



CITY PLAZA

WUPPERTAL, GERMANY

Completed 2019

Signature | Capital

 CHAPMAN TAYLOR

INTRODUCTION

A five-storey flagship store for Primark, City Plaza is the centrepiece of a large urban redevelopment project which links Wuppertal's railway station to the town centre. City Plaza marks the rail gateway to Wuppertal's city centre, forming part of an assembly of impressive historical buildings which define the remodelled square in front of the railway station.

City Plaza's curved façade is clad with brass panels which alternate with the glass of the curtain wall, lifting the area's look and feel alongside major improvements to the surrounding public realm.

Chapman Taylor's Düsseldorf studio, together with the investor, Signature Capital, won a prestigious German Polis Award for City Plaza in the regenerated town centres category in 2016.

Sectors: Retail

Services: Architecture, Interiors

Client: Signature Capital

Area: 9,600m² GBA

Status: Completed in 2014

Start of construction: 2014

Opening ceremony: 16 April 2019



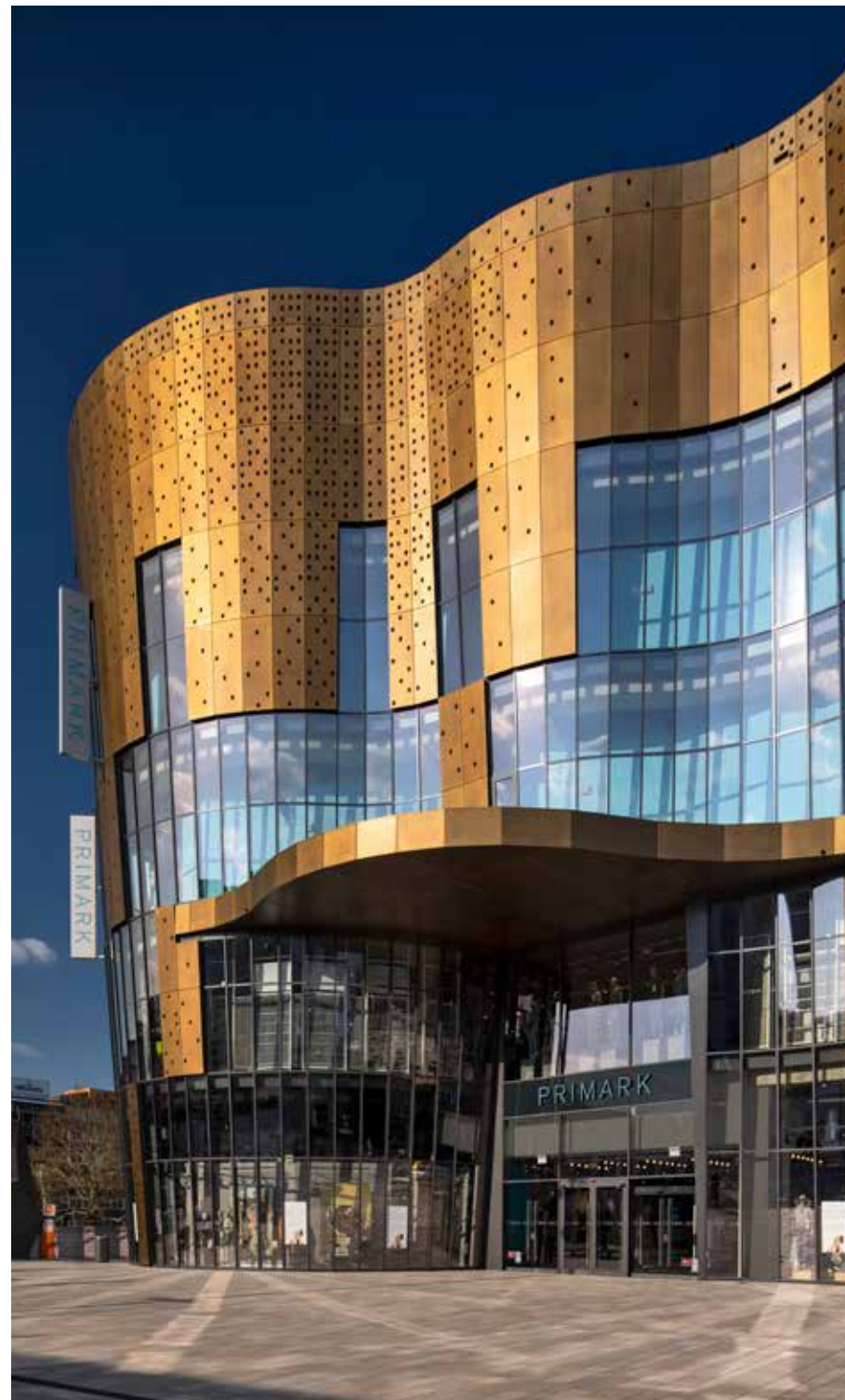
BRIEF AND CLIENT'S REQUIREMENTS

City Plaza is the striking centrepiece of a large urban redevelopment project in the city centre of Wuppertal, in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The five-storey solitaire building sits on a 2,000m² plot and provides four levels of retail space for Primark, an office space at level 5 and a basement garage.

In 2014, the German city of Wuppertal launched its largest post-war urban renewal project – the redevelopment of the city's run down railway station district. The busy urban hub is used by tens of thousands of rail and bus passengers every day. Chapman Taylor, together with investor Signature Capital, was chosen to design the area's regeneration. Chapman Taylor had been working with Signature Capital elsewhere, and they asked if we would be interested in developing an existing urban design scheme created by another company for them to enter.

We wanted to present Wuppertal as a vibrant blend of the old and the new – with a contemporary design for a striking centrepiece building which would help to achieve that in a way which would complement the wider urban context of impressive historical buildings.

The original brief was for it to house multiple retail tenants and a hotel across its five above-ground floors. It was subsequently leased by Primark to house a flagship store. The building is of such a high quality that it serves as a statement of intent, enabling Primark to raise its profile in Germany and reposition itself in the market.



DESIGN EVOLUTION

Our transformation of the entire area reduced the size of the square in front of the railway station and created a much more human scale – for example by proposing the relocation of the main building to bring it into closer focus. Rather than a simple pedestrian bridge from the square to the station, we suggested a wider bridge with retail/F&B pavilions on either side. Previously, the railway station was cut off from the town centre by a busy dual carriageway and pedestrians had to walk through an unwelcoming underpass – the new pavilion bridge transforms the pedestrian experience and seamlessly links the station with the city centre.

