PENZEL_VALIER_

Press kit
89_KEBAG Enova

Contact:
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September 2025

Architectural brief:	Waste to energy plant
Project location:	Emmenspitz, Zuchwil
Client:	Kenova AG
Commission:	Study, 1. place, 2016
Project planning:	from 2017
Start of construction:	2020
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Project name:
KVA Emmenspitz Zuchwil
Function:
Waste-to-energy plant
Type & category of structure according to SIA 102:
Technical installations, waste-to-energy plant
performance share according to SIA 102 (%): Architecture 67% share of services
Floor area:
44'000 m²
Building volume:
ca. 410'000 m³

Project Description

The spatial form of the building is shaped by two key design principles. First, rather than reinforcing the delivery and process bunkers - comprising both existing and new structures with ribs, extending them vertically, and continuing the new construction in the same manner as originally planned, we sought to avoid the resulting heterogeneity. Instead, our goal was to develop a cohesive and powerful overall form that seamlessly integrates the different infrastructural components.

The power plant is organized into two distinct elements: a solid plinth that houses the main infrastructure and the machinery positioned above it. This configuration enhances the legibility of functional relationships while balancing the overall proportions. Resting on the massive base, the technical facilities are enclosed in a lightweight shell- akin to the bodywork of a car. A continuous band of glazing marks the transition between these elements, emphasizing their contrast while offering glimpses into the impressive machine hall.

The chimney emerges from the plinth, rising alongside the process hall to a total height of 80 meters. At its peak, a viewing platform introduces an unexpected yet distinctive architectural gesture, giving the structure a striking and unique detail.



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Awards:
Rethinking the Future Award 2026
Finalist Architizer A+Award 2026
ICONIC Awards 2025
Best Architects 26
Swiss Solarpreis 2025

The volumetric composition takes the form of a sculptural concrete entity, unifying the various functional components into a singular architectural expression. Within this sculptural framework, the process hall serves as both the functional and conceptual epicenter of the complex. Here, the production processes and technological infrastructure become the visible driving force behind the entire facility. As a result, the building asserts itself as a bold and identifiable landmark within the expansive Aare landscape at the southern foothills of the Jura.



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



89_241210_BAU_B0017372_mer.jpg

Photo: Bruno Augsburger

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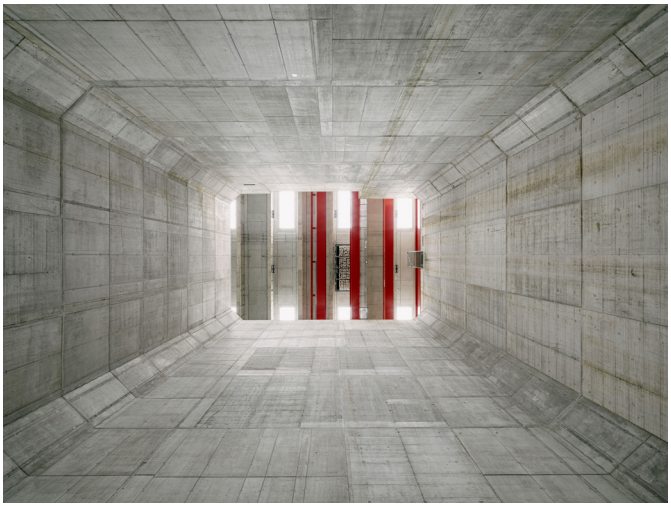
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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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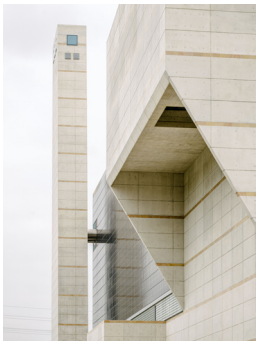
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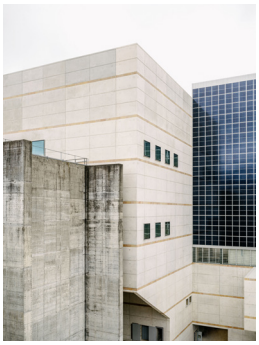
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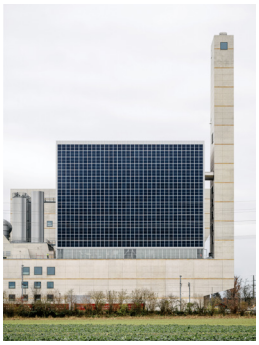
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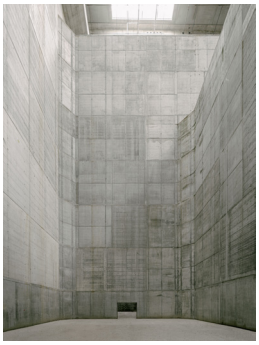
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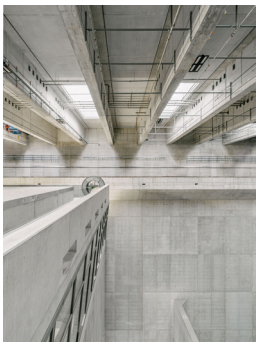
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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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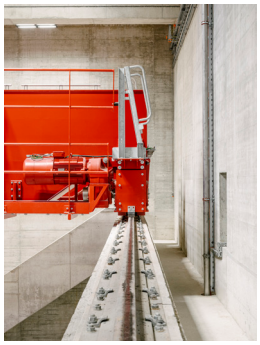
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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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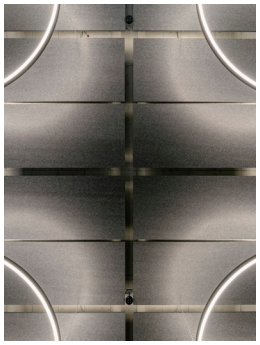
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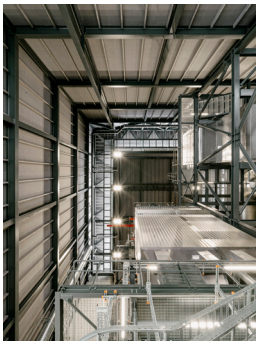
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Photo: Bruno Augsburger



