

Folded Forest

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00. VISITOR CENTER

Every major tourist attraction has visitor center, a place where entrants can get information, buy tickets and other products. Not only is it a location for visitors to orient themselves with the facilities, and even buy a cup of coffee, it's also a chance for architecture to set the tone and make an iconic first impression of their destination. However, it is not only for visitor from other cities, but also it plays role as community center for surrounding community. Finally, it is provided a mixed and gathering point between different user groups.

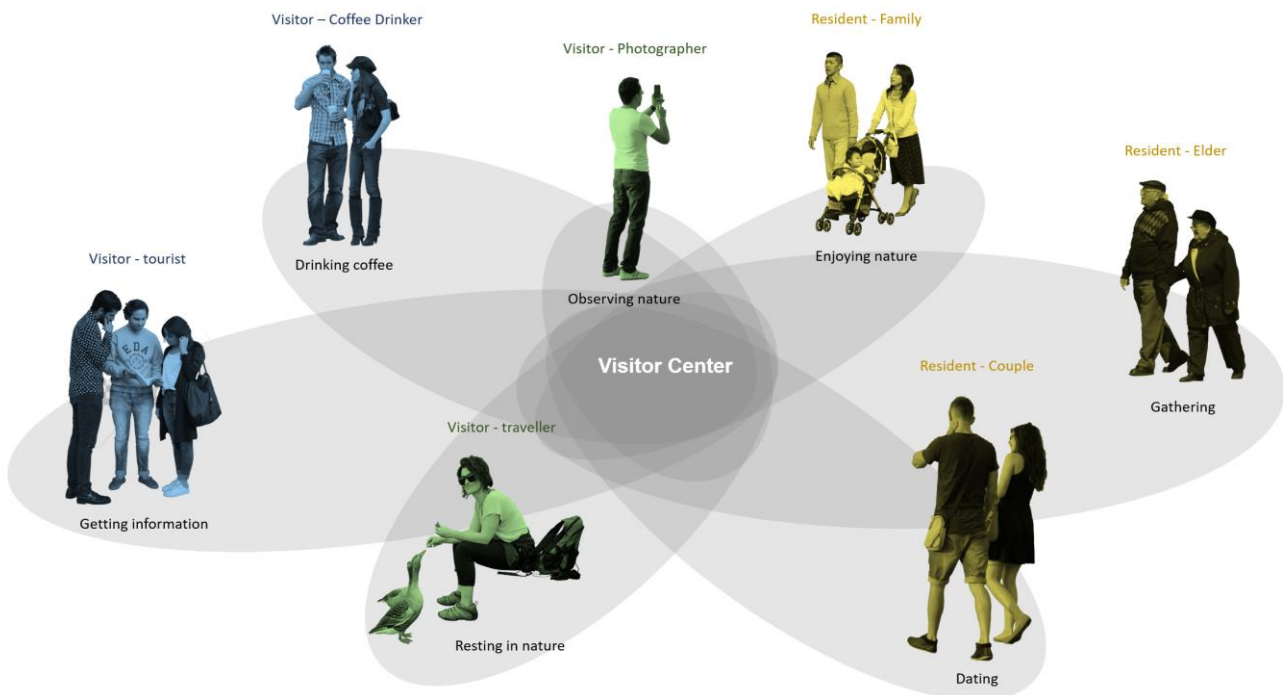


Figure 1 user group

Particularly, visitor center in nature people gather for enjoy the nature. So, fundamental design purpose of visitor center should not ruin the nature as an artifact. In this point we can consider about what visitor center shows to people as an artifact. Visitor center have to be least or transparent for camouflage from nature. Finally, people figure out architecture is weaker than nature and nature is the best architecture. It has to help people enjoy the nature more confident and more comfortable way. Making an indoor space can be good place for observing eye-catching view whether weather is bad or not. Also, opening and closing made framing and suggest different angle for people such as panorama view.

Camouflage
underground



Skamlingsbanken Hill Visitor Centre

Transparent
weightless and weak



Visitor center park Vijversburg

Framing
open and close



Desert X AlUla Visitor Centre

Figure 2 Visitor Center Analysis

Visitor center is usually not a huge size and type can be categorized which is building type, pavilion type and viewing tower type. Building type can be more well-equipped with amenities, Pavilion type is opener to contact nature as it permeates into nature, and viewing tower composed by stairs, can be provided different view that impossible for a man themselves along different heights and directions. These three types can be independent or combined together.

