A COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT AT THE NEW BULEVARD

OF TIRANA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING
OF
EPOKA UNIVERSITY

BY

DAJANA JOLLDASHI

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
ARCHITECTURE

JULY, 2021

Approval sheet of the Thesis

This is to certify that we have read this thesis entitled **"A community center project at the new boulevard of Tirana"** and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

                                           _____

Prof. Dr. Edmond Manahasa
Head of Department
Date: July, 21, 2021

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Anna Yunitsyna	(Civil Engineering)	_____
Prof. Dr. Fabio Naselli	(Civil Engineering)	_____
Prof. M.Sc. Ina Dervishi	(Civil Engineering)	_____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name Surname: Dajana Jolldashi

Signature: _____

ABSTRACT

A COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT AT THE NEW BULEVARD OF TIRANA

Jolldashi, Dajana

M.Sc., Department of Architecture

Supervisor: Dr. Anna Yunitsyna

Community centers are spaces that bring the community into one area and play an important role for the city by contributing to community development in urban areas. The aim is to provide activities that respond to local community needs, also to be accessible and involved in the community, a place that is specifically provided for the people, groups and organizations in a particular area, where they can meet one another and interact.

Tirana is one of the ideal places where traditional cultural values are combined with modern ones, a city that grows and changes every day. It is a city full of hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, youth and artistic centers, which promote an active and diverse cultural life for locals and foreigners who visit it. The city has some potential areas with good quality's, one of them the New Boulevard. A very potential location with a good urban design near the center of the city. It can be easily accessible by people and it provides enough space to include the surrounding as an exterior part of it.

The site is surrounded by residential buildings where will be build what is needed for the community. It will provide numerous activities and events to keep the community involved with the city and each other with activities such: library, auditorium, offices, exhibition area, places to study, meeting space, classes for different courses, also the building will provide Wi-Fi and 3D printer, interior and exterior playground for children's, cafeteria, restaurant and cinema.

With this project, we have the opportunity to highlight the potentials that characterize this area and what is better than a common inclusive environment without judgments about religion, color or age. Enabling the increase of standards not only for quality, but also social life with relaxing environments, entertainment for children and adults also.

ABSTRAKT

KRIJIMI I NJE QENDRE KOMUNITARE NE ZONEN 'BULEVARDI I RI',
TIRANE

Jolldashi, Dajana

Master Shkencor, Departamenti I Arkitekturës

Udhëheqësi: Dr. Anna Yunitsyna

Qendrat e komunitetit janë hapësira që e sjellin komunitetin në nje pike te perbashket dhe luajnë një rol të rëndësishëm për qytetin duke kontribuar në zhvillimin e komunitetit në zonat urbane. Qëllimi është të sigurojmë aktivitete që i përgjigjen nevojave të komunitetit lokal, gjithashtu të jenë të arritshëm dhe të përfshirë në komunitet, një vend që sigurohet posaçërisht për njerëzit, grupet dhe organizatat në një zonë të veçantë, ku ata mund të takojnë njëri-tjetrin dhe të bashkëveprojnë.

Tirana është një nga vendet ideale ku kombinohen vlerat tradicionale kulturore me ato moderne, një qytet që rritet dhe ndryshon çdo ditë. Eshtë një qytet plot me hotele, restorante, bare, qendra rinore dhe artistike, të cilat promovojnë një jetë kulturore aktive dhe të larmishme për vendasit dhe të huajt që e vizitojnë atë. Qyteti ka disa zona potenciale me cilësi të mirë, një prej tyre Bulevardi i Ri. Një vendndodhje shumë potenciale me një dizajn të mirë urban afër qendrës së qytetit. Mund të jetë lehtësisht i arritshem nga njerëzit dhe siguron hapësirë të mjaftueshme për të përfshirë mjedisin përreth si një pjesë të jashtme të tij.

Vendi është i rrethuar nga ndërtesa banimi ku do të ndërtohen ato që nevojiten për komunitetin. Ai do të sigurojë aktivitete dhe ngjarje të shumta për të mbajtur komunitetin të përfshirë me qytetin dhe njëri-tjetrin me aktivitete të tilla: biblioteka, auditorime, zyrat, zona e ekspozitës, vendet për të studiuar, hapësira për organizime takimesh, klasat për kurse të ndryshme, gjithashtu ndërtesa do të sigurojë Wi- Fi dhe Printer 3D, shesh lojërash për ambiente të brendshme dhe të jashtme për fëmijë, kafene, restorante dhe kinema.

Me këtë projekt, ne kemi mundësinë të nxjerrim në pah potencialet që karakterizojnë këtë fushë dhe çfarë është më mirë se një mjedis i përbashkët gjithëpërfshirës pa gjykime në lidhje me fenë, ngjyrën ose moshën. Mundësimi i rritjes së standardeve jo vetëm për cilësinë, por edhe jetën shoqërore me ambiente relaksuese, argëtim për fëmijë dhe të rritur gjithashtu.

DEDICATION

To my family and especially for my father who has been a great inspiration for me all this time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful acknowledgements go to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Yunitsyna, for her dedication, guidance and the availability through this research. I am grateful for the opportunity to study this interesting topic in our county.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

18

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A community center means a building or structure open to the general public, operated by a non-profit corporation and used primarily for cultural, educational, recreational or social purposes. Based on the research for community first it leads to the point that community has five functions: socialization, social control, social participation and mutual support. Community center is an open environment for the public with social activities, recreational activities, education, social support or public information provided to all residents of the community.

The main problem for many cities nowadays is providing a good space for young people to socialize and build relationships. One of those cities is Tirana, which in recent years has begun to expand both in the area and in the population at a very alarming rate. A community center provides young people with that space, keeping them busy and promoting strong relationships through sports and recreational activities. Reducing stress and anxiety reduction, increasing physical activity, by building trust and encouraging the development of friends, social networking and local community participation. This is also useful for working parents who need a safe place for their children to go after school.

A community center itself is a place that gathers the people of a community for different things, it can be a place for all-community celebrations or volunteer activities. It promotes community involvement, not just in programming, but also by building relationships with people in the community. Events held at the center give the opportunity to meet new people and grow to love their town and community.

This thesis explains the development of the community center in Tirana environment. It shows the ways of creating a better common environment by giving the missing facilities and all the other activities that a community center needs for a better cooperation of people living in it and a better approach of the city.

1.1 Problem Statement

Community meaning for me "nurturing human connection" is our survival. We, humans wither outside of the community. It isn't a luxury, a nice thing; the community is essential to our well-being.[Frances Moore Lappé]

The purpose of this project is to support the social life and well-being of individuals and communities by providing social, cultural and sports activities. The following questions also explain the structure of this study.

1- Why is a community center important to a city?
2- Does this area need a community center?
3- What would a community center be used for?
4- How would it help the residential?
5- How can it make the city a better place?

This study provides information about the community center enabling the recognition of the criteria and needs for a good community center. In Albania, we understand that we have a lack of social activities in the group and the need arises for an inclusive environment for all age groups. During the study in Tirana, it is noticed that these centers are few or offer a very limited number of services to the community.

The new boulevard of Tirana is a public urban structure with a length of 1,600 meters. There are 4 lanes for cars, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, at the same time greenery on both sides and underground parking with 320 parking spaces. The New Boulevard crosses the segment from the former Train Station to the Tirana River. It is considered the Tirana of the future where it is planned to create many public and business institutions, offices, banks and relocation of the National Library in this area, which is expected to make it one of the best areas of Tirana. It is foreseen the construction of new apartments for the accommodation of 120 thousand inhabitants, also in this area it is foreseen to build the electric train line which will enable the trip to the airport of Rinas and the city of Durres.

The area where the project will take place is located at the new boulevard of Tirana. The site is up to 3100 m² and is position on the entrance of the road "Stacioni I Trenit",

surrounded by high buildings. Its location on this site is to attract as many people of the city. So, all the functions should be designed for a bigger scale of people. It will be a building cantilevers out above its footprint, 3 to 4 floors. The project will have an area above 700 to 1000m² also the exterior will be part of the project design.

The users of the community center and the functions it will provide, will be for all people of all ages. It will be a gathering point for the people, a playground for children also a place when young people can study together and read books. The building should guarantee aesthetics, functionality, system efficiency, system safety and environmental protection. Community centers allow to use of the urban space in a more efficient and compact way and are one of the predominant buildings in today's urban agglomeration and it is needed for the capital of Albania.

1.2 Thesis Objectives

This project aims to create a Community Center to include all ages who need more opportunities and services for a better life. The aim is to support the social life and well-being of individuals and communities by providing social, cultural and sports activities. To achieve these goals, the building must guarantee the aesthetics, functionality, efficiency of the system, system safety and environmental protection. Community centers allow the use of urban space in a more efficient and compact way and are one of the predominant buildings of today's urban collection and is necessary for the capital of Albania.

This building will be a place where residents can find a balance between the urban, natural and agricultural spheres while promoting biodiversity of cultures and living spaces. The end product of this thesis is the creation of a sustainable community center with low maintenance costs, which, in most cases, are funded by the state. Liquidity and access to the center are important elements in the design of these centers as all services must be accessible to people with disabilities.

1.3 Project Brief

1.3.1 Project concept

There is a lack of buildings of this type in Albania, so this whole concept is an important point for our city and young people to promote themselves. Parts of the design are used diagonal steel structures to provide shadows and also to define the structure. The project concept is integrated with the site, using every possible space to make it functional for the needs of people of all ages.

This project consists of an architectural staircase of a building. The purpose of a community center is to provide study environments, relaxing and entertainment facilities although the focus remains on young people. Analyzing the site and the needs of the community, the main point is the creation of entertainment facilities such as dance classes, music, sports, spaces dedicated to students such as bookstores, computer and printing rooms and study facilities (***Error! Reference source not found.***).
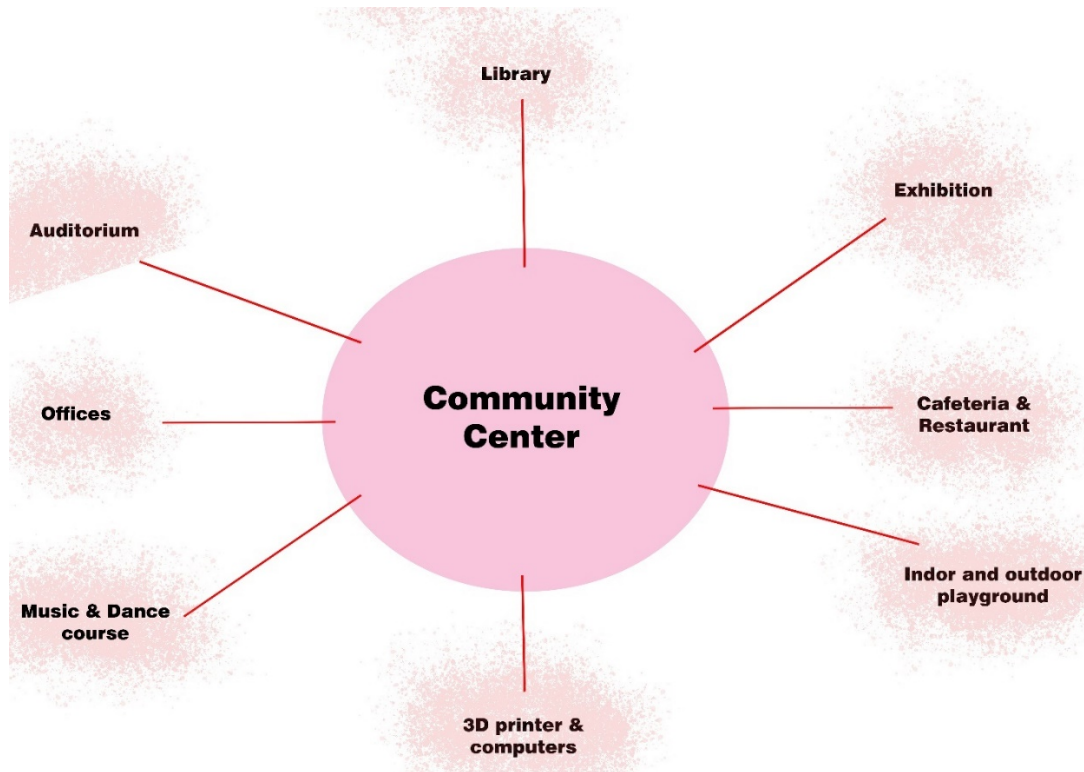
Figure 1- Functions of the building

The integretad category of people's age

■ <18 ■ 19-25 ■ 26-50 ■ 51>
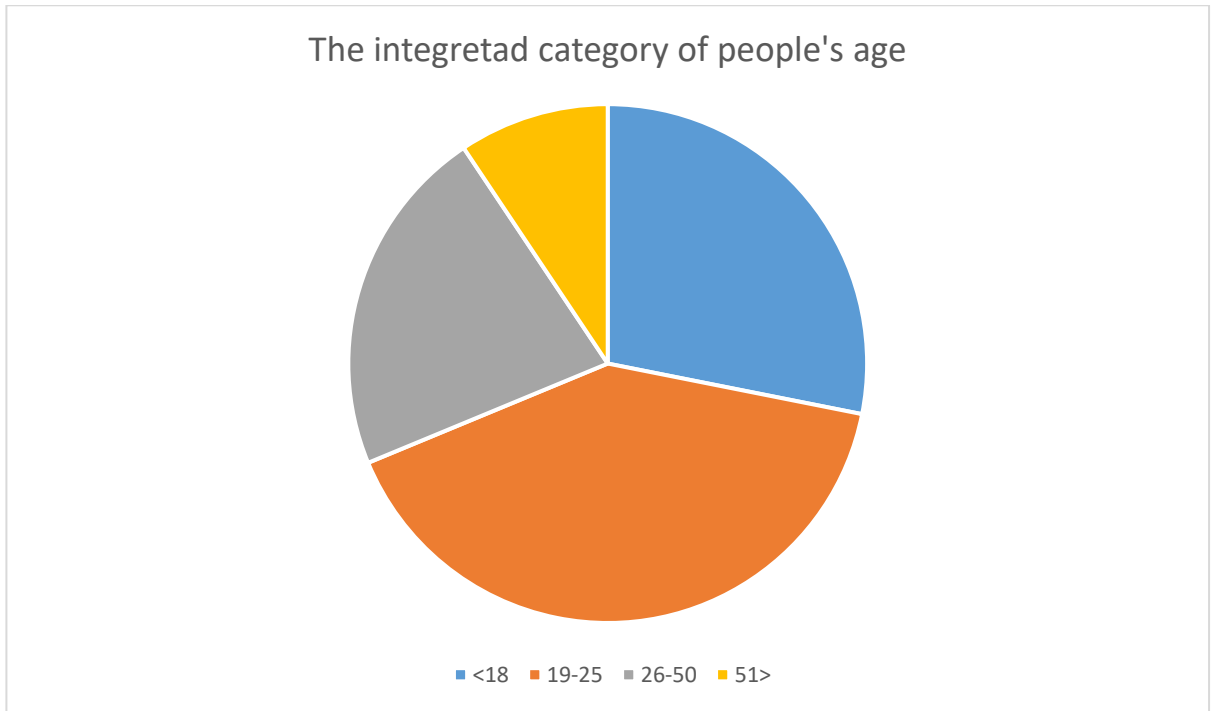
*Figure 2-*The integrated category of people's age

1.3.2 Spatial and functional parameters of projects

A building with these functions, offering these optional services for citizens, must adhere to certain parameters for certain spaces, which can be found in the data book for planning and drafting the "Metric Manual" edited by David Adler. The needed spaces are divided into meeting, administrative, helping, exhibition, sports and leisure activities. A more thorough and complete list of functions and parameters are found in (Table 1-Functional and Spatial Regulations 25)

Table 1- Functional and Spatial Regulations

Functions	No.	Number of people per sqm
Auditorium	1	0.8sqm/person
Library	1	2.2sqm/person
Sports Field	1	Min 405 sqm
Canteen and Kitchen	1	1.2sqm/person
Activity Room	1	Min 70sqm
Secretary	1	Min 16sqm
Storage	2	
Hall	2	Min 10% of the area
Wet Spaces	4	
Reception	2	
Offices	3	Min 17sqm
Meeting Room	1	2.5m/person

Based on the special regulations of building the designed building has an approximately 3500m^2 area where about 500m^2 are for the hall and circulation, 200m^2 for storages and facilities, 100 for offices, 500 m^2 for the library, 500 m^2 for the exhibition, 500 m^2 for auditorium and 1000m^2 for other functions like playground, cafeteria, restaurant and music-dance courses.

