



BOKSTO  
Vilnius, Lithuania

Terra Firma LT were approached in 2017 to assist in taking forward the design of the external areas for this ambitious repurposing of an historic hospital complex in central Vilnius for a mixed use development to include spa hotel, restaurant, offices and private apartments.

Part of early concept designs had been completed by landscape designer Buckley Design Associates in tandem with the scheme architects Studio Sailern and a local landscape architect had been sought by the client to take through detailed and remaining design work and implementation on site. This brought with it many challenges including complex levels, the varying requirements of the new uses and the demands of doing justice to the place's historic legacy.



## BOKSTO Vilnius, Lithuania



The Boksto square complex has been shaped over hundreds of years in several landholdings and the masonry buildings are mentioned in historical sources from the 15th and 16th centuries. In undergoing continuous change, the structure of the complex and its buildings, with their open and closed inner courtyards, had been modelled to the natural terrain patterns to achieve a harmonious blend at a stunning location where levels fall from the upper to lower part of the Old Town, in close proximity to the bank of the Vilnia river.

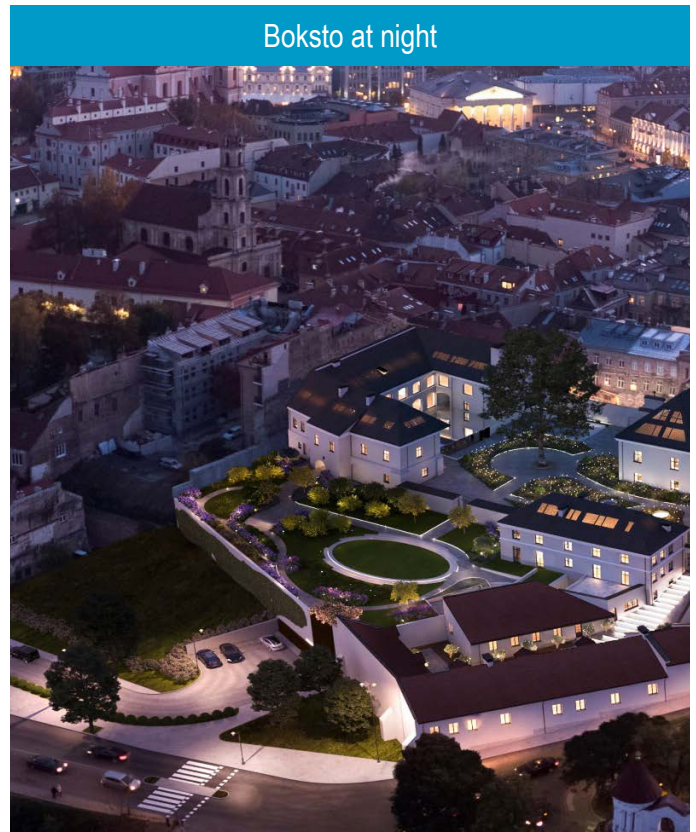
The landscape design has involved streetscape near Maironio street, courtyards and inner street. The TFLT team have been involved in fundamental site planning and design decisions throughout the process and remained close to the visionary client throughout.

One of the more important early decisions was the preservation of the 200 year old linden tree in the main courtyard, at the site's upper entrance. In Lithuania, it is often declared that a tree is protected, but its root zone is ignored, so after a few years, when the growth conditions change, trees often die. The roots of this linden received exceptional attention assisted by a professional Arborist Team, to ensure the works (including basement design) allowed sufficient space to live for many more years. Porous paving with aeration wells is installed around the tree to further ensure the roots get enough water and oxygen.

The selection and procurement of landscape elements (pavements, planting themes) is based on baroque Vilnius landscape research, carried out by the TFLT team, during the design process and aims to bring back the sense of place of this historic complex.

Native plant species and planting types typical to old town Vilnius have been used. Main courtyard, private courtyard, Spa courtyard, inner street, the Lane, and Maironio street public realm have been designed individually to address various functions but overall share same aesthetics and style that gives Boksto square its character.

