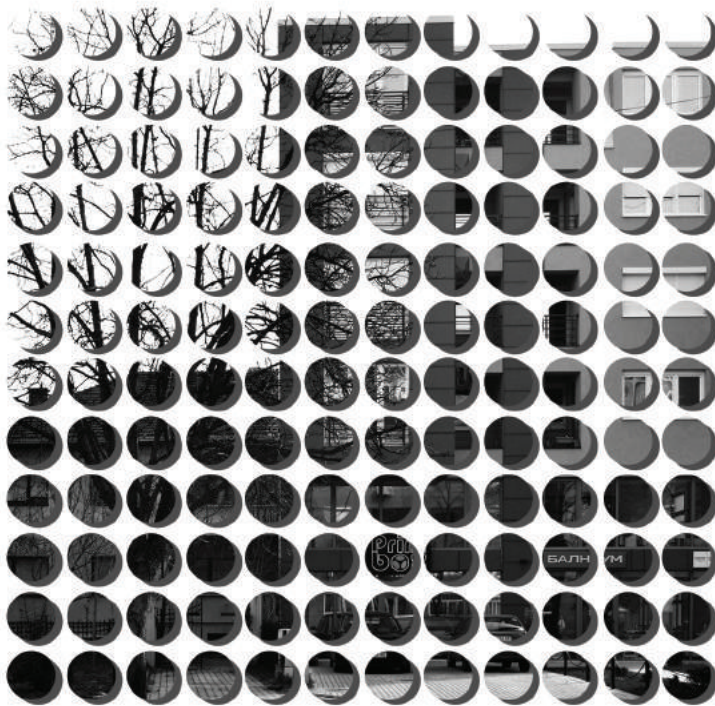


Skopje Reckless:

Towards Dynamic Habitat

Sara Simoska



Skopje Reckless:

Towards Dynamic Habitat

Master Thesis in Architecture

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Abstract

In the recent 10 years, the city of Skopje is growing towards many directions. The more affective to everyday life is the inside growth in density. This growth is represented by constructing new buildings on open public spaces and green areas, by adding floors to existing buildings and adding façade extensions. Additionally, the growth is affecting the mountain Vodno which is very important natural entity parallel to the longest south side of the city. Through out the history different approaches by different professionals were made. The main thing in all of them is a definition of a city core. Today as the city grew a lot, there is an urgent need of new definition of the city core.

This research proposes the city skin as an existing infrastructural line inside the city. The long infrastructural line that defines big part of the city and divides it in a way, it becomes potential for the city growth. It works as a membrane to provide air, movement and growth inside the city. It stands for protecting the incontrollable outside growing and provides diverse public spaces and multiple pedestrian connections to the closest neighborhood. The project area is located on the city skin and from ground floor to top level it relates the city differently. The ground is continuing the complex dynamic atmosphere of the city and the top is relating the clean spacious residential urban blocks built in XX century. Through diverse activities and programs the project aims towards dynamic habitat, in order to enhance a healthy city growth.

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Skopje, city in the middle of Balkan, capital of Macedonia, these days faces a dangerous threat of overbuilding. Almost half of country's population (2 millions people) live in Skopje (>800.000). By comparing it to the world, Macedonia is considered relatively as a small country, thus its cities are generally perceived as towns. Furthermore, a city like Skopje 800.000 inhabitants doesn't seem a lot compared to many other world big cities. Actually this observation is correct, but the perception of what is big and what is small can never be distinguished. In the following thesis, I want to emphasize why uncontrolled and unplanned city growth is dangerous for Skopje and I want to point out the positive surviving entities of the city, criticize the negative aspects and propose a possible way of thinking and acting for the future wellness of city.

Problem

Each day new people come to live and work in Skopje from different cities of Macedonia. It is the most developed city in the county. It provides all levels of education, country's best health care service, main cultural activities, and it is the location of the important political and economical powers. Macedonia is multiethnic country where 6 nationalities and/or ethnicities live, in Skopje, for example, there are Macedonians (majority), Albanians, Roma, Turks, Serbians, Vlas, Bosnians and other minorities. People mainly come for educational reasons and then continue their working careers in city's institutions, businesses and factories. This overcrowding is leading to rapid construction of new residential buildings which is reflected in the following forms:

1. The preexisting parks and open areas that were courts of buildings and used as public spaces, now become land for private investors to build residential buildings
2. The individual family houses are replaced with residential buildings occupying the same space on ground level as the house of 1-2 floors, but having 4-5 floors instead.
3. Already existing residential buildings with 4-5 floors become 6-7 floors and have additional elements on the sides with external terraces and extensions.
4. Expanding towards the mountain Vodno residential buildings of 5-7 floors without good urban planning, just by overlapping two or three parcels of previous single family houses

1. The building on left and on right are old one, instead two in the middle are new one





2. Before it was two houses, today hotel and house



3. Added floors to preexisting building

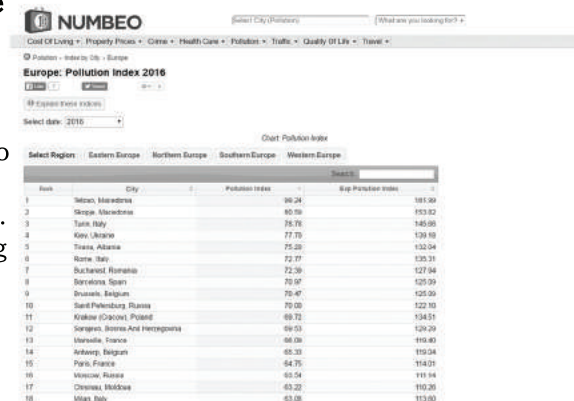


4. View towards the mountain Vodno and build part

The centre area is the direct victim of this radical building. Recently the other municipalities, outside the centre, which are still providing good quality living space for people, started to suffer from the same issue. The mayors of these municipalities published new bizarre master plans presenting new residential buildings in the green areas and extensions of existing buildings.

The biggest thread and the issue

Due to last data presented by NUMBEO, Skopje is the 2nd most polluted city in Europe after Tetovo which is also located in Macedonia. Here Skopje is compared to much bigger cities with much more industries, transport and built area. This shows that there is something wrong in the city's activities and that change should be considered immediately. The pollution is felt mostly during the winter days when the smog is so strong that the visibility is set to minimum.



The government and institutions are not doing any serious measurements. 5. list of European cities according to pollution index

People are showing their revolt by organizing strikes, but all without any results. Although, the reasons of pollution are plural, one of the very important is the construction of new unthought-of buildings and demolishing the green areas. "Air is what gives freedom to people" says Lewis Mumford in the book Culture of cities, but when the clean air is gone, the only left is agony.



6. Smog over Skopje



7. Organized strikes

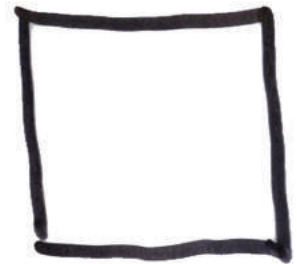
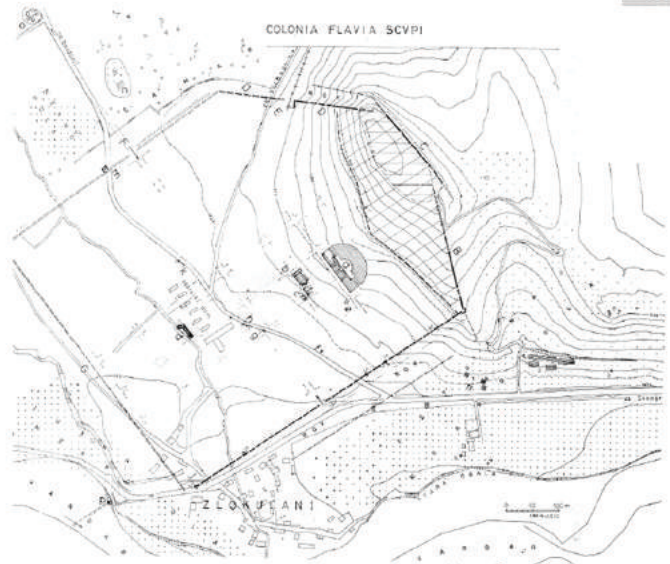
Topographic position

The city of Skopje is located in a valley between 3 mountains and smaller hills. The most significant mountain is the mountain Vodno, towards which the city tended always to grow and today occupies one third of it. Other important natural element is the river Vardar. It passes in the middle of the city and the city growth followed its direction in the past. This topography is important geometrical predisposition for the city, which was and still is, neglected during the urban planning. This topography is also one of the reasons that cause the polluted air to remain in the valley when the temperature is colder. Although the river Vardar brings the main winds through the city, it is still not enough to clean the pollution that the city produces.

It is important to understand how the city used to grow, from the very beginning until nowadays. As well, it is important to realize how this growth was reflected by the topography and which were the limits of the city during its growth.

**ROMAN CITY SKUPI
13-11 BC TO 518 AC**

The city was founded between 13 and 11 year B.C. It is in the shape of typical roman castrum, orthogonal. Rotated South East – North West with the longer side. It is located on one of the curves of the river Vardar on the south side of a small hill. This way the city was well protected and supplied with fresh water and enough sun. The city was destroyed in 518 ac by earthquake. Today is remained part of the antic theater and some parts of some public buildings.



