From Neo- Renaissance Residence to the Museum of XIV Winter Olympic Games: The Architectural Continuity and Adaptive Transformation of Villa Mandić in Sarajevo

This paper examines the architectural continuity and cultural significance of Villa Mandić in Sarajevo, an Austro-Hungarian–period residence designed by architect Karel Pařík[1]*, tracing its transformation from a private villa to a key institution within the city's Olympic legacy as the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games. Using a historical-architectural approach based on archival sources, urban, architectural planning documents, and conservation records, the study analyzes the building's life and adaptive reuse from 1984, war time in 1990's, through its post-war period and reconstruction completed in 2020. The findings reveal the villa's layered public role, as foreign consulates, Institute for Construction of Sarajevo, and a museum, while highlighting the challenges of balancing historical authenticity with contemporary museum functionality. The wartime destruction of the building and the subsequent relocation of the museum's artefacts to the Zetra Olympic Hall, reconstruction and reopening, demonstrate its symbolic and institutional resilience within a post-conflict urban context. The paper contributes to broader discussions on adaptive reuse, cultural resilience, memory, and sustainable heritage conservation in cities profoundly shaped by historical reconfigurations and conflicts.*

Keywords: *architectural continuity, adaptive transformation, sustainable heritage conservation, cultural resilience, Villa Mandić, Museum of XIV Winter Olympic Games*

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Introduction

With the establishment of Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, dramatic economic, social, and cultural transformations reshaped the urban and architectural development of Bosnian cities. Within this process, new neighbourhoods and ambient urban ensembles emerged, composed of public buildings as well as residential structures, such as the villa complex in Petrakijina Street in Sarajevo. Architects including Josip Vancaš, Karel Pařík, Rudolf Tönnies, and Josip Pospišil, educated in Central Europe and active in Bosnia and Herzegovina during this period, introduced new architectural styles ranging from historicism to Secession, together with new construction techniques that significantly transformed local patterns of dwelling and urban life.

At the time when the villas in Petrakijina Street were designed and constructed, the Building Regulation for the "Provincial Capital City of

[1]Karel Pařík (Veliš, 4 July 1857 – Sarajevo, 16 June 1942)

Sarajevo," published in 1893[2] (Građevinski pravilnik za Zemaljski glavni grad Sarajevo 1893), was in force. According to early Austro-Hungarian maps, the area above Banja Street, where Villa Mandić, the villa of Heinrich Raither, the villa of Hermine Radisch, and the villa of Forstrath Miklau were later built, originally consisted of small vernacular residential structures belonging to the well-known Sarajevo neighbourhood of Sarač Ismail's Mahala. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. *Sarajevo neighbourhood of Sarač Ismail's Mahala*



Source: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine

The first villa in the sequence, was Villa Mandić, constructed in 1903 in historicism for the prominent Sarajevo lawyer dr. Nikola Mandić[3], who also served as President of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Parliament during the Austro-Hungarian administration.

Villa Mandić, an architectural landmark in Sarajevo, offers a compelling narrative of transformation, resilience, and cultural continuity. Designed in 1903 by the renowned, in Austro-Hungarian empire, Czech-born architect Karel Pařík, the villa was used as a private residence and evolved over the decades into a central node of public life. Its adaptive transformation as the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games in 1984 signaled not only a new function but also a deeper cultural role in Sarajevo's urban identity. This paper investigates the architectural and cultural significance of Villa Mandić by tracing its historical trajectory and examining the implications of its transformations across societal, institutional, and cultural contexts.

The main objective of this research is to explore how the villa's adaptive transformation and reuse reflects broader themes of heritage preservation, identity formation, urban, architectural continuity and cultural resilience, particularly in a post-war setting of the city of Sarajevo. By analyzing the building's evolving roles, from consular headquarters (British and U.S.) to

[2]Borislav Spasojević, Arhitektura stambenih palata austrougarskog perioda u Sarajevu, Svjetlost, OOUR Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, prvo izdanje, Sarajevo, 1988, p.171

[3]I. Krzović: „Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine u periodu 1878. – 1918", Umjetnička galerija BiH, Sarajevo 1987. p. 131.

Institute for Construction, and ultimately a museum, this study situates Villa Mandić within Sarajevo's shifting urban and cultural landscape. The villa serves as a lens through which to understand the interplay between architectural continuity, adaptive transformation and societal change.

Methodologically, the paper adopts a historical-architectural approach, drawing on archival documents, urban planning records, photographs and architectural drawings. It focuses on key periods of transformation, especially the villa's conversion into a museum in the early 1980s and its post-war (war of 1992-1995) reconstruction, completed in October 2020. These phases provide insight into both the practical and symbolic challenges of preserving a culturally significant building while adapting it to contemporary uses.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to current discussions on adaptive transformation, cultural memory, and the role of architecture in post-war regeneration. By examining the case of Villa Mandić, the paper not only reconstructs an underexplored aspect of Sarajevo's architectural history but also offers broader recommendations for sustainable heritage management in cities marked by disruption and recovery.

Historical and Architectural Context

Villa Mandić was commissioned at the turn of the 20th century during the Austro-Hungarian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a period marked by intense urban development and architectural transformation in Sarajevo. Designed by Karel Pařík in 1903, one of the most influential architects of the era, the villa embodies a synthesis of characteristics of different neo-styles prevalent in Central Europe at the time. Positioned in the Petrakijina street in the Mejtaš quarter, the villa was conceived as an elegant residence embedded in one of the most representative residential areas of the city (Figure 2).

Pařík's design reflects both the ambitions of Sarajevo's emerging bourgeois class and the city's aspiration to align architecturally with the capitals of the empire. Analysing predominantly neo-Renaissance style of the Villa it is evident that architect pays particular attention to symmetry, ornate detailing, and urban integration.[4] The architecture of Villa Mandić is characterized by its harmonious proportions, richly decorated façades, and a layout that balances representational and domestic functions that we can characterize as late historicism, neo-

[4]Tatjana Neidhart, Sarajevo kroz Vrijeme, Bosanska riječ, p. 192,193. Sarajevo, 2006. Ibrahim Krzović, Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine 1878-1918, Sarajevo, Umjetnička galerija Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, str.195, 223, Boris Trapara, From Vienna To Sarajevo, role models and replicas in the architecture of austro-hungarian period, Doctoral dissertation, Inaclo, Paris 2019. str. 239, 244, 253, 299, Sabira Husedžinović, Graditeljstvo Bosne i Hercegovine kroz stoljeća, Dobra knjiga Sarajevo, 2020. Branka Dimitrijević, *Doktorska disertacija Arhitekt Karl Paržik (Karel Pařík),*Zagreb: Arhitektonski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zagreb 1991. Risto Besarović, *Iz kulturnog života u Sarajevu pod austrougarskom upravom*, Biblioteka „Kulturno nasljeđe", Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo 1974.

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Renaissance style[5]. As a residential villa for a prominent Sarajevo family, it symbolized both cultural capital and the cosmopolitan identity of the city at the *fin de siècle*. The building's typology, a free-standing private villa surrounded by a garden, was consistent with contemporary trends in housing for new social elite in Vienna, Prague, and Budapest, highlighting the transnational nature of Sarajevo's architectural discourse at the time. In recent two to three years there is a discussion raised by colleagues, art historians, architects, on the authorship of the architectural design of Villa Mandić. During the research work for this paper a detailed (executive) dawing of the of floor plans for Villa Mandić show signature of architect Rudolf Tönnies (Figure 3).

