

The Works of Budapest Architects Lipót Baumhorn and Károly Kovács in Novi Sad at the Turn of the Century

New Findings on the Building History

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Abstract

Designer of the new synagogue building complex in Novi Sad at the beginning of the 20th century, Lipót Baumhorn (1860–1932) exercised a significant influence on the architecture of the city (then part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and today second largest city of Serbia). Apart from the synagogue, the Budapest-based architect created five more buildings in Novi Sad: the bank building in the main square, the highly representative palaces of a local furniture maker and a wine trader, and a small two-storey town house. In addition, the research I conducted in the local archives has revealed the address and fundamental details of one more Baumhorn building, considered up to now to have been demolished; this archival information was inaccessible to local researchers for language reasons.

The purpose of this study is to provide a short introduction to the works of Baumhorn – known for his synagogues only – as well as of a direct colleague of his, Károly Kovács, foreman of the new synagogue complex. I find it crucial to recognize these buildings less for their stylistic features – characterizing the turn of the century – than for the role they play in the urban context, both from a typological and a social perspective.

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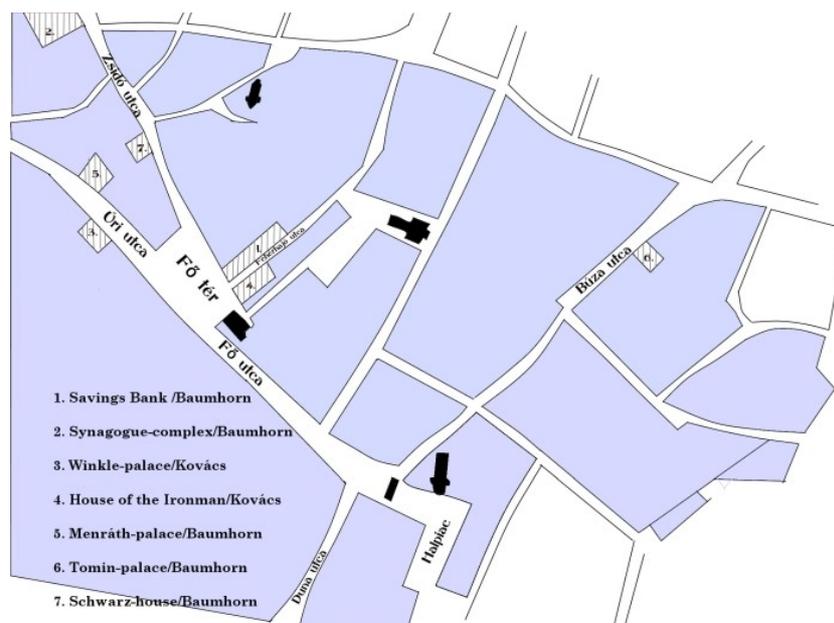
[1] Lipót Baumhorn (1860–1932), designer of the synagogue building complex of Novi Sad, played an important role in shaping the architecture of the city in the early 20th century. Since he was considered mainly as a designer and builder of

synagogues in Budapest, I made an inventory of his works in Novi Sad in a study published in 2011,¹ although my approach back then was rather descriptive and preoccupied with the formal characteristics of his best-known buildings. But my recent research conducted in the archives² revealed a goldmine of information on a Baumhorn building thought to have been demolished; besides, it drew my attention to his so far unknown connection with the master builder Károly Kovács and their joint contribution to the architecture of Novi Sad. Up to now, little has been said in the scholarly literature about the foreman³ of the Baumhorn-buildings in this city. Apart from Kovács's name and imprint, we still do not know much about him, but it is certain that besides his several collaborations he managed to realize some individual works, too. Along with the striking novelty of their works, these two architects prove particularly noteworthy for they were, as far as I know, the only architects from Budapest in the multi-ethnic city of Novi Sad to have created more than just a few buildings; in fact their architectural designs can be found in all the focal points of Novi Sad (Fig. 1).

¹ Ágnes Deákné Oszkó, "Baumhorn Lipót újvidéki épületei - egy szerteágazó életmű keresztmetszete" [The Buildings of Lipót Baumhorn in Novi Sad - Outline of a Multi-Faceted Life], in: *És az oszlopok tetején liliumok formáltattak vala" - Tanulmányok Bibó István 70. születésnapjára* [Studies Presented to István Bibó on his 70th Birthday], ed. Áron Tóth, Budapest 2011, 245-250.

² My research was realized within the framework of a grant program launched by the grant committee of Campus Hungary; it included a twenty-day fieldtrip to Novi Sad in October-November 2013. For their kind assistance I would like to thank historian Ágnes Ózer, art historians Katarina Maximov and Vladimir Mitrović, architects Aleksandar Bede and Visnja Svrđlan, professors Rudolf Klein and Dubravka Đukanovićnak at the University of Novi Sad, Nebojsa Ili Milos from the Technical Archives of the city and the staff of the Archives of the Podkarpackie Voivodship, the Archives of the City and the Matica Srbska Library.

³ Besides the designer-architect we can frequently find another professional on the construction site, who, as a foreman, is personally supervising the most important construction phases and inspects the work carried out by the builder's employees. In case of the synagogue and the Schwarz house in Novi Sad, it is certainly Károly Kovács who was in charge of the local representation of the Budapest-based Baumhorn. As to the construction sites at 12 Trandafil sq. and 14 Kralja Aleksandra str., we can but presume that Kovács was equally appointed foreman since pertinent data are missing in the archives.



1 Novi Sad, sketch-map of the city highlighting the works of architects Lipót Baumhorn and Károly Kovács (© Ágnes Ivett Oszkó)

[2] It would be also interesting to tackle the question of Baumhorn's religious affiliation with Judaism and the commissions he received from the religious congregations in the region. In this study, I will concentrate on the Baumhorn & Kovács buildings in Novi Sad, on which archival research has yielded new findings; these are in a chronological order: the Savings bank of Novi Sad, the Synagogue complex, the Winkle palace, the house of the Ironman [Vasemberház], the home of Lipót Schwarz. Due to the lack of archival documentation or contemporary publications, the two other residential houses, to complete the list of our architects' works, the Menráth palace (14 Kralja Aleksandra str., around 1908) and the so-called Tomin palace situated further off the city centre (12 Trandafil sq., around 1909?, Fig. 2), are not included in this study.



