Polyphonic City:

Crafting a new Lithuanian identity in Wilno, Vilna, Vilnius

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

University of Washington

2021

Committee:

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Department of Architecture

University of Washington

Abstract

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Lithuania is a fledgling nation built on 19th and 20th century conceptions of ethno-linguistic nationalism. Yet its capital, Vilnius, is a hybrid state of Polish, Jewish, Soviet, and Lithuanian heritage that challenges the notion of a singular state identity. Memory and identity clash in the interpretation of what makes Lithuanian heritage. This clash obfuscates the history of place and limits the potential for developing a polyphonic assemblage of heritage narratives that can inform present and future conceptions of what the Lithuanian identity is.

This thesis challenges the notion of singular national identity in order to draw out a hybridity that is reflective of the global and regional identity that the Lithuanian state has tried to cultivate since its independence in 1990. By examining the history of sites deemed significant to national heritage, I seek to challenge the singular narrative that is so often accepted with heritage production and instead present a network of narratives – past, present, and future – that are more representative of the heterogeneous cultural history of Vilnius.

Acknowledgments

To Peter and Jen, Thank you for always challenging me to go further, convincing me to explore my heritage, and your years of mentorship.

To my friends and family, thank you for your encouragement and continual faith in me. I wouldn't be here without you.

To the Valle Foundation, thank you for providing the resources for me to visit and research in Vilnius. The experience you've provided has shaped this entire thesis

POLYPHONIC CITY

CRAFTING A NEW LITHUANIAN IDENTITY IN WILNO, VILNA, VILNIUS

FORWARD

In March of 2020 I found myself stuck in place. Like much of the world, life had been put on hold. I had traveled to Vilnius Lithuania prior to the global pandemic to study Soviet era architecture in the post-Soviet nation. And yet, as I wandered the empty streets of Vilnius, I was struck by just how little the city presented itself as Lithuanian. While most people living in the city today are ethnically Lithuanian, Vilnius itself is a panoply of cultural markers – acting as vertical translations of the cultural heritage of place.[1] One can bear witness to the Soviet, Polish, Lithuanian, and Jewish histories of the city without having to travel outside the Old City. It became clear to me that there is more to this city than its post-socialist identity. It is in fact a place of multiple translations, leading to the potential for myriad interpretations based on the language of who is interpreting the city. It is out of this messiness of translation and identity that this thesis grew.

What follows is an attempt to understand how we may put aside singular claims to place and identity and recognize the potential for narratives to coexist alongside each other. The title of this thesis highlights the three primary claims to Vilnius: Polish Wilno, Jewish Vilna, and Lithuanian Vilnius. While Vilnius today is the undisputed capital of Lithuania, the city's architecture and urban space will be a perpetual reminder of the existence of non-Lithuanian narratives. If we are to create a more just and equitable world, it is the continued coexistence of these varied narratives that must be preserved and amplified. The ground must be prepared for narratives – past and future – to exist in the present as a form of cross-cultural inclusion.

While I may refer to the city as Polish Wilno and Jewish Vilna, this project is primarily an exploration of the present condition and the potential for future narratives. Thus, all references will be to 'Vilnius' unless it has been sourced otherwise. It is also important to understand what this project is not. It is not an effort to unearth 'layers' of history within the city. The history of this place is well established. Each site that is studied already contains markers indicating its historical record. Instead, this is a repudiation of the typical heritage production that memorializes only certain forms of victimhood; that displays the heroics of curated individuals; that archives the relics of the city as if it is a lifeless museum. These are all too common in a nation that has prioritized Lithuanian suffering over Polish or Jewish suffering – in a place where freedom fighters have been valorized even as they were complicit in the Holocaust. Instead, this thesis is an effort to create dynamic urban space to serve the community that lives there while acknowledging the diversity of narratives that are contained within place and providing space for future narratives to develop.

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INTRODUCTION

In March 1990, the Lithuanian state reasserted its independence after 51 years of occupation. With the start of a new democracy for the nation-state, cultural and political elites set out to develop criteria for preserving and enhancing the cultural and ethnic heritage of Lithuania. This increased interest in heritage was cast as an opportunity to build the nation and develop an identity that had largely been suppressed during the Soviet Era. Yet, the identity of the capital today is more a reflection of its current occupants than that of the varied peoples that have called Vilnius home.

Figure 01 - Aerial view of the Vilnius Old Town

In recent decades, geographers and historians have been reexamining the relationship between urban space and cultural identity. There is a discussion occurring within multiple fields of study – cultural geography, social sciences, urban design, and others – regarding the cultural politics of architecture, urban space, and identity in post-socialist cities.[2] Vilnius, being the capital city of post-socialist Lithuania provides a unique case for the exploration of identity and memory and the narratives that develop through the use and adaptation of architectural objects. The cultural narrative of the city has been reworked countless times over the past century, yet its architecture and urban fabric remain as relics to the past that have been constructed, forgotten, or appropriated. Thus, while Vilnius is a post-socialist city, it is representative of a broader historical makeup. Each era of the city's development is representative of how political and social identity influence the lived experience of place. Yet today, the city and its inhabitants are largely homogeneous – representing only a sliver of the diverse peoples that have inhabited the capital city.


Figure 02 - First Sajudis (Freedom Movement)

As the nation has taken up identity formation over the past 30 years, there has been a broad effort to create multiple typologies of identity within the state. Besides specific efforts to craft a distinctly ethno-linguistic Lithuanian identity, the state has also worked to cultivate regional and transnational identities. Alongside Estonia and Latvia, the state has instilled a Baltic regionalism that builds on the shared memory of Soviet occupation in the post-war period. At the same time, Lithuania has negotiated entry into various transnational alliances such as NATO (2004), the European Union (2005), and the Euro Zone (2015). Each instance is an effort to engender cross cultural and political relationships that not only expand Lithuanian presence in the world but incorporate pan-European values into the Lithuanian state. While there has been a clear effort to expand a singular sense of what it means to be Lithuanian, the state has more subtly expanded a hybrid identity through regional and transnational identity production.

It is this subtle influence that allows the opportunity for shaping a new Lithuanian identity that rejects the typical notions of ethnic nationalism. Instead, there is the chance to promote a hybrid identity that reflects the diverse cultural history of the region that was the former

Figure 03 - Markers of Vilnius' heritage narratives

Grand Duchy of Lithuania. By conceiving the Lithuanian identity as an assemblage of the various cultures and memories that make up the nation, Vilnius will not be another museum to the past, but a vibrant setting for life. By embracing the messiness of such a polyphony, a new relationship between past, present, and future is formed – weaving disparate narratives that have produced the city that stands today. As opposed to a singular narrative that replicates the past, the interweaving of these polyphonic narratives produces an identity that is malleable, open to change, and based in the present while extending into the future.

LOCATING VILNIUS

Throughout its nearly 700-year history, Vilnius has been considered a largely provincial city. Yet, its relatively small size compared to other European capitals hides the fact that Vilnius has been a primary center for exchange between much of the cultural and ideological powers in Europe. In order to understand how identity and heritage have shaped the city as it stands today, it is important to understand the context within which the city is located. Briedis writes,

> "Vilnius has always offered a critical link between different components, nations and interpretations of Europe. The town has often been depicted as a bridge between East and West, but, as with any strategically ambiguous site, it has also been a highly contested place. As a result, the city has never possessed a single identity. The place speaks of Jewish *Vilne,* Polish *Wilno,* Russian and French *Vilna,* German *Wilna,* Byelorussian *Vilno* and Lithuanian *Vilnius.*"[3]

Figure 04 - Europe

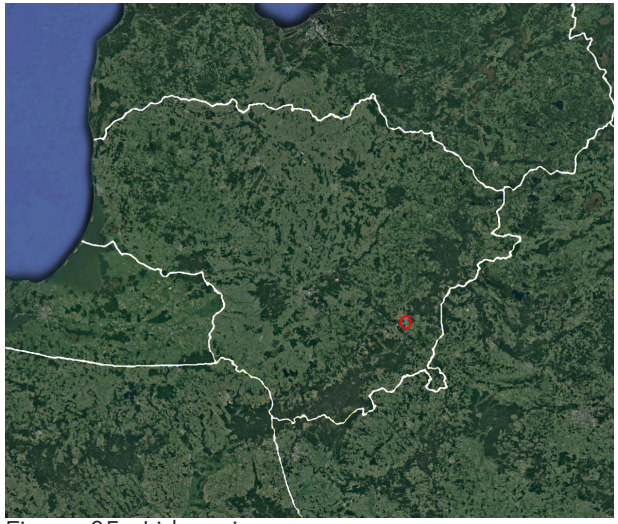


Figure 05 - Lithuania

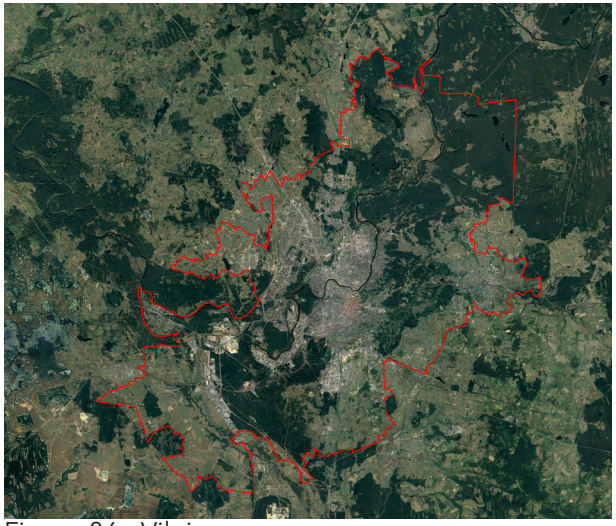


Figure 06 - Vilnius

In fact, its location at the geographical center of Europe is an apt allusion to the fact that the city has been a threshold between many of the power centers of Europe. Located only 12 miles (20 km) from the border with Belarus, the city does not immediately present itself as the historic capital of Lithuania, but a border town that has grown to accommodate the various peoples that have called it home. Yet, as the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it stood at the center of one of the geographically largest nations in European history, spanning from the Baltic coast to the Black Sea (Figure 07).

As a threshold city, Vilnius would become representative of the clash between east and west, Orthodoxy and Catholicism, Judaism and Christianity. The name Vilnius is itself representative of the transitory nature of the place. The Lithuanian form of the name shares the same root with the words *vele* and *velnias* which translate to 'soul of the departed'.[4] This only furthers the notion that the city is a threshold – a place where the living transition to the afterlife. The city is also located at the confluence of the *Vilne* and *Neris* rivers. Once again, the city is a physical transition point between bodies of water. Located in the valley of the rivers only furthers this sense of transition. As the city extends beyond the valley there is a distinct transition to large plateaus and rolling hills that eventually give way to the plains that define much of the rest of Lithuania. In every aspect of the city's geography, it is a threshold – offering a transition from plain to river valley.

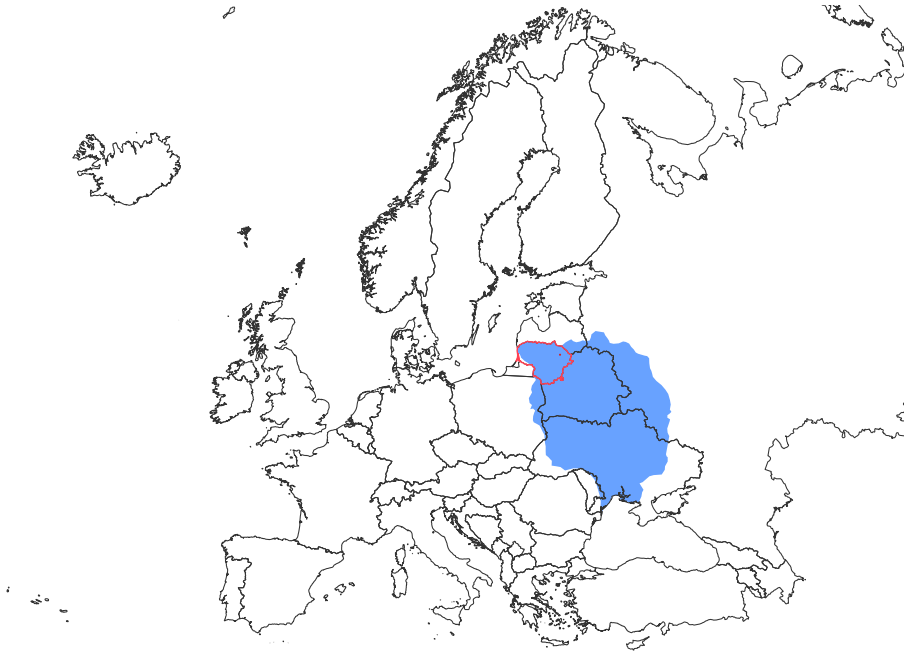


Figure 07 - Extents of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

As a place of transition, Vilnius is an ideal setting for understanding the polyphonic assemblage of narratives. The ground itself is a point of translation between geological and metaphysical narratives that are imbued on the city's myths and origins. As a threshold, the city has amassed the markers of the various cultures, confessionals, and politics that have defined much of Europe's history. An American diplomat once noted, "The only thing to do with Vilna is to pick it up and take it a long way off and squeeze the people out into their respective nations and then put the town itself in a museum."[5] Instead, its centering as a point of transition makes it ideal ground for new narratives to form – intertwined with those of the past.

