

HC
EURC

Annual Open
House Europe
Activity
Report

OPEN
HOUSE
OPEN

HC
EURC

Year
3

OPEN
HOUSE
OPEN

HC
EURC

OPEN
HOUSE
OPEN

HC
EURC

OPEN
HOUSE
OPEN



Co-funded by
the European Union

Table of Contents

Open House Athens	3
Open House Bilbao	25
Open House Brno	45
Open House Dublin	61
Open House Essen	98
Open House Milano	111
Open House Lisboa	121
Open House Slovenia	138
Open House Stockholm	160
Open House Tallinn	185
Open House Thessaloniki	210
Open House Vilnius	235

C
HC
EURC

Athens
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Athens 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.7
Legal Name:	Open House Greece
Date:	March 29–April 6, 2025
Name:	Open House Athens
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	67 buildings, 3 walking tours, 25 creative spaces
City:	Athens
Country:	Greece
Duration:	2 days for the main festival and a week of parallel events

Festival participants

In total, Open House Athens 2025 attracted 11,350 attendees: 4052 men, 7155 women and 134 non-binary people.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 79 men and 358 women: 450 volunteers in total.

Open House Athens 2025 was organised by 1 man and 7 women: 8 people in total.

Introduction

Open House Athens is an annual event held in Athens to promote and help understand architecture. During the event, visitors had the opportunity to enjoy free guided tours of public and private spaces that were opened specially for the occasion. The tours were conducted by volunteers, giving participants the chance to explore the city's buildings, learn about their architectural value and discover Athens' cultural heritage.

The OHA program included buildings from different eras and uses—historic monuments, contemporary works, residences, offices, hotels and more. The event offered a unique opportunity for the public to interact with the city and gain a new perspective on urban space and architecture.

The title of Open House Athens 2025, highlighted through the programme and parallel activities, was 'Future Heritage—today's architecture, tomorrow's legacy'. It focused on the importance of architecture as a means of shaping future cultural heritage. With respect for the past and an eye on the future, this year's theme went beyond contemporary architectural creation and innovative design approaches to also emphasise the preservation and reuse of monuments and historic buildings. Through

highlighting restoration, conservation, adaptive reuse and contemporary architecture that lays the foundation for the cities of tomorrow, the cultural narrative of the future was shaped.

The programme consisted of building tours (OPEN TOURS), organised walks (OPEN WALKS), tours for schools and other educational groups (OPEN SCHOOL), visits to creative and production spaces (MADE IN ATHENS), tours of architecture studios operating in Athens (OPEN OFFICE), and live-streamed online tours.

The programme of activities was accompanied by a series of competitions: photography competition (OPEN PHOTO), an award voted for by the public for the best tour (OPEN VOTE), a competition for the best Open House Athens map (OPEN YOUR MAP), a portfolio competition in collaboration with Vakalo Art & Design College (OPEN YOUR PORTFOLIO) and a competition held on Instagram for volunteers (IG STORIES).

The visual identity of Open House Athens 2025 emerged after a competition, co-organised with the Vakalo Art & Design College, with the winning design by Odysseas Zacharatos featured on the festival's printed material and volunteers' t-shirts.

Additional activities



Anna Karountzou. Photo by Maria Chatzidourou © Courtesy of Open House Greece

MADE IN ATHENS
(March 29–30)

Approximate number of attendees:
1,900

This parallel event once again connected the public with contemporary and traditional production techniques. 25 creative spaces opened their doors, with the creators themselves offering free guided tours.

OPEN WALKS

(March 29–30)

Approximate number of attendees:

1,200



Open Walk. Photo by Kypseli Marios Lepouri © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Three themed walks introduced participants to hidden architectural and historical aspects of Athens under the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of 'Future Heritage':

- 'The Mansions of Kifisia'
- 'Kypseli through Fokionos Negri Street'
- 'Night Walk by IFI Lighting—Unveiling Athens Through Light'

OPEN SCHOOL

(March 31 & April 4)

Approximate number of attendees:
220



European Parliament Liason Office. Photo by Athena Louleopoulou
© Courtesy of Open House Greece



Ticketmaster Offices. Photo by Tasos Papadopoulos © Courtesy of
Open House Greece

Student and educational groups visited selected creative spaces and buildings from the main programme, guided by OHA volunteers.

LIVESTREAMED TOURS

(March 31 & April 6)

Approximate number of attendees:
50,000

Free tours were broadcast live via Instagram from selected buildings of the programme.

OPEN OFFICE

(April 3–4)

Approximate number of attendees:
360



K-studio. Photo by Marios Daniel © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Sponsored by Dimand, distinguished architectural studios in Athens welcomed visitors. Architects personally guided participants through their spaces and presented their design philosophy.

Participating offices: Workshop Dionisis Sotovikis, Buerger Katsota Architects, Ooak Architects, Divercity Architects, K-studio, Deda Architects, Minas Kosmidis Architects, Block722 architects+, A&O Architects.

Competitions

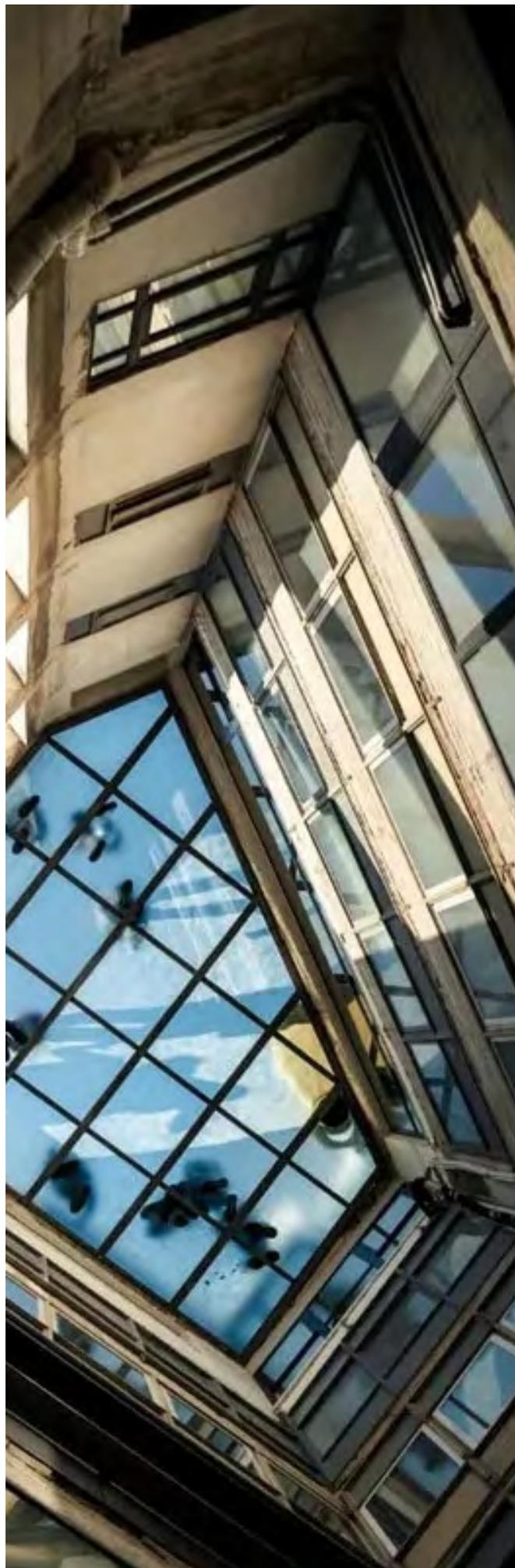
DESIGN THE POSTER

(until January 20)

Approximate number of attendees:

90

Contest for designing the visual identity of the official poster and volunteers' t-shirts for Open House Athens and Open House Thessaloniki 2025.



2nd winner. Photo by @alex_varouxis© Courtesy of Open House Greece

VOLUNTEERS' IG STORIES

(February 27–April 6)

Approximate number of attendees:

200+

Contest on Instagram for volunteers, featuring stories from the festival's preparation.

OPEN PHOTO

(April 5–13)

Approximate number of attendees:

500+

A photography competition on Instagram, sponsored by Xiaomi, which invited participants to capture the theme of 'Future Heritage'.

OPEN VOTE

(April 5–13)

Approximate number of attendees:

1550

The audience award allowed visitors to vote for their favourite tour. A camera from Fujifilm Hellas was awarded to one participant, while volunteers of the winning building/tour received recognition and commemorative gifts.



Finalist of the 'Open Vote'. Photo by @Ttzanetos © Courtesy of Open House Greece

OPEN YOUR MAP

(April 5–13)

Approximate number of attendees:

20

Sponsored by Kleemann, visitors collected stamps on their printed event map and shared them on Instagram to enter the contest.

OPEN YOUR PORTFOLIO

(until April 30)

Approximate number of attendees:

17

In collaboration with the Vakalo Art & Design College, this portfolio competition awarded a full scholarship for the MA in Architectural Design (accredited by the University of Derby).

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:
450

Each year, the festival attracts numerous applications from individuals eager to volunteer. To be eligible, applicants must be over 18 years old and available during the event dates. Volunteers at Open House Athens form a vibrant community through team rehearsals, collaborative participation in organised meetings and shared experiences, like the closing party.

The first meeting for volunteers took place on February 27. Attending these initial gatherings was essential, as volunteers were divided into rehearsal groups based on arrangements made between each group's coordinator and its members. During this stage, volunteers were also introduced to opportunities to contribute to pre-event activities, including research, writing content, translation tasks and distributing promotional materials.

Every year, volunteers are expected to demonstrate qualities such as friendliness, teamwork, patience, strong communication skills, enthusiasm, reliability and a sense of responsibility in preparing for their assigned duties.

Throughout the event, volunteers were easily identifiable by their distinctive t-shirts, marking their official role. Their key tasks involved welcoming guests, providing tours of the



Volunteer training meeting. Photo by Nikos Simos © Courtesy of Open House Greece

buildings, sharing information with the public, and promoting festival-related products at various city locations.

After the festival concluded, volunteers received a digital certificate recognising their contribution.

Instagram stories contest for volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

200+

An online contest was organised, inviting volunteers to share Instagram stories showcasing their preparations for OHA. One participant was awarded a photo camera as a prize. The primary objective of the contest was to motivate volunteers during their training period and enhance engagement within the volunteer community. The initiative proved highly successful, particularly given that the majority of the festival's

volunteers were students aged 18-24, for whom sharing content on Instagram was a familiar and routine activity. Their stories not only contributed to promoting the event among their personal networks but also attracted additional young participants and potential volunteers, thereby expanding the festival's reach and strengthening audience engagement.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Athens 2025 had 77 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Veil
2. Old (Small) Stock Market
3. Offices in 'The Orbit' building

The theme explored the connection between architectural heritage and the future, showcasing works that preserved the historical identity of buildings, repurposed existing spaces in innovative ways or integrated the principles of sustainable architecture. The buildings/tours were categorised into the following sections:

Preserved Heritage

This category referred to buildings of historical or architectural value that had maintained their original form, even if they had undergone restoration or conservation work. It highlighted the importance of architectural heritage and the value of preserving the authenticity of spaces in the modern urban landscape.

Transformation

This section focused on buildings that have been restored or redesigned with a modern perspective to meet new uses. It promoted the sustainable utilisation of the built environment, offering an alternative to demolition and emphasising the importance of repurposing with respect to the past while adapting to the present and future.

Sustainable Design

This category included contemporary buildings that harmonised with their environment and incorporated new technologies, smart materials and principles of sustainable design. Through featuring innovative solutions, it demonstrated the significance of sustainable design for the future of architecture and its connection to architectural heritage.

Innovation Cluster

This section featured modern workspaces and collaboration areas that integrated innovative design practices, sustainable solutions and cutting-edge technologies. It examined how the modern workspace redefined architectural heritage through innovation, flexibility and sustainable development.

Veil (Category: Transformation)

119 guided tours that attracted 1,195 visitors



Veil. Photo by Marios Lepouri © Courtesy of Open House Greece

The renovation and extension of this corner duplex from 1951 was a project by the architectural firm Arid, combining respect for the urban fabric with contemporary design solutions. The addition of a new volume was executed in a way that maintains a sense of lightness without visually burdening the surroundings, incorporating elements that

promote sustainability and functionality. The architectural approach focused on preserving the site's memory, using high-quality materials and adapting to modern living needs. The building includes shared spaces, such as coworking and co-living areas, fostering a sense of community.

Old (Small) Stock Market (Category: Preserved Heritage)

39 guided tours that
attracted 783 visitors



Old (small) Stock Market. Photo by Maria Chatzidourou © Courtesy of Open House Greece

The Athens Stock Market was established in this building, its fourth headquarters, in November 1891, in premises leased from the owner Konstantinos Voultzos. It remained there until November 1934, when it was relocated to the current building at 10 Sofokleous Street, owned by the National Bank of Greece. The

restoration of the building was carried out by the architect Giannis Kizis in 1997. The building stands out for its imposing architectural decoration, both on the exterior and especially in the interior, which follows the principles of eclecticism.

Offices in 'The Orbit' building (Category: Sustainable Design)

35 guided tours that
attracted 351 visitors

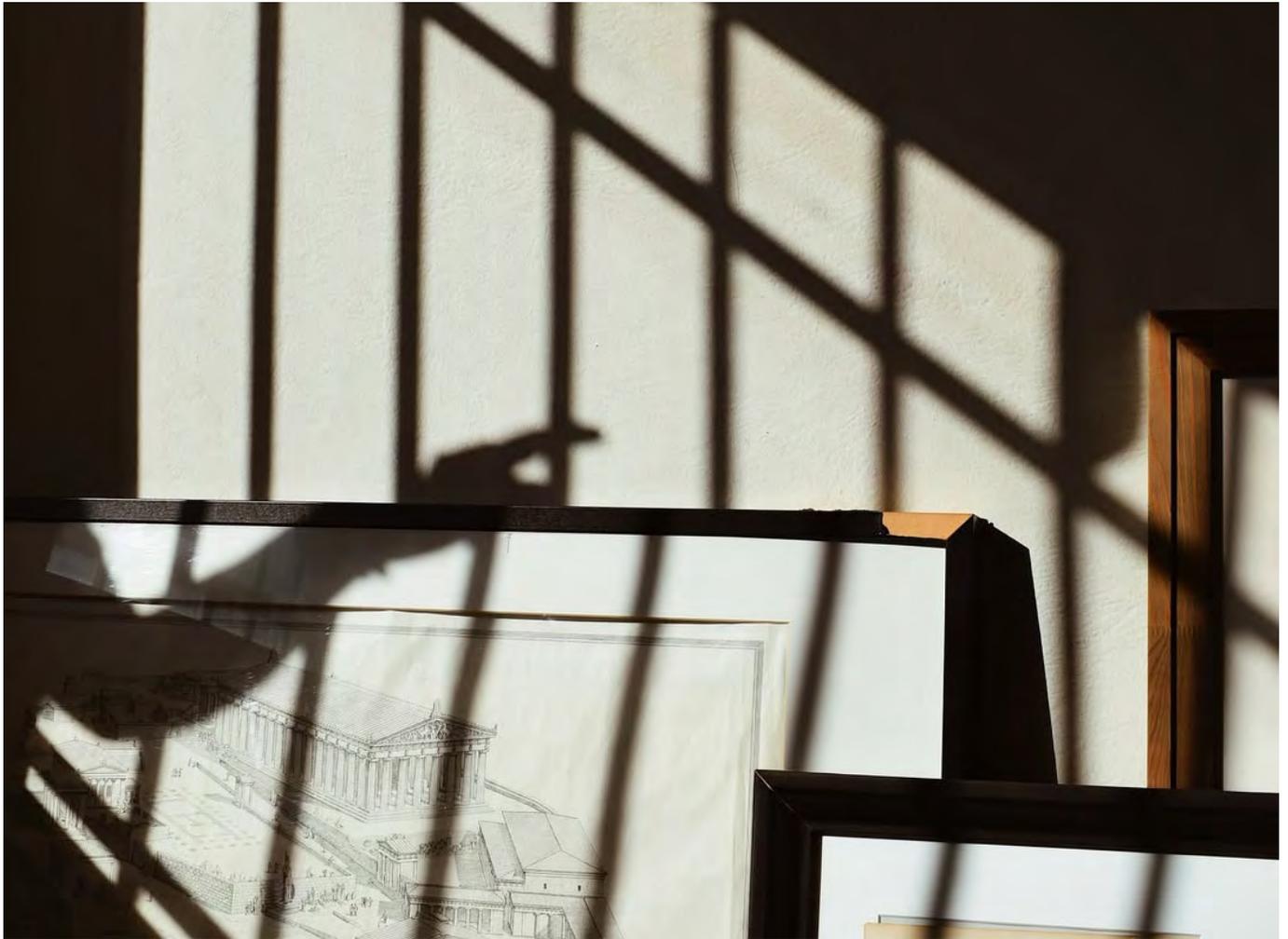


Orbit. Photo by Marios Lepouri © Courtesy of Open House Greece

'The Orbit' is a 9-story office building owned by Noval Property that has been redesigned. The architectural study of the facades was undertaken by Lianou Chalvatzis Architects, while the architectural study beyond the facades was carried out by Lianou Chalvatzis Architects in collaboration with Y & A Vikelas & Associates Architects (Project Design Identity: Lianou Chalvatzis Architects). The building is environmentally certified at the highest LEED

Platinum level and holds a WiredScore Gold certification for its high digital connectivity. Ticketmaster Hellas' offices are located on one floor of 'The Orbit', which was renovated in 2023 by the architectural firm Kokosalaki Architecture. The design created a modern work environment, combining flexibility with spaces that promote both privacy and collaboration.

Festival activities



1st winner. Photo by @Dim_lip © Courtesy of Open House Greece

OPEN PHOTO

Attracted **500+** visitors

This photography competition held on Instagram invited the public to share their experiences and perspectives of the event. Participation was open to everyone—amateur and professional photographers, architecture enthusiasts, and admirers of Athens and Open House Athens alike. The theme of the competition was ‘Future Heritage’.

Participants shared photographs from the event on Instagram, using public profiles and the competition’s hashtags, while following the official Open House Athens Instagram account. The three most distinguished photographs received special recognition for their creativity and contribution.

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



Open Walk. Photo by Kifisia Maria Chatzidourou © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Open House Athens 2025 had 100 guided tours for English speakers that attracted 652 people.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

To make the festival accessible to a global audience, the organising team adopted a multilingual communication strategy. The official website, event listings and promotional materials were fully available in English, while social media content featured bilingual posts. Volunteer guides received training to conduct English-language tours at key sites and were encouraged to use simple, inclusive language. Partnerships with hotels, cultural institutions and transport services further supported outreach efforts, as these partners helped share English-language materials and information with visitors.

One of the festival's greatest successes was the high participation of international guests, many of whom praised the clarity and accessibility of the English-language tours. However, a key challenge was maintaining consistent language quality across all locations, since volunteers' fluency levels varied. To address this, the organisers implemented short training sessions and provided translated scripts, ensuring that all visitors enjoyed a professional and engaging experience.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

Valuable insights have been gained through ongoing efforts to make the festival more inclusive for individuals with disabilities. One of the most important lessons has been the need to prioritise accessibility and inclusivity at every stage of planning and implementation. The commitment to recognising the importance of focusing more closely on the needs of people with disabilities and of continuously improving the accessibility of OHA's activities has become a fundamental part of the festival's mission.

Throughout this process, the organising team have felt great enthusiasm, joy and gratitude. Witnessing how individuals with disabilities were eager to engage actively in society and their appreciation for being included in events was deeply moving, and their curiosity and dedication were truly inspiring.

By incorporating accessibility measures such as website filters and special signage for accessible buildings, OHA not only improved the experience for visitors with disabilities but also helped raise awareness among all attendees about the value of inclusivity. This approach created a warmer, more welcoming environment for everyone involved.

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, confirming the impact of these initiatives. Seeing individuals with disabilities fully participate and enjoy the festival has been deeply rewarding and has strengthened the festival's resolve to continue expanding accessibility efforts.

In conclusion, this year's experience has underscored the vital importance of inclusivity, the fulfilment that comes from creating accessible spaces, and the profound appreciation from those who benefit. Moving forward, OHA remains dedicated to ensuring that all events are accessible to everyone, helping build a community where all individuals feel respected, welcomed and included.

To emphasise this year's theme, the following initiatives and activities were planned:

Information about accessible buildings:

Details about buildings accessible to people with disabilities were made available through an accessibility filter on the festival's website, special signage at accessible locations and dedicated listings in both the printed programme and website.

Online events:

Attracted 50,000 visitors

Livestreamed tours, featuring guided visits to two buildings from this year's programme, were broadcast on OHA's Instagram account.

Bilingual tours:

All Open House Athens tours were offered in both Greek and English to ensure broader accessibility.

C
HC
EURC

Bilbao
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Bilbao 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.17
Legal Name:	Asociación Open Urbanity
Date:	September 29–October 5, 2025
Name:	Open House Bilbao
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	89
City:	Bilbao
Country:	Spain
Duration:	7 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Bilbao 2025 attracted 21,637 attendees.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 166 men and 418 women: 584 volunteers in total.

Open House Bilbao 2025 was organised by 2 men and 4 women: 6 people in total.

Introduction

The Open House Bilbao 2025 festival took place over a full week, from September 29 to October 5, offering a broad and diverse programme focused on architecture and urban planning. Throughout those days, 89 emblematic buildings—including many spaces normally closed to the public—opened their doors so that residents and visitors could explore them through free guided tours. Among the most visited spaces in this edition were the Palacio de San Nicolás, Bilbao City Hall, Torre Bizkaia and the Bidebarrieta Library, all of which drew significant interest from participants eager to discover their history and architectural value. These visits were made possible thanks to the dedication of 580 volunteers, who accompanied groups and shared insights about each site.

As in previous years, the festival not only opened buildings that are usually inaccessible or little known but also offered a wide range of activities designed to showcase new ways of practising architecture. In total, 24 complementary activities were organised, including workshops, lectures and urban itineraries. The programme also featured thematic routes, urban walks and discussion spaces on contemporary architecture, all aimed at engaging diverse audiences and offering new perspectives on the city. Altogether, more than 22,000 visitors took part in the festival's proposals.

In 2025, one of the festival's main focuses was to highlight new ways of doing architecture while still valuing traditional and heritage-based approaches, under the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of 'Future Heritage'. Emerging studios and unconventional proposals—including 'non-building' approaches—were included to show that the discipline extends beyond iconic structures. Once again, accessibility and inclusion played an important role: many opened spaces were fully accessible, and the planned activities brought architecture closer to all audiences.

In summary, the Open House Bilbao 2025 festival was much more than an architectural event; it was an opportunity for citizens to become aware of their city through its architecture and urban planning. The event promoted, disseminated and socialised architecture and urbanism among a broad audience in a participatory way.

Additional activities



Open passport. Photo by Zerikusi © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Open Passport

In line with the playful spirit of the event, and already a classic feature of the Open House Bilbao programme, the 'Open Passport' initiative invited visitors to collect stamps as they toured the buildings featured in the festival, letting them enter a draw for the chance to enjoy an exclusive experience at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum. The passports were available to the public at the festival's

Approximate number of attendees:

397

information points. To take part in the draw, visitors needed to collect at least three stamps—that is, visit at least three spaces—and then register their passport on the Open House Bilbao website. In total, 16 people were selected as winners and enjoyed a professionally guided tour of the museum, completely free of charge, around one month after the festival.

Film forum

Approximate number of attendees:

65



Film forum. Photo by Zerikusi © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Cinema, known as the 'seventh art', is undoubtedly one of the most widespread forms of entertainment, and it offers a magnificent opportunity to reflect on and explore new horizons in all areas of life, including architecture. Following the great success of last year's inaugural session, this activity was held for the second time, once again adopting the well-known film forum format led by Bernardo I. García de la Torre, architect and author of 'Architecture for the Cinema in Bilbao'. After a brief introduction, the audience

watched 'El hombre de al lado', a film closely linked to this year's theme, 'Future Heritage'. This film delved into the impact of architectural design on everyday life. Its setting—Le Corbusier's iconic Casa Curutchet—provided a rich backdrop for discussing how architecture mediates social interactions and power dynamics. After the film, attendees were invited to share their interpretations and explore these themes collectively, fostering an accessible and stimulating way to approach architectural discourse.

'Visual Stories' exhibition



Visual Stories exhibition © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

The selected works of the 2024 Open House Europe 'Visual Stories' open call were showcased during this year's edition of Open House Bilbao. The first-prize project, which had been officially submitted on behalf of Open House Bilbao, was presented alongside the other awarded entries. The exhibition remained open to visitors throughout the seven days of the festival and was hosted in the exhibition hall of one of the participating buildings: the

Zankoeta Municipal Centre. Since it is a public building with unrestricted access, it was not possible to determine the exact number of visitors who viewed the exhibition. However, this characteristic was precisely why the venue was chosen: its open, freely accessible nature ensured maximum visibility and allowed a wide and diverse audience to engage with the creative visual narratives produced for the exhibition.

Workshops for families

Approximate number of attendees:

162

Each year, Open House Bilbao organises workshops for families, and, in its latest edition, this activity returned due to its great success in previous years. It provided an opportunity for children and their families to engage through playful activities, storytelling and creative games, all designed to help them understand important social and environmental challenges. Throughout the sessions, participants constructed a flexible

and mobile 'installation-library' together—a lively space for reading, play and shared reflection. By immersing young people in the architectural and historical heritage of their neighbourhoods, the programme highlighted how crucial it is to educate future generations: fostering their curiosity, encouraging collective imagination and making architecture relevant in their daily lives.

Open Talks

Approximate number of attendees:

65



From the event 'Open Talks'. Photo by Zerikusi © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Open House Bilbao featured a series of professional talks that stood out as some of the festival's most engaging activities. Audiences were particularly drawn to the presentation of the city's next major urban project—the underground transformation of the central railway station—explained firsthand by its designers. A live podcast, where seven experts reacted to architectural dilemmas, also

captured significant attention for its dynamic and accessible format. Additionally, a session on cognitive architecture introduced visitors to how built environments shape human behaviour. These events were highly successful because they offered rare, direct insights from specialists while inviting the public to participate in current debates and envision the future of their city.

Activities for volunteers



Volunteer training. Photo by Zerikusi © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

390

In September, a comprehensive training programme for volunteers was implemented to ensure the effective participation of all volunteers during the festival. The programme consisted of several activities carried out in the weeks leading up to the event.

General training meeting (2 hours)

Responding to volunteers' preferences, the session took place on a Saturday in Bizkaia Aretoa, an emblematic building featured in the festival's catalogue. The meeting began with a presentation on the festival's history and core values, followed by a question-and-answer round. Afterwards, volunteers were divided into groups according to their assigned roles, and each group received specific training tailored to their tasks. The session concluded with a group activity in which veteran volunteers shared their knowledge and practical advice with newcomers while enjoying a light snack. At the end of the meeting, the Volunteer Kit was distributed to all participants.



Volunteer training. Photo by Zerikusi ©
Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Pre-visits to assigned buildings (approximately 1.5 hours)

These visits allowed volunteers to familiarise themselves with the venues where they would be working and to understand the specific characteristics of each space. As a new feature this year, experts were present in several buildings to provide detailed and specialised information during the tours. The opportunity to explore the venues in advance remains one of the most highly valued components of the training programme.

The main challenge continues to be ensuring that the training remains useful for volunteers who have already participated for several years and know the festival's dynamics. For this reason, this year, the group activity gave veteran volunteers a central role—an approach that, according to the feedback received, proved highly satisfactory.

Party for volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

200

On the final day of the festival, October 5, the traditional volunteer party took place—an event open to all volunteers and attended by members of the organisation as well as international participants. This year, the celebration was hosted in one of the city's most emblematic buildings, a former church that has been transformed into a vibrant cultural centre and featured as a new addition to the festival programme. Scheduled right after the closing of the last visitable buildings, the event ensured that every volunteer had the opportunity to join.

During the gathering, volunteers shared stories from their weekend experiences while enjoying ambient music, food and drinks, all offered by the organisation as a token of gratitude for their invaluable contribution. As a new feature this year, the party included vegan food options and a photocall, allowing volunteers to take home a personalised souvenir of the celebration.

Additional benefits

Priority access

Volunteers received a wristband granting them priority entry to all visitable buildings, as well as early registration for the festival's parallel activities. This practical benefit is one of the most motivating incentives, allowing volunteers to enjoy the festival fully while balancing their responsibilities.

Exclusive gift

All volunteers were given a specially designed festival kit featuring official merchandise, including a tote bag, a picnic, a guide, and other items. This tradition is highly valued by volunteers, with some even collecting the kits as keepsakes, making it a meaningful token of appreciation.

Certificate of participation

Each volunteer received a diploma certifying their contribution to the festival, providing formal recognition of their efforts and commitment.

University credits

Students from the Faculty of Architecture at the Public University of the Basque Country earned university credits for volunteering, thanks to agreements with the respective institutions, adding an extra academic incentive.

