

# **MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES**

**SUBJECT: BUILDING TYPOLOGY**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Creating a place for looking backwards – for preserving the history of human activity – had its origins at the dawn of history. Some of the earliest remnants of the human impulse to remember can be found in caves, amid the rock carvings and arcane marks found there. The temples, palaces and libraries of Mesopotamia dating from the third and second millennia BC were the earliest forms of proto-museums; there the preservation and communication of knowledge began. The origin of the word museum, comes from ancient Egypt, where Ptolemy II Philadelphus erected a mouseion in Alexandria in the third century BC. It contained an enormous library, a collection of works of art, and technical and scientific artefacts.

The majority of art museums all over the world have found their accommodation in buildings whose primary function and service, at the time of construction, was completely different. Conversion was more a rule than an exception during (not so long) museum history, and it is unambiguous that typological structures of renaissance and baroque palaces have had dominant influence on museum Organization and structure. The further important step forward, considering museum accommodation in historical buildings, happened after the Second World War, with re evaluation and representation of old artistic works by means of new architectonic tools. During the late seventies, reaction of artists to contemporary prevailing trends in museum architecture resulted in creation of numerous unconventional museums, placed in abandoned industrial facilities, warehouses, power plants, on the margins of official culture, as a contrast to the overdesigned museums as sites of luxury and entertainment. Not long afterwards, the network of museum institutions has accepted the vital elements of this "parallel cultural system" concept and reaffirmed conversion as an equally worthy solution for collection accommodation and temporary exhibition space.

## **HISTORY & CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT:**

"Conversion means change. One converts something that exists because a transformation is necessary. In this sense a conversion is a game with building blocks played in a quarry of history in which the original substance is sometimes so transferred that new and old combine in a symbiotic alliance. In such a case one cannot be removed from the other. Conversions have been carried out in any historical era. Interface between history and the present is expressed in a conversion. In this way dead substance is injected with life."

During the Renaissance, with its newly awakened interest in a golden past, the desire to remember intensified. Thanks to the great collections of the Medici, Gonzaga and Sforza families, the museum became a repository of miscellaneous knowledge and relics as well as a place of study open to small groups of scholars. In the 16th century, the perception of the museum as a 'theatre' emerged, with two parallel strands, the 'theatre of memory' and the 'theatre of nature'.

The Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo's ambitious plans for a theatre of memory, outlined in his opus of the same name, was based on a system for classifying all knowledge according to mnemonic principles. The wooden structure was designed in the shape of an amphitheatre, using the seven Vitruvian orders and a grid of 49 compartments, each belonging to a deity. In the mid-16th century another Italian, the scholar Ulisse Aldrovandi, began assembling a collection of botanical and zoological specimens, a sort of theatre of nature, with the intention of classifying all organic and inorganic species of the world for scientific purposes. This need to arrange knowledge systematically was prompted by the discovery of America and new plant species, and by Copernicus's scientific revelations regarding the heliocentric universe.

At the same time in Germany Wunderkammern – pre-scientific and often eccentric cabinets of curiosities – were established to house collections of all kinds. The difference between the Italian 'theatre' and the German 'rooms' was one of intent: the theatres scientific in nature while the purpose of the German rooms was to surprise the visitor with rare and curious objects. Lacking a system of order, these Kammern, or rooms, were more like workshops, in which all the latest curiosities and

early machines were accumulated. These assemblages revealed the strong connection between creativity and instruments, the natural and the manmade. The Wunderkammern anticipated the idea of the museum as entertainment and opened the way to presentation techniques more akin to those found in many new facilities today.

In the 18th century, during the Enlightenment, Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert launched their *Encyclopédie*. Their goal was to catalogue all knowledge and give it a systematic framework, thereby putting an end to the eclectic museums of the Germans. But it was the archaeological discoveries at Herculaneum that revived the fascination with antiquity. Excavations at Paestum began in 1738 and in Pompeii around 1748.

After emerging from a blanket of ash and stones in the case of Pompeii and boiling mud at Herculaneum, the discoveries, hidden and protected for centuries, provided visual evidence from the past, which was literally being resurrected before one's eyes. Also, at the same time, Johann Winckelmann, inspired by these archaeological finds, published his *History of Ancient Art* in 1764, with its emphasis on Greek art.

