

## Boarding Completed

### Shoppingcenter Loop 5 in Weiterstadt

Who has never been captivated by the idea of flight? True, flying is no longer the exclusive mode of travel it once was but no-one is left untouched by the exciting atmosphere of an airport with its fascinating combination of the big wide world and wonderful technology. HPP Architects have taken this emotion and used it in the architectural expression of their latest project - Loop 5, one of Germany's first themed shopping centers. A unique shopping experience based on the theme of "Air Travel", with over 100 000 m<sup>2</sup> GFA , next to the Weiterstadt exit of the A 5 motorway between Frankfurt and Darmstadt.

### Recognizability, Accessibility and Uniqueness

Recognizability, Accessibility and Uniqueness were the key themes of the brief with which Sonae Sierra, the Portuguese specialist shopping center developer approached HPP at the beginning of May 2006. And it was not only the location of the project that was unusual – on the motorway in an anonymous industrial estate, but also the brief: to develop a shopping center destination that would attract visitors from beyond the region.

The site in Weiterstadt was one of the last locations in Germany that would permit the construction of an edge of town retail park offering town center related goods. The problem of setting down a "big box" in the middle of a Greenfield site was immediately obvious; however, this sensitive architectural challenge presented us with the possibility of designing a unique, themed shopping experience.

### HPP have been designing Shopping Centers for more than 20 years

The architects at HPP started designing shopping centers in the 1980's. This was the point at which the planning failures in German town centers and of inner city retail first criticised. What resulted was a much stronger integration of shopping within the urban structure. The "Olivandenhof" (1988) in Cologne stands as an example of the successful integration of a concentration of retail units within a city center and at the same time



Parking Garage, View A 5



Entrance Gutenbergstraße



Skylight Entrance Mall

marked the beginning of HPP's work in designing shopping centers such as the "Promenaden" in Leipzig's Central Railway Station (1997) that formed part of the revitalization scheme for the station, the "Petersbogen" in Leipzig or the "Arcaden" in Cologne (2005) or the two "Ring Centers" in Berlin (1997). HPP are currently designing the "Rathausgalerie" in Leverkusen (2010) and the "Hofgarten Palais" in Solingen (2011), both of which are retail developments that will be slotted into the heart of the town centers.

## Themed Shopping Experience

The themed shopping experience is still in its infancy in Germany, where the functionalistic shopping center layout prevails. It is hoped that the architecture of Loop 5 will give this genre the impetus it needs and also that it will function as a unique landmark for the Rhine-Main Region. In Weiterstadt, this will be a themed environment; the theme being "Aviation", the idea for which arose out of the shopping center's proximity to Frankfurt Airport and the "ESOC" – the European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt. The name "Loop 5" says it all – architecturally, creatively and instrumentally and at the same time carries the message of the design and its content, it sets the scene for a unique emotional experience and thereby awakens expectations and makes promises that the shopping center fulfills with its every detail.



Sidemall: „Pioneering Flight“ Area

## Reconizability

The 320 by 150 meter complex consists of a shopping center with two full stories, one underground level and a roof story that is stepped back 8 meter as well as a nine-story car park with parking for 3 000 cars. The car park is set in front of the shopping center and sits immediately adjacent to the motorway. Both buildings are connected by bridges and at underground level by a supply road; the rounded corners of both buildings and the vertically-textured running façade unite the two structures into one architectural element.

The exterior image of the shopping center grew out of the concepts of "speed" and "jewellery box". The rhythmically offset, sand-colored façade panels allow a view of the permanently-changing, recessed colored surface of the building shell. By means of the vertically arranged panels of



Exterior image inspired by the concepts of „speed“ and „jewellery box“2/5

differing widths, the dynamic façade suggests speed; the brightly-colored joints suggest the precious stones in a jewellery box. These design elements reach their beautiful conclusion in the perforated metal of the crown that sits atop the building and provides the stage, both day and night, for a sparkling show of light and shadow.

