

Planned with foresight

BAID Architekten from Hamburg are responsible for the design of the ALDI Nord Campus in Essen-Kray. The new, signet-like administration building of ALDI Einkauf SE & Co. oHG will eventually provide workspace for up to 2,000 employees.



At the beginning of March, the new ALDI Nord Campus in Essen-Kray was opened after a construction period of almost three years. The building complex, which covers around 100,000 square metres, was designed by BAID Architekten from Hamburg and is a significant milestone in the corporate history of the Essen-based discount supermarket chain. On an area the size of 14 football pitches, the new building offers an ultra-modern, agile working environment. A working environment that provides plenty of room for cooperation and communication in new ways of working. The ALDI Nord Campus is thus a symbol for the transformation process of the ALDI Nord Group.

The new home of ALDI Einkauf in Essen is an important and necessary step into the future of the corporate group as the inventor of discount supermarkets. Adaptability is essential in retail, especially in an increasingly international and digital world. New work and communication structures that enable a fast and open exchange among departments and employees, both external and internal, are reflected in the architecture.

The ALDI Nord Campus consists mainly of open space offices, co-working areas and communication hubs for a wide range of requirements. Among a total of around 1,200 permanent workplaces in the main building, there are fewer than 50 individual offices. A central café and the staff restaurant create a direct link to the extensive park landscape with water basins, herb garden and jogging track, which was designed by WES Landschaftsarchitekten. The office complex is complemented by two multi-storey car parks with a large roof-mounted solar power system, a day-care centre, a porter's pavilion and a sports pavilion.

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Designed with the genius loci

The ALDI Nord Campus is situated in the industrial area of Essen-Kray. ALDI Nord had operated a huge warehouse on the site, and the previous administration building is located on the directly adjacent property, which is currently being renovated and will continue to be used by the “inventor of the discount”.

BAID Architekten were awarded first prize in the invited architectural competition in 2016, having impressed the jury with their differentiated and elegant architectural vocabulary for ALDI Nord that is visible far beyond the boundaries of the new campus. “The campus was designed and planned according to the requirements and wishes of a modern company, trusting in the successful values and with an eye on the future,” says architect Jessica Borchardt, founder and managing director of BAID.

With their design, BAID restored the original topography of the site and shaped the approximately 10-metre-high level difference in the terrain with the soil excavated for the new buildings. From this moulding, the architects derived the guiding idea for the entire campus: on terraced levels, the architects arranged the usage units, which are structured by function, in a triangle around the high point of the campus – a seven-storey office tower. With their loosened-up campus design, BAID also responded to the adjacent, small-scale cityscape of Essen-Kray and at the same time developed a new green quarter: around 450 new trees were planted on the campus.

Sustainability and foresight

BAID developed a sustainable architecture for the campus that was awarded Gold certification by the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB). Decisive sustainability factors are the large solar power system on the rooftops of the car parks, the consistently intensive roof greening of the buildings, the use of geothermal energy via heat pumps, a ventilation concept with heat recovery and an efficient basic provision of heat and electricity for the campus via a district heating connection. Special elements are the two water areas on the campus, which collect the rainwater – also from the roofs – that accumulates on the property. The lakes, which thanks to their design are much more than mere rainwater retention basins, also increase the sojourn quality on the campus and significantly improve the local microclimate. For Jessica Borchardt, however, the epitome of sustainable construction is when a building reliably serves its users for a long time and does not have to be replaced after just a few decades because it no longer suits the corporate structure. That is why BAID plans all its projects with the greatest possible foresight and designs the buildings to be as flexible and adaptable as possible.

The first extension to the ALDI Nord Campus, which was planned from the very beginning, is about to be handed over. The provision of additional capacities for ventilation, air conditioning and communication proves to be particularly challenging in such growing projects. Since the green roofscape was to be kept free of installations, an extended basement now provides the necessary supply

facilities for the building services. Together with the planned conversion of the existing headquarters, there will be room for up to 2,000 employees on the campus.

