



Deutscher Bundestag

A tour of the parliamentary district

Architecture, art and functions of the Bundestag buildings



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The parliamentary quarter is the new heart of Berlin. Every year millions of people from all parts of the world visit the Reichstag Building and the other parliamentary buildings. The open and inviting architecture of the quarter affords countless insights into the workings of parliamentary democracy. Here vast glazed facades expose the work of Parliament. Here visitors can look over the shoulders of Members of Parliament at work in their offices. The appeal of the Bundestag is also reflected in its numerous visitor facilities, the top attraction – needless to say – being a visit to the glass dome of the Reichstag Building. More than 700 Members of the Bundestag work in the parliamentary quarter, assisted

by some 3,000 staff of the Bundestag Administration and about 6,000 employees of the individual Members and of the parliamentary groups. The smooth discharge of parliamentary duties is made easier by some ingenious architecture. The various buildings, for example, are linked by a system of tunnels and walkways that provide Members and staff with an easily navigable parliament. The Reichstag Building in the heart of the parliamentary quarter can be reached quickly from all of the other buildings. Besides the plenary chamber, the historical building also houses the meeting rooms of the parliamentary groups and the presi-

dential rooms and offices. A great deal of the work of Parliament takes place in committee. The committees and their secretariats are accommodated in the Paul Löbe Building. Internal cylindrical structures, known as the rotundas, rise up strikingly on both sides along the length of the building, their glazed walls offering a clear view into the committee rooms housed inside them. On the east bank of the Spree the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building displays its prized jewel, the large reading room of the parliamentary library, which is seen to best effect when darkness falls. The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is the repository of knowledge, for it is here that we find the parts of the Bundestag Administration

An easily navigable parliament

which supply the Members of Parliament with information on a daily basis. A double-decked footbridge links the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders and Paul Lobe Buildings. Both buildings are part of a complex, known as the *Band des Bundes* or 'federal ribbon', that unites the once-divided city of Berlin architecturally. At its western end the ribbon is completed by the Federal Chancellery and the Chancellery Park. Eight buildings within a single building stretch out to the east of the Reichstag. This is the Jakob Kaiser Building, where five teams of architects created space for Members and staff of the Bundestag. This is where the offices of the parliamentary groups and the Vice-Presidents are lo-

cated. The Jakob Kaiser Building presents itself as an inviting and open edifice, especially from the banks of the Spree. In front of one of the external courtyards, Israeli artist Dani Karavan has installed glass panes bearing the 19 articles that form the Bill of Rights in the Basic Law, the German Constitution (p. 116/117). The eye is drawn from the inscriptions on these artworks into the interior of the new Bundestag structure, from art to politics. Art and politics meet at many places in the parliamentary quarter, thanks to the Art in Architecture programme of the Bundestag's Art Council, which has been running since the mid-1990s. The works of numerous artists from Germany and abroad feature in and around the new buildings. Regular

guided tours and the art exhibition room in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building provide visitors to the parliamentary quarter with an opportunity to view works from the collection. This brochure offers insights into the political life and history as well as the art and architecture of the parliamentary quarter. It leads visitors and readers through the Bundestag buildings, serving as both a guide and a reference work. Visitors are given concise on-the-spot information, while readers receive extensive insights into one of Berlin's most fascinating, animated and popular districts.





The Reichstag Building

The wish for a modern parliament in the historic Reichstag Building determined the way in which the building was redesigned to become the seat of the Bundestag. British architect Norman Foster adhered systematically to this brief.

A modern parliament in a historic building

The Reichstag's exterior, constructed between 1884 and 1894 by the architect Paul Wallot, has remained largely unchanged. Yet behind its majestic facade, transparency and functionality are the imperatives. This is a modern building in a technical sense too, for its state-of-the-art energy system and other services comply with the most stringent environmental criteria (see pp. 133 et seq.). Architecture, functionality and ecology unite to form a harmonious trinity. Transparency and functionality are also enhanced by the clear division of the building into functionally defined levels or floors.

The basement and ground floor house storage areas and facilities for the parliamentary secretariat. The Bundestag physician's consulting rooms are also located here. The next level is the plenary area with the spacious plenary chamber of the Bundestag. This is followed by the visitors' level and the presidential level, and finally the area for the parliamentary groups and the roof terrace with the dome. Each level is identified by a specific keynote colour applied to the doors and other interior features. This colour coding serves as a visual aid to navigation and promotes transparency throughout the building. In line with this colour strategy, the keynote colour for the ground floor is yellowish orange, while a strong blue is used for the plenary level

and dark green for the visitors' area. Burgundy was chosen for the presidential level and grey for the parliamentary groups' level. The construction materials used for the refurbishment of the Reichstag Building also enhance its transparency. Extensive use is made of glass, steel, exposed concrete and matt white or beige natural stone, which lend the entire building an airy and often silvery flair, in spite of the massive bulk of its historical forms. Bold colours feature here too, for example in the panelling and paintwork in the conference rooms, the cafeteria and the bistro in the Members' restaurant.

Visitors likewise benefit from the transparency and functionality that characterises the whole building. Members of the public approach the building by the grand flight of stone steps at the main portal on the west side and enter via the visitors' entrance, passing between the mighty Reichstag pillars. Only a few paces further, and they are in the lofty entrance hall, where, behind glass partitions, the very heart of Parliament—the plenary chamber—comes into view. Here, on the first-floor plenary level, with its keynote colour blue, begins the nucleus of parliamentary life. This area is reserved for Members and their assistants and parliamentary staff. The plenary chamber is surrounded by

a wreath of rooms and facilities that support the work of parliament, especially on sitting days. They include the lobbies and a club room for the fringe discussions that often play an important role as well as a reference library where facts and figures can be checked during debates. There is a small reception area as well as rooms for the President and/or Vice-Presidents chairing the day's proceedings and members of the Government, a room for the counting of votes cast during recorded or secret votes and the Members' restaurant, with its own bistro, and a cafe-

teria. On the south side of the plenary level there is also a Reflection and Prayer Room where Members can gather for Christian morning prayers on sitting days. This space was designed by Düsseldorf artist Günter Uecker and has a quiet, meditative atmosphere. The focus of attention, however, is always the plenary chamber.

It practically reaches through the entire building, rising to the foot of the glass dome surmounting the Reichstag Building, and its interior can be seen from almost all the floors grouped around it, the light wells and many other vantage points. Here is the heart of Germany's parliamentary democracy.



View from the Victory Column of the Königsplatz with the Reichstag Building (image date approx. 1895).



The Reichstag
Building today:
architect Norman Foster's
glass dome
is one of the
city's top
crowd-pullers.

The heart of the Reichstag Building is the plenary chamber with its floor area of 1,200 square metres. Rising to a height of 24 metres, it practically fills the entire vertical space of the building. This is where the final decisions are taken, especially on legislation. This is where the Federal Chancellor is elected. This is also where he or she can be removed from office through the election of a successor. And beyond all the routine work and specialised issues, the plenary chamber is also the “forum of the nation”, where issues of concern to the wider public are raised and discussed time and again. One fact which comes across especially clearly at plenary sittings is that the sovereignty of the

Bundestag is limited only by the provisions of the German constitution. Parliament is not bound by orders or instructions but regulates its own affairs. If the Bundestag is the supreme democratic authority, the plenary is its key constituent body. This is apparent, too, from the structure of the sitting weeks, in which the detailed discussions held by specialised bodies, parliamentary groups and committees culminate in the plenary sittings on Thursday and Friday, where final decisions are taken. The rhythm corresponds to that of a regulated work cycle. In addition, the plenary agenda includes question times, debates devoted to a topical issue and question-and-answer sessions with government ministers after cabinet meetings.

The plenary chamber



The heart of Parliament; the interior of the plenary chamber is visible from all floors of the Reichstag Building.

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 (key-note 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 were seated right in the middle of the chamber.

The first thing to catch the visitor's eye from here is the large Bundestag eagle. Two media walls to its left and right display the current agenda item, the name of the speaker and the next item on the agenda. Below the eagle on the visitors' left is the German federal flag, with the European flag on the right. Beneath the eagle's feet is the slightly raised working area for the Chair, where the President of the German Bundestag or one of the Vice-Presidents is flanked by two Members acting as secretaries, one from a parliamentary group in the governing coalition and one from an opposition group.

The visitors' level

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 table used by the parliamentary shorthand writers, who record every spoken word. To the left of the Chair, as seen from the visitors' gallery, are the seats for the Federal Chancellor, the federal ministers and their staff; to the right are the seats for the Bundesrat, the body that represents the Länder, the constituent states of the Federal Republic. The two seats in the front row immediately next to the President's

working area are reserved for the Federal Chancellor and the President of the Bundesrat. Finally, between the Bundesrat and the Chair is the seat for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, who is appointed to assist the Bundestag in exercising parliamentary oversight of the Bundeswehr.

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 Members from the AfD and CDU/CSU parliamentary groups

on the left as viewed from the visitors' gallery. Next to them are the Members of the FDP and Alliance 90/The Greens. To the right of them come the Members for the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and, on the far right side, the seats occupied by The Left Party. Independent Members sit separately behind the parliamentary group seats. This, then, is the scene of debate and decision-making, the heart of parliament. Nowhere are the public closer to it than on the mezzanine visitors' level, with its green colour coding, which also comprises several lecture and information rooms.



Democracy close up: visitors can look over Members' shoulders during debates in the chamber.

Above the visitors' galleries is the presidential level, where the keynote colour is burgundy. This is where the work of the Bundestag is managed, organised and planned within the limits of the decision-making powers vested in the plenary in respect of its own business. This level houses the offices of the President of the Bundestag, the supreme representative of Parliament. It is also where the Council of Elders, a steering body whose task is to manage

the internal affairs of the Bundestag, has its meeting room. The meeting room of the parliamentary Presidium and other meeting rooms are also located on this floor. Last but not least, the presidential level also plays a representative role. To this end, its amenities include one large and one small reception room.

The presidential level



The presidential level in the Reichstag Building.

It is not possible to accommodate the Members of Parliament, the committees and other parliamentary bodies in the Reichstag. Their offices and meeting rooms are in the parliamentary buildings constructed in the immediate vicinity. The parliamentary groups, however, do have their permanent place in the plenary building, on the third floor, immediately above the presidential level. There is a good reason for this. Since they bring together all the Members from one party – or, as in the case of the CDU/CSU, two sister parties – they are important and often crucial coordinating points. Their assembly rooms and executive committee premises are grouped around an extensive press lobby, which can also be used for large

receptions. The CDU/CSU, SPD and The Left Party groups meet on the east side of this storey and the groups of AfD, FDP and Alliance 90/The Greens on the west side. The premises of the parliamentary groups also include the four corner towers of the Reichstag Building. Their square form and their height give the tower rooms a particularly distinctive shape. On Tuesdays of sitting weeks, when the parliamentary groups assemble, this whole level of the building becomes the temporary hub of parliamentary activity.

The parliamentary groups' level



The parliamentary groups' level in the Reichstag Building, bustling with Members and visitors.

The parliamentary level is the highest working level in the Reichstag Building. Above it lies the extensive roof terrace with a visitors' restaurant – and the large glass dome that has become the emblem of the Bundestag. It sparkles by day and shines out over the city by night. As it is not a closed structure but is open at its upper and lower ends, the dome appears to be suspended like a light and airy globe, a floating superstructure. The mirrored cone in its centre, with its specific technical and environmental functions (see pp. 135 et seq.), lends it an additional dimension. Above all, however, the dome is a crowd-puller, for at the top of the two ramps spiralling gently upwards and downwards within the dome is a

viewing platform which, like the roof terrace, offers panoramic views of the whole of Berlin. At the base of the dome, the plenary chamber can be seen from above – another magnet for visitors. Whether it is viewed from here or in close-up from the visitors' galleries that extend far into the chamber itself, the German Bundestag in the historic Reichstag Building is wide open to all its visitors and so makes good the dedication inscribed in large letters above the main portal on the west side of the building – *Dem deutschen Volke* ('To the German People').

The glass dome



Emblem of the Bundestag: the glass dome on the Reichstag Building attracts millions of visitors every year.

Through its architectural art project, the Bundestag has united art and politics. Renowned artists from Germany and abroad have drawn inspiration from politics in their contributions to the design of the Reichstag Building.

Where art and history meet

Visitors to the Reichstag Building are able not only to admire its impressive architecture but also to view a range of artworks created by renowned German and foreign artists for the home of the German parliament – including, as an act of homage to Berlin's former four-power status, works by artists from the United States (Jenny Holzer), France (Christian Boltanski) and Russia (Grisha Bruskin). The United Kingdom is represented by the architect, Norman Foster. In particular, pieces were commissioned from artists who were prepared to engage productively with the place and its history.

The visitor is welcomed to the west entrance hall of the Reichstag Building with two pieces by Gerhard Richter. The artist faced the difficult task of making a 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 (p. 26). The colours were applied to the reverse sides of three large sheets of glass and recall, not without deeper significance, the colours of the German flag. However, both the vertically elongated rectangular 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 colourist art. By making sparing use of artistic materials, Gerhard Richter succeeded in finding an understated artistic form that generates particular force out of its very simplicity. 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 the viewer's eye can rest, while at the same time creating an intellectual space across which diverse associations and reflections can play.

