

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

Nathan Phillips Square revitalization - H₂O Museum

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The project area is the Nathan Phillips Square, one of Toronto's most famous squares, also the most popular meeting place for Canadian people. In 1958 there is been an International competition to promote the project of the new City Hall. At the moment the City Hall is located on a raised up platform that covers almost the half part of the square. The building is consisting of two half-rounded over 20 floors palaces inhabited by offices that surround the Council cabinet which is a far lower building.

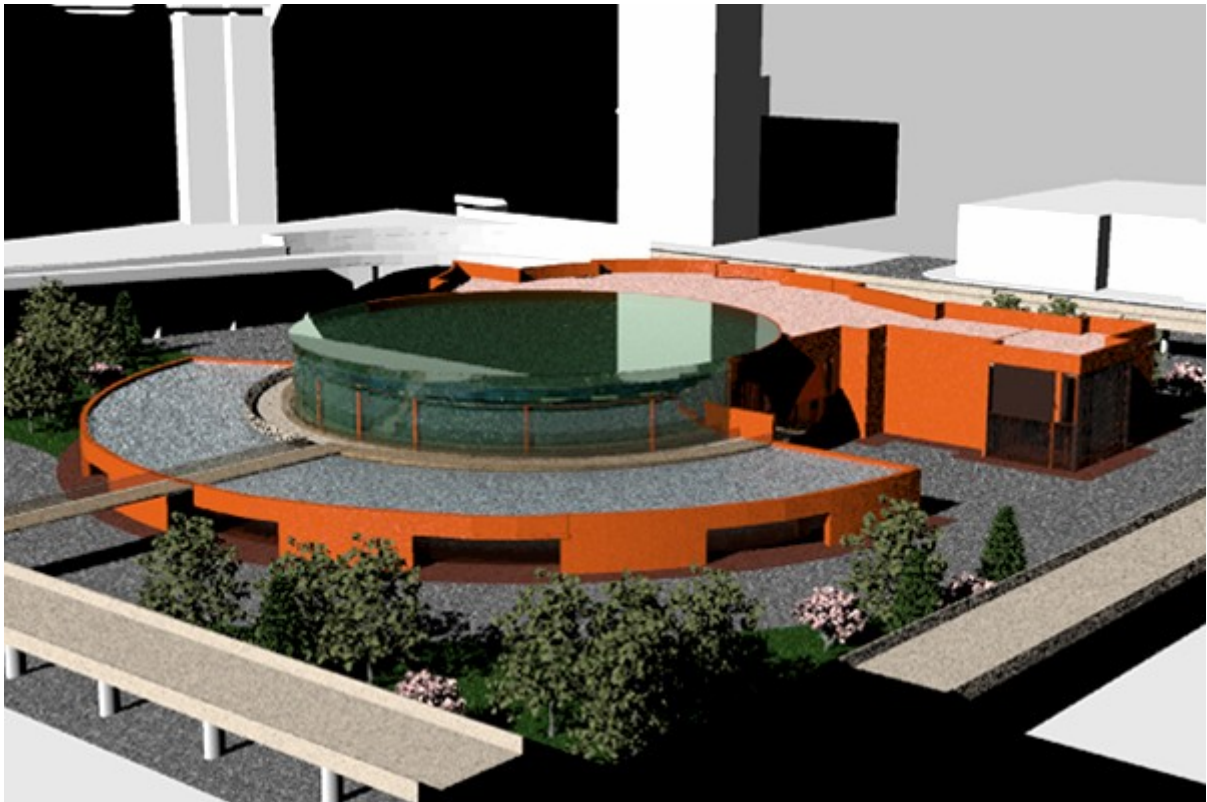


Prospect

The aim of the project is to keep the basic architecture already existing and it is intended for an integral recall of the place. The choice of a project about a museum is because of Toronto being a great cultural city and not only one of the most economically developed town of Canada.

The forms of the project are almost naturally drawn just like a continuation plan of the existing architecture, in particular, the bended line is determinative for the study of the *H₂O Museum*. The project is basically designed on a “vibrating” architecture, with a continuous moving effect, both in the plan and in the prospect. The result is an only two floors out of the ground big building that looks like a container where the use of the different rooms are often separated only by very light elements, such as very big windows and steel pillars.

The water is a basic element: two enormous water basins outline the whole Southeast plan. On the ground floor the water is only visible through some specific big windows inserted into a solid reinforced concrete wall, while, on the first floor a big rounded window allows the sight of a water basin outside.

