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**ЗЛАТКО УГЉЕН У ТУЗЛИ:  
ПРИЛОГ РАЗМАТРАЊУ  
АРХИТЕКТУРЕ  
САМОСТАНА И ЦРКВЕ  
СВЕТИХ ПЕТРА И ПАВЛА**

**ZLATKO UGLJEN IN TUZLA: A  
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## ZLATKO UGLJEN IN TUZLA: A CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSION ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONVENT AND CHURCH OF SAINT PETER AND PAUL

### **ABSTRACT**

The work deals with the architecture of the Franciscan convent and church of Saint Peter and Paul in Tuzla – a complex built during the 80s of the XX century, according to a project done by one of the most prominent domestic architects, the academician Zlatko Ugljen. Although the Franciscan convent existed in Tuzla even earlier, the site of the contemporary complex is entirely new, which allowed Ugljen to produce a new language in architecture and the identity of the place, unburdened by the historical legacy.

After the introductory historical discussion, the work addresses several proposed solutions, and afterwards the developed project, as well as its transformation and changes throughout the time, up until nowadays. Besides that, short review on the interior design and artistic decoration of the complex is presented. Work also gives short insight on the important Ugljen's projects, with the aim of correct positioning of this project within the rich author's opus.

**Key words:** *sacred architecture, Franciscans, Tuzla, Zlatko Ugljen*

## ZLATKO UGLJEN U TUZLI: ПРИЛОГ РАЗМАТРАЊУ АРХИТЕКТУРЕ САМОСТАНА И ЦРКВЕ СВЕТИХ ПЕТРА И ПАВЛА

### **АПСТРАКТ**

Рад се бави архитектуром фрањевачког самостана и цркве Светих Петра и Павла у Тузли, комплексу изграђеном 80-их година XX вијека по пројекту једног од најпроминентнијих домаћих архитеката, академика Златка Угљена. Иако је фрањевачки самостан у Тузли постојао и раније, локација савременог комплекса је потпуно нова, што је и омогућило архитекти Угљену да успостави нову језичку симболику архитектуре и идентитет мјеста, неоптерећене бременом историје.

Након уводних историјских разматрања, рад се концентрише на више идејних, а потом и на изведено рјешење, те његов развој и трансформацију кроз вријеме, све до данас. Такође, презентован је и кратак осврт на унутрашње архитектонско и умјетничко рјешење комплекса. Рад пружа и кратак увид у значајне пројекте архитектке Угљена, с циљем адекватног позиционирања овог остварења у његовом богатом стваралачком опусу.

**Кључне ријечи:** *сакрална архитектура, фрањевци, Тузла, Златко Угљен*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Town of Tuzla, formerly known as Soli, domestic word for salt, is famous for its salt reserves spread all over the town. During the time, huge excavation of the salt layers led to uneven soil subsidence. It caused irreversible process of many building demolitions, one of which will later be the parish church in Tuzla.

