

CAPTURING THE ATMOSPHERE

Sep Ruf's architecture of reconstruction as a reflection of social change in post-war Munich

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ABSTRACT

Sep Ruf (1908-1982) was one of the most significant architects of German post-war modernism and played a key role in the rebuilding of several cities after World War II, particularly Munich. Along with other German modernist architects and supporters of the New Building movement, Ruf sought to initiate an intellectual renewal of architecture as a foundation for the city's reconstruction, aiming to counter the neoclassical architecture of the Third Reich with a style characterised by lightness, asymmetry, and transparency. The fluent transition between exterior and interior spaces, the considerate embedding in the existing urban context, and the combination of traditional and modern architectural elements are essential principles of Ruf's post-war philosophy, leading to the development of a new formal language and architectural expression that captured the "spirit's atmosphere" and reflected the changing social values of Munich's post-war society.

This thesis analyses three case studies of Ruf's work during the first phase of post-war modernism from 1945 to 1963. It provides a historical and architectural analysis, as well as a socio-societal analysis based on local newspaper articles from the era, demonstrating how Ruf's architecture responded to various social challenges after World War II and encouraged public debates about evolving social values in the public, private, and religious domains. The construction of Munich's first high-rise apartment building Theresienstraße (1950-51) was a low-cost social housing project, which offered high-quality living conditions to all social classes. The transparent facades and publicly accessible courtyards of the Neue Maxburg (1952-58) were emblematic of a new social and legal democratisation and stand for Munich's reintegration into the European and international world community. The modern formal language of the church of St. Johann von Capistran (1957-60), built in the course of the Eucharistic World Congress in Munich, was a precursor of the liturgical reformation of the 1960s. Overall, this paper highlights Sep Ruf's contribution to the development of post-war modernism and the broader social and cultural changes of the time in Munich.

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***GLOSSARY**

*This glossary provides further explanation of certain crucial historical or architectural expressions, which appear throughout the essay, and whose translation from German to English, in my opinion, might sometimes be too inconclusive to fully clarify the concept. The included expressions are marked with a star * upon their first appearance within the thesis.*

*** Blockrandbebauung (closed perimeter block development)**

Typical urban structure for the urban development of Munich: multi-storey residential buildings are erected at the edge of a block, leaving the centre free. The outer façade of such a block is often decoratively adorned with stucco ornaments, while the insides are kept plain. The ground floor is usually occupied by small businesses.

*** Drittes Reich (Third Reich)**

The term is an official Nazi designation for the regime in Germany from January 1933 to May 1945, as the presumed successor of the medieval and early modern Holy Roman Empire of 800 to 1806 (the First Reich) and the German Empire of 1871 to 1918 (the Second Reich).

*** Geistige Atmosphäre (spiritual atmosphere / spirit's atmosphere)**

The spirit's atmosphere describes the atmosphere and aura of a place that influence a person's perception and experience in addition to measurable factors. It is a construct in which knowledge, memory, perception and interpretation of a place merge in a spatial atmosphere. Particularly regarding a building's integration into a historical context, it is a matter of picking up on the existing connecting points of a place. In connection with Sep Ruf's strong Catholic conviction, the term can also be interpreted in the sense of Christian tradition as the grasping and translation of a spirituality of a place that cannot be precisely determined into an architectural language.

*** Gleichschaltung (coordination / synchronization / consolidation)**

Process of Nazification by which Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party successively established a system of totalitarian control and coordination over all aspects of German society. All social, political and cultural organisations were controlled and run according to Nazi ideology and policy which the goal to filter and eliminate all opposition among the German population.

*** Heimatstil (Homeland style)**

A modernist architectural style from the beginning of the 20th century and with a heyday until 1945. The focus was on building maintenance, resumption of the old formal language and promotion of traditional construction and craftsmanship. It was the favoured building style for residential buildings during the National Socialist era in Germany while representative public buildings were realised in the style of monumental neoclassicism.

*** Neues Bauen (New building)**

An architectural and urban planning movement in Germany, which was initiated in the period before the First World War up to the time of the Weimar Republic and later on, after the Nazi era, pursued by supporters of following generations of architects and designers. The architectural vision was defined by the development of a socially responsible, new form of building through rationalisation of the architectural language, the use of new materials like steel and glass as well as a simple interior design. Important German representatives: Walter Gropius, Ernst May, Erich Mendelsohn, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Hans Scharoun, Theodor Fischer, Robert Vorhoelzer, Sep Ruf, Egon Eiermann, Hans Schwippert.

*** Stunde Null (zero hour)**

The term stands as a symbol for the complete collapse and destruction of Germany after the Second World War. Not only did the cities lay in ruins, but also the political system, the infrastructure and the economy had to be rebuilt. Zero hour thus stands for the immediate period after the Second World War, which on the one hand was characterised by destruction and supply shortages, and on the other hand, stands for a new political beginning and the end of the National Socialist regime. The term is controversial in historiography as it transfigures the existing political and biographical continuities between the Nazi era and the post-war period.

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine shows that even in contemporary Europe, the issue of post-war reconstruction remains relevant. Rebuilding a country and its cities after years of conflict presents a two-fold challenge. On the one hand, the destruction of cities has a devastating impact on the population, as it loses its familiar and identity-forming environment. On the other hand, reconstruction offers the opportunity for a new beginning and the transformation of new visions and values into a tangible reality. The study of post-war projects from the past can serve as a valuable source of inspiration for the development of contemporary reconstruction concepts. One architect who made significant contributions to the reconstruction of Germany, particularly the city of Munich, after the Second World War was Sep Ruf (1908-1982), whose work and legacy have been somewhat forgotten in modern times. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how Sep Ruf's architecture of reconstruction responded to various social challenges that the population faced after the war. Furthermore, it will examine how his architectural vision promoted crucial public debates during the first phase of post-war modernism in Munich, paving the way for a modern post-war society.

Throughout this paper, I shall analyse three case studies, which were all developed during the first phase of post-war reconstruction in the Federal Republic of Germany from 1945 to 1963. The purpose of these case studies is to illustrate how Sep Ruf's architecture influenced various aspects of social life, such as the private, public, and religious domains. Moreover, I shall demonstrate how he translated new political, social, and religious values into architecture. The three chosen case studies include the residential building Theresienstraße (1950-51), which is considered Munich's first high-rise apartment building, the Neue Maxburg (1952-58), a public building that suffered extensive damage during the war, and the church St. Johann von Capistran (1957-60), notable for its unusual form and construction.

In order to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the three case studies, I intend to investigate various aspects, including integration into the urban context, volume, typology, zoning, and facade. I will utilize plans, drawings, and pictures from the archives of the Architecture Museum and the Local Building Commission of Munich to support my research. As a first step, I will examine the role of Sep Ruf both before and after World War II, with the aid of existing secondary literature. With regard to traditional reconstruction ideas pursued by the municipality of Munich, I will investigate how Sep Ruf attained a position to distance himself from them and realize his vision and ideas for modern post-war architecture. I will

also explore how Sep Ruf's philosophy influenced his approach to the reconstruction of Munich and the architectural principles he developed to express it. For this investigation as well as the analysis of the three case studies, I will rely on secondary literature presenting the challenges faced by architects after the war as well as the findings from two monographs on Sep Ruf's life and legacy: „Sep Ruf: Bauten und Projekte“ by Hans Wichmann from 1986 and „Sep Ruf 1908-1982“ by Irene Meissner from 2017. My paper will complement existing secondary literature by focusing on the influence Ruf's projects had particularly on Munich's society. In addition to the architectural analysis of the three case studies, I will explore the buildings' reception at the time of construction and their impact on important public discussions within Munich's society after the war. This will be accomplished through the examination of newspaper articles and other primary sources.

