

Cultural Heritage & Museums Romania Cultural Synergies

A Cultural Palace in Romania revived old traditions

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The Blaj Cultural Palace in Romania was distroyed during a fire and brought back to life keeping its historical significance.

The Cultural Palace was designed in 1930 for cultural events. It has been a cinema, museum, library and a broadcasting centre. Despite its importance, the palace was not listed among Romania's historical monuments. In 1995 a devastating fire burnt down most of the building, which remained in ruins until 2013. The challenge was to find a balance between maintaining the building's authenticity while adapting it to meet the current cultural needs of the community.

The new design of the Cultural Palace had to reflect the recent tragic history of the building, and be a flexible space, easily adapted to different activities. The rehabilitation preserves the character of the building, while being sensitive to the current context, the cultural life of the community and the trauma of the fire and the long abandonment, which remain deep in the consciousness of the community.

During the 17 years of abandonment, the palace became a ruin. In 2013, a technical evaluation revealed its severe deterioration. As the palace represented a danger to pedestrians, the Municipality of Blaj determined that immediate intervention was needed to restore the building to current standards.

In 2013, the municipality initiated a project to rehabilitate the building. Thanks to historical research (including oral accounts from community members) and technical expertise, it was decided that the spatial and functional design of the palace would follow the original 1930s concept. The building was redesigned to incorporate a flexible multipurpose hall.

The interventions finished in 2016, including the structural consolidation of the building and the reconstruction of the roof, the refurbishment of the interior and exterior, the renovation of the main entrance doors, and the installation of new electrical, heating, sanitary and ventilation systems.

Once the building was put into use, the new image of the

Cultural Palace was well received by the community, who greatly appreciated the resumption of cultural activities.

The initiator and promoter of this project, as well as the owner of the building, is the local administration of Blaj. The funds required for the project came from public funds of the municipality and the county. The project management was provided by the architectural bureau sc. Asiza Birou de Arhitectură srl.

This has greatly improved the view of the surrounding urban landscape. The community has regained a public heritage building as well as the only multi-use cultural facility in the town. The place contributes to social and cultural life, encouraging social participation. It is a place of collective memory and for meeting and socialising. Local craftsmen were employed for all the reconditioning of the building, one of many economic benefits to the local community.

Find more about the project here