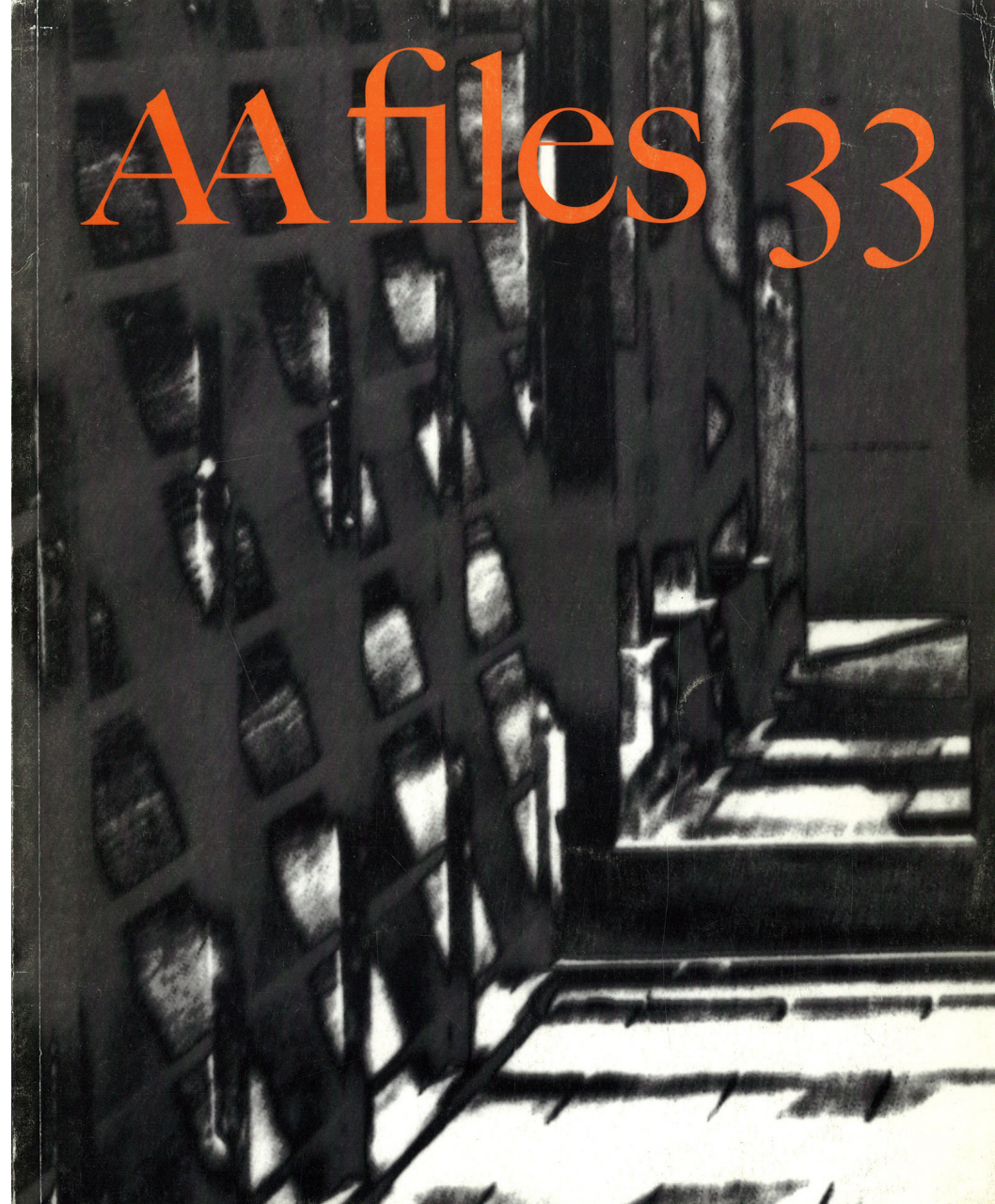


# AA files 33



# Behnisch & Partner

*The following text is based on a lecture by Günter Behnisch, principal of the Stuttgart-based architects Behnisch and Partner, given on 4 March to mark the opening of an exhibition of work by the practice which was held at the AA during 4–22 March.*

Our practice was established in 1953. Since then we have designed and supervised the construction of about 120 buildings, and we've designed a further 500 or 600, mostly for architectural competitions.

Competitions give us the opportunity to take risks and try out new ideas. A decade or so ago, we designed a convention centre for the Hannover Messe company (1). The building was to 'hover' above the central green of the exhibition grounds, supported by three steel legs. It was a design that went to the limits of what was feasible at the time, both technically and in terms of form. The jury were divided. Those involved in the building professions favoured our submission, but in the end another scheme was chosen – nothing out of the ordinary, a building which kept within the bounds of the familiar, and already looks banal.

There are many aesthetic norms. The eye of the beholder differs according to age, background and education. Some seek innovation, others the familiar. But even within these not very precisely defined groups aesthetic values are constantly changing. If we were to design a building today which is capable of pleasing the majority of people, such a building would look outdated tomorrow. It is seldom that a work of art – and I believe that architecture is an art – is universally accepted at the time of its creation, for throughout history the role of art has been both to challenge existing aesthetic values and to define new ones.

