

ART NUOVEAU ARCHITECTURE IN SUBOTICA – THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPETITIVE PRODUCT IN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT: *Subotica, a city in the heart of the Pannonian basin, is famous for its exceptional cultural heritage in the style of Hungarian version of Art Nouveau. Art Nouveau is a specific artistic movement which developed as an opposition to the existing, officially recognized forms of art and is visible in the architecture in Subotica. There are more than 41 buildings in Subotica that were built in the style of Art Nouveau and the most famous are City Hall, Ferenc Raichle family palace and Synagogue. Secession is very often referred to as Art Nouveau, and its main representatives in the architecture of Subotica were Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab, Ferenc Raichle and Titus Mačkovič. The analysis of the factors of importance for the development of tourism (uniqueness, coherency, branding, positioning, infrastructure, partnerships, marketing and tourism organization, interpretation and sustainability) comes to the conclusion that secession can, and should be the primary initiator of tourism development in Subotica, given its attractiveness and value. Secession is the last universal artistic movement that was able to add its own mark to the architecture of Subotica, and thus determine the future direction of the development of cultural tourism in the city.*

Key words: *secession, Subotica, cultural tourism, brand, architecture*

INTRODUCTION

Subotica, a city in north Bačka, in the heart of the Panonian basin, is well-known for its cultural heritage, richly decorated buildings and its multicultural spirit that makes it different.

For a long time Subotica was on the border of two powerful empires, Hungary and Turkey. Subotica began to develop after it lost its military significance. In 1779. the city became a free royal city and received greater autonomy and privileges. In the second half

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Map 1. Geographic position of Subotica
(Source: www.visitsubotica.rs)

of the nineteenth century, after the city was connected via railway, trade in agricultural and livestock products began to develop rapidly. Industrialization began in the late nineteenth century and Subotica became a modern Central European city.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, developments in Europe accelerated, especially in the field of art, science and life, and these changes arrived to Subotica through Budapest. The importance of architecture became a priority, due to the period of peace and economic prosperity of the town. The changes that came from Europe were incorporated in the architecture of Subotica, but were further developed in two directions, one that turns to European cities such as Vienna, Munich, Paris and London, and the other, more dominant one, national Hungarian Art Nouveau. New architectural styles came to Subotica and left their mark, which proves to its citizens and visitors the rich history of architecture (Jovičić and Banjanin, 2013).

THE BEGINNINGS OF ART NOUVEAU IN EUROPE

Secession can be viewed from two different aspects, as a special art movement in Europe that occurred at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century and brought together artists of various stylistic choices that often organized various exhi-

bitions of its members. Another aspect of the idea of secession is the observation of secession as an artistic direction that is reflected primarily in the arts of architecture, painting and sculpture, but left a clear mark in the decorative and applied arts, and was created as an opposition against the current, officially recognized stylistic preferences in painting and applied art. The first “secession” was founded in Munich in 1892 under the leadership of Pike, Trübner and Uhde. The Vienna Secession was formed, in 1895 and was led by Alt and Klimt, and in 1899 Berlin Secession with Lieberman at the head (Vasović, 2005).

Secession is often referred to as the Art Nouveau style, and its name derives from “La Maison de l’Art Nouveau”, shops and galleries that were opened in Paris in 1895 by Samuel Bing.

The characteristic feature of this movement was the tendency towards excessive decoration, linear ornamentation in architecture in combination with a simplified geometric forms. Stylized floral decoration dominates as an ornamental motif.

ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE IN SUBOTICA

Secession has left its own mark on all areas of art and modern life, seeking inspiration in Egyptian, Indian, Japanese and Celtic art, the art of the Middle Ages on the one hand and the floral motifs on the other.