“The modern building complies with high sustainability standards and offers enough space for all ALDI Nord employees – an important step for us as an employer to meet the contemporary expectations of a modern and interesting workplace,” emphasises Torsten Janke, Managing Director of Albrecht KG and, as the client, responsible for the ALDI Nord Campus.

Spontaneous, chance encounters

The entire design of the ALDI Nord Campus portrays a contemporary corporate culture in architecture, which focuses on communication and exchange with one another. The large plaza in the centre of the office complex is the focal point. Around the void, which extends over up to five storeys, the so-called communication hubs provide numerous opportunities for spontaneous meetings. All circulation routes lead across the plaza – everyone inevitably moves through this space. The main entrance to the office complex also leads directly to the central hub.

“Connected horizontally and vertically to the central plaza, our architecture inevitably allows for chance encounters and barrier-free exchange across all areas,” explains Jessica Borchardt.

Construction and design vocabulary

The plaza is column-free and flooded with daylight entering through a huge, filigree glass roof. The most important additional facilities for ALDI employees are directly adjoining this central space: the lecture hall, the staff restaurant and the café. With their oversized sliding glass doors, both catering facilities allow direct access to the stepped outdoor terraces on the two lakes. Between the individual building sections, the plaza with its transparent glass areas opens up towards the park landscape on all sides. Eye-catchers in the plaza are the two vertical green walls, which noticeably improve the microclimate and the acoustics in the large indoor space. In combination with numerous acoustic measures that include all wall and ceiling surfaces, they also contribute to a pleasant atmosphere.

The ground plan of the plaza is the defining geometric figure for the entire campus. The signet-like formal vocabulary with rounded triangles or polygons recurs throughout all design elements, from the ground plans of the reception and sports pavilion and the day-care centre, to space-defining elements such as skylights, windows or objects in the buildings.

BAID designed the building as a reinforced concrete skeleton structure with a classically modern, horizontally structured façade with ribbon windows and white aluminium elements. “Due to their elegant shape, the curved buildings appear as modern houses of our time,” says Jessica Borchardt. The horizontal floor slabs jump out and intensify the linear impression. Floor-to-ceiling window elements with triple insulating glazing ensure optimal daylight yield in the office areas.

For the interior design, BAID acted according to the motto "plain and clean", limiting themselves to comparatively few but durable materials and surfaces: glass, light-coloured walls and ceilings prevail, the offices are fitted with acoustically effective and robust carpeting in various shades of grey, and a light-coloured terrazzo floor was poured in the circulation areas and in the plaza. As a contrast to the enormous dimensions of the open areas, BAID has worked with large-area and, because of the acoustics, micro-perforated wooden surfaces to increase comfort. Furniture and triangular luminaires in blue, the CI colour of ALDI Nord, are used in specific places to loosen up the design with their decorative colour.

Data + Facts

Architecture: BAID Architekten, Hamburg (service phases 1-4)

Client: Albrecht KG / ALDI Nord, Essen

General contractor: MBN Bau AG

Landscape architecture: WES GmbH Landschaftsarchitektur, Hamburg

Competition: 2016, 1st prize

Groundbreaking: June 2019

Completion: March 2022

GFA 1st construction phase: 112,000 m²

Consulting service to client: combine Consulting Düsseldorf

Structural engineering/Building physics: Professor Pfeifer und Partner,

Ingenieurbüro für Tragswerkplanung, Darmstadt

Fire protection: Ökotec-Gruppe, Schwalmatal

Electrical engineering: Kleinmann Engineering Ingenieurgesellschaft für technische

Gebäudeausrüstung mbH, Dortmund

Sanitary, heating, ventilation: IGF Feldmeier mbH, Münster

Façade planning: Mosbacher + Roll Beratungs- und Planungsgesellschaft für

Fassadentechnik mbH, Tettnang

Building envelope: Medicke GmbH, Glauchau

Contract furnishings: Beck Objekteinrichtungen GmbH

Producers (extract):

