

N° 39

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e-Letter

The Shortest



Link

between

Topic:

... Lifesaving and Elegance:
Hospital Bridge in Karlsruhe
Officially Open

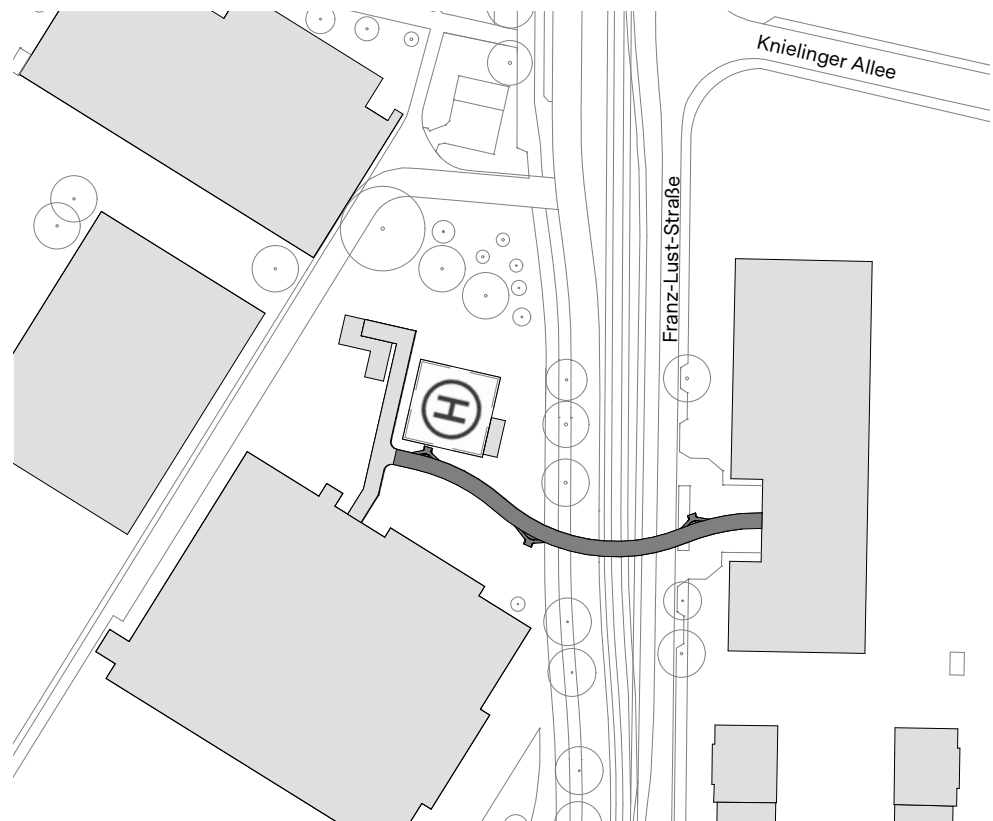
Hello.

Let's be honest – when you're arriving by rescue helicopter, the elegance of the bridge you're wheeled across to reach the hospital isn't exactly top of mind. What counts are short distances and rapid infrastructure. Above all, the bridge's purpose is to save lives. That's exactly what the newly opened bridge at Karlsruhe Municipal Hospital (Städtisches Klinikum Karlsruhe) is designed to do. Officially inaugurated in February, it was designed by *caspar.* in collaboration with Werner Sobek. We won the competition for the project in summer 2020.



The bridge connects the hospital and its helipad on one side of the four-lane Franz-Lust-Strasse to the Helios Heart Surgery Clinic on the other. Emergency patients arriving by helicopter can now be transferred directly to the cardiac unit. Routine transfers between the two facilities are also faster, smoother, and more comfortable.

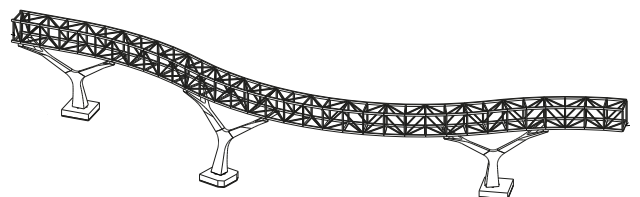
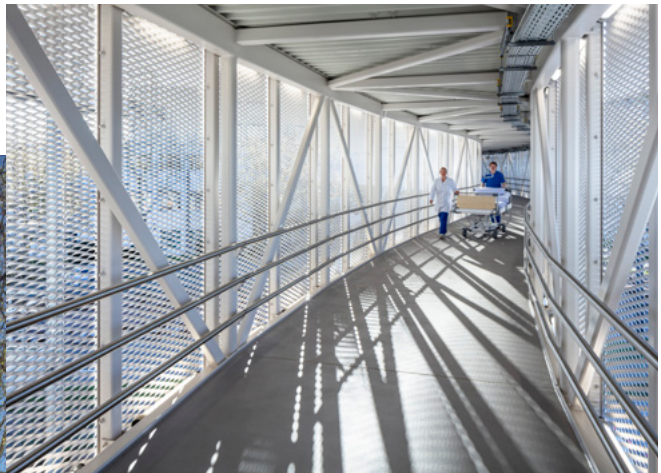
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Montage of construction parts
Site plan: caspar.





