



Scientific Journal of the Observatory of Mediterranean Basin.

Polis University / Ferrara University /

UNECE Center of excellence / Co-PLAN Institute.

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SOURCE: *Scientific journal of the Observatory of Mediterranean Basin, Volume 5 / 2019, pp. 268-279*

ISSN: 2959-4081

ISBN: 978-9928-4563-0-4 (V. 5)

PUBLISHED BY: *POLIS-Press*

DOI: 10.37199/o41005123

Urban exceptions

The interruption of consolidated urban logics as an opportunity to regenerate public space in Prishtina

Loris Rossi, Dorina Papa

Studio and Theory of Architecture 3, 2017/18

Introduction

The following chapter gathers some of the Architecture and Urban research activities developed during the 2017/18 academic year of Design Studios at POLIS University in Tirana. The idea was to push forward the topics initially explored within the PhD workshop trying to investigate new Architecture and Urban strategies for the future development of Prishtina as a new European Capital. Prishtina City LAB has been conceptualized as a multidisciplinary platform in which different scale of design projects shared the same issue regarding the city of Prishtina, focusing on specific applied research activities.

Prishtina has been studied and conceptualized as a laboratory of Urban Experiments; in order to enrich the capacity of the students to manage urban complexity, Architects, Planners and external professionals have been engaged during one year of academic work. The Urban Planning Studio led by Besnik Aliaj and Sotir Dharmo with Llazar Kumaraku, Enrico Porfido, Eranda Janku; the Studio in Architecture and theory 3rd year led by Loris Rossi and Dorina Papa with the external consultation of Antonello Stella from the Department of Architecture in Ferrara (IT) and some of the work elaborated during the Thesis Studio led by Ledian Bregasi and Saimir Kristo has been stressed the idea of Prishtina City Lab as didactic experiments useful to produce new research topics for the Municipality of Prishtina and the academic environment of POLIS University.

The urban complexity of Prishtina is generated by an accumulation of buildings, which throughout history have favored the occurrence of micro and macro-urbanities, persistent elements and what, in time, have become "exceptions" in the urban texture of the city. Urban exceptions occur each time the natural evolution of consolidated urban logics is interrupted, making room for new ways of inhabiting space and rebalancing public and private realms.

In the context of the Studio and theory of architecture course we refer to urban exceptions as, gaps, weaknesses in the urban pattern, vacuums, ambiguities,

interruptions, contrasts and urban fragments, in which each time the relationship between public and private domain is challenged. They can be of different kinds: exceptions which are characterized by persistent elements in the urban fabric (buildings, entire blocks or neighborhoods); exceptions characterized by a latent potential that is waiting to emerge or re-emerge; or they can be identified in urban voids and areas that are permanently or semi-permanently devoid of any programmatic or representative meaning.

Exceptions identifiable in the urban texture of Prishtina is an excuse to

investigate the relationship between architecture and the city, between public, private and threshold space and to operate speculations and proposals aimed at organically reintegrating these "islands" into the city.

The fast-urban growth which many former Socialist cities are witnessing, is causing an interruption in the organic development of the urban fabric. Prishtina, a city which offers numerous interesting urban peculiarities, but totally lacks a clear morphology, is used as an example of this phenomenon.

The above topic has been explored investigating on specific fragments within the city of Prishtina:

Sport activities:

Historically, sports activities and green areas in Prishtina were focused in two main locations: the area between the Palace of Youth and Sports and the stadium. Actually, the Palace of Youth and Sports has been fused with a shopping center in the main front. In addition to the NEWBORN sculpture, posed in its front, a tribute to Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, has obscured its role in the city. Moreover, the roof over the shopping area is converted to a public meeting space. It also serves as an entrance to a conference center used for town meetings, debates, concerts, parties, fairs and other social gatherings. Today the sport hall within the youth center is frequently used as a public parking area. On the back of the palace other activities are placed, such as a theatre, a couple of nightclubs and the stadium is located close by. However, this all-in-one ground is intensively used, is very degraded, as all the activities are mixed up together without any congruence. Therefore, this area has been identified as an interruption in the urban texture which can create room for new public functions.

Administrative and institutional buildings:

The most important existing administrative and institutional area is the parliament and city hall area which

is surrounded by important squares and constitutes the ending point of the main pedestrian boulevard. The parliament building was adapted to this new function after Prishtina became the new capital city, but still the area results highly disconnected considering the existing public and the institutional layer of the city. In this view, this part of the city was selected as an important fragment which not only needs to be posed in connection with important public spaces around, but can be completely rethought in terms of physical structure, public activities, functions, circulation, infrastructure and landscape, considering its new representative role for Prishtina as a new capital city.

Education areas and public facilities:

One of the most prominent areas of Prishtina is the University zone, dominated by the presence of the University Library of Kosova, an atypical regionalist architecture characterized by a combination of domes. Although it houses a variety of educational, art buildings and recreational facilities, the public space between the buildings still results as a vacuum, not displaying its full potential. The various landmark inside this "island" are distant and separated, and the public space in between does not have the power to make them communicate with each other. Hence, here we discovered another gap in which to envision university life in relation to the landscape, to urban life and possibly to contribute in the urban renewal of the surrounding areas.

