



Partners

Herzog & de Meuron
 Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron
 Christine Binswanger (Partner in Charge)

Collaborators

[Full data information](#)

Client

Kinderspital Zürich – Eleonorenstiftung

Contractors

ZPF Ingenieure AG, EBP Schweiz AG, Amstein + Walthert AG and others

Start and Completion Year

2011-2012 (Competition), 2014-2024

Gross Area

96 246 m²

Sustainable and healthy materials or systems

wooden structure, concrete

Photography

Maris Mezulis

Contact and more information

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Kinderspital

New University Children's Hospital

Nou Hospital infantil universitari

Nuevo Hospital infantil universitario

Zurich, Switzerland, 2014-2024

Herzog & de Meuron

REPORT. Sustainable and Healthy Architecture

The new Children's Hospital is located in a residential neighborhood dotted with fruit orchards. It is adjacent to the listed building of the University Psychiatric Clinic (PUK), known as the Burghölzli and its entrance, defined by a large open gate, stands directly opposite the entrance to the historic building of 1869. The concave gesture of the façade creates a shared forecourt for both institutions.

The gate opens onto a round courtyard planted with trees, through which the entrance is accessed. The restaurant and access to the therapy facilities below with gardens of their own adjoining the entrance. On the other side, the building's main street leads to highly frequented types of treatment such as imaging diagnostics, and the surgical day clinic. This central axis, which widens and narrows along the courtyards, terminates at the emergency room, which can also be accessed directly from outside.

In the center of the second floor, additional services are located on both sides of the main street, such as the hospital school, the pharmacy and other shared uses. An officescape oriented towards the outside is wrapped like a wreath around this central zone and provides some 600 workspaces for medical and administrative staff.

The top floor, the quietest area in the hospital, is reserved for children and adolescents, inpatients who are staying overnight or longer. Each of the 114 rooms is designed as a wooden cottage with a roof of its own, providing privacy, a view of the green outdoors and enough room for parents to spend the night with their children. There are four centers along the main street in the immediate vicinity of the cottages, where children and adolescents can receive transdisciplinary treatment.

The façade of the hospital consists of a three-dimensional, loadbearing concrete structure. It combines the first and second floors. The depth of the façade and the infill, which may be wood, glass, fabric or vegetation, varies depending on orientation and the activity inside. Lightweight construction materials have been used consistently throughout the building except for the concrete supports and the circulation cores. In this way, departments can increase or decrease in size: the flat building with its distinctive shape thus ensures the interior flexibility that is so crucial for hospitals.

The top floor with the inpatient rooms is set back and speaks an architectural language of its own. The rooms are staggered and have rooftops with varying inclinations. The individualized, elementary shape of the cottages clearly underscores the singularity of each and every patient.

QUOTES

A healing environment: People in hospitals are often in life-threatening situations. That is an exceptional challenge not only for patients but also for relatives, carers and physicians. Ironically, hospitals all over the world and even in Switzerland are often the ugliest places. For the past 20 years, we have zeroed in on this issue, because we are convinced that architecture can contribute to the healing process; it can make a substantial difference. Here at the Children's Hospital, people can see for themselves how daylight coming in from outside and variations in proportion can animate and change a room, how plants and vegetation can blur the distinction between inside and outside and how materials are not just beautiful to look at but

also pleasing to the touch. We designed all these things with conscious intent so that people can perceive them, sense them and ultimately feel better. Architecture can contribute to healing.
Jacques Herzog

A town in miniature: The curved, three-story main facade with its endearing small-scale wooden houses and variously sloped roofs offers a friendly and warm welcome to young patients and their families. The acute care hospital is organized like a town—with courtyards, streets, alleys, and squares. These, along with the thoughtful use of wood and carefully placed art installations, provide clear and memorable orientation, plenty of daylight, and a connection to nature. The spatial diversity, with views both inside and out, also offers spaces for children, teenagers, and their families to stay and play, as well as restful break areas for hospital staff.

Pierre de Meuron

Holistic mission: In collaboration with many other specialists, we were able to stand by and advise the Eleonoren Foundation throughout all levels of the project, from city planning to architecture, vegetation, materials and even medical fittings and furnishings. The result is a holistically conceived, functional building that is calm and quiet despite its diversity.

Christine Binswanger

Herzog & de Meuron, 2024