

Two Collective Housing Buildings in Sarajevo by Architect Ahmet Hadrovic

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ABSTRACT

In his architectural and design practice, the author of this paper worked in a wide variety of architectural programs and contacted hundreds of people. This experience enriched his knowledge of architecture and contributed to the enrichment of his theory of Architectural Definition Space (ADS). The two examples of buildings presented in this paper are located in the inner core of the city of Sarajevo, so they were considered as 'elite locations for an elite clientele'. Each of the buyers of an apartment in these buildings had some 'special requirements', both in the disposition of the apartments and in the materialization of the surfaces. It is interesting how some clients (thanks to their financial power) bought two or three apartments, connecting them both horizontally and vertically, while leaving the possibility of their functioning as independent housing units.

Keywords: Collective housing, Sarajevo, Cekaluša Street, Podgaj Street

INTRUDUCTION

In his architectural and design practice, the author of this paper worked in a wide variety of architectural programs and contacted hundreds of people. This experience enriched his knowledge of architecture and contributed to the enrichment of his theory of Architectural Definition of Space (ADS) [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26]. In the process of designing residential buildings, the designer is in the closest and most sincere relationship with the client. Clients are more or less open to the designer since they are vitally interested in building an apartment that will be the framework of life according to their needs (housing culture). For this reason, clients choose a designer, mainly based on recommendations from other people for whom the designer in question has already designed a residential space. These circumstances require the designer not only a professional attitude towards the profession, but especially patience towards clients. From the author's experience, patience shown in the process of designing (and building) a residential building always yields good results, and the designer gets the privilege of being a member of the client's family to the extent that he or she determines. When designing multi-apartment buildings, the designer communicates more with the investor (who, most often, will be the user of the apartment in the construction in question) during the design phase. Such an investor wants a certain number of residential units, of various square footage (according to his market assessment), always with the requirement of the possibility of connecting several smaller apartments into one larger one (both horizontally and vertically of the residential building), and dividing the larger apartment into several autonomous residential units, as well as the possibility of adding rooms from one residential unit to another, autonomous, residential unit. In this case, during the construction of the building, all the 'potentials' of the project are realized, where the specific client communicates his requirements regarding the final disposition of the housing unit. Immediately after the end of the war (1992-1995), especially in Sarajevo, there was a great expansion in the construction of residential buildings, where the construction of residential buildings of the so-called collective housing was particularly pronounced. (In general, construction includes the reconstruction of individual residential buildings that were destroyed or damaged in the war throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, the reconstruction of all types of residential buildings in cities, and the construction of completely new residential buildings of all types of housing.). In contrast to the pre-war period (the socialist system of SFRY), the clients of multi-apartment buildings (collective housing) are private companies that 'produce and sell apartments as a highly sought-after commodity'. In the Author's experience, new residential buildings prefer much higher

housing standards than those immediately before the war (1992-1995). However, the laws of the market have recently (2007-2012) resulted in housing constructions that border on housing pathology (Tibra Pacific Settlement in Sarajevo, for example).

Building "Cekalusa" on Cekalusa Street (2002)

Residential and commercial building "Cekalusa" is located in Cekalusa Street, in the municipality of Centar Sarajevo (Geographical coordinates: 43°51'48.37"N, 18°24'57.53"E, elevation: 582 m). The building was built in 2002. This is a very important city street where there are many faculties, embassies, schools... (Figures 1,2).

