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Colourful, vibrant, inspired

Nimbus luminaires light up the innovatively designed Paul Winter Realschule secondary school in Neuburg an der Donau



The whole school system, including its physical design, is under scrutiny. If architecture is considered a constituent element of society, it seems obvious that buildings should be constructed that support modern pedagogical methods. ARGE Behnisch Architekten | ALN Architekturbüro Leinhäupl + Neuber developed a school building that creates room for potential and a framework for a colourful, vibrant and inspired school community. Modul Q and Modul R Project luminaires from Nimbus are part of this concept, providing pleasant lighting for the diverse learning and meeting spaces.

The Paul Winter Realschule in Neuburg an der Donau in Upper Bavaria was experiencing space problems, and so the decision was taken to look for a new location. This was a very fortunate decision for the 600 or so pupils who, since 2021, have been learning in an open, friendly building with a lot of modern features.

Located on former agricultural land on the southern edge of the town and in the immediate vicinity of the historical Sternschanze defensive wall, the varied structure with its natural wooden facade blends in harmoniously with the surrounding landscape. The ground rises

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slightly from the southeast towards the northwest. This topographical feature had a major influence on the design created by ARGE Behnisch Architekten | ALN Architekturbüro Leinhäupl + Neuber. Three main areas – car park, school building and sport facilities – were built on different levels, each offering accessibility for all.

The "school pathway": linking element and lively meeting place

Car park and bicycle racks, school and learning buildings, schoolyard, sports fields, activity areas and green spaces: all of these elements are freely arranged to form a harmonious, integrated whole that reflects the school's versatility and pedagogical diversity. A dynamic central axis linking all of the buildings as well as the indoor and outdoor facilities provides a place for encounters and communication. This "school pathway" also helps people to find their way around the grounds. The smooth transition between indoors and outdoors, together with the expansive glass facades, establishes a close connection to the meadows and fields of the surrounding landscape.

Schoolhouses for year groups 5 to 10 are arranged in clusters along the school pathway. Each cluster accommodates four classrooms grouped around a "marketplace" – a central space for activities or smaller events. Learning bays create a personal learning environment for individual support or enable learning in small groups. Conventional seating arrangements are disrupted by new pedagogical concepts.

The schoolhouses form the "school village" together with the art and craft rooms, the administration and after-school care facility, the library, the STEM area, the school kitchen and the herb garden. In combination with the school pathway and the blending of indoor and outdoor spaces, the free arrangement of the houses creates a lot of special places that encourage a sense of community, resulting in a unique and inspiring school environment.

The open, two-storey assembly hall in the entrance area constitutes the school's communicative hub. With its expansive steps and stepped seating, it provides a wide range of recreation spaces as well as seating options for school assemblies, parents' evenings or performances. Acting as a link between the entrance level and the schoolyard – sheltered from the outside in the centre of the complex – the assembly hall once again encourages

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communication among those using the building.

Always well lit

Every area of the building is filled with daylight. The transitions between indoors and outdoors seems to blend in with one another. In the dark winter months or when the light outside is poor, suitable indoor lighting is required, whereby the designers prioritised very good light quality in every room. They wanted luminaires that were discreet in terms of form and could be deployed in all parts of the school. Their design should be timeless, and they should also be energy-efficient. The Modul Q and Modul R Project ranges from Nimbus fit the bill perfectly as they are especially suitable when it comes to meeting the requirements placed on school lighting. The extremely slim bodies in various shapes and sizes set discreet accents on the ceilings. Their Softlight Diffuser discs made of translucent acrylic glass spread soft, glare-free, homogeneous light through the room. Light-looking Modul Q Project luminaires have been installed in clear-cut patterns in classrooms, the canteen and recreational areas. In the assembly hall, on the other hand, variants of the round Nimbus Modul R Project create a fascinating contrast to the rectangular acoustic panels in the glass facade. The Nimbus Force One floor-standing luminaire with its slim silhouette provides homogeneous, glare-free, wide-area lighting of work zones in the school's offices. The extremely slim head projects a long way over the work surface, while the base containing the technical components disappears almost completely under the desk.

Wood, glass and exposed concrete correspond with clear colours

Wood and glass are the predominant materials both inside and outside the new building. The assembly hall's mullion-transom facade is lent a playful character by the dynamic alternation of open surfaces and white acoustic panels. The other rooms in the school building are also characterised by expansive floor-to-ceiling glazing, which further underlines the proximity to the surrounding nature.

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In the interior, the theme of the wooden facades is reprised in the form of acoustically effective wall cladding. Expansive exposed concrete surfaces and ceramic tile floors form a striking contrast to the warm wood and soft carpet and rubber flooring in the schoolhouses.

Each schoolhouse has its own bold colour scheme, with warm, natural looking materials helping to create a cosy atmosphere. Specially manufactured, versatile built-in furniture can be used for group work or as a private retreat.

During the design phase ARGE Behnisch Architekten | ALN Architekturbüro Leinhäupl + Neuber placed great importance on details, versatile usage and a large number of connecting, integrated elements. This has resulted in mobility and good collaboration among those people who use the building on a daily basis.

Facts

Client: Landkreis Neuburg-Schrobenhausen

Design: ARGE Behnisch Architekten | ALN Architekturbüro Leinhäupl + Neuber

Implemented: 2021

Photos: David Matthiessen, Stuttgart

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1 The architecture of the new school has been thought through down to the last detail, making it a perfect "enabler" for new and creative pedagogical concepts. Intelligent intermeshing of the various usage areas and of the indoor and outdoor areas creates a lot of spaces for learning and interaction, placing the focus firmly on communication and promoting a sense of community. Photo: David Matthiessen

2 The vibrant yellow of the canteen is intensified by the daylight entering through the large, floor-to-ceiling windows. When daylight conditions are poor, square Nimbus Modul Q Project luminaires create the same effect – and on the ceiling they set aesthetic accents and provide uniform lighting. Photo: David Matthiessen

3 The assembly hall is the centrepiece of the school. Its expansive, open steps and stepped seating offer plenty of options for sitting and playing. Slim, round Nimbus Modul R Project luminaires from Nimbus create a fascinating contrast to the glass facade, which is lent a playful vibrancy by alternating rectangular window surfaces and white acoustic panels. Photo: David Matthiessen

4 Just like being outside: while bold colours define the interior and help people find their way around, expansive window surfaces establish a close connection to the surrounding meadows and cornfields. Photo: David Matthiessen

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5 In the classrooms, square Modul Q Project luminaires from Nimbus help the children to concentrate with their soft, brilliant light. Photo: David Matthiessen

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About Häfele and Nimbus

Nimbus has belonged to the Häfele Group since 2019. Located in Nagold, the internationally operating specialist for furniture fittings and lighting is indispensable for furniture production and the carpentry trade, while the Stuttgart-based Nimbus Group is held in high regard in the architecture sector. Two target groups, two different worlds. And yet they have come together and boast a broad joint portfolio of lighting systems for rooms and furniture as well as integrated lighting and acoustics solutions. Product development in the fields of light and acoustics is centred in Stuttgart.

www.nimbus-group.com

www.haefele.de

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