

Historic Cities Support Programme

CONSERVATION AND REVITALISATION OF HISTORIC MOSTAR



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE
WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

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INTRODUCTION

This brochure celebrates the completion of a five-year-long restoration and rehabilitation effort in the historic city of Mostar, carried out in parallel with the restoration of Mostar's most famous landmark, the Old Bridge (Stari Most). While urban rehabilitation efforts are planned to continue after the opening ceremony of the Bridge, this document records and presents, in conjunction with the inauguration of the Stari Most, the considerable progress achieved so far.

From the very beginning, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) and the World Monuments Fund (WMF) realised that the reconstruction of the bridge without an in-depth rehabilitation of the historic neighbourhoods flanking it on the picturesque Neretva riverbanks – its matrix as it were – would be devoid of context and meaning. Thus the whole work programme was shaped in such a way as to establish a framework of urban conservation schemes and individual restoration projects that would help regenerate the most significant areas of historic Mostar, and particularly the urban tissue around the Old Bridge.

AKTC's involvement with Mostar goes back to 1986, when the City of Mostar was granted an Aga Khan Award for its exemplary conservation, urban renewal and urban management efforts. Tragically, the 1992-95 war annihilated much of what had been achieved by that time. After the war it was only logical for AKTC to become involved in the reconstruction of the old city. Fortunately, the Trust was able to join forces with the World Monuments Fund through a partnership created under WMF's Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve our Heritage. The work achieved under this partnership complements the bridge reconstruction project of the UNESCO/World Bank group with a comprehensive urban rehabilitation effort. AKTC's and WMF's work through the years 1998-2004 reflects the pursuit of a threefold strategy:

- Establishment of a detailed conservation and development plan for the old city (within its 1918 boundaries) in order to provide the city administration with an up-to-date record of the existing situation, as well as an appropriate urban management tool for plot-by-plot interventions ranging from restoration to appropriate new "infill" structures.
- Development of a series of action plans for significant specific areas that are characterised by ensembles of historic buildings and their enclosed or adjacent public spaces, particularly the two historic neighbourhoods flanking the Old Bridge complex on both sides of the Neretva River. In these areas Mostar's old townscape has been as much as possible re-established. In cooperation with the residents, owners and the authorities, interventions ranged from roof repairs to the reconstruction of ruined buildings, environmental improvements, street furnishings, etc.
- Identification of a list of 21 important historic buildings to be restored as a priority for the city's recovery, with funds made available through public or private investment. Each building was carefully recorded and analysed, and corresponding conservation (or reconstruction) proposals were prepared, including cost estimates and recommendations for re-use. Out of this list four buildings were restored with funds from AKTC/WMF, while four others are under restoration thanks to funds received from the World Bank and other donors. The remaining thirteen priority buildings await donor funding or private investment.

Through these inter-connected planning and restoration initiatives, AKTC and WMF have made a major contribution to the revival of the Old City of Mostar, not only in the physical sense but also with regard to the social dimension and the institutional setting. Indeed, the implementation of all the projects described in this brochure would not have been possible without the support and active participation of the city administration and its technical services, the religious community, as well as the owners and residents concerned. Another important aspect has been the training of young Bosnian architects who have participated in the project and formed the core of the AKTC/WMF Mostar office.

This “rooting” of the project in local ground has also resulted in the establishment of the Stari grad Agency which, on behalf of the city, will have an important role in overseeing the ongoing implementation of the conservation plan, as well as operating and maintaining a series of restored historic buildings (including the Old Bridge complex) and promoting Mostar as a cultural and tourist destination. The Agency will thus be taking over the functions and responsibilities of the AKTC/WMF Mostar project office, as well as those of the World Bank Project Coordination Unit. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund are delighted to see the official inauguration of the Stari grad Agency coincide with the opening ceremony of the Bridge.

As old Mostar regains its physical identity, it should again become a focal point for visitors from all over the world and – even more importantly – assume again its function as a truly multi-cultural urban centre, providing an example of a place where people of different cultures, religions and ethnic affiliations live and work side by side. May the joint restoration efforts of the city administration and the international community lead Mostar into a bright and peaceful future!

Bonnie Burham, *President, World Monuments Fund*

Stefano Bianca, *Director, Historic Cities Support Programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture*

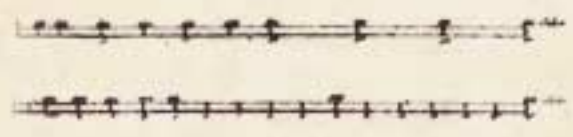
Mostar.

aufgenommen von
Lieutenant Hergen Sirmang
und
Cadet-Offiziers-Stellvert. Carl Stadler.
autographirt
Lieutenant Ludwig Salla de Strizhar.
1878.



1:2000

Original Stadt



A SHORT HISTORY OF MOSTAR

Amir Pašić

*Indescribable is Mostar's most perfect beauty
Are you surprised at the language used by this lover of Mostar?
Not in all the universe, not even in Paradise
Could one ever find the air and the water of Mostar....*

Dervish Pasha Bajezidagić



Above: the Stari Most in a photograph taken at the beginning of the twentieth century. Built in 1566 between two pre-Ottoman towers, the bridge replaced a wooden structure across the Neretva River.

Left: plan of Mostar drawn in 1881. The survey shows the city at the end of the Ottoman period, three years after the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian administration. Commercial, religious and administrative functions were located on the east side of the river, with industry and agriculture on the western sides of the flat plain.

Centuries before the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, Mostar was a small hamlet situated at a strategic crossing of the Neretva River. Its hinterlands consisted of a broad agricultural plain on the west bank and steep terraces on the east bank surrounded by barren mountains. Mostar was a representative multi-ethnic and multi-cultural settlement in Bosnia, which had possessed an independent political identity since the twelfth century. By the fifteenth century, most of the lands that would later become part of modern Yugoslavia were inhabited primarily by peoples of the same south Slavic heritage.

OTTOMAN MOSTAR

The first document that names the city was written in 1474, only eleven years after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. The bridge is at the heart of the town's identity: Mostar means in fact "bridgekeeper". Bosnia was added to the Ottoman Empire as a province and ruled by a *pasha*: an administrator of elevated rank. Following this occupation, Mostar was transformed, in a matter of decades, from a minor river crossing to a thriving colonial crossroads. As Ottoman administrators strove to integrate local inhabitants into their empire and extend their influence, architecture expressed important social and economic changes in Mostar. During the Ottoman period, the *Stari Most* was built to replace a precarious wooden suspension bridge that had spanned the river. Facilitating travel, trade and the movement of military troops, the *Stari Most* became a symbol of the benevolence and power of the Ottoman Empire; it insured Mostar's primacy as the capital of the county of Herzegovina.

The Ottomans used monumental architecture to affirm, extend and consolidate their colonial holdings. Administrators and bureaucrats –

A view of Velika Tepsa Street (today's Maršal Tito Street), looking north, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The street was the main commercial spine of the city, lined with one- and two-storey shop-front buildings. Its east side was completely demolished after World War II. Only a few shop-front structures survive today on the west side of the street.

many of them indigenous Bosnians who converted to Islam – founded mosque complexes that generally included Koranic schools, soup kitchens or markets. These foundations, or *vakufs*, were a traditional mode of philanthropy which allowed for routine distribution of wealth within the empire. The grandest mosques were characterised by a large single dome, like the Koski Mehmet Pasha Mosque in Mostar on the east bank of the Neretva or the Karadjozbeg Mosque, bearing many hallmarks of the famous Ottoman architect Sinan. The dome had come to represent the imperial presence of the Ottomans throughout the territories they controlled; it seems to have signified both Ottoman dominion over a colony and benevolence towards the colonised.

Mosques defined and strengthened communities. A good example is the Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque, a hip-roofed structure that forms the nucleus and principal public open space of its neighborhood, or *mahalla*. Such *mahallas* developed quickly on both banks of the Neretva during the Ottoman period. One- and two-storey houses were anonymous at the street level but rich and expressive within. Each was



carefully sited to catch a view of a cypress or minaret from second-storey windows and each was legally obliged not to block the views of a neighbour. A street-level entry would access the courtyard, creating a transition that allowed for intimacy and privacy within; rooms dedicated to family life were separated from those intended to receive outsiders. Mostar's Bišćevića house is a case in point: an austere entrance belies rooms of built-in cabinets, elaborately carved wooden ceilings and a windowed room that cantilevers over the Neretva River. In thriving commercial areas, houses like the Alajbegovića house addressed the commercial thoroughfare with a shop, with residential spaces above and behind.

Though Mostar was officially part of the Ottoman Empire until the third quarter of the nineteenth century, all of the territories that would later become Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoyed an unusual measure of independence in the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries. Ottoman legislation assuring religious tolerance between Christians, Muslims and Jews had become an integral part of indigenous social and political values, and the city functioned as a bonded, multicultural social entity. In Mostar, historicist architectural styles reflected cosmopolitan interest and exposure to foreign aesthetic trends and were artfully merged with indigenous styles. Examples include the Italianate Franciscan church, the Ottoman Muslibegovića house, the Dalmatian Ćorovića House and an Orthodox church built with a gift from the Sultan.

THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PERIOD

Bosnia was made a crown land of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878, a move calculated to avoid a Serbian takeover. Though Mostar's city council aspired to autonomy, it cooperated with the Austro-Hungarians to implement sweeping reforms in city planning: broad avenues and an urban grid were imposed on the western bank of the Neretva, and significant investments were made in infrastructure, communications and housing. City administrators like Mustafa Mujaga Komadina were central players in these transformations, which facilitated growth and linked the eastern and western banks of the city.

New monuments and architectural styles reflected the aspirations of Mostarians and the Austro-Hungarian administration. Monolithic neo-Renaissance buildings towered over their diminutive Ottoman predecessors and introduced sober, imposing street walls to the city.



Above: the front porch of the Karadžozbeg Mosque built in 1577.



Below: view of the entry court of the Bišćevića house, an eighteenth-century example of domestic architecture built during the Ottoman period.



Above: a view of today's Maršal Tito Street at the beginning of the twentieth century when it turned into a broad avenue lined with tall neo-classical buildings inspired by Austro-Hungarian examples.

One example is the Municipality building. Designed by the architect Josip Vancaš from Sarajevo, it asserted a new prosperity, stability and tradition, linking Mostar symbolically with other European centres. Residential districts around the Rondo invited grand single-family homes and reaffirmed an occidental influence that complemented the city's traditional buildings. By the early twentieth century, elements of Art Nouveau and Secessionist styles began to appear in Mostar's historicist buildings, such as Josip Vancaš' Landbank constructed in 1910.

The inevitable hybrid that emerged from this period of intense building was a new monumental style that combined the massing of European prototypes with Orientalist details. This contamination is illustrated well by Franc Blazek's Gymnasium of 1902. Though its design was derived from Islamic styles of Spain and North Africa and bears no genuine relation with Mostar's Ottoman past, it reflects the tendency of Austro-Hungarian administrators to harmonise rather than suppress cultural difference within the empire.



WORLD WAR I TO SOCIALISM

The First World War was triggered in Sarajevo when Serbian “Black Hand” radicals confirmed their distaste for the incumbent empire by assassinating its heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Fearing annexation by the Serbians, most Bosnians were loyal to the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I. Pragmatism and international pressure in light of a re-aligned Europe at the close of the war forged the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” (later Kingdom of Yugoslavia), a constitutional monarchy that included Bosnia and Herzegovina under the leadership of Serbia’s Prince Regent Alexander. His attempts to “erase the old regional identities” antagonised all parties, culminating in a suspension of the constitution.

These internal conflicts were soon overshadowed by the advance of Hitler and the German alliance with an “Independent State of Croatia” (the NDH). A Partisan resistance in the region grew under the direction of Josip Broz Tito, and attracted large numbers of Bosnians. At the close of World War II, Tito was at the heart of a new socialist Yugoslavia. Between 1948 and 1974, Yugoslavia evolved from a repressive socialist regime to a federative socialist nation made up of discrete republics, of which one was Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this period in Mostar, the industrial base was expanded with construction of a metal-working factory, cotton textile mills, and an aluminium plant. Skilled workers, both men and women, entered the work force and the social and demographic profile of the city was broadened dramatically; between 1945 and 1980, Mostar’s population grew from 18,000 to 100,000.

Because Mostar’s eastern bank was burdened by inadequate infrastructure, the city expanded on the western bank with the construction of large residential blocks. Local architects favored an austere modernist aesthetic, prefabrication and repetitive modules. Commercial buildings in the functionalist style appeared on the historic eastern side of the city as well, replacing more intimate timber constructions that had survived since Ottoman times. In the 1970s and 1980s, a healthy local economy fueled by foreign investment spurred recognition and conservation of the city’s cultural heritage. An economically sustainable plan to preserve the old town of Mostar was implemented by the municipality, which drew thousands of tourists from the Adriatic coast and invigorated the economy of the city. The results of this ten-year project earned Mostar an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986.



Above: Mostar’s main theatre (to the right) was built along Maršal Tito Street after World War II, following the demolition of several old buildings. The functionalist architecture of the period resulted in the radical transformation of the traditional townscape.

