

Purpose

Located within the Embassy compound on Cathedral Avenue in the charming Woodley Park area of Washington, D.C., the new Swiss Residence offers a rare view of the Washington Monument. The nearly 14,000 square foot building is a striking emblem of the best of American vision and Swiss precision. As an extension of the Swiss Embassy's work space, seventy percent of the Residence is designed for official and working purposes, i.e. working lunches, meetings, networking events, exhibits, and other cultural events. In a given year, there are approximately 400 working events and 3,000 guests at the Residence.



Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, D.C.

Switzerland established its first diplomatic representation in the U.S. in 1868. Since 1941, Switzerland's official representation in Washington, D.C. has been located in Woodley Park. The Embassy in Washington, D.C., with 60 employees, is the largest and one of the most important Swiss representations abroad. In addition to the Embassy, the other official Swiss representations in the U.S. include Consulates General in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, as well as the Swiss Business Hub USA, and the three Offices of Science and Technology.



Mission Statement

The Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, D.C.:

- Contributes toward strengthening Switzerland's partnership with the U.S.
- Cooperates with the U.S. in building a better, freer, more secure and just, prosperous, and sustainable world.
- Meets with U.S. authorities and actively advocates for an open, unimpeded exchange between both countries, societies, and economies.

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U.S.-Swiss relations

Known as the "Sister Republics," Switzerland and the U.S. have a long history of shared democratic values and even inspired one another's constitutions. Today, the two nations continue to enjoy strong political, economic, and cultural relations. A unique aspect of this bond of trust involves the "good offices," namely that Switzerland protects American interests in Iran and Cuba. The political cooperation is especially strong on security issues such as combating terrorism, nonproliferation, and crisis mediation in international hot spots. In addition, there is a growing relationship between the legislative branches of the two countries: Over 30 members of the U.S. Congress are part of the Friends of Switzerland Caucus. A complementary organization exists in the Swiss Parliament.

The relations also thrive because of the strong economic ties between the two nations. For many years, Switzerland has ranked among the top seven foreign direct investors in the U.S. Six hundred Swiss companies employ more than 500,000 people in the U.S. and annually invest over \$4 billion in research and development activities. On the other side of the Atlantic, the U.S. is the most important foreign direct investor in Switzerland. Over 650 American companies are located there and many have chosen Switzerland as their European headquarters. The two nations have recently intensified their political, economic, cultural, and law enforcement cooperation through a series of bilateral agreements.



Switzerland.



The Swiss Residence



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History

In 2001, the Swiss Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics launched an international competition to design and build a new Swiss Residence in Washington, D.C. The former residence, built in 1926, was in poor structural condition and could no longer meet the contemporary needs of a diplomatic residence. The renowned American and Swiss firms of Steven Holl Architects (New York) and Rüssli Architekten AG (Lucerne, Switzerland) respectively, were selected from ten international teams that competed to design this project by a blind jury. The project was approved by the Swiss Federal Council and the Swiss Parliament in 2003. The new Swiss Residence was completed in August 2006.



