

Reconstruction of the Berlin Palace and Construction of Humboldt Forum

BERLIN _COMPETITION 2007-2008 _CONSTRUCTION 2010-2013 (ON SITE)

In 1950–51, the Berlin Schloss, or palace, which had been heavily damaged during World War II, was demolished. In the ensuing years, however, even the East German government began to doubt the appropriateness of this act, and from time to time the notion of reconstructing the building on a different site was discussed. After reunification new possibilities arose. For reasons of identity, many wanted—and still want—to rebuild the Baroque royal residence, which had been expanded into a palace by Andreas Schlüter in 1699. Others, however, were—and still are—against the idea on grounds of the issue of architectural authenticity. In 2002 and 2003, the German Parliament, on the recommendation of a committee of experts dealing with Berlin's historical center, decided to work with the Berlin Senate to rebuild the Berlin Schloss as the Humboldt Forum, a structure to be used for cultural and scientific purposes.

As a result, an international architectural competition was announced in late 2007. In November 2008, a jury made up of international experts awarded first prize to an Italian architect, Franco Stella. Stella's proposal fulfilled the requirements perfectly. Three sides of the building's historical façade had to be

reconstructed, and three Baroque façades had to be erected within the Schlüterhof, or historic courtyard. According to the competition requirements, the proposal had to demonstrate a connection to the Schloss's historic urban design and the new building's form had to correspond to the palace's original cubic one. The design's spatial planning had to meet functional demands as well as account for specific room sizes and heights, and a dome, similar to the one that had topped the representative new entrance on the west side since the mid-nineteenth century, had to be rebuilt as well.

Even at this point, there was still plenty of room for playing with design ideas and concepts. The so-called "Apotheker" wing and the east side facing the Spree River could be of contemporary design, while the entirety of the palace's rich history—which spanned from the Middle Ages and through to the structure's twentieth-century destruction and the erection of the Palast der Republik—could be reflected upon. Following the jury's recommendation, the construction of Franco Stella's design will begin in 2010. His project links the three Baroque façades and portals with the modern design of the east side, which

translates the vocabulary of the palace's historical forms into a new, contemporary idiom. Stella has introduced an entirely new "palace forum," which connects the Lustgarten, or "Pleasure Garden," with the city.

Four cultural and scientific uses are foreseen for the new Humboldt Forum: portions of the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (Central and State Library of Berlin) will join the non-European collections of the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), which have been housed in Dahlem until now. Humboldt University will be given a multipurpose "concept space" within the complex, and all kinds of contemporary cultural events will take place in the common entrance and event areas in the tradition of the old Palast der Republik.

The Humboldt Forum joins the hub where the Museumsinsel (Museum Island) and the academic buildings along Unter den Linden meet. In addition, the Dahlem collections embody the "new non-European world," supporting, along with the different holdings of the neighboring museums, an integrated, broader understanding of history and culture.



PROJECT

Reconstruction of the Berlin Palace and construction of Humboldt Forum

SITE

Schlossplatz, Berlin-Mitte

_PARTICIPANTS

CLIENT

Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung (BMVBS; Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs) in cooperation with the State of Berlin

DEVELOPMENT

Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (BBR; Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning)

OCCUPANTS

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz
Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin
Humboldt-Universität

ARCHITECTS

Francesco Stella Architetti,
Vicenza

_SCHEDULE

PLANNING

2007-08 (competition)

CONSTRUCTION START

2010

COMPLETION

2013 (on site)

_BUILDING STATISTICS

USABLE FLOOR SPACE

40,000 m²

GROSS FLOOR AREA

87,000 m² (competition design)

GROSS VOLUME

574,000 m³ (competition design)

_BUDGET

Total construction costs

Cost categories 200 to 700, gross
Budget limit: EUR 552 million, including original equipment; EUR 440 million from the federal government; EUR 32 million from the State of Berlin; EUR 80 million in expected donations