

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ROUSSE IN THE REFLECTION OF ITS ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN PLANNING FROM THE END OF THE 18TH TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract. In this paper the development of the city of Rousse in relation to the construction of the urban space for the period from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century is considered. We present the influence of the European neostyles on the architectural development of the city of Rousse, which appeared in the second half of the 19th century. The form and decoration details of several buildings are considered. A comparison between these buildings and the architectural principles characterizing European style trends in this period is made. Before the First World War, very rich stone decoration dominates the town architecture which is presented by details with symbolic meaning. In this period different architectural styles created the appearance of Rousse as one of the first cities in Bulgaria with a European manner.

Keywords: architecture of Rousse, neoclassicism, neobaroque, secession, facade decoration, city garden, city park.

1. INTRODUCTION

The object of this paper is the impact of the historical development of the city of Rousse on the construction of the urban space and its compositional characteristics from the Renaissance to the significant changes of the transition to Europeanization – the 20th century. The Danube River is the connecting thread of the locals with the European way of life and thinking. The study is based on the broad base of numerous Bulgarian and foreign studies on traditional and Renaissance architecture, medieval and baroque architecture, and urban architecture of Rousse, as well as on the author's long-term theoretical and field studies. The motivation for this study can be represented by several sets of factors. In most of the publications about the city of Rousse,

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reflecting the period from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century, the architectural and town planning appearance of the city is poorly considered.

The architectural features of Rousse in the period from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century have always impressed with their specificity, differing to a significant extent from the architectural layout of the majority of Bulgarian cities during the mentioned period. In this regard, the geographical location of the city is of great importance – on the right bank of the eternal Danube River, connecting part of the European countries. It was this location that guaranteed the early establishment of contacts with Europe and opportunities for significant European cultural influences, which is also evident in the architectural plans and ornamentation of the Rousse buildings of that time.

2. URBAN PLANNING OF ROUSSE DURING THE RENAISSANCE

According to the descriptions of travelers, the architectural and urban planning ideas of the Renaissance began to be applied more widely in the region of the northeastern Bulgarian lands after 1830. Until then, they were used in the construction of the mansions (sarais) of the rich Muslims and governors in the region and in the city of Rousse. Their application was above all in the layout of the interior space – the so-called “ceiling suns” made of wooden materials [1], which are manifested in the layout of the interior of the Old Renaissance Inn (today Zadruga of the Danube masters) Fig. 1. From the outside, the architecture of the buildings was impersonal, following the oriental principles of the previous centuries. The number of one-story buildings prevailed, some of which were covered with wooden boards. In terms of town planning, the street network was winding and followed the relief of the terrain. In several places, square extensions were formed, where cult buildings, clock towers and fountains were located. The central square (Kubeli Jamsi Megdan, today “Prince Alexander Battenberg Square”), which was formed during the Ottoman rule, was large and rectangular in shape.

After 1864, when the city of Rousse was declared the capital of the Danube Vilayet, the principles and ideas of the European styles of Neoclassicism and Neo-Renaissance began to be applied more distinctly in architecture and town planning. They were used in the construction of the houses of merchants and governors, in the construction of public and administrative buildings. The number of two-story buildings has increased. However, the number of one-



Fig. 1. Old Renaissance Inn (today Zadruga of the Danube masters) in Rousse

story houses continued to be higher. In the urban core, the number of two-story buildings predominated, and in the periphery – one-story buildings. The city also acquired a railway station with the completion of the construction of the Rousse–Varna railway line [2]. In terms of town planning, the streets were straight, with the main ones being paved with stone and having sidewalks. Gas lanterns were installed on them, and some square extensions got fountains.

Some governors put their money savings into the modernization of the city during the Renaissance. These were Trasteniklizade Ismail aga, Mustafa Pasha Bayraktar, Midhat Pasha and his successors [3]. With their funds, a new water supply system, fountains, clock towers, religious buildings and many public and administrative buildings were built.

