

Is There a Future for Planned new Towns of the 20th Century?

The Case of LičkiOsik, Croatia

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1 ABSTRACT

Several new towns were established, planned and built for the needs of certain industries during the 20th century in Croatia. What they all have in common is the fact they were built according to the modernist principles of urban planning and architecture: Raša, Podlabin, Borovo and Ubli in the 1930s and towns of Ploče and LičkiOsik after the World War II. A common problem they face now is a result of major political and economic changes of the 1990s that resulted in changes of their economic functions. The transformations of their built environment sometimes don't take into account their unique qualities and the fact that they are good examples of the planning principles of the times when they were built.

This paper presents a brief chronology of the planning process and construction of LičkiOsik – a new town built from the 1950s onwards serving the military production facilities that were located nearby. The modernist and functionalist principles were used in planning, construction and design of the new town, its urban areas and buildings. The town had all the major public facilities and infrastructure and was characterized by good relations towards the surrounding environment and the urban landscaping.

Political and economic changes and subsequent war of the 1990s in Croatia brought drastic changes in the economic base of the town as well as demographic changes, so LičkiOsik is still in the process of finding a way of its future development. This does not come without threats to its urban and architectural heritage since its unique qualities are not well recognized and are still not under formal protection.

2 INTRODUCTION

Even though the majority of settlements in Croatia were formed by the beginning of the 18th century, the facts show the territory of Croatia to be a dynamic one when it comes to planned new towns during the 20th century. Planned towns were designed not only to serve the needs of industrial production but also to improve social, cultural and sanitation conditions for workers. In the 1930s, four industrial towns were realized on the Croatian territory, coming into existence as planned settlements, built in a short period of time according to the principles of modernist architecture and urban planning and with all features of independent urban settlements constructed in previously undeveloped areas. Bata-ville (Borovo) was constructed between 1931 and 1938 near the town of Vukovar, is linked to the rubber and shoe factory of Czech owners and was constructed as an ambitious example of an industrial town¹. In Istria (at the time under the Italian administration) coalmine towns of Raša (1936-1938) and Podlabin (1940-1942) were founded, while at the same time on the island of Lastovo a fishermen industrial settlement of Uble was built (formerly San Pietro)², constructed between 1933 and 1936 as one of the twelve planned towns of the Mussolini's province urbanization project (so called *Citta di fondazione*) – cities constructed next to industrial plants and coal mines in insufficiently developed areas under Italian administration. In addition to these towns, a new town of Mandre on the island of Pag was planned for construction in 1936/1937, which was supposed to serve the needs of production and export of Pag cheese. Due to outbreak of the World War 2, the town was only partially constructed.

Besides constructing new towns, during the 20th century in Croatia in the existing towns new housing estates were constructed, financed by towns or factories.

¹KARAČ(2008)

²KARAČ, JAKŠIĆ, PALINIĆ (2009)

3 NEW TOWN LIČKI OSIK – SPATIAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The planned construction of LičkiOsik should be viewed in a wider spatial and social context of Croatia and former Yugoslavia. After World War 2, several new towns were built in Croatia and former Yugoslavia: LičkiOsik and Ploče in Croatia, Novi Travnik and Vogošća in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Velenje and Kidričevo in Slovenia.

In the years immediately following the end of the World War 2, social and economic conditions in the entire country were severe. Damage caused by military operations was extensive. Statistics show that there were 290 completely destroyed settlements, 99,000 housing facilities, 83,000 business facilities and 44,000 public buildings. Roads, bridges and railway tracks sustained damages that made them unfit for use³ and region of Lika was one of the areas that sustained the most damage. Reconstruction had to be fast and planned. Many regulation plans for towns were developed (Delnice, Knin, Varaždin, SlavonskiBrod, Zadar etc.) and some of them were intended as role models for urban planning.⁴ In just three months, over 60 regulation plans for towns and villages were developed. In addition to reconstructing destroyed buildings, industrial and agricultural production needed to be restarted. The intention was to bring new optimism, described with words such as “new time, new houses, new towns, new villages”⁵.

Social and economic conditions were completely transformed and urban planning backed by centralized state planning had a purpose to help build a new social organization – socialism. Urban planners demanded that existing and new settlements be developed in a planned manner and harmoniously in order to ensure healthy and comfortable living for the people.

Some settlements were destroyed so badly that it may be as well said that they were built anew – for example, the reconstruction of Zadar (which was reconstructed in modern architectural language on an existing urban matrix dating back to ancient times) or the reconstruction of the village Divoselo⁶ in Lika which was supposed to change the settlement structure (of existing scattered settlements) in which the modernist approach to planning and space design was introduced in rural areas through new regulation plans.

Post-war development in former Yugoslavia was characterized by intense urbanization and industrialization. They were the backbone of transformation of the former pre-modern into modern industrial society, which was ideologically equalized with the development of socialism, later in the unique model of “self-governing” socialism. Although modernization processes began in Croatia even before World War 2, particularly in established industrial centers, after World War 2 they were significantly accelerated. Urbanization and industrialization in the post-war period was done mainly through accelerated development of existing towns. In almost all existing towns, new industrial and housing areas were developed which, although representing complex construction projects, nevertheless entirely depended on the existing urban functions in the old town centers.⁷

Only two entirely new towns were developed in the post-war Croatia⁸: (Novi) LičkiOsik in the central part of Lika region, developed next to a military industrial complex, and the port town of Ploče, developed at the end of the railway line which provided the fast-growing industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a connection with sea trade routes.

