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A PEEK BEHIND THE FAÇADE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE





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Design and durability

Each year we aim to give you a fresh insight into the almost limitless possibilities of PREFAs world of architecture. With this in mind, we visited thirteen extraordinary architects in six countries, all of whom share a passion for design down to the last detail and are skilled in the use of strong and reliable materials. After all, alongside durability, beauty and innovation are more important today than they have ever been.

Allow yourself to be inspired by our selected properties in the PREFAs book, and on our new online platform www.moderne-architektur.com, featuring video interviews of the profiled architects. We wish you every success when planning and designing your future projects. We also look forward to receiving your property suggestions for the next edition. You can contact me directly at mike.bucher@prefa.com



Mike Bucher

CEO



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PREFA roof and façade panel FX.12



Valley station of the Seis cable car system

The Seis cable car system now has a new valley station, built on the Seiser Alm, with integrated shopping, service and administrative areas. In the process, the station was modelled on the proud mountain range of the Dolomites which stands in the background. With irregular edges and crystalline surfaces the building nestles into the landscape. The enormous aluminium façades give the building a strong and proud look, and sometimes almost invisible depending on the light.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Valley station of the Seis cable car system
Country: South-Tyrol
Object, location: Station and service building, Seis am Schlern
Construction site type: Conversion and expansion
Architects: Lukas Burgauner, Bozen

Installer: Spenglerei Kometal, Völs am Schlern
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA roof and façade panel FX.12
Façade colour: brown P.10

»At home in the mountains«

Mountain romance? Far from it!

More and more new-builds in South Tyrol are making a statement with modern architecture, like the new valley station of the Seiser Alm cable car system.

The particular geopolitical and cultural situation make South Tyrol and its capital Bolzano a very special place. Bordering on the UNESCO world heritage Dolomites and with broad cultural diversity, Bolzano has much to offer inhabitants and tourists alike. However, the city grew and flourished thanks to trade. Trade privileges helped the junction become a popular trading post between Italy and Germany. And this is still the case. Today, Bolzano is a modern cosmopolitan city in which alpine and Mediterranean influences make it stand out.

A mountain man from the cradle

It's no surprise then, that for a true South Tyrolean, nature and mountains form an integral part of everyday life. The same goes for Bolzano-based architect Lukas Burgauner, who grew up in Kastelruth. "I was born a mountain man, the strange and unique mountain environment of the Dolomites shaped me, my roots are there, that's where I feel at home. By the age of three we

were already skiing down the hillsides. The ski slope was right outside our front door," he fondly reminisces about his childhood on the Seiser Alm. It was therefore a special honour for the contractor, who since 2006 has run his own office with three employees, to plan the new Seiser Alm valley station. The valley station of the Seis cable car system on Seiser Alm has developed into an important hub in the Schlern region. "The Schlern nature park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site," says Burgauner, aware of its significance. The Seiser Alm, the highest mountain pasture in Europe, is an ideal area for skiing and hiking. In summer, well-maintained hiking trails open up the mountain pasture and summits, while in winter, 60 km of pistes as well as 23 lifts and mountain railways are available to skiers and snowboarders. Passenger cars are restricted from accessing Seiser Alm and passage can only be made by bus or with the Seiser Alm cable cars, "on peak days, the cable cars transport up to 11,000 people to the Alpine meadow and back again."



Beautifully integrated into the landscape

The construction manager's requirements – for the Seis cable car system – Seiser Alm AG – were simple: Nothing new, but everything bigger. “Above all, the challenge was developing service and station buildings all at the same time. Functionality, mobility and barrier-free access were the goal.” Over three storeys with a total surface of 3,455 square metres, new space was created for a restaurant, two sports shops, a ski depot, a ski service centre, a fast food restaurant, a shop for regional and local products, two outlets of the two ski schools, the checkout area and the administrative offices of the cable car system. “The building has an imposing volume of 35,000 m³, is approx. 90 metres long and 25 metres wide. Yet a square box was not intended, but rather a structure that is integrated into the landscape.” Due to the slope, the ground floor is for the most part built underground. In a westerly direction, the building looms above the slope with a panorama terrace integrated eight meters up on the street façade. “The design phase was relatively time-intensive, but for construction we only had a little time. The construction phase had to be well-planned and executed.” Despite the construction works, ongoing operations continued.



A dark brown monolith

Now the valley station presents itself as a striking yet subtle monolith, clad in brown FX.12 façade panels. The design of the façade gives the building complex a distinctive character. The irregular angles create a lively pattern of light on the façade and depending on the position of the sun, the panels' appearance changes. At the same time, the circulating and varying height of light and glass surfaces imitate the embedded quartz or crystalline strands that can be found in rock. The colour choice was consciously derived from the landscape context. "The Santner Spitze rises impressively from the Schlern mountains directly in front of the building. My idea was, therefore, that the jagged edges of the adjacent rocks would be rediscovered in the architecture," describes Burgauner. "By using materials which emphasise this design idiom, we have succeeded in creating a distinctive appearance on the outside." The decision to opt for the FX.12 façade panels was made very quickly. The material does not only have aesthetic appeal, but is also completely weather-resistant and braves the temperature changes and environmental influences on the mountain. The panels were manufactured by a local company, Kometal, who already had experience with them and "implemented the specifications very well." Not only the valley station bears Burgauner's signature. The car park adjacent to the valley station – offering 460 passenger car spaces – was implemented according to his plans in 2013.



Erdőhorváti Architects

In a rural area of Northern Hungary sits the new architectural offices of Zsolt Sorosi and his wife Éva Kalóczki. The company's offices are attached to an old farmhouse that has been in her family for 150 years. With futuristic shapes, exposed concrete, large expanses of glass, a metal roof and façades, it is a source of inspiration for future clients.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Erdőhorváti Architects
Country: Hungary
Object, location: Company offices, Erdőhorváti
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Sorosi Zsolt & Kalóczki Éva

Installer: Gulyás András, Nyíregyháza
Roof type: Prefalz
Roof colour: light grey P.10
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: light grey P.10



»Modernity in an idyllic setting«

In their work, the architect couple Zsolt Sorosi and Éva Kalóczki combine the cutting-edge with the very old.

Surrounded by ancient stone houses, farmhouses, churches and cemeteries, the architect couple Zsolt Sorosi and Éva Kalóczki wanted to build an example of the modern world. Next to an old farmhouse and slightly hidden at the bottom of the garden, they have created a really special work space. The new architectural office makes a strong impression with its minimalist shapes, exposed concrete, large expanses of glass, metal roof and façades. The old farmhouse next to it also stands out and has been in Éva Kalóczki's family for 150 years. It looks like it has barely changed in all that time. If the old, thick walls of the building could talk, they would have plenty to tell about the people and changes in this part of the world.

A magical place

This area in Northern Hungary has something almost magical about it, surrounded by mountains and valleys, ancient forests, grapevines, historic castles and palaces. Idyllic mountain roads are surrounded by exotic flora and fauna. This is where the village of Erdőhorváti can be found. It is one of the oldest in Hungary and was recorded in the 13th century. This village is where the new company offices of Zsolt Sorosi and his wife Éva Kalóczki are based. When you first meet this architect couple, they seem almost shy and it is a bit surprising that they have had the courage to build such an imposing property in this rural idyll. There is a good reason, though, for making it so conspicuous: "The architectural office is also a flagship property so it has to be something special. Of course it divides opinions, but nine out of ten visitors love it," says Sorosi.



Not everything is new and perfect

When building their own office, Sorosi and Kalóczyki paid particular attention to the latest trends and implementation details. “The building should inspire, make people curious and encourage them to build in new, courageous ways,” says Éva of their idea. The property’s conspicuous design is based on the huge contrast between the old and the new. The farmhouse had not been lived in for years and was in an extremely run-down condition. However, Éva doesn’t think that has to change straight away: “It doesn’t all have to be perfectly restored, we may leave parts of the old house as they are, in their original, authentic style.” The new areas that are being converted will become a consultation room and a library for architectural and other specialist literature.

