The Architecture of Existing Hotel Complexes as a Base of Urban Development in Neum

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Abstract

The development of tourism in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina's only coastal town, represents a complex process that began during Yugoslavia's socialist era, marked by various social, architectural, and ecological challenges. During the 1960's, alongside accelerated urbanization, transportation infrastructure, and secondary housing, Neum experienced a transformation from a local community to a remarkable tourist destination. Architecture of that period, marked by modernist principles, was not just functional, but reflected a wide socialist ideology- promoting collective welfare, harmony with natural surroundings, and inclusivity. However, the expansion of tourism in Neum also brought problems, such as illegal construction, the destruction of landscape, and spatial segregation. The aim of this research is to analyze how the elements of socialist modernist architecture can be used as a base for the further development of hotel complexes in Neum. Modernist architecture from the socialist period provides various important lessons for today's urban planning. It's basic principles- simplicity, functionality, and the adaptation to the natural terrain, offer a relevant frame for the contemporary development of tourism. In this context, this research focuses on the integration of those principles into contemporary architecture, with the aim of creating sustainable, functional, and aesthetically pleasing hotels that satisfy the needs of tourists, while keeping the local identity. With the use of primary and secondary sources, the analysis includes the study of current hotels in Neum, their architectural characteristics, and urban organization. Special attention is paid to challenges, such as unplanned construction, degradation of the coast, and the unequal development of different parts of the municipality. Through this analysis, concrete models for the further development of hotels are suggested, which include the incorporation of modernist principles, but with a combination of new approaches.

Keywords: *Yugoslavian architecture, Community integration, Adriatic, Hotel architecture, Neum*

1. Introduction

The development of the tourism sector in Yugoslavia reflects a broad connection between social, architectural, and political changes, especially after the Second World War. Although tourism was initially neglected, it got a strategic significance in the 1950's, since Yugoslavia strived to become integrated into the global touristic economy, utilizing the expansion of mass tourism in Europe. A unique aspect of this transformation was the development of modernist coastal architecture, which served as a functional answer to the growing touristic needs, and a symbol of Yugoslavia's determination to modernism and socialist principles. This era brought significant innovations in design, where hotels and public buildings accepted modernist ideals, while also being integrated into the natural surroundings. These architectural innovations have reinforced the idea of collectivist welfare and national identity, which was in accordance with the socialist vision of creating atisfied and unified citizenship.

The case of Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina's only coastal town, depicts the complex interconnection of tourism, socio-political dynamics, and urbanism within a wider framework of Yugoslavia. Starting in the 1960's, the accelerated expansion of secondary homes transformed Neum into a tourist destination. However, this expansion was followed by crucial difficulties, including the growth of illegal construction, demographic changes, segregation, and landscape degradation.

This paper aims to examine the historical and contemporary dimensions of Neum's tourist development, with a focus on socio-spatial transformations and architectural trends. Through the research of mutual connections of modernist design, touristic politics, and the practice of the construction of residential buildings, this research provides insight into the permanent legacy of socialist planning, and its influence on Neum's identity as a touristic destination and community.

2. Social context and its impact to tourist impact

Intending to fully comprehend and analyse the topic and to place it into a wider urbanistic perspective, it was important to set the morphological categorization and define the set of criteria for the evaluation of the elements that would define the general context of the urban development and urban intervention. Understanding the evolution of urban fabrics and the architectural expression of a certain period of time necessitates an examination of the conceptual frameworks and thought processes that inspired these ideologies throughout the world. Within this scope of analysis, it was possible to address the greater cultural and intellectual tendencies that influenced urban and architectural development in the discussed context.

This study adopts a strategy that focuses on experiences generated over the same historical timeframe and under comparable topographic conditions. Given the variety of strategies used throughout the contextual era, a range of urban development approaches for hotels has been identified. This spectrum spreads from conservative contextual interventions that emphasise compatibility with the local environment to urban fabrics moulded by global commercialisation pressures and characterised by the advent of high-rise structures. The case studies of hotel complexes are studied on a macro and micro contextual scale under a paradigm of urban development at different levels. This type of exploratory research methodology allows for the understanding of the holistic perspective in which these hotel complexes are developed and the contextual factors that have affected them. Therefore, the notion of hotel complex development was observed through a set spectrum of urban intervention approaches that would address and acknowledge the perspectives on the international as well as the local level.