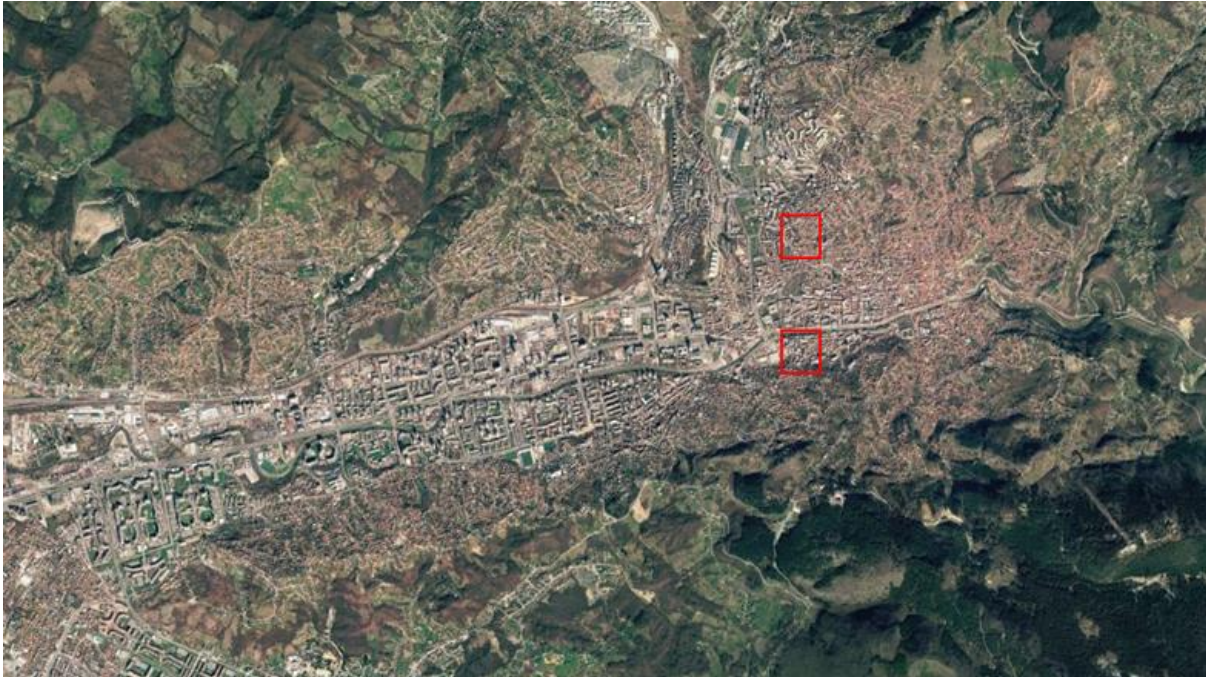


Figure 1. The location of residential buildings "Cekalusa" and "Skenderija 1" in Sarajevo

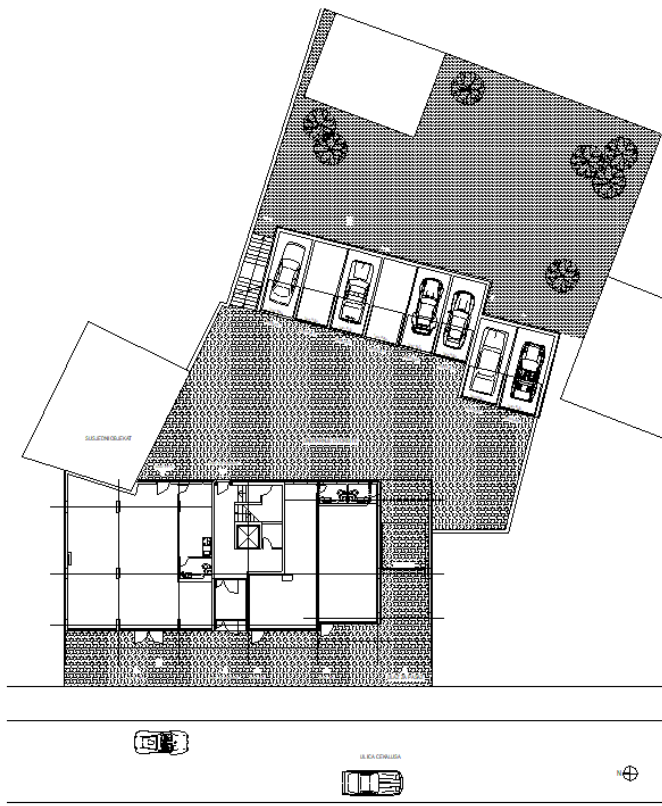
Source: Google Earth. Accessed: July 17, 2026



