

original



herzog & de meuron creates natural bathing pond for naturbad riehen



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naturbad riehen, natural swimming pool

riehen, switzerland

image © michael bär, courtesy of herzog & de meuron

following a number of unrealized iterations for a public bath beginning from 1979, the 'naturbad riehen' has opened its doors in a small swiss town near basel. designed by [herzog & de meuron](#), the scheme trades out the conventional pool concept, with its mechanical and chemical water treatment systems, for a more natural pond which utilizes biological filtration processes. the facility references the traditional *badi*, a local wooden bath structure typical along the rhine river, combining a vibrant environment and enduring aesthetic.





timber decks and walls wrap the central bathing pond
naturbad riehen, natural swimming pool
riehen, switzerland
image © michael bär, courtesy of herzog & de meuron

in regards to both form and performance, the 'naturbad riehen' is treated as a natural pond rather than a standard swimming pool. its edge takes an irregular and vegetated boundary, with various methods for guests to enter the water. these include a gently sloping gravel beach, staircases, as well as wood docks which allow for a jump into the small lake.

functionally, the scheme replaces technical systems for biological filter terraces, which eliminates the use of chemical additives. the process is modeled after the natural terrestrial water purification through layers of gravel, sand, and soil. treatment machine rooms vanish, and water basins are located outside the facility boundary embedded in a sloping landscape across the road. **with respect to the system's ecological cleaning capacity, the baths are able to accommodate 2,000 guests per day.**





the south edge of the site is visually open to the adjacent river
photo by helen schneider

the bath site is enclosed on three sides by timber walls, which also contain facility services. the north and east edges block out noise from roads, while the west border faces private residences. the property is open to the south, toward the river, bounded only by a vegetated hedge. the arrangement places all attention toward the pond at the center. long wooden decks line the complex, allowing for sunbathing and relaxation.