The second large installation by Gerhard Richter can be found on the opposite wall of the west entrance hall of the Reichstag Building. The origins of the design for the *Birkenau* cycle of paintings lies in photos taken by prisoners at the burning of corpses at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the discovery of which triggered a radical decision by Gerhard Richter: he abandoned his figurative approach and moved towards an abstract depiction of their motif. He thus transferred the photographs onto four monumental canvases and painted over them again and again, before scraping these coats off again. The original photos are displayed as prints close to the installation, “not as a piece of art but as a document and memento”, as Gerhard Richter states.

This painting process neither distorts nor conceals the original motifs. On the contrary, just as the recollection of this darkest chapter of German history is burned into the collective memory, so the photographs which evoke these horrors remain hauntingly present – beneath the layers of paint and beneath the surface he lives and memories he generations that came afterwards. Placed directly opposite the installation *Black, Red, Gold*, in the Reichstag Building, *Birkenau* creates an arc of reflection which shows the historical dimensions of Germany’s self-image right here at the heart of German democracy.

For the south entrance hall, Georg Baselitz produced large-format paintings on canvas, inspired by motifs drawn from the work of the great romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (p. 26). As in many of his pictures, he turned the motifs upside down in order to focus attention on the formal design 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*.



Gerhard Richter:
Black Red Gold
(1999)
West entrance
hall.



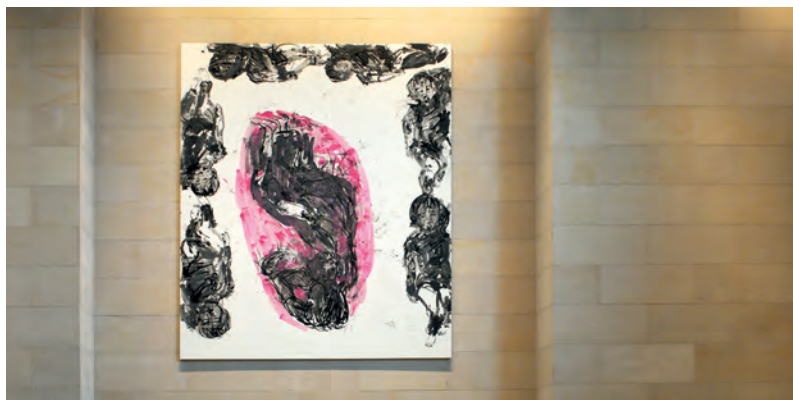
Gerhard Richter:
Birkenau cycle
of paintings,
photo version
(2014/2017)
West entrance
hall.

Carlfriedrich Claus, an artist who was forced into internal emigration in the GDR, is represented with his *Aurora Experimental Space*, the installation of which he oversaw shortly before his death.

Each motif recurs several times in a border surrounding the central figure. Large areas of canvas are untouched, and some of the colouring conveys the impression of having been applied as a wash. This lends the paintings the lightness of water colours, and this transparency enables them to assert their presence against the massive stone ashlars of the architecture. With his motifs and style, Baselitz builds a bridge from the present-day to the age of Romanticism.

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 incurred the hostility of the ruling Socialist Unity Party. In *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 set down

his trains of thought, influenced by mysticism, Kabbalah and Marxist philosophy, on parchment or on glass panels. The writing continually contracts and overlaps to form textual images. Transferred to acrylic panels, these symbolic signs project boldly out into space. In these pieces, Carlfriedrich Claus forged an intensely personal synthesis of poetry, philosophy, mysticism and calligraphy.



Georg Baselitz:
Frederick's Melancholy (1998)
South entrance hall.



Carlfriedrich
Claus: *Aurora*
Experimental
Space
(1977/1993)
South-west
lobby.

The most comprehensive artistic work in the Reichstag Building was produced by Düsseldorf-based artist Günther Uecker. He was given the difficult task of designing a contemporary religious interior for the Reflection and Prayer Room. 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 its salvation in a series of significant works. Drawing on theological traditions and making frugal use of artistic and architectural means

of expression, he succeeded in designing a space is conducive to meditation and self-examination. By erecting a screen wall along the window side with an opening at one end, Uecker guided the light indirectly into the room, giving it the mystical aura of an early medieval crypt. The tone of the room is set by powerful structural elements such as the altar of sandblasted granite, by specially designed chairs and benches and by seven wooden panels leaning against the walls at a slight angle. Uecker made these panels into artistic design elements with nails, paint, sand and stones. The panels visualise the desert as the birthplace of Judaeo-Christian spirituality.

Death and resurrection are condensed into imposing evocative images.

The conference room for one of the most important parliamentary bodies, the Council of Elders, was decorated by Stuttgart-based artist Georg Karl Pfahler.

In an ingeniously crafted optical illusion, coloured rectangles appear to be tumbling down from the walls and veritably dancing away across the architect's wooden panelling.



Georg Karl Pfahler: *Colour and Space Object* (1998/99) Council of Elders Conference Room.



Günther Uecker:
Reflection and
Prayer Room
(1998/99).

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.

In contrast to the all-encompassing ideological vision unfolded by Carl-friedrich Claus, American artist Jenny Holzer chose quite deliberately to concentrate on the history of the Reichstag Building. In the north entrance hall, she installed a sign column with LED message strips on all four sides. Transcripts of speeches given by Members of the Reichstag and Bundestag between 1871 and 1999 scroll endlessly up the pillar in a digital stream of text that docu-

ments the history of the parliamentary speech in Germany. The speeches were selected by the artist and arranged into thematic blocks. Interruptions from the floor of the House are indicated by repeated blinking. The parliamentary speeches scrolling up the column form a symbolic supporting pillar of Parliament as the home of the political speech. The parliamentary speeches scrolling up the column form a symbolic supporting pillar of Parliament as the home of the political speech. Jenny Holzer from the United States is one of four artists who were invited to create new works for the Reichstag Building to commemorate the quadripartite status of Berlin

when it was occupied by the four victorious powers after the Second World War. The other representatives are the architect, Norman Foster from the United Kingdom, Christian Boltanski from France and Grisha Bruskin, representing the Soviet Union. Christian Boltanski designed the *Archive of German Members of Parliament*, which stands in the basement of the Reichstag Building (p. 43). Metal boxes are labelled with the names of the Members of Parliament who were democratically elected to the German Parliament in the period from 1919 to 1999, the year when the refurbished Reichstag Building was inaugurated. The boxes are arranged in two long blocks, stacked up to the ceiling, in such a way that a narrow passageway is created between them.



Bernhard Heisig: *Time and Life* (1998/99) Library.



Jenny Holzer:
*Installation for
the Reichstag
Building* (1999)
North entrance
hall.

In the club room, Grisha Bruskin's triptych *'Life Above All Else'* is an ironic treatment of ideological myths and especially the 'sculpture mania' of Soviet Russia. A total of 115 individual pictures are arranged in rows, each showing a person in pale monochrome, schematised and statue-like, whose individuality is indicated only by his or her coloured props, whether it be a peasant woman from a collective farm with oversized crops or a Russian soldier with the coats of arms of the Federal Republic and the GDR.

The works of other artists in the Reichstag Building, including Katharina Sieverding's memorial *In Memory of the Members of Parliament in the Weimar Republic who were Persecuted, Outlawed or Murdered between 1933 and 1945* (p. 41), provide a lively cross-section of the German and international art scenes. Other works in this category were created by artists such as Lutz Dammbeck, Hanne Darboven, Rupprecht Geiger, Gotthard Graubner, Bernhard Heisig (p. 30), Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lüpertz, Ulrich Rückriem, Emil Schumacher und Jürgen Böttcher, who paints under the pseudonym Strawalde. Works by other artists have been bought.

Hans Haacke's installation *Der Bevölkerung* ('To the Population') was laid out in the northern internal courtyard in 2000 after a fierce and absorbing debate in the chamber about whether the project should be allowed to go ahead. In an area seven metres wide and 21 metres long edged with timber planks, the artist had the dedication *Der Bevölkerung* installed in neon-lit lettering. The words can be read from every floor of the building. All Members are invited to bring some soil from their constituencies to Berlin and scatter it around the illuminated letters. A web camera documents the changes in the proliferating vegetation of the wild biotope, and its images can be viewed at www.derbevoelkerung.de.



Hans Haacke:
To the Population
(1999/2000)
Northern internal courtyard.



Grisha Bruskin:
Life Above All
Else (1999)
Club room.

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

Traces of the past

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 so forfeited its legitimacy. 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 prob-

lems and had become politically impotent. The result was a revolution, which developed from a sailors' uprising in Kiel and reached its climax in Berlin in November 1918. Germany was threatened by two possible developments: either a brutal military putsch or an uprising by the extreme left emulating the Soviet Russian example. On 9 November 1918, Philipp Scheidemann, chairman of the SPD parliamentary group in the Reichstag,

addressing the crowd gathered in front of the Reichstag Building from one of its west balconies, proclaimed a Republic. "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, leader of the radical socialists, announced the founding of a Soviet-style socialist republic from the Palace – the seat of the Kaiser – shortly afterwards and also because Scheidemann did not immediately gain the agreement of his party colleagues. His intervention, however, pointed the way towards parliamentary democracy.

The underground passage

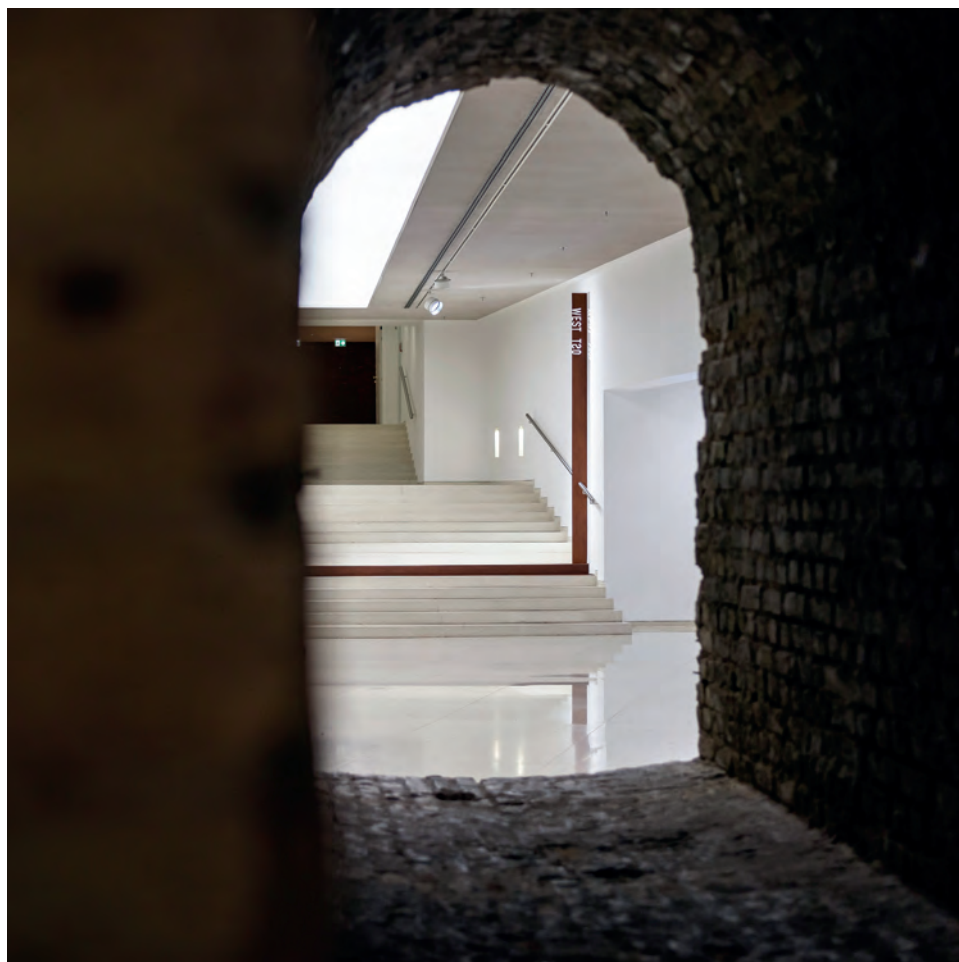
The Reichstag Building became famous throughout the world as a result of the fire on 27 February 1933. Adolf Hitler's Na-

tional Socialist government exploited the occurrence to abolish the rule of law, thereby destroying the foundations of the constitutional state, by means of the Presidential Order for the Protection of the People and the State – the Reichstag Fire Decree – of 28 February. The Enabling Act, which the Reichstag adopted in the Kroll Opera House, Berlin, on 23 March 1933, eliminated the parliamentary form of government and established the dictatorship of the National Socialists. During the refurbishment of the building in the 1990s, construction workers discovered a tunnel that had once carried heating pipes under the street to the palace of the Reichstag President. After the Reichstag fire,

rumours emerged that the arsonists had been sent through that tunnel into the building. Even today, historians are still trying to find out exactly how the building was set on fire. 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 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 a newly adopted retroactive law. It was not until 2008 that the judgment was overturned and van der Lubbe rehabilitated.



Western balcony: Philipp Scheidemann proclaims a republic from a balcony of the Reichstag Building; the photograph shows a reenactment dating from the 1920s.



