

Oriental Style City House in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Muslibegović Family House in Mostar

Ahmet Hadrovic

Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Email address: hadrovic.ahmet@gmail.com, ahmet.hadrovic@af.unsa.ba

Abstract— The Muslibegovic family house is located in Osman Dzikic Street in Brankovac, Mostar (Geographic coordinates: 43°20'30.23"N, 17°48'58.81"E, Elevation: 74 m). It was originally built in the 17th century. It is an example of a developed type of oriental-type town house in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is characterized by a highly developed disposition of the horizontal and vertical plan, the richness of the contents and the separation of the public, i.e. the 'male part' ('selamluk') and the intimate family, i.e. the 'female part' ('haremluk') of the home complex. At the main family house during 1871-1872. In 2008, works were carried out on the expansion of the building (construction of two rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the first floor, extension of the summer kitchen ('mutvak'), storeroom and water tank, for which there is a building permit in the Turkish language issued by the municipality of Mostar ('beledija'). The house was built at the expense of Mehmed Muslibegovic, who had large land holdings in Popovo polje.

Keywords— Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mostar, The Muslibegovic family house

I. INTRODUCTION

The house of the Muslibegovic family is located in Osman Dzikic Street in Mostar (Figure 1). The house of the Muslibegovic family in Mostar was originally built in the 17th century and is an example of a developed type of oriental-type town house in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

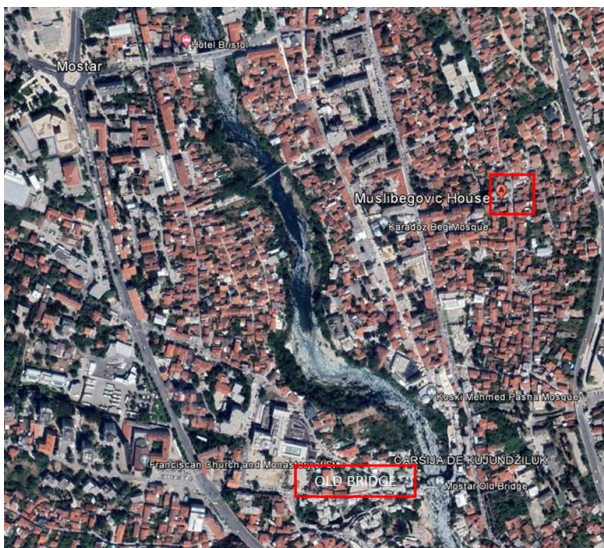


Figure 1. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Location Source: Google Earth. Pristupljeno: 29. Maj 2023.

This type of house is characterized by a highly developed disposition of the horizontal and vertical plan, the richness of

the contents and the separation of the public, i.e. 'male' part (selamluk) and the intimate family, i.e. 'female' part ('haremluk') of the house complex [1,2,3, 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11]. Access to the family-intimate inner courtyard, i.e. the 'women's courtyard', is through the gate located on the southern courtyard wall. The family-intimate inner yard is basically in the shape of the letter 'L' with dimensions of 19.0 x 7.0 m and 5.7 x 9.4 m. This yard is enriched by the arrangement of floor surfaces and vegetation (there is also a palm tree). Greenery and flowers, mainly roses, were planted along the entire southern courtyard wall as well as around the walls of the house. The entrance part of the courtyard is one height lower than the parts to the south and west of the house, from which it is additionally separated by greenery. In the part of the courtyard to the west of the house is the entrance to the western part of the basement of the house and the outside toilet located opposite it (Figures 1,5). Inside the 'women's courtyard', next to the outer dining room, along the southern wall, there are a mutvak with a storage room along the eastern wall, the main building - a family house along the northern wall, and a cistern in the northern corner of the plot, between the house and the storage room.



Figure 2. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. The situation Source: Google Earth. Accessed: May 29, 2023.

The public-economic, or 'men's courtyard' ('selamluk') of the residential complex is located to the west of the 'women's courtyard' ('haremluk'). The first gate on the southern wall of the complex, seen in the direction of climbing along Osmana Djikić Street, leads to the 'men's courtyard', measuring 8.7 x 12.0 m, paved with stone pebbles. During the restoration in 2000, three landings on three levels were made inside the 'men's courtyard', on its eastern part. The platforms are lined

with irregular stone slabs. On the western wall, as well as on the edges of the landing, along the southern wall, greenery and flowers, mostly climbing plants, are planted. There is a fountain on the southern wall (Figures 2,3,4,5,6). The passage from the 'men's' to the 'women's courtyard' is located on the eastern wall. Inside the 'men's courtyard' there is an economic building on the north side, a kitchen and toilet on the south wall and a canopy, supported on three wooden pillars, located along the eastern wall, the wall that divides the two courtyards. An economic building, a barn, given that it was demolished during the 1992-1995 war. year, it was completely reconstructed according to the original condition.