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We want to build houses where it’s not the size, but the details, which are the most important

”



Desire for more freedom

When we asked the couple, who specialise in renovations of historic and sacred buildings, what their hopes for the future are, they replied: “If I could wish for something, it would be to have more freedom when implementing a project. It would be great if clients were open to creative, innovative ideas and didn’t just want to copy what’s already been done. We want to build houses where it’s not the size, but the details, which are the most important, where can we make the most of all the art and science that architecture has to offer.”

They carried out their own material tests

When planning the building, the architect couple really didn’t leave anything to chance. Sorosi made the choosing of materials into a proper science. He personally tested a range of materials and surfaces for resistance, colour fastness, workability and more. He has got to grips with various façade panels and roof tiles using hammers, tongs, sunlight and dirt. PREFALZ came out on top in his tests thanks to their quality and properties. He also liked the range of colours and shapes. When asked if he would happily recommend PREFALZ to his clients, he said confidently: “Definitely, the aluminium products have shown what they can do!” The plumber who did the work also gave positive feedback and endorsed the choice. “András Gulyás’s work was really good, right down to the details. The alloy makes the material very smooth and the surface is incredibly even.” His wife approves of the choice of material from a more practical point of view. “As I am not only the architect but also the woman in the house, I paid particular attention to ensuring that the façades are easy to clean. Using Prefalzal also fitted in ideally with the traditional cladding seen on old farmhouses.”





03

PREFA roof rhomboid panel 29x29
Falzonal



Commercial and residential building, Munich

Beneath the vast roofs of the residential and commercial building at the corner of Leopoldstrasse and Hohenzollernstrasse in Munich, attic apartments have been created with spacious, open-plan galleries. The traditional hipped roof of a Schwabing merchant's house has been reinterpreted with the addition of characterful openings for small balconies and windows. A spine of aluminium holds it all together.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Commercial and residential building, Munich
Country: Germany
Object, location: Commercial and residential building, Munich
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Andreas Müsseler and Oliver Noak, Meiti, Peter GmbH, Munich

Installer: GU: Geiger; Spenglerei: Traub GmbH & Co, Grünwald
Roof type: PREFA roof rhomboid panel 29x29, Falzonal
Roof colour: standard grey aluminium
Façade type: -
Façade colour: -



»A childhood dream beneath the roof«

Anyone who talks about the poetry, childhood memories and energy flows in a house must be particularly interested in its occupants and users.

Andreas Müsseler and Oliver Noak, together with Florian Hartmann and Marcel Meili, make up the Meili, Peter GmbH architects' practice in Munich. Their focus is on inner-city infill building – they rarely build on greenfield sites, as they say themselves.

An important part of their corporate ethos – which is also influenced by working closely with their partner office in Zurich – is that they aim never simply to accept things as they are but always to question everything. This is because, for them, preserving the urban landscape brings special responsibilities.

What was your inspiration for the design of this very unusual style of roof?

Andreas Müsseler: We believe that living just below the roof is like realising a childhood dream. Many people remember going up to the attic when they were children. That moment when the light is coming in through a little window and in the semi-darkness you rummage about for things that bring back memories. The property that we were lucky enough to work on in Leopoldstrasse was, for us, like bringing a childhood dream to life. Addressing the question of where the poetry lies in such a moment, and how we convey that in the apartments, was certainly a driving factor for us in the design process.





How did the team recreate that childhood memory, the rummaging about in the attic?

AM: We were aiming to create a homogeneous roof skin that would bring together the different inclines, surfaces and openings. This resulted in some very freely, and expressively, designed apartments. We asked ourselves how we could combine the interior of the building with the exterior, something which is, in any case, very important for communication in an urban space. How do we perforate the roof skin to integrate this phenomenon of people living just beneath the roof? So we have different heights, open spaces and recesses. There are parts where the roof is set back and parts where it extends outward. So we were able to make visual connections in different ways and for different domestic situations. And always in the hope that the people living there beneath the roof will have a lot of fun with it.

You talk about this expressive roof design and the monolithic wall structure. Why was aluminium a rewarding material to use for the building?

Oliver Noak: Because it does not always want to be the centre of attention. The shape of the roof in itself, with its many gables, is already very striking. So there is no need at all for the material to highlight it even more. Another reason is the flexibility. If you think about the conventional problems with roof work: up there, everything comes home to roost which went wrong with the old building down below. Because of the complex shape of the roof, it was important to be able to make all the individual elements and system components out of the same material, in the same colour. In the steeply pitched roof areas, we used rhomboid-shaped shingles, and on the flat roof and gables we used Falzonal. We were very pleased to have chosen a material that quietly held the spine of the building together. It was the right choice.



A great many companies and individuals were involved in the project. How are the roles within your team allocated?

AM: During the period of a project, which can often last for several years, the distribution of work keeps on changing. As for a classic role allocation – the first person submits the planning application, the second one does the design and a third one works on the detail: there’s nothing like that here with us. We don’t see architecture as being made up of these separate elements. For ourselves, and for our employees as well, we try to maintain the dream, or rather the idea, of architecture as an integral whole and to work on it together, playing ever-changing roles.

For the property in Leopoldstrasse, our mandate was to produce the blueprint and be responsible for the design aspects of the process. The general contractor, Geiger from Munich, was in charge of planning how the job was to be done and actually implementing it. They also brought PREFAB into the picture.

ON: The site managers at Geiger deserve a lot of praise. They held everything together, were really committed to the building and produced some outstanding work. The team from the metalwork company, Traub, also did their very best to create the roof in this shape. The whole team really worked very hard on the job, which does not always go without saying.

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We believe that living
just below the roof is like
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Was building given an internal nickname? If so, what was it and why?

ON: Perhaps not the building as a whole, but we did give our own special names to some of the different details. For example, internally we always called the roof the “spine”, because it held everything together. The loggias were described as “bullet holes”. That probably comes from the emotive idea that the energy created under the roof needs to escape.

Everything that rises up from below is held together by the roof. And all the energy that is created there has to escape outside. These are very interesting ideas, tell us more about them.

ON: Yes, the exciting thing that is revealed in this kind of conversation is that everyone “reads” a building in very different ways. That is exactly what we wanted to achieve with this project, and indeed with all our other projects, namely that everyone who sees the building redefines it for themselves – the façade, the roof, the oriel windows. There is not just one fixed interpretation, end of story. Even just in the immediate vicinity, there are numerous houses that were built back in the 19th century, but they are still managing to tell new stories today. And if we have done that with this building in Leopoldstrasse, we will have done everything right.

So you are helping to redevelop this district and providing inspiration for how the houses round about could be altered in the future?

ON: Or even better: the next architect will write the next new story. A city develops not only by adding more of the same things but by introducing different things. We have just added one brick and we are delighted if it fits into the fabric of the city.

I have always spoken about a chameleon that tries to find its place in the structure of the city without wanting to steal the limelight. That’s the problem with a new building when it wants to put itself right in the foreground. This building doesn’t want to do that. On the one hand, it wants to be self-contained in its own way and, on the other, it wants to integrate itself in the urban landscape. Just like a chameleon. As we’ve already said, the choice of materials plays an important role in that. You have to try to step back a little and not exaggerate everything even more.

Out of respect and a feeling of responsibility towards the surrounding area?

