

GENESIS

Centrum Olimpijskie, Warsaw

A passive-design, mixed-use scheme on the Vistula River for the Polish Olympic Committee

Working in Poland's transition

Andrew Cowan Architects had an office in Warsaw from 1990 to 2005, through the years when Poland was moving from the Soviet era towards a Western, democratic economy.

During that period the practice developed a scheme for the Polish Olympic Committee, for a parcel of land the Committee owned on the bank of the Vistula River in Warsaw.

The project was meant to be progressive, Western and sustainable.



Brochure for the Polish Olympic Committee



Building Design July 1995

BUSINESS 23

CONSTRUCTION

Poland's where the work is

The reconstruction of Kosovo may be grabbing the headlines but Poland is where the money is at, according to the Construction Confederation.

"Kosovo's about the size of Devon, with a population of just 1.5 million inhabitants," says John Bromley, the CC's director of European affairs. "That's tiny compared with Poland. The country has huge potential. £70 billion of construction work will take place in the next four years."

The CC suggests partnering arrangements with local firms. "You have to be willing to work at a local level. Rates of pay are still 10% of UK salaries so for work to be financially viable it has to be done with locals."

For more information on working in Poland, contact the Department of Trade & Industry, tel 0171 215 5000; the Polish Commercial Office, tel 0171 580 5481; the Polish Embassy, tel 0171 580 4324; or the Polish Agency for Foreign Investment, tel 00 48 22 621 6361 or fax 00 48 22 621 8417 (English is spoken).

London-based practice Andrew Cowan Architects has designed a new flagship project for the Polish Olympic Committee, which has just received conditional planning approval.

The £16.2 million design for the Olympic Centre is to be built by the River Vistula in central Warsaw. The mixed-development scheme includes a hotel, cinema, theatre facilities and conference rooms. Photo: Andrew Putler.

Building Design: "Poland's where the work is"

A site on the river

The site lies beside the Vistula, next to a highway close to the city centre, with good access to the surrounding residential areas.

A strip of land next to the river is flood plain, so the project is set back from the water.

It was important that the building undulates in the landscape rather than standing as a block.



The Olympic Centre in Google Earth beside the Vistula



The Olympic Centre placed in Google Earth beside the Vistula

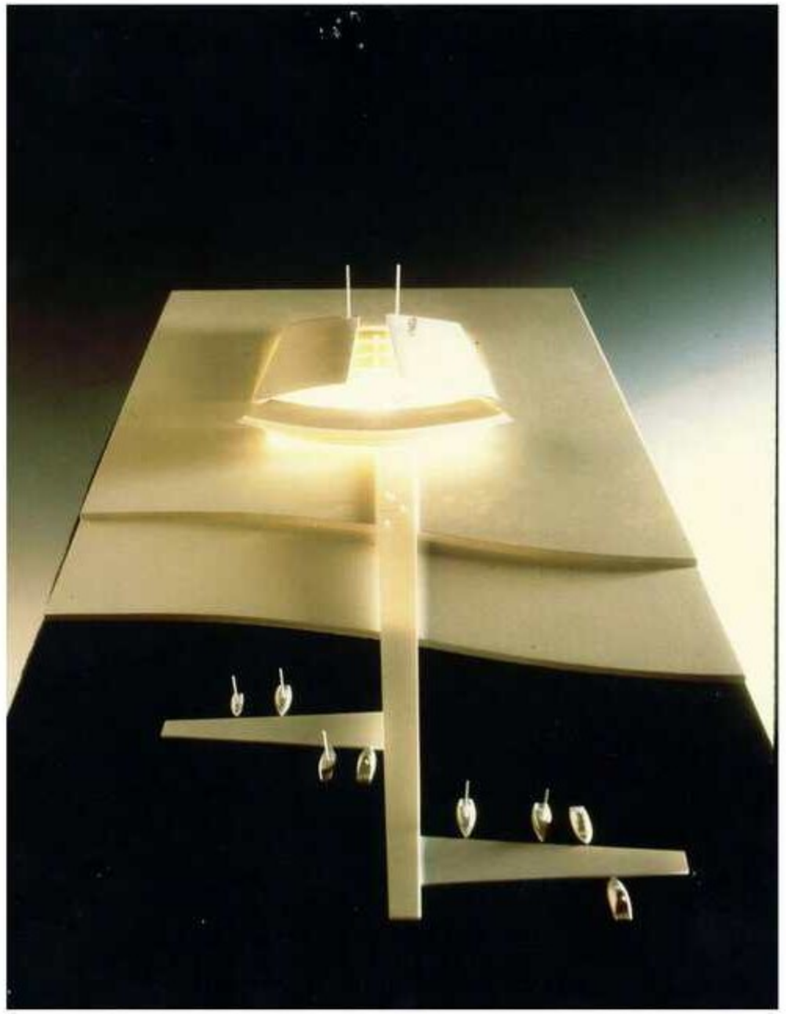
A mixed-use centre

The scheme combines retail, entertainment, offices, a hotel and sports facilities.

