



Adelboden Alpine Spa/Switzerland

UC'NA Architekten

Bathing Between the Boulders

Set against the impressive mountain scenery of the Swiss Alps, a special kind of building project is due for completion by 2011. The Adelboden Alpine Spa breaks new ground in spa and health tourism and its architecture sets new standards. Construction of the 5,000 square meter Alpine spa resort is expected to begin in 2009. Guests can look forward to an exciting stay during which they will experience the worlds of water, health and meditation. The adjoining five-star hotel has around 100 rooms and offers the ultimate in "Alpine Wellness."

The idea of the alpine spa has its origins in a local initiative of the Hot-Water Society and Adelboden Tourist Board. These two bodies have been developing the project since 2003 in conjunction with UC'NA Architekten and SwissSpaGroup, both based in Zurich. In the meantime, the project has successfully passed through the phases of a feasibility study, preliminary design, amendment to suit the land use regulations and creation of a resort services concept. The inhabitants of Adelboden were given their first glimpse of the draft plans in May 2006. Based on the positive responses, the project proceeded to the next phase. One year later, the council approved the preliminary plans and leasehold contract. The design team is currently working on the planning application.

Innovative language of form amid the Swiss Alps

The hotel built into the valley side forms the lower part of the building complex. Round subsidiary building forms intended to represent boulders stand on the roof surface. These striking shapes characterize the design and contain the tranquil spa facilities, such as the meditation spa, treatment zone and sauna. The space between is occupied by the lively water landscape with its 80 meter long channel of flowing water. In the outdoor areas the village square, sun terrace and open-air pool offer an unmatched panorama of the Swiss mountains.

A special challenge in this project was to ensure this large complex located high in the mountains would fit into the village structure of Adelboden, and be well integrated into the features of the countryside and its unparalleled natural surroundings: "The indoor pool at Adelboden is a unique building project that demands a sensitive approach. From the beginning of the project we sought to achieve a dialogue with the surroundings by means of the different and distinct structural forms. We had to develop the characteristics of the location in line with the requirements of the public and the future guests to create a special spatial experience. Architecture with a high sense of identity," explains Manuel Alberati, Partner and founder of UC'NA Architekten.

The Engstligen waterfall, the imposing Alpine scenery and view of the Lohner mountain range – all project themselves into the architecture of the alpine spa: "The mountainside location, proximity of the mountains and the interaction with the impressive water landscapes in Adelboden have greatly influenced our design. The boulder-inspired building shapes are positioned as organizational objects around the intermediate space, which reflects the immediacy and distance of the Alpine landscape, opening to the skies and admitting light. Their sculptural language allows them to fit into the landscape and therefore the complex does not confront nor compete with the existing buildings in Adelboden," explains Manuel Alberati. In this way we were able to develop the spatial quality of Adelboden, whilst giving it an original, fresh expression.

The planning of a building complex of this kind with its diverse range of possible uses places quite a demand on the architects: "We involved specialists with years of experience at an early stage in the concept design of the hotel and spa complex. We learned a great deal about the business management aspects of such a facility. We still had a high degree of creative freedom in the design of the spa. Here we were able to produce something novel; a design where we can place ourselves fully in the position of the visitor and create a unique attraction for future guests – a particularly exciting task," adds Manuel Alberati.

Optimized working with Allplan

The specific requirements of this major project and the complex language of form set the designers a difficult challenge. Among the tools employed by UC'NA Architekten to make the task easier were the Allplan software and the support provided by Nemetschek Fides & Partner. The decision



in favor of Allplan was not based solely on the language of form, but rather more on the complexity of the design. The many levels and inclines made working in 3D essential. The advantages of working in 3D lie in better correlation of the design and construction processes, and that the information is available to all project members at the same time, which is so essential to the work of an architect. Components can also be better coordinated thanks to improved information management with Allplan. Partners have direct involvement in the design, which means their requirements are easier to incorporate and sources of errors are minimized.

Interfaces have to be formulated correctly to enable efficient exchange of data. Not just between different drawings, but also cooperative working on a common model. "This used to be just a vision for the future, but with Allplan and the ability to work in 3D we are much closer to the objective of collecting information on various levels, bringing it together and thus realizing a more rational process of building," says Manuel Alberati.

280,000 spa visitors expected from 2011

The Adelboden Alpine Spa represents a significant project for the region in the context of sustainable development. In 2005 Adelboden was the first Swiss holiday resort to be declared an "Alpine Wellness International Destination." The construction of the alpine spa further extends the portfolio of Alpine Wellness services in Adelboden and ensures the complex's attractiveness as a summer and winter holiday resort. The planned capital investment for the Alpine Spa project is approximately 60 million euro. It will create about 100 new jobs in the region.

Beginning in the spring 2011, the anticipated completion date, an estimated 280,000 visitors will be pampered at the spa annually. The visitors have access to over 900 m² of water in numerous indoor and outdoor pools. Special attractions include the 80 meter long flowing water channel, mineral water pools, the large sauna and treatment zone and the meditation pool. Visitors can leave behind the stress of their day in the warm water of the bubble beds. The extraordinary view of the surrounding Alps invites the visitor to spend time lounging in the outdoor pools and on the beautiful sun terrace.



Why did you decide to use Allplan as your design tool for the Alpine Spa?

It was certainly a risk to use a new CAD software on such a complex project. But it was clear to us from the start that we would only be able to comprehend and realize this project in 3D, and in some areas even in 4D. By using Allplan we were able to examine moving three-dimensional images at any time during the planning process.

You have designed the project in 3D from the beginning. What particular benefits has this brought to you?

Increased transparency, fewer errors and more accurate cost estimates at an earlier stage in the project are the most important advantages. Investors would like the cost frame to be as accurate as possible from the first phase of the design. The objective is to be able to identify problem areas, even at an early stage in the design when details are often still relatively unclear. Different variants and their costs have to be drawn up to allow investors and clients to make their decisions based on readily available, solid information. This was possible using Allplan.

How do you rate the ability to create visualizations during the drawing process?

The ability to move virtually through the buildings, check the components of the design and understand how the project fits together in spatial terms makes many of the design decisions much easier. We are able to recognize and solve difficulties earlier and thus achieve a better result with Allplan.

The correlation of the output of the various design partners is key to a project of this size. How was this achieved with the Alpine Spa?

We are cooperating with many specialist engineers and architects on this project. This involves considerable exchange of data between project partners, above all at the end of certain stages of the design. By using Allplan, we are able to consider aspects together more effectively than before, when they had to be dealt with separately. And the result is an optimized flow of information.