

Insights – A tour of Berlin's parliamentary quarter

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Insights

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parliamentary quarter

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Insights

into Berlin's parliamentary quarter

The Bundestag's four buildings

The Reichstag Building and the Bundestag's three new buildings nearby form a self-contained parliamentary quarter. They are linked together by a system of tunnels and walkways that allow the Members of the German Bundestag and parliamentary staff to go about their business without walking long distances.

The Jakob Kaiser Building houses offices not only for the Vice-Presidents of the Bundestag and some Members, but also for the leaders of the parliamentary groups and their staff, as well as various sections of the Bundestag Administration. Members' offices, the parliamentary committees and their secretariats, the Public Relations Division and the Visitors' Service are all to be found in the Paul Löbe Building.

While the Reichstag Building, the Paul Löbe Building and the Jakob Kaiser Building lie on the western bank of the Spree, the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building rises on the eastern bank, connected to the other side of the river by a double footbridge, the lower level of which is open to the public. The Bundestag Library with its large reading room, the Parliamentary Archives, the Press Documentation Division and the Reference and Research Services have found their new homes in this building.

Opposite:
A view of the
parliamentary
quarter.



The Reichstag Building

Carl-Christian Kaiser

A modern parliament in a historic setting: this was the vision that inspired the transformation of Berlin's Reichstag Building into the new seat of the Bundestag. It was consistently upheld by the world-famous British architect Lord Norman Foster, who was commissioned to translate it into reality.

A modern parliament in a historic setting

The Reichstag's exterior, constructed between 1884 and 1894 by the architect Paul Wallot, has remained unchanged. Yet behind its majestic façade, transparency and functionality are the imperatives. This is a modern building in a technical sense too: its state-of-the-art energy system and other services comply with the most stringent environmental criteria. Architecture, functionality and ecology unite to form a harmonious trinity.

Transparency and functionality are also enhanced by the building's clear division into purpose-specific levels or floors. The basement and ground floor house storage areas, technical services, facilities for the parliamentary secretariat and services installations. The rooms used by the Bundestag's medical officer are also located here. On the next

The east foyer
of the Reichstag
Building.



level—the first floor—is the plenary area with the Bundestag's spacious plenary chamber. This is followed by the mezzanine visitors' level, then the presidential level—the second floor—for the President of the German Bundestag, his staff and senior officials in the Administration, and finally—on the third floor—the area for the Bundestag's parliamentary groups. Surmounting the building is the roof terrace with the Reichstag's new cupola.

Each level is identified by a specific keynote colour applied to the doors and other interior features. These colour accents serve as a visual aid to navigation and promote transparency throughout the building. In line with this colour strategy, the keynote colour for the ground floor is yellowish orange, while a striking blue is used for the plenary level, dark green for the visitors' area, and burgundy for the presidential level. The parliamentary groups' level is decorated in grey.

The modern materials used for the refurbishment of the Reichstag Building also enhance its transparency. Extensive use is made of glass, steel, exposed concrete and matte white or light-brown natural stone, which lift the building's massive historical forms and fill it with a clear, often silvery light. Bold and expressive use is made of colour, for example with the panelling and paintwork in the conference rooms, the cafeteria and the bistro in the Members' restaurant.

Visitors, too, benefit from the transparency and functionality throughout the building. Members of the public approach the building up the grand flight of stone steps at the main portal on the west side and enter via the visitors' entrance, passing between the Reichstag's mighty pillars. From here,



Every level has a
keynote colour.

The plenary chamber is at the heart of parliamentary life.



It is just a few paces into the spacious entrance hall. Already, through the glass partitions, visitors have a perfect view into the plenary chamber—the very heart of parliament. Here, on the first-floor

plenary level, which has the keynote colour blue, one has reached the centre of parliamentary life. This entire floor is reserved for Members, their assistants and parliamentary staff. Entry is at street level: the parliamentarians and their assistants, members of the Federal Government, and the staff of the Bundestag Administration reach this level via the east portal and the two broad flights of stairs in the east lobby. As there is also good vehicular access on this side of the building, this entrance is used during state visits as well.

It is just a few paces to the plenary chamber, fanning out from which are the rooms and facilities that support the work of parliament, especially on sitting days. They include the lobbies and a club room for the often important discussions that take place outside the formal deliberations, as well as a reference library where dates and facts can be checked during debates. There is a small reception

The cafeteria, Members' lobby and club room (top to bottom).



Paul Wallot

Paul Wallot was born on 26 June 1841 in Oppenheim am Rhein. He initially studied mechanical engineering in Hanover, but then moved to the Royal Academy of Architecture in Berlin. From 1864 to 1867, he worked for the Berlin architects Strack, Lucae and Hitzig and in the practice of Gropius and Schmieden. After this, he went on a study tour of Italy and England. From 1869, he worked as a private architect in Frankfurt am Main.

In 1882, he entered the architectural competition to design the parliament building that was being planned and emerged from among 190 entrants as joint winner with the Munich-based architect Friedrich von Thiersch. However, as Wallot's design received the most votes, it was he who was appointed to build the Reichstag Building, which took a total of ten years. Subsequently, Wallot distinguished himself with his designs for the palace of the Reichstag President and the Saxon Diet on the Brühlsche Terrasse in Dresden. The architect was a lecturer at the Academy of Art and the Technical College in Dresden from 1894 to 1911. He became a member of the Academy of Arts in 1885 and a member of the Academy of Architecture in 1894. Paul Wallot died in 1912 in Langenschwalbach.



The Bundestag eagle.

area, as well as rooms for the President in the Chair and the members of the Federal Government, and a room for the counting of votes cast during recorded or secret votes. And not least, there is the Members' restaurant, with its own bistro, and a cafeteria.

Finally, on the south side of the plenary level there is also a multi-faith chapel where Members can gather for Christian morning prayers on sitting days. This space was designed by the Düsseldorf artist Günter Uecker and has a quiet, meditative atmosphere.

The bistro in the Reichstag Building.



The focus of attention, however, is always the Bundestag's plenary chamber. It practically occupies the entire width of the building and rises to the foot of the glass cupola surmounting the Reichstag Building. It is possible to look into the chamber from almost all the floors grouped

around it, the light wells and many other vantage points. This centrality is a physical manifestation of the plenary's role at the heart of Germany's parliamentary democracy.

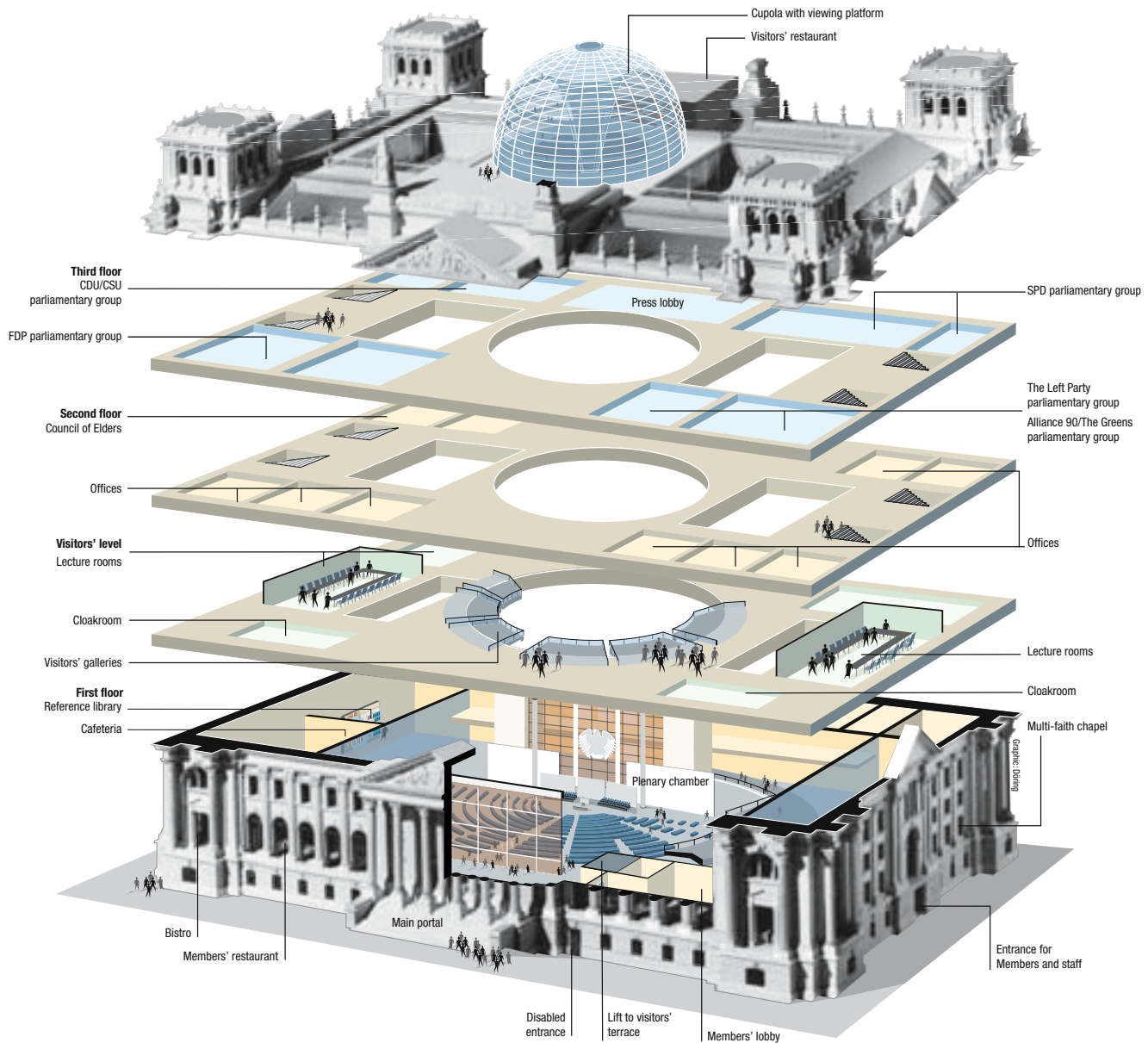


Norman Foster

Norman Foster was born in 1935 in Manchester and studied architecture at the University of Manchester. After graduating in 1961, he won a fellowship to Yale University, where he gained a Master's degree. Returning to London, he founded the architectural bureau Team 4, which was to evolve into his practice Foster Associates in 1967.

People are at the centre of Foster's architecture. His buildings are characterised by their transparency, mostly created by means of large expanses of glass and light steel frameworks. Foster is regarded as a leading representative of what has come to be known as the "high-tech style", on which he has had a decisive influence. His most important works include the passenger terminal for the Fred Olsen shipping line at the Docks of London (1970/71), the headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in Hong Kong (1979-1986), Chek Lap Kok Airport in Hong Kong (1992-1998) and the refurbishment of the Reichstag Building in Berlin (1994-1999). Foster was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1990 and raised to the peerage in 1999.

Sectional drawing of the Reichstag Building



The plenary chamber: at the heart of parliamentary life

The Bundestag’s plenary is where the key features of parliamentary democracy are most visible. Here, in accordance with specific rules, the proponents of divergent political views—and especially the governing majority and the opposition—battle out their differences in the public arena.

This is where the final decisions, above all on legislation, are taken. This is where the Federal Chancellor is elected. And this is where he or she can also be removed from office through the election of a successor. And beyond all the routine work and specialised issues, the plenary is also the “forum of the nation”, where issues of concern to the wider public are discussed. Legislature, control organ, the body that elects the head of government, a forum for public debate: all these roles are most evident in the plenary.

In the plenary, above all, it is also apparent that the Bundestag’s sovereignty is limited only by the provisions of the German constitution, and that parliament is not bound by orders or instructions, but regulates its own affairs. If the Bundestag is the highest democratic authority, the plenary is its most important constituent body.

This is apparent, too, from the structure of the weeks of sittings. The week in parliament generally begins on Monday afternoon with the meetings of the executive committees and various other bodies of the parliamentary groups. Tuesday morning is generally set aside for meetings of the working groups established by the parliamentary groups to examine specific topics. The

Representatives of the press following the debate in the plenary.





Shorthand writers
in the plenary
chamber.

weekly full meetings of the parliamentary groups then take place in the afternoon. The Bundestag's specialised parliamentary committees hold their meetings on Wednesday. Question time in the plenary is generally scheduled on Wednesday as well, often with an hour of debate on a specific current issue and a question-and-answer session with the Federal Government after the cabinet meeting. Finally, Thursday and Friday are the days for the Bundestag's plenary sittings. Parliament's weekly cycle reflects a carefully thought-out and scheduled pattern of work that culminates in the plenary.

The process by which parliament's will is formed and decisions are taken begins in the internal working bodies of the parliamentary groups, continues in their full meetings, which are followed by meetings of the parliamentary committees, and concludes with the plenary, which takes the final decisions.

Publicity is a fundamental element of parliamentary democracy. All the important Bundestag debates are broadcast on television and radio. Above all, however, "the public" means the visitors who attend the plenary sittings. They are accommodated on the mezzanine (keynote colour green) above the plenary level, where there are six galleries arranged in a semi-circle with a total of 400 seats for the general public, official visitors, guests of the Bundestag and the press. Descending in tiers, these galleries extend so far down into the plenary chamber that everything seems close enough to touch—as if the spectators too have taken their places right in the middle of the chamber.

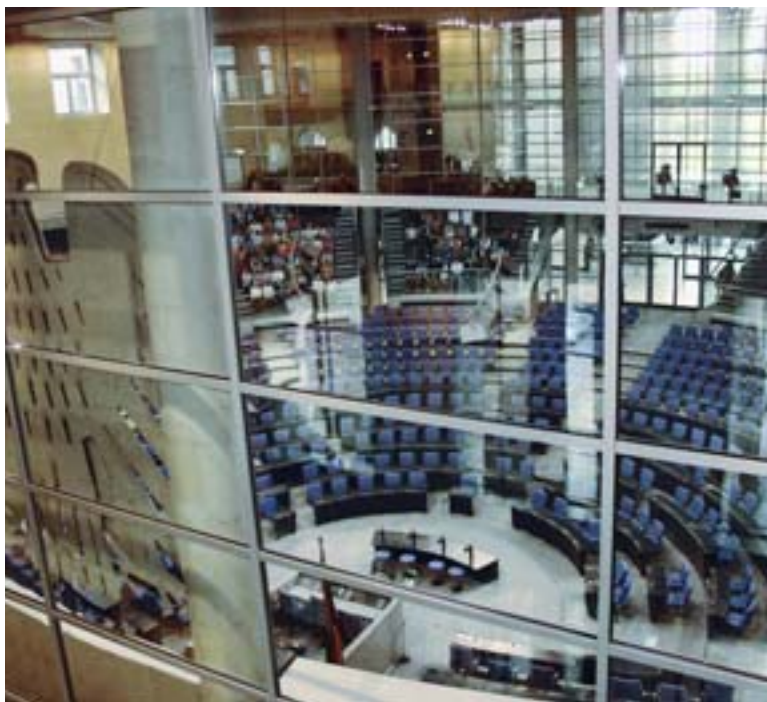
The visitor's gaze falls first on the impressive Bundestag eagle, which hovers in space in front of the glass wall above the President's chair at the head end of the plenary chamber. To its left and right is an LCD display showing the agenda item currently being debated, as well as the exact time. A green "F" signals that the sitting is being broadcast live on television or recorded. Viewed from the visitors' gallery, the German Federal Flag is hoisted to the left below the eagle, with the European flag to the right. Beneath the eagle's feet is the slightly raised working area for the Chair. This consists of the President of the German Bundestag or one of the Vice-Presidents and two Members acting as Secretaries, who are drawn from different parliamentary groups. The parliamentary officials who assist the President in conducting the sitting are also seated here. In front of the working area is the speaker's rostrum, and below it the slightly curved table used by the parliamentary shorthand writers, who note down every word spoken.

Young people
following
proceedings in the
plenary chamber
from the visitors'
gallery.



Visitors have a view of the seats for the Federal Chancellor, the federal ministers and their staff to the left of the President in the Chair; to the right are the seats for the Bundesrat, the body that represents the Länder, the Federal Republic of Germany's constituent states. The two seats in the front row on either side of the President's working area are reserved for the Federal Chancellor and the President of the Bundesrat. Finally, between the Bundesrat and the President in the Chair, there is the seat for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, who is appointed to assist the Bundestag in exercising parliamentary control over the Bundeswehr.

The plenary chamber. Facing the flat inverted ellipse created by the President's working area, the government benches



and the Bundesrat benches, the Members' seats form, as it were, the other half of the ellipse. These are arranged by parliamentary groups, with the seats for the Free Democratic Party (FDP) on the left as viewed from the visitors' gallery. To their right sit the Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), with Alliance 90/The Greens in the middle. Then come the Members for the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and, on the far right, the seats occupied by The Left Party, which entered parliament for the first time in the 16th electoral term.