After more than a century of steadfast efforts and advocacy to create a more equitable balance between work obligations and leisure time, Europe formally established workers' rights to paid vacations in the 1930s as a universal entitlement protected by state legislation [1]. This form of legislative change has led to the reality of a clear distinction between time and space for work and relaxation, necessitating the shortening of the overly long workday and the expression of a rising need for more appropriate leisure time. Although, like much of Europe, mass tourism did not emerge on the Adriatic coast until after the Second World War, when the construction of infrastructure and hotels was at its genesis, as well as the work of tourist associations and the local population's adaptation to the new leisure habits in the Mediterranean [1]. The idea was that by concentrating tourism infrastructure in a small region that was adequately scaled and well-connected in a dispersed fashion to the neighbouring towns or fishing villages, the estimated number of tourists could be accommodated without compromising space and landscape [2]. To accommodate the social reforms and ensure that they align with the contextual urban fabric potential, the needs of modern urban development have been reflected in the social changes. In addition to reflecting larger trends, the postwar socialist emphasis on vacationing and democratising tourism enabled the development of a distinct modernisation vision inside a particular socialist framework, coinciding with the growth of mass tourism in Europe [1].

As the tourism sector expanded, social norms and standards shifted dramatically, forcing them to adjust to meet the changing requirements of both tourists and local populations. This shift was prompted by an increase in tourist numbers, which necessitated changes to infrastructure, services, and cultural traditions to meet the rising demand for leisure and hospitality. The link between supply and demand became a defining factor in the urban development of the newly formed tourist sites. The growth in living standards in postwar Europe profoundly changed mass tourism, which emerged at the same time as the quest for prosperity [1]. The reciprocal change to higher standards seems to be reflected in a more customised travel model, allowing passengers to choose experiences that were specifically tailored to their needs, changing how people engaged with leisure and tourism. Commercial accommodation naturally offered additional options by providing a broader and more diversified variety of places, allowing people to adapt their choices to their own pace and avoid reliance on predetermined timetables [1].

2.1 Tourism Development in Socialist Yugoslavia

After World War II, the Yugoslav government initially neglected tourism but shifted its focus in the 1950s as the country sought to promote vacations as one of basic elements of workers' rights in socialism and to establish relations with foreign travel agencies. Yugoslavia capitalized on the European boom in mass tourism during this period [3] and the development of seaside architecture positioned socialist countries to meet the demands of mass tourism [4]. In the interwar period, tourism flourished due to the establishment of Yugoslavia's first tourist agency, Putnik, in 1923. This agency employed artists and designers to create promotional materials that shaped Yugoslavia's image for domestic and international audiences [5]. However, tourism at that time was primarily accessible to the upper and middle classes. Post-war developments included the introduction of paid annual leave in 1946, providing workers with opportunities for travel and leisure. Paid vacations became a right, enabling citizens to explore their homeland, fostering national awareness, and creating satisfied citizens [6]. Vacation was no longer seen as an opportunity, but rather a right.

Hotels built during the socialist period embraced modernist ideals, prioritizing functionality, geometric forms, and efficient layouts. These buildings served not only as accommodations, but also as symbols of Yugoslavia's modernity [7]. The modernist credo of 'form follows function' is rooted in the belief that the design of a building or object should primarily reflect its intended purpose [8]. Modernist architects adopted concrete, steel, and glass as transformative materials to revolutionize construction and craft structures reflective of their era [9]. Even though modernist ideals emphasize innovation, numerous hotels integrate regional materials to foster a sense of authenticity and connection to their surroundings [10]. Modernist hotel designs strive to merge public and private spaces effortlessly, promoting smooth transitions and fostering interaction [11]. A hallmark of Yugoslav hotel architecture was its integration with the natural environment. Designers emphasized harmony with coastal topography by incorporating shaded areas and locally sourced materials. Mediterranean modernism in Yugoslavia reflected critical regionalism, blending avant-garde designs with local customs. Open, adaptable spaces catered to both leisure and communal activities, aligning with socialist ideals of collective welfare [12].

