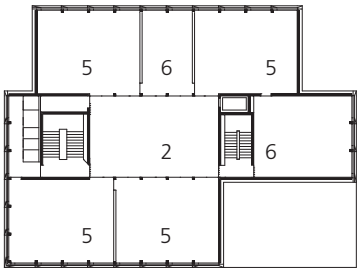
euro inox
The European Stainless Steel Development Association

Vocational College of Upper Valais in Visp, Switzerland

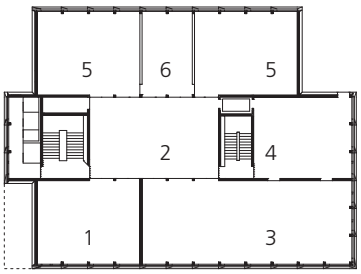
Although conforming to the surrounding development in terms of volume, the new college building is quite different in looks, thanks to the mirror finish of its stainless steel cladding.

The new vocational college with its reflecting façade really stands out from the surrounding houses, schools and commercial buildings. Mirror-polished, angled window reveals in stainless steel (EN 1.4301) and extensive, storey-high glazing highlight the very regular grid of the structural frame. Added sculptural effect comes from the fact that the panel edges next to the windows are bent to raise them slightly from the glass.

Windowless spaces carved out of the compact, four-storey volume give rise to incisions and projections that are further emphasised by a deliberate change in façade material. Each floor has a central concourse with rooms grouped around it. In the upper stories this area can also be used as group workspace. Classrooms are aligned immediately behind the façades. Ceiling-high panes of glass in red, blue, yellow and green partition the individual areas, contrasting with the grey of the concrete, stainless steel and aluminium.



Plan of 2nd upper storey scale 1:750

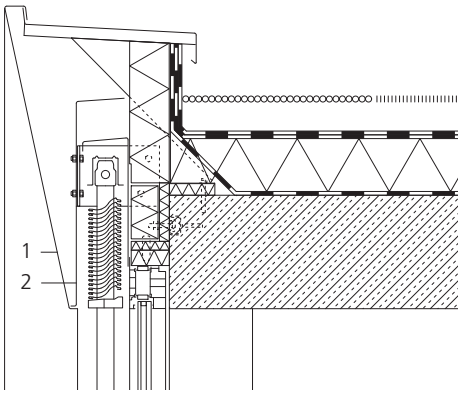


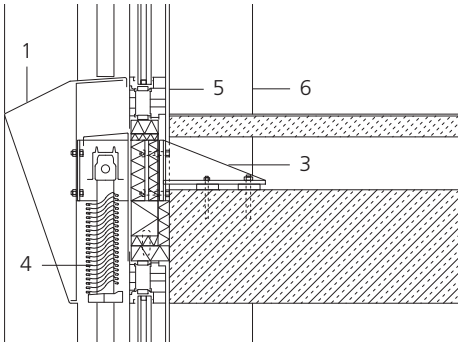
Plan of ground floor scale 1:750

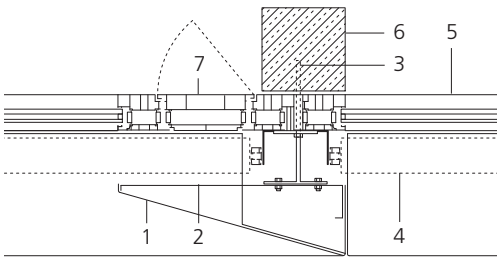
1 Entrance hall
2 Foyer
3 Canteen
4 Kitchen
5 Classroom
6 Prep room

Colour used on furniture and glass partition walls sets a vibrant note in the interior.

Fractal reflections of nearby trees in the mirror-polished stainless steel and glass of the façade.







Vertical and horizontal section of the façade
scale 1:20

1 2 mm stainless steel, EN 1.4301, mirror-finished surface
2 Frame for cladding, 3 mm aluminium sheet
3 Support bracket, 10 mm stainless steel, EN 1.4301
4 Solar shading
5 Window, anodised aluminium frame
6 Prefabricated concrete column
7 Ventilation flap

The new building looks different from every angle – sometimes it reflects the surroundings, at other times it virtually disappears into the clouds.

At each intersection in the cladding eight surfaces converge at different angles of inclination, a factor which made designing and constructing this detail a tricky task. The narrow space between the prefabricated load-bearing components of the reinforced concrete frame and the curtain wall is used to accommodate external louvre blinds to protect against the sun. Contrasting with the reflective, mechanically finished stainless-steel panels, the closed parts of the façade are clad with uncoated large-format aluminium panels. The flat roof is extensively planted.

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