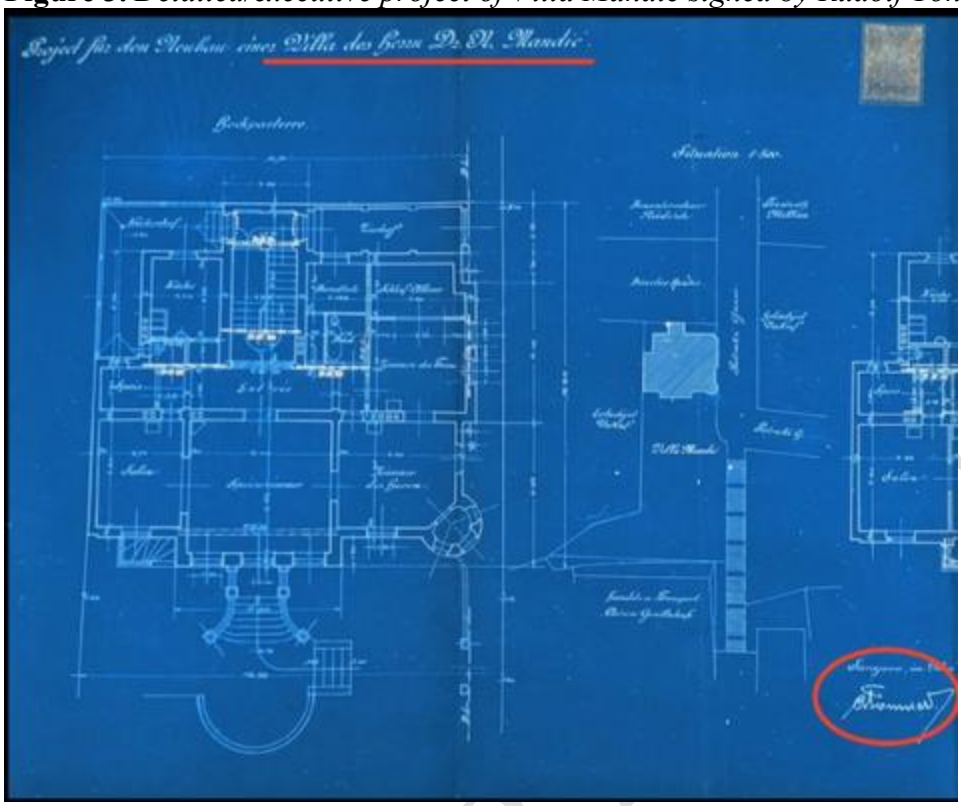
Figure 2. *View to the entrance façade of Villa Mandić for Petrakijina street*



Source: US National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)

[5]Villa Mandić is typical example of small neo-Renaissance palace with bossage (imitation of stone/brick blocks on the facade like the Pitti Palace in Florence), sculptural decoration, a central projection (balcony with columns), pilasters around the windows, and the shape of the windows.

Figure 3. *Detailed/executive project of Villa Mandić signed by Rudolf Tönnies*



Source: Social media of Andrea Baotić

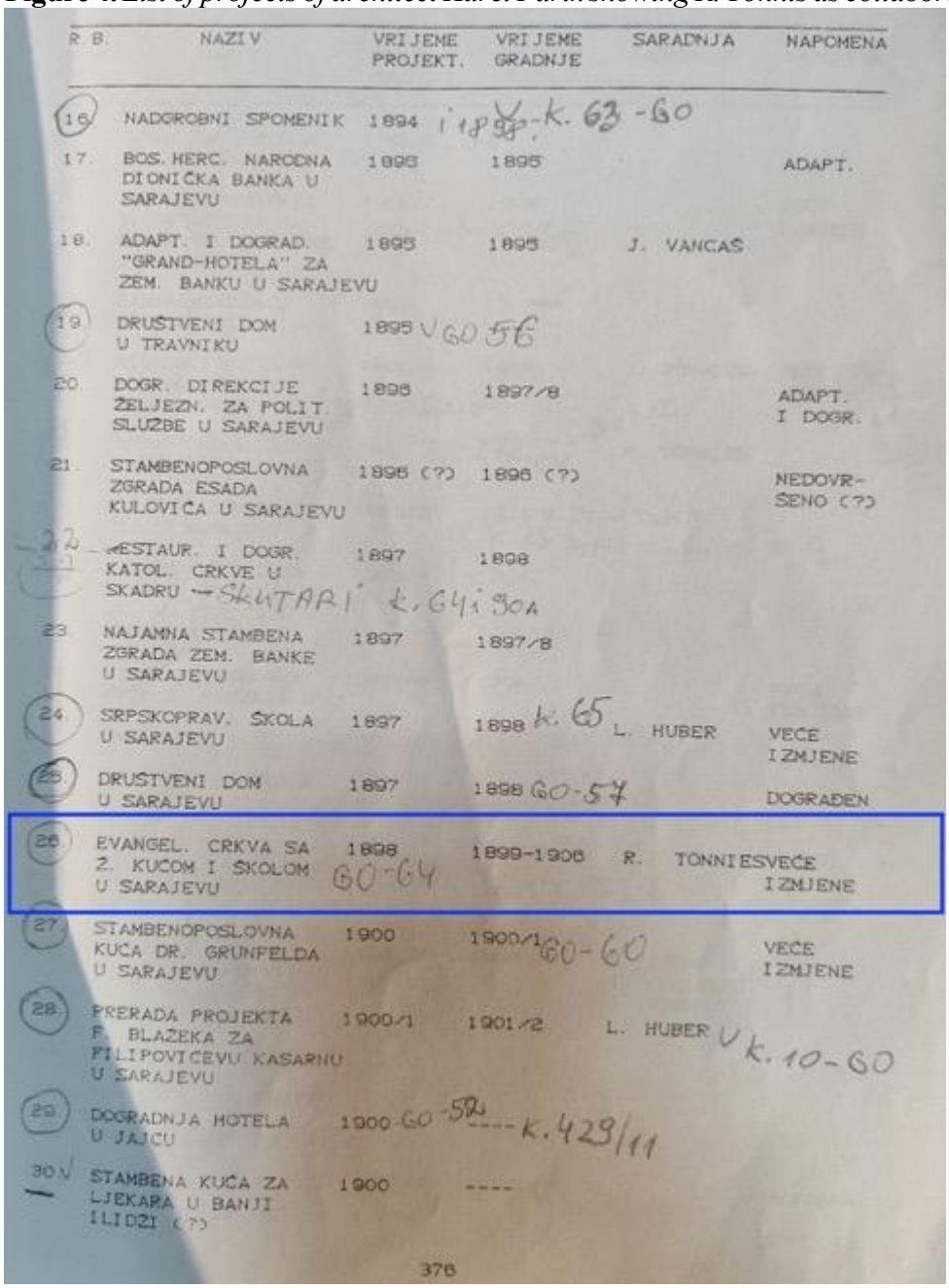
Further research shows following facts: The list of the projects[6] done by Karel Pařík shows that in the period of designing Villa Mandić Rudolf Tönnis[7] was collaborator on other projects for architect Pařík (Figure 4, Figure 5).

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[6]Arhiv, Bosne i Hercegovine. 1917. *ZMF-opšta građa.* br. 3269, š. 8. 3, Sarajevo: Arhiv Bosne I Hercegovine.

[7]Mirha Šabanović, *Rudolf Tönnies – život i djelo*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zagreb, (2022)

Figure 4. *List of projects of architect Karel Pařík showing R. Tönnis as collaborator*



R. B.	NAZIV	VRIJEME PROJEKT.	VRIJEME GRADNJE	SARADNJA	NAPOMENA
16.	NADGROBNI SPOMENIK	1894			
17.	BOS. HERC. NARODNA DIONIČKA BANKA U SARAJEVU	1895	1895		ADAPT.
18.	ADAPT. I DOGRAD. "GRAND-HOTELA" ZA ZEM. BANKU U SARAJEVU	1895	1895	J. VANCAŠ	
19.	DRUŠTVENI DOM U TRAVNIKU	1895			
20.	DOGR. DIREKCIJE ŽELJEZN. ZA POLIT. SLUŽBE U SARAJEVU	1896	1897/8		ADAPT. I DOGR.
21.	STAMBENOPOSLOVNA ZGRADA ESADA KULOVIĆA U SARAJEVU	1896 (?)	1896 (?)		NEDOVR-ŠENO (?)
22.	RESTAUR. I DOGR. KATOL. CRKVE U SKADRU	1897	1898		
23.	NAJAMNA STAMBENA ZGRADA ZEM. BANKE U SARAJEVU	1897	1897/8		
24.	SRPSKOPRAV. ŠKOLA U SARAJEVU	1897	1898	L. HUBER	VEĆE IZMJENE
25.	DRUŠTVENI DOM U SARAJEVU	1897	1898		DOGRAĐEN
26.	EVANGEL. CRKVA SA Z. KUĆOM I ŠKOLOM U SARAJEVU	1898	1899-1900	R. TONNIES	VEĆE IZMJENE
27.	STAMBENOPOSLOVNA KUĆA DR. GRUNFELDA U SARAJEVU	1900	1900/1		VEĆE IZMJENE
28.	PRERADA PROJEKTA F. BLAŽEKA ZA FILIPOVIĆEVU KASARNU U SARAJEVU	1900/1	1901/2	L. HUBER	
29.	DOGRADNJA HOTELA U JAJCU	1900			
30.	STAMBENA KUĆA ZA LJEKARA U BANJI ILIDŽI (?)	1900	----		

