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PREFERENCES 2016

A PEEK BEHIND THE FAÇADE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE



70
YEARS
QUALITY



PREFERENCES 2016

70 years of PREFA!



For the last 70 years, our basic principle at PREFA has been to do something better tomorrow than we did today. And we happily give ourselves this challenge every day. For this is the principle for quality in every area: the continual refinement of our 6,000 products, the implementation of innovative ideas, and the consideration we give to our partners, to society, and to how we use resources.

In PREFArences 2016, we document twelve of the most beautiful, innovative and extraordinary projects of the past years as a résumé, which is also an outlook on, and stimulation for, future projects. This book is also a written “thank you” to all our partners for their trust in our quality products and the expertise, advisory skills and experience of our project developers. And it is also to thank the architects who chose PREFA to realise their construction dreams and of course our skilled workers whose craftsmanship brought these projects to a close.

Mike Bucher

CEO

PREFA
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01

PREFA roof and façade panel FX.12



Refuge de l'Aigle

Here, we were faced with the challenge of building at 3,450 m above sea level. Storms of more than 200 km/h and huge temperature swings have to be reckoned with. Only one material came into question for meeting the demands made on the façade of the new refuge: the façade panels FX.12 by PREFA. Not only do they protect the wooden construction against the elements. They also surprise the alpinist with their modern appearance. The carpenters and tinsmiths are also to be admired for the perfect work they did under these conditions.

Jacques Félix-Faure

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Refuge de l'Aigle
Country: France
Object, location: Refuge, La Grave
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Atelier 17 C - Architectes

Installer: Altibois
Roof type: PREFA roof and façade panel FX.12
Roof colour: stone grey P.10
Façade type: PREFA roof and façade panel FX.12
Façade colour: stone grey P.10



»Everything is difficult
high up«

Jacques Félix-Faure on building in the alpine region, dancing workers and the significance of food. For the French and everyone else.

You took on the task of redesigning a mountain shelter hut on La Meije, a mountain in the National Park of Écrins. La Meije is 3,983 metres high, the shelter is at a height of 3,450 metres – why does one do such a thing?

Jacques Félix-Faure: The hut means a lot to our family. It was built in 1911, in the same year that my grandmother, now 105 years old, was born. She was there very often, as indeed we all were.

Do you also climb?

JFF: Yes, a lot. I grew up in the mountains. I have been climbing since my earliest childhood with my five brothers. In the summer I visited the completed hut with my 3 children. Three of us in the family are architects: my father, my eldest brother and me. And in a way, the mountains have an influence on our work.

What is it about the mountains that draws people to them?

JFF: It changes you when you are up there. You notice how small you are in relation to nature. Then some of your problems get smaller and you become humble and thankful for everything you have.

How did the project come about?

JFF: La Meije is one of the best known and most difficult mountains in France. All good climbers want to go up it at least once. You get a magnificent view of Mont Blanc. The idea of renewing the hut had been around for a long time. Our initial plan was to tear the hut down and replace it. However, there was a certain amount of opposition to this plan, many people wanted to preserve it. So we changed the plans and integrated the old hut into the new one.



How did you do that?

JFF: We thought about how to go about the conversion for a long time, and what an addition, if any, should look like. The hut was somehow like a living museum. We wanted to use the existing wood and the beams so we laid the foundations of the new hut around the old one first. Then we erected a new structure around the old wooden one. This cladding protects the hut from wind and weather. Wind speeds of up to 215 km/h have been measured up here. The only possible way of obtaining energy is by the use of solar cells. We have therefore installed a photovoltaic system. When it was finally finished, our strong men danced with each other! I have never seen anything like it! It was a very special moment to see the team brimming over with happiness.

It must be difficult working at this height.

JFF: Everything is difficult high up. This was the third hut I had built and it was the hardest by a long way. Only people with a lot of mountain experience can work up there. If 20 people have to work expediently on such a project together, each and every man always has to know when he has to do what. It is like choreography. You can't waste any time but you constantly have to consider safety. A project can only develop with teamwork. An architect must of course do the planning and coordination, but the crucial factor is how the team



works together. It all comes down to the people who actually have to work under these conditions. My task was to explain to them why they are doing what they are doing. It was others who were really important.

And who?

JFF: The ones who cooked.

And why, of all people, the cooks?

JFF: Because it is they who provide energy and strengthen the working morale. They ask what you want, how you are, and they hold the team together. Those who cook make others happy. That is particularly important for Frenchmen.

Food or happiness?

JFF: Both.

Which materials did you use for building?

JFF: As we wanted to keep it simple, we used almost exclusively wood. The interior is similar to that of a submarine. On a surface area of only 65 m² there are 3 levels where up to 30 people can sleep. In addition, there are nets for a further 12 people in case someone didn't make a reservation. For the outer cladding and the roof, we used PREFA façade panels (FX.12) made of aluminium. These are the only ones which can withstand the extreme temperature differences between day and night. PREFA was already experienced in fitting out protection huts which was a great help to us. The creasing is not only aesthetic but also has a function: the panels are stiffened by the creases resulting in greater resistance with the same thickness of material. During production, each and every piece gets a unique impression; the creasing pattern does not repeat itself and is irregular even over large areas. No other company could keep up with PREFA.

How did you get the building materials up there?

JFF: I will have to deviate a little. The shelter has a further singularity; as far as possible it was put together in the valley. Being open to the public, the hut is as good as public property. We therefore wanted to show the public what we were making. After all, only a few people will actually visit the hut on the mountain. Quite apart from that, it is extremely expensive to build on the mountain so we constructed as much as possible in advance. It was then flown up the mountain by helicopter; in packets of up to 650 kg because the helicopter could not transport any more at one time.

And yourself, what did you want to achieve?

JFF: The mountain, the weather, the snow, you can't control any of them. The hut provides protection and a feeling of security, a bit like a boat on the high seas. That is what we wanted to remind people of. We also wanted to remind them that we have to look after Mother Nature and the environment. We kept the design simple on purpose in order not to draw attention away from the beauty of the surroundings up there. They come up here and have to live for a while with each other under extreme conditions. They sleep and eat in a very small space. For this reason, we wanted to make this space as friendly as possible.

How did you achieve that?

JFF: By not having too much architecture.

Coming from an architect, that sounds ...

JFF: ... strange, I know. But with this project, less is really more. And it works. Italians, the French, the English, climbers from everywhere come together here and after half an hour they are talking about life. It has something to do with the height, the conditions, but also with the way the refuge is constructed. It is a very special place; one which has to be looked after, and one you simply have to preserve.

Is the hut now manned the whole year round?

JFF: Only from June to September. Only a few people come up the mountain in winter, so it is not manned but always open. I can remember a story which took place in winter – it was a Monday when friends of mine flew up the mountain with a helicopter. They rang me up because they couldn't find the hut. We were worried that it had been destroyed and blown away by the wind.

What had happened?

JFF: It had been snowed in. So much so that you couldn't see it anymore!

02

PREFA composite panel



BIOARK

BioArk is a facility specialising in Bioengineering and Diagnostics – primarily for start-ups needing a lot of flexibility in room layouts. According to these requirements, we have made this concept visible both inside the building and on the façade. We outwardly conveyed this concept by using imperceptible symmetry and three different matching tones of grey. PREFA composite panels and the fitter's Swiss precision guarantee a long-lasting solution with exacting demands on protection and the fastness of colours.

Jérôme Fracheboud and Philippe Robyr

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: BioArk
Country: Switzerland
Object, location: Laboratory, Monthey
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Philippe Robyr & Jérôme Fracheboud

Installer: Rocpan SA
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA composite panel
Façade colour: smoke silver, light grey, grey metallic



»Everything is harmony«

Philippe Robyr and Jérôme Fracheboud on architecture's fundamental duties and the Swiss people's love of their huts.

In which ways did the function of the building affect its appearance?

Philippe Robyr: Most of the tenants are technological start-ups, particularly in the Life Science field. The basic idea was that the building should not only satisfy the requirements of these companies functionally, but also visually. These grow and change quickly. Therefore we attempted to find a language for the building, one that is not too ...

Jérôme Fracheboud: ... not too straight. Inside, everything should stay in motion. Every office is different, changeable. This should be reflected in the general concept but at the same time make a uniform picture, without divulging the differences between the individual levels from the outside. The façade makes it homogeneous. Because of the façade, one would never know that each story has a different design.

Which criteria did you use to choose the colours and materials?

PR: Here too, we tried to take the different companies into consideration by using rather muted, unobtrusive colours. We finally decided on PREFA composite panels in grey and taupe. Unobtrusive and neutral.

And inside?

