

## URBAN INSERTION - A NEW LIBRARY FOR THE CITY OF ZALĂU -

### URBAN UMETANJE - NOVA KNJIŽNICA ZA ZALĂU GRAD -

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**Abstract:** *Analyzing the landmark buildings situated in the central area of Zalău city, one can notice some buildings that constitute joint elements between the condominium residential area and the central area. Considering the studied location, this joint element is missing, resulting an uncertain relation between those two areas. The need of an appropriate space for the Sălaj County Library determined author to propose two approaches. The purpose is to activate the urban space through a functional mixing in the inner city by creating a sense of diversity and identity in the new town centre.*

**Key words:** *urban insertion, landmark, functional mixing, identity, connecting people, leisure.*

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**Sadržaj:** *Analizirajući građevine koje se nalaze u središnjem dijelu Zalău grada, mogu se primijetiti neke zgrade koje čine zajedničke elemente između kolektivne stambene površine i centralnog područja. S obzirom na položaj u fokusu, ovaj element nedostaje, rezultirajući neizvesan odnos između ta dva područja. Potreba za odgovarajućim prostorom za Regionalnu knjižnicu Sălaj ohrabrila je autora da predloži dva pristupa. Svrha je aktivirati urbani prostor kroz funkcionalnu kombinaciju središnjosti grada stvaranjem osjećaja različitosti i identiteta u novom centru grada.*

**Ključne reči:** *urbana umetanje, orijentir, funkcionalno kombinovanje, identitet, povezivanja ljudi, slobodno vrijeme.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Studying the **history and the evolution of the urban built environment** we can define its structure as a result of the general development trends and **defining elements**. Today there are multiple instances where architectural or urban interventions are made without a proper study of the historical context, therefore affecting negatively the functionality, aesthetics, the urban life and the urban built space.

Analysing the urban and architectural evolution and the impact of different elements on the **image of the city** can help us identify the best development directions and a better understanding of the analysed space, this representing the obligatory starting point towards **sustainable development proposals**.

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The urban built environment and also the urban life are in a constant changing state. The **culture, the economic and political** situations along multiple other factors and circumstances are **influencing the form, the evolution and the usage of the urban space**. Throughout history the urban environment and the public space had been developing as an entity in an organic manner, reflecting the abilities and trades of its community, but this type of dynamic was changed by the sudden industrialisation.

## 2. A NEW LIBRARY FOR THE CITY OF ZALĂU

Zalău is the residence of Sălaj County and it's situated in Transylvania, alongside the Zalău River, in the contact strip between the Transylvanian depression, the Western Hills and the Western Lowland.

In the near future, the municipality wants to refurbish the historical buildings, to remodel the city centre by making more parking and green spaces, so for the **sustainable development** of the city it's recommended an analysis of the current situation by indicating strengths and weaknesses then **setting targets** and shaping a **coherent vision** for the development of the urban space.

**Creating and ensuring high-quality public spaces** is possible by understanding the architectural culture as the sum of cultural, economic, technological, social and environmental factors which are influencing the quality and the planning of construction processes. Therefore the architectural heritage should be protected. [1]

A coherent city is made up of both **visual and physical elements of coherence**, and a **consistency** between urban functions, infrastructure, networks, new information and communication technologies. Currently, due to rapid development, the lack of consistency in the continuity of developments over time is an issue which affects the continuity of the built environment's character, and also the **continuity of an identity**. In European cities the specificity and identity are given by the local history and diversity with a development that reflects the characteristics of social, economic, institutional and cultural rights of its people. [2]

As an influence of the phenomenon of urban migration, new urban identities are forming, each city has its own character as a result of social and cultural relations that have influenced its development thus **social identity is closely linked to the city's identity**.

