

Potsdamer Platz Reconstruction

Renzo Piano Building Workshop





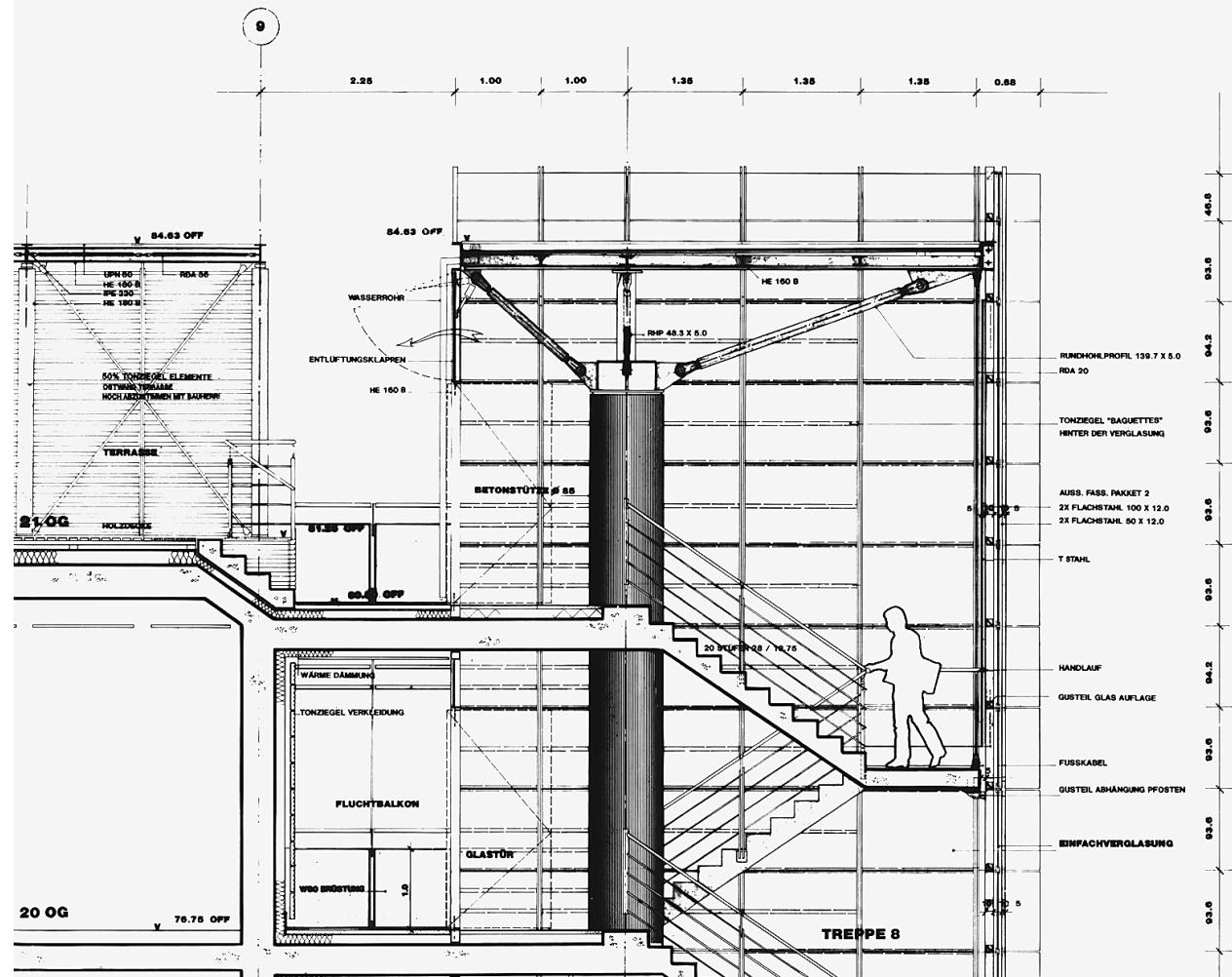
Photo Vincent Mosch



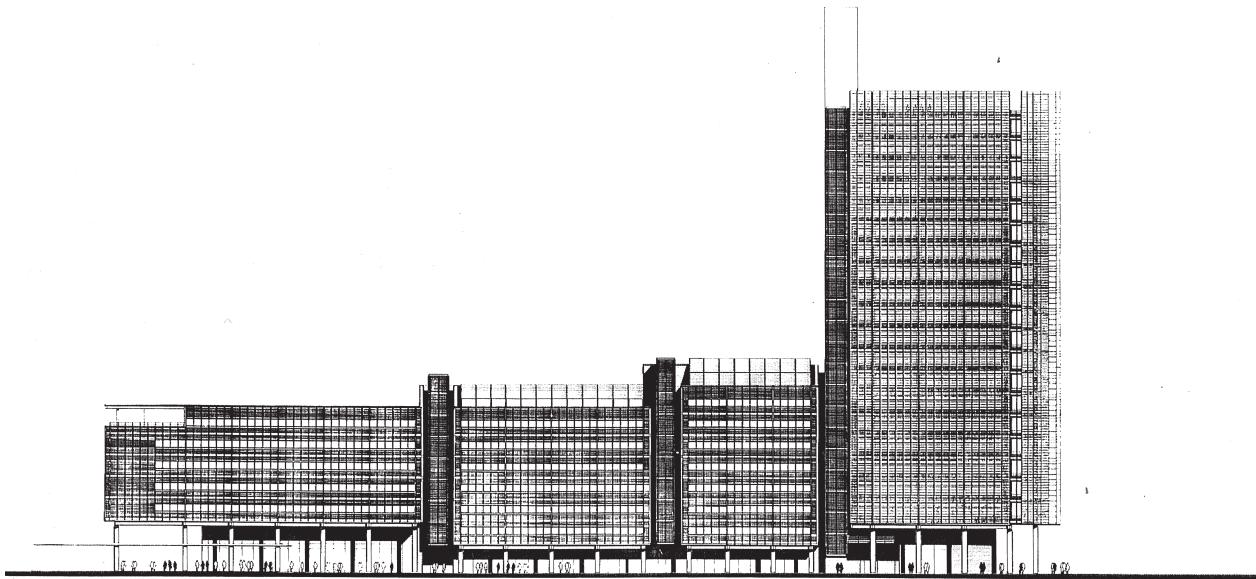
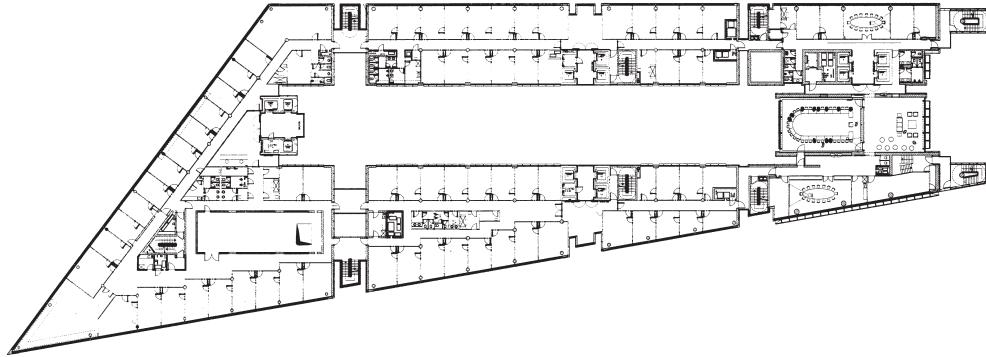
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Shortly after the reunification of Germany numerous architectural competitions were held in connection with plans to renovate Berlin. One such project sponsored by Daimler-Chrysler involved the rehabilitation of the square, Potsdamer Platz. Because the site had been Berlin's cultural and commercial center up until the 1930s, it took on enormous symbolic meaning, besides posing considerable challenges. During World War II, Potsdamer Platz had been subjected to numerous bombings because of its proximity to Hitler's bunker. At war's end, urban planners razed what little remained. Ultimately, the tide of political events led to its abandonment and the Berlin Wall was erected at the far end of the square.



During the early phases of the project in 1992 Potsdamer Platz no longer existed. All that remained on this wasteland was a street, Potsdamer Strasse, lined with trees that had been protected since the 1950s, and Weinhaus Huth, the only building that survived the war. East Berlin was cut off from the square by an immense no-man's-land, and the buildings to the West (including the Neue Staatsbibliothek built in 1972 by Hans Scharoun) turned their backs to the site. There was a great need to revive the square's spirit. This would entail rebuilding a whole section of the city from ground zero within a very short period of time.

The plans called for a complex of eighteen buildings surrounding a pedestrian area that was to become the project's nerve center. The square would be constructed on a human scale and would be surrounded by water, allowing it to serve as a meeting place, a point of social interchange, and a great intersection situated at the edge of Potsdamer Strasse. As the point where most of the roads in the district converged, it would accommodate a heavy flow of traffic and be alive with commotion day and night. Special attention would be paid not only to the size and density of the streets (paved in Berlin's traditional granite), but also to the presence of trees and water as well as to the details of the shopping arcades and the stores inside them. The goal was to attract Berliners and become one of their favorite places to visit.