Rediscovered:
parts of the old
heating tunnel
that once linked
the Reichstag
Building with
the palace of
the Reichstag
President and
the boiler
house. A step
and a strip of
corten steel
mark where the
wall ran.

Graffiti left by Soviet soldiers

Under the National Socialist regime, the Reichstag Building remained largely unused. The Soviet Union, however, attached great importance to the building as a symbol of the 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 build-

ing. 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 this graffiti has been preserved – as traces of a history that led from megalomania to total defeat.

The Red Flag on the Reichstag Building

During the battles for control of the city, the Soviet troops had an effective way of marking the objectives they had captured in the fighting for the city. Each objective was given a number, and its capture

was signalled by means of a Red Flag. In order to ensure that at least one flag on the roof proclaimed the victory of the Red Army, several groups carried Red Flags as they fought their way towards the building. Once the building was captured, Soviet soldiers secured the Red Flag to its eastern parapet. The famous photograph showing three soldiers raising the Red Flag next to the south-east tower was a re-enactment staged in the days that followed but still has great significance today as a symbol of the end of the National Socialist regime.



Expressions of victory: following their capture of the Reichstag Building, Soviet troops marked the walls with graffiti.



Symbolising the end of National Socialist rule: Soviet troops hoist a Red Flag on the Reichstag Building in Berlin (reenactment).

Place of Remembrance and Members' lobby

Artist Katharina Sieverding created a memorial within the refurbished Reichstag Building for the Members of the Reichstag who were persecuted and murdered during the period from 1933 to 1945. This impressive space on the plenary level 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 Members of Parliament can withdraw, where they are reminded unobtrusively yet inescapably of the fates of many of their predecessors.

With its background motif of the sun's blazing corona, the five-part photo painting 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". Three books of remem-

brance honouring the memory of many Members of the Reichstag lie on wooden tables in front of the memorial. The volume on the central table, containing short biographies, commemorates each of the 120 Members of the Reichstag who were murdered by the National Socialists. The other two books of remembrance pay tribute to parliamentarians who were arrested or forced into exile.



Place of refuge:
the Members' lobby in the Reichstag Building.



Katharina
Sieverding: *In
Memory of the
Members of
Parliament in
the Weimar
Republic who
were Persecut-
ed, Outlawed
or Murdered be-
tween 1933 and
1945* (1992)
Members' lobby.

Memorial to Murdered Members of Parliament

Near the south-western corner of the Reichstag Building stands a memorial to those Members of the Reichstag of the Weimar Republic who were murdered by the National Socialists. The creation of this memorial can be traced back to the commitment of *Perspektive*, a citizens' action group. Comprising 96 broken tablets of Berlin cast iron, reminiscent of the narrow gravestones at Jewish cemeteries. Names and dates are inscribed along the upper edges of the tablets, as are the places where the victims died: Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen, Berlin-Plötzensee, Theresienstadt ... More plates can be added to the memorial as new research findings emerge. The ap-

parent unobtrusiveness of this artwork, which is about ten metres long, is intentional, for the National Socialist evil is meant to be understood as a disaster that crept up on Germany with the acquiescence of too many people.

Archive of German Members of Parliament

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

ranged in two long blocks, stacked up to the ceiling, in such a way that a narrow passageway is created between them, dimly lit by bare carbon-filament bulbs. Each politician is identified as a historical individual, and each is accorded the same amount of space, regardless of how long he or she served as a Member of Parliament. Boltanski deviates from this principle in only 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 there was no democratically legitimised parliament in Germany.



Dieter Appelt, Klaus W. Eisenlohr, Justus Müller and Christian Zwirner: *Memorial to the Members of the Reichstag of the Weimar Republic who were murdered by the National Socialists* (1992) Outside the Reichstag Building, in the south-west corner.



Christian
Boltanski:
*Archive of Ger-
man Members
of Parliament*
(1999)
East entrance,
basement.

The Berlin Wall

Following the Second World War, the Reichstag Building lay on the border between East and West. Because of its location, it came to symbolise the division of Germany, the nation's fragmented political landscape and its bleak prospects. In the 1960s the building was rebuilt on the basis of plans drawn up by architect Paul Baumgarten. When the construction of the Berlin Wall began on 13 August 1961, if not even earlier, the building became the focus of many disputes simply because of where it stood. The stretch of wall erected between the Berlin administrative districts of Mitte and Tiergarten became

one of the most sensitive flashpoints in the world. East and West faced each other, heavily armed and distrustful. Every movement came under surveillance; any error on either side was liable to be misconstrued and trigger an overreaction. When the border was opened in November 1989, the Wall came down, including the section behind the Reichstag Building. There are reminders of its existence at several places. A commemorative grove was created on the western side, with simple crosses dedicated to the young people who lost their lives trying to flee over the Wall; another place of remembrance is located on the bank of the River Spree on the north side of the Reichstag Building. Between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag Building the course of the wall is marked with stones set into the street.

The linear complex of new parliamentary and government buildings known as the *Band des Bundes* (Federal Ribbon) spans the River Spree, which formed the border here until 1990. A section of the “hinterland wall” remains preserved inside the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building as a salutary reminder, and incorporated into the German Bundestag’s Berlin Wall Memorial. In the room, which is open to the public, a book of remembrance for the dead is displayed as a memorial to the victims of the GDR border regime.



The night of 20 November 1961: Behind a wooden fence, keeping them out of sight, workers construct a wall of concrete slabs on the East German side. The Reichstag Building can be seen in the background.



Now: View of the Reichstag Building 30 years after the Wall came down; the cobbles set into the roadway mark the course of the Wall.

Commemoration of Solidarność

On the north side of the Reichstag Building, a piece of wall from the Gdańsk Shipyard commemorates the Polish trade-union movement Solidarność which was created there in 1980. With its fight for democratic rights, it made a telling contribution to the end of the division of Europe. The piece of wall with a bronze commemorative plaque is a gift from the Polish Parliament to the Bundestag. The plaque is inscribed in German and Polish as follows: “In memory of the struggle

waged by Solidarność for freedom and democracy and of the contribution of Poland to the reunification of Germany and for a politically united Europe”.

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 contribu-

tion to the fall of the Berlin Wall and so the achievement of German unity, namely the opening by the Hungarian Government of 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 and so put paid to the impenetrability of the border between East and West. The bronze plaque, which was installed after unification, contains the following inscription in German and Hungarian: “A sign of friendship between the Hungarian and German people for a united Germany, for an independent Hungary, for a democratic Europe”.



Plaque on the Reichstag Building commemorating the opening of the border in Hungary on 10 September 1989.



Commemorating Solidarność: the piece of wall from the Gdańsk Shipyard and the commemorative plaque were a gift from the Polish Parliament.

9 June 1884

The foundation stone was laid 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, proclaimed the German Republic from a balcony of the Reichstag Building.

27 February 1933

Following Adolf Hitler's seizure of power, the Reichstag fire came to symbolise the death of parliamentary democracy in Germany.

May 1945

The battle for Berlin finally ended the National Socialist regime and the Second World War that it unleashed. The Reichstag Building – like so many others in Germany's capital city – lay in ruins.

Chronology of the Reichstag Building

13 August 1961

The building of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961 sealed the division of Germany. Until the collapse of the GDR regime in 1989, the border between East and West ran alongside the Reichstag Building. In the 1960s, architect Paul Baumgarten redesigned the internal structure of the Reichstag Building for parliamentary uses, and the building housed the permanent exhibition *Fragen an die deutsche Geschichte* (Questions on German History).

4 October 1990

On the day after the formal reunification of Germany, the first sitting of the all-German Bundestag took place in the Reichstag Building. It was attended by the Members of the (Bonn) Bundestag and 144 Members of the Volkskammer (People's Chamber) of the GDR, who had been elected by the existing Volkskammer to serve in the Bundestag. The first all-German Bundestag elections were held on 2 December, and its constituent sitting took place in Berlin on 20 December.

20 June 1991

The Bundestag decided in Bonn that Berlin was to become the seat of parliament and government once more. The decision was adopted by a narrow majority of 338 to 320 votes.

July 1993

The Council of Elders selected the refurbishment proposals submitted by British architect Norman Foster.

June/July 1995

Artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrapped the Reichstag Building in fabric. As soon as the wrapping was removed, the reconstruction work began.

19. April 1999

The Bundestag took possession of the rebuilt Reichstag Building in a ceremony in which the architect, Norman Foster, presented the President of the German Bundestag, Wolfgang Thierse, with a symbolic key to the building. The Bundestag moved from Bonn to Berlin in July and August 1999.

The first regular week of sittings began in the newly refurbished Reichstag Building on 6 September. On the following day, the Bundestag celebrated its 50th anniversary.

October 2001 to December 2003, 2010

The parliamentary quarter took shape as the new parliamentary buildings were completed – the Paul Löbe Building in October 2001, the Jakob Kaiser Building in December 2001 and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building in December 2003. Work began in 2010 on an eastward extension of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building.

June 1994

After heated debates, the Council of Elders decided that the Reichstag Building was to have a dome once again.

May 1995

Norman Foster's final design for the roof structure on the Reichstag Building was presented: a glass dome with internal walkways.



1884: Emperor William I lays the foundation stone for the Reichstag Building designed by architect Paul Wallot.



1999: The British architect, Norman Foster (r.), presents Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse with the symbolic key to the redesigned Reichstag Building.





The Paul Löbe Building

To the north of the Reichstag Building lies the Paul Löbe Building. It is part of the ‘federal ribbon’, an architectural design concept that forges a symbolic link binding the once-divided city of Berlin.

An engine of the Republic

Named after the last President of a democratic Reichstag and President by seniority of the German Bundestag, Paul Löbe (see page 73), this new parliamentary building is part of the 'Federal Ribbon', the linear complex of buildings that spans the River Spree and links together the two halves of the German capital once divided by the Iron Curtain. The Ribbon, built along a West-East axis, comprises the Federal Chancellery, the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building and more or less cuts across the diameter of the large hemispherical area contained within the arc of the River Spree. It was intended as a link between the district of Moabit in the west and the historical Friedrich-

Wilhelm-Stadt in the east. The project represented "a capriciously powerful urban structure that successfully reflects a bold self-projection of the state and sets a high standard for future architectural competitions", as the jury for the urban-design competition stated in its selection decision in 1993. The designs of Munich-based architect Stephan Braunfels for the Paul Löbe and Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Buildings fitted the bill, and he accepted the client's commission. The buildings are connected by a double-decked bridge. Unlike the Reichstag Building, which houses a modern parliament in a historic edifice, the Paul Löbe Building offered Braunfels an opportunity to pursue original ideas uninhibited by the legacy of the past. The new eight-storey building with its five striking wing blocks

on either side and eight distinctive glazed cylinders looks like a powerful yet stylish engine driving the Republic. The Paul Löbe Building, about 200 metres long and 102 metres wide, was designed primarily 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, for most legislative work is done not in the plenary chamber, but by the Bundestag's specialised permanent committees. On the other hand, the Bundestag does not wish to diminish the public nature of its proceedings in any way, for democracy and transparency are interdependent; they are two sides of the same coin.

This transparency is immediately exemplified at the west end of the building, where the main entrance is located. The massive facade is fully glazed, and its panes reflect the Federal Chancellery, located opposite. Even at a distance, visitors receive the message that they will be welcome in the Paul Löbe Building. This message is conveyed even more impressively in the evening, when the vast expanse of glass is illuminated from within and the staircases rising symmetrically to the right and left, sometimes referred to as 'stairways to

heaven', unfold their deliberately sculptural effect.

The side facades are 200 metres long and 23 metres high, segmented by five side wings with greened courtyards between them, and display a welcoming openness. The glazed side walls of these courtyards contrast with the grey exposed concrete of the outer facades.

The building

Since the Members' offices, the committee secretariats and the conference rooms look out onto the courtyards, the parliamentarians can enjoy fine views as they deliberate, while people outside have a good view of the work being done by their elected representatives. Spreeplatz and its riverside walk are also appealing. This is where the Paul Löbe Building makes the daring architectural leap over the Spree to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders

Building and its impressive flight of steps descending to the river. The interior of the Paul Löbe Building, with its 1,000 or so offices and the committee meeting rooms, is also characterised by transparency and openness. This is due above all to the hall that runs through the complex from west to east, rising to a height of eight storeys and culminating in a glazed lattice roof, 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. Vast glass facades rise at either end, offering fascinating prospects of the Federal Chancellery to the west and the glazed library of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building across the Spree to the east.



Invitingly spacious: the west entrance to the Paul Löbe Building.

The Paul Löbe Building is not just a striking edifice; it is also 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 committee rooms are accommodated in cylindrical towers, two storeys high. 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.

The number of members varies between committees; in the 20th electoral term, committee sizes range from 19 to 49. The Committee for Cultural and Media Affairs, the Sports Committee and the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid all have 19 members. The Finance Committee, the Budget Committee and the Committee on Health are some of the committees with more than 40 members. The largest committee, with 49 members, is the Committee on Labour and Social Affairs.