Anonymous satisfaction survey

Volunteers were invited to complete an anonymous online survey to provide feedback and suggestions, giving them a voice in shaping future editions and increasing their sense of ownership and involvement in the festival.

These incentives, recognition tools and opportunities for engagement went beyond typical events, providing volunteers with motivation, tangible rewards and meaningful acknowledgement for their contributions.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Bilbao 2025 had 3 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Aterpe Plaza de Larrabetzu
2. Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao
3. Acceso Panorámico Horno Alto

Aterpe Plaza de Larrabetzu

1 guided tours that
attracted 20 visitors



Aterpe Plaza de Larrabetzu. Photo by Ana Ortiz © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

The Aterpe Plaza de Larrabetzu project was selected to showcase the Open House Europe annual theme, 'Future Heritage', because it creates a clear dialogue between the town's architectural past and its future. By transforming a disused building into a light, open, timber-structured shelter, the project preserved the traditional role of the aterpe as a communal gathering place while reinterpreting it through contemporary design, sustainable materials and a renewed social purpose. Nestled within the historic square, the new structure bridges heritage and innovation, demonstrating how future-oriented architecture can strengthen local identity rather than replace it. It exemplified how public spaces can evolve to meet present needs while carrying forward the cultural memory that shapes them. As this building is not in the city of Bilbao, only 1 visit could be organised with the architect, but it was worth it because of the strong link with the annual theme.

Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao

6 guided tours that attracted 143 visitors



Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao. Photo by Ana Ortiz © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

The inclusion of the Museum of Fine Arts of Bilbao in the Open House Bilbao 2025 programme highlighted its ongoing transformation into a museum that bridges past and future. The building combines historical layers—from its original 1945 structure and the 1970 extension to the current expansion project, Agravitas, by Foster + Partners and LM Uriarte Arkitektura—demonstrating how heritage institutions can evolve. The expansion not only respects the museum’s architectural and artistic legacy but also reinterprets it to meet contemporary needs: more exhibition space, modern facilities and a renewed connection to the city and its citizens. By opening its doors for the festival, the museum invited visitors to reflect on how cultural heritage is preserved while imagining its future trajectory, making it a perfect example of ‘Future Heritage’.

Acceso Panorámico Horno Alto

8 guided tours that
attracted 208 visitors



Acceso Panorámico Horno Alto. Photo by Ana Ortiz © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

The Panoramic Access to the Horno Alto de Bizkaia was chosen to highlight the OHEu annual theme because it transformed a post-industrial relic into a living bridge between past and present. By installing an urban elevator, a zigzag staircase and a viewing footbridge, the project reconnected the historic industrial structure of the emblematic company Horno Alto nº 1 with its community, offering both physical access and a renewed way to experience the landmark. This intervention honoured the area's industrial heritage while re-imagining it for modern urban life: accessible, public and meaningful. It demonstrated how heritage can evolve—not as a frozen monument but as a dynamic part of the city's future.

Festival activities

Abando Taupadak

attracted **153** visitors

The presentation of Abando Taupadak offered a unique opportunity to explore how Bilbao is preparing to reinvent one of its most central neighbourhoods—bridging past infrastructure and future urban life. After the planned burial of the railway tracks and the arrival of the high-speed train, this project will free up some 130,000 m² in the heart of the city. The proposal envisions a new central park, homes, public facilities and pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly mobility, while transforming the historic station's vault into a vibrant public space.

This event was selected to highlight the OHEu annual theme because Abando Taupadak merges heritage preservation (the old railway infrastructure and historic station vault) with forward-looking urban transformation. It showed visitors how safeguarding the past could go hand in hand with designing inclusive, sustainable and connected cities of the future, making it a compelling emblem of 'Future Heritage'.

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



Guided tours. Photo by Zerikusi © Courtesy of Asociación Open Urbanity

Open House Bilbao 2025 had 1 guided tour and 1 exhibition for English speakers that attracted 40 attendees. 62 buildings were accessible for people with reduced mobility.

As part of the festival's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, a talk was offered on cognitive architecture, exploring how built environments can better respond to human needs and behaviours. In addition, priority access wristbands were distributed to visitors with functional diversity, ensuring they could enjoy visiting buildings comfortably and without waiting. These initiatives aimed to make the festival more inclusive and to raise awareness about the importance of designing spaces that are accessible to all.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

At Open House Bilbao, buildings for guided tours in English and other non-native languages were carefully selected based on their accessibility, popularity and the availability of guides comfortable conducting tours in those languages. Priority was given to iconic or highly visited sites to ensure that non-native speakers could fully experience the festival highlights.

To engage non-native speakers, international volunteers were stationed at information points, providing guidance, answering questions and helping visitors navigate the festival in English. Additionally, maps, schedules and promotional materials were made available in English.

One success story was the participation of several non-native speakers who expressed that having English-speaking volunteers and tours greatly enhanced their experience, allowing them to fully enjoy the festival and interact with local culture. Collaborations with international volunteer networks facilitated this support, helping us create a welcoming environment.

From this experience, it was clear that accessibility for non-native speakers relies not only on the translation of materials but also on human support on-site. Including multilingual volunteers and guides was essential for fostering inclusivity and ensuring a positive experience for all visitors.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

This year, Open House Bilbao continued the process of making the festival more accessible and inclusive for people with special needs, building on the work started last year when the website was redesigned. The website now provides clear, user-friendly information on which buildings are accessible for people with reduced mobility and which are not. This information was also included in printed materials, allowing visitors to plan their routes in advance.

Accessibility was a key consideration in selecting buildings for the festival, resulting in 72% of all sites being fully accessible. In addition, visitors with disabilities could request a priority access wristband upon providing proof of a disability certification, allowing them to enjoy the buildings without waiting in queues.

This year, Open House Bilbao also collaborated closely with APNABi, a local association supporting people with autism. The APNABi Care and Education Centre—which has also received an architectural award—was included in the festival programme, providing a unique opportunity for engagement and learning.

These measures, while modest, contributed to a more inclusive festival and provided valuable insights. They have shown the importance of accessibility planning and highlighted areas where further improvements could be made to continue enhancing participation for all visitors.

C
HC
EURC

Brno
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Brno 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.23
Legal Name:	SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT, Z.S. (Culture and Management club)
Date:	May 16–17, 2025
Name:	Open House Brno
Type	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	118
City:	Brno
Country:	Czech Republic
Duration:	2 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Brno 2025 attracted 45231 attendees.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 36 men and 114 women: 150 volunteers in total.

Open House Brno 2024 was organised by 8 men and 9 women: 17 people in total.

Introduction

In 2025, the Open House Brno (OHB) festival focused on how cities and architecture transform over time and what legacy current developments might leave, under the Open House Europe annual theme of 'Future Heritage'. The second main topic of this year's festival was the work of architect Bohuslav Fuchs, exploring the urban design of Brno in the 1930s. Both topics were fulfilled through specially curated tours, intergenerational programmes connecting memory and modern transformation, and public discussions that linked the past, present and future of Brno's urban fabric. Moreover, a special tramway ride was organised around 20 of the most interesting locations authored by Fuchs. The festival weekend featured a further 118 locations and 26 different activities, recording 45231 visits and made possible by 136 local volunteers and over 14 international volunteers from Athens, Rome, Thessaloniki, Vienna, Zagreb and various places in Slovenia.

The most popular event by attendance was 'Picnic Saturday' at Nova Zbrojovka, recording more than 3500 visitors, thanks to the festival's collaboration with a food festival, as well as a dedicated programme for children and multiple buildings made accessible nearby. Visitors also appreciated tours through the Janacek Theatre, led by theatre students in the style of resembling an actual working day 'behind-the-scenes'. Overall, the festival received highly positive feedback, with about 30% of this year's programme dedicated to new locations, thus marking a total of 317 unique locations opened in Brno by the festival over the years.

Additional activities

There were 118 unique buildings in the OHB 2025 programme, 20 of which featured dedicated English-speaking tours and 2 of which offered tours in German.

There were 40 additional events:

- 1 Grand Opening Event
- 6 'Future Heritage' events guided by students, seniors and people related to the buildings
- 3 workshops for children
- 1 'Draw Your Own Villa' workshop
- 1 tramway tour of 20 buildings by the architect Bohuslav Fuchs
- 3 tours of the Janacek Theatre led by theatre students
- 1 picnic event
- 1 'Earth planet in a chapel' exhibition
- 1 'Visual Stories' exhibition
- 3 locations presenting the activities of expats within Brno (Tivoli, JMK, Expat Centre)
- 2 locations featuring the Ensemble Opera Diversa
- 14 locations as part of Open Gastro Brno
- 1 Closing Concert (500 visitors)

Recording of theatrical performances at Tesař Villa, Masná burza (Meat Market) and Zábrdovice Municipal Spa

As part of Open House Brno 2025, the event, 'A Glimpse into the Private World of Bohuslav Fuchs', offered a unique theatrical dialogue exploring the family life and professional legacy of the renowned architect, urban planner and studio head. Based on a ten-page libretto, the performance featured four actors portraying Fuchs, his wife and their children, bringing to life his motivations, daily routines and lesser-known moments from the 1930s. Through personal reflections and vivid storytelling, the piece reanimated Fuchs's iconic buildings and invited audiences to envision the future through the eyes of an architect. The event welcomed approximately 180 visitors across several showings, with an additional 60 participants attending a dedicated tram ride. A recording of the performance is currently in post-production and is expected to be available in August 2025.

Approximate number of attendees:

240

'Teralóna' installation in the chapel of St Anne's University Hospital

This installation is part of the Open House Brno 2025 festival, which offered rare access to hidden and fascinating spaces throughout the city. In this case, however, it was not only about a space but about the entire world and how people relate to it. In the centre of the hospital chapel lies an installation resembling the planet Earth. In the silence of the chapel, the Earth takes on a new meaning through observation, humility, care and pause. In the hospital environment, where daily encounters with vulnerability and hope are common, the simple presence of the planet can act as a light for the soul of the hospital. Faith and science meet here; just as the planetary model was created through precise knowledge, the spiritual space of the chapel is the result of care, diligence and attention to what transcends people.

Approximate number of attendees:

515

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

112

The welcoming event for volunteers initiated 95 new volunteers, alongside 55 returning volunteers. The organisers shared the festival's core values and instructions. Essential materials such as t-shirts, maps and badges were distributed through a sequential process. Volunteers passed through various stations where they completed tasks including insurance registration, getting their assignments and receiving materials such as location banners, orientation signs, badges

and t-shirts, as well as written content for guided tours and marketing materials. The event concluded with a Q&A session.

There was also a party for the volunteer community, hosting more than 150 attendees. Although mainly oriented towards volunteers, stakeholders and other guests were also invited. As in previous years, the party was held at Villa Engelsmann, a unique venue providing breathtaking views.

A workshop on how to conduct guided tours

Approximate number of attendees:

112

Bara Kulikova, a professional tour guide, prepared a second in-person educational event, aimed at improving volunteers' personal skills concerning visitor guidance. The event took place in the premises of St Anne's

University Hospital on May 16 and included rehearsals for participants and peer-to-peer feedback.

Other benefits



Grand opening. Photo by Dagmar Sukopova © Courtesy of SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT

For the 2025 edition of OHB, there were about 20 'Volunteer Thursdays' organised, where volunteers were given the opportunity to visit newly added buildings to the festival's programme. The initiative recorded roughly 150 visits in total, with many volunteers visiting multiple buildings. There was also a tramway ride specifically scheduled for the volunteers.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Brno 2025 had 36 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. House of the Lords of Lipé
2. The Brno Arms Factory
3. The Janáček Theatre

House of the Lords of Lipé



House of the Lords of Lipé © Courtesy of SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT

The House of the Lords of Lipé, also known as Schwanz's House or Schwanz's Palace, is one of the oldest preserved buildings in Brno. It was built between 1243 and 1260. Its current name comes from the Moravian provincial governor Čeněk of Lipé, who purchased the house in 1564 and owned it until 1587, when it was acquired by Kryštof Schwanz of Retz in exchange for the house U Červeného

vola on the corner of Koblížné Street and Náměstí Svobody. The house subsequently underwent significant reconstruction. Antonio Gabri, to whom Schwanz entrusted this task, transformed the Gothic house into a three-story Renaissance palace. The Italian sculptor Giorgio Galdi is the author of the entrance portal and two cylindrical bay windows decorated with stone reliefs.

The Brno Arms Factory



The Brno Arms Factory © Courtesy of SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT

Zbrojovka Brno, also known as the Brno Arms Factory, is one of the most iconic industrial sites in Czech history. Though its official founding dates to 1918, the area had already been used for artillery workshops before then. Over the 20th century, Zbrojovka became internationally known for its production of weapons, machine tools, tractors, automobiles and even early computers. The factory played a crucial role in the industrial development of Brno and was a symbol of Czechoslovak engineering strength.

After decades of activity, the decline of the original company led to the abandonment of the site. Today, traces of its industrial legacy remain in several preserved buildings, including the former headquarters—known as the CASTLE—which retains many original design elements, and the Boiler House, marked by the iconic Zbrojovka chimney.

The Janáček Theatre



The Janáček Theatre © Courtesy of SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT

One of the largest theatre buildings in Europe, built at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the Janáček Theatre is one of the purest examples of the so-called Brussels style in Brno. The building recently underwent a demanding general reconstruction, during which its social spaces were restored to their original lustre.

The Janáček Theatre was built between 1961-65, but its history dates back to the very beginnings of the National Theatre in Brno and the many years of effort to build

an independent representative building of Czech theatre, searching for space, means and architectural solutions. The monumental building was ceremonially opened on October 2, 1965 and is partly surrounded by a city park. Bearing the hallmarks of traditionalism, it was primarily intended for large opera and ballet performances of both classical and modern repertoire. The bronze monument to Leoš Janáček was installed in 1975, and its author is Stanislav Hanz.

Different audiences in the local Open House festival



Grand Opening Event. Photo by Dagmar Sukopova © Courtesy of SPOLEK KULTURA & MANAGEMENT

Open House Brno 2025 had 20 guided tours for English speakers that attracted 300-500 people. There were 2 tours for German speakers that attracted 20 visitors. As part of Open House Brno's 'off-season programme', special tours were conducted for clients with vision loss of the festival's partner, TyfloCentrum. These tours took place at their headquarters and other selected buildings on demand.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

The selection of buildings for guided tours was based on the availability of qualified guides for each language. The tours covered a range of locations, with guides who were proficient in both English and non-native languages to accommodate the festival's diverse audience.

To engage non-native speakers, OHB focused on collaborations with key community resources. This included a close partnership with the Expat Centre, targeted specific periodicals and web pages aimed at the expat community. This helped to reach a broader audience and ensure the festival's activities and communications were inclusive.

One of 2025's successes was accommodating 14 exchange volunteers for Open House Brno's events, with participants coming from cities involved in the Sister Cities programme: 4 from OHEu, 5 from Wien, and 5 from Zagreb. This collaboration not only enhanced the event but also fostered cross-cultural exchange. However, challenges arose when coordinating schedules and language proficiency; however, they were managed by working closely with international volunteers and local expat organisations.

Open House Brno managed to get into public transport, not only through advertisement but also in the form of an interactive 2-hour tram tour, presenting selected buildings during the ride.

The festival partnered with organisations specialising in the integration of expats: Beruska Centre at Tivoli, South Moravian Centre for Foreigners and Expat Centre. These collaborations provided valuable insights and resources, especially in reaching out to non-native speakers. Additionally, the festival consulted with the governmental office responsible for foreigners to better understand the needs and preferences of expats within the region. The main lessons included understanding that complete web pages in English were essential, and the booking tool needed to be separated based on language.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

The festival was made more accessible through the curation of a special set of guided tours specifically designed for groups with mobility, hearing and visual impairments. These tours were carefully tailored to provide an enriching experience while addressing the unique needs of each group, making the festival more inclusive. They were available both before and during the festival, ensuring that everyone could participate and enjoy the event.

To improve accessibility, dedicated tours were offered for people with disabilities, as well as podcasts and online guided tours with subtitles. These initiatives ensured that attendees with different needs could engage with the festival's content in a way that worked for them.

The festival partnered with organisations such as TyfloCentrum, which specialises in supporting people with visual impairments, and the League of the Deaf, which focuses on individuals with hearing loss. Their expertise helped make the festival experience truly accessible to all.

One key lesson learnt was that, without the involvement of dedicated groups and organisations, very few visitors with disabilities would attend the event on their own—their active participation and support were essential for making the festival truly inclusive.

Distribution

The Open House Brno website featured 118 buildings with descriptions in Czech and English, as well as blog posts. There were also 100 filmed guided tours available on YouTube and about 30 podcasts on different sites.

Link:

<https://openhousebrno.cz/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/openhousebrno/>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/openhousebrno/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/OpenHouseBrno>

Linkedin:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/openhousebrno/>

Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/45TRMaakNezv74pPtcMC4M>

Blog:

<https://openhousebrno.cz/cs/blog>

Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/@Open_House_Brno

C
HC
EURC

Dublin
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Dublin 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.26
Legal Name:	Irish Architecture Foundation Limited
Date:	October 11–19, 2025
Name:	Open House Dublin
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	225
City:	Dublin
Country:	Ireland
Duration:	9 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Dublin 2025 attracted 25,000–30,000 attendees.

The festival had 403 volunteers.

Open House Dublin 2025 was organised by 4 people.

Introduction

In 2025, the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) invited audiences to gather for Open House Dublin (OHD)—nine joy-filled days of talks, exhibitions and tours—as it explored Dublin’s ‘Future Heritage’. At OHD, the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of ‘Future Heritage’ focused on the present, celebrating the stories of Dublin as they were lived and experienced, with an eye on how they are shaping the city’s tomorrow. From O’Connell Street to the coast, and from the mountains to the metro, Open House Dublin opened doors across the city and county.

The annual theme deepened people’s understanding of architecture’s role in building a shared future for Dublin. With free events for all ages, including ‘Open House Junior’, the festival invited people to celebrate what had already been built and to take part in shaping what came next. Visitors came for the buildings, stayed for the talks and left with a renewed sense of Dublin’s heritage, its future and their shared role within it.

30,000 people engaged with the IAF through Open House Dublin this year. Over 9 days, 900 tours and events took place across the city and county, with 190 buildings opening their doors. More than 1,000 building owners, managers, staff, keyholders, architects, tour guides, artists and facilitators participated in this festival of architecture.

IAF House returned as a free and accessible public venue for architecture and culture in Charlemont Square, Dublin, welcoming visitors to exhibitions, films, workshops and conversations about the festival and the work of the IAF.

‘Open House Junior’ explored the theme of ‘Future Heritage’ through workshops and events for children, teens and families. Workshop highlights included ‘Scala’ (led by the artist Asbestos), LEGO workshops with brick artist Jessica Farrell, ‘Memory Mapping’ and ‘Design Your Dream Plaza’, all encouraging young people to engage creatively with architecture and public space.

‘Open Table’ featured in-depth, informal conversations about the lives of those who live and work in Dublin.

Building tours showcased landmarks such as the General Post Office, Dublin Airport’s Old Central Terminal and the French Ambassador’s Résidence de France. Walking and cycling tours explored areas from Fatima to the Grand Canal, Smithfield, Ranelagh and the Dublin Port Tolka Estuary Greenway. The residential programme highlighted transformations of city-centre homes, Victorian cottages, contemporary family houses and carefully restored historic properties by leading architectural studios.

'Open Studios' returned, offering behind-the-scenes access to architects at studios across Dublin, including O'Donnell + Tuomey, Newmark Architects, Brennan Furlong, Hawkins\Brown, Henry J Lyons and others.

'Open Extra' presented talks and film screenings, exploring European historic houses, the recreation of public space in Clontarf Village and the history of the Iveagh Markets, among other topics.

Finally, 'Open Access', focused on improving accessibility, featured tactile tours, Irish Sign Language (ISL) tours and the 'A Day in My Wheels' workshop by Spinal Injuries Ireland. A sensory pod was also available at the IAF venue, offering a quiet, calming space designed for visitors who may have felt overstimulated or overwhelmed.



Additional activities

‘Building — An Fonteyne in conversation with Ludwig Engel’

Approximate number of attendees:

100

A highlight of the festival featured Belgian architect An Fonteyne (noAarchitecten) in conversation with Ludwig Engel (HouseEurope!), presented by the Irish Architecture Foundation as part of Open House Dublin 2025 and a new international talks series. The discussion explored how innovation in architecture can creatively reuse existing buildings instead of demolishing them, addressing Europe’s housing crisis and environmental challenges. The event attracted strong public interest for its timely focus on sustainability, affordability and civic responsibility. Its success stemmed from combining expert insight, relevant social issues and practical ways citizens could contribute to more sustainable, imaginative urban futures.

Dublin Castle — Autism Friendly Tour

Approximate number of attendees:

10

This tour was specially designed to meet the needs of visitors with sensory sensitivities, and it provided a calm, inclusive and engaging experience. The event stood out for its thoughtful accessibility, allowing participants to learn and enjoy the heritage of Dublin Castle in a quiet, welcoming environment, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusion and meaningful cultural participation.

'Main Street Matters: In conversation with Dublin's Architects'

Approximate number of attendees:
50



Main Street Matters. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

'Main Street Matters' was a standout panel discussion that delved into the value and impact of Dublin's main streets as vital spaces of connection, identity and everyday life. The conversation brought together Andrée Dargan, Andrew Devonport, Cian Harte and Fionnuala May, with Mary McCarthy moderating the session. This engaging exchange offered diverse perspectives from Dublin's four County Architects on how main streets shape the character, heritage and social fabric of the city. The event resonated strongly with audiences for its blend of professional insight and civic relevance, sparking meaningful dialogue about how these shared urban spaces can evolve to support vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities in the future.

Glanmire — Official Residence of the Ambassador of Canada to Ireland

Approximate number of attendees:

50



Glanmire. Photo by Canada Residence © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

The Official Residence of the Ambassador of Canada to Ireland, Glanmire, offered visitors a rare opportunity to explore a 19th-century historic home rich in cultural and diplomatic significance. Guests discovered the residence's fascinating history, its notable past occupants and its special connection to Pádraig Pearse, while admiring both its architectural elegance and the Canadian artworks on display. Guided tours included the dining room, two formal salons, the study, and the front and rear gardens, featuring a beautifully restored Victorian greenhouse. Embassy staff shared insights into how Glanmire serves as a vital space for diplomatic engagement, hosting events that foster dialogue and connection between Canada and Ireland across topics of government, culture, business and civil society.

'A Day in My Wheels'

Approximate number of attendees:

48



To not design is to cost the earth. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

A Day in My Wheels, presented by Spinal Injuries Ireland, offered a powerful combination of experiential workshop and walking tour, giving participants the chance to experience accessibility from a wheelchair user's perspective. Beginning in the Creative Hub at IMMA, the session included an engaging introduction to spinal cord injuries, accessibility awareness and the principles of universal design. Participants were then provided with wheelchairs and guided by staff, including those with lived experience of using a wheelchair, through IMMA's courtyards, pathways and indoor spaces, encountering real and simulated obstacles along the way. This immersive event stood out for its hands-on learning, empathetic insights, and focus on how thoughtful design can create inclusive environments that blend heritage and innovation.

'Open House Baby' at 23 Kildare Street

Approximate number of attendees:

6

'Open House Baby' was a charming and inclusive tour designed for new parents and their little ones, led by Dr Hannah Malone (TCD) and Emma Gilleece (RTÉ Culture). Taking place in the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment—Ireland's first purpose-built civil service building completed in 1942—the event offered a relaxed and welcoming environment where babies were as much a part of the experience as their parents. Participants explored the building's Art Deco interiors, learned about its relief sculptures inspired by Irish mythology and industry (notably created by a female artist, which was rare for the time) and enjoyed insider stories from retired facility managers who knew the landmark intimately. The tour's success was due to its family-friendly approach, architectural insight and celebration of heritage through community connection.

'Seen — Unseen' exploration of The Chapel, Dublin Castle

Approximate number of attendees:
50



Seen — Unseen exploration of The Chapel, Dublin Castle © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

'Seen—Unseen', an art project by Clare McLaughlin, offered a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of how people experience art and culture without sight. Participants were invited to wear blindfolds during a 15-minute sensory exploration, heightening their awareness of sound, texture and atmosphere within the historic surroundings of Dublin Castle. With small groups of up to six people, each session created an intimate and reflective experience that challenged traditional, vision-based engagement with art. Facilitated by McLaughlin, a socially engaged visual artist dedicated to inclusive access to art for people of all abilities, the project highlighted the richness of non-visual perception and encouraged participants to consider how creativity and inclusivity can transform cultural spaces and deepen people's connection to heritage.

'Making Dust' (dir. Fiona Hallinan) film screening at Europa Experience Dublin

Approximate number of attendees:

35

The screening of 'Making Dust', followed by a discussion with filmmaker Fiona Hallinan and architectural historian Ellen Rowley, offered audiences a profound reflection on architecture, memory and materiality. The film essay documented the demolition of a Dublin church, shifting focus from loss to the life and afterlife of the building's materials. Through oral histories recorded in Finglas and a new materialist perspective, it explored themes of sustainability, embodied energy, and the social and cultural significance of architectural fabric. The event's success stemmed from its combination of artistic storytelling and scholarly insight, inviting viewers to reconsider how buildings live, age and continue to shape communities, even in their dismantling.

'Solid Space and Sound' – tactile tour at the National Gallery

Approximate number of attendees:

20

The tactile tour at the National Gallery of Ireland offered a unique and immersive way to experience the gallery's architecture through materials, texture, space and sound. Over the course of a 60-minute blindfolded visit, participants were guided by a member of the gallery's expert guide team through both indoor and outdoor spaces, engaging their non-visual senses to connect with the shape, atmosphere and acoustics of the building. Focusing on the gallery's most architecturally significant areas, the tour encouraged visitors to reimagine familiar surroundings through touch, sound and spatial awareness. This innovative experience stood out for its inclusive, multisensory approach, transforming the way audiences perceived and appreciated architecture and space, through rain or shine.

'From Bauhaus to Baggot Street' exhibition at Europa Experience

Approximate number of attendees:

100

This exhibition showcased a striking selection of photographs by Séamus Moran, tracing how European influences have shaped Ireland's built environment across the centuries. The exhibition highlighted 18th- and 19th-century classical designs, 20th-century Modernist innovations and 21st-century architectural diversity, revealing a nation in continual dialogue with global ideas. Through Moran's lens, visitors could see how Ireland's architects, patrons and builders both absorbed and reinterpreted continental traditions, resulting in a landscape that is distinctly Irish yet internationally inspired. The display also celebrated Ireland's growing presence on the world architectural stage, with the architects of featured buildings earning major honours such as the Mies van der Rohe Award and the Pritzker Prize.

2025 AAI Awards Exhibition

Approximate number of attendees:

120

The 2025 AAI Awards Exhibition, presented by the Architectural Association of Ireland, offered the public an inspiring overview of 78 projects showcasing the breadth and creativity of contemporary Irish architecture. Featuring both built and unbuilt works from practitioners in Ireland and abroad, the exhibition highlighted emerging directions in design while celebrating projects that made a meaningful social, cultural or environmental impact. The awards aim to raise architectural standards and foster public engagement with the discipline. This year's jury recognised thirteen outstanding projects, granting seven awards, including the prestigious Downes Medal, and six Special Mentions. The 2025 selection reflected the exceptional quality and diversity of submissions, from landscape and infrastructure projects to theoretical works, underlining architecture's evolving role in shaping a sustainable and contextually sensitive built environment.

'Open House Baby' at 23 Kildare Street

Approximate number of attendees:

6

'Open House Baby' was a charming and inclusive tour designed for new parents and their little ones, led by Dr Hannah Malone (TCD) and Emma Gilleece (RTÉ Culture). Taking place in the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment—Ireland's first purpose-built civil service building completed in 1942—the event offered a relaxed and welcoming environment where babies were as much a part of the experience as their parents. Participants explored the building's Art Deco interiors, learned about its relief sculptures inspired by Irish mythology and industry (notably created by a female artist, which was rare for the time) and enjoyed insider stories from retired facility managers who knew the landmark intimately. The tour's success was due to its family-friendly approach, architectural insight and celebration of heritage through community connection.

The Loos Bar

Approximate number of attendees:

25

Hidden away in Trinity College, Prof Edward McParland helped visitors explore a replica of a legendary Viennese watering hole. In the common room on Trinity College campus is a bar, inaccessible to the public, designed by de Blacam and Meagher Architects in 1984. Modelled on the American Bar by Adolf Loos from 1907 in Vienna, this icon of classic modernity was reproduced as a mirror copy. Shane de Blacam, known as the godfather of Irish architecture, took visitors through the story of how this became an offshoot of their refurbishment of the Dining Hall (Richard Castle 1741) after its near destruction following a fire in 1984.