2 Novi Sad, Tomin palace, Trg Maria Trandafil 12, 1907–1909, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

The architecture of Novi Sad at the turn of the century

[3] A considerable number of buildings of Novi Sad was conceived during a reconstruction period following the cannon firing of 11–12 July 1849.⁴ These works of architecture of the second half of the 19th century were long considered to be of scant individual taste and insufficient relevance for research.⁵ Since the turn of the millennium, however, this period has come to the centre of academic attention. Rejection of the same period in the past was mainly due to the spirit of historicism, i.e. to an architectural style which made a random selection of the formal heritage of the past when conceiving the interior and exterior design of the buildings. Bearing predominantly neo-renaissance and neo-baroque features, these buildings make up a homogeneous cityscape in Duna street, for example, but we may encounter them everywhere in the city.⁶ In the 1850s we can find a number of guest designers who created romantic homes out of the modest old dwellings, but these disappeared from the 1860s onward.⁷ The largest historical

⁴ Ágnes Ózer, *Élet és történelem [Life and History]*, Újvidék 2002, 9. After the destruction, only 808 out of 2,812 houses in the city remained intact.

⁵ Slobodan Jovanović, "Architecture of Novi Sad", in: *DaNS (Društvo arhitekata Novog Sada)* 30 (2000), 16-18, here 17.

⁶ A good example of how these historical houses are interpreted and represented, based on the historical facts found in the archives and in other documents, was the temporary exhibition organized by the City Museum (Muzej grada Novog Sada) in autumn 2013 in its venue at 29 Dunavska.

⁷ Vladimir Mitrović, "The Builders of Novi Sad", in: *DaNS (Društvo arhitekata Novog Sada)* 30 (2000), 20-21, here 21.

commissions started in 1870, after the formation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy when, besides the craftsmen arriving mainly from Budapest and Vienna, a local school of builders was established (with József Czoczek, Anton Tikmayer, Daka Popović, Martin and Sebastian Sotić, Vilmos Linarik, etc.). The most prominent imperial, municipal and clerical commissions were carried out by György Molnár (1829–1899), who was born in Budapest, but settled in Novi Sad, where he continued to work for almost fifty years. Among other monuments his name is associated with the neo-renaissance city hall and the neo-gothic Roman Catholic parish church Miasszonyunk Szent Neve [Holy Name of Our Dear Lady], both of which are situated in the former Main square. Furthermore we should mention the names of Gyula Wagner (1851–1937), designer of today's Vajdasági Museum and Archives [in the Podkarpackie Voivodship]; Franz Woruda (1857? – 1940?), probably born in Vienna and of Czech origin; and Vladimir Nikolić (1857–1922) from the township of Zenta [Senta].

[4] A few years ago, Vladimir Mitrović, architectural historian, drew our attention to seven Hungarian, and mainly Budapest-based architects, who created the art nouveau character of Novi Sad: Aladár Árkay (1868–1932), Lipót Baumhorn (1860–1932), Imre Francsek (1864–1920), Károly Kovács (dates unknown), Géza Márkus (1871–1913), Frigyes Spiegel (1866–1933, together with Géza Márkus) and Béla Pekló (1867–1960).⁸ Art history considers them as pioneers of a trend called Hungarian folk art nouveau, although their formal richness surpasses the school of Ödön Lechner (1845–1914). With its wave mouldings on window sections and window sills, the residential house conceived by Árkay at 7 Safarikova street is indeed in close relation with the technique of brick band ornamentation applied by Lechner, and the same holds for the hospital building (1 Hajduk Veljkova str., 1909) designed by György Kopeczek (1864–1920). However, the Sulphur Bath built by Imre Francsek (68 Futoska str., 1909–1910) and the Adamovics palace (4-6 Mladenaca sq., 1911) conceived by Frigyes Spiegel and Géza Márkus should be classified rather as Jugendstil or imperial Art Nouveau. This imprint promoted by Ákos Moravánszky refers to certain elements on the façade – i.e., wreaths, winged geniuses, masks and mythological elements⁹ – identically applied in different regions of the Monarchy and deeply rooted in historicism. To be more precise we should say *late* historicism, which, coupled with the classic tendencies of the 1910s, shapes the art of architecture in a decorative and yet functional way. Undertaken roughly in the same period, the creations of Béla Pekló, Károly Kovács and Lipót Baumhorn represent the same trend.

⁸ Vladimir Mitrović, *Arhitektura XX veka u Vojvodini*, Novi Sad 2010, 85–101.

⁹ Ákos Moravánszky, *Versengő látomások. Esztétikai újítás és társadalmi program az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia építészetében 1867–1918* [Rivalling Visions. Aesthetic Renewal and Social Program in the Architecture of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1867–1918], Budapest 1998, 106.

Buildings of the Main square designed by Baumhorn and Kovács

[5] The two earliest works by Lipót Baumhorn in Novi Sad, the Savings Bank of Novi Sad on the Main square (7 Trg Slobode, 1904–1905; Fig. 3) and the communal synagogue complex (1906–1909) at 11 Jevrejska street, formerly leading to the Main square¹⁰, were conceived in a rather different spirit.



3 Novi Sad, Trg Slobode, buildings of the Savings Bank and the House of the Ironman (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[6] The documentation of both buildings is incomplete. Based on the available references (written documents, copies of plans, reports from periodicals), the building of the bank was prior to the design of the synagogue. The building application filed with Baumhorn's finalized plans and kept in the city archives (Arhiv grada Novog Sada) bears the date of 17 February 1904.¹¹ The Újvidéki Hírlap [Novi Sad Newspaper] issue of 20 March 1904 announces that the

¹⁰ In the 1930s, Úri street and Jevrejska street/Zsidó street, both leading to the Main square, were divided by a boulevard. Presently Jevrejska street/Zsidó street starts at the beginning of the boulevard.

