

Great Synagogue Memorial in Vilnius



ZAK architecture



Importance of the Great Synagogue



The Jewish people have very deep religious traditions in Lithuania - The Great Synagogue was built in 1573.

Until World War II, Vilnius was known as one of the most important Jewish cultural, architectural and spiritual centers in Europe. The Strashun Library was opened in 1900.

Gaon Elijah ben Shlom Zalman, great sage and scholar of the 18th Century, brought fame to Vilnius as the Jerusalem of the North and the Great Synagogue became its heart.

From the 16th to the 20th centuries it was the best known Synagogue in Central Europe. All of the buildings of the Cultural Center were destroyed after World War II.

Great Synagogue Memorial in Vilnius

The Vilnius City Municipality has initiated the Great Synagogue Memorial project.

The creation of the Memorial will be accomplished through a broad base of support and joint efforts.

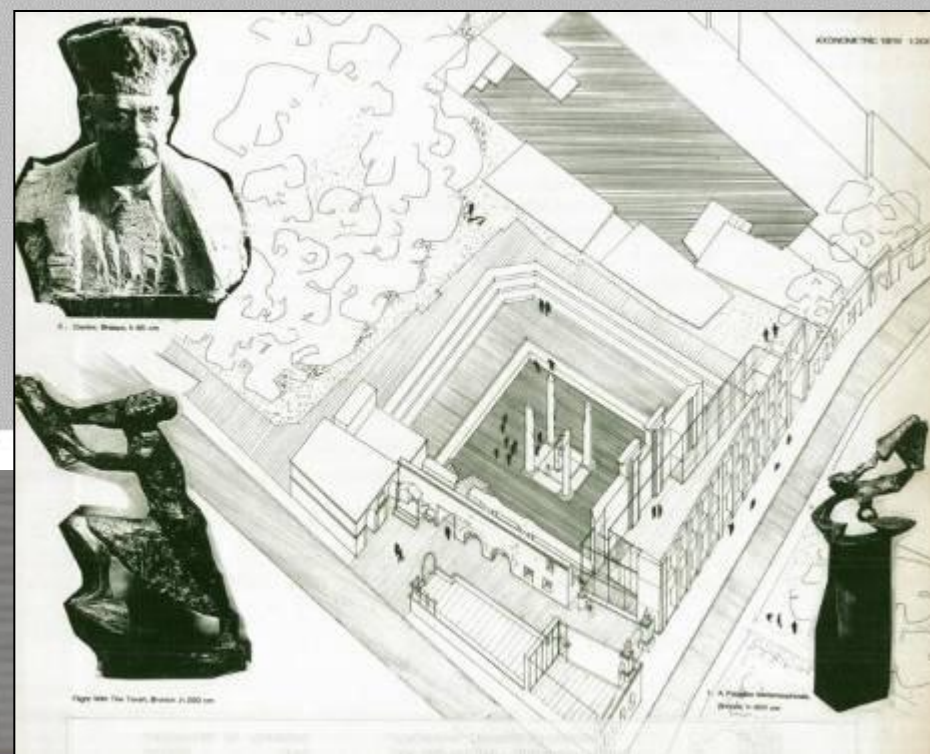
The Vilnius City Municipality invites you to join us in this unique possibility to restore an important part of Jewish heritage and Lithuanian history.



The winning project in 1990



Preliminary documentation & reconstruction, competition material



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History of the International Tender



1989 – An international tender for the establishment of the Jewish memorial center was held. Organizers – Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania together with local Jewish organizations and national art institutions.

1990 – The tender was won by architect Tsila Zak in cooperation with sculptor Willy Gordon from Sweden (both with original roots from Vilnius).

2011 – The city of Vilnius city signed a contract with Tsila Zak for project proposals.