The Committees

‘Conference Room 2.400 – Budget Committee’ says the sign on a door on the second floor of the Paul Löbe Building Behind the door is a round, two-storey-high room that feels almost intimate despite having more than 100 seats. The carpeting 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 suspended above it, ready to be lowered. There are wooden panels on the walls and electrically controlled sun blinds in front of the windows. While the gallery

has seating for about 50 visitors, approximately 80 people can sit below in the actual committee room. The 45 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. As a ‘working parliament in miniature’, a committee needs 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 secretariat and its chairperson tend to be located very close to each other. Besides the secretariat offices, there are meeting rooms, offices for assistants and research staff and a registry. Altogether, the amount of space required by the Budget Committee takes up a whole storey in one of the side wings.



Where the specialised work of Parliament takes place: the Bundestag committees meet in the conference rooms of the Paul Löbe Building. Here, we see the Budget Committee.

The locations and facilities for the other committees are similar. Only the number of backrooms varies, depending on the size of the committee. The same principle of functionality paired with openness, however, applies everywhere – reflected, for example, in the separation of visitors from the working level by means of raised galleries, one storey higher. The public should be able to watch their Members of Parliament engage in the legislative process without disturbing their work.

The Committee on the Affairs of the European Union enjoys an exceptional status. With 40 Members of the Bundestag in its ranks as well as 19 Members of the European Parliament who are entitled to participate in its work, it is the only one that is able to take decisions on behalf of the whole House. Its special role has also earned the EU Affairs Committee a special privilege, in that 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 large east rotunda of the Paul Löbe Building, 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. Moreover, with its interpreting booths and technical rooms, it is perfectly equipped in terms of conference technology; various major public hearings and international conferences are also held there. The German Bundestag provides information about the parliamentary committees in its flyers, available at: www.btg-bestellservice.de/informationmaterial#45



Interior view of the Paul Löbe Building: the committee meeting rooms are located in the rotundas.



Evening in
the Paul Lobe
Building: the
Europasaal can
be found on the
top floor of the
rotunda (on
the left in the
picture).

The Paul Löbe Building not only houses the committees and parts of the Bundestag Administration – including the Visitors’ Service and the Public Relations Division. It also contains the offices of many Members of the German Bundestag from the two biggest parliamentary groups, the SPD and the CDU/CSU. Decisions about which of the 736 Members who currently constitute the German Bundestag are to have their offices in the Paul Löbe Building, which in the Jakob Kaiser Building and which in the premises on Unter den Linden were taken by the

parliamentary groups’ room allocation commissions among themselves. In reaching their decisions, the commissions tried to take account of the Land group to which each Member belonged. The buildings are not ranked in order of precedence.

The standard accommodation for a Member in the Paul Löbe Building is as follows: three rooms, each measuring 18 square metres, exterior walls of glass from floor to ceiling, sun blinds and shades, carpeting in muted 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. The three rooms are connected.

Members of Parliament

A total of 54 square metres for one Member may seem like a lot of space, but it is anything but lavish in the reality of everyday parliamentary life. The fact is that Members do not work alone; they employ research staff and secretaries and are often assisted by young people on work placements or students. All of them ensure that the work process runs smoothly in Members' offices. And indeed there is much to be done there. About 20 weeks each year are sitting weeks, when the Members of Parliament

work in Berlin. Meetings of parliamentary groups, plenary sittings, committee meetings and meetings of working parties and Land groups take up a large part of the working week. Throughout an electoral term, parliamentary business usually generates over 12,000 printed papers; in the 19th electoral term the total was over 31,000. The length of each document can vary greatly – from a couple of pages to several hundred. The annual budget has over 3,000 pages. Members have to read many of these printed papers, familiarise themselves with the topic areas and deliberate on these with other parliamentarians.

Local appointments have to be planned and organised, and preparations have to be made for press interviews and for appointments with visitors and representatives of associations. More information about the work and duties of Members of Parliament can be found in the brochure "Facts", which can be downloaded or ordered via the following link: www.btg-bestell-service.de/informations-material/42/anr40410000



Each Member has three offices equipped with modern technology. Pictured here is Klaus Ernst from The Left Party parliamentary group.

Publicity is part and parcel of a democratic parliament, hence the great emphasis placed on public relations and services for visitors at the German Bundestag. Every year, millions of people from all parts of the world visit the Reichstag Building and the other parliamentary buildings. The Visitors' Service guides and looks after visiting groups and explains the work of the Bundestag and Germany's political system to them. The rooms on the ground floor of the Paul Löbe Building are the venue for educational seminars on parliament and politics and discussions between Members and visitors from their constituencies, while from the visitors' restaurant on the second floor of the glazed east rotunda, visitors can look out over the Spree.

The Public Relations Division of the Bundestag provides information through brochures, flyers, pamphlets, films, books and exhibitions on subjects such as how Members work in the chamber, in committees and in their constituencies and how laws are made. The Public Relations Division's publications are available online as accessible PDFs; films can be streamed. There is also information material on the history of the Bundestag and on architecture and art in the parliamentary quarter. Much of this material is translated into several languages. In addition, the Bundestag disseminates information about its work throughout the country by means of its Infomobile, a touring exhibition and stands at trade fairs.

The Visitors' Service and the Public Relations Division



Field service at the Pferdemarkt in the city of Hameln: the German Bundestag's mobile information unit provides the facts about parliamentary work throughout the country.

The Paul Löbe Building is firmly embedded in the design concept of the ‘easily navigable parliament’. The Bundestag library and the parliamentary archives in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building are quickly reached by a two-level bridge over the Spree with a lower span between the river banks for the public and an upper span leading from one building to the other at sixth-floor level for Members of Parliament and staff. This architectural ‘leap over the Spree’ is not only a symbolic but also a physical link between the two parts of Berlin that were once cut off from each other.

The ‘Leap over the Spree’



Who was Paul Löbe?

Social Democrat Paul Löbe (1875 to 1967) became a Member of the National Assembly in Weimar in 1919. In 1920, he became a Member of the German Reichstag and President of the Reichstag – an office from which he was ousted by National Socialist Hermann Göring in 1932. As editor of *Vorwärts*, the national mouthpiece of the SPD, he was imprisoned for six months on trumped-up charges of having embezzled party funds. He was arrested again following the attempt to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944 because of his contacts with the resistance group associated with Carl Goerdeler. After the end of the war, Paul Löbe immediately resumed his activity in the SPD and as an editor. As a member of the Parliamentary Council from 1948 to 1949, he played a major role in the shaping of the Basic Law. As President by Age, he opened the constituent sitting of the first Bundestag in 1949. In 1954, he was elected president of the Kuratorium Unteilbares Deutschland (Indivisible Germany Trust), which he subsequently served as honorary president until his death.

Holding the bell, Reichstag President Paul Löbe keeps order at the sitting of the Reichstag on 6 December 1930.

The Paul Löbe Building, where the committees are based, is also a meeting place for art and politics, which form a successful liaison.

Where art and politics meet

Anyone approaching the Paul Löbe Building from the direction of the Federal Chancellery will notice that its fully glazed west facade is disrupted by four large aluminium rhomboid panels suspended behind the glass close to the twin staircases – the Berlin Panels created by American artist Ellsworth Kelly. The emphatic blue, black, red and green of these panels and their asymmetric positioning conjure up a dance-like, almost light-hearted feeling of relaxation that subverts the otherwise rigorous structure of the facade.

This dancing effect is picked up inside the building by French artist François Morellet (p. 70): 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 loop down from the ceiling, leading ever further into the complex and – like the aluminium panels on the west facade – subverting the structural regularity of the hall with their own effervescent rhythm.

An installation by 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 quotations.

One side features a quote from Ricarda Huch, while on the other is a passage from Thomas Mann:

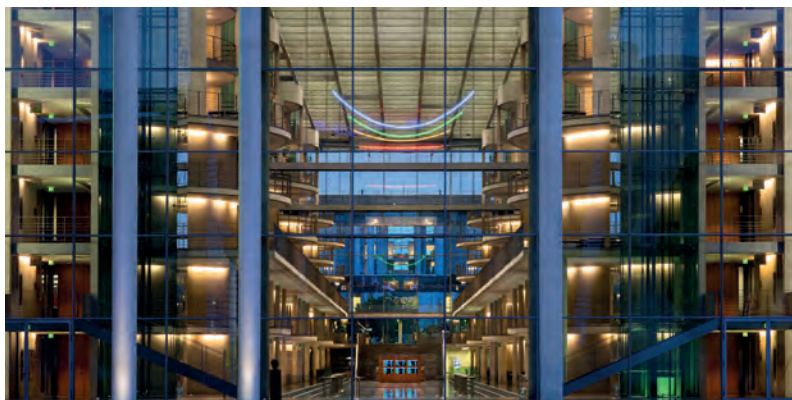
“What, then, was life? It was warmth, the warmth generated by a form-preserving instability, a fever of matter, which accompanied the process of ceaseless decay and repair of protein molecules that were too impossibly complicated, too impossibly ingenious in structure. It was the existence of the actually impossible-to-exist, of a half-sweet, half-painful balancing, in this restricted and feverish process of decay and renewal, upon the point of existence. It was not matter and it was not spirit, but something between the two – T.M.” Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (Der Zauberberg), novel (1924).

“For what is a person’s life? Like the raindrops that fall from heaven to the earth we traverse our span of time, driven hither and thither by the wind of fate. Wind and fate have their unalterable laws, according to which they move; but what does the raindrop that they sweep before them know of these laws? It rushes through the air with the others until it can filter through the sand. But heaven gathers them all to her again and pours them out once more; and gathers and pours them again and again, always the same and yet different. – R. H.”

Ricarda Huch, *Recollections of Ludolf Ursleu the Younger* (*Erinnerungen von Ludolf Ursleu dem Jüngeren*), novel (1893)
 With this text trail, Joseph Kosuth invites anyone crossing the hall in the hustle and bustle of everyday parliamentary life to reflect time and again on the meaning of life too, though he does not purport to provide a ready-made answer.
 The east facade features two ten-metre-high neon light sculptures by Leipzig-based artist Neo Rauch. The painter has cleverly transferred the air of mystery he creates in his paintings to these sculptures. Two men, both standing on ladders in slightly different postures, appear to be waving or reaching upward. Their

symbolic attitudes can be interpreted as an allusion to the culture of a democratic society, the gestures of a speaker or someone who is reaching out for lofty goals.

The courtyards of the Paul Löbe Building are located in front of the rotundas, and passers-by are able to look down into them. A number of these courtyards are decorated with topiary hedges trimmed into geometrical patterns designed by the architect. Others feature works by artists who received commissions from the Bundestag following art competitions, and several of these pieces are integrated into the design of the hedges. On the north side of the building, for example, Jörg Herold installed a mirror above one light well that focuses the sunlight into the courtyard,



François Morellet: *Haute et basse tension* (1999 to 2001)
 Hall.



Neo Rauch:
Man on Ladder
(2001)
East facade.

directing it in the course of a day across several of the disc-shaped stone slabs set into the soil, although it takes a whole year before every one of the discs has been highlighted by this reflected beam. Each slab is inscribed with a significant date in the history of Germany; some of the dates are well-known historical milestones, while others are less familiar, but together they form a fascinating presentation of the events in the country's past and their interconnections. In the adjoining courtyard, Franka Hörnschemeyer created a spatial labyrinth out of yellow and red metal formwork elements of the sort 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 lattices are arranged to reproduce the ground plans of various structures that stand or once stood on the banks of the Spree, including sections of the Berlin Wall that once stood to the east, now-demolished buildings and dog kennels used by GDR border guards as well as the ground plan of parts of the Paul Löbe Building. The ground plans, however, are not laid out separately but overlap each other. Past and present are thus interlocked, making the political development of the location tangible and comprehensible. The figure of the labyrinth, moreover, raises the question of choosing the right path – a playful motif yet serious food for thought in a political context.

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 the shadows cast by these columns reveal that one bears the unmistakable features of the German national poet Goethe and the other those of an Alsatian or German shepherd dog. Both pieces are playfully incorporated into the hedges around them like elegant baroque sculptures and poke fun at monuments to bourgeois hero-worship as well as at the constant German quest for reassurance.



Jörg Herold:
*Loop of Light
with Dateline*
(2001)
Courtyard on
north side.



Franka
Hörschemeyer:
*BFD: flush
aligned dense*
(1998/2001)
Courtyard on
north side.

