

Sandi Bulimbašić

Conservation Department
in Split, Ministry of Culture
and Media of the Republic of
Croatia

ARCHITECTURE COMPETITIONS IN INTERWAR SPLIT: THE STATE AND THE IDENTITY OF THE CITY*

Abstract

This paper analyses the influence of the state and state authorities in creating architectural and urban identity in interwar Split. After World War I, because of its privileged position as the main state port in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the town flourished in terms of infrastructure, construction, and town planning, based on the Regulation Plan from 1924. Furthermore, it hosted as many as 29 architecture competitions. Selected examples are competitions for the Maritime Museum (1928), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (1930), the Adriatic Lighthouse (1935); the administrative building of the Littoral Banovina (1936–1937) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has remained unfinished up to the present day. The influence of state authorities is analysed through various aspects of architecture competitions and realizations.

Keywords: architecture competitions, interwar Split, the Maritime Museum, the Oceanographic and Biological Institute, the Adriatic Lighthouse, the Littoral Banovina building, the Serbian Orthodox Church

INTRODUCTION: INTERWAR SPLIT AND TOWN PLANNING

Based on five selected examples of architecture competitions and their realizations, this chapter analyses the influence of the state, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and state authorities in creating architectural and urban identity in interwar Split. In that period, the town hosted as many as 29 architecture competitions (27 realized, five announced at the international level), which is a very large number, compared to the number of 39 competitions in Zagreb and a total of about 120 interwar architecture competitions in Croatia as a whole.¹

After World War I, Split was a devastated, neglected town with dusty streets and impoverished people, while Italian warships and the Allied fleet

* This work was co-funded by the Croatian Science Foundation within the project IP-2018-01-9364 *Art and the State in Croatia from the Enlightenment to the Present*.

¹ In the last few decades, interest in the interwar period in ex-Yugoslavia, its history, architecture, and visual arts, has grown in general. The first thorough research on the topic of this article was a book on interwar architecture competitions in Split: Darovan Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu 1918–1941* [Architecture Competitions in Split 1918–1941] (Split: Društvo arhitekata, 1994). For more on this topic, see Vedran Duplančić, “Obalni pojas grada Splita u urbanističkim planovima, projektima i studijama u razdoblju od 1914. do 1941. godine” [Coastal Strip of Split in Urban Plans, Projects, and Studies between 1914 and 1941], *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam*, vol. 12, no. 1/27 (2004): 111–121; Stanko Piplović, *Izgradnja Splita između svjetskih ratova* [The Construction of Split between the World Wars] (Split: Društvo prijatelja kulturne baštine, Društvo arhitekata Splita, 2008); Stanko Piplović, “Urbani razvitak Splita između dva svjetska rata” [Urban Development of Split between the Two World Wars], in *Vladan Desnica i Split 1920.–1945. Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta 2014.*, eds. Drago Roksandić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF-press, 2015), 41–72. On interwar architecture competitions in Zagreb: Tamara Bjažić Klarin, *‘Za novi, ljepši Zagreb!’ – arhitektonski i urbanistički natječaji međuratnog Zagreba, 1918.–1941.* [For a New, More Beautiful Zagreb! – Architecture and Planning Competitions of Interwar Zagreb, 1918–1941] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2020). Relevant sources for the research were periodicals published in interwar Split and the Archive of Conservation Department in Split.

were docked in the port because of Italian attempts to occupy Dalmatia. Very soon, because of its privileged position as the largest state port, along with Sušak, Split developed at a faster pace than other cities in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes / Yugoslavia.² Ivo Tartaglia, the prominent mayor of Split for ten years (1918–1928) and later Ban/Governor of the Littoral Banovina³ was very influential, in good terms with the Yugoslav Royal Family Karađorđević, who used to spend their summer vacations in Split and in nearby Kaštela. The town flourished in terms of infrastructure (it got electricity in 1920, and a railroad connection with the inland and Zagreb in 1925); construction and town planning were based on the Regulation Plan from 1924. This basic document, written by the young German architect Werner Schürmann, came into force in 1928. It was the basis for the city's expansion, mostly to the east and west along the sea. The urban matrix created then is recognizable even nowadays. Locations and terms for most architecture competitions in interwar Split were based on this plan.

Competitions included buildings for the administration government, health care, welfare, culture, education, science, catering, and economy. There were also politically influenced architectural and sculptural competitions glorifying King Alexander I Karađorđević after his violent assassination in Marseilles in 1934. In most cases, first prize was not awarded, and competition projects were often redesigned afterwards. Frequent members of competition juries were Ivo Tartaglia,⁴ architect Kamilo Tončić, painters Emanuel Vidović and Angejo

2 Rijeka, Pula and Zadar were under Italian rule at that time. For more about Split in interwar period, see Branislav Radica, *Novi Split: monografija grada Splita od 1918.–1939. godine* [The New Split: Monograph of Split between 1918 and 1941] (Split: Branislav Radica, 1931); Duško Kečkemet, “Skica za sliku Splita između dva rata” [A Sketch for the Picture of Split between the Two Wars], *Mogućnosti*, no. 8-9-10 (1992): 636–642; Zdravka Jelaska Marijan, *Grad i ljudi: Split 1918.–1941.* [The Town and Its People: 1918–1941] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest, 2009); Aleksandar Jakir, “O nekim značajkama razvoja Splita u međuratnom razdoblju” [Certain Characteristics of the Development of Split in the Interwar Period], in *Vladan Desnica i Split 1920.–1945.*, eds. Rokсандić and Javorina, 13–25.

