



# Living Spaces

CITIES AND REGIONS SHAPING  
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
FOR EVERYONE

# Cities and regions driving high-quality architecture

## A CATALOGUE OF 30 GOOD PRACTICES

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture

Directorate D – Culture Creativity and Sport

Unit D.2 – Creative Europe

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# FOREWORD

## BY COMMISSIONER IVANOVA

"Only architecture that considers human scale and interaction is successful architecture."

This statement by the famous Danish architect and urban design consultant Jan Gehl highlights our shared duty to make architectural decisions that prioritise the needs people and that have a lasting positive impact on future generations.

The built environments of our cities and regions do much more than just providing shelter or infrastructure for our movements and exchanges. They also mirror our European cultural diversity, our innovative spirit and our collective ambitions.

Architects who work closely with public authorities craft the spaces in which we grow, live, learn, work, play, enjoy artistic experiences or take decisions that will mark history.

The European Commission recognises the significance of architecture, and supports it through Creative Europe, the flagship programme for cultural and creative sectors. Beyond offering support to professional architects, European Union policies and projects have long acknowledged the role of architecture in creating high-quality living spaces for all. They have also fostered a shared culture of architecture. We also have the task to make informed choices for the sustainable future of our cities and regions to address the challenges posed by climate change and increasingly fragmented societies.

This catalogue is a product of *Living Spaces – cities and regions that shape the built environment for everyone*, the European peer-learning scheme on high-quality architecture and built environment for local and regional authorities. *Living Spaces* will help plan and implement high-quality architectural policies and projects that benefit the community. Enshrined in our architectural policy, the programme follows up on the recommendations from the Member States experts' group on high-quality architecture for everyone, which stems from the 2019-2022 EU Work plan for culture, to bolster local and regional capacities.



(c) Jennifer Jacquemart  
Source: EC - Audiovisual Service

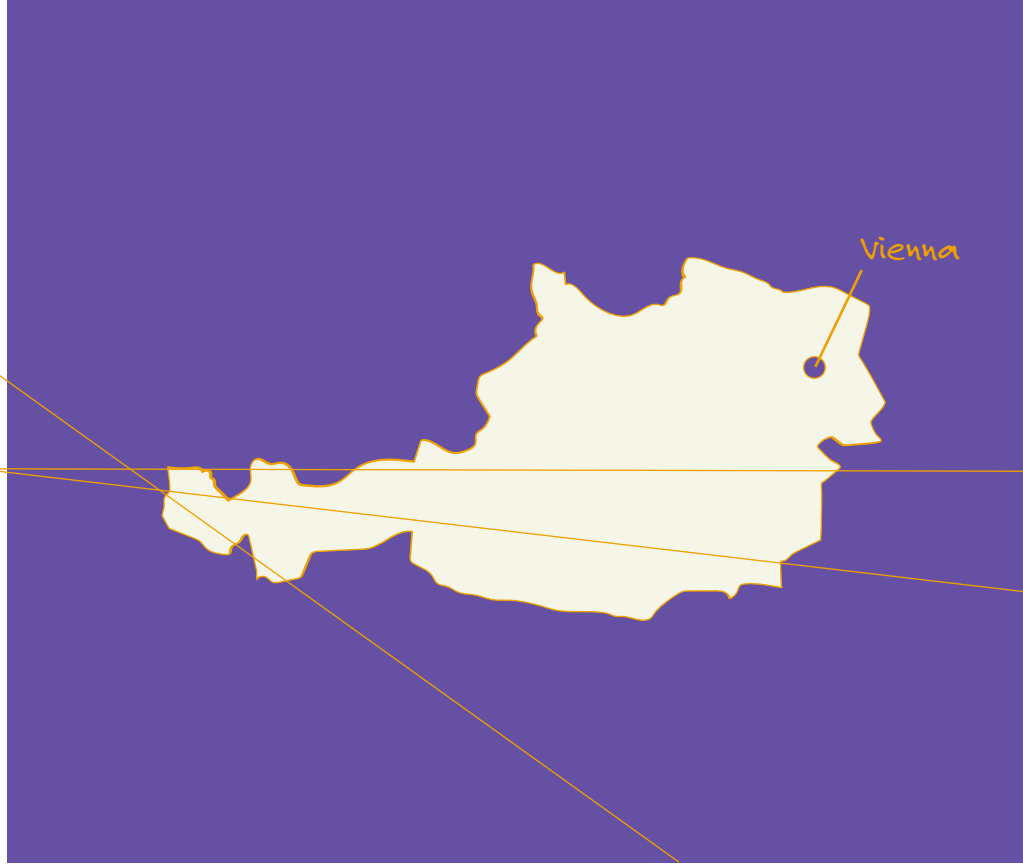
**Iliana Ivanova**

*European Commissioner  
for Innovation, Research,  
Culture, Education, and Youth*

Following the adoption of the 2018 Davos Declaration "Towards a High-quality *Baukultur* for Europe" and the 2020 launch of the New European Bauhaus initiative, which connects the European Green Deal to our daily lives, I am pleased to present this collection of 30 local and regional initiatives. They do in my view exemplify the direction for the future.

The practices presented in this catalogue, which were selected by local and regional authorities, showcase the ingenuity and creativity of European cities and regions in shaping the built environment for everyone.

Whether you are looking for examples of community-led projects, participatory planning, retrofitting, repurposing of industrial buildings, new cultural facilities, space design guidelines or experimenting with locally sourced materials, this collection is certain to inspire and guide you.



# AUSTRIA







# URBAN PLANNING FOR AND WITH WOMEN

## COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD-DEVELOPMENT IN ASPERN LAKE CITY



### BACKGROUND

Vienna is considered a pioneering city in gender planning for its more than 25 years of practice. The Women's Office initiated planning-centred efforts in 1991, leading to a dedicated coordination office in 1998. Gender mainstreaming became a city-wide strategy in 2000, expanding into spatial development. From 2005 to 2010, Vienna executed about 60 pilot projects across planning levels. This approach, guided by a gender planning expert, involved interdisciplinary collaboration across administrative levels.

The project of Lake City Aspern consists of the re-development of a former airfield site that aimed to provide around 10,500 flats accommodating more than 20,000 people and creating 20,000 jobs. Centred on an artificial lake spanning 240 hectares, it ranks among Europe's largest development zones.

The challenge was to develop a sustainable and equally shared new part of the city over a long period of time.



### SOLUTION

Lake City Aspern exemplifies inclusive, gender-conscious urban development in a peripheral area.

Developments of Lake City Aspern focused on gender related aspects and on women's needs - for instance higher sensitiveness on safety in public spaces, and their larger share of care work - while maintaining a user-centric approach and strong focus on community building.

Women's requirements were accounted for in the design of the area and of individual buildings. This encompassed park designs, sidewalk width and accessibility, seating availability in public spaces, well-lit streets, and a polycentric structure with facilities within a 15-minute walk.

The mixed-use centre integrates living (with social, private and co-housing projects), work, culture, and social infrastructure.

Most mainstream planning activities in Aspern are highly gender relevant, such as the first organised shopping street in Austria, which facilitates care work.

Addressing affordable housing with a gender lens, the project creates a safe and accessible urban environment where women can freely move around at any hour of the day. Spaces that induce anxiety, such as underground parking lots were carefully designed to improve the feeling of safety.



(c) Luiza Puiu

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- In 2003, the city established a project team including landowners and surrounding neighbours. They had the opportunity to express their needs and ideas and were given a seat on the jury of the Europe-wide competition for the design principles of Lake City Aspern's public spaces.
- An emphasis was placed on the design of public spaces, with various forms of parks, squares and semi open spaces available throughout the area.
- The project aims to promote sustainable modes of urban mobility and reduce car dependence. There are dense pedestrian routes, cycling lanes and public transport stops (bus and underground) in proximity.
- Streets and public areas are exclusively named after women - e.g. Simone-de-Beauvoir-Platz and Janis-Joplin-Promenade - as a subtle response to the historically prevalent practice of predominantly naming them after males.
- Residents express high identification with the community. Many report they feel like urban pioneers and say that living there feels like being on holidays, especially in summer when walking from their apartments to the lake in swimsuits.



## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

Vienna's success lies in disseminating gender mainstreaming across planning scales and tasks, notably in urban design, housing, parks, and transportation. Successful implementation, seen in public parks, showcases the public sector's control as landowner, facilitating diverse user needs. This impact is mirrored in street design, but less so in local services due to market dynamics.

Tips from the city:

1. Find strong and reliable partners that are willing to go for an extended walk with you.
2. Stay open for exchange with others and be careful what to accept and what to reject, keep flexible and awake, as whatever you have achieved might not be the right solution for the next time.
3. Put on your gender glasses, as if not, you stay on one eye blind.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The development agency (Wien 3420 Aspern Development AG) oversees the project development, in cooperation with the city administration. New public spaces are handed over to the city for maintenance. A specific unit for urban development areas in the Executive Office of Construction and Technology coordinates the city departments involved.

Wien 3420 AG has around 20 staff members while the neighbourhood-management team onsite has 6 members. Various city administration employees cooperate on topics like urban planning, streets, parks, building permits, schools, kindergartens.



## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€ 5 billion**

It is mainly financed by revenue from land development and supported by municipal and national funds.



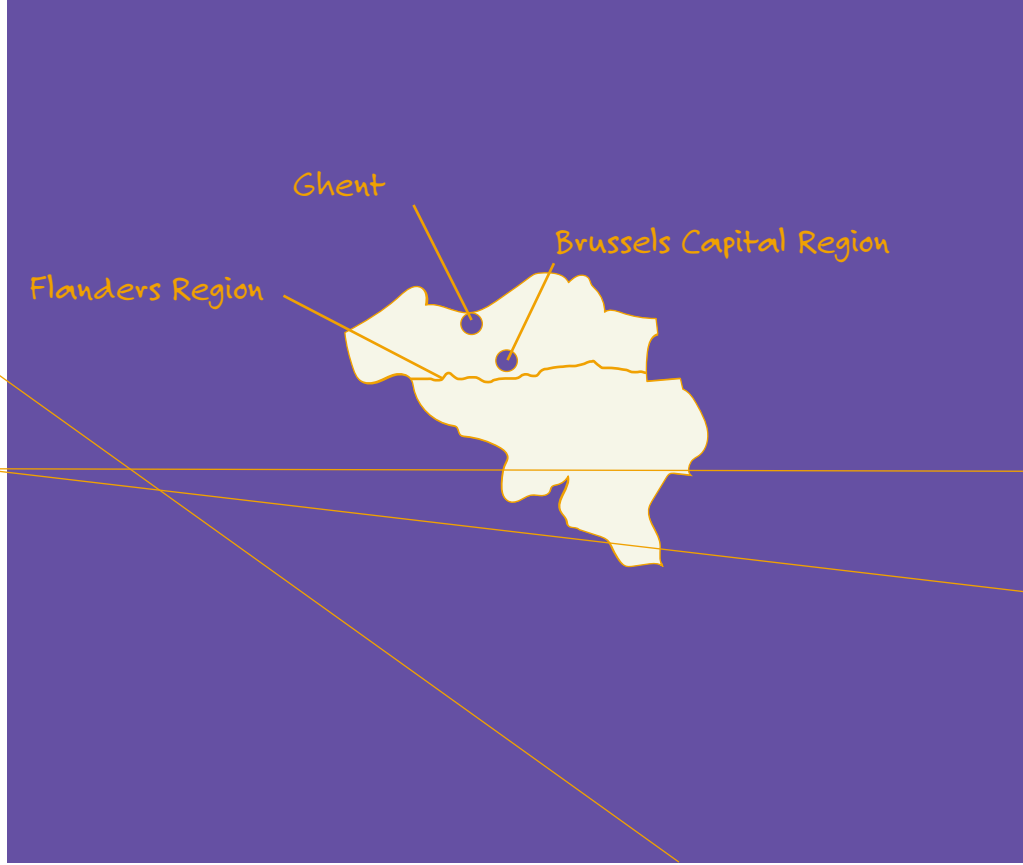
## RESOURCES

Website Aspern Seestadt

<https://www.aspern-seestadt.at/en>

Gender planning in Aspern

<https://tinyurl.com/5bydbzrz>



# BELGIUM

# BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION

BELGIUM

👤\* 1,200,000

Year completed: ongoing

Type of project: governance

Main sponsor: Brussels Capital Region

## BRUSSELS' BOUWMEESTER - MAÎTRE ARCHITECTE

### A NEW ROLE FOR COMPREHENSIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

#### BACKGROUND

In the past, Brussels experienced rapid urbanisation without comprehensive urban planning. In recent years, high-quality architecture and the built environment have been explicitly prioritised. In 2009, the Brussels Capital Region government introduced the Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA) position to enhance the quality of urban development projects across the city.

The appointment of Master Architects (bouwmeesters) has emerged as a widely adopted approach in Belgium since 2000. The original goal was to better organise public procurement processes for architectural service contracts, focusing on their depoliticisation and professionalisation. In this context, it meant ensuring well-structured architectural competitions.

However, in Brussels, this objective quickly evolved to encompass a broader mission – how to advance the overall architectural and built environment quality, facilitated by diverse tools. The BMA is selected through an open and public recruitment process, overseen by an assessment committee that involves external specialists at the regional level in the Brussels-Capital Region. Appointments span a five-year tenure. Although the Brussels government sets the mandate, the position maintains independence to promote the best architectural and urban planning outcomes for the city.



#### SOLUTION

From a governmental and administrative perspective, Brussels is considered a regional entity. But concerning its special scale it operates as a city. The BMA is a unique case in Belgium as the position brings together the local and regional levels. Unlike in other cities or regions, the "bouwmeester" position is written into the law and is not dependent on the regional government's choice but on the regional parliament's decision. The role of the BMA aims for maximum impact by covering all aspects of urban development, including architecture, urban planning, public spaces, and landscape.

The BMA works not only on projects but also on governance and tools that structurally improve the quality of the built environment. Its mission is to drive forward Brussels' ambitions in urban development by assisting, advising, and encouraging public and private clients. It aims to benefit a wide audience, as it affects everyone in the city. It uses a variety of tools, now marked by increased public engagement and a special focus on climate change.

Through the years, the role and responsibilities of the BMA have evolved. It includes four main soft power tools that are used in practice: design competitions, 'quality chambers' (design review boards), research by design, and communication.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The BMA operates in a cross-functional manner, collaborating with various entities and departments engaged in the urban development of Brussels, and works with various policy levels and areas on federal, regional and local levels.
- The “research by design” approach helps figure out a project in its early stages and lays out the future possibilities for each site, programme or theme. Within this tool, the team discusses how things should look and work in that space.
- The BMA is appointed by the government as a whole and is at the service of those politically responsible for all policy areas. This indicates that spatial quality is taken care of / integrated in all aspects of governance and decision-making, and ensures a comprehensive approach to urban planning and development. Quality must bring everything together and connect different aspects.



(c) Jonathan Ortegat

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

Since 2000, the appointment of bouwmeesters has become increasingly popular in Belgium as a best practice. There is regular interest abroad in introducing a similar function, at national level (Sweden, Estonia), and at city level (the Netherlands, Romania).

Tips from the city:

1. Laws and regulations are useful, as a starting point for design quality. But additional measures are necessary, especially the more informal approaches of soft power in quality design governance.
2. Independence in quality design governance is important, as trust grows based on argumentation and accountability. This allows the BMA to work transversely, breaking silos and working both in and outside of the system.
3. Develop a bridging function between the world of creativity and citizens and that of administration and politics. The aim isn't solely bottom-up or top-down, but rather the seamless interaction between them.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Various actors, including public authorities from different policy areas, players from the field of culture and education, and activists and civil society organisations, were involved in the introduction of the BMA position in 2009.

Many actors are involved in the current functioning of BMA: public authorities at all levels, private sector and professional circles, press, cultural and educational institutions, civil associations.

There are currently 15 people on the BMA team.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€1,500,000**

The budget is provided by the Brussels Capital Region. The budget only covers the remuneration of the team, including any overhead costs. In 2022, the cost was around €1,500,000 for 17 staff members.

The intervention of the BMA is free of charge for anyone who calls on its services. However, the budget associated with the implementation of the projects is not included in this scope.

## RESOURCES

BMA website [www.bma.brussels](http://www.bma.brussels)

Urban Maestro project  
[www.urbanmaestro.org](http://www.urbanmaestro.org)



**FLANDERS**  
BELGIUM

€\* 6,774,807

Type of project: health & well-being; sustainability

Main sponsor: Flanders Region

Architecture studios:  
Coussée & Goris,  
RCR Architectes

Year completed: 2022

Total area:  
+/- 6,000m<sup>2</sup> (Kortrijk),  
+/- 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> (Wuustwezel)

Prizes: NEB Prize 2022 Prioritising the places and people that need it the most

Materials: a combination of brick, glazed fired facade bricks, plaster and metal

# WEAVING CARE INTO URBAN SPACES

NEW MODELS OF CARE AND COLLECTIVE LIVING IN FLANDERS



## BACKGROUND

The Flemish government has appointed a master builder to improve the architectural quality of public buildings such as schools, care institutions and social housing.

Like other countries in Western Europe, Belgium faces the challenge of an aging population. Such challenge will become more and more acute in the coming decades, putting pressure on care infrastructure.

In recent years, the existing infrastructures had become insufficient to meet the ever-growing demand. In 2012, the Flemish master builder and the Flemish minister of welfare published a call for pilot projects in innovative care infrastructure that would put care back at the centre of the urban space. The pilot project got the necessary permissions to operate outside usual regulatory framework for elderly care. The aim was to provide concrete solutions that could inform policy work.



## SOLUTION

Since 2014, in total 5 pilot projects for invisible care started to explore new models of collective living for those who need care and to give care a natural place in the urban space again.

Two of those pilot projects are

### De Korenbloem in Kortrijk

Two historic villas surrounded by a park were transformed in a new care campus for people with early-onset dementia, stroke-related disabilities, and somatic symptom disorder. The villas were extended with two new buildings for residential care: one aimed at young people with dementia and a residential one for elderly with somatic care needs. The design prioritised autonomy, self-direction and references to a recognisable living environment by including a kitchen, a living room, a bedroom and more.

### Coda in Wuustwezel

The facility was already used as a centre for palliative care. The renovation and expansion, include an 8-bed hospice, a low-care centre, a day centre and a palliative care expertise hub. The new complex represents a contemporary reconstruction of the original farmstead and the monastery garden that were in the area. It follows a philosophy of "preserving the past within the new."

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The redevelopments for both pilot activities fit harmoniously within the existing landscape and the urban development of the sites. The spatial qualities and unique elements guided the transformation.
- De Korenbloem: To help people with dementia cope with memory loss, reinforcing connections with familiar objects, routines, and personal spaces is important. Creating individualised “small worlds” within a safe and personal environment can aid in understanding and organising space. The idea of “home” is vital, as it offers a secure base to explore the outside world and reflects our identity. The new buildings designs are based on residents’ capabilities rather than their limitations. Diverse design elements, materials and furniture choices give each living space its own unique character that balances practicality with individual needs for identity, comfort, and security. This approach allows residents to shape and personalize their space, creating ‘small worlds’ aligned with their wishes and preferences.
- Coda: Hospital wings are commonly associated as cold and impersonal. Thus, the palliative centre aimed to create an environment that makes residents feel right at home. Durable, warm and materials from their own homes that are familiar to the residents were used such as wall tiles, wooden floors and joinery colour accents, embracing nature for a holistic living experience.

(c) Karin Borghouts



## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Draw up a good project definition. Think about the social ambitions and the vision of your services. Look beyond your own program and try to include programs from other (public) partners in the project.
2. Integrate design research in public procurement. Give the assignment to 5 diverse candidates to draw an initial vision and choose the architect based on alignment with project expectations and ambitions, prioritizing quality.
3. Enable a dialogue between the design teams and the client before awarding the contract. Ensure open communication for mutual growth, enabling both parties to collaborate and ask relevant questions.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The Flemish master builder team and the healthcare administration guided the care institutions through the 5 pilot projects with a project director, a care specialist, and an architecture expert.

The Flemish Infrastructure Fund for Personal Affairs, the Flemish Government Architect team and the Environmental Administration provided 1 staff member each.

Each project formed a working group with two coordinators, the client, the architect, and care administration representatives.



## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€20,850,000**  
for De Korenbloem (Kortrijk)

Total budget: **€6,400,000**  
for Coda ( Wuustwezel)

Team Flemish master builder and the Flemish care and health agency invested €300,000 in the 5 pilot projects. Each one- received €40,000 for the project director, care, and architecture experts. The remaining budget was used for research, a colloquium, and a publication. The remaining funds came from care institutions’ own resources.



## RESOURCES

Pilot Project in Kortrijk - De Korenbloem:  
<https://rb.gy/a7wr2x>

Pilot Project in Wuustwezel – Coda:  
<https://rb.gy/pprcuh>

Pilot Projects Invisible Care:  
<https://pilotprojectenzorg.be>



**GHENT**  
BELGIUM

👤\* 267,712 (2023)

Materials: steel,  
concrete

Type of project:  
cultural facility

Main sponsor:  
City of Ghent

Architecture studios:  
Coussée & Goris,  
RCR Architectes

Year completed: 2017

Prize: shortlisted for  
the EU Mies Award 2019

Total area: 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Usable floor area: 18,419 m<sup>2</sup>

# DE KROOK LIBRARY

FROM WASTELAND TO A BALCONY TO THE CITY



## BACKGROUND

After years of occupying various buildings, Ghent's public library needed a place of its own. Its stock and activities had outgrown its locations and in 2009, the city decided that it was time to build a 'library of the 21st century'.

The site chosen for the library was a post-industrial, dilapidated neighbourhood in the city centre. There was strong political will to provide residents with quality cultural infrastructure and to revive the neighbourhood through culture, entrepreneurship, and innovation. The building would lie on a bend ('krook' in dialect) of the Scheldt River, hence its name.

De Krook is part of a large-scale urban renewal project that bundles knowledge, culture, and innovative entrepreneurship. The multifunctional building adds a 21st-century architectural landmark in a city dating back to the early Middle Ages and forms a meeting place for all Ghent residents.

The building hosts the city library, labs, offices of Ghent University (including its radio) and the Flemish research centre for nanoelectronics and digital technologies (imec), and a café.



## SOLUTION

Opened since 2017, De Krook is not only a place for borrowing books, but also for taking part in a wide range of activities, studying, seeking advice and meeting people.

The design of De Krook library, with its visible steel construction organised as a stack of stark horizontal plateaus, creates a physical link with the surrounding city with attractive views across the urban landscape. The architects (Ghent Architecture firm Coussée & Goris, with its Catalanian partner and Pritzker-Prize winners RCR Arquitectes: Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramón Vilalta) embraced a raw and honest approach, leaving construction materials exposed. This demanded an immaculate finishing, with a high sense for technical detail and precision. The design included communal areas (with a major public artwork,) and greenery alongside the building. Two new bridges were built over the river allowing pedestrians and cyclists easy access.

The construction of the building required 2,000 tonnes of construction steel, 1,000 tonnes of reinforcement steel, 6,500 m<sup>2</sup> of steel external joinery, 750 foundation piles, 7,615 m<sup>2</sup> external triple glazing, 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> carpeting, 160 km data wiring for connectivity.

Heating and cooling are generated by a geothermal borehole energy storage field. The site will be complementary to the new and nearby innovation and tech hub Winter Circus, with surplus energy flowing between both buildings. Solar panels were installed on the roof in 2023.





(c) Michiel Devijver

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Although a very large building, De Krook was designed to be on the same scale as that of the surrounding buildings. Thanks to its concave banana shape that follows the bend of the river, it never comes across as monumental or dominant.
- De Krook has transformed a neglected area into a lively, trendy neighbourhood. The library is more than a building; it is now a meeting point between culture, innovation, and knowledge for all residents.
- Sustainability was considered from the remediation works and the construction. 85% of all materials were transported over water to prevent nuisance in the city centre and saved 140 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

The following ideas could work in other cities and projects:

1. Visually integrate new buildings in the city scape.
2. Consider future uses ahead of the construction by consulting local groups (e.g. young people) to know their needs and expectations.
3. Make sure your building is future proof by having easy access to electricity and network cabling, so you can easily revise certain functions in the building without high costs.
4. Create momentum around new buildings to involve various groups of people. For instance, in Ghent, a human chain of volunteers carried the books from the old library to De Krook.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Five players made the library possible:

- City of Ghent
- province of East Flanders
- Ghent University
- imec
- Flemish Community

The first four formed a cooperative company with social purpose "Waalse Krook", responsible for launching the architecture competition. They jointly developed the requirements of the call focusing on the shared infrastructure and open character of a building that would enable them to work together. They all sat in the jury under the coordination of the Flemish Master Builder.

Waalse Krook operates the building. The four partners are represented in the general assembly and board of directors of the cooperative.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€65 million**

of building costs, of which €21 million were financed by the municipality. The remaining funds were provided by the Flemish government (€25 million), the province of East Flanders (€4 million), imec (€7.5 million) and Ghent University (€7.5 million).