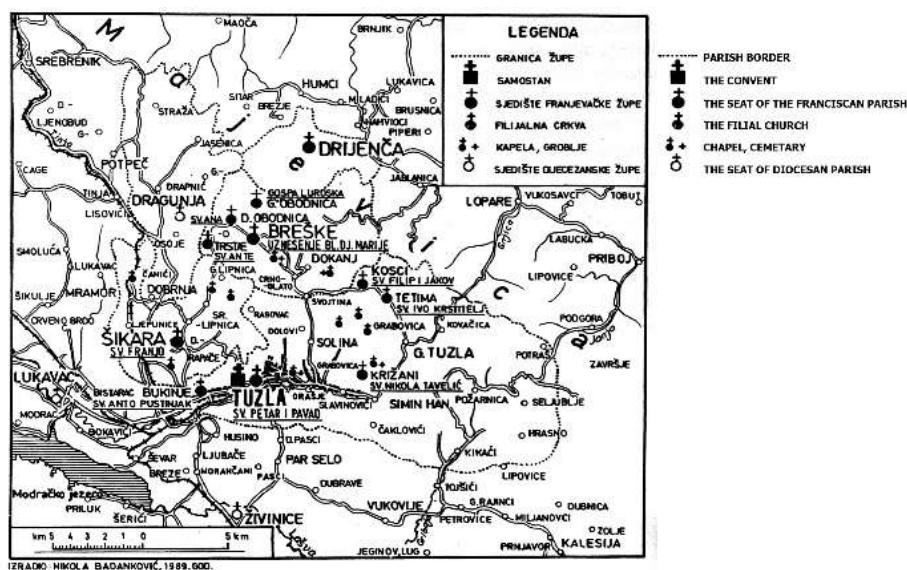


Illustration 1. Convent area Tuzla with belonging parishes. Map done by Nikola Badanković 1989 [1:209]

Just like for the other convents in Bosnia, at the turn of the authorities, in the XIV and XV century, rather few certain evidences regarding the founding of the exact convents exist. Many lead to the existence of the Franciscan convent in Tuzla as early as at the end of the XIV or at latest in the beginning of the XV century. Even some historians mentioned convents in Gornji and Donji Soli, corresponding to Gornja and Donja Tuzla today. Both convents were first mentioned in written sources in 1506, later in 1514 only the convent in Gornja Tuzla, and in Ottoman documents, a church in Donja Tuzla were mentioned in 1533, and in 1548 both the convent and the parish church devoted to Saint Peter. [1:201]

By the beginning of the XVI century, many Franciscan convents in this part of Bosnia were ruined, causing the great migration of the Catholics. Friars from Zvornik, on the very border to the former Serbian Kingdom, moved to Gradovrh along with their brothers from Gornja Tuzla. Some sources even refer to the convent in Gradovrh, as the convent in Gornja Tuzla, which is not the truth. The Franciscans stood there until the beginning of the Siege of Vienna in 1683, when they were all compelled to move to Bač, Danube-based town in Serbia today. [1:202]

A similar situation was for the friars in the convent in Donja Tuzla. In 1570, they moved to the convent of Saint Elias in Modriča, but returned shortly after. In 1580, the convent was burned to the ground, but luckily soon after restored. The Siege of Vienna was the ultimate challenge for the Franciscans and Catholics, in general, as they were ought to move to free Croatian lands. [1:202-3]

The convent area Tuzla currently holds parishes, besides the homonymous parish in the seat of the convent, in Breške, Drijenča, Šikara, and Zvornik-Srebrenica.

The complex of the Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul is located in downtown of Tuzla, town in the northeastern part of central Bosnia. The site's address is Franjevačka 26, and is situated nearby the Jala River, surrounded with streets Franjevačka, Hendek, and Fra Grge Martića.

The Convent belongs to the Franciscan Province OFM Bosna Argentina, with the seat in Sarajevo, and the Parish Church is under the jurisdiction of Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vrhbosna, also with the seat in Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. (*Illustration 1*)

## 2. CONVENT OF SAINT PETER AND PAUL

The history of the convent is not less tumbling than the rest of the Franciscan activities in Tuzla. After the period of discontinuity in the existence, the parish house was constructed in 1899, as the predecessor of the convent that will later be revived. Communist regime took over the facility after WWII. After fierce struggles, Franciscan authorities managed to inscribe their residence in Tuzla as the official, canonically established convent in 1964, and move back to the old building. [1:204]

The seat of the convent was relocated to the new complex in 1986. The local authorities took over the old building again, marking the new milestone in the history of the Convent of Saint Peter and Paul in Tuzla. Ever since, the new complex, built on the other site, will become the visual symbol of the Franciscan presence in Tuzla.