CHAPTER 1: LIFE AND WORK BEFORE AND AFTER WORLD WAR II

1.1 EDUCATION AND WORK BEFORE 1945

To fully comprehend Sep Ruf's architecture of the post-war period, it is imperative to first gain a detailed understanding of Ruf's progression and career before and after World War II. Born on March 09, 1908, Sep Ruf grew up in „simple, middle-class circumstances“ (Meissner, 2017, p. 16) in Munich, which at the time was still part of the German Empire. In 1926, he commenced his studies in Architecture at the Technical University of Munich, completing his degree five years later in 1931. At that time, the architectural studies curriculum at the university followed a very conservative doctrine, which was greatly influenced by German Bestelmayer, a supporter of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), who opposed all progressive and modern approaches towards architectural design. However, this did not seem to have had a lasting impact on Ruf, who later remarked that “he would not consider himself a disciple of any particular teacher“ (Meissner, 2017, p. 23). His participation in a competition for the design of contemporary single-family houses announced by the architecture journal “Bauwelt” in 1930 is evidence of this: Ruf's design of cubic flat-roof buildings is, according to Meissner (2017), the young architect's first commitment to modernism.



Figure 1: Sep Ruf's wife Aloisia Mayer, his father Josef Ruf and Sep Ruf



Figure 2: Sep Ruf in his atelier in Munich, Giselastraße 32

Following the completion of his studies and a one-year internship, Sep Ruf established his own business at the age of 24 and opened an office in Munich in 1932. Two additional occurrences in the same year would have significant implications for Sep Ruf's professional career. Firstly, some of his projects were chosen for display in the "Kunstaussstellung in München" (art exhibition in Munich), implying that the then-unknown architect was able to quickly establish himself in Munich's art scene as the youngest participant in the exhibition. Secondly, Ruf was admitted into the "Bund der Deutschen Architekten" (BDA) (Association of German Architects), presumably due to his good relationship with the architect Theo Lechner (Meissner, 2017, pp. 30-34). Ruf's subsequent buildings were primarily single-family homes of wealthy, private clients, which he mostly realised as functional cubic volumes with asymmetrical, floor-to-ceiling window openings without lintels and flat roofs (Wichmann, 1986, p. 15).

However, due to the failure of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the NSDAP, Sep Ruf was no longer able to pursue his ideas and ambitions of "Neues Bauen" (New Building)*. From the mid-1930s onwards, all building authorities systematically took action against architects who did not implement the "Heimatstil" (Homeland style)* advocated by the party. Under the principle of "Gleichschaltung" (coordination/synchronization/consolidation)*, all architects were obligated to join the "Reichskammer der bildenden Künste" (RdbK, Reich Chamber of Fine Arts) if they wished to continue their professional work. Although Ruf managed to avoid party membership, he too had to comply with the RdbK's regulations. The increasing state control and political pressure forced him to adopt more conservative and traditional designs. Only by deliberately avoiding modern elements was he able to continue realizing a large number of projects during the Nazi period, including single-family homes, and housing estates, such as the Ramersdorf model housing estate of 1933/34 or the Oberlandsiedlung München of 1938-42, and public buildings, such as the Allach elementary school of 1936-39. Ruf was even exempted from military service to help realize important buildings for industry and the military. In 1942, however, he was once again called up for military service, resulting in the closure of his Munich office, which was bombed out during the war (Meissner, 2017, pp. 38-87).

To summarize, Sep Ruf's interest in modern architecture and New Building already began during his studies and early career. However, due to the Nazi regime's political pressure and repression, Ruf had to put his ideas on hold and distance himself from them to avoid persecution. It was not until the end of the war and thus of the Nazi regime in 1945 that he was able to resume his pursuit of modern architectural concepts and ideas and translate them into built reality.

1.2 PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ROLE AFTER 1945

Prior to delving into the actual built reality, it is necessary to elucidate how Sep Ruf succeeded in reinstating himself as an architect in a considerably brief time frame following the war. Particularly in Munich, which was renowned for its conservative building culture, the question arises as to how Ruf was able to attain a position that enabled him to realise his ideas on New Building. Fundamentally, three decisive factors can be identified as attributing to this development. Firstly, Ruf's non-membership in the NSDAP proved to be an advantage. The city council believed that local architects should be primarily considered for the reconstruction of Munich. All Munich architects could apply to the Reconstruction Department and the American occupation forces would then verify whether they were eligible for a work permit based on their actions during the Nazi regime. As Ruf was not politically involved during that time, he was commissioned by the city to rebuild damaged buildings shortly after the war. Consequently, he was able to reopen his own office as early as 1946 (Meissner, 2017, pp. 91-93).

In addition to his reconstruction projects, Ruf's expertise in housing construction proved valuable as Munich faced an acute housing shortage after 45% of the city was destroyed during Allied bombing (Meissner, 2017, p. 90). In addition to the reconstruction projects allocated by the city, Ruf worked on numerous detached houses using an elementary construction method that facilitated quick building (Wichmann, 1986, p. 15). In fact, Ruf was commissioned for more than 40 different projects in the first four years after the war alone, according to Meissner (2017, p. 91). As social housing became increasingly relevant in the early 1950s, Ruf took on larger residential buildings, including the high-rise residential building Theresienstraße of 1950/51, which will be discussed in more detail later in this paper. Ruf's pre-war experience in housing construction, as previously mentioned, along with the remarkable effort with which the Federal Republic of Germany was reconstructed after the war, despite military defeat and economic challenges, helped establish him as one of the most significant architects in Munich in a relatively short time after the war.

Last but not least, Ruf's ability to establish connections with important decision-makers and his diplomatic skills were crucial to his rapid recovery after the war. Besides, he maintained links with significant building authorities in Munich and also developed connections with publicists who wrote about his projects, gradually expanding his fame beyond Munich's borders (Meissner, 2017, p. 95). One of his most notable associates was the later German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, for whom Ruf designed the "Kanzlerbungalow" (Chancellor's Bungalow) (Wichmann, 1986) in 1963. Ruf's diplomatic skills were evident when he mediated

between the Munich City Council and the American occupation forces in 1954. After the former refused to approve plans for a new consulate general in Munich, the architect succeeded in modifying the plans in a way that the city council agreed to, resulting in his commission to build the new American Consulate General by the State Department in Washington in 1954 (Meissner, 2017, pp. 133-138).