1.3.3 Technologies and building construction

The project aim is to create a functional building integrated with modern design. The structure of the building and the columns are made with concrete. The exterior design of the building is glass facade integrated with steel as a shadow element. The roof has openings to introduce natural light into the building and make it a warmer environment, to have more open spaces and a more flexible design.

1.3.4 Design Methodology

The master thesis consists in the designing of a community center as a multifunctional project. As such it heavily relies on detailed architectural drawings and renders. The methodology followed is based on the use of programs of AutoCAD, Sketchup and Lumion. Their use provides a clear representation of the project idea and its components, such as floor plans, section, elevations, site analysis and renders. They are integrated together for a unified graphical work.

1.3.5 Scale and project content

The scale of the project is in 1:300 because after understanding and analyzing the whole structure of the building the volumes inside it needs a better explanation of the organization of the building and how the circulation inside that building will be.

Also, because the building has in target every person in every age and has many functions every function has an explanation. This research also intends to solve a problem for the city where the citizens don't have many places to go in their free time and this structure can accept a big flux of people based in its location and its scale.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter introduces us with brief information about the thesis, identifies it, and its objectives. Also, it gives brief information about the project concept, specifications parameters and technologies that are going to be used in the design of the building.

The second chapter is divided into three main points of the thesis and shows information about literature based on them and similar case studies and projects. In the third chapter are explained all the site information from its selection to its development and organization.

In the fourth is explained all the methodology that is used to go in the results. Firstly, it shows the way and analysis that are made about the project concept, decisions and requirements that are needed for the structure.

And after all of this information in the fifth chapter is shown the whole design of the project from plans and sections to facades and renders. And in the sixth chapter are explained all the conclusions from the thesis and the project.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CASE STUDIES

2.1 Theory and practice at design Community Center

2.1.1 Community Centers Design and Social Impact

As Garrett Nelli said "Architects hold a unique position in society and we play various roles throughout the construction process. We see ourselves acting as moderators, activists, public speakers, and leaders of many parties. "Our exposure to the public and our variety of different skills prepare us to better equip ourselves to be a key player in implementing this change in design thinking." (Margaret Mead, 2005)

Each developed country bears the responsibility of providing community facilities for the urban mass. Among the various facilities, the community center is one of the main civic facilities that aims to facilitate community interactions thus contributing to community development in urban areas. In this view, it is important to design for the health, safety, and well-being of the public. A recent increase in environmental standards and health thinking may be associated with public health. Various programs such as community activities and services, religious youth groups, and other community-based activities, play a major role in human life. What do we know about the role and processing programs of the community where we live? How can you ensure that the program is designed to successfully meet civic needs for a happy and productive life?

A city like Tirana, where the lack of spaces for community gathering and interaction is severe, present an urgent need in solving problems and increasing their potential to ensure effective and multi-purpose. This study reveals that community centers can be a center of community development, essential elements of well-being, and health protection. It provides opportunities for policy, practice, and research to ensure that the program is well designed to meet the needs of young people.

2.1.2 Community Participation

To achieve the goal of creating a usable space for all the needs of the community including all age groups it is important to know the needs and requirements of the community. The design and program of this project should take into account the individual who will use this space and how many hours he will use in this space. (Semantic scholar, 2021)

Community centers are really important for the development of a city. The thesis literature provides the information needed on how a community center works and the decision that architect should take in consideration, starting from the choice of elements to the separation of the spaces and the its functions. The best way to have a good final product is to understand first the way how the people interact with the spaces and their needs and then the cooperation of both against the building's organization.

2.1.3 Deichman Library

Deichman Library is located in Sentrum, Norway. The building cantilevers above its footprint. The concept diagram depicts the 3 main entrances and how the circulation is organized. the floor height is up to 5m. The essence of the new Deichman library is based on light and space and continuous diagonal views placed between the interior of the library and the surrounding streets and square. (ArchDaily, 2020)

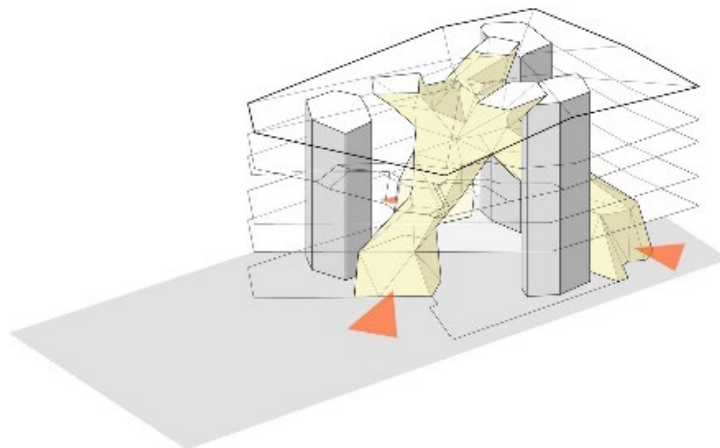*Figure 3-* Deichman Library (Sentrum, Norway 2020)

Figure 4- Concept diagram

The underground level includes the auditorium, the cinema, a special room for meetings, media storage and distribution, technical and support functions. While on the other floors there are offices, meeting rooms and the open library. The ground floor facade is completely transparent. The light shafts connect the floors and distribute daylight downwards from three big skylights in the roof. The open areas have more permanent surfaces in neutral colors and robust materials and in the corners of the building panoramic windows open views in different directions.
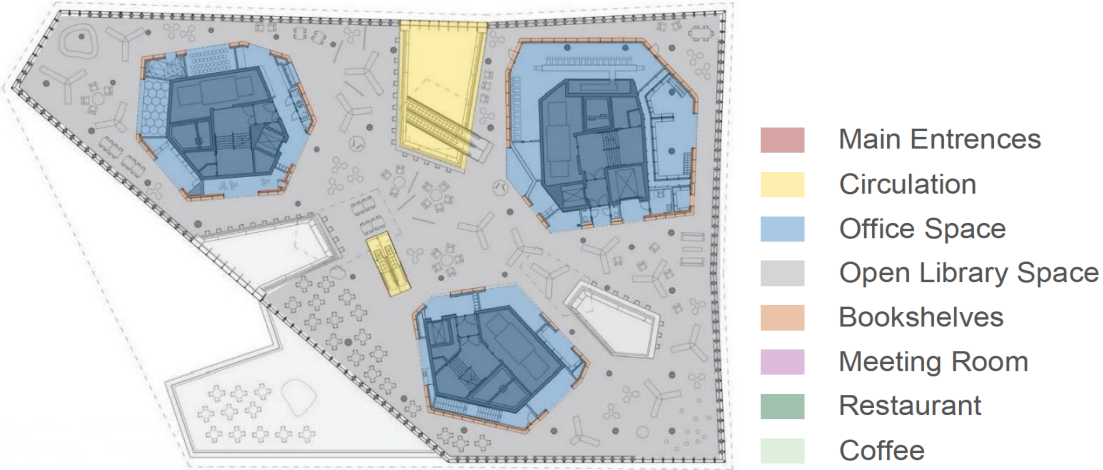

Figure 5- Ground Floor

Figure 6- First floor & Legend

The building is constructed of materials such as transparent glass, concrete, metal and wood for the interior of the library. It's completely transparent and that makes it an open and a welcoming place.

Figure 7– Interior of Deichman Library (Sentrum, Norway 2020)

2.1.4. Yue Library

This library is located in China and it's a reading-themed space, with areas for drinking coffee.it aims in promoting cultural exchange and community services. It is a two-floor building with 10-metre-high space, divided into horizontal layers forming natural wood platforms for activities. High bookshelves connect ground floor with the upper ones. (ArchDaily, 2020)

Figure 8- Yue Library (Hangzhou, China 2019)

The ground floor has the main entrance and also two other entrances that improve circulation. It is a public area which offer coffee space, a gathering point, an open library space and also provide the exterior part of the building. The first floor has more private spaces dedicated working in groups and meetings. Also, at this floor contains the staff offices and the reception. The ground floor it can be named as "the relaxing floor". After studying and working you have a space when you can relax.
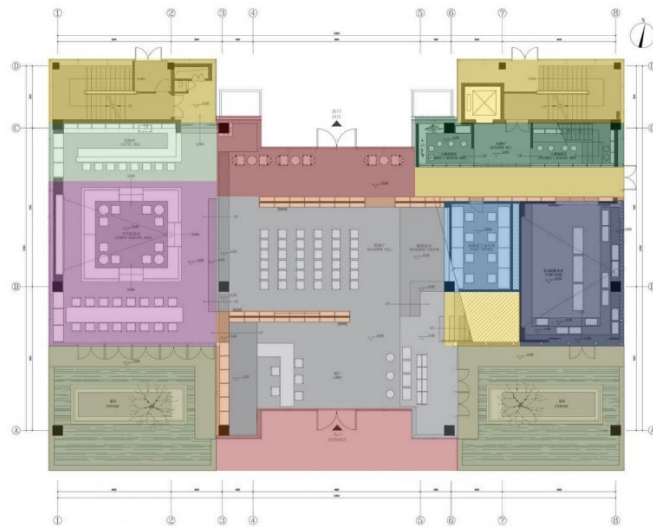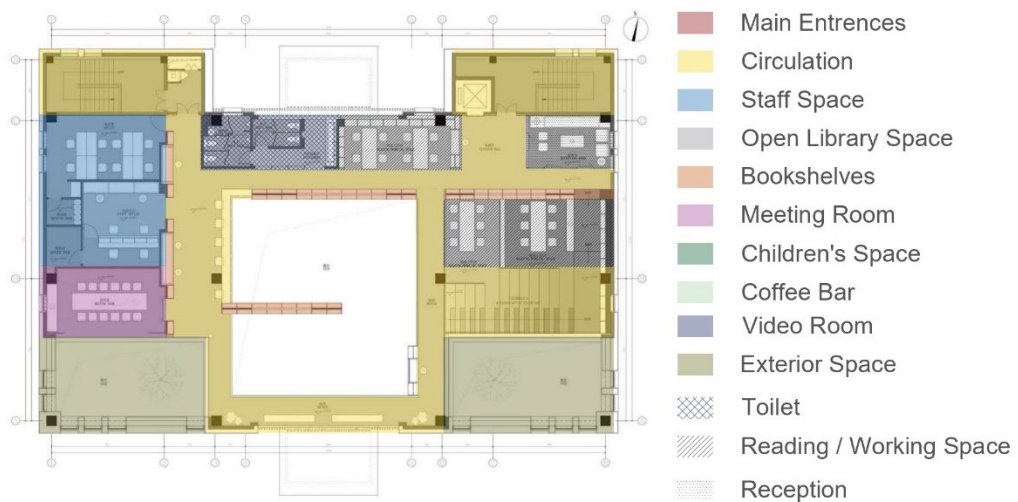

Figure 9- Ground floor

Figure 10- First floor

The Yue library is a space which includes a movie concert space, an international music festival activity, and more. Platforms and corridor bridges cut through the towering vertical bookshelves, giving visitors the sense of being enveloped in a dense forest of books. The interior design is characterizing the use of natural wood and other materials have been kept to a minimum. Floor-to-ceiling windows allow in large quantities of natural light and cascading down the large stairs, provide views of the garden outside. The material used are transparent glass, aluminum wood veneer ceiling, white oak plank wood and Mongolian black stone floor.

Figure 11- Interior of Yue Library

2.1.5. Sendai Mediatheqe

Sendai Mediatheqe is a structure located in Sendai-Shi, Japan. It is a mixed media public structure that combines library and an art gallery. The general concept was to provide free access to the public. The main idea of the architect was to create an open and flowing space, and he did not want a predetermined space with beams, walls and rooms. He achieved this through structural tubes, which allowed new interior spatial qualities. (Design Boom, 2020)

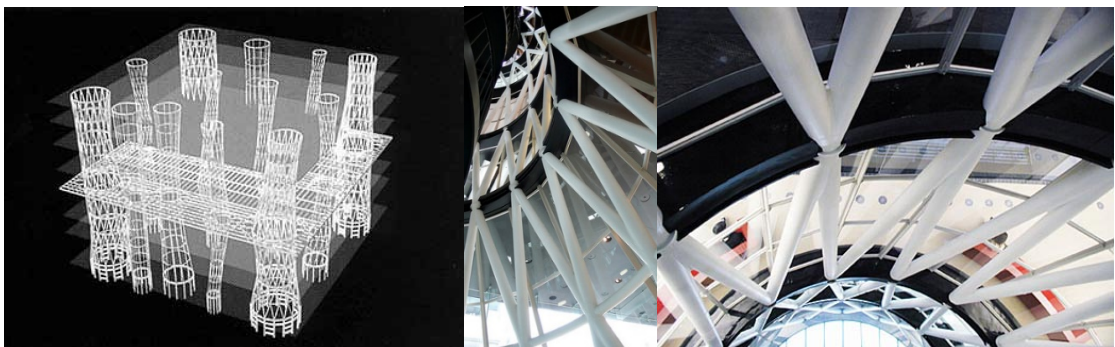*Figure 12-* Sendai Mediatheqe (Sendai-Shi, Japan)

Figure 13- Structural tubes

The seven levels of Mediatheque building offer a range of services including a library, art gallery, an extensive collection of film and audio, a theater and a café, bookstore, an information service center for the visually impaired and a visual imaging media center. The ground floor is an open square, containing the reception, a café and a book and magazine shop. While on the first floor is the children's library, web room and administration.
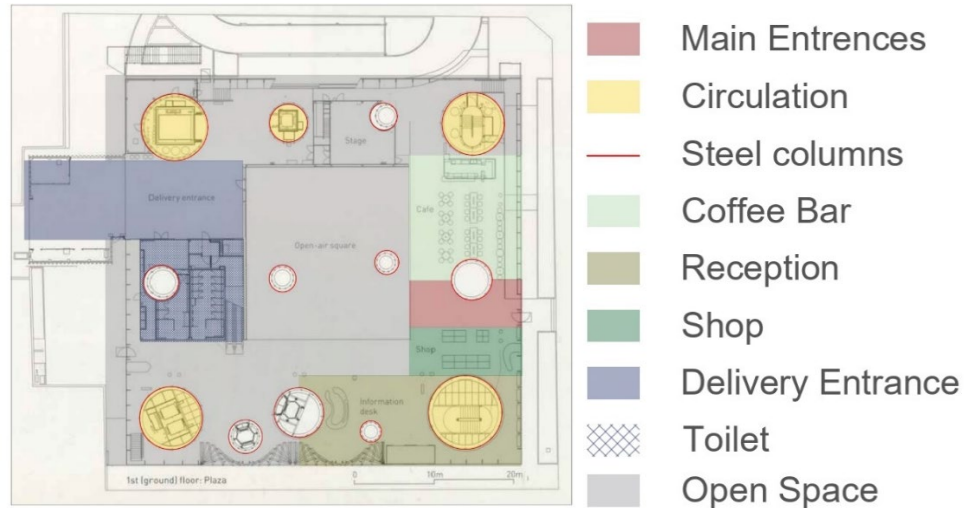

