

BRUTALISM IN SERBIAN ARCHITECTURE: STYLE OR NECESSITY?

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Abstract. *Historiography expresses a firm point of view that the movement of Brutalism did not have a more significant influence on Serbian architecture. Several researches in their essays point out that there are, however, certain works by Serbian architects that could be denoted as Brutalist in style. Nevertheless, after scientific analysis of the representative examples materialized in raw concrete and brick and their comparison with authentic interpretations of Brutalist principles, it is evident that Serbia does have a significant number of architectural works representing Brutalism. The aim of the research was to consider to what extent Brutalist architecture in Serbia was the consequence of architects being inspired by modern world Brutalism architecture, or whether its emergence stemmed from necessity, i.e. specific social circumstances in Serbia during the 60s and 70s of the XX century.*

Key words: *architecture, brutalism, material expressiveness, raw concrete, béton-brut*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the term Brutalism was first introduced connected to the Swedish architect Hans Asplund and his review of Villa Göth in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1950 (Banham, 1966:10), followed by the book by Reyner Banham "New Brutalism: Ethics or Aesthetics?" in 1966, along with numerous researches published subsequently (Dženks, 1986; Donnelly, 2007; Flowers, 2011; Crosby, 2011; Kitnick, 2011; Dempsey, Youtz, Haigh, 2014; Shyti, Çela, 2014; i dr.), it sparked off constant debates on the interpretation of the term, the characteristics, values and importance of Brutalist architecture. The emergence of Brutalism in world architecture is linked to certain works of Le Corbusier in France and India, to the works of Peter Smithson, Alison Smithson, Richard Seifert, Basil Spence and John Bancroft in Great Britain, Paul Rudolph and Ralph Rapson in the USA, Vilanova Artigas, Lina Bo Bardi and Paulo Mendes da Rocha in Brazil, as well as other authors who in the period from

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1950 to 1975 stressed the importance of honest use of material (brick, raw concrete, stone, etc.) in such a way that they were used on façade surfaces in their original shape, without further processing, with an aim of achieving new “raw” aesthetics as the authentic reaction to social conditions after the Second World War and mass-production in architecture (Sofić, 2014a:17; Dženks, 1986:298; Shyti, Čela, 2014:297-1). In its thirty years of existence, Brutalism movement underwent three phases (Sofić, 2014b:44):

- 1) early phase (1950-1959), characterised by echoing the structures of the international style, the use of cubic and orthogonal forms executed in raw concrete, steel and brick, mainly without finishing treatment of the surfaces and sometimes with partly coloured segments of the facades. The most important examples from this period are the apartment house (Unité d'Habitation) in Marseille (Le Corbusier, 1952); the Secretariat Building in Chandigarh, India, (Le Corbusier, 1953); the building of Hunstanton Secondary Modern School in Norfolk (Peter & Alison Smithson, 1954); apartment block *Maisons Jaoul* in the suburb of Paris *Neuilly-sur-Seine* (Le Corbusier, 1956), Illinois Institute of Technology (Mies van Der Rohe, 1956), etc. (Banham, 1966:16,19,85; Flowers, 2011:356-357; Michael, 2014:19). According to Reiner Banham, the first structures that could be described as entirely executed in Brutalist style are two apartment buildings by Le Corbusier in the town of *Neuilly*, France, built in 1956 (Banham, 1966:85);
- 2) mature phase (1960-1969), which saw the construction of monumental structures with rough, asymmetrical, often scattered and sculptural forms, executed in raw concrete, steel and brick and without final processing of the surfaces. Characteristic examples of this period include: monastery of *Sainte Marie de La Tourette* in Lyon (Le Corbusier & Iannis Xenakis, 1960); TWA Flight Center in New York (Eero Saarinen & Associates, 1962), the building of the College of Arts and Architecture Yale in New Haven (Paul Rudolph, 1963); the building of the Salk Institute for Biological Research in La Yolla, California (Louis Kahn, 1965); apartment block Habitat 67 in Montreal (Moshe Safdie, 1967); government office building in Orange County in Goshen (Paul Rudolph, 1967); Andrew Melville Hall at St Andrews University Complex (James Stirling, 1968); government office building in Boston (Gerhardt Kallmann & Michael McKinnell, 1969); office building 4 New York Plaza in New York (Carson, Lundin & Shaw, 1969), etc. (Flowers, 2011:356-357; Dempsey, Youtz, Haigh, 2014:160);
- 3) late phase (1970-1975), characterised by the use of concrete, brick, stone and their combinations, aiming to achieve attractive façade plasticity. On the other hand, more emphasis is given to experimenting with different options and plasticity of cast concrete, which is why certain examples exhibit futuristic-expressionistic character. Important examples of this period are: Government Service Center in Boston (Paul Rudolph, 1971); Robin Hood Gardens in London (Peter & Alison Smithson, 1972); Buffalo City Court (Pfohl, Roberts and Biggie, 1974); Royal National Theatre in London (Denys Lasdun, 1976); The Holy Trinity Church in Vienna (Fritz Wotruba, 1976), etc. (Karp Mackenzie, 2015:1).

