

## Competition Visitor Center National Park Black Forest (GER)

project **Expansion and reorganisation of the National Park near "Ruhestein"** through **planning a visitor and information centre with an administration building** awarding authority **State of Baden-Württemberg (GER)** team **WW+, Esch-sur-Alzette/Trier (LUX/GER), HDK Dutt + Kist GmbH (GER)** gfa **6.210 m<sup>2</sup>** gv **34.140 m<sup>3</sup>** total area **4.049 m<sup>2</sup>** net construction costs (KG 200-700 minus 600) **20.500.000 €** competition phase **08/2014 - 10/2014** open competition **1. phase / 2 phases** participants **167**

*"Nature is always the same, but nothing in her that appears to us, lasts. Our art must render the thrill of her permanence along with her elements, the appearance of all her changes. It must give us the taste of her eternity."*

Paul Cézanne

The particularity of the geology and geography of the 'Schwarzwald' Nature Park characterises the overall sculptural and typological structure of the planned visitor and information centre. The concept for the architecture, the setting of the individual functional units and the design of the outdoor facilities is logically derived from the existing natural environment.

### Genius Loci – Building formation in the flow of nature

The distinctiveness of the site within a landscape area with isolated solitary buildings belonging to the 'Ruhestein' nature conservation centre provides only tangential specifications for urban planning references. The result is a basic concept of a visitor and information centre in the flow of nature.

The architectonic concept foresees a compact building form in a bid to reduce built-up areas in favour of green surroundings and places particular importance on a harmonious integration into the surrounding natural environment. Given its standalone form, the building forms a clear, identity-establishing conclusion to Landstraße 401, yet due to the volume's particular shape, which follows the terrain, it opens up towards the 'Schwarzwald' recreational area. The generous building recesses, the high degree of transparency and the wide, open forecourt create a flowing connection between the visitor and information centre and the existing natural environment and green space. The associated administration building corresponds proportionally to the design of the visitor centre and joins the existing 'Villa Klumpp' in the extended planning area.

With its clear structure, the design provides visitors with a secure entrance to the landscape area. At the same time, a sense of openness and transparency is achieved through the targeted use of material, light and openings.

### Access

The main entrance is defined by a generous forecourt on the north side of the building. From there, via a covered entrance area, the spacious foyer is accessed, which given its representative and welcoming character becomes a central meeting point and at the same time represents an important interface of the building, via which all other areas can be accessed. The individual functional areas of the ground floor taken up by retail, exhibition and gastronomy spaces with outdoor use are directly connected to the foyer. The events room can also be accessed from here. Since meeting points represent an important orientation element for visitors, the building with its central meeting point and additional communal areas features a distinctive transparency and generosity.

The connection to Landstraße 401 provides vehicle traffic with direct access to the newly planned parking area, which borders the planning area to the northeast. Deliveries are carried out at the gable end facing the street, in the basement of the information centre.



site plan



floor plan GF

### Functional solution

The individual main function areas automatically emerge given the angled building form oriented to the nature park. The accessory functions accompanying the individual main units are accommodated together with the access area in room-dividing cubicles. The foyer is located in the building's joint and features an information counter and shop. The entrance area is joined by a gastronomy space, oriented to the street, and the exhibition space looking out on the nature area. Parts of the permanent exhibition as well as a generous cinema room are located in the basement, on the same level as the teaching rooms and linked to the ground floor via a staircase and a lift. In line with the layered topography, the basement is embedded in the existing terrain and towards the rear building area provides space for storage and other accessory function rooms.

Large-surface glazing looking out on the green outdoors lets the individual room elements enjoy nature's view while supplying them with abundant daylight, ensuring a bright and friendly atmosphere in all the main rooms. The unrestricted view of the surrounding nature allows visitors to let their minds roam freely. The outdoor areas of the visitor and information centre, given their layout in terms of space and design, undergo a functional extension in relation to the inside rooms and can be used for individualised purposes, fostering a desirable environment in addition to the natural atmosphere.

Spatially and visually, the high degree of transparency leads to an intertwining of various room zones, resulting in a 'place of communication'. This has a positive influence on the internal communication as well as the interaction between the visitor centre and the adjoining nature area. The transparency within the building allows adjoining areas to connect physically and optically to one another to varying degrees and increases the flexibility of use of individual functional areas.

