

ARTIS THEMED WALKS
SECESSION TAILORED TO
THE INQUISITIVE WALKER



NOVI SAD

1 CITY – 5 BUILDINGS – COUNTLESS STORIES

SYNAGOGUE (1905–1909)

11 Jevrejska Street



The Synagogue in Novi Sad is a central part of a complex that, besides it, includes a school and the Jewish municipality building. Built to the design of Lipót Baumhorn, these structures were the most demanding construction undertaking in Novi Sad in the early 20th century. The fact that Jewish community was resourceful enough to bring an eminent architect and open to Secession as a new style earned the Synagogue a reputation of being one of the most representative buildings in the Vojvodina capital.

This three-nave edifice with an impressive, dominating dome, the Synagogue towers above all the surrounding buildings. Its structure features easily distinguishable medieval models; however, a large number of windows arranged in harmony on the façade and under the dome, a dominant rosette above the main entrance and reduced, elegant decoration clearly speak of a modern interpretation of older buildings. Its ochre-and-white façade with discreet geometric ornamentation is an efficient combination of clinker brick and plastered surfaces. The most distinctive Secession influence is reflected in the interior which is literally bathing in the coloured light penetrating through its numerous stained glass windows. Although the Synagogue is mostly used as a concert hall and the model organ in the gallery above the altar brings to mind that there used to be the famous Rieger organ there, this monumental structure is a symbol of an era of great economic growth and, consequently, of a construction boom in Novi Sad at the turn of the century.

Lipót Baumhorn (1860–1932)

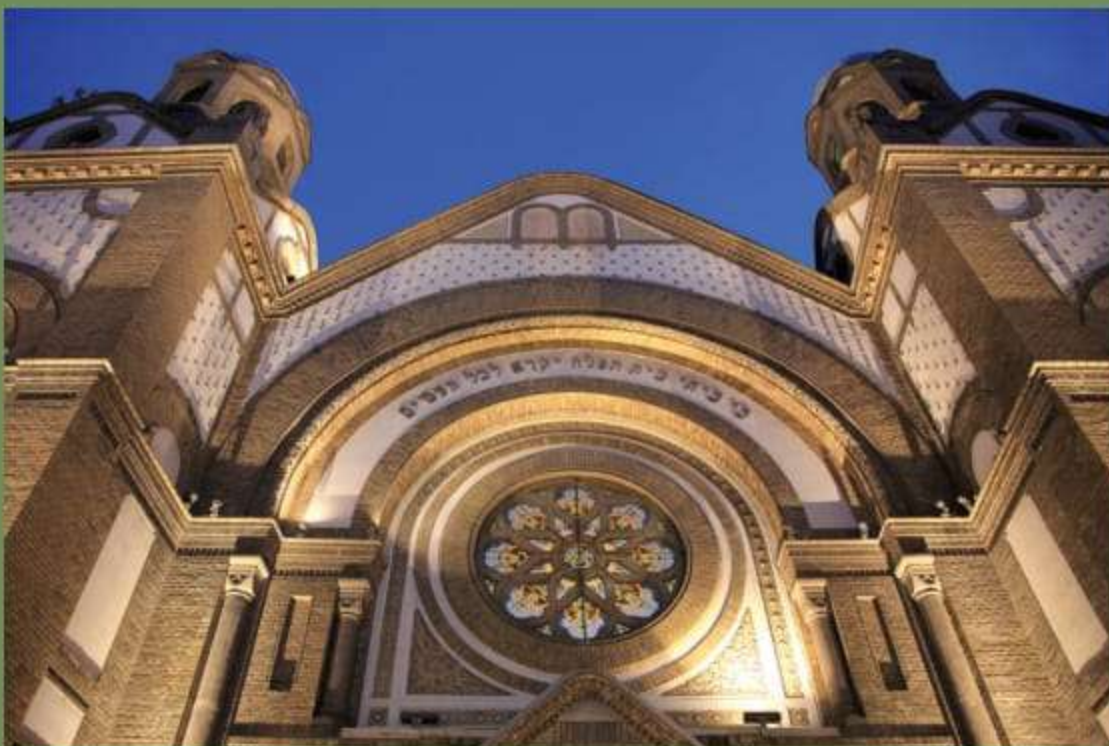
Lipót Baumhorn, a Hungarian architect of Jewish descent, has the reputation of a synagogue builder for a good reason. While in his career he designed

