

THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE OF HO CHI MINH CITY

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION | JANUARY 2015

DOSSIER B - CONCEPT DESIGN REPORT

SUMMARY

1	INTRODUCTION - CREATING PLACES OF MEANING.....	3
2	DEVELOPMENT STAKES AND OBJECTIVES	5
3	MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT	8
4	THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE - OR TELLING THE STORY OF HO CHI MINH CITY	12
5	A NEW IMAGE OF GOVERNANCE	18

True men of progress are those who take a deep-seated respect of the past as their starting point.

Ernest Renan – author, historian, philosopher (1823-1892)

1 INTRODUCTION - CREATING PLACES OF MEANING

The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City called for an international competition for the redevelopment of the city's Administrative Centre. The project is a major undertaking not only for the municipal government but also for the people of Vietnam's most prosperous city.

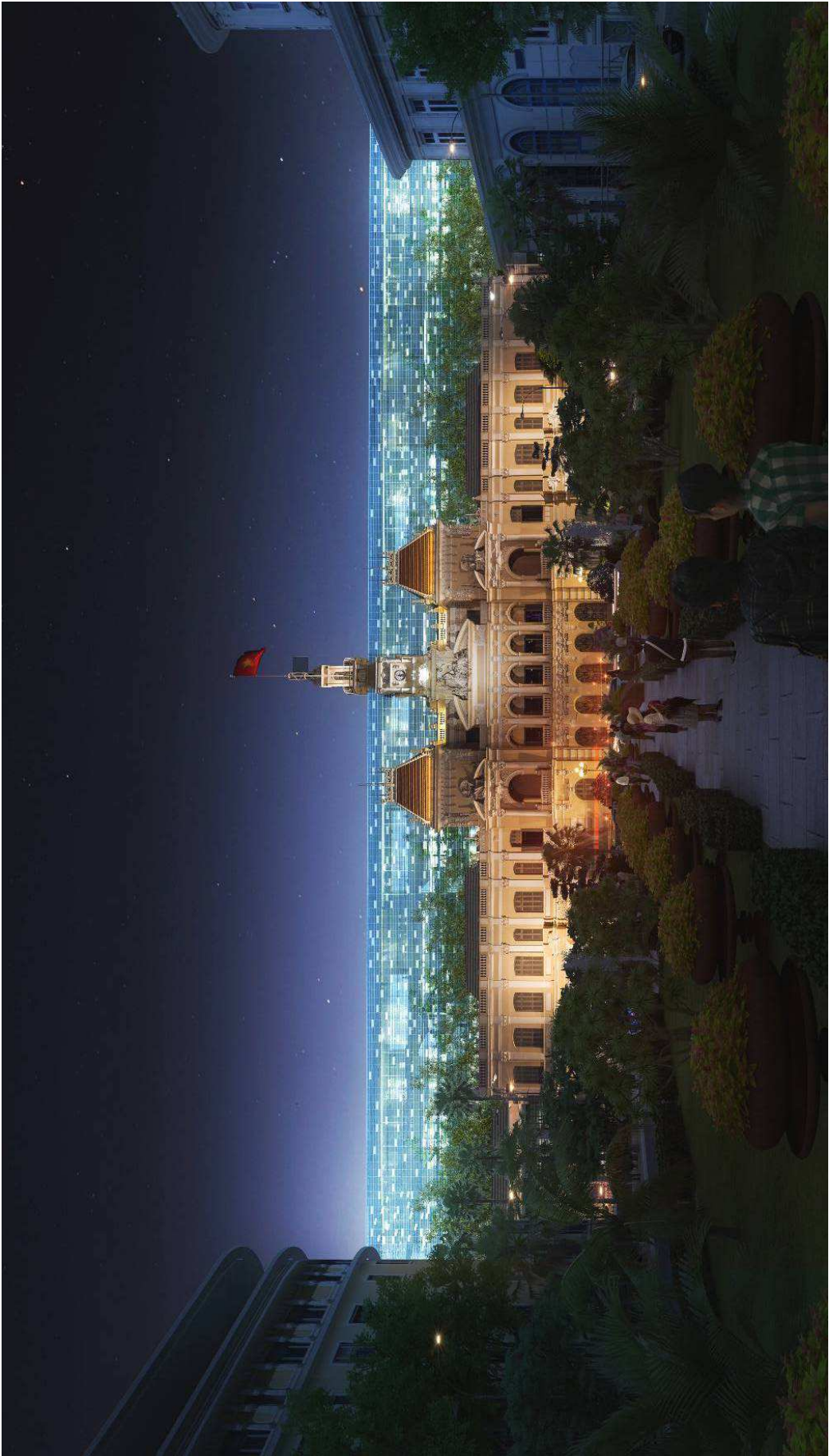
The new Administrative Centre to be developed on the site of the historic City Hall will be a project layered with history. More than just the construction of new offices or the creation of a singular building, the redevelopment is a unique opportunity to reflect on the identity of a city which in 300 years has grown from a small outpost of a sparsely inhabited territory into a modern metropolis of over 7 million people.

Our consortium's concept for the new Administrative Centre seeks to reconcile the city's rich history with its progressive ambitions. Our aim is to be exemplary in **respecting heritage** as well as in **embracing bold ideas and new practices**, from working methodologies to the end result.

The new Administrative Centre will thus be a project that **tells the story of Ho Chi Minh City** through a harmonious composition of new and old where each object participates to bring coherence and sense to a united entity. It is about creating new type of place imbued with meaning that will :

- promote a new image of governance based on values of civic service;
- provide a modern working environment for administrators and representatives; and
- connect with the past and render tangible layers of history that are no longer visible.

This Concept Design Report elaborates the master planning and architectural design principles that underline our consortium's proposal for the development of the new Administrative Centre of Ho Chi Minh City.



2 DEVELOPMENT STAKES AND OBJECTIVES

Located in District 1 and bordered by Le Thanh Ton Street to the south-east, Dong Khoi Street to the north-east, Ly Tu Trong Street to the north-west and Pasteur Street to the west, the new Administrative Centre occupies an entire city block at the geographical, historical and cultural heart of Ho Chi Minh City.

Rapid growth in the last 3 decades has seen the destruction of many of the city's architectural heritage, the prolific apparition of modern skyscrapers and hazardous infill refurbishments. The established and much-loved urban identity of Ho Chi Minh City is undergoing constant transformation as the city reinvents itself from a colonial and provincial capital to contemporary international city.

