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The Design for the Guggenheim, both by its compact polygonal shape and restrained height, helps to retain the integrity of the existing site by respecting the open character of the harbour and park. Main public functions are situated on the ground level, minimising backside areas and encouraging visitors to loop around the museum and continue into the park. The strong and compact polygonal shape is wrapped in a vitreous skin, which creates fuzziness and openness. At night, a multi-layered facade of various forms of glass reflects and diffuses the light such that the Museum itself becomes an urban lantern.

The layout of the exhibition space mirrors the concept of the Guggenheim to present only temporary exhibitions. It "blurs" the distinction between the perceived informality of a "Kunsthalle" and the formality of a traditional Museum. The character of the space alternates between clinical "white cubes" and informal spaces with openings.