

Kindergarten in Rødovre, Copenhagen



The light creates and stimulates the children's play outside. The pergola-like ceiling above parts of the wooden playground/terrace provides sunshade for the children as well as a special effect to the building.

Architect:	ONV Architects
Photographer:	Laila Halsteen and VELUX A/S
Client/investor:	The municipality of Rødovre
Building company:	Scandi Byg A/S
City:	Rødovre
Country:	Denmark
Year of completion:	2009

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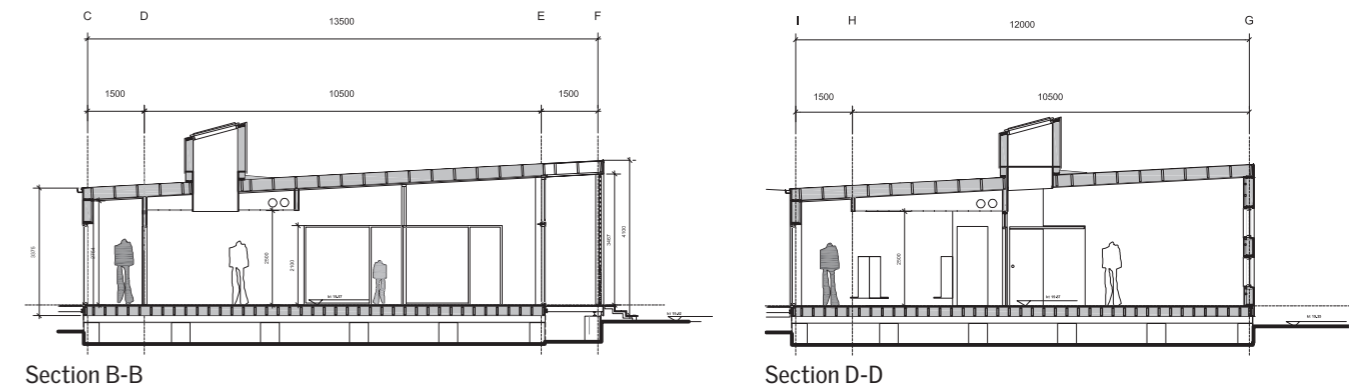
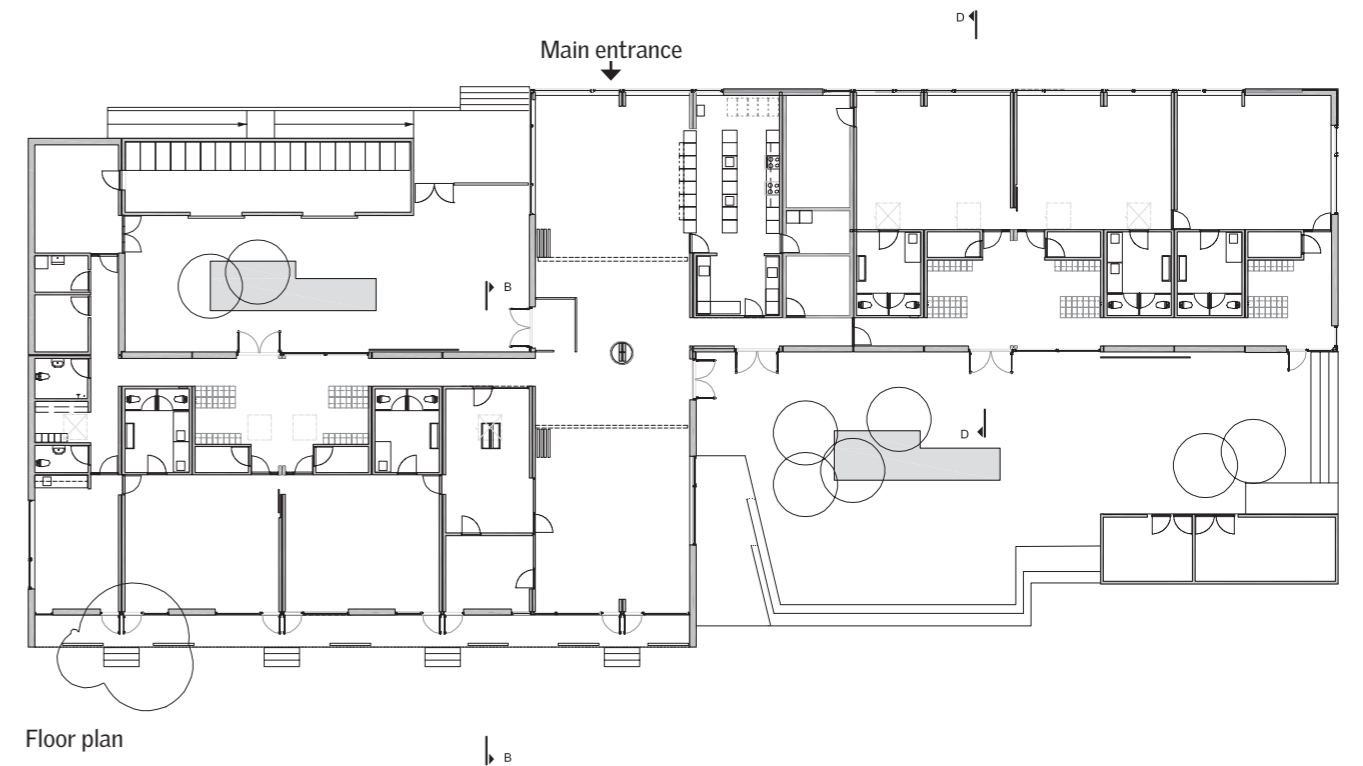
This bright, signal red building encourages and stimulates infants, minor children and members of the staff to explore and initiate creative processes, express emotions and simply move around more in a more playful manner.



