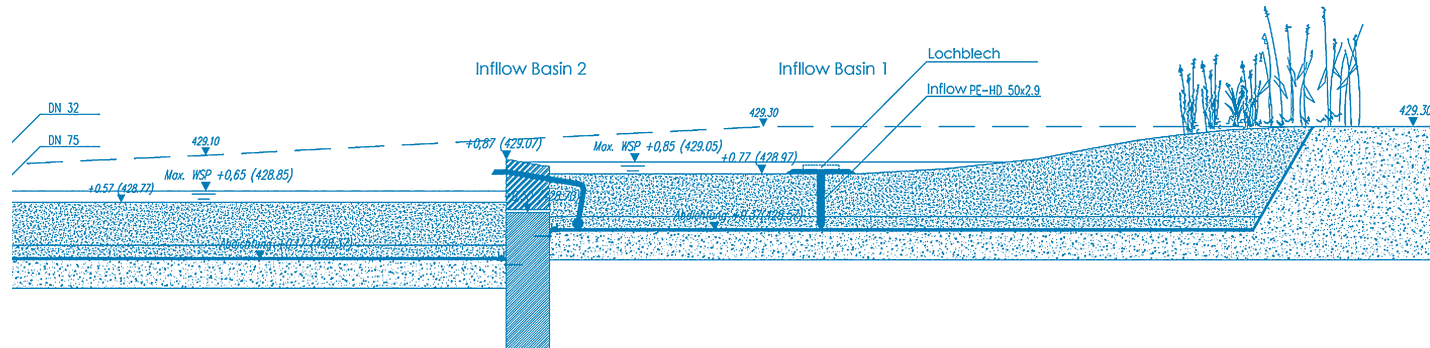




Cleansing Biotope

Shore Vegetation



drinking water or at least bathing water quality will be required. As a rule water features that suggest drinking, in other words raised features, should use drinking water, while bathing water quality is usually sufficient for features at ground level, or for pools.

The interplay between water and its built environment should be taken into account at the planning stage. Materials like concrete or mortar can have a significant effect on water chemistry, increasing the calcium content and raising the pH value of the water drastically. This can have a very negative effect on flora and fauna and in extreme cases damage the surface of materials.

Certain nutrients and germs will get into the water naturally by rainfall and can cause biological surface growth like algae or bacteria. The aim should be to keep this within tolerable bounds. Unrealistic expectations on the part of the client, like clear water that is free of algae at all times, should thus be discussed in advance. Such a requirement makes enormous technical demands that can only be met by using chemicals, UV filtration and other elaborate techniques. Using chemicals to purify water often turns out to be a dead end – it is expensive in the long run and ecologically dubious for the water. It can also create a number of peripheral problems, such as restricted plant growth or offensive odours.

Water is much more readily accepted when it is clear. For this reason attention should be paid from the outset to the rubbish and pollutants that will come into contact with the water and to their sources. Some things will fall into the water naturally, some as a result of human intervention. Fallen

leaves or road dust, but also food for ducks and fish (this should not be underestimated as a problem), and remains of human food and packaging will likely end up in the water. Any open water is polluted by such materials, which are either dissolved in it, or remain undissolved. It is therefore very important to know about any sources of pollution at the planning stage, and to estimate the nature and scale of their possible effects on the water feature.

The choice of which water technology is ultimately installed is influenced by all these prior considerations and investigations of processes in the water system. Courageous decisions about ecologically sensible solutions take pressure off the environment and can set new standards that lead to genuine innovation. Learning from nature and using the insights gained for new concepts is also a relevant planning approach here.

