

THE ARCHITECT
JOŽE PLEČNIK
GUIDE TO MONUMENTS

THE ARCHITECT JOŽE PLEČNIK

Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia



The European Heritage Days Series
The architect Jože Plečnik
Guide to Monuments

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The architect Jože Plečnik

As Plečnik's artistic career began in Vienna, it is impossible to understand his work outside the context of everything that was going on in the capital of the Hapsburg Empire at the time. Because art history research has placed particular emphasis on the progressive nature of Otto Wagner's architecture – which was also encouraged by the architect himself – it has overlooked the artistic problems which he actually encountered on a daily basis. We know a great deal about his hopes and aspirations, but we do not know enough about the very soil from which the Vienna Secession sprang, with all of its specific traits. In fact, modern Austrian architecture evolved organically from its own tradition, which – due to economic, political, social and national issues – differed a great deal from that in the better developed, and, in a sense, more homogeneous West European countries. If we wish to understand the diversity of European architecture around the year 1900, we must pay particular attention to the "conservative" side of Wagner's art, because it is more telling than all of the well-familiar facts. Research into Wagner's "most conservative" student, Jože Plečnik (Plečnik, 1997) offers a detailed insight into the matter-of-fact situation which prevailed at the end of the 1890s in the studio at the Schillerplatz in Vienna, and also led to one of the most radical variations of the Art Nouveau movement. This is explained to a great extent by Plečnik's short note, addressed far later to his colleague and friend from their common time in Rome, Alfred Castelliz, revealing the source of his initial enthusiasm for architecture: "Wagner's drawings in the Künstlerhaus were so disciplined, radiating far more power than those of others. You could sense in them, a little at least, the flash of eternity. Later on, the man seems to have preferred to be an engineer – but before that, he was indeed the architect."¹

Jože Plečnik was one of the most loyal heirs to the "artistic" side of Wagner's architecture. During his training, a heated discussion prevailed over who should shape the future of the art of building. Otto Wagner argued determinedly that this should be the artist, who could learn engineering more easily than an engineer could learn art.² Plečnik was one of Wagner's first students, so he followed from the very beginning the decisive phase of the transformation of historicism into the Modern. He remained faithful to the new architectural language, developed on the basis of Gottfried Semper's the-

1 Plečnik's letter to A. Castelliz dated 10th February 1929 (Stele, 1967, p. 290).

2 Otto Wagner: *Moderne Architektur* (Graf, 1985, p. 276).

ory of cladding, to the end of his days. (Prelovšek, 2004, pp. 243–253) In this fact lies the principal difference between he and the majority of his fellow-students, since he imaginatively evolved new forms out of the old and drew inspiration from far more than just the many scholarly journals that flooded Europe around 1900.

Plečnik was born in 1872 in Ljubljana, then a rather small and economically under-developed capital of the province of Carniola with some 30,000 inhabitants. He only attended grammar school for a single year, then gave up and returned to his father's cabinet maker's workshop. With a state bursary he then attended the School of Crafts in Graz, where he was trained as a cabinet-maker, but in his free time he helped Professor Leopold Theyer draw architectural plans. When in 1892 his father died, Plečnik was too young to take over his workshop. So he moved on, without really wanting to, to Vienna, taken there by one of Theyer's older students, the owner of a respected furniture factory. The two years Plečnik spent there with him were "a solid but very hard school" for him (Stele, 1967, p. 290). After several attempts to enrol at the School of Applied Arts – since he envisaged his future as a cabinet-maker – he tried his luck, encouraged by his family, at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts. He showed a few of his drawings to Wagner, who had just become professor there and who accepted the young neophyte without hesitation into his class. But lacking the fundamental technical knowledge, Plečnik experienced a bitter disappointment his first hour there. He then spent the school year of 1894/95 in the teacher's studio, where he quickly became familiar with architectural work, and later returned to Wagner's master class at the academy. He completed his studies in the spring of 1898, with a utopian urban plan for the Scheveningen seaside resort at the Hague, which won him the so-called Prix de Rome. In late autumn of the same year he set off on his several-month study trip through Italy, which ended with a short visit to France. (Stele, 1967, p. 290)

Plečnik's biography reveals a few lucky coincidences which helped the talented youth who was, however, poorly-equipped regarding the practical side of life, to navigate his way from being a mere cabinet-maker's apprentice to the role of a top artist. Even the conservative patriarchal background of explicitly Catholic morals in which he grew up proved to have a decisive influence. He remained loyal to his home all his life, followed the instructions of his elder brother and priest Andrej, and had difficulties in adapting to a metropolitan way of life. A sceptical stance towards all that was new and foreign reinforced his dedication to traditional architectural ornamentation which he tried to transform to suit the new modern times. While working for Theyer, and later in the J. W. Müller furniture factory in Vienna, he acquired a good knowledge of historical styles, which his fellow-students in Wagner's school knew only superficially and were not able to make good use of. Further, Plečnik possessed advanced skills in the cabinet-maker's craft and was well familiar with wood-working techniques and technologies. He kept to the classical cabinet-maker's use of plywood and did not engage in the very popular designing of chairs made of bent wood. Vienna was one of the rare European capitals whose art did not develop accord-

ing to revolutionary shifts. Already Fischer von Erlach was an ingenious eclectic who could combine all of the many achievements and advancements of past centuries in his own work. Wagner, Adolf Loos and Josef Frank all displayed a similarly positive attitude towards tradition, a view which well suited the young Plečnik as well.

He was lucky to come to Wagner at a time when the new style was only beginning to emerge. Wagner had no need of students who discussed the problems of the new art, but rather he carefully selected those who were good draughtsmen. Thus he relied on Josef M. Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann, notwithstanding the fact that they had nearly or already completed their studies with his historicist predecessor, Karl Hasenauer. Because Wagner had decided on the evolutionary process of gradual adaptation of the old to the new (Prelovšek, 1992 and Oechslin, 1994, pp. 88–113), their rich imaginations were particularly welcome, for the more familiar with the old art they were, the more easily they could transform it and the richer their repertory of new forms emerged. Again, Plečnik was already familiar with historical styles from his time at the School of Crafts in Graz, but their application in architecture was new to him; therefore he depended even more on Wagner's instruction. Lacking proper education, he would never deem to doubt the correctness of his teacher's theoretical foundations. The basic lesson he gained under Wagner's tutelage was that the old was no longer useful in answering the needs of these new times. But because Wagner's reform worked primarily on the level of architectural ornamentation, he easily adapted to his new role as architect.

Wagner belonged to the generation that had its roots in Neoclassicism, and he fought with this style more or less all his life. His farthest reach was to create impressively engineered constructions in which he saw symbols of modern progress. Therefore he embellished his buildings with a technoid ornamentation reminiscent of the techniques of Asenbaum, Haiko, Lachmayer, Zettl (1984, p. 88), but still employed this in an expressly historicist way; that is, in the sense of a traditional cubic building scheme, articulated by classical projections and characterised by rustication on the lower floors. He did not, to be sure, invent everything by himself, but made use of following certain trends of the French and Belgian Art Nouveaus. He particularly relied on architects like Paul Hankar and Vistor Horta, who endeavoured to include some feat of modern engineering into their decorative schemes. Among such popular motifs were visible iron crossbeams above the windows, which received an expressly modern and programmatic character only in Wagner's work. Later he favoured aluminium as industry's latest achievement in building material technology, but never paid special attention to the aesthetics of concrete nor its constructive possibilities.

The only possible way to go beyond Wagner's proto-Modern was to simplify or schematise, which Plečnik understood as an impoverishment of the art of building and a return to engineering. Because turn of the 19th century European architecture tended primarily to search for new forms of building ornamentation, Wagner's rationalism deviated widely from the prevailing enthusiasm for organic forms. Plečnik's generation was no longer so heavily burdened with

the past. Rather than Wagner's belief in technical progress, it was his attitude towards materials, based on Semper's historically-deduced laws, that exerted particular influence on the Slovene architect. Plečnik was not fond of formal exhibitionism and preferred keeping to classical materials, such as stone, brick, wood and metal. However, he did not refuse to use other materials – if he was forced to use them. In such cases he demonstrated a considerable amount of originality of design, which, too, he had learned in Wagner's school. This he expressed as far more than a mere display of novelties, by which many of his Viennese colleagues tried to win recognition.

Another circumstance, essential to Plečnik's development, should not be disregarded: that is the intersecting and mixing of various artistic influences in the multinational Vienna. As the representative of a small nation with a "non-historical" past, he felt he a very strong personal obligation to make up time lost and to excel at his work. A parallel is offered with the Jews of Vienna from whom he must also have learned a great deal – this though he never really liked them, largely as a result of Christian anti-Semitic propaganda. From a youth who had not known what exactly to do with himself, Plečnik had matured within but a few years into a man with a clear vision of his future, firmly deciding to serve the needs and ideals of his nation. Had he not gone through the "solid" school of Wagner, he might have succumbed to the euphoria of national romanticism that led to the many blind alleys of various national styles before the Great War. Plečnik avoided such simplifications and searched for specific national idiomatic characteristics and features in the proportions not in their shape but in the rhythm and syntax of individual architectural elements. He sought refuge from Germanic pressure in the Slavic idiom and saw "bitter lyricism" as the quintessence of all Slavic art (Kotiča, 1902, p. 98). In his later study of Etruscan production he intuitively sensed an affinity with his own work, which (mis)led him to the idea that the Etruscans had been ancient ancestors of the Slovenes. Although he never declared this conviction publicly, the art of Ancient (classical) Rome was thus freed for him from the rigidity of a historical style, and became a legitimate pre-stage of modern Slovene architecture, complete with all of the inherent possibilities for further development. In this, Plečnik also followed Semper's teaching of two original building styles, the ancient Greek and the Gothic, of which only the former was believed by him to have preserved its genuine vitality. (Semper, 1863, p. 214)

After his return from Italy and France, Plečnik worked in Wagner's studio for a short time, where he completed – after Olbrich had moved to Darmstadt – an additional few stations of the Vienna city railway. Then Plečnik went out on his own. As a student of Wagner's, it was not difficult for him initially to find enough work. Due to his inability to work profitably and his ever more intense design of sacred art, together with the fact that his modern views found little response among the conservative Austrian clergy, commissions soon began to dwindle. For some time he was saved from bankruptcy by the factory owner Johann Evangelist Zacherl, but eventually only a professorship at the Prague School of Applied Arts was left to him as a last resort, where he was invited by a fel-



Plečnik designed the exterior and the staircase of Langer Villa in Vienna.

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low-student from Wagner's studio, Jan Kotera. Thus, after 18 years in Vienna, Plečnik moved in 1911 to Prague, where he found a second home for the next ten years.

Because it is impossible to present everything within the framework of this article, I shall limit my writing only to some of Plečnik's most characteristic works, created – as are all of them – in a continuous dialogue with Wagner, though proceeding from quite different ideas. It should be noted that what Plečnik learned at school was quite sufficient for him, and he did not move away from the problems which preoccupied the community of modern architects in Vienna around 1900. He kept returning to the same questions and tried to find a new answer each time. After leaving Vienna he was less firmly-bound to scholastic ideals and felt far freer in his efforts toward a more plastic mode of expression.

Already in his first independent plan for a building – the Langer Villa (1900–1901) in the Vienna suburb of Hitzing (Prelovšek, 1979), for which he only designed the facade and the staircase – Plečnik endeavoured to free himself from too strong a stylistic reliance on Wagner. While the interior is not far from the established ways of the decoration for the Vienna city railway stations, the facade boasts several innovations. The stylised roses inserted into plaster are highly reminiscent of the decoration employed by the Scott, Charles R. Mackintosh, which Plečnik admired at the eighth exhibition of the Vienna Secession; but they may also have been taken from or inspired by the ingenious decorator Olbrich, whose influence is rather conspicuous in Plečnik's early works. Early on Plečnik also managed to cope with the Wagnerian facade-scheme. Unlike his teacher, he tried to inter-connect separate parts of the facade more closely, to become a uniform building cladding. Balconies running round the two free corners of the Langer apartment block on the Wienzeile (1901–1902) were the first realised step towards this goal; originally they had interesting glass floors.

The balconies on Langer House in Vienna extend over two corners of the house, connecting the facade into a uniform exterior.

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Around the year 1900, Wagner's circle was intensely involved in the search for a modern facade cladding and a methods by which it could be fastened which should, at the same time, also serve as part of the building decoration. In the Villa Loos, in Melk on the Danube, Plečnik tried a combination of plaster and ceramic tiles. The result was not satisfactory, which resulted in his decision to use a uniform facade cladding on the Zacherl House in the centre of Vienna, for which he radically simplified his winning competition design (1900) in the course of construction (1903–1905). Alternating wider and narrower vertical granite bands cover the whole of the exterior, whose individual parts are no longer separated by pylons or lisenés nor accentuated by architectural sculpture, but rather are indicated only by the variation in the rhythm. Thanks to the rod-like lisenés, behind which a stone cladding is fastened, and to the muscular telamons by Franz Metzner, the whole conveys a highly-dynamic, plastic impression. The rounded corner facing the cathedral is topped by a high drum-like roof, which gives the impression of a cylinder inserted in the facade cladding. The proportions of the windows too are different from Wagner's. Further differing from Wagner's practice is the lower part of the building, intended for business, with the mezzanine serving as a mere transitional horizontal belt below the polished granite surface of the apartment floors and at the same time, a compositional counterpart to the more sumptuously designed attic. These novelties were not modelled so much on the examples of other architects but rather achieved via Plečnik's study of the art of Antiquity, which made him very disciplined in artistic matters. However, if he had been able to curb his vivid imagination on the building's exterior, then he gave it free rein in the interior, where it literally exploded in the organically-shaped stairway candelabra. The Zacherl House is one of the landmarks of the European Art Nouveau, which already points decidedly to the Functionalist aesthetics of the 1920s.



Facade of Zacherl House,
Vienna

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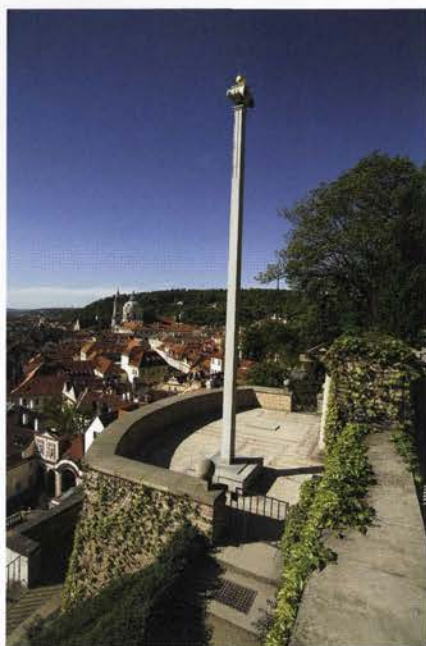
Around 1907 Plečnik was also dealing with Cubist forms (Strajnić, 1920, p. 28 fig. 10), which he – unlike Picasso and his followers – derived exclusively from archaic Mediterranean architecture. The capitals of the concrete columns in the crypt of his church of the Holy Spirit (1910–1913) in Vienna are the most illustrative example of this. Although Cubism represented only a short episode in Plečnik's art, it accelerated its flourishing in Bohemia, where the Slovene architect was even referred to as “the father of Czech Cubism”. The church of the Holy Spirit was a religious and social centre in one of the most neglected working-class districts in Vienna. Unlike Wagner, who favoured a central ground plan, Plečnik preferred the ideal of the traditional early Christian basilica, which he, however, improved to achieve better acoustic properties and a better overall view by abandoning vertical supports between the nave and the aisles. He made a number of designs for this church, until at last, due to a lack of funds, he was forced to resort to a construction of reinforced concrete. Unlike his younger colleague from the Wagner school, István Medgyaszay – who also trained with the French pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete, François Hennebique, and employed an extraordinarily thin dome in his contemporary church in the village of Mul'a in an area settled by a mixture of Hungarians and Slovaks (Pozzetto, 1981, p. 422) – Plečnik concentrated primarily on the aesthetics of the texture of the new building material. For the galleries above the aisles he introduced a simple bridge construction on reinforced concrete beams, and on the facade he employed proto-Doric columns of ancient Egypt, which were the only ones suited to an execution in wood panelling. But he was more interested in the very working of the material, which he tried to imbue with new life by mixing crumbled brick and by rinsing, grinding and hammering. In this, Plečnik was preceded numerous later architects who came to deal with the aesthetics of concrete.

Decorative element in the interior of the church of the Holy Ghost in Vienna



The decade of his professorship at the School of Applied Arts (1911–1921) was an entirely unproductive period for Plečnik as regards building activity, but he made good use of it to undertake a profound study of ancient art and its laws with regard to Semper's teaching on the metamorphoses of materials and forms. All of this worked to his advantage in the conversion of Prague Castle, a task entrusted to him in 1920 by the Czechoslovakian President Tomáš G. Masaryk (Josip Plečnik – An Architect of Prague Castle, 1997). This prestigious commission going to Plečnik was the result of the prevailing disunion among Czech architects, who preferred to choose a foreigner who could be dismissed at the very first instance of disagreement or discord. Therefore Plečnik set about work with the greatest sense of responsibility and a deep respect for the Czech nation. In modernizing the castle and its surroundings to become the seat of the new democratic president, he endeavoured to free the building as much as possible from the visible bonds of the Hapsburg rule and to open it up to the people of Prague. At the same time, however, he avoided introducing any foreign architectural elements which had not been present on the site earlier. He co-inventively followed Masaryk's philosophy by employing huge monolithic pieces of noble materials and by a number of allusions to, associations of and quotations from the Czech and Slovak history and culture. The tall monolithic granite obelisk erected in memory of the fallen Czechoslovakian legionaries thus became the leading motif of the conversion. Because Plečnik accepted the post of professor at the newly-established university in his native city of Ljubljana, he kept returning to Prague during school holidays where, in the meantime, his former student Otto Rothmayer carefully supervised the implementation of Plečnik's ideas. Thus work on the Prague Castle was continually intertwined with his architectural interventions in Ljubljana. The former was a test for the latter, and vice

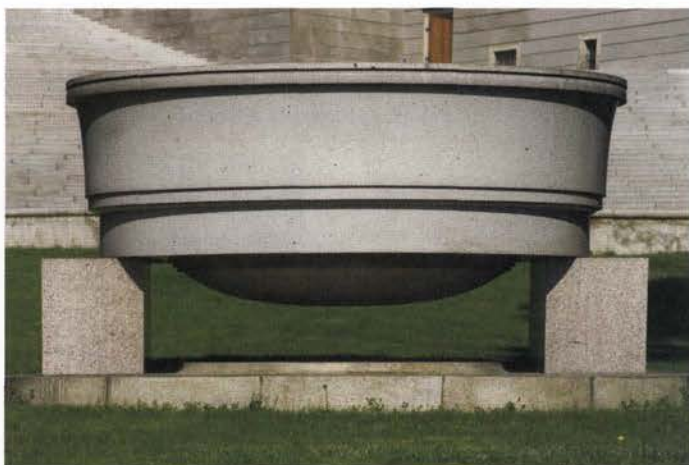
versa, he continued in Prague a number of his Ljubljana designs – the only difference being that opportunities were far poorer at home than in the Czechoslovakian capital, so he was forced to settle for cheaper materials, particularly artificial stone.



Obelisk at Prague castle

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Although he had pondered town planning for Ljubljana already in his early years, Plečnik had no formal urbanistic experience prior to his arrival at Prague Castle, where the issues and problems were similar. He designed the castle gardens by expressly architectural means, and took care to preserve anything he deemed worth saving. He laid out sandy paths irrespective of the trees that might spring up in the middle of them. But he firmly resisted including any flower beds or traditional trellises proposed by the castle gardeners. Instead, he included large grassy “carpets” and shrubs. Since Czech sculptors could not satisfy him and produce garden sculpture suitably stylised in the antique manner, he employed a number of Greek ceramic vases metamorphosed in stone. The largest granite bowl, with a diameter of 4.3m, was placed in the centre of the lawn below the monumental staircase of the Paradise Garden as a counterpart to the planned obelisk which, however, was not realised. In spite of public protest he had several parts of the castle walls removed, thus opening up picturesque views over the city. He also included several gazebos and viewing terraces in the good half-kilometre stretch of garden south of the castle, terminating in the east with a Mediterranean pergola and an elegant obelisk on the Moravian Bastion. He paid special attention to joining the gardens into a single continuous castle route. Thus he spanned a special bridge between the Garden on the Bastion – which represents a gradual transition from the castle courtyards to the wild nature of the Stag Moat – and the Gunpowder Bridge, from where the route should have continued through the Royal Gardens in the north and



Granite bowl below the staircase in Paradise Garden, Prague Castle

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would then have been united again with the gardens in the south by a special bridge. Like the obelisk, an alley in the north and a daring proposal for the connection of the Castle with the city too remained only on paper.

The First and Third Courtyards were paved according to Plečnik's design. The First Courtyard served as experience and precedent for the (stone) paving of the Congress Square (Kongresni trg) in Ljubljana, and the latter in turn for the Third Courtyard in Prague Castle. The former two cases taught Plečnik how important it was to keep the ground levelled. In the Third Castle Courtyard this was also conditioned by the covering of archaeological finds by a concrete roof. Plečnik used granite slabs from various parts of the country and imitated the existing pattern of the pavement, thus moderating the monotony of the whole. With this he also presented the natural riches of Czech and Moravian quarries. He placed two fountains in the courtyard, together with the remains of the obelisk originally intended for the staircase of the Paradise Garden. Of particular interest was the end-solution of the canopy with a copper roof in front of the newly-opened passage to the Garden on the Ramparts. He used only a "provisional" construction on the site which was, so to say, sacred to the Czechs, in order not to interfere with the historical heritage of the place. Along with local traditional motifs, examples of Classical Mediterranean architecture also played an important role in all of the interventions. In an iconographic sense, the ambivalence of Plečnik's presentation enabled free allusions to mythical events and persons from Czech history, by which the tradition of Antiquity and folk art were brought together.

