Neues Museum

The Neues Museum on Berlin’s Museum Island was designed by Friedrich August Stüler and built between 1841 and 1859. Extensive bombing during the Second World War left the building in ruins, with entire sections missing completely and others severely damaged. Few attempts at repair were made after the war, and the structure was left exposed to nature. In 1997, David Chipperfield Architects won the international competition for the rebuilding of the Neues Museum in collaboration with Julian Harrap.

The key aim of the project was to recomplete the original volume, and encompassed the repair and restoration of the parts that remained after the destruction of the Second World War. The original sequence of rooms was restored with new building sections that create continuity with the existing structure. The archaeological restoration followed the guidelines of the Charter of Venice, respecting the historical structure in its different states of preservation. All the gaps in the existing structure were filled in without competing with the existing structure in terms of brightness and surface. The restoration and repair of the existing is driven by the idea that the original structure should be emphasized in its spatial context and original materiality – the new reflects the lost without imitating it.

The new exhibition rooms are built of large format pre-fabricated concrete elements consisting of white cement mixed with Saxonian marble chips. Formed from the same concrete elements, the new main staircase repeats the original without replicating it, and sits within a majestic hall that is preserved only as a brick volume, devoid of its original ornamentation. Other new volumes – the Northwest wing, with the Egyptian court and the Apollo risalit, the apse in the Greek courtyard, and the South Dome – are built of recycled handmade bricks, complementing the preserved sections.

With the reinstatement and completion of the mostly preserved colonnade at the Eastern and Southern side of the Neues Museum, the pre-war urban situation is re-established to the East. A new building, the James Simon Galerie, between the Neues Museum and the Kupfergraben canal, echoes the urban situation of the site pre-1938.

In 2009, after more than sixty years as a ruin, the Neues Museum reopened to the public as the third restored building on Museum Island, exhibiting the collections of the Egyptian Museum and the Museum of Pre- and Early History.

Competition  1993–1994 (Phase 1)
1994–1997 (Phase 2 and 3)
Project start  1998
Completion  2009
Gross floor area  20,500 m²
Client  Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz represented by the Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung
User  Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Architect  David Chipperfield Architects London & Berlin
in collaboration with Julian Harrap
Competition 1993–1994 (Phase 1)
1994–1997 (Phase 2 and 3)
Project start 1998
Construction start 2003
Completion 2009
Gross floor area 20,500 m²
Client Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz represented by the Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung
Project controlling Ernst & Young Real Estate GmbH
User Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Architect David Chipperfield Architects London & Berlin
In collaboration with Julian Harrap

Competition, Phase 1
Project architect Jamie Fobert
Competition team Renato Benedetti, Jan Coghlan, Eamon Cushanan, Madeleine Lambert, Genevieve Lilley, Jonathan Sergison, Steven Shorter, Zoka Skorup, Simon Timms

Competition, Phase 2 and 3
Project architect Mark Randel
Project team Philipp Auer, Franz Borho, Nathalie Bredella, An Fonteyne, Robin Foster, Mario Hohmann, Martin Kley, Harvey Langston-Jones, Patrick McInerney, Ian McKnight, Claudia Marx, Guy Morgan-Harris, Rik Nys, Eva Schad, Alexander Schwarz, Haewon Shin, Graham Smith, Henning Stummel, Giuseppe Zampieri, Mark Zogrotzki

Outline proposals
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Project architect Eva Schad
Project team Isabel Karig, David Saik, Alexander Schwarz (Design lead), Florian Steinbächer

Detailed proposals
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Project team Janna Bunje, Adrian Dunham, Harald Eggers, Annette Flohrschütz, Michael Freytag, Anke Fritsch, Isabelle Heide, Christoph Hesse, Christiane Melzer, Franziska Rusch, Alexander Schwarz (Design lead), Christian Stiller
Production information

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