

KARIN DOM

NEW BUILDING, SCHEMATIC DESIGN

VARNA, BULGARIA

The proposal for a new building of the Karin Dom Foundation is composed of a single, low in height, elongated building volume, carefully positioned into the building plot so as to preserve the foresty character of the garden that is currently occupying the site. A lot of consideration was put on implementing the building's footprint into the ensemble formed by the surrounding buildings. One immediately recognises the shapes of the neighbouring buildings of the clinic to the southeast, and the dormitories to the northeast into the footprint of the newly proposed building. The end result is a structure that lives in **harmony** in its **context** both with the rich nature of the site and its man made neighbors.

The approach for pedestrians and cars is clear and predetermined by the configuration of the plot and its only possible access from northwest. Upon entering the site you find yourself in a small plateau where the main entrance is positioned together with the ramp to the underground parking hidden behind a big door and the independent entrance to the medical center. In front of the building, in between the trees there will be a few resting places in the form of round benches and also the possibility for short term car drop off zone. The rest of the site is completely covered in green **landscaping** areas with the exception of a small pathway that serves as a chance to go for a short walk.

After entering the building you are immediately greeted by the generous space of the main lobby with its main feature - the **inner courtyard**. From the first moment it was clear that minimising the amount of trees that need to be removed will be one of the main concerns. This was the reason one of the main elements that give character to the buildings emerged - the two story high inner courtyard filled with the existing pine trees. The courtyard plays an other important role not only for the ground floor where it brings natural light to the spacious lobby but also for the upper floors where it helps with orientation and improves the quality of the circulation spaces.

From the lobby the main groups of building occupants each take their own way. People who work at the Foundation have the chance to go through the private, personnel only spaces positioned on the ground floor to change and then start with their duties. Visitors after a brief consultation at the reception then head inside and depending on their particular interest are guided to one of the 3 floors accessible for them. On the ground floor are the main therapy units: the **physio** and **hydrotherapy** halls. They have the most direct access and the 3.5m clear height of the ground floor is perfect for accommodating

the required technical installations for their operation. The hydrotherapy unit is conveniently using the natural slope of the terrain in the south direction to integrate the volume of the swimming pool and keep the floor on the same level as the rest of the ground floor. On the upper floor are located the units for **family** mediated and **early intervention**, and the **diagnose** and **therapy** center with its numerous treatment halls. The halls are carefully arranged to have maximal synergy with the other functionally connected units. On that level are also the spaces for the **administration** of the building oriented to the north and connected to the rest of the building with a transitional space around the inner courtyard. The third level is for the **montesory** center and the training facilities. The floor plan is arranged in a way that provides clear boundaries between the zones meant for children and the ones for public access. The montesory unit was carefully considered to be on the uppermost level instead of on the ground level to provide a sense of security and privacy to the occupants. It is located next to a spacious rooftop terrace that provides opportunities for resting and for outdoor activities which is at the same time located in between the tree crowns. The **terrace** is covered by an elegant, fabric covered **pergola** which provides shelter and improves the usability of the terrace.

The choice of materials was thoughtful and took into consideration the proximity of the building to the **sea** - one of the main characteristics of the city of Varna. Concrete was an immediate choice - it brings **calmness** to both the exterior and interior appearance of the building but special attention is given to the finishing, going for a sandblasted, warm, off-white look. This imbues the material with qualities achieved only through the help of two natural elements so typical of Varna - **air** and **sand**. The third most prominent natural element - **water** is reflected in the shining turquoise textile external sunshading that helps keep the building occupants comfortable in the warm summer months.

All things considered the proposed building is trying to find the line where the search for optimal performance and rationalism meets with the natural desire for generous pleasing spaces and perhaps this line is not a straight line but rather a gentle **arc**.