In summary, Sep Ruf's remarkable achievements following the war propelled him to establish himself as a highly successful architect in an impressively short amount of time. Within two years of the conclusion of the war, he was appointed a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg, and in 1953, he was designated as a professor of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Ruf's reputation as a prominent architect was further affirmed when he became a member of the federal board of the Association of German Architects (BDA) in 1954 (Wichmann, 1986). Having already gained significant notoriety and influence in the early post-war period, Ruf, together with other eminent Munich architects who shared his dedication to modernism, was able to facilitate a public discussion about New Building. Together, this group of like-minded people worked on tackling political, social and economic challenges and laying the groundwork for a new intellectual direction for the architecture of reconstruction



Figure 3: Sep Ruf with German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard

CHAPTER 2: PHILOSOPHY FOR POST-WAR ARCHITECTURE AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MUNICH

2.1 FREUNDE DES NEUEN BAUENS

The social and reconstruction situation in Germany after the Second World War was highly complex and continues to be a controversial topic. Therefore, this paper can only provide a brief overview of this subject. In his book „Architektur der Wunderkinder“, Winfried Nerdinger examines post-war architecture in Germany and explains that the period after the war was „both a time of rupture and of continuity“ (Nerdinger, 2005, p. 9). The famous „Stunde Null“ (zero hour)* was marked by the fact that, despite the end of the Nazi dictatorship and political changes such as the currency reform in 1947, the introduction of a new constitution, and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, there were many personal and structural similarities between the Nazi period and the Adenauer Republic. Numerous laws and building regulations were adopted unchanged, and in Munich, Karl Meitinger advocated for only slightly modified planning of the Nazi regime as the new urban planning for the reconstruction of the city (Nerdinger, 2005, pp. 9-10).

According to Nerdinger (2005), the biographical intertwinements with the Nazi era, meaning that many decision-makers and party supporters of the NSDAP continued to occupy their positions after 1945, resulted in no confrontation with the architectural legacy of National Socialism. Instead, many architects rejected the desire of large parts of the population for reconstruction and sought to repress the historical relation to the past through radical new buildings and to distance themselves from the architecture of the Nazi dictatorship. Modernist architects associated their buildings with a departure into a new era and called for a „spiritual renewal as the basis of reconstruction“ (Nerdinger, 2005, p. 14) as well as an opening of architecture to the citizens and the international world community (Wichmann, 1986, p. 17). For architectural design, this specifically meant replacing the monumentality, heaviness, symmetry and hierarchisation of the National Socialist dictatorship with dematerialisation, lightness, anti-symmetry and transparency (Nerdinger, 2005, p. 14).

However, in Bavaria, particularly in Munich, the proponents of modernism faced a formidable obstacle in the form of a staunchly traditionalist mindset. Unlike other major German cities such as Berlin, Hamburg or Frankfurt, Munich had barely any functionalist buildings erected even before the war. This conservative approach to construction persisted in post-war Munich under the leadership of Mayor Karl Scharnagl. Hans Eckstein, a prominent

German journalist at the time, strongly criticised this attitude in his articles and founded the discussion group “Freunde des Neuen Bauens” (Friends of New Building) in 1948, hoping to promote the New Building culture in Munich. This group, of which Sep Ruf was a member, organised discussion evenings and attempted to gain support for modern post-war architecture in municipal decision-making. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that not only representatives of modernism from all over the world were invited to the discussions, but also Munich building officials who were rather opposed to the group’s goals (Stauch, 1984, p. 77-78). Sep Ruf’s involvement in the Friends of New Building, which was the only public discussion forum for modernist architecture in Munich at the time, further attests to his openness to modernist ideas and his efforts to disseminate them to the public.

2.2 PHILOSOPHY AND ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES

Ruf’s dedication to modernism is indisputable. However, the underlying philosophy and architectural principles that informed his vision for modern post-war architecture are yet to be fully comprehended. As an architect who conveyed his beliefs through his constructions, there are no personal records available, and only a limited number of publications written by Ruf himself that may offer insight into his theoretical framework. Nonetheless, the following chapter will endeavour to extract the most significant architectural principles of Sep Ruf’s post-war architecture by drawing on the scarce surviving fragments and the analyses of Meissner, Wichmann and Widder.

Ruf, along with other German architects of post-war modernism, sought an intellectual renewal of architecture as a foundation for reconstruction as well as a departure from the architecture of the Nazi era. In an article titled „Das Gesicht unserer Zeit“ (The Face of Our Time), which Ruf penned and was published in the Munich newspaper *Die Propyläen* in 1951, Ruf expressed his dissatisfaction with the public’s reserved response towards his ideas for modern post-war architecture. Ruf criticised the fact that the public was „open to the ideas and conception of modernism in theory, but in practice would only welcome it in combination with the outdated, old formal language of the past” (Ruf, 1951). Ruf (1951) underscored that architecture, like all artistic creation, must be „a spiritual statement, a clear bringing out of the essence“ (n.p.) of the present era. According to Ruf, a mere repetition or minor alteration of the old formal language would not suffice, as architecture needed to distinguish itself clearly from “statements of the earlier time“ (Ruf, 1951, n.p).

Ruf aimed, like other German proponents of post-war modernism, to counter the neoclassical architecture of the “Drittes Reich” (Third Reich)*, which was characterised by weightiness and solidity, with lightness, asymmetry and transparency. Ruf’s collaborators, including structural engineers and designers, have reported on his unyielding desire for floating buildings and lightness (Wichmann, 1986, p. 17). These architectural principles underpinned Sep Ruf’s post-war architecture and were first embodied in Ruf’s design for the new building of the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg from 1950 to 1954, a pavilion architecture characterised by lightness, which, according to Meissner (2017), „marked the decisive turning point in Ruf’s work“ (p. 126).

Ruf’s approach to post-war modernism differed from radical representatives in his belief that a distinction from the past did not necessitate a break with tradition. Recordings of the so-called „Darmstädter Gespräche“ (Darmstadt Talks), a panel discussion to which Ruf was invited as a speaker, provide insight into Ruf’s approach. The Darmstadt Talks was a three-day panel discussion on the occasion of a building exhibition on the development of modern architecture entitled „Mensch und Raum“ (Man and Space), which was held in Darmstadt in 1951. The participants of the parallel discussions included renowned West German architects and architectural theorists of the era, such as Egon Eiermann and Hans Schwippert (Widder, 2022, pp. 107-108).

During his speech, Ruf introduced the concept of the “geistige Atmosphäre“ (spirit’s atmosphere/spiritual atmosphere), which he explained could be created by employing essential form-giving vertical and horizontal elements, such as roof, wall and column, from which the entire form of a building could naturally emerge. In this way, the spiritual atmosphere could generate an appropriate architecture for the contemporary time. Ruf further noted that while new materials could be utilized for the creation of a new formal architectural language, traditional materials such as wood or stone could also be employed (Widder, 2022, pp. 124-125). This statement holds significant importance as it underscores the combination of tradition and modernity as an essential approach to Ruf’s philosophy. The architect posits that contemporary architecture need not sever its ties with tradition as long as it simultaneously reflects a new consciousness of life and a new path towards the future.

During the discussions, Ruf expressed his belief that the creation of the spiritual atmosphere should not only encompass the architectural work and the design of construction but also extend to the interior and exterior design and its surrounding landscapes (Widder, 2022, p. 125). The intertwining of interior and exterior space was another prominent principle in Sep

Ruf's post-war architecture. By utilising a few similar materials that extended from the interior outwards into the open space and vice versa, he created a seamless transition between interior and exterior by keeping with the tradition of modernism. The volumes he designed formed niches and courtyards in the outdoor space, and the wall no longer served solely to create space but was primarily a functional element for statics and protection. Where possible, Ruf broke up the walls and made them transparent (Wichmann, 1986, pp. 17-18), resulting in bright, light-filled interiors. For Ruf, one of the architect's primary responsibilities was to design in such a way that people in the city could be provided „light, air, sun and an outdoor seating area“ (Meissner, 2017, p.67).