## 3. PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT PETER AND PAUL

Just in the XVIII century, the Franciscans had succeeded in return to Tuzla, and reorganized their pastoral activities; that produced the only active parish in the whole northeastern Bosnia at the beginning of the XVII century. After decades of moving from one to another home of parishioners living in Tuzla, the parish seat was finally moved to its own house, in Tuzla downtown in 1852. The parish church was constructed in Trnovac, in the suburbs of Tuzla, as Ottoman authorities did not allow the construction works on the location of the former convent. It was built in 1871-1872, according to project done by the local construction master, Antun Lindarević. It was used for only two decades and soon after got damaged, leading to final demolition. [1:203]

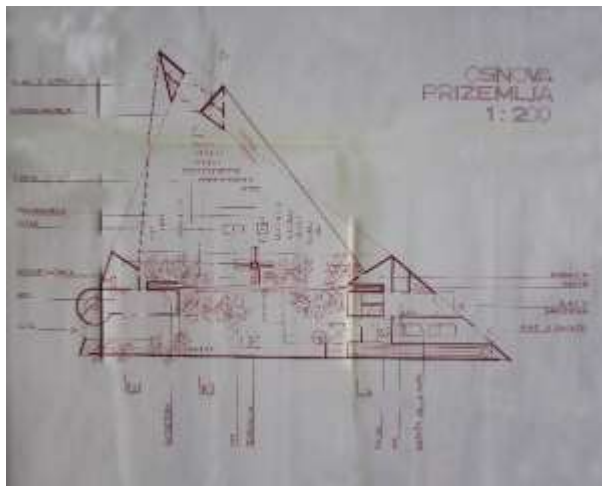
The new church was built in 1893-1894, on the site of the former Franciscan convent, in Tuzla downtown, according to a project done by Josip Vancaš. Its Gothic revival style was characteristic for Vancaš at the beginning of his work in Bosnia, but not comparable to other convent churches in OFM Bosna Argentina, as it was fairly small. Some inconsistencies are recorded regarding the ownership of this project, as some unofficial sources lead to the name of Frano Mihanović as the architect of this church. Nevertheless, it was decently decorated and equipped: wooden sculptures of *Mary with Christ* (1854) and *Saint George* done by famous Austrian workshop "F. Stuflesser," and later with several other sculptures like *Heart of Jesus*, *Saint Joseph*, *Saint Anthony*, *Our Lady*, *Saint John the Apostle* and *Saint Michael*. The interior was painted by Josip Pellarini in 1930. [1:203]

Due to aforementioned soil subsidence, even this church got damaged during the time. It was first reconstructed in 1964, before the friars decided to pursue for a completely new project in the following time. It was, however, prolonged by the local authorities, as the relationship

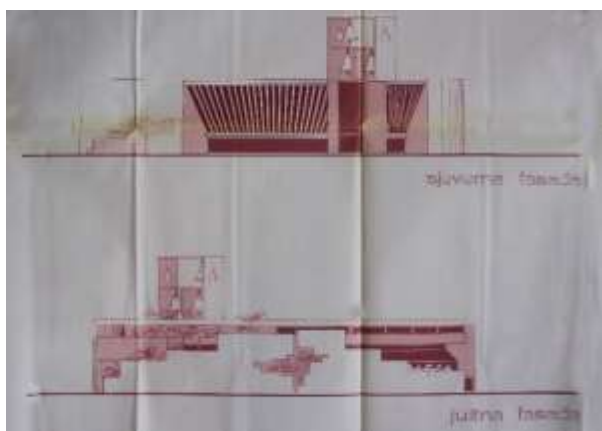
between the Catholic clergy and the communist regime was not as desired. The church was declared for demolition in 1983, and finally demolished in 1987, after the new Franciscan complex was already erected on the other location.

Recently, a new project was started on this former Franciscan site. A cultural centre “Saint Francis” is currently under construction, according to a project done by resident architect Juro Pranjić. It is the recall of the demolished church and the former convent-parish house, as the disposition of the site revives the prior relations. The main building – multifunctional hall is shaped as former, demolished church, emphasizing the historical aspect of the site.

