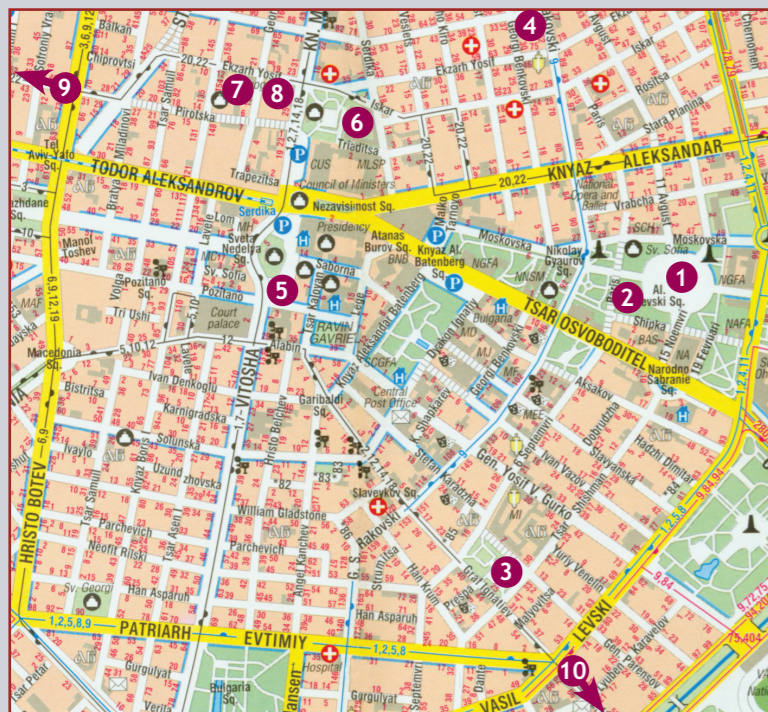


MAP OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
POST-BYZANTINE SITES IN SOFIA

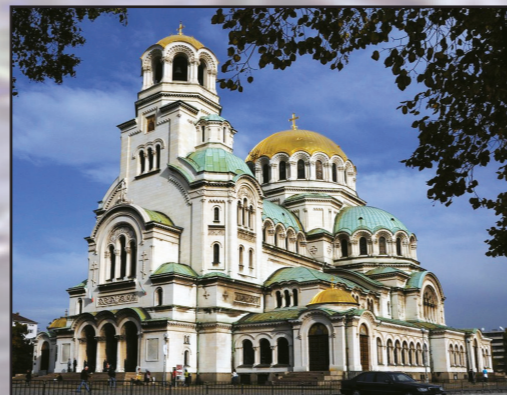


- 1 St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral • 1 St. Alexander Nevski Square
- 2 Palace of the Holy Synod • 4 Oborishte Street
- 3 Church of the Seven Saints, or 'Sveti Sedmochislenitsi' • 25 Graf Ignatiev Street
- 4 Church of St. Paraskeva (The New) • 58 Rakovski Street
- 5 Orthodox Theological Academy (presently: Theological Department at the Sofia University) • 19 St. Nedelya Square
- 6 The Mineral Baths • 1 Banski Square
- 7 Sofia Central Synagogue • 16 Exarch Josef Street
- 8 The Central Hali (covered marketplace) • 25 Marie Louise Square
- 9 Church of St. Nicholas the New of Sofia • 76 Pirotska Street
- 10 Orthodox Seminary with the Church of St. John of Rila • 2 Velchova Zavera Square

The front page shows 'Portrait of Princess Marie Louise as a Byzantine Empress'. This posthumous portrait of the first wife of Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria was painted in 1900 by Prof. Ivan Mrkvička and won the gold medal at the World Exhibition in Paris in the same year. In the picture we can see motives borrowed from the well-known early Byzantine (4th century) floor 'mosaic with cypresses' excavated under the apse of St. Sophia Church in Sofia, and the ornamented garment of the princess reproduces the attire of Sebastocratrress Desislava from the 13th century murals in the famous Boyana Church. The 3 metre-high canvas is kept in the collection of the National Art Gallery, set in its original bronze relief frame cast by Boris Schatz.

