

International Open Architectural Competition Maksimir Stadium and Svetice Sports and Recreation Centre Zagreb, Croatia



Cover photo: Ivan Klindić / fotografijezagreba.hr



2 View to the Maksimir Park and the start of construction of the North stand. Photo: prof. arch. Krešimir Ivaniš, 1955.

More than a stadium

Zagreb is a city of sport, home to numerous clubs with long-standing traditions and internationally recognized achievements. However, the city's sports infrastructure has yet to fully reflect this level of excellence. This disparity is particularly evident in our football stadiums which remain inadequate despite the remarkable success of our local and national teams.

The architectural competition for Maksimir Stadium and Svetice Sports Centre is the most significant and extensive undertaking in Zagreb in recent decades. Our aim is to reshape this symbolically and historically powerful site, which is deeply rooted in the identity of Zagreb and Croatian football.

Although the original stadium complex was conceptually powerful, decades of additions and partial renovations have substantially compromised its architectural integrity.

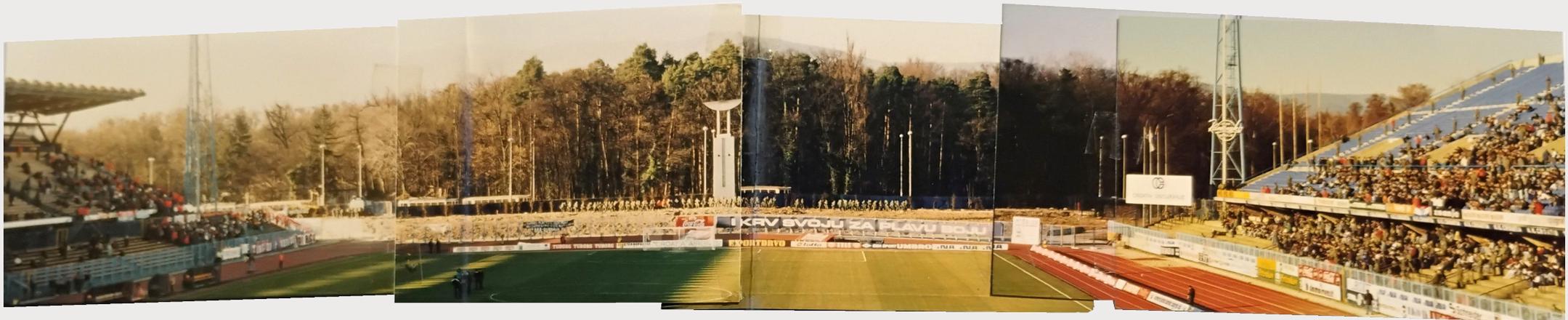
Our vision extends beyond the mere construction of new facilities. This area is more than just a hub for sport and recreation; it is a symbolic urban landmark and a defining feature of Zagreb's identity - the eastern gateway to the city center, situated along one of our most vital urban avenues. Such a location demands thoughtful spatial articulation, architectural excellence, and long-term responsible management.

We envision this site as a multifaceted social and spatial “City of Sport” - an open and inclusive environment for professional athletes, recreational users, fans, and all our fellow citizens.

We invite you to contribute to this new chapter of Zagreb’s sports infrastructure and to become a part of its future development.

