

THE DESIGN CONCEPT FOR THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

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The design concept developed for the permanent exhibition has the task of presenting the resistance against the National Socialist dictatorship, with its diverse motives, aims, and forms, and imparting information objectively, while making the content accessible in a way suited for both large groups and individual visitors.

The presentation of content on the primary, visual level concentrates on a small number of sample biographies and selected documents. In this form, the many different themes of the resistance can be communicated in a compact, understandable, and powerful manner, without abandoning the exhibition's basic focus on documenting history. Using images from the time that are as close to life as possible, the exhibition presents the groups and individuals of the resistance at the visitors' "eye level." This approach arouses interest in the stories and fates behind the events, enabling identification and empathy.

The existing structure of a series of former offices accessed via corridors has been altered by knocking through walls, mainly up to ceiling height. This new interior architecture offers many different spatial and visual links and enables simple and intuitive orientation for visitors. Despite many new doorways, the original room units are still recognizable, with individual exhibition topics clearly allocated. The exhibition rooms now create an impression varying between exhibition halls and topical cabinets.

The removal of low suspended ceilings and unnecessary doors, the redesign of required fire protection measures, and the extension and reorganization of the entrance area have also created new, more generous, and open spaces. The design incorporates barrier-free access to all exhibition content.

By cladding all corridor walls in a standard form, they have been made into central exhibition surfaces. They function as a "backbone" to the exhibition, which is divided across several sections of the building due to the existing architectural structure, and they also enable visitors to experience the topics in a continual and unified manner. The warm gray color scheme emphasizes their particular function within the overall spatial context. Distinguished from one another through the use of reliefs and the installation of niches, consoles, and drawers along with a varying graphic presentation of the content on display, these exhibition walls are the central focus for imparting each topic.

Between the rooms, transverse walls—also clad on each side—separate the individual topic areas but do not seclude them from one another. The spacing of the new doorways in the transverse walls creates a clear view through to the historical rooms in the first part of the exhibition, and in the last part allows visitors to meander from room to room through staggered openings.

The warm gray color scheme is repeated in a slightly paler shade on the wall surfaces of the former representative rooms, which have been preserved in their historical state to a great extent. The structure of these authentic spaces used for the attempted coup of July 20, 1944, remains unchanged, but they are clearly marked as part of the entire permanent exhibition by means of the unified design parameters of colors, lighting system, exhibition furniture, and graphic presentation of the topics. The contrast between the parquet flooring, double doors, and stucco and the more sober exhibition furniture and graphics applied to the walls has a particularly fascinating and inspiring effect. The adjoining corridor is also directly integrated into the exhibition. Distinguished by a striking color scheme on the wall, it houses media stations that offer an opportunity for undisturbed further exploration of the exhibition content.

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The exhibition elements have been designed in a consistent modular form, developing spatial and visual presentations of the content appropriate to the respective topic with as much variation as possible. Alongside the varied design of the exhibition walls, the consoles and desks containing facsimiles of documents, drawers and albums, suspended or positioned room panels, and wall panels compiled in a mosaic-like manner extend the communicative repertoire. Seating in the form of benches offers visitors an opportunity to study additional facsimile documents on individual topics. Media stations and media panels—highly visible touch screens—enable individual or group-oriented in-depth study and also take significant pressure off the primary, visual level in the exhibition spaces.

The concept of the surfaces and color schemes of the exhibition elements and spaces also contributes substantially to the exhibition's conciseness, continuity, and positive impression. The pale color scheme of the historical rooms in contrast to the darker shades in the adjoining spaces enlivens the visitor's tour through changes in the spatial atmosphere. Designed in a clear, reduced style, the exhibition elements consist of uniform wooden constructions varnished in ultra-matte. Darker gray tones provide a non-distracting background to the existing spaces, in order to focus concentration on the content itself. This content is presented all the more prominently in bright colors from the blue and green spectrum, using powerful images and a clear layout.

The lighting concept supports this concentration on content by focusing accordingly on the visual zones, albeit without entirely excluding the effect of daylight. The panel curtains keep the window structures recognizable, while filtering outside light to a sufficient extent. Linear lighting effects below and in the exhibition walls themselves provide orientation for visitors and support the presentation of the exhibition content.

The graphic presentation of the content employs sensitive and empathetic use of photos and documents, functional typography, and a stringent overall layout, which integrates all elements, including English texts, in the correct order, thus supporting perception of the content provided and intuitively following the individual narratives.

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