

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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NEW CONOID STRUCTURE PRECAST CONCRETE PLANKS ON STEEL CHANNEL SECTION SUBSTRUCTURE BETWEEN NEW BRICK PIERS BUILT FROM CONOID POCKET.

ASSUMED
180
280

CONOID POCKET
F.W.

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HOUSE OF YOUTH

LOCATION

HAMBURG, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

KERSTEN + KOPP

ARCHITEKTEN

WRITER

RUTH SLAVID

PHOTOGRAPHY

KLEMENS ORTMEYER





With its supple forms housing a range of different functions, there's a great deal going on in this youth centre in Hamburg. And rather than concealing everything within a dumb shed, its architect, the Berlin-based partnership of Kersten + Kopp, has elected to articulate this complexity and make it the expressive key to the building. Their achievement is to pull multiple functions together into a coherent whole by the use of strong linear elements grounded by a neutral palate. At the same time, coruscating flashes of colour, the hosting of external activities within the building footprint and some unorthodox structural forms make it clear that this is a building of both visual and physical vigour.

Translated as the House of Youth, the three-storey structure encompasses sports, leisure and training facilities. Conceived as a destination and distraction for young people, whatever their interests, it sits on the former industrial island of Wilhelmsburg, south of Hamburg's extensive docklands. It's also a

pioneer project for the city's international building exhibition, IBA Hamburg, due to be held in 2013.

Across a new square, one short end of the new building confronts the spiralling tower of the Maximilian-Kolbe Church. The sculptural church is executed in bare concrete, softened by some climbing plants, and the House of Youth squares up to it with a shotcrete climbing wall, its undulating surface decoratively pockmarked with handholds and climbers' markings.

The area behind the wall is cleverly used as a place for storage, and behind that is the building's key space. Straddled by slender sloping concrete columns, this is a kind of 'external' sports court, with enough protection to be used in all but the very worst weather. It's a flexible and accessible inside outside space, a place to play and socialise, with snappy urban overtones of the basketball courts in *West Side Story*. The soffit above it gives an idea of the unusual way in which elements are woven together. Two lightwells are lined with a bright green metallic

paint finish that echoes the hue of the sports surface. The hollow concrete slab has been designed both to cover the sports court and to support the structure above. As its curved underbelly projects down through the slab you get some sense of its wider role. What you are actually seeing, however, is the half pipe of the skate run which occupies one side of the building's first and second floors. Open to the sky, it also has a signature colour, a glowing red that is visible from above and the side, and is also used to animate the underside of the cantilevering roof.

Tucked in among these more standout elements are a standard double-height sports hall at first-floor level, as well as a computer lab, study and dining facilities. It is the sobriety of the rest of the building – the austere aluminum cladding, the simple glazing and external stair, and the neutral but thoughtful internal palette of materials – that underscores the showstopping elements and transforms the project into a surprising and animated whole. 

FLASHES OF BRIGHT COLOUR
AND UNORTHODOX STRUCTURAL
FORMS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT
THIS IS A BUILDING OF VIGOUR



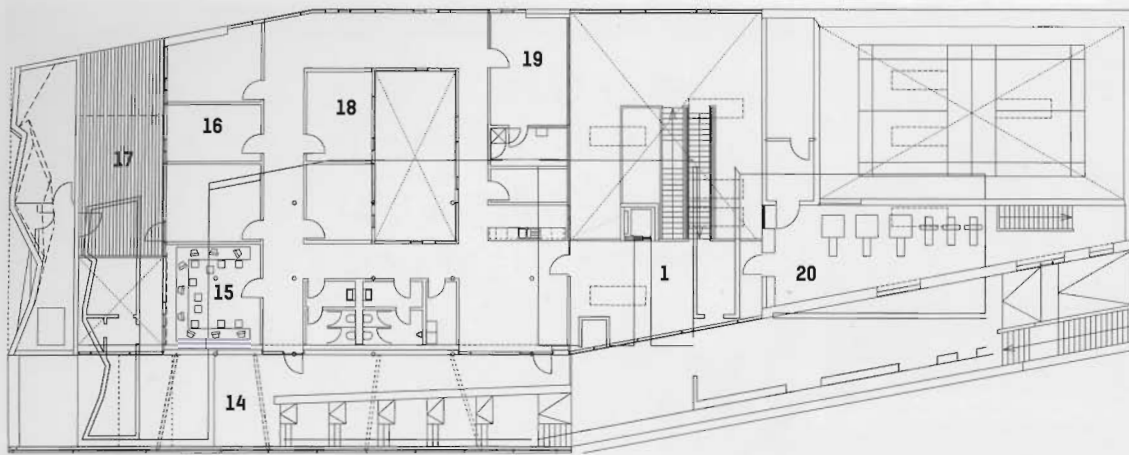
Previous page_ After dark, the building reveals its spatial and functional complexity. Hoisted high on angular piloti, an elevated volume shelters an inside/outside sports court