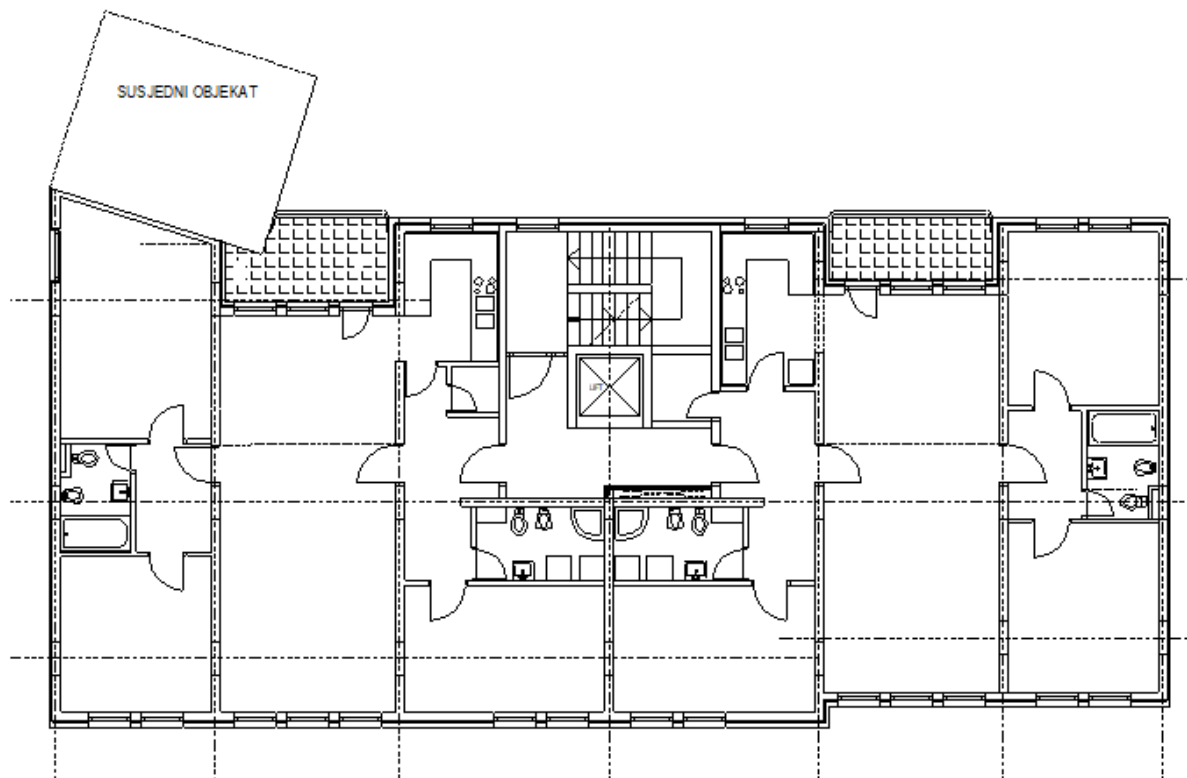
Figure 2. Residential and commercial building "Cekalusa" in Sarajevo (2002). Location

Source: Google Earth. Accessed: July 17, 2026

Given that the building has an exceptionally valuable location, the apartments are designed as luxurious, and in a way that allows the possibility of combining several smaller ones into one large apartment and vice versa. (The investor of this building is a well-known European and world businessman of Bosnian origin). The value of these apartments is also given by the inner courtyard of this building, in which there are garages for personal cars, one or two per apartment. On the ground floor of the building are business premises (Figures 3,4).



