

Where Old Meets New:

New Building for the Felix Platter University Geriatrics Center Safeguards the Future of Geriatric Medicine

Comprising seven stories from the lower basement to the fifth story, the new building for the Felix Platter University Geriatrics Center in Basel, Switzerland, has 176 patient rooms with 280 beds, 1,655 doors, 969 windows, 11 elevators, and state-of-the-art energy standards. With a floor space of 23,577 square meters, the new hospital building is one of the most advanced in Switzerland. One of the unique features of the building is that building information modeling (BIM), a method of digital planning, was employed to use all relevant building-related information from the competition stage up to the operation of the building. The international project management and consulting company Drees & Sommer oversaw the project, performing the role of project and information manager as well as providing overall project management for the client. The new building was officially opened on February 22, and on February 23 an open day was held for the public.

The new build project for the Felix Platter University Geriatrics Center is pioneering in one important respect: it is so far the only project of its size in Europe to have been planned and realized entirely digitally at all stages from the very start using building information modelling (BIM). Using BIM, the new building is planned in advance down to the smallest detail as a digital twin, with all relevant data being stored in the BIM model database, from where it can be retrieved at any time. The method played a major part in enabling the building to be completed on schedule and within the budget, with a construction period of only four years. Drees & Sommer's interdisciplinary healthcare team also contributed by providing project management, engineering, real estate, and user experience experts to perform the work effectively. However, the use of BIM does not end after the planning and construction phases are completed. Florian Schrenk, Senior Project Partner at Drees & Sommer, explained: 'What is important, and so far unique in Europe, is that the BIM data from the planning and construction process is not abandoned once construction is completed, but is carried over into the later operation of the hospital, where it can be accessed at any time.' This is of great benefit to the operator, as it enables equipment to be monitored and controlled in realtime. Facility management is improved in efficiency because areas such as building technology, medical engineering and cleaning can be particularly effectively organized with the data now available.

Another special feature of this state-of-the-art new building is that it has a very flexible layout, which enables management to respond quickly to new medical developments. Operationally, the hospital is more efficient and better prepared for the future due to the combination of the acute geriatrics, geriatric psychiatry and rehabilitation departments under one roof. Jürg Nyfele, doctor of natural sciences and chief executive officer of the Felix Platter University Geriatrics Center, commented: 'The average age of our patients is 81 years. The state-of-the-art infrastructure and processes in our new building leave us well positioned for the future – particularly in view of the demographic changes taking place – and ensure that our patients are given professional advice and care.' The hospital has therefore not only invested in a new building – its future strategy also includes a new IT landscape and the optimization of all processes.

The new building was designed by architecture firms wörner traxler richter, based in Frankfurt am Main, and HolzerKobler with offices in Zurich. Each of the four upper floors of the new building accommodates two nursing wards with combined therapy and consulting rooms. On the ground floor is the reception, patient admissions, the restaurant, and all outpatient and inpatient medicine departments. The two lower levels house logistics, technology and parking. The needs of an ageing society are addressed by an integrated supply strategy; this is one of the reasons for incorporating the general practitioner's surgery WestfeldPraxis into the building. Patient wellbeing was the primary consideration in every aspect of the new building's design. With this in mind *GERT* age simulation suits – which give the wearer an understanding of the typical limitations of older people – were used to help determine the interior design. These insights directly influenced the architecture and design.

In its highly advanced new building, the Felix Platter University Geriatrics Center offers prevention, treatment, early diagnosis, therapy and postoperative care. The scientific focus of the health center is on the areas of cognition, mobility and nutrition.

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