



# Roche Architecture

Fundamentals and key design elements

Architecture Experts Panel

V1, 3rd June 2025

# Roche architecture

- Roche Architecture, value and design fundamentals
- Key design elements

# Roche Architecture, value and fundamentals

# Roche Architecture

What value does it bring?

## Roche identity



Our spaces are **messengers of our values** and seen as reference to the quality of our **brand**

## Spaces for people & products



**Functional and human-centric** designed spaces which shape our **working culture**

## Long term



A **tradition**, which has shaped our culture and **reputation** for more than 100 years. **Sustainability**, key for future development

# “Traditionally ahead of time”

Roche Architecture legacy and evolution

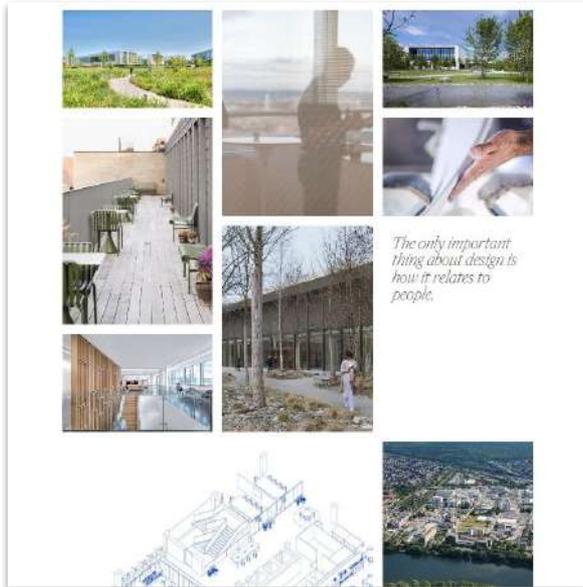
The timeline features a central orange line with circular markers for each year. Above the line are images of buildings from 1936, 1940, 1960, 1971, 1996, 2015, 2019, 2022, and 2025. Below the line are text descriptions for each year. To the left of the timeline, there are additional images of early Roche buildings. To the right, there are images of modern Roche buildings, including a large complex at the end of the timeline.

Year	Event / Milestone
1936	Building 21, 27, Basel
1940	Otto Salvisberg, followed by Roland Rohn
1960	Building 67
1971	Architecture Principles and corporate signage
1996	Formation of the Architecture Experts Panel
2015	“Our spaces” Design Fundamentals
2019	Global Architecture Community launch
2022	
2025	

# Our spaces

Roche guide of the built environment

## Buildings, Interiors, Exteriors



*The only important thing about design is how it relates to people.*

[spaces.roche.com](https://spaces.roche.com)

## Checklist

### Our spaces

Roche guide of the built environment  
Buildings Key Features\_V3

**Ahead of time**

**Adaptability to future change:**

- Plan for future needs, phases, and extensions.
- Layout the structure for an optimal bay width, eave position, and floor plan size and proportion to allow flexibility of use.
- Design modular, standardized structure, in provision for further extension.

**Sustainable technology**

- Take design opportunities to promote and communicate sustainable awareness, considering local specificity.
- Facilitate low-energy solutions for cooling, heating, lighting, etc. in compliance with Roche sustainability directives K5 - K18.
- Choose non-toxic products and materials with a low environmental impact.

**Fit to purpose**

**Designed from the inside out**

- Function should drive form and structure.
- Employ clear, rational and simple spatial organization and structure for flexibility of use.
- The building's expression must be consistent with functional typology.

**The expression of function**

- Form should relate to the interior organization, reflecting the building's function.
- Use rectilinear forms, as they are easily referenced by the human eye.
- Roche buildings must have a timeless elegant appearance.