Glass partitions: intek

Carpets: Interface

Terrazzo: Terra-Plan

Wall paints: Caparol

Textiles: Kvadrat

Tiles: MosaWash

Basins: Roskopf und Partner

Wood panelling: Topakustik

HPL laminate: Egger

Luminaires: Zumtobel, Regent, Prolicht

Fire doors: Jansen

Turnstile: dormakaba

Door locking system: Salto

Electrics: Hager

Room acoustics: Mooia

Furnishings: Walter Knoll, Bene, Muuto, ViaSit, Brunner, Vitra, Assmann

Hamburg, May 2022

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Further photos and drawings available on request

Please note: The use of the photos is only permitted in connection with editorial reports about BAID and the ALDI Nord Campus. Photo credit (unless otherwise stated): © Marcus Bredt, 2022

About ALDI Nord

ALDI Nord is one of the leading international retail companies. With a tradition stretching back more than 100 years, the ALDI brand stands for the invention of discount supermarkets. The corporate group offers customers in nine European countries high-quality products at the lowest possible price, following the principles of simplicity and a focus on the essentials. The key contribution to the sustained success of ALDI Nord is made by more than 80,000 ALDI employees in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

1 The new ALDI Nord headquarters is an important and necessary step into the future of the company, which once invented discount supermarkets but now has to face a completely changed competitive context. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

2 The ALDI Nord Campus consists mainly of open space offices, co-working areas and communication hubs for a wide range of requirements. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

3 The signet-like ALDI Nord Campus, designed by BAID Architekten from Hamburg, will eventually provide space for more than 2,000 employees. Photo: Martin Haag

4 With oversized sliding glass doors, the catering facilities on the campus allow direct access to the stepped outdoor terraces on the lakes. These water basins serve to retain rainwater and at the same time significantly improve the local microclimate. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

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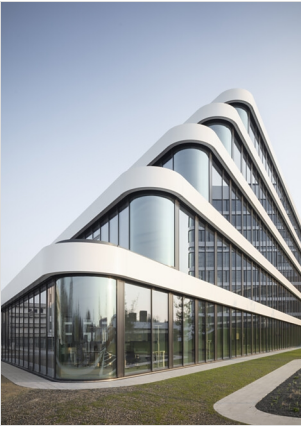
5 BAID Architekten designed the building as a reinforced concrete skeleton structure with a classically modern facade with ribbon windows and white aluminium elements. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

6 The entire design of the ALDI Nord Campus portrays a contemporary corporate culture in architecture, which focuses on communication and exchange with one another. The large plaza in the centre of the office complex is the heart of the new ALDI Nord organism. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

7 All circulation routes lead across the plaza – everyone inevitably moves through the plaza. The main entrance to the office complex also leads directly to the central hub. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

8 The plaza is column-free and flooded with daylight entering through a huge, filigree glass roof. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

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9 The open-plan design of the ALDI Nord Campus is a symbol of the transformation process of the ALDI Nord Group. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

10 “Connected horizontally and vertically to the central plaza, our architecture inevitably allows for chance encounters and barrier-free exchange across all areas,” explains Jessica Borchardt, founder and managing director of BAID Architekten. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

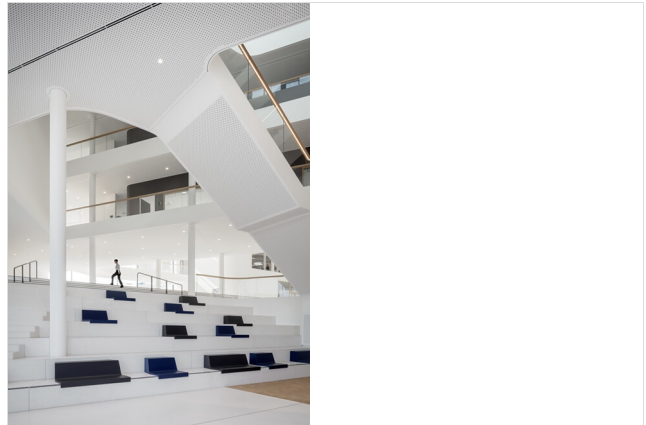
11 The most important additional facilities for ALDI employees are directly adjoining the plaza: the lecture hall, the staff restaurant and the café & deli. With their oversized sliding glass doors, both catering facilities allow direct access to the stepped outdoor terraces on the two lakes. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