Our concept for the City Plaza building itself drew upon the city's 18th and 19th century textiles boom, drawing inspiration from the yarns, fabrics and lace that were created and traded, as well as the colouring of these materials.

The building's curved façade is clad with brass panels alternating with glass to create a striking 'curtain wall', playfully referencing fabric folds with materiality and colours which lift the entire area's look and feel. The design lifts the area's look and feel alongside the major improvements to the surrounding public realm.

The result is a unique façade which will slightly alter over time, reflecting the fluidity of a curved fabric. A large canopy shelters the main entrance area, designed in keeping with the building's geometry, and the material for which corresponds to the façade cladding.

The curved and slanting façade of the building was a challenge – if it wasn't for our BIM capabilities, it might not have been possible. We had to design each individual panel with care because there couldn't be a uniform size and shape, and each panel has a unique perforation to create a pattern. Therefore, each panel was numbered and allocated to its own position on the façade. This was a very complex process. We designed the whole building in BIM, and the other contractors were able to make use of our model – simplifying the process, preventing clashes and saving a lot of time on the development.

A major construction challenge was that the site is on top of rock, which had to be dynamited away to allow for an underground level of car parking, service access and other facilities. This was a time-consuming and tricky process, and was also expensive.



FINAL DESIGN

The design remained remarkably consistent from early concept stages through to completion on site. The design was selected early on because of its ‘Wow!’ factor.

The City of Wuppertal competition process required interested investors to put in a financial offer for the site, supported by an architectural proposal. Based on the financial strength and experience of the investor, Signature Capital, and the architectural quality of the proposal, the city then selected us as the winning team.

Therefore, any fundamental changes to the design would have had to have been approved by the jury and would have jeopardised the success of the bid.

The public now sees the great improvement that the scheme has brought about. They are now able to walk between the railway station and the city in a seamless and much more pleasant way, and they can also see the way in which the square’s proportions have become much more human in scale.

More than that, however, the design for the building lifts the entire area. It creates new possibilities – people now dwell and watch the world go by over a coffee or wander around exploring in a space which was previously grubby, seedy and functional. It’s now a positive experience just to stand there and look around, and to appreciate the new sense of place that the design has created.

City Plaza has become a catalyst for further developments in Wuppertal since its conception, and is now a key reference for discussions about how to regenerate urban centres during a period of uncertainty about the future of physical retail.



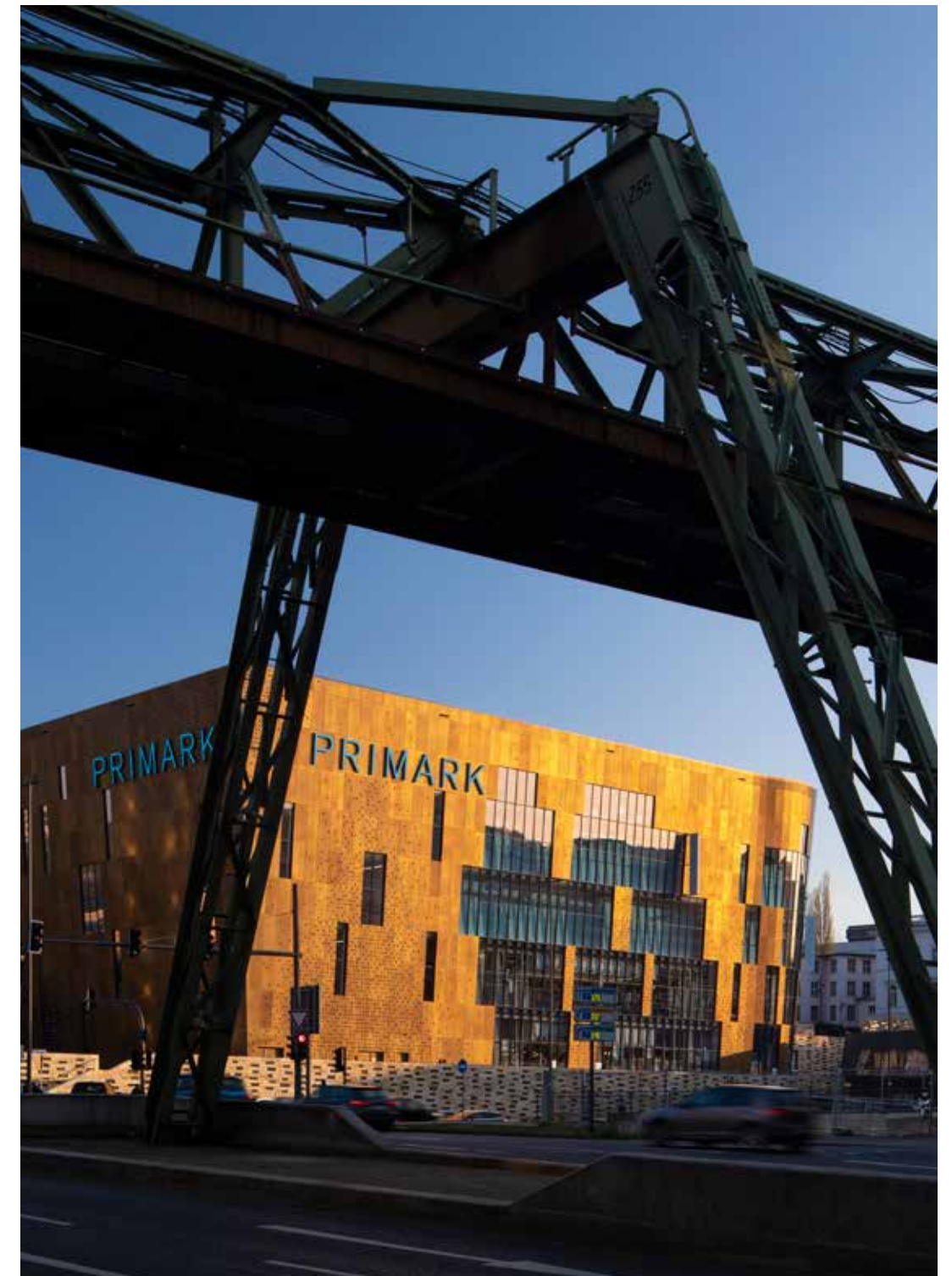
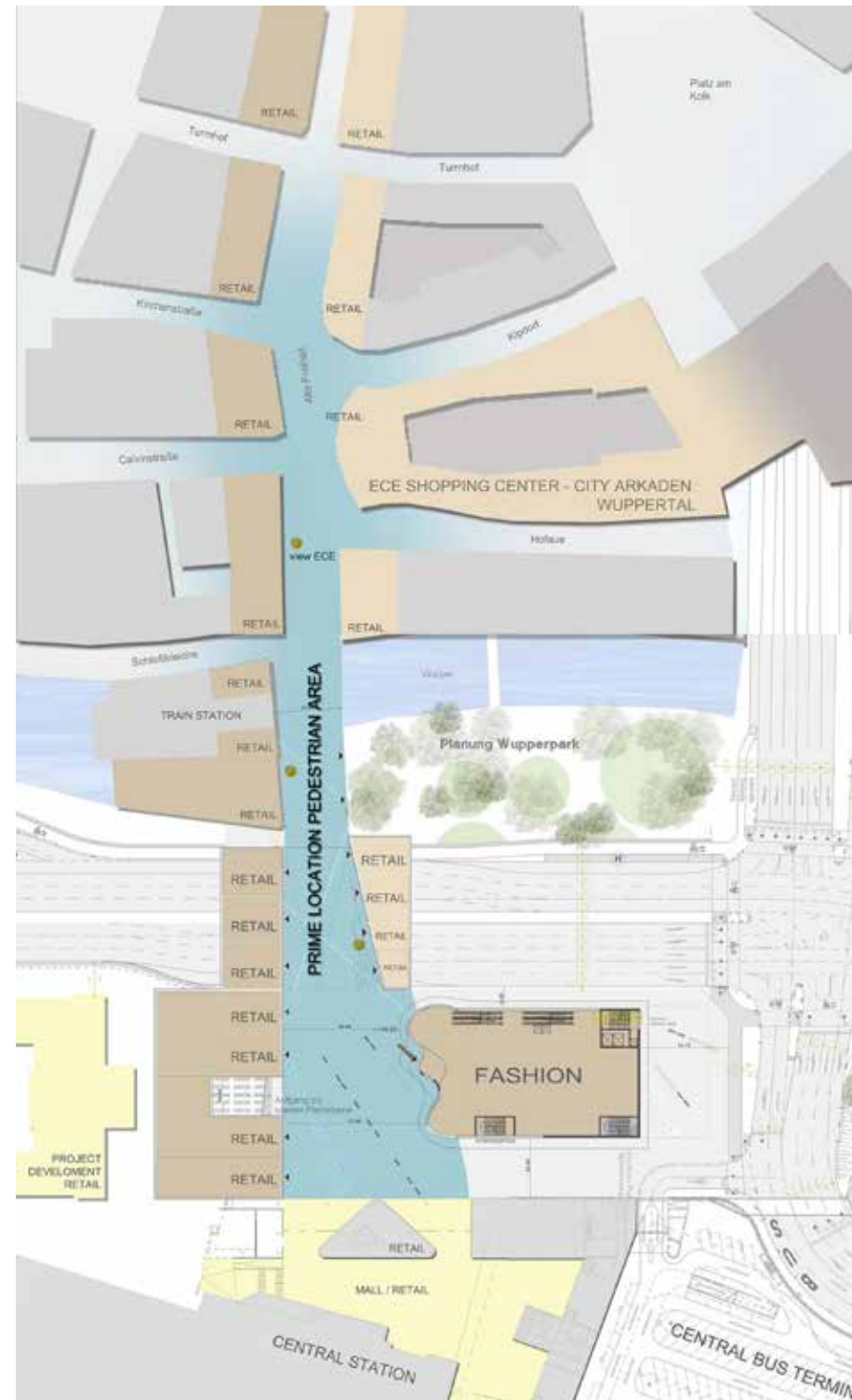


