The New Headquarters
Where Past Meets Present

The office building of Österreichische Volksbanken-AG in the 9th district of Vienna, in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre

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"Die Pappenheimer" – play by Franzobel
Lots of people have helped to build up our headquarters:

>> We would like to thank all those involved for their hard work. <<

We regard this picture as a symbol of the joint creation of our new corporate headquarters, which was only made possible by the valuable contributions of individuals to a common goal fit for the future.
The VBAG Group is becoming more integrated, and has built a corporate headquarters that stands as a symbol of the new, unified bank.

When the decision was taken in 2006 to build new premises that would meet the requirements of a modern, customer-oriented banking group, no-one imagined that it would become the headquarters of a new bank. The ongoing legal merger of Österreichische Volksbanken-Aktiengesellschaft and Investkredit Bank AG is already taking physical shape by grouping together the employees of both banks. We are taking this opportunity to combine experience and innovation in order to be forward-looking.

As the central institution in the cooperative association of Volksbanks, we have a long-term approach. Therefore it was an obvious decision to make our new headquarters sustainable. We have the support of experts such as the Austrian Sustainable Building Council here: they regard the new building as a successful building and certify its above-average quality in many sustainability aspects.

Combining the old with the new is a trademark of the cooperative Volksbanks. This commitment – to respect old and new, traditional and modern alike – is also perfectly reflected in the new building. Its foundations are the cooperative Volksbank model, our proven values and our employees.

To our target architecture – one bank, one brand, one aim, one strategy – we can now add one premises from which we will move the new bank forward. Together, we will inspire our customers and partners with our efficiency, quality and enthusiasm.

We are pleased that the employees are now bringing the building to life, as our employees are our bank’s capital. This capital never appears in a balance sheet, but is crucial to shaping the future successfully.

Hans Hofinger
Chairman of the Supervisory Board

Gerald Wenzel
Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Executive Board
Quotes on the New Headquarters

Josef Pröll, Austrian Minister of Finance

>> A new home is always also an opportunity for a new start. I would like to congratulate VBAG on its new headquarters. <<


>> This innovative project of VBAG impressively shows that contemporary, exciting architecture blends in with the historic cityscape. <<

Martina Malyar, Alsergrund District Mayor

>> The corporate headquarters is a great addition to the Alsergrund district, and also provides an economic boost to the neighbouring district. I hope that all employees feel at home in the 9th district, and wish a warm welcome to everyone! <<

Hans Lang, Chairman of the Works Council, VBAG

>> We have now taken possession of the new headquarters – our headquarters! A combination of old and new, with access for disabled people and an emphasis on environmental and social responsibility ...and we are looking forward to it! <<
Space to Work Together

>> Everything that belongs and can belong to the world in any way is inextricably linked with this conditionedness by the subject and is only there for the subject. The world is a representation. <<

Arthur Schopenhauer

The 150th anniversary of the death of the great philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer happens to fall in September 2010, as does the completion of the move to our new headquarters.

In honour of his words and in line with his main themes, we too put the emphasis on the subject of our deliberation and developed an idea of what requirements our projects must fulfil.

On the – metaphorically speaking – sound foundation of the remaining historical section of the building, we looked for a harmonic link with the axiom of the modern that gives the exterior of the building its distinctive appearance.

Inside, a world opens up that, with its lightness and brightness, architecturally strips the space of direct tangibility and, interwoven with congenial artistic interventions, stimulates the mind.

This creates “space” and inspiration for people to work together – our customers, our employees and our business partners.

We are pleased with this newly created symbol that underlines our view of humanity and system of values at the dawn of a new era. We would like to say a big thank-you to all those who supported us bringing this project to fruition.

In the following pages, you will find everything you need to know about our new headquarters: from its history, through the artistic concept to responsibility in practice.

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Project management

Christian Reitgruber
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Where Past Meets Present

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Snapshots of a Long History

The construction of the new headquarters combines new building and renovation. Originally, the new headquarters consisted of four houses at the following addresses:

- Peregringasse 1/Maria Theresienstraße 15
- Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13
- Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14
- Peregringasse 3/Kolingasse 18

At the new headquarters, legacy meets new beginning and preservation meets creation. The time span between the old and new headquarters ranges from 1871 to 2010. This almost 140-year history has many small economic, cultural, intellectual and social tales to tell.

**Time of origination: Wilhelminian era – Historicism – Economic liberalism (1850 to 1890)**

The new headquarters traces its historic roots back to the years of the Wilhelminian era, which were characterised by a construction boom in Vienna.

The **Peregringasse 1/Maria Theresienstraße 15, Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13, Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14** and **Peregringasse 3/Kolingasse 18** block of buildings is part of a two-row block development between Ringstrasse and the former Lastenstrasse, now called Kolingasse. This serves as a link road to the Danube Canal, a market area and, in particular, a supply route for the Rossau Barracks. The block of buildings blends in with the character of the former Ringstrasse development. The façade design of Maria Theresienstrasse 13 and 15 is commensurate with the late historic style and aesthetic as well as the contemporary vision of its owners.

**The immediate surroundings:**

**The Rossau district in „Alsergrund“**

“Alsergrund” was created after the incorporation of the suburbs and comprised the following districts: Alservorstadt, Michelbeuerngrund, Himmelpfortgrund, Thurygrund, Liechtental, Althangrund and Rossau.

Rossau was initially called “Oberes Werd” (upper island). It was formed from the former “Fischerdörfl”, a fishing village surrounded by meadows. Boatmen had horses that pulled their boats upstream, and they took them to water in this area, which led to the name being changed to Rossau (the first recorded mention dates from 1368). After the Turks were driven out in 1683, boatmen and traders settled in this area, and the meadows were cleared and built on. Rossau, also called
“Neu-Wien” (New Vienna), developed into a thriving suburb, and went on to become the preferred construction site of the aristocracy.

The area was bordered by the „Servitenkloster“ (Servite convent) and the Jewish Cemetery (Rossauer Judenfreithof, Seegasse 9-11, first recorded back in 1652), Liechtenstein Palace and Rossau Barracks.

Whilst the suburbs retained an air of village tranquillity between 1815 and 1848 with their organic growth, the building structure was completely transformed during the Wilhelminian era. In contrast to contemporary city expansion structures in the form of grid structures with crowded tenements, Rossau remained immune from these trends.

Whereas the historic block of buildings that consisted of four houses was then crucially close to the „Börsenviertel“, the central banking and insurance district at the time, Rossau was primarily designed as a residential district in the Wilhelminian era.

**Jewish life in Rossau**

At the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648, there was already a large influx of Jews from the East (Poland and Russia). However, it was not until after the compromise of 1864, which recognised Jews as citizens with equal rights in Austria-Hungary and granted them complete freedom of religion and belief, that a separate Jewish settlement came into being in Rossau. As a result of this development, the Jewish community grew very quickly. From the 1870s, large numbers of orthodox Jews emigrated there from the East (Galicia, Hungary and Russia). Around 1900, the Jewish population made up more than one-sixth of the population of the 9th district, with the majority living in Rossau.

**Building and living around the new headquarters**

Tenants in Rossau consisted of tradesmen and businessmen (paper, timber and textile industries). Many had migrated to “Neu-Wien” from the textile district. Their numbers declined continuously until the First World War. Officers, high-ranking civil servants, “self-supporting people” and some manual workers, mid-ranking officials and salaried employees also lived in the Rossau district. Banking executives were to be found as building owners as well as tenants.

Because of their proximity to the 1st district (boundary: Maria Theresienstrasse), the four houses had a rather different landlord and tenant structure. The tenants and owners were predominantly bankers, industrialists and “self-supporting people”. There was a particularly high ratio of female owners.

Members of the high nobility were less prominent as building owners than the younger aristocracy, for instance. Instead, the “banking aristocracy” (bankers) became the new landowners and homeowners to settle in “Neu-Wien”. They were looking for close proximity to the aristocracy in order to gain prestige.

Following the stock market crash of 1873 (“Black Friday”), the number of construction companies fell significantly. In the intervening period, many residential properties acted as clubhouses as well as business premises of banks and insurance companies, which needed more space due to expansion measures.
Daily life around the new headquarters

In addition to various workshops, the surrounding factories provided many jobs for the working-class people in the district.

To provide the population of Rossau with essential supplies, small shops were set up in the basements of the houses; there were also small markets nearby, a daily fish and grocery market as well as the „Tandelmarkt“ outside Rossau Barracks, Roßauer Lände 3 (formerly Elisabeth-Promenade with representative residential buildings), which was destroyed by bomb attacks in the Second World War.

In veneration of St Peregrine (1265-1345), Servite monk, patron saint of foot and cancer patients, the „Peregrinimarkt“ was held every year near the „Servitenkloster“ (Servit convent) at the end of April. It was hugely popular with the people of Rossau, not least because of the “Peregrini biscuits”.

Who owned the four houses and who lived there?

Peregringasse 1/Maria Theresienstraße 15 was sold to Josef Boschan & Sons by the City Expansion Fund in 1871. Josef Boschan was a wholesaler, sugar and spirits producer, and from 1866 was the owner of a cotton-spinning factory in Oberwaltersdorf, which was largely destroyed in a blaze in 1897.

The house was built in 1875 in line with the plans of the same – still unknown – architect/builder as the house in Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13.

Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13 was sold to Isidor Reitzes, who worked in the banking and commission business, by the City Expansion Fund in 1871. A five-storey house was built on this plot of land in 1874. The architect and builder are unknown.