'Behind the Pillars' tour of the General Post Office

Approximate number of attendees:
170



'Behind the Pillars' tour of the General Post Office. Photo by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

The tour of the General Post Office (GPO) offered an exclusive and in-depth exploration of one of Ireland's most iconic historic buildings. Opened in 1818, the GPO is celebrated both as a landmark of Georgian architecture and as the headquarters of the 1916 Easter Rising. Hosted by Dr Caitlin White, the tour guided participants through five floors of offices surrounding two inner courtyards, showcasing the Art Deco entrance, the Dome and Telegram Office, the balcony overlooking the Public Letter Office Hall, with its original 1929 writing desks and fittings, the CuChulainn statue, and the stairwell once used by Radio Éireann. The experience concluded in the GPO Museum courtyard, with attendees enjoying free admission to the museum. The tour's success stemmed from its combination of architectural grandeur, historical significance and expert storytelling, bringing the rich layers of Ireland's national heritage vividly to life.

Dublin Airport's Old Central Terminal Building

Approximate number of attendees:
180



Dublin Airport. Photos by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited



Dublin Airport. Photos by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

The tour of the Old Central Terminal Building (OCTB) at Dublin Airport, led by Graeme McQueen from the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA), offered a rare glimpse into 80 years of aviation history and some truly unique views of the airfield. Opened in 1940 and designed by Desmond FitzGerald, the building's curved, tiered design, inspired by the lines of an ocean liner, earned multiple architectural awards. Originally built to handle 100,000 passengers annually, the terminal now serves that many travellers in a single day, highlighting the vision and foresight of its design. The tour included a short presentation on the history of the OCTB and Dublin Airport, followed by an exploration of the building itself, offering visitors an engaging combination of architectural appreciation, historical context and aviation heritage.

Quayside Project

Approximate number of attendees:

200

The 'Dublin Docklands Riverside Tour', led by Urban Agency, offered an engaging look at a landmark Dublin City Council project that blends functionality, sustainability and public engagement. Beginning at the central plaza between the Docklands Office and the Municipal Water Sports Centre, participants explored the enhanced 4.2m-wide boardwalk, landscaped areas, seating and lighting, all of which were designed to create an open and inclusive riverside environment. The tour continued through the striking interiors of the Docklands Office and the Municipal Water Sports Centre, before concluding at the newly extended pontoons, which enhance access for emergency services, water activities and tours of the Jeanie Johnston ship. Highlights included two remarkable glulam structures made from European larch, celebrated for their strength, elegance and sustainability, showcasing innovative design in a dynamic urban setting.

'Compact Interiors: Planning Space on Working Sailboats' tour

Approximate number of attendees:

90

This tour explored the specialist compact design skills required to prepare sailboats for extended passages at sea. Crews require rest areas, cooking facilities, sleeping areas and shower/toilet facilities, all carefully designed into the smallest hull possible. The lighter the hull, the faster it will sail. The smaller the overall envelope, the easier it is to park, crew, manage and afford. And so, a great deal of thought goes into designing boat interiors and tailoring them for the needs of individual owners. Tours of four different sailboat interiors were provided.

The French Residence Tour

Approximate number of attendees:

340

The tour of 'Mytilene', the official residence of the French Ambassador to Ireland, offered visitors an exclusive glimpse into one of Dublin's most prestigious historic homes. Built in 1885 by architect Alfred Gresham Jones and serving as the official residence of the French Ambassador since 1930, Mytilene combines architectural elegance, history and diplomacy. The 30-minute guided tour began outdoors with an introduction to the residence's asymmetrical facade and distinctive white stonework, then moved inside to the refurbished reception room, highlighting its architectural features and role in hosting distinguished guests such as Éamon de Valera, General de Gaulle and François Hollande. Visitors also learned about the traditions of French hospitality ('service à la française') and enjoyed views of the expansive garden through over 60 windows. The tour's success was due to its blend of architecture, history and cultural diplomacy, offering a rare behind-the-scenes experience.

Irish Sign Language tours at Eavan Boland Library and The Iveagh Trust Museum Flat

Approximate number of attendees:

40

The tours in Irish Sign Language (ISL) with Alvean Jones offered a unique, fully accessible experience of Dublin's architectural and cultural heritage. Participants explored the Eavan Boland Library, widely celebrated as Ireland's finest modernist building, and a striking example of brutalist architecture that has captivated visitors since its opening in 1967. The tour also included a visit to The Iveagh Trust Museum Flat ('Nellie's Flat'), a cultural gem of Dublin 8, where visitors learned about the people, events and communities that have shaped the city.

'Open Table' series

Approximate number of attendees:

100

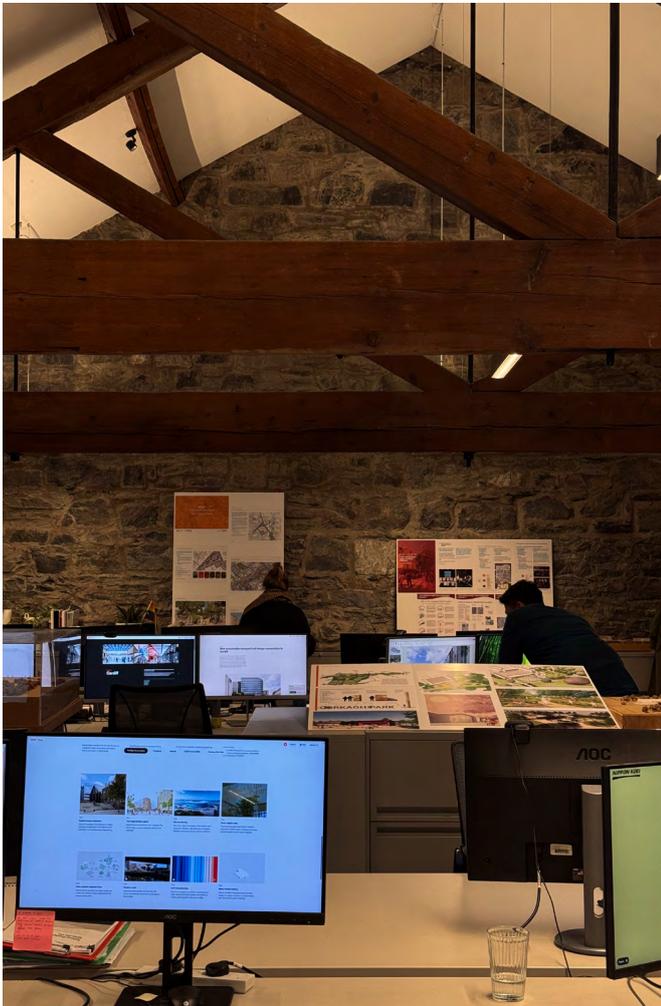


Open Table. Photo by Myles Shelly © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

With topics of democracy, design, diversity, demolition and diaspora, the Open Table series returned with brand new in-depth, informative and informal conversations about what really matters to those who live and work in Dublin.

'Open Studios'

Approximate number of attendees:
620



'Open Studios'. Photos by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited



'Open Studios'. Photos by Tra Nguyen © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

Visitors were invited to step behind the scenes with in-person tours and talks with architects at their design studios around Dublin, exploring the ideas shaping the future of Dublin's architectural heritage.

'Discover Architecture by Touch': tactile tour for visitors with vision loss

Approximate number of attendees:

20



'Discover Architecture by Touch'. Photo by Noemi Lanovic © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

Tactile tours were offered at the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) and the Museum of Literature of Ireland (MOLI). These tours, designed for visitors with vision loss, invited visitors to explore architecture through an immersive hands-on experience. These tours were developed with and were led by Emilie Conway, a vocal jazz artist, disability activist and consultant. The tours included tactile models of the facade, floor plans and ornaments of the different rooms developed by architect Tadgh Charles.

'Mise Le Meas' exhibition

Approximate number of attendees:

1,000



Mise Le Meas. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

This exhibition of letters, drawings, films and objects was intended as a call to the young people who have left Dublin behind to find work or another life elsewhere. Examining their lives through architecture, the exhibition posed several questions: which factors have driven people away? What has the city's young population lost by leaving? What has the city lost by their departure? What about Dublin still haunts them?



HouseEurope!. Photo by Ste Murray © Courtesy of Irish Architecture Foundation Limited

'To Not Design Is To Cost The Earth' exhibition

Approximate number of attendees:

1,000

From furniture to infrastructure, from birth to death, from home to school, from pitch to park, the contemporary world is one that is first formed, and then sustained, by design. This new exhibition championed the value of architecture and design through the work of over 70 architects working today in Ireland and abroad.

HouseEurope!

Approximate number of attendees:

1,000

The IAF was proud to present for the first time in Ireland the work of HouseEurope!, an award-winning activist organisation campaigning to change European law to prevent unnecessary demolition of existing buildings. Presented in association with Islander Architects.

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

114

The training session for volunteers at Open House Dublin 2025 was hosted in collaboration with the National Gallery of Ireland, in person at the National Gallery on Friday, October 3, 2025. As the first in-person training session since the end of the COVID pandemic, it was presented as an opportunity to meet the OHD team and connect with fellow volunteers in preparation for the festival weekend.

The session gave volunteers the opportunity to learn everything they needed to know about their roles, provided a space for questions, and allowed volunteers and participants to learn about accessibility and inclusion within arts and cultural spaces. The specialised accessibility and awareness training was essential for volunteers, giving them the tools to create a welcoming experience for all Open House Dublin 2025 visitors. It also offered them the chance to hear from professionals in the arts and disability sector. The training was additionally pitched to those interested in or involved in the arts, architecture, cultural programming or event management. Volunteers who attended were eligible to request a reference letter confirming their attendance following the festival.

The training was designed in collaboration with Kate Drinane—Tours, Talks, Training & Interpretation Officer at the National Gallery of Ireland. This year, the training was hosted by Róisín Power Hackett, a visual artist, writer and curator who is a member of Arts and Disability Ireland, and Emilie Conway, a jazz singer, composer, artist, disability activist and founder of DADA (Disabled Artists, Disabled Academics).

The training began with an induction training summary led by Katie FitzGerald (Irish Architecture Foundation), which was followed by the introduction to the new speakers by Kate Drinane. The first presentation was given by Róisín Power Hackett and the second by Emilie Conway. Kate Drinane wrapped everything up with a specialised tour guide training.

Coffee and chat session

Approximate number of attendees:

20

This was a casual invitation for prospective and returning volunteer tour guides to meet with each other and the festival organising team ahead of the festival. Volunteers were asked to recommend any venues they had an interest in, and the organising team attempted to include them in the programme.

End of festival party and quiz

Approximate number of attendees:

50

This party for volunteers and participants was held at the Irish Architecture Foundation's temporary venue, the IAF House in Charlemont, on Sunday, October 19, 2025, 18:00–20:30, directly after all the programming on Sunday had finished.

Pizzas and drinks were provided, and a table quiz was hosted. The volunteers split themselves up into teams and answered questions. The first-place team received vouchers for a local cinema that had participated in Open House Dublin. The second-place team received a €30 voucher for a pizza restaurant.

This event allowed volunteers to meet at the end of the festival, celebrate their hard work and be fed! It was very successful and easy to host the event, as it was held at the IAF's own venue. Hosting the quiz allowed the volunteers a more structured way to interact with each other.

Exchange volunteer meet-up

On Friday, October 17, 2025, all the visiting volunteers in Dublin as part of the Open House Europe Volunteer Exchange Programme were invited to meet up with the Open House Dublin team and previous volunteers from the festival who had participated in the programme earlier in the year. The meeting at a local bar for pizza and drinks was a convenient, relaxed and casual way to introduce all the visiting volunteers before their weekend spread across the city.



Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Dublin 2025 had 15 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. National Gallery of Ireland
2. National Museum of Ireland—Archaeology
3. Past and Future Legacies at Society House

National Gallery of Ireland

1 guided tour that
attracted **35** visitors

It invited participants to imagine and design the National Gallery of Ireland of the future, exploring how art, architecture and inclusivity could shape tomorrow's cultural spaces. Through creative drawing and 3D construction, the workshop encouraged participants to think about how heritage evolves, how value is ascribed, how heritage is preserved, and how spaces that reflect a shared, inclusive and sustainable future could be designed.

National Museum of Ireland—Archaeology

1 guided tour that
attracted **50** visitors

This workshop connected the past, present and future of Dublin's built environment. By exploring Viking Dublin and recreating the homes and cityscapes of over a thousand years ago, participants gained an understanding of how people once lived and built their communities. This hands-on activity encouraged reflection on how history and archaeology shape people's sense of place and inspire the future heritage being created today, showing how learning from the past could inform the design of more connected and resilient cities for the future.

Past and Future Legacies at Society House

3 guided tour that
attracted **60** visitors

These tours celebrated the preservation and interpretation of Dublin's Georgian architectural legacy. Through an immersive tour of 63 Merrion Square, participants experienced how craftsmanship, design and personal expression shaped historic homes and continue to inform conservation today. By connecting archival collections with the building's carefully restored features, the event highlighted how understanding and maintaining built heritage ensures its relevance and vitality for future generations, embodying the spirit of the annual theme through care, continuity and cultural appreciation.

Festival activities

Malahide Library

Attracted **50** visitors

This exhibition captured how young people imagine and shape the future of their communities. The 'Fingal Future Visions' project celebrated creativity, collaboration and forward thinking by inviting children to envision what Fingal might look like in twenty years, considering technology, biodiversity, the environment and community. By allowing children to express their hopes and ideas through art, the project reflected on how today's imagination and values become tomorrow's heritage, highlighting the importance of including younger generations in conversations about the future of places.

'Iveagh Markets: Past, Present and Future Heritage' exhibition

Attracted **45** visitors

'Iveagh Markets: Past, Present and Future Heritage' highlighted the importance of preserving and reimagining historic spaces for future generations. Through photographs, personal stories and shared memories, the exhibition celebrated the rich social and cultural heritage of the Iveagh Markets while also looking ahead to their renewal and restoration. By connecting the lived experiences of the past with plans for the building's revival, the exhibition embodied the essence of the annual theme, honouring what came before while ensuring that this iconic place continues to have meaning and life in the future.

Europa Experience

Attracted **30** visitors

This was a panel discussion exploring how historic houses in Europe are navigating the complex interplay of preservation, innovation, financial sustainability and public engagement in the 21st century. Organised by Historic Houses of Ireland.

Future Heritage LEGO Brick Competition

Attracted **50** visitors

This competition for LEGO brick enthusiasts aged 4-17 years was themed on 'Future Heritage'. It invited participants to reimagine the places, stories or buildings that are currently highly valued, and to build their vision of the future using LEGO bricks. The participants could have chosen to build a park, a school, a home, a place to rest or a place to play—anything was possible!

The Evolution of Neighbourhoods

Attracted **50** visitors

This talk examined how mid- to late-20th-century housing contributes to Dublin's evolving urban story. By exploring 1970s suburban development, public housing and community-led cultural projects, the event encouraged reflection on how everyday places become valued heritage over time. Through expert talks, historical maps and local engagement, participants considered both the past and the future of neighbourhoods, highlighting how community, design and lived experience shape the heritage that is inherited and passed on.

'Open Table' series: Diaspora

Attracted **25** visitors

Why are young people leaving Dublin, or is Dublin leaving them? The 2025 'Open Table' series opened with a conversation led by architecture graduates Aoife Casey and Paul Stewart (Dawna Collective). Exploring themes of diaspora, diversity, design, demolition and democracy, the discussion examined heritage, identity and the forces shaping where and how people choose to live.

Online activities

The following were articles published in the Journal on the Open House Dublin website:

‘Drogheda Civic Offices —
breathing new life into
old buildings’ by BDP
Architects

Attracted **9,000** visitors

Summary: The redevelopment of the Drogheda Civic Offices exemplifies the power of adaptive re-use to balance heritage preservation with modern functionality. Two long-unoccupied protected structures in Drogheda’s Fair Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) have been sensitively restored and linked via a contemporary new building, creating a connected, future-ready civic complex. The design respects historic fabric, enhancing decorative brickwork while introducing a welcoming public entrance, plaza and sustainable features such as photovoltaic panels and EV charging points. Once damaged by fire, the former council chamber has been revived into light-filled, accessible spaces that now host council meetings, community events, cultural exhibitions and diplomatic functions. Delivered by BDP’s multidisciplinary team, the project has received multiple awards, including BAYA Building Refurbishment Project of the Year. Drogheda Civic Offices showcase how thoughtful integration of old and new can create vibrant civic spaces that honour history while serving contemporary communities.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/drogheda-civic-offices-breathing-new-life-into-old-buildings/13066/>

'TUS Coonagh Cross Campus—redefining our future by repurposing our past' by BDP Architects

Summary: The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Coonagh Campus in Limerick is a striking example of adaptive reuse in action. Transforming a long-abandoned shopping centre, once a symbol of economic decline, into a state-of-the-art engineering and innovation facility, the project breathed new life into both the building and the surrounding community. By reconnecting education, industry and community, the Coonagh Campus demonstrated how adaptive reuse could preserve local heritage while fostering innovation, resilience and social value.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/tus-coonagh-cross-campus-redefining-our-future-by-repurposing-our-past/13073/>

'Revitalising through Reuse: No. 9 George's Place and Wash House'

Attracted **9,000** visitors

Summary: The George's Place and Wash House project in Dún Laoghaire will transform two historic buildings into a Centre for Creative Lifelong Learning, supported by €7 million in THRIVE Strand 2 funding. No. 9 George's Place, a former 1831 hotel, and the 1910 red-brick Wash House will be restored and extended to provide studios, teaching rooms, multi-purpose spaces and social areas for creative activities including animation, filmmaking and music. The project prioritises heritage conservation, accessibility and energy efficiency, while introducing a biodiverse courtyard and nature-based drainage solutions. Extensive public engagement guided the design, ensuring the hub will reflect community needs and aspirations. This initiative exemplifies how adaptive reuse and thoughtful design can revitalise town centres while preserving historic character.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/revitalising-through-reuse-no-9-georges-place-and-wash-house/13705/>

‘Bringing back homes: Coast Guard Cottages, Dún Laoghaire Harbour’ by Ciara D’Arcy MRIAI, DLR Architects Department

Attracted **9,000** visitors

Summary: The Coast Guard Cottages at Dún Laoghaire Harbour, a terrace of eight historic two-storey houses built around 1845, have been sensitively restored for social housing by the DLR Architects department. This conservation project carefully balanced heritage preservation with modern energy efficiency, using techniques compatible with the original fabric. Measures included a limecrete floor slab over recycled glass insulation, breathable lime, cork and clay plasters on walls, attic insulation with sustainable materials, and repair of original windows with draught-proofing rather than replacement. Original ventilation routes were restored, avoiding damage to the historic granite facades. The project demonstrated how traditional buildings could be adapted for contemporary living while retaining their historic character. The cottages are now fully occupied, breathing new life into these timeless coastal homes and preserving them for future generations.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/bringing-back-homes-coast-guard-cottages-dun-laoghaire-harbour/13716/>

‘Wonderful Barn: Metropolitan Workshop’ by Metropolitan Workshop

Attracted **9,000** visitors

Summary: Metropolitan Workshop is transforming the 18th-century Wonderful Barn and its surrounding estate in Kildare into a vibrant public and community hub. Built in the 1740s as a grain store, the helter-skelter-like structure and its ancillary buildings, including Barnhall House, dovecotes, stables and a walled garden, will be carefully restored in collaboration with conservation specialists Howley Hayes Cooney and landscape architects Aecom. The redevelopment will create event, exhibition, café and community spaces, while reinstating historic landscape features and introducing playgrounds, multi-use games areas and pedestrian/cycle routes. The project is responding directly to community consultation and seeks to balance heritage preservation with public accessibility, ensuring financial and social sustainability. Once complete, the Wonderful Barn complex will serve as a cultural, educational and recreational destination, enriching local tourism and providing a valued resource for residents and visitors alike.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/wonderful-barn/13723/>

'A Single Pear Tree Sits at the Heart of these Lands' by Land Development Agency

Attracted **9,000** visitors

Summary: The Liberties, with its strong sense of community and rich heritage, provides a unique backdrop for the Pear Tree Crossing project at The Digital Hub. Covering 3.72 hectares, the development will deliver around 550 new homes alongside spaces for enterprise, culture, leisure and community engagement. Central to the project is a commitment to preserving the area's layered history, including repurposing landmark buildings like Vat House 7, while introducing green spaces and energy-efficient, accessible public areas. Developed in collaboration with local residents, businesses and The Digital Hub, the Pear Tree Crossing project seeks to balance aesthetics and functionality, enhancing the Liberties' distinctive identity. Through sensitive regeneration and thoughtful design, the project aims to create a sustainable, vibrant urban community valued by future generations.

Link:

<https://openhousedublin.com/a-single-pear-tree-sits-at-the-heart-of-these-lands/13056/>

Different audiences at the local Open House festival

Open House Dublin 2025 had 2 guided tours for Irish speakers that attracted 40 people and 1 talk in Irish that attracted 25 people. Additionally, there were 3 guided tours for visitors with hearing loss, 3 guided tours and activities for visitors with vision loss and 2 guided tours for visitors with neurodivergences.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

This year, the festival had 2 tours in Irish, which were proposed through an open call. The tours of projects carried out by Dublin City Council were well attended, showing strong interest and engagement from the Irish-speaking community. Although the festival didn't establish partnerships with supporting organisations, there are plans to explore collaborations and expand the offerings of tours in Irish and other international languages in the future.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

Following last year's mission to make the festival as accessible as possible, the festival's core team undertook trainings in different areas of accessibility: 'Inclusive Language', 'Disability Awareness' and 'Introduction to Neurodiversity', all delivered by the Irish Centre for Diversity. The team also participated in a workshop led by Diversity Alliance on 'Strategies and Tools for Inclusion and Accessibility', and one team member has been taking Irish Sign Language courses. Additionally, the team attended the Disrupt Disability Arts Festival, an annual disability arts festival in Ireland, and took part in an open discussion organised by Vision Ireland, exploring creative and rights-based approaches towards improving access for people with vision loss to arts and cultural spaces.

Concerning the festival's website, accessibility features were added: font size adjustment, contrast activation and grayscale images. Each event/tour entry also had accessibility information.

In this year's programme, the following events and tours were dedicated to people with disabilities:

- 3 Irish Sign Language tours at Eavan Boland Library, The Iveagh Trust Museum Flat and Leinster House. Partnership: Alvean Jones, ISL tour guide.
- Autism friendly tour at Dublin Castle.
- 3 tactile tours for visitors with vision loss. Partnership: Emilie Conway, disability activist and consultant.
- A sensory pod was available at the IAF venue, offering a quiet, calming space designed for visitors who may have felt overstimulated or overwhelmed.

The festival also held several events and tours to raise awareness about the experiences of people with disabilities:

- Tours at the Wayfinding Centre, which is a transport and mobility training centre to empower people with disabilities to use transport. Partnership: Vision Ireland.
- ‘A Day in My Wheels’ experiential workshop and walking tour, giving participants the chance to experience accessibility from a wheelchair user’s perspective. Partnership: Spinal Injuries Ireland.
- Blindfolded tours of The Chapel, Dublin Castle, which allowed visitors to have a reflective experience that challenged traditional, vision-based engagement with art.

All festival locations were supported by the visual interpreting service Aira, which was available for people with vision loss to support their festival experience. Aira assisted with digital tasks, including booking tickets for tours and events and assisting with website use. It also assisted visitors with navigating their surroundings while taking part in tours and events.

Finally, all Open House Dublin 2025 volunteers and participants received bespoke training, designed in collaboration with Kate Drinane (Tours, Talks, Training & Interpretation Officer from the National Gallery of Ireland). This year, the training was also hosted by Róisín Power Hackett, a visual artist, writer and curator who is a member of Arts and Disability Ireland, and Emilie Conway, a jazz singer, composer, artist, disability activist and founder of DADA (Disabled Artists, Disabled Academics). Volunteers additionally received guidelines about how to guide a person with visual loss and were asked to read ‘Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport’ from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as other articles on universal design, the Irish Disability Act 2005 and the European Accessibility Act.

In preparation for next year’s festival, the IAF is planning to run a series of workshops with Emilie Conway aimed at engaging young people with visual loss in architecture. The team is having meetings with several organisations that work with children with vision loss, including Vision Ireland, Fighting Blindness, Feidach and Child Vision, to seek advice and promote the workshops.

Distribution

Journal

<https://openhousedublin.com/journal/>

Launched in 2020, the Journal features a variety of articles on the Open House Dublin website. It is a key part of the festival's digital programme, allowing the festival to engage a broader and more diverse audience. This year, over 13 articles were added.

Additional digital content

<https://openhousedublin.com/whats-on/>

A collection of short documentaries commissioned by the Irish Architecture Foundation, directed and produced by Dyehouse Films, was released, revealing the impact of designed space on culture, history and society. The 'Site Specific' series, in its choice of architectural subjects, crosses scale, time, type and use. From a family home to a national power station, from a place for health to a place for legislation, it is no accident that within the current context, the focus is on spaces for health, energy, family, education, law and commerce.

C
HC
EURC

Essen
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Essen 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.35
Legal Name:	Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.
Date:	September 6–7, 2025
Name:	Open House Essen
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	28 with guided tours
City:	Essen
Country:	Germany
Duration:	2 months

Festival participants

In total, Open House Essen 2025 attracted 1248 attendees.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 20 men and 29 women: 49 volunteers in total.

Open House Essen 2025 was organised by 2 men and 6 women: 8 people in total.

Introduction

Open House Essen 2025 brought the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of 'Future Heritage' to life by opening up spaces which reflected how the city has been evolving. 28 buildings—from historic landmarks to private housing projects, creative studios, workshops and former industrial sites—welcomed the public into places that are usually closed. Together, they offered a glimpse into the architectural stories that may shape Essen's heritage of tomorrow.

The festival was made possible by a committed community. 49 volunteers supported visitors throughout the weekend, while a core team of 7 people worked year-round to organise, curate and communicate the programme.

The festival's title, 'Future Heritage— Das Erbe von Morgen', explored what future generations might consider worth preserving. This theme was chosen because Essen is a city shaped by transformation: industrial heritage, new ecological visions, shifting demographics and debates on inclusive urban development. The festival raised the question: Which buildings, spaces and ideas today will define the Essen of tomorrow?

This theme was realised through curated tours, expert talks, workshops, participatory conversations and encounters with architects, residents, local initiatives and representatives of different cultures, including leaders of

mosques and churches. The programme connected historical locations with innovative projects and explored how climate change, democracy, accessibility and social justice shape and influence Essen's future architectural heritage.

Among the most popular buildings was the newly transformed Kunstraum Heilig Geist, a former church. It attracted many visitors by offering rare behind-the-scenes access, strong emotional resonance and a clear connection to the city's evolving identity and its possible future heritage. Another well-visited space was the former church of St. Gertrud, now TRUDI, which has been transformed into a home for an art school. Visitors were drawn by the building's unique blend of historical architecture and contemporary creative use, offering insight into adaptive reuse and the future of urban heritage. These venues were particularly popular because many visitors were curious about the fate of former churches—with around 50% of churches closing in the area, people were eager to see how such remarkable architectural spaces were being repurposed. The combination of historical significance, innovative reuse and cultural programmes made them must-see locations during the festival.

Events at Kunstraum Heilig Geist were also among the most visited. The programme combined an architecture-focused exhibition, an organ concert, hands-on workshops with a carpenter on sustainable design of tomorrow, and a lively Forum for Young International Architects. This mix of culture, craftsmanship and future-oriented discussions made the venue one of the festival's key hotspots.

This year, a great source of pride was bringing diverse cultures and communities together. For many visitors, it was their first time entering a mosque. Local residents joined the festival through a partnership with a neighbourhood festival. Open House Essen also collaborated with the City Conference and hosted a silent walk, where participants wearing noise-cancelling headphones communicated through gestures alongside members of the local deaf community. Additionally, the first edition of the Forum for Young International Architects was successfully launched, creating a space for dialogue, exchange and inspiration.

Additional activities



Forum for Young International Architect. Photo by Open House Essen © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.

Forum for Young International Architects

Featuring emerging talents from Ukraine, Brazil, Slovakia, Iran and Germany. This first edition created a platform for dialogue, exchange, and networking across cultures and disciplines in cooperation with the Association of German Architects (BDA), nurturing intergenerational exchange.



Silent walk. Photo by Lenka Stepankova © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.

Silent walk

A participatory experience where visitors wore noise-cancelling headphones and communicated through gestures alongside members of the local deaf community, fostering awareness and accessibility.

Partnership with Neighbourhood festival

Local residents were engaged in guided tours, workshops and discussions about the city's future heritage.

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

49

Each volunteer was consulted individually and received a guide from the Volunteers Coordinator.