decks wrap the pond to provide areas for sunbathing
photo by helen schneider



a concrete wall contrasts the typical timber finish
photo by helen schneider

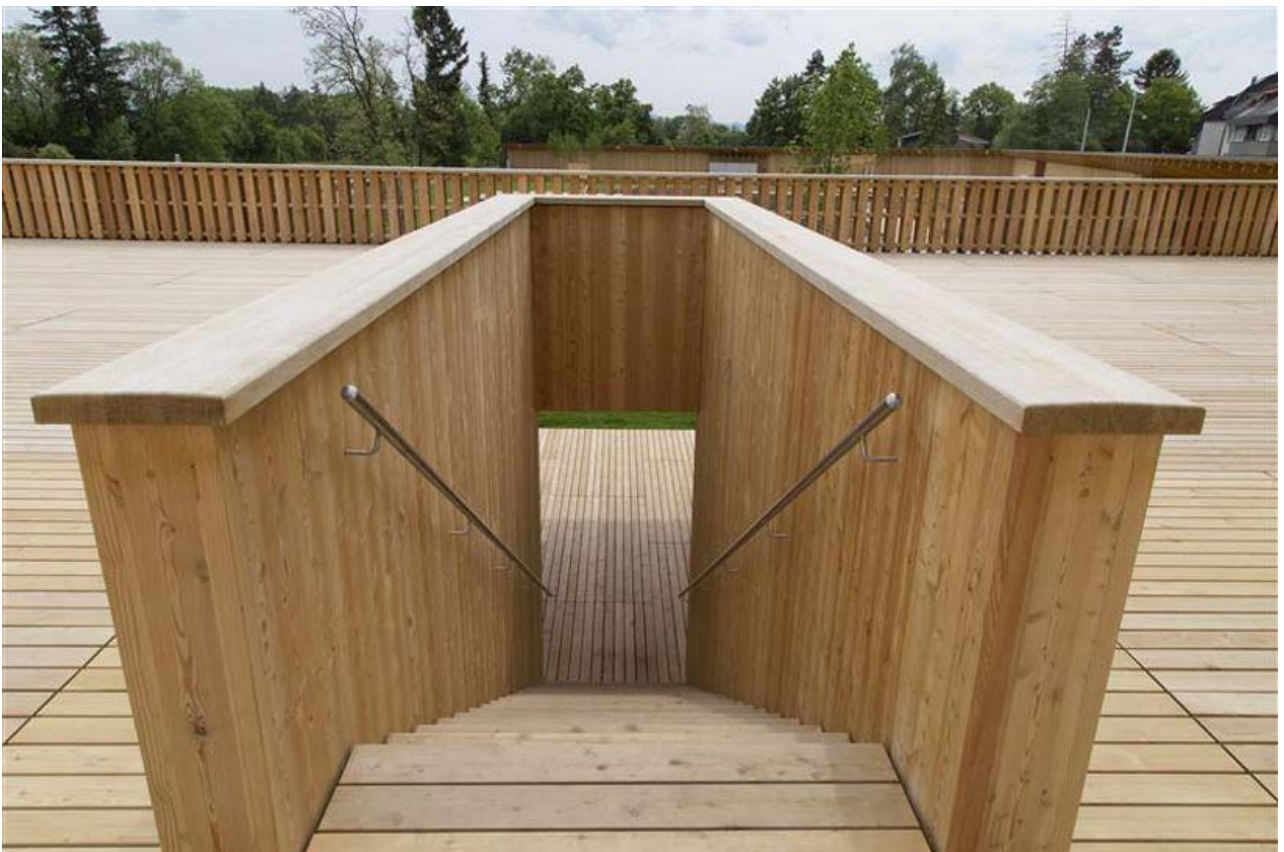


the entry breezeway is located on the eastern edge of the site
photo by helen schneider





the facility includes a small café
photo by helen schneider



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a roof deck is located on the eastern edge building volume
photo by helen schneider



vegetation lines the pond's edge
photo by helen schneider





a gravel beach gently slopes to provide a slow entry into the bath
photo by helen schneider





full article here

project info:

location: weilstrasse, riehen, switzerland

project dates: 08/2007 – 06/2014

client: gemeindeverwaltung riehen, riehen, switzerland / tobias betschart

site area: 164,074 sqft / 15,243 sqm

gross floor area: 3,488 sqft / 324 sqm

footprint: 3,488 sqft / 324 sqm

gross volume: 39,800 cbft / 1,127 cbm

façade surface: 4,306 sqft / 400 sqm

planning

architect planning: herzog & de meuron, basel, switzerland

partner architect: rapp arcoplan AG, basel, switzerland

general planning: rapp arcoplan AB, basel, switzerland

cost consultant: rapp arcoplan AB, basel, switzerland

electrical engineering: eplan, basel, switzerland

hvac engineering: stokar + partner ag, basel, switzerland

landscape design: fahrni und breitenfeld, basel, switzerland + wasserwerkstatt, bamberg, germany

plumbing engineering: locher schwittay gebäudetechnik gmbh, basel, switzerland

structural engineering: ulmann & kunz bauingenieur ag, basel, switzerland

other specialists: wasserwerkstatt planungsbüro für badegewässer, bamberg, germany

timber work: pirmin jung, rain, switzerland

consulting

building physics: ehram und partner, basel, switzerland

civil engineering: gemeinde riehen, riehen, switzerland

geometrician: jermann ingenieure & geometer AG, Pratteln, switzerland

geotechnical consultant: dr. von moos AG, zurich, switzerland

herzog & de meuron project team

partners: jacques herzog, pierre de meuron, wolfgang hardt (bis 30.4.2011)

project team: michael bär (associate, project manager), harald schmidt (project manager), sarah righetti (project manager), jeanne autran, nathalie birkhäuser, nils büchel, thomas cardew, judit chapallaz-laszlo, dorothee dietz (visualizations), guillaume henry, guy nahum, uta schrameyer, tobias josef fritzenwenger, benno lincke, miguel palencia olavarrieta



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