**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMANIAN HISTORY**

1. Introduction and relationship with the city

The architecture competition for the National Museum of Romanian History in Bucharest is pretended as the adaptation and extension of a building originally conceived for the post and telegraph services, built between 1894 and 1899.

Currently, the building forms a closed block surrounding an interior courtyard, placed in the west end of the old part of the town. The main facade consists of ten Doric columns over a twelve step platform, which has access from Calea Victoriei. The two lateral wings, accessible from Strada Stavropoleos and Strada Franceză, have both secondary entrances which serve as direct entrances to the building’s main stairs. The later façade has access from Strada Poştei, in which there are located two direct accesses to the inner courtyard, which are both surrounded with entrances connected to the secondary stairs, allowing an inner circulation circuit to happen, and giving the needed exits of the building.

2. Formal structure of the building.

The building’s distribution works around a central ring which, starting on the entrance hall, distributes the different spaces towards the streets surrounding the museum or the inner courtyard. The core areas of the three secondary wings make singular spaces, noticeable from the exterior by the increase of the height and length of the structure.

In 1970 part of the basement started working as a museum, and a new building was made within the courtyard, aiming to get space for allocating the rest of the exhibitions and the Trajan’s column.

3. Program and implantation

Our proposal tries to recover the inner courtyard, making it suit the necessities of the program, seeing it as an inner square, a meeting point and accessible routes from the main hall and Strada Poştei, achieving a public space that increases its visual relationships.

The adaptation of the older existent building for museum usage tries to get versatile spaces which can be redistributed and reorganized. For this purpose, we suggest removing all the inner partitions and divisions which have no architectural value, aiming to let the user admire the rooms in their entire splendor.

This also will allow a better circulation and more organization possibilities.

On the other hand, the new divisions obliged by the new programme of the building will be executed with light materials, preferably prefabricated, which allow themselves to be redistributed and reallocated.

This removal of the inner partitions and light material usage allow cross ventilation between the facades and a better sun exposure of the rooms, being able to achieve through a better control of the external openings a high bioclimatic control.

Our belief is that the existing building placed inside the inner courtyard for displaying the Trajan’s column works properly on its own, but the part that grows over the ground level distorts the inner courtyard and the views of the old building interior facades from it, also making it difficult to have good lighting and ventilation, conforming spaces between the facades that have no real use and don’t allow a proper circulation.

This is why our proposition is to leave the courtyard cleared, and add more floors under the ground level, trying to recover the original views from the inside on the courtyard and its space value as a public area for Bucharest, allowing the execution of different activities and increasing the communication between the main hall and the Strada Poştei entrances.

The entrances grant access to the building on ground or basement level where the car elevator is allocated, due to the unevenness of this mentioned street and the use of subtle ramps.

The three first underground levels will be used as part of the museum program, and will have permanent exhibitions in it. The main hall will have a union to these underground levels through a series of stairs.

The exhibition will be placed around two big openings from ground level, working diagonally and allowing flexibility and the possibility of a modification of the displayed pieces.

The overall conception of this space allows achieving a grand variety of perspectives while traveling through the museum and gives the users the possibility of witnessing the Trajan’s column from different points of view, discovering its greatness.

The burial of this new museum levels forces us to use zenithal lighting as the source of natural lighting, this mentioned openings allow us to bring light to the inside, distribute the museum flow and give the museum a mysterious and intimate feel.

Under these three new underground levels there will two additional ones which will be used for storage, facilities, installations, workshops, and parking spaces connected vertically with the car elevator and the stairs.

In summary, the proposed solution of recovering the courtyard, adapting the existent building, and creating the new one aims to achieve spaces flexible enough to allow usage and program changes, functionally or formally, maintaining the communication and services units, the restaurant, cafeteria and cafes, and allowing possible iterations according to the necessities.