The special importance that outdoor space held for Ruf can also be witnessed in his efforts to integrate his buildings into the urban and landscape context. According to Wichmann (1986), the „Prinzip der Integration“ (Principle of integration) (p. 21) was a decisive factor in Sep Ruf's designs. He did not view his buildings as isolated entities from the urban space but rather sought to establish a dialogue with the existing building fabric and the urban or rural context. As mentioned above, Ruf did not attempt to copy an existing formal language but rather considered the existing context, choosing an appropriate scale and developing an individual language of form. As Ruf (1951) stated, the spirit's atmosphere led to a „clear formal language, which is economical and simple, and which fits naturally into existing urban spaces“ (n.p.).

Distinction from the Nazis' neoclassical architecture through lightness, asymmetry and transparency, the combination of tradition and modernity, the interweaving of interior and exterior space, and the considerate embedding in an urban or landscape context are four essential principles that run like a thread through Sep Ruf's projects during the first phase of post-war modernism. At the end of this chapter, I want to underscore that Ruf was primarily concerned with creating a special atmosphere, a unique feeling of space, which he referred to as „Raumgefühl“ (feeling of space/sense of space). This atmosphere was designed to create an „Aufenthalt“ in the indoor or outdoor spaces of public, cultural and sacred buildings, meaning a spatial quality that invited people to stay (Meissner, 2017, p. 142). This shows that for Ruf, construction, function and the use of new techniques and materials were always subordinate to creating a special quality of stay and space that focused on people and their needs in private and public life. In the following analysis of the three case studies, I will investigate how Ruf translated these principles into built reality and the influence of his architecture on Munich's society.



Figure 4: Sep Ruf and Egon Eiermann

CHAPTER 3: PRIVATE DOMAIN – THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING THERESIENSTRASSE

3.1 HOUSING SHORTAGE AND SOCIAL HOUSING AFTER WORLD WAR II

Sep Ruf's dedication to creating high-quality, humane living conditions is evident in his design for Munich's first high-rise residential building in Theresienstraße, which was achieved in 1950/51. Like many German cities, Munich faced a severe housing shortage after the war, with 82,000 apartments destroyed („Wiederaufbau Münchens“, 1952). Of the original 261,790 dwellings before the war began, only 182,270 remained after 1945, one-third of which needed repair (Nerdinger, 1992, p. 336). The influx of refugees caused by the war, along with the loss of land and economic distress, exacerbated the situation and led to a strong migration to urban areas. Munich's population doubled in about ten years, reaching over one million in 1956 (Nerdinger, 1992, p. 337).

During the first post-war years, creating new housing in the cities posed a significant challenge. The destruction of cities and infrastructure, along with a shortage of building materials, tools and skilled labour, added to the difficulty (Widder, 2022, p. 7). The lack of building land and materials led to a shift in the architectural style of new residential buildings in Munich. Before the war, the „Munich Bürgerhaus“ (Munich townhouse) (Christlieb, 1951, p. 3) had a storey height of three metres or more. However, due to the shortage of building materials and the growing population, the height of the individual storeys was reduced to 2.45 to 2.60 metres, resulting in more storeys per house. Mono-pitch or flat roofs were preferred over high roof trusses due to the shortage of wood (Christlieb, 1951).

To alleviate the precarious situation of the housing market, the new federal government led by Konrad Adenauer enacted a new housing law in 1950. This law aimed to promote social housing and set a goal of building 1.8 million social housing units within the next six years. These apartments were primarily intended for displaced refugees and people who had lost their homes during the war and were to be subsidised through public funds, tax concessions and the provision of building land (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 1950). In Munich, the „Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot e.V.“ (Association to alleviate the housing shortage) also received a state loan of 198,000 DM (Deutsche Mark) from special funds (Bund Deutscher Architekten, 1955) to finance the construction of the apartment building on Theresienstraße.

The „Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot e.V.“ had previously gained attention in Nuremberg for its operation in the reconstruction of destroyed and the construction of new multi-storey apartment buildings on a „completely new financing basis in Germany“ (Draft of a letter in the interest of the Association to alleviate the housing shortage e.V., n.d.). In this new financing method, each future resident contributed to the financing of the construction and acquired the right of residence as well as ownership of one apartment. The acquisition of condominium ownership of apartments became possible through the „Gesetz über Wohnungseigentum und das Dauerwohnrecht“ (WEG) (Law on Condominium Ownership and the Permanent Right of Residence) of 15 March 1951 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 1951, p. 1). The German government intended to encourage the population to contribute to the country's reconstruction by creating the new legal form of the “Eigenwohnung” (owner-occupied apartment). The law aimed to help the social classes who could not afford a house on their own to acquire ownership of an apartment. Compared to conventional rented apartments, owner-occupied apartments motivated savers with low income to financially support the construction of large apartment blocks and thus contribute to the reconstruction of the destroyed cities (Fischer-Essen, 1950).

In 1950, the “Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot” purchased the site for the Theresienstraße apartment block for 135,00 DM (Bund Deutscher Architekten, 1955) and planned to construct a new apartment building where future residents would become co-owners. Sep Ruf, as vice-chairman of a branch of the association in Munich, planned several housing complexes for the association in the post-war period (Meissner, 2017, p. 146). Social housing was a priority for Ruf, who believed that low-cost building construction should not equate to primitive living conditions (Stauch, 1984, p. 80). Despite the low building costs of only 895,000 DM (Bund Deutscher Architekten, 1955), this paper will demonstrate how Sep Ruf still succeeded in creating an appealing and dignified living experience in the Theresienstraße apartment block.



