
PHILIPPE SAMYN&PARTNERS: K-TOWER NOMINATED FOR MIES VAN DER ROHE 2022

K-Tower redefines not only the skyline of Kortrijk, but also the landscape of residential developments in Flanders. This high-rise building embodies the required vision for future projects in urban areas as suggested by the 'Vlaams Bouwmeester'.

Along with the renewed banks of the Leie river, 65 apartments were built within 22 floors whilst occupying merely 480m² of the ground-surface!

Through well thought urban planning, the opportunity was created for a high-quality environment which would benefit both residents of K-Tower and the local inhabitants.

While the reflective power of its architectural design generates an ever-changing landmark in Kortrijk for every hour/day of the year.

The skyline of Kortrijk used to be dominated by the outdated 'Collegetoren' in modernist architecture. This was built in 1965 to showcase the distinction of the local school. To make matters worse the boarding school was decommissioned due to fire safety regulations, leaving the school and the city with an abandoned and rapidly deteriorating building. Therefore, SAMYN and PARTNERS' architects & engineers, suggested to demolish and rebuild the tower in another location, turning K-Tower perpendicular to the Leie river and creating a sleeker landmark as seen from the city. This also meant that the longer sides of the building now gained the best panoramic views of the meandering river.

Yet the greatest improvement for the surroundings of the K-Tower lies in the power of its reflective facades. The patchwork of white, reflecting and mirroring cladding generates a kinetic image, influenced by both the fleeting clouds and the rising/setting of the sun. Instead of dominating the skyline of Kortrijk, K-Tower adds a touch of light through deconstructive architecture.

Each floor plan can provide a sufficient variety of layouts (1 to 4 bedrooms apts.) for its only structural fixed elements are the exterior facades, the very small interior circulation-core and a couple of shear walls.

A conscious choice was made for large terraces (25m²/apts.) that can act as outdoor rooms. By alternating them on even and odd floors, the outdoor spaces can benefit from a double height and thus get a very spacious feeling. This way, the sunlight penetrates deep into the apartments, improving the quality of indoor life. The users may also appreciate two oriented views from each terrace. These are also incredibly light thanks to the use of galvanised and coated steel. The high perforated plates for the balustrades guarantee perfect wind comfort for users while having the opportunity of looking through the veil from the intimacy of their homes.

For technical installations, K-Tower was provided with an internal heat-network with a single boiler-room and a simple plate-to-plate heat-exchanger in every apartment which would require almost no maintenance.



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Publication

02/02/21

Website

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