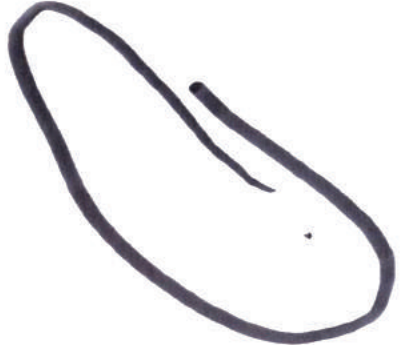
ENCLOSURE



8. Roman city map, its shape, and its relation with the topography

BYZANTIUM CITY SKOPJE
527 ac - 1329 ac

The city was strategically located on the hill near the river Vardar. It was fortified against the attackers during the Byzantium period. The walls that embrace the upper city are following the slope of the hill and are working together with the natural topography. These walls enclose a definitive space on the hill. There was also a lower city, where the citizens were living, and it is located in the space between the river and the hill. From this location later on, the city continues spreading and growing, but the core of the city centre remains near this point until these days.



ENCLOSURE



9. Byzantium city map, its shape, and its relation with the topography

OTTOMAN CITY of SKOPJE
1329 ac - beginning of 20th C.

The ottoman city found its position next to the Byzantium city but on the flat surface in 1392 when it was conquered by Ottoman Empire. The oval shape of the river Vardar in this place creates good location for city settling. The city starts growing north and spreading equally towards each side. Positioning of the train line in 1873 on south, next to the mountain Vodno is a reason for the city's growth towards north. The train line parallel to the mountain connected the city with Thessaloniki and Dubrovnik, for market and trading reasons. While the perpendicular line connected the city with Kumanovo.

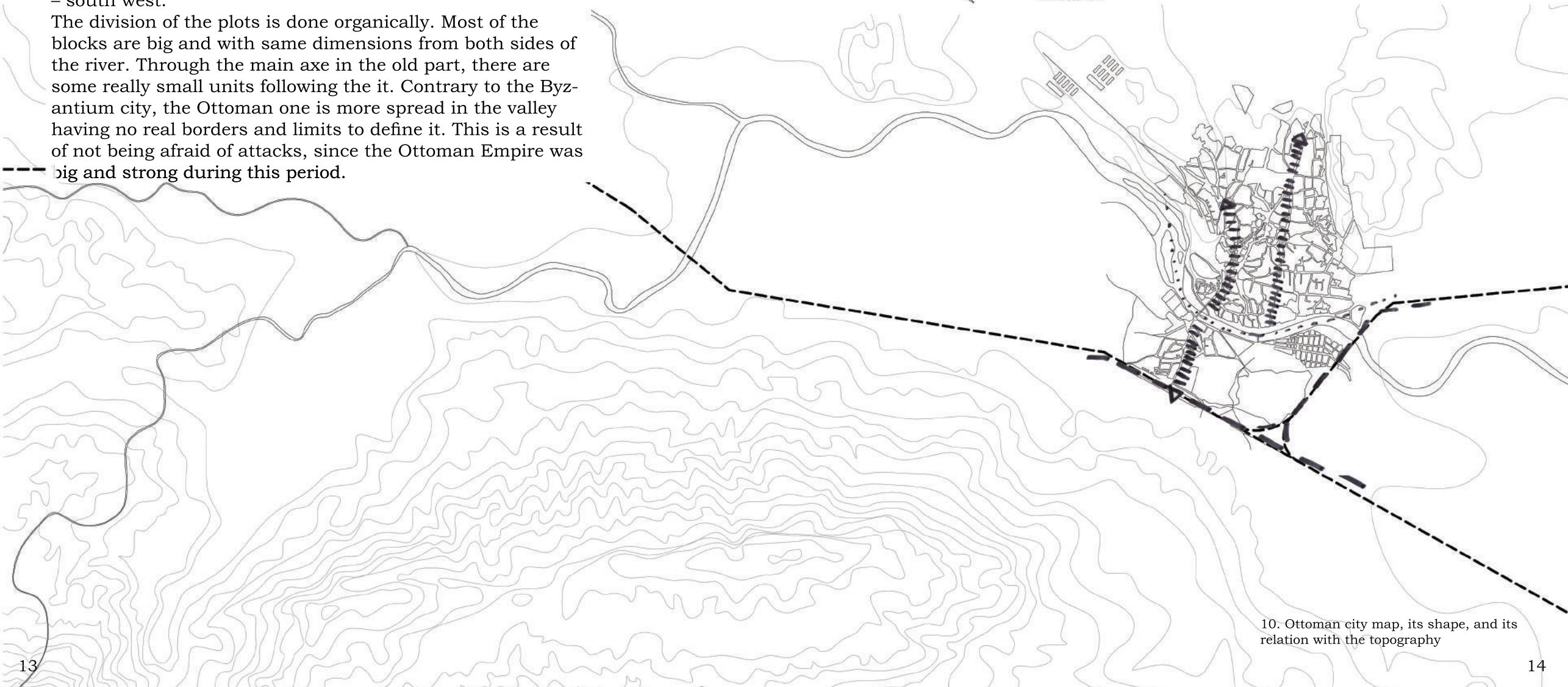
During this period city spread primarily in the axe north east - south west.

The division of the plots is done organically. Most of the blocks are big and with same dimensions from both sides of the river. Through the main axe in the old part, there are some really small units following the it. Contrary to the Byzantium city, the Ottoman one is more spread in the valley having no real borders and limits to define it. This is a result of not being afraid of attacks, since the Ottoman Empire was

big and strong during this period.



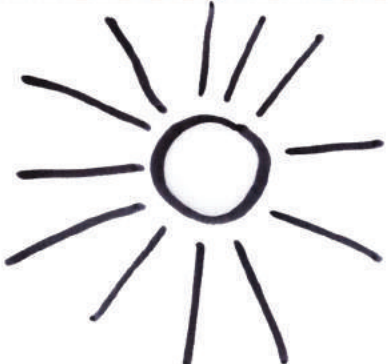
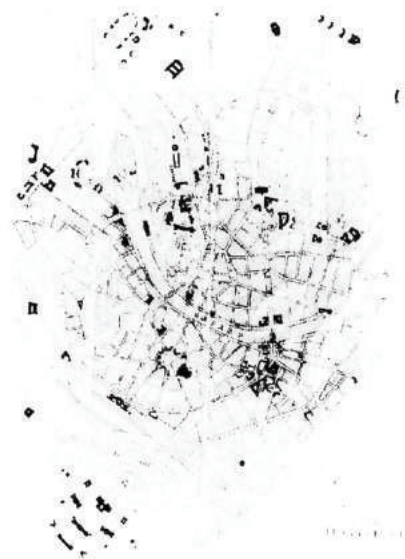
SPREADING



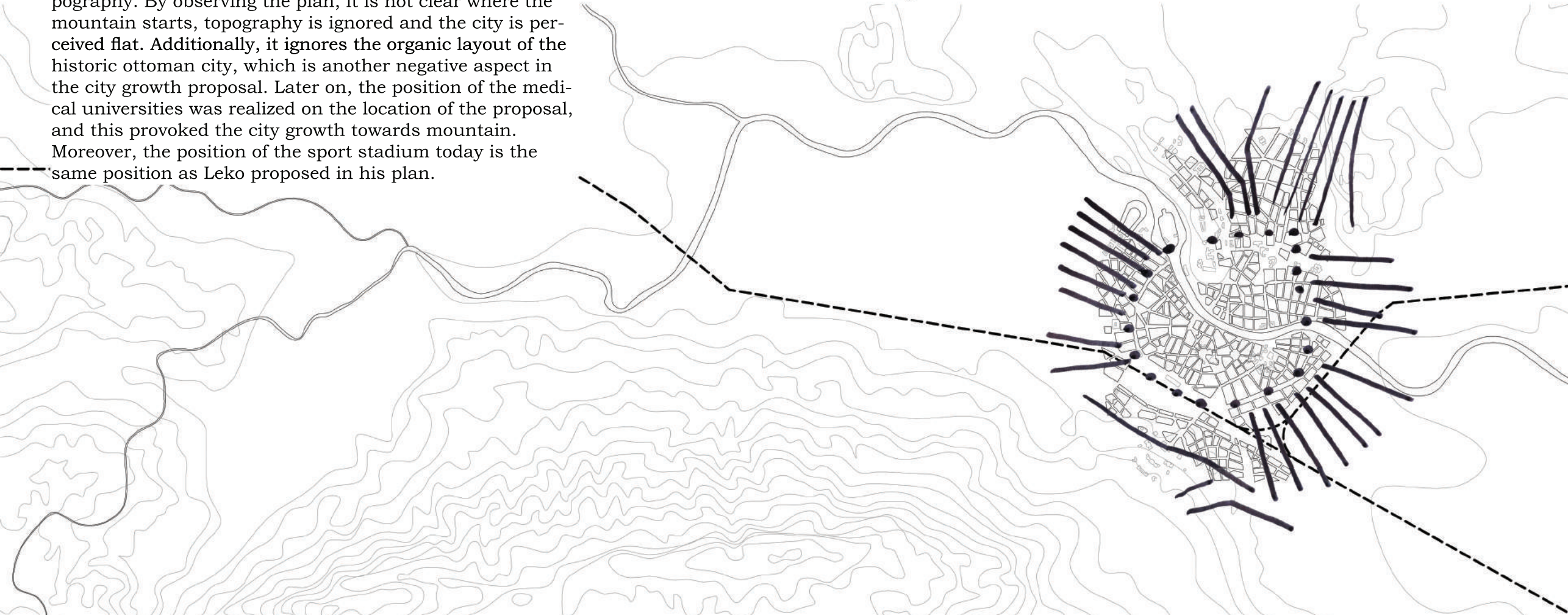
10. Ottoman city map, its shape, and its relation with the topography

**Regulatory plan by Dimitrie T. Leko
1914**

This proposed plan is similar in geometric blocks in the both sides of the river. This way the city gains unification as a whole. The spreading towards north is stopped; while towards south the planned spread of the city is more significant. The growth of the city is proposed behind the train line, towards the mountain. Putting there a compound of medicine faculties and linking them with strong axe to the river makes drastic change. New element is introduced, the circular ring as unification of the city from the both sides. This ring is later visible in all further plans. Even though the tendency of posing some strong matrix of unified blocks is understandable, still this matrix is ignoring the natural topography. By observing the plan, it is not clear where the mountain starts, topography is ignored and the city is perceived flat. Additionally, it ignores the organic layout of the historic ottoman city, which is another negative aspect in the city growth proposal. Later on, the position of the medical universities was realized on the location of the proposal, and this provoked the city growth towards mountain. Moreover, the position of the sport stadium today is the same position as Leko proposed in his plan.