Leipzig-based artist Till Exit chose a different way to raise the question of what makes a sculpture, creating four perspex cubes illuminated from within. Structural elements inside the cubes, their varying surface textures and the semi-transparent character of the dice create complex visual effects that make the sculptures 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 Cuban artist Jorge Pardo into a total artwork complete with coloured crystal chandeliers that

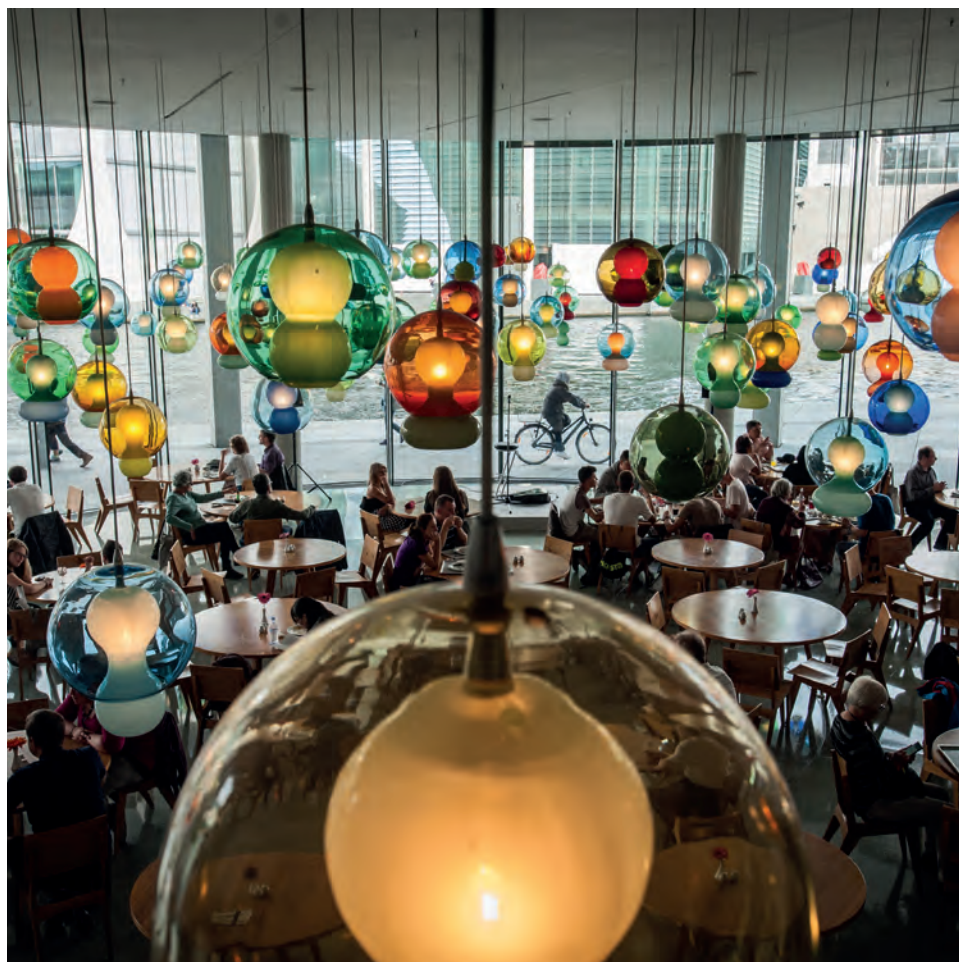
take up the whole ceiling and specially designed furniture. In the visitors' restaurant, Tobias Rehberger spanned the gaps between cultures by having classic design furniture reproduced by craftspeople from other cultural traditions who worked from the artist's own drawings.

British artist Angela Bulloch, for her part, links visitors and Members in a highly allusive installation: when someone sits down on one of the seats in front of the conference room of the EU Affairs Committee on the Affairs of the European Union, he or she activates electrical contacts that make coloured lamps light up one storey below on the level of the visitors' restaurant. Those who sit on these

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 of the Art Council of the German Bundestag, the Paul Löbe Building is not just a place of concentrated parliamentary committee work but also a place of encounter between art and politics.



Angela Bulloch: *Seats of Power – Spheres of Influence* (1998/2002). When someone sits down on one of the seats in front of the conference room of the EU Affairs Committee, they activate electrical contacts that make coloured lamps light up one storey below.



Jorge Pardo:
Untitled
(restaurant)
(2002)
Members'
restaurant.





The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building

Housing the large library, the archives and the Press Documentation Division, the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is the information and service centre of Parliament the Bundestag. It complements the Paul Löbe Building both architecturally and functionally and completes the ribbon of federal buildings.

A repository of knowledge

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 design concept proposed by Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank that was chosen by a jury from among 835 submissions in the spring of 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. A bridge between the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building establishes the connection between West and East. The architect, Stephan

Braunfels, calls it the 'Leap over the Spree'. The 'House of Knowledge' also aspires to openness. The Spreeplatz on the western bank with the long, slightly curved flight of steps leading down to the Spree has its counterpart on the opposite bank in the steps that fan upward towards the concourse in front of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. It is the Spreeplatz that offers the best view of the glazed library of the latter building and the large circular opening in the concrete facade behind which the meeting room for public hearings is located. The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building currently contains some 600 offices. They are located in the so-called 'comb teeth' of the buildings. Two of these protruding wings were initially half-sized

teeth – a structural necessity caused by the presence of the Plattenbauten – prefabricated concrete panel buildings – that used to stand on the west side of Luisenstrasse. In 2010, however, work began on the extension to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. At the heart of this new eastern extension is a 36-metre-high tower. Besides 300 new offices, an imposing entrance area will be created next to Luisenstrasse as well as a bistro with ample seating inside and outside the building. The bistro and the building will be open to the public. The main hall will also be available for public events and will be able to accommodate about 1.200 guests.

With his two buildings to the west and east of the Spree, architect Stephan Braunfels does not attempt to compete with the Wilhelmine facade of the Reichstag Building. Instead, he presents them without any ornamentation.

The first thing that strikes the onlooker about this block of two structures linked together across the Spree is their featherlight roof constructions, each of which projects into a broad canopy. With their transparent coffered ceilings they generate a sense of lightness, while the interplay of light and shade creates ever-changing textures and patterns on the poured concrete of the walls and piers.

The architecture

The regular comb-like structure created by the alternating wings and external courtyards of the Paul Löbe Building is continued in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. The glass facades of the courtyards and the transparent glazed east and west facades contrast sharply with the hard shell of the exposed concrete, while adherence to an eaves height of about 23 metres serves to harmonise these Bundestag

buildings with the surrounding urban structure. A defining feature of the interior of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is the light that bathes the building through its coffered ceiling and seems to keep altering the clear architectural lines of the main hall.

The rectangular hall with its centric layout forms a transparent west-east axis and is bisected at a great height by a long metal rail to which loudspeakers are attached. The hall can be viewed from every angle from a perimeter gallery. Whatever the perspective, no one can ever fail to be

impressed by the focal point of the building, the library rotunda at the western end of the hall. The circular reading room is flanked by four towers, which house the library research services and the archives and catalogues. The towers have a square floor plan and do not extend all the way to the roof. In this way a light bar is created which lets in daylight and lends the structure a pleasant atmosphere.



Works by the artist Katharina Grosse in the assembly hall of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building.

Below the information and advice level of the rotunda, where the two large panoramic window areas afford views across the Spree to the Reichstag Building, a piece of the Berlin Wall is preserved in an otherwise empty room. This remnant of what was known as the hinterland security wall draws attention to the history of the site, for when Germany and city of Berlin were divided, the hinterland Berlin Wall ran through this area on the banks of the Spree. Above this memorial are five more storeys, including the reception level and the reading room.

Books are conveyed from the stacks in the depths of the building by means of a sophisticated transport system.

Another impressive feature is the large hearing room with its square floor plan. The room, which is primarily used by committees of inquiry, is divided into two areas, covering three floors of the building. It overlooks the Paul Löbe Building across the Spree, the double-decked bridge between the two buildings and the Reichstag Building. The double bridge linking the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is also a symbol of the reunification of the divided city.

Leading down from the 290-square-metre hearing room are the impressive Bramante steps (p. 94), named after the first architect of the High Renaissance, who produced the first architectural plans for the new Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome in 1503. Other flights of steps in the building also catch the eye with their playfulness and formal diversity, 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.



Leap over the Spree: two bridge decks connect the Paul Löbe Building with the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building.



Focal point of
the building:
the five-storey
library rotunda
On the right
side of the
building a black
concrete relief
is hung, part of
a two-piece art
installation by
Julia Mangold.

Named after Liberal politician Marie-Elisabeth Lüders (see p. 91), the 23-metre-high new building is the parliamentary memory bank. It can also be described as the repository of knowledge, because it is home to the Press Documentation. For the first time in their existence, these entities are now located under one roof.

A hearing room with a gallery is reserved primarily for the work of parliamentary committees. Offices and meeting rooms complete the workplace, where the Postal Service, the Official Trips Division and the Car Pool are also accommodated. The building also contains small branch offices of Deutsche Post and German Railways as well as a travel agency for official trips.

Service within easy reach



View inside the
Marie-Elisabeth
Lüders Haus.

The easy navigability of Parliament also benefits the staff of the Press Documentation Division, who compile an electronic press dossier every morning containing the latest information on all political issues and post it on the Bundestag Intranet. In the electronic press archive, which has been in existence since 1999, up to 700 press articles from over 50 newspapers, magazines and news services at home and abroad are uploaded, tagged with keywords and processed for Intranet searches. An analysis of selected online press is also carried out. The conventional press archives, known as the 'old archives', hold some 23 million press cuttings in paper format from the

period from 1949 to 1999. In addition, the Press Documentation Division has a historical newspaper collection with some 4,700 volumes as well as one of Germany's largest collections of caricatures.

The information and research service of the Press Documentation Division fulfils documentation and research requests made by Members, parliamentary bodies and staff of the Bundestag Administration. It also compiles dossiers of material from the conventional and electronic archives. In the reading room of the information service, users can consult the latest issue of about 120 German and foreign publications.

Pooled knowledge



The Press
Documentation
Division also
scans articles
from newspa-
pers to create
a press review.

The Bundestag Library is one of the world's largest parliamentary libraries. Its stock comprises far more than 1.5 million media units, about 8.000 periodicals, special collections of parliamentary material and official printed papers. It also provides its users with numerous electronic publications, including over 1,000 newspapers.

In 1949, the year it was created, the library had 1,000 books. Today it acquires some 15.000 new volumes every year. In Bonn, these stocks were dispersed across eight different sites, but now the entire store of knowledge is gathered together in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building.

The visible centrepiece of these intellectual riches is the Library rotunda, which is divided into five storeys, including an information and advice level, a reading room and a gallery. Space has been found for 22,000 volumes in the rotunda.

The stacks are located in the basements of the building. The Long, gently curved cabinets hold the card catalogue, which records all holdings acquired up to and including 1986. Apart from cataloguing, archiving and caring for the stocks, the library staff offer a comprehensive information service for Parliament as well as conducting searches for material and compiling bibliographies on particular topics.

The library



All-round
knowledge:
the shelves
of the library
rotunda hold
22,000 volumes.

Immeasurable importance also attaches to the holdings of the Parliamentary Archives and to the Subject and Speakers' Indexes, without which all of the specialised publications would be practically unsearchable. Both of these offer a wealth of information sources on the history of the Bundestag and the Federal Republic of Germany.

All bills, whether adopted or rejected, expert reports, statements, decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court, the full written records of the Bundestag, its committees and bodies, an extensive sound and image archive, election campaign Precise indexes even make it possible to search the printed papers by entering unusual criteria. All of the data are stored electronically and can be retrieved online. Liberal politician Marie-Elisabeth Lüders (1878-1966) is regarded as one of the most important social campaigners and one of the leading representatives of the women's movement in Germany.

Historical sources



Who was Marie-Elisabeth Lüders?

In 1912, with her thesis on national economics, she became the first woman in Germany to obtain a doctorate in political science, and until 1918 she performed several leading functions in social work and the care of women. In 1919, she became a member of the constituent National Assembly. From 1920 to February 1921 and from March 1921 to 1930 she was a Member of the Reichstag. In 1933, the National Socialists imposed an employment and publication ban on the feisty politician; in 1937, she was held in solitary confinement for four months. From 1953 to 1961 she represented the FDP in the Bundestag; as President by Seniority, she opened the constituent sittings of Parliament in 1953 and 1957.

President by Seniority
Marie-Elisabeth
Lüders opens
the constituent
sitting of the
second Bundestag on 6 October
1953.

In the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, the parliamentary repository of knowledge, art, knowledge and politics interact.

Where art and knowledge meet

Even from outside the building, Italian artist Maurizio Nannucci's blue glowing neon installation entitled *Blue Ring* is visible through the glass facade of the library rotunda. The blue band of neon letters forms an eighty-metre circle just below the ceiling in the reading room of the library. Inspired by a passage from Hannah Arendt, Nannucci highlights the tension inherent in the relationship between the fundamental rights to freedom and equality by juxtaposing the following two sentences: "Liberty is conceivable as the possibility of action among equals"/"Equality is conceivable as the possibility of action for liberty". With these sentences, the artist

describes two possible modes of action in a liberal state and explores the tension that arises between them in a democracy, i.e. the question of the right balance between The library is the right place for questions of this kind, since it is an institution where knowledge about our culture is gathered together and awareness is fostered of our duty to preserve and expand it. The scope and challenge of thought and the absence of a conclusive answer to such reflections on freedom and equality are represented vividly by the perpetual circular motion of the two sentences, in which the two references to *Freiheit* (liberty) stand next to each other, as do the words *Gleichen* and *Gleichheit* ('equals' and 'equality').

Nannucci has produced a message that encourages us to rethink the potential impact of political action. His textual art also forges a link with the quotations from Thomas Mann and Ricarda Huch set into the floor in the hall of the Paul Löbe Building by American artist Joseph Kosuth (pp. 69/70), Jenny Holzer's LED display column with its scrolling parliamentary speeches in the north entrance hall of the Reichstag Building (pp. 30/31) and the articles from the Basic Law on Dani Karavan's glass panels that are located directly opposite on the embankment promenade next to the Jakob Kaiser Building (pp. 116/117).

