

# *This is how you build today*

## A multi-storey office building made of wood

Single-family houses made of wood are no longer a rarity in Switzerland. Multi-storey office buildings, on the other hand, are. But this is precisely what PSP Swiss Property chose for a new replacement building in Basel. Thomas Kraft and Terri-Liza Bachmann explain why.



**Interview with Thomas Kraft**  
Asset Manager  
PSP Swiss Property

*The “Clime” on Grosspeterstrasse in Basel replaces a building that was erected in the 1980s especially for the PTT. What did you respectively Swisscom no longer like about it?*

**Bachmann:** Of course, one does not lightly demolish such a young building. At the time, the office building was constructed for the specific requirements of the PTT. The technological leaps of the last decades, but also the new ecological requirements and the increased expectations of the tenants have meant that the once tailor-made building no longer met today's requirements.

**Kraft:** For this reason, we invited five architectural firms to take part in a tender, which was won by the locally based and globally renowned architectural firm “Diener & Diener”. They de-



**and Terri-Liza Bachmann**  
Property Manager  
PSP Swiss Property

signed a timber hybrid building that ideally combines ecology, aesthetics, functionality and an optimal working environment. The result is 5,600 m<sup>2</sup> of space that can be flexibly fitted and divided – from individual offices to open-plan offices. Incidentally, Swisscom is once again an important tenant in the “Clime”.

*Why did you decide in favour of a timber construction and against a conventional solid construction?*

**Kraft:** The advantages of a wooden construction for an office building of this size were obvious: the lightweight construction with a correspondingly short construction time, the design flexibility, the sustainability aspects thanks to the renewable raw material wood with its good CO<sub>2</sub> balance – the processed wood

binds and stores approximately 2,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for as long as the “Clime” will stand. In addition, wood has a significantly lower dead weight than concrete or steel, which requires less massive reinforcement measures for the underground components. This has enabled us to preserve the two basement levels with the two-storey underground car park almost completely; this way we were able to save a lot of grey energy.

**Bachmann:** I am also impressed by the aesthetics: the façade consists of 44,000 pieces of pressure-impregnated spruce and fir, which were attached in precision work. The wood can be seen and felt from the outside and the inside and provides a good indoor and working environment. In addition, there are “soft” factors such as the warmth that a wooden building radiates, the “homeliness” – which offers an additional incentive to be present in the corporate office, especially in times of home office and hybrid work. All in all, a product has been created that stands out pleasantly from conventional office spaces and is very popular with potential tenants. As a result, the building is already almost fully let.

*Is the “Clime” a chalet?*

**Bachmann:** Not quite. Wood is acoustically, visually, but also thermally pleasant, congenial and homely. But it also offers an optimal environment for productive work. The “Clime” is not a chalet, but a state-of-the-art office building that is perfectly suited for a wide variety of work forms.

**Kraft:** By the way, the supporting structure is not purely made of wood, but a hybrid of wood and concrete. An office

building made only of wood is difficult to realise. In Basel, for example, there are increased requirements for earthquake safety; therefore, the staircase core is made of concrete. The ceilings are also not made of pure wood, but of a composite of wood and concrete, because of the indoor climate as well as impact sound insulation.

*Why can't we see any blinds on the "Clime"?*

**Kraft:** Because there are none. All glazing is equipped with dynamic solar control glasses with electrochromic coating. These can be controlled automatically depending on the solar irradiation. Electrochromic means that the glass changes its appearance with different electrical voltages. Depending on the voltage, the window pane darkens and thus changes the incidence of light. While the visible light is let through, the heating infrared rays are blocked. Thanks to this system, we were able to do without an external sun protection device.

**Bachmann:** We have installed a total of 1'500 m<sup>2</sup> of dynamic solar control glass. Dynamic means that the glass, as mentioned, automatically adapts to the light irradiation. Therefore, no additional shading or anti-glare systems are necessary. The glass is 100% transparent in any state, and the view remains unobstructed at all times. The comfort is therefore greater than with a conventional blind construction and, at the same time, we need less energy.

*How is the "Clime" heated and where does the electricity come from?*



The «Clime» on the Grosspeter site in Basel – a prestigious multi-storey office building in timber construction with state-of-the-art interior fittings and infrastructure.

**Kraft:** We heat with district heating. We also have our own photovoltaic system on the roof. Incidentally, the roof terrace is freely accessible to all tenants

and offers a far-reaching view of the Jura mountains. We use the electricity produced by the photovoltaic system for general electricity, but also for the charging stations in the parking garage; this way we can use most of it in the building.

**Bachmann:** You could, therefore, say that the "Clime" is an outstanding building, from the foundation to the photovoltaic system on the roof – ecologically, aesthetically, functionally and economically.

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## PSP Swiss Property

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