In the context of profound morphological mutations, it is useful to recall the remarkable qualities of the site and project brief which served as starting points for our reflection on the design of the new Administrative Centre.

A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE TO BE PRESERVED

The site contains some of the most important architectural heritage of the city notably two buildings of the colonial period:

- The existing **City Hall** - one of the most recognisable buildings of Ho Chi Minh City. Since its completion in 1908, the elaborately decorated colonial style building has always served as the seat of municipal government. The building's urban composition (centred on Nguyen Hue axis) and the continuity of function have given City Hall a strong image associated with civic power and governance. Over the years the building has become an **icon of the city**.
- The existing Department of Communications/Department of Commerce and Industry building at 59 Ly Tu Trong Street. Also built during the colonial period (c. 1890), the two-storey building is a fine example of **early colonial architecture**.

A UNIQUE URBAN COMPOSITION TO BE PROTECTED

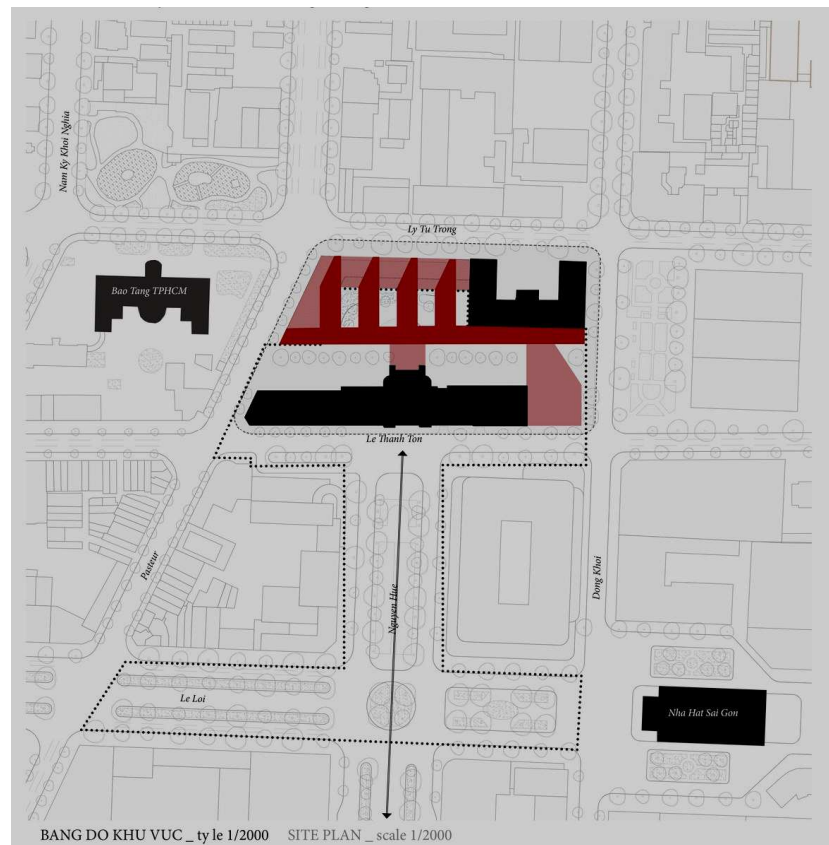
In addition to the architectural qualities of existing buildings, the site is also part of an urban composition specific to Ho Chi Minh City and its history.

The site frontage on Le Thanh Ton Street and the main façade of City Hall terminates one of the most important and prestigious urban axis of the city - Nguyen Hue Boulevard. The monumental 45m wide street with generous sidewalks lined with boutiques and skyscrapers links the Administrative Centre with the Saigon River. Together with the boulevards Le Loi, Ham Nghi, Le Duan and streets such as Dong Khoi and Ton Duc Thang, these urban axes are traces of past visions of the city and form a network of space of **"spectacle and representation"**.

In the colonial period, the urban perspectives were carefully composed to define the image of French colonial Saigon - perfectly aligned street façades, tree-lined sidewalks punctuated by the vista of a public edifice. They remain today an essential experience of contemporary Ho Chi Minh City.

FUTURE VISIONS

The current urban master plan of the city foresees a reinterpretation of the idea of spaces of “spectacle and representation” by remodelling Nguyen Hue and Le Loi boulevards into a network of pedestrian and green axes. Future vehicular access into these arteries will be restricted transforming the vast areas of the city into civic spaces of celebration and festivities. By its location, the project represents a unique opportunity to participate in the definition of this vision and extend the urban experience.



MOMENTS OF INTIMACY TO BE REFOUND

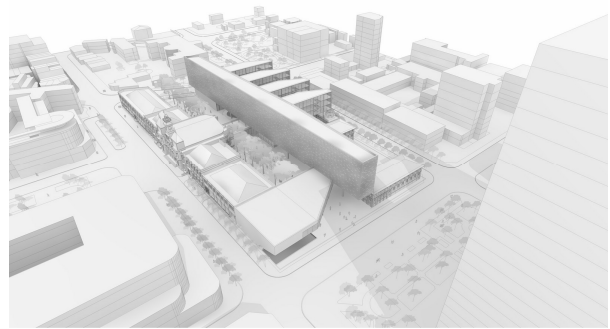
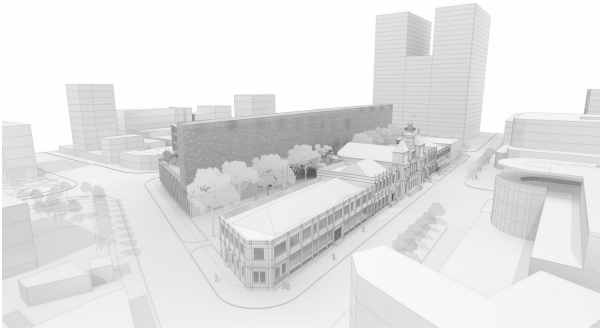
To the people of Ho Chi Minh City, the city also offers moments of intimacy that are counter-points to the formalism of spaces of “spectacle and representation”. The numerous gardens, squares, patios, courtyards, terraces and alleyways interspersed between buildings are as important to the fabric of the city as the monumental urban axes. The amalgamation of small tenement lots into urban blocks for multi-storey developments has destroyed much of this intimate scale.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE PAST

Topographically, the site is situated in an elevated part of the city with views towards the Saigon River. The higher grounds correspond with an area of the city where in 1790 stood the first fortification constructed by Nguyen Anh. Indeed, historical studies show that the location of the site correlates with the southern most corner of the citadel known as Thành Bát Quai and that its geometry is defined by the form of the citadel walls.