Ground floor



Typical floor plan

Figure 3. Residential and business building "Cekalusa" in Sarajevo (2002). Project

Source: Author (Project, 2002)



Figure 4. Residential and commercial building "Cekalusa" in Sarajevo (2002)

Source: Author (June 10, 2011)

Building "Skenderija 1" on Podgaj Street (2005)

The residential building "Skenderija 1" is located in the Skenderija district of Sarajevo, near the famous sports and business center (Geographical coordinates: 43°51'14.62"N, 18°24'58.63"E, elevation: 542 m). The building was built in 2005. The location is extremely attractive (the very center of Sarajevo), but geodetic-geologically very difficult: the terrain is very steep, prone to sliding. As the attractiveness of the location prevailed, a building was designed and built, which is literally 'nailed' to the supporting substrate (which is at a depth of about 10 m) with powerful piles, and the building itself is oriented towards the lower street (Podgaj Street) and the upper street (Souk-bunar Street). The garages are accessed from the lower street (Podgaj Street) and from the upper street (where the garages are situated on two levels). From a design and construction-contractor point of view, this was an extremely complicated task. (The co-author on this project was the architect Sakim Hodžić, whose company (ENCO d.o.o., Sarajevo) was the main contractor of the construction-craft works. The main piles were made by the company BUTMIR d.o.o. from Sarajevo).