Figure 14- Ground floor

Figure 15- First floor

At the third and fourth level, the room is actually a mezzanine are the area of borrowed books and reading rooms. At the floors is seen the structure without any pillars but with 13 non-uniform pipes which seem to rise smoothly through the building.
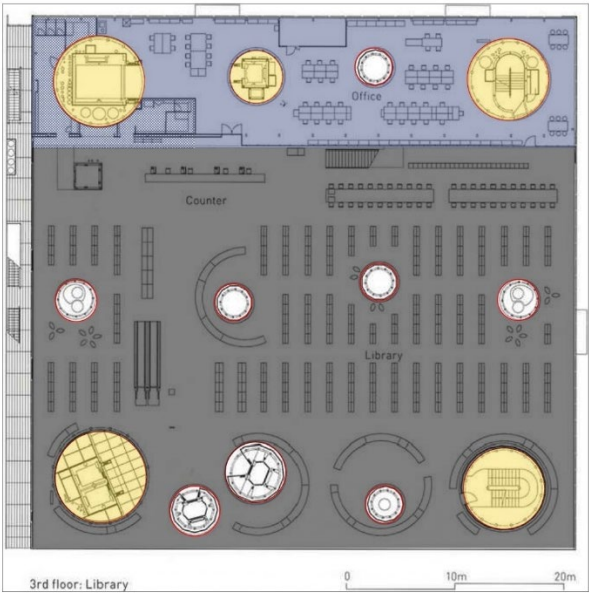
Figure 16- Third floor
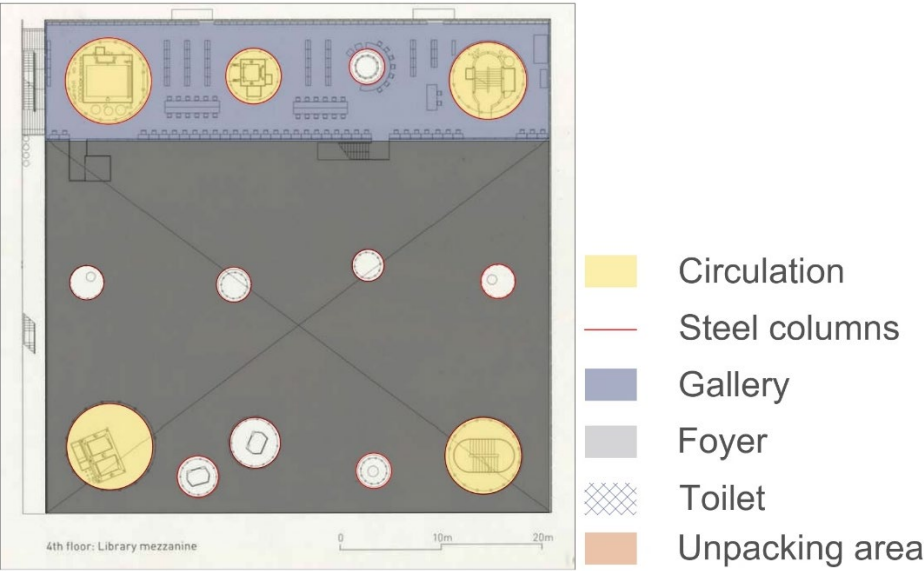
Figure 17- Fourth floor

On the fifth and sixth floors, there are located the exhibition galleries, used by the citizens of Sendai. And at the last floor is a film and conference room, which are enclosed by a wall. This minimal and pure form of structure consisting simply of flat slabs and pipes shafts defining the building is the version of the domino system with steel frame.

Figure 18- Fifth floor & sixth floor

Figure 19- Seventh floor

The structure consists of three elements: 'plate', 'tube' and 'skin'. 'Tubes' are 13 tree-like elements that penetrate vertically into tiles 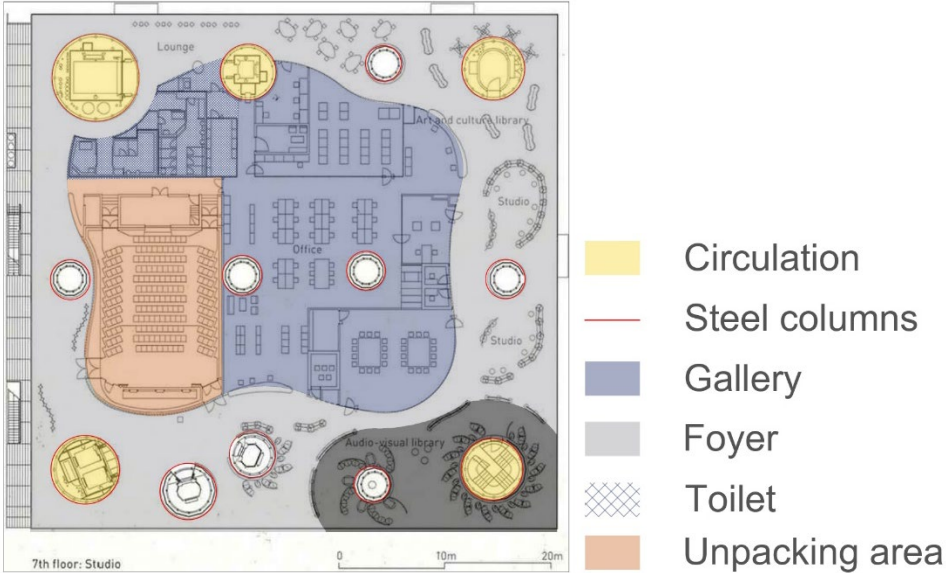to organize and integrate the space where energies flow (light, air, water, sound, etc.) 'Leather' means the elements that separate the interior of the building from the outside. And by 'skin', the transparent membrane that allows fluid communication with the interior's visual exterior.
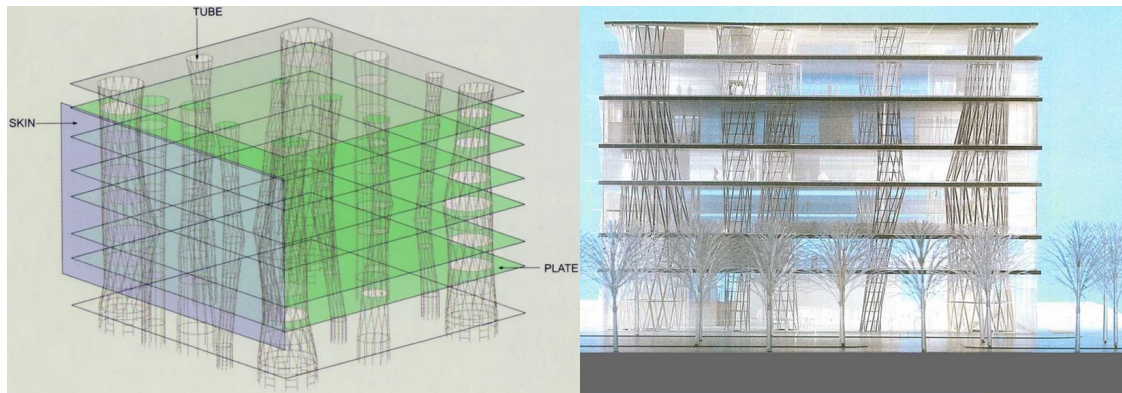
Figure 20- The structure

Air conditioning systems are located on the roof and downstairs. They communicate with each other through pipes that penetrate the tiles. During summer, the upper and lower opening mechanisms are released to generate climbing air and during winter, the opening mechanisms are closed so that the wall can functions as a highly insulating layer of air. The steel tubes have a diameter from 2 to 9 meters.
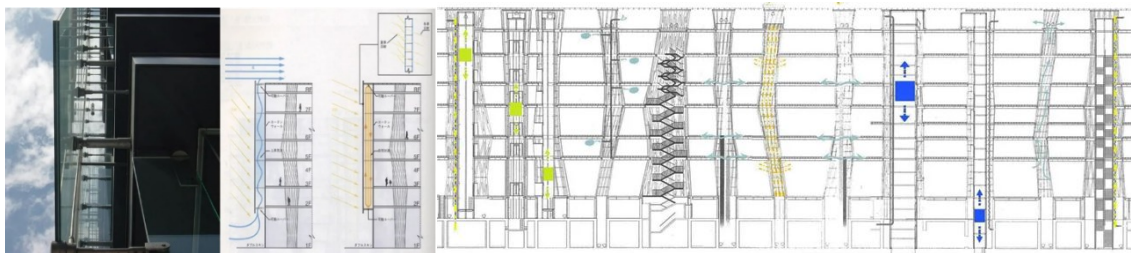
Figure 21- Air condition

The height of the building is 36m and the materials used are transparent glass, steel columns and wood for interior. The designer, Ito has described his work as "being easy & transparent" and it took him 6 years to make this unique building.

Figure 22- Interior

2.1.6. Doksan Library

With an area of 2203m^2, the library is located in South Korea and has a height of 5m. The small library generates a comfortable, peaceful environment, with a central atrium, and sixteen skylights illuminating the interior with natural sunlight. Large windows offer views towards the surrounding forest. Sixteen skylights piercing the ceiling, placed right above the reading tables. Meanwhile, a series of prominent square frames, with indirect lighting, are installed to illuminate the tables in the evening. (Archdaily, 2020)

Figure 23- Doksan Library (South Korea, 2020)

The ground floor is related with the exterior part of the building. It provides a coffee area, staff offices, meeting room, reception and the open library space. While the first floors have the open library, a classroom for courses and private spaces to read books.

Figure 24- Ground floor
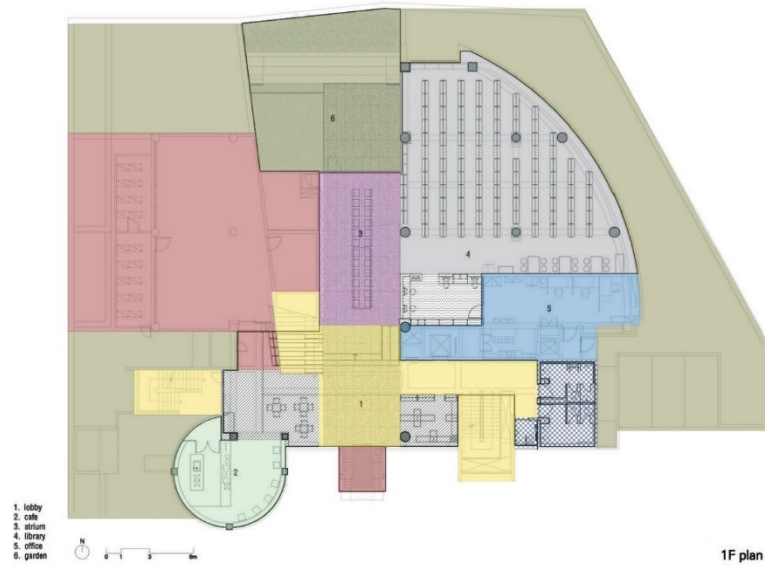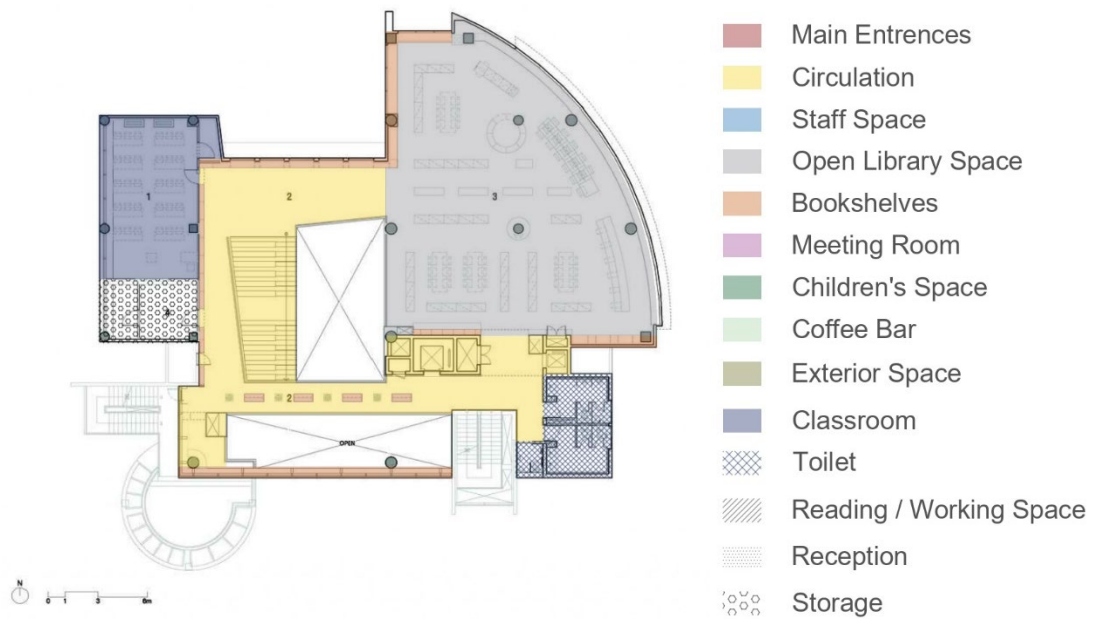

Figure 25- First floor
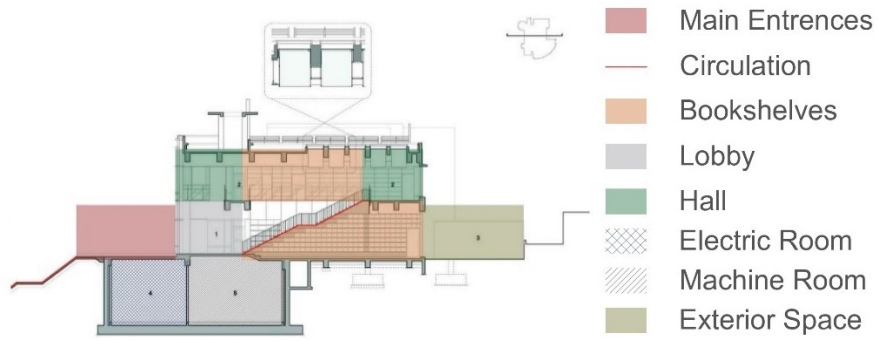
Figure 26- Section

A bookcase is placed to the side of the wide staircase which leads to the second floor, where small personal spaces are installed alongside each of the windows on the second floor, where one can sit and read with privacy. The most used materials are transparent glass, concrete, metal and wood for the interior.

Figure 27- Interior

2.1.7. Mesquite Library

Mesquite Library is located in Las Vegas with an area 4100m^2. A community bookstore with an open coffee, popular browsing materials and a dedicated area for the community to buy books. The Mesquite library is a one store building whose functions are spread all over it. It offers a flurry of activity with people of all ages enjoying the library facilities. The concept was to create a building to serve the community, a gathering point when you can drink coffee, read books and a playground for children. (lvccld, 2020)

Figure 28- Mesquite Library (Las Vegas, 2018)

The ground floor functions consist on open library spaces, meeting room, playground for children's, community concerts community theater and community movie night. There will be different courses that will be taught by librarians, community partners and volunteers.

Figure 29- Photos of the building

The facade is completely transparent providing natural daylight all the time, masonry wall, transparent glass, colored wood furniture's and metal celling. Interior design is focused on using colors to give life to the spaces. The building provides Wi-Fi and a 3D Printer. Interior and exterior offer a playground for children.

Figure 30- Photo of the facade

Figure 31- Interior

2.1.8. Mei-Wu-Ying Center for the Arts / Mecanoo

This building is located in Koahsiung, Taiwain with an area of 141.000 m². The center symbolizes the transformation of Kaohsiung and marks the transition from a port city to a modern, cultural metropolis. The new cultural complex is the largest in Asia by offering, a concert hall, an opera house, a playhouse, a recital hall, a public library and studios for music and dance. It is open to the public all the time and people can perform mini concerts, play music, dance, eat and drink. (Mecanoo, 2020)

Figure 32- Mei-Wu-Ying Center for the Arts (Mecanoo, 2011)

Inspired by the local Banyan trees with their iconic crowns, the vast, undulating structure is composed of a skin and roof, and connects an extensive range of functions. Through the integration of the open space, the green belt and the vast area itself, the Center and the Park become one.

