

VILNIUS ART CENTRE INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT COMPETITION  
EXPLANATORY TEXT

## 1. Urban Context:

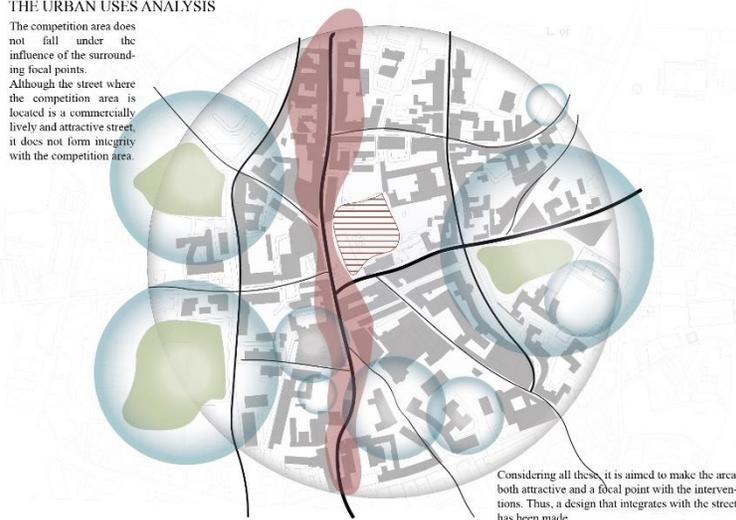
The competition area is within the Jonušas Radvila Palace Complex, on the land that constitutes the entrance to the relevant facility. It sits within the old city centre of Vilnius with its layered structure which sheds light on the ancient history of the city and serves as a reference for the state of construction. The cross-section where the site sits on, also offers a transitional range to Vilnius suburbs.

In this context, as it will be frequently repeated in the rest of the text, the design space is literally and genuinely acting as a threshold space. In its current form, the one-way open courtyard space leads to one of the important arteries of the city and constitutes the starting point of the relevant artery. The existing complex, which is an important station of the inner-city tourist routes of local and foreign tourists, has a preliminary preparation area, which is specified as "Zone B" in the competition specifications, unlike the surrounding building blocks. On the basis of its current state, "Zone A", which is mostly set up with billboards, was designed with the decision to sustain its function as a stop where public interaction will be experienced intensely during the design phase.

During the multi-dimensional analysis and studies of the city, neighbourhoods where artistic activity in the city lives with the reference of autonomy, and the "Hop On - Hop Off" routes organized for tourist tours attracted particular attention. Every interval where art-based social interaction at the city scale finds such a basis is also a candidate to be sustainable and applicable for the Vilnius Art Centre. Rather than a programmed sequence of activities, the urge to create a suitable basis for every artistic activity that is likely to occur spontaneously in the "Urban Audience - Artist" dialogue has also manifested itself especially for the "Zone B". For this reason, it was important for a possible event to have an equal orientation in every direction and on every plane; Instead of major tectonic movements, the effort to create a border was provided with green stains which are active in use. Therefore, it is recommended to enrich and preserve the existing plantation spectrum, especially during the application phase, and to shape the trees on condition that they are protected and safe.