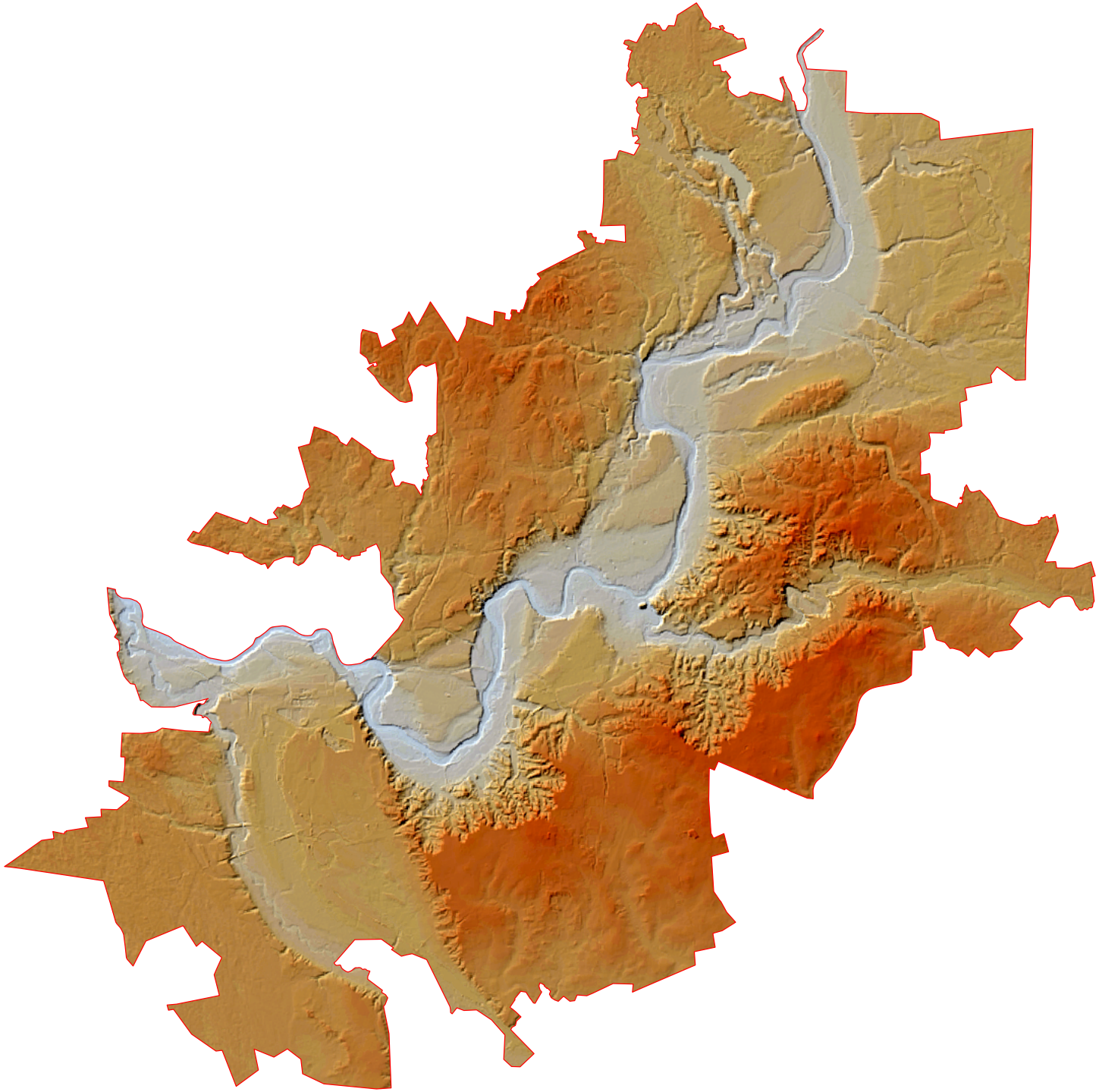


Figure 08 - Topographic relief map

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since its recorded beginning, Vilnius can be described as a multi-national city. Throughout history, various peoples have claimed it to be an important cultural hub for nationalist recognition. This mixed ethnic history presents a challenge to any singular claim of nationalist identity in the urban fabric of the city. Over the course of 700 years, the city has only recently seen a singular culture dominate the city.[6] If we are to examine how identity and heritage translate across time as distinctive narratives in the present context, it is important to understand how the nation of Lithuania and its capital Vilnius came to be.

Historical record shows the first mention of Vilnius as capital in 1323, in letters from the Grand Duke Gediminas to Pope John XXII.[7] Yet more important to the city's (and for that matter the nation's) historical narrative is the myth of its founding. Legend says that Gediminas,

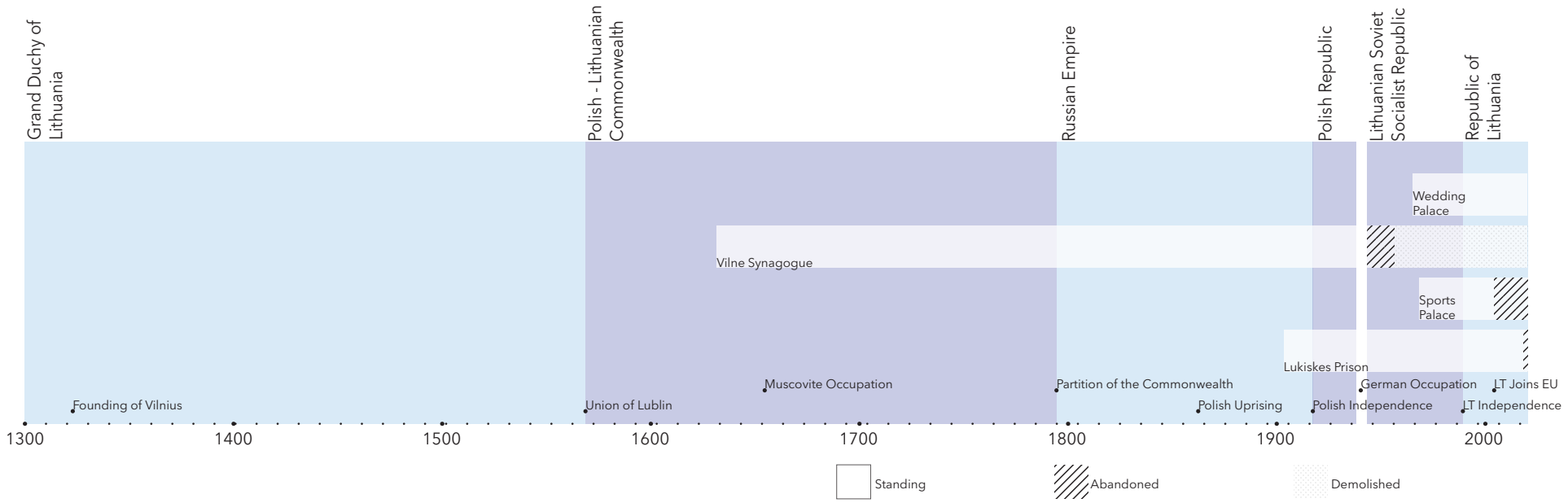


Figure 09 - Timeline of Vilnius' history

after having a dream in which he saw an iron wolf howling atop a hill in the future city, interpreted this to mean that he must form the capital around that hill. Now the seat of power, Vilnius would come to be the cultural capital of the Grand Duchy, and later, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Vilnius would grow around what is now *Gediminas Hill,* with the ducal palace at its base. Through the Union of Lublin (1569), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland would unite. This union, while guaranteeing security for the Lithuanian people, would cement Polish culture and language as the dominant force in Vilnius.[8] It would also mark the high point of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and over the next two centuries, the state, and eventually Vilnius, would be partitioned and annexed by Russia. What was once the economic and cultural capital of Lithuania would be reduced to a provincial administrative center of the Russian Empire in 1795.

Vilnius would remain a provincial outpost of the Russian state till the cessation of hostilities in World War I (WWI). Taking advantage of the internal divisions in Russia and the overthrow of the monarchy, both Polish and Lithuanian nationalists fought to claim Vilnius as their own. Having been the capital of the Grand Duchy, Lithuanian nationalists claimed the city as the political and cultural center of the state.[9] At the same time, Polish authorities claimed Vilnius as a Polish city, referencing the majority Polish speaking population and Polish cultural institutions. One could also argue the Belarusians and Jews could also make claim to the city. In fact, Vilnius was anecdotally considered the *Jerusalem of*

Figure 10 - Jewish life around the former Great Synagogue

Figure 11 - Statue of Gediminas with the Iron Wolf

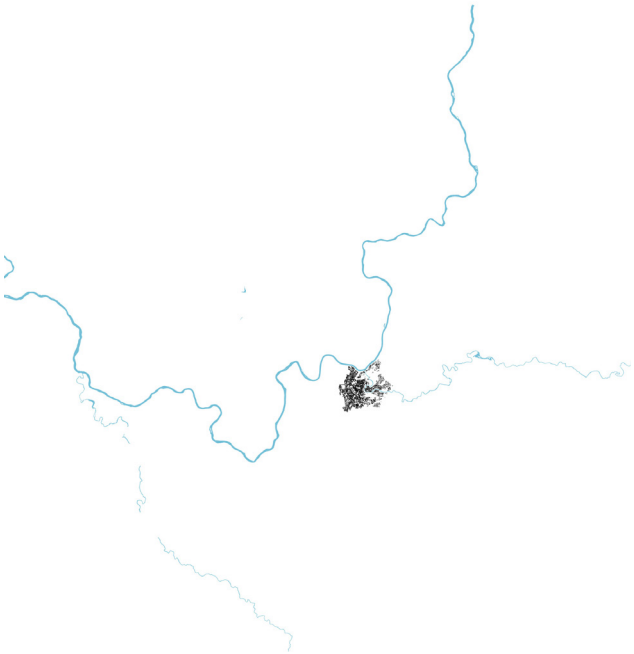
Lithuania for its rich history of Talmudic scholarship. While Vilnius was assuredly a multi-ethnic city, it would be controlled by the Polish state as a provincial city till World War II (WWII). At the same time, the newly formed Lithuanian Republic would claim Vilnius as the one true capital of the state. The city Kaunas, only 62 miles (100 KM) away, would stand as the provisional capital until the Soviet Army captured Vilnius and returned it to Lithuania in 1940.

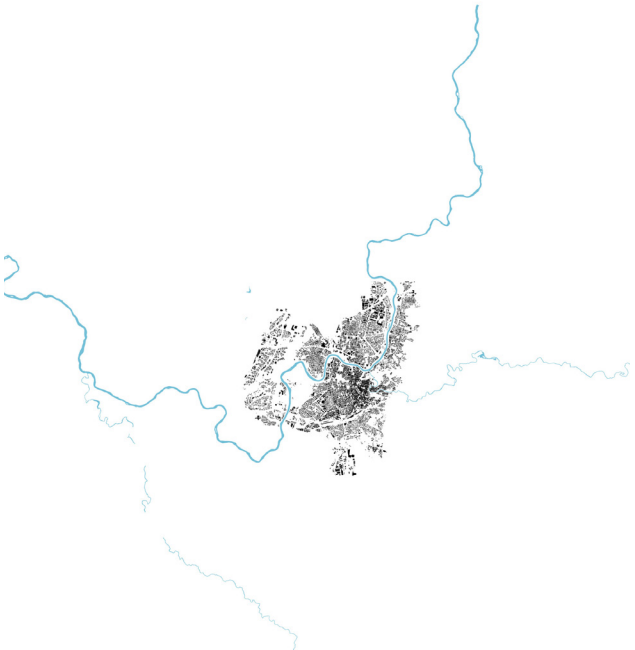
WWII would become a major inflection point for the city's cultural history. Most of the city's Jewish population would be executed in the hills of Paneriai just outside the city. Upon Soviet occupation, most Poles would be imprisoned or forced to repatriate to Poland.[10] With the city's population reduced by more than half, the city would become the site of drastic cultural reshaping. It was no longer a Polish and Jewish city, but a Soviet Lithuanian capital. And while it was the capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR), it functioned more as an administrative state than the historical capital of the Lithuanian nation.[11] In fact, Lithuanians would not be the majority demographic until the 1980's, less than a decade before the dissolution of the Soviet state and the reassertion of independence on March 11, 1990.

Thus, over the course of a century, Vilnius had transformed from a multiethnic, provincial city to the historic capital of a Lithuanian nation-state. Lithuanian nationalists, following independence in 1990 would have to reach back centuries, to the history and myth of the Grand Duchy to claim the city as a truly Lithuanian place.

Figure 12 - Civitatis Orbis Terrarvm (1612) - Earliest map of Vilnius

Figure 13 - Russian Map of Vilnius (1916)





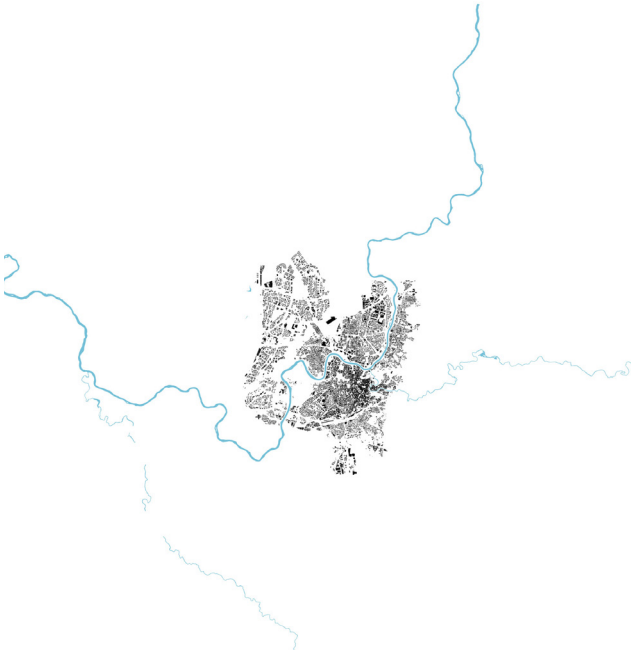
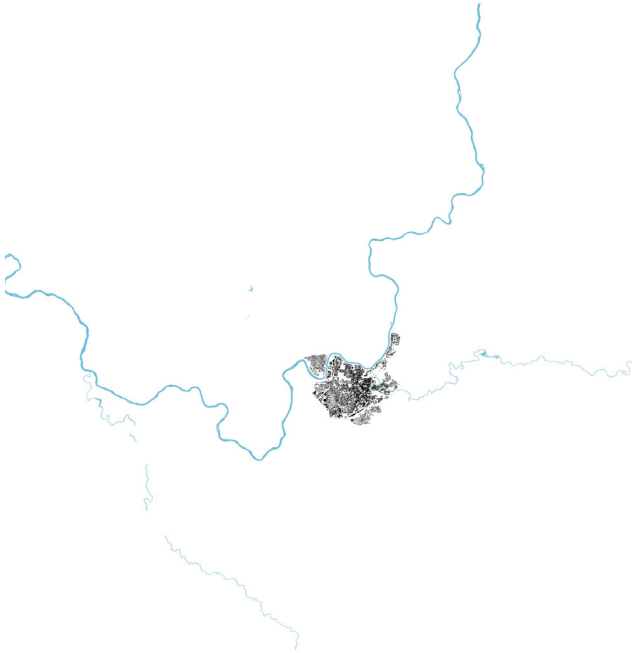
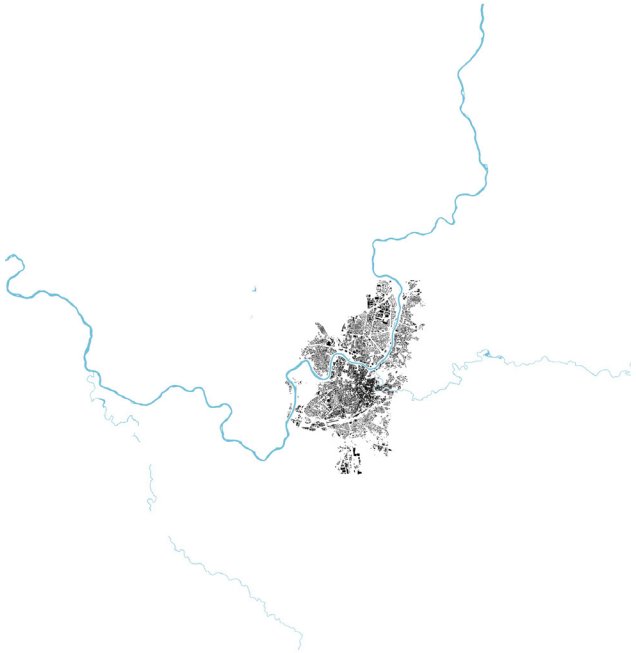


