



Moeding Keramikfassaden GmbH
Ludwig-Girnghuber-Straße 1
84163 Marklkofen

Abstract ceramic books

New Dornbirn city library

It is often said that people have lost interest in printed books. In Dornbirn, however, more books are lent out than anywhere else in Austria. The recently completed city library by Christian Schmoelz and Dietrich Untertrifaller Architekten acknowledges this love of reading by depicting books on its façade in abstract fashion – not as printed volumes, but in the form of long ceramic baguettes. Made by Moeding, their sustainable production and durability is fully in line with the quality and environmental standards of Vorarlberg architecture.

There is no question that architecture enjoys a prominent status in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg. Its architectural stronghold is the city of Dornbirn, home to around 50,000 people and the origins of the *Vorarlberger Baukünstler* movement in the 1960s, whose young architects prioritised social, affordable, resource-saving, and regional architecture far removed from traditional design principles. Working in the Rhine Valley, between Lake Constance and the Bregenzerwald Mountains, their visions have defined many public spaces and buildings for living, culture, commerce, and education over the past decades. The region's unusually large and broad range of training opportunities is not only reflected in its more than 30 educational establishments; it can also be seen in its sophisticated architecture. One outstanding example is the recently completed city library by Christian Schmoelz and Dietrich Untertrifaller Architekten in the school district park. The new building, the joint winning project entry in a competition, replaces the old library in the neighbouring Stieger Villa and, with a total floor space of 1,170 square metres, now provides sufficient space for the library's holdings of almost 50,000 items. These holdings can now be read, listened to, and viewed by visitors over three levels.

Playful architecture as a contrast

The central space in the new library is the double-height foyer, which is naturally lit from above and provides easy access to the lower ground level and all other parts of the building, such as the open access areas, creative and gaming zones, a book den, and sanitary and building control facilities. The information and lending area is located on the ground floor, where the walkways have been designed to recreate the course of the original path between Jahngasse and Schulgasse, thus lending the building the sense of being a public space. 'The design concept was not just to create a *container for books and media*, but also to give the whole city an extended living room,' says Peter Nußbaumer from Dietrich Untertrifaller Architekten. The shape of the building was also designed to create a link to the immediate surroundings. This is an area with a large number of schools and playgrounds, so a playful, friendly style of architecture was chosen, one that stands out from the right-angled building structures in the city centre and creates a recognisable point of reference for children and families. After just eighteen months of construction, the result is a free-form pavilion consisting of four connected parabolas in reinforced concrete with a double-skin façade. While the inside consists of floor-to-ceiling wood and aluminium windows installed in panels, allowing abundant daylight to flow into the library, the outer façade serves as ideal protection from the sun. The Moeding ceramic baguettes used here create a play of light inside the building and lend the structure an apposite detail on the outside: an abstract book façade.

Ceramic baguettes: more than just façade

This semi-transparent building envelope was created with the help of a total of 7,714 oblong ceramic baguettes measuring 120x60 centimetres. Their rectangular format, the vertical and diagonal arrangement, as well as the broken white and parchment-like structure reconstruct the format and writing of a book. Special support profiles on a curved steel substructure specific to the system are used to attach the baguettes, enabling quick and easy installation and subsequent replacement around the building. In addition to ensuring a recyclable façade system, one criterion for the choice of ceramic baguettes was the architects' requirement – true to the vision of the *Vorarlberger Bauschulen* – that the building materials used be as sustainable and durable as possible. They defined the colour tone and structure in several sampling runs before the

pollutant-free glaze was produced in Marklkofen, Bavaria. As Christian Schmoelz says, ‘thanks to the material made of clay and loam, the ceramic elements have the excellent property of weathering naturally and enter into a wonderful dialogue with nature as a result.’

The new city library is the first building in Dornbirn to combine modern Vorarlberg architecture with traditional ceramic building materials, highlighting the design sophistication of a ceramic façade. Through its design and interaction with existing pathways, the library accentuates its social value and creates a dynamic and vibrant public space.

