

Shell suit: the aim is to give a welcoming sense of arrival, with glimpses of what is on offer

Calming club class

By Barrie Evans
Photographs by Dennis Gilbert/VIEW

Aspria Health Club in Hamburg is an edge-of-town family club with enough site space for the club building plus tennis courts and car parking. The architects – a collaboration of Colwyn Foulkes & Partners and Stiff + Trevillion – were appointed to fit out the club building. As with KXGymUK (see page 32), the business agenda was to move the health club up market, but here starting at a much lower base. Nicholas Colwyn Foulkes feels the German health club scene is a decade behind the UK, still focused on muscle-building, not socially welcoming.

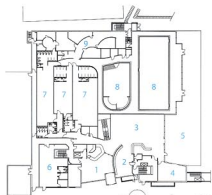
D&B contractor Pellikaan has built about 500 such clubs across the continent, which are essentially crinkly tin sheds, although with some opening up, say, with a fully glazed facade. Aspria asked the architects to work within such a largely given shell form.

Spatially, the overall approach for this, and a possible 20 more clubs, is to give a

sense of arrival, leading to a welcoming hub with at least glimpses from there of what is on offer. Then members can move through the club to wind up or wind down. It should not feel necessary to do any sport.

The architects were happy with a two-storey enclosure, as feeling less shed-like than a single storey, and have managed to include a third part-floor where the roof rises toward the front. At ground level, the reception leads to a creche, cafe/restaurant and bar, a swimming pool and a leisure pool, spa, plus changing rooms. On the first floor are machines and fitness studios plus a 'Japanese-themed Wellness Spa', including steam rooms, monsoon showers and treatment rooms. The second part-floor is now a stretching area, with potential for development.

Overall, the designers hope they have 'given well-being and mental calm equal weight with physical fitness'.



- KEY**
- 1 entrance reception
 - 2 sports bar
 - 3 restaurant
 - 4 function room
 - 5 terrace
 - 6 creche
 - 7 changing rooms
 - 8 swimming pool
 - 9 spa area

ground floor plan
30 January 2003

| CREDITS | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CLUB BUILDING AREA 4,885m ² | and Stiff + Trevillion: Nick Foulkes, Yussidar Yusuf, Mike Stiff | Hanscomb |
| CLIENT Aspria Alstertal Immobilien | PROJECT MANAGER DTZ Debenham Tie Leung | D&B CONTRACTOR Pellikann Bouwbedrijf & Hooper Architects |
| ARCHITECT Colwyn Foulkes & Partners | QUANTITY SURVEYOR | SUBCONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS fit-out Harmeling Interieurs; lockers Craftsman Quality Lockers UK; fitness spaces TechnoGym UK; spa Klaf's Sauna |



Total fitness

By **Barrie Evans**. Photographs by **Chris Gascoigne**

James Thorp of Thorp Design is obsessive about detail. When we visited KXGymUK (KX pronounced 'kicks') close to Chelsea's King's Road, he was disappointed to find a few of the towels had not been folded and inserted in his specially built racks as he had demonstrated. The aim of total control is pursued through an inclusive package of design, project management and the use of selected subcontractors the designers know well.

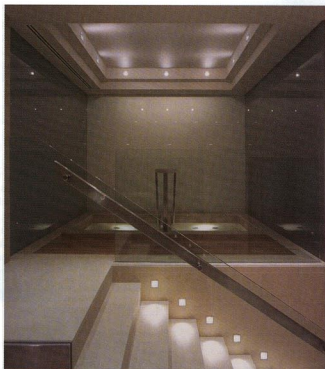
A new venture by a former banker, KXGymUK aims to provide a 'whole environment', to be 'London's most exclusive

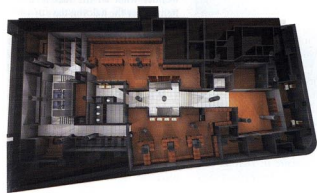
gym, offering a sanctuary to some of the world's most private people'. For the future, the client feels there is probably only a market for this level of facility as one or two clubs per European country.

KXGymUK is focused on fitness, providing exercise bikes, treatment rooms, kick boxing, fitness classes, plunge pools, flotation tank, steam rooms, a small lounge, plus a 'shopfront' of cafe and shop. This is a club for busy people working at fitness. The bikes can be networked via the Internet to your personal fitness trainer anywhere in the world.

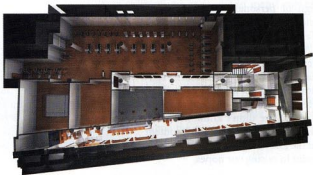
The location is the old nine-floor Harrods repository, the basement and ground floor latterly used as a restaurant, now gutted to provide 170m² of space, with plant at the back and on the roof. Existing columns have been accommodated. A new stair and bridge provide central circulation. Within this framework, the background is mainly neutral with flash-gap detailing, except for the heavy use of Macassar ebony veneer wall panels. In some areas, softening comes from floors using the yacht deck technology of teak boards caulked with rubber, accommodating timber movement without cracks.

All is measured and rectilinear, lines accentuated by strong lighting, the custom furniture as if detailed on graph paper. Dust would not dare settle.





basement



ground floor



Opposite top: the gym entrance, with shop to left. Opposite bottom left: refaced original column. Opposite bottom right: plunge pool. Top: even at the top of the market, machines jostle for space. Left: control zone

CREDITS

CLIENT
KXDNA: Simon Fry
DESIGNER
Thorp Design: Igor Falkovsky, James Thorp, Philippa Thorp
MAIN CONTRACTOR
PC Shopfitting
JOINERY
Beacher Joinery