



UNIUNEA
ARHITECȚILOR DIN
ROMÂNIA

Primăria orașului Râșnov



Architecture competition – Ideas competition phase for the Union Square in Râșnov

COMPETITION THEME



1. PROMOTER

The Romanian Union of Architects in partnership with **Râșnov Town Hall**.

The Romanian Union of Architects, the oldest professional organization in Romania, an apolitical and independent professional association of creators, aims at promoting architecture and urban planning as cultural domains, and protecting built heritage and landscape.

RUA is involved in supporting the local community represented by the Râșnov Town Hall by identifying specific needs and values, followed by the identification of high-level professional and cultural solutions and offering the competition results to the local community for implementation.

2. CONTEXT

The history of Râșnov is circumscribed to the evolution of the Land of Bârsa, colonizing, historical turmoil as well as the commercial and cultural importance from the Middle Ages to present time. The emergence of the present-day town and the evolution of the characteristic urban tissue of Râșnov is the product of the Transylvanian Saxon colonization in the early 13th century and the urban culture they brought in.

Râșnov is present in the architectural literature through its renowned landmark, the *Peasant Citadel*, along with two other valuable historical monuments, *Saint Matthias' Evangelical church* (13th century) and *Saint Nicholas' old Orthodox church* (1384).

It is considered that *"...the oldest part of Râșnov Citadel would date from the 14th century....The walls of the medieval citadel got erected gradually, the construction site being dependent on the funding capability."* (N. Pepene, B. F. Popovici, V. Ștefănescu –Râșnov. În numele trandafirului)

What is of interest from a historical, social and anthropological point of view is the appropriation and the administration of the citadel by the community in Râșnov in the first half of the 15th century. Nowadays, it is a romantic presence and a dominant elevation in the landscape.

From an urbanistic point of view, the town developed initially between the Citadel hill and Ghimbășel river. The vernacular urban tissue assumed the topographical limits of the citadel hill and those of the river, and the main trade route in the direction Bran – Brașov. The centre of the town, the place of expression for the democratic and community mentality of the medieval Transylvanian Saxon society is Marktplatz – the marketplace, the current Union Square.



The central square at the beginning of the 19th century – the old town hall is on the right of the Evangelical church. The town hall building was erected on the plot of the Transylvanian Saxon church in 1831, and in 1894 a floor was added.

The Union Square gathers the town's important buildings around it: the new and the old town hall buildings, the Evangelical church, the cinema building and the Gasthof building. "Amza Pellea" cinema building is the symbolic place of a special cultural event held in Râșnov – *The Film and History Festival*. The film screenings and cultural assemblies can be held in a number of other neighbouring locations.

The Gasthof building (1875) has potential and it is hoped it will be restored to public circulation, being meant to be turned into a cultural centre.

"The Evangelical church is the second-largest monument in Râșnov after the citadel and the only church of the Christian community of the Transylvanian Saxons in Râșnov preserved to date...

Nevertheless, the church was assessed as dating from the 13th century due to the presence of Romanesque and Gothic architectonic elements, visible at the interior...

The current appearance of the Transylvanian Saxons' church dates from the period 1774-1775, when a new roof was erected and the church walls were put up."

(N. Pepene, B. F. Popovici, V. Ștefănescu –Râșnov. În numele trandafirului)

Hence, the Union Square, from where car traffic was diverted through the car underpass, has numerous circumstances to activate the local community and connect it to the tourists attracted by cultural events and the place's value and beauty.

The Union Square, the *marktplatz* of the now disappeared old Transylvanian Saxon community, must continue being the symbolic place of modern Râșnov and the expression of social cohesion. It must convey passionately the values of past's artifacts in a dynamic contemporary world, with its own evolution pace in terms of information and knowledge.

3. THE COMPETITION

The objective of the competition is to explore and identify valuable architectural solutions and concepts for the valorization of the public space of the Union Square. Either as a space of vicinity for the local community or as a space of cultural artistic events for visitors, the square needs to be supported into becoming a place of social dialogue, education, and encounter between history and the modern forms of artistic expression. The objective of the square revitalization is to create a representative, convivial and significant public space for Râșnov.



The limits of the study area

4. THE MAIN CONCEPTUAL THEMES OF THE COMPETITION

Public space

The competition will focus particularly on fulfilling the role of public space, with all its ideal attributes and hierarchies. The symbolic significance of the meeting place of the local community and the visitors - a space for civic, cultural and artistic expression, needs to be strengthened.

Furniture and lighting

Adequate furniture represents an important component of any square. Furniture items contribute considerably to the fulfillment of the public space function and must compliment the general space structure. It is important that public lighting forms part of

the design concept and hence influences decisively the character of the square during various events or nighttime.

Pedestrian circulation and waiting areas

Pedestrian circulation is an important component of square configuration. Direct and natural pedestrian flows need to be encouraged and facilities will be provided for resting functions, flexible or specific-use spaces.

Bicycle circulation

Given that an integrated approach on environmental protection focuses on reducing pollution and encouraging open-air movement, cycling tourist routes should be built in the vicinity of Râșnov, on Citadel hill. The public space of the Union Square should be provided with bicycle parking possibilities.

5. DRAFTING THE PROJECT

The graphic part will be displayed on maximum two A0 -sized sheets of white paper (841 x 1189 mm), in vertical layout, and will consist of pieces destined to highlight (structurally, volumetrically, aesthetically) the general concept;

- a plan and sections of choice – suggestive for supporting the proposed solution;
- a representative perspective;
- detailed perspectives on contestants' choice;
- an explanatory text (maximum one A4-sized page integrated in the 2 sheets);
- schemes/sketches/suggestive proposals, other drawings or notes, on contestants' choice and deemed appropriate to understanding the proposed solution.

The sheets will be numbered in the lower right corner: "plate no./total number of pages" (1/2, 2/2). In the upper side, plate no.1 will contain the title: *The Union Square in Râșnov*. To keep anonymity, each project will have an identification symbol. This will be composed of 2 letters (capitals) followed by 4 digits, on the contestant's choice. On the front of each sheet, the identification symbol will be inscribed in the upper right corner, in a 5,00 x 3,00 cm rectangle.

All requested pieces will be submitted in digital format at the email address in conformity with the competition regulations.

6. GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- The proposal's relevance to the context
- The originality and unity of the spatial planning conception
- The value of public representation
- Design quality and capacity of the proposed design to show a relaunching role for this Place

The jury has the liberty to determine the weight and detailing of the general criteria stated in the present text.

7. COMPETITION DOCUMENTATION

- A. Competition regulations;
 - B. Ideas competition theme;
 - C. Site plan - scheme;
 - D. Site plan .pdf file
 - E. Site plan .dwg file;
 - F. Context photographs.
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