

Grand Hotels Around the Kvarner Bay: Seaside Hospitality Between Austria and Hungary

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Abstract The hotel architecture around the Kvarner bay represents a specific Austro-Hungarian response to the Riviera phenomenon, made possible by the railway connections to the continental capitals of the Empire with the port of Rijeka. Through a detailed comparison between different investments and realisations, the article explores the ways of dealing with the *hotellerie* in the coastal area administratively divided between Austria, Hungary and Croatia in the last decades of the 19th century and the years leading to WWI.

Keywords Hotel architecture. Kvarner bay. Rijeka. Sušak. Crikvenica.

Summary 1 Rijeka and Sušak Between Hungarian Investments and Local Capital. – 2 Opatija/Abbazia: The Corporate Identity of 'Viennese Brighton'. – 3 Crikvenica: an Archduke in Action. – 4 Conclusion: Architecture of Grand hotels between Politics and Services.

The grand hotel, one of the emblematic phenomena of the 19th century, is usually referred to as a particularly apt illustration of the changing society of its time. These hospitality structures reach the level of lavishness previously reserved to noble palaces and become somewhat liberal places of public encounter across space and class.¹ The golden age of both city and leisure hotels in Europe is closely entwined with the development of the railway system and tourism, in particular with the pleasure of passing harsh winter months of inland Europe at the Mediterranean and the summer at the Northern seaside, which became a matter of upper-class habit in the second part of the cen-

ture. The Northern Adriatic participated in these developments, especially Venice, already an obligatory stop of the Ancien-Regime Grand Tour.² The earliest and the most prominent responses in the Austria-Hungary to the French and Italian riviera stimuli are to be found around the Kvarner bay in the north-eastern Adriatic, worth looking at in a more detailed comparative perspective.

The bay of Kvarner for centuries lived a complex political situation of a borderland between multiple political entities, which triggered the formation of a particular internal dynamic concerning administration, trade, investments, transport and social issues. Even after the region as a whole found itself

¹ Versions of this article have been delivered at the *11th International Conference on Urban History*, Prague, 2012 and *Grand Hotels at the Fin de Siecle. Global Dimensions, local experience*, Technische Universität Berlin, 2013. I would like to thank organizers and participants of these events and the anonymous reviewers at MDCCC 1800 for their suggestions. The historiography on various aspects of hotel history is rather vast, starting with influential Walter, Watkin 1984. For a recent historiographical summary see James 2018.

² Zucconi 2002.



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part of Habsburg Monarchy, shores of Kvarner remained administratively divided; these partitions became particularly intricate after the 1867 constitution of Dual Monarchy, followed by 1868 Hungarian-Croatian agreement, amended with a status of Rijeka as Hungarian territory in 1870.

During the last decades of the 19th century, the investments in infrastructures, especially train-lines, vehicled the creation of an open regional ecosystem, and the accelerated development of port towns of Rijeka and Sušak and prompted the transition into seaside resorts of Opatija and Crikvenica.³ The present article, stimulated by a recent book on Rijeka's "dualistic era" by Guido Zucconi and the exhibition on "Austrian Riviera" held in Wien Museum in 2013,⁴ analyses the Kvarner grand hotels serving the said system until WWI in terms of diverse capital flux and newly acquired conscience of tourism as an industry as well as a momentum of political and social influence. The focus on the hotel architecture is chosen as it embodies several dichotomies of modern life: it is both public and private, universal and local, serving the motion while standing still.⁵ How

these concepts were met by the investors and architects in a seaside *triplex confinium* is a question worth investigating, as it reproduced interests of continental capitals of Austria-Hungary, thus representing in a nut-shell the complexity of "competing visions" of the fin-de-siècle Monarchy".⁶

The relation of hotel architecture connected to train-lines, as well as to their surroundings, was an essential question at the time, as testifies the 1897 book by August Prokop (1838-1915), influential Austrian architect and professor at k.k. Technical school in Vienna.⁷ The present comparison between different hotels and their settings around the Kvarner bay is possible thanks to in-depth studies of single resorts and towns.⁸ Désirée Vasko-Juhász has given an Austrian viewpoint of Opatija and Crikvenica within networks of South Austrian railways and riviera.⁹ Moreover, turn-of-the-century hotel and bath architecture in present-day Croatia and around Kvarner has been recently studied by Mirjana Kos, Julija Lozzi Barković and Jasenka Kranjčević, embedding it within the medical and social discourse of the first tourism-related migrations.¹⁰

1 Rijeka and Sušak Between Hungarian Investments and Local Capital

The arrival of direct Hungarian rule over the Kvarner port of Rijeka in 1870 brought large investments in its port infrastructure and the construction of railway connections with Zagreb and Budapest within the system of Hungarian railways. A brunch of South Austrian railways tied Rijeka to Trieste and Ljubljana in 1873, although this direction, because of the steep incline, remained almost exclusively for passenger use.

The city blossomed with an extensive input of Hungarian capital, and its fast economic development required hospitality structures of a certain level. A Trieste businessman of Slovenian origin,

Giuseppe (Jožef) Gorup (1834-1912), promptly detected this need.¹¹ By 1874, when he bought the old hotel Europa at the port and had it completely rebuilt, Gorup had already invested in several apartment buildings on the newly filled terrain nearby, called Civitas Nova, extensively developed by a local businessman.¹² Significantly enough, for his hotel at the town's new sea-front he did not choose the same designers: this time he hired a prominent architect, Giuseppe Bruni, who by that time had authored the Palazzo Modello, which also contained a hotel, and the Municipal palace in Trieste, inspired both by Venetian renaissance buildings

³ On interaction and interdependence of ports and resorts in different geographical contexts, see Borsary, Walton 2011.

⁴ Zucconi 2008; Rapp, Rapp-Wimberger 2013.

⁵ See James, 2018.

⁶ On the "competing visions" concept see Moravanszky 1998.

⁷ Prokop 1897; Vasko-Juhász 2006, 46-7.

⁸ On Rijeka see Glavočić 1997; Žic 2000; Glavočić 2001. Crikvenica was mainly studied from the aspect of history of medicine and medical tourism, see Krištafor, Jurdana, Uremović 1988; while hotel architecture was investigated by Matejčić 1985. On Opatija see Radović Mahečić 2002; Vahtar-Jurković 2004; Zakošek 2005.

⁹ Vasko-Juhász 2006, 2017.

¹⁰ The historical hotel architecture in Croatia was also recently presented in an exhibition in Croatian museum of Tourism in Opatija with a small divulgative catalogue: Kos, Pintur, Urban 2011. For baths in the Kvarner area see Kos, Lozzi Barković 2009.

¹¹ Matejčić, 1975; Ivančević 2001, 306-27; Lozzi Barković 2000. On Josip Gorup see Glavočić 2013; <https://rijekaheritage.org/en/kj/hoteleuropa>.

¹² On Civitas Nova see Zucconi 2008, 36-42; Glavočić 2008.

such as Sansovino's Libreria or Codussi's Palazzo Vendramin Calergi and Lescot's projects for the Louvre.¹³

Hotel Europa was a large scale project, taking the whole rectangular block with the long facade reflecting in the waters of the port and the short one dominating the square once-called Piazza Adamich [fig. 1]. Three stories high, at the moment of its creation, hotel Europa was the most up-to-date and the most elegant structure in the centre of Rijeka, with Grand café Central on the ground floor serving as a gathering place for the city elite. This eclectic building, with its central part accentuated by giant pilasters and balaustrated balconies, features elements Bruni used on his Trieste houses, drawing inspiration from Italian Renaissance. The architect's Venetian training may have resulted useful also in resolving of the building's statics, as the drawings show no basement floor and vertical elements are well planted into the artificial terrain. The Hotel Europa remains less ostentatious and more classical-looking than Bruni's palaces in the neighbouring city, its minor inventiveness resulting in a more familiar feeling for the international travellers coming from the continental metropolis, just as the present-day hotel-chains tend to advocate.

Besides the elegant café and restaurant on the ground floor, whose seating capacities, as the architect suggested already in the project drawings, may have been enlarged by covering of the courtyard, the most impressive space remains the little saloon on the first floor, with fresco decoration by a local painter Giuseppe Fumi.¹⁴ The rooms of the upper floors were organised around the central corridor that ran through the wings, with less luxurious ones looking towards the central courtyard, while the bathrooms were shared [fig. 2].¹⁵ Built only four years after the first *grand hotel* was opened in Vienna, the commodities offered by Grand hotel Europa were soon to be exceeded by other structures in town. The hotel, especially its café, remained an important feature in the city life of Rijeka and a memento of the first phase of international experience of the newly established sea-port.

In the decades following the opening of hotel Europa, some twenty hotels were functioning in

the booming city, most of them in restructured earlier buildings. Usually smaller than Gorup's hotel, they were concentrated in the two "hospitality axis": one that runs from the port towards the new Hungarian Governor's palace (Lloyd, Bonavia) and the second one running from the port towards the new train station (Bristol, Hotel de la Ville, Hungaria).¹⁶ Among the designs, the most interesting is the 1909 project for Hotel Bristol by a Trieste architect active in Rijeka, Emilio Ambrosini, a generation younger than Bruni, for yet another local businessman, Josip (Giorgio) Ružić, with the solution of Ambrosini's signature intersecting polygons of the courtyard and staircase.¹⁷ Relatively modest in size, the hotel had a cafe and a restaurant on the ground floor and served mainly the business clientele coming to Rijeka by train.