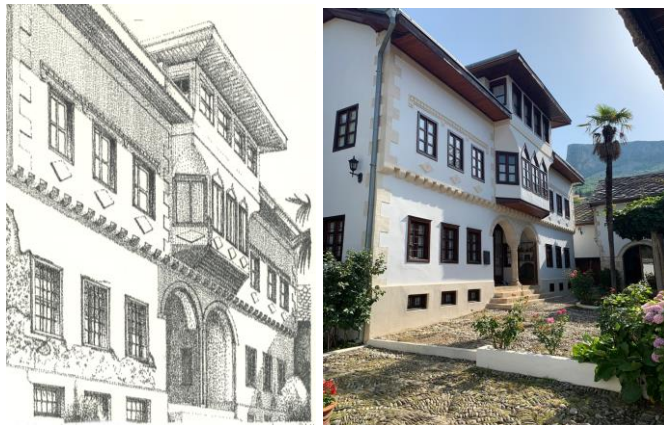


Figure 3. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Intimate-family, i.e. 'female courtyard' ('haremluk')

Source (left): Author (Drawing, 1984)

Source (right): <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/putovanja/muslibegovica-kuca-biser-osmanske-arhitekture-i-idealna-oaza-tijekom-boravka-u-mostaru---718667.html>, Accessed : 29.5.2023.



Figure 4. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Arrangement of the intimate family, i.e. 'women's courtyard' ('haremluk')

Source: <https://life.ba/kultura/muslibegovica-kuca-mostar/374737/>, Accessed: May 29, 2023.

II. SPATIAL-FORM CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOUSE

Muslibegovic Family house in Mostar is vertically developed through basement, ground floor, first floor and attic. In this respect, it is specific (in relation to the house of the Kajtaz family and the Biscevic family in Mostar, for example). In addition, the house of the Muslibegovic family has some other novelties: the kitchen with a fireplace has a chimney, and not an open space ('dimluk') for exhausting smoke; it also has a modern toilet. Along with some details in

the design of the facades, these are elements of the 'Europeanization' of the classic oriental-type town house in Bosnia and Herzegovina [2,5] (Figures 3,7).

The layout of the house is symmetrical in two axes. The centrally positioned hall is closed with rooms on the longitudinal sides; in the recess between the rooms there is a two-legged wooden staircase in the shape of the letter 'L', and the hall on the fourth side, on the floors, is extended into a space for family gatherings ('jazluk'). On the floor level, we again see open spaces covered with strong eaves ('divanhana', 'kamerija', i.e. 'jazluk') and basic living spaces, 'chardaks' (Figure 8). The main living spaces are multipurpose (at the same time they are living rooms, dining rooms, reception rooms, bedrooms). Polyvalence enables the absence of furniture, which, in the European understanding, defines the purpose of the room. In fact, the main rooms, on the entrance wall of the room, have a built-in battery ('musander'), which for this type of house is standardly made up of a linen closet ('dusekluk'), a spa ('hamamdzik') and an earthen stove ('furuna') for water heating for spa needs. By 'activating' some of the contents of this battery, the space, in the European sense, becomes a bedroom or a bathroom. Along the other three walls of the multipurpose room, there is a sofa for sitting ('minderluk'), which gives the room the dimension of a living room. By introducing a low, round table ('sinija'), the living room becomes a dining room. Since the walls are thick (especially those on the ground floor, built of stone), it was possible to install niches ('dulaf') in them, which had the role of European chests of drawers and wardrobes. Obviously, in this way, the freedom of the floor surface was obtained.