### Construction and materials

The massive concrete cubature is clad with natural finished larch as a curtain-wall wood shingle façade. In line with the geological layering of the natural space, the entire cubature of the visitor and information centre as well as that of the administration building is embedded into the natural environment as a monolithic timber structure. The new construction's interior is characterised by a scaling down to just a few materials.

In accordance with the comprehensive energy, robust, durable and sustainable materials have been deliberately chosen, which are easy to care for and maintain their appearance over a long period of time.

### Open space concept

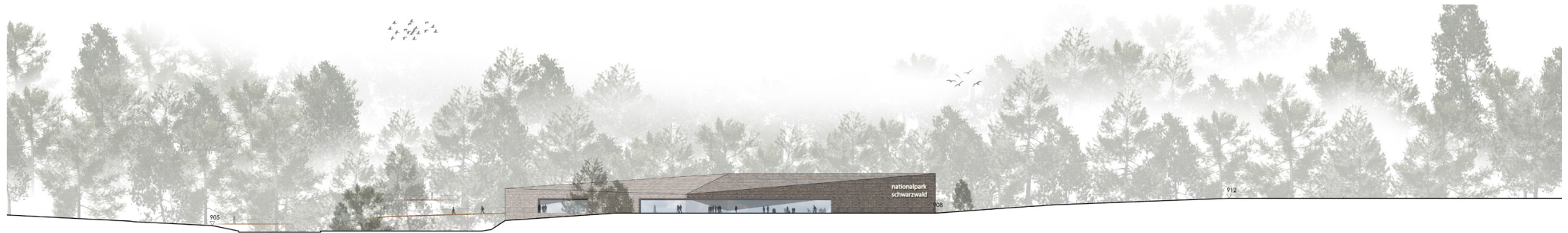
The new construction of the information centre of the 'Schwarzwald' conservation area calls for a correspondingly delicate treatment of the existing green structures. Thanks to in particular a space-saving structural engineering concept, the high-quality existing green space can to a large extent be retained. Through integrating those existing trees that are worth retaining as much as possible, the building projection and the connecting canopy pathway take centre stage, thereby amplifying the landscape. No adverse effects to the existing green network are expected.

### Urban planning and incorporation into the landscape

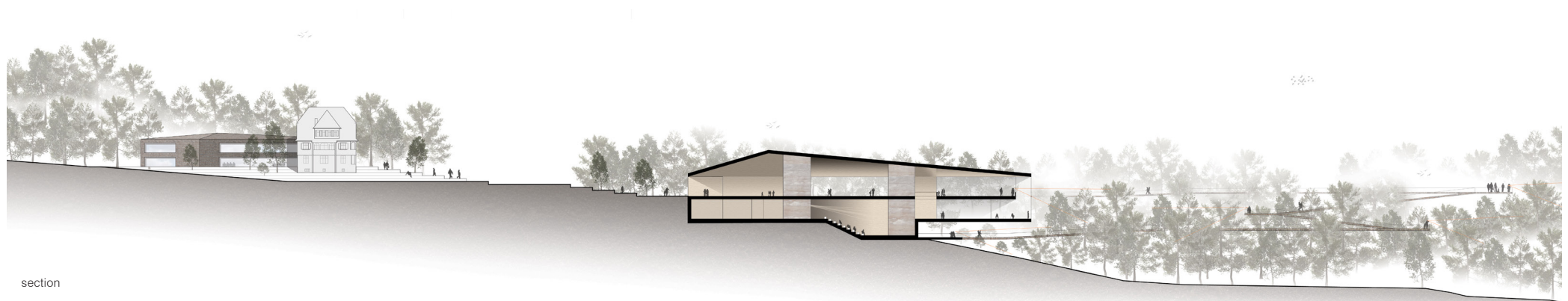
The future new address of the National Park near Ruhestein is embodied in a venue that stylises the existing type of landscape, while safeguarding it as a preamble and entry point to the setting of the national park. In line with the principle of "Let nature be nature", open spaces are created that reflect the archetype of the cultural landscape.

Here special uses like a winter sports centre, national park administration and transport facilities find a new order, while any new additions merely strengthen this order.

The building ensemble, made up of a visitor centre and an administration building, is incorporated as an independent component into the diversity of the 'Schwarzwald' nature park.



elevation



section