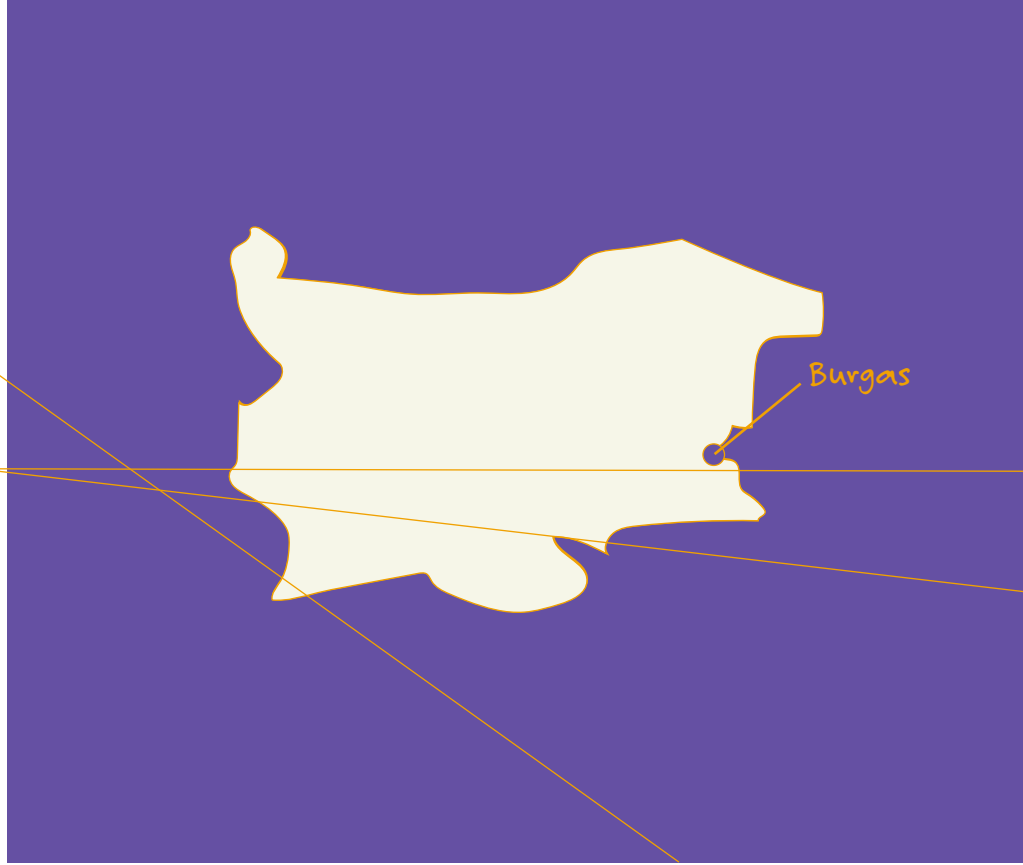
## RESOURCES

De Krook website (in Dutch)  
<https://dekrook.be/en>

EU Mies Award  
<https://www.miesarch.com/work/4219>

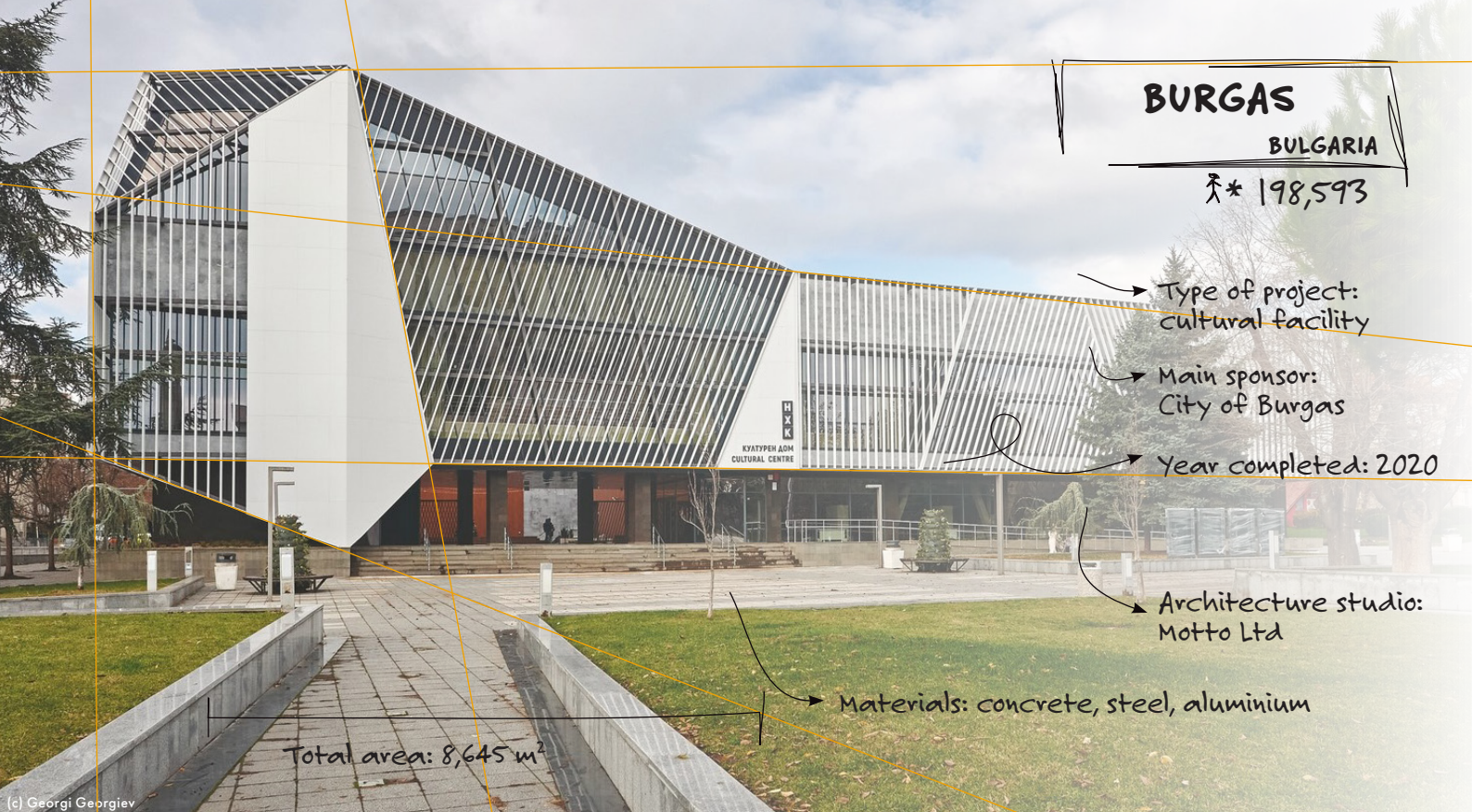
Information about De Krook on the Visit Gent website (in English)  
<https://visit.gent.be/en/see-do/de-krook>

Video <https://youtu.be/5dVCA-87Rmw>



BULGARIA





**BURGAS**

**BULGARIA**

👤 \* 198,593

→ Type of project:  
cultural facility

→ Main sponsor:  
City of Burgas

→ Year completed: 2020

→ Architecture studio:  
Motto Ltd

→ Materials: concrete, steel, aluminium

Total area: 8,645 m<sup>2</sup>

(c) Georgi Georgiev

# KEEPING UP WITH EVOLVING SURROUNDINGS

MODERN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN MEETS LEGACY IN BURGAS' CULTURAL CENTRE



## BACKGROUND

Located on the main city square, the NHK Cultural Centre was built in 1975. Its architecture is typical of socialist modernism.

For many years, it was one of the centres of Burgas' cultural life. The building blended harmoniously into its surroundings, which consisted of low buildings and green areas.

In the 2010s, the square underwent rapid changes. Two new 9-storey buildings were erected, the square was completely redesigned, and a new underground street was built.

After receiving the NHK Cultural Centre as a donation in 2014, the municipality decided to reconstruct and retrofit it through an architectural design competition. The aims were to provide a better level of service to citizens and better integrate the building into the new urban landscape.

The project meets principles set out in a municipal ordinance on The shape of Urban Spaces, Buildings and Architectural Ensembles, which sets specific requirements for the appearance of all components of the built environment, contributing thereby to create a sense of unity on the territory of the city.



## SOLUTION

The new look of the surrounding square prompted the architectural studio to rethink the volumetric model of the NHK Cultural Centre. A new steel-made shell was added to the building, changing completely its silhouette, and giving it a contemporary aesthetic that blends in with its surroundings.

Several ill-advised interventions had been carried out in the past since the construction of the building, preventing easy circulation within it. The project gave the opportunity to rethink and repair the inner configuration of the building, but also to add new spaces and equipment. The new cultural centre comprises eight multi-functional and completely renovated halls (4 halls beforehand), meeting accessibility standards.

When possible, the original volumes, structures and materials that bore the architectural character of the building were preserved. This includes the curtain walls, the marble strips, the mosaics on the floor, the wood panelling of the main hall foyer, the railings. The original concrete structure was reinforced with metal frames.

Thermal insulation, new glazing, heat recovery ventilation systems, new heating system, complete replacement of electrical and plumbing installations improved the energy performance of the building. As a result, operating costs were reduced while the users' comfort was improved.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The project reintegrates the existing building into contemporary society, adapting its features and functions to the needs of today's users. It provides Burgas inhabitants with a modern, appealing and energy efficient cultural infrastructure.
- The new volumetric-spatial features of the building contribute to reintegrate the place in the contemporary urban landscape. From the inside, the shell gives a sense of unity to all the rooms and contributes thereby to a strong sense of place.
- By removing the glass facades at the main entrance and creating new connections with the courtyard and the square, the new building opens to the outside and invites people to get in.
- The reorganisation of inner spaces and optimisation of the connections between them enable new interactions among all users.
- The project reconciles socialist and contemporary architecture in a modern interpretation of a public building with a cultural purpose. From a distance, the building appears uniform, but as you get closer, you discover the different architectural layers, old and new, that harmoniously blend.



© Georgi Georgiev



## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Preserve what has a heritage value and reintegrate the whole retrofitted building in a contemporary and modern design.
2. Don't be afraid to integrate new and innovative solutions.
3. When planning a cultural centre, diversify the functions available in the building, in order to satisfy multiple needs.


 PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The Municipality of Burgas provided a team of four experts to support the development of the project and ensure its successful delivery:

- a Project Manager, who was an engineer from the "Construction" Department of Burgas Municipality;
- a Project Coordinator, who was an expert from the "Strategic development" Department;
- a Financial Expert from the "Budget and Finance" Department;
- an Expert "Investor control" from the "Construction" Department".



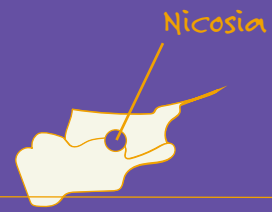
## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€4.5 million**  
It was funded at 90% with European Regional Development Funds, 6% by the State and 4% by the municipality.



## RESOURCES

Presentation of the NHK Cultural Centre on EU Mies Award website:  
<https://www.miesarch.com/work/4944>



# CYPRUS



# NICOSIA CYPRUS

👤 \* 55,032

Type of project:  
public space; heritage

Year completed: 2021

Main sponsor:  
European Structural Funds

Architecture studio:  
Zaha Hadid Architects

Prizes:  
2022 State Architecture Award (Cyprus), Category "Outstanding Architectural Project", International Architecture Award 2022, by the Chicago Athenaeum, Museum of Architecture and Design

Material: reinforced concrete, glass, marble, grass, compacted soil, porous concrete and granite slabs based on a gravel layer

Total area: 35,200 m<sup>2</sup>  
Public space, built spaces: 7,175 m<sup>2</sup>

(c) Arkaites

## REDESIGN OF ELEFThERIA SQUARE

A MODERN DESIGN WITHIN A HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### BACKGROUND

Eleftheria (Freedom) square is located adjacent to the Venetian walls of Nicosia. The walls are a masterpiece of the Venetian defensive art of the 16th century and have a geometric shape following the principles of the Renaissance ideal city.

During British colonial period, the city's expansion beyond the walls prompted the creation of new entrances to connect the old city to the newly developed areas. Eleftheria square is located at one of those first openings.

Over the years, the square developed as the central gathering place of the capital city, the focus of celebrations of major events, such as political rallies, manifestations, historic and important symbolic events.

Given Nicosia has been a divided city since 1974, and has experienced environmental degradation and social disintegration, the municipality has recently prioritised the revitalisation of public open spaces. The adopted planning strategy aims to redevelop the urban core as a multifunctional centre and to improve the built environment and public realm.

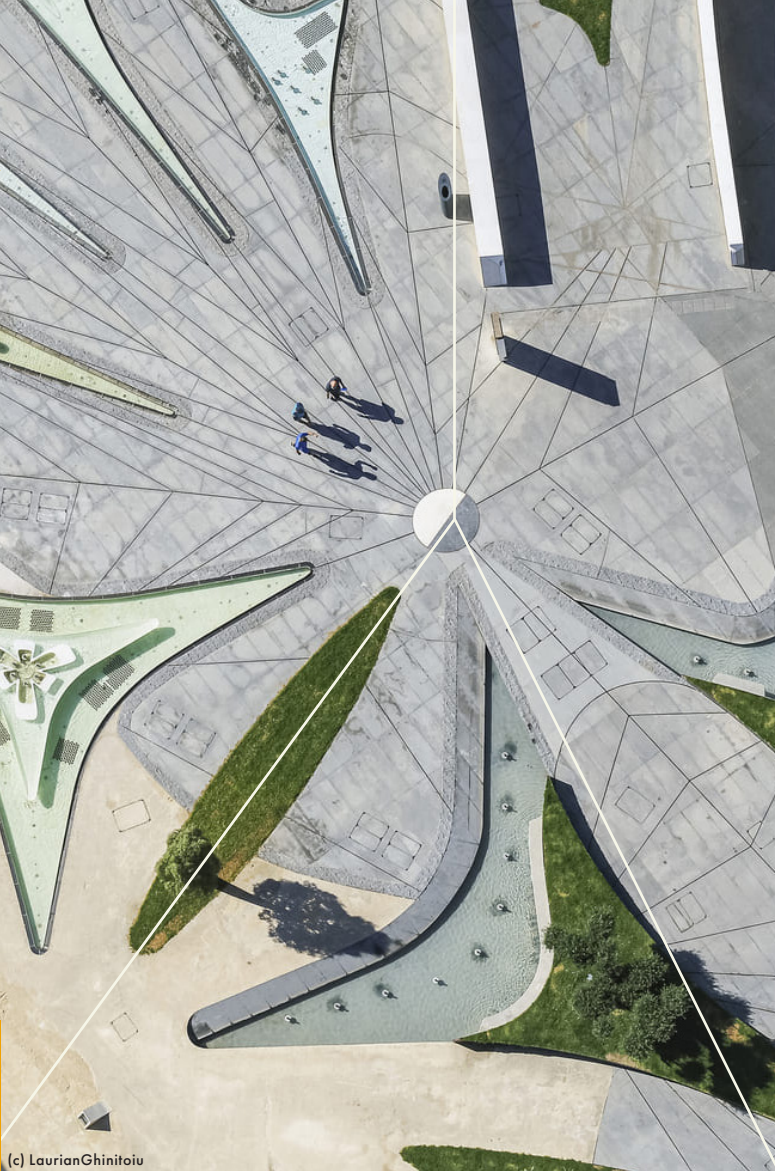
### SOLUTION

The final project came through an architectural competition, awarded to Zaha Hadid Architects. The redevelopment of the square aspired to exploit the environment of the Venetian walls and its surrounding moat, to create a pleasant circular park on the outskirts of the old city. The project aimed to organically link the functions of the historic centre with those of the contemporary city, providing facilities for all the communities living in Nicosia.

The project is developed on two levels: the city level and the moat level, seamlessly connected through a system of staircases, ramps and elevators.

At the upper level, the bridge forms a new civic square that links the historic city with the modern central business district.

The lower moat level was designed as an urban park featuring gardens, palm-lined promenades, and water elements, all contributing to the improvement of the area's microclimate. The project has provided a range of public amenities in the park, including an amphitheatre, both open and covered spaces for public events, a children playground, cafeterias, an information centre, a cycle route, and walking trails. Additionally, 220 trees were strategically planted in green islands to provide shade without obstructing views of the walls.



(c) Laurian Ghinitoiu

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The new design had to adapt to and enhance the constraints and opportunities of the heritage space, as set during collaborations by the Antiquities Department, which is responsible for safeguarding the Venetian walls. The effort to adapt to the historic environment led to the exploration of alternative solutions, redesigns, and investigation of a large array of materials.
- The project maintains a contemporary character, while also respecting the monument. As the Antiquities Department did not allow any construction within the moat, all built surfaces had to be redrawn and accommodated under the pavements of the surrounding roads. The paving pattern and architectural elements follow a fluid geometry inspired by the surrounding urban environment
- The redesign of Eleftheria square achieved a balance of soft and hard surfaces. Surface materials used are soft such as grass and compacted soil, while hard surfaces are based on gravel, and placed in a way that allows the subsoil of the moat to breathe. Contemporary materials and technologies as well as electromechanical systems coexist with the historic environment.
- New businesses and hospitality/recreation developments have developed in the area. Old empty buildings were refurbished, and ground floor spaces of surrounding buildings are transformed into recreational spaces. Municipal buildings and old banks have been repurposed as cultural and training spaces.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Develop a dynamic and ambitious vision remaining optimistic despite adversities.
2. Aim at innovative solutions even if they seem impossible at a first glance.
3. Large scale urban projects are not always easy to communicate with the public who may have concerns about changes in their daily lives. Use a wide network of partners, including urban planners, architects, artists, who can share the vision in an innovative way and discuss openly with locals.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The municipality established a decision-making group including the mayor, four directors of departments, and the project coordinator. The project had a full-time team consisting of a project coordinator, clerk of works, three administration officers and four part time officers for specific issues.

Public departments permanently involved with the management and funding process: the European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior, the General Directorate of European Programmes Coordination, and the Treasury Department of the Ministry of Finance.

Involved in specific technical and professional issues: the Antiquities Department, the Public Works Department, the Town Planning and Housing Department, the Electricity Authority of Cyprus, the Water Board of Nicosia, the Telecommunication Authority and other private telecommunication companies.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

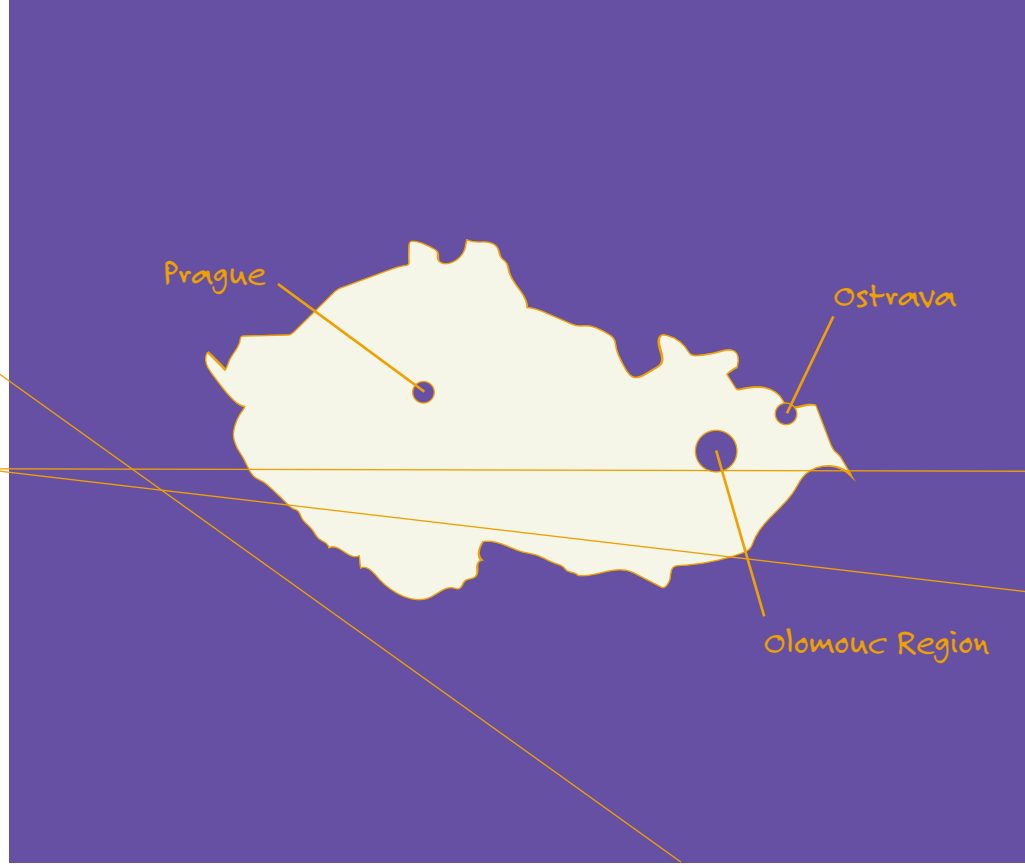
Total budget: **€28,980,000**

for the construction costs of the project. 85% came from EU Structural funds, 10% from the Municipality and 5% from the Government of Cyprus.

## RESOURCES

Nicosia Municipality  
<https://tinyurl.com/3933ayra>

Zaha Hadid Architects  
<https://tinyurl.com/3z7uwbfb>



# CZECH REPUBLIC





# OLOMOUČ REGION CZECH REPUBLIC

👤\* 634,000

Type of project: heritage

Year completed: 2020

Main sponsor:  
Olomouc Region

Architecture studio: Atelier-r

Prizes:  
Czech Architecture Award  
2021, International Dezeen  
Award in the category  
Rebirth project

Total area: 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>

Material: stone, brick, Corten steel,  
glass, concrete

## REGENERATION OF HELFŠTÝN CASTLE

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE MEETS HERITAGE



### BACKGROUND

Helfštýn, the second-largest castle in the Czech Republic after Prague Castle, was built in the last quarter of the 13 century above the Moravian Gate valley.

Known for its impressive and well-preserved medieval architecture Helfštýn Castle features a large courtyard, fortified walls, towers and a Gothic chapel. The castle has been modified and expanded over the centuries, reflecting different architectural styles. It is situated in a picturesque natural setting, with beautiful views of the surrounding landscape.

The castle underwent significant renovations and restoration works in the 19 and 20 centuries. However, in 2014, the castle closed to the public due to severe safety hazards, such as falling masonry elements.

The Olomouc Region, which owns the castle, decided to undertake major renovation works in collaboration with the operator of the castle and the National Heritage Institute.



### SOLUTION

The Olomouc Region and the National Heritage Institute agreed to supplement the conservation and renovation works with contemporary architectural interventions, in an effort to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the place and improve the visitor experience.

New pathways were created through existing gaps in the ruins, connecting the ground floor with the higher levels of the castle.

While the contemporary architectural additions are immediately recognisable because of the materials used, they complement the character of the historical structure very well.

Three types of materials were used, one for each level of the building. The roofing is made of glass on steel beams; the staircases and footbridges are made of Corten steel (a special iron alloy that undergoes a controlled corrosion, which gradually stabilizes); and the ground floor paths are made of polished concrete.

The National Heritage Institute insisted on the preservation of the castle's authentic character. The new roof that was added could not increase the volume of the structure and could only go as high as the level of the peripheral walls.

The design project was based on a 3D modelling of the castle, from thousands of photographs taken from a drone, which allowed to best plan the new architectural interventions.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The architectural concept rested on the respect of the historical features of the building. The project was discussed and negotiated with conservation experts.
- The addition of a glass roof was done without increasing the volume of the building. The contemporary additions to the structure fit within the building and are hardly visible from the outside. The mass of the castle and its effect on the landscape did not change in any way.
- The renovated castle attracts visitors who are interested in both medieval and contemporary architecture. A satisfaction survey found that 95% of visitors liked the reconstruction and the castle has seen an increase in visitors since reopening. The castle's Knight's Hall hosts cultural events, theatre performances, concerts, as well as weddings and other social events.
- The new structures act as a counterpoint to the old walls. They make it possible to access new places in the castle and open on new views on the surrounding valley. Visitors can now better perceive and understand the cultural value of the place.

(c) BoysPlayNice

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Think how, through smart renovation, you can increase the social, environmental and economic value of your heritage sites, while at the same time enhancing their cultural significance.
2. Consider the social, cultural, environmental and economic needs of the local community. In so doing, your built heritage can be integrated in a meaningful and creative way into contemporary society and thereby be preserved in a sustainable way for future generations.
3. Support a dialogue between experts to strike a balance between heritage elements and new interventions, so that the latter can be intelligently integrated into future uses, through a sensible and meaningful weighing of interests.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The renovation and construction works were overseen by representatives of

- the Olomouc Region
- the Ministry of Regional Development
- the National Heritage Institute
- the Museum Komenského, representing the users of the castle
- Atelier-r, the architectural office

The preparatory phase of the project required the most human resources: up to 9 people in the architectural office, up to 5 for the investors (Olomouc Region and Ministry), up to 3 people for the Museum.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€3.88 millions**

53% funded by the EU, through the European Regional Development Fund; 41% by Olomouc Region; and 6% by the Czech State.

## RESOURCES

Webiste of the castle: <https://helfstyn.cz/en>Portfolio on the website of the architecture studio: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2mps7d>Video showing the castle after the renovation works: <https://tinyurl.com/4xxr5a84>



# OSTRAVA CZECH REPUBLIC

👤\* 296,630

Type of project:  
governance; public space

Year completed: ongoing

Main sponsor:  
Municipality of Ostrava

(c) Martin Grobe

## WE CREATE SPACE

EMPOWERING LOCALS TO DRIVE URBAN PROJECTS IN OSTRAVA



### BACKGROUND

The city of Ostrava has a rich community life, with civic initiatives that carry out events of European significance. In recent years, community life has been given a new impetus with younger generations becoming actively involved, especially in the organisation of social and cultural activities.

Ostrava views quality architecture and community spaces as a way to involve citizens in the governance and development of the city in line with strategic priorities

- to connect the city within and with the world
- to revitalise the historic city centre
- to cultivate an environment for life for all generations

More than 20,000 citizens participated in the creation of the Strategic Development Plan of the City of Ostrava in various forms of cooperation. The next step was to motivate citizens to get involved in the creation of the city with the people living around them.



### SOLUTION

With “We create space”, Ostrava designed a tool that hands over co-responsibility for a part of the city into its residents’ hands. This grant programme allows the community to implement their ideas for public space revitalisation and improvement with city funding.

A budget up to 500,000 Czech Koruna (€20,750) is allocated to individuals or groups based on a call. The application process is simple: any individual, group, association, cooperative, or non-profit organisation can send a project idea and budget to the city via email. Proposals are evaluated by a committee of six experts, including city representatives and external specialists. If a project is selected after this first phase, its team can pitch it to the evaluation committee. To secure funding, the project must then gather 30 signatures from residents. The applicant is responsible for the implementation of its project for one year and has two years to contribute to its maintenance on a voluntary basis.

To date, 52 projects have been funded, creating or revamping spaces for meetings, relaxation, contemplation, social, cultural events and sports activities, with participation from students, seniors, parents, volunteer firefighters, physical education groups, housing cooperatives, property owners’ and neighbourhood associations.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Minority community projects helped to build mutual tolerance and overcome prejudice, e.g. adapting a community garden for children with certain abilities so that they can play together with other kids, encouraging tolerance and mutual understanding from an early age.
- Up to 86% of projects are in good condition and still popular, even after the two-year sustainability period. Several former applicants return to the programme over the years and continue within their communities to build a public space according to their ideas.
- Citizens bring their life experience from the neighbourhood into the modifications of public space. They can thus create a public space that reflects their real needs.
- The collaboration between the municipality and the 23 city districts enhances urban cohesion and fosters a coordinated approach to public space transformation. In partnership with the city districts, the municipality engages in activities to present citizens with a portfolio of opportunities for their participation in city development.
- The programme has brought about change in residents' perception of the city management. The grant programme contributed to the city's credibility and to people's trust.



(c) Martin Grobe

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Engage in face-to-face interactions with citizens, taking your message to the streets, and explain to them the process of grant programme.
2. Actively engage with citizens, who are often inexperienced in grant applications or project management. Offer not only administrative support but actively help them develop their project proposal through feedback from the experts.
3. Select localities to focus on by considering the wider context, for example the social phenomena in an area and how transforming public space could help the local communities.
4. Maintain active communication with individual districts, ensure feedback is received– such as how a specific district interacts with projects within their jurisdiction.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The guarantor of the grant programme is the Deputy Mayor of Ostrava for strategic development. The programme is managed by the Strategic Development Department of the city. Cooperation also takes place across departments within the municipality (property or legislative department) and with city districts.

The programme manager, programme coordinator and 2 marketing specialists are involved in the operation of the programme. The staff involvement corresponds to 1 full-time equivalent (meaning when employees are scheduled to work 40 hours per week).

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **8,000,000 CZK** or **€330,000**

which is the budget of this current, 6th year of the programme (from 22 March 2023 to 31 December 2025). It is financed by the Municipality of Ostrava.

## RESOURCES

Website

<https://tvorimeprostor.cz/o-programu>

Instagram

<https://tinyurl.com/2s44mz8a>

Facebook <https://tinyurl.com/2s43sph9>



(c) Jan Maly

# PRAGUE PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN MANUAL

A GUIDE TO URBAN SPACE TRANSFORMATION



## BACKGROUND

Prague has great ambitions to reverse the negative impact of earlier car-centred planning. In 2013, Prague City Hall converted the previous planning institution into the Prague Institute for Planning and Development (IPR Prague). The goal was to create an architectural and planning advisory body for the city. IPR Prague was tasked with a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of public spaces and to overall planning in the city.

The city is striving to protect its heritage and the unique character of its various neighbourhoods while limiting urban sprawl, improving the urban environment to respond to residents' needs, and adapting to climate change. With one of the largest UNESCO World Heritage areas in Europe, Prague faces unique challenges regarding managing the public realm and incorporating climate mitigation strategies.

The city has made high-quality built environment a priority, tackling many years of poor-quality public space construction and maintenance.



## SOLUTION

The Public Space Manual is a public document setting principles, rules, recommendations, and criteria for the creation of public spaces. Released in 2014 by IPR Prague, it serves as a guide for the city's strategy for future public realm improvements.

