

The building clearly seeks to apply broad-ranging ecological principles in architecture. Designed to house exhibitions, events and seminars related to sustainability and ecology, the complex itself is a clear example of how green principles can concretely be applied to architecture. The tenets of bioarchitecture evidently run through the building. First, the energy requirements have been carefully analysed, with renewable sources being used. The design seeks an integrated approach to merging two key ecological elements: optimising natural lighting and dealing with the constraints of direct sunlight. The resultant decisions affect both the use of solids and voids on the external elevations and the functional layout of internal space. The size and location of the glazing is carefully calculated, using differing types of screens depending on the amount of direct sunlight each building section receives. Aside from influencing the overall composition, such calculations also prevent areas from overheating or, on the north-facing side, from excessive heat loss.

The consequent design complexity is expressed through the architecture, combining advanced options, broad-based ecological commitment and highly-functional solutions that help achieve the display purposes of the building and contribute to local economic and cultural development, since this is another of the centre's business goals.

The actual structure is mixed. Reinforced concrete is used in the exterior perimeter ring, with brick and concrete pillars and floors. The solid brick curtain walls are designed to provide sufficient mass to achieve thermal inertia and, at the same time, use a traditional local building material with a new outlook. The ecological strategy has numerous parts: the ecological footprint of materials, the balance between consumption and resources, indoor comfort given the significant variations in public attendance, thermal insulation (wood fibre was placed in the air cavity of the envelope), and extensive automation.

Glulam is used in the central section of the building, where a large void dominates, providing both light and acting as a natural ventilation chimney. A seamless path connects the different storeys and mezzanine levels, effectively providing an overview of the complex. The interior is clearly divided into different parts without being fragmented. The inclined wooden pillars, the sloping ramps, the staircase with a transparent parapet, the panelling and the exposed wooden beams and cross-beams are the other defining features. The spaces on the ground floor are divided according to function, starting with a reception area and the entrance hall on the south-west side, a bar/restaurant, the conference area with a large foyer and 150-seater auditorium, and the core of the lateral exhibition area. The latter has been designed using the concept of "exposition modules" consisting of a basic module that can be combined with several others. This model is repeated on the upper floors. The most striking feature is the unbroken spiral around the central void lit by the skylight. The building is a demonstration of an ecological design, providing concrete evidence of material use and techniques. Space usage is flexible, using modular options that can be adapted to the various themes presented with each event. The elevations and the building itself are made more dynamic through the interplay of solids, screens and glazing, the void in the volume marking the entrance and the glazed cut in the main side wall.