Building
amenities



Skamlingsbanken Hill Visitor Centre

Pavilion
canopy and columns



Screen Pavilion

Viewing tower
stairs



Marsk Watchtower

Figure 3 Visitor Center Type

01. SITE ANALYSIS + SELECTION

Firstly, the site selection takes several factors into consideration, such as accessibility, necessities supply and safety and view spots. We think the site in the below picture will be a good choice for the visitor center. In detail, it is close to nearby villages and roads, which make sure of the sufficient supply of necessary materials, like food, water, and power, especially in emergency or in case. It is also chosen between the three hotels, which can provide the visitors with more choices.

During the second or the first half part of the journey, it will be an ideal place for the visitors to take a break, besides the hotels. Taking the scenery into consideration, at the corner of the Hochstrasser, people who come from both sides will take a good view of the visitor center, which will not be blocked by the hill or the high trees. As for the building, it will demonstrate differently according to the terrain and the distance from it. Visitors will enjoy the different sections, forms, or parts of the building, providing unique experiences when traveling.

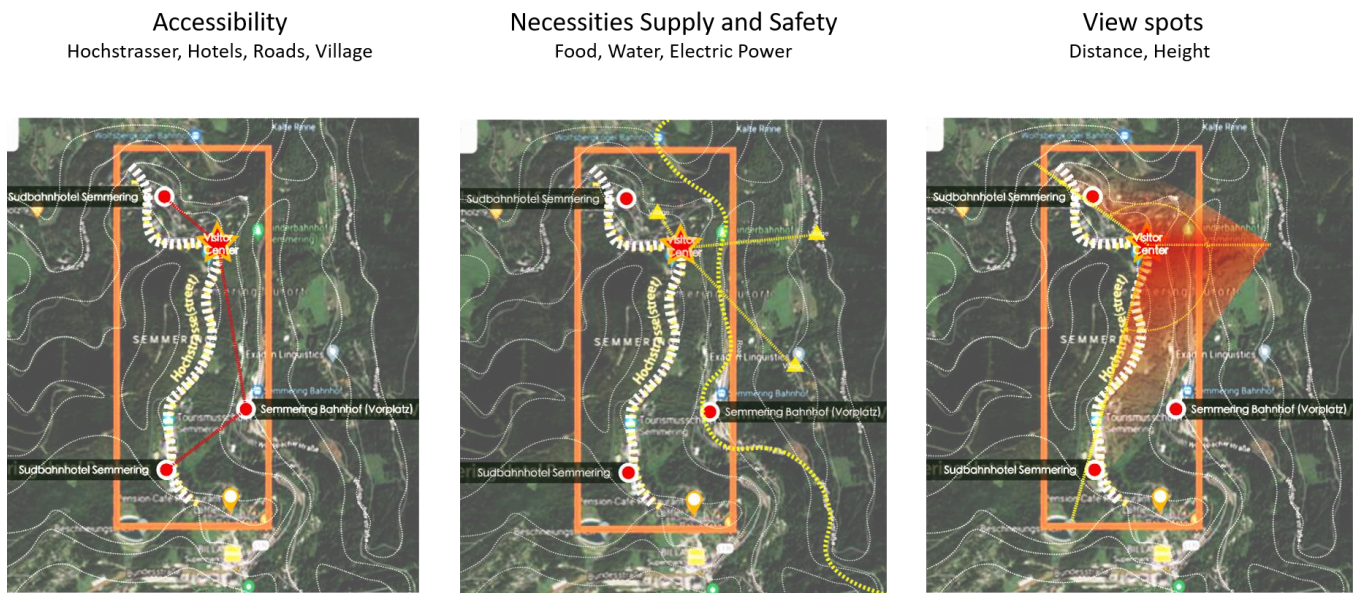


Figure 2 Site Analysis

02. DESIGN CONCEPT

The concept of our design is connection -- connecting the two sides of the mountain in the traffic, so that tourists have a more convenient tour path; Connect people and nature on the landscape, so that artificial buildings and natural environment better integration, harmonious coexistence; Culturally connecting the city and the countryside, different functional blocks are placed on both sides of the corridor, respectively representing the needs and culture of urban residents and rural residents, so that the building can balance the use needs of the two groups of people.

So, we start from four piled up boxes. After that, we pull boxes along the mountain slope and twists that for to secure views from different angles. By connecting the four boxes, the height of the box is adjusted to create a diagonal flow line and various experiences inside and outside. At this time, the highest roof is placed at the same height as the road, connecting the road with the roof. Space is left between boxes with various heights. Then, a new mass is inserted in the space between the raised so that the interior can be connected under the slope. It connects by stairs so that each mass can be connected not only from the interior but also from the exterior roof. Because the height of the box is adjusted, a ramp is built on the roof and connected to the next roof through fewer stairs. On the connected roof, a shrubby forest is created, and people naturally approach the roof as another path, and the surrounding forest environment is extended to connect to nature and people they encounter.