2.2 Case Study 05: Neum, Bosnia&Herzegovina

Similarly to the previous case studies, under the set of criteria, the urban development of Neum began as well during the 1970s with its infrastructural integration into the contextual environment [13]. The construction of Grand Hotel Neum, Hotel Zenit, and Hotel Sunce in Neum has significantly changed the urban landscape and where one of the key factors of urban development of the area on a micro context scale, especially from the perspective of the growing tourism industry along the Adriatic coast. These hotels were the responsible agents and mediums as a critical component of a comprehensive urban development strategy that has elevated Neum from a sleepy beach village to a touristic destination.

Grand Hotel Neum, designed by Enver Jahić and Nemanja Vukićević initially as hotel and institution for retired people, was the largest hotel resorts in Adriatic coast and town's largest and most prominent complexes. It has served as a stimulus for other infrastructure upgrades, such as greater road connectivity and increased public services [13]. Modernist concept of Grand Hotel Neum is one of the best examples of already great Yugoslav touristic architecture that is perfectly fitted into the slopy landscape, with clear idea to not dominate, but to be incorporated into the context despite the size of the building. Architects use utilitarian elements of terraces, as partition walls and fences, to create brilliant rhythmic architectural expression and a lot of intimate spaces for every hotel room oriented to spectacular views to see, peninsula and greenery of surrounding park next to the beach.

Hotel Zenit, with its specific architectural style that is clearly routed in traditional architecture of the area, exemplifies the effective integration of modern design into the coastal environment, while also contributing to the expansion of the hotel and leisure facilities. It was the best example of modernist architecture that is regionally oriented with clear idea of "genius loci" with perfect integration into the natural, but cultural and traditional context. This orientation is visible in use of traditional materials and forms, but even more in concept of entire

complex which use typical elements of Mediterranean architecture and urbanism with numerous gardens, patios, pedestrian streets and small squares to create authentic atmosphere of this part of Mediterranean, without any copy, but with very original architectural approach. Hotel Zenit was recognized from public and architects and his architect Slobodan Jovandić 1987 was awarded with the most prominent Yugoslav architectural award established by daily newspaper "Borba".

Similarly, Hotel Sunce has had a significant influence on the local context with its architectural intricate statement as well as the tourist attraction. Collectively, these edifices have reshaped the town's urban structure, promoting vertical expansion along the coastline and encouraging the diversity of public spaces like promenades and leisure facilities. This development has altered the dynamic between the built environment and the natural coastal landscape in a socially responsible approach. The impact on Neum's urban fabric is seen in the development of tourism-oriented infrastructure, which has transformed the town into a dynamic destination while also providing issues in balancing development and environmental protection.

Mentioned 3 hotel resorts are until today the most significant touristic, architectural and urban points of Neum and their importance and successful architectural realizations should be taken into consideration for every future urban development of the city, but as great examples of contextual oriented architecture which could be followed in future architectural and urban solutions.

The case of Neum is specific since it holds a lot of potential, but due to the outside factors of social and political dynamics, the materialization of the urban development is not properly juxtaposed with any other private interest. The case of Neum is important in order to understand all the segments of the urban development approaches with historical connotations within similar geographical contexts.

Fig. 1-4. Hotels Zenit, Sunce and Grand hotel Neum

The rapid development of tourism, alongside secondary homes in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina's only municipality with sea access, began in the 1960's, accompanied by the completion of transport infrastructure [14] Second homes in Neum developed intensely between the 1960's and 1980's- a period in which the process of individualization in Yugoslavia started to strengthen. The process was followed by a strategic fragmentation of political power by increasing the power of local self-governing units. This environment had been used by members of the political elite who engaged in illegal construction, accompanied by workers from abroad (Gastarbeiter), who invested in the construction of holiday homes [15]. The process of random construction was mainly concentrated alongside the steep area between the coast and the Adriatic Highway [16] The development of the tourism sector in Neum was followed by demographic changes, with Neum's population increasing from 282 (1953 census), to 3,013 (2013 census). Secondary homes serve an important role in the development of the tourism sector in Neum. Owners usually build their holiday houses nearby areas where their relatives or friends have a holiday home, which creates the emergence of segregation [17] Second homes are usually built on the coast itself, implying the dominant bathing form of tourism [18] It was found that more than half of holiday homeowners have another holiday home equipped for occasional use. Most of those homes are inherited and rarely sold [19]. Most owners are not ready for permanent relocation, but alternate between using a holiday home, and a house as the place of their residence [20], turning Neum into a typical weekender settlement.

