

Motto: NMADD as a civic nexus: connecting building to city and art to urban life

NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION

What was previously a space to shift transient commuters is now a space for weaving the city core to the waterfront. This woven nexus extends urban life to the harbor and fills in a critical piece of the waterfront network of cultural buildings.

The focus of this urban project is to collect relationships between the immediate and greater fjord area. By developing an overall form reminiscent of the fjord-scape, a central garden space with vantage points to the city and the harbor, and a material palette recalling Norway's geological history, the Proposal is a culturally sensitive and bold addition to Oslo's growing artistic community.

The Proposal responds to the Norwegian Government and Cultural Ministry's goal to create versatile, meaningful meeting places on the fjord. The heritage of the existing site is central to the design for the new Museum. It was important to us to quote the harmony of the existing geometry and to create a neighborhood apex, on top of which one can view the neighboring buildings, the city and the water.

As if erupting from under ground, the Project appears to grow geologically upwards, housing the Museum functions within monumental stone walls. The heaviness of the material is balanced by the transparent gathering spaces.

The scheme pushes all of the functions to the site perimeter and opens up a Central Garden in the middle. The site perimeter is a "habitable wall" with interesting openings through it that engages the city and lets greenery spill from the inside out.

The openings allow urban corridors to flow into the site's core and terminate (or begin) there like an Italian piazza. Big sheltered urban doorways, 10-15 meters high connect the Museum Garden with the city.

The central courtyard is a glass-lined, truncated conical ellipse that is carved out to optimize natural light. The city-facing walls highly textured local stone reflect the geological order: it rises in stratified layers from rubble on the bottom, next to rough cut, honed, polished, flamed, and frosted glass clerestories above. The Order grows from ancient to modern materials and from heavy to delicate.

The driving forces are the central garden, entry staircase, and programmatic exterior walls. In the central garden, visitors can congregate and reflect. For locals, the space will engender community pride; for visitors to the city it will showcase the intersection of urban center and beautiful landscape. The grand entry staircase is inspired by the Spanish steps in Rome; it is simultaneously part of the Museum and an extension of the city street. The programmatic exterior walls appear to be monumental boundaries, but are actually flexible pieces of the Museum; the undulations create a reciprocal relationship between interior and exterior.