Left_ The long, low volume of the House of Youth duels with the spiralling tower of a neighbourhood church

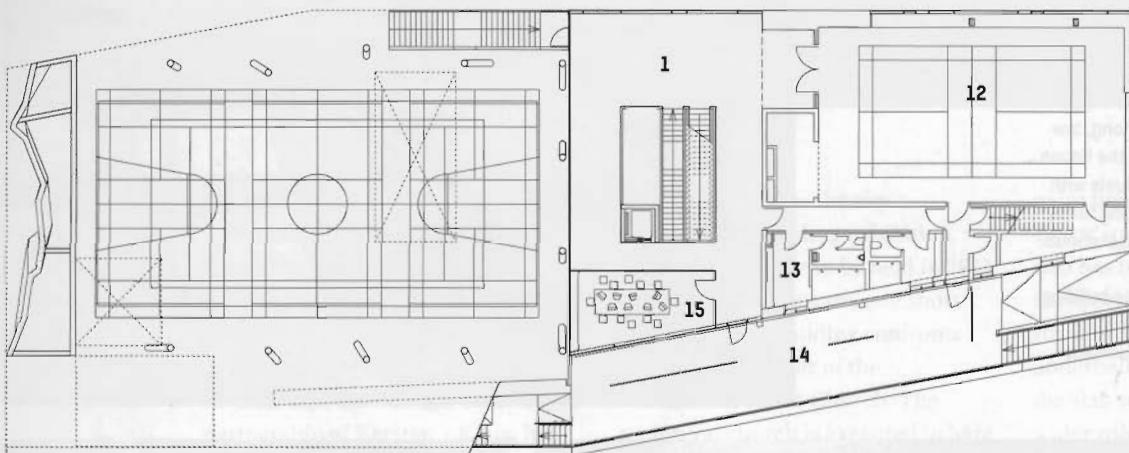
Above_ The building is wrapped in a neutral aluminium skin

Right_ Main staircase
Below_ The internal sports hall is lit and animated by cuts in the walls and roof