3 The Littoral Banovina was an administrative unit in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It was established in 1929 and existed until 1939, when it was reorganized based on the Cvetković-Maček Agreement and merged with the Banovina of Sava and several other smaller areas into the Banovina of Croatia. The Littoral Banovina included the largest part of southern Croatia, specifically Dalmatia (except for the Dubrovnik area, which was in the Zeta Banovina, and Zadar, which was under Italian rule), as well as western Herzegovina, central Bosnia, and the Livno and Duvno regions. It got its name because it included the largest part of the seacoast of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The capital of the Littoral Banovina was Split and the first Ban Ivo Tartaglia (1929–1932) was from Split. Consequently, the development of Split as a privileged city in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was guaranteed. However, sometimes it meant that the implementation of the state policy decisions in town planning was unnegotiable. Tartaglia was succeeded by Josip Jablanović (1932–1935), born in Makarska, and the third Ban was Mirko Buić (1935–1939) from Split.

4 Tartaglia was often the president of competition juries until the beginning of 1930s. Ivo Tartaglia was born in Split in 1880 and he grew up in a noble family of Dalmatian Italian roots. He was a lawyer, politician, entrepreneur, and publicist. Tartaglia was the mayor of Split from 1918 to 1928 and the Ban of the Littoral Banovina from October 1929 to June 1932. He was a very influential politician in interwar Split and in many ways, as a mayor and later a Ban, he was responsible for the prosperity of Split, in terms of infrastructure, the building of the Lika railway and many important civil and public buildings in Split. He also started a series of projects in the Littoral Banovina, building hospitals, draining wetlands and improving the agriculture. He was also known as a patron, art lover, collector, and art critic. His collection of artworks was the largest one in Dalmatia. In June 1948, Tartaglia was put on trial in Split, on charges of having expressed pro-Karađorđević and pro-Italian sentiments and otherwise undermining the government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He was sentenced to seven years of hard labour, the loss of his civil rights for two years after that, and his property was confiscated. He died in 1949 at the Lepoglava prison. For more about Tartaglia, see: Norka Machiedo Mladinić, *Životni put Ive Tartaglia* [The Life Path of Ivo Tartaglia] (Split: Književni krug Split, 2001); *Ivo Tartaglia:*

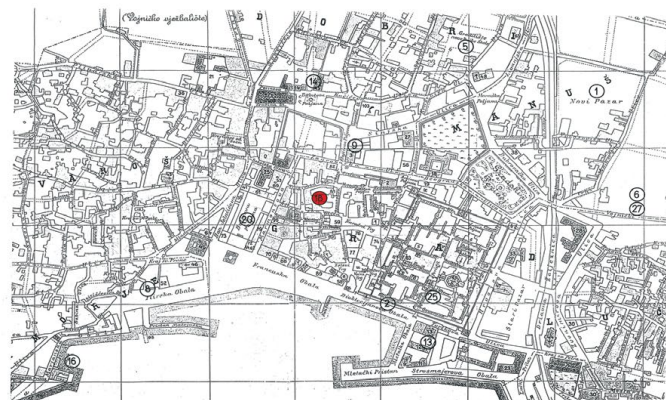
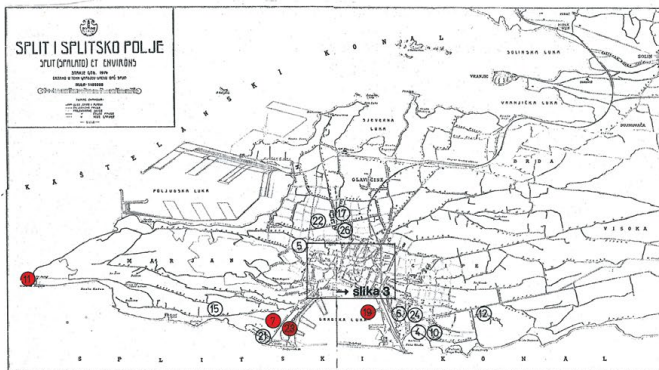


Fig. 1. Map of Split by Petar Senjanović, 1914, with marked positions of buildings erected as the result of 27 realized and five selected architecture competitions in interwar Split: the Maritime Museum (No. 7), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (No. 11), Serbian Orthodox Church (No. 18), the Adriatic Lighthouse (No. 19), the Littoral Banovina (No. 23). First published in: Darovan Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu 1918–1941* [Architecture Competitions in Split 1918–1941] (Split: Društvo arhitekata, 1994), n. pag.

Uvodić, sculptor Ivan Meštrović: prominent protagonists of the Medulić Association (1908–1919), who were actively involved in decision-making and implementation of the state policy in those days.⁵ Since the Split Municipal Archive was destroyed in a fire, documentation of competitions is insufficient in most cases.

