

## KNE, Niederprüm (GER)

project **New construction of operations premises and administrative building for KNE headquarters** awarding authority **Kommunale Netze Eifel-AöR, Prüm (GER)** team **WW+, Esch-sur-Alzette/Trier (LUX/GER), Werner Schaack, Trier (GER), Ingenieurbüro Dieter Lohner, Trier (GER), Ingenieurbüro Weber, Gransdorf (GER), HDK Dutt+Kist, Saarbrücken (GER)** gfa **2.840 m<sup>2</sup>** ufa **2.270 m<sup>2</sup>** gv **10.715 m<sup>3</sup>** total area **2 ha** net construction costs **2.450.000 €** start of planning **01/2012** realisation **04/2013 - 10/2014** awards **restricted competition 2nd price 2015 Award: Baukulturpreis 2015 Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm (GER)** comission **based on negotiated procedure**

*"The only way you can build, the only way you can get a building into being is through the measurable. You must follow the laws of nature in the choice of materials, methods of construction and engineering. But in the end, when the building becomes part of living, it must evoke unmeasurable qualities. The spirit of the building's existence takes over."*

Louis Kahn

### Genius Loci – harmonious integration into the Eifel landscape

The new construction of the administrative building and operations premises of the Kommunale Netze Eifel (Eifel City Networks – KNE) represents – from an urban planning point of view – the important start of the upcoming expansion of the L11 commercial zone in Niederprüm. The architectural concept, the setting of the individual functional units and the design of the outdoor facilities are all consistently derived from the existing natural environment.

The distinct cubic building with its stand-alone form marks a clear, identity-establishing conclusion to the B410. The three-storey administrative building blends into the surrounding terrain with its ground floor being absorbed into the existing topography. Separated by the asphalt depot yard, it is joined by the single-storey operations building running parallel to it. The façade of the building ensemble features a front-mounted vertical larch cladding and thus blends into the natural surroundings. The chosen materials capture the ecological vision of the company while also reflecting the building's landscape-influenced location.

### Functional solution

The building ensemble is unmistakable in its function and structure. The main entrance of the administrative building is clearly defined with a setting that befits its location. From here, a vestibule leads to the open foyer area, which is highly representative and forms an important interface of the building, since it is from here that all other areas are accessed. In addition to the office units facing north, the ground floor houses a common room and break area with an adjoining small kitchen as well as the laboratory area featuring a microbiology work unit. Further office rooms as well as a generous conference room are accommodated on the upper floors. The basement houses the technical equipment rooms, archives and storage rooms, as well as a number of covered and sheltered parking spaces. The structural concept evolves from the external walls and a bearing structure that follows the corridors. This allows for maximum flexibility in terms of the building's current and future spatial layout. The façade is capable of taking into account changing spatial concept requirements, without having to make any formal-aesthetic concessions.

The single-storey operations building, which includes a vehicle depot, workshop and warehouse, corresponds in form and materials to the administrative building and sits slightly offset and parallel to the latter.







#### **Materials**

All the office and corridor doors are glazed, allowing neighbouring rooms to be physically and visually connected to one another to varying degrees. This creates a pleasant work and social environment for users and visitors alike.

The interior is also characterised by a scaling down to just a few materials: the walls and ceilings are white throughout, with just the floor surfaces, made of durable natural rubber, providing a touch of colour to the office zones in the form of a pleasant green.

#### **Energy concept**

The building concept is mindful of keeping energy requirements in terms of heating, in other words the running costs of the building, down to a minimum. Through choosing materials and various energy saving systems with sustainability in mind, an energy- and cost-optimised as well as sustainable building has been created, fully in keeping with the guiding principle and philosophy of the company. The building construction is simple, robust and reliable. The choice of materials is based on the key principles of sustainability and ecological optimisation. The use of wood – in the form of the façade's vertical timber cladding – as a renewable CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral resource supports this objective.

#### **Outdoor facilities**

The outdoor installations around the new construction feature a balanced synergy of operations-related functional zones and representative entrance areas.

The depot yard between the administrative building and the operations premises as well as the access road to the parking places in front of the administrative building feature a monochrome resilient asphalt surface, in contrast to the light surfaces of the parking places, located on various levels so as to follow the topography. The generous front zone with the main entrance area on the south side of the administrative building is made up of the open access area as well as the staff terrace, which features large-scale 1x1m concrete panels. A two-row hedge forms the access gate. The planting of two multiple-trunk hedges, the installation of lighting bollards and spacious seating options have furthermore enhanced the terrace as an enjoyable place to linger. To maintain a homogeneous overall picture, Saarbrücken landscape architects Dutt und Kist limited their choice of materials for the fixed surfaces to a bare minimum, deciding on asphalt, concrete paving stones and basalt gravel and colour coordinating these with the façade.