#### 4. NEW COMPLEX OF THE CONVENT AND PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT PETER AND PAUL

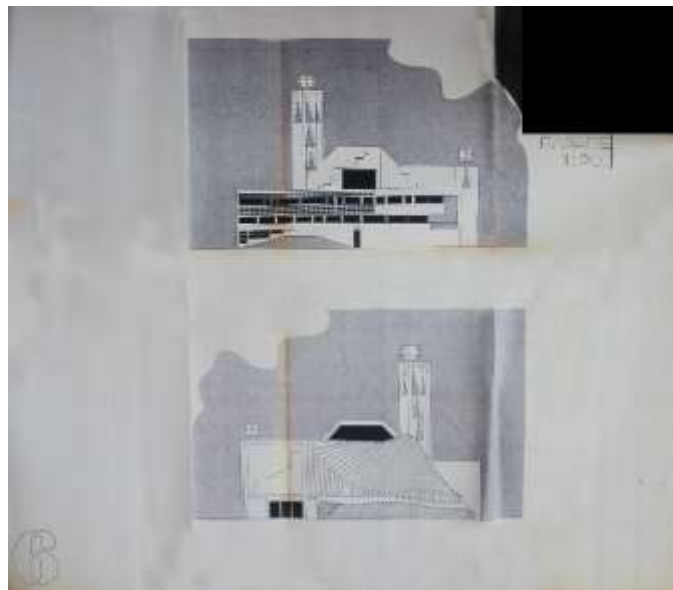


**Illustration 2.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: ground floor plan, segment of one of the preliminary projects done by Zlatko Ugljen [2]*



**Illustration 3.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: elevation views, segment of one of the preliminary projects done by Zlatko Ugljen [2]*

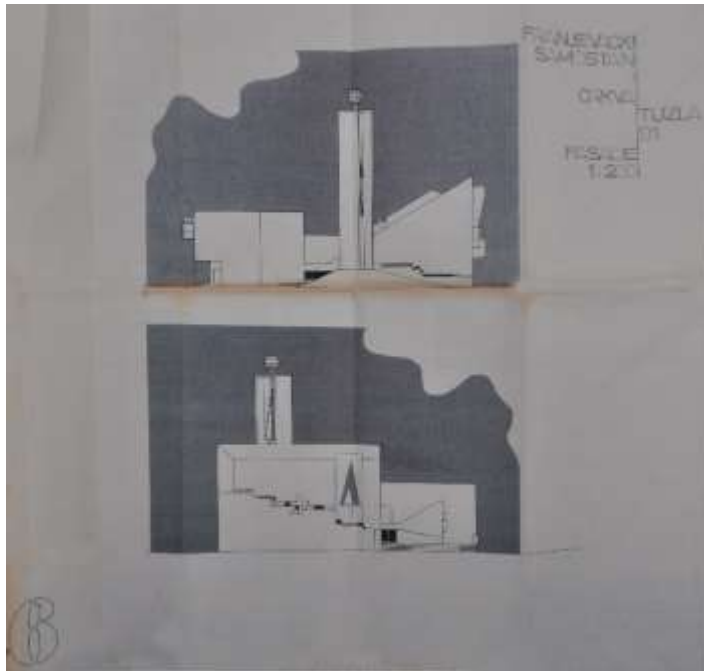
Even before the official decision and announcement for the demolition of the old parish church, and the leaving of the old convent in downtown was reached, Franciscans stepped into the process of project development. The architect Zlatko Ugljen, whose greater involvement in the constructions for OFM Bosna Argentina initiated in 80s, was commissioned for this project back in 1977. As far as the archive documentation available for public research is concerned, before the final project is approved, at least three more projects were proposed. They are all basically configured around the same idea, but developed with different details. (*Illustrations 2-5*)



**Illustration 4.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: elevation views, segment of one of the preliminary projects done by Zlatko Ugljen [3]*

