

HOUSE OF REVOLUTION

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One of the biggest, memorial buildings in former Yugoslavia, was the House of Revolution, whose construction began on 18.09.1977 in Nikšić, republic of Montenegro.

The project was planned by Slovenian architect Marko Mušič, who won in the architectural competition in 1976. A room-sized model of Mušič's House of Revolution was shown at the Montenegro Pavilion during the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014, in an exhibition highlighting the late-Modernist architecture of former Yugoslavia.

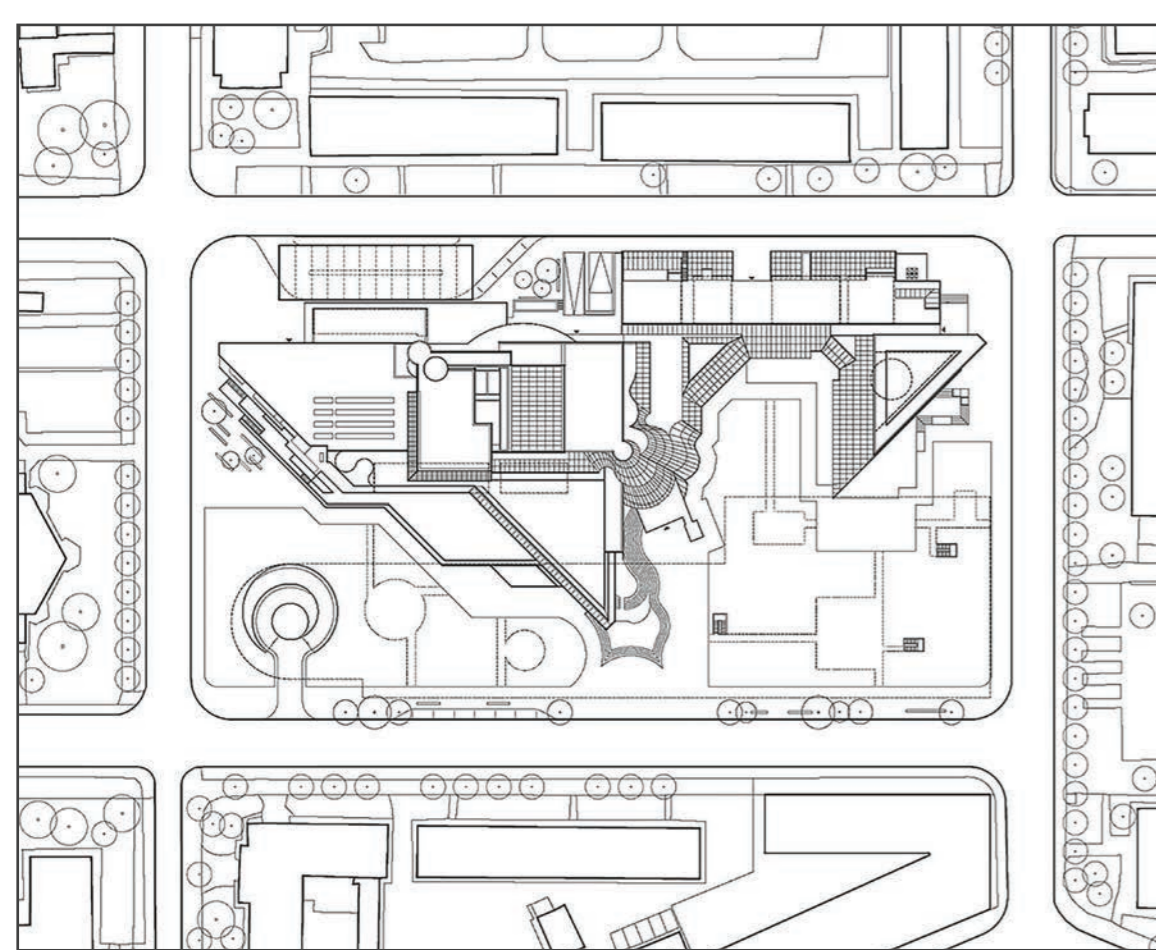
In the former Yugoslavia during the 70's, it was common to build memorial monuments and buildings. One of those is the House of Revolution, the project in which the politicians had trusted.



A memorial centre celebrating Yugoslav unity and the efforts of the socialist revolution
Memorial building House of Revolution, an Indicator of Urban Identity Transformation of Nikšić city, 2015



View from the top of the building, with red metal trusses that made a concrete structure, and all of that was covered by a shell of blue, bright and crystal glass.



Situation plan - House of Revolution, Nikšić



Broken glass and gentries on the ground floor plaza, Nikšić

CONSTRUCTION PLAN

The building has a combined role. It's a memorial, massive building dedicated to liberation struggles of partisans who died in WWII, and also a cultural center. The Home of Revolution symbolically represented the spirit and unity of Yugoslavia. During construction, the building has become one of the main elements of urban identity and pride of all citizens. As a monument, the House of Revolution wouldn't be a mournful memento, but rather this structure should represent the future and power.

The original plan provided that it should have 7 000 square meters, but because of the request of political structures, its size grew to 22 000 square meters (imagine three football pitches, lined up side-by-side, and filled with concrete shapes stacked up to a dizzying height). It ran to a cost equivalent to €25 million by today's rates.

More than 400 tons of steel went into the project (it was possible to make 3000 comfortable apartments or 50 buildings of 14 floors), as well as red metal trusses that would support a concrete superstructure, and all of it was covered by a shell of bright blue glass. The project anticipated that the building could accommodate 7 000 visitors (which at that time represented a quarter of the population of the city). The building was designed to have the following facilities: a large amphitheater with 1 000 seats, cinema, halls, radio and TV centers, libraries, art studios, galleries, restaurants.

TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY OVER TIME

Not long after Tito's death, when was the so-called anti bureaucratic revolution started in 1989, with an economic crisis that will lead to the gradual suspension of the construction. It is very likely that the construction would never had been finished as projected anyway due to its colossal increase in size and costs.

Over time, blue glass disappeared which has coated the building and then lowered steel elements. There was water and groundwater that flooded most of the basement rooms. Building has become a place for the homeless. The building has been called a "deathtrap," and "source of infection," and branded as a no-go zone frequented by drug addicts and criminals. The building had claimed the lives of 16 people, and then the 'House of Revolution' got the nickname 'House of Death' – a sad antithesis of everything the original design concept had stood for.

OPINION OF CITIZENS

Even today there are different opinions about the building. A large number of citizens think that this building should be demolished although in the construction of this building participated these same people who for decades have been giving the 3% of their salary as a contribution to construction. However, many citizens are

aware of the historical value that this project had and they agree that the building should be completed.

RENOVATION

The building wasn't finished and never used, until 2018, when its renovation began. In 2015, there was an International competition for the Architectural solution of reconstruction, and the authors SADAR+VUGA (Slovenia) and HHF Architekten (Switzerland) won. The intention isn't to reincarnate what House of Revolution was supposed to be, originally, but to redefine it as an important node within the city landscape. This means that 10% of the surface of the object will be used for different contents and activities, 20% will be public promenades and 70% will be closed for public.

Time will show what the fate of the House of Revolution will be.



House of Revolution in reconstruction progress, Nikšić 2021