Former industrial areas:

Not far from the city center, there are dormant former industrial areas which with the growth of the city are seen as vacant territories with a lot of potential. One of the selected areas is the former brick factory in the northeastern part of Prishtina. It was abandoned in the early 2000s and since then it is used as a warehouse point. This factory is positioned near an important road that connects the city of Prishtina

with Podujeva and is surrounded by a residential neighborhood. Today it's considered as a weak part of the neighborhood, being only partially and occasionally used in the existing state of degradation, but it can become a new pole for the area, that can promote the development of new functions in this almost dormitory neighborhood.

The above mentioned list of possible interventions will be intended as Urban exceptions already persistent in the Prishtina city patterns.

Methodology will address the topic of exceptions in the urban fabric considering three main aspects: ecology, typology and public space.

The goal of the project is two-fold:

To explore urban elements and processes, through observation, analysis and morphological investigations, addressing issues of the ecology of organized complexity;

To operate speculations and generate urban design proposals for the public domain, aimed at organically integrating, or re-integrating, the urban exceptions into the urban fabric. Students studied the selected exceptions and understand their existing and potential role in the city, identifying the hotspots inside and outside the area, the public and green space. Such process guided them in the elaboration of a project at the urban scale, enriching the design strategy with a vision of the area.

The Architectural Design studio intends to deepen the topics of architecture design in relation to the surrounding space and the character of the city. In this sense, it will benefit of the contribution of the "Integrated urban planning studio" which structured the complex design experience in different territorial scales, national, regional and urban. In order to achieve this objective, the laboratory proposes

integrated method of interpretation, starting from a multi-scalar vision. The primary outcome of the studio was a multi-scalar design proposal for public space or a more general strategy to exploit the potential of the specific urban exception identified by each student. One of the main objectives is to reestablish a strong connection with the city, healing not only the site, but a wide system of public infrastructure and services in the city. This system is meant to build a qualitative urban space which is set in the relation with the landscape and the city.

The second step is the elaboration of an architectural scale project, developed starting from the dialog with the surrounding. The proposed topic is a public building as a meeting place. Through the design of a complex building for public use, it is intended to highlight the conditions that allow for the requalification and clear recognition of a place in the city. The design of the project will start from the definition of an idea, a structuring form, and the choice of a function based on the needs of Prishtina as a new capital city and the general vision built in the previously defined scales.

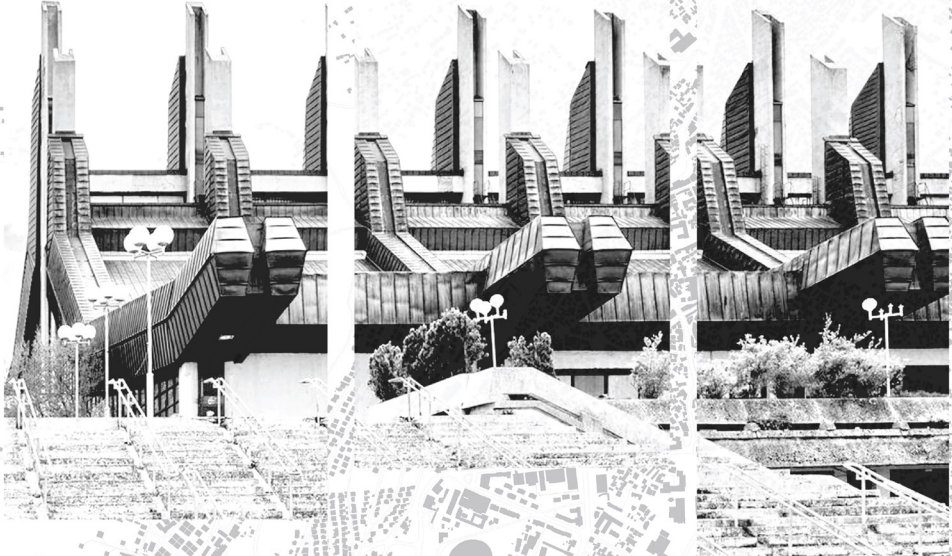
The final outcomes are expected to be elaborations in different levels and scales of interventions:

1. In territorial and urban scale: territorial vision in 1:10000, urban vision in 1_5000 including the selected area,
2. In landscape scale including the masterplan of the project area in 1:1000/2000 in which the relations with the surrounding are highlighted,
3. In architectural scale including drawings in 1:500/1:200 represented through digital techniques, models and axonometric / prospective views. In this scale students are expected to also show the collective layer of public space.

The Palace for Youth and Sports was originally named "Boro and Ramiz" after two World War II Yugoslav Partisans and People's Heroes of Yugoslavia - Boro Vukmirovic and Ramiz Sadiku. As such the name was to symbolize brotherhood and unity between Serbs and Albanians who constituted the majority of the population in Kosovo.