numerous public edifices in Budapest, Szeged, Timișoara, Novi Sad and other towns in Austro-Hungary, the fact that as many as twenty two synagogues were built to his designs truly justifies his great renown. Baumhorn graduated from the College of Technology in Vienna under professors Ferstel, König and Weyr. In the early days of his professional career, he worked at Ödön Lechner's studio in Budapest for twelve years. The first syn-

agogue he designed in Esztergom in 1888 was greeted with such delight in the Jewish community that the ones in Rijeka, Zrenjanin, Timișoara, Szolnok, Braşov, Szeged, Novi Sad and other towns were to follow. The best-known is definitely the Szeged synagogue completed in 1902, the second largest in Hungary and the fourth largest in the world. Baumhorn also designed several bank buildings, such as the Catholic Savings Bank in Novi Sad and the Szeged-Csongrád Savings Bank in Szeged. Other palaces bearing his signature are the Wagner Palace in Szeged, and Lloyd's Palace and Water Palace in Timișoara.

Hundred Square Meters of Stained Glass Windows

Stained glass windows are definitely the most beautiful decoration of the Novi Sad Synagogue. According to some estimates, approximately three hundred square meters of stained glass adorns the windows of different shapes. The monofora, trifora, oculi and rosettes perforate the Synagogue walls forming the frames for a true Secession style glass design exhibition. Especially interesting and equally modern combination of geometric and floral motifs featured with the symbols of Jewish faith produce a fascinating unity of monumentality and creativity. While it remains unknown what workshops produced these amazing stained glass windows, it is well-known they were commissioned by the esteemed members of the Novi Sad Jewish community.



CATHOLIC SAVINGS BANK – VOJVODJANSKA BANK PALACE (1907)

7 Sloboda Square



While the works on the Novi Sad Synagogue were still in progress, Lipót Baumhorn was engaged on another public building located downtown. The Novi Sad Catholic Savings Bank was built in 1907 on the plot of a former palace of the reputable Dedinski family. Just a few steps away from the new Magistrate building (City Hall) and the imposing neo-Gothic Name of Mary church, designed by György Molnár in the late 19th century, he faced the task of designing an equally presentable building on a long and narrow plot of land. The front façade,

lavishly adorned with columns, stucco decoration, wrought iron and high attic, is positioned on the narrower side facing the Sloboda Square, while the considerably wider side façade is facing Njegoševa Street. Baumhorn decided on an eclectic design – namely, a combination of multiple styles in terms of structure. A large area of the side façade features a grid with as many as twenty three vertical sections where the architect playfully arranged his favourite windows of different shapes, ornamental parapets, wrought iron railings, and stuccowork. The repertory of ornaments much like those of the Viennese Secession was produced as a fine fabric made of different yarns. The typical, light façade colours provide a subtle frame for the elegant combination of decorative elements. Baumhorn liked to experiment with Secession but preferred to use its almost monochromatic style, like a dancer who chooses waltz without

a second thought when faced with a choice between flamenco and a waltz. The buildings he designed in Novi Sad definitely show that he was not so strongly influenced by his first boss Ödön Lechner and that the years he spent studying in Vienna and his travels around Europe induced him to develop a preference for the latter kind of aesthetic expression.

The Banking Boom

As an organized, institutionalized system, banking experienced rapid growth in the second half of the 19th century. This impressive progress resulted directly from the Industrial Revolution and rapid development of cities, as well as from the new forms of entrepreneurship involving loans, investments and savings. Divided by denominations within city districts in previous centuries, the communities joined forces in the early days and planned various projects together, particularly the construction ones. Such projects implied the establishment of funds to be used for financing and providing loans, which created a platform for

the emergence of savings and investment banks. The previous practice of keeping money and other valuables in hidden places in a house, making necklaces and other ornaments of silver and gold coins, or even keeping money on one's body, was slowly fading away since a savings bank offered a secure safe and savings account interest. The executive boards of early banks such as the Catholic Savings Bank in Novi Sad consisted of wealthy, respectable members of the community which established the bank. Their reputation and capital provided a guarantee the bank was reliable.