DEFINING A
CIRCLE FOR LIMIT/
OUTSIDE SPREAD

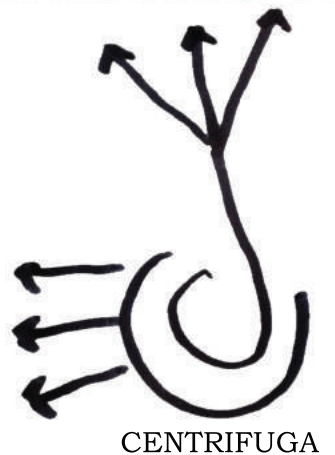


11. D.T.Leko proposal plan its shape, and its relation with the topography

Regulatory plan by Mihajlovic 1929

In this plan, the approach to the city is done by dominating long strong axes that connect the city from one side, trough the center to the beginning. These axes obviously predict further spread of the city, because of its dimensions of 8m/12-16m/20-24-30m couldn't belong to a city with 120-150.000 people as the plan proposes. The ring from the previous plan now is emphasized and gains more regular geometry. It is the characteristics of this planning that introduced more centers with same importance by means of geometry and scale. The difference between them is the position in relation with, more or less, important street axes. This planning is all about street design in first place. Since the cars are the machines of the future, the plan respond to this idea. Even more, the axes are emphasized with tree lines, which is the first positive element in the plan. This lets the nature inside the city. The blocks in new part (south part) are mostly repetitive, but just more regulated then the plan of Leko. In the older part, the original organical pattern of the historic Ottoman city is still ignored. The city finishes in north with big arc of green areas, but actually this looks like gate for new further urban spreading. The stadium, Park and Luna Park are kept the same position as before untill today.

Parallel to the east train line, green area is introduced, to make a buffer zone. On the outside of the train line there is new development, with bigger and wider blocks than the center. This provokes the new city spread on east. Towards the mountain the planning is even more dramatic then the Leko's one. The position of buildings there show the vision of future constructions on the mountain. There, before the train line under the mountain, a green buffer zone is introduced, which also shows the limits of the city centre and periphery.



12. Mihajlovic proposal plan, its shape, and its relation with the topography

**General Regulatory plan by L. Kubesh
1948**

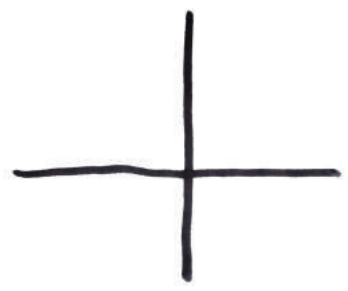
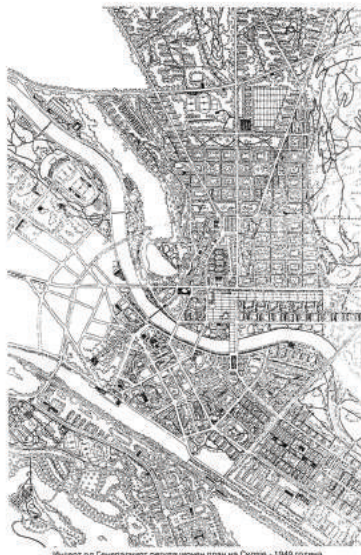
This plan is characterized by big area blocks that are divided by the main streets. Streets are planned as long axes that connect from point A to B in straight mode. The north part of the river Vardar is treated with square shaped blocks and with two strong North-South and East-west axes. On the intersection between these axes there a building is located to satisfy public needs. The positive new aspect in this planning is that the most historic part of the old bazaar is recognized and preserved. On the south side of the river, there are streets spreading parallel to the mountain Vodno. These streets give opportunity to the city to spread on east and west, and not on south, as in previous plans. The blocks, as mentioned before, are secondary elements divided with service streets and act like small island communities. There, the trivium of streets in the north side of river Vardar still exist. The spreading of the city towards north is accepted from the previous planning. The buildings are individual and in-between there are a lot of greeneries. There is no system of piazzas but open space for public use is located everywhere around the residential areas. The industry is positioned on the east side, by taking into consideration the movement of the wind.

By introducing strong east west and north south axes, the existence of Ring Street is not so dominant. It still exists, but in the east part the circle is interrupted.

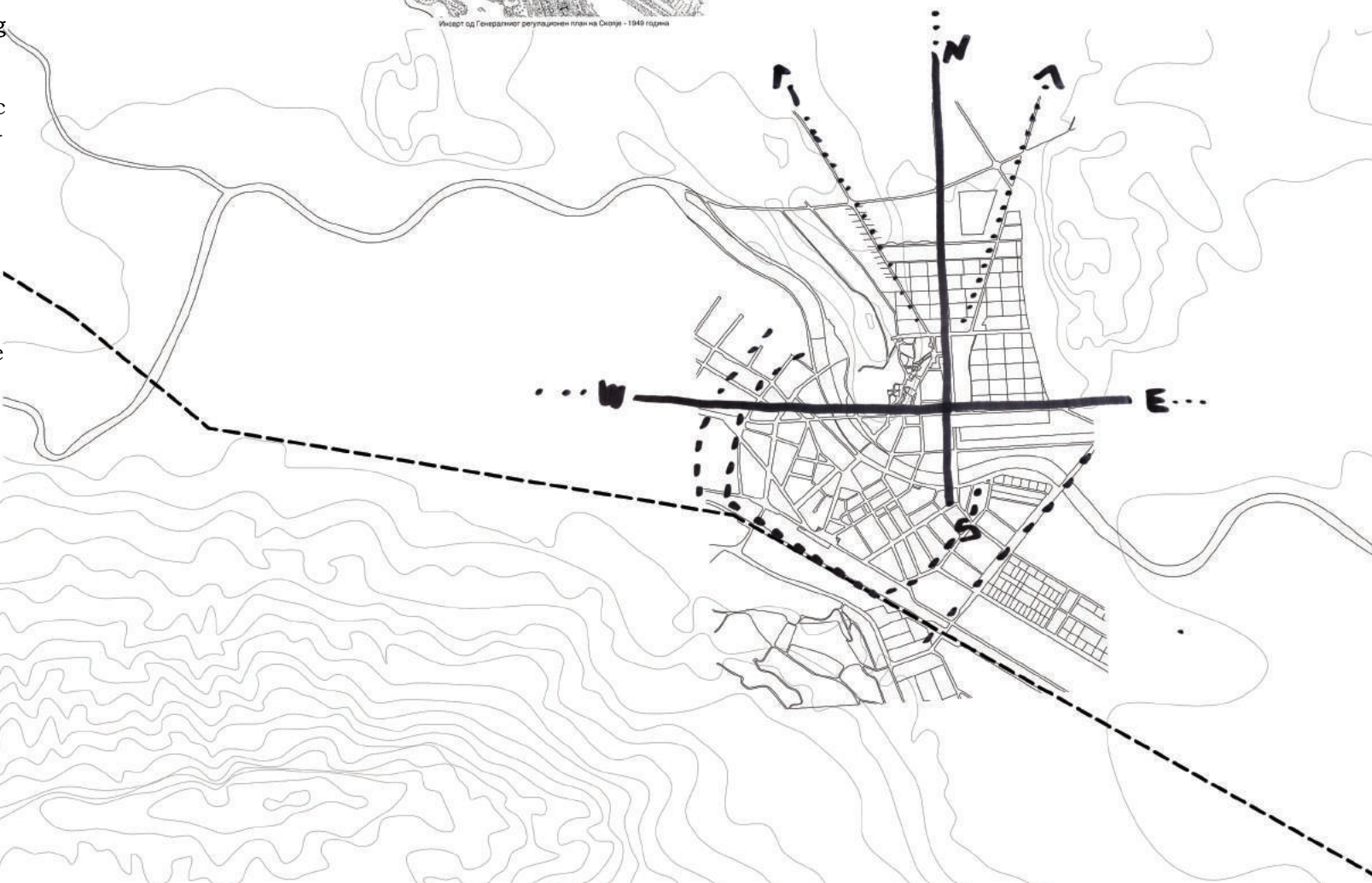
The space next to the river is treated with green areas, so it becomes a walkable public space.

For the first time in the regulating plan, the treatment towards the mountain is different. The streets imitate the isohypses of the slopes, and small individual houses are proposed. The same happens on the northern periphery.

This plan is thoughtful proposal that anticipates the city needs. It is way ahead of the previous proposed plans.



TWO AXES
LINEAR CITY



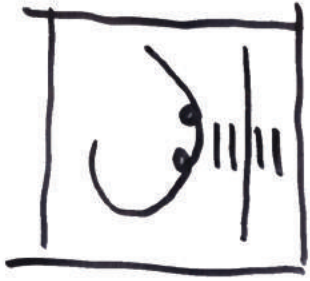
13. L.Kubesh proposal plan, its shape, and its relation with the topography

**Kenzo Tange winning proposal
1965**

After earthquake of 1963 in Skopje, the United Nations made an international competition for planning the central core of Skopje. The winning proposal was a combination of Kenzo Tange (60 %) and Mishevic (40 %) projects .

