



# BUSINESS PARK STAHLWERK BECKER



Willich Economic Development

Noticeably different

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Location with character.



# THE WILLICH LOCATION



## THE WILLICH LOCATION

Modern, with a great future - and yet steeped in a history in evidence in many corners of the city, an invitation to linger for a while: the young city of Willich presents itself to its visitors. In 1970 in the scope of a municipal reform, the four then independent communities of Willich, Anrath, Schiefbahn and Neersen were merged together to form the newborn city of Willich.

A young, burgeoning city with a complete infrastructure: kindergarten facilities for every child, all types of schools, meeting points for young people, doctors for all areas of speciality, a modern hospital - the entire spectrum.

When it comes to sport and recreation, Willich is way ahead of the game. Whether you want to simply relax in the DE BÜTT sports and outdoor pool centre, ride a skateboard in the half-pipe, kick a ball around the park or play a round at the DUVENHOF GOLF CLUB, in Willich anything goes.

And for culture cultures there is also an excellent offering. Theatre festivals in the Schloß Neersen castle, exhibitions, galleries, concerts, cabaret: when it comes to art and culture there's always room for more. And right outside the Willich city limits begins the typical Lower Rhine countryside, where every season of the year has its own special colour. And of course its own special charm.



→ *Modern, with a great future, and yet steeped in history.  
A young, healthy city with a complete infrastructure.*

# → LOCATION MÜNCHHEIDE/STAHLWERK BECKER



→ A climate that fosters economic growth.  
A successful, international mix of business sectors.

With the MÜNCHHEIDE INDUSTRIAL AREA the city has written a success story paralleled by no other across the country: In 1980 the visionary settlement of industrial enterprises began in the north of Willich - practically in the middle of a field. A project that was mildly ridiculed at first grew into a success story under the careful expansion policy of the municipal property development agency (GRUNDSTÜCKSGESellschaft GSG): The result was by no means a Moloch monstrosity, but rather an aesthetically pleasing park with an intact infrastructure that is now home to over 300 firms with around 6,000 employees.

A successful, international mix of business sectors, from the trades to high-tech, from global players to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). And especially companies from the Far East feel at home in MÜNCHHEIDE: To date over 30 firms from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong have subsidiaries in Willich.

A success story that is certainly not a coincidence: the concept of one-stop service was realised in Willich early on. Full service convenience: not only does Willich Economic Development work hand-in-hand with building inspectors from the sale of the lot to issuing the building permit, the administration

The *Technisches Rathaus* in Neersen, headquarters of Willich Economic Development



delivers solutions from one and the same mould. The municipal property development agency (GSG) and the town planners ensure one level for an atmosphere that promotes business for all. Which begins with new subsidiaries but doesn't stop there: inventory management isn't just a buzz word, but rather the order of the day. And at the end of the day it's the facts and figures that deliver the proof: For decades now the city has offered a reliable, stable financial structure with attractive fees and taxation, with a corporate tax rate lower than any in the region and many in the whole country. Another factor that promotes the growth of the economy.

And this success story goes on: next chapter, STAHLWERK BECKER. On the grounds of the old steel mills, an extremely attractive business park with an advantageous industrial environment is being built for high-quality enterprises offering good jobs. Trade and services, manufacturing, recreation and sports, culture and historical buildings and even a business start-up centre are grouped together in a unique combination around a row of decorative drainage basins about 800 metres long - and all this with the best connections: for example only 10 minutes by motorway to the Düsseldorf airport.

At the same time the city itself is growing in leaps and bounds: At the beginning of 2000 the 50,000 population mark was surpassed. And in the new residential area of Wekeln, built in 1994 on a green meadow, now stand the homes of more than 4,000 people. By 2010 these residents will number around 6,000. And although the city is growing, the low unemployment rate remains constant: The current rate is less than 7 percent.