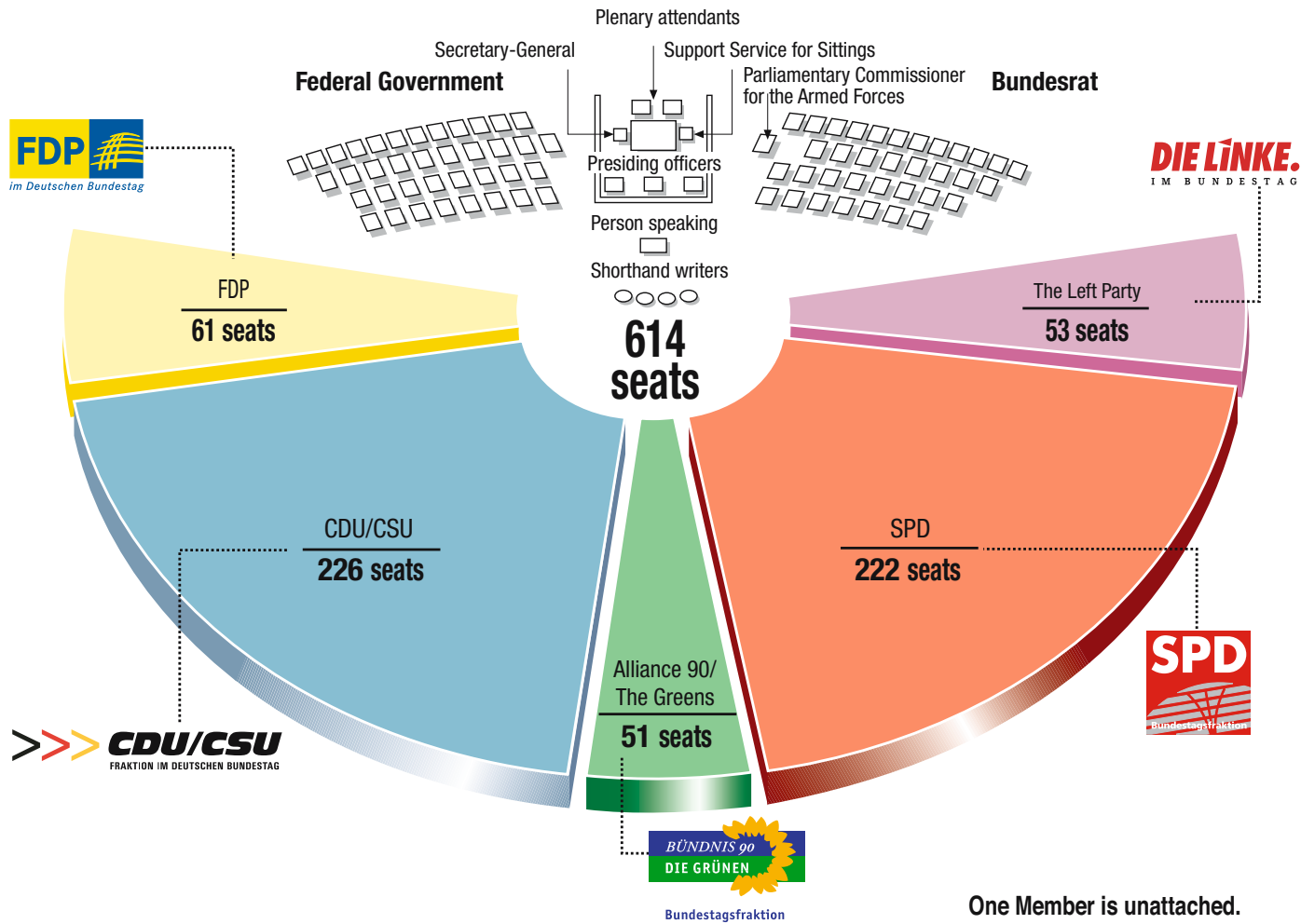
This, then, is the heart of parliament, where debates are held and decisions are taken. The public is closest to it on the mezzanine visitors' level, which includes various lecture and seminar rooms with adjustable walls, all equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

Above the visitors' galleries is the presidential level, where the keynote colour is burgundy. This is where the Bundestag's work is managed, organised and planned—within the limits of its rights to make final decisions, which the plenary also exercises in respect of its own business. This is where the President of the Bundestag has his offices and where the Council of Elders, a steering body whose task is to manage the internal affairs of the Bundestag, has its conference room. The conference room of the Presidium of the Bundestag, other meeting rooms, and the offices of the President's immediate staff and the head of the Bundestag Administration are also located here. The presidential level also plays, not least, a representative role. There are therefore two reception rooms—one large, one small—and a dining room with its own small kitchen.



The plenary assistance service (above) and the bell used by the President of the Bundestag (below).

Distribution of seats in the 16th electoral term of the German Bundestag



As at: April 2006

The President, the Presidium, the Council of Elders

The President of the Bundestag is parliament's highest representative. Together, the President and the Vice-Presidents form the Presidium, parliament's supreme body.

In protocol terms, the President of the Bundestag is second in rank only to the Federal President, who is the head of state. In other words, he ranks higher than the Federal Chancellor and the presidents of other constitutional bodies. This reflects the primacy of the legislature (the Bundestag) over the executive (the Federal Government).

The President represents parliament in the public domain. Within the Bundestag, he and the Vice-Presidents, together with the Council of Elders, conduct the business of the Bundestag. He exercises proprietary and police powers in the Bundestag and, together with the Vice-Presidents, takes the key decisions on personnel matters in the Bundestag Administration. He and the Vice-Presidents are most visible in their role as Presidents in the Chair during the Bundestag's plenary sittings. They must conduct the debates fairly and impartially, ensure that the precise rules of debate are complied with and that matters are dealt with properly, and maintain order in the Bundestag.

In managing the internal affairs of the Bundestag, the Presidium is assisted by the Council of Elders, a steering body composed of the Presidium and other Members of the Bundestag, who are appointed by the parliamentary groups in proportion to the number of seats they hold. Appointees are not the oldest Members of the House, but always have

substantial parliamentary experience. The most important tasks of the Council of Elders—which is also chaired by the President of the Bundestag—are to prepare the Bundestag's programme of work and set the agenda for the plenary sittings. It also deals with, and seeks to find solutions to, contentious issues relating to the dignity and rights of the Bundestag or the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure.

From the outset, accommodating all the Members, committees and other bodies in the new Reichstag Building was impossible. Their offices and meeting rooms are located in three new complexes that have been constructed in the immediate vicinity of the Reichstag Building: the Paul Löbe Building, the Jakob Kaiser Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. The parliamentary groups, however, do have a permanent home on the third floor of the plenary building, above the presidential level. Their conference rooms and the rooms used by their executive committees are grouped around a spacious press lobby, which can also be used for major receptions and other events.

The CDU/CSU and SPD parliamentary groups hold their deliberations on the eastern side of the building, with the FDP, The Left Party and Alliance 90/The Greens conducting their parliamentary affairs on the western side. The rooms used by the parliamentary groups also include the four corner towers of the Reichstag Building. With their rectangular form and high-drawn ceilings, these rooms are spacious and distinctive. And on Tuesdays during the weeks of sittings, when the parliamentary groups meet, this level temporarily becomes the focus of parliamentary activity.



Meeting of the Council of Elders.

Norbert Lammert,
the President
of the German
Bundestag, during
the constituent
meeting of the
16th electoral term.



The parliamentary groups

There are good reasons why the parliamentary groups are accommodated in the Reichstag Building. Since their role is to unite all the Members from one party—or, as in the case of the CDU/CSU, two sister parties—they are important, often crucial levers within the parliamentary process.

The logos of
the parliamentary
groups.



It is not just that the parliamentary groups decide on the initiation of draft legislation or the political approach they will adopt in the plenary debates, for example. Their role is often akin to “parliaments within parliament”. Although the members of a parliamentary group agree on political fundamentals, there are invariably shades of opinion, divergent views and disagreements on substantive issues. During the discussion stage when their political will is taking shape, the parliamentary groups do not always present a united front. As with the political parties during the subsequent plenary debate, there are often lively and even heated discussions within the parliamentary groups before the various standpoints are clarified and—as far as possible—a common position is agreed. And this is one of the things that make the parliamentary groups key actors in the parliamentary process.

The third floor, where the parliamentary groups are accommodated, is the last working level in the Reichstag Building. Above it lies the extensive roof terrace with a visitors’ restaurant—and the glass cupola that surmounts the plenary chamber and immediately became the emblem of the Bundestag in the refurbished Reichstag Building, if not the symbol of the federal capital, Berlin. During the day it sparkles; at night, it shines out over the city.

As it is not a closed structure, but is open at its upper and lower ends, the cupola appears to be suspended like a light and airy globe, a floating superstructure. The mirrored cone in its centre, with its specific technical and ecological functions (see pp. 26/27), is a particularly interesting feature. Above all, however, it is the cupola’s accessibility that is a unique attraction, exerting a powerful appeal for every visitor. The impressive ascent within the cupola leads via a gently inclined helical ramp to the elevated viewing platform that, like the roof terrace, offers spectacular panoramic views over the city.

From the foot of the cupola, visitors can look down into the plenary chamber—a further point of interest. The view from here, or from the visitors’ galleries, which extend far into the plenary chamber, reveals the far-reaching transparency of the German Bundestag in the historic Reichstag Building—a further symbolic element of its commitment, inscribed in large letters above the main portal on the west side of the building, “Dem deutschen Volke” (To the German People).



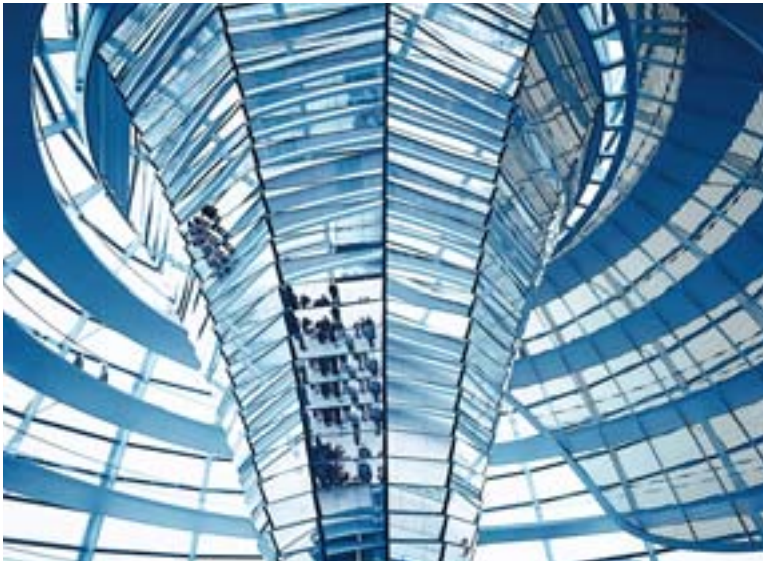
The cupola
attracts a
constant stream
of visitors.

Ecology writ large

What the visitors cannot see: the Reichstag Building and the adjacent Bundestag buildings form their own ecosystem. Energy-saving, eco-friendly, state-of-the-art technology is the key.

Its most visible element is the “light sculptor”, the skittle-shaped cone that extends from the cupola into the plenary chamber. Daylight is reflected without glare through the cupola by the 360 angled mirrors attached to the cone, so that less electricity is required for artificial lighting. It also allows waste air to rise naturally for extraction through the open upper end of the cupola. As a further energy-saving measure, fresh air is channelled under the plenary chamber via large ducts that existed in the original Reichstag Building. It rises through perforated mesh in the floor and is filtered through the carpet into the chamber at the right temperature and humidity.

The cupola of the Reichstag Building with its “light sculptor” and sun shade.



The cone also conceals a heat recovery system that exploits the surplus energy contained in the waste air to heat the building. Finally, a photovoltaic system located on the south-facing section of the roof, with an area of more than 300 square metres, serves as an emission-free energy source. Similar installations are found on the roofs of the Paul Löbe Building and the Jakob Kaiser Building. The centrepiece of the Reichstag Building’s energy concept—which aims to produce and use energy sparingly with minimum environmental impact—are the government quarter’s thermal power plants, which are powered by biodiesel produced from rapeseed oil, a renewable energy source. This saves on consumption of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas and mineral oils and avoids waste emissions.

In accordance with the principle of combined heat and power generation, the surplus heat produced in the generation of electricity is used to heat and cool the parliamentary buildings. Thanks to this technology, the power plants are able to meet around 80 percent of overall energy needs. As an additional feature, surplus heat drives an absorption cooling plant to produce chilled water or, especially in summer, is stored as warm water in an aquifer 300 metres below ground for use in winter. A second, separate aquifer 60 metres below ground stores cold water chilled by the winter air. This is then used to cool the building in summer. Thanks to the use of surplus heat combined with aquifers, the Reichstag Building’s thermal power plants are far more efficient than other installations. In combination with the other energy-saving technologies installed in the Bundestag’s buildings, the system considerably reduces emissions of pollutants as well.



The cone directs light into the plenary chamber and transports waste air out of the building.

Overleaf: The plenary chamber from above.



Opposite: **Tracing the past**

The pediment of
the west portal.

Germany's recent history is inscribed into the very fabric of the Reichstag Building. The traces of the past can still be seen. They just have to be found and interpreted.

The west balcony

The First World War, which saw vast deployments of men and materials, high numbers of casualties and a catastrophic food situation, destroyed trust in the Imperial government among broad swathes of the German population. The regime lost their support and therefore lacked the legitimacy to act. The situation came to a head in November 1918. A sailor's uprising in Kiel developed into a full-scale revolution, which was mainly played out in Berlin.

On 9 November 1918, crowds were milling around in Berlin between the Royal Palace, the seat of the Emperor, Wilhelmstraße, the seat of the Imperial government, and the Reichstag Building. The majority no longer wanted to live in the conditions prevailing under the Imperial regime, while the men who governed the country no longer had any solutions to its problems and had become politically impotent. Germany was threatened by two possible developments: either a brutal military putsch or an uprising by the extreme left emulating the Soviet Russian example.

Philipp Scheidemann
proclaiming
the Republic on
9 November 1918.



On the afternoon of 9 November 1918, Philipp Scheidemann, the chairman of the SPD parliamentary group in the Reichstag, spoke off the cuff to the crowd gathered in front of the Reichstag Building from one of its west balconies and proclaimed the Republic.





The Reichstag
Building ablaze,
27 February
1933.

Various versions of his speech are recorded. He recalled the occasion in 1928 when he wrote his memoirs. Scheidemann's account includes the following passage: "Workers and soldiers! The four years of war have been terrible. The people have had to make fearful sacrifices of possessions and blood. This disastrous war is at an end. The murdering is over. The consequences of the war, the poverty and the misery, will still burden us for many years... Be united, faithful and dutiful! The old and the rotten, the monarchy, has collapsed. Long live the new! Long live the German Republic!"

It was a daring step, particularly as Karl Liebknecht, the leader of the radical socialists, announced the founding of a Soviet-style socialist republic from the Royal Palace shortly afterwards and also because Scheidemann did not immediately gain the agreement of his party colleagues. However, his words sketched out the way forward to parliamentary democracy. The power of the Imperial government was broken and the path of extremism had been rejected.

The Reichstag Building became famous all over the world as a result of the fire that gutted it on 27 February 1933. Adolf Hitler's government, which had just been appointed, exploited the incident to demolish the foundations of the rule of law with its "Emergency Degree to Protect the People and the State" of 28 February. Shortly afterwards, the "Enabling Act" of 23 March 1933 abolished parliamentary government for all practical purposes and installed the National Socialist dictatorship.

The heating tunnel

The remains of the fire were not cleared away until the 1960s. During the refurbishment work following German reunification, construction workers discovered a tunnel that had once carried heating pipes under the road behind the Reichstag Building to the palace of the Reichstag President (today the home of the German Parliamentary Association). It was preserved as an archaeological find. According to rumours, members of the "Sturmabteilung", the paramilitary wing of Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), had infiltrated the Reichstag Building through this tunnel in order to set the building on fire, an accusation that was never substantiated. A section of the tunnel was cut out during the building work and is now on show in the underground pedestrian passage leading from the Reichstag Building to Members' offices in the Jakob Kaiser Building. This is intended to commemorate the Reichstag fire and Marinus van der Lubbe, who was sentenced to death for arson by the Reich Court in Leipzig on the basis of retrospective legislation.

A section of the old tunnel that carried heating pipes between the Reichstag Building and the former official residence of the President of the Reichstag.





Graffiti left by Soviet soldiers

A burned-out shell stripped of all significance, the Reichstag Building remained largely unused under the National Socialists. However, the Soviet Union continued to accord the imposing building great importance as an icon of the events associated with the establishment of Hitler's dictatorship. During the final phases of the Second World War, in particular, Soviet propaganda presented the capture of the Reichstag Building, which was prominent on account of its size and central position, as a military objective and political goal.

The battle for Berlin began on 21 April 1945 and the fighting arrived at the Reichstag Building on 29 April 1945, although it took until 2 May 1945 for the Red Army to wipe out all resistance in the building. In the days that followed, many Soviet soldiers wanted to immortalise themselves there, writing their names or brief messages on its walls as an expression of victory. Some of these graffiti have been preserved—as traces of a history that led from megalomania to total defeat.

The Red Flag on the Reichstag Building

The Reichstag Building consequently became a symbol for the rise and fall of Hitler's regime, without itself having played a major role during the National Socialist period. When the end finally came, the Red Flag fluttered from its roof. The background to this was a relatively effective method used by Soviet soldiers to mark the objectives they had captured in the fighting for the city. Each objective was given a number, and once it had been taken a Red Flag was put up to signalise it was in Soviet hands. This helped the Soviet troops

Opposite:
After the Reichstag Building had been captured, Soviet soldiers immortalised themselves with their names or messages.

to work out in the chaotic, devastated city which parts of Berlin they already held.

At the Reichstag Building, this military practice became a political gesture: several groups, each with a Red Flag, fought forward towards the building in order to ensure that at least one flag on the roof proclaimed the victory of the glorious Red Army. Once it had been captured, the Red Flag was raised by three Soviet soldiers on the building's east parapet.

The newsreel pictures that are included in many documentary films and the famous photograph of three soldiers raising the Red Flag next to the south-east tower were recreated in the days that followed and distributed all over the world as authentic documents. Nevertheless, they are extremely valuable, above all for the way they sum up the spirit of the time, and have great and enduring significance as images that represent the end of the National Socialist regime.

The Berlin Wall

Following the Second World War, the Reichstag Building lay on the border between East and West. Its location at this prominent point lent it symbolic importance. It was a symbol of Germany's division, the rifts that marked the country's political landscape and the bleak outlook for its future—a state of affairs that only began to change gradually.