In architecture too we must question the limits of our history, and transcend these from time to time. This is the way architecture

evolves. Competition designs are ideally suited to this approach. We have no client, we need not justify every step we take, the design can evolve more freely. We often go too far. But what if we do? Things which attract opprobrium at the outset may find favour later. And, as time passes, design features which at first seemed unusual or unacceptable often become integrated with the overall work.

Some time after the competition for the Hannover Messe we designed a media centre for the municipality of Krefeld (2) – a medium-sized town near Cologne – on a very long and narrow inner-city site. The building we proposed was 150 metres long and 20 metres wide, two to three storeys high, and was supported on long columns 'flying' over a square in the old part of the city. Here we had clearly, perhaps not even consciously, developed further the idea on which our design for the Hannover Messe was based. But now the time was right and our design was awarded first prize.

Instead of the usual two façades, or at the most four, this building has seven: in addition to the two along the longitudinal sides and the two along the narrow sides, there are the roof surface viewed from above, the underside of the building, and finally the surface of the square. Beneath the body of the building, we proposed a large pool of water in which its shiny underside, covered with murals, would be reflected. We felt that such a device would enhance this location, especially when compared with the standard arrangement whereby a building obliterates the ground it occupies.

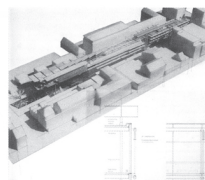
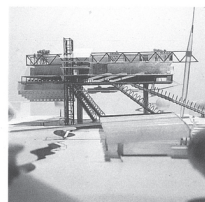
The project was never built, perhaps because of a shortage of funds, but recently the client asked us to resume the design.

Almost ten years ago we entered a competition for a high-rise building for a regional bank in Stuttgart (3). Previous to that time the design of high-rise buildings had generally concentrated on and reflected the problem of achieving

stability. We felt that this preoccupation, which stifled so many other possibilities, no longer merited such priority, as it had become possible to make a tall building structurally sound without much visible effort. And this would leave the tower form open to other solutions and concerns, for example to the urban setting. Thus the tower block no longer had to isolate itself from the city. Once again, however, we were not able to execute our project. Perhaps it was too unfamiliar a form for the client. Yet today, not ten years later, the same client tells me how much he regrets not going ahead with it.

In terms of its size, organization and so on, our practice has frequently undergone changes, in response to the work that comes into the office. We believe that no more than forty architects should work together in an office. This is a number which allows many things to be done more easily – people know each other well, and therefore respond more easily to what the others are thinking and doing, and they do each other favours – all without the need for too much organization. None the less, we have often had to work with more than forty. On these occasions we have subdivided the practice. From 1968 to 1972, in an office which had been set up for a job on the Oberwiesenfeld, we carried out the planning of the Munich Olympic Park. Moreover, for some years now there have been two practices in Stuttgart, one in the suburb of Sillenbuch and one in the city centre. The latter also has a branch office in Lübeck, in northern Germany.

The Sillenbuch practice, under the direction of Manfred Sabatke, is working on new buildings and conversions in the Munich Olympic Park, a new control tower for Nuremberg airport, a residential complex in Ingolstadt-Hollerstaeden, school buildings in Ingolstadt (a Montessori School), a spa building in Bad Elster, and conversions to



the school complex in Lorch.

Our city-centre practice, under the direction of Stefan Behnisch, is working on an administration building for the Landesgirokasse (regional savings bank) in Stuttgart, St Benno Roman Catholic School in Dresden, an office building for the Schleswig-Holstein Regional Insurance Agency, laboratory buildings for the Institute for Forestry and Environmental Protection (IBN) in Wageningen, an exhibition and office building for a furniture manufacturer in Tauberbischofsheim, the Centre for Performing Arts in Bristol (4), the Lothar-Günther Buchheim Museum in Feldafing, and the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen. Both practices are currently working together on the new Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin.

We see ourselves as offering a product that is 'tailor-made' rather than 'off-the-peg.' As 'bespoke tailors' we can best afford to do what we are best at doing, and we are able to limit the tasks which don't interest us to those which are strictly necessary. Working as a bespoke tailor may be more demanding, but it is more interesting as well. We invest a lot of effort in our designs, perhaps too much, but for us such work is not a burden. We study our designs from many perspectives, from inside and out, achieving discoveries and insights. Certain things may be recognized and precisely named, others may only be recognized through association – beyond the preconceived levels of our reality, and then only in varying degrees of detail.

We also have to take care of the things which never vary, whatever the task, and which of course we aim to do reliably and well – especially as these are the prime criteria by which the client is able to judge whether he can trust his architect. However, it is the specific qualities of a task which are foremost in our minds. We believe that all tasks have their distinctive qualities, even those which appear unspectacular. In each design problem the elements are combined in a novel and often surprising way. As a rule, qualities waiting to emerge become evident only later, thereby indicating how far the task can be elaborated, and which components should govern the design. There is also the question as to whether dominant components should impose an order on other components, or indeed whether the former can subordinate

themselves to the latter.

