



## The House of Leaves by Studio Terragni Architetti; Albania

April 1, 2019 | Albania, Architecture, BigSEE Architecture Award 2019 - Winner, Public and commercial architecture



Until recently, this unobtrusive house in the middle of Tirana, Albania, served as the headquarters of the Sigurimi, the secret service agency, operating throughout the long dictatorship of Enver Hoxha.

Its location was crucial in the geopolitics of the city, for it had the “normal” appearance of a private villa, yet it was a sophisticated technical branch of government. The transformation of this “House” into a site of memory required delicate interventions.

The derelict condition of the house is itself an integral part of its character, a kind of historic tattoo, a deeply etched condition no one can quite comprehend today. The House of Leaves was and remains a labyrinth of rooms, with all the traces of its transformation from a Maternity Clinic to a top-secret place of surveillance, it is full of breaks, scars and unexpected places.

We treated the house with care, we applied stitches were necessary, we revealed the incongruity and opened passages and we came to see how uncomfortable memories emerge.



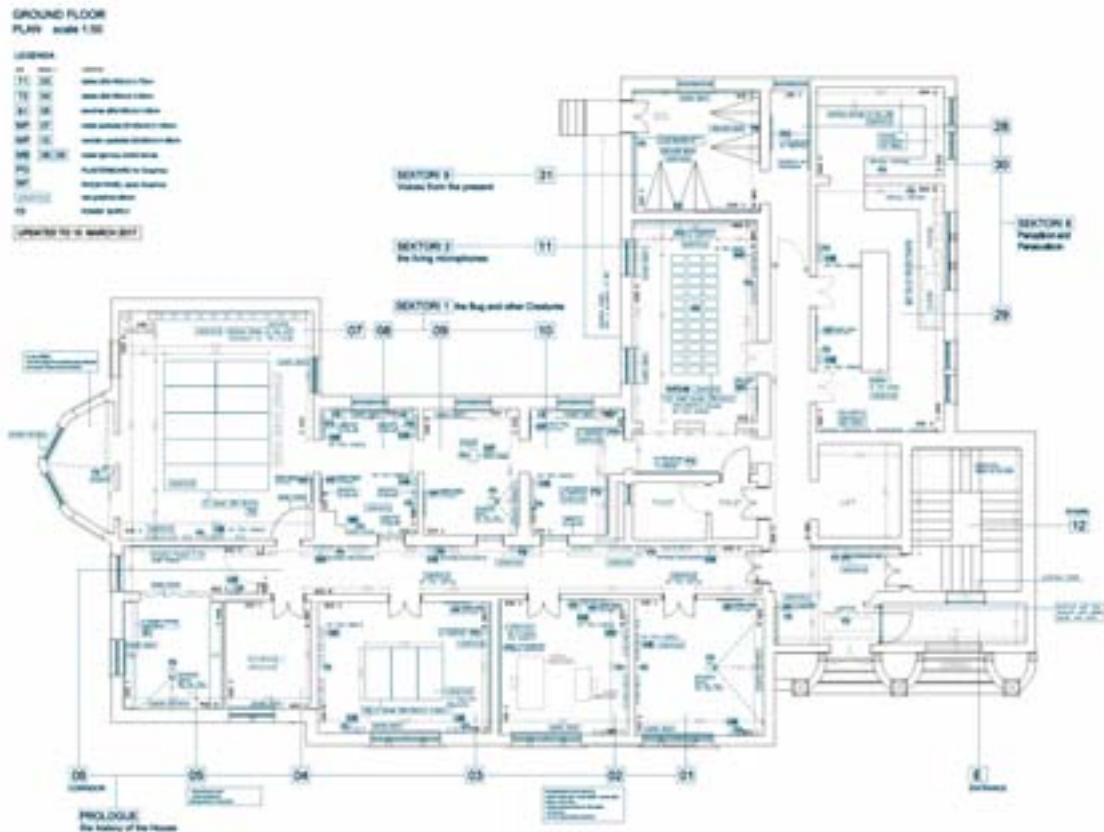
***What makes this project one-of-a-kind?***

The most telling aspect of the House from the current point of view is its multi-layered condition. The building reveals barriers and divisions, demarcations and thresholds of different vintage and purpose, all of which transform it into a strangely hollow and subtly shrouded object. By the simple act of opening the Museum and its grounds to the public, the half-forgotten, half-feared conditions of the past are peeled away, leaving one to reckon with a disconcerting present.









**FILE**

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Year of completion: **2017**

Location: **Tirana, Albania**

Total area: **1 300 m<sup>2</sup>**

Site area: **800 m<sup>2</sup>**

*Text provided by the architects.*