



International Scientific Conference Urban Civil Engineering and Municipal Facilities,  
SPbUCEMF-2015

## Revitalization of Historic Buildings as an Approach to Preserve Cultural and Historical Heritage

Milja Penić<sup>a</sup>, Golovina Svetlana<sup>b</sup>, Vera Murgul<sup>c,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Aleksandra Medvedeva 14, 18000 Niš, Serbia

<sup>b</sup>Saint Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Vtoraja Krasnoarmejskaja ul. 4, St. Petersburg, 190005, Russia

<sup>c</sup>St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, Politekhničeskaya, 29, Saint-Petersburg, 195251, Russia

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### Abstract

The need to preserve architectural heritage of historical and cultural value is getting more and more significant. At the same time it is very important to develop environment dynamically to sustain life activities in general. The article deals with the revitalization method with the purpose to preserve and restore historical landmarks, which assign a new function – to expand areas and adjust historical buildings to modern requirements. The projects of historical buildings in the cities Nis (Serbia) and Saint-Petersburg (Russia) were considered as examples herein. Revitalization was presented as a method of how to convert life-sustaining environment in the context of preservation and promotion concerning cultural value of historical buildings.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of SPbUCEMF-2015

**Keywords:** revitalization, historic buildings, architectural heritage, historical landmarks, active preservation .

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### 1. Introduction

Various needs of contemporary society and growing consciousness of great value of architectural heritage emphasize the importance of revitalization as a means of preservation, but at the same time its activation in the

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\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7 950 010 1931; fax: +7 812 535 7992  
E-mail address: [october6@list.ru](mailto:october6@list.ru)

context of sustainable development. New, innovative techniques of active preservation and protection of architectural heritage are developed. As there is no universal formula for objective consideration and evaluation of always disputed connection and integration of “old” and “new”, the need for that universal cognition is basis and motivation for further research in this area. The aim of research in methods and final visual products of revitalization is that “visual objectification should be the final result. Evaluation of visual significance of ambient is a result of interweaving of objective criteria, functional organization and creativity in design.

## 2. Villa Zivkovic in Niška Banja

Villa Zivkovic in Niška Banja which is an important example of the development of early modern architecture in Nis, is located near the center of this small but attractive tourist place. Little is known about this building but its timeless impressiveness and monumental spirit confirm that this is a facility that is worth preserving as one of the most successful aesthetic ventures of the Niš Modern. For these reasons, Villa Zivkovic has set a great challenge to the authors of the design as a building that can be considered as self-sufficient in the aesthetic sense, and any intervention on it must be thought out and nonintrusive.

The subject of this paper is a case study of revitalization of Villa Zivkovic, as an innovative method of revitalization of the building that has cultural and historical significance. The method applied in this design is based on emphasizing the original aesthetic value of the existing building, and therefore the cultural importance that building carries as one of the representative examples of the development of early Modern in Nis and the surrounding area [1-11].

In twenty years period, from 1920 to 1941, Niska Banja, as the existing thermal spa, as well as the settlement which is just being formed, experienced a sudden building expansion. Niš, as industrial and administrative center of the Moravian Banovina already formed a civil elite that built family villas, larger buildings with rooms for rent, and hotels in Spa, as neighboring resort. [1] During this period between the two world wars, the Modern architecture records its fastest growth in Nis and Niska Banja. In the literature Niska Banja is mentioned as a phenomenon with very large number of buildings of architectural value built in the style of early modernism. Villa Zivkovic is located at Ivan Goran Kovacic Street in Niska Banja, in the centre of this small tourist resort. Little is known of this building. It was built at the end of IV decade of the twentieth century, and a designer is unknown. The most expressive and beautiful example with all the characteristics of pure Modern architecture in solving function and formation of masses, is the house of brothers Zivkovic, traders from Nis, probably built in 1938 or 1939th. [2] Functionally and in its form, Villa Zivkovic is the classic example of Modern architecture between two World Wars. (Figure 1) Dynamic treatment of two volumes that are intertwined, at the same time emphasizes the verticality and horizontality. Strong white volume of the first floor, which is semi-circular in its basis, comes from the more massive and heavier corps which is in the background, and rests on a circular pillars and creates a partially illusion of "levitation" above the entrance to the ground floor. (Figure 2)



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