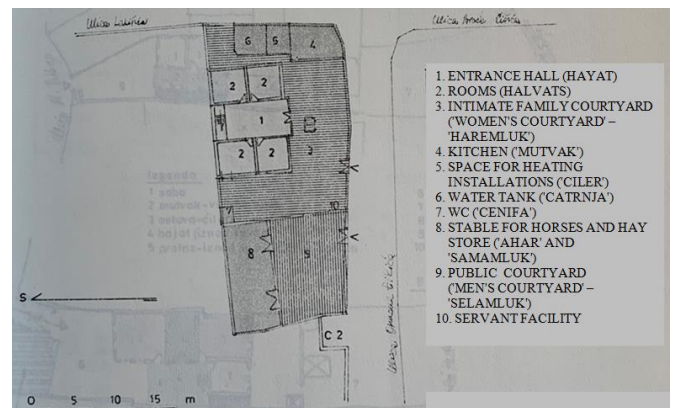


Figure 5. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Ground floor
Source: Pasic, A. (1989). Contribution to the study of Islamic housing construction in Yugoslavia on the example of Mostar, how old is the housing architecture of Mostar an autochthonous phenomenon (doctoral dissertation), Zagreb (in Bosnian)



Figure 6. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Section
Source: <http://old.kons.gov.ba/html/slike/1092839071.jpg>, Accessed: May 29, 2023.



Figure 7. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Entrance facade of the house

Source: <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/putovanja/muslibegovica-kuca-biser-osmanske-arhitekture-i-idealna-oaza-tijekom-boravka-u-mostaru---718667.html>, Accessed: 29.5. in 2023



Figure 9. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Wooden staircase ('basamaci') hall of the first floor-attic

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.ca/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g295388-d806749-i20823887-Bosnian_National_Monument_Muslibegovic_House_Hotel-Mostar_Herzegovina_Nere.html, Accessed: 29.5.2023.



Figure 8. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Arrangement of the chamber ('jazluk') on the first floor, on the access facade with a view of the courtyard

Source: <https://life.ba/kultura/muslibegovica-kuca-mostar/374737/>, Accessed: May 29, 2023.

III. CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALIZATION

The exterior walls of the Muslibegovic house in Mostar, as well as most of the interior walls, are made of crushed stone 'taken from nature', not far from the house. The outer walls are 55-60 cm thick, and the inner walls 40-50 cm. The outer walls are only roughly plastered on the outside, while their inner surfaces are finely plastered and painted with white milk of lime. Partition walls are thinner, about 20 cm thick [5,9].

The stone, extracted from the surrounding meadows, was used to make the pillars and arches of the ground floor, and was cut into stone slabs that were the covering of the multi-pitched roof.

The wood was used for making staircases ('basamaci'), mezzanine and roof constructions, the partition between the hall and the 'jazluka', as well as for making doors and windows. The mezzanine structure of the house is made of wooden beams, which on the upper side support the wooden floor of the floor, and on the lower side the wooden ceiling ('shishe'). There are several designs of the wooden ceiling, from room to room, all with more or less rich geometric decoration (Figures 8,9,10).



Figure 10. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Different designs of wooden ceiling ('shishe')

Source: <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/putovanja/muslibegovica-kuca-biser-osmanske-arhitekture-i-idealna-oaza-tijekom-boravka-u-mostaru---718667.html>, Accessed: 29.5. in 2023

IV. DOORS AND WINDOWS

The main entrance to the intimate family courtyard, or the 'female courtyard' ('haremluk'), is through the gate located on the southern wall of the courtyard (Figure 11, left).



Figure 11. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Left: Access gate to the inner courtyard from Osmana Đikić Street. Right: Inner door, wooden ceiling ('shishe')

Source: <https://mojinfo.ba/nacionalni-spomennik-kuca-muslibegovica-u-mostaru/>, Accessed: May 29, 2023.



Figure 12. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Left: 'mihrab windows' in one room. On the right, the windows on the dock facing the inner courtyard (and the entrance from the street)

Source (left): <https://www.vijesti.ba/clanak/13120/bogatstvo-muslibegovica-kuce-foto>, Accessed: May 29, 2023.

Source (right): https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNBhNgNL9ejXQAJs6gi_xW_Sk6Cc-I3tzK80Gg=h1440, Accessed: 29.5.2023.

The window openings stand out on the white plastered facades of the house. The windows of the basement, which appear on all three facades of the building, measure 80 x 40 cm, are wooden, double-hung with demirs on the outside. All windows in the rooms, measuring 85 x 110 cm, except for those on the front facade of the first-floor docks, are rectangular, made of wood, double-hung, with six glass windows. The windows of the ground floor have demirs on the outside, and the windows on the first floor do not. The windows of the ground floor and first floor have a relief niche ('mihrab-window') on the inside. The windows in the bathrooms are smaller, measuring 60 x 50 cm, and are also made of wood. The size and shape of the windows located on the doxat of the first floor are the same as the other windows on the rooms of the first floor. They differ from other windows by their spiral arch finish, which gives the object a representative effect. Above the windows on the side facades of the docks, a triangular pendant appears in the negative,

which is a 'European influence' that came from the Adriatic coast (Figure 12).