Through the collection of data from relevant institutions, it was determined that the total number of holiday homes in Neum was 415. In Neum, most holiday homes are owned by residents of other municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Sarajevo (43.57%), Čapljina (17.42%), and Mostar (11.01%) being in the top three. A significant number of secondary homes are also owned by residents of Croatian cities, mainly Dubrovnik (47.33%), followed by Metković (12.43%), and Zagreb (7.69%).

The gathered data show that the development of tourist amenities in the coastal region between the Adriatic Highway and the sea, where vacation homes were constructed by owners who did not live in the Municipality of Neum, led to a sort of segregation. Just 40 local families

have homes on the land they inherited in this vacation home region. However, the bulk of the local population continued to concentrate in the "weekend house settlement's' hinterland, northeast of the highway. The effects of this development can still be seen today in Neum's physiognomy, functional characteristics, and most notably, social life.

Besides segregation, other problems are created as well. Compared to their counterparts in Neum itself, vacation homes in rural areas are less furnished and organized and have different origins. Neum's coastal homes were constructed specifically as vacation homes, whereas rural communities' homes were once family residences that were transformed into second-home amenities.

Finally, Commercial facilities for the growth of tourism were built alongside haphazard, unlawful construction without any regulatory planning at less than 100 meters from the coast. In this sense, the coastline landscape and the natural ecosystem were permanently changed.

3. Principles of future Neum urban development

When it comes to the applicable concepts that were derived from the socialist Yugoslavia hotels architecture, it can be noted that contextual integration, above all, ensures that new urban intervention blends in perfectly with the surrounding landscape while honouring the local natural, social, and cultural features. The sensation of genius loci is enhanced by this link to the surrounding context. For development to satisfy present demands without endangering future generations, sustainable development is essential. It places a high priority on resource conservation and environmental impact reduction. Buildings should also have lasting architectural value, which means that they are made to be functional and aesthetically pleasing for a long period, gradually improving the urban environment.

However, there are several urban development dangers to be aware of. Avoiding these trends is crucial because of the negative repercussions of global urbanisation, which include the loss of local identity and the emergence of generic and hostile project developments. In order to ensure that urban development and intervention are both sensible and responsible, inefficient development should also be prevented. It is imperative to stop the decline of architectural value since short-term profitable projects can have long-lasting detrimental effects on a city's cultural and historical values.

Concerning urban development that were derived from a set criterium of categorization have shown the spectrum of different perspectives and approaches in the process of urban development. The leverage of existing hotel complexes as a basis for urban development uncovers resonating principles that could potentially guide towards sustainable and contextually appropriate development. A primary approach identified is topographical integration, which underscores the necessity of aligning the configuration of the edifices with the natural landscape, thereby ensuring that the constructed environment complements and integrates into the surrounding terrain. This principle is particularly significant in areas characterized by steep coastal slopes and irregular topography, where careful planning has been employed to maintain both the visual appeal and environmental integrity of the region. Another notable principle is phased development, which advocates for gradual and incremental expansion, facilitating improved resource management, minimizing disruption, and allowing for adaptation to changing demands over time. Concurrently, the sustainability principle emphasizes the importance of environmental conservation and the incorporation of energy-efficient technologies, intending to diminish the ecological impact of tourism infrastructure as well as the establishment of a system that depends on itself. Accessibility has also been prioritized, focusing on the establishment of transport links that support pedestrian movement and infrastructure adapted to slopes, thereby addressing topographical challenges. Furthermore, community engagement has proven vital, with local stakeholders actively participating in decision-making processes to ensure that developments align with the needs of residents and safeguard local interests. Lastly, the enhancement of cultural and recreational opportunities has been pivotal in strengthening the identity of the place, ensuring that tourism expansion does not impact and disrupt the local heritage and affect the local population. These guidelines could be essential for the urban development of existing coastal tourist sites since they encourage a harmonious coexistence of local heritage and contextual environmental preservation with the introduction and construction of touristic amenities. This set of urbanistic principles could serve to establish norms and standards for the master plan development, ensuring that the urban fabric regenerates in alignment with appropriate enduring architectural and urbanistic value by utilizing the concepts of already introduced and recognizable elements that stood the test of time.

