

Wuttke & Ringhof Architekten: Drawing the best solutions



It is an art to be able to create buildings that fit into their context, which are astonishing in their own right but without overpowering the environment they find themselves in. Since 1993, Wuttke & Ringhof Architekten have been refining this art, working on projects in Germany and Denmark from their office in Copenhagen.

TEXT: JOSEFINE OLDER STEFFENSEN | PHOTOS : WUTTKE & RINGHOF

MAIN IMAGE: Wuttke & Ringhof Architekten works on everything from the initial idea to the final product, helping with all practicalities along the way.

“The early ‘90s in Berlin were incredibly exciting for architects. Everyone was coming to Germany as so much of it had to be rebuilt, and there was an opportunity to start again and create something astonishing. It was in this environment that Thomas and I joined forces and started to take part in competitions, which we found ourselves winning a lot of,” explains Beatrix Wuttke, partner at Wuttke & Ringhof Architekten alongside Thomas Ringhof.

They have since then continued on their competitive path, winning competitions in both Denmark and Germany. Over the years, Wuttke & Ringhof have worked on everything from home extensions to neighbourhood developments, and most recently, they have been working on a hotel in Eutin in Germany.



Blending in while standing out

The hotel site is next to a beautiful lake, which hugs the small local town. On the opposite side of the lake is a castle from 1776, and the town is picturesque and traditional, having been spared in the war. "It was very important to us to take care of the town when we had to consider how to design a modern hotel in one of the prime locations of the area. Throughout the process of designing and drawing the building, we knew we wanted to give something back to the town, rather than only providing a space for visitors," explains Wuttke.

The hotel had to be an inclusive space, meaning that 25 per cent of the staff have some kind of disability, which had to be taken into account when designing the work environment; there should be plenty of rooms that are easily accessible. "There were many factors involved, so we had to utilise every corner we could, while taking care not to disrupt the beauty of the town."

The final design, which won them the competition, includes a terrace on the lake and a restaurant that opens up the space to the locals. The hotel has 44 rooms, with those overlooking the lake having their own private balconies, so people can make the most of the views. The outside of the building uses bricks and stones from a local brickyard, which are the same as those used to build the castle opposite. It is a simple and effective way to create something new and beautiful, which still fits perfectly in with the town's historic and charming buildings.

Coming up with the best solution

"When we take on a new competition or a project, we always work through a process of trying every option on the table. We work with other specialists and gather all the information we can, and then try lots of iterations of how the building could work optimally. That way, we can ensure that we've tried all solutions and ended up with the best one," explains Wuttke.

The best solution is also closely related to the context of the building and the use it will have. "It's impossible to bring about a good piece of architecture without understanding how and where the building is used. In fact, the most important thing is to understand the place you're building in, whether it's creating new buildings within a city or designing a whole new area of housing."

In all their projects, Wuttke & Ringhof let the building speak for itself. "As an

architect, you can't shout too loud. The building has to have its own character and be able to transform with its context and allow people to make it their own as well. We have to let the building be transformed by its environment, from the initial drawing and far into the future."

Wuttke & Ringhof Architekten takes great care to create buildings that not only serve their purpose well, but also fit in while still standing out. Their approach of testing numerous solutions has led to them winning a vast array of competitions, which has ultimately led to innovative and beautiful buildings across both Denmark and Germany.

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