12 Lecture hall of the ALDI Nord Campus. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

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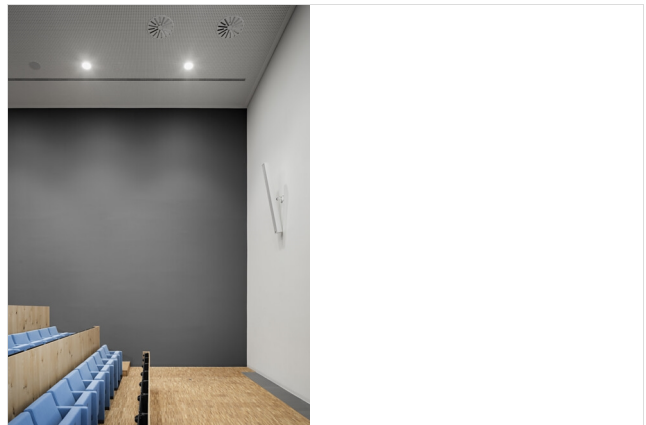
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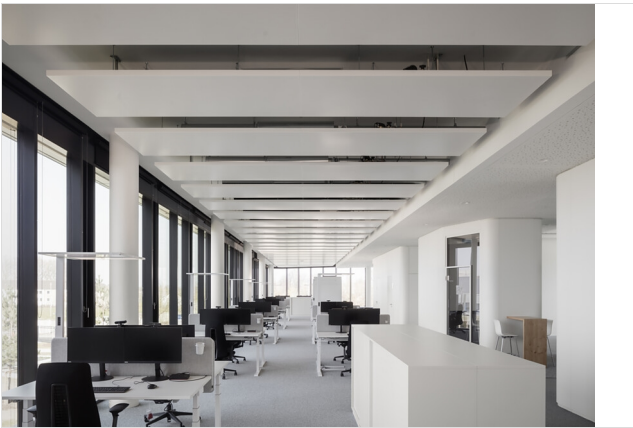
13 For the interior design, BAID acted according to the motto “plain and clean”, limiting themselves to comparatively few, but durable materials and surfaces. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

14 The team at BAID includes architects, interior designers and product designers. All disciplines have also been involved in the ALDI Nord Campus project. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

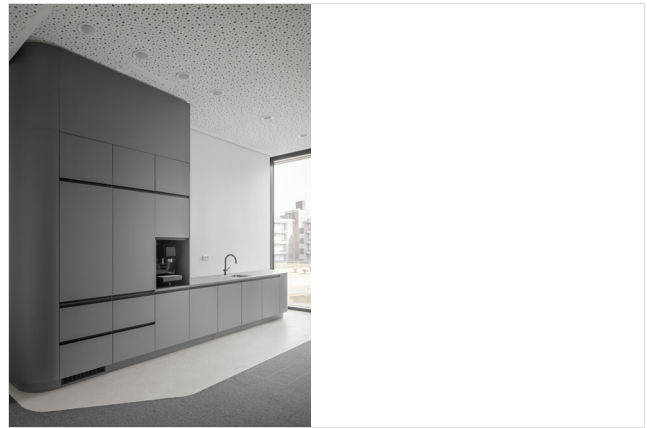
15 Contemporary co-working spaces characterise the working environments of the ALDI Nord Campus. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

16 Furniture in ALDI Nord’s CI blue is selectively used to loosen up the design with its decorative colour. Photo: Marcus Bredt, 2022