In this way, the German Basic Law, parliamentary speeches, passages from German literature and Nannucci's political reflections are united in one great intellectual call to meditation that binds all the parliamentary buildings on both sides of the Spree.

The exit from the library rotunda leads into the large central hall of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building. French artist François Morellet, who had already lent the hall of the Paul Löbe Building a rhythm of its own with his installation *Haute et Basse Tension* (High and Low Tension, p. 70), has enlarged on this work in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building with an elegant arrangement of intertwined tubes in black and white.

Munich-based artist Julia Mangold, for her part, draws the interior and exterior of the building together with her simple forms, focusing on the elementary. Inside the hall, she has hung a large black rectangle, a simple geometrical shape tailored to the proportions of the architecture. It is positioned as a raised form on the outside of the library rotunda and so follows its roundness. A similar black rectangle can be seen on the exterior of the building, buried in the facade on a supporting pier at the top of the steps leading down to the Spree.

From Stephan Braunfels's geometric architectural language, the artist has cleverly developed 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 located on the same steps by the banks of the Spree, is a highly visible symbol, even from afar. The impending fall of the rider and the rearing horse embody a last rebellion against the growing inhumanity of the age and convey a visible signal of human self-assertion.



Imi (Klaus Wolf) Knoebel:
Red Yellow White Blue 1–4
(1997)
Events foyer,
Bramant Steps.



Julia Mangold:
Untitled (2003)
External river-
side area.

Immediately next to the steps is a room that is open to the public in which parts of the Berlin Wall that once divided the West and East at this point have been rebuilt. Ben Wargin preserved these fragments of the Wall and has marked them with figures showing each year of its existence and the number of known Wall victims in that year. More detailed information on the victims of the GDR border regime and their life stories can be found in the book of remembrance on display. The architect lets the segments follow the original course of the Wall, thereby intensifying the impression of cutting and dividing in the circular room.

Other examples of the artistic design of the building are provided by the acquired works of significant artists such as Imi Knoebel (p. 94), Sophie Calle, Eberhard Göschel, Nikolaus Lang, Paco Knöllner, Bertram Kober, Rémy Markowitsch, Wieland Förster, Michael Morgner, Susan Turcot, Cornelia Schleime and Hans Vent.

Room for art

The Art Room in the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building is a further expression of the Bundestag's commitment to art. The room has been used to stage exhibitions of contemporary art with a parliamentary or political connection. The new exhibition room in the extension to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building will be open to the public once the construction work has been completed. It will be accessible through the main entrance to the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building in Luisenstrasse.



Ben Wagin:
*Berlin Wall
Memorial* (2003)
Marie-Elisabeth
Lüders Building.





The Jakob Kaiser Building

To the east of the Reichstag Building, between Pariser Platz and the Spree, stands the Jakob Kaiser Building. About 60% of Members have their offices here, as do many employees of the parliamentary groups.

Eight buildings in one

When the decision was taken to move from Berlin to Bonn and it became clear that Parliament, its Members and its staff would need new workspace in Berlin, the Jakob Kaiser Building was created, a structure that integrated existing architecture, incorporated elements of the historical street plan and so blended with Berlin's architectural traditions.

Five teams of architects were commissioned to design a building complex that would meet the architectural requirements of Parliament. While Cologne-based architect Thomas van den Valentyn was primarily entrusted with the restoration and

development of the Reichstag President's palace (see pp. 110 et seq.), four other teams – Busmann and Haberer, de Architekten Cie, von Gerkan, Marg und Partners and Schweger and Partners – worked out, on the basis of the specified courtyard dimensions and number of offices, that eight buildings would be needed. Each of the firms developed two buildings. Schweger and Partners assumed responsibility for Buildings 1 and 2, Busmann and Haberer

for Buildings 3 and 7, von Gerkan, Marg and Partners for Buildings 4 and 8 and de Architekten Cie for Buildings 5 and 6. The five firms of architects formed a planning company under the name of Planungsgesellschaft Dorotheenblöcke Berlin mbH, which, as the main contractor, was in full control of the project. A tour of the eight buildings in one named after CDU politician Jakob Kaiser (see p. 109) shows that a fascinating outcome can emerge when five teams of architects work on their own respective strands but with a common sense of direction and a shared goal.

Two lengthy rows of buildings on either side of Dorotheenstrasse revisit the historical plot structure. They differ from it by having larger internal courtyards and connections below and above street level as well as by using large glazed surfaces to take advantage of modern-day scope for energy savings. One conspicuous feature is the glass curtain facade of Buildings 5 and 6, which enhances their acoustics and thermal insulation. The flat green roof is fitted with photovoltaic panels. The Jakob Kaiser Building does not exceed the standard Berlin eaves height of 22 metres, yet its glazed upper storeys offer breathtaking prospects. The use of glass expresses transparency through architecture.

The internal layout of the Jakob Kaiser Building makes for easy orientation. To the north, the Spree keeps coming into view through the openings, while east-west axes link the courtyards of the complex, 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 is bounded by Wilhelmstrasse to the east. The numbering follows the same pattern in the south block, with Building 5 at the Tiergarten end, followed by Building 6, Building 7 and Building 8, which likewise ends at Wilhelmstrasse in the east. Bridges run between Buildings 2 and 6 and between Buildings 4 and 8 and connect to a network of internal access routes linking various buildings and levels.

The basic design concept

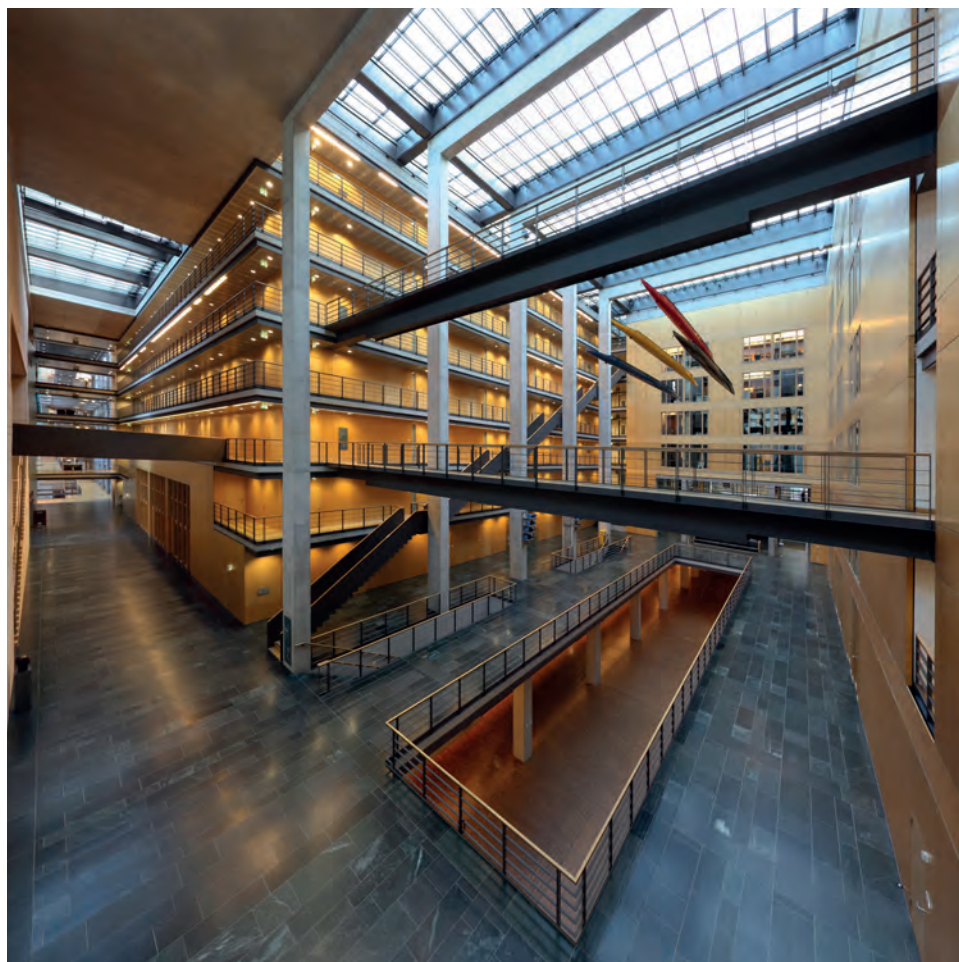


Vanishing lines:
the Jakob Kaiser
Building offers
an impressive
study in per-
spective.

The work of the Bundestag is determined to a considerable extent by the parliamentary groups. They form working groups and working parties to study the issues on the committee agendas and formulate positions for adoption by their own parliamentary groups. This is why not only Members but also parliamentary groups have their own staff. About half of them are accommodated in the Jakob Kaiser Building. The parliamentary groups are spread out across whole storeys. Offices belonging to each of the two largest parliamentary groups, for instance, are to be found in almost every one of the eight buildings in the complex. Building 1 is the main point of entry, as it were, for the neighbouring buildings too, which are distinguishable by the diversity of their facades.

The function of the first internal courtyard as a central reception area is emphasised by the extensive views it offers into other areas of the building. From Dorotheenstrasse, part of the Reichstag President's Palace can be seen through its glazed entrance, while to the right it is possible to look through into Buildings 2, 3 and 4, which, with their continuous hallways, raised walkways and passages, create the impression of forming a unified whole. 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.

A building for the Vice-Presidents and parliamentary groups



Insights and
outlooks: the
architecture
deletes bounda-
ries between
inside and out-
side.

Long hallways, cutting across the building like ‘urban seams’, allow light to flood down into the first basement. A staff member 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. Perhaps it is someone heading for one of the two conference rooms that further decompress the architecture there by rising through two storeys. Members deliberate below, while space is provided for the public in the visitors’ galleries above. In this way, the architecture fulfils a wish expressed by many parliamentary reformers by

making the real core business of the Bundestag more transparent. The fact is that greater volumes of more routine parliamentary business are conducted in the working parliament of The fact is that greater volumes of more routine parliamentary business are conducted in the working parliament of committee meetings than in the debating parliament of the plenary chamber. The two conference rooms are intended primarily for study commissions, which explore issues of strategic importance in greater depth and detail than is possible during normal day-to-day business and hold hearings of experts, generally in public.

Transparency and openness

These rooms also serve as back-up accommodation for major hearings held by the permanent committees. The larger of the two conference rooms has interpreting booths and permanently installed television cameras, which can transmit deliberations live at any time to the Bundestag's own television service or to other television stations.

Bundestag Television is based on the other side of Dorotheenstrasse in the basement of Building 5 with its own fully functioning studio. It serves to raise public awareness of parliamentary work. When the television stations have long since ended their broadcasts from the Bundestag, people still have the opportunity to tune in live at

www.bundestag.de to watch Parliament reaching key decisions.

Building 4 and Building 8, with their matching exteriors, form the eastern ends of the two blocks at 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 passers-by can see that work is in progress inside. A glazed bridge crosses Dorotheenstrasse from Building 4 to Building 8, from which there is access to a restored bank building that has been integrated into the complex. Eleven steps compensate for the height difference between the modern and historical structures. The old stairwell differs in every way from the modern stairways. While the latter use

glass, wood and concrete, the old wrought iron banisters set the tone here.

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. None of the 1,745 offices are occupied in perpetuity, however, for the allocation of space to the Members, the parliamentary groups and their respective staff depends on the distribution of seats in the current electoral term. A change in the party-political composition of the Bundestag has implications for the Jakob Kaiser Building too. In principle, all the architects adhered to the specification of 18 square metres for each office unit.



View into the foyer of the Jakob Kaiser Building.

But care was taken throughout to keep the arrangement fluid, making it possible to respond to changing functions with new configurations. The overall composition of the south block makes play with the fascinating effects of voids, which encompass several storeys and incorporate internal concourses, various open areas. Sheer playfulness is conveyed by the idea of making practical use of the large entrance hall in Building 5 to install a kidney-shaped 'courtyard building' accommodating two small conference

rooms. The diversity of the ensemble can be read from the varying design of the courtyards, which are roofed or open, designed as small park area in one place and flooded to form a small artificial lake in another. In yet another, a few square metres of soil ensure that trees can even reach up towards the sky. The former seat of the Chamber of Technology has been incorporated into Building 5. On the inside, the old edifice has been directly connected with the new structure, particularly through the continuous wooden panelling. Several years after the conversion was carried out, a room height wall mosaic by the artist Charles Crodel from the 1950s was discovered and exposed. Externally, the

facade clearly indicates its independent historical identity. The symbiosis of the historical fabric of the building and its modern extension is expressed, above all, by the addition of an attic storey that takes its shape from its historical model but is unmistakably modern in its use of steel, aluminium and glass.



Who was Jakob Kaiser?

Bookbinder Jakob Kaiser (1888 to 1961) joined the Christian trade-union movement at a young age and entered politics, becoming a member of the Centre Party in 1912 and entering Parliament in 1933, when he won a seat in the last freely elected Reichstag. In 1934 he became involved in the resistance to the National Socialists and was held in Gestapo custody for several months in 1938 on suspicion of conspiracy to commit high treason. He narrowly avoided being part of the wave of arrests following the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944, being the sole survivor from the inner core of the trade-union resistance in Berlin. After the war he helped to establish the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and became party chairman for Berlin and the Soviet Zone of Occupation. He was removed from the chairmanship by the Soviet military administration in 1947 for opposing the imposition of ideological uniformity on East German society. As a member of the Parliamentary Council, he helped to frame the Basic Law. In 1949 he became a Member of the Bundestag and was appointed Federal Minister for All-German Affairs.