ON: Exactly! For example, a six-storey extension on top with a flat roof would be entirely unacceptable. It would not fit into the cityscape or be right for the location. That’s why we look every day for solutions which, firstly, are economically viable, and, secondly, do not destroy the urban landscape. And it’s that exciting interplay between forces pulling in opposite directions that motivates us to come to work every day. After all, a building like this will be here for at least the next 50 years, so everyone has to be able to live with it. We aren’t building for ourselves, but for the people who live and work there, and have to cope with it every day. It’s supposed to stimulate debate. Perhaps it will disturb one or two people, but at least it will have started something. The worst thing would be if it were seen as something neutral, not inspiring at all.





Clara & Robert Office building

The Clara & Robert office complex in the centre of Düsseldorf is a virtuoso performance, linking two new buildings with the historic Saarhaus. During the development, the estate by Jurek M. Slapa and Jürgen Kowald was in a special kind of love triangle, as the futuristic aluminium façade was not only used as the framework for former barracks, but also a famous pair of composers. Let's take it one at a time ...

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Clara & Robert Office building
Country: Germany
Object, location: Office building, Düsseldorf
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Jurek M. Slapa
slapa oberholz pszczulny | architekten,
Düsseldorf

Installer: Willms Fassadentechnik, Roetgen
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA composite panel
Façade colour: Brushed aluminium

A close-up portrait of architect Jurek M. Slapa. He has shoulder-length, wavy brown hair and is wearing round, thin-rimmed glasses. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a dark, high-collared shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

»Let the music play!«

Inspired by music, architect Jurek M. Slapa from sop architekten has placed an historic barracks building within a futuristic framework, breathing new life into it.

A building speaks for itself” could be the philosophy of architect Jurek M. Slapa. When you look at them, many of sop architekten’s properties tell whole stories and quickly reveal their usage and background. You might think that it is the major projects, the properties that bring kudos with them, like completing Düsseldorf Airport, that particularly motivate Slapa. But for him, it’s not about the status: “It doesn’t matter whether it’s an airport or a family home, we approach the projects with the same passion,” says the charismatic architect, who has focussed on office, housing and industrial construction since 1987. This can be seen in the Clara & Robert office building.

Mr Slapa, there is a fascinating love triangle behind Clara & Robert. Can you tell us more?

Jurek M. Slapa: It’s about the link between architecture, history and music and the people behind the name, Clara and Robert. The starting point was the new building’s aluminium façade. The playful arrangement of the different window slits reminded the building’s owner of old metal perforated musical discs. Before gramophones, these used to be found in street organs. This created a connection between music and the people behind the name, Clara and Robert Schumann, the famous composer couple, who lived in Düsseldorf in the 19th century and were extremely important in the area. At the time, Robert Schumann was also Director of the Düsseldorf Music Association.



Only a few kilometres away from the property stands the Clara Schumann School of Music and the Robert Schumann College of Music.

It's a façade that is therefore reminiscent of old recording media. What song would the building play, if it could?

JMS: It would probably play Robert Schumann's famous 'Träumerei', it's such a classic amongst Romantic piano pieces.

Is it also the architect's responsibility to preserve the site's history?

JMS: Of course, that is our duty. We always try to preserve the old backgrounds and structures as much as we can and bring them into the present. The Saarhaus, for example, was part of an old barracks facility from the Wilhelmine Period. It was built at the end of the 19th century and was one of the largest surviving barracks in the Rhineland.

When it was first built, the Saarhaus wasn't a prestigious building. It simply acted as an entrance to a sports and exercise hall, with no outstanding architectural features, nothing spectacular. That's why it didn't feature in the development plan and was approved for demolition.

For us, though, it was important to preserve a small slice of history so that we didn't lose the site's identity. By giving it a modern framework, the Saarhaus has been given new life and now serves its original function once more of being an entrance building. What makes the barracks so special is what we have subsequently created. Integrating the old building into the new one and expanding it by adding the Corten steel box lends it a certain charm and provides a really interesting contrast.

Why did you choose aluminium and specifically, PREFACE composite panels?

JMS: Material is one of the key factors in architecture. The materials were chosen in close collaboration with the property owners and the general contractor. We always envisioned designing our aluminium façade to look very homogeneous, which required large expanses of panels. PREFACE composite panels were ideal for this. We also made a conscious decision to have the façade in brushed aluminium, for several reasons: it linked back to the old perforated musical discs which weren't coated either. It's also because the material is so vivid. Natural aluminium reacts to different levels of light; at dawn, it looks totally different to when the sun is going

down. What's beautiful is that the observer doesn't realise this straight away. They think it looks interesting but don't exactly know why. It's our little secret.

Doesn't a façade that is to be aesthetically reminiscent of an historic musical instrument demand a lot from the contractors?!

JMS: Yes, true. Façade builder Wolfgang Willms was commissioned to undertake the technical and structural requirements. His team produced truly exceptional work. The challenge for us was to arrange the joints perfectly. A strict, orthogonal grid would have destroyed the homogeneity of the surfaces. The solution was to use a special grid plan with which the joints could be playfully adapted to the panel sizes. The material also helped too, naturally, as it is easy to work with and can be tilted. It's a great material.

Would you work with PREFACE again? Would you create a façade that echoes the idea of a concept?

JMS: Yes, I have to say that lots of people here really like the idea. Not only the property owner, but also other architects and colleagues have congratulated us on the successful façade that we've created here. We're particularly happy if a project is well received by colleagues.





05

PREFA façade shingle



Family home Ehenbichl

An angular monolith with an aluminium façade and flat roof – not exactly a typical building for a rural area. Amidst the Tyrolean Alps, architect Martin Reinstadler built a home for him and his family that bears his signature. It was meant to be innovative, sustainable and low-maintenance.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family home Ehenbichl
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family home, Ehenbichl bei Reutte
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Martin Reinstadler,
a4L-Architects, Breitenwang

Installer: Spenglerei Müller, Lermoos
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA façade shingle
Façade colour: light grey P.10



»A monolith in the country«

Architect Martin Reinstadler dared and named himself construction manager. Amidst the village character he has erected a memorial by building a modern home.

Planning your own house is one of the toughest tasks for an architect. Why would you put yourself through this? “Building my own home was a great experience for me, every one of my future clients will benefit from it,” the Tyrolean is convinced. Constructing a family home has a strong psychological element: “When you are creating something for a long period of time, you become obsessed.” Whether it is the construction manager’s unusual wishes or external factors, the fact is: Not all wishes, values and visions could be taken into account. “Ultimately, there were time, space and financial constraints. But me and my family feel very comfortable in the house, and that’s what counts. It ticks all the boxes.” It took years to come up with the ideas, long conversations with my partner were needed and now and then the approval of former fellow students too. “In the house everyone, even guests, is meant to feel at home straight away.”

Demolition or renovation?

The new home was built on a plot in Ehenbichl town centre near Reutte in Tirol. An old farmhouse stood here – Reinstadler’s father’s house. “The house had considerable sentimental value for us all,” explains Reinstadler, who agonised at length over the decision of whether the old building should remain. But the building was beyond repair and ultimately had to be demolished. “Thankfully my father agreed with the decision. He wanted me to build a house that met the needs of my own family.” My father’s blessing was therefore pivotal for the demolition.



Our own home in our own way

It has now become an angular monolith with an aluminium façade and flat roof, a young family's home. The special thing about his new-build, according to Reinstadler, is that "this type of modern architecture can and should exist alongside the traditional." Traditional materials have been interpreted in new ways and the façade clad in light grey P.10 PREFA shingles. "Aluminium is a fascinating building material," Reinstadler describes the advantages such as flexibility, robustness and malleability. The issue of sustainability was important in the choice of material. "Its weather-resistance and energy efficiency made our decision easy. Our house will also live for a long time, since aluminium has the particular property of coating itself with a protective oxide layer. Nothing crumbles or flakes off, nothing rusts in hidden spots."

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Aluminium is a fascinating
building material.