¹¹ Arhiv grada Novog Sada (Technical Archives of the City of Novi Sad), document number F.1. 13944/1904; building permit number 5806/kig, 1904; the Baumhorn plan is missing. In addition, see 1 Njegoseva in Folder PK 31 – out of which the plan of 1904 is missing – containing an application, as of 7 December 1903, in which the Savings Bank of Novi Sad applies for a permission for temporary alterations. It is granted on condition that the altered buildings may be used only until the construction of the main building is completed (application no. 187/1903). The number of the building permit granted by the City Council as of 15 December is 25060/1903. The plan attached to it is signed by urban engineers Sándor Vulkó and Béla Pekló, executive constructor Jakab Pekló, and, on behalf of the Savings Bank, by general managers Balassa and Ágoston Herger.

construction of the Savings Bank building has begun and underlines the fact that Baumhorn's impressive and modern design was conceived after due consideration of Ignác Alpár's instructions. Builder Béla Pekló from Novi Sad figures as executive constructor.¹² The emergence of the name of Alpár (1855–1928), an influential architect of Hungarian historicism, seems to prove my former assumption according to which the structural arrangement of the building's façade corresponds to an iconography of bank buildings that is deductible mainly from Alpár's works and includes the three-quarter twin pillars on the front façade measuring two entire floors (Fig. 4).



4 Novi Sad, detail of the façade of the Savings Bank, Trg Slobode 7, 1904–1905, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[7] In the summer of the same year the construction was drawing to an end, and on 20 April 1905 the Savings Bank branch opened in the new building.¹³ As to the circumstances of the commission, the relating documentation reports that the commission was originally placed by the Catholic Post Savings Bank.¹⁴ When scrutinizing the names on the board of directors of the Catholic Post Savings Bank published by the *Újvidéki Hírlap*, it appears that among these figured also certain members of the Jewish community in Novi Sad, not to mention the name of István Winkle, who would employ Károly Kovács only a few years later.– The clarification of the circumstances of the commission proves relevant for researchers when reasoning whether Novi Sad follows the scenario materialized in Szeged a few years earlier:¹⁵ Here the commission for the synagogue had earned Baumhorn further commissions from private individuals. Whether the same holds for Novi Sad, is not yet proved. On the contrary, it seems possible that here the sequence

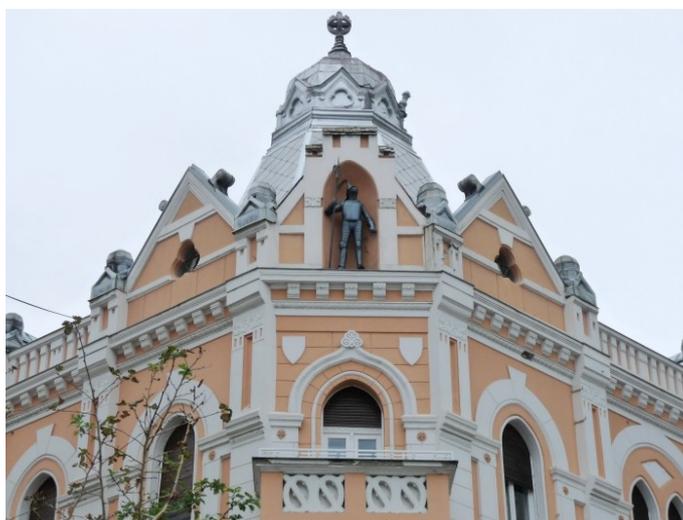
¹² *Újvidéki Hírlap*, vol. 13, no. 23 (20 March 1904), 1; press release of the Entrepreneurs' and Industrials' Journal 25 (1904), n. 17. 6.

¹³ *Újvidéki Hírlap*, vol. 13, no. 69 (28 August 1904), 2; *Újvidéki Hírlap*, vol. 14, no. 33 (23 April 1905), 2.

¹⁴ Donka Stančić, ed., *Umetnička topografija Novog Sada*, Novi Sad 2014, see "Trg Slobode 7".

was reversed.– Public reception of the bank building was fairly positive. The local newspaper referred to above¹⁶ considered the building with its monumental shapes and impressive appearance as the most beautiful piece of architecture in Novi Sad, matching perfectly the urban surroundings dominated by the city hall in neo-renaissance style, the Grand Hotel nearby and a neo-gothic church.

[8] In contrast to the functionalist approach followed by the 1906 design of the synagogue complex, the formal elements of the highly decorated bank palace include motifs of late historicism, the Viennese Secession and Art Nouveau. Instead of reviewing the religious community's buildings situated further off from the bank, let us proceed by taking a glance at the so-called House of the Ironman (Njegoseva 2 [called Andrássy street at the turn of the century]), 1908–1909, which lies between the bank branch and the Catholic church, and opens a dialogue, on account of its formal design, with both neighbouring buildings (Fig. 5).