In the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, four wars were fought between the Ottoman and Russian empires. Meanwhile, the city of Rousse continued to grow, which necessitated the construction of new fortress walls and fortifications. After 1829, the local authorities invited Prussian engineers headed by the famous General von Moltke to plan the construction of the fortifications [4]. Then a fortress wall was built with massive and thick walls placed on ramparts. They divided the city into two parts, with the Christian hamlets of Mechka and Voevoda being separated by walls. A

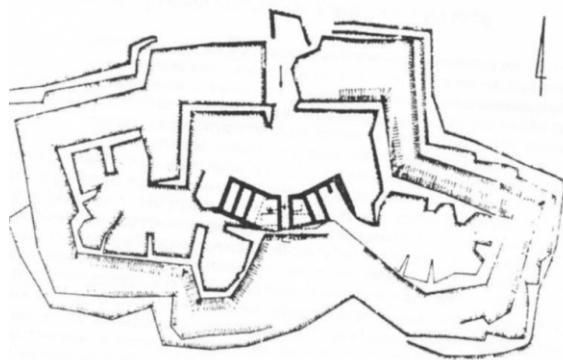


Fig. 2. Levent tabia around the city of Rousse

deep moat lined with stones was dug around the fortress, which was filled with water from the rivers Danube and Rusenski Lom when needed. It is assumed that the Krainen Cemetery (today the Park of the Revivalists) was surrounded by a wall, because traces of a moat can be seen behind the Pantheon. After 1830, fortifications (tabia, example – Levent tabia) were gradually erected around the city of Rousse, which formed two fortification belts, Fig. 2.

In Rousse, the beginning of organized shipping after the Liberation was established. With the small steamers donated by Russia, the “Danube Flotilla and Sea Unit” was created. The first commander of the flotilla was Captain Alexander Yegorovich Konkeyevich, who was later replaced by Captain Zinovi Rozhdestvensky [5]. A Naval School was opened here, which later moved to Varna together with the naval part of the flotilla. A little later, with the help of the private capital of Bulgarian bankers, a commercial fleet was created, which consisted of tugboats and barges. Buildings were built for the administration of the two fleets, which were part of the port complex. The “Danube Flotilla and Marine Unit” was housed in the purpose-built naval barracks, and the management of the merchant fleet was housed in the Customs and Port Authority building. The second building had an interesting structure – the architectural style was neoclassicism, and it also had commercial and warehouse premises. Today, all the buildings that are part of the Rousse–Zapad port complex have been preserved from the naval barracks complex. Their architectural style is neoclassicism with massive construction.

During this period, a port was built in the city of Rousse, capable of handling the increased commercial and economic needs of the city and the young state. It was a complex of buildings and facilities that covered the coastal area

from the mouth of the Rusenski Lom River to the Eastern Industrial Zone. Its construction began already at the time of Midhat Pasha (1864–1868), when research began at the mouth of the Rusenski Lom River to form a water basin where ships could unload their goods. Then the first crane for unloading ships in Bulgarian lands was installed, several warehouses for storing the unloaded products and a small ship repair workshop – its machines were driven by a steam engine. After the Liberation, more large-scale works on the construction of port facilities began. Two complete plans for the port complex were prepared by the Czech engineer Planichka in 1883 and by the French engineer Charles Guillaume in 1895. By the end of the First World War, quay walls connected with pontoons were built, several loading and unloading cranes were arranged at the mouth of the Rusenski Lom River and the island of “Sveti Matei”, a shipyard whose machines were driven by steam engines and sheds for storing the unloaded goods (The eastern industrial zone had its own port) [5]. The port administration was housed in a specially built building for the Customs. It was completed in 1902 and was a massive three-story brick building with attics in the neoclassical style. It later housed the management of the merchant fleet. Today, this building houses the Rousse Transport Hospital [6]. Thus, in the period from the Liberation to the end of the First World War, the coastal area of the city of Rousse was formed. The port complex was located there, which with its functions played an exceptional role in the commercial and industrial development of the city and the young Bulgarian state. Its buildings and facilities were modern for their time, where steam-powered machines played a major role.

