

Siroki Brijeg in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract— Siroki Brijeg is a town and the seat of the municipality located about 23 km west of Mostar (Geographic coordinates: 43°22'59.59"N, 17°35'33.80"E, elevation: 273). The city is located on the routes of important roads, Mostar-Split and Mostar-Livno (and further towards Bihac and Zagreb). Near Siroki Brijeg (42 km) is the city of Medjugorje. From a geographical point of view, Siroki Brijeg is located in the zone of high Herzegovinian karst, at an altitude of more than 270 meters above sea level. It is part of the Rakitno-Hrgud tectonic unit. Between the mountains of Varda, Gvozd, Rujna and Trtle there are two plateau-karst fields: Kocarinsko, Mokarsko Ruzovo, Trnsko polje and Mostarsko Blato. From a geological point of view, this area belongs to the bauxite-bearing terrains along the directions Crna Lokva-Kidacka Njiva, Resnica-Polog and Uzarici-Knespolje. The area of Siroki Brijeg is relatively rich in water. The rivers Listica (which receives the river Ugrovaca in the town of Siroki Brijeg), Mokasnica, Crnasnica and Zvatic flow towards the Mostarsko Blato depression. The water from Mostarsko Blato sinks, only to reappear, in the form of generous springs, on the right bank of the Neretva, south of Mostar (spring of the river Jasenica, spring of Rebrac).

- The area of the medieval fairground along the Listica river,
- The remains of a medieval fort at the Borak site (near the spring of the Listica river).



Keywords— Siroki Brijeg, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Siroki Brijeg town has 28,184 inhabitants [1]. The continuity of settlement and life in this area has been going on since prehistoric times, as evidenced by the material remains of the culture (Figure 1):

- Prehistoric mounds, at the sites: Cigansko brdo above Oklaj, Solda houses (along the Okaji-Dobrkovici road), Radesice, Krstine (or Bunker), Straznica (near Susko's houses), Mokarsko polje,
- Prehistoric castles, on the following sites: the right bank of the Listica river (Markanovica castle), on top of Ciganski brdo, Cavar castle (on the rock by the Listica river),
- Prehistoric fortress, Ancient-Roman (and later) early medieval fortress in Mokro (Mokriskik, Mokarski grad). The fort was built in the Illyrian era, and in the Late Antiquity a refugium was built in it. The fort served to protect the road that led from Brotnje beyond Trtal to Privalje and Kocerinski polje, as well as the protection of the settlement at the foot of the hill on which the fort is located. Byzantine emperor and historian Constantine VII Porphyrogenet (912-959) mentions it as an important object in his work "De administrando imperio" ("On the administration of the empire"), which was written in the period 949-955.
- Remains of an early Christian basilica (5th-6th century) with a baptistry,
- Medieval stecak necropolis in the following locations: Trn, Sajmiste near the river Lištica, Bareviste, Jelinak, Polugrina in Mokro,

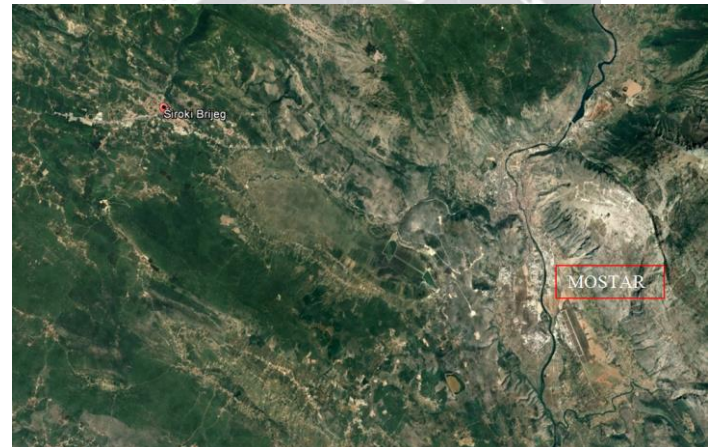


Figure 1. Siroki Brijeg. Location

Source:

https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija, Accessed: 7.25.2022., left

Google Earth: Accessed: 7.26.2022, right

II. ENVIRONMENT

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence [2].