Party for volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

30

The party took place on the last day of the festival weekend in the garden of TRUDI, the former church of St. Gertrud, with food and drinks.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Essen 2025 had 13 buildings from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the OHEu annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Kunstraum Heilig Geist am UNESCO-Welterbe Zollverein
2. Kreativ Kathedrale TRUDI
3. Pestalozzi Siedlung

Kunstraum Heilig Geist am UNESCO-Welterbe Zollverein

4 guided tours that
attracted **300** visitors



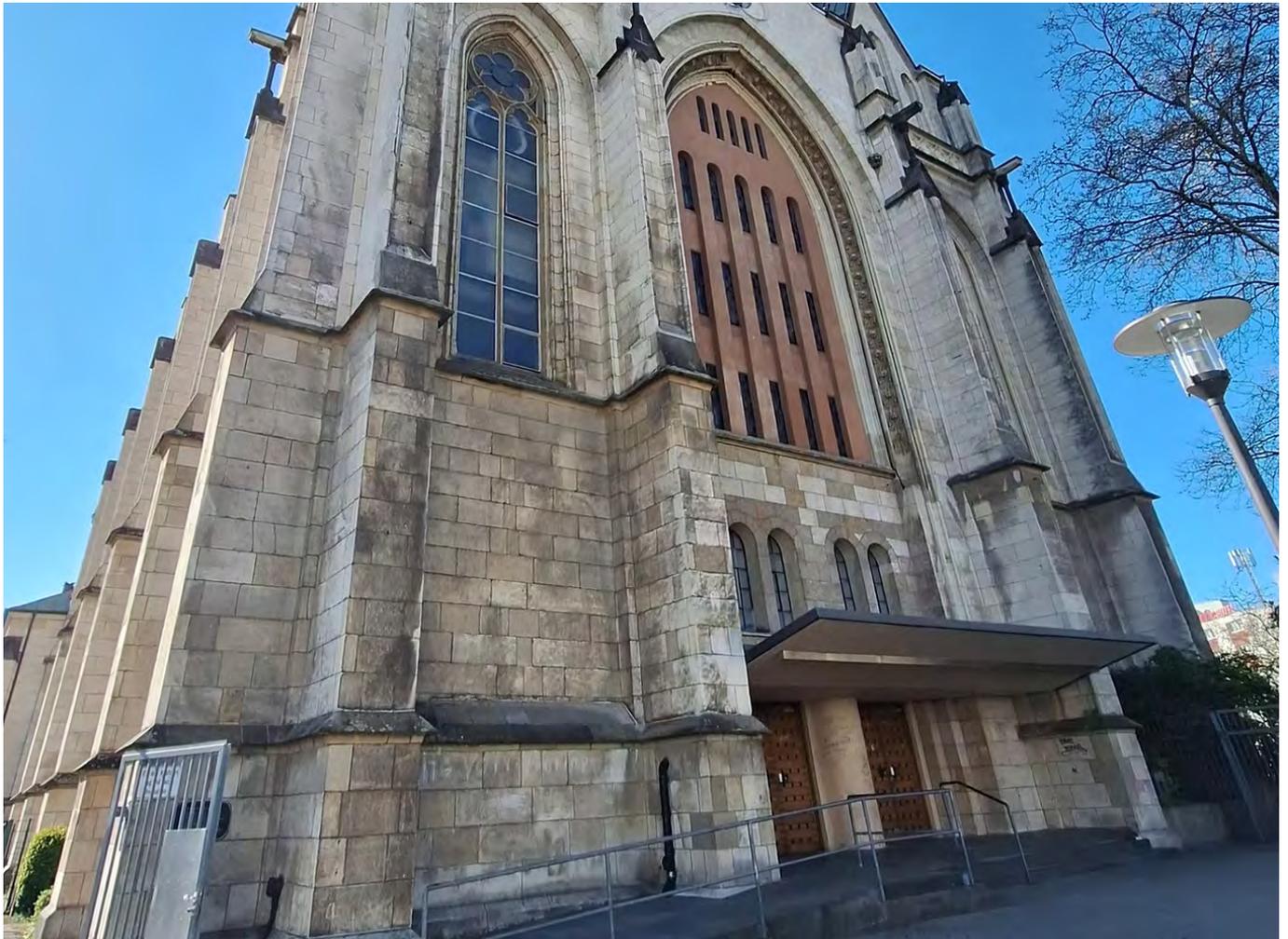
Kunstraum Heilig Geist am UNESCO-Welterbe Zollverein. Photo by Ravi Sejk © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.

The former Heilig-Geist Church, now Kunstraum Heilig Geist (an art space), exemplifies the theme 'Future Heritage'. Originally designed by Gottfried Böhm as a striking architectural 'tent' in the industrial landscape near Zollverein, the building demonstrates how visionary design can

shape the future of a city's heritage. Today, it continues to inspire and engage the community, showing how historic and architecturally significant buildings can be adaptively reused to serve new cultural purposes while preserving their identity for generations to come.

Creative Cathedral TRUDI

1 guided tours that
attracted 80 visitors



Creative Cathedral TRUDI © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.

The former St. Gertrud Church, now TRUDI, illustrates the idea of 'Future Heritage' by showing how historic religious buildings can be creatively repurposed. Once a church, the building now serves as the home for an art school, combining its rich architectural

character with contemporary educational and cultural use. This transformation highlighted how the preservation of architectural heritage was able to be balanced with new functions, keeping the building alive and relevant for future generations.

Pestalozzi Siedlung

2 guided tours that
attracted **16** visitors



Pestalozzi Siedlung © Courtesy of Forum Kunst und Architektur e.V.

The Pestalozzi-Siedlung 'Neuhof' in Katernberg is a powerful example of how social responsibility, post-war reconstruction and community housing can become part of a city's living heritage, making it an ideal site to illustrate the theme of 'Future Heritage'. Built in the post-World War II era to provide

stable homes for young miners and displaced youth, Neuhof combined work (at the nearby Zeche Zollverein) with family-style housing, offering security and a sense of belonging in challenging times. Guided tours of the private residences were arranged through the owners.

Festival activities

Städtebau meets Open House Essen

attracted **100** visitors

The 'Städtebau meets Open House Essen' exhibition brought together student-designed urban planning projects and the existing architecture and heritage of Essen, bridging academic design thinking with the lived space of the city. Organised in cooperation with RWTH Aachen University.

Different audiences at the local Open House festival

Open House Essen 2025 had 15 guided tours for English speakers that attracted 20 people. Additionally, there was 1 tour in Persian, 2 in Turkish and 2 in Polish that attracted 12 people.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

The Open House Essen 2025 programme was designed to attract people with special needs, including members of the local deaf community, residents from socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and non-German-speaking visitors. A strong emphasis was placed on accessibility and inclusion, striving to make architecture and cultural experiences available to all.

C
HC
EURC

Milan
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Milano 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.20
Legal Name:	Associazione Open House Milano
Date:	17–18 May, 2025
Name:	Open House Milano
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	100
City:	Milan
Country:	Italy
Duration:	2 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Milano 2025 attracted 25000 attendees: 12000 men and 13000 women.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 40 men and 45 women: 85 volunteers in total.

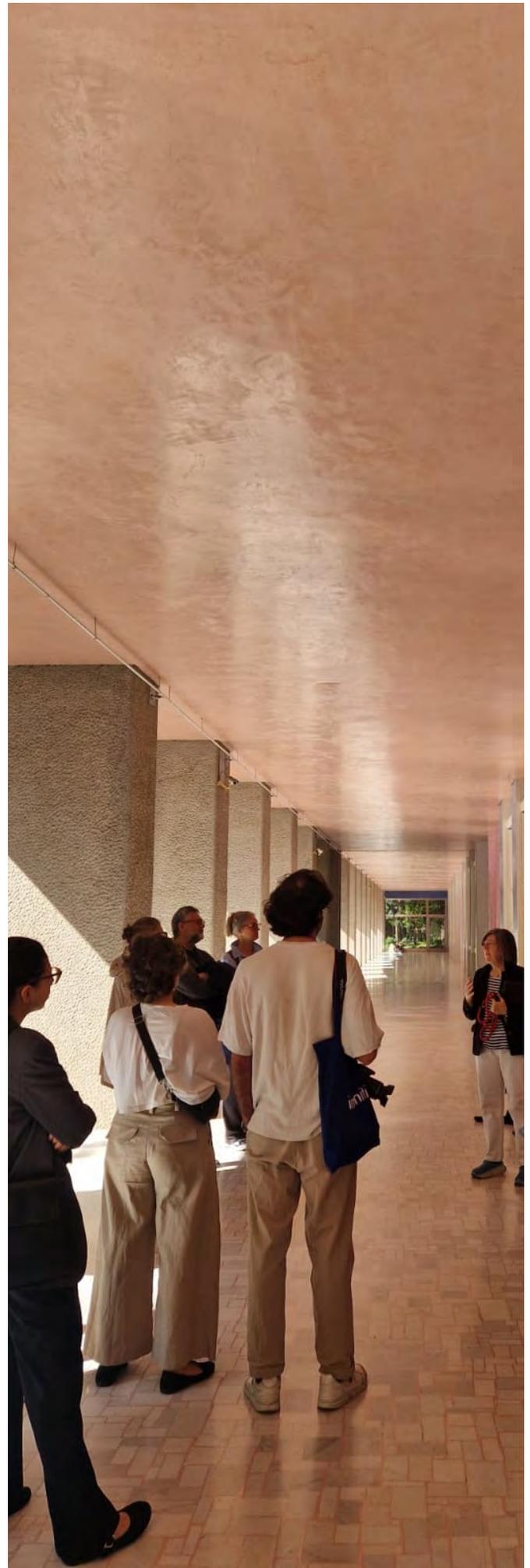
Open House Milano 2025 was organised by 3 men and 5 women: 8 people in total.

Introduction

In 2025, 100 buildings opened their doors to the public during the Open House Milano (OHM) festival. 85 volunteers and fewer than 15 staff helped to organise it.

The main theme for this edition was 'In A Relationship'. It was chosen for the tenth edition of the festival as a celebration of relationships through architecture and the city itself. This theme also connected to the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of 'Future Heritage'. During the festival, the emphasis was on the different aspects of heritage that will be passed on to future generations, highlighting the importance of preserving and valuing shared heritage.

Among the most popular buildings were private houses, appreciated for their fascinating features, and construction sites, which offered visitors a glimpse into typically inaccessible spaces and allowed them to gain a better understanding of construction processes. By all accounts, it was a truly interesting and meaningful event!



Activities for volunteers



Volunteers gathering © Courtesy of Associazione Open House Milano

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

60

All the trainings were conducted remotely to increase volunteers' attendance. The structure remained the same as in previous years: a first glimpse to introduce the Open House project across different scales, from Open House Worldwide, to Open House Europe, and finally, Open House Milano, focusing on the

organisations' activities and the OHEu annual theme. The second part of the training focused specifically on the activities the volunteers were going to undertake, such as assisting visitors, guiding tours and explaining the festival itself.

Social gatherings

Approximate number of attendees:

50



Volunteers gathering © Courtesy of Associazione Open House Milano

After the festival, there was a party thrown for volunteers which received high attendance from volunteers. In the lead-up to the festival, several smaller gatherings were organised which were attended by 10–15 volunteers each.

These events allowed volunteers to network, receive acknowledgement for their hard work and strengthen the sense of community between them.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Milano 2025 had 14 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. ARIA— Ex Macello
2. Casa della Memoria
3. Piazzale Loreto

ARIA— Ex Macello

1 guided tours that
attracted 50 visitors



ARIA - Ex Macello © Courtesy of Associazione Open House Milano

A former slaughterhouse complex, ARIA is one of the most significant projects for the redevelopment of Milan's industrial and production heritage from the early 1900s. The area, which has been abandoned for a long time, will contain social housing and become a hub for students and universities.

Casa della Memoria

15 guided tours that
attracted 300 visitors



Casa della Memoria. Photo by Studio Baukuh © Courtesy of Associazione Open House Milano

This project was selected as preserving the civic memory of the Italian resistance movement is part of the heritage the present generation wants to leave for the future inhabitants of the city. The building itself also architecturally expresses the importance of preserving memory and history.

Piazzale Loreto

1 guided tours that
attracted 60 visitors



Piazzile Loreto Top view © Courtesy of Associazione Open House Milano

The redevelopment project of Piazzale Loreto is one of the key urban planning projects currently underway in Milan. Led by a journalist from the architecture and design magazine, *Abitare*, the tour brought visitors from the Info Point to the Piazzale Loreto square and helped them to understand the project and how it will positively change the city.

Different audiences at the local Open House festival

Open House Milano 2025 had 60 guided tours for English speakers that attracted approximately 200 people.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

This year, the festival mainly worked through social media and word of mouth to attract non-native participants. Volunteers who were not native speakers were encouraged to share the festival with their circles. Additionally, the festival approached universities to promote the festival to foreign students. There were also collaborations with international architectural firms.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

In 2025, the festival strived to improve its communication so it was more simple and inclusive. Analysis was also conducted of the different access requirements to the featured buildings and sites. .

C
HC
EURC

Lisbon
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Lisboa 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.14
Legal Name:	Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa
Date:	10 - 11 May, 2025
Name:	Open House Lisboa
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	72 buildings, 4 urban walks, 11 'Plus' activities, 21 buildings w/ accessible visits, 8 'Junior' activities, 10 buildings w/ tours available in English
City:	Lisbon
Country:	Portugal
Duration:	2 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Lisboa 2025 attracted 18352 attendees.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 75 men and 169 women; 248 volunteers in total.

Open House Lisboa 2025 was organised by 2 men and 6 women; 8 people in total.

Introduction

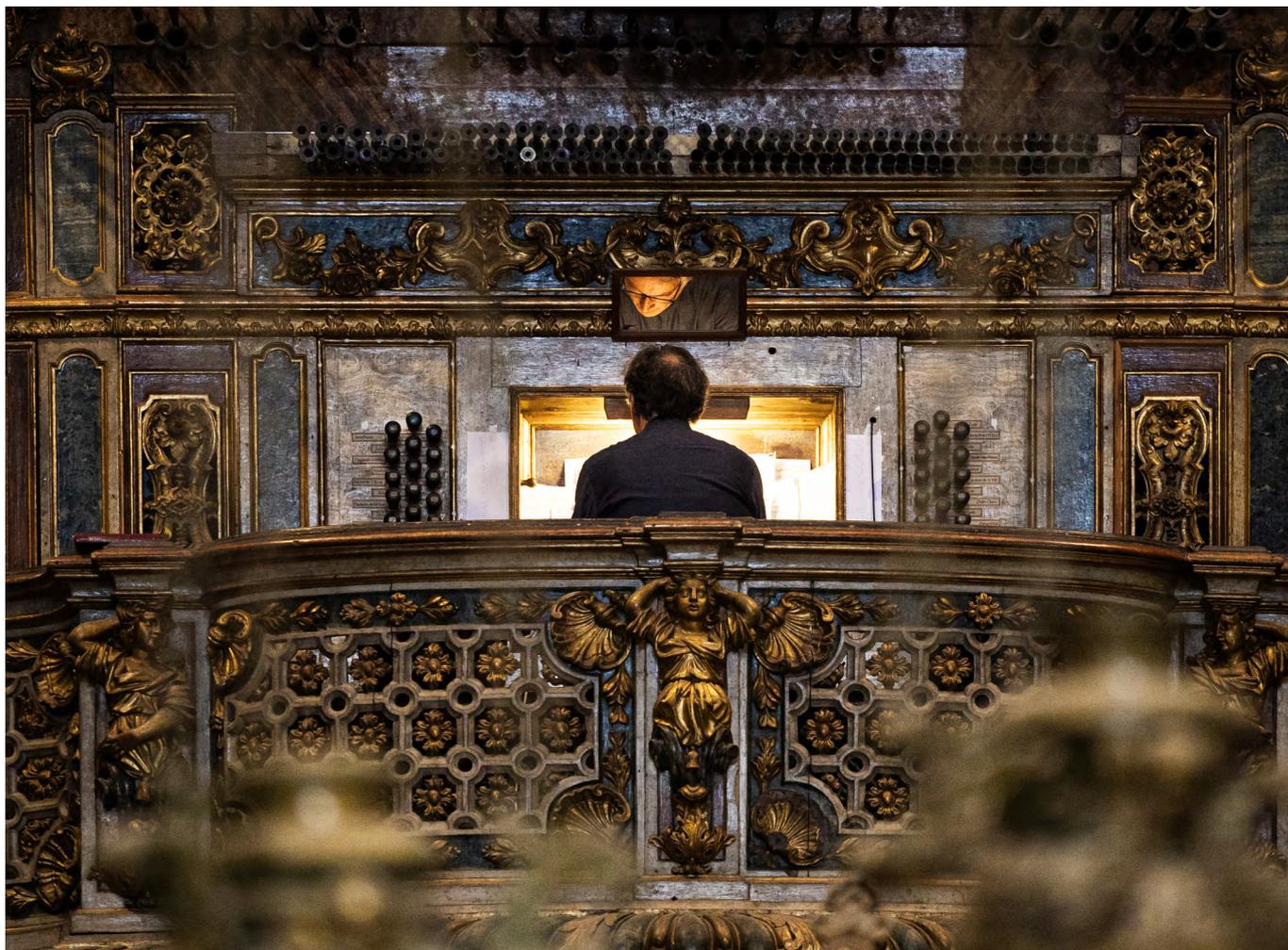
Open House Lisboa wrapped up another edition with a strong sense of mission accomplished. Over the course of two days, the event welcomed more than 18,000 visits, confirming its role in drawing the public out into the streets and spaces of the capital.

One of the festival's signature features, the volunteer programme, brought together around 250 people who dedicated themselves wholeheartedly and were key to coordinating the 72 spaces opened to the public. This edition featured a number of debut locations, including the National Pantheon, the Fronteira Palace, Uni Cocktail Bar, Vilalva Palace – Office of the Attorney General, Casa Ásia – Francisco Capelo Collection, the InSound studio and the British Cemetery.

Accessible visits continued to be a priority in the programme. In this 14th edition, 21 spaces were made accessible thanks to our accessibility consulting partner, Locus Acesso. The parallel programme also included 4 urban tours, 11 Plus activities, and 9 activities designed for families.

Curated by Daniela Sá and João Carmo Simões, this edition set out to explore “The Invention of Lisbon”, raising a number of questions: What makes Lisbon Lisbon? What are the elements that shape this idea of the city? In the words of the curatorial duo: “The city is made of individual buildings and of infrastructure—those visible and invisible spaces we move through, which connect and bind everything together. That is where the invention of the city's architecture lies: a complex system of layers that we are not always aware of, but that we help to build and that fundamentally shape our everyday lives.”

Additional activities



Five Centuries, Five Nations. Photo by Matilde Fieschi © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Five Centuries, Five Nations

This activity consisted of an organ concert at the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora. The magnificent Iberian organ, built by João Fontanes de Maqueira in 1765, takes center stage in a concert that showcased its unique features—such as the split keyboard and horizontal reeds—through pieces like

Approximate number of attendees:

71

“battles” (which simulate combat, galloping, and fanfares) and works in the *tiento de medio registro* style. The program included compositions ranging from the 16th century to the past century.

Give Warmth to Draw (Junior Activity)

Approximate number of attendees:
10



Give Warmth to Draw. Photo by Matilde Fieschi © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Taking advantage of the exhibition “Taking More Than There Is to Give”, on display at the Sinel de Cordes Palace, we developed an activity for children. In this exhibition we explore energy—how it moves, transforms, and dissipates. It can be in the movements we make when carrying things or building houses.

The children were asked several questions: Have you noticed that a home has energy that extends the day? You can see it in a lamp, a heater, or a hairdryer. But what if we used heat to draw? and the final results were incredible.

Strolling around Ladra (walk tour lead by teenagers)



Percurso Laurear a Ladra. Photo by José Martins © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa



Percurso Laurear a Ladra. Photo by José Martins © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Approximate number of attendees:

12

In this guided tour, a group of teenagers took the public on a walk to show their way of experiencing the streets that are part of their daily lives. This guided tour asked questions such as: Who are the teenagers living in this city? Where do they go and where do they hide? Which spaces do they consider their own?

Activities for volunteers



Volunteer training © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Volunteer training

Approximate number of attendees:

148

To prepare the large team of volunteers, a training session was held to cover the key aspects of the event. The session included an introduction to Open House Lisboa 2025 and its central theme, presented by this edition's curators, along with an overview of the parallel programme, available print and digital

materials, practical tips for engaging with the public, and guidance on supporting visitors with special needs. We took this opportunity to hand out the volunteer kits, which included: maps, a t-shirt, a badge, and a lanyard. Once again, the session was hosted at the Ismaili Centre.

Closing party

Approximate number of attendees:
180



Photo by João Azevedo © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

The closing party took place on Sunday, May 11, from 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM, in the courtyard of the Lisbon Architecture Triennale's headquarters. In a relaxed and convivial atmosphere, the event brought together the curatorial team, volunteers, team tutors, partners, specialists, and property owners. The gathering was an opportunity to celebrate the

experience and express gratitude to everyone involved in the event. Guests enjoyed music from a DJ, snacks, and wine generously provided by Quinta da Lapa winery. During the evening, volunteers were also given meal tickets as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Other benefits

Programme for non-native speakers

Available in each building, this manual outlined protocols with the team and property owners, visitor guidelines, and how to handle unexpected situations. It was sent before training to address questions during the session.

Pre-visits

The volunteers visit their assigned buildings beforehand to gain firsthand experience, better understand key features, and prepare for guided tours.

Meal Tickets

During the closing party we offer meal tickets that volunteers can use in various partner establishments, including cake shops, restaurants, supermarkets, etc

Study Material

Each team's tutor compiles and organises materials for each building that are shared with volunteers. Materials include photos, technical drawings, articles, reports, expert bios, and a visit summary sheet

Lunch box

During the festival we offer all volunteers a lunch box which includes a sandwich, croissant, piece of fruit, energy bar and juice

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

By opening the doors to 72 carefully selected sites—including bridges, houses, tunnels, palaces and other essential infrastructures—Open House Lisboa invited the public to uncover the often-invisible layers that shape the city’s identity and daily life. This approach reflected a broader understanding of heritage, not only as something to be preserved but also as something in constant transformation. It revealed how Lisbon’s built environment is the result of ongoing invention—where the past, present and future intersect. In this way, ‘The Invention of Lisbon’ naturally connects to OHEu 2025 annual theme of ‘Future Heritage’ by showing how architecture serves both as a

record of what has been and as a foundation for what is yet to come, encouraging deeper reflection on how the legacy of cities in an ever-changing world is defined, reinterpreted and carried forward. Although the majority of the OHL 2025 programme reflected the annual theme, these were five of the most emblematic sites: Patriarchal’s Reservoir, Torre do Tombo Archive, Ritz Hotel, Matinha Gasometers and the National Pantheon. In addition to these sites, four urban tours led by specialists from various backgrounds were also held, each exploring the annual theme in different neighbourhoods of the city.

The Accessible Hill' urban walk

1 guided tour that attracted 20 visitors



Percurso Colina Acessive. Photo by José Martins © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

With a new dynamic that focuses on promoting soft transportation, spreading inclusive mobility and encouraging the use of public transport, it was considered important to re-equalise accessibility between the lower part of the city and Castle Hill. For this, the city itself is fundamental—the hill reveals its needs naturally and creates the possibility of thinking about access linked to existing possibilities. Also fundamental is the connection of the new routes to the transport network (metro, trains, trams, river network and buses), public car parks (existing and proposed), and existing forms of access. The new access routes (A1/Sé, A2/Graça, B1/Alfama and B2/Mouraria) are associated with various public programmes—the parish council, creative hub, social centre and viewpoints—creating a new, fluid and natural dynamic, revitalising and making the Castle Hill more interesting.

National Pantheon guided tours

16 guided tours that
attracted 485 visitors



National Pantheon guided tours. Photo by Eduardo Montenegro © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

As a monumental building deeply rooted in Portuguese history and identity, the National Pantheon embodies the traditional notion of heritage. However, its presence in the event also invited visitors to question how such iconic buildings can remain relevant in contemporary urban life. By opening its doors to the public in the context of Open House Lisboa 2025, the National Pantheon became more than a symbol of the past; it became part of an ongoing dialogue about how historical architecture is interpreted and activated in the present. This engagement not only fostered collective memory but also encouraged reimagining how heritage sites like the National Pantheon could evolve, be repurposed and inspire future generations in an ever-changing social and cultural landscape.

Lisbon Riverside urban walk

1 guided tours that attracted 14 visitors



Lisbon Riverside urban walk. Photo by emontenegro © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

This urban walk, tracing The Walls of the Lisbon Riverside, as once described by Vieira da Silva in 1900, offered a unique lens through which to explore the annual theme of ‘Future Heritage’. By revisiting a historically significant area of the city—now radically transformed by contemporary urban renewal projects—the tour invited reflection on how the layers of Lisbon’s architectural and infrastructural evolution are both preserved and reinterpreted. The transformation of the waterfront, driven by coordinated efforts between national and local authorities, illustrated how urban heritage is not static but constantly negotiated and reshaped to meet present and future needs. By questioning the sequence, authorship and social appropriation of these developments, the walk highlighted the dynamic relationship between memory and innovation, showing how even recently developed spaces could carry cultural significance and become part of the evolving legacy passed on to future generations.

Different audiences in the local Open House festival

Open House Lisboa 2025 had **150** guided tours for English speakers.

For 2025, the festival changed its strategy and selected 10 venues that were able to offer tours in English during all opening hours. Most of the venues were open in the mornings and afternoons on both days, offering an average of 15 tours over the two days, resulting in 150 English-speaking tours (15 tours across 10 venues). However, tours were only guided in English when there were foreigners in the group. This was not counted, so the exact number of visits in English cannot be indicated, nor the number of foreign visitors who took part in these visits.

The festival offered accessible tours in 21 venues.



Accessible visits - Tactile Book© Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

Open House Lisboa's accessibility consultant, Locus Acesso, trained a group of volunteers to be prepared for leading audio-described tours for people with vision loss. These tours were named 'Image Blowers'. These volunteers were able to accompany the guided tours and, either individually or in small groups, describe the visual and physical characteristics of the buildings. These tours were available at 16 sites, carefully chosen based on their characteristics.

A 'relaxed visit' of the British Cemetery was offered for people with neuro-disabilities, cognitive impairments, seniors and families with babies, operating at a relaxed pace and with accessible language.

There were also 2 tours organised with a Portuguese Sign Language interpreter for people with hearing loss, as well as an inclusive workshop for children with vision loss, featuring the reading of a tactile book, conducted in collaboration with the Bengala Mágica Association.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

The venues were selected based on their ability to offer tours in English throughout opening hours, ensuring consistent availability for non-native speakers. To engage non-native speakers, information about the festival was communicated in English and English-speaking volunteers were available to provide guided tours when foreign visitors were present. A key challenge was accurately tracking the number of English tours and participants, as language use was only noted when foreigners attended. The festival partnered informally with volunteers experienced in multilingual guidance but did not establish formal collaborations with specialised organisations. From this experience, the importance of better data collection on language use and the value of proactive outreach to non-native speakers to enhance inclusivity in future editions became clear.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

The festival was made more accessible by training volunteers to provide audio-described tours at 16 carefully selected sites. These volunteers described visual and physical features of the buildings to support people who are blind or have vision loss. A 'relaxed visit' was offered at the English Cemetery for people with neuro-disabilities, cognitive impairments, seniors and families with babies, featuring a calm pace and accessible language. Additionally, two visits included a Portuguese Sign Language interpreter for participants with hearing loss. The festival collaborated with local associations specialising in disability support to reach these audiences. However, despite these efforts, achieving strong participation from people with disabilities remains challenging. Ongoing partnership development, tailored communication and flexible programming are essential to improve inclusion and better engage these communities in future festivals.

Distribution

Booklet

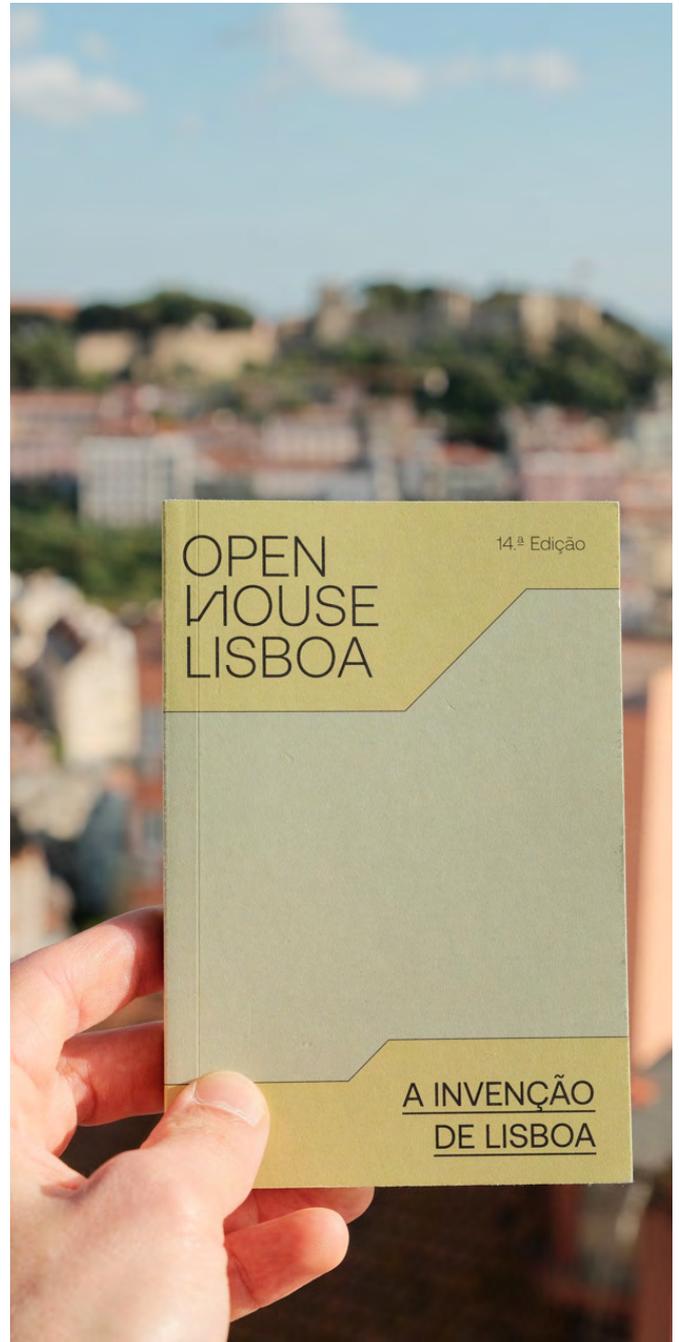
Believing that every perspective on the city is unique and worth preserving, since Open House Lisboa 2018, different ways of seeing the city have been collected through a printed pocket guide. In each edition, this guide reflects the curators' interpretation of the city and is designed to be used beyond the event weekend, like a collectable piece for visitors to keep after the weekend.