5 Novi Sad, pediment of the House of the Ironman, Njegoseva 2, 1908–1909, architect: Károly Kovács (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

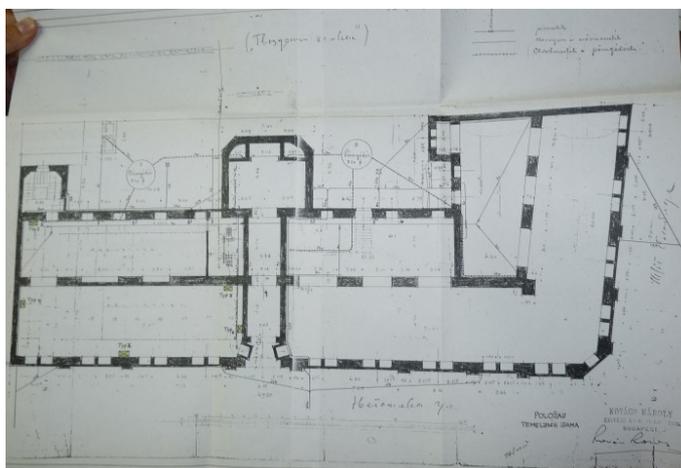
[9] Latest findings by researchers revealed that the house, which in the 1980s was considered to be a work by Béla Pekló, had originally been designed by Károly Kovács working (also) in Novi Sad at the turn of the century.¹⁷ The

¹⁵ On the building complex in Szeged see Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, "Lipót Baumhorn and his Commissioners. Manifestation of Jewish Assimilation in the Architecture of Szeged at the Turn of the Century", in: *Als ich can - Tanulmányok Urbach Zsuzsa 80. születésnapjára* [Studies on the Occasion of the 80th Birthday of Zsuzsa Urbach], ed. Gábor Gaylhoffer-Kovács and Miklós Székely, Budapest 2013, 34–45.

¹⁶ The high appraisal voiced in the press release may partly be due to the biased opinion of editor-in-chief dr. Sándor Nemes, member of the Jewish community of Novi Sad.

¹⁷ Bela Duranci, *A vajdasági építészeti szecesszió* [Architektura secesije u Vojvodini], Újvidék 1983, 67.

possibility of Pekló's contribution is not yet excluded,¹⁸ but a copy of the original plan archived at the local Institution for the Conservation of Monuments clearly indicates Kovács, Baumhorn's colleague newly arrived in Novi Sad, as its designer (Fig. 6).¹⁹



6 Copy of the planning document of the House of the Ironman, autograph signature and stamp of "Károly Kovács, architect and builder, Budapest" (by courtesy of Zavod zastitu spomenika kulture grada Novog Sada [Institution for the Conservation of the Monuments of the City, Novi Sad])

[10] The copy was made of the original plan of the basement level of the three-storey building designed by order of the Roman Catholic parish. Dates and other data in relation with the building permit are not visible. The building was designed around 1908²⁰ and accomplished in 1909. The ground floor was originally to house shops while on the upper floors huge flats were installed. The name of "Ironman" is derived from the statue of the armoured knight which used to stand on the corner of the former two-storey building and is currently situated in the trimmed corner gables of the new building. The urban topography edited by Donka Stančić describes the formal arrangement of the three-storey, L-shaped house as purely Art Nouveau, but the variation of the forms applied is in fact much richer than that. Situated in a corner of the city's Main square, the building – with its peak-arched upper floor windows, almost spikey roof-top pediments, square-shaped geometrical arrangement and leafy-foliaged fields multiplied in

¹⁸ Mitrović, *The Builders of Novi Sad*, 27.

¹⁹ Zavod za zastitu spomenika kulture grada Novog Sada [Institution for the Conservation of the Monuments of the City, Novi Sad], Njegoseva 2; folder on the House of the Ironman. For further data referring to the building see Stančić, ed., *Umetnička topografija Novog Sada*, Njegoseva 2.

²⁰ The relating passage in the urban topography (see Stančić, ed., *Umetnička topografija Novog Sada*) makes reference to document n. 246.20395/1908 in the Technical Archives of the City, without detailing its actual content. However, during my visit, the archives were unable to find the corresponding document.

the divisions – sports an individual blend of historicism and turn of the century. Its neo-gothic forms rhyme with the pointed arches of the parish church built in 1893, while its window sections, corner turret, coats of arms and minutely wrought coating ornamentation are equivalents of a number of similar elements on the bank building situated right next door. The designer appears to have made an effort to find a special architectural solution required by the location of the site, situated in the corner of a public square. Kovács opted for a synthesis of the neighbouring styles of medieval and Art Nouveau motifs. This observation holds also true for the gateway. There we can detect the patterned ribbons of the ogee-arched architecture over its peak-arched blind arcades, while the staircase lights hanging from the ceiling are filled in with geometrically shaped lead glass windows.

[11] Several motifs of the formal design applied here are astonishingly reminiscent of Baumhorn's style, mainly the corner turret, which is similar to the one we can find on the Savings Bank of Szeged-Csongrád, but also the bunch of leaves and twirling foliage filling in the square-shaped fields of the front façade. Within Baumhorn's works, these motifs first appeared on the façades of non-religious public buildings at the beginning of the turn of the century, shaping the cityscape of Szeged and Temesvár [today Timișoara, Romania] in Hungary.²¹

The Winkle palace, the synagogue complex and the relationship of the two architects

[12] Once considered as the centre of public administration, religion and banking, the former Main square lies at the end of three major streets. According to the indications on a map of 1885, the so-called Fő utca [Main street] – today Zmaj Jovina – coming from the southeast led to the Main square and continued under the name of Úri utca [Gents' street] – at the turn of the century Kossuth Lajos street, between WW1 and WW2 Narodnih Heroja, today Kralja Aleksandra – towards the northwest, while another street starting at the Main square and called Zsidó utca [Jewish street] led to the northern suburbia. At the turn of the century this street was named Rákóczi street, and Jugoslovske Narodne Armije between WW1 and WW2. Today, after the complete row of its houses on the east side was demolished, it has become a square called Trg Pozorišni [Színház tér]. (Currently its continuation is the Jevrejska/Zsidó street mentioned earlier.) Housing homes and shops on two or three levels, the buildings of the Main street were realized or altered between 1850 and 1900, their style of architecture arising, similarly to all the other regions of the Monarchy, out of a neo-renaissance or neo-baroque inspiration. One part of Úri and of Zsidó streets originates from these decades, but the other part, featuring the buildings designed by Baumhorn and Kovács, represents the turn of the century.

²¹ In Temesvár/Timișoara: Állami Felsőbb Leányiskola [Public High School for Girls], Bd. Constantin Diaconovici Loga 45, 1901–1903; in Szeged: Hitközségi székház [Seat of the Jewish Community], Gutenberg u. 20, 1901–1903.