4. Possibilities for New Hotel Projects on Same or Similar Premises

Based on our detailed analysis of Neum's history and case studies of similar challenges faced by cities worldwide, we concentrated our research on identifying strategic locations for potential hotel development projects in Neum. These analyses provided a foundation for identifying key locations and opportunities for innovative and sustainable hospitality development. Building on this groundwork and drawing from case studies of similar challenges worldwide, we focused our research on identifying strategic locations for potential hotel development in Neum. In our location selection process, we considered several key factors, including the geographical position, existing construction traditions, modern trends, functionality, and optimal space utilization, proposing the following sites as focal points for new projects:

1) Klek Peninsula

The Klek Peninsula is known for its stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage, making it a great spot for sustainable tourism. Its untouched beauty and quiet location give it huge potential for hotel projects that respect the environment and local culture. However, one big challenge is the lack of infrastructure, which makes development difficult. If not done carefully, building here could harm the natural habitat, so it's important to approach any projects with sustainability in mind to protect what makes this area so special.

Fig. 5, 6. Klek Peninsula and Feral Beach

2) Feral Beach

The Feral Beach is the only developed part of the Klek Peninsula, giving it a unique position as a foundation for further growth. Inspired by successful Mediterranean resorts, it already showcases some potential for development. On the positive side, its existing infrastructure provides a starting point for upgrades, and its picturesque location makes it attractive for visitors. With the right investments and a focus on maintaining its authentic charm, it could transform into a world-class resort that combines modern amenities with the area's natural beauty.

That said, its status as the only developed area comes with challenges. Any expansion must be carefully managed to avoid overwhelming the current infrastructure or damaging the surrounding environment. Overdevelopment could risk losing the natural charm that makes Feral Beach so unique. To ensure its long-term success, future projects should focus on sustainable growth that enhances the area without compromising its ecological and cultural integrity.

3) East part of the city area

Strategically located in Neum, next to Hotel Orka offers stunning views of the Adriatic Sea and easy access to the beach, making it a prime spot for visitors seeking relaxation. While slightly removed from the busy urban core, it remains close to major attractions, offering a perfect balance of tranquility and convenience. This unique positioning creates significant redevelopment potential, with opportunities to enhance its existing facilities and transform the site into a modern, eco-friendly retreat. Thoughtful upgrades could elevate Hotel Orka into the most wanted destination that harmonizes luxury with the natural beauty of its surroundings.

Fig. 7. And 8. View from the East part of the city and Feroelektro site

4) Feroelektro

The problematic site of Feroelektro in Neum presents a unique opportunity for hotel development, provided that existing political issues are resolved. This location, currently underutilized, has the potential to be transformed into a modern hotel that could attract tourists and boost the local economy. By addressing the political and regulatory challenges, stakeholders could leverage this prime site to create a destination that enhances the appeal of Neum, offering both visitors and residents improved amenities and services.

5) Deteriorated Buildings

In Neum, the coastal area is dotted with numerous deteriorated buildings that significantly detract from the city's overall appeal. At least seven problematic structures, mostly former workers' resorts—have been identified as major problems. These abandoned sites remain unresolved due to ongoing political disputes, leaving prime coastal locations underutilized. Clearing these problematic zones would open up valuable space for the development of modern tourist facilities, which are urgently needed to meet the city's growing demand. As Neum's tourist season continues to thrive year after year, creating new accommodations in these key locations could greatly enhance the city's charm and economic potential.

Fig. 9. And 10. One of deteriorated hotel buildings and central parking next to the beach and coast

6) Central Parking Neum

Parking plays a crucial role in Neum, but its current design and purpose often result in inefficient land use, creating congestion

and limiting the potential for more meaningful developments. To address this, rethinking the existing parking solutions could be key. Transforming these areas into spaces of public significance, such as community parks, gathering areas, or multi-functional venues, could greatly enhance urban experience. This shift would not only improve the overall aesthetic and functionality of the area but also contribute to a more vibrant and accessible environment for both residents and tourists, fostering a sense of community and encouraging longer stays.