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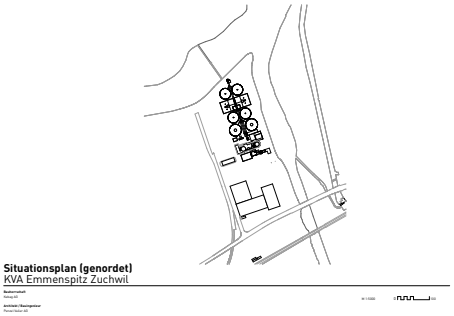
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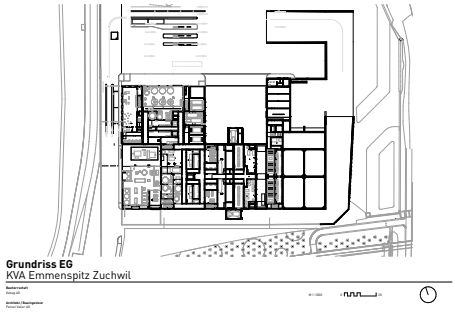
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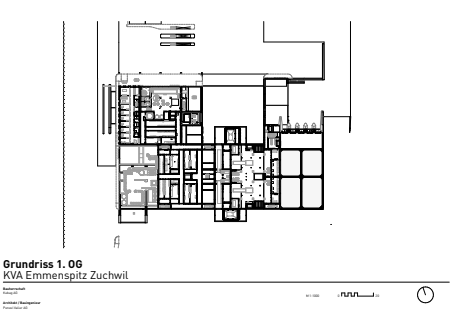
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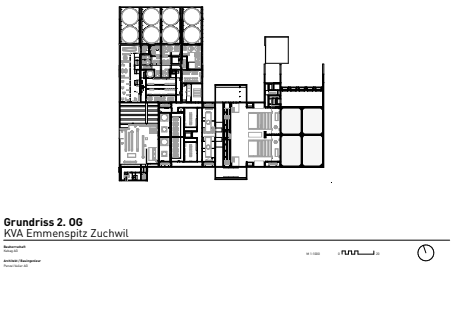
Site plan