Blocks 32-33 were severely damaged during World War II. Remaining parts of the buildings were demolished in the 1950s



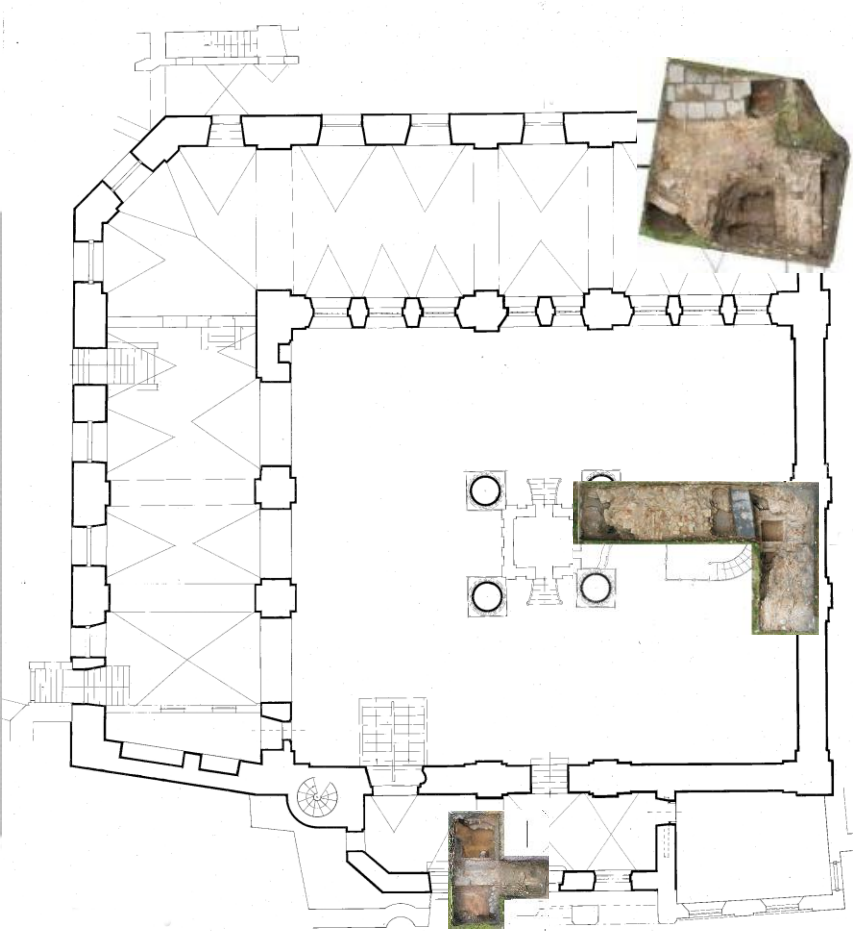
View of Žydu Street in 1944



Buildings demolished in the 1950s



Great Sinagogue fragments - archeological findings in 2011



Dig No.3 - Sinagogue walls R edge

Dig No.2 - Sinagogue bima PR columns,
Aron ha kodeš places and R wall place

Dig No.1- Entrance to the Great
Synagogue via ell

Existing Situation and Historic Buildings

Buildings before World War II:

1. The Great Synagogue
2. Strashun Library
3. Old Kloiz, New Kloiz
4. Gaon Kloiz
5. Synagogue of Burial Brotherhood
6. Gaon School
7. Mikve (Bathhouse)
8. Kloiz of the Cemetery Brotherhood
9. Kloiz of the Craftsmen Brotherhood
10. Chasid Synagogue
11. Public Well
12. Schulhoif
13. Back Yard with Public Well

Today the site of the Great Synagogue is occupied by a primary school and residential buildings



Restoration of Zydu Street

1. The Great Synagogue	$45 + 110 \times 2 = 965$ sqm
2. Strashun Library	$300 \times 2 = 600$ sqm
3. Services (Clock House)	$75 \times 2 = 150$ sqm
4. Book Shop & Café (Gaon Kloiz)	$450 \times 2 = 900$ sqm
5. The "Gaon" Museum	$90 + 100 + 50 = 240$ sqm
Total area:	2855 sqm



