

STEEL HALL IN HEDDESHEIM



Architect:	Helwig & Helwig Architekten
Location:	Heddesheim, Germany
Prepainted metal:	ThyssenKrupp Steel

There can be few more colourful buildings than the factory building that Helwig & Helwig Architekten has designed in Heddesheim, Germany. Its client is a digital printing company which is known for the strong and durable colours it employs in the prints that it transfers onto items such as T-shirts, so it made sense to reflect this in the design of the building.

Dirk Helwig of Helwig & Helwig felt that the flatness of coloured metal would be particularly appropriate, because 'their products are not dimensional'. Clad in blues, yellows and greens, the building is virtually shrink-wrapped, the only differentiation being in the **glazed entrance** that rises the full three storeys of the building, and has some strong horizontal aluminium elements.



Helwig was keen to avoid the clichéd manner in which the office section of a factory is often differentiated as a separate volume. Here in contrast the offices are marked out only by their horizontal bands of glazing, facing east to the nearby mountains.

The architect had previously designed a strongly coloured industrial building for a manufacturer of artificial turf. In that case, using various tones of green had been an obvious solution. But in Heddesheim, the design is far more chromatically adventurous. At the same time, costs were tight, and the architect had to select panels that were affordable. 'We were very limited by the budget,' said Helwig. 'It was a mix of wanting to make a big impact, and the need to stay within budget.'



There is an economy of scale in the number of panels that one orders, so although Helwig might have liked to be even more adventurous, he limited himself to **14 or 15 colours**. Some of these manufacturer Thyssen Krupp has available as an 'off the shelf' solution, whereas other colours have to be specified and applied individually. Helwig carefully selected a mixture, so that the overall cost was affordable, while some panels were more expensive than others.

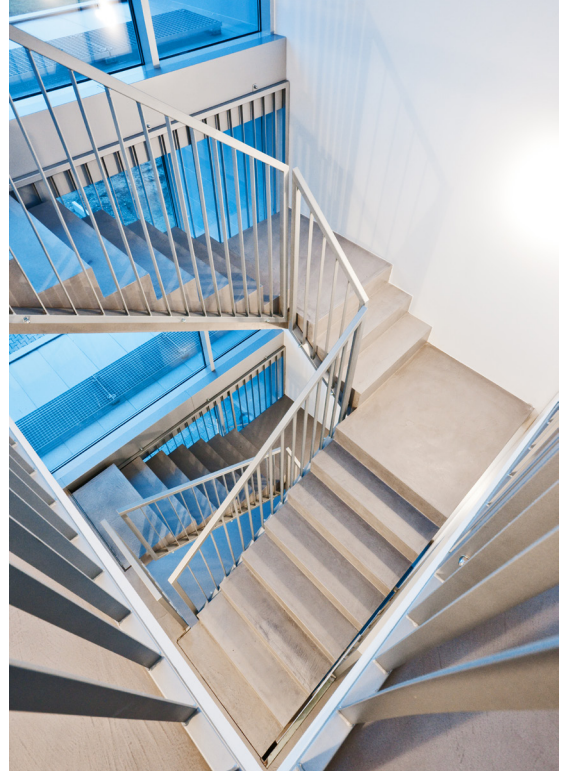
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When choosing his palate, he deliberately avoided red, as this is notorious for being the least stable of colours.

Although the building is only three storeys high, it is in an area of low-rise construction, and has a degree of prominence. One of the most charming elements is that there is an **open courtyard on the roof** above the offices, complete with a timber walkway, which can be used for social events and offers magnificent mountain views.

Architects are notoriously wary of colour, but at Heddesheim Helwig & Helwig has used it as a major tool in its armoury. Where others might have sought to distinguish a building by three-dimensional modelling, in a way that was scarcely appropriate to its use, here the architect has created an identity through colours.

It is a great advertisement for a client whose work is all about bright hues. And since those adorning the building are reminiscent of sunshine, of blue skies and of green grass, they cannot fail to lift the spirit, even on the very dullest of days.



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