



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Digital DNA incorporated in architecture

Metal mesh at the new Samsung headquarters in Silicon Valley

The company premises of the global giants play a decisive role in the fight to draw the best employees and to underline their image as the ultimate innovation hotbed. As a result, Silicon Valley – birthplace of the most important technical innovations and a magnet for the world's cleverest minds – is increasingly becoming an architectural hotspot. In the San Francisco Bay Area, huge corporations such as Google, Apple, Facebook and co. trump one another with spectacular concepts for their new headquarters in order to underline their claim to be the most attractive employer and the most successful visionary. Samsung's corporate campus in San José is no exception: over more than 100,000 square meters, the NBBJ architectural firm designed superlative headquarters for Apple's South Korean rival. Alongside a ten-story main building the campus includes a star-shaped cafeteria and a nine-story parking deck. For the cladding of its 152 meter-long and roughly 27 meter-high façade, the architects chose Omega 1520 metal mesh from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG, which GKD printed with a design specified by Samsung.

Innovations that change the world are the focus of entrepreneurial activity in California's Silicon Valley – probably more so than anywhere else on the planet. The companies based here live off their groundbreaking ideas and their hipness, with which they attract the most creative and innovative people, who in turn produce these ideas in great numbers. To accommodate them scores of charismatic new buildings are springing up, where the aim is



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to reflect the perfect balance between *community*, *performance* and *innovation*. Just a few miles from the new Apple headquarters, the new American headquarters of Samsung was also built with the goal of creating workplaces that move people. At the same time the *Samsung Device Solutions America headquarters*, built at a cost of USD 300 million, was to sustainably convey the self-image of the Apple challenger. Alongside the international research and development department, the building was also to provide a base for the marketing, sales and application development departments. The South Korean company chose NBBJ for this project, the most sought-after architectural firm in the high-tech scene and the company behind projects including the new headquarters of Google in Mountain View and Amazon in Seattle.

The objective: visibility and lifestyle

The building owner specified the maximum spontaneity in collaboration between employees through a visual and spatial bond and the opportunity to experience a lifestyle in tune with nature with like-minded people. In doing so they combined the objectives of attracting the country's best employees and driving forward the corporation's success. As a convincing statement of the company's self-image and values, the building was to offer innovative minds an environment that lends their work importance and with which they can identify. This also comprised the sustainable use of natural resources, which is why the new headquarters were built in line with the criteria of LEED Gold. Furthermore, Samsung aimed to almost quadruple its number of employees from 700 to 2,500 with the project, with the dimensions of the ten-story building specified to accommodate this. In light of its sheer size, the challenge for the architects was in creating the desired collaborative environment over some 25,000 square meters, in which each individual's visibility is maximized – regardless of which floor he or she is on.



Green campus with communicative circuits

Their answer was a clearly structured, dynamic building consisting of three square sections arranged on top of each other with two rows of windows. Lush green terraces running around the roof of each of the lower sections separate these two-story building sections from one another. Because of this design, each employee is only one floor away from a relaxing green area. These sections are supported by four blocks set toward the inside with ceiling-high glazing, which give the building a light, floating feel in spite of its size. In a style reminiscent of a portal, they form the main entrance to the inner courtyard, which opens up into an enormous open-air atrium. Here, the rigid angularity of the façade is replaced by a flowing, building-high curve, thus giving the building the form of a donut from a bird's-eye perspective. Thanks to this circular design, the ceiling-high windows in the inner courtyard area provide their own shade, while employees in the glass donut can look up or down and see people two stories away. In a figurative sense, this creates circuits of communication – inspired by semiconductors, which are among Samsung's most successful products – and enables high-speed communication between employees over several building levels, thus bringing about new cooperative synergies. The central atrium is where all paths cross. The peaceful, green inner courtyard is continued in a park along East Tasman Drive. Together with the lushly planted green areas on the open mezzanine floors, this creates the feel of a green campus in which the offices are embedded in a vertical park. After walking through the park landscape, employees and visitors reach a fitness studio boasting state-of-the-art equipment and various gastronomic facilities, which are accommodated in a star-shaped relaxation area on the extensive site. Like the on-campus basketball field, they invite staff to spend time on-site or have a workout and also contribute to team development.



Identity-defining parking deck as a backdrop

Organically linked to the campus is the parking deck, which offers 1,346 parking spaces across almost 54,000 square meters. Its elongated, narrow design leaves maximum space for green areas and relaxation zones. To give the nine-story building a less dominant appearance, the open parking deck is encased by shimmering stainless steel mesh panels measuring up to 27 meters high and three meters wide. The reflection of sunlight and the structure's surroundings transforms the parking deck façade into a lively backdrop for the neighboring park area. The 70 mesh panels form a semitransparent membrane and were mounted using the tried and tested structure made of round rods and eyebolts. These ensure that the parking deck is optimally ventilated and flooded with daylight, while also functioning as a fall guard protection, providing protection from heavy rain and minimizing the draftiness often typical of parking decks. Internal lighting at night gives the Omega 1520 stainless steel mesh a transparent appearance, thereby giving users an additional feeling of safety. An artistic print reminiscent of electric circuits on circuit boards gives the shimmering texture its image-forming quality, impressively merging the corporate identity with the natural surroundings.

6.955 characters incl. spaces

GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG

The owner-run technical weaver GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG is the global market leader for metal and plastic woven solutions as well as transparent media facades. Under the umbrella of GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE the company combines three independent business units: SOLID WEAVE (industrial meshes), WEAVE IN MOTION (process belt meshes) and CREATIVE WEAVE (architectural meshes). With its six plants – including the



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headquarters in Germany and other facilities in the US, South Africa, China, India and Chile – as well as its branches in France, Great Britain, Spain, Dubai, Qatar and worldwide representatives, GKD is never far from its customers.

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Picture 1: The open parking deck is encased by printed stainless steel mesh panels from GKD measuring up to 27 meters high and three meters wide.



Picture 2: The elongated, narrow design of the parking deck leaves maximum space for green areas and relaxation zones.



Picture 3: The semitransparent membrane ensures that the parking deck is optimally ventilated and flooded with daylight, while also functioning as a fall guard protection.



Picture 4: An artistic print reminiscent of electric circuits on circuit boards gives the shimmering texture its image-forming quality.

Picture 1-4 © Rien van Rijthoven

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