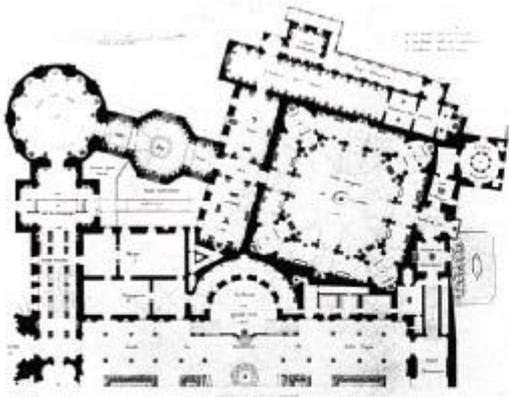
With the French Revolution in 1789, the social outlook began to change and a demand to open museums to a wider public emerged. According to the Jacobin Republicans 'the beautiful' should be available to everyone as it supported the notion of 'the good'. They revived the Greek ideal of *kalokagathia* – perfection of the body and city based on balance, justice and proportion – and believed that through the institution of the museum a model of moral virtue would be capable of building a new society. On 18 November 1793 the Louvre, the first public museum, were opened, conveying a sense of national belonging and making knowledge a public resource.

The first museums, like Vatican Museum, Louvre and Uffizi, are even now greatly admired and respected, as the perfect museum model. Our idea of "immaculate" museum form (at least for exhibition of old masters' paintings) is formed by these model museums, although these first museums were originally built for different content and service. Conversion was a rule, not an exception in museum building type evolution. First museums were housed in luxurious residential objects which frequently had long and narrow "galleries" and small "cabinets of treasure" and they had been used as exhibition spaces for ages in Europe, mainly for private collections of artistic objects and scientific specimen. In the beginning, the purpose of the galleries was not exhibition. Their *raison d'être* was to connect distant parts of huge palace complexes. Later, utilization of these spaces for exhibition became a logical consequence.

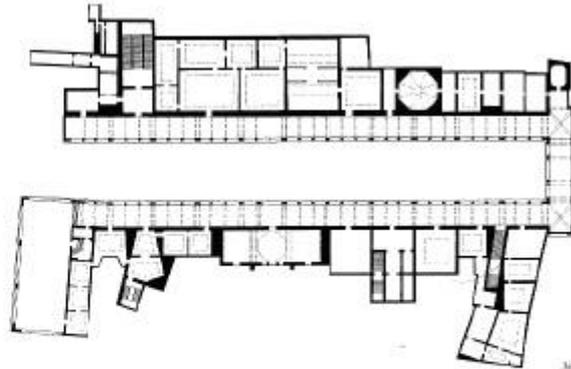
Vatican is one of the fundamental examples. The Pope's collection was increasing very fast through the multi-storey gallery complex designed by Donato Bramante. It was conceived as a connection between Belvedere Palace on the north and the central part of the Pope's residence, but as soon as in 1508, the first sculpture exhibition was installed in the palace courtyard, in the immediate proximity to Vatican. There is a similar story about Fontainebleau. Works of art "imported" from Italy to France were exhibited in the Gallery François Ier, which was originally created as a link for two palace wings. Soon after that, Vincenzo Scamozzi had built the Gallery Vespasiano Gonzaga in Sabionetta, near Mantua, whose interior was later decorated with sculptures.

More time has passed until the Uffizi in Florence begun to function as an administrative center, and a home for ducal collection, which was placed in the deep enfilades. It was a cornerstone of Vasari's brilliant intervention in the heart of Florence, at the end of XVIII century. The Medici's family collection, one of few renaissance collections preserved till the present days without change, was established in the 1670s, in Galleria degli Uffizi, in several ducal offices, designed previously by Giorgio Vasari for Cosimo I de'Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Later changes in Uffizi Loggia, needed for accommodation of the large Medici collection, construction of the Tribune building, and special adjustments in the interior, have contributed to the establishment of new standards for

buildings used as exhibition space. The history of the Louvre is similar. It was built as a palace wing in the XVIII century, created as a connection to the central part of Palace in Tuileries, and used exclusively as the exhibition space as early as the 18 century.