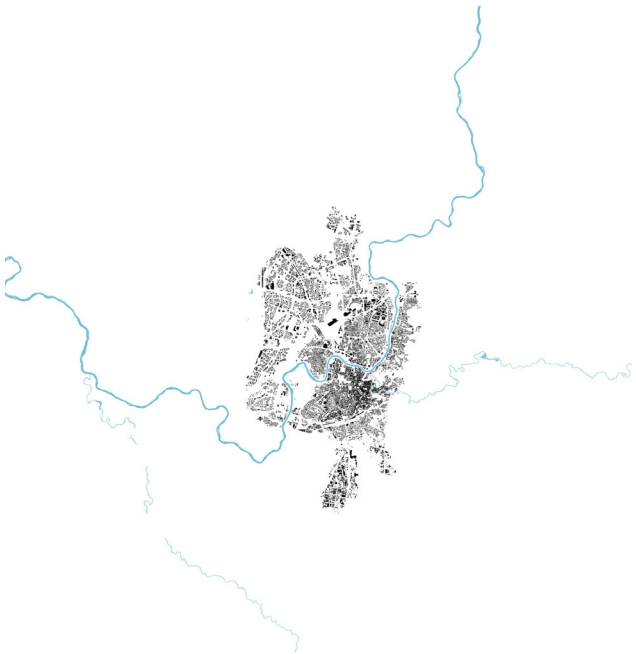
Figure 14 - Development of Vilnius



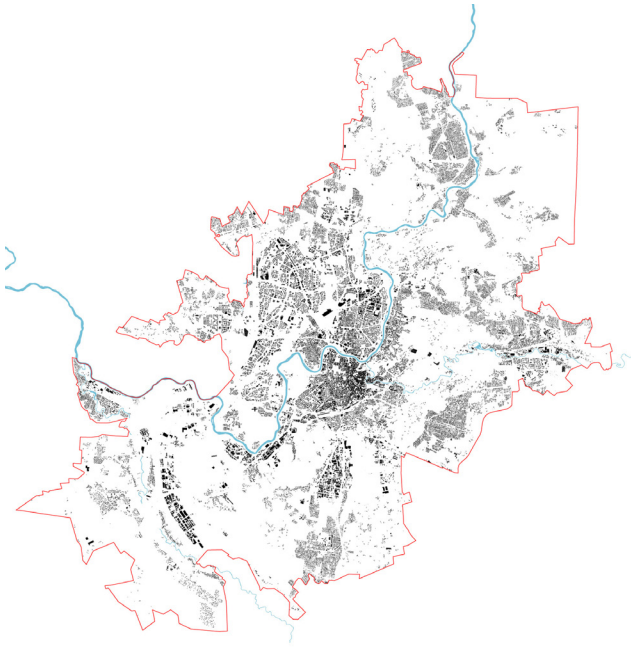
1900



1970



1995



2020

IDENTITY IN VILNIUS

Upon Reassertion of Independence in 1991, Vilnius was lacking a defining national and cultural heritage. The state immediately set out to define the city as Lithuanian. Yet in doing so, it has ignored the vast assembly of various heritage narratives that exist. The city itself is a unique setting for understanding how present identity may conflict with past identities – creating opportunity for developing a framework that acknowledges historical identities while making room for future narratives.

Throughout much of its existence, Vilnius could be considered a multi-cultural city. Dating as far back as the 16th century, the city was defined by its subtle acceptance of cross-cultural integration, and acceptance of interfaith differences.[12] This is in stark contrast to later periods of the city's history, particularly after the partitioning of the

Figure 15 - Removal of the Statue of Lenin from Lukiskes (Lenin) Square in 1991

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. By this point, the city was dominated by Polish and Jewish cultural institutions in the 19th and 20th centuries.[13] Only one church served the small Lithuanian population that lived within the city. However, Vilnius was also the site of the first modern Lithuanian cultural institutions in the late 19th century.[14] Early Lithuanian cultural institutions such as the Great Seimas and publications such as *Auszra (Gate)*, *Varpas (Bell)*, and *Vilniaus Žinios* provided ample proof of a strong Lithuanian cultural presence in Vilnius that was largely overshadowed by the predominantly Jewish and Polish population.[15] The Great Seimas was a platform for Lithuanian Nationalists to argue for and discuss Lithuanian autonomy in church, education, and state. Such meetings were a basis for arguing for a cultural state dedicated to the Lithuanian people with Vilnius as its capital. At the same time, publications such as *Vilniaus Žinios* – the first non-Russian newspaper to be published in Vilnius after restrictions were implemented – were used to distribute a distinctly Lithuanian call to action for cultural and political autonomy. These institutions, while serving a small segment of the Vilnius population amplified Lithuanian cultural and historical claims to the city when there was little presence of a uniquely Lithuanian identity to represent their cause.

It was these early publications that led towards the Lithuanian national movement. However, it is the rise of the *Krajowcy,* in late 19th and early 20th century Vilnius that is reflective of the diverse cultural history of the city. The Krajowcy can be considered a hybrid between Lithuanian and Polish nationalism – recognizing the historical union of Poland and Lithuania as defining the cultural background of Vilnius. Thus, residents could be described as Polish speakers with Lithuanian heritage. The Krajowcy, led by thinkers such as Tadeusz Wroblewski, presented a contrast to the cultural-ethnic identity of the city.[16] The writers and the artists of the Krajowcy viewed themselves as Polish speaking Lithuanians who, along with Jews and Belarusians, were the rightful claimants of Vilnius in a reconstituted Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The identity crisis and nationalist movements of Lithuania, Poland, and Belorussia, with claims to Vilnius, all returned to a specific recollection of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth centered around their own ethno-linguistic background. Unlike the ethno-nationalism that would come to shape much of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Krajowcy offered an early conception of modern multiculturalism that would not return until the post-Soviet era.

Following WWII, Vilnius was a shell of a city. While the Soviet Union had decided to rejoin Vilnius with Lithuania, it is difficult to claim the city served as a Lithuanian national capital. Instead, it functioned more as an administrative center for Soviet policy. Kaunas was likely more representative of Lithuanian national identity during the Soviet era.[17] Kaunas, at this point, was a Lithuanian city, and being the provisional capital prior to WWII, hosted most of the nation's cultural institutions. As Aleksandravicius notes,

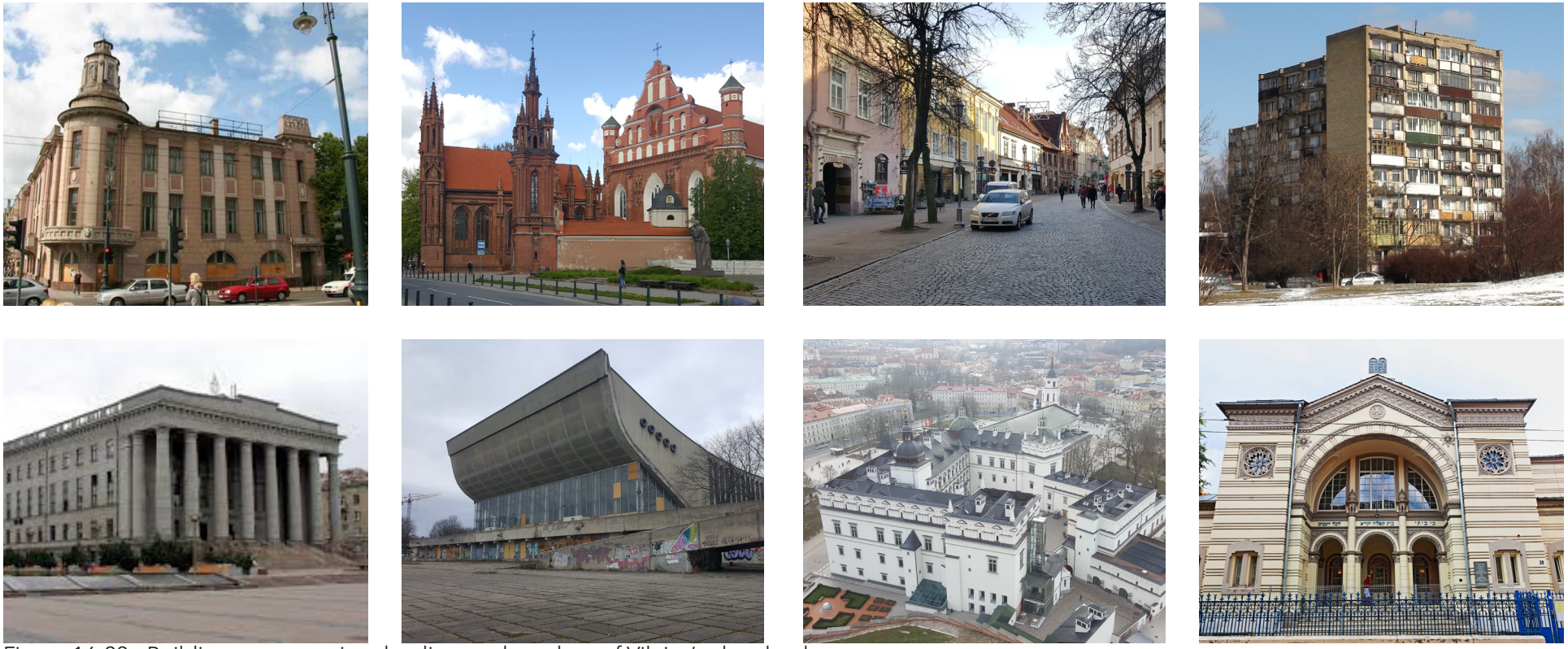


Figure 16-23 - Buildings representing the diverse charachter of Vilnius' urban landscape

> "The new community of the Soviet capital city consisted of Russian-speaking war veterans and a growing wave of Lithuanians streaming in from the countryside. People from Kaunas sometimes say dismissively of Vilnius that it is only 'Kaunas plus villages' because that is where most of its Lithuanian population originated."[18]

While Kaunas may have been more representative of Lithuanian national identity prior to WWII, Soviet policy would drastically alter the composition of Vilnius – allowing for its gradual Lithuanianization. Forced repatriation of ethnic Poles in Vilnius, agricultural consolidation policies, and urban industrialization policies of the Soviet regime provided the framework for Vilnius to transition from a bilingual, Russian-Lithuanian city in the 1950s to a Lithuanian cultural capital in the 1980s.[19]

Today, Vilnius stands as a distinctly Lithuanian city. Over 87% of the city's population is Lithuanian, with Belorussian as the second most populous cultural group – accounting for only 4% of the city's population.[20] Little connection remains with the Polish and Jewish history of the city. In the 2011 Census, less than 1000 individuals indicated they were of Jewish faith.[21] With population markers largely absent, the greatest indication of a non-Lithuanian identity in Vilnius is the built environment itself. In this instance, the city is still a diverse assemblage of cultural signs. The Baroque architecture of the Polish era stands in contrast to the Gothic architecture of the Grand Duchy,

Old Town
1323-1890

New Town
1900-1965

Figure 24 - Major urban typologies of Vilnius

Socialist Sleeping Districts
1965-190

and the Socialist Modernism of the late Soviet period. The only physical signs of distinct cultural representation to be erased in the city were those of the Jewish community. Little stands today to represent the diverse architectural heritage of Litvak Jews. When viewing the urban fabric of the city, there is a stark divide between the various eras of the city's existence. Figure (24) details how the density and layout of neighborhoods vary based on the political era they were developed: Grand Duchy, Polish and Russian control, or Soviet Era.

The question becomes, how do contemporary social groups relate to the complex history of the city? Do these groups project a singular vision of identity and heritage or do these groups refrain from constructing a limited history? Nekrošius argues that this is a complicated task in a state where "living memory" still dictates much of the relationship groups have with the architecture of the city.