Lipót
Baumhorn



“IRON MAN” PALACE (1908–1909)

2 Njegoševa Street



Until recently it was believed that one of the most imposing buildings in Novi Sad's downtown was designed by a Budapest-based architect Béla Peklő, another builder who favoured the Secession style. The discovery of the original design of this palace indicated, however, that the “Iron Man” was built by Károly Kovács. Chronologically speaking, this was also the last Secession style building in the Vojvodina capital. The plot of land where the “Iron Man” is located has an interesting past. At one time there used to be a Catholic cemetery there, which was afterwards replaced by a building of the Catholic church community. This structure was demolished in an air-raid during the Hungarian Revolution in 1849 when a military crew shelled the town across the Danube from Petrovaradin Fortress. In the second half of the 19th century, master builder Andreas Hohner built there a three-storey (ground floor+two floors) house with a corner entrance where he put up a statue of a knight in armour, after which the structure got its name. In the 1900s, Hohner hired Károly Kovács to design a representative tenement palace as a unique combination of geometric Secession, Orientalism and neo-Gothic styles. This façade features a more intensive colour contrast and a more playful rhythm of various building elements. While the “Iron Man” palace intrigues the eye with its façade, the true Secession jewels are found inside – from the lavish stuccowork in the entryway, to the staircase with a wrought-iron railing, to meticulously created stained glass windows for which there are certain clues they were designed by Károly Kovács himself.

Dornstetter's Pastry Shop

The “Iron Man” palace was the home of the oldest cake shop in Novi Sad ever since the 19th century. Its owner Gabriel Reihard moved to Novi Sad from Osijek in 1820. He became famous for his cremeschnitte (vanilla custard slices) so the pastry chef Istvan Hajerek made the effort to maintain the quality of this cake after he took over the business from Reihard. The cake shop was purchased in 1913 by Jakob Dornstetter who transformed the modest, four-table shop into a luxurious space where only the dining room serving cakes, pastry and refreshments occupied an area of more than two hundred square meters. The elegant interior featuring expensive furniture, crystal chandeliers and mirrors could even measure up to Café Gerbeaud in Budapest. Dornstetter had a true medieval fusion of cakes on his menu. From chestnut puree and cremeschnitte, to Sachertorte and Reform cake. An elite gathering spot, it mostly appealed to women since the cake shop was a kind of public space they could visit unaccompanied and not appear as ladies of questionable morals at the same time.



Hungarian architect Károly Kovács designed the monumental Winkle Palace built in the first decade of the 20th century. This three-storey (ground floor+two floors) tenement palace, commissioned by a respectable businessman István Winkle, is close to Viennese Secession style in its spirit. The imposing size structure looks like a grid featuring a large number of windows arranged in fifteen vertical sections on the street-facing façade. At street level there is a row of shop windows, while apartments for rent are on the upper floors. A steady rhythm of the façade elements is accentuated with wrought iron balconies typical of Secession and with the cornice and attics formed above the three avant-corps. The powder pink-and-white façade and its delicate stuccowork leave an impression of elegance. It does feature masks, geometric and floral motifs, typical of the Secession repertory of ornaments, but as a subtle accent rather than as a dominant theme. Inside the Winkle Palace there is a wide staircase with a well-preserved wrought iron railing. The apartments are bright, spacious and luxurious. Winkle definitely had in mind wealthy members of society as his potential tenants.

Károly Kovács – the Lost Architect

Although even two major buildings located downtown Novi Sad have recently been reliably attributed to Budapest-based architect Károly Kovács, there is almost no trustworthy information about this master builder – from the basic facts about when and where he was born, where he studied or died, to the more important ones about where else he worked. In the preserved documents, Kovács appears as the author of designs for the Winkle and "Iron Man" palaces, and also the person to supervise the construction of the Novi Sad Synagogue. It all points to Kovács being employed as an architect at Lipót Baumhorn's studio. That is all we know about him.

