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PORT-INDUSTRIAL TOWN OF PLOČE (1945-1971)

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KEYWORDS

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RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

ABSTRACT

The paper explores the residential architecture of the port-industrial town of Ploče in the period from 1945 to 1971, affirming the town as a unique example of planned modernist realization on the eastern Adriatic. Ploče is a unique town that developed on the Dalmatian karst in a deep natural harbour at the mouth of the Neretva River, in which a modern port-industrial town was built for the needs of the magnificent harbour, combining the principles of modern architecture

with elements of tradition, and urbanism that affirms views of the harbour, pedestrian connections, and autochthone horticulture. By employing various methods – historiographical and morphological analysis of residential architecture, as well as the study of unpublished archival materials – the paper valorises the contribution of local architecture within the broader context of Croatian postwar Modernism.

INTRODUCTION

Since its founding and first presentation in the professional journal *Arhitektura* (***) 1955), the modern architecture of the port-industrial town of Ploče has largely remained unexplored and unknown to scholars, professionals, and the general public. Inspired by the quality of architecture from seven decades of neglected and unexamined modern heritage, this work aims to investigate the residential architecture of Ploče (1945-1971).¹

This research therefore seeks to identify the locations of residential buildings in Ploče, the architects, architectural offices and construction companies responsible, and to analyse the typology, design, and specific architectural approaches of the residential architecture. A database like this would allow quicker comparison of Croatia's residential architecture from that period and support developing guidelines and criteria for recovery and resilience of the housing stock. To understand residential architecture from different periods, it is necessary to know the socioeconomic and political-legal conditions under which it was planned and realized. A valuable attempt to create a database of residential architecture in Croatia and its typology from the modern period is a project of the Department of Housing, Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb, which began in 2022. This project collects and records high-quality examples of Croatian residential architecture since 1945 (Josić, Korlaet and Virag, DASA),

however, it only includes one example from Ploče. (Fig. 1)

In the larger cities along the Croatian Adriatic, modern residential and industrial architecture has been researched, contributing to the recognition and affirmation of their modern architectural heritage and urban identity. In that regard, it is the research on the modern architecture of Rijeka (Valušek, 1996; Palinić and Bjelanović, 2021), Zadar (Arbutina, 2001; Mlikota, 2021), Split and Dalmatia (Keckemet, 1976; Tušek, 2018), Dubrovnik (Baće, 2023) that stands out. Among the studies of modern architecture in smaller towns, Omis (Barišić Marenčić and Perković Jović, 2023) and Duga Resa (Bilić and Barišić Marenčić, 2021) stand out.

Modern architecture is explored through the work of individual architects. The architectural contributions of key figures in modern architecture such as Lovro Perković (Keckemet, 1979; Uskoković, 2015), Ivan Vitić (Grimmer and Kisić, 2005/2006), Nikola Dobrović (Ivanišin, 2000; Ivanišin, 2015), Ivo Bartolić (Bobovec, Korlaet and Virag, 2015) and others, also demonstrate their engagement in residential architecture projects.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this paper is to provide a comprehensive insight into the development of residential architecture in Ploče between 1945 and 1971 through a reconstruction of the historical planning process and a critical analysis of the architectural quality of the realized projects. The study seeks to investigate how specific socio-political conditions and the role of Ploče as a 'new town' influenced the formation of a high standard of living that successfully integrates modernist idea with human needs and the local context.

The town Ploče, has recently been the subject of research on urban development (Kranjčević, Barišić Marenčić and Jelčić, 2024) and public architecture (Barišić Marenčić, Kranjčević and Jelčić, 2025). The aim of this paper is therefore to explore the largely unexamined residential architecture of Ploče from 1945 to 1971, to identify the works of both prominent and lesser-known modern architects from Croatia and the surrounding region, to specify addresses and dates, and to analyse architectural achievements and contextualise them within the framework of Croatian modern architecture.

¹ During the socialist era (in Croatia and Yugoslavia), legal regulations on planning and construction of settlements and construction land were divided into two basic time periods. The first period refers to 1946-1971, and the second to 1972-1987 (Krstić and Pajović, 1987).

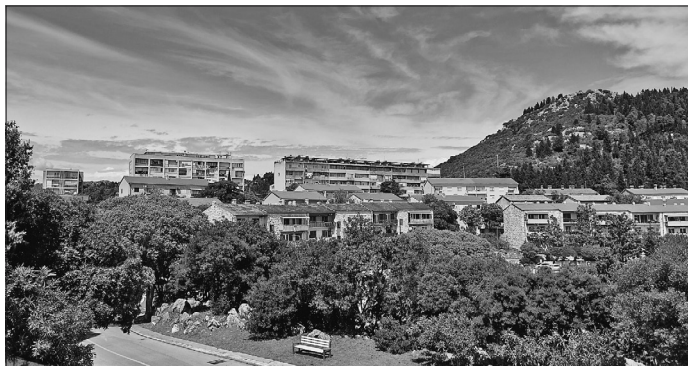
² Modernist residential architecture could be interpreted through two distinct lenses: as a derivative imi-

The research employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining the historiographical method – through the analysis of archival records – with a spatial morphological analysis of residential blocks (contour lines, sea views, and pedestrian accessibility). Emphasis is placed on field surveys and architectural valorisation; the paper evaluates the aesthetic and functional qualities of Late Modernism in Ploče, identifying elements of synthesis between international style and local building traditions. In doing so, it determines the degree of preservation of original concepts and the relationship between the planned structure and the existing landscape. Using a comparative method, the study positions the residential development of Ploče within the broader context of ex-Yugoslav and European postwar Modernism (WWII)², highlighting parallels and deviations relative to contemporary urban planning practices.