In the post-independence era, the fledgling democracy invested heavily in producing a national ethnic identity more broadly associated with 16th century Lithuania than contemporary society.[22] When comparing Vilnius to Kaunas, much of the heritage found in Vilnius today had to be constructed in the 20th century. In fact, Kaunas, which acted as the provisional capital during the interwar period (1918-45), contained stronger architectural relationships to national heritage than Vilnius.[23]

PRESERVATION

As an independent state, Lithuania immediately erected monuments, museums, and other cultural institutions – Vytautas Magnus University, the State Theater, and the čiurlionis Art Museum – in Kaunas to reflect the national identity of the state. At the same time, Vilnius would see little development as a Polish provincial city.[24] Unlike Kaunas, Vilnius would have little architectural connection to the Lithuanian state when it was returned to the state. In order to organize a distinctly Lithuanian capital, existing architecture would need to be appropriated, and new construction developed to create a connection to historic claims to the city.[25] Interestingly, Aleksandravicius closes by quoting the following from the *Kaunas in your* Pocket guide:

> "Kaunas was once the temporary capital of Lithuania. Never know, might be again one day. Actually, there are plans to form Kaunas and Vilnius into one big city - a true Euro City. Then Kaunas will be the capital again, sort of . . . but it will probably be called Vilkaunius, or something. (Hey, that sounds cool. Remember where you saw it first.)"[26]

That Kaunas and Vilnius may one day merge into a megalopolis implies that new narratives of an ethnic capital would need to be created. It seems likely that the creation and appropriation of identity narratives is a continual process, allowing the sign value of architectural work to be adjusted to contemporary needs. The choice to nullify and appropriate centuries of history is a part of a pattern of developing heritage. As David Lowenthal argues, heritage requires fabrication. It is within the willful forgetting and manipulation of history that peoples forge group pride, identity, and culture.[27]

Figure 25 - Potential Megalopolis of Kaunas-Vilnius


Figure 26 - Construction of the Ducal Palace - Mid 2000s

It is evident in heritage building such as the reconstruction of the Palace of the Grand Duke (2018). Here, John Czaplicka writes,

> "Reconstructing the grand duke's palace would seem to physically and symbolically reverse the Russian incursions into the city and to recall the period before the rule of the Russian Empire (1795–1917), the Polish Republic (1921–1939), and the Soviet Union (1944–1991). In a contemporary Lithuanian understanding of national history, the palace may be understood as a link to the history of the city beyond the interregnum of foreign nations (recalling the period of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth) and to the very origins of the city itself."[28]

It is clear that, in this case, the act of preservation and heritage building is about "reversing" history. An entire segment of Vilnius' history is ignored in order to create a direct and physical link to a different, more culturally desirable, segment of the city's timeline. Creating symbols of independence is an important part of asserting independence. Yet, Czaplicka states that the emphasis on a strong Lithuanian Identity risks overshadowing the multi-ethnic history of the capital.[29] As Timothy Snyder notes, in an effort to strengthen national identity in the Lithuanian state, one must forget that the city was dominated by Jewish and Polish cultural life prior to 1941.[30] In projecting a national identity, there is an explicit attempt to forget previous identities in the built fabric of the city.

Preservation in Lithuania has faced a difficult task of navigating the diverse, ethnic history of Vilnius, while also providing an outlet for presenting a unified vision of the Lithuanian nation-state. The architectural history of Vilnius reflects the diverse cultures that have resided there, but also the traumas that social groups have faced, and

Figure 27 - Gediminas Tower. (Reconstructed)

Figure 28 - Gravestones from the Old Jewish Cemetery

the many shifts in cultural and political orientation. Thus, architectural historians, and preservationists are faced with the difficult task of understanding the narrative value of architectural objects and their relationship to place. In this case, it is useful to look at the article, *Use of Architectural heritage: Challenges of Preservation and Adaptation* by Edita Riaubiene, which presents the very difficulties that Lithuanian architects face in applying international and local heritage prescription to historic sites. Riaubiene notes that many historic sites in Lithuania are adapted as contemporary novelties.[31] Sites such as the Palace of the Grand Dukes and Trakai island castle were reconstructed to historical interpretations, limiting their use to sites of tourism and education.[32]

Similarly, there is a growing discussion about the role architectural history plays in the development of contemporary narratives – especially during the post-Soviet era. Czaplicka argues that architects play a key role in shaping the narrative identities of post-Soviet cities. He states that their evaluations will help to determine what is authentic and legitimate in the urban realm.[33] Thus, architects must avoid the pitfalls in adherence to canonical cultural ideals. By recognizing the diverse shifting history of culture and architecture in Eastern Europe, architects can create a contemporary discourse on the full extent of European culture and the multiethnic and conflicted history of many cities that is still prevalent in their architecture. In many ways, this highlights the relationship architectural history has with social memory. As Theodore Weeks notes, Vilnius is an assemblage of architectural and

urban spaces that were deployed deliberately to reframe the historical narrative of the city.[34] Cemeteries were bulldozed, churches adapted, and memorials removed. In many cases, new cultural facilities (that still stand today) were built atop these sites in an effort to clear the cultural history of place and create a new narrative of Soviet, collective culture. Weeks argues that such actions were a deliberate choice to remake Vilnius as a Soviet-Lithuanian city, in order to selectively forget uncomfortable histories and create hegemony of Lithuanian cultural dominance.[35] Reviewing the reconstruction plans of the Vilnius *Old Town* (Figure 30-31), it is quite evident that there were deliberate attempts to remove any indications of past cultural representation – especially in the Jewish quarter of the city. Wide swaths of the city were intended to be bulldozed to accommodate Soviet planning ideals that masked the various narratives of the place for a cleansed vision of the city of the future.

Lithuania, unlike many other Soviet republics consisted of a population that was majority Catholic. The Catholicism of the Lithuanian people was a source of cultural independence from the state that the LSSR and USSR viewed as a risk to state control.[36] Thus, state institutions were used to supplant religious institutions and sites. For example, the Palace of Weddings (1974) was built atop of the former Lutheran cemetery. Similarly, the Palace of Funerals (1975) was built atop the former site of the Old Jewish Cemetery. Here, there was a direct replacement of historic institutions and traditions with state ordained

Figure 29 - 1940 Old Town Retrospective

functions. Cemeteries were not the only sites of adaptation. The Church of St. Casimir, largely considered the most important Catholic church in Vilnius, was converted to a Museum of Atheism.[37] Other churches, while less direct in their representation of state religious policy, would also be converted to storehouses and parking garages. Such appropriations were not confined to the Catholic church either.

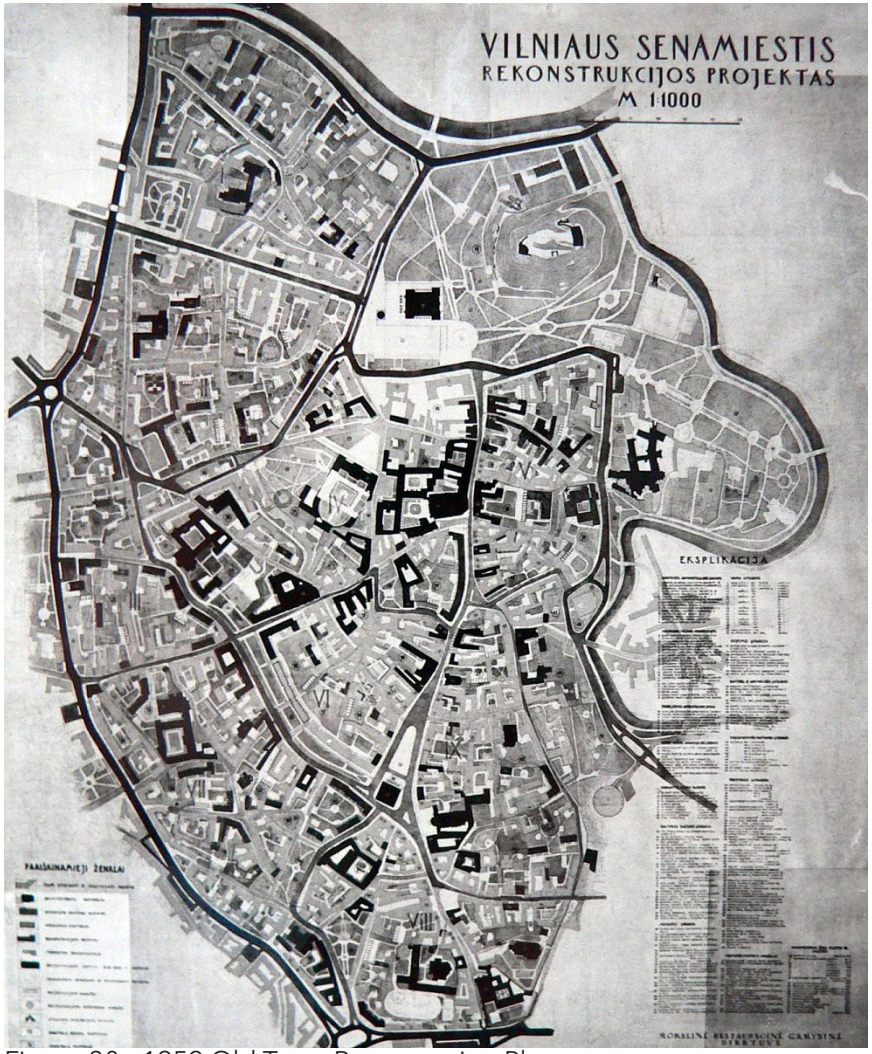


Figure 30 - 1959 Old Town Regeneration Plan


Figure 31 - 1988 Old Town Regeneration Corrections

The Great Synagogue, the center of Jewish life in Vilnius, was razed so that a kindergarten could be built in its place. The monument that was constructed at Paneriai – the site of mass Jewish murder during WWII – was dynamited in 1952 and replaced with a nondescript memorial that failed to mention the death of Vilna Jews at the site.[38] Gravestones from the Old Jewish Cemetery would be reused as construction material across the city. Many of the squares and cultural institutions built during the Soviet period were quite literally built with the graves of the city's former Jewish citizens. In all these examples, there is a direct effort to reduce the distinct identity of specific cultural and religious groups by the destruction and adaptation of specific architectural and urban sites of significance.

HERITAGE PRODUCTION

It is important to understand how architecture from various eras is treated within the spectrum of definable heritage. The Lithuanian state has set out criteria to select and produce historical narratives that reflect the cultural and political values of the state in the present. Thus, while these criteria create a simple rubric for the preservation of distinct architecture, it does little to navigate the conflicting cultural narratives contained within each site. This conflict produces a range of responses to protected heritage that can be defined as:

Figure 32 - Former Communist Party Headquarters. Currently houses the Lithuanian Siemas (Parliament)

Fabrication: An effort to reproduce distinct historical narratives to create political and social legitimacy.

Abandonment: A lack of social or political interest that leads to sites languishing under protected status but with no desire to develop them.

Demolition: A site that is cleared – likely to make room for a contemporary development – because the existing infrastructure is deemed insufficiently representative of the state's interests.

Appropriation: The most common form of preservation in which architecture is repurposed for a new use associated with the interests of the state.

Each response reflects how the state values specific sites in the built environment. They emphasize the identity and interests of the state, regardless of public perception. For example, upon independence, the state immediately worked towards reconstructing the Ducal palace at the center of the city. It is considered a heritage monument, yet is an approximation of a building that had been abandoned after the Muscovite invasion of 1655. It is a reconstruction meant to reaffirm the contemporary state's ties to the Grand Duchy of the 15th and 16th centuries. In contrast, the Lietuva Theater is an example of *removal*. Built as a social condenser, the theater was a beloved cultural venue within Vilnius. Community protest delayed the demolition of the theater for years. Yet, it was ultimately deemed insufficient for a 21st century Lithuania and was demolished in 2008. Other examples include the abandonment of the Palace of Concert and Sport and the reuse of the Communist Party Headquarters as the Seimas (Parliament).

(A) Palace of Concert and Sport

Built in 1971, the sports hall was part of a larger complex of sports facilities built along the north bank of the Neris River. Built atop the Old Jewish Cemetery, the site has been abandoned since 2005. The building and cemetery grounds are national heritage sites, however the contraversial history of the sports hall's development has led it to be abandoned since it was deemed insufficient for occupation in 2005.

Figure 33 - Palace of Concert and Sport (1972)

Figure 34 Palace of Concert and Sport (2015)

(B) Palace of the Grand Dukes

The Ducal Palace is fabricated heritage. Although the grand duke of Lithuania had resided on the site, the original palace had been abandoned in the 17th century. Completed in 2018, the current building is an approximation of the exterior style of the palace and now consists of a museum to the state's history. It's construction is an attempt to reconnect Vilnius to its history as the capital of Lithuania after centuries of 'occupation'.

Figure 35 - Artist depiction of the Ducal Palace ruin

Figure 36 - Reconstructed Ducal Palace (2020)

(C) Lietuva Theater

Built in the 1980s, the Lietuva Theater was a popular cultural site that hosted the Vilnius Film Festival until 2005. In 2017 it was demolished to make way for a new development that would become the MO Museum in 2019. The demolition of the theater fits a pattern of removal that has been undertaken in Vilnius. This is a pattern that has particularly affected sites the present government has little interest in preserving.

Figure 37 - Lietuva Theater

Figure 38 - Mo Museum

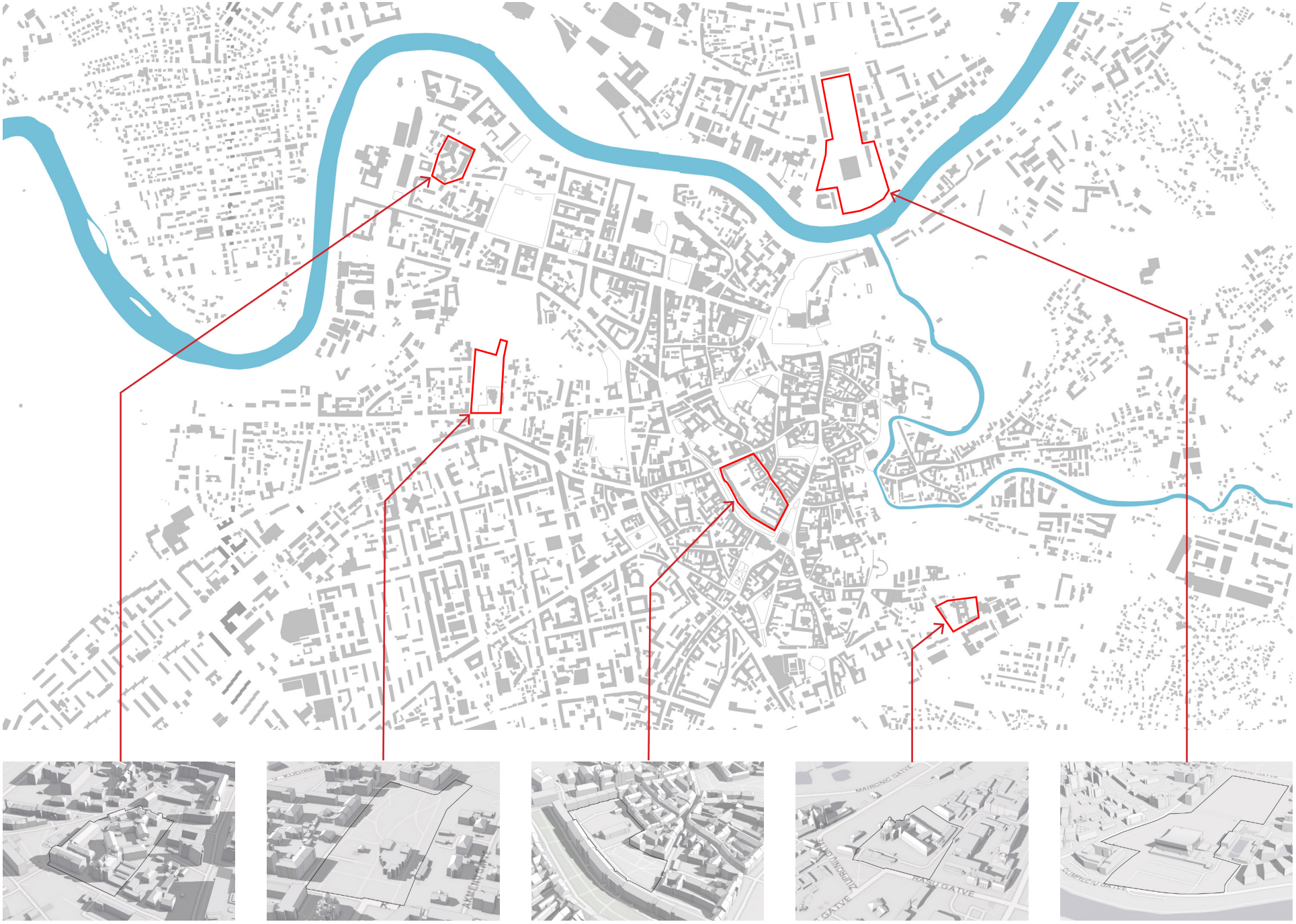
SERVING LIFE

With an understanding of the historical and cultural context within which Vilnius is situated today, it is time to return to the notion of serving life. The narratives of a place, and thus the identity of a place, are shaped by the people who inhabit it. To serve life is to make room for the vast array of cultural and heritage narratives that assemble in place. By creating space that allows for the mixing of narratives and identities, a hybrid state emerges. In order to nurture this hybrid identity, places must actively serve the immediate community while retaining a flexibility for future narratives to alter the fabric of the city.