The complex consists of three visually separated, but functionally entirely connected, building parts: the parish church on the northeast, the convent on the southwest, and the oratorio on the northwest, which is recently converted into a gallery. (*Illustrations 6, 7*) The complex is surrounded by three streets, whose configuration decisively influenced the concept. The architect used a new axis in the space in order to create the sculptural effect and visually dissolve the complex on three aforementioned blocks. The complex, therefore became the crossing of new pedestrian routes, as they are directed through the site, over the elevated ramps. One huge ramp is making the shortcut over the complex, and guides visitors to the elevated central courtyard, which is actually the public square – inside the very complex. It also separates the vast corpus of the convent from the church. Two other ramps are separating the church from the oratorio and the bell tower, and at the same time make the circular scenography for the procession of the Via Crucis. The language used is more sculptural than architectural, providing the correct understanding of the project only if everything is observed together. The convent has irregular outlines, curved main façade walls, emphasizing different use in comparison to the church and the oratorio. The church is developed around the trapezoid set in the base, as well as in the section through the altar. There is hidden another highlight of the project: cable suspended roof, with the outstanding light and shadow effects in the interior. The structural decoration, like fake dual-layered walls, with the stepped outlines, or extruded crosses that are used on the façades, is also the part of the interior. The entrance to the church is not traditional, along the elongated axis, linking the entrance to the altar: on

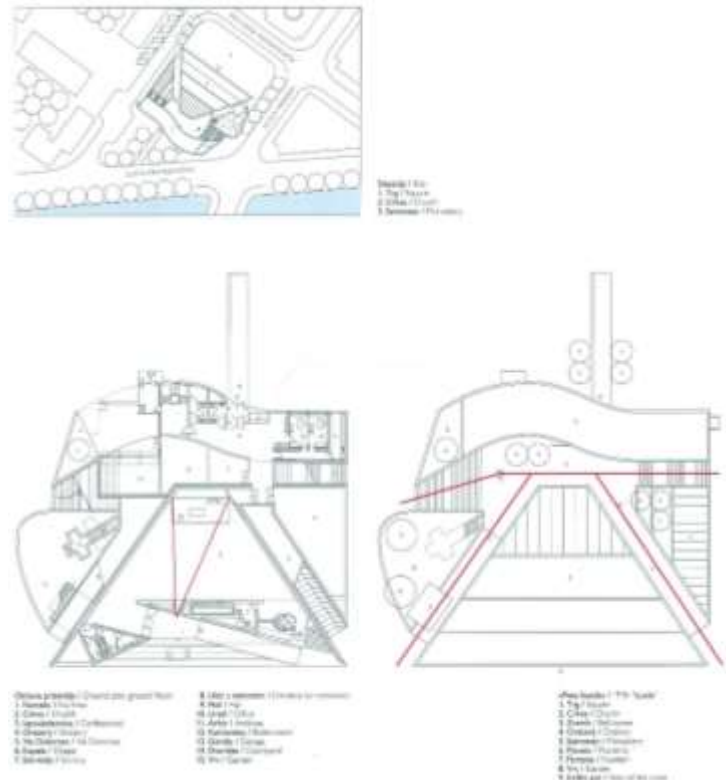
contrary, moved entrance allows an even better perspective view of the interior from the point where exterior meets interior, if any border even can be drawn. (Illustrations 8-11)



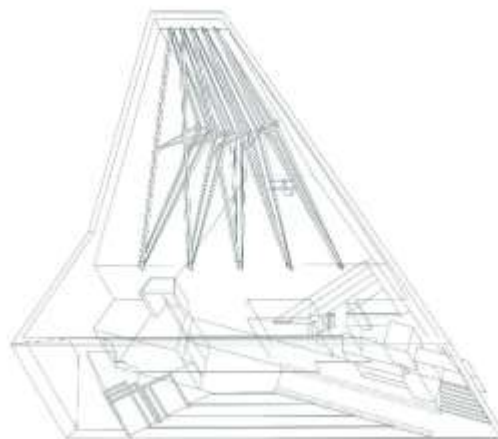
**Illustration 5.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: elevation views, segment of one of the preliminary projects done by Zlatko Ugljen [4]*

Structural concept covers the clean story and supports it with bright and defined lines of reinforced concrete elements, but designed in a way to delete the difference between the floor and the wall, the wall and the beam, etc. Everything is coloured in white, and was supposed to be one of a kind composition with the artificial landscape architecture design of the roof-placed square. So it is, in the interior. The church is especially interesting, with its shining walls, designed wooden furnishing, and simplified, yet well-thought, altar equipment.

