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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF BERLIN

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Planning for the future of Berlin

It is over four years now since the Berlin Wall was opened. Previously a symbol of the bi-polarity that divided the world, today Berlin is an example that the difference between the two systems can be successfully overcome. Due to its geopolitical position at the heart of Europe and as the German capital, Berlin will play a vital role in the future of Europe.

Now the city stands at the brink of an enormous growth process, offering great opportunities but also considerable challenges in the field of urban planning. The city of Berlin, 880 square kilometres in all, has a present population of 3.5 million, predicted to rise by 300,000 by the year 2010. Such growth demands a similar development in the necessary housing and infrastructure. Furthermore the decision to make Berlin the capital of Germany, siting a number of ministries here as well as the Federal Parliament, has brought a wave of investment which requires a corresponding growth in available office space.

With this in mind, we intend to make Berlin a global forum for contemporary urban design and architecture. However new developments must respect the distinct identity of Berlin and conform to Berlin's traditional urban structure and architecture. Above all they should not disrupt the mixture of housing, parks and commercial activities that can be described as being typically 'berlinish.' To address all these points, parliament decided upon the new Land Use Plan (LUP) after 60 hours of discussion and voting on the 23rd June, 1994. With this fell one of the biggest hurdles that Berlin would have to face in this definitive stage of its development; that is to say, having no one permissible development strategy for the entire city area. The Land Use Plan aims at nothing less than laying down the preliminary prerequisites for a reunited capital, Berlin. While protecting 'green' Berlin, the Plan's contents also insure and encourage the unusual scope of variety particular to this city. The Plan forms the basis of new strategy for Berlin the working city, and for sufficient and attractive accommodation potential.

For each area of the city the type and intensity of use has been defined and is a precondition for all investment. So the Land Use Plan is an opportunity to put our major principles of urban development into practice. Emphasis is to be placed upon development within the city rather than urban expansion. Priority will be given to regaining the inner areas which Berlin lost, as well as healing the wounds left by the

war. During forty years of division the planners pursued separate goals, sometimes making the same mistakes in both halves of the city. We hope to make use of Berlin's growing political influence, and its economic, social and cultural importance in order to restore, repair, renew and modernize the city after years of stagnation and waste. This applies to the reorganization of large infrastructure systems, such as rail and road systems, but also to the numerous small gaps and barren areas which still disfigure the fabric of the city - not to mention, of course, the deep scar where the Wall once stood.

Moreover, the Plan offers an outstretched hand to Brandenburg. Our Land Use Plan fits perfectly into the bounds of the agreement, already drawn up between the Land Brandenburg and Berlin. While our Plan allows 500ha for supplementary trade and industrial areas, this has now become almost 4,500ha in Brandenburg, nine times the amount therefore, to mention only the approved plans. It is clear from this that our Land Use Plan does not hinder any moderate development plan for the entire region, but on the contrary that it challenges it. This year we wish to do away with the principles of a county development programme common to both Berlin and Brandenburg, and put forward a common housing development concept instead, for the narrow band around Berlin where the two areas merge.

The focus of our attention in planning and financial terms is the eastern part of the city, specifically the north- and south-east. The development plans as well as the extension and renovation of the necessary infrastructure have assumed priority so that in 20 years time the new, modern aspect of Berlin will be there. Precautionary planning measures have been taken to meet future needs, specifically the provision for up to 150,000 new inhabitants as well as 60,000 new work places. Now our task is to define priorities for the developments, judging them against economic, ecological and urban criteria. Environmental aspects of urban development are dealt with in the Landscape Programme. This outlines, amongst other things, the creation of 16 new parks as well as 450 kilometres of green swathes throughout the city. These are necessary both for recreation and sport facilities; for the protection of animal and plant species as well as to improve the climate of the city itself.

In November 1992 the government of Berlin passed a detailed plan to secure 21 industrial areas. This is based on the recognition that re-industrialisation is important for the long-term economic viability of Berlin and that a healthy, lively development of the services sector can only be expected on the basis of an adequately strong trading and industrial base.

In this context Berlin is encouraging the settlement of new firms in combination with research institutions, university locations and residential areas of the highest standard. A suitable structural model has been developed in Adlershof/Johannisthal, a 460 hectare site with a long tradition of industry. It has been chosen to locate, amongst other things, the new Science Faculty of the Humboldt University and the research cyclotron Bessy II, in order that a new industrial and commercial structure can be developed. Moreover these facilities will be complemented by 5,000 new flats and a 75 hectare landscaped park.

It is predicted that the demand for various types of office space in Berlin over the next twenty years will necessitate a doubling of the capacity in 1989. It is precisely this extensive growth which must be channelled into a well considered location, where it will boost rather than disrupt the town.