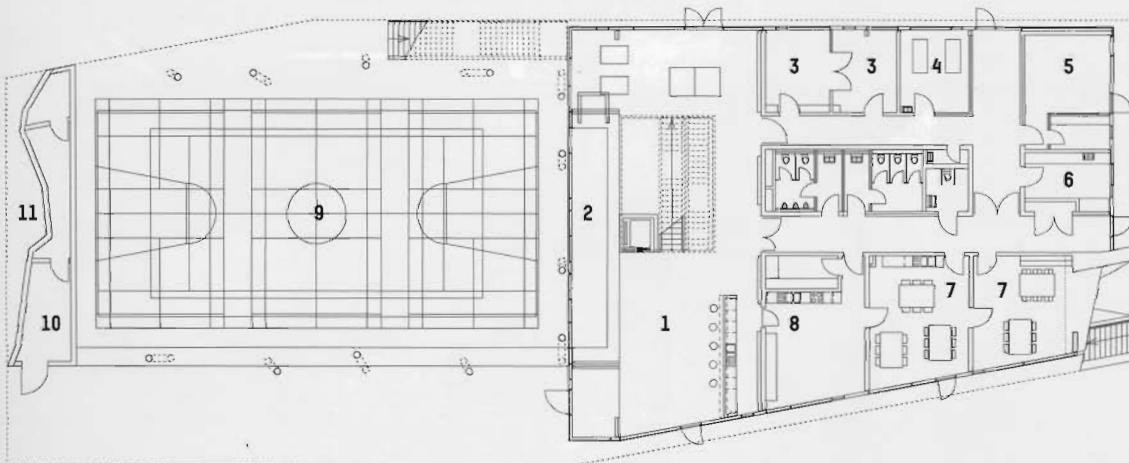




second-floor plan

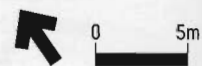


first-floor plan



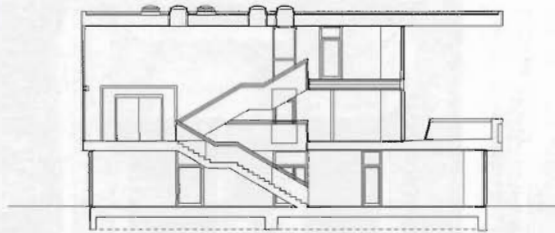
ground-floor plan

- 1 club/café
- 2 viewing area
- 3 changing room
- 4 workshop
- 5 music studio
- 6 photo lab
- 7 dining and homework area
- 8 kitchen
- 9 sports field
- 10 waste store
- 11 climbing tower
- 12 sports/multi-purpose sports hall
- 13 showers
- 14 skate track
- 15 computer lab
- 16 homework and education area
- 17 terrace
- 18 meeting room
- 19 manager's office
- 20 gym





Above_ The set piece inside outside sports court is the building's spatial and social focus. It forms a natural gathering point and can be viewed from other parts of the complex

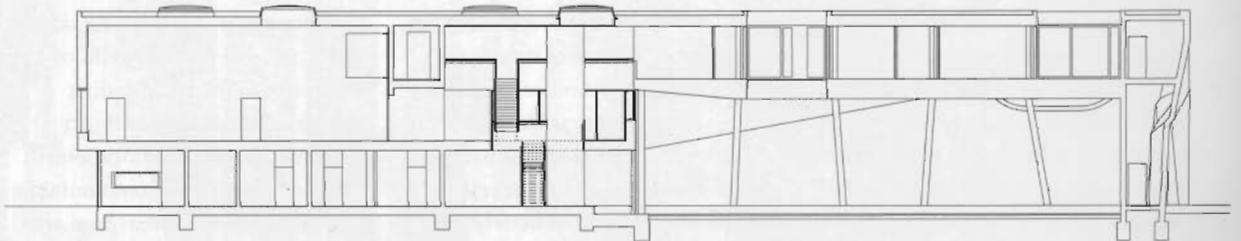


cross section through the café

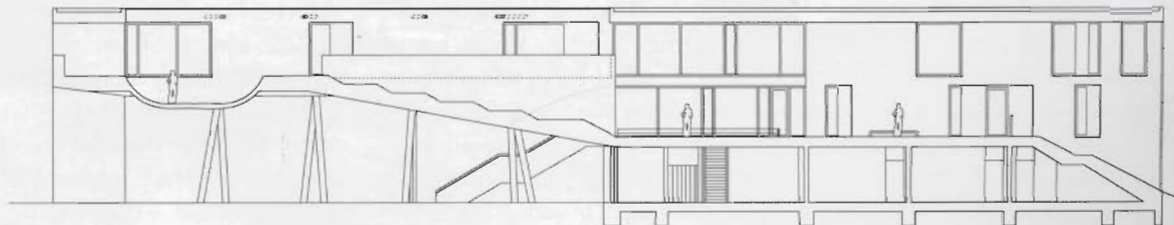


cross section through the sports hall

ARCHITECT
Kersten + Kopp
Architekten, Hamburg



long section through the sports hall and sports court



long section through the skate track