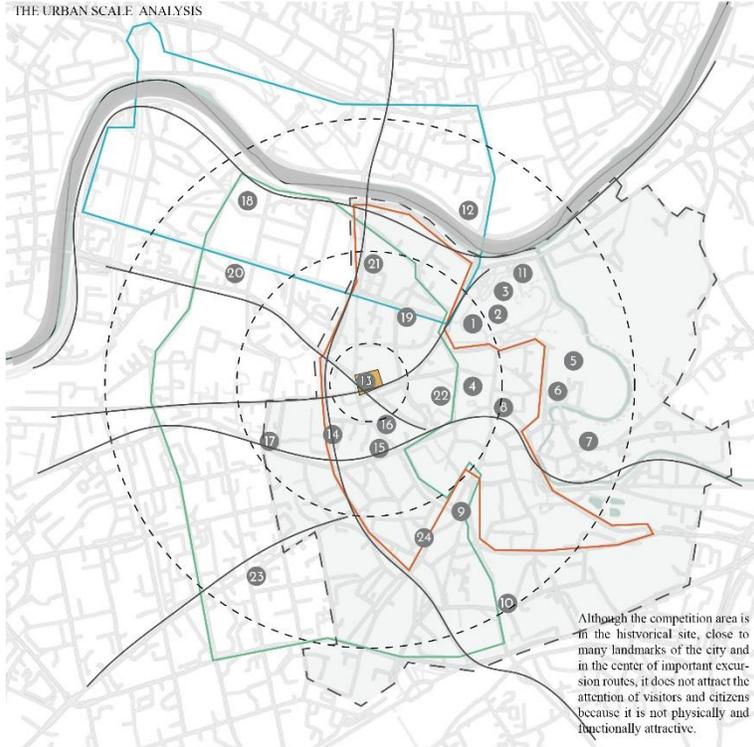
### THE URBAN USES ANALYSIS

The competition area does not fall under the influence of the surrounding focal points. Although the street where the competition area is located is a commercially lively and attractive street, it does not form integrity with the competition area.



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THE URBAN SCALE ANALYSIS

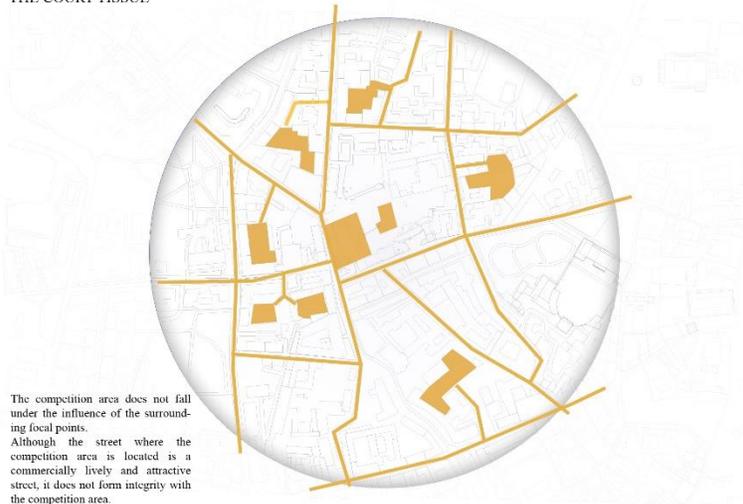


Although the competition area is in the historical site, close to many landmarks of the city and in the center of important excursion routes, it does not attract the attention of visitors and citizens because it is not physically and functionally attractive.

- |   |  |                            |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| 1 Cathedral Basilica                      | 11 National Museum of Lithuania              | 21 The Government          |
| 2 Palace of Grand Duke of Lithuania       | 12 Energy and Technology Museum              | 22 The Presidential Palace |
| 3 Geminidas Tower                         | 13 Museum of Radvilas Palace                 | 23 Tolerance Center        |
| 4 Vilnius University Ensemble             | 14 Evangelical Reformer's Church             |                            |
| 5 Bernardine Garde                        | 15 Lithuanian Theatre, Music & Cinema Museum |                            |
| 6 St. Anne and Bernardine Church Ensemble | 16 St. Catherine's Church                    |                            |
| 7 Uzupis                                  | 17 Russian Drama Theatre                     |                            |
| 8 Literary Street                         | 18 St. Philip and St. Jacob's Church         |                            |
| 9 Town Hall                               | 19 Money Museum                              |                            |
| 10 Gates of Down                          | 20 Museum of Genocide Victims                |                            |

- Boundaries of area of Vilnius Old Town
- Competition Area
- Urban Transportation
- Trip Route 1
- Trip Route 2
- Trip Route 3
- Accessibility

THE COURT TISSUE



The competition area does not fall under the influence of the surrounding focal points. Although the street where the competition area is located is a commercially lively and attractive street, it does not form integrity with the competition area.

