



Photos: Sören Meyer, Hannover

GROHE Project

BIG R&D Centre
of KWS SAAT AG, Einbeck
Planning of office buildings

GROHE

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Bünemann & Collegen GmbH, Hannover (from the left: Christian Rathmann, Gerhard Bünemann, Jörg Vaqué)
Interview partner: Christian Rathmann

Old walls, new outlooks

Minimised energy requirements, enhanced user convenience - this was the guiding principle followed by Bünemann & Collegen when the Hannover-based architects planned the conversion of an old seed storehouse into a modern research and development centre for their client, a seed company.

Mr Rathmann, could you please describe the construction task?

In the case of KWS SAAT AG in Einbeck our construction activities were preceded by a thorough master planning exercise. We identified the potentials of the plant together with the client and evaluated all building measures with a view to their future use in the process.

The master plan we developed can now be implemented step by step. The most recent element is the BIG building. Having completed several new buildings including the administrative building and the visitor information and employee centre, we were for the first time confronted with the task of converting a production building into an office building. The existing complex was part of the company's heritage; it was the first

Bünemann & Collegen have been in office and industrial construction for more than 30 years. Typical projects include transportation and residential buildings just as well as energy efficient refurbishments and interior design. The firm's architects develop master plans and have profound experience in the field of sustainable building. Their KWS BIG building attracted the "Energieoptimiertes Bauen 2009" award from the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology.



Part of the master plan: Visitor and employee centre

building on the KWS site to be built after World War II. This means that we had to conserve the evidence of the past, while on the other hand, we had to create future-oriented workplaces for research and development – this meant conserving the past and designing for the future at the same time.

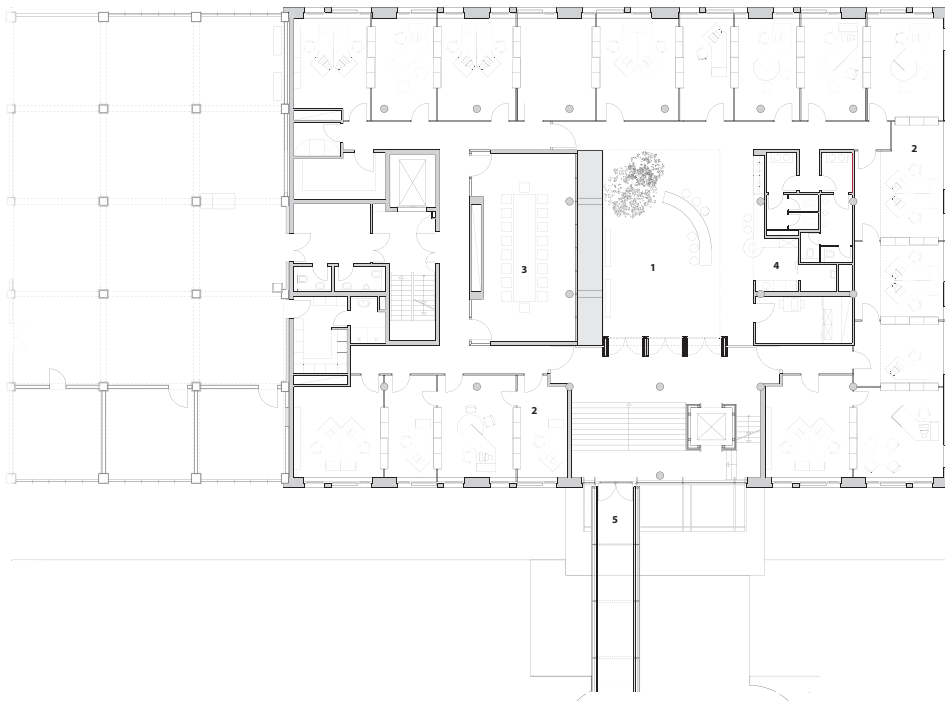
Tell us about the architectural concept you developed for the conversion of the old seed storehouse into a modern office building.

The two lower floors continue to serve as production areas while the five upper levels now accommodate 120 workplaces, meeting rooms and the new “think tank”, which can be used in various ways for workshop events. We have maintained the depth of the building from the outside even though it is unfavourable for the new purpose, with a central air well providing daylight for the office space. This means that the building has been given an open centre, which is at the same time a distributor and meeting point where open kitchens, copy rooms and transport and communication zones are gathered and towards which the meeting rooms are oriented. Full-height windows brighten up the dark-red brick facades, which are characteristic of the entire KWS plant. A glass bridge mounted at a height of nine metres links the building

with other research buildings. All these elements – air well, windows and bridge – stand for transparency to the inside and outside, helping to make working processes transparent and promote communication.