Research into the residential architecture of Ploče is primarily based on the examination of difficult-to-access and scarce archival material of the Town of Ploče Archives, Croatian State Archives Zagreb, State Archives Dubrovnik, Metković Branch, Croatian Railway Museum, as well as limited biographical data from the biographies of individual architects (such as Vuko Bombardelli and Lovro Perko- vić, for whom either information on constructions in Ploče is missing or it is unclear which buildings they designed), and on professional articles and several published books about Ploče or the port intended for the general public (Kovačević, 1996; Kovačević, 2003; Smoljan, 1996). The research into the modern residential architecture of Ploče was conducted through fieldwork in Ploče, photographing the current state, interviewing residents, and searching various online sources to obtain a more complete picture. The results of this research can help establish guidelines and criteria for its sustainable use, renovation, and resistance.

A limitation of the research is the limited project documentation, which does not cover all buildings, and often the preserved inventory units lack complete documentation. The documentation is difficult to read and reproduce due to very faded, old copies. Furthermore, the Ploče Folk Collection [Zavičajna zbirka] is closed for renovation and its contents are unknown.

² manifestation of Western architectural models, or as a manifestation of 'socialist modernity,' a concept championed by theorists Stephen Kotkin and Victor Buchli. Socialist residential architecture was predicated upon social ownership and the intentional construction of a new society, a 'new man,' and a reconfigured spatial paradigm (Kotkin, 1995; Buchli, 1999).



INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW OF HOUSING CONDITIONS IN CROATIA FROM 1945 TO 1971 AND LITERATURE REVIEW

FIG. 1 VIEW OF THE TOWN OF PLOČE, AREA OF UPPER PLOČE, SOURCE: AUTHORS

After WW II, the initial reconstruction of Croatia, a war-torn country, focused on industrialisation and electrification. The intensive processes of industrialisation and urbanisation had a significant impact on the construction sector, especially in cities where industry was concentrated, as it was necessary to provide housing for employees. The first Five-Year Plan Act of the People's Republic of Croatia from 1947 (Zakon o petogodišnjem planu razvitka, 1947) addressed the construction industry and housing. Article 14 stated that it was necessary to "build 2,350,000 m³ of residential buildings" in cities and villages and to ensure "over five years a total amount of 4 billion 980 million dinars". It was also necessary to begin and develop mass industrial production of prefabricated residential houses with standardised parts at the fastest pace (Five-Year Plan Act, 1947: 234). Resolving the housing issue and its architecture became an important socio-political, legal, economic, cultural, and consequently urban-architectural and technical-technological challenge. To build enough apartments, it was necessary to secure sources of financing, implement new legal regulations and standards, roll out a design range, and operationalise construction through the application of modern technology and the education sector. "The right to an apartment" was a principle of social care for workers that was closely linked to housing construction and architecture, as well as to economy and law (**1954).

Architecture and construction sector faced various challenges in housing construction, such as functional apartments (floor plans), design, construction speed and construction quality, as shown in Table I. Architectural competitions were also held for typification and prefabricated construction. Comparisons of housing construction with other countries were made. Ownership of apartments was a special issue, and some proposed introducing

TABLE I OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE ON RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE IN PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

Challenges in the construction of residential architecture	Authors of the articles
Design of apartments	Bartolić (1950a); Kosar (1950); Gombos (1950); Antolić (1952); Balagović (1967)
Apartment construction	Baylon (1950); Bartolić (1950b); Kosar (1950); Bartolić (1951); Baylon (1952); Perco (1954)
Apartment size	Planić (1949a)
Apartment lighting, apartment hygiene	Baylon (1950), Teodorović (1952)
Specific form of apartments	Dumendžić (1950); Tušek (1950)
Ownership	Perco (1954); Mrčela (1981)
Architectural competitions for the construction of apartments	Tušek (1952a); Tušek (1952b); Tušek (1952c)
Standard and prefabricated construction	Planić (1949b); Planić (1949c); Bartolić (1951); Matijević Barcot (2020)
Collective construction	Tučkorić (1958); Badnjar Gojnić (2023)
Legislation	Planić (1949a); Kahle (2021)
Sociological Approach to Housing	*** (1954); Paljan (1972); Paljan (1974); Badnjar Gojnić (2023)
Financing the construction of residential buildings	Zakon o doprinosu za stambenu izgradnju (1955); Osnovni zakon o privrednom poslovanju i gospodarenju stambenim zgradama (1965).

Source: Author's processing

condominium ownership. Housing construction was also discussed at the conference of Yugoslav cities in Sarajevo in 1954, which was attended by economists, lawyers and architects (Perco, 1954). It is worth noting that past experiences are sought to address the challenges of housing construction in the 21st century (Badnjar Gojnić, 2023).

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE OF PLOČE 1945-1971

The complexity of the challenges the residential architecture of Ploče was faced with is evident from the correspondence of the Regional People's Liberation Committee [Oblasni Narodno oslobodilački odbor] for Dalmatia as early as July 1945. The Regional NOO sent letters to the Croatian and Bosnian – Herzegovinian authorities. The Department of Regulation, the Architectural Department at the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of Croatia were requested to form a team of urban planners before the Regulatory Plan for Ploče was drawn up to assess and determine the needs of the future settlement on site. The Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina was requested to provide urgent assistance in building materials for the repair of the buildings (the administration building, the unfinished power plant and the workers' camps), as they were significantly damaged. In short, the letters emphasize the seriousness of the housing problem for convicts and port employees in Ploče. Architect Josip Se-

issel from the Architectural Department of the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of Croatia was soon sent to Ploče.