The manual is addressed to anyone active in the investment, planning, design, approval, maintenance, and operation of public space (city and municipal districts officials, planners and designers, private investors and the public).

Through simple language and illustrations, it clearly communicates goals and principles for making the public realm more liveable and less car oriented. Contents include the various kinds of public spaces and their role in the city, streetscape and traffic management for qualitative public spaces and individual components (e.g., street furniture, trees, technical elements, surfaces).

Since its publication, two plug-in documents helped complete the manual: "Art in Public Space" and "Catalogue of Recommended Elements".

A 2015 evaluation by architects and urban planners praised its positive impact on the public realm, marking a shift towards the quality of the city's public spaces. The best indicator of the manual's success remains its continuous use and enhancement through targeted plug-ins.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- By integrating contributions from architects, engineers, civil servants, and other stakeholders, the manual is a prime example of dealing with fragmented management and administration of public space by setting good standards. It also shows how environmental considerations can be integrated into public spaces in the city.
- IPR Prague published a brochure available in Czech and English to present the basic principles set out in the Prague Public Space Design Manual and the proposed Public Space Development Strategy. It is written in an accessible manner for non-professionals.
- The manual has helped to kick-start several important follow-on documents, including a Catalogue of Recommended Elements of Public Spaces, which builds on the manual's guidelines and offers more tailored solutions that consider the character of specific sites.
- In practice, the implementation of the manual has been a long process. However, it has gained acceptance among the many stakeholders involved in public space decision making in the city. On its approval, the manual mandated that organisations under the City of Prague adhere to its guidelines in projects, plans, public space investments, and when commenting on methodological and legislative documents.



## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

The manual is the first tool in a wider comprehensive approach to improve the quality of Prague's public spaces. It is of fundamental importance not only for Prague, but it has also served as an inspiration for other cities in the Czech Republic and abroad.

## Tips from the city

1. Translate important documents into English, as this is key for promoting communication and exchange with other cities.
2. Involve stakeholders from the start to make sure guidance manuals meets their needs.
3. Make any manual for public space design as user-friendly and accessible as possible to ensure maximum buy-in.
4. Conduct a dialogue with the responsible institutions for legally mandated legislative requirements to improve the urban scape in line with the recommendations.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

A staff of 12 from IPR Prague worked on the original Public Space Manual. Two employees of IPR Prague plus members of various working groups made up of stakeholders continue to work on the plug-ins.

The Public Space Manual and associated documents were developed in close collaboration with the city administration and other stakeholders, such as the Technical Roads Administration, public transport providers, utility providers, city districts, and other institutions involved with maintaining of the streets and public areas in Prague.



## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€200,000**

The manual was created by IPR Prague staff as part of their regular operations. Using an approximation of the time spent developing the manual, the cost can be estimated at €200,000. The total budget comes from the City of Prague.

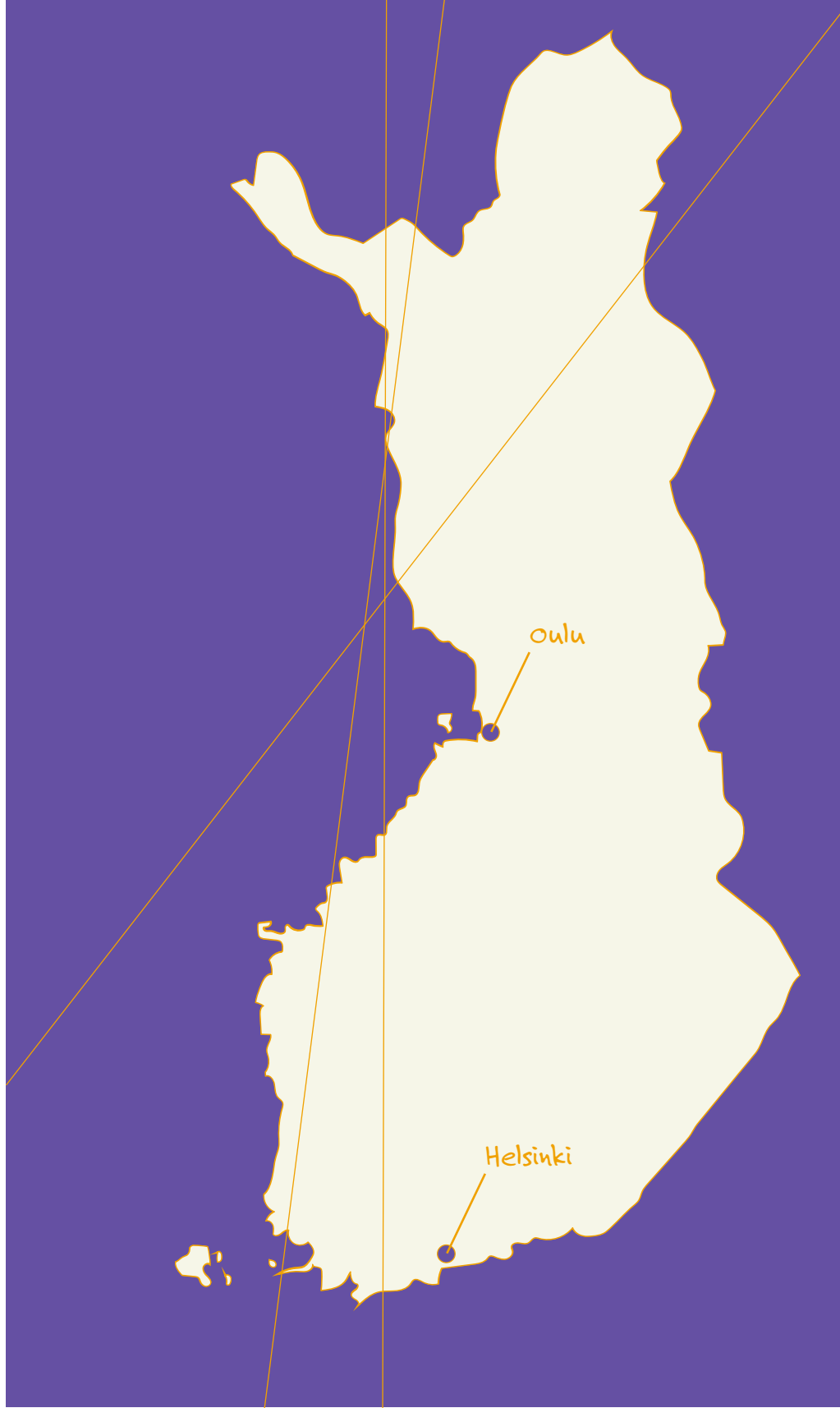


## RESOURCES

Public space – IPR Prague  
<https://iprpraha.cz/page/3411>

Catalogue of recommended elements of public spaces in the capital City of Prague  
<https://tinyurl.com/4bf6vsu6>

Brochure (in English)  
<https://tinyurl.com/yeyd6ade>



# FINLAND

HELSINKI  
FINLAND

人\* 631,695

Type of project:  
cultural facility

Main sponsor:  
City of Helsinki

Architecture studio:  
ALA Architects

Year completed: 2018

Total area: 17,100 m<sup>2</sup>

Materials:  
wood, glass, concrete

Prizes:  
2019 Public Library of the Year,  
Vuoden Teräsrakenne 2018, People's  
Choice award AZ Awards, European  
Steel Design Award, Best in Heritage  
Project of Influence Award 2020,  
shortlisted EU Mies Award 2019

# HELSINKI CENTRAL LIBRARY OODI

A LIVING MEETING PLACE FOR ALL

## BACKGROUND

The project initially aimed to create a building that works as a city space in the heart of the urban landscape, characterised by its openness to the public, safety, and free admission for all.

Oodi's strategic location across from the Eduskuntatalo (Parliament House) was purposefully selected as a symbol of the interconnection between government and the public. The chosen location positions the new library at the centre of the city's cultural district, in proximity to various prominent institutions.

Helsinki launched an architectural competition for the design of the future library, insisting on its sustainability and blending in the urban context.



## SOLUTION

The name "Oodi" was chosen for to convey a sense of homage and tribute to the city and its residents. Translating as "Ode" the name reflects the library's role as a celebration of culture, knowledge, and democracy.

The library structure is mainly composed of public areas, presenting an extensive selection of services. Visitors can engage in numerous activities and proactively pursue their interests. It serves as an ever-evolving platform for learning and personal growth for both residents of and visitors to Helsinki.

The architectural layout divides the library's functions into three levels: a lively ground floor, a peaceful upper floor, and an enclosed in-between volume with multi-purpose functions. The design concept revolves around interlinking the three levels. The square in front of the building extends indoors through the glass façade and connects with the public spaces of the ground floor. The third floor preserves the traditional library atmosphere and features a Citizens' Balcony over the urban landscape.

In between these two levels, the second floor is the most intimate space, placed inside a curved wooden mass. The mass has been vertically elongated, forging connections with the layers both above and below.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The competition rules placed a significant emphasis on ensuring the integration of the future building within the urban fabric (Töölönlahti urban bay area known for its cultural attractions, and recreational opportunities).
- The building is nZEB (almost zero energy building according to the EU classification). During the construction process local materials were utilised and local climate conditions were kept in mind.
- Service design principles were applied to enhance the customer experience, encompassing signage, furniture, and material arrangement. The library team continues to involve volunteers in planning new service concepts and layout changes.
- To highlight their value of equality, Oodi has introduced gender-neutral toilets, which make their use easier for children and parents.



(c) Jussi Hellsten

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. When setting the evaluation criteria for an architectural competition, put a significant emphasis on the effective harmonisation of the building with its location in the city, its usability, sustainability (energy efficiency), and practical feasibility besides architectural merits.
2. Incorporate residents' ideas and feedback in the planning and design of the new building, for instance through urban events, workshops, online platforms, and campaigns.
3. Offer continuous development and modification of the services and design, for instance through participatory budgeting for pilot projects.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

While the Deputy Mayor for Culture and Leisure headed the main management team, several other management groups played a more hands-on role in the execution process.

Presently, the library itself employs a staff of 64 members, yet numerous additional individuals, whether directly or indirectly, contribute to its continued operation.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

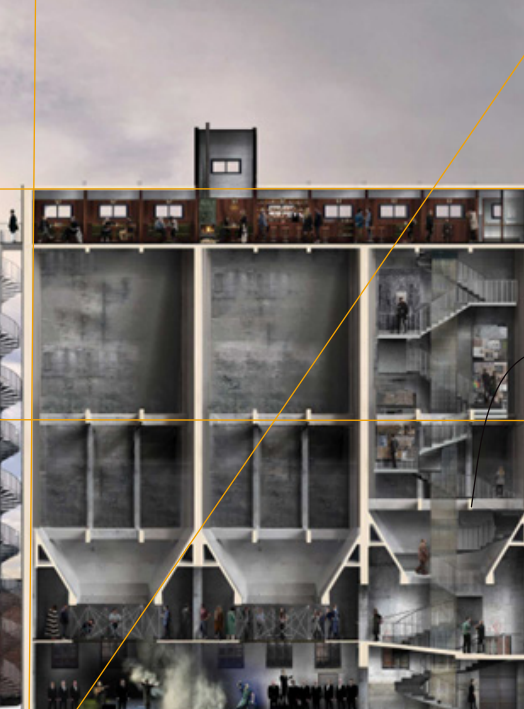
Total budget: **€95 million**

Approximately €93 million was allocated for the physical construction, with an additional estimated €2 million designated for pre-construction planning, projects, and related expenses. The project's funding comprised 69% from the city of Helsinki and the remaining 31% sourced from Finnish national funds.

## RESOURCES

Oodi website

<https://oodihelsinki.fi/en>



**OULU**  
FINLAND

👤 \* 211,848

Total area: 525 m<sup>2</sup>

Type of project: cultural facility, heritage

Year completed: ongoing

Main sponsor: Factum Foundation

Material: reuse of existing timber structures, hempcrete sourced locally, renovation of the outer concrete layers

Architecture studios: Skene Catling de la Peña and Factum Foundation

Illustration by Skene Catling de la Peña studio

# AALTOSIILO

FROM CONCRETE CATHEDRAL TO A MULTISENSORY CABINET OF CURIOSITIES



## BACKGROUND

The Toppila Silo is one of the remaining buildings of the Toppila cellulose factory, designed by Alvar and Aino Aalto in 1931 in Oulu.

The architectural significance of the so-called AaltoSiilo was immediately recognised: its poured concrete structure, only 10cm thick, was deemed groundbreaking and a great example of the merging between engineering and architecture, between form and function.

The silo was left empty and abandoned after the factory closed in the 1980s. When the area was re-zoned at the turn of the 1990s, the silo was listed as a Nationally Important Protected Building.

While most of the factory buildings were repurposed, AaltoSiilo remains untouched: coherent but in a vulnerable condition, in an increasingly residential area.

Its repurposing fits into Oulu's Cultural Strategy and Architectural Programme, which both seek to enhance the built environment, from urban planning to the finest details of individual buildings.

The City of Oulu will be European Capital of Culture 2026. The AaltoSiilo project is a lighthouse project and future legacy of the year.



## SOLUTION

In August 2020, architecture studio Skene Catling de la Peña and the Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Preservation acquired the building from Oulu City Council.

Together, they restore the silo to make it a reference for the preservation of other concrete industrial heritage. In doing so, they create a vibrant meeting place for the local community. The silo will be transformed into a multi-purpose public space that will function as a 'Cabinet of Curiosity'. A public sauna, a cafe, a rooftop bar, and an outdoor amphitheatre will provide spaces for social encounters. In addition, a new radically ecological structure will be built on the site to act as a research centre.

One of the most complex aspects of the project was the insertion of a new staircase that goes through the existing concrete structure and meets today's stringent building regulations, addressing disabled access and fire risk.

The outcome is a spectacular staircase that wraps around a central lift to bring the visitors to the different levels of the building, adapting itself to the building's form.

The City of Oulu continues to work with the Factum Foundation to preserve the site, in particular by supporting the search for funding at national and international level.



(c) Factum Foundation

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- By retrofitting and repurposing the silo, the project maintains a cultural landmark in the landscape. The new activities developed on-site will generate new social and economic dynamics. Existing timber structures were re-used in-situ or recycled to build new spaces, while hempcrete sourced locally was used to build the new research centre.
- The repurposing of AaltoSiilo retains the historical identity of the building, preserving its architectural significance. AaltoSiilo is not only an architectural landmark, but it also embodies the region's industrial and economic past and how it has impacted the community and the nature surrounding it.
- The building, exhibitions and events organised on-site, will be a source of pride, identity, and employment. At a larger scale, the project provides a deconstruction methodology and building protocol for reuse of local concrete spolia and smaller architectural components.
- The beauty and original character of Aalto's work are preserved. A sculptural staircase, which adapts itself to the building's form, was added to the building. The result is a stimulating journey, which brings the visitor into very close proximity to the building shell while manoeuvring between a highly dramatic structure and series of events along the way.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

- Devote ample time for planning: allow all stakeholders to thoroughly analyse and address critical aspects of the project before construction begins.
- Work with a motivated partner, willing to allocate the necessary resources, (budget and personnel), to engage in communication with the architect and project team and who is committed to the project's success.
- Design a compelling architectural project, which enhances the overall impact and value of the project for people and the landscape.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

All partners and entities, directly collaborating on the implementation of the AaltoSiilo project meet every three months:

- The Urban Planning Department and the Culture Services of the City of Oulu,
- Oulu Culture Foundation – Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture,
- Alvar Aalto Foundation,
- Factum Foundation,
- Architecture studio Skene Catling de la Peña,
- Engineering office HRW Structural Design and Max Fordham Engineers.
- Universities, architecture schools, the Architecture Film Festival, and local non-profit organisations were involved in discussions.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€5 million**

The estimated budget for the project is: €2 million for the restoration and reinvention of AaltoSiilo; €3 million for building the new research centre adjoining the silo plot and public amenities.

Half of the financing comes from domestic and international foundations; 10-20% from the City of Oulu, 10-20% from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, and 5-10% from the EU.

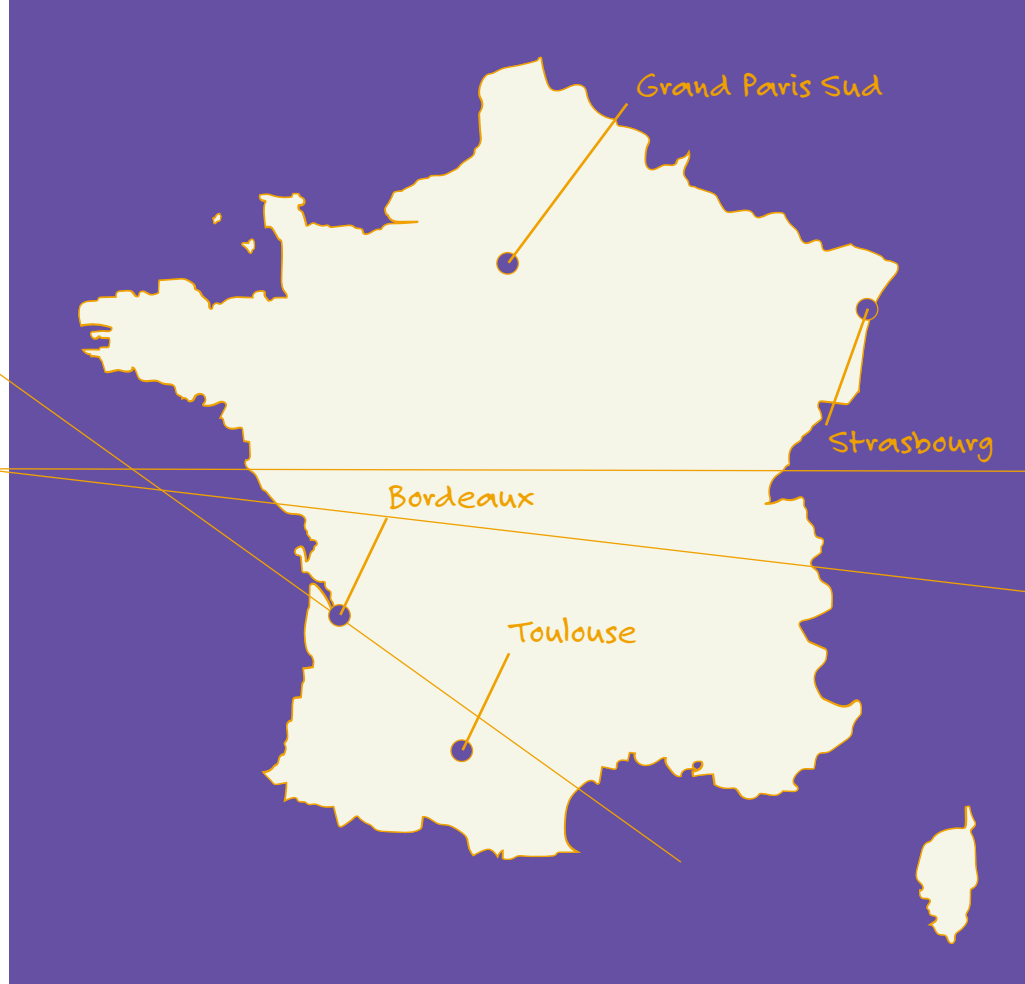
## RESOURCES

Website dedicated to the project:  
<https://www.aaltosiilo.com/en>

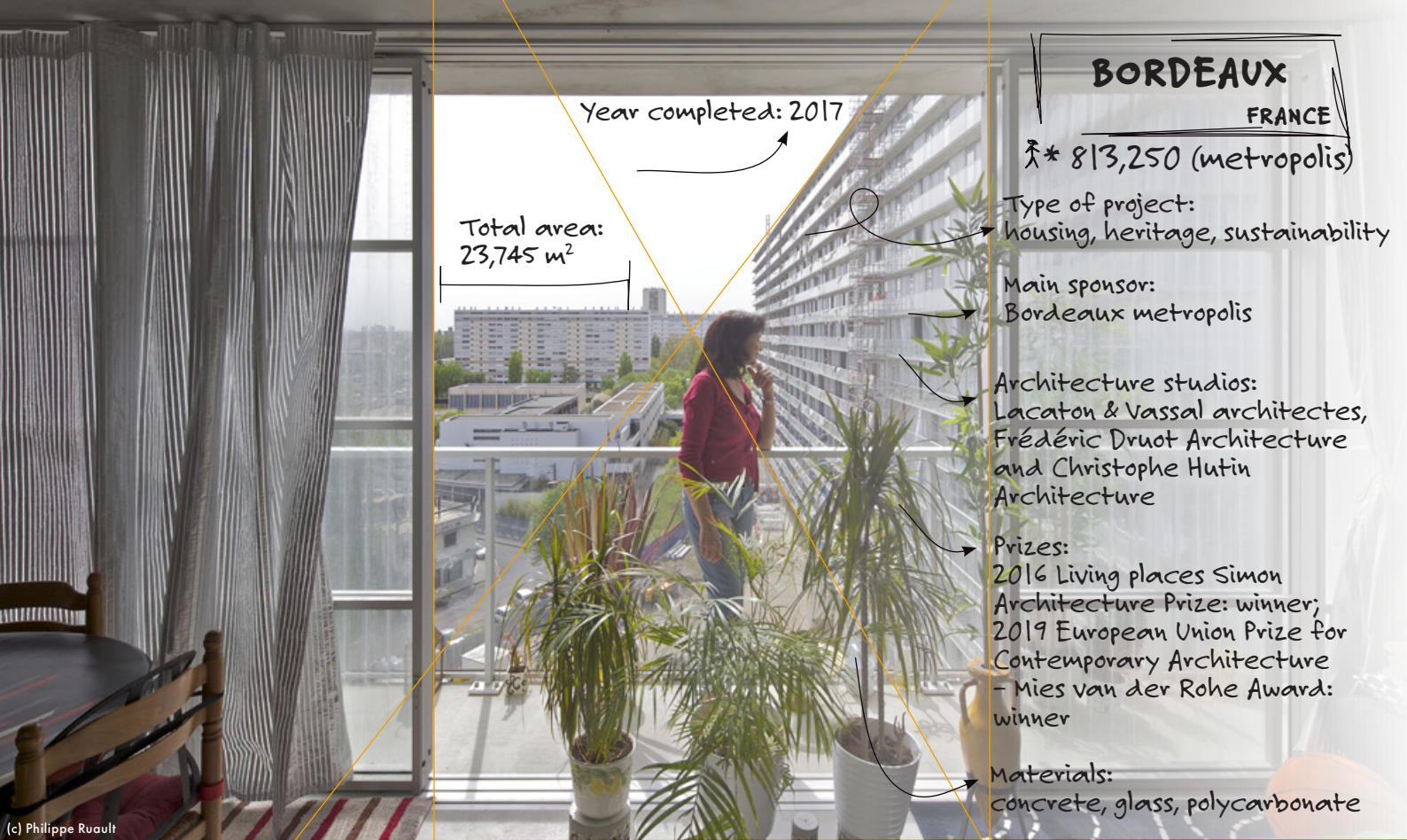
Skene Catling de la Peña  
<https://scdlp.net/projects/aalto-siilo>

Video: <https://vimeo.com/858988905>

Article on Archdaily:  
<https://tinyurl.com/364nb7bz>



FRANCE



**BORDEAUX**

FRANCE

813,250 (metropolis)

Year completed: 2017

Total area:  
23,745 m<sup>2</sup>

Type of project:  
housing, heritage, sustainability

Main sponsor:  
Bordeaux metropolis

Architecture studios:  
Lacaton & Vassal architectes,  
Frédéric Druot Architecture  
and Christophe Hutin  
Architecture

Prizes:  
2016 Living places Simon  
Architecture Prize: winner;  
2019 European Union Prize for  
Contemporary Architecture  
- Mies van der Rohe Award:  
winner

Materials:  
concrete, glass, polycarbonate

## A NEW LIFE FOR 530 HOMES

TOWARDS SPACIOUS, COMFORTABLE, AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING IN BORDEAUX



### BACKGROUND

Located 800 metres from the historic centre of the city, Grand Parc is a complex of 4,000 housing units (22-storey towers and bars) labelled "Remarkable contemporary architecture".

Reflection on the future of the Grand Parc district began in 2011. This process included public consultation, preparatory study and a coordinated action plan between the city, metropolis, donors (Aquitanis, InCité, CDC Habitat), and the Bordeaux Nord Aquitaine Polyclinic.

The result was a global project to rehabilitate 3,500 housing units, demolish 56 units and build 1 000 more, construct and rehabilitate public facilities (nursery, gymnasiums, community halls), and restructure and requalify public spaces. These efforts would restore this working-class district's ability to attract new inhabitants by revealing its qualities.

The 3 blocks of 530 social housing dwellings "Gounod, Haendel and Ingres - G,H,I" were built between 1954-1975. They needed renovation after their demolition had been ruled out. Aquitanis, the metropolitan social housing operator, with the support of the city of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Metropolis, decided to transform them and make them more sustainable while improving the quality of life of inhabitants for a limited cost.



### SOLUTION

The first step was to extend the existing structure. Winter gardens and balconies were grafted to the buildings, offering residents light and an additional 30m<sup>2</sup> space, accessible through large, glazed sliding doors connecting every room to the winter garden. These changes offered a pleasant private semi-outdoor space while improving the buildings' energy performance.

Behind the new floor-to-ceiling glass, thermal curtains provide extra insulation. On the other side, a lightweight façade of transparent, corrugated polycarbonate panels and glass in aluminium frames were assembled and equipped with reflective solar curtains. Inside the apartments, bathrooms and the electrical installation were upgraded. Outside, new lifts were built, access halls were created, and the gardens were improved.

Proper planning and scheduling, and the use of prefabricated modules allowed for each apartment to be renovated in a 12-16-day period, allowing inhabitants to remain in their dwelling during the work.



Philippe Ruault

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The transformation of the dwellings optimises the dimensions, light, views and comfort of the apartments, without modifying the existing structural organisation, in compliance with 'Bordeaux, Port of the Moon' World Heritage status.
- Preserving existing buildings without carrying out heavy work meant the project could concentrate the budget on the extensions, since these were key to improving the quality of the dwellings in a significant and sustainable way.
- More than 1,000 people participated in the consultation to help specify resident and user expectations. Aquitanis appointed a mediator to facilitate communication between the tenants and the project team.
- The innovative renovation has radically improved the space and quality of life of its occupants without making any compromises.
- The regeneration aimed at changing the image of the neighbourhood and maintaining the supply of affordable housing while diversifying the profile of its inhabitants.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

The GHI transformation reflects an inventive practice of conservation and illustrates how architectural creation can extend the history of a building or urban ensemble while significantly transforming it. It also demonstrates 20 century architectural heritage can meet today's needs, avoiding costly and environmentally harmful demolitions.

Tips from the city:

1. In the context of the climate crisis and resource scarcity, demolition can no longer be considered an option.
2. Before getting in a regeneration project of this scale, consider its benefits at urban and social levels. Such project comes with a cost but also with high social, environmental and heritage value.
3. Public consultation is indispensable in a project targeting heritage buildings. The local sense of place and shared history will inform your project.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Grand Parc Regeneration plan was initiated by Bordeaux Métropole and the City of Bordeaux, supported by Aquitanis.

The city set up a project team assisted by a landscape designer and an architect. This team ensures that projects are in line with the objectives defined for the requalification of Grand Parc and that they respect its urban and heritage features.

About 30 people worked on the project's implementation: departments of urban development and urban planning and housing, the Bordeaux UNESCO Local Committee, a consulting architect, and the project team.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€36.6 million**

€35 million for renovation of existing housing units. Aquitanis provided 77.9 % of the budget (€27.65 million). Bordeaux metropolis 17.7% (€6.2 million). The Nouvelle Aquitaine Region 2.3 % (€795,000). The European Regional Development Fund 2.1 % (€737,000).