**Easy maintenance**

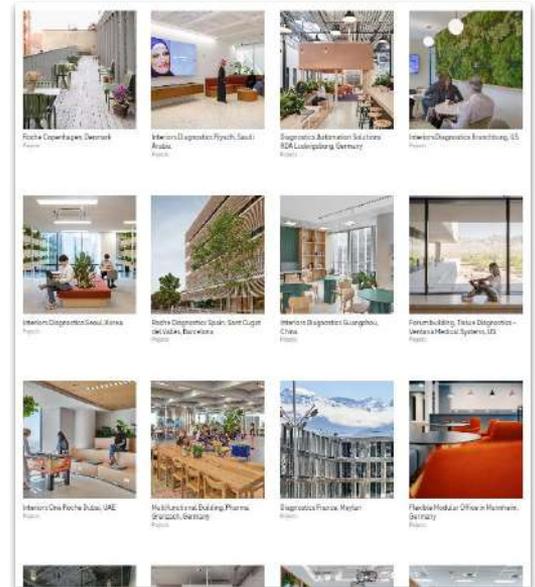
- Select durable, wear-resistant, easy-to-clean materials and design solutions.
- Plan low-maintenance systems and easily accessible HVAC and MEP installations.
- Practice a low water usage/greenery concept.
- Define a Life Cycle strategy based on the Life Cycle Asset Management (LCAM) process.
- Follow the building operation manual. Use the building management system to monitor, analyse and reset for optimum efficiency in operation.

**Form at human scale**

**Human scale**

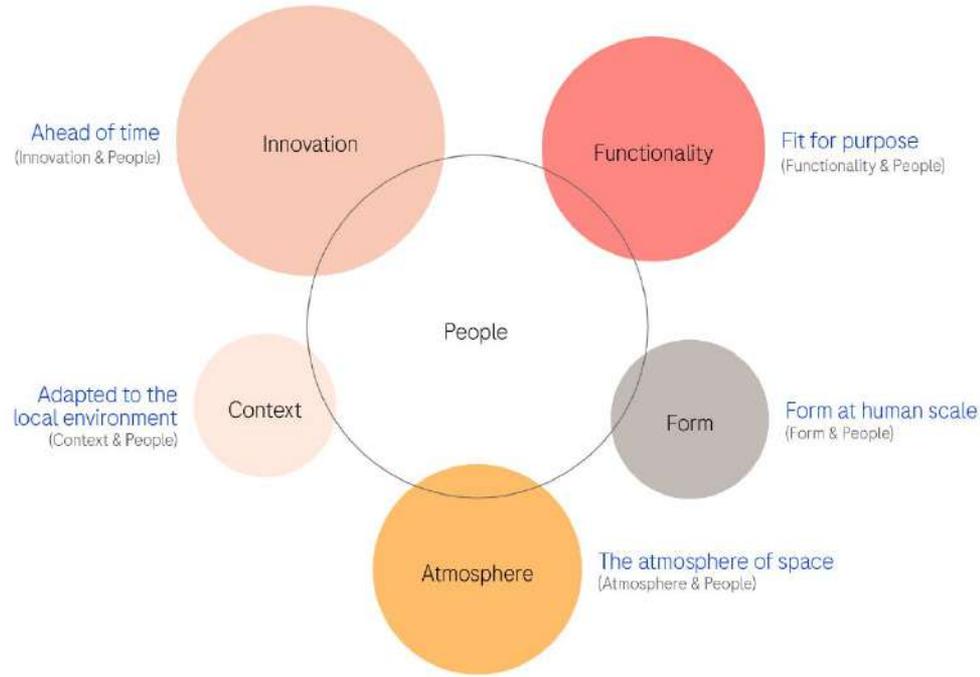
- Define spaces according to human proportions.
- Elements should be scaled to human physical capabilities.