Below: the 1970s and 1980s were marked by the construction of large residential blocks, associated with the functionalist aesthetic and social programmes of the socialist regime.

Opposite left: Mostar’s most prominent Orientalist building was Franc Blazek’s Gymnasium built in 1902 with classical proportions and Islamic details.



The destroyed Stari Most (to the left) and the ruins of Girls' High School (to the right) along Maršal Tito Street in a view taken after the 1992-1995 war. Monuments and prominent historic buildings were especially targeted by tank shells. The Girls' High School remains in ruins to this day (see pages 59-61).

THE COLLAPSE OF YUGOSLAVIA

During the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, ultra-nationalist leaders in the republics enjoyed political ascendancy which would have been unthinkable under Tito. Alija Izetbegović formed a new government in Bosnia, which included the representation of Muslim, Bosnian-Croat and Bosnian-Serb parties. In 1992, 64% of the Bosnian electorate voted for a state “of equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others”. Days later, Sarajevo was under a siege that would last more than three years. During this same period, Bosnian Serb military and paramilitary forces pursued a campaign of terror and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Mostar was overwhelmed by Serbian military units, and shelled from the surrounding hills during May and June of 1992. Nearly 100,000 people were forced from their homes and over 1,600 died. Many historic buildings in the old city, including most of the city’s important mosques, were heavily damaged. Even the Old Bridge was hit by a shell.

A Croat-Muslim Federation was able to expel Serbian forces by June 1992. Shortly thereafter, local Muslims and Croats became adversaries due to competing territorial ambitions and ongoing political instability. The Bosnian-Croatian Militia (the HVO) took possession of the West Bank of the Neretva, expelling many Muslim families from their homes, and initiating a new round of hostilities in what was termed the “second battle of Mostar”. More than 3,000 people were killed, and another 10,000 were sent to concentration camps. Throughout the HVO’s assaults, the Old Bridge was a favoured target for hostile artillery. On November 9, 1993, the bridge’s springline was hit at point-blank range by a Croatian tank shell and Mostar’s 400-year-old symbol fell into the cold Neretva River, provoking deep sadness for citizens throughout the city for whom the Bridge had represented everything permanent and inviolable.

MOSTAR SINCE 1995

President Izetbegović of Bosnia-Herzegovina and President Tudjman of Croatia signed a Federation Agreement on 18 March 1994, which provided for an interim administration by the European Community in Mostar, a city still coveted by both Bosnians and Bosnian Croats. Following this partial peace agreement, Mostar remained a violently divided city; the east side remained without electricity, running water, 70% of its pre-war housing units and nearly all economic activity. In the years following, European Community administrators were able to engineer political equilibrium, implement humanitarian assistance, restore essential infrastructure and build new schools.

NATO’s intervention in the region began with the signing of a “General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina” in Dayton, Ohio. Delineating a Muslim-Croat Federation covering 51% of Bosnia’s territory and a Republika Srpska covering 49%, this agreement led to increased stability. By June of 1996 local residents of all backgrounds and absent refugees were able to participate in elections for a unified city government in Mostar. Today, there is a growing local economy and a joint administration, in which Muslim and Croat officials alternate in the post of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Moderate and centrist politicians have put forward a conciliatory political agenda with increasing success and public support. As wartime tensions slowly fade, energies are being poured into new commercial and civic projects – including the reconstruction of damaged historic architecture – which have fostered a growing sense of hope in the city and its future prospects.



Above: the Musala area as seen from the west side of the Neretva River following the war. Both Tito’s Villa (to the left) and the Neretva Hotel (to the right) were severely damaged.

Below: map of the Balkan region with the location of Mostar after the Dayton agreement of 1995.



REINTEGRATING THE OLD CITY

Francesco Siravo



View of the Old Bridge and the surrounding historic fabric in 1986, before the destruction of the 1990s.

Mostar, perched atop the steep banks of the Neretva River in south-western Bosnia-Herzegovina, was for centuries an outstanding example of cultural and religious diversity in the heart of the Balkans. In spite of the very considerable damage the city suffered during the 1992-1995 war, Mostar remains an extraordinarily important European cultural heritage site. Its preservation and development have a symbolic meaning and underscore Bosnia-Herzegovina's determination to recover its multicultural past and to secure a future of tolerance and peace. This is the reason why several international organisations have extended help – beyond political and material assistance – toward the reconstruction and restoration of Mostar's architectural heritage.

While the joint project of the World Bank and UNESCO was established to tackle the reconstruction of the Old Bridge complex, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund focused on the restoration of a number of monuments and on the urban fabric surrounding the Stari Most in an effort to re-establish their physical and operational integrity. Individually these various structures may be less important than the Old Bridge, but together they form an inalienable and essential part of Mostar's historic townscape.

To lay the ground for this comprehensive urban conservation effort, the AKTC/WMF team began in 1998 the preparation of a "Conservation and Development Plan for the Old Town". This Plan was formally adopted by the authorities on 15 May 2001. It includes plans, regulations and guidelines for the protection of the historic core of Mostar, detailed proposals for the rehabilitation of the neighbourhood areas, and a series of adaptive re-use schemes for priority buildings, as well as provisions to support institutional strengthening and active management of the historic city's future.

Since 2000, the joint AKTC/WMF technical team has carried out a series of rehabilitation activities focused on individual buildings and improving open spaces in the historic neighbourhoods. Planning work has also continued on the nineteenth-century parts of the city, adjacent to the Old Town. This shift represents an effort to integrate the central area with the rest of Mostar and put in place the conditions needed to establish a cohesive plan for the entire city.

Left: satellite image of Mostar showing the city in year 2000 straddling the Neretva River and contained between the Hum Hill to the west, and Mount Prenj and Mount Velež to the east.



Above: suburban development on agricultural land outside the city.

Below: piecemeal residential development on the eastern hills, above the central area of the city.

A PLANNING STRATEGY FOR GREATER MOSTAR

The future of the historic core and the central area cannot be separated from Mostar's peripheral areas and the development of the city as a whole. Future development trends at the city level will inevitably have repercussions on the central area, and indeed will determine its function and role within greater Mostar. The city's population, following a sharp decline during and after the war, has been stable for quite some time at around 105,000 inhabitants. However, over the past several years, there has been substantial and disorderly urban expansion taking place on the hills overlooking the city and in the surrounding countryside. This should be reason for concern: the agricultural land around the city is being swallowed by unregulated suburban development, precluding a wiser utilisation of precious land assets and imposing on future administrations ever-greater infrastructure costs in new roads and public utilities. Moreover, the clearing of the vegetation and subsequent construction on the surrounding hills is compromising the very stability of the slopes that lie above the central area of the city.



These trends are made worse by a past tendency to create competing poles of attraction and duplicate urban facilities, the legacy of old conflicts and uncoordinated planning by the different municipalities. Even the planned highway connection could have a centrifugal effect and, unless it is carefully harmonised within the existing context, drain precious resources away from the city centre. If left unchecked, the combination of the recent uncontrolled growth and foreseeable new developments could easily result in a dispersed agglomeration surrounding a mono-functional centre, increasingly dependent on a tourism-based economy. These negative trends are not unique to Mostar, but they have been exacerbated here by the urgent need to rebuild and re-establish acceptable living conditions after the war. In the process, immediate, limited gains have conflicted with longer-term plans and may today preclude the achievement of future, more substantial benefits to the city as a whole.

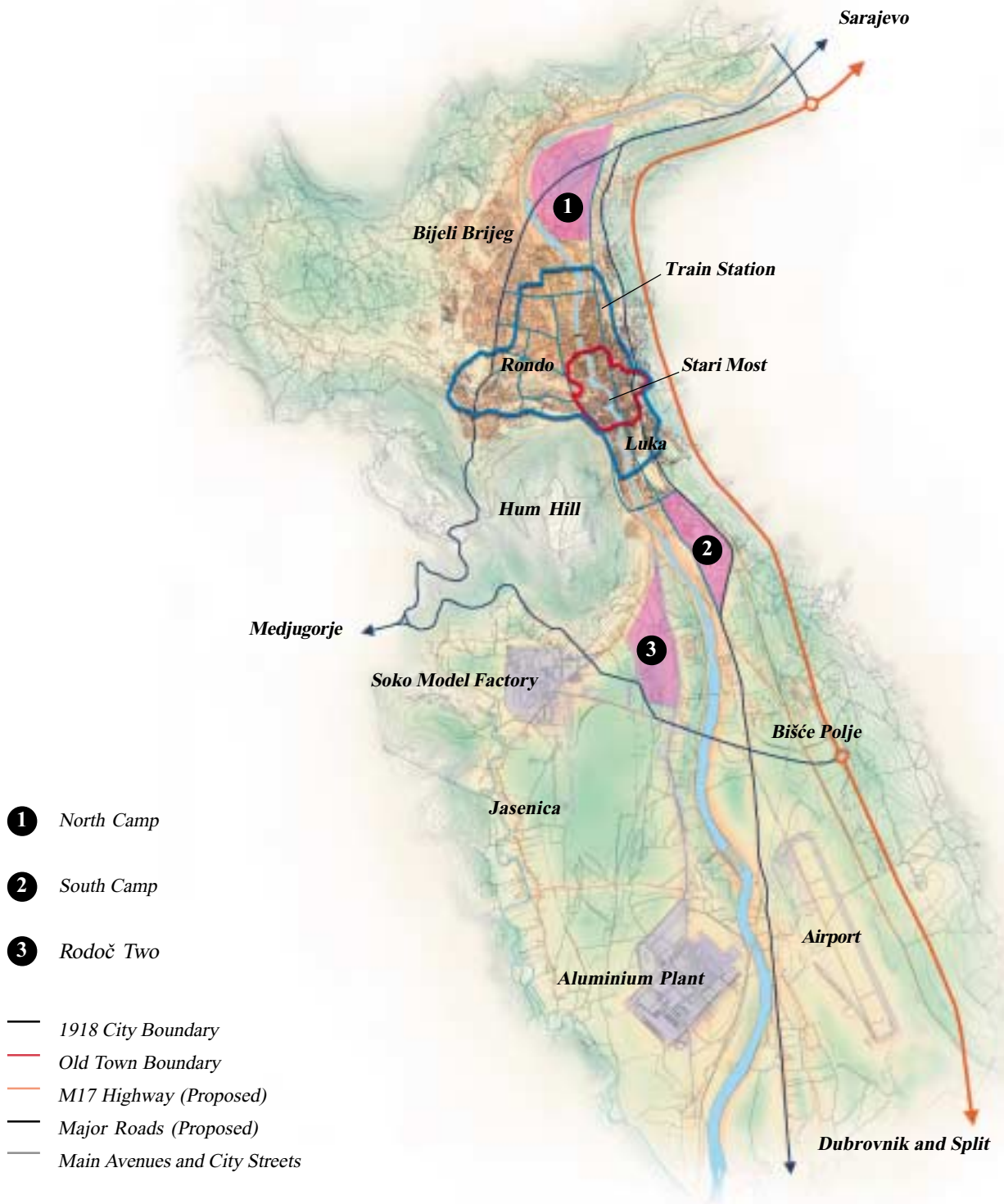
Comprehensive long-term planning will be the task of the newly unified city administration which, from 2004 onwards, will replace the former six sub-municipalities – one of which more or less coincided with the boundaries of the historic city. While for political reasons AKTC/WMF has not been able over the past several years to actively assist the city with planning the metropolitan areas as a whole, today certain guiding principles and planning concepts for strategic areas can begin to be put forward. Mostar's urban history and current assets provide the key to identifying a different model of development and a significant future role for the city.

Since its establishment as a military outpost of the Ottomans, the city's form and growth were determined by natural factors: straddling the Neretva River and contained between the imposing elevation of the Hum Hill to the west and Mount Prenj and Mount Velež to the east, Mostar grew along the north-south axis, parallel to the water's course. The available land along both riverbanks was gradually filled. Expansion along the mountain slopes was likewise contained within an upper limit of 115 metres above sea level, as far as the supply of water would reach. These natural constraints account for the current size and form of the city, an irregular, elongated shape that extends over a total surface area of slightly more than 500 hectares. This basin is the city's natural domain, and this is where future expansion should concentrate, rather than being determined by the current disorderly growth outside the city limits. In future, Mostar's development will need to be carefully



The first plan of Mostar drawn in 1617 shows the city as an important communication node and crossing point between the two sides of the Neretva River. Even today, Mostar's importance lies in its being a crossroads between the route that connects the Dalmatian coast to the inland territory and the northern region of Bosnia.