**Tomislav Tomašević, mag.pol.
Mayor of the City of Zagreb**

**Luka Korlaet, dr.sc.arch.
Deputy Mayor of the City of Zagreb**



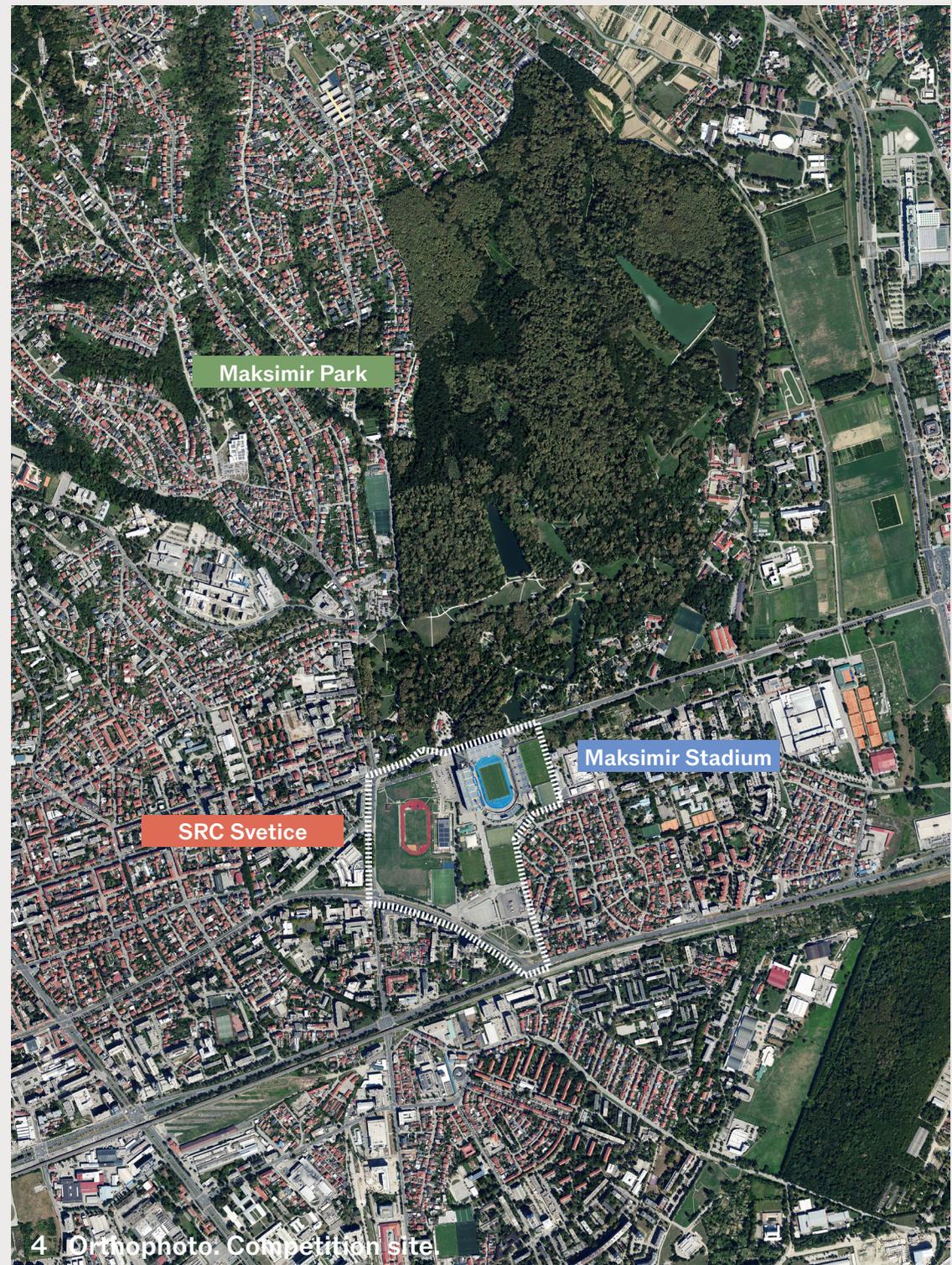
3 View to the Maksimir Park and the start of construction of the North stand. Photo: prof. arch. Krešimir Ivaniš, 1955.

Competition site

Svetice Sports and Recreation Centre, together with Maksimir stadium, occupies a prominent position on the eastern edge of Zagreb's city centre, adjacent to the historic Maksimir Park. It is one of the city's most significant sports sites, known for its long tradition of athletic facilities and the iconic Maksimir football stadium.

The immediate vicinity of Maksimir Park creates a unique ambient setting, making future development of this area particularly important.

Any further planning should be approached thoughtfully, with careful consideration of the urban context and the city's broader green infrastructure network.



Maksimir Park 1794. —

On what was once an almost endless stretch of church-owned land, lies Maksimir Park – a forest park opened to the public in 1794.

As the most important landscape park in Croatia and the first public promenade in southeastern Europe, it was also among the earliest public parks in Europe.

Originally designed in the Baroque style by its founder, Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac (1752–1827), and later developed in the English and Romantic styles by Bishop and Cardinal Juraj Haulik (1788–1869), the park once covered over 400 hectares (now 316).

At the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, Maksimir lay on the outskirts of a city that then had barely 10,000 inhabitants.

From the mid-19th century, Zagreb grew rapidly, with sports and leisure becoming increasingly popular. Maksimir became the site of the city's first organized recreational and water sports facilities: a small swimming area on the First Lake in 1845, followed by an ice rink and a toboggan run in 1853. The first international swimming and water polo match in Zagreb was held on Maksimir Lake in 1923. Citizens also enjoyed bowling, skating, rowing, running, and skiing in the park. It can be said that the development of recreational and sports facilities on the slopes of Medvednica on the eastern edge of what was then Zagreb, was closely linked to the creation of Maksimir park.

In 1964, it was declared a Protected Cultural and Natural Heritage Site.