**Fig. 1.** The Vatican, courtyard of statues in the Belvedere and the Museo Pio-Clementino



**Fig. 2.** Giorgio Vasari, Uffizi, Florence, begun 1560

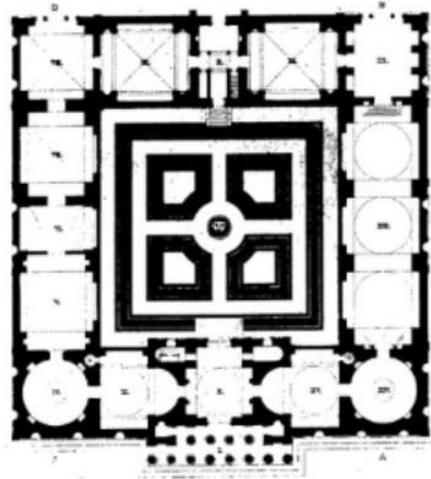
Carlo Marchionni's Villa Albani, built for Alessandro Albani, and Fridericianum in Kasel, designed by Simon Louis Du Ry, for Frederick II, also witness about hybrid origin of museum. Although with different concept, both buildings were used for exhibition: Vila Albani for the antiquities, as the specialized museum, while the Fridericianum, with its library and mixed collection of scientific curiosities and works of art, was an encyclopaedic museum. Both palaces were built in late baroque style and represent, in opinion of many, two most important precedents of modern museum buildings.

This early phase in development of "museum building type" had a significant influence on further progress in museum buildings organization. Typological structure of first museums, which were adopted baroque and renaissance palaces, had effects on the art exhibition. All major rooms were interconnected, which influenced the sequence of viewing, treated as a linear continuity, with a presumption that the viewer will follow the prerequisite order, a feature which is perpetuated through time in museum buildings until present days. Leo Von Klenze's Alte Pinakothek in Munich, therefore, with exception of brilliantly constructed staircase, is essentially a modification of palace design.

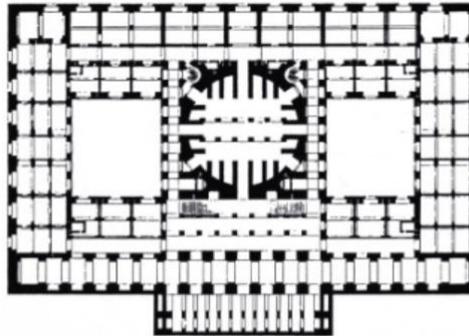
In the 19th century, museums began to be built in the capital cities of Europe. The buildings themselves alluded to the past. Classical pediments, Roman pilasters, and vaults and cupolas inspired by 16th-century architecture were prevalent. Thus it was not only the works within the museum but the structure itself that exhibited and conserved the past.

There are many examples of the 19th-century museum. In Munich the Glyptothek was designed by Leo von Klenze as a classical temple to accommodate the intellectual framework of the Greeks in addition to its marble statuary.

In Berlin, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum, isolated in its urban setting and distinguished by an arcade and an unbroken series of galleries, expresses the cultural status of the city. In 1891 Gottfried Semper completed the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna as a palace of culture, designed according to the Renaissance model of interconnecting spaces.



Leo von Klenze, Glyptothek, Munich, 1830



Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Altes Museum, Berlin, 1830

These *palace-museums* merged culture and power to convey an image of an idyllic past. Referential in character, they achieved a perfect unity between the works accommodated – often looted during colonial enterprises or stolen and transported from one continent to another – and architecture. Still today, entering a 19th-century museum gives one a sense of awe and reverence for the objects and the cultures from which they came.

After the WWII, in the 1950ties, the seductiveness of museum accommodation in old buildings with big historical, cultural and architectural values is rediscovered. Museums, as the "places of recollection" find perfect frame for their works of art in architecture which is, as a piece of cultural heritage, also a "recollection" worthy of preservation. Persuasive contribution of Italian authors to the restoration of old, valuable buildings and museum design in general is especially striking. Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella, Carlo Scarpa, Studio BBPR, have undoubtedly shown that they understand the old architecture and respect tradition, and their successful interventions were admired all over Europe. Their reconstructions have offered some solutions which had great influence on further development of "museum architecture". Alleviated of the museum "monumental crust", a museum design process is transformed, and therefore the works of art themselves initiate certain architectonic project; the works of art determine space, dimensions and proportions of exhibition walls. Every single statue and painting is analyzed and, in search for appropriate space for them, exhibits are shown "visibly"; they express the idea that museum exhibition is not only about storing, but above all, about communication which should be individual and specific.

