



Avenue of the Arts

Tbilisi, Georgia

working document



The present document is a working document produced by StudioMilou Architecture and StudioMilou Singapore for the “Why Museums Now” conference to take place on the 19, 20 and 21 September 2012 in Tbilisi jointly organized by the Georgian National Museum and the Goethe Institute. The “Avenue of the Arts” project is a proposal made by StudioMilou Architecture and StudioMilou Singapore in 2012 as a revision of the 2006 Master Plan.





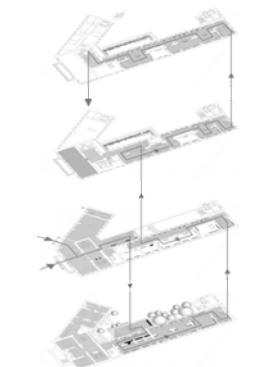
The Avenue of the Arts

Tbilisi, Georgia

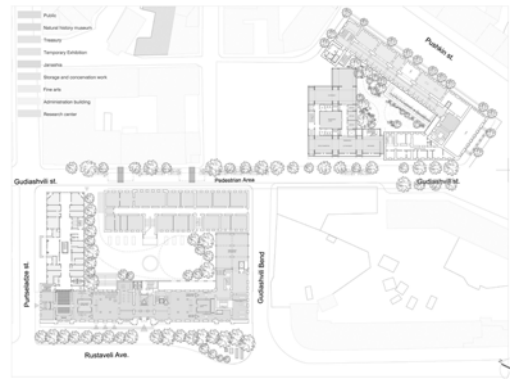
The project proposes to transform a part of Rustaveli Avenue into a place dedicated to Georgian culture, arts and traditions, a destination that is at once innovative and creative in character, located at the heart of the historic city centre.

The “Avenue of the Arts” proposal aims to provide a spectacular open-air and multi-purpose platform for the use of the different museums and cultural venues existing along Rustaveli Avenue, allowing them to present activities for the public in an open public area. It will be open in the evenings and during the daytime and will complement the city’s other attractions and activities, including those in the tourism and the hotel sector. The “Avenue of the Arts” proposal will involve key cultural and art institutions along Rustaveli Avenue in order to ensure the critical mass of exhibition and programme material needed. This creates a strong “cultural platform”, able to attract visitors from the city and beyond, to help it fulfill its historical role as the Cultural Capital of the region.

During the conference, Jean François Milou will only present the architectural and urban-planning aspects of the project. It is hoped that the presentation will open up discussion among the participants about the present situation of the Georgian National Museum and the future challenges it faces within the City of Tbilisi.



Example of a schematic isometric of the gallery extract from the 2006 collection



Plan of the different parts of the Museum Street project



Visual perspective of the space planning of the collection

The 2006 Master Plan

The Georgian National Museum Master Plan produced in 2006 was an important step forward in the renovation work underway at the Georgian National Museum. The Master Plan synthesizes, in terms of function, urban-planning and architecture, the consultations that had been carried out by the National Museum over the previous three years, as well as the planning work that had been undertaken in collaboration with UNESCO and its institutional partners (GNM Concept Paper and State of Collections Analysis).

The Master Plan aimed to function as a reference document for the Georgian National Museum that would allow the restructuring of the Museum to be properly planned and would serve as an additional decision-making tool in the daily management of the Museum.

The 2006 Georgian National Museum Master Plan proposed the development of a renovation project for the National Museum within the framework of a large-scale urban project “The Museum Street” that included the creation of an urban district dedicated to the arts and culture. This district would develop its own characteristic activities over time and would become an attraction in its own right within the City of Tbilisi.



Concept perspective from Janashia Museum





Reassessing the 2006 Master Plan

The 2006 Georgian National Museum Master Plan remains important as an internal technical document giving recommendations for the management of the museums in the historic centre of Tbilisi. It has proven to be a key document in assisting the management of the Georgian National Museum in the decision-making process for the renovation of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia and for the planning of future developments (Restoration & Conservation Centre and Museum of Fine Arts).

However, the 2006 Master Plan was never meant to be a public document, and it did not aim to convey a Vision of the Georgian Museums that could be easily shared with a larger public. In the same way, it was not intended to develop strategies beyond the institution nor bring awareness to the present and future circumstances of the Museum sector in Georgia.

As a result, the 2006 Master Plan did not provide strategic solutions to some of the key problems that have impacted the Georgian National Museum over recent years, including:

- Respecting and conserving the historical fabric of the city center by implementing tighter control on the Civic District's urban development and thereby ameliorating and maintaining GNM's image in the city.
- Strengthening the position of Tbilisi as a cultural capital and destination in the region by raising strong political and financial support for the Cultural and Museum sectors.
- Garnering civil society and political support for a carefully developed heritage architectural strategy for the Museum district, giving priority to exemplary architectural conservation practices and the historical fabric of the district.