*Greater Mostar:
Road Network, Boundaries and Principal Locations*

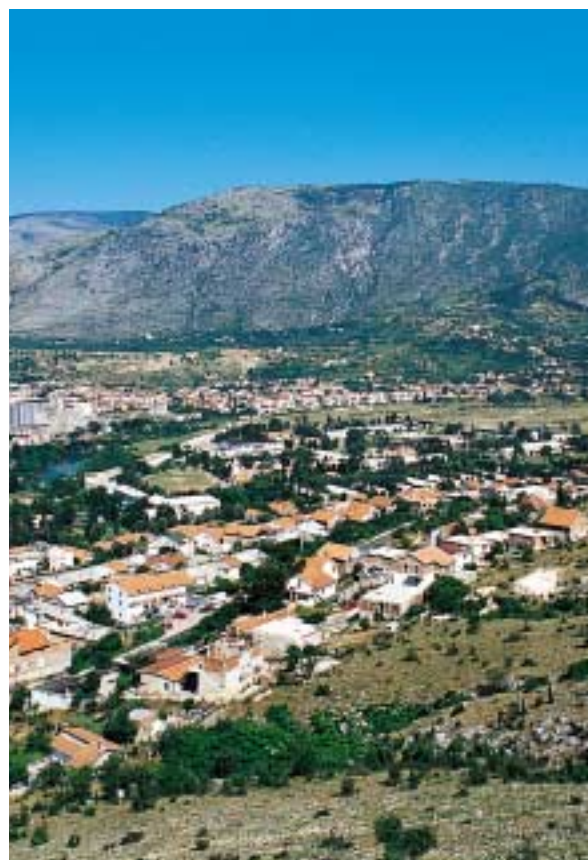


planned, in line with its historical pattern of growth and according to the physical and environmental constraints of the site.

Priority should be given to reconstructing and rehabilitating the central areas and the inner periphery of the city where there still is substantial scope for urban regeneration and the recycling of existing land and buildings. This would reinforce the role of the central area and provide the density and variety of activities necessary to sustain a truly urban environment. The proposals prepared for the central area by AKTC/WMF explore this course of action and indicate how this objective might be achieved through careful urban design planning and by targeting important opportunities to be found within existing sites and individual buildings.

But it would be unrealistic to imagine that all of Mostar's future growth can be absorbed entirely within the built-up areas. Today there remain three parcels of public land that could accommodate the city's future expansion. They lie inside the natural limits of the city, within a maximum radius of 2,000 metres from the central area. All three parcels can be organically integrated within the city's well-established pattern of linear growth, and all of them should be considered precious "reservoirs" of city growth to be used wisely in the years to come.

The first parcel of land is the so-called North Camp situated at the northern edge of Mostar where the Neretva River sharply bends to the east. Its surface area is approximately 36 hectares; the second is located at the southern end of the city, the so-called South Camp, and measures 20 hectares; and the third, also located at the southern end, but on the west bank, is known as Rodoč Two and measures approximately 30 hectares. Combined development of these land assets could generate approximately 9,500 residential units, housing between 30 and 35 thousand people. These units, when added to Mostar's pre-war housing stock and the additional development within the built-up area, would increase the town's capacity to between 140 and 145 thousand inhabitants – 25 percent more than at present – enough to accommodate the city's foreseeable expansion for the next twenty-five years. This represents a long-term growth prospect that is environmentally sustainable and compatible with the current physical configuration of the city. Any further growth should occur outside the city limits, beyond the industrial and rural zones located within a ten-kilometre radius of the city centre, preferably in satellite communities or separate municipalities.



View of the North Camp located to the north of the Railway Station. In the background, bordering the river, is the area still available for development.



A recent view of the old town following the reconstruction of the Stari Most and restoration of its surrounding structures.

Development within the three proposed expansion areas will be facilitated by the fact that the land is publicly owned. This will allow for comprehensive planning, rather than the haphazard, plot-by-plot development currently taking place in the agricultural areas around the city. Careful and sensitive planning will make it possible to “re-knit” the city together, integrating the new with the existing and making it possible to think of the new expansion areas as integral, yet self-sufficient, parts of the city. With commercial and public facilities complementing the residential units, it will be possible to avoid the total dependency of the new expansion areas on the centre, as well as the kind of mono-functional residential development characterised by the large apartment blocks that prevailed during the socialist period.

Comprehensive planning based on sound design principles and a model of compact, well-balanced urban development, would make the best of Mostar’s traditional qualities and exploit to the full the city’s considerable assets. These are a productive agricultural base, a rich

environmental and cultural heritage, the presence of the second largest university in the country and an existing, if ailing, industrial base. Mostar would be able to reposition itself as the key centre of the region and attract the investment and resources needed to fuel its revitalisation by promoting the products and resources of the surrounding agricultural region; by developing its cultural and environmental assets to attract quality tourism; by strengthening its role as a university centre committed to high standards of teaching and research; and by converting its industrial base to innovative, higher-technology products.

These courageous actions could be the premise of an urban renaissance, one that many medium-sized cities across Europe – similar in size and comparable to Mostar in many respects – are eagerly pursuing with encouraging results. Cities like Alicante, Toledo and Oviedo in Spain, Freiburg in Germany, Perugia and Siena in Italy, Volos in Greece, Nîmes in France – to name a few – have realised that for their future development they should capitalise on their distinctive qualities and assets, rather than on trying to compete with, or repeat the errors of the larger metropolitan areas. Mostar still has time to pursue such a model of development, one that is rooted in its urban past and which has considered the natural limitations of the site, yet is able to seize the current opportunities and reinvent the role of the city in the years to come.

CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL AREA

The AKTC/WMF planning efforts responded to the urgent need for a framework for the reconstruction of the historic core in order to put a halt to the hasty and unregulated developments that took place in the aftermath of the war. They also became the occasion for an in-depth investigation of the physical fabric and the establishment of coherent, long-term planning tools to better manage and coordinate action throughout the central area of the city, comprising its Ottoman core and the Austro-Hungarian extensions, as defined by the city's historic 1918 boundary.

The principal tenets of the AKTC/WMF proposals are based on the conviction that planning and architecture are integral parts of a single process of urban rehabilitation, and that economic growth and development are not incompatible with the historic fabric. On the contrary, the central area of Mostar constitutes an irreplaceable

The historic area is Mostar's principal asset, one that needs to be carefully managed to attract investment and resources for the future development of the entire city.





The Old Bridge and the adjacent bazaar and historic neighbourhoods are complementary parts of a single urban system.

resource for the entire city. Its special qualities must be carefully protected and wisely managed in order that they may survive and extend their legacy into the future.

The proposals for the central area grow out of a few key ideas which have shaped the different components of the plan and gradually coalesced into the first concrete interventions realised by AKTC and its partners. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Reinforce the complementarity between the Old Bridge and the adjacent bazaar and historic neighbourhood areas. The bridge and the surrounding urban fabric must be considered part of a single system that should be protected and managed in its entirety through consistent, unequivocal and well-coordinated planning and building measures.
2. Recognise the centrality of the Neretva River in shaping the image and identity of the city and aim at preserving its natural landscape qualities for the future. The natural features must not be compromised by too many access points or by the proliferation of buildings, terraces and other makeshift structures along the riverbanks.
3. Streamline and improve circulation in the central area by establishing a clear hierarchy of motorised roads and a separate pedestrian network in which traffic and parking are regulated. Reinforce and extend car-parking points around the central area within easy pedestrian access to the historic core.
4. Identify key “action areas” and “streetscapes” as priority zones, which should be the object of special planning efforts and public and private investment. These links and urban nodes should re-connect the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian parts of the central area, and try to mend the scars and gaps inflicted on the traditional cityscape by the modernist development of the seventies and eighties, as well as the destruction of the war and the unregulated development that ensued.
5. Revitalise the many ruined, empty or underused historic buildings within the central area. These structures reflect Mostar’s multi-cultural past and should be reclaimed to meaningful use in order to spur economic growth, revitalise neighbourhoods and enhance community pride and identity.

These key ideas underlie the planning documents and detailed proposals prepared by AKTC/WMF for the so called “Old Town Conservation and Development Area”, comprising the historic centre and its immediate surroundings to the north and south of the Ottoman core. The plan pursues its objectives through two distinct but complementary levels of planning.

The general plans and building regulations aim at regulating land use and building activities so that these are compatible with the historic character of the town. They also make provisions for the protection of monuments, traditional buildings, green areas and open spaces, indicating the forms of intervention applicable to each, and the level of protection to be achieved in the different cases. These policies are supplemented by general traffic proposals aimed at improving motorised circulation in and around the central area, and at creating new pedestrian areas and additional parking for visitors and residents. Finally, a set of infrastructure plans indicates the types of interventions necessary to complete or supplement the utility networks in order to ensure adequate provisions for water, sewage and electricity in the central area.

The second, more focused level of planning identifies priority structures and urban zones earmarked for intervention, both inside and outside the conservation and development area, with an indication of the norms and design prescriptions to follow in rehabilitating individual buildings and reorganising specific areas. Each of these sites is seen as an opportunity to achieve and project a cohesive urban image through the use of appropriate materials and a consistent design vocabulary, to resolve specific problems – such as filling a gap in the fabric or reorganising a public space – and to improve the quality of the central area through additional facilities and new amenities.

In parallel to preparing these planning proposals, the AKTC/WMF team worked closely with the municipal authorities to ensure the establishment of an effective institutional setting and a solid management structure to sustain the implementation of the plan over the long term. To this effect, technical assistance and support was given to the technical department of the Old City Municipality – which eventually resulted in the establishment of the *Stari grad Agency*. This initiative was taken with the double aim of promoting and directing planning and conservation efforts in the central area (see *Investing into the Future: the Stari grad Agency*). This remains the












The natural qualities of the Neretva River need to be protected against the inappropriate development of its riverbanks.

Highlights of the Conservation and Development Plan

The general plans and regulations prepared by AKTC/WMF for the “Old Town Conservation and Development Area” regulate land use and building activities and provide for the protection of monuments, traditional buildings, green areas and open spaces. In addition, a series of interventions of reconstruction and rehabilitation were completed, and detailed plans finalised to target individual buildings or specific sectors of the old town. These are highlighted below.

Interventions and Proposals

-  Monuments and historic structures where rehabilitation and reconstruction work has been completed.
-  Priority historic buildings still endangered and in need of financing, for which detailed restoration and re-use plans have been prepared.
-  Streetscape improvements in Maršal Tito Street to expand the pedestrian use of the street and mitigate the impact of motorised traffic;
-  Shop-front improvements, “infill” proposals and landscaping of open areas in Fejić Street to reinforce the quality and pedestrian character of the street;
-  Detailed plans for the market area (Mala Tepa and Mejdan Square);
-  Detailed plans for the Historic Neighbourhoods near the Stari Most, on both sides of the Neretva River (see page 38);
-  Protection measures to preserve the landscape qualities of the Neretva riverbanks;
-  Preservation of the Baščine garden and regulation of the flow of water to feed the Radobolja River water channels during the hot season;
-  Adaptive re-use plans for the former Girls’ High School to create a multifunctional centre (see pages 59-61);
-  Detailed plans for the Brankovac mahalla, including the pedestrian Bajatova and Konak alleyways and related open spaces; and
-  Definition of building and rehabilitation guidelines for the Cernica (9a), Luka (9b) and Donja (9c) mahallas.







single, most critical challenge for the future: only a conscious planning and management effort will ensure that the quality and significance of the urban fabric as a whole can be retained and a sympathetic and meaningful development process carried on.

STREETSCAPES AND ACTION AREAS

Several Streetscapes and Action Areas in key locations were selected for detailed planning within the framework of the plan. These areas are relevant because of their strategic position and their potential for future development.

Maršal Tito and *Fejić Streets* were singled out for detailed planning as the two major streetscape systems crossing the Old Town and extending into the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century part of the city. As the principal corridors which connect and articulate the transition between the earlier Ottoman core and the later extensions of the city, these streets play a primary role in bringing the different parts of the central area together. In addition, some of Mostar's most distinguished landmarks and significant buildings can be found along these streets. Their rehabilitation should be seen as a significant opportunity to spark investment in neighbouring buildings and city blocks.

Fejić Street is today the principal pedestrian thoroughfare, busy at all times of the day.