Photo Vincent Mosch



Photo Beringo Gardin



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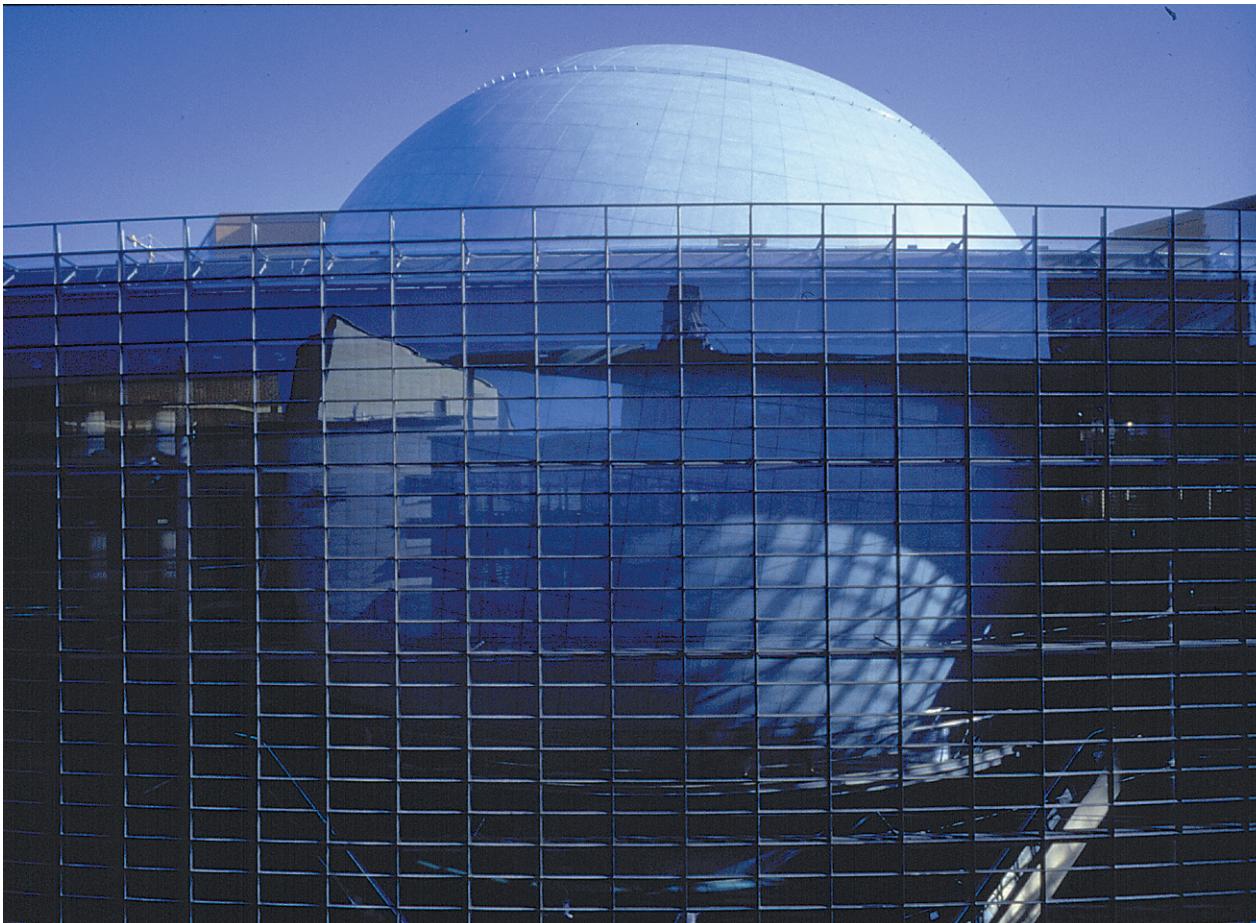


Photo Vincent Mosch



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Project Credits

1992-2000

Reconstruction of a section of Potsdamer Platz
Berlin, Germany

Client: Daimler-Chrysler AG

Architects: Renzo Piano Building Workshop
In association with: Christoh Kohlbecker

Consultants: Boll & Partners/Ove Arup & Partner,
IBF Dr. Falkner GmbH/Weiske & Partner;
IGH/Ove Arup & Partner, Schmidt-Reuter
& Partner (HVAC); Müller BBM; Hundt &
Partner; IBB Burrer, Ove Arup & Partners;
ITF Intertraffic; Atelier Dreiseitl; Krüger &
Möhre; P.L. Copat Drees & Sommer/Kohlbecker

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