



Press information
11/2021

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A new high-rise for Frankfurt: The “central business tower” designed by KSP Engel gets the green light

It's launch time for the landmark in Frankfurt's financial district designed by KSP Engel: On November 8, 2021, Helaba Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen signed the general contractor agreement with Ed. Züblin AG for the “central business tower” on Neue Mainzer Strasse. This paves the way for construction of a new high-rise according to plans by the Frankfurt-based architects.

central business tower, Frankfurt/Main

central business tower





New addition to the famous skyline

According to the plans by KSP Engel, the 205-meter-high new build create an appropriate counterpart to the Deutsche Bank towers opposite. At the same time, the high-rise denotes the northern end of the cluster of skyscrapers along the former city ramparts and creates the necessary counterweight to the future towers of FOUR, as well as for the Commerzbank Tower and the Main Tower, Helaba's headquarters, both of them in the immediate vicinity.

An elegant double tower with flexible office concept

The high-rise consists of two parts that face each other, albeit at a slight angle, and are linked by a connecting seam. With striking setbacks for the protruding flanks, a slender, delicately segmented twin tower arises with a total of 52 floors above ground and five beneath. Depending on the vantage point, the building's look changes dramatically: From Opernplatz, it can be seen from a diagonal view, which hides the actual volume of the high-rise thanks to the setbacks in the facades. Fine recesses in the façade trace the tower's load-bearing structure and emphasize the vertical thrust. Horizontal strips highlight the striking setbacks, and the twin towers' division into four segments give them a scale reminiscent of a colossal order. With its consistent, timeless design, it marks a significant, prominent corner point on the park, without obstructing the lines of vision. Viewed from the Taunusanlage, the twin towers with their setbacks help define the urban fabric and the constitute the prelude to the adjoining cluster of high-rises. The timeless design not only shapes the external appearance. In the office areas inside the emphasis is on great flexibility and resilience, as they are conceived not only with today's standards in mind, but also for possible changes in the world of work.

Contract signing marks project kick-off

Following the approval of the preliminary building application, the signing of contracts is the next and initial milestone in the "central business tower" project. It marks the next project phase for the high-rise, whose name alludes to its prime location in the Central Business District of Frankfurt, the financial metropolis.

Open high-rise combines office and culture

In the new-build on Neuer Mainzer Strasse, the architects are combining public and cultural uses with an office high-rise. With this unusual and at the same time very balanced concept, the tower will in future fulfil a key role as the interface between the green space of Frankfurt's old ramparts and the high-rise group along Neue Mainzer Strasse. "As a publicly accessible high-rise with a strong identity, it opens out to the city and interfaces the park, culture, and the world of work," comments architect Jürgen Engel, owner and managing partner of KSP Engel, explaining the key aspects of the design. The overarching idea behind the design proposal was to engage the location, context, time, and usages. In this district there is already an existing building in neo-Renaissance style from the early 19th century with interior elements typical of that period, such as a historical rotunda, as well as a classical architectural monument on the neighboring plot, and several modern high-rise buildings. The team of architects thus deliberately opted for an ensemble: All the components remain side by side and interlock – as in an evolved urban landscape. The design forms a triad of high-rise, old and new podium buildings with the museum in the recessed top floor, and the public space, which develops into the ensemble of buildings.



Revitalization of historical podium building with cultural use

The historical, heritage-listed podium building from the early 19th century with its striking natural stone neo-Renaissance façade will be rounded out by a new build with proportions and a design adapted to the existing historical structure. The new edifice references the perforated façade structure and the stone materiality of the historic building and interfaces between the 205-meter-high tower and the lower existing buildings from the period when Frankfurt's banking district was in its infancy. As a publicly accessible place with various usages, it will become a new meeting point in the quarter. The podium building and the first four floors of the tower offer space for culture and hospitality: Alongside the new branch of Weltkulturenmuseum, which will be housed here, the plans also include a restaurant on the ground floor of the new building facing the ramparts parkland and a café in the historical podium building with an evening wine bar. The rotunda on the mezzanine floor of the historical section is to be reconstructed as an important interior element in keeping with its heritage status. With the lofty space of the rotunda as the central point, a bistro will be incorporated into this historical context, which, like the large restaurant on the second floor of the tower, will be open to the general public.

Jürgen Engel firmly believes that architecture has the social duty to design the city: „Public usages in high-rises are a great solution to increase densities further and bring more life into downtown quarters.“

New public thoroughfare – connecting the city and the park

The foyer will be located between the podium and the tower by way of a public arcade along the axis formed by Neue Mainzer Strasse and the ramparts parkland. There will be an additional passageway in the historical podium, creating a public route from the corner of Neue Mainzer Strasse and Junghofstrasse.

To the south, the new build creates a public thoroughfare between Neue Mainzer Strasse and the park: Through a colonnade that runs parallel to the underground service/delivery bays, the parkland is now linked to the street and a sight-line fostered between downtown and the park. This improvement in pedestrian through-routes forges a close connection between the city and the parkland. The design also links the private outdoor area to the west to the public park of the erstwhile ramparts – the former rear side adjoining the park becomes prestigious frontage that expands and enhances the urban space.

High-rise as a vertical “solar power plant”

In terms of sustainability, KSP Engel again applies an innovative concept that has been the subject of lengthy prior research: With photovoltaic modules integrated into the façade, an unprecedented “solar power plant” the size of a high-rise is created, which supports power supplies to the building. The box-window façade also boasts an external solar shading system that is protected from wind and weather by the rear-ventilated impact pane and is therefore highly effective.

From competition to completion

The basis of KSP Engel's high-rise design goes back to the winning competition entry from 2001 and has since been newly devised and advanced. Building permission will presumably be issued in 2022 and demolition of the existing buildings on the construction site on Neue Mainzer Strasse are scheduled to start in November 2021. The first tenants are set to move in in 2027 and completion of the overall project is scheduled for 2028.



Short story

1. On November 8, 2021, the Helaba Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen signed the general contractor agreement with Ed. Züblin AG for the “central business tower” in Frankfurt/Main.
2. The plans for the new high-rise were drawn up by KSP Engel, which won the architecture competition back in 2001.
3. The design combines tower and podium to form a well-balanced urban ensemble comprising office space, a museum, and hospitality, and creates a passage between Neue Mainzer Strasse and Frankfurt's Wallanlagen park.
4. As a new fixed star in the Frankfurt skyline, the tower will be an urban lynchpin within the cluster of high-rises.
5. With integrated photovoltaic modules in the façade, the “central business tower” becomes the first high-rise in Germany to also function as a solar power plant.

Project data

Project:	central business tower, Frankfurt/Main
Developer:	Helaba Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen
General contractor:	Ed. Züblin AG
Project management:	OFB Projektentwicklung GmbH
GFA total:	approx. 115,000 m ²
GFA above ground:	approx. 95.000 m ²
GFA underground:	approx. 20.000 m ²
Height:	205 m
Architecture competition:	2001, 1 st prize to KSP Engel
Completion:	Planned for the end of 2027
Certification:	Target of LEED Platinum

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KSP ENGEL

KSP Engel is one of the internationally successful architecture firms based in Germany. The company's decentral structure enables it to address regional specificities in depth and to manage a broad spectrum of construction projects. Its international breakthrough came with the Chinese National Library in Beijing, which is considered one of the country's 100 most important buildings. Today, KSP Engel employs around 300 people and acquires the majority of its commissions through successful participation in international architecture competitions.

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