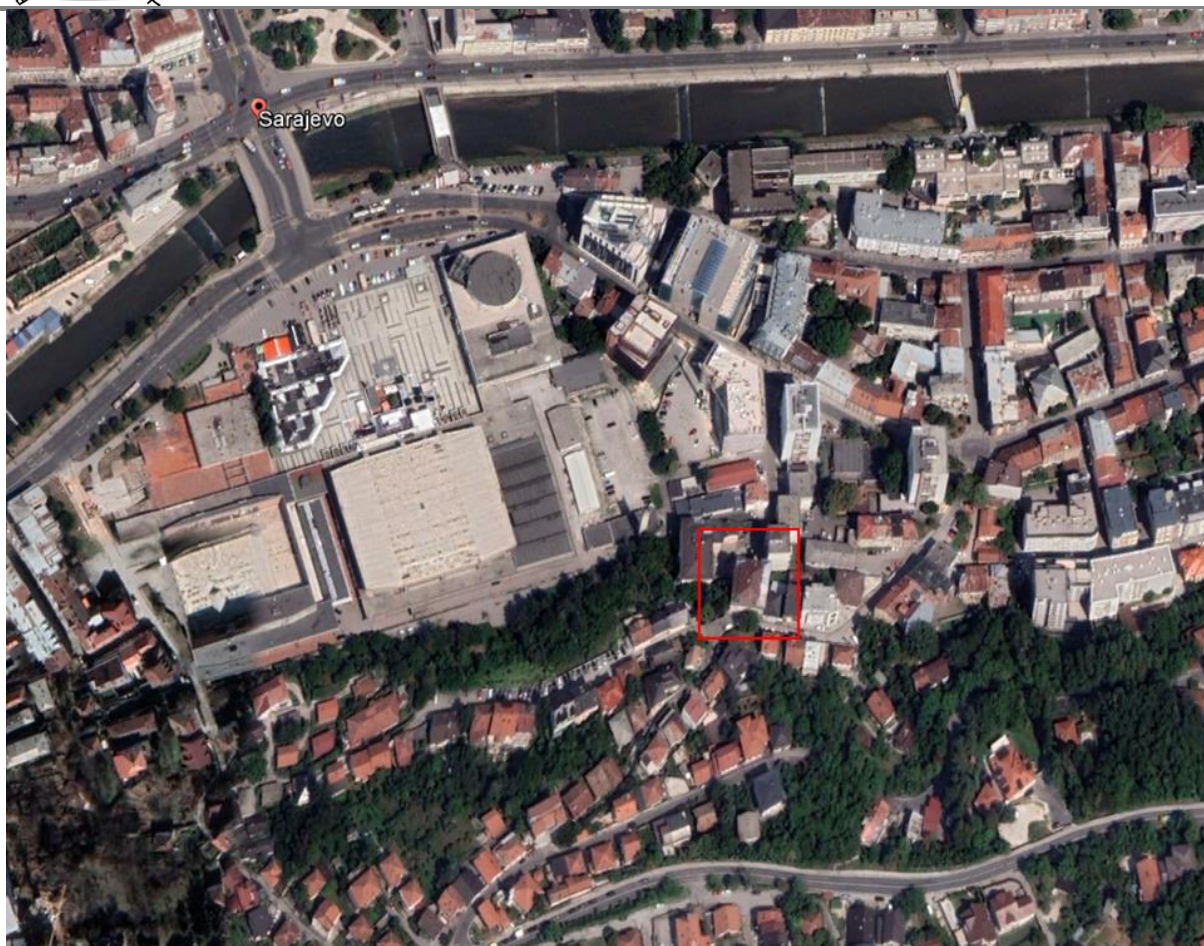
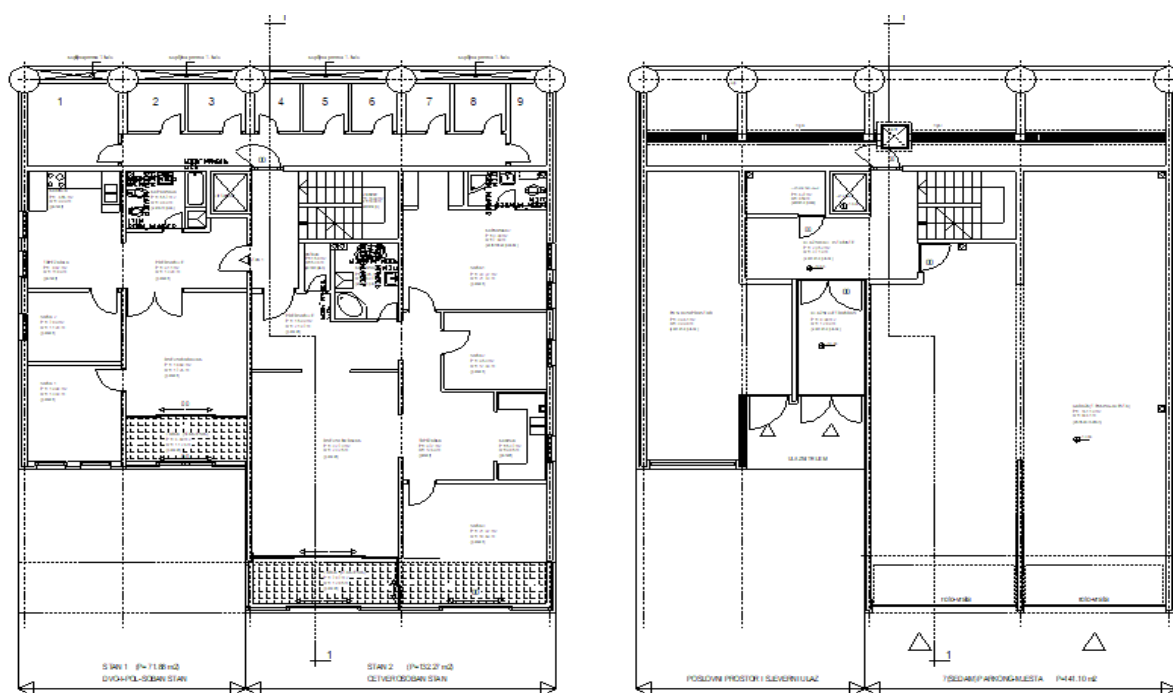
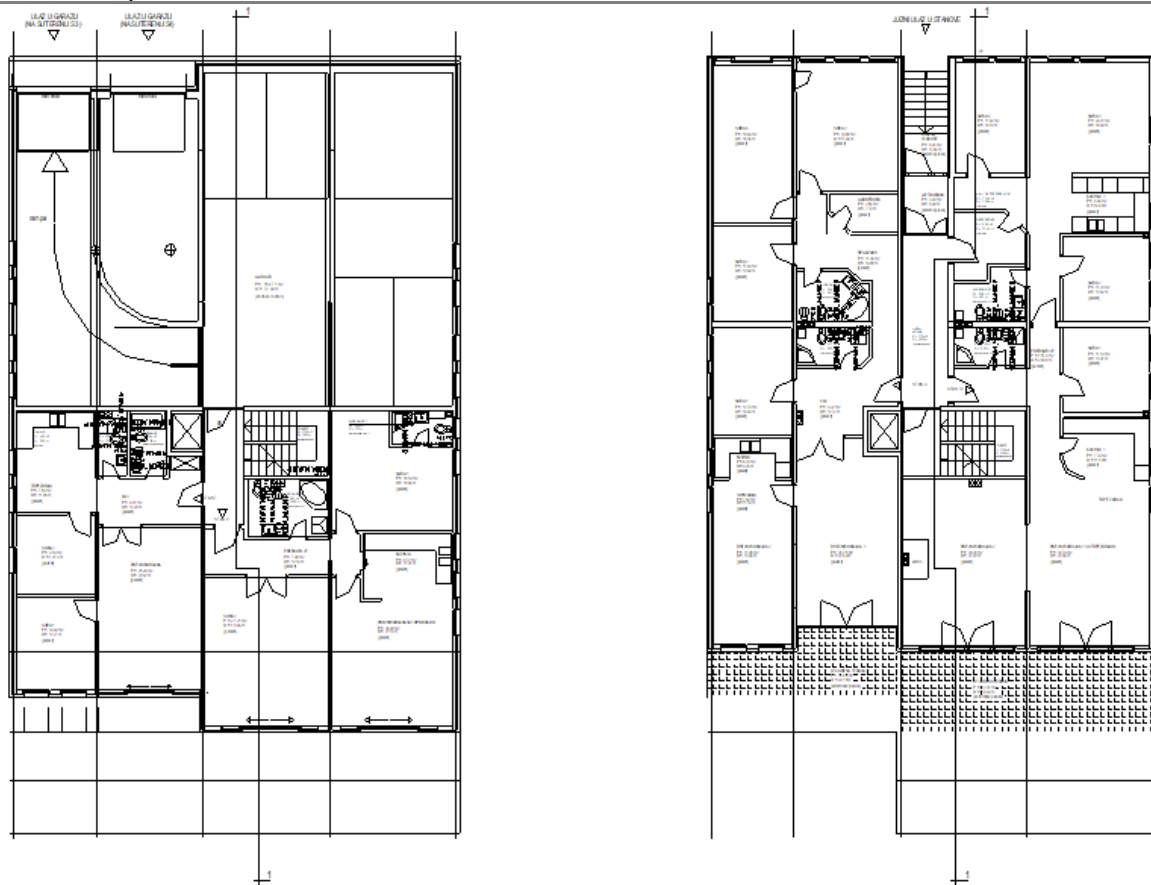