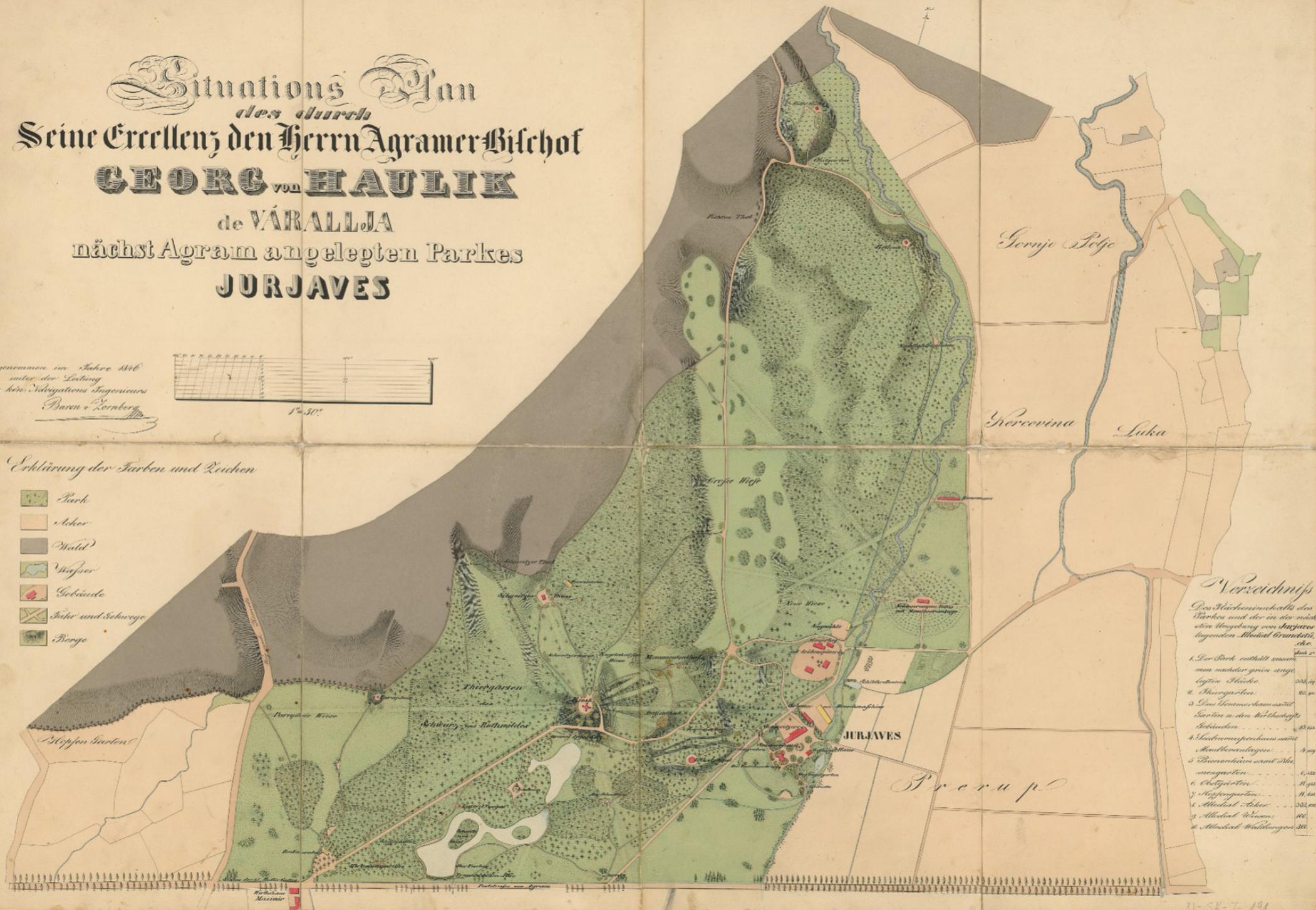
Situations Plan
 des durch
 Seine Excellenz den Herrn Agramer Bischof
GEORG von HAULIK
 de VÁRALLJA
 nächst Agram angelegten Parkes
JURJAVES

Eingenommen im Jahre 1846
 unter der Leitung
 des k. k. Navigations Ingenieurs
 Baron v. Zornberg



Erklärung der Farben und Zeichen

- Park
- Acker
- Wald
- Wasser
- Gebäude
- Fähr- und Schweige
- Berge



Verzeichnis

Das Kärthenswirthschafts des
 Bischofs und der in der nächst
 oben Umgebung von Jurjaves
 liegenden Altsiedlungsstelle, etc.
 etc.

1. Der Park enthält zusammen man wachser grün angelegte Fläche	200,00
2. Oberrgarten	80,00
3. Das Sommerhaus samt Garten u. den nöthigen Gebäuden	20,00
4. Bodenverpachtung samt Kautschukanlagen	1,00
5. Brunnenschloß samt Ab- messung	6,00
6. Oberrgarten	11,00
7. Unterrgarten	11,00
8. Altsiedlungsstelle	232,00
9. Altsiedlungsstelle	100,00
10. Altsiedlungsstelle	300,00