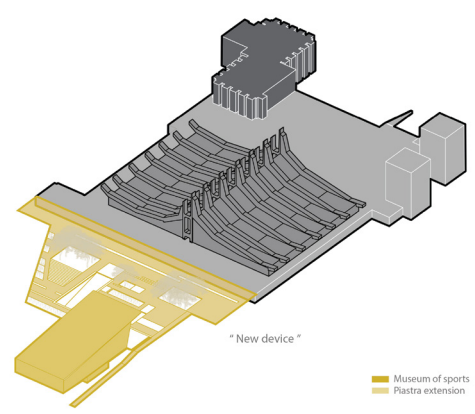
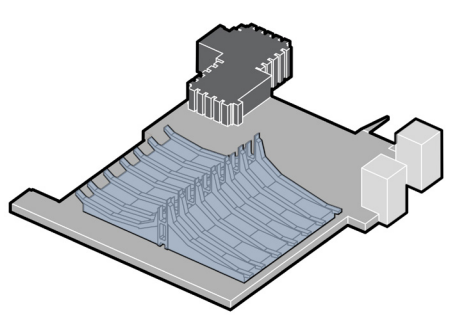
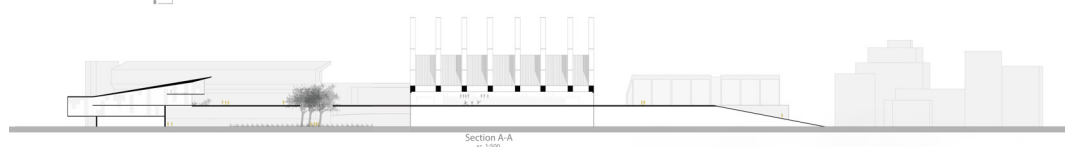
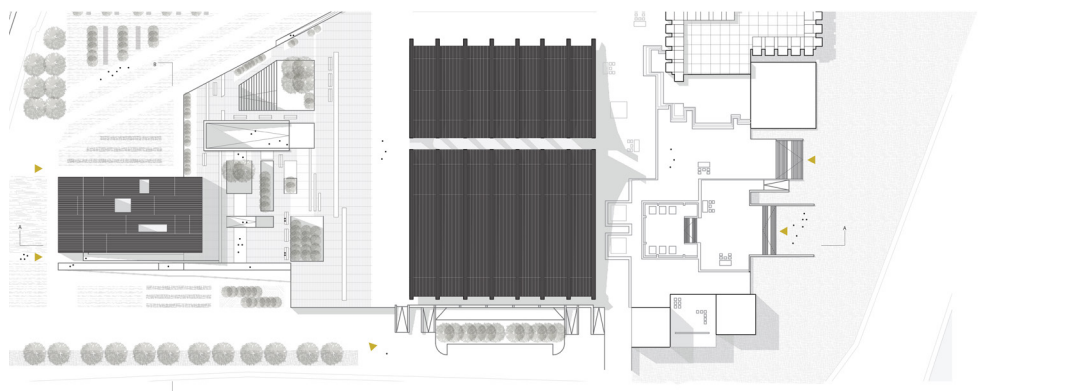
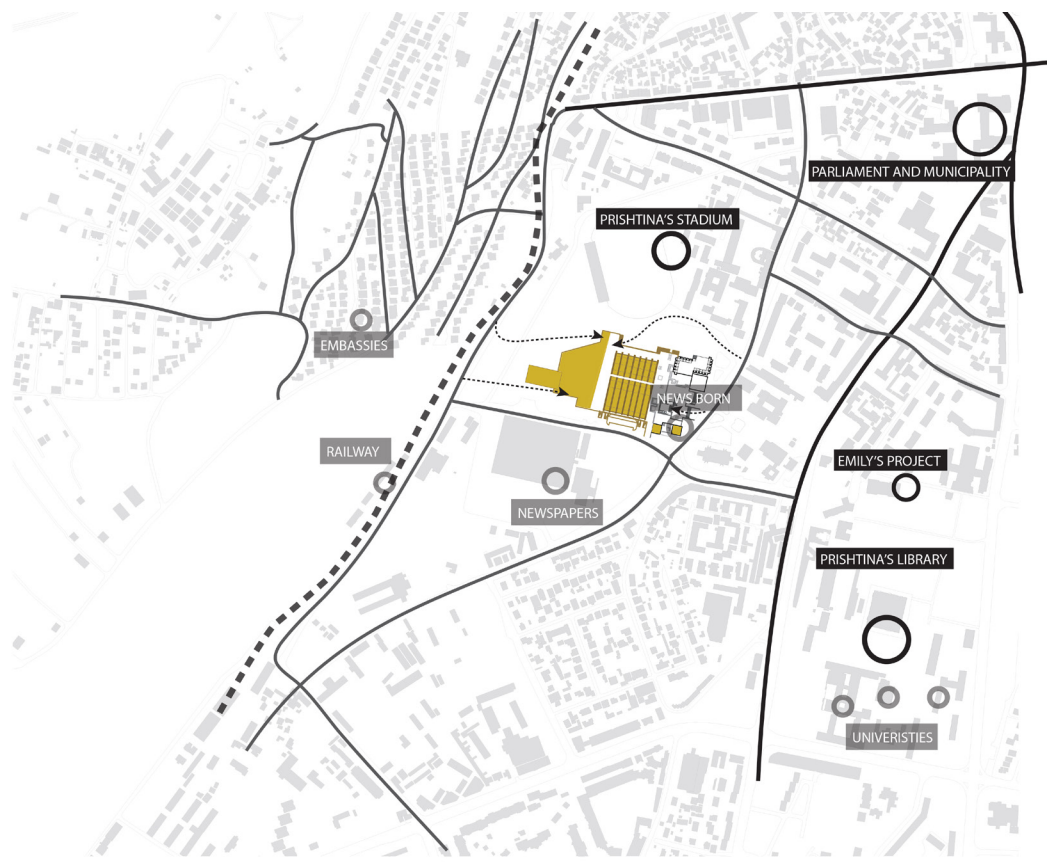
In 1974, during the Yugoslav Communist system in Kosovo, an architectural competition was launched in Pristina to build a new large sport centre near the city centre. Five architectural offices presented their proposals. Moreover, the Institute of Architecture at the Skopje Faculty of Architecture submitted another two proposals. The jury decided to award the first prize to the architecture studio DOM, which was directed by Zivorad Jankovic, Halid Muhasilovic and Strecko Espak.

