

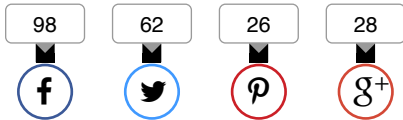
roeoegli & maeder integrates new swiss embassy into leafy nairobi neighborhood



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## roeoegli & maeder integrates new swiss embassy into leafy nairobi neighborhood



lucerne-based firm roeoegli & maeder has completed switzerland's new embassy in nairobi, kenya's (<https://www.designboom.com/tag/architecture-in-kenya/>) capital and largest city. the building is surrounded by trees which have an embedded social and political importance following political activist wangari maathai's green belt movement in the country, which began in 1977. set in a lush and leafy neighborhood, the embassy's footprint circumvents the site's existing trees, while the building itself is topped with a green roof – further integrating it into its bucolic context.



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switzerland's new embassy in nairobi, kenya  
image © iwan baan (<https://iwan.com/>) (also main image)

a perimeter wall, a safety provision mandated by the brief, turned out to be the starting point of the embassy's design — merging the enclosure of the site, with interior programing. *'the building itself grows seamlessly out of this enclosing wall, which spirals into the middle of the site, culminating in a split-level arrangement of rooms at the center,'* explains roeoelsli & maeder (<https://www.roeoelsli-maeder.ch/>). *'a slight gradient of the ground further enhances the split level arrangement, with each of the offset floors containing different functions.'*



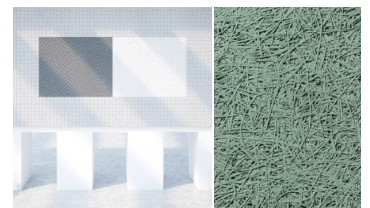
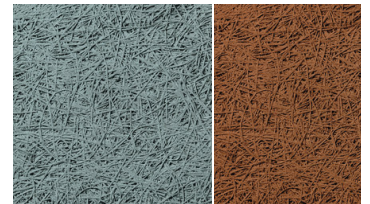
the building's faceted, polygonal geometry is unified by red-tinted concrete walls  
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internally, the lobby, which serves as the building's central hub, connects the different areas of the embassy. the space also provides a visual connection to the outside world, furthering the embassy's relationship with its natural setting. the building's faceted, polygonal geometry — a direct result of the desire to maintain prominent trees — is unified by concrete walls with a dyed red coloration, (a tone that resembles the iron oxide found in the local soil).



the thick concrete façade regulates the building's internal temperature  
image © iwan baan (<https://iwan.com/>)

importantly, the thick concrete façade regulates the building's internal temperature, meaning that there is no need for air conditioning or heating. in addition, a flexible use of internal space, an array of solar panels, and rain and waste water recycling systems complement the sustainable use of the building. roeoelsli & maeder won the competition to complete the building in 2011 before collaborating with local firm DMJ architects ([http://www.daginternational.com/Dmj\\_Web/HOME.html](http://www.daginternational.com/Dmj_Web/HOME.html)) to realize the project.



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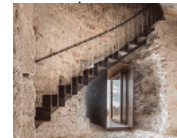
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a visual connection is provided to the outside world  
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large windows frame external views  
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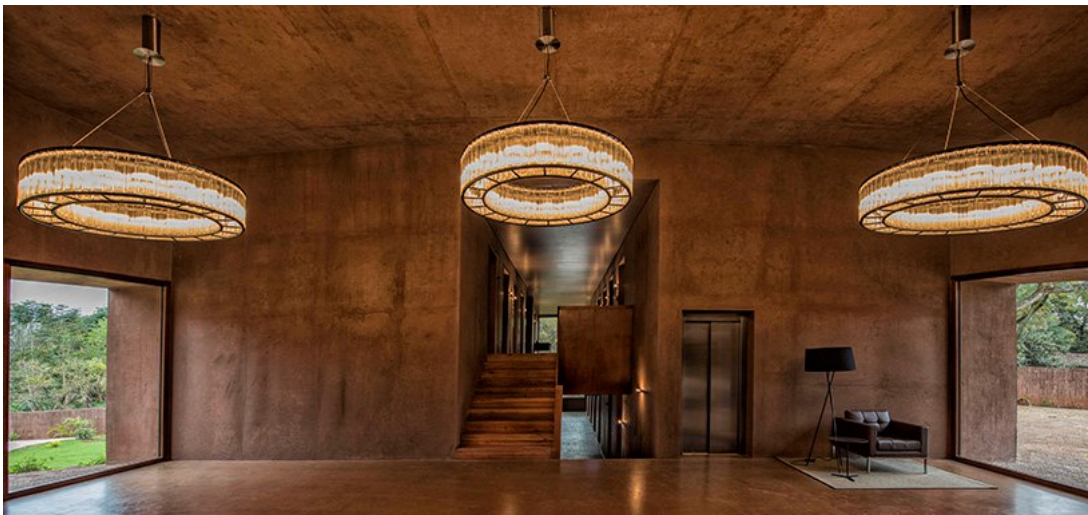
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each of the offset floors contain different functions  
image © fabio idini (<https://www.movieandclick.it/>)