Carlo Scarpa, in his design of the conversion of Palazzo Abbatellis in Palermo (1954), into the exhibition space (National Gallery of Sicily), researches the mutual relation between the exhibits and their immediate surroundings. Courtyard, windows screened with gothic ornaments, bare stone walls, and vaulted ceilings from the 15th century palace, as well as the big fresco "Triumph of death", became the part of museum exhibition and contribute to the creation of the specific atmosphere. Scarpa made a whole range of small interventions in cooperation with local craftsmen, and he had used their skills to create recognizable contemporary form which, although modern, expresses his respect to the past. Scarpa's reconstruction of Castelvecchio in Verona (1958-1961) represents not only an exquisite example of conversion of an old castle into the museum space, but also a daring restoration of medieval building. Scarpa found out that the courtyard façade does not date from the 14th century, and that it is a "pastiche" from the 1920s, and decided to incorporate some surprisingly invasive details into it, gaining the revived wall structure. Nowadays, willingly or not, conversion of old palaces and castles frequently means the reduction of their architectonic features, and this example of "transplantation of historic skin", would be hardly acceptable from the aspect of modern conservators.

It was not until 1959, however, that a new vision for the museum and its use of space appeared. This is the year that Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York City was completed. Based on the principle of an ascending helix, as if aspiring for verticality and growth, the building breaks with conventional geometry. Wright produced a small building in the city's urban fabric, yet one that explodes on the inside. With the Guggenheim, Wright formulated a different approach to museum design, one in which the spatial setting has an affect on the exhibitions and changes the viewer's perception of the works on display. Rather than the compartmentalised space of the 19th century or the Modernist's neutral white cube, Wright structured space so that the void became a prominent feature. He changed the discourse: the space of the museum now had a meaning of its own. Today this internal contradiction between the content and the container has become the rule. With the Guggenheim, memory, or the act of remembering, resides at the intersection of resources and materials.

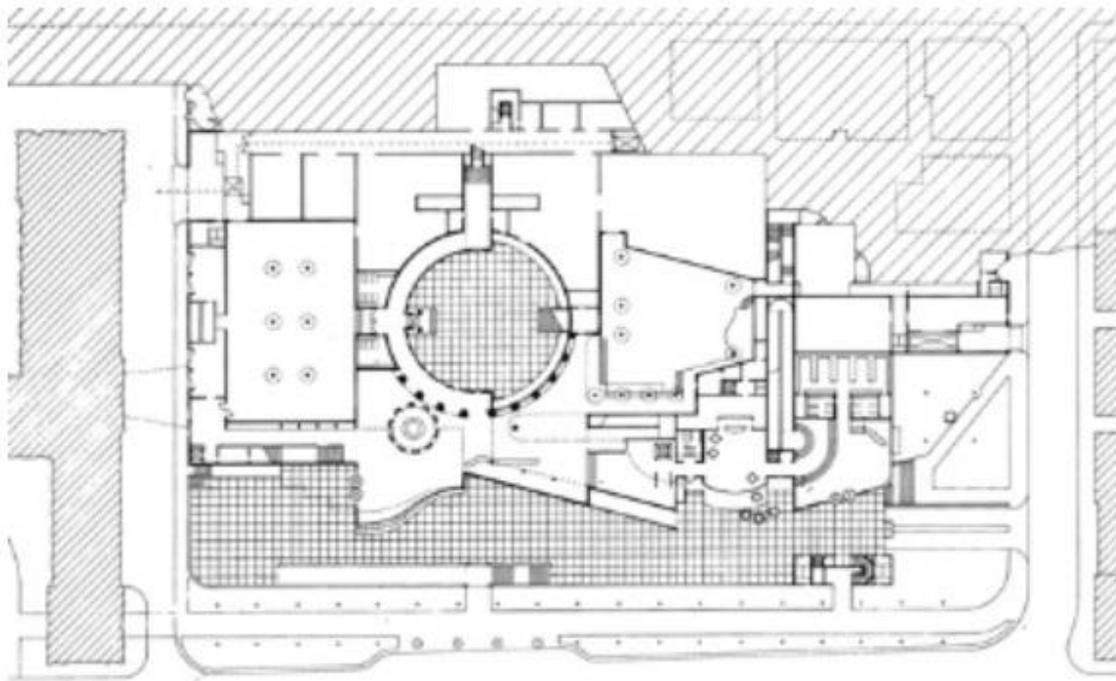
Museum architecture of 1960s and -70s is characterized by two trends: widespread "white cube" museum architecture, neutral from aesthetic and political point of view, and parallel expansion of, truly revolutionary, although seemingly superficial architectonic innovations (starting with Centre Pompidou). Museums are not confined any more to exhibition and storing of art works, they gain new functions, as guided tours, banquets, lectures, conferences, retail stores – functions that are nowadays considered inevitable in museums. All these activities are synchronized with new museum program. Present day museum is a place where the culture is exploited for new purposes. In these new, vast, noisy spaces, crowded with people, all contemplative analysis of artwork is annihilated, and visitors are forced to consummate the art in motion. Architecture has become an instrument of that process and it fits perfectly into this new function: escalators, turnstiles, and other architectonic elements, previously reserved only for department stores and shopping malls, railway stations and airports, are more and more often found in big museums, In this way, museum lose their unique identity, and turn to faceless facets of modern globalized society, adjusted for careless, craving for gratification.