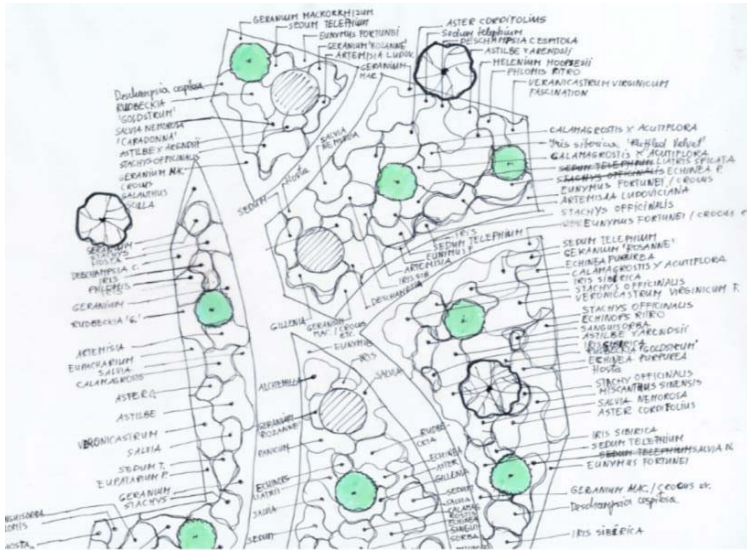
The design process emanated from a clear client vision for the re-use and regeneration of the Boksto complex. The architects and concept landscape designer lay the foundations for the site plan though this did evolve further with detail following TFLT involvement and historic research while also expanding to the western side of site where TFLT created the concept for the oval lawn and terraced gardens in a private courtyard and redesigned the Spa Courtyard. Historic narrative was important but so too was the interface with contemporary design, clear detailing and a robust approach to sustainability and how SUDS drainage would actually work or perennial planting matrices establish with easily understood maintenance 3 of 7 regimes.



User experience and the landscape setting had to be considered for a variety of uses and a variety of times; day and night and throughout the seasons – Lithuania’s climate brings hot summers and cold winters, much of which can be under snow. Level changes were achieved through ramping and ramped steps, also lifts where possible to allow ease of accessibility. Views within courtyards, through to the next space and out to the wider city are framed and enhanced. The sense of history and the place of a modern regeneration within it are celebrated by the detail of the landscape materials. The over-riding result is the addition of a succession of spaces within the city’s urban fabric that are of ‘fine grain’ and real interest , providing a place that is hopefully seen by most to be of sublime beauty.