JF: Since the new building is an extension of an already existing one, a sort of public space evolved between the old and the new architecture. We kept the floors of the cafeteria and the conference rooms on the ground floor green in order to underline their public nature and the fact that they belong together. We decided on neutral colours and shades of white for the offices.



Sounds very harmonious. Was that intentional?

PR: We aim to achieve that in all our buildings. In each project, we pursue a vision of coherent colours and materials. Part of our work is to bring consensus into this area. And to achieve a kind of universal harmony.

What do you mean by that?

PR: Each part of a project is always a part of a whole. Even when certain materials are built into different places, we nevertheless try to connect them up in one way or another.

You usually work a lot with wood and not so much with concrete. Did this mean you had to make a big adjustment?

JF: Building is always a question of budget. Furthermore, building companies usually prefer to work with materials that they know and have mastered. Wood is more expensive and more difficult to build with. Essentially, however, one can say that the demands which are made on a building affect the choice of building materials. In this case, in surroundings characterised by industry, working with cement was almost predetermined. The metal panels on the outside fitted in beautifully.

PR: Yes, and anyway we had to seal the façade as quickly as possible in order to protect it from the elements. We used PREFA's façade panels and completed the façade with individual wooden elements.

What are you working on at the moment?

JF: On housing. At the moment we are building primarily flats, 140 in all. And a motel. We don't specialise in any one particular area; there have also been schools and a spa. We recently won a contract for a building project in the north. In a small village, the main thing is to bring more life into the village with innovation in residential building and renovation. Also one of architecture's duties.

Architecture and Switzerland: do they go well together?

JF: It depends. In this country, there is a sort of basic cultural appreciation of architecture. One tries to construct good, high-quality and sustainable buildings. There are many small studios in Switzerland – that may mean fierce competition but it also gives young architects the chance to do their own thing. So on principle we can work pretty freely.

PR: Except perhaps for one thing. We also work a lot in Valais, thus in an alpine region. There are different



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I am convinced that
buildings can be modern
and up-to-date anywhere.
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ideas and expectations of our work there. There are many chalets in the Alps, and there are many people who want exactly that type of architecture. The people in the valleys and in the foothills of the Alps are more open to contemporary architecture.

A bit like in Austria: there are places like Kitzbühel, which seem to consist only of chalets, and then there are regions like Vorarlberg, which have now become internationally well-known for their open approach to modern architecture.

PR: I am convinced that buildings can be modern and up-to-date anywhere. There is simply no point in putting up the chalets of a hundred years ago. Still, we meet this “hut mentality” over and over again.

What is up-to-date architecture then? How would you define it?

PR: That is a question of approach. How do we think about architecture? What should it be able to do? And how can we reconcile requirements and construction?

JF: And yet we should not forget one thing. From the technical point of view, every construction project is different. But the way we approach a new project is always the same. The strategy, the basic questions stay the same. It is really a question of how we can harmonise them. I think that is what architecture is really all about.

03

Prefalz



Family Home Mártonhegyi

This luxurious project is captivating: it has an exclusive position – on the edge of a forest but still in town – and impressive architecture. Equipped with amenities such as a swimming pool and a sauna, the house is a very attractive place to live in. Prefalz was used to cover a very large area on the north side, which is also the weather side. The challenge here was the height and the three dimensions into which the façade is bent. As the connections are waterproof, the weather side is ideally protected.

Szabolcs Nagy-Miticzky

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family Home Mártonhegyi
Country: Hungary
Object, location: Family Home, Mártonhegyi
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: NAGY-Miticzky Szabolcs,
Sárkány Bence: Tér-Alkotó Stúdió

Installer: Ács-Bádogos-Szigetelő Kft.
Roof type: Prefalz
Roof colour: anthracite P.10
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: anthracite P.10

»Making boundaries disappear«

Why PREFALZ? A lucky coincidence! The Hungarian architect Szabolcs Nagy-Miticzky on design and particularly successful twists.

The house which you designed is really very special – do you like this kind of architecture?
Szabolcs Nagy-Miticzky: I am an architect and a designer. When we started 20 years ago, we were young and motivated and wanted to create architecture which stuck out. We have been pursuing this idea ever since.
I think we won the tender for this project because we consciously swim against the stream. The design was actually intended for a larger house-construction project, but it was never realised. However, our client liked it so much that he wanted to use it for himself in Budapest. The basic design was therefore adapted and the result is now a small iconic building.



In what ways did it have to be adapted?

SNM: Originally meant for 50 flats, it was actually implemented for two. Apart from that, the surroundings are completely different. It was planned for a plot on the shores of Lake Balaton, now it's surrounded by streets and borders on a small forest. We integrated this contrast – peaceful forest on the one side and the town on the other – into our design. The building opens out onto the forest which means plenty of glass and natural light. On the town side, which has a closed façade, we used Prefalz. Here too, the difference between the materials glass and metal turned out very well. A famous Hungarian architect said that it resembled a spider's web – structures produced by the construction!

Wasn't that intentional?

SNM: No, we wanted to gain a surface which isn't really there. Normally you build a basic structure whose outer form defines the inner one. We wanted to create a structure which first and foremost supports the terrace as well as giving the occupants of the house the feeling that they are in fact in the open – and not just in an extension of the house in the open. The spider's web was not our fundamental idea.

The "spider's web" is useful for the awning!

SNM: Yes, we considered how, with their different occupants, we were going to further separate the two sto-



reys from each other without using a dividing element which was too strong. That is how we came upon the awning. We accepted the strong colour contrast because the awning is an accessory, not in the true sense of the word part of the house.

The whole house gives the impression that you wanted to bring nature into the building.

SNM: We wanted to soften the severe division between outside and inside by using glass. That is why the four terraces run towards the forest thus turning into a part of the forest. Especially at night when you light a candle, the border between outside and inside disappears.

The whole back of the house is covered by Prefalz. Why did you decide on PREFALZ?

SNM: The façade is bent in three dimensions. It was difficult to find the appropriate cladding material. It really needed someone who could implement this. Due to its flexibility, Prefalz is easier to shape than most comparable folding materials. It offers the planner a broad range of creative possibilities for roofs and façades. The material is delivered in rolls and cut into shape, canted and folded by the tinsmith. Waterproof connections are thus made without bolts, glue, or welding. Besides, we wanted to produce a dark, shiny surface. At first we thought of glass, then ceramic; but these materials were not appropriate for our purposes, which is why we decided on metal. Why exactly Prefalz by PREFALZ? Honestly? I don't know anymore. Perhaps it was just because a flyer was lying around on my desk. I can't remember anymore. However, it proved to be absolutely the right decision and was in this sense a truly lucky coincidence!





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04

PREFA shingle



Residential Building Vienna

The house, built at the turn of the century, is situated in a “protected zone” for old buildings. One of the challenges with this two-storey building was the ridge which protruded just at the point where the two roof surfaces met. Instead of laying a fillet, the tinsmith used PREFA shingles throughout which, with a considerable amount of additional work, he bent the over the ridge. The narrow pillars on the third floor were also covered with shingles, despite the difficult small segments.

Markus Schuster

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Residential Building Vienna
Country: Austria
Object, location: Residential Building, Vienna
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Dipl.-Ing. Markus Schuster

Installer: Schibich Hermann GmbH
Roof type: PREFA shingle
Roof colour: anthracite P.10
Façade type: PREFA shingle
Façade colour: anthracite P.10

»New meets old«

... and both complement each other well. Markus Schuster has created flats with a fantastic view by converting attics in the Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna. Urban living under the roof.

As an architect, would you ever say: “Hey, cool, an attic conversion”?

Markus Schuster: Before getting absorbed by attic extensions, I didn’t dream of them at all during my sleepless architect nights. However, in this case, it isn’t “just” an attic but a complete storey as well. As an architect, one says “that is better already”. The whole house would be even better of course. In the meantime, I have learnt to love attics because I am repeatedly impressed by how much the quality and use of space of the old “Gründerzeit” houses of the late 19th century can be improved. And attic extensions are of course one of the latest topics as far as compacting the city’s population is concerned. I look at roofs and see a lot of great potential. Now I actually do say: “Hey, cool, an attic conversion!”

What was so “cool” about the house in Mariahilfer Strasse?

MS: That was exciting because it is surrounded by three streets. That is not at all typical. It is also beautifully positioned because it’s so high up and there’s a gradient towards the south.

What are the challenges of an attic conversion?

MS: There are plenty of challenges. That is how it is when you build onto existing structures. There are surprises all the time. What makes attic extensions so challenging is planning the implementation with its endless number of details. As soon as you think you have solved everything, something crops up where the solution you have just found just won’t work any more.



How does the PREFA façade complement the existing house?