New railway connections were built on the territory of the young Bulgarian state. Their goal was to facilitate the movement of cargo and raw materials from the Danube ports to the newly built industrial enterprises in the interior of the country. Another goal was the faster and more comfortable movement of passengers between major Bulgarian cities. Then the railway line Rousse – Gorna Oryahovitsa – Veliko Tarnovo was built, which was completed in 1902. In the same year, the “Haltata” railway station was also completed, which was located slightly to the west of today’s Central railway station [7]. It was connected to the old railway station by a bypass which ran past the Eastern Industrial Zone. Until the end of the First World War, the two railway stations were connected to the port complex by means of railway lines that skirted the peripheral areas of the city. In this way, the coastal area together with the railway stations and the railway lines between them formed the territorial appearance of the city of Rousse – this is how you could see how far the city territory reached by the end of the First World War.

3. INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE CITY

The Eastern Industrial Zone was built as a symbol of the nascent industrialization of the young Bulgarian state. It covered the area between today's Youth Park, Lipnik Blvd., the Danube River and today's Marten village. Four industrial enterprises were built in it at different times – the Trud brick factory (1893), the Persistence weaving factory (1905), the Mühlhaupt machine factory (1907) and the sugar factory (1912) [7]. This industrial area had a convenient connection with the old railway station and had its own port – as we mentioned earlier in this chapter this port was built by the owners of the sugar factory, but it was also used for the other enterprises. The cargo that was unloaded at the port was taken up the hill by means of cable railways. The buildings of the industrial enterprises in the zone were built with the use of modern construction solutions for that era, and their architecture was subordinated to the architectural styles ruling at that time in Central and Western Europe. The construction of the individual halls consisted of massive brickwork with evenly spaced window openings, which in some of the buildings was plainly exposed without plaster. The forms of the buildings were cleared of decoration, following some of the principles of Art Nouveau. The machines of the factories were driven by steam engines, so each enterprise had a tall chimney from which the steam came out. Through the old railway station, the production of industrial enterprises reached other Bulgarian cities, which had an impact on the economy of the young Bulgarian state. Some of the enterprises in this area had a significant impact on the architectural development of the city of Rousse after the Liberation – for example, the brick factory produced bricks that were used in the construction of buildings and facilities in the city.

During this period, many bank buildings, an insurance company building and the building of the first Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bulgaria were built in the city of Rousse. The elements of neoclassicism, neobaroque (Viennese) and secession styles are noticeable in their architecture. The details that decorated their facade from the main streets were supposed to symbolize the commercial prosperity of the company that owned the building. Most often, statues and stucco decorative elements of muses, winged Hermes, Mercury or some other god from ancient Greek and ancient Roman mythology were placed on the facade, combined with laurel wreaths and garlands. In some cases, such as the building of the representative office of the Bulgarian National Bank and the Balkan Bank, the facade was stripped of decorative elements. In this way, all the rigor of the building of the banking institution was emphasized. Thus, the architecture of the bank buildings, as well as the



Fig. 3. Bank DSK of Rousse

buildings of the insurance companies and the chamber of commerce and industry had an impact on the historical development of the city of Rousse, Fig. 3. The architects who worked in the city during the period from the Liberation to the end of the First World War used them as a model in the design of the residential and residential-commercial buildings and other facilities.

The architectural and construction reconstruction of the city of Rousse after the Liberation was helped by the economic and economic growth of its citizens and the influence that Central and Western Europe (primarily Austrian) had on the development of the city through the Danube River. In the second half of the 19th century, the self-confidence and economic strength of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie grew. The newly rich craftsman or merchant wanted to build a new house, in which there would be many rooms, and part of them should serve as a craft workshop and for storage rooms. The economic life of Rousse is directly related to its nodal geographical location, the Danube River and its rich agricultural surroundings. These factors create extremely favorable

conditions for the economic growth of the city, which significantly outstrips other Danube cities and establishes itself as an important center of trade and crafts.