In search for national characteristics by studying traditional architecture, Hungarian Secession created a distinctive architectural style that has gotten its final form only by hiring architects from Budapest, which brought the spirit of the metropolis to Subotica. Big wish of the residents of Subotica and a great inspiration of builders who have raised a number of Art Nouveau buildings, resulted in the creation works that remain after a century, are equally beautiful and attract the attention of tourists. It is evident that the architecture built and decorated in the Art Nouveau style is not unique, but they belong to varieties of Viennese and Hungarian Art Nouveau. The Vienna Secession in architecture is focused on pure geometric forms. The buildings that were built in this style were often decorated with linear designs. On the other hand, the Hungarian version is inspired by Indian and Syrian architecture, and later by traditional Hungarian folk art. Ödön Lechner, who is considered as the founder of this movement in Hungary, has managed to unite all the aspects in the unique style - Hungarian Secession.

The architects that contributed most to the arrival of secession art to Subotica were Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab, Ferenc Raichle, brothers József and László Vágó and Pal Vadas, while local architect Titus Mačković and Mátyás Salga supported these trends.

Although the number of objects that they projected in Subotica is not large, the quality of the architectural achievements made by architects from Budapest Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab led to the fact that these objects became the symbols of Subotica. The duo has designed buildings all over Hungary until the end of the war in 1918. They were students and followers of the founder of the Hungarian Secession, Ödön Lechner. Marcell Komor was the project manager, in charge of building the concept, organization of

space, function and structure, and Dezső Jakab designed interior down to the smallest details (Jovičić and Banjanin, 2013).

Magnificent buildings projected by these prominent architects from Budapest are the City Hall, the Synagogue, Subotica Savings Bank Palace as well as the complex of buildings in Palić.

Ferenc Raichle, also a follower of Hungarian Art Nouveau, moved from Budapest to Subotica in 1896. Fulfilling the desires of his clients, his first projects were not performed in the style of Art Nouveau. He has designed numerous public and private buildings, and his family palace is the most beautiful among them. Unfortunately, Raichle did not enjoy his work for long, because after four years of construction, in 1908, the palace was confiscated by the bank and the architect was forced to leave Subotica.

In Subotica there are a number of buildings built in the Art Nouveau style, and it is particularly interesting to note that some of the architectural designs were created in a way that both the interior and exterior were made in the same style, as a unique work of art that that also called the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Buildings in the Art Nouveau style in Subotica are located on the cultural tourist route created by the Tourist Organization of the city, and was created as a part of the on the International IPA cross-border cooperation project between Hungary and Serbia. The most significant buildings¹ on this route which have the potential to assist in positioning the city of Subotica as secession of tourism will be additionally explained below.

Secession entered Subotica with the construction of the **Leović tenement palace** in 1893, and this palace is the first stop on this cultural route. According to the project by Ödön Lechner and Gyla Partos in 1893, the house was built for the royal notary Simeon Leović in the alley in front of the newly formed railway station, in the style of Art Nouveau. Symmetry and the monumental dimensions of the neighboring buildings further emphasized the dimension and asymmetry of the Leović palace, which is particularly emphasized by a marginal octagonal tower with lantern. Flat surface, double windows, the colors, new materials and playful roofs are the part of this monumental building. The beauty of the natural materials that were used for the palace is noteworthy, as the facade is made of yellow bricks, while the roof is covered with Zsolnay tiles (Aladžić et al., 2002).

The next building on the cultural route is the **Ferenc Raichle family palace**.

For his future home, architect Ferenc Raichle selected the most beautiful location, in the alley, just in front of the railway station. Raichle Palace was built between 1903 and 1904, and in its construction Ferenc Raichle has invested all his capital and creative potential, but soon after the end of construction he went bankrupt, in 1908. The court seized his assets and displayed them in the auction. The house was bought by Theresa Hartman, who bought it for his son, who soon sold it to Emil Schosenberger.

Since 1949, City Museum was finally set in this palace. In 1970 the building became the Contemporary Art Gallery “Art Encounters” (Martinović Cvijin, 1985).

¹ The listed buildings that are a part of the cultural route “The route of Secession” are the most interesting spots that tourist often visit in Subotica.