The concept of a grand hotel connected to the baths, so well explored in Budapest and other Hungarian cities, was introduced to Rijeka in 1894 as an investment of brothers Sigismund and Artur Klein (Emödi). Two sets of drawings for later demolished hotel and baths called Bagno Ilona in Školjić (Scoglietto) area are known, the first by duo Havranek and Adriányi from Budapest (1893), with pumps that would have been produced by the factory of Ferenz (Franz) Walser [fig. 3].¹⁸ The second, much less opulent and more classical looking, is signed by otherwise unknown architect D. Marussig (1894).¹⁹ The location near the river, once facing the Biedermeier promenade with alee of trees, provided the baths with fresh water. At the same time, the sea baths were also possible thanks to the pipeline bringing it from the nearby coast.

The ambitious first project envisioned a large rectangular complex, with two courtyards around the domed space for the Turkish bath in the centre, a feature unknown in Rijeka beforehand. The ground floor was to host a restaurant and several pools and bath-tubs besides the central oval one, the most unusual being the semicircular basin in a rounded angular pavilion. The elegant elevation with hotel rooms on the upper floors and the intricate skyline of the complex with separate little towers also recalled Budapest architecture of the period. The Hungarian capital city is even echoed

13 Firmiani, Walcher, Favetta 1975. On Bruni's Trieste hotel projects see Bulfone Gransinigh 2020.

14 Pustišek, 2011.

15 HR-DARI-57/3.1.19.1(37/1874), box. 115.

16 Žic 2000, 56-63. On hotel Lloyd see <https://rijekaheritage.org/hr/kj/hotellloyd>.

17 HR-DARI/51, 153, 155. On Emilio Ambrosini see Pustišek 2011.

18 HR-DARI/57, 3.1.18.22., 31/1893. See Kos, Lozzi Barković 2009, 104-9. Ferenc Havranek and Géza Adriányi are the authors of the project for the Town hall in Debrecen, see Dávid 1981.

19 Marussig is a surname typical of Trieste region. See Ivančević 2001, 324-5.

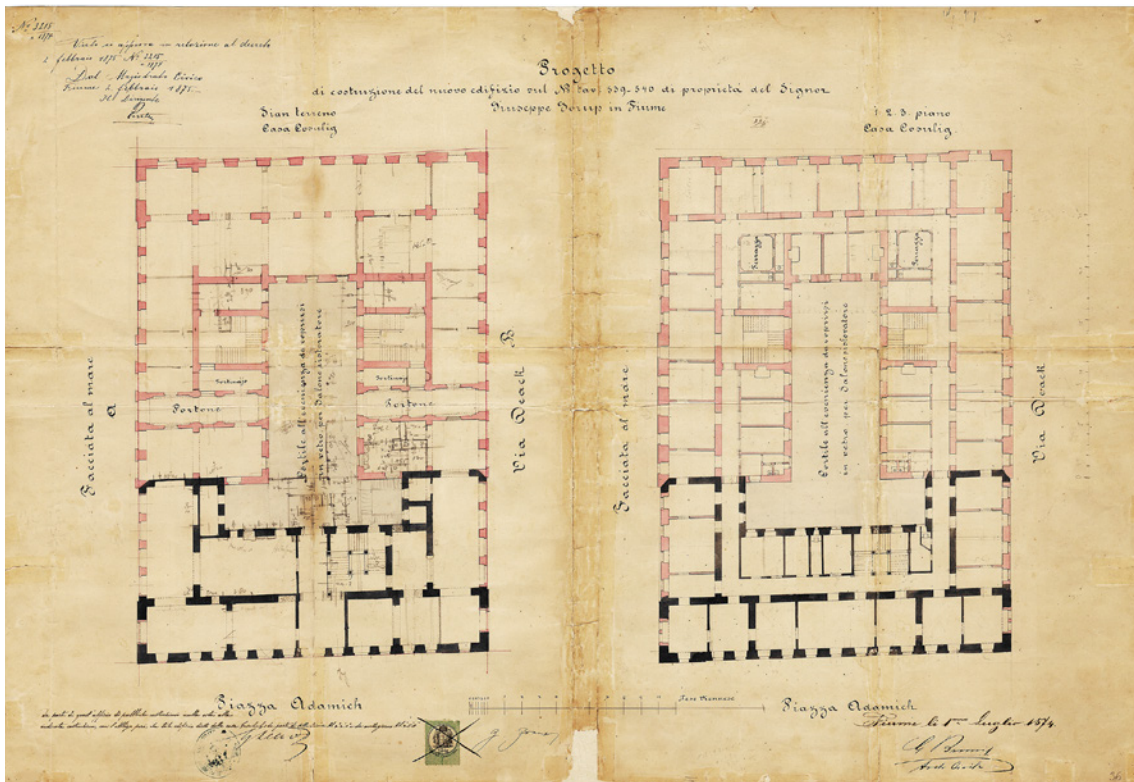


Figure 1 Grand Hotel Europa Rijeka. 1890 ca. Postcard. Private collection

Figure 2 Giuseppe Bruni, Grand Hotel Europa Rijeka, plans. Rijeka, Državni arhiv Rijeka (State archive Rijeka) HR-DARI-57/3.1.19.1 (37/1874), box 115

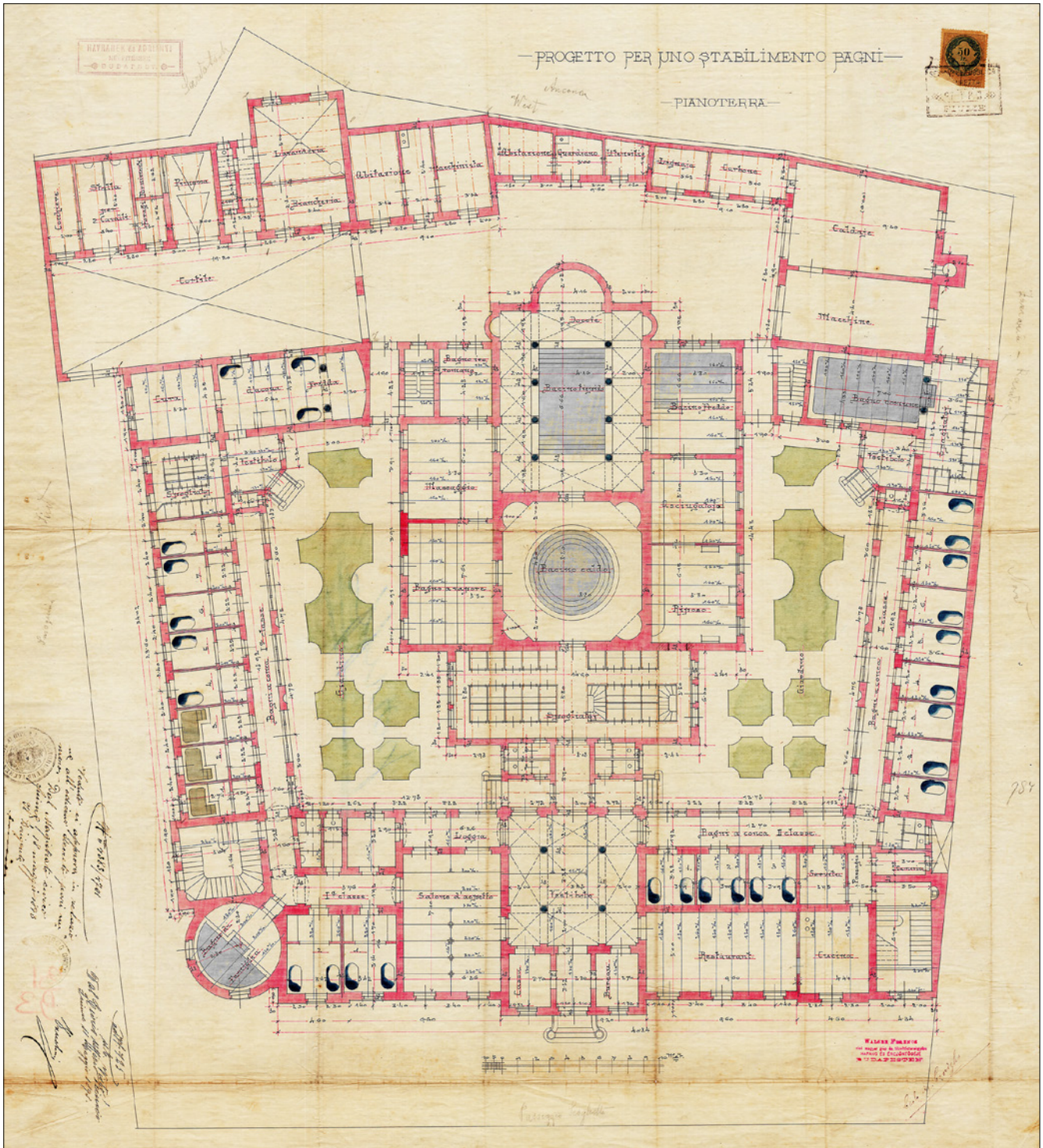


Figure 3 Ferenc Havranek and Géza Adriányi, *Bagno Ilona*.
Rijeka, Državni arhiv Rijeka (State archive Rijeka)
HR-DARI-57, 3.1.18.22 (31/1893)



Figure 4

Szilárd Zielinski,
Hotel, Rijeka. 1910 ca.
 Postcard collection
 Sergio Kristafor,
 in *Arhitektura secesije
 u Rijeci*, 256

in the somewhat dramatic position of the hotel under the steep vertical rocks, reflecting those of Buda hill where some of the most lavish baths and hotels, such as Hotel Gellert, are situated. Had it been realised, the complex might have been the most luxurious grand hotel featuring pools and baths in Rijeka, very clearly pointing towards Hungarian clientele used to an approach to bathing and body new to Kvarner area.