Along with the gardens and courtyards Plečnik also designed the presidential apartments on the second floor of the south wing. To connect the endless Baroque suites of rooms, he arranged an impluvium with an elegant granite bowl next to the new oval stairwell. He changed the nearby medieval White Tower into a special room for signing state documents and furnished it solely with a massive teak table. He gilded the neighbouring room, comprised of two smaller chambers, to allude to the famous chapel of the Holy Cross at



Mediterranean pergola with stone table in Moravian Bastion Garden, Prague Castle

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Karlštejn Castle, from the glorious days of King Charles IV. According to the President's daughter Alice, who participated in the conversion plans, the heart of the renovated castle was intended to serve as Masaryk's library, only partly preserved today. To please Alice, Plečnik also envisaged a salon with folk embroidery beside a great party hall which he clad in green fabric and surrounded with wooden columns by the walls. He designed an armchair for the former which represents a wooden "metamorphosis" of antique metal furniture with leather "cushion" and straps. The armchair is a kind of antique parallel to contemporary chairs by Breuer composed of metal tubing. The most radical of Plečnik's interventions in the castle was the so-called Columned Hall, where – by removing the ceilings between – he created a great unified space. It was meant to be a propylaeum through which visitors could enter the Second Courtyard

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Silver Hall, Prague Castle



and proceed to St. Vitus' cathedral and the central Third Courtyard. With the pattern of the pavement in the First Courtyard and the opened passages through the castle building he designed access to the presidential staircase as a kind of processional route guiding the Czech kings to Vladislav Hall, where coronations took place.

Masaryk's abdication in 1935 left Plečnik and his work on the Castle bereft of an influential protector, so he determinedly left Prague. Although he did not receive any proper commissions immediately after his return to Ljubljana, the situation gradually improved. The Franciscans were the first to ask from him a design for a new church in the Ljubljana suburb of Šiška, and at the same time, the director of the City Building Office, Matko Prelovšek, included him in the solution-process addressing urbanistic problems. Only modest funds from the city budget were allocated for this purpose, but Plečnik nevertheless managed to carry out several arrangements. When he had left Vienna and accepted a state job, he began to refuse any pay for the work he did and was annoyed if his students and assistants charged their clients too much. He understood his profession as a special mission comparable with the priesthood.

At the end of the 1920s, Plečnik could already boast the implementation of some minor regulation interventions, such as the layout of St. James's Square, Zoisova street, the access to the castle from St. Florian's church, the Congress Square and more. In preparing the plans, his students collaborated as draughtsmen. In expectation of a new building act he grouped his far-reaching ideas into two regulation plans, one for the so-called "Greater Ljubljana" (1928–1929) and the other for its North-Eastern region (1928), which he called the Holy Cross district (Svetokriški okraj) after the nearby central municipal cemetery (Prelovšek, 1997, pp. 267–273 and Stabenow, 1996). While the former envisaged a large-scale redesign of the city centre, with a number of new public buildings and extensive green areas and partial implementation of a ring road, the latter offered a model solution of a new, autonomous city quarter layout, with a broad housing typology on the basis-example of a garden city. He did not resort to big housing agglomerations but rather envisaged free-standing villas and terraced houses with long narrow gardens to provide enough light to the inhabitants. The two plans actually represented the last optimistic attempt to direct the city's urban development before the onset of the global economic slump which rendered all of Plečnik's projects unrealistic: to set up a university in Tivoli park, to convert the castle into a museum and to build a new Town-Hall and new premises for the National Gallery. Instead, he had to tackle public works that were paid out of the unemployment fund. Thus, alongside the alleyway and the old fortification on Castle Hill, he arranged the banks of the Ljubljanica, with the Three Bridges and the Cobblers Bridge, and the banks of its tributary, the Gradaščica, with the Trnovo Bridge (Prelovšek, 1989, pp. 15–19). On the example of the Viennese boulevard of Wienzeile he first intended to cover, in Ljubljana too, the entire course of the river through the town. Therefore his bridges are not simple passages of the street across the water, but are envisaged as smaller town squares; with the



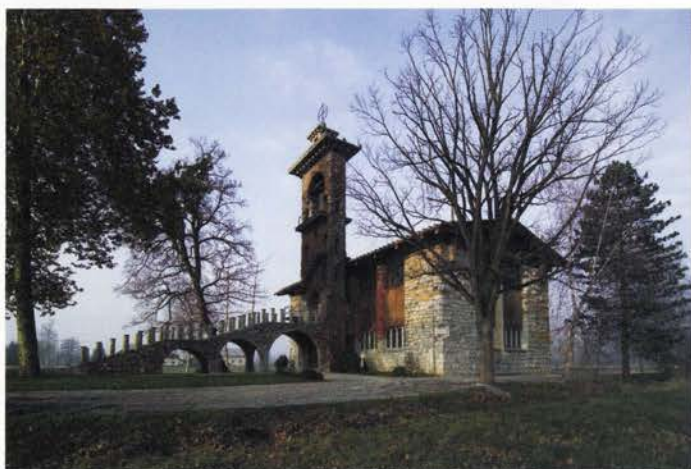
Cobblers' Bridge, Ljubljana

Three Bridges he even tried to create a celebratory entrance to the old city core under Castle Hill.

A special place in Plečnik's architecture goes to his sacred buildings which brought some revolutionary innovations as regards liturgical issues. The central square nave of his already-mentioned Franciscan church in Ljubljana (1925–1927), (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, 1997) built after a slightly-altered initial project for Prague, is slightly lower than the surrounding ambulatory, and the presbytery with its high altar reaches deep inside as the spiritual and physical centre of the church. The nave is surrounded by colossal brick pillars, and the entire interior covered with a wooden coffered ceiling, a string of windows in the walls beneath it representing the final step in the metamorphosing of the early-Christian basilica. The church of the Sacred Heart, built 1928–1930 in Prague (Prelovšek, Josip Plečnik – an architect of Prague castle, pp. 565–580 and Margolius, 1995), is a big hall with no interior spatial caesuras. Owing to the lack of funds, Plečnik had in mind its gradual “sacralization” by erecting cyborium altars unevenly over the place. The presbytery reaches into the nave with no difference in height. The crypt with barrel vaulting, whose triumphal arch is built of the remains of the oldest churches excavated on Prague Castle, and the interior of the bell-tower with a gently-inclined ramp leading to the bells are particularly impressive. The ramp was meant to prove that he too had mastered the Functionalist architecture, which, as such, he did not recognise as true art. To reduce construction costs, he added a wide, flat bell-tower to the relatively low church, by which it appears to be far higher for the dominant view it affords.

Concurrently with the church in Ljubljana he was also building a church in the village of Bogojina (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnikova Slovenija, 1997, pp. 230–242 and Krečič, 1997) in north-eastern Slovenia. With the latter he turned the existing minor church into an ante-chamber of the new extension, whose proportions were taken from the old building. The new part consisted of a sequence of two squares each side of which is the width of two bays of the old church. The span of the old triumphal arch was in turn

the measure for the width of the new presbytery. Plečnik even preserved the old bell-tower, though he also added a bigger new tower because of the shattered equilibrium of masses. As in Ljubljana, the principal compositional theme in the Bogojina church was that of a hall with columns. Because these would have proven so costly had they been executed in the desired size, he decided on columns inter-connected by high arches. In this way the static demands of the church were satisfied with inner supports, which also made possible thinner surrounding walls.



Church of St Michael, Barje

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Quite different is his subsidiary church of St. Michael at Ljubljana Marshes (Ljubljansko barje; 1937–1938), (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana. An architectural guide, 1997, pp. 257–264) built upon some 350 supports rammed into the mud. Because of the soft ground he separated the flat bell-tower, whose weight is dispersed and reduced by many arched openings, from the church. In this case too Plečnik had to be very sparing with the available funds, so he used stone only for the central part and the four corners, and filled the space in between with timber. Instead of columns he used extremely 'secular' concrete pipes from the municipal sewerage works in the interior, just as he 'profaned' the entire Franciscan church with an asphalt floor. Because St. Michael's was a village church, he included a great deal of rural items of daily use among the sacred symbols. The most outstanding innovation in the liturgical sense was the body of the church turned adjacent to the entrance axis, which rendered possible closer contact between the priest and the congregation.

Plečnik also designed several churches elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. For the Franciscans in Zagreb he envisaged a hall-like space with a seemingly irregular arrangement of columns of varying thickness. The windows behind the altar should reach down to the floor, opening a view to a small fenced garden, so that the whole would create the impression of a sacred forest terminating in a "hortus conclusus". Between 1936 and 1937, only a crypt of similar design was built (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, 1998, pp. 186–191).

Contact with the Orthodox world of the South-Slavic Balkans always moved Plečnik to draw on several Classical examples, such as the Pantheon in Rome. For the Bosnian Franciscan Province he built a circular church of St. Anthony of Padua in Belgrade (1929–1932). (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, 1998, pp. 220–231) Initially he intended to roof it with a large classical dome, but because it would have been difficult to carry out such a construction with the builders whose work he did not know, he replaced it with a concrete slab in the final plan. He found an original solution to the problem of a dome in 1935 in his unrealised plan for the Catholic cathedral in Sarajevo. He planned to superimpose a smaller shallow vault over a larger circular space and support it with tilted walls to statically better carry the burden. He later tried several times, unsuccessfully, to put this idea in practice; the last of these times in his project of 1947 for a new Slovene parliament building. Also interesting was his solution for a Jesuit church and residence in Osijek (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, 1998, pp. 204–208). When the outbreak of the Second World War prevented the implementation of the design envisaged on a large scale, he proposed in 1944, without any hope of its realisation, to join the residence and the church tower into a single construction. A mighty tower would crown a five-storey living quarters much the same way the obelisk was inserted into a stone pediment at Prague Castle.

Among his secular works, worth mention is his rebuilding of an older apartment house in Ljubljana to suit the needs of the Chamber of Trade, Industry and Commerce (1925–1927). (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana, 1997, pp. 135–139) As this was to be the prestigious command centre of the young Slovene economy, Plečnik encountered no troubles with funds. He clad the new stairway in dark polished stone and embellished it with columns. Owing to incorrect measurements for the staircase he had to change the initially Doric columns into downward-tapering Minoan forms. Seeing as Functionalism was just celebrating its first illustrious public appearance at the International exhibition of industrial and decorative arts in Paris, we come to understand why Plečnik glorified the Classical column in the Ljubljana Chamber as characteristic of the humanistic tradition so deeply-rooted in Western European civilisation. Various forms of portals show that he re-experienced Antiquity in a non-traditional way; that is, in the sense of Semper's teachings on the gradual evolution of architectural forms. Plečnik's design of the polychrome ceiling outside the main hall on the first floor also follows Semper's instructions about "colourful Antiquity", while with the wooden ceiling in the main hall he literally cited Semper's idea about the stretching of sails over temple courts (Semper, 1884, pp. 298–299).

Immediately after the completion of the Chamber palace Plečnik received commissions for buildings for the People's Lending Bank in Celje (1928–1929) (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnikova Slovenija, 1997, pp. 192–198) and an office building for the Vzajemna Insurance Company in Ljubljana (1928–1930) (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana, 1997, pp. 143–147 and Prelovšek, 1985). In both cases the site boasted one exposed

corner, which enabled Plečnik to return to his early solution in the Zacherl House in Vienna, only this time the question of facade cladding was not so decisive. He used plaster in Celje and "inserted" a massive cylinder in the building's corner, while he made a brick-and-stone facade in Ljubljana and indicated the corner "protrusion" merely with balconies by recessing the wall. For the view from below, the Minoan columns – slightly thicker in the upper part – optically correct the perspectival distortion of the facade. Like the telamons on the Zacherl House, antique-like figures are placed above, holding a banner, the symbol of mutual allegiance and, at the same time, the basic element of Semper's explanation of textile art. The circular vestibule, where the spatial axis changes direction, leads to a triangular stairway by which the architect made better use of the ground plan at the irregular bend between two streets.

Plečnik's most important building in Ljubljana is without a doubt the University Library (1936–1940) (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana, 1997, pp. 37–46 and Gooding, 1997), built on the site of the early-Baroque Auerspeg Palace which was damaged by the earthquake of 1895 and was subsequently pulled down. With this building Plečnik first attempted to preserve the memory of its precursor, and he would reply to the adherents of Functionalism that the function of libraries would certainly change in the course of time; but Ljubljana would still have a monumental building, which might possibly be converted for other programmes. Unlike the facades of the People's Lending Bank and the Vzajemna Insurance Company, the library's facade was designed according to a new theme he had already tried in the church in Prague. He envisaged the Library as an ancient temple, wrapped in a colourful Semperian cladding made of brick and stone. Inside, a long staircase leads through a peristyl to the large reading-room, where the construction of the galleries and cross-passages is particularly interesting, supported by common iron gas pipes. Opposite the reading-room is a solemn entrance into the exhibition room. The portal is shaped like a petrified curtain, the door leaves are decorated with inlay and incrustation. A few years earlier Plečnik furnished the villa of his friend Prelovšek in Ljubljana (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana, 1997, pp. 121–124). Here the furniture represented a link between the interiors of Prague Castle and the University Library. This apartment represents the richest interior in terms of variety of forms the architect envisaged for Slovenia. Concurrently with the rearrangement of the villa he built an apartment house for the same client at the base of Poljanska street. After its predecessor the building was named Peglezen (Flat-Iron House) (Hrausky, Koželj, Prelovšek, Plečnik's Ljubljana, 1997, pp. 112–114 and Prelovšek, Podlogar 1986). Although Prelovšek had no need of another house, he answered the needs of his friend Plečnik, who wanted to invent a workable ground plan for the extremely narrow site. He partitioned the staircase diagonally, thus optically lengthening it as the steps, in perspective, narrow towards each landing.

The last major commission the architect realised immediately before the War was the complex of funerary farewell chapels in the central municipal cemetery in Ljubljana (1938–1940) (Prelovšek,



Garden of All Saints

Kopač, 1992). Instead of a large mortuary he envisaged a major central chapel intended for prayer, surrounded by smaller chapels, named largely after the patrons of the city's churches. In so doing, he retained the traditional style of taking leave of the deceased who used to lay in the local church until the funeral took place. A colossal columned architecture represents the entrance into the Garden of All Saints as Plečnik called the complex. He also furnished it with smaller architectural structures, a fountain and benches. On the other side he marked the exit with a sumptuously ornate facade of the workshop building, with "textile" fields composed of twice-burnt brick and pebbles. Plečnik's farewell chapels are a combination of a number of ideas and themes, with which the architect was preoccupied throughout his life; and at the same time they exemplify an extremely spiritual "non-functional" art, a true antithesis to the architecture of Wagner.

By the end of the war Plečnik had prepared a considerable number of designs for the plan and regulation of Ljubljana, but times had radically changed and his art was no longer in demand. The new regime favoured the Socialist Realist art of the architect's imitators. Only the state award for cultural achievement, which he received in 1947, marginally improved his situation; but neither the city nor the state conferred any major commission on him. After the Yugoslav break with the Soviet Union, general enthusiasm for the Functionalism of Le Corbusier and Aalto surged in Slovenia, and Plečnik's work was more or less regarded as pitiable. He worked almost exclusively for the Church, but these commissions did not represent major realisations but a series of small-scale rebuildings and repairs of buildings ruined during the war. If we exclude the arrangement of the former monastery of the Order of the Teutonic Knights in Ljubljana, he received only a few minor works in other towns. His plans to change Ljubljana into a national metropolis had actually already been fully-completed before the war.

Throughout his fruitful and relatively long life Plečnik stuck to artistic and moral tenets of the Secessionist movement. In specific circumstances, created out of benevolent offers by Masaryk in

Prague and by the comparatively provincial character of his native Ljubljana, he was given reign to fully develop his architecture based on the humanistic tradition of the Antiquity, and in the process, setting in motion the only serious critical alternative to the mainstream of 20th century Functionalism.

DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

photos **DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK**

Translated from the Slovene by **ALENKA KLEMENC**.

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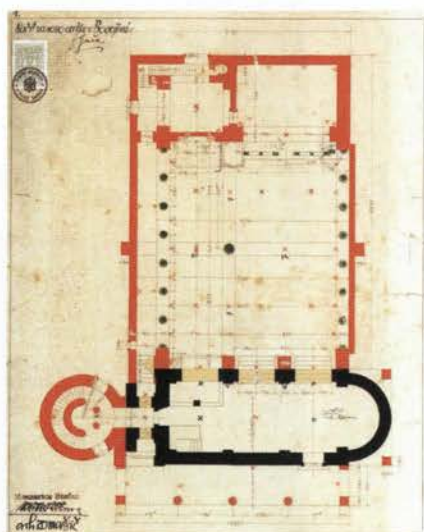
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Church of the Ascension of Our Lord

<i>IRN</i>	30
<i>Location</i>	Bogojina
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	14 th and 17 th century, 1923-24, 1926-1951
<i>Renovation</i>	2007
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Neva Sulič Urek

The majestic church of the Ascension of Our Lord towers above the surrounding area and its architecture defines the view of Bogojina. For several decades it has attracted enthusiastic admirers of Plečnik's architecture from Slovenia and abroad. It is one of the most original blends of modern, Gothic and Baroque architecture, and boasts a magnificent round tower and spatial interior. The main facade is adorned with a wooden sculpture of Christ in the axis of a large window. The exterior is rendered dynamic with round windows, the lower roofs of the side aisles in the western façade and the supporting arches in both longer facades. The large surface of the gable roof is interrupted with a small turret in the northern part of the western half of the roof and the jutting semicircular conclusion of the Baroque presbytery. The Gothic tower features corner buttresses characteristic of the Prekmurje region, which can also be seen in the church in Martjanci. The ante-chamber under the choir loft can be accessed through the main entrance from the portico outside. Another entrance leads through a Gothic portal in the preserved Gothic tower. The area under the choir loft belongs to the old structure and continues into the semicircular presbytery to the east. When we ascend the stairs from the low ante-chamber, the view of the nave with a large column made from the Podpeč stone opens up in front of us. The column dominates the entire nave and separates it from the aisle. It supports four arches carrying a wooden ceiling



Plečnik's plan for the church in Bogojina, 1924 (Prelovšek, *Plečnikova sakralna umetnost*)



Part of the northern façade and the western façade before renovation

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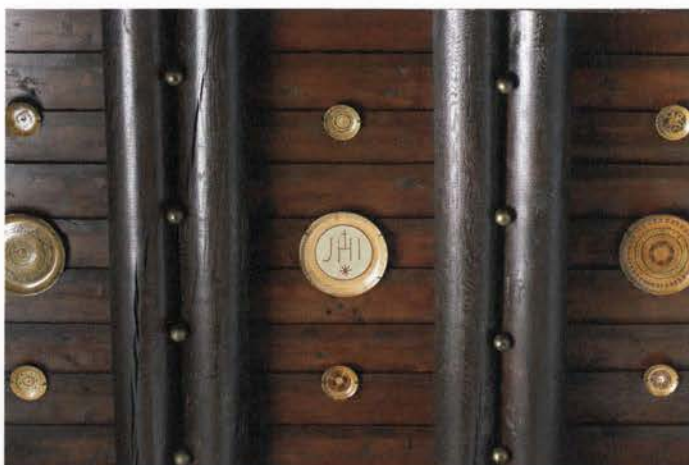
that is decorated with golden celestial stars and ceramic plates symbolising the Prekmurje region. The longer walls are flanked by more columns of the Podpeč stone, which to the west stand away from the wall, forming a passage along the aisle. The spaces between columns are accentuated with semicircular niches containing depictions of the Stations of the Cross. The presbytery features a classical altar made of oak, depicting Christ's Ascension. The lintel and part of the altar's retable are adorned with pottery as a link between Antiquity and the tradition of Prekmurje. To the left of the high altar, a side niche contains an altar of St Joseph. Its counterpart is a round stone pulpit next to the triumphal arch. On the other side of the building, above the old church that is now the ante-chamber, a stairway in the round tower leads to the choir loft with the organ.

Bogojina is mentioned as early as 1208 as Bogina. The original medieval church was constructed in the Romanesque period.

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Southern façade after renovation, autumn 2006





Wooden ceiling in the church

According to Dr Marijan Zadnikar it dated from the mid-13th century and encompassed a Romanesque brick structure measuring 9.5 x 5.57 metres in surface area. In the 14th century it was a typical Prekmurje single-nave Gothic church with a tower to the west, straight wooden ceiling in the nave and rib vault in the presbytery. Originally it was consecrated to the Holy Trinity. During the Reformation, the villagers set fire to the church, but by 1669 it was made Catholic again. In 1793 the nave was vaulted, and later in both 1810 and in 1888 the entire church was renovated.

