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- Apartment complex, Zierikzee
- Synagogue, Mainz
- Housing, Wrocław
- Mixed-use complex, Sarajevo
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Scandinavian simplicity

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Mixed-use complex, Sarajevo

This building by studio non-stop can be read as an 'urban puzzle'.

■ BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA — TEXT: ELŠA TURKUŠIĆ, PHOTOGRAPHY: SANDRO LENDLER

Sanja Galić Grozdanić and Igor Grozdanić set up their architectural practice some nineteen years ago. In the course of their joint career they have dealt with many different types of projects, both urban design and architectural. 'Importanne', a recently completed mixed-use complex in Marijin Dvor, a district in the centre of Sarajevo, is their most complex and most ambitious undertaking to date. Their design strategy is characterized by a range of analogous and associative ideas always presented graphically in the form of pictograms. The approach they adopted for the Importanne project was based on a puzzle – the Balkan Puzzle – and was

aimed at achieving spatial harmony between the new commercial enterprises and surrounding urban context.

On the one hand, therefore, the architectural challenge, was to combine the different volumes, functions and capacities in a dynamic and spatially appropriate composition. In addition, because of its complexity, this composition had to be both contemporary and conceptually innovative. On the other hand, the architectural concept was greatly influenced by the heritage context. The site is located between two distinct districts, one containing dense blocks of late 19th-century buildings and the other, the city's first district built on modern-

ist principles, containing free-standing housing blocks interspersed with green space.

Accordingly, the general concept of the Importanne complex is based on the premise of a combination of buildings and greenery in the form of a 'multi-block', a compact and dynamic composition made up of eight separate volumes of different sizes (the largest of which has twelve floors and the smallest six) arranged around three internal courtyards at mezzanine level. Each volume has its own aesthetic, spatial and functional identity. Two volumes are reserved for a hotel, three contain office space and the remaining three volumes contain apartments. The volumes are interconnected (on two or three sides) by neutral glass structures five storeys high. On each storey are planters containing creepers which are supported on steel cables strung across vertical glass surfaces.

The volumes sit on and are linked by a linear podium containing the shopping centre (located on the basement, ground and mezzanine levels), below which is a three-level car park. →

↓ Office blocks on the north and east elevation

↓ Apartments around the internal courtyard



↓ South elevation





↑ Central hall in the shopping zone ↓ Glazed roof



(Mixed-use complex, Sarajevo)

The retail units of the shopping centre are strung along a long central hall which is the communication spine for the whole complex. Daylight enters along the length of the hall which is punctuated by three partially glazed roofs which form the floors of the internal courtyards. Accordingly, the central hall provides visual connectivity with the higher structures and generates a certain spatial dynamism and social interaction within the centre: the roof terraces serve as relaxation spaces for the office workers, while the south elevation of each courtyard space contains the access walkways for the apartments.

The elevation expresses the homogeneity of the whole while the individual volumes are differentiated by means of variations in the colour of the Etemit facade panels and in the type and rhythm of window openings. Additional dynamism is created by the so-called 'bites' – cut-out sections of facade lined by vividly coloured panels which contribute to the 'puzzle' idea. In the residential volumes these 'bites' take the form of loggias which can be closed off with a glass partition in deference to the Sarajevo climate.

The two hotel volumes are planned for Phase II of the project which will unfold in the course of the next year when an existing police station will also be demolished. That the current unfinished nature of this project does not overly detract from its aesthetic appearance or from the sense of the original idea, is largely due to the fact that all the volumes are self-contained. Indeed, the current situation actually underscores the simplicity and flexibility of this architectural concept. Its real value and significance is its very novelty within the existing urban set-up of Sarajevo. At the same time, it is important to note that despite its central location, Marijin Dvor has not yet fulfilled its promise to become the new city centre. In this respect, the Importanne centre represents an advance of sorts. Studio non stop's 'urban puzzles' concept is a reminder of the mutuality of different forces that go to make up a city. It was on this basis that the architects established the criteria which enabled them to achieve a balance between the desires of investors, socio-economic processes and architectural and urban demands. ←



↑ Ground floor ↑↑ Sixth floor ↓ East-west section



IMPORTANNE CENTRE, 2007 – 2010

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
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