

contract

International Interiors From Budapest to Stockholm and Hong Kong

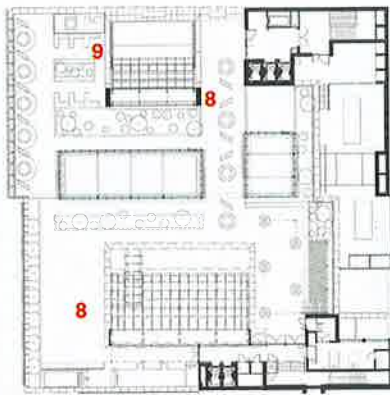
Inside the IIDA Headquarters

Previewing
Healthcare Design
Expo + Conference

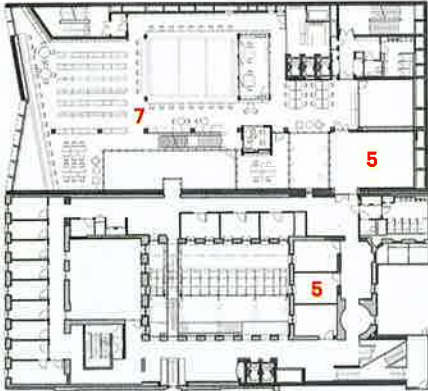
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

By Alia Akkam
Photography by
Tamas Bujnovszky

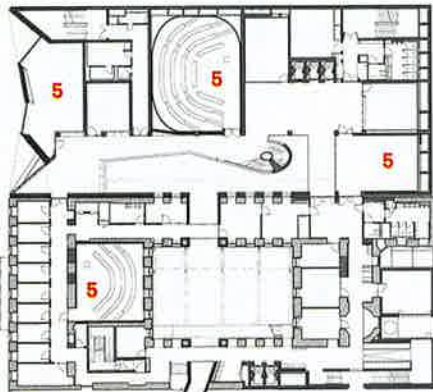
For a university in Budapest that celebrates higher education within open democracy, O'Donnell + Tuomey stitches together old and new, historic and modern



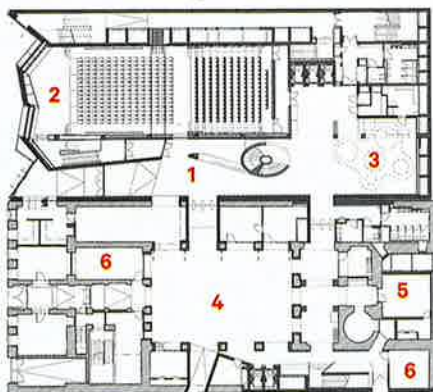
Seventh Floor



Fourth Floor

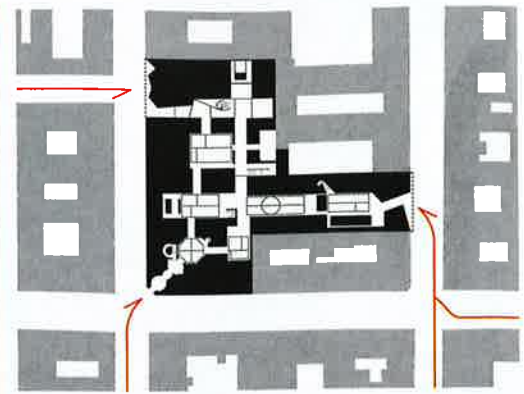


First Floor



Ground Floor

- 1 Reception
- 2 Auditorium
- 3 Cafe
- 4 Event court
- 5 Classroom
- 6 Meeting room
- 7 Library
- 8 Roof terrace
- 9 Study boxes



Site Plan

O'Donnell + Tuomey is led by Sheila O'Donnell and Tuomey, who were the 2015 recipients of the Royal Gold Medal bestowed by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