Opportunities Today...

Experience acquired over the past six years will naturally cause the Georgian National Museum to revise its vision and redefine its strategy for the coming years.

The City of Tbilisi project that redesigns Rustaveli Avenue within a new tramway infrastructure plan connecting different sectors of the city with the historical centre is a key change. This will allow better connections to be made between the city and the historic centre and Museum District, and it will create the conditions necessary for a well-connected cultural destination in the historic centre of the city.

In addition, the vacancy, or underutilization, of key public buildings in the vicinity of the National Museum, among them the old parliament buildings and the National Youth's Palace of Tbilisi, could provide new opportunities for the Georgian cultural sector in general and more specifically for the Georgian National Museum.

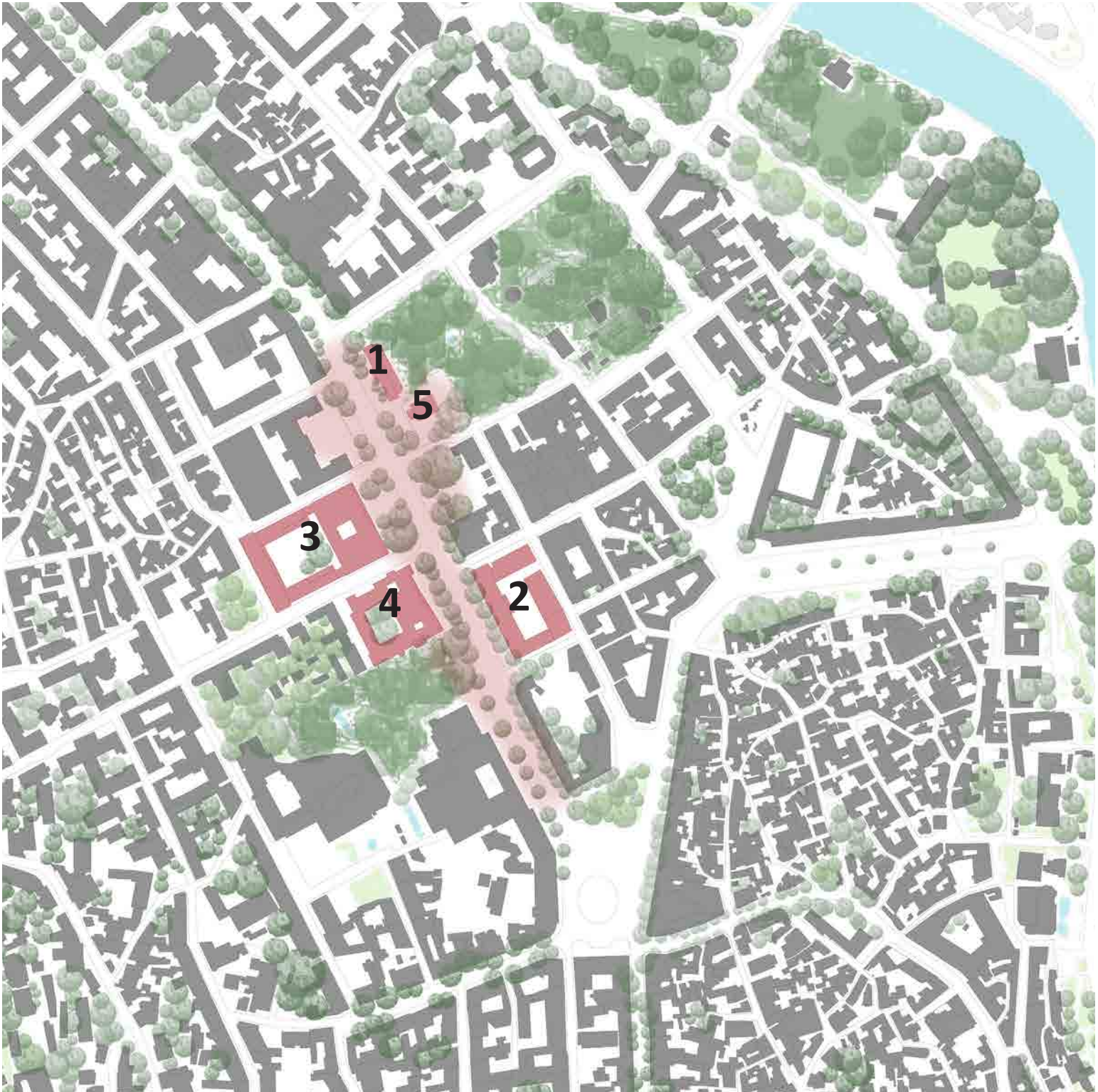
These changes and projects have created the conditions necessary for a revision of the 2006 Master Plan, compelling it to become a more ambitious and at the same time clearer project that uses Rustaveli Avenue as a piazza uniting various cultural institutions and an ambitious cultural platform that can deliver a wide range of exhibitions, programmes and activities throughout the day and at all times of the year.