Selected examples of competitions in interwar Split are competitions for buildings affirming the maritime orientation of the privileged port city in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: the Maritime Museum (1928), the Oceanographic and Biological Institute (1930), the Adriatic Lighthouse, (1935), the administrative building of the Littoral Banovina (1936–1937) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has remained unfinished up to the present day (**fig. 1**). They all demonstrate architecture and architecture competitions in service of state politics and ideology. The examples of inadequate realizations, the Littoral Banovina building and particularly the Orthodox Church, testify to the abuse of competitions even today. The influence of the state authorities will be analysed through various aspects of architecture competitions: selection of the location and purpose of the buildings to be erected, preservation of cultural heritage, competition participants (competitors, members of the jury and city commissions), and extensive, sharp polemics on competitions and realizations published in the daily newspapers.

THE MARITIME MUSEUM, 1928

Jadranska straža (The Adriatic Guard), which was founded in 1922, announced the competitions for the Maritime Museum and the Adriatic Lighthouse. The aim of the organization was the promotion of national characteristics and the Adriatic orientation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The organisation issued a representative magazine under the same name, richly equipped with texts and

politikar i intelektualac, Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa "Ivo Tartaglia i njegovo doba" [Ivo Tartaglia: Politician and Intellectual, Proceedings from the International Conference 'Ivo Tartaglia and His Time'], eds. Aleksandar Jakir and Marijan Buljan (Split: Književni krug Split, 2016).

⁵ For more on this topic, see Sandi Bulimbašić, "Medulić, the Association of Croatian Artists in the Context of Central European Artistic and Political Aspirations: The Myth and the Nation," in *Art and Politics in the Modern Period*, eds. Dragan Damjanović, Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić, Željka Miklošević and Jeremy F. Walton (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, FF-press, 2019), 243–254.

photographs.⁶ The Executive Committee of the Adriatic Guard presided over by Ivo Tartaglia announced the competition for the Maritime Museum in June 1928. The first submission deadline of September 1, 1928, was extended for three months (to December 1, 1928) because only five projects were received during the summer months, and the jury concluded that none of the projects met the competition terms and conditions. This, of course, was against the competition rules, and provoked a protest from the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects. After the extension, 33 projects were received.

The location for the Maritime Museum building was bought by the Split Municipality in the Meje district, opposite the Sustipan peninsula, in 1927. Architects approved of this location, not far from the coast, but some participants in the competition objected that the main facade of the cadastral parcel was too narrow. The commissioner took the responsibility of exploring the possibility of an additional land purchase. The competition programme included a two-story building with a basement, which would include both the museum and the offices of the Adriatic Guard. Members of the jury were appointed by Ivo Tartaglia. Along with the members from the Adriatic Guard, he invited renowned architect Jože Plečnik from Ljubljana, who declined the invitation, and a distinguished architect from Zagreb, Edo Schön, who accepted the invitation. The first prize was not awarded.⁷ However, the cash amount for the first prize was equally divided between four participants: Aleksandar Freudenreich and Pavao Deutsch from Zagreb, Branislav Kojić from Belgrade, Josip Costaperaria from Ljubljana, and Juraj Neidhardt from Zagreb, who submitted two variants of the project and won a purchase prize although a purchase was not mentioned in the competition rules. The second prize was awarded to Dujam Granić from Belgrade, and the third prize to Herman Hus from Ljubljana. An exhibition of the competition projects was held at the Galić Art Salon in Split.

Due to the lack of finances, the building of the Maritime Museum only occurred several years after the competition. The project was redesigned, and two separate buildings were built – the boarding house for student excursions

6 Norka Machiedo Mladinić, *Jadranska straža 1922.–1941*. [The Adriatic Guard 1922–1941] (Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2005). The first president of the organisation was Juraj Biankini. After his death, Ivo Tartaglia became the president in 1928. Both Biankini and Tartaglia were prominent protagonists of the Medulić Association, which promoted the national idea and the union of Yugoslav nations before World War I and stopped its activities in 1919. The logo of the organisation was the mace of Prince Marko turned upside down, evoking Ivan Meštrović and his Cycle of Prince Marko, the symbol of struggle in the period before World War I, when the idea of the union of Yugoslav nations still seemed unattainable.

7 In 1930s this became a common practise. Competition participants were indignant due to such unjust decisions of the jury. There is no one precise reason why a first prize was not awarded on this and other architecture competitions in interwar Split. We can say that in some cases the decision was made based on political, national, or religious reasons. In other cases, the reason was rivalry between some members of the jury and participant(s) in the competition. In still other cases, the projects were too modern for the members of the jury and their notions about the building design. This is the reason why many awarded competition projects were redesigned afterwards. In most cases of architecture competitions in interwar Split, most of the jury members were politicians, not architects or engineers, and therefore were not competent enough to make quality decisions about the first prize. The discussion on this topic is complex and extensive.

