

## Former school 'Franzstraße', Aachen (GER)

project **New residential construction and a senior care facility designed with a community concept in mind**

awarding authority **City of Aachen (GER)**

award **3rd prize, restricted realisation competition**

services **WW+, Esch-sur-Alzette (LUX) / Trier (GER) architecture**

open space. in cooperation with  
HDK Dutt+Kist, Saarbrücken (GER)

rendering rendertaxi, Aachen (GER)

facts **- 40 rooms in seven residential units including common areas, care centres and cafeteria  
- combined with 20 condominium units  
- underground carpark with 80 parking places**

dates and numbers

gfa **8.080 m<sup>2</sup>**

ufa **5.190 m<sup>2</sup>**

total area **0,51 ha**

competition phase **06/2016 - 09/2016**

The building plot in question is part of a perimeter block development – centrally located, not far from the pedestrian zone, close to the historic Marschierort. This prominent location, the challenging topographical factors involved and the stipulated use concept all called for a sensitive and thoughtful design approach.

### Guiding principle

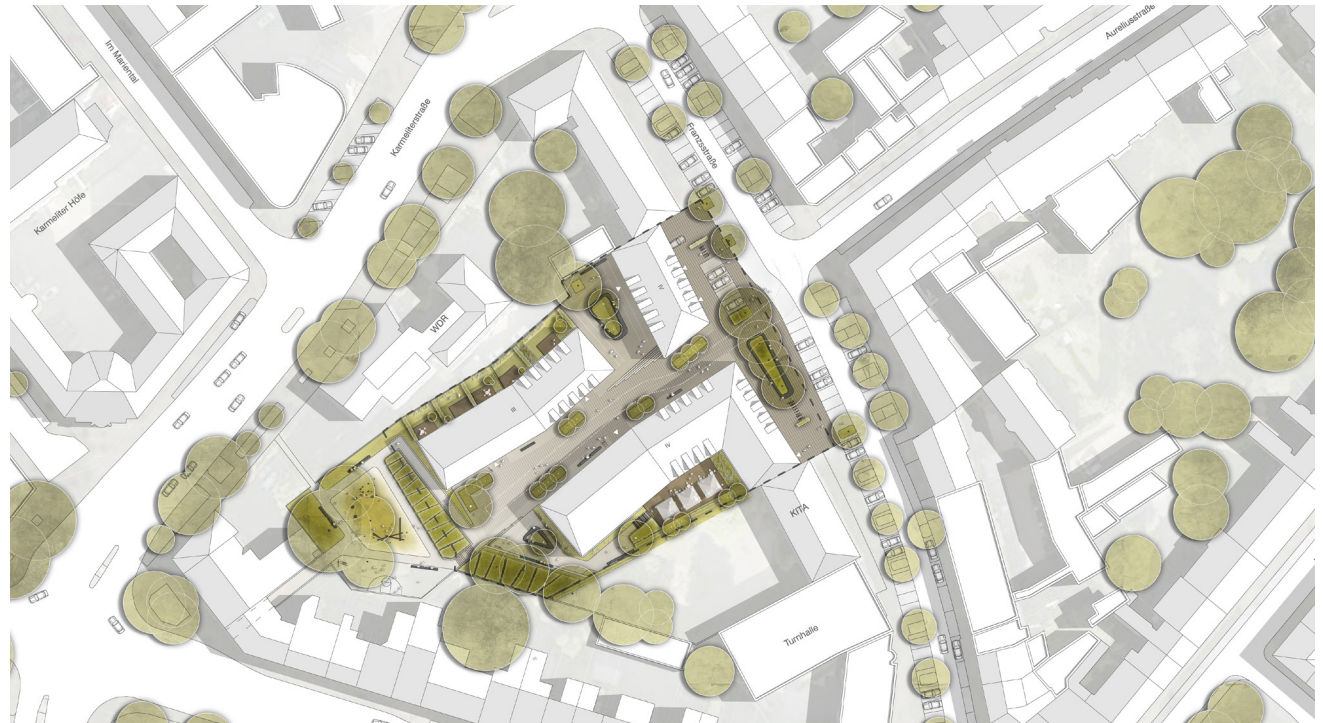
The present design foresees a construction featuring three structures. Together these structures form an ensemble that evolves from Franzstraße to the inside of the block. The perimeter block development remains open to Franzstraße, thus incorporating the block interior into the public road space and widening the latter. The open, generous gap allows for the area to be easily traversed and further corroborates the prominent address of the building ensemble.