It also has a curtain wall of each mass, which allows you to enjoy panoramic views while staying in the interior facilities such as restaurants and coffee shops, unlike your experience in roof lamps. People recognize the roof as a road, and find the building while walking along the road. After recognizing the building, attention is paid to the building from the natural environment, and when entering the building, the wide window emphasizes nature again, and users fall into nature once again.

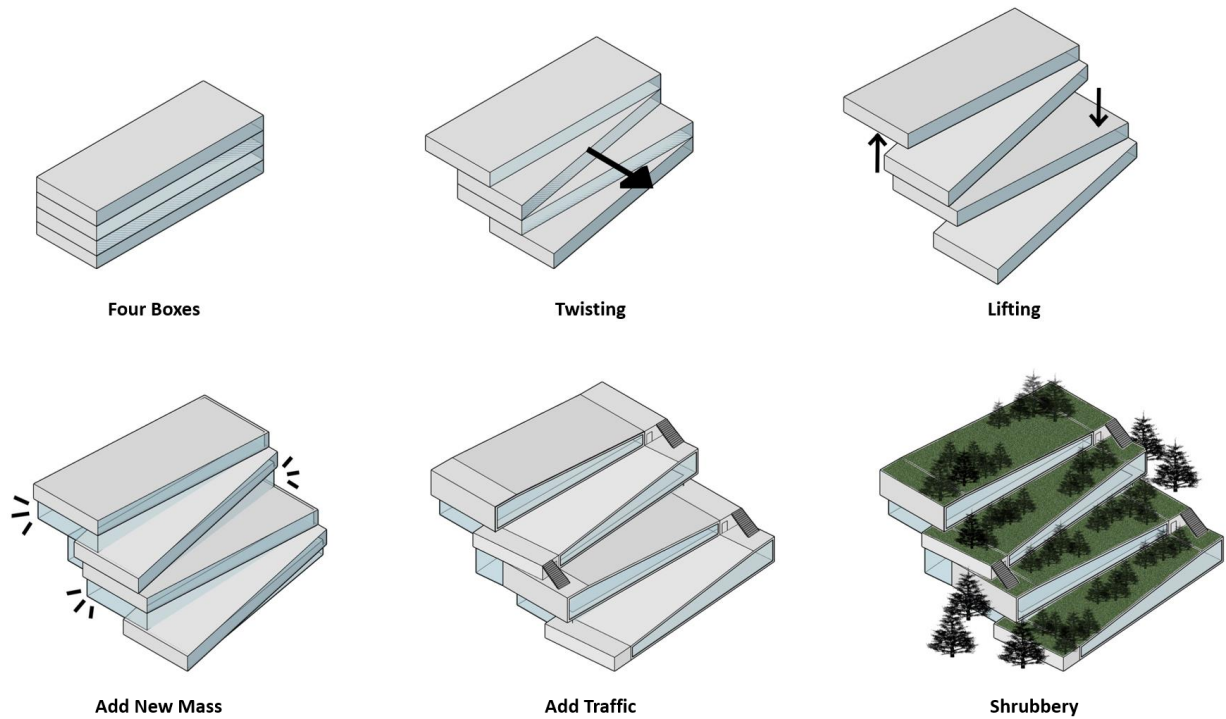


Figure 3 Mass Process

The sculptural form of the visitor center secures 11 hours of lighting from 10:50 a.m. to 10 p.m. in summer season. It also faces sunlight for a rather long period of eight hours from 1:10 p.m. to 9:10 p.m. in winter season. This can be a time zone that is sufficient to give a natural view, and also be an important possibility for the use of solar energy in buildings.

The combination of twisted modules offers a variety of visual experiences, that are similar and different for each floor. Users who admire the beauty of nature from the inside while looking down at the beautiful landscape of the Alps are exposed directly to nature with shrubbery created on the roof terrace.

