

Jože Plečnik's Ljubljana

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Photographs by Alan Ward 2019

Notes on the Making of the Photographs

It is rare when one designer, such as Jože Plečnik working in Ljubljana, has such an extensive and profound influence on the identity and character of a city. Rather than overlay an expansive vision or plan for his birthplace, Plečnik incrementally implemented a series of projects that transformed Ljubljana over several decades. His accomplishments in the early twentieth century include significant urban design adjustments to the center of the city, followed by the design of civic buildings, bridges and urban landscapes - including streets, squares, parks and promenades.

Early in Plečnik's career, he studied and worked with the Austrian architect Otto Wagner. Wagner was a leader in the Viennese Secession Movement in the late nineteenth century that Plečnik embraced. After work in Vienna and Prague, he set out on his own in 1910 and returned to Ljubljana, where he implemented a series of designs that left his personal and distinctive design expression on Slovenia's capital.

Beginning with Pršernov Trg square, the symbolic center of the city along the Ljubljanica River, Plečnik modified the layout of the square, adding trees and the Triple Bridge over the river in 1929 (5-8). He retained the original 1842 bridge for vehicles - modifying its design and adding pedestrian bridges on each side. The Triple Bridge connects to the covered Central Market and adjacent outdoor market, each designed by Plečnik (9-13). He positioned three market buildings

along the river on a long and narrow site, only 12 meters wide and 180 meters long. The first building is a small temple-like structure, adjacent to the Triple Bridge, followed by two market halls that are slightly curving; each hall includes a covered outdoor room with public seating overlooking the water (12).

Plečnik's designs for the urban landscape include the transformation of the narrow Ljubljanica River corridor, adding retaining walls and terraces with stairs down to the water, along with promenades and planting on both sides of the river (17-20). Further downstream, his architectural elaboration on the design of a weir - that maintains the water level in the city center, makes this utilitarian structure into a landmark in Ljubljana with three classically inspired towers rising above the water and splitting the river into two channels (41-43). A new linear green space at the site of Roman ruins (40) along with the redesign of Tivoli Park (37-39) are other Plečnik-designed landscapes in the city.

Jože Plečnik's series of projects achieve the appropriate scale and character within the historic context of Ljubljana, which is now one of the most pedestrian-oriented cities in Europe. His distinctive design approach is a simplified form of classicism, influenced by his early years in Vienna, that makes a visible connection to the past, while transforming Ljubljana to meet the demands of the twentieth century.

List of Photographs

1. Robba Fountain in Mestni Trg (Town Square)
2. Passage at St. Peter's Parish Church
3. Passage to river
4. View to Prešernov Trg Square
5. Prešernov Trg Square and Franciscan church
6. Deghengi Hauptmann House by Carl Metod
7. Triple Bridge and Prešernov Trg Square
8. Side bridge for pedestrians by Plečnik
9. Central Market, Triple Bridge and Prešernov Trg Square
10. View east of Central Market by Plečnik
11. Central Market, outdoor market and monument by Plečnik
12. Central hall in covered market building
13. View west of Central Market and outdoor market by Plečnik
14. Central Market and Ljubljanica River from north side
15. Pedestrian bridge to Central Market
16. Dragon Bridge by Zuriš Zaninovič
17. Ljubljanica River, Triple Bridge, Franciscan church
18. Ljubljanica River embankments
19. View west along the Ljubljanica River embankments
20. Panorama of Ljubljanica River embankments
21. Cobbler's bridge by Plečnik
22. View east of stairs to the Ljubljanica River by Plečnik
23. View west of stairs to the Ljubljanica River by Plečnik
24. Kongresni Trg (Congress square) by Plečnik
25. Novi Trg by Plečnik and Ljubljanski Grad (Medieval fortress)
26. Peglezen (Charcoal Iron House) by Plečnik
27. Secessionist building
28. Simon Gregorčič Memorial by Plečnik
29. Corner of former monastery Križanke
30. Križanke Summer Theatre courtyard by Plečnik
31. Courtyard at Križanke
32. Entry courtyard at former monastery Križanke
33. Inner courtyard at Križanke
34. Novi Trg, National and University Library by Plečnik
35. National and University Library
36. National and University Library entry
37. Pedestrian connection under rail line to Tivoli Park by Plečnik
38. Fountain at Tivoli Park
39. Jakopic promenade to a museum at Tivoli Park
40. Roman wall at Mirje and archeological park by Plečnik
41. East view of Vadna Zapornica sluice gate by Plečnik
42. Vadna Zapornica column
43. View west of Vadna Zapornica























































































Notes

All Photographs © Alan Ward