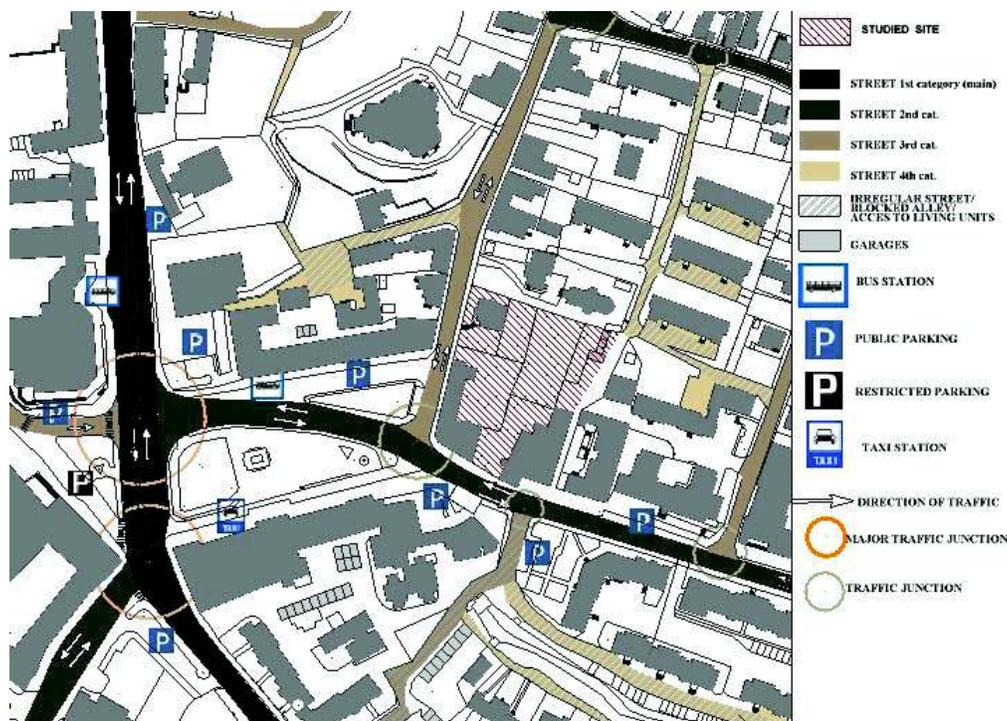
The role of **the spirit of a place and culture** plays an important role in the city coherence and quality of life. Thus, it is proposed to **correct the discrepancies** between certain areas of a



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city, but at the same time keeping the specific nature of the various measures and interventions at the city such as the protection and enhancement of streets, squares, paths as elements of continuity of the urban environment, creating symbolic urban environments, cultural and natural heritage in order to produce the conditions for creating new spaces that give coherence to the urban tissue. [3]

Author proposed a location and a solution for the **new headquarters of the Sălaj County Library**, because the current building in which the Library functions is in a state of decay, it does not have the capacity to satisfy the demands of this institution anymore and must be



consolidated and renovated.

Figure 1: City centre – buildings, streets, traffic

The **analysed site** is located in the social-administrative sector, at the limit of the central area of the city, next to Iuliu Maniu Square - an **emblematic area for the community**. Thus the motor and pedestrian links with the central area would **revive the urban space**. Each of the proposed insertions on the Eastern front can become an important landmark for the square and contribute to the strength of its image, but are also offering important opportunities for leisure.

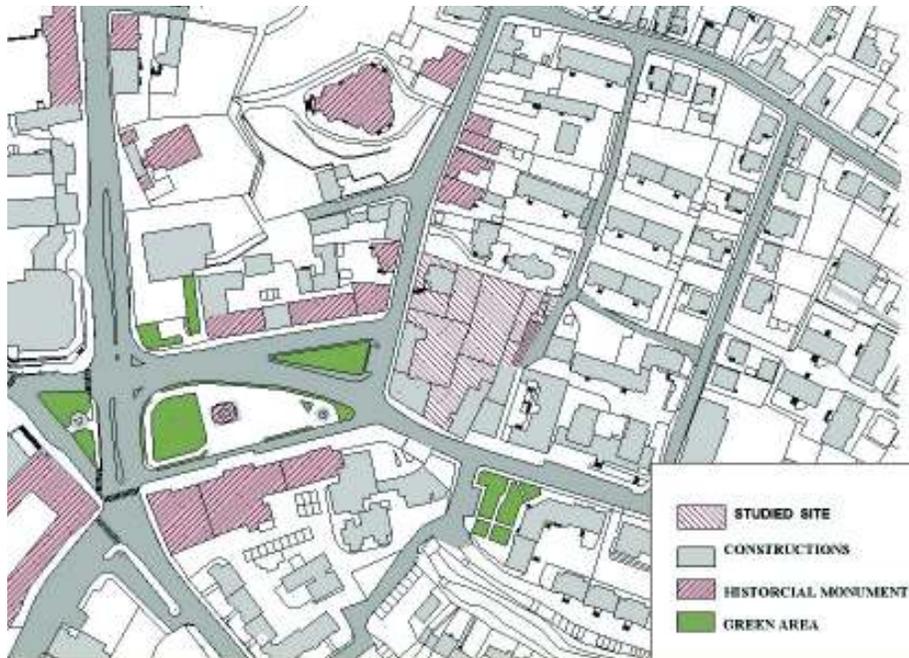


Figure 2: City centre – historical buildings

Author is proposing two solutions - the purpose is to create iconic images, **marking an entry point to the city centre**, providing spaces with a **powerful interactive character** and multiple points of access to the site, inner activities invading the outer spaces.