Table 1. The list of secession buildings in Subotica

1.	City Hall
2.	Synagogue
3.	Raichle family palace
4.	Town Tenement palace
5.	The building of the music school
6.	Subotica savings bank palace
7.	Lajos Fazekas tenement palace
8.	Simeon Leović tenement palace
9.	Golden Lamb hotel palace
10.	Aloiz Poljaković tenement palace
11.	The twins palace
12.	Marko Batić family palace
13.	Jewish church municipality palace
14.	Austro-Hungarian Bank palace
15.	Hungarian General credit bank palace
16.	Lončarević family palace
17.	The building of the technical school
18.	Sava Međanski family palace
19.	Jozef Ungar tenement palace
20.	Ernest Lendvai tenement palace
21.	Mano Sugar tenement palace
22.	Ignac Fridman tenement palace
23.	József Roznófszky tenement palace
24.	Miksa Dömötör tenement palace
25.	Gyla Vali tenement palace
26.	Tereza Vojnić Hajduk tenement palace
27.	Piroška Vojnić Zelić tenement palace
28.	Adolf Gross family palace
29.	Stipan Peić Tukuljac tenement palace
30.	Heinrick Lehrer family palace
31.	Klara Parčetić tenement palace
32.	Geza Klein tenement palace
33.	Matyas Salga family palace
34.	Antal Morvai family palace
35.	Gyergy Santa sanatorium
36.	Mill
37.	Milan Ogranjov Jr. tenement palace
38.	Nepkor building
39.	Ferenc Nagy tenement palace
40.	Building of the Main office of Subotica electric tram
41.	Raichle tilery

Source: Organization for cultural tourism „Bogaz”



Picture 1. The Raichle Palace

(Source: http://www.citymagazine.rs/img/cms/Rajhlova_palata.jpg)

The rich use of the decorative motifs of Hungarian folk art is evident in the facade where the condensed mosaic floral decorations are done in blue on a flat wall surface. Corrugated fences and wreaths of Zsolnay ceramics terracotta color are also visible on the facade. The palace was restored in 2004 and the backyard façade was lighted. In the same year, the city has provided fundings for the restoration of the front part of the building, toward the Ferenc Raichle park. The restoration was completed in 2005, when one century of the building was celebrated.

Continuing the walk on this cultural route, on the way to the town square, one comes to the building of **Subotica Savings Bank Palace**, located on the main promenade. The facility was designed by the Budapest architects Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab in 1907 in Hungarian Art Nouveau style. The facade of the building was restored in 1992. The main purpose of this building can be seen in the symbols on the facade: the squirrel - a symbol of diligence, the beehive - a symbol of frugality, and owls - symbol of wisdom. The facade is bent around the corner, and the floor is decorated with motifs inspired by decorative ceramic folk art and stone carvings. Large glass surface instead of solid ground were applied to this building for the first time in Subotica. However, the greatest value of this building is simply in its beauty, in the fact that every color and every ornament is well thought of (Jovičić and Banjanin, 2013).

Across from the Subotica Savings Bank Palace is the building of the **Golden Lamb hotel palace**, built in the nineteenth century. The palace was adapted to the style of the Munich Art Nouveau - Jugendstil in 1904, by the local architect Titus Mačković. In the



Picture 2. Subotica Savings Bank Palace

(Source: [www. http://farm6.staticflickr.com/5108/5880421261_4fd5bbega4_b.jpg](http://farm6.staticflickr.com/5108/5880421261_4fd5bbega4_b.jpg))

eighties of the XX century, the building was demolished and then re-built, according to the project of the old one. Army House headquarters were seated in this building for many years (Jovičić and Banjanin, 2013).

Town tenement palace was projected in the spirit of the Vienna Secession, with the creativity that stands out from all other buildings in the city. Its author is the architect Pal Vadas, who developed a modern concept, simplified forms, design and choice of the materials that were used for the construction of this building and make it aesthetically valuable. Calmness of geometric Art Nouveau is reduces with the human figures on a gold background, subtle mosaics with stylized representations of birds, and masks made of wrought iron - a direct effect of Viennese painters and architects from the turn of the century (IPA cross-border cooperation programme - Art Nouveau in Subotica and Szeged, 2012).