Online Architecture Atlas

The OHL website is open and accessible all year round. The website works as an architectural atlas that features all the buildings that have been part of the event since 2012. For easier and more intuitive browsing, there is a filter section that allows users to filter by author, year of construction, type of space and area/neighbourhood. The website will soon include biographies and portraits of the authors/architecture studios.

A link to the website:

<https://www.trienaldelisboa.com/oh/en/places/>



Booklet. Photo by emontenegro © Courtesy of Associação Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa

C
HC
EURC

Slovenia
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Slovenia 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.11
Legal Name:	Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost
Date:	April 11–13, 2025
Name:	Open House Slovenia
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	75
City:	Whole country (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Nova Gorica, Piran, Štanjel, Ankaran, Ptuj, Brežice and other cities in Slovenia)
Country:	Slovenia
Duration:	3 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Slovenia 2025 attracted 3245 attendees: 1286 men and 1958 women.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 10 men and 68 women: 79 volunteers in total.

Open House Slovenia 2025 was organised by 6 women.

Introduction

The largest architectural festival in Slovenia, Open House Slovenia (OHS), opened the doors to 75 outstanding architecture projects across the country for the sixteenth consecutive year in 2025, taking place from April 11 to 13. The event was held under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar.

The aim of the OHS festival remained raising awareness among the general public about the value of well-designed spaces, promoting responsible spatial planning and presenting examples of the best practices in contemporary architectural production as part of Slovenian culture and national identity. Through first-hand experience, the festival sought to bring the values of quality architecture closer to the public and encourage active participation in the dialogue about the built environment. It highlighted examples of good practices that offered solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges. This year's festival programme was selected from submitted proposals by a professional jury composed of five experts in the field of architecture and design: Tina Gregorič (architect and professor), Ana Grk (architect), Jure Henigsman (architect and researcher), Andraž Keršič (architect, researcher, curator and educator), and Mateja Kurir (philosopher and researcher).

'Architecture can only truly be understood when experienced in person. The OHS festival is a remarkable opportunity that allows

everyone to freely visit private homes, offices, institutions and key landmarks of Slovenian architectural history. It's only when we experience these spaces at a 1:1 scale that we can satisfy our spatial curiosity. The value of the festival goes beyond the experience of good architecture, as it also reflects the spirit of the time through the presentation of current architectural production. Normally inaccessible buildings offer both professionals and the general public a deeper appreciation of the creative potential of architects and the culture of quality construction.'

— Andraž Keršič on the significance and role of the Open House Slovenia festival

The central theme of this year's festival was 'Future Heritage'. It reconsidered the concept of heritage in the context of space and architecture, as well as its meaning, evaluation and relevance for the future. It invited visitors to explore buildings and spaces and to discover the stories they tell. The festival highlighted innovative approaches to preservation, and the balance between respecting tradition and local character and responding to the complex challenges of the contemporary world. It also raised the essential question of which practices of today will become tomorrow's legacy. The spaces and architecture created today will shape the historical understanding and identity of future generations. By encouraging dialogue and critical reflection between festival visitors and project authors, this year's OHS festival sought to deepen the understanding of architecture's role in shaping our shared future.

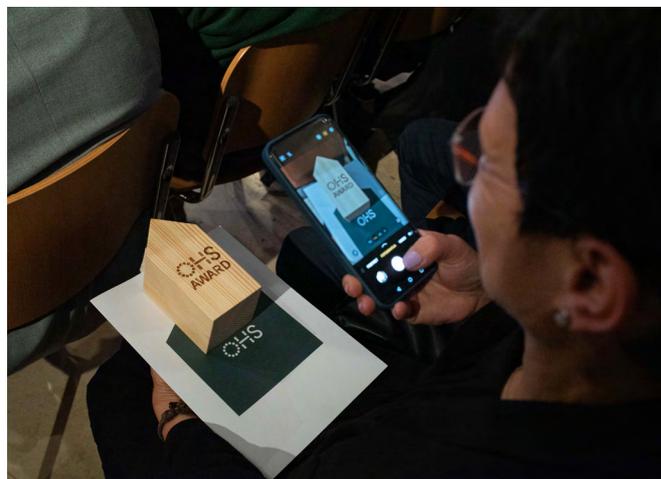
In 2025, the OHS festival joined the celebration of the 160th anniversary of the renowned Slovenian architect Max Fabiani's birth. Selected guided tours within the festival programme highlighted his work. In Ljubljana, visitors were able to participate in an architectural walk through Fabiani's Ljubljana and visit the Mladika building, while in Štanjel, a guided tour of the Ferrari Garden was organised.

Festival participants also had the opportunity to visit private apartments, single-family houses, educational and cultural institutions, as well as business and tourist buildings. At Dvor, near Žužemberk, visitors explored the renovation of the Auersperg Ironworks, now housing the Natura 2000 Interpretation and Information Centre. The KO-RA Centre for the Elderly in Ravne na Koroškem opened its doors to the interested public. In the Gorenjska region, visitors toured the stunning Alpine Houses and the Entrance Pavilion to the Vintgar Gorge. The programme also included a site visit to the Rotovž Centre construction site in Maribor and a guided tour of the Ankaran Cemetery. In Celje, visitors were invited to view the renovated Pelikan Photo House and take a walk along the Castle Paths, all guided by architects.

Additional activities



Award closing event. Photo by Urban Cerjak © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost



Award closing event. Photo by Urban Cerjak © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

OHS Award and festival closing event

In May, the annual OHS Award Ceremony was held at the City Museum of Ljubljana for the selected architectural projects, which were part of the Open House Slovenia 2025 festival.

The festival has been awarding the OHS Award since 2019. This award differs from traditional professional architectural recognitions, as its main purpose is not only the expert evaluation of architectural achievements but also encouraging the wider public to understand the importance of quality-built environments and participate in their creation. All projects included in the festival programme were pre-approved by a professional jury. The final

Approximate number of attendees:
130

winner was then chosen by the public through voting. Thus, the award reflects the direct response of the spaces' users, for whom the architecture is primarily intended.

The OHS Award is presented to the entire project team—architects, engineers, clients, contractors and investors—emphasising that quality architecture stems from collaborative effort and shared responsibility. In contrast to short-term, low-cost approaches, the award highlights practices rooted in professionalism, long-term vision and an understanding of space as a key driver of social development.

Fabiani's year

Approximate number of attendees:

145

In 2025, OHS joined the celebration of the 160th anniversary of the birth of Max Fabiani, a visionary Slovenian architect and one of Central Europe's most influential urban planners. Fabiani shaped the image of modern Ljubljana, combining Viennese Secession, Italian classicism and progressive urban principles, adapted to the Slovenian context. His post-earthquake urban plan for Ljubljana in 1895 laid the foundation for the city's modern development, and his work continues to inspire with its elegance and deep respect for cultural space.

As part of this year's OHS festival, several guided tours highlighted Fabiani's legacy. In Ljubljana, visitors joined a walk through 'Fabiani's Ljubljana', led by Prof. Janez Koželj, and explored the Mladika complex—originally the first all-girls' high school and dormitory in the city—co-designed by Fabiani and Ciril Metod Koch. In Štanjel, a tour focused on the Ferrari Garden took place, designed by Fabiani during the inter-war period. Its terraced layout blends local and foreign elements into a harmonious whole, centred around its iconic oval pool.

Tour for families and children

Approximate number of attendees:

45

In 2025, OHS collaborated with the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO) for the second time. A tour, catered towards families and children, titled 'CASTLE—LEGO Workshop for All Generations', was offered.

The visitors started by exploring Fužine Castle and discovering its rich history. They learned who built the castle, who lived there and who took it over, as well as what activities the castle's owners were engaged in and who the people were that came and went. The guides explained the difference between a castle and a manor, and what distinguishes a

medieval castle from a Renaissance one. The families explored how many lives and stories Fužine Castle holds and what happens there today. They discovered how conservators and architects restored the castle and how other historic castle buildings live on across Slovenia. After the discussion, the kids were invited to build their own model of a castle using LEGO bricks.

Guided tours of projects for vulnerable groups

Approximate number of attendees:

100

This year, there were three tours organised of buildings for vulnerable groups. This offered opportunities for festival visitors to learn more about the experiences and daily lives of elderly people and individuals with hearing impairments and vision loss.

During the visit to the Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the festival attendees in Ljubljana toured the new school and kindergarten classrooms of the Institute and learned about the specific architectural language which follows the logic of the existing complex to maintain its clear readability.

At the guided tour of the Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired, visitors learned about the emphasis placed

on contrasting materials, colours and tactile surfaces to facilitate orientation. They observed the tactile floor markings, Braille signage and a tactile map at the entrance, which enable users to gain a better spatial understanding. The architects explained the goal of the project: to create a space that resembles a home-like or learning environment, as it is not intended for medical treatment but for helping users adapt to everyday life.

The KO-RA nursing home welcomed OHS visitors at its multipurpose facility, which offers day care services, as well as temporary and permanent accommodation for elderly people. The nursing home aim is to promote intergenerational networking and local community involvement.

Expert jury— an example of good practice

A key element of good practice at the Open House Slovenia festival is the involvement of an expert jury composed of architects and other spatial planning professionals. This multidisciplinary group plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and credibility of the festival programme. Each year, the jury carefully evaluates submitted architectural projects based on criteria such as spatial innovation, contextual sensitivity, functionality and sustainability. Their professional judgment ensures that only projects of high architectural and social value are included in the festival.

By involving experts from different fields— architecture, urbanism, landscape architecture, design, sociology and philosophy—the jury brings diverse perspectives to the selection process. This helped to highlight a wide range of building types, scales and approaches that reflect the complexity of the built environment. Their rigorous and transparent evaluation process supported the festival’s mission to promote architectural excellence and responsible spatial development accessible to the wider public.

Expert jury— an example of good practice

A key element of good practice at the Open House Slovenia festival is the involvement of an expert jury composed of architects and other spatial planning professionals. This multidisciplinary group plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and credibility of the festival programme. Each year, the jury carefully evaluates submitted architectural projects based on criteria such as spatial innovation, contextual sensitivity, functionality and sustainability. Their professional judgment ensures that only projects of high architectural and social value are included in the festival.

By involving experts from different fields— architecture, urbanism, landscape architecture, design, sociology and philosophy—the jury brings diverse perspectives to the selection process. This helped to highlight a wide range of building types, scales and approaches that reflect the complexity of the built environment. Their rigorous and transparent evaluation process supported the festival’s mission to promote architectural excellence and responsible spatial development accessible to the wider public.

Activities for volunteers



Volunteer training © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

Public speaking and communication workshop for volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

40

On Thursday, February 13, a workshop on public speaking and communication was organised for the festival's volunteers. The goal of the training was to improve the volunteers' public speaking and communication skills at the guided tours, encourage the exchange

of experiences among them and give them the opportunity to ask members of the Open House Slovenia organising team any questions they might have about their role in the festival. The workshop was led by a Slovenian actress and educator Barbara Krajnc-Avdić.

The workshop began with short movement exercises, which enabled them to feel more comfortable and at ease. The session continued with techniques to help them unwind and gain confidence before their speaking engagement. Additionally, the volunteers learned skills for clearer and more confident communication. The training concluded with a role-playing exercise: a simulation of possible scenarios that may occur during the guided tours.

The Open House Slovenia organising team introduced volunteers to their duties, explained their tasks and responsibilities for the festival and gave them pointers and comments during the role-playing exercise.

The feedback from volunteers was positive. They stated that they felt more confident about their upcoming guided tours and found the workshop helpful.

Introductory meeting for new volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

40

An introductory meeting for all new volunteers is held at the beginning of each festival season. This time it was hosted at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture. Introductory meetings for new volunteers are a standard practice at OHS, as it is essential for volunteers to understand the purpose and structure of the event they will be part of, their role and the organisation behind the festival. These meetings serve as an excellent starting point for the volunteers' continued engagement leading up to the main event.

to the online archive of Slovenian architecture, the festival's goals and mission, and the OHS Award.

The main part of the meeting focused on explaining the role of volunteers at the festival, outlining their responsibilities during the event, sharing plans for the annual team excursion and presenting opportunities for exchange through the Open House Europe project, along with a broader introduction to the initiative itself.

The presentation began with an overview of the event's format and history, an introduction

The event concluded with an overview of other activities organised by OHS.

Annual excursion

Approximate number of attendees:

50



Annual excursion Zagreb. Photo by Megi Pilko © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

On Saturday, March 8, the wider Open House Slovenia festival team took part in an architectural excursion to Zagreb, marking the third time this event had been held. The idea originated as a way to deepen volunteers' architectural knowledge while fostering stronger bonds within the festival's team.

The excursion included visits to iconic sites like Kockica, a modernist symbol of Yugoslavian progress, and the classical Zagreb Stock Exchange palace. Together, the team explored the J28 Gallery in a former vinegar factory, toured the innovative Met Boutique Hotel, and ended the day at the renovated Urania cinema

and Oris House of Architecture, learning about their upcoming programmes.

The excursion proved highly successful. Volunteers expanded their architectural horizons, exchanged valuable experiences among themselves and experienced first-hand what it means to present a project well—skills that directly benefited their roles in guided tours. Beyond the educational value, the shared experience strengthened the sense of community and teamwork within the wider Open House Slovenia festival team, reinforcing everyone's collective commitment to the festival's success.

Two online meetings for new volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

10

On Thursday, March 27, a Zoom call was organised as an alternate option for all new volunteers who applied after the introductory meeting at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture.

In the virtual session, volunteers learned about the mission and structure of the Open House Slovenia festival, including its format, history, online architecture archive and the OHS Award. The focus of the meeting was on the role and responsibilities of volunteers and opportunities for exchange within the Open House Europe project. The event concluded with a brief overview of other activities run by OHS. The purpose of the online meeting was to inform new volunteers about the purpose and structure of the event they were going to be part of, their role and the organisation behind the festival.

On Thursday, April 3, another Zoom call was organised as a last-minute platform for the volunteers to raise any questions they had about the festival and their role as volunteers.

In the video call, specific issues the volunteers had about their projects, such as how to smoothly finish the guided tour, how to best navigate subsequent tours and how to divide assignments when there are two or more volunteers, were discussed.

The purpose of the online meeting was to provide an additional opportunity to answer questions, provide clarification and resolve any dilemmas that may have arisen with the volunteers about the course of the festival, their tasks and responsibilities.

Additional benefits

This year, merchandise such as t-shirts and tote bags was provided for all the volunteers. Additionally, they each received one free admission to the Museum of Architecture and Design. The volunteers got the opportunity to meet some of the architects in person, network and get their contact information. This year, they also received a special offer for tickets to the Days of Oris architectural symposium and festival in Croatia.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Slovenia 2025 had 31 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Mladika
2. Renovation of Europe Square and the Vrtača Railway Underpass
3. Rotovž Centre

Mladika

2 guided tours that
attracted 70 visitors



Mladika. Photo by Miran Kambič fabiani © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

The Mladika building was selected for the Future Heritage programme because it embodies the key values of this year's Open House Europe theme, highlighting the importance of preserving, adapting and reactivating built heritage in a way that supports contemporary life. Designed by Max Fabiani in the early twentieth century, Mladika is one of Ljubljana's architectural landmarks, with a strong historical, cultural and urban presence. Its recent renovation shows how heritage buildings can be carefully restored and repurposed without compromising their identity. The project maintains the building's original spatial organisation, facade articulation and decorative details, while, at the same time, integrating modern systems and functionalities needed for its use as a government office. This thoughtful transformation respects the building's legacy while preparing it for future generations. Mladika demonstrates how architectural heritage can remain relevant, useful and inspiring, and how quality design from the past can continue to contribute meaningfully to the fabric of the contemporary city.

Renovation of Europe Square and the Vrtača Railway Underpass

2 guided tours that attracted 75 visitors



EU Square and Vrtača Underpass. Photo by Megi Pilko © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

The tours of these two projects, Europe Square and the Vrtača Railway Underpass, were selected for the Future Heritage programme for the way they redefine a historically divided urban space into a symbol of cross-border connection and shared public identity. Located directly on the border between Slovenia and Italy, this site once embodied separation and limitation, as the square was split between two countries for decades. Today, through careful urban design and architectural intervention, it has been transformed into a unified and open public space that encourages movement, encounter and collaboration. The project carries strong symbolic and spatial significance, both as a gesture of reconciliation and cooperation, and as a new piece of heritage representing coexistence. Its inclusion in the European Capital of Culture 2025 programme further strengthens its relevance, demonstrating how thoughtful urban interventions can give new life to spaces marked by history. It is a powerful example of how heritage is shaped not only by what is preserved but also by what is chosen to be connected.

Rotovž Centre

2 guided tours that
attracted 50 visitors



Rotovž Centre. Photo by Tinkara Gselman © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

The Rotovž Centre was selected for the Future Heritage programme because it presents a unique moment in the life of an important public building—one that is still under transformation. The guided tour of the construction site gave both the general public and the professional community rare access to the process of creating architecture: the structural, material and spatial decisions that are usually hidden once the project is completed. Such visits allowed visitors to understand architecture not only as a finished product but also as a layered and evolving process shaped by design intent, technical challenges and public investment. The renovation of the Rotovž complex—which will house a new public library, art gallery and community spaces—is a major step in revitalising the cultural core of Maribor. By opening the doors mid-construction, the project invites the public into the very making of a future civic space, reinforcing the idea that heritage begins long before the ribbon is cut.

Festival activities

Spaces of the State

Attracted 220 visitors

In May 2025, Open House Slovenia hosted a specially curated weekend titled 'Spaces of the State', which focused on the architecture and spatial identity of public institutions in Slovenia. Through guided tours, talks and curated experiences, the programme offered the public rare access to buildings that house key state functions, many of which are not typically open to visitors. The aim was to explore both their architectural value and their symbolic and civic roles in shaping how people experience the state as a physical and democratic presence.

The event was part of the Future Heritage thematic programme, as it questioned how these spaces, often built in different political or architectural periods, continue to serve contemporary society. By opening their doors and inviting reflection, 'Spaces of the State' encouraged dialogue about transparency, accessibility and collective ownership. It showed that heritage is not only about preservation but also about how public architecture is actively used and understood today.



Spaces of the State Photo by Author's full name © Courtesy of Af-ront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

One Hundred Years of Milan Mihelič: Tour of the Slovenijales Building

Attracted **45** visitors



Slovenijales. Photo by Mateja Jordović Potočnik © Courtesy of Af-
ront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost



Slovenijales. Photo by Mateja Jordović Potočnik © Courtesy of Af-
ront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

As part of the centenary of architect Milan Mihelič's birth, Open House Slovenia hosted a special event featuring a guided tour of the Slovenijales building, one of Mihelič's most iconic office projects completed in 1971. The building is a key example of late modernist architecture in Slovenia, notable for its structural clarity, modular layout and forward-thinking approach to workspace design. Its open floor plans and expressive facade reflect a vision of adaptable architecture rooted in human scale and long-term usability.

The event included an architectural tour and a public conversation with the architect who led the most recent renovation, offering a valuable insight into the process of adapting a protected modernist building for contemporary needs. This encounter between past and present, between Mihelič's original ideas and today's functional and technical requirements, brought the OHEu annual theme of Future Heritage to life. The event emphasised the relevance of post-war modernism not only as the legacy of the past but as a living part of Slovenia's architectural culture that can be renewed through thoughtful transformation and open public dialogue.

Online activities

One Hundred Years of Milan Mihelič: Tour of the Slovenijales Building' podcast is still in the works

Link to the podcast:

<https://odprtehiseslovenije.org/od-dediscine-k-sodobnosti-o-prenovi-stavbe-slovenijales-z-arhitektom-andrejem-mlakarjem-podkast-odprto-40/>

Different audiences in the local Open House festival



Annual excursion. Photo by Megi Pilko © Courtesy of Afront, zavod za prostorsko inovativnost

Open House Slovenia 2025 had 3 guided tours for English speakers.

Approximate number of attendees:

75

Every building/tour in the festival's programme had a sign to signify if it was suitable for people with mobility impairments. 5 different buildings had a Slovenian Sign Language interpreter.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

A decision was made to conduct English-speaking tours only in the capital, Ljubljana, as it has the most foreign tourists and non-Slovenian-speaking residents who might have been interested in exploring quality architecture under guidance. The festival's website and programme were also available in English, with all explanations and tour booking capabilities. OHS reached out to Erasmus exchange students and found some groups on Facebook to advertise the festival. Queries from prospective visitors were also received before the festival, and they were provided with suggestions for suitable sites to visit. It was quite hard for the festival to attract non-Slovenian visitors, so, in the future, there are plans to connect more with tourist organisations in Ljubljana, which could also help to reach other people who don't know about Open House Slovenia. There are also plans to connect with Ukrainian institutes in Slovenia.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

As part of the ongoing efforts to make Open House Slovenia more inclusive, information was provided in both Slovenian and English, and it was clearly marked which buildings and tours in the festival programme were accessible to people with mobility impairments. The festival continued its collaboration with the Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, inviting their network and representatives to visit the festival. A Slovenian Sign Language interpreter was present at five buildings during the event. Through this collaboration, the festival organisers became more aware of the challenges in reaching and engaging people with hearing impairments, who are often deeply marginalised in society. Despite this, the festival maintained its commitment to finding ways to make architecture more accessible and welcoming for all. OHS also continued its partnership with the University for the Third Age, encouraging older adults to visit the festival or participate as Open House volunteers, strengthening intergenerational exchange and active involvement in architectural culture.

C
HC
EURC

Stockholm
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Stockholm 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.32
Legal Name:	Open House Stockholm
Date:	October 4–6, 2025
Name:	Open House Stockholm
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	105
City:	Stockholm
Country:	Sweden
Duration:	3 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Stockholm 2025 attracted 15,000 attendees: 5,940 men, 8,910 women and 150 non-binary people.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 16 men and 61 women: 77 volunteers in total.

Open House Stockholm 2025 was organised by 2 men and 5 women: 7 people in total.

Introduction

Open House Stockholm 2025 was a successful edition of the festival, showcasing architectural and cultural landmarks with a focus on the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme of 'Future Heritage'. Over 3 days, 105 buildings and sites opened their doors to the public, offering insights into how the city was built and formed into what it is now, and how it will continue to develop. The festival was supported by 77 volunteers and organised by 7 people.

Due to it being the tenth edition of the festival, a special emphasis was put on the anniversary of both Open House Stockholm, as well as integrating it with The National City Park's 30th anniversary. This was done by coordinating efforts and showcasing multiple sites and buildings in the park, both before the festival and during. In addition, two separate landing pages were built on the festival's website—one for each anniversary.

Among the most popular sites were Stockholmsrummet (The Stockholm Room) and Prins Carls Palats (Prince Carls Palace). Stockholmsrummet is the City of Stockholm's exhibition and information centre dedicated to urban development. Prins Carls Palats is a Roman-style villa in Djurgården built in 1844. It was originally home to the sculptor Johan Niclas Byström, later served as the residence for Prince Carl, and is now the Spanish Ambassador's residence in Stockholm. The high engagement with both

of these sites showed visitors' keen interest in the development and history of the city, highlighting a desire to understand both where Stockholm is going and where it came from. The Stockholmsrummet allowed people to actively participate in shaping the city's future heritage, while Prins Carls Palats offered a window into the city's significant historical past through its preserved architecture and collections.

The biggest event ahead of the festival was the OH! POPUP, which was a retrospective on the long and complicated process to redevelop the Slussen area, which is set for completion in 2028. The discussion, led by Lena From, covered the evolution of the design from the first competition in 1991 through the final approved proposal in 2010. Participants included former City of Stockholm architect Ingela Lindh and current city architect Torleif Falk, while architect Boel Hellman provided a historical overview.

The festival's greatest achievement this year was the broad diversity of its audience. Buildings and sites in underserved areas were successfully opened, welcoming people of all ages who traditionally hadn't engaged with the city's architects and builders. This effort effectively bridged the gap between design professionals and the wider community they serve.

Additional activities



'Here Lies a Dog Buried' bike tour. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm



'Here Lies a Dog Buried' bike tour. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

'Here Lies a Dog Buried': bike tour in The National City Park's unknown landscape

On June 3, a guided bike tour, part of the OH! POPUP event and led by archivist Hampus Busk, took thirty cyclists through the centre of The National City Park (Nationalstadsparken), the first of its kind in the world. The tour, titled 'Here Lies a Dog Buried', revealed the protected but often overlooked urban landscape's hidden histories. Participants discovered stories concealed beneath the grand surfaces,

Approximate number of attendees:

25

including forgotten monuments, relocated churches, abandoned shooting ranges, the oldest animal cemetery in the Nordic region and traces of infrastructure from old landfills. The two-hour ride showcased a complex landscape shaped by royal power, military activity and cultural visions that both materialised and failed to launch.

Bike tour along the borders of The National City Park

Approximate number of attendees:
30



Bike tour along the borders of The National City Park. Photo by Jens Aronsson © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

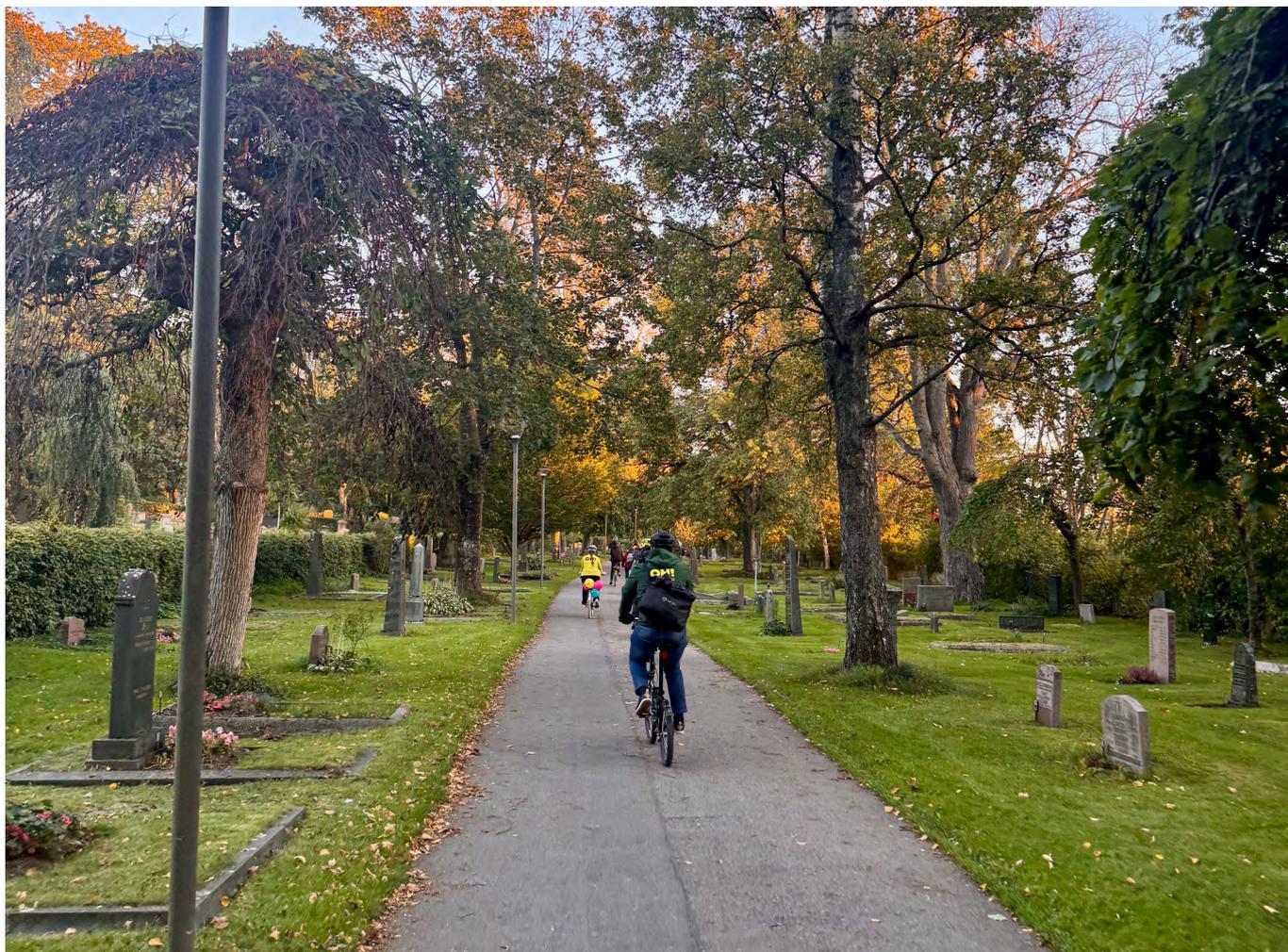
This year's second guided bike tour celebrated the 30th anniversary of The National City Park with a successful ride around Brunnsviken. Over thirty cyclists defied the initial rain for a journey led by cultural historian Hampus Busk, who shared royal anecdotes, forgotten histories and secret defence lines. The route connected diverse areas—from Norrtull,

Hagastaden and Haga, past Frösunda, Bergshamra's old greenhouses, and the Bergianska Gardens—ending at Frescati and KTH. This tour effectively showcased the park's unique blend of city and nature, where new developments coexist with deep historical traces, making the landscape a continuous narrative of Stockholm's past and present.

