

Stork Nest Farm - Integration of equestrian equipment



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Introduction

We were asked to design the revitalization of a farmstead, which would be used for company presentation, holding of corporate events and, last but not least, staff training and their leisure activities. The farmstead Semtín near Benešov, which was selected for this project, was in desolate state, but its strong Genius Loci with a large water reservoir and Nature park Džbány-Žebrák nearby destined the project for a special approach.

The landscape character resembles a submontane region with a large complex of woods, wide meadows with groves and wetlands and a no less significant system of ponds.

The stork nest on the top of the distillery's chimney with its nearly 90-year history gave the complex its name and widely influenced the process of forming the horse-riding arena.

It became a symbol of the symbiosis between man and animal, or (if you like) the client's company - specialized i.e. in manufacturing natural products - and nature. It wasn't a formal symbol for us. We were fascinated by stork's fidelity. Almost 90 years generations of storks are returning from Africa to the farm and we tried to design the farm in order to bring back people here again.

These birds also fascinated us by their endurance in building their nest. After decades they construct still the same, no doubt about the shape and material, still in the same place and with no desire for originality, which bothers all architects and builders nowadays. Storks don't look for exceptional places. They don't want to distinguish themselves and compete with others. Storks became a symbol for us in the approach to construction. Our design of the farm was led in humility to these bird architects.

The old farmstead consisted of an enclosed yard of an almost square ground plan and addition of a piggery. The yard contained two dwelling houses, a distillery, a barn and a stable. The buildings for stabling were torn down; also a small dwelling house had to be removed due to bad technical state. The remaining buildings (villa, distillery, barn) were intended for reconstruction.

At the beginning of the design was the idea of creating two independent functions – recreationally educational with accommodation and agricultural - which can work either together or separately. Therefore the buildings were conceived as enclosed units, which neighbour on one another and can be easily connected or separated. New buildings have been added to the existing ones to restore the form of the original farmyard.

The agricultural function got its new own service yard connected with an educational path, where the visitors can see the animals kept on pastures. The animal breeding on the farm is not motivated by economic profit, but only constitutes a means of forming a rural framework for the other functions of the complex. It enables the visitors to relax in immediate closeness to traditional domestic animals of the Bohemian countryside.

The dwelling yard is tied together with an agricultural trail, which makes the visitors acquainted with agrarian cultivation. A fishing trail leads to the pond and culminates in a sightseeing building in close contact with the dam. Maintenance of the surrounding fields does not reach the state of high farming, as well as fish breeding in the pond, which serves only for breeding trophy fish, recreational fishing, bathing and swimming.

The Stork Nest Farm should serve for work and recreation, mental and physical progress of the visitors. For this purpose there are more than 90 hectares of land consisting of green areas, sport grounds, a pond, drifting and pastures, biotope and a golf driving range.