From the functional point of view, the convent is organized as follows: on the ground floor there is the public part of the convent holding the parish offices, archive, and links to the oratorio, church and the sacristy. First floor is residential, with the rooms for nuns, kitchen, dining, and living rooms, as well as the direct link to the public square outside, while the second floor is reserved for residential needs of the friars.



**Illustration 6.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: site, ground floor, and roof floor plans, segments of the final project done by Zlatko Ugljen [5:142]*



**Illustration 7.** *The Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: axonometry of the main corps, segment of the project done by Zlatko Ugljen [5:142]*

The construction works on the church started in September 1983 during the era of Guardian, Friar Josip Zvonimir Bošnjaković. The church was blessed by Provincial Superior, Friar Luka Markešić in 1987, and finally consecrated on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008, by Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Cardinal Vinko Puljić. Construction works in the convent started in 1984 and completed in 1986.





**Illustration 8.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: view of the main entrance to the convent from the south (2013)*



**Illustration 9.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: view of church main facade and the bell tower from the north (2013)*

Today, the complex is more or less completed, and carried out in accordance with most of the designed ideas, but unfortunately its highlights are thrown away and virtually closed. The concept of the open space on the roof is abandoned, and the complex is actually put inside the traditional fence, closing its potential for intentional visitors only.



**Illustration 10.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: view of the chapel and the base of the bell tower with the public roof elevation from the east (2013)*



**Illustration 11.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: close-up view of the bell tower from the east (2013)*

The interior was done also by Ugljen, and conducted by several different artists. The painter, Ivan Lacković Croata produced stations of *Via Crucis* in 1989, which were mounted in 1990. The only altar painting was done by Vasilije Jordan, also set in the church in 1990. The church also holds some parts of the demolished church: three bells, produced in 1927, and Jenko's organ from 1961. [1:203-4] Just recently, the church was equipped with new stations of *Via Crucis*, done by sculptor Antun Babić. The installation was consecrated on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2012. [6:24] (*Illustrations 12-14*)



**Illustration 12.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: interior view of the church (2013)*

The convent holds many valuable pieces of art. The most important are the works dated in the contemporary time: *The Last Supper*, one of the last works of Ivo Dulčić, and others done by Zdenko Grgić, Slavko Šohaj, Nada Pivac, Đuro Seder, Ljubo Lah etc. [1:204]



**Illustration 13.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: interior view of the church (2013)*

The complex holds also the exhibition gallery, organized on the ground floor. Gallery „Kristian Kreković“ is named after one of the most prominent XX-century Bosnian portrait masters and

was opened on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006; it often hosts interesting exhibitions of prominent national artists, as well as some cultural events and meetings.

The most recent artworks installed in the complex include *The Cross*, copper sculpture situated in the front courtyard of the church, and was done by young sculptor Ilija Skočibušić, as the monument of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Franciscan order.



**Illustration 14.** *The Convent and the Parish Church of Saint Peter and Paul, Tuzla: close-up view of the organ on the northern wall of the main nave in the church (2013)*