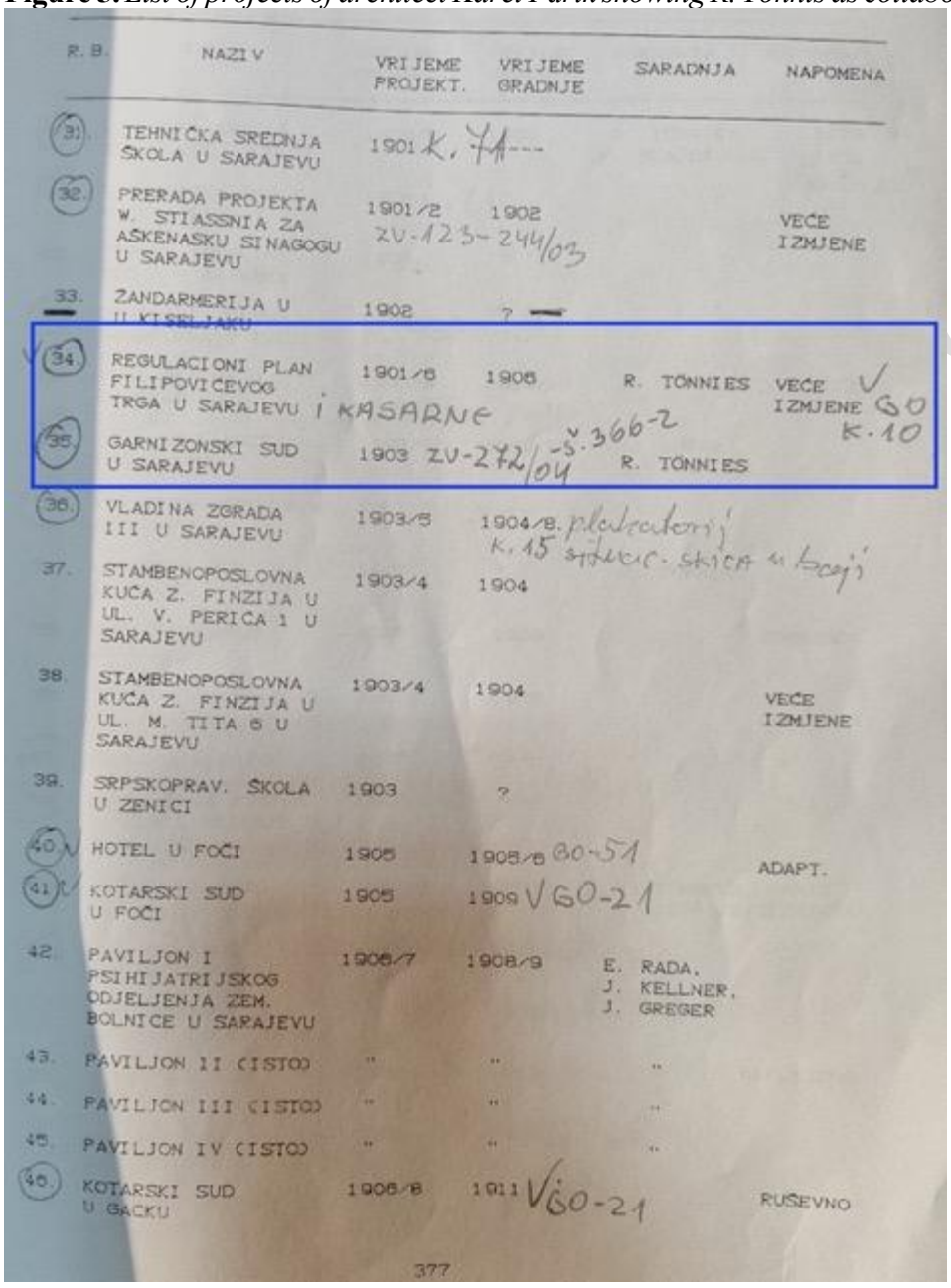
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Also the autobiography of Rudolf Tönnis he listed the projects that he describes in German language as sketches and preliminary design that he developed, clearly meaning that he wasn't the author of the original projects but he developed the detailed design[8] in Bosnia and Herzegovina during that same period of begin of 1900-is (Figure 6). Among listed works there are evident projects that are designed by architect Karel Pařík like Protestant church;

[8](translated from: "…nachbennanten Skizzen und Entwürfe ausgearbeitet")

Evladijet Dženetića Vakuf building is project by architect Josip Vancaš; War-court-building done by architect Karel Pařík, as well as Vila Mandić (Figure 6).[9]

Figure 5. *List of projects of architect Karel Pařík showing R. Tönnis as collaborator*



R. B.	NAZIV	VRIJEME PROJEKT.	VRIJEME GRADNJE	SARADNJA	NAPOMENA
31.	TEHNIČKA SREDNJA ŠKOLA U SARAJEVU	1901 K. 74---			
32.	PRERADA PROJEKTA W. STIASSNIA ZA AŠKENASKU SINAGOGU U SARAJEVU	1901/2 ZV-123-244/03	1902		VEĆE IZMJENE
33.	ŽANDARMERIJA U U KISELJAKU	1902	?		
34.	REGULACIONI PLAN FILIPOVIĆEVOG TRGA U SARAJEVU I KASARNE	1901/6	1905	R. TÖNNIES	VEĆE IZMJENE G0 K.10
35.	GARNIZONSKI SUD U SARAJEVU	1903 ZV-272/04 -5.366-2		R. TÖNNIES	
36.	VLADINA ZGRADA III U SARAJEVU	1903/5	1904/8. plafoniere K.15		
37.	STAMBENOPOSLOVNA KUĆA Z. FINZIJA U UL. V. PERIĆA 1 U SARAJEVU	1903/4	1904		
38.	STAMBENOPOSLOVNA KUĆA Z. FINZIJA U UL. M. TITA 6 U SARAJEVU	1903/4	1904		VEĆE IZMJENE
39.	SRPSKOPRAV. ŠKOLA U ZENICI	1903	?		
40.	HOTEL U FOČI	1905	1905/6 G0-51		ADAPT.
41.	KOTARSKI SUD U FOČI	1905	1909 G0-21		
42.	PAVILJON I PSIHIJATRIJSKOG ODJELJENJA ZEM. BOLNICE U SARAJEVU	1906/7	1908/9	E. RADA, J. KELLNER, J. GREGER	
43.	PAVILJON II (ISTO)	"	"	"	
44.	PAVILJON III (ISTO)	"	"	"	
45.	PAVILJON IV (ISTO)	"	"	"	
46.	KOTARSKI SUD U GAČKU	1906/8	1911 G0-21		RUŠEVNO