Sofia Municipality: www.sofia.bg

SOFIA • BULGARIA

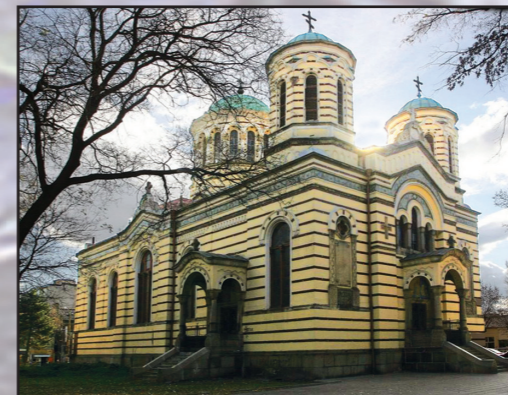


From top to bottom:

St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral, detail of the south façade • designed by Arch. A. Pomerantsev in 1882 and built in 1904–1912 • consecrated in 1924

Church of the Seven Saints, or 'Sveti Sedmochislenitsi' • In 1901–1903 the Kodjadervish Mosque, designed by Mimar Sinan (1528), was reconstructed into a church in post-Byzantine style following the design of architects A. Pomerantsev, P. Momchilov and Y. Milanov

Church of St. Paraskeva (The New) • designed by Arch. A. Torniyov and built in 1922–1929 • woodcarved iconostasis by Jan Travnicky and Todor Christov



From top to bottom:

Church of St. Nicholas the New of Sofia • designed by Arch. A. Torniyov, 1896–1900 • façade decoration and interior design by H. Tachev and St. Badjov • wood-carved iconostasis and furniture implemented by Lazar and Nestor Aleksiev after a design by A. Torniyov and H. Tachev

Sofia Central Synagogue • designed by Arch. F. Grünanger and built in 1905–1909 • façade decoration and interior design by H. Tachev • Sofia Synagogue is a Sephardic (Spanish) Jewish temple, which is why the building displays an unusual mixture of Moorish and post-Byzantine styles.

Halite • designed by Arch. Naum Torbov and built in 1909–1911 • restored in 2000



POST-BYZANTINE
ARCHITECTURE
IN SOFIA



SOFIA:
CULTURAL TOURISM



Orthodox Theological Academy • designed by Arch. F. Grünanger and built in 1908–1914 • façade decoration after the design by H. Tachev • stone carvings by the Italian sculptors Hardi and Filloti • The dome, which was originally shaped like the Patriarch's crown, and the gable below it, once bearing a mural composition of the 'Promotion of the Bulgarian Independent Church' by Nikola Ganushev, were destroyed by bombing in 1944.

The impressive domed and vaulted architecture of modern-day Sofia shelters masterpieces of stone relief, majolica, brick and stucco decoration, *opus tessellatum* mosaics, mural painting and wood carving, all inspired by the rediscovery of Byzantine ornamental refinement. This new circle of phenomena found in the East of Europe was termed 'byzantineggiante' by the Italian art historian Pietro Scarpellini, and in 1943 in the French *L'illustré* the Swiss diplomat Jean-Pierre Borlos called Sofia 'the capital city with Byzantine domes'.



Palace of the Holy Synod • designed by Arch. Y. Milanov and Arch. P. Momchilov and built in 1912 • façade decoration by H. Tachev

Sofia's post-Byzantine style in architecture and decorative arts was synthesized at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century. It exemplifies a peculiar Bulgarian artistic achievement within the common European Art Nouveau movement. Through the post-Byzantine the nation's cultural elite sought to give aesthetic expression to the reinstatement of Bulgaria's state sovereignty after its liberation from Ottoman rule, and to its aim of bringing the country up-to-date with modern European values. In the first quarter of the 20th century the post-Byzantine was synonymous with the Third Bulgarian Kingdom (1878-1946). Its most significant patterns can be seen in the capital city Sofia and they feature a distinctive layer of its cultural heritage. Arch. Yanaki Shamardjiev was the first to put a name to the artistic concept in 1894 when discussing how the mausoleum for the late Prince Alexander von Battenberg should look, "it is the Byzantine architectural style with the alterations it has undergone in our country that presents itself as our national style". Around 1900 the discovery of the early Christian tombs under St. Sophia Church with their Byzantine frescoes dating back to 4th–6th centuries gave a strong impetus to shaping most central public and religious buildings in post-Byzantine fashion. In 1912 the understanding of 'the national style' was already commonly shared in terms of 'reminiscence and utilisation of Byzantine forms with a local hue'. The main representatives and creators of the post-Byzantine style in Sofia are:

- the architects Yordan Milanov and Petko Momchilov, who designed the buildings of the Holy Synod, Mineral Baths, Sofia's Central Prison with the Church of St. Apostle Peter, and completed the plan by A. Pomerantsev for a reconstruction of the 16th century Kodjadervish (or Black) Mosque into the Orthodox Church of the Seven Saints
- Anton Tornyov with his extraordinary designs of the churches of St. Nicholas The New of Sofia, and of St. Paraskeva
- the Austrian Friedrich Grünanger, who designed the Orthodox Theological Academy (presently housing the Theological Faculty at the Sofia University and the Central Museum of Church History), the Orthodox Seminary with the Church of St. John of Rila, and the Central Sofia Synagogue
- the Russian Alexander Pomerantsev, who designed the magnificent St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral, and the reconstruction of the Black Mosque into the Church of the Seven Saints
- Naum Torbov, who designed 'Halite' – the covered market place
- Nikola Lazarov, who designed the reconstruction of the old Sofia Cathedral of St. King (presently known as St. Nedelya) in 1899, and the Royal Palace of Vrnanya
- the decorative artists Haralampi Tachev, Prof. Stefan Badjov, Prof. Ivan Mrkvička, Prof. Anton Mitov • the woodcarvers Jan Travnicki, Todor Christov, Petar Kanchev
- the founder of the Ceramic Department at the National Art Academy, Prof. Stefan Dimitrov. Later, in the 1930s, arch. Ivan Vasilyov applied post-Byzantine elements in his design for the renovation of St. Nedelya Cathedral (which was blown up by terrorists in 1925), and arch. Pencho Koychev used them when forming the main entrance to the Law Courts. Unfortunately, some of the most enchanting post-Byzantine designs, such as those for the building of the National Art Academy by Anton Mitov, and for a National Revival Museum by Anton Tornyov, never came to fruition.



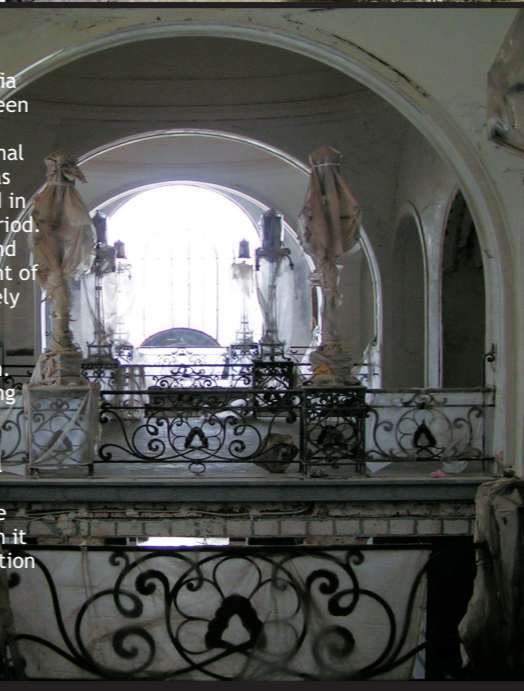
The Mineral Baths

It was built in 1906–1911 after the design by Arch. Y. Milanov and Arch. P. Momchilov. The remarkable façade decoration, created by its multi-coloured majolica friezes and ornaments, is based on the design by H. Tachev. The majolica tiles were made in the 'Izida' ceramic factory in Sofia using technology developed by Prof. St. Dimitrov.

The entrance is flanked by medallions containing the images of *Apollo Medicus*, the classical god of curative waters, and of *Ulpia Serdica*, the female symbol of the Roman city. They denote the importance of the hot mineral springs in attracting the peoples of antiquity to establish a settlement here.



In recent years Sofia Municipality has been in the process of repairing the original building, which was severely neglected in the Communist period. With the façade and the gardens in front of it almost completely restored, it is now the turn of the interior renovation. The interior is being adapted to house exhibition halls of the Sofia Historical Museum, while another part of the building will return it to its original function as a spa centre.



Mosaic image of St. George the New and St. Nicholas the New of Sofia on the south façade of St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral

The profusion of marbles, rich mosaics and sculpted capitals that is typical of the great Byzantine architecture of the 6th and 7th centuries in Constantinople and Ravenna can be seen once again in Sofia's post-Byzantine churches, and to the largest extent – in the Cathedral Church of St. Alexander Nevski. But it is not difficult to discern the original Byzantine symbolism of the circled crosses, peacocks, vines and doves cast in ornaments, as well as the supplementary 'dosseret' capitals, in the other post-Byzantine buildings too.



Capital of a column in the Church of Saint Paraskevi (the New) with sculpted doves

Capital of a column in St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral

