

## **Pears Jewish Campus – The Blue House, Berlin**

New construction of a combined school (crèche, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school up to grade 12) and community centre.

Address: Westfaelische Strasse 15, 10709 Berlin

Client: Chabad Lubavitch Berlin e.V., Berlin

Gross floor area: 8,000 sqm incl. basement

Completion: August 2023

Work stages: 1-5, artistic direction

Architect: Sergei Tchoban

Associated partner: Frederik-Sebastian Scholz

Project management: Frederik-Sebastian Scholz, Nancy Wendland

Team: Lev Chestakov, Eimear O'Gorman, Valeria Kashirina, Birgit Koeder, Anja Koch, Charlotte Lennertz, Ingo Schwarzweller, Ramona Schwarzweller, Waldemar Strese, Niina Ballheimer, Fabiana Pedretti

Work stages: 6-8: Kondius AG, Berlin

Structural engineering: Ingenieurbuero Bendel Bradke Lang Bauwesen GmbH, Berlin

Building equipment: Ingenieurbüro für Haustechnik KEM GmbH, Berlin

Landscaping: Nolte / Gehrke Partnerschaft von Landschaftsarchitekten mbB, Berlin

Shell construction: Koegel Bau GmbH & Co. KG, Bad Oeyenhausen; Bauunternehmen Mueller GmbH, Schwielowsee

Building acoustics: ABH Akustikbuero Hoffmeier, Berlin

Fire protection concept: Roessel Brandschutz, Berlin

Lighting design: LichtVision Design GmbH, Berlin

Planning of school / day-care centre equipment, work stage 2: Architekturbuero Heidrun Klein, Erfurt

Planning of equipment for school / day-care centre, work stages 3-8: Design Alchemists, Berlin

Planning of equipment for specialist rooms at school, work stage 5: Kreische Boehme Beyer GbR, Ilmenau

Clinker façade: Keramik für Bau und Denkmalspflege GmbH, Großraeschen; Jahnsen Bau GmbH, Herford

Windows / doors: Sommer Fassadensysteme-Stahlbau-Sicherheitstechnik GmbH & Co. KG, Doehlau

Carpentry work: Weisse GmbH & Co. KG, Eberswalde

Wood cladding for sports hall: Vereinigte Holzbaubetriebe Wilhelm Pfalzer & Hans Vogt GmbH & Co. KG, Woringen

Planning Cafeteria/library: KA+ GmbH, Berlin; studio kejo GbR, Berlin

Design of 'trees of life': Anna Nezhnaya, Berlin

Graffiti art: TOBO aka Tobias Friesike, Berlin

Photographer: Roland Halbe, HG Esch

Adjacent to the site of the Chabad Lubavitch Family and Cultural Centre in Berlin's Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district, the community centre Pears Jewish Campus Berlin is a facility for children and young people consisting of a school, a crèche, and a kindergarten.

Surrounded by heterogeneous architecture, the new school building with its organically curved form is a free-standing structure embedded in a green school garden with diverse open spaces for different uses, such as playgrounds and sports fields. The two-storey multi-purpose hall on the third floor can be used flexibly for sports activities but also for cultural events, such as religious celebrations, or for seminars and conferences. On the fifth floor there is an auditorium with ascending tiers for film screenings or lectures. The building also has a dining room and a kosher kitchen. The rooms of the basement on the concave

side of the building have access to the outside area. Here green cascades with steps lead up to normal ground level.

The building's amorphous curved shape was chosen in reference to the interior of the Chabad-Lubavitch Centre, where the contemporary additions to the rectangular, Neoclassical existing building were deliberately executed in the same organic formal language with rhythmic horizontal banding that appears in the structural form and façade of the new building. The vertical slits of light within the horizontal bands on the school's façade are also a motif found in the interior panelling of the neighbouring synagogue.

Constructed in masonry and concrete, the building immediately catches the eye with its colourfulness and materiality. This is where its name, 'The Blue House', comes from. In terms of form and style, the design of the school building again refers to the neighbouring family and cultural centre: there is a colour connection between the iridescent, sky-blue / midnight-blue-violet glazed, rear-ventilated clinker-brick façade of the new school building and the blue-white glazed entrance portal of the Jewish cultural centre in the front part of the site. The colour blue has had a special significance throughout the history of Judaism right up to the present day: reminiscent of the blue of the sky, this shade is the colour of divine revelation.

The roof slab is a slope-free inverted roof with a two-layer waterproofing in accordance with the flat roof directive. The roof surface will be extensively greened.

The school's main entrance is accessible from street level. Its walls are adorned with two kabbalistic trees of life – light installations by the Berlin artist Anna Nezhnaya. The two brightly coloured trees that greet people at the entrance to the campus are more poetically picturesque than schematic. An oak and an olive tree, they symbolize the two countries - Germany and Israel.

The two-storey entrance hall has a mirrored ceiling as a special design element. From the adjacent staircase, all floors are wheelchair-accessible via at least one lift.

The facility is intended for use by 450 children and adolescents, ranging from children of crèche or kindergarten age up to grade 12, i.e. between the ages of approximately one and 18. The school rooms (classrooms, subject classrooms, assembly rooms, workshops) are used exclusively by the school; the group rooms, exclusively by the daycare centre.

The concrete wall on the street side shows graffiti by the Berlin street artist TOBO, aka Tobias Friesike.

