from a repressive socialist regime to a Federative Socialist nation made up of discrete republics, of which one was Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this period Mostar, the industrial base was expanded with construction of metalworking factory, cotton textile mills, and aluminum. Skilled workers and woman entered the work force and social and demographic profile of the city was broadened dramatically; between 1945 and 1980, Mostar's population grew from 18.000 to 100.000. Because Mostar's eastern bank was crowded and burdened by inadequate infrastructure city expanded on the western bank with the construction of large residential blocks.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a healthy local economy fueled by foreign investments spurred recognition and conservation of the city's rich culture heritage. An economically sustainable plan to preserve and reconstruct the old town of Mostar was implemented by the municipality, which drew thousands of tourists from the Adriatic coast and invigorated the economy of the city. The result of this ten years project earned Mostar an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986.

In 1992, 64% of the Bosnian electorate voted for the state of "equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others". Days later, Sarajevo was under the siege that would last more than three years.

Mostar was overwhelmed by Serbian military units, and shelled from the surrounding hills during May and June 1992. The industrial capacities of the city were targeted from the surrounding hills.

Many historical buildings in the old city core were heavily damaged. A shell hit even the Old Bridge. In May 1993 'second battle of Mostar' had started. People had suffered city core was completely destroyed, Bosnian Muslims were expelled from West bank to the East, more than 3,000 people mostly civilians were killed. During this period the Old Bridge was even more damaged.

At 10:15 a.m. on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1993, Stari Most – the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman footbridge that had been a symbol of Bosnian multi-centralism for over 400 years – was shelled at point-blank ranged by a Croatian army tank, until this icon collapsed into cold Neretva River. This moment provoked deep sadness for citizens throughout the city for whom the Bridge had represented everything stable and sacred.

Since 1995, Mostar started all over again. The beginning was hard but people that live in this region are made to not give up and they always have at least tiny line of hope for better future. First steps are made just after Dayton Peace agreement on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1995. Under the European Union Administration (1995-1998), important parts of Mostar's decimated infrastructure were restored, schools and hospitals were reconstructed and number ruined buildings stabilized. As humanitarian assistance infuses the city with strength, Mostar offers foreign donors a rare opportunity to animate a vital link between historic architecture, social utility, and civic identity. The investments to the damaged historic fabric have positive impact of visible reconstruction on local morale.

But still, Mostar need a lot of time and efforts to recuperate from the urbicide that had happened there.

## HISTORY OF THE STREET

The urban area of Fejic Street was formed between 1470 and 1620. Today's name of the street is related to several brothers from Fejic family, who died as antifascist fighters and their family house was located in this street. The street was parallel with the main street and had the function of connecting mahalas, which developed to the north of the bazaar, between the main street and the Neretva River. The first neighborhood to be formed was the Atik or Sinan Pasha mahala in the flat area immediately next to the bazaar. The center of mahala was the public square (Mejdan) surrounded by the residence of the governor, a local court, a mosque (1474) and a hammam.

The mid 16<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by the remarkable development of the Ottoman city, when several hundred new shops were built in the bazaar, around the stone bridge built in 1566. In the same period, Karadjoz built the largest kulliye in Mostar (mosque in 1557, with two medreses, mekteb, han and several auxiliary structures). Final arrangement of the area took place in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when two new mahalas were formed around Roznamedjy mosque (around 1610), and the KJose Jahija Hodzina mosque (before 1620), between Karadjozbegova mahala and Musala Square.

Short streets (sokaks) to the east and west connected the street with housing complexes, organized on a unique three part scheme: a house, a courtyard and a garden. Only the roof of two-story houses covered with stone slates was visible behind high walls, which protected the privacy of the family.

Houses with facades along the street were without windows on the ground floor, and on the first floor they had projecting bay windows.

The architectural and urban structure formed up to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century remained unchanged during the following century.

During the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878-1918) great number of interventions in the city took place, and the Fejic street area shared the same destiny as other parts of the city.



