



Peter Hübner, Evangelische Gesamtschule Gelsenkirchen

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When the synod of the Westphalian Evangelical Church made the decision to build the school in about 20 years ago, this was accompanied by a large number of hopes and desires that – formulated as a commission – were expressed in the foundation stone document that was walled up when building started in 1997. It runs like this:

»The Evangelical Church of Westphalia, by establishing the comprehensive school in a district with particular need for renewal would like to set a sign of hope and help to prepare young people to deal with the urgent problems of our day. For this reason the school's educational work will focus on the following three points:

1. The school should be a meeting-place, making it possible for young people coming from various nations and practising different religions to live together peacefully.

2. The school is to be an ecological place of learning, and enable young people to look after the creation that has been entrusted to mankind.

3. The school should open up to the district in which it is sited, and become a cultural centre.«

The architects conceived the school as a little town, with the key aims of achieving diversity, sophistication and responsibility taken on by the users themselves. Hence the individual sections were all planned independently by colleagues of Peter Hübner and his plus+ bauplanung practice, with active participation by all the pupils involved.

As the building was for a new foundation, it was possible to involve a whole year consisting of 130 pupils in planning and designing their own teaching area throughout the six-year building phase. Each year has a housing group, and each of the five classes has its own house inside it. Each house has its own entrance, its own cloakroom with toilets attached, a large gallery, a terrace and a garden.

The book shows the entire process from developing the educational programme via the competition, planning and realization including the participation processes to the everyday running of the school. It is a must for anyone interested in new educational concepts.

Peter Hübner is professor in the University of Stuttgart architecture faculty and has been running an architecture practice in Neckartenzlingen near Stuttgart for 30 years; this has so far realized 18 schools, as well as other buildings.

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