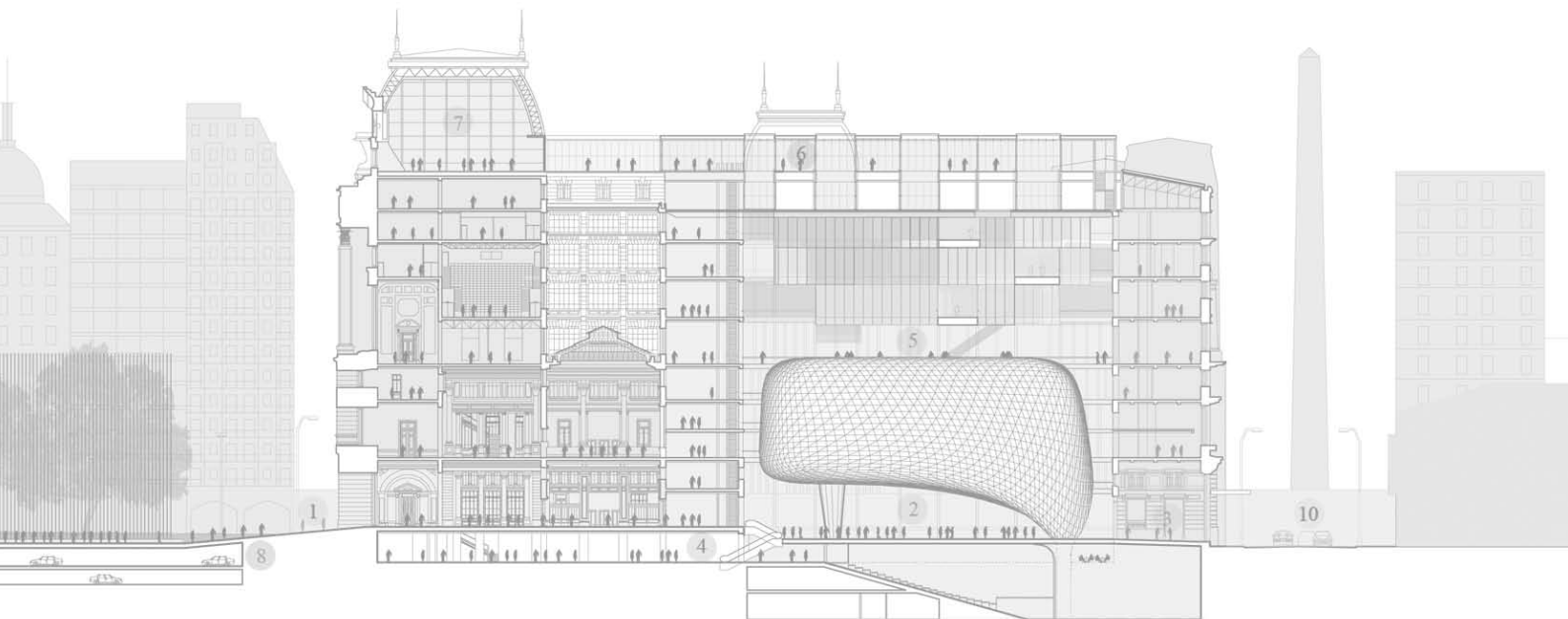


# Palacio de Correos Proyecto Centro Cultural del Bicentenario



CONVERSION AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE ANCIENT  
POST AND TELEGRAPH PALACE & IDEAS FOR ITS  
SURROUNDING AREA

BARES | BARES | BARES | BECKER | FERRARI | SCHNACK



Placed in the political and cultural center of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the former Post and Telegraph Palace, a highly valued heritage and historical building will be transformed into the Centro Cultural del Bicentenario.

First prize in an international competition, this project mixes avant-garde architectural programs with meticulous restoration work.

Concert halls, exhibitions rooms, auditoriums, the Centro Cultural del Bicentenario with more than 100 thousand square meters of surface will become one of the biggest cultural centers worldwide.

## Context

The Post and Telegraph Palace was originally designed to host the Argentinian Central Post Office, by French architect Norbert Maillart. The construction began in 1889 in the area limited by Leandro N. Alem and Corrientes Avenues, and Bouchard and Sarmiento Streets, downtown Buenos Aires. After numerous interruptions, the building was finally opened in 1928. In 1997 the building was listed as a National Historic Monument, due to its architectural excellence, its historic importance and the valuable heritage inside. The development of new communication tools during the 20<sup>th</sup> century affected traditional postal traffic. As a result, the building is nowadays inappropriate and oversized for present requirements. In this context, the Argentinian government decides the conversion of this building into an international cultural center and symphony hall, providing new life to the building.



The facades and the noble areas will be completely refurbished.

