



MOSAIC
MINISTRIES QUARTER, VILNIUS

In Latin, the word ‘minister’ means ‘servant’ or ‘assistant’. Etymologically, the concept of ministry may be associated with care for others, attentiveness, or even service responding to various needs. However, throughout history, the idea of ministry has gradually changed its meaning. Its role has increasingly been interpreted as ‘the center for governance’, ‘the coordinator of bureaucratic processes’, or even ‘concentration of power’.

Alongside this, the architectural articulation of state apparatus has been traditionally accompanied by symbolic formalization. The nature of its relationship with society was defined by the centralized position in an urban plan, the grandeur of buildings based on vertical subordination, and the demonstration of power through sculptural and ornamental forms. At the same time, these buildings maintained a clear index that made them easily recognizable compared to other urban structures. In simple terms, state apparatus buildings had to differ from residential buildings, workshops, or stores in a very clear manner.

In recent decades, this tendency has almost been lost. The governmental buildings tend to be equated with businesses, and their architectural specificity has been blurred in the context of commercial and urban forms. This led to the leveling of representations, hence the architectural expression of governmental structures keeps on losing its particularities.

At the center of the proposed project, one finds a threefold intention.

On one hand, there is a suggestion to emphasize the openness, accessibility, and the ancient idea of ‘service’ that becomes significant in a democratic society that opposes authoritarian forms of governance.

On the other hand, the aim of the project is to maintain an identity that would signify the essential architectural specificity, differentiating the state apparatus from offices, stores, or hotels. This is why the proposed building could be conceived as a place of the dialogue with society. In this sense, the symbolic index of the governmental district, rather than expressing vertical power structures, invites for participation in a horizontal exchange.

Thirdly, the architectural articulation of the building would follow the principles of sustainability and bioregionalism, which are crucial in the face of global warming and ecological crises.

All three of these conceptual directions are unified in a monolithic structure composed of a facade, the adjacent part of the street, and a 1.8-meter-high solid fence. Formed from a mosaic of boulder slabs found in Lithuania, the street-facing façade would extend all the way onto the street. This subtle and tradition-inspired solution would create an unexpected urban situation, where the building, almost in a literal sense, becomes a part of the city fabric. The offices of ministries may be seen as a place one can enter without necessarily going inside.

In addition, the mosaic of bolder slabs would enable to reintroduce a highly sustainable material, used in this region for centuries. These stone structures are still found in the manors and cellars of northern Lithuania; historically being a part of bioregional construction context, today they gain a new meaning of sustainability and longevity.

Covered by a monolithic mosaic, the office building would be extracted from the context anonymity. Moreover, this characteristic element would create a

warmer atmosphere for the whole neighborhood. In tune with its architectural zoning, it may be suggested to slow down traffic in this area on workdays and, if possible, close it altogether on weekends.

The principle of horizontal subordination would be also maintained in the distribution of the offices of the ministries. Two parallel entrances would ensure their rhythmic accessibility in the architectural structure, when six institutions are located side by side, almost following the logic of a musical rhythm 1+2, 1+2.

In a similar logic, the conceptual field forming the building would be implemented in interior solutions. There would be no finishing materials inside the building that serve to hide internal communications and mask other elements of construction. Thus, the tendency to expose material solutions would echo the principles of horizontal and socially accessible architecture.

The first floors of the building could serve not only commercial but also community purposes, they could host the spaces of creativity, children activities, accommodate cultural and social organizations.

General (building) details:

Development intensity (incl. existing G11 building): **2**
Development density (incl. existing G11 building): **54%**
Building Height: **21.66** m (main parapet level at **17.6** m)
Number of floors: **5** (4 + attic)
Building footprint area: **6068** m²
Overground volume: **94812** m³
Subterranean volume: **36408** m³