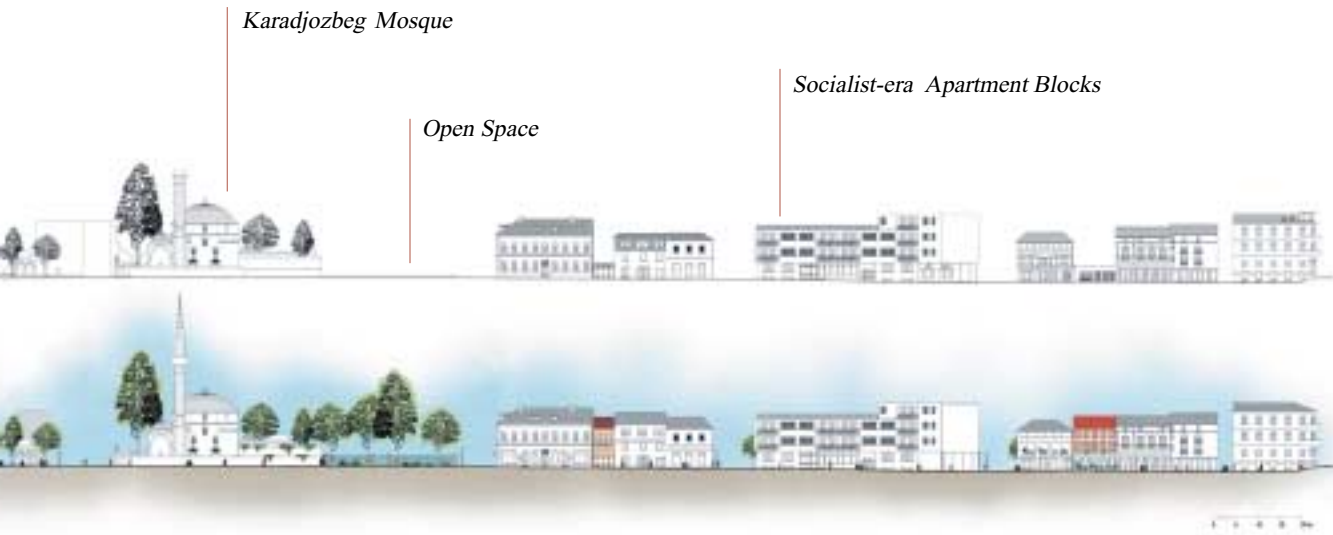


Streetscape improvements on Fejić Street

Questions were asked about the present use of these streets, how well they function and how they might be made more inviting. In particular, this applied to *Maršal Tito Street*, which is today strongly compromised by the heavy one-way stream of vehicular traffic directed north to the railway station and west via the Tito Bridge. In this case, particular attention was paid to the design of pedestrian spaces to mitigate the impact of the vehicular traffic. In addition, improvements were envisioned with regard to on-street parking, planting, lighting, paving, street furniture, signage and road markings. Encouraging slower traffic and expanding the pedestrian use of the street will eventually lead to the opening of more shops and street activities and to improving the poor quality of the existing streetscape. In *Fejić Street*, already largely pedestrianised, a complete survey of the street's façade highlighted the need to fill gaps and rebuild ruins through infill developments. The survey also showed the need for shop-front improvements to reverse the decline in the run-down sections and for the re-instatement of appropriate details where buildings have been inappropriately altered. Detailed plans for the rehabilitation of the principal landmarks lining both streets complete the streetscape proposals contained in the plan. These combined actions for the improvement of *Maršal Tito* and *Fejić Streets* will go a long way toward restoring Mostar's sense of place and bringing its central area back to life.



The Karadžobeg Mosque, with its recently restored minaret, is Fejić Street's principal landmark.





Above: view of the Railway Station today. Built in the 1980s, the station occupies a pivotal position at the north entrance of the town. The building is today underused and partially empty.

Below: view of the east and south sides of the Musala Square lined with prestigious buildings around the recently re-landscaped central garden.

The Action Areas were selected from across the entire central area, and are on the need and potential of each site to resolve urban issues and introduce beneficial change. The most important Action Areas are the Historic Neighbourhoods on either side of the Old Bridge (see *Rehabilitating the Historic Neighbourhoods*). This is where the transformations of the historic fabric in the aftermath of the war have been particularly worrisome and where the AKTC/WMF team has concentrated most of its efforts, either through direct funding and implementation, or by providing technical assistance to the World Bank's Project Coordination Unit.

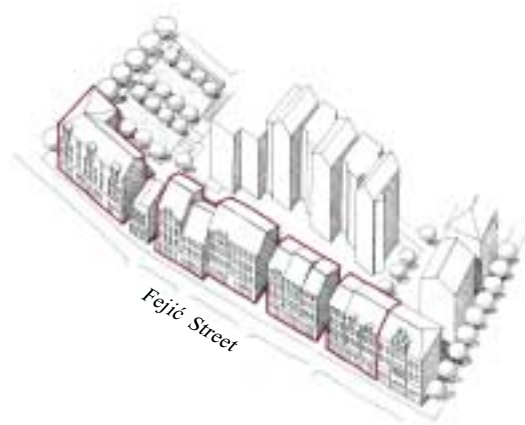
The other Action Areas are located around the Ottoman core and in key locations in the eastern Austro-Hungarian sector of the city. The briefs for the principal Action Areas detailed in the plan are described below:

The Railway Station (Stanica): This site lies in a key position at the northern edge of the central area, well connected to the western side of Mostar and within direct proximity of the North Camp. Yet, the area has remained fairly suburban and undeveloped, calling for additional investment to increase urban densities and the quality of the city fabric. There is also a need to re-think access and circulation, re-position the bus station, expand parking and introduce commercial activities and public facilities in the under-used, partially empty railway station. The western edge of the site, along the river, requires urgent reorganisation of the workshops and housing developments that have haphazardly occupied part of the public land. Further erosion of public land in this location would irreversibly compromise public access to the river, as well as impede the establishment of a protected green area and pedestrian link with the North Campus.

The Musala Square: Located south of the Stanica area, the square lies on the eastern side of the Tito Bridge. It is organised around a central garden lined by prestigious buildings on the east and south sides. The recent restoration of the garden and the Austro-Hungarian public bathhouse set the stage for the general upgrading and restitution of the square to its former importance, making it one of the premier public open spaces in the town. The key to achieving this result in full hinges on modifying and gradually harmonising the uneven quality of the building frontages facing the square, especially those along the north and east sides. This can be done by restoring the facades of the existing traditional buildings, removing inappropriate additions and finishes,

and by improving the quality of the recent constructions through corrective interventions. The introduction of corrective measures to mitigate the impact of hasty, private developments in sensitive areas has already been successfully implemented by AKTC/WMF in the Historic Neighbourhoods areas (see *Rehabilitating the Historic Neighbourhoods*). A similar strategy could be adopted here by the city planners to complete the reorganisation and improvement of the Musala Square.

The Razvitak Area: Located in close proximity to the Musala Square, the Razvitak area developed primarily during the Austro-Hungarian period as part of an urban extension in the north-eastern sector of the city. The area was considerably modified in the 1970s and 1980s with the construction of apartment blocks and a large commercial centre and residential tower off *Maršal Tito Street*, as well as a mixed-use complex along *Fejić Street*. These later developments contradicted the earlier organisation of the blocks along traditional town planning models, and have led over the years to an incremental fragmentation of the traditional cityscape. This trend was exacerbated by the extensive war damage in the 1990s, which hit the Razvitak area especially hard.



The axonometric shows in outline the “infill” structures proposed for the north western segment of Fejić Street. The proposed townhouse units are designed to reconstitute the block’s edge and relate in size, materials and proportions to the older townhouses along the street.

The Razvitak area proposals showing the existing buildings in light sepia and the proposed “infill” structures in red-brown. The plan aims at reintegrating the continuity of the streetscapes, particularly where there are gaps or set-backs, and making use of building types, forms and proportions that maintain a sense of continuity with the existing urban fabric.





The market is the most frequented part of the Old Town, and requires a number of functional and contextual improvements.

Today, one can observe large gaps in the urban fabric, semi-abandoned structures as well as ill-defined and somewhat degraded public open spaces. The remodelling of the Razvitak area offers both an opportunity to “repair” the city fabric and to identify possibilities for increasing residential and commercial use, adding more private and public parking, improving pedestrian circulation and creating more green space in a very central location. The resulting plans show how such strategic locations can be reorganised in ways that respect the traditional configuration of the blocks and streets and that integrate new structures and urban amenities within the traditional context. As such, the Razvitak proposals exemplify a method of intervention that could be adopted throughout the central area, with important implications for the future development of the city.

Mala Tepa and Mejdan Square: The Market (Mala Tepa) and the Mejdan Square are located at the very edge of the Ottoman core and call for careful and co-ordinated planning as they are closely connected and must accommodate multiple functions centred on the public market. Interventions on the market call for improving the disposition and design of the vending stalls, re-designing the market edges – particularly the edge facing the river, and remodelling the existing enclosed spaces along the upper terrace and the balcony below, possibly with a change in use as these are hardly used as retail spaces. Mejdan Square needs new parking for residents, a restoration and adaptive re-use scheme for Plot 25, as well as a scheme to reorganise the square’s northern edge where a hotel, now demolished, used to be located. The site of the former hotel is now subdivided into three plots used as a kayak club, boat storage and a restaurant. The complete remodelling or substitution of these three structures with a single building projecting onto the open space would re-establish the former unity of the square.

Overall, the Streetscapes and Action Areas proposals prepared within the framework of the plan advocate protecting and ‘repairing’ the existing urban fabric, as well as “recycling” poorly used land and buildings in the central area. These proposals are the best alternative to the present sprawl and fragmentation, and they provide the necessary premise for “re-knitting” and reintegrating the entire city. Future development should be encouraged in built-up areas to repair ruins or fill in vacant or underutilised land rather than building up open land or agricultural areas outside the city.

Such a policy makes sense in Mostar for many reasons. To begin with, there is a scarcity of open land outside the city, while the destruction that occurred during the war has rendered many urban sites available for rehabilitation and new construction. Urban infill will also cost the government and city administration less than new development, as it does not call for substantial public investment in new utility networks and roads, but rather it takes advantage of existing infrastructure installations and past investments. Moreover, infill development is less dependent on transport networks, whether public or private, than development in outlying areas, as residents are within walking distance of shops, offices, schools and services.

A further advantage in the case of residential infill development is that it helps meet the demand for small- to medium-size apartments by returning or new families, singles and the elderly. These segments of the population constitute an increasing share of the housing market and are more likely to buy or rent a condominium apartment or small house within or near the central area.

To this effect, the plan includes “typological reconstruction” among the options available in cases where the old configuration of the city fabric, as inferred from cadastral plans and photographic records, has been destroyed or considerably altered. As a result, several infill models for residential buildings were developed as part of the Action Area proposals. They reflect the massing, proportions and materials of pre-existing structures without trying to mechanically reproduce the forms and details of the old buildings. Such typological reconstructions are a better means of maintaining historical continuity in a traditional urban context than applying dubious or pseudo-historical styles and details where records are limited or fragmentary and the pre-existing buildings have totally disappeared.

Finally, and most importantly, investment and appropriate development in the central area is the best way to ensure that Mostar maintains its identity and relevance in the coming years, avoiding the double risk of encouraging peripheral sprawl while turning the city centre into a tourist enclave. To the contrary, strategic investment in the central area will spur community and economic revitalisation by keeping people closer to town, thus stimulating additional demand for goods and services, and enhancing the increased activity that is the unmistakable sign of a vital and well-planned urban centre.



Elevations of the wide-lot townhouses designed for Fejić Street.

The scheme above presents a unified treatment for the entire group of façades. The scheme below shows a different treatment for each façade, but uses compatible proportions and forms throughout.



Floor plans of the townhouses combine ground-floor commercial space with residential units above.



REHABILITATING THE HISTORIC NEIGHBOURHOODS

Amir Pašić and Francesco Siravo



Ramića Street is one of several walled alleyways that give an intimate character to the secluded public spaces of Mostar's neighbourhoods.

Nowhere is the importance of appropriate development more evident than in the Historic Neighbourhoods that form the very heart of the old town. Straddling both sides of the Neretva River at the strategic crossing point of the Old Bridge, these neighbourhoods are in fact an integral part of the *Stari Most*. They constitute both its physical, visual and functional context. With the highly visible religious buildings counterbalanced by the simple one-storey shops lining the bazaar streets and low-rise residential structures that make up the bulk of the built fabric, these old neighbourhoods reflect the character of the city formed during the Ottoman period, and remain an inextricable part of Mostar's historic image.

The intimate, urban and cohesive quality of the *mahallas* depends on homogeneous building materials (stone, slate and wood) and on the uniform proportions and heights of the buildings. These elements come together in a subtle interplay between the occasional landmarks and the simple residential structures, the walled alleyways and close public spaces, and the striking natural features of the river gorge. It is a delicate balance, and one that can be easily thrown off. Many traditional buildings, particularly along the commercial and tourist enclave and in the secluded interiors of the *mahallas*, have maintained their architectural features and details. Many others, however, were shelled and have been left in a state of ruin, or hastily and poorly reconstructed, or radically transformed during the immediate aftermath of the war.

DEFINING AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Conservation and Development Plan for the old town of Mostar gave special consideration to the Historic Neighbourhoods in an effort to establish a comprehensive, long-term programme of physical rehabilitation and reconstruction. This was considered a matter of urgent priority in order to preserve the identity of this most valuable and sensitive part of the historic city and prevent inappropriate redevelopment from taking place. AKTC and WMF joined forces with the city of Mostar to identify a viable programme of interventions that, with the direct involvement of the residents, could foster a gradual process of urban rehabilitation and development.

Left: view of the Neretva River, looking north. In the foreground, to the right, is the residential complex in Ramića Street restored in 2003 by AKTC/WMF.



Above: inappropriate alteration and extensions of traditional buildings in the neighbourhoods took place in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Below: the same location after AKTC/WMF's corrective interventions.