Town of Ploče was not exempt from the demand for apartments (convicts and employees). Some residents turned directly to the Ministry of Construction in 1945 to request the construction of family houses, which responded that a regulatory plan with collective buildings (HR-HDA-248) was in progress.

It was emphasized that urban plans were being drawn up either for parts of the settlement or for the entire settlement. That is how the unique construction of a modern, planned port-industrial town on the southern Adriatic begun.

Near Crna Rijeka, various institutions, government offices, facilities, a cinema,³ shops, and taverns were located, while in the upper part of the town, there was a bakery and a church in a barracks (Kovačević, 1996). Often, the first workers did not have adequate accommodation and were housed in wooden barracks while seeking work (Šunjić, 2025).

The configuration of the terrain and the regulation of the Neretva delta determined the "division" into two spatial and thus residential units of Upper Ploče (north of Crna Rijeka) and Lower Ploče (south of Crna Rijeka). The residential zone of Lower Ploče (located directly next to the port) represents the first planned organized residential zone. This zone is a smaller-scale residential building but is more connected to the port. Upper Ploče is an area of a larger residential zone and with its imposing buildings dominates the views from the town to the south and vice versa. In this context, the "modern landscape" of the new town was formed (Fig. 2).

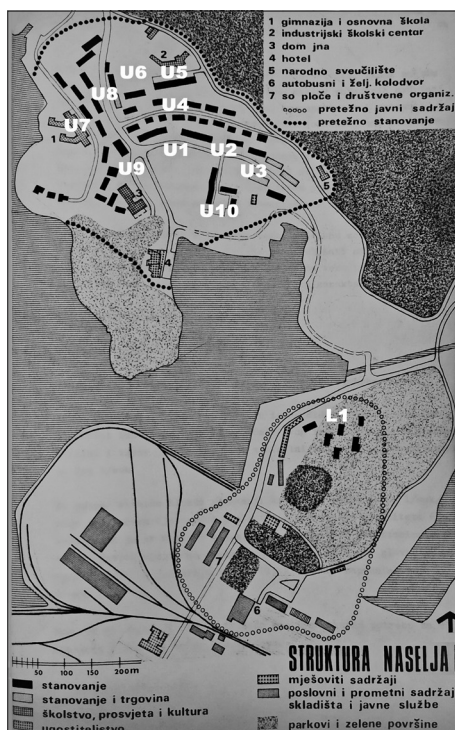
LOWER PLOČE

In addition to the magnificent port at the mouth of the Neretva, the first construction of residential buildings took place on Prišnica Hill, south of the mouth of the Crna Rijeka. This marked the initial phase of constructing the so-called "solid buildings" as a replacement for the barracks where citizens were temporarily housed as port workers.

Residential buildings on Prišnica (architect Lovro Perković, 1947-1948)

The first construction of residential buildings near the port for the project client, the Mariti-

FIG. 2 STRUCTURE OF PLOČE WITH MARKED RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (LISTED IN TABLE II), SOURCE: AUTHORS PROCESSING



³ The cinema was later demolished (Kovačević, 1996).

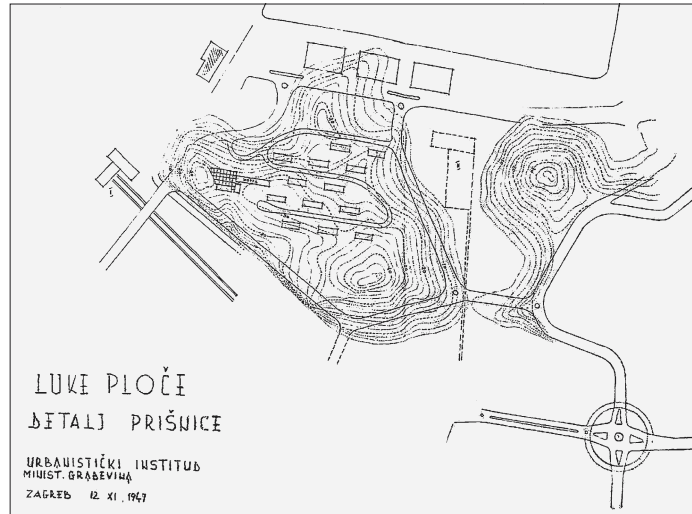
⁴ Terms used by the local population for Stražnica hill is referred to as Strazbenica or Izvidnica.

me Administration, dates to 1947-1948 on the rocky terrain of Prišnica hill (Ulica Prišnica 2, 3, 4, 6). Lovro Perković as an architect at the department of the Dubrovnik Regional Construction Company Graditelj, planned a residential neighbourhood and designed longitudinal standard stone residential buildings. This part of the town is characterised by parallel rows of longitudinal buildings, arranged in a staggered layout to ensure open views towards the new town area. (Fig. 3).