Artists' response to this arrogance and indifference was equally harsh. PopArt has already shown its aversion towards museum as institution; with evolution of LandArt, MinimalArt and Environmental Art, and even more with development of performance art and "happenings", war against the "white cubes" speeded up. Art gets more and more public approval outside museum space, and first alternative exhibition spaces arise. Most of them were private galleries or some kind of artistic "communities", which functioned as workshop and exhibition space at the same time. In the beginning, in New York, in SoHo and later in Chelsea, but also in Europe, these "revolutionary" exhibition spaces were created in some incredible places – old industrial facilities, railway stations, deserted warehouse and administration buildings, power plants, hospitals, jails, schools... creating an alternative space for art and parallel cultural system as a reaction to "overdesigned" museums packed with luxury and mass products. Alternative museums, which refuse to be museums, constantly

move beyond limits, make breakthrough, and revitalize artistic avant-garde critics of museums, especially by recognition of complex nature of each space devoted to the contemporary art.

One of the most famous alternative exhibition spaces was PS 1 Contemporary Art Center on Long Island, in Queens, New York, opened in 1976. It was situated in an abandoned school building, by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources inc., an organization devoted to organizing exhibitions in underutilized and abandoned spaces across New York City. In a deliberate rejection of the "white cube" aesthetics, this building has preserved its former character in structure and exterior. The PS-1 primary interest is set on critical, fresh, anti-cultural and politically engaged groups, while exhibitions often work as an unexpected revelation.

In the post-modern climate of the '80s we see a transition from the *city-museum* to the *museum-city*, where the museum itself becomes a kind of citadel – a complex image of solids and voids, with components of public space included within it. A vision of the museum developed as a reverse image of the city. James Stirling's 1984 design for the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart is one of the best examples of the principle of museum-as-urban-system. It is an articulated container that, by means of its central courtyard, directs circulation through a multilayered scheme, between inside and outside and between history and the city. Later, Aldo Rossi proposed a scheme for the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin that is, despite remaining on paper, perhaps one of the most comprehensive of his designs. Like a collage of an ideal city, it amalgamated residential units, a Renaissance rotunda that served as a link between the parts, and colonnades which relate the urban spaces to those of the museum.



James Stirling, Neue Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, 1984

Considering how many alternative spaces for art there were by 1984, Charles and Doris Saatchi's conversion of a garage and motor-repair shop in London into a private museum has received an inordinate amount of attention. The renown of 98A Boundary Road as a gallery for painting and sculpture for since the 1960s was due partly to Charles Saatchi himself, a partner with his brother

Morice in one of the world's largest advertising and public-relations agencies. In their emphasis on neutrality, Saatchi and the late Max Gordon, the friend and architect he chose to design the space, created galleries more like those of a public than of a private museum. In contrast with most projects of its kind for which the collector personalizes the architecture, 98A is remarkably anonymous. Gordon designed a container within the container of the original trapezoidal structure, and used light to unify galleries.

While many architects working in the '80s were concerned with safeguarding the image of the city, Hans Hollein published one of his most fascinating designs (unfortunately never built) for the museum on the Mönchsberg in Salzburg, which entailed a structure that remains underground, practically without elevations. The theme of excavation was reinforced by a great circular recess leading to the underground spaces. A series of interlocking paths that would provide the possibility of visiting the exhibition halls according to one's own inclinations harked back to the idea of an experiential museum. But, even more importantly, Hollein's design negated the idea of the museum as a projection of the city.