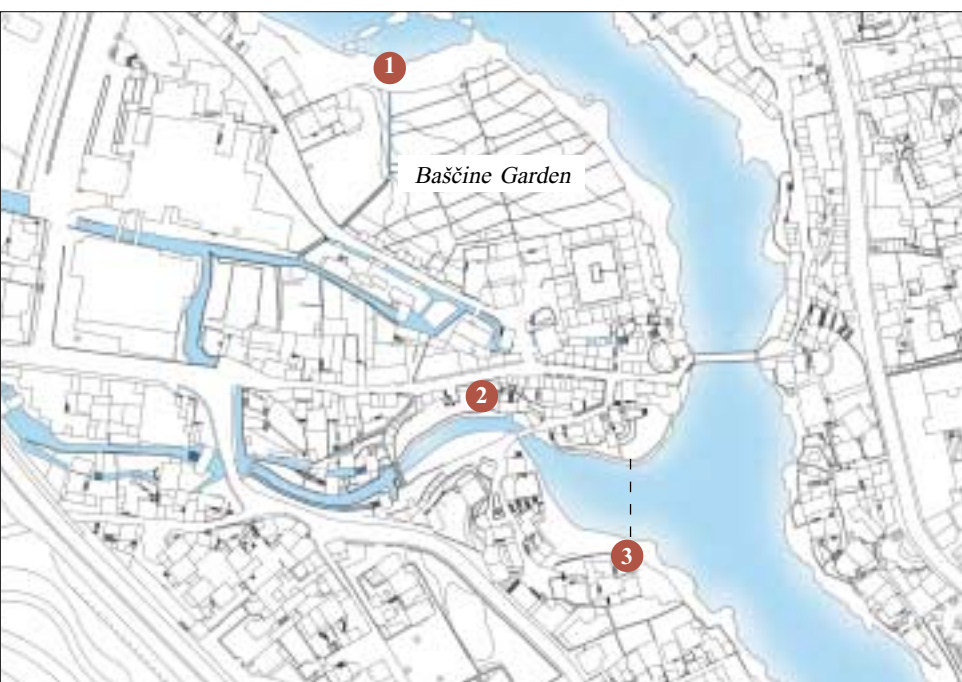
In particular, land-use policies were established to maintain and protect traditional uses by reinforcing the close correlation between activities and buildings as well as the existing mix of uses. In all cases where buildings have a clear commercial purpose, such as those lining the bazaar streets, the land-use policies confirm and reinforce this use through the rehabilitation of vacant or underused commercial structures. Similarly, the rehabilitation of buildings to be used as housing is recommended in all cases where the original use was clearly residential. Recommended land uses do not preclude other existing uses or the development of new activities which are compatible with the traditional buildings. However, in a number of cases, measures are indicated to discourage or ban certain land uses, particularly those that introduce activities that conflict with or that will lead to the radical transformation of the character and environmental quality of the Historic Neighbourhoods. These measures are recommended to avoid wholesale commercialisation of the area or its conversion into an exclusively tourism-oriented enclave. Instead, a continued strong residential presence is recognised as an essential factor in reinforcing and safeguarding the lively urban character of the Historic Neighbourhoods.

Infrastructure and environmental upgrading has considerable bearing on the general condition and image of the *mahallas*. The detailed plan identifies public and infrastructure projects that focus on streets, squares, riverbanks and canals, and specifies the necessary actions and technical briefs. Special attention was focused on analysing the current installations for water, sewage disposal and storm-water drainage. The Neighbourhoods programme calls for the rehabilitation and re-commissioning of the existing networks, and foresees selected improvements with the installation of new water mains and sewers in critical locations.

Additional provisions have been included to regulate the Radobolja River that flows into the Neretva close to the *Stari Most*. The Plan proposes that water be pumped from the Neretva River above the Baščine garden and redistributed during the summer when water is short, thus regulating the flow and quality of the Radobolja water supply throughout the year. The existing water channels would be re-opened, and the flow of water automatically regulated through eight small locks. In addition, six of the nineteen original water mills would be re-activated with the Buka water mill serving as a cleaning station. Finally, upgrading plans foresee consolidation of the riverbank and its use for recreation

such as swimming and kayaking, as well as selective improvements to streets, alleyways and open spaces throughout the Neighbourhoods.

The measures above are complemented by intervention criteria to be applied to individual structures and plots within the Historic Neighbourhoods. Definition of these criteria is based on a plot-by-plot assessment and detailed surveys, followed by the identification of forms of intervention for each building according to whether it is traditional or contemporary, and according to its specific condition, architectural significance and state of integrity or alteration. The intervention criteria apply to the totality of the Historic Neighbourhoods, where building permits are now granted by the administration based on the residents' compliance with the norms and guidelines established by the Plan. In a number of cases, incentives and other forms of support (rehabilitation grants, low-interest loans, free technical advice, etc.) have been made available to facilitate compliance. In addition to specifying forms of intervention applicable to individual buildings, the plan identifies architectural ensembles, including their immediate context, which, even though made up of a number of separate building units, form a coherent and recognisable whole. In the plan, these complexes, in order to avoid piecemeal and uncoordinated

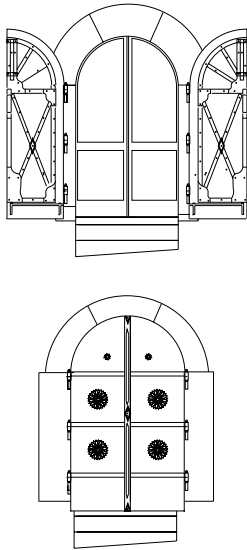


Above: the consolidation of the Radobolja riverbanks was carried out by the AKTC/WMF team as part of the infrastructural and environmental upgrading of the neighbourhoods.

Left: the plan regulates the flow and quality of the Radobolja water supply by pumping additional water from the Neretva River.

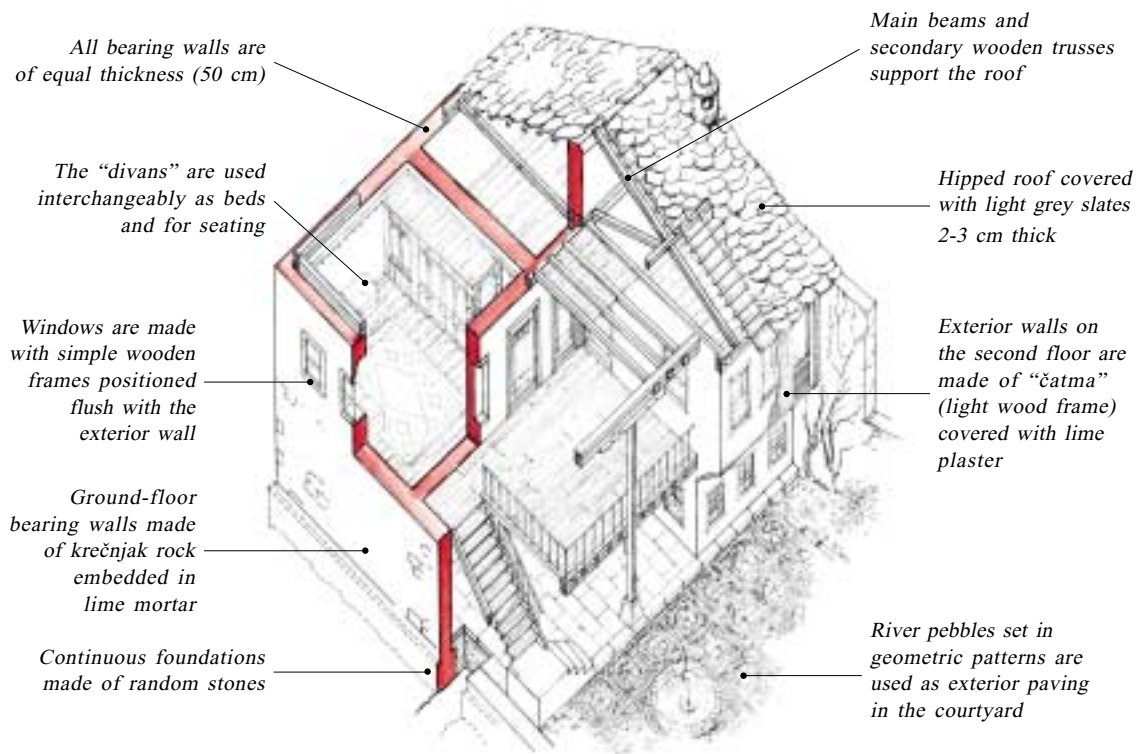
- 1. Pumping station*
- 2. Sand filter and control station at Buka water mill*
- 3. Pneumatic dam and compression chamber*

Traditional construction details have been documented in order to serve as reference material for builders and residents.



interventions, are subject to coordinated actions based on the identification of compatible uses and homogeneous treatments.

The Neighbourhoods plans are complemented by a set of building and rehabilitation guidelines. This is a permanent activity associated with the ongoing rehabilitation work, whereby typical traditional construction methods and details are documented and disseminated among residents, professionals and the building trades to provide examples of “best practices” and thus help preserve Mostar’s traditional building heritage. In spite of the destruction and widespread introduction of modern construction technology and materials, traditional methods are still understood and practised by a select group of local artisans and master builders. The AKTC/WMF projects have made ample use of the local knowledge and have encouraged training and apprenticeship programmes as part of the building projects and rehabilitation activities carried out in the Historic Neighbourhoods between 1999 and 2004. Re-introducing these traditional methods on construction sites is the best guarantee of perpetuating and eventually transferring them to the next generation of builders.





IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES AND RESULTS

In order to facilitate the implementation of the Neighbourhoods plan, the AKTC/WMF team identified and combined different financing mechanisms according to the nature of the buildings and open spaces in question, their tenure status (whether public, private or part of the *vakuf* holdings) and their specific rehabilitation needs. In such a way, public, donor and private funds are mixed and matched to achieve the desired results. Many of these activities were directly financed by AKTC/WMF. In other cases, AKTC/WMF acted as the technical advisor and implementing agency on behalf of the city administration, as well as other donors and private individuals.

In the case of monuments and significant historic buildings, the funding mechanisms include donor financing as well as acquisition and

The main bazaar street on the eastern side of the historic area constituted the main commercial spine during Ottoman times and remains an integral part of the urban fabric associated with the Old Bridge complex.



The Ottoman shop tower, located near the western tower of the Old Bridge, was the first rehabilitation project carried out by AKTC/WMF in the Neighbourhood Areas. The use of local limestone rubble, lime mortar and slate for the roof ensure that the original appearance and durability of the building are retained.

restoration by the *Stari grad Agency*, often through grants extended by AKTC/WMF. In this case, the funds generated by the commercial re-use of the buildings – examples being the Hundo Han and the Buka water mill – are reinvested by the *Agency* in the historic area, either to finance other rehabilitation work or to maintain its properties. The rehabilitation and selected improvement of residential and commercial structures has generally been carried out through soft loans extended to owners ready to invest directly in the improvement of their properties. In addition, AKTC/WMF provided design assistance and small grants for emergency repairs and corrective interventions to mitigate inappropriate recent transformations. Finally, improvements to water and sanitation, street paving, lighting and landscaping of the riverbanks were financed through low-interest loans extended by the World Bank to the public administration.

The implementation plan identifies three distinct sub-zones of priority intervention within the Historic Neighbourhoods:

- the Old Bridge complex itself, comprising the towers of the bridge and the adjoining commercial structures on both sides of the river;
- the Jusovina-Spile sub-zone, on the west side of the historic area, including the residential structures along Jusovina and the Kriva and Oručevića Bridges spanning the Radobolja, Neretva's tributary; and
- the complex formed by Ramića and Ćemalovića Streets between the Maršal Tito Street and the east bank of the Neretva.

In all of these sub-zones, the work carried out by AKTC/WMF has sought to combine specific opportunities to rehabilitate individual buildings, achieve townscape improvements and upgrade public open spaces with the aim of re-establishing the integrity of this most sensitive part of historic Mostar.

Restoration of Individual Buildings: This component has targeted both the east and west sides of the Neretva River, with special attention given to the commercial streets and to the residential buildings along the eastern riverfront. The first two pilot projects realised in 1999 – a shop front tower and the Kayak Club on the west side of the river set the stage for all the subsequent interventions on individual buildings by AKTC/WMF. Both structures had been severely damaged during the war and both were in public ownership. AKTC/WMF worked

closely with the local authorities and provided a local team of builders and trainees with guidance and supervision during implementation of the works. Project funds were thus used to generate employment and training opportunities in the area.

The shop tower (1 on the site plan) is a typical bazaar street commercial structure with retail space on the ground floor and storage above. The three-storey structure was built of limestone with wooden floors and a double-pitch roof covered with slate. These same materials and similar architectural features were also employed originally in the construction of today's Kayak Club (2), a residential tower historically related to the Vučjaković family. A suspended wooden bridge leads to its front entrance. Both buildings were restored using traditional materials and methods and were returned to full use in 2000. Additional commercial units rehabilitated in 2001 include the shopfronts located in Priječka Čaršija (3) and the adjacent two-storey building, also commercial (4).




The two-storey commercial building above and the Priječka Čaršija shopfronts were reconstructed from cadastral plans and existing similar buildings such as those below.



Interventions in the Historic Neighbourhoods

The plan below identifies the location of buildings and open areas where AKTC/WMF carried out rehabilitation works and improvements between 1999 and 2004. The work on buildings includes the rehabilitation of residential and commercial structures, emergency repairs and corrective interventions. Works on open spaces include improvements to water and sanitation, street paving, lighting as well as landscaping of the riverbanks.