2. INTERPRETATION OF THE TERM *BRUTALISM* AND ITS CREATIVE PRINCIPLES

The core of the term *New Brutalism* relies on the aesthetics of Le Corbusier residential housing unit in Marseille from 1952 and his use of the term “*béton-brut*” in the context of the architecture executed in raw concrete (Donnelly, 2007:10). The key characteristic which made this building the basis for further creative ideas by Brutalist architects is not its grandiosity, nor its concept of spatial-functional organization, but Corbusier’s opinion that reinforced concrete was not any more “precise material of the mechanical age” and that it can be used in a completely new, original way, in its raw state, rough and rugged which is why a newly constructed building appeared to be “a grandiose ruin” before it had been finished (Banham, 1966:16). The first principles of Brutalist architecture were announced by Peter and Alison Smithson in 1953 in the article “The House in Soho” where they stressed that their intention was to have a building with a completely exposed construction without final treatment inside the construction wherever possible (Smithson A., Smithson P., 1953:342). Shortly after this, in 1957, the Smithsons stated that Brutalism represents an attempt to be objective about “the reality”, as the key lies in ethics, not the style as it was interpreted until that time. They also stressed that the essence is to face the society of mass production in an attempt to create “raw poetry” through different materials such as raw concrete, wood, stone, even marble, plaster and stainless steel, provided that adequate visual effect is achieved (Smithson A., Smithson P., 1957:113; Smithson A., Smithson P., Drew J., Fry M., 1959:81). In his comments related to the early projects of the Smithson couple (The House in Soho, The School in Hanstenton, extension on the building of Sheffield University, etc.), Reyner Banham states that one architectural work can be considered Brutalist if it possesses the following characteristics (Banham, 1955:361; Banham, 1966:45-46):

- 1) **Clear exhibition of structure** – this relates to inclination to stress primary construction, often even vertical communications. Outer layers are omitted, as they hide the original appearance, the aesthetics of the construction and basic construction materials;
- 2) **Valuation of materials “as found”** – the inclination to use the materials in their raw or original form, so that there is no need for later processing, i.e. the concrete shows traces of wooden frames, joints, anchors, etc.
- 3) **Memorability as an image** – perception of an architectural work should aim for its comprehensive and clear experience, i.e. that the form perceived from one point can later be confirmed when going around the building or when using the structure;
- 4) **Formal legibility of plan¹** – architectural composition should be recognisable in the structural layout. The form should reflect the functional organization of the structure and materials it was built of.

¹ Although Reyner Benham in his essay in 1955 “New Brutalism” at first stressed “the readability of the form in the base” as one of the recognizable criteria of Brutalism (Banham, 1955:358), in 1966 in his book “New Brutalism: ethics or aesthetics” he changed his opinion, explaining that the stated criterion is to be omitted if future evolutionary shapes are to be included, as well as to offer a clearer interpretation of the term (Banham, 1966:45-46). In this sense the criterion of form legibility will still be included as one of the indicators of the presence of Brutalism. The reason for its reintroduction lies in the fact that the emphasis of the research is primarily on identifying the presence of Brutalism, and only then on detecting new forms of Brutalism in Serbian architecture.

Although Brutalist buildings are most often identified as the ones using raw concrete as the most dominant material in surface articulation, there are frequent examples of other material usage, such as brick, wood or stone. According to Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schregenberger what is of utmost importance is that the materials are taken *in situ* and that they should serve as inspiration for creative work. After the Second World War when the countries were economically and materially exhausted, the use of materials “as found” was a new way of perceiving and applying ordinary construction materials (Lichtenstein, Schregenberger, 2001:11, 40). On the other hand, Brutalist character in historiography can also relate to the level of façade separation, while certain extreme examples of Brutalism in some situation are even linked to expressionistic tendencies (Alfirević, 2015a:50).

3. THE INFLUENCE OF BRUTALIST AESTHETICS ON ARCHITECTURE IN SERBIA

Professional reference books do not have many entries related to emergence of Brutalism in Serbian architecture, even though there is a significant number of buildings that could be considered as Brutalist. According to Mihajlo Mitrović, Brutalism does not exist as a stylistic determinant in Serbian architecture or historiography, because, as he stresses, there are very few authors who used Brutalist principles and whose work is notable. This list includes: Stojan Maksimović, Branislav Jovin, Svetislav Ličina, Ljiljana and Dragoljub Bakić, Uglješa Bogunović and Slobodan Janjić. In his interview with Ivan Marković, Mitrović stresses that Brutalism is up to a certain degree present in Belgrade, while to his knowledge there are no other examples in Serbia, other than in Belgrade (Marković, 2011:197). On the other hand, it is important to mention research conducted by Aleksandra Ilijevski, Mare Jankova Grujić, Zoran Manević and others, in which in the context of discussing stylistic and other characteristics of buildings in Serbia, the authors made the link between some architectural structures and the principles Brutalism. Also, it is important to mention the interviews that Ivan Marković and Đorđe Alfirević conducted with architects Mihajlo Mitrović, Branislav Jovin and Ljupko Ćurčić, all of whose creative works reflect the principles of Brutalism. In the essay “*The Language of Architectural Brutalism in Serbia as the Issue of Cultural Exchange*”, Duško Kuzović emphasizes four architects as the prominent engineers whose works include Brutalist creations: Svetlana Radović - Kana, Mihajlo Mitrović, Ivan Antić and Branislav Jovin (Kuzović, Kuzović, 2013:3-41).