Figure 5: Image of the Theresienstraße apartment building

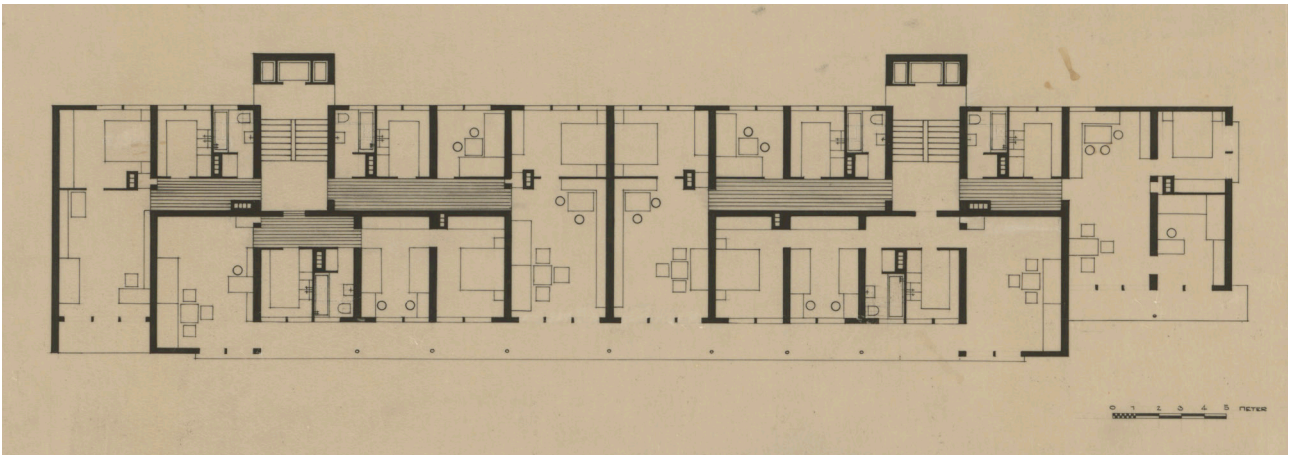


Figure 6: Floor plan of the apartment building Theresienstraße



Figure 7: Site plan Theresienstraße 46-48

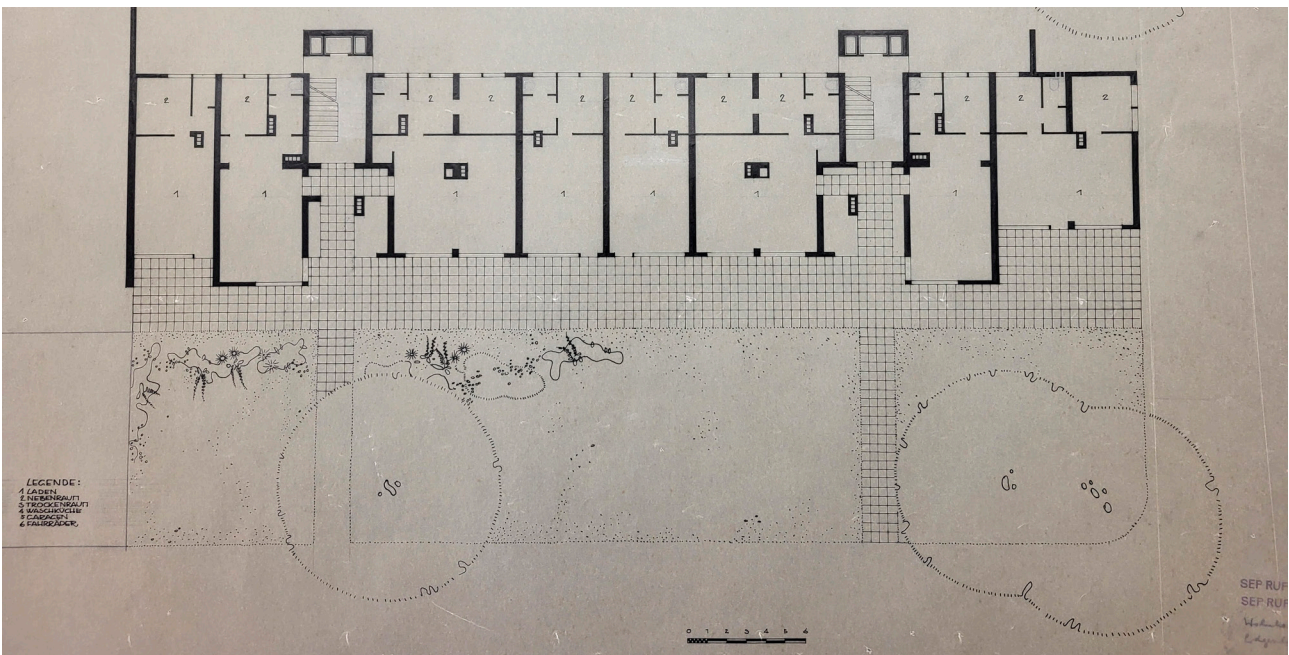


Figure 8: Ground floor plan of the apartment building Theresienstraße

3.2 LIGHT, AIR AND SUN FOR HIGH-QUALITY LIVING CONDITIONS

The Theresienstraße residential building comprises eight floors and includes six shops on the ground floor, along with 42 apartments ranging in size from 51 to 68 m² (Meissner, 2017, p. 146). The building has two entrances and two main staircases. The floor plan reveals that the left staircase provides access to two apartments designed for families with children, featuring an entrance hallway, kitchen, bathroom, living room, master bedroom, and children's bedroom, and one apartment for couples without children, with an entrance hallway, kitchen, bathroom, living room, and bedroom, whereas the right staircase gives access to three apartments for families with children per floor (Figure 6).

Upon examining the site plan (Figure 7), the first distinctive feature of the building regarding its integration into the urban context can be observed. Ruf deviates from the traditional "Blockrandbebauung" (closed perimeter block development)* by separating the apartment complex from the old building line, thereby generating a small green area in front of the building. As a result, he establishes a preliminary transition zone between the public traffic routes and the private balconies facing the street. Ruf attains the asymmetrical building volumetry favoured by modern post-war architecture by further decreasing the depth of the last apartment and developing an additional setback in the façade. This also results in a small entrance area for visitors to the ice cream parlour planned on the ground floor level (Figure 8).

In addition to the ice cream parlour, the other five shops on the ground floor also feature large shop windows that entice passers-by to stop and look. The arcade in front of the windows not only provides shelter from rain and inclement weather but also creates a second transition zone between public and private spaces. The gradual transition from public to private is completed by two small corridors leading to the two entrance doors of the residential building. These corridors are not dark or confining, as they open up to the shop windows of the adjacent stores. The wooden entrance doors with their transparent glass elements offer a warm contrast to the white colour of the rest of the street façade. The delicate door profiles are bevelled towards the sides to reduce their face width. Even in the smallest detail, Ruf's commitment to transparency can be seen here (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Photograph of the main entrances to the apartment building today (with the original entrance door)

The interplay of light and transparency is not only evident in the light-filled staircase, which opens up to the courtyard on the other side of the building thanks to its floor-to-ceiling windows, (Figure 10) but also in the building's apartments. Thanks to the building's shallow depth, each apartment unit has windows on two sides of the building, and the south-facing windows, which have no lintels, allow for a high level of light penetration.

The dissolution of the street façade through the floor-to-ceiling window elements creates a seamless and flowing transition between the living spaces and the outdoor terraces and connects the residents with the outside environment. The steel columns in front, which support the balconies and ceilings, as well as the transparent railing construction, are so delicate that they do not obstruct the view to the outside and further emphasise the structure's lightness (Figure 11). The south-facing balconies offer residents a sunny spot, which in the case of Theresienstraße is accompanied by breathtaking views over the entire city (Figure 12). In summary, the design of the apartment building on Theresienstrasse embodies the essential characteristics of Sep Ruf's post-war architecture and exemplifies the architect's talent for creating a new formal language that fits into its urban context in a restrained and unassuming manner.



Figure 10: Main staircase



Figure 11: Image of the lintel-less windows



Figure 12: Image from the balcony with a view over the city of Munich

3.3. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDINGS IN MUNICH

However, the architectural design of the apartment building on Theresienstrasse elicited mixed reactions upon its construction. While some Munich residents called it a „Glaskasten“ (glass box) (Christlieb, 1951, p. 3) due to its transparent balcony façade, others perceived it as a successful stride towards redesigning and loosening up the city district (Vorhoelzer, 1950). Nonetheless, from a contemporary perspective, it is apparent that Sep Ruf's project was a remarkable achievement in social housing planning. Unlike the bleak and inhospitable tenement buildings found in other social housing projects, Ruf succeeded in constructing a modern edifice with high-quality furnishing, despite the constraints of a limited budget. The magazine „Bauwelt“ (1952) praised the building's interior, which featured a tiled bathroom with a coal-burning cooker, a bathtub, washbasin and toilet, a multi-room air-heating cooker and a kitchen with a combined coal and gas cooker, in addition to two lifts („Das Haus der Wohnungseigentümer im Herzen Münchens“, 1952). This meticulous enumeration attests to the exceptional nature of this qualitative equipment in a social building project at the time. The modern furnishings, which complement the design of the well-lit living spaces, underscore Ruf's aspiration to provide quality housing to all classes of society, irrespective of their income or social status.