In the case of LičkiOsik, the incentive for the construction came from the development of military industry, combined with a strive to develop the underdeveloped and war-torn parts of the Lika region, and so a town was built for the needs of the newly founded military (metal) industry. At the same time, new towns were built in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well, next to military industry facilities in Vogošća near Sarajevo and

³MARASOVIĆ (1959):6.

⁴KRANJČEVIĆ (2009)

⁵ŠEGVIĆ (1945):10

⁶KRANJČEVIĆ (2009)

⁷In most cases we cannot speak of a systematic construction of *satellite towns* (as was the model applied in Scandinavian and French towns) nor about the model of systematic development of *new towns* (as was, for example, applied in Great Britain). According to: FRAMPTON (1980), HALL (1988).

⁸In 1970s, new types of settlements were being built in Croatia, the so-called apartment resorts based on the construction of so-called vacation homes, i.e. homes for secondary living. That is how Červar-Porat (1977), Mareda (1981), Barbariga (1984), Gajac (1987) and other settlements were constructed. Even though they represent complex construction structures, these settlements are nevertheless monofunctional, primarily oriented towards tourism, used exclusively seasonally and therefore this analysis did not consider them as new towns.

Novi Travnik⁹ near Travnik. According to available data, LičkiOsik and Novi Travnik were designed in the same planning office (UIH - Urban Institute of the Socialist Republic of Croatia). It seems that the same planning teams¹⁰ worked on their design, and the built environment and architectural designs show many similarities. All three towns were designed in late 1940s, built in the early 1950s and in their design and architectural shaping modernist and functional principles of post-war period were used.

In former Yugoslavia, new towns were built with an aim of bringing the concept of industrialization of the country to the predominantly rural areas (as in the example of Velenje and Kidričevo in Slovenia), with an aim of developing certain strategic spaces (as in the example of Nova Gorica in present-day Slovenia, at the border with Italy) and to accommodate certain strategic (mostly military) industries that were fast developing away from the eyes of the world, but also away from the eyes of the domestic public.

Modernism was introduced in former Yugoslavia before World War 2 and was accepted by the local public, even made remarkable accomplishments in some places. Post World War 2 architecture and urban planning relied on that interwar modernist base, especially after the official break from the Soviet Union in 1948 when modernism was finally accepted as the official aesthetics of socialist modernization. Post-war projects show a relatively high standard of planning, fast development of the construction technology and an emphasis on standardization (which enabled efficiency) as well as on public spaces and contents, as a result of the political context of “self-governing” socialism¹¹.

LičkiOsik is a good example of a pragmatic approach to planning and design. Adopted models of modernist planning are efficiently implemented, with no aspiration for experimental lunges but with high level of consistency and without significant deviations. In design, the tendency is towards rationalization and therefore common spatial standards for the design of apartment buildings were applied in the design of dwelling units, which was the subject to wide professional discussion of the time¹²



Fig. 1: Novi LičkiOsik – a view on the center of the new town

⁹Former name was Pucarevo

¹⁰Unfortunately, the original plans for LičkiOsik from 1948 were not available to authors of this paper so the issue of authors and exact members of the planning team remains a subject for further research. What is known is that the plans were designed at the Urban Institute of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (UIH), at the time the biggest urban planning office in Croatia. Written sources mention Branko Petrović (** (1953), ** (1955a), ** (1955b)) is mentioned as the main author of LičkiOsik. Branko Petrović mentioned LičkiOsik and Novi Travnik as projects on which he worked in his biographic data under “work at 15 urban plans of towns and settlements (parts of Zagreb, Port of Ploče, Brod, Travnik, Zabok, LičkiOsik, Novi, Rab and others)“.

¹¹ The phenomenon of Yugoslav architectural and urban planning practices in post-war period was recently researched by authors participating in the project „Unfinished Modernisations – Between Utopia and Pragmatism“. More in KULIĆ, MRDULJAŠ (2011).

¹²BARTOLIĆ (1950), BARTOLIĆ (1951), KOSAR (1950), TUČKORIĆ (1958)

4 SPATIAL DISPOSITION

The new town of LičkiOsik lies approximately 1.2 kilometers east from the old town of LičkiOsik¹³ and administratively belongs to the town of Gospić¹⁴. The old town of LičkiOsik¹⁵ developed along the road, present day state road D-25 (Korenica – Gospić – Karlobag). There is a railway line east of the town and a railway station of the same name is located at the 218th km from Zagreb in the Split direction.

