

Aga Khan Award for Architecture

2013

WINNING PROJECTS

Islamic Cemetery

Altach, Austria

Architect: Bernardo Bader

Client: Municipality of Altach

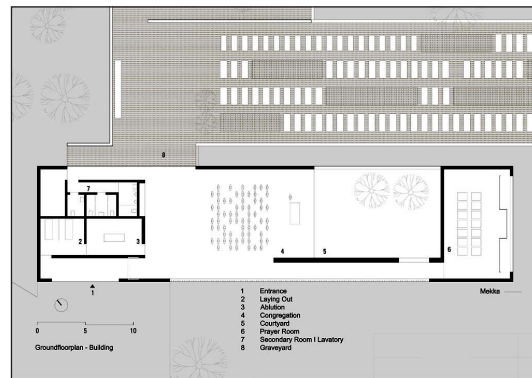
Project Description

The Cemetery serves Vorarlberg, the industrialised westernmost state of Austria, where over eight percent of the population is Muslim. Though the Islamic community in Austria has had a long history, only recently have burials according to the Islamic rite become possible. Prior to this, Muslims – especially first and second generation – used to send their dead back to their countries of origin or opt for burial in extension of existing cemeteries, but without Islamic rites. The principal materials used were exposed reinforced concrete for the walls and oak wood for the ornamentation of the entrance facade and the interior of the prayer space.

A lattice-like system of red concrete walls of varying heights and patterned by formwork delineates five distinct staggered grave fields oriented towards Mecca and a rectangular one-storey building in a simple but monumental design; towards the road, higher walls provide a feeling of enclosure; towards the mountains they are lower and embedded in the ground; everywhere, though, they are broken and interrupted,



encouraging a continuous flow of space and dialogue with the surrounding landscape. The space includes ablution rooms and assembly rooms in a subdued palette that give onto a courtyard. The prayer room on the far side of the courtyard reprises the lattice-work theme with Kufic calligraphy in metal mesh on the “qibla” wall. The subtle simplicity of the Cemetery’s design and its interaction with its natural surroundings provide a calm and dignified place for spiritual contemplation, burial and mourning

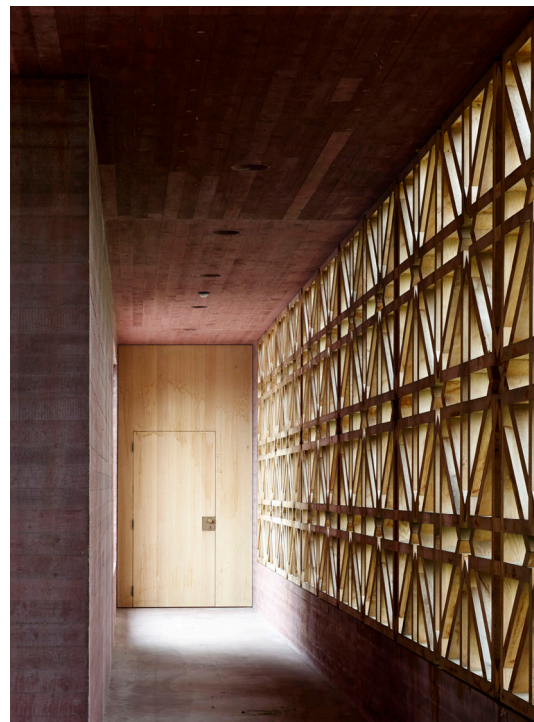


Jury Citation

“The Islamic Cemetery, in its restrained and measured expression, belies a complex cultural negotiation. In the context of its host environment, it presents a symbolically charged site as a place of resolve. The project brought together a multi-faith, multi-ethnic group of actors to realise the wish of an immigrant community seeking to create a space that fulfils their spiritual aspirations and, at the same time, responds to the context of their adopted country with a culturally sensitive design and aesthetic.



“Simple in expression and poetic in form, it not only engages the natural landscape in an intelligent manner but also suspends any notion of declaration. While emphasising spiritual pluralism, the Cemetery also provides the final destination for a minority group in a dominant society.”



Project Data

Client

Municipality of Altsch, Altsch, Austria: Gottfried Brändle, Mayor of Altsch, Austria

Architect

Bernardo Bader, Dornbirn, Austria

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| <i>Consultants</i> | Eva Grabherr, director of Okay.zusammen leben/Advice Centre for Immigration and Integration, Dornbirn, Austria Vorarlberg Association of Municipalities, Dornbirn, Austria Attila Dincer, leader of the initiatory group “Islamic Cemetery”, Dornbirn, Austria |
| <i>Artist</i> | Azra Akšamija, Boston, USA |
| <i>Structural Engineer</i> | Merz Kley Partner ZT GmbH, Dornbirn, Austria: Gordian Kley, partner |
| <i>Site Supervisor</i> | Thomas Marte, Dornbirn, Austria |
| <i>Craftsmen</i> | Association for the Preservation of the Bosnian Kilim, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| <i>Site area</i> | 8415 m ² |
| <i>Built area</i> | 468 m ² |
| <i>Cost</i> | US\$ 2.98 million |
| <i>Commission</i> | June 2008 |
| <i>Design</i> | January 2008 – December 2011 |
| <i>Construction</i> | March 2010 – December 2011 |
| <i>Occupancy</i> | December 2011 |

Bernardo Bader

Bernardo Bader is an architect from Krumbach, the Austrian region of Bregenzerwald, with an office currently in Dornbirn, Austria. He studied architecture at the Innsbruck Technical University and, after receiving his engineering degree (Dipl. Ing.) in 2001, he founded his own architectural office. His work investigates how architecture can be embedded in regional building culture, based on local architectural grammar. His projects bear witness to the excellence of handcraft, deep attention to tectonic detail and sensitivity to the local



context. Bader is a member of the Advisory Design Commissions as well as the Advisory Committee for Urban Contemplation in the Vorarlberg region. Since 2012, he has held a lecturing position at the University of Liechtenstein in Vaduz. He has received a number of prestigious awards, including the Weissenhof Architectural Furtherance Prize 2007 for young architects in Stuttgart, Germany, the Constructive – Liechtenstein Prize for sustainable building in 2011, the Piranesi Award 2013, and numerous local timber construction awards, as well as clients' awards. His work was nominated for the DETAIL Prize 2012 and the Mies van der Rohe Award 2013.

Website

<http://www.bernardobader.com>