5 Map of Maksimir Park, Zagreb, 1846. Author: Baron Leonard Zornberg



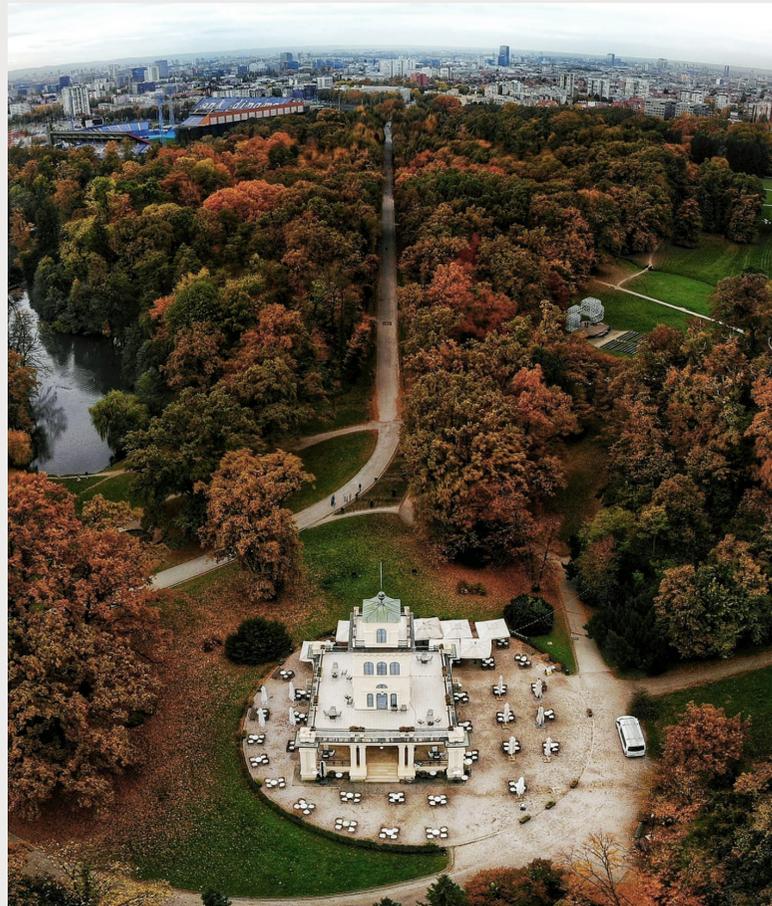
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6 Maksimir park, walkers, 1905.

7 Maksimir lake, rowers, 1960.

8 A scene from the movie 'One Song a Day Takes Mischief Away', depicting life in Zagreb before WWII and the Sunday dances in Maksimir park, dir. Krešimir Golik, 1970.

9 Maksimir park today, a promenade towards Stadium.

Svetice Sports and Recreation Centre 1897. —

The large meadow south of the Maksimir Forest, today the SRC Svetice, has long served as a hub of sports and recreation, beginning with the velodrome in 1897 and continuing with the development of various sports facilities.

Throughout the 20th century, individual sports facilities and fields were designed by different architects, but without the urban design of the entire area, largely due to the land ownership issues.

In 1897, based on a design by engineer Gustav Hermann, a wooden velodrome was constructed in the northwest corner of the site, at the intersection of Maksimirska street and Svetice street.

In 1912, on the site of the current stadium, the Croatian Academic Sports Society (HAŠK) created a football pitch with an 8-meter-wide and 402.25-meter-long athletic track around it, along with two tennis courts, setting a foundation for future sports development.

In 1934, on the site of the current athletic track, a 120.000 sqm wooden stadium for the Sokol Rally was built, based on a project by architect Josip Dryak. The field could host 5,045 athletes, with wooden stands and standing places for 50,000 spectators.



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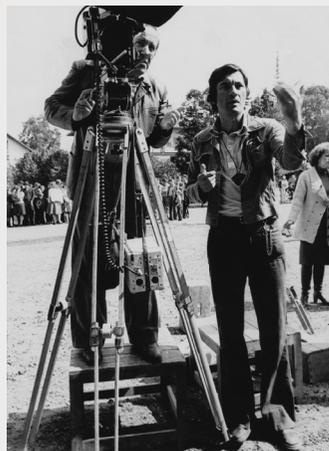
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10 Bicycle race, Maksimir, 1898.

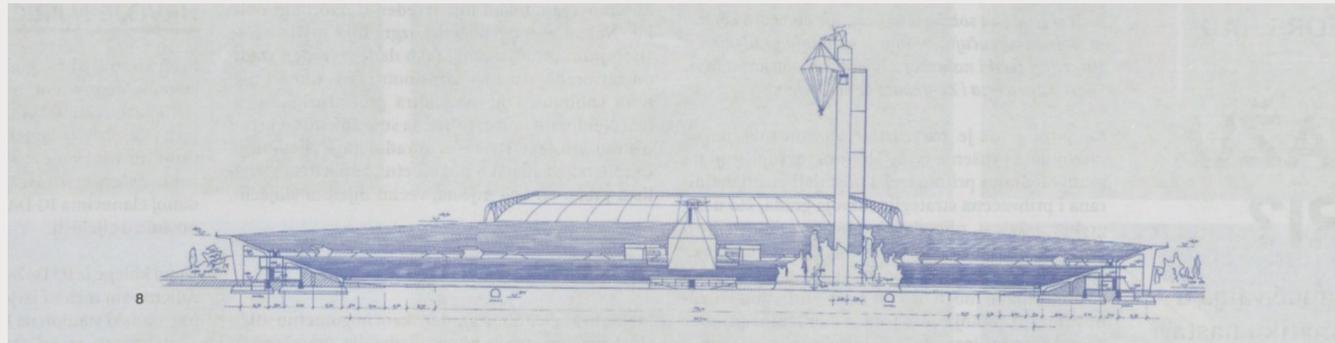
11 Athletic and football stadium, 1913.

12 Stadium for Sokol Rally, north-west area of the competition site. Project by architect J. Dryak, built in 1932., burned down in 1941.