New tramway, new paving treatment of the road allowing reduction of car speed along this section of the Avenue

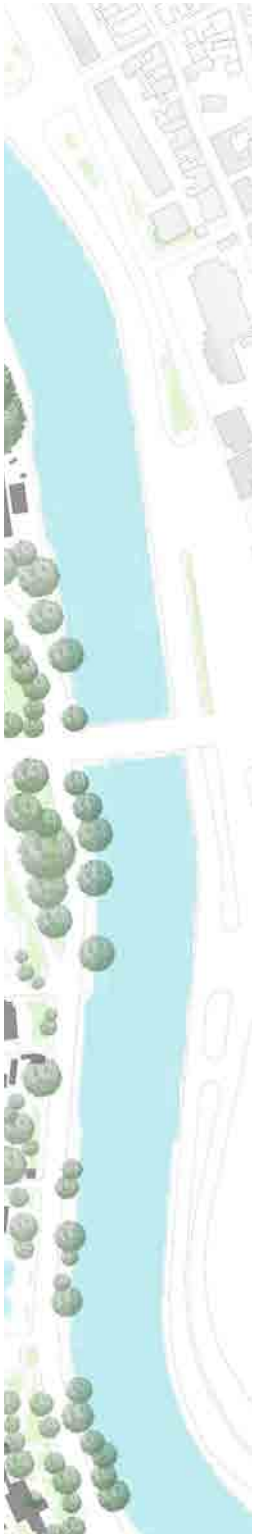


Occasional closure of car traffic along this section of Rustaveli Avenue with automated bollards





The creation of the tramway line and control of the car traffic along this section of Rustaveli Avenue will create a platform for all programmes



- 1** National Gallery of the Arts
- 2** S. Janashia Museum of Georgia (GNM)
- 3** Parliament Building
- 4** National Youth's Palace of Tbilisi
- 5** Kashueti Church

An Acropolis of Georgian Culture

The project proposes to regulate automobile traffic on Rustaveli Avenue between Freedom Square and the Marriot Hotel and to find new uses for the existing buildings, among them the former parliament buildings and the National Youth's Palace of Tbilisi. It takes advantage of and coordinates infrastructure projects already underway by the City of Tbilisi, such as the tramway and the landscaping of the urban public spaces, bringing them together in a single project: the "Avenue of the Arts".

In this way, the public space of Rustaveli Avenue will function as a platform for exhibitions, cultural programmes and other events that will be open to all throughout the day and during the evening. The educational and religious institutions located on this part of Rustaveli Avenue, as well as the museums, will be able to coordinate among themselves in order to present a calendar of cultural events that will be worthy of the "Avenue of the Arts" and will reflect the dates of the national and religious calendar.

The aim of the project is to encourage the volume of cultural events and programmes necessary to create a Living Cultural Platform in the district that will function as an Acropolis of Georgian Culture and will serve as a cultural destination not only for residents of Tbilisi, but also for visitors and tourists from the region and from the world as a whole.

The project is on the scale necessary to give back to Tbilisi its status as the cultural and artistic capital of the Caucasus, and it could well look for inspiration to other similar projects elsewhere, for example in Brisbane in Australia, in the South Bank area of London and in the area of London around the Tate Modern.



National Gallery of the Arts

Former Military Historical Museum "Temple of Glory"

