Selected as European Capital of Culture 2022, Kaunas is becoming increasingly known as one of the Baltics’ key knowledge and cultural hubs. MRC previously worked with the city on their Science Island competition. This second anonymous design contest (to Lithuanian procurement rules that included a negotiated procedure with the finalists) followed the success of the first.

The new c. €30m Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre, named after a Lithuanian polymath, is intended to be an exemplary civic building. Despite a lively arts and music scene, Kaunas — and Lithuania — lacks a first-rank concert hall with the facilities and acoustic quality to host leading orchestras.

The Centre will comprise: a 1,500-seat Concert Hall with outstanding acoustic qualities; a smaller, secondary hall; conferencing facilities; a restaurant, cafe and bar; and office spaces; and underground parking.

As the brief to competitors explained, this circa 11,750 sq m landmark building on a riverside site should be a regenerative initiative that re-shapes the city, moving its epicentre closer to the river and revitalising a former industrial area.

Given Kaunas’ exceptional architectural heritage — the city is en route to becoming a UNESCO Site for Modernist Architecture — and the site has memorable panoramas to the Old and New Towns — architectural quality and contribution to the cityscape were the essential criteria used to judge the designs.

Jonas Audėjaitis, Kaunas Faculty Dean, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Member of Kaunas City Council and competition juror, said:

*The response of the international architectural community was exceptional — 117 entries from architectural practices from 36 countries. It was a privilege to receive so many creative, high quality concept designs.*