Site plan: Proposed buildings

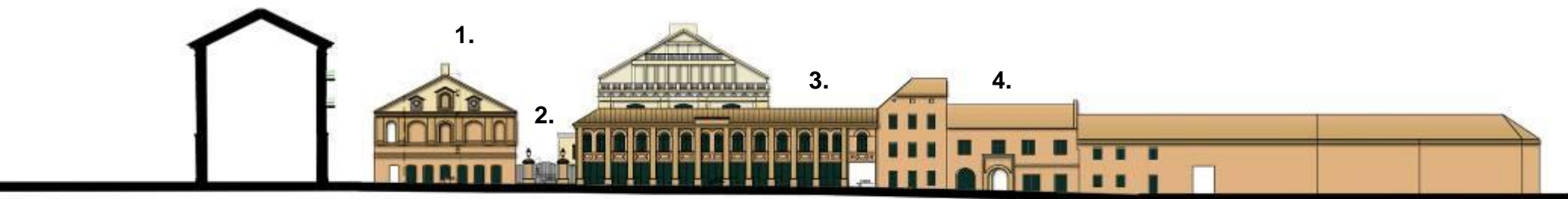


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Chronological Presentation of the Concept in Sections & Elevations



Proposed Buildings:

1. Book Shop & Café
2. Gate to Schulhoif
3. Strashun Library
4. “Gaon’s” Museum

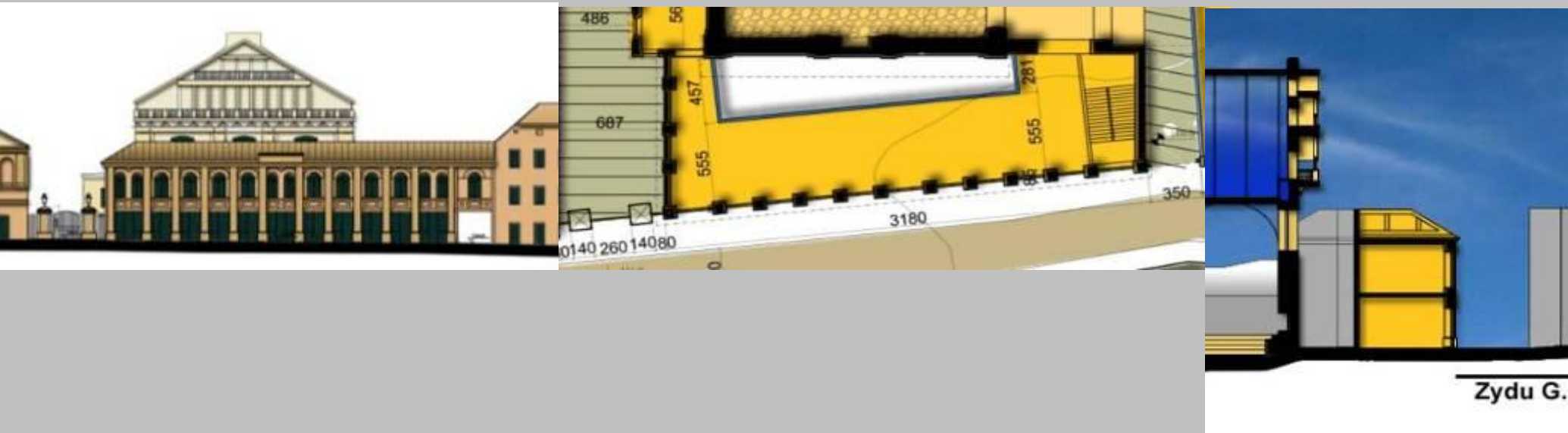


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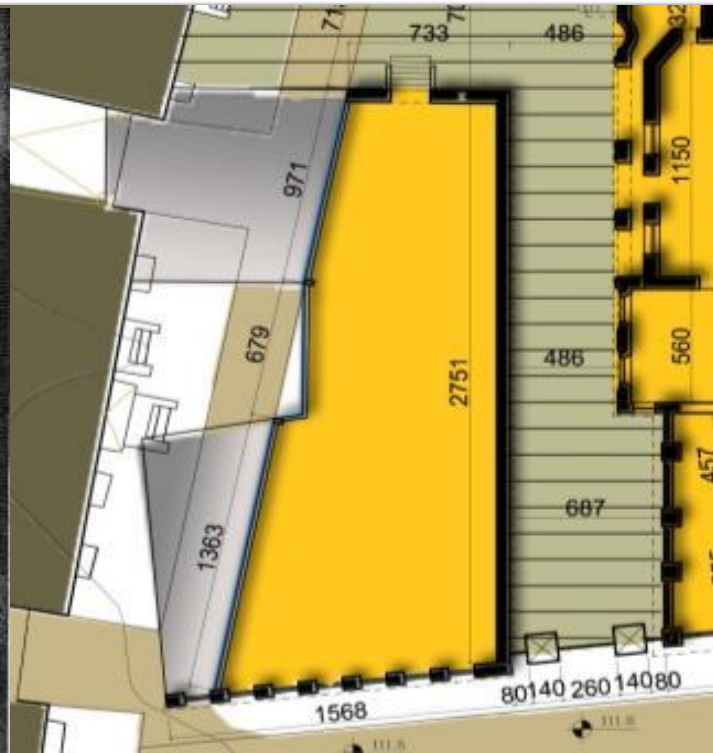
The Strashun Library

The façade facing Žydų street will be rebuilt to its original state, with traditional materials, whereas