Figure 33- Exterior photos

From the concept diagrams presented below we can see the public entrance of the building which has two entrances, two car parking and includes greenery as part of the design. The building in the artistic concept has an opera house, recital hall, theater, concert hall and an outdoor theater that connects the ground floor and the terrace. The building has facilities which are open to the public 24 hours for individual events etc.
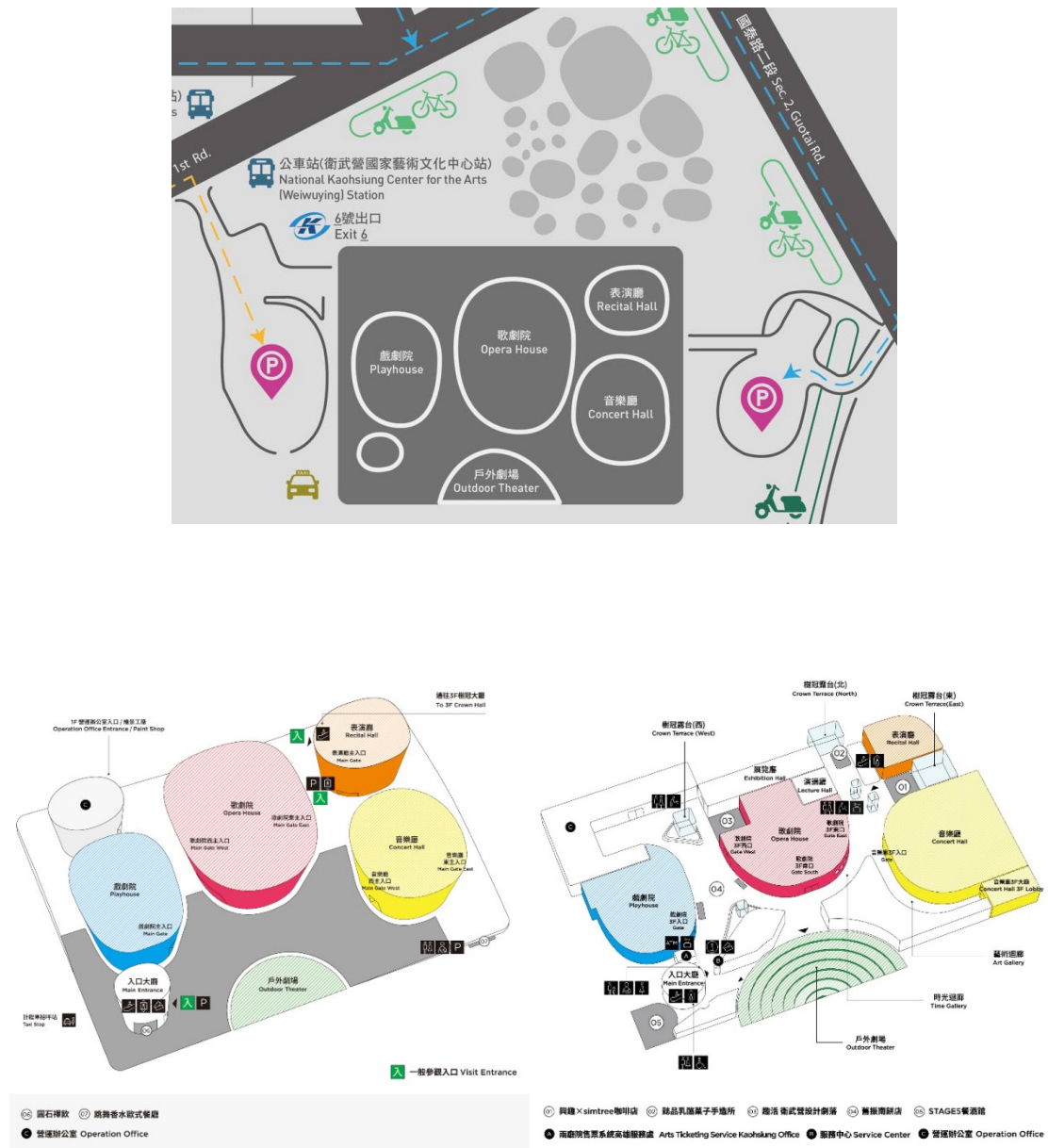

Figure 34- Concept Diagram

Figure 35- Photos of Mei-Wu-Ying Center for the Arts (Mecanoo, 2011)

2.1.9. Forum Groningen Multifunctional Building

The building is located in Groningen, The Netherlands with an area of 17000 m². Community Center that offers exhibition spaces, movie halls, assembly rooms and restaurants. The Forum aspires to become a platform for interactions and debates. It can also be called a 'living room' for the city. (Archdaily, 2019)

Figure 36- Forum Groningen Multifunctional Building (Groningen, The Netherlands 2019)

The gap functions as a spatial interface that connects all functions, cinema, book collection, exhibition, auditorium and as such it hopes to catalyze the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Vertical squares are accessible to the public. The building functions start with the ground floor with cafeteria, stores and continues with the auditorium, forum shop, cinema and film-music, meeting rooms and studies, offices, kitchen and restaurant. The design ends with the roof terrace, a viewing platform and outdoor theater.

Figure 37- First floor
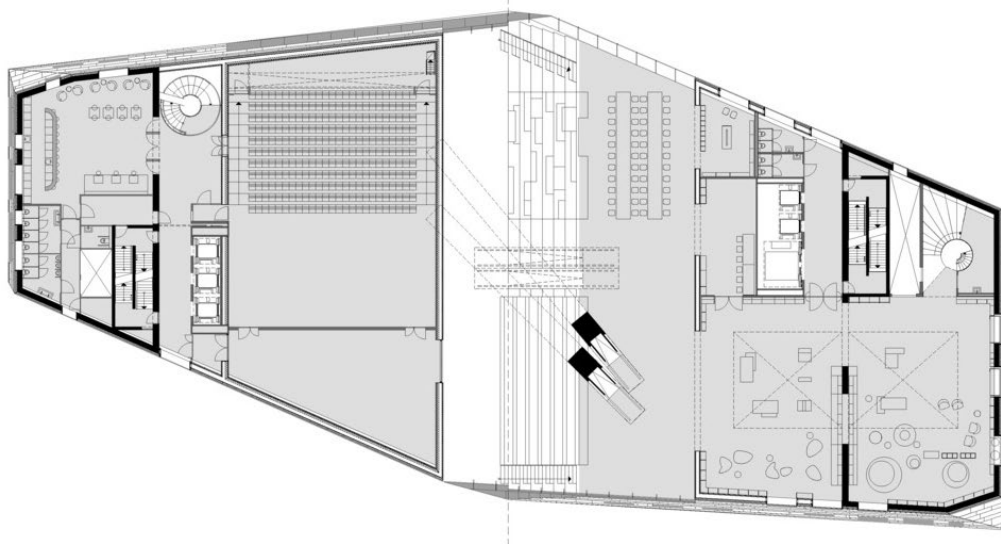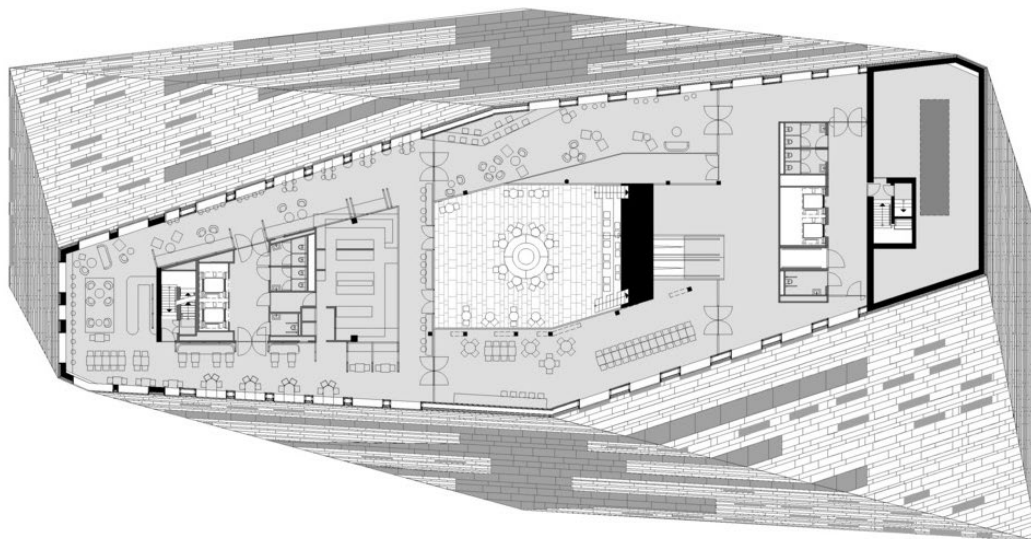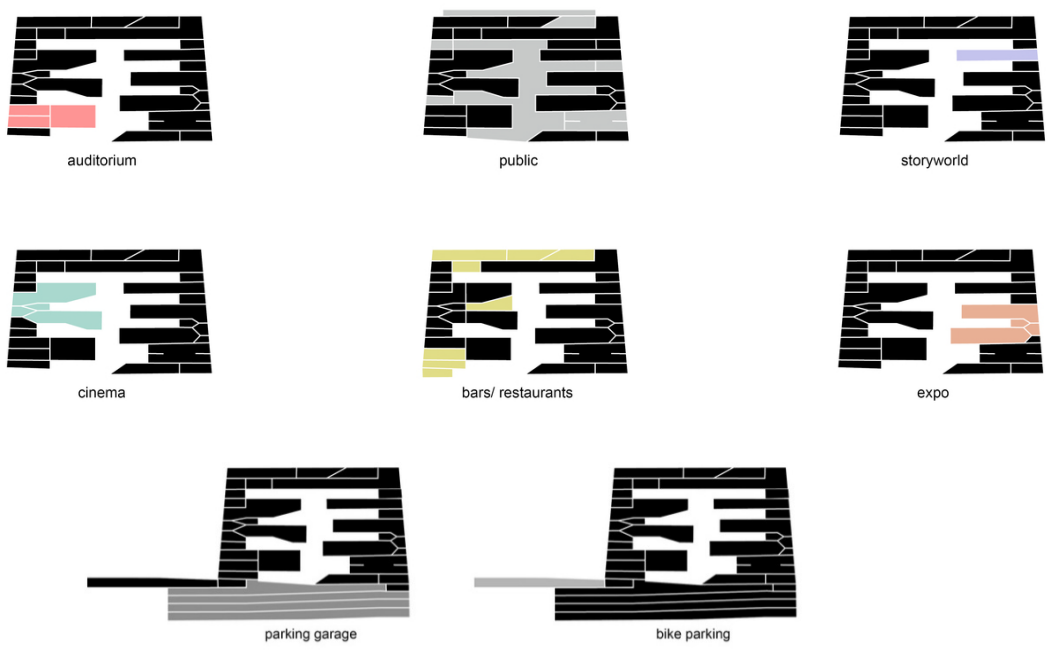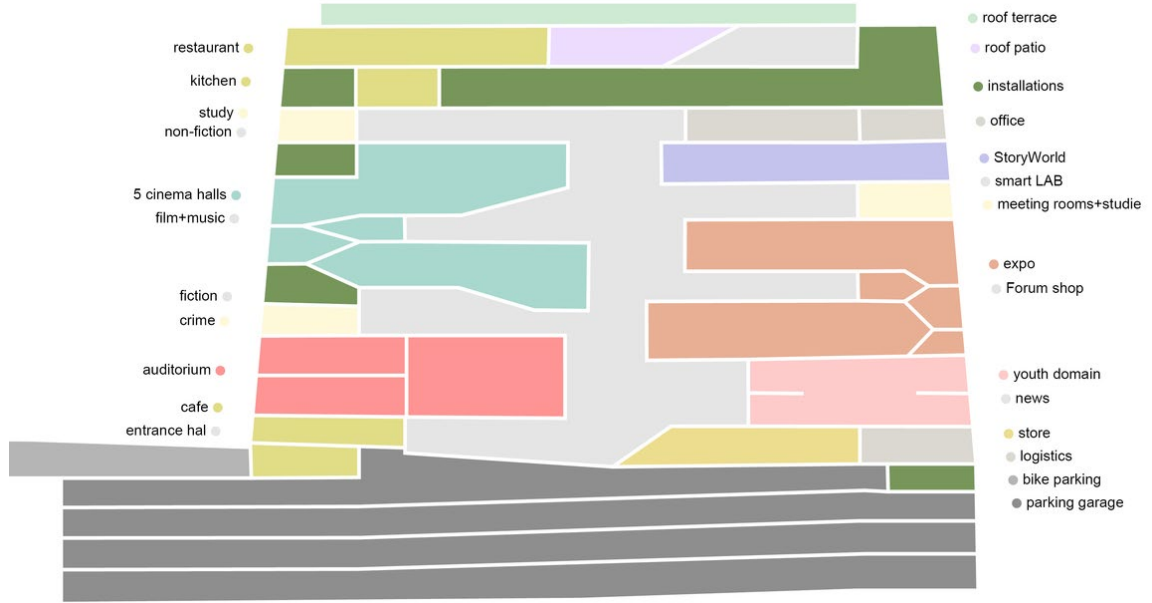

Figure 38- Tenth floor

Figure 39- Concept diagram

The interior is characterized by earth and wood colors. Natural light is provided by tall windows that are transparent and friendly to the public.

Figure 40- Interior

2.2. Ten Center

The 'Ten' Center is located in the city of Tirana, an institution created by the Municipality of Tirana for the citizens but especially for the youth. This center aims to discover and support the talented young people of the capital and to live in the artistic and cultural life of Tirana. (TEN, 2021)

The center serves as a gathering point for young people in its environment with various activities that it offers, such as: a cinema, shows, classical concerts, projection for films, documentaries, didactic materials, presentations, study environment, official reception with extensive participation, community forum gatherings, celebrations, etc. The central hall is designed for 130 people. Children's environment serves as a creative laboratory for age groups of 3 to 13, with groups of not more than ten people.

This center is welcoming for all those who want to use their free time fruitfully, developing their talents and at the same time increasing the level of their knowledge. It also serves as a promotion opportunity for young artists who already have an environment to exhibit their work.

Figure 41- Ten Center (Tirane, Albania)

Figure 42- Interiors from Ten Center (Tirane, Albania)

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Site Selection

The site is located in the city of Tirana at the New Boulevard of Tirana. The new boulevard is one of the most developed new points of the moment in the capital, located northeast of the city. The development and remodeling of the entire boulevard area started during 2014 and a part of it was completed during 2018. The new boulevard is designed to be "Tirana of the future", in correspondence with the masterplan of "Tirana 2030".