Bertha Pappenheim

A major story had its origins in this house: the treatment of 21-year-old Bertha Pappenheim (1859-1936) by Josef Breuer, a colleague of Sigmund Freud. As the “Anna O.” case, she played a key role in the development of psychoanalysis. She lived in an apartment in the third floor of this house from 1878 to 1881.

VBAG erected a plaque in 2007 at the initiative of and in cooperation with the historian Gudrun Wolfgruber.

Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14 was sold by the City Expansion Fund to the two Jewish businessmen and self-supporting gentlemen M. Sorer and Julius Fraenkel, who built a five-storey apartment complex.
The headquarters in the field of medicine and science

The arrival of university institutions began with the construction of the Josefinum in 1784. Construction of the institutions the Medical University, close to the Rossau district, in the context of expansion and modernisation of the General Hospital (Vienna poorhouse built in 1725) from 1869, also led to an increase in the number of medical practitioners and scientists.

Famous physicians such as the surgeon Theodor Billroth (1829-1894), the psychiatrist Theodor Meynert (1833-1892), the paediatrician Clemens von Pirquet (1874-1929), the anatomist and social reformer Julius Tandler (1869-1936) as well as the founder of psychoanalysis and depth psychology Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and outstanding scientists such as technologist Wilhelm Franz von Exner (1840-1931), the physicist and pioneer of atomic theory Ludwig Boltzmann (1844-1906) as well as the physicist, mathematician and 1933 Nobel prize winner, Erwin Schrödinger (1887-1961), carried out their projects near the new headquarters. There is also mention of social reformer Hildegard Burjan (1883-1933), who founded the “Caritas Socialis” nursing centre in Pramergasse to support poor families.

From the turn of the century to the interwar years 1918 to 1938

Whereas a process of functional change of the properties from primarily residential use towards administrative use had started in the last decade of the 19th century, the social structure in the Rossau district continued to change in the interwar years. The number of civil servants and lower middle class tenants increased and the function of the residential properties changed towards management and administration. Lots of offices were built in the former residential properties.

The headquarters in the field of art and culture

The immediate surroundings of the four houses were also a focal point of the cultural life and artistic creativity.
For instance, the author Karoline Pichler, nee Steiner (1769-1843), used to spend time at a saloon at Alser Strasse 25 that Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872) and Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850) also frequented.

Alsergrund is associated with the literary figures Peter Altenberg (1859-1919), Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966), Erich Fried (1921-1988), Friedrich Hebbel (1813-1863), Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850), Leo Perutz (1882-1957), Felix Salten (1869-1945), Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), Jura Soyfer – also an author whose works were frequently staged at the “ABC Cabaret”, Porzellangasse 1/corner Berggasse – (1912-1939), Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979) and Otto Weininger (1880-1903). Famous architects such as Heinrich Ferstel (1828-1883), the painter and illustrator Egon Schiele (1890-1918) and the composers Anton Bruckner (1824-1896), Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) and Franz Schubert (1797-1828) lived and worked near the new headquarters.

In the interwar years in particular, Alsergrund became established as a lively location for public cultural events. The Dietrichstein riding school, Liechtensteinstrasse 37, became the “Flieger-Kino” (cinema) after the First World War. In 1971, it was renovated and affiliated to the French Lycée, founded in 1954, as “Studio Mollière”. The ABC Cabaret, Porzellangasse 1/corner Berggasse, was opened in 1934. Performers included Fritz Grünbaum and writers included Jura Soyfer, Peter Hammerschlag, Hans Weigel and Friedrich Torberg. The Harmonietheater at Wasingasse 33 (“Danzers Orpheum” since 1868) was built in 1864/65. The auditorium was designed on the basis of plans by Otto Wagner. One of the oldest cinemas in Alsergrund was the “Heimatkino”, which was converted into the „Schauspielhaus“ (theatre) in 1978.

From 1923 to 1930, the poet and cultural philosopher Hermann Broch (1886-1951) lived at Perergrinagasse 1/Maria Theresienstraße 15 (door 16) at the home of his friend Ea von Allesch, a leading light in the cultural life of the Fin de siècle and Modern eras.

**1922:** Funding of “Zentralkasse der Volksbanken Österreichs”

**1927:** Due to a lack of space at Lindengasse 5 – the association had 6 employees – the second floor of Langenhahn Palace, 1010 Vienna, Teinfaltstrasse 1, was rented and the offices were relocated.

**The era of National Socialism: 1938 to 1945**

Displacement of the Jewish population started straight after the “Anschluss” of 1938. Jewish tenants were evicted, their business premises and homes were confiscated, and their synagogues and temples were destroyed. On the basis of the Nuremberg Laws and numerous decrees, they were stripped of...
their civil rights and personal assets and excluded from almost all lines of work as well as schools and universities.

The Jewish landowners and tenants of the four houses were also directly affected by Nazi persecution, eviction and confiscation measures.

**Confiscation and “Aryanisation”**

**Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13**

The owner Herbert Elias (born 30 April 1885 in Vienna, died 29 July 1975 in New York) was one of the academic staff of the medical faculty of the University of Vienna, a member of the Austrian Society of Internal Medicine, the Austrian Society of Physicians and the Virchow Pirquet Medical Society and the author of numerous scientific works on biochemical problems on research in the field of serology. After being removed from office in 1938 and having his assets released on 14 August 1940, he became a “non-resident” and emigrated to the USA. His ownership rights then passed to his wife Ilse Elias, nee von Arnim. Their two children Kurt Elias and Hanna Elias also emigrated to the USA.

**Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14**

On 11 April 1938, the house was taken from its owner, the banker Louis de Rothschild, and taken over by the “German Reich”.

**Life in hiding**

As contemporary accounts testify, Jewish tenants in the immediate vicinity survived Nazi acts of violence hiding under cover, for instance Mr Konrad, who lived at Kolingasse 15. Mr Konrad got through the Nazi era hiding in his apartment, where he lived with his Catholic wife, a dressmaker at the fashion house Braun & Co. on Graben.

**Collective apartments**

After the “Aryanisation” of their homes, Jewish tenants who had not managed to leave the country were housed in collective apartments until their planned deportation. One prominent example is “Berggasse 19”. From 1891 to 1938, this was Sigmund Freud’s home and surgery as well as the headquarters of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (previously the Wednesday Society) and the International Psychoanalytical Association, IPA. From 1882 to 1889, the doctor and Social Democrat politician Viktor Adler (1852-1918) lived in what subsequently became Sigmund Freud’s apartment. The Sigmund Freud Museum is now at Berggasse 19.

**1945 to the 1960s: Post-war years and reconstruction**

On 1 September 1945, the district „Alsergrund“ came under the control of the USFA (United States Forces in Austria), which was based at Otto-Wagner-Platz 1-3. Today, the Late Classical building is home to the Austrian National Bank, which came into being after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In 1945, the building became the headquarters of the US High Commissioner, and then the Central Bank once again.
HISTORY

Restitution of confiscated property
Liechtensteinstraße 2/Maria Theresienstraße 13
The process of restitution for the house started on 27 January 1951. Ownership was not transferred to siblings Hanna Kapiz, nee Elias, and Kurt Elias until 1969 (50% each).

Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14
In 1947, a public trustee was appointed for the house, which was confiscated from its owner Louis de Rothschild in 1938. Instigation of the restitution process was started on 29 April 1947 in accordance with the verdict of the Restitution Committee. Ownership was restored to Louis de Rothschild on 19 October 1948.

Reconstruction
During the 1950s, many houses in the district „Rossau“ that were destroyed in the war, e.g. Kolingasse 17, half of which was bombed to pieces, were rebuilt. At the same time, bombed-out ruins were bought up in order to build rent-free apartments independently.

The house Peregringasse 3/Kolingasse 16, which was bombed in 1945, was rebuilt in 1962/1963 in accordance of the plans of the architect Otto Nobis.

The social structure in Rossau changed significantly, partly because the many former Jewish tenants had not returned from emigration. To create office space, apartments were swapped or pooled together. One existing form of social decline in particular affected the location of the apartments. Whilst the tenants (private individuals, companies or associations) bought the street-side apartments, the rear apartments (former servants’ apartments) were increasingly leased by relatives of the lower middle class. However, outward appearances remained the same, not least because of the structural design. Previously “grand” apartments continued to serve professional and private representation purposes. In perfect keeping with the “saloon culture” of upper-class tenants of the Wilhelminian era, Rossau remained a good address.

1951: Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966), who lived at Währinger Strasse 50-52 from 1956 until his death, published his key literary work “Die Strudelhofstiege oder Melzer und die Tiefe der Jahre” (The Strudelhof Steps). The Strudelhof Steps were built in 1690 to provide access to the former Danube shoreline, and were rebuilt in 1910 on the basis of plans by Theodor Jäger. Since their renovation in 1962, there has been a plaque there with a poem by Heimito von Doderer.

1951: Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966), who lived at Währinger Strasse 50-52 from 1956 until his death, published his key literary work “Die Strudelhofstiege oder Melzer und die Tiefe der Jahre” (The Strudelhof Steps). The Strudelhof Steps were built in 1690 to provide access to the former Danube shoreline, and were rebuilt in 1910 on the basis of plans by Theodor Jäger. Since their renovation in 1962, there has been a plaque there with a poem by Heimito von Doderer.

As the office premises of Volksbank in 1010 Vienna, Teinfaltstrasse 1, were destroyed by bombs and stripped bare by looters, further space in the building were rented in 1953.

The business operations of Volksbank with 47 employees were relocated to Peregringasse 4 in 1954.

At the Extraordinary General Meeting on 14 April 1958, the purchase of the property Peregringasse 3 was approved due to lack of space (93 employees). After the bombed-out ruins were pulled down, a new building with 11 storeys (architect Otto Nobis) was to be erected. The fact that the building was still occupied by four parties despite the war damage made the construction project much more challenging. In addition, site management was difficult due to the location, the traffic and associated issues relating to safety precautions.
1960s to the 1990s

The ground-breaking for the new building at Pereg-ringasse 3 was held on 19 June 1961. Volksbank rented further office space (two floors) at Pereg-ringasse 1 in 1962. More space was still required because the new building was not yet finished. Relocation took place on 14 September 1963, after close of business. Business operations in the new premises commenced on 16 September 1963.

Volksbank had 241 employees at the end of 1971: Once again, there was a lack of space. For this reason, the property at Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14 was purchased. Despite this, no vacant offices were available, so another two floors of Pereg-ringasse 2 were rented. However, as there were no suitable premises to accommodate the IT equipment following the creation of the data centre, premises in 1010 Vienna, Am Hof 11, were also rented.

In the mid-1960s, a business downturn began. Whilst there had previously been a good infrastructure, according to former residents, one business after another had disappeared. Until the 1960s/70s, in the basements of the four houses were a general store, a central hub for information of all kinds, a bakery, a dairy store that also sold wine, a sweet shop, a pet shop and a hairdresser's. Just down the road, a second-generation Bohemian family ran a greengrocery (Kolingasse 9). After it closed, the printers located in the same house took on the business premises. A well-organised general store (Kolingasse 11), which also did home deliveries, supplied the neighbourhood with everyday essentials. Furthermore, keeping up the textile business, there was Wilhelm Kaiser’s wallpaper shop (Kolingasse 19) and the music publisher Klimek (Kolingasse 17), which remains to this day.

From 1975 to 1986, the house at Liechtensteinstraße 4/Kolingasse 14 was completely demolished apart from the two frontages, and the property was rebuilt (7 main storeys and 2 attic storeys). All four houses underwent loft conversions between 1975 and 1986. Further conversions were carried out between 1985 and 1990. Whereas the houses were originally used for residential purposes, their function increasingly changed towards office use.
The new office building of Österreichische Volksbanken-Aktiengesellschaft was constructed within the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in the 9th district of Vienna. The central theme of combining old and new was implemented with architectural integration in the surrounding area beyond the Ringstrasse.

There were two main reasons why the Group started to consider a new building. Firstly, the original headquarters had become too small. Secondly, the building equipment, appliances and fabric were becoming “dated”. It was therefore time to build a headquarters suitable for customers, business partners and employees.

With the new building project, many customer-focused departments were combined in one headquarters. The Group has therefore grown closer together. A modern customer centre has been created. VBAG’s main aim was to provide customers with a place where many essential transactions can be made under one roof.

At the outset, everyone involved was focused on the location debate: stay in the 9th district on the outskirts of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and meet the extensive requirements, or go to the a “greenfield” site and erect a new office building there?

The Project Idea
Building the new headquarters at the old location
A clear commitment to the 9th district ensued. The main reasons are set out below:

**Established location**
The square complex between Peregringasse, Kolin-gasse, Liechtensteinstraße and Maria Theresienstraße is an established location. Customers, business partners and employees know and value this address. Challenges and construction restraints were therefore deliberately taken on board.

**Central location**
Situated in the immediate vicinity of the 1st district, the location has excellent links with the public transport network. This is positive for everyone - customers, employees and business partners - and was a key factor for the bank’s Executive Board when deciding on the location. Because of the central location, many employees cycle or walk to work. This would not have been possible with a location on the outskirts of Vienna.

**Infrastructure**
The sound infrastructure of the 9th district gives employees an environment that makes day-to-day life easier.

The decision to retain the location says as much for the regional ties and the “mentality” of the company as the architectural realisation of the new headquarters. Combining the old with the new is a trademark of the cooperative-oriented Volksbanks. Both in Austria and at international level, the central institution has a regional outlook, based on the traditional values of its founder Schulze-Delitzsch. This commitment - to respect old and new, traditional and modern alike - is also perfectly reflected in the new headquarters.
Cooperation with all political decision-makers

Carrying out a construction project of this magnitude in the centre of Vienna was a challenge that was only possible through close collaboration with political decision-makers. An outstanding basis for discussions at regional and local level was the essential requirement here.

2-year planning process

“Vienna is a thriving city that prides itself in taking very good care of its historical legacy and will continue to define itself with high-quality architecture and outstanding urban development in the 21st century. This innovative project of VBAG clearly shows that contemporary, exciting architecture blends in with the historic cityscape.” Vienna’s Executive City Councillor for planning, Rudolf Schicker, emphasised the attractiveness of the building with these words at the project presentation of the planned new corporate headquarters.

After a planning process of almost two years, accompanied by the architect Albert Wimmer (project organisation), which was completed with a competition [for further information on the architecture competition and the vision of the architect Carsten Roth > SEE PAGES 22 and 24], an architecturally impressive project coordinated with Vienna City Council and the 9th district was in place.
Implementation of the construction project

After this, the construction project was implemented successfully on a partnership basis in line with the stipulations of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre [> SEE PAGE 20].

Ground-breaking ceremony

A major milestone in the construction phase was the ground-breaking ceremony in May 2008. The traditional ground-breaking ceremony was performed with representatives of the Federal Government, city council and district as well as the construction companies involved in the context of a commemorative event that was also attended by numerous residents.

Topping-out ceremony

The next prominent highlight was the topping-out ceremony in September 2009. This ceremony still has symbolic significance, especially for the construction workers. The construction workers celebrated this major step in the building of the new headquarters together with the residents and the Executive Board as well as numerous employees of VBAG.
The Headquarters in the Context of the Vienna World Heritage Centre

Preservation of traditional values can be found in the retention of the historic part of the building, which overlooks Vienna’s old town – a UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Most of the block of the old building that consists of four houses is part of the Ringstraße development. Total demolition with subsequent reconstruction was not possible because of the protected area regulations as well as the sensitive location in the core zone of the World Heritage Centre. In contrast, partial demolition preserving more than half of the building fabric of the block enabled it to be structured as an element of the Ringstraße development in a contemporary format and with an appropriate utilisation concept. The design required considerable stability in terms of height development, structure and materials, in particular due to the prominence of the facades in the cityscape (chiefly on Peregringasse and Kollingasse).

Background

In the preliminary proceedings – on the basis of the expert opinion of Friedmund Hueber – it was established that there were no significant objections to demolition of the house at Peregringasse 3 and the
house at Liechtensteinstraße 4, of which only the façade remains of the original structure. However, in the interest of the cityscape, it was deemed to be desirable to preserve the façade of the house at Liechtensteinstraße 4 (especially the ground floor) and integrate it into a new building. As the houses at Peregringasse 3 and Liechtensteinstraße 4 accounted for less than half of the building fabric of the construction site, reconstruction of this area as an extension or annex was to be assessed in line with the building regulations.

The houses at Peregringasse 1 and Liechtensteinstraße 2 were to be fundamentally preserved in terms of their structure. In any case, in adaptation and renovation measures, more than 50 % must be preserved (this also has to be verified by means of an area calculation). This involves all elements crucial to structural design and space creation such as façades, load-bearing walls and ceilings, staircases, roof etc. The rear part of the houses at Peregringasse 1 and Liechtensteinstraße 2 was also available. Demolition of more than 50 % of the above-mentioned crucial elements and therefore total gutting would have been tantamount to demolition. This was not only impermissible due to the protected area regulations, but also because the provisions of the land utilisation and development plan would have applied in full in this case (BKL IV, max. building height 21 metres and less in Liechtensteinstrasse).

Another important aspect for the cityscape is the design of the attic storeys. In contrast with the current jaggedness and heterogeneous design of the attic storeys in particular, Vienna City Council is targeting a high-quality skyline in the interest of the cityscape. This not only includes the compatibility of the block with the square and street walls of the surrounding area in relation to heights, scale, texture and materials, but also the neat integration of the necessary technical superstructure.

**Design, impact on street space**

The building to be erected and renovated is situated in a protected area pursuant to Section 7 of the Vienna Building Regulations and in the core zone of the World Heritage Site, and also marks the corporate headquarters of VBAG that has been associated with the property since the company was founded. This resulted in the absolute necessity to design an unmistakably recognisable and memorable bank building.

Accordingly, sensitive and careful consideration of shapes, proportions, colours and materials was required. In particular, the character and design elements of surrounding Wilhelminian-era building fabric had to be taken into account.

**UNESCO World Heritage Centre**

The designation “World Heritage Centre” is based on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972). The purpose of this Convention is to select this “cultural and natural heritage” and summarise it in a World Heritage List. A total of 911 properties in more than 150 countries are already included in the list. Eight locations in Austria have been entered in the list since 1996: the old towns of Salzburg and Graz (and Eggenberg Castle), the historic centre of Vienna, Schönbrunn Castle and Park, the Semmering Railway and the cultural landscapes “Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut”, “Wachau” and – jointly with Hungary – “Fertő–Neusiedler Lake”. ♦
The Architecture Competition

The intention was to send out a signal! The new building, which has been the site of VBAG’s headquarters since the early 1960s, was not only to undergo unmistakeable external architectural changes, but also combine artistic elements.

