

Animate the inanimate.

Puppets are inanimate objects that come to life through skillful manipulation. Similarly, our proposal seeks to animate a building to add to the life and vibrancy of Stara Zagora.

The design animates the building in three primary ways. First, the large theater volume at the center of the building composition has been pulled, as if by strings, to create a dynamic form, thrusting skyward. Clad in mirror-like, pleated metal panels and sloping walls, the exterior reflects the surrounding environment, coming alive with images from the city and breaking down the scale of the theater volume. Second, the lobby extends parallel to General Gurko Street, continuing the clean lines of the city fabric, matching the height of the existing theater, and wrapping the theater volume. Glass exterior walls reveal the human activity within, animating the street and making the movement of people part of the show. Third, plants climb the walls and roofs for natural animation and growth over time. Stainless steel cables, an homage to marionette strings, weave over the façade to become the pathways for vines and plants.

The overall building plan is L-shaped to preserve several existing trees within a courtyard at the southwest corner. The theater itself is rectangular, oriented east to west, and resides one level above the street. With wood walls, floors, and ceiling panels, the new hall is a natural geode within the reflective exterior. An angled stair rises through the lobby between the existing building and the theater addition, linking old and new, with a series of vertically stacked support spaces to the south. The residential apartments are located within the wood trusses over the theater while the warehouse space is located below grade. The structure of the building is mass timber, to connect to the wood tradition of Bulgaria and reduce embodied carbon. Solar panels, green roofs, and rainwater collection round out the sustainable approach.

Building Density = 1.11 (2,322 sq. m. above +0.00 / 2,100 sq. m. plot)

Total Built-up Area = 748 sq. m.

Total Landscaping Area within the boundaries of the plot and building = 85 sq. m. (Ground level planting)

165 sq. m. (Green roof area)

Estimated cost of construction = \$46,403,514 BGN (\$26,500,000 USD)