As the first structure linked to the Brutalism aesthetic, Mare Janakova Grujić and Aleksandra Ilijevski list the Military and Geographic Institute (1950-1954) in Belgrade, built by architect Milorad Macura (Janakova Grujić, 2009:150; Ilijevski, 2015:174). The authors are of the opinion that this building represents “a significant early example of Brutalism in Serbian architecture” and that “it was built of reinforced concrete in a skeletal structure which is exposed façade material”, and this was not given in technical plans, as the finishing processing of the building was executed in artificial stone, and the plasticity emphasised on the façade is not a primary construction, but relates to pilasters providing a modernistic element, which is why it cannot be said that the building of Military and Geographic Institute is the consequence of application of the basic principles of Brutalism as the authors claim.

The first obvious trace of Brutalist aesthetics is shown on the building of New Belgrade Municipality (Stojan Maksimović, Branislav Jovin, 1962-1964) (Fig. 1). In Serbian historiography, the prevailing opinion up to now was that when designing the Municipality Building, Jovin and Maksimović were inspired by the Brazilian and Japanese architecture, which was particularly popular with architects in Serbia during the 60s (Simonović, 2014:121; Blagojević, 2004:116; Manević, 1972:33). However, as Jovin states, the usage of raw concrete in façade articulations of the Municipality Building, was a clear consequence of their inclination towards functionality, and it can hardly be said that they used Brutalist principles, since he had first heard of this term around the year 2000 (Alfirević, 2016:67). This is why it can be said that the Municipality Building has a Brutalist appearance, but not that it was the direct consequence of conscious implementation of Brutalist principles.



Fig. 1 New Belgrade Municipality Building, Belgrade (Stojan Maksimović, Branislav Jovin, 1962-1964) - (Source: author's private collection)



Fig. 2 Housing building in Braće Jugovića St, Belgrade (Mihajlo Mitrović, 1964-1967) (Source: M. Mitrović)

In the mid-sixties of the XX century, when the Telecommunications Tower at Avala was constructed (Uglješa Bogunović, Slobodan Janjić, 1959-1965), one of the architectural symbols was created, a symbol that reflected technical progress of the country. After it had been destroyed in 1999 NATO bombing, it was rebuilt in almost its identical shape and on the same location. The original tower was almost 195m high (136.65m of concrete part and 58.2m of iron part) and at the time when it was built it was the highest construction in Serbia made of reinforced concrete (Zloković, 1966:20). The use of raw concrete in the finishing treatment of the tower is the consequence of the pragmatic construction thinking and cannot be linked to the conscious use of the principles of Brutalism, although the construction does appear to be a Brutalist piece of work.

The first obvious use of the principles of Brutalism is evident in the apartment building at 14 Braće Jugovića St in Belgrade (Mihajlo Mitrović, 1964-1967) (Fig. 2). Mitrović “on purpose sacrificed the third dimension in shaping the space, so that the facade concept could be reduced to *ab imago* solution“, which achieved artistic composition of typified windows and doors on the red brick background and with accentuated fields made of raw concrete (Mitrović, 1975:131). This example does not

show a complete application of Brutalist principle of clear structure expression, as the pillars are hidden in the interior of the building, while the façade stressed only inter-floor ceilings, but it is of importance that other principles were applied, first of all honest use of the material, which, according to Aleksandar Đokić will be characteristic for other buildings executed by Mitrović (Đokić, 1970:19). A much bolder solution is Mitrović's work at 10 Braće Jugovića St, where the author combined expressionistic structure of the building with Brutalist materialization.

The most significant architectural work by Branislav Jovin and one of the remarkable examples of Brutalism in Serbia is the building of Urban Planning Institute in Palmotićeveva St in Belgrade (Branislav Jovin, 1967-1970) (Fig. 3). As in other cases, Jovin does not consider the Institute building a Brutalist piece of architecture, but he does stress that his main guidelines in defining the appearance of the building were: a) exposing the main pillars outside the main tract as the consequence of functional inclination to unite inner space and b) the use of materials in their original form, which points to the fact that Jovin had consciously used the principles, even though he was not aware that they were Brutalist (Alfirević, 2016:69).