This discovery of distinctive qualities can be illustrated by our work at Bad Elster (5), where Germany's oldest spa – in the most southwesterly part of Saxony, not far from the great spas of Bohemia and the Czech Republic – is to be renovated and modernized. Some parts of this old complex will have to be demolished, the technical services renewed, and still other parts built from scratch. In addition, some specifically architectural problems are emerging. For example, the existing formal elements, though much admired locally, are weak when compared with those of other spas. The spa building that we see today comprises several structures from different periods. The first of these was made in 1850, the last during the socialist regime. During this time quite disparate architectural forms were joined together in an arrangement which often appears strange and haphazard. Yet the building is listed.

This poses a number of questions. How much can we preserve? What has to be renewed, and what can be added? What should the new additions be like? And how should the parts interrelate or relate to the building as a whole?

At present the various buildings are situated around a large rectangular courtyard, which up to now has been used as a work yard by the maintenance engineers. Our proposal turns the complex inward, and reinvents the inner courtyard as an atrium. The floor coverings will possess special qualities of colour and texture. There will be interesting plants and new buildings with both sheltered and open-air swimming pools, deck chairs, reception rooms, etc. Both as a whole and in each of its parts this area is to be 'aestheticized'.

The new buildings to be erected in the courtyard will be lean and precise, and seemingly immaterial features – light, shadow, sounds, smells, views of the formal green and of the renovated façades of the buildings fronting the courtyard – will dominate. The floor surfaces may act as the focus of the complex as a whole, but we will have to wait and see how it develops.

Our office has been in practice for almost forty-five years now. In retrospect our work seems quite a mixture. Of course some buildings are better than others, but there is not one building of which we

should feel ashamed. They are all still presentable – or rather nearly all, for some have been mislabeled by the client or by other architects, who thought the buildings could be modified without further care. However, we do keep an eye on certain buildings that we regard as landmarks in our work.

When clients decide to make alterations to a building we have designed, they usually consult us. So it was that we recently returned to a school that we built between 1958 and 1960 in the town of Lorch. We were asked to add a new storey to one wing and to create a new façade for another. Although the technical aspects of replacing the wood-framed windows and the asbestos-cement cladding were of little consequence, the architectural implications were challenging. How were new façade elements to present themselves without denying their newness, or without putting the old elements to shame? This is easier said than done, for today's colours, materials and constructions are stronger and more assertive than they were thirty-five years ago.

Or consider the renovation in 1996 of a small office building in Stuttgart's Kronprinzstrasse (6), which we built in 1969. It was a building with an unfortunate history. The city council had originally planned to concentrate a stretch of inner-city traffic along Kronprinzstrasse. In order to provide sun and noise protection for this south-facing façade, we suspended a tinted glass screen across it. A further logical step in this rather fortified treatment of the façade was to equip the interior with air-conditioning. Soon after, however, the city centre was made traffic-free, leaving the building strangely over-protected.

A bank later purchased the building and asked us to convert it. It was extensively changed; in fact, only the structure was left untouched. Nevertheless, people had grown accustomed to the glass screen, and we wanted to preserve it, although in a modified form. The dark, inflexible panes of glass were replaced with clear, movable glass slats which offered protection against sun and rain and also contributed to the building's ventilation system. The result was a finer, more functionally articulated shield. Behind this we installed wooden-framed, vertically pivoting windows, to enhance the interior both functionally and formally.

In our task of restructuring the

Olympic Stadium (9), we are faced with far greater difficulties. The Munich Olympic Park is not only one of Munich's principal monuments, and symbolic of the German spirit around 1970 (one thinks here of Willy Brandt's exhortation 'Let us risk more democracy!'), but is also a landmark in our own body of work. In recent decades, few highly regarded and uncontroversial monuments have been created in Germany, and those which exist should be preserved. On the other hand, this is not the architect's problem, for the question as to whether this stadium should be altered, or indeed converted from a public, multipurpose stadium to the commercial premises of a soccer club, should be answered by the people of Munich and the politicians who represent them.

Should the city decide to rebuild, we wish to ensure that the stadium is altered as decently as possible, with as many existing components as possible preserved. Structures spanning great distances are required to avoid disruption of spectators' views, and the plexiglass sheeting covering the roof needs to be replaced. But the real problems lie with the question of whether the people want and are able to preserve this popular Munich monument – and this is a question that encompasses both social and political issues.

For the last two years we have been involved with Berlin's Academy of Fine Arts in Pariser Platz (7). The Academy was previously located in this square for many years, and now, after the reunification, it wishes to return. Pariser Platz, at the Brandenburg Gate on the western edge of Friedrichstadt, is a landmark of Berlin's longest axis. Axes such as these are power lines, organizing whole districts and their multifarious relationships.

Berlin's Senate has issued a series of regulations governing the design of the façades of buildings bordering on Pariser Platz. These stipulate not only dimensions and proportions but also materials – the intention being that the appearance of the new square should match that of the original, which was destroyed during and after the war. Apart from the Brandenburg Gate and the old exhibition halls of the Academy of Fine Arts, none of the original buildings survived, and few people remember the old square. This means that the new Pariser Platz is based on an image that no

one can describe.