Fig. 2. Anonymous, Opening ceremony of the Maritime Museum in Split, photograph, December 1933, in: *Jadranska straža*, no. 1 (1934): 28.



and the museum. The author of the post-competition project from 1930 remains unknown.⁸ The construction of the Maritime Museum started in summer 1931 and lasted until February 1932. In 1933 the building was extended, and the Maritime Museum got its temporary premises. The opening of the Museum in December 1933 marked the ten-year anniversary of the Adriatic Guard (**fig. 2**).

Split Maritime Museum still does not have its own building. Paradoxically, it is situated far from the sea, in the Austrian barracks inside the baroque Gripe fortress.

THE OCEANOGRAPHIC AND BIOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, 1930

Competition for the Oceanographic and Biological Institute was launched in 1930, with a submission deadline of May 3, 1930. The commissioner was Yugoslav Academy of Science and Arts in Zagreb and Serbian Royal Academy in Belgrade. A special commission appointed by the Academy chose Split instead of Dubrovnik for the location of this important scientific and research institution. The location was at the cape of Marjan hill. It was an invitational Yugoslav competition. Architects were invited from the four centres of the Kingdom: Bogdan Nestorović from Belgrade, Edo Schön from Zagreb, Ivan Vurnik from Ljubljana, and Fabijan Kaliterna from Split. Josip Kodl from Split was, at his own request, allowed to be excused “out of the competition”,⁹ because he designed the first project, before the competition was launched. His project was later abandoned. The competition programme included the Institute building, a harbour for research ships, and a residential building for the director. One of the competition requirements defined the design and style of the building as: “a

⁸ For more about the competition, see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 49–51.

⁹ It was the new rule of architecture competitions. See Bjažić Klarin, *‘Za novi, ljepši Zagreb!’*, 33.

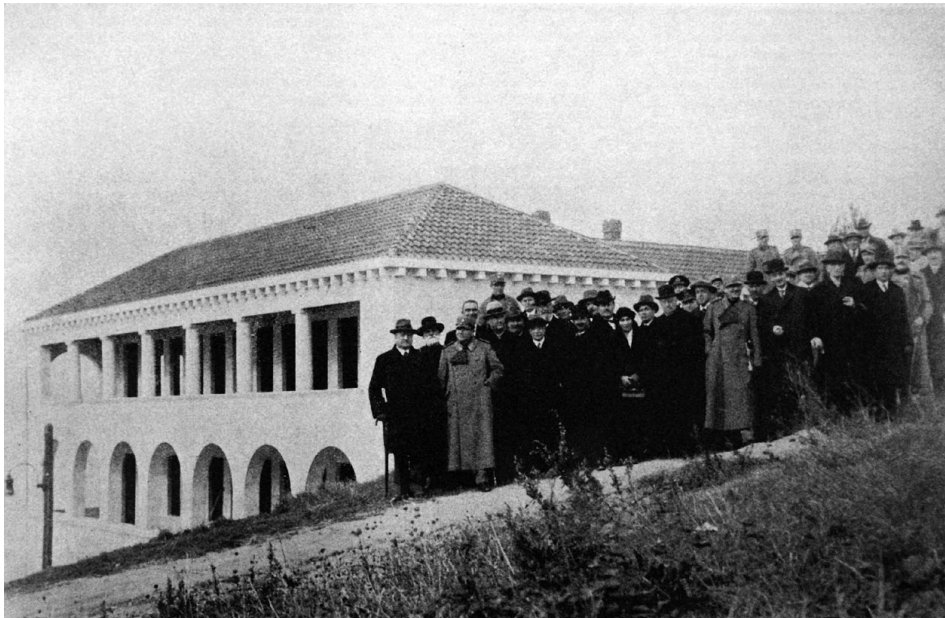


Fig. 3. Anonymous, Opening ceremony of the Oceanographic and Biological Institute in Split, photograph, December 1933, in: *Jadranska straža*, no. 1 (1934): 29.

scientific institution of calm and serious exterior, adjusted to the maritime type of the building, local prices and local materials.”¹⁰ The members of the jury were the academic architects Martin Pilar and Ćiril Iveković from Zagreb, academic biologists Vale Vouk, a Croat of Slovenian origin, and Aleksandar Đorđević from Belgrade. According to the jury none of the submitted five works met the terms and conditions of the competition.¹¹ Analysing the projects of the invited architects, it’s obvious that the decision of the jury was based primarily on the architectural style of the projects. Nestorović proposed a classical monumental building, Vurnik’s idea was a radical rounded tower, projects by Kodl and Schön were in the contemporary style of modernism, and Schön’s project was in the best tradition of the Zagreb school of architecture.¹² Finally, the jury decided to accept the project by Fabijan Kaliterna, with necessary changes. Kaliterna was invited to Zagreb, where members of the jury gave him guidelines for modifications to his project. The final project was realized in cooperation with a Norwegian professor, Hjalmar Brock, who was appointed Director of the Institute.¹³ Kaliterna changed his project several times, particularly the most exposed southern facade.¹⁴ Construction started in 1933. The residential building was built first, and finished in March 1933. The main building of the Institute was built in December 1933 (**fig. 3**), but the interior design was late, with many delays, and the Institute moved to its new building only in 1941.¹⁵

540

10 See Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 60. My translation.

11 There were reactions to the implementation of the competition because of its organization in secrecy and the lack of an exhibition of competition projects. Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 61.

