

National Library of Israel Reveals Detailed Plans for New Complex as Cornerstone is Placed

- **Cornerstone laying ceremony for the new National Library of Israel (NLI) complex will take place today (April 5, 2016) in Jerusalem in the presence of President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and dignitaries from Israel and abroad**
- **Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron is designing the building with the Israeli firm Amir Mann – Ami Shinar Architects & Planners serving as executive architects**
- **The new National Library building will open its doors to the public in 2020**

Jerusalem – Today the National Library of Israel (NLI) published plans for the new NLI complex. The library complex, designed as a LEED platinum sustainable building, will be located in Jerusalem's National District adjacent to the Knesset. The building totals approximately 45,000 sq. m. including six above-ground floors comprising 15,000 sq. m., and four below-ground floors totaling 30,000 sq. m. The project partners are the Government of Israel, the Rothschild family through Yad Hanadiv, and the David and Ruth Gottesman family of New York.

Herzog & de Meuron's Project Description Summary

Designing a new building in Jerusalem juxtaposes the desire to react to the architectural traditions of this historically significant place with the ambition to make a building that is both appropriate for the contemporary city and specific to the immediate site. These challenges frame our proposal for the National Library of Israel. Jerusalem has two primary urban precincts. The historical center lies to the East while the modern administrative and cultural zone sits among newer development in the West. The dense and highly pedestrianized Old City forms the dominant image of Jerusalem. Unlike the Old City, buildings in the new development are heterogeneous, freestanding, and primarily linked by vehicular traffic. It is in this area that the site for the National Library of Israel is located. The site is a sloped, triangular plot at the intersection of Ruppin Boulevard and Kaplan Street. Located between the Israel Museum to the South and the Knesset to the East, the National Library site is directly between Jerusalem's most prominent institutions and is an extension of the park-like landscape that weaves through the area. While fully independent, the library will be a link between the cultural and civic buildings around it. A native garden with public space and art will surround the Library and connect the interior functions to the surroundings. Visitors, who come for the cultural experience, mingle with local residents, researchers, and staff who use the Library on a daily basis. Exhibition spaces, eating venues, an auditorium, bookstore, and youth center, all surround the reading room. The diversity of functions and the connection to the city ensure that the Library will remain a strong and vibrant institution in the future.

The design responds to the context and reflects the ambitions of the National Library of Israel. It is open and transparent but grounded in the traditions of great libraries and the city itself. As in the past, books will remain at the center. They form a foundation and necessary balance against constant technological change. Books root the building to the ground and are visible to all in a central void. Vitrine-like elements form the bottom two floors and display the Library's content and activities to the street. Above, a carved space containing stone binds the project together and reflects the massive quality of Jerusalem's historical architecture, the scale of the adjacent buildings and the shape of the site. The stone is not just sculptural. The elevated mass provides shade while its mineral construction adds thermal mass to insulate the interior spaces. The form is strong but humble to its surroundings and the environment.

Herzog & de Meuron

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron established their office in Basel in 1978. The partnership has grown over the years – Christine Binswanger joined the practice as Partner in 1994, followed by Robert Hösl and Ascan Mergenthaler in 2004, Stefan Marbach in 2006, Esther Zumsteg in 2009, Andreas Fries in 2011, and Vladimir Pajkic in 2012, Jason Frantzen and Wim Walschap in 2014, and Michael Fischer in 2016. An international team of some 40 Associates and 380 collaborators in six offices – in Basel (main office), Hamburg, London, Madrid, New York City, and Hong Kong – is presently at work on projects across Europe, the Americas and Asia.

Herzog & de Meuron have designed a wide range of projects from the small scale of a private home to the large scale of urban design. While many of their projects are highly recognized public facilities, such as their stadiums and museums, they have also completed several distinguished private projects including apartment buildings, offices, and factories. The practice has been awarded numerous prizes including The Pritzker Architecture Prize (USA) in 2001, the RIBA Royal Gold Medal (UK) and the Praemium Imperiale (Japan), both in 2007. In 2014, Herzog & de Meuron were awarded the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize (MCHAP) for 1111 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach and in 2015 the RIBA Jencks Award.

Attached also please find the following:

1. A full description of the project in Hebrew and English
2. High-resolution images of the new building with instructions for attribution – see the link below.

https://ftp.nli.org.il/public/file/lflqslm-aEybXfZBytybQw/press_2.zip