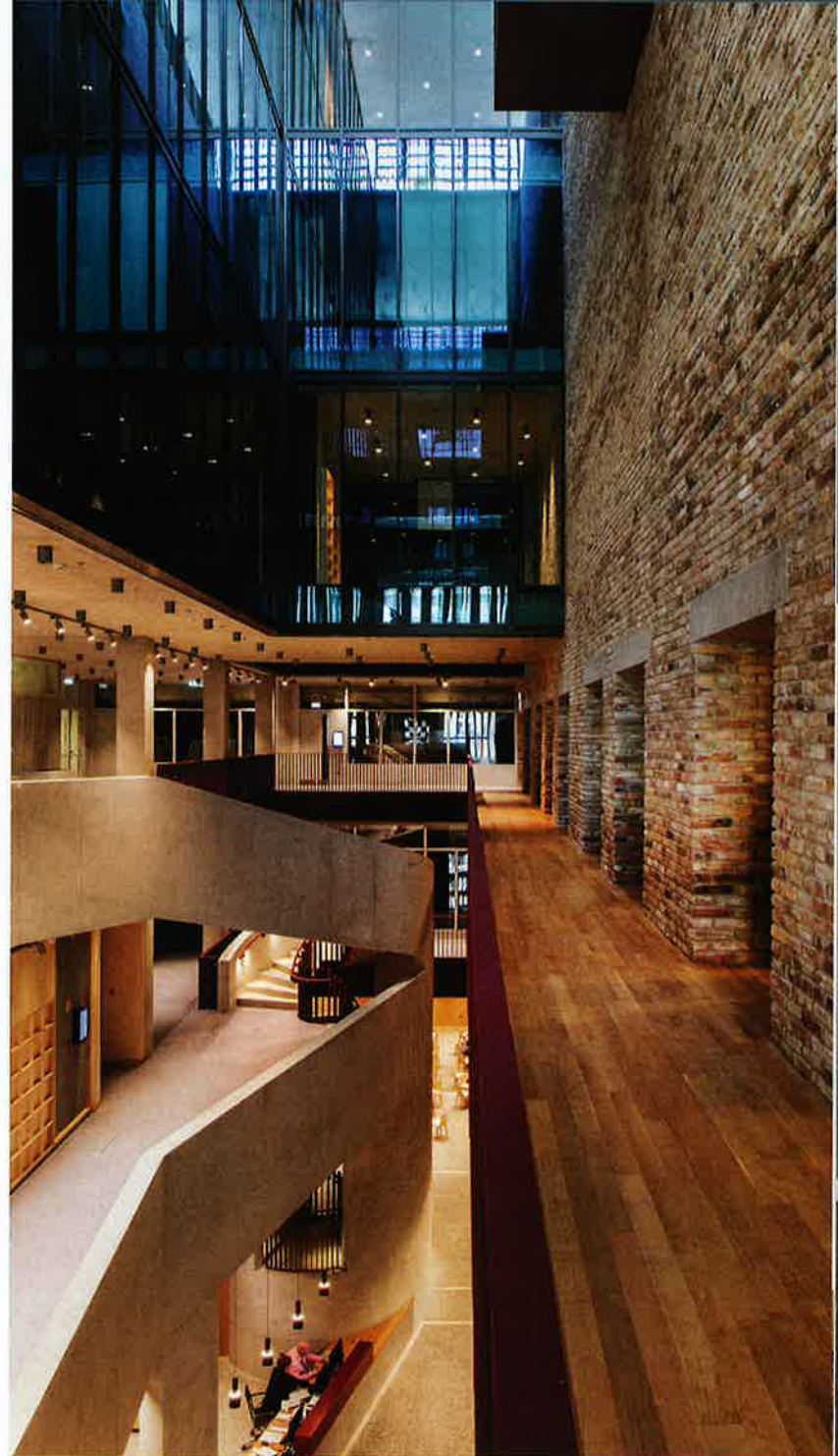
CEU is a graduate-level university founded and financially supported by Budapest native George Soros, the Hungarian-American hedge fund manager and philanthropist. By 2012, CEU was growing rapidly. A flurry of new academic departments, research programs, and students demanded an efficient and sustainable growth plan, says Pal Baross, director of the campus redevelopment office.

The design brief called for linking buildings, honoring the past, and fostering a collaborative learning environment. The overall plan requires a multiphase transformation of five adjoining, previously disconnected historic buildings and the construction of two new buildings. The 168,000-square-foot first phase, complete and featured here, comprises a new building known by the address 15 Nádor connected to a circa-1841 structure at 13 Nádor, which was completely gutted and renovated. Where necessary, ramps and staircases were strategically placed to align floor levels between the old and new buildings. The time frame for future phases has not been established.

Inside the new structure, a five-story library, characterized by birch wood fenestration, is centered on an atrium. An auditorium is at ground level for lectures and events, and a cafe and classrooms complete the program. "The new library and

The first time John Tuomey, co-director of the Dublin-based architecture practice O'Donnell + Tuomey, visited Budapest, it was to attend the competition briefing for a new building with the renovation of existing structures at the city's Central European University (CEU). Immediately, he was struck by Budapest's beauty and CEU's sightlines looking toward the Danube River. Forging a visual relationship between the school and the river, and Buda and the hills beyond, he thought, was essential for CEU's new chapter.

The CEU board agreed, and O'Donnell + Tuomey, in collaboration with local firm M-Teampannon, embarked on a five-year project.