The buildings were erected as residential properties in the historic style at the beginning of the High Wilhelminian era. The change of use from apartments to offices was carried out gradually, with the last adaptation work being performed between 1985 and 1990.

Checking of the general renovation and a feasibility study for the entire central complex (Peregringasse 1 and 3 as well as Liechtensteinstrasse 2 and 4), including intensive coordination with the building authorities, were carried out in the years before the architecture competition.

The decision to hold an architecture competition in conjunction with Vienna City Council was then taken within Volksbank, with the following stipulations set for the participants by the building owner:

- Landmark building with creation of an unmistakable identity
A property with a distinctive character and atmosphere

The feel of the building should be inviting, light and friendly, in harmony with the existing urban surroundings and with human dimensions

Not monumental, monotonous, straight and cold

The building should create modern office working conditions with a high degree of flexibility in terms of room layout

Special attention should be paid to the design of the facade, in particular sound insulation and solar energy

Environmentally-friendly with regard to design and use of materials

Additional key focal point: low operating costs

Well-known and international architectural firms were invited:

Aulenti Gae, Geiswinkler Architects, Atelier Hayde, Martin Kohlbauer, Marte.Marte, Podrecca Boris and the architectural firm Carsten Roth of Hamburg.

To enable decision-making of the highest quality in the competition, the jury consisted of representatives of the building owner as well as the following experts (= specialist jurors): Josef Matousek, Klaus Vatter, Friedrich Achleitner, Manfred Nehrer, Elsa Prochazka and Patricia Zacek. The advisors of the awarding body also included the architect Albert Wimmer and his team. In October of the same year, the competition projects were made available to the public at Volksbank Vienna, Schottenstor branch, during World Savings Week.

Ultimately, the architectural firm Carsten Roth impressed with its professional design approach and sensitive vision. It was an impressive winning project that met the artistic and economic criteria of all members of the jury.

For the new corporate headquarters, a decision was made to exercise discrete restraint on the outside whilst reflecting a modern bank on the inside. The old and new buildings have been merged together impressively. The two bodies are joined together in the attic storey and the glass roof is almost invisible during the day, although a bright ring appears to hover above the building at night. The centrepiece was and is the atrium with its tower-like elements.

After taking his intermediate diploma in Brunswick, Carsten Roth continued his studies in Vienna, and has therefore had an artistic association with Vienna since the 1980s. However, he has said that it was the stage design of a performance of Tannhäuser in the 1980s that is now being conceptually expanded on 20 years later. “Spiritually, Vienna was and is my second home”, says Carsten Roth. “When I heard about the construction of VBAG’s corporate headquarters, it was soon clear to me: I must give that a go.”

His high-calibre team of Klaus Bollinger (supporting structure planning specialist) and Brian Cody (building equipment specialist), Tim Kettler and Gerhard Düh was quickly put together.
The Architect’s Vision of the Headquarters

The new VBAG corporate headquarters contrasts the preservation requirements of the World Heritage Centre and the ultramodern vision of a successful Volksbank.

This contrast is applied between the outer shell and the spatial centre at the focal point of the building. Facing outwards towards the core zone of the World Heritage Centre, the building radiates discrete restraint, but without looking submissive. At the heart of the interior, the boundless vision of a modern bank expands outwards and upwards: instead of becoming narrow and dark in the atrium, an endless light open space unfolds in the new building as visitors or employees go further inside.

Urban development and preservation of monuments
The clarity of an inner-city perimeter development is to be reinforced here by the clear division into an old building section and a new building section, both of which are separated by a narrow joint. The new building embraces the architectural three-way split of historical facades into a base, middle and roof zone and strengthens the neighbourhood with its stone outer surface.

The basic principle of strongly shaped facades from the Historicism and Wilhelminian eras that look to be arranged vertically when viewed from the front and horizontally from an acute angle is rigorously adhered to: from an acute angle, intradoses of different depths increase the materiality and level of detail, and the perpendicular division changes to a horizontal organisation.

Structures and interior
Two structures, the old building and the new building, each form a “U” shape that attract each other like magnets. In the attic story, both structures are combined to form a whole that is almost invisible in the daytime, but appears to hover above the building complex as an illuminated ring at night. The shared base extends underneath a raised atrium in which several brilliant white, dematerialised ashlar blocks reach towards the sky. These slender towers give the impression of endlessly stretching the space of the interior. Through agile adjustment of the corners and other slight alterations, the longitudinal and lateral dimensions are also no longer perceptible. All light surfaces, translucent and milky transparent, reflect each other and create a space of real grandeur and great mystery.

Whereas banks all over the world dream of being part of the skyline, six towers are enveloped here to
form a skyline of their own within the entire bank building. This atrium attains its full effect through being linked with the exterior on the ground floor. On a few supporting panels, the upper floors of the new extension stand above a light-filled ground floor that draws visitors into the conference area and, in particular, the atrium.

Progression and organisation
It is typologically inconceivable for such a striking interior be accessed via a basement (first downstairs, then upstairs...)! Instead, visitors reach a ground-floor level via some pedestal steps and – if they wish – go up from there to the glass-covered atrium, a multifunctional level that leads on to major gatherings, exhibitions, cultural events, lectures, presentations and much more on the first floor.

Almost exclusively single-wing offices are arranged around this atrium, interspersed with the tower-like conference rooms and other service rooms as well as staircases and lifts. Even so, there are no really visible access balconies, as they are delineated from the use of the atrium by translucent and slightly transparent materials. Just two staircases are enough to provide access to the entire building complex, and they both provide a view of the street via two slim perpendicular building joints.

The organisational concept takes into account the fact that many people reluctantly move into offices in atriums only to end up looking into each other’s rooms. Whilst there are inner offices on one transverse side of the atrium for space-saving reasons, working areas here are hidden from view – with no “opposite number” and with a fantastic view of an indefinable mystical world full of daylight.

The two perpendicular building joints lead into the side entrances and emergency exits. The underground garage is accessed by a straight ramp that leads into a neatly arranged split-level space continuum. Recreation rooms in the basement are supplied with ample daylight and vistas through glazed slits along the entrance façade.

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**Prof. Carsten Roth**

Born in 1958 in Hamburg. Studied at the Technical University of Brunswick and in Vienna at the Academy of Fine Arts under Prof. Gustav Peichl and in the USA at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg and Alexandria, majoring in the integration of daylight in architectural space here.

After returning, set up his own studio in Hamburg in 1987. Every construction project is fully planned, detailed and advertised here, and project management is also carried out from his office.

1998-1999 Visiting professor in design and construction at Kassel University.

Winner of the Critics’ Prize for architecture awarded by the German Critics Association in 2002.

Since September 2003, university professor at the Institute for Building Construction and Industrial Construction at the Carolo-Wilhelmina Technical University, Brunswick.
The new headquarters consists of eight upper floors (7 upper floors in the existing building section) and four underground floors. The ground floor and the new building section of the 1st floor (top-client area) form the quasi-public area, which is provided for meetings and conferences.

The company restaurant on the ground floor and a cafeteria on the 1st floor are also in the semi-public area. Events can be held in the covered atrium, which was designed by Otto Zitko.

Underground floors 2 to 4 are used as a garage. Various storage rooms, the processing rooms dispatch operations and the rooms for the building equipment can be found in underground floor 1.

The other floors are given over to office use.

The forecourt outside the main entrance on Kolin-gasse is a vehicle-free zone. It will be renamed as “Volksbank-Platz” in the coming year.

The entrance area of the new corporate headquarters is fitted with revolving doors and provides a view of the entire entrance hall through the use of glass. In addition, the meeting rooms situated at the front facing Kolingasse and the conference centre (front facing Peregringasse) are only separated from the outside by means of room-high glass.

Reception is staffed 24 hours a day.

On entering the new headquarters, the light installa-tion “eins durch unendlich - unendlich durch eins” by Brigitte Kowanz immediately comes into view. The artwork forms the ceiling of the foyer and thus becomes an integral part of the new architecture.
A spacious waiting area has been created outside the conference area, opposite reception. Separated from the entrance hall by a wooden wall, it enables discussions a secluded atmosphere.

Stairs lead from the entrance hall to the atrium and the meeting rooms on the first floor.

The centrepiece of the new headquarters is the atrium – a meeting place for customers and employees. In this 22-metre-high space, Otto Zitko created an artwork like nothing else in the Austrian banking world on wall space of around 4,000 square metres covered with layers of foil.
Otto Zitko has been using drawing as a method of painting since the 1980s. He frequently works in a spatial context, and only ever decides on site what graphic concept he will use. The same applied to the artwork in the atrium. Zitko uses the spatial structure of the atrium with its edges and recesses as a context for his typical blend of drawing and painting. His main challenge was the technical realisation of the artwork. Zitko made his ideas visible in a three-dimensional format in a scale model of the atrium. Various colour types were tested on foil samples around 5 square metres in size. The artist travelled to the foil manufacturer in Germany with the results in order to examine the effect of the chosen colours on the foil and the dimension of the area on another 7.5 metre-high model.

In the innovatively designed company restaurant with its 200 seats, the employees and guests can enjoy not only a culinary treat, but also a visual one thanks to front cooking. Front cooking is a special form of cooking in gastronomy. The chef prepares the meals outside the kitchen and immediately in front of the guests, who can therefore watch key parts of the preparation and cooking process.

