

ARCHITECTURAL FACT SHEET

DESCRIPTION:	<p>The Museum of the History of Polish Jews (MHPJ) is the world's only museum to tell a story of the Jewish people from the Middle Ages to today. Welcomed as a breath of new life in an area often mired in sadness and loss, the Museum is an educational and cultural center devoted to sharing the rich cultural heritage of Jews of Polish descent. With over 10 million Americans of Polish descent and 50% of the world's Jews tracing their ancestry to Poland, the world eagerly anticipates the beginning of construction of this important new cultural institution. Projected attendance estimates include over 30,000 Americans, 50,000 Israelis and hundreds of thousands of Europeans each year.</p>
LOCATION:	<p>The MHPJ is located in what was the heart of the Warsaw Jewish Quarter, where from the 19th century through 1939, between 70 and 90% of its inhabitants were Jewish. Beginning in 1940, the Nazis began concentrating Poland's population of over 3 million Jews into a number of extremely overcrowded ghettos in various Polish cities. The Warsaw Jewish Quarter became the Warsaw Ghetto, holding an estimated 440,000 people in a densely-populated area. Even before the Nazis began their massive deportation of Jews from the ghetto to extermination camps, thousands of Warsaw Ghetto Jews died due to rampant disease or starvation. It is also the site of the largest Jewish uprising in German-occupied Europe: the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. This month-long fight by organized members of the ghetto attempted to prevent further deportation of ghetto residents to the concentration camps. The Nazis ended the fighting by burning the ghetto and killing or deporting any surviving Jews.</p> <p>In 1998, the Warsaw City Council donated 3.2 acres (13,000 square meters) within the former Prewar Jewish Quarter and Warsaw Ghetto to the future home of the Museum. In 1948, a monument designed by Nathan Rappaport was dedicated to the resistance fighters. This monument is located directly across the plaza from the future museum. The land around the monument and the museum will remain a public park.</p>
ARCHITECT:	<p>Mahlamäki and Lahdelma Architects, of Helsinki, Finland Finnish architectural firm specializing in museums and cultural centers throughout Europe. Team of 30 led by Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmari Lahdelma www.ark-l-m.fi</p>
SCHEDULE:	<p>Groundbreaking: June 26, 2007 Grand Opening: 2009</p>
PROJECT COST:	<p>At least \$65 million, not including the value of the land At least \$33 million is for construction</p>
DIMENSIONS:	<p>The Museum building is 5 stories in height, 4 of which are above ground. The total height of the building is 85 feet (26 meters), with over 62 feet (19 meters) rising above ground level.</p> <p>The 16,000 sq. ft., entrance hall cuts through the entire building and reaches from the ground level to the roof, a soaring space over 52 feet (16 meters) in height. Part of the temporary exhibition space is two stories high, measuring about 30 feet (over 9 meters). The auditorium and its lobby are also double-height spaces.</p>

FACILITIES:

The Museum's public space measures 140,000 square feet, featuring eight central galleries that together comprise 43,000 square feet. Other interior features include a 500-seat auditorium and a restaurant that can accommodate 150 visitors. A 5,400 square-foot, state-of-the-art education center will feature multimedia displays and web-based kiosks. A reading room and research center with individual study stations will also be available to visitors. The building is fully wheelchair-accessible.

BUILDING DESIGN:

The building is a compact, cuboid form designed to complement rather than overshadow Nathan Rappaport's 1948 *Memorial of the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto*, situated directly across the plaza from the museum entrance. The signature design feature is a dramatic jagged chasm that cuts through the entire museum, from the roof to the entrance, dividing the museum spaces and allowing natural light to stream throughout the building from the ceiling and both front and rear walls.

The building's dramatic gash and glass walls reveal an interior of organic, undulating forms. This design alludes to the Old Testament's miraculous parting of the Red Sea through which the prophet Moses led the Jews to escape captivity in Egypt. In this way, the museum's overall plan foregrounds the life of the Jewish people over any particular catastrophic events in history, and its transparency reflects the desire for a truthful reckoning of the past.

The museum's curving walls and ceilings were made possible by the use of Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and 3-D modeling. The entire building exterior is made of tempered glass, with a double skin façade to protect against heat and offer high quality sun protection. Lighting systems will be designed with energy-saving solutions in mind.

MATERIALS:

The building frame will be concrete, and facades will be made of prepatinated copper and glass. Some exterior components will be made of concrete cast in situ. The floors will be made of either concrete or wood, while entrance halls will be made of limestone and yellowish concrete. The roof will be covered with gravel made of either glass or limestone. The majority of the materials will come from Poland and throughout Europe.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

Landscaping around the museum will be completed in cooperation with the City of Warsaw. Existing trees will be preserved or moved with the objective of maintaining a green area around the museum building. The parking lot will feature green-colored stones to complement the natural greenery nearby.

ARCHITECTURAL PROCESS:

The Finnish architectural team of Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmari Lahdelma was selected in 2005 after an international competition conducted by a jury of 13 architectural scholars, museum directors and cultural affairs professionals from around the world. This type of competition was the first of its kind in Poland. The winning design prevailed over 117 architectural submissions and 10 other short-listed entries, including those submitted by Studio Daniel Libeskind, Peter Eisenman Architects, Kengo Kuma and Zvi Hecker.

Lahdelma and Mahlamäki Architects was founded in 1997; the partners began working together in 1985. The firm's commissions include a broad range of projects, including public buildings, office buildings, housing, renovations, urban planning, and furniture design. The firm is best known for its design of Lusto, The Finnish Forest Museum in Punkaharju, Finland.

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