## 5. SACRED AND OTHER PROMINENT ZLATKO UGLJEN'S PROJECTS

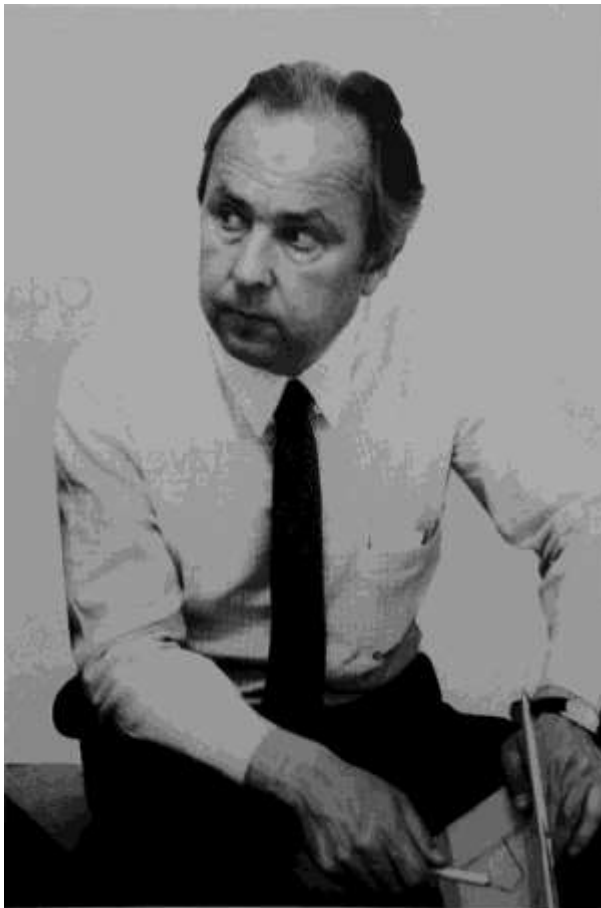
Zlatko Ugljen was born on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1929 in Mostar. (Illustration 15) He graduated from architecture at University in Sarajevo in 1958, and soon after began working both as an architect and a teacher. Between 1959 and 1962 he worked as an independent designer in the Design Agency of Sarajevo Military District. At that time, in November 1960, he began working at the Department of Architecture, University in Sarajevo. He was retired in 2000; but nevertheless, Ugljen is still a regular professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, where he has been teaching since 1986. [5:235-6]

Since 1990, Ugljen has been corresponding, and since 2002, has been a regular member of Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina; besides that he is corresponding member of HAZU - Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and SAZU - Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

*"...As an architect, Zlatko Ugljen is a builder and a teacher whose entire being expresses the unity of the quest and creation; he is simultaneously architect, designer and town planner, the prerequisite of sovereign rule over the entirety of visual spatial organisms.*

*All his buildings, whether intended for public use or residential purposes, are designed and constructed in the sometimes pleasant, at times dramatically tempestuous, picturesque and visually conflicting cultural and social space of the ever restless Bosnia and Herzegovina, that ancient and at the same time contemporary western forecourt of the Balkans, with their oriental stamp, which is also, conversely, the oriental portal of Western Europe, depending on where one stands and which geopolitical and cultural lenses one looks through. Despite the exceptional power of its modern idiom, his architecture radiates an identity of which the Bosnian origin is discernable, so that one grasps at first glance the meaning of the statement: "The Bosnian*

*character, as the common denominator of the conceptual content expressed by the term Bosnia, is a specific identity”...” [5:241-6]*



**Illustration 15.** Zlatko Ugljen [5:234]

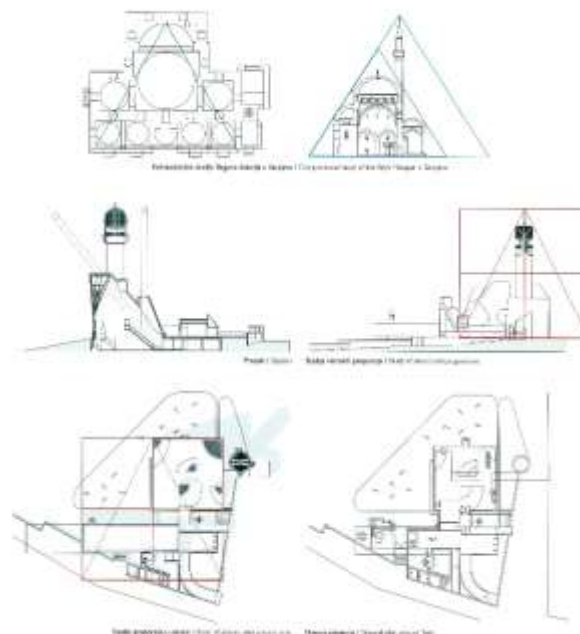
Besides a number of great awards and recognitions, one of the most significant that Ugljen got is *Aga Khan Award* for Architecture received in 1983, for the design of Šefarudin's White Mosque, Visoko. [5:8] (*Illustration 16*) The award itself stands for one of the most respectable awards in the world of Islamic art, while the mosque in Visoko still remains one of the most recognizable Islamic sacred buildings over the past decades, not only in Europe, but much wider.