István Winkle – a Successful Businessman

Stefan Winkle, whose name was Hungarianized to István, was a reputable businessman and an influential member of the German community in Novi Sad. He was widely known as the founder of the Winkle Brewery which started its operation in 1850. In addition to the Novi Sad silk factory, established in 1770, breweries were the oldest factories in Novi Sad to guarantee high profits to their owners. This is how Winkle found himself among the most successful Novi Sad entrepreneurs. According to available sources, by 1908, at the time István Winkle's palace had already been built, his brewery was producing 112.000 hectoliters of beer a year. When the construction works on the Novi Sad Synagogue began, Winkle was a member of the executive board of the Catholic Savings Bank, a building also designed by Lipót Baumhorn. The Jewish community applied to the Savings Bank for a loan and so Winkle had the opportunity to see the design and meet the supervisor Károly Kovács. Businesslike as he was, he made a deal with him right away, hiring him to make a design for his own palace.



The party in the Winkle family home

WINKLE PALACE (1906/1907)

5 Kralja Aleksandra Street



While the construction works on the Novi Sad Synagogue and the Catholic Savings Bank were in progress, Lipót Baumhorn received an offer to build several other stylish buildings in Novi Sad, one of which was the Menráth Palace in the city centre. It was an opportunity to apply all the knowledge gained from the Renaissance-oriented Ferstel in Vienna and in Lechner's Budapest studio, and blend it together to create an impressive, three-storey (ground floor+two floors) tenement building owned by the respectable Menráth family. Designed in the shape of a Cyrillic letter "Ш", this residential and commercial building features a playful façade with bay windows and balconies. The ground floor hosts several shops, there are ten apartments on the upper floors and the courtyard offers warehouse space. The light green façade is subtly decorated with rhythmically placed light grey ornaments. The prevailing stuccowork decoration is skillfully complemented with wrought iron railings on the balconies. The geometric ornaments, meanders, masks and stylized floral motifs give this elegant façade an almost exotic charm. This is where we also see Baumhorn's passion for windows of different shapes and his skill to bring diverse elements into a fine harmony. A masterpiece influenced by the Viennese Secession, Menráth Palace definitely ranks among Novi Sad's most beautiful buildings.

Menráth Family – Furniture Makers

Master carpenter Lorenz Menráth, a Danube Swabian, came to Novi Sad from Odžaci in 1843. He was only twenty-four years old when he established his own business L. Menrath & Sohn. A modest workshop grew into a serious furniture manufacturer, while Lorenz's three sons – Ernst, Victor and Josef – became modern businessmen. Even though Menráth was largely known for his Alt Deutsch style furniture, the preserved illustrated ads show that by 1890 they had already been selling bentwood furniture, highly popular in Secession. In addition to furniture, they sold a full range of accessories – upholstery fabrics, rugs, curtains, bedding and other furnishings. The Menráths' capital was accumulating fast so they were able to purchase the house and the estate from their neighbour Wilhelm Weiss in the early 20th century, and to commission a grand tenement palace on the two merged plots. The family's furniture shop was on the ground floor while on the upper floor they occupied two apartments furnished with the pieces from their own exclusive shop.

Close to Being Demolished

Every period has its own town-planning ideas which include modifications, demolitions and new construction projects. This is how the Menráth Palace came close to being torn down in the 1960s. Clearing terrain for the construction of the present-day Mihajlo Pupin Boulevard downtown Novi Sad resulted in tearing down of the Catholic grammar school and an old Armenian church. At the last moment, it was decided that the street should take a slight curve so the Secession beauty survived the 20th century. It was restored earlier this century and instead of the original high-ceilinged attic covered with roof tiles, a glass structure was put up in its place.

MENRÁTH PALACE (1908)