THE COMPETITION BRIEF

In calling for an international ideas competition, the Ho Chi Minh City government has recognized the remarkable opportunity that the redevelopment of the Administrative Centre precinct represents. Given the unique nature of the site and the project brief - to provide the City with a new civic image that at the same time valorizes its rich history and to provide the People's Committee with a modern workplace that befits its status as a place of governance in the 21st Century - the ambition of the project as a whole is in itself a source of inquiry and inspiration.



3 MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In general development terms, the 18000m² site is subject to 3 main urban constraints:

- Coefficient of buildable area 3 (representing a total buildable area of 54000m²)
- Maximum footprint 60% (or 12000m²)
- Height limit 30m

In total respect of applicable regulations and future visions for the city centre, our master plan for the redevelopment of the Administrative Centre consists of:

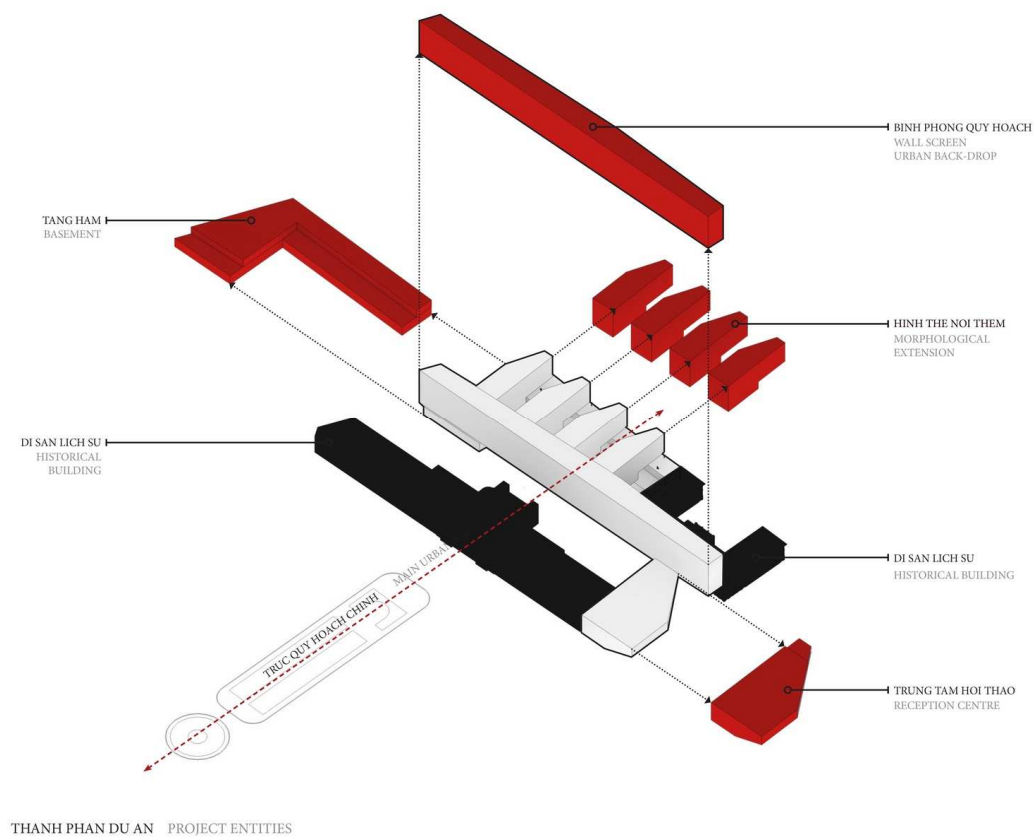
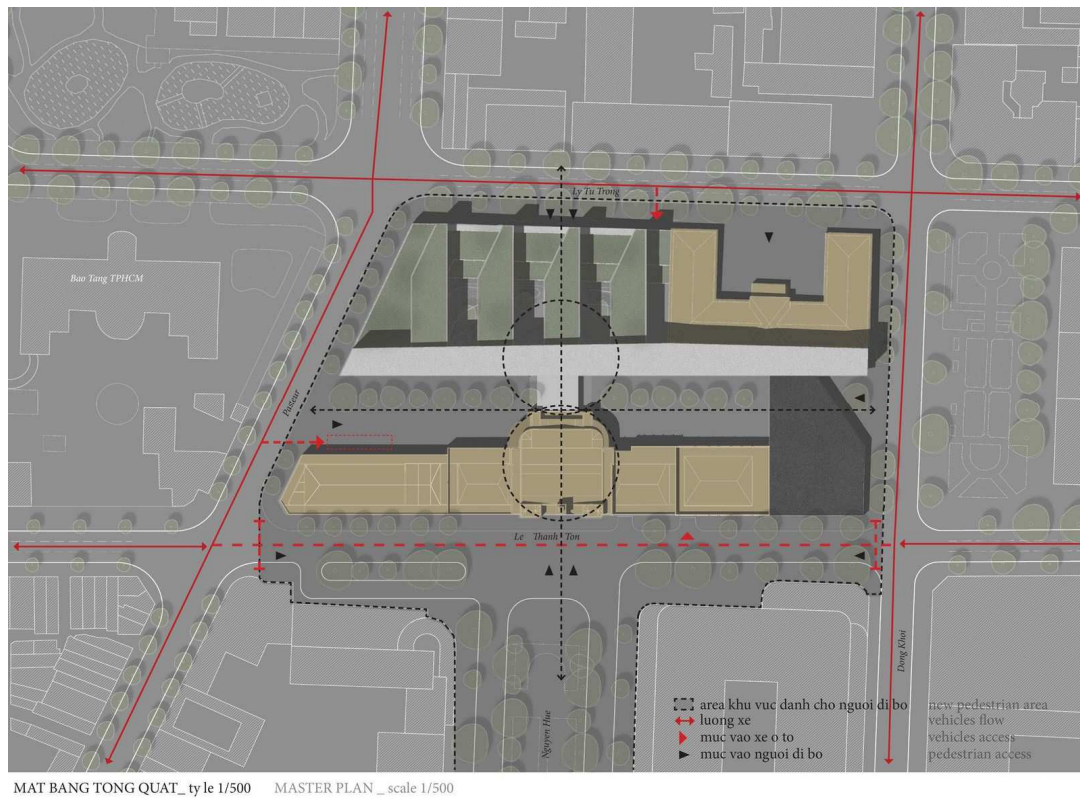
- The conservation and refurbishment of the existing iconic 7500m² City Hall (Block A) which will house the People's Committee, the People's Council as well as offices for members and delegations;
- The construction of a 1200m² state-of-the-art Reception Centre on the corner of Le Thanh Ton and Dong Khoi Street including a 300-seat auditorium, reception rooms, meeting rooms and necessary support services;
- The conservation and refurbishment of the existing 3000m² historic building at 59 Ly Tu Trong Street (Block D) into a modern working place;
- The construction of a new 7-storey office complex of over 19500m². Nicknamed "**City Wall**", the building is carefully inscribed into the site creating a unified ensemble.
- The new complex and the restored Block D will house the 5 departments of the municipal government as well as 2000m² of library and exhibition spaces and generous hanging gardens and terraces;
- The construction of over 20000m² of basement area over 2 levels housing the complex's technical services rooms and dedicated parking with secured access for VIP, guests and personnel.