The stipulations seem equally vague. The intention is to create a 'square with a unified image'. But this ignores the fact that buildings are a reflection of society. Who could presume to make such demands of Pariser Platz? Elected representatives of the people are not necessarily qualified to make judgements concerning aesthetic norms – the very reason why institutions such as the Academy of Fine Arts have been established. Doubtless it would have been better to have consulted the Academy, yet this was not done and the result is quite unsatisfactory.

I would never attempt to reconstruct a Berlin square of the nineteenth century, an era dominated by Prussian-German arrogance. But, even if the intention is to mimic the architecture of the former square, this should be done not through materials but through architecture. The particular characteristic of these forms was not their solid walls perforated by windows, yet this is precisely what is being stipulated. The architectonic device of the perforated façade transcended the banality of the solid wall, which in those times could not be avoided. It should also be remembered that, although the façades of that era were derived from the classical tradition and were made of similar materials, they were in fact quite diverse. Such were the possibilities of the nineteenth century.

Berlin's politicians were unable to resist the temptation of yielding to popular yearnings for the 'good old days', which seemed to find their reflection in these old façades. Prior to this project we avoided whenever possible the use of forms which are associated with historic architecture. However, in an attempt to satisfy at least the spirit of the city's wishes, we adopted the proportional methods which were used to create the façades on the old Pariser Platz, although not the materials. We then applied these methods to the materials of our era, in so far as we are able to define them. For us the triviality of our own times is epitomized by the glazed curtain wall – which corresponds to those old perforated façades.

We are now witnessing a disturbing development in Germany, in which organizations not accountable to the public are becoming

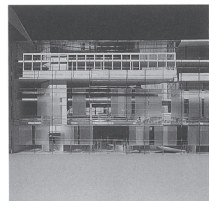
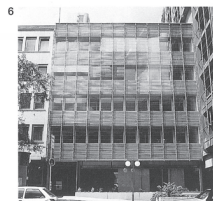
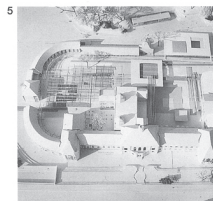
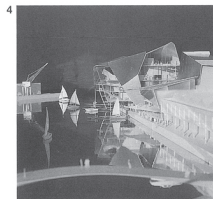
increasingly involved in the public sector. Because of their size and commitments such organizations cannot afford to take risks, and as a consequence architects are also coming under pressure to avoid risk. Although the public sector is subject to many of the same pressures to preserve its own status quo, these did not stifle the vitality of architecture, and until recently there was room for the freedom to manoeuvre that architecture needs in order to develop, or at least one could make some room.

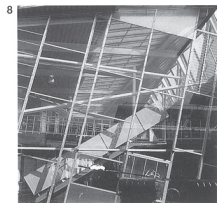
It was also in this context that the practice of holding competitions for public buildings developed, resulting in architecture of a high standard – schools, nurseries, old people's homes, town halls – especially in small towns. If the public sector places responsibility for its buildings – which after all belong to its citizens – in the hands of investors and contractors, the result will be safe and banal architecture. As ever, it should be our political representatives who guarantee, and are accountable for, architectural freedom.

Such trends are likely to influence our practice. We tend to study a commission from many angles and in great detail. One idea leads to another, details take on a life of their own, narratives are created. Here, perhaps, one can point to examples from certain works of literature, where detail is not a digression but rather the life and soul of the work. Our architecture works in a similar way.

Naturally, the design of a building could be formulated in the same way that one might formulate a marching order or an order of attack, or instructions for the use of a machine, or a scientific treatise. Impressive results have been achieved by such methods, but they have held little interest for us until now. Nevertheless, we may have to reconsider the way we work, or at least reconsider the focus of our work.

Meanwhile the age differences in our practice have become considerable and, accordingly, differences in experience and world view. A person who grew up in the countryside and ran barefoot through the fields will inevitably see the world differently from someone who spent his childhood in the streets of a large city. Until now, I have regarded our architecture as an assembly of elements drawn from a variety of world views, and





our method of working as one which allows opportunities for including and integrating many worlds. This philosophy is illustrated by the new Plenary Chamber of the German Bundestag in Bonn (10). Here a rationally planned structure is juxtaposed with unexpected elements of light, space and architecture.

It requires greater effort, in the case of a large office building, to create differentiated areas which are equal in quality and value. As a rule such a building often contains from several hundred to perhaps more than a thousand identical work-places. Thus our design has to take its lead from the other structural components. When working on the new central administration building for the Landesgironkase in Stuttgart (see p. 40), we sought answers in the building's urban setting. Our investigation resulted in a form which distinguishes between the harder, more urban elevations facing the city streets, and the softer, more inviting elevations of the interior courtyard. Although their dimensions and outlines were determined by the form of the building, the façades were developed further in terms of colour and graphics. In this way the building expresses itself and its many relationships – to both individual spaces and the ensemble as a whole. Most of the work-spaces are further divided into areas with their own characteristics and arrangements. Certain public elements were given special treatment, such as the courtyard, the entrance hall, and the cantilever which reaches out into the space of the city. The complex as a whole is full of variety and surprise, and the different parts relate to one another and to the building as a whole in many ways and at many levels.

