

The HOUSE OF ARTS & CULTURE

“HOUSE”...A CULTURAL HOUSE

What's the meaning of a cultural house?

For us this house is an accessible space that invites, attracts and embraces the people; free to accept any kind of artistic expression and to promote culture in a drastic way, without limits. As a pot of cultural creativity this multi purpose usage building has been designed. The possibility of free wandering of the space and a large open public square has been the first aims of the concept. The principle idea was to design a house open to the public, a building that belongs to the city and invites every generation, especially the young one to participate to the growth of the arts and culture. An interactive and productive house, through which the citizen can express himself, can exchange ideas; can find a real contact with the culture and vice versa.

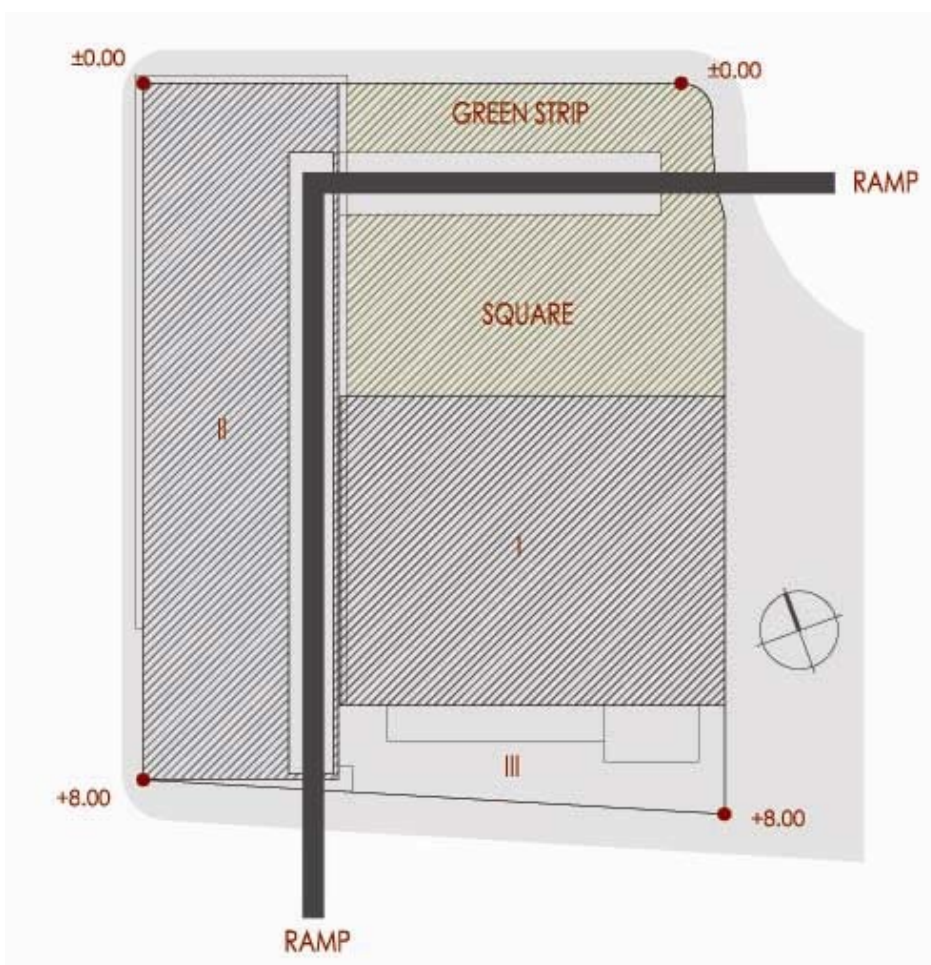
Having these basics we planned a clear Γ shaped complex of two buildings that embraces a large square towards the pedestrians' way. The square composes the heart of the complex and leads to the interior, while a two – pole ramp, has the role of an alternative urban passage; starts from the pedestrians road, passes through the building and leads to the intermediary road that separates the Lot no 128-4 from the high speed road. We aimed to design a building where the interior balances with the exterior. For this the building opens up towards its square, while simultaneously it is protected by the motorway, without creating an unapproachable wall.

Generally, the basic elements of the concept, the form of the building, the square, the ramp as well as the approaches were defined following the analysis of all the data. The district where the project is located, its orientation, the altitude, its relation to the motorway, the square with its clock, the beach etc were the geographical elements which gave us the first directions. The growth of the urban web, the views and the heights of the surrounding buildings had an affect on the design which centers on the human - user of the space. The study of the way he moves, where he comes from, where he concentrates, where he wants to feel that the building protects him and where he wants it to withdraw and let the outdoors exceed was very important to design the project.

These, in connection with the basic principles of the program of the competition, in theoretical and practical levels, lead to the specific proposal. The various uses of the house are grouped in a functional and clear way.

Before starting the explanation of the interior, important is to mention that each of the four sides of the site has its own special role.

