

TOPLOCENTRALATA



Renovation and transformation of Topolocentrala, looking at the main entrance, multipurpose space and rooftop cafe.

PROJECT:
**Renovation of the
Former Heating Plant**

TYPE:
Cultural

CLIENT:
Open competition

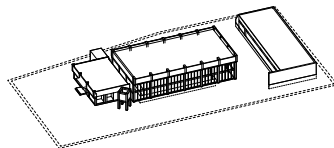
LOCATION:
Sofia, Bulgaria

SITE:
**Site area:
4.895 m²**

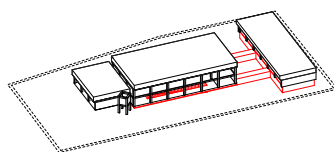
SCALE:
**Construction area:
1.530 m²
Above ground:
1.064 m²
Below ground:
590 m²**

PROGRAM:
**Public, black box theatre,
cafe and bookshop**

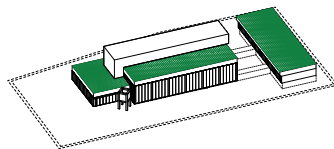
COLLABORATORS:
Makter Consult Ltd.



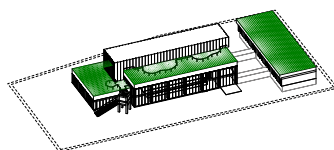
THE EXISTING BUILDING



REMOVING & EXCAVATING
EXHIBITION TUNNELS



ADDING THE NEW
L-SHAPED EXTENSION &
GREEN ROOFS



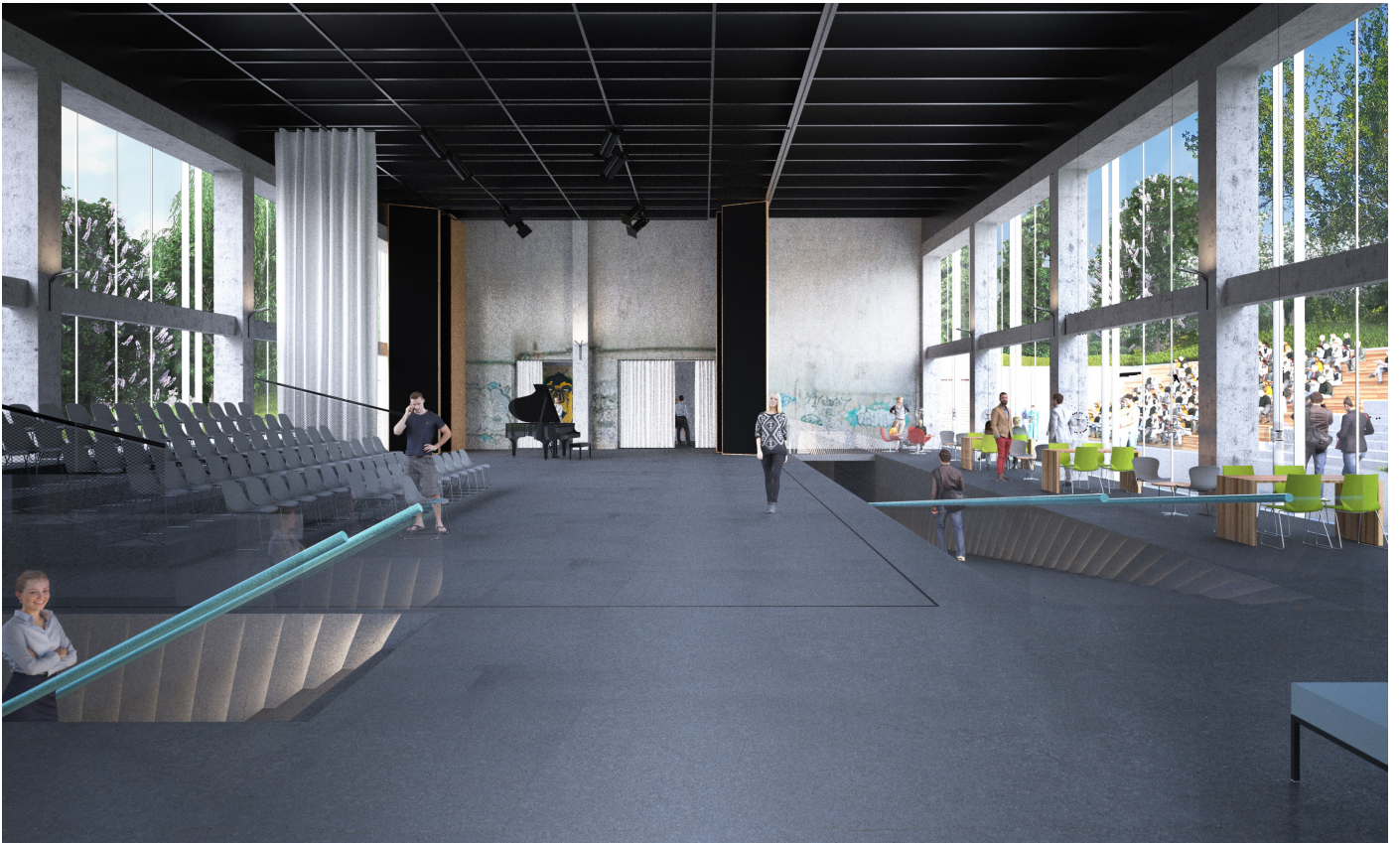
THE FINAL BUILDING COMPOSITION

Let the past speak, and the present live. This has been the working title of the transformation of the former Heating Plant of the National Palace of Culture into a Centre for Contemporary Art and Culture.

The new Topolocentrala (TC) is a balance of keeping all what is already great, enhancing the existing qualities and adding just enough to make it all come together and perform in a contemporary architectural and functional way. It is an important exercise for the city of Sofia and Bulgaria as a whole. Too much history is currently being demolished and removed in order to make space for fast and speculative development across the country.

The existing TC is a composition of three main volumes arranged according to a functional approach. Time has had its impact on the physical appearance, but its historic importance is still present. The large span roof with its crown-like profile and efficient, yet aesthetic concrete columns, are all elements with an aesthetic and historical link to its period of construction during the communist era. The TC has been abandoned a long time; nevertheless, it has been telling another story as a place for subculture, with graffiti images and sporadic events. Both periods play an important part of the identity of TC which both are present in the new design and are preserved. An L-shaped volume is added, connecting all the functions by an internal flow. The design is a balanced contrast of old and new. The new extension is a minimalistic and contemporary piece of architecture.

The performance building is the heart of the new TC. It is kept as one big open space where several programs and activities take place. A multi-transformable area where sliding folding walls with acoustical capabilities allow for any type of setup in combination with movable telescope seating and the backstage and artist area behind the existing partition wall. Sculptural stairs leading to the old technical levels allow the visitors to go directly to the underground exhibition program.



Multipurpose performance space with two sculptural stairs & ramp leading to the underground exhibition program.



Transformation of old technical level into underground exhibition area.