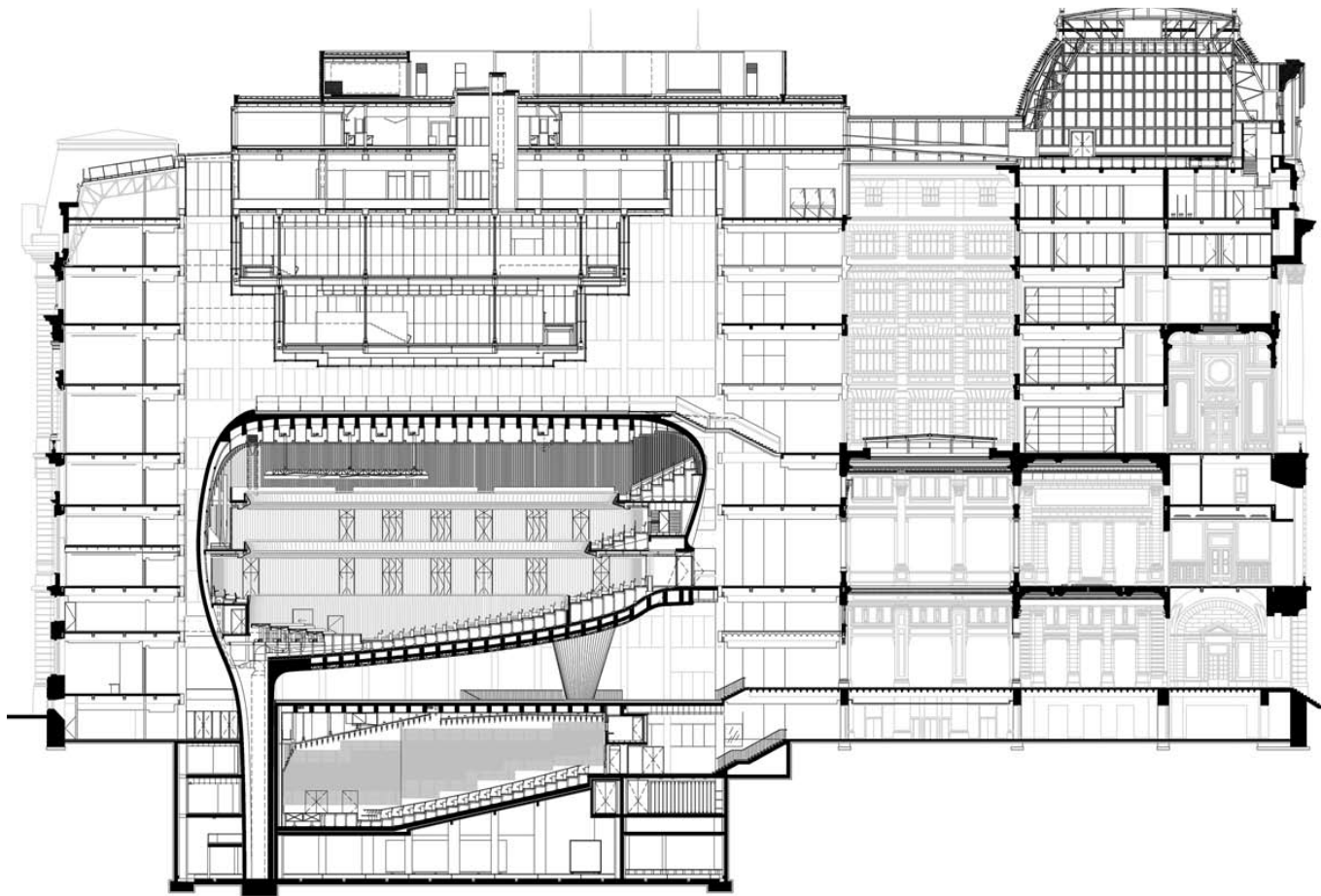


Photographs of the building during the construction showing its metallic structure.



The competition to convert and refurbish the old Post and Telegraph Palace has been organised by the Argentinian Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investments and Services together with the National Secretary of Culture and the Central Architects Society. Forty international proposals were submitted.

The president of the Jury was architect Ramón Sanabria Boix, from Barcelona. The winner of the competition was the team formed by Argentinian architects Enrique Bares, Federico Bares, Nicolás Bares, Daniel Becker, Claudio Ferrari and Florencia Schnack. This team is in charge of developing the final project.