The reconstruction of the vast ruin in the 1950s illustrated the slow pace of change. At first imperceptibly, then more clearly from 1948, and ever more clearly after 13 August 1961, when the authorities in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) sealed the border, the building came to be at the centre

Opposite:
The Red Flag
being raised on
the Reichstag
Building.



West Berliners
scaling the Berlin
Wall, 1989.



of many conflicts simply because of where it stood. The wall erected between the Berlin administrative districts of Mitte and Tiergarten became one of the most sensitive flashpoints in the world. This was the front line between two military blocks armed to the teeth with the latest weaponry, each suspiciously observing the other. Every movement was analysed. The slightest error on either side could have triggered a mistaken response from the other. And that would have meant war.

The Berlin Wall stood behind the Reichstag Building, but when the border was opened in November 1989, it was only a matter of time before its physical manifestation too was swept away. There are concrete reminders of the existence of the Wall at several places. A commemorative grove dedicated to the young people who lost their lives along the border in Berlin trying to make their way to freedom was created on the western side. Simple

crosses preserve their names for posterity. From the Brandenburg Gate, past the Reichstag Building to the River Spree, the course of the Wall is marked with a line of stones set into the road surface and the paving of Ebertplatz. The linear complex of new parliamentary and government buildings known as the *Band des Bundes* (Band of Federal Buildings) spans the River Spree, which formed the border here until 1990. The new architecture overcomes historic divisions, thus symbolising how the once-divided city is growing together. The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building to the east of the Spree was built on a site that had previously been occupied by border fortifications. As a reminder to future generations, a section of the “hinterland wall”, which prevented access to the death strip from the east, remains preserved beneath the Bundestag Library. These blocks of concrete pay eloquent testimony to the past and make this new building—like the Reichstag Building itself—a witness to history.

Memorial to
victims of the
Berlin Wall
(above) and
remains of the
fortifications
(below).



Place of Remembrance and Members' lobby

History is also commemorated within the refurbished Reichstag Building, for instance with the work entitled *In Memory of the Members of Parliament in the Weimar Republic who were Persecuted, Outlawed or Murdered between 1933 and 1945* designed by the Düsseldorf-based artist Katharina Sieverding in the Members' lobby. This impressive space on the ground floor of the building is consciously conceived not as a place of mourning and warning, but as a zone of peace and tranquillity to which present-day parliamentarians can withdraw. The fates of many of their predecessors are remembered unmelodramatically and yet ineluctably. With its background motif of the sun's blazing corona, the five-part photopainting at the head of the room conjures up associations with both the Reichstag fire and the global conflagration it presaged, as well as the subsequent rebirth of a purified, democratic Germany as a "phoenix from the ashes". The raging flames come to stand for the past and the future, and can be understood both as a portent and as a warning not to take democracy for granted but to guard over it with unceasing vigilance. The central motif is a yellow X-ray image of a human spine placed in front of this sea of flames. It refers metaphorically to the courage of the Members of the Reichstag who "showed backbone" and defied the terror of the National Socialists. Three books of remembrance honouring the memory of many Members of the Reichstag lie on wooden tables in front of the memorial. The volume on the central table commemorates each of the 120 Members of the Reichstag who were murdered by the National Socialists with a short biography. The two other books of remembrance pay tribute to parliamentarians who were arrested or driven into emigration.

The Members' lobby.



Memorial to Murdered Members of Parliament

A memorial to the Members of the Reichstag who were murdered by the National Socialists is to be found outside, to the south-west of the Reichstag Building, where thousands of visitors queue daily to visit the cupola. Designed by the Berlin-based artist Dieter Appelt, this work consists of broken tablets of Berlin cast iron reminiscent of the narrow gravestones at Jewish cemeteries and makes an initially modest, unspectacular impression. Names and dates are inscribed along the upper edges of the tablets, as are the places where the victims died, places that document a terrible past: Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen, Berlin-Plötzensee, Theresienstadt... The apparent unobtrusiveness of this artwork, which is about ten metres long, is intentional. The desire was not to present the National Socialist disaster strikingly as a startling revelation, but as a catastrophe that quietly descended on Germany with the acquiescence of far too many of its people.

Archive of German Members of Parliament

History can also be explored in the basement, where the French artist Christian Boltanski keeps the biographical past alive with his *Archive of German Members of Parliament*. Almost 5,000 metal boxes are labelled with the names of all the Members of the Reichstag and German Bundestag democratically elected between 1919 and 1999, when the refurbished Reichstag Building was inaugurated.

The rusty containers the size of shoeboxes are piled up on top of each other up to the ceiling in two long narrow blocks with a narrow passageway running between them, only dimly lit by



The Memorial to Murdered Members of Parliament (above) and the Archive of German Members of Parliament (below).

carbon-filament bulbs. This “basement archive” gives Germany’s democratic tradition impressive symbolic form. Each politician, whether they only spent two years in parliament or had a crucial role in guiding Germany’s fate over a longer period of time, is identified as a historic individual remembered with the same amount of space. Boltanski only deviates from this principle in two respects: the boxes for the Members of the Reichstag murdered by the National Socialists are marked with a black stripe as “Victims of National Socialism”. And a single black box in the middle of the passageway stands for the years from 1933 to 1945, during which the German people were not represented by a democratically legitimated parliament.

Plaque commemorating the opening of the Hungarian border

A memorial plaque at the north-east corner of the Reichstag Building commemorates an event that made a crucial contribution to the fall of the Berlin Wall and so the achievement of German unity: the courageous decision by the Hungarian government to open the border fence between Hungary and Austria on 10 September 1989. Thousands of GDR residents then fled through this first breach in the “Iron Curtain”; the border between east and west was no longer impenetrable. The bronze plaque, which measures about 90 by 150 centimetres, bears the inscription, “A token of the friendship between the Hungarian and German peoples: for a united Germany, for an independent Hungary, for a democratic Europe.” The plaque was raised into place shortly after unification before the Reichstag Building was refurbished as a gesture of gratitude to Hungary.

The plaque commemorating the opening of the Hungarian border.



Chronology

9 June 1884: The laying of the foundation stone for the Reichstag Building, which was designed by architect Paul Wallot.

9 November 1918: After the collapse of the German Empire at the end of the First World War, Philipp Scheidemann, chairman of the Social Democratic parliamentary group, proclaims the German Republic from a balcony of the Reichstag Building.

27 February 1933: Following Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power, the Reichstag fire comes to symbolise the death of parliamentary democracy in Germany.

May 1945: The battle for Berlin finally ends the National Socialist regime and the Second World War that it unleashed. The Reichstag Building—like so many others in Germany’s capital city—stands in ruins.

The foundation stone for the Reichstag Building being laid, 9 June 1884.





13 August 1961: The building of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961 seals the division of Germany. Until the collapse of the GDR regime in 1989, the border between East and West runs alongside the Reichstag Building. In the 1960s, the interior architecture of the Reichstag Building is modified, and it is used for parliamentary and other purposes.



4 October 1990: One day after Germany's formal reunification, the first sitting of the all-German Bundestag takes place in the Reichstag Building. It consists of the Members of the (Bonn) Bundestag and 144 Members of the Volkskammer (People's Chamber) of the GDR elected by the Volkskammer to the Bundestag. The first all-German Bundestag elections are held on 2 December, and its constituent sitting takes place on 20 December in Berlin.



The first sitting of the all-German Bundestag, the wrapped Reichstag Building and the cupola (top to bottom).

20 June 1991: Meeting in Bonn, the German Bundestag decides that Germany's parliament and government should once again have their seats in Berlin. The vote to move to Berlin is won by a narrow majority of 338 to 320.

July 1993: The Council of Elders of the German Bundestag decides in favour of the proposals for the building's refurbishment put forward by the British architect Norman Foster.

June 1994: Following heated discussions, the Council of Elders decides that a new cupola should be built on top of the Reichstag Building.

May 1995: Norman Foster's final design for the roof structure on the Reichstag Building is presented: a glass cupola with internal ramps on which visitors can walk up to a viewing platform.

23 June to 6 July 1995: Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrap the Reichstag Building in fabric. As soon as the wrapping has been taken down, demolition and reconstruction work begins.

19 April 1999: The German Bundestag takes possession of the rebuilt Reichstag Building in a ceremony. The architect, Norman Foster, presents the President of the German Bundestag, Wolfgang Thierse, with a symbolic key to the building. The Bundestag moves from Bonn to Berlin in July and August. The first regular week of sittings begins in the newly refurbished Reichstag Building on 6 September. The following day, the German Bundestag celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.



Building profile—the Reichstag Building in figures

Volume of Reichstag Building:	Approx. 360,000 m ³
Net useable area:	Approx. 11,000 m ²
Plenary chamber:	1200 m ² ; 29,000 m ³
Bundestag eagle in plenary chamber:	Area: 58 m ² ; height: 6.80 m; width: 8.50 m; weight: almost 2.5 tonnes; construction: 4 aluminium sheets, each 12 mm thick
Height of Reichstag Building including cupola from street level:	54 m
Length of Reichstag Building:	137.4 m
Width of Reichstag Building:	93.9 m
Height of roof terrace:	30 m
Height of viewing platform from street level:	47 m
Height of cupola from roof terrace:	24 m
Diameter of cupola:	40 m
Weight of cupola:	1200 tonnes (800 tonnes of steel, 400 tonnes of glass)
Area of glass in cupola:	3000 m ²
Rooftop restaurant:	100 seats in restaurant and 100 on the terrace



The Jakob Kaiser Building

by Gregor Mayntz

The Jakob Kaiser Building stands between Pariser Platz and the River Spree just a few paces from the Reichstag Building. More than 2,000 Members of the German Bundestag and parliamentary staff work there.

The basic concept

When the decision was taken to move from Berlin to Bonn and it became clear that parliament, its Members and staff would need new workplaces, a large, plain office building could have been thrown up: a more or less soulless, mechanistic bureaucratic edifice that would have stood out like a sore thumb in the Berlin cityscape. Instead, the Jakob Kaiser Building was carefully planned and constructed as a complex that would integrate existing architecture, follow the shapes of earlier streets and so fit in with Berlin's historic architectural traditions. A tour through this "building of eight buildings" shows how fascinating the results can be when five teams of architects pursue their own ideas within a shared framework. And with one purpose. The Cologne-based architect Thomas van den Valentyn began the restoration of the palace of the Reichstag President before his colleagues and finished two years earlier than the others as well. However, from the very outset, he integrated the building into the structures that were to be erected later, both architecturally and functionally. Basing themselves on the specifications laid down by the Bundestag, the four other teams (Busmann

+ Haberer from Cologne, de Architekten Cie from Amsterdam, von Gerkan, Marg und Partner and Schweger + Partner from Hamburg) developed several master plans that all followed one basic concept: two rectangular blocks on either side of Dorotheenstraße reproducing the historic shape of the plots of land on the site, but differing from the earlier buildings in having larger courtyards, links running below and above road level and large areas of glass that would allow the application of modern energy saving technologies.

The glass curtain façade of Building 5 and Building 6, which improves the complex's acoustics and thermal insulation, is especially worthy of note in this respect, and the landscaped flat roof is equipped with photovoltaic cells. The Jakob Kaiser Building does not exceed the Berlin maximum eaves height of 22 metres, yet breathtaking perspectives can be enjoyed from the dizzy heights of its glazed upper storeys. The use of glass expresses the principle of transparency by architectural means. The internal layout of the Jakob Kaiser Building makes it easy for people to find their way about. To the north, several light wells offer free views of the Spree, while east-west axes link the complex's courtyards, allowing a simple numbering scheme that begins at the west end of the north block with Building 1, followed by Buildings 2, 3 and 4, the last of which stands on Wilhelmstraße to the east. The numbering follows the same pattern in the south block with Building 5 next to the Tiergarten, followed by Building 6, Building 7 and Building 8, which overlooks Wilhelmstraße at the east end of the complex. The bridges between Buildings 2 and 6 and Buildings 4 and 8 can be reached from within the complex via the halls and walkways that connect together the various sections and levels of the building.



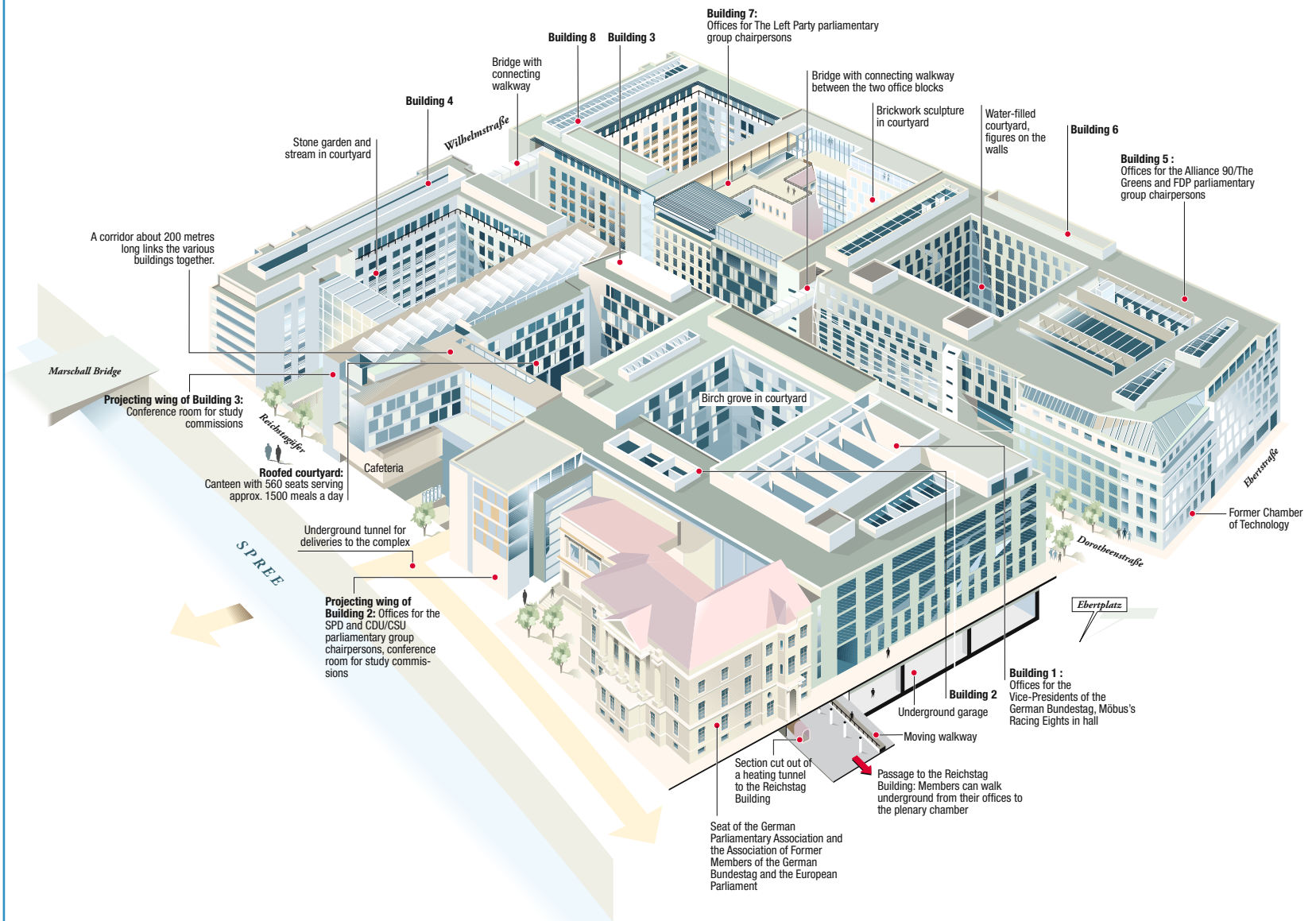
Office doors with glass slits at the sides (above) and the entrance hall of the historic building in Dorotheenstraße (below).



Who was Jakob Kaiser?

Hardly any other name would have been more appropriate to the symbolism of the place, its history and its future than that of Jakob Kaiser. This bookbinder from Nuremberg was a resolute champion of parliamentarianism in the Weimar Republic. He was involved in the Christian resistance during the National Socialist period, and in 1945 joined with like-minded activists to found the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the Soviet Zone. He was removed from the leadership of the CDU by the Soviet military administration due to his opposition to the imposition of ideological uniformity on East German society. But Kaiser did not give up and went on to become a member of Berlin City Council, a member of the Parliamentary Council and Federal Minister for All-German Affairs. He died in 1961 at the age of 73.

Sectional drawing of the Jakob Kaiser Building





Parliamentary bodies

The parliamentary groups and the Presidium

The internal organisation of the complex does not correspond particularly closely to its external division into separate buildings, which may well reflect the parliamentary truism that everything is always linked to everything else and politicians therefore have to be capable of seeing the big picture. This thinking is also evident in the accommodation provided for the parliamentary groups and their staff.

A minimum of five percent of the Members of the German Bundestag is needed to form a parliamentary group. The work done in the German Bundestag is controlled to a considerable extent by these parliamentary groups. They are important in institutional terms since their relative strengths are reflected in the composition of the Council of Elders, the membership of the parliamentary committees and the number of committee chairpersons provided by each parliamentary group. However, the parliamentary groups play an important role in policymaking as well: on the one hand, as bodies that mediate between the electorate's political aspirations and their practical implementation in parliament; on the other, in preparing the decisions of the Bundestag. To this end, the individual parliamentary groups form working groups and working parties that contribute to the deliberations in the specialised committees and prepare the positions finally adopted by their own parliamentary groups. This is why, apart from the staff each Member employs to help them with their personal work, the parliamentary groups also have subject specialists with the policy experience to carry out detailed research and provide expert advice. They all need



Roofed courtyard.

Opposite:
Connecting
passage from
Building 1 to
Building 2.



Conference room
in the historic
building in
Dorotheenstraße

offices, and about half of them are accommodated in the Jakob Kaiser Building.