SETTING

City Plaza is the centrepiece of a large urban redevelopment project in the city centre of Wuppertal, in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, which sought to transform the city's run down railway station district. The busy urban hub is used by tens of thousands of rail and bus passengers every day. Chapman Taylor, together with investor Signature Capital, was chosen to design the area's regeneration.

We reduced the size of the square in front of the railway station and created a much more human scale – for example by proposing the relocation of the main building to bring it into closer focus. The railway station was previously severed from the city centre by a dual carriageway, and pedestrians had to walk through an unwelcoming underpass. That highway was lowered by 6m and a new bridge made of steel and folded glass built, flanked on both sides by retail/F&B pavilions (now fully let). The new bridge transforms the pedestrian experience, seamlessly linking the station with the city centre. Pedestrians crossing the bridge barely sense the road below.

City Plaza sits on top of rock, which had to be dynamited away to allow for underground parking, service access and other facilities. The upgraded square's proportions are now more human in scale, with careful building positioning creating a more intimate feel. People now dwell and watch the world go by or wander around exploring in a space which was previously grubby and functional. It is now a positive experience to look around and appreciate the new sense of place there.

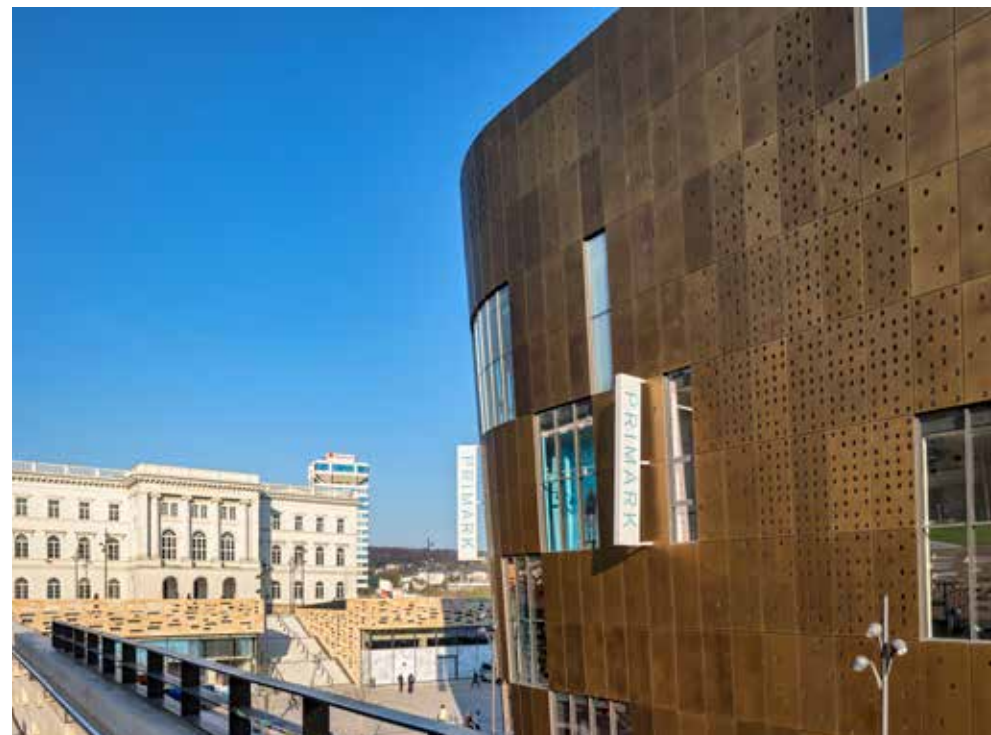


URBAN CONTEXT

There is a mix of building styles in the surrounding area, including modern, post-war developments, but many buildings are historical.