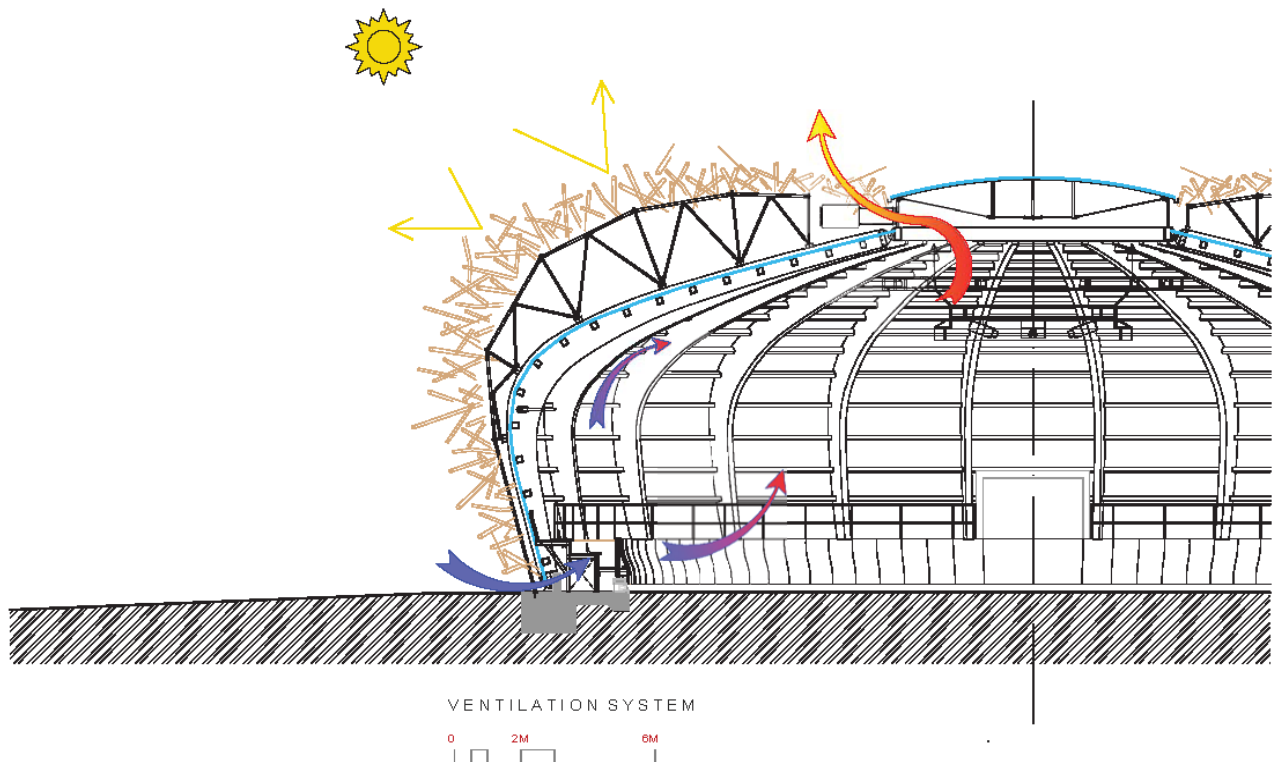
Multifunctional arena

The new building of a riding arena was designed for the needs of horse breeding and riding sport during winter season. Moreover it should serve for all sorts of presentations, sports, and cultural events. The internal equipment of the building and its position among other buildings are adapted to this use. The arena is situated in a close proximity of the main service yard with stable and is directly connected with a restaurant, which acts as a snack-bar. There is also a connection with the residential yard, where the visitors are accommodated.

The arena's appearance should evoke the stork's nest, a symbol of home, safety and security. The arena is 12,5 meters high, its external diameter is 35 meters, the diameter of the indoor riding surface is 24 meters.

The foundations are formed by a massive concrete ring. The roof is supported by an atypical glulam timber beam structure. An external cladding of translucent polycarbonate boards was fixed between these beams. The external oak logs, giving the structure an expressive appearance, provide also shading. They were fixed to the building at the total amount of 200 tons at the length of 4, 6 and 8 meters. A secondary steel grid-frame construction was added to the timber beams to achieve the external shape of the nest and also to provide the method of fixing the logs to the structure. The central sky-light with a diameter of 8 meters serves for intensive ventilation of the internal space by natural air flow. The fresh-air inlets are placed under the stand, the air outlets are placed around the perimeter of the sky-light's ring. In the case of a high solar heat gain there are ventilation fans on the roof that fulfil a supporting role to the natural ventilation.

The arena's surface of the riding area is covered by sand with capillary irrigation for riding sport, which can be covered with plywood boards during all sorts of events. The riding area is surrounded by a wainscot (protective barrier) and a stand for c. 200 people, also with a VIP stand upstairs.



The riding arena became a landmark in the area of the farm and an element which attracts attention in wide neighbourhood. The Stork Nest Farm was completed in 2010. Later, our firm designed other additions to the farm: the Environmental Education Center and a large rectangular riding hall.

Main stable

The main stable building is just beside the circular riding arena and the main service yard. The stable consists of a two-storey middle-part and two single-storey wings beside. The middle-part's groundfloor contains offices and special premises, such as: saddle room, quarantine box, feed storage and cloakrooms for riders. The first floor is reserved for small flats and cloakrooms for staff. The building's wings are used for stabling. The left wing is reserved for horses and the right wing for other animals like cattle, ponies, sheep, goats and rabbits. The horses are stabled in stalls. The large height of the stable space assures intensive ventilation and a healthy climate.

The stall's flooring is made of rubber mats. It is easy to clean and it generates low stress of hoof and protects tendons. It is used with a small amount of absorbent bedding. The flooring in the corridor is made of oak wood bricks.

Barns

The Stork Nest Farm is surrounded by large meadows. Four barns were placed there. They contain hay storage and stable. The barns are connected with the meadows so that animals can be out to pasture all day.

