

Architectural ensemble of the Old Soko mosque in Gračanica

Country or territory:
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
Commission to Preserve
National Monuments

Contact name:
Mirela Mulaluć Handan

Email address:
mirela@aneks8ko.com.ba



Name and address of bulding(s) or site: ARCHITECTURAL ENSEMBLE OF THE OLD SOKO MOSQUE IN GRAČANICA

Inventory reference number(s): 06-6-91/03-2

Ensemble type(s): Monumental, architectural ensemble consisting of a mosque and a graveyard.

Building type(s): Religious - Mosque

Main date(s): Date of construction of the mediaeval building: the first half of the 15th century;
Date of transforming the mediaeval building into a mosque: arround 1520.

Current use(s): Not in use

Significance:

The date of origin of the Old Mosque and its use can be viewed in the context of the mediaeval fort of Soko.

The earliest reference to Soko fort dates from 1429, when it was owned by Prince Radivoj, son of King Ostoja and brother of the Bosnian King Tomaš. The Srebrenik banovina fell under Ottoman rule at the time of Sultan Selim II (1512-1520), and it was probably in 1520 that Sokograd (Soko fort) was occupied.

The mediaeval building of the Old Soko Mosque was built in the first half of the 15th century and was intended to serve as the feudal lord's court. It may be assumed that it was used as a church by the Magyar garrison in Soko fort while the fort belonged to the Srebrenik banovina (1464-1520). It retained this purpose until the mediaeval town of Soko came under the Ottoman rule. On coming under the Ottoman rule the town of Soko remained the cultural, military and administrative seat of the nahija. The Ottomans used to build mosques for their garrisons in the fortified towns they had occupied, and it can safely be said that the Old Soko Mosque is the oldest mosque in this area. It is known as the Fethija by the local people, a name also given to the other mosques built immediately after the establishment of the Ottoman rule (fath or conquest).

The mosque remained in use until 1980 when a new mosque was built in Soko.

General information

In June 1984 archaeological investigations were carried out on the Old Soko Mosque, including investigations within the building and works on the exterior walls, when much of the plaster was knocked off. No apse was found, which is significant since this is an essential feature of every church, nor were any architectural features ascertained that would suggest the building was originally built as a church. The investigations uncovered traces of fire and various repairs and reinforcements to the walls, indicating that the building underwent several fires (Veljko Milić, custodian and archaeologist: «Rezultati arheološkog istraživanja na lokalitetu Stare džamije u Sokolu»). The building was most likely originally built as a feudal manor. In mediaeval Bosnia such manors were known as courts, and were much larger than the houses of the rest of the population; they were built in urban settlements and their outskirts. Some of the feudals lived in courts located within fortified towns. The court would be stone-built with lime mortar. The interior of these mediaeval courts was probably of wood, which has rotted away with time.

The building of the Old Soko Mosque is rectangular in ground plan, measuring 12.66 x 7.60 m. The walls are of irregular quarry stone bonded with lime mortar, and are 38 cm thick. The facade was plastered. The entrance porch was added later of solid brick, 38 cm thick. The roof structure was wooden. Traces of wooden tiebeams are to be seen on the building, along with elements of the original roof structure that no longer exists. The Old Mosque has a hipped roof with classic wooden roof structure overlaid with tiles. There are no interior partition walls and archaeological investigation found no evidence of there having been any. The windows and doors are semicircular vaulted and of finely dressed stone. The ground floor windows and door are made of much more finely dressed stone than the upper windows, and the stone used came from a quarry not far from the building itself.

There are visible traces of adaptation, particularly where the *mihrab* was built. Part of the central section of the south wall was pulled down to build the *mihrab*. On the north wall at the upper floor level, close to the west wall, a small door was pierced reached by a wooden staircase. Along with these alterations, a wooden minaret was erected, which was pulled down in 1934 and replaced by a new stone minaret. To allow access to the minaret, the west wall was pierced and the small door at the level of the upper floor in the north wall was walled up, with a larger one pierced at ground floor level which became the main entrance door. The original door on the west was bricked up at the same time. On completion of these works the present day portico outside the entrance door on the north was added on.

Research and conservation and restoration works

In June 1984 archaeological investigations were carried out on the site of the Old Soko Mosque in Soko. The investigations were conducted by a four-member team of archaeologists from the Museum of Eastern Bosnia in Tuzla: Veljko Milić, Branko Belić, Aleksandra Popović and Savo Vojić. The investigations uncovered traces of burning, and various repairs and reinforcements to the walls, which indicates that the building was renovated and repairs and additions carried out on several occasions.

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

Of national interest

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

The following documentation is in possession of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments:

- Documentation on the location and current owner and user of the property (copy of cadastral plan and copy of land registry entry),
- Data on the previous and current condition and use of the property, including a description and photographs, data of war damage if any, data on restoration or other works on the property if any, etc.
- Historical, architectural and other documentary material on the property, as set out in the bibliography.