Our practice has handled both quick jobs and lengthy jobs, major commissions and minor ones, houses surrounded by other buildings as well as free-standing buildings, and buildings serving a variety of purposes, for a variety of clients.

One of our quick jobs was a building for the Hysolar Institute at Stuttgart University (8). We worked on it for two years. The requirements were simple – laboratories, offices and storerooms – nothing that could not have been housed in a simple building. However, it was obvious

the client had not engaged us to design a simple building; he wanted something spectacular. And that was how we saw it too. We wanted to experiment with form, and we had been contemplating such an experiment for quite a long time. It was an attempt to build with both large and small prefabricated components and to devise an overall form which could accept and incorporate them. Our solution was a spatial collage – a solution that we then carried to an extreme.

In contrast, our work on the Plenary Chamber was a long affair, a job that we were involved with for more than two decades. During the design the brief changed repeatedly, causing us to revise the design substantially several times. Ministers and officials came and went – as did the architects who worked in our practice. And after twenty years we ourselves were of course no longer the same people we had been at the start.

On the face of it the project was almost bound to fail. But we couldn't afford that, as the building meant a great deal to us. Given such a difficult situation, we tried to devise an organizing form which would allow individual elements a maximum of independence, in relation both to the building as a whole and to its other parts – an order capable of assimilating the different elements to which different people had contributed over the course of two decades. The result was again a collage, but in this case similar to those made by the Dadaists. In this collage a plenary chamber could be juxtaposed with a foyer, a staircase placed next to a group of trees, executive offices next to the Rhine, and so on, without the formal aspects of these elements requiring co-ordination or their making any claims on one another.

We did, however, establish some fundamental principles. For instance, that things – material objects – should show a mutual respect by maintaining a distance from one another. In this way the various elements could remain 'themselves' and find expression in a way that corresponds to their essence, yet each element and each part could also serve a purpose within the overall scheme and the non-material 'gaps' could assume a special importance. We believe that such an approach to architecture, whether formally uncoordinated, as in Bonn, or co-ordinated, as at the Hysolar

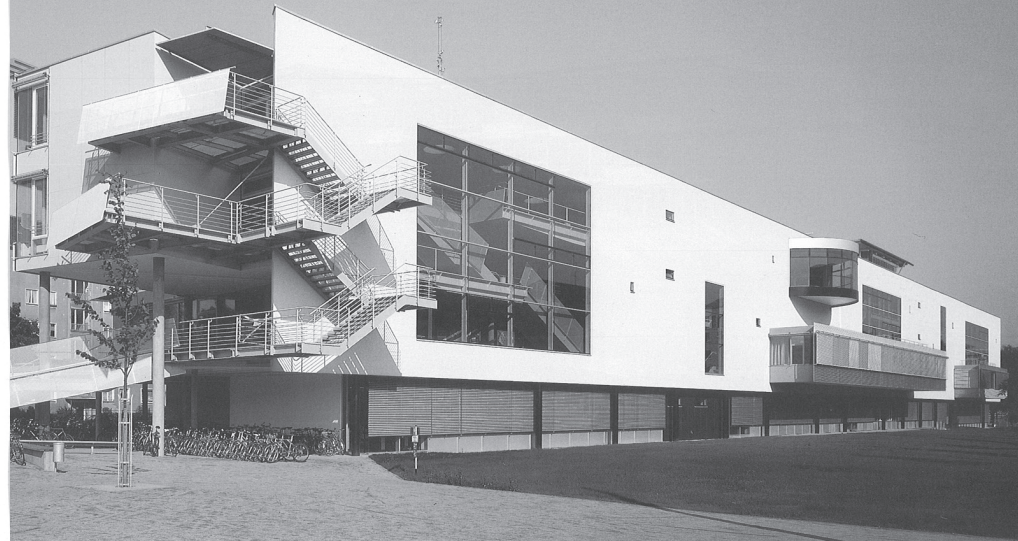
Institute, might serve as a metaphor for a free society in our times.

Two of the building complexes we have designed bear witness to the social and political spirit of an era – the Olympic Park in Munich (9) and the Plenary Chamber of the Bundestag in Bonn. The Olympic Park marks the beginning of an epoch, and the Plenary Chamber marks its provisional end. Today we are living in more conservative times, as is reflected in the architecture of new buildings in Berlin. However, we choose not to resign ourselves to this situation.

Finally there is the question of why we approach our work in this way, and why we seek the particular and distinctive elements in each job. I believe that through this search for the particular we become familiar with the world around us. When we design and build a kindergarten, for example, we explore the question of how children develop and grow. When we design an old people's home we observe how a person's life comes to a close. In the case of an office building we try to find out about life in a large administrative organization. Our work on the design of the Plenary Chamber gave us insights into the life of parliamentarians, and so on. These are the things that interest us. Without this kind of involvement our work would be tedious, and so we make it a means of discovering the world around us.