Longitudinal standard stone buildings were designed with four possible execution variants: variant I, three identical two-room apartments per floor (Fig. 4a); variant II, three different apartments per floor – one three-room, one two-room, and one studio apartment (Fig. 4b); variant III, six studios per floor 8 (Fig. 4c); and variant IV, a hostel with seven rooms per floor (***)The Town of Ploče, Archives). Variant I was implemented with three two-room apartments per floor, featuring a circular connection around the kitchen and toilets, as well as access via the hallway and loggia. The sanitary core with kitchen enabled these variant solutions. At the foot of Prišnica hill, four stone storey houses were built with double-pitched roofs and roofs made of channel tiles (three identical and one partially modified buildings). The houses were designed in the spirit of traditional architecture, reflecting the extremely modest post-war period and the largely destroyed construction technology in the Second World War.

Despite this, the interfloor structure is built as a reinforced concrete fine-ribbed system, with the direction of the ribs determined by the shorter span. The use of modern structures and materials, the subtle design of the buildings, traditional yet with a modern expression, and the rationally variable spatial-functional solution, all attest to the refinement of an unknown modern achievement in residential architecture in southern Croatia.

The stone facades reflect the thoughtfulness of the modern architect, evident in the analysis of wall surfaces, the formats of windows and French windows, and shady loggias with balcony consoles for each apartment, centrally located on three facades (Fig. 5).



The post-war creation of the residential complex on Prišnica remains completely unknown in professional and scientific literature, as well as within the oeuvre of architect Lovro Perković. It is not even presented in the monograph specifically dedicated to architect Lovro Perković by Sandra Uskoković (Uskoković, 2015).

UPPER PLOČE

Northwest of the mouth of the Crna River, residential buildings and structures for social and public purposes were built on predominantly rocky, hilly terrain. In the second phase, the melioration of the marshy area south of the slopes of Stražnica⁴ created flat terrain (the present-day area of Ban Josip Jelčić Square and its surroundings), after which the southern waterfront was filled and developed, now known as Coast (Obala) dr. Franjo Tuđman.

Residential buildings along Vladimira Nazora and Rogotinska streets (unknown author, 1950s)

On the southern slopes of Stražnica hill, the concentric arcs of Vladimir Nazor Street and Rogotinska Street were laid out, approximately following the contours of the terrain with

FIG. 3 DETAILED URBAN PLAN FOR PRIŠNICA, PLOČE, SOURCE: HR-HDA-248. MINISTARSTVO GRAĐEVINE NRH, 2.2.2. LUKA PLOČE, SIG. (1945-1947)

FIG. 4A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT PRIŠNICA (ARCH. LOVRO PERKOVIĆ), FLOOR PLAN, VARIANT I. SOURCE: THE TOWN PLOČE, ARCHIVES

FIG. 4B RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT PRIŠNICA (ARCH. LOVRO PERKOVIĆ), FLOOR PLAN, VARIANT II. SOURCE: THE TOWN PLOČE, ARCHIVES

FIG. 4C RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT PRIŠNICA (ARCH. LOVRO PERKOVIĆ), FLOOR PLAN, VARIANT III. SOURCE: THE TOWN PLOČE, ARCHIVES

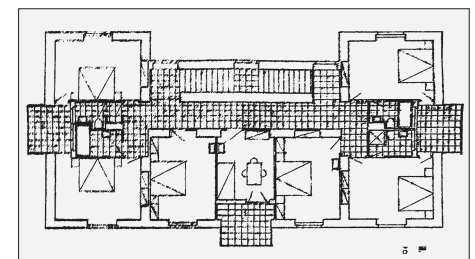
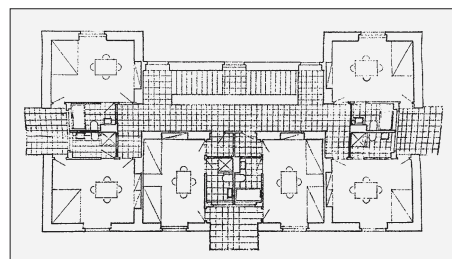
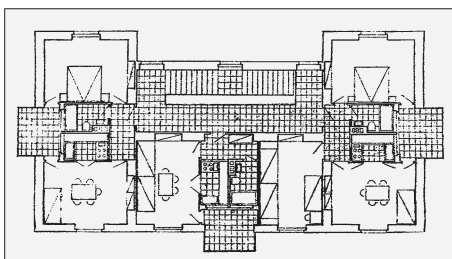




FIG. 5. PHOTOGRAPH OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AT PRISNICA (ARCH. LOVRO PERKOVIC), SOURCE: ***(1955)

a gentle slope (Fig. 1). The southern arch of the former Vranjak canal within the unregulated Neretva Delta determined the alignment of these streets, which concentrically follow the geometry of the original southern natural shoreline. The first stage of realisation of the port-industrial settlement, that is, the typical residential buildings, is also visible in a series of aerial photographs from 1955, 1960, 1966, 1968, and 2017, published in 2024 (Kranjčević, Barišić Marenić and Jelčić, 2024: 301-302). In the first phase of realisation, a series of typical longitudinal residential buildings, either four-storey or two-storey with gable roofs, were built along streets that follow the contours of the terrain, namely Vladimira Nazora and Rogotinska streets. The residential buildings form an urban structure of three concentric arc segments with slight deviations (Fig. 6a).