However, the parliamentary groups are not based in the individual buildings within the Jakob Kaiser Building, but spread out across whole storeys. For instance, the offices of the two largest parliamentary groups extend through almost all eight of the building's subunits. However, first we should begin our little tour at the main entrance on Dorotheenstraße. Building 1 is the main point of entry for the neighbouring parts of the complex, which draw the eye with their contrasting façades. The very form of the first hall the visitor enters underlines its function as a central reception area by offering extensive views into other areas of the Building. Straight ahead, part of the Reichstag President's Palace can be seen behind a glass screen, while to the right it is possible to look through into Buildings 2, 3 and 4, which can now be perceived as a unified whole endowed with coherence by the corridors, walkways and bridges that run through the block.

To the left rises the first wing of offices, which accommodates the Parliamentary Services Directorate, including the shorthand writers, and the Vice-Presidents. Together with the President of the German Bundestag, the Vice-Presidents constitute the Presidium and conduct plenary sittings. The Vice-Presidents and the shorthand writers occupy the offices closest to the Reichstag Building. After all, they are sometimes pressed for time.

A building for commissions

Again and again, narrow hallways cut across the building, allowing light to flood down into the upper basement from the recessed attic storey as well as encouraging visual communication. Someone on the first floor of Building 3 can see at a glance who happens to be walking along the landing on the third floor of Building 4. And where they are going: possibly into one of the two conference rooms that rise up through two storeys, giving the architecture a looser feel. In these conference rooms, Members deliberate on the lower

level, while space is provided for the public on a visitors' gallery above.

This realises a wish expressed by many parliamentary reformers in the form of practical architecture, making the core of what the Bundestag actually does more transparent. For the routine business is conducted to a greater extent in the meetings of its committees ("working parliament") than in the discussions that take place in the plenary chamber ("debating parliament"). The two conference rooms are intended primarily for study commissions, which explore issues of importance for the future in greater depth and detail than is possible during routine, day-to-day business and hold hearings of experts in public. However, these conference rooms are also set aside as back-up accommodation for the normal committees—in case there is ever a shortage of space for meetings in the Paul Löbe Building.

The larger of the two committee conference rooms not only has built-in interpreting booths, but proceedings there can be broadcast by the Bundestag's own television service or fed to other television stations at any time as a live signal from permanently installed cameras. Bundestag Television is based on the other side of Dorotheenstraße in the basement of Building 5 and possesses its own fully functioning studio. Part of its role is to make the work of parliament more accessible to the public. For when the television stations have long since ended their broadcasts from the Bundestag, citizens can still watch parliament reach decisions in real time on the Internet at www.bundestag.de. A couple of mouse clicks are all it takes to view live recordings of debates.

A breathing building

With their matching exteriors, Building 4 and Building 8 form the eastern ends of the two blocks overlooking Wilhelmstraße. Here too, transparency and openness characterise the interior design: the office doors protrude slightly into the corridors with glass slits at the sides through which it is possible to see whether there is work going on behind them. Crossing over the glass bridge to the south side of Dorotheenstraße, we find ourselves in a restored bank building that has been integrated into the complex. Eleven steps compensate for the height difference between the modern and historic structures. The old stairwell, which is dominated by magnificently ornate wrought iron, differs in every way from the modern banisters, where cool, calm glass, wood and concrete set the tone. The parliamentary groups are accommodated on the southern side of the Jakob Kaiser Building, in which the German Federal Government also maintains meeting rooms and liaison offices. However, none of the 1,745 offices are occupied in perpetuity. The allocation of space to the Members and their staff, the parliamentary groups and their subject specialists depends, of course, on the distribution

Each office
measures approx.
18 square metres.



of seats, which changes every few years when new elections are held.

Just as the Bundestag lives and changes, so can the Jakob Kaiser Building be described as a breathing building. Basically, all the architects kept to the specification of 18 square metres for each office unit. But care was taken throughout to keep the arrangement “fluid”, making it possible to respond to changing functions with new configurations without the need for extensive structural alterations. The overall composition of the south block plays with the fascinating effects of the voids that run across the complex, rising diagonally through several levels and incorporating various open areas. The idea of using the large entrance hall in Building 5 purposefully with a kidney-shaped house accommodating two small conference rooms inside its roofed interior courtyard achieves a genuinely playful effect. The multifacetedness of the ensemble can be gauged by the different ways the courtyards are laid out. They are either roofed, open, small green areas or landscaped with an artificial pond. A couple of square metres of soil ensure that, here too, trees can grow up towards the sky.

A restored staircase.



Our tour ends at the “Chamber of Technology”, which dates from before the First World War and has been integrated into Building 4. Its wooden panelling ensures the interior of this older building shares the same visual identity as the new parts of the complex. Externally, however, the façade clearly reflects its independent historical identity. The symbiosis of the historic fabric of the building and its modern extensions is expressed, above all, by the sloped attic storey: formally, it draws on historical models, but the choice of materials—steel, aluminium and glass—is unmistakably modern.

Technology

From the upper basement, it is possible to reach both the underground connecting passage to the Reichstag Building and an underground passage under Dorotheenstraße to the other parts of the Jakob Kaiser Building. Light penetrates every corner, from the 26-metre-high glass roof down into the upper basement. Beneath lie the lower basement, the access tunnels for deliveries and an underground garage. The internal climate of the Jakob Kaiser Building is managed on the basis of ingenious energy-saving concepts. The amount of energy required to heat the building is minimised by the glass façades in which fascinating, ever-changing coloured reflections can be seen, varying with the viewpoint and time of day. Water runs through the centre of the concrete pillars and beams, and can be used to heat or cool the building as required according to the season. Furthermore, the complex, which has a total volume of 728,000 cubic metres, is connected to the hot and cold water aquifers deep beneath Platz der Republik in front of the Reichstag Building as well as the parliamentary quarter’s biodiesel cogeneration plants.



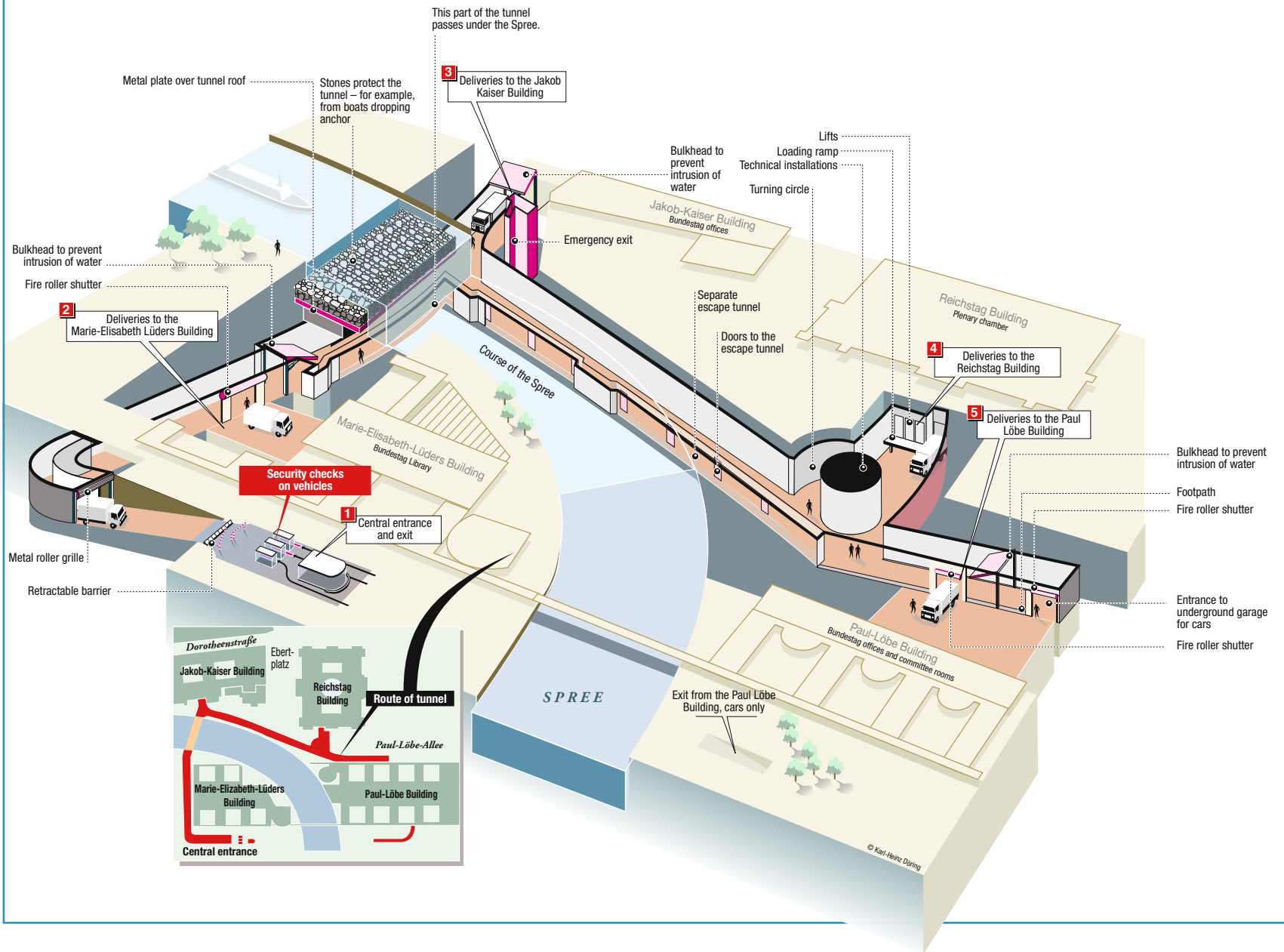
A glass façade.

Building profile—the Jakob Kaiser Building in figures

Completed:	December 2001	Upper storeys:	5
		(plus recessed attic storey)	
Net useable area:	53,000 m ²	Meeting rooms:	43
Gross internal area:	152,000 m ²	Rooms for the Presidium of the German Bundestag:	25
Total volume:	728,000 m ³	Internal service rooms:	150
Offices:	1,745	Conference rooms for study commissions:	2
Area of standard office:	18 m ²	Underground garage:	260 parking spaces
Basement levels:	2		
Ground floor:	1		

1 TV studio, 1 canteen with 570 seats, 4 shops

Tunnel system



German Parliamentary Association

Conversations on the bel étage

The Reichstag President's Palace, which can be counted as part of the Jakob Kaiser Building, is occupied by the German Parliamentary Association. Internally and externally, it replicates the style of the Reichstag Building directly opposite. This is no coincidence, since both buildings were erected between 1884 and 1903 to the plans of Paul Wallot.

The aim of the restoration was to preserve the historic fabric of the building as far as possible. The façades were renovated and the original spatial structure and arrangement of staircases, corridors and reception rooms also remained largely untouched. The building was listed as a monument of historical interest in 1994 and is the home of the German Parliamentary Association, which is dedicated to the informal cultivation of contacts among Members and their guests, as well as the Association of Former Members of the German Bundestag and the European Parliament, which seeks to keep up lines of contact to former parliamentarians. Much of these two organisations' work is done behind the scenes in small administrative rooms on the second floor. But attention naturally focuses on the club rooms and dining rooms on the first floor, the "bel étage", as it is known, which is reached from the ground floor via an imposing marble staircase. The Reichstag President's Palace also offers a fine setting for larger red-carpet occasions with the great hall that is entered from the loggia.

The bel étage (above) and main staircase (opposite) of the former official residence of the President of the Reichstag.



Historic view
of the official
residence of the
President of the
Reichstag,
circa 1910.



A residence for the President of the Reichstag

Following the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, there were at first no plans to build an official residence for the President of the Reichstag, who was merely supposed to receive a grace-and-favour flat from the Empire in the new Reichstag Building—which would have been the sole material privilege of the office. However, when no space could be found in the plans to include accommodation for the President, a separate building had to be constructed. After the search for a suitable location and a design and construction phase that lasted from 1897 to 1904, the completed building contained residential accommodation and offices for the President of the Reichstag as well as flats for the secretary-general of the Reichstag and the steward of the President's residence. The design and construction work were entrusted to the architect of the Reichstag Building, Paul Wallot. In spring 1899, the project was expanded to include a wing running away to the side with a hall dedicated to William I known as the "Emperor Room". The Executive Committee of the Reichstag, a body

made up of senior parliamentarians that managed the administrative affairs of the Reichstag, argued that this would hide ugly fire walls standing on the adjoining plot. Paul Wallot kept the west façade of the residence, with its main entrance, oriel and carriage entrance, architecturally plain opposite the richly articulated east façade of the Reichstag Building. By contrast, the Executive Committee of the Reichstag and the architect were keen to decorate the principal north façade looking out onto the River Spree with particularly lavish ornamentation. Nor did they allow themselves to be deterred from these plans by the Prussian authorities charged with supervising public spending, who presented objections to the addition of the Emperor Room and its high steps leading into the garden that delayed construction work. The building was finally completed at the end of 1903 and presented to the Reichstag by the Building Department of the Reich Office of the Interior on 10 January 1904. It was opened by the President of the Reichstag, Franz Count von Ballestrem, on 3 February with a dinner attended by Emperor William II.

Gerhard Hahn

The former
official residence
of the President
of the Reichstag
following its
restoration.



The Architects

Diversity as a guiding principle

The guiding principle for the Jakob Kaiser Building is diversity. In 1994, the architect Nils Hartenstein was expecting to pop over to Berlin from time to time to keep an eye on the progress of the planning work. But things did not quite turn out as he had imagined. The five architectural practices commissioned by the German Bundestag, Thomas van den Valentyn, Busmann + Haberer, de Architekten Cie, von Gerkan, Marg und Partner and Schweger + Partner met for the first time in March 1994. Only after this did the work start in earnest. If all the different designs were to be shown running past as an animated film, it would soon become apparent how many changes were made to the plans even before the first sod was turned. The projecting wings were initially going to match the mighty proportions of the Reichstag President's Palace, but then shrank more and more in order not to block the view of the Spree. A restaurant became necessary, but not as many conference rooms were needed as originally thought. Once it had been drawn up, the master-plan was never static. Bruno Vennes of Busmann + Haberer sums up the teams' experience in a pithy image: "The master plan lives..." Certainly, the teams of architects, who had hardly known each other or not known each other beforehand, found working together a completely new experience. They unpacked their files and began the planning work sitting desk by desk in a large canalside loft on the Paul-Lincke-Ufer in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. Their cooperation was marked by increasing openness: "We rapidly realised that we could only really do it all jointly, that we had to find a shared language," remembers Nils Hartenstein.

Once van den Valentyn had been entrusted with the restoration and conversion of the Reichstag President's Palace, the teams calculated from the specifications for the size of the courtyards and the number of offices that eight buildings would have to be constructed, divided them by four and concluded that each practice should develop two buildings. After further consideration of the various functions foreseen for the different buildings and relevant technical and architectural issues, Schweger + Partner took on Buildings 1 and 2, Busmann + Haberer Buildings 3 and 7, von Gerkan, Marg und Partner Buildings 4 and 8 and de Architekten Cie Buildings 5 and 6. The companies jointly formed the consortium Planungsgesellschaft Dorotheenblöcke Berlin mbH, which was to be responsible for the overall management of the work as the main contractor. And there was going to be a great deal to manage in the course of a construction project on this scale.

More than 250 organisations and authorities had to be consulted, their requirements taken into account and thousands of contractors and subcontractors coordinated. And yet the building that was finally created represents a unified whole.



Model of preliminary plans for the Jakob Kaiser Building (1996).



The Paul Löbe Building

by Sönke Petersen

The Paul Löbe Building rises in Berlin's parliamentary and government quarter just a stone's throw away from the Reichstag Building with its glass cupola.

An engine for Germany

The light, long building on the Spreebogen named after the last democratic President of the Reichstag, Paul Löbe, is part of the Band of Federal Buildings, the linear complex that spans the River Spree and links together the two halves of the German capital once divided by the Iron Curtain. The Band consists of the new Federal Chancellery and the Paul Löbe Building on the western bank of the river and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building on the eastern side, which is linked to the rest of the development by a double footbridge.

Unlike the Reichstag Building, which houses a modern parliament in a historic setting, the Paul Löbe Building offered an opportunity to pursue original ideas uninhibited by the legacy of the past. Laypeople and experts alike are unanimous in agreeing that the Munich-based architect, Stephan Braunfels, has been highly successful in doing this: about 200 metres long and 102 metres wide, with its ten striking side wings and eight distinctive glazed cylinders, the new eight-storey building looks like a powerful, yet stylish engine driving Germany into the future.

Functions

The Paul Löbe Building was designed, above all, to house three major parts of the German Bundestag: the parliamentary committees, the Public Relations Division and the Visitors' Service. These are vitally important for a modern parliament. Most legislative work is done not in the plenary, but by the Bundestag's 22 specialised permanent committees, almost all of which have a remit that mirrors the competences of a particular federal ministry.

Opposite:
The main hall of
the Paul Löbe
Building.



According to the Rules of Procedure of the German Bundestag, the committees are “bodies responsible for preparing the decisions of the Bundestag”. In fact, such decisions are often taken at the committee stage, as most Members rely on the detailed preliminary work done in the committees and their recommendations for decisions when it comes to the final voting on legislation in the plenary. There is no alternative to this reliance, given the highly specialised division of labour characteristic of modern democracies: no parliamentarian can be an expert on all the many complex and often highly specialised topics that are debated; they have to rely on the advice of specialists. However, despite the preparatory work of the committees, the individual parliamentarian retains overall political responsibility.

