

**Time frame**

Autumn 2016 – autumn 2017

Stakeholders

Private investor builders
Civil society
Landscape architects

Typologies (space types)

Outside space

**Design quality criteria**

Designability
Opportunities to interact

**Structure-related quality criteria**

Designing the provisions/
living spaces
Collaboration
Participation and identification

The starting point

Kloten church, parish hall, old vicarage, youth centre and atrium are all in the midst of a green oasis in the old village centre. This collection of buildings and natural spaces forms an inviting “church park” well away from everyday stresses.

The parish of Kloten has been focusing on all forms of families since 2014. Starting up various family-friendly activities such as the Family Days while including the church park has made the church attractive for this target group, too. Children and families are discovering the church as an inviting location with space to play and move around.

The parish originally launched the Bistro Plus project in order to further expand its hospitality through family-friendly spaces. It wanted to create a venue with a bistro and natural playground within the church park and its five buildings. It investigated what would bring added value to this place in the midst of the green oasis assisted by families and interested parties. What do families want to do, experience, get out of a venue? What guiding values should it have? What should it look like and what facilities should it have? What spaces are needed by young and old?

Aims

The church park is to be revitalised and made into a venue for young and old. A natural playground and a bistro in the yurt are to become a free space for families that also enables inter-generational encounters. The conception and the realisation of this free space is to be carried out using participative elements. Mothers, fathers, children and other interested parties are to be involved in the planning and construction and be able to identify with the place. Nature is to be included as a living space and the playground should blend into its environment.

Target group

Children, parents, grandparents, guardians and interested parties from the parish, political municipality and surrounding areas.

Costs

The playground, at around 1,100sqm in size, cost close to 200,000 Swiss francs.

Project progression

The playground project lasted from autumn 2016 to autumn 2017. The initial phase saw the collection of ideas for the natural playground in a participative process with children, their parents and interested parties. As the playground was built on municipal land, clarifications became necessary with the city and a right of use was negotiated.

An initial planning workshop with around 45 children and adults saw the collation of ideas, the exploration of the playground area and the building of appropriate models. It therefore soon became clear which elements should be present on the playground. A large sand area with running water, climbing options and relaxation areas were planned by the "Spiel mit Raum" [Play with Space] planning office, as well as a swing, a barefoot path and spaces to balance, hop and discover. In the spring holidays of 2017, children painted the first wooden figures that give the play area a unique face.

The construction phase began following approval of the investment loan by the Klotten reformed church parish in May 2017 and building permission from the city. All interested parties were able to join in on two building days. Children and adults shovelled sand and sawed panels to size, hammered in posts and put together the net for the climbing frame, painted the colourful figures and screwed them in, concreted in the slide frames and much more. The playground was opened in July 2018 with great fanfare and joy. Trees, bushes, herbs and flowers were planted by many helping hands large and small on a planting day in November 2017.

Success factors

- The initiative and engagement of the Klotten reformed church council
- The interest of the families from the parish and the public
- Large demand for natural play areas
- The city of Klotten making a centrally located area available
- The implementation with very experienced specialists while including various age groups in a participative process
- The positive attitude of all those involved
- Very low property damage
- The culture of welcoming, inter-generational encounters and community were able to be further strengthened through recurring activities such as the playground refresher with children and adults in the spring, where simple maintenance work or playground expansions take place.

Challenges

Delays are common in a project that requires various approvals. This meant the amount of time for the construction phase was somewhat tight.

Conclusion

The parish of Klotten designed a place for meeting and community in the playground and yurt. This is highly valued by children, parents, grandparents and other guardians as a place to meet and talk. A popular social space with a personal touch has been created. As the bistro is operated by church staff and volunteers in the yurt, which forms an ensemble along with the playground, personal relationships are breathing life into the location. A culture of hospitality is a conscious decision. Actively including children, parents and interested parties has led to guests and contributors being able to identify with the location.

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