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Helmholtz Institute Erlangen-Nürnberg for Renewable Energy (HI ERN)

Project information

On the university campus of the Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg (FAU), the new HI ERN research building has been completed after almost three and a half years of construction. The Helmholtz Institute for Renewable Energies is a branch of Forschungszentrum Jülich and is operated in close cooperation with FAU and Helmholtz Zentrum Berlin. The aim of HI ERN is to develop material- and process-based solutions for climate-neutral energy production and to link excellent research in the fields of materials, energy and process research.

The new HI ERN headquarters is grouped around a narrow but long green inner courtyard. The zoning of the building into an office and a research area is derived from this. Within the cube-shaped structure, an undercut on the ground floor marks the entrance area. This is followed inside the building by a foyer flooded with daylight. This reception and distribution area contains various seminar rooms and laboratories, a

cafeteria and various seating options. Depending on requirements, the foyer can be used as an exhibition area and, by connecting individual rooms or parts of the cafeteria and the inner courtyard, as a larger, multifunctional event space.

The superimposed, staggered access foyers are each located at the southern end and, as central communication areas, participate in the green inner courtyard situation with the towering elm tree. While this “green lung” illustrates the process of natural photosynthesis, the scientists at HI ERN are researching regenerative energies inside to support the energy transition. The physical and chemical laboratory areas required for this are located on the 1st and 2nd floors and are arranged in such a way as to create large-scale interconnected laboratory areas that promote interdisciplinary exchange. On both floors, the scientists’ offices are arranged in a U-shape around the landscaped inner courtyard and are directly adjacent to the laboratory areas. The meeting rooms as well as lounge and communication areas are also placed in connection with the “green lung” of the inner courtyard. With this concept of constant visual contact with the inner courtyard, complete orientation in the building was made possible. The 3rd floor houses the new ‘Helmholtz Siemens Joint Lab’ with additional work and office spaces. The technical centre is arranged above the laboratory areas and supplies them via the vertical shafts.

A technoid impression characterises the horizontally structured aluminium façade with its tactile surface reminiscent of microscopically enlarged nanostructures. Its finely crafted structure symbolises the complexity of the laboratory research conducted in the building and highlights the openness of the HI ERN as part of a complex research and scientific landscape. With its massive parapets, typical of laboratory buildings, the ribbon façade also ensures energy efficiency.

https://www.gerberarchitekten.de/en/project/helmholtz-institute-erlangen-nuernberg-for-renewable-energy-hi-ern/








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