- A** Stari Most Complex
- B** Jusovina-Spile Sub-zone
- C** Ramića and Ćemalovića Streets
-  City Wall Rehabilitation



- Rehabilitation work completed in 1999-2002
- Rehabilitation work completed in 2003
- Infrastructure and open space improvements
- Consolidation, cleaning and landscaping of the riverbanks

- 1 Shop tower
- 2 Kayak Club
- 3 Priječka Čaršija
- 4 Commercial building
- 5 Buka water mill
- 6 Hindo Han

- 7 Oručevića Bridge
- 8 Kriva Bridge
- 9 Residential complex on Ramića Street
- 10 Residential complex in ruins on the southwest riverbank





Above: the Hindo Han as it appears today after its reconstruction. In the background is the minaret of the reconstructed Neziraga Mosque.

These units were probably part of the Tabačica Mosque property, and were used as a source of income to maintain the religious building. The shop front units are a good example of the typical one-storey commercial structures found in the bazaar, with timber shutters and wooden posts supporting the pitched roof.

The largest restoration projects undertaken in the historic *mahallas* are the rehabilitation and conversion of the Hindo Han into a restaurant and the houses on *Ramića Street* into a guest house. The introduction of compatible commercial uses for both of these structures will provide revenue for the operation of the recently established *Stari grad Agency* and assure it a self-sustainable future.

The Hindo Han (6), located at the edge of the bazaar area, just below the Neziraga Mosque, was built in the eighteenth century, later modified and eventually demolished in the 1960s, like the nearby mosque. It was a simple structure with masonry bearing walls on the ground floor, and a light timber frame structure on the upper floor covered by a hipped roof. The structure was originally a *han*, one of eight commercial hostels that used to exist in Mostar, and took its name from the Hindo family who owned it. Like the other *hans*, now disappeared, the lower level was a stable and storage area and the living quarters were above. Its original appearance and features, documented in the cadastral plans and historic photographs from the early part of the twentieth century, provided the basis for its recent reconstruction and adaptive re-use into a restaurant facility, under special agreement with the city administration, the owner of the land.



The residential complex on *Ramića Street* (9) was also reconstructed on the basis of the extant ruins and photographic records. These houses belonged to the Bajramović family who entrusted it to the local *vakuf* organisation as a charitable endowment. A prominent complex facing the eastern riverfront, it is highly visible from the opposite side and from the nearby Old Bridge. Its reconstruction was critical to re-establishing the visual continuity of this section of the Historic Neighbourhoods. Conversion to a guest house proved especially suitable to the plan of the building, which is organised into discrete units around a narrow open court leading to a garden overlooking the river. The interior follows the flexible arrangement typical of Ottoman houses, with cupboards (*musenderas*) and *divans* arranged around the room, such as may still be found in Mostar (e.g. the Kajtaz and Muslibegovića houses).

General view of the Ramića Street complex after its adaptive re-use into a guest house. In the background are the ruins of the neo-classical façade of the Girls' High School (see page 59). On the opposite page below is the riverside elevation of the Ramića Street complex.





Above: traditional slate has been reinstated as roof cover.

Below: sewerage installations and other infrastructural improvements on the Jusovine-Spile sub-zone were completed before repaving the streets.

Proposed corrective measures: Some minor surgical interventions were planned mainly along the Jusovina-Spile. They advocate a realistic course of action that takes into account the modifications that have already occurred – most of which were carried out with building permits issued to private individuals by the municipal authorities during the early stage of reconstruction. In order to mitigate their negative impact, a compatible scale was needed with appropriate details and materials for the structures adversely affected. The interventions carried out under the supervision of the AKTC/WMF team resulted in a series of targeted interventions, including:

- re-surfacing of concrete walls with natural stone;
- re-landscaping of altered riverbanks;
- re-configuration of changed roofs and substitution of clay tiles with traditional slate;
- modification of the proportions of overly large new openings as well as their frames and exterior finishes.

These interventions must be considered exceptional corrective measures, rather than the norm. They are an imperfect solution and can never fully redress the past. Given the circumstances, however, these measures represent an acceptable solution to the unacceptable transformations, and are the only practicable means of trying to restore this very sensitive and visible part of the Neighbourhoods to its former integral appearance. Following approval of the Plan and its regulations, these corrective interventions will no longer be necessary.

Upgrading Infrastructure and Open Spaces: The improvements to public open areas have focused on the Jusovine-Spile and the Ramića-Ćemalovića sub-zones, respectively located west and east of the Neretva River. The Jusovina-Spile sub-zone comprises the Jusovina Street as well as the Kriva and the Oručevića Bridges spanning the Radobolja River. Historically, the development of this area followed the construction of these bridges and creation of the pedestrian pathways connecting this part of the old town to the Stari Most. The first solid stone bridge across the Radobolja River – the Kriva Bridge – was built sometime before 1558, probably in connection with the construction of the Neziraga Mosque, dated 1550 and located some thirty metres further up on the small hill overlooking the bridge. The second bridge was built after the *Stari Most* in 1566. After its destruction in 1893, the Oručevića Bridge was replaced with a metal bridge in 1897. This entire

area played an important economic and productive role that was based on its link to the Radobolja River, a source of energy and water for irrigation. Eventually, a network of channels provided energy for nineteen water mills, while a large tannery occupied this location between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, constituting an important source of economic activity and employment for the town.

The public space and infrastructure improvements carried out during the period 2000-2004 by AKTC/WMF saw the drainage improved and the main pedestrian streets resurfaced with the traditional small rubble stones set in geometric patterns, as well as the Oručevića Bridge restored. In addition, the consolidation and landscaping of the escarpments along the Radobolja riverbanks were completed, together with the rehabilitation and improvement of the commercial and residential structures along Oneščukova Street. Finally, three abandoned water mills were reconstructed from the extant remains and available documentation, including the Buka water mill (5) destroyed by a flood in the late-nineteenth century, which has been returned to use as a water cleaning station for the water pumped from the Neretva River.



Above: street paving was carried out in the traditional way, with the use of small river stones.

Below: general view of Jusovina Street after the completion of the building rehabilitation and open space improvements.





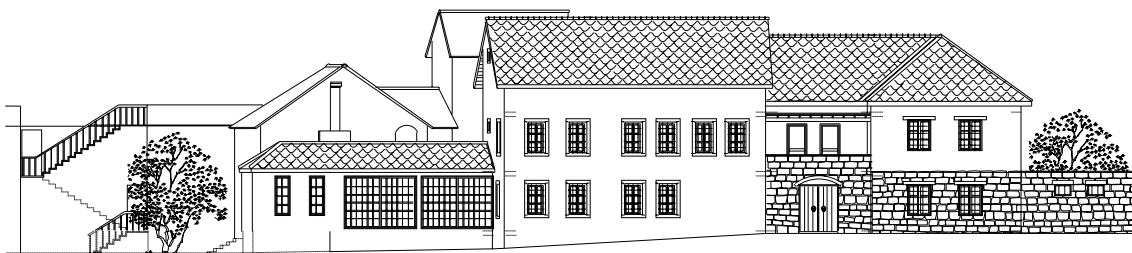
Above: the consolidated Radobolja riverbanks, now part of an improved pedestrian circulation network.

A second programme of open-space improvements was also completed on the east side, focusing especially on the loop formed by *Ramića* and *Ćemalovića Streets*, the narrow alleyway that descends from Maršal Tito Street towards the river and then rejoins the higher ground along Tito Street further to the south. The programme included improved drainage and street paving, rehabilitation of the high walls on both sides of the alley, including portions of the former city walls, and, following a special arrangement with the residents, restoration of the residential gateways or, in some cases, their substitution with traditional wooden frames.

This series of open space interventions also included works carried out to rehabilitate a portion of the former city walls, a system spanning both sides of the Neretva River. The walls were built in the sixteenth century to protect the houses and shops of the bazaar area, when Mostar's importance as a crossroads and commercial centre grew after the Ottoman occupation. Only a small portion of this enclave survives today, along the Kriva Bridge and *Ramića Street* where the remains of the wall can be observed flanking a pedestrian pathway still in use.

The improvements carried out between 2001 and 2002 include resurfacing and completion of missing steps along the pedestrian path, accompanied by selective interventions on the wall itself. Such interventions included replacement of missing stones, reintegration of missing wall sections, capping where needed for drainage and the elimination of accretions and inappropriate building materials.

Future Initiatives: With the completion of key interventions in the Jusovina-Spile and *Ramića-Ćemalovića* sub-zones, two of the most visible portions of the historic *mahallas* surrounding the Old Bridge have been restored to an acceptable level of integrity. Further actions will have to concentrate on the southwest riverbank, at the confluence of the Neretva and the Radobolja Rivers. Prominent in this area is a



former residential complex, today in ruins, overlooking the west bank of the Neretva (10). Built at the beginning of the twentieth century, the complex was heavily damaged during the war and is today in ruins. It is made up of three buildings organised around a large common courtyard covering a total area of 450 square metres. The large open space at the front of the complex overlooks the Neretva River. The gardens at the back of the complex, occupying the space separating the building from the former city wall, can be successfully integrated into a future conversion programme.

The panoramic position of the complex, at the confluence of the two rivers and with a direct view of the Old Bridge, make it a natural candidate for conversion into a series of guest houses, applying the same formula successfully implemented by the AKTC/WMF team in other cases. The plans, now finalised, foresee a ten-room facility with a café and restaurant overlooking the bridge. As in the case of the Ramića Street guest house, the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the complex would be done without modifying its existing organisation, while traditional materials and finishes would be used throughout.

To date, the arrangements needed to carry out the rehabilitation and partial reconstruction have proved difficult to finalise. This complex remains a crucial part in completing the work started on the other riverbanks and to restoring the visual continuity of the built fabric.

Below: general view of the ruined residential complex looking south. The partial reconstruction and rehabilitation of this complex is important to restore the visual continuity of this sensitive area at the juncture between the Neretva and Radobolja Rivers.

Left: proposed north elevation of the ruined residential complex on the western Neretva riverbank after its planned reconstruction.



RECLAIMING MOSTAR'S MONUMENTS AND BUILDINGS

Amir Pašić and Francesco Siravo



The porch of the Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque, severely damaged during the war, before and after the restoration carried out in 2002-2003.

Left: the ruined Landbank building designed by Josip Vancaš in 1910 is one of the priority buildings along Maršal Tito Street. The building, derived from contemporary Viennese models, is the best example of Secessionist architecture in Mostar.

Mostar's landmarks were individually targeted and subjected to heavy damage during the war. While some have been or are being restored, many more are still endangered and require urgent attention to avoid additional damage or, in some cases, total collapse. Their revitalisation is a key component of the Conservation and Development Plan and essential to making the central area once again a fully functioning urban entity. The strategy pursued by AKTC/WMF has been to intervene directly on a number of smaller traditional buildings, while at the same time preparing comprehensive redevelopment proposals for several monuments and larger structures. These more ambitious proposals reflect both the larger investment required and the high level of cooperation between public and private sectors needed to launch more complex revitalisation projects.

COLLABORATION FOR DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

In addition to the rehabilitation work carried out in the Historic Neighbourhoods, AKTC/WMF selected three other traditional structures for priority intervention: the Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque, the Biščevića and Lakišića housing complex and the Muslibegovića house. These buildings were chosen in light of their urgent need of repair, the quality of the buildings themselves and the added training value of each as building sites. Together they encompass most of the conservation and building repair activities typically found in Mostar. The AKTC/WMF planning team prepared conservation and adaptive reuse proposals and supervised the work on site, which was carried out by experienced local builders and a group of young apprentices under their direction. These initiatives are not only a tangible contribution to the preservation of endangered buildings of great significance; they have also helped to establish a group of builders specialised in international restoration and conservation standards and practices who will be able to carry on working on similar buildings in the future.

The Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque stands at the centre of the Donja mahalla, one of the small neighbourhoods established during the Ottoman period on the west bank of the Neretva River. The mosque was built sometime before 1620 by Sevri Hadži Hasan, a religious man



Above: interior of the Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque after restoration.

Below: view of the Biščevića and Lakišića complex with its čošak supported by slender masonry piers.

who became the mosque's first *imam*. He also established a *vakuf*, or religious charity, by donating various properties in the area for the upkeep of the mosque. This simple building is a typical example of its kind, exemplifying all the architectural features and details of a small religious Ottoman structure built in the Balkan region during the seventeenth century. The building is square in plan, topped by a hipped roof covered in local slate and dominated by a slender circular minaret positioned at the northwest corner. The minaret rises above the surrounding residential buildings and is the focal point of the neighbourhood. An exterior porch attached to the north side of the mosque provides a transition to the interior space through a *muqarnas* portal of finely carved stones, an excellent example of its kind. The length of each side of the prayer hall is almost identical to the building's height, approximating the form of a cube, with two storeys of pointed windows filtering the light into the interior space. The stone *mihrab* is carved with *muqarnas* motifs and provides a stylistic link and counterpoint to the exterior portal.