Year	1857	1890	1900	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Number of inhabitants	429	732	674	532	726	2298	3035	3045	2885	1772	1892

Table 1 Number of inhabitants in LičkiOsik(Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Settlements and Population of the Republic of Croatia 1857-2001, Census 2011, first results, www.dzs.hr)

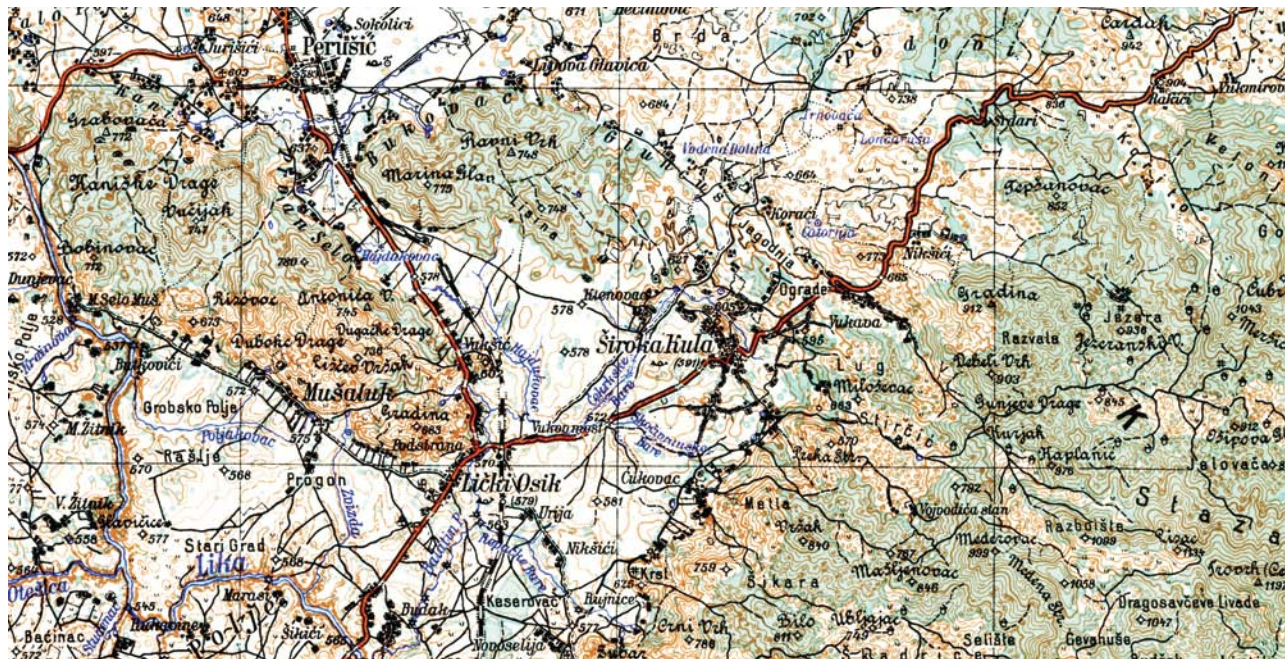


Fig. 2:Old topographic map of the wider area prior to construction of the new town(State map from 1930)

¹³New town LičkiOsik lies at an altitude of 579 m above sea level. It belongs to the cadastral municipality of LičkiOsik. It is located in the eastern part of the *Ličkopolje* valley, in the micro region of *Lička Zavala*. It is located 7 km northeast of the town of Gospić.

¹⁴Gospić is the seat of today's Lika-Senj County. The County is situated in the southwestern part of Croatia. It occupies a surface area of 5,350.00 km². Total population of the county is 53,677. Average population density is 10 people/ km². As much as 57% of the county territory is covered with forests, while 28% of the territory is protected. According to the settlement structure, Lika-Senj County is characterized by numerous scattered settlements. Of the total number of 170 settlements in the Lika-Senj County, 163 are villages.

¹⁵In the old village of LičkiOsik, a church of St. Joseph was built in 1842 and a primary school opened in 1857. In 1948, the old settlement had 532 inhabitants who were farmers and cattle-breeders.