In 1914 a new priest arrived in the village, an educated man named Ivan Baša from Beltinci. He immediately began collecting money for the construction of a new church. In 1923 the priest commissioned Jože Plečnik to prepare plans for a central-plan building with three semicircular apses. The ground plan was intended to be a symbolic representation of Christ on the cross. Of the old church, only the medieval tower in front of the entrance was to be preserved. In the same year, Plečnik submitted a project for a longitudinal three-nave building with two semicircular arches dividing the nave and the aisles, which allowed a direct view of the high altar from the aisles. The project was a logical derivation of his church of the Holy Spirit in Vienna from 1910, and two of his churches in Prague and Šiška, on which he worked concurrently. After he saw the old structure, studied the report of the construction engineer Anton Suhadolc and received the proposal of his brother Andrej to incorporate the old church into the new building, Plečnik opted for an altered version of the longitudinal church. He transformed the old church into the ante-chamber of the new building. Since the old structure was not based on the metric system, he abandoned his usual module of 2.5 metres, which he used in his churches with pillars; instead, he adapted the scale of the old church. Using the dimensions of the three late Baroque vault bays of the old structure, he designed a passage from the old church to the new. The broadest vault bay of the old church served to determine the width of the new aisle. According to the geometric system, which is defined by a module of 8.25 metres – the sum of the other two vault bays – he



Disused windows were replaced with new ones

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defined the length of the nave as the double sum of the module. He defined the width of the presbytery according to the width of the nave, and its length by the span of the old church's triumphal arch. He defined the side passage along the narrow aisle with the dimensions of the old Gothic tower. He used the spatial relationships of the old church also in cross-section, applying the basic module in the height of the arches in the nave and dimensions of the corresponding vault bay of the old church in the aisle. The construction of the church's external walls began in the spring of 1925 and was completed in September 1927, with the exception of the portico. In 1931 the ceiling was finished. In the second half of the 1930s Plečnik designed the chandelier and the high altar, but subsequently the designs were simplified and were carried out two decades later.

Before 2006 only minor renovation projects were implemented in the church. In 1994 the parish replaced the old, worn-out electric wiring, laying the new wiring in the old channels with the exception of sockets and wiring for the sound system. Three years later the bells were electrified. To mark the 70th anniversary of the church's construction, the façade was renovated, followed by the roof a year later. The wooden parts of the roof and the ceiling were protected with a solution that was too dark; consequently they no longer blend with the rest of the interior. In 2003 the parish of Bogojina requested that the organ space be extended. The original organ by Angster/Pécs was produced during the Second World War, which saw a shortage of both quality material and funds. Consequently its value did not justify their preservation. But the placement of a new organ was problematic because of the supreme appearance of Plečnik's architecture. It was demanded that the new organ be limited to the allocated area in the middle opening of the choir loft. The art historian Dr Damjan Prelovšek took part in the designing of the new organ, adjusting it to the elements of the church's architecture. With the new organ, the parish intended to enrich local and regional cultural events and facilitate the organisa-

tion of organ concerts, which would increase interest in the Bogojina church.

In 2005 the parish requested the cultural protection status as well as permission for the renovation of the façade, roof, ceiling and windows. Its application was approved at a public tender for cultural projects in the area of immovable cultural heritage, which were co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia in 2006 and 2007. Before the renovation of the façade, drainage was carried out to dry the moist parts of walls. Desanders and ducts for rainwater were installed. The disused oak windows were replaced with new ones and the damaged parts of the roof were repaired. The wooden ceiling was protected and touched up with gold on 264 spheres representing celestial stars. The deteriorating parts of the façade were replaced with new lime roughcast and the proper colour of the façade was determined with the help of the sounding of the colour layers. The sounding of the roughcast was carried out in the façade next to the Gothic tower and under the cornice on the western and northern façade. Consequently, the ivory colour was used following this investigation.

These procedures in the church and on the façade nearly complete the renovation; the only task that remains is the demanding renovation of the portico and restoration of the high altar in the presbytery.

NEVA SULIČ UREK

photos: pages 26, 28 NEVA SULIČ UREK, page 27 DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

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People's Lending Bank

<i>IRN</i>	4311
<i>Location</i>	Celje
<i>Planning</i>	1927-1928, 1929 (theatre)
<i>Implementation</i>	1928-1930, 1930 (theatre)
<i>Renovation</i>	1976 (facade), 1994 (façade installation of the cross replica), 1996 (theatre/cinema interior)
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Branka Primc

The People's Lending Bank is the most distinct building in Celje from the period between the world wars. The tall, four-storey structure in the town centre, at the irregular corner of two streets, consists of two rectangular wings of varied length, placed at right angles to each other. They are connected with a vertical, cylindrical structure that is slightly taller than the wings. The main wing along Stanetova ulica (Stane Street), which is the shorter of the two, is divided into seven bays with windows, whereas the longer, auxiliary wing along Vodnikova ulica (Vodnik Street) consists of nine bays. The courtyard features a theatre adjacent to the main wing; it is placed in parallel to the longer, auxiliary wing, only it is somewhat lower and narrower. The main aesthetic feature of the building is the cylinder between the street facades of the two wings, accurately expressing Plečnik's idea of the functional hierarchy of architecture. Unlike the massive, simple wings, this part of the building soars upwards and gives an impression of weightlessness. On the ground floor, the cylinder is embraced with pillars (rectangular supports), whereas on the first and second floor it features columns connected

People's Lending Bank building in the early 1930s
(Celje Historical Archives, Pelikan Photo Collection)





Present-day state of the connecting element in the corner of the street façades

with a balustrade, which can be also found on the third floor. The fourth floor is embellished with a balustrade balcony with voluted consoles and a cross with the crucified Jesus above it. The ground floor of the street façade features shop windows and is embellished with a broad, simple moulding that separates it from the first floor. Plastically emphasised strips that run across the first and second storey of both wings create a distinct sense of horizontality. The entire building is embraced with two identical cornices placed on top of each other. A balcony with a balustrade is placed in the middle of the first storey of the main wing and is carried by four classical heads sculpted by Božo Pengov.

The client wanted an office and residential complex with the main emphasis on the secular Catholic institution of the lending bank. The original plans for the building were prepared by Plečnik's student Vinko Lenarčič as part of his Bachelor's thesis and Plečnik introduced only minor changes to them. The construction of the lending bank was supervised by Anton Suhadolc and was carried out by the local builder Konrad Gologranc. The theatre was part of the original commission and was designed by Plečnik in 1929.

The building is an important link in Plečnik's oeuvre of public palaces that begins with Zacherl's palace in Vienna (1903-1905). The introduction of the cylinder and the contrasts between the cylinder and the rectangular forms of the two wings point to the expressionist principles that were constant components of Plečnik's church and secular architecture in the 1920s. Close similarities can also be found with the layout of the Vzajemna Insurance Company building in Ljubljana; both buildings were designed in the same period, but as the construction of the lending bank proceeded at a quicker pace, it served as a model for the Vzajemna building.

The present-day condition of the building is a result of many adaptations (renovations, reconstructions). Some of them were carried out during Plečnik's lifetime. The most drastic changes were



Original state of the theatre hall (Architecture Museum of Ljubljana, Plečnik Collection)

introduced in the interior, which due to its changed purpose, saw its original appearance obliterated, whereas the exterior remained largely unchanged. Original elements preserved in the interior are the staircases with balustrades and columns and the round hall on the ground floor with the wooden panelling, columns and gilded ornaments. The theatre hall is well preserved.

The first comprehensive renovation took place in 1976, but unfortunately it was entirely unsuitable. The worn parts of the roughcast were patched and the entire building, including concrete plastering, painted greyish-white like the façade. The dividing concrete strips on the first and the second floors were painted bright ochre.

The most extensive renovation of the exterior was carried out in 1994. Conservators attempted to restore the original external appearance of the building as much as possible. Consequently, the original (older) roughcast and colours had to be determined through investigations. Given the difficulty and scope of the task, the chief conservator recommended a construction company that was already experienced in the renovation of demanding historical buildings. The entire exterior was repainted in the colour of the original roughcast, whereas the cornices and the round decorative elements of the moulding were painted white. Particularly problematic was the demand of the investor that the original windows be replaced with simpler ones made of artificial materials. The chief conservator insisted that the original windows must be repaired or replaced with suitable replicas made from identical materials, since they represented an integral part of the architectural design of the building's exterior. New windows would have impaired the basic relationships and the cultural monument would have been degraded. The investor and the chief conservator came to an agreement and their cooperation serves as an example of good practice. The original cross, which had been removed by the Germans during the Second World War, was replaced with a replica in the same year, which restored the building's original surge upwards.



Renovated hall of Metropol Cinema

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In 1996 the theatre hall was renovated to accommodate the town cinema Metropol. The structure retained its decorative stuccowork on the ceiling and original airing screens. The wooden fence on the gallery was restored. The conservator demanded the use of heraclit, the original sound insulation material, for walls.

In 2002 the owner wanted to install lighting on the façade to illuminate the exterior. In 2003 the bank decided to modernise the branch, to move the entrance to Vodnikova ulica (Vodnik Street) and to place a jutting roof above it. The conservator advised that the exterior of the ground floor must remain unimpaired despite the new entrance and that the jutting roof must comply with the basic criteria: it had to be clearly indicated that it is an easily removable modern addition to the building.

MATIJA PLEVNIK

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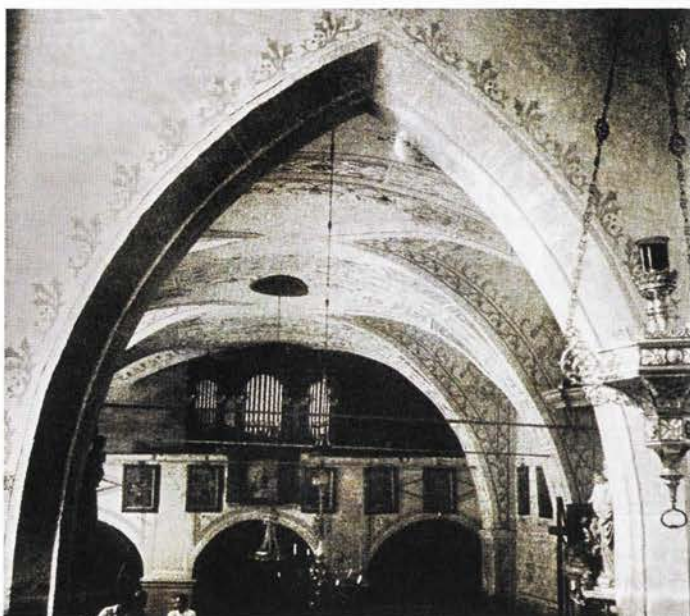
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Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

<i>IRN</i>	3003
<i>Location</i>	Grad
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	12 th century, late 15 th century, 1729, 1955
<i>Renovation</i>	1958, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1989, 2006
<i>Chief Conservator</i>	Neva Sulič Urek

The Gothic church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Grad stands at the foot of a low hill with a large castle complex hidden behind forest greenery. The church, composed of the nave, a large presbytery, a sacristy and a western tower typical of the Prekmurje architecture, differs from most other Gothic churches by the fact that the presbytery is taller than the nave. The nave and the presbytery are surrounded with buttresses. The late Gothic portal with baton moulding, leading into the church, can be accessed through the Baroque tower between two diagonally-placed buttresses. Another entrance to the church leads through a late Gothic portal with baton moulding in the southern façade. To the right, a rectangular Gothic window from an earlier construction phase can be found. The interior, which gives the impression of a harmonious whole, is illuminated through tall Gothic windows. The two-bay presbytery is spanned with a star-rib vault and features a Baroque altar, a work of Janez Klein from 1778. The central niche in the altar contains a Gothic statue of the sitting Blessed Virgin with the Holy Infant from around 1510. The northern wall of the presbytery is embellished with a Gothic tabernacle from the same period. The

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Vault in the nave before removal in 1955

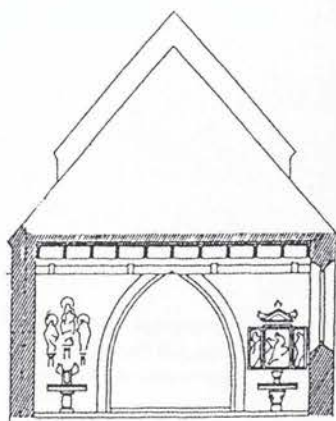




Presbytery

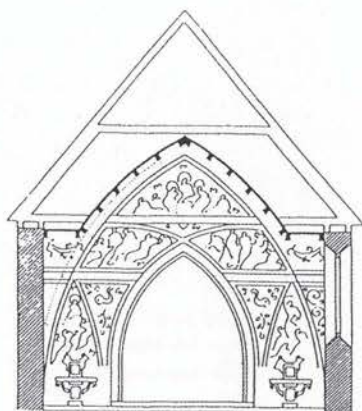
wooden structure of the ceiling supported with buttresses in the nave repeats the form of the Gothic triumphal arch in the presbytery. The nave was designed by the architect Jože Plečnik.

The church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Grad is one of the most important and oldest church buildings in Prekmurje. According to archival sources, Bishop Liupram of Salzburg consecrated a church in 853 in Lindolverschirichun, a settlement that some historians identify as the predecessor of Lendava. In 1183 the Hungarian king Bela bequeathed the area of the present-day Grad, which was called Gornja Lendava until 1952, to the Cistercian monastery of Szenttgothárd. In 1208, during the lifetime of the feudal lord Nicholas of Eisenburg, the parish already existed and was by far the oldest in the area. An important role was played by the Order of St John, the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, who according to archival sources also resided in Sobota and Selo. According to the visitation report from 1756, the well-known Gothic wing altar from the early 16th century featured two figures of monks above the central balusters.



Original design of the ceiling
(Kuhar, Jože Plečnik v cerkvi
Marije Vnebovzete pri gradu,
2002)

The church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin was undoubtedly built back in the Romanesque period, but presumably a church had stood at the location even earlier. This is evident from the tower that stood separately from the church until the 18th century. It was characteristic of the oldest church architecture and was the only such example in Prekmurje. Unlike the tower, the present-day church dates from the late Gothic construction phase from around 1500. At that time, a taller presbytery was added to the old nave and the nave was probably renovated. The presbytery features the most beautiful Gothic tabernacle in Prekmurje, which is mentioned and praised in a visitation report from 1698, as well as a Gothic statue of the Blessed Virgin from around 1510 in the Baroque altar. Until 1941 the Gothic statue of the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Infant was part of the Gothic wing altar; its four panels with paintings and reliefs are on display at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. According to the art historian Emilijan Cevc, the altar displays influences of Gregor Erhart's workshop from Ulm. The visitation report also reveals that the church was vaulted and the vault decorated with murals in 1660. In 1729 a 35-metre tower was added to the western façade, replacing the former wooden turret on the church and the tower standing next to the building. Long before the Second World War, the tower began to lean to the west, pulling the wall of the nave with it. In 1942 the vault was left exposed for a longer period of time during the renovation of the roof and was damaged by rain. The impaired vault pushed apart the walls of the nave. In 1952 the priest Ivan Kolenc requested the assistance of the Institute of Monument Protection of Slovenia. Based on the report of the senior construction technician Jože Požauk of the Maribor Planning Bureau, the conservator Marjan Zadnikar summoned an inspection committee that confirmed the static report. At that time it was probably decided that the vault should be removed, because static reinforcement with iron pins was very expensive and problematic. The priest Ivan Kolenc invited the architect Jože Plečnik to participate in the renovation of the nave. Although his illness prevented him from visiting the church in person, Plečnik came up with a highly original solution to the problem of ramshackle walls. He proposed that lancet support arches from prefabricated concrete elements be built in the



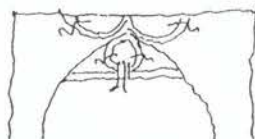
Original design of the ceiling
(Kuhar, *Jože Plečnik v cerkvi
Marije Vnebovzete pri gradu,
2002*)

interior. These arches echoed the shape of the Gothic lancet triumphal arch between the nave and the presbytery and relieved the pressure on the walls of the nave. On the new structure of the nave, Plečnik installed two pairs of rafters that carry the open roof structure, as is done in basilicas. He supported the roof with a horizontal structure that extends as far as the edge of concrete elements. He covered the ceiling with large decorative ceramic tiles. He placed a new choir loft in the width of the slanting roof structure and elevated it with a tall wooden fence, decoratively and visually connecting it with other wooden elements of the nave. Moreover, the church was stylistically unified with the colouring of the old and new walls and stone. The architect placed lanterns in ceramic elements on the walls, thereby creating the magic atmosphere of the heavens.

Unlike Bogojina, which was Plečnik's first contact with Prekmurje, the renovation of the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Grad was his last work. Both the planning and renovation works were described in great detail by the local priest Štefan Kuhar and published in a leaflet in 2002. The publication includes Plečnik's letters to the priest Ivan Kolenc and all five plans prepared for Plečnik by his student Anton Bitenc of Ljubljana. The plans date from 17 March to 1 September 1955. The renovation lasted from 11 July to 23 October 1955.

The renovation of the nave was implemented in several stages. According to the first plan, dated 17 March 1955, Plečnik prepared two proposals for the replacement of the Baroque vault. The first entailed a straight wooden ceiling resembling the wooden Gothic ceiling before the vaulting of the nave in 1660, whereas the second entailed four concrete profiled arches that echo the shape of the triumphal arch and reach as high as the roof. With the second plan, dated 24 April 1955, in which he obviously confirmed and later implemented the idea of concrete arches in the nave, he designed the choir loft and the ceiling composed of ceramic tiles. Plečnik later retained the tiled ceiling and abandoned the original design of the choir loft and the staircase. In the third plan, dated 27 July 1955, he envisaged the unrealised expansion of the church in the western part with the portico, where he designed a spiral staircase leading through the tower to the choir loft. In the fourth plan, dated 16 August 1955, he proposed the construction of an aisle to the north and a different design of the choir loft with a spiral staircase, which too was never implemented. The fifth, last and eventually implemented plan dated 1 September 1955 envisages the choir loft and the staircase leading to it. Plečnik used an altered design of the choir loft from the fourth plan. He transformed the profiled lancet triumphal arch into a supporting brick wall.

Plečnik's last drawing depicts a chandelier from the choir loft at the Grad church (Kuhar, *Jože Plečnik v cerkvi Marije Vnebovzete pri gradu*, 2002)



The renovation of the nave in 1955 was the most important change in the church after the Gothic construction phase. In 1957 the priest Ivan Kolenc renovated the exterior, whereas a year later, the Gothic tabernacle and the statue of the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Infant were restored. All works proceeded under the supervision of the conservator Marijan Zadnikar from the Institute of Monument Protection of Ljubljana. Maintenance, restoration and conservation works were carried out in the church by the Maribor regional branch of the monument protection service, which was founded in 1959. The restoration of the Baroque altar with the Gothic statue of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Infant, which took longer, lasting until 1983, was supervised by the restorer Bine Kavčič. In 1980 the presbytery was renovated according to the plans of the architect Jože Kregar of Ljubljana. In the early 1980s the central heating was restored, in 1983 the interior was re-decorated, in 1987 the roof was repaired and in 1988 the building received a new façade. In 2006 the staircase in front of the western tower was reshaped and reduced while retaining the existing grey stone following the wish of the parish. The church has been meticulously maintained over the past decades, largely by the priest Štefan Kuhar, who retired in August 2007 after publishing a valuable leaflet with an accurate description of the renovation of the nave according to the plans of our greatest architect Jože Plečnik.

NEVA SULIČ UREK

photos: page 34 MARIJAN ZADNIKAR, INDOK Centre Archive, page 35

NEVA SULIČ UREK

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King Alexander's Hunting Lodge

<i>IRN</i>	4793
<i>Location</i>	Kamniška Bistrica
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1932/33, 1934
<i>Renovation</i>	1988

Following a commission by King Alexander, Plečnik designed the hunting lodge in Kamniška Bistrica in 1932/33, three years after the Yugoslav royal court leased the hunting preserve in the Bistrica forests. At that time, Kamniška Bistrica was already a popular mountaineering and hunting base, although the road connecting it with Kamnik was in a bad condition.

Plečnik envisaged the hunting lodge in the middle of the forest as a building with the ground floor built of stone, the first floor panelled with wood and a gently slanting gable roof. The interior was simple. On both floors, the corridor runs along the entire southern (entrance) façade and allows access to the rooms along the western façade (facing the mountains). According to the original plans, the ground-floor (from the west to the east) featured utilities, a room next to the kitchen, a kitchen, dining room and guest room. The first floor can be accessed on two separate staircases, one leading to the rooms of the king and the queen, the other to the rooms of their children and their governess. The first floor (from the west to the east) features a bedroom for the children, a bathroom, a bedroom for the governess, the queen's bedroom, a bathroom and the king's bedroom. The corridor on the first floor is divided in the middle by a walk-in wardrobe, which ensured complete privacy of the royal apartment.

Construction was completed in 1934. From Plečnik's letters to Emilija Fon it is evident that the works were still in progress on 12

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Main façade of the hunting lodge in the forest





Detail of stone façade

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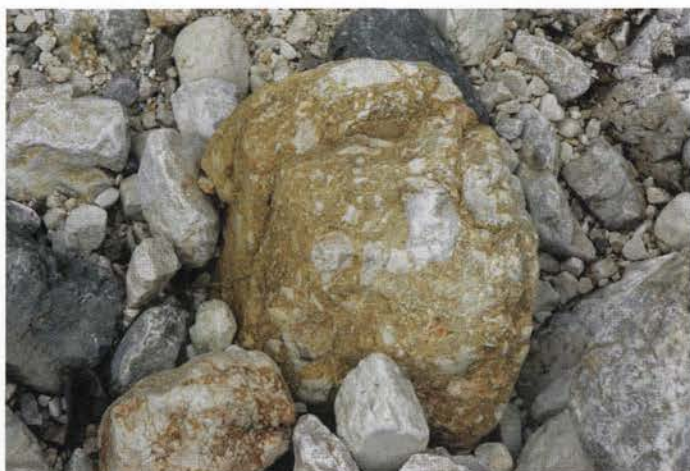
July 1934. He says: "Tomorrow we go to Kamniška Bistrica for two days. I have driven the craftsmen and myself to the extreme so that everything would be ready." Despite this rush, the king did not spend much time at the lodge, as he was assassinated the following autumn.