In 1988 at a time when the crisis in the property market was leading intellectuals and artists to question the meaning of design, the *Deconstructivist Architecture* exhibition was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and sparked new concerns about architectural composition. It was no longer the image of the historic city that was dictating the rules but, rather, the concept of new, interstitial spaces and the philosophy of the 'between' or crossover became dominant. Leading architects in this period were Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelb, Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind.

The exhibition inspired a change of direction. History was no longer a complete and self-referential activity that determined the boundaries of composition, nor was it a hierarchical idea relating to urban structure. The city was now dissected, and memory was split apart and refuted. In the '80s, memory had been restored with Modernism's use of ordered Classical space while Deconstructionism was re-examining the most influential figures of the early decades of the 20th century, artists such as Boccioni, Balla, Duchamp, Melnikov, Tatlin, El Lissitzky, Terragni, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Part of the spirit of the period was a return to the explosive force of the Futurist, Constructivist and Russian Suprematist era along with the heroic figures of the Modernism.

This change in direction is central to understanding museums in the '90s. The museum became a work of art and a theatrical space that was more important than even the works on display. Attention had shifted from a concept that focused on the works on display, often enhanced by the neutral character of the museum that housed it, to a stereophonic one in which the museum experience itself provides the primary stimuli: work and space, memory and relationships, past and future.

Spatial and other types of relationships now took precedence; the void was more important than the solid; and the dynamics of movement replaced the linearity of 19th-century plans. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry, the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind and the Kiasma Museum in Helsinki by Steven Holl are the most comprehensive examples of this development.



**Libeskind's lightning bolt Jewish Museum in Berlin was a smash hit when it first opened, its expressionistic empty spaces a harrowing memorial: filled with exhibits a year later, the effect was less convincing**

With the Jewish Museum, Libeskind had to address a painful past. His schema opposed urban regulations and turned the plan of the city into a map of paths connecting the places where Jewish intellectuals, poets and artists had lived. Then he connected these lines into a drawing that became a web of universal memory. Into this void, the museum records the trauma of the wiped-out names. It expresses a space of collective relationships as a self-contained and isolated place. The visitor feels a kind of misgiving and experiences the silence. The subject of the museum is its deafening emptiness. In the nakedness of the walls and in the faint light from the thin window slots lies the impossibility of rationalising the completely irrational and absurd story of the extermination of an entire people.

Today, thanks to abstraction, the relationship between a museum and its context is translated into formal and figural principles, which interpret the landscape as an unveiling project. The idea that connects the museum to landscape originated when environmental protection issues became pressing as a result of land exploitation, technological accidents, pollution of the natural environment by oil tankers and the destruction of the 'green lungs' of the Amazon. And, even more importantly, it is the Land Art movement that grew up in America in the '60s and '70s to which we owe a new vision of the landscape. If we look more closely at these developments, we can gain an understanding of certain lines of research that came together in contemporary museum architecture.

To design the *museum-landscape* means making the environment central again. Industrial quarries, mines, military bunkers and Palaeolithic archaeology sites provide new opportunities for creating places in which memory is understood not just as a cultural and encyclopaedic product, but as revealed through nature itself via its repositories.

The idea of the *museum-landscape* addresses a double paradigm: the transformation of abstract signs and environmental art and a reinterpretation of rocky landscapes as evidence of a brooding, granitic nature that resists the perseverance of time. The museum now includes the landscape as a fundamental subject that deserves protection in order to correct the mistakes of industrial and military history. It helps us reappraise the environment and to see it as the new challenge for the future.

### **EXAMPLES OF MUSEUMS TRANSFORMED FOR CURRENT NEEDS:**

#### **OLD MUSEUM, BRISBANE , QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA –**



With the changing needs of the society some museums were transformed to carry other activities . One of the examples of such museums is the Old Museums Building of Brisbane , Queensland , Australia . It is a heritage listed former exhibition building , then a museum and now a performance venue in Brisbane Queensland Australia. It was originally called exhibition building and concert hall . In 1899 , the exhibition hall became home to Queensland Museum , with the museum remaining in the building until the museum was relocated to Queensland Cultural Centre in 1986. Because of the Queensland Museums long occupancy of the museum , the building is now known as Old Museum . The old museum is now home to Queensland Youth Orchestras , who use the building as a rehearsal , performance and office space. The building is home for the Brisbane Symphony Orchestra and some other bands too.

