The Dreispitz area is located in the south of Basel in a plain run through by the river Birs. In early 20th century the foundation Christoph Merian CMS established on the former cultivated land an industrial area with storage- and factory- buildings. There was built as well a tax-free area with two huge buildings Freilager and Transitlager to stock merchandise from all over the world. A tight net of train tracks enabled the transportation of the merchandise, which also explains the unique order of the buildings. Over seven decades the site was inaccessible to the public and was described as a ‘forbidden area’.

The main goal of the design is to maintain its industrial edginess while keeping traces of site specific characteristics allowing for the new construction to have its own identity. The open space concept reacts in a flexible way to the process-oriented development of the site. A huge open plaza is creating the heart of the new Campus ‘Kunstfreilager Dreispitz’ and offers space for meeting and events. Green filters built with trees are framing the plaza. A tall light post marks the plaza and remembers to the cranes from the former industrial site. Mobile shelters and seating furniture (semester project, industrial design students HGK) structure the plaza. The mineral and light colored surface of the plaza is smoothly shaped. Those shapes are collecting the rainwater to create small puddles. In warm summer days they influence the micro climate positively. In case of an event on the plaza, the puddles will be drained. The tight courts with their train tracks will be transformed into green gaps. They are planted with pioneer plants and they will be treated following a dynamic plant concept. They are creating intimate and different open spaces. The pocket parks are located into gaps between buildings. As small and open designed spaces they create a network for the pedestrians.