14 Kralja Aleksandra Street



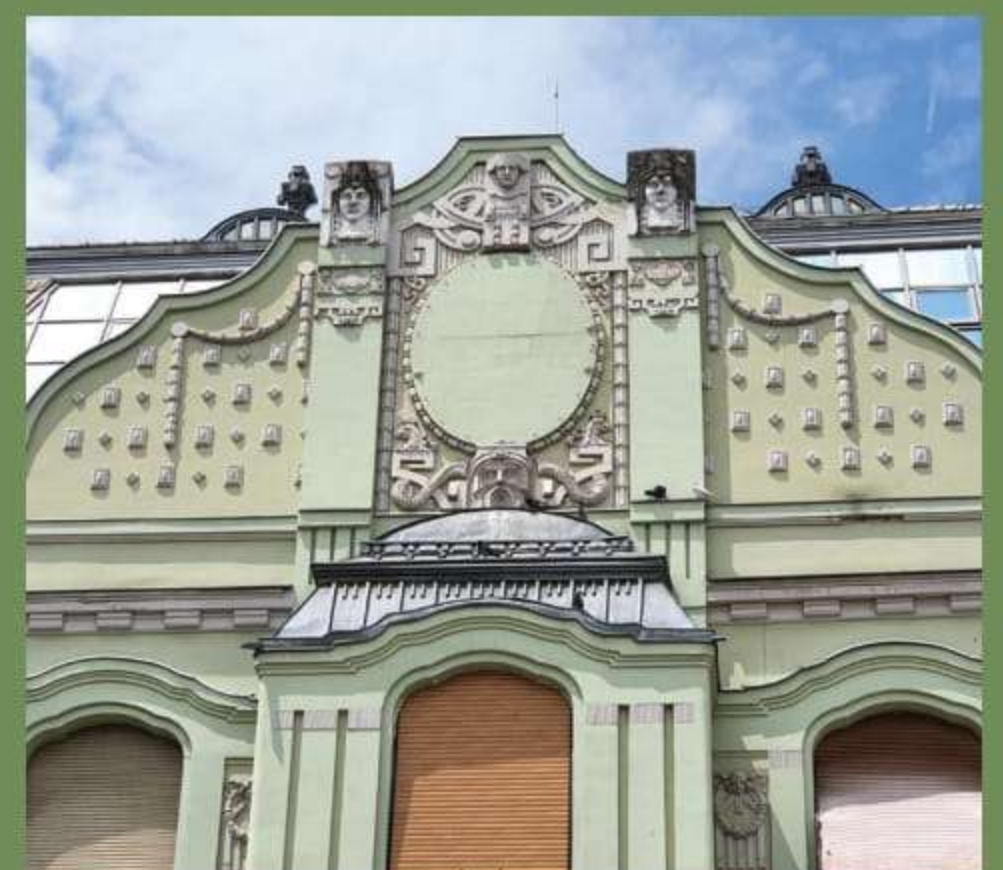
ОНО ЈЕ ПРИЗНАТО, ДА У КУЋИ НАМЕШТАЈА
Л. МЕНРАТА И СИНА
 У НОВОМ САДУ, Кошут Лајошева улица бр. 46—48.