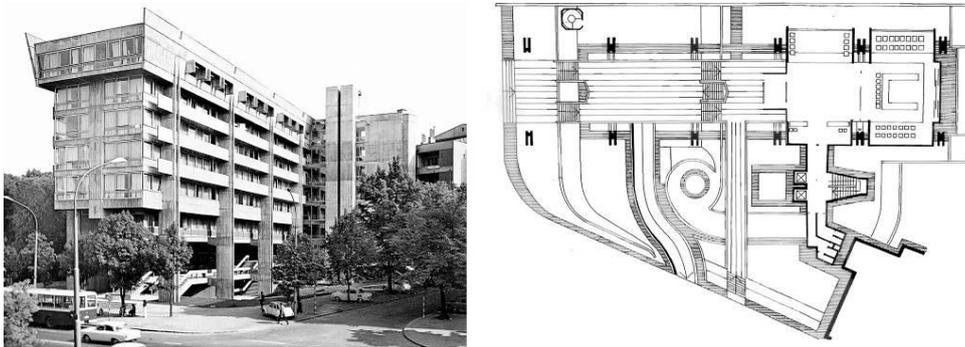


Fig. 3 The Building of Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, Belgrade (Branislav Jovin, 1967-1970) – outside appearance and the plan (Source: B. Jovin)

By the end of the 60s of the XX century the construction of New Belgrade apartment blocks 22 and 23 began (1968-1974), designed by architects Božidar Janković, Branislav Karadžić and Aleksandar Stepanović (Fig. 4). In their characteristics, both apartment blocks can be linked to the ideas of Brutalism due to their use of raw concrete in articulation of façade surfaces, but also because of clear exposure of the object structure, both on the facades and on the base, where one can clearly distinguish the directions of horizontal communications dividing the building into functional tracts (Aleksić, 1975:54, 57; Alfirević, Simonović Alfirević, 2014:7). The same idea motivated the construction of a whole line of apartment buildings, housing complexes and apartment blocks in Belgrade, Novi Sad and other Serbian towns, where raw concrete, and in some cases bricks, were used, for instance in the case of apartment complex in Ivanjica (Petar Vulović, 1972-1978), apartment complex “Rudo” in Belgrade (Vera Ćirković, 1973-1976), housing complex in Bulevar Revolucije St in Belgrade (Zoran Žunković, Mihajlo

Živadinović, 1966-1970), apartment buildings in block 29 in New Belgrade (Mihajlo Čanak, Milosav Mitić, 1967-1968), apartment buildings in Bulevar Vojvode Stepe St in Belgrade (Branko Aleksić, 1969-1972), apartment buildings in housing settlement Liman III in Novi Sad (Predrag Cagić, Milan Lojanica, Borivoje Jovanović, 1970-1971), apartment buildings in block 61 in New Belgrade (Darko Marušić, Milenija Marušić, Milan Miodragović, 1971-1973), etc. (Fig. 5). All of the above mentioned examples share a characteristic inclination towards honest use of material, without additional finishes. On the other hand, further inclinations towards the use of Brutalist principles cannot be noticed, which indicates that the use of raw concrete, sometimes in combination with bricks, was a trend of some kind, present in the late sixties and early seventies of the XX century in Serbia, emerging as a consequence of striving to create something new in conditions of intensive prefabrication and directed housing construction. (Mecanov, 2015:158).



Fig. 4 Block 23, New Belgrade
(Aleksandar Stepanović,
Božidar Janković, Branislav
Karadžić, 1968-1974)
(Source: author's private collection)



Fig. 5 Block 61, New Belgrade
(Darko Marušić, Milenija Marušić,
Milan Miodragović, 1971-1973)
(Source: author's private collection)

A particularly characteristic example of Brutalism is the building of Public Accounting Service in Kraljevo (Petar Vulović, 1969-1973) (Fig. 6). By choosing to treat the primary form of the building as a compact unit, Vulović scattered the secondary plasticity almost to the extreme, which is why some authors link this building to the modernist expressionism (Alfirević, 2015a:255). Although at first it appears that Vulović's building of Public Accounting Service in Kraljevo is reduced to a simple cubic assembly with rhythmically exposed slanting pillars in between which there is a spread structural grid of windows and parapets. The whole materialization of the building was executed in raw concrete with finishing pecking which stressed its ruggedness (Jevtić, 1973:30). Although there are no direct written sources indicating that Vulović consciously applied Brutalist principles, the presence of Brutalism is evident in exhibiting the primary structure, honest use of material, clear legibility of the object base and the memorability of the facades.