The building has won an award for its high energy efficiency. How did you achieve this kind of efficiency?

The client wanted to achieve a high level of user convenience with minimum energy requirements inside the building. To achieve this objective, we reduced the thermal load through a compact shape, extensive thermal insulation and the utilisation of thermal storage masses. In addition, the utilisation of proprietary energy resources like a CHP plant, compressed air heat and an absorption-type refrigerating machine contribute to the positive energy balance. The present primary energy requirement of 38 kWh/m²a is 63% lower than prescribed by Germany’s EnEV 2009 energy saving directive. And thanks to the fact that heating is largely provided from exhaust heat or renewable resources, the building is even carbon neutral in terms of its energy requirements.



- 1 Hall
- 2 Office
- 3 Meeting
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Bridge

Floor plan ground floor, 1:500

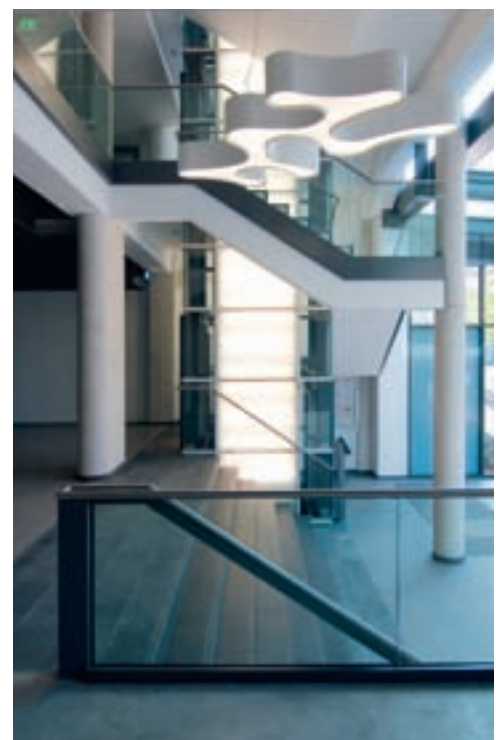
How did you structure the inside of the building, especially the office space?

It was a matter of combining the demand for high user comfort, the limited budget and the client's wish for maximum versatility. We used cavity flooring for the air, power and data supply. There are no awkward radiators thanks to the concrete core activation integrated into the ceiling. The façade openings were aligned with a grid layout which is adaptable to various types of organisation ranging from individual offices to group offices. Glass dividing walls and wall units which serve as storage space and dividers may be moved as required without interfering with the building structure. The backs of the wall units were perforated to improve the acoustics. Floor-standing lamps obviate the need for suspended ceilings and sun shades integrated into the space in-between the window panes provide for glare protection irrespective of the weather.

What materials did you specify?

The sustainability of a building becomes evident not least in the choice of materials. Besides ecological criteria like the use of safe and certified building materials and the economic parameters, "socio-economic" factors are very important for the choice of materials. We were looking for a balance of neutral, natural shades and accents of colour, a balance of cool brilliance and a warm atmosphere. The floors in the stairwell are made of anthracite-coloured slate contrasting with white walls. Deep red glass back walls for the open kitchens and the floor made of beige stoneware are

The floors in the stairwell are made of anthracite slate





Bottom lighting gives the reception desk a floating appearance



Harmonious interplay between a deep red glass wall and a floor made of light stoneware



The office space is illuminated by an atrium

characteristic of the air well. For a spacious feel, the glass partitions between the offices integrate full-height door elements with cherry wood surfaces. In the offices, the colour scheme continues with a beige-brown flecked carpet, cherrywood cupboard elements and red upholstery for the desk and meeting room chairs. We have combined direct and indirect light, created a pleasant atmosphere with warm light colours and underlined the space concept with roof lights tracing the contours of the atrium. The choice of materials reflects our commitment to durability, soundness and high quality down to the smallest detail.

What do you think are the characteristics of good sanitary facilities in office buildings?