MS: As you approach the site, you see three very similar houses next to each other. I wanted to keep this ensemble. The character of the lower houses was to be preserved. Besides, I wanted a distinct separation of new from old. So I searched for a material which could be used for a vertical façade as well as being suitable as a roof skin – and I found it in the PREFA shingle. With this, it was possible to achieve the homogeneous appearance I wanted to realise with the addition of the new storey and the attic extension. Thus, both the complete storey and the attic extension are one entity which, as a modern addition, consciously sets itself apart from the rest of the building. I chose anthracite in order to further underline the difference between old and new, as the existing façade is painted a very light colour. Another advantage of the dark anthracite is that the shadow of the snow fenders, which is painted the same colour, practically disappears. That makes them just about invisible. The house stands in a protected zone which is why not every material is allowed. We therefore had to get the agreement of Municipal Administration Department (MA 19), which is responsible



for the townscape in Vienna. But there were no difficulties with the PREFA shingles in this regard.

You often hear prejudices against flats which are directly underneath a roof – “too far up” or “too hot” – what do you say to that?

MS: I’m not aware of such prejudices. I tend to hear about very many people badly wanting to live right at the top. Amenities such as a lift are compulsory anyway nowadays. Height has the advantage of having a good view. From this object, you get a really wonderful view! In addition, the house opens up to the south. The terraces are very popular. In order to prevent the house from getting too hot in the summer, the roof was appropriately insulated, antiglare glass was used and an additional air-conditioning unit was installed. The shingles were laid like the scales of a fish. Apart from the high level of sealing, the tiles lend the roof a certain vitality which further sets the extension apart from the massive “Gründerzeit” house below.

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... and I found it in the PREFA shingle. With this, it was possible to achieve the homogeneous appearance I wanted to realise with the addition of the new storey and the attic extension.

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How has the perception of what is architecturally interesting changed?

MS: This perception changes all the time. My father was also an architect and I was confronted with this from my earliest childhood. There is something akin to fashion in architecture and many similar ways of implementation. You notice the trends which are built over a period of time. I want my buildings to be timeless and not necessarily following some trend. I prefer to put up something that will last. In the case of the house on Mariahilfer Strasse, my motto was “delicate restraint” which also fitted in very well with the ideas of MA 19 with relation to the protected zones. As far as I am concerned, the construction must match its function. I don’t see the point in creating a spectacular construction which doesn’t work and ends up costing much more than expected as a result.

You shouldn’t force things, thereby incurring an unbelievable rise in costs. I generally stand for clear lines and structures.

Are there actually too many architects?

MS: (smiles) Being an architect myself, yes of course! In fact we don’t need any at all apart from me! (laughs) But that’s the way things are, you can’t change it.



Family Home Retzbach

With this object, everything is centred on the façade. The aluminium composite panels are coloured “Spring Lake” with an iridescent surface. A special detail is the drainpipes. Thanks to the new square pipes, modern houses can now be equipped. The drainpipes are thus architecturally perfectly integrated, making them an optical improvement for flat roofs and cubed houses. The composite panel can be canted around corners so that no sharp edges, joints or embrasures occur.

Ernst Maurer

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family Home Retzbach
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family Home, Retzbach
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Architekten Maurer & Partner ZT GmbH

Installer: Spenglerei Dachdeckerei Pollak GmbH
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA composite panel
Façade colour: Chameleon, Spring Lake



»A modern chameleon«

What happens when a tinsmith wants to realise his dream of owning his own house? He looks for a renowned architect to create the perfect living environment and designs the façade himself.

If you approach the town of Retz in Lower Austria by car, your attention is caught by a façade in the distance which reflects the sun in an unusual way. This façade is part of the house belonging to the Pollak family. Florian Pollak runs a company of tinsmiths in Retz and has thought up something very special for his own house. A house which represents a sort of expanded corporate identity to his profession and which brings together the things which are important to him: excellent materials, high quality and that little “je ne sais quoi”.

A façade like a chameleon.

PREFA aluminium composite panels were used for the façade of this family home. What makes these panels special is the crystal-effect creasing which produces an iridescent surface with surprising results. Depending on perspective and the way in which the sunlight falls, the panel changes its colour. First it's brown, then green, then dark violet. The façade is live-

ly and pleasing to the eye; it is certainly the house's appeal. So much so that Florian Pollak sometimes simply stands in front of the house just to appraise the façade. “I just love it. I wish as many people as possible could feel the same about it”, he says, thoroughly rapt. Some passers-by are puzzled by the façade. Are the panels all different colours? Then Pollak compares it to flip-flop car paint. Many people see an association to a chameleon. A very modern chameleon because the design of the house is graphic. Sometimes it has been compared to a barracks. It is a house which polarises. “Curves are rather difficult with these panels. They get too narrow and the effect is not the same any more. This architecture is very graphic but at the same time well thought-out. It is a very large building which wouldn't look all that great if it were white. It is almost disguised by the play of colours as it blends in beautifully with the abundant surrounding countryside”, explains the architect, Ernst Maurer. But Maurer also highlights the technical and environmental protection aspects: “This material may seem more expensive at first sight, but if



you take into account the costs of its whole life cycle, it is cheaper than any polystyrene façade. We still don't know how to dispose of certain insulation materials or artificial rendering and which costs we will have to face. The PREFA aluminium composite panel is a sustainable material. You unbolt the panel, take the mineral wool away – and that's it!"

Being a tinsmith, Pollak's main consideration when choosing materials is how he is going to work with them. "The advantage of the composite panels is that you can cant them around the corner. There are no sharp edges, joints or embrasures. The attention to detail is excellent, and I like that!"

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The
PREFA aluminium
composite panel
is a sustainable material.
You unbolt the panel, take
the mineral wool away –
and that's it!

On teamwork and giving your word

With their constructions and the associated commitments, Architecture Agency Maurer and Partner want to create suitable living spaces for people as part of a master plan. It isn't just showing off. The three most important considerations for Maurer are the wishes of his clients, the surroundings and the materials. He discusses with his clients their interests and requirements. How long do they want to live in the house? Are there children? Might they want to sell the

house at any point? A particularly important aspect to Maurer is how the building fits into the landscape. One doesn't build just for oneself but also for one's fellow men and the landscape. What charisma should the building have? What does that mean for the surroundings? These are questions the architect asks. People often build something too big. Then an avalanche of running costs awaits them even though they only partly use the house. Maurer gets round this by building several storeys, all of which can be run separately. Everything must be carefully thought through at the planning stage. As far as Florian Pollak is concerned, he has succeeded in creating an ideal living space. He calls his home "optimal" with lots of places for each family member to withdraw to. In his view, everything has been considered.

When working together, the architect and the tinsmith complemented each other. "We still like each other", says Florian Pollak, laughing, "It all worked smoothly and perfectly. It isn't the first time that we have worked together on a project." For Ernst Maurer, good teamwork means reliability and a high standard of workmanship. "Sadly, people are increasingly not keeping their word anymore. One doesn't speak to each other, one sends email. This development makes construction work more difficult. Instead of rectifying faults immediately, one gets an email with an explanation why one couldn't rectify the fault, and unless ... I'm not a friend of moral sermons, but I find that really bad. So much the better when one has a reliable partner who keeps his word", says Ernst Maurer.

A profitable business

The "chameleon" is beautifully positioned. It is the last house on the hill and enjoys a completely unimpeded view of the surroundings. Surrounded by trees and meadows, it effectively lies in the countryside. A pond and a garden swimming pool also created by the architect and his client, add a special touch of luxury. Tinsmiths? Is that a profitable business? The question is answered by the architect, not the tinsmith: "Business is rewarding when you are dedicated to the job at hand. If you only want to make a profit, it doesn't work. Quality must not be allowed to suffer; there must be an ethos of give and take." And that works excellently between architect Ernst Maurer and tinsmith Florian Pollak.

06

PREFA façade rhomboid panel



Energy Education Experience Centre Aurich

The particular challenge in the EEZ project were the curved, and at the same time, conical façades. Due to the warping in several dimensions, marking out the mounting points for the PREFA wall panels was only possible with a mounting template specially made by a tinsmith. Several thousand panels had to be cut and appropriately canted on-site for the bolts on the uprights and the attachments for the glass façades. At 25 panels per square metre, our fitters mounted 73,000 individual panels.

Lothar Tabery

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Energy Education Experience Centre Aurich
Country: Germany
Object, location: Museum, Aurich
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Architektenbüro Tabery

Installer: BAU-FA-TEC Bau- und Fassadens. GmbH
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA façade rhomboid panel
Façade colour: aluminium blank with clear varnish

»Aurich's great fortune«

"Aurich is eerie", as an admittedly not very kind saying about the town in East Frisia has it. The "turnaround" came in 1984. The wind, together with Enercon, a wind power generating company, brought the boom and, over time, good fortune. Later, the architectural large-scale project "EEZ – the Energy Education Experience Centre" came into existence under the direction of architect Lothar Tabery in Sandhorst, a district of Aurich.

