



h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten

Functionality with a twist

“Our motivation stems from the fascinating challenge of finding a unique solution for each building project,” says Martin Gessert and Albrecht Randecker, who founded the architectural office h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten in Stuttgart in 1998.

TEXT: JULIKA HÜTHER | PHOTOS: H4A GESSERT + RANDECKER ARCHITEKTEN

Initially focusing on residential buildings, they soon expanded their portfolio by taking on public building projects for schools, offices and health care facilities. They soon asserted themselves on the market as an architectural office concentrating on cost effectiveness, functionality and sustainability through a wide array of open tenderings. At the same time, more and more clients approached them directly. Over the following years, several nationwide projects consolidated the success of h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten.

Judging from their impressive growth to approximately 60 employees and two additional offices in Düsseldorf and München today, their approach to creating innovative but functional, individual buildings has certainly paid off. Around 40 awards gained for national and international architectural competitions during the last five years are further testimony to the office's solid standing in the world of architecture.

Location, people, function

The nature of every new project the office accepts is determined by three main factors:

location, people and function. “We create buildings for the respective location and react openly and impartially to its requirements,” say Gessert and Randecker. Considering the location means respecting its context regarding landscape, city planning, history and social use. Likewise, the profile of the potential building users as well as collaborators determine the shape of the project. Last but not least, the potential function of the building is defined by the intrinsic values of the company, by innovation and the unique functional requirements of the building type. “Considering people and locations directly requires a continuous dialogue which influences the quality of the result,” say Gessert and Randecker.

HABA office extension

Habermaas GmbH is a manufacturer of toys specialising in wooden toys, furniture,



clothing and children's games. h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten designed a new office and reception building on the grounds of a former brewery with three offset wings that created plenty of floor space while maintaining a discreet exterior.

Forms and structures were used in a playful way and created an exciting, imaginative building. Wood dominated the inside of the structure as well as its front, referencing the origins of the company. Colourful metallic and transparent surfaces reflected the modernity and creativity of the company, underlining its philosophy.

MTZ centre for technology and IT-townhall at the M-Campus technology park

h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten planned the restructuring and development of a technology park on the grounds of a

former Munich gasworks. While keeping to the existing urban planning framework, it was structured internally as a campus with clearly visible modular units with variable use of space to allow companies to retain their individual identities.

One of these units, the MTZ technology centre, which houses entrepreneurs as well as existing technology companies, has been designed by the office as a "house in a house" with eight modules. The flexible interior concept allows for all sorts of uses from laboratories and cleanroom technology to business clubs and offices of diverse sizes. It also includes glass elements on the East and West front that move according to the sun. In combination with colourful panels, they create a constantly changing outer appearance, representing the ever changing use of the interior.

Similarly, when designing the new IT and service centre for the city of Munich, the office clad the front of the building with vertically arranged metal lamellas reminiscent of a barcode, which refers to the subject matter of its users. It creates a unique identity for the IT-townhall while underlining the overall planning framework of the campus.

Current and future projects

Two other recently finished projects, which illustrate the work of h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten perfectly, are the Arabeska office block and the GIZ (German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation) office block. The first includes facades that oscillate back and forth to reflect the changing surroundings of the Arabeska park with its green spaces, organically integrating the building into its immediate environment.

The GIZ office block profits from an efficient groundplan with hallways that fan out in irregular intervals to incorporate areas for communication and other uses but always allow for a direct view onto the campus of which the building is part.

With numerous national and international projects such as offices, schools, residential buildings and health care facilities in the



making, h4a Gessert + Randecker Architekten are sure to create many more functional, imaginative buildings in the years to come.

www.h4a-architekten.de

Top left: HABA office extension. Photo: Zooey Braun, Stuttgart

Top right, down: Arabeska park
MTZ centre for technology and IT-townhall.
Photos: Stefan Müller-Naumann, Munich