12 Ibid., fig. 33–36, n. pag.

13 Kaliterna’s competition and post-competition project: Ibid., fig. 37, 38, n. pag.

14 Kaliterna’s sketches and various realizations of the Institute building are kept in the Archive of Fabijan Kaliterna, property of the Bošković family, Split.

15 Until 1941, the Institute was situated in the boarding house Schiller, which is today known as Vila Dalmacija. On competition for the Oceanographic Institute see: Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 60–62; Marija Bošković, Robert Plejić, “Biološko-oceanografski institut u Splitu arhitekta Fabijana Kaliterne” [The Institute

Fig. 4. The Oceanographic and Biological Institute in Split, 2017. Photograph by Sandi Bulimbašić.



The Oceanographic Institute is one of Kaliterna's most notable projects, an effective compromise between traditional and modern architecture, characterised by harmonious proportions, superior performance of the stone façade with loggias and situated in a beautiful surrounding near the coast. It is certainly one of the distinguished works of the Split interwar architecture (fig. 4).

541

THE ADRIATIC LIGHTHOUSE / MEMORIAL LIGHTHOUSE DEDICATED TO KING ALEXANDER I KARADORĐEVIĆ, 1935

After the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles, in October 1934, and a memorial service held in Split, the Adriatic Guard District Committee decided to build a memorial lighthouse dedicated to the King on the pier in the town port.¹⁶ The competition was local in character: only architects, engineers and sculptors with a permanent residence in the territory of Split could participate. It was launched on July 27, 1935, with only ten days before the deadline for the submission, a rather short period for making a conceptual

of Sea Biology and Oceanography in Split Designed by the Architect Fabijan Kaliterna], *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam*, vol. 23, no. 2/50 (2015): 250–263.

¹⁶ At that time it was called the Pier of Major Stojan. For more about the competition see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 84–85.

¹⁷ The announcement of the competition was published in the local newspaper *Novo doba*. Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ The members of the jury were Josip Jablanović, Governor of the Littoral Banovina, Mihovil Kargotić, the mayor of Split, Budislav Stipanović, Director of the Directorate for Transport, Ivo Stalio, president of the District Committee of the Adriatic Guard in Split, Vorih Matković, president of the Working Committee for the Memorial Lighthouse, engineer and architect Danilo Žagar, and painter Emanuel Vidović. Deputy members were Ljubo Karaman, Josip Kodl, Dinko Fabio, Rikard Visin, Hranko Smodlaka, Mirko Karlovac and Čiro Čičin-Šain. See Ibid., 84.

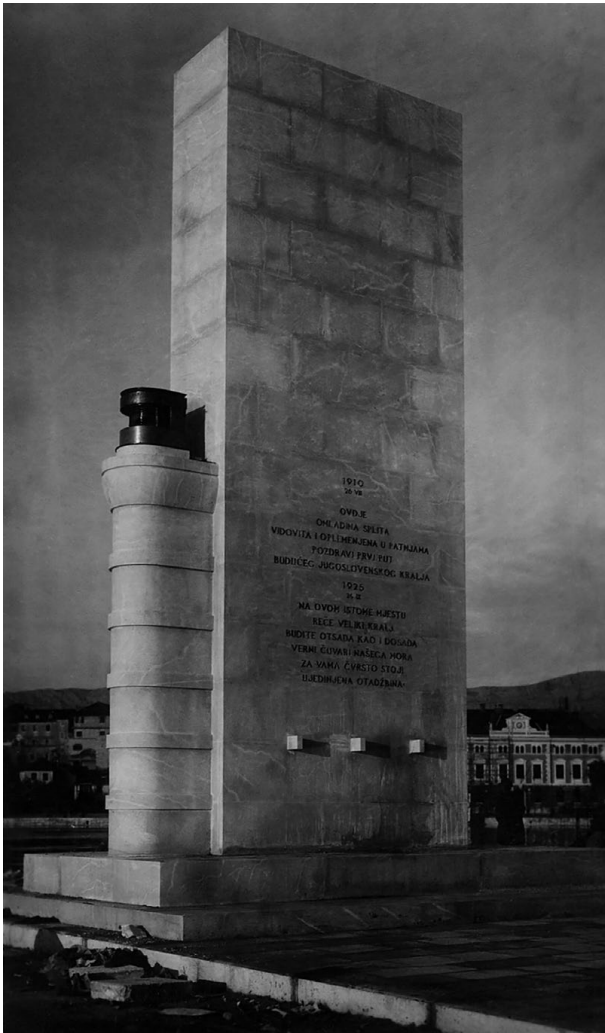


Fig. 5. The Adriatic Lighthouse / Memorial lighthouse dedicated to King Aleksandar I Karadorđević, 1935, postcard, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split.