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A storm-proof and maintenance-free façade

Furthermore, the approved cladding with Falz-in-Falz folding technology made the façade storm-proof and maintenance-free – painting and other costly renovation works are not needed. The material was processed by the tinsmith Müller, a company which employs two specialists in it. "The craftsmen were top notch," says the architect, content in retrospect.

From passion into profession

Martin Reinstadler is an architect out of passion. His two daughters are sources of inspiration for the young father, and not only for his own house. "I love building for the next generation," says Reinstadler, whose current favourite project is a nursery. "We really integrated the children into the planning and worked out that sun, light and the connection with the outside were the most important for them." Unbridled curiosity, sincere hap-

piness, a great deal of energy and infinite imagination: Children are an utterly inexhaustible source of inspiration. Nature and mountains are also a part of the amateur painter's life. "We build and plan for people sustainably and I think that is the most important factor," states the contractor's motto, who together with a partner has led the Architekturbüro a4L of four employees for three years. As he says himself, even as a child he sensed his artistic creativity was a calling. His goal is to change the world and have a positive influence. And despite having realised many brilliant projects, one aspiration remains: "I would like to win an international competition and design a museum."



Family home Leonding

This private house in Leonding plays with colour very boldly. All surfaces, outside and in, are stylishly finished in brown, bronze or ivory. Architect Peter Blineder wanted to create a house that radiates as much individuality and personality as its owners. It looks as if the house has been attached to the sidings and not the other way round.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family home Leonding
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family home, Leonding
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Peter Blineder, Gallneukirchen

Installer: Spenglerei Wilhelm Stadler, Gallneukirchen
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA siding
Façade colour: brown P.10, bronze and ivory

»Clever interplay of colours«

Architect Peter Blineder is forward-thinking and self-confident, taking inspiration from around the world, and he likes to work with customers who are on the same wavelength as him.

Peter Blineder is the wolf among Austria's architects. A master builder in the fourth generation of a building dynasty, he decided after just a few years to go solo. He likes to be creative, flexible and independent, with no diversions or distractions, and to keep testing himself with new details and new materials. Above all, he likes to maintain a direct line of communication with his customers and suppliers, so that no information or inspiration is lost. He compares himself to a Japanese swordsmith who has to complete his creation himself.

As a lone wolf you are more flexible, you can be bolder, without constantly having to justify yourself. What effect does this have on your work?

Peter Blineder: I like to work for customers with whom I have a personal understanding. Architecture emerges from communication that encourages creativity. My best projects have come about when I have been on the same wavelength as the customer, so that we formed a harmonious whole. Then we created the right product and the end result was virtually perfect.



Apart from that direct line of communication, what other deciding factors are there for success?

PB: Cost planning. Initially, my customers are often surprised by the prices that I quote. But in my opinion the project should not suffer in the end, simply because you gave an incorrect estimate at the start. Especially for the finishing touches, when it comes to choosing the façade and the floors, the interior design and the layout of the garden, you need a certain budget. You must not choose the materials for the surfaces on the basis of the lowest price, otherwise the whole design will suffer.

The surface materials do always create the first impression, don't they?

PB: Yes, it's the surface materials that determine the quality and elegance of a building. I always try to introduce some new details. At the moment, I am specialising in flush finishes. The idea is that seamlessly fitting doors, frameless windows and flush-mounted electrical fittings create surfaces that are as smooth and simple as possible. As we know, in architecture the most difficult thing to achieve is to make something look as minimalist as possible. It takes a great deal of thought, right through to the end. For example, all the corners have to line up exactly and not be displaced by the thickness of the plaster.

So it is precisely those things which look most simple in the end that are the most difficult while they are being produced?

PB: That's right, because unfortunately many tradesmen don't think so far ahead, they simply focus on their own stage of the work. So perhaps they add another layer of plaster, then the facing layer is applied – and already it sticks out 4 or 5 cm too far and doesn't look like it was supposed to.

How was it with the private house in Leonding?

PB: The house in Leonding was an exciting challenge. I was trying to create a certain colour structure, encompassing the façade, the windows and the roof, the floor coverings and the furniture. The same three colours, brown, bronze and ivory, run through everything. The idea was to give the whole house a signature, to create a sense of unity based on the shapes, the dimensions of the components and, also, the colour scheme.

And how did the owners react?

PB: At first they were rather sceptical, they thought the façade would be too dominant, that it would stick out too much. But now they are very proud of their home. The owner told me recently that he was fully expecting two cars to crash on the road, because drivers kept stopping to look at the house.

What about the assembly, who put it together so skilfully?

PB: When you are creating a siding façade, it's important to find the right partner. It's not the price, but the quality of the workmanship that should determine your choice of contractor. After all, everything has to be exactly right when it is fitted, for example, the sidings have to line up exactly with the openings for the windows. That's why, right at the start of the design process, I matched the windows to the siding material and drew up an accurate installation plan. Stadler in Gallneukirchen has a lot of experience in this, we have already worked together on several similar projects very successfully.

Why is aluminium such an exciting material for you?

PB: Simply for visual reasons, I really like using this metal. You can use it to visually stretch the façades, by building in longitudinal structures. The grooves

that are formed – with or without seams – make the façade look really great. And of course there are practical reasons, too. Aluminium is weather-resistant and long-lasting, the surfaces are robust and durable. The excellent surface finish means that the water flows away well, and if it's fitted correctly, it is even self-cleaning. PREFA are also very supportive. They aren't only interested in big projects, but are also helpful in organising small batches in bespoke colours. That means the product can be used in yet more different ways. All these reasons make this material very exciting for me as an architect.

How do you see the future of construction and home-building?

PB: I think we are going to be forced to change our ideas about energy, comfort and construction costs. The next generation will find it hard to raise the necessary budget, not least because of rising land prices. Houses will change considerably, and standards will have to fall because most people can no longer afford them. We will also have to step back from all the regulations of the last 20 years on energy efficiency for maximum comfort, and from all the control systems in "smart homes".

Our fellow architects in Japan are demonstrating how houses will become simpler again: there are never more than 10 light fittings in any house. If the user needs more light, he goes to where the light is, otherwise he moves away from it. The same principle applies to the heating. That brings us back closer to the kind of buildings that we started with. Like in the old farmhouses, 100 or 200 years ago. Not every room was fully heated at a constant temperature. Maybe the sitting room was at 25 degrees and the other rooms at only 14. And people felt just as comfortable, and were ill less often. We Central Europeans need this change from cold to warm for the regeneration processes of the human body to work properly. If there is too much technology and automation, we lose our connection with nature and the four seasons.





07

Prefalz



Rúbaň Winery

Throughout its history, the **Château Rúbaň estate has had lots of owners and a range of uses**. Attracting many visitors, the manor house, winery and guest house now has the reputation and appearance it deserves. An interplay of golden, undulating, reflective façades, representing nature and wine.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Rúbaň Winery
Country: Slovakia
Object, location: Vineyard, Rúbaň
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Zoltán Bartal, Graphite s.r.o.

Installer: Matutomi s.r.o., Komárno
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: maya gold

»Nature in a golden mirror«

Zoltán Bartal is the master of the interplay of colours and materials and invites us to accompany him on an architectural journey through time.

In the picturesque Slovakian town of Komárno, on the banks of the River Danube and surrounded by Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest, architect Zoltán Bartal has chosen a smart spot for his company's base. The company was founded in 1999. He has always been interested in art, colours and shapes, so it was no coincidence that he chose architecture as his profession early on.

His current masterpiece is the Château Rúbaň estate. The estate consists of a sleek, elegant manor house, a winery and a guest house. He was in charge of renovating the manor house and the guest house a few years ago. It's now time to provide the winery with an appropriate style. Bartal describes the development: "When we started, the whole area looked totally different."





