



The Look of Berlin Zoo's New Panda Exhibit

dan pearlman Experience Architecture Zoo Architects and Berlin Zoo unveil the new Panda Enclosure Design

When it was announced in autumn 2015 that Chancellor Angela Merkel was negotiating during her China visit a pair of pandas for Berlin's Zoological Garden there was much excitement. It quickly became clear, however, that the arrival of the animals required the construction of a new Panda Exhibit.

Since then, the planning activities have been in full swing. The team at dan pearlman Experience Architecture is in charge of the new design at the zoo. The renowned zoo architects already have the necessary project experience. Just this spring, Panda World – designed by the Berlin office – opened at the South Korean zoo and leisure park Everland Resort.

PANDA EXHIBIT ARCHITECTURE

The Panda enclosure in Berlin is situated near the Elephant Gate entrance to the zoo. Upon entering the zoo, a visitors' pavilion comes into view. Modelled after the historic Chinese pavilion of 1898, the pavilion provides the first glimpse into the female panda's outdoor enclosure. Since giant pandas are typically solitary animals, they are kept apart at the Berlin Zoo except for a few days out of the year. The two spacious outdoor enclosures are separated by an understated, functional building that houses a protected visitor plaza as well as the den and caretaker areas. The design of the Panda enclosure combines modern European modernism and Far East traditions: the simple cubic structure of the main building contrasts with the grey, finely textured brick façade, which is modelled after Chinese architectural designs. In addition, other elements such as gates and railings as well as the pavilion recall historical China. The landscape concept for the Panda enclosure is based on Sichuan province, the home of the giant pandas that is located east of the Tibetan Plateau. Bamboo, rock formations and small streams will also define the animals' habitat at the Berlin Zoo.





Organic shapes on the ground and ceilings, as well as islands of bamboo clusters, not only give the visitor plaza an airy and purist feel, but also form a thematic link between interior and exterior.

An exhibition, which is dedicated to all aspects of panda life, will enrich the visit, the communication concept will be developed by dan pearlman Brand Architecture.

THE PANDAS' WELFARE

As with all their projects, the architects place great importance on the welfare of the animals – this is also the case with the sensitive giant pandas. Thus, Plexiglas skylights above the indoor enclosures provide daylight and are UV-B and UV-A permeable. And for behavioural enrichment purposes, climbing courses, sand pools, shelters, swings, slides and other diversions have been incorporated into the naturally designed outdoor enclosures in order to provide the pandas a variety of activities.



FROM CONCEPT TO THE PANDAS' ARRIVAL

“Planning an exhibit for animals that are so rare and overseeing it all, from the initial concept to the arrival of the pandas, is a special honour,” says Kieran Stanley, CEO of dan pearlman Experience Architecture. The world famous giant panda is an ambassador for species protection and is still vulnerable. Only about 2,000 animals still live in the wild, and giant panda are also a rarity in zoos and zoological gardens. It is only possible to marvel at fifty animals in zoological facilities outside of China.

The tight timetable provides a particular challenge. The architects have only fourteen months to design and build the 5,480-square-metre Panda exhibit since it is supposed to be ready to go by summer 2017.



“With our highly effective partner, emproc Bauprojektmanagement, we succeeded in developing a tailor-made strategy for bid, tender and construction management early on in the planning process and integrating our own project control services so that the project remains on schedule and within budget,” Bernd Blome, unit director at dan pearlman Experience Architecture.

Also pleased with the outcome of the planning process is zoo director Dr. Andreas Knieriem: “The design of the enclosure was developed in close co-operation with our zoological experts and we are very proud to again welcome giant pandas to Germany after five years. The animals are very special to us and will move into Europe’s newest panda-habitat.”

ABOUT DAN PEARLMAN

dan pearlman – architectural company and creative agency – designs since over fifteen years brand and leisure environments from its former factory floor offices in Berlin and is in addition to that active in the fields of brand strategy and brand communication.

In designing zoos and recreational facilities, creating a narrative is one of dan pearlman’s strong suits. “We tell stories by turning them into built reality”, says CEO Kieran Stanley. The architects’ portfolio includes the immersive environment Yukon Bay at Erlebnis-Zoo Hannover, a fictional gold rush town and home to wolves, caribous, polar bears, seals and penguins; an amphibious safari through the Lost Valley at Everland Resort in South Korea; as well as both strategic development plans for Berlin’s Zoological Garden and Tierpark amongst others.

Recently completed was the immersive environment Islands at Chester Zoo, which establishes a direct connection to the zoo’s conservation program, as well as the project Panda World, which opened in spring 2016 at the South Korean zoo and amusement park Everland Resort.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Client: Zoologischer Garten Berlin AG

Project: Panda Garden

Services: Architecture and Landscape Architecture (HOAI phases 1-9),
partially project management, communication

Overall planning area: 5480 m²

Gross floor area including visitors-plaza: 998 m²

Construction cost: 9 Mio. Euro

Project management: Anna Buttkus

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