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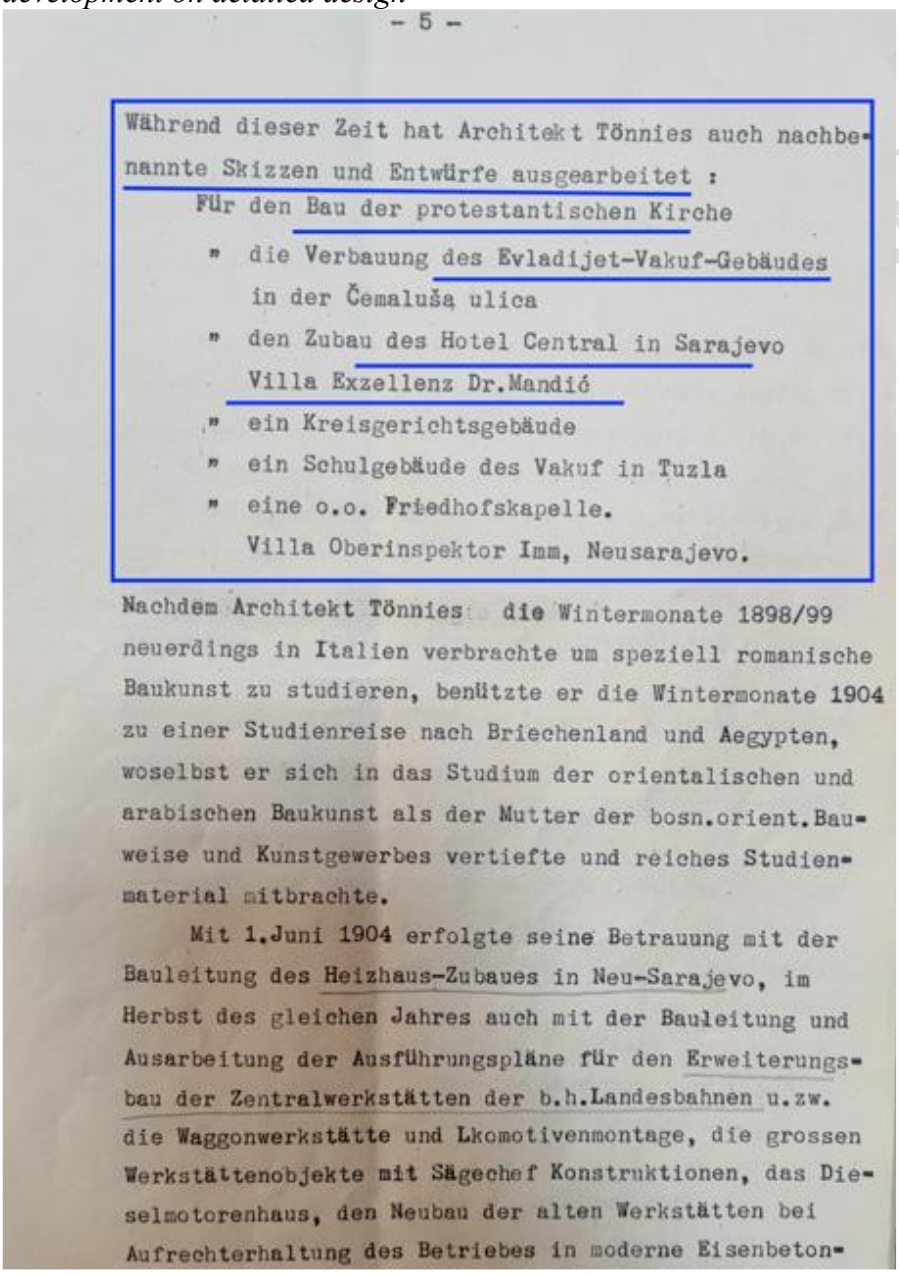
Source: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine

All these facts and translation from German work "ausgearbeitet" – that mean "developed" made us sure that the idea and preliminary design of the Villa Mandić is work of architect Karel Pařík and that his collaborator on this project

[9]Arhiv, Bosne i Hercegovine. 1917. *ZMF-opšta građa.* br. 3269, š. 8. 3, Sarajevo: Arhiv Bosne I Hercegovine.

for the development of detailed architectural design was Rudolf Tönnis, who as such also left his signature on the detail designed project. Similar is also with other phases of project, like water installations. All engineers who participated in the design of these phases left their signature on the drawings (Figure 7)[10].

Figure 6. *List of projects on which architect Rudolf Tönnis worked on development on detailed design*



- 5 -

Während dieser Zeit hat Architekt Tönnies auch nachbenannte Skizzen und Entwürfe ausgearbeitet :

Für den Bau der protestantischen Kirche
" die Verbauung des Evladijet-Vakuf-Gebäudes in der Čemalušą ulica
" den Zubau des Hotel Central in Sarajevo
Villa Exzellenz Dr.Mandić
" ein Kreisgerichtsgebäude
" ein Schulgebäude des Vakuf in Tuzla
" eine o.o. Friedhofskapelle.
Villa Oberinspektor Imm, Neusarajevo.

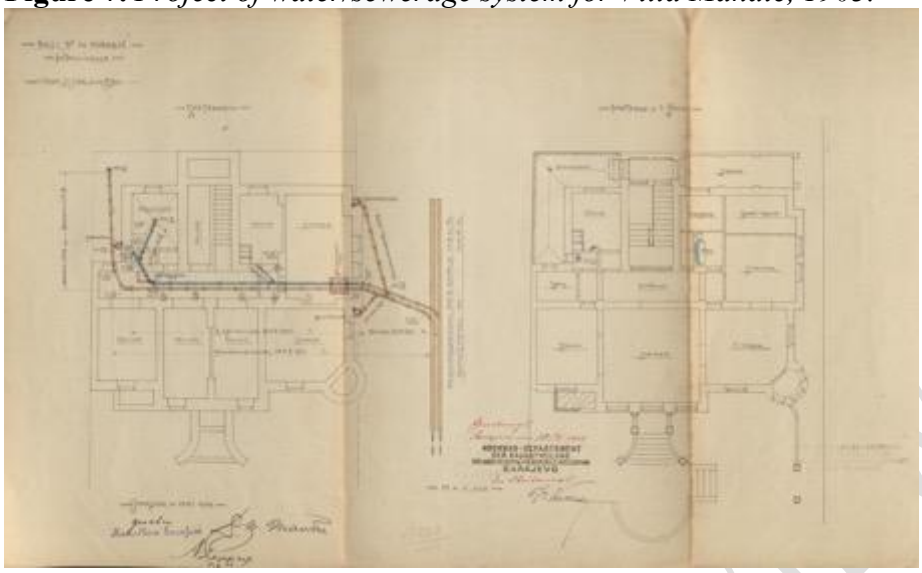
Nachdem Architekt Tönnies die Wintermonate 1898/99 neuerdings in Italien verbrachte um speziell romanische Baukunst zu studieren, benützte er die Wintermonate 1904 zu einer Studienreise nach Briechenland und Aegypten, woselbst er sich in das Studium der orientalischen und arabischen Baukunst als der Mutter der bosn.orient.Bauweise und Kunstgewerbes vertiefte und reiches Studienmaterial mitbrachte.

Mit 1.Juni 1904 erfolgte seine Betrauung mit der Bauleitung des Heizhaus-Zubaues in Neu-Sarajevo, im Herbst des gleichen Jahres auch mit der Bauleitung und Ausarbeitung der Ausführungspläne für den Erweiterungsbau der Zentralwerkstätten der b.h.Landesbahnen u.zw. die Waggonwerkstätte und Lkomotivenmontage, die grossen Werkstättenobjekte mit Sägechef Konstruktionen, das Dieselmotorenhaus, den Neubau der alten Werkstätten bei Aufrechterhaltung des Betriebes in moderne Eisenbeton-

Source: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine

[10]Arhiv, Bosne i Hercegovine. 1917. *ZMF-opšta građa.* br. 3269, š. 8. 3, Sarajevo: Arhiv Bosne I Hercegovine.