Clad with Hungarian limestone, the facade of 15 Nádor (opposite) serves as the new public face of the university. Inside, concrete paving (above, left) establishes a relationship with the urban context. Connecting staircases (above) encourage movement and architectural dialogue between the various structures.

Key Design Highlights

Linking a building dating from 1841 to a new structure, the project forges visual relationships between the school, the city, and the river.

Ramps and staircases were strategically placed to align floor levels between old and new buildings and to imbue the interiors with a sense of movement.

The five-story library features a glass-topped central atrium with birch wood cladding.

Intelligent glass roofs in the courtyards respond to climate conditions and provide access to light and air.

The Hungarian limestone facade of 15 Nádor provides a new public face for the university.

A spiral staircase (left) made of concrete and raw steel painted red oxide is a focal point in the entry foyer. Glazed walls (opposite, top) allow light to penetrate the interiors. The ground-floor cafe (opposite, bottom) provides a place for students and faculty to congregate.



auditorium building architecturally captures CEU's mission to be transformative, yet is respectful of the urban heritage within the historical context of downtown Budapest," Baross explains. "Courtyards are the most consistent feature. The architects not only reinterpreted new uses for them, but established connectivity and turned them into energy-saving spaces."

Modern yet contextual

Capped in new intelligent glass roofs that respond to climate conditions, these courtyards are inspired by the centerpieces of old Budapest housing stock: "Residences that were palaces," Tuomey says. At CEU, courtyard purposes are both utilitarian and eco-friendly—semi-conditioned gateways to neighboring buildings that amplify light and air. Openings are pierced through with connecting staircases that strengthen movement and create an architectural dialogue.

As the new public face of the university, 15 Nádor's facade is fashioned from Hungarian limestone sourced from the same quarry as numerous other structures throughout the city. Accentuated by aluminum and a perforation pattern, an element that is echoed in the auditorium, the building is modern yet connected to historic context.

"We wanted to design a public Hungarian building that is as classic to the city as the opera house, but with contemporary relevance," says

Central European University

Architect and Interior

Designer **O'Donnell + Tuomey**

Local Architect **M-Teampannon**

Client **Central**

European University

Where **Budapest**

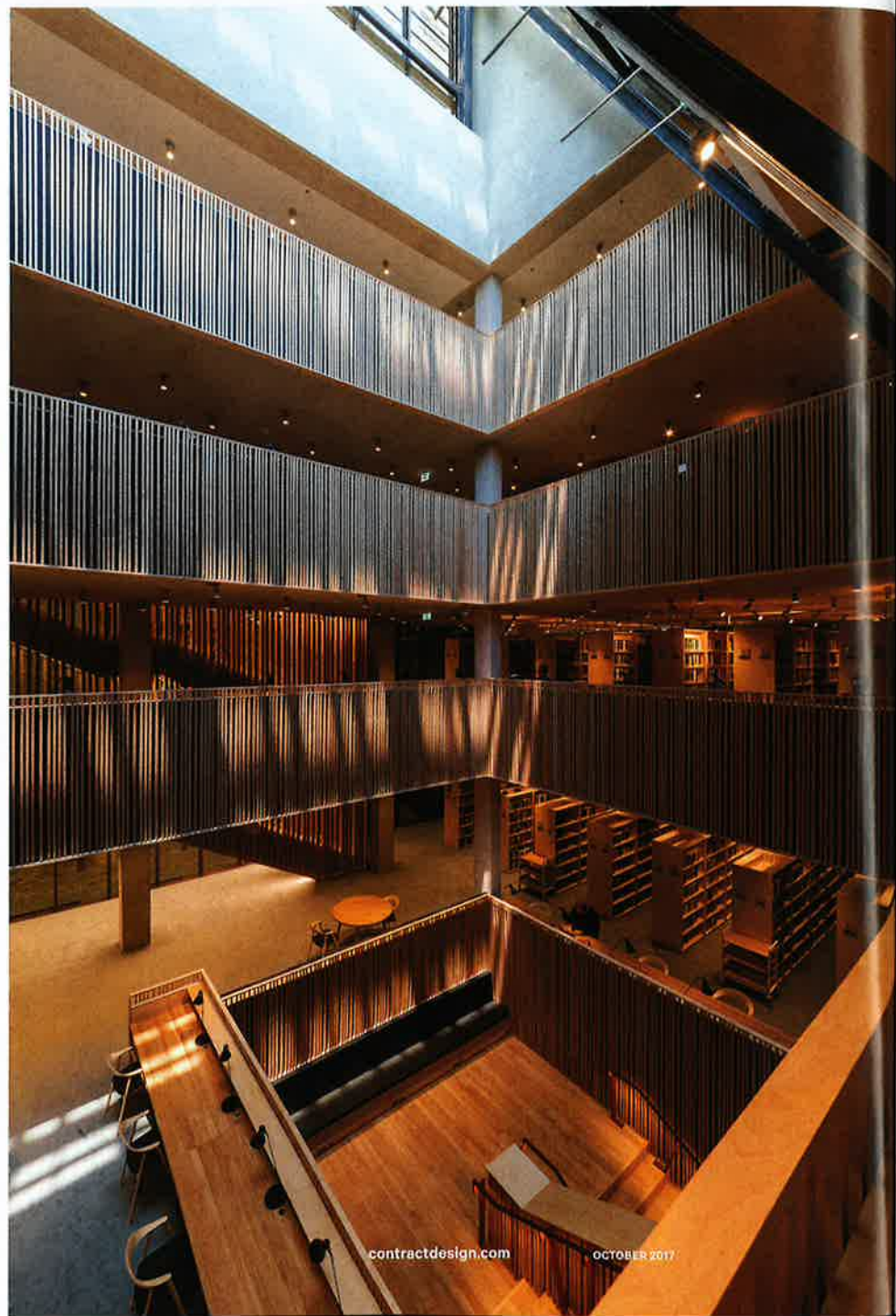
What **168,000 total square feet on 10 floors**