### Illustrative masterplan





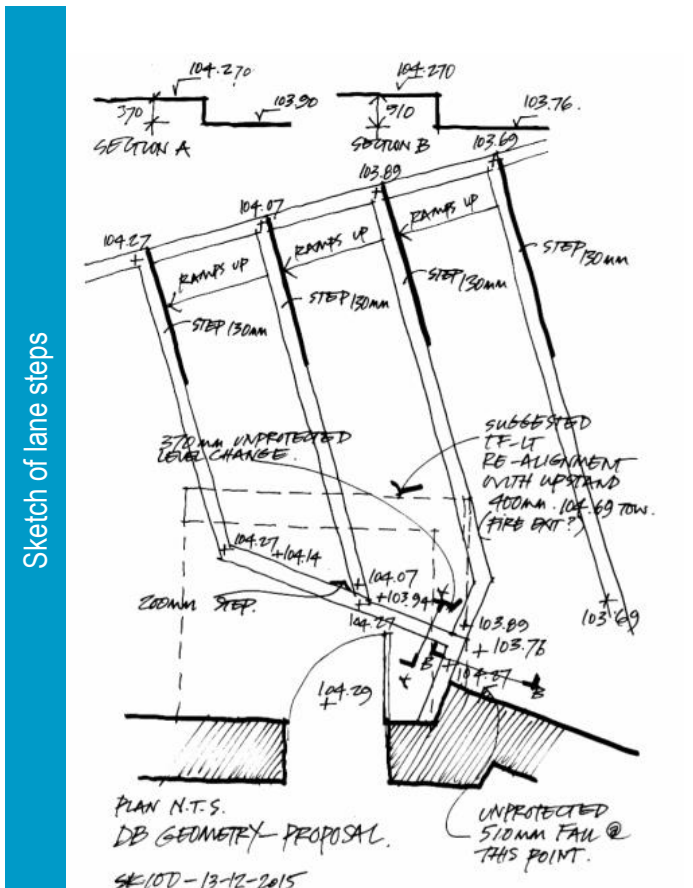
The lane



Main courtyard before works started



The gate from the Lane to the Main courtyard



Sketch of lane steps

## Boksto at night

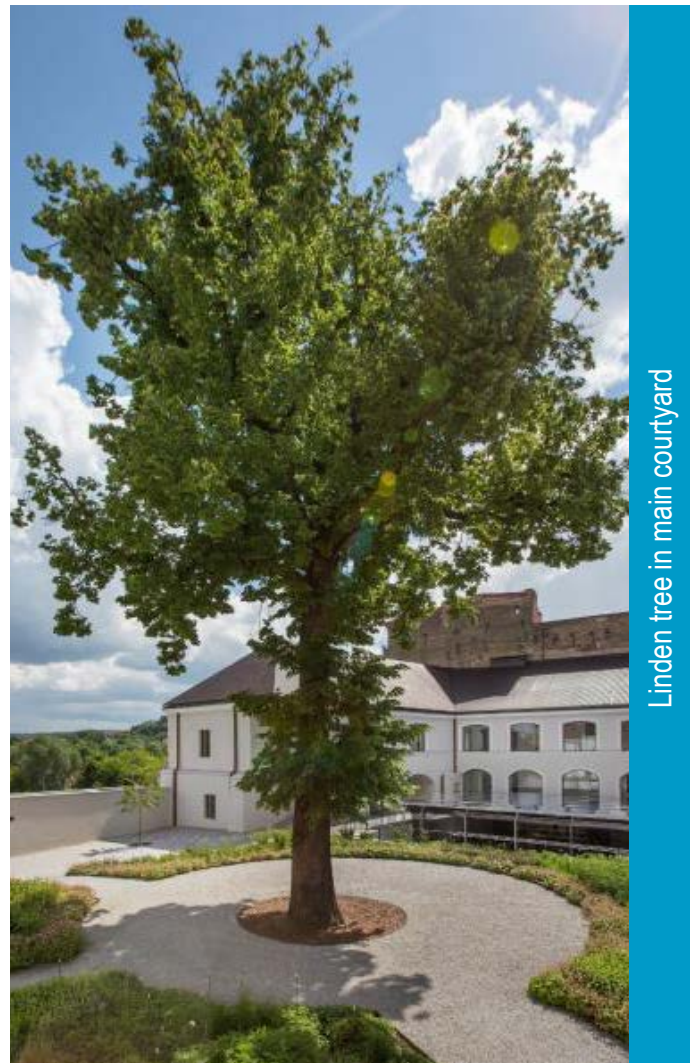


The Project's sustainability credentials must be headed by the very fact the whole project is predicated on the re-use of old buildings. This has been done in an extraordinarily inventive way. The landscape has re-utilised old paving materials in appropriate areas and sought to have porous surfaces for water management and attenuation. Plantings are biodiverse with a basis in native materials but fleshed out with trees, shrubs, grasses, perennials and bulbs. Ongoing maintenance ensures the use of nature friendly, ecological substances without any aggressive chemicals. Great lengths have been taken to protect the site's only historic tree. Public access is enabled throughout most areas and stunning views enabled. Lighting is an important aspect in enabling extended hours of use, particularly for the hotel, restaurant and gardens. This is done with low energy LED fittings.



Finished ellipse forms a centrepiece in the courtyard and acts as a main viewing platform, also acts as amenity lawn for functions, or even a small football game

## Looking from spa to spa courtyard



Linden tree in main courtyard

terrafirma

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