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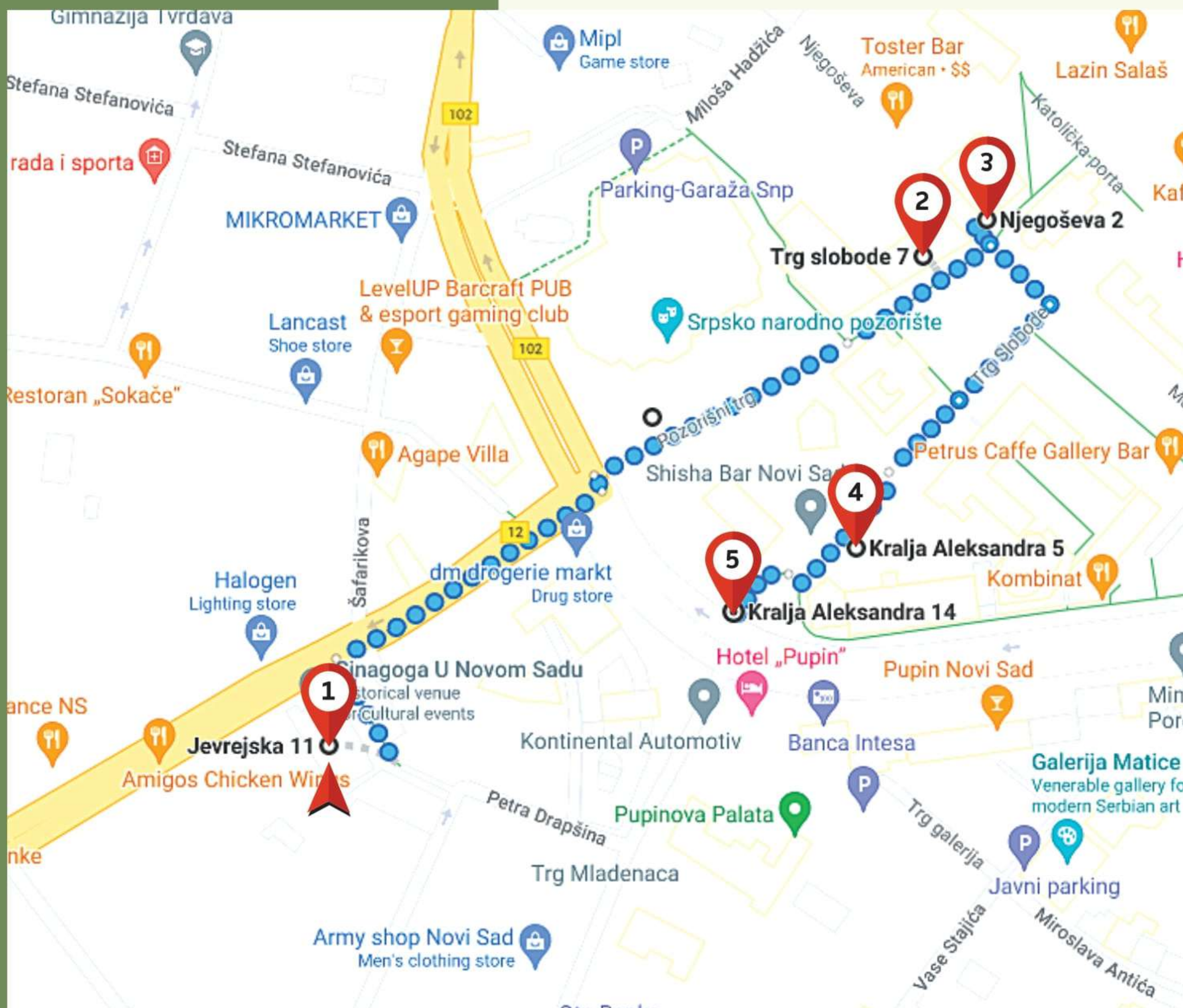
Велики избор у завесама, простирачима (тепиха), застирача за постеље и столове, мадраца, дечијих кола, слика и огледала.