There's one last thing: a good building is founded on fairness – fairness towards children, towards the elderly, towards communities and clients, towards contractors, towards everyone. We expect the same fairness to be shown towards us, by clients for instance. To produce good architecture we need good terms. This of course includes money, but not only money. We all have a limited amount of time and a limited amount of energy. If we had to use these resources to settle disputes or fend off attacks, we would be unable to produce good buildings. Good architecture and fairness go hand in hand.

## Behnisch & Partner



## St Benno Roman Catholic School

**Dresden, 1993–6**  
Competition design, 1992  
First Prize

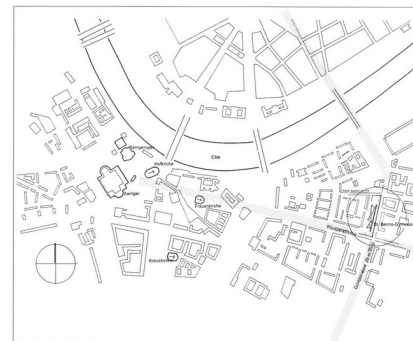
St Benno Roman Catholic School was founded as a school of Latin in 1709, under August the Strong. Forced into closure during the Nazi regime, it remained dormant throughout the socialist period. In 1991 its charter was reinstated under the auspices of a progressive diocese, and the school now serves 720 students.

St Benno's is near the centre of Dresden, situated between the heavily travelled '26er Ring' highway and the terraced banks of the Elbe, on a long site which terminates in a public square. This tension between aggression and tranquillity was a starting-point for the design. On the street façade a white wall screens the interior space, while the western façade opens on to a colourful

interior garden, similar in atmosphere to the vineyards and terraces of the Elbe.

**Colour design**  
A city gains life from both its natural and its architectural landmarks. In Dresden these include the Elbe, the Zwinger and the Frauenkirche. The St Benno school building with its distinctive blue wall also contributes to the character of the city, if only because it represents an enrichment of the predominant palette – we need only imagine how the wall surface might have appeared, had the colour been changed to yellow, ochre or grey.

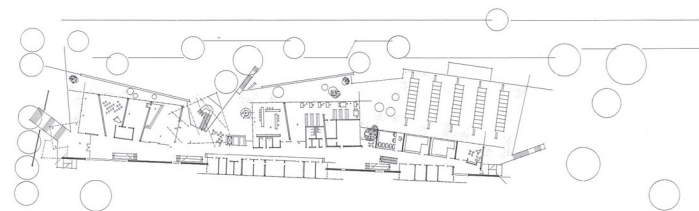
The strategy for the colours used in the school was developed in conjunction with the painter Erich Wiesner, who both lived and worked on the building site during the execution of the project.



The blue wall – principal city elevation along Güntzstraße (the 26er Ring).



St Berno: Elevation along Pestalozzistraße.



First-floor plan.

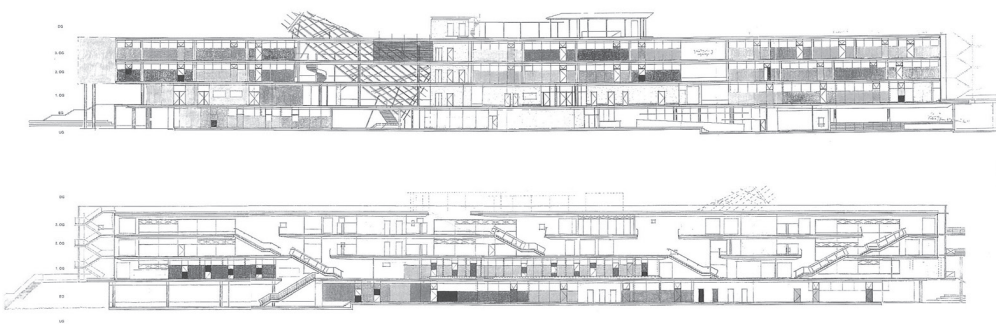


View of central hall along interior façade.



CHRISTIAN KANDIA

Interior view showing top-lighting and circulation.

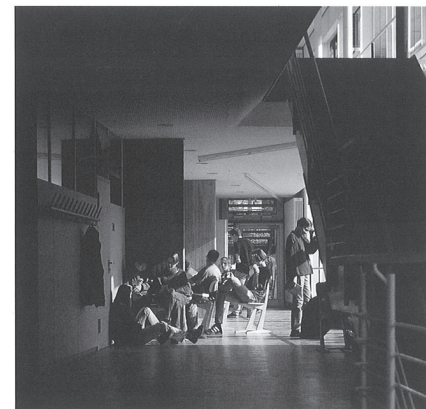


Longitudinal sections.



FELIX BRAME

Chapel.



FELIX BRAME

Corridor.



**Project:** St Benno Roman Catholic School, Pillnitzer Straße 39, Dresden  
**Client:** Bistum Dresden-Meißen  
**Bischöfliches Ordinariat,** Dresden  
**Architects:** Behnisch & Behnisch, Büro Innenstadt, Stuttgart  
**Project leader:** Martin Werminghausen  
**Project group:** Félix Bembé, Martina Höh, Michael Schuch, Iris Stamminger, Barbara Stölzle  
**Site supervision:** Kerstin Bode, Thomas Hoppe  
**Colour:** Erich Wiesner  
**Landscape with:** Büro Noack, Dresden  
**Structural planning:** Büro für Baukonstruktionen, Fritz Wenzel, Karlsruhe  
**Completion:** August 1996

Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs by Ralph Richter.