The proposed interventions are **visible from the historical town square**, creating a **coherent image** and many opportunities for leisure, but at the same time, a slight detachment from the square offers the possibility of creating **a place with its own identity**.

Two of the neighbouring buildings are **historical monuments**: one is from the interwar period and the other is a two storey building from the beginning of the twentieth century. Those buildings will be **kept and used inside both architectural programs**.

The lining up at the street and the attachment to the neighbouring building wall is mandatory, thus, the third existing building in the site will be also refurbished used as administrative space, directly linked to the proposed edifice. Its image will change by proposing **a new facade with a signal role**.

For a more **coherent car and pedestrian traffic**, in both interventions author proposed a new street which continues the existing alley 'Aleea Nucilor'.

**The first intervention** will be **almost non-invasive in relation with the neighbouring buildings** which are **refurbished** and used within the architectural proposed program. The one storey historical building will serve as the County's Writers Association and the two storey building will be used for various training courses. Both will be connected with the proposed volume through a connecting glass volume. Between the two refurbished buildings will be a plaza which can be used as an outdoor theatre or exhibition space and depending on the circumstances can be public or private.



Figure 3: First proposal – SITE PLAN

The level difference between the minimum and maximum levels of the land is 7 metres. So author concluded that the most efficient is to solve: the parking, books warehouse and workshops at the two northern underground levels.

The courtyard formed between the new and refurbished buildings is more private, it can host outdoor activities organized by the library personnel or exhibitions expanding form the exhibition area situated at the ground floor of the building.

On the East side, between the neighbouring building on which there is no intervention, author proposed a terrace for the coffee shop situated at the ground floor of the building, therefore activating this space which otherwise would be used only as a crossing route.

The upper part of the site is adjacent to an Orthodox church, so author proposed a stationer's shop which can also serve the church and may extend with different activities on the **public plaza created for both edifices.**

On the last level author proposed a glass volume which guides us outside on the roof terrace, part of which is grassy. The roof terrace plays the role of a so-called 'belvedere' offering a view towards the historical buildings form the city plaza.