Natural Environment

By natural environment, we mean all those features that nature gave, and on which man (mostly) did not exert his influence: geographical location, geomorphology, watercourses and reservoirs, plant and animal life, available soil, climate [2].

Natural resources and sights. The waters from Siroki Brijeg belong to the Neretva river basin. The main surface

streams towards Mostarski Blat are: Listica with Ugrovac, Mokasnica, Crnasnica and Zvatic. The Brinja, whose beginnings are north of Bogodol, flows westward below the elevation of Kulica (1199) and on its way to Listica receives the Ladin stream near Prskal, and 2.5 km further down, the waters of the Dobrinj stream. These streams buy all the surface water during heavy rainfall and snow melting in the southwestern parts of the Cabulja mountain^[3].

The surface water that receives the Rakitno polje is drained by the Tocak, Jelica, Zmijjinac watercourses and during heavy rainfall forms a significant intermittent watercourse, the Ugrovac, which, passing through the deeply incised Brina canyon, receives incidental torrents, and flows into the village of Trn from the Kocerinsko polje, and on the way to the Mostar mud, in connects the Siroki Brijeg center with the Listica river^[3]. The Siroki Brijeg town and the settlements around it are a gift of the Listica river (Figure 2). The Listica river, on the other hand, is a gift from the prey of Cabulja, which 'catch' rain and snow, and throughout its entire course, in its hollow limestone structure, it preserves water, which, in the form of rivers, streams and a small spring, springs up at its foot and provides life for people, animals and plants (Figures 3, 4, 5).

The Listica river rises at the foot of Cabulja Mount, about 4 km north of Siroki Brijeg. From that place to the Borak locality, several new springs join the Listice river.

The way in which man exerted his influence on the course of the Listica river is amazing, at the same time rational and achieved with a visible effort to act in a natural and beautiful manner.

Constructed concrete dams and stone retaining walls divide the flow of the Listica river in several directions so that mills and waterworks could be built in suitable places. The kinetic energy of water becomes simply visible to the eye of the observer.

The Mediterranean climate prevails in Siroki Brijeg. Winters are cool and summers are long and warm.



Figure 3. Fields near Siroki Brijeg

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)



Figure 4. Fields in Siroki Brijeg with the Listica river

Source:

https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMUL_eZx6n6LdapL2nuEdTJTtXfHmBMLTu_d8LO=h720

<https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipN-6MvpGShXYDtKPMVjfBRp3gK2rG1sMzdQF8li=h720>

Accessed: 7.26.2022.



Figure 5. Fields with tobacco plantations in Siroki Brijeg

Source:

<https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipN82Ock0495Hv0bWMwHxTwdXAqFvGqvUIQC10kh=h720>, Accessed: 7.26.2022.

Social Environment

By Social environment we mean everything that man has created and that separates him from the world of other living beings^[2]. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less ordered products of their activity) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an ordered system of abstract symbols (letters, signs)^[2].

The natural and social environment, general poverty, various diseases, emigration and three wars had a direct and decisive impact on demographic phenomena and demographic processes in this traditionally emigrating area. All these factors left a permanent mark and scar on the collective consciousness of the people of this region and beyond. Pressed by the aforementioned adversities, a large number of them sought refuge throughout Europe, as well as the entire world. It was not by chance that the popular saying among the people of this region arose 'how Germany takes our strongest back,

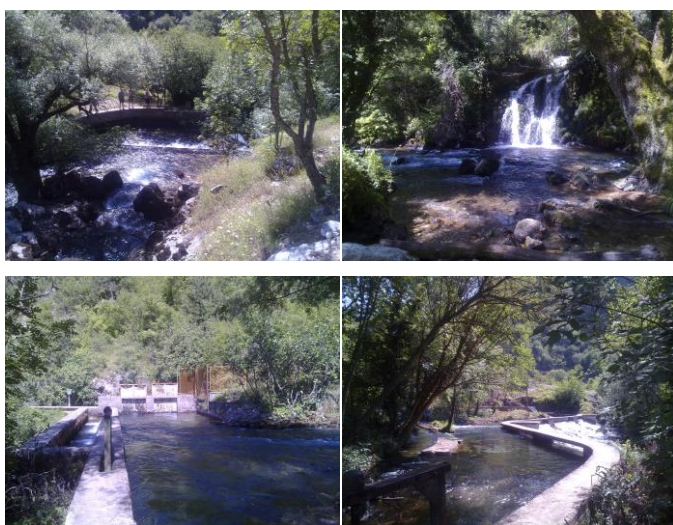


Figure 2. Listica river near Siroki Brijeg

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)