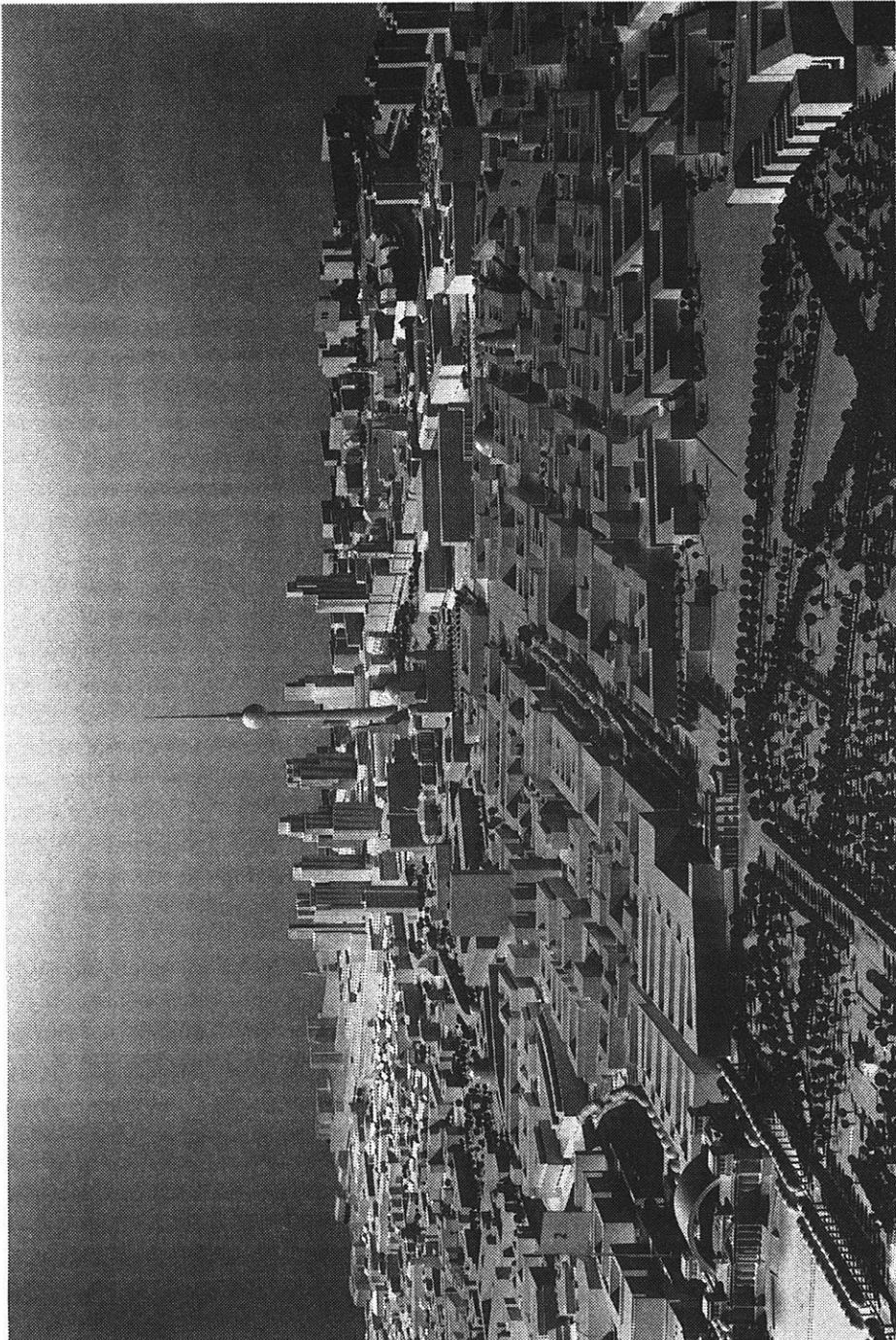
In aiming to meet this demand we wish to concentrate most of the office projects in Berlin along the inner railway ring, specifically at those places where it is intersected by railway lines from the suburbs and outlying areas. The necessary sites for office space have already been designated, as have the areas for industrial and commercial use. Furthermore the sites for the 400,000 new tenement flats which may be required within the next 20 years have also been found. That is to say, all precautionary planning measures have been taken to meet future needs.

Our planning for Berlin the working city is limited neither to the provision of the 500ha for supplementary trade and industry, nor to the doubling of office space in the city, as revealed in the Land Use Plan. We also have a planning strategy for those such places in production work as are now benefiting from the coexistence of science and culture, found specifically in towns. And it also entails the concentration of office space wherever it will enliven and define the city, and neither empty nor dominate it. It is with this in mind that the plan exists to situate office blocks on rail "crosses", and have a purely qualitative growth in the centre.