Bagno Ilona was built in 1894 according to the second, a sober neo-Renaissance project, with pools, Turkish baths, bath-tubs and showers on the ground floor and residential spaces on the first floor.²⁰ The documentation on its activity and finally, demolition, remains scarce. Still, the existence of the pipeline for the seawater is documented again in 1899, while in 1900 the building underwent a comprehensive restructuring according to the project of Rijeka architects Giovanni Maria Curet and Ugo Pagan, adding more hygiene-related content to the upper floor, with a second intervention following in 1906. It seems that the building did not function as a hotel, envisioned in the sumptuous first project based on Hungarian models and by Hungarian architects, as its Hungarian owners adapted to a more modest size of the pro-

vincial town. Nevertheless, the building offered a new format for public bathing, introducing a significant change to personal hygiene and well-being.

After the turn of the century, Rijeka became a gathering port for the Central-European emigrants to America. In order to control the flux of this particular group arriving in Rijeka by trains, the Hungarian government invested in a specific hotel situated away from the city centre that could host as many as 1500 people [fig. 4].²¹ It was built according to a project by Budapest engineer Szilard Zielinski (1860-1924), who used the Hennebique system for this reinforced concrete structure. The building was poor in ornament but rich in services: it provided spaces not only for sleeping but also for washing and medical examination, as well as for communal activities. The structure was not an elegant grand hotel, but it was an innovative project that used the most recent building techniques and sanitary standards unmet by hotel Europa and should be considered as an answer of the establishment to a specific urban problem.

Sušak, the municipality on the east bank of the river Rječina belonging to Zagreb-ruled territories, also built its turn-of-the-century grand hotels. The one echoing the role that Hotel Europa

²⁰ HR-DARI/57, 3.1.19.1, 97/1894. Školjić 12. See also Kos, Lozzi Baković 2006, 108.

²¹ Rotim-Malvić 1997, 2009.

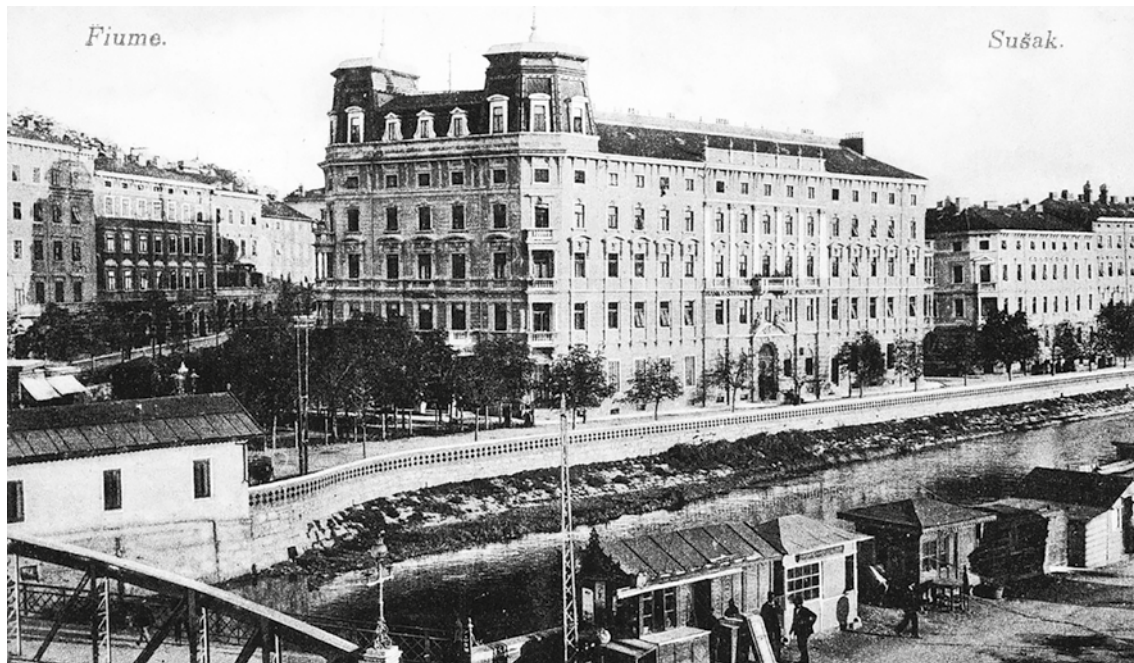


Figure 5 Mate Glavan, *Hotel Kontinental Sušak*. 1910 ca. Postcard. Državni arhiv Rijeka (State archive Rijeka) HR-DARI-279/RI-270

had for the Hungarian port, and its sea-front is an 1888 building for the town's major Hinko Bačić, built by entrepreneur and architect Mate Glavan [fig. 5].²² It became trendy among the locals for its restaurant and café, and its upper stories soon changed their original residential function and became a hotel named Kontinental. Interesting for its cut - angular shape and the two towering roof structures, Kontinental through its eclectic decoration and elegance recalled the continental metropolis, cities of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from which its guests were arriving.

The long curving seashore of Sušak featured a different type of hotel, which is a hybrid between the city hotel and the leisure one, opened with balconies and bathing structures towards the sea. A hotel-sanatorium Pećine was one of the first health-related facilities, opened in 1909 in an adapted older building, featuring spaces for both elementary medical care and hotel rooms.²³

Hotel Jadran, built as an investment of group of local businessmen in the eve of the WWI,²⁴ represents a swan song of Belle-époque at Kvarner: its angular forms, resulting from its reinforced con-

crete structure, witness for a change of taste in the most dramatic manner, as it is one of the first hotels that explores both structural and esthetic aspect of this kind of structures [fig. 6]. It had 50 rooms, running water and electricity, offering also an organised transfer from the train station and a renowned restaurant. Its sea-bathing facilities, open to the general public, were incorporated within the building structure, with separate access staircases for male and female bathers. Numerous old postcards speak volumes about the popularity of these sea-baths among the locals, which remained open through the war-time period.

Rijeka and Sušak as sea-ports in expansion featured elegant town-hotels of a city-palace type, offering hospitality to businessman and travellers. The hotels were also important spaces of interaction for the locals, such as cafes and restaurants, which soon became gathering places of the city elites. The hotels built by local capital and Trieste or Rijeka architects were concentrated in the vicinity of the port or the train station. Hungarian investors in Rijeka imported a type of an indoor

²² Rotim-Malvić 1997, 458-65.

²³ Kos, Lozzi Barković 2006, 131-4.

²⁴ Lozzi Barković 1996; Bradanović 1997, 332-88. 515; Kos, Lozzi Barković 2006, 135-7; <https://rijekaheritage.org/hr/kj/hoteljadran>.

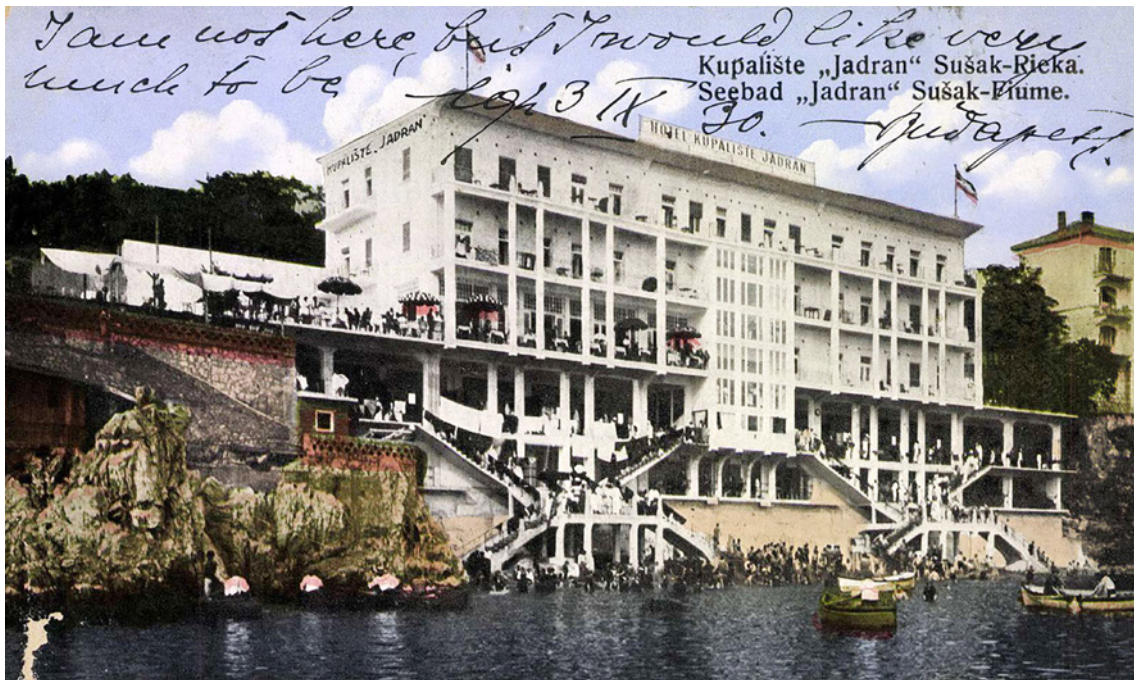


Figure 6 Unidentified architect, *Hotel Jadran, Sušak*. 1930 ca. Postcard. Private collection

bath-hotel and a large transfer-hotel, corresponding to the specific needs of different social groups. In the eve of WWI, local investors in Sušak understood the advantages of the railway connections

and the seaside, presenting a hybrid town/leisure hotel which offered accommodation for business visitors and tourists but also attracted locals for its bathing facilities.