Münchheide I-III, the Münchheide IV development area and the Stahlwerk Becker business park: Even by European standards a development and industrial area with significant dimensions



Employees of **Cartomat**, specialised printing firm



European headquarters of **UMAX**, high-tech IT company



**Pooch Klimatechnik**, manufacturer of air conditioning technologies



Factory hall of **Corodur**, manufacturer of high-quality welding consumables



# LOCATION STAHLWERK BECKER



Stahlwerk Becker business park - free spaces marked in highlighted graphics

## Willich - an industrial location with 17 nations

Aiptek	LG Electronics	Rohm Electronics
Alimex	Nedis	Seiko
Behringer	Noritsu	Sumitomo
Canon	Pioneer	Topcon
De Beers	Portakabin	Umax
Fujinon	Radiometer	Wheelabrator
Hitachi	RMP Rheinmetall	Yonex

## Radius / Population

50 km	6,000,000 residents
100 km	16,000,000 residents
200 km	25,000,000 residents
500 km	80,000,000 residents

## An industrial location with the best connections



Düsseldorf airport	10 min
Messe Düsseldorf	8 min
Anrath railway station	5 min



## HISTORY

In June 1908 Reinhold Becker, director of the Krefeld utilities company, made a proposal to the Willich town council to build a steel mill. The town council recognised Becker's offer as a chance for rapid economic



Stahlwerk Becker Business Park ca 1924

advancement for Willich and sold him a large piece of property west of the freight depot for 3,000 reichsmarks per acre. The production area was to amount to a total of 80,000 square metres.

By November of that year STAHLWERK BECKER AG, headquartered in Willich, was already listed in the commercial register. Due to the high quality of the steel they produced the mills were soon widely renowned. The firm expanded considerably, aided in part by the enormous profits during World War I.

Naturally the end of the war and the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles worsened the economic situation drastically, exacerbated by the death of the company founder in 1924. In 1928 the heirs of the steel mill were forced to sell out to a consortium of the Ruhr steel community.

Soon after this, the consortium stopped the steel production - for economic reasons, as the official report read. Others were of the opinion that the steel giants in the consortium were purposely eliminating competitor Becker.

The workers of the mills, together with the local authorities of Willich, protested against the closing of the plant and made efforts to keep operations going on their own. Of course without success: On 5 April 1932 the Willich mills were completely shut down.

In 1934 the Ruhrstahl consortium leased the mills to Deutsche Edelstahlwerke, who produced steel there for the duration of the wartime economy and until the occupation of the American soldiers began in 1945.

After World War II the machinery was dismantled and the local authorities established 18 smaller mills. However, in 1948 these mills were shut down by the new military government, in order to use the land for a pioneer regiment of the British Army of the Rhine.



# 1908

STAHLWERK BECKER AG



Workers in **Stahlwerk Becker** ca 1924

→ 1997 saw the creation of the necessary prerequisites for a new, future-oriented utilisation of the old **Stahlwerk Becker** grounds.



Drop forge ca 1924

### ROYAL ENGINEERS

Naturally the shut-down of the steel mills meant an enormous economic setback for the community of Willich: For almost forty years the mills had been their guarantee for a modest level of prosperity. At the same time the ROYAL ENGINEERS did much to contribute to international relations: Far from sequestering themselves in their barracks, the Britons soon became an integral part of public life in the community of Willich, providing all kinds of logistics and humanitarian support. For example orphan care in Haus Broich, the building of playground equipment and efficient snow removal in winter.

In 1973 the citizens of Willich thanked the Britons for their commitment by granting them the honorary FREEDOM OF THE CITY of Willich.

In 1992, the last of the CORPS OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS withdrew, a unit that at times had been 2,000 strong. Afterwards, the grounds were almost completely deserted; only a few individual halls were being used for commercial purposes. As the city of Willich possessed very few commercially zoned reserves, the decision was made to integrate the grounds of the former steel mills into urban development planning,

so that the land could be used by businesses. So a land development firm in Aachen was given the job of carrying out a feasibility study, which was then presented in July of 1996.

The sale of the property by the federal property administration in 1997 created the prerequisites for a new, forward-looking utilisation of the old STAHLWERK BECKER.

As project developer, owner and marketer of the land, the municipal property development agency (GSG), based on the development plan in force since April 2000, had old structures torn down and the land developed. Now the sale of the remaining buildings and empty lots could begin. At present, 50 percent of the empty lots and 70 percent of the lots with existing buildings have been sold, and the last buildings are scheduled to be built in 2008 and 2009.



Steel testing laboratory ca 1924

# FREEDOM OF THE CITY.



View of Hall 4 from the entrance of the business park



Business start-up centre



## PLANNING

The grounds of the STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK are situated - right beside a nature reserve - on the western perimeter of the city of Willich.