4. ARCHITECTURE OF ROUSSE UNTIL THE END OF FIRST WORLD WAR

From the Liberation to the end of the First World War, the urban appearance of the city of Rousse was gradually changed from a typical oriental village to a modern European city with squares, parks and gardens. As can be seen from the city plan of engineer Todor Tonev, the primary and secondary street network was geometrically straight [8, 9]. The squares also had regular geometric shapes. From the old layout before the Liberation, the route of the old fortress wall has been preserved, from which today's "Tsar Osvoboditel" boulevard was formed. The central square, which was shaped into today's "Prince Alexander I Battenberg" square, was also preserved. This shows continuity with the old oriental settlement, from which the Calliope's house (today a museum of urban life), the old inn (today the Danube Craftsmen's Association) and the two mosques (Said Pasha Jamsi and Haji Mehmed Jamsi) are still preserved. The old central street of the Ottoman city of Ruschuk – Jami-i-Jedid, was also preserved, which was rebuilt into today's Aleksandrovska Street. At both ends of this street (today's Prince Alexander Battenberg Square and Alley Street) the buildings of the Public Institutions – power, army, education, topos of presence – were located. In the process of planning the urban fabric, the urban planning ideas of classicism, renaissance and baroque were applied, which brought the city of Rousse closer to most of the cities of Central and Western Europe, which were examples of the use of these stylistic currents in urban planning, Fig. 4. Following the example of Vienna, architectural ensembles were formed – these are the ensembles around Aleksandrovska, Knyazhevska, and Slavyanska Streets, the ensemble around today's Dr. Mustakov Square, the ensembles around today's Borisova and Nikolaevska Streets, the Jewish quarter, the Armenian quarter and others.

After the Liberation, the erasure of everything that connected the city of Rousse with the old oriental settlement began (as we have already pointed out, very few objects have been preserved from it today). Until 1893, the principles of neoclassicism and neo-renaissance were applied in the construction of new buildings and facilities, and after 1893, the principles of baroque, eclecticism and secession. The interesting here comes for the second period. Back then, the sides of the buildings facing the street or the square were decorated with

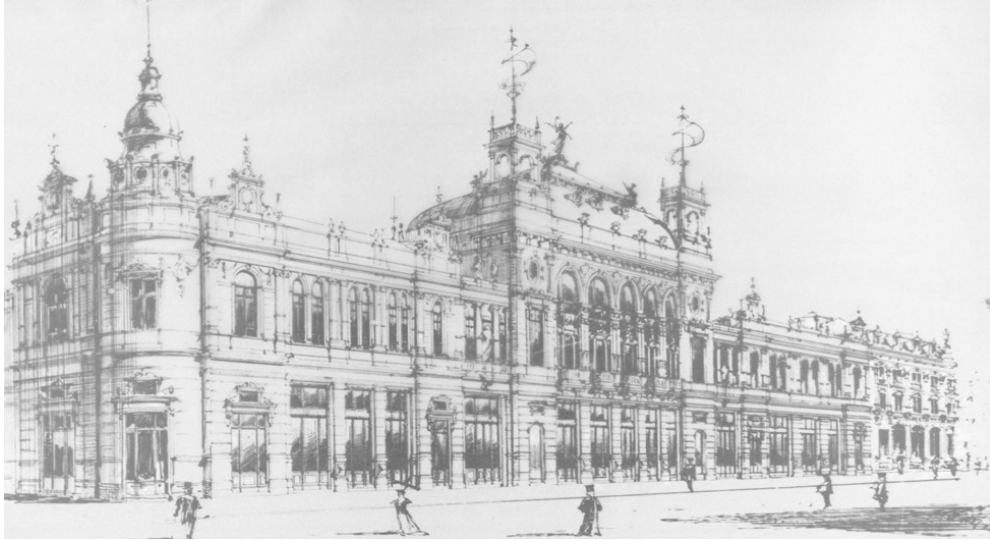


Fig. 4. Theater of Rousse

rich stone-plastic decoration that followed the principles of the three architectural styles mentioned. Depending on the type of buildings, this stone-plastic decoration had a certain symbolic meaning, Fig. 5. In residential and commercial buildings and some bank buildings, statues, busts and mascarons of Mercury, Venus and muses were placed on the facade, between the windows and the roof, as well as stucco-shaped garlands and laurel wreaths, which symbolized trade and financial success. At other bank buildings, as well as at the buildings of power, education, military, police, etc. the facade decoration was cleaned, which symbolized all the rigor of the establishment that owned the building. The owner's preferences influence the exterior (facade) and interior design of residential houses.