1885-1888 Architect A. Salzman

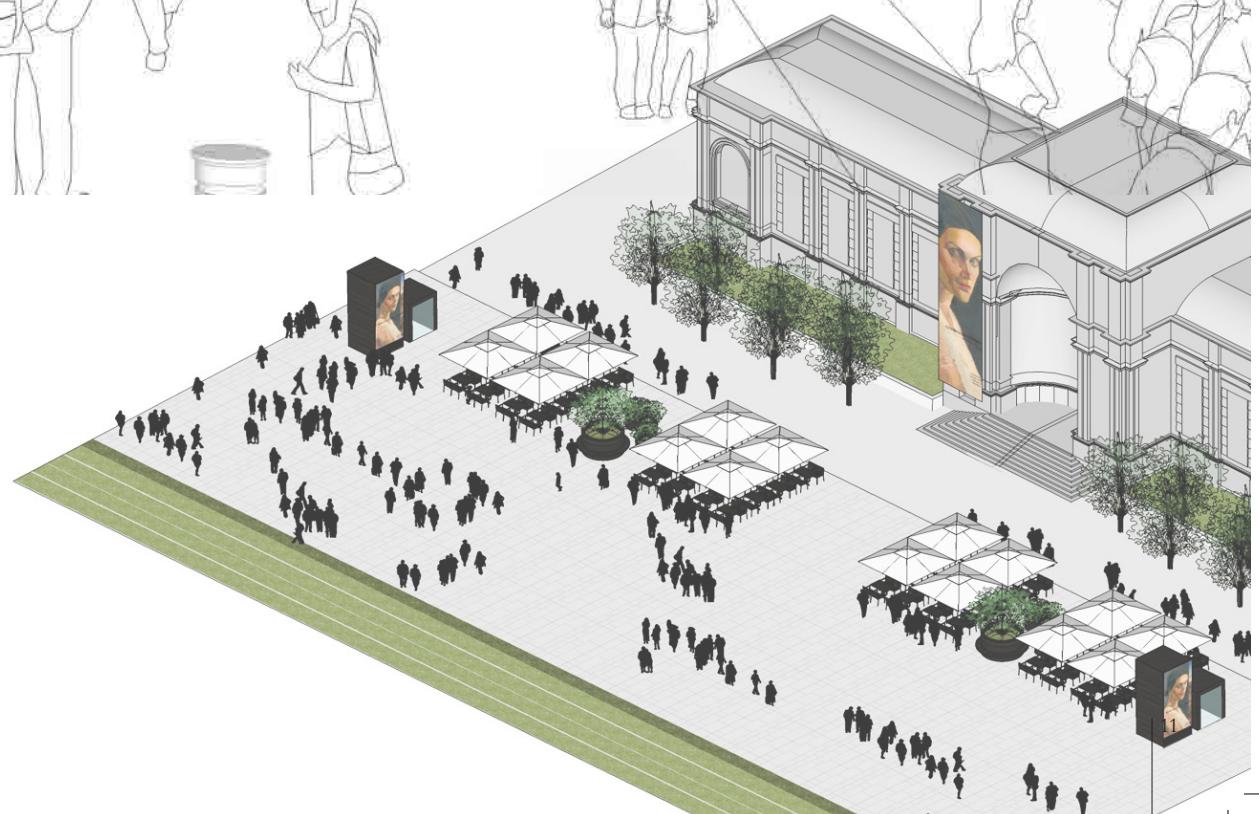
2012 "Ainda Arquitectura"

Contribution to the "Avenue Of the Arts" Programme

- Exhibition, Programmes,
- Café, Restaurants, Terraces, Shops, Bookshop,
- Open Garden
- Open air performances
- Evening programmes



View of Rustaveli Avenue in front of the National Gallery of the Arts when the Avenue is closed to car traffic





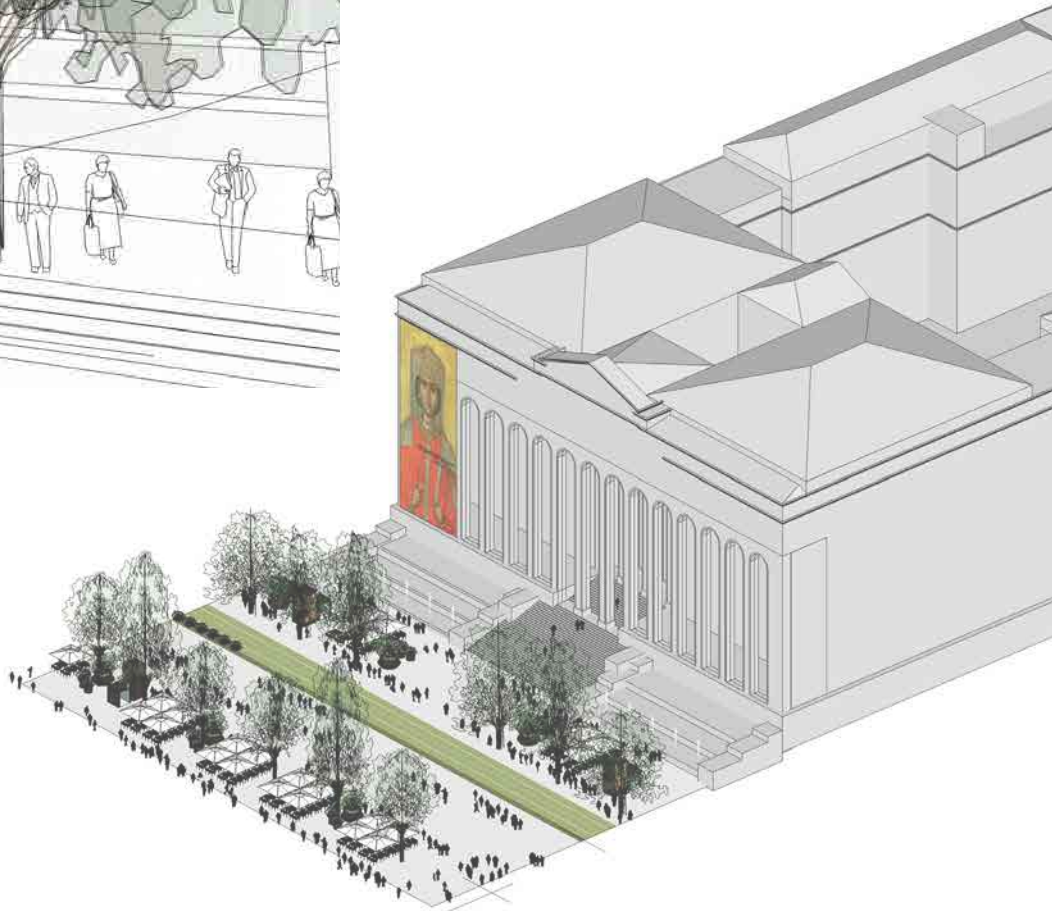
View of Rustaveli Avenue in front of the Parliament when the Avenue is open to reduced speed car traffic