the modern section of the building will be constructed of steel and glass. The Strashun Library will house a research centre, library and exhibition gallery.



The Gaon's Academy

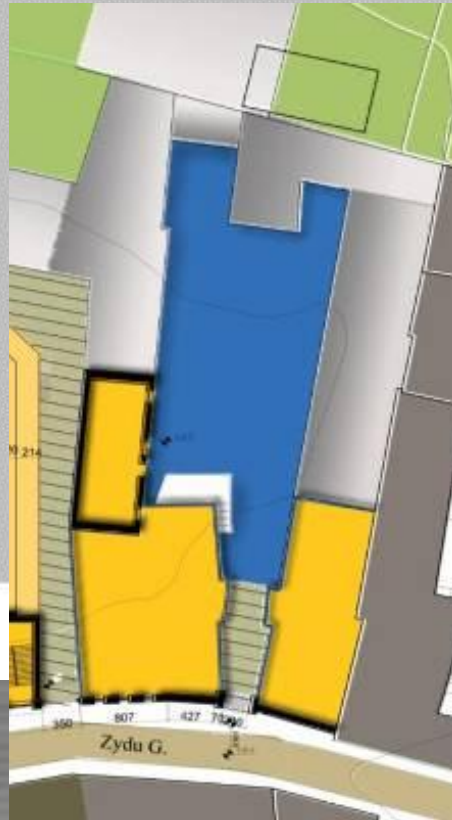
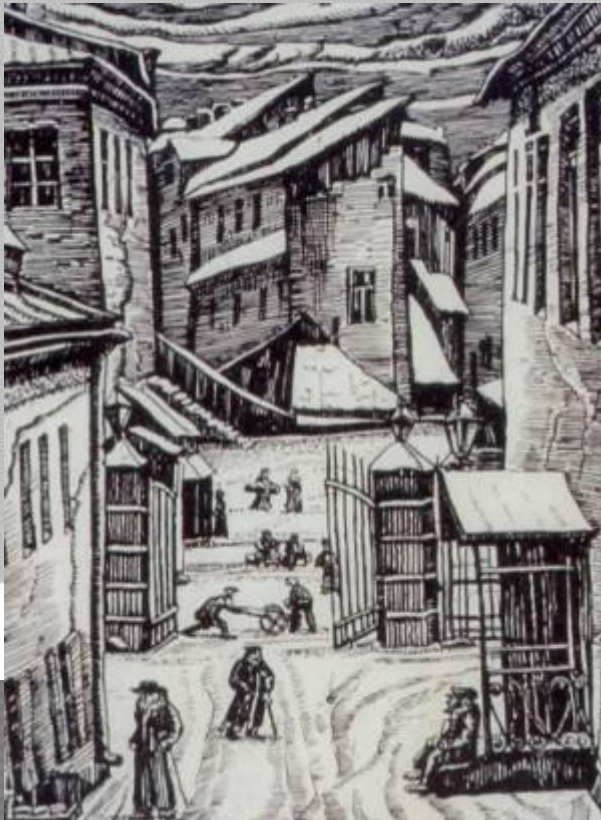
The original site of the Gaon's Bath Midrash is partly occupied by post war residential buildings, therefore the original volume will be cut with open edges symbolizing the absence and the void. The building will accommodate an information centre, a book store, a cafe with Jewish cuisine.