The windows located on the doxat of the second floor are the same size and shape as the other windows in the rooms, but they open sideways ('surma windows'), so that the lower wing is movable and rises above the upper one. A similar window solution is also visible on the house of the Bišćević-Laksic family in Mostar^[5].

V. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF HOME EQUIPMENT

Similar to other oriental-type townhouses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the house of the Muslibegović family in Mostar also has its own specific characteristics in terms of space equipment and envelope surface treatment. The main rooms of the house, the halva on the ground floor and the conservatory on the first floor, are, conditionally speaking, 'empty'. The fixed elements of the 'furniture' are: a sofa for sitting ('minderluk'), a battery built into the wall ('musandera') with three 'compartments' - for storing bedding ('dusekluk'), a spa ('hamamdzik') and water heating for spa needs ('furuna) – a fireplace for preparing coffee ('kahve-odzak') and a service table for drinking coffee ('mangala'). Niches ('dulaf') are arranged in the thick stone walls, where small equipment, books, souvenirs are kept (Figure 13, right).



Figure 13. The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar. Left: Decorating one room. Right: Decoration of the hall

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.ca/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g295388-d806749-i20823887-Bosnian_National_Monument_Muslibegovic_House_Hotel-Mostar_Herzegovina_Nere.html, Accessed: 29.5.2023.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/bosnian-national-monument-muslibegovic-house-hotel-mostar--156289049551779547/>, Accessed: 29.5.2023.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Muslibegovic family house in Mostar is one of the most representative examples of an oriental-type town house in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Commission for the Preservation of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by its Decision no. 09-02-1001/03-1 of July 18, 2004, declared the “residential construction complex of the Muslibegovic family in Mostar, together with movable property”, a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina [12]. During the restoration in 2000, the economic building was turned into office space. Today, it houses the premises of the “Aga Khan Trust for Culture” and “World Monument Found” foundations. The ground floor of the building is used as a meeting room, workshop space or presentation space, depending on the need. A wooden staircase in the shape of the letter 'L' leads to the floor where the working space of the “Aga Khan foundation” is located.

This house is one of the examples of bioclimatic architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so it is often visited by students of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo, as well as from other universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region.

REFERENCES

- [1] Pasic, A. (1994). *Islamic Architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Organisation of The Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul, pp. 33-43
- [2] Pasic, A. (1989). Contribution to the study of Islamic housing construction in Yugoslavia on the example of Mostar, how old is the housing architecture of Mostar an autochthonous phenomenon (doctoral dissertation), Zagreb (in Bosnian)
- [3] Hasandedic, H. (1990). *Muslim Heritage in Eastern Herzegovina*, El Kalem, Sarajevo (in Bosnian)
- [4] Hasandedic, H. (1996). *Sloboda newspaper*, no. 8 (in Bosnian)
- [5] Hadrovic, A. (2007). *Defining Architectural Space on the Model of the Oriental Style CityHouse in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA, pp. 91, 121, 205.
- [6] Hadrovic, A. (2010). *Research study on Architecture and Overview of the Architect's Experience*, Sarajevo, Acta Architectonica et Urbanistica, Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, pp. 67 - 70.
- [7] Hadrovic, A. (2018). *Architecture in the travelogues of an architect. Book 1: Balkan*, Faculty of Architecture University in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, pp. 389 – 414 (in Bosnian)
- [8] Ahmet Hadrovic, *Drawings by architect Ahmet Hadrovic*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, ISSN (online): 2582-7138 Volume: 03 Issue: 04 July-August 2022
- [9] Ahmet Hadrovic, *The Place of Wood in the Design of Oriental Type City Houses in Sarajevo*, *International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Science*, Volume 6, Issue 8, pp. 42-58, 2022.
- [10] Ahmet Hadrovic, *Musafirhana in Fojnica*, *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies*, Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2023; 3(1):648-654
- [11] Hadrovic, A. (2009). *Structural Systems in Architecture*, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA, pp. 138, 145
- [12] Commission for the Preservation of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina
http://old.kons.gov.ba/main.php?id_struct=6&lang=1&action=view&id=2490
 Accessed: 5/29/2023.