[13] Facing one another, the two buildings which once shaped the image of Úri street are the Winkle palace (Kralja Aleksandra 5, 1906–1907, Károly Kovács) and the Menráth palace (Kralja Aleksandra 14, 1908–09, Lipót Baumhorn). Although the relating documentation is lost, the designer of the latter building can be unmistakably identified on the basis of a reference in the history of the furniture-trading Menráth family.²² The circumstances of the commission are unclear, but it is reportedly the highly respected József Menráth of German origin who, having earned by that time a good reputation on a local scale, entrusts Baumhorn with the project of his palace. Novi Sad saw the birth of one of its most lively building façades, whose architecture is closely related to the formal language of the Viennese Art Nouveau (Secession). More static in its construction, the three-storeyed palace of István Winkle (Fig. 7) had been conceived prior to the Menráth palace and occupied as early as the autumn of 1907.²³



7 Novi Sad, Winkle palace, detail of the façade, Kralja Aleksandra 5, 1906–1907, architect: Károly Kovács (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[14] Since the fields of ornamentation covering the façade of the Winkle palace and the wreathed female heads placed between its window sections are normally classified as Baumhorn's individual features – identical with a similar part of the façade of the Savings Bank of Szeged-Csongrád, and bearing identical metal bars on the balcony railings –, I found it difficult to determine which one of the two architects had actually designed the Winkle building (Fig. 8–9).

²² Ágnes Ózer: Volt egyszer egy Újvidék [Once Upon a Time There was a Novi Sad], Újvidék 2012, 51–52; Háztörténetek: Német sorsok a Duna mentén [History of Houses. German Destinies on the Bank of the Danube], ed. Donauschwäbisches Zentralmuseum, Ulm, exh. cat., Budapest 2002, 141–161; Ágnes Ózer: Jedna novosadska priča/Eine Neusatzler Geschichte, Novi Sad 2008.

²³ Újvidék 32, no. 76 (22 September 1907), 4; Újvidék 32, no. 88 (4 October 1907), 4.



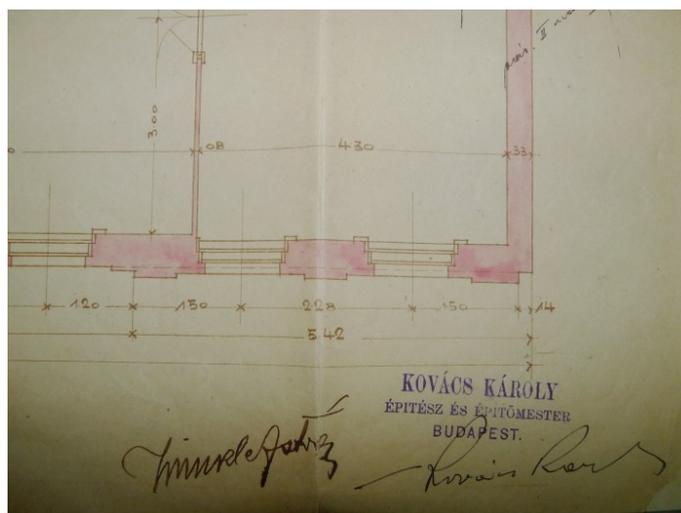
8 Novi Sad, Winkle palace, detail of the façade, Kralja Aleksandra 5, 1906–1907, architect: Károly Kovács (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)



9 Novi Sad, Menráth palace, detail of the façade, Kralja Aleksandra 14, 1908–1909, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[15] Searching in the Technical department of the Historical Archive of the city of Novi Sad, I found the general plan of the first floor, bearing the signature and stamp of Károly Kovács (without indication of the date; Fig. 10).²⁴

²⁴ Istorijiski Arhiv grada Novog Sada, Tehnicki Arhiv [Historical Archive of the City of Novi Sad, Technical department], reserved documents of Donka Stančić. The cover of the plan bears the number 17 in red ink. In the document, there are two building permits noted bearing the numbers 11987/1906 and 13182/1906; the date on the stamp duty is 11 July 1906, and the signatories are István Winkle and Károly Kovács.



10 Detail of the plan of the Winkle palace. Istorijski Arhiv grada Novog Sada, Tehnicki Arhiv [Historical Archive of the City of Novi Sad, Technical department] (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[16] There is a tiny detail linking the two creations of Kovács, the Winkle palace and the House of the Ironman: Both buildings display a divisional pilaster covered with striped coatings and located between the window sections up to the level of the second floor. This element appears to be Kovács' own characteristic feature, including a special blend of ornamentation borrowed from late historicism and the related Viennese patterns, and a heritage of classic forms originating from the 19th century.

[17] The duration of the cooperation between the two architects, Baumhorn and Kovács, is not yet exactly known. The first reference is from 1902,²⁵ while the last one, the plan of a school building situated at the corner of Csata and Gömb streets in Budapest and bearing the signature of Kovács together with the stamp of Baumhorn, dates back to 1910.²⁶ The nature of their joint ventures can be better understood considering that the stamp of Károly Kovács figures only on two plans of residential buildings – the House of the Ironman and the Winkle palace²⁷ –, while most of the plans bearing his signature are carried out on behalf of the Baumhorn office. These include the synagogue complex, the school in Csaba street and the home of Lipót Schwarz. Most probably, he represented the

²⁵ The documents relating to the synagogue of Fiume bear Baumhorn's stamp and include statistic calculations signed by Kovács (6 November 1902); in: Drzavni Arhiv u Rijeci, document n. JU-51 100/1902.

²⁶ Budapest, Csata u. 20.; Budapest Főváros Levéltára [Archives of the capital city of Budapest], Collection of architectural plans, research documents of site n. 27464-65. Although a design of Béla Rerrich was approved in 1909, the Baumhorn version was realized instead. On the plaque mounted in the building's main hall, Baumhorn is named as designer of the building.