€1.6 million for new housing units. Aquitanis provided 94.5 % of the budget (€1.525 million). Bordeaux metropolis 4.8% (€76,800). Action Logement (a group formed by the French government with social partner organisations to support access to housing) 0.7 % (€12,000).

## RESOURCES

Transformation of 530 dwellings - Grand Parc Bordeaux – EU Mies Award 2019  
<https://bit.ly/490UOnZ>

The project on Aquitanis website  
<https://bit.ly/3tNgxyl>

The project on Bordeaux metropolis website  
<https://shorturl.at/bcET7>

# CITY OF EVRY-COURCOURONNES / GRAND PARIS SUD SEINE-ESSONNE-SÉNART AGGLOMERATION FRANCE

↑\* 66,000 (city)  
356,000 (urban  
agglomeration)

Type of project:  
governance;  
urban regeneration

Year completed: ongoing

Main sponsor: City of Evry-  
Courcouronnes and Grand  
Paris Sud agglomeration

Architecture studios:  
ATELIER ET-SI, Atelier de  
l'Ours, Bellastock, Constructo  
skateparkarchitecture, Elodie  
CAVEL & Isabelle JEGO, Monono,  
PALM (Peint à la Main), Studio  
KATRA, Stany Boulifard (4PK),  
Quatorze, YA+K

Total area: approximately 25ha

## A TAILOR-MADE CITY RENEWAL

BEHAVIOUR-BASED AND DYNAMIC URBAN PLANNING

### BACKGROUND

Grand Paris Sud Seine-Essonne-Senart (Grand Paris Sud) is an urban agglomeration located in the southern part of the Ile-de-France region, 30 km south of Paris. It is composed of 23 municipalities including Évry-Courcouronnes (67,000 inhabitants). Evry is one of the 5 new towns around Paris, which were rapidly urbanised after 1970. In 2019, Evry and the small town next to it, Courcouronnes, merged into one municipality. Although a major economic centre with 143,000 jobs, Evry-Courcouronnes suffers from an overall image deficit which harms its economic attractiveness. Local surveys connect the lack of enthusiasm and lack of a sense of conviviality to the absence of a real city centre.

To tackle this challenge, the city, and Grand Paris Sud, have been developing a comprehensive strategy since 2019 to strengthen the conviviality of Évry-Courcouronnes city centre and to transform both the user experience and the economic image of this destination. This partnership, together with residents, students, public and private employees in the area, conducted a social and urban diagnosis which led to a master plan in 2021.



### SOLUTION

Since the renovation of major cultural facilities (auditorium, food court, media library and cinema) will only be delivered from 2028, the city and agglomeration decided to act proactively on the rest of the city-centre, by testing tactical town planning approaches.

Transitory urban planning, prior to important renewal and construction works, is a way of reinventing urban life by gradually experimenting with what the city centre of tomorrow could be. This behaviour-focused approach involves observing user needs and expectations to imagine new light urban facilities adapted to the context and actual uses. These can be moved, adjusted, or perpetuated if they receive validation from the public. They may also be removed if they do not prove to tackle the challenges.

10 public spaces in Evry-Courcouronnes were revitalised in 4 years, with new features such as open spaces for students to gather, street furniture, revegetation, floor paintings, sports and leisure facilities, an open exhibition space, and an "Art Du Deplacement" (similar to parkour) practice area.

The transformations received positive feedback from residents, employees, students, and organisations involved in the collaborations. Not only has tactical planning resulted in an increase in the number of public space users but it has also improved relationships between people and the institutions.



(c) Atelier De L'Ours

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Transitory urban transformation operates using cheap and fast planning, based on existing public spaces and with light facilities. Each intervention is specific to the context.
- Multiple consultations with inhabitants, users, shop owners and management services, provided an overview of the constraints of each space and helped design the best adapted solutions in terms of location, uses, typology of intervention, plant variety etc.
- Transitory urban planning considers the point of view of multiple users of the territory (businesses, employees, students, residents). It provides an operational understanding of their aspirations, expectations, and difficulties. It allows for experimentation with rapid responses to local issues or new uses of public space
- This methodology makes it possible to build the city as a succession of experimentations. Considering the perceptions of various groups (residents, businesses, students, or workers), it transforms city planning from a top-down model to an experience and emotion-based approach.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Use tactical urbanism not only as a temporary occupation, but as light, cheap, and fast experimentations, to design a fair master plan.
2. Relying on the existing environment allows smooth transformations.
3. Build cross interactions (with the inhabitants, active forces and within your organisation) not only during the project, but also before and after.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The initiative is managed by Grand Paris Sud (1 part time staff member), and the city of Évry-Courcouronnes (3 part time staff members).

Partners include: ENSIIE engineering school, art and design section at the Georges Brassens high school, Essonne's Architecture, Urbanism and Environment Council (CAUE91), Art Du Déplacement Academy Evry, Grand Paris Sud art learning centre, Etoile Fab Lab, Pariciflore local plant nursery, local artists from "La cité des Artistes", la Fabrik.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€425,000**

Grand Paris Sud: €200,000 were funded by Grand Paris Sud (including €100,000 from the Ile-de-France region) and €225,000 from Evry-Courcouronnes (including €180,000 from the Essonne Prefecture).

## RESOURCES

Urbanisme transitoire:  
<https://tinyurl.com/32vptsbu>





**STRASBOURG**  
FRANCE

Population: 277,270 (city)  
511,552 (metropolis)

Type of project:  
urban regeneration

Main sponsor:  
Strasbourg Eurometropole

Architecture studios:  
Alexandre Chemetoff  
& Associés, nunc, DRLW,  
Lucquet architects, AAT,  
Hentschel Kubler

Year completed: ongoing

Materials:  
upcycled materials, concrete

Total area: 80,000m<sup>2</sup> (62% unbuilt)

(c) Jesus S. Baptista

# THE COOP PROJECT

A NEW DISTRICT TO LIVE AND WORK CROSS-BORDER



## BACKGROUND

The COOP is part of the wider Deux Rives urban development project, launched to renew Strasbourg's ties with its neighbour city across the Rhine. The project has been designed to meet growing housing needs and to avoid urban sprawl by transforming some 230 hectares of port wasteland.

La Coop, located in the "Port du Rhin" neighbourhood, between the city centres of Strasbourg and Kehl, Germany, is an industrial part of the city formerly home to the iconic distribution network Coop Alsace (the Union of Alsace Cooperators). Built in 1911 to house the company's headquarters, Coop Alsace developed their production and distribution activities there throughout the 20th century.

Following the cessation of Coop Alsace's activities in the mid-2010s, the unoccupied site was acquired by Société Publique Locale (SPL) Deux-Rives, a company created in 2014 by Strasbourg City and Eurometropole to carry out construction or rehabilitation projects in the territory.

With landscape architect and urbanist Alexandre Chemetoff, SPL Deux-Rives has been transforming the buildings of the former Coop Alsace into a new COOP district: a mixed function place for exchanges between economic activities (including port, industrial, creative, digital, and social businesses), culture and civic life.



## SOLUTION

The COOP district master plan defines the framework of public spaces, architectural identity, ecological goals, urban programming, and the necessary public works. Its 2021 update reinforces climate adaptation and improves the social housing dimension and facilities for residents, based on local feedback.

Out of a total surface area of 80,000 m<sup>2</sup>, 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> are in rehabilitation (mixing housing, offices, and public equipment), and 40,000m<sup>2</sup> of new or rehabilitated surfaces will be dedicated to socio-economic activities (offices, workshops, craft premises, logistics activity, shops, community centre).

COOP includes 550 housing units (of which 32% are affordable housing). The district hosts artists and creative companies, the KaléidosCOOP coworking space for social economy, the Strasbourg Museum's Study and Conservation Centre, and will soon feature a food court, offices, and shops.

Notable premises:

- La Cave à Vins ("the wine cellar"), a 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> building, of which 7,600 m<sup>2</sup> has been rehabilitated as facilities for the City of Strasbourg. It hosts vast multi-purpose spaces, supports for cultural and socio-economic projects and events.
- La Virgule, a 4,600 m<sup>2</sup> space renovated to create spaces for creation, innovation, and hosting events.
- L'Union Sociale, an 8,200 m<sup>2</sup> former storage warehouse, houses the Centre for Study and Conservation of Museums of the City of Strasbourg.



(c) Alex Flores

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The COOP district invests and reinvents the heritage of Coop Alsace. The buildings, in a state of decay since the mi-2010s, are preserved, repaired, and reinvented. The architecture is based on the qualities of the existing and the singular identity of the site: the history of the place, the historic use of buildings, the presence of artists when COOP was still a wasteland.
- The 1964 Cave à Vins building (then considered the most modern winery in France), has been classified as outstanding contemporary architecture by the Ministry of Culture in 2023, signifying the importance of the industrial architecture of the Coop district.
- The people of Strasbourg are attached to the site's heritage because it's part of the history of Alsace. There was once a Coop grocery shop in every neighbourhood, and many people in Strasbourg have relatives who worked for the Coop. The district's history was a key consideration for many residents when making their decision to move there.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Commission a study of the existing situation to guide the programming based on the past life of the site.
2. Take time and leave room for the plan and the project to evolve.
3. Approach rehabilitation with a certain frugality. This will help tenants to take greater ownership of the site: it enhances the value of what already exists and leaves room for future uses.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Deux-Rives project, and the COOP in particular, are the subject of a concerted development zone (Zone d'Aménagement Concerté) managed by the Eurometropole in conjunction with the City of Strasbourg.

The project is led by SPL Deux Rives and the landscape artist and urbanist Alexandre Chemetoff. The SPL Deux-Rives has a team of around twenty people dedicated to the urban project.

Strasbourg Eurometropole's Vice-President in charge of operational urban planning, chairs a steering committee that includes all the elected representatives concerned.

Within the Administration, the Urban Development Projects Department of the Urban Planning and Territories Directorate is responsible for overall coordination. A project manager acts as the interface between the elected representatives, the departments and the operator in charge of implementing the project, SPL Deux-Rives.

The project manager works full time on the operation at the Eurometropole and City of Strasbourg, supported by a project team of 4 people (one full-time equivalent). Other departments are also involved in their respective areas of expertise.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€283 million** for the Deux-Rives project, of which €51 million was allocated to the COOP project specifically.

61.7% of the development expenses (studies, land management, depollution, installation of networks and infrastructure, construction of facilities, etc.) are covered by the sale of land to property operators.

Other funding sources include:

- Municipality/Metropolis: 38%
- Region: 0.2%
- National Administration: 0.1%

## RESOURCES

COOP District website  
<https://tinyurl.com/3sbdmvay>



TOULOUSE  
FRANCE

👤\* 498,003

→ Type of project:  
governance, sustainability

→ Main sponsor:  
City of Toulouse

→ Year completed: 2023

Total area: 118 km<sup>2</sup>  
(city of Toulouse)

(c) City of Toulouse

# RESPONSIBLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

BALANCING URBAN GROWTH WITH BIODIVERSITY, COMFORT AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

## BACKGROUND

Toulouse, with its location in the Southwest of France, three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and dynamic aeronautics and space industry, is a very attractive city. Over the past ten years, it has grown by an average of 5,000 inhabitants per year. Each year, around 3,500 new housing units need to be built, and business areas must be expanded. However, this expansion has so far come without an overall vision.

In a densely populated city like Toulouse, the challenge is to plan in a way that the city remains attractive and liveable despite its higher density. This means

- Preserving green spaces
- Promoting quality architecture that contributes to maintaining a strong identity through the built environment
- Developing public transport, pedestrian, and cycling facilities
- Ensuring that shops, services, and workplaces are within a 15-minute walking or cycling distance

Toulouse is also particularly exposed to high summer temperatures and urban overheating. These threaten not only the health of residents but also local biodiversity.

## SOLUTION

In 2016, Toulouse launched the Toulouse Urban Project to guide urban development amid rapid construction. This initiative shapes the city's territorial growth with a long-term perspective to 2040. It involves collaborative urban strategies and a shared vision among diverse stakeholders while offering practical solutions for new building projects. Following a 2018 Manifesto outlining Toulouse's urban vision, and a 2019 City Master Plan, district-specific masterplans (2023) detail how the master plan applies to sectors, districts, and streets.

The city developed tools for constructive dialogues with architects and property developers, establishing quality criteria and guidelines for each of the city's six main districts. After three years of technical work and extensive citizen participation, the result is a set of six booklets known as the "Cahiers Toulousains."

These booklets cover a range of policy areas including housing, nature, economy, facilities, and inclusion. They address vital issues such as preserving neighbourhood identity, enhancing green spaces, improving public areas, facilitating mobility, boosting the economy, and enriching the city's architectural and urban diversity. A central focus is finding climate solutions, with each booklet offering context-specific, holistic climate mitigation and adaptation measures for every neighbourhood.

# Mon quartier demain

Vision partagée sur son évolution



VENEZ DÉCOUVRIR LES RÉSULTATS DE LA CONCERTATION LORS D'UNE RENCONTRE CONVIVIALE

> du 17 juin au 13 juillet

(c) City of Toulouse



Mon Quartier + Facile

MAIRIE DE TOULOUSE

CONTEXT

DIVERSITY

SENSE OF PLACE

BEAUTY

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The booklets define guidelines that are relevant to each neighbourhood's natural and built context. They provide a thorough analysis of the identity and urban evolution of each district, offering a historical, sociological and architectural perspective on the area.
- The booklets' guidelines will be used in all projects related to the built environment. They help local managers to decide whether a construction project is relevant or not, and to see with the project leader (public or private) how to improve it according to the local context.
- An innovative and ambitious participation process has been implemented gathering more than 2,000 contributions over one year. The project team met with residents, workers, and visitors from various neighbourhoods, ages, and social backgrounds around the city. The result? An identity card for each of the six districts, helping to maintain human attachment to the places undergoing urban transformation.
- Although technical documents, the booklets are written so that everyone can read them to explore the neighbourhood's past, present, and future, and understand urban development in their street, district and city.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Involve all municipal departments to build a shared vision from the beginning so that the city master plan is an opportunity to enhance existing good practices and inspire new projects.
2. Gather strong political support for the project by involving all local elected officials in the process.
3. Be innovative, ambitious, and open-minded when drawing up the urban master plan, so that the story of the city and the guidelines defined are truly local solutions.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The project was managed by a Project Director and a Project Manager from the Urban Prospective and Strategy Department for three years. They were supported by the Toulouse urban planning agency (AUAT) with five architects, urban planners, and landscape architects for the technical part of the Booklets.

Overall, about 50 departments of the City and Metropolis collaborated on the project (transport, local democracy, environment, urban planning, economy, public spaces, public gardens, urban heritage, communication, etc.), taking part in some 50 technical workshops.

Architects and property companies as well as Toulouse residents were involved in consultations.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€1,200,000**

funded by Toulouse City.

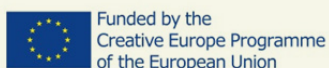
One million euros was spent on studies, €200,000 on the citizen consultation process, and a small budget was added for printing.

## RESOURCES

Toulouse Booklets (in French)  
<https://bit.ly/46yVhvl>

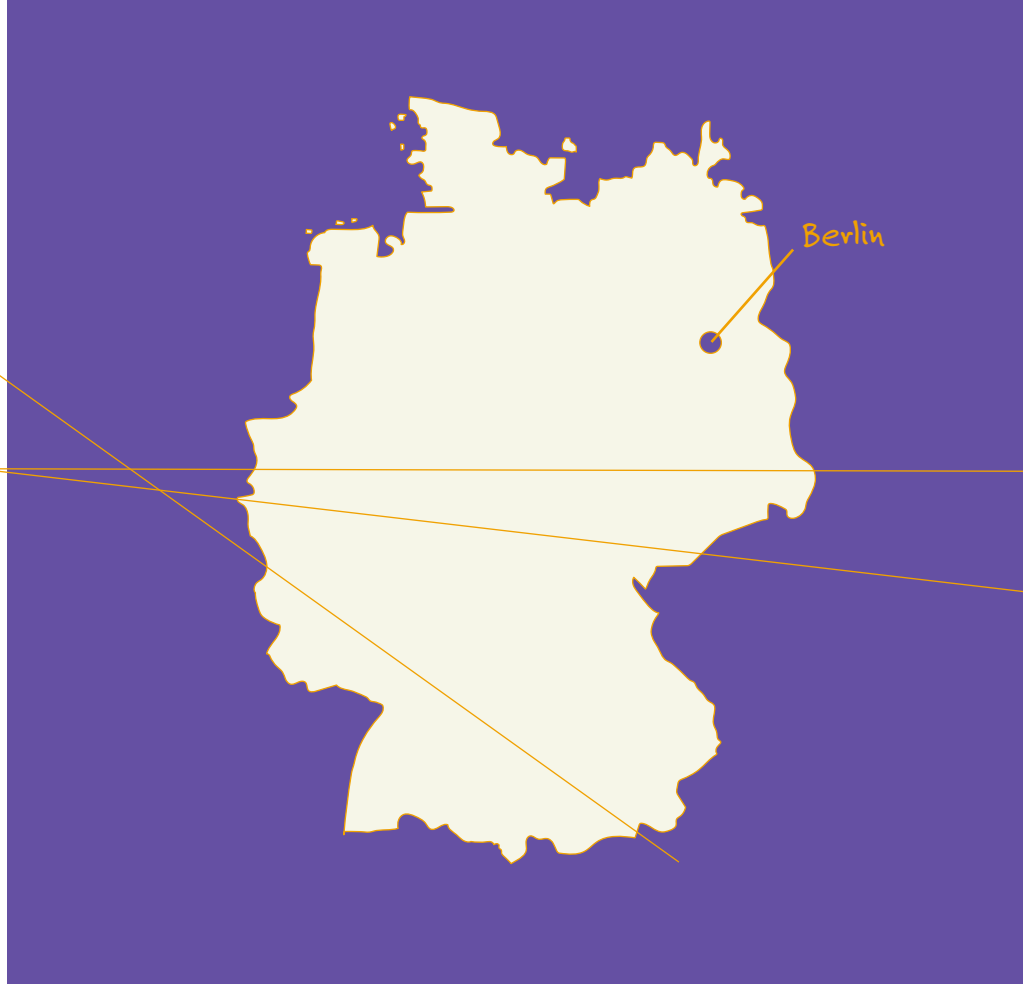
Toulouse Urban Project (in French)  
<https://bit.ly/3QmNXNx>

Participation process short video (in French)  
<https://bit.ly/3S62bDL>



### CONTACT:

Toulouse Municipality Contact Form  
<https://metropole.toulouse.fr/nous-contacter>



# GERMANY



# BERLIN GERMANY

👤 \* 3.7 million

Type of project:  
urban regeneration

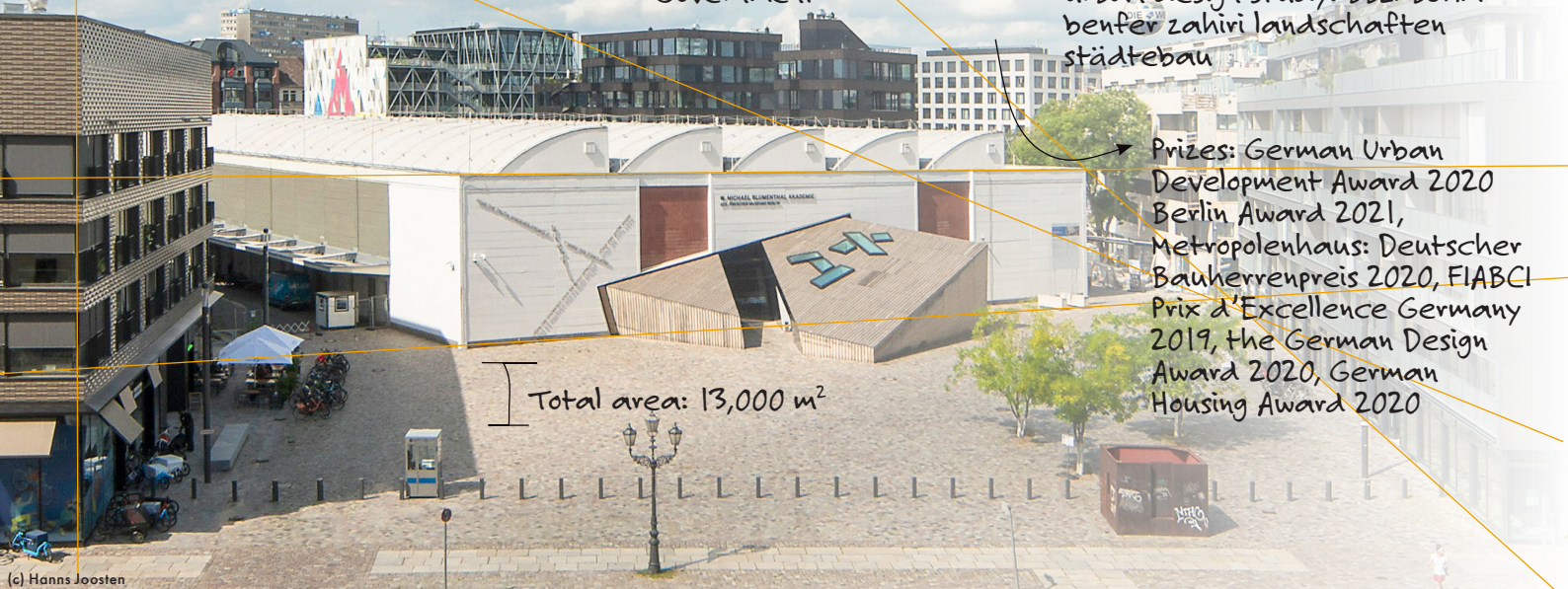
Year completed: 2018

Main sponsor:  
Berlin Federal State  
(Senate Department  
for Urban Development,  
Building and Housing)  
and German national  
Government

Architecture studios:  
bfstudio-architects with  
Benita Braun-Feldweg/Matthias  
Muffert; ARGE ifau, Heide & von  
Beckerath architects; Deadline  
architects, Grif-fin Jürgens GbR;  
urban design study: bbz| böhm  
benfer zahiri landschaften  
städtebau

Prizes: German Urban  
Development Award 2020  
Berlin Award 2021,  
Metropolenhaus: Deutscher  
Bauherrenpreis 2020, FIABCI  
Prix d'Excellence Germany  
2019, the German Design  
Award 2020, German  
Housing Award 2020

Total area: 13,000 m<sup>2</sup>



## SOCIAL MIX IN THE BLUMENGRÖßMARKT NEIGHBOURHOOD

BRIDGING CULTURES: BERLIN'S CREATIVE QUARTER TRANSFORMATION

### BACKGROUND

A wasteland around the Jewish Academy in the former Blumengroßmarkt (flower market) in the centre of Berlin offered the opportunity to transform a socially stigmatised neighbourhood into a more diverse urban area. The transformation followed the ideal of the mixed city facilitating the coexistence of different actors and using a co-creative approach.

The project faced challenges specific to the area, including its location as an inner-city peripheral zone stemming from the history of the former Berlin Wall. Navigating the urban landscape was further complicated by a juxtaposition of planning regulations and architectural laissez-faire.

Moreover, the area experienced urban development disruptions alongside the coexistence of parallel communities, with museums, cultural institutions, and educational entities on one side, and a predominantly migrant population on the other.

The area was also socially precarious, having a high proportion of people with a migrant background (about 70%), coupled with lower levels of education and income.

### SOLUTION

In a collaborative effort, in 2010 the local community and the district formulated a strategic urban development concept titled "Art and Creative Quarter" (KuKQ). The aim was to integrate Berlin's flourishing new creative community into a neighbourhood where migrant population live, without triggering social conflicts, displacement, or gentrification. The city devised a plan to transform the former flower market site into a liveable neighbourhood. It launched a development concept competition focusing on shared spaces for social interaction, mixed uses, and new building typologies.

The winners of the competition were three co-investing groups with cooperative, social, and cultural missions. Together they founded the project group PxB to develop the site, working closely with the district and Berlin Senate.

Today, the flower market hall is framed by attractive architecture with mixed programmes and welcoming public spaces. Three new buildings contain flats, ateliers, commercial spaces, shared workspaces, offices, workshops spaces, seminar rooms, guest accommodation, a summer kitchen, an event space, a gallery, a café, shops, and a restaurant. Some of the spaces are used by social organisations as owners and tenants with reduced rent or for free.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The project is an example of smart cooperation between municipal stakeholders, private investors selected according to public interest criteria, and local citizens. Together they managed a co-creative and inclusive planning and implementation process.
- PxB, the Berlin Senate and the district created cooperation instruments: a site development contract committing PxB to fund interim projects, youth empowerment, citizen participation, and events; a qualification process with four workshops on urban design, commerce/ open space, architecture, and neighbourhood integration; an advisory board for urban planning and architectural issues.
- By offering space for inclusive housing, temporary projects, cultural and educational activities, Blumengroßmarkt targets young people, people with migrant backgrounds, elderly people, and unemployed people.
- The Feldfünf cultural platform manages the community spaces on the ground floor of the Metropolenhaus building where the community curates a dialogue between art, design, and everyday life.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

The project highlights several key lessons:

- Displacement and gentrification can be avoided through a concept-driven, stakeholder-involved approach, even with private funding.
- Common good-oriented financial models, and co-financing, can sustain non-commercial spaces for social and cultural purposes.
- Effective cooperative urban development relies on collaboration and a shared vision, integrating top-down and bottom-up processes.

3 tips from the city:

1. When a public real estate property is listed for sale, seek authorisation to oversee the investor selection process according to common interest aspects on a relevant degree.
2. Prepare a strategic framework encouraging socially and functionally mixed-used public and private spaces. Allocate winners of competitions based on best development concept, rather than lowest price.
3. Work with the people, institutions and associations that are already there. They know the place, the people, and the challenges.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

One person from each organisation: district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Berliner Großmarkt GmbH, Foundation Jewish Museum Berlin, Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing.

About 8 persons are needed for the management of the cultural platform, (around 1.5 full time equivalents plus voluntary work).

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€75 million**

in private funds to construct the three buildings. This is the largest cooperative urban development project in Germany to date by financial volume.

€4,240,000 for the redesign and transformation of the open spaces, streets, of the Bessel Park and of Enckestreet through joint national-regional-municipal programmes for "Urban Heritage Protection", "Vibrant Centres and Neighbourhoods" and "Future for Urban Green".