After the Liberation, many foreign architects and engineers worked in the city of Rousse. Many Bulgarian architects and engineers who completed their education abroad worked together with them or separately. Together they introduced the European architectural styles in the construction and territorial planning of the city. One of the most famous architects is Friedrich Grünanger, who studied under Prof. Friedrich von Schmitt at the specialized school of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1877–1879. He is a representative of late historicism, the eclectic style and Viennese Baroque and Secession. With the exception of the District Administration building, which was designed and built in the Neoclassical style, the rest of the buildings in

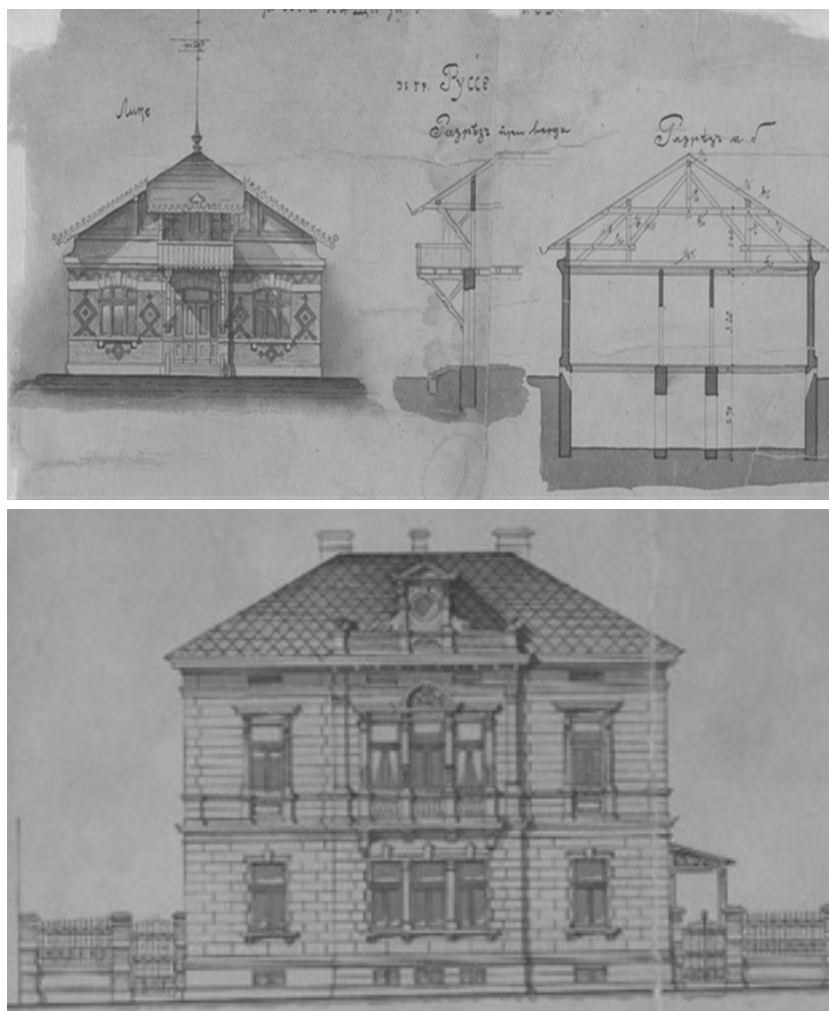


Fig. 5. Facades of old houses in the city of Rousse, [10]