²⁷ The general plans of the synagogue of Makó in Hungary bear his stamp, too. Source: József Attila Múzeum, Makó, Történeti Dokumentációs Gyűjtemény [József Attila Museum, Makó, Collection of historical documents], 94.49.1-3.

Baumhorn office in several construction sites, just like in Novi Sad, which is far away from Budapest. Here his name figures for the first time on the plan of the synagogue, next to Baumhorn's signature (Fig. 11).



11 Plan of the synagogue of Novi Sad, 1906, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (© Zavod za zastitu spomenika kulture grada Novog Sada [Institution for the Conservation of the Monuments of the City of Novi Sad])

[18] Next to the autograph signature we can see the date of January 1906, while the stamp of the public authorities was issued on 21 May 1906. Károly Kovács is likely to have brought the plans before the Jewish community, and to have been the one in charge of supervising the construction phases.²⁸ The construction itself

²⁸ Chronicle of the synagogue's construction: On its general meeting of 20 February 1904, when the Jewish community was about to consider the enlargement of the synagogue built in 1826, the idea of building a new one emerged. After calculating the costs, the decision was placed in the hands of the members of the community, who voted for a donation of 40.000 crowns to cover the expenses of the construction. (The newspaper *Újvidéki Hírlap*, in its issue of 17 March 1904 [vol. 13, no. 22], p. 2, gave a detailed account of the donators and the amounts of their contributions.) The lot of land of their choice, costing 30.000 crowns, was extended by another lot, on which stood the so-called Löbl house, bought at a price of 28.000 crowns (probably as early as in 1904). The construction was supposed to begin in August 1905 (as announced on 6 April 1904). In order to be able to submit the plans of the building complex, the contracted Baumhorn asked for a prolongation of one month in December 1905. On 12 April 1906 the building commission submitted the concerning tenders and, with the approval of Baumhorn, voted unanimously in favour of Subotica-based entrepreneur Gyula Lábás' tender. (The total cost was calculated at this time at 306.936 crowns and 46 cents; eventually, the complex was completed at an additional cost of 140.000 crowns.) The sequence of the construction came to be the following: school, synagogue, homes of public officers. The

was carried out, with a certain delay, by the building company of Gyula Lábas based in the city of Subotica. Based on this reference, Károly Kovács is most likely to have been appointed foreman, which would explain the fact that his signature figures next to the stamp of the Baumhorn office.²⁹ Another argument in favour of this assumption is the fact that at the turn of the century there were several constructions, where the tasks of designing, executing and most likely foremanship were undertaken by the same person.³⁰ In case of commissions of a larger volume – such as the Baumhorn buildings – it seems logical that an architect from Budapest should be locally represented by a foreman carrying out the necessary supervisory tasks. Károly Kovács, who was staying in Novi Sad specifically for this reason, was more likely to be commissioned as designer of the Winkle palace and of the House of the Ironman than any other architect based in the far-off capital city of Budapest. The commission for the Winkle palace must have come directly after the arrival of the plans of the synagogue, as István Winkle, member of the directors' board of the Savings Bank of Novi Sad, learnt about the project when he was negotiating a bank loan on behalf of the Jewish community. (The date on the duty stamp of the Winkle plan is so blurred that apart from the year of 1906 nothing else is visible.) During the construction of the community buildings accomplished by September 1909, Kovács got the commission from the Catholic parish to build the House of the Ironman, whose preliminary designs are most likely to have been conceived in 1908. Before his total costs were to be financed by the community's own contribution, donations, sales of the synagogue chairs, support from the city and a bank loan of 210.000 crowns taken out from the Savings Bank of Novi Sad. The remuneration of the architect and the engineering foremen (Kovács?) was budgeted as follows: Baumhorn 15.000 crowns, supervising engineers 4000 crowns. In order to win the support of the city, the general meeting of the Jewish community elected a delegation, including Lipót Schwartz, former client of Baumhorn in 1910. The farewell service in the old synagogue, which was to be demolished soon, was held on 3 June 1906. Three commemorative stones were placed in the new building, in the rabbi's dressing room wall. By the school year of 1907/1908 the construction of the school was finished, and it came to house temporarily in its large meeting room the house of worship. The synagogue was not accomplished by the time prescribed, i.e. 1 November 1907, but the neighbouring office buildings were occupied on 1 September 1908 by the functionaries of the community. In summer 1909 the synagogue was finished and its inauguration took place on 8 September 1909. See: Imre Radó and József Mayor, *A noviszádi zsidók története* [History of the Jews in Novi Sad], Újvidék 1930, 107–117; for further information on the synagogue cf. Donka Stančić, "Novosadska sinagoga", in: *Sveske za istoriju Novog Sada* 17 (1986), 153–156; Pavle Šosberger, *Sinagoge u Vojvodini, Novi Sad* 1998; Pavle Šosberger, *Novosadski jevreji, Novi Sad* 2001.

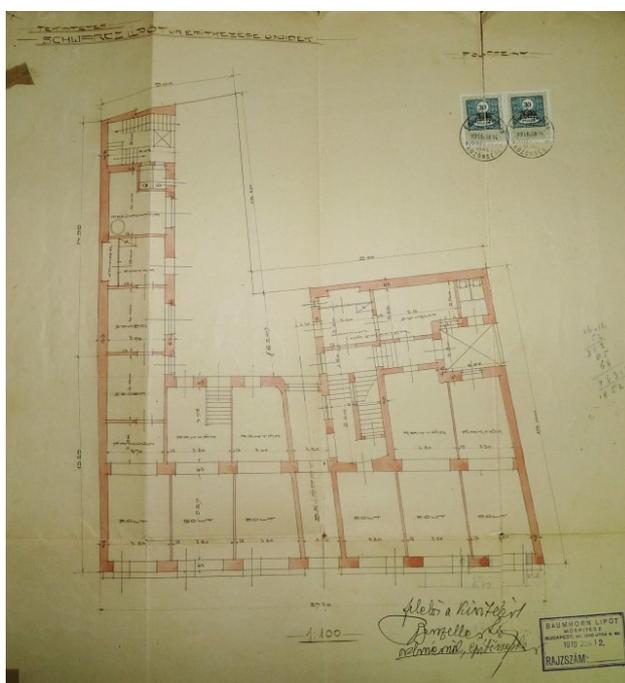
²⁹ In Šosberger, *Sinagoge u Vojvodini*, 47, a certain Adolf Deutsch is indicated as supervising engineer of the construction, but this does not exclude Kovács' role as foreman.