Figure 7. *Project of water/sewerage system for Villa Mandić, 1903.*

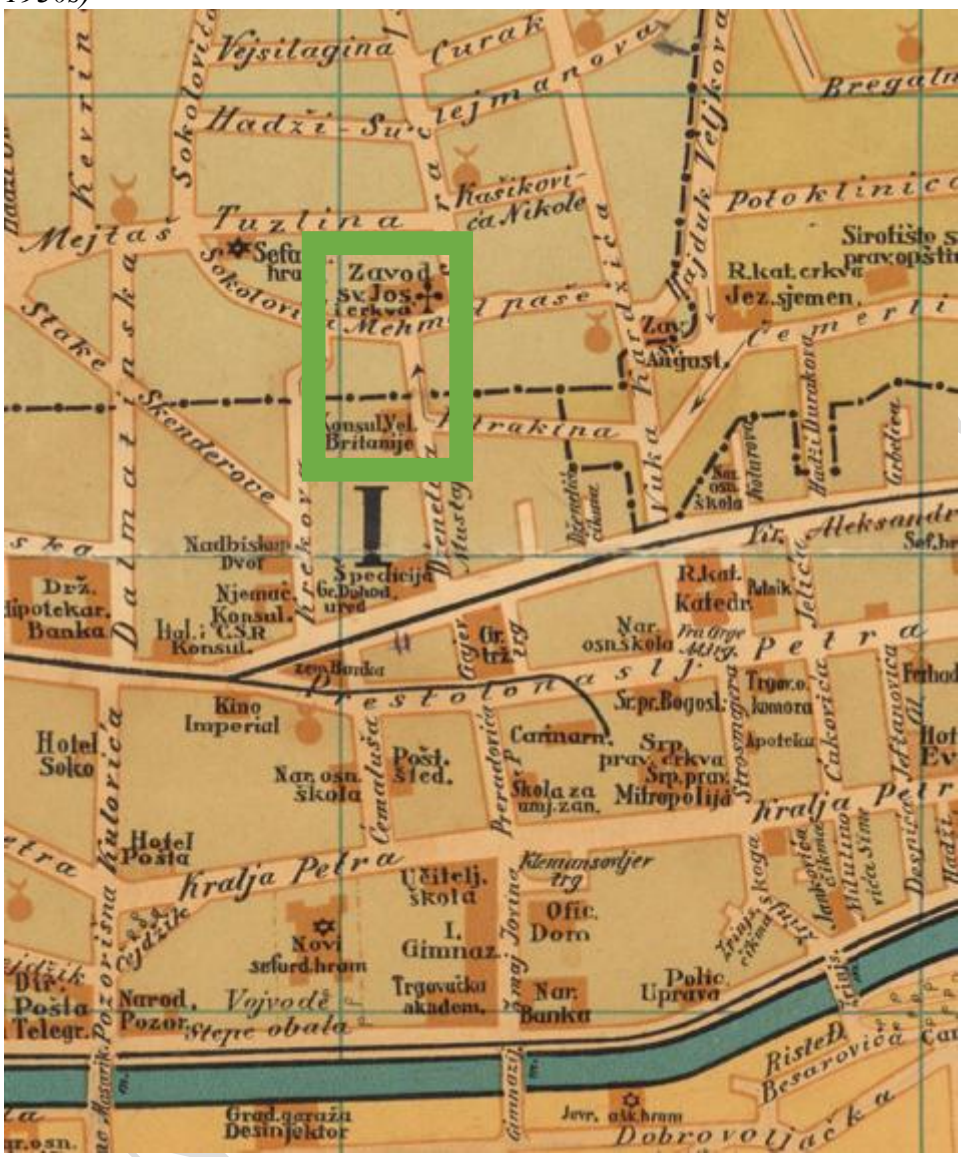


Source: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine

After serving as a private residence for several decades, the villa gradually entered the public sphere reflecting broader shifts in geopolitical and the city's institutional landscape. During the interwar period it was repurposed to house the Great **Britain Consulate** (cca. 1918–1930s), signifying Sarajevo's growing importance in diplomatic affairs during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Figure 8). This diplomatic function continued later with the **U.S. Consulate**, which occupied the villa from approximately the 1960s to the late 1970s**.**

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Figure 8. *Map showing Villa Mandić as Great Britain Consulate (cca. 1918–1930s)*



Source: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine

These roles not only altered the functional character of the building but also subtly impacted its internal spatial configuration to accommodate administrative needs. Following its use by foreign missions, Villa Mandić was temporarily used as the seat for different public institutions**,** further extending its role in the public domain. While documentation on this transitional period remains limited, this phase represents the villa's integration into the institutional infrastructure of socialist Sarajevo, underscoring the flexibility of its spatial design and its enduring presence in the urban fabric.

In May 1978, on the announcement of Sarajevo's selection as the host city for the XIV Winter Olympic Games**,** the villa was once again reimagined, this time as a cultural institution. Its architectural elegance and already public use made it a natural candidate for transformation into the Museum of the XIV

Winter Olympic Games**,** which opened in February 1984. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the building's history, positioning it at the intersection of cultural heritage and national representation during a period of global attention on Sarajevo[11].

Transformation into a Museum

Figure 9. *Entrance garden of the Villa Mandić acting as Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games*



Source: Archive of the Olympic committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1984.

The transformation of Villa Mandić into the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games was a strategic cultural and architectural decision made in anticipation of Sarajevo's role as the host city for the 1984 Winter Olympics. When the city was awarded the Games in 1978, preparations extended beyond the construction of sports infrastructure to include cultural programming that would solidify Sarajevo's image on the international stage. The conversion of an

[11]Miroslav Prstojević, *Zaboravljeno Sarajevo*, Stubovi kulture, Sarajevo 1999.

iconic building, at that time already in public use, into a museum was emblematic of this ambition, a merging of modern sporting achievement presentation, artists contribution to the museum with the preservation of architectural heritage[12] (Figure 9).

Villa Mandić was chosen for its symbolic value and central location. As a finely crafted structure by Karel Pařík, the villa offered both prestige and visibility, qualities desirable in a museum intended to serve as a permanent memorial to the Olympic spirit. Its transformation marked an important cultural investment, demonstrating the city's intention not only to host a global sporting event but to integrate that event into Sarajevo's urban and architectural narrative for all future generations.

The Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games officially opened in February 1984, coinciding with the Games themselves. It was conceived as a hybrid institution, part sports archive, part cultural and artistic center, that celebrated Olympic values while fostering local pride. The museum housed memorabilia, documentation, photographs, medals, and uniforms from the Games, creating a unique cultural repository that extended the Olympic values beyond sports into the domains of design, architecture, and civic identity.

Converting Villa Mandić into a museum required a series of architectural interventions that balanced the villa's residential integrity with the functional needs of a contemporary exhibition space. The project involved **adaptive transformation and reuse** as methodology that seeks to preserve the architectural character of a building while reprogramming its spaces for new uses. This approach presented several challenges: adapting domestic-scale rooms for public exhibition, ensuring climate control and artifact preservation, and providing accessible circulation paths within a structure not originally intended for large public use (Figure 10).

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[12]Nedžad Kurto, *Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine, razvoj Bosanskog stila*, Sarajevo Publishing, Sarajevo 1998.

Figure 10. *Interior of Villa Mandić acting as Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games 1984*



Source: Archive of the Olympic committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1984.

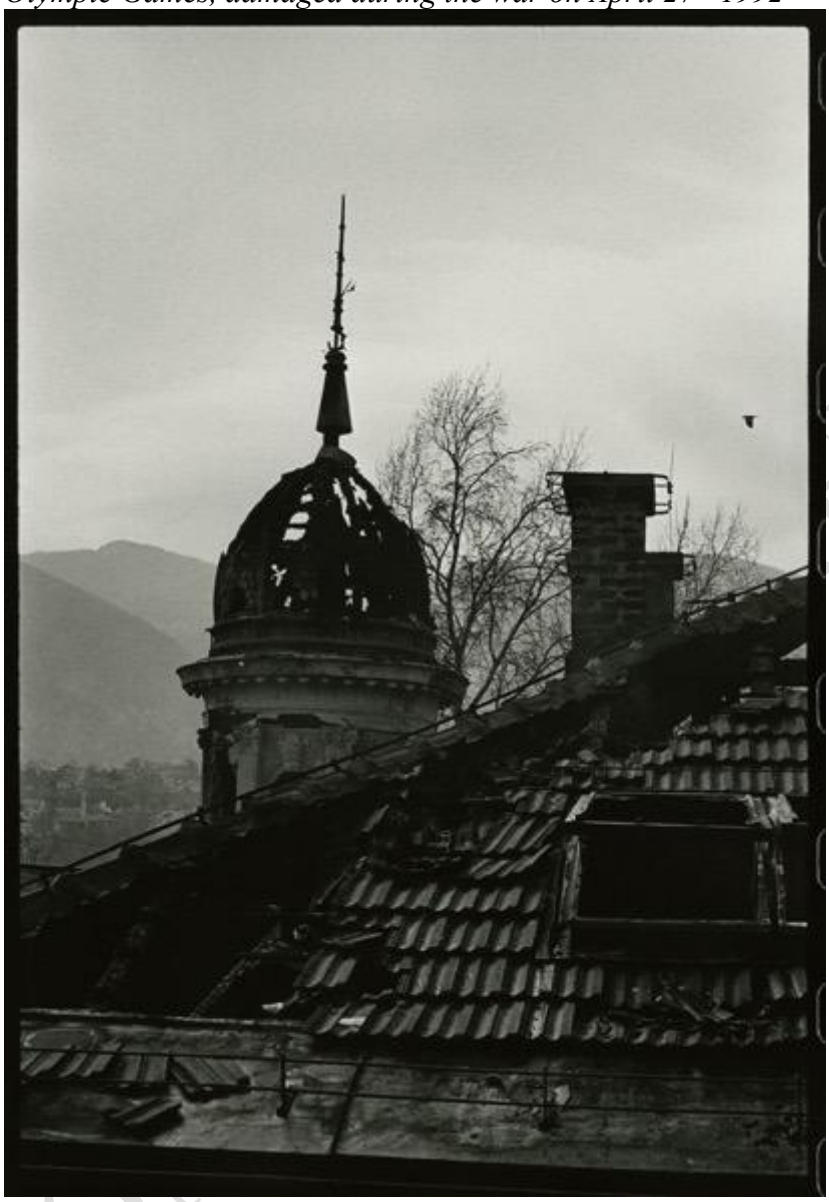
The conversion was sensitive to the villa's historical and aesthetic qualities. Rather than imposing drastic modifications, the adaptation worked with the existing spatial layout, integrating museum functions in a way that respected the building's original design. Exhibition rooms were arranged to correspond with the former reception and residential areas, while temporary partitions and reversible installations were used to protect the architectural fabric (Figure 10). Despite the constraints, the adoptive transformation and reuse of Villa Mandić as a museum was successful in establishing a dialogue between past and present. It allowed visitors to experience Olympic heritage within an architectural space that itself told a story of Sarajevo's urban evolution. In doing so, the museum served not only as a cultural destination but as a living example of how historical buildings can be reactivated for contemporary civic life. This period of evolution in development of the city lasted almost eight years, until the fall of Yugoslavia.

