

OPEN SPACE AT THE WU CAMPUS

The Campus is a sequence of spaces that engage with one another and are qualified – in architectural terms - by the buildings. The guiding principle of the Master Plan has also determined the design of these spaces. A fabric of internal and external areas defined by the position of the entrances in relation to a succession of squares generates the desired atmosphere.

The open spaces at the new Campus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business act as a setting that provides the context for the structural elements of architecture. Acting as a milieu, they define boundaries and interfaces vis-à-vis each neighbouring plot as well as a series of spatial sequences for the creation of a whole. When providing context, they form busy stations of active exchange, together with more secluded places of study and research.

The Campus is conceived as a traversable park, forming a series of squares at the various stations which – via alleys in the open space - lead to specific areas. The sequences are designed in such a way that each path is an education and an experience in itself. The ever-present line of sight to the verdant Prater is particularly important in the quality implementation of the aforementioned spatial ambitions.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATION

In addition to fulfilling the societal functions of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, the Campus also fulfils social ones within the urban milieu and in the context of the upgrade of both the locale itself and the area beyond. These functions, which are embedded in a broader context, are described in greater detail in the Master Plan manuals of the Architectural Competition. The technical aspects of the Campus are described in the documents pertaining to the Integral Guiding Concept of the Master Plan as well as in the reports of the respective technical planners. Herein, the description focuses on the spatial configuration of the Campus in terms of function.

The spatial functions of the Campus lie mainly in the separation from the city beyond by means of a green boundary which evolves into the Campus proper, in the configuration of a sequence of six squares with dissimilar settings in the central portion of the Campus as well as in the division of the Campus into individual plots, each of which is to be developed in accordance with the Master Plan as well as the Spatial and Functional Programme in order to provide a predetermined disparate mixture of uses and functions.

OPEN AREAS AND LANDSCAPE

The Green Boundary around the Campus

The entire Campus is surrounded by trees and shrubs, namely a naturally verdant periphery, which separates it from the adjacent city and busy highways. The Campus will be accessible via 6 entrances and 5 pedestrian passageways, 24 hours a day.

The Ginkgo tree defines this boundary as a continuous element. The Ginkgo tree is the most common avenue tree in Japan and has been increasingly planted in Austria over recent years.

Its resilience, slim growth and intensive autumn colour make it particularly valuable.

The Green Boundary of the Campus is comprised of different spatial situations. The relationship between the Green Boundary and those trees that are more centrally located on the Campus, follows different spatially visible layers.

A broad filter of Ginkgo trees in well-organised groups will be observed to the south of Plot W2. The configuration of both the pedestrian and cycle paths is linear. Individual seating elements are arranged along the path in the immediate vicinity of the building. Isolated hedges act as classifying elements.

The Squares

The public open space within the Campus has been structured in a sequence of six squares. Each has been adjusted to the functions and proportions of the respective adjacent plots.

SQUARE 1 – WU LOUNGE (western access to the Campus)

Square 1 constitutes the Campus' "reception" area at the Executive Academy. There is also a taxi stand. Neither the Fair nor its adjacent hotel is far. The square is characterised by waiting areas and places intended for coincidental encounters. Stabilised open space forms a slight basin that is partially covered by trees in an umbrella-like fashion. Flexible, coloured synthetic elements invite people to sit and lie down. The edge of the area towards the Prater rises continuously, and forms a transition to the peripheral undulating terrain in the direction of the street and the Messe Hotel. The entrance to the Campus will feature an artwork.

SQUARE 2 – WU EXPO (on the western side between W1 and W2)

Elevated above a stretch of water of varying width, this square is an island-like structure in general open space. It can be reached via ramps and may be used as an outdoor area for the adjacent café. One solitary tree provides shade and constitutes a landmark in this area. Within the water, which is slightly elevated in relation to the other open areas, there are some plants, while people may also sit along its edge. An object of art is located at the western entrance to the square.

SQUARE 3 – WU RELAX (on the eastern side between W1 and W2)

The square adjacent which the special libraries are located invites people to read and relax in the open air. The courtyard providing light for the subterranean garage is planted with high bamboo. The staircases leading to the underground garage are glazed (with fire protection glazing) in order to admit as much daylight as possible into the garage area below. An object of art will be placed at the eastern end of the square.

SQUARE 4 – WU STAGE (central location in front of the LLC)

The large general free space of the central square will feature elevated balconies offering panoramic views and will encompass oblique areas of wooden decking or prefab concrete. The square also acts as a practical, multi-functional platform for events. All the Campus pathways lead into this square. The open space features one group of trees to provide shade and act as a counterbalance to the large synthetic area. The courtyard providing light for the subterranean garage (Staircase 2) is the same as that for WU Relax.

