



VICTORIEI SQUARE, TIMISOARA
”DESIGN AND MODERNIZATION
OF THE OPEREI (VICTORIEI)
SQUARE AND STREETS IN THE
CITADEL AREA”
DESIGN COMPETITION

ANNEX 1
COMPETITION BRIEF



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1. GENERAL DATA

1.1. THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZER OF THE COMPETITION

The Contracting Authority of the competition is the Timisoara Municipality, the owner and administrator of the public spaces that will be the object of the investment, which will become the beneficiary of the contract resulting from this competition.

The organizer of the competition is the Romanian Order of Architects (OAR), a professional organization whose mission is to increase the quality of the architectural-urban planning product and to appreciate this service towards society, as an act of culture of public interest. In this sense, the OAR promotes policies and professional practices that value the built heritage and favor the production of architecture of value, fundamental areas for the quality of life.

The competition is organized in accordance with the international provisions for Architecture and Urbanism Competitions as mentioned in the Guide of good practices in organizing design competitions, published by OAR in 2018 and revised in 2022, and in compliance with the provisions of the legislation in force regarding awarding public procurement contracts.

The solutions competition is organized as an independent procedure according to art. 105, lett. a) from Law no. 98/2016 on public procurement, following as later, based on the provisions of art. 104, para. (7) of the same law, the contract for design services to be awarded to the winning competitor of the competition, following a negotiation procedure without prior publication of a notice of participation.

1.2. PURPOSE OF COMPETITION AND OPPORTUNITIES

Victoriei Square (formerly Operei Square) is an exceptional historical, cultural and identity landmark, which exceeds the geographical limits of the city of Timisoara. It is one of the main squares of the city and the symbol of the fall of the communist regime in Romania (here being the place where Timisoara was proclaimed the first free city in Romania, on December 20, 1989). At the same time, it includes numerous symbols and important cultural and affective landmarks for the city's inhabitants (such as the National Opera / Palace of Culture, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the statue "Capitoline she-wolf" or the artesian fountain "with fishes"), among many other elements of historical and cultural heritage that they must be understood in all their significance, protected and valued as such.

The Timisoara City Hall has been trying for several years to rehabilitate this space, for which several fragmentary maintenance, repairs, and local improvements have been contracted and are currently being carried out. The local press pays attention to this square and signals the desire of the citizens to be brought into harmony with the demands of the 21st century, as is evident from the many online civic discussion forums.



Thus, the main objective of the competition is the contracting by the Timisoara City Hall of the design services necessary for a good quality design of the public space of Victoriei Square, in accordance with the values settled here over time.

Correlated with this intention, the Contracting Authority is looking for a preliminary vision for the medium and long-term development of Timisoara, which takes into account the already developed urban spaces and which foreshadows a common meaning for them, according to the Contracting Authority's desire to "green" the center, to create a "green-blue network" on the scale of the entire settlement. This vision should demonstrate the validity of the development proposals in Victoriei Square in relation to the entire area of the historical center of Timisoara for as long as possible.

1.3. ARCHITECTURAL STAKE

The stake of the competition consists in formulating a solution for the design of the public space that is respectful of the built heritage, of all the layers that history has deposited in this space, and in accordance with the elements of the urban landscape. The participants in the contest should find the maximum potential for each of the needs of the Victoriei Square — housing; religious cults; public administration; services: offices, banks, hotels, restaurants, cafes, and confectionery, services and medical practices; small commercial spaces; education, culture; leisure and entertainment; civility, etc. — and to re-establish them as a turning point for the coherent development of the entire central area of Timisoara, connecting the area of the Unirii Square with the area of the Bega River and the parks on its banks.

Thus, the participants in the competition must take into account all the existing functions, as well as some foreseen functions, and find a fair measure between the perennial values of the history and space of Victoriei Square and the possibilities of innovation in accordance with the contemporary way of thinking and using of the public space, following the contemporary needs generated by climatic, social and economic changes.

In continuation of this desire, the proposed solutions should take into account the local objective of increasing the degree of biodiversity in the green spaces in the central area of the city and the desire to increase the degree of shading by planting trees where they are missing or in new suitable areas. Also, the competitors will consider the criterion of sustainability, which would imply the use of this design for a long period of time and a limited consumption of resources intended for the current maintenance of the market.

2. LOCATION INFORMATION

2.1. FRAMEWORK AND IMPORTANCE IN THE CITY

The current structure of the city is the result of the negotiation between the relief conditions and the sequence of stages of evolution carried out on the basis of successive systematization projects developed since 1716. This resulted in a system of well-defined urban spaces, with regular geometries and clear functional and compositional hierarchies.

The intervention targeted by this competition continues the city's policy of rehabilitating this system, by uniting the historic squares in an urban promenade in the north-south direction and re-establishing their functional and expressive links with the adjacent urban area and with the other major landmarks in the city's structure. (fig. 1)



<https://arhitectura-1906.ro/2013/03/reabilitarea-spatiilor-publice-din-centrul-istoric-al-timisoarei/>

2.2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY SPACES

The area of implementation of the results of the competition includes the fragments of the public domain shown in the plan below (fig. 2), respectively:

- Victoriei Square, $S \cong 20\text{ha}$
- Iancu Huniade Square, $S \cong 14.3\text{ha}$
- The streets that converge on Victoriei Square or delimit the study perimeter, $S \cong 23.4\text{ha}$
- The front from King Ferdinand I boulevard, continued by the boulevard Constantin Diaconovici Loga, $S \cong 6.4\text{ha}$