The following design proposal explores how sites with distinctive heritage narratives may be critically evaluated, altered, and expanded in the service of life – opening the ground for new narratives to form and thus reshape the Lithuanian identity to reflect the cosmopolitan aspirations of the nation.

SITE SELECTION

Site Selection focused on urban sites within Vilnius that are currently protected under the state's heritage protection regime. A review of potential sites focused on the conflicting identity narratives that played out over the history of each site. Early on this included such dynamics as a monastery changing from Catholic control to Orthodox and back before being converted to a prison. Or the transformation of the former Jewish cemetery into a sports hall that has now been abandoned. Initially, 5 sites were selected, each presenting an opportunity to explore the intertwining nature of Vilnius's complex historical narratives. These sites were also fissures within the fabric of the city. Largely abandoned, these sites had become divisions in the urban fabric.



Lukiskes Prison

Wedding Palace

Former Great Synagogue

Visitation Monastery

Palace of Concert and Sport

Figure 39 - Initial site selection

Figure 40 - Vilnius Wedding Palace

Figure 41 - Kindergarten built atop former Great Synagogue

Figure 42 - Lukiskes Prison

Figure 43 - Palace of Concert and Sport

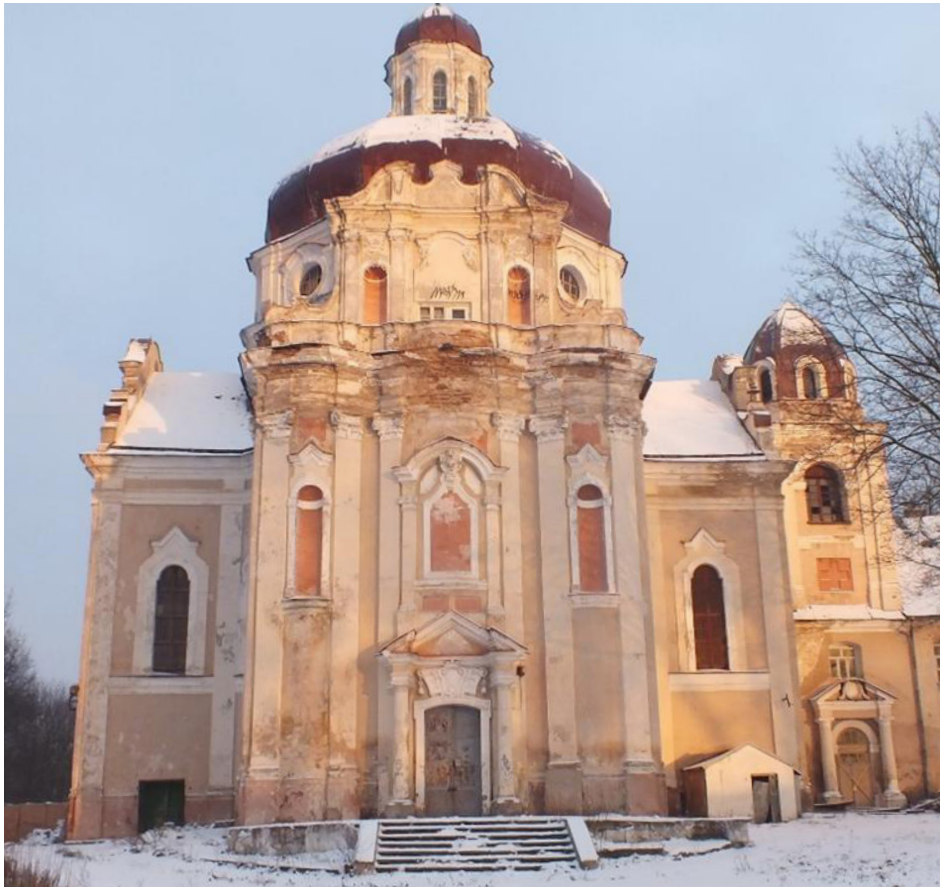


Figure 44 - Visitation Monastery

Focusing on the Old Town of Vilnius, the initial site selection included the Palace of Concert and Sport, Lukiskes Prison, the former Great Synagogue, the Vilnius Wedding Palace, and the Visitation Monastery. Each site was selected based on the following criteria:

1. Protected status under the state's cultural heritage laws.
2. The city is considering proposals for each site's redevelopment.
3. Multiple heritage and identity narratives exist on the same site.

Because each site has a proposal for redevelopment, developing a program was not initially a concern of the design. Instead, the proposed program was initially accepted as a part of the design project. This in turn would allow for the project to focus on reconnecting the 5 sites with the city surrounding it. If the emphasis is to serve life, then program should be malleable. Especially considering the fluctuation of interest and needs of the community over time, it is more important that the sites offer flexibility and adaptability to new narratives than a fixed program that prescribes what is best for a community that can determine its own needs.

Finally, each site was chosen because of the ability to emphasize the coexistence of multiple narratives in time. In every instance, there is a presence of conflicting narratives that are to be preserved and opened for interpretation. This should not be confused with layering where the timeline of a site is presented in a clean, orderly fashion. Instead, the sites offer the opportunity for polyphonic assemblage of narratives and timelines that are presented in the present – simultaneously. By ensuring that each narrative is present on site, while avoiding the pitfalls of linear presentation, the design becomes a space for new narratives to be developed – tying past and future together in the present context.

The final design focuses on 3 of the 5 sites initially selected. These sites were selected from the previous selection because of their strong relationship with one another. The Palace of Concert and Sport, Wedding Palace, and former Great Synagogue are all sites of transgression. The ground that they stand upon is in many ways sacred ground. Both the Sports Palace and Wedding Palace are former cemeteries that had been liquidated during the Soviet era. Atop the sites, cultural institutions were built in the Socialist Modern style. In many ways, the construction of these cultural objects was a clear attempt to replace the communal role of religion with that of the state. The former Great Synagogue saw similar change as the ruins of the Jewish quarter were cleared after WWII. A kindergarten would be built atop the remains of the synagogue, covering the transgression that had occurred on that site. In all three instances, the ground was cleared in order to replace religion with the state.

The clearing of each site was an action that separated them from the broader urban fabric. Today, these 3 sites still stand as fissures in the ground of Vilnius – acting as stronger barriers than connections to the surrounding community. In order to serve life, each site will need to be reconnected with the city around it. These fissures will need to be healed in order to provide room for new narratives in each place.

Palace of Concert and Sport

Wedding Palace


Former Great Synagogue

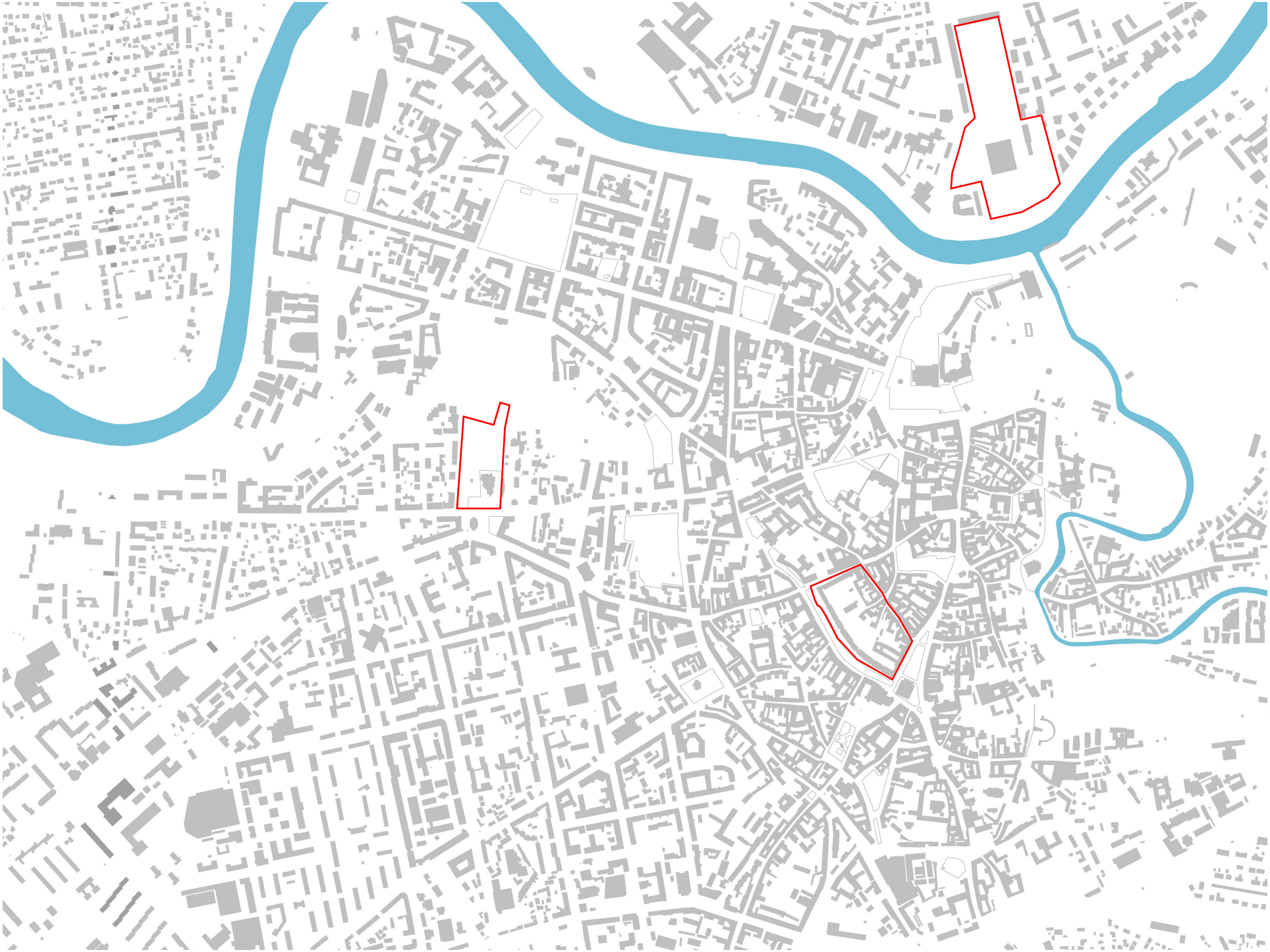


Figure 48 - Final Site Selection

EXISTING NARRATIVES

Each design is intended to de-monumentalize the existing structures on the site. Currently, the three sites are large voids in the urban fabric of the city – disconnected from the immediate community. They each cause disconnection in a different way.

In the case of the Wedding Palace, the park grounds are a continuation of the park system that extends to Tauro Hill Park and across the *New Town* to the Neris River. Yet the Wedding Palace stands in stark contrast, to this system. The building itself has no relationship to the park around it and its massive volumes create a division between building and ground. The processional route up the main stairs further emphasizes the separation between ground and building – creating distinctly unique experiences of the same site. At the same time, the park has no relation to the history of the site. The park was a former Lutheran

Figure 49 - Existing Plan of Evangelical Park and Wedding Palace

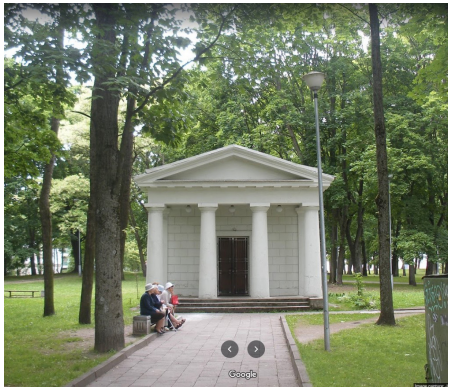


Figure 51-55 - Existing Conditions

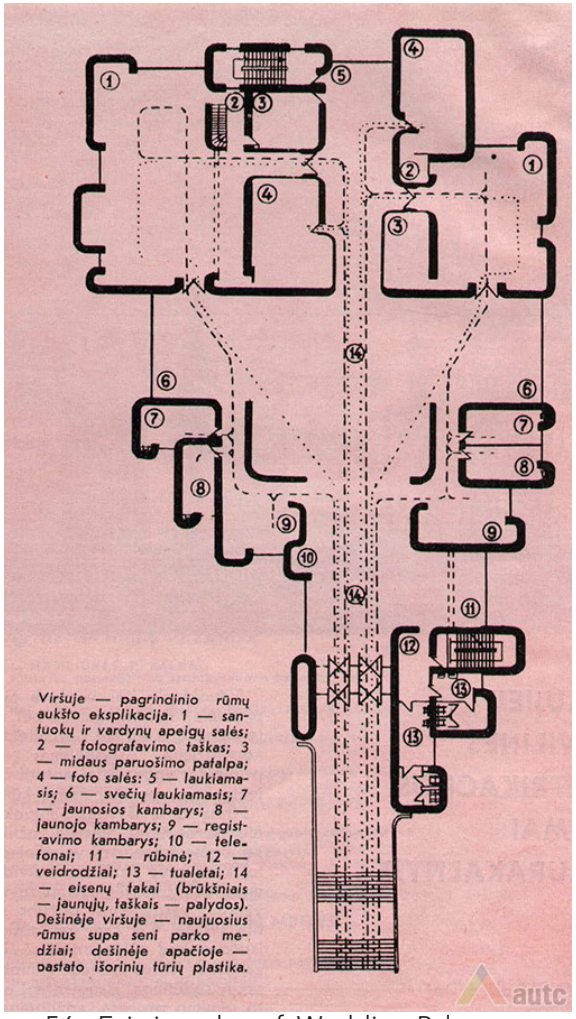


Figure 56 - Existing plan of Wedding Palace

Cemetery that was closed in 1961. What remains of the cemetery is a single mausoleum that stands adjacent to the wedding palace. Today, both the park and the wedding palace are protected as cultural and architectural sites of significance. Yet they are disconnected, both from each other and the transgression of removal that occurred with the closing of the former cemetery.