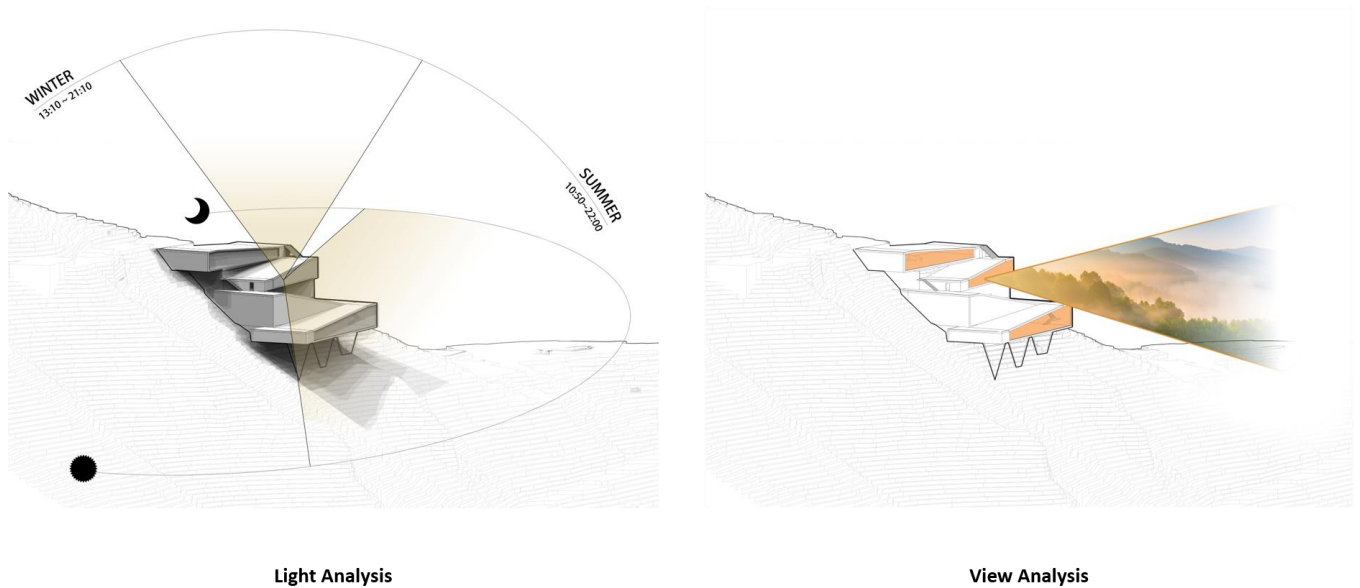


Figure 4 Light and View Analysis

When the zigzag shape of the building putting on the mountainside, it integrates the building into the mountain and forest and folds nature into the building. This Z-shaped building can exist harmoniously with surrounding natural environment, and eventually it looks like artificial mountain.

Inside of building, there are kinds of activities to provide leisure and entertainment places for visitors. There is a cafeteria for drinking coffee or tea and restaurant. This eating and drinking facilities can be a good place to gathering residents from surrounding community and place for taking a break for tourists, who are tired of traveling.

Moreover, there is a gallery space for exhibition. Gallery is usually a closed space for emphasized display but gallery in this building can be an open gallery. Because the curtain wall covers all the walls in one section, the exhibition hall is displayed by natural light rather than artificial lighting, and at the same time, one wall becomes a permanent exhibition hall that contains nature that changes over time and season.

Furthermore, one of the most basic roles of the visitor center is to provide visitors with information about this building as well as information about the entire tourist area. In addition to simply delivering information, visitors can get more practical and unusual information through natural communication with residents. Also, residents will be able to study and learn about the area by themselves, not just as a guide. For residents, not only information about the area, but also through books and media materials, such as libraries, residents can learn many things.

Therefore, it is a joint shelter for visitors and residents, as well as a place to get information and communicate. It is only when accompanied by such diverse activities that the visitor center achieves its essential goals. People gather here to enjoy nature more effectively, to communicate, to get information and their body and mind to relax and refresh with nature and other people.



Figure 5 East View and West View

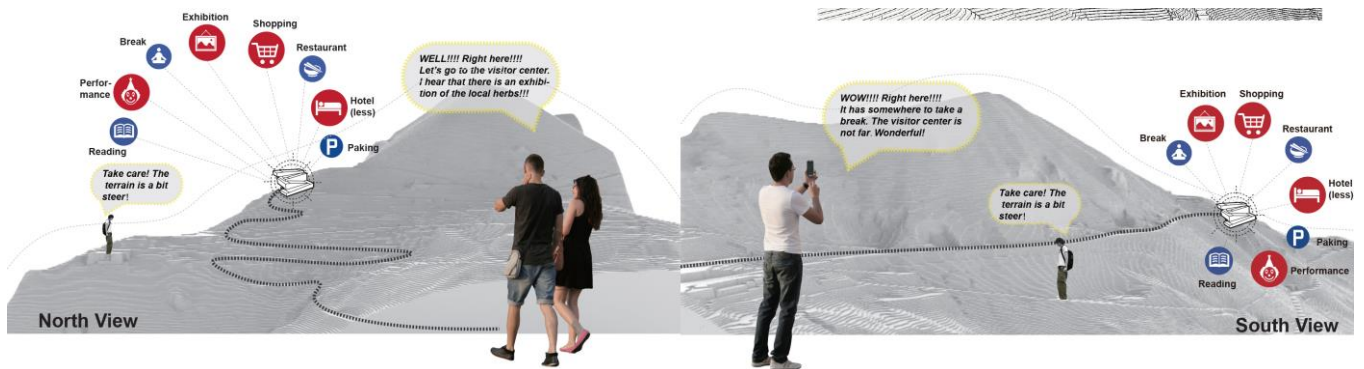


Figure 6 North View and South View (Program Arrangement)