The redevelopment will thus create **over 30000m² of modern office space** for the People's Committee, the People's Council and associated departments and services.

In addition to the renovation and construction office spaces, the project also proposes to the people of Ho Chi Minh City a new civic experience. The interior of the site will be transformed into a tree-lined internal street, vast pedestrian plaza and elevated gardens terraces accessible to the public.

The main façade of the City Wall complex, a monumental system of elevated streets, not only serve as access to the various municipal departments but also as **urban belvederes** offering spectacular views of the city from within. Finally, the building's rooftop will house an urban park suspended 30m from the ground.

A summary of the floor areas is provided in the schedule below.





Façade on Le Thanh Ton Street



Façade of internal street



Façade on Pasteur Street



Façade on Dong Khoi Street

Floor Area Schedule

The New Administrative Centre of Ho Chi Minh City

	City Hall (m ²)	Department of Internal Affairs (m ²)	Department of Transport (m ²)	Department of Resources and Environment (m ²)	Department Thong Tin va Truyen Thong (m ²)	Department of Commerce and Industry (m ²)	Library & Exhibition Centre (m ²)	Reception Centre (m ²)	Total per floor (m ²)
	Block A	Block D	New building	New building	New building	New building	New building	New building	
Ground Floor	3750	1500	950	x	x	x	1250	125	7575
First Floor	3750	1500	950	x	x	x	850	1100	8150
Second Floor	x	x	600	475	475	1225	x	x	2775
Third Floor	x	x	750	625	625	1350	x	x	3350
Fourth Floor	x	x	750	625	625	1350	x	x	3350
Fifth Floor	x	x	750	625	625	1350	x	x	3350
Sixth Floor	x	x	325	225	225	975	x	x	1750
Total Floor Area	7500	3000	5075	2575	2575	6250	2100	1225	30300
First Basement Floor	x	x	10450						10450
Second Basement Floor	x	x	10450						10450
Total Refurbishment									10500
Total New Construction									19800
Total Basement Floors									20900
Total Development Area									51200

4 THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE - OR TELLING THE STORY OF HO CHI MINH CITY

The major challenge of the design of the Administrative Centre is the harmonious reconciliation of progress and tradition through architecture. Our concept for the development of the Administrative Centre is first and foremost about creating a unified composition between the new and old where each carefully constructed element carries a particular significance. The City Hall, the reception centre, the complex of municipal offices as well as the new internal street, civic plaza and hanging gardens all work together to reveal the story of Ho Chi Minh City - its history, its identity, its people and its ambitions.

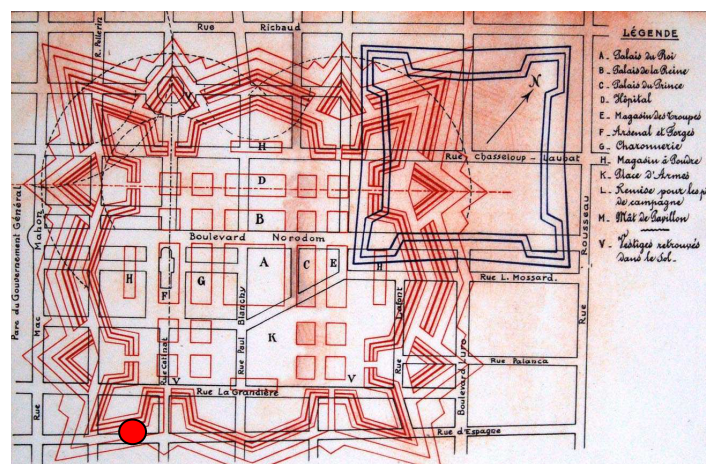
The design can be understood as a series of short stories interwoven into a coherent and unified whole:

- Figure of memory
- Unifying urban back-drop
- Celebration of civic life
- Hybrid morphology
- Layered landscapes
- Living heritage

FIGURE OF MEMORY

At the centre of our project is the construction of a new 7-storey office complex which we have nicknamed the City Wall. It is a simple figure stretched out horizontally and delicately inscribed into the site.

The main element of the complex is a 175m long by 30m high elevated volume that runs the entire length of the block parallel to the existing City Hall building. The position of the volume, which corresponds with the approximate location of the original citadel foundations, and its abstract horizontality recall the form of old citadel walls. Through a **figure of memory**, the project attempts to render visible a story that is hidden from common views.