Recently, the city has proposed moving civil marriages and birth registry to the central municipal building located in the central business district. There has been no proposal for what would become of the Wedding Palace itself besides its continued preservation as a significant architectural heritage site. Both the park within the site as well as Tauro Park to the north have redesign proposals that would strengthen the connection between the two. The current proposal for Tauro Park includes the construction of a National Symphony Hall. Located at the top of the hill, this building would pay homage to historic proposals to move the seat of government to the site. While the Seimas is not moving locations, placing a national civic center at the edge of the site places greater importance on the value and use of the park.

Figure 57 - Proposed National Concert Hall

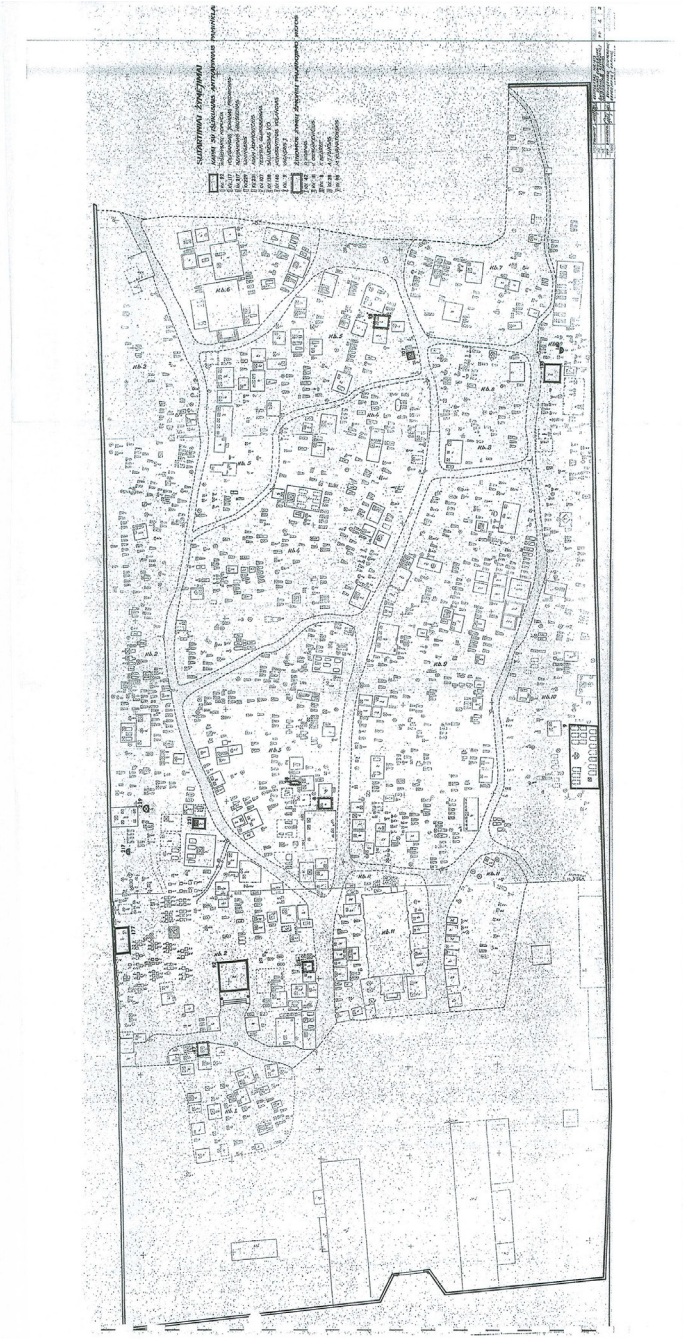


Figure 58 - Inventory of Evangelical Cemetery

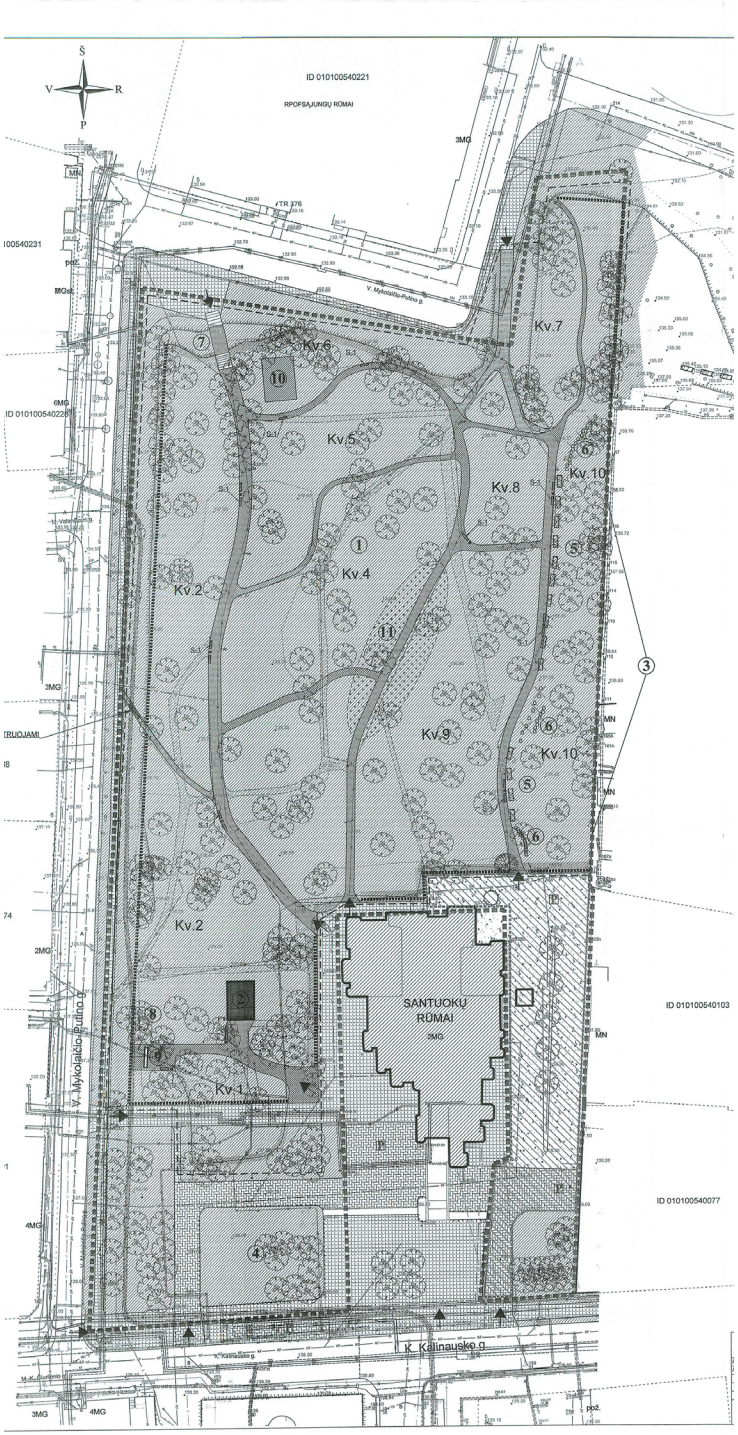


Figure 59 - Overlay of Cemetery plan atop park plan

The former location of the Great Synagogue is another site of transgression. Located in the heart of the former Jewish Quarter, all that remains of the synagogue is buried underneath a kindergarten built in 1957. The synagogue and the community that surrounded it were a vibrant setting for life prior to WWII. Today, apart from two cross streets, the neighborhood is a void in the dense fabric of the *Old Town*. Much of the area was bombed in the waning days of German occupation in 1944, and as part of the Soviet reconstruction plans most of the area was cleared. The only reconstruction that occurred was along German Street – the large boulevard that had originally been planned to cut across much of the *Old Town.* Today, all that stands in the space is a kindergarten and an open green space. While the city has made efforts in recent years to memorialize the history of the neighborhood, there is no physical connection to the history of place. As the school still stands today, there is no opportunity for reconnecting to the synagogue and the vibrant life that formerly existed around it. The emptiness of the site is completely removed from the dense figure of the surrounding community and the narrow winding streets that previously cut through the site.

Figure 60-65 - Existing Conditions

Figure 66 - Existing Plan

The municipality is currently working with the Jewish community of Vilnius to design a memorial and archeological preserve at the site of the former Great Synagogue. Former proposals were largely criticized as attempts to create a tourist environment around the synagogue site. Today the city has agreed to demolish the existing two-story kindergarten built atop the synagogue and reconstruct Zydu (Jewish) Street according to its original footprint. No proposal has been adopted for the synagogue itself beyond the request from the Jewish community that an open-air structure be built to protect the existing remains that will be part of an archeological preserve.

Figure 67-74 - Jewish quarter prior to 1950

Figure 75 - Pre war plan

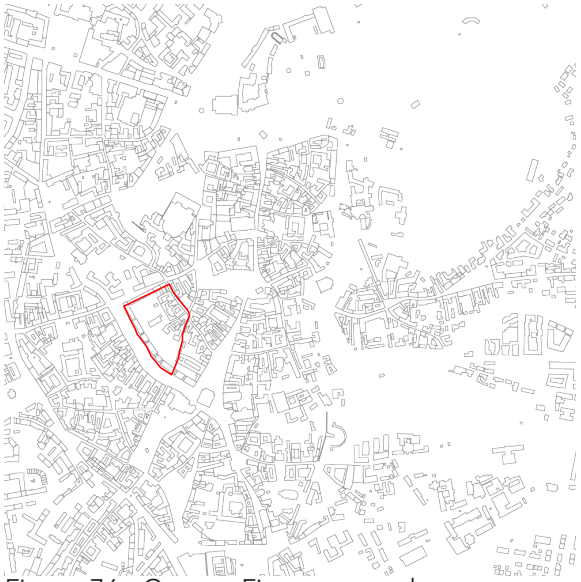


Figure 76 - Current Figure ground

Figure 77 - Synagogue Site Overlay

Figure 78 - Vilna Ghetto Locations

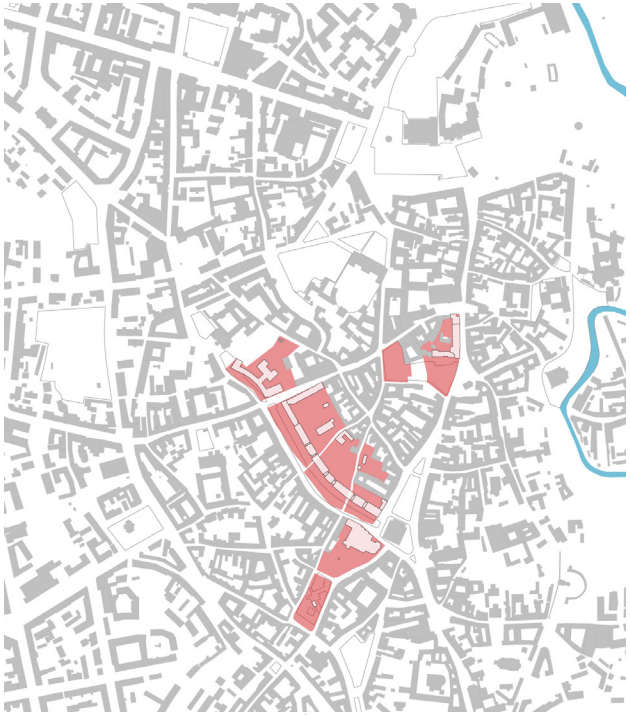


Figure 79 - Post War Voids

Figure 80 - Current Jewish Community Centers

Located on the northern bank of the Neris River, the Palace of Concert and Sport is another large void in the city. The building itself – as well as a neighboring swimming and diving center – is all that remains of a broader sports complex that stretched north from the river. Today, the site lies abandoned, with little movement on developing or actively preserving the site. This is in part due to the history of the site. The sports hall itself is built atop the former *Old Jewish Cemetery*. While the cemetery was closed in the 19th century, it was still one of the most significant cultural sites of Jewish life in the city prior to WWII. After the war, and the murder of Lithuania's Jewish population, Soviet authorities razed the cemetery and used the gravestones to construct various public projects across the city. Today, the site stands empty, separating the contemporary business center of the city from the residential district to the east of the site. Further, all that connects the site to its history as a Jewish pilgrimage site are the gravestones that have been recovered from throughout the city and returned, only to lie abandoned at the foot of the Sports Palace. This site creates a distinct separation between the primary business district and a large residential district, but more importantly it is a drastic fissure in Vilnius' cultural identification. To replace a significant piece of Jewish identity in the city with a sports venue was a deliberate attempt to subjugate the history and identity of the city in order to glorify a socialist vision of the future.