## Stories behind our spaces



# Roche Architecture

## Design fundamentals



[> How did these fundamentals come about?](#) **They are rooted into the company's values**



# What makes Roche architecture distinctive?

From Design fundamentals to key visual elements



## Ahead of Time

- Masterplan grid
- Adaptable to future change



## Fit to Purpose

- The expression of function



## Form at Human Scale

- Find the essential: reduced, timeless elegance
- Pure volumes
- Human scale
- Natural materials, honest



## Atmosphere of Space

- Emblematic stairs
- Attention to detail
- Neutral colour
- Human centric interiors: bright, inspiring, green, inclusive



## Adapted to Local Environment

- Sense of place

# How does this translate into architecture?

Identifying distinctive characteristics

- **What makes Roche Architecture?**
  - Not all design fundamentals deal with design elements which create a physical distinctive characteristic aspect.
  - **Ahead of time, Form at Human scale** and **The atmosphere of space** are the fundamentals which shape the physical uniqueness of Roche Architecture the most.
  - On the contrary, **Adapted to the local environment** brings physical elements which relate to the specific context, strengthening the local character and differentiating sites from each other.
- **Is Roche Architecture recognizable?**
  - We can identify a building which meets Roche approach to architecture by certain distinctive elements in a given context, but this is not exclusive to Roche.
  - Roche architecture does not define a style but **a distinctive formal language\***

*\* principles of organisation and visual elements which communicate a design intention, it is like the grammar and vocabulary of architectural expression.*

# Key design elements

# Key design elements

As described in Our spaces, Roche guide of the built environment

- Embedded in a Site Masterplan framework
- Massing, orthogonal geometries , [Pure volumes](#)
- Functional expression, absence of ornament, [The expression of function](#)
- [Human scale](#) related proportions. Articulation of volumes as planes and surfaces, no heavy mass
- [Neutral colour](#), conveys luminosity and purity associated with healthcare
- Modular and flexible, [Adaptable to future change](#)
- Timeless elegance, reduced, [Find the essential](#)
- [Natural materials](#), honest
- Spatial experience through [emblematic stairs](#)
- Human centric interior design: [bright, inspiring colours](#), [creating atmospheres](#), [greenery](#), [inclusive by design](#)
- [Attention to detail](#), simple-elegant, never over articulated
- [Sense of place](#), adapted to the local context: responding to climate and culture

# Masterplan

A grid based framework



Basel site, Switzerland, 1969



Penzberg site, Germany, 2024

# Masterplan

A grid based framework

- Place Roche buildings within a site Masterplan that creates a rational structure to guide future development.
- Use grid-based frameworks to ensure flexibility, scalability and coherence over time - and contextually influence the form/geometry of buildings within.

Don't 



# Orthogonal massing

Pure geometric volumes



Basel Building 21, Salvisberg 1936



Indianapolis Development Center Building E, SOM 2016

> [Pure volumes](#)

# Orthogonal massing

Pure geometric volumes

- Shape orthogonal massing adapted to the grid to define building fabric.
- Create primary volumes that can be clearly read and respond to a functional building typology.
- Articulate infrastructure or connecting elements, so they visually differentiate from the main volume.
- Deviate only on exceptional situations, when building elements create a special destination place.

Don't 



> [Pure volumes](#)

# Functional expression

Absence of ornament



Basel Chemical Manufacturing B29, Salvisberg 1938



Basel Laboratory B92, Herzog & de Meuron 2000



> [The expression of function](#)

# Functional expression

Absence of ornament

- Derive form and structure from the building function.
- Define the building expression from its functional typology and required facade performance.
- Use rectilinear forms, as they are easily referenced by the human eye.

Don't ❌



> [The expression of function](#)

# Human scale proportions

Design people can relate to



Basel Building 27, Salvisberg, originally built 1938, extended 1954 and 1965



Kaiseraugst Office B254, Nissen Wentzlaff 2016

> [Human scale](#)

# Human scale proportions

Design people can relate to

- Articulate volumes as planes, rather than solid heavy mass.
- Avoid monumental oversized spaces, and extremely large distances.
- Define spaces according to human measurements.

