

ARCHITECTURE: THE MERITS OF COPPER

Contemporary architecture relies increasingly on copper. Whether for roofs or facades, architects greatly appreciate copper, not only for its aesthetic qualities but also for its physical and environmental properties. This trend is clearly illustrated in Berlin by the Scandinavian Embassies, the Bundesdruckerei (Federal Print Office) and the Israeli Embassy and also by individual detached houses. Copper is a source of new inspiration for architecture offices in Europe.

Copper emblazons the town

Flaming orange-red, warm brown or patina green, the palette of colours that copper offers architects is a source of inspiration. This range of colours is linked to the **natural development of copper** as it acquires a protective brown then patina green surface coating in just a few years: it is this patina that protects the copper and makes it so resistant to corrosion.

Thanks to recent innovations in the copper industry, architects now have **pre-patinated products** at their disposal, giving them immediate access to a whole range of colours, for the construction of new buildings as well as for the renovation of old monuments. Consequently, in



spite of the damage incurred during Reunification celebrations, the roof of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin was easily repaired using sheets of pre-patina copper. The new construction of the Scandinavian Embassies, completed in 1998 following the plans of Viennese architect Alfred Berger, proudly displays a magnificent wall, 250m long and 15m high, made out of strips of pre-patinated copper in a lovely shade of lively green.

Copper, the environmental benefit

The other essential benefit of copper is that it is part of an environmental approach which integrates the entire life cycle of a building, from conception to implementation to recycling. Extremely **long-lasting, 100% recyclable**, with no loss of performance or any restrictions as to its use, **copper can be used, recycled and reused** indefinitely. Furthermore, the recycling industry is very effective and well organised. In 2004, 41% of the copper used in Europe, i.e. 2 million tonnes, came from recycling.

Fluid forms

Malleable, ductile and highly resistant to corrosion, copper is also valued for its physical properties. Thanks to its copper facing, the Austrian Embassy in Berlin is a long way from being a typical construction of a purely functional type and is much closer to the "absolute organic" - to use the words of its architect, Hans Hollein: a veritable living organism with an oval body and skin in patina green scales.

As profiles or mesh, in sheets or slabs, copper is used by many interior architects and designers in a variety of ways to create true works of art.

Now a European competition

For several years, Copper Development Association in the UK (CDA UK) has been organising a design focussed competition for UK based architects who use copper in their projects. The winners from previous years are amongst the most talented contemporary architects. Given the growing success of this event, it was decided to extend this competition to a European level. The results of the 2005 competition will be announced tonight in London.

About the European Copper Institute :

The European Copper Institute is a joint venture between the world mining companies and the European copper industry. Its mission is to promote copper's benefits to modern society across Europe www.eurocopper.org

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