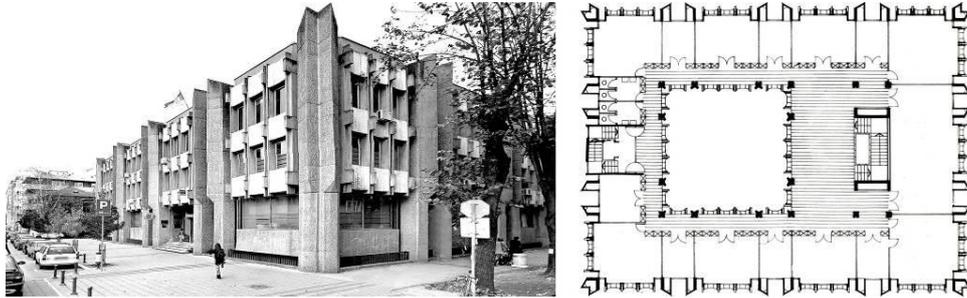


Fig. 6 The Building of Public Accounting Services,
(Petar Vulović, 1969-1973) – outside appearance and the layout
(Source: author’s private collection)

A significant example of Brutalist architecture in sports structures is the Sports-Recreational Center “25 May” in Belgrade (Ivan Antić, 1971-1973) (Fig. 7). Aiming to mirror the sharp forms of the Kalemegdan Fortress or a sailboat on water in its composition of the sports complex, Antić had raised, from horizontal, scattered structure of the first story, warping roofs, achieving the authentic expressive effect. The materialisation of the sports centre is reduced to the use of surface made of red brick and raw concrete, modularly segmented by joints, which further stressed its expressive appearance (Jevtić, 2004:13). Antić has insisted, that in his view, the most admirable thing in architecture is to stress wide spans, which, as he claims, he has always aspired to in order to amaze the spectators (Milašinović-Marić, 2005:11). On the other hand, he used raw concrete and brick on several occasions with an aim of achieving memorable visual effect through honest use of material. However, except for the things mentioned above, there are no further indications that the author consciously used the principles of Brutalism in his works.

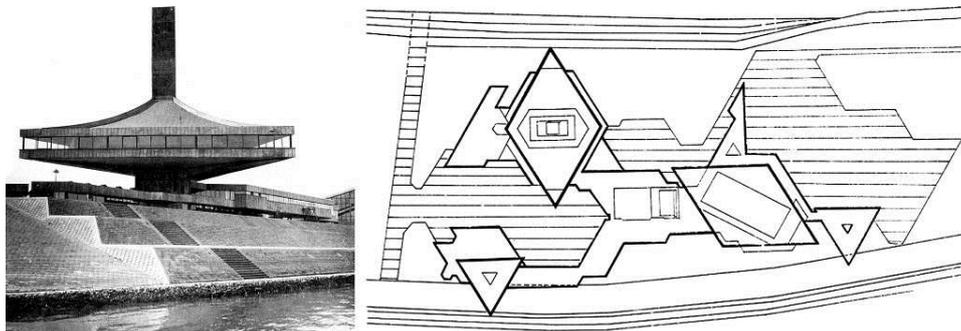


Fig. 7 Sports-Recreational Centre “25 May”, Belgrade
(Ivan Antić, 1971-1973) - outside appearance and the base
(Source: author’s private collection)

In constructing the apartment building on the corner of Južni Bulevar St and Maksima Gorkog St in Belgrade (Stojan Maksimović, 1971-1974), the author stressed the primary structure of the building emphasizing the concrete pillars and inter-storey boards on the facades, which formed the foundation through grid within which he combined the fields of brick and raw concrete, thus achieving the desired artistic effect (Fig. 8). The accents in the spatial composition are marked by staircases with elevators, pulled outside the façade plane, which contributed to the emphasis of the horizontal and vertical communications in the building structure (Anonim, 1975:128). As Maksimović was the co-author with Branislav Jovin on several occasions and taking into consideration that it is not known who influenced who and to what extent during their cooperation, it can be assumed that both architects had contacts with the architecture in Brasilia and Japan in the 60s and through the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and *JA (Japan Architect)*, which makes it possible that Maksimović, as well as Jovin, applied the principles of Brutalism without having any special interest in their theoretical interpretation.

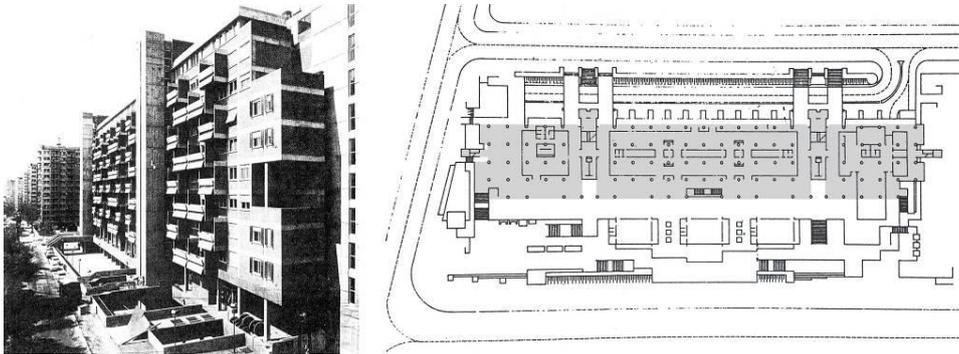


Fig. 8 Apartment house on the corner of Južni Bulevar St and Maksima Gorkog St in Belgrade (Stojan Maksimović, 1971-1974) - outside appearance and the base (Source: author's private collection)

