

Historic building of the City hall (National Library)

Country or territory:
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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

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Name and address of bulding(s) or site: HISTORIC BUILDING OF THE CITY HALL
(National Library), Sarajevo

Inventory reference number(s): Provisional List of National Monuments
No. 510

Building type(s): Administrative, public, educational, City hall

Main date(s): Built at the end of the 19th century

Current use(s): Not in use

Significance:

The *Vijećnica* or City Hall dates back to the end of the 19th century and was erected at the end of Baščaršija on a triangular plot with a 1892 design, by the architect Alexander Wittek, who also began the building works. The design was later altered and supplemented by Ćiril Iveković, who took for his inspiration the Mameluk architecture of Cairo. The City Hall was built in the eclectic pseudo-Moorish expression. This is characterised by the use of rich ornamentation and decorative sculptural elements on the facades, which are also distinguished by alternate horizontal bands of light and dark tones, suggesting alternating layers of brick and stone, typical of almost all the buildings of that period and manner. The application of decoration is typical of the pseudo-Moorish manner.

The building was formally opened on 20 April 1896 as the City Hall, and from 1910 on it was also the seat of the Bosnian Assembly. During renovation works, the foundation stone was discovered with the date inscribed: 1892-1896. From October 1948, the building was used as the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, containing about three million titles.

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

Of national interest.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Commission to Preserve National Monuments

Condition:

Very bad

Amount of war or associated damage:

During the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina the building was shelled and set on fire.

Suffered more than 30% of roof damage, with significant damage of walls, but can be repaired.

Risk:

The building is owned by the City of Sarajevo. The future use of the building is still undecided. The decision has yet to be made whether to use it as headquarters of the city authority and mayor, or to restore it to its pre-war function of the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Condition risk:

Under repair or in fair need of good repair but no user identified or threat of vacancy.

Reconstruction works are proceeding with funding and supervision from several donors, with the European Commission as the most important donor. Work on the roof has been completed and the stone columns of the forecourt that were damaged by fire have been replaced.

Technical assessment and costing:

A project for urgent sanitation and consolidation is done. A project for conservation and restoration needs to be done.

The following measures and works shall be applied:

- All the structural elements of the building, such as the roof, foundations, walls, ceilings, and all interior and exterior elements shall be structurally repaired and restored to the original appearance
- The structural repairs and restoration shall be carried out through the consolidation of existing material or its replacement with the material of the same type, same dimensions and form, with the use of the same building techniques wherever possible, on the basis of documentation on its original form
- To restore authentic arrangement

Costing proposals for the projects and restoration works have not been done.

Ownership:

The building is owned by the Municipality of Sarajevo-Old town and the National Library.

Occupation:

Not occupied

Management:

The provisions relating to 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) shall apply to the National Monument.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be responsible for ensuring the legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary to protect, conserve, display 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:

In architectural style and urban significance, the City Hall ranks highly amongst the most important buildings in Sarajevo. It became the city's signature. It also had great symbolic value as the national library. The Regional Plan for BiH to 2000 classified the City hall in Sarajevo as category I – object of national importance.

The priority level of intervention is *high*.

NOTE:

Condition
Very bad

Condition risk
Under repair or in fair need of good repair but no user identified or under threat of vacancy.

Criteria employed for the Priority Intervention List:

- The monuments are designated as national monuments,
- They represent rare or unique examples of the typology of chronological - stylistic corpus,
- They were damaged/destroyed during the 1992-1995 war in BiH and 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.