

Press Release

Revitalisation of the Philipp Soldan Forum in Frankenberg

Frankenberg is a small town in northern Hesse near Marburg with a historic town center. Not far from the old town, the Ederberglandhalle, built in the 1980s, serves as an event and conference center for the entire region. Owned by the town of Frankenberg, the L-shaped, monopitch-roofed brick building was showing its age and was therefore revitalized over the past two years under the direction of ian shaw architekten. After just over two years of revitalization, the arena will reopen in mid-2023 under the new name Philipp Soldan Forum. ian shaw architekten provided full support for the refurbishment - from design, planning permission and detailed design to construction supervision and cost control.

Before the initial design, together with the local authorities a series of workshops were conducted with theater groups, musicians, the staff who would operate the forum and members of the local public in order to form an initial program for the renovation and identify the main objectives of the new design. The desire to retain as much of the existing structure as possible and reuse it's while making clear decision as to what areas needed to be selectively demolished meant that the character of the building, which was well known to the local population, was retained while upgrading it.

The concept of the refurbishment was not only to provide a venue that was acoustically on a par with any of the major music destinations in Germany, but also to enhance the beauty of the existing building whilst making it accessible to all. The aim was not to overload the existing structure with new surfaces, but to revitalize the existing volumes, a design in which something was both removed and added.

It was about giving an old friend a new lease on life. In the spirit of sustainability and timelessness, few, high quality, natural materials and a reduced color palette have been used.

The central foyer, from which the three halls are openly accessible, gives the impression of a large, sublime space. The floor plan has been retained: The main hall can be connected to the two side halls by acoustically effective sliding walls or used as three separate halls. In total, the 4,848-square-metre hall has seating for 750 and standing room for 2,000. Key measures included the removal of the gallery in the main hall, allowing the full height of ten meters to be used, and the integration of skylights to illuminate the previously dark interior. An intricately crafted and acoustically effective wooden ceiling in the main hall, with recessed LED lighting and integrated ventilation, connects the halls in a sweeping and seemingly floating manner. The joints in the ceiling are precisely designed to balance the lighting, acoustics and air conditioning systems. A total of four new meeting rooms have been created above the main hall and in the basement. The building has been brought up to the latest energy standards. It has new mineral wool insulation and district heating.

All windows, plumbing, ceilings, walls, floors, roofing, building services and acoustics have been replaced. The overall aim was to integrate the numerous technical installations into the design in such a way that they were not obtrusive. The interior is characterized by many bespoke features: the ceiling lighting, for example, was custom-made, and the counter and checkroom furniture was designed specifically for the Philipp Soldan Forum. Ian Shaw Architects also designed an acoustically effective table, which was manufactured by Frankenberg-based furniture manufacturer Thonet. The circular reception desk, which is accessible from all sides and doubles as a ticket counter, features LED strips displaying the silhouette of Frankenberg. There is an induction loop in the floor for the hearing impaired.

The ticket counter uses the same visual language as the bar and ticket counter and forms a "family" of objects placed on the horizontal plane of the oak floor.

Attention was paid to circular construction, the oak floorboards held by a clips system can be either fully removed or sanded down to seven times, all lamps can be easily demounted, and the wooden ceilings can be completely disassembled.

High-quality materials and finely coordinated colors create a discreet and elegant atmosphere. The frames of the new floor-to-ceiling oak windows have been pigmented to match the new oak floor with underfloor heating. Externally, the window frames are bronze anodized to blend with the brick façade.

Project Philipp Soldan Forum

Location Frankenberg (Eder)

Client City of Frankenberg (Eder)

Architecture ian shaw architekten (Ian Shaw, : Moritz Powik, Tizian Borzaga)

Budget 9,400,000 euros

Construction time and completion 2021 to March 2023

Structural engineering Nolte Structural engineering

TGA Harald Hilbert

Acoustics Vladimir Szynajowski, s-acoustics

Introduction to Ian Shaw Architects BDA RIBA

Studio

Ian Shaw Architects is an interdisciplinary, multilingual architecture firm offering a full range of services, including concept development, budgeting, specifications, drawings, construction administration, interior design, and lighting and sound design.

With extensive practical experience in Europe and the United States, our team realizes both local and global projects.

Ian Shaw Architects is a member of the organizations Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and Bund Deutscher Architekten (BDA) as well as the Chambers of Architects of Hessen (AKH) and Thuringia (AKT).

Principles

In addition to the integration of the built context and natural environment, the observation of the course of the sun, compass direction and light distribution are fundamental components in the design process.

Central to our work is the articulation of spatial proportions through the subtle manipulation of daylight and artificial light. The architecture is reduced to the essentials, with technology subtly integrated into it.

Only individual solutions can truly meet the requirements of a construction situation. Precisely planned special constructions are the basis of an architecture that is characterized by efficiency, elegance and authenticity.

Work process

After analyzing the specific situation, we seek out and define the essence, the core of the respective project.

Regardless of the scope and budget, creativity, attention to detail, quality and precision of implementation are always at the center of our attention.

In close collaboration with customers and specialist engineers, we develop individual solutions for complex problems – detailed planning and true-to-scale models ensure efficient realization, as does our constant presence on site.