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From Design to Reality: The Journey of Macedonia's Luxor Hotel and Casino

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Abstract

This paper presents a recently constructed building - Hotel and Casino, located in Blace, North Macedonia, showcasing contemporary architecture, innovative design, and modern technology usage. Through a combination of description, design documentation, renders, and real-life photographs, the process from conception to completion will be presented. The building is not just a place for luxury and entertainment but also stands as a model for transforming modern architecture in the region. Therefore, the location, the functionality, the structural system, the façade design, and the interior decoration will be thoroughly explained. By highlighting these features and presenting important details from the building, this paper will show the importance of architectural design and the role of the architect in the project as the main leader.

Keywords: hotel, casino, design, architecture, construction

Introduction

Architectural design is based on integrated and comprehensive optimization of various aspects of buildings. Architects, as the leading representatives of the project team, play an important role in guiding and conducting the design (Shi & Yang, 2013).

The design of a casino requires a specific approach, taking into consideration various aspects for achieving a pleasant gaming area (Finlay et al., 2010). Additionally, the building is combined with a hotel, which demands careful planning and design, based on technical information, regulations and standards. Hotel design is a vital and fast-growing sector in the hospitality industry, and therefore, it should be designed with special attention (Penner et al., 2012).

This paper presents a project for a casino and hotel building with detailed explanation regarding its location, functionality, structural system, interior and exterior design, as well as the process of construction.

Project Description

The building consists of an underground level, ground floor and two floors with a total gross area of 4380 square meters. It has a specific combined structural system from reinforced concrete and steel, carefully balanced with the functionality and the aesthetics of the building.

Location

The building is located in North Macedonia, close to the border “Blace” (Figure 1), between North Macedonia and Kosovo, in the Municipality of Chucher Sandevo, which the investors chose. Their idea was for the building to be located near both countries so it would attract visitors both from Kosovo and North Macedonia. In addition, there are no other buildings in the neighborhood that are similar.

Figure 1

Location of the building (<https://www.google.com/maps/>)



Before the construction activities, the location was an empty field with grass and bushes (Figure 2). The access to the location is from the road located on the southern part which is on a lower level than the location itself.

Figure 2

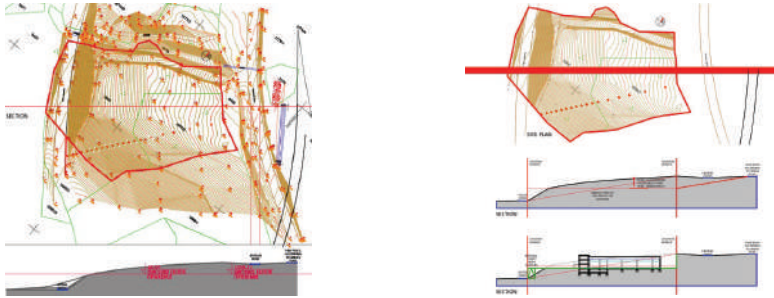
Photos of location (private photographs)



The terrain had a very high slope (Figure 2 and 3), with a distance between the lower and the higher point of more than 18 meters. The investors wanted the building to be positioned as high as possible, so it would be visible from everywhere, especially for the visitors coming from the border crossing.

Figure 3

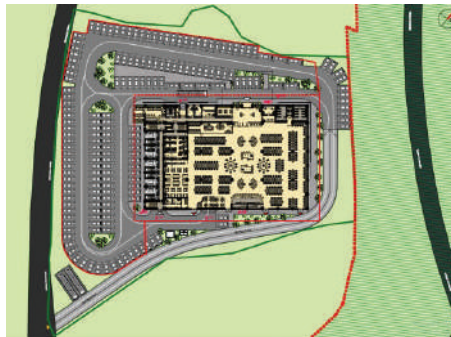
Geodetic floor plan of the site with isohypses and section (Geodetic Elaborate 0801-176/3/21)



Positioning the building on a higher level was very challenging due to the access street that leads to outside parking around the building. This street needed to have a slope acceptable for the traffic engineers according to the regulations and standards. The Site Plan is presented in Figure 4. Almost all of the area outside the building is used as parking space for visitors. The empty space is covered with greenery.

Figure 4

Site Plan (Main Project 07/23-1)



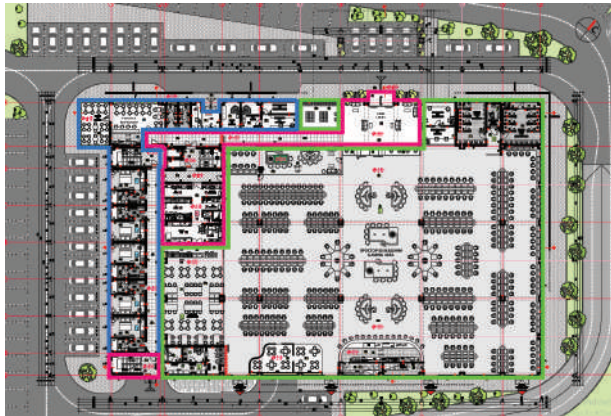
Functionality of the Building

The building is divided into four levels, where all the needed premises were arranged. The underground level covers only one part of the entire surface of the building. Technical and staff rooms, such as food storages, laundry and ironing, administration offices and rooms (changing rooms, lockers, toilets, showers etc.) and mechanical, electrical rooms are placed here.