Zagreb our smart mind, and the dark satire pride'^[4]. However, the strong will to live and awareness of mothers managed to maintain and preserve life and hope for a better life with a high birth rate, or as the popular saying goes, which is also valid for Široki Brijeg, 'Herzegovina settles everything, but does not displace itself'.

The highly educated population of this municipality tripled between 1971 and 1991 (from 90 to 605 university degrees). The decisive role in this sense was played by the University of Mostar, which, in addition to its general cultural role, also had a direct impact on the improvement of the demographic picture in these areas.

History of Siroki Brijeg. Falling under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the second half of the 15th century, the population was dispersed and thinned out. The first Ottoman censuses in Herzegovina (1468/1469, then 1475 and 1519) show that the population remained only in the mountain villages. From the fall under the Ottomans until the middle of the 19th century, Herzegovina was almost completely cut off from social, cultural and political events in other European countries^[5]. As the only leaders with the remaining people were the Franciscans.

The more recent history of the Siroki Brijeg area and Catholicism is closely related to the construction (1846) of the monastery on Široki Brijeg and its activities, which started a spiritual, civilizational and cultural revival. The small town began to emerge at the beginning of the 20th century around the Cemer water mill (Turkish: cemer = vault), so from the beginning the town itself was called by the same name. After the road connection (1900) with Mostar, some former friar students (dijak = student, pupil; here meaning: servant, assistant) and enterprising people from nearby villages built shops and inns, and a small town was born, which was named Lištica after the river Listica. However, since it became the administrative center until April 28, 1952, the official name of the municipality and district was Siroki Brijeg.

During the Second World War, alongside the Ustase, Italian troops were stationed in the city. In that period, the Italians built 4 forts on the hills overlooking the city. On February 7, 1945, the Partisans liberated Siroki Brijeg.

In the seventies of the 20th century, the monastery began to operate systematically outside of strictly religious and charitable frameworks. From the beginning, incidentally with spiritual programs and without announcement, then with announcements and reviews in the press, he organized art exhibitions, organized a drama group that worked successfully, then (1979) the monastery treasury and *Biblia pauperum* (the past of the region and the monastery in pictures) were arranged and with cartographic representations). She was the initiator and holder of the preparations for the establishment of the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of Mostar, based in Siroki Brijeg. The academy has been operating since February 1996 and is located in the building of the former dormitory. The Academy of Fine Arts is not the first higher education institution operating in Siroki Brijeg; the so-called domestic theology (*Studium domesticum Sacrae Theologiae*) existed in the

monastery (1892/1893), and perhaps until the foundation (1895) of theology in Mostar.

Architectural cultural and historical heritage. The rich cultural heritage of Siroki Brijeg, which has existed for centuries, resulted from the continuity of life in this area from prehistory to the present day, which is based on water, wide fields and the Sun (Figures 6-9).

Prehistoric, Roman and medieval times left evidence of numerous stone buildings in the vicinity of today's city: a large prehistoric pile, on the elevation of Cigansko brdo above Oklaj^[6]; the medieval fortress in Bork, not far from the Listica spring^[7]; piles above Solda's houses, near the Oklaj-Dobrkovici road^[6]; piles in a wider area called Radesice^[8]; Markanovic castle above the right bank of the river Listica^[8]; hillfort on the prominent top of the hill Cigansko brdo^[8]; Cavar's castle on a stone cliff by the river Listica^[6]; a large pile on Cavar brdo, called Krstine (today a place called Bunker)^[6]; piles on the hill called Straznica near Suško's houses^[8]; piles on the edge of Mokarsko polje, east towards Turcinovici^[6]; prehistoric castle, Roman and early medieval fortress in Mokro (medieval town of Mokriskik, Mokarski grad)^[9]. There are also medieval tombstones (stecci): Bareviste, Jelinak and Polugrina in Mokro^[10], Sajmiste by the Listica river^[10,11] and stecci in the cemetery on Trno^[10,11]. The early Christian era left a testimony of its Christianity in Mokro: the foundations of a basilica with a baptistery (5th or 6th century)^[12,13,14,15].