4.1. Contemporary Urban Considerations of Mediterranean Cities

- Climate and Environmental Adaptation

Planning for Mediterranean cities demands careful attention to climatic and environmental factors. Hot, dry summers and mild winters demand the use of natural ventilation, shading, and energy-efficient materials to create comfortable urban environments. Water-sensitive urban design plays an important role, addressing water scarcity while enhancing public spaces. Features such as reflecting pools and underground rainwater harvesting systems can be both aesthetically pleasing and functionally beneficial.

- Cultural and Historical Integration

Preserving historical architecture and weaving it into modern urban development maintains the unique identity of mediterranean cities. Spaces reflecting social habits—such as outdoor plazas, markets, and promenades—support the cultural fabric of these communities.

- Human-Scale Design

Walkability is central to Mediterranean urban design. Compact neighborhoods with narrow, shaded streets foster pedestrian-friendly environments. Mixed-use areas, combining residential, commercial, and public spaces, create vibrant and interconnected communities that prioritize human interaction.

- Urban Green and Blue Spaces

Mediterranean cities benefit from incorporating native vegetation, such as olive, cypress, and fig trees, into public spaces, providing natural shade and cooling. Proximity to the sea is a critical asset, allowing for waterfronts, piers, and open-air cultural spaces that enhance the urban experience.

- Economic Sustainability

Balancing tourism infrastructure with year-round economic opportunities is essential to avoid seasonal economic slumps. Supporting local businesses and crafts through well-designed markets and workshops bolsters economic resilience.

4.2. Particularities for future Neum's development

It is important to take into consideration that Neum's development has been hindered by the lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework. This has resulted in disorganized growth, often driven by immediate tourism needs rather than long-term urban functionality. To address the disorganized development in Neum, a comprehensive master plan should be established. This framework would define zones for residential, commercial, public, and recreational use while setting guidelines for building heights, architectural styles, and sustainability standards.

Urban Structure is very fragmented and some of the basic functions of urbanity still missing as defined city center, cohesive squares, and well-planned public meeting spaces, leaving the city without a clear identity. This fragmented urban structure reduces its appeal as a tourist destination and limits its functionality for residents. Establishing a central square as the heart of the city would provide a focal point for cultural, social, and economic activities. Secondary squares and courtyards in residential and commercial zones would create intimate spaces for community interaction. Connecting these areas through walkable streets and pathways would enhance the city's overall cohesion. The transformation of Neum's waterfront into a vibrant public space is key to its development. Promenades, seating areas, and small parks can encourage social interaction and leisure activities. Maintaining public access to the waterfront will ensure it remains an asset for both residents and visitors, avoiding over-commercialization and preserving its natural charm.

Public transportation, pedestrian pathways, and parking facilities in Neum are underdeveloped. These gaps lead to congestion, inefficient land use, and reduced accessibility for both residents and visitors.

Neum's economy heavily depends on summer tourism, leading to reduced vibrancy during the off-season. Addressing this seasonal reliance is crucial to creating a year-round functional city. Multifunctional spaces that host events, markets, and festivals during the off-season can help reduce Neum's dependence on summer tourism. Developing attractions such as wellness centers, cultural hubs, and conference venues would support a steady influx of visitors throughout the year.

Considering all prior analyses and design principles, this research proposes step-by-step strategies for Neum's development, focusing on integrating its geographical, cultural, and economic context with sustainable practices and community-centered designs.

By addressing its challenges with carefully planned strategies and leveraging its natural and cultural assets, Neum has the potential to transform into a vibrant, year-round destination. Through revitalization projects like the Feroelektro building, the reimagined seaside parking area, and pedestrian-focused developments, Neum can achieve a balance between modern infrastructure, environmental preservation, and cultural integrity, paving the way for a sustainable and dynamic future.

4.3. Design Proposals for Study Case Sites

From previously mentioned sites for interventions for this research two key sites are selected for potential development: the Feroelektro building and the current seaside parking area.

The Feroelektro building has been neglected for decades, leaving it in a deteriorated state. However, this underutilized site presents a significant opportunity for revitalization. A full-scale redevelopment could breathe new life into the building by transforming it into a mixed-use complex. This redevelopment would integrate both hotel accommodations and commercial spaces, creating a dynamic destination that could enhance Neum's tourism and local economy.