The partial reconstruction and restoration work started in the year 2000 under the direction of Professor Zeynep Ahunbay, with site supervision provided by the local AKTC/WMF team. Traditional techniques and materials were used throughout. Efforts were made to reposition the original stones, particularly those of the collapsed minaret, and to reintegrate the west and south perimeter walls of the mosque. The roof structure and the decorated wooden ceiling had to be entirely rebuilt. The portico was brought back to its original appearance with the reconstruction of its roof and the removal of a room added later on one side of the structure. The walled open space around the mosque was partially repaved with small stones set in geometric patterns and the rear garden was re-landscaped. The mosque has thus been restored to its original appearance, and once again it is the principal landmark and social anchor of the neighbourhood.

The Bišćevića and Lakišića housing complex is Mostar's best example of domestic architecture built in the Ottoman-Balkan tradition. The complex was originally a single family house. Today it is made up of two independent two-storey courtyard units: the Bišćevića house and the Lakišića house. The Lakišića house, which was the specific object of the AKTC/WMF intervention, used to be the family quarters (*haremlik*) of the larger complex and was connected to the public portion (*selamlık*) of the Bišćevića house. Today the Lakišića house is a two-storey courtyard dwelling entered from a wooden portal facing *Bišćević Street*. Surrounding the building, with its courtyard, garden and service structures, is a perimeter stone wall protecting the privacy of the house and creating an intimate enclave. The walls are masonry with wood used for the cantilevered bays and interior partitions. The timber roof structure, covered in local slate, slopes down to form projecting eaves that protect the interior spaces from the summer sun. An open stairway in the balcony provides access to the living quarters, the *hajāt* below and the *tavan* above. On the first floor, the interior spaces also include a special reception room projecting over the Neretva River, the so-called *čošak*, with its built-in seating (*divan*) and windows on three sides. Before its partial destruction during the war, this house was still embellished with its original carved wooden cabinetry and ceilings.

In 2001, following an agreement with the city and the Lakišića family to re-use the restored building as a guest house and source of revenue for the *Stari grad Agency*, AKTC/WMF began work on the building. The *haremlik*, *selamlık* and *tavan*, which had been hard hit during the



Above: the two-storey porch of the Lakišića house after restoration. The space is used as an outdoor living area during the summer.

Below: the restored interior shows the formal arrangement of the divan along the sides of the room. Traditional houses in Mostar were modeled after the grander Ottoman examples, adapted to respond to local climatic conditions and building technologies.



Above: an interior view of the main family room of the restored Muslibegovića house.

Below: the grand entry front of the house.



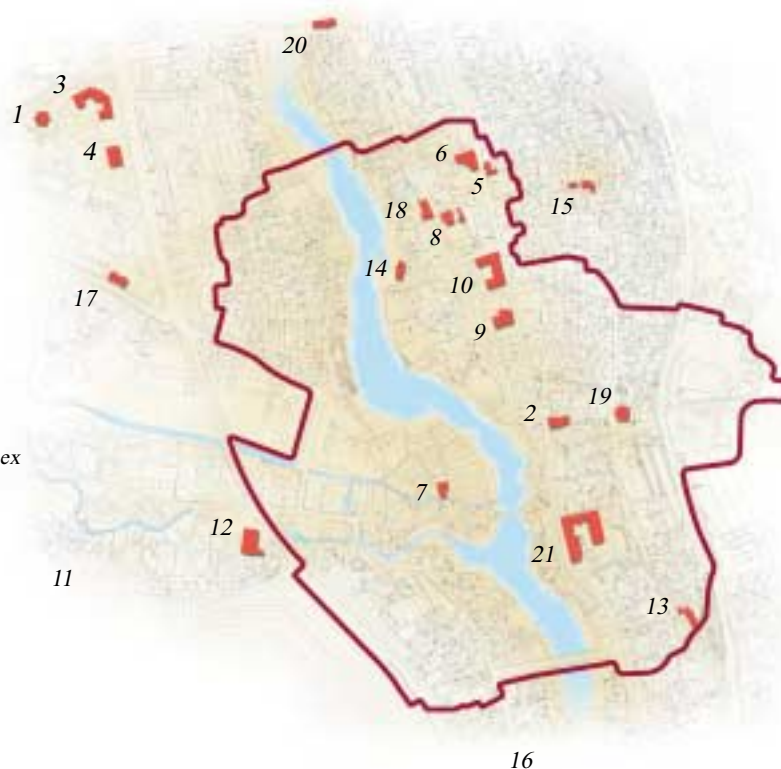
war, were completely re-built based on the existing remains and old photographs. The timber roof frame was reinforced, while the wooden ceilings and balustrades in the *tavan*, fortunately still in place, were repaired and cleaned, together with the interior cabinetwork. Only a few window frames could be repaired; the rest were substituted with replicas. The external masonry walls were consolidated with injections of grout and, if severely cracked, repaired with masonry stitches. In addition, where the piers supporting the *čošak* had been repaired with concrete, these were removed and restored to their original appearance. Finally, the courtyards and garden were re-paved and re-landscaped.

The Muslibegovića house was built in 1875 for a prominent local family. It is the largest and grandest of the surviving houses built during the Ottoman period. Its four storeys are extremely rare in Ottoman-Balkan residential architecture, recalling prototypes more commonly found in Istanbul. The house is part of a large complex which included various out-buildings, a summer kitchen, a stable for livestock, accommodation for a horse-drawn carriage, and an ample courtyard. The *čošak*, which supports another projecting windowed room above, links this home stylistically with the earlier, more intimate Biščevića and Lakišića complex. The house preserves some outstanding examples of traditional woodwork, with nearly every room featuring a working cabinet (*musandera*) and elaborately carved ceilings. Built only three years before the advent of Austro-Hungarian rule, the Muslibegovića house reminds us to what extent and how recently Mostar looked to Ottoman traditions and architectural styles as the standard for comfort and graciousness.

The Muslibegovića house has been owned by the same family since its construction and will retain its original residential use in future. The house suffered relatively minor structural damage in the recent war and was repaired, although poorly. In addition, recent changes had been made to the entry porch which needed to be reversed in order to bring the building back to its original appearance. In addition to remedying this, there was a general and great need for comprehensive maintenance and work to stabilise the auxiliary buildings, including the old stables, summer kitchen and storage areas. The need for these interventions, combined with the quality of the interior decorative surfaces, determined the inclusion of the house in the AKTC/WMF rehabilitation programme. Following completion of the works, the house became the temporary accommodation for the consultants participating

Priority Buildings identified by AKTC/WMF

1. University Library
2. Konak complex
3. Austro-Hungarian Gymnasium
4. Third Primary School
5. Alajbegovića house
6. Serbian Primary School
7. Čejvanbeg Hamam
8. Karadžozbeg Mosque
9. Landbank
10. Municipality Building
11. Bishop's Palace
12. Hrvoje Hall
13. Kajtaž house
14. Biščevića and Lakišića housing complex
15. Muslibegović house
16. Sevr Hadži Hasan Mosque
17. Napredak Cultural Centre
18. Vakuf Palace
19. Metropolitan Palace
20. The Music School in Musala Square
21. Girls' High School



in the project, while the stables were converted into offices for the AKTC/WMF team. These investments were possible because the owner agreed to reinvest the rent in the restoration of the complex.

PROGRAMMES FOR SELECTED BUILDINGS

In an effort to place these direct interventions into a larger context, AKTC and WMF had earlier decided to launch a campaign for the restoration of twenty-one of the most significant endangered historic structures located on both the eastern and western sides of the city. They were chosen because they constitute critical gaps in the urban fabric and because they can serve as “anchor” sites during the long process of reconstruction. Moreover, these buildings represent some of Mostar’s highest architectural achievements, reflecting the city’s long history and rich culture. They include Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim religious structures; Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Socialist-



The University Library awaits rehabilitation. Originally a private house, the building displays the style of the Austro-Hungarian period.



The Napredak Cultural Centre is now undergoing rehabilitation. It is shown here in its current state (above), together with its restored main elevation reconstructed from the records (below).



era public buildings; as well as important commercial, residential and educational buildings. These structures are seen not only as monuments and historic buildings to be preserved, but also as potential focal points that can attract investment and stimulate the economic growth needed to revitalise the surrounding neighbourhoods. These wider implications are helping to define the adaptive re-use programmes and the detailed plans, economic feasibility studies and funding arrangements.

To sustain the campaign, AKTC/WMF published in 1999 a brochure containing individual dossiers describing the history, condition, proposed interventions and costs of rehabilitating twenty-one significant historic structures in central Mostar entitled *Reclaiming Historic Mostar – Opportunities for Revitalisation*. The document was circulated among prospective donors and a number of the buildings were selected for rehabilitation. These included the Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque, the Biščevića and Lakišića housing complex and the Muslibegović house described above, as well as the Čejvanbeg

Hamam taken on by Unesco with Funds-in-Trust provided by the French and Turkish governments. Four more buildings from the list are either being rehabilitated or have received a firm commitment from donors, including the Austro-Hungarian Gymnasium and three buildings selected by the World Bank on the basis of the detailed plans prepared by AKTC and WMF: the Napredak Cultural Centre, the Metropolitan Palace and the Vakuf Palace. Once completed, these buildings, which were all built around the turn of the twentieth century, will be returned to their respective Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian communities and serve as cultural centres and, in the case of the Metropolitan Palace, as the residence of the Orthodox bishop.

The Napredak Cultural Centre is an Austro-Hungarian structure built in 1906 for the Croatian Cultural Society of Napredak. Designed in the Art Nouveau style fashionable at the time, it is a rectangular building with a cylindrical tower in the northwest corner, topped by a bulb-shaped dome with a lantern above. Originally the building had two storeys and a basement. A third storey was added in 1926. During World War II, the building was expropriated from the Society of Napredak by the national government and converted into a children's hospital. After the war, the building was given back to its previous owner and functioned once more as a cultural centre until the outbreak of war in 1992, when the centre was seriously damaged. The structure is today in poor condition, and most of its stucco decoration is missing. The plan prepared by AKTC/WMF foresees the renovation of the building's exterior decoration, which can be replaced on the basis of old photographs and drawings. Eventually, the structure will be returned to its original use as a multi-functional centre and library for the Napredak Cultural Society. The architectural plans are limited to some interior partitioning and the improvement of the building's utilities and services.

The Orthodox Metropolitan Palace, perched on top of one of the highest points on Mostar's east bank, can be seen from nearly any vantage point in the city. Built in 1910 as the residence for the Eastern Orthodox Bishop of Mostar, this is the only surviving monumental building associated with the Orthodox population. The rich texture and sophistication of its decorated façade, which culminates dramatically in an attic decorated with niches and statuary, gives the building a Baroque feeling and makes a distinct contribution to the architectural diversity of Mostar's city fabric. Several important interior elements



Above: an historic image of the Orthodox Metropolitan Palace.

Below: the front façade of the palace in its current condition before the building's imminent restoration.



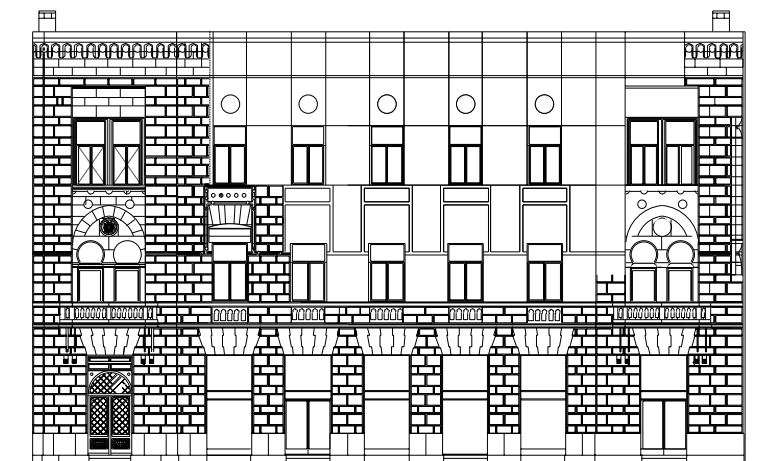


The photograph shows the street façade of the Vakuf Palace in its present condition. Most of the decorative elements were destroyed and will have to be reconstructed from the existing remains and the available documentation.

endowed the palace with a sense of true opulence: an entrance hall with elegant columns filled with natural light filtering down from carefully positioned circular openings in the roof and second floor, the beautiful meeting hall on the east side of the building and the large terrace above with spectacular views of the city. The grand entrance and reception rooms were decorated with frescoes combining *trompe-l'oeil* and botanical motifs inspired by the archaeological finds of Pompeii.

Today, only the façade and parts of the exterior envelope survive. The floors, stairs and the roof structure were heavily shelled and collapsed as a result. The exterior and interior stucco decoration, including the ceilings, are also missing or seriously damaged. There is sufficient evidence, however, to be able to reproduce the original details, including the rich decoration of the exterior entrance stair and balustrade, as well as the niches, obelisks, bas-reliefs and statuary of the attic. The original doors and windows are mostly gone and will need to be replaced with replicas of the original fixtures. Upon completion, the palace will be returned to its original owner, the diocese of the Orthodox Church of Zahum-Herzegovina.

