

DeA architectes, Mulhouse

A club house draws on traditional architecture

New builds and conversions on the Saint Apollinaire golf course, Michelbach-le-Haut, France

Mulhouse-based *DeA architectes* found inspiration for their range of new builds on the Saint Apollinaire golf course in the traditional barns of the former priory. They also converted the existing building stock for the use of players and visitors. Even after the redevelopment as a golf course, the grounds remain open to the public.

Up to two hundred years ago the pious could be found on their pilgrimages to the Domaine Saint Apollinaire, which lies in the Sundgau region of the Alsace, not far from the Swiss city of Basel. A tree-lined avenue still leads to the priory, which was founded in 1140 AD. Since the summer of 2020 both golf players and the wider public can enjoy the magnificent, almost 250-acre large estate. A number of agricultural outbuildings on the lands have been converted by *DeA architectes*. The new build of the generous club house and a number of smaller structures were inspired by the estate's traditional sheds and barns. Together, the contemporary architecture and the historic buildings form a hamlet-like structure, bringing new life to the location.

The two-storey club house, which is the largest building on the golf course, lies at the end of the avenue and cleverly uses its site on a slope. On the upper entrance level are public areas such as the foyer and restaurant, and the generous terraces along both longitudinal sides that are protected by the wide projecting roof. The lower storey, which is partially sunk into the hillside, holds the facilities for the golf players - such as lockers, changing rooms and storage spaces - that are oriented towards the golf course. On the course itself are a number of smaller new builds, such as shelters for the practice area as well as smaller huts for the storage of grounds maintenance equipment. Their simple timber construction draws on the surrounding vernacular.

The very spacious agricultural outbuildings with their wide projecting roofs were ideal for the conversion into storage facilities for push carts, golf carts and machinery. All facades of the new builds, such as the club house or the caddie area, are clad in coniferous timber and uniformly varnished in a rich black, while the conversions retained their rendered walls or visible timber frame exterior. A feature common to all buildings are the extensive gabled roofs, which fits them unobtrusively into the landscape's undulating character between the fairways and meadows.

Golf Saint Apollinaire is open to the public - which is rather unusual for a golf course. This meant that a special safety concept had to be devised for the grounds of the eighteen-hole course, a task that was planned and executed by Rosknecht Golfplan GmbH from Lindau in Germany, who are also responsible for the landscaping. Daniel Weber, client and owner of Golf Saint Apollinaire, cites his experiences with two other golf courses in Switzerland - in Sempach and Kyburg - which are also publicly accessible.

The grounds of Golf Saint Apollinaire were reinvigorated through the sensitive redesign and its contemporary use. It was with that in mind that DeA architectes developed a composition of new builds for the golf course which revert back to the surrounding traditional architectural language, and sensitively renovated and repurposed pre-existing structures. The whole project was completed in October of 2020.

DeA architectes, located in the French city of Mulhouse, was founded in 2007 by Guillaume Delemazure who had previously worked for several years as an associate with the Basel-based architectural bureau of Herzog & de Meuron. The international team of architects gets its inspiration from the character of the surrounding Upper Rhine Valley region and predominantly works on cross-border projects. They developed a multi-storey car park at the Euro-Airport Basel-Mulhouse, which has laid the foundations for further infrastructure planning in the tri-country border area between France, Germany and Switzerland. Together with Swiss investors KMØ Mulhouse the bureau also converted a historic industrial building from the first French railway company in Mulhouse into a modern, multifunctional digital and innovations hub and events location. Adjacent to Mulhouse central railway station they built two office buildings that will help to further invigorate and develop the surrounding quarter. And currently they are building a residential project directly along the Franco-Swiss border. The quarter is quite innovative for these parts of France. Areas within site are being held back for the growth of tall trees. And the structure itself is of mixed construction: a timber facade infill on a primary concrete frame.

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