The existing parking area by the seaside currently occupies valuable land that could be better utilized for more impactful purposes. Our proposal is to relocate the parking facility uphill, just above the Feroelektro site, thereby freeing up this prime waterfront location for meaningful development. To ensure convenient access between the new parking area and the hotel, we plan to introduce a cable

car or inclined elevator, providing a smooth and enjoyable connection between the two locations.

Once repurposed, the current parking space will be transformed into the city's main public square, evolving into a vibrant focal point for both locals and visitors. This vibrant public space would serve as a hub for social interaction, events, and community activities. Reimagined space will be pedestrian-friendly, designed to embrace nature while fostering social interaction and community engagement.

The area between Feroelektro and the repurposed parking site will become car-free, offering a stunning seaside walkway that invites people to experience the natural beauty of the coastline. By creating a lively, nature-centric environment, we aim to establish a vibrant and accessible area that connects residents and tourists with both the city's heart and the surrounding seafront. The integration of natural elements, such as trees and landscaped areas, will further enhance urban experience, making it both environmentally and socially vibrant.

5. Conceptual project study

Learning from Socialist Yugoslavia architecture, which was strongly routed in the principles of modernity incorporated in context. The design features stepped terraces that harmonized with natural slopes, exemplifying landscape-integrated design. As well as functional modular approaches ensure adaptability and efficiency [21]. While minimalism was characterized by limited decorative elements, a reduced palette of materials, and a strong focus on utility. Architectural styles in such locations were influenced by Adriatic, Mediterranean, and mid-century modern aesthetics, incorporating elements such as white finishes, arches, wooden louvers, shutters, and locally sourced stones [13].

Fig. 11. Modular hotel concept

Incorporating these principles and making bioclimatic architecture into modern hotel design in Neum could ensure that the project blends seamlessly with the natural environment [13]. while maintaining aesthetic appeal. Shared Spaces and Social Awareness was integral to Socialist Yugoslavia architecture, fostering communal living and shared experiences while maintaining privacy. Commercial spaces are located near the beach and by the reception. Proposed elements for the new hotel project include inclined elevators to improve accessibility and serve as landmark for Neum offering direct sea views and electric eco-friendly transportation across Neum's hilly terrains.

These elevators would reduce congestion, support economic growth, and cater to both tourists and residents with the possibility to expand to several stations connecting the entire town. Pedestrian paths and steps with gentle inclination, combined with lush greenery located outside of the hotel will keep privacy for hotel guests, strategically positioned, only two sections of the pathway shared between hotel guests and the public, the upper and lower sections.

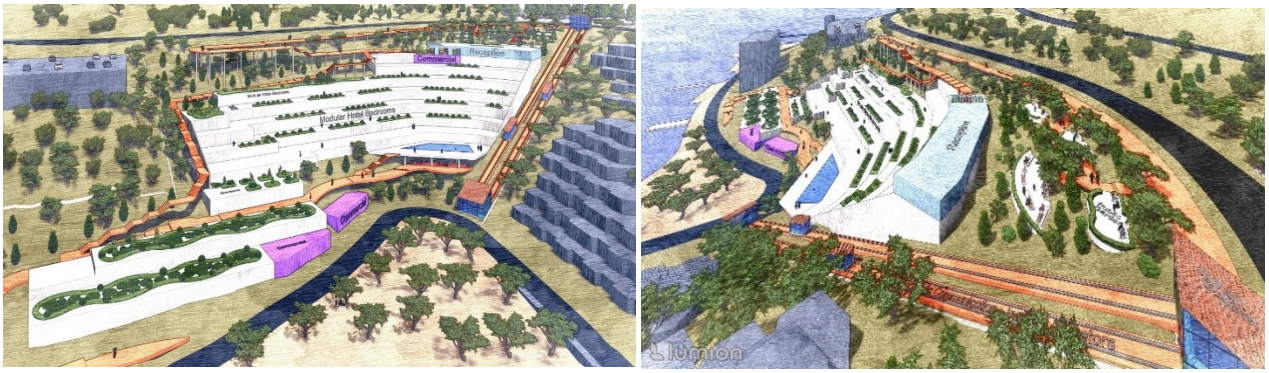

Fig. 12 and 13. The stepped walkway gradually inclined and stepped public gardens on the right

Gardens are located and embedded up the hill next to the inclined elevators station and the walkway. This location was chosen because it will not disturb the views to the sea as if there were a building instead. The gardens will also enhance the views from the sea to the city.

