

CITY CEMETERY ST MARTIN

1604 ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECT REPORT

HOW ONE CAN MEET DEATH

As winner of an architectural competition held by Linz AG, Heidl architects have upgraded the cemetery of St Martin by restructuring the entrance area and building a chapel of rest.

They have succeeded in emphasising the meaning of the place by the use of established design tools like monumentality or the creation of visual axes. On the other hand they use natural components like grassy mounds, sandy paths and clear groves to emphasise the special quality of the woody cemetery.



In no part of the area they lose sight of their aim – to define the space through a sequence of exterior and interior rooms and to therefore assign certain usages and connected moods.

The tripartite main entrance door – crowned by a simple stone bar – opens up to a wooded court that is bounded by a similar door situation in the back. From here the view falls straight on the main axis leading into the green.



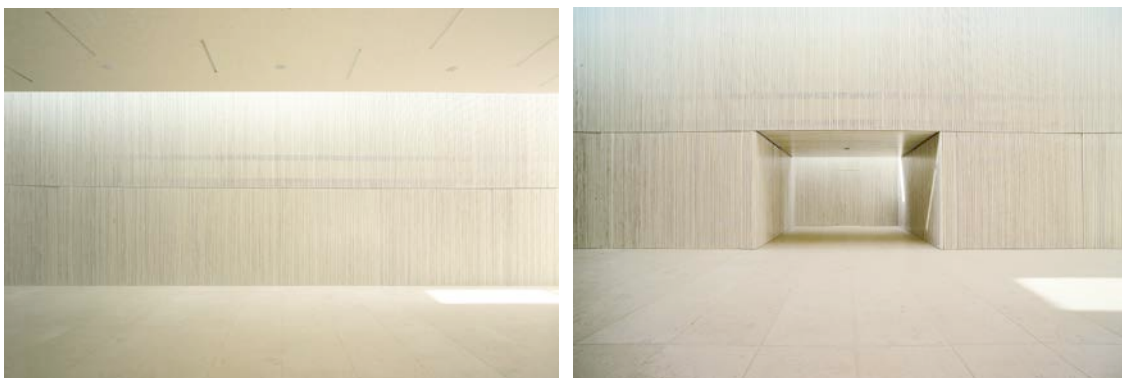
A few steps farther a bell tower positioned in front of the entrance façade of an administration building initiates the change of direction of 90 degrees. One now moves towards the chapel of rest in an exterior space protected by a wall, an earth mound and the sky. The slant cut volume of the chapel reaches into the open and by that means manages another change of directions with ease. Metal coated sliding doors open up to the main room of the chapel of rest. On the opposite side one will later step outside into the old chapel that is integrated into the new structure conclusively.



The chapel of rest works thanks to its uninterrupted big form – structurally planned with regard to aesthetics and efficiency by the engineers Aigner-Friedhuber & Partner.

ATTENTIVE IN NICHES

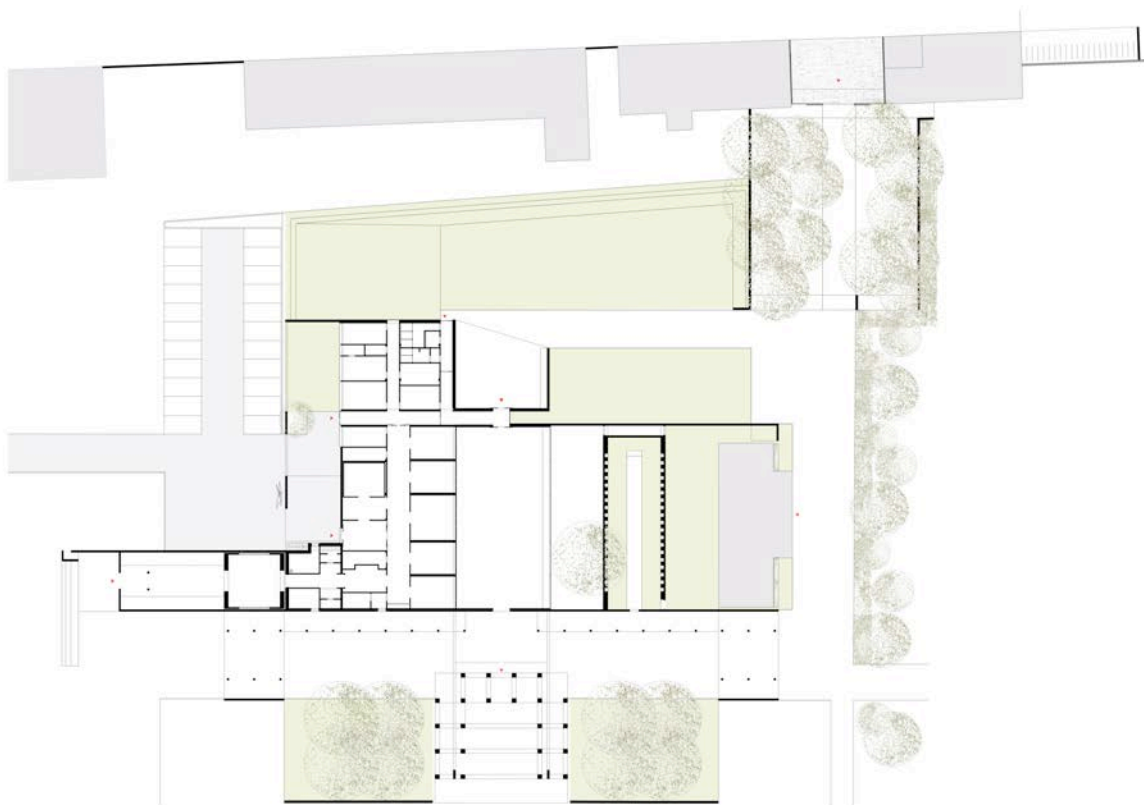
Heidl architects have hid the five lying in state niches behind a cladding of white stained oak wood slats along the long side of the room, so that the attention is focused on the involved niche.



On the other side the floor rises – levelling the perspective – towards the opposite long side, that opens up glassily atop a bench to a silent court with a single tree. Via glassy sections in the roof rays of light fall onto the walls. The modest colourfulness and materiality of the room underline the message to put the human into the centre and to find something special in the simple.



This attitude continues in the also carefully designed adjoining rooms. Especially the area provided for ritual washings pays respect to its intended use with sensibility and high design quality.



(translation of an article by Romana Ring in the newspaper Oberoesterreichische Nachrichten, 2008-11-08, "Wie man dem Tod begegnen kann")