03. DESIGN PROPOSAL

The main focus of interest in architecture over the past few decades has been the city. The increasing migration from rural areas to the cities caused vacancies and thus a demographic change in rural structures. This phenomenon can not only be observed in Austria but takes place worldwide. In the beautiful natural environment of Semmering, we hope that the countryside can attract more people to come to live, travel and experience, so that the advantages of the countryside can be discovered and the development of Semmering economy can be driven. We want to create a connection between urban and rural people so that they can all use this building and come together in this building.

We also want to create a connection between nature and artificiality. People always want to conquer nature, but we believe that nature and man-made buildings should be a harmonious coexistence and organic connection. Our visitor service center is hidden in nature in a low profile. We designed a continuous green roof path, called "folding forest", so that the building becomes a part of nature, and people walking in nature can walk directly into our "folding forest". On this winding roof covered with plants, people can wander freely and enjoy the beautiful mountain view from different angles. At the same time, the building itself is integrated with the surrounding environment, without destroying the harmonious natural environment.

At the same time, we also established a connection between the indoor and outdoor, where people walking on the outdoor roof can easily enter the interior, enjoy a cup of coffee and watch the local culture exhibition. Looking out from the interior of the main building, the beautiful view of Semmering unfolds in front of the visitors like a painting scroll. We wanted to design a framed view to restrict the view of the visitors, so that the view from the interior is different from that from the outdoor environment.

We wanted to create a vision with our folded Forest building, to create multiple connections, including urban and rural, natural and man-made, indoor and outdoor spaces and existing building and new building. It is hoped that this building can bring vitality to Semmering community and environment, where tourists and local residents can enjoy the building with nature and bring some economic income to the locality.