Location

Rødovre is a suburb just 8 km west of central Copenhagen, a mainly residential community with many green areas and mixed housing consisting of row houses, villas and blocks of flats. Named 'the grasshopper' the kindergarten lies close to an open, green area and in connection with a former school and a stadium with sport facilities.

"From the beginning the kindergarten project was focused on creating a place of its own character in a diverse area with many mixed types of buildings and surfaces. The strong signal red colour and the S-shaped geometry with a wooden covered playground have been designed as landmark points and give the building a specific and very different look compared to the surroundings", concept developer and architect, Søren Rasmussen, from Danish ONV Architects says.



Function

You arrive to the kindergarten by a long, narrow path from a parking lot. The first encounter is an almost Japanese style inner courtyard, which leads to the heart of the building: A significant community room with an open kitchen section. Besides this the building consists of multiple activity, play- and group rooms lying on a string inside the S-shaped building. In addition there are several bathrooms, wardrobes for children and staff offices. Room for prams and sheds are integrated in the rectangular shape or body of the building.

The kindergarten has a flexible limit of about 55 children to occupy the 900 m² floor plan of the building (860 m² for the main building plus 40 m² for sheds). Visiting the place gives a general feeling of room for all kind of activities and child's games.

"This is about 4 times more space than the average per child, or 16 m² instead of 4 m². The architecture provides and supports our lifestyle and team spirit with emphasis on movement and healthy food. Automatic air and daylight control systems help to facilitate the daily routines

for the children and us, the employees. Children should be looked upon as small 'grasshoppers', free to move, jump and play rather than regarded as chickens in a cage. The space, light and overall friendly and flexible environment is probably one of the reasons why our kindergarten is already very popular and with a huge waiting list", explains the daily leader, Lotte Rosenkrans, who was headhunted as leader and to be part of the design process two years before the opening in Easter 2009.

Daylight and window design

The windows used in the eastern and western façades are completely different. To the east, small vertical bands of windows gently let the daylight in, whereas quite large windows from floor to ceiling with external blinds somehow filter the light from the west. In the eastern part of the building, several light chimneys with electrically operated VELUX roof windows have been used as additional sources of light and ventilation. The chimney-shaped constructions on top of the roof are designed to underline and exaggerate the use and expression of the VELUX roof windows, adding a special look to the outer shape too.



Materials and construction

About 90% of the building has been produced in units of 60 m² in a factory in the north-west part of Jutland and then assembled on site in just four months. All materials are chosen as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible.

Wood and plaster have been used in the construction and covered with large scaled, red painted aluminium façade panels with flexible corners making the surfaces of all exterior façades highly visible. Wooden terraces and soft rubber-asphalt are the childproof surfaces used as outdoor flooring materials.

Economy

Economy has played a major role in the building design process, because the budget was quite modest. Both ONV Architects and the municipality have been well aware of keeping the cost on a minimum level and it ended at 14,000 DKK/m² excl. tax.

"As builder, the municipality of Rødovre, has put much energy and focus into the building process. Constructing the kindergarten in the shortest possible time, at a competitive price level inclusive of low maintenance expenses was an important task. At the same time, we had strong demands for high level architecture, meaning a well designed spatial framework with as much variation and spacious experiences plus beautiful and well-lighted rooms as possible. All these expectations and intentions have been fulfilled to our great satisfaction", says the chief architect of Rødovre municipality, Bjarne Rieckmann.

