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Opus 60

Steidle + Partner, Alfred-Wegener-Institut, Bremerhaven

With an introduction by Gert Kähler and photographs by Christian Richters. 56 pp. with 46 ill., 28 of which in colour, 280 x 300 mm, hard-cover, German/English

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Building on the tip of a tongue of land, with a view of an estuary and the sea in the background – that is always a happy chance for an architect. But for the same reason, for them places like these are definitely also among the hardest to deal with – the associations that well up are much too seductive, much too well-worn: for example, can one more »steamer« be built by water, thus reviving one of the favourite motifs from the early days of modern architecture?

The new building for the Alfred-Wegener-Institut für Polar- und Meeresforschung, named after Alfred Wegener, the famous geoscientific pioneer, is near the city centre by the commercial harbour, not far from warehouses and other industrial buildings.

The building is not one in which the institution is putting itself on show; for example, you look in vain for a magnificent entrance with an actual or symbolic portal, inviting visitors to step into the building. Like its neighbours, it is just a working building for its 240 employees.

But what is striking is the unusual façade: a pattern is made with glazed tiles in white, grey and black, seeming more regular than it actually is. The architects – pictorially speaking – have set up poles at the corners of the plot and stretched fabric between them (they use the word »tweed« when discussing the façade pattern).

And in the interior the colour designer Erich Wiesner, whom the Steidle + Partner practice has already been working with for many years now, has given the individual corridor areas, but above all the foyer, a spatially intensive colour structure, made up of few colours – blue, rust-red, yellow, white, anthracite. The effect is unambiguous: a space is not being given a particular atmosphere here, determined by colour, but a spatial structure is accentuated and dynamized.

After studying architecture, Gert Kähler first worked in several architecture practices before turning to his present activity as a critic and architectural historian. His publications include the book *Architektur als Symbolverfall. Das Dampfermotiv in der Baukunst*. Christian Richters studied at the Folkwangschule in Essen. He is one of the most sought-after architectural photographers in Europe today. In the meantime Richters has supplied the photographs for seven Opus books.

