

Ljubljana

Hauptmann House

Wolfova 2

0 km
127 C2
D4

Alternative name:
Mali nebotačnik (The small skyscraper)

Year of adaptation of façade:
1904

Designer:
Ciril Metod Koch

Contractor:
Gustav Tönnies

Investor:
Adolf Hauptmann

Building type:
commercial-apartment house

Source:
Reg I, f. 1520, No. n. 26513

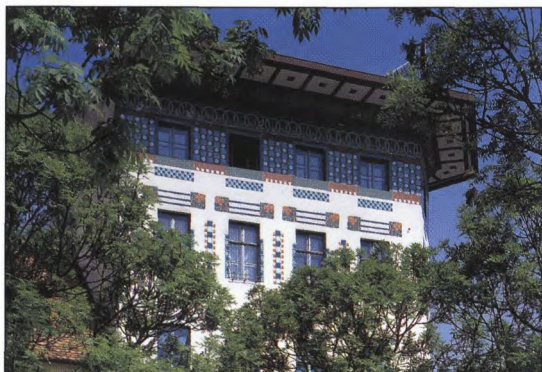
The house on the corner of Wolfova ulica and Prešernov trg is called Hauptmann's house after the owner, but because of its proportions, the great height in comparison with the width, it was also given the nickname "the small skyscraper". It was built in 1873 on the site of a former tavern, which had already existed there as early as 1600. It was one of the few Ljubljana houses not to have been damaged by the earthquake, so it also successfully defied the post-earthquake regulation of the square, thus marking its pre-earthquake building line.

In 1904, the owner decided to



renovate the building. He commissioned a plan for a new façade and new roof from the city architect, Ciril Metod Koch. The architect designed the renovation in the style of the fashionable Viennese Secession inspired by Wagner. The five-storey façade is horizontally divided by a strongly profiled moulding between the ground-floor and the first floor, a wide coffered band between the first and second floors, and, additionally, by horizontal lines cut into the plaster on the lower two floors. The upper side of the roof was originally terminated with metal snowguards, undulating in a line characteristic of the roofs of oriental houses. The façade decoration becomes denser towards the top of the building. Above the windows of the second floor runs an ornamental disconnected line of small blue tiles. Vertical strings of tiles of various colours decorate the spaces between the windows of the third floor, and above them, a decoration of glazed tiles in the geometric motif of a chessboard covers the entire façade between the windows, continuing uninterruptedly up to the cornice, and then merging into the coloured plaster which decorates the strongly projecting eaves, designed in Wagnerian style, with a motif of





coloured coffers. The facing with ceramic tiles on the upper part of the façade, modelled on the then fashionable Wagner's Majolica House, and the coloured stuccowork create harmonious green-blue and red-white façade decoration, which is also harmonised with the dark-green of the window frames and shutters and the dark green and white façade plaster. Here, for the first time, Koch used fashionable colour contrasts, by which Hauptmann's house stands out in the context of Prešernov trg. He undoubtedly found the models for such decoration in contemporary Viennese architecture, though some interpretations link the colour intensity of the façade to the profession of the owner of the house, who was a trader in paints. Undoubtedly, Hauptmann's house is one of the best of Koch's works in Ljubljana.¹

Literature:

N. Šumi, *Arhitektura secesijske dobe v Ljubljani*, Ljubljana, 1954;
 B. Rovšnik, *Stilni razvoj ornamenta na fasadah v Sloveniji od 1895 do prve svetovne vojne*, *ZUZ, n.v.*, 16, 1980, pp. 25-50;
 D. Prelovšek, *Ljubljanska arhitektura Hribarjevega časa, Grafenauerjev zbornik*, Ljubljana, 1996, pp. 579-650.

¹ N. Šumi, *Arhitektura secesijske dobe v Ljubljani*, Ljubljana, 1954.