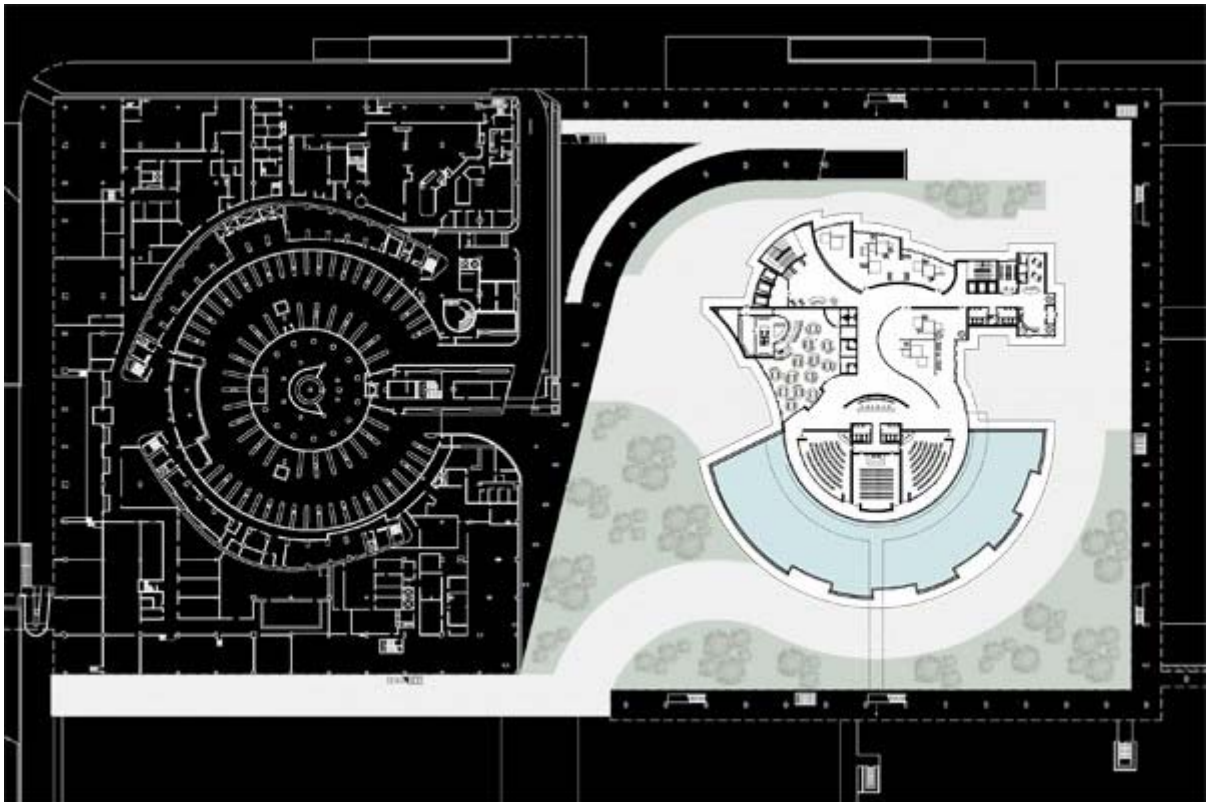


Three-dimensional sight

The technological aspect of the project has a special importance as its aim is to find a compromise among modern forms and traditional materials.

The building is projected in front of the City Hall, not at the two towers and the Council Cabinet level, but at the street level, and most precisely, in a pedestrian crossing area whose structure is built on pillars that are at the actual platform level. This kind of architecture is highly characterized by the glass: wide sail shaped windows merge into the bending walls along the whole perimeter and, additional big transparent elements outline the impressive water basins on the outside.

The main entrance of the building is situated on the ground floor in the unique point where the bending line meets the straight line, while, on the upper floor a footbridge linked to the existing one leads to two additional entries by following the basin structure shape. The suggested track of the *H₂O Museum* is the following: from the main entrance on the ground floor you go to the hall that leads to the first show-room, then to the second one and to the round passage where there is a perfect sight of the lower water basin. Afterwards, you go to the refreshment point, finally you arrive to the stairs and to the elevators. On the upper floor the main stairs leads to a second hall from where you go to the reading room and to the multimedia laboratory, then to the third and fourth showing room, to the shop and, finally to the stairs and to the elevators where you can reach again the main entrance on the ground floor.



Ground floor plan

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