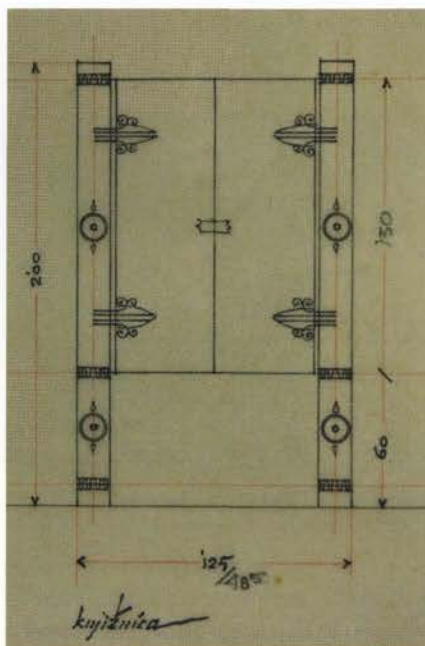
After the Second World War, the hunting lodge was nationalised. The new Yugoslav authorities used it as a protocol building. It was run by the Kozorog Institute for the Breeding of Wild Game and used by the political leadership for hunting and holidays. The lodge was often frequented by the Yugoslav president Tito. Consequently it is known as Tito's mansion. The Kozorog Institute used the lodge as accommodation for wealthy foreign hunters.

The interior of the building was slightly changed. The furniture of the queen's bedroom was moved to the guest floor on the ground floor, which came to be known as Maček's room after its most frequent resident. New equipment was brought to the building. The old-fashioned wood stove in the kitchen was replaced with a more modern one, the utility rooms on the ground floor were converted into a boiler room and central heating was installed.

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Stones in the bed of a nearby stream





Part of Plečnik's design
of a bookcase in the royal
bedroom (Architecture
Museum of Ljubljana)

Because of the high maintenance costs, the building was rented out, starting in 1988, for a longer period of time to the Stol company of Kamnik, which renovated it as part of its regular activities. The preserved original items of furniture were returned to their places, bathroom walls were tiled, the door leading from the corridor to the bathroom was replaced with wall closets, new furniture for the kitchen and the former children's bedroom was designed and installed, and the furniture for the former governess' bedroom was made according to Plečnik's designs. The company also carried out the only structural change: on the ground floor, the dining room was expanded into the guestroom (Maček's room), thus creating a large dining room that could also be used as conference room. The original dining table was enlarged by inserting a stone plate into it. A series of chairs was made for the dining room according to Plečnik's original designs, intended for the furnishing of the building.

After the renovation, Stol used the lodge only occasionally. Today the building is abandoned and in need of renovation. All furniture designed by Stol is preserved. The preserved original furniture consists of the king's and queen's bedroom, bathtubs in both bathrooms, tiled heating stoves, seats for security guards at both ends of the upper corridor and (probably) a table with chairs in the living room next to the kitchen on the ground floor. All original fittings have also been preserved, complete with the staircases and the windbreak. The ceilings and wall panelling in the wardrobes on the first floor are also part of the original structure.

All renovation of the building was carried out without the involvement of the monument protection service. During the next renovation, all postmodernist elements introduced in 1988 should be removed and the building should be assigned an appropriate function.



Detail from the bookcase

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In 2006 the Kranj Regional Branch of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia proposed that the hunting lodge be declared a local monument along with the mountain hut and the adjacent building, the Windischgraetz hunting lodge ("Pri Jurju" inn), the Our Lady of Lourdes chapel, a monument to the mountaineers who died during the National Liberation Struggle, and the memorial plaque commemorating the march of the Second Group of Partisan Detachments, which would form the Kamniška Bistrica Protected Area. The proposal envisages a protection regime that would ensure the preservation of the buildings and the character of the landscape in the wider surroundings of King Alexander's hunting lodge.

The cultural monument status of King Alexander's hunting lodge and the surrounding area depends on the decision taken by the Kamnik municipal councillors. We hope they will come to see the merits of preserving the valuable characteristics of the Kamniška Bistrica area, where architect Jože Plečnik displayed a great sensitivity for building in the natural surroundings.

SASA LAVRINC

photos: **SASA LAVRINC**

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Church of St Peter

<i>IRN</i>	231
<i>Location</i>	Komenda
<i>Renovation</i>	the square 1996, restoration of the high altar 1981-1984, Plečnik's tabernacle 2001
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Maja Avguštin

The first church in Komenda is recorded in a document dating from between 1147 and 1154, which mentions the local priest Altvin. In 1510 a new church in Komenda was commissioned by a member of the family "von Latern de Schalis". The exterior of this structure was depicted by Valvazor. In 1704 Baron Peter Jakob de Testaferrata arrived in Komenda. In 1726 he undertook the construction of a new parish church, for which he turned to the Ljubljana architect Gregor Maček, who produced the plans for the new building. He modelled it on the Ljubljana cathedral. He surrounded the vaulted nave with a series of chapels and designed the presbytery as a square with truncated corners. The new church was consecrated in 1729. It was completed in the late 1750s when it was furnished. Franc Jelovšek contributed the designs for the high altar and the pulpit (completed in 1758 and 1760 respectively).

The Komenda municipality invited Jože Plečnik to design the square in front of the church and to construct a new access to the building before the Eucharistic Congress of 1935. The plans were completed in 1934 and 1935.

Plečnik conceived the access as a combination of a narrow staircase immediately next to the chaplaincy and a ceremonial slope rising towards the square and the church. On the curve of the slope he placed a lantern, for which he drew inspiration from a lantern in the graveyard from 1510. A preserved photograph shows the original situation with the lantern in place as chosen by the architect. After the Second World War the lantern was moved to the church square without its base.

Plečnik's original plan
of the square, 1934





Access ramp

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The square included a monument to the victims of the First World War. From it, Plečnik hung a large cast iron bell as a symbol of war and death, because during the First World War many bronze bells were melted down and replaced with cast iron ones. Plečnik intended to place the monument between the access slope and the stairway, as is evident from the plan. Today the monument stands in front of the entrance to the cemetery.

In 1996 the originally sandy platform with strips of concrete tiles was paved with granite cubes and concrete tiles according to the plan of Feliks Hribernik. In the middle of the slope, a replica of Plečnik's lantern from the Žale cemetery was placed.

During the earthquake of 1895 the high altar in the church was heavily damaged. In the 1950s the Komenda priest Viktorijan Demšar decided that the high altar must be renovated owing also to the decayed wood. He turned to Jože Plečnik, who came up with a design for a new tabernacle. The tabernacle was crafted by the copersmith Alojz Pirnat. Plečnik found inspiration for his design in Glavar's Baroque fountain in front of the mansion behind the church. He combined the composition of the holy vessel with a raised lid with two lanterns and angels from the old tabernacle, creating a refined whole. He indicated the difference in age and design between the tabernacle and the wooden altar by selecting a different material.

The final restoration of the high altar was carried out from 1981 to 1984 under the supervision of the Kranj Institute for Monument



High altar with Plečnik's tabernacle

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Protection. It was implemented by Dinko Gregorin of the Ljubljana Restoration Studio. At that time, the altar architecture and statues were restored. From the beginning of the restoration of the high altar remained the dilemma over what to do with Plečnik's tabernacle. The expert committee (composed of the priest Nikolaj Pavlič, Dr Emilijan Cevc, Director of the Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage Olga Zupan, Director of the Restoration Centre Josip Korošec, Prof France Kokalj, sculptor Momo Vukovič) convened on 30 November 1995 to consider the reconstruction of Jelovšek's tabernacle and to find a new location for Plečnik's tabernacle. The priest Nikolaj Pavlič proposed the construction of a new chapel on the northern side of the nave, which would be accessed through the baptistery built by the architect Janez Valentinčič. The committee adopted the plan for the reconstruction of the Baroque tabernacle. It also proposed the construction of a new chapel to the north of the nave. In October 1997 the new director of the Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage Vladimir Knific and the chief conservator Damjana Pečnik called for the meeting of a new expert committee, which was composed of Dr Emilijan Cevc, Dr Nace Šumi, Dr Borut Košir, Dr Damjan Prelovšek, Prof Marjan Ocvirk, the priest Nikolaj Pavlič, France Vardjan, Josip Korošec and Prof France Kokalj. The members of the committee failed to reach a unanimous decision. Some of them maintained that the moving of Plečnik's tabernacle would be justified if a suitable place for it were to be found in the church; others believed that Plečnik's masterpiece was exceptionally well in tune with Jelovšek's altar, which was 200 years older than the tabernacle, and that the construction of a chapel would destroy Valentinčič's baptistery. The Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage maintained that Plečnik's tabernacle should remain part of the Baroque altar.

"... a successful coexistence of artefacts from different time periods, such as that of Plečnik's tabernacle and the Baroque composition of the altar, is a rare achievement and is therefore worth preserving..." (Vladimir Knific, *Delo*, 21 October 1997)

In March 1999 the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Slovenia issued Approval for the Construction of the Tabernacle Chapel to the North of the Church of St Peter in Komenda. The structure was built and today Jelovšek's altar features a reconstruction of his tabernacle, whereas Plečnik's tabernacle, along with the baptismal font, is kept in the chapel to the north of the nave.

MAJA AVGUŠTIN

photos: page 44, top MAJA AVGUŠTIN, bottom BERNARDA JESENKO FILIPIČ drawing MARJAN TEPINA

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Church of Sts Cyril and Methodius

<i>IRN</i>	1981
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	built in 1958-1960 to the plans from 1933-1934
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Mojca Arh Kos

The church of Sts Cyril and Methodius is a result of a several-decades long process of urban planning conducted by the architect Jože Plečnik and the development of the northern part of Ljubljana. The architect Anton Bitenc supervised the construction of the present-day church of Sts Cyril and Methodius next to the present-day Küzmičeva ulica (Küzmič Street) in Bežigrad according to the revised plans of the original church of Sts Cyril and Methodius constructed between 1933 and 1944 next to the church of St Christopher.

Plečnik planned the original church of Sts Cyril and Methodius for the newly-founded parish next to the old cemetery chapel of St Christopher. He placed the new structure next to the old Baroque church with the tower on the axis of Dunajska cesta (Vienna Road) as a completely modern, four-bay building, creating a triangular area between the new and old church. He placed arcades in the northern wall, erected the chapel of the Sorrowful Mother of Good in the triangle and placed the choir loft in its axis. The chapel could be accessed from the nave through an arcade. The layout of the church of Sts Cyril and Methodius was secular and consisted of four equal parts. The front part featured the altar, whereas the remaining three composed the nave. The interior was transversally divided with slightly pointed arches. The church was covered with a gently slop-

.....
Raised choir loft to the side of the nave





Chandelier in the church of
St Cyril and Methodius

.....

ing gable roof on massive longitudinal wooden beams. The open roof structure and the rounded windows (two in each bay) gave the church an early Christian appearance.

The precise location of the church was selected by Plečnik in 1957. Anton Bitenc basically transferred and recreated the appearance of the original church. The tower with a hall and the park in front of the church were created in accordance with Bitenc's plans in 1960. The structure of the tower is modernist and is characteristic of high-rise buildings of that period; nevertheless, according to the regulations in place, it was not supposed to be higher than the surrounding buildings.

The exterior of the church is uncharacteristically secular and the purpose of the building can be discerned only from the artistic elements on the facades. The interior of the church is unusual, but at the same time typical of Plečnik's designs of uniform church interiors.

The choir loft is raised above the level of the nave and placed to the side. A chapel containing elements of the furnishing from the original church of Sts Cyril and Methodius (the high altar and the side altar of St Joseph from 1945; the column of the Blessed Virgin of Brezje from 1948; the choir furnishings and the organ from 1935 and the pulpit from 1944, designed by Plečnik; frames for the Baroque altar of the church of St Christopher and the Stations of the Cross, also designed by Plečnik) was built on the ground floor of the nave next to the choir.

The western wall of the nave features two doors. Only when opened does the visitor discover that they lead to a confession box in the wall. The southern wall features a door on the main axis, which although resembling the exit from the church, leads to the baptistery and the chapel.

According to the sources of the Ljubljana Bežigrad parish, the church of Sts Cyril and Methodius was, together with the old church of St Christopher, a memorial sanctuary for all of the deceased

buried at the cemetery of St Christopher. This function was defined by Plečnik, who after the moving of the cemetery to the church of the Holy Cross, inserted the remaining gravestones in the external walls of the building. Many inhabitants of Ljubljana carved the names of both their deceased and living relatives in marble plates that, in accordance with Plečnik's instructions, are now fixed on the walls of the presbytery of the present-day church of Sts Cyril and Methodius. Both churches were demolished during the construction of Gospodarsko Razstavišče.

The church of Sts Cyril and Methodius is an example of a newly-constructed building from the period 1956-1960, in which Anton Bitenc recreated the original appearance of Plečnik's church by employing the original furnishings. At the same time it represents an interesting conservation approach in terms of the preservation and reconstruction of the original plans and the interior of the building.

MOJCA ARH KOS

photos: **DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK**

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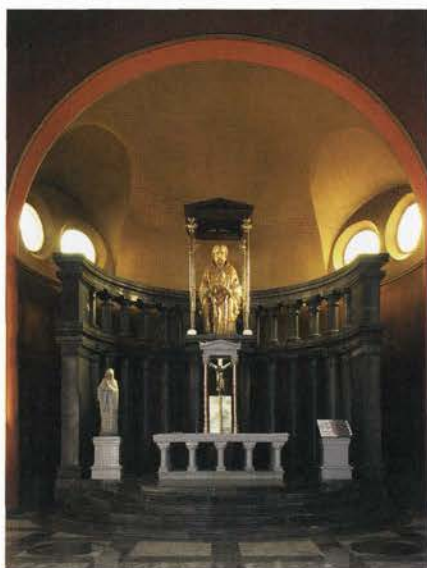
Church of St Joseph in Poljane

<i>IRN</i>	1977
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning</i>	1912-1914, interior 1922-1943
<i>Construction</i>	1912-1924, furnishing 1923-1941
<i>Architect</i>	Anselm Werner, interior Jože Plečnik
<i>Renovation</i>	1996-1997
<i>Chief conservators</i>	Janez Kromar, Gojko Zupan

The Jesuits returned to Ljubljana in the late 19th century and founded their community in Poljane. The historicist building by architect Rajmund Jeblinger still stands at no. 9 Zrinjskega ulica (Zrinjski Street). The ambitious Jesuit brothers commissioned plans for their new church from various architects. In the end they selected the less original design of the Benedictine monk Anselm Werner. He designed a very traditional, Neo-Romanesque structure with a high ceiling and emphasis on the central part of the church. The interior is conceived as a domed hall and a presbytery. The new church was built as part of the “earthquake piety”: after the devastating earthquake of 1895, the people of Ljubljana prayed to St Joseph for protection from similar disasters. The construction began in 1912. On 4 August the Ljubljana bishop consecrated the foundation stone. Two years later, at the outset of the First World War, the church was not yet completed. Only the outer walls, without the choir loft and any furnishings, had been built.

During the First World War, the church’s interior remained bare, without the choir loft and altars. The dome was completed; its eight bays rested on squinches. The Austrian army occupied the building and used it first as accommodation for soldiers and later as

Majestic altar with emphasis on the statue of the patron saint





Choir loft

a warehouse. In 1915 the church passed to the Ljubljana municipal authorities, but it remained a warehouse, mostly for food, which was transported around the building with carts. After the First World War, in 1921, the church was returned to the Jesuit Order. The brothers carried out the most urgent renovation work and consecrated the church. Plečnik was not particularly enthusiastic about the uncompleted structure; nevertheless he felt a special affinity with the church because of its patron St Joseph.¹ Initially, the architect took part in the furnishing of the interior only as an adviser. The church was consecrated on 19 March 1922. At that time, the altar area in gold and red was conceived and the wooden coffered ceilings above the presbytery together with the galleries were probably completed. The capitals in the nave and the presbytery, decorated predominantly with symbols of Christ, had been completed earlier. The entrance portal features similar, Neo-Romanesque low reliefs: five scenes from the life of St Joseph on the outer arch and the death of St Joseph in the lunette.

Cooperation with Plečnik developed slowly. In 1925 the Jesuits built their first retreat in Slovenia according to his plans. The building is located next to their old residence.

One of the first completed features in the interior of the church was the pulpit. The architect designed it as a cylindrical structure that he later used also for one of the gravestones at the Žale cemetery.

¹ "... if I achieve any goal, perform some honorary work that would bring me some money to be able to invest, I pledge to build something in St Joseph's honour at home..." Such were his thoughts in his letters from Italy. (STELE, 1967, p. 106) St Joseph is a widely venerated saint in Slovenia and 34 churches are consecrated to him. Slovenes built a small church in his honour even as far as Leadville.

Plečnik spent a long of time designing the altar. He drew several versions. The client selected a majestic structure with the main emphasis on the statue of the patron saint. The high altar was installed in 1941 and had been built according to a model made before the Second World War in Plečnik's studio. The monumental gilded statue of the saint with Christ is the work of Božo Pengov. At that time the presbytery was paved, whereas the walls had already been decorated with bright colours.² The altar area was additionally embellished with a chandelier.

In 1949 the authorities confiscated the community building and the church. The remaining Jesuits moved to the Bogenšperk castle. As the church was no longer used for liturgical purposes, the monument protection service was concerned about the altar. It was proposed that the sanctuary be walled off in order to provide at least temporary protection for the altar. This emergency measure suggested by Marijan Zadnikar remained in place for over half a century, and the altar remained undamaged despite the subsequent mixed functions of the building. The remaining furniture was moved by the Jesuits and other clergy to other churches in Ljubljana. The most sacred part of the altar was transferred to the cathedral. The chandeliers and several other smaller pieces were moved to Trnovo. The subsequent whereabouts of the pulpit are unknown.

The large church was given to filmmakers who built their studios on the premises. The companies Vesna Film, Triglav Film and Viba Film made many Slovene films there, beginning with Kekec. In a gesture of goodwill the Republic of Slovenia returned the church to the Jesuits and completely renovated it. The state covered all of the costs of the renovation that took place in 1996. The church was given a new, glorious appearance the likes of which it had never known. In 2002 Viba Film vacated the community building.

The renovation took place under political pressure from both sides. Everybody wanted the goodwill gesture to be completed before the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ljubljana. The government set very short deadlines to contractors because the return of the church to the Jesuits was connected with the promotion of the Pope's visit in Slovenia. The demands of the representatives of the Jesuit Order sometimes exceeded the capacities of workers and their willingness to carry out the project. Additional demands were expressed by the architect Jože Marinko who wanted to stamp the interior with his personal mark, whereas the conservators insisted that the original building should not be changed and that Plečnik's designs should be re-implemented. The sounding investigations and additional surveys showed that they were correct. The interior of St Joseph's is an ideal example of the Beuron School principles and is the only one of its kind in Slovenia. The only element somewhat amiss is the paving in the presbytery, where the stone employed is too colourful.

The cleaning of the interior was fast and sometimes improvised. The church was full of film backdrops, walls and other structures.

2 The completion of the presbytery was encouraged in 1940 when the Jesuit Order celebrated the 400th anniversary of its founding. The jubilee was marked with a special plaque inserted in the wall above the altar.

People and machines moved around the dark church in a cloud of dust. Part of the scaffolding collapsed during the work. Luckily none of the workers were injured.

The sounding of the walls and the reconstruction of the decorative elements was supervised by the sculptor Peter Mali. Despite minor difficulties with the renovation and tight deadlines, the work proceeded relatively quickly. A special committee was faced with several dilemmas regarding the analysis of Plečnik's fence around the church. The fence had so deteriorated that it had to be removed. The conservators decided not to replace it with a replica because of the comprehensive presentation of the church's historicist exterior. Towards the end of the work, government representative Dr Janez Dular, the Minister of Culture, ceremoniously presented the Jesuits with the keys to the church. The government also paid for the bronze bust of Pope John Paul II,³ which embellishes the church.

The bright area under the dome has become a concert hall and occasionally serves as an art gallery as well. Regular services are held in the chapel next to the church.

GOJKO ZUPAN

photos: DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

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3 The bust is the work of the sculptor Mirsad Begić.

Cobbler's Bridge

<i>IRN</i>	5642
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning</i>	1927-1929
<i>Implementation</i>	1930-1931
<i>Renovation</i>	1990-1991
<i>Chief conservators</i>	Gojko Zupan, Staša Blažič

The Cobblers' or Shoemakers' Bridge was designed by Jože Plečnik and built in the early 1930s. Several of its predecessors stood at the site between Jurčičev trg (Jurčič Square), which is the conclusion of Novi trg (New Market), and the junction between Mestni trg (Town Market) and Stari trg (Old Market), the area popularly known as "Pod Trančo". It is the narrowest point in the river, where the Ljubljana almost touches the castle hill.