Residential accommodation was to be added in a later phase.



Presentation model



Presentation model



Passive design

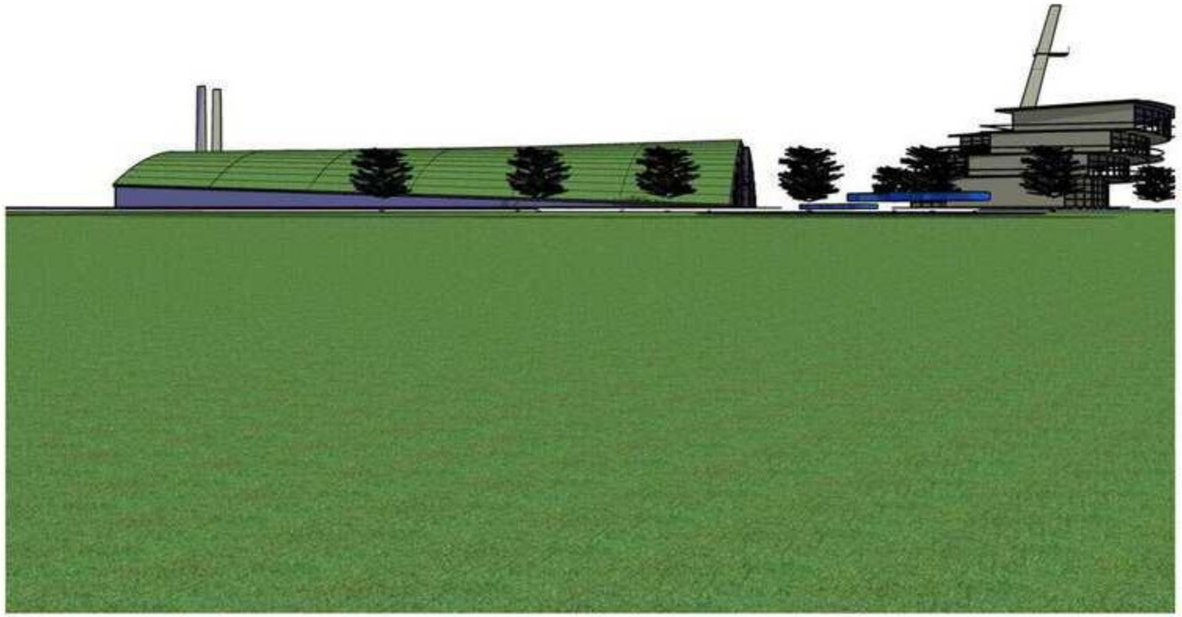
About 75% of the project is covered with new landscaping. It retains heat in winter and cools the building in summer through evaporation from the planting.

The buildings are oriented so that cross winds cool them in summer. Most large buildings have more problems with overheating than with keeping warm.

Heat pumps using the water source provide additional heating and cooling.