2 Opatija/Abbazia: The Corporate Identity of ‘Viennese Brighton’

On the western part of the bay, under the direct rule of Vienna, benefits of the area’s mild climate were soon recognised by well-known Austrian and Croatian medical specialists.²⁵ Heads of Southern Austrian railways identified the opportunity for investment and development of health-related tourism [fig. 7]. The company was holding train lines between Vienna, Trieste and Rijeka, and had already invested in alpine resorts of Neu-Toblach/Dobbiaco and Semmering, famous for the fresh-air treatments.²⁶ Therefore, they constructed a line between Ljubljana and Rijeka and built the train station in Matulji, just above Opatija, equipped even with a royal waiting-room. Horse-carriages and, from 1908, an electric tram line provided the

connection to the seaside.²⁷ In 1882, the company’s propulsive director Friedrich Julius Schüller (1832-1894) bought Villa Angiolina in Opatija, a gracious mid-century building immersed in a lush park previously owned by a local merchant and politician Higinus (Iginio) Scarpa.

Soon the company’s strategy for the development of the seaside resort similar to French and British riviera ones was put into action through the acquisition of a series of lots in villa’s vicinity. Moreover, Antun Silberhuber (1839-1899), the director of South railways’ medical institutions in Opatija and the head of Austrian Touring club founded the local branch of the club and used it as a channel to build a net of promenades and walk-

²⁵ Radović Mahečić 2002, 132-3; Zakošek 2005; Vasko-Juhász 2006.

²⁶ Vasko-Juhász 2006,

²⁷ Zakošek 2007

ing paths as well as parks through donations of locals and celebrity guests of Opatija. In 1887 the South Railways hired a renowned doctor from Vienna, Julius Glax (1846-1922), as a head of development of their Opatija facilities, and the place rapidly developed into a small town with running water and electricity.

The first grand hotel, Quarnero, was built in 1884 according to the designs by the company's architect, Franz Wilhelm [figs. 8, 9].²⁸ He was an engineer-architect who, like company's head architect Wilhelm von Flattich (1826-1900),²⁹ came to Austria after the conclusion of the construction of the Württemberg main train-line. Wilhelm assisted Flattich in designing the now lost South train station in Vienna as well as hotels and holiday homes in the abovementioned alpine resorts, creating highly typified and functional architecture. Its decorative language featured both classical elements and hints to the wood-frame architecture of the region. When Flattich, who also designed the central train station in Trieste (now known as Trieste Centrale), left the company, Wilhelm provided somewhat dry but well-proportioned designs for Südbahnhotel in Semmering and hotels in Opatija.

Hotel Quarnero, an ambitious project inserted between the two Opatija emblematic buildings, the Villa Angiolina and the 15th century church of Saint Jacob, initially had an appearance of a late-19th century Viennese palace, with conventionally-sized openings and only a few balconies on the side facing the sea, alien to any local stimulus.³⁰ Wilhelm designed a small annexed bathing pavilion featuring male and female compartments with bath-tubs for warm sweet- and saltwater baths, looking like a small alpine train station. A complete typological novelty in the company's repertoire was a large building containing tubs for cold baths and changing cabins with the stairs to access the sea, where Wilhelm had to look across the Adriatic for inspiration, to sea-bath-buildings of Rimini and Viareggio. In response to the increasing number of bathers, the baths were enlarged in 1904 according to the Alois Breyer's projects.³¹

A second, much larger hotel, was named after the crown-princess Stephanie and opened in her and her husband's presence in 1885 [figs. 10, 11].³²

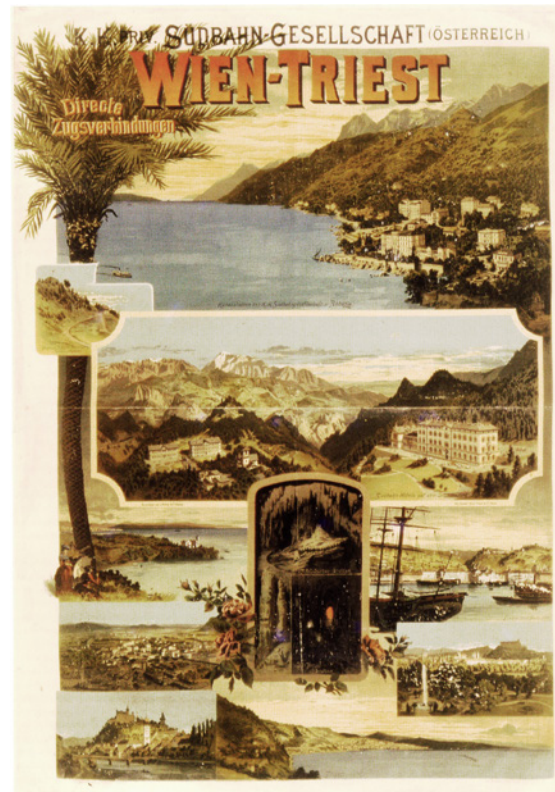


Figure 7 J. Weber, P. Balze, Poster. 1898. K.K. priv. Südbahn-Gesellschaft (Österreich) Wien-Triest. Wienbibliothek, Plakatsammlung

This large rectangular block with two internal courtyards, just like slightly earlier Hotel Europa in Rijeka. The project was published in 1892 issue of *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, featuring a reading-room, a billiard room and a “conversational-room” as well as hairdressers and a cleaning room at its ground floor, all services typical for the luxury hotels of the period.³³ In 1892, a new restaurant and an impressive hall were added on the side, evidently crucial for the mundane life of its visitors.

The two hotels and all their dependencies functioned as a system: the guests from hotels used the baths at Quarnero until, in 1902, the large

²⁸ Zakošek 2005, 143; Vasko-Juhasz 2006.

²⁹ Vasko-Juhasz 2006,

³⁰ The project was published in *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, 57, 1892, Bl. 14. Radović Mahečić 2002, 136-40.

³¹ Zakošek 2005, 145; Kos, Lozzi Barković 2006, 91-4.

³² Radović Mahečić 2002, 141-2; Zakošek 2005, 135.

³³ *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, 57, 1892, Bl. 17, 18.

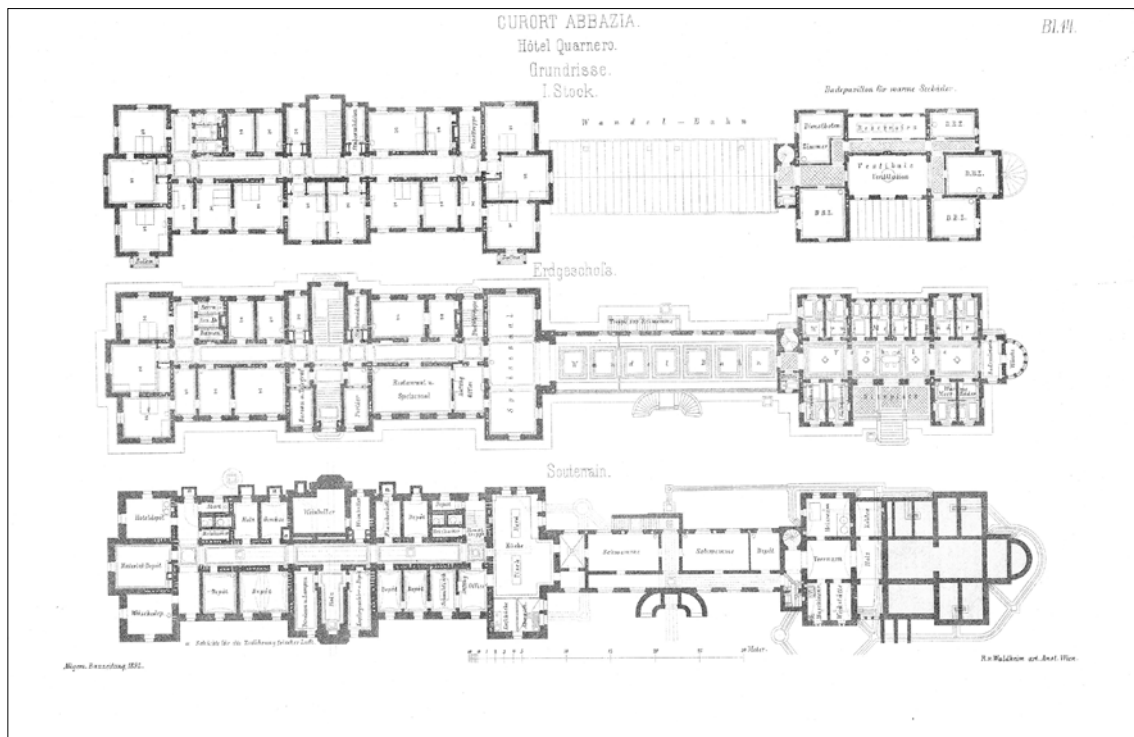


Figure 8 Franz Wilhelm, *Hotel Quarnero*. 1892. Plan. *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, 57, Bl. 14

bath-building named after Archduke Ludwig Viktor was erected in connection to Hotel Stephanie on the Opatija's main street, by the next generation of Sudbahngesellschaft-related architects, Alfred Wildhack and Robert Morpurgo.³⁴ An elegant turn-of-the-century building responded to the need for more advanced spa treatments not only for the guests of the specific hotel, but for the whole resort, and its central saloon, together with numerous cafes, became the centre of mundane activities. It featured warm and cold sea and fresh-water baths in bath-tubs and other spa treatments, but the planned in-door swimming pool was never built. This made obsolete the spa pavilion of Hotel Quarner, so in 1909 it was transformed in a great hall suitable for a grand café and evening galas, as explained in *Wiener Bauindustrie-Zeitung* of 1910.³⁵

Just like in Neutoblach/Dobbiaco nuova, in the vicinity of the first Sudbahnhotels in Abbazia/Opatija numerous other hotels were built: in 1888

doctor Ignaz Schwarz and his relatives invested in a sanatorium (today Hotel Opatija), made according to designs of Friedrich Sigmundt (1856-1917), the Austrian architect active in Vienna, Graz and Ljubljana.³⁶ Sigmundt collaborated with Wilhelm, and the hotel-sanatorium named Quisisana followed the block-like structure of the earlier hotels. The modernisation of the services took place on the opposite side of the Slatina bay, where Josef Grusser erected a large structure of hotel Bellevue in 1891. Soon it was advertised by his son Antun as having balconies directly on the sea, sweet and salt water baths on each floor, elevators, electricity and central heating, as well as the spaces typical of the grand hotels: hall, reading and game rooms, small and large dining rooms. The modernisation of forms, now privileging terraces with the sea-view, is announced with competition-winning design by Max Fabiani (1865-1962) for the Sanatorium for the Office workers (Beamtenkurhaus)

³⁴ Zakošek 2005, 298; Kos, Lozzi Barković 2006, 98-100.