Moreover, private gardens for hotel guests' usage allocated on the stepped hotel structure. This will add more natural appeal to the hotel as well as producing fresh air and help with passive cooling during hot seasons. Furthermore, employing functional and aesthetically appealing drainage systems incorporating rainwater harvesting to manage water sustainably alongside the walkway and the hotel. This will lead to the concept of community integration and mutual benefit. These shared spaces would strengthen the connection between hotels and the community while enhancing tourist experiences.

Green Parking Solutions is introduced by relocating the existing parking area from the beach and coast area uphill with an approximate capacity of 110 to 120 parking spaces. The design has eco-friendly features. Proposed strategies replacing asphalt with gravel to lower surface temperatures during hot days. Also, planting trees in parking zones to provide shade and improve air quality and could be combined with sun collectors' shading elements. Moreover, shared parking systems, merging hotel and public parking to optimize land use. Finally, this will allow gradually transition of lower streets next to the coast to car-free zones, encouraging alternative transportation methods.

Fig.14 and 15. Left, a map shows the reallocation of parking area from the beach to uphill. Right, perspective

Similar concept of sustainable beachfront initiative provides two types of free shades for visitors. First, natural shade solutions, such as planting trees with specific features that maximize the shaded area. Also, adding potted plants in areas where it is not possible to plant on natural soil.

Urban integration and City Square development has been a focus in this project. A multi-purpose open area, for the needs of locals for the market, for floating tourists as a dock for boats, during the day for sunbathing, at night for sitting/events, in the winter for skating, always for the need of the town square. At the existing location, there is a parking lot that is being moved to stop the mass influx of tourists and for a more regular circulation that is more pleasant, quieter and less burdensome for all citizens and tourists. Providing easy access pedestrian paths and inclined elevators connecting the upper street with the proposed area for the new city square, encouraging foot traffic and reducing car dependency. Therefore, the concept design proposes redeveloping the existing parking lot into a vibrant city square with public seating, greenery, commercial and recreational spaces. Furthermore, hosting cultural events and markets in the square to attract both tourists and locals, fostering economic and social growth.

6. Conclusion

The criteria and principles outlined in this research could potentially contribute to the urban development of Neum, as well as neighboring coastal tourist destinations, allowing for the harmonious integration of local heritage and environmental protection with tourism infrastructure development. By developing a set of urbanistic principles, these guidelines establish the framework for master plans aimed at revitalizing the urban landscape in accordance with architectural and urbanistic values that transcend the time. This approach utilizes well-established and known elements that have shown to be effective over time, enabling long-term development while preserving the unique character of these coastal places. The architecture of existing hotel complexes could be utilized as a base of urban development in Neum with assessment of the architectural and urban concepts, and with their reinterpretation to align with the needs and context of contemporary and future developments. Neum's proposed new hotel project demonstrates its ability to harmonize with its natural and cultural heritage. Drawing inspiration from Socialist Yugoslavia architecture, this paper outlines a vision for sustainable, functional, and inclusive designs that integrate seamlessly with its environment. By incorporating green initiatives, shared spaces, and innovative urban planning, Neum can position itself as a model for sustainable tourism development on the Adriatic coast.

The results of the research suggest that Neum could be developed in the direction of a unified touristic spot that successfully balances cultural and historic heritage conservation and responds to contemporary tourist requests. While offering functional spaces that connect private and common areas, integrating local materials and relying on the natural surroundings, the future hotel complex can not only develop the tourism sector, but also improve its socio-spatial balance. On the base principles of socialist modernist architecture, it is possible to develop strategic plans for the further development of hotels in Neum, in which regional authenticity, integration with nature, and functionality will be the focal points. Such an approach would enable tourists to enjoy an authentic experience, while the local community would have a long-term benefit from sustainable and planned development.

Finally, this research shows that architectural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia can serve as a strong foundation for the shaping of future touristic and urbanistic strategies in Neum, especially in the context of conserving the cultural and natural identity of this unique coastal town.

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