'In the Footsteps of Death': a historical bike tour through the city's memories

Approximate number of attendees:

45



In the Footsteps of Death. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Open House Stockholm hosted another guided bike tour as part of the OH! POPUP event, led by archivist Hampus Busk, from Medborgarplatsen to the World Heritage site Skogskyrkogården (The Woodland Cemetery). The tour explored Stockholm's history through its burial sites, covering everything from medieval traditions and cholera epidemic cemeteries to Sandsborgskyrkogården, the

city's first municipal cemetery. The finale was at Skogskyrkogården, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Sigurd Lewerentz's Resurrection Chapel. The event illuminated how the process of death has been gradually democratised over time and how the city's architecture and spaces are fundamentally shaped by collective grief and memory.

OH! POPUP: 'New Slussen and the History Behind the Result'

Approximate number of attendees:
150



New Slussen and the History Behind the Result. Photo by Julia Nordholm © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

The event looked back on the long and rather complicated process that led to the new Slussen area, to be completed in 2028. The retrospective began with Stockholm Architects' historic Slussen compilation from 2011, when debates were still ongoing about the chosen design. After the first competition in 1991, two more followed, and, in 2010, the final proposal was approved. The outcome had evolved over time as new conditions, interests and needs arose.

Architect Ingela Lindh, who worked for the City of Stockholm from 1991 to 2018 and served as city director from 2016 to 2018, and city architect Torleif Falk, in office since 2016, joined the discussion. The new permanent secretary of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Lena From, led the conversation, while planning director and architect Boel Hellman presented a brief historical overview based on a 'historical relay' produced in 2011 in cooperation with the Moderna Museet.

'Future Heritage' workshop

Approximate number of attendees:

25



Workshop on Future Heritage. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Key individuals from the Open House Stockholm board, reference group, ambassadors and project team gathered for an inspiring workshop to discuss the Open House Europe annual theme for 2025: 'Future Heritage'. The theme explores what is chosen to be passed on to future generations—which buildings, places and infrastructure carry forward present-day values and innovations. It emphasises both the preservation of cultural heritage and the active shaping of tomorrow's legacy through new construction methods and conscious choices.

The goal of the workshop was for the group to discuss how this theme was going to permeate the 2025 festival and strategies for reaching an even wider audience. A major focus was placed on increasing the accessibility of the festival to ensure a broader target group was reached.

Reference group meetings

First meeting:

Approximate number of attendees:

8

This was a focused planning meeting to kick off the year and strategise for the upcoming festival. The agenda included an introductory round, a thorough review of the OHEu annual theme and operational direction, a free brainstorming session for the festival programme, and annual planning with the reference group. A major focus was placed on exploring the annual theme, generating exciting new ideas for the year, and identifying successful elements from last year to improve upon moving forward. The group also reviewed and discussed a compilation of prize-winning buildings to inform the festival's selections.



Second meeting:

Approximate number of attendees:

12

This was a meeting that, unlike the previous one, placed a greater focus on discussions rather than presentations. Activities included a tour/guided viewing of the area. The central discussion points concerned: potential collaborations and projects, the programme's status (current and future outlook), and a deeper discussion of the annual theme, specifically focusing on real projects and objects.

Third meeting:

Approximate number of attendees:

12

The final meeting before the start of the festival focused on discussing the programme and nailing down the final details before the festival, giving space for addressing any last-minute concerns. The meeting also featured an analysis of the festival's map of planned and confirmed buildings, to make sure the programme was spread across the city and to avoid having everything in central Stockholm.

VIP event after the festival

Approximate number of attendees:

32

This event, hosted in November together with one of the festival's partners and the main architecture office, celebrated this year's successful festival as well as Open House Stockholm's 10th anniversary. Other organisations that have not yet participated in Open House Stockholm were also invited, in the hopes of creating the foundation for future collaboration through sharing the purpose and vision of the festival.

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

50

During the initial meeting, held online via Zoom, volunteers received background information about Open House Stockholm, learning about its foundation and its affiliation with OHEu and Open House Worldwide (OHWW). They also received details about this year's festival setup, including the number of showcased objects, dates and so on. After this, volunteers received training on the year's programme, themes, website navigation and the general structure of the festival programme, including its geographical distribution, allowing them to feel familiar with the programme and the festival as a whole. Volunteers also received guidance on how to specifically welcome visitors with special needs. Practical aspects were also covered, such as promotional products and the guidelines surrounding them, along with the roles volunteers were going to undertake during the day. Various roles and general guidelines were discussed, outlining expectations and responsibilities. All this information was also distributed to volunteers via email, and at the end of the meeting, there was an opportunity for questions on topics that may not have been covered.

Team building/training with area managers

Approximate number of attendees:

15

Before and after the festival, team-building events were organised with the project team and area managers. Prior to the festival, the area managers' responsibilities and roles during the event were elaborated, and some architecture-related games were played for team-building purposes. In the post-festival meeting, everyone gathered to evaluate how things went, and the project team expressed their gratitude for the area managers' extra effort during the festival.

Premiere event

Approximate number of attendees:

70



Premiere event. Photo by Jens Aronsson © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

During the premiere event, volunteers had the opportunity to meet in person for the first time. At this event, promotional products were distributed, and volunteers also had the chance to listen to speakers and engage in networking with other Open House key individuals. Also, they got to meet the exhibitor of the site that they were going to be volunteering at.

Thank-you event

The thank-you event for volunteers served as a heartfelt expression of gratitude and a means to grow unity within the group. The idea stemmed from the recognition that the volunteers are vital to the festival's success. The event created a dedicated space to acknowledge their contributions and build a sense of community. It featured a guided tour in the spirit of Open House, which was followed by a gathering with food and drinks.

Other benefits—certificate

Many of the festival's volunteers were students building their resumes, so they were offered a certificate of participation that acknowledged their valuable contributions to Open House Stockholm. This recognition was available to all volunteers, not just students. Upon request, a personalised certificate was provided that could be added to their resumes or portfolios to highlight their involvement in the festival.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Stockholm 2025 had 80 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Forskaren Nya
2. Stadsvandring Hagastaden
3. Solbergaskolan

Forskaren

guided tours that attracted
200 visitors



Forskaren. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Forskaren was selected to showcase the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage' because it is a deliberate and enduring investment in the future identity and progress of the city. The project represents a commitment to constructing a legacy of innovation in the life science sector that future generations will inherit. Its unique, durable architecture, central location in the new Hagastaden district and purpose as a hub for collaboration across academia, research and business all mark it as a contemporary structure intentionally built to be a future landmark. Furthermore, its publicly accessible ground floor and interactive exhibitions, like 'The Cell', ensure that the cutting-edge work of today becomes a tangible and understandable part of Stockholm's developing cultural and intellectual heritage.

Hagastaden Stadsvandring: city walk in the industrially historic quarter

1 guided tours that
attracted **50** visitors



Historical city walk in the industrially historic quarter in Hagastaden. Photo by Tove Freed © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

The industrially historic 'Blästern' quarter was chosen to showcase the annual theme because it powerfully illustrated the adaptive reuse and continuity of Stockholm's urban development. The district is a physical timeline, blending well-preserved industrial architecture from the 1930s (where famous products like Julmust and Zingo were made, and early Volvos were assembled) with the ultra-modern 21st-century life science hub of Hagastaden, Forskaren. By retaining buildings like the one designed by Ragnar Östberg (architect of Stockholm City Hall) and integrating them into the new 120,000 m² mixed-use complex, the site demonstrated how tangible assets of the past were valued, adapted and actively built upon to form the foundation of the city's future legacy.

Solberga School

3 guided tours that
attracted 105 visitors



Solbergaskolan. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Solberga School was selected to showcase the annual theme because it is a prime example of preserved and adaptively reused 1950s architecture, designed by Paul Hedqvist. The school holds a 'green classification' for its cultural-historical value, featuring preserved original details like the magnificent light hall with its characteristic round lantern. By highlighting the school, the festival demonstrated that 'Future Heritage' involves integrating historically valuable environments into modern urban development. The tour, led by architecture historian Martin Rörby, emphasised how the 1950s architectural vision had been successfully transformed into a vibrant and renovated learning environment for today's students, bridging past design with future needs.

Festival activities

OH! POPUP: 'New Slussen and the History Behind the Result'

Attracted **150** visitors

The event focused on the long and complicated process that culminated in the transformation of the Slussen area, which is set to be completed in 2028. The discussion, featuring key figures like former city director Ingela Lindh and city architect Torleif Falk, utilised the 2011 'historical relay' to trace the project's evolution from the initial 1991 competition through subsequent revisions to the final 2010 design approval. This retrospective highlighted how the ultimate outcome was a result of continuously adapting to new conditions, interests and public needs over nearly three decades.

Slussen was selected to showcase the annual theme because it fundamentally represents a legacy of urban evolution and democratic compromise under extreme public scrutiny. The project is not just a new piece of infrastructure; it is a profound reimagining of a vital, historic central hub—a complex nexus of public transport, water management and urban space. Its protracted development demonstrates that 'Future Heritage' is a process of navigating diverse demands and transforming a crucial historical asset to ensure its functionality and resilience for the



New Slussen and the History Behind the Result. Photo by Anna Carnell
© Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

next century, ultimately establishing a new, durable foundation for Stockholm's future.

'Future Heritage' workshop

Attracted 25 visitors



Workshop on Future Heritage. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

This focused festival planning meeting was chosen to showcase the annual theme because it was the foundational event for exploring and defining the focus for the entire year's activities, particularly the upcoming festival. The agenda was specifically structured to include a thorough review of the annual theme and a free brainstorming session for the festival programme. This dedicated time allowed the group to actively generate exciting new ideas that interpreted and related to 'Future Heritage'. Furthermore, the meeting included an activity in which a

compilation of prize-winning buildings was reviewed to inform the festival's selections. This direct engagement with contemporary and recognised architecture was a crucial step in identifying what constitutes 'heritage in the making' and how these modern examples could be presented as 'Future Heritage' for the public to experience and learn from. The meeting directly set the operational and conceptual direction for the year, ensuring the annual theme was embedded in all subsequent festival programming and selections.

'In the Footsteps of Death': a historical bike tour through the city's memories

Attracted **45** visitors



In the Footsteps of Death. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm



In the Footsteps of Death. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

This guided bike tour was part of the OH! POPUP event, held in collaboration with the Stockholm City Cemeteries Administration and led by archivist Hampus Busk. The tour took participants from Medborgarplatsen to the World Heritage site Skogskyrkogården (The Woodland Cemetery). Along the route, cyclists explored Stockholm's history through the lens of death and burial sites, covering medieval traditions, cholera epidemic cemeteries near Skanstull, and the city's first municipally designed cemetery at Sandsborg. The tour culminated at Skogskyrkogården, where the 100th anniversary of Sigurd Lewerentz's Resurrection Chapel was celebrated.

This event was chosen to showcase the annual theme because it highlighted both the architectural and intangible legacy of the human experience. The route illuminated how the processes of grief, memory and death have fundamentally shaped the city's spaces and social values, emphasising the gradual democratisation of death over time. Skogskyrkogården itself, a monumental, internationally recognised work of landscape and building architecture, is a preserved World Heritage site. By connecting these historic, culturally significant places, the event demonstrated that 'Future Heritage' includes the careful stewardship of sacred, reflective spaces and their related social histories, ensuring these profound architectural and civic legacies are understood and passed on.

Open House Stockholm visits SFX students

Attracted 25 visitors



Open House Stockholm visits SFX students. Photo by Ellen Norman © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Open House Stockholm met with SFX students (Swedish for Professionals), architects and engineers who had recently arrived in Sweden. Executive director Joanna Messmer spoke about the upcoming festival and volunteering opportunities. The SFX programme focuses

on professional Swedish language and helps participants understand the job market, serving as a vital first step for them to utilise their expertise and connect with the Swedish building sector community.

Online activities

Participation in Urbanistica Podcast, two episodes

'Episode 531: Rikard Espling, initiator/founder of Open House Stockholm, and Joanna Messmer, executive director for Open House Stockholm. In this episode, we meet the organisers behind Open House Stockholm—the festival that for ten years has opened doors to the city's most exciting buildings. We talk about the idea that started it all, the biggest milestones and challenges along the way, as well as collaborations with partners and international networks. Joanna and Rikard take us behind the scenes and share both memories and future visions, where this year's theme is Future Heritage in focus.'

Link:

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/urbanistica-podcast/episodes/531--SWE-10-rsjubileum-Open-House-Stockholm-Arkitekturfestival-e37n1vr/a-ac4t7ct>

'Episode 534: Joanna Messmer, executive director for Open House Stockholm, discusses this year's programme and what will be seen during the festival.'

Link:

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/urbanistica-podcast/episodes/534--SWE-Open-House-Stockholm-festivalprogram---Joanna-Messmer-e38bu63/a-ac5nf72>

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



In the Footsteps of Death. Photo by Joanna Messmer © Courtesy of Open House Stockholm

Open House Stockholm 2025 had 12 guided tours for English speakers and 59 tours where guidance in English was available on request, which attracted 110 people. The festival had 56 buildings and areas that were wheelchair accessible.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

All participating buildings were generally invited to consider offering guided tours in English, but extra attention was given to areas where it was known that there were going to be many English-speaking visitors, such as universities and cultural institutions. This helped to make the programme more accessible to international guests and students.

A particularly successful example was the Architecture School at KTH, where a four-hour slot was organised with flexible tours in either Swedish or English, depending on the audience. This adaptive approach worked very well and was appreciated by both local and international visitors.

The festival's website was available in English, although it has not yet been fully translated. It was an important tool for reaching non-native speakers. The festival also strengthened collaborations with several embassies and cultural institutes, such as the Italian Cultural Institute and the Spanish Cultural Centre in Stockholm, which contributed valuable English-language tours.

One key lesson was understanding that many places were open to offering bilingual tours once they understood the need. This flexibility greatly improved inclusivity for international visitors.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

Several steps were taken to make information about the festival more accessible to people with disabilities. On the festival's website, all images included appropriate alt text, and the website's design was continually reviewed to make sure accessibility and contrast standards were met. This ongoing work helped make the online experience more inclusive for all visitors.

When it came to physical accessibility, the festival strove to make all participating sites as accessible as possible. However, since the buildings varied greatly in age and design, full accessibility was not always possible. To support visitors, each programme entry clearly stated whether a location was wheelchair accessible and whether it was suitable for families or people with limited mobility. It was also clearly specified when accessibility was restricted so that visitors were able to plan their visits in advance.

One important lesson learnt was the value of transparency and clear communication. By openly sharing accessibility information, visitors were helped in making informed choices, and the festival ensured that it remained as inclusive as possible.

Distribution

Additional digital content:
Jubilee page to celebrate
10 years of Open House
Stockholm

The article celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Open House Stockholm, a festival that has made architecture accessible to everyone by opening buildings normally closed to the public. It traced the event's growth since 2016 and its connection to the global Open House Worldwide network. The piece highlighted the 2025 OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage' and emphasised inclusion, accessibility and public engagement with the city's built environment.

Link:

<https://www.openhousetockholm.com/en/jubileum>

Page to celebrate The
National City Park's 30-
year jubilee

This dedicated section on the festival's website celebrated The National City Park's 30th anniversary and highlighted events and tours related to or happening at the park.

Link:

<https://www.openhousetockholm.com/en/nationalstadsparken30ar>

C
HC
EURC

Tallinn
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Tallinn 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.29
Legal Name:	MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus
Date:	October 11–12, 2025
Name:	Open House Tallinn
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	60
City:	Tallinn
Country:	Estonia
Duration:	3 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Tallinn 2025 attracted 9,407 attendees: 5,936 women, 3,359 men and 28 non-binary people, with 84 people preferring not to answer (these figures are based on 1815 survey results).

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 32 men and 178 women: 210 volunteers in total. Open House Thessaloniki 2025 was organised by 7 women.

Open House Tallinn 2025 was organised by 2 men and 7 women: 9 people in total.

Introduction

Open House Tallinn (OHT) 2025 took place on October 11–12, marking the seventh edition of the festival. Over the course of two and a half days, the event welcomed more than 9,400 visitors to explore the city through architectural tours, workshops and lectures. The festival was organised with the help of 210 volunteers, who formed the core of the team and supported coordination, guiding and visitor management. In total, the programme featured 42 buildings and 19 special events, with tours held in Estonian, English, Russian and Estonian Sign Language.

The focus of the 2025 festival followed Open House Europe's (OHEu) annual theme: 'Future Heritage'. The theme encouraged reflection on how today's architecture and urban environments will shape the heritage of tomorrow. The festival explored what defines the architecture of the future and how it can be preserved for generations to come. To help answer these questions, the festival's special programme was expanded to include a greater number of events discussing the intersections of heritage, innovation and sustainable development. Many sites in the main programme also addressed the theme directly, presenting examples of both contemporary architectural excellence and adaptive reuse of existing spaces.

The main tour programme introduced several new buildings while also revisiting some of the most popular sites from previous years. The festival extended beyond the central districts to reach the north-eastern, northern and south-western neighbourhoods of Tallinn, introducing visitors to a wider urban context. Among the highlights were the Mustamäe State Gymnasium, Nõmme Elevator, Kadriorg Orangery and Tallinn Town Hall. The special tours and interactive activities proved highly popular, especially the architect-led tours, evening lighting design walks, garage tours and a surprisingly well-received indoor orienteering event.

A great source of pride for Open House Tallinn 2025 was making the festival more inclusive and collaborative, strengthening partnerships with a wide range of organisations, associations and educational institutions. This was reflected in the expanded special programme, which was larger and more diverse than ever before. Volunteers joined the festival through collaborations with the Estonian Academy of Arts, other cultural festivals, associations, institutions and schools, and the festival also served as an official student practice provider for one of the schools. The volunteer training and coordination process was further improved, offering participants a more structured, educational and rewarding experience.

Overall, Open House Tallinn 2025 was the largest edition to date in terms of programme diversity, participation and partnerships. It set new records in visitor numbers and volunteer engagement, and it deepened the festival's role as a platform for dialogue about the future of architecture and the city.

Additional activities



Karisma kadrioru oranžeriis. Photo by Evert Palmets © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus



Ars Projekt. Photo by Evert Palmets © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

Tours with architects

Approximate number of attendees:
170

For the first time in the festival's history, tours with architects were offered in four different locations, bringing visitors closer to architects, their ideas and their daily work. Participants explored Wise's new office, representing the forward-looking workspace of a modern unicorn company; a high-end harbour building, reflecting contemporary waterfront living; an architecture bureau located in a rebuilt electricity station, showcasing adaptive reuse and creative environments; and the Kadriorg Orangery, a large and elegant modern gardening house that combines historical context with contemporary architectural solutions. These tours encouraged direct dialogue between architects and the public, offering insights into both the creative process and the diversity of architectural practice.

Workshop for young people

Approximate number of attendees:

6

In collaboration with the Architecture School, a special experiential walk and workshop invited young participants to explore the Krull Quarter, an area where industrial heritage meets contemporary urban renewal. The activity focused on observing how a former industrial district is being transformed into a future-oriented and sustainable urban environment, while preserving key elements of its historic character. Experiencing the area on foot and by bicycle allowed participants to understand the principles of a '15-minute city', such as accessibility, proximity and human-scale design. The event successfully engaged young people in discussions about the theme of 'Future Heritage', highlighting how adaptive reuse and thoughtful planning can ensure that the past meaningfully contributes to the cities of tomorrow.

'Lightning Lectures' series

Approximate number of attendees:

28

The 'Lightning Lectures' series featured short, inspiring presentations by experts and practitioners working in the fields of architecture and urban space. Each lecture lasted approximately 15-20 minutes, offering valuable insights and fresh perspectives on how architecture and urban environments shape people's daily lives and surroundings.

This year's programme included diverse topics: 'The City at Night' explored nocturnal urban landscapes, 'Urban Soundscape' examined acoustic environments, 'Reincarnation of a Garage Area Along an Insect Path' demonstrated adaptive reuse, and 'Play, Models, and Pleasant Urban Space' investigated interactive urban design approaches. Several presentations connected to the 'Future Heritage' theme, particularly discussions on adaptive reuse and how contemporary interventions become tomorrow's heritage.

The format's success came from its accessibility—brief, focused presentations lowered the barrier to entry for audiences unfamiliar with architectural discourse while providing substantive content for enthusiasts. The variety of topics attracted diverse participants and sparked meaningful conversations about urban development, heritage preservation and the evolving relationship between people and built environments.

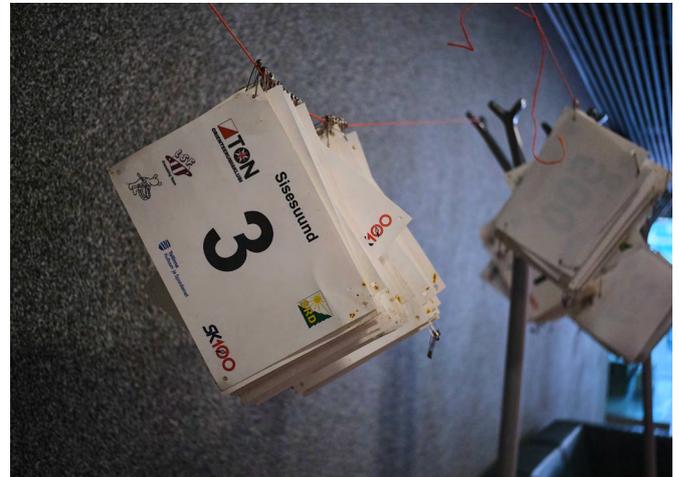
Interior orienteering

Approximate number of attendees:

72



Interior orienteering. Photo by Kevin Loigu
© Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus



Interior orienteering. Photo by Kevin Loigu
© Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

This year, the festival once again collaborated with a local orienteering club to create a unique indoor orienteering event within a bank office building from the 2000s. This innovative format merged architectural exploration with sport, offering participants an active and engaging way to experience interior spaces they might have otherwise simply walked through.

The event proved exceptionally popular, attracting both architecture and orienteering enthusiasts, the latter of which might not have typically attended Open House Tallinn events. Its success was due to the interdisciplinary approach—transforming architectural

observation into an interactive challenge that appealed to diverse audiences and age groups. Participants navigated through the building's distinctive spaces while competing against time, creating a memorable and dynamic experience.

This collaboration demonstrated the potential for cross-sector partnerships to broaden Open House Tallinn's reach and help reimagine how people engage with architecture. This experience will be used as a model for future programming that will bridge different communities and disciplines while maintaining the festival's core mission of making architecture accessible.

Tours with specialists

This year's special programme reached unprecedented scope, featuring collaborations with specialists across multiple architecture and urban development-related disciplines to deliver niche-focused tours exploring diverse aspects of the urban environment. The programme included a lighting design tour (which culminated in lighting the 1980s Olympic fire), thematic explorations of garage architecture, circular landscape architecture practices, agricultural infrastructure, heritage site lifecycles and architectural sustainability.

These specialist-led tours successfully bridged professional expertise with public engagement, making complex architectural

and urban planning topics accessible to broader audiences. The programme's success stemmed from its ability to reveal hidden layers of the built environment through expert perspectives, transforming familiar urban spaces into subjects of deeper inquiry. By connecting specialists directly with the public, meaningful dialogues about contemporary architectural challenges and practices were facilitated. The expanded special programme demonstrated a strong public appetite for in-depth, specialised content that goes beyond traditional architectural tours, attracting audiences interested in both technical knowledge and the evolving relationship between people and their built environments.

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:

120

The general volunteer training session took place this year at the Estonian Academy of Arts, providing a more comfortable and spacious setting for the event. The day was organised as an informational, training session for all volunteers, combining practical preparation with community-building activities. It began with a presentation introducing festival updates and general information, followed by a detailed briefing on volunteer roles, tasks and available tools, as well as tips collected from previous years. The training also included an inspirational session on guiding practices and volunteer responsibilities.

In addition to the general training, other sessions were introduced this year, including first-aid and conflict-resolution training. Volunteers were also invited to choose from a range of additional trainings before the event, ensuring that the sessions reflected their interests and needs. This approach aimed to equip volunteers not only with skills relevant to the festival but also with knowledge and experiences applicable beyond the event.

The training effectively prepared volunteers, minimised information gaps and strengthened cooperation between location teams, organisers and volunteers. The main challenge remained finding a way to create a concise yet comprehensive event that delivered maximum value within a limited timeframe. As the number of volunteer roles continued to expand, the amount of information to be shared also had to increase. While segmenting sessions by role would have further enhanced focus and efficiency, the organisation of such tailored sessions was not yet fully feasible within the festival's current capacity. However, this remains a clear direction for future development, as Open House Tallinn aims to continuously improve the volunteer experience and training structure in the coming years.

Trainings at locations

Approximate number of attendees:

2-10 per location

In addition to the general volunteer training session, site-specific training sessions were organised at each location where volunteers led public tours. These sessions were held together with specialists, managers or staff members from the respective sites, who introduced the history, key functions and unique characteristics of each building. Whenever possible, the sessions were recorded for later reference, allowing volunteers to revisit the material while preparing their tours. This approach helped guides to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the venues and plan their routes and narratives effectively.

A recurring challenge has been directly involving architects in these training sessions, as their participation would bring valuable professional insights and make the sessions more engaging. Another significant difficulty this year was finding suitable times for both volunteers and collaborating stakeholders, given the growing number of volunteers and the busy schedules of all parties involved.

Workshop for volunteer photographers

Approximate number of attendees:

5

Open House Tallinn aimed to produce high-quality visual content and capture each location during the festival. As covering all sites with professional photographers was not feasible, volunteer photographers played an essential role. To support their development and ensure consistent quality, a training session was organised in collaboration with the Design Night Festival, led by Open House Tallinn's professional photographer.

The workshop provided practical guidance and tips on photographing events and architecture, focusing on composition, lighting and capturing the atmosphere of guided tours. The training took place in a lively, real-event environment, giving participants an opportunity to practice in conditions similar to the festival. This collaboration created valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and allowed newer photographers to gain confidence and experience in event photography, while also strengthening cooperation between Open House Tallinn and Design Night Festival.

Thank-you event

Approximate number of attendees:

130

The festival's closing thank-you event for volunteers has evolved into a valued tradition, serving to express gratitude, share experiences and discuss future opportunities. This year, several improvements were made based on previous events. A larger venue was rented to accommodate the growing volunteer community, addressing the space constraints faced previously. The event featured an interactive quiz, with winners receiving the opportunity to choose priority placements at next year's Open House Tallinn locations—an incentive that generated considerable enthusiasm among participants.

Attendance increased compared to previous years, reflecting the strengthening of the festival's volunteer community. The event successfully maintained its core purpose of fostering connections while keeping a concise format that included essential components for meaningful interaction.

Looking ahead, there is potential for further enhancement by inviting guest speakers from diverse professional backgrounds—whether comedians, architects, urban planners or other relevant fields—to provide fresh perspectives and enrich the volunteers' experience. The optimal timing for this event continues to be evaluated, weighing the benefits of holding it separately versus at the conclusion of the festival's final day. Additionally, as volunteer numbers grow, there is an ongoing need to ensure the organising team has sufficient availability to engage directly with volunteers, rather than being occupied with event logistics.

Other benefits

The festival's volunteers and team members often have limited time to visit buildings outside of their assigned locations. To address this, there are plans to offer exclusive tours for volunteers during non-festival periods, allowing them to experience the architecture and spaces they helped showcase.