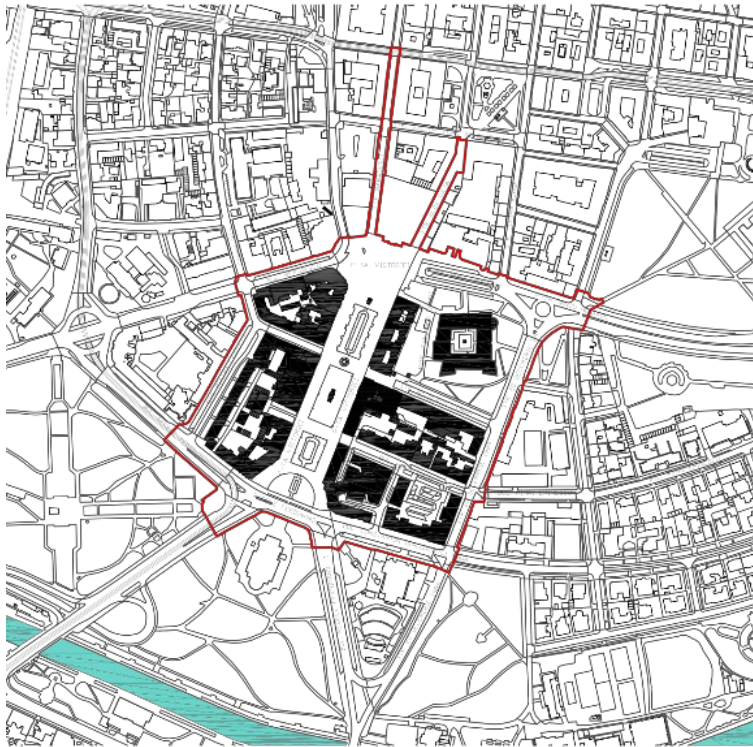


Fig. 2 Study perimeter / implementation area

2.3. BUILT AND LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

Victoriei Square evolved around the central core of the city, as can be deduced from the sequence of the city's historical plans (Annex 4 - Historical Plans) and from the "Theoretical Archaeological Evaluation Report" (Annex 4 - Studies), here being sedimented and stored traces of the most significant stages in the military, the political, social and cultural history of the city.

Victoriei Square

- it is part of the urban site with LMI code TM-II-s-A-06095 Urban site "Cetatea Timisoara" Neighborhood, TIMISOARA municipality; Victoriei Square-Huniade Iancu Square - Telbisz Carol Str. - Proclamation from Timisoara Str. - Hector Str. - Brătianu Ionel I.C. Square - Oituz Str. - Dima Gh. Str. - St. John Str., century XVIII - XX;
- includes an architectural ensemble with LMI code TM-II-a-A-06115 - Interwar Urban Ensemble "Corso";
- and is included on the list of priority areas for protection and intervention on buildings in the Municipality of Timisoara, according to the Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timisoara number 221 of 15.06.2021 Regarding the approval of the "Regulation for the application of the Financial Support Program for increasing the architectural-environmental quality of buildings from the priority intervention areas in the Municipality of Timisoara" (fig. 3)

Therefore, the rehabilitation of Victoriei Square and the adjacent streets is part of a

complex process of rehabilitation of the entire built heritage of Timisoara, concentrated in the three historical cores of the city's development (Cetate, Fabric and Iosefin neighborhoods).

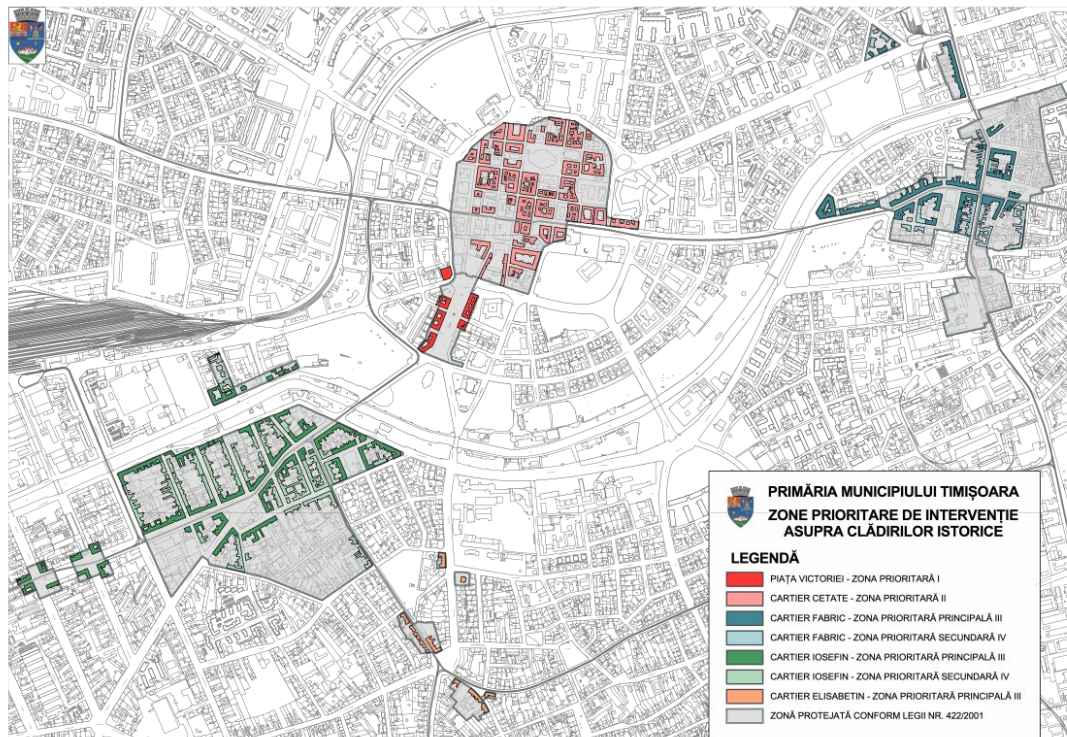


Fig. 3: priority areas for protection and intervention on buildings in the Municipality of Timisoara

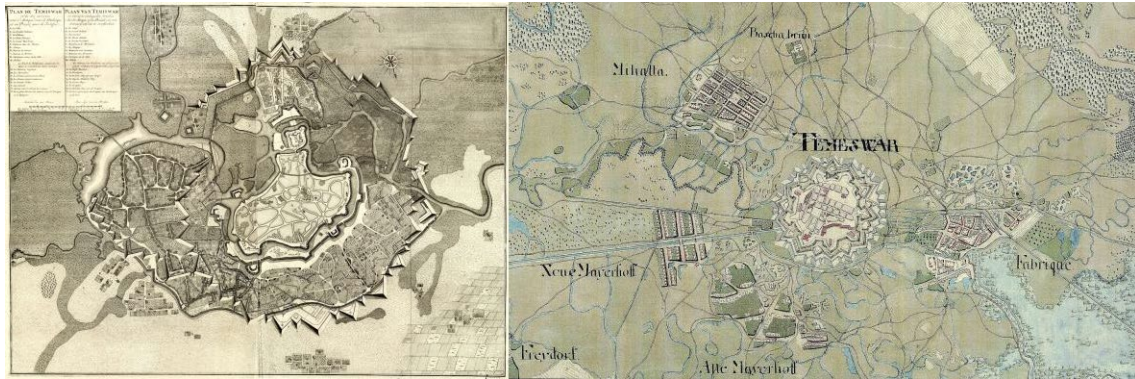
The "Historical Foundation Study" (Annex 4 — Studies) describes the multiple periods and their implications on the present situation of the studied area, allowing us to see potential dimensions for the future, especially in terms of the restoration of the built heritage. The "grounding landscape study" (Annex 4 — Studies) completes the description of the built heritage with information about the state of the vegetation in the studied area.