By developing the idea on application of raw concrete in complete articulation of the building, Mihajlo Mitrović built the motel *Mlinarev san* near Arilje (1974-1975) (Fig. 9). Guided by the viewpoint that it is necessary to adapt the motel to the surrounding topography and to directly overhang the river, Mitrović stretched the primary structure of the building, stressing the plastic qualities of the concrete. The primary construction of the building is made of reinforced concrete gable walls which is why the author dynamized the sides of the motel so that the flooring of the building would not stand out from its immediate surroundings. While raw concrete was used in materialization of the facades as the basic material, the interior is domineered by wood and brick, used in their original form. The Motel *Mlinarev San* is a rare example of a Brutalist object in Serbia which due to its irregular geometry possesses even expressionistic character. This is why, except for honest use of material and clear emphasis of the object structure, the presence of the remaining principles of Brutalism cannot be confirmed, as the geometry is poorly legible from the base and the object can hardly be understood or experienced from just one point (Kadijević, 1999:108-122).

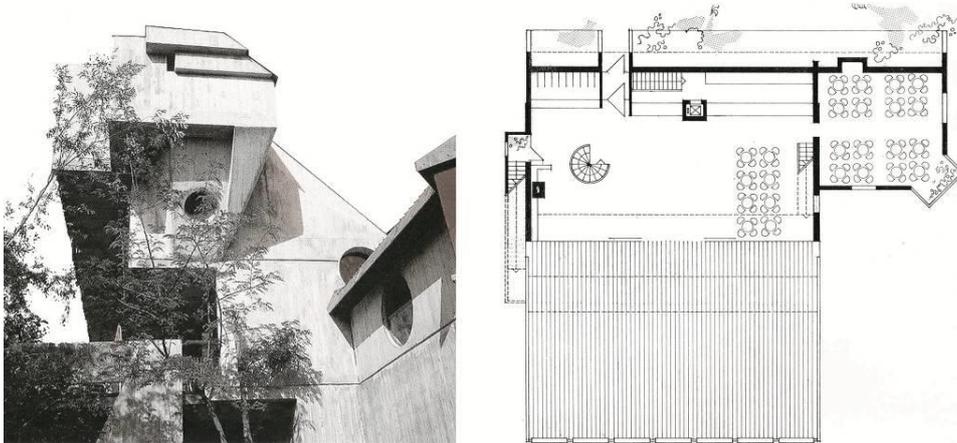


Fig. 9 Motel *Mlinarev san*, Arilje (Mihajlo Mitrović, 1974-1975) - outside appearance and the base (Source: author's private collection)

One of the most important Brutalist objects constructed outside Belgrade is the Building of Požarevac County Court (Ljupko Ćurčić, 1974-1976) (Fig. 10). In terms of composition, the building is based on the interaction of several cubic volumes, connected in such a way that their base lacks horizontal communication, which is why they give the impression that the primary form has been disintegrated. The disintegration of the form stems from the author's opinion that it is necessary to emphasize, even in visual terms, the difference between the functions in the object, which is why several building units were constructed – the Building of Požarevac County Court, County Public Prosecutor's Building and the Building of Organized Labour Court (Ćurčić, 1974:1). Along with prominent works of representatives of Metabolism in Japan - Kisho Kurokawa, Kiyonori Kikutake and Fumihiko Maki, Ćurčić emphasized on the facades the rhythm of concrete pilasters, particularly in places where the halls were laid out, creating the impression of stressed façade plasticity. The primary motive defining the architectural nature of the building is the modular prefabricated concrete frame with rounded edges which stresses the structure and the rhythm of the windows. In his interview with Đorđe Alfirević, the author states that he was aware of Brutalism in French architecture and Metabolism in the Japanese, but that he did not make a conscious effort to follow any role models, although Brutalist principles are evident in articulation of this object. What can be pinpointed as particularly defining is the emphasis on the primary structure of the building, which influenced recognizable form and logical concept of the base, while the use of raw concrete, according to the author, even though he himself stresses that he favours brick, was the consequence of necessity in circumstances which required fast construction with limited material resources (Alfirević, 2015b:72).



Fig. 10 Požarevac County Court (Ljupko Ćurčić, 1974-1976) - outside appearance and the base (Source: author's private collection)

The building of County Court in Sremska Mitrovica (1976-1979) (Fig. 11) is just one in a row of structures characteristic of Ćurčić work during the seventies of the XX century, which possessed similar Brutalist characteristics. Orthogonal approach to spatial organization of the architectural unit, the division of form with permeation of primary masses and playfulness of the façade plans with interwoven secondary elements, are all supported by the penetration of horizontal communications on the facades, accentuated by extended concrete walls. The stressed rhythm of the elements, the highlighted pilasters on the facades and honest processing of the surfaces in natural materials, became a recognizable pattern that Ćurčić applied in order to achieve dynamic and ornate composition. The use of raw concrete, according to the author, comes as a consequence of the striving to build a high quality structure which will be permanent and above all-cheap, which was the requirement of the investors, although the author himself said that he would have preferred to have built the Building of Federal Executive Council and the Court buildings in natural stone, which would greatly contribute to their representativeness (Alfirević, 2015b:71).