TOP & ABOVE: Details of the blue wall.

RIGHT: Central hall.



View from the north edge of the site.

## State Insurance Agency, Schleswig-Holstein (LVA)

**Lübeck, 1992-7**  
Competition design, 1992  
First Prize

The city of Lübeck is characterized by tall spires, handsome brick structures, and a system of canals – remnants of its history as one of the principal medieval trade centres in northern Germany. The LVA, an organization which manages a public insurance fund for the state of Schleswig-Holstein, commissioned a new administration building, to be situated in a district on the western border of the city. The new building provides office space for approximately a thousand workers, as well as a parking garage for 550 cars, a sports facility, a small workshop, and living quarters for the caretaker.

With its four main arms varying in both length and orientation, the building takes the form of an open, somewhat skewed cross. At the centre of this cross lie the most public areas – a generous entrance hall and a cafeteria/restaurant. The building stretches along diagonals through the central hall, making full use of the site.

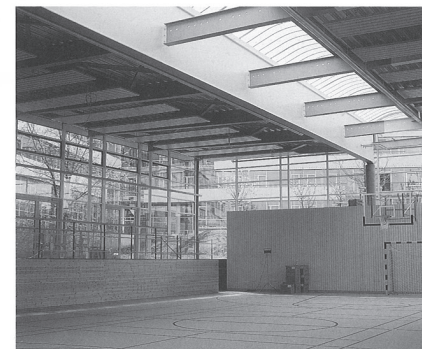
From this hall the arms can be seen branching out into the landscape, creating visual effects that play with the boundaries of the site. And, as with a tree, new branches may grow out of the building without detracting from the original concept. The narrow form of the arms allows for both natural lighting and ventilation, as well as maximum visual contact with the landscape.



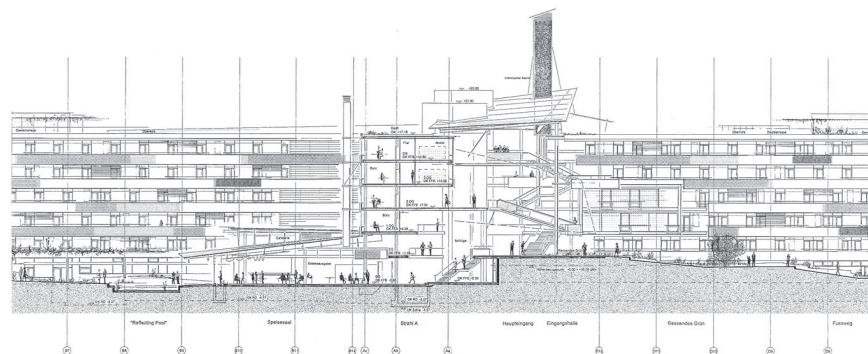
Cafeteria.



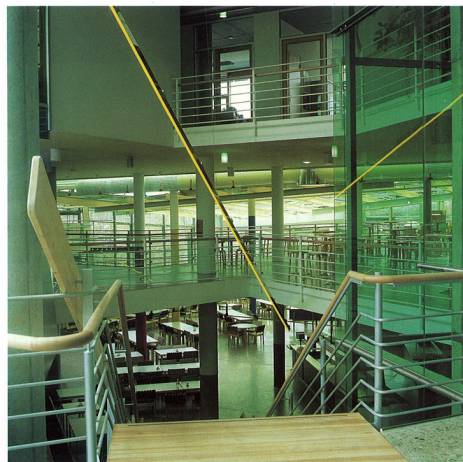
View of a corridor showing top-lighting.



Sports gymnasium.



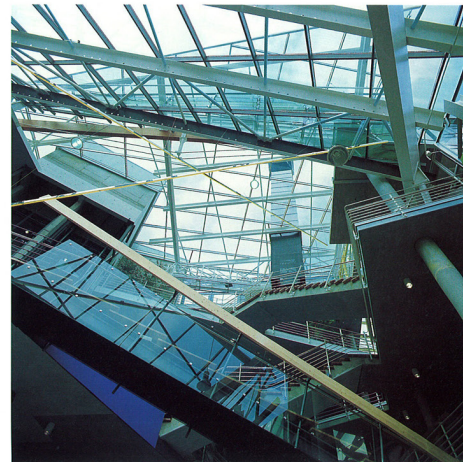
Long section through an office 'arm' illustrating the connection with the central hall and stairs (shown overleaf).



Views of the central hall.