These studies, as well as the "Theoretical Archaeological Assessment Report" and the analysis of the succession of the historic city plans, suggest the density of heritage elements at this site and urge caution in approaching them.

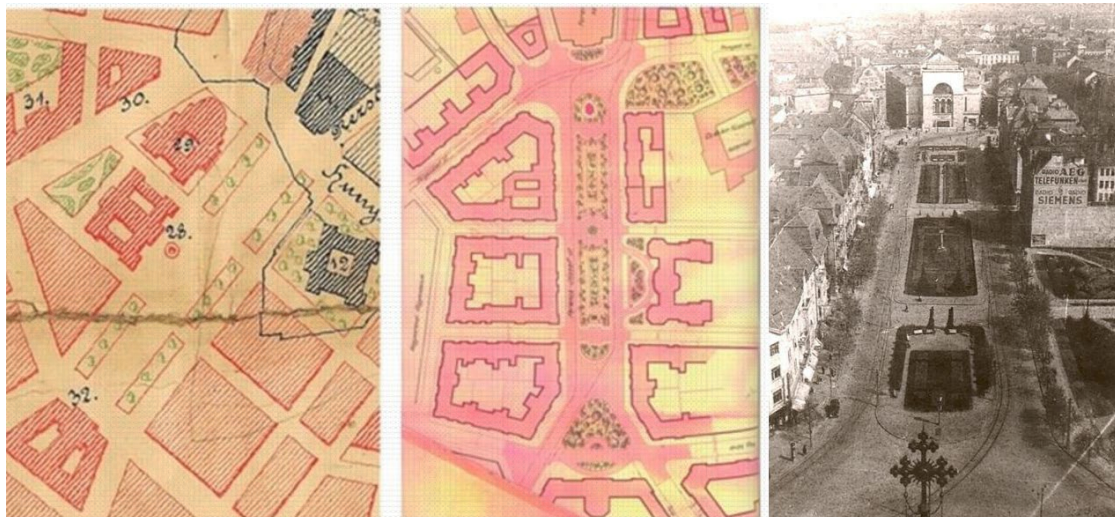
2.4. HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

2.4.1. The constitution of the urban space of the Esplanade

Victoriei Square reflects the stages of the city's transformation since 1716, when Timisoara passed from the Ottoman administration to the Habsburg administration. This was followed by the complete demolition of the Ottoman city and the construction of the Austrian fortress, completed by 1750 (fig. 5).



This is how the core of Victoriei Square appears, as a small triangular square next to the Petrovaradin Gate (southwest of the city, the connection to Belgrade), near the Huniade Castle. The current configuration is the result of the expansion of the city in the period 1867-1918, when the building of the theater / Opera (1872-75) and the western front (1910-12) are built, the Petrovaradin Gate (1891) is demolished and the esplanade is prefigured, planted linearly in the middle and covered by one of the city's new tram lines, which connected the Iosefin neighborhood to the center (fig. 6).



The definition of the space to the south is achieved through the design (through an architecture design competition organized in 1934) and the construction of the Metropolitan Cathedral "St. Three Hierarchs" (fig. 7) in the period 1936-46. Compared to the original proposal (1873) to close the perspective to the south with a massive building that would have housed the Palace of Justice, the cathedral is present enough to mark the axis of the esplanade and flexible enough to open the space to the green spaces along the river. Finally, the square space is closed by the construction of residential blocks with public functions on the ground floor, which complete the eastern front in the

1960s (fig. 8) and, respectively, by the construction of the Modex building on north of the Castle and continuing the alignment of the Opera House, in the 1970s. (fig. 9)



Fig. 7: Opera Square before 1937, without the Metropolitan cathedral and after the completion of the cathedral, image from 1958-60



Fig. 8: (left) the blocks on the east front. Fig. 9: (right) north front (Opera and Modex building)

2.4.2. The underground passage in front of the Opera House

The passage in front of the Timisoara Opera House was built in the period 1978-1981 and was followed by the burial of pedestrian traffic under the route of the tram line that crossed the square at that time. The underground passage, which also contained commercial premises, lost its usefulness in November 1989, when the tram lines were removed, and the square became pedestrianized. In the last three decades, this place has been the subject of many debates and antagonistic projects: (1) its preservation and re-functionalization as a commercial passage managed by the private environment, or as a museum of the Revolution, together with the balcony of the Opera House; (2) covering the entrances, rehabilitating toilets and inserting bar services; or (3) turning it into an overpass to close off the central traffic ring (an idea present in the 1960s systematization sketches) and completing it with a 400-space underground parking lot.

As it appears from the debates occasioned by these projects in the local press, public opinion is not necessarily favorable to the resumption of traffic on the central ring, even if it were buried; on the contrary, the problems that would be brought by the entrance and exit underground for the pedestrian passage of the central area are pointed out. At the same time, the re-establishment of commercial functions does not seem to have

support either: the creation of the passage itself is considered to have been a fad, and the unsanitary nature sustained by the continuous dampness from underground reinforces the rejection of this space.

From a technical point of view, the main problem is the relationship with the groundwater. Being an area with swampy terrain, the first problems seem to have appeared right during the execution, when the wooden piers on which the Opera House was built began to dry and were concreted (according to the testimonies of architects professionally active at that time). The technical evaluation report of the passage drawn up for the foundation of this competition (Annex 5 – Technical investigations) describes a water level in the passage (in March 2022) of 20-30 cm and estimates that for the re-functionalization it would be necessary to study the lowering of the phreatic level in the passage area, but which would have an influence on all the buildings in the area and consequences on the quality of the foundation lands.