Parliament Building

Upper Building (former Council of Ministers, Parliament of Georgia)
 1933-1938, Architects – V. Kokorin, G. Lezhava
 Lower Building (Former Presidium of Supreme Council, Supreme Council, Parliament of Georgia)
 1946-1953, Architects G. Lezhava, V. Koronin, V. Nasaride

Contribution to the “Avenue Of the Arts” Programme

- Hotel of the Arts, Artist in residence
- Exhibition, Programmes,
- Café, Restaurants, Terrace, Shops, Bookshop,
- Open air performances on existing stairs
- Evening programmes on the courtyard





S. Janashia Museum of Georgia

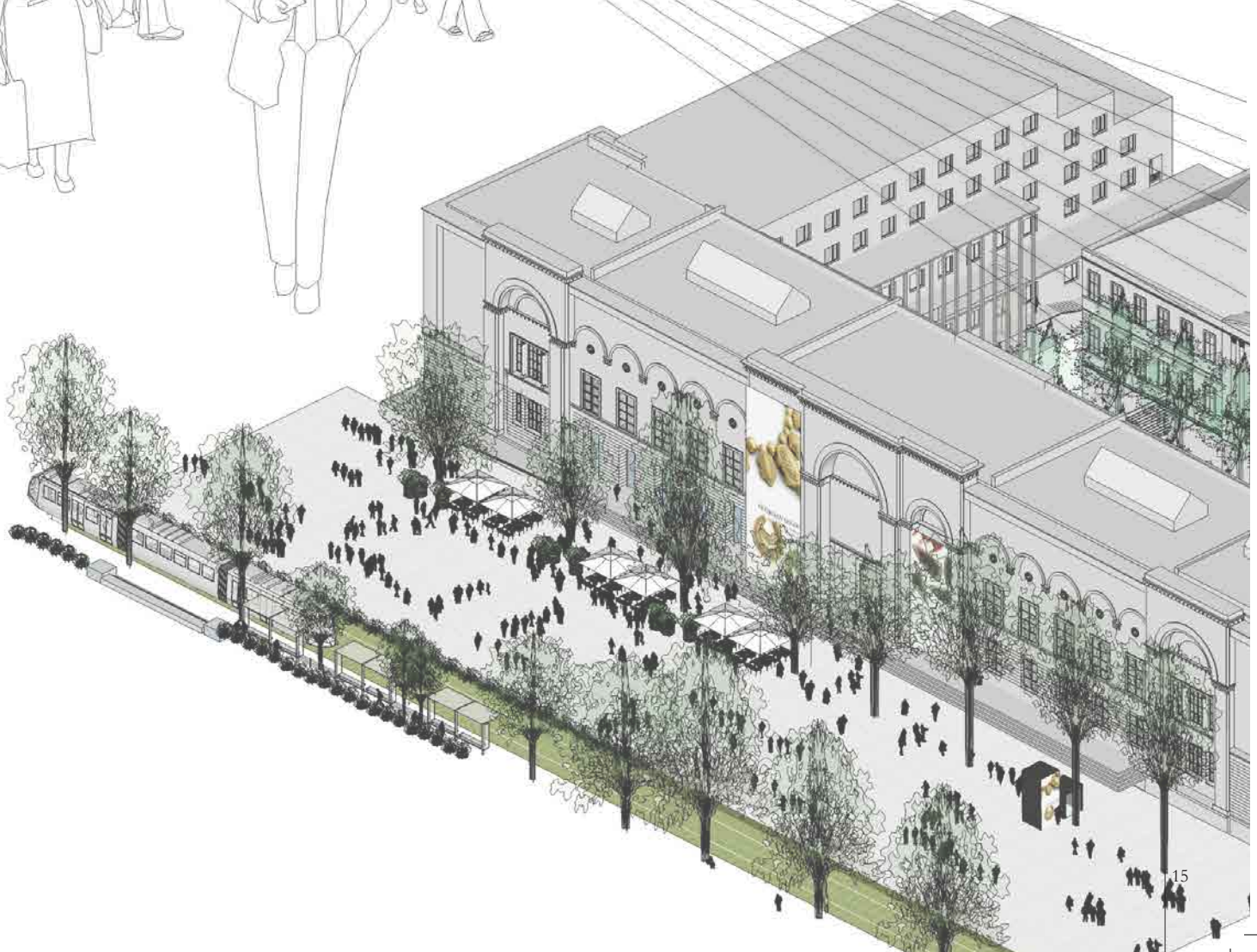
1910 Architect – M. Neprintsev
1929 Architect – N. Severov