There were several old, really unattractive buildings on the property which had previously been used for military purposes, and then religious ones. “I had to persuade the investor that it would all only look in harmony if part of the building was removed and the manor house was made the centre of the estate. It wasn’t easy, as this entailed changing the whole infrastructure.” In addition to the manor house, the winery and an old building were retained, with the latter converted into a guest house. All the other buildings were torn down.

Undulating and purist

The property is situated in a large park with some beautiful, old trees; at the entrance to the manor house sits one of the region’s oldest and largest plane trees. Bartal set himself the task of capturing nature and the wine that is so important for the region in his buildings. All the buildings are aesthetically linked with one another: The golden colour of white wine, the undulating lines of the hilly wine country and the purist materials of concrete, glass and aluminium result in a unified look. The idea behind the façade design was to





slightly reduce the building's physical impact. It now has a highly individual undulating look, with irregular joints on the aluminium façade and clearly visible lines on the concrete walls.

Discover magical walls

The winery is a multi-functional property with an imposing section that opens out towards the park and the old trees. In addition to the winery, there is also a visitor room in the building that can be used separately as a wine store or for seminars and events. A striking guest house has been created out of what used to be a rather unsightly building. On the forest-facing side, a glass façade stretches from floor to ceiling, both capturing and reflecting nature. The window frames were kept as delicate as possible. From the outside, it almost looks as if the building were not there. It's only at night, when it's dark, that the light from the individual rooms shines through and hints at what is really behind the 'magic' wall. The effect on the other side is precisely the opposite: prominent, shining golden façade elements in the entrance area entice visitors into the building.

A multi-functional material

The material used was Prefalz in Maya gold. When asked why aluminium, Zoltán Bartal's answer is short, but emphatic: "Why not?" He later explains: "I was looking for a material that can be used in all buildings, both externally and internally, and that brings additional merit to the property. The golden aluminium not only met these requirements perfectly, it also had exactly the shade and level of shine that I wanted." The companies Tonex and Matutomi assisted with the implementation. In total, the project took over three years, with everyone playing their part to ensure it was a success.

A walk through history in colours

"The combination of old and new was very important to us. There is so much history and old craftsmanship in the winery and we wanted to pick up on this in our building," says the proud Slovakian, whose own roots are not far from the manor house. Of course, the golden colour is supposed to be reminiscent of the fruity white wine that is so prized in this region. If you look closer, you can also see that the play of colours also works as a time scale. As you move from the old manor house to the winery and the modern guest house, the colours become lighter, so according to the age, the colour moves from a dark brown through to a light gold.

When asked whether there will be more projects on this estate, Bartal replies: "I would like to build a chapel that reminds people of the monastery and priests who once lived here." Finally, he invites everyone to pay a visit to the Château Růbaň estate. "It's worth it!"









Schloßhofer Straße House

The roof space construction in Schloßhofer Straße is perceived as a converging entity of metal and glass surfaces. Generally speaking, during the design of the eight apartments a heavy emphasis was placed on open-plan rooms bathed in light that provide the best possible use of the space. Truth be told, when carrying out high-quality renovations of Gründerzeit houses, it is not only the modern look that counts, but also techniques and building materials must complement each other.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Schloßhofer Straße House
Country: Austria
Object, location: Residential building, Vienna
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Gerda Eisler, Büro für Architektur, Vienna

Installer: All Dachprofile GmbH, Graz
Roof type: PREFA composite panel
Roof colour: bronze
Façade type: PREFA composite panel
Façade colour: bronze



»Facelift for an architectural gem«

What happens when an extravagant architect, an unconventional Gründerzeit house renovation and shiny materials meet?

Loft conversions, renovations, operational facilities – architect Gerda Eisler boasts a diverse field of activity: “Simply everything that’s fun.” And what is particularly fun is planning outside of the usual conventions. Everything begins with this one idea – to begin with they are all painstakingly compiled and often discarded later. But the initial idea is more often than not the best, since you always come back to the root. “I feel most creative when I am playing sport

and being active, good communication and interaction with the person I am exercising with stimulates my imagination,” says the extravagant architect, who has turned her red locks into a brand label. Even her company image is anything but ordinary. Her logo came about thanks to a piece of her son’s graffiti artwork under a railway bridge.



A successful feat

The renovation project on Schloßhofer Straße in Vienna's 21st district is also unconventional. The existing building was renovated with care while being occupied, and eight new top floor apartments were created. This added more value to the property than purely functional basic improvements would have done: "The construction manager wanted maximum loft space with as little roof sloping as possible." A feat that has been very much achieved. Cooperation with the construction manager and suppliers proved extremely positive. Perhaps the reason for this is that not only do the Gründerzeit houses become more beautiful over the years, but also those leading the project gain in experience and composure. The focus is on the essentials, without unnecessary frills.

Getting the best out of it

In total, seven apartments were built, as well as a skybox apartment as a maisonette. We managed to avoid roof sloping on the courtyard façade thanks to a clever idea, which was to indent the building. On the street façade, there are roof slopes only on the first loft floor, while behind on the second loft floor a balcony was built. The special atmosphere which prevails in this district, like in the house itself, makes this house a completely unique redevelopment property. But Eisler knows that each building often presents its own challenging modernisation demands. As attractive the view and as exclusive the location may be: Gründerzeit houses require special construction solutions. "For me it is especially important to create contrasts and to get the best out of what is there," says the architect upon describing her motivation.



Material and colour emphasise the beauty

Ideas can be realised on a large-scale and in spectacular fashion with the PREFA composite panel. Together with the client, material and colour were determined that emphasise the simplicity and beauty of the building. For the roof and façades, a subtle bronze colour shade was chosen which creates an attractive contrast. The material was processed by All Dachprofile, based in Graz. “As the architect you work all year long together with certain companies,” says Eisler, pleased about the good cooperation.

Aluminium is more versatile than traditional materials. It is not only roofs and façades that can be clad, but also interior rooms can be shaped and storage units folded. PREFA also offers ex-works a solid basis for technical solutions which the architect, planner and contractor can directly fall back on. And that makes the product, as Eisler confirms, so unique. It provides security.

With assertiveness and initiative

And how do you impress as a woman in the male-dominated construction sector? “Not only through competence, but above all by trying to build a team at the construction site and to work towards a common goal. With a lot of love for people, with all their strengths and weaknesses. And with the will to achieve high-quality architecture,” says Eisler who skilfully confronts her daily challenges. For after more than 30 years of construction-site experience, she no longer lets herself be affected by the rough manner on-site. “Every day you are dealing with people from all walks of life – so you have to individually adapt to each construction manager or construction worker.” Flexibility, assertiveness and initiative are required during the often long construction phase. “It’s like a birth, sometimes you are moody and restless, but everything needs time. No two construction processes are the same, and you have to start from scratch with each project.” All things considered, working in the construction sector has a lot to do with creativity, organisation and communication. “And being creative is something very beautiful!”





09

PREFA façade rhomboid panel 29x29



Family home Vétroz

The villa in Vétroz planned by Engin Demirci in French-speaking Switzerland is not what it seems at first glance. Only once you go inside do you see the spacious interior and the magnificent view. And it's only once you move further away that you discover the asymmetrical roof and the idea of a “hungry reptile” ...

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Family home Vétroz
Country: Switzerland
Object, location: Family home, Vétroz
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Engin Demirci, Demirci Architecte, Sion

Installer: Travalletti & Biner SA, Ayent
Roof type: -
Roof colour: -
Façade type: PREFA façade rhomboid panel 29x29
Façade colour: bronze

»A reptile in the vines«

In the Swiss canton of Valais, the beautiful Rhone valley runs between vineyards and glaciers. It gave its name to the marvellous Rhone river, which serves as a lifeline that gently meanders through the valley. The capital of the historic canton, Sion, is situated here and is where architect Engin Demirci has his office. With wit, charm and full of energy he tells us of the artists from France and Spain that inspired him during his teenage years to design houses himself. If he had his way, then he would also plan the right interior for every house, just like the old masters did in days gone by.