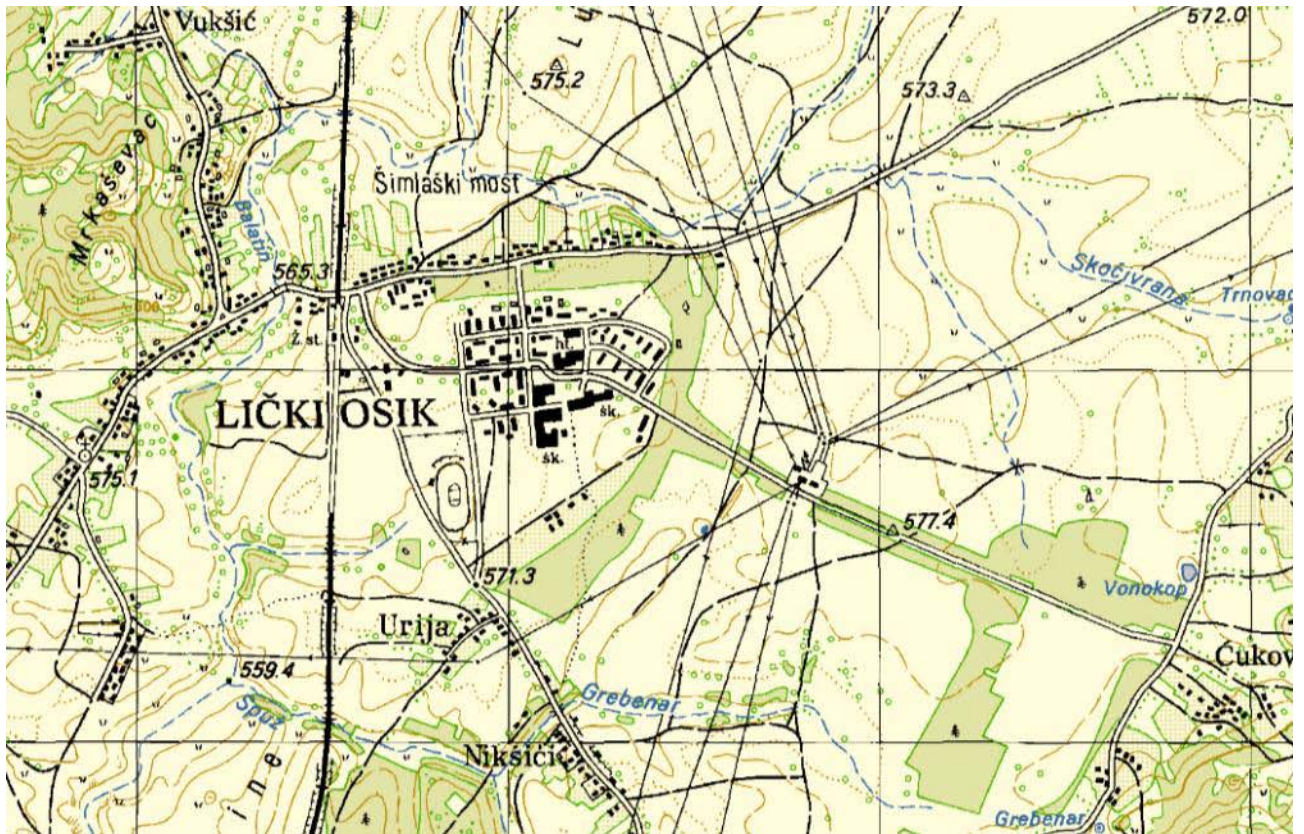


Fig. 3: Croatian topographic map from 1974. (Note that the industrial facilities are not displayed due to their military origin.)

4.1 Constructing a new town

Political and economic reasons as well as huge human and material losses during the war were one of the reasons for building a state-owned factory and a new town on this location. The new settlement, in the early times also called Novi Lički Osik (New Lički Osik), was built around 1.2 kilometers east of the old settlement of Lički Osik, on the other (east) side of the railway line and the Balatin creek.



Fig. 4: A view on the new town of Lički Osik (with the old Lički Osik in the foreground)

The impetus for building the new settlement of LičkiOsik was the decision to build there a large metalworking industry complex that would serve the needs of the former Yugoslav People's Army military system. By the decision of the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia dated April 4, 1950, a company in the process of construction called Ivan Gošnjak was founded in LičkiOsik, which operated under that name until April 16, 1954, when it changed its name to Work Organization Marko Orešković. The main business activity of the company was metalworking, and since it primarily produced products for the military industry, it was under the jurisdiction of the Secretariat of Defense. As the plan was to employ around 1.500 workers in the company, the decision was made to build a new town next to the factory. The Urban Institute of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (UIH), as the republic institute, was in charge of designing all spatial plans, from regulation to detailed ones, as well as all modifications to plans. The names associated with the design of first regulation plans are those of architects BrankoPetrović and Bora Pavlović¹⁶, but most likely other architects participated as well. Besides the regulation plan, the two architects are also the authors of the apartment buildings' plans¹⁷.

Given Lika's predominantly scattered population (due to natural and anthropogenic influences), construction of a new settlement was an example of changing spatial distribution of population as well as creating a new identity to what was primarily rural and poorly developed space at the time.

Geodetic survey for the design of a regulation plan began in 1949 when geodesists carried out surveys in the Urije field (between the old village of LičkiOsik and the settlements of Široka Kula, Čikovac and Ostravica).¹⁸ After the first regulation plan for the construction of LičkiOsik was designed at the UIH Institute, the next step was to carry out land subdivision, build infrastructure and finally build apartment buildings. The settlement was built by the construction company Tempo from Zagreb, while the investor was the Marko Orešković factory. It was planned to have between 4.000 and 5.000 people living in the town (maximum number of inhabitants was a little bit over 3.000), while the factory was supposed to employ 1.500 workers.

The new factory and settlement called for building a new technical infrastructure that was almost non-existent in Lika. A sufficient supply of electricity¹⁹ and water²⁰ had to be secured and a telephone network built as well as the sewer system for surface runoff and wastewater. A water supply network was built for the needs of the settlement with its capacity increased in mid 1950s, also a sewage system, roads and a telephone network, and between the town and the factory two large electric substations were built.

The new factory was supposed to be the main driver of industrial development of Lika as it was expected it would stimulate development of other activities related to it to a bigger or lesser extent. That, however, did not happen, which is to a certain extent understandable given the fact that the factory was tied to the military system and that resulted with certain isolation from the rest of the economic sector. Even though the factory was not profitable, it was the most significant metalworking company in Lika and *raison d'être* of the new town until the beginning of the 1990s which brought significant economic and social changes, and in the end the war. With the collapse of the socialist social and economic system, the factory ceased production.²¹

¹⁶ Personal archives and biography of the architect BrankoPetrović; Monography of the Urban Planning and Architectural Office, „AR-59“ in Zagreb; Petrović, B. (1955) Arhitektura and Pavlović, B. (1956) Calendar of Lika. Unfortunately, due to several movements from one location to another, plans from the archives of the Urban Institute of Croatia have been largely lost. Among the lost plans are also regulation plans for the construction of LičkiOsik. All plans from mid 1980s are kept in the town of Gospić.