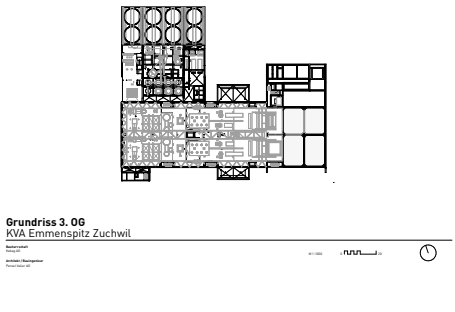
Ground floor plan



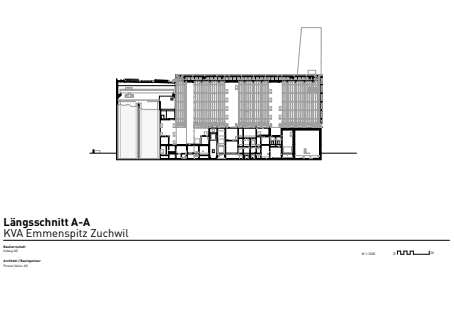
1st floor plan



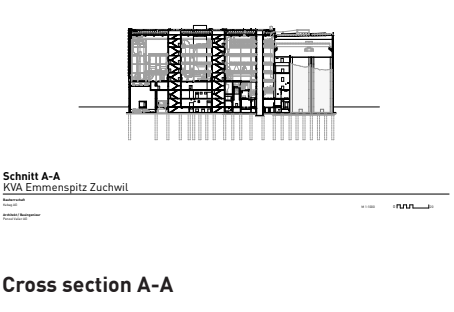
2nd Floor plan



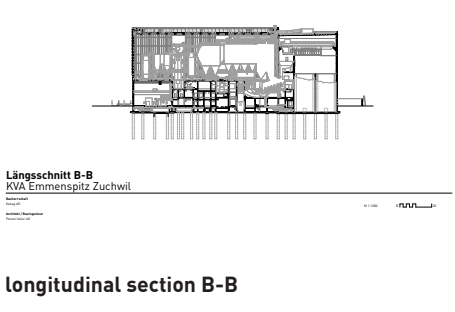
3rd floor plan



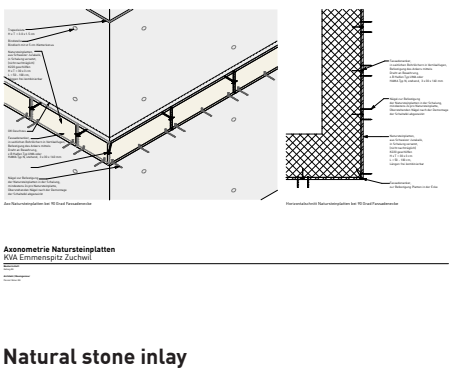
longitudinal section A-A



Cross section A-A



longitudinal section B-B



Natural stone inlay

All drawings © Penzel Valier

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CREDITS

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Architecture:
Penzel Valier, Zurich
Apostolos Apostolinas, Leonore Daum, Ecem Dönmez, Timon Dönz, Agnes Eklund, Cait Elliott, Jan Erismann, Liam Gerber, Roland Hasler, Christian Klein, Leo Kleine, Magnus Lidman, Christian Penzel, Heinz Rempfler, Sven Semmisch, Johannes Süssbier, Friedrich Tellbüscher, Martin Valier, Philippe Vaucher, Henning Vogel, Daniel Zielinski

General planner:
TBF+Partner, Zurich

Architectural photography:
Bruno Augsburger, Zurich
Dominic Büttner, Zurich

SPECIALIST PLANNING

Civil engineering (building construction, special foundation engineering, excavation and structural design): AFRY Schweiz, Zurich

Photovoltaic planning:
Sundesign photovoltaic engineering, Stallikon

Landscape architecture:
Maurus Schifferli Landschaftsarchitekt, Bern

Process engineering:
TBF+Partner, Zurich

HVAC-planning:
Tri Air, Jona SG

Sanitary planning:
Bösch Sanitäringenieure, Dietikon

Electrical planning:
Bering, Bern

Building automation:
TBF+Partner, Zurich

Building physics:
Gartenmann Engineering, Zurich

Safety and fire protection planning:
Hautle Anderegg und Partner, Ostermundigen

Traffic planning:
TBF+Partner, Zurich

Site Management:
S+B Baumanagement, Pratteln

Office name:
Penzel Valier
Founded:
2008
Number of employees:
125
Location:
Zurich
Website:
www.penzelvalier.ch

About Penzel Valier

Penzel Valier is an architecture and engineering firm based in Zurich. The interdisciplinary office was founded in 2008 by Christian Penzel and Martin Valier and focuses on sophisticated architectural designs and structures that result in innovative, iconic buildings and urban environments. Today, the office comprises more than 100 professionals and is led by Leonore Daum, Christian Penzel, Friedrich Tellbüscher, and Martin Valier. Intensive, team-based collaboration across all disciplines enables the development and implementation of innovative solutions.

Penzel Valier works in a network of partners and planners using state-of-the-art digital technologies and tools. Architectural concepts are developed as unique responses to the brief and the local context, in close dialogue with the clients, always striving for distinctive solutions to specific challenges.

Firmly embedded in Swiss building culture and focused on the quality of construction, the spectrum of work ranges from large infrastructure projects to institutional and public buildings to residential buildings, hospitality, and interior design for clients such as SRF, ETH, BKW, Kenova, Bernmobil, RHB, SNF, and others.