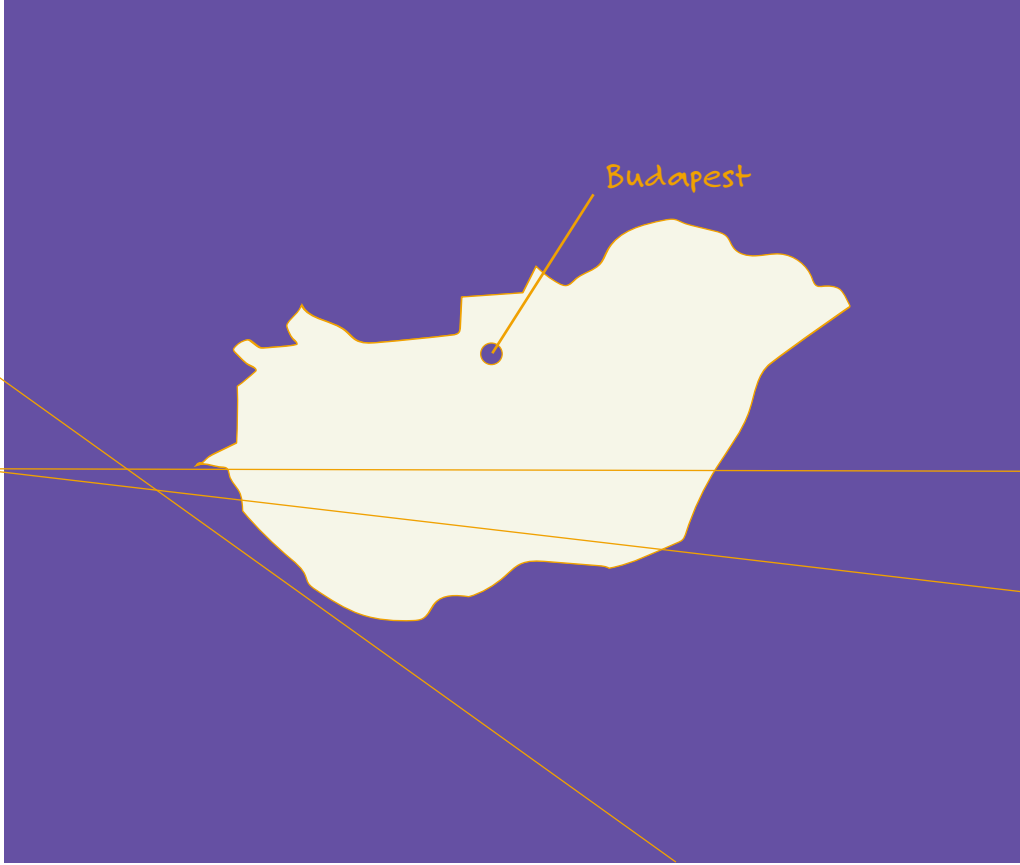
€90,000 from the PxB group for citizen engagement, activation, and events.

€60,000 per year from Metropolenhaus Groundfloor Society for the cultural management staff of Feldfünf.

## RESOURCES

Project description for the German Urban Development Award <https://bit.ly/3Qr3tby> and video <https://bit.ly/3fDHODX>

Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Living <https://bit.ly/3Q1dydx>



# HUNGARY







## BUDAPEST HUNGARY

👤\* 1,682,426

Type of project:  
educational facility

Year completed: 2016

Main sponsor:  
13 District of the  
Municipality of Budapest

Architecture studio:  
Archikon Architects

Prizes:  
BIG SEE Architecture Award  
2019; Architectural Niveau-  
Prize of the Budapest Chamber  
of Architects; Hungarian Real  
Estate Development Award 2017

Total area: 2,640 m<sup>2</sup>

Material: brick, concrete, environment-  
friendly materials as much as possible  
(e.g. paints and glues free of VOCs)

(c) Tamas Bujnovszky

# MESÉSKERT KINDERGARTEN

DESIGNING A PLAYFUL, BEAUTIFUL AND SUSTAINABLE PLACE FOR CHILDREN

## BACKGROUND

The 13 District of Budapest is a densely built-up area, with many multi-storey residential and office buildings. The increased number of residents in this district brought along capacity-related problems in buildings housing public services, including educational buildings.

On the site of the current Meséskert kindergarten was a previous kindergarten, built in the 1980s, able to accommodate 8 classes. This kindergarten no longer met residents' needs, either in terms of level of service or capacity. In 2013, the local government decided to demolish the existing kindergarten and procure a new building able to accommodate 16 classes and 400 children.

As the size of the plot could not be extended, the only way to achieve the necessary capacity was to build a compact, vertical building.

The municipality decided to commit to the highest standards in terms of sustainable buildings. This fits into the ambition of the municipality to provide children and educational teams with an inspiring and healthy built environment, providing a calm atmosphere conducive to learning.

## SOLUTION

The Meséskert Kindergarten is the first Hungarian nursery school to meet passive house requirements - a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in buildings.

The spatial configuration of the building, combined with highly performant construction materials and innovative technical systems, has enabled a drastic reduction in the building's energy demand, and ecological footprint, while improving indoor environment quality.

The building's heat loss is extremely low due to advanced thermal insulation for walls and triple-glazed windows.

A heat recovery ventilation system renews the air inside the building while minimising heat loss - it filters dust and pollen from the outside air and recovers up to 90% of the heat contained in the exhaust air.

In summertime, automatic moveable external shades prevent the building from overheating, while in wintertime, they allow the sun to flow into and heat the building.

The architects prescribed environment-friendly materials, such as paints and glues free of volatile compounds, where possible.

Modern taps with perlators were installed to reduce water consumption, and rainwater is channelled and drained towards green areas.

As a result, the building's energy consumption is ten times lower than that of other similar buildings, and the comfort of children and teachers is improved.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The entrance of the building is on the street side, so that children can enjoy a large, woody playground on the calm side of the plot. A guiding principle of the project was to enable many children to play outdoors, despite the limited size of the area – this led to the decision to create a rooftop playground.
- The round, square, and triangular shapes of the roof terrace create a vertical connection with the interior and bring light into the building. This roof, resembling the holes of a shape sorter, provides a beautiful fifth façade for the residents of the surrounding high-rise buildings.
- The needs of the children are at the centre of the design concept. Children feel at home, and it is easy for them to find their way around. Humorous figures are painted on the floor, walls, doors and glass. The walls are painted with magnetic paint so that children’s works can be displayed. Ideas and needs expressed by the educational team were taken on board by the designers.
- Seen from the sky, the inner courtyards on the roof make it clear that it is a playful place. Inside, the inner design is tailored to the age of the children – they can recognise their favourite cartoon figures painted throughout the building.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. As a local public authority, have a clear long-term vision and strong leadership about the well-being of residents, being aware that well-being necessarily implies actions in favour of a sustainable and quality living environment.
2. Lead by example and don’t be afraid to innovate. Even though this often requires additional resources and time, the 13 District implement pilot projects to test new solutions, enabling innovation for all.
3. Work with all stakeholders. Close collaboration among investors, operators, users and the local community, as well as a close partnership with the contractor during the implementation phase are key.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The Investment Division of the 13 District Municipality of Budapest oversaw the project.

Up to 20 architects and engineers were involved in the design of the kindergarten, and up to 10 people supervised the implementation of the project.

The building is maintained by 10 people, who also look after the other 17 kindergartens of the district.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€2.5 million**

for the design and construction of the kindergarten. 100% was funded by the municipality of the 13 District of Budapest.

## RESOURCES

Video of the kindergarten:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8NJL7kPJIE>

Photographs on Archikon website:

<https://archikon.hu/projects/19>

Website of the BIG SEE Awards:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdcssxaa>



ITALY



**BOLOGNA**

ITALY

👤 \* 394,843

→ Type of project:  
public space

→ Architecture studio:  
Tasca Studio

→ Main sponsor:  
City of Bologna

Total area: 5,882 m<sup>2</sup>

Materials:  
bricks and reinforced concrete

→ Year completed: 2022

(c) Comune di Bologna

# SQUARE LUCIO DALLA

A CULTURAL CANOPY FOR EVERYONE



## BACKGROUND

The Lucio Dalla square, named in honour of Italy's renowned singer-songwriter, is in the heart of Bolognina, a popular and lively area just outside Bologna's centre. Bolognina is an iconic neighbourhood with a past marked by Italy's social and political history. Nowadays, it is inhabited by a multicultural, vulnerable population but also frequented by students, young people and those looking for underground and non-conformist places.

The square that stands there today was built between 1953 and 1955 as a canopy-shaped marketplace for cultivators to sell fruits and vegetables. The rectangular canopy is made up of a series of continuous vaults in brick and reinforced concrete that rest on twenty-four pillars, typical of industrial architecture. The authorship of the structure has long been wrongly attributed to engineer and architect Pier Luigi Nervi, while it in fact belongs to Renato Bernardi.

As the market relocated in the mid 1990s, the canopy gradually lost its significance, falling into a state of neglect and disrepair. By the early 2000s, the local authorities considered demolishing the unused structure, since it was unprotected by heritage regulations. However, during planning consultations, Bolognina residents (associations, citizens' committees, sports groups, parish groups, trade unions and cooperatives) demonstrated their deep emotional connection to the canopy and voiced their desire to preserve it.



## SOLUTION

The city of Bologna embraced a collaborative design approach to determine the forthcoming purposes of the canopy. The strategy aimed to transform this neglected area on the city's outskirts into a vibrant public space for cultural events and projects, addressing concerns of decay and safety in the Bolognina district through community engagement.

The municipality oversaw the renovation of the canopy and the construction of a gymnasium and a cultural centre in its immediate surroundings. The work on the canopy involved structural consolidation including the foundations, electricity, and plumbing.

The rejuvenation of the space faced many challenges: an earthquake in 2012 shifted policy priorities, the bankruptcy of the company suspended the works, and the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down the process. The work was finally completed in 2022.

In March 2022, the Culture Department of the Municipality launched a public call for a continuous programme of activities during summer. The pilot looked for proposals that would understand how to live day by day in the new square and understand its unique qualities, or 'genius loci'. The winning proposal "Di Mondi Festival" reflected the multicultural character of the district. On 9 July 2022, the new Lucio Dalla square was inaugurated, marking its new role as a multi-use cultural space.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Lucio Dalla square is part of a larger urban transformation project in the area including a new community centre, pedestrian areas, cycle paths and green areas. Trees, lawns and reflecting pools will be added to complete the facade of the square for summer 2024.
- The square has become a vibrant hub for music, dance, theatre, and diverse activities, and sports such as skating, ice-skating, boxing, tennis, and chess. Activities cater to a wide audience and are tailored to people of all ages, embodying a renewed modular area beneath the canopy.
- The sheltered, shady space offers protection from the elements. Street furniture such as tables and free water fountains enable many families from all social, economic and cultural background to use the square as a lively and welcoming daily meeting place.
- The canopy's architectural shapes recall the style of engineer Pier Luigi Nervi (although not the author of the work). This is because the association with Nervi was so strong that, over the years, Bolognina residents and market workers have called the space 'Tettoia Nervi' ("Nervi's canopy"). This helps to increase its emotional impact and popularity. Consultations held in the area showed that locals experience this space as beautiful and prestigious, worth being protected and enhanced with new activities and functions. Dedicating the square to Lucio Dalla, a beloved figure in Italy, increased curiosity and anticipation for the new public space, regionally and nationally.



(c) Comune di Bologna

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Consider all the technical aspects concerning a new public area (cleaning, mobility, security, sustainability, accessibility, green impact, etc).
2. Develop pilot temporary projects (two or three seasons maximum). Be very careful when selecting the leader and consider their problem-solving skills, flexibility, economic soundness, authority and capacity of representing other associations, public bodies and institutions.
3. Manage governance flexibly, reviewing choices as problems or opportunities arise.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The municipality set up a transversal working group coordinated by the Director of Culture Department. It involved several sectors: heritage, public works, security, mobility, etc. to define the function and uses of the square.

7 permanent staff members work on the project.

Project managers for the Municipality of Bologna were Architect Manuela Faustini and Architect Vincenzo Daprile.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€4 million**

for the renovation of the square. Plus €329,000 in 2022, and €289,000 in 2023 for Di Mondì Festival.

The entire budget of Di Mondì Festival comes from government funds for culture and entertainment in the suburbs. It was allocated through a public call managed by the Department of Culture and Creativity of the Municipality of Bologna. The Municipality of Bologna provides cleaning, public lighting, maintenance of green spaces, and maintenance services for the structure.



## RESOURCES

Di Mondì Festival <https://dimondifestival.it>

Tasca Studio <https://www.tascastudio.it>

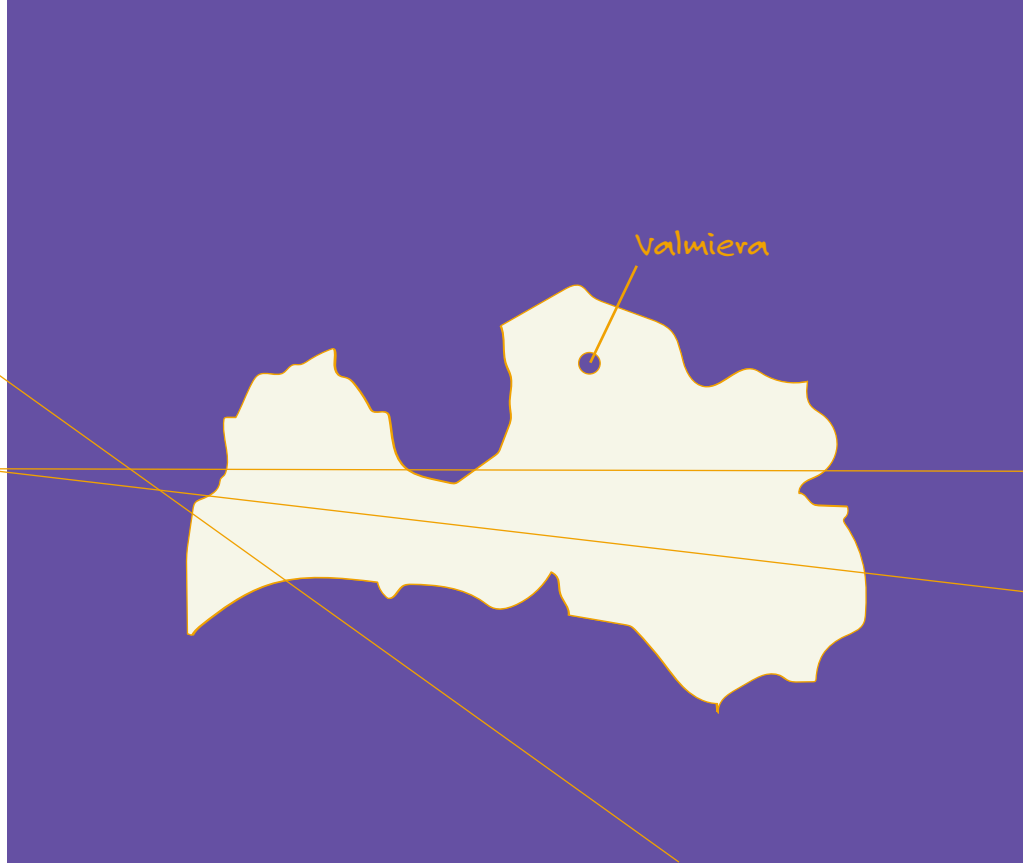
Piazza Lucio Dalla on Attribune  
<https://rb.gy/wwxxs>

## CONTACT:

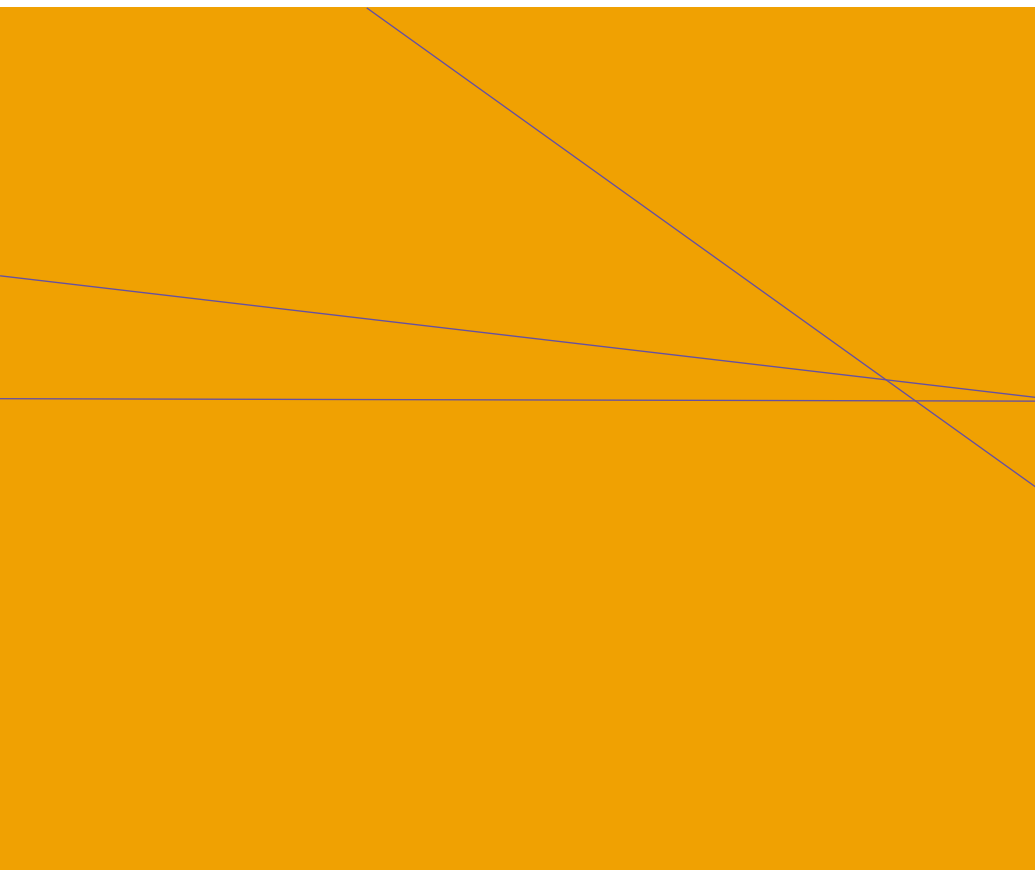
Culture Bologna

[cultura@comune.bologna.it](mailto:cultura@comune.bologna.it)

[immobilitaculturacreativita@comune.bologna.it](mailto:immobilitaculturacreativita@comune.bologna.it)



LATVIA





**VALMIERA**  
LATVIA

👤\* 24,750

Type of project: public space

Year completed: 2021

Main sponsor: Latvia's State Forests Jsc. And Municipality of Valmiera

Architecture studios: Mind Work Ramps in cooperation with ALPS Landscape Workshop and Celu comforts Ltd.

Prizes:  
1st place in the "Sustainability in architecture, construction, design in the Baltics 2023"  
2nd place in the "Landscape" category at the "Best Building of the Year in Latvia 2021" awards  
2nd place in the "Territory Improvement" category at the "Latvian Construction Year Award 2021" competition

Total area: 1,1395 ha

(c) Valmiera municipality

# TRANSFORMING ASPHALT INTO NATURE

FOREST PARK, A MODEL OF ECO-CONSCIOUS AND INCLUSIVE REHABILITATION



## BACKGROUND

Valmiera is located in northern Latvia, on the border with Estonia, in a region of lakes and rivers. The municipality has placed high-quality architecture and the built environment at the forefront of its development strategy, aligning with the sustainable development strategy of Valmiera county 2022-2038. The city has also developed a sustainable energy and climate action plan until 2030, integrating initiatives aimed at flood risk prevention and the promotion of sustainable, climate-neutral construction.

The city lacked an urban space that catered to the interests and needs of its young residents, particularly those who embraced non-traditional sports and activities. The limited sports facilities and lack of amenities at the skate park led to conflicts and even vandalism. At the same time, the community sought a space for young people to engage in urban sports and activities, reducing social tensions and isolation. Thus, a new sports park became even more necessary.



## SOLUTION

Through active community engagement and careful consideration of resident preferences, the city revitalized a formerly deteriorated area into a vibrant contemporary and green park by converting an old and neglected outdoor ice rink. "The Forest" park for sports and active recreation meets the needs of the youth population by providing a modern urban space for urban sports. The new design includes a 170 m long cycling track, a spectator stand, a court, a playground, outdoor fitness equipment and a public drinking water tap. Facilities were tailored to cater to various groups, actively promoting interaction, unity, and a deeper connection with nature.

The chosen site was a vast asphalted area that contributed to the heat island effect during the summer and lacked amenities for visitors.

The new project aimed to create an inclusive and sustainable urban oasis featuring lush vegetation, localised rainwater management, promotion of eco-friendly mobility, aesthetically cohesive outdoor installations, efficient LED illumination, eco-conscious materials like pine bark mulch, soil conservation, enhanced amenities, and responsible waste management.



(c) Valmiera municipality

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- To gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by the area and to anticipate the necessary infrastructure solutions, the municipality initiated a public opinion survey. Suggestions and feedback were collected from residents, all of which were considered within practical constraints and harmonized to shape the optimal development plan for the area.
- The territory is designed to successfully accommodate and foster a sense of belonging for diverse social groups, including youth, children, families, individuals with mobility impairments, active sports professionals and beginners, as well as enthusiasts of active leisure.
- The outdoor furniture was thoughtfully chosen to align with the city's character while ensuring durability. Plant selections considered Latvia's climate and urban conditions, providing varying foliage throughout the seasons. Tree types suitable for active areas were chosen, and safety was prioritized with leaf-conscious choices.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Address the community needs and ensure the dignity of the action sports enthusiasts within the community.
2. Conduct annual citizens' survey on local development priorities and identifying citizens' expectations. Public involvement and participation are KEY for a successful project.
3. Integrate and mix new infrastructure with existing functional institutions.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The project was overseen by the Valmiera City Council.

A working group of approximately six representatives from the Real Estate Management Authority, Urban Planning Department, and Municipal Management managed the project development within the municipality.

Currently, the maintenance and cleanliness of the park fall under the responsibility of the municipality, in collaboration with Valmiera Youth Center "Vinda." Park activities are organised in conjunction with the Municipal Sports Administration.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING



Total budget: **€1,157,300**

57% of the total cost, were covered by Valmiera's municipal budget, including the utilisation of a loan from the State Treasury.

43% of the total cost came from a donation from the State Forests Company (Latvijas valsts meži) earmarked for the creation of an educational sports and leisure area for children and families.

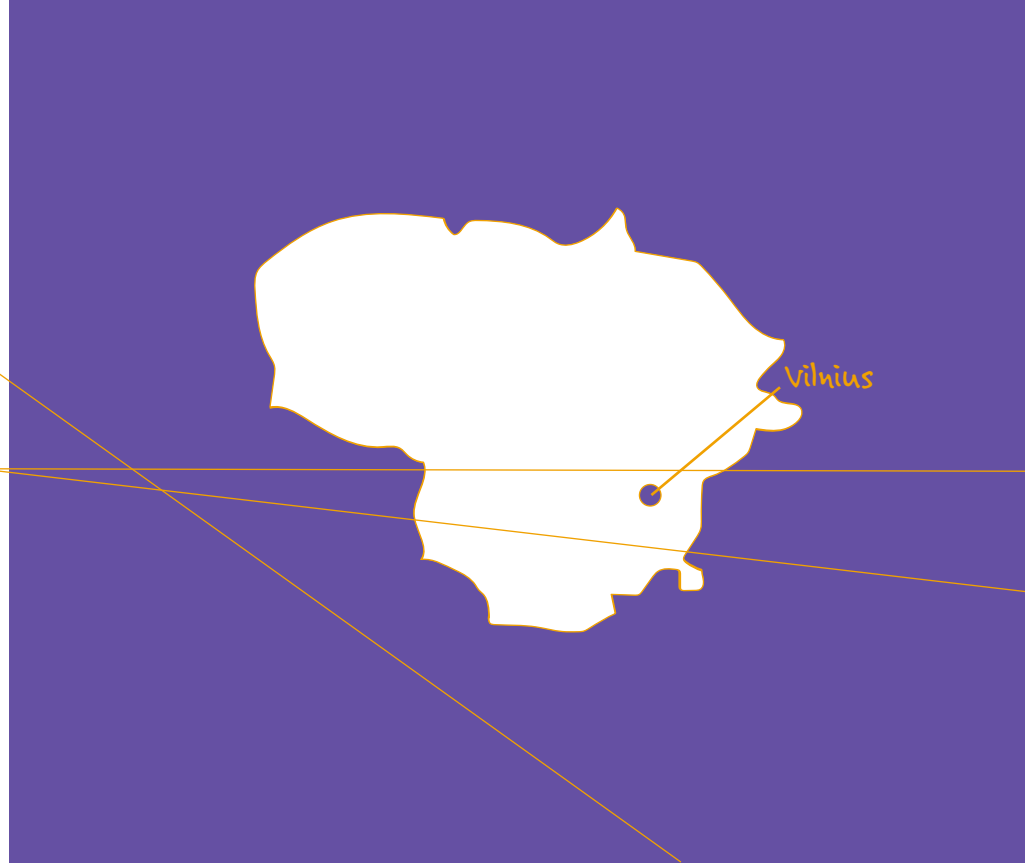


## RESOURCES

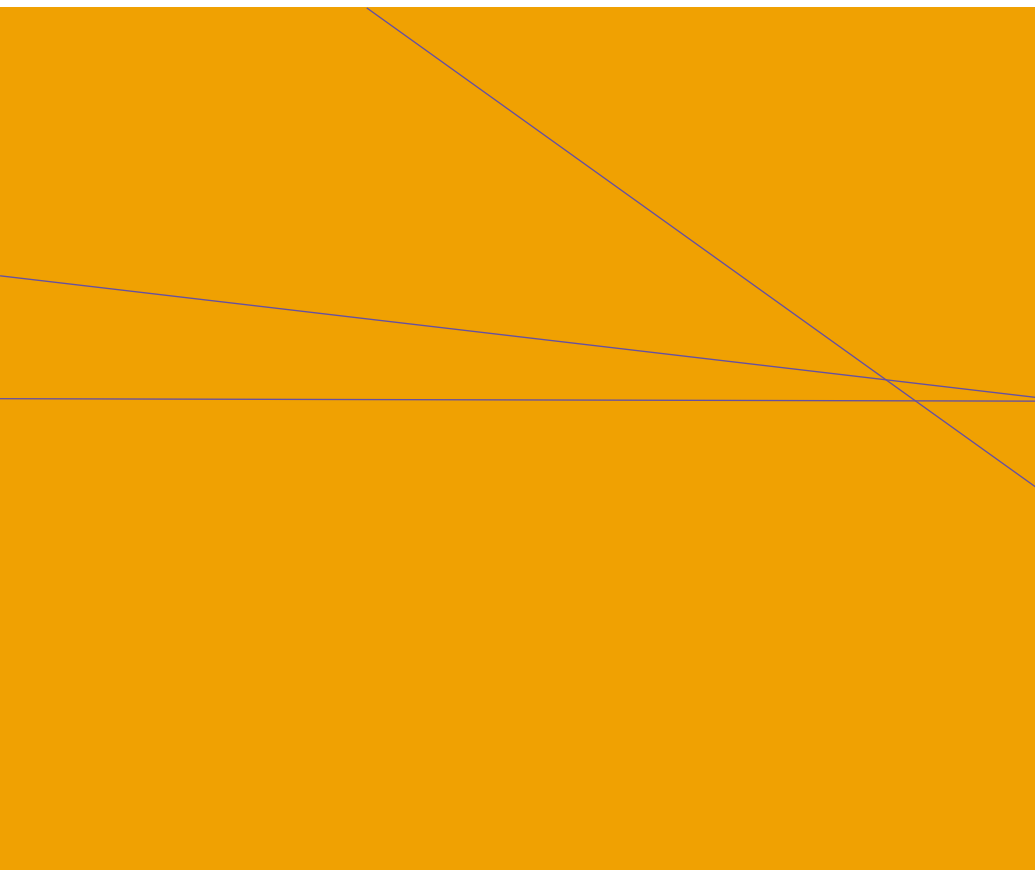
Visit Valmiera: <https://tinyurl.com/4psm6phy>

Forest park video (in Latvian):  
<https://tinyurl.com/3kwxw6yv>





# LITHUANIA





# MUSEUM OF URBAN WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

REVIVING TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CITY



## BACKGROUND

Vilnius has defined “10 principles for quality architecture in Vilnius” that are important for the shaping of the future image of the city and its quality of life. Two of these principles intend to preserve and reuse historic buildings and heritage objects and invites to develop the city in a more sustainable way.

Užupis, the oldest historical suburb of Vilnius, was defined a priority area in the Vilnius City Master plan and Vilnius Old Town management plan. It features a great example of wooden architectural heritage: the house at Polocko Street 52. Considered one of the most beautiful historical wooden buildings in Vilnius, it was abandoned for decades, leading to its significant deterioration.