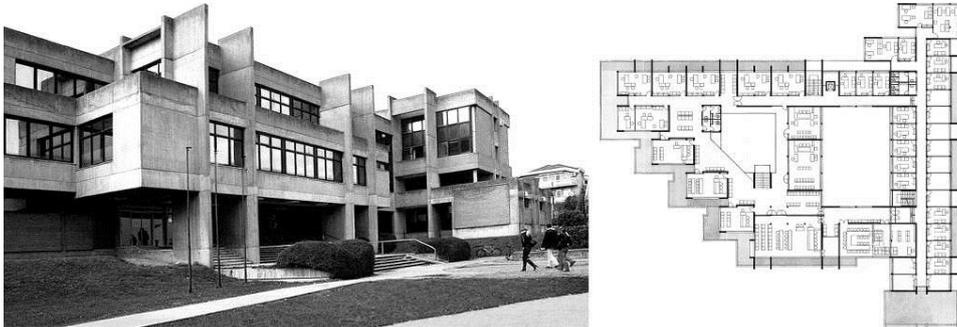


Fig. 11 County Court Building, Sremska Mitrovica (Ljupko Ćurčić, 1976-1979) – outside appearance and the base (Source: author's private collection)

The last important Brutalist work in the creative opus of Ljupko Ćurčić is the Building of Federal Executive Council “SIV III” in New Belgrade (1975-1980) (Fig. 12). By requirements of the programme, the surface area of the object and the proximity of the

buildings of the New Belgrade Municipality and the existing building of Federal Executive Council II “SIV II” influenced the viewpoint that the huge building mass should be broken down into several dynamically interconnected volumes, giving the structure “more natural dimensions, closer to human perception of space. The basic shape setting was executed through division of dimensional forms through powerful extruding elements while at the same time softening everything by introducing long horizontal planes of parapets and by extracting cubic pylon elements characteristic of the higher part of the object“ (Ćurčić, 1975:6). Although the building is in its base organised functionally and memorably, its conception in space can hardly be perceived only from one point, due to numerous dynamic trellises of horizontal parapets and vertical pilasters. A certain novelty in materialization of the structure is the introduction of yellow bricks for vertical communication spots, aimed to enrich with colours an almost grotesque monochromatic contours of the object. Striving to humanize the monumental dimensions of the building, the author perforated the ground floor in several places and introduced two large atriums in the centre of the building base, which provided him with adequate conditions for work.

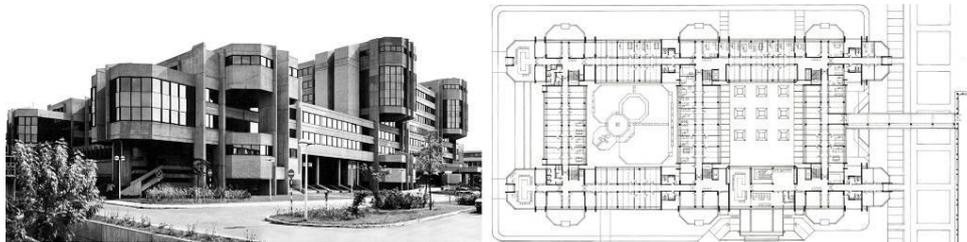


Fig. 12 The building of Federal Executive Council SIV III, New Belgrade (Ljupko Ćurčić, 1975-1980) - outside appearance and the base (Source: author’s private collection)

Apartment and office building “Genex Tower” or the so-called “West Gate” (1970-1980) is the most significant work of Mihajlo Mitrović in Belgrade, and at the same time the most distinguished example of Brutalist architecture in Serbia. According to Dragana Mecanov, Mitrović’s visit to Chandigarh in India left an enormous trace in his creative work, primarily reflected in the honest use of the materials such as raw concrete (Mecanov, 2015:30). The Tower comprises two segments, the apartment building part and the office part, with separate entrances and communications via a footbridge on the top of the tower and the rotating panoramic view restaurant, which makes the building appear futuristic. Final processing of the facade was executed in raw concrete, which according to Mecanov was the author’s initiative (Ibid, 2015:277). At some points, around circular and other windows, unusual details are present, such as the indentures above the windows or prism-shaped concrete fences, which make Mitrović’s architectural work recognizable. A clear space conception and memorability of the structure, the use of raw concrete and the emphasis on the vertical communications in the shape of concrete cylinders are obvious indicators of the presence and the use of Brutalist principles.