SQUARE 5 – WU PATIO (between O1 and O2)

The square is elevated on the northern side by several steps, leading to the food court building the design of which is also inspired by the idea of steps. It can be reached by ramps and staircases. The catering area terrace forms an essential element of the square. A dense umbrella is offered by sycamore trees planted in strict order, providing shade and coolness.

On the west side of the square there is a row of trees, which constitute an extension of the passage into the square. A courtyard providing illumination also accommodates Staircase 3 of the subterranean garage.

SQUARE 6 – WU FORUM (eastern entrance to the Campus)

This is the eastern entrance to the Campus which will mainly be frequented by students on their way to and from lectures at the Lecture Room Centre. The terrace landscape of the lecture room centre is reflected in a compact elevated open space in which trees and garden elements are embedded. These elements which invite students to sit a while facilitate relaxation and exchange after lectures. The square is decorated with objects of art, marking the entrance to the Campus. The courtyard providing light for the subterranean garage (Staircase 4) is located centrally on the square which shall not be planted with high vegetation.

THE PLOTS

The building plots for the architectural competition were thoroughly described in the document entitled Master Plan WU Vienna, and a body of requirements was developed to define the qualities of the milieu, identity features, and interfaces. The specifications influencing architecture in the most immediate way are the passageways and alleys which traverse the plots and provide a connection to the Prater and areas within the Campus. Local displays of special functions were suggested as orientation points, which become gradually more visible when crossing the Campus. The arrangement of public and communal facilities - such as cafeterias, shops and lounge areas - in the ground floor area of the buildings, and directed towards the respective square, are an essential prerequisite that ensures the appropriate functioning of the squares.

The allocation of the individual departments to the individual plots was effected by the appropriation of functional requirements by the University of Economics and Business. On account of their varying patterns of use, special functions - such as the Executive Academy, special libraries, administration, the Library and Learning Center, the Lecture Room Centre, the Refectory and external service providers - will characterise the squares allocated to them.

The following functions are allocated to the individual plots:

W1-EA

Executive Academy

W1 (West 1)

Department of Finance
Department of Statistics and Mathematics
Department of Economics
Department of Social Sciences
Library for Social Sciences
Cafeteria

Alley east-west

Passage north-south

W2 (West 2)

Research Institutes
Department of Corporate, Labour and Social Law
Department of Public and Tax Law
Department of Business Financing – Section Accounting
Commercial Law Library
WU Administration
Bakery

2 passages north-south

LLC (Library and Learning Center)

Academic Library
Learning Center
Service facilities for students
Bookshop
Teaching Material Center
Cafeteria
Copy Shop

O1 (East 1)

Department of Cross-Border Business
Food Court
Lecture Room Center

O2 (East 2)

Department of Information Processing and Process Management
Department of Marketing
Department of Management
Department of Corporate Management and Innovation
Department of Foreign Language Business Communication
Foreign Languages Library
Austrian University Student Association
Sports Center
Kindergarten
Bookshop
Supermarket

2 passages north-south
Alley east-west

EXTERNAL ACCESS

The configuration of the WU Campus in open light structures engendering communication will strengthen the users' feeling of security. Attractive open spaces invite people to stay and animate the Campus area – a basic prerequisite for informal social control. Areas that might otherwise have given rise to fear have been avoided by a well-organised routing of passageways; at the same time all accesses to the subterranean garage are illuminated by natural light. Direct allocation of the entrances to the public parts of the Campus area has also been sought.

The Campus is basically a pedestrian zone. The driveway for vehicles and main supplies to the garage is located at the eastern entrance. Waste collection is organised on a decentralised basis in the basement refuse rooms, and thence conveyed to the loading yard within the subterranean garage. Aboveground refuse rooms, which can be reached by vehicles, are provided for the Executive Academy and at the western side of Plot W2.

Accesses to the subterranean garage are located at squares 3, 4, 5 and 6. Courtyards that provide light, and which are located around glazed staircases, allow the natural illumination of the basement below. Those arriving by way of the garage are directed to the buildings via the squares. This contributes to security (there are no public lift accesses in the basement, except for supplies and wheelchair users), and generates an urban milieu within the squares where people can establish and maintain informal contact.

BUSarchitektur & BOA Office for Offensive Aleatorics, Vienna
in co-operation with Landscape Architecture