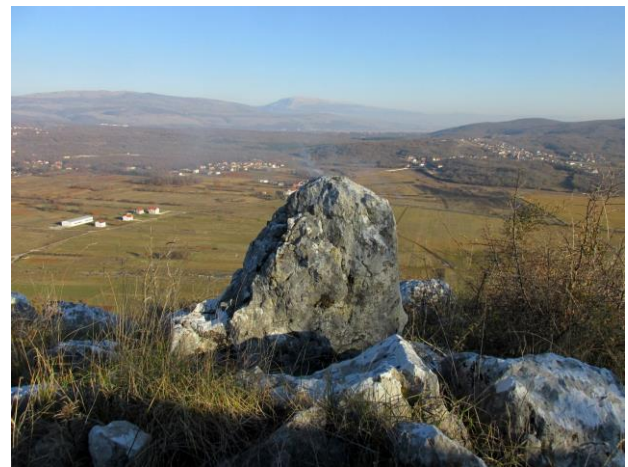


Figure 6. Gradina Mokro. Gradina is a prehistoric structure built by the Illyrians.

Source:
<http://megalithhercegovina.blogspot.com/2015/12/najnovijiividmegalitska-gradina-u.html>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

The medieval fort is located on a rocky slope near the spring which, together with other springs, forms the Lištica river. This fort is popularly known as Gradina and Borak (Figure 7).

A concrete dam was built on the Lištica river in the Borak area. In fact, it is an engineering construction in which, in an extremely expedient manner, water is diverted in several controlled directions for later, very rational, use^[6] (Figure 9).



Figure 7. Remains of a medieval fortress

Source: <https://hiveminer.com/User/Vinko%20Musa>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

The miserable backwater was diverted by a concrete trough (section approx. 2 x 2 m) along a slightly inclined isohypse towards Siroki Brijeg, the surrounding settlements and fields.

This watercourse, with its appearance in a stone cliff, looks unreal, especially on the part of the viaduct that bridges the Siroki Brijeg-Borak road (Figure 9).



Figure 8. Waterworks on the Listica river

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)



Figure 9. Concrete dam on the Listica river (Part of the irrigation system)

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)

III. MAN

Space acquires meaning only if it stands in some relation to man. This relationship ranges from the relations of the already known dimensions of space, through those that can be sensed, to those that are currently beyond the reach of human

imagination. In other words, man is a being on the way, a being who continuously learns, a being of open possibilities. The term 'man' is a huge question, the essence of which he himself is trying to decipher within his limits, within the limits of the Earth and the limits of the Universe ^[2].

Institute of the Holy Family in the Puringaj settlement near Siroki Brijeg (1997-2000). The Institute of the Holy Family is an institution for accommodation, upbringing and education of girls without adequate parental care and girls from socially disadvantaged families (Figure 10). The Franciscan monastery on the hill is the 'protecting sign' of Siroki Brijeg (Figure 11).



Figure 10. Holy Family Institute in the Puringaj settlement near Siroki Brijeg

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)



Figure 11. Siroki Brijeg today

Source: <http://www.sirokibrijeg.ba/index.php/gradska-uprava/javna-poduzeca-i-ustanove/137-hrvatski-kulturni-dom>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

Boundaries: architecture as a framework of life

Boundaries are those places in the environment where the situations encountered are controlled according to very specific human needs. Conditions are all those discovered and undiscovered phenomena in space that have a stimulating or degrading effect on humans. Borders, therefore, have the task of enabling the selection of influences. In the architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment ^[2]. The Franciscan monastery with the church is located on a hill (Siroki Brijeg) that dominates the city, and from which distant vistas spread all around. Today, one of the most important cultural monuments is the Franciscan monastery with a church¹ (founded in 1846). It is obvious that in this location of the monastery there is a lot of spiritual and religious symbolism that the inhabitants of Široki

¹ The building complex - the Franciscan monastery with the church in Siroki Brijeg was declared a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, number 88/07).