Mr Demirci, why did you decide to become an Architect? What inspired you?

Engin Demirci: My interest in architecture was aroused at a very early age, during my time at secondary school. A classmate gave a presentation on the Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier, a building from 1929. When I saw the project, something clicked and I knew that I wanted to be an architect. The building fascinated me, back then it was way ahead of its time!

Was Le Corbusier your only role model or were there others that inspired you?

ED: Many artists inspired me, most of all Antoni Gaudí. The Sagrada Família and various villas that he built at the time. What fascinated me the most was that he planned the buildings right through from A to Z. Not only the shell, but also the interior, the furnishings. At this time, the complete works counted for artists. Envious.

Today, the furniture is no longer necessarily planned by the architect as an exquisite achievement. That's a shame, I would like to have the opportunity to plan the outside spaces, lighting, furniture and everything

else. That would be to the building's benefit, as an elaborate and stylistically confident overall concept.

The villa in Vétroz was the result of an overall concept too, tell us more about it.

ED: The villa is located amidst the vineyards on a small, gently sloping street. The narrow, rectangular plot required an elongated, compact floor plan. I designed the house to be very tall in order to create as much space as possible. The split roof with four different roof heights provides a large volume, especially on the inside. The lounge boasts high ceilings with large windows which offer a beautiful view over the Rhone valley. Furthermore, in the basement there is a small and inconspicuous self-contained flat.

To what extent does the vineyard influence the building?

ED: The rather organic shape was strongly influenced by the hilly landscape. Even the materiality was an important matter. The upper part of the house is fitted with a striking aluminium façade. It is reminiscent of reptile skin stretched across the entire upper part of



the building. Almost like a lizard which is lying in waiting between the vines and is stretching its mouth wide open towards the Rhone plain.

It sounds like a bold concept. How did it come about?

ED: Right at the beginning of planning, I had the idea of working with a bronze metal. Yet the construction manager still needed convincing – he thought the material was too industrial and not exactly typical for a vineyard. Luckily he trusted me and came on board, it was the right choice and now everyone is very content.

The client was also very impressed by the durability and sustainability of the aluminium. It protects the house from extreme weather conditions, even in the Rhone valley there can be storms and snow. Furthermore, it meets the needs of the workmanship. A flexible material was required for the organic concept, one that could follow the flow and shape. The bronze shade also matched perfectly.

Did everything go to plan during implementation?

ED: It was the first time that the tinsmith had worked with this material. Initially, it was necessary to clarify how the small components were to be prepared and fitted. But then everything went really fast and the result was extremely satisfying.





St. Valentin Trafik

In the middle of a commercial district, Poppe*Prehal Architects have created a remarkable and contemporary tobacconist's shop. The little building with its two tall, pointed gables and red metal cladding cannot be missed. An excellent example of how a certain something can make even a small building eye-catching.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: St. Valentin Trafik
Country: Austria
Object, location: Trafik newsagent's, St. Valentin
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Helmut Poppe,
Poppe*Prehal Architekten, Steyr

Installer: Stefan Ertl, St. Valentin
Roof type: Prefalz
Roof colour: black-red (bespoke colour)
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: black-red (bespoke colour)

»A shining moment«

The architects at Poppe*Prehal in Steyr have the courage to think outside the box: Managing Director Helmut Poppe on reinterpreting structural shapes and the quest for inspiration.

Helmut Poppe is one of the two managing directors of Poppe*Prehal. The practice, which employs 14 people, works mainly on projects in the public and commercial sector, such as schools or kindergartens, but also some residential buildings, all over eastern Austria. The design of the Trafik tobacconist's shop in St. Valentin demonstrates how even a small-scale project can be an exciting challenge. The specification was "to stand out in the commercial area". That is achieved by the dark red metal cladding that covers the building from top to bottom and glows in the sunshine. "With the red colour, I was trying to capture the moment when you light a cigarette, to reproduce that pleasure," muses the architect. The two-part structure with its pointed gables gives the shop an imposing appearance. A unique design that got everyone talking about it.



Mr Poppe, what does architecture mean to you?

Helmut Poppe: What makes my job so exciting is learning new things – it’s different for every project. Often you have to find out about unfamiliar materials and then develop new concepts based on them. We always try to break down existing conventions or reinterpret them, yet at the same time we keep asking: “Just how far can I go? How far will the customer go along with me? Is this useful to the customer?” It makes no sense to break rules simply in order to be different. And in architecture, breaking out means using different shapes, different materials and a different design idiom.

Your project, the Trafik shop in St. Valentin, did it arouse a great deal of interest?

HP: Yes, this building attracted a great deal of attention, in a good way, but, of course, also in a bad way. Either way, this Trafik shop was a topic of conversation for weeks, and well beyond the town itself. For the customer, that was free advertising, and it created a positive image for him.

Was there, so to speak, an overall idea behind this project?

HP: The owner’s requirements were expressed in very general terms and left us a great deal of freedom: “We have an existing Trafik shop with all its fittings. Now it needs to move to a new location. “When we started planning, we already had a basic floor plan. I came up with a concept that was very practical and which also benefited the customer. We created a Trafik shop with two gables and a ceiling height of 7 metres. The space is open right up into the gable. This construction lets a lot of daylight into the shop, especially with the glass frontage at both ends. Inside, the Trafik shop is clearly laid out, in a modern and functional design.

We arrived at the idea of the two pitched roofs for various reasons: firstly, we have incorporated a traditional style that is very typical of this region and reinterpreted it in our own way. Secondly, a supermarket was being built next door and we designed a tall building so that the Trafik store was not overwhelmed. Thirdly, we wanted to separate the sales area from the storage area. Now one part is in the glazed, transparent half, and the other is in an enclosed, opaque area.





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Our basic idea is to combine
aesthetic appearance and
sustainability
”



It looks as if some of the materials used in the building were very special?

HP: That's right. I opted for PREFA quite early on. The PREFALZ material can be stretched like a skin over the roof and façade and gives the building an abstract appearance. The details are also important. If you look at the Trafik shop, you can see where the material has been profiled. That creates a really nice tension. The dark-red colour of the shingles is a bespoke colour and imitates the glow of a cigar or cigarette.

Did the preparation and construction all go exactly as you expected?

HP: It was certainly not an easy task and some of the details were very complex. We commissioned a small metalworking company to carry out the work – Stefan Ertl from St. Valentin – and we are very pleased with how they did it. We had a lot of meetings with them, and they did what we asked them to with great commitment and to a very high quality. We worked very well together.

So what is your main priority when you are designing and building?

HP: Our basic idea is to combine aesthetic appearance and sustainability. And as well as the sustainable side, we also try to handle building projects efficiently for everyone concerned, from the customer to the contractor. Cost estimates must be accurate, budgets must be adhered to and the price must be cost-effective for all sides. In that way we can achieve top quality.

Everyone needs a muse, where does your inspiration come from?

HP: I am an architect through and through, you might say. My main concern is to place architecture that is contemporary in its design and appearance in a cultural context. I am very lucky that this is not a job for me but a passion. I'm always thinking about architecture and reflecting on architecture in my free time as well. I like to find inspiration at the theatre or by going to exhibitions. I am very interested in art in general. But I also like riding my Harley through the countryside, and, if a property catches my eye as I ride past, I stop, take a closer look, and savour the moment. For me, that's relaxing and fun!