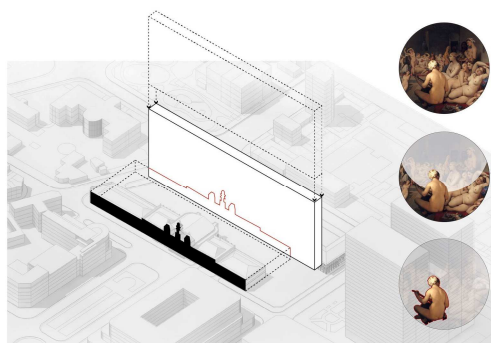


Historical map showing the location of the citadel and the actual site

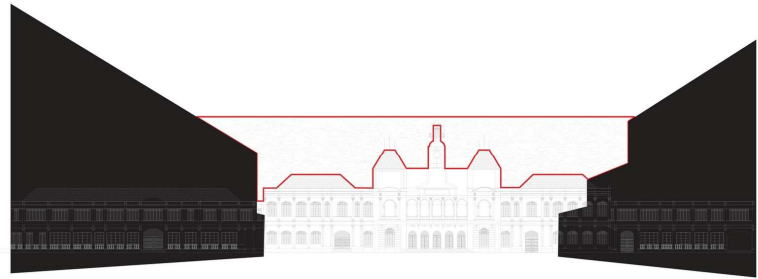
UNIFYING URBAN BACK-DROP

In the past, the elaborate silhouette of the central pavilion of City Hall, viewed from the perspective on Nguyen Hue Boulevard, stands out clearly and powerfully in the sky of Ho Chi Minh City. Today, with the proliferation of high-rise constructions, this picturesque composition is compromised and the image of City Hall as a public institution is diminished.

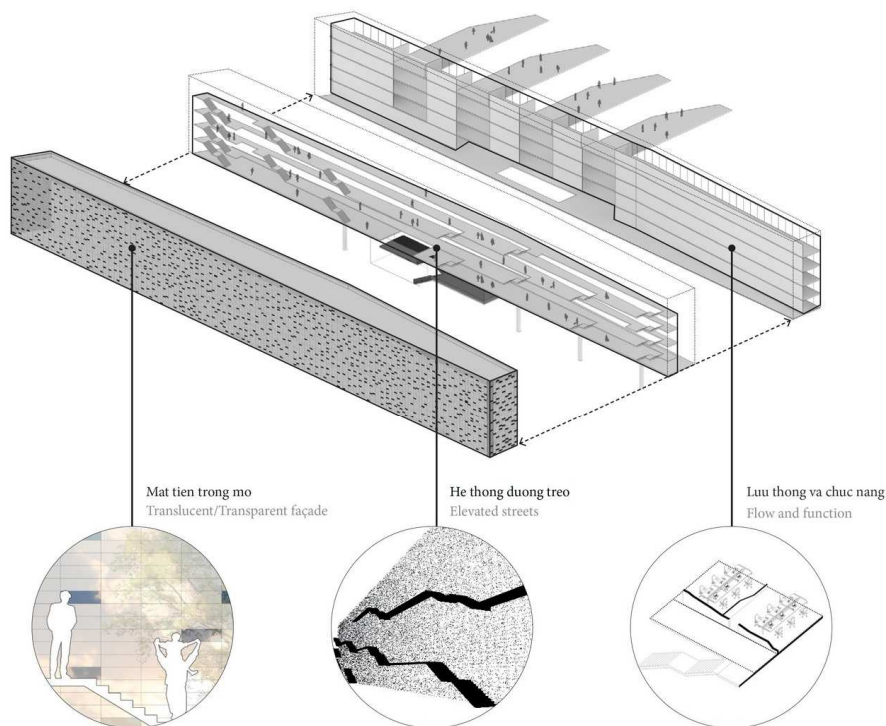
Composed of large translucent and transparent panels, the main façade of the City Wall complex is designed not only to be a light filter for the interior spaces but also a **back-drop** to enhance the ornate and stately façades of the City Hall building. The cacophony of towers and objects that has appeared in the background of the composition is now replaced by a simple and unifying element **that is both theatrical and urban**. The pureness and serenity of a horizontal line cutting across the sky is also a deliberate counter-point to the vertical trend of speculative constructions in the city thus distinguishing and ennobling the new Administrative Centre as a public edifice.



SO DO KHAI NIEM_TIET LO NET BAN DIEN CONCEPT DIAGRAM _ REVEAL THE PROFILE



SO DO KHAI NIEM CONCEPT DIAGRAM



SO DO BINH PHONG QUY HOACH

DIAGRAM OF THE URBAN BACK-DROP

CELEBRATION OF CIVIC LIFE

The new Administrative Centre is conceived not simply as a place of work but a **celebration of civic life** where public components of the building's programme are given particular attention.

The Reception Centre, with its articulated volume in continuity with the east wing of City Hall, is placed at the most prominent angle of the site - the junction of Le Thanh Ton and Dong Khoi streets. Taking the form of an inverted pyramid and bridging across the internal street, the Reception Centre marks one of the entry points into the site and is symbolic of the act of welcoming.



Perspective of the Reception Centre

The Library and Exhibition Centre, a transparent double-volume element, is placed along Ly Tu Trong Street tightly aligned with the tree-covered sidewalks. Our design intention is to reveal the interior functioning of the Centre and to render it inseparable from the life of the city.

However the most important public component of the project is not the enclosed volumes but the generous and open exterior spaces. The project deliberately pushes built elements either to the periphery of the site or lifting them off the ground thus liberating the heart of the site for pedestrians. Accessible via the internal street or by filtering through the buildings, the new civic plaza is a unique urban experience in the city.

From the civic plaza, the public can also access the elevated streets and urban belvederes that constitute the main façade of the City Wall complex. The continual movement of people behind the translucent/transparent curtain wall animates the façade in a way similar to the south façade of the Pompidou Centre in Paris.