## 2. Architectural Context

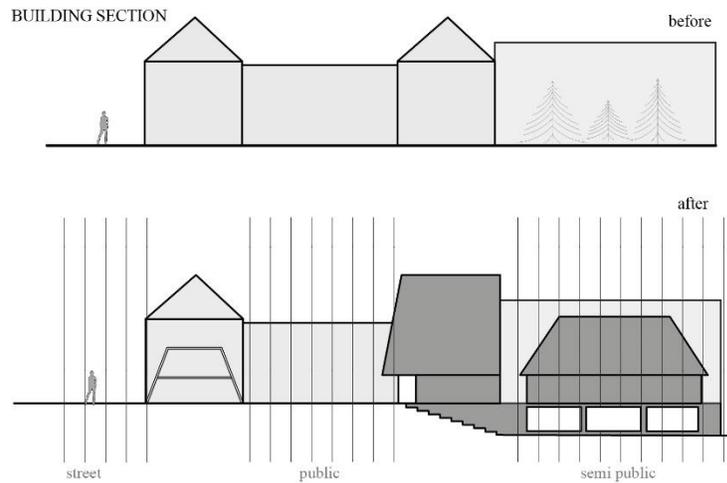
In the light of the data conveyed in the competition specifications, it can be easily stated that the dominant stance of the structure group is following an eclectic order in which symmetry prevails and occasionally additional structures were added or demolished over time. Conservation approaches that can be included in the design argument as an element of quality in ancient European cities can also reveal a rich inventory by reviving the icons that have taken a place in the city memory and become pictures through archival research of the past. In this context, the distribution of tower structures throughout the complex, which can be recognized at first glance, shows that they are parts of an incomplete order in today's conditions. For example, in order to rule out this sense of incompleteness, a modern morphological attempt of the associated tower component has been positioned in the foreground right wing and the middle part of the background, making use of past period illustrations. These modern structures, which repeat the existing tower components in proportion and scale, have been reinterpreted in the footsteps of modernism and the development of construction methodology & technology. In order to break the perception of a complex which converges *horizontally* in general, the related additional structures were supported by strong wooden carcasses in the *vertical* direction. Thus, the intervention area has been expanded in order to ensure that the multidimensional phenomenological perception is valid on all planes of the site.

On the other hand, the highly defined stance of both the parcel-scale segregation and the semi-open courtyard area and the open area of "Region B" which is perceived as a threshold structure as mentioned previously. In order for the notion of a courtyard to be perceived in four directions and to provide entrance to the facility, the urge to not articulate a building between Zone A and Zone B has clearly manifested itself. However, on the other hand, looking from the Vilniaus Street, it is important to make the presence of a qualified building inventory felt in the background and to be modest with these new buildings, even if there are additional buildings. For this reason, the old tower component in the north and the new tower component also designed for protection purposes on the archaeological excavation site in the south were combined with light and wooden carcass. In a primitive approach, just like in the ancient Greek cities, the carcass, in which a frame is built to repeat the main function of a pure Stoic structure, also strengthens the perception of the courtyard. In the meantime, permeability was prioritized; This permeability has been tried to be achieved with carcass layout pre-sizing and transparent surfaces.

Since the complex contains different types of functional components within itself, it is necessary to provide good distribution and separation between the sub-spaces. The existing building inventory with the ongoing exhibition function on one hand and on the other hand, the existence of the wide-span exhibition hall and the multi-purpose hall functions require the right staining within the complex layout. In this context, the large-span structures, where the boundary walls will form a wall without allowing physical permeability, are positioned in the northeast block, with a more inward working principle. Meanwhile, the demolition of the warehouse structure, which does not constitute an element of quality within the existing building inventory and has a trapezoidal geometric order, is envisaged. In order to meet the structural requirements especially in the carrier phase, the "Multi-Purpose Hall" and the "Large Exhibition Hall" are positioned one on top of each other; so that the

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“Foyer” which belongs to the “Multi-Purpose Hall” has its own open space, the collapsed courtyard was also articulated in the background. In this way, starting from Vilniaus Street in order; "Public B Zone", "Semi-Public A Zone" and "Private Collapsing Courtyard" are lined up one after the other in the form of a flow sequence.



### 3. Outdoor Usage Scenario

#### a. Functional Layout:

The complex does not have a comfortable intervention area due to its archaeological inventory likely to be found throughout its lifetime and its location in a congested urban texture. For this reason, setting up a flexible and transformative space usage scenario rather than dividing the prime function distribution into a single monolithic plane or volume will provide the same richness to the design. In this context, "Zone B" has been designed as a versatile sub-square that will feed Vilniaus Street, without serving only the property of the facility, in the focus of public use, just like it was before. It is sometimes thought to be used as a meeting place where tour buses will partially occupy a parking space, sometimes host a small or medium-sized outdoor event within a city festival, sometimes only promotional advertising objects will be placed, and sometimes will take a place in the memory of the city. For this reason, the design plane and the landscape approach were designed with a refined language; The relationship between hard ground and green space has been resolved with an orthogonal tendency, which is a reference to the existing building language. "Zone B", in which a Cartesian coordinate system is used as a base, offers a clue to its user that it can actually enable transformation with this background.