Under these conditions, it is obvious that the passage as such cannot have a future in the new layout of Victoriei Square.

2.5. MEMORIAL-SYMBOLIC LANDMARKS

The esplanade that occupies the central space of the Victoriei Square is, at the same time:

- the result of a way of thinking and manufacturing urban public space specific to the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century;
- witness to a way of using the public space present until the Second World War, which favored the placement of HoReCa functions on the sunny side (from the west) and thus induced an implicit segregation of users (in the memory of the place, "Corso" originally referred only to the western promenade);
- depository of objects that remember certain moments and stages in the evolution of the city and of Romania. They are presented in chronological order below:

2.5.1. The Capitoline she-wolf monument

The "She-wolf Statue" is one of the reproductions of the Capitoline wolf statue in Rome (Musei Capitolini) offered by Mussolini to the municipalities of Bucharest (1906), Cluj (1921), Chisinau (1921), Targu-Mures (1924), Timisoara (1926) and many other cities in countries around the world, with the aim of legitimizing his regime as the "founder of the new Rome". In Timisoara, the sculpture was installed on the esplanade, on a plinth 4.93m high, facing the opera building, at that time under reconstruction after the fire of 1920. In the first decades, the reception of the monument was linked to Mussolini's Italy, becoming a landmark of the protests against the Vienna Dictatorship of 1940 supported by him. Today it is perceived as a symbol of the Latinity that connects the Romanian people to the Italian people and is listed on the List of historical monuments in Timis county, category "Public monuments", code TM-III-m-B-06314 "Capitoline wolf Monument" (Current images in Annex 7 — Photo documentation / Public monuments).

2.5.2. The fish fountain

The artesian fountain was built in 1957, initially having the shape of a star on the corners of which stood five bronze fish. Having quickly become an emblematic place for the city, the fountain underwent changes over time, reaching a circular shape. Starting in 2021, the fountain is being rehabilitated (Appendix 8 - Additional documentation / 8.3. Excerpt from PT memo rehabilitating fish fountain).

2.5.3. The pigeon clock

It was installed in the 1970-80s and became a meeting place in the Square. It is a small assembly composed of a layout at ground level with an approximate diameter of 4m and a clock placed on a concrete plinth approx. 4 m. The clock broke beyond repair and was replaced in 2012 with a serial object, but even so, it remains one of the major affective landmarks of the market and the city (Current images in Annex 7 — Photo documentary and past images in Annex 8 – Additional documentation).

2.5.4. Busts with effigies of King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria

King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria were crowned as kings of all Romanians on October 15, 1922, in the Cathedral of Alba Iulia, where the Union of Transylvania with Romania had been proclaimed on December 1, 1918. Their busts in Victoriei Square in Timisoara were inaugurated in 1998 to mark 80 years of the Great Union (Current images in Annex 7 — Photo documentary).

2.5.5. The Liberty Tree

Planted by forest firemen from Marseille in memory of the Revolution of 1989 - right in front of the Crucifixion Monument - made by the sculptor Paul Neagu.

A plaque placed next to the tree reads: "This tree was planted on 06.01.1990 by a delegation of forest firefighters from Marseille, symbolizing the friendship between the Romanian and French people as well as the freedom gained following the revolution of December 1989" (Current images in Annex 7 — Photo documentary).

2.5.6. . Monumental sculpture "Crucifixion"

It is a work by the artist Paul Neagu placed on the current site on December 22, 1999, to commemorate the Romanian Revolution of December 1989. Displayed just opposite the Orthodox Cathedral, on whose steps the revolutionaries were shot on December 18, 1989, the sculpture incorporates several symbols and summarizes the tragedy of those who fell in Timisoara during the days of the Revolution (Current images in Annex 7 — Photo documentation).

2.5.7. The revolution of 1989

The Balcony of the Opera House is the place from which Timisoara was proclaimed, on



Fig. 10: The Timisoara Revolution

2.5.8. Cultural and ethnic diversity

The social structure of the city is the result of an ethnic mixture generated over centuries of history in a place of interferences and successions of empires. In 1918, the largest community was German, followed by Hungarians, Romanians, Jews, Serbs, and many other smaller communities, such as Bulgarians, Slovaks, Croats, Czechs, Slovenes, Poles, etc. Ethno-cultural diversity is still maintained today, the census data from 2011 revealing the presence in the municipality of Timisoara of 21 ethnicities and 18 nominated religions, with 81.36% of the total population of Romanian ethnicity and 9.66% belonging to other ethnicities (Hungarians, Serbs, Germans, Roma, etc.), in the situation where 8.98% of the city's residents chose not to declare their ethnicity. In parallel with the reduction of the weight of some of the traditional ethnic minorities, the numerical increase of the representatives of new ethnicities (Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs, etc.) is noticeable, settled in recent years, through immigration, due to the attraction exerted by the dynamic economy of Timisoara on the business environment and the workforce.

In Victoriei Square, the most visible trace of ethnic diversity can be found in the Opera House, which houses three state theater institutions, operating in three different languages: the Timisoara National Theatre, the German State Theater and the Csiky Gergely Hungarian State Theatre.

2.6. FUNCTIONS

As in any central square, the buildings bordering Victoriei Square house public functions from a wide spectrum: housing; religious cults; public administration; services: offices,



banks, hotels, restaurants, cafes, and confectionery, services and medical practices; small commercial spaces; education, culture; leisure and entertainment; civility, etc.

The urban space hosts numerous fairs, concerts, exhibitions, protests, sports events, and other occasional gatherings, and in everyday life, it is the main destination of the inhabitants of the entire city, from where it is then distributed to the other surrounding urban spaces: to the north, to Libertatii Square and Unirii Square; and south to Bega and the parks along the canal.

Thus, Victoriei Square is the most important public space in the city, both from the point of view of the sedimented past and the extremely dynamic present of an urban population that looks very carefully and with very high expectations towards this place.