Brijeg and all of Herzegovina are aware of, enjoy and see as the origin of their identity. On the right, immediately after the entrance to the landscaped park of the church via the monumental staircase, we find a fountain with four water outlets (the floor plan of the fountain has a cross). Finely decorated stone benches surround the fountain.

Generous water from the fountain, solid performance of all elements of the fountain in stone leaves the observer with the impression of eternal duration of both the fountain and everything that the view includes from this place.

This impression is contributed by the view of the city from the church, the old trees around the church, sculptures that exude a special calmness, visitors to the church (those who are there for prayer), children playing in the park...

In the well-organized and pleasant park in front of the church, there is a modest monument commemorating the year of the foundation of the 'order' of the Franciscans in Herzegovina. The text is carved into the white stone slab:

HOME

1846.23/7-1896.28/7

Herzegovinian Franciscans with their simply to pay tribute to the Honorable menu of the fathers who founded Hercegovac religious order Fra Rafo Barisic.

Nikola Kordic, Angeo Kraljevic, Ilija Vidosovic, Miho Sliskovic, Mate Cutura, Augustin Marijic, Ilija Skoko, Filip Ancic, Pasko Kvesic, Pilip Coric, Angijeo Primorac, Mate Coric. This monument is eternal harnost raised. On the occasion of Pentecost anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan Order State of Order in Herzegovina.

Visitors' special attention is drawn to the bronze sculpture of a Franciscan, a gift from a certain Mirko (Gornji Gradac, 1939) and his wife Margita from California. The sculpture is in the field of the inner courtyard, exposed to the sun, rain and snow (...), which was intended to express the way of life and perseverance of the Franciscans (Figure 13).



Figure 12. Listica River in Siroki Brijeg

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)

Source:

<https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipMrLdHtFQETVvZGVehOovjgTFRdIj71SISbjXX=h720>, Accessed: 7.26.2022.

Franciscan High School (today Fr. Dominik Mandic High School) in Siroki Brijeg. The gymnasium was founded (1889) during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 14).

Folk school ('Pucka skola') in Rasno near Siroki Brijeg. The construction of the school began in 1902 and ended in

1906, during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The school has been renovated several times, most recently in 2016 (Figure 15).



Figure 13. Franciscan monastery ('samostan') with a church
Source: Author (6.22.2013.)



Figure 14. Franciscan High School

http://www.mff.ba/mff_ogradu.asp

<http://bih-x.info/regije-i-gradovi/gradovibih/siroki-brijeg/>

<http://gimnazija-sb.com/portal/>

Accessed: 13.06.2018.



Figure 15. Folk school (Pucka skola) in Rasno near Siroki Brijeg
<https://www.jabuka.tv/siroki-brijeg-110-godina-pucke-skole-u-rasno/>,
Accessed: 13.06.2018.

The Academy of Fine Arts is the only artistic and educational component of the University of Mostar. At the session held on January 11, 1996, the Governing Council of

the University of Mostar made a decision to establish the Academy of Fine Arts. Thus, the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of Mostar with its seat in Siroki Brijeg was formally and legally established. The competition for the enrollment of the first generation of students was announced on February 5, 1996, and the entrance exam lasted from February 19 to 23. The Academy started working on March 4, and was officially opened on March 7, 1996 (Figure 16).



Figure 16. The building of the Academy of Fine Arts in Siroki Brijeg. The building was built (1924-1931) as a Gymnasium, during the Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

<https://www.jabuka.tv/izlozba-zajedno-uumjetnosti-u-sirokom-brijegu/>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

Tobacco station (Dogana) Siroki Brijeg. The tobacco factory, the first tobacco facility in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was established in Mostar (1880). The tobacco station in Siroki Brijeg was opened in 1912 (Figure 17).

