



Daimler Chrysler Office and Retail

Berlin



Integrating low-energy design within a dense urban environment, the buildings are designed to optimise passive solar energy, natural ventilation and daylight

In 1991 the city authorities opted for a conservative masterplan for the redevelopment of the devastated Potsdamer Platz quarter of Berlin (close to the former line of the Berlin Wall), rejecting more radical proposals including those initially submitted by RSHP. A further competition for the Daimler Chrysler site was won by Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker. RSHP was subsequently commissioned to design three buildings on the site with a total area of 57,800 m².

The brief stipulated that designs work within the context of the traditional Berlin square block, with buildings no more than nine storeys high formed around potentially oppressive internal courts. To one side, the buildings had to address an enclosed retail arcade raised several storeys above ground level. Working within these constraints, the practice was able to subtly subvert the municipal masterplan to produce buildings of strikingly contemporary appearance which, most significantly, utilised a low-energy servicing agenda.

The key to this strategy was the erosion of the blocks at their south-east corners to allow daylight to penetrate the central courts, which were turned into covered atria to illuminate interiors, and facilitate views out of the buildings. The atria are naturally ventilated throughout the year augmented in the winter with mechanical heating.

The two office buildings and one residential block were designed for natural ventilation throughout, with intensive research into the servicing programme partly funded by an European Union grant. As a result, it was estimated that energy consumption in the office buildings would be half that

Place
Berlin, Germany

Date
1993-1999

Client
Daimler Chrysler

Office Area
29,000 m² (Building B4 + B6)

Retail Area
12,500 m² (Building B4, B6 + B8)

Structural Engineer
Weiske & Partner GmbH/
Knebel & Scumacher/Ove
Arup & Partners

Services Engineer
rp+k sozietät (joint
venture with J Roger
Preston & Partners)/
Schmidt-Reuter und
Partner

Quantity Surveyor
Davis Langdon & Everest/
Drees & Sommer AG

Landscape Architect
Krugler & Mohler

Main Contractor
Müller Altvatter + C
Barasel AG GmbH

Awards

2000
RIBA Award for Buildings in Europe

generated by a conventionally air-conditioned building. The façades of the buildings incorporated clear and opaque glass panels, solid areas of ceramic tile cladding, and external and internal blinds, a sophisticated mix which allowed the internal environment to be adjusted in response to the requirements of users. Visually striking, the practice's contribution to the Potsdamer Platz development challenged conventional wisdom, producing a pioneering low-energy environment for business accommodation.