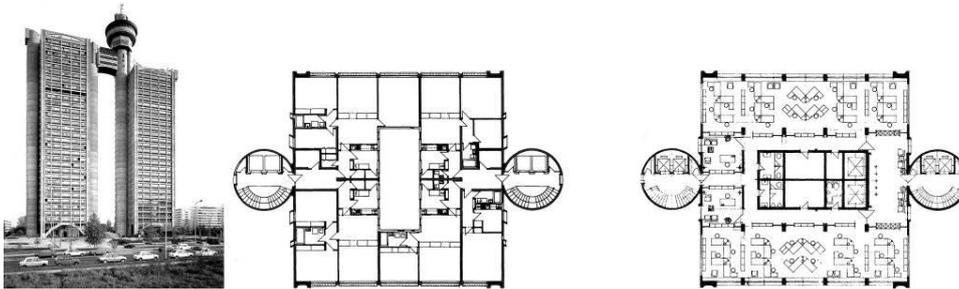


Fig. 13 Apartment and office tower “Genex”, New Belgrade (Mihajlo Mitrović, 1970-1980) - outside appearance and the base (Source: author’s private collection)

The peak of Brutalist aesthetics in Serbia was accomplished with hotel “Zlatibor” in Užice (Svetlana Radević, 1979-1981) (Fig. 14). The primary expressive form of the hotel based on the cross-like foundation from which stationary block rises in the form of defined “rocket” (Markuš, 2003:44-46), further supported by unconventional materialization of the surfaces with joints in concrete following the direction of narrowing the building’s contours. The aesthetic potential of cast concrete is particularly stressed in the dynamic trellises of parapets, consoles and extruding elements with slanting sides, while the façade surfaces on the hotel ground floor are roughly pecked, which purposely stressed the smooth tower above. The honest use of the “as found” material is characteristic of many other works of this author, among which the hotel “Podgorica” in Podgorica is particularly significant.



Fig. 14 Hotel „Zlatibor”, Užice (Svetlana Radević, 1979-1981) – appearance and façade segment (Source: author’s private collection)

4. CONCLUSION

Discussing numerous examples of architectural objects in Serbia whose form can be linked to the Brutalism movement in the world, there are two distinct groups that used raw concrete and brick as the consequence of difference in construction standpoints. The first group includes works which exhibit evident use of Brutalist principles, whether consciously or unconsciously, and which are the consequence of smaller or bigger imitations of the modern architecture of the sixties and the seventies of the XX century,

promoted in architectural magazines *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and *JA (Japan Architect)* in Serbia. The works of some architects, such as Mihajlo Mitrović, Petar Vulović, Ljupko Ćurčić or Svetlana Radević, consciously exploring aesthetic potentials of raw concrete and bricks, stand out not only in terms of their architectural approach, but also in terms of expressive possibilities of the used material. To what extent they could be called the main protagonists of the Brutalist movement in Serbia is still to be researched in a much more comprehensive study, which perhaps would confirm that they directly or indirectly did follow Brutalist architecture in France, Japan or Brazil. The other, much larger group includes the works that exhibited the use of raw concrete as a more direct consequence of the social circumstances requiring the fast construction of cheap and functional structures, which is why the structures only visually appear to be Brutalist structures, although they were not the result of the theoretical use of Brutalist principles. Numerous authors, such as Branislav Jovin, Stojan Maksimović, Ivan Antić, etc., whose works are included in this group, paid more attention to architectural organization of space, while the expressive possibilities of raw concrete were pushed in the background. Although, based on the studies carried out so far it appears that Brutalist movement did not have a more profound influence on the architectural culture in Serbia, there are numerous examples confirming its existence in Serbia and moreover, respectable achievements were made not only in terms of innovativeness of the use of material, but also in expressivity achieved through use of raw concrete and brick.

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BRUTALIZAM U SRPSKOJ ARHITEKTURI: STIL ILI NUŽNOST

U istoriografiji je opšte uvreženo mišljenje da pokret brutalizma nije imao značajnijeg uticaja na arhitekturu u Srbiji. Nekolicina istraživača u svojim esejima skrenula je pažnju da postoje pojedina dela srpskih arhitekata koja bi mogla da se označe kao brutalistička. Međutim, nakon naučne analize reprezentativnih primera koji su materijalizovani u natur-betonu i opeci, i njihovog poređenja sa autentičnim tumačenjima brutalističkih principa, postaje očigledno da u Srbiji ipak postoji značajan broj brutalističkih ostvarenja. Cilj istraživanja je da se razmotri u kojoj meri se brutalistička arhitektura u Srbiji javila kao posledica ugledanja arhitekata na savremenu arhitekturu brutalizma u svetu ili je njena pojava proistekla iz nužnosti, tj. specifičnih društvenih okolnosti u kojima se Srbija nalazila tokom šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina XX veka.

Ključne reči: *arhitektura, brutalizam, izražajnost materijala, natur-beton, béton-brut.*