"Zone A", on the other hand, achieves a contrasting balance within itself with the existing building stack in the northeast and the modern building stack in the southwest. While keeping the sustaining power associated with the variable surface behaviour high, perception of "Old - New" also references the urban fiction consisting of layers. Just like in "Zone B", the concept of flexibility is more limited in the order in which a Cartesian coordinate system is used as a landscape base. Because the inputs and outputs of the existing building inventory are fixed; The same is valid for the existing wood stock. On the other hand, it is also important to have a defined hard-floor route for possible service-purpose truck entrances.

The collapsed courtyard, which we call "Zone C", and which serves the "Multi-Purpose Hall Foyer" below the public use level, draws all the attention to the middle part with its amphitheatres; thus, the unidentified backyard access, especially in the northeast, is automatically camouflaged. The associated amp setups also allow for spontaneous artist activity. Thus, the autonomous structure of the street art becomes richer with a participatory tendency.

#### b. Accessibility and Transportation Scenario:

Under the Art Centre function, one of the most difficult interventions is how to ensure a possible service transfer. It will be a great advantage in terms of general operation that especially large exhibition objects and display products can be accessed from a single dominant order to the dispersed layout of the existing building complex. Considering that the relevant exhibition objects will mostly be brought to the design area by high-gauge trucks, it is important that the manoeuvring area of the relevant tractors and trailers are resolved in harmony with an ergonomic and holistic design language. For this reason, the ground floor height has been kept as 5.00 metres in order to ensure the passage of trucks in front of the threshold structure that separates the "Zone B" and "Zone A" from each other. The relevant threshold structure carrier foot intervals are also aligned in accordance with the truck passage; It is detailed in accordance with the forward or reverse manoeuvring rules. Accordingly, as

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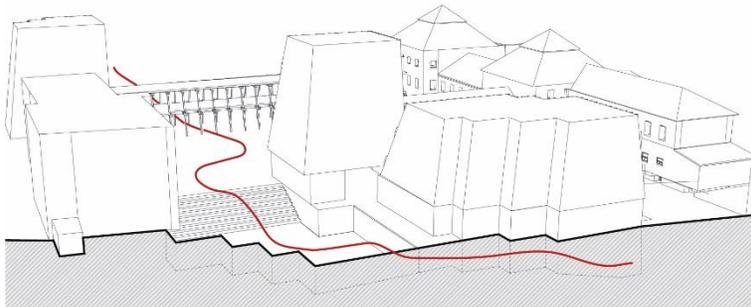
given in the competition specifications, the truck (or towing trailer) takes a reverse manoeuvring position by approaching over the "Zone B". Passing under the threshold manoeuvre area, the modern tower, located in the middle of the background, brings its trailer closer to the building core and unloads its load to all the floors with the help of the freight elevator located in this core.

The route traces of trucks or similar high-gauge vehicles are in an identifiable language with orthogonal landscape design. Meanwhile, no secondary plane or language was used to dominate the main open space arrangement and landscape design. The recreation, in which the hard ground plane can provide the joints and gaps in the fictional landscape language, is able to provide heavy load resistance with the basalt stone arrangement.

The Art Center does not have a parking lot, as it is located in the congested urban fabric and, according to the analysis, the possible density of users is mostly brought by tour buses and taken at the last station of the tour route following Vilniaus Street. Moreover, this situation is not considered essential by the competition selection committee and organizers. However, outside of the effective usage hours, it is possible for the service provider trucks to have an open area park for a limited time thanks to the courtyard.

For pedestrian access, rather than a restricted track or ground track, a cartesian solid ground plane has been designed, where the user can be involved at every point of the area, where each floor space can turn into an activity platform at any time of the day, and which can be superposed with the flexible structure of the dynamic or static movement network. This situation also constitutes a comfort factor for a possible urban furniture or spontaneous placement of outdoor objects, just like the reference examples given in the competition specifications.