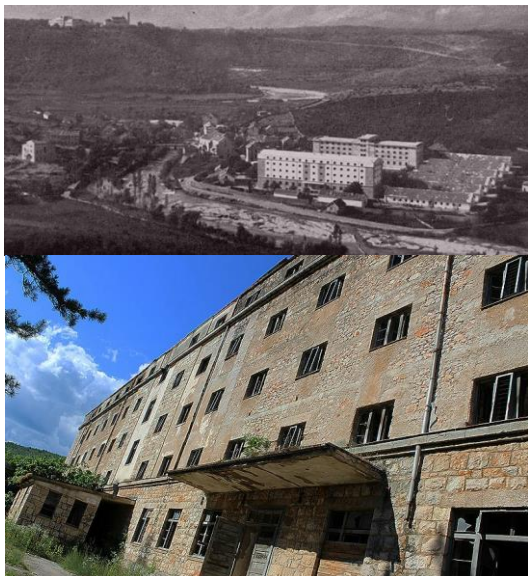


Figure 17. Tobacco station (Dogana) Siroki Brijeg

https://www.jabuka.tv/wpcontent/uploads/2012/01/dogana_11.jpg
<https://www.jabuka.tv/duhanska-stanicaruglo-sirokog-brijega/>
 Accessed: 13.06.2018.

Pecara Stadium in Siroki Brijeg. The stadium was built in the 1950s. The auditorium has room for 5726 visitors (Figure 18).



Figure 18. "Pecara" Stadium in Siroki Brijeg

Source:

<http://www.nk-sirokibrijeg.com/~nksiroki/index.php/hr/klub/stadion-pecara>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

<https://www.jabuka.tv/pogledajte-kako-izgleda-pecara-iz-zraka/>, Accessed: 13.06.2018.

Pecara City sports hall in Siroki Brijeg. The hall was built in the 90s of the 20th century. The hall has a capacity of 4,500 spectators (Figure 19).



Figure 19. „Pecara“ City sports hall in Siroki Brijeg

Source: <https://www.jabuka.tv/hoce-li-tvrtka-mepasuci-u-hkk-siroki/>, Accessed: 7.26.2022.

IV. CONCLUSION (PERSPECTIVES)

By the term 'Perspective' (in the framework of the theory of Architecturally Defined Space) we mean "that dynamic relationship that connects now-future, existing-possible, realized-desired" [2].

Today Siroki Brijeg is a city with a developed economy in a wide range of activities. Some of the most successful companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina operate there: FEAL d.o.o., TT KABELI d.o.o., MCI d.o.o., MEPAS d.o.o., NAMEKS d.o.o., HERING d.o.o., BERNINA d.o.o. (Figures 20, 21). Thanks to the abundance of water and organized canals for irrigation possibilities, agriculture in Siroki Brijeg is also notable.

Sport is a very successful form of business and entertainment. Some of the most successful clubs in Bosnia and Herzegovina operate there. In 1948, the football club "Borak", today's "Siroki Brijeg", was founded. The conditions it has today (a modern stadium with lighting, a sports and recreation center on Blato) are at the European level. Basketball club "Mladost" (today "Siroki") was founded in 1974. For many years he competed in the Herzegovina League, and at the end of the eighties in the Republic League of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The basketball players of Siroki experienced a great rise in the second half of the nineties. In the 1997/1998 season. they become champions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and winners of the Super Cup of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 1998/1999. for the first time they appear on the European stage (Sapporta Cup).

Culture and education are also noted. Today, the Siroki Brijeg region operates the Art Academy, the Franciscan Gallery with a rich treasury, several cultural and artistic

societies, the Amateur Theater “Didak”, the Music School Siroki Brijeg, the “Ogranak Matice Hrvatske”, “HKD Napredak”. Literary evenings, theater performances, concerts, painting colony, and exhibitions are just some of the cultural events that regularly take place in Siroki Brijeg. Most of these manifestations take place as part of the project “Brijeska Zvona”, which was founded in 1999, and whose founder and general patron is the Siroki Brijeg city ^[16]. Thanks to its favorable geopolitical position (it is located on the main road Mostar-Split), natural and human resources, the perspectives of the rich life of Široki Brijeg are wide open.



Figure 20. Today's Siroki Brijeg

Source: <https://www.jabuka.tv/hoce-li-tvrtka-mepasuci-u-hkk-siroki/>, Accessed: 7.26.2018.



Figure 21. Restaurant on the Listica river

Source: Author (6.22.2013.)

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