Our design was not required to follow any local vernacular building styles or regulations, but we thought it important that we design a consciously modern and striking building – our aim for City Plaza was not to create a pastiche of Wuppertal's heritage, but rather to add to the city's built legacy with a new layer, firmly rooted in the present.

Chapman Taylor's ambition was to present Wuppertal as a vibrant blend of the old and the new – the contemporary design for City Plaza helps to achieve that while still complementing the wider urban landscape.



USE OF SPACE AND INNOVATION

The original idea was for City Plaza to house several retail tenants and a hotel across its five above-ground floors. It was subsequently leased by Primark to house a flagship store.

The five-storey solitaire building sits on a 2,000m² plot and provides four levels of retail space for Primark, an office space at level 5 and a basement garage and storage area.

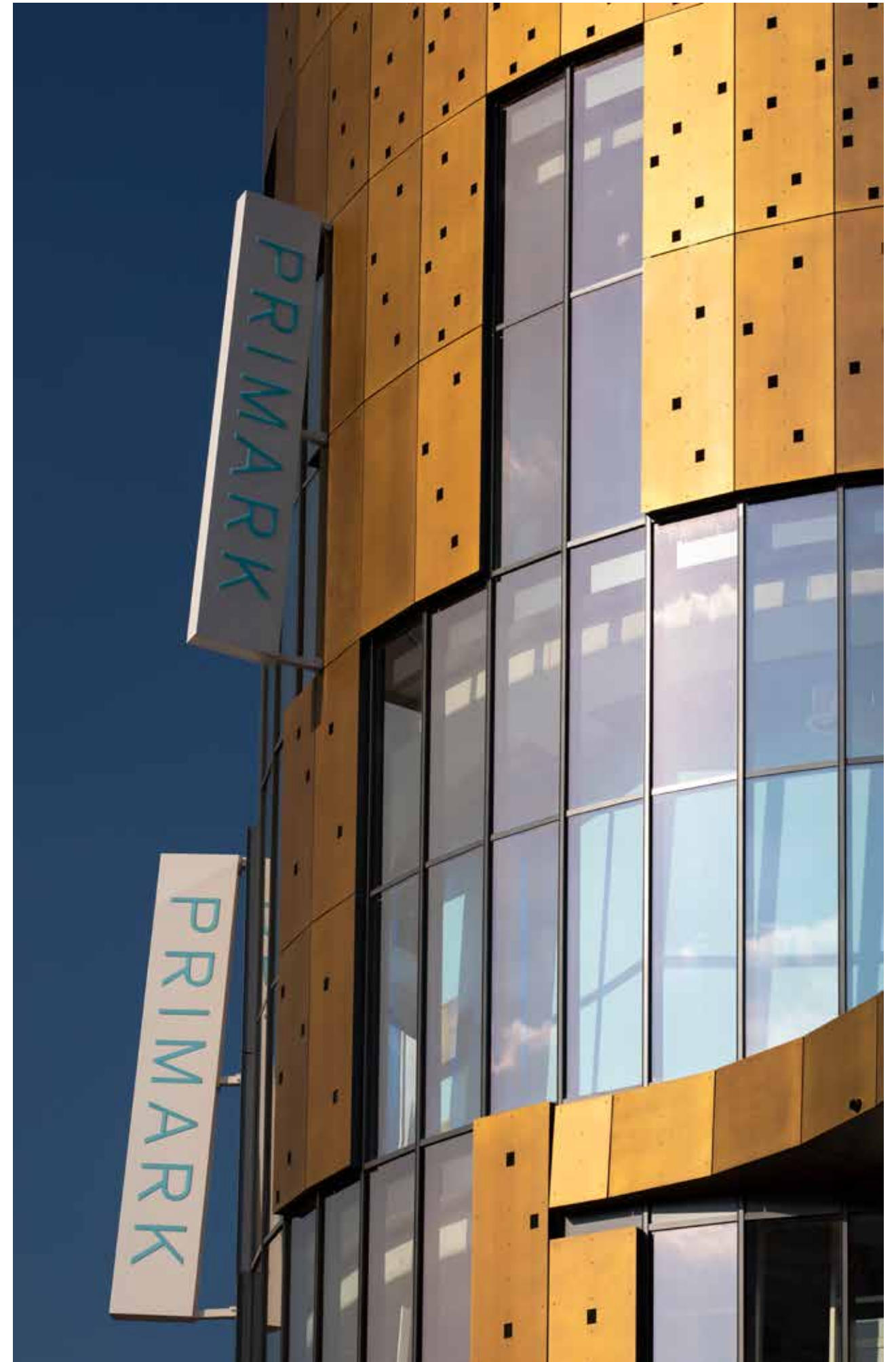
Our concept for City Plaza drew upon the city's 18th and 19th century textiles boom, drawing inspiration from the yarns, fabrics and lace that were created and traded, as well as the colouring of these materials. The building's curved façade of brass panels had to be designed individually and with care, because there couldn't be a uniform size and shape. Each panel also has a unique perforation to create a pattern, with each numbered and allocated to its own position on the façade. This was a very complex and painstaking process.

A large canopy shelters the main entrance area, designed in keeping with the building's geometry, and the material for which corresponds to the façade cladding.

We designed the whole building in BIM, and the other contractors were able to make use of our model – simplifying the process, preventing clashes and saving a lot of time on the development.