## Accessibility

Most visitors to the shopping center will come by car on the A5 motorway and via Robert-Koch-Strasse and Friedrich-Schäfer-Strasse. The center is accessed to the north of the site; customers and employees can access level 02 of the nine-story car park. Three of the nine levels have a direct link to the shopping center, either via bridges or the supply road, on the remaining six levels visitors enter the center via the six groups of lifts that bring them out directly at the shopping level they require. Pedestrians enter the center through the generously proportioned main entrance with its projecting canopy on Gutenbergstrasse. Loop 5 is constructed in the form of a ring mall – apart from the lower ground floor that is T-shaped, and houses not only the supermarket and electronics store but also the technical services and the delivery area. Three sets of escalators connect the lower ground floor with the shopping floors above that draw the shopper through the entire center by dint of their single entrance/exit. Within this arrangement, the shopping centre provides 175 retail units ranging in size from 25 square meters to 3,420 square meters, 1,430 square meters of food court with 25 restaurants and 1,200 square meters space for unusual leisure facilities. The food court is positioned in the middle of the first floor above the entrance atrium. Visitors can also access the set-back stacked story via the escalators from here. All levels are also connected by lifts arranged within the internal core.

## Uniqueness

The location of the shopping center defines its layout; it sits in an industrial estate with no urban relationship. Visitors can wander around the center's loops, experiencing the exciting spatial impressions in the four variously designed malls. The interior architecture of the mall is shaped by aviation: from its very beginnings through to the golden age of flying and the jet age. The world of airlines and airports that symbolize



Glass-clad rear-lit escalators



Jet engine motif in the center of the boulevard

mobility of the 21<sup>st</sup> century breathes “skyflair”. Propellers, wings, rudders and rotors along with the graphics in the wall coverings and the flooring set the stage for a unique emotionally stimulating experience.

The six meter story height lends the 3-story atria cathedral-like dimensions; this generosity of space positively affects the attractiveness of the retail areas. The skylight, the side malls and the boulevard work together, through their impressive volume and the various interpretations of the aviation theme to shape the guiding themes of Loop 5. “Jet Set”, “Contemporary Aviation”, “Pioneering Flight” and “Golden Era” are the subthemes that are communicated through the four different adventure areas. They are differentiated by means of coordinating color and materials; Loop 5’s theme colors of aubergine, red, yellow and blue that already feature on the façade are carried through into the interior and underscored by the lighting and graphics concepts. LED lighting in the ground floor ceiling of the Skylight, evoking gangways, glass-clad rear-lit escalators, illuminated portholes in the mall - all these design elements work together with the wall and floor graphics to emphasize the detailed interior design concept. A MIG-Jet, painted light-blue and suspended from the wavy- sculpted Skylight ceiling to provide a particular highlight and serves not only to underscore the Jet-Set atmosphere of the food courts on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor but also turns the Skylight itself into a real eye-catcher.

Each detail of Loop 5 evokes a new experience and transmits the emotions that are connected with the thrill of flying. Loop 5 follows the trend of turning shopping into an emotional experience and as one of Germany’s first to be themed, belongs to the next generation of shopping centers. Since it opened at the beginning of October 2009, Loop 5 has already become one of the biggest attractions in the Rhine-Main Region.



Cathedral-like dimensions of the boulevard



MIG-Jet as eye-catcher



Entrance Gutenbergstraße by night

**Project Data**

Project: Loop 5 Shoppingcenter Weiterstadt

Architects: HPP International Planungsgesellschaft mbH

Project Partner: Werner Sübai

Project Management: Johannes Holthausen, Meike Behmann

Project Team: Stephan Heimann, Karoline Ludwig, Yvonne Migura,  
Nadja Moche, Kirsten Neumann, Nathalie Rehm, Claudia  
Roggenkämper, Robianto Sugiri, May Lin Tan, Stefan Winkelmeyr

Client: Loop 5 Shopping Center GmbH

Project Architect: José Quiñtela (Sonae Sierra)

Developer: Sonae Sierra, Portugal

Location: Weiterstadt

Planning and Construction Period: 05/2006 until 10/2009

Opening: 9th of October 2009

GFA Center: 96.000 m<sup>2</sup>

GFA Parking Garage: 86.940 m<sup>2</sup>

Rental Units: 175

Number of Restaurants: 25

Work Stations: 1.000

Parking Lots: 3.049

Structure: Concrete Framework

Construction Grid: 8/10 respectively 10/16

Façade: Fiber Cement/ Aluminium

Number of Elevators: 21

Number of Escalators: 14

Environment Protection: Sonae Sierra Environmental Certification due to  
ISO 14001

Level aboveground: 2 plus set back upper floor

Level underground: 1

Height Between Floors: 6.00 m

Construction Costs: 265 Million Euro