

PRESS RELEASE – 24 JUNE 2010**Henning Larsen Architects wins Georgian Aquarium**

Henning Larsen Architects has won first prize for its significant design concept for a new aquarium in the seaport of Batumi, the Republic of Georgia. The invited competition took place in spring 2010 and, in addition to Henning Larsen Architects, the German architecture company Drei Architekten and the two American companies PJA Architects and Pryor & Morrow Architects were in the running to win the competition.

The 2,000 m² aquarium will replace the previous aquarium of the port and will be situated on the beach side of Rustaveli Str. adjacent to Batumi 6 May Park featuring a Dolphinarium and Zoo.

Inspired by the characteristic pebbles of the Batumi beach, continually shaped by the wash of the waves through millennia, the building stands out as an iconic rock formation visible from both land and sea. The formation constitutes four self-supporting exhibition areas where each of the four stones represents a unique marine biotype – the Aegean Sea & the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Black Sea & the Red Sea and finally the more interactive exhibition.

“The building will become a landmark and an organic reference to all elements of the sea”, explains Design Director and Partner at Henning Larsen Architects, Louis Becker. “It captures the special atmosphere by the sea and thus becomes a tribute to the power of the sea!”

Batumi Aquarium will become a modern, cultural aquarium offering visitors an educational, entertaining and visually stimulating journey through the different seas. The central, multipurpose space in connection with the aquarium features a café and retail functions and its flexible layout makes it well-suited for presentations and workshops.

“It has been important for us to create a design that relates explicitly to local characteristics of Batumi while at the same time reaching out to the world”, says Anders Park, who is project manager for a number of Henning Larsen Architects’ projects in Georgia. “The aquarium interacts with its surroundings and becomes a manifestation of nature itself”.

Unfolding around the aquarium, a landscape of different sea archipelagos provides attractive opportunities for innovative outdoor research and learning as well as informal meetings along the beachfront.

Its significant expression inspired by nature will not only make Batumi Aquarium a spectacular new landmark in Georgia but also a state-of-the-art contribution to exploring life underneath the sea surface.

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