

B R A U E N W Ä L C H L I A R C H I T E C T E S

SWISS EMBASSY IN BEIJING

Sanlitun, Dongwujie 3, Beijing 100600, China

Project Information Sheet, 09.01.19

MV, (translation by Eóin Mc Carthy / 19.11.2018)

The project envisions the demolition and the reconstruction of the embassy, the reorganisation of the garden and the conservation of the residence of the ambassador, dating from 1972. The embassy in Beijing is destined to be the largest official representation of Switzerland abroad. It will be home to around 130 work places. The project is the result of an open project competition for architects and landscape architects (may 2018). The project's budget is of the order of 12 million Swiss Francs VAT inclusive (maximum cost) and covers the total costs of the project (planning of project and realisation). The project language is English

Client

Federal Office for Buildings and logistics (FBL)
Fellerstrasse 21
3003 Bern - Switzerland

Architect

Brauen Wälchli Architects
Rue de Bourg 25
1003 Lausanne - Switzerland

Landscape architect

Landscape architect Jean-Jacques Borgeaud
Avenue de Chailly 23
1012 Lausanne - Switzerland

Planning

Phase 31 – concept design and cost estimation	08.-10.2018
Phase 32 – developed design and budget	2019
Credit approval by the Federal Parliament	2019-2020
Phases 33 and 41- planning permission and tender process	2020
Phase 51 – detail design	2020
Phase 52 – construction works	2021
Phase 53 – handover and exploitation	2023

Project facts

Project stage: concept design November 2018

Gross external area	5'428 m2
Gross internal floor area	4'721 m2
Built surface	707 m2
Nett internal area	3'624 m2
Built volume	23'081 m3

Summary Description

Load-bearing structure above-ground

reinforced concrete walls, fair-faced finish

reinforced concrete beams, fair-faced concrete finish, prefabricated or cast on site,

pre-stressed / ultra-high performance concrete if deemed necessary

floor slabs in reinforced concrete

Load-bearing structure below-ground

reinforced concrete walls, fair-faced finish

Envelope

Glazed curtain wall elevation, transom and mullion type (or frame if necessary) in timber with steel core, thermal glazing, conforming to security regulations of an embassy

Roof

“Green” insulated roof

Garden

Planting and arrangement according to the competition concept.

Roots of the clouds

A rock is certainly a stable entity. And yet one must represent it like a presence as transient as breath, as fluid as water. In China, the ancient dynasties gave rocks the name “roots of the clouds”...

Six erratic blocks, the remnants of Swiss glaciers tell of the presence of Switzerland in Beijing and of the attachment to the ground that welcomes it.

The project proposes a reading of the site which attaches itself to the notable architecture of the residence, it's relationship with the vegetation of the district and the region and of the invisible links that this Swiss ground knits with it's host, China.

The walls, the floating floor plates and the concrete fins represent the principal characteristics of the 1970's villa, which is to be conserved. These elements correspond to an international architectural language which one finds for example at the Nordic pavilion in Venice, and communicates an idea about openness in both the real and figurative sense of the word. Relatively simple to achieve, it allows long spans for reception type spaces and guarantees a flexibility of use in the inhabited space.

A series of parallel walls slide into the garden of the embassy to compose a new whole with the residence. It allows for a very fluid progression of spaces, from the entrances on the street right until the heart of the garden where the main house benefits from a new vegetated treasure trove. Whilst evocative of the typologies of the Siheyuan homes of the Beijing region, this spatial organisation brings a strong visual transparency that dematerialises the limits between the interior and exterior. It offers a work environment both open and convivial. The careful distribution of these simple wall planes in the proximity of the main house however guarantees the quiet confidentiality and required discretion necessary for the embassy.