(5104 characters incl. spaces)

Project information

Project name:	Dornbirn city library
Developer:	City of Dornbirn
Architects:	Dietrich Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmölz Architekt
Façade engineer:	Thomas Mennel, gbd group
Façade lining:	MOEDING ceramic façades with brick baguettes



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Figures



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Located in the park behind the existing library, the asymmetrical, organic shape of the new city library blends in pleasingly with the surrounding right-angled building structures, reflecting the playful character of the school district. The walkways within the building recall the former path between Schulgasse and Jahngasse, in the process creating a public space.

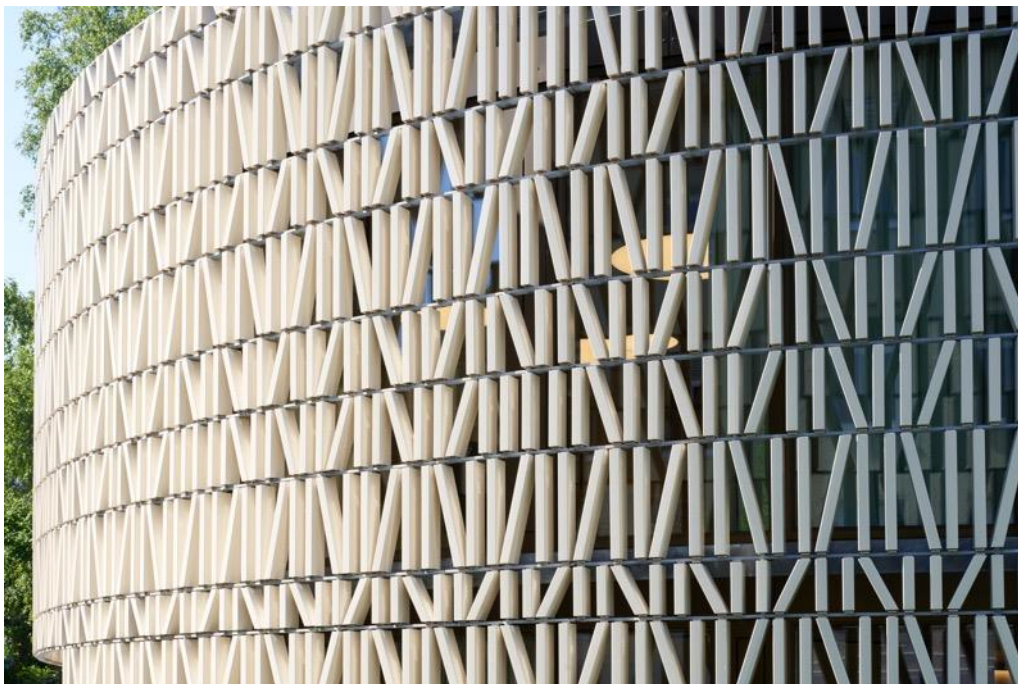
Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmözl Architekt

Photo: Stefan Müller-Naumann



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The vertical and diagonally inclined ceramic baguettes mounted on a steel substructure serve as a permanent, aesthetic sunbreak, offering shading by day to save on energy consumption. Their geometry suggests bookshelves, letters, and numbers.

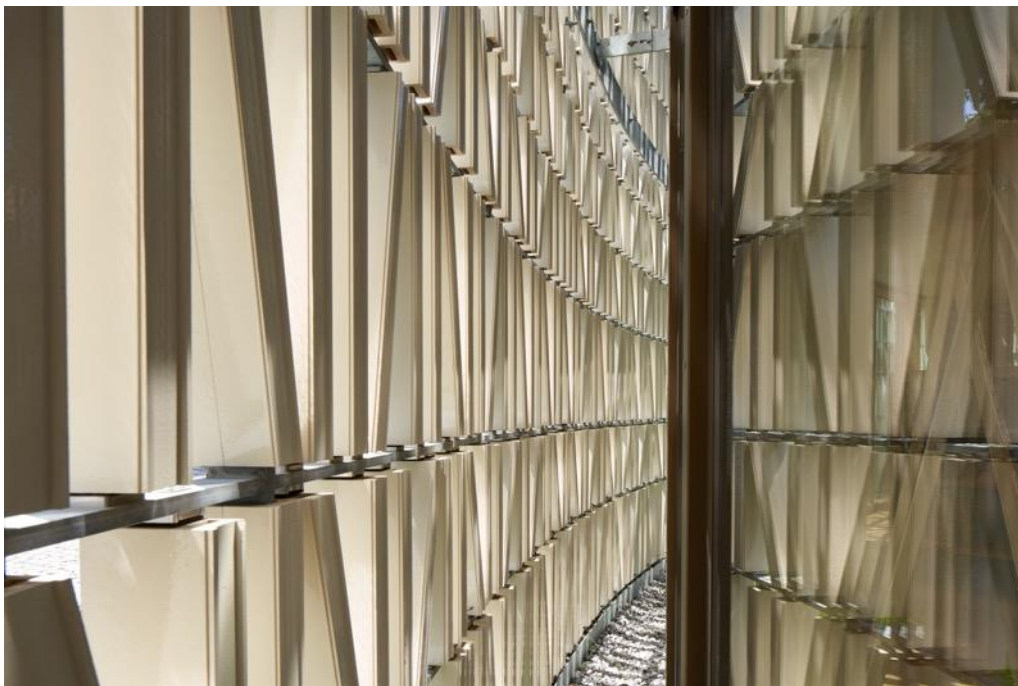
Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmölz Architekt