³⁵ "Umbau des Caffè Quarnaro" 1910; Radović Mahečić 2002, 137.

³⁶ Zakošek 2005, 188; Vasko-Juhász 2004, 255.



Figure 9 Franz Wilhelm, *Albergo Quarnero*. 1930 ca. Postcard. Private collection

[fig. 12].³⁷ The building was constructed in 1896 as a single block with angular towers connected by long balconies supported by pillars and somewhat whimsical tall columns. The style of the decoration reflects Fabiani's vicinity with Otto Wagner and the design was published in *Der Architect* in 1898.³⁸

By the 1890s, the approach to the hotel architecture in Opatija had considerably evolved, also as a consequence of multiple private and public investments. In 1892 the building-order was issued, instructing that only isolated buildings with the main façade towards the sea in the greenery are to be permitted.³⁹ Nevertheless, the image of the resort remained highly controlled by the company that initiated its development. The *Sudbahngesellschaft* erected several smaller dependencies and villas surrounded by the parks, making Opatija/Abbazia essentially a *Hoteldorf*, brought to life by the capital of an Austrian company and continued developing as such, with very little interest in the

local traditions. The fishing village ceased to exist: by the end of the 19th century, its transformation into the cosmopolitan resort of grand hotels and villa-dependencies submerged in trimmed parks and gardens for affluent clientele was completed.

In 1889 Opatija was granted, by imperial decree, a status of health-resort. Its guests were the elites from all Austrian lands, as well as Hungary, the Habsburgs and other nobility, Bulgarian, Prussian and Romanian royal couples and internationally known artists. Extensive and sophisticated hospitality and spa structures were in constant need of qualified workers: the internationalisation of Opatija brought cooks and pastry chefs, concierges and medical personnel from large continental towns of Austria-Hungary, bringing changes to all social categories in the area.⁴⁰

A romantic vision of the eclectic leisure park was continued in numerous buildings by Viennese architect Carl Seidl (1858-1936) who served pub-

³⁷ Pozzetto 1981, 140; 1983, 44-5; Radović Mahečić 2002, 142-3; Hrausky 2015, 22; Damjanović 2020, 85-6.

³⁸ *Der Architect*, IV, 1898, T. 34.

³⁹ Vahtar-Jurković 2004

⁴⁰ Kos, Pintur, Urban 2011, 53-8.



Figure 10 Franz Wilhelm, *Hotel Stephanie*. 1892. Plan. Opatija. In *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, 57, Bl. 17

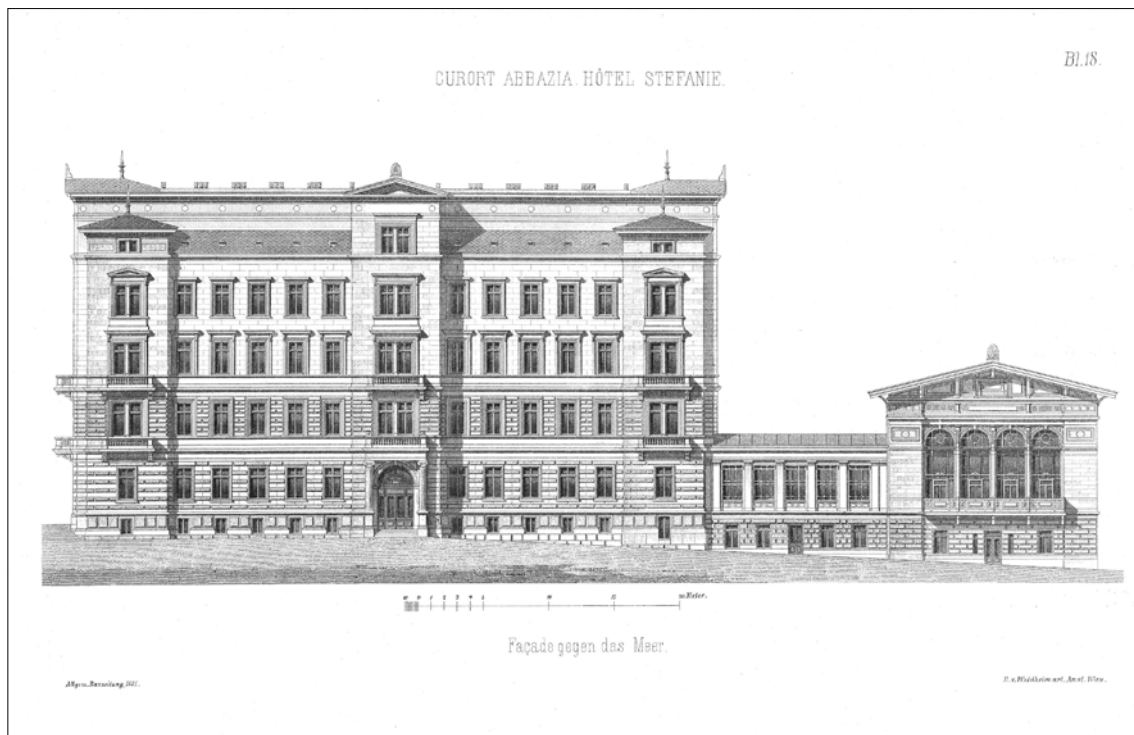


Figure 11 Franz Wilhelm, *Hotel Stephanie*. 1892. Elevation. Opatija. In *Allgemeine Bauzeitung*, 57, Bl. 18

lic (Courthouse, Municipal house, the Evangelic and the Catholic church) and private commissioners (numerous villas: Schmidt-Zabierew, Nizza, Count Brunitzky, Edera, Ariston, and Tomasi).⁴¹ The architecture of the first hotels appeared as rather dull to advocates of modernism: Josef Hoffmann, writing about the k.u.k. Riviera in 1895 issue of *Der Architekt* notes their resemblance to the train stations.⁴² Unsurprisingly, Hoffmann was pleased only by Carl Seidl villas, as picturesque as his sketches of traditional houses in the nearby village of Volosko, published on the same page of the magazine.

A final large project of the Belle-Epoque Opatija was the new Kurhaus, ought to be built on a large artificial peninsula in front of Villa Angelina. The designs by the Viennese architectural trio of Wagner students, Emil Hoppe (1876-1957), Marcel Kammerer (1878-1959), and Otto Schonthal (1878-1961) won the first prize in a public competition in 1911, envisioning a sizeable polyfunctional complex, including a pool with artificial waves

[fig. 13].⁴³ The outbreak of the WWI cut its realisation short. However, Hoppe, Kammerer and Schonthal published yet another project for a hotel in Abbazia in 1914, which shows enrichment of volumes and spatial development of the main level of the hotel [figs. 14, 15]. Its upper floors are organised around two interior courtyards framed by distribution hallways, building on the experience of Hotel Stephanie. Interesting remains the choice of façade opened only by rectangular and bay windows, without any concession to the Mediterranean climate and already established typology with balconies and terraces.

Two large scale buildings show an updated formal language, both featuring semicircular volumes for communal spaces devised to enable a dynamic interplay of sea-views and light. Had they been built, they would have changed the waterfront of Opatija, with the Kurhaus dwarfing Villa Angiolina, the initial core of what had become the most beloved the maritime touristic *Dorf* in the Monarchy.

⁴¹ On Seidl see Valušek 1990, 2019.

⁴² Hoffman 1895, 37.

⁴³ *Der Architect*, 1912, B. 96; Whyte 1989, 82-3; Kos, Kranjčević 2016, 34-5; Kranjčević 2017, 93, Damjanović 2020, 87.

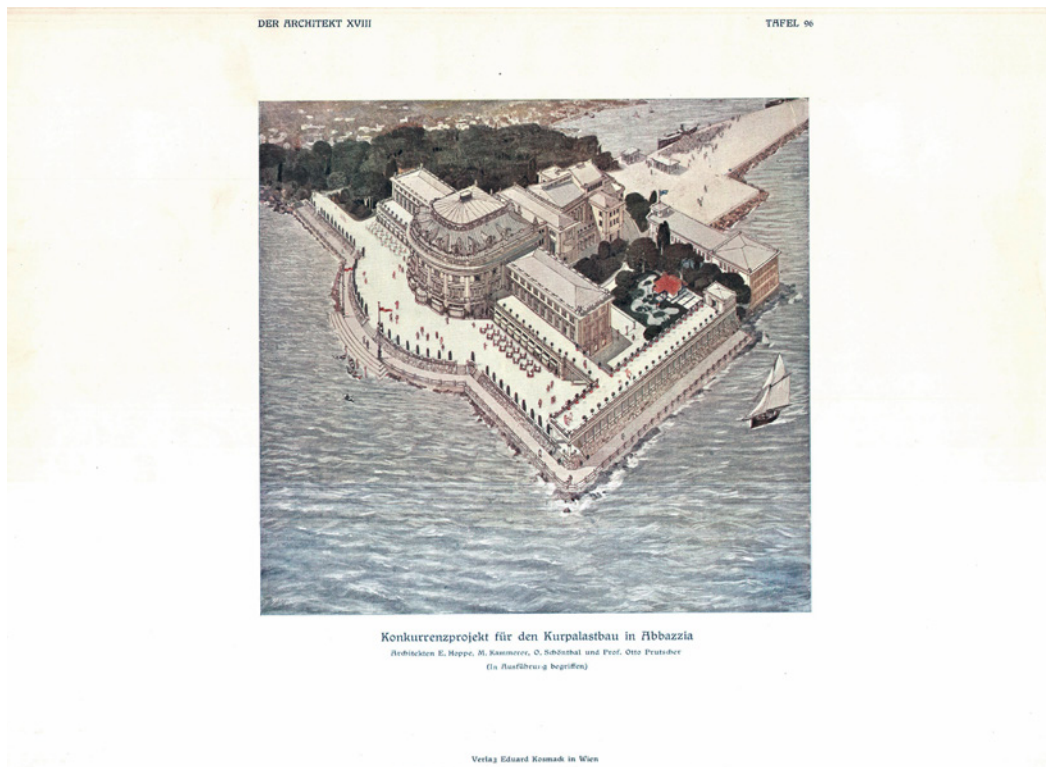


Figure 12 Max Fabiani, *Sanatorium for the Office Workers (Beamtenkurhaus)*. 1898. *Der Architect*, IV, T. 34

