

“DETROIT+”

PROJECT NAME Detroit+

PROJECT TYPE Young Architects Competitions

COMPETITION NAME Detroit Waterfront District

STATUS Finalist Mention

DESIGNER Offteco s.r.l.

PROJECT YEAR 2020

TEAM Flaviano Basile Mariarosaria Savoia Flavio Maio Marika Maio Francesco Buttà

01. Concept

The competition promoted by Manni Group in collaboration with Sterling Group is “Detroit Waterfront District” to design the future leisure and entertainment heart of the city of Detroit. “Detroit Waterfront District” precisely focuses on the most fascinating canvas of all: the urban void overlooking the river amid downtown skyscrapers. The aim is to design a building complex to redefine the city skyline to become the symbol of the revival of one of the most iconic and controversial cities of the history of the United States of America.

We think the city of Detroit needs a global urban transformation process. To think not only of a monocentric but polycentric intervention that is a network of punctual urban regenerations involving the whole city. We called this transformation plan DETROIT+. In this plan our intervention in the former area Joe Louis Arena becomes an example and a focal point to start this process of urban regeneration in the urban voids present in Downtown district and along the Detroit river.

Our concept starts from a territorial analysis of Detroit Waterfront and an urban analysis of Downtown District, since the site object of the competition is placed between these two realities. We identify some Detroit contrasts that become the starting point of our design idea:

1. A contrast between high/low city and high/low density construction;
2. A contrast between radial model and grid model of Downtown urban plan;
3. A contrast between built and urban voids.

We respond to 1° contrast with a new hybrid type of building. This hybrid type starts with linear buildings and turns into a cluster of towers. A mix of low and high building. The low buildings contain offices, leisure and public spaces. The high buildings contain private spaces as hotel and houses to provide an innovative and exclusive housing supply.

From a historical research we record the 2° contrast: an overlap of urban models in the current urban configuration of Downtown District. In our project area we imagine to synthesize the contrasting souls of the city using three main axes in our masterplan. A first parallel axis and a second orthogonal axis to the Detroit Riverwalk are cut by a third diagonal axis parallel to the Street.

We fix the 3° contrast with an extreme design gesture that empties our volume as we believe that urban voids are the distinctive and recurrent feature of Downtown. The void is seen by us as an opportunity for regeneration and becomes the main character of our project. A “cut” cross the complex and is filled by a green promenade. The aim is to continue the Detroit Riverwalk by climbing to the sky, so as to enjoy the view of the river and skyscrapers from above.