Fejic Street- plan

Existing structures, especially along the street, were replaced with new structures different in scale, materials and applied decoration.

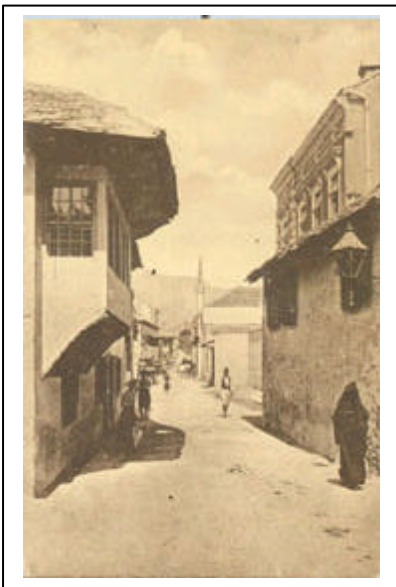
Around the Mejdan Square were built the Thonhauser's Pharmacy with apartments (1879), Officers and County Officer's building (1885), Hospital (1880-88), County government building (1894) and Orient hotel. At that time a hammam next to the Sinan Pasha Mosque was eradicated (1884).

After the Musala square was connected with the right bank of the river by Franz Josef bridge in 1882, and several years later by a new short street to the Main street, the new city main square was organized. New structures were built around the square: the Commercial school (1880), Neretva hotel (1892), the Fire Brigade headquarters (1913), City Bath-banja (1914), and Bristol hotel (1906) across the new bridge.

Formation of the shortest connection between the old city center (Musala area) created great entrepreneur interest for investment in the street.

In that period the street was named Sauerwald strasse after the name of the state representative in Mostar. Several public structures were erected in that time: Magistrat and Police (1893), Vakuf palace (1894) on the place of former Karadzobey han, the Wencel pharmacy and apartments (1904) and Ukraine cinema built in 1911 creating new landmarks in the area.

During WWII, in 1944, the area was bombed and many structures in the vicinity to mention that the Sinan Pasha mosque was destroyed by the local communist government in 1948, as a part of the ideological confrontation with religious organizations.



Segment in Fejic Street-  
Ottoman architecture



Hotel 'Orient', built in Austro-Hungarian period  
– Fejic Street

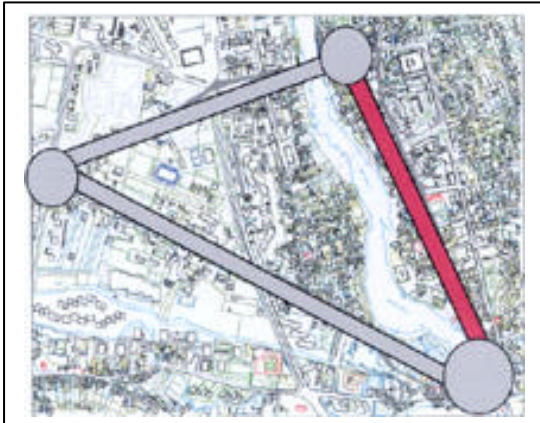
## ANALYSES

### IMPORTANCE OF FEJIC STREET IN THE CITY

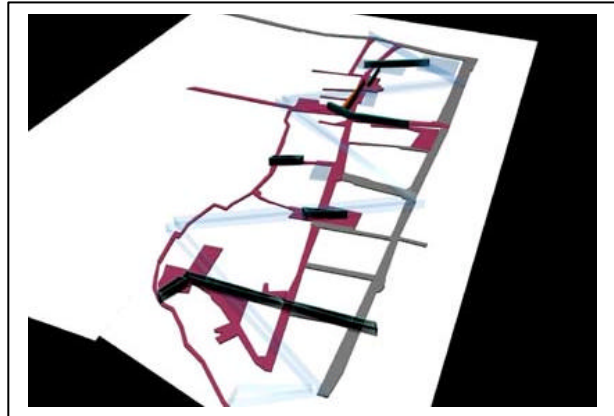
As it is seen in historical development, there were two major development periods. Those periods gave main shape of the city as well as guidelines for further development. In that context Fejic Street is one of the major city elements, starting from the Old city core up to the northern part of the city. In the Ottoman period Fejic Street was only the tiny line between the city core (carsija) and housing blocks (mahalas). It was formed out of the high walls of surrounding housings and their yards. Later on with Austro-Hungarians it became an important social element with public facilities in the ground floors, among them cafés and other social facilities. This is not excluding the existence of social life during the Ottoman period; it's only that it was organized differently.