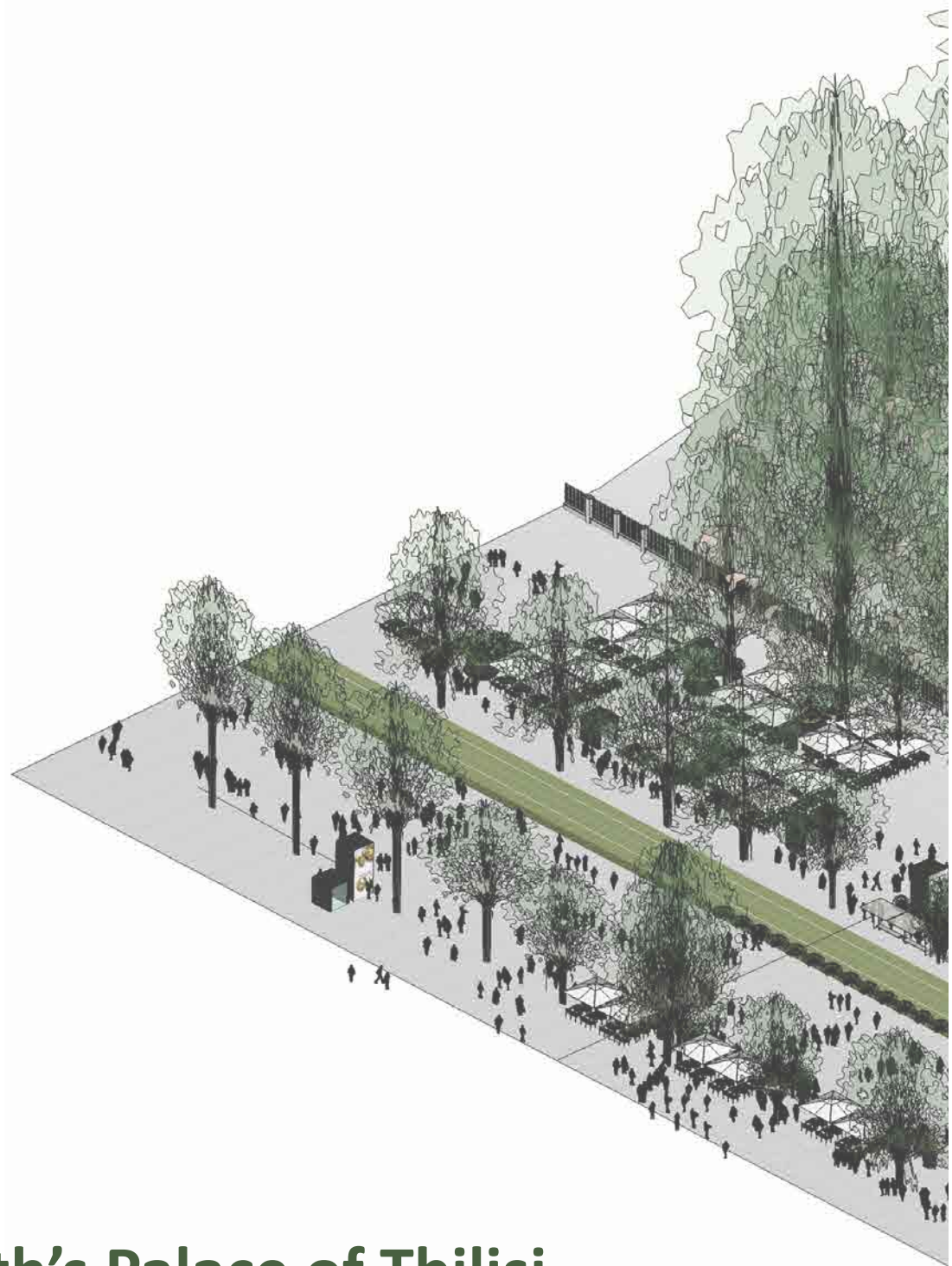
Contribution to the “Avenue Of the Arts” Programme