EUREST – the long-standing company catering partner of VBAG – firmly believes in fast and efficient service: the menu of the day is shown on a flat screen in the entrance area together with sample dishes. Once the

>> ...and the kitchen produces culinary delights. <<

Hans Lang, Chairman of the Works Council
dish has been chosen, the diner can go straight to the service point where their choice is available (starters, soups, salads, pasta, grill, wok etc.). However, deciding what to eat is not easy, as there are four hot main meals to choose from.

On the ground floor and in the top-client area of the 1st floor, twenty meeting rooms whose capacity can be flexibly adapted from four to thirty people by means of variable partitions are available to all employees. In addition, the conference area on the ground floor can be used for events for up to 150 people, meaning that there are no obstacles to a successful event.

As well as these meeting rooms, each floor is equipped with two departmental meeting areas, each with sufficient space for eight people.

Most of these meeting premises and event facilities have state-of-the-art media systems in order to fully live up to the image of a successful bank. For instance, a room for video conferences is available. The entire conference area has W-LAN, and in the large event room, in addition to the screen, there are also flat screens on the side walls, ensuring that all participants have a good view of the presentation.

All rooms are managed via a room reservation database and can be booked very quickly. As an additional feature, digital door signs are also used for fully automatic signage of the premises.

Furthermore, the 8th floor has four meeting premises that are available to the Executive Board only and, because of their size and level of equipment, will also be used for Supervisory Board meetings in future.
Our Working Environment

The new headquarters was completed in summer 2010. Relocation of around 600 employees took place immediately afterwards.

The new headquarters was completed in summer 2010. Relocation of around 600 employees of VBAG, Volksbank AG – Investkredit and Volksbank International, VBI, took place immediately afterwards.

Office concept
VBAG decided to create structured shared offices in the new headquarters. This office concept takes into account the requirements of a modern, open and thriving bank. Within spacious rooms, the individual organisational units are marked out by mobile partitions without actually being separated from each other. Room-height partitions are largely dispensed with. The emphasis is on transparency, and the primary aim is to encourage communication between the groups. The spatial conditions in the new building stipulate room sizes for a maximum of 30 employees, and the average group size of the departments is between four and eight employees.

The concept applies to the new building and the existing one. In the existing building, the existing walls allow office sizes for a maximum of 14 employees. The office areas situated along the façade are bordered by the retained walls.

>> New headquarters, new bank, new opportunities! <<
Gerfried Brunner

>> I get more from my colleagues – problems are overcome more quickly and more easily because we can interact directly. <<
Andrea Mastny

The biggest possible number of transparent openings ensures maximum accessibility and flexibility in terms of future room configurations. Room standards set out the available space for each worksta-
tion: a standard workstation is defined as around 8 square metres of complete office space. Twice as much space is available to a group leader. In the context of a change project, basic rules that stipulate the hierarchy level up to which workstations are integrated in the group or incorporated in an individual office were devised in coordination with the Executive Board. The same amount of space is granted to every group leader up to the divisional head. An individual office is allocated to heads of department and divisional heads.

>> Finally, no more tangled cables, because the cables have been integrated in the desks and installed in the floor. <<

Michael Orter

To be as flexible as possible, the office partitions are designed as partitioning systems. The system walls have a modular design and can be dismantled and reassembled in the event of changes to the room configurations. The necessary sound protection levels are of course guaranteed. The colours and materials of the walls were selected in a careful coordination process with representatives of the company taking into account the planned furnishings.

**Furnishings**

The aim is to make the room situation as open and fluid as possible. At an early stage, the Executive Board stipulated that the necessary storage space was to be kept to an absolute minimum, thus supporting the impression of unlimited space. By introducing an electronic document management system and a requirements-oriented archiving system with archives at different distances, it is possible to reduce the storage space per employee to 3.6 running metres at the workstation. This enables consistently low storage elements in the room that provide protection at the back for those sitting down and can also be used for short stand-up meetings.

The room is dominated by the horizontal spaces, only broken by the 1.7-metre-high partitions, which make the organisational units easy to identify.

**Basic workstation module**

Each workstation consists of a desk, a height-adjustable supplementary table that can also be used for stand-up meetings, a swivel chair, a rolling file cabinet and a sliding-door cupboard. Workstations facing each other are separated by means of table-top units that can be fitted with trays for files or pens. Wall-facing workstations are situated opposite a partition or wall system that can also be individually equipped with organisation elements or media elements.

**Meeting rooms**

The meeting rooms are situated on the ground floor (conference area for events for up to 150 people), on the 1st floor (top-client area) and on the 8th floor (conference rooms on the executive floor). In addi-
through the new headquarters

Information, technical measures that enable events to be held have been carried out in the atrium. The ground floor and first floor are part of the semi-public area of the building and can be accessed with no security checks, i.e. visitors only go through reception.

VBAG is the owner and user of properties in the immediate vicinity of the new headquarters. The Group’s property philosophy is for the properties it owns (new headquarters, Renngasse 10, Pergingasse 2 and 4, Kolingasse 15 to 19 and Wasagasse 2) to be used. Leased space is gradually being returned, with the exception of Saturn Tower. According to the meeting room concept of the new building, all serviced meetings must be held in the new headquarters. Employees who work in the surrounding buildings also have access to the premises. The meeting rooms on the ground floor and 1st floor cover the estimated requirements: scenarios of meetings with up to 52 people are feasible. Settings with cinema-style seating enable a correspondingly higher attendance (max. 150 people).

Interior design – BEHF

The Vienna-based architectural firm BEHF was commissioned to design the representative areas such as the top-client area on the 1st floor and the executive floor. The impressively equipped meeting rooms combine modern seating comfort with sophisticated media equipment. The Executive Board offices are equipped in a timelessly elegant manner.

The interior design is gentle and restrained and sufficiently accommodates the artworks of the former Investkredit collection as well as the spectacular view of Vienna.
**The printer concept**

There is a very special concept for the printers. Previously, around 700 printers were used within the Group. As a result of the new printer organisation, there are now only 260. On each floor, there are four standardised “printer islands”. The new devices are multifunctional devices that can do everything: print, copy, fax and scan. The new system delivers considerable cost savings. As most printing is double-sided, the environment aspect is also sustainable as a result of the significant reduction in paper consumption. The printers are operated with a chip – for instance, the size of a 2-euro coin – that identifies the employees. This chip is also used for access authorisation, time logging and payment in the company restaurant.

**Electronic document management**

“No piles of papers: more space for employees instead” is the principle. To ensure optimum use of the new office space, an electronics data management system is used for the personal archives of the employees, departmental and divisional archives. All relevant documents are managed and made available digitally. Of course, there is also a paper archive for documents that need to be stored physically. And the aim is not to be entirely paperless: the employees continue to manage current working documents in paper format. The reduction of paper storage in the workplace is not the only thing they like about the new system. It reduces the often significant amount of time spent searching in files and filing cabinets. Essential documents are available more quickly – for several employees at a time and regardless of location. Another crucial factor here is the increased level of document security. An electronic system for incoming daily mail is also to be implemented next year.

**Building operation**

To ensure in-depth preparation and constructive influencing of conditions at the new headquarters, moderated user team meetings were held at in 14-day intervals throughout the entire planning and execution stage.
LITERATURE IN THE UNDERGROUND GARAGE

The Special Library

An employee portrait with a difference by Liquid Frontiers*

Intellectual capital as a sound basis

The artistic design concept for “The Special Library” was customised for the area of the underground garage of the new headquarters. It thrives on the participation of employees. Based on the diverse interests and skills of the employees, the project attempts to paint a portrait of the company by setting up a library whose unique composition reflects what the individual VBAG employees personally deem to be important. In a sense, this also represents the intellectual capital that is available and constantly exchanged within the company. In this respect, all employees of the VBAG Group were asked to provide three books that they felt should be part of the VBAG library. The spines of the books were scanned in, put together in a library arranged according to the names of the employees and visually played back into the spatial basis of the building in the form of large-format displays. The selective but effective conversion of the normally highly mundane underground ambience into a library of various shelves of books not only ensures additional orientation in the underground floors, but is also intended as an ironic reference to this location, where the vault was often situated in days gone by. The concept relates to the traditional notion of a bank, which for many years was characterised by the myth of cash and gold that was believed to be well-secured in the vault of a bank. However, since this romantic notion was supplanted by the digital reality of the financial services sector and the politically correct representation of capital has been eroded in many respects as a result of current developments, it seems appropriate to regard the primary basis of a bank as being rooted in the intellectual capital of its employees.

The library as a portrait

Every library is unique. Hardly any two libraries have exactly the same collection of books. Every library forms its own universe that not only consists of its books, but is also formed by the links between the books. In this respect, whatever their layout, libraries are always also labyrinths where you can find things you were not even looking for.

Libraries can be seen as a portrait of those who put them together. They create a kind of “silhouette” of the intellectual contours and life situations of their respective owners, which is why libraries are often of particular interest to artists, writers, scientists and politicians. For instance, Umberto Eco’s li-
Library is famously huge, with more than 10,000 books. In the famous story “The Library of Babel” by Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges, the library actually serves as a metaphor for infinity itself.

The possibility of libraries to reflect properties and individual characteristics of their founders also applies in cases where they were put together by a collective. For instance, the library of a monastery, a family, an association or a company gives an insight into the intellectual cosmos that its members share. However, in company libraries, there are hardly any comparable examples where, as in this case, the principle is turned on its head and is solely geared towards and reflects the reading preferences of the individual employees.