Moreover, the fact that Sep Ruf designed an apartment for childless couples on each floor is indicative of the increasing liberalisation of social conditions and a precursor to the dissolution of traditional family patterns. An article published in the women's magazine *Revue* from 1951 (Figure 13) promotes the apartments by narrating the move-in of a young couple and highlighting the many advantages of their new home, such as a capacious kitchen, a private bathroom and a living room flooded with sunlight. The article thus attests to the high quality of life that the apartments offered, despite their low construction cost of only 38 DM per cubic metre (Wichmann, 1986, p.61). The author also explains to the reader the difference between renting an apartment and purchasing an „Eigentumswohnung“ („Hauseigentümer: Die Mieter“, 1951, p. 5) and how the couple finances the acquisition of the apartment. This demonstrates again that the concept of purchasing an apartment was not yet prevalent and remained an unfamiliar notion to many of Munich's residents at that time. For couples and families who lacked the means to buy their own house, this financing method enabled them to acquire a home and crisis-proof asset. The Theresienstraße residential building therefore also represents a growing democratisation of society.



„He — ist das hoch!“ rief die junge Frau, als sie zum ersten Male auf der breiten und hohen Treppe über im siebenten Stock gelegenen Zweifamilienwohnung stand und auf die Straße schaute. Aber ihr Mann sagte sich: „Wir ziehen ganz hoch hinauf, dann haben wir die Sonne aus erster Hand und wohnen über den Dächern von München“. Und obendrein ist es wesentlich billiger!“



Das Fensterputzen geht noch einmal so schnell, wenn man es gemeinsam macht und es macht doppelt Spaß, wenn man weiß, daß einem die Wohnung ganz gehört, daß sie einem niemand wegnehmen oder beschlagnahmen kann, daß es keine Haus- und Untermieter, ja nicht einmal einen Hausbesitzer gibt, über den man sich ärgern muß.



REVUE
IN DEUTSCHLAND

„Das ist unser Haus“, sagt Marina dem REVUE-Reporter, „und dort oben wohnen wir. Wir haben uns dem Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot angeschlossen, sind der Bauparlaments beizutreten und haben tüchtig gepöppelt, bis ein Fünftel des Baupreises zusammen war, jetzt sind wir richtige Wohnungsbesitzer mit Anteilen am Haus.“



„Dort kommt der Tisch hin!“ sagt Marina zu ihrem Mann. Jahrelang hat sie sich auf den Augenblick gefreut, daß sie sich eine eigene Wohnung ganz nach ihrem Geschmack einrichten kann, und bei jedem einzelnen Möbelstück wollte sie schon im Voraus, wo es in der geräumigen Zweifamilienwohnung mit Küche und Bad am besten hinpaßt.

Hausigentümer: Die Mieter

Ein junges Paar zieht in eine wirklich eigene Wohnung

Ein neuer, viel diskutierter Haustyp ist nun auch in Deutschland Wirklichkeit geworden: das Haus mit sogenannten Eigentumswohnungen. Die Interessenten zahlen in diesem Falle keine Baukostenzuschüsse oder Mietvorauszahlungen, sondern einen bestimmten Kaufpreis. Sie werden damit nicht zu Mietern, sondern regelrecht zu Eigentümern der Wohnräume. Es gibt hier also keinen Hausbesitzer mehr, das Haus gehört vielmehr anteilmäßig allen Bewohnern. REVUE-Reporter Ernst Grosser hat in München ein junges Paar, Peter und Marina, beim Einzug in ein solches Haus beobachtet. Im August vorigen Jahres wurde der Grundstein zu diesem siebenstöckigen Bau gelegt. Jede Woche wurde ein Stockwerk aufgesetzt, und in sieben Wochen stand der Rohbau fertig. Am 1. April war es dann so weit, daß die neuen Eigentümer einzeln kommen. Eine Wohnung in diesem nach modernsten Gesichtspunkten errichteten Haus kostet zwischen 14 000 und 15 000 DM. Ein Fünftel dieser Summe muß beim Einzug bezahlt sein. Monatlich müssen dann zwischen 80 und 100 DM — ähnlich einer Wohnungsmiete — entrichtet werden. Nach zehn Jahren verringert sich diese Summe auf die Hälfte, und nach 27 Jahren ist die Wohnung Eigentum. Die Frage ist bei diesem Wohnungskauf nur: Wer hat so viel Geld?

HAUSEIGENTÜMER: DIE MIETER



Ein großes, geräumiges Wohnzimmer ist der Mittelpunkt jeder Wohnung. Im Durchschnitt sind die Wohnzimmer 22—26 Quadratmeter groß, die Schlaf- und Kinderzimmer 11—14 Quadratmeter, Küche- und Badezimmer 6—8 Quadratmeter. Im Keller gibt es dazu noch Abstellräume, zwei Waschküchen und Trockenräume.



„Lieb Sonne in der Wohnung“, war der Hauptgesichtspunkt, nach dem der Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot durch seinen Architekten Sapp Ruf diesen modernen Wohnbau errichten ließ. Die guten Erfahrungen, die das Ausland mit Eigentumswohnungen machte, waren hier Vorbild.



In der Küche ist alles zweckmäßig, damit die Hausfrau nicht so viele Schritte zu machen braucht. Mittelpunkt ist der kombinierte Gas-Kohleherd.



Die Mehrzweckkachelöfen wird von Flur aus beheizt, so daß die Zimmer sauber bleiben. Nach allen Räumen gehen Luftkippen, die die Wärme in die Wohnung ausströmen.



„Natürlich gibt es auch ein Bad“, sagt Marina, „wenn es auch klein ist.“ Nach der Arbeit des Urnngs profitiert sie die Wärme gleich aus. Nach diesen zwanzigjährigen Tagen kann sie glücklich sein. Sie ist mit ihrem Mann jetzt Mitigentümerin des Hauses. Nach 27 Jahren ist die gesamte hypothekarische Belastung abgetragener, so daß nur noch ein geringer Monatsbeitrag für Reparaturen, Hausverwaltung und öffentliche Abgaben bleibt. Das Eigentumsrecht ist im Grundbuch eingetragen, so daß die Wohnung auch verkauft oder belehnt werden kann.

Figure 13: Hauseigentümer: Die Mieter. Ein junges Paar zieht in die wirklich eigene Wohnung. (1951). *Revue*, 16, 5-6.

Last but not least, the Theresienstraße development played a crucial role in the public debate surrounding high-rise construction in Munich. During the building's construction, Munich still adhered to the „Staffelbauplan“ (staggered building plan), devised by Theodor Fischer at the beginning of the 20th century, which stipulated a maximum building height of 22 meters (from the pavement to the gutter) for all of Munich's buildings (Meissner, 2017, p. 146). The residential building on Theresienstrasse exceeded this regulation by exactly one metre, thus earning the distinction of being Munich's “first residential high-rise building“ („Erstes Wohn-Hochhaus in der Theresienstrasse“, 1950), as reported by the local newspaper *Münchner Merkur*. Though the government of Upper Bavaria had granted special permission for the height to be exceeded, numerous civil servants from Munich's Local Building Commission voiced their disapproval of this decision, as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported at the time. Among their criticism was the contention that high-rise

residential buildings were unprofitable due to the necessity of lifts, which would raise rents, and their reluctance to introduce „skyscrapers à la New York“ (Arnsperger, 1950, p. 9) to Munich because „...the people of Munich did not like to live too high above the ground“ (Arnsperger, 1950, p. 9).