Today, on the ground floor of this building there is a pastry shop Ravel, where time has stopped and where the spirit of the good old days can still be felt.

Unlike many European cities, the center of Subotica is not dominated by the cathedral or church, but **City Hall**. Because of its location, size and decorative architecture of the Hungarian Secession, City Hall has become a symbol of Subotica.

The Subotica Senate invited tenders for the construction of the new Town Hall in 1906. The old Town Hall was built in Baroque style in the early nineteenth century. It was very old and dilapidated, and the mayor Karoly Buro advocated the construction of a new building.

After being informed about the requirements and wishes of the mayor, Budapest architects Marcell Komor and Dezsó Jakab made a project in the style of Hungarian Secession and the further arrangements were made in order to build a new facility in exactly same style (Martinović Cvijin, 1985).

Marcell Komor and Dezsó Jakab made a unique fusion of architecture and art. The planners divided the tasks so that Komor was in charge of the structure and function of the building and its specific purposes, while Jakab was responsible for the interior design.

It was built between in 1908 and 1910, and the interior was completed in 1912. It occupies an area of nearly 6000 square meters. The tower is 76 m high, and the viewpoint is at a height of 45.5 m.



Picture 3. City hall

(Photo: Igor Marinović, Subotica)

Subotica City Hall has four entrances. The lacy patterned iron ceremonial portal leads to the entrance hall and luxurious staircase, which leads to the first, representative floor. The walls are covered with carved, wooden paneling and brass fittings, lamps and other details are bright accents of warm brown wood. All decorations rely on the treasure of Hungarian folklore and basic motif is a tulip flower (Duranci, 2005).

The City Hall was declared as a monument of culture on March 14th 1967, and by the decision of the Parliament of Serbia (R.S. nr.16) from March 3rd 1991 the monument got the status of special importance (Krstić, 1999).

It is important to mention the Subotica City Hall tower and lookout, located below it. The tower is an object that can be seen even from the highest building in Subotica, and lookout provides a remarkable and spectacular view of the entire city.

The Palace of the Hungarian General Credit Bank is located in the city center, in the old town, in the Square of the Republic No. 2. It was built in 1911, in the geometric style of the Vienna Secession, designed by architect Alfred Hajos from Budapest. Although the palace was large and situated in an excellent location, compared to the City Hall and the large square, it remains unnoticed (Aladžić et al, 2002).

Dušan Stojković palace or Lončarević house was built in the early nineteenth century. Its existing appearance is credited to the architect Geza Cube, who restored the facade of the palace and designed in the style of the Vienna Secession in 1907. Although he was a faithful representative of the Renaissance in Subotica, this palace is one of his most beautiful works. The most interesting decorative element of this palace is the angular window at the corner of the building, that is rested on a shell. After the renovation, the building has given a new function and it became a restaurant (Jovičić and Banjanin, 2013).

Austro-Hungarian Bank palace was projected by renowned architect Ferenc Raichle in 1901. It is a one floor, massive building, built with the intention to give the impression of security and stability. The impact of secession can be seen in a variety of decorative elements, such as the female face, head of Mercury, sunflower blossoms, hives, key and door handle in the shape of sphinxes. These motifs symbolically convey messages about wealth, security and confidentiality (Duranci, 1983).

Miksa Dömötör tenement palace was one of the first tenement palaces with geometric elements of the Vienna Secession in Subotica. It was built in 1906 by brothers József and László Vágó, famous architects from Budapest. It was ordered by Dr Miksa Dömötör, a physician and prominent figure, who wanted it to his family palace and office. Palace is a remarkable blend of functional and artistically designed space, and for the time it was built, it contained all of the existing comfort. On the ground floor, right of the entrance, there were two stores, followed by a printing company. To the left there was a sumptuous five-room apartment of the owners and office, and upstairs there were two similar apartments for rent. The symbol of the architects, brothers Vágó, was a bird motif, and it can be seen in this building as well. The most noticeable is the wrought iron gate that decorates the balcony on the first floor, where two birds facing each other (Duranci, 1983).

