

press release – 10/07/2020

Quartz offices in Brussels delivered.
an open house for people to work - and live

The European Quarter in Brussels has a brand new office building. The new construction project Quartz, commissioned by Cofinimmo and designed by POLO Architects, has recently been delivered. VK Architects & Engineers (technology & facade engineering) and the contractor BPC, subsidiary of the CFE group, joined forces for this sustainable office project, which was given an 'Excellent' BREEAM certificate in its design stage. When the interior is finished, Quartz will be home to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

open house

Quartz is a surprisingly refreshing concept in a strategic corner plot location on Avenue des Arts, a stone's throw from the Brussels inner ring road and the Parc de Bruxelles. Stainless steel curtains create the idea of an 'open house'. The metaphor converts the dated concept of an anonymous office building into a homelike space for people to work - and live. From certain vantage points, the large glass surfaces provide direct views of the garden behind the building. The passers-by might catch a glimpse of the green courtyard space through the entrance to the underground car park, along the front of the building.

The accentuated entrance, strategically positioned at the corner of the building, invites visitors into a spacious lobby, designed and proportioned as a place of encounter. A ground-floor atrium extends one level down, allowing natural daylight to penetrate into the lower garden level. A floating exterior staircase in architectural concrete connects the ground floor to the sunken garden. The double-height auditorium provides unique opportunities in terms of spaciousness, natural light and the connection to the garden.

two faces

The building is made of concrete and glass. Nine floor slabs wrapped around a core. All facades have imposing storey-high glass surfaces. The office levels are interconnected through additional perforations of the structure, while team work is stimulated by galleries and internal staircases. Workspaces bathed in natural light and offering surprising views contribute to meaningful collaboration. On the 6th floor, the rooftop terrace acts as a place of encounter.

The different orientations and characters of the surrounding streets determine the facade design, leading to a two-faced building. This southern facade along the narrow Rue Joseph is equipped with sun protection consisting of large horizontal slats to keep out the scorching summer sun. On the west side, the sun is low and horizontal slats have little effect. This facade along the exceptionally broad Avenue des Arts was given a more extroverted character. It features power-operated laced metal curtains that can be opened or closed according to the position of the sun.

play of volumes

A volumetric game of horizontally stacked plateaus links the different prevailing building heights along Rue Joseph and Avenue des Arts. On ground level, the facade along Rue Joseph II retreats from the building line. This way, the main volume appears to float and passers-by get a view of the inner courtyard. The building seems to float along the Avenue des Arts as well by compensating the difference in height - nearly two metres - by a dark base in natural stone.

Quartz is a first-class, sustainable, 21st century office building centred around its users' quality of living and work. Its facade of glass, white architectural concrete and stainless steel curtains highlights its forward-thinking qualities in a row of anonymous building.

QUARTZ OFFICES | location: Avenue des Arts / Rue Joseph II, Brussels | area: 8.593m²
programme: newly built offices | client: Cofinimmo | winning competition design

POLO Architects

POLO Architects was founded in 1991 by Mauro Poponcini & Patrick Lootens. Today, The design-focused practice with expertise in urbanism, architecture & interior design consists of a dedicated team of 100 highly skilled professionals, working in Antwerp and Brussels.

A solid firm with plenty of knowledge, architectural expertise and experience. But also, and more importantly, a beautiful group of colleagues with a work ethic driven by design, creativity and reflection.

POLO Architects is an amalgam: a creative bundle of contradictions with room for large projects (commercial, private, public) as well as (smaller) exceptions.

POLO Architects is ready to prove itself: always, together, different. A stimulating perspective.

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