Ugljen has a colourful and extremely rich opus in his ongoing career. Some of the most interesting designs are: hotel "Visoko" in Visoko (1969-1974), hotel "Ruža" in Mostar (1972-1975), hotel "Bregava" in Stolac (1973-1975), aforementioned Šefarudin's Mosque in Visoko (1969-1979), "National theatre" in Zenica, co-author Jahiel Finci, (1972-1974), hotel "Vučko" on Jahorina mountain (1983), Spiritual and cultural centre of Diocese in Mostar (1988-1990), mosque of the Behrambeg's madrasa in Tuzla, co-author Husejn Dropić (1996-), and "Rijaset" the headquarters of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Kovači, Sarajevo, which is being built. [5:241]

It is important to mention that a very special place in Ugljen's work take sacred facilities, which are, as seen, some of his most prominent projects in general. It is even more important to emphasize that those projects have to be overviewed as a whole in order to be properly understood, rather than to give fractional data on a particular one. The character and the aim of this work do not provide enough space for any extensive contemplations of such kind; nevertheless, it is to point out their importance. Ugljen's work reaches far more beyond local borders, not only by its extent and physical presence, but by its widespread acknowledgement and enrooted establishment in the sphere of architecture.

Some say that Ugljen became easily predictable with his ongoing projects, due to usage of distinctive elements of architectural articulation: white façades, strict geometrical shapes in the background, plain wood in the interior etc. The purity of these elements is brought to completely new level in his sacred projects, self-explaining the idea of his architectural genius and ability to use always the same elements producing something entirely original and new.

It all becomes even more interesting when one takes in mind deeper analysis of sacred projects for different religions. The aspect of used materials and the dictionary of architectural elements do not vary much from project to project, but the way they are being translated into the real space and time is what makes them unique and distinctive for the personal signature of Zlatko Ugljen. Like aforementioned, for any comprising research on Ugljen's work, especially when the sacred projects are concerned, the role of the knowledge on the other projects is decisive and crucial. It is also nothing less important to take a closer look into ongoing projects, which also doubtlessly hold the traces of his previous work, and to conclude about the seamless continuity in his expression.



**Illustration 16.** Šefarudin's Mosque, Visoko; studies, details; done according to project by Zlatko Ugljen (1969-1979) [5:57]

## 6. CONCLUSION

The historical overview of the construction activities on the Franciscan sites in Tuzla comprises the period since the end of the XIX century, but here more than in the other sites in OFM Bosna Argentina, only the recent pieces of architecture remain as recognizable visual elements. Even though the old church remained in its place until the late 80s, it never got its full attention, maybe because of late convent establishment, or simply because of its poor architectural proportions and insignificant monumentality in comparison with other top convent churches in OFM Bosna Argentina.

Nevertheless, the new complex that was built after the demolition of the old site is making up the gap. Ugljen's project is internationally recognized as one of his greatest entry projects in OFM Bosna Argentina. Its unique sculptural approach to the entire project - from the global to the detailed context, provides original and self-explaining designs. And indeed, so it was especially the case here. The comprehensive project, developed around the local spatial guidelines, was shaped to accommodate both sacred and public functions of such a complex, and yet be well composed with the surroundings. Ugljen here set some of the design principles that will be later followed in his other projects in OFM Bosna Argentina, and thus improved and even brought to higher level.

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