The proposal of Kenzo Tange is characterized with 4 high speed streets that enclose the central area. Inside there are two big important structures. One is the transportation structure called the City Gate. This element is a mixture of movements up and down, involving train line, cars and pedestrian. It also includes residential and market activities. The other structure is called City Wall and it is repeating the already existing ring of the city centre. This time it is emphasized with residential buildings. This is one of the most radical definitions of the city so far. Still today this circular element is important for the city. Inside the circle, there are all the existing buildings that survived the earthquake. Outside it is the future development of the city.

what is interesting about this plan is that the space is walkable all around and accessible for everybody. There are passages next, under, and over the buildings. This plan is really important for Skopje because it opens new perspective for the city. Many buildings were built in the next two decades that were inspired by this planning.



STREET ENCLOSURE INSIDE:
duality of transport and living



14. Kenzo Tange proposal plan, its shape,
and its relation with the topography

Skopje today...

668 518 citizens (counted 2006)
>800.000 citizens - today, estimated
Area:
Main city 571,46 km²
Metropolitan area 1.854,00 km²

Macedonia

2.058.539 citizens (counted 2011)
Area 25.713 km²



16. Present day construction



15. City Map with the Periphery



17. Skopje Metropolitan Area, Google earth 2016



Skopje Centre
1:10 000

18. Skopje Central Area, Google earth 2016

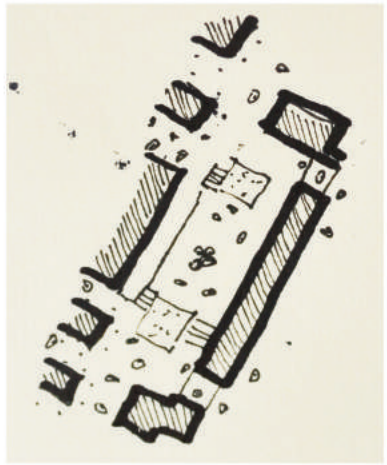
Skopje first skin
Spaces of silence in the chaos
1:10000



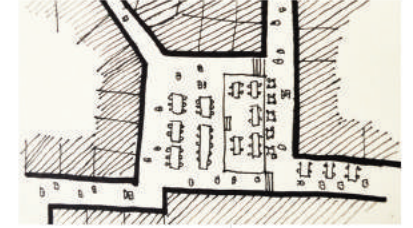
Fortress Kale Justinian I
527



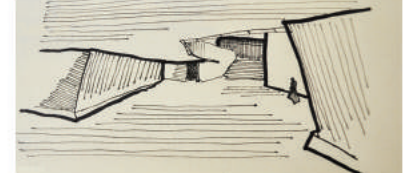
City wall court
1968



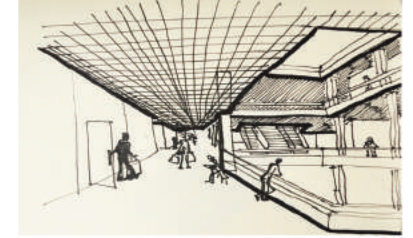
Old bazaar
1359

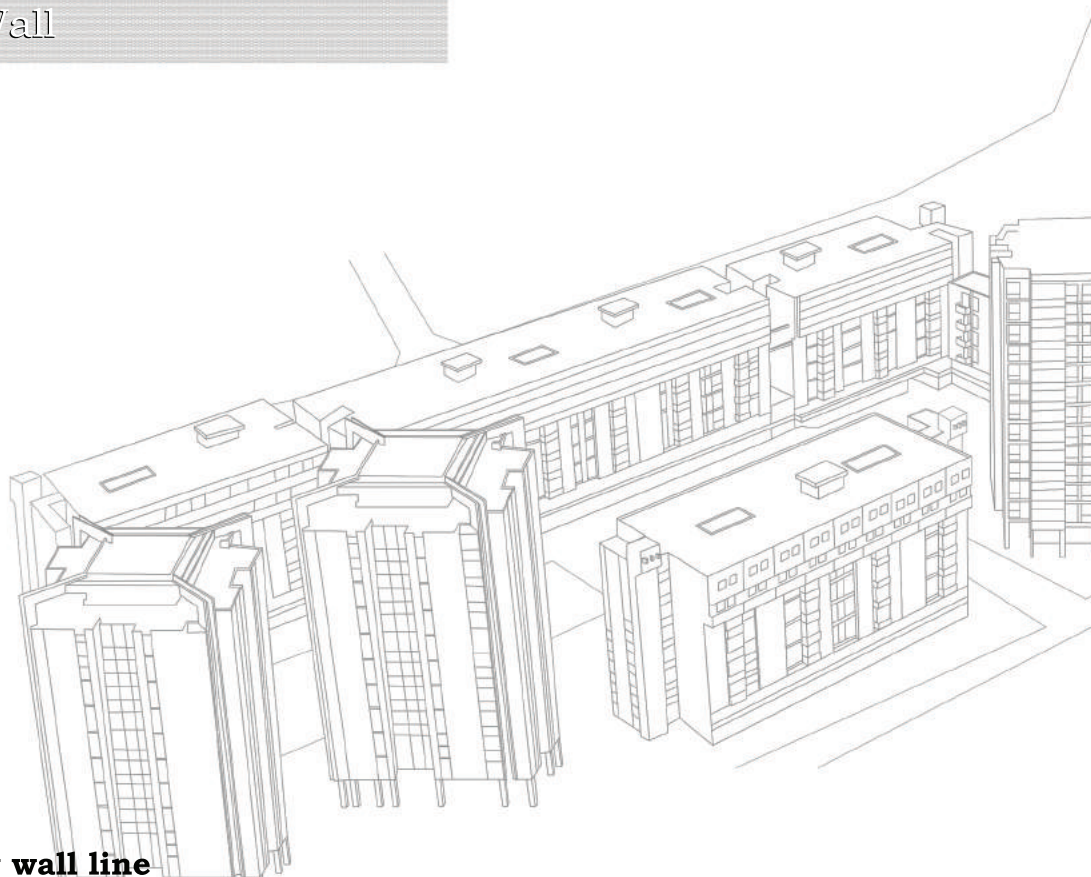


Macedonian Opera and Ballet
1980



Gradski Trgovski Centar 1973



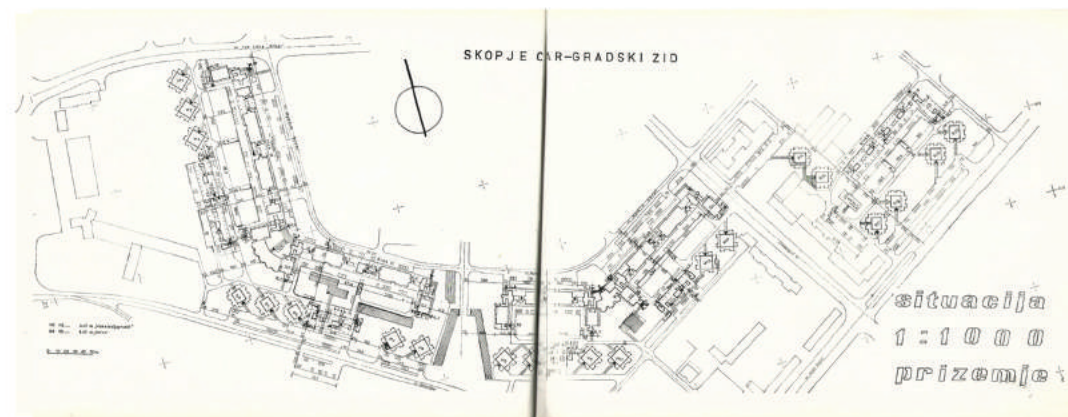
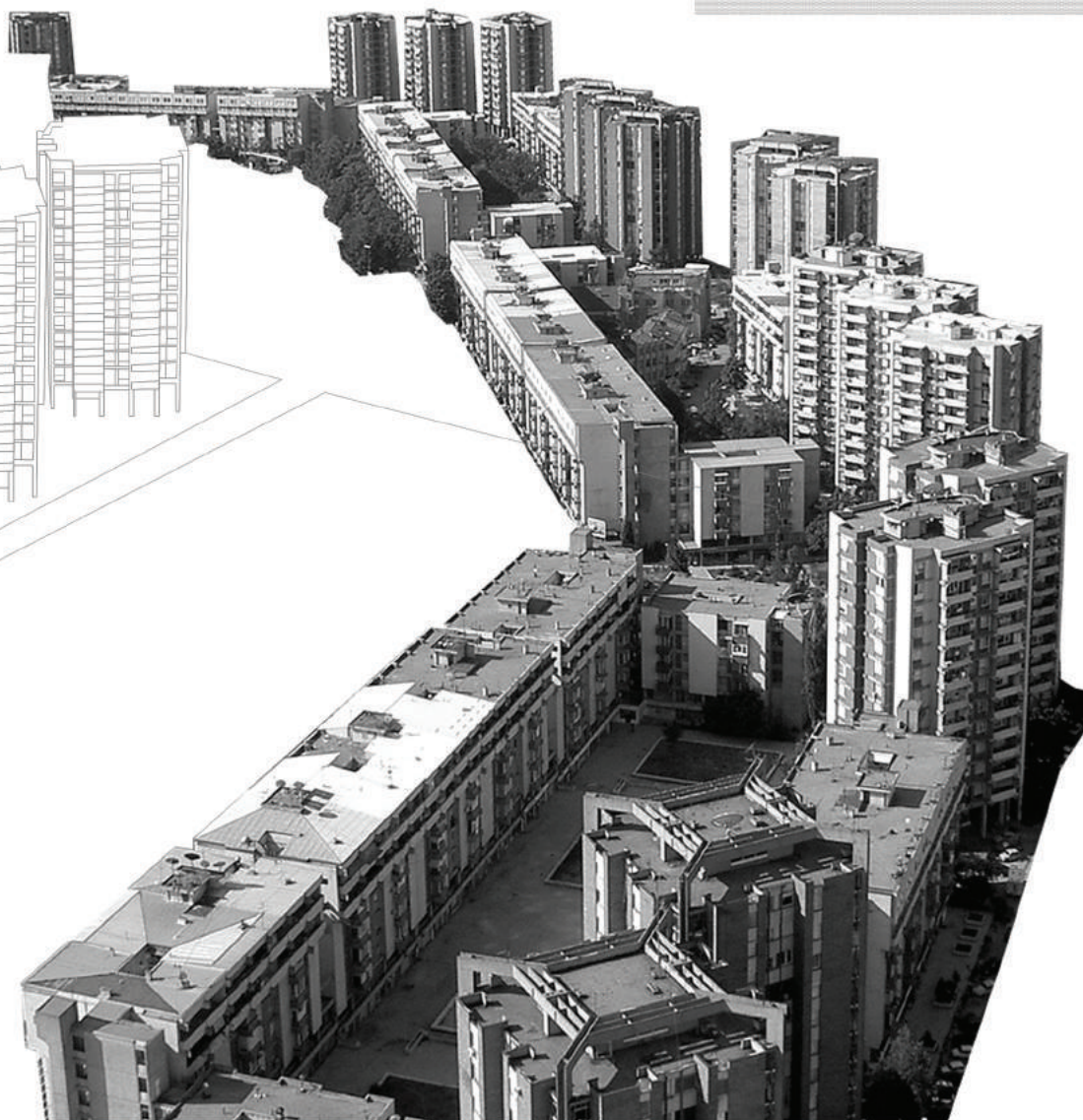