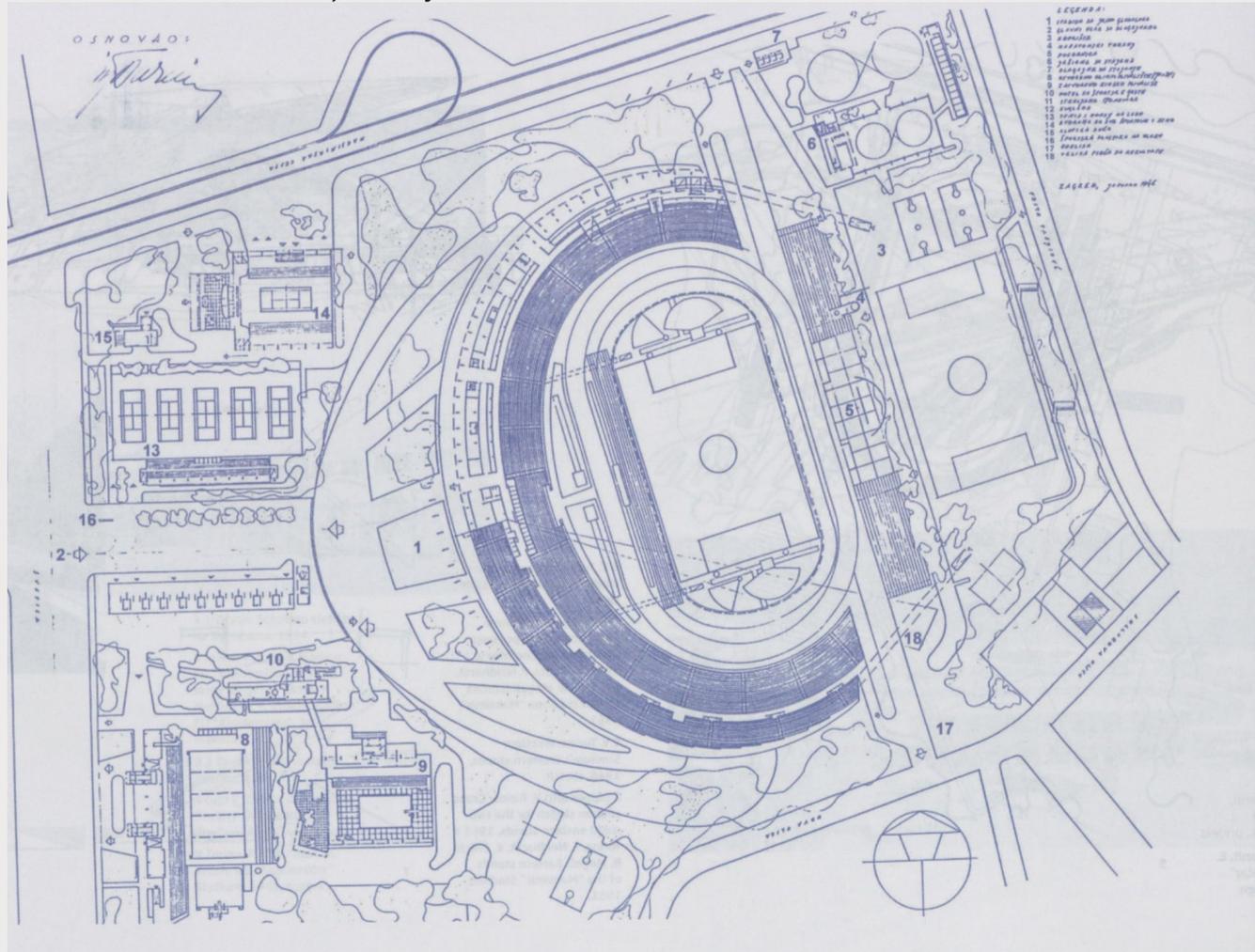
13 Sokol Rally.

14 Cartoonist and film director Dušan Vukotić, Academy Award (Oscar) winner, during the shooting of his film Operation Stadium, 1977.

The first urban design for the entire Svetice area, along with a proposal for an athletic stadium, was created in 1946 by architect Vladimir Turina. He placed an oval stadium at the center of the site, set back from the surrounding streets, and carefully arranged the remaining sports grounds around it. With continuous ellipsoid stands surrounding the football pitch and athletic track on three sides, he opened the arena towards the east. Unfortunately, due to ongoing land-ownership obstacles, the idea of developing the entire area was abandoned. In the same year, Turina designed a new project for an athletic/football stadium, this time located in the northeast corner of the Svetice site, together with architect Franjo Neidhardt and structural engineer Eugen Ehrlich.



16 Stadium of the Home of the 2nd Yugoslav Army at Svetice. Longitudinal section. Architect Vladimir Turina, January 1946.



15 Stadium of the Home of the 2nd Yugoslav Army at Svetice, with a sports settlement. Site plan. Architect Vladimir Turina, January 1946.

Maksimir Stadium 1946. – 1961.

When architects Vladimir Turina and Franjo Neidhardt, together with structural engineer Eugen Ehrlich, began designing the new stadium, two spatial circumstances directed the project toward a Hellenistic-like open arena rather than a compact structure.

The first was the beauty of the surrounding landscape and the proximity of Maksimir Park, with all its climatic benefits.