Designed as an exhibition hall and then converted to a museum, the Old Museum Building is a symbol of the Victorian spirit of inquiry and innovation. The Old Museum Building was, in its time, a good specimen of the large Australian exhibition building. True to the type, it had a large exhibition hall covered by a wide span trussed roof. The internal spaces were unadorned, but the whole was enclosed in elaborate architecture which was intended to impress. The building was set in pleasure gardens and also boasted a concert hall and a dining room. Although later adaptation has altered the exhibition hall, dining room and concert hall, the essential form of the building as an exhibition hall is

clear to see. Although the Exhibition Building was the fourth home for the museum, and not built for the purpose, it was converted in a thorough and thoughtful way. The move to the Gregory Terrace building gave the museum a useful increase in space, as the basement was to be used for offices and preparation areas. The conversion followed the practice of the time of designing museums as a series of galleries or halls, with large internal spaces for hanging exhibits. The conversion can be counted a success, and the result was a creditable museum building by the standards of its time. Although the museum function was not expressed in the external form or the architectural style, the building became the symbol of the museum. A part of the building was also used as a concert hall and then an art gallery for 84 years and is now used for musical rehearsal and performance. As a specially built venue for concerts, later converted to an Art Gallery, the Old Museum Building has played an important part in the artistic life of Queensland. The building is significant because it has been in constant use for cultural purposes. It was then the largest auditorium in Brisbane, the concert hall took the place of a city hall. The original scale of the hall is not visible today. The changes made during the 1930 art gallery conversion, and compounded during the recent adaptation, have reduced the capacity of the hall from the 2,800 claimed in 1891 to the present comfortable accommodation for 400. The visible volume of the hall has also been substantially reduced by the loss of gallery space and the intrusion of acoustic baffles, lighting bars and sound shell.

With the conversion to an art gallery alterations were made that have since obscured the significance of the space as a concert hall – the main damaging changes are:

- Partial removal and alteration of the galleries
- Introduction of the dormer windows
- Removal of the organ
- Replacement of the raked auditorium floor and raised stage with a level floor throughout

The recent adaptation of the hall has masked the dormer windows, introduced another organ in a different location, and introduced a new stage while retaining the level auditorium floor. It has also introduced a new layer of highly visible changes – the box within a box walls, and the lighting, acoustic and air-conditioning services. The combined effect of the changes made in the period from 1930 to 1999 has been to hide the original scale and volume of the hall, and to mask the character of the original space. The dormer windows introduced for the 1930 art gallery conversion remain visible outside the building. They are the most substantial visible evidence of the Queensland Art Gallery's occupation of the building. The use of the concert hall by museum preparators and curators is not regarded as a significant episode in the life of the building.

The exhibition hall – another part of the building was an ambitious undertaking. The large scale and substantial construction of the hall evoke the optimism of the late nineteenth century in Queensland before the depression. Building the exhibition hall was also an attempt to keep up with the other colonies, which all had substantial exhibition buildings. These attributes survive today, and are the basis of the significance of this part of the building. The Queensland Museum occupied the exhibition hall for 86 years and the hall was specifically remodelled for this purpose. It is the museum that is most strongly identified in the public mind with the building. The museum has had the longest occupation of any activity in the building and its presence can clearly be seen in the fabric of the exhibition hall.

The main elements of the conversion – the gallery floor, the dormer windows and the ceiling lining – were carried out with skill and a sympathetic regard for the existing building. Although most of the fittings and fixtures of the museum displays have been removed, the exhibition hall still bears many marks of the museum. Through the museum conversion, the basement area was changed from a large open space to a series of offices, preparation and storage areas. The timber partition walls, with glass in the upper section, were constructed using material from partition walls that were previously part of the exhibition hall

Much of the initial museum office layout remains intact, and the present significance of the basement derives from its relationship to its museum function. The significant elements are:

- The glass topped timber partition walls

- The trolley line and hatch which, it is assumed, facilitated the movement of large items into the exhibition hall
- The glazed lights in the floor above, designed to pass daylight from the exhibition hall to the basement
- The shelving for books and specimens.