City wall line

City wall is a group of buildings that create urban blocks and emphasize the first ring of the city centre of Skopje. This ring was first introduced to the city in the planning of Leko. Later it appeared again in the further plannings. The ring gained its finest form with the master plan of Kenzo Tange in 1965. The new point introduced in this master plan, compared to previous, was that the ring was emphasized with particular residential buildings. The creator called it City wall, which is how, it is called today. Same as, the walls of the medieval European cities, it defines the “historical” part of the city and announce the new “modern” growth of the city.

What is Particular about this City Wall is that it is composed by double row of buildings, towers of 13 floors and linear buildings of 7 floors. In between the two rows a buffer zone is created. This creates spaces between the city centre and the further city. It hosts neighborhood activities mainly for the residents in the buildings, and then in the neighboring ones and finally to all the citizens. Activities that can be found there are: kids areas and playgrounds, green areas, skating areas, basketball play grounds, markets, cafeterias, pets area, music bands rehearsals (in the underground parkings) ,...

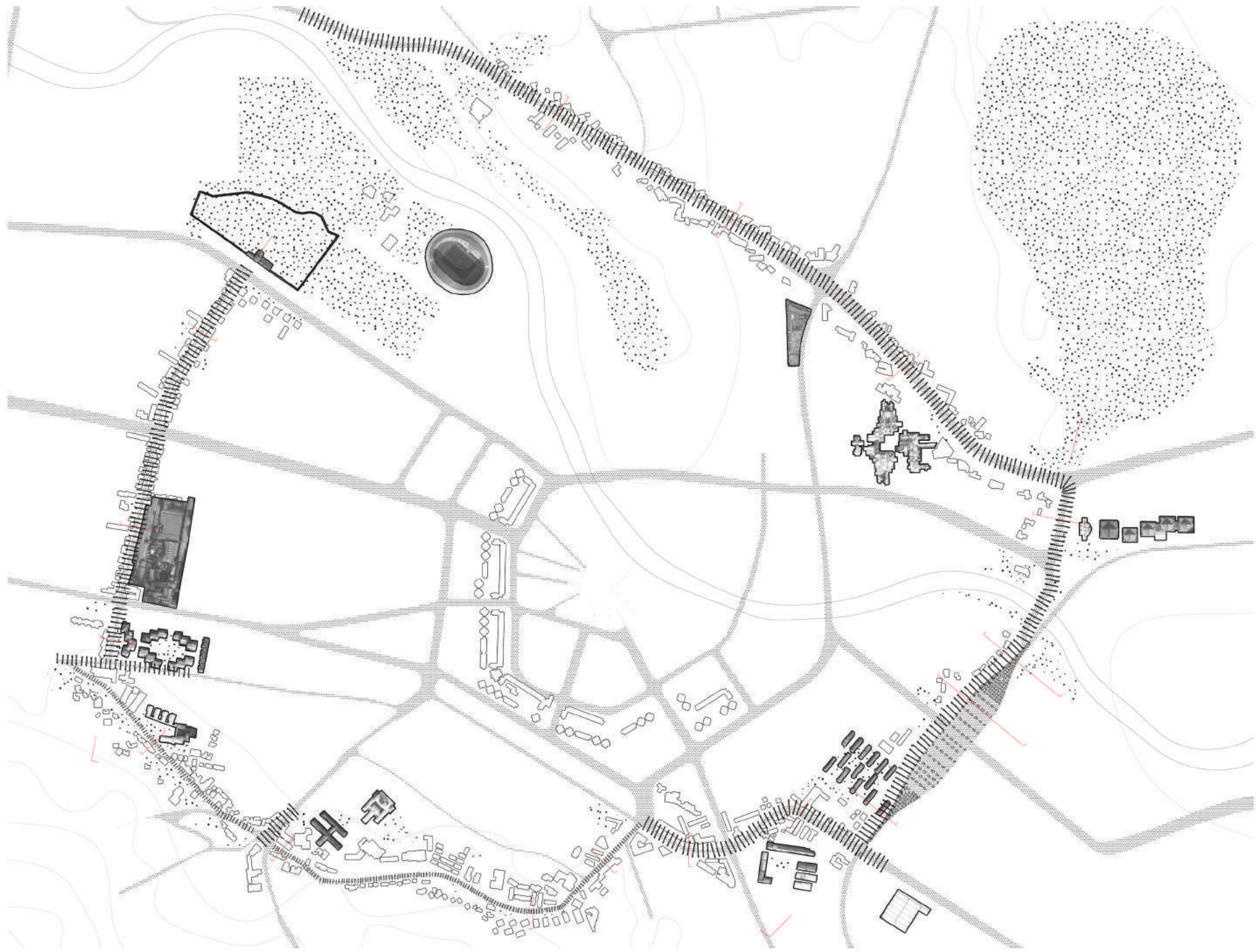
The city wall occupies space on the south of the river Vardar. The ring continues in the north side of the river and creates a complete circle. On this side, the city wall doesn't continue but the ring embraces important entities of different historical times like Fortress Kale from Byzantium era, Old bazaar from Ottoman era and Macedonian Opera and Ballet which were built in 1970. Each of them provide movement only for pedestrians and creates a systems that work independently of the surrounding.



19. Plan of the Skopje City wall

Skopje First Skin
Spaces of silence in the chaos
1:10000

greenery
intensity of noise



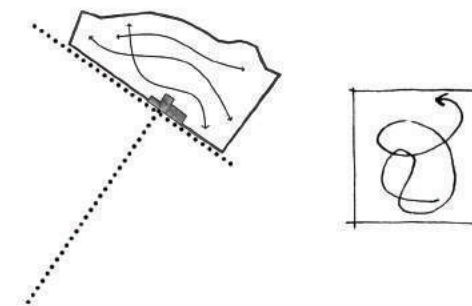
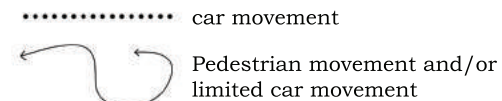
City skin

Since the city of Skopje grows in every direction: horizontal, vertical, in density, towards the mountain... It is necessary to understand city's new order. As a result of the mistreatment of the open space and the green areas, there is no existing relation between buildings in order to create public city spaces for people. All the in-between space becomes transit zone, mainly for cars. Pedestrian walks and activities to animate the people become luxury. This makes the city unlivable. I tried to see which places of disorder in the city have potential. I perceive the existence of the City Wall as a positive element in the urban planning. When it was built, the centre of the city was considered inside the city wall. Today, the central area of the city is considered further then the city wall.

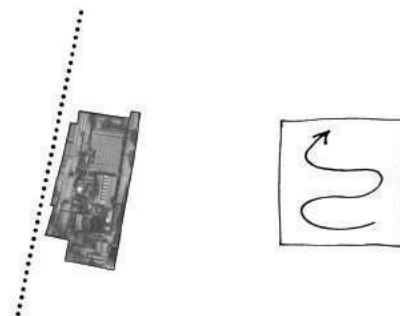
I tried to imagine, what if there is a new defining element around it that can work on the limits and accept all the negative elements of the surrounding and provide positive energy to the neighborhoods on the limits, and then further. I called it skin, which also can be membrane, enclosure, definition, shell, wrap, envelope and much more. But first of all it is skin because it should be something thin and soft and radical in the same time. In order to reinforce this perception for the need of city skin I analyzed the next bigger existing car ring than city wall ring. This ring exist as a car movement except is interrupted in the city park, but it is not important if it has some cut. The car streets that create this ring line don't make big importance for perceiving this all area as chain. It is the same as in the past master plans of Skopje of Leko and Mijalkovic when they focused first on street design and then what left remained blocks for buildings. So this time I accept the car line as a starting line, but I want to understand what is there characteristic on this line and then what can I propose so this line improve important part and influence entire city.

Why this line is important?

