

MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY, MAXIMUM COMFORT - MICROSOFT, MUNICH

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With an open, bright and flexible architecture, the new German Microsoft headquarters in Munich is an example of how a building needs to be designed for the future world of work and ensure an optimum climate for employees.

Fixed workstations, compulsory physical attendance, timesheets for staff – all of these are a thing of the past for Microsoft employees. Whether working from home or from the office, the only thing that ultimately counts is good results. And this requires highly motivated employees who, despite being free to work from anywhere, enjoy coming to work in the headquarters to work alongside their colleagues on the advancement of common projects.

A year of operations in the new Microsoft headquarters in Munich has shown that the concept has increased employee satisfaction across the board.

For the architects and building designers, this new working world presents a special challenge, as the office of the future or "smart workspace" with its bright atrium consists of a staggered building structure. Accordingly, a comfortable indoor climate with an optimum infrastructure has to be created for the roughly 1900 employees.

To this end, architectural firm GSP architekten from Munich designed a building complex extending across roughly 26,000 sqm of floor space on up to seven storeys – more than enough room to accommodate a state-of-the-art, "non-territorial open office space". The design was developed by the architects in close cooperation with Microsoft. The building also offers 67 different conference rooms for employees, an 836 sqm restaurant and a 200 sqm fitness area.

The building is designed according to very high sustainability standards: its shell has a certification of LEED Platinum for Core & Shell, while the interior construction has a certification of LEED Gold for Commercial Interiors. The high-end look is provided by the glass façade, which is framed with brilliant white Corian®, a weather-resistant, self-cleaning material. This Windows look makes it a very appropriate landmark for Microsoft.

The abundance of room and light, the eleven green roof terraces and the light-flooded courtyards ensure a friendly, campus-like environment that is intended to encourage exchange. Together with the Digital Eatery café, the atrium on the ground floor is open to the public. In the cafe, visitors can try out all the latest Microsoft products while enjoying the culinary offerings.

Optimum air

In the new building, special attention was paid to ensuring an optimum indoor air quality as well as state-of-the-art building services. Bacon Gebäudetechnik, specialists in the area of heating/air conditioning/ventilation/sanitation, were commissioned with implementing the technical building services.

High-pressure air humidification systems were directly integrated into the high-end TROX X-CUBE air handling units so that the indoor climate could be perfectly tailored to meet requirements. The nine weather-resistant X-CUBEs on the roof were, for the most part, pre-assembled by TROX Austria.

For the first time, the air handling units were delivered together including the cabling. This reduces the processing steps and coordination efforts between the trades on site, thereby saving time. In line with the architectural requirements, the six engineering rooms and outdoor air handling units on the flat roof were designed by the ventilation and air conditioning specialist TROX Austria to be particularly low, providing optimum fresh air to the premises.

Inside the building, a further six air handling units from TROX provide perfect air conditioning. TROX Austria also supplied the control units, the multileaf dampers and sound attenuators, as well as the fire and smoke protection systems.

The subtle integration of the air conditioning components and systems meets all our aesthetic standards, despite the enormous requirements due to the number of different installation situations in this project" emphasises architect Michael Bentele from GSP architekten.

For the architects and building services engineers, it was particularly important to install reliable technology that would be appropriate for the room and design parameters. TROX Austria offered extensive support throughout the project from the very early planning stages. A year into operations at the Microsoft headquarters and the building still meets all the extremely high expectations. Functionality on the highest technical level coupled with professional planning and processing on time and on budget is the guiding principle of the GSP architectural office in Munich. The building services also fulfil these high demands.