Figure 13 Emil Hoppe, Marcel Kammerer, Otto Schonthal, *Kurpalastbau, Abbazia*. 1912. In *Der Architect*, XVIII, T. 96

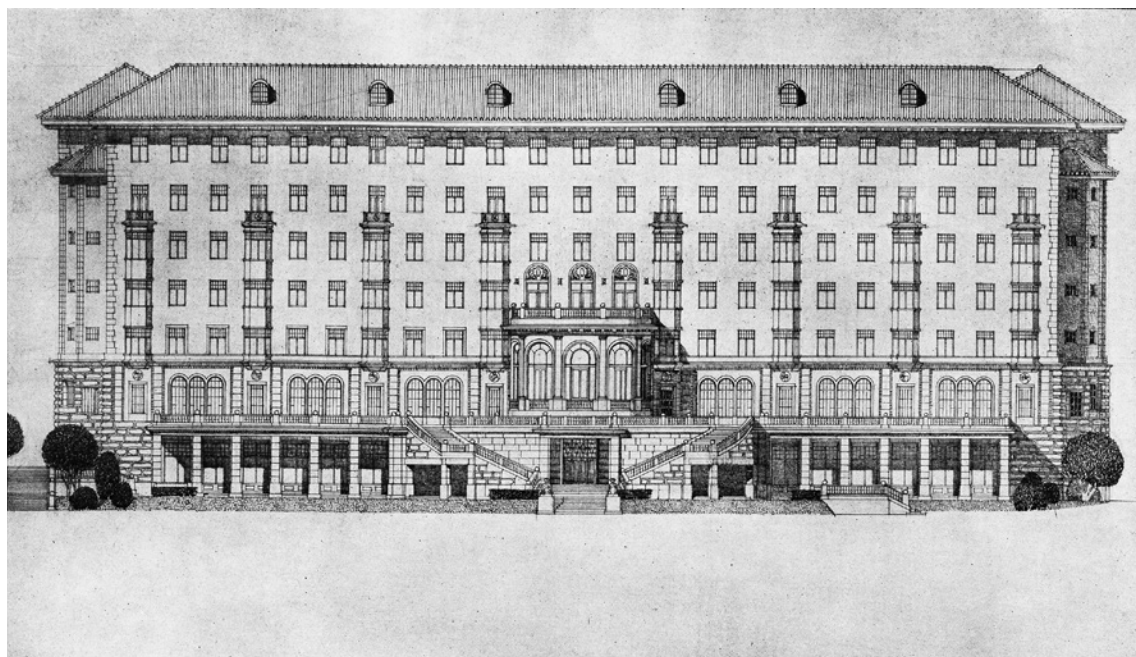
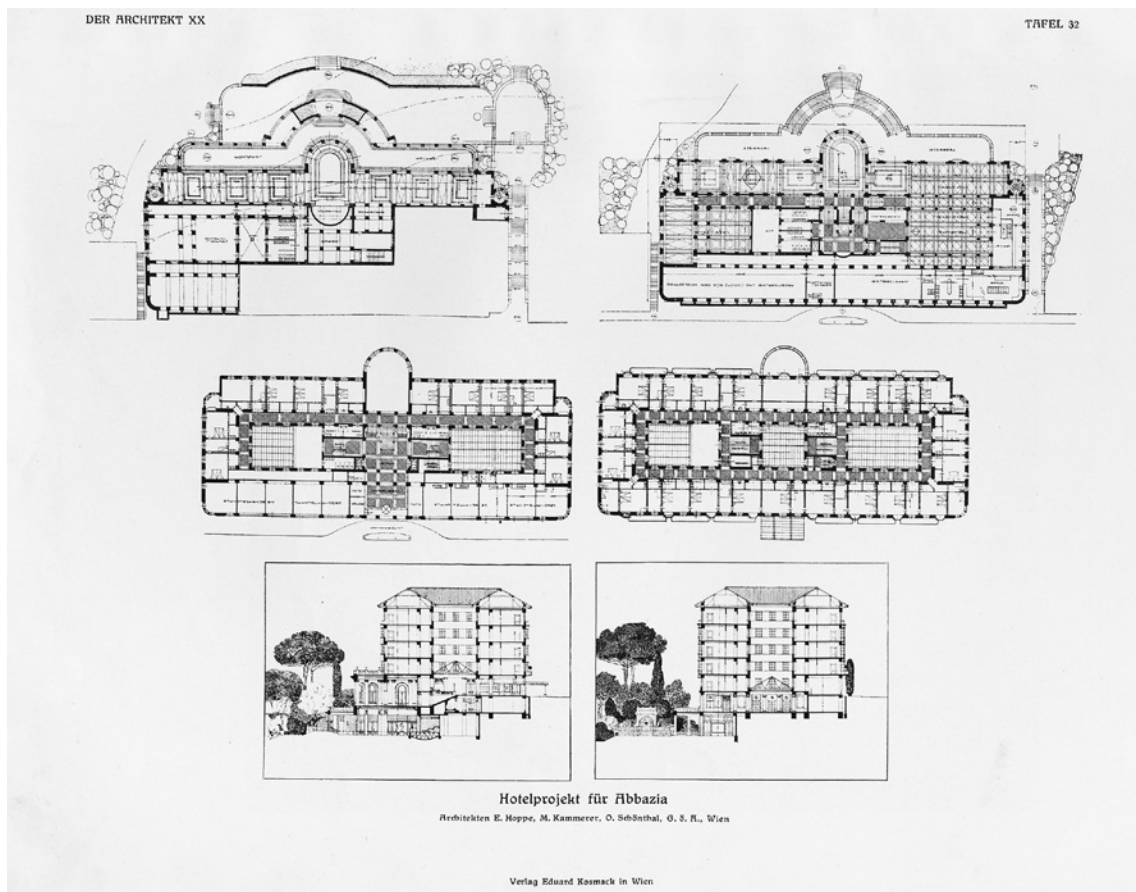


Figure 14 Emil Hoppe, Marcel Kammerer, Otto Schonthal, *Designs for a hotel in Opatija*. 1914. Plan. *Der Architect*, XX, T. 31

Figure 15 Emil Hoppe, Marcel Kammerer, Otto Schonthal, *Designs for a hotel in Opatija*. 1914. Elevation. *Der Architect*, XX, T. 32

3 Crikvenica: an Archduke in Action

On the southern side of Kvarner, in Crikvenica, a fishermen village around the 15th century Pauline monastery developed into fashionable holiday and health resort preferred by the Hungarian and Croatian elites. In 1891, an influential professor of math at Graz University, cartographer and passionate alpinist Johannes Frischauf published the first guidebook of Crikvenica area. Entitled *Klimatischer Curort und Seebad Crikvenica*, it described area's natural beauty and mild climate characterised by mixing of the mountain and maritime air, a fact considered particularly beneficial for respiratory problems.⁴⁴ The village lay relatively near the transportation system put in service of Hungarian port of Rijeka, and it was easily reachable by steam-boats, especially after the construction of the new pier in 1871.

Unlike Opatija, where a large transport corporation was involved in both creation of services and building of grand hotels, Crikvenica was brought to mundane life mainly thanks to efforts of Archduke Joseph Karl Ludwig von Habsburg (1833-1905), the palatine of Hungary.⁴⁵ The member of the "Hungarian branch" of the Habsburg dynasty, he resided mainly in his castle Alcsút in Hungary. In 1881 he bought a villa in Rijeka which became his family primary winter residence. His interest in benefits of baths and bathing was revealed already in 1868 when he commissioned a project of a large bath-house and a Grand hotel on his estate at Margaret island in Pest to the architect Miklos Ybl (1814-1891).⁴⁶ Joseph Karl also took part in shaping the panorama of pre-industrial Hungarian economy as one of the founders of Hungarian Economic Association, a fact that indicates a character of means, connections and influence necessary for creating a new pole of attraction for demanding continental travellers.

