

Project

# Hessenwald School Weiterstadt 2012-2016

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**Location**

Wolfsgartenallee 8  
64331 Weiterstadt

**Client**

Da-Di-Werk  
Facility and environmental management  
service of the County of  
Darmstadt-Dieburg, Germany

**Competition**

1st prize 08/2011

**Start of construction**

02/2014

**Service phases**

1-9

**Completion**

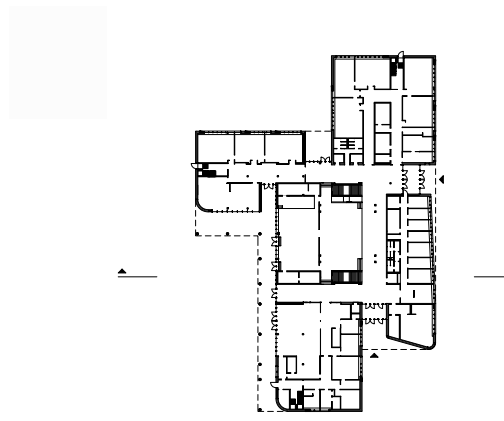
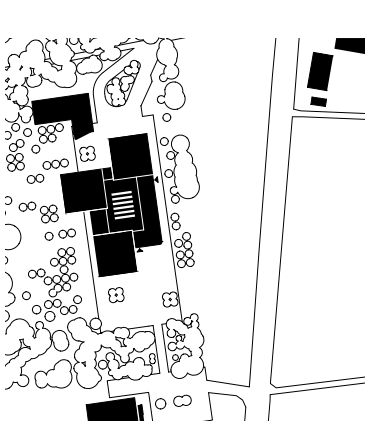
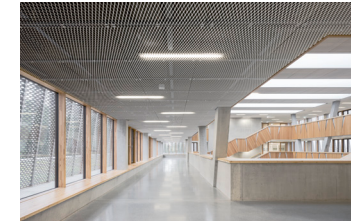
08/2016 (1st construction phase)  
08/2017 (2nd construction phase)

**Building costs**

ca. 25,8 Mio. €

**Photos**

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view from the south  
↖

site plan  
←←

floor plan ground floor  
←

view from the west  
↖↖

access area cultural hall | Kulturhalle  
↑↑

cultural hall | Kulturhalle  
↑

**wulf  
architekten**

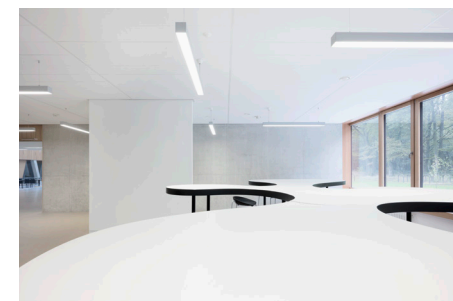
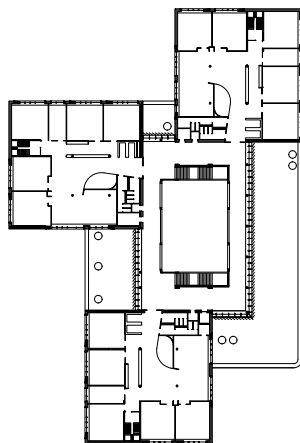
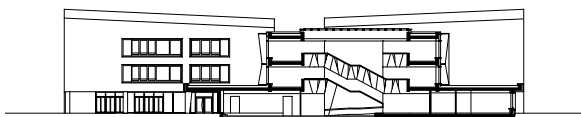
The Hessenwald School is located in a clearing in the woods near the village of Gräfenhausen, a district of Weiterstadt (Darmstadt). It is a cooperative, lower secondary level comprehensive school with multiple tracks that allow student mobility among different school forms, such as academic high school, mid-level secondary school, middle school, and combined lower- and mid-level secondary school for a total of 700 pupils. Once a week, the roughly 400 pupils of the Huada-Chinese-School have classes here.

The new building is subdivided into three pavilion-like elements grouped around a common center. The pavilions establish a sense of individuality and identity for the respective grade levels, and each has a multipurpose room and five classrooms on its two upper floors. A "reading platform" was developed for each grade-level area, creating zones within the flexibly usable area between the classrooms and defining a quiet retreat within the forum.

At the heart of the newly created ensemble are the communal areas, such as the auditorium, music room, and an indoor recreation area, which have been designed as a large »public center«. The pavilions are grouped around this central hall, which is suffused with light and cites the natural surroundings with its wood surfaces and the terrazzo floor. The perforated sunshading in front of the peripheral gallery filters the daylight, creating an atmosphere much like that under the trees. All areas of the school ensemble can be coupled spatially.

Our design strengthens the genius loci that resides in the allure of the forest clearing. The serenely designed pavilions are clearly discernible as such and conform to the educational concept of creating individual houses for the different grades and offering an »open learning« approach within learning clusters. The Hessenwald School is distinguished by its facades, which are made of exposed masonry coated with a light-gray whitewash and punctuated by large horizontal window openings set within deep reveals.

The outdoor space is understood as a place that can be interpreted, and which draws its strength from the interplay between contact and retreat, between free play and group activity. The school's high energy standard is evidenced by its compliance with the Passive House Institute's criteria for the primary energy demand of the entire building.



reading platform | Forum  
↑ ↑

staff room  
↑

covered outside area in front of the hall  
←

cross section  
←←

floor plan first and second floor  
←