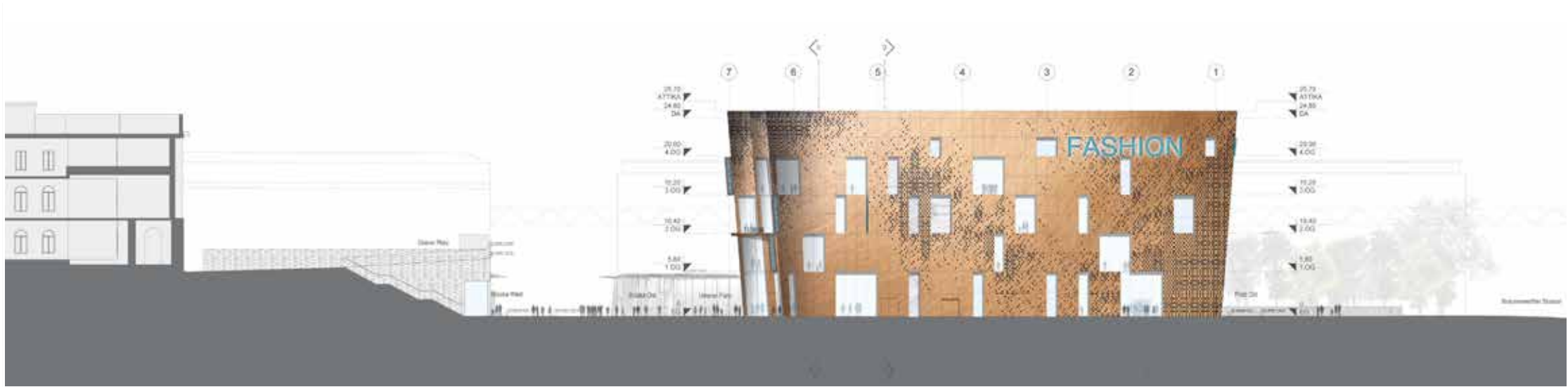
The unique, amorphous and slanted facade, combined with the choice of materials, makes the building an architectural landmark in the city of Wuppertal and has helped transform a previously run-down area into a lively and attractive urban destination.

At a recent retail conference in Düsseldorf, the attendees were brought in buses to see City Plaza – it was held up as an example of how a commercial scheme can thrive if it is a substantial improvement on what went before and positively transforms a built space.

