



Project development Halbinsulaner house (2024)

In addition to our work as architects, over recent years we have also been involved in project development and management. We founded the Halbinsulaner building cooperative in 2013 in conjunction with our partners, Hella Kotschi and Daniel Luchterhandt. In fact, we oversaw the construction of the Halbinsulaner building project from conception to completion as project developers and managers.

In our role as architectural planners, we were involved only with the basic design of the project, developing the initial concept for the building. Our guiding principles for the development were that it should be open, allow for communication between users and inhabitants on multiple levels and be usable by the community. Further, that it should be constructed using sustainable building materials.

It was on this basis that we developed a plan for the distribution of the apartments within the building. We then launched a design competition to take the plan further, as a result of which we were able to win WERK Arkitekter of Copenhagen to be the design architects.

In 2025, the resultant design for our community building in HafenCity was submitted by WERK as 'The Beehive' to the jury of the MIPIM real estate competition, and, to our great delight, it won the award for 'best residential project'!



The concept

We are particularly pleased that WERK's design has enabled us to realise our original ideas for a structurally sustainable building for communal living and working.

The Halblnsulaner building offers 27 families (including ours) individually designed living spaces. It also provides space for 12 offices (including our practice). Most of the business owners working there also live in the building, allowing them to find the perfect work-life balance.

As a community project, the construction costs of our building, which was categorised as affordable housing, were subsidised, and thus the apartments are limited in size. However, the project was conceived to house numerous communal areas throughout the building, including two guest flats, an entrance area, a lounge with a view over the city and a fire-place, a workshop, a greenhouse, various communal garden areas, and, most excitingly of all, our large events area, the KreaTiefgeschoss.



The KreaTiefgeschoss

Our common room is named KreaTiefgeschoss because it covers 358 m² of floor space and three floors down to the basement, where it has its actual event area with a pull-out staircase and large windows facing the Baakenhafen. On the ground floor, there is an open guest room with a semi-professional kitchen, where all the house's celebrations take place, from family parties and cooking evenings to the big New Year's Eve dinner.

This beautiful large room and all the other communal areas form the "social architecture" of the building, because this is where regular exchanges take place within the community, not only during celebrations, but also in the administration and maintenance of the rooms.



Building for the Future

Our second major concern – sustainability – was supported by the communal nature of the project. Due to the previously mentioned restrictions on space, we assigned only 25 m² of living space per person. The proximity of work and home means that many of the inhabitants can manage without owning a car.

The arcaded planting encompassing the routes around the building has transformed the exterior of the house into informal meeting places obviating the need to develop a main façade or a source of heating. Thus, these spaces can be employed as theatre-like viewpoint for events taking place in the inner courtyard.

In terms of construction, we ensured that only a small amount of concrete was used and that the skeleton structure of the concrete-wood hybrid building could easily be adapted to future changes in use. The building façades were designed to be non-load-bearing wooden structures with excellent insulation values. The house is heated by means of geothermal energy in the main, in combination with photovoltaics. The services are organised in a decentralised manner, with the consequence that the roof areas can be used as communal roof gardens, rather than, as is often the case, as spaces to house large ventilation units.

We are delighted that we are not the only ones to think that our building is one of the most beautiful structures in Hafen-City, and thrilled that it has now been accorded the MIPIM Award in the category: internationally outstanding residential construction project. We are grateful to our architects, specialist planners, craftsmen and, in particular, our neighbours, for joining us on this exciting journey.