sketch for “the national-symbolic Adriatic lighthouse.”¹⁷ The monetary rewards were low in comparison to other competitions at the time: 300 dinars for the third prize, 700 for the second prize and 1,000 dinars for the first prize. However, seven projects were submitted, exclusively by architects although it was architectural and sculpture competition. The jury had seven members, including high-ranking politicians, the city mayor, engineers, architects, and a well-known painter, Emanuel Vidović. Seven deputy members of the jury were also appointed.¹⁸ First prize was awarded to Prosper Čulić, an architect and engineer from Split, whose sketch was published in *The Adriatic Guard*.¹⁹ Second prize was awarded to architect Ante Škare, and third prize to a renowned architect from Split, Emil Ciciliani. The jury also recommended awarding another third prize to Niko Armanda. Three other works won a purchase prize, but they have remained unknown.²⁰

The construction of the lighthouse started soon after the competition, thanks to the voluntary contributions collected from the citizens of Split. The ceremonial opening was held on December 8, 1935, marking the ten-year anniversary of the *Adriatic Guard*, and the first anniversary of the memorial service held for King Alexander in Split (**fig. 5**). After World War II the lighthouse was demolished for political and ideological reasons.

SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, 1935

The competition for the Temple of St. Sava in Split was preceded by contention over the building site. The Ministry of Finance in Belgrade exchanged the lot near the Bishop’s Seminary for the site of the Benedictine Convent of St. Mary de Taurello for an insignificant amount.²¹ The convent, whose construction lasted from the 11th to 18th century, was mainly pulled down in 1937 to make way for a monumentally conceived Orthodox Church. Vaulted porticoes in the courtyard and a restored renaissance stone portal from the 16th century in Domaldova Street still remain from this old convent.²² The idea was

¹⁹ *The Adriatic Guard*, no. 1 (1935), 470.

²⁰ Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 85.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 82–83. The swap was executed in secret and without consultation with the Catholic Church, which for centuries was the real owner of the convent. See: Tomislav Đonlić, Josip Dukić, “Prijeperi oko zemljišta za gradnju katoličke katedrale i pravoslavnog hrama sv. Save u Splitu 1920-ih i 1930-ih godina” [Contentions over the Building Site for Catholic Cathedral and Orthodox Temple of St. Sava in Split in 1920s and 1930s], *Crkva u svijetu*, no. 2 (2013): 209–235.

²² For more about the convent, see Zdeslav Perković, “Istraživanje samostana Sv. Marije de Taurello” [Research on the Convent of St. Mary de Taurello], *Kulturna baština*, no. 11-12 (1981): 46–64.

to demolish the whole complex of the convent and form a square around a new orthodox church.

The Committee for the Construction of the Orthodox Church was founded early, in 1921. When Split became the centre of the Littoral Banovina and the eparchy in 1928, the idea of the construction was actualized. According to some sources, the first project was made in the middle of 1933.²³ However, on January 30, 1935, the Church Municipal Council in Split announced the competition. The submission deadline (April 1st) was extended for 20 days (to April 20, 1935). The programme of the competition defined the design of the church as an “orthodox temple without a bell tower,” built from the local white stone in Serbian-Byzantine style, with the main entrance on today’s Obrov Street, and with a capacity of around 1,200 people.²⁴ The jury met on May 8, 1935. There were seven members of the jury: Mihovil Kargotić and Vorih Matković, engineers from Split, Milan Zloković, an architect from Belgrade, Ljubo Karaman, a conservator from Split, Jovan Klicov, President of the Split Church Municipal Council, Sergije Urukalo, a parish priest, and Sava Bibić, a merchant from Split.²⁵ The jury procedure caused dissatisfaction among the members of the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects. The Split section of the Association invited their members to refuse to participate in the work of the jury. Furthermore, they wanted the Association to ban its members from participating in the competition. Remarks referred to the insufficient number of architects on the jury, low monetary rewards, a short competition deadline, and the insufficient quality of the programme especially regarding the historical valuation of the construction site. The commissioner of the competition did not consider most of these criticisms.²⁶

Fifteen works were submitted; one was disqualified because it was not received on time. Unlike many competitions at the time, the first prize was awarded to Aleksandar Deroko, an architect and university professor from Belgrade. His project design of a circular floor plan building, extended with a semicircle, is lost.²⁷ Second prize was awarded to two architects from Split, Helen Baldasar and Emil Ciciliani. One of the participants was a young architect from Split, Lovro Perković, in collaboration with Ksenija Grisogono.²⁸ Two anonymous works were awarded purchase prizes. In July 1935, the Committee of the Orthodox Church accepted Deroko’s final project. However, in the middle of 1939 construction began based on a modified project by Baldasar and Ciciliani: “in Serbian-Byzantine style, with four domes on the sides, and

23 Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 82.

24 Ibid., 82–83.

25 For the deputy members of the jury, all of them engineers and architects from Split, see: Ibid., 82.

26 Felix Šperac, one of the jury deputy members, resigned. Ibid.

27 It was described as a reminiscence of an early Christian church: Ibid., 83 (*Jadranski dnevnik*, no. 108, May 9, 1935).