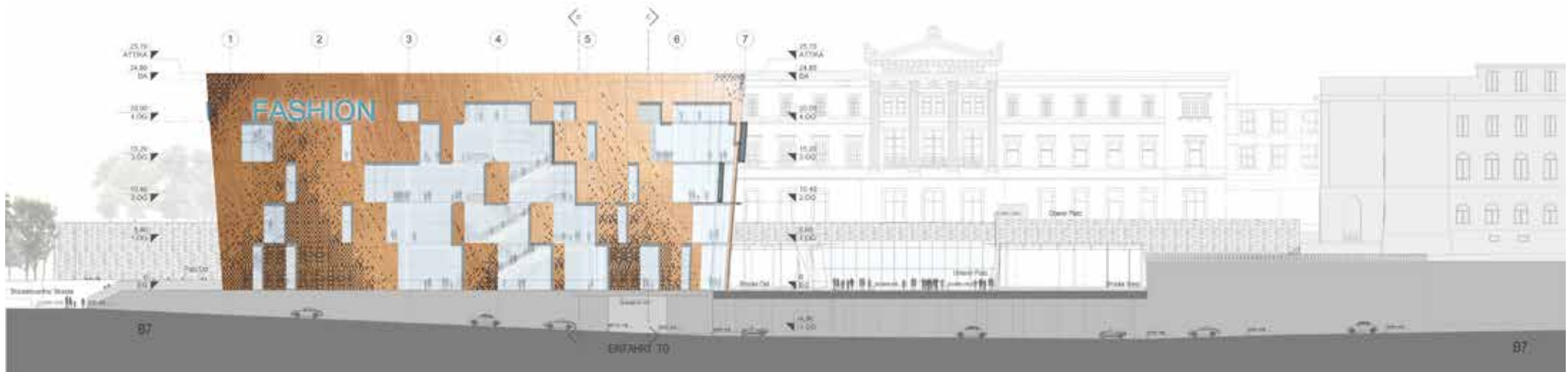




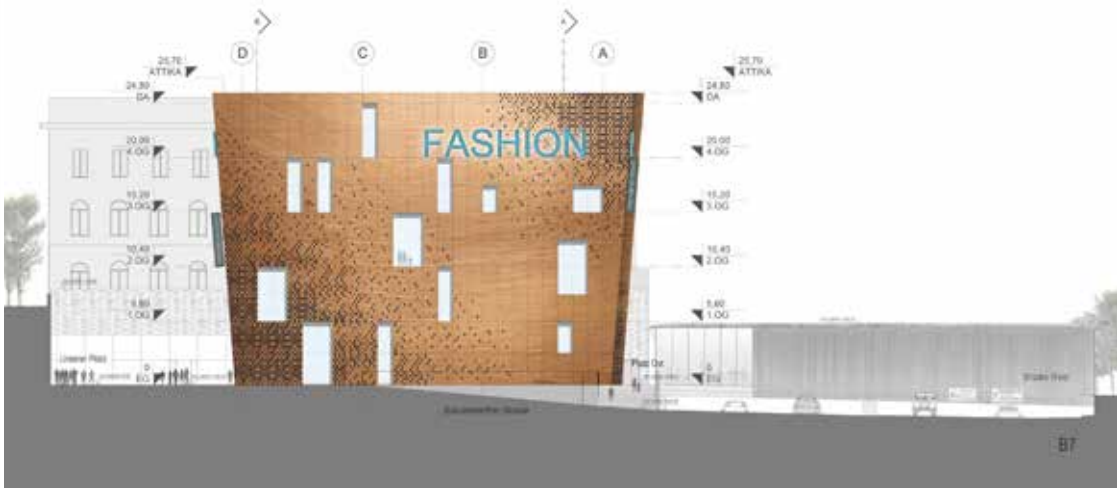
ELEVATIONS



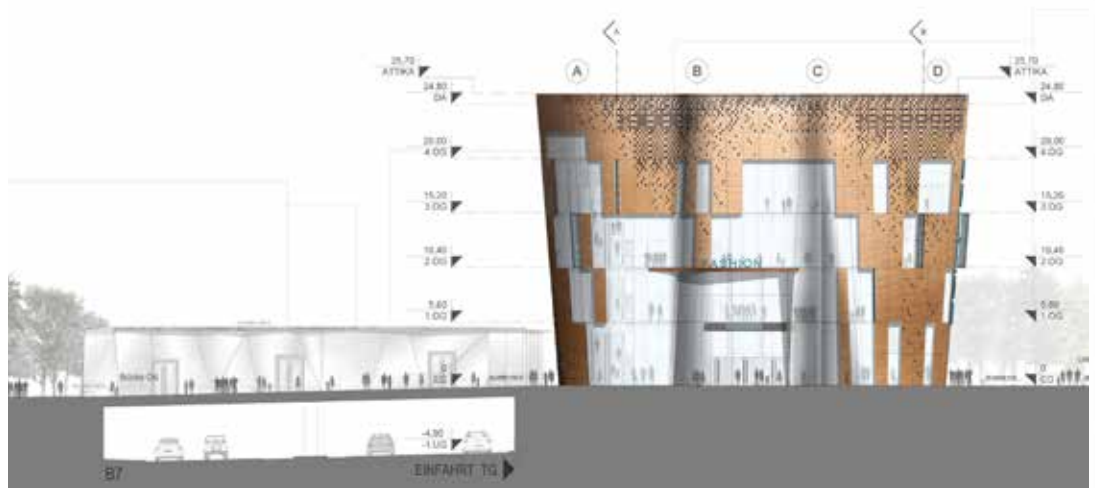
Ansicht Süd
SCALE: 1:20



Ansicht Nord
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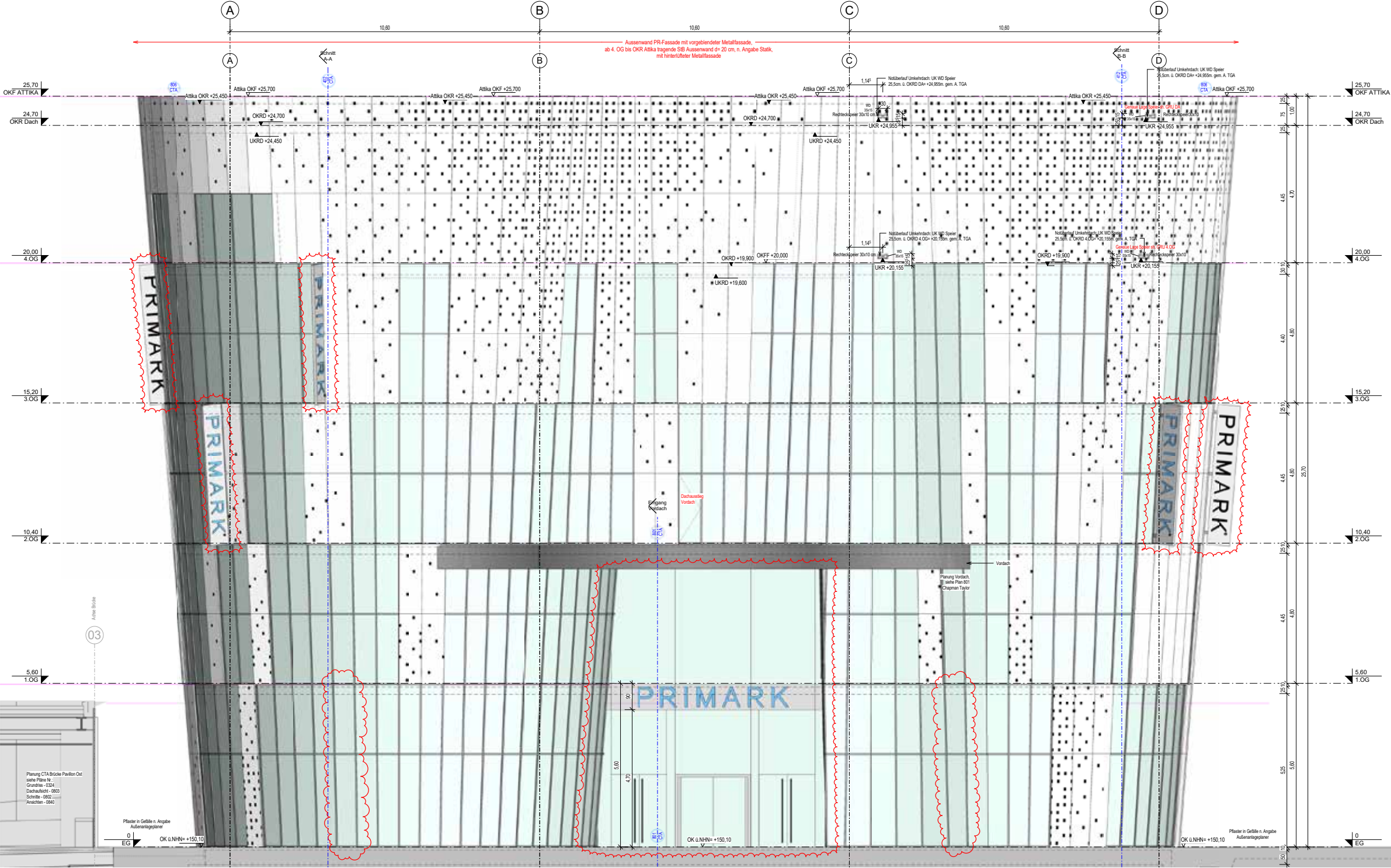