Six decades later, this palace was the home of the printing company, until 2008, when it has been restored and the City Museum of Subotica was established in it.

Last in the series of structures located on the cultural route is Subotica **Synagogue**.

Architects from Budapest, Komor and Jakab, were chosen for the construction of a magnificent and unique building of Synagogue in 1902. Plans for the building were presented in 1899 on a competition in Szeged. Construction works began in 1901 and already in 1902 the building was fully completed (Aladžić et al, 2002).

In addition to its artistic and aesthetic value, it is exceptional because it is the only Synagogue in Europe, which has elements of the Hungarian Secession. Four smaller domes symbolize the four corners of the world, while the large dome symbolizes the universe. The external height of the building is 40 m, while the height of the interior



Picture 4. Synagoge
(Source: www.subotica.com)

space 23 m. Central dome is carried by the steel beams covered with ornamental plaster elements, which was a part of the new architectural design. That harmony of its construction and decoration makes the Synagogue as one of the finest examples of Art Nouveau. Floral decoration, typical for this style, is presented in the form of a peacock's feather, tulips, roses and lilies, and is present as well as on the facade, and in the interior of the Synagogue (Martinović Cvijin, 1988).

After the World War II, a small number of Subotica Jews that survived could not meet or maintain the facility. In 1976, the Synagogue was passed into the hands of the city. Until the end of the eighties, theatrical performances were held in the Synagogue. Today, though dilapidated, it is still magnificent and beautiful. In recent decades Synagogue is slowly being renovated.

Expert Committee of UNESCO proposed in 1989 that the building of Synagogue should be included in the World Heritage List, and the Republic of Serbia declared it a cultural monument of exceptional importance in 1990.

Komor and Jakab used the most revolutionary way to connect architecture measured by European standards with traditional ornaments of this region.

FACTORS OF FEASIBILITY OF A TOURISM PRODUCT BASED ON ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE IN SUBOTICA

The modern world has become a global market where they are no longer just competing producers of goods and services, but also countries, regions and cities fighting each other for their share of the market and its share of the funds that will be invested or spent on tourist trips.

As the city of Subotica has over ten buildings built in the Art Nouveau style, it is possible to build up their image by putting emphasis on them.

In accordance with the existing practice in the world when it comes to the field of development and management of cultural heritage as a tourism product, also looking at general trends in tourism in Europe and the world, especially those that have an impact on cultural tourism, it can be concluded that the key factors of successful tourism product based on secession in Subotica are the following:

- **Uniqueness:** Uniqueness refers to everything that makes one area different from the other, giving it a unique selling position. As there are no cities whose offer is based solely on secession (except Szeged), this product is both authentic, which also contributes to creating a brand based on secession.
- **Connectivity:** Art Nouveau heritage attractions in Bačka and neighboring Hungary, conditionally speaking, are spatially relatively close. Because they are not the sites that are world famous brands, then they themselves are not sufficient to attract large numbers of visitors (except the City Hall), since the current situation shows that there is not enough interest of tourists, and many of them still do not know it exists. Grouping in a joint bid, networking and connectivity of the attractions (such as, for example, cultural route "Secession in Subotica", which includes 14 buildings built in this style, or the route that includes the art nouveau buildings

in Palić), provided that they collectively become interesting enough to attract visitors, and to benefit from a joint approach to the market (with particular emphasis on marketing).