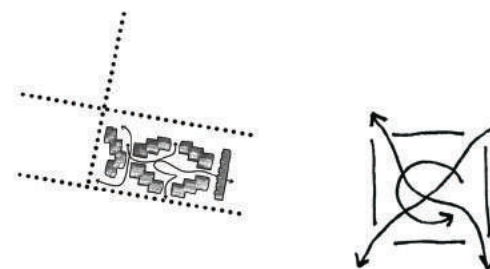
Starting from west to north, the line starts with zoo garden, which behind has the city park. Then the line continues from north to south to continual facades of anonymous buildings, that don't or rarely make relation with the pedestrian walk of the street. By arriving to the mountain there are two important sites I observed. One is a huge area of abandoned furniture factory Treskav. This location is exactly on the half way between the river and mountain and is positioned on crossroad between two important streets. So this location can be good for project location, where can be experimented and presented my ideas about Skopje future building. Next interesting site is one permeable block built in 1980's. The buildings do not complete as totally enclosed court, but also they are permeable on the ground floor which makes the court more accessible. I perceive this yard as a good example of still existing public spaces for people in Skopje. It should be emphasized and preserved, because many courts like this were already built with smaller buildings. This block stays on the city skin and I include it in the system for reinforcing the chain. The city skin is important because on the south it creates a line on the mountain towards where the city started growing intense in the past 10 years. Today on the mountain could be seen buildings with height of 5 or 6 storeys. Again these buildings don't create any relation with the space around and don't give activities in the ground floor. Furthermore these buildings privatize the mountain and instead of being accessible to all the citizens of the city for recreational activities, hiking, biking, picnic etc, the mountain becomes private property of residents with locked yards and securities. The need for new apartments is obvious but it should be stopped doing it towards the mountain and in that way. The building on mountain took its way further then imagined 5 years ago.



Free movement in enclosed space



Defined movement dependent by industrial process



Free movement in defined court



Free movement around enclosure



Zoo garden from 1926



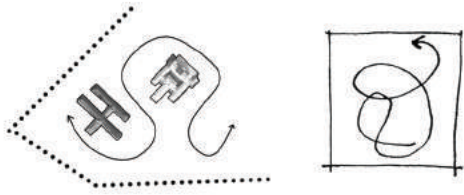
Street side of not functional factory Treska no access inside



Court yard of residential block Kapishtec 1985



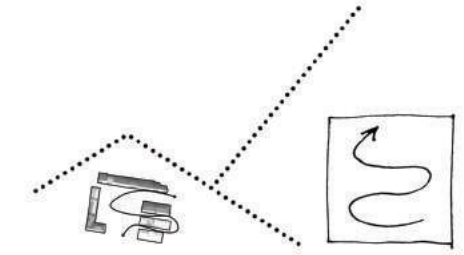
Protected access to elderly people dormitory



Free movement in enclosed space



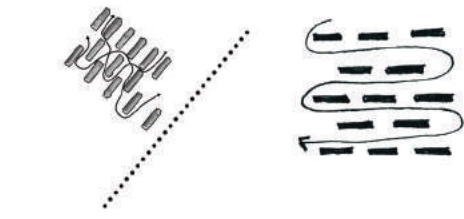
Clinical centre



Defined movement dependent by industrial process



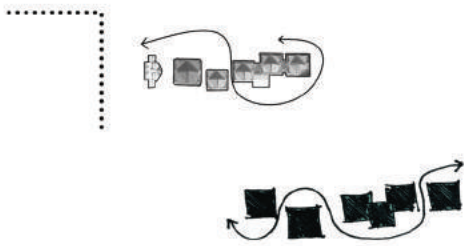
Barracks of factory for Tabacco



Free movement in continuous parallel spaces



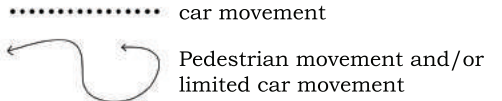
In-between space of residential buildings



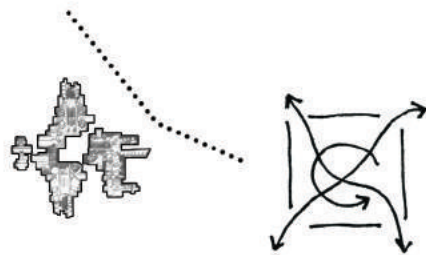
Free movement around and inside multiplied squares



Fair rooms



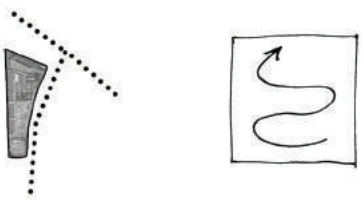
The city skin doesn't present the limit on which the mountain is built, but it is in the middle of it. The city skin doesn't want to be a wall as an end of development, on contrary it wants to work in the middle of problem and promote good qualities inside. On this south part of the line there are two sites selected. One is the dormitory for elderly people. The yard of this building is enclosed in fence, and it is silent and green. Although the access is limited, it has potential as a space for hosting some community activities. This protected by fences green areas, proved to be the last surviving from the insane building. So the perception about open space is dubious. The construction is oriented on money making. Each land that can be bought and built by some richer person in order to double the profit with selling apartments, it is allowed from the city



Free movement in defined porous court



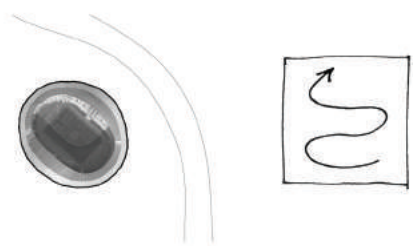
University campus saint Cyril and Methodius



Defined movement in-between market stalls



Bird eye view to the biggest covered market in Skopje



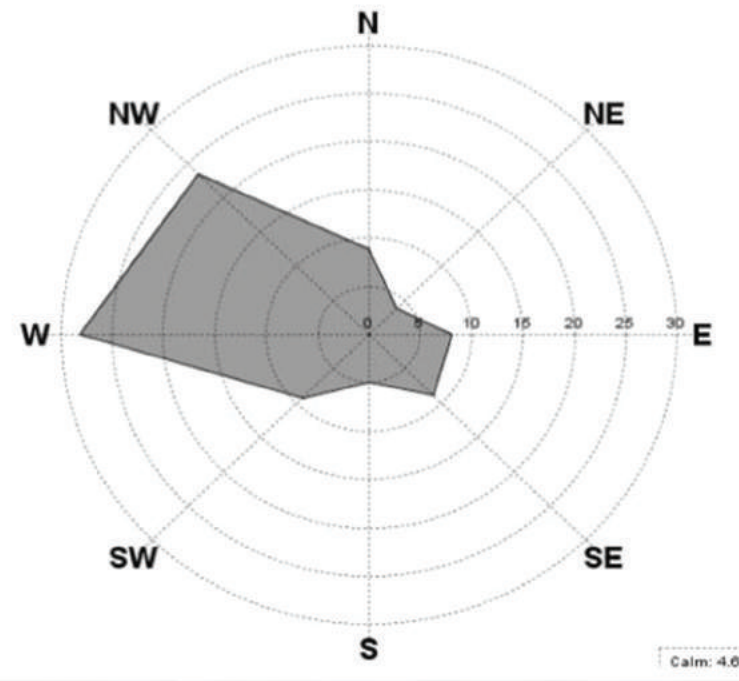
Defined movement in defined court



Sport stadium of Skopje

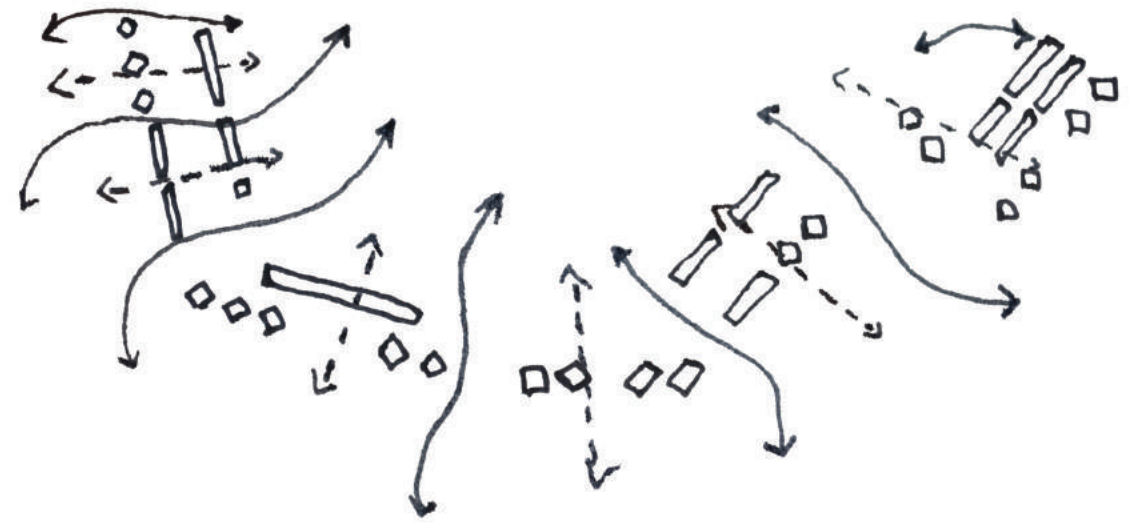
institutions. The next site on the south line is the Clinique campus of Skopje. It is big area of singular buildings. Between the buildings there is limited car access for ambulance car and pedestrians. There are green areas as small parks. On the east side of the skin, the line is parallel to the train line. This is really challenging area. The train line itself creates this limit.

Although it was planned to be elevated, so the movements under it are free, still it presents an end of one part of the city and beginning of totally different part. On this site there are two sites. One is still active factory for Tobacco. This factory is a beginning of an industrial part which in the past was considered as an end of the city, but today is totally not. Since the main winds in Skopje are blowing from west to east, the factories polluted air went outside the city. Today after the train line there is big part of the city where the polluted air from the factories goes to. This and other factories in north but on the same line make the part behind the train line the most polluted in the entire city. This is why this factories activities should be reconsidered in the future and the existing buildings be given new meaning and activities that will answer the citizen needs. This area lacks also for public spaces and activities so this joint point of many roads and neighbors, also as a mountain beginning, can be perfect spot for new city energy.