As testimony of the era of steel production that began in 1908 and which still characterises the location and its architectural profile, a number of administration office buildings and production halls are still standing, as well as the old waterworks and a land-marking water tower. All listed as historical buildings, these relics of the industrial past tell their tales to this day, in some cases from a considerable distance.

With its close proximity to the city, on the one hand the business park has played a significant role in the urban development of Willich, while presenting an opportunity for historical preservation at the same time. On the other hand, its integration into the surrounding districts of urban development on one side and nature reservoir on the other, has presented complications.

A feasibility study was carried out, which would form the basis for developing the STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK. The next step was to draw up an overall planning concept, which set down the fundamental structure for the later development plan. Under consideration of various special aspects - the transport links of the planning area, treatment of protected buildings, the integration of special building zones, management of historical relics, etc. - the development plan went into effect in April 2000.

The plans support and make good use of the specific character of the location: The historical building structures are highlighted to give the location its distinctive flair.

The aim: no run-of-the-mill cluster of industrial enterprises, but rather a location with unique character.



View along the decorative water basins

→ *The Stahlwerk Becker business park is a unique location with special flair.*



# PLANNING



→ *Economical, architectural, historical and ecological aspects are combined to make a unified whole.*

The existing, roughly rectangular shape of the overall grounds was maintained by the planners as the basic structure. The plans not only kept the original principal lines running through the park, but even markedly refined them to create a distinct identity. The central 800-meter long row of water basins forms a decorative axis and makes it obvious that the location is differentiated and characterised by the high quality of its public infrastructure. At both ends of the water pools are special added highlights: The north end is marked by an imposing 5-storey building, the so-called *Lamellenhaus* (house covered with slats). At the south end, the water in the drainage basins flows into a small pond in the open countryside and then seeps into a natural catchment area. At this point there is a clear fusion with the adjoining conservation area, almost as if the natural landscape were being drawn into the business park. Two 4-storey buildings, placed on the right and left of the south end of the drainage basins, are to form a counterpoint to the *Lamellenhaus* at the northern tip.

The design quality of the location in terms of urban development is on the one hand characterised by the excellent infrastructure, and on the other by the design concepts of the buildings themselves. A first

impression can be gained from the buildings that are already completed. The protected buildings are further profiled through respectful distance to the newer structures around them.

In order to optimise the transport links of the business park and achieve fast connections to the 44 motorway, but without putting the extra strain of heavy freight transport on the area, the existing network of roads around of the town was built up and expanded. This means that the Münchheide exit for the 44 motorway is now only 5 minutes away.

The entire park is landscaped with trees and gardens. At the entrance and along the decorative drainage basins, long double and quadruple rows of trees are planted. A broad strip of green beckons visitors into the grounds; the above-mentioned basins are not only pretty to look at, but also act as a reservoir for rainwater from the adjoining driveways and nearby roofs. The water ultimately seeps into the ground in the catchment area around the pond in the south. The southern and western perimeters of the nature reserve are marked by a wide strip of gardens, with public footpaths and bike paths. Combined with the paths along the water and the connection to the local

footpath network, this is altogether an inviting place for taking a stroll – not only for the people working in the business park, but for all residents of Willich.

An additional benefit is the highly diversified utilisation possibilities of the park: Besides manufacturing and services, the location also offers a cultural and gastronomic programme, thus attracting an even wider scope of the public to the area with activities outside of standard working hours.

Thanks to the integrated overall plan it is possible to combine economic, architectural, historical and ecological aspects to a unified whole. Here new standards have been set, which will have a positive influence not only on the future urban development of the city, but in particular on the future development of the industrial location. The innovative character of this industrial location was impressively substantiated by the generous support of the municipal government within the framework of the Regionale 2002.



Drainage basins with the *Lamellenhaus*



Mouth of the drainage system



Cartomat, specialised printing firm





The restored administration building



Truck and old-timer museum in Hall 31

### DEVELOPMENT

To date, the municipal property development agency (GSG) of the city of Willich has sold a number of different properties with buildings as well as empty lots in the grounds of the STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK.

