

Karin Dom

The Karin Dom Foundation for children with special needs is one of the most important and influential civic organizations in Bulgaria. Today with its staff of 45 members they work with over 300 children and families from Varna and continue with what was established in 1996 by diplomat and philanthropist Ivan Stancioff.

Together with the history of the foundation, the nature of the site contributes to the aura and magic of the foundation. With a delicate yet strict vision onto the site, the project places itself in the best possible position. The goal is not to keep all the trees but rather make a pragmatic decision on the site's assets. The project rather than faking a total preservation of the trees by building around them decides to stay as compact as possible. Placed on the least tree populated part of the plot, the project takes away only a few trees that will be replaced by more healthy ones. In order to truly preserve the existing ones, the building doesn't produce underground space which would destroy root-systems with excavations. This also leads the new building to produce an effective use of the budget by keeping the project as compact as possible, it manages to keep the building costs low by not digging or creating too much façade area which would prove pricy in the short and long term. This outer shell creates the safety belt for children Karin Dom is known for. Most program being over ground also plays a role in the safety belt, since the visual connections from outside in are blocked by height and trees but keeping the views towards the outside intact.

The efficiency with which Karin Dom in providing training for all the involved parties also transcribes in the spatial organisation of the building. The easily readable circulations are the backbone of the project, this clear routing is one of the main focuses. Two elements of distinctive colour guide the user and visitor through the different levels and spaces, from the playful lobby and reception space until the ludic roof. With the colour and the round windows, the circulation binds all the program together without breaking the efficiency of it yet allowing for some unexpected moments of joy.

In order to make the best possible building, the project uses all proven techniques to lower building costs. A controlled budget will allow the Karin Dom Foundation to provide the best building possible and focus their effort and money on their mission. Avoiding underground works for parking allows the project not only to preserve its surrounding but also to cut expensive works. More than a programmatic switch, the parking on the first level allows it to be more than a mere stationary space. By lifting the building out of the ground and integrating the parking in the routing and use, the new building allows multifunctionalities. Now the parking being on the first level it has access to light and natural ventilation in the middle of a forest of trunks. This space with implemented assets offers Karin Dom the possibility to use it as a parking but offers also a new space, open and capable of housing events of multiple sizes. Adding program for new and surprising uses while lowering the buildings cost.

Due to its function and mission, the building for Karin Dom must be an example in terms of sustainability. Other than the compactness and the preservation of its context, the building must not only protect but also improve the current situation. Therefore, it proposes a multitude solutions such as cross ventilation through the patio, rain collection with its different roofscapes and sun heating and luminosity. All these allow the building to be as passive as possible, lowering environmental impact in order to offer tomorrows children a better Earth. Since the Foundation has a social role, the building also takes sustainability to the social level, by using as little as possible the park space it offers green area to non-users and allows them to share the context. User-friendly architecture provides easy access to any kind of person, be it valid or in restricted mobility.

Like Varna and its multiple pocketparks, the site is a luxuriant accumulation of greenery. Sitting next to the city centre and the Stadium, overlooking the sea and the mountains, the site has an ideal position in the neighbourhood. Using the "already-there", the project multiplies the site, using as little as possible of the site, it preserves it as good as possible but also makes up for what it takes. New trees are planted in the previously tarmacked spaces. By lifting the building out of the underground, it allowed the projects roof to overlook some major buildings and make visual connections with the surroundings, water and mountains. The project also provides a patio, that gives light and ventilation, but also connects the interior of the building with proximity nature. In association with the roof, this creates new meeting spaces and relaxation areas that allow staff and patients to connect with their environment. The roof offers different spaces and functions, from the hill that lifts you over the tree crowns to the small open-air theatre and the common gardening circle. All this with access to the sun, fresh air and nestled in the tree crowns of the park.

Throughout all the levels, the building provides the best possible environment to the foundation. Every level offers the best possible connection to the surrounding, to light and views, thermal comfort and carefully selected materials. The movement up into the tree crowns is associated with a little play in the shades of the occultation and thermal curtains that provide a colourful background for the evolution of the children's condition.

The new Karin Dom Foundation building is the reflection of the foundation's values – adapting proven and effective principles to create and improve. As much as others seek help and information from Karin Dom Foundation, the building now helps the foundation to fulfil their tasks and mission. The new centre will continue the foundations great work and build upon it to continue towards something amazing and caring.

Floor area on underground level:	0 m2
Gross floor area on above-ground level incl GF:	2690 m2
Total landscape within the plot and the building:	1735 m2
Total landscape roof terrace:	614 m2
Number of parking spaces on level 1:	19

Program

LEVEL0

A Reception
 A1 Reception
 A2 Play area for children
 A3 Waiting area
 A4 Conversation nook for parents and therapists
 A5 Coat hanger for visitors

B Toy library

C Physiotherapy
 C1 Main physiotherapy room
 C2 Rebound Therapy Room
 C3 Occupational therapy room
 C4 Physiotherapy warehouse

D Montessori centre

D1 Dressing vestibule
 D2 Room for group activities
 D3 Room for group activities for children with special needs
 D4 Bedroom for children to rest
 D5 Separate toilet for children
 D6 Kitchenette

I Medical centre

I1 Doctor's office
 I2 Waiting room

I3 Hazardous waste premises
 I4 Manipulation room
 I5 Electrotherapy facilities

U2 Warehouses and ventilation room

LEVEL1

U1 Parking
 U2 Warehouses and ventilation room

LEVEL2

E Hydrotherapy unit
 E1 Swimming pool for individual and group therapy
 E2 Changing rooms
 E3 Baby gym/ toddler room

F Centre for diagnostics and therapy

F1 Multisensory room
 F2 Rooms for individual work
 F3 Diagnostic room
 F4 Auxiliary room
 F5 Music therapy room
 F6 Art therapy room
 F7 Staff room
 F8 Room for individual work with parents
 F9 Sensorimotor room
 F10 Demonstration kitchen

LEVEL3

G Early intervention centre
 G1 Early intervention team room

G2 Family counseling room

H Centre for family - mediated interventions

H1 Vestibule
 H2 Little+ room
 H3 Rainbow group room
 H4 Auxiliary room

J Training centre

J1 Seminar hall
 J2 Toilets to the visitor halls
 J3 Kitchenette for preparing coffee breaks
 J4 Coffee break area
 J5 Warehouse to the Training center
 J6 Office for training team

K Administration

K1 Accountancy
 K2 Development team office
 K3 Meeting room and group activities with parents/ volunteers
 K4 Director's office
 K5 Management office

L Staff rest areas

L1 Staff lunchroom
 L2 Dressing room

M Roof

Cost estimation

1 435 000 euro