3. COMPETITION BRIEF

The Contracting Authority wants the development of Victoriei Square and the neighboring streets - the central area with the richest historical memory of the Municipality of Timisoara - in accordance with its meanings and with the political, economic, societal and ecological changes that are currently taking place.

Competitors are invited to transpose the existing built environment into a series of attractive urban spaces that stimulate encounters between people; to contribute through the quality of the architectural, urban, and landscaping designs to the continuous maintenance and recreation of the community feeling. To succeed, the intervention must combine the understanding of the spirit of places, the identification of historical and urban values, the invention of solutions for long-standing problems, as well as original proposals, suited to the unprecedented circumstances provided by the present and the foreseeable medium-term future. The unfolding climate crisis is unavoidable, and the proposed solutions must meet it.

The design proposed by the competitors will also have to offer a sustainable solution for the rehabilitation of Victoriei Square in relation to its immediate and close neighborhoods:

- functional – strengthening the central character of the area through an ingenious interweaving of different traffic flows and places to spend time;
- architectural - by highlighting the existing constructions and facilities, as well as public monuments, defining the character of the studied perimeter;
- landscaper - in accordance with the "green city" tradition of Timisoara, at the same time the climate crisis is in full swing, the new-old center wants to become a representative and leisure area, properly arranged from an ecological point of view.

At the same time, it is hoped that, through the expected social and artistic impact, the reconfiguration of this urban complex will contribute to *reaffirming the cultural identity of the entire area*.

3.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

In order to meet the conditions of the urban life of societies faced with the multiple crises of the beginning of the 3rd millennium, the redevelopment of Victoriei Square and the adjacent streets will have to seek solutions to accommodate the many contradictions that accompany the rapid development of technological endowments and the implicit societal restructurings. It is therefore considered that the whole concept must be built around an environmental and at the same time ecological suitability of the future urban spaces. We are not looking for an impossible "romantic return to nature", no hypothetical reconstruction of a previous state, but a different rethinking of the relationship between the built environment and the natural one: of the possible or desired *overlaps*, of the inevitable *exclusions* and contact areas between the human habitat and the natural environment.

The planning proposals will identify and preserve all the valuable elements of the urban area included in the studied perimeter, taking into account the fact that the city is a continuum, and the intervention resulting from this study will have to relate as fluently as possible to the neighborhoods. The designers are invited to imagine the reformulation of the studied urban spaces so that they remain familiar, but also affirmatively represent ways of life of the present, to meet the current requirements of urban living. Finally, like any project, this one will involve a foresight component: how would it be desirable to evolve this representative urban space of Timisoara in the next period of time?

In order to pursue these goals, three general planning principles are proposed:

- Conservation and promotion of the existing cultural heritage;
- Categorical change in the balance of traffic flows in favor of pedestrians and market surfaces to create places of rest, communication, and civic expression;
- Considerable increase of unsealed surfaces, dendrological fund, biodiversity, and the volume of green mass through the diversity of the proposed landscaping.

3.2. RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS OF INTERVENTION

Of course, the appropriate ways to approach interventions are numerous. However, some directions considered appropriate will be listed:

- The most extensive restriction of road access exclusively to riversiders, supply and intervention vehicles, in a shared space regime;
- Elimination of surface parking of vehicles;

- Creating more crossing possibilities for pedestrians and cyclists from Victoriei Square to the Metropolitan Cathedral and to the banks of the Bega Canal;
- The most extensive use of porous pavements to allow the passage of rainwater into the soil. Also in the idea of maximizing the use of fresh water, an integrated system of capturing meteoric waters can be considered to participate in the irrigation of urban plantations;
- Considering a typology of urban plantation as rich as possible, from square and alignment to urban grove, and from lawn to rain garden (self-sustainable gardens that collect rainwater);
- Designing public lighting in such a way as not to disturb the biological rhythm of birds that nest in the foliage of trees;

The competition aims to restore the coherence of the urban spaces of the study perimeter configured in and around Victoriei Square by involving all the specific means of design in architecture and landscaping. The success of the approach will depend on achieving the balance between conservation and innovation, between mineral and vegetable, and between the needs of contemporary urban life related to the energetic and biological sustainability of the ensemble.

3.3. ZONING AND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

For reasons of method, the intervention perimeter was divided into functional areas; treating them differently does not in any way mean the introduction of fractures in a spatiality that is desired to be as unified as possible in its diversity. The areas are as follows:

Area A, cu suprafata de cca. 20,0 ha, este Piata Victoriei. with an area of approx. 20.0 ha, is Victoriei Square. Divided in turn into the following subareas:

- A1.** Underground passage area; the northern end of the square and at the same time the platform in front of the Opera House, point of confluence of four streets;
- A2.** All the rest of the esplanade; the market is currently treated as a succession of compositionally insufficiently individualized segments.

Area B, with an area of approx. 14.3 ha, is the square that opens in the width of Huniade Street, to the northeast of Victoriei Square, between the Fashion House building and the Huniade Castle.

Area C, with an area of approx. 23.4 ha, includes all the streets that converge on Victoriei Square or delimit the study perimeter, with the exception of King Ferdinand I Boulevard;

Area D, with an area of approx. 6.4 ha, consists of the front from King Ferdinand I



boulevard, continued by Constantin Diaconovici Loga boulevard.

Specific design requirements and recommendations for the four areas:

Area A – Victoriei Square

It is the spatial, functional, and symbolic center of gravity of the intervention perimeter, but also of the entire historical city of Timisoara. It is dominated by the main facade of the Palace of Culture (Opera).

From the competitors are expected:

Innovative solutions for the complex functions of the square, together with the realization of the stated general wishes.

The **A1** area accumulates a complexity of urban functions, some of which are difficult to combine. The exclusion of car traffic from Victoriei Square eliminated only one of the functional conflicts. The convergence point of four streets, the platform in front of the Opera House covers the obsolete space of the underground pedestrian passage, which today is completely dysfunctional.

The resolution of this space that has become *residual* is the pivot around which the development of the A1 area evolves. The history of failed attempts to rehabilitate the passage eloquently illustrates the difficulty of the problem. That is why, in order to recover the functional valences of the northern segment of the market, it is required to *remove* the passage and arrange the surface it occupies in the most innovative way possible: the solutions will take into account the great diversity of events that can take place in this space, but and the tendency to "green" the public space as much as possible.