Figure 43 - Main entrance to the New Boulevard of Tirana

The site can be accessed from two pedestrian streets. This area is approximately 3100m^2, its position on the entrance of the Boulevard and it provides some challenges in construction because of the different level from quota 0 to quota -1 that is 4m. (Tirana post, 2020)

Figure 44- Site location

Figure 45- Photos of the site

Figure 46- Photos of the site

3.2 Relieve
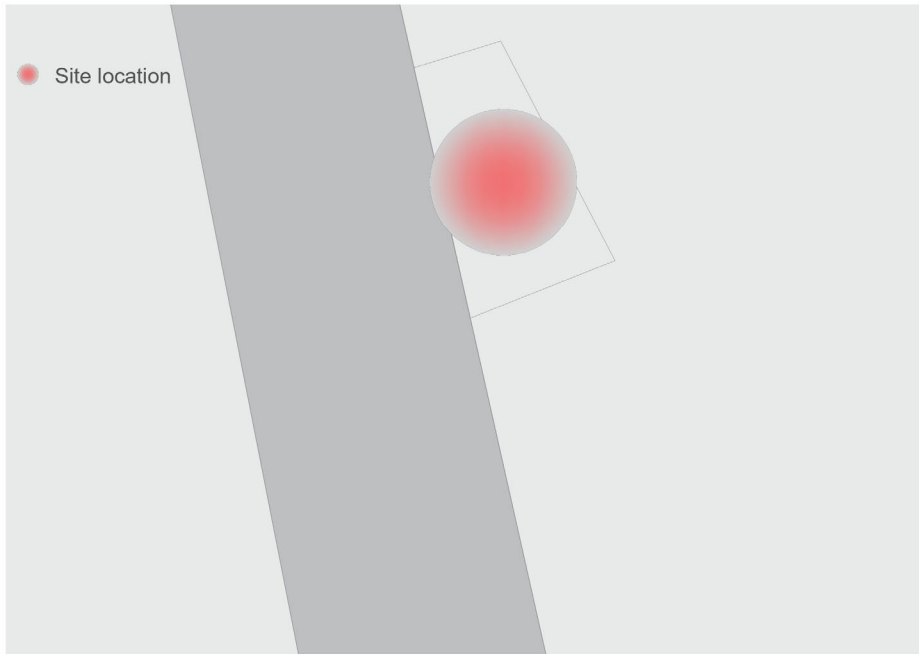
Figure 47- Site relieve

The location of the site's mostly identifiable characteristic is the straight path and the different level from quota 0 to quota -1 that is 4m.
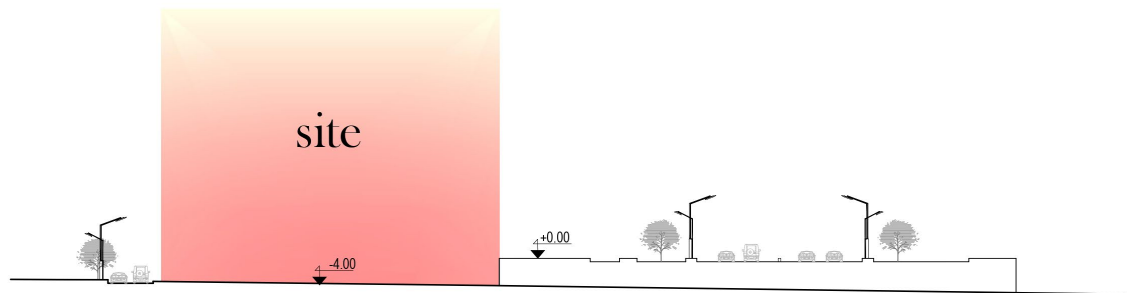
Figure 48- Site section

3.3 Urban Developments

Figure 49- Urban Footprint

The location of the site is surrounded from residential building, where the average height of the floors is 3 m. On the entrance of the boulevard there are some cafeterias, a car parking and a laboratory.
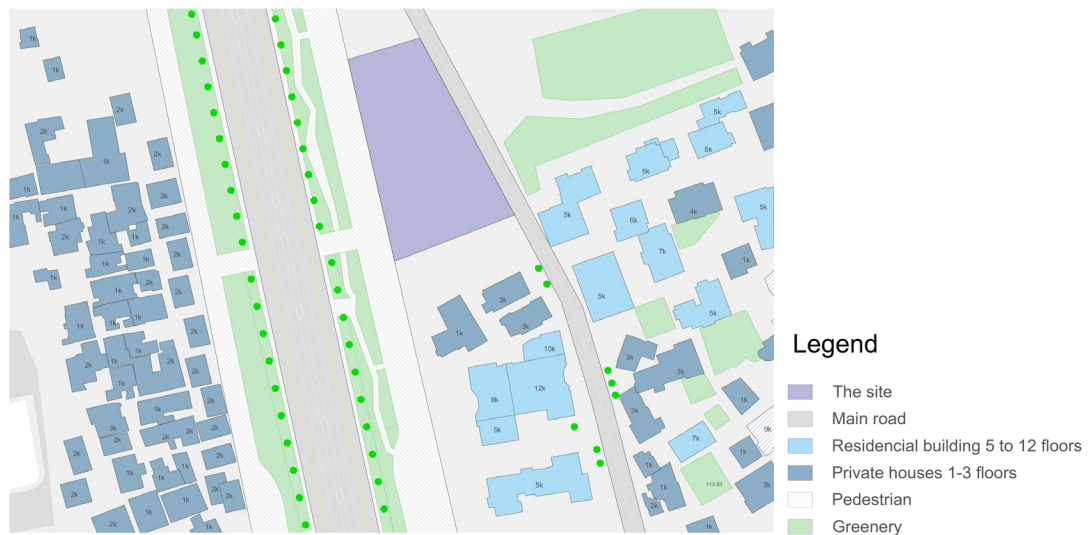
Figure 50- Map of functions (Current plan)

Figure 51- Map of high buildings (Current plan)

Legend

- The site
- 1-2 storeys buildings
- 3-5 storeys buildings
- 6-7 storeys buildings
- 8-12 storeys max

Figure 52- Map of circulation (Current plan)

Legend

- Main Boulevard
- The Site
- Main Road
- Secondary Roads
- Residential Buildings
- Private Buildings
- Pedstrian
- Greenery

The location where the site is will have total changes during the next 10 years. The Masterplan is designed by the well-known company Grimshaw which is expected to be completed in 2030 and give the city a new European urban development. The project aims to increase public spaces, including the entire sphere of public institutions available to all, from large public squares to promenades and playgrounds. (Grimshaw global, 2021) Below I studied the master plan of the new boulevard where I chose the location of the site for my project.

Legend

1- Mixed Use - International competition
2- Mixed Use - International competition
3- Municipality - International competition
4- Public / International competition
5- Commercial - International competition
6- Library - Public development
7- Opera House - Public development
8- Public / Private development
9- Art Gallery- Public development
10- Cultural center - Public development
11- River activities - Public development
12- River activities - Public development

Figure 53- Map of functions (New plan 2030)
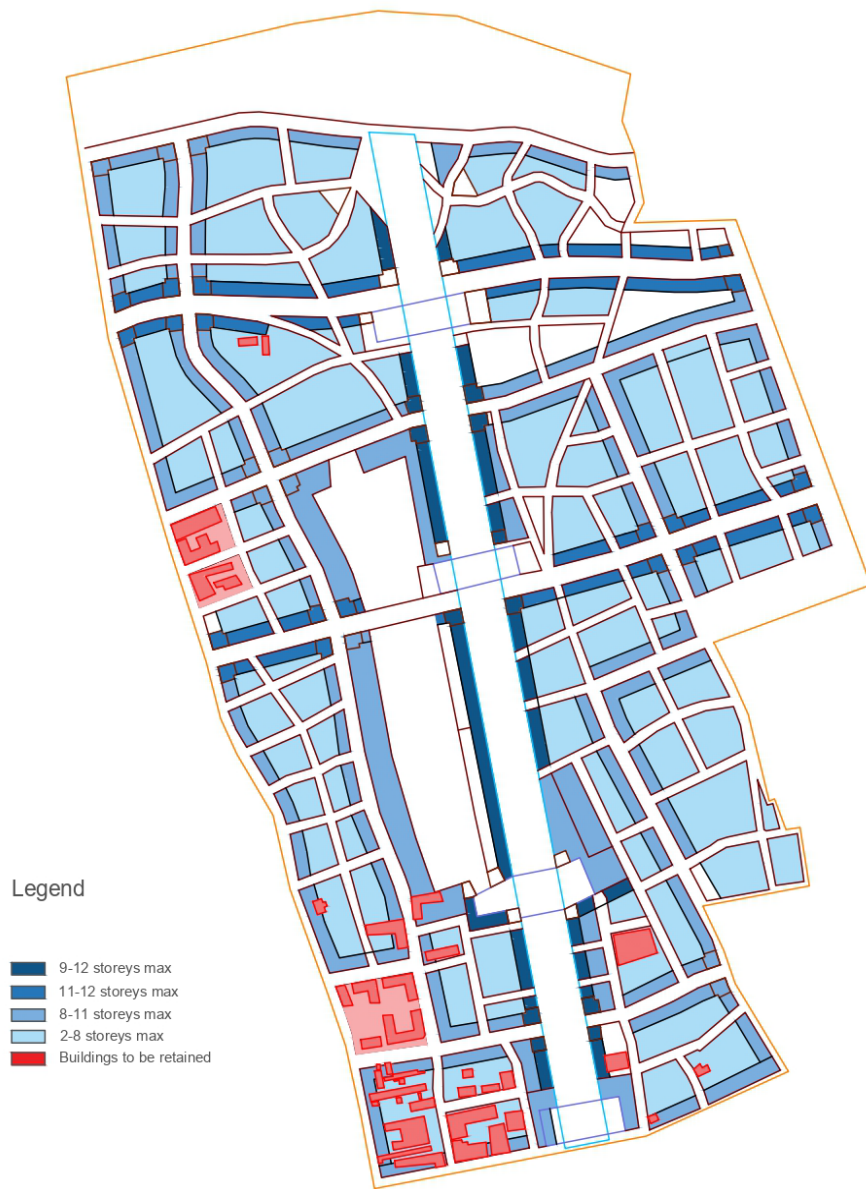
Figure 54- Map of high buildings (New plan 2030)

Legend

- Public square
- Main Boulevard
- Primary urban road
- Secondary urban road
- Local road
- Pedestrian only

Land use

- Residential
- Residential existing
- Residential + Comercial
- Residential + social services
- Residential + education
- Social service/natural land
- Residential+ services+insitutions
- Infrastructure
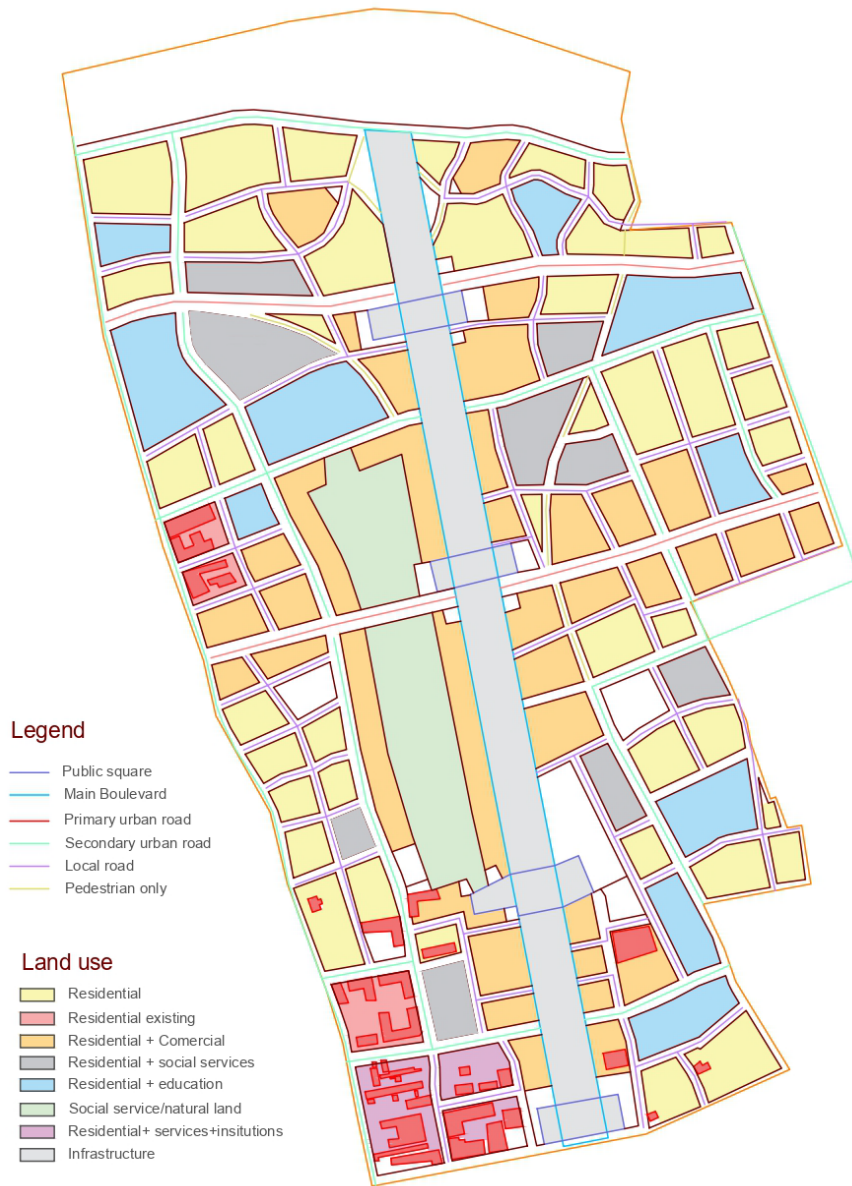
Figure 55- Map of circulation and functions of buildings (New plan 2030)

3.4 Circulation

The boulevard circulation is composed of 4 vehicles lanes, 2 for bicycles and the rest is dedicated to pedestrians. In the near future, the municipality of Tirana plans to install an electric train to Tirana-Durres in this area. This circulation made possible the maximum use of the area by the citizens.

Figure 56- Circulation

3.4 Vegetation and Hardscape

The whole zone is characterized by uncontrolled greenery and high trees because it is a protected area. The most characteristic vegetations are trees like oak tree, acacia, pine, maple etc.

Figure 57- Photos of the Boulevard

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Analysis

4.1.1 Community

The master thesis consists of designing a community center as a multifunctional project. As such it heavily relies on detailed architectural drawings and renders. After selecting the site and making an observation of the people of the community about what they do daily and what they are missing in that area, if there is a need for a community center and what functions should have the community center to fulfill those needs. The methodology followed is based on some points I made that help me organize my project, as shown below:

A. A study for the city
B. Direct questions to the citizens of the city
C. 10 case studies

By studying the first point, I came to the conclusion that the composition of Tirana is overcrowded with multi-story buildings, dividing and limiting the premises with one age group, and no place that can gather all age groups together. From a statistic made in 2019, Albania has an increase of 6.3% from the previous year for the cafeterias in the city, 654 bars per 100.000 citizens that means 1 bar per 152 citizens. Albania is now the first country in Europe that has this many bars, says Instat. Despite the fact that we have a high number of cafes, an environment as a community center needs cafes but with a specific purpose such as gathering to discuss various issues, as well as to be as close as possible to the children who play near you.

The next point was the questionnaire addressed to the citizens of the city of Tirana to find out more about the needs and requirements of different age groups. According to

the questionary, it results that 79% of people weren't satisfied in terms of entertainment and that would like to add more activities as mentioned in the questionary. 12% were not sure on what they want and 9 % are happy with the activities that the city offers.

The project is also put in reference to 10 case studies, designed from various studios in different location. Internet source from the relevant companies is used to get detailed information. Gathering such records is followed by their analysis. They are projects of similar contexts and similar typologies. This helps to create a comparative base for my own design. as such the approach would be reflected with other studio approaches. By analyzing their projects, it would be possible to understand what to avoid or to implement on my project.