Speed is crucial – but so is presence. The 80 meter-long bridge combines function with a distinct aesthetic, making a confident addition to Karlsruhe's urban fabric as it spans Franz-Lust-Strasse and the streetcar tracks that run down its center. With its illuminated white box truss girder curving in a gentle S-shape, the bridge strikes a balance between clarity and character. Forked supports at either end of the road (plus one at the helipad) ensure stability, while white expanded metal panels with varied perforation provide both light and privacy. By day, the bridge reads as a continuous white band; when backlit or illuminated from within, its structure and the movement within appear in silhouette through the perforated skin.

The bridge makes a confident addition, combines function with a distinct aesthetic ...



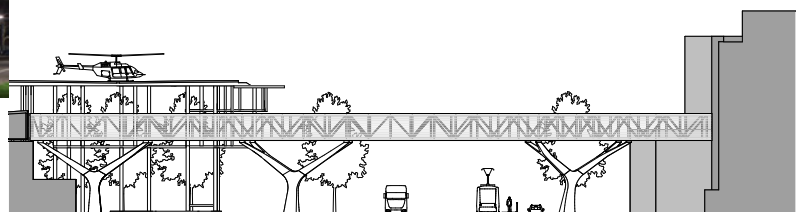


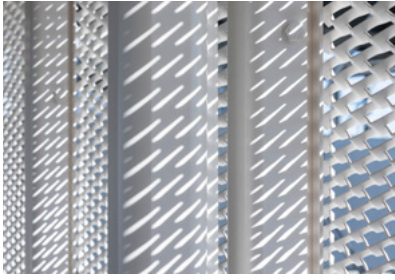
The supports are highly expressive yet restrained – at once clear and organic...

The supports deserve a special mention. They are highly expressive yet restrained – at once clear and organic. Their branching form is functional, allowing the bridge to span road and rail without obstructing traffic. At the same time, their tree-like structure resonates with the plane trees lining Franz-Lust-Strasse, which already give the street the feel of an urban boulevard. In fact, those very trees inspired the curve: to avoid disturbing their root systems, the design bends gently to fit between them.

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And yes, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line – but any delay from the gentle swing is negligible, considering the almost absurd situation that existed before the bridge: patients from the helipad had to be taken several floors down by elevator, transferred into an ambulance, driven to the next tram crossing, and then back up the street on the other side – just to reach the Helios Clinic across the road.





That the bridge brings an urgently needed – and literally lifesaving – improvement to this route would be reason enough to feel satisfied. But there's more. This project challenged us to plan with precision and restraint, maximizing functionality while creating an aesthetic presence that emerged directly from purpose – one that reveals different facets by day and by night. I hope the images here and on studiocaspar.com, give a sense of that. Many thanks to the entire team and all project partners for an again outstanding performance!

Warm regards,

Caspar Schmitz-Morkramer

Project data

Client Städtische Klinikum Karlsruhe

Project Construction of a bridge

Procedure 1st prize competition

Planning and construction period 2021–2024

Service phases 1–8

Architect of record

Caspar Schmitz-Morkramer

Competition Johannes Feder (PL),

Jutta Göttlicher, David Schlaht, Lena Nehl

Project Harald Bender (PL), Vanessa Frank,

Maria Urban, Maik Voit

Gross floor area 200 m²

Specialist planning

Project controlling FC-Projektsteuerung, Karlsruhe

Technical building equipment

Werner Sobek Green Technologies, Stuttgart

Structural planning Werner Sobek AG, Stuttgart

Fire protection Kempen Krause Ingenieure, Köln

Site management, construction supervision Krebs

+ Kiefer Ingenieure, Köln

Construction site safety coordinator

Weber-Ingenieure, Pforzheim

Photos (completion) © HGESch

Photo (construction site) © Markus Kümmerle

Plans/Drawings © caspar., Werner Sobek AG

Let's stay in touch!

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