URBAN FLOW



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**c. Other Data**

As it is known, the competition area is located in an area with hard and tough climatic conditions. There is a situation where the temperature difference between seasons both during the day and during the year is high, and this excess causes structural destruction. Therefore, besides conventional ergonomics, strength and physical life are also of great importance in terms of materials. In order to prevent possible effects that may affect third-dimensional building components such as a possible wind turbulence, snowdrift, landscape elements were solved mobile; Grid plates at the base of the Cartesian plane have been lifted to the third dimension in stair ergonomics. Thus, the "Surface Area - Volume" ratio is minimized as much as possible. In order to provide long-lasting durability, the hard floor material "Basalt" was preferred. The tree inventory, in which coniferous landscape elements are repeated, makes this scenario possible with a base that tends to enrich it with pine and its derivatives.

Existing building inventory and additional buildings are important not only for functionality, but also for architectural style experiments, as they stand out as an aesthetic element with an effort to stylize them. For this reason, it would be more accurate to use indirect lighting fixtures, which are resolved in detail, instead of a light source with a clear source. Thus, we encounter an attitude that will show the building, not the light.



#### 4. Architectural Function and Other Solutions

##### a. Functional Layout Distribution

According to the existing building inventory, the chance of intervention is limited, as the complex has structural features in the masonry class and has not been subjected to a comprehensive load-bearing test. With the evaluation made on the widths of the walls, some interior walls that were not load-bearing and were later applied by extension were removed and an effort was made to create a wider and more flexible space. In view of the exhibition scenario, a renovation-oriented restoration approach will be adopted in the existing building stock, with the thought that fixed (permanent) exhibition objects and paintings will be exhibited in place. The sequential arrangement of the indoor units (i.e., the rooms) also makes a possible permanent exhibition setup achievable; It can create a tour route that supports the museum function. The excursion route related to the transitions provided from the structures constructed in addition to the physical contact can also turn into a cycle with a clear beginning and end. Support units such as Ticketing, and Sales Unit were resolved in the presence of modern additional structures.

The building, which is numbered 12 in the existing building inventory and located in the north of the complex, has been functioned as a "Personnel Work Office" to allow approximately 50 people to work individually or in groups.

Contemporary annexes are mostly detailed to host temporary exhibition and event basins. The new tower structure, located on the right side of the front facade, serves as a cover for the archaeological remains at the lower ground level, while transforming into a collective production space on the upper floors with a staircase with individual access. These spaces in which the vertical transfer model was taken in advance and where interaction is intense on the basis of information transfer and production, constitutes the current design problematic are units where users of all ages and profiles can take place in the centre of attention with effective participation and sharing.

The front surface modern threshold structure connecting the new tower structure and the old tower structure includes the cafeteria and outdoor dining areas on the lower floor, while the multi-purpose closed passage area, ticketing and information receiving units, where access to the collective production area is provided on the upper floor.

The first normal floor plan, where the definition of the courtyard exists most clearly, is also the floor where the loop geometry of circulation is clearly defined. The vertical circulation between the sill building floors is actually provided by an amphitheatre that leads to Vilniaus Street, hence the street art platform. This amp setup is basically a stationary standby rather than a circulating element. If you leave the relevant amphitheatre and head towards the Old Tower, you will see a permanent exhibition function starting from the Old Tower.