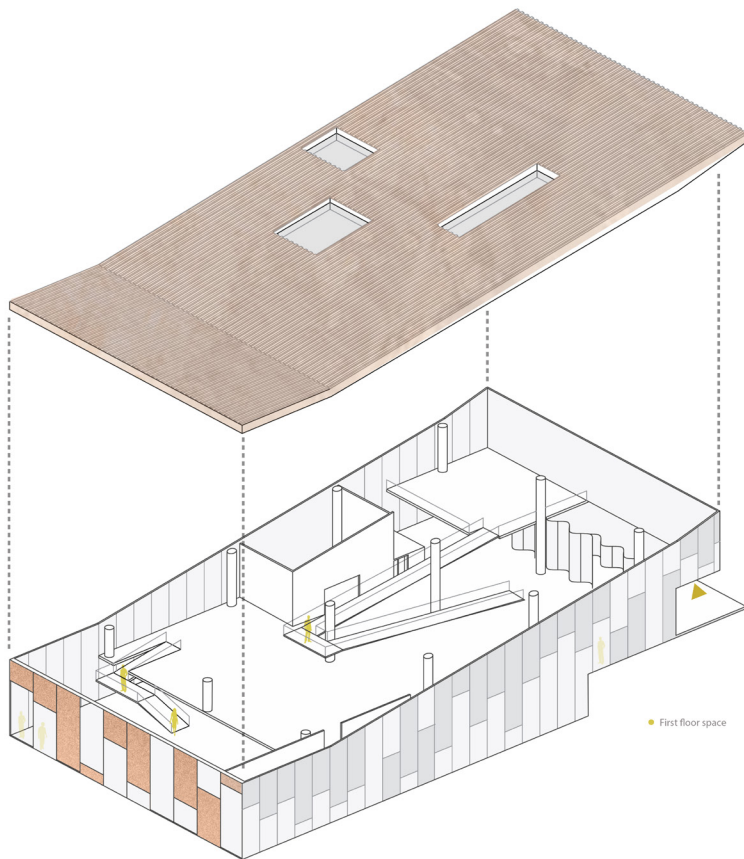
Half of the building nowadays is burned so this is where the idea of my project is based in revitalising this building. The project consists in building a new "device" for Boro Ramiz and this "device" is a sport museum which makes the existential object more important and more valuable.



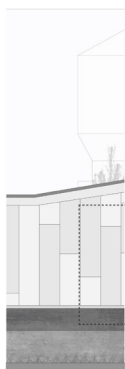
Sport and Recreation Centre "Boro and Ramiz"
Pristina, Kosovo, 1974-1977
Architect: Zivorad Jankovic



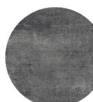




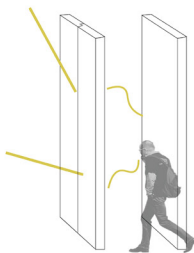
• First floor space



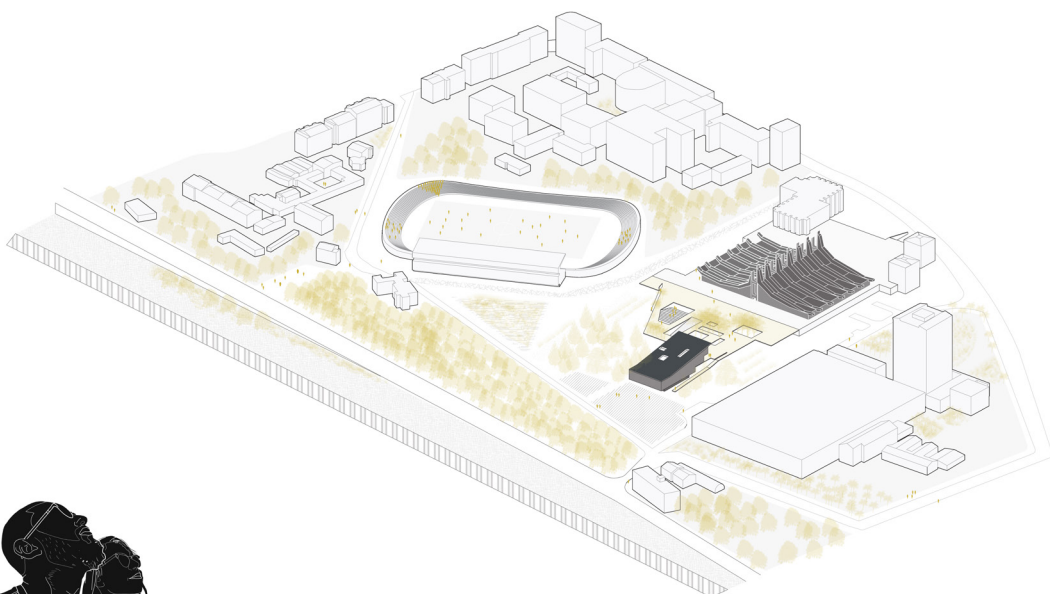
• U glass facade
Used to smooth the sun radiation inside the building