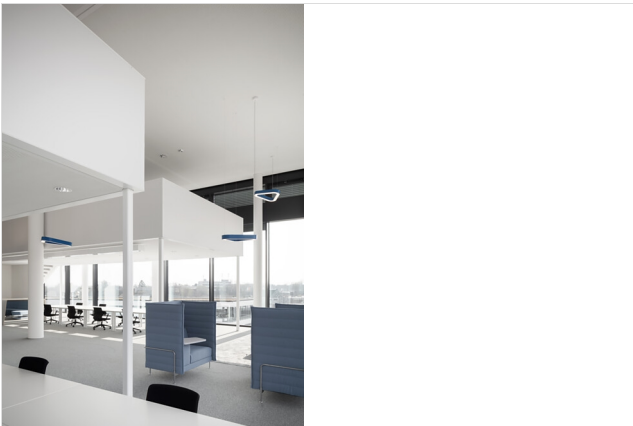
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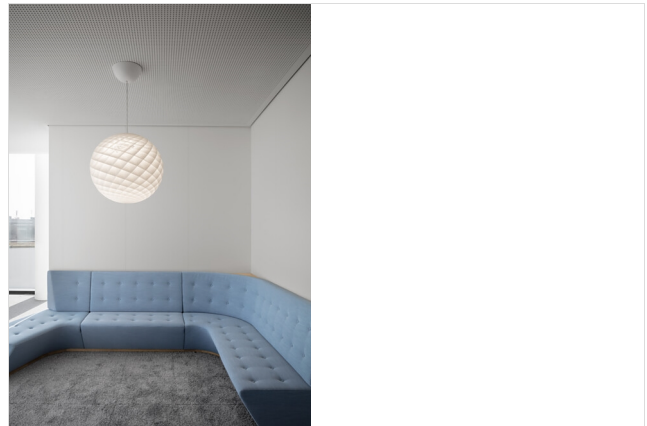
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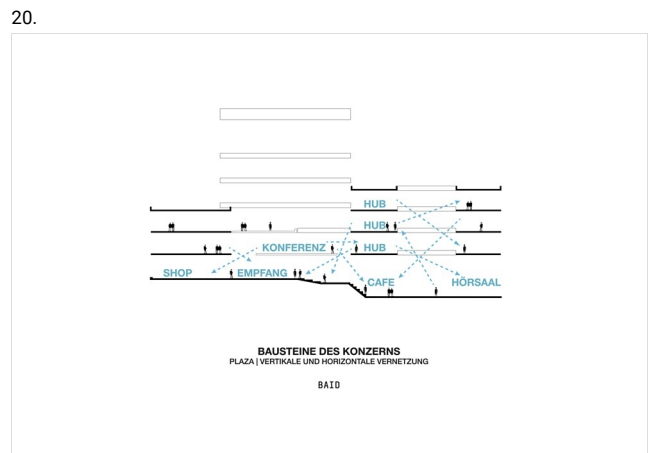
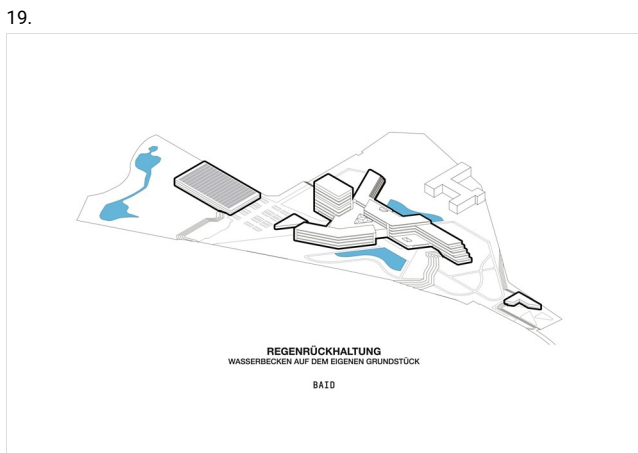
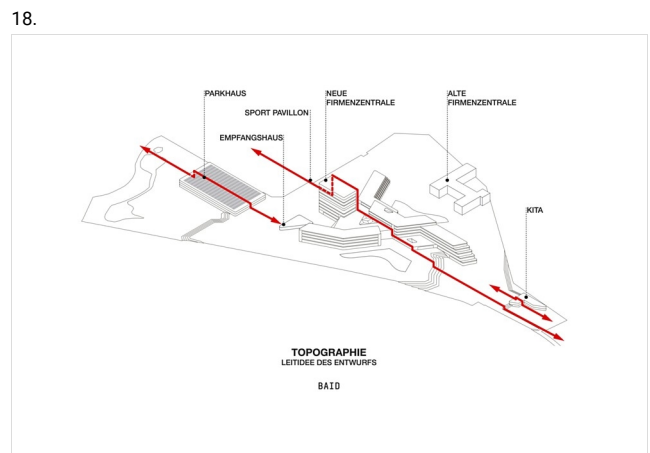
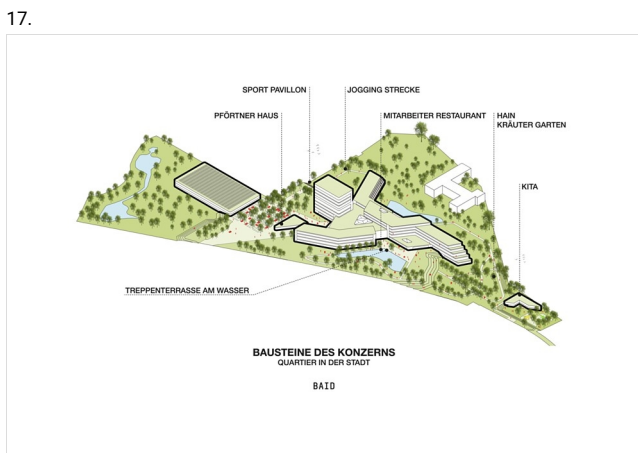


