Sofia-based studio NiMa Design has completed Oborishte 26, a brick-clad residential building whose load-bearing façade allows for column-free interiors in the Bulgarian capital's historic centre. Built on the site of a demolished Socialist-era Brutalist structure, the project received a 2026 Architecture MasterPrize in the Residential Buildings – Mid-Rise category.

The building's architectural form draws on the contrasting identities of its site. Rounded corners, characteristic of the historic buildings in the Oborishte neighbourhood, are combined with the robust massing associated with the former structure. Curved and angular volumes are arranged in a composition of shifting forms, with recesses that break down the building's mass and create sheltered terraces and private outdoor spaces.

Brick was selected as the primary façade material, giving the building a tactile surface that follows its curved geometry. The masonry is combined with deep window reveals and large glazed openings, creating a contrast between solid and transparent elements. As daylight moves across the façade, the recessed surfaces produce changing patterns of light and shadow that emphasize its depth and sculptural character.

The building's load-bearing façade plays a central role in its spatial organization. By transferring structural loads through the perimeter, the design allows for large spans without internal columns, providing greater freedom in the arrangement of individual apartments. The resulting floor plans can accommodate different layouts and adapt to the changing needs of residents without the constraints of a conventional internal column grid.

Two underground levels accommodate residents' parking, allowing the above-ground floors to be dedicated to residential use.

Inside, generous ceiling heights and open-plan layouts create loft-like living spaces. Large windows bring natural light deep into the apartments and establish views towards the surrounding neighbourhood. The recessed terraces extend the living areas outdoors while maintaining privacy from the street and adjacent buildings.

Oborishte 26 approaches urban renewal as a continuation of the neighbourhood's architectural evolution. By introducing adaptable residential spaces within an established historic setting, the project demonstrates how contemporary housing can accommodate changing ways of living while maintaining a considered relationship with the existing city.