However, in 2019 Vilnius City Municipality decided to restore the building and establish a new cultural institution - the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture (MUWA) as a cultural infrastructure meeting the needs of contemporary society.



## SOLUTION

Built in the 19. century, the house is an example of wooden urban architecture with unparalleled carvings on the facade.

The restoration works, carried out by an interdisciplinary team of woodworkers, polychrome researchers, and restorers, aimed to preserve the building’s authenticity. 80% of the original exterior decoration elements and 70% of the authentic walls and structures were retained. To reduce the use of new materials, the team used elements from other demolished wooden buildings when those from the original house could not be saved.

The interior wall decoration was preserved and partially restored in accordance with polychrome research results.

The MUWA promotes wooden architecture as a sustainable, environmentally friendly solution, and integral part of the contemporary city. The museum presents an exhibition which connects the past, present and future of urban wooden architecture in the world, as well as works by local artists, and by students and graduates of the Vilnius Academy of Arts.

It also established a consultation centre with a database of craftspeople to help owners and residents of wooden buildings in Vilnius learn how to maintain and preserve their homes in a way that is sustainable and historically sensitive.

The renovation of the house inspired a similar project in Šnipiškės, another suburb of Vilnius, where an experimental hub of historic and contemporary wooden architecture is planned.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- With the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture, the city has managed a sustainable restoration and rebranding of a historical wooden house, setting an example for the country and wider Baltic region.
- The museum activities contribute to raising awareness about the aesthetics and contemporary use of wooden architecture heritage among residents and visitors, bringing historic timber-based buildings back into the cityscape.
- The museum has published a catalogue of the original elements of wooden architecture in Vilnius and organised two international conferences: for contemporary wooden architecture (2022) and for wooden architecture heritage in cities (2023).
- Since its opening, the museum has become a meeting point for the people of the district. The consultation centre has already helped around 100 citizens with the maintenance and restoration of wooden buildings.
- From an artistic point of view, the house features authentic materials and forms from the late 19th century. Its unique decoration distinguishes it from other residential wooden buildings of the time, giving it the character of a suburban residence.
- The museum is an in situ preserved example of the heritage of wooden architecture that strengthens the visual identity of Užupis, and is a recognisable and much-loved place by Vilnius residents.

© Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

- Invest significant time and resources in documentation and research, including architectural assessments, archival research and on-site surveys. This will ensure that the project aligns with the building's original design and cultural significance.
- Establish partnerships with skilled craftspeople and heritage experts who possess cultural heritage preservation certificates and expertise in traditional building and crafting technologies to maintain authenticity during restoration.
- Prioritize sustainability and authenticity: in the use of existing materials and minimize the introduction of new elements. Strive to strike a balance between preservation and modern requirements, ensuring that the building remains functional while staying true to its historical and cultural roots.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

6 representatives from Vilnius City Municipality from Department for Culture, Department for Cultural heritage preservation, Department for Project Management.

Director of Directorate of Vilnius Memorial Museums

3 staff members from the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture.

Technical supervision was provided by the company JSC Vilnius vystymo kompanija.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€1,183,597**

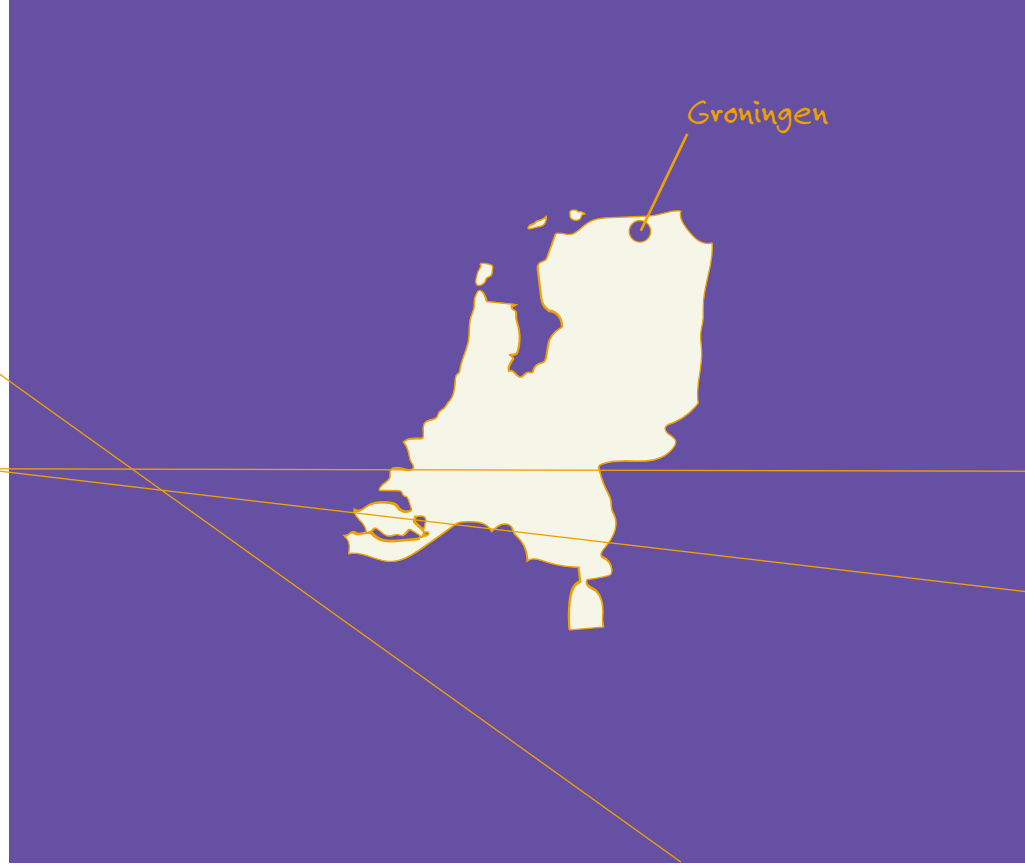
of which €506,991.18 funded by the European Union (Priority 7 "Promotion of quality employment and participation in the labour market" of the European Union funds investment action programme), €676,606.63 funded by the Vilnius City Municipality.

## RESOURCES

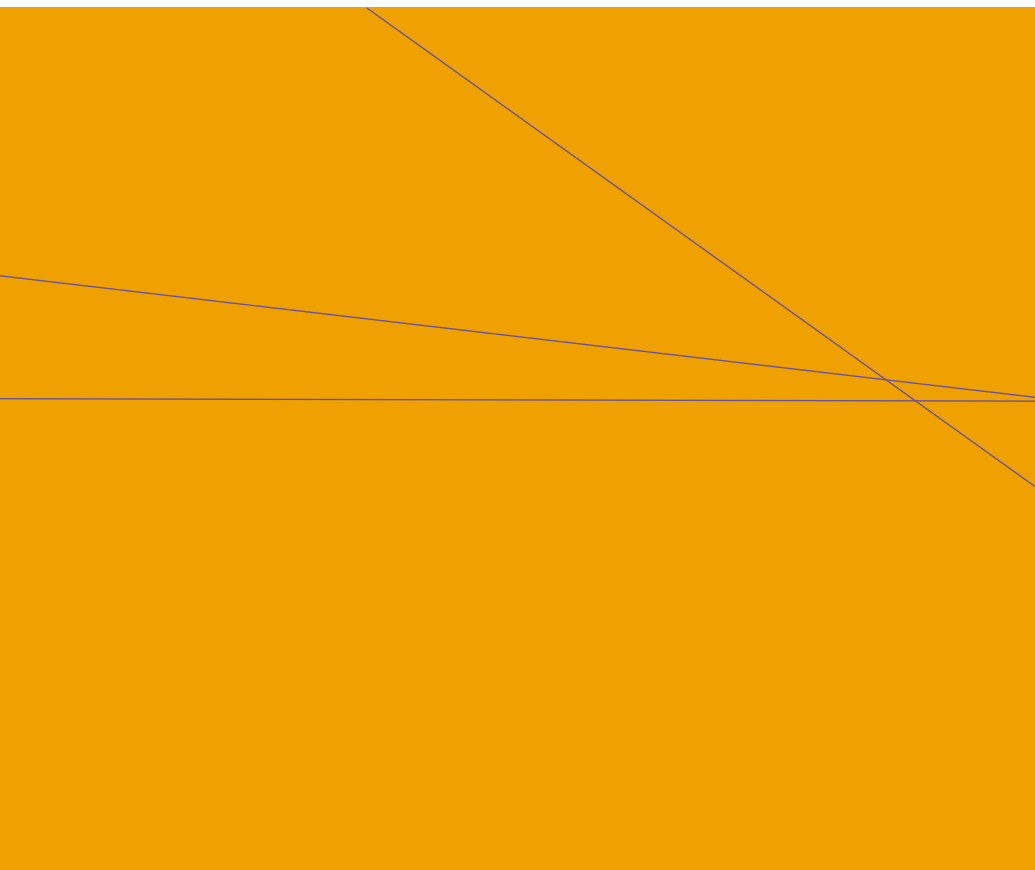
Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture:  
<https://mmam.lt/>

European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2023: <https://tinyurl.com/mfkekeh>

EU Mies Awards nominations:  
<https://miesarch.com/work/5472>



# THE NETHERLANDS





# DE KUNSTWERF, THE ARTS YARD

A CULTURAL SPACE OPEN ON THE CITY

## BACKGROUND



For years, theatre and dance companies were scattered around the city. In 2018, the municipality published an architectural competition to commission a new building to bring the four companies in one place and give them a permanent and visible address in a former industrial area, at the junction between the old and the new Groningen.

The brief for De Kunstwerk ('the art yard') consisted of 4 individual closed rehearsal spaces for the different theatre and dance companies with strict noise requirements. Each should have its own kitchenette, front door, and office.

Competition entrants had to consider the remnants of this past, which include a row of workers' houses, a large electric-power station (already home to a renowned dance company), a villa, and a small entrance pavilion, all dressed up in an eclectic livery of brown stock brick with stone and redbrick trim.

The project fulfils Groningen's ambitions for high-quality architecture and responds to government cuts in budgets for theatre and dance companies.



## SOLUTION

The winning project proposed to organise the requested spaces and facilities around a series of interconnected courtyard gardens. The heart of De Kunstwerk is therefore not the building itself, but the inner garden, designed as a succession of public spaces that invites the audience to look inside and encourages interaction and cooperation between the companies.

The new building fits cleverly around the existing historic buildings, offering a nice passage with fine nooks and sitting niches. The central amphitheatre, positioned between all companies, serves as a central public gathering space.

Where the site's edges are free of buildings, the architects added arcades and colonnades to close the perimeter visually. Paved in brick, which ensures a certain continuity with the historic fabric, they open the place to the surrounding urban fabric.

Architects faced two major constraints. First, because of gas extraction in the region, Groningen is prone to earthquakes. Second, the rehearsal spaces needed to be acoustically insulated both from each other and the neighbours. They finally opted for a steel frame (bendy enough to withstand seismic shaking) clad with thick concrete for acoustical performance.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

The project smartly balances multiple interests and gives a spatial and material response to several challenges: it integrates the new building harmoniously with the historic buildings and urban fabric; it enables synergies among companies; it opens the place to the city; it gives visibility to the companies; it prevents noise pollution and is planned against earthquakes.

The visual language is very graphic and certainly innovative in the Netherlands.

De Kunstwerf does not focus on the theatre hall, but on the public sphere. By the nature of its design, De Kunstwerf is a cultural building that establishes a connection between residents and visitors. It also enables and supports synergies among the companies.

The lower facade made of black polished concrete, with galleries and arches, feels almost classicist, while the white convex concrete elements that tower above it look industrial. The curved galleries function well as a transition area between inside and outside, and the vaulted white concrete creates changing shadow effects throughout the day.



(c) Iwan Baan and Stijn Bollaert

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Make sure that you enable young architectural firms to apply for architectural design competitions. Even if they cannot demonstrate extensive experience on similar projects, they can bring fresh and innovative ideas.
2. Consider the surrounding public space.
3. Design a building that suits the needs of the makers of culture, in which they can be visible, rather than a place for the exhibition of their work only.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The architectural design competition was organised in two stages, under the supervision of the city architect. 120 applicants submitted their vision for the project in written format. Then five architectural offices were invited to submit a sketch design – they were remunerated for this. The selected architectural studio worked closely with the theatre and dance companies, and with municipal departments, taking their needs into account.

Under the leadership of a single project leader, several municipal departments were involved in the project: the Department for Culture, the Department for Urban Planning and Development, and the Department for Real Estate. Altogether, 10 civil servants from the municipality were involved throughout the procurement, design and construction process.



## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€ 7 million**

for the design and construction of the project. 52% funded by the City of Groningen; 42% deriving from the rent paid by the dance and theatre companies; 6% funded by the State.



## RESOURCES

Kunstwerf website

<https://kunstwerfgroningen.nl>

Information on the website of the Dutch Design Awards: <https://rb.gy/kfic83>

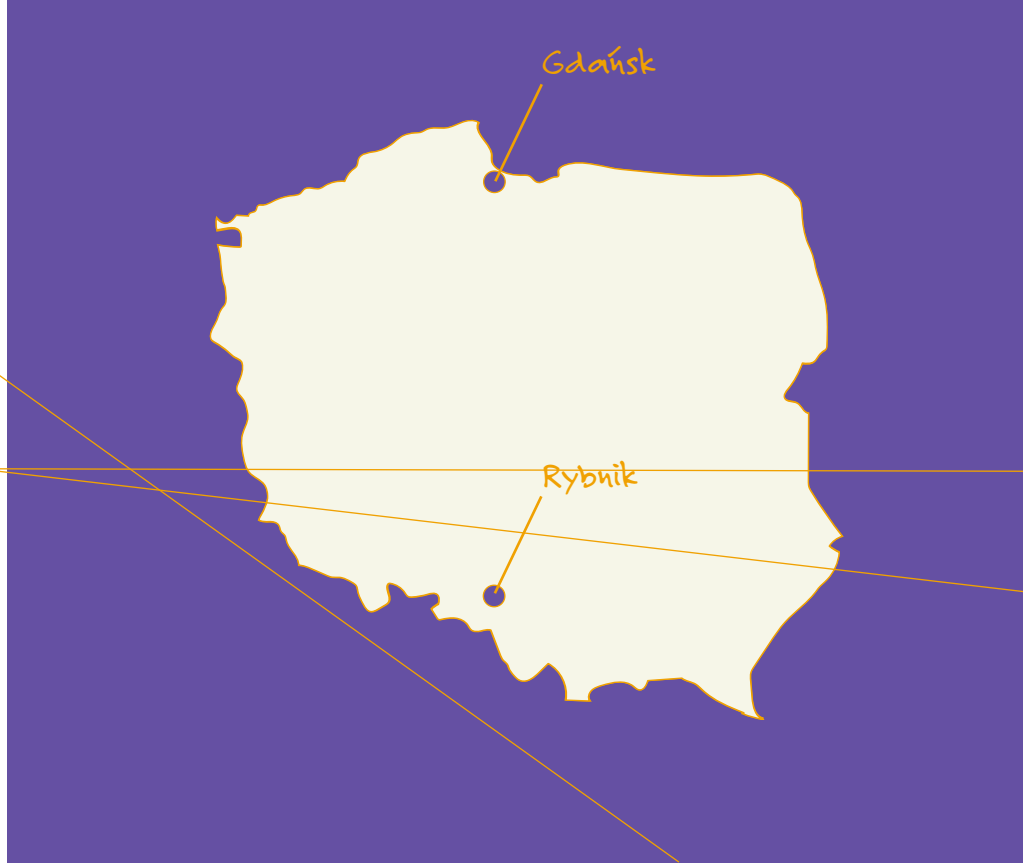
Video, including interview with the architecture studio: <https://rb.gy/hd4x9v>

## CONTACT:

Groningen Municipality contact form

<https://tinyurl.com/2a9hmxwh>

Ard de Vries Architecten  
info@arddevries.nl



POLAND





GDAŃSK  
POLAND

470,621

Type of project: governance

Year completed: ongoing

Main sponsor:  
City of Gdańsk

Prizes:  
Leader of Local Government  
2022 award by the  
Association of Polish Cities

(c) Gdańsk Architect Office

# GDAŃSK DESIGN WORKSHOPS

WHERE LOCALS CAN SOLVE URBAN CHALLENGES AND SHAPE THEIR CITY



## BACKGROUND

Gdańsk takes a comprehensive approach to ensuring the quality of life and well-being of its inhabitants through conscious management of the built environment. The Development Strategy Gdańsk 2030+ puts the quality and coherence of the public space at the fore of development goals for the city.

Gdańsk created the position of City Architect in 2021 to coordinate urban planning, aesthetics, and quality of new and rehabilitated built environment. The City Architect operates at the intersection of various local government departments and sector-specific policies to help make Gdańsk a green, common, accessible, and innovative city.

Among its activities, the City Architect conducts consultations and participatory processes with local communities for the urban development of public and private areas.



## SOLUTION

Gdańsk Design Workshops are a series of meetings devoted to innovations in shaping public space. They are developed and implemented by a multidisciplinary team from the City Architect's Office, with external experts when needed.

Gdańsk Design Workshops are inclusive and open to all interested parties, e.g., residents, specialists and non-specialists in urban planning and architecture, investors, scientific community, local government officials, Non-Government Organisations.

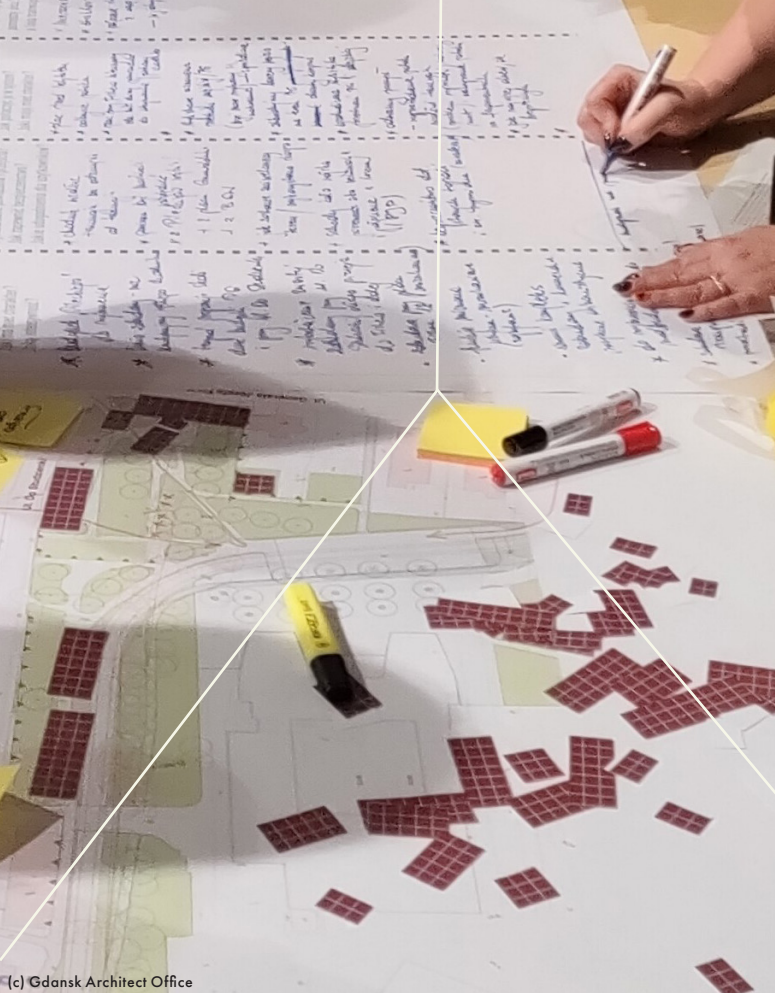
The design workshop process has led for instance to a study of the Grunwaldzka Avenue strip, an important service area of the city, which will increase the number of jobs, apartments, services, greenery, and expand the public transport network. Another example is the development of an architectural and urban vision of the entrance to Stogi beach.

The workshops embody the values of the development strategy of the city, namely: cooperation, education, openness, environment, and mobility. With an emphasis on public space, social integration, and civic activity, they focus on participatory solving of local issues and provide recommendations for new directions to shape the city.

The process lasts between 3 months and 2 years, and typically includes 5 meetings: introduction, three workshops and a conclusion with recommendations for future planning.

About 10 projects have already been implemented using this method.





(c) Gdansk Architect Office

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Each workshop process enhances the urban environment using the available human, architectural, natural and cultural resources while managing the limitations and dysfunctions of the space.
- The expertise and partners mobilised in the design workshops method is tailor made for each topic, area, and issue. They have involved urban planners, sociologists, architects, historians, engineers, economists, educators, IT specialists, media and PR experts
- The design workshops have strongly contributed to trust building between the city administration and the community. They resulted in an increased sense of agency in policy-making and shared responsibility for the effects of its implementation on the city's physical, environmental, and social space.
- Participants to the design workshops all have an emotional connection to the place under transformation. The workshops contribute to the aesthetic education of participants who then feel responsible for the applied solutions and act as ambassadors of their quality and appropriateness.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Assemble your team: mobilise a wide range of competences with a strong emphasis on social skills (communication, mediation, leadership).
2. Raise awareness about the value of the design workshops among local political leaders and within the city administration to finance the practice.
3. Be flexible in the process, don't be afraid to work unconventionally and horizontally. Be brave, dare to make mistakes, be friendly, be honest and do not give up!

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: between **5,000-180,000 PLN**, or **€1,079-€38,841**

per design workshop process.

Depending on the complexity of the problem solved by the Design Workshops method and the expected results, the budget varies. Staff costs for an average workshop process (6 months) amount to € 3,500.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The workshops are run by the City Architect Office with one full time staff member, and three half time.

## RESOURCES

Gdańsk Design Workshops on the city website  
<https://tinyurl.com/56skcsau>



# PILOTING NEW SOCIAL SPACES

HOW A LIGHT-WEIGHTED STRUCTURE CHANGED THE LIFE OF A SMALL CITY

## BACKGROUND

Located in the south of Poland, Rybnik is a city divided into 27 districts, each with a strong local identity. In 2021, the city adopted its development strategy which included the goal to improve the aesthetics, functionality and accessibility of public spaces and urban green areas while making the most of its former industrial areas and facilities for economic, social, recreational, and natural purposes.

There was a need for community building and for better social integration among residents which led to the idea of a new public space as a focal point for local life.

This resulted in an architectural project to create several places where people could meet and where all types of cultural and sports activities could be practiced. The challenge was to create a universal building, flexible enough to be adapted to different urban contexts.

The Local Activity Centre is a pilot project in Klokocin, a peripheral district of Rybnik identified as lacking a centre and meeting place for community groups, festivals, and exhibitions.

## SOLUTION

During preparatory meetings, locals suggested that the facility should feature both an outdoor space for open air activities and an indoor area for meetings in bad weather conditions.

Designed by MWArchitekci, the Local Activity Centre consists in a coherent ensemble of one building with a multifunctional room and a shelter. Both structures create a kind of semi-atrial space. The roof features integrated seats, which can be used on an everyday basis for people to relax and as seating area for outdoor events.

The rhythm of the glue laminated timber rafters, lengthened in leaps on one side and shortened on the other side, creates a distinctive, twisted roof plane. The consistency of materials is complemented by the façade covered with larch planks, which turn grey over time, making the buildings blend with its surroundings.

Although simple, unassuming, and unpretentious, the Local Activity Centre perfectly responds to locals' needs. The facility is operated by a local association in collaboration with the municipality and district's leaders. The city intends to create several similar structures around Rybnik as part of its Municipal Revitalisation Programme.



(c) Michał Jędrzejowski

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The City Council organised public consultations enabling residents to comment on the proposed architectural concept. Their involvement early in the process created a sense of ownership and responsibility for the final building.
- The idea is for the residents themselves to be the hosts of the complex and take the initiative to organise events there that will bring them together.
- The materials came from local manufacturers, which reduced transport costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the structure could be assembled by local contractors reinforcing the sense of ownership.
- The Local Activity Centre is a place with which residents identify and which serves them.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Consider small scale projects and light structures as valuable tools for activating and integrating the local community.
2. Listen to needs and plans of the local community. Make space for grassroots initiatives driven by the residents themselves rather than solely by governmental decisions.
3. The local community should have a voice at every stage of the creation of such a facility, starting from the conceptual phase, through documentation, investment implementation, and continuing into its operational phase.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- Development Stage: 4 staff members from the City Hall, two from the Revitalisation Office at the needs analysis stage, two from the Investment Department to supervise the construction of the building.
- Operational Stage: 3 individuals from the local community, local initiators, association, no personal costs incurred.
- Collaborating architects: Barbara Rokicka, Aleksandra Rudnicka, Jan Fiałkowski.
- Civil, soil and survey: Radosław Wileński.
- Construction company: ZPUH Al-Due Bogusław Jarzyna

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

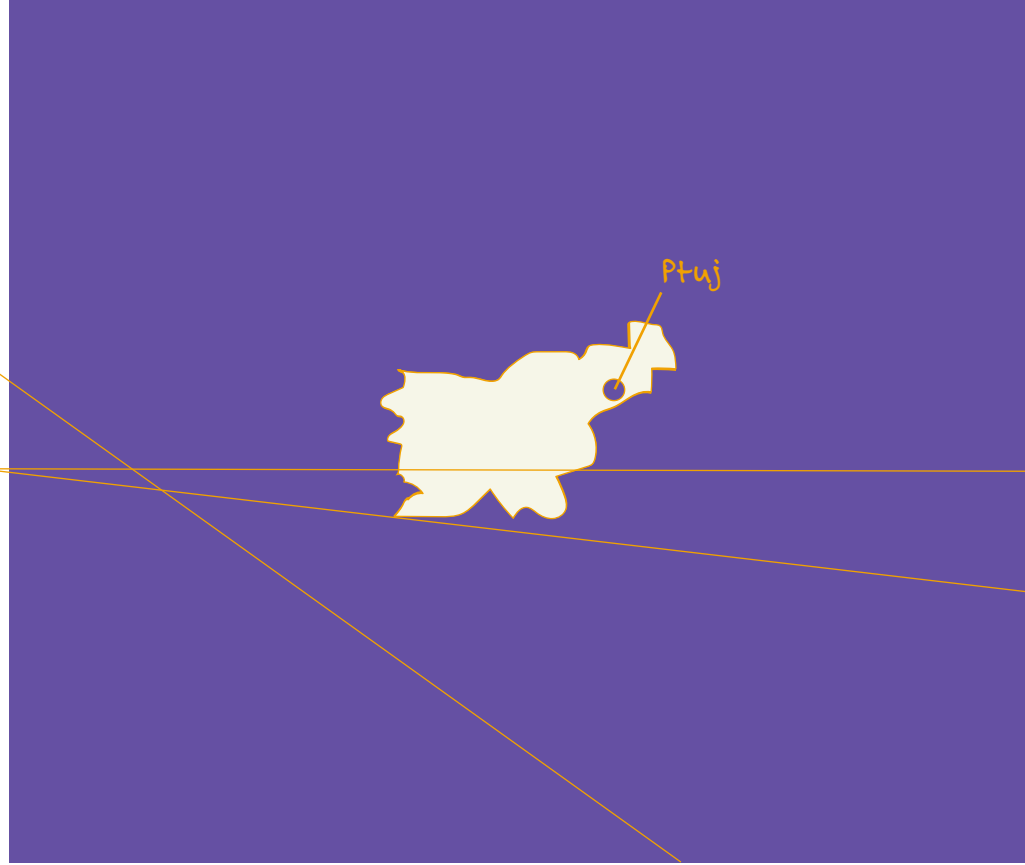
Total budget: **1,098,000 PLN** or **€250,313**

funded by the municipal budget.