Legendary sage, the "Vilnius Gaon" (1720- 1797)

The House of the "Vilnius Gaon"

The Vilnius Gaon's house will be rebuilt as a museum, commemorating his legacy. The name "Gaon" was an honorary title bestowed on the eminent sage, Rabbi Eliah Ben-Salomon (1720-1797), whose enlightened philosophy had a profound influence on the Jewish religion.

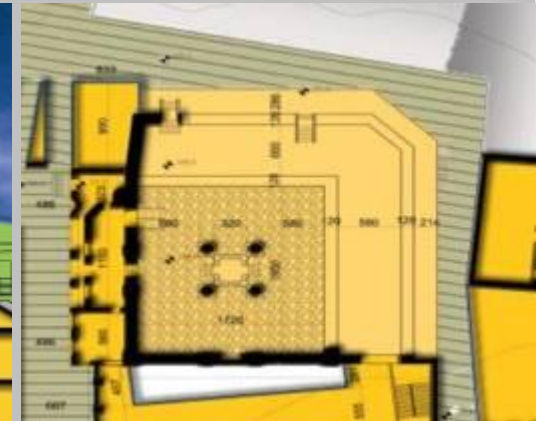


The Site of the Great Synagogue

The splendid assembly room, originally built in the Renaissance style, will be represented by an open room. The "open room" will be protected from view by the Strashun Library and by the hall at the entrance to the Synagogue yard.



Interior in 1786, by A.Smuglevicius



The Renaissance style assembly room in a spacious building was able to hold up to 6000 people – the entire Jewish community in its early days.

The Site of the Great Synagogue - Eastern Wall

The wall will be rebuilt to its full height with Gordon's sculpture in low relief: "Jacob and the Angel". The cavity at the place for the Holy Ark will remain empty.



Adjacent to the vestibule, a small pavilion will be erected, containing public toilets and storage facilities. On the arches facing the "Schulhoif", clock faces indicated the official religious time for Sabbath and for the lighting of candles. Replicas of the original clock faces will be installed.

Objectives - Reviving Original Character and Path

Buildings of the memorial will be designed to provide a stimulus for creative imagination and to be a source of pleasure to the Vilnius community and its visitors.



Project implementation

I STAGE: Technical design of the Memorial project	2013.01 – 2014.10
II STAGE: School transfer procedures	2013.01 – 2016.09 ★
III STAGE: Construction of the Memorial	2016.06 – 2017.06
Concept creation of the memorial activities program	2013.01 – 2017.06

★ Perhaps by as early as 2015

Preliminary budget of the Memorial project	9 million US dollars
Preliminary budget of infrastructure	2-4 million US dollars



Project management scheme