Ansicht Ost
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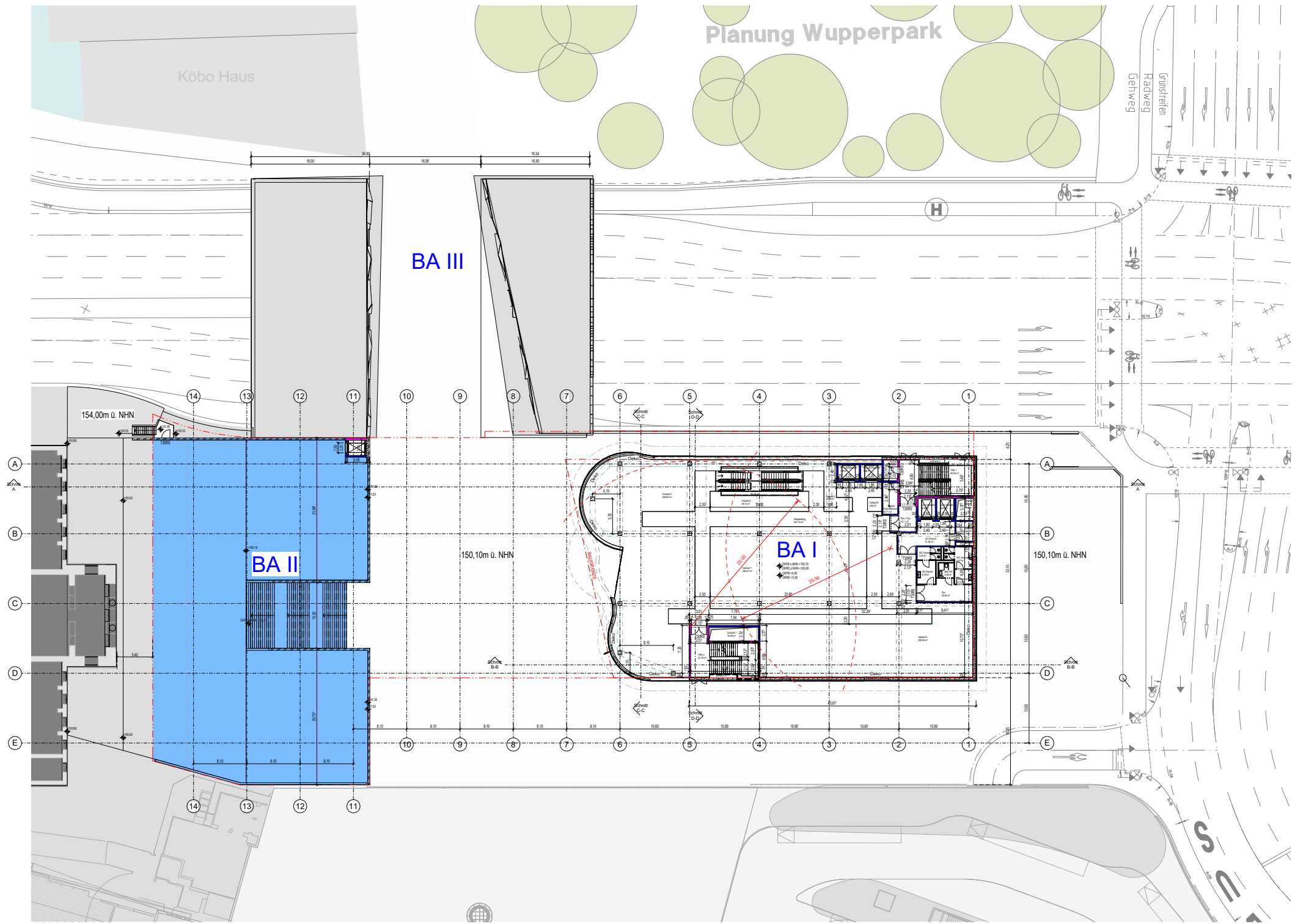


Ansicht West
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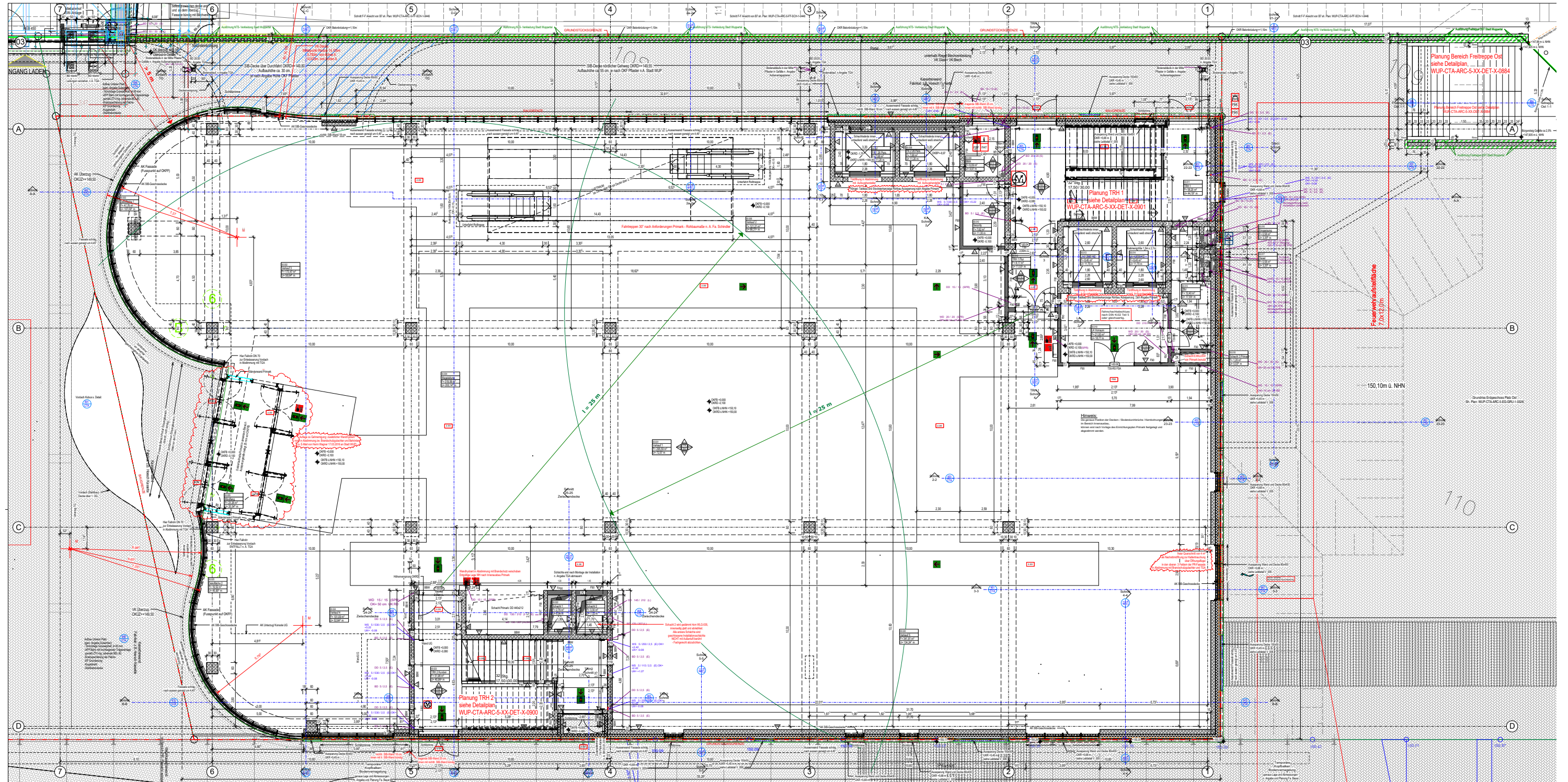
WEST ELEVATION