In the Middle Ages, a wooden bridge known as the Upper Bridge stood on the site. Later it was augmented with a shed for butchers, which was replaced with market stalls after 1618. This state of the bridge was depicted by Janez Vajkard Valvazor. Because many cobblers lived and worked near the bridge, its older names were replaced with Cobblers' or Shoe-makers' Bridge. From the very beginning, the structure was a continuation of Jurčičev trg, because the houses on the left bank stood immediately next to the water and only two narrow alleys led from the square, one to Novi trg and the other to the Provincial Diet Mansion.

In the 19th century, the bridge was renovated and the stalls removed. Because of its poor condition, the first plans for the construction of a new, stone bridge were prepared in 1847. According to the sketches kept at the municipal archive,¹ they envisaged two versions of the structure: with one and with two arches. But they were not built. A public tender was announced and by 1866 new plans for the bridge and its construction were selected. A year later, the Ljubljana was bridged with a cast-iron structure made at an iron-works in Dvor near Žužemberk. The bridge was placed high above the banks and from the right bank it was accessed on stairs placed to the side of the structure. The bridge was designed by the architect J. Hermann of Vienna.

When the iron bridge became too narrow, the architect Plečnik was commissioned to design a new structure. Already during the regulation of the riverbed, the architect planned a concrete bridge on a slender support in the middle of the river, on which he wanted to create a market above the river. In some versions, the bridge was designed with a pergola providing shade in the summer heat, but because of the traffic conducted across the bridge this was not possible. Before traffic was banned in the medieval part of Ljubljana, the surface of the bridge was divided with kerbstones into lanes for

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1 The plans are dated 6 May 1847 and signed Byloff.



Cobblers' Bridge

pedestrians on the edges and the middle lane for vehicles. The edges of the bridge are adorned with balustrades which, at each end of the bridge, curve and protect a few metres of the bank as well. Decorative columns rise above the balustrade; they were intended to carry the crossbeams of the pergola, but the plan was later abandoned. On a broad support on the outer side of the bridge, Plečnik placed a candelabra with originally designed lamps, skilfully emphasising the middle of the bridge and the support.

In the shapes of the balusters and columns, the architect played with the basic forms of the orders of architecture, ranging from the Doric to the Corinthian. The column in the north-eastern corner of the bridge features the year of construction, 1931. In accordance with Plečnik's plans, Jurčičev trg was repaved and combined with kerbstones and stairs leading to a shoe shop as early as 1929. The same rounded kerbstones divided the pedestrian and vehicle lanes on the bridge. After traffic was banned from the old part of the city, the bridge became a meeting point for the local population. Nevertheless, conservators were aware that the bridge was affected by the passage of time and in February 1978 the Institute for the Protection of National Heritage presented a cost estimate for the renovation of the Three Bridges and Cobblers' Bridge to the municipal officials, but it was put aside.

In the 1990s the bridge was statically impaired, a fact was reported by experts.² Corrosion, insufficient maintenance and constant use had caused considerable damage to the supports and concrete slabs of the bridge. Parts of the balustrades were worn or even missing, pushed into the Ljubljanica by vandals. On 11 June 1990 the municipality adopted plans for a thorough renovation and replacement of the corroded balustrades. The work was planned to take place at the same time as the renovation of the Three Bridges. They were implemented by the same contractors: GIVO was in charge of the construction work, the Materials and Construction Research Institute took care of special tasks, and COSTON cast new balustrade elements. The renova-

² On 28 February the costs of the renovation project were estimated at 6,652,560 dinars. The project was prepared by Dušan Remic, Igor Janežič and Jože Kos.



Lamp on Cobblers' Bridge

tion was supervised by the commission that was appointed by the Ljubljana Regional Institute for the supervision of the Three Bridges.³

The commission first demanded a thorough documentation of the existing bridge, particularly the balustrades and their faults. The Institute for Materials Research assessed the level of damage. It was decided that both balustrades should be replaced. Tone Corel of COS-TON was in charge of the concrete casting procedure. Faults on supports and bearing surfaces of the bridge were repaired, water drainage was ensured and an additional new asphalt layer was applied. The balustrades were replaced with new ones that were firmly fixed on the ground. Consequently, in the fifteen years since the renovation, vandals have not thrown a single piece of the balustrade assemblies into the river. Before the work was completed, the commission demanded that certain corrections be carried out. Some demands of the conservators were never implemented, such as the carving of the year of construction and renovation in the corner column and corrections of the capitals of the candelabra that were cast too shallowly. The renovation of the bridge was completed by the end of 1991.

The selected original elements of the bridge (the candelabra with capitals and individual balusters) were taken to the Architecture Museum and were fixed on the brick wall on the edge of Plečnik's garden in Trnovo in 1994. The wall was in fact built as a surface for the display of the concrete elements from Plečnik's bridges.

GOJKO ZUPAN

photos: **DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK**

3 The commission consisted of the representatives of the municipal authorities and contractors, as well as Dr Damjan Prelovšek of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Dr Peter Krečič of the Architecture Museum, Marjan Ocvirk of the Plečnik legacy committee, France Vardjan of the Restoration Centre and Staša Blažič and Gojko Zupan as representatives of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

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Križanke

<i>IRN</i>	389
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning</i>	c. 1260, 1714, 1952–1956
<i>Construction</i>	c. 1265, 1714–1715, 1952–1956, 1980
<i>Renovation</i>	1951–1956
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Nace Šumi
<i>Renovation of the church</i>	1978–1980
<i>Renovation of the school</i>	1990
<i>Architect</i>	Matija Suhadolc
<i>Chief Conservator</i>	Majda Freljih Ribič

The rebuilding, expansion and renovation of the former Teutonic Knights monastery is the last great work of the architect Jože Plečnik. After his death, the project was continued and completed by the architect Anton Bitenc and his associate Viktor Molka.

The Teutonic Knights monastery was built in the south-western corner of medieval Ljubljana. The area, not far from Novi Trg (New Market), had probably belonged to the Templars. Around 1260 the Teutonic Knights built a three-nave church and adjacent buildings there. To the west, the defence wall of the Roman settlement of Emona was elevated and incorporated into the monastic complex. To the south, a new, taller defence wall was erected along the dug-out trench or Graben (Zoisova cesta / Zois Road). Today, only a few walls with spoils, Gothic pointed windows in Gosposka ulica (Nobility Street) and a few carved stone fragments and epitaphs in the lapidarium remain of the medieval monastery. The stone relief of the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus, part of the original church, is on display at the National Gallery. In the Baroque period, the demolished basilica was replaced with a central-plan church constructed according to the plans of Domenico Rossi in 1714. The splendid altars are the work of the Vienna sculptor Marco Prodi (1715). The side altars contain the original paintings of St George by Martino Altomonte and St Elisabeth by Anthoni Schoonjans.

After the Baroque period, at least one small structure was built within the complex every century, resulting in a maze of walls, windows, roofs, gardens and courtyards. In the 19th century, the monastery was converted into a prison and the courtyards were renovated. In 1936 a major rebuilding was planned: the building next to the big courtyard was to be elevated according to Plečnik's plans.¹

After the Second World War, the neglected monastery was converted into the Arts and Crafts School, which was renamed the School of Design and Photography. Although the building initially served the new function and well accommodated the school's art

1 Letter of the builder Curk to the city authorities. Copy in the archive of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Ljubljana Regional Branch, »Križanke« file.



Courtyard with redesigned candelabra, a staircase to the terrace and concrete cast of Khumerstainer's Hercules

students, needs subsequently exceeded the capacities of the Križanke complex.

During the 1950s, the attractive, listed complex of the former monastery next to a Baroque church was also given over to summer theatre. The renovation was entrusted to the architect Plečnik, who together with his associates, conceived a new concept with emphasis on the three courtyards that, with some new features, became the heart of the newly-created public venue. The architect faithfully observed the prohibition of any destruction of the old structures that had even the least aesthetic value.

By adding new elements within the old walls and with carefully designed paving, he created a large Mediterranean courtyard. He adorned the hidden square with arcades on the facades of the old structures. He based the individual elements of the arcades on the demolished Auersperg Mansion, thereby symbolically paying homage to a building that he replaced with the National and University Library. The arcades follow his concept of the renovation of the 17th century inner courtyards in Ljubljana. He additionally embellished the large surfaces of facades with sgraffiti. After the 16th and 17th century, this type of decoration fell out of fashion, but during the renovation of the Town Hall and Križanke, old decorative techniques were revived. Plečnik adorned the courtyard with newly designed candelabra, a stairway leading to the terrace and a concrete cast of Khumerstainer's Hercules.² The terrace was embellished with Gangl's original decorative elements from the roof of the Provincial Theatre (the present-day Opera), several stone spoils and a small well. Two sculptures that were taken from the teachers' college were placed next to the entrance to the courtyard.

2 The original statue stands in the lobby of the town hall. The concrete copy is located in Križanke, whereas the stone copy can be found on the fountain in Stari Trg (Old Market).



Entrance to Hell's Courtyard

The Small Courtyard in the corner next to the main entrance was converted into an intimate garden with a lapidarium in accordance with Plečnik's plans. In this way, Plečnik revived and upgraded another of the city's features, which is the incorporation of spoils, ranging from the Classical to the medieval, in the city facades. He strategically inserted the stone remains of demolished buildings, ranging from portals (from the Ajdovščina area) to statues in the plain wall, emphasising the niches and blind corners. Most carved pieces, from capitals to epitaphs, can be found in the lapidarium next to the church wall. The architect opened up the formerly closed courtyard with a few windows, making a hitherto hidden spot available to passers-by and allowing light to fill the formerly dark area.

Plečnik designed "Hell's Courtyard" in an entirely different way. He defined the area that is hidden amidst buildings with patterns in the paving and with lamps with rounded shades. Together with Bitenc, he designed similar lamps for the church in Grad. The edge of the courtyard is marked with a stone bench, where passers-by can rest or listen to recitals and concerts.

The architect paid special attention to the furnishing of the restaurant "Plečnikov Hram". Like the arcades, he embellished the interior with sgraffiti, which to some degree resemble Classical grotesques. But despite its historicist elements, they create a fresh, dynamic interior. The ceiling bears the inscription: For the entertainment and education of Ljubljana's guests. Bitenc later added the chandelier to the interior, as well as a model of the Brioni pavilion, which was put on display in a special room.

The Križanke complex represents the swan song of the aged architect, who accepted the commission when almost 80 years old. At the end of his career, he gave Križanke a new form and content. Most of the work was completed in 1955, when the conservator Nace Šumi described it in an interesting presentation. According to Šumi and Stelè, the architect saved the complex that was falling into ruin. After Plečnik's death the architect's students Bitenc (the courtyards,

Plečnikov Hram) and Molka (summer theatre) completed the project according to the master's plans. They followed all of his basic ideas and even upgraded them with a large, open arena with stairs. Later they covered the theatre with a collapsible canvas roof, which was designed in 1965 by the engineer Miloš Marinček. After long consideration, the projection room above the staircase was expanded.

Plečnik did not conceal the monastery with walls or expose it to the public with but a few windows. On the western side, he converted a lawn into a playground and a small building next to it into a public toilet. To the south, he transformed a terrace above the road into a relaxation area with benches and a few stone spoils inserted in the walls. He complemented the gradation of walls and terraces with carefully selected trees. Above the corner between Emonska ulica (Emona Street) and Zoisova ulica, a column was erected according to Plečnik's plan. It is adorned with an expressive bronze portrait of the poet Anton Aškerc by the sculptor Nikolaj Pirnat.

After Plečnik's death renovation did not come to a halt, though no courageous nor particularly inventive new projects have been carried out. A large memorial bust commemorating the great architect was erected in Ljubljana. It was cast from a portrait made by his student Vladimira Bratuž. Later the casting of the head of Anton Bitenc was placed on a plinth next to it.

Certain details, such as small arrangements for new or expanded needs, were planned by various architects, including Matija Suhadolc (renovation of the school), Marjan Ocvirk (stage, projector room; "Plečnikov Hram"; Kosovel monument), Miro Kranjc, Tjaša Štempihar and others. Several interesting projects were not implemented, such as the renovation of "Plečnikov Hram" by Vesna and Matej Vozlič. Various curators and experts on Plečnik's work have overseen Križanke in addition to those already mentioned: Staša Blažič, Peter Krečič, Janez Kromar, Vesna Kolar Planinšič, Uroš Lubej, Darja Pergovnik, Damjan Prelovšek and Gojko Zupan.

GOJKO ZUPAN

photos: DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

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Plečnik adorned the arcade with sgraffiti.



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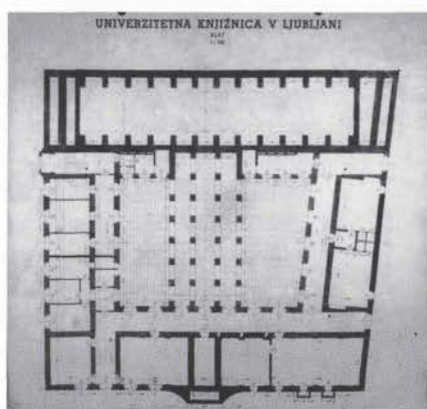
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National and University Library

<i>IRN</i>	373
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1930–1940/1936–1941
<i>Renovation</i>	1995–2000

The National and University Library is an architectural and artistic masterpiece, as well as one of Plečnik's most important works in Slovenia. The five-storey, four-wing palace with two inner courtyards was built on the site of the Auersperg Mansion that had been demolished after the earthquake of 1895. Its ground plan is adjusted to the irregular trapezoid shape and gentle slope of the land lot and is the dominant feature of Novi trg (New Market) and Vegova ulica (Vega Street).

Plečnik designed the first plan for the university library in 1930¹, but had changed it significantly when construction began in 1936, particularly in the façade and the monumental stairway in the interior.² The façade of the ground floor consists of stone with rusticated elements, whereas the façade of the upper storeys is enlivened with the decorative application of stone and brick³, as well as protruding windows. The entablature under the straight roof is embellished



National and University Library, layout of the ground floor, 1931–1941

- 1 The construction of a university library had been discussed since the founding of Ljubljana University in 1919. As early as 1927 Plečnik assigned his student Aleksander Dev to prepare plans for the library. In 1930 and 1931 the master worked on his version of the design for the library that was to be built on the site of the former Auersperg Mansion (in the early stages of the planning, he was helped by J. Valentinčič, whereas in the later stages, implemented by 1936, he was assisted by E. Ravnikar). Plečnik published the library plans in a monograph entitled *Projekt univerzitetne biblioteke v Ljubljani*, 1933. (Krečič, 1992, p. 226)
- 2 The architect designed a new façade and reduced the stairway from the original three flights to one flight of stairs.
- 3 During the construction of the façade, Plečnik used a combination of local materials, the Podpeč limestone and Vrhnika brick.



Large reading hall after the airplane crash in 1944

with a stone cornice. The flow of the façade is interrupted by two recessed windows of the large reading room in the southern wing that span all four storeys. The two entrance portals, the monumental main portal in Turjaška ulica (Auersperg Street), which rises as far as the moulding of the first storey, and the simpler one in Gosposka ulica (Nobility Street), softly reach out from the façade to the street. The wooden door frame and the two wings of the main entrance, lined with sheet copper, were modelled on the Pantheon. Although the lower, side portal is designed in simpler forms, it is splendidly emphasised with the monumental statute of Moses.⁴

The layout of the library is simple and clear. The ground and first floors constitute the representative public interiors, whereas the upper storeys accommodate the library's storage facilities and individual collections.⁵ The individual floors of the palace are connected by side stairways of two flights.⁶ The main part of the interior is the large reading room on the first floor of the southern wing, placed perpendicularly on the entrance axis and connected to the main entrance by means of a monumental stairway. The stairway, clad with the noble, black stone from Podpeč⁷ is splendidly embraced by sixteen monumental columns carved from the same stone. The wooden furniture of the large reading room, chandeliers and ramps on thin metal supports with fences were all designed by Plečnik.

An inventory of Plečnik's furniture reveals that relatively few complete interiors with original furniture have been preserved. It is also evident from the preserved historicist and Secession pieces that inherited furniture was used for some of the less important

4 The statue of Moses is the work of sculptor Lojze Dolinar from 1927 and was exhibited at Salon d'automne in Paris in 1928. Plečnik placed it above the side entrance to the library, from where he intended to move it to a more prominent place on the façade. Hrausky, Andrej. Koželj, Janez. Prelovšek, Damjan. Plečnikova Ljubljana, Vodnik po arhitekturi. Ljubljana 1996, p. 43.

5 Manuscript, music and painting collection.

6 The stairway with landings designed as balconies with balustrades are made of terrazzo.

7 The stone of the fence to the right of the stairway is embellished with a multitude of fossilised sea shells, which can also be found at the base of corresponding columns and which add a special touch to the elegant black stone.



Newspaper reading hall

rooms.⁸ Two completely preserved interiors are the large reading room (as the most representative part of the library) and the storage facilities with interesting book shelves of intentionally rough design on the upper floors of the palace.

During the Second World War, in January 1944, an Italian aircraft crashed into the library, destroying much of the large reading room and library material. After the war, the large reading room was renovated under Plečnik's supervision. At the same time, the hitherto missing furniture was designed.

The first large, comprehensive renovation of the National and University Library after Plečnik's death began in the mid-1990's simultaneously with the preparations for the construction of a new university library in Ljubljana. The palace never shed its original function, unlike many other cultural monuments; so during renovation, a new purpose did not have to be defined. Nevertheless, this did not prove as advantageous as it seemed at first glance: Plečnik succeeded in completing only some of the representative interiors⁹ and storage facilities. The carefully designed interiors were not degraded only by the introduction of odd pieces of furniture, but also by the fact that many of them were used for different purposes. The interiors that were hidden from the public were gradually transformed into storage spaces for books and unused equipment. The library was literally crammed with growing mounds of library material;¹⁰ even the representative part of the palace became affected.

The library urgently needed renovation, as it became clear that all activities of the National and University library would have to remain located at Plečnik's palace until the construction of the new

8 The palace contains several historicist bookcases from the late 19th century and several Secessionist pieces of office furniture that were moved there before the opening of the library in 1941. But most furniture arrived at the library after 1945, when many cultural institutions became depositories for disused and outdated furniture from the offices of the state administration and ministries.

9 The large reading room, the central stairway, side stairways and offices.

10 From 1945 onwards the library was obliged to keep copies of all publications from the whole of Yugoslavia, so it soon became apparent that the library would have to be expanded or that a new one would have to be built.



Plečnik's corridor after renovation

building, even though they exceeded the available space. Various library activities and operations had to be rationalised to fit the existing architectural framework, which is strictly protected as a supreme architectural monument. At the same time, the most recent findings and demands of the librarian's profession, as well as prevailing standards regarding access for the disabled as well as fire and earthquake safety measures had to be incorporated into this project of thorough and practical renovation. The project also envisaged the implementation of Plečnik's abandoned ideas, such as the arrangement of the newspaper reading room.

The conservation guidelines¹¹ demanded full preservation of the palace and rational use of the unfinished or filled basement on the condition that Plečnik's architectural elements, fittings and furniture be preserved.¹²

During the revitalisation of the palace, the architect Marko Mušič¹³ presented a proposal that fell within and met the conservation guidelines. He took into account the central most demands that the renovation respect the status and meaning of the monument, and should aim at the renovation of the building and the preservation of its original function taking into account all of the defined components.

The architect planned the renovation in two stages: the renovation of interiors defined by Plečnik's architecture and the establishing of new interiors necessary for the modern operation of the National and University Library. The procedures thus defined focused on the most important needs of the library being met until the construction of the new university library: arranging the newspa-

- 11 The conservators Janez Kromar and Staša Blažič Gjura of the Ljubljana Regional Branch of the Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Slovenia were involved with the renovation. All proposals made during the project were examined by the Committee for the Protection of Plečnik's Heritage.
- 12 All destroyed pieces of Plečnik's architecture and furniture were used as a model for the making of replicas.
- 13 Since the significance of the existing architecture was taken into full consideration during planning, the renovation is seen as homage to Plečnik. Existing architecture served as the basic point of departure in the building of new representative interiors and utilities.

per reading room, creating additional storage facilities, improving the library's operations by establishing a new information and lending system, arranging a coffee shop and improving basic operating conditions with new cloakrooms and toilet facilities.

The renovation project encompassed facilities that took on their original function or a new function similar to the original. In accordance with Plečnik's original plan, a newspaper reading room was arranged, whereas the colonnade in the portico of the newspaper reading room on the ground floor was transformed into an information centre. The area between the main entrance and the monumental stairway was opened up to allow full access and new facilities were built: a coffee shop, a computer classroom and utilities in the basement which can be accessed from the entrance hall via a newly-built stairway.¹⁴ The executed implementation is very functional in nature, yet the approach was carefully planned so as not to impede the message of Plečnik's architecture.

The large reading room – as the most elegant interior in the palace – demanded special attention during its partial renovation. Since all of its furniture was designed by Plečnik, all procedures had to be subordinated to the demand for the thorough preservation of all original elements.

Together with the interior, the façade was renovated. One special project was the renovation of the main entrance,¹⁵ during which the original but disused sheet copper lining of the wooden door wings was replaced. The inappropriate outside door handles were replaced with replicas of Plečnik's well-known original design in the shape of a horse's head.¹⁶

Despite the comprehensive renovation over the past decade, real protection and preservation of Plečnik's National and University Library will be ensured only once a new university library building is constructed. The new building will relieve Plečnik's masterpiece of large quantities of library material and crowds of users that flock to the library every day; and ultimately provide certain sanctuary for this exceptional architectural monument.