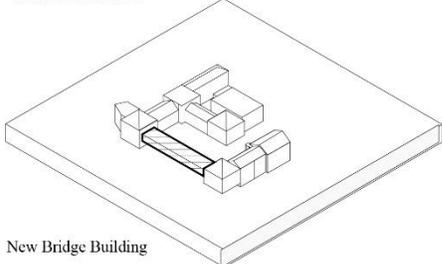
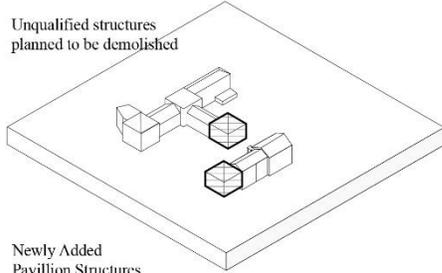
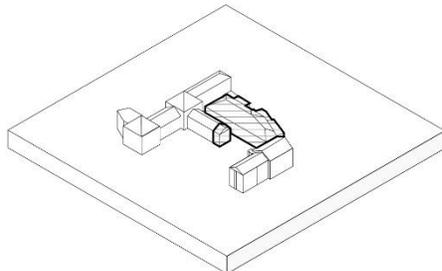
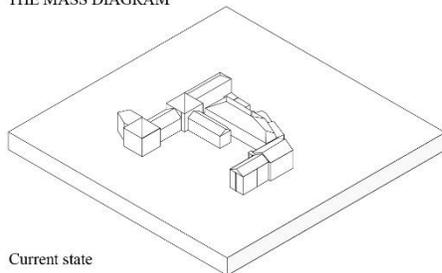
The new tower, which is located on the background middle surface after being included in the courtyard, houses more library and workshop units. The related structure also has deep cores as it houses the load transfer centre to which the service provider trucks and tractors will approach. The freight elevator, which is one of these cores, operates only between the ground floor and the basement floors. Thus, the contact with the upper floor visitor mass is cut off for load distribution and stowage.

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The other modern structure behind the "U Courtyard Scheme", which is the subjective and unique diagnostic element of the complex, houses the temporary and transformable exhibition hall on the ground and above ground levels. On the lower ground levels (See 1. Basement and 2. Basement Floors) there are "Multi-Purpose Hall" and "Museum Warehouse", "Exhibition Object Conservation Techniques Room" and "Technical Spaces". Access to this area from the modern tower structure located on the middle surface can be easily ensured by wide corridors and passages horizontally, and wide freight elevators vertically.

Meanwhile, the façade contour of the front-facing right-hand new tower and the background "Temporary Exhibition & Multi-Purpose Hall" structure were stylized with modular retreats in order to both add dynamism to the static existing mass language and create an adaptable line to the parcel geometry.

THE MASS DIAGRAM



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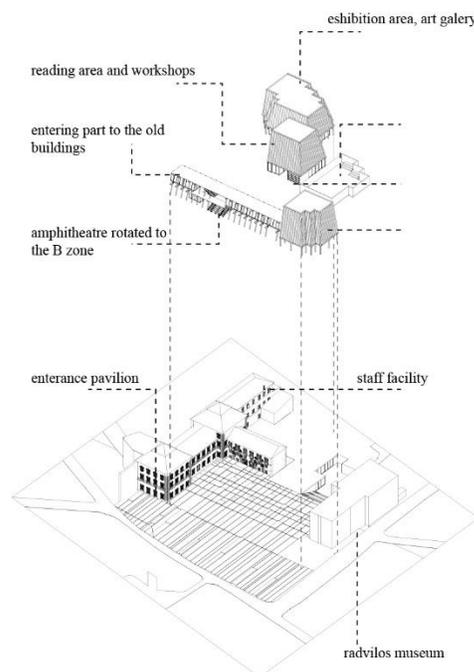
### b. User Movement in Space:

According to an upper scale urban analysis, one of the building components that can be considered global but also frequently encountered in Vilnius is "Closed Bridge Passages from Structure to Structure". So that, some sub-transitional thresholds were defined by names such as "Door of Dawn" and were believed to bring luck after the transition for years.

In order to provide some similar usage habits throughout the facility, an effort has been made to revitalize it in terms of the threshold structure that almost spontaneously emerged. In this context, similar entrance gaps have been left within the threshold structure on the front surface and in the new tower located on the middle surface of the rear wall of the courtyard.

The external perceptible entrance of the facility is under the "Threshold (or Bridge) Structure". After the entrance, you dive directly into the courtyard. Or, after exiting to the upper floor within the "Threshold Building" with the amphitheatre, one can enter the "Permanent Exhibition Units" of the existing structure by passing through "Ticketing" and "Waiting" respectively. After traversing the "Permanent Exhibition Units", the exhibition track is completed with the new tower interior core located on the background mid-floor and exits to the courtyard.