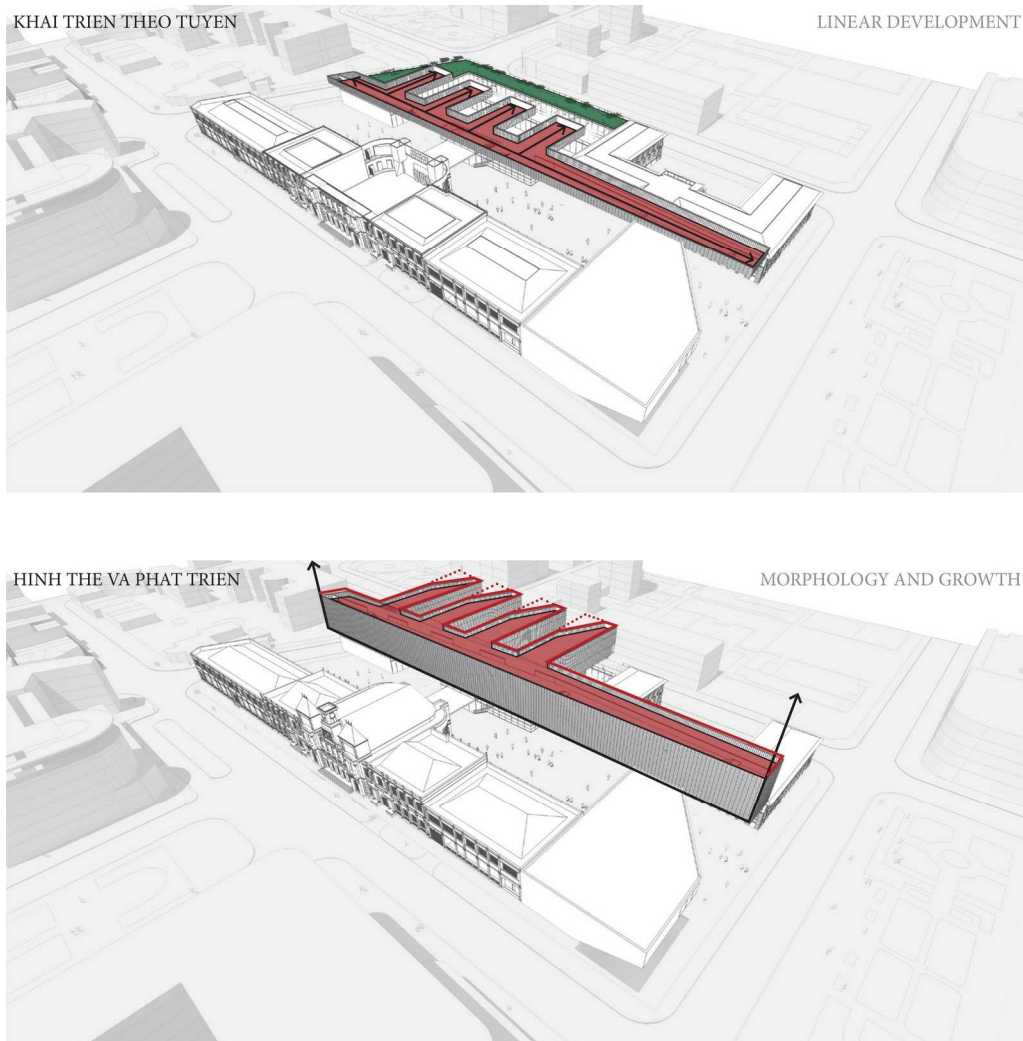
Perspective of the internal street and civic plaza

HYBRID MORPHOLOGY

Recent studies have shown that there is an instinctive correlation between man and nature and the quality of a place of work is directly related to type of views obtainable from the working position. The relationship of office space to vistas and greenery is thus primordial.

The comb-like figure of the new 7-storey construction, while adding nearly 20000m² of floor area, decomposes the immense mass into smaller volumes. The articulated and carefully proportioned massing assures maximum natural light into all offices spaces as well as allowing landscaped elements to penetrate into the interior. The impression of immersion in nature and light is accentuated by the full height curtain wall façades, elevated terraces and rooftop gardens.

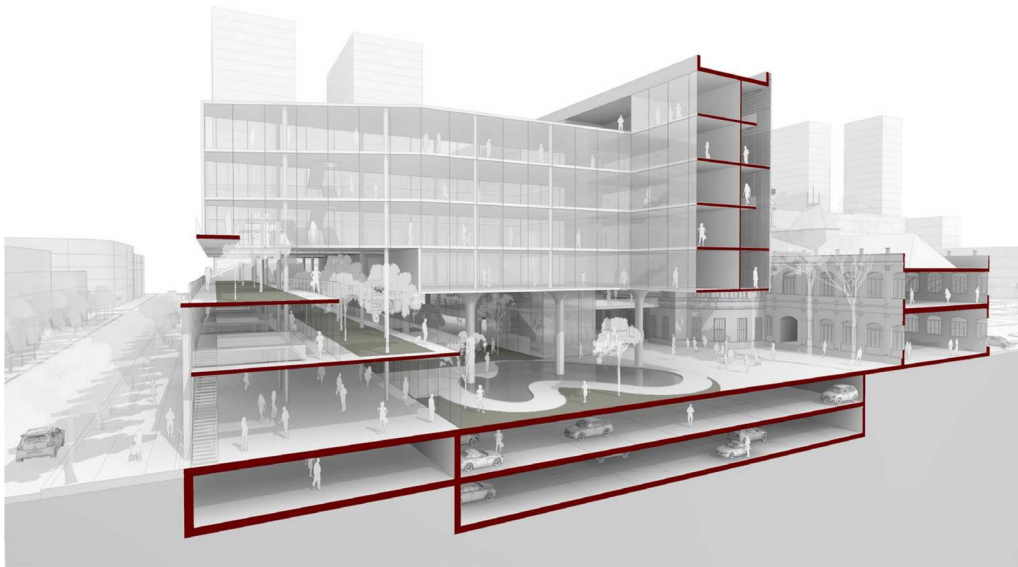
As a result, the new Administrative Centre is neither one monolithic object or fortified block nor a sprawling collection of individual entities. It is a kind of **hybrid morphology** that is **dense yet porous, compact yet open** where nature, light and built spaces are imbricated into one inseparable whole.



LAYERED LANDSCAPES

The project integrates generous landscaped elements in a layered composition that seeks to extend the vision of Nguyen Hue Boulevard as a “green axis” into the interior of the site. The internal street will be lined with matured tall trees such that the treetops will protrude beyond the City Hall silhouette creating a visual connection with the Nguyen Hue axis. Their natural profile creates an intermediate layer which reveals the presence of the internal street located between the City Hall building and the new complex thus inviting the visitor to enter into the precinct.

The civic plaza and office buildings will also be animated by a variety of landscaped experiences intelligently located at different levels - such as elevated terraces that run along Ly Tu Trong Street, rooftop gardens and patios - so as to enhance a sense of immersion in nature horizontally and vertically.



PHOI CANH MAT CAT PERSPECTIVE SECTION

LIVING HERITAGE

In our opinion, every intervention in an existing building, from conservation to renovation to extension, should be approached with respect and creativity in order to assure compatibility of the existing fabric with project goals. For the new Administrative Centre, we strive to be exemplary with respect to the treatment of heritage buildings and seek to contribute to the culture of living with heritage in Ho Chi Minh City.