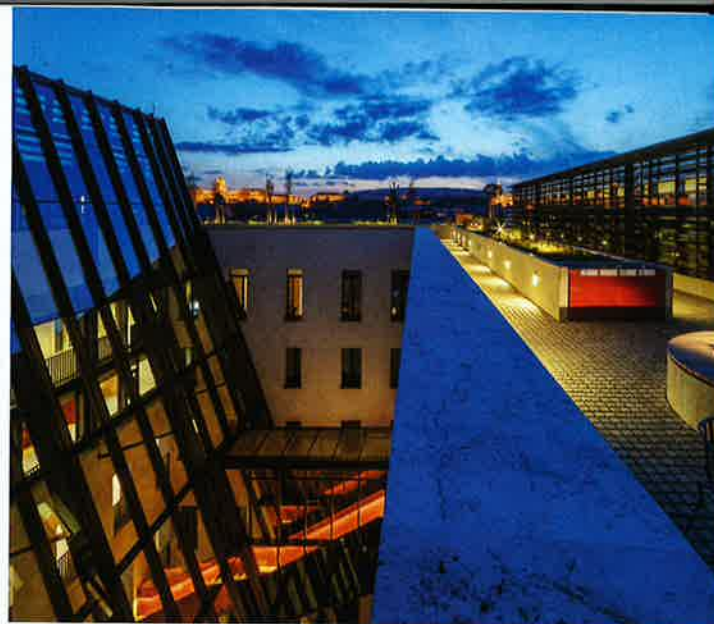
Cost/sf **\$162.20**

For a full project source list, see page 68 or visit contractdesign.com,



A library atrium (right and below, right) is capped with an intelligent glass roof that responds to climate conditions. Circular skylights illuminate a reading area (below). Semi-conditioned gateways (opposite, left) connect neighboring buildings. The roof terrace (opposite, right) features planters, pavers made from local timber, and a variety of seating.





Máté Hidasnemeti, an architect at M-Teampannon. The new building is set back from the street in some portions and pulled forward in others. A direct axis to the Danube brightens views from the classrooms, cafe, auditorium, and library.

Stitching old and new

Inside 15 Nádor, concrete mimics pavement to enrich the wider urban connection, and brick is indistinguishable from the original found in the adjoining 13 Nádor. The reception desk in the entry foyer is placed adjacent to a spiral staircase—a nod to a stairwell at a Budapest inn that Tuomey is enamored with. Crafted in concrete and raw steel painted red oxide, the staircase is a focal point.

The sprawling rooftop over both the new and existing buildings, accessible to all within the university, is designed with lush landscaping, pavers made from local timber, and a variety of seating.

“A new building can be easy, but if you’re trying to make a radical transformation and stitch old and new together, that is a complex and painstakingly careful business,” says Tuomey. “We wanted a contrast, but we didn’t want to lose the dignity of either.”

Considering that Soros is also the founder of the Open Society Foundations, which support democracy, this institution—focused on the social sciences, humanities, and public policy—is guided by similar values, and Tuomey wanted the design to reflect that. “We had this idea,” he says, “of pulling the city more into the campus and pushing the university out into Budapest.” **c**