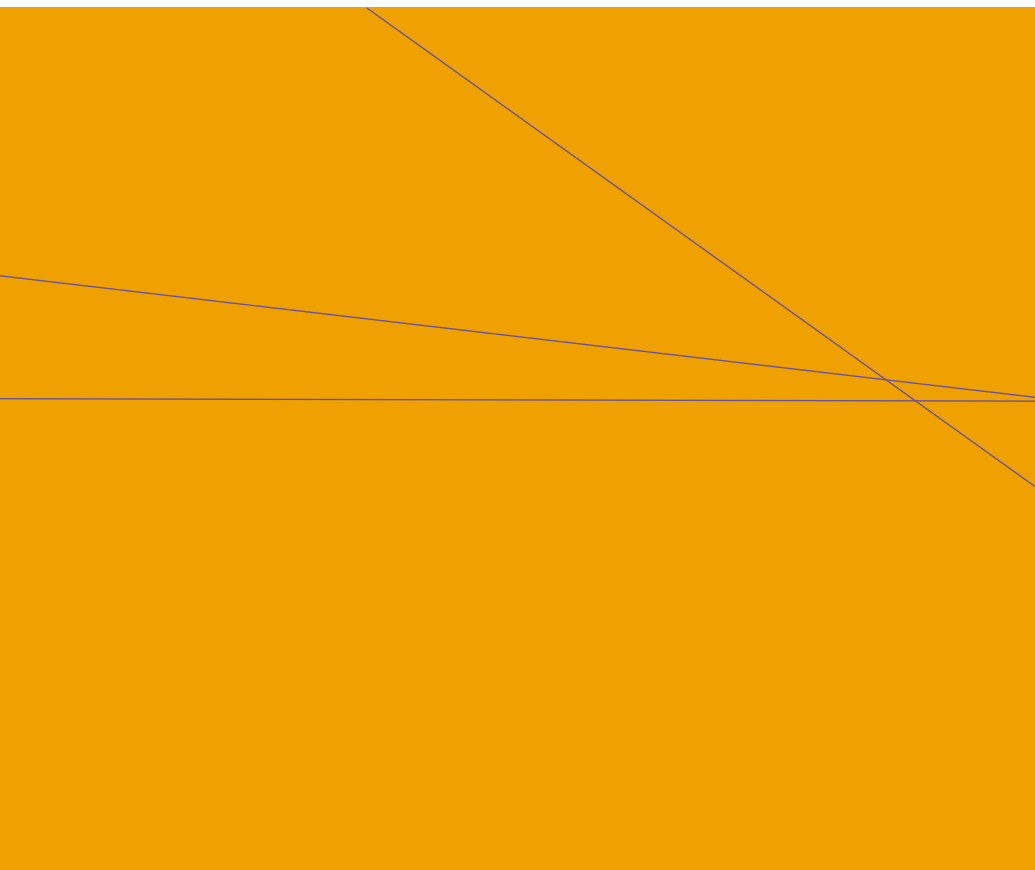
## RESOURCES

EU Mies Awards website  
<https://www.miesarch.com/work/4669>

Architect's website  
<https://mwarchitekci.pl/1701-cal>



SLOVENIA





**PTUJ**  
SLOVENIA

€ \* 23,530

Type of project:  
public space

Year completed: 2020

Main sponsor:  
City Municipality Ptuj

Architecture studios:  
Arhitektura Krušec; Studio  
AKKA

Prizes:  
Plečnik Award 2021,  
Shortlisted for the EU Mies  
Awards 2022 (category  
Urban Planning)

Materials:  
concrete, gravel,  
pohorje tonalite

Total area: 6,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Usable floor: 765 m<sup>2</sup>

(c) Miran Kambič

# LIVING ON THE RED CARPET

HERITAGE AND MODERN DESIGN MEET ON PTUJ'S MARKET SQUARE

## BACKGROUND

The market square is located in one of the oldest parts of the city, that has been changing over time, due to the destruction of the town by fires at the end of the 17. century, the construction of new houses and demolition of old ones.

In the past, a large building used as a military barracks surrounded by narrow medieval streets stood on the site of today's marketplace. Before the First World War, the 300-year-old barracks and the adjacent building were demolished to create a large open community space. However, after the demolition, the formerly narrow streets became a gaping void at the crossroads of two important roads running through Ptuj. The vacant area was subsequently used as a marketplace, a road, a bus station, and parking lot.

In 2016, the municipality decided to renew the market square to offer Ptuj citizens a new place to meet and socialise. The project is a continuation of the old city centre rehabilitation which started in 2013 by renovating the city square. After the market square, it has continued with the renovation of the Old Steklarska building in 2021.

## SOLUTION

The market square renovation includes a new building and an open-air community area with shaded tables and chairs.

The market building stands on the site of the former covered market, demolished as part of the renovation of the square. The new building is made of red concrete and has a distinctive horizontal geometry. The horizontal roof "underlines" the verticality of the church bell tower and thus further emphasizes this city landmark. There is a viewing platform on the roof. This way the square becomes a stage for the daily lives of the citizens of Ptuj.

With the demolition of the barracks, Ptuj had lost one of its largest red bricks roofs which are characteristic of the city. Symbolically, the roof of the demolished building is given back to Ptuj in the form of the red-coloured pavement of the square. Its paving pattern recalls the outline of the former barracks and its adjacent house.

The urban carpet is not only a design element but also an architectural means that defines the relationships in space and provides functional integrity for a broad public area.

The chairs are a distinctive element of the new square. They are placed in such a way that they create different ambiances for people to sit down: linear or circular composition or individually placed around the square.

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

During the construction works, archaeological excavation found that the medieval streets in this area were paved with pebbles from the nearby rivers and streams. Drava River gravel was therefore used as aggregate for the characteristic structure of the terrazzo that covers the new marketplace, where the barracks once stood, to remind of its past and heritage. The rest of the area is paved with Pohorje tonalite. These are two indigenous materials that shaped the history of Ptuj.

By paving the new square with red terrazzo, the idea was to bring it closer to everyday users, facilitating the social acceptance of the space, while reminding people of the city's characteristic red roofs.

The chairs were placed either on the square's edges or clustered in the trees' shade, encouraging people to come together and socialise. They really came to the fore during the Covid-19 pandemic, being one of the few available outdoor seating areas in the city.

The space is versatile and can be used as a marketplace, outdoor showroom, concert venue, or a playground.

The overall design, including the marketplace building, is purposeful in its monochromatic tone, bringing out the variety of colours of the products sold at the market. The space is conceived as a contextual background for life and movement. In other words, it is only beautiful when people are there.



(c) Tomaž Krušec

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Include the local population in the design process, encourage public debate and discussion.
2. Weave connections (material and immaterial) to the existing urban fabric when designing a new public space. The place that was there before informs the architecture, but most of all, it helps the residents to accept the new space as an integral part of the city.
3. Include as much greenery into open town spaces as they permit.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Mayor's Office and the Department for Economic Activities of the City Municipality Ptuj managed the project.

Approximately 10 people were involved: a project manager, specialists in transport, municipal infrastructure, use of public space, EU fundraising and operation of commercial activities from Javne službe, d.o.o., a company founded by the Municipality for the implementation of economic public services.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€6,163,335.56**

of which 69% were funded by the European Regional Development Fund and 31% by the municipality.

## RESOURCES

City of Ptuj

<https://www.ptuj.si/objava/333769>

EU Mies Awards

<https://www.miesarch.com/work/4971>

Arhitektura Krušec

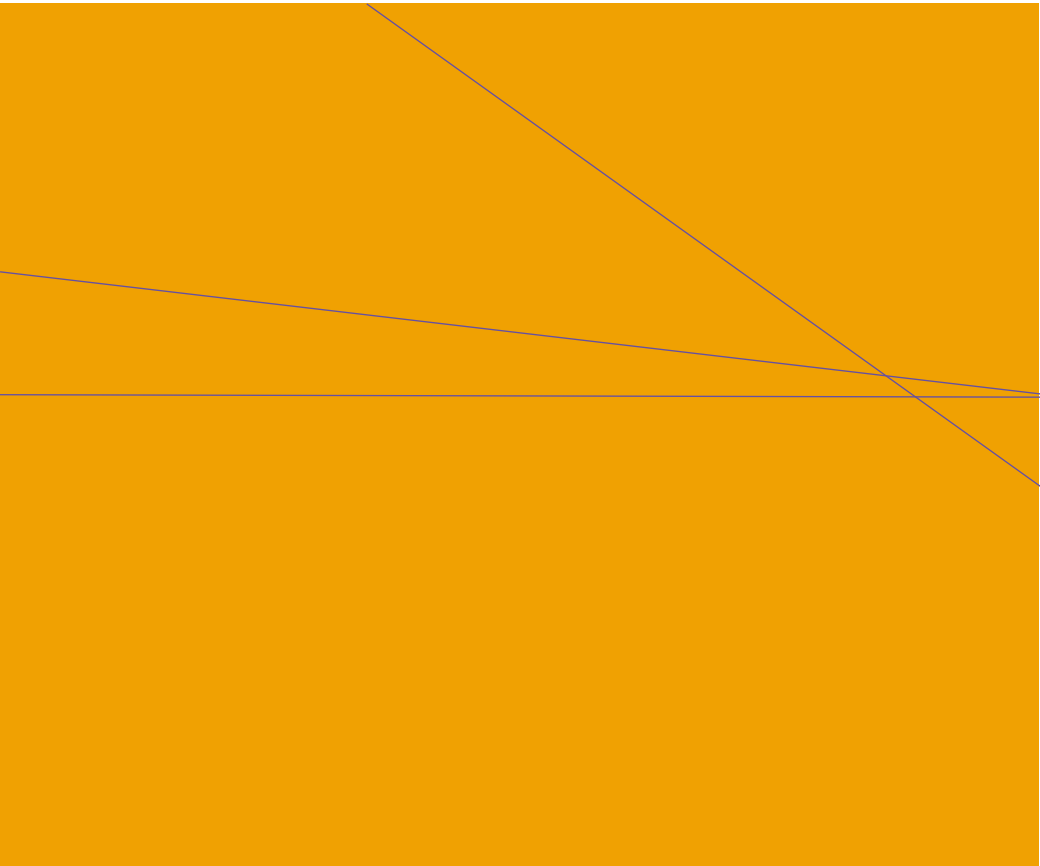
<https://tinyurl.com/bdhuke6n>

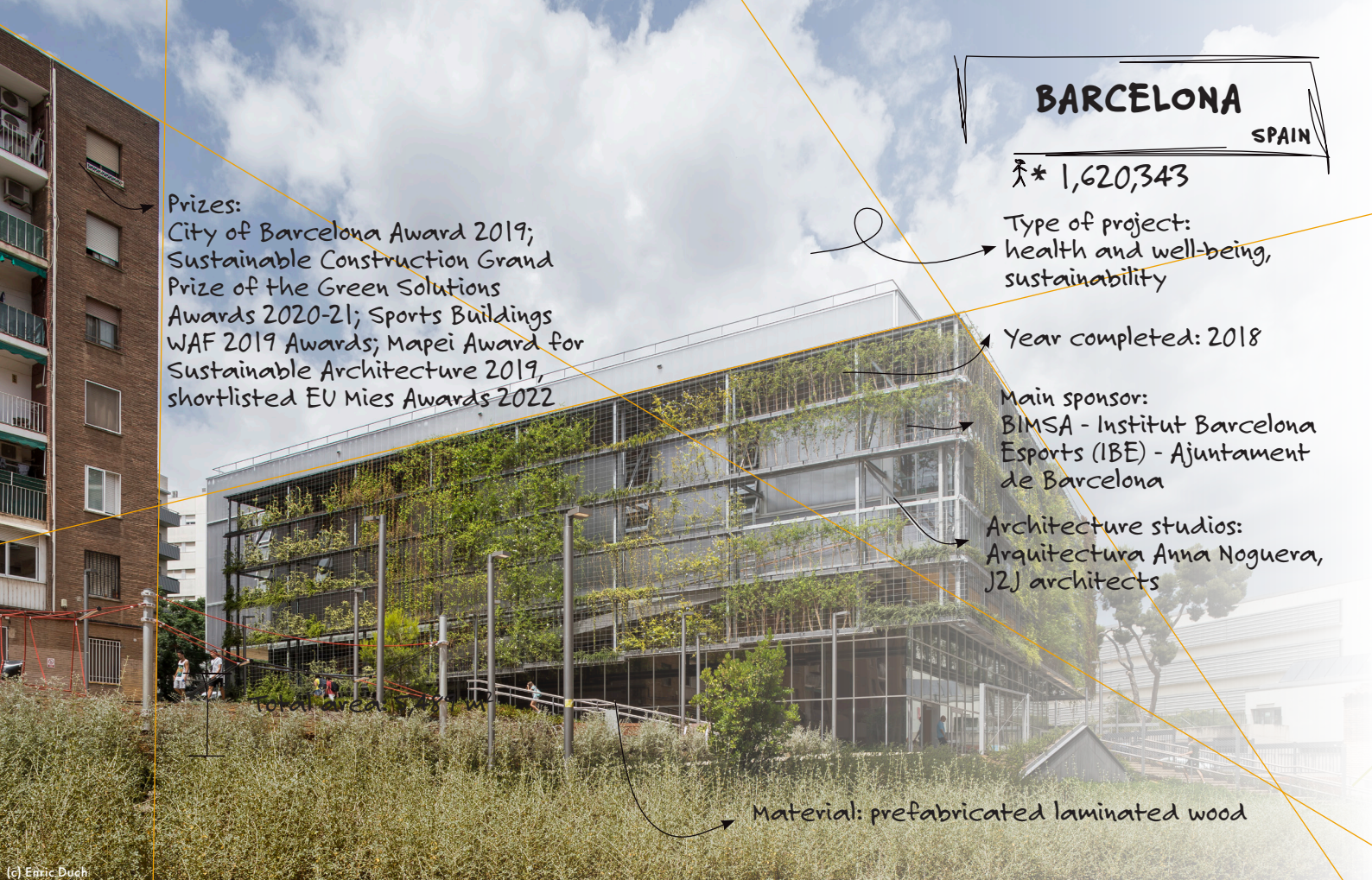
Piranesi Magazine

<https://tinyurl.com/y83h9cma>



# SPAIN





**BARCELONA**

SPAIN

👤 \* 1,620,343

Type of project:  
health and well-being,  
sustainability

Year completed: 2018

Main sponsor:  
BIMSA - Institut Barcelona  
Esports (IBE) - Ajuntament  
de Barcelona

Architecture studios:  
Arquitectura Anna Noguera,  
J2J architects

Prizes:  
City of Barcelona Award 2019;  
Sustainable Construction Grand  
Prize of the Green Solutions  
Awards 2020-21; Sports Buildings  
WAF 2019 Awards; Mapei Award for  
Sustainable Architecture 2019,  
shortlisted EU Mies Awards 2022

Material: prefabricated laminated wood

# TURÓ DE LA PEIRA'S SPORTS CENTRE

GETTING FIT IN A CARBON NEUTRAL HAVEN



## BACKGROUND

Turó de la Peira is an urban quarter located in a high-density, low-cost social housing neighbourhood from the 1960s in the periphery of Barcelona. The area lacked meeting places and had a shortage of green and public spaces and facilities.

An existing but outdated sports court and pool were located in the area, nestled between neighbouring buildings. The pool had suffered damage, and the outdoor sports court was inadequately sized for competitions and created noise disturbances for nearby residents. In addition, the urban landscape was characterised by hard pavement, concrete walls, and a total absence of vegetation.

An intervention was needed to turn the grey and uninhabitable environment into a green, welcoming and friendly place. Barcelona City Council decided to hold an architectural competition to upgrade the sports facilities.



## SOLUTION

The projects involved a holistic transformation of the site and its surroundings through renaturalisation and environmental regeneration.

The old sports court and pool were merged into a single building to create more free space and a garden. The new sports centre consists of two overlapping large spaces: a heated swimming pool on the semi-basement floor and a sports court on the upper floor.

The innovative building was designed to operate with minimal energy consumption, including features such as thermal insulation considering solar orientation; sensor-monitored skylights and windows for efficient cross-ventilation; a compact, partially submerged structure to minimise heat loss; and an aero-thermal system that recovers heat from hot water production. Photovoltaic panels on the roof generate up to 90% of the building's energy needs. An exterior plant facade envelops the structure, shielding it from the sun and forming a bioclimatic space. The green gallery is a hydroponic plantation system, chosen for its lightness, substrate durability, water retention capability and ease of installation.

Walls and solid surfaces were replaced with landscaped slopes that make various paths and provide sitting places and children's playgrounds.

The entire structure, pillars, girds, slabs and walls were prefabricated in the workshop and assembled on site.





(c) Enric Duch

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The project emphasises the perceptions and feelings conveyed to those using the space. Natural light, greenery, and the incorporation of wood create a cosy ambiance, distinct from the coldness often found in comparable facilities.
- Mindful of the topography, the building is half-buried, bridging the difference in level between the two streets.
- The city council organised three project presentations for the inhabitants' approval. Community members had the opportunity to articulate their concerns, aspirations, and demands, which impacted positively the project.
- The passive architecture criteria construction has achieved an energy efficient building. The investment will be recovered in a few years by saving on energy costs. The equipment has obtained the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum qualification.
- The project aligns with the Barcelona City Council's commitment to people with functional diversity by ensuring access to external and internal facilities.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Develop a global vision of the project. Pay attention to the different systems that make it up concerning electrical and thermal energy consumption from the start.
2. Keep in mind from the drafting stage, the necessary maintenance of the building when it will be in operation.
3. Have a technical maintenance team trained in the new technologies applied to the building that is able to understand and manage the installations.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The project was executed by personnel from the Barcelona Sports Institute including staff from the administrative, legal, and sports promotion departments. The dedicated team from the Department of Facilities Projects and Works Management played a pivotal role in its successful implementation.

After defining the project, its execution was delegated to the Barcelona Municipal Infrastructures (BIMSA) company, specifically established for government-promoted construction projects.

The facility is run by the private company IGE BCN S.L, through a 4-year concession contract with the Barcelona City Council. The company is responsible for the maintenance of the installations, and for offering sport activities for various groups.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€9,805,542**

The budget of the project was estimated €9,483,253 for the cost of the building and €322,289 for the cost of the park. The funding was exclusively provided by the Municipality of Barcelona.

The City Council temporarily covered for the energy expenses during the first year of operation (€110,000).

First establishment expenses to be paid by the concessionaire (€60,000 first year).

## RESOURCES

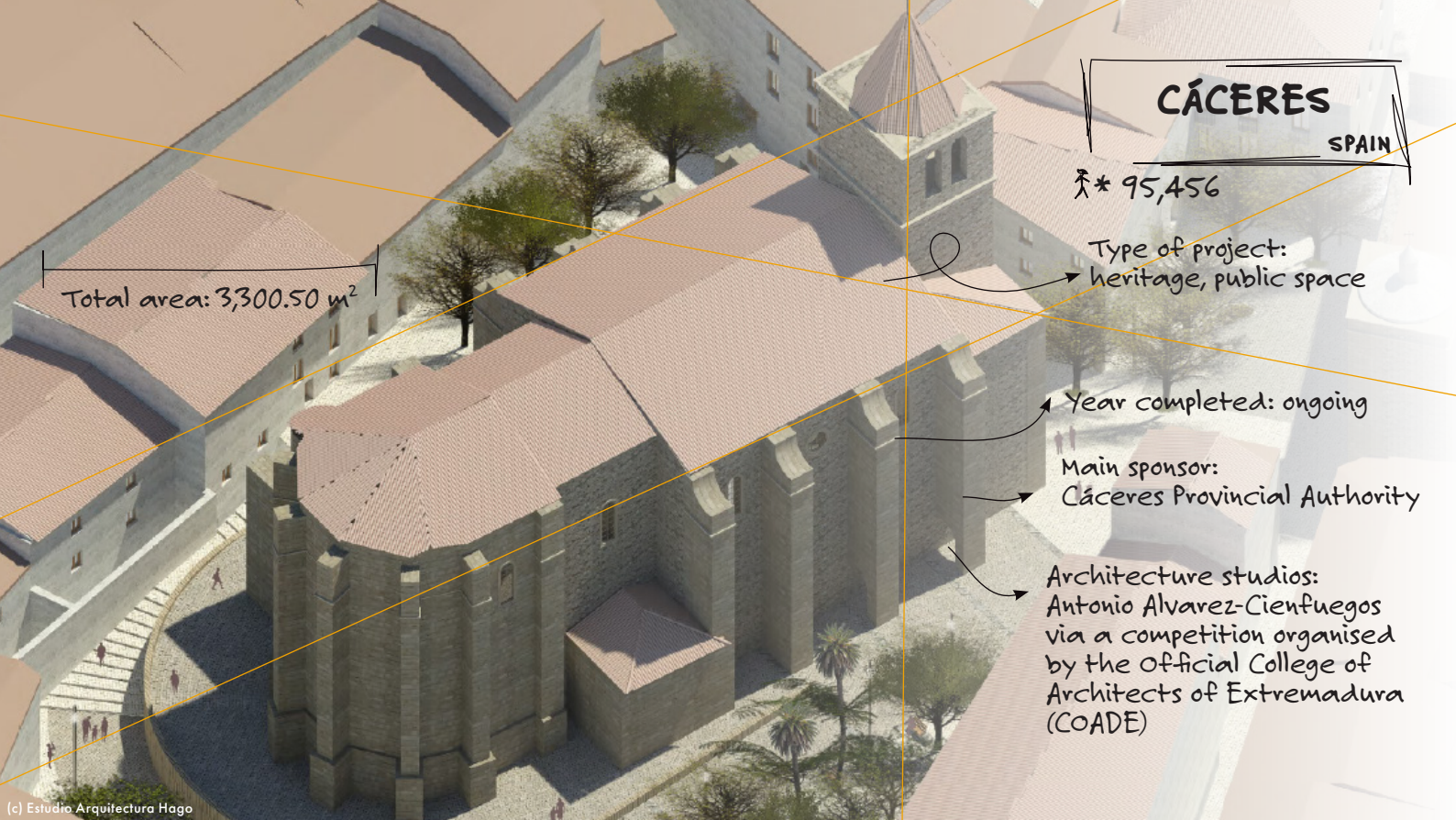
Anna Noguera Architects  
<https://tinyurl.com/ye2ykh4>

Video <https://tinyurl.com/msnhybbf>

ArchDaily <https://tinyurl.com/5n8fn8bc>

EU Mies Awards  
<https://tinyurl.com/5n8zpn9m>

Design Boom <https://tinyurl.com/2tb2rfch>



**CÁCERES**  
SPAIN

👤 \* 95,456

Type of project:  
heritage, public space

Year completed: ongoing

Main sponsor:  
Cáceres Provincial Authority

Architecture studios:  
Antonio Alvarez-Cienfuegos  
via a competition organised  
by the Official College of  
Architects of Extremadura  
(COADE)

Total area: 3,300.50 m<sup>2</sup>

## DESIGNED BY LOCALS

PEOPLE, GOVERNMENTS, AND EXPERTS REDEVELOPING SANTIAGO SQUARE TOGETHER

### BACKGROUND

Santiago square is a popular spot for Cáceres' locals and tourists alike, hosting cultural and leisure activities. However, residents' associations expressed concerns about the degradation and marginalisation of this area of the UNESCO World Heritage city. In 2022, the public authorities decided to transform the square into a more attractive space that could better meet the needs of users, accommodate various activities and reinforce the community's sense of belonging.

The Official College of Architects of Extremadura (COADE) run a competition to collect proposals to:

- improve accessibility to the square and its functionality;
- establish a strategy for car mobility and parking;
- enhance green areas;
- ensure the proper management of urban services;
- improve water collection and drainage.

This initiative is inspired by the New European Bauhaus, and the Spanish Urban Agenda. It implements actions foreseen by the Local Action Plan of Cáceres and meets objectives of the Spanish strategy for buildings' energy renovation.



### SOLUTION

The renovation of the Santiago square and its surrounding neighbourhood is the outcome of

- a participatory approach that closely involved citizens in the decision-making process
- a collaboration between several governance levels, which provided strong leadership
- expert guidance provided by the COADE

The specifications of this competition were formulated by a working group made up of representatives of residents' associations, COADE, and public authorities. The Provincial Council of Cáceres, the City Council of Cáceres, and COADE also held several technical meetings to align their criteria and expectations.

The COADE, in collaboration with residents' associations, carried out numerous meetings, workshops, and actions, such as visits to the square, throughout the process to raise awareness among inhabitants and collect their proposals.

The competition jury, made up of residents, architects, and representatives from the local and provincial administrations, convened in July 2022 to review all submissions. In October 2022, the winning project was publicly presented and an exhibition showcasing all the proposals was inaugurated at the COADE headquarters, in the presence of all the stakeholders involved in the process.



(c) Estudio Arquitectura Hago

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The rehabilitation process for the square is strongly rooted in the concerns and proposals expressed by the residents, considering the specificities of the place, namely a square and neighbourhood with high heritage value.
- A core objective was to reinforce the local community's sense of belonging. The participatory approach has enabled architects to tailor the solutions for the rehabilitation of the square to the needs of all users, considering the heritage value of the place.
- Throughout the process, numerous actions were carried out to sensitise inhabitants to the challenges of the project and collect their proposals. This participatory approach enabled to design bespoke solutions and reinforce the community's sense of belonging.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Design and implement a structured participatory process from the outset, in which inhabitants of all ages, genders and social backgrounds, are at the centre of decisions.
2. This participatory process must be led and advised by professionals, so that decisions are technically and economically feasible.
3. Foster a dialogue between different points of view, disciplines and administrations in a multi-level co-governance process.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The project was supervised by several public administrations, including the

- Cáceres Provincial Council (Department of Intelligent Territorial Infrastructures and Mobility),
- Cáceres City Council (Office of Urban Development and Historic City)
- Historic City of Cáceres Consortium

The Competition Ideas was developed and implemented by the COADE, with contributions from the Ciudad Monumental de Cáceres Neighbourhood Association and the Technological Institute of Ornamental Rocks and Construction Materials (INTROMAC).

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€ 600,000**

including the forthcoming renovation works. It was provided by the Provincial Council of Cáceres to the COADE to implement the project and the rehabilitation works. This budget will probably be increased to €1.1 million due to inflation.

## RESOURCES

Competition website:

<https://www.coade.org/plaza-de-santiago>

Video: visit of the square:

<https://tinyurl.com/yve6v82m>

## BALEARIC ISLANDS

SPAIN

👤\* 1.2 million  
(940,471 on Mallorca)

→ Type of project:  
housing; sustainability

→ Main sponsor:  
Balearic Institute of  
Housing - Institut Balear  
de l'Habitatge (IBAVI)

→ Architecture studio: IBAVI

Prizes:  
2022 AR Emerging  
Award as recognition  
for the evolution of  
IBAVI's approach from  
Life Reusing Posidonia  
to Santa Eugènia

Materials:  
marès sandstone,  
wood (partially from  
reuse), reused roof  
tiles, handmade  
kitchen tiles

Total area: 502 m<sup>2</sup>

Year completed: 2023

# PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE REVOLUTIONISING SOCIAL HOUSING, ONE STONE AT THE TIME

MALLORCA'S TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS IN ECO-FRIENDLY PUBLIC DWELLINGS

## BACKGROUND

In Spain, the construction industries account for 17% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and despite this, there is no widespread debate about the importance of reducing materials emissions during building work (grey energy). It is therefore essential to reconsider the industrial processes during construction works in addition to the energy efficiency of the final building.