¹⁷ There is a notable similarity between towns Novi Travnik and LičkiOsik in spatial scheme and architecture. It is interesting to note that the Urban Institute of Croatia, besides urban plans, also designed projects for residential and public buildings.

¹⁸ Cvetković, B. (1958) Plodoviizgradnje – LičkiOsik u riječiislici, number 24, pg 3.

¹⁹ Hydroelectric power plant Senj was built.

²⁰ The town gets its water supply from the river Lika. Water supply system was built in 1953. See: Kljaić, S (1956) no. 65 p.4 „Na pustompoljunovi grad“.

²¹ Part of the factory is nowadays used for the production of windows and doors.



Fig. 5: Spatial disposition of the new town and industrial zone in relation to the existing settlement of Lički Osik

5 URBAN PLANNING CONCEPT AND URBAN PLANS

The new factory was meant to be a driver of the entire development, including the change of the spatial identity of this part of the Lika region. For these reasons, new Lički Osik (although in administrative terms part of Gospić) was planned as a self-sufficient entity with all functionalities and contents required for 4.000 to 5.000 inhabitants.

The spatial concept of the town was envisaged in the modernist principles that imply zoning. The basic organizational layout and the road network were based on the overlapping of two geometric models. The first basic model – the bigger part of the settlement – had streets planned in the north-south and east-west direction. The second model – smaller part of the settlement – had streets planned at a 45 degree angle. This is also the direction of the road leading to the industrial zone. An exception is a smaller residential zone in the northeast part of the town and the main access road, which was arch-shaped, lined with trees, and leads straight to the main town square.

In order to prevent the existing settlement from being burdened with transit traffic and industrial production, the new town was erected south to the state road and east to the railway line as well as located at the 1.5 km distance from the factory. The main aims of planning were technical infrastructure, social justice and sanitation infrastructure.

The orientation of buildings was also aligned with the street scheme. In the central zone, buildings were consistently oriented in the north-south or east-west direction, while the 45° rotation in peripheral parts ensured a sort of playfulness of the town scheme.

Around the central square, which was planned twice as large as finally built, buildings for public and social purposes were planned. Sports and recreation zone was planned in the southern part of the town.

In all planning and construction stages as well as in the functioning of the town great attention was given to green areas within and around the town. The residential area is separated from the industrial zone by a wide

belt of artificial forest that provides natural border from the north and east, at the same time reducing the impact of the predominantly northeast wind. Inside the town 5.000 m² of green areas were planned, while on the outside 15 hectares of acacia and poplar trees²² were planted.

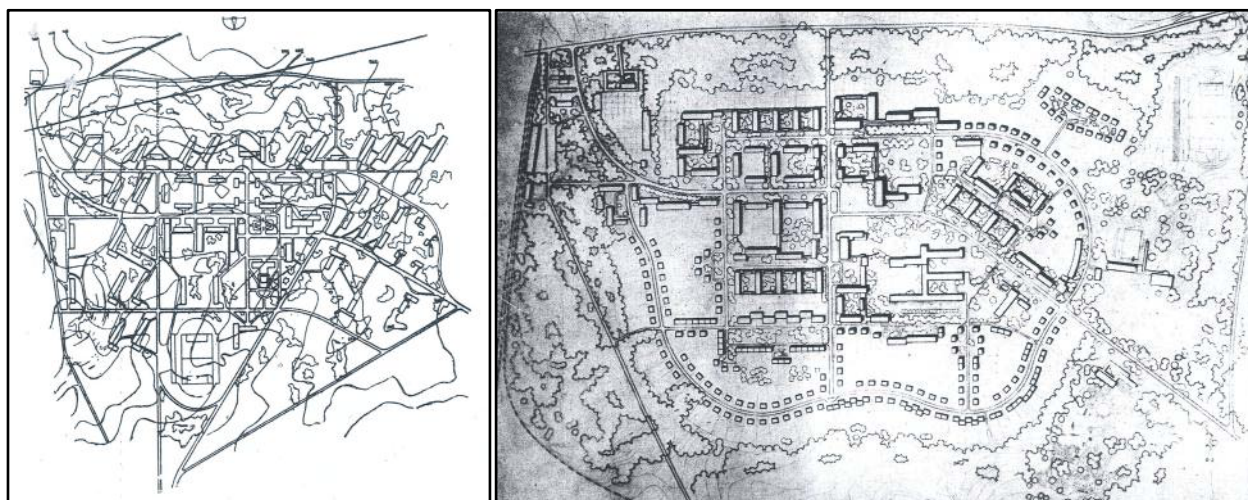


Fig. 6 (left): Planned urban composition of LičkiOsik according to the 1949 regulation plan
 Fig. 7 (right): Urban composition of LičkiOsik according to the 1955 urban plan

The regulation plan was modified already in 1955. The replanning attempted to *fit the already built buildings into the new plan instead of making them look as fragments of something started but not finished. Therefore, the construction in the center resumed in the form of blocks and tall buildings within the strict geometric raster of the existing roads, whereas towards the outskirts the emphasis was on lower and scattered individual construction.*²³

With the 1955 modifications of the plan, construction of exclusively apartment buildings lying on a 45-degree angle to the town's road network was abandoned and the new plan included a higher percentage of individual houses on separate lots that were supposed to make a circle around the central part of the town. The size of the main town square, where a cinema, a post office and a municipal center²⁴ were planned along with the already built hotel, was reduced. The sports and recreation center, which was not built in the first phase, was planned to be built in the northeast part of the town.

