

The National Library of Israel Unveils Design for New Library Building in Jerusalem

The National Library is pleased to share the concept designed by the Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron for the new home of the Library in Jerusalem. As set out in the brief for the new building, the design, which will evolve during subsequent design stages, communicates the 'values of openness and accessibility to the general public of all classes, nationalities and denominations'. The new building is a central element of the Library's renewal as a 21st century library, housed in an appropriate sustainable building – a 'creative and dynamic centre for onsite and online activities', designed 'to activate and inculcate the irreducible value of pluralistic, tolerant and enlightened modes of public life'.

David Blumberg, Chair of the Library said: "The new building is the jewel in the crown of the National Library's renewal enterprise, which is moving forward full-speed. It will provide the Library with a stately and fitting home that will contribute to the enhancement of its activities in every sphere in which it has begun to operate over the past decade. These professional realms encompass research, preservation and provision of access to Jewish and Israeli culture using state of the art technologies. The new building will reflect the Library's role as a leading national institution in the collection and preservation of the treasures of the Jewish people in Israel and throughout the world."

Herzog & de Meuron gave the following statement: "Our project reflects the open and transparent ambitions of the National Library of Israel. The strong, sculptural form of the stone, related to the specific topography and context of the site, is elevated off the ground, and situated above vitrine like elements. The stone contains a large open space for the library's visitors and users to interact while the vitrines expose the collection, reading room and public functions to the street and adjacent surroundings."

The new Library building, combining functions of a central research center, a venue for indoor and outdoor cultural and educational activities, a hall for digital experience, a secure, climate controlled underground storehouse for its treasures and administrative headquarters, will be constructed on a site allocated by the Government of Israel in the National Precinct (Kiryat Ha'Leom) adjacent to the Knesset, Israel Museum, Science Museum, Hebrew University and the Supreme Court building. The built area consists of approximately 34,000 square meters – 6 floors totaling 15,000 square meters above ground and 4 floors totaling 19,000 square meters primarily for stacks and parking below ground.

The design, incorporating principles of sustainable (“green”) design, will strive to minimize the building’s energy consumption. Design of the new building, with the executive architect Mann Shinar Architects and Planners will continue in 2015. Construction is to begin in 2016 and is planned for completion in 2019.

Funding for the important national project is being provided by the Government of Israel, Yad Hanadiv, a philanthropic foundation of the Rothschild family, and by the David and Ruth Gottesman family of New York.

About the National Library of Israel

The National Library of Israel, established in 1892, collects, preserves, cultivates and bestows treasures of knowledge, heritage and culture in general, and in connection to the State of Israel and the Jewish people, in particular. The renewal of the National Library of Israel is preserving its rich 120-year history while daring to imagine something different: an institution at the forefront of knowledge dissemination and cultural creativity utilizing cutting-edge technologies. In fulfillment of its new national mandate, the National Library is creating content, processes and infrastructure that will offer open, democratic access to the vast world of physical and digital resources and tools, not only those based on the Library’s own holdings, but also on the almost limitless resources available through collaborative arrangements with other repositories of knowledge.

The centerpiece of the National Library's comprehensive renewal process is the construction of the new world-class facility located steps from the Knesset in the heart of Jerusalem. The move to a new building will enable the Library to realize its mission and roles in the 21st century, and to make its vast and rich collections accessible to researchers and to people of all nationalities and religious denominations throughout the world.

www.nli.org.il

About Herzog & de Meuron

Herzog & de Meuron are internationally known for designs that are sensitive to the site, geography, and culture of the region for which their buildings are planned. Their designs comprise 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.

Established in 1978, Herzog & de Meuron is now a partnership led by five senior partners – Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, Christine Binswanger, Ascan Mergenthaler and Stefan Marbach. Partners include Robert Hösl, David Koch, Esther Zumsteg, Andreas Fries, Vladimir Pajkic, Wim Walschap and Jason Frantzen. An international team of 38 Associates and about 360 collaborators is working on projects across Europe, North and South America and Asia. The Basel-based firm has offices in New York City, London, Hamburg, Madrid and Hong Kong. The practice has been awarded numerous prizes including The Pritzker Architecture Prize (USA) in 2001.

www.herzogdemeuron.com