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THE LEARNING FACTORY

Rising student numbers, better teacher/student ratios and the desire to concentrate the teacher training college in one place in the city were the conditions that prompted the University of Bern to seek additional space for development. In 2000, the canton acquired part of the former "von Roll" industrial site in the Länggasse district. In an architectural competition held four years later, the NAAN project by the Zurich architects giuliani.hönger was selected as the winner from 71 entries. The proposal involves the design of a complex comprising existing and new buildings. In a first stage, the former points production hall was converted into a lecture theatre centre for the University and teacher training college in Bern. The facility has been in operation since autumn 2010.

The spatial organisation of this lecture theatre centre, which houses seven lecture theatres and their foyers, is based on the principle of a house within a house. The existing listed building is completely preserved, including the supporting structure and building envelope. The two floors inside house three lecture theatres with 120 seats each, three with 215 seats and a large hall with 468 seats and 60 foldaway seats. The building can accommodate up to 1,500 students.

The installations divide the hall space, which is no longer recognisable at a glance. Only when the users move within it does it become a whole. Between the existing building envelope, the outer wall and the structure of the roof beams, a complex space has been created for relaxation and meetings. Thanks to skylights and lateral openings, the lightweight installations made entirely of wood allow the building to operate largely by daylight. The amount of materials used for the installations was kept to a minimum, while the materials themselves were selected for their recyclability. The technical installations and distribution networks for power, air and water are accessible everywhere and interchangeable thanks to system separation. The energy efficiency of the building makes it one of the first conversions in Switzerland to meet the Minergie-Eco standard: the foyers act as buffer zones and can be tempered to just 15°C as needed, using the waste heat from the cold production system.

The installation and modification harmoniously combine the new and the old—the industrial character of the site remains visible despite the conversion. As a college with an international reach, the facility is also used as a conference centre during the holidays, so the important site of industrial history remains accessible to the public. The Canton of Bern aims to expand the former "von Roll" industrial site into a university centre by adding two new buildings. The lecture building now completed is the centrepiece of the facility, which should accommodate 4,000 students in the future.

The execution of the new production hall lecture building is exemplary in every respect. With equal mastery of architecture, urban development, building preservation, energy and resource conservation, the interdisciplinary team was able to implement a high-level reference project for sustainable structural change. The work exemplifies the fact that requirements relating to sustainable construction and outstanding structural and creative quality can be met in a cost-conscious manner.

AWARD

UNIVERSITY OF BERN; PRODUCTION HALL LECTURE BUILDING AT THE "VON ROLL" SITE, BERN

Location

Fabrikstrasse 6, Bern

Client

Amt für Grundstücke und Gebäude des Kantons Bern, Bern

Team

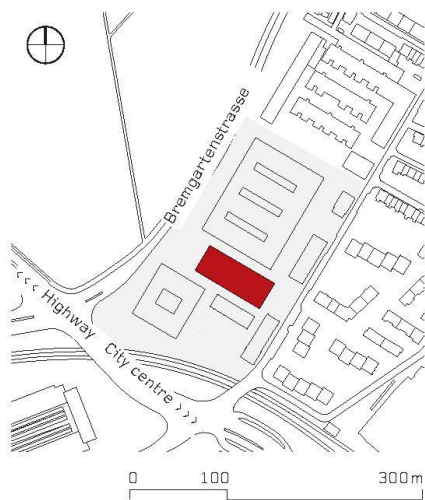
Architecture: giuliani.hönger, Zurich
 Construction management: b+p baurealisation, Zurich
 Civil engineers: Dr. Schwartz Consulting, Zug
 Timber construction engineers: Walter Bieler, Bonaduz
 Façade design: gkp fassadentechnik, Aadorf
 Building physics/acoustics: Bakus Bauphysik, Zurich
 Building services: Amstein+Walthert Bern, Bern
 Minergie-Eco consultants: Bau- und Umweltchemie, Zurich
 Fire protection: Makiol+Wiederkehr, Beinwil am See
 Lighting: Vogt & Partner, Winterthur
 Landscape architecture: Hager, Zurich
 AV planning: Kilchenmann, Kehrsatz-Bern

Planning and execution

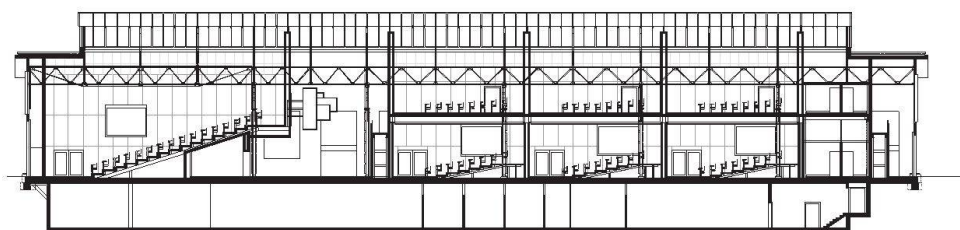
2004–2010



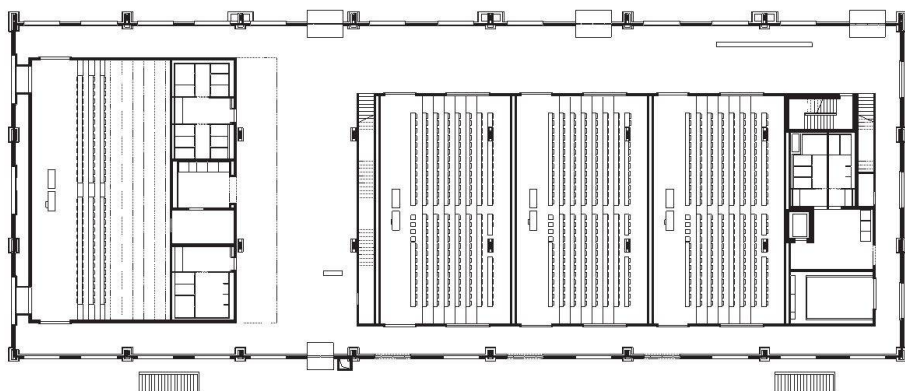
01



02



03



04

01 The large auditorium with approx. 500 seats (photo: Walter Mair)

02 Map (plans: giuliani.hönger)

03 Longitudinal section

04 Ground floor plan

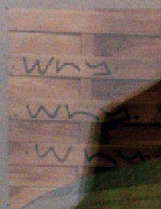
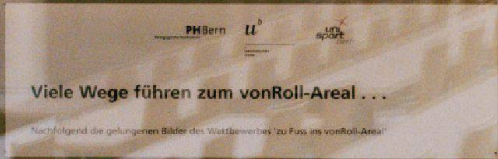
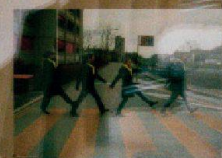


01 Residential and commercial building, Selnastrasse, Zurich (corner house) (photo: Dominique Marc Wehrli)



02 Production hall lecture building, University of Bern (photo: Karin Gauch, Fabien Schwartz)

15 Min.
8 Min.
16 Min.

[illegible]



04 University of Bern;
production hall lecture
building at the "von
Roll" site, Bern
(photo: Jules Spinatsch)