Figure 5. Residential building “Skenderija 1” on Podgaj Street in Sarajevo (2005). Location

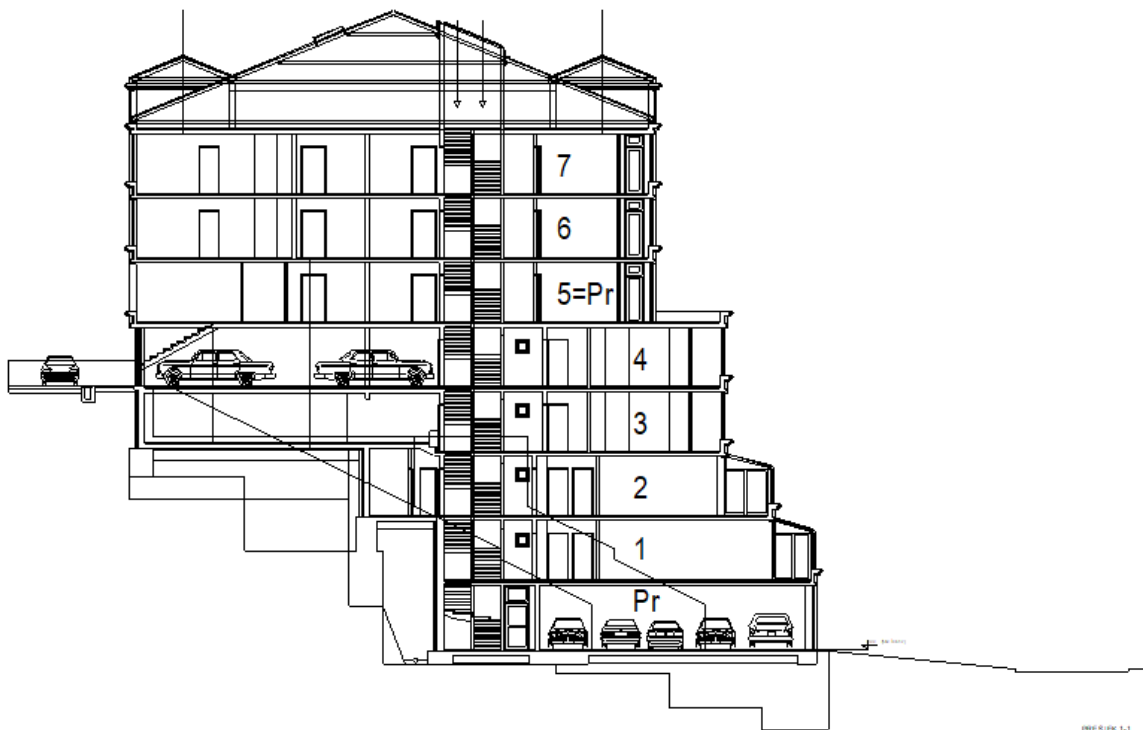
Source: Google Earth. Accessed: July 17, 2026



