

EXPLANATORY TEXT – NATURAL FRAME

1. URBAN IDEA

We propose a new type of natural icon for Vilnius and Lithuania, a NATURAL FRAME. A world museum of art and design should be an art piece that represents not only the city but the culture of the time when it is created. At the era of climate change and need for sustainability, we propose an organic monument built in wood that resembles the perfection and complexity of nature. This is an unprecedented emblem for the city and the 21st. century that will attract everyone to Vilnius revitalizing its economy and presence in the world cultural scene.

2. ARCHITECTURAL IDEA

Architecture is the framing of life. We propose an abstract leaf-like structure in wood that will cover the new areas of the museum while connecting the existing protected buildings together with the new renovated building at the south of the site. Its interior provides a grand and complex space for visitors facilities as well as the new multifunctional hall for up to five hundred people. Its architecture allows for a new type of amphitheater at the roof of the building where people can climb and gather to observe events at the green plaza below.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR THE COMPETITION AREA (ZONE A) AND ITS ADJACENT AREAS (ZONE B)

Functional layout of the spaces to be occupied by the designed complex

The new complex landmark connects the two groups of preserved buildings while creating two types of courtyards: a public green plaza at its front and a private garden with trees and sculptures and areas for events at the back.

The main access of the complex is located at the center of the courtyard where visitors enter the spaces for social and information functions. A corridor distributes people to the northern and southern buildings while connecting to the multifunctional art-center. Elevators and emergency stairs are allocated also at the central core.

Exhibits are displayed at the Western Pavilion, Northern Block, Northern Pavilion and Radvilos Museum; as well as the 1B3p Complex. Staff offices would be allocated at the top of this newly renovated building.

First floor of the new iconic addition includes a balcony for the multipurpose hall and provides double height volumes for both visitors and art center.

The top of the NATURAL FRAME is an organic amphitheater that will become the extension of the green plaza below forming a new type of intricate climbable form attracting the local and international communities. This is a plaza meeting urbanism, architecture and art; forming the largest permanent art piece of the museum. This is an original architecture that will enhance the international representation of Vilnius and Lithuania.

Under the main access plaza all service areas are hidden. A large elevator platform also covered in grass as the rest of the plaza brings large trucks to level -1, while the top cover closes to completely disguise the loading and unloading. This underground level connects all buildings with a corridor to provide robotic service access to all areas of the museum. It is functional and liberates the main plaza of intersection of service and access functions.

Solutions for pedestrians, non-motorised transport, traffic circulation and parking

Pedestrians dominate the project. Both open public courtyard at the front of the complex and the private garden with trees within the museum are dedicated to pedestrian enjoyment, not only for the museum, but as a new public arena reinvented by the presence of the new emblem of the city, the NATURAL

FRAME. Its top reaffirms the pedestrian character of the project by letting people explore it and gather on it every day and every hour.

Zone B of the project would remain with a hard surface to permit temporary parking for buses and taxis visiting the museum. Parking for the project would be accommodated at the nearby streets.

The concept of the pavement /coatings proposed for the Competition territory, the site and its approaches

The main plaza is covered in grass respecting the large existing tree. Despite the fact of having an underground service level below, it is possible to have it in twenty centimeters of proper earth.

Zone B remains with a hard surface to permit the temporary parking of vehicles delivering visitors to the complex.

The back private courtyard with trees is covered with wooden fragments allowing the display of sculptures and extending the wooden character of the NATURAL FRAME.

The plantations and greenery grouping solutions proposed for the Competition territory, the site and its approaches

Green grass is displayed at the main access plaza where people can not only gather to visit the complex but also play, dine, exercise, gather for any type of events. The nearby presence of the intricate NATURAL FRAME brings a new meaning to a simple green surface, maximizing the publicness of the open space.

Trees are allocated at the back courtyard creating a natural continuum of green plaza – wooden building – trees courtyard; nature evolving in different forms.