The building complex, composed of four crescent-shaped buildings with a large courtyard in the middle, stands on a man-made island. The visitor is invited to explore all facets of the theme.

Herr Tabery, with the EEZ in Aurich, you have created a very beautiful project. Do you know how many PREFA rhombi were used?
Lothar Tabery: Yes (short laugh), the funny thing is that opinions are divided! Our initial assumption was that we'd need 67,000, later 70,000. In the end it was 73,000 rhombi. At least, that's what it said on the invoice!

Did you use different rhombi, or was it always the same element?

LT: On principle we used only the 20 x 20 cm rhombi. We did use special sheet metal rather

than rhombi for the porch as we wanted to have a contrast. This forms only a very minor part and applies to only a few square metres of the project. It is the rhombi which clearly dictate the look of the building! As far as working with the PREFA rhombi is concerned, I must say that they are ideal for covering the curving façades, which sometimes have a seven degree incline and are tapered. As the panel structure is made up of such small sections, the geometry of the construction that we have created here can be worked on without a problem.



The shape of the building is a real eye-catcher. Which aspects and creative preparations relating to its shape, and also the rest of the building plan, were considered? And how did these come about?

LT: The building complex now consists of four curved, or rather crescent-shaped, structural elements with a large courtyard in the middle. However, the planning had to be done twice over. The first plan had been developed from a public tender idea; to integrate building unit 1 – which up until then had been the only building, and which had been planned to go on another site anyway – into the local surroundings harmoniously. This particular location was characterised by the Jade-Ems canal which flows through Aurich making a really sharp, very distinctive bend just there. The resulting peninsula gave me the inspiration for the crescent-shaped construction which in turn led to a construction shape which took the genius loci into consideration.

In the course of the planning process, however, additional participants were found and the user requirements in the space allocation plan were increased tremendously. As a result, the initial concept, which was purely a science centre project, had to include an educational concept too. This complied with the wishes not only of Enercon, which had just joined the project,

but also of other participants. The company was very interested in the presentation of technical know-how and educational concepts in (wind)power. Thus 1,500 m² of floor space were added, also more participants with educationally relevant energy topics. Due to the new size, a new location had to be found.

Is that how the island came about?

LT: Exactly. In the new location in Sandhorst, there was no such stretch of water, which was an important aspect of the master plan. The water was to serve the purpose not only of giving the building the appropriate surroundings and distance, but also to be available as “material” to all institutions using the whole building. The water was staggered into different steps in order to maximise the use of sloping ground thereby creating little waterfalls which could also be used for experiments with water. This is how the concepts of the master plan evolved in which the island as well as its surrounding water are both depicted as ellipses and the buildings as a broken ellipse.

What other advantages does the new location have?

LT: Not until we had the new location was it possible to make the second attempt at planning the building complex. The location was to provide space for several relat-

ed uses. The aspect of energy on the one hand and that of education on the other, centred around the training of Enercon’s apprentices, are in Units 2 and 3. There is also as a so-called out-of-school facility, the Centre for Nature and Technology in Units 2 and 4. A unique effect is expected in the “energy meeting place” in Unit 4 which constitutes a common communication room for school pupils and apprentices. The Centre for Sustainable Nutrition of the Rut and Klaus Bahlsen Foundation and the Teachers’ Training College for the Administrative District of Aurich are also located in Unit 4.

And the visitors?

LT: Visitors have an unforgettable experience as they are able to see through the large glass façades of each of the corridors in the visitors centre right into the rented training centre; for instance into Enercon’s co-called glazed training workshop. The eight different users thus form a conglomerate from the fields of tourism, culture, economy and training which concentrates specifically on energy and education topics. In this combination, this is a first in Germany as well as the rest of Europe!



The education tower is particularly impressive: Did the suggestion of creating a tower come from you or was it already in the tender?

LT: In the course of the tendering process, a tower was indeed specified. The tower, including the roof, was to house a video presentation with a 360 degree projection. The idea was to give visitors a visual and audible impression of visions about energy. Out of all the companies tendering, ours was the only one not to plan the tower in the middle of the building. With this, the individual stations of the topical areas which are clustered round the tower inevitably specify the direction the visitor has to take. Museums often have this arrangement. Since each individual topical area can be covered by the term energy but at the same time can be viewed independently, we didn’t want to dictate the direction in which visitors should walk. This meant, of course, that the tower had to be shifted out of the central position and moved to the façade as a configuration element. In the course of the planning process, it was decided that it should also be possible to walk up to the top of the tower.

Aurich is the centre of wind power in Germany. How does this affect the character of the place?

LT: Well, I’ll say it like this: the town of Aurich had to live for a long time with the saying “Aurich ist schaurig”, meaning Aurich is eerie. Up until more than 20 years ago, there was comparatively little industry. The region had its history and pretty historical buildings, but it was rather “underexposed” with regard to economic standards. Since 1984, when the thriving company Enercon based itself in Aurich, the town has seen an amazing upswing. Other public facilities were added and despite the relatively small population of about 40,000, Aurich has developed commercially into a very important place in East Frisia.

So the wind has been Aurich’s good fortune?

LT: Yes, you could say that.



Museum of Romanticism Opinogóra

The 71.4 m long construction with a volume of 9,670 m³ is situated in the middle of a park and is partly a reconstruction of an old orangery. By adding two new constructions, a completely new building housing a museum and a conference centre was created. Despite the tight budget, we decided on Prefalz for the whole roof. The colour corresponds to that of the original roof and was also used for decorating the modern structure.

Janusz Łabuz

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Museum of Romanticism Opinogóra
Country: Poland
Object, location: Museum, Opinogóra
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Płockie Pracownie Projektowe

Installer: DEK-MAR
Roof type: Prefalz and Falzonal
Roof colour: patina green
Façade type: -
Façade colour: -



»No reason
for romanticism«

With the help of the residents of the Polish town of Opinogóra, architect Janusz Łabuz managed to rebuild the Opinogóra Orangery by basing it on the old one. The latter was badly damaged during the Second World War and was later demolished in the middle of the 20th Century. There were only rumours and legends about how it really looked. A complete reconstruction of the building wasn't possible, just an elegant connection to the new minimalistic wings.

Does a museum for romanticism have to be romantic?

Janusz Łabuz: No, it doesn't. Especially if you are building something completely new. An architectural object should correspond to the time of its construction. However, in an "unromantic" Museum of Romanticism, the presentation of exhibits with a modern background is very exciting. The extensive natural landscape with its lakes, islands

and neo-Gothic palace on top of a hill are actually the main exhibits at Opinogóra. These are all outside the orangery. Therefore there is no necessity to add anything to the architecture. These days, the creation of a strictly romantic object is quite unnecessary. It could even make a caricature out of the whole idea of romanticism.



How would you describe the atmosphere of the building?

JŁ: It is full of “outside”, full of air and vegetation, full of detailed and distant views of the park.

Would you say that you have brought the park into the building?

JŁ: That was the intention; after all, we are talking about an orangerie! The completely transparent elongated building stands amongst big old trees and has definitely become part of the park.

What sort of appearance did you want to achieve?

JŁ: The main problem was “reconstructing” the orangerie. There were virtually only verbal accounts of the appearance of the original orangerie. We only had a sketch which was based on the accounts given by older residents about its shape and appearance. It must be noted therefore that the new building is not authentic if an honest architectural approach is to be made. It seemed to us that the best idea was to “hang” the orangerie over the site and to integrate it into the surrounding countryside. This was achieved by the



subtle, broken-up construction and its transparent filling; a technical challenge to accomplish. In the end it assumed a more industrial character than we had intended.

You were inspired by Farnsworth House and the Glass House. Do you also know the “Chancellor Bungalow” in Bonn?

JŁ: Yes, these objects are very similar, also with respect to their building costs. I am not sure whether you know that Mrs Farnsworth sued her architects because of unduly excessive costs, and the lawsuit went on for years.



No, I didn’t know that!

JŁ: In the case of the orangerie, it was the opposite. Having to keep to a budget meant that the expression of the original idea was limited. The biggest savings were made on the most spectacular elements which would have had a significant influence on the feeling of lightness and transparency.

The green, or rather the turquoise, matches beautifully. Was that an original colour?

JŁ: I wanted to use green on patina-coated copper at all costs. This is the only combination which spontaneously mimics natural green. PREFE aluminium is the only material which is on both the historical as well as the modern parts of the building. Thanks to the varnishing, it turned into the modern counterpart, or equivalent, to the original roof-covering material of the 19th century. The aluminium in this form is the only material which spontaneously mimics nature. The colour of the PREFE panels was extended over the whole object, also on the steel elements.