The Archduke endorsed a formation of a Budapest-based consortium which financed the most impressive tourism-related structures in Crikvenica,⁴⁷ built by the firm *Josef Holub & Konsorten* [fig. 16].⁴⁸ In 1892, the consortium seemed to have approached Viennese architect Arnold Lotz (1851-1930),⁴⁹ and he designed a vast and relatively rigid neo-baroque hotel complex on the slope overlooking the sea [fig. 17].⁵⁰ Inspired by the monumental Viennese architecture of the 18th century, filtered through the late 19th century examples such as Karl von Hasenauer's and Gottfried Semper's the *Neue Burg*, Lotz envisioned the large main hotel building connected to its two lateral annexes with curved arcaded porches. In a somewhat reverse vision of the *Schönbrunn* and its *Gloriette*, a second rectilinear colonnaded porch, ennobled by a triumphal-arch structure, is running along the shore. The theme of the arcades also defines the main floor of the hotel building. In contrast, the upper floors have conventual rectangular openings similar to Lotz's Viennese designs, such as the contemporary "Marc Aurel-Hof" (Marc Aurel-Straße 6). The concession to the Mediterranean climate is the balconies and loggias at the angles of the main building. The high domed roof of the central pavilion of the main building remains a typical continental element of the era, often used by the Viennese atelier *Fellner&Helmer*, with whom Lotz also collaborated. A particularly extravagant aspect of the complex would have been an underground tunnel connecting the main building with the seaside porch, thus enabling a careless stroll in any weather. Budget-wise, the immense complex must have been an impossible business enterprise, even for a consortium under archducal protection.

The realised complex by architect Josef S. Hö-

⁴⁴ Frischauf 1891.

⁴⁵ Married to princess Clotilde of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1846-1927), he distinguished himself as a botanist, planting experimental botanical gardens around his Rijeka and Alcsút estates, as well as on Margaret Island in Budapest. The archduke was also an accomplished linguist, with particular interest in Gypsy language and folklore, resulting in a first Roman-Hungarian dictionary and grammar book. Archduke was also interested in medicine, having taken exams at the University of Padua in his youth, see v. Wurzbach 1860; Vasko-Juhász 2017.

⁴⁶ Bellák et al. 1991, 236-42; Sisa 1992.

⁴⁷ Matejčić 1985, 325-57. The consortium advertised the acquisition of the bonds repeatedly, see *Pester Lloyd*, 27th October 1894, 4; 1 November 1894, 4 etc.

⁴⁸ The firm was founded in 1887, and begun with acquisitions of the terrains in Crikvenica, while a year later a modest see-bath with 16 cabins was built, only to be rebuilt from 1891 and opened in 1894 with 100 cabins and the adjacent café, see Kos, Lozzi Barković 2009, 152-7; Vasko-Juhász 2017, 37.

⁴⁹ Arnold Lotz studied at Vienna Polytechnics under Heinrich von Ferstel and Karl König, and was one of the architects active in designing residential buildings in 1880s and 1892 in the Austrian capital. Later he moved to Budapest and was active mainly as city engineer, see Brandstetter, J. 2006.

⁵⁰ Prokop 1897, 5-12; Vasko-Juhász 2017, 38; Kranjčević 2019, 46.

fler (1860-1927) was smaller and more compact than Lotz's magniloquent design, but still dominating the rocky landscape just north of the historical core of Crikvenica. It is still the largest hotel building on the east side of Kvarner bay [figs. 18, 19, 20].⁵¹ The 126 room hotel was designed in 1893 and finished by 1895. It opened under the name Hotel Archduke Joseph, featuring all the amenities of the modern resort hotel, with the corresponding see-bath building and indoor pools. Its rectangular block-like disposition used the slope of the terrain to wedge the basement level with necessary services. The main entrance, situated at the hill-side of the ground floor, leads to the main staircase. Restaurants, bars and reading rooms are evenly distributed towards the sea-view facade. The most prestigious rooms of the upper floors were those opening towards the towering arcaded sea-view porches, possibly stimulated by Lotz's solution for the hotel's ground floor facade. These innovative elements show Höfler's sensibility for the Mediterranean climate, perhaps inspired by his travels to Italy and his time in Anatolia with Heinrich Schliemann during the excavations in Troy.⁵² The design, besides its rigid distribution system and relatively uninventive other facades, remains an attractive solution for an eclectic Mediterranean grand hotel.⁵³

Besides numerous investors, the budget for the landscaping and creating a lovely exotic park between the hotel and the seashore proved insufficient, and the consortium went bankrupt.⁵⁴ The Archduke finally bought the hotel and changed its name to Therapia, which suggested its health-related amenities such as sweet and saltwater indoor pools and gymnastic halls with the most advanced

medical equipment of the time.⁵⁵ A pier with the customs office was constructed in front of the hotel, facilitating the transport by boats from Rijeka.

The surroundings of Therapia echoed Archduke's interests: the rocky slope was transformed into a well-groomed park called Paradise garden with the small zoo, sports facilities, a dog-hotel and a pavilion in the form of a Swiss chalet where Gypsy music was played. Unlike Opatija hotels, where the whole resort was involved in the well-being of the guests, here the complex functioned as an independent and self-sufficient organism, using the neighbouring village as a picturesque backdrop.

In 1900, the Archduke brought in a well-known Polish balneologist Henryk Ebers (1855-1919), who very successfully led the thalassotherapy institute in the hotel for the next four years, alas attracting mainly Russian and Polish clients.⁵⁶ This did not meet Archduke's interest in creating a Hungarian resort, so Ebers was replaced by a more Central-European team: from 1904 landed gentleman Alexander von Csilléry managed the hotel. In 1904 he installed a medical team led by doctor Hermann Coltelli de Roccamare, already active in Crikvenica in 1894, who had also worked at the spa at Ilidža (Sarajevo).⁵⁷ In 1909 Therapia's medical director was Hungarian Bela Gróo (1878-1962), who extensively wrote on benefits of baths and bathing.⁵⁸ The business and political strategy by a Hungarian Habsburg was clear: in the vicinity of Hungarian port of Rijeka with its transport system created by Hungarian capital, leisure facilities were created as a response to Austrian Opatija. The eclectic architecture of the hotel and baths corresponded to international standards and tastes. Still, at

⁵¹ The authorship of the hotel was recently established by Désirée Vasko-Juhász, see Vasko-Juhász 2017, 40. Plans were published in *Bulletin der Ungarischen Ing. Und Architektenvereinigung*, Budapest, 1899, 33, h. 7. Copies of the drawings are also preserved in Croatian Historical archive in Zagreb, HR-HDA-79, Kurbad und Hotel, Crikvenica, signed as S. Höfler architect. I would like to thank the archivist Mirjana Jurić for her precious help in locating the drawings, which have been moved since their last partial publication in Matejčić 1985.

⁵² Höfler, born Mödling near Vienna, was a pupil of Theophil Hansen. In 1880, Höfler won a travel bursary with a project for "Kursalon with baths" and toured Italy. After that, he was involved in archeological digs in Anatolia with Heinrich Schliemann. In the 1890s the architect is documented as active in Budapest, see Zavadil 2011, 343-8. Desirée Vasko-Juhász was able to add to Höfler's opus two buildings in Mödling, designed in his later years, see Vasko-Juhász 2017, 41.

⁵³ Interestingly enough, one of the original members of the investment consortium was Viennese architect Christian Ulrich (1836-1909), also well known for his works in Budapest. His technical expertise might have helped with more sophisticated elements of the design, but this hypothesis for the time being remains without archival support. On Ulrich see Prokop 2005.

⁵⁴ *Winer Zeitung*, 5 Juni 1897, 2-3; Vasko-Juhász 2017, 41.

⁵⁵ Krištafor, Jurdana, Uremović 1988, 145-71; Kos, Lozzi Barković 2009, 152-7.

⁵⁶ Henryk Ebers was educated in Krakow and was one of the key figures in the development of the Polish spa town of Krynica. He had practised in Opatija, Crikvenica and Lido di Venezia and published brochures in Polish on his therapies on Kvarner bay, see Ebers 1902 and Ebers 1903.

⁵⁷ Hermann Coltelli da/von Roccamare is probably of Zadar origin, had studied in Graz and rose to become Archduke's private physician. See Radauš 1989.

⁵⁸ Kos, Lozzi Barković 2006, 156. Gróo would eventually become a chief physician of the Margaret Island Spa and Sanatorium in Budapest. He authored several publications on Hungarian baths: Gróo, Moll, Kunst 1942; Gróo, Lestyán, Török 1947; Gróo 1948.



Figure 18 Josef S. Höfler, *Hotel Therapia*. Postcard.
Public library Crikvenica/Gradska knjižnica Crikvenica

Figure 19 Josef S. Höfler, *Loggia of the Hotel Therapia*. Postcard.
Public library Crikvenica/Gradska knjižnica Crikvenica

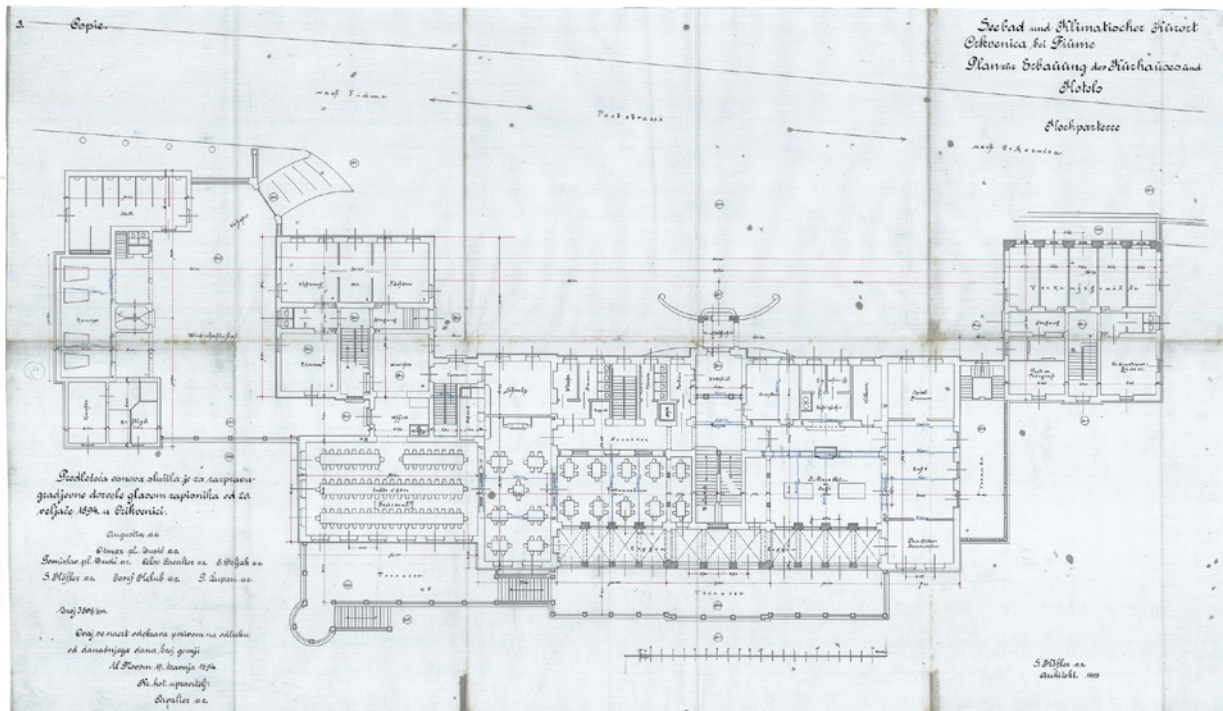


Figure 20 Josef S. Höfler, *Hotel Therapia*. Plan. Državni arhiv Zagreb/State archives Zagreb HR-HAD/79-001

the same time, the importance of pools and special spa treatments, typical of Budapest grand hotels, was repeatedly stressed.