In preparing Berlin for its role as the capital city we have made considerable progress in a short time (Figure 1). On 20th June 1991 the German Bundestag (federal parliament) gave us the task of planning and constructing the capital in Berlin. Eleven months later we had agreed with the Parliamentary Commission and the Federal Government, on the goals, programme and parameters for the urban design competition to relocate the two houses of the Parliament and the chancellery in the Spreebogen area. Both this competition and that for redesigning the Reichstag were successfully completed in spring 1993. The proposals put forward by the architects Axel SCHULTES and Charlotte FRANK for the integration of the parliamentary quarter, the Spreebogen, into the city, and Sir Norman FOSTER's ideas for the reconstruction of the Reichstag, all do justice to the importance of the task in hand.

The concept for planning the capital city stipulates that Government and Parliament will find space in the heart of the capital. On the contrary, the political institutions, along with other facilities of international standing such as the museums, the Opera and the Humboldt University as well as residential and commercial facilities, will all contribute towards repairing the severe damage suffered by the city and create a lively area rather than merely a governmental ghetto. This criterion is particularly valid for the Spreeinsel, the former site of the Stadtschloss (old city palace), and its immediate vicinity. We have reached an agreement with the Federal Government that in the long term three ministries will be located here. In this historical area, which in the past has always marked the interface between representatives of state and city, we want to create a new type of ministry, suitable for a modern European capital.

Figure 1 Model of Downtown Planning (Berlin - Mitte)



The final design in the urban design competition for the historical centre of Berlin around the Spreeinsel was decided upon in May 1994. After the major competition on the Spreebogen area, the competition to redesign the Spreeinsel was the second part of the town planning preparations for the move. At the same time, it was the last stage in the restoration of Berlin's historical centre. Young Berlin architect and first prize winner, Bernd NIEBUHR's greatest strength was his superb combination of the ministries' demands and those of the town.

However it is not only the arrival of the government and parliament that we have been planning for. In 1993 decisions were also reached in the competitions for the urban development of a number of areas in the east, specifically around the Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, the Hauptbahnhof, and Heinrich-Heine-Straße near the former border crossing. This last project is a prime example of the necessary urbanization of Berlin, entailing the restructuring of a fallow area, where the Wall formerly stood, to create one of the most valuable sites between the historic centre and the neighbouring districts. The regeneration of barren wasteland is also apparent at 'Checkpoint Charlie' where the architectural proposals put forward by Philip JOHNSON and David CHILDS, amongst others, have been chosen for a large-scale development. Along the Friedrichstrasse, north of 'Checkpoint Charlie', we have approximately 15 projects in all, involving architects such as PEI, COBB and UNGERS. It is here that the Lafayette department store, designed by Jean NOUVEL, is presently under construction.

A two-phase urban design competition was launched in May 1993 for the Alexanderplatz. This area to the east, neighbouring on the old centre will in future be the most important urban square in the re-united city. There, in the middle of the city centre and following the basic structure of historic Berlin, an example of modern urban planning will emerge. A decision was reached in September 1993 in which the first prize was awarded to the Berlin architect Hans KOLLHOFF. The buildings here will be taller than elsewhere, in order to make the place stand out from a distance, since this is to become the most important city square for shopping, socialising, leisure, living and services. The square itself is to be the most important of meeting places for the citizens of Berlin. The jury agreed that his urban design with a number of skyscrapers would complement the 360m television tower there, whilst making maximum use of the space available.

The first major project affecting the structure of the re-united Berlin is the development of Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz; alter the Spreebogen the second most important link between East and West Berlin. In 1991 it was the subject of a complicated but relatively short decision-making process. Today the architectural competitions for this area have been completed, and construction is already underway in some parts. Daimler-Benz and Sony, for example, will be erecting headquarters, together with shops, flats and additional facilities to create a new and lively area in the city. Within the framework of Renzo PIANO's urban design concept a selection of eminent international architects have drafted buildings:

KOLLHOFF, ISOZAKI, ROGERS and MONEO amongst others. For the area on the opposite side of Potsdamer Platz. ABB have chosen the design by Giorgio GRASSI.

The vast amount, spatial and temporal, of future projects places new demands on the state of planning in Berlin for the century to come, as was clear from the start. The whole of Berlin has to come to terms with its new-found future. This is why we needed a new way of handling the methods and tools of planning, some of them old, others new.

By setting out well-defined parameters, specifically the Land Use Plan and the Landscape Programme, we intend to ensure that the economy and social structures can develop in a controlled and sustainable manner. Above all, the planning and development of the city must be seen in a wider context, so that a close relationship is maintained between Berlin and the surrounding state of Brandenburg. Only then can the region strengthen its position within Europe as a whole.

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