The western segment of Vladimira Nazora Street is characterised by two elongated, two-storey stone buildings whose concave ground floor plan follows the arc of the street. The rhythm of the concave southern façade is defined by the features of the loggia zone, entrance zone, perforated stone windows, and balcony zone, as well as the alternating

arrangement of the stone facade and smooth wall panels. The arrangement of front gardens and elevated entrances above the stone retaining wall, alongside the internal parallel access road that follows the slope as a ramp, establishes a gradual transition from public to private space and further reinforces the coherence of the overall design solution. The buildings are colloquially known as Railwaymen's Houses, as they were intended for railway personnel, or because of the large hewn stones that define their façades, as well as a series of typical railway houses built along the railway line. The central section of Vladimira Nazora Street is characterised by four longitudinal, four-storey buildings with two entrances and a sloping roof. The ground-floor business premises have increased ceiling heights, and the building typology includes two flats per staircase. The northern staircases are marked by a vertical band of horizontal concrete louvres. The residential buildings were built before 1956, but do not match the designs by Pavle Krat preserved in the Ploče Archives (***The Town of Ploče, Archives).

The northern Rogotinska Street is lined with fourteen two-storey elongated residential buildings, arranged parallel to the street and isohypse (Fig. 7). The living areas of the flats, with balconies, face south and overlook the bay. The buildings have a design suited to the local climate and tradition, with partially stone facades made of large hewn stones and gable roofs. Construction was completed in the 1950s.

Residential and commercial building H – 3 (architect Branko Došen, 1967, 1971)

More than fifteen years later, between the two-storey and four-storey buildings at 13 Vladimira Nazora Street (Fig. 6b), the residential and commercial building H-3 (1967, 1971) was built according to the design of Branko Došen (Project Office at the Banja Luka Technical School) (*** The Town of Ploče, Archives). The transverse layout of the north-south residential building differs from all the previously mentioned buildings along Vladimira Nazora Street and Rogotinska Street, and its axes extends to the southern residential building by Mladen Frka, built on low-lying flat terrain. The difference in the approach to urban planning and the use of

FIG. 6A RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AT VLADIMIRA NAZORA STREET, NR. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 (UNKNOWN AUTHOR), SOURCE: AUTHORS

FIG. 6B PHOTOGRAPH OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AT VLADIMIRA NAZORA STREET 13 (ARCH. BRANKO DOŠEN) AND VLADIMIRA NAZORA STREET 15-17, 19-21, 23-25 (UNKNOWN AUTHOR), SOURCE: AUTHORS



5 Documentation for other projects by architect Ivo Gersić has not been preserved in the Archives of the Town of Ploče and DAD, Metkovic Branch.

6 Since in Croatian the word "building" is feminine, the building is colloquially called Bombardella.

the hipped roof by the Banja Luka architect is evident here, and the imperative of open views towards the south and the bay characterises the southern gable facade.

High-rise residential building, the so-called Blok (architect Ivo Gersić, 1949)

Architect Ivo Gersić's residential and commercial building is a spatial and urban landmark of upper Ploče. Colloquially known as Blok, it was the largest residential building in the town of Ploče at the time of its construction in 1949 (Fig. 8). A photograph of the Ploče model includes a description of the building: "The new residential block, through its massing, defines and encloses the settlement's structure, giving it a distinct character." (***) (1955). The building was built on Kominska Street, numbers 2-5, on the slopes of Stražnica hill, at one of the highest points in the town, and dominates the view of the town from the south. The five-storey longitudinal building is oriented east-west. Four entrances with four staircases and a grid of circular windows create a rhythmic pattern on the northern facade. The northern entrances are grouped in two pairs. Two entrance zones for each pair of entrances enhance the quality of the residential neighbourhood with a shady porch, partial changes in level, and stone cladding, evoking a place for neighbours to gather and talk, children to play, and the formation of a spirit of community among the residents of the impressive building. The staircases are double-flighted, and between the two flights there is a lift, which was a rarity in southern Dalmatia at the time. Along the staircase core, there are three flats on each floor. Two larger apartments with dual-aspect orientation flank a smaller, centrally located apartment with a south-facing orientation. The living areas of all apartments face south, offering impressive views of the bay and the sea near Neretva Channel. Shaded southern loggias create a rhythm along the southern facade of the residential building. Due to the southward slope of the terrain, the base of the building comprises two prominent basement floors with storage rooms and a ground floor, all clad in roughly hewn stone. According to Tomislav Premerl, Ivo Gersić built "several residential buildings in Ploče" in 1949 (Premerl, 1998), but within this research only one building had been detected.⁵

⁵ The gallery building in Ploče was modelled on the six-apartment E-57, Experiment – 1957, which Vuko Bombardelli used for apartment buildings in Split (1958-1961), Kastel Sucurac, Dugi Rat, Čapljina, and Mostar (Matijević Barcot, 2020).

Residential building, the so-called Bombardelli (architect Vuko Bombardelli, 1959)

West of the so-called "Blok", a residential building colloquially known as Bombardelli was built in 1959, named after its architect Vuko Bombardelli (Kominska 1).⁶ The building features a gallery system, with a northern gallery and a staircase accentuated by a vertical, prominent wall panel (Fig. 9b). Architectural documentation has not been preserved in the archives in Ploče (***) (Town of Ploče, Archives). The construction of this residential building in Ploče is not recorded in the bibliographic units dedicated to the architect Vuko Bombardelli (Tušek, 2018: 30).⁷ Six apartments are arranged within eight transverse modules, accessed from the northern gallery (Fig. 9c). The clear grid of the southern facade of the modern building (Fig. 9a) contrasts with the lower, more traditional stone houses in Rogotinska Street. More modern construction technology, rationalisation, standardisation, and a shift away from traditional architecture fifteen years after World War II are evident in these two recently mentioned examples of residential buildings in Ploče.