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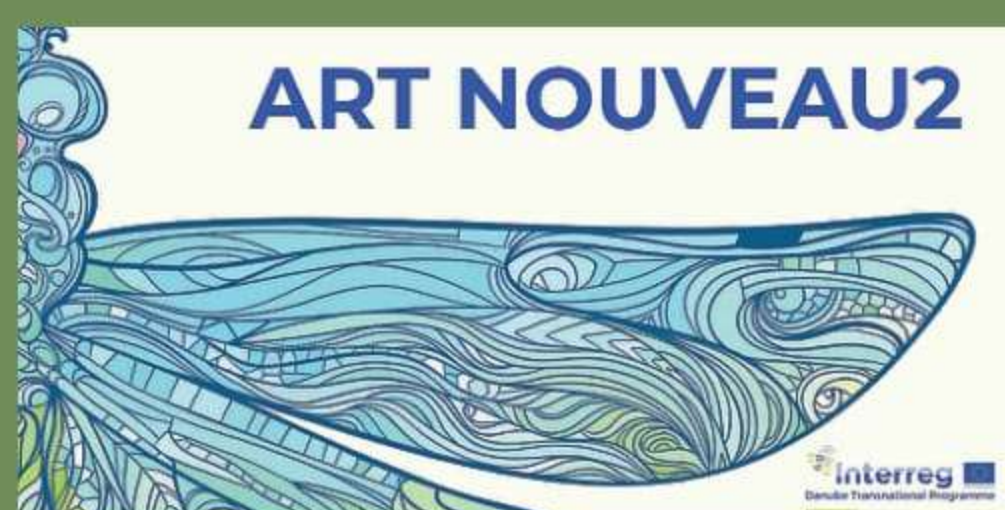
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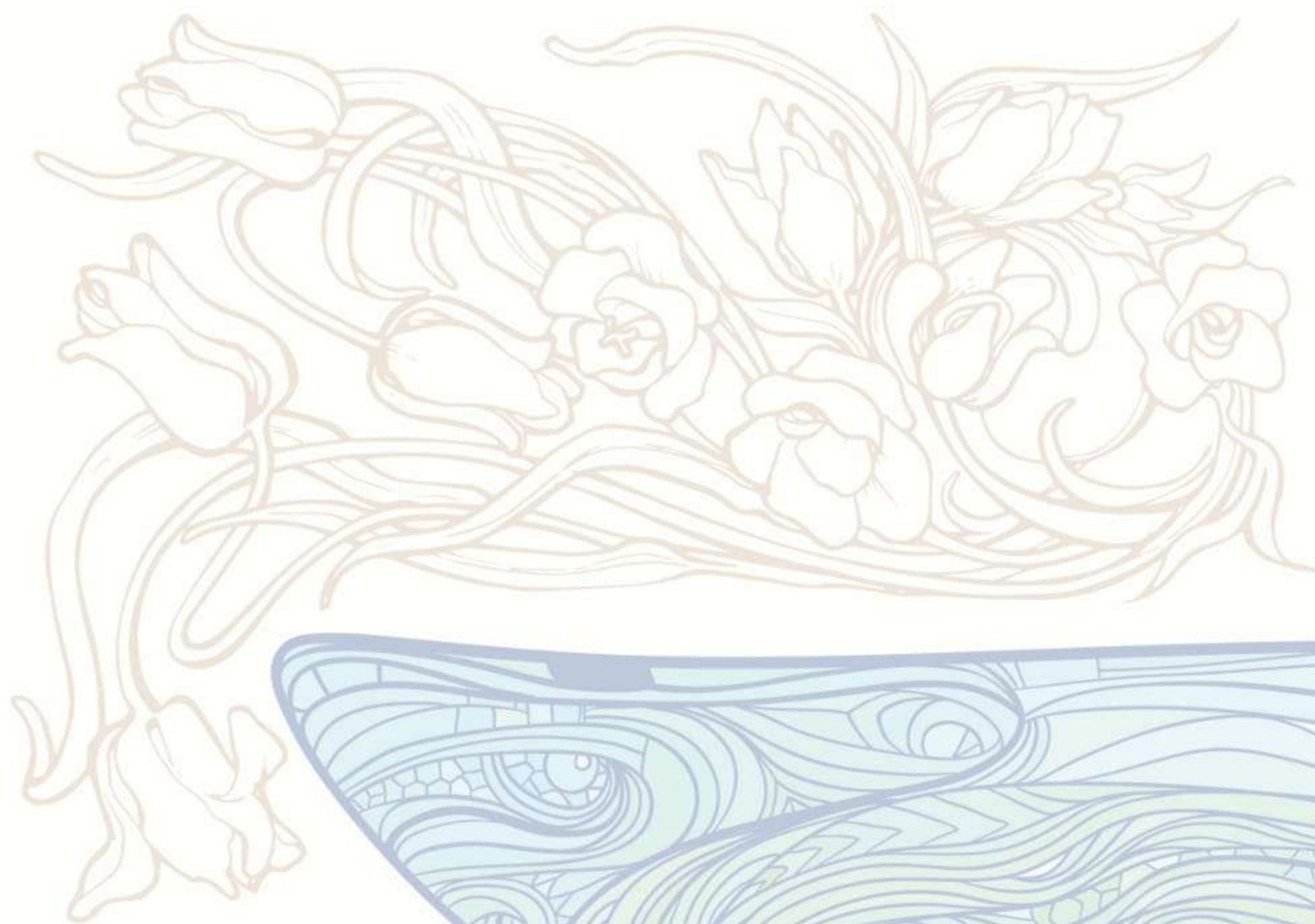
Advertisement for the Menráth's shop



Brochures on themed walks inspired by the Secession heritage in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Subotica are available for free download from Republic institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments website at www.heritage.gov.rs and Artis Center website at www.artiscenter.com.



An original concept of Artis Center, the “Secession Tailored to the Inquisitive Walker” programme has been carried out within the project Art Nouveau 2 – *Strengthening the Danube Region’s cultural identity by building on common heritage of Art Nouveau*, where Republic institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments features as a project partner, and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia as an affiliate partner.



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