4.1.2 Inspiration from the site

As a direct method of investigation to define the shape of your project is by well analyzing the site. So, the whole concept of the building based on the shape of the site connecting the two levels, from the boulevard to the secondary road to make the facilities interconnected and functional for the community.
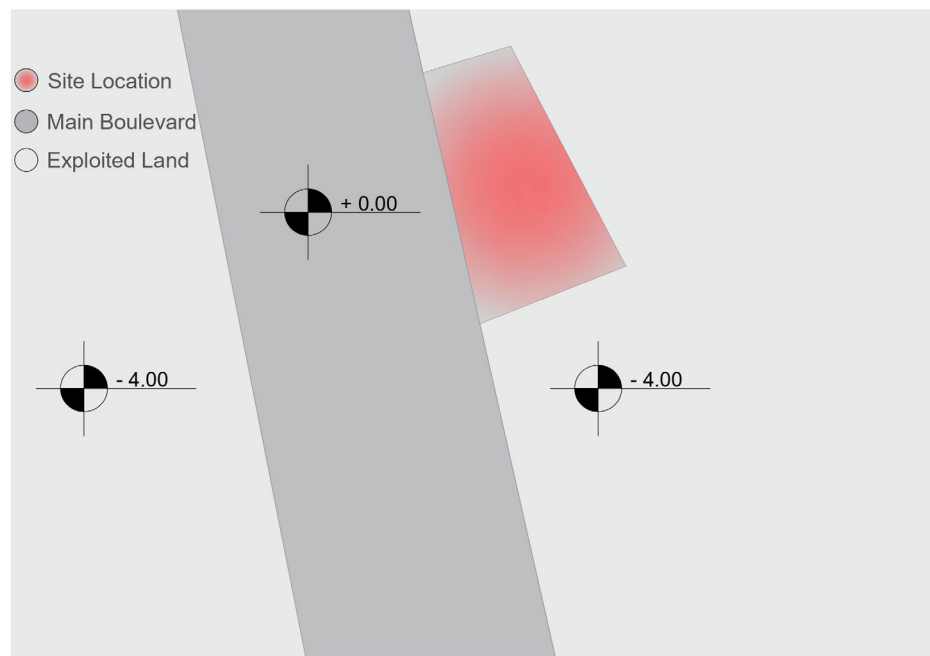

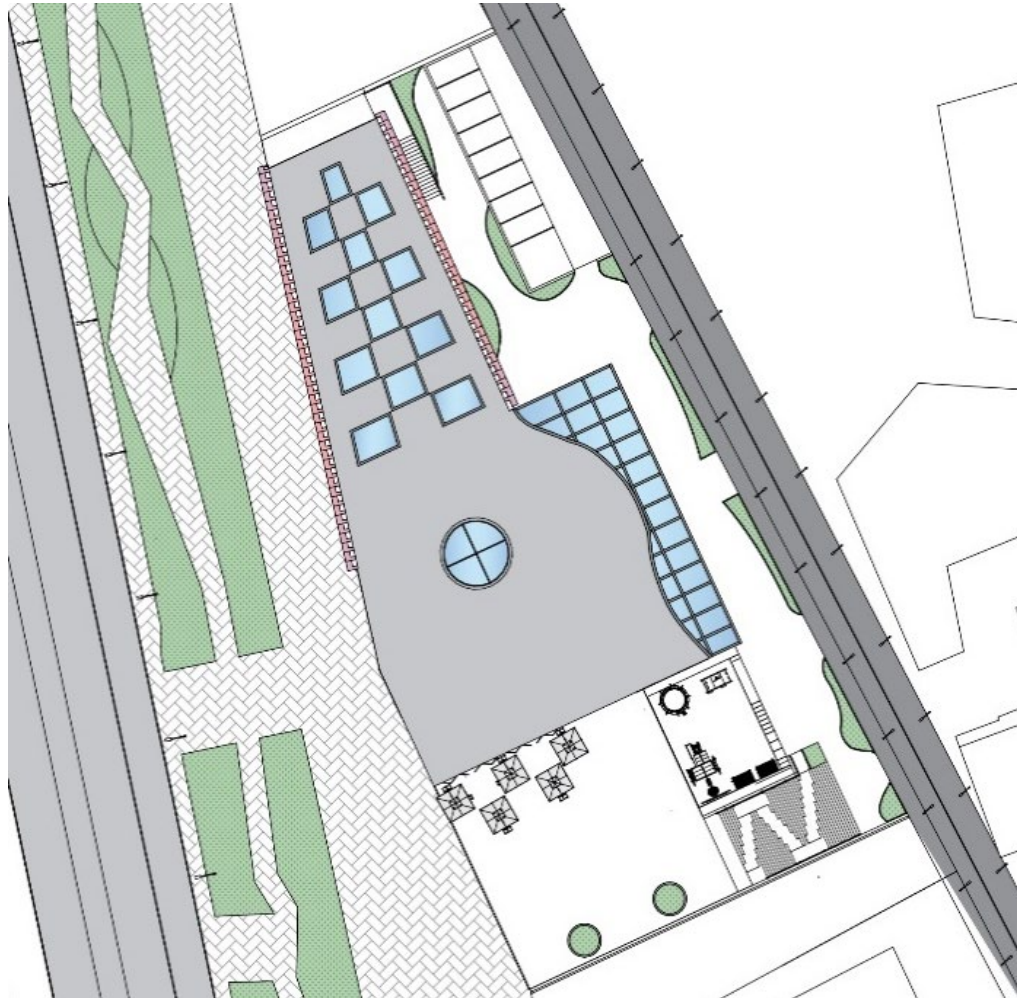
Figure 58- Trace of the building

Figure 59- Trace of the building

4.2 Structural Connection

Architects and builders use their best judgment in selecting materials and then ask how these materials can be combined to create, not just a solid building, but a useful, enjoyable, inspiring and functional building.
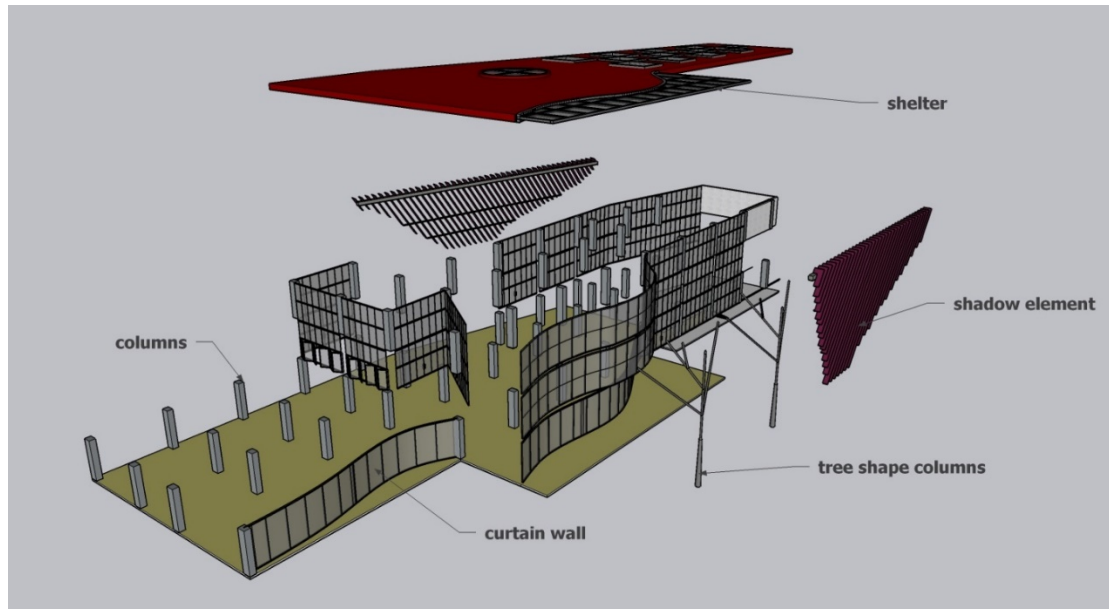
*Figure 60 -*Structural Parts Connection

The whole structure is designed with concrete columns and steel beams. The shelter is designed so that there is sufficient lighting and is supported by a concrete column and two tree columns in the front part. Curtain walls are widely used to give transparency making them welcoming to the whole community.
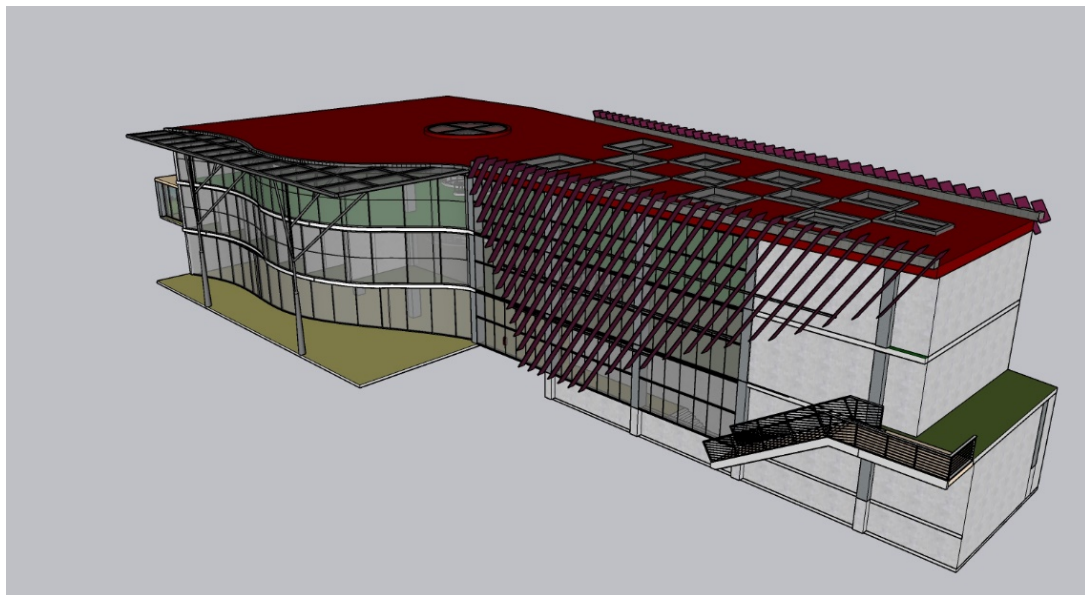

*Figure 61-*Designed Structure

4.2.1 Columns

Concrete columns and two tree columns were used in the project. Reinforced concrete columns are structural elements created to support compressive loads, consisting of concrete with an embedded steel frame to provide reinforcement. Like the branches of the tree load their weight on the body of the tree, those beams that are connected to the main structure where the steel beams are connected load the weight on the column. This connection creates a shape that looks like a tree. From the calculations to have a better load the "body" of the column is wider at the end and smaller in diameter in the branches.
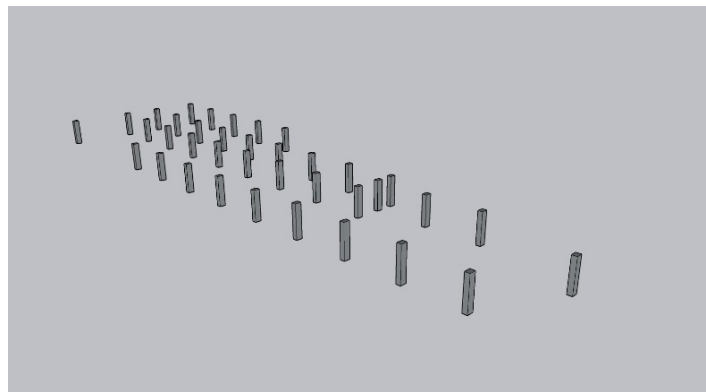

*Figure 62-*Concrete columns

Figure 63- Tree-shape columns

4.2.2 Shelter

Like the name itself, shelters protect the object. In this case, it is integrated with concrete materials steel, and glass. All these three materials are properly connected providing support, security, and design. The open parts in the shelter make possible efficient and useful lighting.
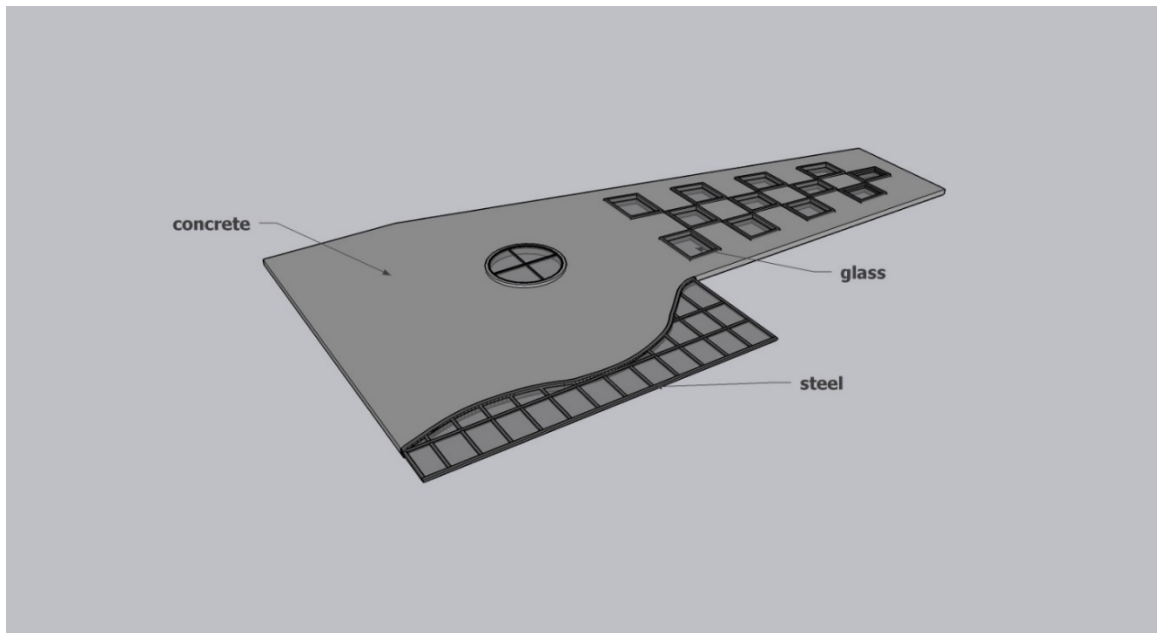

Figure 64- Shelter

4.2.3 Curtain wall

The primary purpose of a curtain wall system is to protect the building interior against exterior natural phenomena such as sun exposure, temperature changes, earthquake, rain, and wind. The entire volume of the structure is enclosed by curtain walls that are formed by the shape of the project itself. The main function of this decision is done due to the necessary light in the building.
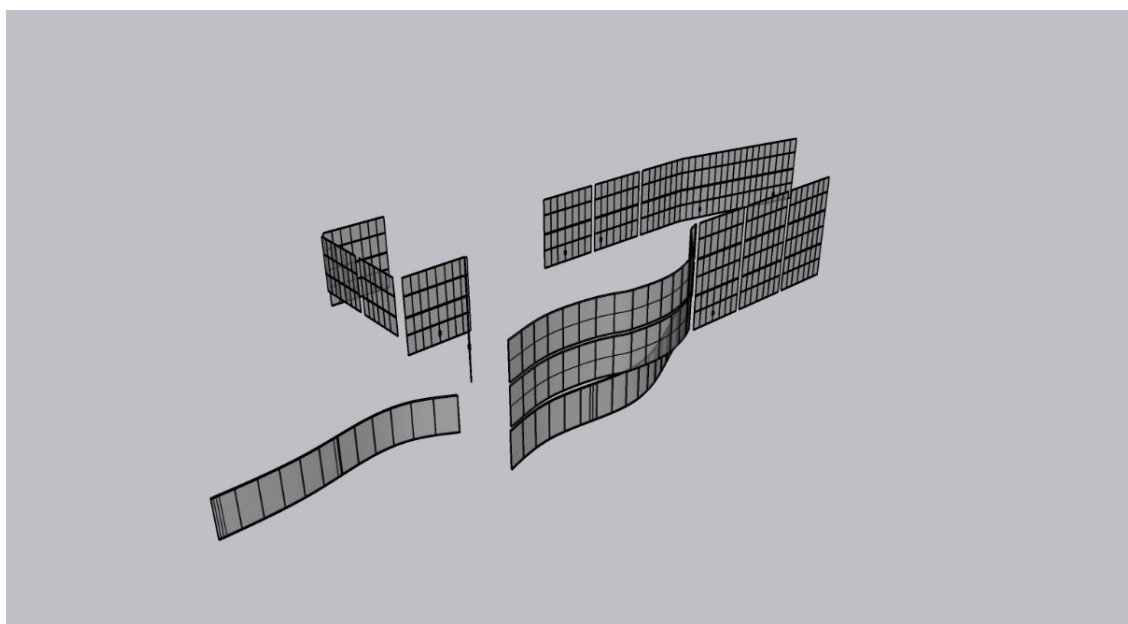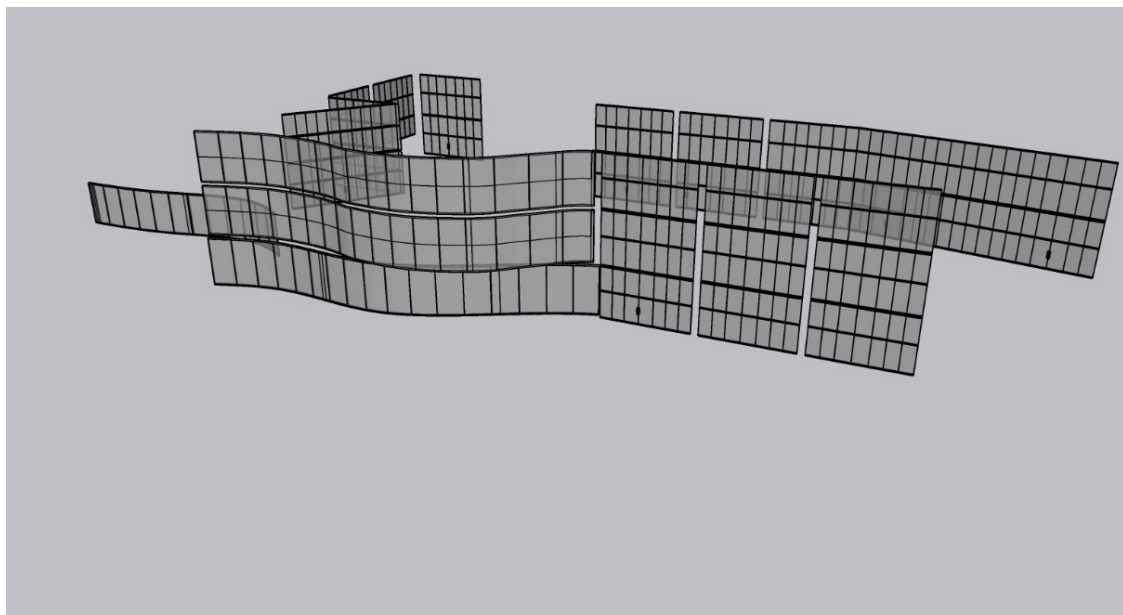
*Figure 65-*Curtain Walls Structure