### MONUMENTS

These include, for example, Hall 22, a former power house, currently being used by an investor as a sport, fitness and wellness centre. Across from this historical building stands Hall 31. The owner of this building runs a truck, tractor and old-timer museum in it, with a restoration workshop and technical book publishing house adjoined. In the approx. 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> Hall 28 is a company specialising in printing on high-tech materials.

Another protected building is occupied by the municipal property development agency (GSG) with their business start-up centre: Here young, up-and-coming companies can apply for financial aid for a limited amount of time. In the same building are also the offices of the security firm that protects the STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK.

A group of buildings in the old entrance area of STAHLWERK BECKER has been sold to a corporate group. In addition to three other buildings from the days of the steel mills (1908 - 1918) the old administration building also stands here, a structure of great significance to the STAHLWERK BECKER location in terms of both urban development and architecture. This building best illustrates the typical character and typology of the historical area.

After thorough but careful restoration work, around 150 new jobs were created here.

The waterworks - still in operation until well into the sixties - play a very important role as a communication centre and meeting point in terms of the atmosphere of STAHLWERK BECKER: The utilisation of this building as an event and gastronomy venue ensures these services for the business park and the surrounding economic areas of MÜNCHHEIDE I - III, while also offering rooms for events, company functions, and activities from the worlds of film, theatre, art and music.



State-of-the-art fitness and wellness. Hall 22.



→ *The Stahlwerk Becker business park is a unique location with special character.*

### PROPERTY

Empty lots of from 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> have also been sold to companies from a range of sectors, who are erecting their own buildings. These are enterprises from the areas of manufacturing, trade and services. For example, a firm that specialises in the production of high-quality welding consumables or one that develops, plans and builds mobile block heat and

zoning is becoming increasingly significant, in part due to the direct connection of the business park to a 90-hectare sub-development, in which all manner of housing and other property wishes can be fulfilled.

### RENTAL PROPERTIES

The municipal property development agency (GSG)



power units for the utilisation of regenerative energies, or companies dealing in high-tech products all over the world - from their Willich location. Properties have also been sold to Taiwanese companies, which have established their European headquarters in Stahlwerk Becker. Add to that firms that present textiles as well as bath and sanitary articles in attractive exhibition rooms. From the range of service-providers are companies specialising in medical technology and the advertising industry, to name but a few. In keeping with the specifications of the development plan, a discounter and a beverages market have moved in to the so-called special building zone.

In addition to all these types of uses for commercial purposes, the location also offers so-called mixed commercial areas, a mixture of residential and commercial zoning. The aspect of strictly residential

has sold a number of different properties and buildings to investors who, in turn, lease out this commercial space to other companies. This covers the needs of companies with a strategic orientation that exclusively reflects the rental business, as well as the requirements of SME's not interested in owning the relatively small spaces they need.

For example, two large spaces totalling 9,300 m<sup>2</sup> were provided for a very up-market industrial centre situated right beside the water pools: space for offices, storage and service.

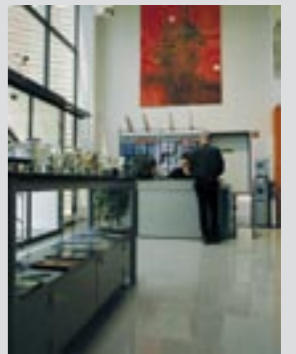
At the head of the drainage basins the so-called *Lamellenhaus* was built exclusively for office space: the good exposure of this spot and the extraordinary architecture of the building characterise the look and style of this part of the park.

The supplementary rental property offer is of interest



to a wide spectrum of enterprises, and the diversity of commercial space both for sale and for lease make it possible to realise the concept of establishing a colony of representatives of the widest possible scope of business sectors.

The 44 W development plan is now in place, property marketing is in full swing, and the requirements of all



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applicants are served to the greatest extent possible - to achieve ideal integration into the conceptual plan of the STAHLWERK BECKER project for everyone.

### SUMMARY:

The STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK offers an advantageous industrial environment for high-quality firms offering employment in the areas of services, manufacturing and the trades.

The park provides spaces for classic industrial subsidiaries and for service offerings from the areas of sport, recreation and culture.

And all this in an atmosphere of excellence and comfort: the STAHLWERK BECKER BUSINESS PARK is a unique location with special character.