Architectural Concept

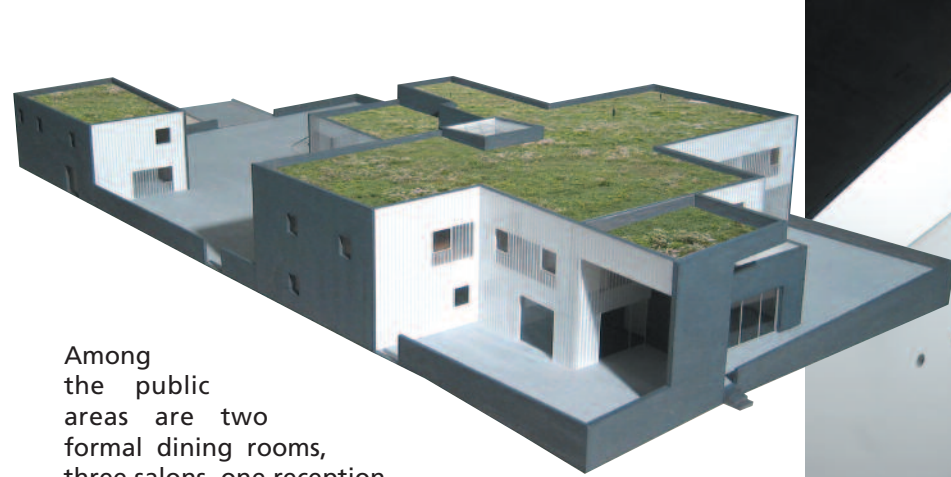
The Residence is set on a plateau at the highest point of the site with an arrival square, a reflecting pool, a reception courtyard and an herb garden. The design, in a cruciform shape, serves to divide the different areas into zones. The building is characterized by horizontal and vertical views through, into, and over it, repeatedly defining the structure in its complex shape.

The front façades of the wings are constructed in charcoal-colored exposed concrete trimmed in a local slate and sand-blasted structural glass planks. The remaining façades are made of glass and serve as transparent and semitransparent areas between the inside and the outside. The resulting black and white façades were inspired by the rugged snow-covered Alps of Switzerland.

The flat roof is a fifth façade with greenery. The low maintenance "sedum" green roof with PVC panels provides considerable energy savings, keeping the house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. The green roof also reduces storm water run-off, provides noise insulation, and has the ecological benefits of filtering pollutants and CO₂ out of the air and reducing the urban heat island effect.

Constructed according to environment-friendly "Swiss Minergie Standards," the south façades use passive solar energy. "Minergie" is a registered quality label for new and refurbished buildings with interior air quality comfort as its main theme. Comfortable air quality is ensured by the high-grade building envelope and systematic renewal of air.

With regard to materials and energy consumption, the plan corresponds to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles for high-quality, sustainable construction. Other energy saving measures include automated external window shades equipped with sensors that close when it becomes too sunny or windy to better regulate interior temperature.



Among the public areas are two formal dining rooms, three salons, one reception hall, and a stone terrace that offers a spectacular view of Washington, D.C. and the park. The private space is upstairs and is divided into three areas: the living quarters of the Ambassador and his family, two guest rooms, and two staff apartments.

The rooms designed for official functions are situated along a diagonal to lend a sense of transparency and openness. They are highly versatile and able to accommodate both small and very large meetings for up to 200 people. This is accomplished through the use of custom-designed oversized pivot doors equipped with acoustic paneling to absorb noise. These doors can be opened to create a continuous flowing space or closed to accommodate smaller gatherings.



Interior Design

The Swiss company Zed. worked with the architects on the interior design concept for the new Swiss Residence. The result of this cooperation is that the building can be experienced as a totality with the exterior and interior designs complementing each other. There are three main characteristics of the interior design: the use of warm earthy colors, versatility and modularity of the furniture, and an emphasis on Swiss and American design.

The interior design uses warm color accents like mossy greens, chocolate browns, rusty reds, soft whites, and subtle taupes. The first floor, used for official functions, is dominated by a light-colored stained ash wood, found on the



interior doors by Steven Holl Architects as well as in the matching built-in drawers and shelves. These light colors are complemented by the dark mordant-dyed furniture specifically designed for the Residence. On the upper floor where the Ambassador's quarters and guest rooms are located, by contrast, dark bamboo is used for the wood flooring while the built-in drawers and shelves in the rooms are cream and white.

To complement the American-Swiss architectural partnership, Zed. used primarily Swiss and American designers throughout the Residence. Swiss designer Hannes Wettstein designed much of the furnishings including the Cassina Globe couches and American designer George Nelson added flair with the coconut chairs found in the salon. Historic artwork brought over from the previous residence includes the portraits of the famous American generals Robert E. Lee and William T. Sherman by Swiss painter Frank Buchser.