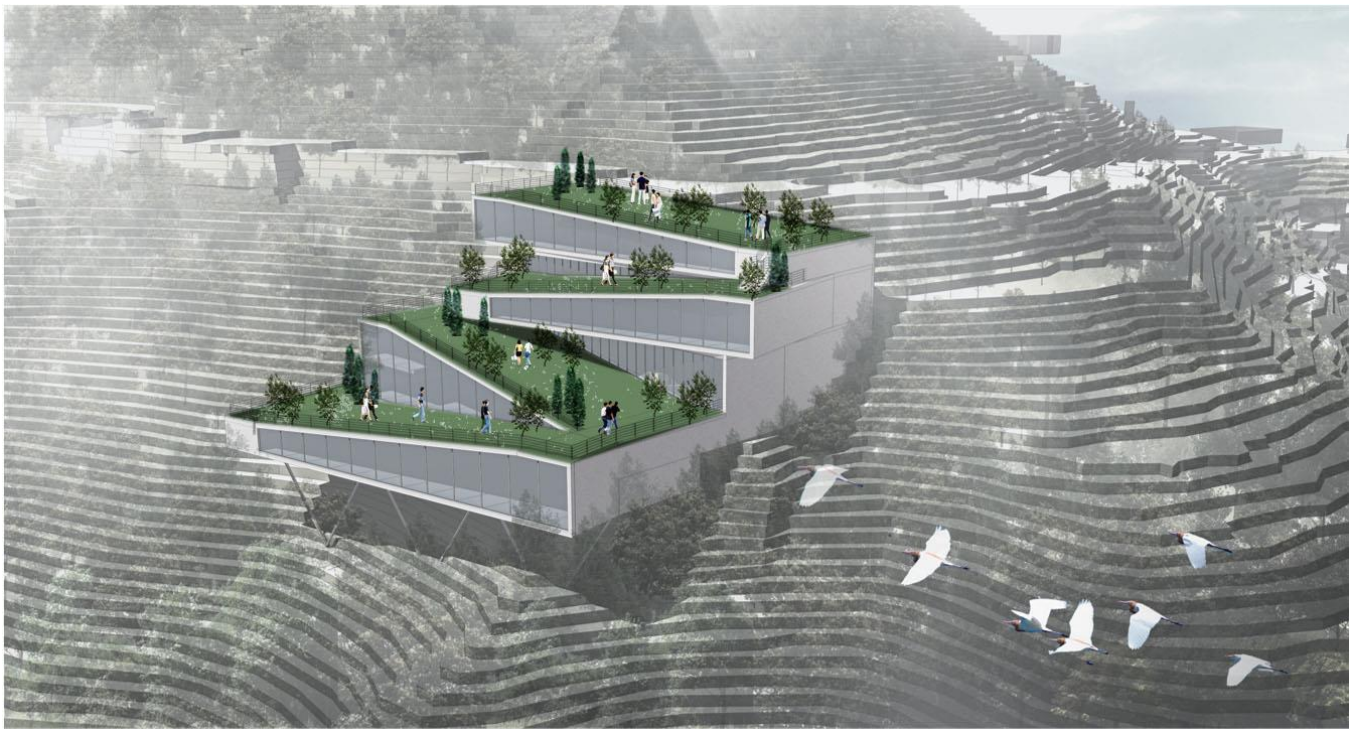


Figure 7 Bird Eye View

Our visitor center has two entrance to approach from road. The first is the roof. This route is both an extension of the road and a guide to a new experience. People approach the sloping forest road with curiosity as they walk down the street. If you walk down the street, you will not recognize the building until you face it. At the same time as the roof on which he stands, the terrace naturally leads inside the building.

Second, if you pass the building and follow the road further, you will see another slope. Walking down the street, you reach the entrance to the fourth floor of the building. In this case, it is used for main access purposes when it is difficult to access the sloping roof when it rains or snows, and people go straight from the road.

Besides, the four modules, twisted at various angles, propose different views from floor to floor, limiting slightly different viewing angles.