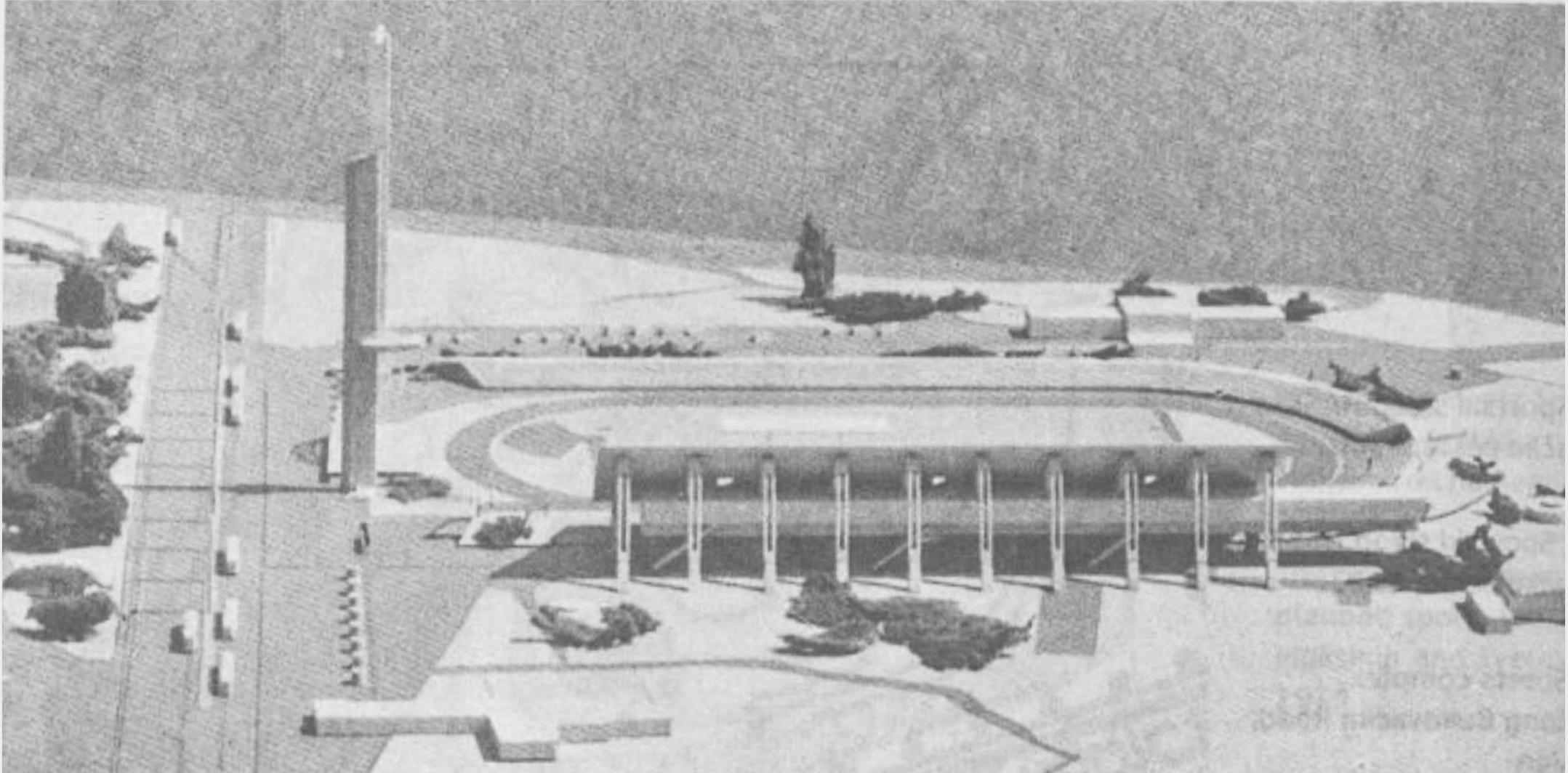
The second was the newly designated location, the very northeast corner of Svetice-Maksimir area, at the intersection of Maksimirska Street and later intercepted Jakićeva street.

Turina strongly believed that sports are inseparable from nature and landscape.



Designed as a 3-meter-high horseshoe-shaped earth embankment surrounding the east, south and west sides of the football pitch and athletic track, the arena was left open to the north, allowing the breeze

to flow through and welcoming the presence of Maksimir Park and Medvednica Hill. On the west side, a concrete stand was added, never touching the earth slope, held by remarkable reinforced concrete supporters.



18 Model of a new Stadium, designed by architects Vladimir Turina and Franjo Neidhardt, with structural engineer Eugen Ehrlich, 1946.

In 1953, the architects designed a proposal for the Svetice Sports Complex, including a swimming pool, athletic stadium, tennis courts and athlete housing. With the increasing demand for larger capacity, the architects redesigned the West Stand and added new North and East Stands, while still preserving the earth embankment.

The North Stand, built in 1955, was 110m long with a 6-meter-high concrete stand placed above the earth slope, creating a total of 16.000 standing places. The West Stand, with twelve monumental concrete supports through which a cubic service volume was inserted, had a capacity of 6,262 seats in 28 rows and 225 places in 23 loggias.

With the addition of the North Stand, the stadium moved away from the initial concept of an open Olympic-style arena.