Lighting solutions proposed for the competition area – the site and its approaches

Subtle warm lighting will be provided 24/7 for the main plaza and roof scape of the new building. Adequate museum lighting for the interiors and courtyard would be calculated with specific consultancies in further stages.

The proposed small-scale architectural solutions in the Competition territory, the site and its approaches

We propose to eliminate most small scale architectural solutions to give space to a clean plaza where public counts the most and where any event of small or large scale can happen.

Use of essential green/sustainable solutions offered in the Competition territory, the site and its approaches, conceptual engineering solutions

Most importantly the building is constructed in CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) contributing to the necessary shift from concrete and steel construction that is needed for this century. In this sense, the complex icon would be the first representing a new era of sustainability and rethinking of technologies towards a future of wooden construction, where CO2 emissions are mitigated. It is imperative that we shift now towards a new NATURAL architecture.

The conformity of the Competition territory and the site and its approaches with the principles of universal design

The new principles of universal design should be based on wood construction. The project offers a paradigm shift on the way of thinking on how we build cities. It is obvious that not every building should be complex but a museum of art and design offers an unprecedented possibility to become in itself a piece of art. However, the complex building offers the principles of CLT construction, recycling of wooden pieces, and reduction of polluting concrete and steel industries, that together contribute to half the CO2 emissions of the world that are destroying our environment.

Landscaping phases of the site and its approaches

Green grass covers the landscape of the main access plaza which is extended in a complex manner on top of the iconic building. Wooden fragments give continuity of such natural roofscape as the private courtyard in the back of the building.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE SOLUTIONS OF THE DESIGNED COMPLEX

Functional layout of the building complex

Level -1: Service areas, storage areas, loading and unloading, corridors to connect elevator platforms at every important node of the exhibition areas

Ground Floor: Main access plaza, roofscape amphitheater, main access, visitors facilities, multifunctional hall, exhibition areas, elevators and stairs, private courtyard with trees for open air exhibition and social events.

First floor: Exhibition areas, double height space for visitors hall, balcony and double height for art center, connecting bridge between existing buildings.

Roof: Amphitheater oriented towards the plaza on top of new building.

Description of solutions for the movement and distribution of visitors and staff of the building complex

People access at the center of the complex from the plaza to the visitors facilities with a grand lobby permitting social and distribution functions. Visitors can decide to move to the right or left of the museum and/or to access the art center if they are part of an specific event. The central core of the project provides elevators and stairs to distribute people to every wing of the complex.

Staff would use the same access yet they direct themselves towards the second floor of the west wing at the 1B3p building.

Materials of the building complex

New building – CLT, Cross Laminated Timber

The rest of the project is renovated with traditional stucco and painting. Underground areas are kept bare and economic.

Use of essential green/sustainable solutions of the building complex, conceptual engineering solutions

The building shift from traditional concrete and steel construction as it is built entirely in wood (CLT), allowing prefabrication off-site and quick assemblage at the museum's location.

The essential structural solutions of the building complex

Concrete foundations

CLT beams and trusses

CLT panels for slabs and cladding

Essential engineering solutions of the building complex

Solar panels on roofs to provide electricity

Water treatment plant to recycle water

Geothermal engineering for heating

LED lighting

Essential fire safety solutions for the building complex

Sufficient emergency stairs to provide escape means

Hydrants and extinguishers were needed

CLT is more resistant to fire than steel

Compliance of the building complex with universal design principles;

Built entirely in wood, the project aims to contribute to the shift from the concrete and steel construction. In that sense, it becomes an iconic paradigm of sustainable architecture.

Phases of the construction

The NATURAL FRAME would be prefabricated off-site. Therefore the assemblage and on-site construction would be swift and without major disturbances for the neighborhood and city. Preparation of the foundations as well as renovation of the other buildings can be done while the design and preparation of the CLT pieces is produced, finishing at a coordinated and rapid manner.