a slight gradient of the ground enhances the split level arrangement  
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the building is surrounded by trees which have an embedded social and political importance  
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the perimeter wall turned out to be the starting point of the embassy's design  
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the structure is topped with a green roof  
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full article here

**project info:**

**competition (open procedure):** 2011

**realization:** october 2014 – august 2016

**location:** embassy of switzerland (<https://www.eda.admin.ch/nairobi>), nairobi, kenya

plot area: 4,046 sqm  
footprint: 770 sqm  
usable area: 1,512 sqm  
main usable area: 849 sqm  
volume as per SIA 116: 6,120 m3  
photography: iwan baan and fabio idini

client: swiss confederation, federal office for building and logistics FOBL  
project manager: jodok brunner

client's representative in nairobi: bautop 2001 (<https://www.bautop-2001.ch/>)  
collaboration: rené häni

architect: ro.ma. roeoegli & maeder gmbh (<https://www.roeoegli-maeder.ch/>), dipl. architekten eth bsa  
collaboration: christian maeder, philipp röösli, adrian rogger

local architect: DMJ architects ([http://www.daginternational.com/Dmj\\_Web/HOME.html](http://www.daginternational.com/Dmj_Web/HOME.html))  
collaboration: simon johnson

project management: mentor management ltd. (<https://www.mmlea.com/>)  
collaboration: andrew ward, lawrence mureithi

landscape architect: concrete jungle (<http://www.junglescaper.com/>)  
collaboration: bruce hobson

civil engineer: BG ingenieure und berater AG (<http://www.bg-21.com/en/homeofbg>) (zürich)  
collaboration: markus pieper

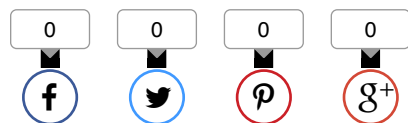
civil engineer: metrix integrated consultancy (<http://www.metrix.co.ke/>)  
collaboration: khalid alkizim

MEP engineer: BG ingenieure und berater AG (<http://www.bg-21.com/en/homeofbg>)  
collaboration: maxime raemy, benoît müller


MEP engineer: EAMS ltd. consulting engineers (<http://www.eams-consultants.co.ke/>)  
collaboration: gordon schofield

philip stevens | designboom

jun 05, 2018



very thoughtful design. As a Nairobiian, I really appreciate the deliberate effort to put up the embassy in a design that captures the Kenyan way of life, our social values and political symbolism. Kudos Switzerland, maybe you should now open up Swiss bank branches in Kenya, we got some loot to stash :-).

 Lameck Nyandusi Ondieki

jun 05, 2018

(<https://www.designboom.com/maeder-swiss-embassy-nairobi-kenya-06-05-2018/#comment-1331720>)

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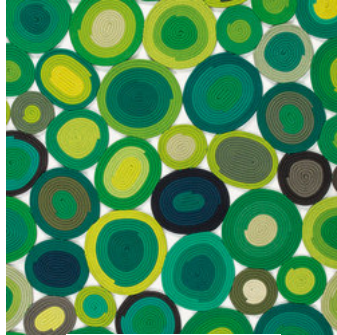
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**renovation-intervention-architecture-08-26-18/**

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**women fabric**  
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the distinctive brise-soleil system on the main, west-facing façade features an interconnected array of sunshades that form the monolithic, outer skin.

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the use of a lightweight timber frame and special paper on the upper façade calls to mind the country's traditional houses.

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