The ground floor covers the entire surface of the building (Figure 5). There are three entrances to the ground floor plan: the main entrance for guests, the economical entrance for food and beverage delivery, and the staff entrance for administration. The economic entrance is connected to the food storage and the main kitchen, while the staff entrance is connected to the staff offices and rooms. Marked with a green outer line are the premises for the casino, including a gaming area, restaurant, bar, toilets, and cash desk. The areas marked with blue outer lines are areas for the hotel, such as hotel rooms, small restaurant for breakfast, offices, reception, doctor's room, and luggage room. The rest are shared areas, marked with red color: lobby, corridors, stairs, elevators, and kitchen.

Figure 5

Ground Floor Plan (Main Project 07/23-1)



The first and second floor are identical and intended only for hotel rooms. The space above the gaming area is higher due to mechanical installations for ventilation, cooling and heating. The quality of the air is one of the most important things while designing a casino, because people should feel pleasant and comfortable inside.

Methodology

The methodology used in this paper implies a description of the complex structural system of the building, an explanation of the interior and exterior space, as well as a brief overview of the construction process through drawings, 3D renders, and photographs.

Structural System of the Building

Regarding the structure, the building is separated into three different parts (Figure 6). The gaming area has a frame structural system from reinforced concrete columns with 12 meters spans connected with steel trusses, so that the space will be wider, there will be a bigger distance between the structural elements and more space for the gaming machines. In Figure 6, it is marked in green on the floor plan (left).

The hotel area is marked in blue and has a regular frame reinforced concrete structural system with a 6-7 meter span since the rooms don't require a bigger distance between the columns.

Finally, the canopy structure at the entrance (in yellow color) has steel trusses supported by two columns.

Each part is properly dilatated and structurally separated from the other, while at the same time stands as one functional whole.

Figure 6

Structural System of the Building (Main Project 07/23-1)



3D Representation of the Interior and Exterior Space and Construction Process

The design of the exterior and interior space was carefully performed, using materials such as metal, wood, and textile combined with special types of lights to enhance the users' experience (Figure 7). The whole building façade is painted in black so that the golden decoration would stand out using a contrasting effect. The aim of the façade design was to create a building that can be easily seen from far away. While the idea for the façade provoked an inviting and intriguing feeling, the interior space was designed in a way that provided comfort and luxury. The

curved spaces, reinforced with interesting elements in the interior such as lights and chains, allow a feeling of luxury but at the same time, coziness.

Figure 7

3D Representation of the Exterior and Interior



The construction process of the building lasted almost two years. It started with site preparation, foundation, and structural framework, exterior cladding and roofing, installation work, interior finishing, and final touches. Figure 8 represents the building during construction, while Figure 9 represents the building on the day of the opening.

Figure 8

Photos from the construction process (private photographs)



Results and Outcomes

The new hotel and casino building in North Macedonia represents a great example of contemporary architecture and design, and it exemplifies the integration of aesthetic, functionality, and structural innovation. By overcoming numerous challenges during the design and construction, the team has set a new standard in luxury and entertainment. The careful design of the interior and exterior space, combined with the functionality and structural stability, offers an amazing experience for the users.

Figure 9

Photos from the finished building (private photographs)



Discussion

The design of the building introduces contemporary architectural elements, modern materials, and design technology, which makes it a benchmark for future development in this area. It stands as a potential hub for regional tourism and luxury

experiences, inspiring similar projects in nearby areas, contributing to economic development of the municipality.

By mixing two different functions, the project is a great example of how diverse commercial purposes can coexist and enhance one another. This synergy can contribute to increased visitor numbers and extended stays, which will also have a positive impact on the region.

The solution for the structural system showcases how architects and engineers can overcome technical challenges to achieve aesthetic and functional goals. Moreover, the emphasis on sustainability through efficient building systems and practices shows the importance of reducing the environmental impact, aiming to combine luxury and eco-friendly solutions.

The design of the façade makes the building a landmark, visible from the border crossing and the surrounding area. This deliberate choice of dramatic contrast is not only meant to attract attention but also to convey a sense of luxury and sophistication, which is further emphasized in the interior design with the application of high-quality materials, sophisticated lighting, and spatial design.

Finally, the success of this project underscores the importance of teamwork in architectural practice. The architect as the main leader in the project, in correlation with all the other parties involved, is crucial for the success of the project.

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