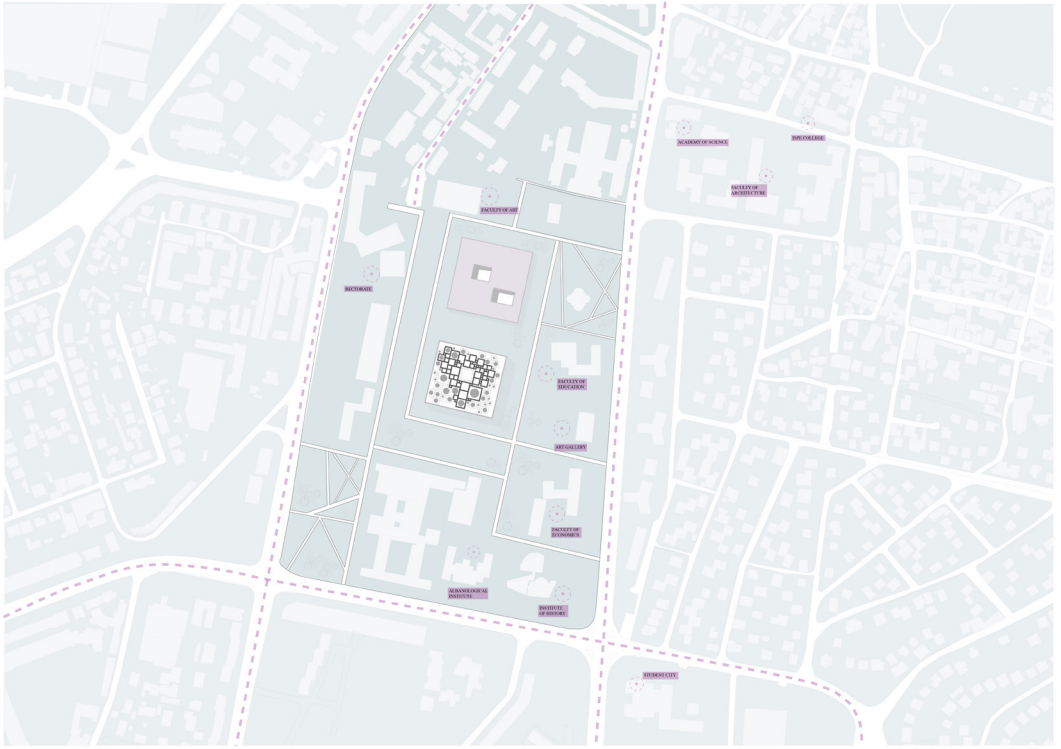


• Black concrete
Used to create a variety in facade and as an object to keep the building suspended



• Maintains the needed lighting for exposition since it doesn't need too much sun light

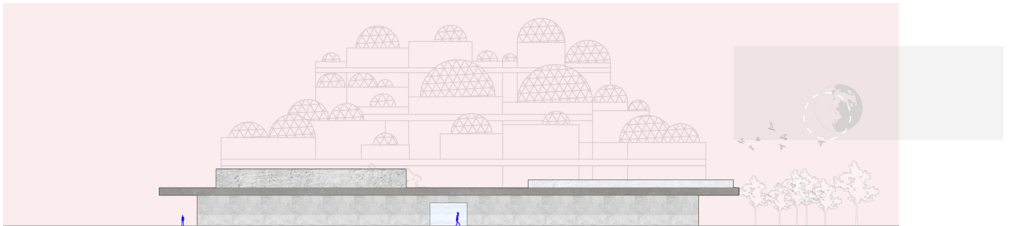
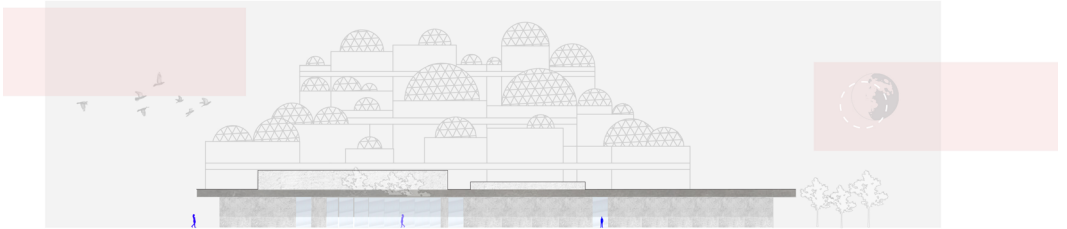
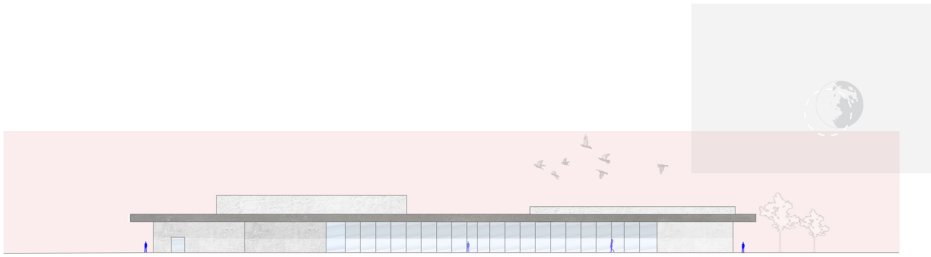




