



# NEW EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE

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A publication of

**A10**  
new European  
architecture

Edited by  
Hans Ibelings and  
Kirsten Hannema

A selection of  
25 projects from  
around Europe

Essays about the  
current state of  
European architecture

# Bjelašnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Apartment building Studio Non-Stop

### Unioninvest Olympic Apartments

Architect: Studio Non-Stop (Sanja Galić Grozdanić and Igor Grozdanić with Edin Avdibegović, Hasnija Kazić and Jasmina Topcagić)

Client: Unioninvest d.d. Sarajevo

Address: Babin Do, Bjelašnica

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During the 1984 Winter Olympics, Mount Bjelašnica, a permanently snow-capped mountain some twenty-five kilometres southwest of Sarajevo, was the venue for the men's alpine skiing events. The ski resort was mostly destroyed during the war in the 1990's and the area was badly in need of a makeover. In 2004, an urban plan for Mount Bjelašnica was adopted; it envisaged the construction of holiday apartments in the area known as Babin Do. Since then, the ski resort has become a construction site and the scenery of Babin Do has changed with every visit. The resulting panorama is made up of cliché objects, which either copy-paste the alpine ambience or completely deny it.

One exception is Union Olympic Apartments, designed by Studio Non-Stop. With its strong, irregular form and elegant colours, the complex stands out from its built environment, but is completely assimilated within the surrounding landscape. The architects took the local topography and colours as their starting points and this is reflected in the finished building, which conjures associations with the silhouette of the mountain peak. The traditional village mountain house (*katun*) provided inspiration for the functional organization of the complex. The materials used – dark green zinc, pine wood and lime mortar – establish a coherent relation with the surroundings, echoing the colours of the rocks, snow and evergreen forest. Indeed, the architects' choice of materials is the building's most important feature, underscoring rather than negating the natural environment.

The building is composed of two identical sections. Although they are divided by a local road, they constitute a unique functional entity in that they are connected by three underground levels – a further adaptation to the local topography that provides space for additional programme and enhances the quality of the complex. The lowest two levels contain the public spaces: garages, shops, restaurants and store rooms for ski equipment. They are vertically connected with the two apartment sections – the upper one containing 36 units over five levels, the lower one 40 units over four levels.

Both apartment sections are trapezoid, positioned symmetrically in relation to a lower middle level. They are located along an east-west axis, with the main facades facing south towards Bjelašnica and the main ski piste. In order to provide the apartments in the upper section with adequate daylight and good views, the two sections were shifted horizontally in relation to each other. Now all apartments

receive plenty of sun. The movable wooden panels in front of the large window openings act not only as sun screens, but also as an intermediary between the occupants and the scenery, especially when they are on the balconies or in their kitchen, living room or bedrooms. The movement of the wooden panels gives the building a dynamic character.

The lower basement floors, visible on the south elevation of the lower section, are strongly outlined by white frames. They look like the sturdy base of the building. The facade of the lowest level, on which the white frames rest, is clad with local limestone. It faces the traffic road, from which a stairway leads to the terrace of the basement level above. The zinc roof continues in the sloping end facades, hiding the prominent white parts of the apartments with their classically dimensioned windows.

Studio Non-Stop, who have a reputation for simple, minimalist solutions, designed the Union Olympic Apartments from an analysis of location, use and flexibility. Their choice of a glazed south facade, which contrasts with the more typical closed facades of alpine buildings, contributes to the elegance and the quality of the project's interior. Future plans for the area envisage more buildings with public functions. It is to be hoped that exceptional buildings like this one will become a rule. <





↗ The connecting underground levels appear to be part of the facade of the lower building.

↘ All end facades are clad in dark green zinc.

Movable wooden panels act as sunscreens and intermediary between occupants and scenery.





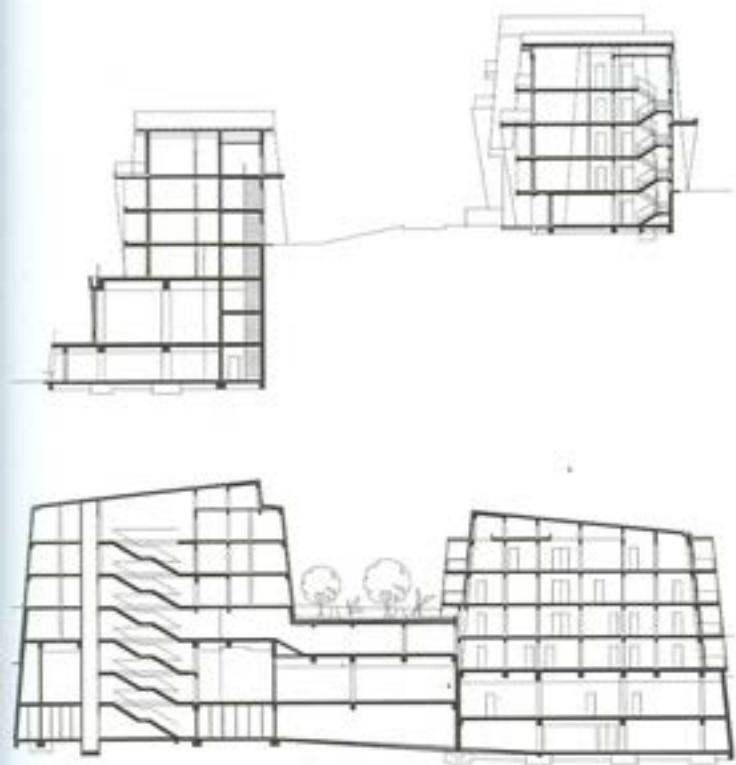
↑ The two blocks were shifted slightly to ensure views for both.

↓ Rear facade

Apartment interior

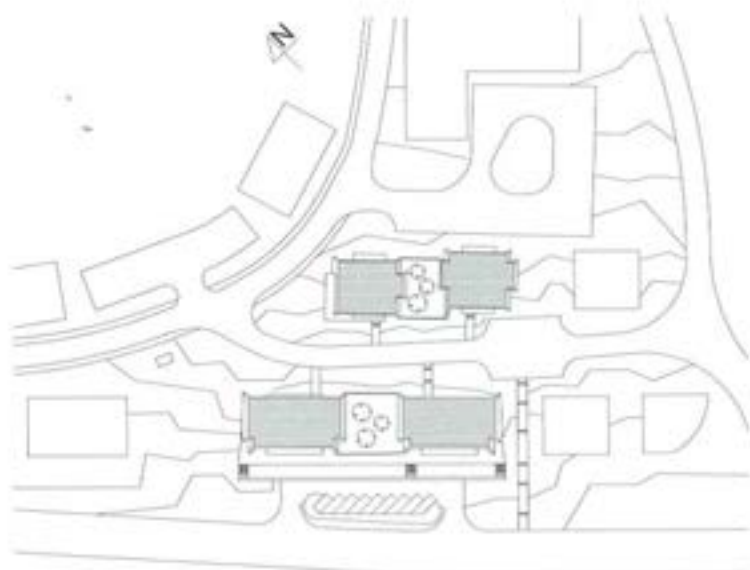






↑ Sections

↓ Floor plan of the two blocks, separated by a local road



Site plan

