

## Competition Trier post office (GER)

project **revitalisation and conversion of the former central post office building on Kornmarkt** into an office and commercial building awarding authority **Trier Core S.A. (GER)** project developer **Company Group Gilbers & Baasch GbR, Trier (GER)** team **WW+, Esch-sur-Alzette/Trier (LUX/GER), ernst+partner landschaftsarchitekten, Trier (GER)** photo **Eike Dubois** gfa **16.854 m<sup>2</sup>** ufa **10.536 m<sup>2</sup>** total area **0.61 ha** competition phase **03/2010 - 04/2011** restricted competition **1st Prize** start of realisation of sections (conservation legislation related agreements) **09/2011**

### Our approach

Having performed an in-depth analysis of the existing building, we are of the opinion that this type of conversion must be accompanied by a noticeable intervention of the building ensemble. A concept that is to be functional in the long term as well as sustainable requires more than just visual renovation and repair work. The existing building must be reinterpreted, rethought and redeveloped. What we aspire to is a subtle, differentiated new interpretation of the old, that is to say a smooth transition instead of a harsh break. The opposite sharpens the awareness of the existing while providing a new stage for it. New additions should be noticeable but must not push themselves to the fore. In addition to meeting the quality expectations, economic aspects also play a key role. To be able to guarantee the long-term economic success of this project, it will be accompanied by a continuous cost update, an obvious instrument that we architects with project management experience like to use.

### The objective

Our concept follows the objective of breathing new life into the old post office. This is achieved on the one hand by the basic idea of a variety of uses and the creation of a lively, creative site, and on the other hand by the sensitive treatment of a well-preserved existing structure. From our point of view, the building and courtyard ensemble must maintain the character of the old structure even after the renovation and conversion work is completed. New accents will contribute to setting a new scene for the old building and will attract the interest of tenants, visitors and future customers. Highly individual solutions, sporting a love of detail, make of this site a unique feature, a site that exists only here in this form, exuding its own charm, a place that we grow attached to and that beckons people to come and experience this building steeped in history. In spite of the already present structures, a high level of flexibility is aimed for; in particular regarding user-specific size requirements and the various types of uses.



floor plan





### The circuit – as a central theme

Strolling from one place to the next, delving into surprising retail universes while always keeping the courtyard as a central orientation point and reference to the outside – that is our idea behind the creation of a largely courtyard-orientated continuous 'gangway'. This concept creates visitor-friendly areas of public traffic, with natural lighting, and intuitively guides visitors, while ensuring flexibility for the retail concepts through a better proportioning of the rooms. Greater room depths generate more flexible concepts and open up the possibility of installing freely adjustable 'function boxes', which can for instance accommodate secondary uses. The circuit also acts as a buffer zone given its position between two distinct worlds: the busy shops, awaiting to be discovered, and the central inner courtyard, a secure contained location with seating and outside tables and chairs, an invitation to linger and observe the vibrant hustle and bustle. Stylistically, the circuit speaks a gentle language, displaying an attractive control system that points out all the public functions to visitors, such as the stairs, the

lift, the toilets and any special events and locations.

### Access

Given the clear differentiation between trade and office access, there will be no unwelcome overlaps. The office stairwells also function as the compulsory emergency exit stairs for the first-floor retail premises. A combination of the access paths for the offices and residences is conceivable, but it may even be that it makes more sense to keep these separate, depending on the what the real demand is.

### The post office courtyard – the heart

The inner courtyard, tucked away behind the representative façade of the old post office, can be glimpsed from outside upon coming closer and upon casting a glance through the entrance gate. With its unequivocal language as a public space, it draws in visitors, allowing them to immerse themselves from a very busy and bustling pedestrian zone into an urban city courtyard atmosphere. As the heart of the ensemble, the post office courtyard is the most important open space, around which most of the uses are gathered. Through their reference to the courtyard, all the neighbouring interior spaces and access paths enjoy a special outlook that oozes with atmosphere. The post office courtyard features a deliberate minimalist, homogeneous design with large-format light-coloured paving, which acts as a carpet and extends right into the pedestrian zone, attracting visitors along the way. The post office courtyard is like a city lounge out in the open with its own identity. The surrounding façades make up the walls and the tapestry of the lounge.