How has architecture changed since the time when this building was originally planned?

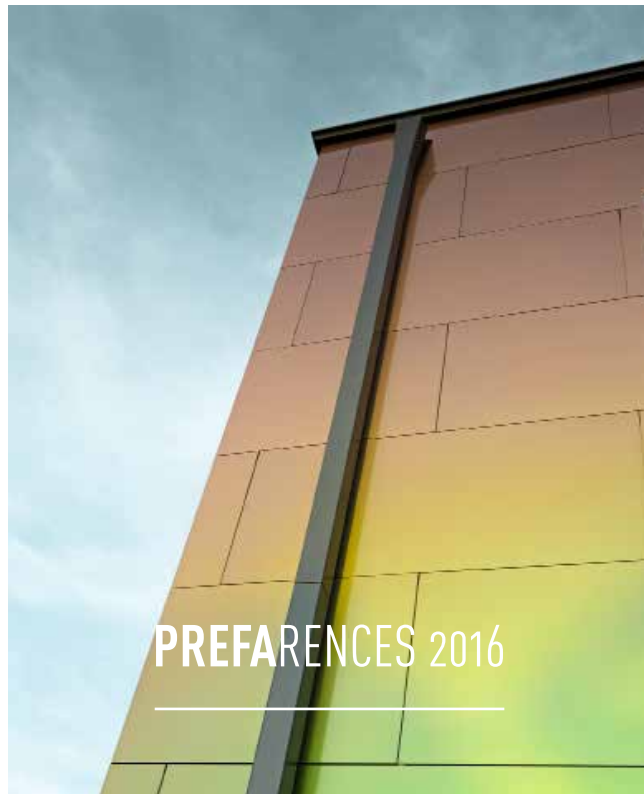
JŁ: Not much in appearance. Buildings considered original or extravagant were the pioneers of every era. Later buildings were based on patterns and standards which had been brought in by these pioneers. They compiled several models and thought up the details. These days, system solutions provided by manufacturers are normally used.

How important is symmetry?

JŁ: Very important, when appropriate. We notice symmetry unconsciously. People with symmetrical faces appear more attractive to us. We should perceive monumental palaces, axial urban and architectural plans as being symmetrical. I only use symmetry when it is contextually justifiable. This was the case in Opinogóra where the orangerie is part of the axial plan that dates from the 19th century. But I was able to break through the perfect symmetry with the overhanging wings.

How important are the park and the orangerie to the people of Opinogóra?

JŁ: They give them the possibility to identify themselves with the town and its history. They give self-confidence to people working with their cultural heritage; they open a constant and a very real door to high culture and also the possibility to relax in places where previously only a few were able to.



08

PREFA Siding



Residential Building Asti

The material from PREFA was the only one which was available in the colour “opal green”. The thinness of the material made it necessary to cover the whole façade with relatively short sidings in order to prevent the material from rippling. Together with a skilled craftsman, three sidings were laid next to each other horizontally. In this way, it was possible to give the building a clean and homogeneously aesthetic look.

Fabio Buttiglieri and Filippo Cornero

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Residential Building Asti
Country: Italy
Object, location: Residential Building, Asti
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: GAP Studio

Installer: Lattoneria Mauro Galavotti
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA Siding
Façade colour: opal green P.10



»Architects have super powers«

*Fabio Buttiglieri and Filippo Cornero on
the good life, the Italian way of life and
the best way to educate clients into
believing in better solutions.*

What can you say about the building project?

Fabio Buttiglieri: We have erected four different buildings each with 15 to 20 flats on an area of 20,000 m². The basic idea was actually quite simple. The houses haven't really got a front and a back. Every outside wall, every façade, is the front. You walk round the house and never have the feeling that you are at the back. The surroundings are characterised by the park, the river and the fields; all very countrified. We tried to let nature flow into the design of the buildings. And not to interrupt the flow produced by the greenery. It continues right through, from the ground, from the meadows, right up to the roof.

In what way?

Filippo Cornero: The terraces get bigger the higher up you go. You can feel nature everywhere you go. And even where you can't see it, i.e. in the technology, it's still there. Photovoltaic systems and solar cells were installed in order to handle power as efficiently as possible. Also, a Landscape Commission first had to give the construction scheme its building permission because it stands in a specially protected area. For this purpose, special studies were made and there was much discussion about the colour of the façades and the material to be used.



The choice fell upon aluminium sidings, as this system, more than any other, fulfilled the two requirements: aesthetics (colour) and comfort, also with respect to maintenance.

Generally speaking, how do you go about starting a project? Do you always consider the surroundings, the environment, as much as you have in this case?

FB: No architect should see a building in isolation but should let the effect it has on its surroundings influence the design at the planning stage. This building scheme was indeed a very special case. Our client first had to be convinced about our concept. His company has been constructing residential buildings for many years now, but they all look, well to put it plainly, more or less the same. Although it took quite a while to convince him that a lot could be achieved with a different approach and a wider perspective, it was well worth it in the end.

Do you have to educate clients?

FC: You have to try to show them something new, to draw the unknown into consideration and to be open to unconventional solutions. I wouldn't call it education, but you can certainly teach them something. In this case, the designing took up at least as much time as the convincing.

Buildings self-sufficient in energy and reusable materials are gaining more and more in importance. Is that what you understand by modern living?

FB: You cannot understand modern living without taking nature into account. To me, that means that you have to respect what exists and handle the environment with care. If an architect thinks himself to be too much of a sculptor or an artist, he loses his regard for the surroundings. And with that, the necessary respect. Architecture, as I understand it, embraces all aspects of sustainable building. For this, functionality is just as important as the surroundings. The point is not just to build to hit the headlines, but to create respectful and, in the nicest sense of the word, functional architecture which is worth living in. Of course, aesthetics also play a role, but always by taking the surroundings into account.

So much green on and around one building; is that new for Italy?

FC: No, there are lots of other buildings which are being built with broadly speaking "green ideas" as guiding principles. The reality, however, is that very often in the past, many constructions erected purely for speculation ruined many towns in Italy.

And today, this is changing?

FC: Slowly. But there is still a lot to be changed.

What are the really happy moments in your work?

FB: Hmmm ... The relationship built up with the clients. You try to anticipate what they want; try to make suggestions which exceed their powers of imagination. We influence their lives and the life in their surroundings with what we do and the decisions we make.

What is the difference between life in Italy and life in other countries?

FB: The Italians ... how should I put it? The way we spend our leisure time, the food, the social life in general, all that is, I think, different from anywhere else. Like in the US, for instance. I think we are just more alive. We appreciate and cherish the good life.

And the good life is what?

FB: Everyday life! Not the big ideas, not the projects, no, everyday life. We eat and sleep and drink and meet friends. Every day. That is the good life.

Are you working in London at the moment?

FC: Yes, the restoration of the interior of an old penthouse built in the 80's. Very much the 80's in appearance but somehow interesting. The client, a woman from the States, liked our suggestions and the project ended up being really beautiful. Just because you asked – that was such a happy moment. The highest award for an architect is surely when the wishes of a client become reality. That is what makes our work so fascinating. We have the power to change things around us.

Does your studio concentrate mainly on dwellings?

FB: There are six partners in the studio, and everyone has their special area. For one it's the houses, for others offices and clinics or general renovation; it's quite diverse. I think we have had quite a bit of luck. I mean six architects, men and women of different ages and different backgrounds. Nobody thought that we'd make up a team. We searched and found each other.

Is there something that you would really like to build?

FC: Something which we have already done but which interests me a lot are hospitals or anything in the healthcare area. Unfortunately, though, there is hardly any public money in Italy for this.

Why this area?

FB: Because it simply has to function for everyone. That is what makes it so challenging. It all comes down to collective requirements. Everyone is ill or injured at some point and needs help; so functionality counts. However, we come there as sick people and want to be healed. For this we need surroundings which support this process. So it also comes down to design. Quite complex, this whole thing.



Family Home Bad Tatzmannsdorf

Due to the hillside situation, a very dynamic form was developed for this family home. The roof tips forward slightly which intensifies the dynamics of the chamfers. Each aluminium composite panel has a different form which had to be cut and mounted by the tinsmith. The size of the panels provided not only a challenge to the skilled craftsman, but it also supports the monolithic shape of the building.

