

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY & ECOLOGICAL HEALING ENVIRONMENT & ARCHITECTURE AT THE LVR-KLINIK LANGENFELD, GERMANY

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Keyword: healing architecture

1 INTRODUCTION

The main grounds of the LVR-Klinik Langenfeld, Germany cover an area of about 42 hectare. There are ca. 50 buildings spread out over the premises instead of just one central hospital building. The clinic has extensive green areas, small forests, footpaths and relaxing areas.

In the clinic, an extensive decentralisation and modernisation process takes place. Next to several new built treatment centres outside the main premises (to insure treatment close to the patients' homes), there are numerous new built buildings on the main grounds of the clinic.

The natural green areas as well as the architecture of the new builds on the premises are part of the clinic's overall concept to support treatment and healing of the patients' diseases on the one hand and on the other hand help reach the clinic's ecological and environmental goals.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Since 2017, the LVR-Klinik Langenfeld works closely with the local Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU). The clinic's premises build a big protected biotope for local bird breeds, insects, bats and other animals. One of the biggest interventions in cooperation with the NABU, which is also included in therapy plans, is the bird protection project. More than 30 bird breeds live on the hospital grounds. In the work therapy group "wood", patients and therapists build bird boxes using environmentally friendly materials and hang these in trees all over the clinic's premises. The patients also help feed the birds through winter. To inform patients, employees and the public about the project, bird excursions led by a NABU member take place regularly. This is only one example of the extensive work on the outdoor areas of the clinic. The project groups work on re-planting traditionally local flowers, fruit trees and other plants. Not only in the green areas but also in the clinic's organic garden. The work therapy group "bio-garden"

grows local organic vegetables, fruit and herbs. Patients take part in therapy groups that work in the gardens, help dry and process herbs and fruit and get to learn everything about vegetable gardening – from sowing to harvesting to process the harvest to selling the final product. These actions are always carried out with a therapist present as part of a therapy program. They promote physical, mental and social skills.

However, not only the clinic's outdoor areas are designed to help the patients heal and to support the environment. All new buildings were erected in the passive-house-standard to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Passive houses are extremely energy efficient. They require very little energy to achieve a comfortable temperature year round, making conventional heating and air conditioning systems obsolete. At the same time, therapy concepts were considered while planning the layout of the buildings.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three main positive outcomes can be observed by laying out the outdoor and indoor concepts in the described ways.

First, the actions in the outdoor areas that patients take part in are treatment for different mental illnesses. The therapy promotes mental, social and communicative skills. It allows patients to acquire key qualifications for work life, like endurance, punctuality, responsibility, etc. In addition, it helps to gain personality skills, like confidence and self-awareness.

Second, the NABU-project as well as the passive-house-standard buildings help the clinic reach its ecological goals. The hospital works hard to be a sustainable and environmentally friendly organisation.

Finally yet importantly, all measures create a peaceful and natural environment on the clinic grounds. Patients, employees and visitor profit from natural surroundings and energy efficient houses, which are a trademark for the LVR-Klinik Langenfeld.

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