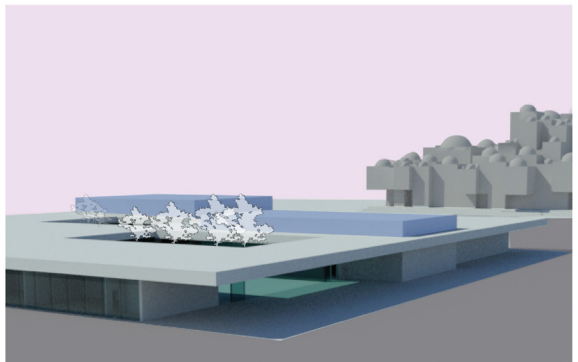
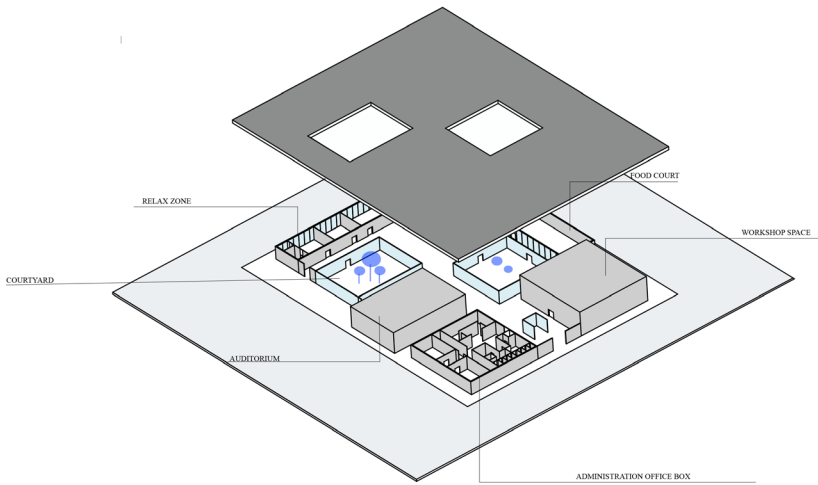
ANALYSIS THAT AFFECTED THE CONCEPT OF THE PROJECT
1 : 2 0 0 0

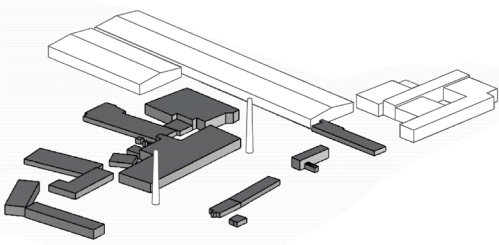


1:500 PLAN IN RELATION WITH THE SITE SURROUNDINGS.