Basement 1 and Basement 2



Basement 3 and ground floor



Cross section through the slope

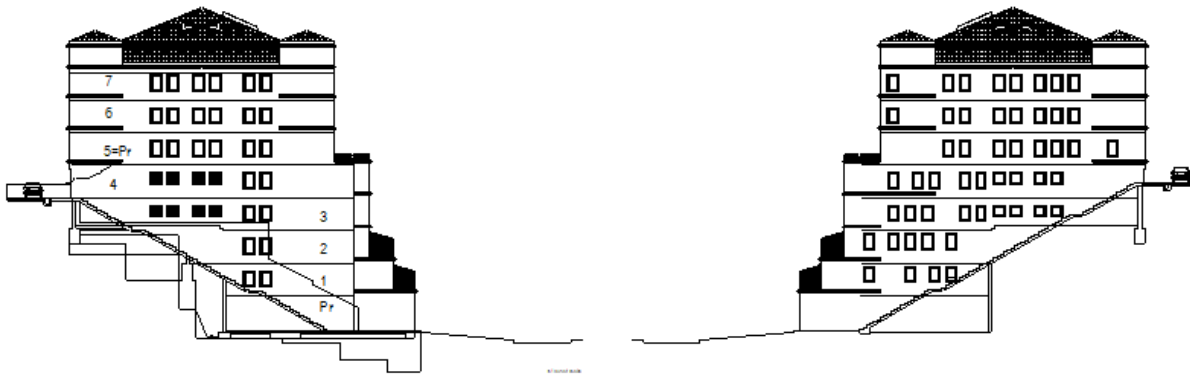


Figure 6. Residential building "Skenderija 1" in Sarajevo (2005). Project

Source: Author (Project, 2005)



Facades





Figure 7. Residential building "Skenderija 1" in Sarajevo (2005)

Source: Author (March 30, 2012)

CONCLUSION

In his architectural and design practice, the author of this paper worked in a wide variety of architectural programs and contacted hundreds of people. The two examples of buildings presented in this paper are located in the inner core of the city of Sarajevo, so they were considered as 'elite locations for an elite clientele'. It is interesting how some clients (thanks to their financial power) bought two or three apartments, connecting them both horizontally and vertically, while leaving the possibility of their functioning as independent housing units. In the process of designing residential buildings, the designer is in the closest and most sincere relationship with the client. Clients are more or less open to the designer since they are interested in building an apartment that will be a framework for living according to their needs (housing culture). For this reason, clients choose a designer, mostly based on the recommendations of other people for whom the respective designer has already designed a residential space. These circumstances demand from the designer not only a professional attitude towards the profession, but especially patience towards the clients. From the author's experience, patience shown in the process of designing (and building) a residential building always yields good results, and the designer gains the privilege of being a member of the client's family to the extent he or she determines.

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