Cross-section

**BARES | BARES | BARES BECKER | FERRARI | SCHNACK  
ARQUITECTOS**

Architects Enrique Bares, Federico Bares, Nicolás Bares, Daniel Becker, Claudio Ferrari and Florencia Schnack became partners in 2006, submitting an entry in the International Architecture & Urbanism Competition for the Centro Cultural del Bicentenario and winning first prize. Since then, this team has received awards in several competitions, including a special mention in the competition to convert and refurbish a historic building downtown Buenos Aires (the Majestic-AFIP Building); Second prize in the competition for a new Scientific Center and seat for the National Research Institute (Buenos Aires); and has been shortlisted in the International Competition for the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center in Santiago, (Chile). These achievements come from the consolidated effort of a team of more than fifty professionals in architecture and urban design, with additional support from renowned consultants.

## Project Description

### Ideas for the urban surroundings

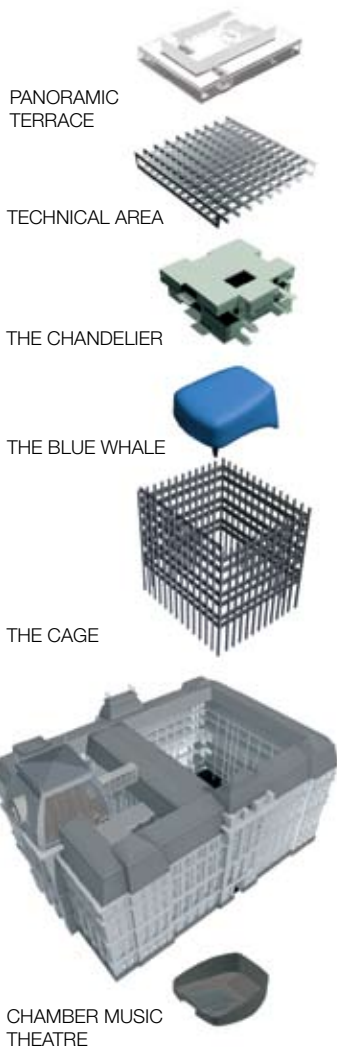
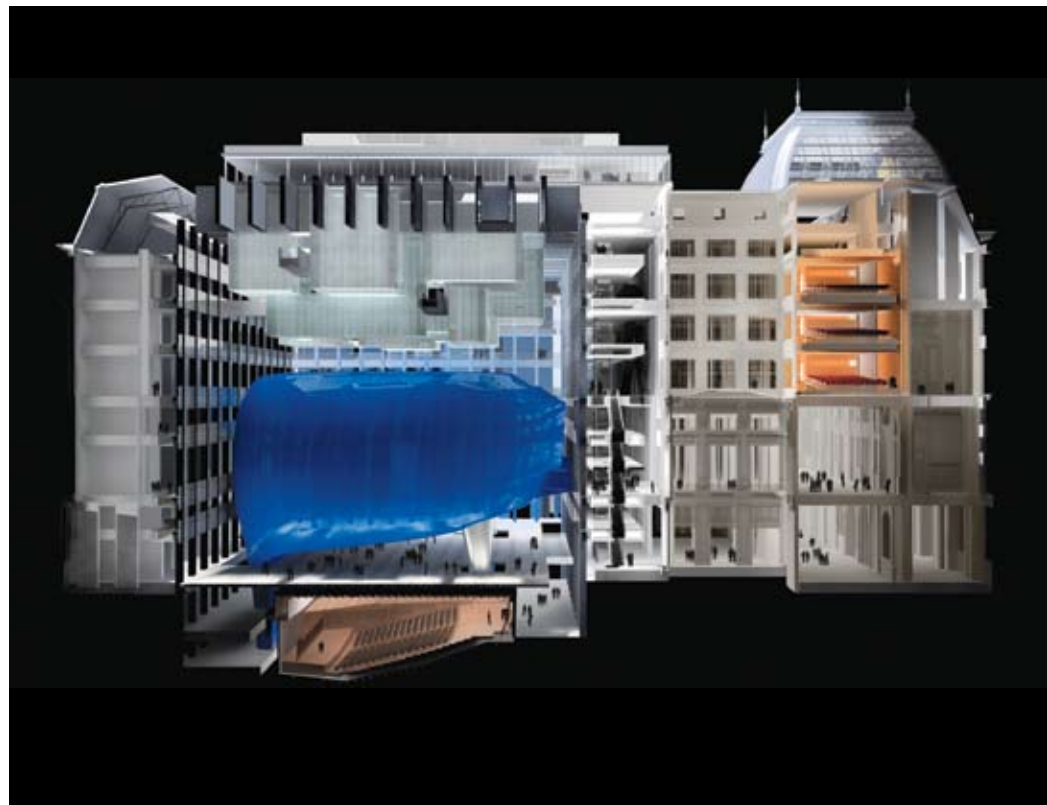
The building area is connected with the most important political and civic center of the city and the country, Plaza de Mayo (May square) opposite Casa Rosada, seat of the office of the President. The area also limits with Corrientes avenue, whose traditional and popular character is to be recovered, and the recently refurbished dock area of Puerto Madero. Many public and private buildings with a high historic importance related to the entertainment, culture, business, education and research make this area particularly attractive for national and international tourists.