17 Components of the ALDI Nord Campus. Illustration: BAID

18 Development of the campus in line with the topography. Illustration: BAID

19 The three lakes also serve as rainwater retention basins for the campus and are integral components of the sustainability concept. Illustration: BAID

20 The plaza is the communicative heart of the ALDI Nord Campus. Illustration: BAID



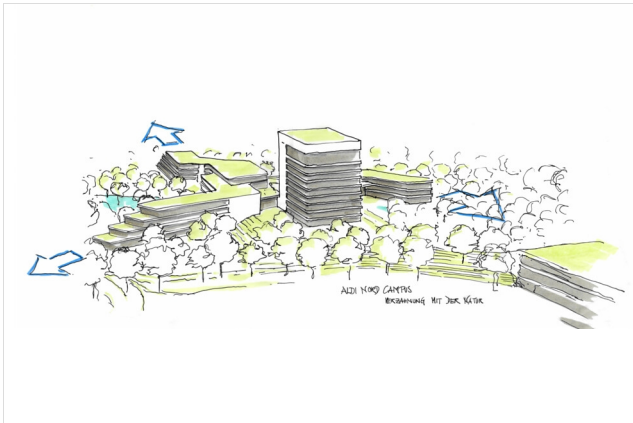
21 Interlocking of the campus with nature. Sketch: BAID

22 Outdoor terraces by the lake. Sketch: BAID

23 Site plan, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

24 Garden level, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

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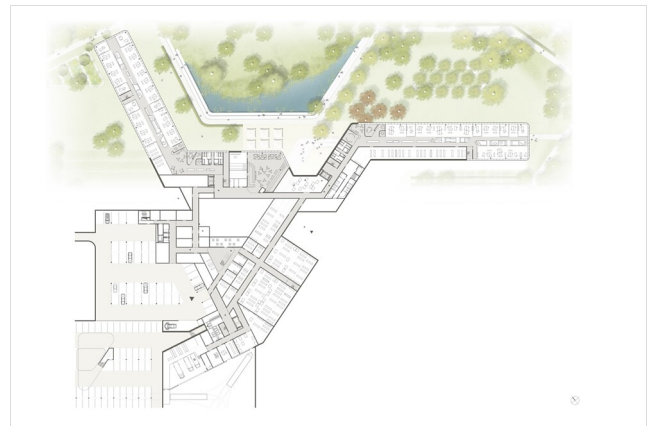
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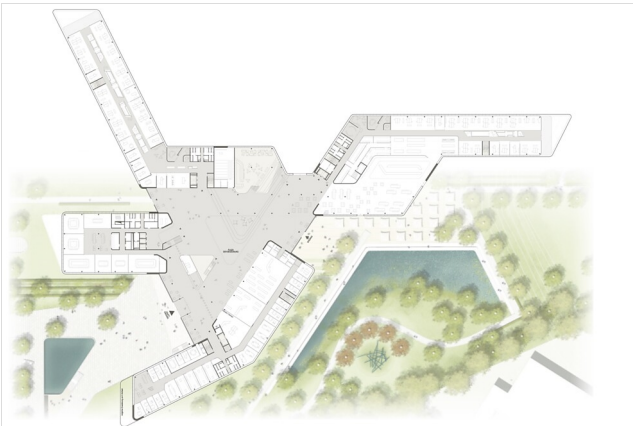
25 Ground floor, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