GROUND LEVEL MASTERPLAN



GROUND FLOOR



MAIN MATERIALS USED AND FINAL APPEARANCE

The main façade materials include:

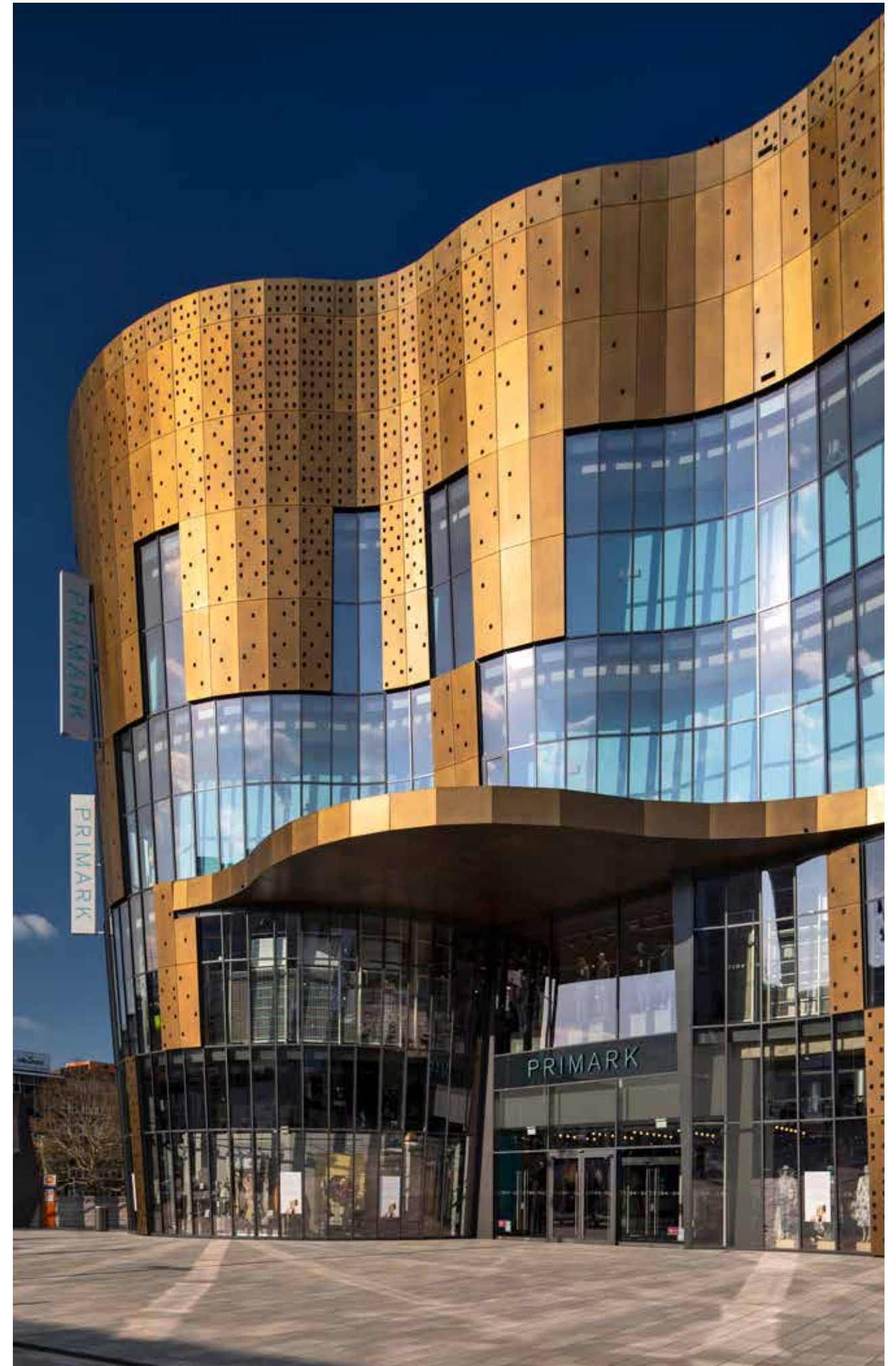
- Metal panels main building – TECU brass (pre-burnished and lacquered)
- Glass main building – THERMOPLUS S1 (optiwhite)
- Glass Primark entrance lobby – DELODUR (optiwhite) 8mm

We decided to create a multiply curved façade, leaning outwards at the upper levels by 4.6% (a total of 2.0m overall), which resembles the folds of curtains.

The rear-ventilated and extensively glazed mullion-transom façade uses mineral wool insulation and is clad with an underlying membrane. The façade consists of a multi-part substructure and cladding with pre-burnished and lacquered copper and aluminum alloy composite panels. The multiply curved façade leans outwards at the upper levels by 4.6% (a total of 2.0m overall).

The building coating was done by hand – we had to design each individual panel with care because there couldn't be a uniform size and shape, and each panel has a unique perforation to create a pattern. Therefore, each panel was numbered and allocated to its own position on the façade. This was a very complex process. We designed the whole building in BIM, and the other contractors were able to make use of our model – simplifying the process, preventing clashes and saving a lot of time on the development.

The unique, amorphous and slanted facade, combined with the choice of materials, makes the building an architectural landmark in the city of Wuppertal and has helped transform a previously run-down area into a lively and attractive urban destination.





SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY CONSERVATION AND INNOVATION

The design, construction and operation of City Plaza complied fully with the very high standards required by Germany's energy efficiency standards (ENEV 2018).

The building's glazing allows for abundant natural light in interior spaces without glare, while the heat-resistant Thermoplus glass technology controls solar gains and helps to further reduce the building's energy requirements in terms of cooling.

The interiors make extensive use of LED lighting, providing a low-energy lighting system as a supplement for the natural light.

The façade design makes extensive use of TECU brass panels, which are certified as an environmentally friendly building product in accordance with ISO 14025 and EN 15804. The copper/brass is durable and very long-lasting, meaning that the façade will require minimal maintenance or replacement materials.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

In the event of any emergencies, the centre ensures immediate free-moving evacuation, with “anti-panic” locks installed on the doors.

If any emergency occurs which causes the lights to go off, evacuation routes would be well signposted and well-lit by emergency exit lighting

The evacuation staircase is 1.5m in width to prevent bottlenecks and to ensure a quick and smooth process for bringing everyone to safety.

