

Wooden platform near Basel elephant enclosure, Basel

2017



From here you have an overview of the new savannah landscape of the elephants at Basel Zoo. The wooden platform is slightly elevated and allows a view of almost the entire elephant enclosure. Since mid-March 2017, the animals have had significantly more room to move.

The project

During three and a half years, a new home was created for the four elephant cows of the Basel Zoo. The new elephant enclosure called "Tembea" (Kiswahili for "on the move") is 5300 square meters in size. This near-natural savannah landscape offers the animals two and a half times as much space as the previous facility to let off steam. At the elephant enclosure, zoo visitors also get their money's worth: they can observe the pachyderms in their home from a new wooden viewing platform, which is actually a high perch. The construction: The visitor platform is slightly elevated on the zoo's slope, about five meters above the ground, providing a great view of the enclosure.

The construction

The platform consists entirely of cross-laminated timber panels made of spruce and fir. The floor slab was clamped into the reinforced concrete columns via the longitudinal reinforcement. The clamping was done by bonding the reinforcement to the timber slab.

The challenge

The floor plan of the platform was modeled on the head of an elephant. The staircase has the abstract shape of a trunk, the platform itself represents the head. The gray color of the facade is also reminiscent of elephants. Due to the unusual ground plan, the viewing platform does not have any right angles. The staircase becomes increasingly wider from the approach to the platform, and the platform also opens towards the front. These geometric peculiarities therefore required special solutions from the timber engineers in terms of both statics and design.



The entire elephant enclosure can be seen from the viewing platform



All wood: seating in the platform



Climbing through the trunk: the platform has the outline of an elephant's head

Construction Data

- Cross laminated timber 36 m³
- Three-layer board spruce/fir 60 m²

Services of Timbatec

- SIA Phase 31 Preliminary design
- SIA Phase 32 Construction project
- SIA Phase 41 Tendering and comparison of offers
- SIA Phase 51 Implementation project

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