**Implementation**

To paint as multifaceted and meaningful a portrait of the VBAG Group as possible, the employees were asked to name the three books that, in their subjective opinion, should be included in the library of VBAG. For selection of the books, the primary criterion was the importance that the readers attached to these works. Consequently, all books that had enthused or influenced the participants during their lives in any way were considered, whether they were novels or collections of lyrics, children’s books or textbooks, heirlooms or new publications. Because of its public nature, “The Special Library” provides the opportunity to draw attention to authors and books, which can benefit titles and subjects that are less well-known.

With readers nominating three books each, a good balance should be found between stipulation and variance. On the basis of three books, a range of interests and preferences can be shown that is highly representative. ♦
Art in the Atrium

Otto Zitko’s innovative project for our bank

The centrepiece of the new headquarters is the atrium – an architectural highlight in a 22-metre-high space. An artwork like nothing else in the Austrian bank world has been created here on wall space of around 4,000 square metres covered with foil.

The artwork by Otto Zitko in the atrium forms a special synergy with the specific architecture. Otto Zitko emerged as the winner of the art competition.

In the context of a tendering process held back in 2008, the six Austrian artists Peter Kogler, Brigitte Kowanz, Gerwald Rockenschaub, Virgil Widrich, Erwin Wurm and Otto Zitko were invited to design “art in the atrium”.

The challenge for the artists was to fit the respective artwork with the special spatial conditions and the architectural challenge of the atrium. Stefan RothleitnerContemporary provided technical support for this competition.

The criterion for the decision was the response to the space and the individual interpretation of it in the various artistic media. The jury unanimously opted for Otto Zitko’s design for the atrium. It also proposed Brigitte Kowanz’s concept for “art in the foyer” [> SEE PAGE 40].

Otto Zitko’s uses the spatial structure of the atrium with its edges and recesses as a context for his typical blend of drawing and painting.
What most impressed the art jury about the design was that Otto Zitko developed a lively contrast with the geometry and orthogonality of the staggeringly high architecture with his references to the handwritten and physical.

Otto Zitko’s work really blends into the space, yet asserts its own separate structure. It forms a symbiosis with the architecture. The relationship between calculated order and free form, which is made visible by the interaction between architecture and art, is reflected in Otto Zitko’s own approach. The motion structures, which initially appear dynamically shapeless, gain their effect from their connection with precise compositional aspects and interrelationships. The ambivalence of Otto Zitko’s approach is therefore optimally applied to this spatial situation in view of the set task.

The artist’s main challenge was the technical realisation of the artwork. Otto Zitko made his ideas visible in a three-dimensional format in a scale model of the atrium. Various colour types were tested on foil samples around 5 square metres in size. The artist travelled to the foil manufacturer in Germany with the results in order to examine the effect of the chosen colours on the foil and the dimension of the area on another 7.5 metre-high model. A dedicated aerial work platform was provided for the work in the atrium of the new headquarters. This overcame the problem of the area’s 22-metre height. To give the artist greater and more flexible mobility, a scissor lift was also provided on site. In approx. 20-month gestation period of the artwork, the future use of the atriums as a meeting place for customers and employees was increasingly relevant. The creation process of the “art in the atrium” project was documented in photographs and on film.
The Artist Otto Zitko

About Otto Zitko’s Work
 Otto Zitko is one of the most important Austrian and most internationally renowned artists of the middle generation. He has been using drawing as a method of painting since the 1980s. However, adherence to the line, which enables him to keep the colours separate, is regarded as a consistent continuation of painting. Usually, the linear forms are continuous and extend with all types of repetition across the chosen background in bundles, clusters and spirals. In this way, they have a direct effect on the artwork surface, thus also generating effects of spatial illusion and becoming a gestural psychological profile.

Otto Zitko very often works in a spatial context, with this space being his graphic field of activity. The artist only ever decides on site what graphic concept he will use, and this was also the case with the artwork in the atrium. Consequently, the scope of action of his painting process not only defines the space, but is also acts as a reflection of his own body.

As a visual experience, the line becomes an extension of the sensory and emotional experience in the space. As a result of this, the interior is enlivened with dynamism and theatricality. The atrium has undergone an inventive transformation of its original special architectural features.

In an all-over principle, the line is continued across the walls and underlines or negates architectural details. In doing this, Otto Zitko starts at one point in the area and follows a spontaneous impulse. He
thus shows an immediacy of his artistic expression. The line continues through edges and breaks, visually straddle several metres and appears to ignore distance. His interior works generate a striking illusionism.

The freely executed line looks uninterrupted and continuous, thus generating a sense of speed by actively taking the observer on a rollercoaster ride. Therefore, a temporal dimension also plays a major part in the art experience. The interior drawing is closely engaged with the available three-dimensional space and develops the impression of a multidimensional environment.

It could be said that the drawing itself becomes a piece of architecture.

Guest commentary

With the realisation of the art projects by Brigitte Kowanz, Eva Schlegel and Otto Zitko, VBAG is showing the importance of contemporary art in terms of sustainability. Art often instigates a reflection process of social, economic and cultural developments. It acts as a kind of mirror to the world. The triggering of new perspectives and the creation of alternative values constitutes the enormous potential of the visual arts. For a bank like VBAG that strives to be innovative, art is an essential companion to the creation of new ideas.

I am pleased that the interior painting in the atrium by Otto Zitko has found a counterpart within the building in the light installation by Austrian State Prize winner Brigitte Kowanz in the foyer. The installation by Eva Schlegel makes art tangible throughout the entire headquarters.

Three internationally renowned artists have thus made a major contribution at an Austrian company in Vienna.

Stefan Rothleitner, curator, on behalf of the jury

Otto Zitko

A PROFILE

1959 born in Linz, lives and works in Vienna

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2010 Arnolfini, Bristol
2009 Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Nationalgalerie Berlin
2008 Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg
2007 Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig
2006 Bunkier Sztuki – Contemporary Art Gallery, Krakow
2005 Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA, Helsinki
1999 Biennale di Venezia
1994 Kunsthalle Bern
1994 Kunstverein Hamburg
1986 Biennale di Venezia, Venice
1984 Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent

REPRESENTED BY

Chim & Read, New York
Krobath, Vienna/Berlin
Galería Heinrich Ehrhardt, Madrid
Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Innsbruck

www.ottozitko.com

THE JURY

Rainer Fuchs, MUMOK, Harald Posch, VBAG project manager, Hannah Rieger, ÖVAG, Carsten Roth, architect, Stefan Rothleitner, StefanRothleitner-Contemporary
Art in the Foyer

The light installation of Austrian State Prize winner Brigitte Kowanz

When we enter the new headquarters, we immediately see the light installation “eins durch unendlich – unendlich durch eins” by Brigitte Kowanz. The 630 x 800 x 40 cm artwork forms the ceiling of the foyer and is therefore an integral part of the new architecture. With her light installation, Brigitte Kowanz realises a central idea of her artistic creation: opening space into infinity. The light installation thus engages with the architecture.

In her light feature, the artist uses mirrors that guide the light inwards, into the depths of the image space. The lights between the mirrors act as both space-creating elements and information carriers. The space created is boundless. Interior and exterior merge into each other. An unexpected dynamic motion is generated that takes place between the surface of the artwork and its perceptible depth. The mirror is simultaneously a partition and a connecting element. Dissolution of boundaries and the interplay between real and virtual space are the central themes of the installation “eins durch unendlich – unendlich durch eins”. Two spaces are created that incorporate the entire surroundings as well as the observers. Time and place reflect each other. A simultaneousness of text, image, sculpture, space and time is generated and becomes tangible to the senses.

The infinite and boundless are generally beyond our human understanding. In Brigitte Kowanz’s light installation, transparency, which usually promises clarity and therefore lucidity, unveils endless interconnections and intersections. ♦
About Brigitte Kowanz’s work
In her work, Brigitte Kowanz deals with the phenomenon of light in its manifestation as subject matter. Her works are characterised by an interest in light, language and text as ubiquitous symbols. What stands out is the way in which art and light merge into each other as an artistic theme. Light becomes the theme as a physical presence, but is also used as a medium for this theme-setting. Issues of perception, encoding and diversification of knowledge, the transformation of materiality into energy and the close link between light and information and light and time are at the heart of this. Linguistic elements in the form of light evolve from the message to the image. The immateriality of light illuminates the material boundaries of its objects and portrays regularities through numerical relationships and encoding. The displayed artificial light gives off an oscillating effect, making barriers that are created physically or in the mind noticeable and visible by illuminates them. In this way, the prescribed boundary between artwork and space is re-evaluated.

Brigitte Kowanz

A PROFILE
1957 born in Vienna, lives and works in Vienna
1975-1980 Studies at the Hochschule für angewandte Kunst, Vienna
since 1997 professorship at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna
2009 Austrian State Prize

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS
2010 MUMOK, Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna (solo)
2009 Die Macht des Ornaments, Orangerie, Unteres Belvedere, Vienna
2007/2008 Intervention, Brigitte Kowanz, Oberes Belvedere (solo)
2007 Kunsthalle Krems (solo)
2006 Postmediale Konditionen, Medialab Madrid
Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht, ZKM, Karlsruhe
2004 Stadtlicht – Lichtkunst, Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg
Einleuchten, Museum der Moderne Salzburg
Gegen-Positionen, Museum Moderne Kunst, Passau

REPRESENTED BY THE GALLERIES
Häusler Contemporary, Munich
Krobath, Vienna
Ruzicska, Salzburg

www.kowanz.com
Art and Literature

Eva Schlegel “processes” the text of Franzobel throughout the building

The installation by Eva Schlegel at VBAG involves use of the play by Franzobel [► see “Headquarters on the Stage”, PAGE 48]. As this text was specially written for the bank, the play is to remain permanently on view on the premises in line with Eva Schlegel’s concept.

