

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 1
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

Call for proposals for the design of open spaces and the creation of a new library and an auditorium in the “Campus dei licei”(High School Campus) in Schio

by Marco Gini

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All the work was done with Elena Alfonso, a university mate of mine, with whom I share the merits of this project.

The word “campus” in the call for proposals’ title was what strucked us and what eventually made us decide to apply to the call for projects with our university thesis. The image of an American university campus, something characterized by unity and strongly recognizable, immediately came to our mind.

Reality instead showed us a poorly characterized, almost “identityless” suburban area in which the school buildings’ architectural features themselves were barely interesting.

Consequently, the first thing we had to do was re-stitch back the urban fabric, tearing down all physical barriers between the school buildings; we were looking for a strong sign able to confer unity on the site, while trying not to reduce everything to simply replacing or adding urban furnishings.

An analysis of the historical maps revealed the presence of two ancient leats flowing respectively parallel to Via Tito Livio and perpendicular to it.

The basic concept of the whole project is therefore centered around the reclamation of these two waterflows, the creation of a wide tree-lined lane and the use of green inclined planes, aimed at reshaping the local morphology.

Using the inclined planes enabled us on the one hand to achieve physical and visual dynamism, on the other hand to mask the school buildings which were then used to create all spaces required by the call for proposals (parking lots, rest areas, bus stops).

The “isolated” nature of the site was emphasized through diverting the road system to the margins of the area, with a cycleway, linked to the pre-existing road system and cutting across the area from one end to the other.



This newly shaped pattern includes the two buildings foreseen by the call for proposals: the auditorium and the library. The library building is located in a barycentric position, and it has been conceived as an extrusion from the surface that creates an overhead square one floor above; all required spaces have been carefully “cut” into it.

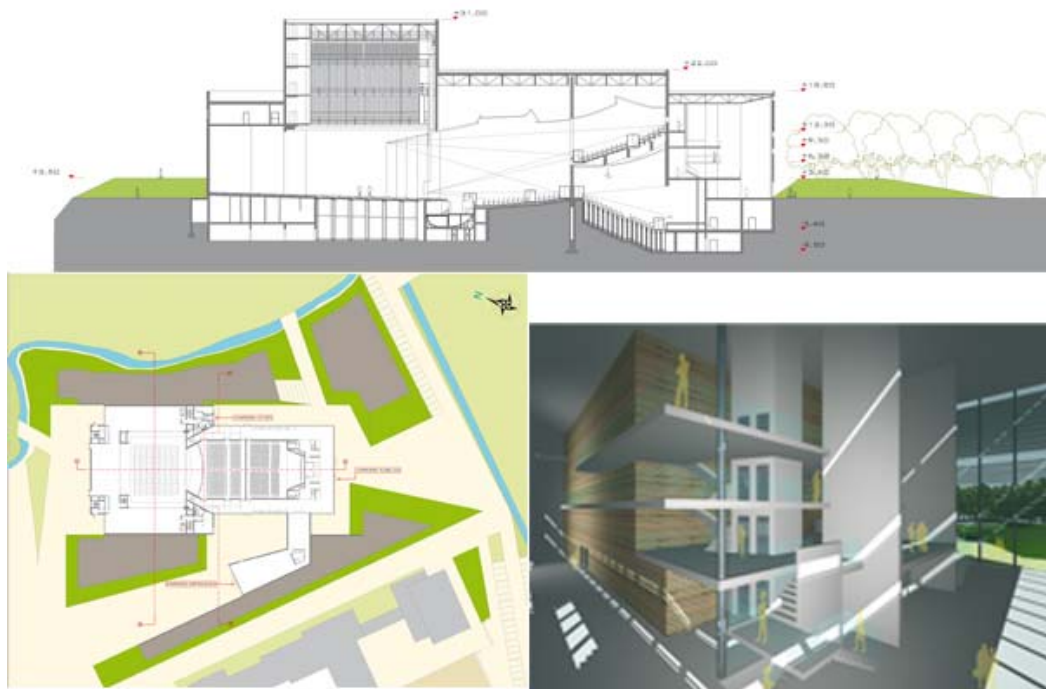
The building is connected to ground level through sweet slopes and large stone stairways; the building’s main entrance is located in the overhead square. The reading room consists of a single space covered by a large inclined roof creating wide windows, properly screened to guarantee the right amount of light, and is also directly linked to a lowered private courtyard.

All other service spaces such as offices, the bar and the restaurant have been designed to have both a direct link to the library and to the main entrance at ground level; the latter faces the street so that people can have access to the bar and restaurant facilities even beyond school times.



The auditorium has been designed following the same criteria, but certainly the most interesting aspect is the flexible nature of the auditorium hall. The call for proposals asked for two separate halls with a capacity of 1000 and 500 people respectively, able to be united if the need be.

We chose to opt for a basic configuration with fixed stalls and gallery for 500 people, while the remaining part of the stalls has a variable geometric configuration. Through hydraulic lifting platforms and concealed walls the configuration of this part of the hall can be changed to obtain an independent hall for 500 people or a single stalls space with a 1000 people capacity. Moreover, the gallery itself can be isolated thus obtaining three independent halls for 500 people each. To achieve such a degree of flexibility we had to think about a rather complex distribution, which in the project was translated into a foyer developing alongside the hall like a sort of a glass second skin, and a system of visible vertical connections which characterize its main entrance.



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