Later on Fejic Street is becoming more and more important and together with two more axes in the town is making the main city core. The two other axes are already formed and defined by the functions and structures. Fejic Street was highly damaged and destroyed during the recent war and that is one of the

biggest problems we are facing nowadays in the process of reconstruction. Its important to say that even non-planned partial reconstruction and repairs brought this street into phase where we can not defined weather it is a pedestrian or traffic street or what it actually is? It looks like a 'no men's land', where many reconstructions are happening without following regulation plan.



Red line- Fejic Street; triangle presents city core of Mostar



Fejic Street in the scale of historical city core

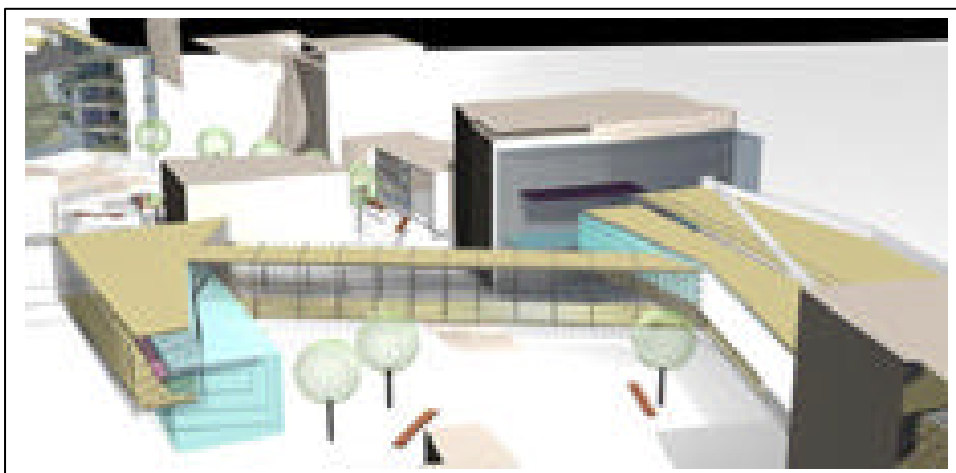
It is not an easy step to build the space where people will like to be and spend their free time. It is important to go through different elements and categorize eventual problems as well as name necessary interventions. Fejic Street is studied through different aspects: urban, architectural and economic. All free showed that Fejic Street has a great potential which is giving a special spirit to this street. It is only a question of planning and right interventions.

The complete study made about this street gave as final result certain categories of problems on both urban and architectural level. Out of those categories is provide a lit of interventions important to be executed.

Street is divided into three zones and each of those zones is treated as proposed in the interventions. Unfortunately this study is still not taken in consideration of local authorities, but it is very important to say that final **conclusion** is following:

There are two approaches in the reconstruction of one historically valuable area. It can be redone as it was before with full reconstruction and scholastic approach to it, and it could be treated with full respect to the tradition and history in the context of contemporary life following the needs that people of today. Because we do not build for someone else, but for us and for the generations that are coming after. This what we are building today will be the history soon and it is very important for the urban continuity of Mostar.

**(PPS presentation on the 39<sup>th</sup> IsoCaRP congress in Cairo will present all work including detail design of above-mentioned street zones)**



Part of the Fejic Street; new edition- project of the city multimedia center - proposal