28 On the project by Perković, see Sandra Uskoković, *Lovro Perković: estetika prostora i senzibilitet konteksta* [Lovro Perković: Spatial Aesthetics and Context Sensibility] (Zagreb: Ex libris, 2015), 163–167.



the big one in the middle.”²⁹ The exhibition of the competition projects took place in May 1935 in the hall of the Chamber of Trades and Crafts. World War II interrupted the construction works, and only the walls of the ground floor were erected (**fig. 6**). The question of heritage preservation became important and the idea of destroying the whole medieval complex of buildings in order to form a square around a Neo-Byzantine building started to seem unreasonable.³⁰

The idea of a church with a central dome about 28 meters high in the medieval core of Split, an area that is now under UNESCO protection, has always been against the principles of heritage preservation. The church has remained unfinished up to the present day because the eparchy authorities rejected recommendations by experts (conservators) to adjust its style to the surrounding built environment or to change the location. The Conservation Department in Split suggested that the church should be finished with a tiled roof, like the houses in Split’s historic centre, but the Orthodox Church authorities still insist on a dome (**fig. 7**).

The competition for the Serbian Orthodox Church is an example of the abuse of the competition model which resulted in an inadequate architectural realization in the historic centre of Split, causing polemics and conflicts that

Fig. 6. Aerial view on the unfinished building of Serbian Orthodox Church in the historic centre of Split, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split. Photograph by Ivica Pleština.

29 Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 83 (*Novo doba*, no. 109, May 10, 1939). My translation.

30 *Ibid.*, 83.

Fig. 7. The main portal and walls of the unfinished Temple of St. Sava in Split, 2021. Photographs by Sandi Bulimbašić.



have persisted until the present time.³¹ It demonstrates what happens when the influence of the state and the state/church authorities becomes more important than urban planning, architectural values, expert opinion, cultural heritage, and its preservation.

THE LITTORAL BANOVINA, 1936–1937

The Littoral Banovina building on the west section of Split's port is another example of an inadequate realization, which in many ways influenced future architecture and urban competitions in Split. The choice of the location was determined in 1936, and there were immediate complaints regarding its distance from the town historic core, since the cadastral parcel was very large, and according to the Regulation Plan, the competition programme defined a five-story building. It included the Ban's apartment, an office for the Ban and his assistant, offices for different administrative departments, a ceremonial hall, and a hall for Ban's Council. The Regulation Plan included a series of large residential and public buildings along the coast, which explains the massiveness of the Littoral Banovina building. However, the plan wasn't realized, and other buildings along the shore were built according to the architectural and urban competition of 1957.³²

The competition, which had a Yugoslav character, was launched on November 28, 1936. The commissioner was the Royal Ban's/Governor's administration in Split. The submission deadline was January 1, 1937, and it was extended to February 26, 1937. The jury decided on the awards on March 9, 1937. The jury had seven members and, except for Stjepan Hribar, the Head of the Regulation Department of the Zagreb City Council, most of them were

31 On the relation between the state, nationalism, and architecture of the temple after World War II, see Vjekoslav Perica, "Dva spomenika jedne ere. Političke konotacije izgradnje pravoslavne crkve i katoličke konkatedrale u Splitu", 1971.–1991. [Memorials of an Era: The Politics of Church Rebuilding in the Former Yugoslavia. The Case of Constructions of an Orthodox Church and Catholic Cathedral in Split, Croatia, during Late Communism and Pre-war Crisis, 1971–1991], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (1999): 93–126; Željko Primorac, "Kopija beogradskog hrama Svetog Save u Splitu" [A Copy of the Belgrade Temple of St. Sava in Split], accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.hrsvijet.net/index.php/kolumna-zeljko-primorac/52489-zeljko-primorac-kopija-beogradskog-hrama-svetog-save-u-splitu>.

32 See *URBS 1959.–1960.*, no. 11 (1961). The same texts in: *Regulacija zapadne strane gradske luke Split* [Regulation of the Western Part of the Split City Harbour] (Split: Savjet za urbanizam Narodnog odbora Općine Split, 1961).