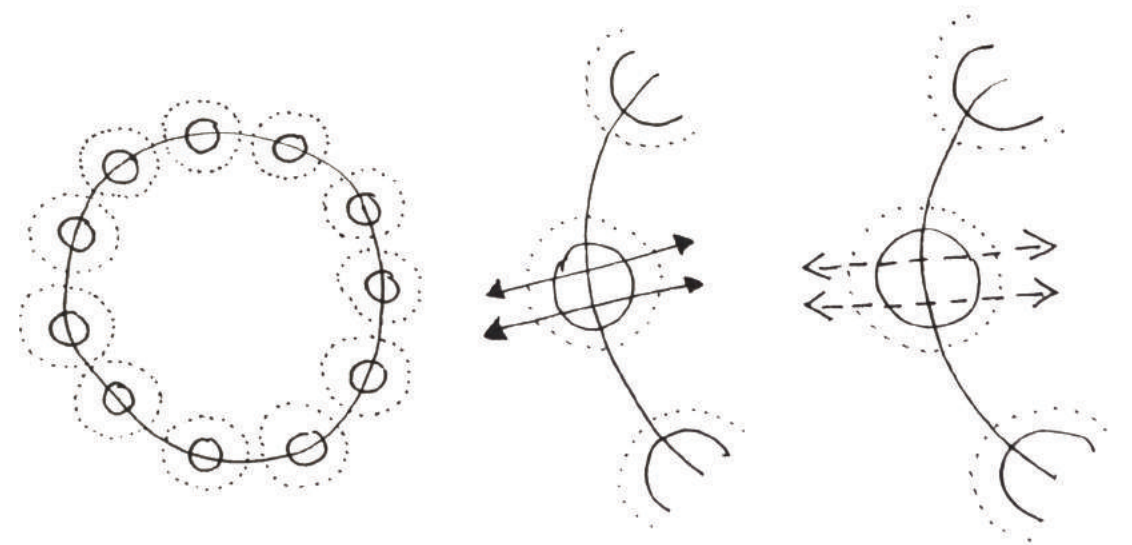


20. Meteorological Station Skopje
Wind rose - Domination Wind direction (%), Period 1981-2010

On the north side of the city skin I perceive as important: the Fair trade rooms, the University campus, the biggest bazaar in Skopje and the Sport stadium. All of these are buildings itself, but in the same time they collect big masses of people that spend quality amount of hours. These buildings are powerful structural element of the chain of City Skin and can become potential sites that host extra activities to improve the surrounding.



21. Permeable pedestrian Axis through the city wall on the ground level



22. City line consists of many hot spots that attract

23. City line adopts the permeability as its main quality

Project site

The project site makes connection (relation) with the city on two levels. It is a strategically picked position that is becoming protagonist of the city skin concept in city scale and in the same time is local neighborhood point that intermediate the different part of a neighborhood. The project site is an opportunity for the neighborhood and can bring livability of the neighborhood and the city.



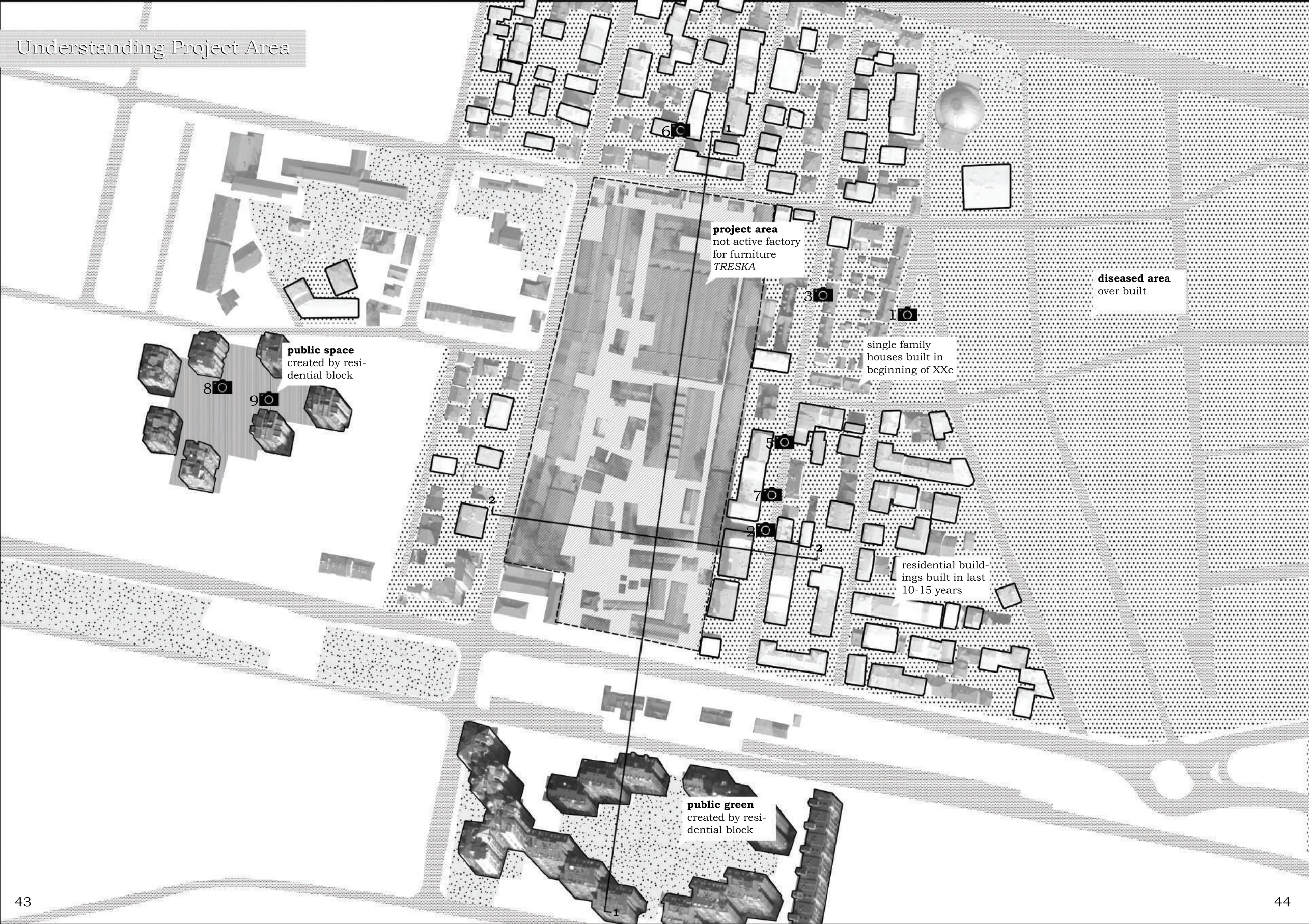
1. City scale importance of the project site works in ring unification of the city as it lies on the city skin line.
2. Neighborhood scale of the project works in linear direction as mediator between two residential areas and supplies them with missing elements.

1. City scale

Regarding the project area location, there are two streets that are more significant and both of them put the area on high importance for the city. The strongest axe is West-East Street that leads from the city periphery to the city centre. It is one of the three main streets in the west part of the city centre that serves to the residential areas. It is long 6km and wide 20m. If from one side presents opportunity for good linear connection of the side, from other it presents huge limit towards the north-south residential areas and mountain. Moreover there is green area parallel to it on the south side which enlarges the limit with the south side. This is not a thread for the city skin because it works by separated points that work on neighborhood scale, but they shouldn't necessarily be connected. The in-between connection is a plus. Since the next selected silent point is located on the other side of the big axe street, and the limit in-between is strong, then the possible continuity can be achieved by improving the north-south section of the street. Generally to all the line of the city skin the street sections should be improved by adding bicycle lines, low vegetation and trees colonnades and pleasant pedestrian sidewalks. This improvement can be drastically done by the new buildings. The project area is with the longer side towards the North-South Street and this is an opportunity for improving the street section. The section of the street on the next silent point is good designed and presents invitation point to the inner court of the residential block. This can serve as an example of how to approach the project area.

2. Neighborhood scale

After good understanding of the neighborhood around the project area, can be identified one 70% diseased area, and other still more relaxed area but towards where the thread is moving slowly. In this area there is one residential block MLECEN which supplies the neighborhood with public space. The project area in neighborhood scale should mainly moderate these two areas. It should bring people from their inside and create condition for people to meet and share common space. In order to achieve this it should work in linear directions west-east. In its area it should provide public spaces where the axes will be denser and then fade out.