Jakob Kaiser addressing the first CDU Congress in Exile in the Titania-Palast cinema, Berlin, in 1946.

On the north side of the Jakob Kaiser Building stands the former palace of the Reichstag President. The building, designed by architect Paul Wallot, serves today as the seat of the German Parliamentary Association.

Conversations on the bel étage

The building now occupied by the German Parliamentary Association may be regarded as part of the Jakob Kaiser Building. 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 historical fabric of the palace as far as possible. The facade was restored, and the orig-

inal spatial structure and arrangement of staircases, corridors and reception rooms also remained largely untouched. Cologne-based architect Thomas van den Valentyn ensured that the architecture and functional features of the building were adapted for connection to the subsequent constructions.

The palace, which was placed under a preservation order in 1994, is now home to the German Parliamentary Association, which is dedicated to the cultivation of informal 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 maintain lines of contact with former parliamentarians. The heart of the building is formed by 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 great hall combined with the loggia also provides a setting for major red-carpet occasions.

A residence for the President of the Reichstag

Following the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, there were initially no plans to build an official residence for the President of the Reichstag, who was merely supposed to receive grace-and-favour apartments in the new Reichstag Building from the Empire, 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 living quarters for the Secretary-General of the Reichstag and the Kastellan, the steward of the President's residence. The design and construction work were entrusted to the architect of the Reichstag Building, Paul Wallot. In the spring of 1899, the project was expanded to include a recessed east wing, the Emperor Room, which was dedicated to William I. The reason for this extension, according to the Executive Committee of the Reichstag, was to conceal the unsightly fire wall that stood on the adjoining site. Paul Wallot opted for simplicity for the west facade of the residence, with its main entrance, oriel windows and carriage entrance, given

its location opposite the richly articulated east facade of the Reichstag Building. By contrast, the Executive Committee of the Reichstag and the architect attached great importance to a particularly aesthetic design for the north facade, the main frontage facing the River Spree. Nor did they allow themselves to be deterred by the Prussian audit-reviewing authorities, which raised objections to the addition of The building was completed by the end of 1903 and presented to the Reichstag by the Building Department of the Reich Office of the Interior on 10 January 1904. The formal opening by the President of the Reichstag, Franz Count von Ballestrem, took place on 3 February and was followed by a banquet in the Emperor Room, attended by Emperor William II.



The residence and office building of the Reichstag President, c. 1900.



Restored: the former palace for the President of the Reichstag now houses the German Parliamentary Association and the Association of Former Members of the German Bundestag and the European Parliament.

The artworks in the eight buildings in one, like the architecture and politics in the Jakob Kaiser Building, are individual and kaleidoscopic. At the same time, they represent what is communal and unifying.

**Where art combines the personal
with the communal**

Entering Building 1, visitors find themselves in a wide, high hall, where the artist Christiane Möbus has suspended four 17-metre rowing boats, painted yellow, red, blue and black, from the roof. Her *Racing Eights* move gently up and down in a random pattern, each one following its own rhythm as it rises and falls, so that the boats constantly form new constellations. The opening in the floor of the hall with the stairs to the basement is made to seem like a deep pool of water, the boats being lowered as far as its surface before rising up again. The four racing eights are partly an allusion to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, a symbol of democratic

competition between equals. Consequently, the dancing rhythm of the boats and their strong colours not only create a buoyant mood but simultaneously link play and sport and – in the building that houses the parliamentary groups – symbolise the vigour and fairness of competitive politics. 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 the installation *The Daughter of the Regiment* by the English artist Tacita Dean. She discovered 36 opera programmes dating from 1934–1942 at a flea market in Berlin. A portion was cut out of each title page where a swastika would have appeared: the removal of this opens up a

perspective on the past and on reckoning with it. The mail office in Building 2 is entered from the hall of the basement and looks out into the courtyard designed by landscape architect Gustav Lange, where – as if in a primeval forest – birch trunks and boulders lie scattered on the ground, from which young birches strive up towards the light. At the ground-floor level, they are surrounded by a band of water that frames the image of the birches like a gleaming silver border.

The view of the Jakob Kaiser Building from the River Spree is dominated by the urban space created by Israeli artist Dani Karavan. The courtyard he designed had to be enclosed on the Spree Promenade side for security reasons, but, instead of using railings or parapets, the artist chose glass panels about three metres high to close off the area, thereby ensuring a high degree of transparency, at least in visual terms. Strips of grass bounded by steel rails radiate outwards from the courtyard, passing beneath the glass panels.

The form of this design matches its content, for each of the 19 glass panels displays one of the fundamental Located directly next to the Spree that once separated East and West Berlin, the 19 articles of this bill of rights is a reminder of the difficult years when the German democracy was being founded in Bonn. The painter Ulrich Erben decorated the daylit stairwell of Building 3 with circular panes of glass,

backpainted in blue, red, green or yellow. Groups of four glass circles are set flush into the grey exposed concrete walls in diagonal patterns. The discs seem to be dancing up and down, their vivid colours and circular shape injecting “cheerful lightness” (Ulrich Erben) and liveliness of motion and colour into the ubiquitously repetitive right angles of doors and walls.



Ulrich Erben:
Untitled (2001)
Stairwell of
Building 3.



Dani Karavan:
Basic Law 49
 (1998/2003)
 Spree prome-
 nade.

The courtyards in Buildings 4 and 8 were designed by landscape architects WES & Partners. Pools of water surrounded by pine trees and other plants, illuminated fibre-glass columns and boulders lend these courtyards the feel of Japanese gardens. Ventilation shafts required for the building services have been cleverly transformed into a sculpted staircase. A stone sculpture by Matthias Jackisch from Dresden establishes a link between the stairwells of Buildings 4 and 8. In the large landing windows on

either side of Dorotheenstrasse one half of a rock fragment is to be seen, cut into four parts, which are distributed over four storeys. Only when they are viewed from the street does it become apparent that all eight pieces of the stone actually fit together. The artist regards his performance sculpture *Augenstein* as the end product of a process that began in a Swedish quarry with the discovery of the rock fragment. 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 the landscape-moulding power of the Great Ice Age. On the ground floor in the stairwells of Buildings 4 and 8, Cologne-based artist Astrid Klein has created an installation made of neon tubes arranged like a line of steps rising and falling.



Matthias Jackisch *Augenstein* (1998–2001)
Stairwell of Buildings 4 and 8.



WES & Partner:
Untitled (2003)
Courtyard of
Building 4.

The neon tubes bear quotations from Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). In his political philosophy, Hobbes stressed the need for contractual arrangements as the basis for the creation and preservation of communities and examined the conditions for peace and justice in society. For the internal courtyard in Building 7, Danish artist Per Kirkeby constructed a sculpture in the form of a four-storey-high brick wall with window-shaped openings. It stands opposite the white-painted fire

wall of the old building – as The artist exploits effects of light and shade to model a purposeless piece of architecture, where the art lies in the interplay of sculpture and building. In Buildings 5 and 6, artists Lili Fischer and Hans Peter Adamski perceived and approached the light shafts that run down through all the floors as a creative challenge. Adamski, who once belonged to the *Mülheimer Freiheit* group of artists, drew on cutout techniques to produce 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 upwards on the wall. 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.



Astrid Klein:
Untitled (1997)
Stairwell of
Buildings 4
and 8.



Per Kirkeby:
Untitled (2000)
Internal court-
yard of
Building 7.

The courtyard of Building 6 has been flooded by English artist Antony Gormley, with only a jetty protruding diagonally two thirds of the way into the courtyard. On the surrounding walls of the building, cast-iron sculptures of human figures jut out at right angles to the facades, facing skyward as if intending to walk up the walls. The sculptures are reflected in the water. This installation gives the courtyard a curious life of its own, for the sculptures lend it human dimensions and make the otherwise lifeless space a source of experience for onlookers through the irritation trig-

gered by the sight of the sculptures jutting horizontally from the wall into the space above the courtyard. In this way, Gormley demonstrates the social purpose of his sculptural works, which is to let people regain a bodily and spatial relationship with their environment. The entrance to Building 5 is highlighted by Jürgen Klauke's radiant blue glass panels. An abstract pattern is drawn in white lines over this blue background.

Another eight artists are represented with acquisitions in the Jakob Kaiser Building. The architectural diversity of the individual buildings is matched by the individuality and distinctiveness of the artistic interventions and statements.

As the home of the parliamentary groups, the Jakob Kaiser Building underlines, on an artistic level, not only the diverging yet always mutually complementary and energising political positions of the parliamentary groups parties but also what is shared and what is unique in the individual positions of the artists themselves.



Antony Gormley:
Stands and falls (2001)
Courtyard of Building 6.



Jürgen Klauke:
Pro Securitas
(2002)
Building 5.





Other Bundestag buildings

Besides the Reichstag Building and the three new Bundestag buildings, there are other notable edifices in the parliamentary quarter, some of which are presented here.

The fringes of the parliamentary quarter

The Otto Wels Building

Built in the 1960s to the plans of architects Emil Leibold, Herbert Boos and Hanno Walther, what is today the Otto Wels Building originally housed the GDR Ministry of External Trade. In the 1990s, the Brands Kolbe Wernik firm of architects completely refurbished the building at number 50, stripping it right down to the old skeleton of reinforced concrete.

The Otto Wels Building provides office space for Members of the Bundestag. The frontage facing the main avenue contains two-storey retail premises, which are used as restaurants. The building excludes cool modernism, and its official role seems almost incidental. Some of its stylistic elements are reminiscent of Italian neoclassicism.

The buildings at numbers 50 and 71 Unter den Linden also belong to the Bundestag. These are essentially the fringes of the parliamentary quarter, behind the Brandenburg Gate. In 2017 the two buildings were given new names on the anniversary of the National Socialist 'Enabling Act' of 23 March 1933.

The building takes its name from SPD politician and party chairman Otto Wels (1873–1939), who was a Member of the National Assembly in Weimar and of the Reichstag. In his famous speech in front of the Reichstag on 23 March 1933, Wels spoke out against the Enabling Act, despite numerous attempts to intimidate him. The SPD parliamentary group subsequently voted unanimously against the Act, through which Parliament deprived itself of its powers.

The Matthias Erzberger Building

At number 71 on Unter den Linden is the Matthias Erzberger Building, which formerly housed the GDR Ministry of National Education. In the mid-1990s, the Bundestag commissioned GehrmannConsult GmbH + Partner KG to renovate the building. The reinforced-concrete frame construction dating from 1961, which had been given an austere facade with a cladding grid of industrially prefabricated panels, is now harmonised with the rest of the boulevard in a restrained neo-classical style.

The building is named after the Centre Party politician and Reich Minister of Finance Matthias Erzberger (1875 – 1921). In 1918 he signed the Armistice of Compiègne, concluded between the German Empire, the United Kingdom and France, which put an end to the fighting of the First World War. As Reich Minister of Finance, in the years that followed Erzberger implemented one of most significant financial reforms in German history. In 1921 he was murdered in an attack by a right-wing terror organisation.

Wilhelmstrasse: the office building at number 65

The office building constructed for the GDR Foreign Ministry in the 1970s has been thoroughly refurbished for permanent use by the Bundestag. On the basis of plans drawn up by Lieb + Lieb Architekten, the office building was completely gutted, and a new top storey was added. The building structure was given a glass frontage and is intended to lend a modern tone to one of the main crossroads in the parliamentary quarter. By the 1990s, some of the Bundestag Administration offices were already located in the building. The building is now used for



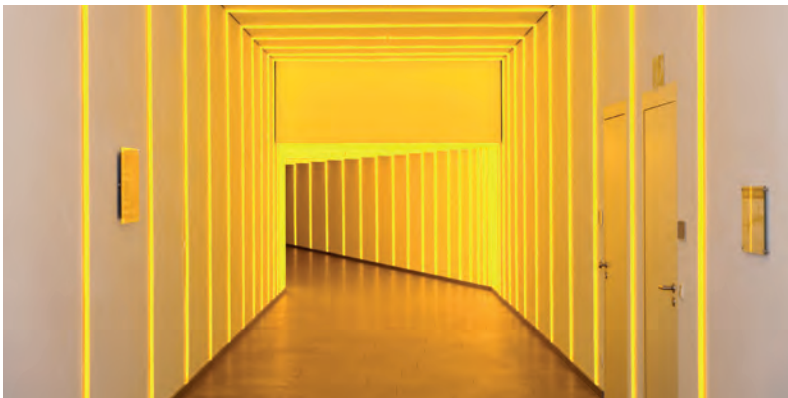
The building at Unter den Linden 71 is home to Members' offices. In 2017, it was named after the Centre Party politician Matthias Erzberger (1875–1921).