Humenné Palace

A new roof for a manor house – Humenné Palace was built in the 17th century in the Renaissance style. It was destroyed after the Second World War and re-built in the 1960s. Fifty years later, it is now time to renovate this town's important structure and replace the damaged roof. The colour of the roof panels and the matching anthracite fittings hark back to the historic use of iron.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Humenné Palace
Country: Slovakia
Object, location: Humenné Palace, Humenné
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Miroslava Kasaníčová,
Atelier MK, Humenné

Installer: KLTP s.r.o.,
Ing. Branislav Tulis, Spišská Nová Ves
Roof type: PREFA roof rhomboid panel 29x29
Roof colour: anthracite P.10
Façade type: -
Façade colour: -

»A palace with a new roof«

'Tis early practice that makes the master – and there follows the reward of grand projects. Architect Miroslava Kasaničová feels honoured.

Architect Miroslava Kasaničová has already made a name for herself in Eastern Slovakia. As the daughter of an architect and an engineer, she learnt about architecture from an early age. Since starting work, she has lived through exciting times of change from the heteronomous, practical use of space through to the design-rich, customised realisation of Lebensraum. However, the renovation of Humenné Palace, the region's landmark, has been the highlight of her career and, as she says, a great honour.

Ms Kasaničová, your architectural career started when you were still a child?

Miroslava Kasaničová: My mother is an architect and my father an engineer. As a small child, they used to take me into the office and to construction sites. I was fascinated, sitting between plans and construction cranes, and it inspired me to become an architect myself.

As a woman, it is definitely not always easy to establish yourself in this male-dominated environment. Was your mother a role model?

MK: My mother inspired and encouraged me from a very early age. For the first seven years, we shared an office. She showed me how the business worked up to the day she retired. I learnt a lot from her, and am still learning.

Even during my training and studies, though, I learnt how to handle certain situations. When I started work it wasn't easy; male colleagues were preferred for projects over me. Fortunately, this has gradually changed over time. Design now has greater meaning and aspirations. In my particular area, I can clearly see how general ways of thinking are changing. It has become more and more important to people where and how they live and what their houses and apartments look like. I have benefited from this as design has always been one of my strong points. I am really pleased about these changes.



What do you think brought about these changes?

MK: It's certainly linked with the globalisation of the market. Marketing influences how people think and architecture is seen differently. Shapes, materials, colours; these all become more important because they are ubiquitous in the media. It's no longer just about what's practical, but also about what's beautiful.

PREFA is a good example of this as their quality and design is of a high standard. The catalogues and website are helpful and inspirational, with plenty of solutions and real-life examples. I really like working with them.

Let's talk about Humenné Palace; can you give us a brief description?

MK: Humenné Palace is an important piece of architecture for the town and the region and is a building with plenty of history. It was originally built in 1610 in the Renaissance style and rebuilt at the end of the 19th century in the style of French Baroque palaces. Unfortunately, it was burnt down around 1946, after the Second World War, and was rebuilt in 1964. Today, it houses the Vihorlatské Museum. This provides an insight into the history of the Horný Zemplín region and displays historic exhibition pieces such as furniture, weapons and clothing in their original condition.

An open-air folk architecture museum was set up in the Palace gardens.

What was your task?

MK: In 2015, the Palace underwent general renovations and I was commissioned to carry out the renewal of the damaged façades and roofs. The decision was made to use PREFA 29 x 29 roof panels. The aluminium is really light as the roof truss can't support a lot of weight. Longevity was also a deciding factor. The 40-year guarantee provides the necessary assurance that the roof is protected.

How was the roof renovation carried out?

MK: We laid the tiles diagonally; this looks really good both close up and from a distance. The anthracite colour is for aesthetic as well as historic reasons. It harks back to the iron elements on the Palace, the gutters, the Palace door and in other places.



In general, the project was a huge challenge but I am really satisfied with how it went. There were lots of details to bear in mind, covering the numerous angles was a precise job that had to be carried out by hand. Aluminium was ideal for this as it's flexible and malleable, making it great to work with. It's also wind- and watertight and doesn't bleach.

What equipment was used on the roof?

MK: The roof is designed to be 100 per cent secure. For maintenance work, we used safety hooks, walkways and steps. The major advantage is that the material and equipment such as snow guards came from the same manufacturer so the designs and colours all fit together.

How would you sum up your career so far?

MK: Renovating Humenné Palace is my greatest piece of work so far. Who knows if I may get to work on another building with a history and background like this one. I am very proud of it.





Catholic church Langenau

The ageing church in Langenau near Ulm dated from 1967 and was in need of general refurbishment. Storm damage and vandalism had taken their toll, and the interior was no longer up-to-date. The aim was to make the church more attractive and appropriate for modern liturgy.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Catholic church Langenau
Country: Germany
Object, location: Church, Langenau
Construction site type: Reconstruction
Architects: Architekturbüro Elmar Weber, Langenau

Installer: Engl GmbH, Fuchstal-Leeder
Roof type: PREFA shingle
Roof colour: anthracite P.10
Façade type: -
Façade colour: -

»On religious orders«

Anyone refurbishing churches needs to know a great deal about contemporary history, materials, committees and, of course, the liturgy itself. Architect Elmar Weber has both the experience and the dedication.

Architect Elmar Weber has made a name for himself as a church restorer. A committed Catholic, he and his team of seven specialise in renovating churches. After 25 years and about 35 successful church renovations, he knows the procedures and challenges all too well.

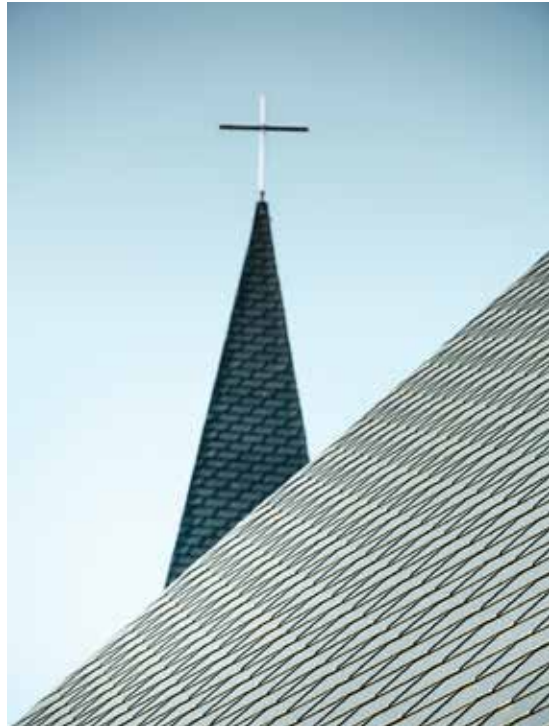
What particularly excites you about renovating and modernising churches?

Elmar Weber: It is a special honour to be able to work on churches. Renovating God's house is a sensitive business and quite different from building houses. You need special expert knowledge. For example, we renovate the trusses of old, sometimes late Gothic churches that have been attacked by vermin or rot. You need to understand the liturgy, what happens during the service, the

sound of the bells, how church clocks work and much more. I also believe you need a certain sensitivity if you're going to create this very special space – where worship takes place.

So it is an art that not everyone understands?

EW: What I really enjoy about my job is working with experts. We deal with skilled specialists in all fields, generally people who restore carvings or paintings, bell founders and so on. We are all working towards the same end and want to deliver a high-quality result. And in the awareness that the renovation needs to last for at least 50 years. It's not only about introducing modern things but, above all, making things long-lasting. Sustainability is always a high priority.



The collaboration between the architect and the customer is normally a very intensive business. How does that work with the church?

EW: It is very interesting with church buildings because there is not just one owner but normally a whole committee. For example, the parish council is the committee elected to represent the church congregation. That is to say, the council makes decisions for its members with the priest being the chairman. Then they have intensive discussions in committee about what can and cannot be done. For a new project, I first of all gather up everybody's requests – whether that's those of the clergy, people working with young people or the elderly, the church choir or the organist. When I know everybody's concerns, I can start planning and designing. From my experience, I know what is possible and can be financed.



