

Palace and Museum - All Adaptations of the Palace Vranyczany-Dobrinović at Zrinski Square 19

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The Archaeological Museum in Zagreb often changed its location: from its first address at the National House on the Upper Town, via the Palace of the Academy on Zrinjevac 11, until the final relocation to the Vranyczany-Dobrinović Palace, soon after the World War II.

The palace at Zrinski Square 19 was built by Baron Dragan Vranyczany-Dobrinović as the first luxury rental house in Zagreb, which was the talk of the town already at the time of its construction, in the period from 1878 to 1879. However, the recognizable yellow façade – originally coffee-coloured – conceals just a small part of the structures that the designer had given it. The palace at Zrinjevac 19, which was put up for sale in 1916 as the most expensive real estate in Zagreb, was purchased from the Baron's heirs by Radivoj Hafner, a rich supplier of horses and meat to the Austro-Hungarian army. We owe today's lavish appearance of the palace to Hafner, who installed marble slabs on the ground floor and stairway, and who built a panoramic elevator in the central part of the stairway, which he decorated with his monogram, RH, and horses, and which is protected by a gilded wrought iron fence. Between the two world wars there were many tenants: the American Consulate, the French Consulate, the Zagreb Automobile Club, the Officers' Club, Poljoprivreda d.d., S. Radan's technical supplies store... Before the start of World War II, the Banate of Croatia Savings Bank, later the Bank of the Independent State of Croatia, evicted all the tenants and demolished the side courtyard wings of the building and the luxurious stables with the intention of erecting new safe deposit buildings in the courtyard facing Gajeva Street, but the project was never realized.

During the dark period between 1941 and 1945, the war did not spare the palace at Zrinski Square 19. After the German invasion and the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, the new regime immediately ceded the facility to the German army. The most famous tenant at Zrinjevac 19 in that period was the German general Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, an Austrian-born professional soldier, historian and politician with an interesting biography.

The Archaeological Museum was relocated to the Vranyczany-Hafner palace in 1945 from the building next door, Zrinjevac 11, where the museum's holdings were kept for 65 years in a cramped ground floor space of the Academy's building. Several years later, all the doors on the 2nd floor were removed, and the original oak panels, marble fireplaces and chandeliers, as well as the remaining furniture, had to be removed too, since visitors were more interested in Vranyczany's interior design than in the exhibits. Today the palace has regained its luxurious look, mostly owing to Hafner's remodelling, and the Historicist ceiling stuccos on the first floor have been preserved as part of the original decorations from Vranyczany's era.

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