This year, volunteers were provided with carefully selected merchandise, including volunteer t-shirts, tote bags, insulated thermos bottles for sustainable drinking and measuring tapes—practical items that reflect the architectural focus of the festival. However, as the volunteer base continues to grow, maintaining this level of quality merchandise has become financially challenging. Moving forward, there are considerations to either simplify merchandise offerings or to redirect resources towards enhanced catering for volunteers.

Lunch was provided for all attending volunteers, ensuring they were well-supported throughout their shifts. This year, sponsor partnerships were secured to provide food at the volunteer thank-you event.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Tallinn 2025 had 23 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Town Hall—Linnahall
2. Designers' House—Projekteerijate maja
3. Põhjala Factory

Town Hall—Linnahall

21 guided tours that
attracted 645 visitors



Town Hall—Linnahall. Photo by Michael Isaiah Kennedy © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus



Town Hall—Linnahall. Photo by Ya Chuan © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

As a contested postmodern landmark navigating between preservation and transformation, Tallinn Linnahall exemplifies the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage'. Originally completed as the V. I. Lenin Culture and Sports Palace (1976-1981), this monumental 38,479-square-metre structure represents Soviet-era architecture that contemporary society must reckon with as heritage.

Its architectural significance—axial symmetry inspired by ancient temple architecture, innovative integration with the urban landscape through accessible rooftop walkways, and dramatic seaside positioning—demonstrates design values that transcend political context. The building's current state of neglect raises critical questions central to the annual theme: How is architecture tied to complex histories preserved? What happens when monumental public buildings lose their original function?

Linnahall embodied the challenge of recognising postmodern structures as heritage worthy of protection and adaptive reuse. Its inclusion prompted dialogue about which contemporary buildings deserve preservation and how communities can reimagine such spaces for future generations while honouring their architectural and historical significance.

Designers' House — Projekteerijate maja

20 guided tours that
attracted 340 visitors

Projekteerijate maja (Designers' House) at Rävåla puiestee 8 embodied the urgent questions at the heart of the annual theme. This 1982 modernist office building, designed by Peep Jånes, Arvo Niinevåli and Mart Port, represents mid-20th-century architectural values—functionality, geometric purity and spatial innovation—yet faces imminent demolition for the Rävåla Galerii development.

The building's abstract auditorium forms and carefully planned interior hierarchy demonstrate modernist ideals that shaped Tallinn's urban landscape. Originally housing Estonian SSR design organisations, it represents a significant chapter in the city's architectural profession and urban development.

Its impending replacement raises critical questions related to the annual theme: At what point does modernist architecture warrant preservation? How is urban development pressure balanced against architectural significance? Can buildings from the recent past achieve heritage status before disappearing? By opening Projekteerijate maja during its final years, it created a space for dialogue about which contemporary structures deserve protection and how societies determine what becomes tomorrow's heritage.

Põhjala Factory

12 guided tours that
attracted **144** visitors



Põhjala Factory. Photo by Anna Floren © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

Põhjala Factory exemplifies the annual theme's focus on adaptive reuse and the transformation of industrial legacy into the contemporary creative economy. This former Bekker Shipyard site, which housed Põhjala Rubber Industry, producing nearly 2 million pairs of shoes annually by 1978, demonstrated how industrial heritage could be reimagined rather than demolished.

The complex's transformation into a hub for over 100 creative businesses, community gardens, galleries and cultural events showcased innovative approaches to preserving industrial structures while addressing contemporary urbanisation and economic needs. It embodied the delicate balance between respecting industrial heritage and embracing adaptability.

Põhjala Factory demonstrated that adaptive reuse practices are becoming tomorrow's valued legacy, showing how industrial spaces could foster circular, localised economies while conserving shared memories. The site proved that former production facilities could become vibrant cultural centres, illustrating how contemporary interventions successfully honour industrial heritage while creating spaces that future generations will cherish, as well as showing how obsolete infrastructure could gain new relevance through creative transformation.

Festival activities

Workshop for young people: 'What is a 15-Minute City?'

Attracted 6 visitors

The workshop for young people at Krulli Quarter invited participants to explore a rapidly transforming urban district and engage with one of the questions at the heart of the annual theme: Which practices of today will become tomorrow's legacy? On foot or by bicycle, participants discovered how contemporary urban planning decisions—integrating nature, creating human-scaled public spaces, planning for kindergartens and event spaces—represent the architectural and planning choices that future generations will inherit.

This hands-on exploration addressed how contemporary architecture responds to urbanisation challenges while balancing adaptability with local character. By experiencing this evolving neighbourhood firsthand, participants critically examined which design principles and urban interventions deserve preservation and how today's built environment decisions will shape future people's understanding of liveable, sustainable cities.

Engaging young people in observing urban transformation fostered a dialogue between users and creators, encouraging critical thinking about architecture's role in shaping collective futures. The workshop demonstrated that the notion of 'Future Heritage' extends beyond individual monuments to encompass the everyday urban fabric where communities live, learn and gather—spaces whose significance and value will be rediscovered by each generation.

‘Lightning Lectures’ series: ‘Reincarnation of the Garage Area Along Putukaväil (Insect Path)’

Attracted **16** visitors

This entry from the ‘Lightning Lectures’ series explored transforming garage complexes along Putukaväil into vibrant urban fabric, addressing the annual theme’s central question: Which practices of today will become tomorrow’s legacy? Presenter Gerda Suzann Seeblum examined how reimagining outdated structures creates new urban possibilities while preserving heritage value.

The presentation demonstrated adaptive reuse as sustainable urbanism—transforming fragmented environments into multilayered spaces integrating residential, commercial and community functions. By focusing on green spaces and human-centred design, it showcased how contemporary approaches address urbanisation and resource conservation challenges.

Seeblum’s work exemplified balancing tradition with adaptability, asking: Can obsolete infrastructure become valued heritage through transformation rather than demolition? The lecture invited dialogue about preservation, adaptive reuse and architecture’s role in shaping equitable, sustainable cities that future generations will cherish.

Guided tour: 'How old buildings breathe today'

Attracted 26 visitors



Guided tour 'How old buildings breathe today'. Photo by Kevin Loigu © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

This guided tour explored one of the best-preserved buildings in Tallinn's old town across multiple historical layers, led by an experienced restoration architect. The tour demonstrated the annual theme's core principle—how each generation rediscovers its relationship with inherited architecture through careful preservation and adaptation.

The building exemplified the delicate balance between respecting historical traditions and ensuring contemporary functionality. Through examining its various historical layers and restoration interventions, participants learned how preservation practices conserve shared memories and stories while maintaining buildings as living spaces. The tour addressed which restoration approaches will themselves become valued heritage, showcasing how professional conservation work protects Europe's multilayered architectural legacy while enabling buildings to remain relevant for future generations.

Guided tour: ‘Lifecycle of the Town Hall – Linnahall’

Attracted **4** visitors

This tour explored Linnahall’s evolution through different political regimes, examining the idea of contested heritage. Led by an architect who studied the building’s adaptability, the tour analysed this megastructure’s architectural significance and complex socio-political context.

The walk addressed fundamental questions related to the annual theme: Which parts of history are preserved, and which remain contested? The building embodies the contrasts of European heritage—traces of imperial legacy coexisting with architectural excellence. Is it Soviet debris or a Nordic gem?

Examining Linnahall’s potential future within the expanding seaside urban development, the tour demonstrated how contemporary architecture must balance respecting historical significance with addressing urbanisation and sustainability challenges. The building’s fate reflects broader debates about which modernist structures deserve preservation and how societies determine what becomes tomorrow’s valued heritage, particularly when tied to complex political histories.

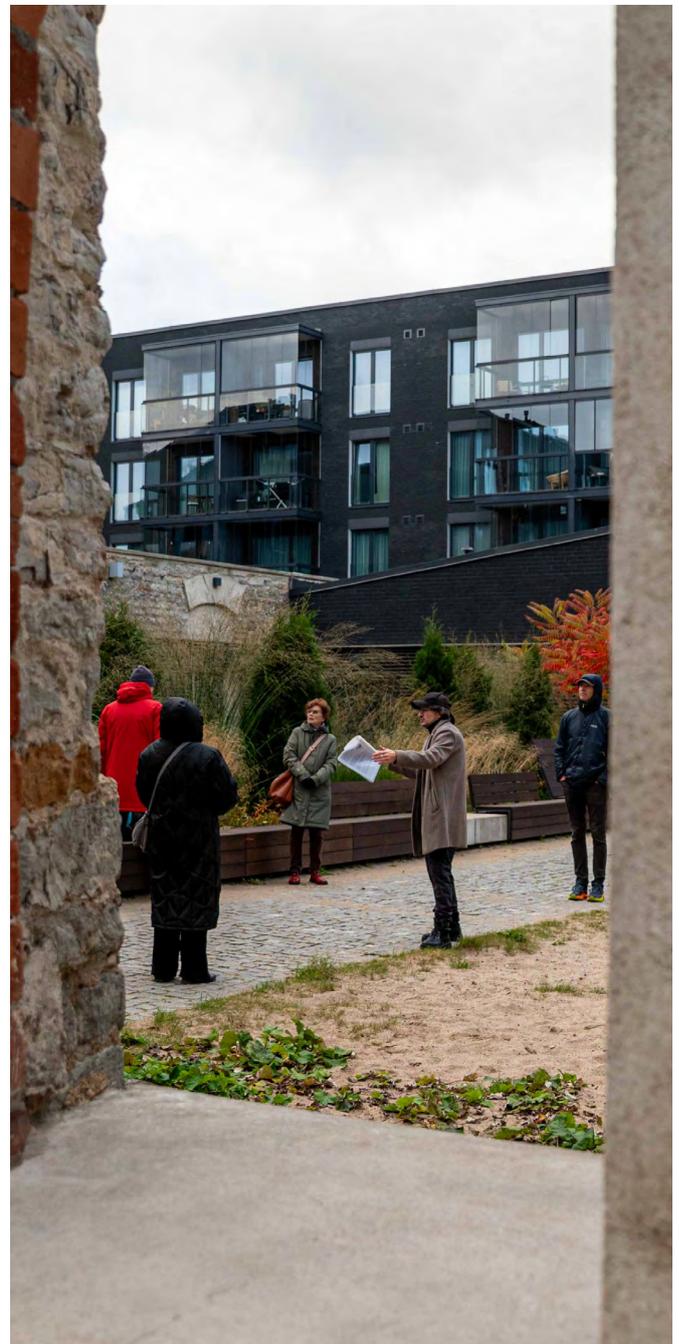
Guided tour: 'The Persistence and Transience of Architectural Heritage'

Attracted 29 visitors

This walking tour explored Kalamaja's multilayered architectural heritage—from century-old wooden houses to contemporary interventions—directly engaging with the annual theme's core ideas. Participants examined how different generations rediscover their relationship with inherited urban fabric and how perceptions of value evolve over time.

The tour addressed the idea of contested heritage through industrial building transformations and new public space creation, examining the delicate balance between honouring local traditions and embracing contemporary adaptability. Both preserved structures and recent developments that respond to urbanisation and climate challenges while respecting historical character were explored.

By experiencing this diverse architectural landscape, participants critically assessed which of today's urban design practices embody the innovation, sustainability and community focus that will define tomorrow's valued heritage. The tour demonstrated how contemporary interventions could conserve shared memories while addressing present needs.



Guided tour: 'The Persistence and Transience of Architectural Heritage'. Photo by Sander Hallaste © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

Guided tour: 'Stories of Old Town and Kalamaja Garages'

Attracted **73** visitors



Stories of Old Town and Kalamaja Garages. Photo by Matilda Mody
© Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus



Stories of Old Town and Kalamaja Garages. Photo by Kaur Eskor
© Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

This tour explored Tallinn's diverse garage architecture—from excellent early 20th-century examples to Soviet-era complexes—examining which modest structures deserve recognition as 'Future Heritage'. Participants discovered how garages have evolved from purely functional spaces into workshops, hobby spaces and successful businesses, demonstrating adaptive reuse and resilience.

The tour addressed questions of contested heritage: Can utilitarian structures achieve heritage status? How does their significance evolve as car culture and urban needs change? These buildings represent different epochs' approaches to infrastructure and community space, embodying European heritage's multilayered complexity.

By examining both preserved historical garages and transformed contemporary spaces, participants were able to critically assess which adaptive reuse practices will become tomorrow's valued legacy. The tour demonstrated how seemingly ordinary structures reflect shifting technological and societal needs, asking whether today's creative transformations of obsolete infrastructure represent innovative approaches future generations will preserve and celebrate.

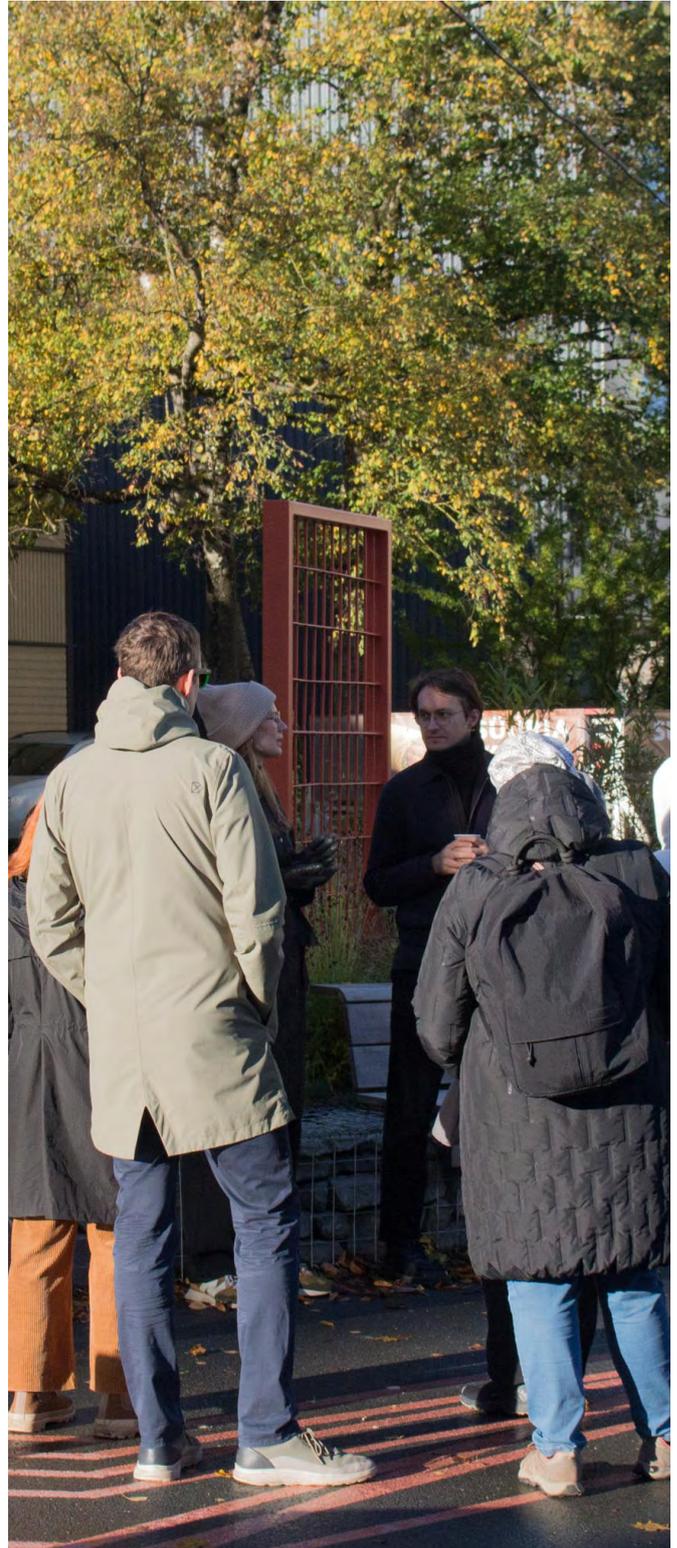
Guided tour: 'Interim Use and Reuse of Space and Materials in New Downtown Parks'

Attracted **16** visitors

This guided tour explored three recently created sites in central Tallinn that embody questions related to the annual theme about adaptive reuse, circular economy and temporary urbanism. Led by a landscape architect, the tour examined whether today's sustainable practices—reusing materials and reimagining interim spaces—will become tomorrow's valued legacy.

The sites included Liivalaia Trassipark, a temporary pocket park incorporating salvaged materials from the demolished courthouse; Uus-Veerenni Park, an award-winning landscape project featuring construction waste from surrounding developments; and Uus-Veerenni Interim Park, a fully circular intervention using only reused materials and naturally occurring plants.

These projects addressed the challenges at the core of the annual theme: How can contemporary architecture conserve resources while creating meaningful spaces? Can temporary interventions become heritage-worthy? Do circular economy principles and material reuse represent practices future generations will preserve and celebrate? By showcasing innovative approaches to urbanisation and climate challenges, the tour demonstrated how today's experimental landscape design may define tomorrow's understanding of responsible, adaptive architecture.



Interim Use and Reuse of Space and Materials in New Downtown Parks. Photo by Kaur Eskor © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



Guided tour: 'The Persistence and Transience of Architectural Heritage'. Photo by Sander Hallaste © Courtesy of MTÜ Eesti Arhitektuurikeskus

Open House Tallinn 2025 had 72 guided tours for English speakers that attracted 1,269 attendees, 60 guided tours for Russian speakers that attracted 1,462 attendees, and 8 guided tours for Estonian Sign Language speakers that attracted 83 attendees. 12 locations had wheelchair-accessible tours, and the festival had 1 workshop for children and 1 tour for school-age young people.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

To ensure inclusivity, non-native language tours have been offered since the start of the festival. These tours are typically organised at confirmed locations selected based on a combination of availability, potential popularity and the presence of local guides fluent in the required languages. All festival communication—including social media posts, website articles, newsletters and press releases—was provided in both Estonian and English to accommodate an international audience. Additionally, the festival reached out to local Russian-language media outlets, with the help of a Russian communication manager hired from the festival's group of volunteers. She participated in interviews with other Russian-speaking volunteers to share information about the event and their experiences. This approach helped attract visitors from minority language groups, and the media response was favourable to volunteers.

Feedback indicated that both English- and Russian-language tours were popular; however, the primary challenge was the shortage of Russian-speaking guides to meet the demand for Russian-language tours.

For tours in Estonian Sign Language, the festival partnered with organisations that support individuals with disabilities and shared information through their networks. Feedback from attendees was positive, though it became clear that outreach efforts should start earlier to accommodate advance planning needs. Compared to previous years, the festival managed to have fewer or no non-sign-language speakers reserving spots on these tours and achieved better success in attracting the intended audience. There were 8 tours this year in Estonian Sign Language, and it seemed that this was too many compared to the number of people who were able to visit the tours, as most of them were half empty.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

This year, the festival continued prioritising accessibility through several established and enhanced practices. To make information more accessible to people with disabilities, the programme on the festival's website had filters to highlight wheelchair-accessible and sign language tours. This information was also clearly displayed in printed materials.

Wheelchair-accessible tours were maintained with priority access options, allowing people using wheelchairs to join tours where physical access permitted. Tours offered in Estonian Sign Language were significantly expanded compared to previous years. The festival collaborated with organisations that support people with hearing loss to refine its communication approach and share event information through their established channels, strengthening these valuable partnerships.

To improve the registration process, a better system to ensure only sign language users could register for tours specifically designed for them was created, preventing confusion and ensuring appropriate participation.

Key lessons emerged from this year's experience: communication and scheduling for these tours must begin several months in advance, as people with disabilities tend to plan activities early; although the channels of disability support organisations were utilised, there is a need to enhance communication clarity further and improve website accessibility features; while more sign language tours were organised this year, attendance was lower than expected, indicating the need to reassess the appropriate number of such tours based on actual demand to allocate resources more effectively.

C
HC
EURC

Thessaloniki
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Thessaloniki 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.7
Legal Name:	Open House Greece
Date:	November 15–23, 2025
Name:	Open House Thessaloniki
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	73 buildings, 25 creative spaces, 6 factories, 5 architectural offices, 1 themed walking tour
City:	Thessaloniki
Country:	Greece
Duration:	8 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Thessaloniki 2025 attracted 9,979 attendees: 3,434 women, 6,449 men and 96 non-binary people.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 89 men and 396 women: 485 volunteers in total.

Open House Thessaloniki 2025 was organised by 7 women.

Introduction

This year's Open House Thessaloniki (OHT) festival was one of the largest and most vibrant editions yet. A total of 73 buildings opened their doors to the public, offering free access to spaces that are usually inaccessible. The organising team was supported by 500 dedicated volunteers, along with the broader organisational team and partners who helped coordinate the various programmes, guided tours, parallel events and competitions.

The title of OHT 2025 was 'Future Heritage—today's architecture, tomorrow's legacy'. It was chosen to highlight how contemporary architecture shapes the cultural heritage of the future, while honouring the city's historical layers. The title guided all aspects of the festival: the guided tours, the Future Heritage OPEN WALK, the selection of buildings, the parallel activities, the visual identity, and even the OPEN PHOTO competition (titled 'Reflections of the Future Heritage'). The entire programme showcased historical buildings, reuse projects, modern sustainable designs and sites that reflected Thessaloniki's evolving urban identity.

Among the most popular buildings were historic and industrial landmarks such as the Fix complex, Hub 26, the Royal Theatre and the apartment building in Karabournaki—also featured in the livestreamed tours. In addition, contemporary educational buildings in the suburbs attracted strong interest, as did the newly re-established hotels in the city centre,

which are housed in former historic buildings transformed and regenerated through modern architectural approaches. These sites stood out for their architectural significance, their connection to the city's industrial heritage, and the unique opportunity they offered to access spaces not typically open to the public.

The most popular activities included the OPEN WALK industrial-heritage route, the MADE IN THESSALONIKI programme and the OPEN PHOTO competition. These attracted large participation because they offered immersive experiences: visits to factories and opportunities to get to know Thessaloniki's creative and production communities, thematic walks through lesser-known neighbourhoods, and creative competitions that encouraged participants to share their perspective on this year's event, fostering active public engagement.

A great source of pride for the festival this year is the strong community involvement and the overall breadth of the programme. The successful coordination of 73 buildings, hundreds of volunteers, multiple sponsors, educational activities and thematic actions demonstrated the festival's growing impact. The Open House Europe (OHEu) theme of 'Future Heritage' also resonated deeply, inspiring meaningful dialogue about sustainability, reuse, cultural identity and the future of Thessaloniki's urban landscape.

All of this year's selected buildings reflected the title of 'Future Heritage—today's architecture, tomorrow's legacy', and the programme highlighted projects that either preserved and promoted the historical identity of buildings, creatively and innovatively reused existing spaces or incorporated principles of sustainable and contemporary architecture. As such, the entries were categorised into three sections: Preserved Heritage, buildings of historical value that retain their authentic form; Transformation, examples of reuse and contemporary restoration; Sustainable Design, contemporary buildings that incorporate sustainable technologies and innovative materials.

The visual identity of this year's Open House Thessaloniki and Open House Athens festivals was created through the 'Design the Poster' competition, co-organised with the Vakalo Art & Design College. The competition involved designing the festival poster, printed materials and volunteers' t-shirts—key elements that shaped the festivals' communication and aesthetic presence. The winner of this year's competition was Odysseas Zacharatos, whose proposal stood out for its contemporary visual approach and the simple, symbolic way it expresses the spirit of Open House Thessaloniki and Open House Athens.

Additional activities

The main festival weekend took place on November 22–23. A variety of parallel events started a week earlier, offering visitors a wide range of activities that brought them closer to the city’s architecture, industry and creative community.

During Open House Thessaloniki 2025, the following activities took place:

MADE IN THESSALONIKI

(November 15–19)

Approximate number of attendees:

2,200

This parallel event once again connected the public with contemporary and traditional production techniques. 25 creative spaces and 6 factories opened their doors, offering free guided tours led by the creators themselves.



Grayn design studio. Photo by Thanos Xenitidis © Courtesy of Open House Greece



Villa Mordoch. Photo by Ifigeneia Papazoglou © Courtesy of Open House Greece

OPEN WALK

(November 15–16)

Approximate number of attendees:

270

The themed walking route titled 'The Industrial Heritage of Thessaloniki' introduced participants to hidden architectural and historical aspects of Thessaloniki, in line with the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage'.

OPEN SCHOOL

(November 18 & 21)

Approximate number of attendees:

800

Student and educational groups visited creative spaces and selected buildings from the main programme, guided by OHT volunteers.



Livestreamed tours

(November 21)

Approximate number of attendees:

34,200

Free tours were broadcast live via Instagram of two buildings from the programme.

OPEN OFFICE

(November 20–21)

Approximate number of attendees:

310

Sponsored by The Source by Marmouris S.A., distinguished architectural studios in Thessaloniki welcomed visitors. Architects personally guided participants through their spaces and presented their design philosophy.

Participating offices: Urban Soul Project, FORMrelated, UBUpplan, MP SPARCH, NOMEN, Minas Kosmidis Architects.

Open office. Photo by MP SPARCH-KYRIAKI KAVAZI© Courtesy of Open House Greece

OPEN TOURS

(November 22–23)

Approximate number of attendees:

29,000

The main event of OHT, the guided tours, brought together 73 public and private buildings of architectural interest—residences, offices, hotels, museums and monuments. All of the selected buildings highlighted the theme of ‘Future Heritage’ across the categories of Preserved Heritage, Transformation and Sustainable Design.

Closing party

OHT always ends in a festive way! All participants were invited to the closing party: volunteers, architects, owners, sponsors and guests.

Competitions:

Instagram stories contest for volunteers

(October 22–November 22)

Approximate number of entries:

200+

Contest on Instagram for volunteers, where they had to share stories from the festival's preparation.

OPEN PHOTO

(November 22–30)

Number of entries:

520

This photography competition, sponsored by Arrena Water, invited participants to capture the theme of 'Reflections of the Future Heritage' and share their photos as posts on Instagram.

OPEN VOTE

(November 22–30)

Number of votes:

2245

The audience award allowed visitors to vote for their favourite tour. A camera from Fujifilm Hellas was awarded to one participant, while volunteers of the winning building/route received recognition and commemorative gifts.



Villa Mordoch. Photo by Gerasimos Dossas
© Courtesy of Open House Greece

OPEN YOUR MAP

(November 22–30)

Number of entries::

30

Sponsored by Kleemann, visitors collected stamps on their printed event map and shared them on Instagram to enter the contest.

Open call for visual stories

(November 22–December 6)

Number of entries:

19

Part of the three-year Open House Europe collaboration. Participants expressed the theme of 'Future Heritage' through photography, video, drawing and other visual media.

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:
485

Each year, Open House Thessaloniki receives a large number of volunteer applications. Volunteers become an essential part of OHT, taking part in team rehearsals, supporting the information point, attending organisational meetings, celebrating together at the closing party and forming a vibrant and diverse community.

The first volunteer gatherings took place on October 21 and 22, and were followed by a social event designed to strengthen team bonding. Attending the initial briefing was a key step, as volunteers were assigned to groups and began scheduling rehearsals with their group coordinator. They also got the opportunity to support various parallel activities held before the main festival weekend, as well as to contribute to tasks such as research, text writing, translations and distributing promotional material.

To join the volunteer team, individuals had to be over 18 years old and available during the event dates. The ideal candidates were those who were polite, cooperative, patient, communicative, proactive and reliable, as well as able to properly prepare so they could confidently carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them. Volunteers wore a distinctive t-shirt that identified their role and made them easily recognisable throughout



Volunteer training meeting. Photo by John Simitopoulos © Courtesy of Open House Greece

the festival. Their primary duties included welcoming visitors, guiding and accompanying them through the buildings, providing information and promoting partner products at designated points across the city.

After the festival ended, volunteers received a digital certificate acknowledging their contribution.



Magichphoto photobooth © Courtesy of Open Chaous Open House Greece

Party for volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:
200

After the first volunteer meeting, a party was organised at the bar Bord de l'eau to encourage team bonding and bring everyone together, helping to form strong connections.

Gathering to distribute materials

Two days before the main festival weekend, a gathering was organised at the festival's information point to distribute all the necessary materials to the volunteers. This meeting was essential as it provided volunteers with everything they needed for the weekend: t-shirts, posters, signs, flyers, energy bars and gifts from festival sponsors. It served as the final preparation before the event, allowing volunteers to socialise and strengthen connections within the team.



T-shirts distribution meeting. Photo by Syrmo Papadaki © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

Open House Thessaloniki 2025 had 73 buildings and/or guided tours from the festival's programme dedicated to showcasing the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme: Future Heritage.

List of buildings:

1. Pinewood American International School
2. The Excelsior Hotel
3. Koukoumpani Mansion

Since all featured buildings were part of this year's theme, the programme was organised into three key categories, each highlighting a different dimension of architectural evolution and the ongoing dialogue between past, present, and future.

Preserved Heritage

This category included buildings of historical or architectural value that had retained their original form, even after restoration or conservation work. It highlighted the importance of architectural heritage and the enduring value of authenticity within the contemporary urban landscape.

