

herzog & de meuron designs 'autobahnkirche' motorway chapel

nina azzarello | designboom | feb 20, 2020

herzog & de meuron has unveiled its design for **switzerland's** first motorway **chapel**, named **the 'autobahnkirche'**. the project draws from the concept of medieval wayside chapels, which offer travelers a place of rest, silence, and prayer. the architects point out that the concept has already been established in neighboring countries, with 46 such churches found in germany alone. situated on the A13 motorway near andeer — a small village in the grisons region — the visible part of the chapel comprises four walls that appear to lean against each other.



all images © herzog & de meuron

'the project is unusual for us because neither the spatial program nor the location were clearly defined,' says **jacques herzog**, founding partner of **herzog & de meuron**. *'the idea for the chapel in andeer had to emerge from the site alone, from the location, from the road. we were looking for architecture that would sharpen the perception of visitors — of the location, the natural environs, and even of the way they see themselves.'*

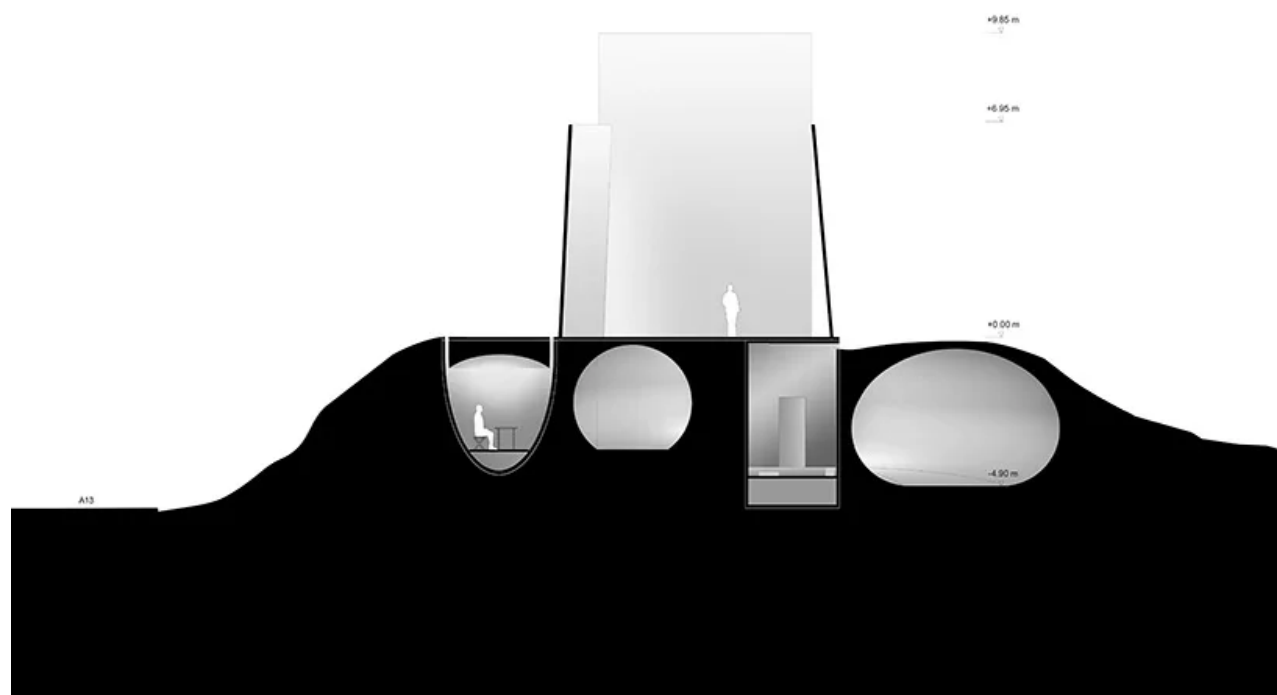


from the above ground chapel, a broad, snail-shaped flight of stairs leads to an earth room conceived as a sequence of three chapels. along the funnel-shaped earth space, visitors find two other small chapels: the first for readers, with even daylight coming into the round room from above; and the second with a candle, a mat, reflecting wall, and a single skylight. finally, a last room opens to a panoramic view of the landscape, the village, and the lush green meadows and woods. perception of the vegetation is heightened by the complementary red of a room-height pane of tinted glass.



'the deeper you go, the weaker the sounds from the motorway and the stronger the sound of your own footsteps,' explain the architects. 'finally, when you reach the last room, strong daylight streams into the heart of the chapel and you see a panoramic view of the landscape, the village, and the lush green meadows and woods. perception of the vegetation is heightened by the complementary red of a room-height pane of tinted glass. the sun, setting in the evening, shines through the red glass into this last portion of the chapel, which leads directly to the landscape outside.'





project info:

project number: 515

project official name: autobahnkirche

location: andeer, switzerland

project phases: concept study, jan 2019 – feb 2020

client: IG autobahnkirche A13

client representative: IG autobahnkirche A13, peider ganzoni

project team:

herzog & de meuron project team:

partners: jacques herzog, pierre de meuron, andreas fries (partner in charge)

project team: martin knüsel (associate), daniel wilson (project manager), monica gaspar bonilla, jonas läufer, anna ludwig

planning:

cost consulting: christen baukosten- und projektmanagement, aeschenvorstadt 24, 4051 basel, CH

structural engineering: konzett bronzini partner AG, bahnhofstrasse 3, 7000 chur, CH

specialist/consulting:

traffic consulting: casutt wyrsh zwicky AG, 45 via principala, 7053 falera, CH

visualizations: aron lorincz ateliers, nagyvárad u. 15, 2100 gödöllő, HU

building data:

gross floor area (GFA): 3'013 sqft / 280 m²

GFA above ground: 1'399 sqft / 130 m²

GFA below ground: 1'614 sqft / 150 m²

number of levels: 2

height: 32 ft / 10 m