The Bundestag can no more do without publicity than it can without its committees. Democracy



The committee rooms are located in rotundas.

and transparency are mutually dependent—two sides of the same coin. Hence the Bundestag’s efforts to ensure that not only the media, but ever increasing numbers of citizens as well, take a direct interest in its work. More than ten million guests have visited the parliament buildings in Berlin since 1999. When they come, many want not just to have a look at the Reichstag Building and enjoy the view from its cupola, but also to see what goes on behind the scenes at the Bundestag. In order to make sure these visits run smoothly, the Bundestag has set up its own Visitors’ Service. Its staff are based in the Paul Löbe Building, where interested groups of visitors can learn about the German political system in seminar and exhibition rooms close to the heart of power. The hope is that the ideal of transparent, open democracy can be experienced in the Paul Löbe Building.

The building

This transparency is exemplified at the west end of the building, where the main entrance is located. The massive façade is fully glazed and reflects the Federal Chancellery located opposite in its broad sheets of glass. Even from some distance away, visitors are supposed to gain the impression that they will be welcome in the Paul Löbe Building, the workshop of the German parliament. The complex looks even more attractive in the evening, when the vast expanse of glass is illuminated from within and the staircases rising symmetrically to the right and left unfold their deliberately sculptural effect (causing them to be sometimes referred to as “stairways to heaven”).

The side façades are 200 metres long and 23 metres high, articulated by five side wings with



The Bundestag’s children’s daycare facility.



Events are often held in the main hall.

landscaped light wells between them, and display a welcoming openness. The side wings and their glass walls looking down onto the light wells form a contrast to the grey exposed concrete of the outer façades. Since the offices for Members, the committee secretariats and the conference rooms look out onto the light wells, the parliamentarians can enjoy fine views as they deliberate, while the citizens they represent can look in at the work being done by their elected representatives.

A flight of stairs in the Paul Löbe Building.



Spreeplatz and its riverside walk are also attractive places to spend time. This is where the Paul Löbe Building makes the daring architectural leap across the Spree to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building and its beautiful flight of steps descending to the river, which was intended to bring some of the flair of Venice to Berlin.

The interior of the Paul Löbe Building, with its 510 rooms for 170 Members, its 450 offices used by the committee secretariats and various admin-

istrative divisions, and its 22 conference rooms for committee meetings, is also characterised by transparency and openness. This is due above all to the vast eight-storey hall that runs through the complex from west to east beneath a glazed lattice roof, forming a promenade from where the eye can range throughout the entire complex, up to the open storeys with their side walkways and the balustrades reminiscent of ships' railings, the visitors' galleries, the bridges crossing the hall and the 16 glass lifts.

Glass façades rise at either end, offering fascinating prospects: of the Federal Chancellery to the west and the glazed library of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building on the other side of the Spree to the east. When a tourist boat on the Spree suddenly seems to be sailing through the middle of the hall, this only intensifies the impression that one is standing on the bridge of a mighty parliamentary ship.

Meeting of
the Petitions
Committee in the
Paul Löbe Building
(15th electoral
term).



The committees

The Paul Löbe Building is not just a beautiful piece of architecture, but a valuable instrument of parliamentary democracy. This is shown particularly clearly by its key role as the place where the committees do their work. The two-storey committee rooms are accommodated in cylindrical towers. In these rooms, the Members deliberate on the lower level, while visitors can observe proceedings from the galleries above when a committee meets in public. At these times, the corridors of power are opened up to the people, the sovereign. However: the architecture has run a little ahead of reality here, for committee meetings are still not usually held in public.

The number of members in a committee varies: the small committees, like the Committee on Tourism or the Sports Committee, have 16 members, while

the large committees, such as the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Internal Affairs, the Committee on Economics and Technology, the Committee on Labour and Social Affairs and the Committee on Transport, Building and Urban Affairs have 36 members. The Budget Committee is the largest with 41 members. Since money is just as decisive a factor in parliament as elsewhere and all bills with financial implications have to be discussed by the Budget Committee, it counts as one of the most significant committees of the German Bundestag. Traditionally, it is chaired by a member of the opposition on account of its function of scrutinising the Federal Government on budgetary issues.

“A 2.400—Budget Committee” stands in white letters against a blue background on the second floor of the Paul Löbe Building. Behind the door is a round, two-storey room that feels almost intimate despite having more than 100 seats. The carpeting

Journalists wait
during a committee
meeting in the Paul
Löbe Building.





A committee room.

is subdued, black within the central circle, blue around the outside. The eye lingers on the warm wood tones of the large round table with its open centre, presentation equipment hanging above it ready to be lowered. There are wooden panels on the walls and electrically controlled sunblinds at the windows. While the gallery has seating for about 50 visitors, approximately 80 people can sit below in the actual committee room. The 41 members of the Committee have permanent seats at the round conference table. Behind them stand another 30 chairs—for representatives of the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Court of Audit and the Länder, Germany’s constituent states. Ministers, state secretaries and senior civil servants all have to appear here when money matters are at stake. And some are said to have had a pretty torrid time at the hands of this committee.

By contrast to the old highrise building where Members worked in Bonn, ministers now no longer have to sit on hard chairs outside the committee conference room in a public area before they are questioned by the Budget Committee, as if they were waiting to see a dentist. At the Paul Löbe Building, they can settle into comfortable armchairs in extensive lobby areas on the gallery levels where all informal contacts take place.

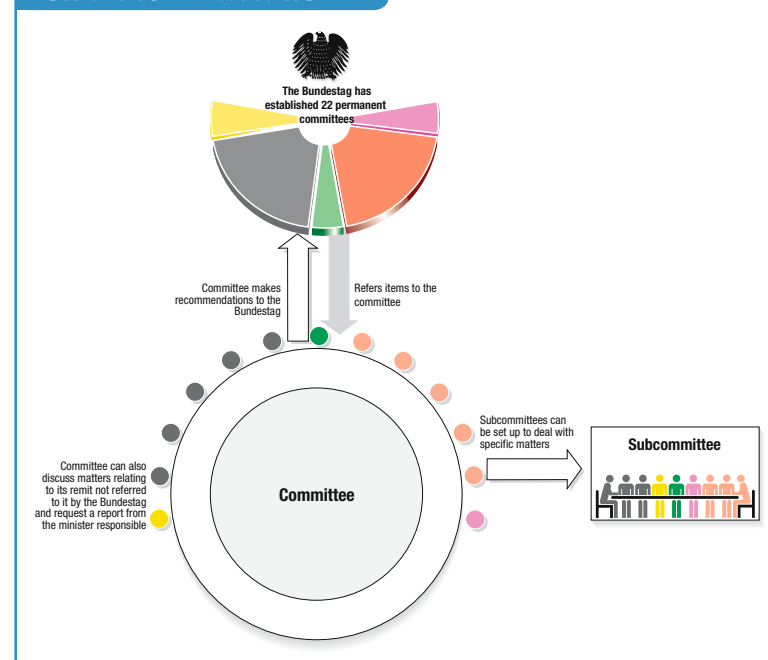
The committees

The committees of the German Bundestag are organs of the whole parliament. Their composition is therefore determined by the relative strengths of the parliamentary groups, which reach agreement among themselves on how many committees are to be established, what remit each committee is to be given and how many members it should have. In the current electoral term, the Bundestag has established 22 permanent committees, which have between 13 and 41 full members and the same number of substitute members. The Basic Law requires the establishment of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union, the Defence Committee and the Petitions Committee in every electoral term.

As a “working parliament in miniature”, each committee requires its own infrastructure. This includes, first and foremost, a secretariat that is responsible for all organisational matters, scheduling and clerical work, as well as assisting the chairperson of the committee and its members. This is why the offices of a committee’s secretariat and its chairperson tend to be located very close to each other. The Budget Committee is allocated 14 rooms: its secretariat occupies seven offices, apart from which there are meeting rooms, offices for assistants and research staff and a records room. Altogether, the amount of space required by the Budget Committee takes up a whole storey in one of the building’s side wings.

The accommodation and facilities for the other committees are similar. Only the number of side

How the committees work





Each office
measures 19.2
square metres.

rooms varies depending on the size of the committee. But the same principles apply everywhere: functionality paired with openness. This is why the visitors' galleries are separated from the working level and raised a storey above it. Citizens should be able to watch legislative work being done by their elected representatives without disturbing the committees' deliberations.

The Committee on the Affairs of the European Union enjoys an exceptional status. Its meetings are attended by more participants than any other committee, with 33 Members of the German Bundestag, as well as 16 Members of the European Parliament who are entitled to be involved in the committee's work. It also possesses special rights as the only committee of the German Bundestag able to take decisions on behalf of the plenary. The Committee on the Affairs of the European Union

has been given a remarkable conference room to match its prominent position: it is the only committee not to meet in one of the eight cylindrical towers flanking the main hall, but in the second and third storeys of the Paul Löbe Building's large east rotunda, which offers a magnificent view of the River Spree. With an area of 261 square metres, the Europa Room is considerably larger than the other committee rooms. Furthermore, with its interpreting booths and technical rooms, it is perfectly equipped in terms of conference technology. It hosts major public hearings of various kinds and international conferences are also held there.

The Members

The Paul Löbe Building does not just house the committees and parts of the Bundestag Administration—including the Visitors' Service and

the Public Relations Division. It also contains the offices of 170 Members of the German Bundestag from the two biggest parliamentary groups, the SPD and the CDU/CSU. Decisions about which of the 614 Members who currently constitute the German Bundestag are to have their offices in the Paul Löbe Building, which in the massive Jakob Kaiser Building located to the east of the Reichstag Building and which in the buildings on Unter den Linden are taken by the parliamentary groups' room allocation commissions among themselves. When doing this, the commissions try to take account of the different Länder from which Members come.

There is no hierarchy among the parliamentary buildings in Berlin. The standard accommodation for a Member in the Paul Löbe Building is as follows: three rooms, each measuring 19.2 square metres, exterior walls of glass from floor to ceil-

ing, sun blinds and shades, carpeting in restrained colours, a washbasin and wardrobe behind reddish maple panelling, desks and shelves, also in maple veneer, and a frosted glass door leading out into the corridor. Each Member is allocated three offices connected together, making a total of 57 square metres—which may at first seem like a lot of space, but is anything but lavish in the reality of everyday parliamentary life. For Members do not work alone: they employ research staff and secretaries, and are often assisted by young people on work placements or students.

The delivery of internal mail is one of the tasks performed by the Floor Service, which has its rooms on the top level of four of the eight rotundas. The mail sorting office on the ground floor is responsible for the delivery of the many letters and cards arriving from outside. The lightness of the offices is impressive. The large windows allow unimpeded views over to the side wing opposite, the people working in its offices and—at an angle—the Reichstag Building or the Spreebogen.

The Paul Löbe Building is embedded in the concept of a “parliament of short distances”. For instance, it is connected to the Bundestag Library and the Reference and Research Services in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building by a double bridge over the Spree with a public lower level open to pedestrians and cyclists and an upper walkway at the height of the fifth floor reserved for Members and staff. In the basement, a wide pedestrian passage leads from the committee rooms straight to the Reichstag Building and so saves Members from having to carry umbrellas with them in bad weather.



Who was Paul Löbe?

Paul Löbe was born on 14 December 1875, the son of a carpenter in Liegnitz (Legnica), Silesia. He was apprenticed as a typesetter and worked from 1899 to 1919 as editor-in-chief of the Social Democratic newspaper *Volkswacht* in Breslau (Wrocław). He joined the Social Democratic Party at the age of 20 and was elected to Breslau City Council in 1904. In 1919, he was elected

to the National Assembly in Weimar for the constituency of Breslau. A year later, he became a Member of the German Reichstag and was its President between 1920 and 1932—with an interruption of half a year in 1924.

He was imprisoned for six months after the National Socialists seized power in 1933, then worked for the academic publishers Walter de Gruyter Verlag. He was arrested again following the attempt to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944 due to his contacts with the resistance circles around Carl Goerdeler. After the end of the Second World War, he played a crucial part in the rebuilding of the SPD. He was a member of the Parliamentary Council from 1948 to 1949, then a Member of the German Bundestag and its President by Age from 1949 to 1953. In 1954, Paul Löbe was elected president of the Foundation for an Undivided Germany, participating in its activities as its honorary president until his death. Paul Löbe died on 3 August 1967 in Bonn.

The Visitors' Service and the Public Relations Division

Publicity is just as essential to a democratic parliament as air is to breathing. Hence the great emphasis placed on public relations and services for visitors at the German Bundestag. The two divisions of the Administration with conceptual and organisational responsibility for these activities are accommodated in the Paul Löbe Building. Over 50 rooms are assigned to these divisions—including offices, seminar rooms and an in-house photography studio.

The Visitors' Service makes all the arrangements for visiting groups that want to learn about parliament and politics in Berlin. Its staff organise invitations, the reimbursement of travel costs, guided tours, refreshments and accommodation. However, most attention is devoted to its efforts to explain the work of the Bundestag and Germany's political system to very diverse groups of visitors. This is

Visitors in front
of the Reichstag
Building.



done in seminar rooms on the ground floor of the Paul Löbe Building, where in-depth political education seminars and discussions between Members and visitors from their constituencies are held.

The Visitors' Service makes constant use of the visitors' restaurant on the second floor of the glazed east rotunda, where visiting groups can relax after grappling with the intricacies of the political process and enjoy a glorious view of the River Spree. One storey below lies the restaurant reserved for Members and staff with its 150 seats. But here too, the atmosphere is very much one in which encounters are encouraged. Another part of the Visitors' Service is the Guided Tour Service based in the Reichstag Building. Its staff certainly have their hands full: more than ten million people have visited the Reichstag Building's cupola since spring 1999. Three-quarters of a million people make prebooked visits every year and are looked after personally by the staff of the Visitors' Service. They include Members' guests, groups without invitations from Members, groups planning discussions with parliamentarians, people who have come to see plenary sittings and hear talks, participants in role play sessions, groups which want to learn about the buildings and their art and architecture, as well as, of course, VIPs—state guests, diplomats and politicians from all over the world.

While citizens benefit directly from the organisation and hospitality of the Visitors' Service when they visit parliament in Berlin, the output of the Public Relations Division, whose staff also work in the Paul Löbe Building, filters through to the public via various indirect channels—such as the Bundestag's "information truck" and stands at trade fairs.



The German Bundestag's information truck (above) and visitors in front of the Reichstag Building (below).



Pipes and switches.

Technology

Like all the other parliamentary buildings, the Paul Löbe Building too is equipped with innovative, environmentally friendly service installations. Its thermal power plant runs exclusively on fuel from regenerable primary energy sources (biodiesel). At the same time, the application of heat and power cogeneration ensures an improved level of economic efficiency and minimises emissions of pollutants.

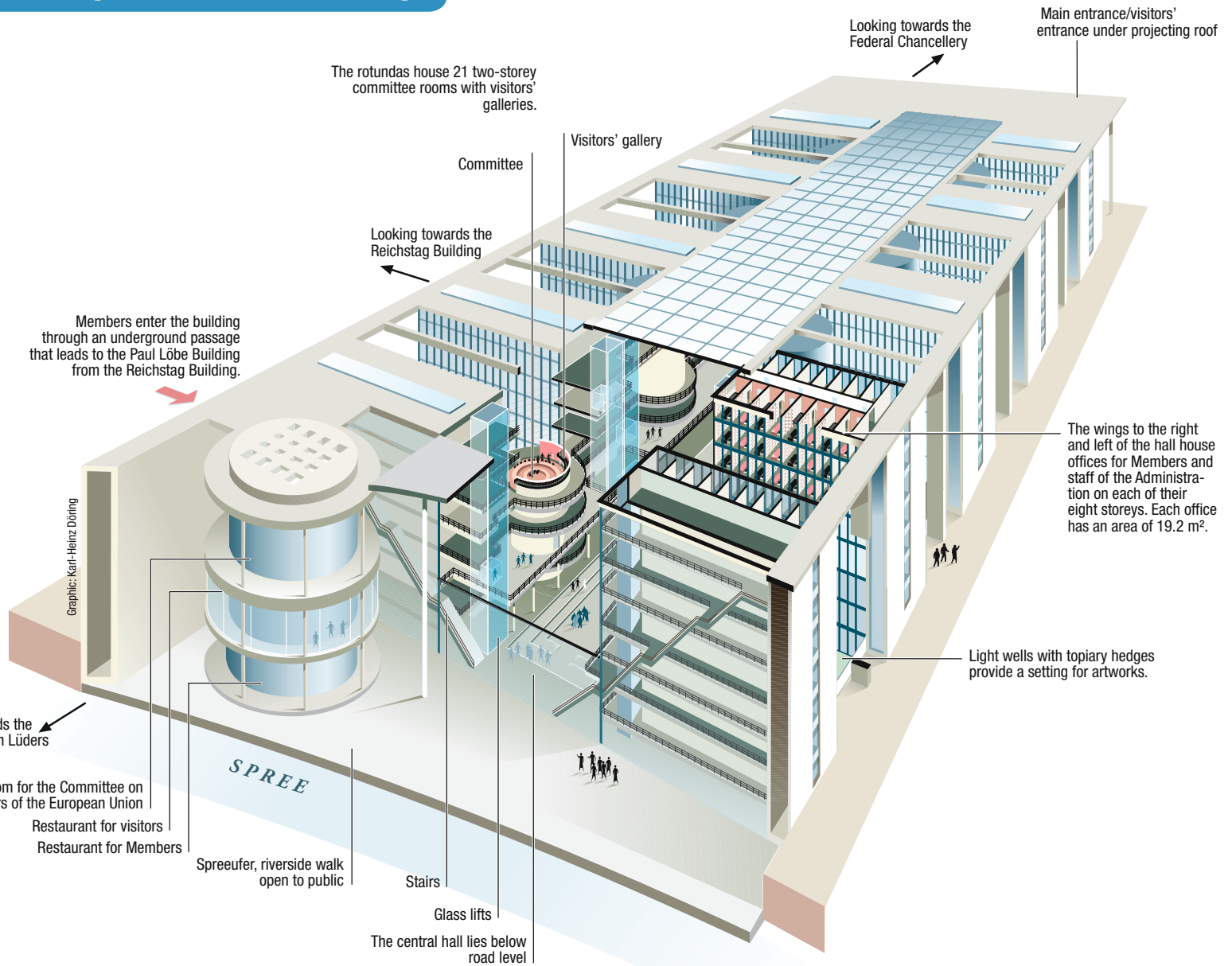
In order to implement the energy saving strategy specified by the German Bundestag and the Federal Government, the technical planners developed a photovoltaic installation measuring 3,230 square metres for the Paul Löbe Building. Its solar modules are integrated into the architecture of the large lattice roof, where they also act as shading devices that defuse the direct rays of the sun. However, the electricity produced by the photovoltaic cells can only cover a small proportion of demand; the building's baseload supply is drawn from the thermal power plant and, at peak times, the public grid.