- **Branding:** Branding is a very important element for further product development. The main goal of destination branding is to differentiate it from the competition by making the consumer take the stage from ignorance to visit the destination and later re-visit destination. To achieve its goal it is necessary to develop awareness and recognition of potential visitors and create a positive image in their minds through a strong brand identity (Čugurović, 2011). If properly applied, branding gives a certain guarantee, a promise in the field of character of the heritage experience, or what kind of quality, content and depth of experience the visitor can expect. In the process of creating a brand of Subotica based on secession, it is very important to point out its main advantages, which entail that the brand in general could be based on it. Secession in Subotica is a very strong tourism product with a very broad influence and, as such, is the thing most tourists recognize the city from. Hungarian Secession, which dominates the city, contributes to the fact that Subotica has the name “city of secession”.
- **Positioning:** Within the radius of only 100 km there are three cities (Novi Sad, Sombor and Szeged) whose architecture has the traces of secession, but only the secession in Subotica is present in such an extent that it becomes synonymous with the city. As a major competitor, Szeged in Hungary, threatens to create a brand based on secession. Under the IPA cross-border cooperation programme, that links these cities in a cultural route, the mutual competitiveness is reduced. Joint market appearance increases the chance for success, because of the broader scope of activities and influence. Although there are significant benefits from this project, Subotica should act beyond it as well. The necessity of self-promotion as the city of secession stems from the fact that many buildings in the city center are built in this style, and it is therefore a sufficient reason for its tourism development through secession.
- **Infrastructure:** The quality of tourism infrastructure and superstructure in the center of the city, and the quality of the transport network is an important factor which potential tourists use to create a picture of Subotica. Access roads are of an excellent quality and the proximity of the E -75 and nearness of the border with Hungary contribute to this image. In addition, the streets in the city center meet the requirements of tourists.
- **Partnership:** IPA cross-border cooperation programme leads to the development of partnerships between Subotica and Szeged, cities of secession. Cities are connected into a route called “Art Nouveau in Subotica and Szeged” and have a joint appearance at the tourist market.
- **The organization of tourism and marketing:** Tourist Organization of Subotica should have a key role in the development of tourism in Subotica based on secession. They have published extensive publications in the form of guides in Serbian, Hungarian, English, German and Russian language, intended for tourists. Art Nouveau buildings are represented in these publications, as well as the two pro-

posed routes that would take tourists to these buildings. Tourist organization represent itself on the foreign market mainly independently and emphasis is on secession as the main product of Subotica.

- **Interpretation:** The presentation of cultural tourism requires a special approach to the tourists, so that they could have unforgettable experiences. Objects in the Art Nouveau style must be presented by a professional staff, whether in terms of art historians or local tour guides.
- **Sustainability:** it is necessary to harmonize the requirements of all stakeholders and create a tourism product for a clear strategic plan, because the sustainable development implies the preservation of the cultural heritage community. It is certainly important that the level of the awareness of the importance of preserving and building in general is big, and therefore for the structures built in the Art Nouveau style as well. In recent years, a great deal has been invested in the rehabilitation of buildings in the Art Nouveau style, as it is characterized by the vibrancy and diversity of color, all in order to attract more tourists.

CONCLUSION

Architectural heritage of Subotica is worth keeping and compliance. Comparing modern architectural buildings with buildings in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is clear that modern buildings lack the spirit of tradition and authentic image that the latter buildings possess. Searching for national characteristics, studying folklore and folk architecture, Hungarian Secession has created a signature architectural language.

There are over 41 buildings built in the Art Nouveau style in Subotica, and the most notable are the City Hall, Ferenc Raichle family palace, the Synagogue and others.

Tourist organization is aware of the importance of secession as a factor of development of tourism in the city, and therefore it makes numerous efforts so the city can be recognized as a city of Art Nouveau.

With the analysis of factors that are important for the development of tourism (uniqueness, connectivity, branding, positioning, infrastructure, partnerships, marketing and tourism organization, interpretation and sustainability), comes the conclusion that secession can, and should be the primary element of tourism in Subotica, given its attractiveness and value. In the future, it is necessary to offer tourists a greater extent directed towards the international market, since the secession, as artistic direction, is present in Europe, so we can expect that foreign visitors are familiar with it. It is necessary to act at the local level, especially to educate the population, so that they can become aware of the wealth that surrounds them.

Secession is the last universal artistic movement that was able to bring its own mark to the architecture of Subotica, and thus determined the future direction of the development of cultural tourism in the city.

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