19 Model of SRC Svetice, architects Vladimir Turina and Franjo Neidhart, 1953.



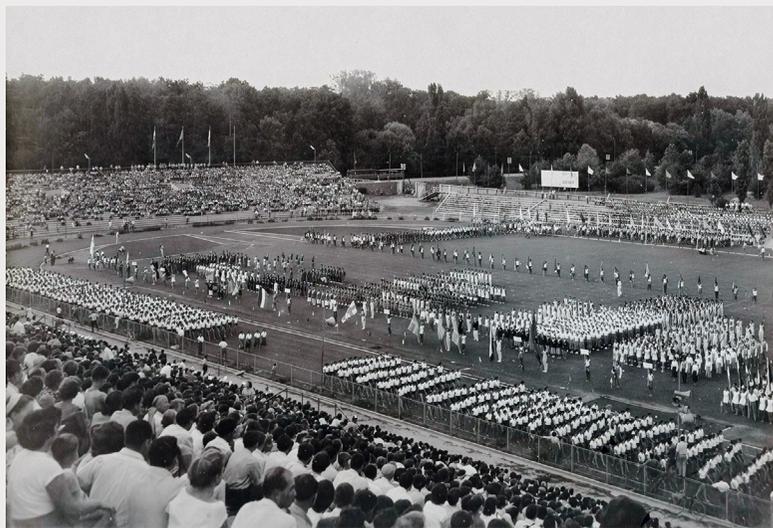
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20 West stand, 1946. – 1954.

21 West stand with view to the North stand, built 1953. – 1955.

22 View to the North stand

23 Gymnaestrada, Maksimir stadium, 1957.

Photo 20-21: Zagreb City Museum, legacy of Vladimir Turina

While designing the East Stand, architect Boris Magaš joined the team.

The East Stand is a double-sided stand: the higher stand faced the main pitch, while the lower stand faced east, toward the auxiliary football pitch. Its capacity was 12,000 standing places and 18,000 seats.

When the East Stand was completed in 1961, the total capacity of Maksimir Stadium was 55,549.



24 Double sided East stand. Photo: Zagreb City Museum, legacy of Vladimir Turina

Maksimir Stadium 1961. – 1987.

In 1958, the Board of FC Dinamo decided, without consulting the original authors, to build a South Stand and extend the East Stand in order to connect it with the North and South Stands, thus creating a fully enclosed sports arena. This decision would detach the Stadium from its surroundings, something the authors had continually avoided, even through the numerous additions and changes made from the beginning up to 1961.

In 1963, all communication between FC Dinamo and Vladimir Turina ended.

The South Stand, designed by Božidar Tušek, was built between 1964 and 1969.

Over the decades, Maksimir Stadium has hosted numerous sporting and cultural events and has become a symbol of the Dinamo Zagreb football club.



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25 Construction of South Stand, designed by architect Božidar Tušek, 1964. -1969.

26 Outdoor Swimming pool complex, designed by architect Franjo Bahovac, 1965.

27 FC Dinamo, Stadium user since 1951.

28 Yugoslavia-Spain, World Cup qualification game, 1973.

Maksimir Stadium 1987. – 2020.

Beginning with modifications carried out to increase stadium capacity for the 1987 student world games, the XIV Summer Universiade, a series of severe interventions began, gradually diminishing both the stadium's functionality and architectural value.

In 1997, with the aim of meeting international football standards, the club - then named FC Croatia (Dinamo), commissioned architects Nikola Filipović and Branko Kincl to redesign the stadium.

After the death of Croatia's first president in 1999, and following the (re)construction of the North and West stands, all further work was halted.

Years of insufficient maintenance, combined with damage caused by the 2020 earthquakes, further contributed to its deterioration, leaving the stadium in poor condition and largely unsuitable for major sporting or public events.

The athletics track surrounding the football pitch also poses a challenge for any attempt to reorganise the existing structure, as it severely limits the possibility of adding new stands and bringing spectators closer to the field - a standard feature of modern football arenas.



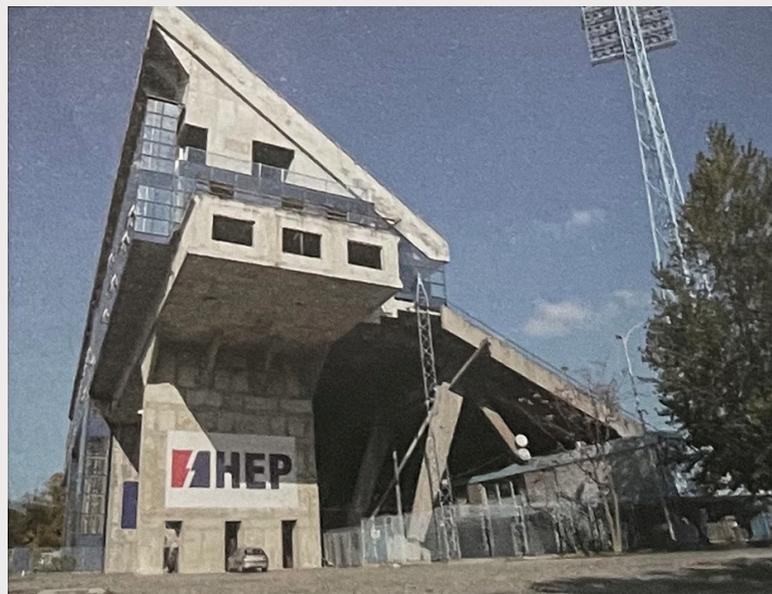
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29 XIV Summer Universiade,
Grand opening at Maksimir
Stadium directed by Paolo
Magelli, 1987.

