Located within the cultural centre of the city, alongside the grand Plaza Mayor, the Casa de la Panadería, the City Hall complex is one of the capital’s most symbolically important new projects. It expresses the transparency of the democratic process and demonstrates the potential for a sustainable democratic forum; with a commitment to public accessibility, a sensitivity to history; and a rigorous environmental agenda. Emphasising values of clarity and precision, the glazed structure is a new landmark for Madrid, and a symbol of the vigour of the Spanish democracy.

A simple palette of materials and straightforward detailing reinforce the direct character of the architecture. Structure played a major role in creating an efficient and integrated network of systems encouraging multiple public entries. A diagrid construction supports the west facing façade, and the skin is composed of banded, triple-glazed triangular panels, with fritting and solar blinds. Heritage buildings on adjacent streets envelop the building and tie the site to the city grid and Madrid’s history.

The spaces in between the three primary drums, are open and a part of the urban streetscape adjusting the building. The series of elliptical ring overpasses linking the elevated levels, within the space. At the top floor, there are balconies terraces overlooking the city which can be used for public exhibitions and events. The cantilevers in the atrium is also open to the public and the assembly chamber on the second level, is surrounded by a tiered public gallery. The distorted concavity of the glass sheet cladding over the chamber, opens the building to the canal, and at night, lights reflect off the water creating rippled undulating patterns across the building’s façade. Light, gridded glass and coiled aluminium work together dynamically to create a structure that, although unfamiliar and daring, invites exploration and enables social interaction.