Hans Eckstein's (1950) article „Sollen wir Wohnhochhäuser bauen?“ (Should we build high-rise residential buildings?) (p. 9) illustrates how polarising the issue of high-rise construction was within Munich's society in the early 1950s. Eckstein delineates the citizens' concerns about whether the high-rise residential buildings could provide a happy and dignified life and whether the „skyscraper form“ (Eckstein, 1950, p. 9) was an appropriate typology for the reconstruction of the destroyed city. The discussion about high-rise buildings not only involved the organisation of private life but also the potential negative influence that this new housing typology could have on society's organisation and value system as a whole, as Eckstein (1950) expresses through the following question: „But can we wish for a form of city and housing that so strongly promotes the development towards the massification and proletarianisation of society, ultimately towards total collectivism and political totalitarianism, which threaten to emerge from it?“ (p. 9). He concludes his article by declaring that a „skyscraper city“ (Eckstein, 1950, p. 9) and projects like Le Corbusier's „Unité d'habitation“ in Marseille are not suitable for Munich. Instead, he presents Sep Ruf's design for Theresienstraße as a successful high-rise project that permits healthy living conditions despite a dense internal program.

In conclusion, the significance of housing construction in the post-war period goes beyond providing shelter to a war-torn society. As pointed out by Eckstein (1950) and Widder (2022), the practices cultivated in the domestic sphere were also intended to influence responsible participation in public life. The rebuilding of the country through new financing, creating equal housing and living conditions for all social classes, and democratising property were in line with the public social and political development of the post-war era. The values conveyed by Sep Ruf in the design of the Theresienstraße building, such as transparency, modesty, equality and democratisation, are not only evident in his designs for private housing but also his buildings for the public, as the next chapter will illustrate. Therefore, the value system behind Ruf's design for Theresienstraße aims to positively spill over from the private lives of the residents to the development of a modern, liberal post-war society in public life. The building's impact on Munich's urban fabric was also significant, as it contributed to the densification of the city centre and the creation of a modern, cosmopolitan image for Munich by introducing the high-rise residential building as a new typology to the city.

HANS ECKSTEIN:

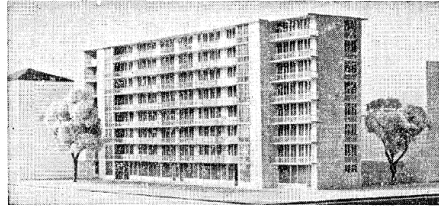
Sollen wir Wohnhochhäuser bauen?

„Der Kern unserer alten Städte mit ihren Domen und Münstern muß zerschlagen und durch Wolkenkratzer ersetzt werden.“ Nicht nur Aberglaubensfremde und Städtebauer, die unsere zerstörten Altstädte aus einem der Tradition sich verpflichtet fühlenden Ideal oder als Attraktionen für den Fremdenverkehr wieder so winzig und pittoresk aufbauen wollen, wie sie waren, werden diesen Satz des berühmten Le Corbusier mit Bestürzung lesen, sondern auch keineswegs romantisch angelegene, vielmehr mit sehr nüchternem Verstand die Zeichen der Zeit besorgte beurteilende Soziologen. Ihnen liegt nicht so sehr das Schicksal von Kathedrales oder hübschen alten Häusern und die Schönheit historischer Stadtbilder am Herzen. Sie denken nicht als Aestheten, sondern sehen die sehr bedenkenlichen Konsequenzen, die sich aus Wolkenkratzerstädten für den Zustand der Gesellschaft ergeben, und stellen die unbedingte Frage, ob der Mensch in Wohnhochhäusern wirklich glücklicher, menschengemäßer lebe. Wohlverstanden: nicht dieser und jener, denn viele werden durchaus gern und gut in Hochhäusern und bequemer als vorher wohnen. Die Frage ist vielmehr, ob die Wolkenkratzerstadt ein erstrebenswertes Ideal und Ziel als Form der Stadt und des gesellschaftlichen Lebens sei. Sie wäre ohne Zweifel als eine der Massenformen unserer modernen Zivilisation netzgemäß. Aber können wir eine Stadt- und Wohnform wünschen, der die Entwicklung zur Vermassung und Profetiarisierung der Gesellschaft, schließlich zum totalen Kollektivismus und politischen Totalitarismus, die daraus zu entstehen drohen, so stark befördert?

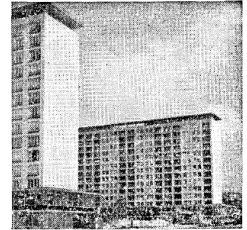
Schon schämen sich nicht wenige der sentimentalen Gefühl, die sich lieber für ein niederes Haus in schöner Gartenlandschaft als für ein Appartement in einem Hochhaus und lieber für eine Gartenstadt als für eine Wol-

kenkratzerstadt entscheiden. Es sind Leute, die sich längst eingeeredet haben oder sich von jeden Avantgardisten um jeden Preis, die nie fortschrittlich genug sein können, haben einreden lassen, höchste Steigerung und Verbilligung aller irdischen Güter sei der Ideale höchstes; zum mindesten sei die fortschreitende Vermassung ein unabweichliches Schicksal. Deshalb sind sie der Meinung, ein gutes Werk zu tun, wenn sie stoßen, was ihrer Meinung nach sowieso fallen muß, die noch verbliebenen Reste und Formen einer individualistischeren Existenz — und fühlen sich höchst avantgardistisch, wenn sie einsteifen die Wachen bauen, in denen die kommende vermaste und profetiarisierte Gesellschaft hausen wird: in den um einen Liftschacht gruppierten Wohnungen eines Wolkenkratzers. So propagiert Le Corbusier die „vertikale Stadt“ und plant den Umbau eines kleinen Vogesenstädtchens in ein Wolkenkratzerdorf oder packt in Marseille die Bevölkerung eines ganzen Stadtviertels in ein einziges Wohnhochhaus, von dessen ersten, zweiten usw bis siebzehnten Geschöß jeder Bewohner der 350 Appartements in eine schöne Parklandschaft bildet, von der ein winziger Bruchteil als Garten am niederen Haus die meisten unendlich glücklicher macht. Es besteht, kurz gesagt, die Gefahr, daß die Wolkenkratzer-Stadtbau-Doktrin den Architekten statt zum Helfer des Menschen zum Mitleidigen macht am weiteren Schwund gesunder, menschenwürdiger Existenz, und an einer weiteren Begrenzung der persönlichen, ökonomischen und geistigen Freiheit, die uns in der Vermassung noch blieb und die zu erhalten doch wohl des Schweißes der Edlesten wert wäre.

So sehr wir darum die Wolkenkratzer-Stadt mit allen ihren Konsequenzen für die Individualisierung des Lebens nicht wünschen können, so gewiß kann das Wohnhochhaus eine



Rechts: Die neuen Wohnhochhauszeilen in Hamburg. Links: Der geplante Wohnhochhausbau in München.



mögliche und gute Lösung sein, zu der wir uns unter bestimmten Umständen entscheiden können und sollen.