Rousse designed by this architect were built using the Viennese Baroque and Eclectic styles [8]. Engineer Eduard Winter, who was the city engineer of Rousse, was a supporter of classicism in its later forms with richly detailed decoration on the facade, Fig. 6, [6]. Architect Petko Momchilov graduated from the Boys' High School in Varna in 1885 and worked as a teacher in the city until 1887. After studying in Munich, in 1892 he graduated from the University of Prague with a major in architecture. Apart from the designer of the Rousse Men's High School (today "Hristo Botev" Secondary School) Fig. 7,



Fig. 6. Decoration of the buildings in the city of Rousse



Fig. 7. Rousse Men's High School (today "Hristo Botev" Secondary School)

he is the author of architecture diverse in design and form, which stands out for its original artistic image and synthesis. His preferred architectural styles are Neoclassicism and Neo-Renaissance, often mixing them in the design of his buildings [8]. Architect Nikola Lazarov graduated in architecture as a



Fig. 8. Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
(today Rousse Regional Library “Lyuben Karavelov”) [10]

state scholarship holder in Paris. He first started working as an architect in maintenance of the government buildings in the principality, after which he opened a private architectural office in Sofia. From his studies in Paris, he adopted eclecticism with a massive form of buildings as his main style, which can be seen in the building he built for the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (today Rousse Regional Library “Lyuben Karavelov”) Fig. 8. The work of architect N. Lazarov was distinguished by rich stone-plastic decoration – baroque forms, arched pediments, towers, balustrades and others [8].

5. ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

After the signing of the Neue Peace Treaty on November 27, 1919, there was a decline in the socio-economic development of Bulgaria. Its overcoming absorbed the efforts of the Bulgarian rulers in the 20s to the mid-30s of the 20th century [11]. At the end of this period, there was a decline in the development of the city of Rousse due to its downgrading from a regional center to a municipal center [12]. The end of the First World War was also connected with waves of refugees to the territory of Bulgaria. Many refugees from Dobrudja, Thrace and Macedonia settled in Rousse. This required the municipal authorities to organize new neighborhoods for the settlement of the refugees. After 1935, with the election of engineer Kiril Startsev to the post of mayor and the restoration of Rousse's position as a regional center (July 16, 1941), a period of growth began. Two town planning plans were created – one from 1929 published by S. Simeonov and the other prepared in 1941. Some of the refugees were hired as workers in the Rousse industrial enterprises, which led to the construction of residential neighborhoods around the factories. An example of such a working-class residential neighborhood was the neighborhood next to the Sugar Factory.

The economic decline after the First World War in Bulgaria led to the entry of the ruling architectural styles in Europe at that time – late secession, art deco and modernism (functionalism and Bauhaus) [2]. They were applied by Bulgarian architects who completed their education abroad and mastered these styles to perfection, as well as by the few foreign architects who worked in Rousse during that period. During the period from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second World War, the municipal authorities and private entrepreneurs invited mostly Bulgarian architects. Responsible positions in the municipality related to the development of architecture and town planning were given to Bulgarians, and the few foreign architects and engineers who practiced in Rousse during that period worked at the invitation of private entrepreneurs.

During the period from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second World War, the City Garden, the City Park and the quay were rebuilt in a more modernist style in the spirit of the parks and gardens of Western Europe at that time, Figs 9 and 10. Places for trade and leisure have formed. The park, the garden and the quay have become a favorite place for residents of Rousse to spend their free time.

After the advent of socialism, along with the construction of modern buildings and facilities, efforts were made to preserve and rehabilitate the cultural



Fig. 9. City Garden with the Liberty Statue of Rousse



Fig. 10. City Park in Rousse

and historical heritage. After the Republic of Bulgaria became a full member of the European Union on January 1, 2007, with the help of funds earned un-

der European projects and programs, the Municipality of Rousse implemented several projects related to the rehabilitation of architectural ensembles and the restoration and conservation of several buildings and archaeological sites. After November 10, 1989, the share of private investors in cultural and historical heritage protection activities increased. All actions in the field of cultural heritage protection on the territory of the Municipality of Rousse are coordinated with the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute of National Statistics. These actions continue to this day.

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