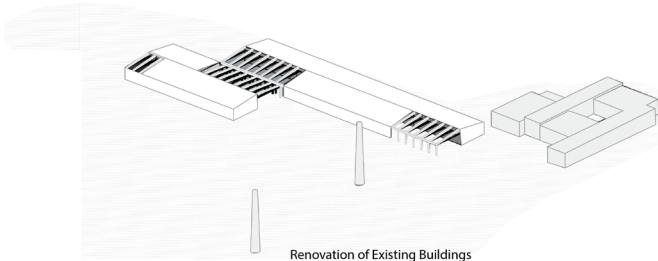


FACADES 1:500

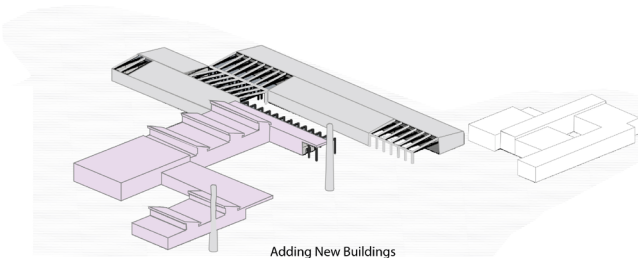




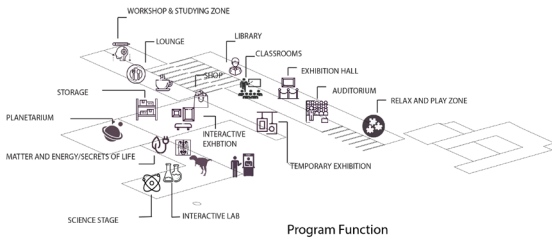
Demolished Buildings



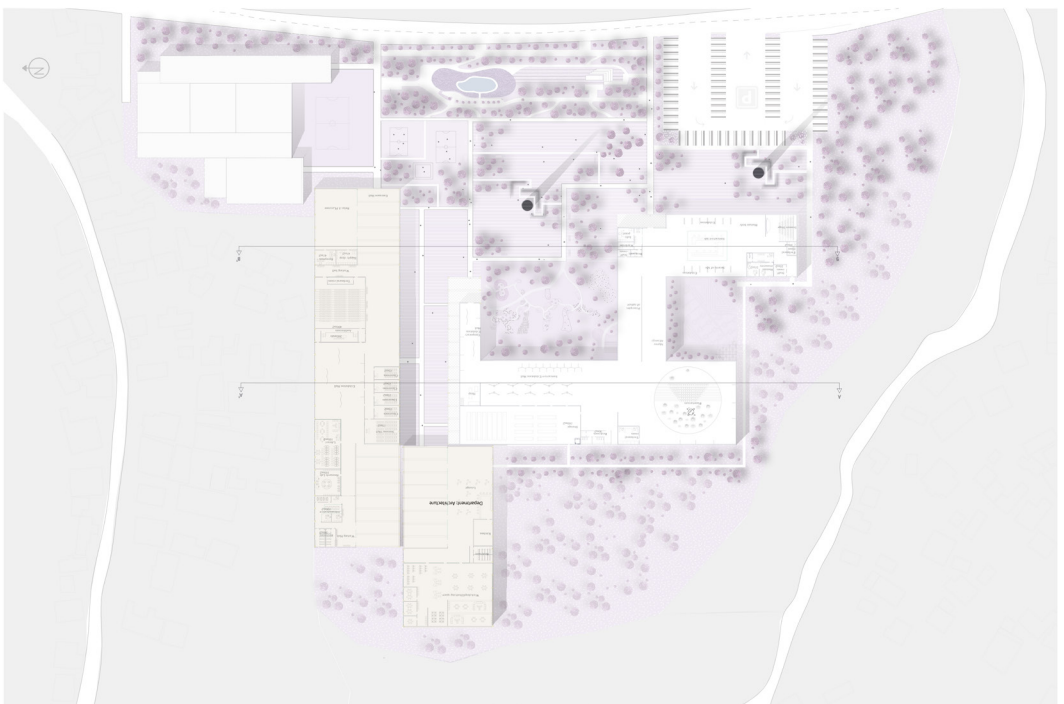
Renovation of Existing Buildings



Adding New Buildings

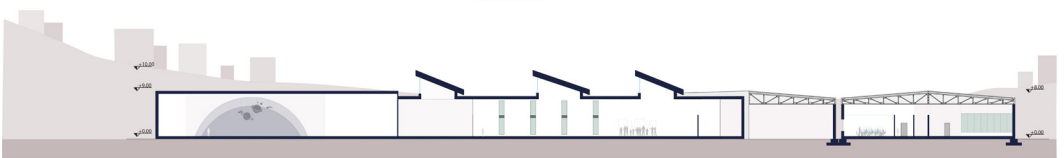


Program Function

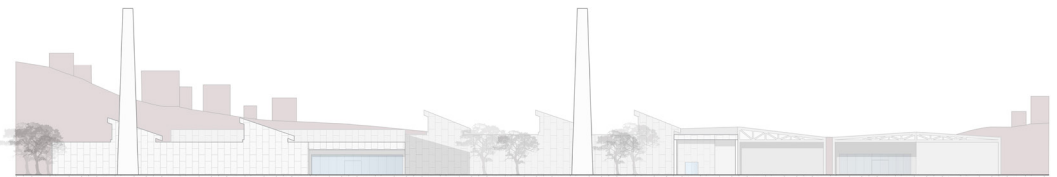




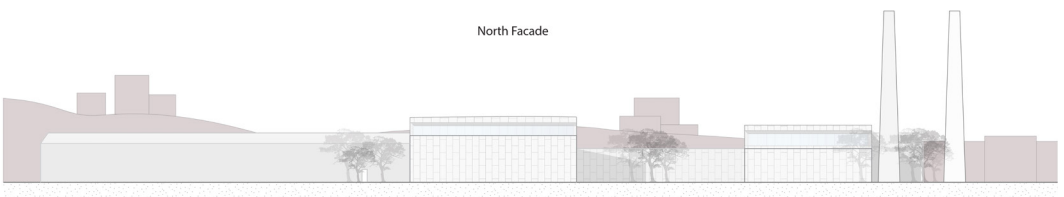
Section A-A'