Durability and easy care are basic prerequisites but they should not dictate the design. We try to avoid the typical features of the sanitary facilities of former years, such as pale light, too many white tiles, small mirrors or the total absence of colour; the accumulation of accessories at the washbasins is a typical eyesore as well. For us, the quality of an office building does not stop at the WC door. Besides being functional, carefully planned sanitary facilities with

a spacious atmosphere should be something the company can be proud of.

What are your criteria for selecting the right products, e.g. faucets and fittings?

What is true for the project as a whole is true for the details, too: simple operation, easy maintenance of the components and timeless design that matches the entire building are the key criteria, along with an appropriate price-performance ratio, of course.

Project | Forschungs- und Entwicklungsgebäude BIG, Einbeck

Builder | KWS SAAT AG, Einbeck

Architects | Bünemann & Collegen GmbH, Hannover (Gerhard Bünemann, Christian Rathmann, Jörg Vaqué)

Building volume | EUR 7.5 million

Services | Work stages 1-9 according to HOAI

Gross floor area | 6,300 sqm

GROHE product | Atrio wall-mounted faucet



Thanks to the reduced language of form and its simple and intuitive operation, the Atrio wall faucet fits in perfectly with the modern environment.

Clear advantages for perfect solutions

Straight architecture, clear contours, full-height windows and a simple façade – an environment that is just perfect for the GROHE Atrio faucet line. Inspired by Bauhaus architecture and featuring a classical pillar geometry, Atrio is used in many modern lofts and understated interior designs. Simple elegance and purist forms with a consistent focus on cylindrical shapes are its hallmarks. Wall spouts combined with lean single-lever mixers are installed in the new office building of KWS SAAT AG, Einbeck. “Transparency, clarity and spaciousness are absolutely typical of the building, which is dominated by right angles supplemented by some pillars here and there. A dainty faucet would have disrupted this interior design scheme. This is why Atrio complements this architecture with its simple design in perfect style,” says Michael Huth, Head of Project Management at GROHE

Deutschland. He is well aware that architects and planners attach great value to consistent concepts and is available to provide all the specification details they need to draft tenders for the equipment of sanitary facilities. Particularly in commercial buildings, this includes easy operation as provided by the GROHE SilkMove® technology. Durable high-tech materials make the operation of the Atrio single-lever mixers smooth and precise. And the GROHE StarLight® chrome surface means that their brilliance is sure to last for the lifetime of the product.

The GROHE bidding and planning service team provides competent assistance for the entire planning, pricing and bidding process of your project. Important data required to plan high-quality bathrooms are available in different formats at www.mygrohe.de, where you can also subscribe to the free "Bau.Werk.Objekt" newsletter, which provides regular information about the latest solutions and new products from GROHE.

Grohe AG
Feldmühleplatz 15
40545 Düsseldorf/Germany
www.grohe.com

Grohe AG
Feldmühleplatz 15
40545 Düsseldorf, Germany
www.grohe.com

Bisher erschienene GROHE Objektberichte: **Johannes Wesling Klinikum** Minden | TMK Architekten + Ingenieure, Düsseldorf | **Atrion am Lietzensee** Berlin | Gregor Fuchshuber + Partner, Leipzig | **Ellington Hotel** Berlin | Reuter Schoger Architekten, Berlin | **Schloss Freudenstein** Freiburg | AFF architekten, Berlin | **Wissenschaft- und Kongresszentrum** Darmstadt | Chalabi architects & partners ZT GmbH, Wien | **Ozeaneum** Stralsund | Behnisch Architekten, Stuttgart | **Deutsches Auswandererhaus** Bremerhaven | Studio Andreas Heller GmbH, Hamburg | **Lenbach Gärten** München | Steidle Architekten, München | **Neumayer-Station III** Antarktis | Alfred-Wegener-Institut, Bremerhaven | **Klimahaus® 8° Ost** Bremerhaven | Klumpp Architekten Stadtplaner, Bremen | **Kindergarten Sighartstein** Neumarkt/A | kadawittfeldarchitektur, Aachen | **Radisson Blu Hotel** Hamburg Airport, **Lindner Park-Hotel Hagenbeck** Hamburg | JOI Design GmbH, Hamburg | **Reemtsma Park** Hamburg | Helmut Riemann Architekten GmbH, Lübeck | **Neubau Rudolf-Harbig-Stadion** Dresden | Beyer Architekten, Rostock | **Oberstufenzentrum** Berlin-Weißensee | ReimarHerbst.Architekten, Berlin