School on the edge

west facade, facing the harbor and Peterson Packing

situation plan 1:5000

Section H-H, north facade1:400

Section I-I, east facade 1:400

The factory buildings towering over Mosse Marina

Worker houses with the large rock behind

East facade facing the inner courtyard

Description

The American College of Norway is a private school in Moss. The school offers a one year program of preparatory courses for people who wish to study in the USA. As the ACN looks to expand from 70 to 150 students, it needs a new building to house it.
Currently the school is located at temporary facilities in the Moss tank area. This area is within walking distance of the city centre, and lies between the bankrupt Peterson factory and a large rock.
There, on the edge of the Moss tank plateau, overlooking the Mossesundet, is a small, flat area. The site is long and narrow and sloping, unable to accommodate a traditional school building.

Peterson Packaging is the last local factory to either go bankrupt or move its production abroad, marking Moss' identity as an industrial town in a post-war era.
To prevent Moss from simply becoming a grey suburb to Oslo, one must now look to unique local institutions, other than the industrial ones. This ACN is an institution that could help add some new identity and life to the central areas of Moss.

Placement and shape

Originally, the site was regulated to follow the edge of the neighbouring sites and only be 8 meters wide. No standpoint on the unusal setting was taken.

I angled the building towards the steep edge facing the industry. This makes for more generous courtyards and keeps a more sensible distance to the existing houses.

The original site plan keeps a lot of residual areas towards the factory unbuached. Even before the factory went bankrupt they were filled only with bushes and garbage. The new building expands across those residual areas, making use of the leftover space.

Organisation

The organization of the program follows these main intentions:

- The school functions and smaller spaces are located at the uppermost floor

- The larger common spaces are located at the ground floor, easily accessible for everyone

- The U1 floor contains support functions

- The U2 floor comes all the way down to the industrial floor, creating a general back of house and a service entry.

- The school is universally designed

Facade

The facade is translucent and allows 10% of outside natural light to pass through. It wraps around the entire building and gives it a milky white exterior.

The cladding references the corrugated metal facades at the omnipresent factory, while simultaneously adding something completely new to the area. The distance between the corrugations is relatively small, adding a finer scale to the envelope.

Upper floor

Moss Verk street passes by the site and is surrounded by small wooden houses. In between the houses one can glimpse the base of a large rock, towering over the area. This street is used as an analogy for the main circulation in the school.
The classrooms are the "worker houses", offering glimpses of the factory in between them. Lodged between the classrooms are the "backyards", informal social spaces. The classrooms fluctuate, subdividing the circulation zone into smaller subspaces.

On the other side of the "road" there is an almost inverse situation: shelves with study stations separated by voids, offering contact down to the ground floor.

The upper floor is held up by metal rods hanging from the transverse structural frames. This way the ground floor only has columns in its periphery.

Section A-A, 1:200
The translucent facade characterizes the interior spaces. The storage and support floors are embedded into the ground below.

Plan 1:200, upper floor

The building envelope bulges out towards the factory. This makes one part of the school significantly wider, allowing it to encompass the auditorium together with the interior circulation. In the upper floor this is also put to use: accomodating the larger classrooms and study spaces.

the upper floor hanging above the study area

the wooden framework envelope wrapping around the primary structural frames. The framework is filled in with translucent isolation and window frames.

white, translucent facade

Section B-B, 1:200
as the section is pulled back towards the curved wall, the functions appear.

The auditorium divides the ground floor and is accessible from the reception area, and the support floor.

The upper floor contains classrooms interrupted by small informal "living rooms". At the northern end is the school administration. A meeting room concludes the upper floor at this end.

At the south end there is a void.

Section C-C, 1:200
the north end of the building. Meeting room on the upper floor, cafeteria below. The volume cantilevers over the industrial floor.

Section D-D, 1:200
The cafeteria supported by a kitchen. In the upper floor are work stations and a printing area. The building is embedded into the edge.

Section E-E, 1:200
Here the school reaches the industrial floor, with the hydraulic elevator connecting all four floors.

Section F-F, 1:200
The school at its widest. The auditorium walls above ground are made of opaloed polycarbonate. The stage is buried into the edge.

Section G-G, 1:200
At the south end the upper floor is hanging over the study area. The elevatorss are visible as they bulge out (west) and break (east).

Plan 1:200, ground floor

Plan 1:200, U1

Plan 1:200, U2

tank location at the southern end of the site

Translucent white smoke from when the factory was active