The so-called former officers' residential buildings (unknown author, 1950s)

In the 1950s, five residential buildings, colloquially known as officers' buildings, were built along the eastern side of Tin Ujević Street (Staklarević and Štefanac, 2015: 289). The urban layout along the street comprises of an alternating sequence of elongated three-storey buildings with larger or smaller front gardens, a stone base, and loggias facing west, overlooking the western part of the bay. The floor plan features two symmetrical, transversely oriented apartments per staircase. The architectural documentation for all these apartment buildings has not been preserved in the Town Ploče, Archives and the architects remain unknown (***) (The Town of Ploče, Archives).



FIG. 7 PHOTOGRAPH OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AT ROGOTINSKA STREET (UNKNOWN AUTHOR), SOURCE: AUTHORS

FIG. 8 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, THE SO-CALLED BLOK (ARCH. IVO GERSIĆ) ABOVE RESIDENTIAL BLDGS. IN ROGOTINSKA AND VLADIMIRA NAZORA STREETS, SOURCE: DUJE JELČIĆ





project from 1963-1964 for Ploče (exact locations unknown), and in accordance with the requirements of the construction company GP Lavčević, from Split. These longitudinal, five-storey buildings with flat roofs have two entrances, each serving two apartments per staircase (two- and three-bedroom apartments). The basement floor contains smaller apartments, due to the sloping terrain, as well as a shared laundry room and woodshed. The living rooms and larger bedrooms have balconies, and three such vertical zones provide rhythm to the longitudinal facades.⁸

Residential Row Family Houses (architect Zoja Dumengjić, unrealised project, 1952)

An interesting project by architect Zoja Dumengjić from 1952 for a row of single-storey stone family houses with an “L” layout and an asymmetrical gable roof (Barišić Marenic, 2020: 268) remains unrealised.⁹

Residential buildings at Ban Josip Jelačić Square (architect Mladen Frka, 1961-1962)

Four typical three- and two-storey residential buildings were built on the reclaimed and levelled flat terrain beneath the arches of Vladimira Nazora and Rogotinska streets, at 2-9 Ban Josip Jelačić Square. The residential buildings have flat roofs and loggias oriented to the south or west, and the ground floor, or base, is clad in carved stone. In the Ploče Archives, only partial construction documentation of the cross-section details of the Residential Building with 16 apartments from 1961 (Town of Ploče) has been preserved. The cross-section detail of the facade is signed by Mladen Frka from the Dubrovnik Project Bureau Arhitekt. In this cross-section detail, alongside the reinforced concrete walls and cantilevered loggia overhangs, the intermediate floor structure of prefabricated “I” reinforced concrete beams 20 cm high and prefabricated panels is evident. The use of modern prefabricated systems enabled faster con-

⁸ The buildings are three stories above a low ground floor.

⁹ A typologically similar example is the later construction of the atrium residential rows by architect Ana Marija Jelincić Semencić in Siget, Zagreb (1969-1971, now mostly upgraded).

¹⁰ Born in Odessa and emigrated from Russia after October revolution.

¹¹ Pavao Krat (19/6/1907 Saratov, Imperial Russia – 1969, USSR) architect graduated in 1931. Between the two world wars he worked in Belgrade in the design office of Dragiša Krsovan. Designed the main post office building in Belgrade. Deported to the USSR because of the Imformbiro.

Tipaska osnova etaže sa 6 stanova E-57

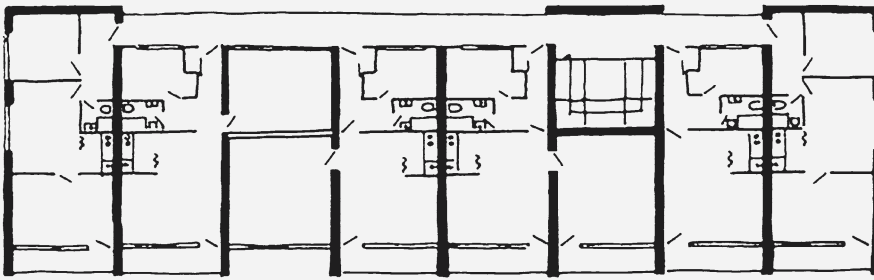


FIG. 9A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, THE SO-CALLED BOMBARDELLI (ARCH. VUKO BOMBARDELLI), SOURCE: AUTHORS

FIG. 9B PHOTOGRAPH OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, THE SO-CALLED BOMBARDELLI (ARCH. VUKO BOMBARDELLI), SOURCE: AUTHORS

FIG. 9C RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, SO CALLED BOMBARDELLI (ARCH. VUKO BOMBARDELLI), TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN OF FLOOR E-57, SOURCE: BILTEN 4. SPLIT: ARHITEKT, 1960.

Residential building (architects Mile Jovanović and Mladen Frka, 1966)

Although no complete architectural documentation has been preserved in the Metković Archives (HR-DAD, Metković), nor any other material in Ploče (***The Town of Ploče, Archives), a draft of the water and sewage connection at that location, the outlines of the building with an almost square floor plan, and the ground floor plan with water and sewage connections indicate that the apartment building at 2 Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević Street is the work of architects Mile Jovanović and Mladen Frka from the Ploče Construction Company, dating from 1966. The five-storey building with a flat roof dominates the elevation north of the original JNA Hall in the western part of Gornje Ploče.