In the north-south axis of the square is the "Opera clock", associated with a small circular fountain, recessed into the pavement. The current clock took the place of the old square clock, also of industrial design, and the Fountain, where the pigeons bathe, is in a state of relative decay.

In the entire study perimeter, this is the most suitable area for gatherings with a large number of participants: protests, shows, fairs, commemorations, etc.

The **A2** area presents itself as a series of squares treated with vegetation, lined up in the north-south direction, forming the esplanade between the two buildings of major importance that define and orientate it: the Opera House and the Orthodox Cathedral. The current layout of the planted areas creates two wide *promenades* along the fronts, connected transversely by paved passages, located next to the streets perpendicular to the north-south axis that open into the esplanade, and which delimit the vegetal segments.

It is the area where all the public monuments in Victoriei Square are located. From north

to south:

- "The she-wolf nursing Romulus and Remus", placed on a high plinth;
- "Fish Fountain" (under rehabilitation, see Annex 8 — Additional documentation);
- The "Freedom Tree" planted by forest firemen from Marseille in memory of the Revolution of 1989;
- Busts with effigies of King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria:
- The "Crucifixion" monument, created by the sculptor Paul Neagu.

With the exception of the two royal busts, the other pieces are located on the north-south axis of the Victoriei Square, thus obliterating the direct visual axis that connects the monumental facade of the Opera House with the sculptural volume of the Metropolitan Cathedral. The architecture of both buildings is proportional to the urban scale of the esplanade. The relationship between the monuments is fortuitous both symbolically and compositionally.

Reconfiguring this area will need to preserve all of the valuable pieces placed here, but not necessarily the exact location where they are currently located.

The ample and generous urban space requires a convenient rearrangement of the component elements, a rethinking of the spatial, visual, and symbolic relations between them, to frame a cohabitation of different historical-identity narratives. The ceremonial air must be preserved, but avoiding any grim solemnity. The dissolution of the corridor spatiality and the formation of places that favor the gathering of groups of people will be pursued. The proposed arrangement will allow the favorable perception of the pieces collected over time, but without allowing themselves to be monopolized by them, but facilitating the daily, natural habitation of urban spaces.

B Area— Iancu Huniade Square

The square, or rather the Huniade small square, articulates as a spatial alveolus to the north-east of the Victoriei Square, offering a welcomed opportunity for functional and architectural diversification, as well as an otherwise eastward expansion of the Opera platform.

Together with the space created by Sfântul Ioan and Marasesti streets at their confluence with Regele Mihai I boulevard, Huniade square creates an asymmetric perpendicular axis on the development of Victoriei square (like a transept with unequal arms).

The spatial character of the area is determined by the presence, to the south, of the Huniade Castle complex, with its own garden that participates in the ambient direction of the composition.

In a happy counterpoint, the brutalist unfolding of the fashion house (Casa de Mode) edifice supports the direction of the gaze towards the Civic Park. The proposed arrangement will enhance the value of this exceptional architectural presence.

The parking of a significant number of automobiles currently makes a bad figure in this urban space with great ambient possibilities.

From the competitors are expected:

The functional and landscape reinvention of the entire square, which can thus become a place in itself, a minor pendant of the Victoriei Square and not an annex to it.

The link function with the Civic Park remains important; it needs to be supported with leisure and public catering functions, enhanced by suitable spatial solutions.

The C Area is characterized by the diversity of the importance, functionality and prospect of the streets that make it up. Approaches will correspond to this diversity, achieving unity through subtle means appropriate to each place. Car traffic is already to a good extent eliminated from here, thus there is considerable freedom in the choice of the proposed layouts.

From the competitors are expected:

Minimal interventions that have the effect of spatial coagulation of these extensions of the Victoriei Square. They are urban spaces that mediate and prepare the entrance to the market, respectively, in reverse motion, they gradually reduce the intensity of the most important urban space in Timisoara. This aspect will be reflected in the choice of materials, in the density and grouping of the component elements of each individual assembly. Attention will also be paid to the cohabitation of traffic flows, preferably in a *shared space* regime.

The study cannot envisage significant road traffic changes, but it can propose nuances of the existing one and a treatment of paved and planted surfaces in such a way as to improve the general ambience. The alternation of roadway/shared space, respectively pedestrian/*shared space* can be considered.

J. W. Goethe Street, continued by Eminescu Boulevard (studied until 20 Decembrie Street in 1989) forms a perpendicular intersection on the esplanade. Goethe is a dead end that lends itself to static arrangements, while Eminescu connects the complex with a (semi)carriageway to 20 Decembrie 1989 street, the eastern limit of the study perimeter, thus requiring a more pragmatic approach.

Nikolaus Lenau street forms in association with Dr. Nicolae Paulescu street (considered up to Piatra Craiului street), the second perpendicular to the esplanade to the north. It



rhymes with the pair Goethe - Eminescu and will be approached similarly. Importance will be given to the Studio cinema building (with an Art Deco facade in a continuous front, the only cinema in the city with a main facade and mono-functional building centrally positioned; the large space in front of the access will be arranged as such with a dual role: gathering square of public and pocket of the Victoria square.

Regele Mihai I Boulevard is the thoroughfare that brings car traffic to the platform of the Opera House. It is requested to replace the row of parking spaces with urban planting, at least on the segment between Victoriei Square and Paris Street.

Alba Iulia Street is the extension of Victoriei Square to the northeast, along the eastern front of the Opera House. As far as Victor Vlad Delamarina street, it will be treated as such, with finishes, plantings and urban furniture of the same quality as those in the square.

Marasesti Street is the pendant of Alba Iulia Street, along the other front of the Opera House building. Up to Coriolan Brediceanu Street will be treated similarly to its counterpart.

The **D Area** is an urban boundary, persistent despite the disappearance of the fortification walls that historically determined its routes. The northern front is compact, including the municipal hall. In the center of the development, the opening of Victoriei Square opens – the *corso* of Timisoara facing south through a trapezoidal space. The opposite, southern front is predominantly vegetal, with the exception of the main facade of the Metropolitan Cathedral, a dominant element in the urban landscape, but also the most significant presence from a symbolic point of view. The main function and at the same time the major dysfunction of this area is a very intense urban traffic.