Rectangular riding hall

The large riding hall serves to satisfy the needs of equestrians because the circular arena is too small for equestrian riding. There is small horse stable beside connected to the riding hall. Every stall has a direct view to the outside and is connected to a minipaddock.

The riding hall also contains a restaurant upstairs with VIP stands and is also used by the guests of the nearby Environmental Education Center ("Ekocentrum"). There is a good view from the restaurant into the riding hall, as well as into the "Ekocentrum".

The riding hall's structure is simple due to low cost and durability. There is a column system of reinforced concrete in combination with glulam timber beams with steel rods. The steel rods are used to eliminate pressure of the roof and allow to make the timber beams thinner.

The building is clad in wood from the exterior and the interior as well. The exterior cladding was made of thermally modified pine wood due to durability. The interior cladding was made of spruce wood due to reduce cost.

The surface of the area for riding contains sand with capillary irrigation – the same system as the one in the circular arena. The area for riding is surrounded by a protective barrier from plain plywood.

Environmental Education Center - "Ekocentrum"

The "Ekocentrum" was built between the farm yard and the meadows with barns. It consists of a vernacular courtyard with 3 wooden houses and a labyrinth with facilities for hurt animals – aviaries and enclosures. Visitors can observe eagles, owls, water birds, foxes, otters and many other animals. Also a new enclosure for lemurs has been built last year. The "Ekocentrum" is visited mainly by families with children and schools. The adjacent rope park is very popular too.

Other facilities for horses and equestrian sport designed by SGL PROJEKT

Feeding modules (National Stud Kladruby nad Labem)

The feeding modules in the courtyard of the stud was built in order to ensure enough water for all horses coming back from the pasture to the stable. The manger is made of terrazzo elements on a brick base wall. The fountains for warming-up water are made of one whole precast terrazzo piece. Sharp edges are covered by a wooded plank-ring wrapped by a steel strap to avoid injuries of animals.

Pillars for dressage of the horses were placed into the middle of the court.

The building won in The Architecture Grand Prix - National Architecture Award 2003 for Artwork in Architecture.

Equestrian center in the North Bohemia

This equestrian center was designed in 2000. There is large riding hall, stables and accommodation for equestrians and guests as well. The stable is beside the riding hall, but every stall has a direct view to the outside.

Equestrian center in Sadska

The project of this equestrian center was designed in 2001. It is interesting in building configuration, which was designed in order to eliminate outdoor ways and to separate the movement of horses, fees, staff and equestrians.

Rural farmhouse with horse breeding in the Central Bohemia

At the beginning there was a devastated rural farmhouse. We designed a renovation of the old buildings and added a stable and a small riding hall. The stable has a capacity of 12 horses. This facility has a very nice small scale.

Riding Hall in Humpolec

This project was designed for the Czech University Of Life Sciences. Unfortunately the hall wasn't built up. Nowadays there is an old equestrian stadium with stands in a very bad condition. There isn't even a riding hall to host eventing and driving events.

It could be a nice equestrian facility. We designed a riding hall with a stable for approximately 40 horses and there should have been an outdoor stand with a view overlooking the stadium. At the end they only built an outdoor riding arena there.

Development plan of the National Stud Kladruby nad Labem

National stud Kladruby nad Labem is the oldest major stud in the world. The old Kladrub's whitehorses have been bred there. They are a well-known harness and ceremonial breed.

In 2004 we created a development plan for the whole grounds of the National stud, which is comprised of approximately 12 square kilometers. We dealt with traffic, movement of horses, staff, feed or manure and areas for development.

In 2008 we worked on 3 smaller projects of this development.

First we designed a large hall for riding, because the National Stud has none. We designed large complex with a riding hall for competition and another one for training. They were situated beside the outdoor riding arena so we designed outdoor stand for visitors too.

The second task was the design of a conversion of the Borek farm into leisure and practice riding facility.

And finally the third task was to design the houses for accommodation and catering of guests. But none of those designs have been built.

Farmstead Čečelice

The farmstead in Čečelice is another design of equestrian facilities.

We are working on this project presently. In its range it is similar to the project Rural place in Central Bohemia. Now we are expecting to obtain the planning and building permits.

Farmstead Lány

This is one of our latest projects. We designed a rural home for the elderly, which is connected to an equestrian facility.

Rural place with horse breeding in the Central Moravia

This is our latest project. It is smaller facility with horse breeding. We are working on it presently.

Organisme

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