Another technical feature of the Paul Löbe Building is its connection to the 500-metre-long underground access system under the parliamentary quarter that links the Reichstag Building with the three new parliamentary buildings (see graphic on page 60). All materials necessary for the business of the German Bundestag can be transported underground through a system of tunnels unique in Germany with a single entrance and exit point, reducing the pressure on the roads above ground.

Opposite:
The boiler room.



Sectional drawing of the Paul Löbe Building



Cube, circle, cylinder

An interview with the architect
Stephan Braunfels

Herr Braunfels, you became well-known for your urban design work, your plans for the Hofgarten, the Marienhof and the Altstadttring in Munich, and the blueprint for Dresden. How did you approach the Berlin project?

In the past, I always defined myself through my urban design work. The job for the German Bundestag excited me because the conception I had developed for the Spreebogen competition was similar to the one by the eventual winner, Axel Schultes. When it came to the competition for the Paul Löbe Building, it was now necessary to take the urban form of the Band of Federal Buildings as it had been conceived by Axel Schultes and flesh it out with real architecture, which meant not just planning a building on a predetermined plot of land, but placing it in a context within the built urban environment.

What considerations played a role in this work?

For one thing, of course, the location opposite the Federal Chancellery, although there was the difficulty that the competition for that building was being held at the same time. So I could only speculate about what would be built there. What was decisive for me was Axel Schultes's last design for the Chancellery, which was drawn up before the competition. He designed a roof that projected a long way out at its east end. Apart from that, another parameter was the 22-metre maximum eaves height. And the long sides of the building

were supposed to define the Band of Federal Buildings as consistently as possible, create a unified effect and still allow communication with the outside world—so there were extremely contradictory requirements to be fulfilled. To the east, we had to pull off the leap across the Spree, although Schultes's proposal with two bridges could not be implemented because the south bridge would have needed an enormous span.

Looking at the Löbe Building and the Lüders Building, one is reminded of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn. What led you to these models?

I grew up with Le Corbusier from when I was a child. When I was seven years old, I visited Le Corbusier's pilgrimage chapel in Ronchamp with my father (the art historian Wolfgang Braunfels). I stood in front of the church and said: I want to be an architect! While I was at school, I would impatiently draw houses in the style of Le Corbusier until I was finally allowed to study architecture.

The architect
Stephan
Braunfels.



In your first buildings in Munich, however, you played more with classicist quotations and were not exactly averse to postmodernism.

Yes, the “postmodern crisis”, as I would see it today, was already beginning when I was a student. People were vacillating between Hilmer and Sattler, who were generally traditionalist, and Uwe Kiessler, who was still modern, while I was more inclined to take the traditionalist view of things. But in contrast to Hilmer and Sattler, with whom I now have a number of disagreements, I am returning increasingly to the simple, elementary forms adopted by Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Louis Kahn. I am now really where I should have been at the age of 35. I am becoming more and more of a minimalist, also as far as my views on art are concerned. I have now started collecting monochrome paintings.

How has that influenced your work on the buildings for the Bundestag in Berlin?

Firstly, the material: the only option that came into question was exposed concrete. Secondly, the attempt to work without frivolous ornamental trickery and only use architectural techniques, to create effects through the contrast between closed, heavy elements and open, light elements. Sometimes I ask myself whether we could not have made the glass façades even lighter, for example. And then of course the elementary forms of the square and the circle, as they were used by Kahn. This is particularly clear on Spreeplatz, where the new design deploys the basic forms cube, circle and cylinder.

Interview: Falk Jaeger



Building profile—the Paul Löbe Building in figures

Key presented:	15 October 2001
Gross internal area:	81,000 m ²
Net useable area:	28,500 m ²
Volume:	425,000 m ³
Area of site:	17,000 m ²
Height of building:	23 m
Length of north façade:	157 m (not including projecting roof)
Length of south façade:	200 m (not including projecting roof)
Width of building:	102 m
Diameter of Europa rotunda:	26.5 m
Projecting roof over main entrance:	24 m
Floors:	8 (one beneath road level)
Basements:	2 (garage and thermal power plant)
Number of parking spaces:	Approx. 270
Depth below groundwater table:	9 m (plus floor slab)
Number of offices:	Approx. 1,000
Conference rooms for committees:	22
Total volume of concrete:	60,500 m ³
Total weight of structural steel:	11,300 tonnes



The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building

by Kathrin Gerlof

With its large library, the Parliamentary Archives, the Press Documentation Division and the Reference and Research Services, the new building named after the liberal politician Marie-Elisabeth Lüders is the German Bundestag's information and service centre.

The Band of Federal Buildings makes a leap across the Spree to link the eastern and western parts of Berlin.



History

Once the decision about the future shape of the built environment on the Spreebogen had been made, it took a good ten years before all the construction work was finished. The concept proposed by Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank that was chosen by a jury from among 835 submissions in spring 1993 has now been completed with the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building designed by Stephan Braunfels on the eastern bank of the Spree in what was once East Berlin.

Schultes and Frank called their sequence of parliamentary and government buildings the *Band des Bundes*—the Band of Federal Buildings. It runs along an east-west axis, dividing the land enclosed by the great curve of the Spree from the Tiergarten to the south, and was conceived as a link between the district of Moabit in the west and the historic Friedrich-Wilhelm-Stadt area in the east. Explaining its decision in 1993, the jury stated that the project represented “an unconventionally powerful urban structure that does justice to the state’s brave

presentation of its institutions and puts in place a challenging framework for subsequent architectural competitions.”

With the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, Stephan Braunfels has fulfilled the hopes expressed at that time and dealt brilliantly with requirements laid down by the German Bundestag.



Who was Marie-Elisabeth Lüders?

Marie-Elisabeth Lüders was born on 25 June 1878 in Berlin. In 1912, she became the first woman in Germany to gain a doctorate in national economics. Having held several leading positions in social work and the women’s movement, she joined the German Democratic Party in November 1918 and became a member of the constituent National Assembly in August 1919. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders was a Member of the Reichstag from 1920 to February 1921 and from March 1921 to 1930. As a parliamentarian, she campaigned for women’s equality and measures to improve the lot of the unemployed. In 1933, the National Socialists banned the combative politician from exercising her profession and publishing. She was held in solitary confinement for four months in 1937. After the Second World War, Marie-Elisabeth Lüders was a member of Berlin City Council for the Liberal Democratic Party/Free Democratic Party, with special responsibility for social services for two years from 1949. She was a Member of the German Bundestag from 1953 to 1961, opening its constituent meetings as President by Age in 1953 and 1957. Marie-Elisabeth Lüders died in 1966 in Berlin.

The architecture



The main hall with the Library rotunda and a view of the Bramante steps from below.

The architect Stephan Braunfels does not attempt to compete against the Wilhelmine façade of the Reichstag Building with his two buildings to the west and east of the Spree. Instead, he presents them devoid of all ornamentation. These two structures linked together across the river form a single, 350-metre-long block that strikes those who see it for the first time with its wide, startlingly light, projecting roof constructions. The transparent coffered roofs that flood the large open spaces inside the buildings with light create constantly changing textures and patterns on the poured concrete of the walls and piers thanks to the interplay of light and shade.

The buildings rely on openness. Spreeplatz on the western bank of the river, which leads down via a long, gently curving flight of steps to the Spree, is matched on the eastern side by open steps that widen as they rise, culminating just under the roof of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. These are ideal places to relax and chat: west and east meet there, and views can be enjoyed in all directions.

The urban, and consequently public, significance of the link thrown across the Spree from the Paul Löbe Building to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is present in the space between the two blocks, which the public can cross on a narrow bridge. The interior of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is dominated by the light that falls into the building through its coffered roof and seems to transform the clear forms in the main hall over and over again. A long metal rail with loudspeakers attached to it runs at a great height down the middle of the rectangular hall, which can be

Opposite: The view from the Paul Löbe Building.





viewed from all sides on the surrounding gallery. The visitor is always impressed by the building's centrepiece, the Library rotunda at the west end of the hall.



Offices overlook the main hall and its staircases.

A section of the Berlin Wall is preserved in an otherwise empty room below the information and advice level of the rotunda, where the two large glazed façades provide a fine view over the Spree to the Reichstag Building. This section of what was known as the hinterland wall, the part of the fortifications that prevented GDR citizens from getting anywhere near the actual border, follows its former course and constitutes a reminder of the site's history. Five levels rise above the memorial, including an advice level and the reading room. An ingenious transport system brings books requested by readers from the stacks in the depths of the building. The Library is a space where people can work in peace, while remaining right in the thick of parliamentary events, since the other Bundestag buildings are only a short distance away.

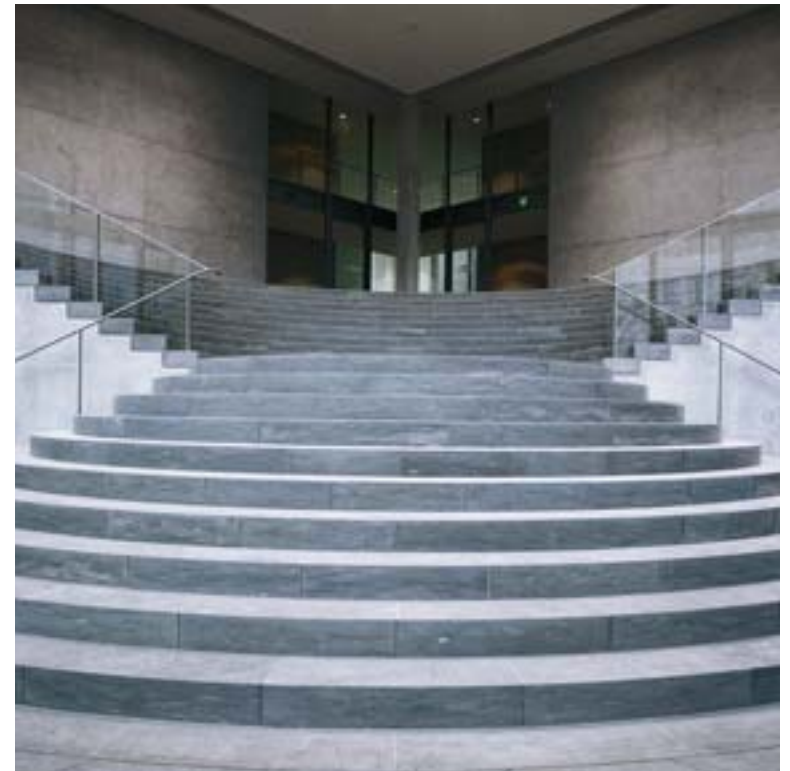
The large hearing room mainly used by committees of inquiry is also impressive. From here, the eye ranges over the Spree to the Paul Löbe Building, the double bridge across the river and the Reichstag Building. Beneath this 290-square-metre room, one finds the impressive Bramante steps named after the pioneering architect of the high renaissance who drew up the first plans for St. Peters in Rome when it was rebuilt in 1503.

Other flights of steps in the building also catch the eye with their playfulness and formal variety—such as the trumpet-shaped steps in front of the rotunda and the “stairway to heaven” leading up to the gallery that runs around the hall. The 600 offices

are accommodated in side wings, two of which are just half the width of the others, a solution forced on the architect by the prefabricated slab buildings that originally stood on the western side of Luisenstraße but have now been demolished.

The Bundestag finally moved into the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building in mid-2004. It now belongs to those who work in it, as well as to strolling passers-by, the curious and interested members of the public who wish to form a judgement or simply be impressed. These two groups are not cut off from each other, and that is exactly what the Bundestag and the architect wanted.

The Bramante steps.





The Library rotunda.

Functions

The 23-metre-high new building houses the memory of the German Bundestag and is, at the same time, a reference and research service centre for its Members. The Bundestag Library, the Press Documentation Division, the Parliamentary Archives and the Subject and Speakers' Indexes are located under one roof there for the first time in their existence. A hearing room with a gallery is reserved primarily for the work of parliamentary committees, while the subject areas, a major part of the Reference and Research Services, are based in the building as well.

Offices and meeting rooms complete the workplace, where the Postal Service, the division responsible for official trips made by Members and staff and the Car Pool are also accommodated. There is a small post office, a German Railways ticket office and a travel agency. A terrace decorated with sculptures and the large exhibition space (which is

located beneath it and the steps leading down to the Spree) are open to the public and offer anyone who lingers there a truly spectacular view across the River Spree of the Reichstag Building and across the city.

Those who have taken possession of and are using this building are, in their different ways, excited, amazed or even simply just relieved about all the things that are now better and nicer: the short distances, the excellent working conditions, the new views. Hartmut Zimmer, the head of the Postal Service, which sorts and delivers about 10,000 items of post every day, was one of the first to move in: "We have light, we have beautiful rooms, the architecture is unbelievably impressive and lots of jobs are so much easier. At times in Bonn, we had 130 different buildings. The post van sometimes had to drive for miles there just for one letter. We didn't see some of our staff the whole year through. The new building brings us together."

The card index
(above)
and shelves in
the bookstacks
(below).





Accumulating knowledge—documenting the media

One could also describe the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building as a house of scholarship, for it is the home of important sections of the Reference and Research Services, which is one of the three Directorates-General within the Administration of the German Bundestag and employs about 500 staff. Apart from this, the building houses the Documentation Directorate and the women and men of Hotline W, who take inquiries from Members and either pass them on to the appropriate subject areas, refer them to the Library, or research the answers themselves.

“It is a building of short distances,” says the head of the Documentation Directorate, “and we are all delighted about our new workplace because, in spite of all our efforts, the balancing act between Bonn and Berlin that went on for years often led to inefficiencies. We were always proud that Members only rarely felt the 622 kilometres that had to be bridged, but it cost a great deal of energy.” Nor do the staff of the Press Documentation Division have far to go. They gather information on the whole range of political topics in an electronic “press dossier” posted on the Bundestag Intranet every morning.

Not only that, since 1999 about 750 press articles from 60 newspapers, magazines and press services in Germany and abroad have been electronically clipped, cross-referenced with keywords and presented for research purposes on the Intranet every day. 23 million press clippings are available in the press archive kept since 1950. Among them is one of the largest caricature collections in Germany.

Opposite:
View into the
Library.

Historic magazines
and newspapers in
the press archive.



A dream of a library

Never has the Library of the German Bundestag been so well provided for as it is today. It is now the world's third-largest parliamentary library after Washington and Tokyo, and stocks well over 1.3 million volumes, approximately 9,300 periodicals, special collections of parliamentary materials and official publications. In 1949, the year the Library was established, it had just 1,000 books. About 21,000 new volumes are acquired every year. In Bonn, these treasures were scattered between eight different sites, but all this written, printed, collected and accumulated knowledge is now gathered in one place.



The reading room and gallery.

The visible centrepiece of these intellectual riches is the Library rotunda, which has five different levels, among them an information and advice level and a reading room with a gallery. Space has been found for 22,000 volumes in the rotunda. The stacks, equipped with rolling shelving that moves on rails, are located in the building's basements.

In Bonn, truly acrobatic skills were required to remove a weighty tome from some of the lower shelves, but conditions are much easier under the new roof. "We are," says Ursula Freyschmidt, head of the Information and Reference Service, "delighted with the building, with the rooms here, with the rotunda, which is such a beautiful place to work and read, and the opportunities it gives us to present the Library's impressive fund of books."

Another of the Library's treasures can be surveyed, browsed through, touched and admired in its long, gently curved cabinets: the card catalogue, which records all holdings acquired up until 1986. No computer will ever be able to equal the charm of doing research by hand: leafing with one's forefinger through the cards held on rods until one has found what one is looking for. Apart from cataloguing, archiving and caring for the items it stocks, the Library's 90 staff offer a comprehensive information service for the German parliament, research materials and compile literature on specific topics.



The Library rotunda holds 22,000 volumes.

Overleaf:
The reading room with Maurizio Nannucci's *Blue Ring*.





The Parliamentary Archives

Historical sources

The holdings of the Parliamentary Archives and the Subject and Speakers' Indexes, without which it would hardly be possible to use any of the parliamentary publications in the library, also have immeasurable value. Both unlock the door to a wealth of sources for those studying the history of the German Bundestag and the Federal Republic of Germany.

All bills, whether adopted or rejected, expert reports, statements, decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court, the full records of the German Bundestag, its committees and bodies, an extensive sound and picture archive, election campaign materials and all stenographic records are available to users. Precise indexes make it possible to search the printed papers even using unusual criteria, and the subject thesaurus encompasses 17,000 terms. All these data are stored electronically and can be viewed online.