During the last decade of the 19th century, contemporary with the development of Therapia’s “Paradise park” for the elegant clientele, the Archduke and his wife introduced to Crikvenica charitable institutions that brought rather different customers. Due to Archduke’s efforts, the ex-Pauline monastery was transformed into a sanatorium for Hungarian and Croatian veterans opened in 1895. Two years later, the veteran institution was moved to a newly built villa Mira (*mir* meaning peace in Croatian). At the same time, in the ex-monastic structure the archduchess Clotilda opened a children sanatorium named after their tragically killed son (Laszlo Gyermekotthon-Ladislavus Kinderheim-Ospicio marino). Although the two institutions had clear reference in archducal pair’s personal history, they were also investments in the health-tourism future of Crikvenica.

The Archduke’s efforts to attract the Hungarian capital and entrepreneurship in the development of tourism in Crikvenica finally happened in the year of his death: in 1905 colonel Josef Bekessy,

who may have arrived in Crikvenica through Archduke’s military connections, and Koloman (Bela) Rimanóczy Junior (1870-1912), an architect and owner of the largest construction company in Nagyvárad, now Oradea in Romania, came to Crikvenica and fell in love with the place.⁵⁹ By 1908, Hotel Miramare was built according to Rimanóczy Jr.’s design, attracting wealthy clientele mostly from the Hungarian dominated part of the Monarchy [fig. 20].

The hotel had 70 rooms on its upper floors, while its ground floors hosted a café and a restaurant. It also had the most advanced spa (“hydrographical institute”) with warm saltwater baths, continuing and updating the offer set by hotel Therapia. Miramare also had its electrical power plant, running water and elevators, which made it a most-technologically advanced building in the Crikvenica area for a long time.

Unlike the earlier block-like hotel structure that contrasted the rippling landscape, Miramare’s outline ably follows the curve of the street, putting into motion the whole composition and allowing more privacy and the better sea-view from the rooms. The upper part of the structure is elegantly

⁵⁹ HR-DARI/49. 50. Lozzi Barković 2003, 70; Uremović, Vukelić, Gobić 2006, 254; Rimanóczy, Ferkai 2017.



Figure 21 Koloman (Bela) Rimanóczy Junior, *Hotel Miramare*. Postcard. Public library Crikvenica/Gradska knjižnica Crikvenica

arching over the rounded openings of the ground floor, exposing the architect's interest in the interplay of volumes and curved lines, visible in his contemporary projects for Moskovits palace in Oradea and the First Savings Bank Palace in Hungarian Debrecen.⁶⁰ In Crikvenica, however, he abandons the high undulating cupolas of his continental realisations, maintaining the intricate skyline of the gable (now altered), typical for Hungarian turn-of-the-century architecture.

There is a shy reminiscence of the Venetian early-Renaissance in its triple arches resting on the columns on the first floor balconies, while flat, undulating stucco motifs are invigorating some of the surfaces. Inside, stucco flowers decorated the ceilings in the most representative rooms.⁶¹ Rimanóczy Junior modernised his expression in the first years of the 20th century following the tendencies of "Hungarian national style" set by Ödön Lerchner (1845-1914) and József (1877-1947) and

László (1875-1933) Vágó, compensating in a number of realised and unrealised projects and in speed in which he reacted to the new stimulus what he lacked in inventiveness and refinement. Miramare remains one of his most successful designs and investments, eulogised for its elegance by well-known Hungarian Oradea publicist Márton Nagy (1860-1941).⁶²

Turn of the century Crikvenica was transformed from a fishing village into a seaside resort, even obtaining the official status of a spa from Zagreb and Budapest governments in 1906.⁶³ Tourism triggered the improvement of infrastructure, including sea-bath structures and promenades. During the first decade of the 20th century, local investors opened a series of small private hotels, such as Crikvenica, Bellevue and Royal, while probably inspired by the existing Hungarian sanatoriums, a teacher Marija Steyskalova initiated a Czech children colony.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Bostenaru Dan 2011, 30; Pašca, 2008, 280-306; Rimanóczy, Ferkai 2017.

⁶¹ Matejčić 1985, 350.

⁶² Rimanóczy, Ferkai 2017, 260.

⁶³ Uremović, Vukelić, Gobić 2006, 253.

⁶⁴ Krištafor, Jurdana, Uremović 1988, 47.

Nevertheless, Crikvenica never attracted as many visitors as Opatija. The main investor and promoter, the Archduke Joseph Karl Ludwig von Habsburg, was eager to use Hungarian investments in Rijeka and its connection by railway to Budapest in development of a resort that would meet the needs of the half of the Empire he felt he

was responsible for. Its grand hotels are interesting architectural realisations, featuring innovative solutions from continental architects measuring themselves with a coastal setting. Moreover, both offered up to date services and health and spa treatments, attractive especially to continental clientele used to Turkish baths tradition.

4 Conclusion: Architecture of Grand hotels between Politics and Services

The comparative analysis of the emblematic examples of grand hotels of the “k.u.k riviera” in the period between the Austro-Hungarian agreement and the World War I confirms these as buildings of urban-scale importance, in both historical and architectural terms. At the same time, the subtle differences between them speak eloquently about the newly acquired international significance of the area. The fast growth of Rijeka is also confirmed through numerous hospitality structures importing the latest trends in architectural decoration and building techniques, from the elegant, eclectic early Europa at the new sea-front in the 1870s to the highly functional Hotel Emigranti in the first decade of the new century. The hotel business was mainly left to local investors who engaged Trieste architects, with results comparable to their earlier work in the then Austrian port. The Hungarians in terms of the hospitality structures intervened in a relatively remote place, on Scoglietto, between the old industrial zone and the city-core. The location was chosen as it provided the abundance of water for pools and basins, creating a spa typical of the turn-of-the-century Budapest, which also included a hotel. Significantly enough, the initial luxurious project by Hungarian architects was replaced by a smaller neo-renaissance structure by a local (Trieste?) architect. Still, the baths in question were popular and well-advertised.

The investments and habits brought from Hungary are also present in luxurious and large hotels in Crikvenica, containing facilities with special pools and baths, enabling common inside bathing. These devices were given minor importance in the mainly Austrian resort of Opatija, where individual inside bath-tubs were privileged. Both resorts developed the system of lavish parks and seaside walking paths, as well as sea-bathing buildings facilitating and “civilising” the activity the locals were practising for centuries.

Opatija remains the first large-scale seaside resort in the area, featuring urban development similar to those of contemporary Viareggio or British and French-riviera towns. Its’ fast but controlled transformation into the leisure and health resort

is clearly signed by the “corporate identity” of the Viennese transport company that developed it. Crikvenica, on the other hand, preserved an original nucleus and continued to function as a village when investors from Croatia and Hungary, promoted by a “Hungarian Habsburg” Joseph Karl, started to build large self-sufficient hotel-complexes on the free terrain in its vicinity. The complex of Hotel Therapia as well as nearby Hotel Miramare represent rather interesting responses of both Viennese and Hungarian architects to a coastal climate, Rimanóczy’s undulating solution perhaps the most inventive among all the resort hotels in the area.

The hotel architecture and its urban impact in the Kvarner bay area reflect the political arena in the Austria-Hungary from the *Ausgleich* until the WWI as well as its changing economy, featuring the latest building and medical technologies. The hospitality structures involved a set of very different actors: local businessman, a transportation company from Vienna, a “Hungarian Habsburg” archduke, architects otherwise active in Vienna, Budapest, Trieste and Oradea, all with different political and business agendas. In terms of specific facilities, Kvarner hotels corresponded to habits and needs of the affluent continental clientele, but also influenced local communities. In terms of style and decoration, architects of different backgrounds remained sustained: the late international eclecticism non aggressively updated at the turn of the century remained the key expression. The k.u.k. Kvarner hotels were not exotic nor orientalising, and the research into regional traditions and materials, visible at Semmering and Toblach hotels, was almost non-existent. In terms of adjustment to climate, during the last decade of the 19th and especially in the first years of the 20th century, the building blocks finally open up with loggias and balconies privileging a sea view. The most interesting result within this research is the building of Hotel Jadran in Sušak, a prime example of hybrid town-seaside hotel almost entirely reduced to its reinforced concrete skeleton. Finally, the existence of grand hotels favoured mixing

of people, customs and languages of all social extraction within an already multifaceted society of the North-East Adriatic seashore.

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