26 First floor, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

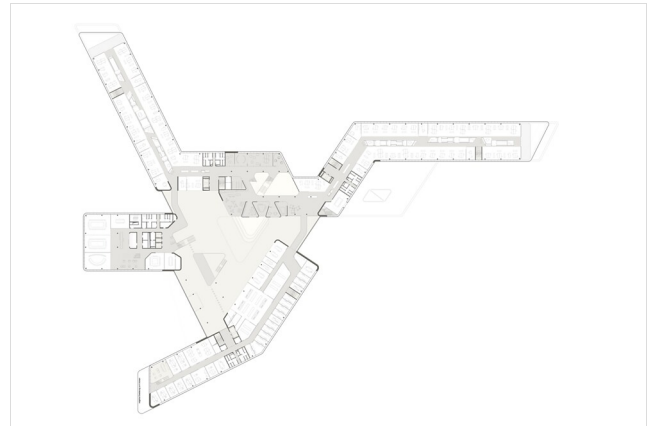
27 Section through the plaza, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

28 North elevation, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

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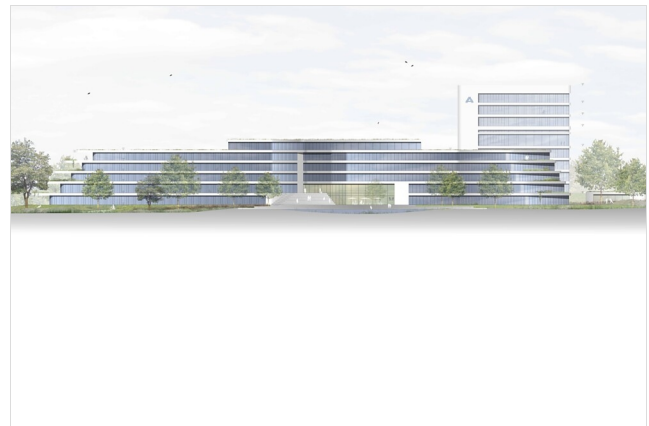
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29 South elevation, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

30 West elevation, ALDI Nord Campus. Drawing: BAID

31 Sketch of the entrance area. Drawing: BAID

32 Sketch of a communication hub. Drawing: BAID

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About BAID

BAID stands for **B**orchardt / **A**rchitektur / **I**nterior / **D**esign and was founded in 2005 by architect Jessica Borchardt. The 30-strong team of architects, interior designers and product designers pursues a holistic approach by keeping a close eye on all aspects of the project during the planning process. From the cubature to interior design, all relevant aspects – in addition to the functional requirements – are given the necessary appreciation that characterises a thoroughly conceived and aesthetically convincing building project.

Curious about new things, creative and enthusiastic about details, BAID designs and implements projects across all service phases, primarily in the segments of housing and contemporary office and administration buildings. In doing so, BAID represents the users' internal structures with good architecture, taking into account the requirements of a radically changing working world. The planners are aided by the innovative use of modern design technologies, combined with the valuable experience gained from successfully completed projects.

BAID designed the new company headquarters for DB Schenker, ista and Innogy SE, for example. The new ALDI Nord Campus in Essen was opened in March 2022.

BAID's generous office premises in the historical "Hopfenburg" in Hamburg's centrally located Kontorhaus District extends over three floors. Part of the space is taken up by the exhibition room of Galerie Borchardt. The renowned art gallery, which has been run by Peter Borchardt since 1997, mediates between art and architecture with a project-oriented approach. It brings together artists, architects and clients – often resulting in the joint realisation of new projects.

www.baid.de

www.galerie-borchardt.de

[Instagram BAID](#)