War Damage and Post-War Resilience

The outbreak of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 brought devastating consequences for Sarajevo and its built heritage. Villa Mandić, as both a cultural landmark and a symbol of internationalism through its Olympic legacy, became a target during the siege of Sarajevo. Positioned in a strategic zone, visible to the frontlines of the enemy army, the villa was severely damaged by shelling and fire on April 27th 1992, resulting in the loss of much of its interior, structural integrity, and original museum exhibits. It was targeted to destroy the cultural heritage of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as representation of the Olympic spirit (Figure 11).

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Figure 11. *Roof view of Villa Mandić acting as Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games, damaged during the war on April 27th 1992*



Source: Milomir Kovačević, Strašni, 1992.

The destruction of the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games was a profound cultural loss. It not only erased the physical manifestation of Sarajevo's Olympic achievement but also threatened the continuity of a public narrative that celebrated openness, sport, and global connection, values that stood in stark contrast to the violence and isolation of war. For many residents, the villa's ruin that remained after the destruction, represented a deeper rupture in Sarajevo's civic memory and identity. Numerous Olympic artifacts and documents were destroyed**,** while others were rescued by the director of the Museum, Edin Numankadić, staff of the Museum and local citizens who risked their lives to

protect them. Their actions underscored the symbolic importance of the museum and the broader desire to safeguard collective memory even amid destruction. This informal network of preservation laid the groundwork for the museum's eventual rebirth in a new location. In the years following the war, Sarajevo faced the enormous task of rebuilding its urban fabric, institutions, and cultural infrastructure. The original villa, heavily damaged and structurally compromised, could not immediately resume its function. As an interim solution, efforts were undertaken to relocate the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games to a new site. In 2004, the museum officially reopened in the Zetra Olympic Complex, a location equally symbolic due to its association with the 1984 Games and its own wartime survival (Figure 12).

Figure 12. *Exhibition of the Sarajevo's Olympic legacy in the Olympic Hall Zetra, opened in 2004 for public*



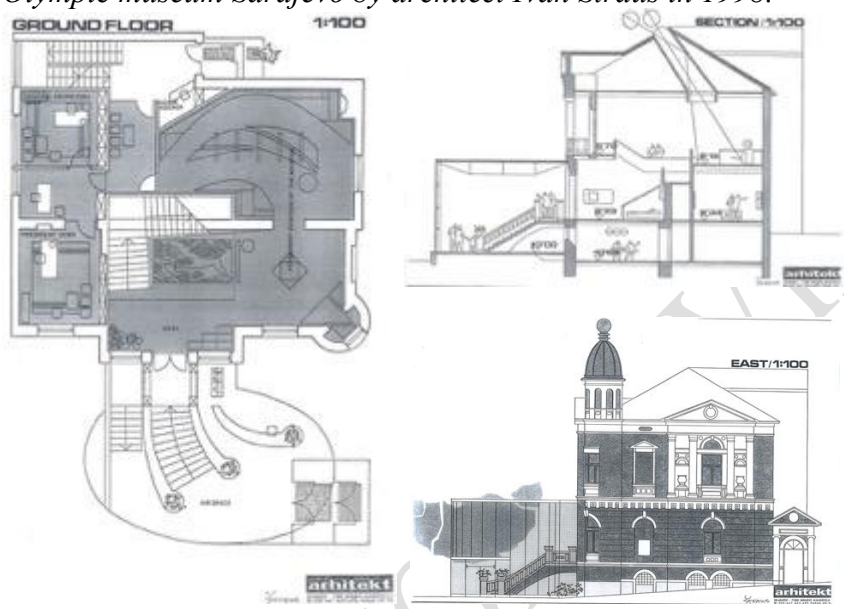
Source: Archive of the Olympic committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2004.

The *new temporary museum space* continued the mission of commemorating Sarajevo's Olympic legacy, now enriched by the added layer of post-war resilience. It housed salvaged artifacts from the original collection alongside new exhibits documenting the war's impact on the city and the museum itself. In this way, the museum's narrative evolved from a celebration of a single event to a testimony of endurance, memory, and reconstruction. Although the physical space had changed, the relocation preserved the institutional continuity and symbolic function of the museum. It demonstrated how cultural institutions could adapt and persist even in the face of profound disruption. Moreover, it kept alive the public's relationship[13] with the Olympic legacy, ensuring that younger generations could access this history in a renewed form.

[13] Ákos Moravánszky, *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture*, Budapest, The MIT Press 2005.

During that period, starting from 1998, architect Ivan Štraus worked on adaptive transformation plans of the Olympic museum. He proposed also some new additions to the existing building by adding closed entrance hall as well as proposing new lateral lighting (Figure 13/14/15).

Figure 13/14/15. *Floor plan of adaptive reuse of the Olympic museum Sarajevo by architect Ivan Štraus in 1998./ Section of adaptive reuse of Olympic museum Sarajevo by architect Ivan Štraus in 1998/ East Elevation of adaptive reuse of Olympic museum Sarajevo by architect Ivan Štraus in 1998.*



Source: Archive of the Olympic committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1998.

The first phase of reconstruction started with roof and main construction elements in the interior and the works were done by year 2000 (Figure 16/17). Next phase was integrating and finalizing main construction elements as well as portals and windows to have closed building, protected from the changing weather conditions (Figure 18/19).

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Figure 16/17. *1st phase of reconstruction of the roof. Roof view of Villa Mandić acting as Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games, during and after reconstruction of the roof in year 2000.*



Source: Archive of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000. - 2005

Figure 18/19. *2nd phase of reconstruction of the windows and portals as well as main construction elements in the interior, from year 2000. - 2005*



Source: Archive of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000. - 2005.

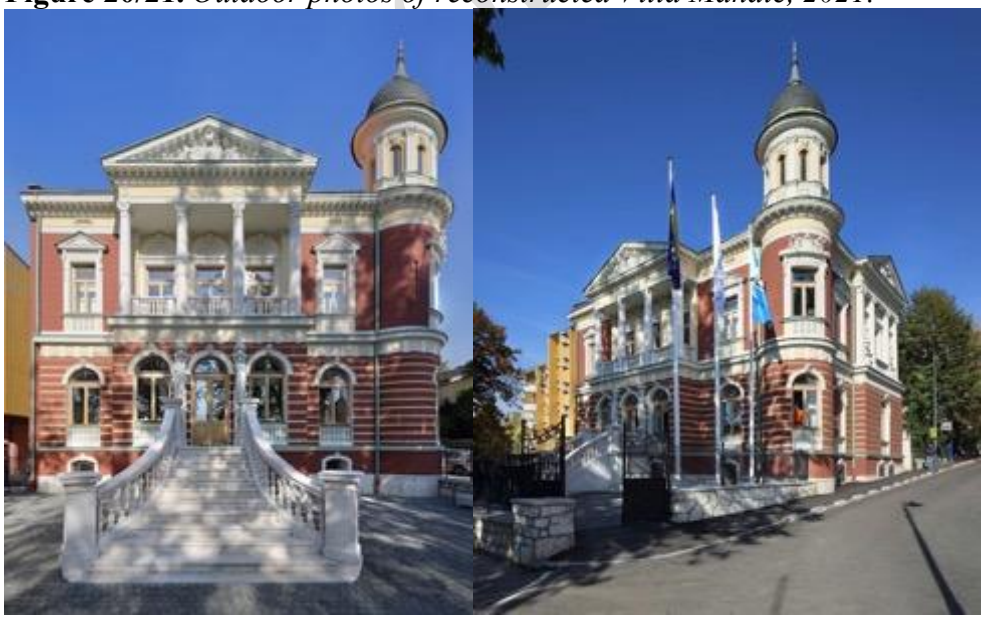
The Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pursuant to Article V, paragraph 4 of Annex 8 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Article 39, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, at its session held from 10 to 16 March 2009, adopted the following decision *The Built Heritage Complex – a complex of villas dating from the Austro-Hungarian period in Petrakijina Street (Villa Mandić, Villa Heinrich Reiter, Villa Hermine Radisch and Villa Forstrath Miklau)* in Sarajevo is hereby proclaimed a National Monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina and represents the best-preserved ensemble of villas from the Austro-Hungarian period in Sarajevo,