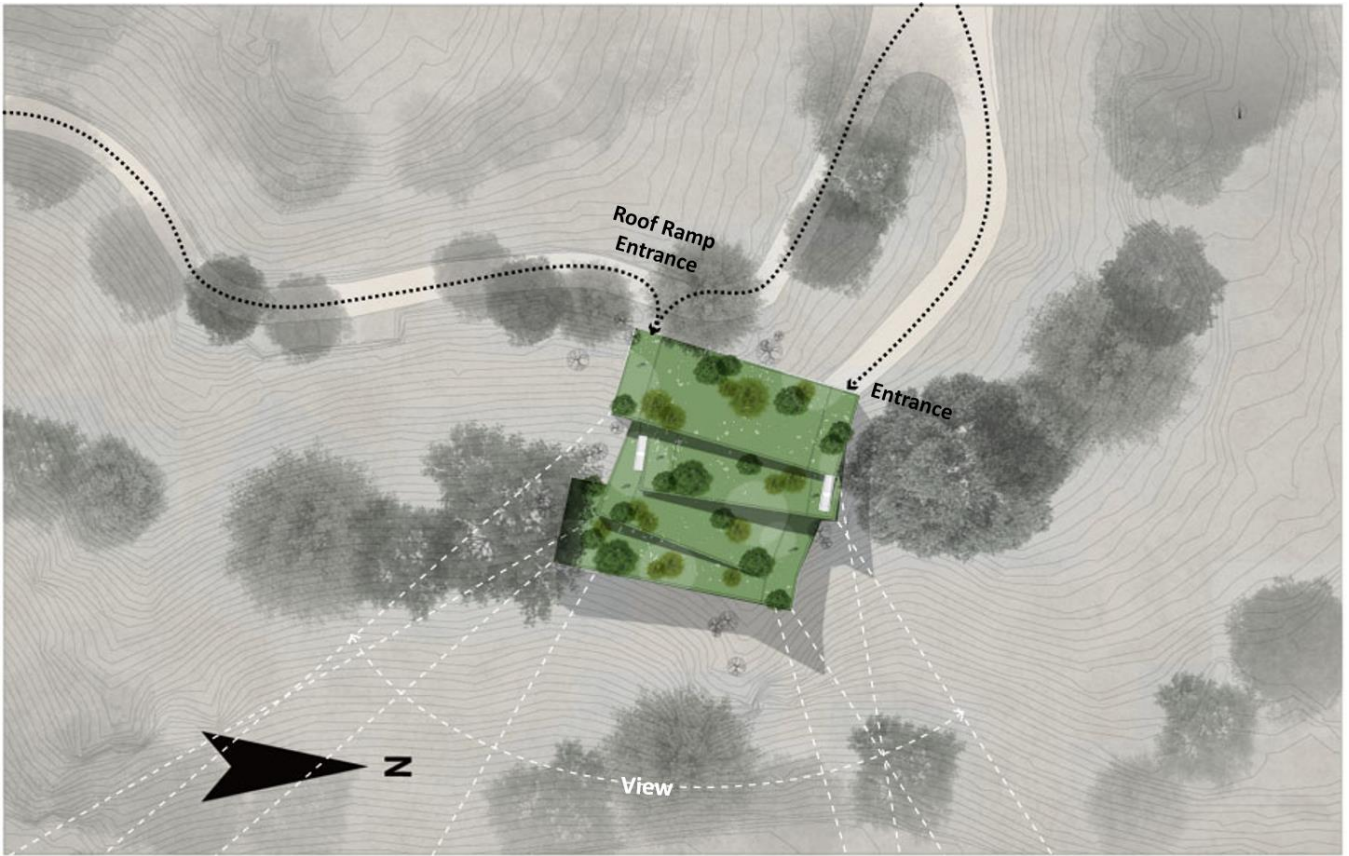


Figure 8 Site Plan

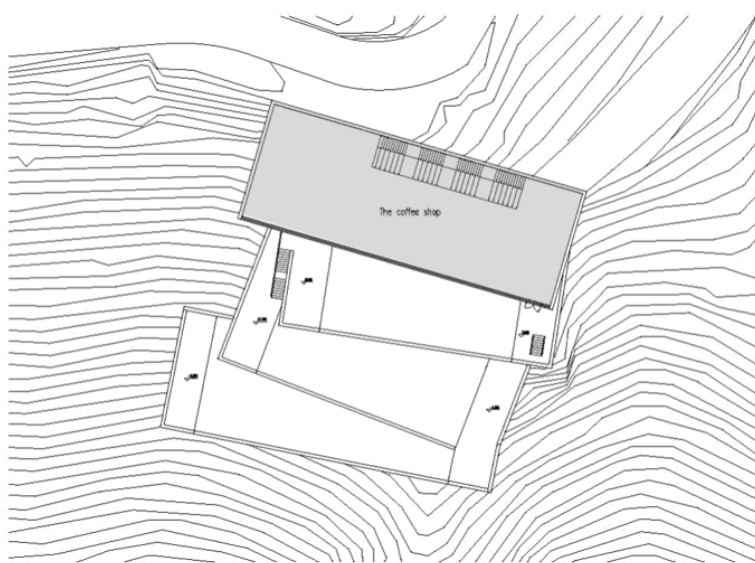
Unlike the volumes on the second and third floors, and the third and fourth floors leading to stairs, the roofs on the first and second floors naturally lead to ramps. People can go up and down more comfortably and ride bicycles. In addition, the first and second-layer mass combinations are connected internally and create various spaces.



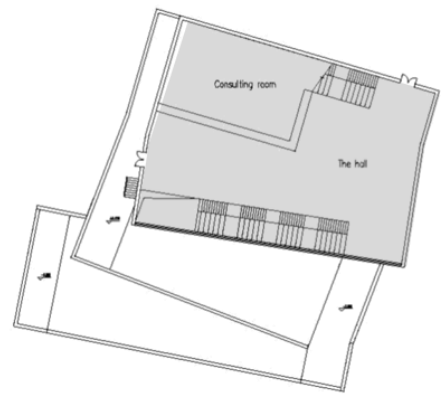
Figure 9 Roof Ramp Perspective

When you look at the floor directly inside the building from the street, the first floor has an entrance hall and a consulting room so that visitors can get information right away. Up the stairs, the second floor, where the road meets the roof, is the tallest floor and has the widest view. There were coffee shops and restaurants here to create a more private and quiet space. The first basement floor, which falls from the first floor, has the largest area and lies deep into the ground. Therefore, the exhibition hall was partly focused on artificial light, while the other part emphasized the dynamic flow of moving to the second basement or going out to the terrace, looking at open windows towards the natural landscape. The exhibition also leads to the second basement level, and the second basement level is an open exhibition hall that emphasizes nature more and is distinguished from the first basement level. As a large exhibition space on various floors was created and designed as much as possible, it is hoped that residents and visitors will be filled with various activities through various events and gatherings.

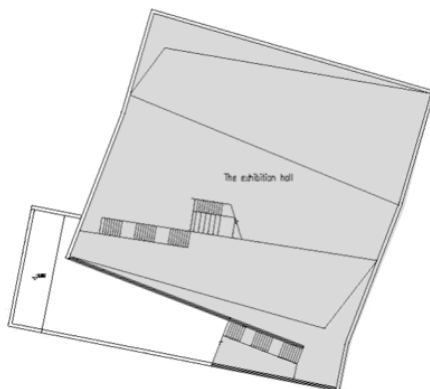
The roofs of all floors are connected by stairs and slopes, and when you open the door at the end of the curtain wall on all floors, the roofs of the lower floors become terraces, creating a shrubbery park in harmony with the natural scenery of Mt. Alps. People freely circulate in and out and look and feel nature from various perspectives. Artificial shrubbery terrace gardens and visitor centers disappear and become infinitely weaker in the nature of the Alps. Camouflage with minimal artificial intervention helps people fully concentrate on nature.