Eva Schlegel takes a holistic view of the headquarters in her work. She defines the glass areas, which are mainly to be found in the existing building on all floors but in different positions, as screens.

Her concept consists of dragging the text across all doors and upwards across the storeys like a ribbon. When walking through the headquarters – from door to door – it is possible to read the entire play.

The sharp (legible) text layers are at a height of 70 to 140 cm. Beneath them and above them, the texts are blurred. This creates a total of three ribbons of text. The legible middle ribbon is deliberately situated below eye level, which has the effect of focusing the eye of the observer on Franzobel’s text. The spaces behind it thus remain out of sight.

In addition, a complex three-dimensional text installation that physically presents the play in a different way again was created in the entrance hall and company restaurant. ♦
The Artist Eva Schlegel

About Eva Schlegel’s work

Eva Schlegel combines questions of conventional painting with those of media art. The central aspect of her work is the relationship between the picture and the observer. Since the mid-1980s, the artist has been working with the medium of photography, which is applied in different forms. In her work, she experiments with a wide range of materials such as glass, lead and mirrors and develops various techniques that always focus on perception. Her blurred text works on glass correspond to research on boundaries of expression of language and communication.

Eva Schlegel

A PROFILE

1960 born in Hall in Tyrol, lives and works in Vienna
1979-1985 Studium an der Hochschule für angewandte Kunst, Vienna
1997-2006 Professor of art and photography at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna
2011 Commissioner of the Austrian Pavilion, Biennale, Venice

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2010 In Between, MAK, Vienna (solo)
Island, Nexus, Kunsthalle Saalfelden (solo)
2009 CIIGE, Beijing
2007 FotoKunst, Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg
Prague Cultural Forum (solo)
There is no border, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck
21 Positions, cultural forum, New York
2006 Simultan, Fotomuseum Winterthur
Crossover, Karoska Galerija
Ljubljana Umjetnosti, Slovenia
Why Pictures Now - Fotogalerie/Film/Video heute, MUMOK, Vienna
Ik01, Museum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Einsen
opera austria, Centro per l’Arte Contemporanea, Prato

REPRESENTED BY

THE GALERIES

Krinzinger, Vienna
Charim Ungar Contemporary, Berlin
Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen

www.evaschlegel.com
Our Art Collection

Focus on works by Austrian painters and sculptors from the 1960s to the present day.

In the new headquarters, the Investkredit collection, which has been merged with the art collection of VBAG, forms a further basis for art activities. In conjunction with Kunstkontakt, a positioning concept has been devised for the new headquarters and the surrounding Group buildings. Artworks in office premises encourage more creative work. Art often helps to find unconventional solutions to complex issues.

>> Art is communication in the here and now and for generations to come. <<

The history of the art collection of Volksbank AG – Investkredit is closely linked with its history as a bank for companies. As part of the purchase of the Investkredit Group by Österreichische Volksbanken- Aktiengesellschaft 2004, the art collection also became part of the history of the VBAG Group, in which old meets new.

Volksbank AG – Investkredit was established in 1957 with the mandate of supporting the industrial reconstruction. There is a parallel here with the impressive reconstruction of the fine arts in Austria. Ever since, Volksbank AG – Investkredit has valued artists, who are a creative expression of new beginnings and innovation. This is one reason why the published catalogues on the art collection are entitled “Colours of the Renewal” (1st edition 2003, 2nd edition 2007).

Artists from the stable of Monsignor Otto Mauer and his gallery next to St. Stephan form the starting point and the core of the collection. Purchases were not made for reasons relating to museum systems or completeness. The art shows the economic rebirth of this period.
The art collection merged with the art holdings of VBAG comprises around 650 works by Austrian painters and sculptors from the 1960s to the present day. It is a concentrated blend of paintings, works on paper and plastics that mainly provides a reflection of abstract and expressionistic art. The entire collection was subjected to adjudication for the repositioning.

Continuation of the collection is carried out in the context of “art premieres”. Thematically, the tradition of the existing collection is constantly maintained. The professor of an art university stands in the centre with his/her Next Generation. “Next Generation” signifies students and graduates of the master class.

**Art Brut floor**

As the collection also focuses on Art Brut, a whole floor has been dedicated to this movement in the new headquarters. Art Brut is created by people who have very special approach to reality. We often find it in company outsiders in a psychiatric context. It is an original, "raw" art with an unconventional style idiom. The creators are not artistically trained. Current art trends mean nothing to them. The artists from Gugging – the Art Brut model in Austria – are on show here. They held their first exhibition in 1970 at the gallery next to St. Stephan. Art Brut combines social and cultural responsibility in a unique way [› SEE PAGES 46–47].

Collecting contemporary art involves passion, requires knowledge and experience and is based on responsibility – passion for new ideas, otherness and the desire to create, knowledge of the ideal and material value of art and responsibility for culture and society.

A bank is a social entity and also thrives on the communication of ideas. This conviction is one of the main reasons why Österreichische Volksbanken-AG is endeavouring to not only collect and own art, but also to present and communicate it, thus inspiring others.

I would like to congratulate VBAG warmly on its outstanding collection of Austrian contemporary art, the sustainability and quality of its collection and its willingness to engage with its employees, customers and society about art.

Gerald Matt, director of Kunsthalle Wien, on behalf of the jury
The Art Brut Floor

The artists from Gugging on our Art Brut floor on the 6th floor

ART BRUT ONLINE
Further information on the House of Artists in Gugging and the Art/Brut Centre Gugging.

www.gugging.org

ARTISTS FROM GUGGING

Oswald Tschirtner
Menschen im neuen Jahrtausend
(People in the New Millennium)
1999, etching, 20 x 15 cm

Oswald Tschirtner
Mensch mit Sonne (Person with Sun)
2004, etching on Zerkall handmade paper, 15 x 15 cm

Johann Fischer
Giraffe
1985, pencil, crayon on paper, 40 x 30 cm

Johann Fischer
Apfelbaum (Apple Tree)
1983, pencil, crayon on paper, 40 x 30 cm

Günther Schützenhöfer
Auto (Car)
2002, etching, 14 x 14 cm

Oswald Tschirtner
Menschen im neuen Jahrtausend
(People in the New Millennium)
1999, etching, 20 x 15 cm

Franz Kernbeis
Burg (Castle)
1991, pencil, crayon, 62.5 x 88 cm

Heinrich Reisenbauer
Äpfel (Apples)
2003, pencil, crayon, 72.9 x 101.8 cm
ARTISTS FROM GUGGING

Franz Kernbeis
Flugzeug (Aeroplane)
2004, pencil, crayon, 39.1 x 72.8 cm

Arnold Schmidt
Flugzeug (Aeroplane)
2002, acrylic on canvas, 160 x 200 cm

Arnold Schmidt
(in cooperation with seedingart) Figuren (Figures)
2008, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 160 cm

Johann Korec
Christkind Maria u Josef (The Infant Christ, Mary and Joseph)
2003, Indian ink, watercolour, 12.4 x 29.6 cm

Arnold Schmidt
Mensch (Person)
2005, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 80 cm

Oswald Tschirtner
Eine Blume (A Flower)
2005, marker pen, acrylic on canvas, 180 x 45 cm

Franz Kernbeis
Blug
2003, pencil, crayon, 124.5 x 149.5 cm

Oswald Tschirtner
Fünf Menschen (Five People)
2005, marker pen on canvas, 45 x 180 cm

Johann Garber
Köln-Dom (Cologne Cathedral)
2001, etching on Zerkall handmade paper, 25 x 18 cm

Arnold Schmidt
(in cooperation with seedingart) Figuren (Figures)
2008, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 160 cm

JOHANN FISCHER
(1919-2008) Lived and worked at the House of Artists from 1981

LEONHARD FINK
(1982) Has worked at the Gugging open studio since 2001

JOHANN GARBER
(1947) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 1981

FRANZ KERNBEIS
(1935) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 1981

JOHANN KOREC
(1937-2008) Lived and worked at the House of Artists from 1981

HEINRICH REISENBAUER
(1938) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 1986

ARNOLD SCHMIDT
(1959) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 1986

GÜNTHER SCHÜTZENHÖFER
(1965) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 1999

OSWALD TCSHIRTNER
(1920-2007) Lived and worked at the House of Artists from 1981

KARL VONDAL
(1953) Has been living and working at the House of Artists since 2002

AUGUST WALLA
(1936-2001) Lived and worked at the House of Artists from 1986
The Play “Die Pappenheimer” by Franzobel

To present the new headquarters and the history of the location in a literary manner, VBAG opted for “documentation with a difference”. From the outset, the idea was for a stage to be used in the atrium.

This led to a theatre project with Franzobel, initiated by his publisher at Thomas Sessler Verlag, Maria Teuchmann. Franzobel, one of the most important contemporary Austrian dramatists, was predestined for this task. As well as an unmistakable love of language and drollness, Franzobel’s plays are characterised by specific topics and compelling socio-politically motivated issues. Franzobel deals with historical topics in a precise and tangible manner. Immaculately researched facts are woven into a structure of characters and situations.

