

HEC Paris MBA Building

Jouy-en-Josas, France 2008–2012

The new MBA building for the École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) is located on the school's campus near the historic Paris suburb of Jouy-en-Josas. The existing 1964 campus consists of a series of pavilions in a wooded landscape. The original design intent had been compromised over the years, resulting in a campus which lacked focus and was in need of a clear entrance. The new building is the first stage of a masterplan to meet the demands of a growing student body and faculty. The client's brief specified a building that would not only house the teaching facilities for the MBA course and re-house its administrative services, but also provide the main entrance to the campus and reinforce HEC's image as one of Europe's top business schools. Planning requirements stipulated a low building volume set back from the site boundary.

Located at the southern edge of the existing campus, the building acts as a gateway, an interface between the wider community and the teaching environment of the school. The building's envelope unifies a variety of programmatic elements within a single skin. The main entrance opens onto the central hall, a social hub encouraging chance meetings and informal gatherings. This hall connects the private areas of the building, such as the administrative offices, to the public areas, including the principal auditorium and cafeteria.

The main mass is broken up into a series of blocks that are staggered along the long axis of the building, creating rhythm and variation along the public space on the south side. This movement integrates the building into its context and creates a variety of interior and exterior spaces. The corners offer breakout spaces for private study and informal learning, complementing an extensive range of different teaching spaces to suit diverse group sizes and teaching approaches. These include flat-floored seminar rooms, classic Harvard-style stepped lecture theatres, and regular lecture halls and classrooms. The ceiling height increases floor by floor, giving teaching spaces ample light and expansive views. The main auditorium, a black box with a smooth white interior, is lit by a large circular skylight and seats an audience of 250. A series of smaller skylights introduce additional natural light into the rooms.

The materials used for the building – aluminium for the curtain wall façade and exposed concrete in the interior – references those of the original 1960s campus buildings. The vertically articulated façade is composed of alternating modules of 800mm and 500mm width separated by protruding fins, adding depth and plasticity. Narrow horizontal aluminium bands express the increasing storey heights, further unifying the composition of the blocks.

The structural and façade strategies play an important role in enhancing the energy performance of the building. The concrete is insulated on the exterior, with the metal cladding also acting as a weatherproofing barrier. Exposing the concrete within the building takes advantage of the material's thermal mass; the heat absorbed by the floors and walls in the summer is dispersed at night by a mixed free-cooling system. This is facilitated by the aluminium mesh ceiling, which allows air to circulate.



Date	2008–2012
Gross floor area	10,300 m ²
Client	Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris, Extension du Campus de "Hautes Etudes Commerciales" (HEC)
Architect	David Chipperfield Architects, London
Director	Andrew Phillips
Project architect	Jan Vermeulen
Contact architect	Debarre Duplantier Associes
Landscape architect	Debarre Duplantier Associes
Structural engineer	VP & Green Ingenierie / Adams Kara Taylor
Services engineer	Ingenierie Louis Choulet
Façade consultant	VP & Green Ingenierie
Acoustic consultant	Cabinet Lamoureux
Fire protection consultant	Batiss
Quantity surveyor	Mazet & Associes
Graphics	John Morgan studio / Locomotion
Audiovisual consultant	Labeyrie et Associes
Photography	Simon Menges