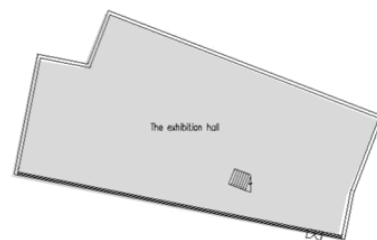
Second floor



First floor



The negative a layer



Negative on the second floor

Figure 10 Plan

The building that flows along the slope of the land adapts to the surrounding environment. Each floor is connected by stairs and slopes, and all floors have a view and emphasis on nature, but on the higher floors, various activities, connections between different floors, and terraced gardens allow people to socialize with nature. Then, they reach their final destination, B2, and reflect on the meaning once more. It becomes a meditation space that focuses solely on nature.

In the front view, the dynamic Z-shape is emphasized even more. We wanted to make the building more transparent and disappear according to the terrain by placing curtain walls on the front. The shrubbery of the ramp, which is a roof and terrace, emphasizes this camouflage, and curtain walls frame the eastern side of the ramp, rather than the north-south direction, drawing light and new views into the building.

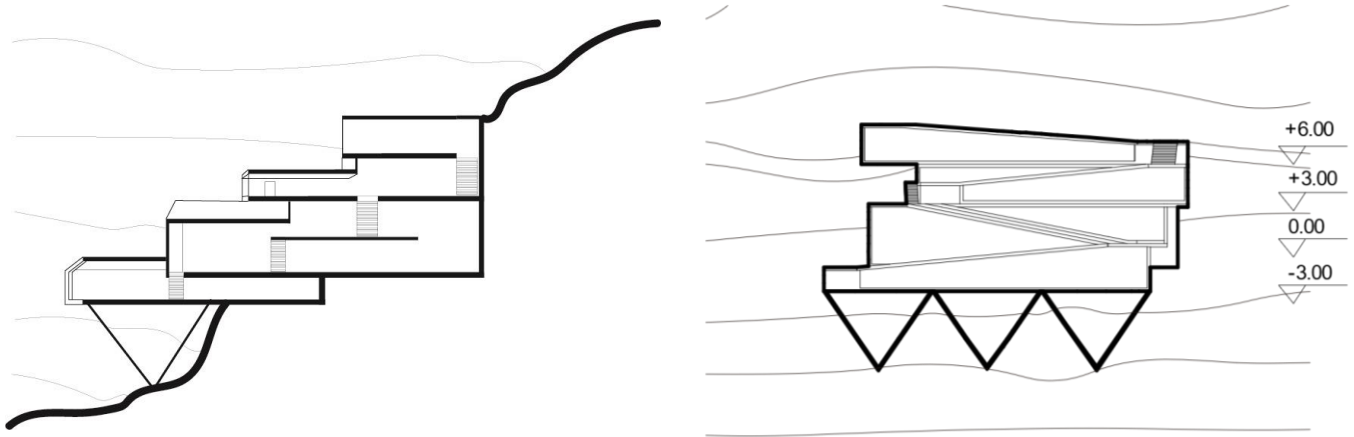


Figure 8 Section and Elevation

Alpine acid, which is viewed from the inside, can be viewed comfortably without being affected by the external environment. It frames the natural environment of the Alps, where people meet and see at coffee shops. Looking at nature, people are overwhelmed by it and think about their existence. Also, you can see the shrubbery of the terrace and the people passing through it, and experience a variety of things to see and experience.

The natural connection between the inside and outside of the building causes more people to communicate, and in such circumstances people feel about communities, and in nature we are all the same and equal, and we are all connected.



Figure 9 Indoor Perspective View

04. Conclusion

We simply designed a Z-shaped architecture to fit the ground, but its impact and effect came greatly to the user. The recent coronavirus outbreak has led us to a growing desire for a larger outdoor space than trapped rooms, resulting in a lack of people's communication and physical contact. We are getting used to this situation. The visitor center not only relieves the desire for the natural and outdoor environment, but also reminds us of the communication that we had forgotten. We hope more people will experience more diverse spaces and we've folded and compressed the forest, but we want them to reach nature more closely through the communication of the users.