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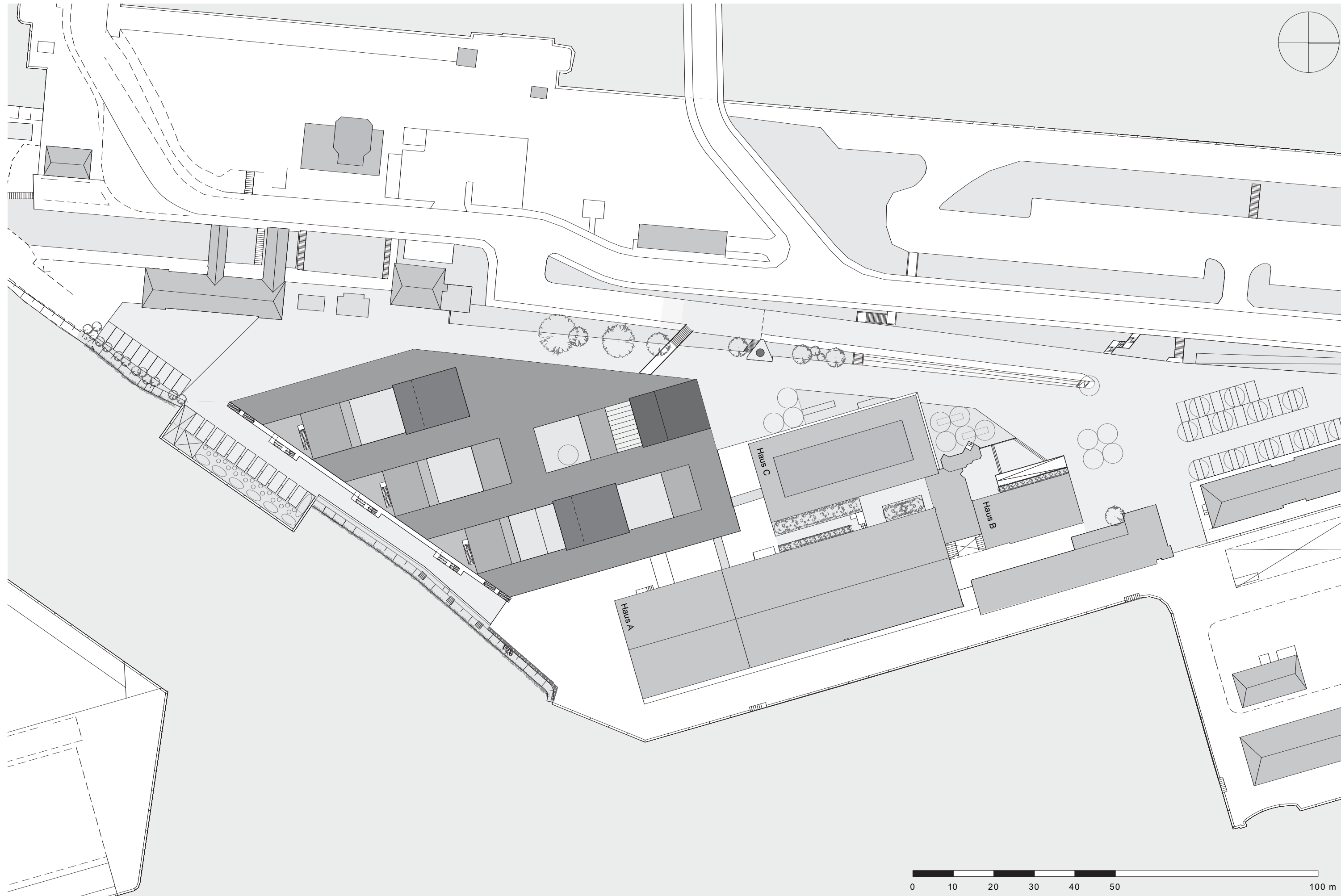
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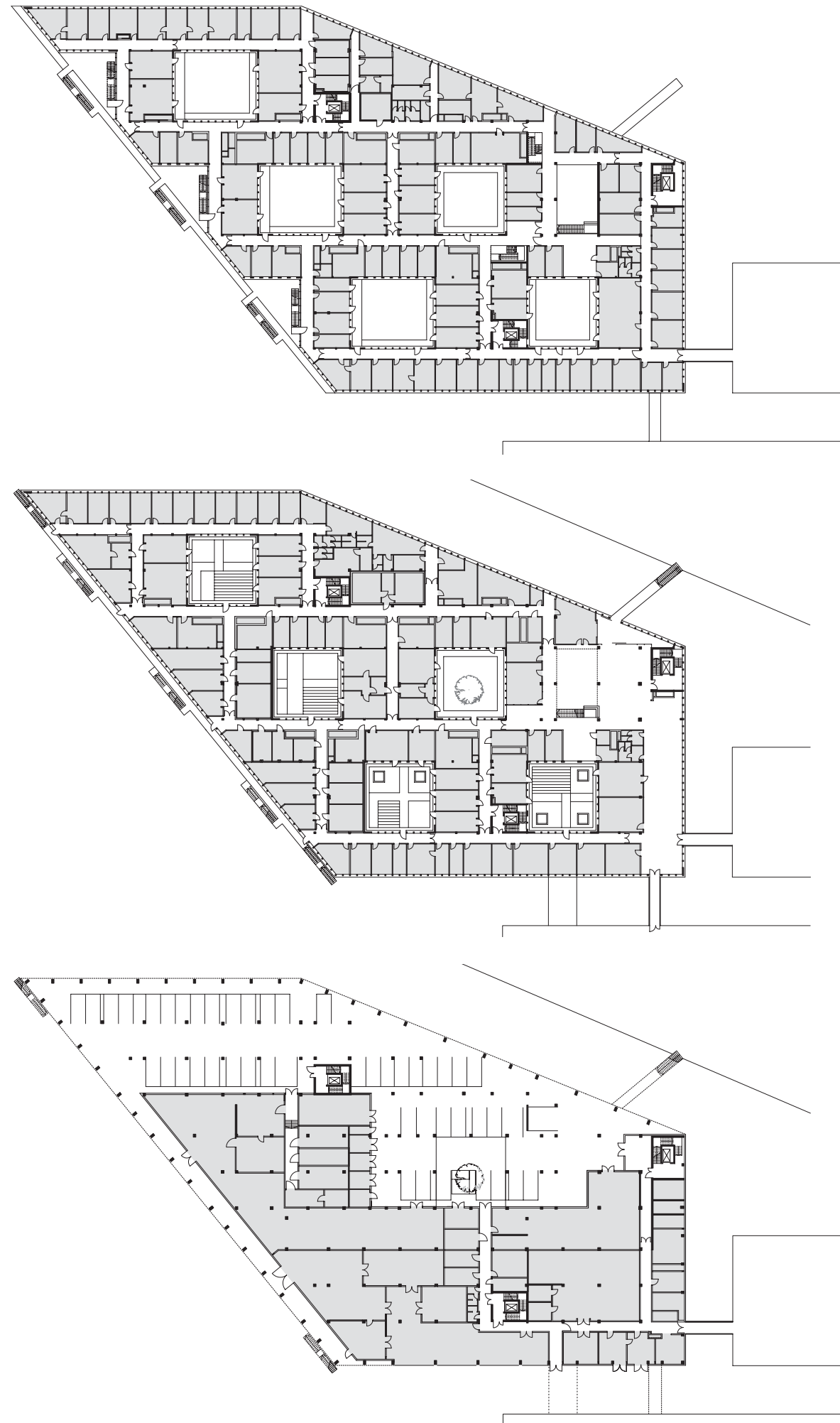
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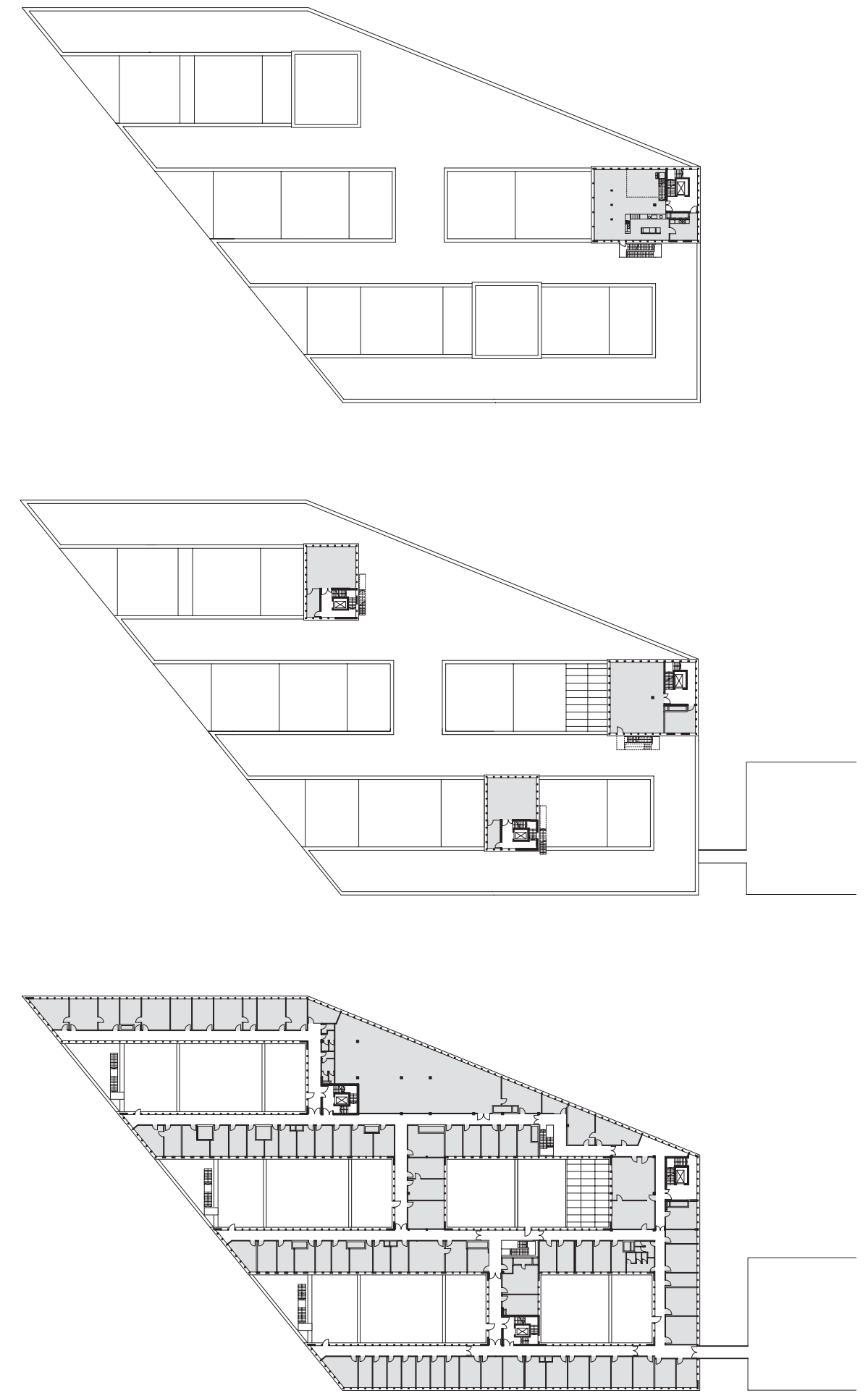
2. Lageplan.

2. Site plan.



3-8. Grundrisse (Ebenen 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6).

3-8. Floor plans (levels 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6).





1. Gesamtansicht von Südosten.
1. General view from the southeast.



2. Gesamtansicht von Nordosten.
3. Gesamtansicht von Südosten.

2. General view from the northeast.
3. General view from the southeast.



4. Teilansicht von Westen.
5. Gesamtansicht von Südwesten.



4. Partial view from the west.
5. General view from the southwest.