The Helene Weber Building and the Elisabeth Selbert Building

Members' offices. Its purpose is to reduce overcrowding in other parliamentary buildings. Its purpose is to reduce overcrowding in other parliamentary buildings. A pedestrian tunnel designed by Berlin artist Gunda Förster connects the building at 65 Wilhelmstrasse with the Jakob Kaiser Building, providing Members and staff with a shortcut to the other parliamentary buildings.

Two Bundestag buildings which primarily house parts of the parliamentary administration were given the names of two key "Mothers of the Basic Law" in 2017, on 23 May, the anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law. In doing so, the Bundestag honours the lifelong political contributions of both women to German history, their resistance against the National Socialists and their fight for equality between men and women. The building at number 88 Dorotheenstraße is

now known as the Helene Weber Building. Born in 1881, Helene Weber was a Member of the National Assembly in Weimar and of the Reichstag, and was one of the few Members of the Centre Party who fought to the end within her parliamentary group to prevent Hitler's Enabling Act. After the Second World War she was elected as a representative of the CDU to the Parliamentary Council, where she was involved in the drafting of the Basic Law. She was a Member of the German Bundestag from 1949 until her death in 1962.



Underground passage between the building at Wilhelmstraße 65 and the Jakob Kaiser Building. The *Tunnel* artwork was designed by Gunda Förster.

The Elisabeth Selbert Building stands at numbers 62–68 Unter den Linden. It is named after the Social Democratic politician and lawyer Elisabeth Selbert, who was born in 1896. She managed to be admitted to practice as a lawyer at Berlin's higher regional court, against the will of the National Socialists, after she stood unsuccessfully for election to the Reichstag in 1933. As a Member of the Parliamentary Council, she wrote history with the sentence "Men and women shall have equal rights", successfully prevailing after several failed votes to have this incorporated into the Basic Law.

In addition to parts of the Bundestag Administration, the Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt Foundation is also located in the Elisabeth Selbert Building. This is one of the federal non-partisan memorial foundations established by the German Bundestag, and aims to uphold the memory of the efforts by Willy Brandt, an SPD politician, to achieve peace, freedom and unity for the German people.

A day nursery for the Bundestag

To the north of the Paul Löbe Building is the day nursery for the children of Bundestag staff, which was opened in 1999. It was designed by Vienna-based artist Gustav Peichl, following an architectural competition. The nursery is located beside the Spree and is rather suggestive of a whimsically elegant ship that has docked alongside the 'ribbon of federal buildings'. Vibrant colours, simple geometric forms and playful elements reflect the imaginative world of the children inside the building. The two prominent hemispheres on the roof contain little cave dwellings in which children can have their afternoon nap.



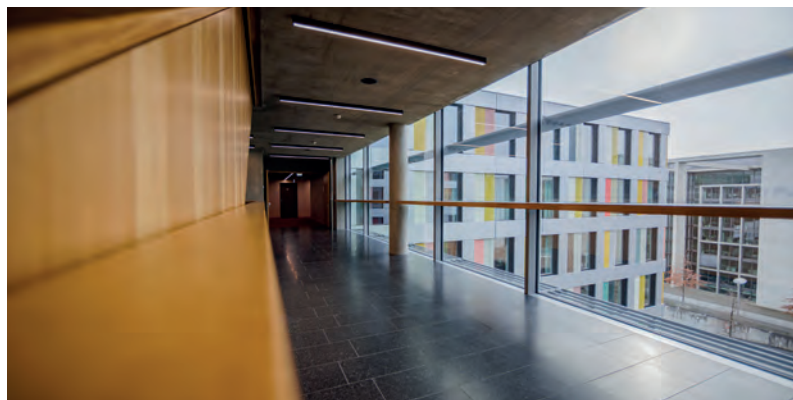
View of the Bundestag nursery.

The Luisenblock West modular building

Since December 2021, a new office building constructed using timber modules has stood at the area west of Luisenstraße, known as “Luisenblock West”. The seven-storey modular building was designed by the Berlin architectural firm Sauerbruch Hutton. In order to meet the increased space requirements following the 2021 Bundestag elections at short notice, 400 Members’ offices were constructed on the ap-

proximately 7,660 square metre plot in just 15 months under the supervision of the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR). From an urban development perspective, the new building reflects the height and cubic volume of the Marie Elisabeth Lüders Building located to its south, integrating seamlessly into its environment. At the same time, its coloured glass panels provide the exterior with modern accents, giving the building its own unique character. The office building consists primarily of around 460 timber modules, the majority of which were

pre-fabricated in Berlin. The floor slab and foundation, the ground floor with plant and storage rooms, and the two core access elements were made from precast reinforced concrete units and cast-in-place concrete, with exposed concrete surfaces.



Exterior view of the Luisenblock West modular building.





Energy and technology

The Reichstag Building and the surrounding Bundestag buildings are an ecosystem in their own right. Cutting-edge energy-saving green technology is the order of the day.

Ecology writ large

The Reichstag Building

The cone-shaped funnel that extends from the dome of the Reichstag Building into the plenary chamber reflects glare-free daylight into the chamber through its ‘light sculptor’ of 360 angled mirrors, so that less electricity is required for artificial lighting. Fresh air is channelled into the plenary chamber in an energy-saving manner at the right temperature and humidity.

Concealed within the cone is a heat-recovery system which uses the available energy to heat the building. At the heart of the strategy for rational and environment-friendly energy production and consumption are the thermal power plants for the

parliamentary quarter, which are fuelled by bio-diesel obtained from rapeseed. 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.



The funnel in the dome of the Reichstag Building, surrounded by the exhibition “From the Reichstag to the Bundestag”.

This technology enables the power plants to meet, on long-term average, 70% of the total heating requirement and 50% of the total electricity requirement of the Technical Network for the Parliamentary Buildings. What is more, surplus heat drives an absorption cooling plant to produce chilled water or, especial-

ly in summer, is stored in the form of hot water in an aquifer some 300 metres below ground to be fed back into the system in winter. A second aquifer about 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, these thermal power plants are far more efficient than other instal-

lations. The exhaust gas emitted by the bio-diesel-fuelled generators is cleaned in a complex process. This ensures that emissions remain well below the legally prescribed limits.



View from the plenary chamber into the dome.

The Paul Löbe Building

Like all the other parliamentary buildings, the Paul Löbe Building is also equipped with innovative, environment- friendly service installations. Its thermal power plant, for example, runs exclusively on fuel from renewable primary energy sources (biodiesel), while the cogeneration of heat and power ensures greater economic efficiency and minimises pollutant emissions. In order to imple-

ment the energy-saving strategy prescribed by the Bundestag and the Federal Government, the technical planners developed a photovoltaic array 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 screen the building from the direct rays of the sun. The electricity produced by the photovoltaic cells, however, can meet only a small proportion of demand; the baseload supply for the building is drawn from the thermal

power plant and, at peak times, from 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 district. All materials required for the business of the German Bundestag can be transported underground in this tunnel system - unique in Germany – thereby reducing the volume of traffic on the streets above.



Showing the way: supply pipes for the energy-saving environment-friendly technology of the parliamentary quarter.

The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building

The Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building likewise benefits from the smart energy strategy for the Bundestag buildings. Two biodiesel-driven thermal power plants, located in the Paul Löbe Building and the Reichstag Building, supply electricity and heat. Since it is tied into this overarching system of linked technology in the parliamentary buildings, the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building also has a reduced environmental footprint. Efficient thermal insulation and the use of renewable energy sources serve to lower energy consumption on a sustainable basis.

The Jakob Kaiser Building

The basement of the Jakob Kaiser Building gives access to 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 first basement. The internal temperature of the Jakob Kaiser Building is man-

aged on the basis of ingenious energy-saving strategies. The amount of energy required to heat the building is minimised by the glass curtain walls, 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.



Glass corridor linking houses 3 and 4 in the Jakob Kaiser Building.

The Luisenblock West

The newly constructed modular building at “Luisenblock West” features an impressively efficient and environmentally- friendly overall concept. The building predominantly consists of sustainably-produced timber modules, most of which were prefabricated nearby in the region and can be dismantled when needed. This ensures short transport routes and reduced emissions. In addition, the bidding consortium adhered to what is referred to as the Wood Cycle concept, and

committed to planting new trees, so that the approx. 2500 cubic metres of timber used in the building can regrow over the next 15 years. What’s more, the solar panels installed on the roof have a total generating surface of around 590 square metres, enabling these to take over a significant share of the new building’s electricity generation.

In addition, 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, the area in front of the Reichstag Building, as well as to the biodiesel-fuelled cogeneration plants of the parliamentary quarter.



Luisenblock West building site: a module is lifted onto the site by crane.



DB S U

Hauptbahnhof

Friedrich-List-Ufer

Alexanderplatz

Margarete-Steffin-Straße
Kapelle-Ufer

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung

Charlottenstraße

Luisenstraße

Schumannstraße

Reinhardtstraße

Marienstraße

Rahel-Hirsch-Straße

Spree

Willy-Brandt-Straße

Konrad-Adenauer-Straße

Otto-von-Bismarck-Allee

Bundeskanzleramt

Bundestag

Bundespressekonferenz, Pressehaus

Adele-Schreiber-Krieger-Str.

Luisenstraße

Schiffbauerdamm

Heinrich-von-Gagern-Straße

Paul-Löbe-Allee

Platz der Republik

Reichstagsufer

Reichstagsufer

Bunsenstr.

Allee

Vitzthak-Rabin-Straße

Scheidemannstraße

Dorotheenstraße

Dorotheenstraße

Wilhelmstraße

Straße des 17. Juni

Brandenburger Tor

Pariser Platz

Brandenburger Tor

Unter den Eichen

Unter den Eichen

Ebertstraße

Behrenstraße

Cora-Berliner-Straße

Hannah-Arendt-Straße

Wilhelmstraße

Ebertstraße

Hannah-Arendt-Straße



Properties owned by the Bundestag

- 1 Plenary area, Reichstag Building, Platz der Republik 1
- 2 Former residence of the Reichstag President, Deutsche Parlamentarische Gesellschaft Friedrich-Ebert-Platz 2
- 3 Bunsenstrasse 2
- 4 German Cathedral (Deutscher Dom), Am Gendarmenmarkt 1 (Exhibition on Parliamentary History)
- 5 Helene-Weber-Haus, Dorotheenstraße 88
- 6 Dorotheenstraße 90
- 7 Dorotheenstraße 93
- 8 Jakob Kaiser Building, Dorotheenstraße 100–101
- 9 Day care centre, Otto-von-Bismarck-Allee 2
- 10 Luisenstraße 17
- 11 Luisenstraße 35
- 12 Luisenstraße 32–34
- 13 Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building, Adele-Schreiber-Krieger-Straße 1
- 14 Luisenblock West, Adele-Schreiber-Krieger-Straße 6
- 15 Neustädtische Kirchstraße 14
- 16 Neustädtische Kirchstraße 15
- 17 Paul Löbe Building, Konrad-Adenauer-Straße 1
- 18 Schadow Building, Schadowstraße 10 –11
- 19 Schadowstraße 12–13
- 20 Schiffbauerdamm 17
- 21 Otto Wels Building, Unter den Linden 50
- 22 Matthias Erzberger Building, Unter den Linden 71
- 23 Unter den Linden 74
- 24 Wilhelmstraße 60
- 25 Wilhelmstraße 64
- 26 Wilhelmstraße 65
- 27 Alt-Moabit 10129
- 28 Pariser Platz 3

U U-Bahn (underground railway)

S S-Bahn (suburban railway)

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

- A presentation, delivered in the visitors' gallery of the plenary chamber on non-sitting days, on the functions, working methods and composition of the Bundestag as well as the history and architecture of the Reichstag Building
- Attendance at a plenary sitting (one hour) when Parliament is sitting
- Study visits on non-sitting days at the invitation of a Member
- Attendance at a plenary sitting at the invitation of a Member

- Guided tours of the Reichstag Building on non-sitting days with explanations of the functions, working methods and composition of the Bundestag as well as the history and architecture of the Reichstag Building

- Art and architecture tours of Bundestag buildings (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 a range of languages on request

- Special guided tours for children aged 5 to 14 on Children's Days

- 'Experiencing Parliamentary Democracy', a role-play exercise for pupils from the 10th and subsequent years of schooling (age 15+)

Come and visit us

Roof terrace and dome of the Reichstag Building

All services must be booked in advance. Anyone wishing to visit the Bundestag can send a booking request with the aid of the online booking form at www.bundestag.de/en > Visit, or register by post or fax to:
Deutscher Bundestag
Visitors' Service Platz der Republik 1 11011 Berlin
Fax: + 49 30 22736436
www.bundestag.de/besuche/formular.html



General information can be obtained from the Visitors' Service by phoning + 49 30 22732152

The dome and roof terrace of the Reichstag Building can be visited free of charge, but prior booking is essential. An online form for booking a time slot is available at www.bundestag.de/en > Visit. It is also possible to send a booking request by post or fax to:
German Bundestag
Besucherdienst
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
Fax: + 49 30 22736436
Opening times: 8.00 hrs to 21.45 hrs (last admission) daily.
The roof-terrace restaurant to the east of the dome is open. A reservation is necessary. Tables can be booked via telephone between 10.00 hrs and 16.00 hrs on 030/2279220 or via email berlin@feinkostkaefer.de

Information material

Information material about the Bundestag can be ordered via various channels:
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