possessing invaluable historical and documentary significance.[14] The complex provides an important source of knowledge about construction practices and ways of life in the central part of the city of Sarajevo at the beginning of the 20th century.

In addition to its historical and documentary significance, this built heritage complex possesses considerable environmental and architectural-aesthetic value, given that the foremost architectural authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time designed and constructed unique buildings, both in stylistic and formal terms, of a kind not found in other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[15]

A significant turning point came with the comprehensive reconstruction of Villa Mandić, which was carried out intensively between 2018 and 2020**.** Thanks to the combined efforts of the "Studio Architect", the renowned architect Ivan Štraus**,** who contributed drawings and conceptual guidance for the reconstruction and a team of local architectural firms, the villa was restored with great success, with financial help of International Olympic Committee, Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina and City of Sarajevo. On October 9th, 2020, Villa Mandić officially reopened as the Olympic Museum Sarajevo, reinstating its original role as the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games. This marked not only the return of the museum to its historical home but also a broader moment of cultural revival for the city. The restored building now functions once again as a vibrant public institution, merging historical memory with contemporary relevance in Sarajevo's post-war landscape (Figure 20/21/22).

Figure 20/21. *Outdoor photos of reconstructed Villa Mandic, 2021.*



Source: Anida Krečo, 2021

[14]Commission, to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina. n.d. "Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika." *http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba.*

[15]Commission, to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina. n.d. "Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika." *http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba.*

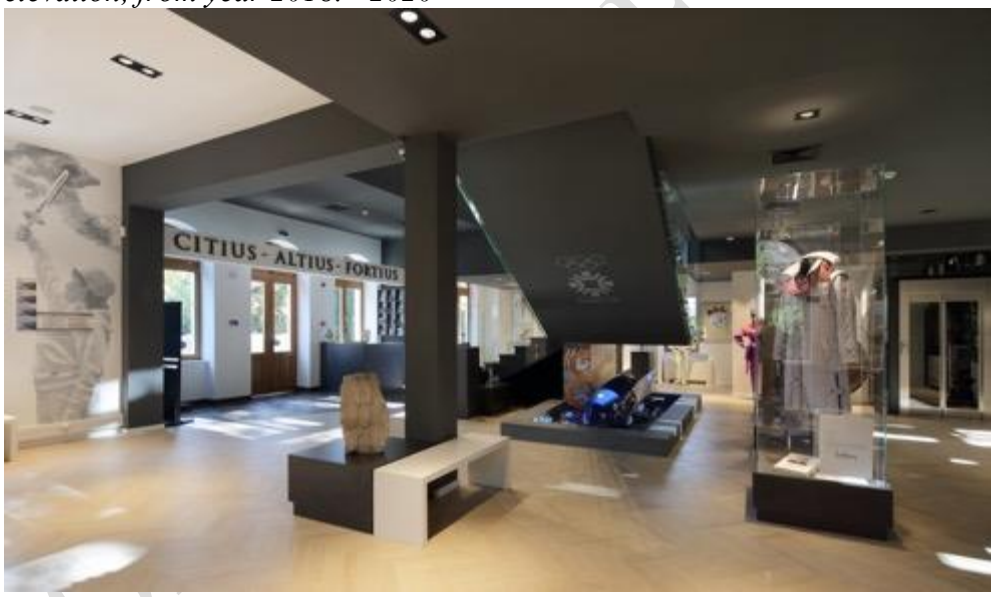
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Post-War Renovation and Conservation Strategies

The post-war reconstruction of Villa Mandić, culminating in its reopening as Olympic Museum Sarajevo in 2020, stands as a compelling example of architectural resilience and cultural restoration. Following the wartime devastation and years of disuse, the decision to restore the villa was not only a technical and architectural challenge but also a symbolic gesture toward reclaiming Sarajevo's historical continuity and civic pride.

The renovation project was guided by core principles of architectural conservation, aiming to preserve the historical authenticity of the villa while ensuring its functional adaptation for a modern museum. This dual aim required careful attention to the villa's original design features, materials, and spatial composition, particularly those that reflected Karel Pařík's architectural language. At the same time, the project had to meet contemporary standards for public accessibility, exhibition display, climate control, and digital infrastructure (Figure 22).

Figure 22. *3rd phase of reconstruction of the whole building interior and elevation, from year 2018. - 2020*



Source: Anida Krečo, 2021.

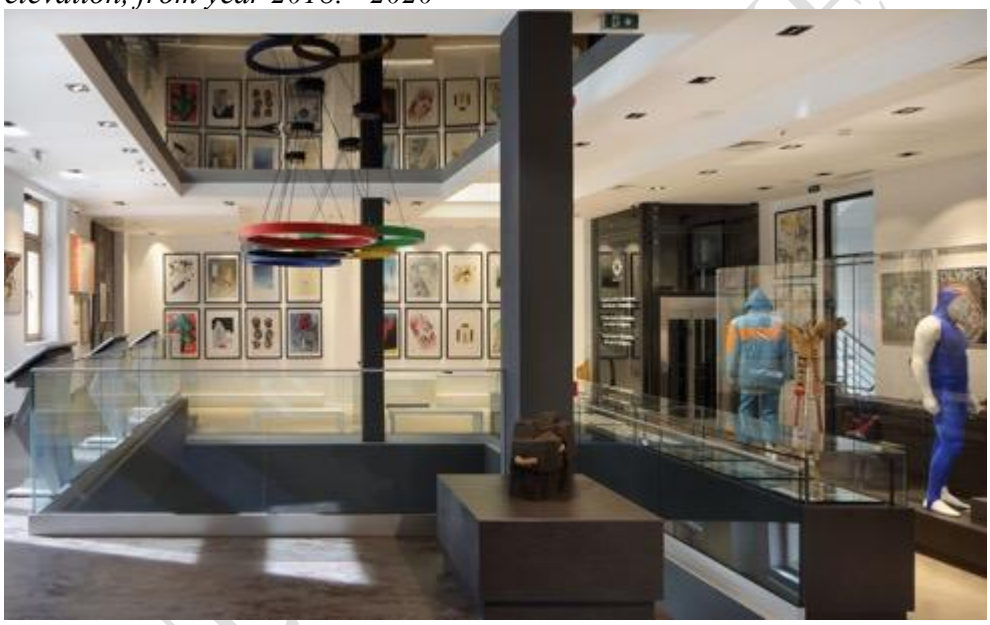
The restoration was deeply respectful of the building's historic character, striving to retain as much of the original fabric as possible while clearly distinguishing between preserved and reconstructed elements. Interior spaces were carefully analyzed to determine which features could be restored or reconstructed based on surviving documentation and physical traces. This approach allowed the villa's spatial narrative to be reactivated in a meaningful and conscious way.

The renovation process benefited from the expertise and legacy of architect Ivan Štraus, a key figure in Sarajevo's architectural history and one of the original voices behind the Olympic architectural identity of the city. Although

retired, Štraus contributed drawings and conceptual guidelines for the restoration, bringing not only his technical knowledge but also an intimate understanding of the Olympic spirit embedded in the villa's identity.

