

PRO MON TORIO

MAINZ LU

LUDWIGSTRASSE, MAINZ CITY CENTRE, GERMANY

2020–2019

Renovation of the historical heart
of one of Germany's most important
historical cities

The project is the outcome of an invited international competition for the redevelopment of the historical centre of the city of Mainz, in Germany, from Schillerplatz, along the famous Ludwigsstraße boulevard up to Gutenbergplatz. Mainz is a city of great historical prominence, having been a vibrant cultural centre throughout the ages. From the fortified city, once an important node in the Roman Empire, to the open city that was birthplace of the printing press, and to the population's endurance in the face of devastating carpet-bombing at the end of World War II, Mainz has been consistently relevant to European history. The intervention is centred in the scenic monumentality of the Napoleonic axis that connects Schillerplatz to the cathedral. The proposal highlights the Schillerplatz–Mainzer Dom axis, and the Ludwigsstraße promenade (colloquially referred to as the 'LU'), reconfiguring both the street façades and squares.

Approximately 5,000 sq. m of additional green space is generated, including gardens, an amphitheatre directly linked to Ludwigsstraße and a new public square connecting retail, hotels and restaurants. Our proposal also limits car traffic on the Schillerplatz–Mainzer Dom axis to public transport and emergency vehicles, increasing the city's sustainability with pedestrian and bike accessibility, which in turn reinforces street commerce.

The redesigned Karstadt department store is the main anchor for the renovation of the Ludwigsstraße site and forms an obvious extension of the public space from Schillerplatz. Its volume is devised to generate two public roof terraces with wonderful views of the city. The ensemble of three-storey volumes comprises a hotel with ballroom, a club and a three-storey retail space with a gastronomy area. In spatial and functional continuity with Ludwigsstraße, a raised public square in the heart of the Karstadt building generates a monumental stair-cum-amphitheatre that operates as a multipurpose space to and from Ludwigsstraße. The programme also includes a 155-key hotel on Bischofsplatz, located on top of the existing deck park.

Consciously rejecting the preferred typified schemes of international hotel chains, its design is carefully integrated into the spirit of the place, with a slightly receded volume and a façade of wood and bronze shutters. The double-storey corner building on Fuststraße contains a mixed-use programme, including 12 small apartments, shops and restaurants on the ground and first floors. On the second floor is an auditorium for rehearsals and a small cultural centre dedicated to music learning programmes and performing arts.

In terms of the façades, a compositional system based on a morphological reiteration generates subtle variations and juxtapositions, which in turn provide a consistency to the intervention as a whole, giving each building or set of buildings their own identity. The tectonic articulation brought about by the use of post-and-lintel elements produces a compositional theme that evokes the underlying structure, which would otherwise remain concealed. The materials applied are all naturally robust and in a certain sense traditional, e.g., stone, cast iron, solid wood, copper, ceramic and terracotta. Green elements in specific locations, such as public terraces and balconies, enliven the city.



Location: Ludwigsstraße, Mainz City Centre, Germany

Client: Boulevard LU GmbH & Co.KG

Scope of services: Master plan, architecture and landscape architecture

Project brief: Mixed-use building with 155-keys hotel (10,276 sq. m), offices (5,722 sq. m), retail (9,290 sq. m), restaurants (2,610 sq. m) and entertainment (63 sq. m); a second mixed-use building with residential units (1,197 sq. m), retail (2,391 sq. m), restaurants (298 sq. m) and a multipurpose cultural space with stage (1,336 sq. m); in addition to the landscape renovation of Ludwigsstraße and all the surrounding streets and squares

Plot area: 5.1 ha

Gross floor area: 42,336 sq. m

(plus 9,019 sq. m underground parking)

Project status: 2019 (design competition, special prize)

Rendering: 4+Arquitectos