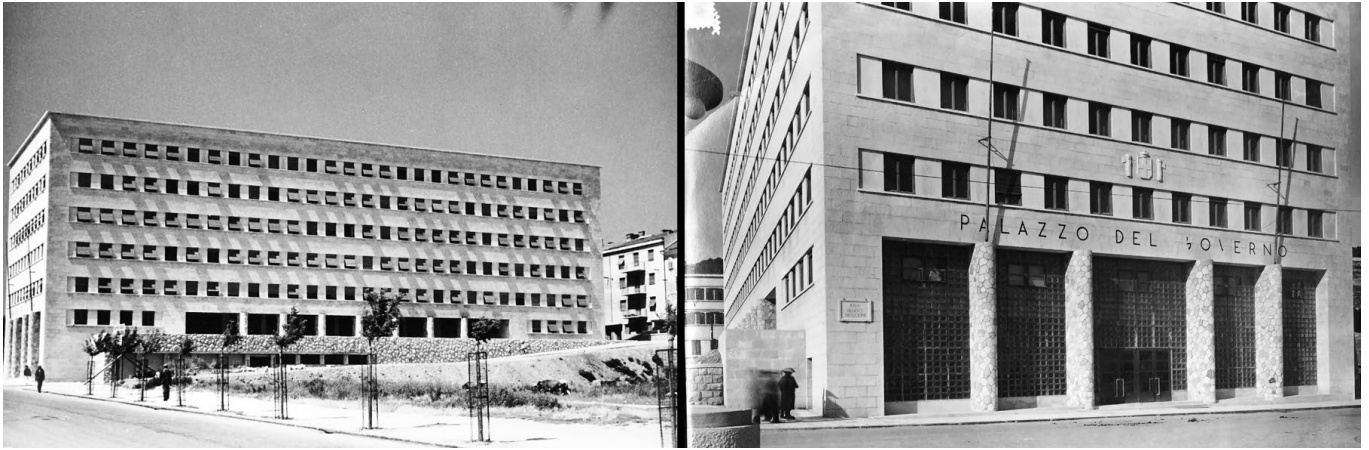


Fig. 8. The Littoral Banovina building as Palazzo del Governo, 1943, photograph, Archive of the Conservation Department in Split.

from Split and employees at the Technical and Architecture Department of the Split City Council: engineers Lucijan Stella, Dinko Buić, Dane Matošić, and architects Fabijan Kaliterna, Prosper Čulić, Ante Barač. The monetary rewards were high; 20,000 dinars for the third prize and a purchase prize, 25,000 for second prize and 35,000 dinars for first prize. Fifteen competition works were submitted. First and the second prize were not awarded. The third prize was awarded to Zoja Dumengjić and Selimir Dumengjić from Zagreb. An additional third prize was awarded to Milorad Družeić and Boris Katunarić from Split. There were five purchase prizes; one was awarded to architects from Zagreb, Nikola Despot, Vladimir Turina, and Vid Vrbanić, and there were four other anonymous purchase prizes. Most of the competition participants avoided a single building and suggested two or three buildings accommodating all of the required facilities. Furthermore, most projects suggested a separate building for Ban's apartment. The exhibition of the competition projects was organized in the City Hall on March 11, 1937.

546

The Littoral Banovina building was built according to a purchase award project by Despot, Turina and Vrbanić. The project included two buildings: a smaller object for Ban's residence, the building with a long façade parallel to the shore, and a huge six-storey building for other facilities, with a shorter facade parallel to the shore, in the form of a closed block with a central hall through all the floors. The construction works started in February 1938, followed by sharp polemics about the inadequate size, design, and location of the building.³³ The construction of the administrative building was completed in 1940. The smaller building for the Ban was not realized.³⁴ During World War II, the purity and massiveness of the building attracted Italian Fascists, who appropriated it for the administrative centre of their government (April 1941 – September 1943) (**fig. 8**).

³³ Petar Senjanović, an engineer and architect from Split, insisted that the members of the jury, not architects, were to blame. On Senjanović, see *Petar Senjanović, splitski graditelj i planer: iz ostavštine u Sveučilišnoj knjižnici u Splitu* [Petar Senjanović, Split Builder and Planner: From the Legacy at the University Library in Split], eds. Robert Plejić, Darovan Tušek, Dražen Pejčković, Ana Grgić and Mihaela Kovačić (Split: Sveučilišna knjižnica u Splitu, Društvo arhitekata Splita, Grad Split, 2007).

³⁴ Banovina Hrvatska had been founded at that time and there was no need to build a separate building for the Ban. For more about the competition and tendering see Tušek, *Arhitektonski natječaji u Splitu*, 97–100.

Today the Littoral Banovina building houses the city administration.³⁵ However, according to the General Town Planning Scheme, it will be repurposed as a hotel.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Town planning in Split based on the Regulation Plan from 1924 defined the locations for most interwar architecture competitions. The willingness of the state government to accept the legislation of architecture competitions and the professional opinion of the Association of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects was important. However, the implementation of the competitions and decisions of the juries were often in contrast with competition requirements. In most cases first prize was not awarded, competition projects were redesigned afterwards, and there were more politicians than architects and engineers in the juries. This caused indignation among competition participants and reactions on the part of the Association in order to protect professional rights of its members. The influence of the state authorities can also be seen in decisions about construction sites, the purpose of buildings, and the context of the preservation of cultural heritage.

Competitions for the Maritime Museum, the Adriatic Lighthouse and the Oceanographic and Biological Institute were announced in order to promote the Adriatic orientation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the development of Split as the main state port. The memorial lighthouse dedicated to the deceased Yugoslav king also had symbolic and political meaning. The massiveness of the Littoral Banovina building stood as a symbol of the state itself. The unfinished Temple of St. Sava in the medieval historic centre of Split demonstrates the implementation of political and religious decisions at the expense of town planning and cultural heritage preservation values.

The selected examples, among 29 architecture competitions, have in many ways defined the architectural and urban identity of interwar Split, but also the city today. Adequate or inadequate realisations testify that architecture competitions were often implementations of state policy and national and political interests, rather than expressions of urban or architectural values.

³⁵ The name "Banovina" has been in common use among the citizens of Split up until today.