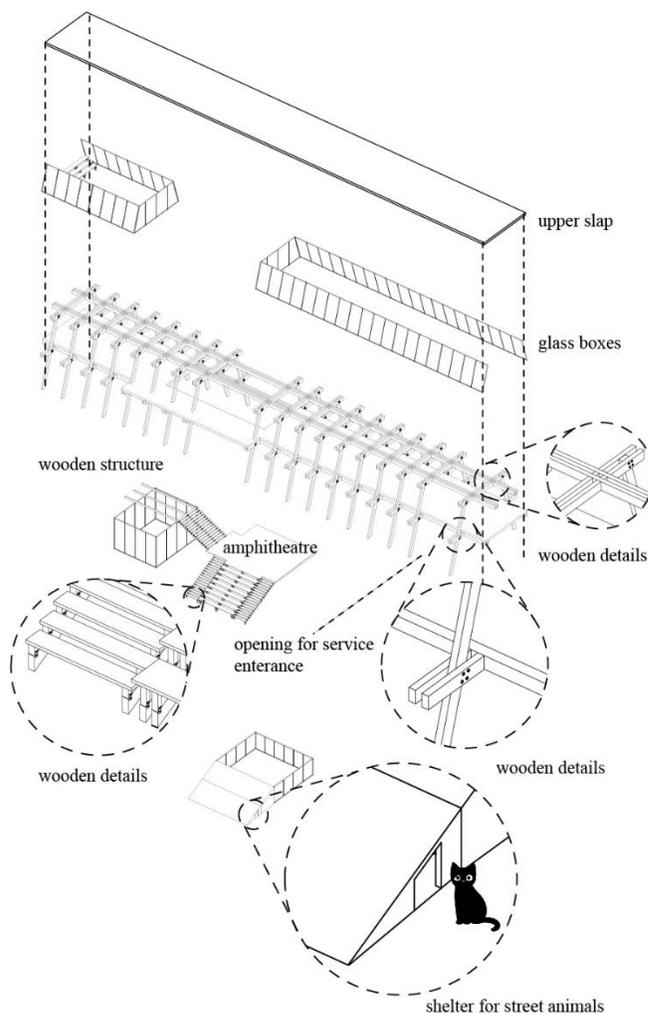
Immediately after entering the courtyard, 3 orientations welcome the user. If the user wishes, he/she can enter the surrounding structures that define the courtyard, from the ground floors to the exhibition stage of any permanent exhibition unit. Meanwhile, security and control are already ensured at the first entry. In the second orientation, the "Temporary Exhibition Unit" can be accessed by passing through the new under-tower passage located on the background mid floor. The third orientation is the passage to the lower courtyard with the amphitheatre used to access the "Multi-Purpose Concert Hall" and the "Foyer & Cafeteria" supporting this hall.



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**c. Material Usage:**

Since the existing building inventory is built with massive masonry technology, the surface opening ratio remains limited. In addition, additional structures have been constructed or covered with wooden material in order to make the contrast balance desired to be created more readable with an extreme attitude and to convey today's design understanding with the choice of carrier methodology. The front façade "Threshold Building" is shaped with wood material both structurally and as a separator and covering. The cold attitude of the existing building inventory is thus balanced by a warm response. On the other hand, the new tower on the right side of the front façade was formed by steel fabrication in a wide opening in order to prevent damage to the archaeological remains under the ground; wooden and glass surfaces were preferred for the facade cladding. The rear interior mid-floor, the new tower and the "Temporary Exhibition Building" were similarly constructed with a conventional frame system; The wall is covered with a heat-treated wood veneer that is resistant to climatic conditions.



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**d. Staging:**

The designed structure can be operated in a staged order in terms of both the building component sequence and the state of being built. For example, within the facility where an operating model can already be realized in its current state, demolishing the idle background wide-span hall, and reconstructing it together with the collapsed courtyard may constitute the first stage, while the construction of the facility can be concluded by adding new structures surrounding the courtyard and constructing the "Threshold Building" afterwards.

	<b>Existing Conditions</b>	<b>The proposed (new) buildings</b>	<b>Existing and Proposed (new) buildings</b>
<b>Area of the Site</b>	10260 m <sup>2</sup>	10260 m <sup>2</sup>	10260 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Intensity of Development of the Site</b>	0.56		0.84
<b>Total Area of the Building Complex</b>	5846 m <sup>2</sup>	4035 m <sup>2</sup>	8641 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Volume of the Building Complex</b>	45370 m <sup>3</sup>	27330	68446
<b>Number of Storeys (max)</b>	3	3	3
<b>Height of the Building Complex(max)</b>	23.45 m	23.45 m	23.45 m

