

The ThyssenKrupp Quarter – an architectural ensemble

The competition brief for the ThyssenKrupp Quarter called for a “consistent” self-contained building ensemble. Expectations were not for a solitary symbolic high-rise but for an expansive and flexible cluster of equal-ranking buildings capable of responding to change processes within the Group. Based on these specifications, the joint design submitted by the TKQ architect consortium JSWD Architekten and Chaix & Morel et associés was selected as the winner ahead of 105 other entries. It was just a small but logical step from the idea of a “consistent ensemble” to the design of a campus architecture.

The ThyssenKrupp Quarter consists of a cluster of individual buildings embedded in a green, tree-studded carpet. Linked by short paths and small squares, the buildings line a central ordering axis comprising a large water basin and the “Avenue of the Worlds”. In addition to this general development plan, the TKQ architect consortium JSWD Architekten and Chaix & Morel paid particular attention to the architectural consistency of the individual buildings. The aim was to create a quarter with a compact and homogeneous architectural appearance conveying a strong sense of unity. The campus is dominated by intricate facade structures of metal and glass. The floor-to-ceiling glazing reinforces the impression of openness and transparency.

The “shell – core” principle

The overriding design motif applied to all the new buildings on the campus is the “shell – core” principle. All buildings in the quarter are composed of L-shaped elements enclosing a shared central space. This gives a clear alignment not only to the headquarters (Q1) but also the forum building (Q2) and the neighboring office buildings Q5 and Q7. There are two types of facade: One faces the central space, the other faces the exterior and is therefore responsible for the impact the buildings create in the surrounding area.

These exterior facades vary the appearance of the “basic shell”. In building Q1, the “basic shell” is dominated by the horizontal slats of the external sunshade system. In the forum, too, the architectural motif is incorporated in the external sunshade system made of perforated stainless steel sheets. In Q5 and Q7 the “basic shell” idea is conveyed as a playful structure of horizontal and vertical stainless steel slats.

The atriums and inside courtyards are based on a different design idea: Large, smooth color-coated sheets are used to finish the facades. Windows to allow light into offices facing the courtyards are cut out of the sheets in the form of large elongated openings. Each facade type has its own individual appeal, but it is the interplay between shell and core that creates the overall effect. The consistent application of this principle to all buildings on the campus was key to the homogeneous architectural impression now created by the new ThyssenKrupp Quarter.

Q1, the headquarters

The headquarters, known as Q1 in the context of the ensemble, is the heart of the new ThyssenKrupp Quarter. More than 500 people will work in the cube-shaped building. At a height of 50 meters it towers over all the other buildings on the campus without being over-dominant.

And it is not its height but its striking, expressive shape that gives the building its elevated status. The geometric interlinking of different volumes around a shared central space not only creates a visually exciting exterior, but also provides for interesting room sequences inside the building. At the center is the glass-roofed atrium. It extends over ten stories and comprises a number of mezzanines and platforms. The north and south faces, each overlooking the water axis, feature 28.1 by 25.6 meter panoramic windows. They each comprise 96 separate glass panes held together by a thin, barely visible cable structure so that the windows appear to be made from a single gigantic sheet of glass.

Alongside the overall architectural impact of the building and its interior qualities, the use of material and design in its facades plays a key role. The sunshade system illustrates how the architecture of the new campus is united with the product world of ThyssenKrupp. For the construction elements of the sunshade system developed by the architects and planning partners, ThyssenKrupp stainless steel products were used over a total facade area of 8,000 square meters. As the building's owner, ThyssenKrupp provided full support in the search for technically innovative solutions and efforts to meet optimum building standards.

Q2 forum

The Q2 forum is the place for meetings, exchanges and project work. International project teams work in the Q2 forum, and this is also where the Group receives its guests. The main conference and events hall can seat up to 1,000 people. The building also houses the staff canteen and guest restaurant. And last but not least, the Q2 forum is the underground logistics hub for the entire ThyssenKrupp Quarter.

The Q2 forum's particular flair lies in its unconventional room sequences: It is comprised of alternating single-story and two-story areas. The three main levels are joined together in several places by shared atriums of different heights. The experience of space and enhanced functionality give the Q2 forum a particular appeal, making it a key focus of attention on the campus.

Buildings Q5 and Q7

The sculpting of the building form is also a central design element in buildings Q5 and Q7. The two L-shaped elements together forming one building are given spatial definition by recesses in the ground floor. Deep incisions in the cube-shaped upper stories in the form of recessed balconies and conservatories give the five and seven story buildings unexpected accents compared with conventional office buildings. Some 220 employees will work in Q5 and around 300 in Q7. The two L-shaped sections are joined at each end by bridges. These, too, create deep recesses in the building volume and make for attractive proportions.