Figure 81-86 - Existing site conditions

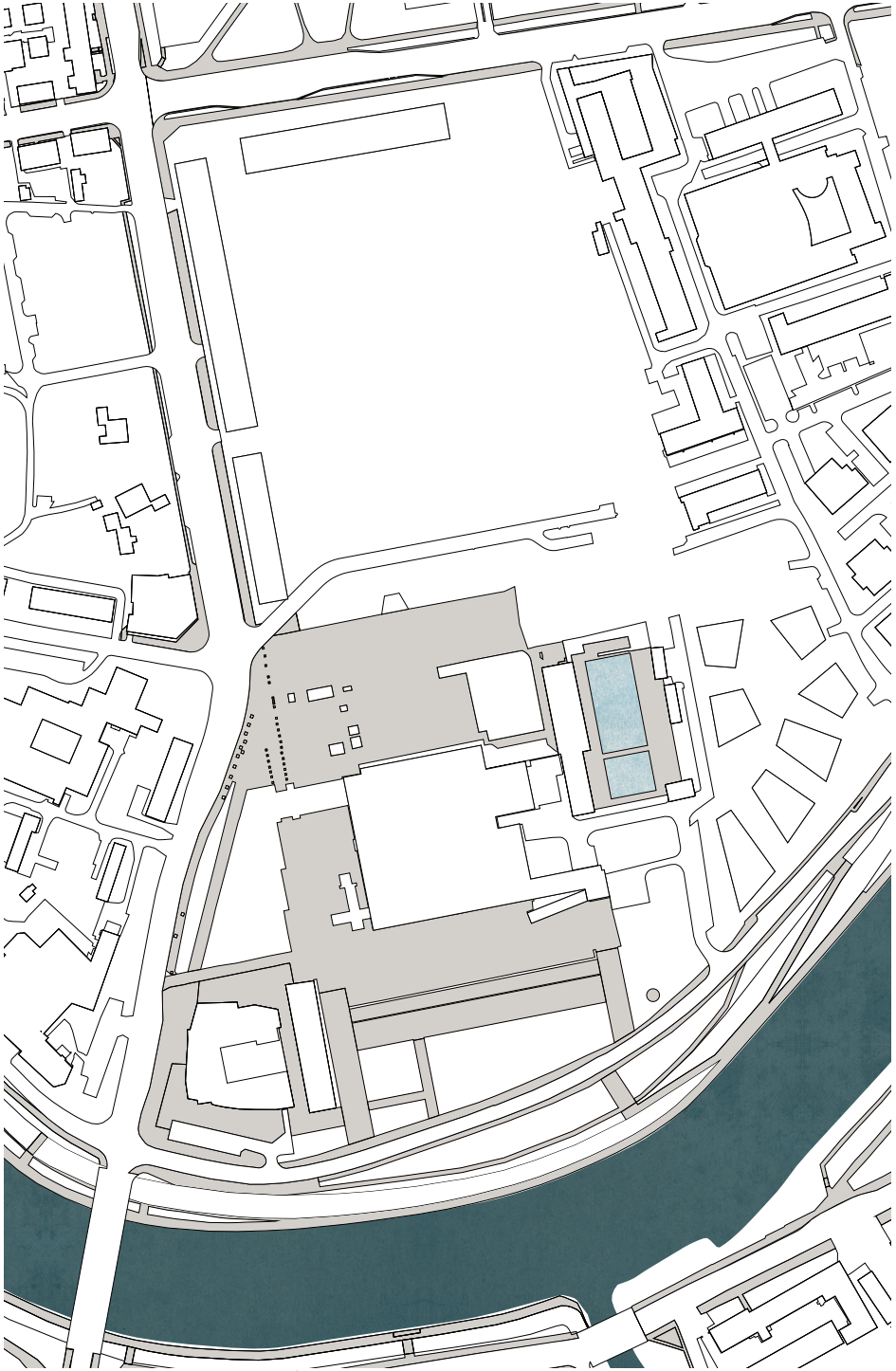


Figure 87 - Existing Site Plan

The municipality of Vilnius has been engaged in a protracted effort to convert the Palace of Concert and Sport into a conference center. The city has received funding and detailed plans to do so without affecting the remaining site. This is in part due to the controversial history of the site. Its location on the former Old Jewish Cemetery has led to calls for its demolition and reconstruction of the cemetery. At the same time, a strong anti-Russian (Soviet) sentiment within the community has led to a push to remove the building because its distinctive design is so strongly reminiscent of the Soviet era. The controversy over what to do with the site has led most proposals to languish over time, leaving the site to continue to remain abandoned.

Figure 88 - Gravestones stored at the Palace of Concert and Sport

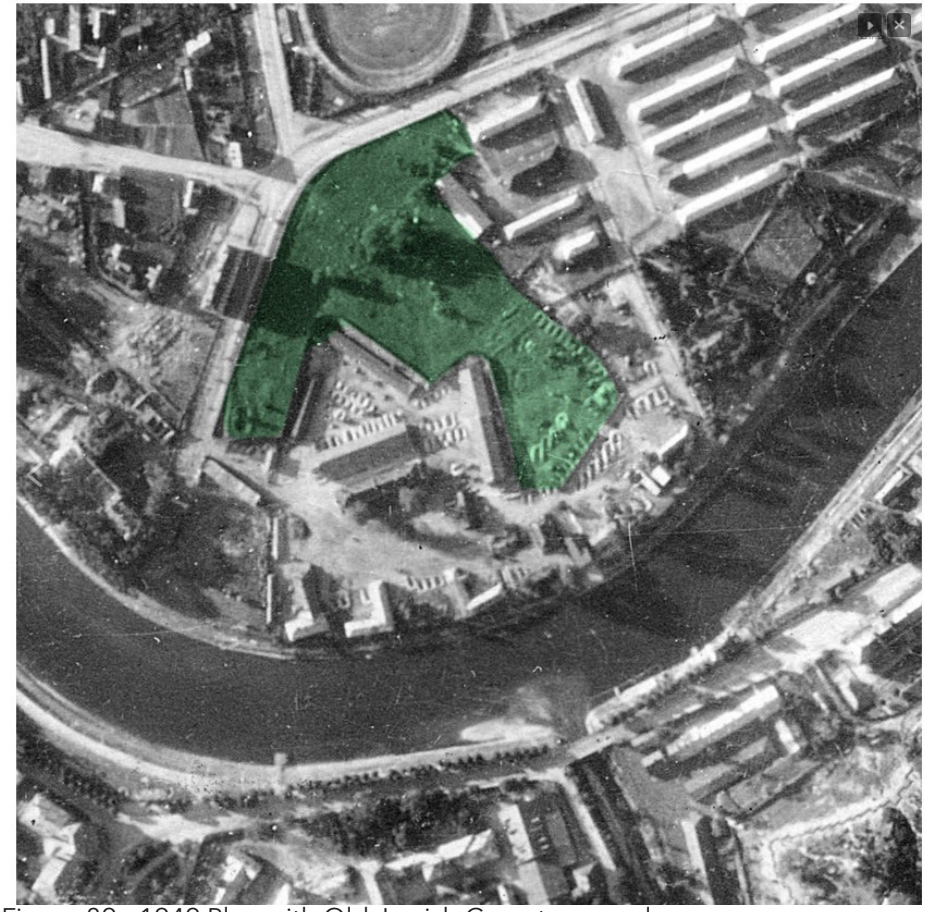


Figure 89 - 1949 Plan with Old Jewish Cemetery overlay

Figure 90 - 2005 Satelite with Russian Empire fortifications overlaye

GROUND, PLATFORM, ROOF

In order to reincorporate each site with the topography of Vilnius' diverse history, the design for each site explores how the ground, platforms, and roofs can be manipulated to reconnect with the surrounding community. Each site is a relatively flat plane compared to the series of hills and valleys the upon which the city is built. By examining the relationship between ground and building, each site reconnects past narratives with the present while providing the opportunity for future narratives as well. Manipulating the ground and platforms of each site, contextualizes the buildings there – removing their singular representation and providing for a broad assemblage of narratives, past and future.

Figure 91 - Proposed Site Plan

Figure 92 - Wedding Chapel Interior

The Wedding Palace design focuses on the manipulation of the ground. The building itself, much like the Sports Palace, stands as a singular monument that is removed from the park landscape. The design reconnects the park and palace by creating a landscape of rolling hills and valleys. New paths across the site are created from the plan of the former cemetery. These paths become valleys in the park, allowing hills to rise between them. In order to incorporate the wedding palace into the site, the common space of the building is removed – leaving the two chapels and a third space as vertical markers of the wedding palace. Retaining its function as a space for ceremony and joy, the chapels continue to provide wedding services. However, instead of the previous condition, in which the building created a grand processional with a monumental stair and interior lobby, the new design uses the topography of the park to carry couples up to the entry of both chapels – making the Wedding Palace a part of the broader landscape as opposed to a separate monolith separated from the site. By retaining its function as a wedding chapel, the building continues to serve the people of Vilnius while reconnecting the history of the broader site with future narratives. The park and chapel no longer stand in contrast to one another but are grounds for the creation of new narratives for those who seek to be married there.

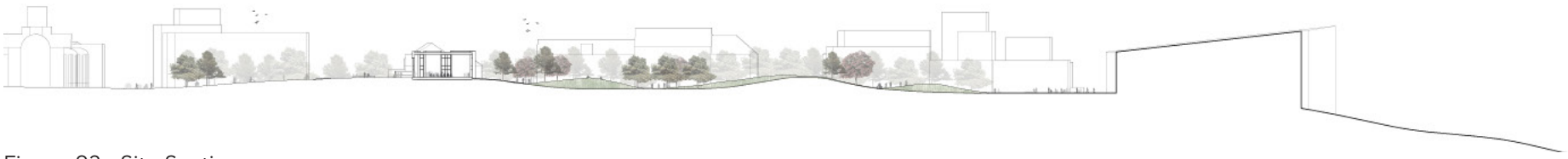
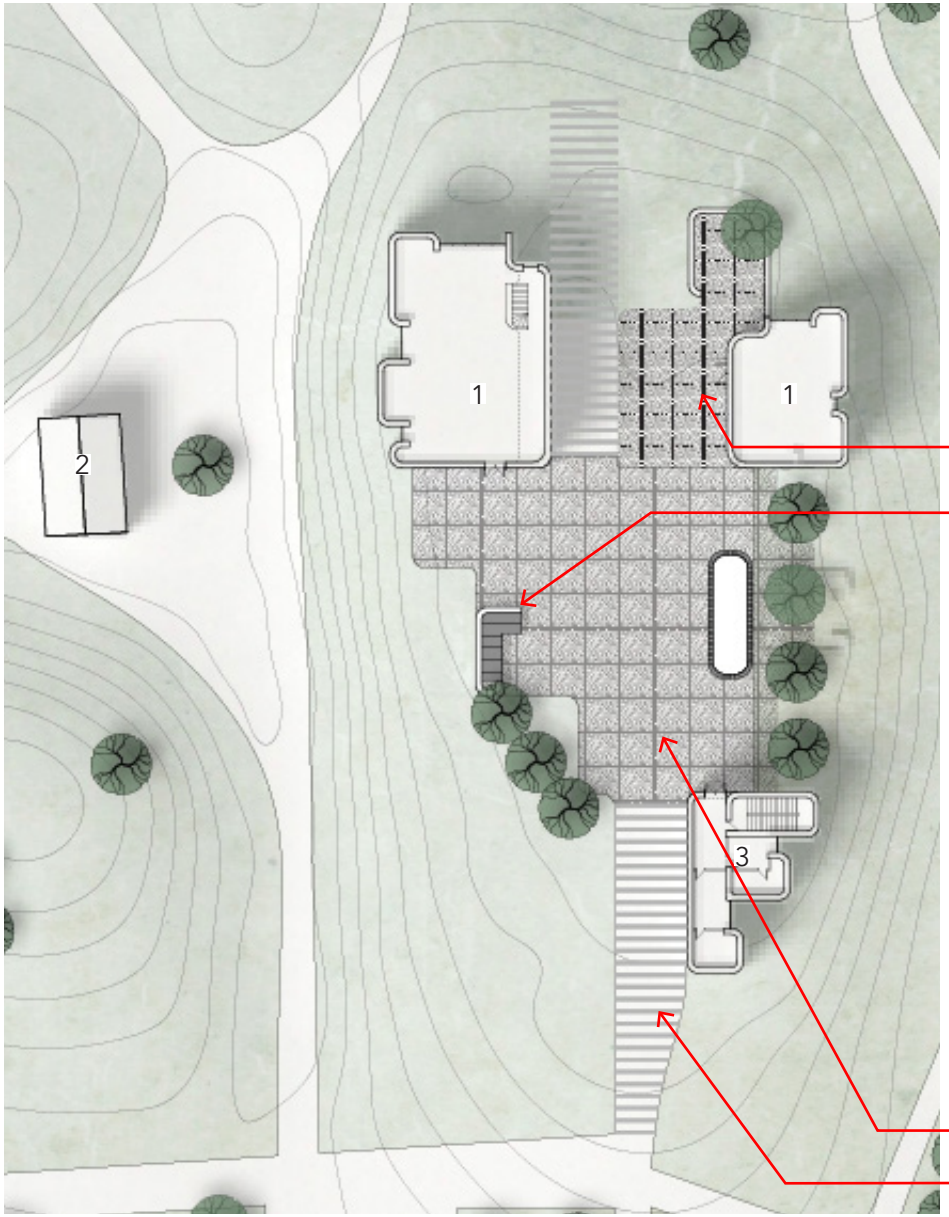


Figure 93 - Site Section



Gravel

Wood

Brick Paver

Concrete

1. Wedding Chapel
2. Existing Mausoleum
3. Rest Rooms

Figure 94 - Proposed Wedding Chapel Plan

The site of the former Great Synagogue currently sits as an empty void in the *Old Town*. Following the existing proposals, the kindergarten is removed, and the remains of the synagogue become an active archeological dig. With the removal of the school, the entire site becomes an open platform. The design focuses on the interplay between ground and roof. Using the ground as a platform, the roof becomes connecting tissue that integrates the site with the surrounding urban environment. As opposed to manipulating the topography of the ground, the roof becomes the topography. The site surrounding the synagogue becomes a landscape of undulating roof forms. The roof over the ruins of the synagogue is the only element that is distinct from the broader roofscape. In this instance, the synagogue is treated as a volume that penetrates the undulating roofs surrounding it. Drawing on the distinctive nature of the former synagogue building, the gable roof of the main hall is reconstructed. Much like the historical images indicate, the roof of the synagogue site is elevated above that of the surrounding roof landscape, highlighting its position as the center of the community.