The Vakuf Palace was built in 1897 by the Mehmed Karadžozbeg religious charity on the site of the former caravanserai of the Karadžozbeg Mosque. Originally, the building housed a library and an Islamic cultural centre, as well as other activities to support the maintenance and operation of the mosque. From the 1960s until its partial destruction in 1992, the Vakuf Palace served as the offices of the Urban Planning Institute of Mostar. The building combines classical



The street elevation of the palace showing the extent of reconstruction necessary to reintegrate the portions of wall still in place during the forthcoming restoration.

proportions and massing with Orientalist decorative elements and is an excellent example of the eclectic style predominant in Mostar during the Austro-Hungarian period. As in other Orientalist buildings of the period, the Islamic motifs employed in the Vakuf Palace do not reflect Bosnian or Ottoman prototypes. Rather, the architects were inspired by the architectural styles of Egypt and Spain, as is evidenced by the horseshoe arches and the courses of ashlar stone. Even the balconies, which were executed by local craftsmen, included ornamental motifs recalling Moroccan traditions rather than Bosnian precedents. With the Vakuf Palace, the Islamic community chose an eclectic interpretation of the Islamic past, introducing new elements and adding visual diversity to Mostar's architectural heritage.

The plans prepared by AKTC/WMF for the restoration of the palace foresee the reintegration of the missing components, including the main staircase, the floors and the roof, all destroyed during the hostilities. The north and east façades were severely damaged and will require extensive repair and reinstatement of the original decoration and architectural details, whose form and quality can be reconstructed from the remains and available documentation. The building's future use as a cultural centre for the Islamic community will not require any major change in the organisation of the spaces inside the building. The ground floor will be used as a cafe and gallery space, while the upper floors will contain offices and meeting spaces.

With the rehabilitation of the buildings described in this chapter, approximately one third of the twenty-one buildings earmarked for priority intervention will have been completed by 2005. Still, much remains to be done. This is especially true considering that the thirteen remaining priority buildings are the largest and most complex on the list. A case in point is the former Girls' High School, a fifteen-thousand-square-metre Austro-Hungarian structure overlooking the Stari Most, which is presented and discussed in the following chapter. Yet, what has been accomplished so far shows that rehabilitating and revitalising Mostar's buildings can have a significant impact on the economy of the city and on reversing the sense of blight and abandonment that surrounds these empty structures. Intervening on these buildings provides an opportunity to re-establish a vital and necessary link between the past and the future, and to turn Mostar's monuments into the urban assets needed to reinforce the city's economic prosperity and civic identity.



Above: an early image from the 1900s of the Municipality Building.

Below: the building as it appears today with the damage incurred during the war. The adaptive re-use plans foresee commercial use on the ground floor and offices above.





INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: THE STARI GRAD AGENCY

Stefano Bianca



The bazaar area on the east side of the Neretva River looking north with the minaret and dome of the Koski Mehmet Pasha Mosque on the right in 1986.

Left: the historic area of Mostar in 1986. The Stari Most is visible on the left and the neo-classical façade of the Girls' High School on the right, above the east tower of the bridge. The photograph was taken in 1986, when the City of Mostar received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for its exemplary work in the conservation and management of an historic area.

While preparing the Conservation and Development Plan (see *Reintegrating the Old City*) and during the subsequent step-by-step implementation of the neighbourhood rehabilitation projects, AKTC and WMF became aware of the need to build up local technical capacities and devise financial and institutional mechanisms to ensure the sustained operation and proper management of the restored buildings and sites – as well as initiate follow-up projects that build on and complement the activities carried out from 1998 to 2004 with external support. Reaching operational and financial sustainability, particularly in view of the imminent completion of several donor-supported projects, is also a concern of the World Bank as the City of Mostar begins repaying the 35-year loan it received to restore the Old Bridge.

The institutional response to these needs is the *Stari grad Agency*. The structure of this new agency is based on several initial concepts put forward by the AKTC/WMF team that were then further developed and agreed upon by the city's administration and the World Bank. While subordinate to the city administration, the *Stari grad Agency* has a special mandate (and corresponding prerogatives) that enable it to take a more integrated, more direct, more flexible and more community-oriented approach to the particular problems of the historic areas than would be the case with a conventional city planning department. Planning departments are usually responsible for larger geographical areas or broad sectors, such as road and infrastructure systems, and they find it difficult to cope with the very detailed planning requirements of historic cities.

CREATING A SPECIAL AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OLD CITY

The concept for the *Stari grad Agency* is based on the recognition that the old town, the nucleus of Mostar – now restored with the help of donors and agencies such as the World Bank, AKTC and WMF – is a major cultural and economic asset for the city as a whole. As such, Mostar's historic area can attract visitors from all over the world, thus generating employment and income for its citizens and increasing the city's tax revenues. The *Stari grad Agency*, as the custodian of these assets, must therefore be empowered, on the one hand, to take an



Above: the restored exterior of the Muslibegovića house's former stables, which served as the AKTC/WMF project offices.

Below: interior view of the office with the planning team at work.

active part in the promotion and conservation of the old town, and, on the other hand, to draw income from its operation and management in order to sustain its staff and operational costs.

Without going into the specific statutory details, it is fair to say that the new urban management unit being set up in Mostar will act as a platform for outreach and interaction, linking both international and local interests. At the broader international level, it will promote the city's cultural heritage and tourism, foster relations with donors and investors and pursue bilateral aid agreements. Locally, it can mobilise prominent citizens, engage in public-private partnerships and maintain close relations with residents' communities in the old town. In many ways, the *Agency* will play the role of an "honest broker" between the city administration and these various constituencies and opportunities, while always promoting the welfare of the old town and its residents.

In particular, the *Stari grad Agency* will exert planning and building controls within the area defined by the Conservation and Development Plan. It will act as the city's implementing arm for urban upgrading and individual construction projects, and it will ensure that future projects within the boundaries of the old town conform to the rules and regulations of the Plan. More generally, it will not only be responsible for the approval (or rejection) of private building applications, but will also be able to assist land owners and developers prepare appropriate project submissions.

In order to cope with these diverse tasks, the *Agency* will need adequate staff, trained in various disciplines, familiar with the particular conditions in the old town and committed to monitoring developments in the field on a day-to-day basis. Initially, the staff of the *Agency* will be composed of professionals trained while working on AKTC/WMF projects and in the World Bank Project Coordination Unit. They will be complemented with staff from the former Institute of Preservation and the city's planning department, as needed. The office of the *Agency* is being moved from the Muslibegovića house – the premises used by the AKTC/WMF team – into the former Institute of Preservation near the Poets' Park in *Maršal Tito Street*, just above the Old Bridge.

The operation of the *Stari grad Agency*, with this broad and demanding mandate, will require funding that goes beyond the normal budgetary resources of the city. Additional funding for the operation of the *Agency*

will therefore have to come from other sources. The first is rental income earned from the buildings restored with donor funding and handed over to the *Agency*, such as the Old Bridge complex (World Bank), the Hundo Han, the guest houses in *Ramića Street* and Lakišića house, and several shops and offices in the old town (all AKTC/WMF projects). The second source will be a tax raised from Mostar’s visitors on behalf of the *Stari grad Agency* through travel agencies, restaurants, hotels and coffee houses – acknowledging the fact that the existence and work of the *Agency* spurs tourism development and generates income for the residents and businesses of the old town.

FUTURE TASKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

In future, the *Agency* may also generate income by acting as a catalyst in forming public-private property development partnerships to rehabilitate and convert public properties still in a state of ruin and awaiting investors. As economic conditions improve, the rehabilitation of such sites, many of them in strategic locations in the city centre, will become commercially viable, and the *Agency* will be in a position to charge design and implementation fees. The AKTC/WMF team has already identified several such opportunities and prepared the corresponding preliminary adaptive re-use schemes and cost analyses. These “Priority Buildings” are described in a separate brochure, *Reclaiming Historic Mostar – Opportunities for Revitalisation*.

Certainly the most prominent among these buildings is the former Girls’ High School built from 1893 to 1901 during the Austro-Hungarian period and located in a dominant position on the east bank of the Neretva, a few steps above the Old Bridge complex. Initiated by the prominent citizen and later mayor, Mujaga Komadina, it is arguably the most impressive neo-classical building in Mostar. From the beginning, it was conceived as a mixed-use structure, accommodating various functions over time, including a girls’ secondary school, municipal and private offices, a sports club and shops along the main street.

During the war, the building’s interior was completely burned and only the façades and some of the structural elements survived. With its fifteen-thousand square metres of usable surface area, the re-use potential of this large structure, in the heart of the historic city and a few footsteps from all the major tourist attractions, is unique. A plan for the adaptive re-use of the building, developed by Professor Boris



Above: the AKTC/WMF planning team worked closely with the city administration for the preparation of the Conservation Plan. Through its activities and interaction, the team has become the nucleus of the future Stari grad Agency.

Below: discussing the Plan with local professionals prior to its formal adoption in 2001.



Above: the proposed glass roof above the interior courtyard of the Girls' High School project.

Below: the axonometric view shows the covered courtyard converted into an open-air café, as well as the roof terrace of the hotel wing overlooking Mostar.

Podrecca in close cooperation with the AKTC/WMF team, makes the most of these opportunities with a design that preserves the historic façades of the former school and establishes a contemporary language in the development of the interior spaces, particularly through the introduction of new glass-roofing above the courtyard.

In keeping with its former multi-purpose character, the converted building will accommodate a variety of uses. They will include: a 36-room hotel, a restaurant and a shopping mall around the roofed courtyard, a multi-storey car park below the courtyard, offices and apartments on the top floors, and a sports club on the upper corner of the site. A series of shops will be located at the lower level of the building along *Maršal Tito Street*. A roof terrace will offer unique views of the surrounding historic townscape.

No doubt its prominent location and convivial character will make this restored building a prime destination for Mostarians and visitors alike. Moreover, the future redevelopment of this key site will complement and increase the attraction of the Old Bridge and, together with other restored buildings and spaces in the old town, constitute a unique civic centre of a both historic and contemporary character.

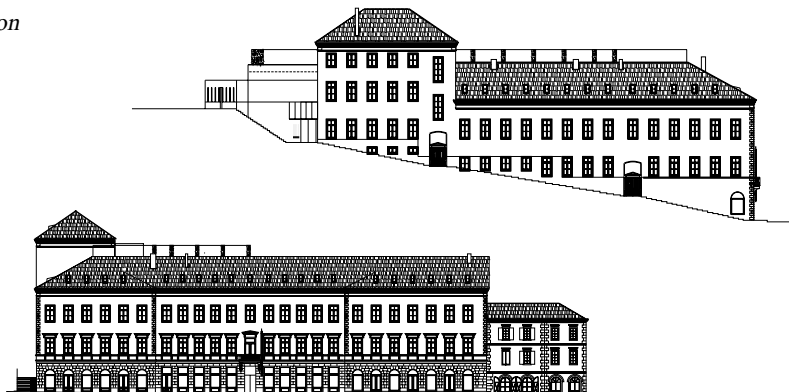


Proposed upper-ground floor plan of the converted Girls' High School showing the various functions of the building.

- Restaurant / Café
- Hotel Reception
- Commercial Space
- Office Space



The side elevation along Kalhanska Street (above) and the main elevation of the Girls' High School along Maršal Tito Street (below).



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The Mostar project is the result of the efforts of office staff, technical consultants and various contractors. The AKTC/WMF Istanbul Office was established in 1998 with the following staff: Pelin Özkiz Çelik (Coordinator) Farkhod Bagirov, Zehra Demirok Telseren, Pinar Engincan, T. Seniha Koçer, Yonca Kösebay Erkan, Olcay Öztürk, Banu Tomruk, Mine Topçubaşı and M. Bengü Uluengin. The AKTC/WMF Mostar Office was established in 2000 with the following staff: Senada Demirović, Aida Idrižbegović, Sladjo Jakirović, Maida Karahasanović, Edin Kostović, Maja Popovac, Elša Turkušić, Lejla Tuzlak and Jesenka Vuk.

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The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is the cultural agency of the Aga Khan Development Network. It was formally established in 1988 in Geneva as a private philanthropic foundation to integrate and coordinate the various initiatives of His Highness the Aga Khan regarding the improvement of cultural life – and in particular of the built environment, which is the most complex and tangible expression of cultural development – in societies where Muslims have a significant presence. AKTC encompasses three programmes: the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Historic Cities Support Programme and the Education and Cultural Programme.

The Trust's **Historic Cities Support Programme (HCSP)** was established in 1991 to provide planning assistance to local government bodies and community groups, and to support conservation and development efforts in historic cities throughout the Muslim world. In addition to Mostar, HCSP's activities include projects in the Northern Pakistan, Cairo, Zanzibar, Samarkand, Syria, Afghanistan and India. These projects cover a wide scope of complementary activities, including development assistance to local government bodies and NGOs, community development work and the implementation of specific planning and rehabilitation proposals in historic areas and buildings that provide space for and revitalise cultural, social and economic activities.

In all of its activities, the HCSP goes beyond specific physical interventions and strives to improve living and working conditions for the inhabitants of historic urban areas. The Programme's planning and rehabilitation efforts are thus designed to contribute to a positive economic climate that can be sustained over time and lead to further investment in the traditional built environment.

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