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Bocconi Campus
Glazed Façades for an Extension Linked to the City
Milan, Italy

The recent extension to the Bocconi University campus in Milan, to the south of the original campus, occupies an area of 36,000 sq. m that was once the site of a dairy collective. The design was by SANAA, with support from Progetto CMR for specific aspects, including the final design and works supervision. The building envelope for the various volumes on the campus was created by Gualini, a leading company in this sector in Italy, with its head office in the northern Italian province of Bergamo.

The new section of the university houses the SDA Bocconi School of Management, with the buildings surrounded by greenery that helps connect this campus to the rest of the university and the city itself. University accommodation, classrooms and other educational and research facilities are supplemented by sport and recreational facilities - including an Olympic-size swimming pool - that are also open to the public.

The typical curved lines of a SANAA design are connected by winding, covered walkways that slide through the park. The notion of a main façade also disappears into flowing, semi-transparent surfaces behind which once can partially make out what is happening in the university.

All of the buildings open onto internal courtyards that are fully glazed to allow in plenty of natural light.

Gualini’s involvement in this project was especially demanding as it had to handle the changing concave and convex movements of the façades to produce a building envelope that consists of fire-resistant continuous façades with a mullion and transom structure, large windows - visually defining the constructions - and metallic door and window frames. The company’s operational wing was involved in the process from the beginning, playing its part in bringing practical form to the architects’ idea of lightheartedness, brightness, momentum and transparency without compromising on performance standards and environmental wellbeing.