Gerald Prenner

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family Home Bad Tatzmannsdorf
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family Home, Bad Tatzmannsdorf
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: DI Gerald Prenner

Installer: Grassel GmbH
Roof type: PREFA composite panel
Roof colour: pure white
Façade type: PREFA composite panel
Façade colour: pure white

»Drama Panorama«

Architect Gerald Prenner treasures the peacefulness and also feels at ease in the concentrated atmosphere of a cemetery. The family home in Bad Tatzmannsdorf came just at the right time. On a lot that used to be more of a waste site facing the cemetery, a contemporary building was created, featuring a courtyard, an oasis of calm.

You like travelling – do you get your inspiration from that?

Gerald Prenner: What I like about travelling is the change of perspective. Changing places and moving always triggers something. The difference from the place where you are usually based is important to the mind.

Do you photograph architecture during your journeys?

GP: I don't usually go anywhere especially because of the architecture. There is something to see everywhere and I like letting myself be surprised. Even when I travel through Austria and see old huts standing around which have such a fantastic form, I am thrilled. The important thing is to have time; otherwise you can only look at things superficially. I like to go inside everywhere because a room should be seen inside as well as outside in order to be understood.

What do you particularly remember of your travels?

GP: The pairing of history and architecture is very special. Originally, I wanted to study archaeology but that was smiled at as being too academic. I used to read a lot of old books and watch old films. They interested me. Morocco was fantastic. We were in Fez, an old King City. If I think about these old castle complexes, I still get goose pimples. I take relatively few photos; it is

more the atmosphere I try to absorb. Once I went to the Philippines. That was not so interesting from the architectural point of view. But the countryside architecture! I wandered about for days in paddy fields or admired the cave architecture. Sometimes ghostly, what people have built into the mountain by hand. I enjoy looking at historical complexes: there are several on Malta and I also find Barcelona interesting because of the way old and new have been beautifully mixed. The countryside is still a big subject for me. Building something in a "difficult" position fascinates me more than anything; as in this project.



What was the goal of your journeys?

GP: I always wanted to dig into the history of a country and understand it as a whole. It has a lot to do with the way of living. And as an architect, that is interesting. With this object, a family home, you create a house for a family. They should feel at ease and feel that that is an ideal place for them to live. At the moment I sadly have too little time for travelling. But even when I go camping with the kids in Italy, it is enough for me to reset my perspectives. The simplicity takes you back a bit. I tend to think in a complicated way and sometimes I lose a relaxed attitude. Travelling helps me a lot. I can travel luxuriously or simply with a tent.

Sometimes one likes one thing, sometimes something else.

GP: Exactly. Every so often, the atmosphere of a hotel is really wonderful.

Do you know Port Piccolo near Trieste? It is like a small Portofino, completely newly built.

GP: No.

The project is the dream of its planner and was started 20 years ago. Now it's almost finished. Only the finishing touches are missing. It is built in the style of old Italian houses but with a harbour, a hotel and everything else that a place needs. A bit mad, but exciting.

Is there anything which you would like to build one day?

GP: I have only a small architectural office ... but I would like to build in interesting landscapes where you can connect architecture to nature. I am always seeing pictures in my mind's eye when I travel through beautiful landscapes. The mixture of man-made architecture and landscape architecture is exciting. There are two villages close to me which I would like to join up by building in this way. The mono-agriculture, which to an extent reigns there, is destroying the soil anyway. You might just as well build on it and connect the originally beautiful countryside with architecture.

What drew you to living in the country?

GP: I grew up in Burgenland; later I studied in Vienna and also ran an office there for a time. Then I simply wanted to return. I like the peace, and properties are still affordable. Moreover, I wanted my children to be able to spend the first few years of their lives unburdened in the country. I reckon that they will inevitably have to go to the city sooner or later. Vienna and Graz aren't all that far away. I find South-East Styria or

South Burgenland are really beautiful. To build something into these gentle hills would be a delicate and exciting challenge. One of my dreams is also to keep my workplace flexible. I have yet to realise this.

What happens to you when you are at another place?

GP: A different energy arises when you are at another place. Your head, in a positive meaning, empties again. Like a reset. That could be difficult for me as I don't like delegating. I like being on the building site myself. I don't know whether there are other architects who have a perfect vision of a room. So much can happen and has to be changed. I have to enter the room in its bare state to see and to feel the true atmosphere and dimensions.

How about this project?

GP: This is a classical family home. The building plot was pretty much waste land so it wasn't really used. Next to the cemetery to boot!

So you look from the pool on the terrace onto the cemetery?

GP: Well yes, a pool and a cemetery both have something calming about them. When you enter a cemetery, you calm down and quietness spreads out. It is somehow so concentrated. That has an effect on the building. It is also concentrated. The design of the façade with its huge aluminium composite panels gives the building a monolithic appearance. The construction on the slope with slit-like openings in the north and east façades rests calmly, as does a large glass façade facing the terrace to the south west. The tinsmith did a wonderful job as it was difficult to cut and attach every individual panel, each of which had a different shape. A kind of courtyard came into being. Very protected. The owner himself was very unsure as to whether it was possible to build there at all. But I like that; I feel that I am in the right place as an architect when the context gets difficult. The terrain was hollowed out, the earth was not good and it was all grown over. The owner rather wanted to have a building with a flat roof and the first plan went in this direction. Due to the topography, I planned the house to have two storeys; the slope otherwise forces you to have massive foundations. Besides, the plot wasn't big. The house is situated in a spa town, Bad Tatzmannsdorf. Strange to say that a flat roof is not allowed outside the spa zone. You wonder why, especially seeing that everything around is a jumble. There is no homogeneous townscape which would be worth protecting. Monopitch roofs are

allowed though, so I developed a dynamic form. Due to the slope of the ground, the roof tips forward a little which further strengthens the dynamics of the chambers. It is almost like a slanting gabled roof in which the first floor is situated. I like the form a lot, much better than a boring flat roof. This is how the local mayor brought us to a dynamic shape which nevertheless radiates peace. The courtyard shape came about because of a concrete wall that was put up for a carport on the south-west side. The other side is protected by the house. Thus a courtyard with a terrace and a pool was formed. I think that courtyard forms are the best forms for living. They are an extension of the rooms. That makes for a pleasant living atmosphere.

Open and protected.

GP: Exactly. In this case, we only had room for one wall to use as a boundary. The open side is bordered by the pool, which at the same time acts as a safeguard to prevent someone falling; the site then drops down four metres. That is quite dramatic.

When does a room become a room for living? How do you give soul to a room?

GP: There are probably several factors. It simply needs atmosphere. But how does it come about? The parameters have never changed. What is visible from outside is of course the light in a room and what function it has. Not every function needs the same light. Of course it is the whole programme. The proportions of the room, the light, the choice of materials. There are lots of possibilities and the right mixture is what does it. The material strengthens or dampens the mood made by light. A material doesn't have the same effect in every room, it depends on how people use the room. Some are alive, others stay perpetually sterile. People definitely create the atmosphere and endow the soul.



MyHotel

At the outset, an important requirement by the investor was that the hotel should be built within a year. This required perfect planning, a well thought-out choice of materials as well as intelligent implementation. The appearance of the building is characterised for the largest part by the golden PREFA façade. A completely new and top-quality appearance was accomplished by using special geometry, scrupulously implemented by the tinsmith. This technology was also used for the interior and makes the appearance of the whole building unique. Smart architecture.

Reinhard Maier-Trommeter and Werner Zimmerhofer

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: MyHotel
Country: Germany
Object, location: Business Hotel, Olching
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Reinhard Maier-Trommeter

Installer: Spenglerei Prenn
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: Falzonal
Façade colour: maya gold



»Staying smart«

A new brand of hotel is bringing a shine to the business hotel skies. MyHotel in Olching has a façade which doesn't only shine because it's designed well; it truly shines! Golden aluminium, what a shining glory!

Business trips can often be pretty tough. Boarding a plane at the crack of dawn taking only the bare essentials, primarily a computer, rushing to a meeting and checking, exhausted, into a hotel, usually after a long day. You don't need much after a day like that, but how refreshing when you find yourself in a hotel which isn't grey, sallow and corporate-looking. "Besides the specification of developing a hotel which was viable, the investor made it quite clear that he wanted to use the architecture to create a new brand", explains the developer, Werner Zimmerhofer. In order to satisfy the budget allowance, the floor plan was drafted first. In doing so, the idea of using the façade to build up

marketing and branding was born very soon. "I have always liked aluminium and also the colour gold. Together with the roofing company with whom I had already realised many projects, we developed the golden façade", says Zimmerhofer. And this golden façade makes quite an impression. The panels are not all the same. The differing widths produce a sort of pleated effect. As another novelty, the Falzonal elements were used inside as well as outside.