³⁰ Among others, the works of the Novi Sad-based building craftsmen Lipót Berceller, Béla Pekló, Fülöp Haasz and Nándor Czoczek, whose construction plans were brought to my attention by the staff of the archives of the Istorijски Arhiv grada Novog Sada, Tehnicki Arhiv [Historical Archive of the City of Novi Sad, Technical department].

last commission in Novi Sad, i.e. the home of Lipót Schwarz, he may have been appointed foreman to two other Baumhorn buildings: the Menráth palace in 1908–1909 and the Tomin palace in 1909. However we do not have enough evidence in these two cases to prove his actual participation.

The home of merchant Lipót Schwarz recently rediscovered

[19] One of the studies written on the architecture of the city of Novi Sad reported on Lipót Baumhorn's contribution to an unknown building in the city that has since been demolished: the home of Lipót Schwarz at 13 Jevrejska street.³¹ Donka Stančić, the author of the study in question, bases her assumption on a general plan of that building she found in the Historical Archive of the city (Fig. 12).³²



12 Ground floor plan of the house of Lipót Schwarz in Novi Sad, 1910, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (© Istorijski Arhiv grada Novog Sada, Tehnicki Arhiv [Historical Archive of the City of Novi Sad, Technical Department]; photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[20] She tried to determine the geographical situation of the building but was encumbered by the fact that streets had been renamed at least three times through history. Designed for the construction of Lipót Schwarz' house, the floor plans of the ground floor and the basement are, without any further annotations,

³¹ Donka Stančić, *Novi Sad od kuće do kuće*, Novi Sad 2005, 294. The same is written by Filip Krčmar in a study on Baumhorn's complete works and the buildings of the Podkarpackie Voivodship: Filip Krčmar, "Lipót Baumhorn – Povodom 150 godina od rođenja", in: *Rad Muzeja Vojvodine* 52 (2010), 295–307.

³² Istorijski Arhiv grada Novog Sada, Tehnicki Arhiv [Historical Archive of the City of Novi Sad, Technical Department], reserved documents of Donka Stančić, Inscription JNA 11 under number 156.

stamped by Lipót Baumhorn and signed by Lipót Berczeller, as person in charge of the execution; in addition, on the basement plan, there is the signature of Károly Kovács. I found the two plans separately in two different rows of documents. The date visible on Baumhorn's stamp is 12 June 1910. Attached to the basement plan, there is a resolution bearing the registration number 426/911 and containing a decision of the city council of 13 January 1911 made on the occasion of a general meeting. The subject of the resolution is the collapsed vaulting in the basement of a house at 13 Rákóczi Ferenc street, whose repair is stated by the council to be the obligation of the official owner, Lipót Schwarz. According to the council's opinion the collapse had been caused by the low quality of the raw material used for the construction as well as by deviations from the original plans. For its repair the resolution strictly prescribed the use of "A" quality bricks as in the original plans. Based on the three documents, the history of the construction may be established as follows: The plans made by Baumhorn at the request of Lipót Schwarz in June 1910 signify the beginning of the commission (or at least the beginning of the application process for the building permit), the stamp on the front of the plan with the number 12498/1910 is the building permit issued by the city council on 18 June 1910. The resolution of January 1911, with the attachment of the basement plan as signed by Károly Kovács, already deals with the problems encountered during the construction phase. Based on the fact that the two plans were filed into separate folders, and based on the differences between the two signatures, we can assume that Kovács held the position of foreman in this case, too, and was in charge of signing the basement plan to be attached to the fact sheets documenting the circumstances of the collapse.

[21] It is yet unknown where the actual location of the building was. The reference to 13 Jevrejska street expressed in the relating studies is supposed to have been a site neighbouring the synagogue. Number 13 is an assumption based on the recurring references to 13 Rákóczi street, while the name of the street is inferred from the renamings that the streets of Novi Sad had undergone. Between WW1 and WW2 the collective name of Jugoslavske Narodna Armije stood for both Rákóczi and Zsidó streets, and the cover of the concerning documentation found in the archives bears the registration number "JNA 11?".

[22] Leafing through a collection of historical postcards of the city, I noticed that the first part of Rákóczi street lies in the vicinity of the Main square, whose eastern row of houses was demolished during the construction of the National Theatre in 1981; the western side of the same street remained intact. As I was walking in the street, I accidentally went into a house whose gateway is decorated with motifs from the period of late historicism - disc pendants, egg-and-dart, coat of arms - which looked somehow familiar to me (Fig. 13).



13 Novi Sad, house of Lipót Schwarz, gateway, Trg Pozorišni 7, 1910–1911, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[23] At first sight, the exterior façade seemed pretty much plain, rather pre-modern than turn of the century. But after scrutinizing the documentation relating to the plans and checking the local maps, I got convinced that the house in question had not been demolished, and that instead of Jevrejska street it is situated at this address, that is 7 Pozorišni square (Fig. 14; or Színház tér [Theatre square] in Hungarian).