Since the construction at that time was focused on building apartment buildings, the plan to build individual houses was never carried out, while the remaining segments of the 1955 plan were mostly realized.

The master plan of 1984 called for significant town extensions to the west (towards the railroad) and south. In the western part of the town, ambitious plans included spaces for apartment buildings with an array of public and commercial uses, while in the south a large zone was planned for individual houses. Apart from a very small fragment of the zone for individual houses, these plans remained unrealized, just like the cemetery planned on the road towards the factory.

Year	Spatial plan title	Plan designed by	Source
1949	<i>LičkiOsik Regulation Plan</i>	UIH	Journal Arhitektura (Architecture), 1955. issue 5-6, pg 65
1949/52	<i>Detailed Urban Plan of LičkiOsik Workers' Housing Estate</i>	UIH	Monography of the UIH, pg 124
1955	<i>Modification of the LičkiOsik Regulation Plan</i>	UIH	Journal Arhitektura (Architecture), 1955, issue 5-6, pg 65
1955	<i>Conceptual Solution for the</i>	UIH	Monography of the UIH, pg 124

²²Kljaić, S. (1956.) Na pustom poljunovi grad, Ličkenovine, number 65 pg 4.

²³Petrović (1955.):66

²⁴The cinema theatre was built within the Cultural Center, while the municipality center was never built because the town never reached the planned number of inhabitants and therefore there was no need for administrative independence from Gospić.

Year	Spatial plan title	Plan designed by	Source
	<i>Center and the Town</i>		
1984	<i>Detailed Urban Plan for Individual Houses Zone</i>	UIH	Monography of the UIH, pg 124 and the archives of town of Gospić
1984	<i>LičkiOsik Master Plan</i>	UIH	Town of Gospić, archives
1986	<i>Detailed Urban Plan for Collective Housing and Public Use Places</i>	UIH	Town of Gospić, archives

Table 2 Chronological order of spatial plans

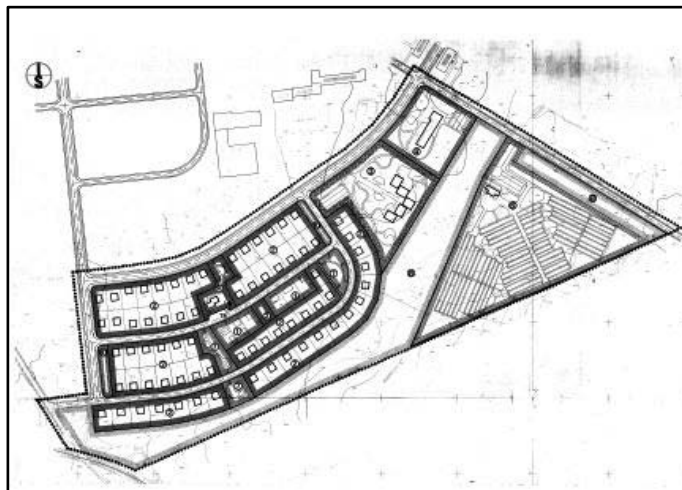


Fig. 8: Detailed urban plan for the individual houses zone and a cemetery in southern part of LičkiOsik (1984.)

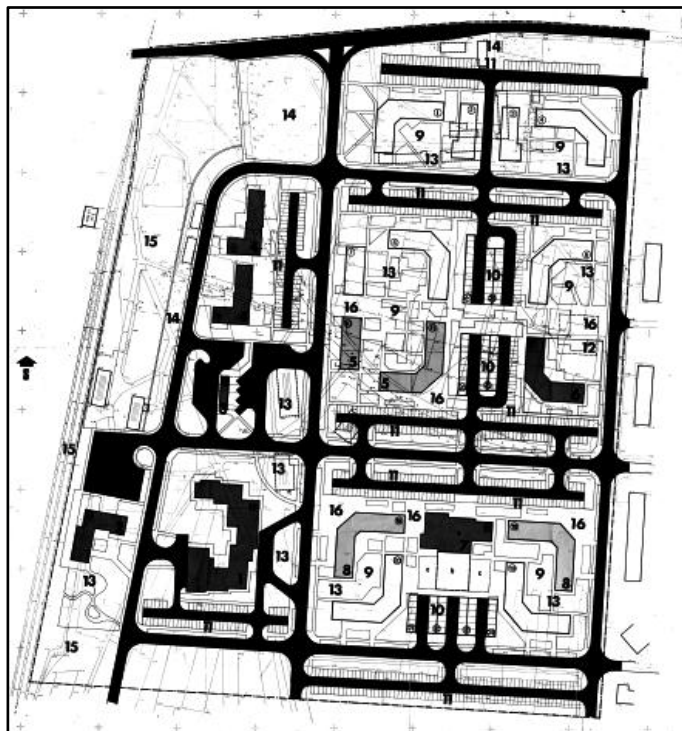


Fig. 9: Detailed urban plan for collective housing and public use places in western part of LičkiOsik (1986.)