From the competitors are expected:

Realization of the functional continuity between the esplanade of the Victoriei Square and the Metropolitan Cathedral, now only visual. In addition to innovative solutions on the scale of finishing details and plantings, the main problem that needs to be solved is the pedestrian and cycling traffic from Victoriei Square to the cathedral and to the urban gardens that stretch along the northern bank of Bega. One of the possible options is to treat the section of the carriageway in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral in a system of *shared space* or an extended pedestrian passage across the entire width of Victoriei Square: motorized traffic from King Ferdinand I Boulevard will cross this section at reduced speed and on a redesigned carriageway as circulation and configuration in favor of pedestrians and activities in the vicinity of the cathedral and the square.

The landscape treatment of the trapezoidal space must strengthen its role in the composition, that of responding, as a free space, to the massive edifice of the cathedral, supporting its importance.

The public forum monument "Crucifixion" is placed disadvantageously both in terms of its sculptural perception and in relation to the botanical, architectural, and urban vicinity: it turns its back to the cathedral, while the original idea, to project the cross of the monument on the silhouette of the edifice of worship, is practically illegible. It is too close to the five-lane car traffic and seems to be drowned in the pseudo-baroque vegetal ground floor that occupies the planted semicircle in which it is located. The placement of the sculpture needs to be reconsidered in order to do justice, through a convenient perception, to its meaning, its artistic value, the importance of the events commemorated.

Although barely visible due to its secluded position behind a line of trees, the Philharmonic building is the opposite front to the Municipal Town Hall on Constantin Diaconovici Loga boulevard. One can consider ways of enhancing this elegant architectural presence, which does not compete with either the dominant silhouette of the cathedral or the compact facade of the town hall.

3.4. FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The totality of the proposed designs will take into account the general tendency, shared by the big cities of post-industrial societies, to give pedestrians as much of the urban spaces as possible. The experience of the post-war decades has shown that the introduction of more vehicles into cities attracts even more vehicles, with urban spaces gradually turning into freeways and eliminating any trace of urban conviviality.

Together with the increasingly pressing climatic emergencies, this trend requires rethinking the basic principles of urban planning, of course still allowing the optimal functioning of large agglomerations.

In the particular case of the study perimeter, it will be considered to reduce the segregation of flows and uses, respectively the possibility will be given that each space can host as wide a variety of functions as possible. Through the meticulous study of the component elements (vegetation, finishes, urban furniture, etc.), places with multiple possibilities of attendance will be arranged.

The proposed lighting concept will have to ensure a good perception of space and obstacles at night, facilitating the orientation of pedestrians and encouraging the formation of groups. The choice of light sources whose temperature will integrate with the interior and exterior lighting of the neighborhoods will be followed, to highlight the built background. Competitors will opt for solutions with low energy consumption and will aim to avoid light pollution.

3.5. LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

The building fronts that determine the spatiality of the streets, the square, and the piazza (cornice heights, finishing materials, empty-full rhythms, construction era, etc.) constitute a significant part of the urban landscape in the study perimeter as a whole. The intervention on the facades is not the subject of this study. But careful consideration in

buildings is essential for finding the best layout solutions. Sunlighting and shading, relating heights to the street prospectus, and architectural styles are just some of the aspects that must be included in the project.

The current location of public monuments reflects the sequence of their appearance and specific choices made at the time. Rethinking everyone's position, as well as the relationship between them and from the compositional, visual point of view, of the diurnal or festive perception constitutes an important register of this intervention.

Regarding the existing vegetation, protecting the numerous valuable specimens - with the mention of yew (*Taxus baccata*) alignments and other mature tree species - is a priority, as it supports essential trophic chains in maintaining and possibly increasing biodiversity in the study area (according to Annex 4 — Landscape study).

It is recommended to recompose in the plant composition as many of the plants existing on the site as possible (trees and shrubs), as well as the preferential choice of a local flora — indigenous species. Species adapted to longer periods of drought and sustainable in terms of maintenance costs and durability will be chosen.

In order to protect and increase biodiversity and to create a visually balanced landscape, it is recommended to use planting in height steps: ground cover plants, herbaceous plants, shrubs, trees with high crowns, etc. These semi-natural types of plant structures will provide the largest leaf mass, which plays an important role in improving the urban microclimate and provides protection and food for numerous species of birds and invertebrates.

It is recommended to choose the plant species in such a way that the decoration is staggered as best as possible by the seasons - special attention will be paid to ensuring the plant decoration for the winter period.

It is important that the circulation surfaces are permeable, to improve the impact on the hydrological characteristics of the soil, thus preventing the further degradation of the ecosystem. The choice of sustainable and recyclable materials is an important objective because in this way the impact on the environment can be reduced, including in the maintenance plan of the planted areas.

The proposed solutions will have to take into account the following infrastructure aspects:

- design of road, carriageway and pedestrian system with intermittent carriageway access (supply, fire brigade, etc.);
- storm water capture and storage design (sanitary engineers);
- design of a system for regulating the level of running water on the site (hydraulic engineering);



- expertise/coordination of underground construction design (structures/sanitary/electrical/irrigation);
- urban design (orientational signage).

It is important to assume a clear attitude in relation to the urban landscape, the character, the architecture and the vegetation of the place, in all its diversity:

- by continuing the urban specificity established over time,
- but also through change, through the typology of the proposed arrangements.

Both registers of approach to the project will follow the argumentation of the integration of the central urban space at the macro level in the "urban ecology" of the Municipality of Timisoara.

4. REQUIRED PARTS

4.1. WRITTEN MATERIALS

4.1.1. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL FOR DESIGN

Each project will include an estimate of the value of design services, according to the Annex 2.3.1. – Financial proposal (independent, anonymized, submitted competition piece according to the provisions of the Competition Regulation, point 3.6.2.).

The financial proposal will have values expressed in lei and will not exceed the maximum ceiling estimated for design costs. The financial proposal will be part of the basis of negotiation for the conclusion of the contract of design services with the winner of the competition.