The diversity of these elements, today scattered around the area could boost this sector if the character of their urban environment is designed as this proposal suggests. By reinforcing its cultural dimension, the new **Centro Cultural del Bicentenario** will play a main role in bringing new life to the area.

The project suggests a reorganization in order to end with the present fragmentation of this sector. Firstly, a basic structure consists in imagining a new perpendicular line to the traditional one formed by the Parliament, Avenida de Mayo (May Avenue) and Casa Rosada (Seat of the President). This new line, which links the area concerned in the competition, will become the new *Bicentenary Park*. The center of the line is crossed by the civic and institutional line previously mentioned (Government Seat, May Avenue, House of Parliament) and two squares mark the south and north limits. The proposal suggests a new design of circulation and movement system that discourages the using of individual automobile in the city center and facilitates a general organization of the public transport system.



## Architectural components of the project



The *Bicentenary Park* is a public promenade that unifies the existent green spaces with the new proposed gardens and the *Arts Square*, shaping a civic space of long sights and recreational areas. This park plays a regenerative part as a green oasis for the city center and plays a social part in reinvigorating the social fabric of the city.

### Conversion and refurbishment of the former Post and Telegraph Palace

Placed between the historic center and next to the recently converted dock district of Puerto Madero, the Post and Telegraph Palace stands in one of the most emblematic areas, downtown Buenos Aires.

This project intends to use the new Cultural Center as a central piece to transform the area into a cultural-oriented hub.

The ground floor is a wide open space. Functioning as a sort of *cultural corridor*, this opening will make the building become a vibrant, permeable, full-of-life space.

An organized system of public squares, in different levels, links the new cultural programs with the most significant areas of the historic building.

The project involves mainly two types of operations: the restoration of the historic building, listed as a National Historic Monument that will produce a contrast with the contemporary architectural programs. The facades and the noble areas inside the building are entirely refurbished whereas the industrial area is partially emptied to house the new architectural programs.

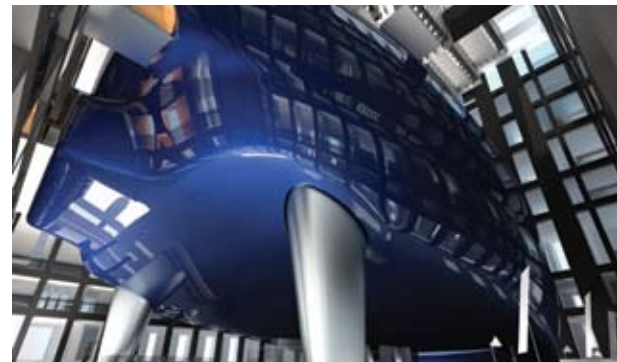
Following a logic of analog objects, the new space will be defined by three singular elements. Inside this empty space that will be produced in the industrial part of the building, a *cage* of metal columns will generate a new facade, a transition between the past and the present. Playing with the comparison of the big candelabras hanging on big concert halls and theatres, the big exhibition rooms will be hosted in the contemporary *chandelier*. The Symphony Hall is contained in a particular object that occupies a central place in this composition: the *blue whale*.

The recovering of the main dome of the Palace transforms a residual room in one of the most emblematic points of the **Centro Cultural del Bicentenario**.

Besides serving for cultural activities, this new place will become a symbol of national civic space.



Right: Symphony Hall  
Left down: The Chandelier  
Right down: The Blue Whale or  
Symphony Hall



# Centro Cultural del Bicentenario BICENTENARY CULTURAL CENTRE



Refurbishment and conversion of former Post and Telegraph Palace and ideas for its surrounding area. Buenos Aires, Argentina.  
First prize, international competition, 2006.  
Project in progress.

## Senior partners

Enrique Bares, Federico Bares, Nicolás Bares, Daniel Becker, Claudio Ferrari, Florencia Schnack.

## Program

Cultural center. Symphony hall, chamber music theatre, museum, multi-function rooms, movie theatres, areas for cultural equipment.

**Total area:** 110,000 m<sup>2</sup>

## Competition jury

Architects Ramón Sanabria Boix (president), Carlos Berdichevsky, Javier Fernández Castro, Mederico Faivre, María Teresa Egozcue, Edgardo Minond, Mario Linder and José Ignacio Miguens.

## For further information

General enquiries: [info@proyectoccb.com.ar](mailto:info@proyectoccb.com.ar)

Press information: [comunicacion@proyectoccb.com.ar](mailto:comunicacion@proyectoccb.com.ar)

**[www.proyectoccb.com.ar](http://www.proyectoccb.com.ar)**