The Olympic Centre in Google Earth



Olympic Centre: elevation study

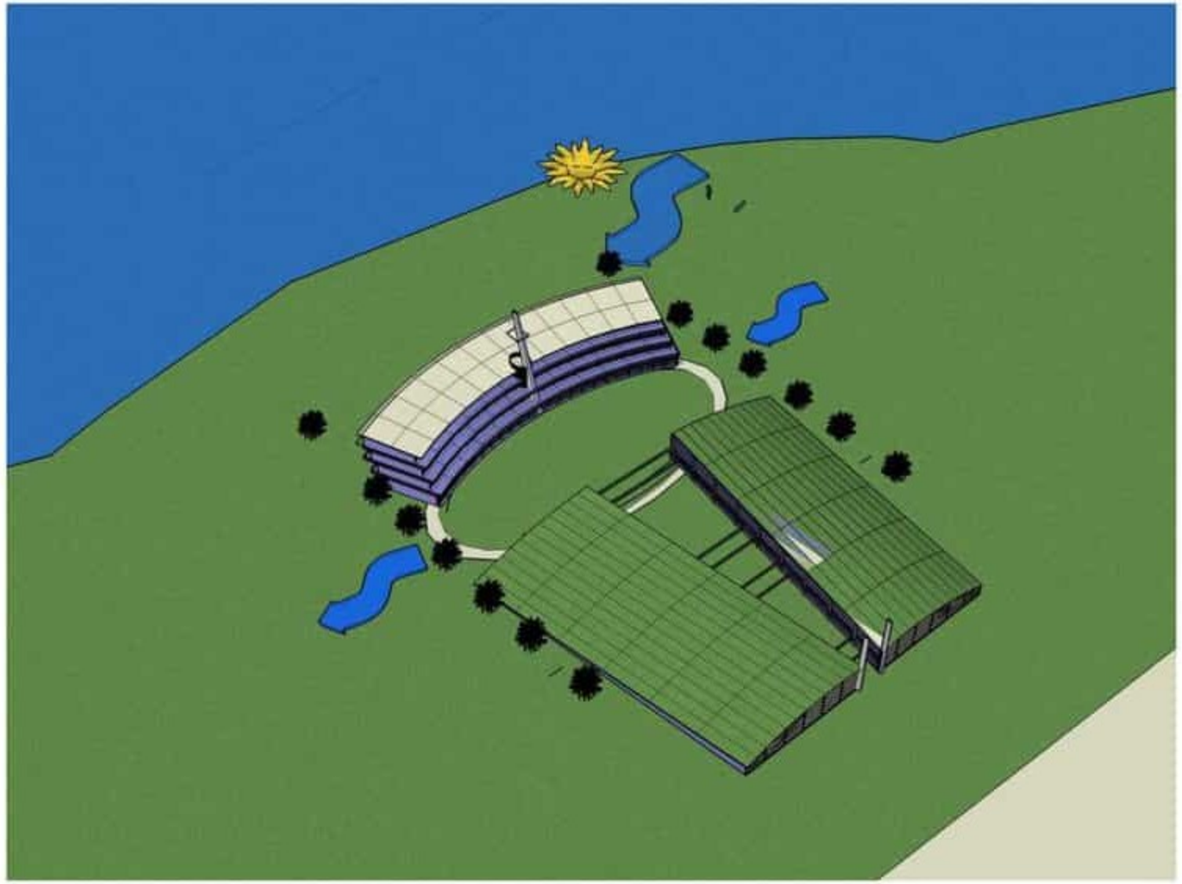
The hotel

The hotel is curved in plan.

Its configuration lets the low winter sun reach into the building for warmth, while preventing direct sun from entering the rooms in summer.



Night render



3D site model by the river

The Olympic Centre in its setting

The model of the Olympic Centre placed in Google Earth Pro, showing the scheme in its riverside setting beside the Vistula, close to the centre of Warsaw.



Model placed in Google Earth Pro

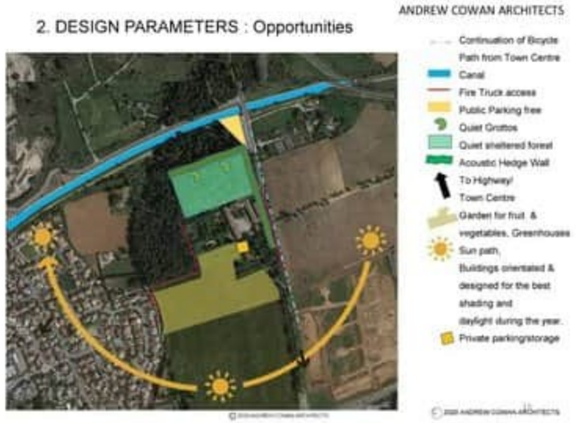


Olympic Centre, Warsaw: model placed in Google Earth Pro

OTHER PASSIVE DESIGN WORK

Mas de Fourques

Design parameters, orientation and landscape for a group of buildings, including a new energy-efficient house.



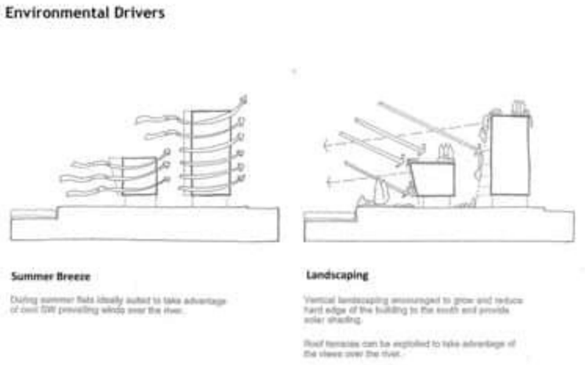
Design parameters and opportunities. © 2020 Andrew Cowan Architects



Space and orientation between buildings and landscape



Phase 3: new energy-efficient house



Environmental drivers: summer breeze and landscaping