Don't ❌



> [Human scale](#)

# Neutral colour, luminosity

Purity association with healthcare



Basel Building 21, Salvisberg 1936



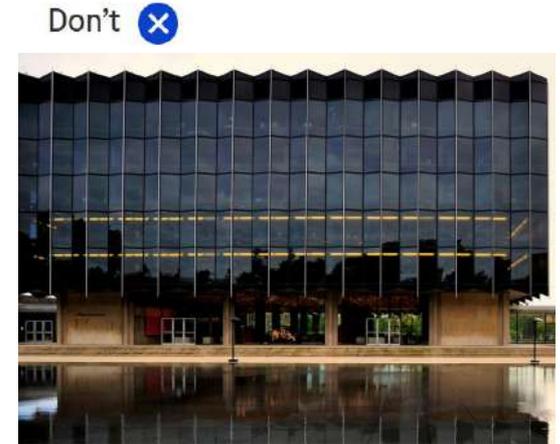
Rotkreuz site, 2020

> [Neutral colour](#)

# Neutral colour, luminosity

Purity association with healthcare

- Use white and light colours for buildings facades.
- Define accent colours mostly on non-permanent finishes.
- Reserve Roche blue only for the logo, not for building components, graphics or decorative elements.



> [Neutral colour](#)

# Modular and flexible

Adapted to future change



Basel Chemical Manufacturing B29, Salvisberg 1938



Sant Cugat, Spain, office-laboratory building, Batlle i Roig 2022

> [Adaptable to future change](#)

# Modular and flexible

Adapted to future change

- Design modular, standardized structures related to the building function.
- Layout the structure for an optimal bay width, core position, and floor plan size and proportion to allow for flexibility of use.
- Plan for future needs, phases, extensions and potential change of use over time.

Don't 



> [Adaptable to future change](#)

# Timeless elegance, reduced

Find the essential



Basel Building 27, Salvisberg 1938



Basel Building 67, Rohn 1971

> [Find the essential](#)

# Timeless elegance, reduced

Find the essential

- Employ a consistent, harmonious and elegant formal language, beyond stylistic.
- Focus on a reduced expression, without superfluous ornament.
- Use a reduced number of different materials and key design elements to define the building character.

Don't ❌



> [Find the essential](#)

# Natural and honest materials



Basel Administration B21, Salvisberg 1936



Kaiseraugst Auditorium B218, Nissen Wentzlaff 2016

> [Natural materials](#)

# Natural and honest materials

- Work with natural, raw materials in their original colour, finish, and tactile appearance.
- Use authentic, durable, quality materials.
- Prefer locally sourced sustainable materials.
- Avoid the use of materials that try to imitate others, stay true.

Don't ❌



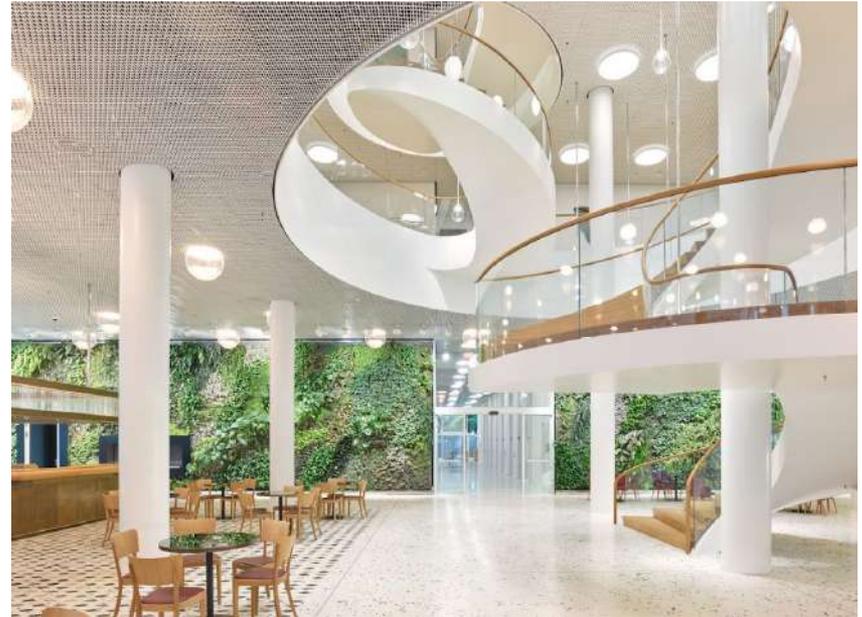
> [Natural materials](#)

# Emblematic stairs

Spatial experience



Basel Administration B21, Salvisberg 1936



Basel Building 2, Herzog & de Meuron 2022

> [Emblematic stairs](#)

# Emblematic stairs

## Spatial experience

- Encourage the use of stairs by locating them visibly in places of social interaction.
- Reflect on body movement to create a spatial experience through sculptural stairs.

