

A place of discovery and adventure, synthesizing nature and machine to create a landscape icon for Kaunas.

The **landscape** of Nemunas Island is tilted up to accommodate the museum, creating a rising form like a headland. The green roof extends landscape over the building, preserving the landscape of the island in full. Three paths extend the length of the island; the nature, human and machine paths. The paths weave and intersect at moments of intensity and become a distributed exhibition, entering the building and into the gallery spaces.

The **exterior** form has two presences, both a building and a landscape. The southern face of the building is organic, responding to the undulating geometries of the river. The northern face is rectilinear, resonating with the urban pattern of the city centre. Timber columns around the perimeter of the building become a colonnade, resonating with the neoclassical buildings of Kaunas city centre. The red tiled rooves of the context are reinterpreted in the new museum, translated into roof edge details.

Entry to the building is through a dramatic cutting, creating the experience of entering nature. The sweep of the river is drawn into the **interior**. The planetarium becomes a focus within the entry hall, circumnavigated by a spiraling ramp. A two storey 'activity bar' extends through the centre of the building, providing controlled ticketed access to the ground floor and a balcony on the upper level, enabling large scale display objects to be viewed from above.

The **galleries** are flexible and atmospheric. The permanent galleries are arranged in a linear manner, enabling an open 'grand hall' configuration, sequential configuration as a series of linked halls and independent configuration as a series of halls, separately accessed via the ticketed introductory area.

The **space planning** of the building provides ease of orientation. Visitor access is through the cutting, along which are arranged ticketing, cloak room and amenities. Staff access is provided to the northern side of the building. The staff spaces are located on the upper level, overlooking the entrance hall. Service vehicle access is located to the northern side of the building. A 5m wide service corridor extends along the northern side of the galleries, providing flexibility of exhibition installation.

The proposal incorporates a series of **sustainability** measures. Natural lighting is drawn into the building – soft northern light to the galleries and controlled southern light to the entry hall, balanced by skylights in the centre. An integrated ventilation system drives natural cooling and heating through the subfloor thermal labyrinth, distributing air and exhausting at high level via operable glazing. The green roof provides thermal insulation, whilst the exposed concrete floor slab provides thermal mass and passive heating.

A series of initiatives support the **feasibility** of the project. Cut and fill is balanced across the site, avoiding the need to import fill. The curvilinear geometry is constructed according to regular arcs, simplifying construction and reducing cost. The roof form is a simple skillion, simplifying construction whilst creating a gentle rise to the view.



Aerial view - enriching and preserving the landscape of Nemunas Island