The separation of the two buildings along Franzstraße provides a fitting and user-friendly solution to the road's extreme terrain. The differentiated treatment of the existing topography allows for a pleasant and barrier-free transition through the redesigned quarter.

### Building typology and context placement

The new buildings will in each case follow the gables of the existing neighbouring buildings and emulate the latter's eaves heights and roof shapes. The side-gabled hip roof along the road front is incorporated as the prevailing roof form and given a contemporary interpretation. For the road side, a zinc roof with a standing seam is preferred. The flat sloping roof surfaces in the block's interior are designed to feature extensive roof greening.

The façade material is brick, featuring nuanced colours throughout the three buildings. This local material, found in many historical and contemporary buildings in Aachen, is known for its durability and low maintenance.



site plan



elevation 'Franzstraße'



section south-west



ground floor

Perforated brick surfaces in the building entrance areas, as well as selected recesses within the façade create an exciting façade appearance. The new building draws on the prevailing type of the punctuated façade and gives it a contemporary treatment. The new buildings consequently integrate harmoniously into the overall appearance of Franzstraße and the surrounding structures.

The differentiated use of this material, as well as the façade opening ratios, give the new buildings a pleasant and modern look. The floor-level façade openings also ensure that individuals with disabilities can enjoy an unobstructed view onto Franzstraße and the residential walkway.

### Outdoor concept

The key component of the outdoor concept is the continuation of the residential walkway, which runs from the forecourt on Franzstraße along the residential properties and the community gardens to the public playground. The result is a fully accessible route through to Karmeliterstraße. This is to be understood not just as a public space sequence, but rather as a recreational area in its own right, all the more valuable due to the absence of any motorised traffic. Private transport is restricted to the forecourt. The western zone features a delivery space for "Haus Anna", while the commercial unit has short-term parking spaces for vehicles and bicycles, alongside the entrance to the underground car park. An emergency priority zone is available for fire brigade, ambulance and furniture transport vehicles or similar. The private open spaces as well as the tenant gardens and the "Haus Anna Cafeteria" patio are located in a protected area behind the buildings. The sensory garden for the retirement home residents is separated from the patio area by a pergola and flows into the northern community garden. A central design element is formed by organically shaped tree groves, which provide generous opportunities for sitting and lingering and can be used for a range of purposes.

The forecourt and the residential walkway feature large-format paving slabs. The building peripheral zones, on the other hand, feature small-format mosaic sett paving in the same colour and as such are used as an equipment zone and accessible entrance. The community courtyards feature primarily water-bound surfaces.

### Use distribution

Each of the three buildings fulfils one of the required uses. The "Haus Anna" retirement home links to the existing western building of the future KITA before bending into the block interior. This angle guides residents and visitors into the heart of the quarter – the block interior, in which the main entrance is located. The building can also be accessed via a secondary entrance on Franzstraße. Haus Anna has four full storeys with a floor area of 1025m<sup>2</sup> and a GFA of 4600m<sup>2</sup>.

To the east, the publicly funded residential construction links to the existing residential building of 52 Franzstraße. This address is also located in the block interior. The residential units are accessed via the walkway or the community courtyard. At the lowest point of Franzstraße is the entrance to the underground car park. The ground floor will house the quarter's café or a commercial zone.

With four full storeys, the residential construction has a floor area of 350m<sup>2</sup> and a GFA of 1540m<sup>2</sup>.

The inside of the quarter will accommodate the independently financed residential construction. This detached structure has two separate building entrances providing access to the residential storeys. The ground-level dwellings have private west-facing outdoor areas.

This building has three full storeys with a floor area of 620m<sup>2</sup> and a GFA of 2100m<sup>2</sup>.

### Floor plan typology

The residential floors are in each case accessed via a staircase and a lift. From this central shaft, the general floor layout allows for three dwellings per storey. In the case of one-bedroom / apartment dwellings, up to four residential units are connected. This vertical access also provides barrier-free admission to the underground car park and the cellar storage areas located there. Each residential storey has two "joker rooms", which depending on the floor plan configuration can be allocated to various dwellings. This allows for a flexible response to housing demand.