

Etrium, Cologne

The headquarters of E-concern in Germany, or Etrium, is the first office building in Cologne to qualify as a 'passive house'. E-concern, a market leader in sustainable energy, wants Etrium to set an example, in the sense of 'practise what you preach'.

The term passive house denotes an extremely low energy consumption and a pleasant indoor climate. Oriented to the sun and well insulated, it has no need of traditional heating and cooling systems. Passive heat sources such as the sun but also the office staff and the technical apparatus including computers, provide almost all the necessary heat. In addition, solar panels and wind turbines on the roof contribute to an agreeable indoor climate and a cleaner environment. An integrated air conditioning system exploits concrete's heat accumulation capacities, giving smaller fluctuations in temperature. Etrium consumes something like a fifth of the energy used by comparable office complexes.

The building has three storeys ranged round an atrium, a spectacular glass-covered court drawing daylight and air into the entire building. Internal terraces on the upper storeys are rotated relative to one another to give unexpected views and vibrant spaces. The wood finish adds an element of informality. Facades are of red broken recycled glass that glistens in the sunlight.

The client received the first golden 'Gütesiegel' from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen (DGNB) for the Etrium. The golden 'Gütesiegel' is in Germany the highest rate for sustainability. The German certification standard commands higher requirements than for example LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).

Client

HIBA Grundbesitz GmbH & Co.KG

Architect

Bentham Crouwel Architekten

Gross floor area

4.879 m²

Start design

2007

Start construction

2008

Completion

2008