4.2.4 Shadow elements

After determining the shape and volumes of the design, it was necessary to add other important elements. There are a perplexing number of solid materials that need to be joined together to build any structure. At the end of the project form, other elements appear that need to be added to complement the design and functionality of the building, being more dynamic than the original conception. These elements have a lot to do with the play of light and shadow over and inside the building during different days and seasons.
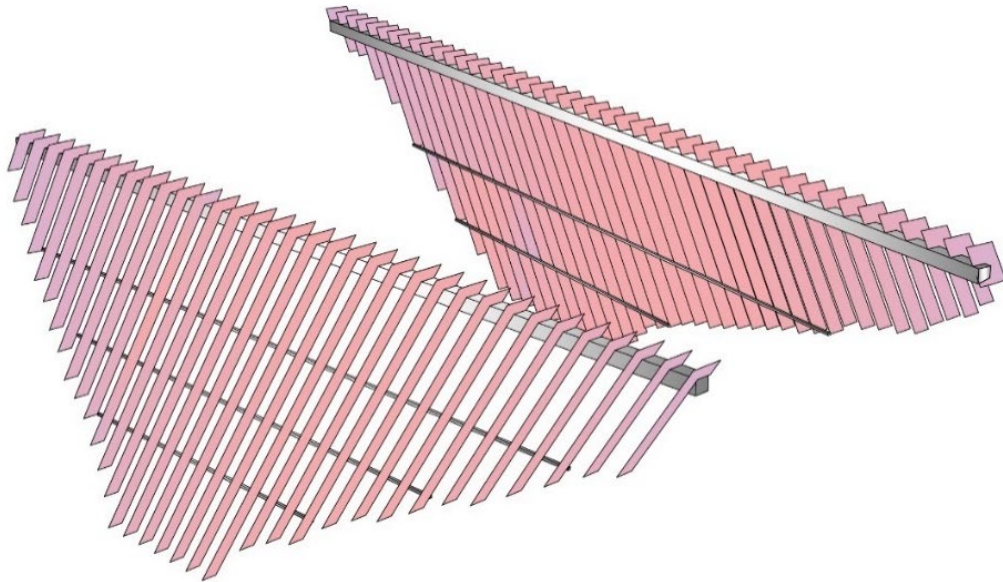

Figure 66- Shadow element

CHAPTER 5
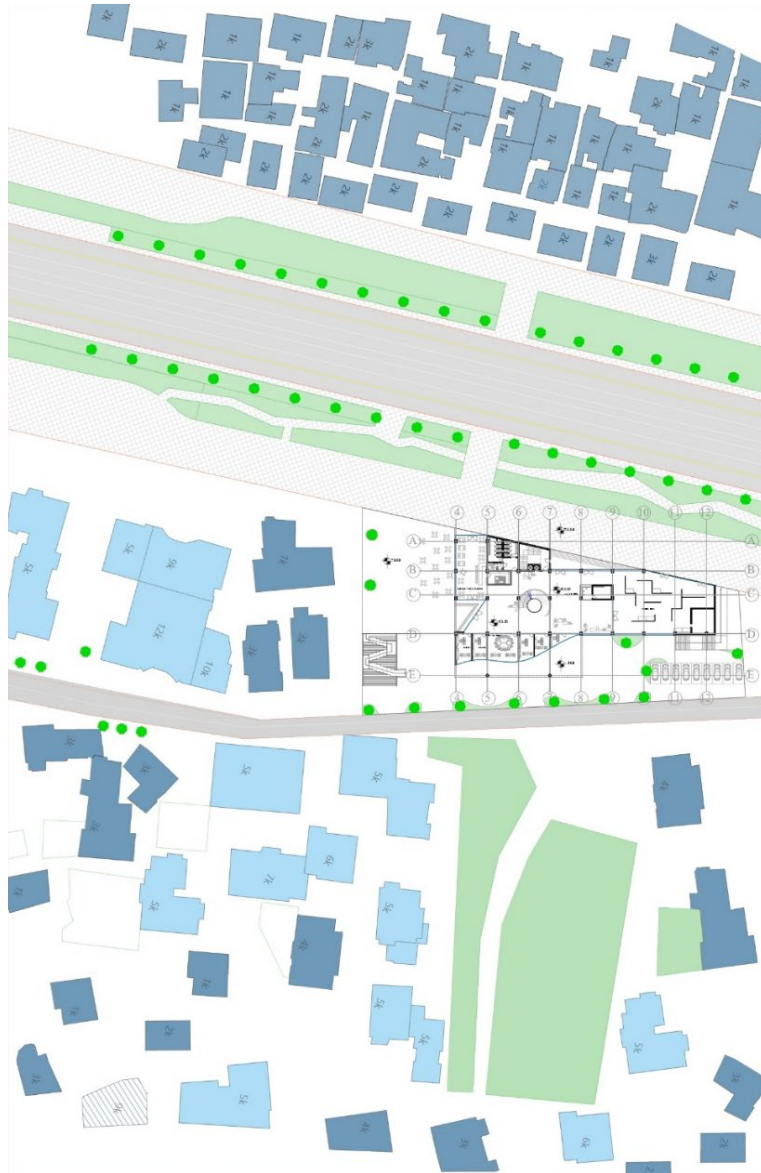
PROJECT DESIGN

5.1 Masterplan

Figure 67- Masterplan

The location of the building in the site makes its placement have a very natural circulation. The circulation of the building makes it a pass-away for the people to go directly from the boulevard to the secondary road. The building is located near the main entrance of the boulevard and is surrounded by residences and private houses. In the external environment of the facility, it has become possible to create a special environment for children, away from the main road. On the right is the parking lot and the rest belongs to the greenery and movement.

*Figure 68-*Top View

5.2 Plans

5.2.1 Underground Plan

The structure of the building is divided into three floors. The underground floor functions are dedicated to students and children with spaces such as: indoor and outdoor playground, music and dances spaces, meeting spaces, a cafeteria and an auditorium. This level is connected with the ground floor through the main outdoor stairs and by the emergency stairs. In the inner circulation an additional set of stairs is used for the vertical circulation. As such a wholesome connection is done through the levels.
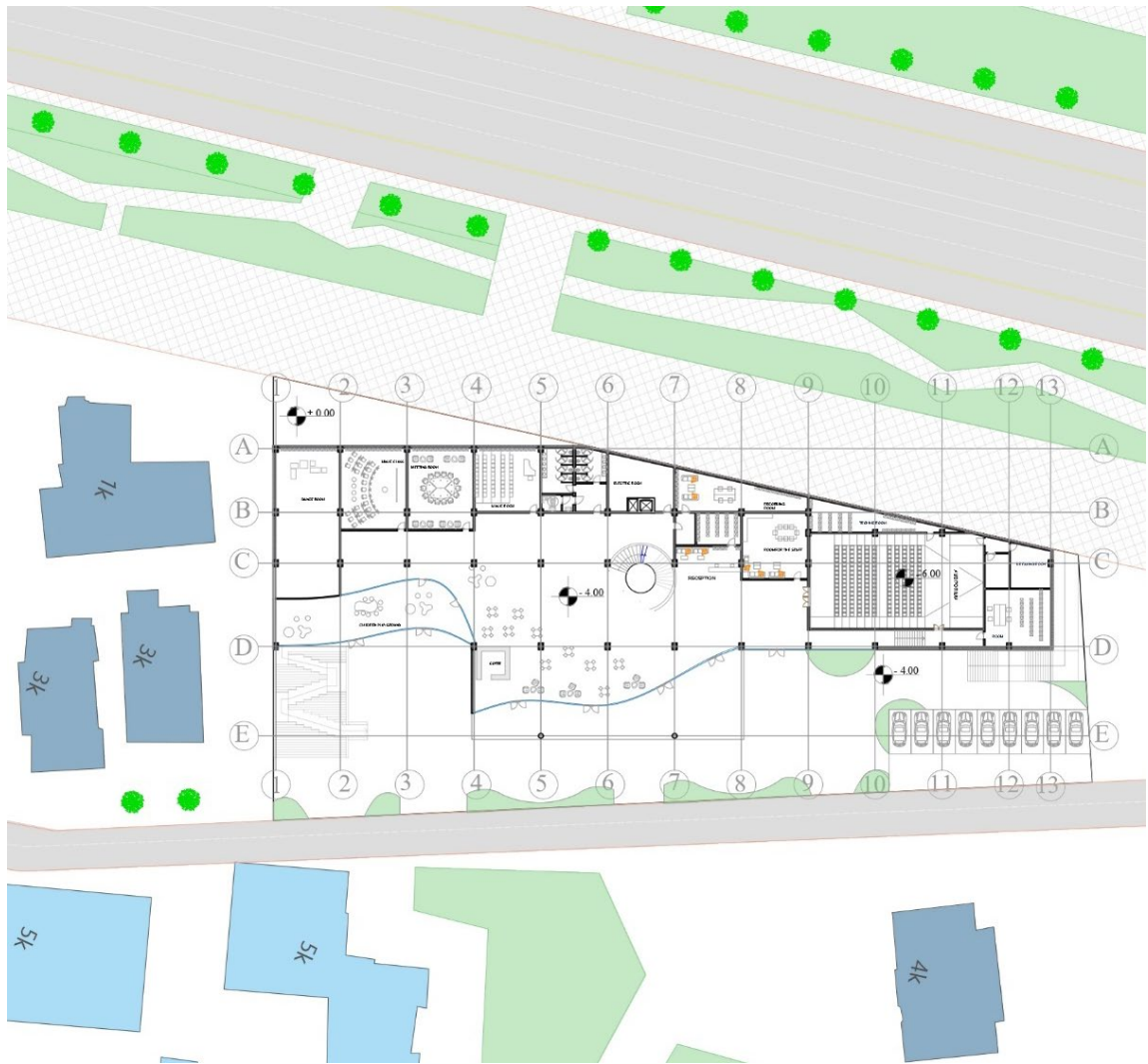

Figure 69-Underground floor

Spaces:

Auditorium: Capacity with an area of 220 m².

Classes: Aimed in providing dance and music spaces for relevant courses.

Cafeteria: It is the most public space of this level aimed to provide a friendly experience

Playground: Placed indoors and outdoors

Technical rooms: In close proximity to the employees for technical assistance

Reception, main stairs and gathering hall

5.2.2 Ground Floor

The ground floor is designed to a be as a public space. That is achieved through several function areas, such as the cafeteria and restaurant. They are located next to the boulevard and can be accessed easily from each side. An exhibition area is located at the next side of the boulevard. The floor also contains offices which are located at the eastern part of the building. The circulation is concentrated at the center of the building with the aim of being easily accessible and visually readable.
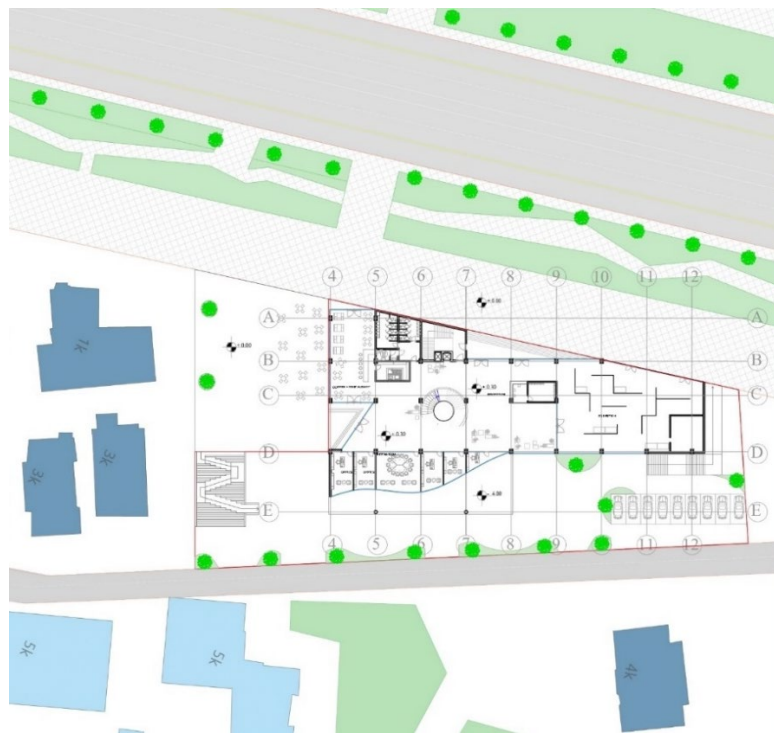

*Figure 70-*Ground floor

5.2.3 First floor

The first floor is concepted as a more private are. It includes an open library which has a set of bookshelves, completed with tables and spaces to study and read. This level also contains a special room with computers and 3D printers in help of the students.
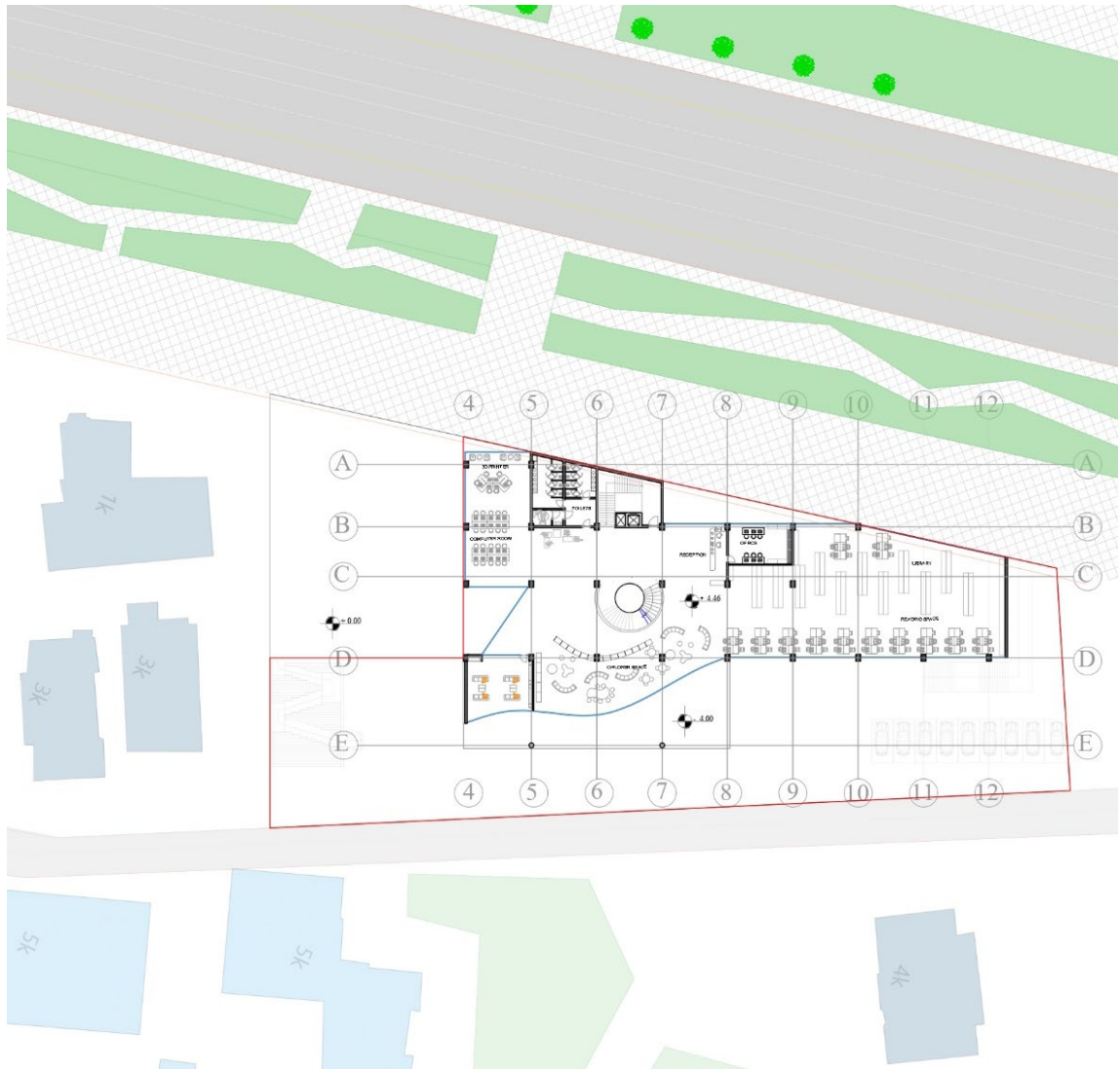