- Exhibition, Programmes,
- Café, Restaurants, Terrace,
- Shops, Bookshop,
- Open air performances
- Evening programmes on the courtyard
- Auditorium programme



View of Rustaveli Avenue in front of the Janashia Museum when the Avenue is closed to car traffic





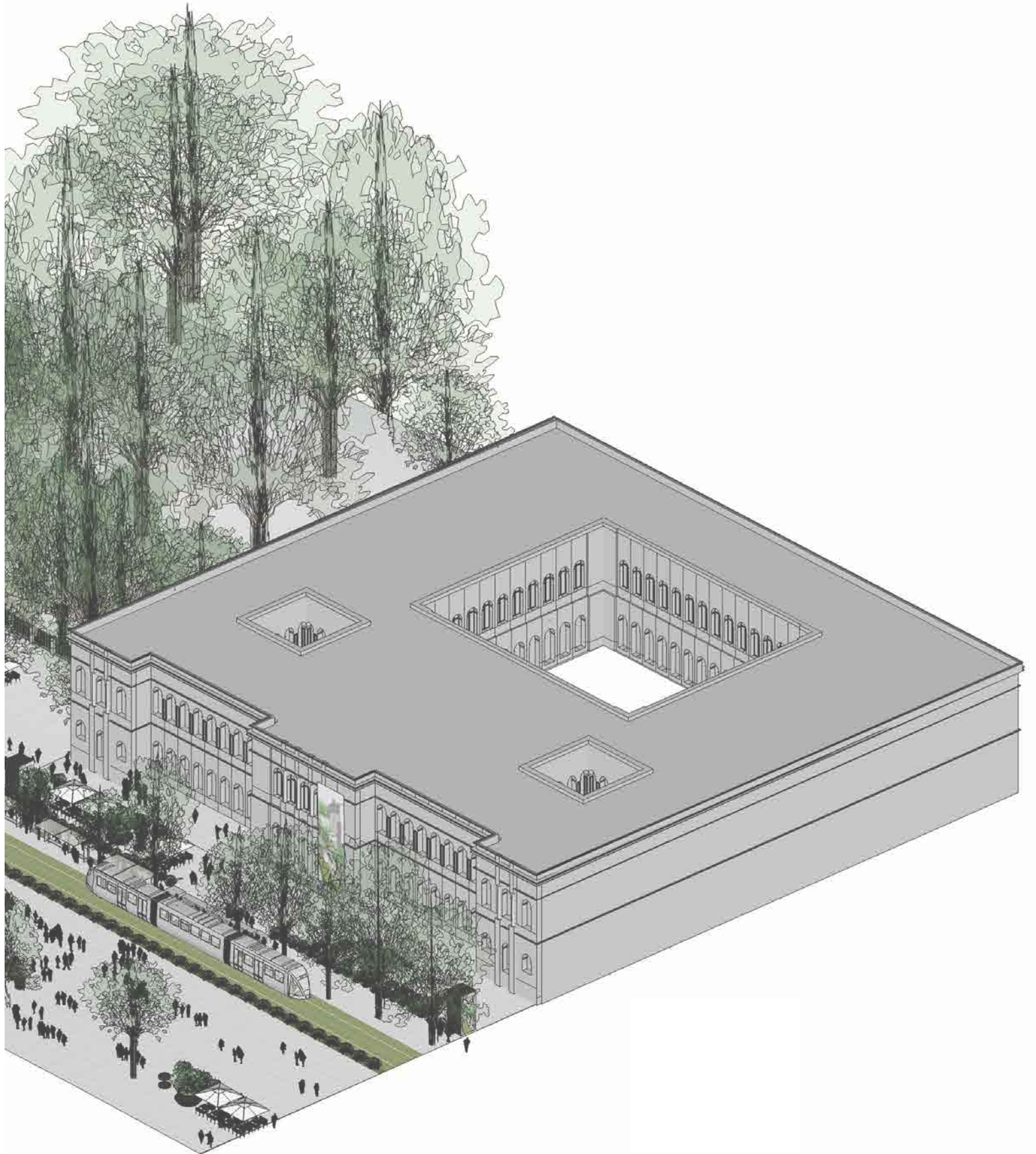
National Youth's Palace of Tbilisi

1845-1847, Architect – N. Semionov

1865-1869 Architect, O.J. Simonson 1865-1869

Contribution to the “Avenue Of the Arts” Programme

- House of the “Avenue of the Art” Project
- Exhibition, Programmes,
- Café, Restaurants, Terraces, Shops, Bookshop,
- Open Garden
- Open air performances
- Evening programmes