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It's not only about introducing modern things but, above all, making things long-lasting.

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And what did that mean for the modernisation of the Mater Dolorosa church in Langenau?

EW: Our job was to give the church a fresh new look and make it attractive again for the younger generation. The church was originally built in 1967 by the architect Rudolf Prenzel in the time just after the Second Vatican Council. At that time, it was extremely modern and it still is today. The building is very asymmetrical, with barely a single right angle in the horizontal or vertical elevations of the church. The materials and structures inside the church were no longer up-to-date. The modernisation began in the area outside the church: you walk past new, heavy granite benches to reach the redesigned church square. The floor slabs in the church are laid at the same angle as the pews, centrally aligned to the altar and the crucifix. Inside the church there was already vertically aligned exposed concrete which we have left as it was. The concrete was cleaned and the carpet on the floor replaced with natural stone. Following the renovation, there is a much longer and clearer echo but one which does not stop people understanding what is being said.

And the church roof also urgently required refurbishment?

EW: Yes, the roof had been a problem for many years: asbestos cement tiles, storm damage, vandalism. Our job was to create a permanently waterproof roof that would resist vandalism and storms. We thought about it a great deal, considered many different materials



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and investigated costs. By agreement with the diocesan building authority and the local parish council, the result was that the appearance of the church would be altered as little as possible if we used rebated metal tiles. Visually these are very close to what was on the church roof before. The anthracite-coloured aluminium tiles are profiled on four sides and firmly secured so they are storm-resistant.

And what was the biggest challenge in the construction project?

EW: We had a nasty surprise when we were renovating the church spire. The lower four floors of the church spire are cement-clad, but from the belfry upwards the construction is made of wood. For many years the house longhorn beetle, a wood-boring pest, had been nesting there unnoticed. The top of the spire was badly damaged and large parts of it had to be replaced. At the same time the shutters had to be replaced because of water damage. The current shutters are designed so that the sound can travel further while water ingress into the belfry is impossible.

What does the church mean to you, your colleagues and your family?

EW: I grew up in a Christian family and have also been influenced by my environment. Religion and the church are very important for us. My wife is a theology teacher and I was on the parish council for ten years. It's interesting when my wife and I visit a church: she explains the symbolism to me and I explain to her how it is constructed, so we gain a complete understanding. The work gives me and all my team a great deal of pleasure. And our customers notice that. We receive work by word of mouth, and now even from both denominations, Catholic and Evangelical. And we work in an ever wider radius. Just now we have some exciting projects: the renovation of a historic church roof from 1698, the complete redesign of the interior of a church and various other refurbishments in the next few years.



Tick family home

At the beginning the idea was a tree house, and the wish was to live amongst the treetops. Naturally, as the couple managing the project are a gardener and florist by profession and would prefer to be able to observe the beautiful old stock of trees, plants and flowers from above, as well as from below. The result is a suspended hideaway home made from natural materials that blends interior and exterior spaces.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Project name: Tick family home
Country: Austria
Object, location: Family home, Gumpoldskirchen
Construction site type: New construction
Architects: Marleen Viereck and Ewald Viereck,
Collaboration: Kerstin Neber-Hagemann,
Viereck Architekten Kindberg

Installer: Wastl Dachdeckerei und Spenglerei,
Niklasdorf
Roof type: Prefalz
Roof colour: black-grey
Façade type: Prefalz
Façade colour: black-grey

»A life in the treetops«

With a suspended tree house and sustainable materials, architects Ewald and Marleen Viereck let us experience nature in a new way.

They use their resources carefully. They want to give the treasures, which they have merely “borrowed”, back to the environment. They want to create buildings which are in tune with the surroundings when it comes to design, materials and colour while at the same time making attention-grabbing statements. “At the beginning I have a sheet of paper, a pencil and an idea. And nothing else,” explains Marleen Viereck, alongside her father Ewald Viereck in their Kindberg architecture office.

It resembles a real-life workshop wonderland, and invites you to feel and discover. Here you sense the meaning of building materials and other materials and their origin. „My father taught me that every single action has significance. More than the best computer.“ Ewald Viereck is proud of his works, as he is of the tree house. And rightly so, we believe.





Mr Viereck, a house in the treetops, how can you picture that?

Ewald Viereck: When you enter the plot, you see a lot of greenery. And this greenery was the reason for us not to build a house in the field of vision, but rather a house that you can see through from below. Crucially, it was the use of precisely calculated static steel supports that permitted the unbroken view through the site. So you can live, eat and sleep up top while only the bare essentials can be found down below: a small storage facility and the technology. Everything else is therefore transparent and the house can literally be seen through.

And how did this wildly romantic idea come about?

EV: The inspiration came from the two construction managers. They are both gardeners, or rather florists, and expressed the desire to be able to look over their plants, trees and flowers from above rather than from below. This is how the fine idea came about to build the house high up, to be able to view the land, to see everything natural that is present in an area of over 3,000 square metres. With this seemingly suspended house, we have enabled the couple to live in the treetops.

What role does the choice of material play in combination with the glorious old trees?

Marleen Viereck: Material is an important matter for us. We always come to a decision together. For us it's always about the haptics, about a feeling, but also about the locality. As part of this, we create mood boards which we sample together in the architecture workshops. They help us to decide in what direction to go with a building.

For the treetop house we opted to go for wood as the base construction material, while aluminium is used on the roof and on the façades. PREFALZ is a great material from a design perspective, it fits well into the surroundings and is very low-maintenance. What's more, the black-grey colour blends well with the green leaves in the trees.

In our projects, it is always important to us that the inside space blends into the outside space. And with this project especially, where we are amongst the treetops, we have paid special attention to this.

So in this case it is rather the contrary: Did the aluminium look so good from the outside that you felt you had to put it inside too?

EV: Yes, so to speak. Outside, the shell is formed of PREFALZ of different widths. The roofscape was thereby covered as a hip roof. This mix with its homely feel can also be found on the terrace: PREFALZ as a shaded material together with the wooden character of the larch tree form a pleasant, natural harmony. And for this reason we also decided to use aluminium inside. From the house entrance to the staircase and beyond you can sense the material and it is constantly present in an attractive contrast with the wood.

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PREFA materials have the advantage of a certain suppleness for hand-crafted workmanship.

The workmanship was simply a success.

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Who helped with the conversion?

EV: Dachdeckerei und Spenglerei Wastl carried out the roofing work. They have done a superb job and handled the material well. For the company Wastl, working with aluminium was nothing new and the result is a tribute to quality craftsmanship and many years of experience.

PREFA materials have the advantage of a certain suppleness for hand-crafted workmanship. The workmanship was simply a success. Furthermore, the material is very versatile, a wide range of surfaces and shapes are available. For the architect this opens up huge scope for new ideas.

Ms Viereck, what does the future hold? Where is the journey going?

MV: As I see it, the trend is generally moving in the direction of natural building materials. Ever more importance is attached to constructing high-quality, durable buildings, not only for a short time. In times of globalisation when everything looks the same, people are looking for materials that bring identity. People want to have a base again, to feel at ease. That's why we are turning to regional products. We like building with wood, because it grows in our surroundings. And when it is no longer needed for the building, it can be returned once more.

So are we merely “borrowing” the materials and intend to give them back to mother nature in the future?

MV: The currently popular concept of recyclable buildings will keep us increasingly busy in the future. Another recycling economy concept is called “Cradle to Cradle.” Even PREFA products are recyclable and for the most part secondary aluminium. These concepts are important in order to construct quality buildings. This is our future, a good direction that we should pursue. For we can no longer keep putting poor materials in our surroundings.



PREFERENCES 2017

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Photo: Croce & WIR; www.croce.at

Interviews: Bettina Almeida

www.prefa.com