30 XIV Summer Universiade,
1987.

31 XIV Summer Universiade
Grand opening, basketball
player Dražen Petrović lighting
the Universiade flame

32 Reconstruction of the West
Stand to increase capacity for
the 1987 Summer Universiade
Photo: Andro Giunio, 2010.

33 Stadium reconstruction
project by architects Nikola
Filipović and Branko Kincl,
1997.

Maksimir Stadium SRC Svetice 2025.

With the arrival of a new City administration, efforts were made to acquire the entire Svetice land. The goal is to build a modern sports complex integrated into the urban context, enhancing the area's existing spatial qualities while meeting the city's needs for contemporary sports infrastructure.

Therefore, in 2025 the City of Zagreb and the Government of the Republic of Croatia reached an agreement to deconstruct the existing Maksimir Stadium and jointly conduct an architecture competition for a new stadium complex, with an estimated construction budget of 204mil Euros.



34 Aerial view from the northeast Photo: Drazen Komar



35 View to the north, towards Maksimir Park, 2025. Photo by Ivan Klindić / fotografijezagreba.hr

Competition Task and Objective

The architectural competition for Maksimir Stadium and Svetice Sport and Recreation Centre is open, conducted in one-stage, ideas and project competition.

The objective of the competition is to select the best urban-architectural solution for Maksimir stadium complex (Implementation Level), and a conceptual proposal for Svetice Sports and Recreation Centre and Borongaj transit hub (Survey Level).

In Croatia, design competitions are integrated into public procurement law.

Therefore, the City of Zagreb will commission the author of the winning stadium project directly for the realization of the new Maksimir Stadium, through a negotiated procedure immediately following the competition.

The idea proposal for the Svetice Sports and Recreation Centre is not binding for the contracting authority and is not subject to subsequent negotiation.

The competition site is divided into four program zones:

- **ZONE A**
Athletic stadium and outdoor/
indoor sports complex
- **ZONE B**
Existing Svetice Swimming
Pool Complex
- **ZONE C**
Football stadium complex
- **ZONE D**
Transport hub

The total area of zones A, B and C is approximately 23 ha.

The proposed division into zones is flexible, but must support future management of sport facilities by different users.



Brief programme overview

ZONE A: ATHLETICS AND RECREATION COMPLEX WITH INDOOR SPORTS HALLS

Athletics Stadium
IAAF category II, audience
capacity: 2,000 seats
Total GFA: 5,274 m²

Indoor Sports Hall for Handball
One large hall for 4,500-5,000
spectators and one smaller hall
for 300-350 spectators
Total GFA: 20,370m²

**Indoor Sports Hall for Futsal and
Basketball**
Audience capacity: 3,000
Total GFA: 6,878 m²

Outdoor fitness park
Exercise area surface: 1,500 m²

ZONE C: FOOTBALL STADIUM COMPLEX

Football Stadium
UEFA category IV, capacity:
Main arena 35,000 spectators,
auxiliary football pitch with 1.500
seats stand, 2 auxiliary pitches
Total GFA: 38,378m²

Parking Garage
Capacity: 800 parking spaces
Total GFA: 24,000m²

ZONE D: PARKING, TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Parking Garage
Capacity: 1,500 parking spaces
Total GFA: 45,000m²

**Network of open public spaces
and pedestrian routes**

ZONE B: EXISTING SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX 'SVETICE'

In 2005, architects Vjera Bakić and Matthias Kulstrunk won the architectural competition for the new Svetice Swimming Pool Complex. The complex was built between 2009 and 2016. Stretched along a north-south axis on a narrow plot, the pool hall is placed between two lower lateral wings with activated roofs for outdoor recreation, allowing natural light and ambient views throughout its entire length. With the north and south facades designed as large windows opening towards Maksimir forest and Svetice, the project is strongly rooted in the physical beauty and ambience of the site. Careful consideration of materiality created a tactile experience for users. Citizens love this pool.



36 West facade. Photo: Marko Mihaljević



37 Aerial view from south. Photo: Dražen Komar



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38 North facade, main entrance

39 Football pitch on the roof of the west lateral service wing

40 Interior of the swimming pool with the view to the South

41 South facade, exit to the sun decks

42 Sun deck area

43 Interior of the swimming pool, view to the East
Photos 38–43
by Marko Mihaljević

Competition Schedule

LAUNCH
March 20, 2026

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING
QUESTIONS**
April 21, 2026

DEADLINE FOR ANSWERS
May 7, 2026

**COMPETITION ENTRY
SUBMISSION VIA EOJN HR**
June 24th, 2026

**MODEL SUBMISSION
DEADLINE, OUTSIDE EOJN HR**
July 9, 2026

JURYING
July, 2026

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF
COMPETITION RESULTS**
August, 2026

EXHIBITION
September, 2026