

Law Courts Jerusalem



Location

Jerusalem, Israel

Built

International competition 2013

As an institution with a multifunctional scope the building's architecture reaches far beyond the limits of culture and tradition, bringing together backgrounds from different people. Just as intact nature is equally treasured – and its beauty equally admired - all around the world, the introduction of gardening

right into the building is seen as the reasonable common denominator. The different threads of architectural tradition as well as juridical tradition are woven together to these two universally understood points: man in nature and man amongst man/facing each other/confronting themselves. Rather than suggesting an imposing and intimidating, strictly hierarchical building in the tradition of the classical temple front and its neo-classical rebirth, our design opts for a different architectural expression. Instead of being only authoritarian it projects an image of a site, where on the same level all parts of a court trial inhabit the same realm. Nature and its principles are seen as the root of ethics, morale and ultimately law are known to all cultures from around the world and are universally understood. The building is not about a top-down direction or an expression of power of one over another. It is about people who meet at eye-level to discuss the issues of members of society (supposedly) trying to violate that inherent order. The layout of the floor plans is clear, allowing easy orientation and navigation. The two main areas -between the public open spine in the middle - the courts, the judges/administration are clearly separated from each other, still the building acts as an “open house” architecturally.

While neither standing in the tradition of a temple like court building, let alone a fabulous “palace of justice” it transform and differentiates the modernist “box” . Views into the city, views from the roof gardens into the new area of Jerusalem focus with a canopy structure which give shadow and let the different people be equal under one roof. The architecture of the building is light, careful, elegant and at the same time transparent. The design is not an overly defensive “security-architecture” of course in respect the local security requirements but an expression of fairness and a court of law as a place of court hearings. While nevertheless respecting the legitimate needs for privacy it promotes openness towards the public, to make verdicts comprehensible. The building should help the public understand how it functions and not try to hide anything important from the public eye.

Awards, Nominations

Team