Social housing projects in Spain are usually awarded through architectural competitions organised by municipal or regional authorities, but in-house architects may also design projects.

Since 2010, the Balearic Institute of Housing (IBAVI) - the public agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Territory of the Balearic Government responsible for providing and maintaining social housing - has been developing internal housing projects to demonstrate the environmental benefit as well as the economic and constructive feasibility of using local materials. These one-off initiatives seek to provide reference values for energy-efficiency requirements for future architectural competitions.



## SOLUTION

The building of six housing units in Santa Eugènia, a small town in the centre of Mallorca, marks the culmination of research carried out by IBAVI on the potential of massive stone construction to produce social housing.

The project takes stock and updates the IBAVI's experience of "Life Reusing Posidonia", a prototype of affordable, sustainable, energy-efficient housing in Formentera. Following a mapping of resources in Mallorca, it aims to develop a sandstone construction system that is faster, cheaper, easier and more refined than previous IBAVI buildings.

The 6 dwellings in Santa Eugènia are built on the site of an old garage whose materials (sandstone walls, window blinds, roof tiles) have been reused to create a two-level building. The double-oriented pass-through apartments make the most of the conditions of sunshine and ventilation. All dwellings have access to an outdoor community patio. The building is based on a structural system of parallel vaults between upper and lower floor. A colonnade of stone piers supports stone lintels. On the first floor, the vertical structure repeats the 80 x 40 cm marès pilasters on the ground floor. Wooden trusses support the ventilated roof. All the spans between pillars are the same to make the construction easier and compensate the extra cost of using natural materials. Windows are arranged on vertical axes to make the walls and lintels simpler to construct.

The use of local marès stone not only lowers local carbon emissions compared with conventional materials produced with fossil fuels, but greatly improves thermal inertia, and therefore comfort.



© Milena Villalba

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The project is the result of a comprehensive study of site conditions: winds, solar orientation, rainfall, geotechnical, morphology and urban context, local regulations, reusable waste and local materials, available industries, building tradition and crafts, available clean energy, full-cycle water management, ecological footprint reduction, and dwelling typologies adapted to the needs of potential residents.
- The project links heritage, architecture and climate change. Traditional architecture has been a constant reference as a way of working from economy of means and what is available locally. The materials used mainly come from the island and are sustainably sourced, for instance, marès sandstone and re-used wooden formwork boards that support the 25 cm of *Posidonia oceanica* sea grass used for insulation.
- This is the most energy efficient building achieved by the IBAVI personnel to date: energy class A with an annual demand for combined cooling and heating consumption of 4.8 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> for the year 2020 and 6.4 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> for the year 2050, with a theoretical scenario of +2 °C.
- Building houses with eco-friendly materials and processes is environmentally beneficial and improves quality of life at almost the same cost of conventional construction. The project demonstrates that sourcing local materials enhances the connection to the place and the efficiency of bioclimatic strategies.
- Elements salvaged from older buildings – e.g. window blinds, traditional Arabic tiles – provide the dwellings with delightful uniqueness, a highly unusual touch for publicly built housing that is all-too-often soullessly standardised.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Look for the local low-carbon resources to face the climate conditions through passive solutions, using vernacular architecture as guide map.
2. Learn or recover the techniques and knowledge to build with at least one of these resources and update the technique to make it affordable.
3. Promote technical skills and knowledge update and development for any stakeholder involved in the construction process: designers, technicians, workers, builders, industries, etc.

## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

11 IBAVI staff members and 7 external technicians.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

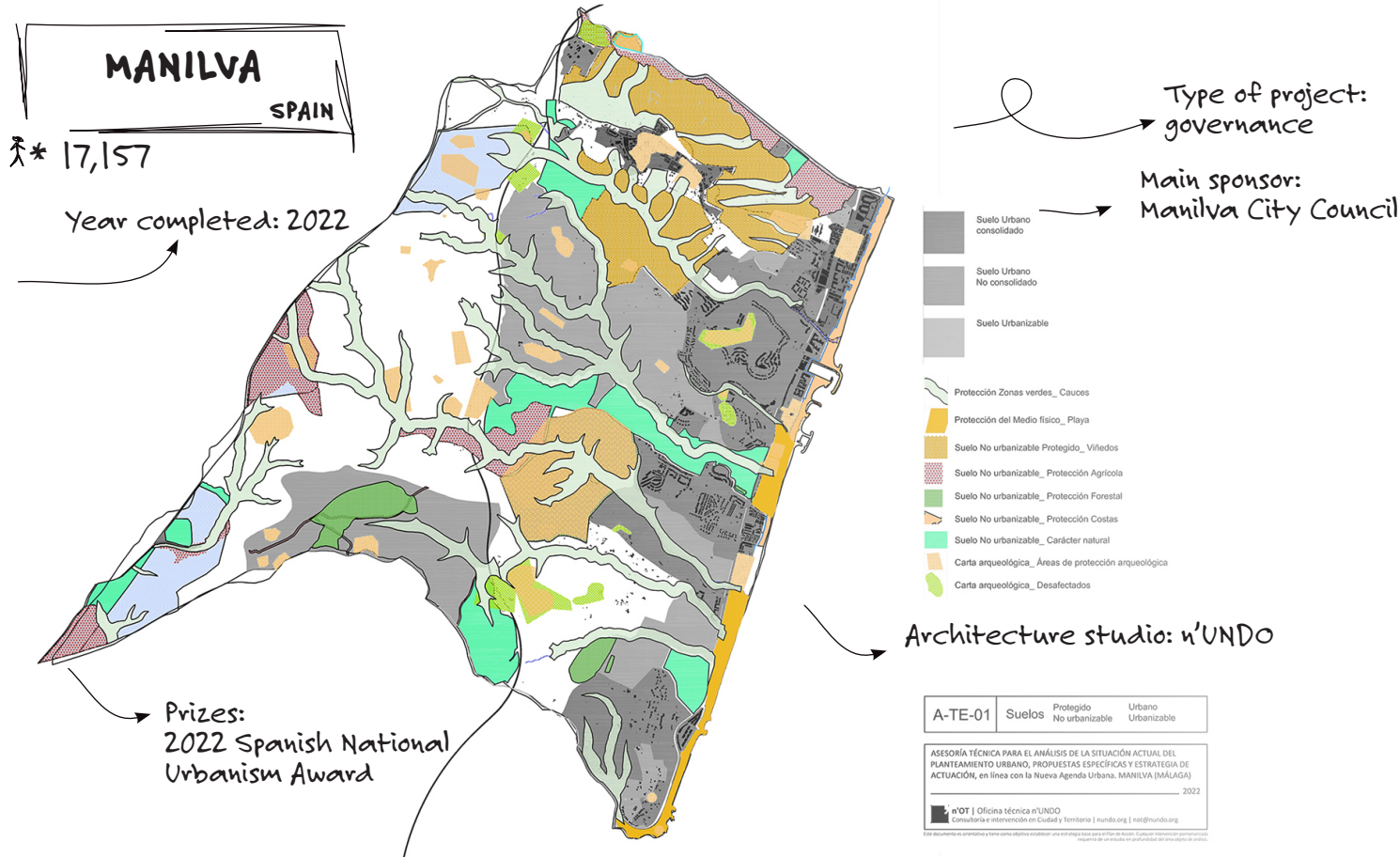
Total budget: **€889,120.41**

65% funded by the IBAVI, 26% by NextGeneration EU and 9% funded by the national government through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia, PRTR).

## RESOURCES

IBAVI website <https://rb.gy/ncj4a>

The Architectural Review <https://rb.gy/hm39j>



(c) n'UNDO

# A SMALL COASTAL CITY TURNS GREEN

RESPONSIBLE URBAN PLANNING FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

## BACKGROUND

Manilva is a coastal municipality in the province of Málaga, Andalusia. Its location, wine culture, and heritage make it a tourist destination. It has been one of the fastest developing municipalities on the Costa del Sol in the past decade, with its population nearly tripling. In 2019, more than a third of its residents were foreigners, primarily from the United Kingdom. Although an economic engine, tourism increases traffic and pollution and pressures municipal services and supplies.

In recent years, the municipality has been updating its urban and territorial planning to align with regional, national and international strategies addressing the climate crisis. The local urban agenda and its related action plan strongly emphasise sustainability, renaturation, decarbonisation and climate resilience across policy areas.

In line with these objectives, the Municipal Urban Planning Office commissioned the technical office n'UNDO to conduct a study and propose a strategy for improving and regenerating Manilva's urban and surrounding environment. The n'UNDO methodology is based on the principles of minimum intervention ("Do not do", "Undo", and "Redo") for a maximum impact.

## SOLUTION

The technical assistance resulted in an urban planning decision-making tool: the "#Manilva Plan n'2030". It offers concrete proposals and strategies for the sustainable development of Manilva in the short, medium and long term, allowing flexible execution, feedback and adaptation to changes.

This plan includes 212 specific and independent actions, coordinated through 3 strategies:

- Manilva, natural and cultural
- Manilva, connected and accessible
- Manilva, alive all year

The proposals can be executed independently and without a pre-established order to ensure greater quality, control, and readjustment over time.

Some examples include the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings for housing, reducing car traffic in the urban centre, green walks to connect peri-urban areas with the centre, dismantling 7.5 km of highway going through the city centre, parking areas within 200 metres of the coastline, and establishing a permanent citizen participation platform.

In the analysis and proposal phase, Manilva City Council included various agents from public administration, elected representatives, and civil society (residents, businesses, heritage organisations). Those diverse perspectives created a fine-grained picture of the area and contributed to concrete proposals towards a sustainable urban model in the short-, medium- and long term.



(c) Manilva City Council

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The analysis was carried out at different scales (territorial, municipal, street) to make visible and connect the various realities that coexist in the territorial and urban complexity and to involve all agents linked to the process. It favours the inclusion of different viewpoints ranging from subjective perceptions to more technical approaches.
- The analysis involved a review of cultural, heritage and ecological landscapes, territorial sustainability, urban sprawl and diversity. It also examined the mountain-coast connection and the dual impact of tourism.
- The methodology is characterised by its adaptability, holistic process, and participatory nature, with a continuous dialogue in all phases tailored to specific cases with flexible timelines. The result is an accessible and practical format with digital support to facilitate the management of the plan and the monitoring of the different phases: I. Analysis and diagnosis, II. Proposals and Strategy, III. Implementation and, IV. Evaluation.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

The Plan n'UNDO methodology is replicable in various contexts and scales.

Tips from the city:

1. Secure political and technical commitment from the outset. Prioritise process over results.
2. Have a clear idea of the local needs in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Start with the first two stages of the methodology, which require a minimum of the resources to obtain a perspective of the possibilities and strategies that can be applied in your territory.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This work has been promoted and supervised by the technical and legal unit of the Urban Planning Department of the City Council of Manilva.

To develop Plan n', the number of staff and the technical profiles are adapted to the size of the area and local conditions. In Manilva, only Phase I (Analysis and diagnosis) and II (Proposals and strategy definition) of Plan n' were developed, involving a team manager and two urban planners, supported by other profiles for specific areas as environmental sciences and ecology.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **€14,500**

for the technical assistance for the preparatory works of the Local Urban Agenda and its Action Plan (Phase 1 and 2). It was funded by the Municipal Urban Planning Office of Manilva.

## RESOURCES

Plan n'UNDO #Manilva:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycxjfs2w>

Spanish Urban Planning Award (in Spanish):

<https://tinyurl.com/4ajhysx2>

Superior Council of the Colleges of Architects

of Spain: <https://tinyurl.com/35ux8swc>

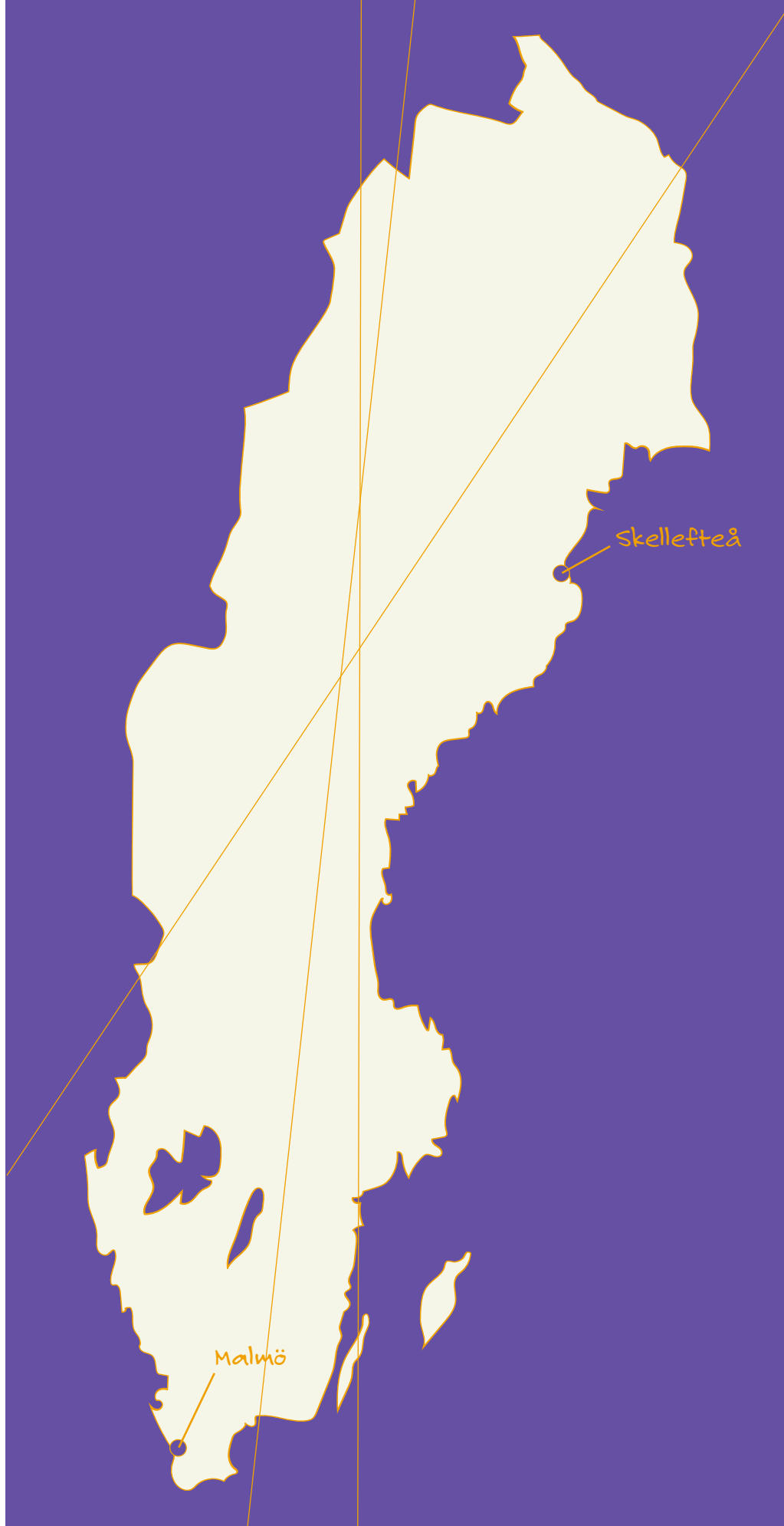
### CONTACT:

Manilva City Council  
[previa@ayta-manilva.com](mailto:previa@ayta-manilva.com)

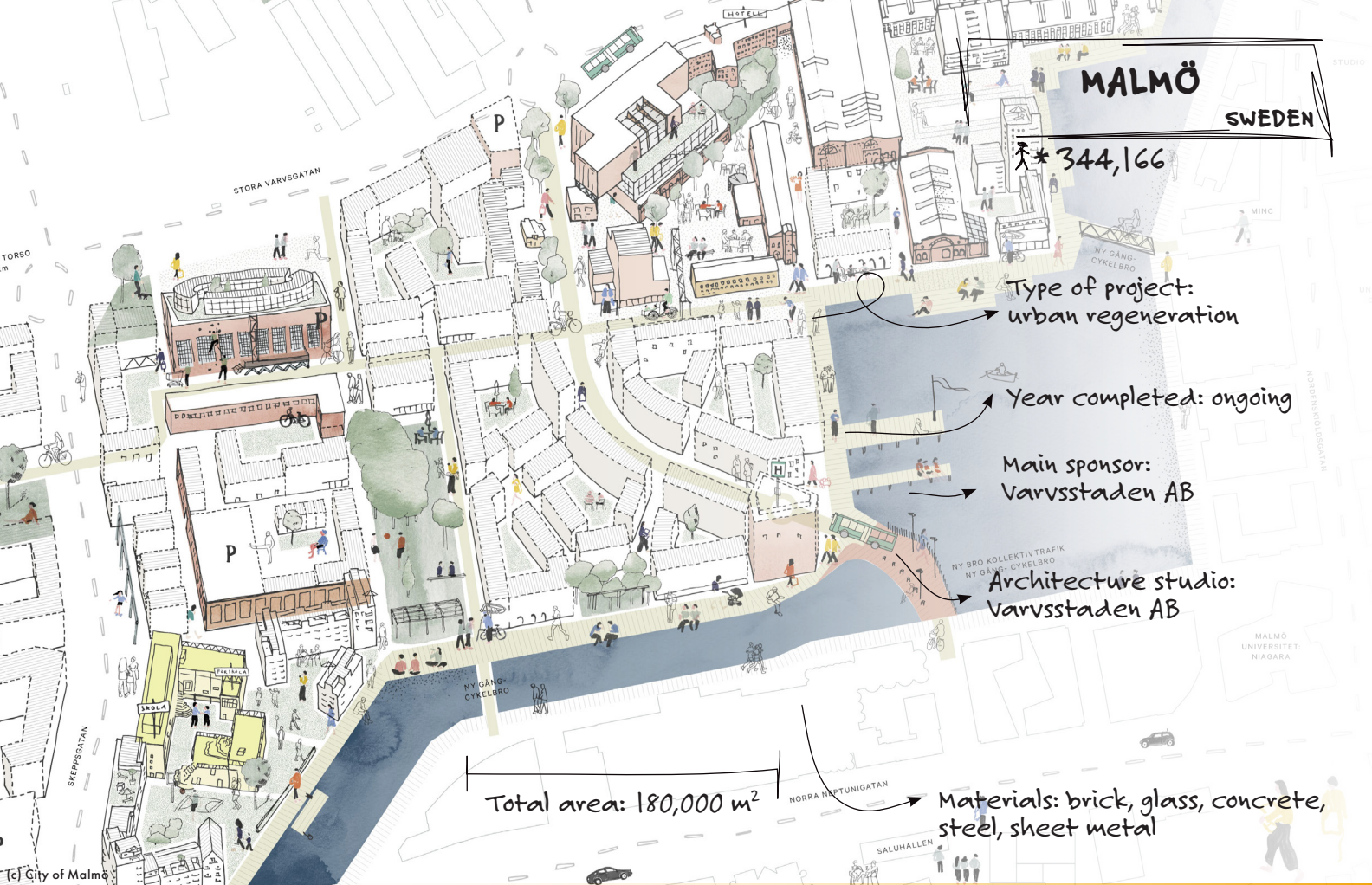
n'OT | technical office  
[noi@nundo.org](mailto:noi@nundo.org)

n'UNDO general information  
[info@nundo.org](mailto:info@nundo.org)

SWEDEN







# FROM SHIPYARDS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

BEYOND BUILDINGS: ENVISIONING SPACES FOR PERSONAL COMFORT AND COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN VARVSSTADEN

## BACKGROUND

Varvsstaden is a historic industrial area in Malmö, situated close to both the harbour and the city centre. Once a thriving centre of industry, it was home to shipyards and industrial facilities. The area contributed significantly to the city's multicultural and forward-thinking identity, thanks in part to Kockums, a prominent shipbuilding company that once operated there.

For nearly a century, Varvsstaden remained closed to the public. However, recognising the area's potential for urban development and the need to create space for residents, visitors, and future activities, the city decided to transform it.

The greatest challenge for this development lies in the dual mission: preserving Varvsstaden's industrial heritage while simultaneously transforming it into a modern, open neighbourhood. This regeneration project is a testament to Malmö's commitment to honouring its past while creating a dynamic and inclusive future in Varvsstaden.

## SOLUTION

Varvsstaden is undergoing a complete transformation into a vibrant living and working district. This initiative is managed by Varvsstaden AB. The company serves as both the contractor and developer and oversees the 25-year development period. This new urban area is composed of 2,500 homes, 4,000 workspaces, schools, and various green spaces. This endeavour not only reshapes the landscape but also pioneers innovative circular approaches to repurposing existing buildings and reusing construction materials, setting a new standard for urban development.

The project aims to foster a harmonious coexistence between "life in the buildings" and "life between the buildings." This thoughtful planning ensures that residents and workers can thrive in an environment that offers both comfortable living spaces and dynamic communal areas.

Preserving its industrial character, Varvsstaden retains and adapts many characteristic industrial structures into commercial, culture and educational buildings. This development embraces a holistic and sustainable urban model, combining mixed-use spaces, public areas, and heritage preservation, promising economic and environmental benefits.

The project's sustainability progress is meticulously monitored and shared publicly on Varvsstaden AB's website.



(c) Rasmus Hjortshøj - COAST studio

## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- The project's guiding principle is to preserve the unique atmosphere of Varvsstaden, allowing the old architecture to gracefully intertwine with the new. The redevelopment reflects diversity, curiosity, and a human-centric approach.
- The development includes multiple green parks and a 1 km-long promenade along the shipyard basin, poised to become Malmö's vibrant new meeting place. Varvsstaden will be seamlessly integrated into Malmö's urban fabric through three new bridge connections for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- Any large-scale industrial sheds that are not being retained are dismantled, and their materials, including steel frames, plates, windows, bricks, stairs, and lamps, are stored on-site for future construction. This eco-conscious reuse not only reduces carbon emissions and material costs, but also imparts a unique sense of history to new architecture. Varvsstaden AB efficiently manages these materials through on-site storage and digital documentation in a material bank, assessing condition, structural properties, and carbon footprint. Architects are encouraged to incorporate these resources early in their designs, aiming to reuse and recycle 80% of on-site materials, potentially saving 30,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Focus on reusing structures and materials as way of strengthening heritage as well as reducing climate impacts.
2. Establish measurable goals around carbon savings and build transparent evaluation and reporting into the project from the start.
3. Give opportunities to creative individuals, from emerging architects to early tenants, who are committed to the project's goals and will invest their time and energy in the place.
4. Be receptive to innovative ways of opening up and transforming previously closed industrial buildings as an alternative to demolition.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Varvsstaden AB oversees the implementation of the projects, in collaboration with officials and politicians from the City of Malmö. The ownership of the area and the management of Varvsstaden AB is divided between two private investors/companies: Peab AB and Fastighets AB Balder.

Varvsstaden AB maintains an active team of 5-6 individuals dedicated to the project. Over the years, the total number of municipal staff engaged in the project has fluctuated. On average, 20 employees have been directly or indirectly involved during the plan development phase. During the detailed planning stage, two to three employees are actively involved.

## BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **0.5 billion SEK** or **€43,085,118**

for the renovation of the public spaces, such as bridges, parks, and roads. It is funded by the City of Malmö.

The individual commercial and residential projects' budgets are managed separately by Varvsstaden AB.

## RESOURCES

Official Website: [www.varvsstaden.se](http://www.varvsstaden.se)

City of Malmö: <https://rb.gy/cev33c>

Varvsstaden Development plan (in Swedish): <https://shorturl.at/tADL7>

City Life Compass for Varvsstaden (in Swedish): <https://shorturl.at/inwGS>

Malmö in the making: <https://malmo.se/Malmo-in-the-making.html>



**SKELLEFTEÅ**  
SWEDEN

€ \* 75,000

Type of project:  
cultural facility

Year completed: 2021  
Main sponsor:  
Skellefteå Municipality

Architecture studio:  
White Arkitekter

Prizes:  
Architectural Review/MIPIM Future  
Project Awards, 2018

Material: cross laminated timber,  
glue-laminated timber, steel

Total area: 30,000 m<sup>2</sup>

# SARA HOUSE OF CULTURE

A VERSATILE TOWER CELEBRATING SWEDEN'S TIMBER LEGACY

## BACKGROUND

Located just below the Arctic Circle, Skellefteå is renowned for its timber construction heritage. This heritage served as a profound inspiration for the city's latest cultural venture: the Sara Cultural Centre. The project arose from an international design competition, that was encapsulating the spirit of timber craftsmanship that defines the area.

The Sara Cultural Centre was envisioned as a significant cultural and creative hub for the city. The centre aims to be versatile and to welcome a variety of cultural activities like exhibitions, performances, workshops, and more. It represents the city's commitment to providing a vibrant cultural space that meets the cultural needs of its community and visitors.

The centre would serve as the first step on a journey to improve the quality of life in Skellefteå as the city expands. This includes adding new railways, housing, and parks for the city's growing population.



## SOLUTION

The Sara Cultural Centre, named after Skellefteå-born writer Sara Lidman, is home to the regional theatre, two art museums, the city library, along with a hotel and conference centre. It is a versatile venue for concerts, performances, meetings, exhibitions, and events. Designed to foster connections among people, Sara Cultural Centre boasts spacious, open areas that create a welcoming environment—a true open living room in the heart of the city.

The winning architectural proposal envisioned an impressive timber-frame tower complex where art, performance, and literary institutions would coexist harmoniously. The project is the third tallest timber building in the world. Advanced energy technology ensures low energy consumption and efficiency is achieved by integrating essential energy components such as solar panels, batteries, and heat pumps with the central energy infrastructure of Skellefteå. The green roof contributes to thermal insulation, as well as absorbing noise pollution, enhancing biodiversity and delaying rainwater run-off.

This cultural hub is not only a model of sustainable design and construction but also a place where all forms of culture thrive side by side.



## CRITERIA FOR HIGH-QUALITY

- Citizens have actively participated in crucial decisions regarding the building's location, offered activities, and architectural design. The community has openly debated the centre's purpose in the media and in meetings. It is anticipated that these discussions and the sharing of ideas will persist, and that the community will consider the building a place for further dialogue and engagement.
- Sara Cultural Centre follows in Skellefteå's long tradition of constructing in wood. The raw material of the building is sourced from forests in the region, and the wood frame was produced in Bygdsiljum, located about 60 km from the city. The 205 modules, which form the hotel rooms are produced in Renholmen, a few miles north of Skellefteå.
- The Centre's furniture is made of recycled fabric or upcycled pieces of furniture from the 1980s to the 2020s providing a distinctive character while limiting carbon emissions.

 TRANSFERABLE IDEAS

1. Establish strong research, analysis, and foster collaborations with experts in relevant fields. This will help securing credibility for the new ideas among politicians, colleagues and citizens.
2. Aim to make everyone a stakeholder and genuinely interested in the city's progress to foster a democratic process in the built environment.
3. Closely monitor every phase of project execution not to lose track of the original proposal's qualities.

 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The implementation of the project was overseen by the City Architect Harriet Wistemar, the Head of Planning Lars Hedqvist and the Head of Buildings Fredrik Nilsson, all working at the municipality of Skellefteå.

A group of 20 staff members were put together to develop the initiative. Aside from the stakeholders/tenants of the house, Sara is managed by a House of Culture Company with 10-15 staff members.

 BUDGET AND FINANCING

Total budget: **1.2 billion SEK** or **€100 million**

and it was fully financed by the city of Skellefteå.

At a later stage, the building (both hotel and cultural centre) was sold to a private company (SBB), but it is still operatively managed by a municipal company (Kulturhusbolaget).

 RESOURCES

Website <https://www.sarakulturhus.se/en>

White Arkitekter <https://tinyurl.com/feurfntz>

## FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

### Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: [https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en)

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