TATJANA ADAMIČ

photos: pages 63, 64 AML ARCHIVE, page 65 DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK,
page 66 BRANKO CVETKOVIČ, NUL ARCHIVE

14 The architect Marko Mušič made several models of the interior, which gave a better picture about the planned renovation. Mušič, Marko. *Projekt notranje prostorske ureditve najpomembnejših prostorov*, presentation file, February 1995.

15 The renovation was carried out by Kovinopasarstvo Žmuc Peternel, and was supervised and expertly co-ordinated by the Ljubljana Regional Branch for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Restoration Centre of Slovenia and Committee for the Preservation of Plečnik's Heritage.

16 Plečnik's original door handle is kept in the security vault of the National and University Library, where it is safe from vandalism and wear from everyday use.

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Miklošičeva Palace

<i>IRN</i>	13233
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1928-1930, 1933-1940
<i>Renovation</i>	1950-2006
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Marija Režek Kambič

The building of the former Vzajemna insurance company across from the Ljubljana railway station, at the corner of Miklošičeva cesta (Miklošič Road) and Trg OF (Liberation Front Square) is, along with the National and University Library and the People's Lending Bank in Celje one of the three "town palaces" built by architect Jože Plečnik in Slovenia.

The building was commissioned by the Catholic Insurance Company in 1928. At that time Plečnik was busy with Hradčani in Prague, so he entrusted preparation of the plans to his assistant France Tomažič. Tomažič not only prepared the plans, but also supervised the construction, whereas Plečnik focused primarily on the staircase and the façade.

For the façade Plečnik used local materials: Vrhnika brick and Podpeč stone. The main accent of the façade is seen in its surge upwards, created by a dense succession of semi-columns. With the gap between the semi-columns and the wall, he created the impression of a double façade. The wings running along the street meet in a truncated corner with the main entrance facing the railway station. The design of the façade is based on a hierarchy of architectural elements: a serene ground floor and mezzanine adorned with dynamic plastic ornamentation and a stylised relief frieze. The



Elevator between staircase and northern wing

ground floor with shops and the entrance is separated from the mezzanine by a rounded stone moulding. Shopping windows are placed deep into the walls, so that the stone between them takes the form of slender pilasters. The rounded copper casing above the windows conceals the blinds. The main emphasis in the corner of the building is the main entrance placed in the central axis. Stone statues on the ground floor are the work of the sculptor Ivan Pengov. The corner façade above the main entrance is embellished with a decorative vase. The window in the northern façade above the former passage to the courtyard is adorned by a motif of the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Infant. The tranquil mezzanine is topped with a narrow rounded moulding. The balustrade moulding above it runs along both street façades. The three upper storeys are embellished with brick semi-columns that are divided by a double concrete moulding at the junctions of the storeys. The flat brick surfaces between the columns feature large windows with lintels on distinctive consoles above and below. Plečnik added a balustrade balcony to the windows in the central axis of the corner and in four out of five bays of the street wings. These windows are deeper and the semi-columns next to them are separated from the wall. The dynamic façade is surmounted with a frieze of stylised relief figures and a slightly protruding cornice. The building is covered with a gently sloping copper roof.

In the interior, Plečnik assigned the staircase the most representative role of the insurance company offices. Because of the exceptionally sharp angle between both street wings, he designed the staircase as an irregular rectangle that narrows towards the back of the building. The main entrance and the staircase are connected with a round entrance hall that slightly softens the spatial axis leading towards the staircase where primary emphasis is placed on the monumental columns made of polished, dark Podpeč stone. The landings feature two columns each, with another column standing immediately on the stairs. To counterbalance the stone of the columns, the architect designed a free-standing wooden balustrade. The stairs are dressed in bright Karstic stone, where-

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Façade of Miklošičeva Palace





Inappropriate barrier in the corridor

as the landings constructed of bright grey terrazzo with black borders. The layout of the interior was designed by Plečnik's assistant Tomažič. The basement encompasses utilities: laundry, storage and boiler room. There was also a chapel, designed by Plečnik in 1933. The sculptural elements for the chapel's altar were fashioned by Božo Pengov in accordance with Plečnik's plans, whereas the painted elements were the work of his brother Slavko Pengov. Later, wood panelling was added to the chapel. The ground floor was intended for shops and the caretaker's apartment. The mezzanine contained the insurance company's offices, whereas all upper floors were intended for residential purposes. Plečnik designed three types of chairs for the palace, all of which are preserved to this day. The patron saint of the Vzajemna insurance company was St Florian. The wooden statue was carved by Božo Pengov and stands in the entrance hall.

The first renovations of the 1950s were not carried out in cooperation with expert institutions. The chapel in the basement was rebuilt and the altar transferred to the newly-constructed church in Dražgoše. In that same period, the furniture – particularly chairs and tables from the large and small conference halls – was moved around without any supervision. In the 1970s an elevator was installed at the junction between the staircase and the northern wing, closing off the passage to the northern wing. In that same period, some of the apartments were rebuilt and converted for different purposes due to expanding business activities. This continued in the 1980s and today the upper floors are comprised only of offices.

The first large, comprehensive renovation took place in 1983 when the entire façade was restored. This was carried out by the Restoration Centre and the work included cleaning, the sealing of cracks and a hydrophobic treatment of the entire surface. The most problematic was the cleaning of the brick wall. Initially it was to be cleaned with water, but instead a micro-sanding procedure was carried out. Natural and artificial stone was sanded. Extensive damage

was visible on the artificial stone statues. There were also traces of rust from the inner structure, resulting in cracks and missing parts.

The hall in the basement, originally a cinema, had been abandoned for several years. In 1984 it was converted into a kitchen serving the offices, but its basic layout remained unchanged. The shop windows on the ground floor facing Miklošičeva cesta were enlarged, a move completely unsuitable from the point of view of monument conservation.

In 1991 a plan for a comprehensive renovation of the basement and ground floor along Miklošičeva cesta was prepared. It envisaged a functional modernisation of vertical communications, a renovation of the basement hall and courtyard entrance to the kitchen, and the removal of secondary annexes to the building, the renovation of the restaurant and the restoration of the problematic shop windows. Work was carried out at a later date. In 1991 the disused copper roof was renovated.

In 1994 and 1995 the planning of the underground garage and comprehensive renovation of the basement and ground floor along Miklošičeva cesta continued. Work took place in 1995 and 1996 under expert supervision. The hall in the basement was renovated and a connection with the new underground garage established. The entrance hall on the ground floor was renovated and expanded, the furniture of the restaurant modernised, the shop windows replaced and renovated, the shop window parapets and wooden frames restored and the original state of the building re-established. The exits leading to the courtyard and the entry way to the underground garage were built in Tomažič's building at no. 17 Miklošičeva cesta. A three-storey underground garage was built under the courtyard, which was repaved with granite.

In 2003 a photogrammetry of the facades was carried out as part of the "Izmere" national project conducted by the Ministry of Culture and the Slovene Institute of Geodesy. Renovation of the offices on the first and fourth floors was carried out in 2003 and 2004 in accordance with the instructions by expert institutions.

Most renovation work over the last 20 years has taken place in cooperation with and under the supervision of expert institutions, but some inappropriate adaptations and moving of furniture was carried out without their knowledge. Nevertheless, this did not impair the original layout and design of Plečnik's palace, which has managed to preserve all its main features.

SABINA RAVNIKAR

photos: **SABINA RAVNIKAR**

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Peglezen

<i>IRN</i>	5928
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1932–1934
<i>Renovation</i>	1990
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Marija Režek Kambič

Peglezen (Flat-Iron Building) is an urbanistically well-placed building on a narrow, triangular lot between Poljanska cesta (Poljane Road) and Kapiteljska ulica (Kapitelj Street) and as such, represents a key urban location that was designed as a model for subsequent buildings erected in this part of the city. Its predecessor, a narrow, two-storey building that was demolished after the earthquake of 1895 was also nicknamed “Peglezen” owing to its flat-iron shape.

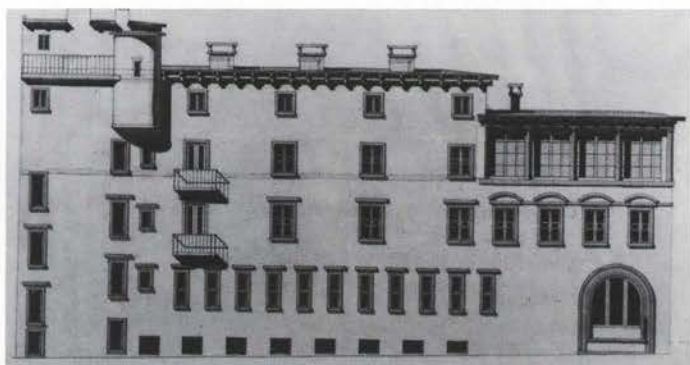
The building was commissioned by Elsa and Matko Prelovšek and was designed by Jože Plečnik. Construction took place between 1932 and 1934. The ground floor was intended for shops, with the upper storeys reserved for apartments.

Plečnik prepared several plans for the building. In 1932 he designed a three-storey building with a level cornice, but the following year he prepared a new plan, which he revised twice: he elevated the structure by conceiving it as a stepped architecture. During the construction he added a drying room and replaced the concrete column with a more dominant flag post. (Hrusky, Koželj, Prelovšek, 1996, p. 112)

The stepped upper floors rise above the ground floor like independent architectural elements. The eastern part of the building ends with a closed loggia serving as a winter garden with an external row of classical Tuscan columns that carry a flat hipped roof. The loggia is closed with large coffered windows with concrete frames drawn from the vocabulary of industrial architecture.

The gable and main façade with the marked, horizontal composition is a typical Palladian combination of bright roughcast and grey artificial terrazzo stone. The ground floor is defined with large openings with moulded frames of artificial stone and wooden doors as well as shop windows. These are surmounted with a row of rectangular windows with arched gables. The first floor with the *loggia* is separated from the lower storey with a simple moulding and surmounted with an ornate one. Individual bays with windows are vertically separated by pilasters. The façade of the stepped upper storey is defined only with rectangular windows and covered with a flat roof supported by heavy beams. The façade of the highest part of Peglezen – hardly visible from the street because it is shifted back – is covered only with roughcast and features seven rectangular windows.

Unlike the main façade in Poljanska Cesta, the façade in Kapiteljska Ulica is not organised in a classical composition. The



Plan from 1933-1934; façade in Kapiteljska ulica (Kapitelj Street)

plastically defined window frames protrude from the façade along with the cylindrical body of a staircase that connects the main staircase with the drying room.

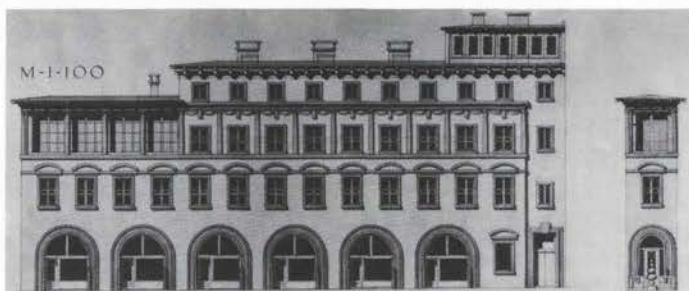
The architect placed the exceptionally designed main staircase in a narrow rectangular room, but succeeded in creating the visual impression of spaciousness by placing the flights of stairs diagonally and narrowing and broadening them towards the top.

The flag post, which is an integral part of the structure, is moved off the main axis of the building so that if viewed from outside the southern entrance of the cathedral it appears aligned with the obelisk of the Robba fountain. The flag post consists of three pieces and symbolises the concept of the State of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. The national flags of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia are painted vertically, whereas the flag of the common state can be discerned horizontally.

From the point of view of the preservation of cultural heritage, the maintenance procedures are particularly important, as they prolong a building's life expectancy. But these same procedures – which may appear entirely harmless – can degrade a monument if they are not performed following preliminary research, without authoritative guidelines and supervision. Therefore, a monument must be thoroughly analysed before renovation to ensure efficient maintenance. Only on the basis of the results of various surveys can the renovation plans be properly prepared.

To prevent damage to or destruction of unique features during the renovation of the Peglezen façade, the expert service devised

Plan from 1933-1934; façade in Poljanska cesta (Poljane Road)





Façade before renovation
in 1990

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guidelines for the project in 1990. In order to preserve the original materials as much as possible and to reconstruct the damaged parts in the same way and using the same methods by which they were first produced, archival sources were examined and scientific tests of the roughcast, paint and metal elements (balcony fences, protective window screens) and architectural elements made of artificial stone were carried out.

Based on the results of historic and scientific research, detailed instructions for the renovation of the façade and all its elements were devised. The structure and colour of the roughcast and plastering were defined to reconstruct those areas that could not be preserved due to extensive damage. This was very important in order to achieve a uniform final appearance, since the original façade was not painted. With the help of trial sand-polished terrazzo¹ samples, the most appropriate cleaning method was determined in order not to damage the glazing of the terrazzo. Balcony fences, protective metal screens on windows, fittings, the roof and the jutting roof were also cleaned and renovated.

Although in 1990 the façade was well renovated, the subsequent maintenance procedures did not comply with the instructions of the expert service. Unsuitable window frames were installed, which only roughly resembled the original ones, thereby degrading a monument that due to negligence on the part of the owner, lost some of its pristine appearance. To prevent any further wilful actions by the owner, an accurate architectural drawing of the original window was made, complete with hinges and casing.² This will serve as a model in creating a replica to replace the unsuitable new windows and those that are damaged beyond repair.

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1 The entrance portal, frames of shopping windows, window frames with arched gables, the mouldings, pilasters...

2 The design of the window is kept at the Ljubljana Regional Branch of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and at the Department of Real Estate Management of the Ljubljana Municipality.



Renovated façade

One of the major problems of monument protection is the placing of inappropriate advertising elements, such as signs and the like, which are too large and which damage the original structure. Peglezen has also fallen victim to such actions. The 1990 guidelines clearly stated that such signs must be removed and replaced with new ones that fit the character of the building.

To ensure better implementation of protection measures, it is necessary to establish additional mechanisms and educate both owners and caretakers on the importance of regular maintenance. The best approach to preserving heritage and its authentic elements lies in regular inspections to pinpoint any faults or injuries and spreading deterioration, which can then be remedied in good time and the monument protected from final destruction.

MARIJA REŽEK KAMBIČ

photos: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Archives, plans from PETER KREČIČ; JOŽE PLEČNIK

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Plečnik's Tivoli Promenade

<i>IRN</i>	26358
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning</i>	1929-1933
<i>Implementation</i>	1931-1933
<i>Renovation</i>	2003
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Darja Pergovnik

Tivoli, the largest park in Ljubljana, dates from the period of the Illyrian Provinces (1809-1813), when the French engineer Jean Blanchard designed three tree alleys in the area of the present-day park. Two of them ran at an angle from the Tivoli Castle to the town, whereas the third ran crosswise from north to south connecting the other two.

After the departure of the French, the design work on the tree alleys was taken up by the Austrian governor Latterman. The poplars and later chestnut trees that he planted were called "Latterman's alleys".

After 1850 a railway was constructed through the park, which cut across the popular tree alleys connecting the park and the city. This was the first major degradation of Tivoli. A large part of the park was transformed from green areas into an urban district that later developed into the present-day neighbourhood of villas and museums along Prešernova ulica (Prešeren Street).

Many old lithographs depicting Latterman's tree alleys as the fundamental and most important landscape elements in the park show that they were of considerable value and served as an attractive sight in the city.

The layout of the tree alleys formed the basic grid of the park, within which many landscape architects have designed individual park elements.

The best-known and most distinguished among them is Plečnik's promenade. Initially the general public rejected the idea; nevertheless the well-planned project was supported by the municipal authorities. After several years and various proposals, the final plan was designed between 1929 and 1933, with implementation following, from 1931 to 1933.

The promenade is an extension of Cankarjeva cesta (Cankar Road), which runs from the centre of the city and ends in an old area of the park featuring a fountain in front of Tivoli Castle, thus connecting the park with the city.

The promenade replaced the former chestnut alley, creating a far broader pedestrian area. But because it was not flanked by trees the townspeople were not satisfied with it; early on they even referred to it as the "Sahara".

Gradually the promenade became an integral part of the Tivoli park and was later generally accepted. Moreover it became a well-known and popular venue in the period before the Second World War.



Plečnik's promenade in the first half of the 20th century

Today the promenade is one of Plečnik's most recognisable works and is an integral part of Ljubljana. Its significance was only re-affirmed when in the 1980s, Ljubljana architects boycotted a public tender for the new Prešernova ulica or Tivolska cesta (Tivoli Road), which like the railway before, cut across the promenade and separated it from the city centre with concrete underpasses.

The central design element of the sand-covered promenade is a series of concrete (terrazzo) lights, consisting of a square base, a column and a square capital carrying the spherical glass lamps placed in parallel to the trajectory of the promenade. The edge of the promenade is marked with concrete kerbstones and benches that define the end and the curve of the path, at the end of which Tivoli Castle stands as a visually dominant element that can be seen from Cankarjeva cesta.

The year 2003 saw the 70th anniversary of the promenade, which at the time was one of the few Plečnik works still in need of renovation. The Three Bridges, Cobblers' Bridge, Trnovo Bridge, the Markets, the National and University Library and Križanke had all already been restored. The lamps had always been a target of night vandalism and were generally in very poor condition. They had deteriorated owing to weather and the elements, chipped and cracked from frost, some of their parts were missing or had decayed exposing rusty tubes with electric wiring in the middle of the columns. Some of the lights had been more or less expertly renovated several years previous and their appearance was therefore no longer uniform. The kerbstones were concealed under vegetation or had suffered damage from weather and salt. Opinions on how the promenade should be renovated always differed (whether only some or all of the individual elements should be replaced or repaired). Because of the poor condition of most of the lamps, benches and kerbstones, we decided that all of the elements should be replaced. The same principle was applied in the reconstruction of Plečnik's bridges. The Coston company, which has experience in the renovation of similar terrazzo elements in bridges, supplied the lamps, benches and kerbstones for the promenade. The original lamps are still visible in the



Exhibition during 2007 European Heritage Days

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street behind the Drama theatre, where they were moved after the removal and construction of the underpasses below the promenade and Tivolska cesta in the 1980s. One of the original lamps is also kept at the National Museum.

Plečnik's well-known promenade lamps, benches and kerbstones were replaced with the aim of restoring the city's finest park to its former glory and resurrecting its unique character, which was subsequently presented in exhibitions at the Monument Protection Centre in Trg francoske revolucije (French Revolution Square) in October 2003, at Ljubljana Castle in January 2004, at the Prague Faculty of Architecture in May 2004, and at Fužine Castle in May 2005. The exhibition display was nominated for the 2004 Plečnik Medal for cultural achievements.

Renovation and conservation supervision was conceived and coordinated by Darja Pergovnik, a landscape architect and conservation consultant at the Ljubljana Regional Branch of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia. The project was financed by the Department of Economic Public Services and Transport of the Ljubljana Municipality, and the exhibition was sponsored by the municipal Department of Culture and Research.

DARJA PERGOVNIK

photos **MARKO GORENC**

Bežigrad Stadium

<i>IRN</i>	393
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1923–1939
<i>Renovation</i>	planned for the near future
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Mojca Arh Kos

The Bežigrad stadium is one of the earliest sports venues in Slovenia and was originally constructed for the gymnastic events and conventions of the Catholic organisation “Orel” (Eagle). The origins of mass sports events date back to the early 19th century, in Germany. The foundations of organised events and systematic sports activities were laid by Miroslav Tyrš (1832-1884) of Bohemia, who in 1861 established a sports club in Prague called Sokol (Falcon). The movement spread across Europe, but it was not immune to political influences. Sports clubs and their much-frequented public events were fertile soil for the spreading of political ideas, nationalistic, liberal or clerical. Under the influence of the general political split in the Slovene nation between the progressive (liberal) and conservative (clerical) camp, the mass sports movement also became divided into the liberal Sokol side and the Catholic, clerical Orel side. The Sokol movement took hold in Slovenia in 1863, when the Južni Sokol society (Southern Falcon) was established in Ljubljana based on Tyrš’s model. The Orel organisation sprang up in opposition to the Sokol movement in 1906, when the Orel society was founded in Jesenice. The members of the Sokol movement convened in buildings with gyms constructed particularly for this purpose, which were called “Sokol homes”, where they organised mass gymnastic events outdoors.

.....
Main gallery



For these popular events, temporary galleries for the audience were built, as well as temporary camps and practice grounds for the competitors. These venues were called "zletišča" or "takeoff points". One of the largest events was organised in Ljubljana in August 1922. It was the first gathering of Yugoslav Sokol societies, for which a temporary wooden stadium accommodating 50,000 spectators and 5000 competitors was built on Linhartova cesta (Linhart Road) in Ljubljana. The stadium featured two concert pavilions (the event was accompanied with selected music that dictated the rhythm), a royal loggia, cloakrooms, a restaurant and toilets. Soon a permanent stadium built of durable materials was needed. The Orel society snatched the initiative from Sokol and enthusiastically embarked on the project of building a stadium. All of its members chipped in, together with major sponsors. The project began with a large Catholic gathering on 26 August 1923, which was combined with a gymnastics performance by the Orel members in the area of the present-day stadium, in a disused gravel pit. For the event, the ground was levelled and places for the spectators were arranged on the slopes. The leadership of the Orel organisation was very pleased with the deserted gravel pit and its owner, the Teutonic Knights Order, probably did not object to them using it.