The execution of the project was carried out by local architectural firms, coordinated under the architectural studio specialized in reconstruction of heritage monuments, studio *Urbing*, which worked collaboratively with company *Unigradnja* also licensed for national heritage monuments to bring the villa back to life. The project successfully balanced the demands of heritage preservation with innovative design solutions, proving that local expertise, when coupled with historical sensitivity, can lead to internationally relevant outcomes. The result is a restored villa that honors its past while functioning fully as a contemporary museum (Figure 23).

Figure 23. *3rd phase of reconstruction of the whole building interior and elevation, from year 2018. - 2020*



Source: Anida Krečo, 2021.

The adaptive transformation of the villa once again raised important questions about museum functionality within heritage architecture. Key interventions included the integration of exhibition technologies, improved accessibility through the addition of an elevator, the reconstruction of damaged staircases, and the installation of new mechanical and electrical systems. Importantly, these interventions were executed in ways that did not compromise the villa's original structure and aesthetic coherence.

Exhibition spaces were designed to create a fluid narrative experience, combining Olympic history, architectural heritage, and memory of the war period. The new layout also allowed for temporary exhibitions, educational programming, and interactive installations, significantly expanding the museum's public role. Through these features, the villa has become more than a

site of memory, it now functions as an active cultural platform that contributes to Sarajevo's ongoing urban and social regeneration.

Villa Mandić in Urban and Cultural Memory

Villa Mandić occupies a singular position in Sarajevo's urban landscape, not only as an architectural landmark, but as a living symbol of the citys layered history, cultural identity, and capacity for resilience. a s museum reflects the complex interplay between built heritage and collective memory in a city marked by political upheaval and cultural transformation.

In many ways, Villa Mandić functions as a spatial archive of Sarajevo's modern history. Each phase of its use, residential, diplomatic, institutional, and cultural, has added a layer of meaning to the building, making it a repository of shared memory. Its prominent location, architectural pedigree, and institutional function have made it familiar to generations of Sarajevo's residents, contributing to its status as a recognizable and emotionally resonant element of the city's identity.

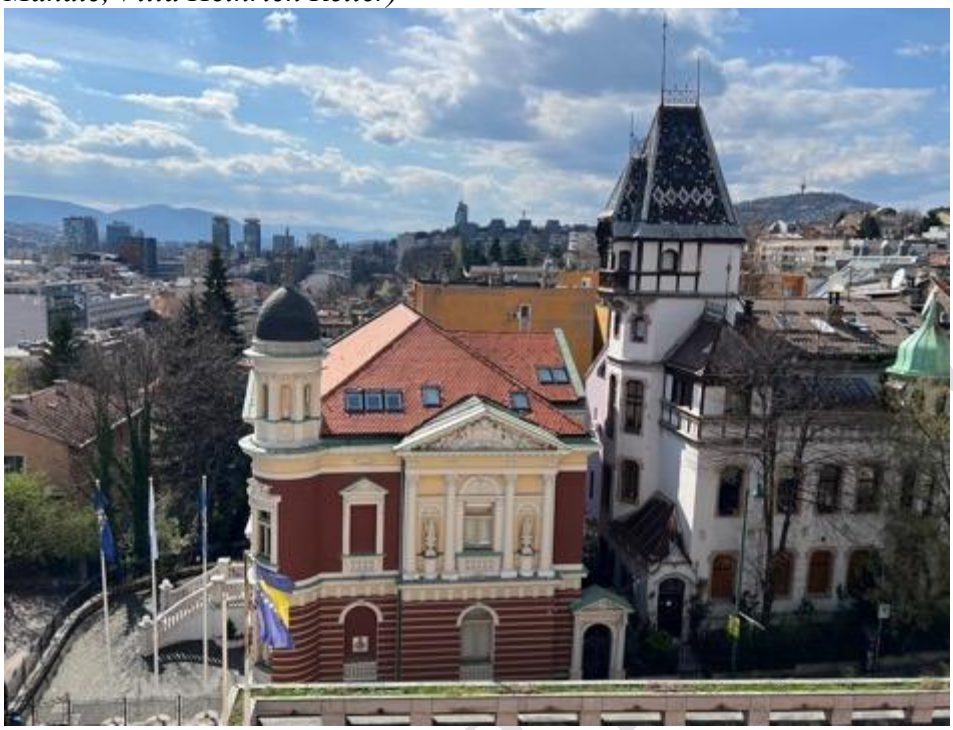
Its current role as the Olympic Museum reinforces this position. The villa now encapsulates not only the memory of the 1984 Winter Games, an event that brought Sarajevo global visibility and optimism, but also the memory of loss, endurance, and the eventual triumph of reconstruction. Through its architecture and curatorial content, the museum communicates a narrative of resilience that is deeply embedded in the city's post-war recovery.

Since its reopening in 2020, Villa Mandić has resumed its role as a public cultural institution, offering exhibitions, educational programs, and events that attract both local visitors and international guests. Its programming is increasingly focused on engaging younger generations, not only with Olympic history but also with broader themes of peace, cultural exchange, and urban heritage. The museum's return to its original location has strengthened its civic relevance**,** reactivating a site that had long stood as a painful reminder of destruction. Today, it represents the opposite, a place of gathering, learning, and inspiration. It contributes to the city's cultural infrastructure while participating in regional and international dialogues about sport, architecture, and memory.

Villa Mandić is unique in its ability to embody multiple cultural registers at once. As a historical building, it speaks to the architectural legacy of the city of Sarajevo. As a museum, it houses the narrative of the Olympics, an event intrinsically tied to notions of international cooperation and peace. And as a restored structure in a post-conflict setting, it stands as a tool of cultural diplomacy, promoting the idea that built heritage can serve not only as a site of preservation but as a vehicle for civic healing and international engagement. This multidimensional identity positions Villa Mandić as a valuable case study in the integration of heritage conservation with urban resilience, architectural continuity, adaptive transformation and cultural programming. Its story offers lessons not only for Sarajevo, but for other cities facing the challenges of post-war reconstruction and identity rebuilding in a globalized cultural landscape

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Figure 24. *The Built Heritage Complex – a complex of villas dating from the Austro-Hungarian period in Petrakijina Street, view in 2026 (on photo Villa Mandić, Villa Heinrich Reiter)*



Source: Boris Trapara, 2026

Conclusion

This study has traced the remarkable journey of Villa Mandić from its origins as a private residence, through its various institutional roles, to its current status as the Museum of the XIV Winter Olympic Games. The villa's adaptive transformation embodies broader themes of architectural continuity, heritage preservation, and urban resilience, illustrating how architecture can serve as a vessel of cultural memory and identity, particularly in a post-conflict context. The research highlights the villa's unique capacity to reflect Sarajevo's layered history, its Austro-Hungarian architectural legacy, its diplomatic functions, its Olympic moment of international prominence, and its wartime destruction and reconstruction. The successful post-war restoration and reopening of Villa Mandić in 2020 represent not only a physical renewal but a symbolic act of cultural and civic regeneration. Key challenges in this process included balancing the preservation of historical authenticity with the need to accommodate modern museum functionalities, ensuring the building's sustainability, and reintegrating it into Sarajevo's urban and cultural fabric. The collaborative efforts of architects, conservationists, and local stakeholders demonstrate that sensitive, locally grounded interventions can achieve globally relevant outcomes.

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This paper also underscores the importance of maintaining institutional continuity through relocation during times of crisis and the critical role museums play in fostering public engagement with history and identity. Villa Mandić's story is a testament to the power of built heritage to foster resilience, healing, and dialogue. Finally, the lessons drawn from this case suggest that sustainable conservation practices, coupled with innovative adaptive transformation strategies, are essential for preserving culturally significant buildings in cities facing political and social transitions. Villa Mandić stands as a model for how architecture, museum and memory intersect to contribute meaningfully to urban regeneration and cultural diplomacy in post-conflict environments.[16]

> *Today, the entire ground floor forms a single open space from which the original load-bearing and partition walls have been removed, and a contemporary reinforced-concrete structure has been installed. In the central part of the space, there is a newly constructed L-shaped staircase, which today dominates the ground floor both compositionally and visually.*
> *Only remnants of the original internal walls remain on the western side of the ground floor. As part of the extension constructed on the northwestern side of the building in 2000, a section of the original external western wall was demolished. At this location, in the extreme northwestern corner, a secondary reinforced-concrete staircase with two flights was constructed, connecting all levels of the building.*

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