

diploma project: **MAŘÍŽ CENTRE FOR THE PAST AND FUTURE**
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Objective

The project is to be set in the village of Maříž (in the Slavonice area) close to the Czech/Austrian border. It is to be a Cultural Landscape Centre demonstrating sustainability and resiliency. The building is to create spaces for cultural reflection and activation for the local area. The project is to complement and enhance the existing local trades and tourism, as well as local + EU initiatives being conducted in the region and across the borders. The building programme is designed with the aim of providing a platform for local heritage and cultural programmes for the region.

Analytical part

The analysis of Slavonice area is compiled in detail, including the historical, geographical and political context. It shows clearly how the history affected the life in the area, including the 20th century historical circumstances such as the 2nd world war, the iron curtain on the border with Austria, and their impacts on Slavonice and the Maříž area. The analytical part of Maříž goes even deeper into the historical context, showing maps from the early 19th century to the end of the 20th century, and describing the development of the 3 nearest villages: Maříž, Leštнице, and Reinholz.

Despite the fact that the analyses are clear and comprehensive, personal input and a final conclusion would be beneficial for the next stage - the design itself. Some important questions for the project and the design itself could be deduced from such a huge amount of work on the analytical part of the project.

Urban context/concept of the Maříž Centre project

As a site for the future Cultural Landscape Centre, the Hrad (the ruins of the castle aside the Maříž village) was chosen. The history (including historical photographs, sketches and text descriptions) is well described, as are the current condition of the ruins and the beautiful surrounding landscape, well documented in photographs. The site was obviously chosen for its undeniable quality of space and surrounding nature, unfortunately this fact is not mentioned in the text.

Design concept

The Maříž Centre building stands on the former castle boundaries, however the shape is newly designed based on an important axis. The key features of the Pond, the Lake, Oak Alley and Ancient Oak have all been addressed in some visual form. The newly design building is "not touching" the remaining ruins and has left them preserved as a warning for the future generation. The ruins are the first elements that the visitor sees when coming from the village to the centre. They can become a very strong component of the overall concept of the building.

The volume of the newly designed building is separated into three blocks with different functions, which fulfil all the requirements for a successful multipurpose cultural and landscape centre.

During the design process the author decided to follow The Living Building Challenge rules. The LBC is an internationally recognised programme that aims to push for the most sustainable built environments as a regenerative process. The LBC is organised into seven performance areas and the project must successfully meet all requirements. The project proved it in all seven categories. Five of them are presented in detail:

Place - the new building is built on the old foundation

Water - catching and storing of rainwater, within the building, so that it is visible for visitors (pond, well), as well as grey water collecting and reuse

Energy - passive solar heating by capturing in a thermal mass wall, and solar panels

Materials - sustainably-sourced cross-laminated timber, double glass, rammed earth walls and concrete, and the reuse of waste material from site excavation for landscaping

Beauty - the product must contain design features intended solely for human delight and the celebration of culture and spirit. For this, the rammed earth wall was used as an element leading the visitor through the building. Perhaps

the whole building — as an element for co-creating a new spirit with its surroundings — should celebrate the genius loci of the place, and not only one wall.

Utility/Layout

The Centre is divided into three untouched pavilions with different functions. The first one is dedicated to an entrance foyer, toilets and offices on the top floor. The rammed earth wall leads the visitors to the second building, the educational part, with lecture rooms and gallery around the water tank in the atrium. The final pavilion contains a library, teaching area and a biological lab in the basement.

The functions fulfil the requirements, however they do not bring any special qualities for each space. A proper site plan which also shows the outside activities, landscape design and important connections is missing.

Presentation

Graphics of the analytical part are nicely and carefully provided, but some of the schemes in axonometric layouts are not clearly readable. The maps and graphs are missing titles, so it is not clear what they are about.

For the main drawings of the project, the combination of simple, computer line drawings and hand colouring techniques was used in a very careful and gentle way.

The plans, and especially the sections and elevations are on a very high graphic level. It will be an advantage to provide more perspective views of both the interior and exterior.

Questions

What was the reason for not incorporating the current ruins into the project and for only preserving them?

From the section, it is obvious that some of the rooms have double height spaces of 5-6 metres. How do you justify so many "empty" cubic metres of heated space?

The amount of work, especially on the analytical part, is highly appreciated, and the sustainable approach towards the project is also the right decision.

Proposed evaluation: B (very good)

Ing. arch. Klára Doleželová 31/01/2018