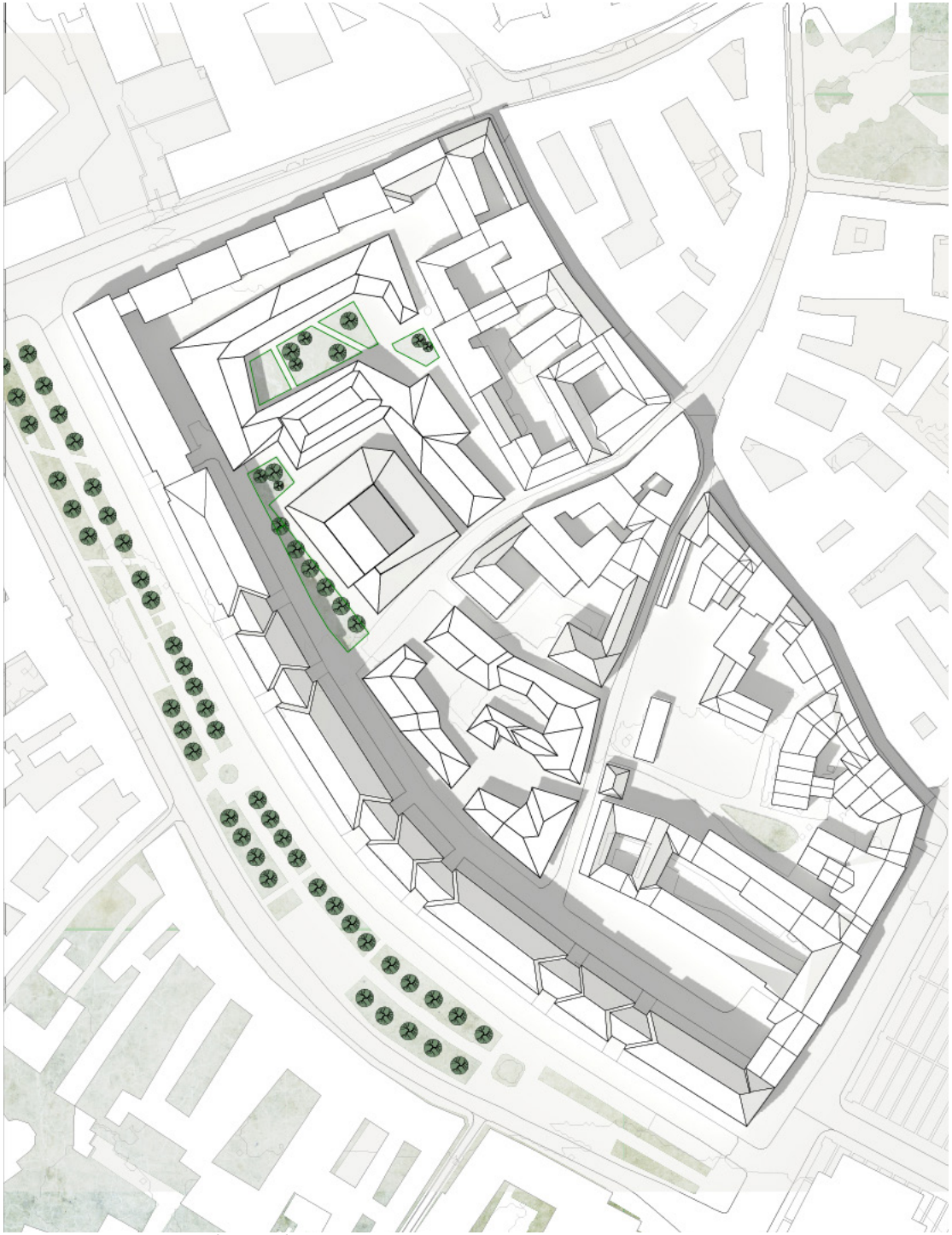


Figure 96 - Proposed Site Plan

Figure 97 - Proposed Floor Plan

(A) School

(B) Synagogue - Archeological Dig Site

(C) Market

Where the site formerly functioned as dead space – apart from the school – it now becomes a vibrant setting for intermingling life. The roofscape east of the synagogue becomes the setting for an open-air market, reconnecting with the history of streets that were once full of vendors and businesses. To the west, the school is rebuilt under the undulating roofs – providing new community space that is intimately connected with the history of place. By keeping education rooted in this site, the design acknowledges that the narratives retained here are valuable to the identity of Vilnius. At the same time, it avoids the pitfalls of turning the entire area into a museum of the past by providing space and function for the creation of new narratives through education of children.

Figure 98 - Section

Figure 99 - Open Air Market

Where the Wedding Palace and former Great Synagogue were designed as singular manifestation of the ground and roofs, respectively, the Palace of Concert and Sport is presented as a combination of the two. Both roof and ground are manipulated to create a site that connects the city surrounding it while serving the people and nature of Vilnius. Much like the Wedding Palace, the structure of the Sports Hall is monumental in scale compared to the barren plane of the site around it. In order to better connect the site with the river and reduce the scale of the palace itself, a series of terraces are constructed – elevating the ground as one moves north across the site. These terraces are designed as a storm water park, serving the community by cleaning runoff before returning it to the river. At the same time, the shell of the Sports Palace is stripped to its primary structure, creating a dialogue between roof, platform, and ground. Greenhouses are embedded within the terraces, providing space for growing produce alongside the rainwater that filters through the gardens. The produce can then be sold alongside other market stalls underneath the roof of the Sports Hall, reconnecting the building to the landscape around it.

Figure 100 - Proposed Site Plan

1 - Open-air M


2 - Greenhouses


3 - Stormwater Filtration Terraces

Figure 101 - Stormwater Terraces

The existing swimming and diving pool is integrated into the stormwater system and becomes an overflow pool that also acts as a reflection pool. Finally, the gravestones are moved from their current resting place in front of the sports hall and carefully situated in a grid alongside the reflection pool. This provides a more appropriate place for reflection and remembrance of those who were buried here. The gravestones are not to become museum artefacts, but physical markers of the continued relationship between past and future narratives – reminding the community that this is sacred ground. Through the production of life and the cleansing of water, the site becomes a connection between community, landscape, and history.

Figure 102 - Section

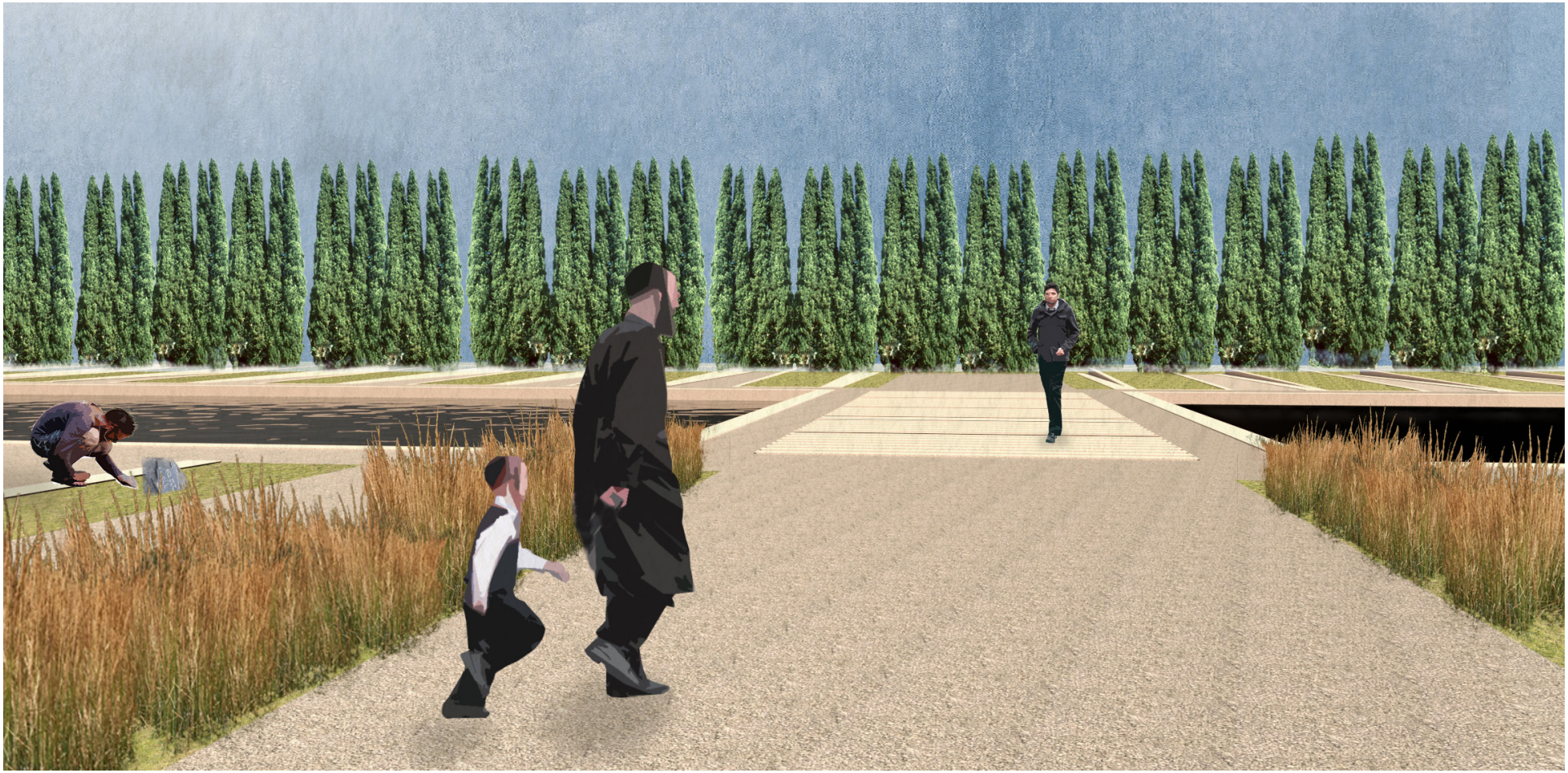


Figure 103 - Reflection Pool

CONCLUSION

"Who will honor the city without a name

If so many are dead and others pan gold

Or sell arms in faraway countries?

What shepherd's horn swathed in the bark of birch

Will sound in the Ponary Hills the memory of the absent–

Vagabonds, Pathfinders, brethren of a dissolved lodge?"[39]

-Czeslaw Milosz

City Without a Name

This city we have spent so much time discussing is a rich tapestry of memories that have shaped the identity of those that have lived there. Its streets are vivid reminders of the past – markers of the lives lived over seven centuries. As has been stated, it would be easy to squeeze every person out of the city and preserve it as a museum. But what new memories would form? Where is the joy, the sorrow, the growth in a city preserved as a static archive? It is the life we bring into space that creates distinctive identity – that colors our memories with moments of joy. This place would be a shell without the various narratives that make up the ground. Thus, we should not treat the world solely as antiquarians – preserving all as it once was. Instead, we must make room for new narratives – shaping a new identity through the intertwining of myriad memories. It is in this service of life that a new Lithuanian identity may form – an identity that is malleable and responsive to the diverse array of backgrounds that will continue to influence life in Vilnius as has been the case since its founding in 1323.

The city of Vilnius experienced dramatic reconfiguration of its cultural makeup over the last century. While the past 30 years of Lithuanian political control have created a sense a stability within the cultural make up of the city, it has also been marked by a decline in the diversity of culture and confession within the city. Yet this is also a period in which Lithuania has embraced efforts to create unique transnational and regional identities. By embarking on cross cultural identity formation, the Lithuanian people are actively challenging the 20th century conception of a singular ethno-linguistic identity for a more cosmopolitan vision of 21st century diversity.

As a post-Soviet capital, Vilnius shares many similarities with post-colonial cities and nations. The people of this city have worked to define the 21st century Lithuaninan identity since 1990. The rich diversity of heritage narratives that existed within the city provide a basis for translating the values and memories that encompass what it means to be Lithuanian. While there is value in preserving and memorializing space to acknowledge past narratives, the city offers a unique opportunity to understand how new narratives can develop along side past narratives - creating an assemblage of memories and identities that provide for a more vibrant experience of life. It is in the service of this vibrant life that we seek to work the ground and make room for new narratives while acknowledging the value of those that came before.

NOTES

1 Briedis, “Locating Vilnius on the Map of Translation.”
2 Diener and Hagen, “From Socialist to Post-Socialist Cities.”
3 Briedis, *Vilnius: City of Strangers*.
4 Briedis, “Locating Vilnius on the Map of Translation.”
5 Strong, *Lithuania’s New Way*.
6 Weeks, *Vilnius between Nations, 1795-2000*. Weeks points out that Lithuanians did not come to represent most of the city’s population till 1989. Instead, he emphasizes Polish domination of culture during the interwar period. A 20-year period of singular cultural dominance that registers merely as a blip in the city’s 700 year history.
7 Everatt, *Vilnius*. Weeks also references this date as a formal ‘beginning’ for the city. Likely it existed prior, however its importance as the capital of the Grand Duchy increases from this point forward.
8 Weeks, *Vilnius between Nations, 1795-2000*. Lithuanian was considered a provincial language until the late 19th century. Thus, even during the high point of the Grand Duchy, Polish was the dominant political and cultural language of royalty and the high court. Over time, Lithuanian as a language would diminish in significance in Vilnius as the Polish language came to define a large portion of the cultural identity of the city.
9 Weeks.
10 Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*; Weeks, “REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.”
11 Weeks, “REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.”
12 Frick, *Kith, Kin, and Neighbors*.
13 Weeks, *Vilnius between Nations, 1795-2000*.
14 Weeks.
15 Weeks.
16 Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*.
17 Aleksandravičius, “Post-Communist Transition.”
18 Weeks, “REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.”
19 Weeks.
20 “Vilniaus Miesto Savivaldybė - Statistika.”
21 “POPULATION BY NATIONALITY, NATIVE LANGUAGE AND RELIGION Results of the 2011 General Population and Housing Census of the Republic of Lithuania.”
22 Aleksandravičius, “Post-Communist Transition.”
23 Aleksandravičius.
24 Aleksandravičius.
25 Aleksandravičius.
26 *Kaunas in Your Pocket*.
27 Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage.”
28 Czaplicka, “The Palace Ruins and Putting the Lithuanian Nation into Place.”
29 Czaplicka.
30 Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*.
31 Riaubiene, “Use of Architectural Heritage.”
32 Riaubiene.
33 Czaplicka, “Contemporary History.”
34 Weeks, “REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.”
35 Weeks.
36 Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*.
37 Weeks, “REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.”
38 Weeks.
39 “City Without a Name by Czeslaw Milosz | Poetry Foundation.”

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