14 Novi Sad, house of Lipót Schwarz, Trg Pozorišni 7, 1910–1911, architect: Lipót Baumhorn (photograph: Ágnes Ivett Oszkó, 2013)

[24] Suddenly I understood where the coats of arms surrounded by empty pendants – characterizing the Savings Bank, the House of the Ironman, the Girls' School in Temesvár (Timisoara, Romania) and the Lloyd palace (1909–1912) as

well as the famous homes designed by Baumhorn in Szeged, Hungary³³ – all originated from! The general plan of the building designed for a site ending in a sharp angle on its northern boundaries corresponds with both the shape of the house and the arrangement of the land as illustrated on present-day and historical section maps. With its six sections of interconnected vaults, the wine cellar indicated on the basement plan represents well the figure of the merchant Lipót Schwarz, whose shop was housed in one of the commercial outlets on the ground floor while his flat – probably – occupied the first floor of the three-storey building. A highly respectable and well-to-do member of the Jewish community, he was selected member of the Chevra Kadisa [Holy Society] before the turn of the century (1891–1897), took part in the financial arrangements to prepare the construction of the synagogue, and became member of the representative body of the community from 1910 to 1912.³⁴ In 1904 he figured on the list of the funding members of the Ártézi Gyógyfürdő Részvénytársaság [Artesian Spa Inc.], among beer brewer István Winkle, Savings Bank director József Czeipek and Jewish community president dr. Károly Kohn, later Kubinyi.³⁵ Likewise, building craftsman Lipót Berczeller, who was in great demand in the city and in charge of the execution of Schwarz' house, was also a member of the Jewish community's representative body.³⁶ Thus Lipót Schwarz seems to have been rich and respectable enough to start constructing in the city centre, and to have his house designed by Lipót Baumhorn who was coming from the capital and was already well-known, and who enjoyed a good reputation in Novi Sad.

[25] Based on its choice of forms, this rather simple three-storey building is defined as originating from the 1920s or 1930s in the topography of the city architecture edited by Donka Stančić. The modest rhythm of the windows in the front façade is 1+1+2+1+1, and the gateway opens in the central axis. There are six shop windows/doors on the ground floor. The upper floors display a projection encompassing the four middle axes. The two central axes are opened with balconies whose corners are trimmed in a triangle shape on the first floor; on the second floor they are completed with metal railings in the form of geometrical bands. The sections between the windows are divided by pilasters reaching up to the level of the window sill, and filled with square-shaped coatings, while the parapets of the windows are decorated with square-shaped mirrors on the wall.

³³ Wagner palace, 4 Kölcsey street/14 Kárász street, 1904–1905; block of flats by Gusztáv Wagner, 28 Fekete Sas street, 1910–1911; Forbát house, 11 Dugonics square, 1911–1912. None of the plans of the buildings constructed in Szeged, Hungary, bears the name of Károly Kovács. For the numbers of these documents conserved in Csongrád Megye Levéltára [Archives of Csongrád county, Szeged] see the relating chapter in Oszkó, Baumhorn Lipót és megbízói [Lipót Baumhorn and his Commissioners], 39-41.

³⁴ Radó-Mayor, A noviszádi zsidók története [History of the Jews in Novi Sad], 103-106, 137.

³⁵ See the announcement of the registration of shares in Újvidéki Hírlap, vol. 13, no. 103 (25 December 1904), 6.

³⁶ Radó-Mayor, A noviszádi zsidók története [History of the Jews in Novi Sad], 136–139.

Judging from the overall appearance of the façade, subsequent alterations are likely to have occurred. We should make further mention of the richly decorated gateway detailed above, on the right hand side of which there is the main staircase. The sidewalls of the plain-lofted split gateway are divided into chequered pilaster strips, while the empty spaces in between sport square-shaped coats of arms and pendants capped with bastion-like crowns.

[26] The range of forms proves to be in close relation with the motifs of the Baumhorn buildings constructed in Szeged, Hungary, between 1910 and 1912, from the window sections with their trimmed corners through the chequered pilaster strips of the gateway to the coats of arms with pendants (in Szeged, Wagner palace block, 28 Fekete Sas street, the arrangement of the gateways is almost identical). These are the simple, geometrical forms of Baumhorn from around 1910, which at the same time keep and modify the basic historical motifs to be applied by the designer in a functional role here.

Summary

[27] The architecture of Novi Sad is quite multi-faceted especially if we consider not only the reconstruction era of the 19th century and the turn of the century but also the period between the two World Wars and the years following it. The heart of the city is still the historical Main square – called Trg Slobode today – and its surroundings, which bear the imprint of a booming economy and civic life from the period of historical Dualism. This prosperity after the years following the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848/49 is mainly due to the city's German, Hungarian and Jewish communities. And that is why the Jewish community could afford to have an impressive group of buildings constructed by one of the most respectable synagogue architects of the era, Lipót Baumhorn, even if it is situated further off from the city centre. The architectural design of Art Nouveau blended with late historicism not only corresponded to the taste of the assimilated community members, who were proud of the social ranks they had achieved, but was also approved of by the city's central financial institution and the industrialists and merchants of the local German community. Commissions placed with Károly Kovács, who had come to represent Baumhorn in Novi Sad, were soon to follow. All in all, Kovács designed two individual palaces in Novi Sad (Winkle palace, House of the Ironman) and is certain to have been appointed foreman of two other constructions. The number of Lipót Baumhorn's works in Novi Sad, complemented by the "rediscovered" Schwarz house, adds up to five: the Savings Bank of Novi Sad, the synagogue complex, the Menráth palace, the Tomin palace and the house of Schwarz.

[28] If we compare the works of the two architects with the creations of other Budapest-based architects in Novi Sad in the same period, it seems evident that the residential building designed by Aladár Árkay with its Hungarian, ribbon-like ornamentation is quite unique in its choice of style, even if in other cities on the Serbian-Hungarian border, for example in Szabadka (Subotica) and Zenta, but even in Szeged, Hungarian Art Nouveau was prospering. Judging from its

functional general plan and the volume of the building, the cosmopolitan palace designed by the architectural duo of Spiegel and Márkus in 1911 seems to transcend the style of the turn of the century. At the turn of the century, the wavy ornamentation used by Baumhorn and Kovács proved rather pioneering, but remained conservative enough to be integrated in the city centre. It matched the cityscape on account of its minutely detailed historical forms but knew how to keep pace with the small-town character of the surrounding buildings. Today the choice of its architectural forms is still something the city takes pride in.

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