**Project:** State Insurance Agency,  
Schleswig-Holstein (LVA),  
Ziegelstraße 152, Lübeck  
**Client:** Landesversicherungsanstalt,  
Schleswig-Holstein, Lübeck  
**Architects:** Behnisch & Behnisch,  
Büro Innenstadt, Stuttgart  
**Project leader:** Gunnar Ramsfjell  
**Project architects:** Martin Arvidsson,  
Birger Bhandary, David Cook,  
Jörn Genkel, Martin Gremmel,  
Horst Müller, Martina Schaab,  
Jörg Usinger  
**Project group:** Thomas Balke,  
Marc Benz, Iris Bulla, Kathrin Dennig,  
Julia Fritsch, Stefan Fromer,  
Pietro Graniola, Helko Krampe,  
Cecilia Perez, Matthias Schmidt,  
Timo Saller, Georg Taxthel,  
Karin Weigang, with Christian Kandzia  
**Site supervision:** Behnisch & Behnisch,  
Büro Innenstadt, Stuttgart; Cronauer  
Beratung + Planen, Munich; Bernd  
Giesen (CBP), Axel Bruchmann,  
Helko Krampe  
**Landscape with:** Wehburg, Eppinger,  
Schmidtke, Hamburg  
**Completion:** May 1997

Photographs by Christian Kandzia.



## Central Administration Building, Landesgirokasse

**Stuttgart, 1992–7**  
Competition design, 1991  
First Prize

The new headquarters building for the Landesgirokasse is located to the west of the city centre, on the crest of the 'Bollwerk', the highest point in the city and the site of its medieval fortifications. The building serves as a work-place for more than a thousand financial services employees.

Careful handling of the building's massing at street level, and the humanizing rhythms and colours of its façades, help to avoid the appearance of a typical monostructure, while the responsiveness of the façade materials to changing light and atmospheric conditions results in unexpected variations in its appearance.

Transparent surfaces and views through the building help to dematerialize its mass and encourage a more complex experiential relationship with the site. The paved surfaces along the Bollwerk follow the topography of the site, contributing to the creation of an urban landscape.

The perimeter of the building forms a large central courtyard, part of which is enclosed by a sloping glass roof. The portion of the hall which lies beneath the glass roof will be used for exhibitions, promotions and other large-scale events. This space is complemented by free elements of the public programme such as cafés, shops and cinemas, which are set along its perimeter.

A large pool of water penetrates the hall, blurring the boundary between interior and exterior, and reflecting sunlight into the courtyard and across the undersides of the building's floor-plates. The role of the courtyard as a city 'room' is reinforced by works of art and special lighting.

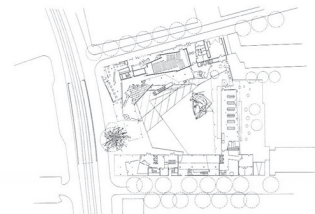
View of Fritz-Elzas-Straße elevation showing 'the Nose', which contains a lounge/bar for the board of directors.



Fritz-Elzas-Straße elevation.



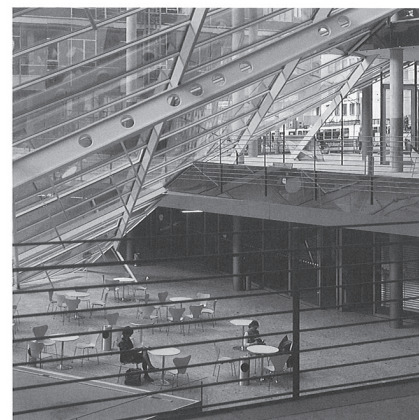
Interior courtyard.



Ground-floor plan.



Main entrance in Fritz-Elzas-Straße and opening to interior courtyard.



Interior hall.



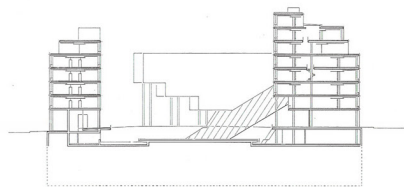
Photomontage of sculpture by Frank Stella.



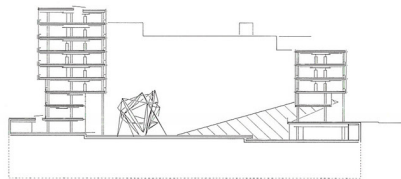
View of the interior courtyard previous to completion of the water pool and the Frank Stella sculpture.



View from interior entry hall into the courtyard, across the glass entry floor.



West/east section.



South/north section.

Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs by Christian Kandzla.

**Project:** Central Administration Building for the Landesgrobkasse, Fritz-Elsas-Straße 31, Stuttgart  
**Client:** Landesgrobkasse GmbH + Co. KG, Stuttgart  
**Architects:** Behnisch & Partner, Büro Innenstadt, Stuttgart  
**Project partner:** Günther Schaller  
**Project architects:** Andrea Crumbach, Martin Schodder, Wolfgang Sterr, Thomas Strittmatter  
**Project group:** Vincent Bandy, Volker Biermann, Michael Blank, Julianna Fecskés, Stefanie Flaubert,

Ulrich Haseleimann, Rochus Hinkel, Hans-Peter Hohn, Tom Hurt, Peter Koller, Ingrid Marx, Christoph Mayr, Christoph Mischke, Claudia Möller, Laura Rovelli, Birgit Sauerhammer, Bettina Stark, Roland Stölze, Peter Voelki, Edelgard Willburger  
**Landscape with:** Luz + Partner, Stuttgart  
**Structural planning:** Leonhardt, André + Partner, Stuttgart  
**Site supervision:** Hans-Joachim Malle, Stuttgart  
**Completion:** June 1997