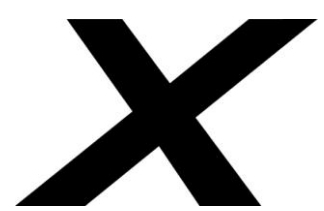


# International Prize of Sacred Architecture V Edition – 2012 / **Fondazione Frate Sole**

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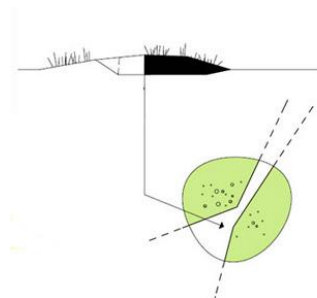
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## OASE

Pastoral care *voestalpine*



Location: Währingerstraße 30, Linz, Upper Austria  
Client: Diocese Linz

Planning data:  
Cast of Architects 2008  
Start of planning: February 2008  
Completion: Summer 2011  
*Art in construction:* Gerhard Brandl

Constructional data:  
Premises: 4.843 m<sup>2</sup>  
Built-up area: 840 m<sup>2</sup>  
Construction: reinforced concrete construction

Pictures: David Schreyer, Rupert Asanger

### Task

The new building for pastoral care in the diocese of Linz, to be located on the site of the steel company *voestalpine*, is designed to create good framework conditions for liturgical and secular events for both active and retired personnel.

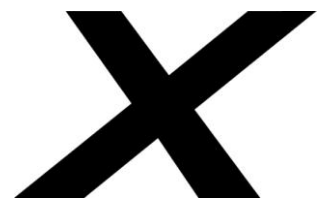
The plot of land lies between borders formed by a number of main roads and the large industrial estate. This creates an island consisting of a four-metre thick deposit of slag stone with the characteristic features of a “no-man’s-land” which is in need of a new strong character.

### Concept

The study of duality between man and work within the steel company led to the concept of a complementary addition to the area through a new “built landscape”. Conventional church buildings, e.g. a basilica or tower, would not be able to achieve their independent meaning in this area as the *voestalpine*’s site is mainly dominated by relatively high buildings (cylinder, spheres, cone, tower, etc.) with incomparably large dimensions.

Small existing woodlands represent a “bastion of nature” and serve as a conceptional starting point for the introduction of an “oasis for the people”, a built landscape which is integrated into the hillside. The building is subsequently developed by cutting into and hollowing out the hillside.

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## The exterior

The building's main artery, which cuts into the hillside, runs towards the entrances along the western side. The embankment, which results from this excavation, is made of dark slag-stone, which is either poured into the embankment or processed as pebble dash. Furthermore, the artery widens as it approaches the green space, and finally, gently leads up to the woods along a broad open sloping surface. The cultivation gradually increases in density starting from the lawn, via a diversity of plants, towards the coniferous forest.

The central lawn is connected to social and event rooms, built into the hillside on the same lower level, through glass walls. The cross, the edge of the wood and meadow as well as the wooden shed are situated up against the upper edge of the building. Different spots within the countryside can be visited via several different walkways and stairs. Climbing the exposed roof terrace on the eastern side of the hillside which faces away from the artery, one passes the steel car port as well as the garden associated with the apartment and youth area.

## The interior

The "built landscape" also determines the shape of the interior. The polygonal ground plan is divided into the main areas by the "ravine", the central part of the development which tapers towards the back. It divides the functional areas in the northern part of the building including offices, meeting room and workshops from the social and religious areas in the southern part including cloakroom, bar, event room and the chapel.

The "bell court" situated by the ravine serves to lighten the functional areas and radiates a contemplative mood due to its division into squares and its bell being placed at ground-level. The hollow space under the bell serves to distribute the sound (like the bell in the mining shaft).

Within eyeshot of the courtyard, the stairs lead up to the upper floor with its guest rooms, the apartment and the youth area. The parish's meeting rooms can be found on the other side of the ravine and are accessible via a bridge.

The chapel, event room and bar are brought together as the main rooms of the social-sacral area under a shell which is divided into triangles. This crystalline geometry creates an important meaning encompassing Saint Barbara as patron saint of both pastoral care and mining for the steel company's ore production. The triangle's surfaces consist of boards varnished in white whose spaces create effective acoustics within the room. The room's shell integrates all the functional fittings, e.g. the bar, doors and/or technical installations, to create a homogeneous appearance.

The demands of different events can be fully met by either joining or separating the chapel, event room and bar area. Two sliding walls enable a choice of separate or connected rooms or an entirely open space covering all of the rooms. The open room as a whole inhabits the chapel and bar and thus establishes a unique programmatic openness to integrate religious and secular institutions into the community.

Text: xarchitekten, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011  
Translation: Anja Ganley, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Modifications: xarchitekten, 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011

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