FANZUN



Innovative architecture in industrial construction

Medienmitteilung

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The innovative industrial project for INTEGRA Biosciences in Zizers shows how architecture and functionality can merge in modern industry. The newly completed building now produces plastic pipette tips at a highly automated level for the whole of Europe and Asia. Alongside the profitability of production, the focus was on integrating the new structures harmoniously into the existing buildings and creating a sustainable, efficient working environment.

«We didn't want to build something completely new.» This statement from Ingo Aschwege, the architect in charge, is surprising at first glance. He explains: «We received an invitation to take part in the architectural competition. The project's particular challenges fascinated us straight away. So we decided to take an unusual route, which ultimately led to success.» Those responsible at Fanzun AG decided not to build the production facility next to the existing operations building, but to «continue building» it, so to speak.

«That's rather unusual for architects. But we deliberately chose to analyse the visual and formal language of the existing building and to continue it seamlessly in the new section, which is three times the size of the existing one,» says Aschwege.

New solutions for new challenges

INTEGRA's decision to set up industrial production in Switzerland, against all trends and developments, was only one of the challenges. Production and logistics have to match the latest global developments in automation to be profitable. For Fanzun's planners, this meant building the facility around the automation. For this reason, a logistics specialist in the planning of highly complex industrial plants was brought in from the start. Everything had to be subordinated to efficiency, because that is the only way to produce competitively on the international market from Switzerland.

The restrictions caused by the Covid pandemic were a further challenge, and on two levels. First, almost all meetings were held by video conference, which greatly increased the workload. Second, building materials and services became more expensive during the pandemic, while material availability kept getting worse. The team therefore had to keep reviewing and re-planning in order to complete the production building on time and within budget without major compromises.

The highlights speak for themselves. In addition to fully automated small-parts and high-bay warehouses, the building has its own separate bonded warehouse for exports, making logistics even faster and more efficient.

Employees now work in the aquarium

The client's expectations were clear from the start: there should be no discrepancies between workplaces in the old and new sections. This was achieved by aiming for seamless unity on every level of the building from the outset. Connecting the two buildings was a particular challenge. The solution is a linking meeting zone in the form of a stairwell hall, a so-called public zone, which makes the connection directly tangible. This zone continues in both directions into office wings, all of which have modern communication zones. As a result,

the building does not split into an office section and a production section. Instead, the whole building works as a single unit and functions as a campus.

All rooms in the existing wing are also being renovated and brought up to the latest standard. In the new building, many offices have natural light from two sides. Above the moulding hall, where the pipette tips are cast, all rooms have interior glazing to capture as much light as possible. «At the beginning, we jokingly called these offices ‹aquariums›, and the name has stuck,» says Aschwege with a smile.

Focus on energy efficiency

Fanzun has extensive experience in the development, planning and delivery of tourist resorts, and this experience also fed into the planning for INTEGRA. The aim: everyone should feel comfortable, whether in the new staff restaurant, which offers healthy and sustainable food, or in production. There are probably not many industrial buildings with oak floors.

Industrial production on this scale is, of course, very energy-intensive. This was taken into account throughout the planning to make the whole campus as energy-efficient as possible. For example, a large photovoltaic system on the roof generates part of the energy required.

In just three years, one of the most modern and efficient production buildings in Switzerland rose from nothing. Together, INTEGRA and Fanzun show that it is possible to produce successfully at a global level in Switzerland.

Photos: Ralph Feiner