The historical beginnings of the stadium date back to 1923, when the location of both the Catholic gathering and the gymnastics performance of the Orel society was selected. Since the gravel pit did not meet the prevailing sporting venue criteria, the Orel society decided to build a stadium and founded the Stadium Cooperative for this very purpose. The architect Jože Plečnik was commissioned to design it, who initially entrusted the task, in turn, to his student Ivan Pengov.

To carry out the commission defined by the Stadium Cooperative, Plečnik later worked in close co-operation with the engineer Anton Suhadolc, who also supervised the construction. The handful of Suhadolc's preserved archival plans and reports published in *Ilustrirani Slovenec* reveal that the initial plans were partially changed.

The construction of the stadium took part in two stages, and was born of Plečnik's original idea and characteristic style. Materials characteristic of Plečnik's work were employed (brick, artificial stone, zinc plates, wood), which he skilfully, either individually or in combination, defined and used to mark the artistic and aesthetic features of the individual architectural elements (the southern wall, the entrance wall, the pillared portico, the memorial column). It is evident from his plans that he looked to Classical models with the thought of combining a sports facility with an outdoor theatre.

The first stage of construction took place between 1925 and 1926. During this period, the layout of the future stadium was defined and partially surrounded with a fence. The southern wall, the entrance wall and the pillared portico with three entrances were built, as well as several steps with seats to the east, the entrance in the south-eastern corner and the memorial column. As part of the stadium project, Plečnik, together with Emil Navinšek, designed



Capital

the Stadium villa (1927-1928), which was offered up as the first prize at the second stadium lottery organised by the Orel society in order to collect the necessary construction funds.

The second stage of construction took place from 1935 to 1940 and decisively marked the entire stadium. At that time the gloriette was constructed as the vertical and symbolic emphasis of the entire area. Later the stepped galleries with seats and two additional, smaller galleries were built. The stadium was constructed by the usual contractors who were close associates of Plečnik and Suhadolc from other previous projects: the Toman and Vodnik workshops of Ljubljana, the carpentry company of Ivan Ravnikar and others.

One of the characteristics of Plečnik's architecture is the multitude and variety of architectural details that in some cases also lend structural features to the building (the zinc cones on concrete spheres on the fence as artistic accent on the top edge of the wall as well as a security element, numerous iron sockets for small flags in the pillared building etc.).

For 80 years now the stadium has preserved its original function due largely to the unique approach to the venue as sports complex taken by Plečnik and his associates. Over these many years, the stadium has hosted a great variety of sports events, and many of them soccer matches, some of which play an important part in the history of sport in both Yugoslavia and Slovenia.

But the stadium has also been used for various cultural and music events. In 2006 the most pressing of maintenance procedures were carried out and signs were removed from the pillared portico along Dunajska cesta (Vienna Road). The future of the stadium is now one of the most heated topics in Ljubljana, owing largely to issues and decisions connected with plans for renovation, which in turn reflect pressing demands for a thorough modernisation of stadium facilities.

The complex as a whole, in terms of its appearance as well as its individual architectural details, well reflect the modern expressionist and classicist styles that typify the work of Jože Plečnik, and

serve to reveal Plečnik's original ideas and his exceptional sense of expression. This in turn makes the planning of the stadium renovation particularly challenging for the conservators, restorers, architects and urban planners alike.

MOJCA ARH KOS

photos: **DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK**

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Three Bridges

<i>IRN</i>	398
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning</i>	1927-1931
<i>Construction</i>	1842, 1930-1931
<i>Architect</i>	Jože Plečnik (in association with Ciril Tavčar and Janez Valentinčič)
<i>Renovation</i>	1991-1992
<i>Chief conservators</i>	Gojko Zupan, Staša Blažič

The Three Bridges is one of the most important works of architect Plečnik in Ljubljana. They stand in the very centre of the city and symbolically connect the medieval part of the city with younger, more recently developed areas of Ljubljana along Prešernov trg (Prešeren Square). The bridges also connect Plečnik's waterway with the trajectory crossing it from City Hall and Prešernov trg to the Tivoli promenade. The architect skilfully expanded and upgraded the former medieval bridge into a complex work of art.

The old wooden bridge at this location was the oldest medieval bridge in Ljubljana. It was repaired and enlarged several times. In 1842 it was replaced with a stone bridge named after Archduke Charles, as is evident from the inscription on the side of the bridge. It was designed by Giovanni Picco, a Friuli builder from Villach, who used stone blocks from the Podutik quarries. Later the bridge was enhanced with gas lamp candelabras and streetcar rails were laid across it.

By the mid-1920s the bridge, which accommodated a streetcar line, pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles, had become too narrow. As early as 1928 Plečnik designed two additional pedestrian bridges placed next to the old bridge in the shape of a fan. The new structures were built at the curve of the river where the distance between the two banks is the shortest. They are slightly wider in the

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Three Bridges



middle and are flanked with staircases leading to a terrace below. Different widths and levels are connected with a grid of fences. The architect designed the bridges with the help of Janez Valentinčič and Ciril Tavčar. He employed solutions similar to those used in Prague and Venice, creating a Mediterranean whole that connects the serene Austrian façades of the buildings of Kresija and Filipov Dvorec, the Baroque front of the Franciscan church and the dynamic curve of the river flowing under the bridges. Plečnik focused on the Ljubljana bridges, on their different forms and adaptations, already during his studies in Italy in 1899.¹

In his expansion and renovation project, the architect demonstrated his respect for the local architectural heritage, fully preserving the old bridge. He even paid special attention to the old cast-iron railings, which he used in the arrangement of Gerber's staircase. He crowned the bridge with concrete and terrazzo balustrades, spending at least two years working on their design. His earlier plans feature double balusters and spheres as decorative elements on the balustrades, as well as reliefs embellishing the junctions between the bridges. Later he opted for another form that resembles the balusters of the Vzajemna insurance company. The balusters are combined with broad fences and specially designed candelabras and rounded ornaments. By using uniform balustrades, he connected the three bridges into a visually uniform structure that weightlessly spans the river and descends to the lower terrace next to the river, the public toilets and the fish market. With this he transformed the bridges into a component part of the bustle in Plečnik's Markets. An additional, although independent decorative element of the bridges is the former flower shop on the right bank, now converted into a souvenir shop, and a newspaper shop on the left bank.

The fences for the bridges were cast by Curk. The casts were fixed on the already-constructed pedestrian bridges and the middle bridge. Concrete was selected as the main material due to limited funds. The architect took the limitations on the use of stone as a challenge and created a masterpiece in the artificial material he called artificial stone. The individual balusters in the 1930s were made manually, resulting in an uneven consistency of concrete and broken stone fragments. Over the years, the individual layers of some of the elements cracked and stones fell off. Due to acid rain, dirt, fog and great differences in temperature, the originally smooth outer surface of the vase-like bases, fence edges and lamp stands literally dissolved, resulting in a rough, uneven effect. The individual elements therefore had to be replaced less than 40 years later. In 1970, balusters were recast by Curk, but 15 years later conservators were already considering a comprehensive renovation and commissioned the first surveys.

In the early 1990s a new sewage system was planned, which had to be laid over the Ljubljanica river. In 1988 certain changes were introduced to the bridges without the consent of the relevant expert institution. But when the city decided to carry out a comprehensive

1 He often wrote about bridges in his letters from Italy. Cf., France Stelè, *ibid.*, pp. 24, 98, 129.



Handmade balusters on Three Bridges

renovation, they sought the advice of the appropriate experts. Since all balustrades were extensively damaged, it had to be decided whether to repair them or to resort to a more radical procedure demanded by traffic and statics experts. It was established that the original balusters could not be repaired – because their surfaces were too corroded – such that they would technically and artistically resemble the forms from the 1930s. They were fixed with weak, insufficiently long metal pins that were rusty and contributed to the internal deterioration of the individual elements. Some of the balusters were fixed to the ground only with mortar. But according to security regulations, the rail was supposed to prevent vehicles from falling into the river.

During preparatory work, a car hit the rail, knocking several balusters into the Ljubljanica; back in 1986 a lorry toppled a part of the rail itself into the river. Due to the delicacy of the project, the chief conservator proposed in 1990 a meeting of an expert committee that would supervise the renovation.² Additional material was prepared to this end. Plečnik's original plans were discovered. Detailed studies of different concrete mixtures for the bridges were made. The original moulds for the balusters had been discarded several years previous and could no longer be retrieved.

In autumn 1990, the GIVO construction company first repaired the cracked lower parts of the bridges and laid the necessary water pipes. The first obstacle was encountered during the renovation of the upper layers. Since the wood used for the panelling was not dry

2 The committee consisted of authorities on Plečnik's work (Dr Damjan Prelovšek of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, Dr Peter Krečič of the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana, Marjan Ocvirk of the Faculty of Architecture and France Vardjan as the representative of the Restoration Centre) and the representatives of the regional institute for the protection of cultural heritage Staša Blažič and Gojko Zupan. The committee worked in co-operation with the representatives of the owner (Municipality of Ljubljana, represented by Janez Lesar), The Materials Research Institute and GIVO contractors.

enough, the surfaces of the new concrete edges were not even. The Materials and Construction Research Institute tested various systems to remedy these mistakes. Finally a special polishing machine was purchased to smoothen out the edges.

In the meantime, various companies made sample balusters. The most appropriate of these was presented by Coston. The committee visited the company several times to remedy any minor faults, to find the most appropriate mixture of materials and find the best polishing procedure for the decorative elements on the bridges. The new balusters appear the same as the originals, but they contain new, strong steel pins in their cores. The smooth appearance confused some experts who did not work with the committee. The preserved original balusters from the lower terrace and the area next to the public toilets had to be shown to them to mark the difference between their smooth surface and the rough and corroded balusters from the top of the bridges. The contractors replaced the rails and installed new bases for lamps. Despite the demands of the conservators, the concrete supports were not cast in one piece. Nevertheless, the renovation continued and was completed by the end of 1991. The wooden scaffolding used during the renovation of Plečnik's bridges was used for the construction of the new pedestrian bridge across the Ljubljana in the vicinity of Ribji trg (Fish Market).

GOJKO ZUPAN

photos: DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK

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Garden of All Saints

<i>IRN</i>	14625
<i>Location</i>	Ljubljana
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1937–1940
<i>Renovation</i>	1985–1990
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Mojca Arh Kos

The Garden of All Saints or Žale cemetery was constructed according to the plans of architect Jože Plečnik, between 1937 and 1940. Its concept as memorial complex, its architecture and the idea of a funerary park are all highly original. Inside a limited space, Plečnik designed the city of the dead – and one which is by no means macabre. It is a place of final farewell for the deceased, where mourners pay their final respects in the intimacy of individual chapels. The gloom that otherwise pervades similar complexes is chased away by the park planted with hornbeam, spruce and Serbian spruce trees and hedges, and adorned with benches, a fountain, pillars and candelabra with lamps.

Chapels stand in the park behind the entrance building or the propileum. They are consecrated to the patron saints of the Ljubljana parishes, the patron saint of Kranj (St Agatus) and the first parents Adam and Eve. Each chapel is a unique example of architecture and of original artistic design. Each has special interior furnishings composed of stone catafalques, chandeliers, altarpieces and painted crucifixes. The imposing emphasis on the complex across the entrance propileum is conceived in the form of a prayer room with a catafalque.

Plečnik placed the necessary utility buildings in the far eastern reaches of the complex, which he separated from the memorial area with a hedge. In the exceptionally designed façades of the workshops, he skilfully concealed the function of the building, and the wall in front of the entrance represents a pendant to the entrance of the complex.

In August 1938 builder Matko Curk began the construction. Initially, Gizela Šulje and Edvard Ravnikar assisted Plečnik. But from

Entrance colonnade of the Garden of All Saints





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June 1938 to the Italian occupation of Ljubljana in April of 1941, the Vlasto Kopač served as the master's assistant. Others involved with the construction of the complex were the builder Emil Tomažič, foreman Andrej Kerševan, supervising engineer Franc Čepon and the city gardener Anton Lap. Metalwork was supplied by the brothers Lojze and Rafael Žmuca and the workshop of Ivan Kregar. The sculptures are the work of Božo Pengov, with the exception of the figures in the chapel of St Francis, which are the work of Alojzij Kogovšek. The murals on the workshops building, depicting scenes from the gospels and figures of saints, martyrs and important individuals from the history of Christianity among Slovenes and Slavs in general are the work of Slavko Pengov.

Plečnik's Žale complex was used up until 1979, when a crematorium was built in the new part of the cemetery in accordance with the plans of the architect Kerševan. Memorial chapels were regarded as politically incorrect and were therefore closed. The complex was largely ignored by the authorities, and its unresolved role-status together with poor maintenance accelerated its deterioration. The Restoration Centre which took care of the building leased the workshops for some time. The cemetery manager maintained the park, but the neglected buildings fell into disrepair and were often the target of vandalism.



Chapel of St Francis before and after renovation

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Prayer room

In 1982, the city of Ljubljana decreed that Navje and Plečnik's Žale cemeteries must be preserved as cultural monuments. Between 1982 and 1985 Navje was renovated and immediately afterwards, intensive preparations for the renovation of Plečnik's Žale began. After being closed for almost a decade, the cemetery complex was probably saved by the rather unexpected new-found interest in Plečnik's work on the part of foreign experts triggered by a successful exhibition of Plečnik's work in Paris in 1986. A programme for the renovation of all buildings was prepared in January 1985 by the Ljubljana Regional Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage and the Restoration Centre of Slovenia.

Nevertheless, the idea of restoring Plečnik's Žale cemetery to its original function and operations was not carried out for a long time afterwards. The Ljubljana Faculty of Medicine suggested that a small museum of medicine be opened in the cemetery, since Jože Plečnik's brother, Dr Janez Plečnik, was an important anatomist and professor. It was agreed that the entire complex would be taken over by the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana, which intended to put up a display of archival documentation in the chapels. In 1987 a public panel on the function of Plečnik's Žale cemetery, its maintenance, the new church, mosque, cemeteries in general, funerals and burials took place. In 1989 the executive council of the city of Ljubljana decided that a team should be established which would survey the conditions, possibilities and various options for the full, working-restoration of Plečnik's Žale. In 1990 a team was formed, which the following year examined the restoration programme. In February 1992, funerary rites were re-introduced in the chapels; and in 1994, the Pogrebna dejavnost Žale, d. o. o. funeral home moved from its premises in Tomačevska cesta (Tomačevo Road) to the entrance propileum.

The most urgent renovation work in the complex was carried out between 1985 and 1990, which encompassed various demanding procedures to remedy injuries incurred in the period during which the complex was abandoned, as well as works in the park. In accordance with the conservation and restoration expert study, the renovation took consideration of the principles of the funerary functions of the complex with the aim of re-establishing such operations.

During the period 1994 to 2004 the Podjetje Žale, d. o. o. company managed and maintained the complex. It also continued the renovation of the interior furnishing of the buildings. The architect Vlasto Kopač donated considerable archival documentation to the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana. Until his death in 2006 he assisted as an advisor during the renovation of the walls inside the chapels.

In accordance with the Plečnik's Žale conservation programme of the Ljubljana Regional Branch of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the prayer room was renovated in 2004. The building, which had never been used in its original capacity, was converted into a gallery.

To provide new administrative and reception premises for the company Javno podjetje Žale, d. o. o., (now temporarily located in the northern administrative building of the propileum), new project documentation for the renovation and change of purpose of the long-abandoned eastern part of the complex, where utilities were once located, is being prepared in accordance with the conservation and restoration programme. In 2006 all necessary work for the protection and supervision of the complex was carried out, but extensive maintenance and renovation of the entire complex will be necessary again some time in the future.

Plečnik's Žale or the Garden of All Saints is on the distinguished list of European cultural heritage regarded as decisive for the formation of the cultural identity of the European Union. On 25 January 2007 the European Heritage Committee convened in Madrid and awarded European heritage status to three cultural monuments in Slovenia: the memorial church of the Holy Spirit in Javorica above Tolmin, Franja Partisan hospital in Dolenji Novaki near Cerkno, and Plečnik's Žale or the Garden of All Saints.

The renovation of Plečnik's Žale is a fine example of the restoring of original function to a complex achieved through effective co-operation of different professions during the decision-making process on the future role of the complex and during the renovation itself as well. Despite many varied interests (including the political), the original function of Plečnik's Žale was restored between 1992 and 1994 due to the efforts of many, including conservators.

MOJCA ARH KOS

photos: page 89 MOJCA ARH KOS, page 84 bottom DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK, top INSTITUTE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ARCHIVE

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Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin

<i>IRN</i>	3928
<i>Location</i>	Ponikve
<i>Planning and implementation</i>	1951-1958
<i>Renovation</i>	1996-1998
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Robert Červ

The present-day church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin is the third sanctuary on the hill to the west of the village of Ponikve. The first church was built or at least renovated by the building workshop of Andrej from Loka in the 1480s, as is evident from a plaque inserted in the southern wall of the present-day nave. In the 18th century a new Baroque church was built at the location, which was burnt and partly demolished during the Second World War.

In 1951 the local priest Janez Lapanja commissioned the architect Jože Plečnik (1872-1957) to prepare plans for the renovation of the sanctuary. Plečnik was faced with the decision whether to reconstruct the Baroque structure or to re-interpret the existing architecture more freely. Plečnik decided on the latter. He preserved the existing outline of the outer walls, but changed the layout of the interior by 180ffl, transforming the former presbytery into the entrance to the church and the western part of the building into the presbytery. He placed the ridge of the gable roof at a right angle to the long axis of the nave. The main façade lost its classical, monumental appearance and is marked only by a lower portico and a simple staircase. Next to the northern wall, Plečnik placed a small cylindrical “angel tower”, as he called it in his plans. Thus he created a pendant to the preserved Baroque tower standing diagonally to the southern corner of the building and directed the attention of the visitor to the new entrance. He left the inside walls unplastered and only roughly grouted, creating a rustic appearance. Of the old church, he preserved part of the triumphal arch. He placed the presbytery asymmetrically next to the wall of the former tower, introducing a dynamic note in the interior. The open roof structure is ornamentally painted. Individual elements

Exterior of the church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin in Ponikve

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View of the interior towards the high altar

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of the former Baroque altar are placed along the long wall, but their presentation is not particularly effective as they are bereft of their former function and message.

Work began, after many bureaucratic obstacles, in 1954, when the ruling authorities were not in favour of the construction of church buildings. Most works were carried out by the local population, who was not always skilful enough for the demanding project. Plans changed during the construction as they were adapted to the conditions at the construction site. The ageing Plečnik could not supervise the construction; instead this role was filled by his assistant, the architect Anton Bitenc (1920-1977). In his memoirs, the priest Lapajne writes that work did not always proceed smoothly. He relates one such instance where Plečnik, referring to Bitenc's intention to design the new altar from parts of the damaged Baroque one, apparently lamented: "The young ones are so influenced by the Institute for the Protection of Monuments that they want to turn every church into a museum. This must not be tolerated. Churches are living organisms, therefore they must be allowed to grow and find their appearance in new, contemporary forms." This is another example of the eternal dilemma between the effectiveness of the conservation doctrine and the power of an architect's creative freedom.

The church was completed and consecrated a year after Plečnik's death. Since then, it has undergone several maintenance procedures: the roof tiles were replaced, the concrete dome on the cylindrical tower was renovated and a fence around the church erected (1996, 1998).

ROBERT ČERV

photos: **ROBERT ČERV**

Church of St Benedict

<i>IRN</i>	925
<i>Location</i>	Zgornje Stranje
<i>Renovation</i>	1946-1948
<i>Chief conservator</i>	Maja Avguštin

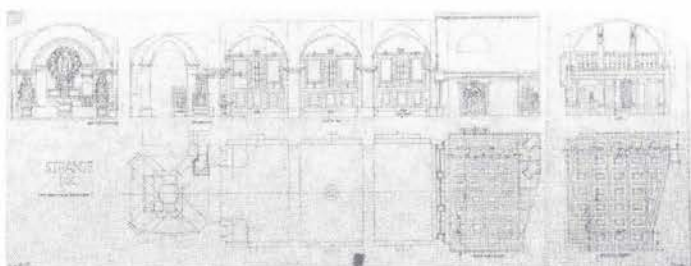
The church of St Benedict stands on a hill 455m above sea level, near the village of Zgornje Stranje. The road below the church leads to Kamniška Bistrica in one direction, and Gornji Grad in the other. Before the present-day structure, a medieval church stood on this location until the early 19th century, as recorded in a document regarding the consecration of the presbytery from 1499. According to Valvazor the church was fortified. A description by the vicariates of Nevlje, Šmartno and Zgornji Tuhinj from 1703, says the church had three altars and a tower with two bells. In the early 1830s the medieval building was demolished and replaced with a new structure that was consecrated in 1834. It consisted of a rectangular nave and presbytery with truncated corners. The roof ridge of the nave was slightly higher than the roof ridge of the presbytery. The sacristy was added to the south of the presbytery, and the tower was separated from the church.