Residential buildings Progres II (architect Ivo Kurtović, 1966-1967)

Two standard buildings in Stjepan Radić Street 3-5, 7-9 were built in 1966-1967, based on the Progres Standard residential buildings

struction and demonstrates the development of technology in southern Croatia. The research of this previously unknown realisation is a contribution to the largely unexplored oeuvre of the distinguished architect Mladen Frka. The residential buildings were designed by Mladen Frka from Dubrovnik, at the same time as he designed and built the exceptional modern hotel Vila Dubrovnik, east of Dubrovnik's Old Town. Framing shady loggias and maximising the best views, the contrasting articulation of the upper floors from the rougher stone base, or rocks in Dubrovnik, characterises both the hotel for wealthy guests in the south of Dubrovnik and the typical apartments in the port-industrial settlement.

DISCUSSION ON THE AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

The residential architecture of Ploče was mainly designed by Croatian architects and by few others from various backgrounds, contributing to the construction of the modern town. The authorship of several buildings is unknown, as no architectural documentation has been preserved, nor have the buildings been presented or evaluated in professional or scientific literature.

Building contractors are most often construction companies from Croatia, such as "Izgradnja" from Ploče, "Izvođač" from Makarska, "Graditelj" from Dubrovnik, the district construction company "Norin" from Metković (HR-HDA-248), and the Lavčević Construction Company from Split.

Zagreb based architects Zoja Dumengjić (1904-2000)¹⁰ and Ivo Geršić (1915-2002) designed i.e. realised residential projects for Ploče. Architect Lovro Perković worked in Dubrovnik (1939-1954) and then in Split (from 1954). Architect Vuko Bombardelli (1917-1996) was Split based architect (from 1950 until his retirement) with his first professional experience in Belgrade (1946-1950). Architect Ivo Kurtović (1928-2013) was a Split based architect and worked for the construction company Lavčević. Architect Mladen Frka (1929-2011) was a Dubrovnik based architect. Architect Mile Jovanović from Serbia (1902-1994) worked in Dubrovnik. The Russian architect Pavao Krat, who worked in Belgrade and Ploče and was expelled from Yugoslavia in the 1950s, is little known.¹¹

The first residential buildings were designed in Ploče by Lovro Perković (1947-1948), and they were built closest to the port. The modest post-war period and the traditional architecture of stone houses in southern Dalmatia influenced the climate-appropriate ar-

chitecture – stone houses with gable roofs. Their urban layout, designed for privacy, is intended to provide open views of the sea from the living rooms and balconies.

Most residential buildings are in the area of Veliki Milosavac and on the northern slopes of Pršnica hill. The so-called residential zone of collective construction in Veliki Milosavac covered 6.5 ha, while in Pršnica it covered 2.5 ha. For comparison, the area designated for the port was 22 ha (Urbanistički zavod Dalmacije, 1973: 61).

By 1973, with the adoption of the Master Plan of Ploče [Generalni urbanistički plan Ploče] (Urbanistički zavod Dalmacije, 1973), approximately 60 residential buildings were built in Ploče. "The number of apartments in social ownership approximately corresponds to the number of apartments in collective residential buildings and amounts to 821 apartments, which is about 14-15 apartments per building" (Urbanistički zavod Dalmacije, 1973: 62).

The Master Plan indicates that there was still demand for housing in Ploče, as several households shared a single apartment and more than 200 people lived in barracks. The attached table shows that most housing was built after World War II, primarily in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Apartments were also built in the neighbouring settlement of Rogotin. The Master Plan further shows that the barracks were still used for housing, there was demand for new apartment construction, and that in the early 1970s some residential areas still lacked utilities (Urbanistički zavod Dalmacije, 1973).

CONCLUSION

The earliest post WW2 residential architecture buildings realised in Ploče display design features close to tradition, such as the use of stone, while later projects show a more consistent articulation of modern architecture, refined with elements like roughly hewn stone, shady porches, and loggias.

Almost all living spaces in residential buildings offer impressive views of the sea bay or face south or west; this underpins the arrangement of residential buildings according to the urban plan. The pursuit of sea views is a key principle in Ploče's residential construction. Positioning staircases to the north (or toward the hinterland) aligns with this aim, and the design of this secondary façade varies with each architect's approach. The careful placement of residential buildings parallel to the terrain contours, the system of graded approaches and front gardens (green area), the transverse urban stairs providing pedestrian links to the sea, and the lush vegetati-



FIG. 10A RESIDENTIAL, SO-CALLED OFFICERS' BUILDINGS AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS (ARCH. MILE JOVANOVIĆ AND MLADEN FRKA), SOURCE: AUTHORS

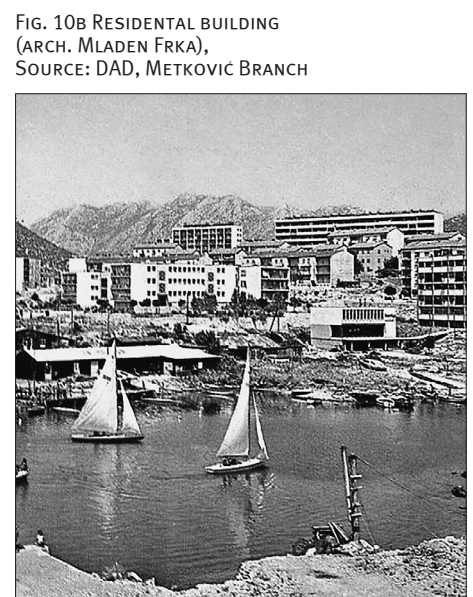


FIG. 10B RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (ARCH. MLADEN FRKA), SOURCE: DAD, METKOVIĆ BRANCH

TABLE II OVERVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ARCHITECTS IN PLOČE BY TOWN AREA, LOCATION AND YEAR (RELATED TO MARKS AT FIG. 2, AND FIG. 3- 10)