Figure 71-First floor

5.3 Facade

The facades show how the volume of the building connected to the ground and how the curtain walls are designed in the building based on the lighting needed inside the building, where the structure is closed and does not need light and where the glasses are used mostly.
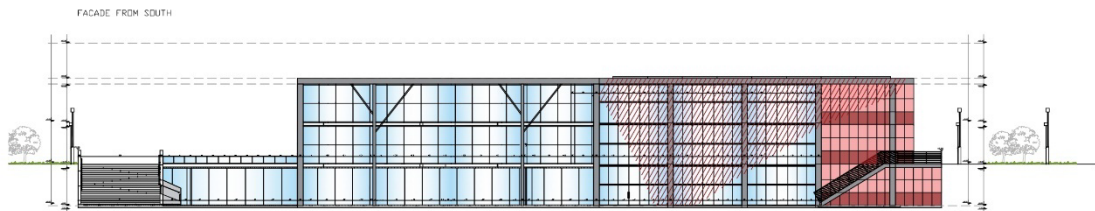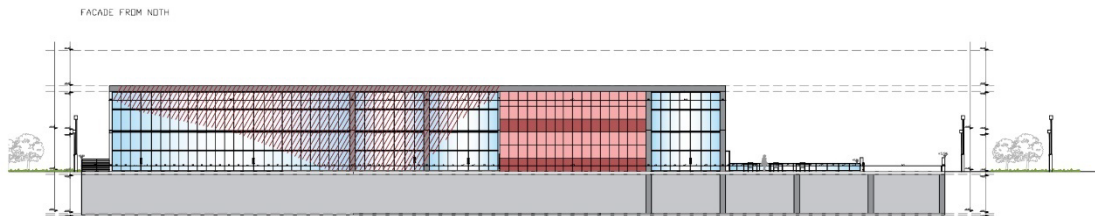

*Figure 72 -*South facade

*Figure 73-*North facade

FACADE FROM WEST

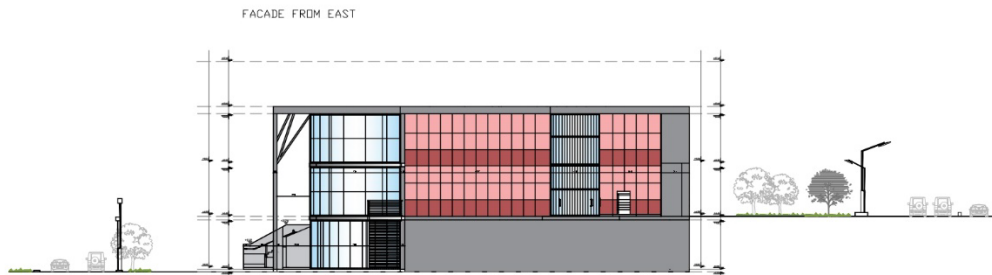*Figure 74-*West facade

FACADE FROM EAST

*Figure 75-*East facade

5.4 Section

The sections of the building show how the building is connected with the terrain and how the elevation inside the building is designed. Also, in the sections is shown how the tree-shape columns are connected with the beams of the structure.
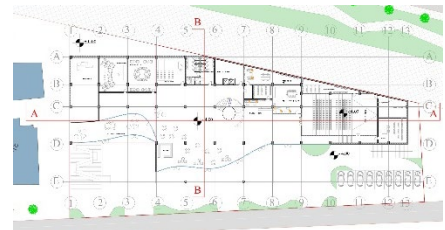
SECTION A-A

Figure 76-Section A-A

SECTION B-B
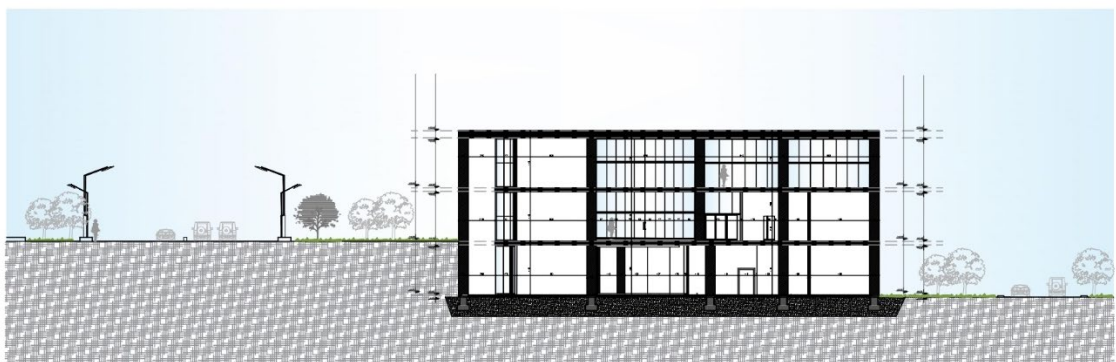
Figure 77-Section B-B
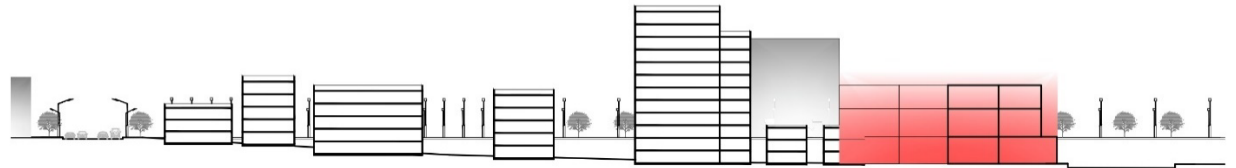
*Figure 78-*Site section A-A
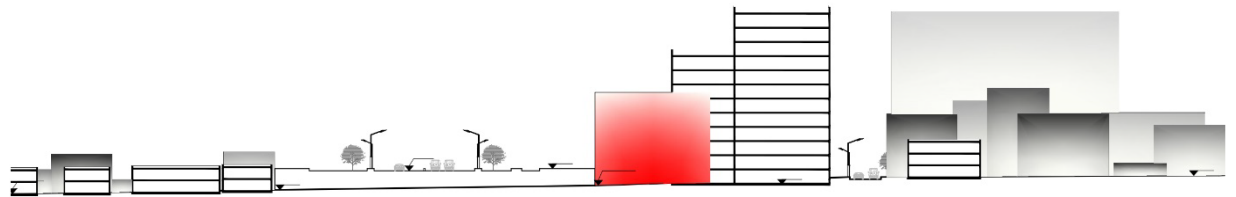
*Figure 79-*Site section B-B
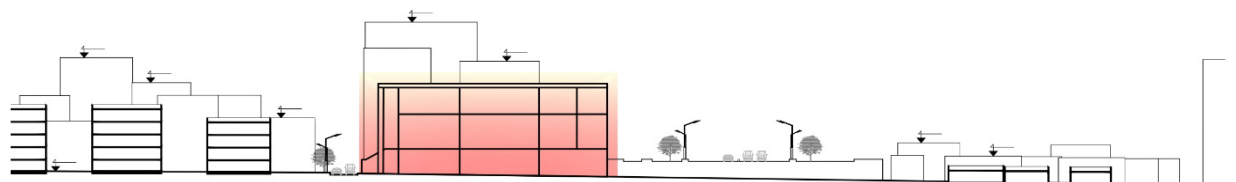
*Figure 80-*Site section C-C

5.5 Renders

5.5.1 Exterior

Figure 81– Main Entrance from the road
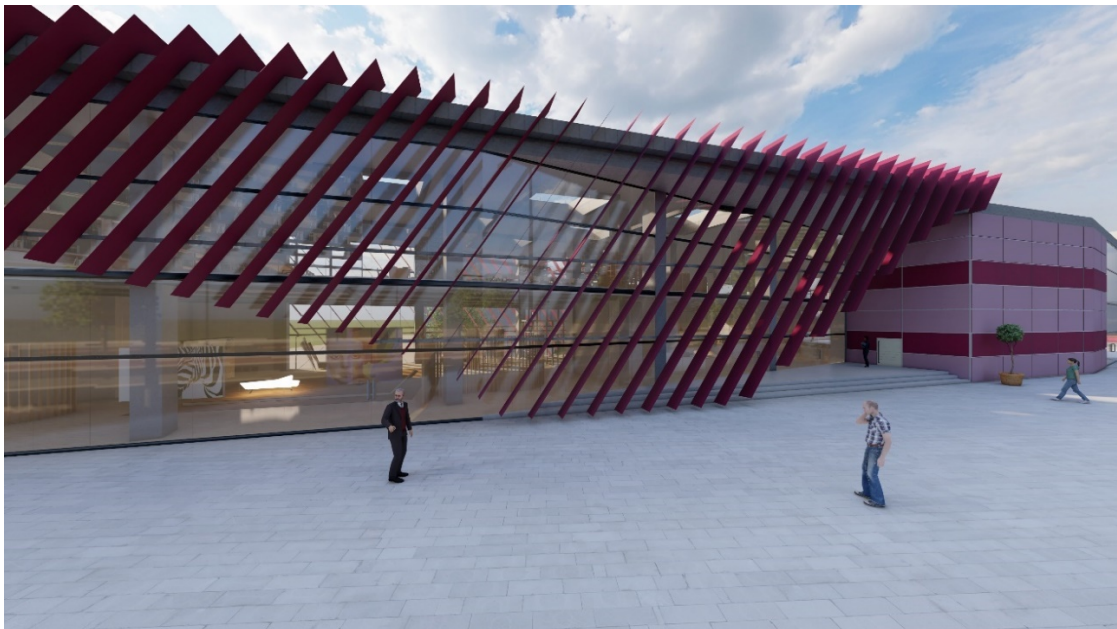
Figure 82– Main Entrance from the boulevard

The render of the entrance shows how the shape of the structure makes a visual attraction of the people to the building. Both areas are populated but did not have a connecting environment for both areas, in this project we enable free movement.

*Figure 83-*Render 3

*Figure 84-*Render 4

*Figure 85 -*Render 5

*Figure 86 -*Render 6

*Figure 87-*Render 7

*Figure 88-*Render 8

*Figure 89-*Render 9

*Figure 90-*Render 10

*Figure 91-*Render 11

*Figure 92-*Render 12

5.5.2 Interior

*Figure 93-*Hall Render

In the render of the hall is shown the point of view from the entrance, where the main reception is located and how the differentiation of materials orientates the circulation inside the building.

*Figure 94-*Render 14

*Figure 95-*Library Render

*Figure 96-*Render 16

*Figure 97-*Exhibition Render

*Figure 98-*Render 18

*Figure 99 -*Render 19

*Figure 100-*Cafeteria and Restaurant Render

*Figure 101 -*Render 21

*Figure 102-*Playground Render

*Figure 103-*Render 23

*Figure 104-*Render 24

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The thesis main objective was to design a community center that actually work. In order to achieve that it was important to do a careful examination of the existing context. The analysis is done for the physical environment and also of the intangible elements of the community.

The thesis depicts the fact that community centres are an important element of today's society. They directly impact the life quality of the community or neighbourhood they are located at. They offer a range of different functions aimed at different target groups. As such they represent an approach of all-inclusive design.

Also, it has been made clear throughout the design process that in order to achieve a successful design, it is crucial to analyse and understand initially the needs of the community. The spaces designed on the project are an outcome of the careful analyse of the existing context. In addition, it is important to understand the ideas and feelings of the target groups. All of this adds to the responsibility of the architect.

What's makes this design more attractive is its location. The boulevard is concepted to be one of the most frequented places of the city. The design itself shows how a designer from analysis of the surroundings can achieve better solutions for its design.

The project uses various architectural programs, and as such it becomes clear that they are crucial in order to be able to present the concept idea and the final outcome. All in all, it is important to design a relevant project, that will be actually used from the community, rather than just be a monument.

REFERENCES

(2019). Retrieved from Archdaily: https://www.archdaily.com/930102/forum-groningen-multifunctional-building-nl-architects?ad_source=search&ad_medium=search_result_all

(2020). Retrieved from lvccld: https://lvccld.org/locations/mq/

(2020). Retrieved from Tirana post: https://tiranapost.al/bulevardi-ri-tiranes-projekti-vazhdon-shetitore-gjate-pasdites

(2021). Retrieved from TEN: https://ten.tirana.al/

(2021). Retrieved from Grimshaw global: https://grimshaw.global/projects/tirana-master-plan/

Archdaily. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.com/951786/doksan-library-dlim-architects?ad_source=search&ad_medium=search_result_all

ArchDaily. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.com/942813/deichman-library-atelier-oslo-plus-lund-hagem?ad_source=search&ad_medium=search_result_projects

ArchDaily. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.com/926534/yue-library-beijing-fenghemuchen-space-design?ad_medium=gallery

Design Boom. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.designboom.com/architecture/toyo-ito-designboom-interview/

Margaret Mead, R. B. (2005). *The World Ahead.*

Mecanoo. (2020). Retrieved from https://www.mecanoo.nl/Projects/project/54/National-Kaohsiung-Centre-for-the-Arts?t=0

Pavin and Yasmin . (2008). *Community centers for community development.* Thesis.

100

Toker and Toker. (2006). Community Design In Its Pragmatist Age.

Semantic scholar. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/:
https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Designing-A-Complete-Community-Center%3A-Responsive-a-
Tubbs/4ccb551f86e4d7cc074c8ef80c531d15ab1897ce#paper-header

https://www.monitor.al/rekordi-shqiperia-kalon-e-para-ne-bote-per-numrin-e-larte-te-bar-kafeve-per-banor/

APPENDIX

Questionary

This questionnaire was addressed to the citizens of the city of Tirana to find out more about the needs and requirements of different age groups. It helped me organize the list of functions that I putted on my project.

(Tick all applicable 1-7)

1. What is your age group?
a) <18
b) 19-25
c) 26-50
d) 51>

2. What are the services missing or that you like to add in your neighbourhood?
   a) Coffee
   b) Restaurant
   c) Library
   d) Museum
   e) Opera house
   f) Gym
   g) Grocery store
   h) Aesthetics services (hairs saloon, barbershop etc.)
   i) Gathering spaces
   j) It spaces
   k) Art classes
   l) Public auditorium
   m) Exhibition space
   n) Spa
   o) Cinema
   p) Theatre
   q) Clubs

3. In your opinion, how much would the added services improve your life?
    a) Barely
    b) Somehow
    c) Very much
    d) Crucial
4. Currently, how much more time do you need to walk to reach the missing services?
    a) 5 min
    b) 6-15min
    c) 16-30min
    d) 31-60min
    e) More than 1 hr

5. How much many do you need to spend till you get these missing services? (if there are any)
    a) Not much many
    b) A considered value
    c) A lot

6. Do you see the boulevard as a space that can offered entertainment for all age groups?
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Maybe

7. Do you think that the boulevard is a proper space for activities?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Maybe

Studying at Epoka University was a very good opportunity for me to pursue my dream. Thanks to dedicated pedagogues, I got the right direction to study and learn more about architecture. These 5 years have been full of challenges and opportunities for this, I want to thank the University and the pedagogical staff. Below I have placed the link for the closing of this school cycle, 5 years of architecture.

Thank you!

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LJkT5dhgxP_PmmuGdQlKegGnluzhtPc8