For the story of the new headquarters, Franzobel turned to the biography of Anna O., or Bertha Pappenheim [see “Snapshots of a long history”, PAGE 10], and brought her back to life on stage 2010. The historic surroundings of the new headquarters in Vienna’s 9th district are also portrayed in literary form on the stage of the Vienna Schauspielhaus theatre at Porzellanngasse 19. After three performances at the new premises, the play “Die Pappenheimer” will be transferring to the Schauspielhaus, a coproduction partner, from 4 November 2010.

Franzobel – “Die Pappenheimer“

At the new headquarters of VBAG in Vienna’s 9th district, the BOSS (“director, Supervisory Board member, president of the golf club, pillar of the community etc.”) and his SECRETARY (“a bit timid, a bit straitlaced, afraid of breast cancer, afraid of intimacy”) go into the strong room at 3.00am to look at a secret paper of the COMMITTEE about monitoring the committee that monitors the committee that deals with the correct treatment of BERTHA PAPPENHEIM. The boss and the secretary are accidentally locked in and are caught by the night watchman, who is on the verge of retirement. He has helped the boss out of a tight spot several times, e.g. when he went home in the wrong trousers after they visited a brothel together… Of course, it would be no problem to keep quiet about a little break-in too! So: head straight out of the strong room? Yes, if it wasn’t for Bertha Pappenheim being there: The famous “Anna O.”, whose hysterical illness was treated by Freud, thus marking the birth of psychoanalysis. She lived in the house that – with no input from her, of course – has become the NEW HEADQUARTERS of VBAG, and is hanging around in the strong room, like the boss and secretary, only as an aged ghost. An encounter that holds surprises for all those involved – and there are plenty of opportunities to identify the PAPPENHEIMERS with the VOLKSBANK TEAM!

**Franzobel’s play summons the spirits of the past back to Kolingasse/Liechtensteinstrasse. This keeps them alive.**

Jan-Christoph Gockel, director “Die Pappenheimer”
How do you support artists, especially dramatists? The best way is by putting on their plays. At the same time, it is always helpful for playwrights to know who, i.e. what troupe, they are writing for: what actors will be delivering their lines, what director will be handling their script. Writing commissions are so sought-after not because of the fee, but because a theatre offers a collaboration. In our case, this offer is particularly original because a bank has come to the theatre and shouted: the stage is all yours! You can’t ask for more than that!

We would like to congratulate VBAG for its courage and smart foresight in commissioning a play for the opening of this historic building complex. Courage because every commissioning of a play and its first performance always shows a willingness to take risks in terms of theatrical art – foresight because this step has also enabled international sustainability beyond the opening. With this in mind, we are pleased to have found a theatre-loving partner in Österreichische Volksbanken-AG for this local cooperation with the Vienna Schauspielhaus theatre, and say to the Franzobel’s Pappenheimers: good luck!

Andreas Beck, artistic management/business management and Richard Schweitzer, business management, Schauspielhaus
The commitment to corporate responsibility is part of the cooperative identity

What marks out the Volksbanks as cooperatives is their sustainable long-term relationships with their owners, customers and investors. The purpose of cooperatives is to continuously support their members in contrast to short-term maximisation of profits. This means that sustainable thinking already manifests itself in the basic cooperative values.

Sustainability – then
300 years ago, the great forester Hans Carl von Carlowitz devised the concept and term "sustainable economic activity". Out of a sense of responsibility for subsequent generations, the aim was to use in a stable and sustainable manner. Only as much timber as can be regrown should be cut down.

Corporate responsibility – now
If this principle of responsibility is transferred to the present day, a unilateral focus on maximum profit is no longer enough to safeguard a company’s future in the long term. Corporate responsibility, states that the three pillars of corporate responsibility – social responsibility, economic per-

>> Living responsibility is part of our cooperative identity. <<

Gerald Wenzel, Chief Executive Officer of Österreichische Volksbanken-AG
formance and environmental protection – are inextricably linked if a high quality of life is to be ensured for all people and future generations.

**Managing Corporate Responsibility**

In May 2009, taking into account international benchmarks, the foundations for an extensive corporate responsibility project were laid. Chief Executive Officer Gerald Wenzel and Kurt Kaiser, Head of Marketing & Communications, instigated the planning and implementation. Mirjam Ernst, head of the Corporate Marketing department, was tasked with the project management. As the Group’s sustainability representative, she is the first point of contact for sustainability matters. In April 2010 saw the publication of the first certified Corporate Responsibility Report with an extensive sustainability programme integrated in the consolidated report. Reporting was accompanied by a new intranet site and website. With the involvement of numerous experts from the Group, a core team was set up around these pillars. Each core team member is networked within their division with key personnel from the various departments. The motif “We live responsibility” expresses a strong commitment to sustainability.

**Sustainability affects us all**

Responsible action has a wide range of fields of action within the Association of Volksbanks: lived-out customer partnership, the development of sustainable investment products, fair loans, the environmentally-friendly deployment of commodities, safety in the workplace, employee support, support of neighbouring districts, responsible supplier management, business mediation as an innovative way of resolving conflicts and green events, to name just a few examples of a lived-out sustainable corporate culture.

>> Development through commitment, diversity and innovation. <<

**Diversity management – empowerment through diversity**

In summer 2009, ÖVAG launched an extensive Diversity Management project under the motto “The Equality of Difference and Difference as Enrichment”. Diversity relates to gender, age, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation and religion among other things. Diversity management is a corporate strategy that views diversity not as a problem, but primarily as a resource. This often leads to win-win situations for companies, employees, partners and customers.
Six project groups developed the diversity dimensions during 2009: gender mainstreaming, people with disabilities, religion/fait, nationalities/ethnic background, sexual orientation and age. A first step was to gather the existing initiatives and measures in the Group, process the data and develop measures for 2010. It quickly became obvious that much had been undertaken in the area of diversity management in recent years, but that individual measures were not sufficiently coordinated or communicated.

Key considerations for the project groups, which were supported intensively by the occupational health practitioner and the Works Council, were protecting the confidentiality of the data material and sensitive handling of the diversity issues. A comprehensive series of measures were developed for 2010. 

Volksbanken is the first European banking group to use business mediation

Business mediation provides a new model to enable companies to obtain commercially optimum results in conflict situations. The aim is to provide a long-term resolution to a conflict to everyone’s satisfaction and enable gains from cooperation. In resolving the specific conflict, the conflicting parties are guided and supported by the mediator as an independent third party. The parties reserve the right to resolve the conflict themselves. The Volksbank Group has...
been committed to the use of innovative skills in companies for several years.

On the basis of the successful “Credit Mediation” pilot project of Volksbank Graz-Bruck, the expansion of mediative expertise in the Volksbank Group via several channels is part of the Corporate Responsibility project: Österreichische Volksbanken-AG was again a partner of the “International Summer School on Business Mediation” (ISBM) on the topic of “crossing borders” in 2010. In autumn 2010, Österreichische Volksbanken-AG presented its study on “conflict costs in family-owned companies”. “We believe in the future of business mediation and the major benefits for the economy”, said Chief Executive Officer Gerald Wenzel, summing up the commitment of Österreichische Volksbanken-AG.

The new Group headquarters

Sustainability aspects were also taken into account from the outset when planning the new Group headquarters. These efforts were also noted by the Austrian Sustainable Building Council (ÖGNB) and klimaaktiv, which rated the new customer centre as above average. When assessing the planning status, the ÖGNB awarded 880 quality points out of a possible 1,000. The score from klimaaktiv for service buildings was 815 quality points out of a possible 1,000. The new headquarters of ÖVAG are therefore “an above-average property that takes into account numerous aspects of sustainable construction at a high level.”

With regard to location and equipment, the highest possible score was attained. The key features of the “new address” are its outstanding location, excellent public transport links and, in particular, the fact that around 50% of the building material results from the further development of an existing building.

The ambitious energy supply concept – Viennese district heating with a high proportion of waste heat and renewable energy with particular consideration given to a photovoltaic system – were positively highlighted, as well as the almost universal provision for accessibility as a planning principle.

Sustainability criteria were considered when selecting the interior fittings and in the company restaurant. Fairtrade coffee and other Fairtrade products were put on the menu in the company restaurant. A non-denominational “tolerance/meditation” room is part of the diversity concept.

Establishing well-founded sustainability management

A clear commitment to sustainable action provides the opportunity to combine the experience and innovation, make employees more aware of sustainability and provide customers, suppliers and stakeholders with added value through transparency, the protection of ethical principles and innovative products. Implementation of the sustainability programme will open up new market opportunities and help to intensify lived-out customer partnership. ♦
From Conception to Completion

The key milestones of the construction project at a glance

**MILESTONES**

**2002**
- Land use studies

**2006**
- Competition

**2007**
- Preliminary design
- Revision briefing
- Approval of preliminary design
- Design
- Approval of design

**2008**
- Construction approval
- Start of demolition
- Ground-breaking ceremony
- Start of construction
- Laying of foundation stone

**2009**
- Completion of shell
- Start of extension
- Handover of building

**2010**
- Handover of building
- Move to premises
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Interview with Mr and Mrs Weidinger, Kollwitzgasse 15, 1090 Vienna, on 2 March 2009 (conducted and recorded by Gudrun Wolflinger)

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