

Winds of change – turning a parking garage into a biking garage

Re-use of a carparking garage at the main station of Karlsruhe, Germany, into a garage for biking commuters

The Area south of the main station of Karlsruhe has been abandoned for many years now. In the early nineties, Rem Koolhaas had the commission for his first mayor building, the to-be-internationally-renowned ZKM, a museum for digital art and media. But, after years of discussing and arguing, the city of Karlsruhe pulled back from the project and opened the ZKM at another spot - without Rem. For the past 25 years, the area was reserved for cars and busses, adding the needed infrastructure for individuals coming to the main station.

In spring 2017, things started to change. An investor developed plans for the empty plot, and not soon after, the parking spots had to move due to the construction works. The city of Karlsruhe decided that this will be a one-time-chance to set a signal towards its community: Karlsruhe would quitting its outdated, car-friendly infrastructure, pushing the share of biking towards the mark of 30% of the total traffic in the city. While the biggest parking yard is being removed, the City of Karlsruhe did not concentrate on new space for cars. Instead it invested in the most modern garage, for bikes only.

TAFKAL was commissioned for this time-sensible project - and nine months after the initial briefing, the garage was opened by the mayor of Karlsruhe. Today, the bright and colorful garage fits up to 670 bikes - not only citybikes and cruisers, but also cargobikes, bikes with trailers and e-bikes. A reserved room for commuting bikers offers a modern locker-room with space to get changed and fresh water. A minimal workshop open to all bikers, offers professional tools to maintain the bikes.

The interior of the garage changed from a dusted grey to a friendly and colorful atmosphere. The graphics, inspired by the metro maps of Karlsruhe, guide the biker from the entrance to the chosen place for locking the bike. The 1.300 m² big garage is divided into five zones, each marked by a different color on the floor, the stand and the custom-made lighting, which also has been designed by TAFKAL.

Project Credits:

Project: Fahrradstation Karlsruhe Süd

Client: Karlsruher Fächer GmbH

Architect: TAFKAL GmbH

Team: Tobias Götttert, Andreea Damian, Veronica Lill, Jon Steinfeld

Lighting: Sara Karim, TAFKAL GmbH

Area: 1.300 sqm

Costs: 710.000 €

Design: 08/2017-10/2017

Construction: 11/2017-04/2018