# Human centric interiors

Bright, inspiring colours, atmosphere, greenery and inclusive design



Basel Building 21, Salvisberg 1936



Ludwigsburg Building 2, interior Studio Alexander Fehre 2022

> Bright spaces, inspiring colours, creating atmospheres, greenery, inclusive by design

# Human centric interiors

Bright, inspiring colours, atmosphere, greenery and inclusive design

- Ensure quality natural light to all permanent workplaces.
- Create transparencies and cross views for a sense of openness.
- Use of colour follows a clear concept directly related to the character of the spaces.
- Ensure a balanced atmosphere by combining direct and diffused lighting and using appropriate light colour temperature and intensity. Avoid a single solution fits all.
- Introduce plants and planters as integral part of the interior design concept.
- Ensure everyone feels comfortable by creating a neutral and harmonious environment. Avoid extravagant eclectic design.

Don't ❌



> [Bright spaces](#), [inspiring colours](#), [creating atmospheres](#), [greenery](#), [inclusive by design](#)

# Attention to detail

Elegant and simple, never over articulated



Basel Building 21, Salvisberg 1936



Kaiseraugst Auditorium B218, Nissen Wentzlaff 2016

> [Attention to detail](#)

# Attention to detail

Elegant and simple, never over articulated

- Plan thoughtful, elegant and simple construction detailing.
- Realize plain functional solutions, never over articulated or ornamented.
- Give consistent attention to entrance areas, staircases, roof trims, handrails, fenestration and sun shading elements.

Don't 



> [Attention to detail](#)

# Sense of place

Adapted to the local context, responding to specific culture and climate



Tucson:  
Desert spirit,  
healthy lifestyle

Building 4, ZGF 2022



Suzhou:  
Garden heritage,  
modern tradition

Administration, SOM 2018



Sant Cugat:  
Mediterranean  
light, life in the  
streets

Batlle i Roig 2022

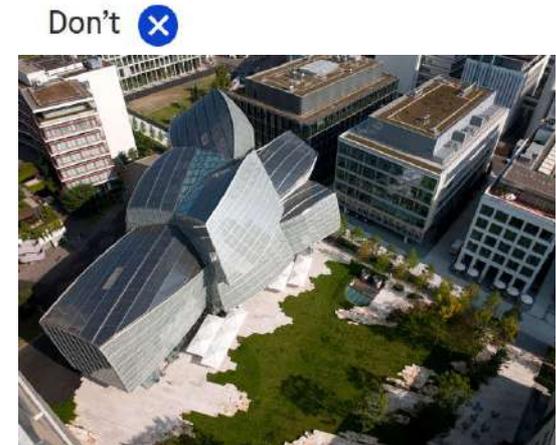


> [Sense of place](#)

# Sense of place

Adapted to the local context, responding to specific culture and climate

- Analyze and identify key distinctive contextual characteristics.
- Interpret and contribute to the unique cultural aspirations of the site.
- Develop key placemaking design elements which will define the local character of a site.
- Adapt building typologies and performance of the envelope to the local climate.



# Key elements of Roche formal language

As defined in Our spaces



Masterplan grid



Orthogonal massing



Functional expression



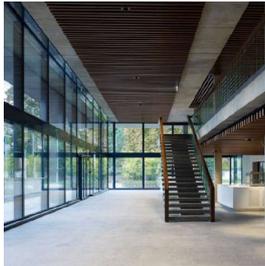
Human scale proportions



Neutral colour, luminosity



Modular and flexible



Timeless elegance



Natural, honest materials



Emblematic stairs



Human-centric interiors



Attention to detail



Sense of place

**Doing now what patients need next**