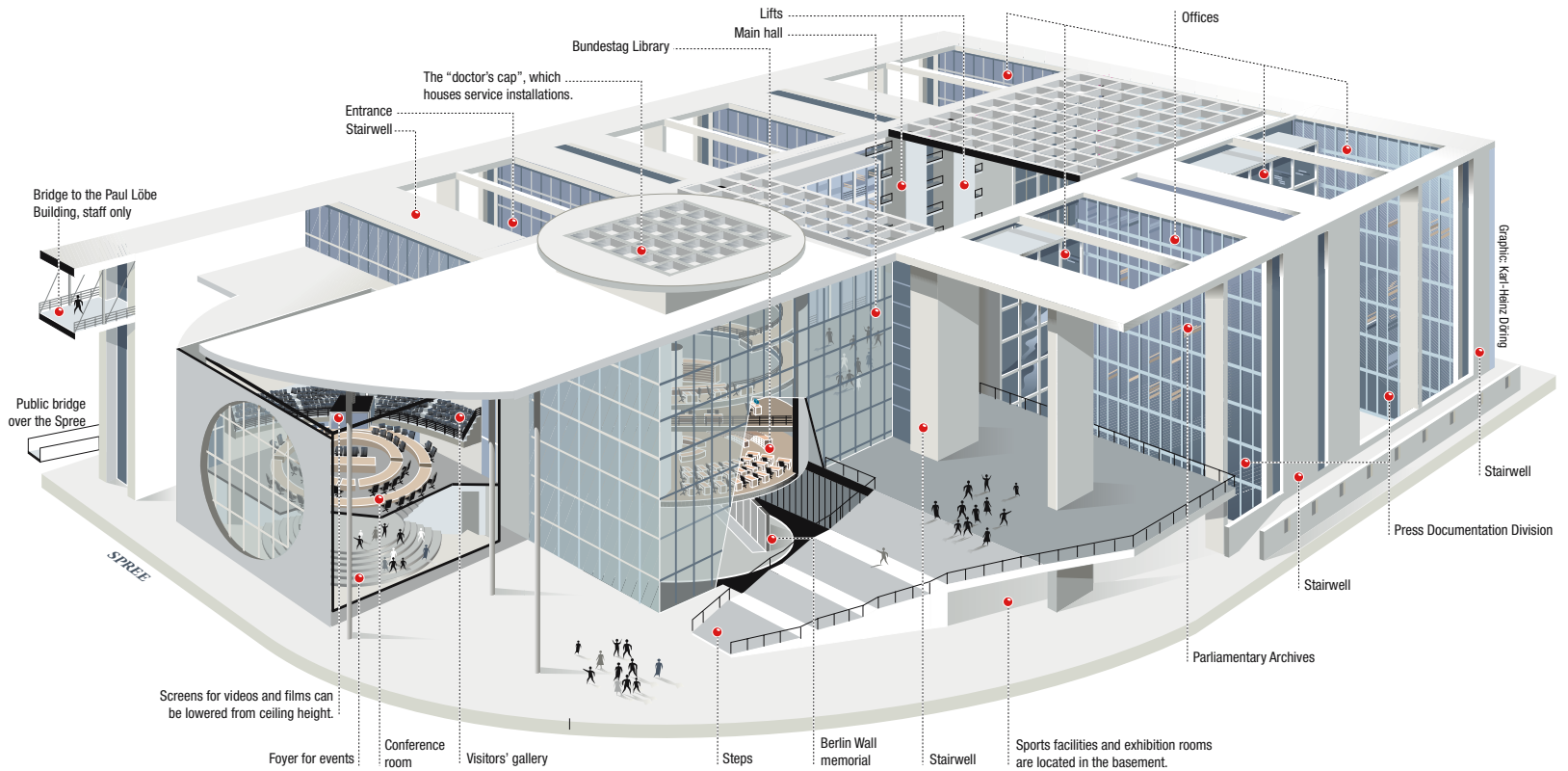
Above all these facilities, which allow the knowledge that has been gathered here to be used for political purposes, stands the vision formulated by Maurizio Nannucci in blue neon letters high up in the rotunda of the Library: "Liberty is conceivable as the possibility of action among equals / Equality is conceivable as the possibility of action for liberty."



The hearing room.

Opposite:
Shelves in the
Parliamentary
Archives.

Sectional drawing of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building



Sport

The German Bundestag Sports Association was founded more than 50 years ago. The soccer matches in which Members of the German Bundestag play against colleagues from other countries have a legendary reputation. Both sides have fun, and the spectators certainly enjoy themselves. Members of the German Bundestag train happily together with staff of the Administration in sport groups of all kinds, as far as time permits. Many of these groups meet in the sports hall of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, which may not look glamorous, but is highly functional. Basketball, volleyball, handball, five-a-side football, badminton, boxing and judo are among the activities that take place there.

The fact that these sporting facilities are now so close by accommodates the often long hours worked by both Members and staff, especially during weeks of sittings. Until the new hall opened, the places where the individual sport groups trained were scattered right across Berlin. Some of the smaller rooms in the sports area are used for gymnastics, back-strengthening exercises, dance and fitness classes.

The sports hall.



Technology

The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building profits from the unique, intelligent energy strategy drawn up for the Bundestag buildings. Two biodiesel-fired thermal power plants supply electricity and heat, while excess heat is stored in the aquifer under the Reichstag Building for later use. Consequently, very little of the energy input is lost. Some of the waste heat from the generators is used to power absorption chillers that cool the building in summer. Heat and power cogeneration enables the waste heat from the thermal power plants and a 300-square-metre solar power installation on the roof of the Reichstag Building to cover about 90 percent of heating and cooling demand and 82 percent of electricity requirements. Since the thermal power plants only burn vegetable oil, they have an outstanding CO₂ balance.

Building profile—the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building in figures

Opened:	10 December 2003	Conference room	
		Hearing room:	290 m ²
		Visitors' gallery:	140 m ²
Technical data		Lobby areas on various levels:	350 m ²
Gross internal area:	65,000 m ²	Foyer for events:	200 m ²
Net useable area:	34,000 m ²	Interpreting booths:	6
Total volume:	325,000 m ³		
		Allocation of rooms	
		Number of offices:	630 rooms
		measuring	19 m ²
		Other areas/spaces	
		Berlin Wall memorial:	580 m ²
		Sports and social area:	920 m ²
		Exhibition space:	420 m ²
		Parliamentary Archives:	2,900 m ²
Library		Internal service rooms:	1,530 m ²
Bookstacks:	8,380 m ²	Press Documentation Division:	1,330 m ²
Open-shelf area:	1,200 m ²		



Art and Politics

by Andreas Kaernbach

The German Bundestag has brought together art and politics in the art and architectural concept developed for its buildings in Berlin. Prestigious national and international artists have helped to create an impressive visual environment, taking inspiration from political life and ideas.



Art in the Reichstag Building

Visitors to the Reichstag Building are not only able to admire its impressive architecture, but also view a range of artworks created by established German and foreign artists for the home of the German parliament—including, as a gesture to Berlin's former four-power status, works by artists from the USA, France and Russia. Great Britain is represented by the architect Norman Foster. In particular, pieces have been commissioned from artists who were prepared to engage productively with this place and its history. In the Jakob Kaiser Building, the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, by contrast, artworks have mainly been commissioned from younger artists selected through competitions and bidding procedures.

The visitor is welcomed to the west entrance hall of the Reichstag Building with pieces by Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter. Both artists faced the difficult task of making their mark on walls that towered up to a height of more than 30 metres. Gerhard Richter responded with a work 21 metres high and three metres wide that makes powerful use of the colours black, red and gold, which were painted onto the reverse of large glass panels to form great blocks of colour reminiscent—not without deeper meaning—of the German Federal Flag. However, both the attenuated vertical format and the reflective expanses of glass make it clear that this is not a depiction of a flag as such, but an autonomous work of art. By making sparing use of artistic materials, Gerhard Richter succeeded in finding a restrained artistic form that generates particular force out of its very simplicity.



Markus Lüpertz's
1840.

Previous page:
*In Memory of
the Members
of Parliament
in the Weimar
Republic who
were Persecuted,
Outlawed or
Murdered between
1933 and 1945*
by Katharina
Sieverding.

Opposite:
Gerhard Richter's
Black Red Gold.



Ulrich Rückriem's
*Double Sculpture—
Floor Relief.*

The large, homogenous fields of colour are carefully accommodated to the shape and size of the wall and so provide a point of stillness in the immense hall upon which viewer's eye can rest, while at the same time creating an intellectual space across which diverse associations and reflections can play.

On the opposite wall of the west entrance hall, by contrast, Sigmar Polke installed illuminated boxes depicting comically ironic visual quotations from German politics and history, among them a mischievous take on parliamentary voting procedures and a defamiliarised view of the statue of Germania at Niederwald near Rüdesheim erected to commemorate the founding of the German Empire. In these illuminated boxes, he compresses historical and political imagery in a double sense: firstly, unlike the work by Gerhard Richter, the illuminated fields occupy relatively little space on the vast wall. Secondly, thanks to a technique that produces effects comparable to holography—and must have appealed to Sigmar Polke's love of experimentation with unusual painting methods—the boxes create an optical illusion that the individual motifs in the pictures are shifting and overlapping, rather like historical memories that become superimposed in people's minds in the course of an individual's life or, more widely, as generation follows generation. Consequently, both in terms of content and form, Polke adopts a counter-position to the serene work by Gerhard Richter with its aura of stasis.

Georg Baselitz produced large-format paintings on canvass for the south entrance hall inspired by motifs drawn from the work of the great romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich. In these pictures,

as has been his practice since the late 1960s, he turned the motifs upside down in order to foreground the formal aspects of the composition. Baselitz's paintings are based on woodcuts after Caspar David Friedrich's *Woman at the Precipice*, *Melancholy* and *Boy Sleeping on a Grave*, which he appropriated to his own personal mode of artistic expression with light, transparent brushwork. Each motif recurs several times in a border surrounding the central figure, which is painted over a magenta-coloured wash that emphasises its place as the focus of the work.



Georg Baselitz's
*Friedrich's Woman
at the Precipice.*



Günther Uecker's
Multi-faith Chapel.

Carlfriedrich Claus, an artist who was forced into inner emigration in the GDR, is represented with his *Aurora Experimental Space*, the installation of which he was able to oversee shortly before his death. He regarded himself as a convinced communist but, in contrast to dogmatic orthodox Marxism, insisted with such determination on the mystical, utopian character of the ideology that he drew the hostility of the GDR's communist regime. In the *Aurora Experimental Space*, which is intended to proclaim the dawn of utopia, he wanted to express his yearning for the "abolition of alienation from oneself, the world and other people". Carlfriedrich Claus noted trains of thought influenced by mysticism, the cabbala and Marxist philosophy on pieces of parchment and sheets of glass, covering both the front and reverse sides with writing that continually contracts and overlaps to form "inscribed shapes", unique forms with the character of both text and visual imagery. Transferred to acrylic panels, these symbolic signs, the products of philosophical musings and poetic imaginings, project boldly out into space. In these pieces, Carlfriedrich Claus forged an intensely personal synthesis of poetry, philosophy, mysticism and calligraphy that evades all attempts at scholarly categorisation.

The most comprehensive artistic work in the Reichstag Building was produced by the Düsseldorf artist Günther Uecker. He was given the difficult task of designing a contemporary religious interior for the multi-faith chapel. Few artists would have been as well suited to this task as Günther Uecker, who had already dealt with the dangers faced by humanity, its hopes and ultimate salvation in a series of significant works. He deployed artistic and architectural means of expression sparingly

to brilliant effect, designing a space that takes its cue from theological traditions and is conducive to meditation and introspection. By erecting a screen wall with an opening at one end in front of the windows, Uecker allowed light to filter indirectly into the room, giving it the mystical aura of an early-medieval crypt. The room is accentuated by the clear-cut boldness of its furnishings—an altar of sandblasted granite, a number of specially designed chairs and benches and seven wooden panels leaning against the walls at a slight angle, on which Uecker created evocative images with nails, paint, sand and stones. The panels visualise the deserts of the Holy Land as the birthplace of Judeo-Christian spirituality, condensing the themes of death and resurrection into powerful, intriguing images.

The conference room for one of the most important parliamentary bodies, the Council of Elders, was decorated by the Stuttgart artist Georg Karl Pfahler. Presented with an ingenious optical illu-

Georg Pfahler's
ColourSpace Object.





sion, coloured rectangles appear to be tumbling down from the walls and veritably dancing away across the architect's wooden panelling. The artist reacted confidently to the forceful colour of the wooden panels he had to contend with in the room, pitting a coherent concept of his own against them. This concept derives its vitality from the contrasts and interactions between colours that overlap and evolve, thus creating a unique sense of chromatic space. Pfahler's specifically south German sensibility has enriched the Reichstag Building with a meeting place characterised by a sense of festive gaiety.

By contrast to the all-encompassing ideological vision unfolded by Carlfriedrich Claus, the American artist Jenny Holzer chose quite deliberately to concentrate on the history of the Reichstag Building. In the north entrance hall, she installed a thin pillar with LED displays on all four sides. The texts of speeches given by Members of the Reichstag and Bundestag between 1871 and 1999 run constantly up the pillar in a digital stream of text that documents the history of parliamentary speaking in Germany. Finally, an exhibition in the cupola informs visitors about the history of parliamentarianism in the Reichstag Building. The pictures on show include hitherto little-known photographs by Erich Salomon, the famous photographic chronicler of the Weimar Republic, which convey an impression of everyday parliamentary life in Berlin during the 1920s.

A number of other artists have artworks on display in the Reichstag Building, including Katharina Sieverding with her memorial *In Memory of the Members of Parliament in the Weimar Republic who were Persecuted, Outlawed or Murdered between 1933*



Jenny Holzer's
Installation for the Reichstag Building (above) and
Christian Boltanski's
Archive of German Members of Parliament (below).

Opposite: Hans Haacke's *To the Population*.



Anselm Kiefer's
*Only with wind
with time and with
sound* (above) and
Gotthard Graubner's
*...rose-fingered Eos
awakes...* (below).

and 1945. Between them, these artists represent a broad cross-section of the contemporary German and international art scene. Fitting works have been specially created by a number of artists, including Christian Boltanski, Ulrich Rückriem, Bernhard Heisig, Grisha Bruskin, Markus Lüpertz, Anselm Kiefer, Gotthard Graubner, Jürgen Böttcher (Strawalde), Lutz Dammbeck, Emil Schumacher, Rupprecht Geiger and Hanne Darboven, while pieces by other artists have also been acquired. The installation *To the Population* by Hans Haacke was only set up in the north courtyard in 2000 following an exciting, controversial debate in the plenary about whether the project should be allowed to go ahead.



Rupprecht Geiger's
Red 2000, 875/99.

Art in the Paul Löbe Building

Someone approaching the Paul Löbe Building from the direction of the Federal Chancellery will notice that its totally glazed west façade is disrupted by four large lozenge-shaped aluminium panels hung up behind the glass close to the twin staircases—the *Diamond Shapes* conceived by the American artist Ellsworth Kelly. Both the colours picked out by these blue, black, red and green panels and their asymmetric placement conjure up a dance-like, almost light-hearted feeling of relaxation that subverts the otherwise rigorous patterning of the façade.

This dancing effect is picked up inside the building by the French artist François Morellet. His glowing neon tubes begin with a tightly stretched, straight red bar running across the hall. This is followed by a series of curved yellow, green and blue neon tubes that sag down from the ceiling, leading ever further into the complex and—like the aluminium panels on the west façade—subverting the clear articulation of Braunfels's architecture with their emotive rhythm.

An installation by the American artist Joseph Kosuth is inscribed into the floor along the whole length of the hall. Like precious intarsia work, metal letters are set into the stone slabs to form two statements that prompt meditations on the nature of life as a unification of the spiritual and the material, and the meaning of human existence. On one side is a quotation from the novelist Thomas Mann, on the other one from the poet and critic Ricarda Huch. The viewer who walks along or surveys these almost breathless sequences of letters finds themselves overwhelmed by the powerful undertow of

François Morellet's
glowing neon tubes
high up in the Paul
Löbe Building.





this great space. At the same time, one becomes almost physically aware of the constant flowing of time and life. Elsewhere in the hall, Karin Sander has set up a touchscreen on a pedestal that can be used to view a virtual book showing pictures of gifts presented to the German Bundestag.

The east façade features two ten-metre-high neon light sculptures by the artist Neo Rauch, who lives and works in Leipzig. Rauch has cleverly transferred the mysterious ambience of his paintings to these glowing green sculptures, which are visible for miles around. Two men, both standing on ladders in slightly different postures, appear to be waving or reaching out for an invisible fruit on a tree. Their symbolic attitudes can be interpreted as a reference to natural horticultural methods, the culture of a democratic society, the gestures of a speaker or someone who is reaching out for lofty goals.

Joseph Kosuth's
installation (above)
and Neo Rauch's
Man on the Ladder
(below).

The light wells of the Paul Löbe Building are located in front of the rotundas, where members of the public walking past are able to look down into them. A number of these light wells are decorated with topiary hedges trimmed into geometrical patterns designed by the architect. Some also feature works by artists who received commissions from the Bundestag following art competitions, and several of these pieces are integrated into the patterning of the hedges. On the north side of the building, Jörg Herold installed a mirror above one light well that reflects a beam of light down at the ground, directing it over several of the round stones set into the low hedging during the course of a day. It takes a year for this reflected beam to touch all the stones in the light well, each of which is inscribed with a historic date in Germany's his-

tory. Taken together, these dates, which include the most central, most familiar events in the country's past as well as more obscure occasions, give a fascinating overview of the interconnections between historical developments.

In the adjoining light well, Franka Hörnschemeyer created a playful, filigree spatial labyrinth out of yellow and red metal lattice constructions of the type that normally support formwork, the moulding used to shape walls of poured concrete. There are paths that lead in and out of the labyrinth, spaces that can be crossed, but also dead ends and closed chambers. The arrangement of the lattices is based on the ground plans of various structures that stand or once stood on the banks of the Spree,



Franka
Hörnschemeyer's
Spatial Labyrinth.