project area
not active factory
for furniture
TRESKA

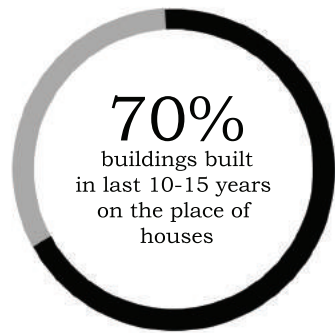
diseased area
over built

public space
created by resi-
dential block

single family
houses built in
beginning of XXc

residential build-
ings built in last
10-15 years

public green
created by resi-
dential block

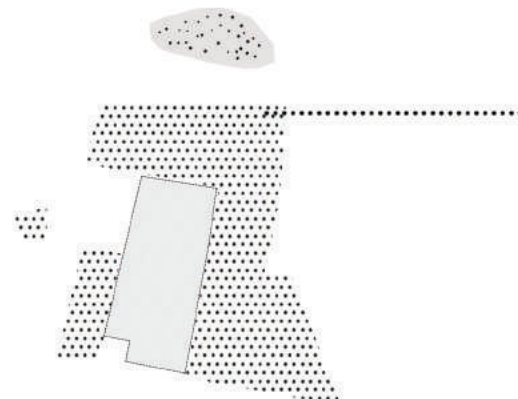


older buildings



group of buildings built
in last 10-15 years

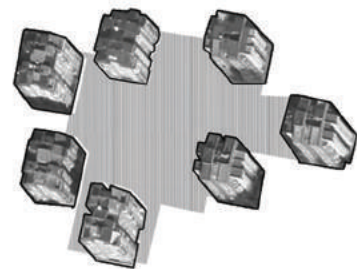
greenery



Diseased area balance

Public spaces = 0
Green areas = 0
Sidewalks = 0
Trees few

24. Urban blocks built in 1970s, last protectors of the public space and the green areas.

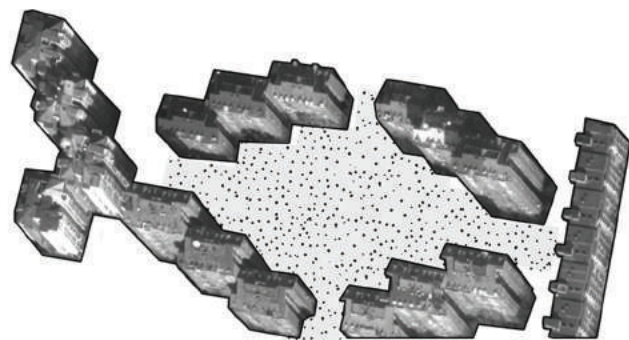


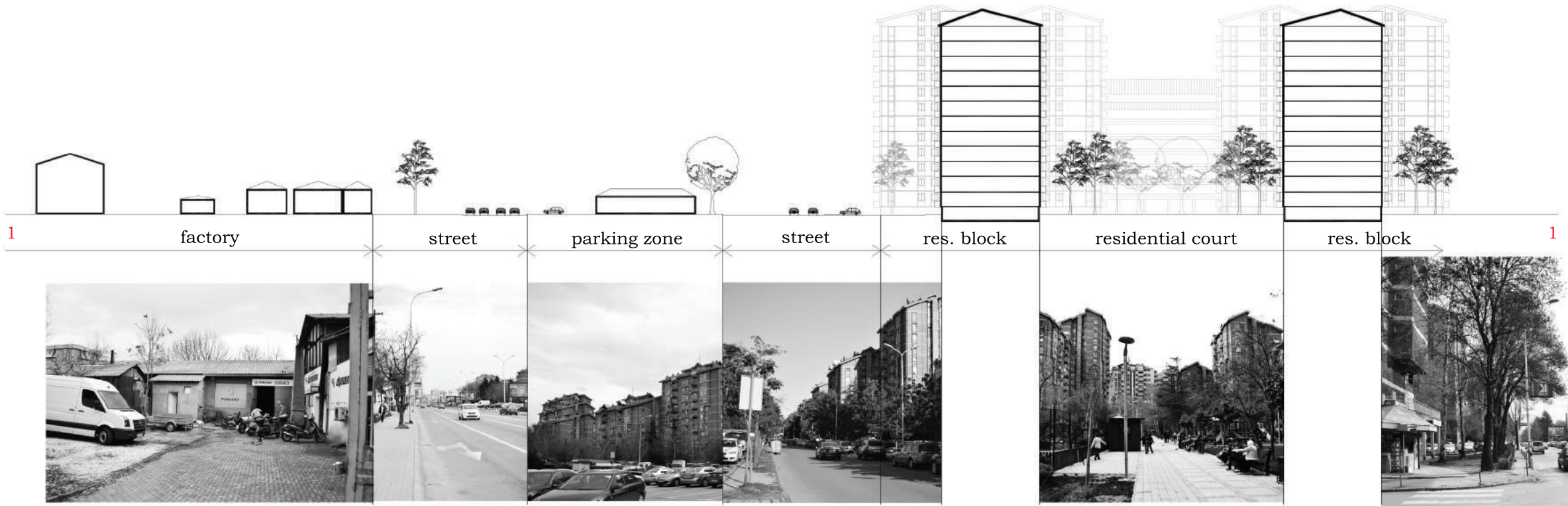
City disease (epidemic)

The uncontrolled building takes its way all around the city. It is initially starting from the city centre where by people belief is the best to live. The attraction of living in the city centre is not unknown and new thing; it exists all around the world and is present trough the history. Even for tourism visits people prefer to be accommodated in the city centre rather in the periphery. This means shorter distances to the biggest amount of services and of course being near to the city “monuments”. If the city supplies good transportation, arrangement of institutions (schools, hospitals, theaters,...), working places, services for supplying needs for home, green areas, sport facilities and other around all the city, then the city centre would be released from the centre attraction. Actually, Skopje is a city that offers many of these facilities troughs entire city area, but still the problem of overbuilding starts from the city centre. There should be not forgotten the centralization planning of the first ring of the city. During the history it creates centrality with defining a territory by one ring of streets and then all the perpendicular streets lead to one main piazza. This way this piazza becomes the biggest interest for the citizens. There is no existing system of piazzas and system of other attraction points that will serve as smaller collectors for the local neighborhoods. Existing of the city wall is positive and it works as a buffer zone between the centre-centre of the city and the widest central area. It is limit and transit zone. But still the overbuilding continues its way. This is why I emphasize the need of **city skin**. It is a new city centre definition that passes trough important points that can become new city attraction points and can drastically affect the surrounding.

When is zoomed in these areas can be understood that each one of them is a limit of different and difficult city building situation. I choose to zoom in the location of already passive factory of furniture TRESKA. It can be understood that from two sides north and east (the sides towards the city centre) the effect of the disease (uncontrolled city building) is already deeply matured. It tries to get rid of the last remnants (single family houses) and sooner or later it will definitely succeed.

The other two sides west and south are still more relaxed, but the project area is standing on the limit so it is it time to act as a pill and cure the city for irreversible process. On this site are spotted two important residential urban blocks built in XX century which supply the city with quality public and green space. These spaces are enjoyed by all the citizens of the city, not only the local neighbors.





Sections 1:1000

There are four spotted scenarios that can be found everywhere where the disease is present. These are the 4 faces of the phenomena of uncontrolled city building. They should be clearly understood and put on the table in order to clarify possible strategies for solving the problem.

1. Last Remnants

During the process of building instead of one house one 5 floors building, there obviously can be found single houses that still don't give up to the process of uncontrolled city building.



25. Remained block of houses built in beginning of XX century



26. Remained house in-between two residential buildings

For sure the owners have been asked many times to sell their house, but they don't buy the deal. I witnessed this situation because my grandmother lives in one of these remnants houses. She doesn't want to live in residential building, she says. She wants her small garden with flowers, it is her world. But this area of the city doesn't have patient no more. Really soon these houses will be replaced with 5 floors buildings.

Under construction...



27. In the block of remained houses, building in process



2. New Old Contrast

Since the uncontrolled city building is happening by replacing one house with one building and the houses were row built houses logically the residential buildings will be also row built buildings. The city will be row built city. In these planning we receive outside and inside, there is no in-between.

When the row remnant houses receive new neighbor which is 5 floors residential building it happen row building-house situation. Both of them serve the same dimension street, the same pedestrian walk, the same parking. But they are different. They still stay touched like brothers, like they were together forever. Now it looks like the remnants are out of scale and order.



28. row buildings and street ambient



29. building and house next to each other

3. Street Life

As the time passes by, the houses are exchanged with buildings, the disease spread more and deeper. The street remains the same. Only they change the asphalt because new installations are needed for the new residential buildings. And they cut the street and they put some asphalt on it, again and again. The streets with dimensions appropriate for single house neighborhood now are supplying residential building neighborhood whit at least 5 times more people. Of course is not working. The sidewalks now are occupied with cars; there are no trees to shade the sidewalks. People walk on the street, mother with babies, children with bicycles, everybody. The street becomes the new public space, because people need it desperately.

4. Brand New

While this fast building process is happening, there should happen many improvisations, strange stairs, small entrances, ridiculous terraces,... People are supposed to live here for 50 years or more and they pay for these apartments the most expensive price per square meter in the country. These buildings are located in the centre of the capital, so it costs. Buildings without proper sun lighting, shadows, not proper parking, no green areas, no kids playgrounds, views from the window towards other strange building.... I believe this diseased architecture and diseased urban planning will raise diseased society. It will affect the psychical development of the people and will have coincidences on long period.



30. New buildings with extensions



31. Street facade with new buildings

Although the damage towards the public space is irreversible, still smaller actions could be taken so these areas are slowly cured and improved in the meaning of public spaces and green areas. There is urgent need of skilled architects to approach the problem and it is a challenge to be architect in this scenarios.

Luckily in the 70 years of XX century, after the earthquake in 1963 happened the golden era for Skopje. Many foereign architects participated in the city planning. Architects from the region and from much further. They worked together with the local architects and were having always in mind the people right of public space and green areas. They were led by the modern movement in the world and the remnants of this era in Skopje still gives to the citizens trust in public space.

On the **city skin** could be found more existing entities of residential blocks that supply still the needed public space isolated from the city chaos. The approach to the city skin is to use this spaces as quality, learn from them, improve them and to become pills for the city and cure it from the strong disease.

Near the project site one of this examples is the residential block *MLECEN*, built in the 70s years of XX century.

The residential urban block MLECEN is consisted of 7 free standing 12 floors residential towers. They serve as needles to define one piazza where in the underground is located the parking and on the top is public space with green courts. Kids run there, there are 3 cafeterias and benches where usually older people seat in the evenings of hot Skopje's summers. This space is used not only from the local inhabitants but from citizens of entire city. It is a proof that residential blocks with public spaces can save the city and give breath and new way of thinking.



32. Public space only for pedestrians



33. Public space for all ages

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