

Wooden benchmarking

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WOODEN BENCHMARKING

Röthlisberger does not only produce large, complex objects but also small, exquisite gems. Example: a tower-like wood-clad seating zone at the "Bellevue" restaurant in Ittigen near Bern, made by Röthlisberger for the Zurich architect and designer, Pia Schmid. Part of a major re-building project, this task combines the company's competences in a very small area: interior design and the development of furniture. Contrary to most complex projects, everything is visible at one glance, and yet it is more complicated than it seems at first.

In 2006, Pia Schmid rebuilt the "Bellevue" restaurant. She tore down an extension built in the 80s and replaced it with a new, one-storey concrete construction which docks onto the existing 1900 façade. On the other side, a large wooden terrace has been added. The entrance and the lobby of the restaurant can be found in the interior at a right angle to the interface between the new and the old buildings. The architect has used this interface as a pivotal or reference point, offering an unobstructed view in all directions, even upwards to the first floor restaurant space thanks to an opening in the ceiling. This architectural feature eliminates the need for signage and explains the construction intuitively.

Pia Schmid has designed two benches facing each other for this high room; their backs reach all the way up to the ceiling. The room itself has been turned into a piece of furniture, and the pieces of furniture constitute the room. The benches bring to mind the benches formerly found at train stations. They are made of nailed down wood slats which clearly define the space as a stylish waiting zone. To make the zone more attractive and comfortable, the slats of different widths and lengths have been glazed in three different red tones. There is more to the decorative seats than meets the eye: Pia Schmid accommodated the ventilation system behind them, and the lathes cover differences in the dimensions and the transition from the old to the new building. The "bench room" secretly and elegantly solves various architectural problems and is a skilfully crafted and elegant seating zone. Author: Ariana Pradal, photos: Philipp Rohner

THE BELLEVUE RESTAURANT, 2006

- > Address: Papiermühlestr. 140, Ittigen
- > Client: Gebäudeversicherung Bern
- > Reconstruction, extension and interior design: Architekt & Designbüro Pia Schmid, Zurich
- > Assisted by: Christian Schwyter
- > Bench construction: Röthlisberger Schreinerei, Gümligen
- > Interior design procedure: Direct order
- > Interior fit out procedure: Invited competition

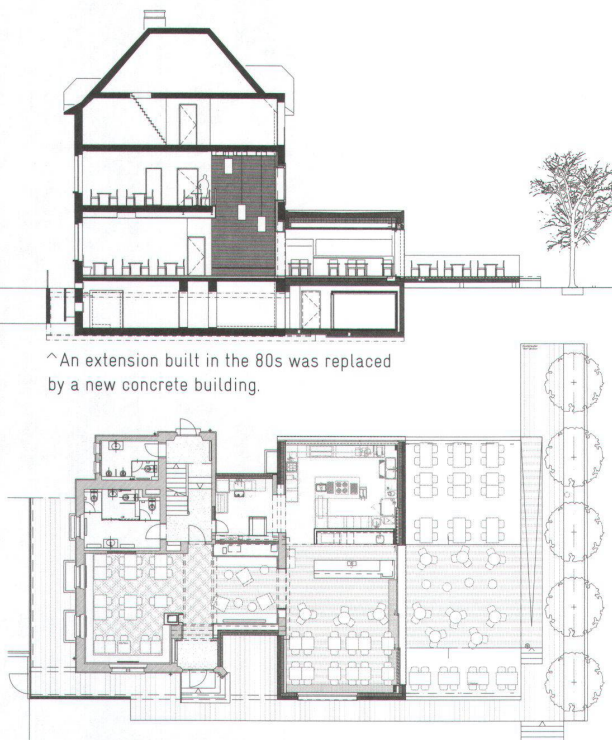


<The "Bellevue" Restaurant in Ittigen: a transition from the old days to modern times.

∨ Railway station style benches as an unobtrusive solution to architectural problems on interfaces.



^ Simple but elegant: "Bellevue" in Ittigen.



^ An extension built in the 80s was replaced by a new concrete building.

<Ground floor layout