4.1.2. Description of the architectural-landscape concept

The conceptual bases of the proposed solution will be briefly explained and specific decisions for one solution or another will be motivated. Explanatory texts, other than captions and image titles, will not exceed 1000 words and will be arranged conveniently on the drawing plates. The texts will be written with a font of 25 points.

4.2. DRAWN MATERIALS

4 sheets 900 x 1600mm format, on white paper, without rigid support, paged vertically, indicating the title of the project, the north, the scale of the representations and the title of the presented elements will be submitted.



The general elements present on each board will be:

- in the upper left: competition title: "VICTORIEI SQUARE, TIMISOARA"
- in the upper right: an alphanumeric identity symbol, composed of 2 letters followed by 4 digits, at the competitor's choice, in a rectangle covered with 5x3 cm black paper, sealed only along the edges, on both sides, according to paragraph 3.7 of Annex 2.1. Competition Rules.
- will be numbered in the lower right corner on the format: page number, total pages.

The sheets will contain **at least** the following pieces:

Sheet 1: Highlighting the general concept

- General plan scale 1:750 that includes: an explanation of the conceptual elements that are the basis of the intervention on the set of spaces; planting strategy; location of public monuments;
- Two representative sections to capture the relationship of the layout of urban spaces, transversally and longitudinally – scale 1:750 (the sections will be marked on the plan);
- Schemes / diagrams illustrating the general design concept and the concept of public and ambient lighting, highlighting the location and temperature of the lights;
- Aerial views (to the Cathedral and to the Opera).

Sheet 2: Layout detail of area A1 + area B

- Landscaping plan of the platform in front of the Opera House and Huniade square – scale 1:250, with the marking of all the proposed elements (surface treatment, urban furniture items, public forum monuments, planting plan, stormwater management solutions, etc.) ;
- Underground passage area plan (elevation -1.50m) sc. 1:250, with the marking of all the proposed elements (surface treatment, urban furniture, public forum monuments, planting plan, stormwater management solutions, etc.);
- Characteristic section through the area of the abolished underground passage – scale 1:250 (the section will be marked on the plan);
- Details of finishes, joints, etc.
- Two representative perspectives from eye level – area A1;

- A representative perspective from eye level – area B.

Sheet 3: Layout detail of A2 area + D area

- Layout plan for the space in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral – scale 1:250, with the marking of all the proposed elements (surface treatment, urban furniture items, public forum monuments, planting plan, storm water management solutions, etc.);
- Details of finishes, joints, etc.
- Two representative eye-level views.

Sheet 4: Layout detail of C area

- Details of finishes, joints, etc. for adjacent streets;
- Illustration of the chosen strategies for crossing the intersection in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral;
- Details of finishes and urban furniture;
- Presentation of some scenarios for the use of the Victoriei Square, at the choice of the competitors;
- Ambient perspectives, at the choice of competitors.

5. AWARD CRITERIA

In evaluating the solutions, each criterion will be given points between 0 and a maximum expressed for each criterion. The maximum score is 100 points, the weights of the criteria being explained in detail, as follows:

A	Satisfying the architectural - urbanistic functional – landscape needs	60 points
A1	<p>Functional criterion</p> <p>Points will be awarded for the synergistic solution of the functions proposed for the square and the adjacent streets, from an architectural, urban, and landscape point of view.</p> <p>The following will be assessed: the quality of the layout of Victory Square and the surrounding urban spaces, the management of predominantly pedestrian traffic flows, the ability to focus physically and not only symbolically the quality of the main urban center of the municipality.</p>	30 points
A2	Technical criterion	10

	The feasibility of the proposed solutions, their durability and sustainability (proposal of easy-to-maintain solutions, use of local materials, etc.) will be assessed.	points
A3	<p>Ecological criterion</p> <p>The following will be scored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed urban plantation typology, from the perspective of sustainability, functional concept and integration into the architectural ensemble; - Solving the collection and reuse of rainwater for the maintenance of landscaping. 	<p>15 points</p> <p>10 points</p> <p>5 points</p>
A4	<p>Financial criterion</p> <p>The following will be scored:</p> <p>Falling within the investment and design ceiling indicated in the tender documentation.</p> <p>*Failure to meet the maximum cost ceiling leads to disqualification of the project.</p> <p>For falling within the ceiling indicated by the lowest price, the maximum score (5 points) is awarded; for other prices, points are awarded proportionally.</p> $P(n) = [\text{Price}(\text{min}) / \text{Price}(n)] \times 5 \text{ pts}$ <p>The score ($P(n) = \text{max. 5 points}$) is awarded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) For the lowest of the offered prices (marked Price min) 5 points are awarded. b) For the other prices offered (marked Price(n)), the score $P(n)$ is calculated proportionally, as follows: $P(n) = [\text{Price}(\text{min}) / \text{Price}(n)] \times 5 \text{ points}$ 	5 points
B	The expressive - environmental attributes of the intervention — the added value of the proposal	40 points
B1	<p>The development vision of Victoriei Square and its surroundings</p> <p>The vision and strategic dimension proposed for the development of this historic area of Timisoara will be evaluated, both regarding the correlation of its different spaces around the esplanade, as well as the enhancement of its historical and identity meanings.</p> <p>The following will be scored: compositional value, spatial-urban value, landscape value.</p>	15 points
B2	Expressing the position of the major urban center of the Victoriei Square and the general atmosphere of the layout	15 points



	The inventiveness of the proposal, the spatial coherence, and the unity in diversity of the components of the urban complex included in the study perimeter will be scored, in accordance with the symbolic importance of the place.	
B3	Quality and clarity of representation of ideas The graphic expressiveness of the drawings will be scored to reflect the contestant's ability to implement the proposed project.	10 points

The calculation algorithm used for the final evaluation of the projects is as follows:

Calculation algorithm for criterion A

$A=A1+A2+A3+A4=30+10+15+5=60$ maximum possible points awarded

Calculation algorithm for criterion B

$B=B1+B2+B3 =15+15+10=40$ maximum possible points awarded

Calculation algorithm for the final assessment:

$A+B=60+40=100$ maximum possible points awarded

Professional advisors

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Arch. Kázmér Kovacs

Arch. Mirona Craciun, competition coordinator

The brief was drawn up based on the substantiation studies and the requirements provided by the Timisoara City Hall.