Marks Related to Fig.2	Architect	Ploče area and Address	Year	Residential building	Figures
		Lower Ploče			
L1	Lovro Perkočić	Prišnica 2, 3, 4 i 6	1947-1948	Four residential buildings, two storeys high, three flats at staircase	Fig. 3-5
		Upper Ploče			
U1	Unknown author	Vladimira Nazora Street 1,3,5,7,9,11	1950s	Three residential buildings, the so-called Railwaymen's Houses, two storeys high, three entrances	Fig. 6
U2	Branko Došen	Vladimira Nazora Street 13	1967; 1971	Residential and commercial building, four storeys high, four flats at staircase	
U3	Unknown author	Vladimira Nazora Street 15-17, 19-21, 23-25, 27-29	1950s	Four residential buildings, four-storey high, two entrances	Fig. 7
	Pavle (Pavao) Krat	Vladimira Nazora Street – unrealised project	~ 1950s	Residential building, four storeys high, two flats at staircase	
U4	Unknown author	Rogotinska Street	1950s	Residential buildings, one and two storeys high	
U5	Ivo Geršić	Kominska Street 2-5	1949	Residential building, the so-called Blok building, five storeys high, two twin entrances with common porch, three flats at staircase	Fig. 8
U6	Vuko Bombardelli	Kominska Street 1	1959	Gallery type residential building, the so-called Bombardelli, four storeys high, six flats per staircase	Fig. 9 abc
U7	Unknown author	Tina Ujević Street	1950s	Residential buildings, the so-called officers' buildings three storeys high	
U8	Ivo Kurtović	Stjepana Radić Street 3-5, 7-9	1966-1967	Residential building, four storeys high, two entrances, two flats at staircase	
U9	Mile Jovanović, Mladen Frka	Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića Street 2	1966	Residential building, five storeys high	Fig 10a
U10	Mladen Frka	Ban Josip Jelačić Square 2-9	1961-1962	Four typical residential building, three- and two-storey high, 16 flats	Fig 10b
		Unknown location			
	Zoja Dumengjić	Unrealised project	1952	Row houses, ground floor level, "L" shaped floor plan	

Source: Author's processing

on of unfenced external areas all contribute to the town's authenticity. Late modern architecture is interwoven with influences from the region's traditional architecture, including the use of stone cladding and, in part, gable roofs. Residents use the shaded loggias facing the sea as extensions of their living rooms throughout the year.

Several prominent Croatian architects who promoted modernism, such as Lovro Perkočić, Ivo Geršić, Zoja Dumengjić, Vuko Bombardelli, Mladen Frka, Mile Jovanović, and Ivo Kurtović, as well as architects from other parts of Yugoslavia, including Pavle Krat and Branko Došen, participated in designing the residential buildings. Zoja Dumengjić and Pavle Krat were Russian emigrants.

The attribution of individual residential buildings to specific designers remains uncertain, highlighting the need for further and more detailed research into this largely unexplored topic of modern architecture in the newly planned town of Ploče, which was almost entirely constructed during the socialist period.

This research, in addition to highlighting the previously unknown modern residential architecture of Ploče, contributes to raising awareness about the architecture of small towns and affirms modern architecture within the broader architectural heritage of Cro-

atia, as well as the architecture of a port industrial town within the heritage of Dalmatia. The work also aims to increase local residents' awareness of the value of the modern architectural heritage in their own town. Architecture of Ploče can be promoted as a tourist attraction, helping to diversify tourist routes in southern Dalmatia and ease pressure on overcrowded tourist hotspots. Despite the above, further research of the available data is needed to determine their inclusion in the Croatian corpus of residential architecture from that period.

Without much pretentiousness, urban greenery in residential areas is often associated with pedestrian sidewalks. Residential buildings in Ploče built until 1971 have remained almost unchanged since its construction and preserved from the damage caused by intense tourism and consumerism. For all these reasons, the residential architecture of Ploče has created a town on a human scale, offering an alternative to the overloaded tourist hotspots of Dalmatia.

This paper also points to the need to affirm and adapt modern architectural heritage to contemporary needs, not only for the sake of preserving the essence of this urban fabric, but also as a possible starting point for shaping future housing strategies.

TABLE III HOUSING INDICATORS IN PLOČE

Housing indicators	Number
Total number of apartments	1.136
Occupied business premises	11
Premises occupied out of necessity	81
Average number of households in one apartment	1,02
The average number of inhabitants in one apartment	3,76
Average apartment size in m ²	54,3
Apartment	
– built until 1918	22
– From 1919 to 1945	59
– From 1946 do 1960	448
– After 1970	594
Apartments equipped with all communal installations	957
The average area of the apartment per 1 tenant in m ²	14,5 m ²
Occupied workers' barracks and collective apartments	22
Number of people in barracks	247

Source: Urbanistički zavod Dalmacije (1973:50), arranged by the author

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4. HR-MGZ- Muzej Grada Zagreba [Museum of the City of Zagreb], Ostavština arhitekata Dumengjić.

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