



Aig Associati Partner

Palais Campofranco Three Centuries of History now Open to the Public Bolzano, Italy

Imagine using a time machine to go back to the Habsburg era, immersing yourself in the architecture and style of that age. But without losing the essence of contemporary architecture. This is the sensation that greets you as you enter Palais Campofranco, the 18th-century residence of Archduke Rainer Joseph of Austria and his wife, Elisabeth of Savoy, located in the heart of Bolzano, a stone's throw from the cathedral and Piazza Walther. After careful historical restoration, the building is now open to the public. The project was initially conceived by MdAA Architeti Associati, but subsequently developed and completed by Aig Associati Partner to adapt it to the needs of the tenants and the client.

Pichler Projects was involved in the work necessary for this to happen, dealing with various types of façades covering nearly 2,000 sq. m of surface area. The concept of dialogue between historic buildings and contemporary volumes takes the physical

form of a courtyard with below ground retail spaces and eating areas, all rotating around an age-old Ginkgo-Biloba tree. This tree is a fundamental part of the identity of this space, having been donated by Princess Sissi to her uncle Heinrich and now the subject of strict building constraints, such as leaving a 5 m "flowerbed" around it (with this continuing down for the entire height of the underground section). Pichler enclosed this vertical section in a multi-floor vase made of powder-coated aluminum panels with milled edges. Around it is a double staircase that allows natural light down into the three lower floors (up to 12 m down). In the shopping mall areas, Pichler installed fire resistant glazed walls and then worked on the exterior façades. The courtyard was effectively turned into a roof garden overlooked by two additional levels of eateries. The bistro is the iconic example of weaving contemporary design into history. Here, the metal sheets on the outside of the structural glass curtain

walls, applied to the double-glazed, screen-printed panels, echo the shapes of Ginkgo leaves. The structure for the metal roof is made of custom welded profiles, corrugated sheet metal, additional concrete casting, an insulating layer, PVC covering and a green roof. The restaurant also looks onto Piazza Walther and it has a new portico section that was created by Pichler using a curved base structure in steel that supports a double-skin glazed façade. Here, ventilation comes from a system of centralized openings in the intermediate cavity, with a temperature sensor. Motorized windows are used on the side facing onto the square, while a wall made of reflective double-glazing was chosen for the cathedral side. The South Tyrolean company also created a galvanized steel structure for the utilities level and new arched-shaped doors and windows to replace those in the historical building, creating another window from the past into the present.



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