Bibliography

1. Documentation of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments
2. Basler, Đuro, *Stari gradovi u Majevidici i Trebovcu*. (Old forts in Majevidica and Trebovac) Articles and material for the cultural history of eastern Bosnia IX, Museum of Eastern Bosnia, Tuzla 1972, 57-59
3. Handžić, Adem, *Sokograd kod Gračanice*. (Soko fort near Gračanica) Excerpt from research project on the Gračanica region in the Turkish era in the ownership of the Regional Collection in Gračanica. Gračanica Herald 11, Monos, Gračanica, 2001, 68.
4. Handžić, Adem, *Tuzla i njena okolina u XVI vijeku*. (Tuzla and its environs in the 16th c.) Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1975.
5. Jalimam, Salih, *Srednjovjekovni grad Sokol* (prilozi za studiju). (The mediaeval fort of Soko – contribution for study) Gračanica Herald 11, Monos, Gračanica, 2001, 60-74
6. Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Prilozi povijesti bosanskih gradova pod turskom upravom* (Contributions to the history of Bosnian forts under Turkish rule) Contributions to oriental philology and the history of the southern Slav peoples under Turkish rule, no.II, Sarajevo, 1952
7. Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Stari bosanski gradovi* (Old Bosnian forts) Naše starine I, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of BiH, Sarajevo, 1954, 22
8. Museum of Eastern Bosnia Tuzla, *Rezultati arheološkog istraživanja na lokalitetu Stare džamije u Sokolu*. (Findings of archaeological investigations on the site of the Old Mosque in Soko) Gračanica Gazette 11, Monos, Gračanica, 2001, 21-26
9. Šaković, Edin, *Oblik i arhitektura starog grada Sokola*. (Form and architecture of the old fort of Soko) Gračanica Herald 11, Monos, Gračanica, 2001, 69-74
10. Vego, Marko, *Naselja srednjovjekovne bosanske države*. (Settlements of the mediaeval Bosnian State) Svjetlost Sarajevo 1957, 105

Condition:

Very bad

Since 1980 the Old Mosque in Soko is no longer used for its original purpose. The monument is in a ruinous state. The entrance portico has completely collapsed, the minaret has been pulled down and the stone used to build it is in the immediate vicinity. There are no surviving doors or windows, nor has the wooden interfloor structure survived; only traces are to be seen on the walls. The roof and walls are in very poor condition and in danger of collapsing.

Amount of war or associated damage:

The mosque suffered no damage as a result of war action.

Risk:

- the mosque is at risk of rapid deterioration due to lack of maintenance and failure to implement even a minimum set of protection measures;
- the mosque is at risk from the elements.

Condition risk:

Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, solution agreed but not implemented.

Technical assessment and costing:

Project for urgent protection measures from further deterioration needs to be prepared.

For the purpose of preserving and ensuring the conditions for the rehabilitation of the mosque, the following urgent measures are stipulated to prevent its further deterioration:

1. conservation of the walls
2. survey and structural analysis
3. repair and structural consolidation of walls and roof;
4. protection of the mosque, in particular the walls, from the effects of the elements.

The minaret and entrance portico of the mosque shall be reconstructed, in the original form, with the original dimensions, of the same or same type of materials, using the same technical procedures wherever possible, while ensuring that the historical stages are clearly distinguishable.

No building on the site of the monument is permitted, nor may any temporary or permanent structures be erected not intended solely for the protection and presentation of the monument.

The mosque harem should be landscaped.

In the area of the historic heart of the town of Soko and the old mosque and harem, forming a single ensemble, no new construction, erection of temporary buildings or other works that could have the effect of altering the area are permitted. All buildings of a temporary nature shall be removed from the area of the access road between the mediaeval fort of Soko and the mosque. Existing residential buildings may not be built onto to exceed a height of 6.5 m. to the roof cornice.

In the area that surrounds the historic heart of the town of Soko and the old mosque and harem, the restoration, reconstruction and adaptation of existing buildings is permitted on condition that they meet the conditions of a maximum of two storeys (ground floor and one upper floor) 6.5 m. in height to the roof cornice, maximum horizontal dimensions of 12 x 10 m, with pitched roofs of an angle no steeper than 30 degrees. Detailed regional plans and town planning and technical plans for the construction of new buildings must include approval from the heritage protection authority. The construction of industrial facilities, major infrastructure, and potential polluters as defined by regulations, is prohibited.

Costing proposals for projects and mentioned works have not been done.

Ownership:

Islamic Community of BiH

Occupation:

No occupancy

Management:

The provisions relating to the protection and rehabilitation measures set forth by the Law on the Implementation of the Decisions of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, established pursuant to Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH nos. 2/02 and 27/02) shall apply to the National Monument.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be responsible for ensuring and providing the legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary to protect, conserve, present and rehabilitate the National Monument.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be responsible for providing the resources for drawing up and implementing the necessary technical documentation for the rehabilitation of the National Monument.

Summary:

The Old Mosque stands within an active Muslim graveyard. The ground on which it is built is very steep, with a marked north-south fall. It is located in the very centre of the village of Soko in the immediate vicinity of the mediaeval fort of Soko built on a rocky outcrop above the Sokolica brook some 6 km north of Gračanica. The only possible approach to the fort is from the north where the Old Mosque stands. The Soko fort and Old Mosque are separated by a natural hollow that was probably spanned by a bridge. This natural hollow now appears much shallower, and a residential building has even been erected there.

Applying the Criteria for the adoption of a decision on proclaiming an item of property a national monument, this national monument reaches the following criteria (criteria of significance):

- A. Time frame
- B. Historical value
- D. Clarity
- D. iv. evidence of a certain type, style or regional manner
- E. Symbolic value
- E. ii. religious value
- E.v. significance for the identity of a group of people
- F. Townscape/landscape value
- Fii. meaning in the townscape
- G. Authenticity
- G. v. location and setting.

The priority level of intervention is *high*.

NOTE:

Condition

Very bad

Condition risk

Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, solution agreed but not implemented.

Criteria employed for the Priority Intervention List:

- The monuments are designated as national monuments,
- They represent rare or unique examples of the typology or chronological - stylistic corpus,
- They were damaged/destroyed during the 1992-1995 war in BiH or they were endangered by the post war conditions (illegal constructions, lack of funding for restoration and maintenance, inexpert reconstruction,...) and are subject to further deterioration,
- Their restoration will encourage the return process in BiH,

- Their restoration will support development of the region.

Sign. and date:

Mirela Mulaluć Handan

10.03.2004.