The layout and fabric of the basement in its various overlays is evidence of the museum's use of the building. As the museum expanded, the need for storage space and preparation areas was catered for by extending the basement area further under the exhibition hall

Although the building was originally built as an exhibition building and concert hall, for the past hundred years it has been known as the museum or the old museum. Now, more than twenty years after the Queensland Museum staff, collection and displays moved out, the museum name reminds people of the major episode in the history of the site. Now the building is only used for music rehearsals and performances.

### **MAIN BUILDING, NATIONAL MUSEUM, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC –**



The National Museum, Prague houses 14 million items for the areas of natural history , history arts , music and librarianship which are located in dozens of museum building. The main Building of the National Museum has been recently renovated in 2011- 2019 and now it will be used to hold permanent exhibitions which will gradually start from spring 2020. The building was damaged during the World War II by a bomb and was reopened after intensive repairs. The museum was also damaged during the construction of Prague metro in 1972 and 1978. The building suffered from excessive noise level, dangerously high level of dust and constant vibrations from heavy road traffic due to opening of the north south highway in 1978. Due to the major reconstruction the museum was closed from 2011 – 2018. Million items had to be relocated to the museums depositories which was one of the biggest moving of the museum collection. The museum will now be used for exhibitions from 2020. . It will be a relatively conservative reconstruction, not a great many architectural changes. The main changes will concern –

- The building has two huge courtyards and it is planned to roof them over to create new space for exhibitions and new space for visitors and
- There will be a tunnel between the new and old museum buildings. It is planned to link the two buildings by an underground tunnel which will house a multi-media exhibition.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Fundamental changes in museum typology have compelled museum experts, architects, curators to search for new solutions, which will please the visitors, but also enable artists to express themselves and feel more at home in their buildings. Successful conversion of historical buildings into museum spaces is an important and influential issue in evolution of museum architecture. Yet, there are many museum experts arguing against this type of conversion. The conversion opponents have various explanations for their attitude. Some of them believe that conversion "simply cannot be copied" and therefore it cannot be a model in architecture. Others think that any intervention on transforming some space into museum leads to the elimination of its spatial qualities and personal features, no matter how degraded this space was previously. There are opinions that limited space and spatial organization of the original historical building have an unfavourable effect on latter museum functioning. Therefore, some dilemmas should be resolved at the very beginning of design process, especially when art museum is planned.

A whole range of decisions has to be made; many of them are disturbing for the unstable balance of power and historical conflict between architects and curators. Many new museum buildings, galleries and other cultural institutions are housed in valuable historical objects, and recently in recycled industrial objects. These spaces almost always have spectacular dimensions, and although they are often emblematic, there is no fear of their domination over art, because their place in "memory and picture of the city" is already granted, and, even more important, they are not visibly "signed" by a contemporary architect. On the other hand, to choose an existing building for accommodation of a museum collection is a difficult task. Dimensions of the building can be a restraining factor in conversion process, as well as the existing building organization. The required preservation of primary building structure, especially when circulation of visitors and transport of art works is considered, can be a challenge. The limited spatial potential in historical buildings often puts together museologists and architects in order to achieve a maximal effect in exhibition areas, while the other museum contents are partially neglected.

All mentioned issues clearly testify about the problems which accompany every conversion of existing objects into museums and exhibition spaces. It is essential to protect the cultural monument, but also to establish a new museum, and to satisfy all specific requirements linked to exhibition of art works and other exhibits and all other aspects of contemporary museum. Beside exhibition area, contemporary museum must possess the prerequisites for other activities, e.g. area for documentation, library, auditorium, entrance hall, museum shops, cafeteria and restaurant, etc. The precise program for a new museum is an essential condition for a successful conversion. Only a joint effort of architects, conservators and curators will result in appropriate solution for two central aspects of this, sometimes dramatically architectonic problem: how to preserve the existing architectonic expression from another epoch, and at the same time, ensure that all conditions for functioning of a contemporary museum are present, without disturbance of building's typological structure.

In this way, conversions serve as guardians of the valuable architectonic heritage; they search for, and establish relations between the cultural legacy, culture and contemporary society. Recycled architectonic elements make their contribution to the fulfilment of modern model of integrated conservation, inevitable in context of sustainable urban development.

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