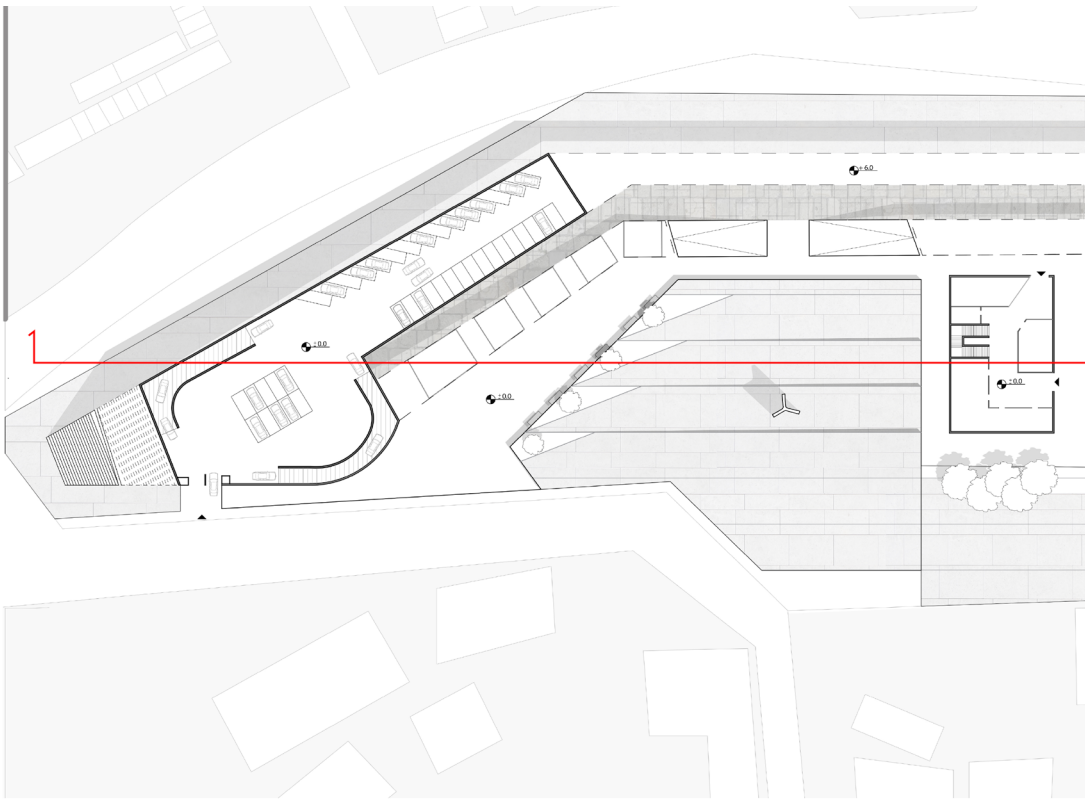
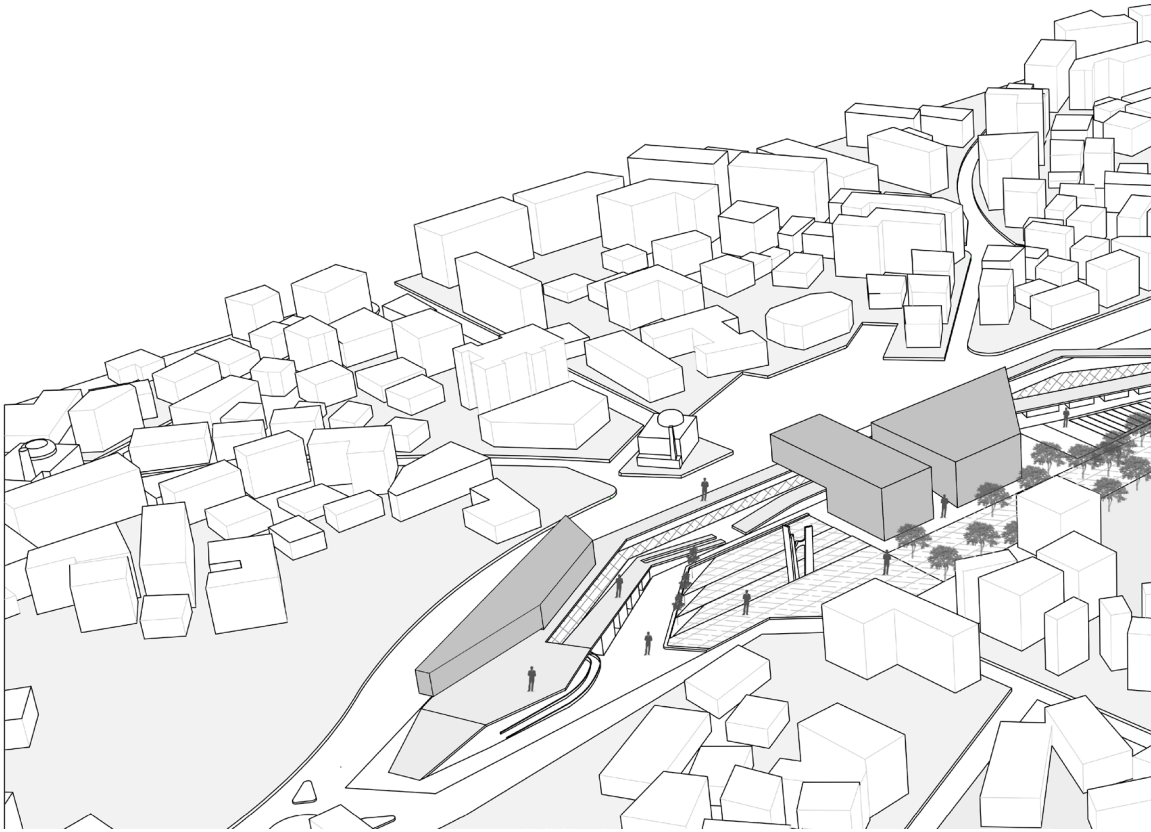
East Facade



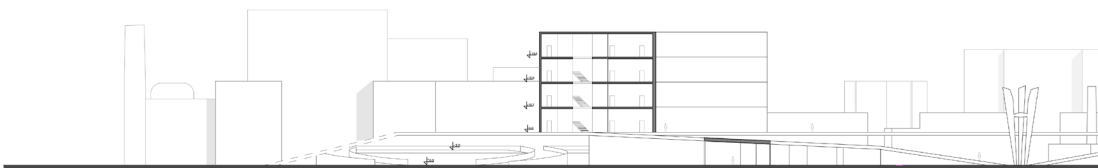
North Facade



*Student / Ledia Gjergji and Redita Isaku
Museum of art and science / SCIENTARY*



Ground Level 1:500



Section 1:500