Photo: Stefan Müller-Naumann



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Inside the double-skin façade, floor-to-ceiling wood and aluminium windows are installed in panels. Maintenance of the façade cavity, cleaning, and replacement is carried out via a circumferential rail-guided façade crane track system.

Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmölz Architekt

Photo: Stefan Müller-Naumann



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The evening reveals the windows hidden behind the semi-transparent façade. While the ceramic baguettes reduce direct sunlight during the day, their arrangement and design create a space that opens onto the park and the city centre in the evening.

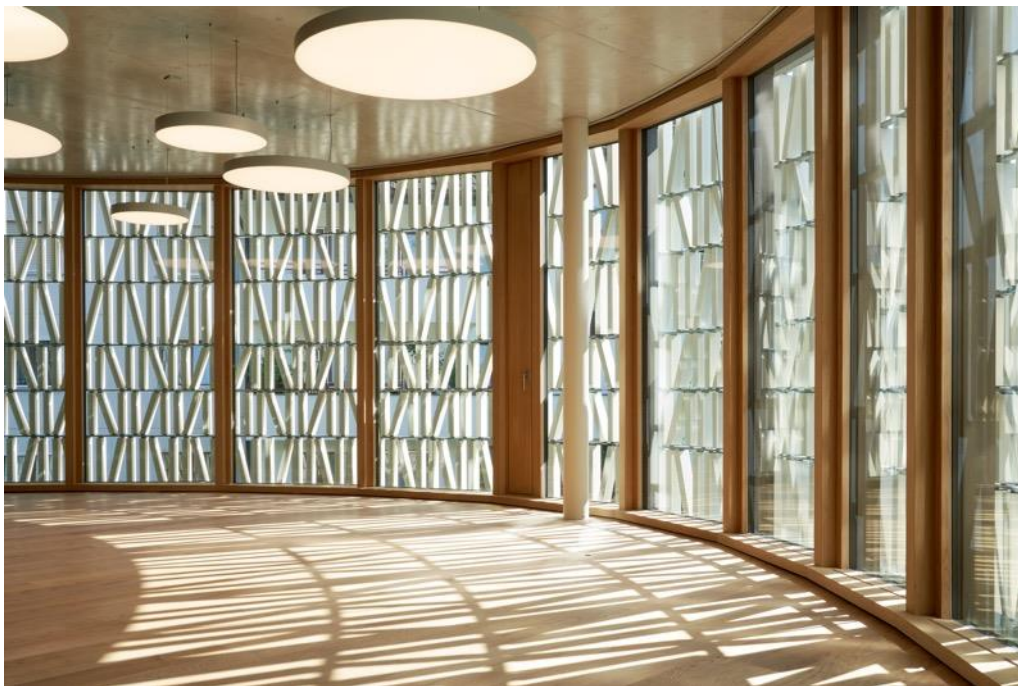
Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmölz Architekt

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Inside the building, there are equally pleasant views in all four directions. The long, hollow ceramic baguettes measuring 120x60 centimetres mounted in front of the windows create interesting plays of light and shadow.

Architects: Dietrich | Untertrifaller Architekten ZT GmbH and Christian Schmölz Architekt

Photo: Stefan Müller-Naumann



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