The iconic splendour of the existing City Hall, a symbol of French architecture in Vietnam, will be carefully refurbished to restore the original qualities building. The older Block D building on Ly Tu Trong Street, built around 1890 as the Hotel de l'intérieur, will also be renovated to stand as a permanent heritage of early civic architecture of the colonial period.

The project will also pay key attention to the **research, documentation and working processes** itself. Beyond the final result, our approach to the design of the new Administrative Centre is about **making visible and rendering accessible the site's comprehensive history** to the people of Ho Chi Minh City.

Before any definitive design solutions are adopted, an exhaustive diagnosis of the existing buildings will be undertaken base on information provided by the Client, by research and by on-site visits and investigations. The aim of the diagnosis is to constitute a sort of **historical database** of the site that would become the referential document for future consultation as well as to determine the potential impact of the project.

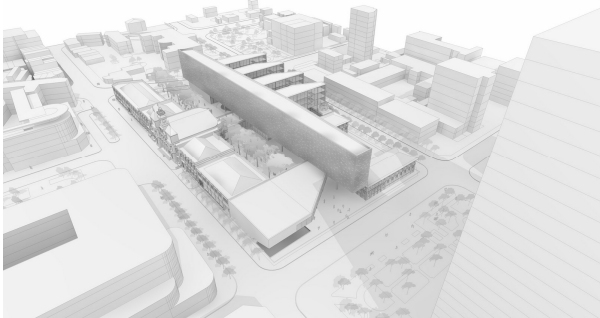
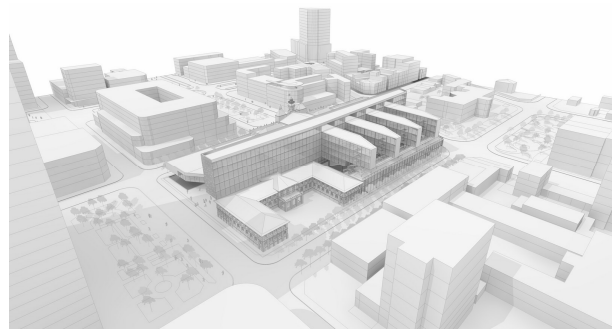
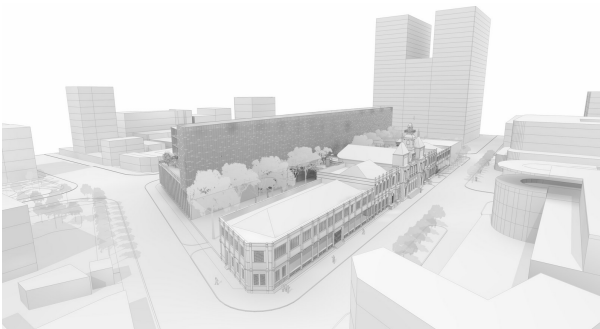
The historical database will document 3 aspects of the building:

- An architectural diagnosis consisting of on-site surveys, detailed drawings and complete photographic documentation of all existing buildings to complement any graphic documents already available such as surveyors plans, old archival plans, old photographs etc.;
- A technical diagnosis consisting of evaluating quality of existing technical provisions in order to determine the appropriate choice in the final design process;
- A structural diagnosis by qualified engineers to document the integrity existing structures.

The conservation and renovation works will be conducted under the direction of an architectural conservation and heritage expert, in accordance with specialised scientific methodologies in order to assure that important heritage is not lost to future generation.

5 A NEW IMAGE OF GOVERNANCE

Our design of the new Administrative Centre adopts a simple and sober figure that is delicately inscribed into the site to reveal the city's historical memories and to bring together in harmonious composition new constructions and existing fabric. Respectful of the 30m height limit and the site's unique central location, the design projects a subtle yet strong and unified image of the Administrative Centre as a place of governance.



All buildings on the site function as a single and coherent complex.

FLOW ORGANISATION

A ceremonial drop-off zone for government officials and state events will be created on the Le Thanh Ton frontage which will otherwise be transformed into a pedestrian precinct in continuity with the future Nguyen Hue Boulevard green axis.

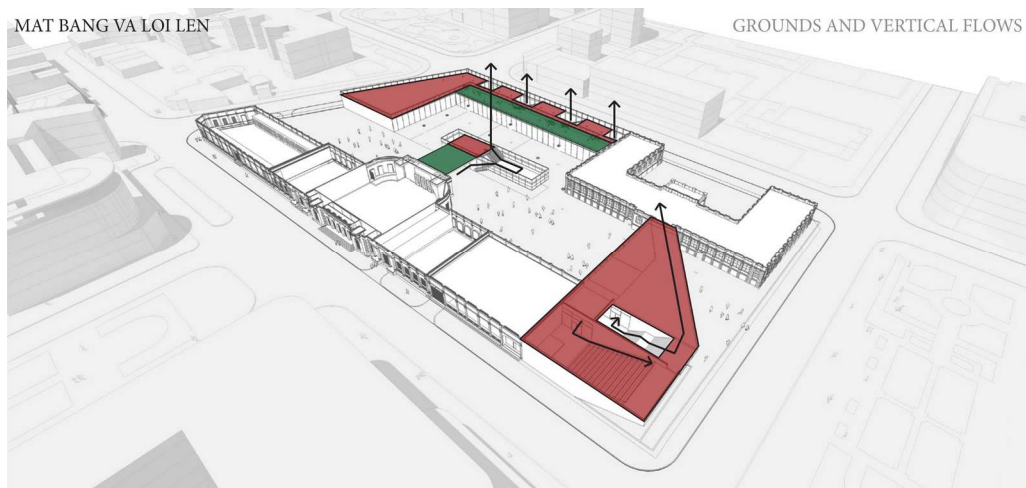
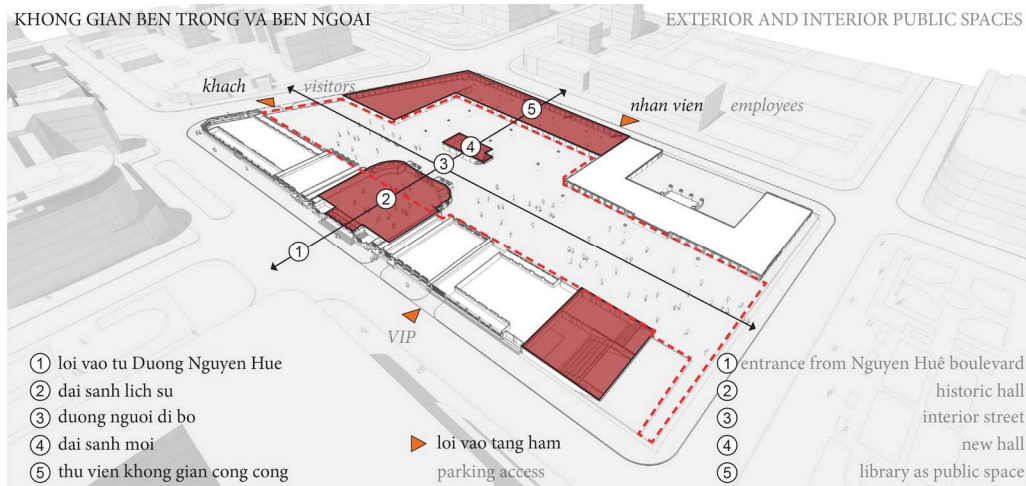
Vehicular access into the site and basement levels will be restricted to:

- VIP access from Le Thanh Ton Street and
- Staff and logistical access from Pasteur and Ly Tu Trong streets.

The entire Administrative Centre precinct will be large open to pedestrian access from all sides including:

- A new public walkthrough from Le Thanh Ton Street through to the civic plaza behind via the redesigned entrance lobby of the City Hall building;

- The tree-lined internal street connecting Pasteur and Dong Khoi streets which will reveal the renovated rear façade of City Hall to the public for the first time;
- The patio of the U-shaped Block D as well as via the City Library and Exhibition Centre.

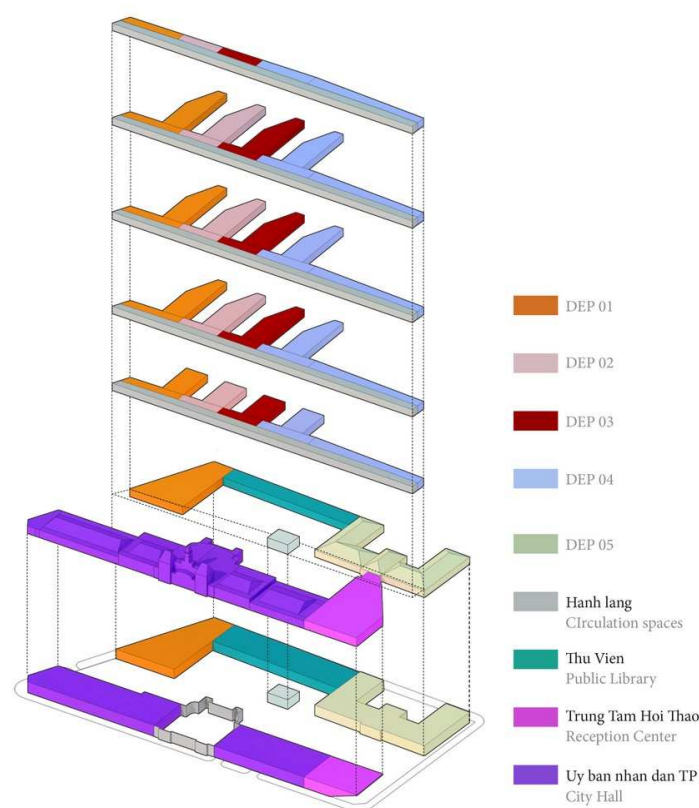


FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATION

The project proposes a very clear organisation of different functional entities linked together by a generous and limpid system of public spaces and internal circulations.

- The 7500m² refurbished City Hall will continue to house the People's Committee, the People's Council and offices for councillors and delegates. The main entrance of the building at ground level will be opened allowing the public to pass freely between Le Thanh Ton Street and the precinct's landscaped interior.
- The land vacated by the demolition of Block C on the corner of Dong Khoi and Le Thanh Ton streets will be the site of the new Reception Centre which will include a 300-seat state-of-the-art auditorium, reception rooms, meeting rooms and support services. The Reception Centre will have direct links with City Hall and the new office complex through internal circulations.

- The 2200m² City Library and Exhibition Centre is placed at ground level along Ly Tu Trong Street hugging closely the street alignment. The two-storey volume will be completely transparent acting as a filter and transition between two moments of intimacy - the tree-covered sidewalks and the protected internal civic plaza.
- The five departments of the municipal administration will be housed in the new 7-storey construction and the renovated Block D. Each department occupies and can be identified with one of the articulated volumes on the north side of the complex. They are accessible directly from separate lobbies located at ground level and via the elevated streets.
- Technical services rooms such as computer server rooms, electrical and HVAC plants and waste management systems are located in the basement floors together with official and staff parking.



SO DO CHUONG TRINH_Kha nang lua chon
PROGRAMATIC DIAGRAM _ possible option

TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Foremost in any reflection on sustainable design is intelligent passive design where the morphology of the building itself plays a fundamental role.

Given the nature and design of the building, the structure new 7-storey office complex will be a reinforced concrete construction with curtain wall façades. In order to assure maximum flexibility in the exploitation of the floor space, the structural grid of the building will be designed so as to eliminate internal columns.

The comb-like massing figure offers not only light but also allows each wing and courtyard spaces to be shaded from direct sunlight. The south façade of the new complex will be a specially designed double-skin composed of translucent and transparent glazing elements which acts as a light filter while allowing spectacular views over the city. East and west facing facades will also be protected by vertical louvres. Their final design will be a subject of simulations and tests in the later stages of the project.

In addition to energy and external performance considerations, user comfort - natural light, visual stimulation, hygrometry and air quality - is also an important and essential factor that we have taken into account. At this stage of the competition, measures designed to guaranty and maximise user comfort for all office spaces can be summarised as follow:

- An important inherent thermal mass by virtue of the building's concrete structure
- Abundant natural lighting and views towards exterior landscaped spaces
- An efficient facade system that works for both air-conditioned and natural ventilation scenarios
- Effective sunshading through the appropriate choice of glazing as well as through external elements - louvres and greenery
- An efficient air treatment system and distribution into all office and occupied spaces

The entire Administrative Centre precinct will be equipped with a Building Management System (BMS) allowing for the monitoring, control and maintenance of technical equipments as well as to analyse the energy performance of the complex.