



A house with two faces

A house with two faces standing on the flank of the Rhine in Düsseldorf. Along the Rhine side you have a three-storey open architecture with spacious patios and a view of the river; on the street side, the house seems similar to the houses in the area, but with a shiny aluminium façade cladding. From the entrance, sepia brown Linarte provides a contrasting touch with integrated lighting on the integrated garage door. According to Michael Dahmen of DDJ Architekten, strict legislation contributed to the innovative design and appearance of this project.

DDJ Architekten

DDJ Architekten was founded around Professor Wolfgang Döring. He taught at the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule in Aachen, where his future DDJ partners also attended: Michael Dahmen and Elmar Joeressen. They started working as employees for Döring in 1991. In 1996, the three decided to run the office together and subsequently founded Döring Dahmen Joeressen Architekten [DDJ]. Since Wolfgang Döring's retirement in 2018, the other partners continued the business. Today DDJ Architekten is an office with twenty architects. They make designs for all kinds of projects – irrespective of the size or type of building – with the aim of creating “beautiful buildings”.

“The Linarte façade cladding connects the building components”

Contemporary simplicity

“Döring had a good eye for clear, modern architecture and simplicity,” says Michael Dahmen about his business partner who passed away in 2020. “In the beginning, he built many experimental designs, and some of these projects are protected monuments today. We are mainly active in residential construction, but we also design commercial buildings such as offices, doctor's practices and car dealerships for premium brands such as Audi, VW, Porsche, Volvo, Aston Martin and McLaren. We are also familiar with tackling protected monuments.” DDJ Architekten is based in Düsseldorf, but gladly works outside the region. They have already completed projects in Spain, Italy and the Austrian Alps.



House with a view of the Rhine

On a high dike in Düsseldorf there is a fairly small but steep plot that offers a view of the Rhine. It's a great view of course, but the urban planning regulations were quite stringent. "Our client came to DDJ after being recommended by a colleague for whom we had built a house along the Rhine right next to that location. Because we were recommended, our new client came to us with a request to investigate the possibilities offered by the site. This was before he had actually even bought the land. We received positive advice from the city for our initial building application that involved a design with a flat roof and staggered floors, but construction was unfortunately impossible due to a change in building law and legal provisions from an existing zoning plan from the 1960's. The only possibility was to build a house with a gable roof."

Redesign

"Of course we wanted to retain as much of the view of the Rhine as possible. This is why a roof terrace was cut along the entire width of the house on the Rhine side. The roof cantilevers over the full depth of the patio living area below. Below this covered patio on the ground floor is the basement façade, which offers an almost frameless view of the river through sliding windows, just like the other two glass façades. The building size cannot be judged from the street side, and it only becomes apparent when viewed from – and with a view of – the Rhine. What immediately stands out are the closed silver aluminium panel façade elements. "We went all out for a futuristic sculpture with the new design. The silver panels on the façade continue seamlessly on the roof surfaces.

Contrast with Linarte

"To contrast with the silver-coloured, large-scale aluminium wall surfaces, we still had to look for vertically structured aluminium wall cladding. We found a Belgian company that advised me to take a look at Renson. It took some effort to work everything out, but in the end we chose a sepia brown surface with Linarte profiles. The cladding was extended into the recessed entrance zone and connects the building components. The garage door system is perfectly integrated into the vertical slat structure. The linear structure is further highlighted by irregularly arranged bands of light



that continue across the gate. Our electrician consulted intensively with Renson in order to achieve this. It was mainly Linarte's personalisation options that appealed to me; the integration of LED lighting and a garage door in the façade cladding was a feature that especially stood out."

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Differentiating architecture

"I like every house to look a little different," says Dahmen as he explains his architecture. "Uniformity is not something that appeals to me. At the start we always ask the client if they have a preference for certain construction methods or materials. If there are no really clear preferences, we look at what best fits the location. The strict legislation imposed by Düsseldorf also came into play. In the end, I think we managed to deliver a very good, intriguing result within the stipulations. Perhaps the building design would never have been so special without those restrictions. And anyway, both the owner and us at DDJ Architekten are very satisfied with the result. The resident told us he is very proud of his home and – although he values his privacy – he is happy to show it off to the outside world."

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