



Opus 48

Steidle + Partner, KPMG-Gebäude, München

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Munich is lucky. A city that is at the top of the popularity scale needs nothing more than attractive building land. There has been a great deal more of this in recent years since industry and commerce have moved off to the periphery, barracks have been closed, the goods station and the airport have been relocated and the exhibition centre has gone to the empty site in Riem that was freed up. This meant that the Theresienhöhe became an urban development area as well. Trade exhibition halls were still being built around the historic parkland, established as an exhibition park around the turn of the century, in the 1980s. In 1997, an architectural competition was looking for ideas for an »inner-city, dense mixture of use for culture, as a central, for housing and commerce«. The prize-winning suggestion by Steidle + partner became the basis for further planning. The convincing feature was the instinctive sureness with which the practice imposed scale and urban character of the surrounded quarters on to the former exhibition-centre site. The development proposal, which could be interpreted in many ways but proposed an easily remembered line, is continued in the architecture, with its sets of buildings staggered against each other. The first buildings to be completed included the KPMG head office, which emerged from a workshop procedure: the ground plan for the complex uses a meander pattern, completed at one corner by a high-rise residential building – which means that the quarter principle of reversible residential and office use is demonstrated within a single block. A central entrance courtyard provides access to the office block, but there is access from the outside elsewhere as well, should the function ever be changed. The building rises to seven storeys, and is pleasingly disturbing because of the lively colours on its façade of glazed ceramic panels. The even staccato of the narrow windows forms a contrast with this. Both together give the architecture the appeal of a mysterious musical instrument – certainly intended for very young, rhythmic music.

Wolfgang Bachmann was editor of *Bauwelt* after studying architecture and working in a practice, and is now editor-in-chief of *Baumeister*. As well as this he writes reviews, commentaries and short stories for newspapers, magazines and yearbooks. Reinhard Görner has been working as an architectural photographer for many years, and is highly regarded by a number of distinguished architects as an interpreter of their work, including Günter Behnisch, Peter Eisenman, Hans Kollhoff, Jürgen Sawade, Hans Dieter Schaal and Otto Steidle.

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