You enter the hotel lobby and see the suspended ceiling in gold. The assistants at the reception are lit up from behind by a golden "shine" because the panels on the



walls stretch right down to the floor. The simplicity of the materials and the effect they make is surprising. Apart from aluminium, you will also find leather, wood and carpets on the walls, floors and ceilings. In these surroundings, a business traveller can concentrate on that which is most important: withdrawing in comfort after strenuous meetings on the one side, and giving full attention to their work on the other. Multifunctional offices offer optimal facilities and are designed to allow those using them to focus all their attention on their work, realising their potential to the full.

The conference rooms are designed for small to medium-sized meetings with colleagues, employees or partners. "More and more hotel chains in the boarding house and business hotel area are investing in design and comfort for business travellers. Likewise, we also used high-quality materials both inside and out, the technical facilities are up-to-date and the furnishings in the lobby combine a range of high-grade materials such as wood and leather and of course metal. At the same time, hotels economise on additional comforts such as a wellness area or a restaurant. The rooms are 16m² in size and spartanly furnished – after all, the majority of guests only check in for one or two nights anyway", points out the architect Reinhard Maier-Trommeter.

From Garni to a low budget hotel with high standards

The origin of today's business hotels lies in the Hotel Garni. Actually a low budget hotel without service and very often with little appreciation of architecture and design. You could describe a business hotel as being a modern Garni combined with lifestyle. MyHotel proves that design doesn't have to be expensive. It is a successful combination of architecture, cost-effectiveness and marketing. A smart concept! Architect Maier-Trommeter describes the biggest challenge as being the very short building period. This was, however, the aim right from the start. Together with the owners and the project directors, a 12-month time line was agreed upon. During this one year, the building permission, the detailed planning and the construction all were accomplished. The hotel is a building with 70 rooms, a relatively large volume for the short construction time. But everything was finished in time and the guests are giving a positive feedback. In a word: a shining achievement!

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11

PREFA façade rhomboid panel



Kasteeltje Heisel

With this castle-like building, we respected its old shape and style, erecting a modern four-storey office block behind the existing façade. The art lay in taking the old and the new, and creating an impressive new entity out of both. The large areas of glass constitute an integral part of an ingenious light concept. The tinsmith suggested that PREFA wall panels would be the ideal material to combine with these areas of glass, and laid them excellently. This complex on the edge of the city of Brussels has proven great success.

Miguel Van Campenhout

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Kasteeltje Heisel
Country: Belgium
Object, location: Office Building, Brussels
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Studiebureau W.J. & M.C. van Campenhout

Installer: A&S dakwerken
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA façade rhomboid panel
Façade colour: anthracite P.10



»Preferably
something new«

Architect Miguel Van Campenhout talks to us about redesigning a castle and explains why this isn't his favourite task, normally.

You don't build castles every day, do you?

Miguel Van Campenhout: No, not exactly! Although this isn't really a castle. The building actually dates from the beginning of the 19th Century but is made to look like a castle. We have planned a business park – five office units which are all connected to each other by a two-storey underground car park. The small castle complex in the middle had to be torn down. It was in very bad condition. Water was coming in through the roof, it would have been impossible to save the wooden structures and in the end only the façade remained. But yes, it was exciting!

And you managed to put the office units behind the castle façade?

MVC: Yes, although we had to adapt quite a bit. Originally, the castle had a cellar in which the staff lived and worked. One of the requirements stipulated by our client was to have four office storeys. The existing

cellar wasn't high enough for ventilation or air-conditioning units.

What did you do?

MVC: We kept the façade as it was. We simply dug deeper into the ground by half a metre, thereby raising the height of the ground floor, called level 0. It still isn't as high as the floors above and isn't as glamorous but it completely meets all the requirements of a modern workplace. The storey directly under the roof isn't as high as the others either but it was impossible to make it any higher due to building restrictions and the solid roof structure.

You have put in large areas of glass. Is this to let more light in behind the façade?

MVC: Yes, but also because it is simply a very elegant solution to the problem of connecting the new construction to the old building. You see, every storey is



250 m² which makes 1,000 m² for the whole area of office space which can, in turn, be further divided into smaller units, all of which are flexible and can be individually configured. And every tenant naturally wants to have as much daylight in their unit as possible.

So completely geared to functionality?

MVC: Of course, it must function. Not only because that was the client's wish – who, after several requests for modification of the finished plans was ultimately very happy – but also because you build for the people who will one day be working there. Who knows, perhaps they will be allowed to use the door leading onto the roof which we had to incorporate at the end. In this way very sensible additions are made, the lift, for instance; only accessible from the back, but at least it is there.

What does it look like inside?

MVC: We worked a lot with concrete, all in a very clear, reduced and modern look. There are concrete floors, which have been treated with a special polished finish, and open reception rooms. The effect of the façade is really powerful, so we wanted to contrast it with small

unobtrusive details, such as the open bar. The connection of the old framework to the modern office technology is exciting. You can see this particularly well in the old white stones which stand out much more against the new architecture. We have also renewed the entrance – here we used concrete, but we kept to the existing basic shape thus further developing the original idea.

And there were no changes made to the façade?

MVC: Oh yes, but we tried to keep the old shape and its style. This cost three times as much as building new, but there was no other way. We had to add a concrete supporting structure to the whole of the inside of the façade because it would otherwise have not been able to withstand the weight of the new roof construction.

How do you feel generally about the contrast between contemporary elements and old structures?

Do you like this type of friction?

MVC: To be honest ... no. Personally, I'm not a friend of the contrast effect, but with this project, I think we have found a good balance. What I like, as do most of my architect colleagues, is a clean, modern style. How-



ever, that is not what most people feel. The general public tends to prefer a combination of two or more styles. Or they want everything to stay the same. I think that a large proportion of the community is rather conservative in this respect. That is why projects like ours are more likely to be accepted – one which combine old and new. People prefer that to something completely new.

Would you prefer something really modern?

MVC: Yes, but working here has shown that even with projects like this one, you can use new elements and materials. Or, and this is how we came upon the PREFAB rhomboid panels, new working materials.

Why, what did you want to achieve?

MVC: Special effects: the new parts of the façade were to look simply magnificent and to be a total contrast to the old parts. Actually, we had intended to use more glass, but then we came upon the metal variety and looked for possibilities to integrate it into the master plan.

Tell me, which kind of architecture do you stand for?

MVC: We are working on a whole string of different projects – airports, office buildings, public swimming pools, train stations, social housing; everything. And in a way, that is in fact how we go about things; we don't want to specialise. Contrary to most other architects who specialise on one particular segment, we always try to do something which we have never done before.

Sounds exhausting ... always being confronted with different requirements.

MVC: We have to meet our clients often and get their ideas down on paper as precisely as possible. A good plan is the basis of good work. And then, of course, it helps if you have a good team and can work without stress. That only works if you see clients and colleagues as friends. Not exactly on a personal level; but so that you always ask yourself: would I suggest that to a friend?

That works?

MVC: With us, yes. Everyone gives their best. Everyone likes the challenge. It works.

And what comes out of it?

MVC: We try to create something beautiful. Quite simply!

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Prefalz



Cool Move

The forceful style of the family home in Weiden am See immediately catches the eye. The walls, which were planned with an outward kink, have a wooden construction underneath them. Inside, the use of wood, artificial leather and polyurethane-covered floors ensures pleasant acoustics. The generous amounts of glass on the garden side open an uninterrupted view of the 200 m² terrace. The rhythm of the Prefalz façade, perfectly fitted by the tin-smith, emphasises the cross section of the structure with its tilted outside walls and the three dimensionally-staged entrance.

Andrea Dämon and Andreas Doser

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Cool Move
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family Home, Weiden am See
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: ad2 architekten

Installer: Peter Koch GesmbH
Roof type: Prefalz
Roof colour: anthracite P.10, light grey P.10
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: anthracite P.10, light grey P.10



»In
Burgenland,
where the bananas
grow«

Andrea Dämon and Andreas Doser made a “cool move” with a family home in Burgenland and talked to us about haute couture, foam rolls and Noah’s Ark.

The name of the family home you designed is “cool move” – why is it a cool move?

Andrea Dämon: We call it “cool move” because it isn’t the first house that this couple have built. They have put up two houses beside a lake called the Neusiedlersee in five years. The decisive factor was our own house which attracted the attention of our clients on their dog walks.

Andreas Doser: It was a double “cool move”, firstly because they erected two houses in the space of a short time and secondly because their houses have developed from being very ordinary to being proper architecture. The name also plays on their passion for windsurfing. There you can find a couple of tricks which are simply “cool moves”.

Was windsurfing an inspiration for the design of the house?

Doser: The inspiration was a conglomeration of functionality, local conditions, requirements and the life-style of the property owners and their neighbours. Just opposite, there is a block of flats with innumerable balconies overlooking the property. They were the reason why we completely shut off that side of the building. The shape of the plot led us to elongate the building which automatically makes it look more dynamic.