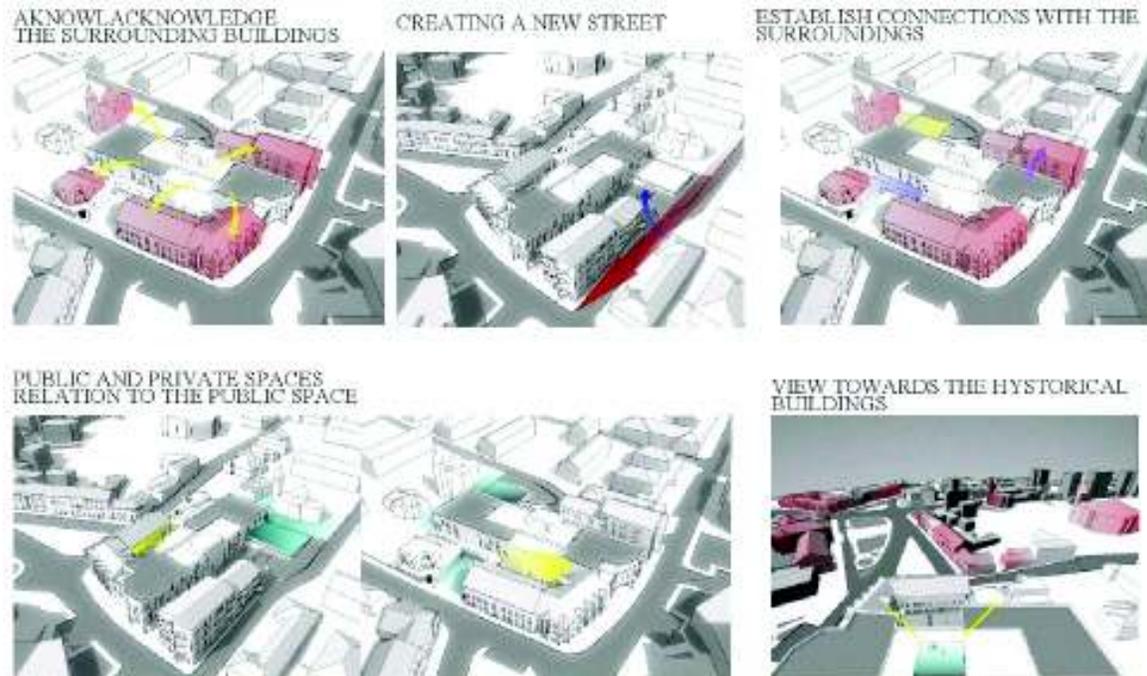


Figure 4: First proposal – CONCEPT

Author tried to establish **connections with the surroundings** by giving each new formed space character and a utility through courtyards and plazas which can expand the interior activities to the outside creating an inside-outside relation. Author **integrated the existing buildings** by refurbishing them and giving each one a function inside the proposed program.

**The second proposed intervention is more invasive to the surroundings**, but it offers more generous spaces and despite the fact that the volume is larger in size compared to the first proposal, it has a very **dynamic image**.

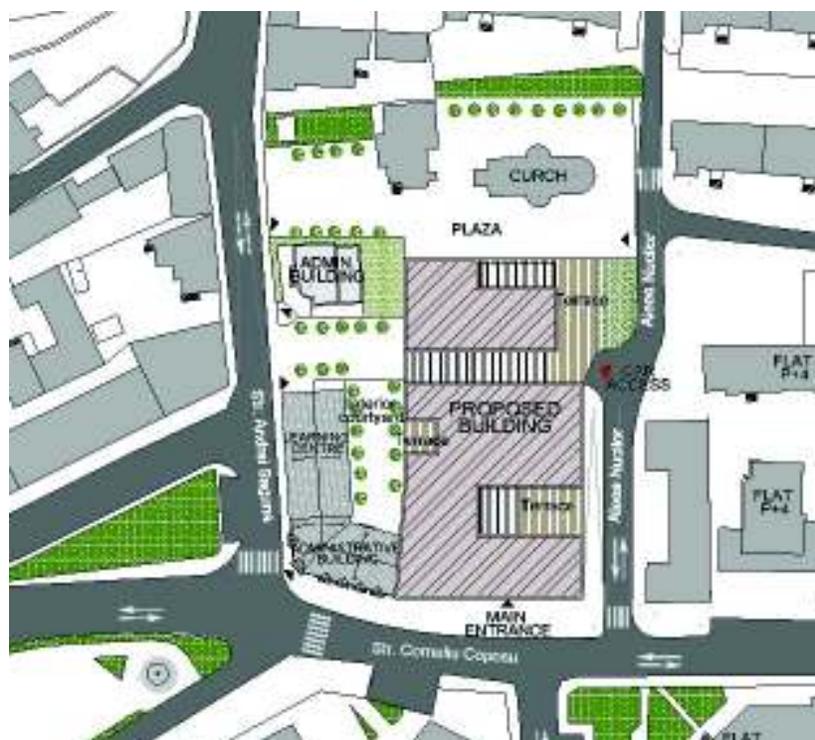


Figure 5: Second proposal – SITE PLAN

Because of the irregular image created by the existing four storey building due to the difference in height and improper position in relation with the surroundings author chose to eliminate it and create a **larger volume which reflects the library's role and importance** for the community.



Figure 6: Second proposal – CONCEPT

The interior will consist of large spaces with an atrium, because the library is an open one with free access to the shelves and with organising and functioning principles in accordance with the current trends for modern libraries.

The various terraces with **different orientations** and the play of glass volumes open new unexpected perspectives to the **city landmarks** from different locations inside the library. This is representing the idea of a **cultural centre**, of a place which celebrates and reminds us of the importance of cultural heritage.

Because of its size and image author consider this proposal to be an **appropriate joint element** between the condominium residential area and the central area, marking the beginning of the city centre and at the same time **reflecting the spirit of its community**.

Both proposals are intended to create an appropriate **element of articulation between the central area and the condominium area**. Smooth and logic movements are proposed in order to obtain quality urban spaces resulting in getting new directions for development and coordination from an urban point of view.

The principle is to create a **modern library and cultural centre** by proposing solutions which **connect people** with different activities and determine them to get out of their daily routine. Through those proposed approaches, the library becomes an important node for the city, activating leisure and personal development.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities - adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007.
- [2] New Charter of Athens 2003 - The European Council of Urban Planners vision on cities in the twenty-first century, Lisbon, November 20, 2003.