Fig. 10: Realized construction projects and planned extensions from 1984 and 1986

6 REALIZATION OF THE URBAN PLAN

The town is accessed by a road that branches off the main road and, curving in wide arch lined with trees, leads to the town in which it becomes a street with paths on both sides, separated from the roadway by narrow green belts. Even though built with modest financial means, the street has a representative appearance. Main commercial facilities of the town were located on the south side of the access road, which leads to the main town square.



Fig. 11: Main access road

The central part of the town is a square quadrangle in shape, around which various public buildings were built. The dominant position on the eastern side of the square is held by a hotel which was also the first thing anybody would see when entering the square. On the southern side of the square was a community center – a cultural center. The north and west side of the square are closed off with apartment buildings consisting of three floors above the ground, of which the ones located on the western side have commercial facilities. The surface of the main square was built as a combination of concrete slabs and green areas, with the focal point being the monument to the hero Marko Orešković.²⁵ The size of the square was adequate for the size of the town and harmoniously proportionate to the height of the surrounding buildings. Towards east, the main square turns into the school square, bordered by east and south with the building of the elementary school. After the elementary school, the main street bends slightly at a 45-degree angle and leads towards the industrial zone lying ahead.



Fig. 12 (left): Hotel at the main town square
 Fig. 13 (right): Building at the western side of the main town square

Perpendicular to the main access road, a street running north-south was built, also lined with trees on both sides that was planned to continue further north and thus achieve one more connection with the existing road. The outskirts of the town consist of residential neighborhoods, formed by freely oriented residential buildings in the north-south and east-west direction and of similar height with three floors above the ground up to a maximum of five floors in some later projects. The spaces between buildings were designed in modernist style with many publicly accessible green areas with areas for gathering of people as well as children's playgrounds. The size of access roads was determined based on the (low) level of motorization at the time.

6.1 Public, social and service facilities

The central part of the town center is predominated by a hotel with four floors above the ground. In the beginning, besides accommodating guests and business partners of the factory, the hotel also served as a temporary accommodation for new factory workers, until apartments for them were built. On an interesting note, the hotel with its 214 beds was, at the time of construction, the biggest and most modern hotel in the Lika region as well as the tallest building in entire Lika.

The southern side of the main square was occupied by the building of the Cultural Center with a library, rooms for various community social activities and a cinema theatre with a Cinemascope technique and a seating capacity of over 300 people – at the time it was the most modern and biggest cinema theatre in Lika.

²⁵ The monument to Marko Orešković was erected in 1965 and was created by the academic sculptor Tomislav Ostojica. The monument was removed from the square during the war in early 1990s. Marko Orešković - Krtija (Široka Kula, near Gospić, April 3, 1895 - Veliko Očijevo, October 20, 1941) fought in World War One, Spanish Civil War and National Liberation War and is a Yugoslav national hero.

The elementary school and kindergarten were built east to the Cultural Center. South of the Cultural Center was a large building of the vocational high school that offered vocational programs tailored to the needs of the factory.²⁶

On the eastern outskirts of the town was the Community Health Center with a pharmacy, located on the road towards the factory and thus providing services to both town inhabitants and factory workers. On the other side of the road was the singles' hotel.²⁷

Commercial facilities were located in low-rise buildings on the south side of the main access road and on ground floors of buildings located on the western side of the main town square.

The 1984 plan envisaged a bus station, a new railway station and a large parking lot in the western part of the town, but these facilities have never been built.



Fig. 14: Spatial disposition of residential, public and service contents: 1. Community Center, 2. Elementary school and kindergarten, 3. Vocational High School, 4. Hotel, 5. Health Center, 6. Singles' Hotel, 7. Shops and commercial facilities

6.2 Industrial zone

The main business activity of the factory was metalworking, but within the military system. Since its founding and until 1954 the factory was called „Ivan Gošnjak“ when it changed name to „Marko Orešković“, but was later also known by an acronym MOL (Marko Orešković, Lika). The main industrial zone was a factory complex consisting of an administration building, a manufacturing plant and accompanying facilities. The factory was approximately 1.5 kilometers away from the town and occupied an area of approximately 10.3 hectares. The industrial zone was connected with the town with a road lined with protective greenery. The entire factory complex was likewise surrounded with high greenery. Even though plans were made to

²⁶As a comparison, the capacity of the kindergarten in Lički Osik used to be 60 children, while today there are 22 children. The capacity of the elementary school in 1989 was around 650 pupils and now it is 264 pupils. The capacity of the vocational high school (now closed) was 289 students.

²⁷At some periods, up to 70% of factory workers were singles.

build an industrial railroad track to the factory, this has never been done so cargo was often transported by road through the town at late-night hours.

The company ceased production in 1990s during the War in Croatia. Failure of all attempts so far to come up with new industrial activities for the factory have generated numerous economic and social problems in LičkiOsik today.



Fig. 15 (left):The building of MOL factory

Fig. 16 (right):Road between the town and the factory lined with tall planted greenery



Fig. 17: Urban composition and building heights in LičkiOsik

6.3 Residential areas

Residential areas in LičkiOsik are of two types: apartment buildings and individual houses. More than half of town inhabitants were supposed to live in apartment buildings and the rest in family houses.²⁸ The number of floors allowed for apartment buildings varied in time. In the beginning, three floors above the ground were allowed, but later the number increased (up to a maximum of five floors above the ground).