Dämon: This reduced, unusual shape is one of the distinctive features of the house. It is long and simple; the kink and the cut-off ends give the shape its character. The ends are not “just simply” cut off, they shield the terrace from the neighbours, catch the church tower on one side ...

Doser: ... and one of the terrace sections is completed focused on the vineyard. When you sit in the Jacuzzi or lie in bed, your gaze is directed at the vineyard. Wind was also a major consideration. The wind, which is always blowing either from the northwest or the southeast, is held off the terrace. Thus the terrace has become tranquil and is sheltered from the weather. Even during storms or when it's raining, you can sit in the open.



That is of course fantastic! Outside turns into inside which is certainly makes a very good atmosphere ...

Doser: ... I would say airy. Because everything is open, few walls. It's light and airy inside. Like a foam roll [a typically Austrian pastry with egg-white filling]. *(laughs)*

Super sweet!

Doser: Super sweet and sexy! *(laughs)* No, without joking, it looks very clean. That was our clients' wish. **Dämon:** It is a much reduced area for both the occupants who are very cheerful and hospitable. They like to surround themselves with people and I think that we have optimised the use of space. The living room has been relocated upstairs, out of sight, and is an integral

part of the bedroom and bathroom. You can shut it off with a sliding door, but on principle it's open plan.

The shape is actually pretty idiosyncratic.

Dämon: Yes, it's got a couple of nicknames. Coffin, for instance.

Doser: But also Noah's Ark. That is positive. Its nickname is coffin because of the slanted edges. In the broadest sense you can describe it as having a shed roof. But the walls are tilted. You can see that in the cross-section.

Dämon: But it polarises people.

In the eyes of many people it's simply too different.

Doser: That certainly plays a part.

How do you start the whole process?

Dämon: Fortunately, our clients come to us by word of mouth. They therefore know what they are letting themselves in for. However, we still try to obtain a written briefing from them – and they are “questioned separately”. There should be no compromises between husband and wife or two people building together. Using their “essays” in which they outline their hobbies, wishes and passions, we cut the “Haute Couture”.

That means that your customers really have to work hard for the architectural briefing?

Doser: Yes, exactly! If someone doesn't want to write, then they have to make a collage. There are different types. Excel fans, too ...

Were these two very different?

Dämon: Most people are completely different. Even if two people have found the love of their lives, they still have different values or preferences. One is a garden freak, the other rather straight. We always say that a house is finished only after about four or five years, when the garden has come alive. These clients have created a kind of Japanese garden on the neighbours' side in which – completely untypical – even bananas grow.

Bananas?

Dämon: The whole of the garden area is black basalt, and on the side of the house is black rendering. The heat is so well retained that the bananas survive during the winter.

Which materials were generally used?

Doser: Statics made it necessary to use a variety of materials. Parts of the ground floor are concrete, then a wooden cover was put on top in order to create the kinks. These are covered by plasterboard and smoothed out with filler. The floors are partly coated with polyurethane. In order to get good acoustics, some areas were covered with artificial leather and wood. The large plates of glass permit uninterrupted views. And then there is the skin, originally made out of rubber. Aluminium was added later to improve the looks of the house.



To improve the looks? What happened?

Doser: Unsightly blisters appeared in the overlaps of the rubber strips, so the looks didn't work out any more. We therefore decided to cover them with PREFALUX. This complied with our wishes as we had planned the aluminium façade in our original concept, anyway. The rhythmical standing seams are at right angles to the building and, true to the natural idiosyncratic nature of this outstanding material, emphasise the cross-section of the structure. The end faces were covered with anthracite metal sheets, and much attention was paid to having a clean transition to the main area which is clad in light grey. The longevity of this material put our clients' minds at ease with respect to maintenance and durability. We therefore attained what the house originally demanded the long way round.

Did you also want to make concessions to the environment?

Dämon: Low energy-consumption and heat pumps are standard.

Doser: Heat pumps, controlled room ventilation, high-quality panes of glass, maximum insulation, rear-ventilated structures, environmentally friendly materials – that is state-of-the-art; for us, it goes without saying.

Dämon: We didn't seal any areas so that rainwater can drain away.

Doser: The workmen are from this region. That means fewer CO₂ emissions because of the shorter distances they have to travel. And we supervised the building site by bicycle or on foot. *(smiles)*

Dämon: We didn't print out much ...

Doser: ... and did a lot of the work at a moment's notice!

Finally: Which buildings do not work at all?

Doser: Buildings which are obviously characterless, and also when houses are multiplied. People show a builder a photo and he builds a copy. Very important: always put up a fence as quickly as possible!

I don't understand the fences either. But the “this is mine and that is yours mentality” is very Austrian.

Doser: The first things you see in front of the house are the garage, the fence and the pool. The pool often costs more than the pre-fabricated house. The house is badly situated ...



Penthouse in Bolzano

The window attachments constituted a particularly difficult challenge both technically and manually for the tinsmith. The attachments had to be guaranteed watertight despite the plant containers which had to be mounted. As aluminium is flexible and easy to work with, it was possible to connect the attachments and openings without a problem. Aluminium tolerates many other materials very well and does not react chemically. Statically, it was important that the material was light as this is a requirement for roof conversions.

Markus Vigl

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Penthouse in Bolzano
Country: Italy
Object, location: Penthouse, Bolzano
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Markus Vigl

Installer: Spenglerei Stuefer GmbH
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA façade rhomboid panel
Façade colour: light grey P.10



You added a storey to an old house in Bolzano by successfully converting an attic. What was the status quo of the building?

Markus Vigl: The house was built at the end of the 19th century and was originally rather small. It was extended several times and effectively had two storeys added. The attic was used as a cellar, the storage rooms were at the top. My client bought the house for himself and renovated it, adding a rooftop garden. Up to a couple of years ago, he lived there with his family until they decided to move to another house. With this, the decision was made to renew the roof, extend the house considerably and convert it into flats.

Can you simply change an old house like that in Italy?

MV: No, it isn't that simple. However, there is a new law which allows the addition of a storey if, at the same time, the whole house is renovated to meet the newest standards. That was the condition. Class A energy-sav-

ing for the whole building, windows, façades and roofs and insulation. That is the so called "energy bonus". You still can't increase the cubage in the historic old city as much as you like, but in this case, by raising the gables we were able to gain two storeys. It is simple to put up a new house which fulfils all the standards on open land, but in the historic old city ...

How is it possible to insulate the house? You can't simply wrap up the old building ...

MV: Absolutely not! I tell you – on open land it's simple; in a historic old city where the houses are listed, it's difficult. The insulation would cover the façade, and that is not allowed. However, help has come to us in the form of new technology. This new technique is called nanotechnology. Coatings with a thickness of two to four millimetres which can replace a 18 to 20 centimetre stone floor or similar. You apply a coating and the problem of insulation is solved.



Fantastic. So simple!

MV: Yes, it's wonderful.

And with that, the project was approved.

MV: The difficulty with a roof conversion is that there are usually people living down below during the building phase. And as anyone knows: if you take the roof off a house, it will rain in. I took off the frame of the roof and put in a sump at the same time so that the rain would not come in. I didn't want the people living downstairs to get wet feet. The construction was to be as light as possible, of course, so that the old walls would be able to carry the new storeys. The construction was made out of wood and steel. Right from the start of the planning stage, I decided to use PREFA's shingles for the roof. There are several reasons for this: they fit into the picture of the city and the neoclassic style of the houses which was influenced by Vienna and Paris. They are light, simple to work with, impervious to weather and durable. The only remaining question was: which shape. Rhombi or rectangles? We decided on the rhombi; very beautiful to use on old buildings.



What do you always pay attention to?

MV: I mostly renovate old buildings. Here, my top priority is to bring in light. As much as possible. Lots of windows and no slants. With a lot of persuasiveness I managed to build very large window openings. It wasn't possible to put in balconies but loggias. With the renovation of an old house something always happens which you hadn't reckoned with, and which you are first confronted by on the building site. There are usually fewer surprises in a new building.

Which creative elements to you use?

MV: Simplicity is very often the most important creative element for me. I also studied history at university and learnt that it is important to achieve symmetry. When you combine new with old, you can't just steam-roll over it. You have to be sensitive without indulging in visions of self-fulfilment. Just simplicity, golden ratio, symmetry; those are the elements. The rest is bare building.

What is important to you?

MV: Most important is that at the end of the day the house is as beautiful as it is now. The façades and openings were planned right from the start and not debatable. Putting in the rhombi was an excellent decision. I get a lot of compliments. I like that.

“
Fantastic.
So simple!
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