Sustainable Design

This category showcased contemporary projects that integrated seamlessly with their natural and urban surroundings. It featured designs that embraced innovative materials, new technologies and sustainable principles, emphasising sustainability not only as a design approach but as a defining element of tomorrow's architectural legacy.

Transformation

This category focused on buildings that had been redesigned or repurposed to meet contemporary needs. It highlighted the sustainable reuse of the built environment, presenting adaptation as a creative alternative to demolition and a way to honour the past while reimagining it for the future.

Pinewood American
International School
(Category: Sustainable
Design)

20 guided tours that
attracted 340 visitors



Pinewood American International School . Photo by Thanos Xenitidis © Courtesy of Open House Greece

The new Pinewood School represents a contemporary architectural landmark within the historic Anatolia College campus in Pylaia, on the outskirts of Thessaloniki. Emphasising

experiential education and sustainable design, the building offers a vibrant learning environment tailored to preparing students for a globalised future.

The Excelsior Hotel (Category: Preserved Heritage)

20 guided tours that
attracted 340 visitors



The Excelsior Hotel. Photo by Konstantinos Aleiferis © Courtesy of Open House Greece

The building was constructed in 1928 as a hotel named Excelsior, right in the heart of Thessaloniki's commercial and business district. Architecturally, it stands out for its

three-sided, perfectly symmetrical façade—facing the small square formed at the junction of Mitropoleos and Komnion streets—and for its distinctive neoclassical features.

Koukoumpani Mansion (Category: Transformation)

20 guided tours that
attracted 340 visitors



Koukoumpani Mansion. Photo by Thanos Xenitidis © Courtesy of Open House Greece

A listed building constructed in 1926, it originally housed the Bank of Thessaly, which went bankrupt in 1929. It later served as the Commodity Exchange until 1980. Following

its restoration between 2022 and 2025, this historic landmark now hosts the Il Conformista Casa Storica hotel.

Additional activities

OPEN WALK: ‘The Industrial Heritage of Thessaloniki’

Attracted **270** visitors

In the middle of the 19th century, the first industrial facilities began to appear in Thessaloniki, marking the city’s passage into the industrial era. Being pioneers at the time, these facilities inaugurated construction with revolutionary methods and materials, patterning after European innovations. The industrial landscape is composed of production units (flour and spinning mills, tanneries), transport networks (railway, port, tram) and infrastructure (gas, electricity and water supply).

Wandering around western Thessaloniki, the city’s evolution from when it represented one of the most influential administrative and commercial hotspots of southeastern Europe is noticeable. This thematic walking tour started from Villa Petridi—an iconic building that dominates the western edge of the city centre—and continued towards the area of the slaughterhouses. Various industrial complexes were explored, the shells of which, though no longer in use, have survived to this day. Stops in the tour included, among others, Fix and Hub 26—spaces that connect the area’s past with its future.

The purpose of this route was to allow visitors to discover the city’s industrial inheritance and the history and architectural evolution of the district’s industrial facilities, which, along with the Port and the Old Railway Station, have formed the industrial character of the city since the middle of the 19th century.



Open Walks. Photo by Syrmo Papadaki © Courtesy of Open House Greece



Open photo. Photo by @tzakouanna © Courtesy of Open House Greece

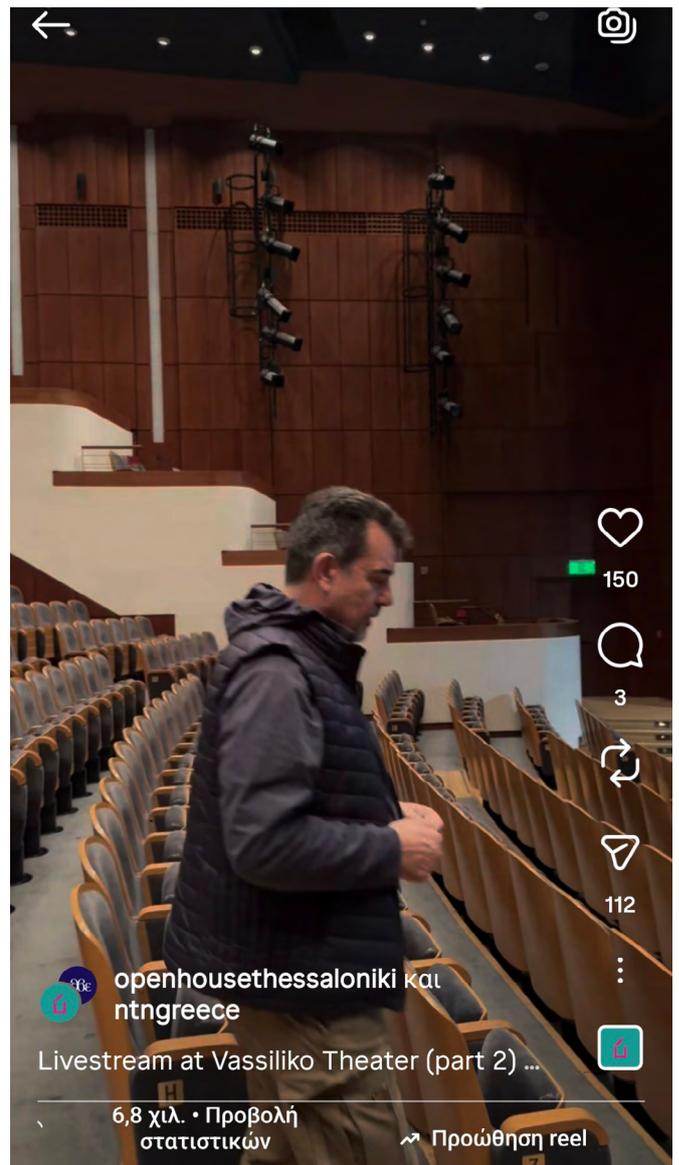
The photo competition, which has been held annually on Instagram, provided the public with the opportunity to share their experience from Open House Thessaloniki. It was open to everyone: amateur and professional

photographers, architecture enthusiasts, lovers of Thessaloniki, and fans of the festival. The theme for submissions was 'Reflections of the Future Heritage'. The three photographs that stood out the most were awarded prizes.

Livestreamed tours

Approximate number of views: **34,200**

This online initiative allowed the public to watch livestreamed guided tours of two buildings from the festival programme via Instagram. The tours were broadcast on Friday, November 21, and later became available as reels on the festival's Instagram account (@openhousethessaloniki). The participating buildings were the apartment building in Karabournaki and the Royal Theatre. By presenting both contemporary architecture and examples of transformed and repurposed architectural design, these buildings highlighted this year's theme.



Koukoumpani Mansion. Photo by Thanos Xenitidis © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



Nikis Waterfront. Photo by Gerasimos Dossas © Courtesy of Open House Greece

Open House Thessaloniki 2025 attracted 396 people to guided tours in English.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

At Open House Thessaloniki, offering tours in English has long been a core part of the festival's approach to make sure visitors who do not speak Greek feel welcome and fully included in the experience, while also encouraging a richer cultural exchange within the festival. By doing so, the festival was able to engage the city's international audience and present Thessaloniki's architectural story to people from around the world.

When designing the programme, buildings that resonate with diverse audiences were selected, placing emphasis on their architectural value and historical context. This ensured that both visitors from abroad and local residents were able to explore and appreciate the distinct identity of the city.

In recent years, the number of tourists joining the event—especially on English and other foreign-language tours—has steadily increased. Their participation has strengthened the festival's role as a cultural highlight for those discovering Thessaloniki. To support this audience, online promotional material and tour timetables in English were prepared, making it easier for non-Greek speakers to organise their visit.

To further improve accessibility for international participants, targeted communication strategies were adopted, such as producing English-language content on social media (particularly on Instagram) and regularly updating the festival's website in English. In some cases, information was also provided in additional languages to broaden the festival's reach.

A significant factor in enhancing the festival's multilingual offerings was a collaboration with a foreign language institute as a volunteer sponsor. Through this partnership, tours in languages such as Spanish and Italian were able to be introduced, opening the event to even more visitors.

Together, these initiatives helped Open House Thessaloniki evolve into an inclusive and welcoming event, bringing together residents and travellers. The continued rise in international attendance highlighted the importance of multilingual accessibility in fostering meaningful cultural interaction.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

Several steps were taken to ensure that festival information was clear, accessible and easy to use for visitors with disabilities.

- Information about accessible buildings: Detailed information on buildings that were accessible to people with disabilities was provided through an accessibility filter on the festival's website. This information was also clearly indicated with special signage on-site and included in the printed programme.
- Online events: Livestreamed tours, offering guided visits to two buildings from this year's programme, were broadcast through the OHT Instagram profile. These online events enabled individuals with mobility limitations—or anyone unable to join in person—to still experience part of the festival.
- Bilingual content: Key information on the festival's website, programme and social media accounts was offered in both Greek and English to support broader accessibility.

Accessibility considerations were integrated into the event planning process. Buildings with ramps, elevators or step-free access were highlighted in all communication materials, enabling visitors to plan their routes according to their needs. Volunteers were trained to assist visitors with disabilities, provide clear guidance and help with navigation at entry points and key locations.

Although the festival did not have dedicated partnerships with disability-focused organisations this year, accessible design principles were incorporated in collaboration with building owners and coordinators. This helped ensure that accessibility information was accurate and that buildings could accommodate different needs where possible.

This year's experience highlighted several key insights: the demand for accessible information is high, and visitors rely on clear, centralised accessibility details to plan their visit confidently; online content and livestreams significantly expand access, especially for individuals with mobility barriers or sensory sensitivities; training volunteers specifically on disability awareness improves the overall visitor experience and creates a more inclusive atmosphere; there is increasing value in formal collaborations with organisations that specialise in accessibility, and the festival aims to strengthen such partnerships in the future.

C
HC
EURC

Vilnius
2025

OPEN
HOUSE
DPE

Open House Vilnius 2025

Introduction

General information about the event

Event No.:	E7.3
Legal Name:	Architektūros fondas
Date:	May 10–11, 2025
Name:	Open House Vilnius
Type:	Open House festival
Number of buildings/areas included in the programme:	50 buildings, 4 green spaces, 12 City Makers' Offices, 3 creative interludes
City:	Vilnius
Country:	Lithuania
Duration:	2 days

Festival participants

In total, Open House Vilnius 2025 attracted 42673 attendees.

In terms of volunteers, the festival had 81 men and 383 women: 464 volunteers in total.

Open House Vilnius 2025 was organised by 4 men and 24 women: 28 people in total.

Introduction

Open House Vilnius (OHV) is an annual open architecture weekend that invites residents and tourists to explore the city through its most remarkable buildings and urban spaces. Held on May 10–11, 2025, the festival returned for its 11th edition, offering a rare opportunity to discover more than 50 unique sites across Vilnius, many of which are usually closed to the public.

This year, the Open House Europe (OHEu) annual theme, 'Future Heritage', encouraged visitors to look at contemporary architecture as tomorrow's legacy. The programme invited reflections on how present-day values, lifestyles and challenges are shaping Vilnius and which elements of today's built environment might become meaningful for future generations.

The 2025 edition also introduced 4 green urban spaces into the programme, highlighting the growing importance of nature and sustainability in architectural thinking. Guided tours took place in Bernardinai Garden, the Japanese Garden Sei Shin En, the Business Garden Vilnius complex and throughout the streets of the Naujamiestis neighbourhood, where visitors could explore the recent transformations of the area's public infrastructure.

Festivalgoers were also able to visit 12 new locations, including the popular Stepono sodas housing complex, the Antakalnis Trolleybus Park and the newly repurposed Kilo Health office. Other standout sites included the Presidential Palace and the ISM University of Management and Economics (formerly the Vilnius Central Post Office).

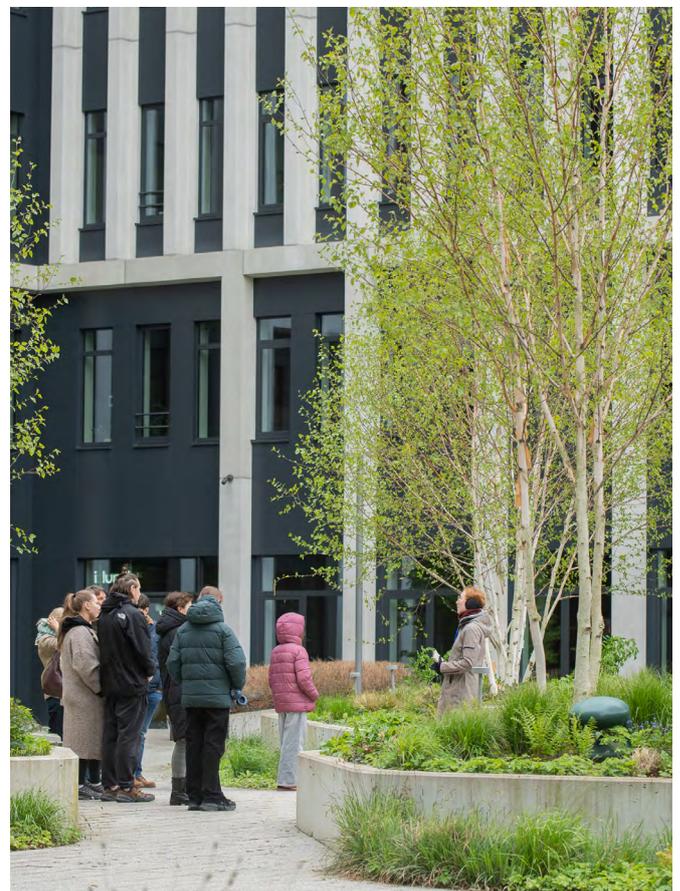
Behind the scenes, nearly 500 dedicated volunteers helped bring the festival to life, guiding tours and ensuring a smooth experience for all participants. Their enthusiasm and commitment played a vital role in making the weekend a memorable celebration of architecture, creativity and civic engagement. With nearly 43,000 visits recorded over the weekend, Open House Vilnius 2025 once again proved the power of architecture to connect people and inspire curiosity about the city they live in.

Additional activities

One of the key highlights of the 2025 programme was the official inclusion of four green urban spaces for the first time. These spaces—Bernardinai Garden, the Japanese Garden Sei Shin En, the Business Garden Vilnius complex and public areas in the Naujamiestis neighbourhood—were presented through guided tours that explored how nature and landscape architecture contribute to the future of cities. Another standout element was the return of the ‘Meet the City Makers’ sessions, which offered visitors direct conversations with architects, urbanists and planners in their workspaces. These meetings attracted twice as many visitors as in previous years, highlighting growing public interest in the behind-the-scenes of architectural work. In addition, several artistic performances and creative activities were held across different venues, encouraging visitors to engage with architecture through various sensory and emotional experiences.

Among these, the ‘Visual Stories’ photography exhibition stood out as part of the broader Open House Europe initiative. It showcased 36 visual narratives from 14 cities, interpreting the OHEu 2024 theme, ‘Accessibility and Inclusion’, through images, videos and illustrations. The exhibition emphasised inclusive design and was curated to be accessible to all, including visitors with visual and hearing impairments. Another creative highlight was a site-specific dance-circus performance by artist Džiugas Kunsmanas and musician Julius Jonušas,

which explored the physical and emotional balance between body and space, bringing architecture to life through movement. Lastly, for the first time, the festival featured a workshop for children titled ‘Nature Discovery Spaces’, developed by BLUMA agency. Held in Miesto laboratorija, it introduced the young participants to sustainable urbanism and biodiversity through hands-on creation with natural materials. This new, family-focused addition enriched the programme and helped to begin fostering architectural curiosity from an early age.



Business Garden Vilnius. Photo by Vytautė Ribokaitė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

Mentor training sessions

Approximate number of attendees:
50



Mentor training sessions. Photo by Jurgita Kunigiskytė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

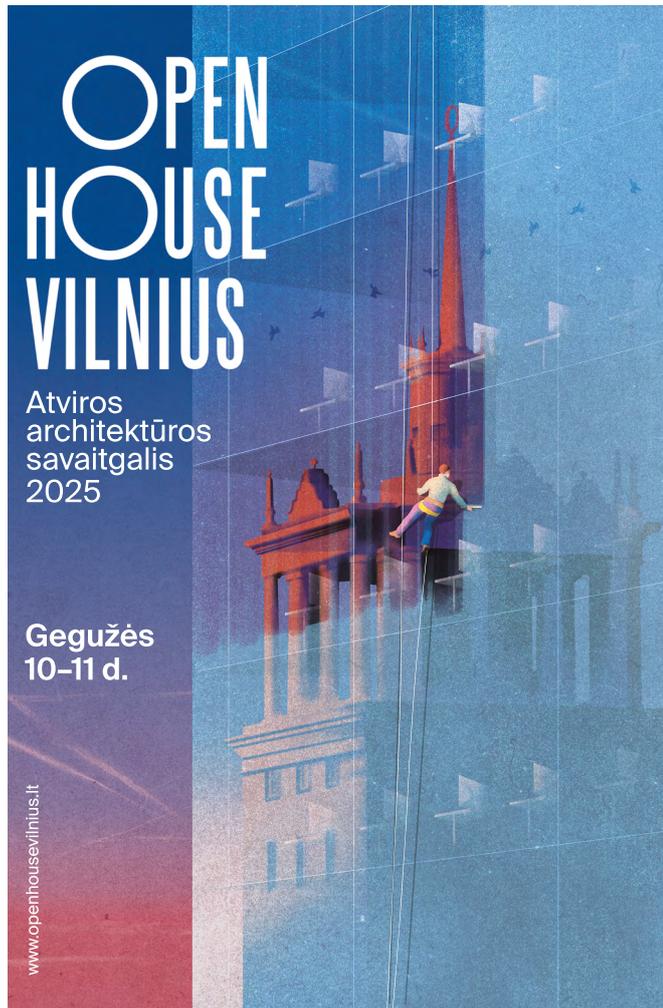
During the mentor training sessions, a focused discussion on the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage' was held. These sessions provided an opportunity for experienced guides and organisers to explore how contemporary architecture and urban spaces, such as the National Stadium Pit in Vilnius, can be perceived and preserved as future heritage. The discussion emphasised the importance of recognising ongoing changes in the urban environment and engaging the community in conversations about what constitutes heritage in the 21st century. This activity was chosen to showcase the theme because it highlights

the dynamic nature of heritage—taking form not only as historical monuments but also as evolving spaces shaped by current social and cultural values. By preparing mentors to communicate this perspective during tours and events, the training helped integrate 'Future Heritage' into the core narrative of Open House Vilnius 2025, encouraging visitors to reflect on how today's architecture can become tomorrow's cultural legacy. This approach aligned perfectly with the OHEu goal of broadening the understanding of heritage beyond traditional definitions.

Poster competition

Approximate number of attendees:

50+



Open House Vilnius poster by Liudas Barkauskas © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas



Open House Vilnius poster by Salvija Vaičikonytė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

A poster competition centred around the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage' was organised. The competition invited participants to creatively interpret and visually express the concept of heritage as something evolving and shaped by the future. This initiative encouraged artists and designers to engage with the theme by imagining how contemporary and future architectural and cultural elements can become part of our shared heritage. The winning poster, designed by L. Barkauskas, was selected for its innovative and thought-provoking representation of 'Future Heritage'.

This activity was chosen to highlight the theme because it fostered public involvement and creativity, allowing the community to contribute actively to the conversation about the ongoing transformation of the concept of heritage. The competition helped to raise awareness and visually communicate the message of Open House Vilnius, reinforcing the idea that heritage is not only about the past but also about how we envision and protect the spaces of tomorrow. More details about the competition can be found on our website.

Radio interview

A radio interview with the festival's organisers was featured on the national broadcaster LRT, where the OHEu annual theme was discussed in depth and the way in which the programme reflected and engaged with it was explained. During the interview, the organisers explored how the concept of 'Future Heritage' influences the way architectural sites are perceived and valued today and how current buildings might become tomorrow's heritage. This broadcast helped OHV reach a wider audience and offered a platform to raise public awareness about the evolving definition of heritage. This activity was selected to showcase the annual theme because it provided a thoughtful, accessible format for discussing and disseminating the core ideas behind 'Future Heritage'.

Link:

<https://www.lrt.lt/radioteka/irasas/2000409574/ateities-paveldo-teoremos-11-tajame-open-house-vilnius?srsId=AfmBOoqLoNcCUj-VqgTlhkP28vZ5vxL4jfJxr9FhyuM5hdRluu1jDien>

Activities for volunteers

Training of volunteers

Approximate number of attendees:
400

The preparation of volunteers for Open House Vilnius 2025 followed a structured, multi-phase approach aimed at fostering both practical skills and critical engagement with architectural heritage. The training began with the phase to prepare mentors, focusing on volunteers responsible for developing and leading tours in newly introduced buildings. This phase opened with an informal introductory evening, helping to build community among the core team.

Next, a general mentor training session was held, including team-building activities such as ice-breaker games and a quiz night focused on the Open House Europe and Open House Worldwide festivals. A central component of this session was the panel discussion, 'Can the National Stadium Pit in Vilnius Become Heritage?', moderated by architect and historian Matas Šiupšinskas. The panellists—including architects Martynas Mankus, Lukas Rekevičius and landscape architect-ecologist Vaiva Marozienė—explored this year's OHEu theme, 'Future Heritage', examining how unconventional or incomplete structures, like the National Stadium site, may gain heritage value over time.

The third training phase brought together all volunteers, including mentors. This comprehensive session addressed key topics



Volunteer training. Photo by Vytaute Ribokaitė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

such as roles for volunteers, interactions with visitors and public engagement strategies. A public speaking workshop helped volunteers build confidence and refine their communication skills.

Finally, on the day before the festival, all mentors were invited for a final coordination meeting. This session was used to distribute all essential materials, share last-minute updates on the festival programme and reinforce key responsibilities for the weekend.

This tiered training model has consistently strengthened the confidence of and cohesion between volunteers. While managing logistics for a large, international team remains a challenge, the collaborative and adaptive approach ensured a high-quality festival.

Volunteer Community Gatherings

Approximate number of attendees:
400



Volunteer Community Gatherings. Photo by Vytaute Ribokaitė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

During the festival weekend, informal social activities were organised to strengthen the volunteer community and celebrate their contributions. On Saturday evening, volunteers were encouraged to meet informally to reflect on the day, share experiences and connect with fellow team members. On Sunday evening, after all tours had ended, a Closing Party was hosted—a long-standing tradition that included warm food and drinks to refresh tired volunteers. The event featured an award

ceremony, recognising the most visited and creative building teams, followed by a live music performance and dancing. This idea was born from the desire to recognise volunteers' efforts in a warm, festive atmosphere. It has been highly successful in building camaraderie, giving volunteers a shared sense of accomplishment, and encouraging many to return year after year. The relaxed setting provided closure to the intense weekend and left a lasting positive impression.

Other benefits



Mentor Training Session. Photo by Jurgita Kunigiskytė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

A key motivational practice of OHV is organising internal preview tours approximately a month before the festival. Each participating building or site was required to conduct at least two trial tours, which allowed volunteers to rehearse their scripts, routes and coordination as a team. These preview tours were open only to other volunteers, offering them a unique opportunity to explore different buildings before the public,

without queues or time pressure. This internal access was highly valued among volunteers, as it allowed them to experience the festival from the visitor's perspective while building curiosity and appreciation for each other's work. It also fostered a sense of exclusivity, mutual support and early engagement, significantly boosting motivation and team spirit before the actual event weekend.

Integration of the Open House Europe programme

Buildings

All buildings, green spaces and city makers' offices featured in the Open House Vilnius 2025 programme discussed the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage' in different ways and from various perspectives during the guided tours.

List of buildings:

1. Office Building of the Lithuanian Cooperative Union
2. Japanese Garden Sei Shin En
3. Centre for Agriculture Information

Office Building of the Lithuanian Cooperative Union

34 guided tours that attracted 1037 visitors



Office Building of the Cooperative Union. Photo by Dovilė Servienė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

This excursion was selected to showcase the OHEu annual theme because it reflected how inclusive architecture and public services can shape the future of social care. The building represents a concrete example of accessible, community-based support for people with intellectual disabilities. Participants had the opportunity to explore how physical space, thoughtful design and integrated services contribute to a sense of belonging, dignity and independence. Spaces like this embody future-facing values of inclusion and equality,

becoming part of the heritage to be passed on—a model for how environments can empower marginalised communities and promote sustainable, human-centred care systems.

Link:

<https://www.openhousevilnius.lt/en/programme/office-building-of-cooperative-union-of-lithuania/>

Japanese Garden Sei Shin En

18 guided tours that
attracted 330 visitors



Japanese Garden Sei Shin En. Photo by Lazarenko © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

The Japanese Garden was selected to showcase the OHEu annual theme because it perfectly represents the balance between tradition and innovation. Japanese gardens embody centuries-old cultural values and natural harmony, yet they continue to inspire new designs and sustainable practices today. Their timeless beauty and philosophy encourage us to respect nature while adapting heritage to future needs. This makes the Japanese Garden in Vilnius an ideal symbol

of 'Future Heritage', illustrating how cultural landscapes can evolve without losing their essence, ensuring they remain meaningful for generations to come.

Link:

<https://www.openhousevilnius.lt/en/programme/japanese-garden-sei-shin-en/>

Centre for Agriculture Information

28 guided tours that
attracted 877 visitors



Agriculture Data Centre. Photo by Gytautė Akstinaitė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

The Centre for Agriculture Information building perfectly fits the theme of 'Future Heritage' as an outstanding example of Soviet modernist architecture that has retained its historical value while remaining functional today. The building not only represents unique architectural and artistic heritage, including Algirdas Dovydenas' stained glass and monumental fresco, but also demonstrates a successful integration of cultural heritage with modern technologies. The complex maintains a strong connection to its surrounding

environment and reflects sustainability principles essential for future urban development. In this way, it symbolises both the past and the future, with the building as a living, adaptable and valuable part of heritage.

Link:

<https://www.openhousevilnius.lt/en/programme/centre-for-agriculture-information/>

Different audiences at the local Open House festival



Bernardine Garden. Photo by Jurgita Kunigiskytė © Courtesy of Architektūros fondas

Open House Vilnius 2025 had 69 guided tours for English speakers that attracted 1329 people, 23 guided tours for Ukrainian speakers that attracted 248 people, and 4 Lithuanian Sign language guided tours that attracted 10 people. 16 activities were fully accessible to people with mobility impairments, and 14 guided tours were partly accessible to people with mobility impairments.

Experience in attracting non-native participants

To attract non-native speakers, a diverse range of buildings was carefully selected to feature English-speaking and other language guided tours. The goal was to offer a variety that would appeal to different interests and cultural backgrounds, including both modern and historic architecture, as well as well-known landmarks and hidden urban gems.

The multilingual offerings were communicated through the Open House Vilnius website, which is available in English and Ukrainian. Additionally, the festival reached out directly to international and migrant communities in Lithuania, encouraging their participation. News about foreign-language tours was often met with enthusiastic responses, with some members from those communities even volunteering to lead tours themselves and inviting their friends to attend, creating a ripple effect of engagement.

The festival collaborated with specific community groups for promotion, especially those supporting Ukrainian residents, whose interest remains strong due to the ongoing war. One of the key lessons learned was that there is a growing demand for inclusive, multilingual programming. Tours in Ukrainian remained highly relevant.

Experience in attracting people with special needs

To ensure the accessibility of the festival for people with disabilities, clear information on the accessibility level of each building and activity was provided. Both on the OHV website and in printed materials, it was indicated whether a site was fully or partially accessible for people with reduced mobility. Distinct icons were also used to highlight tours offered in Lithuanian Sign Language, improving visibility for visitors with hearing loss.

The festival's approach focused on integration rather than separation—separate events were not created for people with disabilities, but instead, the aim was to make the main programme inclusive and welcoming. One of the key initiatives this year was to offer several guided tours in Lithuanian Sign Language. In this process, OHV collaborated with the Lithuanian Association of the Deaf, which supported in organising and promoting these activities.

While these steps represent progress, there is more to be done. The plan is to increase the visibility and availability of Lithuanian Sign Language tours in future editions, and there is a need to better adapt the festival's website and tour materials for people with visual impairments. Overall, this experience highlights that small but consistent steps can significantly improve accessibility and inclusivity across the festival.

Distribution

All festival information, including building descriptions, tour schedules, accessibility details and thematic highlights, was made publicly available on the official Open House Vilnius website (www.openhousevilnius.lt) and actively communicated through the festival's Instagram account (@openhousevilnius). These platforms allowed the festival to reach a wide and diverse audience, keeping both local and international visitors informed and engaged. Digital presence played a key role in providing up-to-date and inclusive content, such as information about tours in non-native languages, accessibility for people with reduced mobility and Lithuanian Sign Language tours. Social media also enabled direct interaction with the community, allowing the festival to answer questions and promote different programme highlights. This multi-channel approach helped ensure the visibility of the event and its alignment with the OHEu annual theme of 'Future Heritage'.

A link to the website:

<https://www.openhousevilnius.lt/>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/openhousevilnius/?hl=en>

Partner festivals



C
HC
EURC

People to
architecture,
architecture,
to people.

OPEN
HOUSE
OPEN



Co-funded by
the European Union