View of Rustaveli Avenue in front of the Kashueti Church when the Avenue is open to reduced speed car traffic

Kashueti Church

1904-1910 Architect - L. Bielfeld

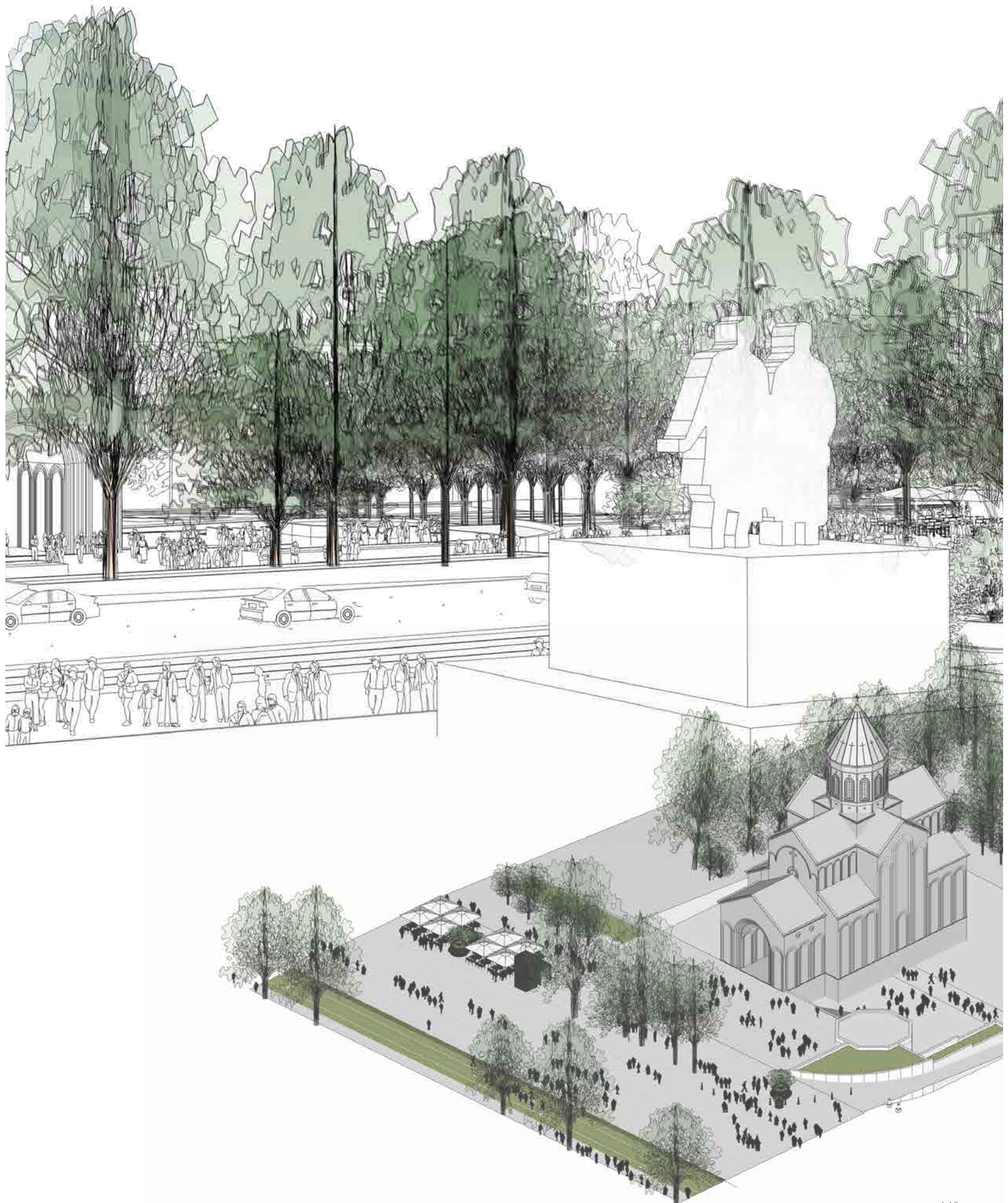
Sketches of Stone Ornament – E. Andreoletti

Sculptor – N. Agladze

Paintings of altar – L. Gudiashvili, 1947

Contribution to the “Avenue Of the Arts” programme

- Space for prayer and meditation
- Historical religious monument to visit
- Open Garden
- Religious mass and rite performances
- Presentation of Religious art



The following members of the studioMilou team involved in this proposal are:

Jean François Milou, Principal Architect
Suzanne Ogge, International Projects and Heritage
Agueda De Urruela, Coordination (studioMilou architecture)

and

Sioh Zhi Xiang, Architect
Luther Seet, Architect
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Melanie Mason, Graphic Designer
David Tresilian, Translation