Even though buildings vary in ground plan area and number of floors, the majority have similar sizes of openings and roof pitches so they look recognizable and unique. Despite modern shapes, due to continental climate, all apartment buildings have hip roofs, originally covered by tiles, but today some also have tin roofs.

Given the technological level of the construction equipment at the time and long winters in Lika, the number of apartments built per year is impressive²⁹.



Fig. 18-21: Apartment buildings in LičkiOsik

²⁸Pavlović, B. 1956, Lički kalendar, str.25

²⁹By the end of 1957 150 apartments, a school with a sports hall, a community center and a hotel were built in the town. During 1958, further 184 apartments were built.

7 DAMAGE SUSTAINED DURING THE WAR OF 1990s AND RECONSTRUCTION

Social and economic changes in socialist countries and the War in Croatia had strong impact on the economic and social situation in LičkiOsik. During the war in the 1990s, LičkiOsik was not under the control of the Croatian government and was renamed into Teslingrad. When the Croatian government re-established the control over that part of the country in 1995, a large number of inhabitants of Serbian nationality left LičkiOsik and went to Serbia. In the meantime, a significant number of people of Croatian nationality who fled war in Bosnia and Herzegovina populated LičkiOsik, and so the war brought not only material destruction but also large demographic changes.



Fig. 22 (left): Visible damages on an apartment building

Fig. 23 (right): Renewed apartment building

Nearly all public and residential buildings were severely damaged during the War. The factory did not succeed in re-establishing production of a significant scale, despite some attempts. Since the town economically almost entirely depended on the factory, the end of production in the factory brought into question the economic sustainability of the town.

Numerous programs on the national and local level are creating preconditions for the normal functioning of the town. The area has been cleared of mines and the majority of residential buildings repaired. In the beginning, only major structural damages were repaired, while now buildings are being renovated slowly but systematically (including renovation of facades and roofs, replacement of windows and similar). The elementary school building, the kindergarten building and the Community health center building have been renovated.

The majority of spaces that were used for commercial purposes and were located in the street leading up to the main square, have been renovated from major damages, however a large number of them are still without a purpose giving the place a feeling of emptiness and disintegration.

The large building of the Cultural Center was significantly damaged and so far only a small (northern) part of it has been renovated, while the larger part facing southward was torn down and an apartment building constructed in its place in 2011. Even though this degraded the offer of public contents in the town, the move was a pragmatic one given that under present circumstances local authorities are unable to finance the reconstruction and operation of the Cultural Center of the former scale.

The former singles' hotel is currently undergoing renewal and transformation.

The building of the former hotel at the main square sustained significant damage and is in danger of collapsing. Its future use is yet to be determined.

The 1990s War as well as the process of transformation and privatization changed the social structure of town's inhabitants, while a part of apartments remained uninhabited. The biggest material damage was caused by the recent war, and during the renovation of buildings the original structure of the town was not disrupted largely due to economic underdevelopment and population decline.



Fig. 24:Former hotel building



Fig. 25:Cultural Center building in 2010

Fig. 26:Reconstructed northern wing of the Cultural Center (2011)



Fig. 27: Visible damages on the southern side of the Cultural Center building (2010)



Fig. 28: New apartment building in place of the southern part of the former Cultural Center (2011)

8 CONCLUSION

LičkiOsik was designed and built after World War 2 to serve the needs of a state-owned factory. It could be said that the town was built as the result of socialist ideology, that is, of a political agenda that, among other things, included urban reform, and was envisaged as a settlement of *progressive work force* in which its inhabitants can fulfill all of their needs. Its construction was not based exclusively on the factors of economic profit, but on urban humanism.

Social and economic changes at the beginning of 1990s had strong impact on LičkiOsik and war conflict further affected its buildings, but especially its demographic structure. The end of production in the factory marked the end of economic base for the functioning of the town. Town's inhabitants are no longer employed in the factory but left to their own resources and to finding new sources of income.

In circumstances in which the government administration no longer has its former role and urban planning no longer includes the element of *classic humanism*³⁰ there is a need to find new ways of self-organizing and articulation of interest of general significance.

Although problems many cities face in today's world are numerous, the situation in LičkiOsik is more than difficult since it reflects the social and cultural situation that is a consequence of deep social and economic restructuring.

The purpose of constructing LičkiOsik was to contribute to the spatial identity of Lika, while its destiny is the result of the possibilities and threats of the existing society. For the time being, it was only the economic crisis that has helped to preserve the existing spatial structure from more serious destruction, since there was hardly any construction at all.

LičkiOsik is, from the urban planning and architectural point of view, a unique project with consistent implementation of adopted standards of urban planning (in the context of the poorly developed and war-torn country at the time) which makes it interesting for analysis. Social and economic circumstances that have changed in the meantime call for adjusting the use of existing structures to new needs, which at the same time poses a threat to their spatial integrity, particularly in light of the fact that these places have been poorly researched and their quality is often unknown both to today's local residents and to those in charge of making decisions about its future spatial development.

The change of social and economic system marked the end of care about planned towns constructed as a result of decisions made on the state or republic level, which also brings into question the preservation of the urban identity and design of planned towns. LičkiOsik is without a doubt a recognizable example of a small industrial town in Croatia and its protection as a cultural good of particular urban value should be considered.

³⁰ LEFEBVRE, H. (1971)



Fig. 29: Atmosphere of the residential area in 2011

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10 PHOTO CREDITS

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