At the eastern side appears the square that downgrades gradually until the entrance level of the house with the external ramp. A pleasant urban design, which combines hard and soft surfaces as well as the element of water, invites you to investigate it and use it in various ways. The element of water has also a symbolic meaning; as a symbol of constant flow of knowledge, leads you to the “spring”. Therefore, the role of the square is principal in this proposal. It will help the human being, each citizen, to feel familiar with the place. It will emphasize the public function of the area. The ramp emphasizes even more this purpose inviting the visitor to travel through the building. In this way it brings him near and gives him the possibility to find out more about the area in the first instance. Both sides of the ramp, the beginning and the end, have the purpose to link the two sides of the site in a way that goes through the building. Therefore, the second pole of the ramp ends up at the south façade of the site where also grows up an external staircase that joins the street to the terrace of the lower building of the complex. An addition to the public role of the square is this free connection that ends to the restaurant which can also function independently.



The west side of the site was judged as best for the approach of the vehicles to the building. Finally, at the north front of the lot there is a permanent parking area and the truck' access to the underground delivery area, maintaining the green striped space, which expands until the square, continuing the open green space of the lot 134-01.

Schematically the proposal is as follows: Two blocks, I and II, which shape a Γ and embrace a square. In Block I, the most of the surface is covered by the large performance and conference hall. Block II covers most of the remaining uses. Block I, due to its functions is a heavy and blind block which because of the desired big height was isolated and took advantage of the difference in height of the lot so a big part of it, is sunk from the side of the high speed road. This mass appears like a large rock in the town showing its role; to be deeply rooted in the history of the country. Block II, longer and higher, is organized in 8 levels over-ground, around two vertical staircases. It includes areas with different use, different heights, areas which need good natural light, as well as areas that do not need natural light. Morphologically it combines blind and luminous surfaces. The building opens up towards the square, emphasizing a zone that covers the entrance and the reception hall of the ground floor (level 0) and the semi-open gallery - the succession of the external ramp - and passes through the foyer of the small hall and the movie theatre at the level 1. The upper levels are covered by a metal perforated grid that allows a filtered light to come through the building and pass to the spaces behind it. Besides the 7 levels over the ground floor there are also 3 levels underground which cover the whole surface of the lot apart from the green strip.

Analytically the functions are as follows:

The level of reception is at -2.00. The reception – entrance covers the whole face of the square thus inviting the visitor. The water zone in front of the reception has double meaning. Symbolically it reveals to the visitor that he has reached the “spring” and visually it increases the height of the glass front due to reflection. At this level the height of the area is quite high so the gathering and movement of the people is achieved comfortably and pleasantly. Entering the area, the visitor faces the info-point and reception hall. The control room is at the border of both the entrances for the public and the vehicles. At the same area the ticket offices are organized, the waiting area, the foyer of the large hall which includes a bar and the shops- boutiques. Further from the border of the reception the area belongs exclusively to the artists. This area which is forbidden to the visitors consists of the dressing rooms and auxiliary spaces which expand over the borders of block I. Going up, at level +3.00 takes place the small multimedia performance hall and movie theatre sharing a foyer, the meeting rooms and the national cinematheque. The cinematheque has two levels which communicate internally by a third staircase which serves also the large hall. It occupies block III which does not continue further from level +8.00 apart from one part of it, as you can see at the elevation 1.

At the next level +6.20 the central staircase leads to the technical areas of the two halls and the second staircase to the Managerial offices of the Administration. At the following level +9.40 we meet all the offices of the employees of the administration and the meeting

room. Their arrangement with the internal central corridor gives the possibility of immediate natural lighting in all offices. Further up, at +12.60 the whole surface is occupied by the workshops. Their placement was based on the natural lighting which is needed by each space, while simultaneously two open spaces were created for relaxation-break for the students.

The next level at +15.80 occupies the library. The central staircase leads to the entrance of the library from where it is possible to supervise all functions. On the one side are organized the library shelves, the workshop and the reading area with a view of the square, and on the other side the area with the protected books, the researchers and the offices. The second staircase leads to the audiovisual which can communicate with the library via a second entrance.

The central part of the library is two-storey so the next level loses a part of its surface. Here at +19.00, we find the restaurant and the lounge bar, together with the lockers of the exhibition area which occupies the maximum level +24.00. The area is quite unified and the height is bigger than a typical ceiling so that there is the possibility of 'false-ceiling', ventilation etc. This particular position gives the possibility of shaping part of the roof so that the restaurant can function independently having also external tables/chairs. The usage of the roof keeps the building alive all day, offering a second large public square that contains also a terrace garden. At the upper level +24.00 takes place the exhibition room. The clear long rectangular area offers the possibility of easily being reshaped according to the needs of each exhibition that is held. The terrace of this building is planted apart from the strip over the gallery that is covered by glass.

Under the reception surface there are three basements. In the first one -6.50 all the technical and miscellaneous spaces are gathered as well as the delivery area for the truck. There is also space for parking of cars. The two levels -10.00 and -13.50 are totally used for parking space.

The two masses I and II structurally are planned as two separate buildings with different size frame. The materials of the structures combines concrete, stone, metal and glass so that the complex has a good incorporation into its surroundings.