German 1 and German 2 by the artistic duo Twin Gabriel.

including sections of the Berlin Wall, now-demolished buildings and dog kennels used by GDR border guards, and parts of the Paul Löbe Building. An axial displacement superimposes the different ground plans on top of each another—as if fatefully clamped together. The past and the present interlock, reflecting the political development of the Spreebogen and making its past immediately tangible and graspable. Furthermore, the magical trope of the labyrinth, which has a long tradition in mythology and art, raises the question of how to find the right way to one's goal—a stimulus for thought that, in a political environment, is just as serious as it is playful.

The artistic duo Twin Gabriel (Else Gabriel and Ulf Wrede) play with the formal qualities of the bust as a genre: the two artists designed two round, profiled columns made of Teflon—*German 1* and *German 2*. Only when the viewer sees the shadows cast by these columns does it become apparent that one depicts the silhouette of the German national poet Goethe and the other that of an Alsatian dog—a “German shepherd”. It is the shadows they throw that reveal the striking features of the poet and the dog. Both pieces are playfully incorporated into the hedges around them like elegant baroque sculptures, ironic monuments to bourgeois hero worship as well as the constant striving to found a stable sense of German identity.

The Leipzig-based artist Till Exit took a different angle on the question of what makes a sculpture, creating four plexiglass cubes illuminated from within. Structural elements inside the cubes, their varying surface textures and the semitransparent character of the material create complex visual effects that enlarge our conventional understanding of what a

sculpture can be, as well as making the cubes appear quite different by day and by night.

The restaurants in the Paul Löbe Building were also decorated by artists. The Members' restaurant was transformed by the Cuban artist Jorge Pardo into a total artwork complete with coloured crystal chandeliers that take up the whole ceiling and specially designed furniture. Tobias Rehberger initiated a meeting of different cultures in the visitors' restaurant by having classic design furniture reproduced by craftspeople from other traditions who worked from the artist's own drawings. By contrast, the British artist Angela Bulloch links visitors and Members in an installation that generates a rich range of associations: when someone sits down on one of the seats in front of the conference room of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union (which is decorated inside with large-format works by Helmut Federle), they activate electrical contacts that make coloured lamps light up one storey below on the same level as the visitors' restaurant. Those who sit on the “seats of power” cannot tell what is happening below them in the “spheres of influence”, and vice versa.

Another thirty artists are represented with installations or acquisitions in the Paul Löbe Building. Thanks to the commitment shown by the Art Council of the German Bundestag, the Paul Löbe Building is not just a place where the Bundestag's committees focus on their duties, but also a place where art and politics enter into dialogue, creating opportunities for reciprocal intellectual stimulation and inspiration.

Angela Bulloch's *Seats of Power—Spheres of Influence*.



Art in the Jakob Kaiser Building



Christiane Möbus's
Racing Eights. The
brightly painted
rowing boats
gently rise and fall.

The Jakob Kaiser Building, with its facilities for the parliamentary groups, is a complex of eight separate buildings that incorporates a number of historic structures. Four teams of architects worked on the ensemble, each designing two of the buildings in their own unique architectural language. The art and architectural concept developed to reflect this diversity was intended to harmonise with the various architectural languages used in the eight buildings, accentuating their individuality with commensurate sophistication.

Entering Building 1, one finds oneself in a wide, high hall, where the artist Christiane Möbus has suspended four rowing boats painted yellow, red, blue and black from the roof. Her *Racing Eights* move gently up and down, each one following its own rhythm as it rises and falls so that the boats constantly relate to each other in new patterns. They allude to the river and lake landscapes that are a constant presence in Berlin, in particular the River Spree flowing past close by. These connotations make the opening in the floor of the hall that leads to the lower basement seem like a deep pool of water, the boats appearing to descend as far as its surface before rising up again. However, Möbus's *Racing Eights* do not just refer to local geographical features, but also to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, a symbol of democratic competition between equals. Consequently, the dancing rhythm of the boats and their strong, emblematic colours not only spread a mood of exhilaration, but simultaneously link play and sport. In the building where the parliamentary groups are based, this creates a vision of the vigour and fairness of the political contest.

The walls of the basement have been specially decorated with paintings by Bernard Schultze, Andreas Schulze, Max Uhlig, Peter Herrmann and Karl Horst Hödicke, as well as a sequence of photographs by the Leipzig-based photographer Matthias Hoch recording the Reichstag Building before its refurbishment by the architect Norman Foster. The post sorting room in Building 2 is entered from the hall of the basement. It has a free view of the courtyard designed by the landscape architect Gustav Lange: as if in a primeval forest, birch trunks and boulders lie scattered on the ground, from which young birches strive up towards the light. They are surrounded by a band of water on the ground floor level like a gleaming silver border framing the image of the birches.

The view of the Jakob Kaiser Building from the River Spree is dominated by the urban space created by the Israeli artist Dani Karavan. The light well he was asked to landscape next to the Spree promenade had to be sealed off for security reasons but, instead of railings or walls, the artist chose sheets of glass several metres high to demarcate the area, ensuring at least visually a high degree of transparency. Alternating strips of vegetation and steel parallel to the main lines of the Reichstag Building radiate from the building, run out of the light well under the glass sheets and continue almost as far as the river embedded into the paving of the embankment.

This successful formal arrangement supports the richly allusive content of Karavan's concept. Each of the 19 glass sheets bears one of the 19 fundamental rights defined in the German Basic Law as it was originally drafted in 1949. Located directly next to the Spree that once separated East and

Gustav Lange's
courtyard.



West Berlin, these 19 articles setting out fundamental rights remind anyone who engages with this work of the difficult years of the foundation of the young German democracy in Bonn.

The painter Ulrich Erben decorated the daylight stairwell of Building 3 with circular sheets of glass, their reverses painted blue, red, green or yellow. Groups of four glass circles are set flush into the grey exposed concrete walls in diagonal patterns. The disks seem to be dancing up and down, their vivid colours and circular shapes injecting the “cheerful lightness” (Ulrich Erben) and liveliness of movement and colour into the constant repetition of right-angled doors and walls.

The courtyards in Buildings 4 and 8 were designed by the landscape architects WES & Partner. Pools of water surrounded by pine trees and other plants, illuminated glass-fibre columns and boulders lend these courtyards the feel of Japanese gardens.



Dani Karavan's *Basic Law 49* pays tribute to the 19 fundamental rights proclaimed by the German Basic Law in the wording adopted in 1949.

Ventilation shafts required for the building's service installations are cleverly transformed into the sculpture of a staircase, which ends mysteriously in nowhere as a monument to itself laden with obscure significance.

A stone sculpture by the artist Matthias Jackisch from Dresden links together the stairwells of Buildings 4 and 8. One half of an erratic boulder is to be seen on either side of Dorotheenstraße in Buildings 4 and 8. The artist cut each of the two halves into four large blocks, which are displayed on four different levels, visible from outside in the large landing windows. Only when they are viewed from the road does it become apparent that all eight pieces of the stone actually fit together. The artist regards his “performative sculpture” *Augenstein* as the result of a process that began in a Swedish quarry with the discovery of the boulder. From there, Matthias Jackisch travelled with the stone via Rügen to Neuruppin, where it was cut and trimmed before finally being transported by boat to the Spreebogen. Now the heavy chunks of stone seem to levitate on the landings, evoking memories of the Swedish wilderness, the thousands of years this piece of rock waited in the earth and the landscape-moulding power of the Great Ice Age.

The Cologne artist Astrid Klein conceived an installation made of neon tubes arranged like a line of steps rising and falling on the ground floor in the stairwells of Buildings 4 and 8. The neon tubes bear quotations from Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). In his political philosophy, Hobbes discussed the need for contractual arrangements to found and preserve a community, and establish the preconditions for peace and justice in society.



Matthias Jackisch's boulders (above) and the courtyard designed by Architekten WES & Partner (below).

Astrid Klein's *Leviathan*.





The Danish artist Per Kirkeby constructed a sculpture in the form of a four-storey-high brick wall with window-shaped openings for the courtyard of Building 7. It stands opposite the white-painted fire wall of the historic building—one might say as a wall in front of a wall. The artist exploits effects of light and shade to model a purposeless architecture, an art that exists in the interplay of sculpture and building. The brickwork sculpture rises up in the courtyard in front of the renovated 19th-century building like some relic of a ruined house—a mute acknowledgement of the finite nature of human plans and actions.



Per Kirkeby's brickwork sculpture (above) and Hans Peter Adamski's silhouettes decorating one of the daylight shafts (below).

The artists Lili Fischer and Hans Peter Adamski perceived and approached the light shafts that run down all the way through the complex in Buildings 5 and 6 as a creative challenge. Adamski, who once belonged to the Cologne artistic group *Mülheimer Freiheit*, produced silhouetted bands that turn in on themselves as they run dynamically across the wall, playing with an optical illusion of three-dimensionality. In her *Congress of the Graces*, Lili Fischer depicts silhouettes of nymphs and other ethereal beings that float up the wall, do somersaults, dance or glide graciously past. Her work is based on performances at which members of the audience are asked to take part in the dance of the Graces and—visible as shadows behind a white curtain—learn to move gracefully under the guidance of the artist.

The courtyard of Building 6 has been flooded by the English artist Antony Gormley, with only a causeway running diagonally out two-thirds of the way across the water. Around this space, cast iron sculptures of human figures jut out at right angles to the façade. Reflected in the water below,

they gaze heavenwards as if they wanted to walk up the walls. With his iron sculptures, Gormley addresses how we experience our own corporeality in the contemplation of another body, unsettling the viewer by locating this relationship in an unfamiliar visual, spatial and intellectual context. The entrance to Building 5 is dominated by Jürgen Klauke's radiant blue glass panels, which constitute the background to white lines forming an abstract pattern.

The art and architectural concept for the Jakob Kaiser Building was rounded off with the project undertaken by the Nuremberg artist Hans Peter Reuter. He decorated the Emperor Room in the former official residence of the President of the Reichstag with the play of geometrical forms in intense, brilliant blue characteristic of his work. Another eight artists are represented with acquisitions in the Jakob Kaiser Building. The variety and multifacetedness of the individual buildings' architecture is matched by the individuality and distinctiveness of the artistic interventions and statements that can be viewed there. As the home of the parliamentary groups, the Jakob Kaiser Building not only underlines, on an aesthetic level, the diverging and yet, at the same time, mutually indebted political positions of the different parties, but also what is shared and what is unique in the individual positions of the artists whose works are on show there.

An iron figure by Antony Gormley (above) and Jürgen Klauke's radiant blue glass panels (below).



Art in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building



Maurizio Nannucci's *Blue Ring*.

Like the Paul Löbe Building, the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building was designed by the architect Stephan Braunfels from Munich. Maurizio Nannucci's blue glowing neon installation entitled *Blue Ring* can be seen from outside the building through the glass façade of the Library rotunda. The Italian artist's blue band of neon letters runs in an eighty-metre circle just below the ceiling in the reading room of the Library. Inspired by Hannah Arendt, Nannucci highlights the tensions inherent in the relationship between the fundamental rights to freedom and equality by juxtaposing two statements: "Liberty is conceivable as the possibility of action among equals / Equality is conceivable as the possibility of action for liberty." With these words, the artist describes two possible modes of action in a liberal state and explores the tensions that arise between them in a democracy, i.e. the question of how to find the right balance between freedom and equality.

The Library is the appropriate place for questions of this kind, since it is an institution where knowledge about our culture is gathered together and awareness fostered of our duties to preserve and expand it. The unending possibilities and unremitting challenge of thought, and the never-conclusive answers provided by such reflections on freedom and equality are represented vividly by the circularity of the two statements, in which the paired words "Freiheit/Freiheit" (liberty/Liberty) and "Gleichen/Gleichheit" (equals/Equality) stand next to each other. Nannucci has produced a text that prompts us to rethink the potential impact of political activities. His statements therefore

Opposite:
Marino Marini's
*Miracolo—L'idea
di un'immagine
(Miracle—the Idea
of an Image)*.



complement the quotations from Thomas Mann and Ricarda Huch set into the floor in the hall of the Paul Löbe Building by the American artist Joseph Kosuth, Jenny Holzer's LED installation showing parliamentarians' speeches in the north entrance hall of the Reichstag Building and the articles from the Basic Law on Dani Karavan's glass panels—which are visible directly opposite on the embankment promenade next to the Jakob Kaiser Building. In this way, the German Basic Law, parliamentary speeches, quotations from German literature and Nannucci's political reflections are united in one great intellectual call to meditation that integrates all the parliamentary buildings on both sides of the Spree. Leaving the Library rotunda, we reach the large central hall of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building.

Julia Mangold's
Rectangle.



The French artist François Morellet had already elaborated an idiosyncratic, cheerfully dynamic rhythmic progression in the hall of the Paul Löbe Building with his installation *Haute et Basse Tension* (*High and Low Tension*) made up of neon tubes hung up like red, yellow, green and blue garlands. He enlarged on this work in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building with an elegant arrangement of two intertwined neon tubes, one black and one white.

The Munich artist Julia Mangold linked together the interior and exterior of the building with her simple forms stripped down to the elementary. Inside the hall, she hung a large, black rectangle, a simple geometrical shape tailored to the proportions of the architecture. It is positioned on the outside of the Library rotunda, following its round wall as a sublime form. A similar black rectangle can be seen on the exterior of the building as a hollow space, a depression in the concrete surface of a supporting pier at the top of the steps leading down to the Spree. This second black rectangle starts on one side of the pier, runs round its corner and extends along the adjoining side. The artist has taken the geometric rigour of Stephan Braunfels's architectural language and cleverly developed out of it her own play of positive and negative, rounded and angular forms.

Miracolo—L'idea di un'immagine (*Miracle—the Idea of an Image*), an equestrian sculpture by Marino Marini given to the German Bundestag by Irene and Rolf Becker, stands on the same steps by the banks of the Spree. In this symbolic, semi-abstract piece, which is visible far into the distance, the impending fall of the rider and the rearing horse kicking out into space like a cry embody a last rebellion against the growing inhumanity of the



Julia Mangold's
Rectangle (above),
the Berlin Wall
memorial (centre)
and François
Morellet's neon
tubes under the
coffered roof
(below).

age and constitute a dynamic gesture of human self-assertion.

Directly next to the steps, there is a round room open to the public in which parts of the Berlin Wall that once divided the West and East at this point have been returned to their original location. The artist Ben Wargin preserved these sections of the Wall, which have been arranged to follow the actual course of the fortifications, cutting painfully into the architecture like a foreign body. This makes it possible to experience the inhumanity of the Berlin Wall in three dimensions, while a display informs visitors about the appalling toll of victims it claimed. Works by many other artists have been acquired for the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, including pieces by significant figures like Imi Knoebel, Sophie Calle, Eberhard Göschel, Nikolaus Lang, Paco Knöllner, Bertram Kober, Rémy Markowitsch, Wieland Förster, Michael Morgner, Cornelia Schleime, Susan Turcot and Hans Vent.

A comprehensive, carefully planned art concept of the kind that can now be viewed at the parliamentary buildings in Berlin reflects an impressive commitment by politics to art, drawing the two very different worlds of art and politics into an inspiring dialogue.

Visiting the German Bundestag

The following services are available free of charge for groups and individuals who wish to visit the German Bundestag in Berlin:

- >> Talks on the visitors' gallery of the plenary chamber on days when parliament is not sitting: topics include the functions, working methods and composition of the Bundestag as well as the history and architecture of the Reichstag Building
- >> One-hour visits to plenary sittings on days when parliament is sitting
- >> Study visits on days when parliament is not sitting at the invitation of a Member (talk, discussion with the Member who issued the invitation, light refreshments)
- >> Visits to plenary sittings at the invitation of a Member (one-hour visit to a plenary sitting, discussion with the Member who issued the invitation, light refreshments)
- >> Guided tours of the Reichstag Building on days when parliament is not sitting: topics include the functions, working methods and composition of the German Bundestag as well as the history and architecture of the Reichstag Building
- >> Art and architecture tours of the buildings of the German Bundestag (Reichstag Building, Jakob Kaiser Building, Paul Löbe Building or Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building) at weekends and on public holidays
- >> Guided tours for foreign visiting groups, available in several languages on request
- >> Special guided tours for children aged 6 to 14 on the four Children's Days held during the year
- >> "Experiencing Parliamentary Democracy": role play exercise for school children from the 10th year of schooling (aged 15) onwards

All services have to be booked in advance in writing. Detailed information on all services for visitors is given in the leaflet *Visiting the German Bundestag*, which can be ordered from the Visitors' Service or viewed on the Internet.

Deutscher Bundestag
Besucherdienst

Platz der Republik 1, 11011 Berlin

Fax: +49 (0) 30 - 22 73 00 27

www.bundestag.de (Information Counter)

General information can be obtained from the Visitors' Service by telephone on +49 (0) 30 - 22 73 21 52 or
+49 (0) 30 - 22 73 59 08.





Committee meetings and hearings

Members of the public wishing to attend public committee meetings and hearings will be admitted if they make a prior booking with the secretariat of the committee concerned, provided that seats are available. A visitor pass will be issued at the entrance upon deposit of an identity card or passport. The committee secretariats can be contacted via the central switchboard of the German Bundestag:

Tel.: +49 (0) 30 - 22 70.

Roof terrace and cupola of the Reichstag Building

The roof terrace and cupola of the Reichstag Building are accessible to all visitors without prior booking via the west portal (right entrance). Visitors must expect long waiting times during peak tourist periods.

Opening times:

Daily from 08.00 to 24.00 hrs
(last admission 22.00 hrs)

The rooftop restaurant overlooking Pariser Platz is open daily from 09.00 to 24.00 hrs. Tables can be reserved by telephone on +49 (0) 30 - 22 62 99 33.

Information material

Information material about the German Bundestag can be ordered by telephone or over the Internet from the Public Relations Division:

Deutscher Bundestag
Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
Tel.: +49 (0) 30 - 22 73 74 53
Fax: +49 (0) 30 - 22 73 62 00
www.bundestag.de

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