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British architectural practice Foster + Partners to design new building for Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences (ELSC). Project to be built on Edmond J. Safra Campus.

Renowned British architecture practice Foster + Partners, led by Lord Foster, has been chosen to design the new home of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (ELSC). Foster + Partners was chosen to develop this project due to the unique level of their work and experience in designing research centers worldwide, such as at Stanford University in the United States and Imperial College in London. The important new building is located in the heart of Jerusalem and represents Foster + Partners’ first project in Israel.

The new building will be constructed on a ??10,500 square metre site, adjacent to the Alexander Silberman Institute for Life Sciences on the Edmond J. Safra Campus and will include state-of-the-art labs, classrooms, an innovative imaging center and areas for biological and pre-clinical research. As part of the plans, significant emphasis will be placed on constructing an environmentally friendly building with a focus on conserving energy and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

According to Prof. Eilon Vaadia, Director of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences, "The establishment of this building is another step towards our vision of building an advanced scientific research center that will provide the best technological infrastructure for researchers in brain science. As a result of this infrastructure, we will be able to continue recruiting outstanding new scientists and training the next generation of graduate students in our unique Ph.D. program."
He also said that the purpose of the building is to make the science of tomorrow accessible to the non-scientific community in Israel, and as such it will include such public spaces as lecture rooms, a gallery, an auditorium and a cafeteria. The location of the building, on the central axis of the campus, will encourage the wider community to visit it in order to learn about different areas of brain research that will be presented.

Hebrew University Vice-President and Director-General Billy Shapira said, “This project will be an important contribution to the Hebrew University and the city of Jerusalem, because the building will become a magnet not only for the scientific community but also the general public who will see an architectural masterpiece that displays the innovation and progress that characterize the university.”

Working at the lab. Illustration by Foster+Partners.

British architect Norman Foster founded Foster + Partners in 1967. Lord Foster has been internationally recognized for his work, which reflects a commitment to environmental issues and sustainable design. Some of his most famous designs include the Millennium Bridge in London, the Great Court at the British Museum, Commerzbank Headquarters in Frankfurt, the new Reichstag parliament building in Berlin, the Hearst Tower in New York, Hong Kong airport, and Beijing airport ? the largest single building on the planet. The studio’s projects have won the RIBA Stirling Prize (twice) and Lord Foster was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1999.

In the Hebrew University project, Foster + Partners will work with the Jerusalem architectural firm of Baer, Shifman-Nathan Architects, headed by architects Yuval Baer and Gait Shifman-Nathan. Their firm is engaged in building planning and development, preservation and restoration, and interior design. Architect Zadok Sherman has also been selected to assist in planning the laboratories and their construction.

The Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Science (ELSC), established in 2009, will be the largest brain research center in Israel. The decision to invest in the center was based on the findings of an international monitoring committee, whose members included two Nobel laureates. The committee determined that the level of neuroscience research at the Hebrew University is among the highest in the world, and that a newly equipped center would guarantee that the university remains among the leading centers of its kind in this field.

Coverage in Ha?aretz.

Coverage in The Jerusalem Post.

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