In his book entitled *Politični okraj Kamnika* (Kamnik Political District) from 1929 Stelè gives a detailed description of the church prior to the renovation carried out by Jože Plečnik. He describes the interior as follows:

“... the nave is covered with a barrel vault on pendentives resting on shallow pilasters along the walls. Each wall features three rectangular windows. The choir is vaulted and rests on two stone

.....
Zgornje Stranje, church of St Benedict





Plečnik's design for the renovation of the interior of the church of St Benedict, June 1947 (HRAUSKY, KOŽELJ, PRELOVŠEK, *Plečnikova Slovenija*)

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pillars. The presbytery is covered with a shallow dome on an octagonal base. The colours of the walls: greenish with white strips and pilasters in the nave. The presbytery features three rectangular windows."

And the exterior:

"... The stone main portal with a triangular tympanum, surmounted with a semicircular window and a round loophole at the top. The presbytery is embraced with a projecting parapet at ground level. The entire exterior is of greenish colour and the church is covered with a single roof with slate tiles... The tower has no parapet at ground level; the ground floor can be accessed through a rounded, stone Gothic portal with ogee moulding. The walls are plain, large, semicircular openings at the bells, Baroque roof..."

The church was heavily damaged during the Second World War. Because of its strategic position, the German army converted it into a military post. The nave was divided into two storeys with a concrete platform, the windows were sealed and the church was surrounded with bunkers. Much of the furniture was burnt. After the war, the local priest and Franciscan friar Martin Perc and his parishioners succeeded in removing the concrete ceiling without



Portico to the south of the church

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Baptistery

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causing additional damage. As a great admirer of Plečnik's work, Perc invited the architect to participate in the renovation. Initially Plečnik declined the invitation and the priest turned to the master's student Majda Neřima, who in early July of 1946 produced plans for the incorporation of the tower into the main building of the church.

In 1946 Jože Plečnik visited Zgornje Stranje for the first time and took over the planning of the renovation and furniture for the church.

As materials were in short supply after the war, Plečnik adapted his designs such that available materials could be used: concrete, river stones, timber. Plečnik used balusters from the demolished façade of the Glasbena Matica building in Ljubljana for the pillars of the southern portico. He concealed the concrete window frames inserted as an emergency measure in 1945 with curtains and explained his decision to the locals as follows:

"... When you come to the Sunday service, your thoughts and gaze will wander through the window towards your home. ... you will be distracted ... the curtains will prevent this, you will be able to focus better and your gaze will rest constantly on the altar ..."

Plečnik achieved an exceptional effect with the paving: the floor in the nave and presbytery are covered with concrete, in which wooden cubes that were boiled several times are inserted. Several of Plečnik's students followed this example and went on to design similar floors. Plečnik converted the newly-created area between the church and the tower into a baptistery, which was completed in 1947/48. Because it is separated from the rest of the church, it became a model for other baptisteries built in that period. Like in his altar designs, Plečnik adorned his architecture with various furnishings from the previous church. He placed the statue of God the Father under a canopy on St Anthony's Cross. The walls are decorated with simple panelling. The baptismal font hangs from the



Sacristy, door handle

ceiling on four thin chains. The ceiling is embellished with carved beams. The carvings are combined with gilding. On the left and right side of the wall, wrought-iron lamps resembling blossoms are placed. The walls under the ceiling remained unplastered, with Plečnik characteristically emphasising them with grouting. The floor is paved with the remains of marble plates.

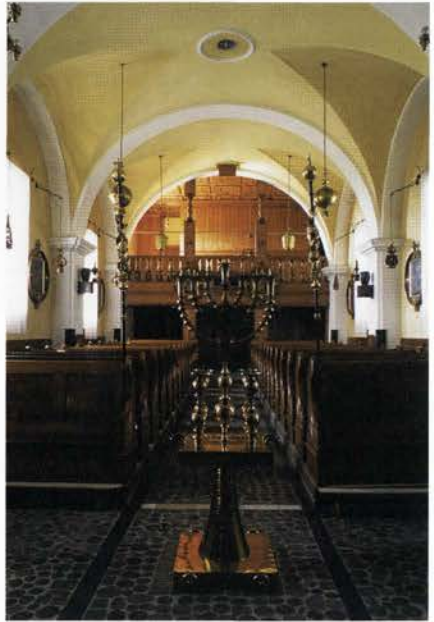
The area below the choir and the choir itself are made of wood. The ceiling under the choir consists of wooden panels. The area also features confession boxes. The choir can be accessed through a turret placed against the southern wall of the tower and featuring a spiral metal staircase.

Plečnik also redesigned and furnished the sacristy. He removed the plastering from the stone vault and marked it with grouting like in the baptistery. The wooden door leading to the sacristy is an exceptional example of craftsmanship. The upper part is designed as a wooden statue in the shape of an amphora. The metal door handle is shaped like a rooster with displayed wings. The lamp on the ceiling of the sacristy opens up like a star in the sky. The western corner of the sacristy features alternating tread stairs that facilitate a shorter span.

In addition to the new sacristy and choir, the rebuilding of the sacristy, the construction of a new access point to the tower, the redesign of the main entrance to the church and the construction of the portico, Plečnik paid special attention to the rich furnishing of the interior.

In 1948 he designed a new high altar of St Benedict. He adjusted his designs to the knowledge and capacities of the local masters. The retable is shaped like a large foliate monstrance containing the old statue of St Benedict. He used the same approach in both side altars.

The church is a veritable museum of Plečnik's church design. He designed the lamps, chandeliers, several suspended and stand-



Choir loft

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ing candlesticks, a candelabrum in the memory of the deceased parishioners, a seven-branched candelabrum, a gong with two small bells, pews, crosses, lights under the choir, lights and frames for the Stations of the Cross, chalices, wooden frames for the window and door in the presbytery, a pulpit, a door to the confession box and more.

In the church of St Benedict, Jože Plečnik appears in the role of an architect transforming an earlier structure. The Zgornje Stranje parish archive keeps an account of Plečnik's explanation of his work in the church to the villagers:

"... At home, old people, the young masters of the house and children all live under the same roof. You must be patient with one another and live in harmony. Similarly, when you come to the church, you will be able explain and show the history of your old church to your children..."

Stele's description of the church portrays a different building than that which is known today. Although great damage was inflicted by the German army during the Second World War, the post-war years brought even greater architectural changes. The church has kept its basic structure with three windows on each side of the nave, the shape of the presbytery and the tower. It has also kept the trapezoid stone parapet on the exterior of the presbytery. The only change Plečnik introduced in the presbytery is the sealing of the two windows from the outside. In his writings, France Stele mentions two medieval portals. The main entrance featured a pointed portal, whereas the portal leading to the tower was semicircular with ogee moulding. The main portal has not survived. The portal that used to lead to the tower now gives access to the baptistery. Plečnik placed the new entrance to the tower in the northern wall, which can be accessed on an external, concrete spiral staircase. After Plečnik's rebuilding immediately after the war, the church remained untouched until 1996, when the Kranj branch of the

then Institute for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage carried out a sounding investigation of the façade and renovated the exterior based on the results.

MAJA AVGUŠTIN

photos: **DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK**

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Regional Unit

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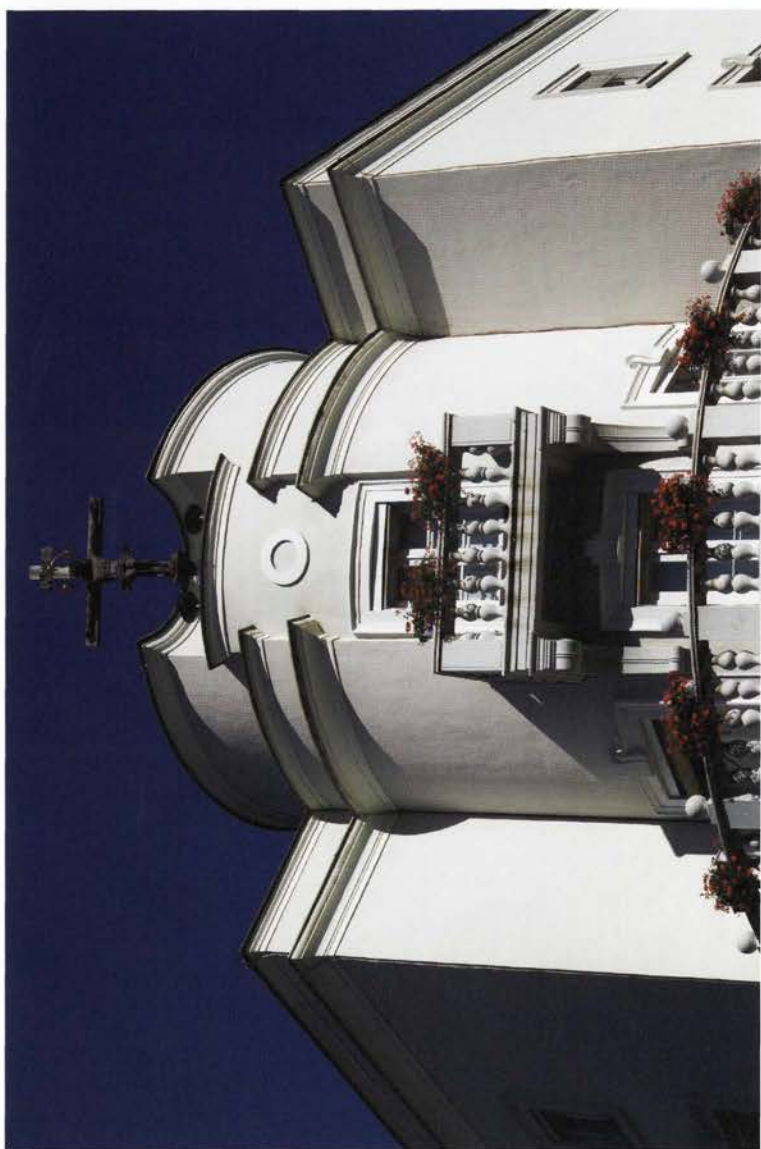
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Colour Plates





Bogojina: Church of the Ascension of Our Lord



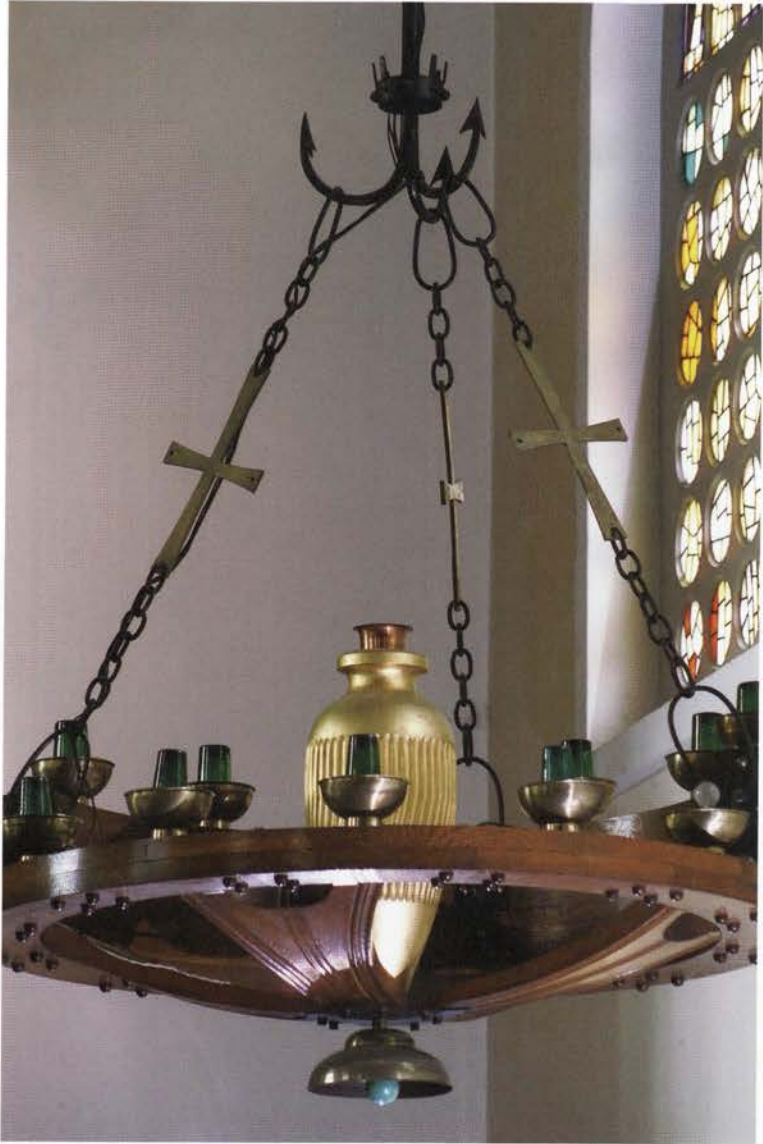
Celje: People's Lending Bank



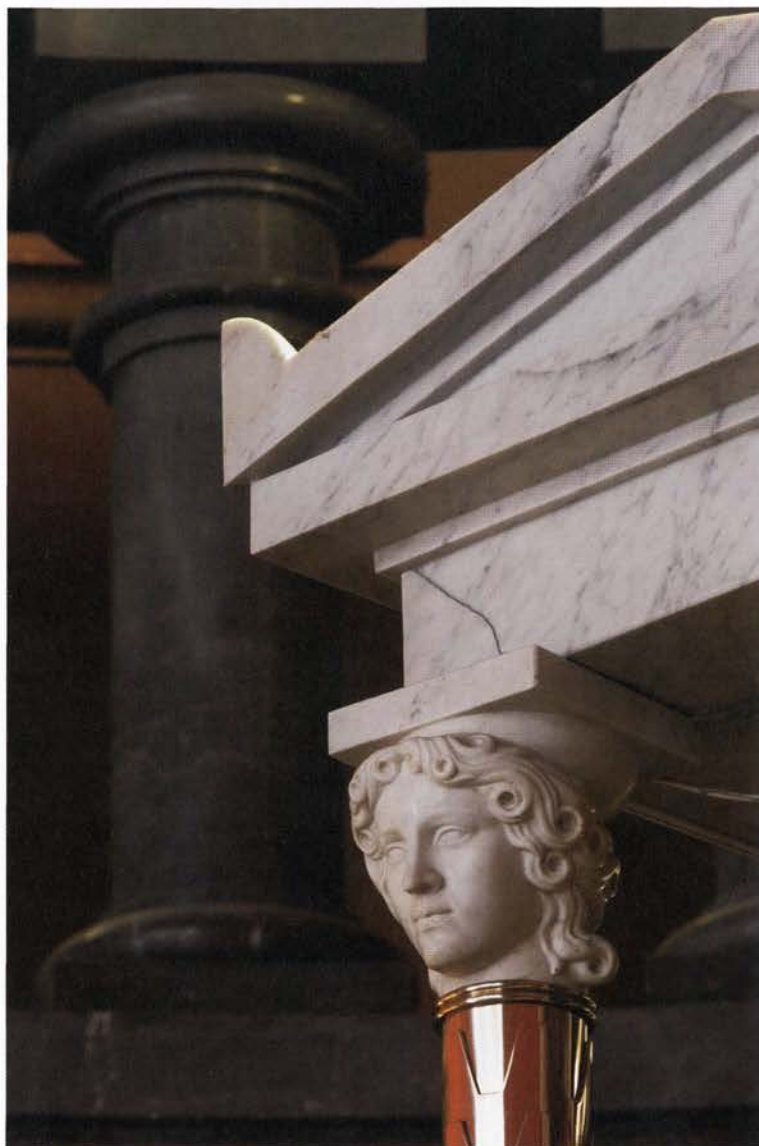
Kamniška Bistrica: King Alexander's Hunting Lodge



Vienna: Zacherl House



Ljubljana: Church of St Cyril and Methodius



Ljubljana: Church of St Joseph in Poljane



Ljubljana: Church of St Michael



Ljubljana: Križanke



Ljubljana: National and University Library



Ljubljana: Markets

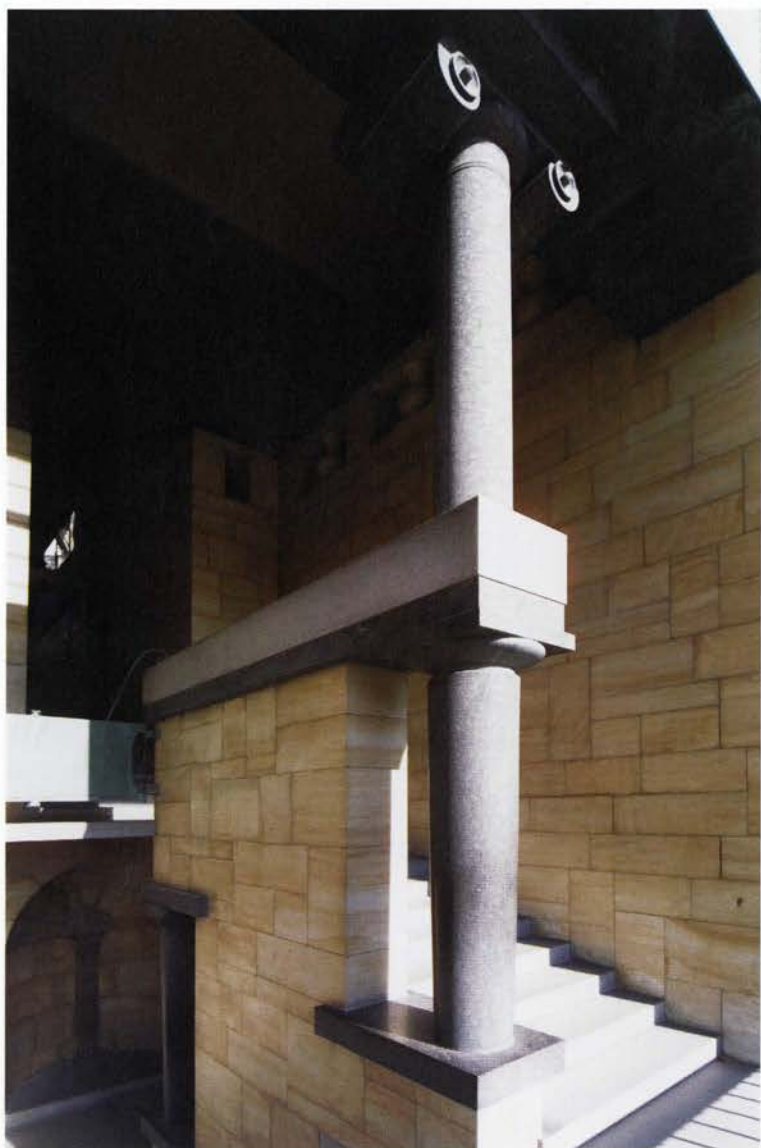


Ljubljana: Garden of All Saints

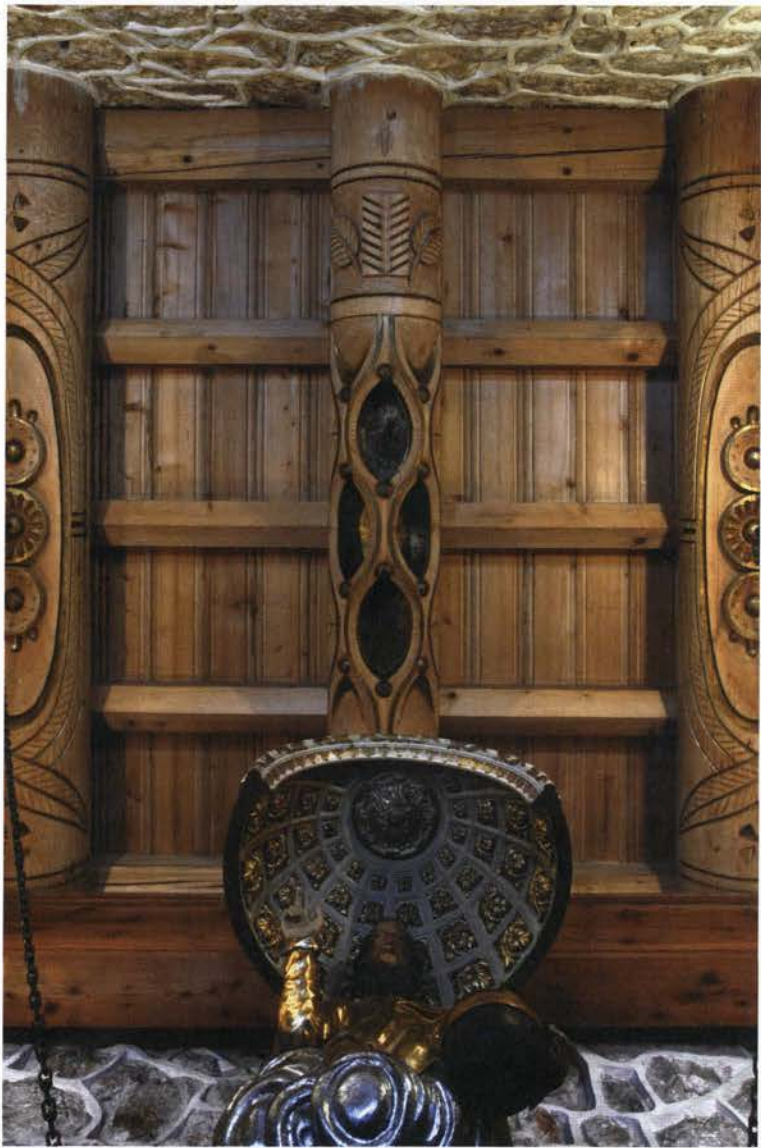


Ljubljana: Miklošičeva Palace





Prague: Bull Staircase, Prague Castle



Zgoranje Stranje: Church of St Benedict

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