Weder in Hamburg noch in München handelt es sich um eine Verwirklichung der Le Corbusierschen Idee der „vertikalen Stadt“, nach der Marcel Lods auch Mainz wieder aufbauen wollte. Die ersten zwei Hochhäuser am Grindelberg in Hamburg, die das größte Baunehmen in Deutschland nach dem Kriege sind, werden auf Fundamenten für 10- bis 14-geschossige Bauten errichtet, die die britische Besatzungsmacht 1946 für ihre Zwecke geplant, aber nicht ausgeführt hat. Der Stahl für zwei Hochhäuser lagerte, bereits geschnitten, seit Jahren. So war es in diesem Falle wohl richtig, daß sich der Hamburger Senat dazu entschloß, die beiden Hochhäuser auf den fertigen Fundamenten und mit dem vorhandenen Material zu bauen, zumal in Stadtteilen, deren dichte Bestattung erhalten werden muß, durch ein Bauen in die Höhe, also bis zu acht und vierzehn Obergeschossen (an Stelle von vier

bis sechs) große Parkflächen, die den Grünflächenbestand der Stadt bedeutend erhöhen, gewonnen und gesündere Wohnbedingungen geschaffen werden. In Hamburg nahm die frühere Bebauung auf dem jetzigen Hochhausgelände mit fünfgeschossigen Mietzinskaserne, zwischen denen unbesonnt Hinterhöfe lagen, 41 Prozent der Grundfläche ein, während die Bebauung mit Hochhäusern bei ungefähr gleichem Nutzungswert nur 9 Prozent der Grundstückflächen beansprucht, also 91 Prozent für Straßen und Grünflächen frei bleiben. Die Erdgeschosse beider Häuser enthalten Läden und Gaststätten.

Das Münchner Wohnhochhaus baut der Verein zur Behebung der Wohnungsnot an der Theresienstraße nach Entwürfen von Prof. Sep Ruf. Jeder künftige Mieter einer der 42 Zweib- und Drei-Zimmerwohnungen ist Miteigentümer des Hauses; er trägt also zur Finanzierung des Baus bei und erwirbt sich durch seinen Eigenumsanteil das Wohnrecht. Das ist eine Form, in der das Wohnungseigentum auch ohne eine

direkte Anerkennung praktisch ermöglicht wird. Die höhere Bebauung (Traufhöhe 23 m statt vorher 13 m) läßt dieselbe Wohnfläche gewinnen, die vordem mit dichter vier- oder fünfgeschossiger Bebauung (einschließlich aller Hintergebäude) erreicht war, ergibt aber gesündere Wohnverhältnisse. Denn sämtliche Rückgebäude, die meist schlecht belichtet und besonnt waren, fallen nun weg und an Stelle enger trostloser Hinterhöfe treten größere Flächen, die begrünt werden und der Erholung dienen können. Das rechtfertigt, solange wir auf die gleiche Nutzung des Bodens wie bei der früheren dichteren Bebauung nicht verzichten können, einen Schritt vor allem dann, wenn gleichzeitig auch die individuellere Wohnform im Flachbau genügend gefördert wird. Denn den Bedürfnissen gewisser Bevölkerungsschichten, vor allem kindloser Familien, ist das Wohnhochhaus durchaus gemäß, ja eine ausgezeichnete, auch aus städtebaulichen Gründen gute Lösung.

Verantwortlich: Hans Eckstein

Figure 14: Hans Eckstein's article "Sollen wir Wohnhochhäuser bauen?" in the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*



Figure 15: Apartment building Theresienstraße 46-48 today

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC DOMAIN – THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HERZOG-MAXBURG

4.1 THE FORMER HERZOG-MAXBURG AND MUNICH'S RECONSTRUCTION

Ruf's ambition to devise an architectural language that would facilitate the advancement of a modern post-war society in Munich was manifested not only in the private but also in the public domain. A preeminent undertaking of his in Munich was the reconstruction of the destroyed Herzog-Maxburg, a historically significant building situated in the old town of Munich. The Herzog-Maxburg building complex originally comprised a church, a Jesuit monastery and a palace from the esteemed Wittelsbacher family. Constructed by Wilhelm V between 1593 and 1596 near the church and the monastery, the palace was intended to establish a „structural centre of the Counter-Reformation“ (Andres, 1987, p.18) in Munich. Initially known as „Wilhelmsburg“ (Wilhelm's castle), the population renamed the structure „Herzog-Maxburg“ (Duke Max's castle), after it was renovated and expanded by Wilhelm's grandson Maximilian Philipp during the 17th century. By the mid-18th century, the former ruler's residence was used by state institutions, including the Ministry of Finance and Economics. During an Allied air raid in 1944, the building suffered severe damage, with only the tower and a part of the façade at risk of collapse remaining intact (Figure 16) (Andres, 1987, pp. 30-64).



Figure 16: Ruin of the Herzog-Maxburg after the Allied air raids in 1944

As a prominent building in Munich's city centre, the destroyed Herzog-Maxburg was a significant part of the controversial debate surrounding Munich's reconstruction. While residential construction dominated in Munich in the early 1950s, construction for public institutions became increasingly important again with the growing upswing in the building industry at the end of the 1950s (Wichmann, 1992, p. 93). However, there was much disagreement about what the reconstruction should look like. In his publication „Das neue München - Vorschläge zum Wiederaufbau“ (The new Munich – Proposals for the reconstruction) (1946), Karl Meitinger, an architect and at that time head of Munich's city building council, reports on the divided opinions within the urban planning institutions and society regarding the reconstruction question. The ideas ranged from an exact reconstruction of the original city to the construction of a completely new city in a different location (Meitinger, 1946, p. 9).

Meitinger himself wanted „to save as much as possible of the spirit and structure of the old city into the new era“ (p.62). Since the mayor in office at the time, Karl Scharnagl, was opposed to any kind of modern architecture and the city council was not interested either in a radical restructuring of the city, the latter approved the reconstruction plan presented by Meitinger in August 1945. The focus of Meitinger's plan was to restore the appearance of the old town. Old as well as new buildings were to be rebuilt with typical Munich facades with plaster and ornamentation, and new buildings were only to be situated outside the city centre (Nerdinger, 1992, p. 340-341). A closer look at two plans published by Meitinger, documenting the destruction of Munich's old city centre during the war (Figure 17) and his plans for its reconstruction (Figure 18), reveals that he had also intended to restore the original building structure in the closed perimeter block development typical of Munich for the area of the destroyed Herzog-Maxburg (marked in red).

Despite the support of the Munich Cultural College and the State Office for the Preservation of Monuments for the reconstruction proposal that called for a restoration in its original form and the preservation of the tower and the part of the façade that was in danger of collapsing, the Land Building Authority ultimately rejected it on the grounds of economic feasibility (Andres, 1987, pp. 65-66). In 1952, the Supreme Building Authority of Bavaria announced an architecture competition for administrative buildings for the Ministry of Justice and administrative facilities for the Archbishop's Ordinariate, in which Theo Papst won one of the three first prizes and Sep Ruf one of the two second prizes. Due to the similarities in their design ideas, they were invited by the Supreme Building Authority to submit a joint proposal. Papst collaborated with his friend Sep Ruf and the two architects merged their designs to create a synthesis that was eventually implemented (Meissner, 2017, pp. 170-171).



Figure 17: Plan of Munich's city centre showing the destruction after the bombing by Karl Meitinger (black: not or slightly damaged, blue: partly damaged, orange: medium damage, red: severe damage; yellow: very severely damaged or complete destruction)



Figure 18: Plan for the reconstruction of Munich's city centre by Karl Meitinger (light grey: old building structures, black: new proposal)



Figure 19: The Neue Maxburg (New Maxburg) by Theo Papst and Sep Ruf at the end of the 1950s, (view from Lenbachplatz on the Pacelli block and the Lenbach block)

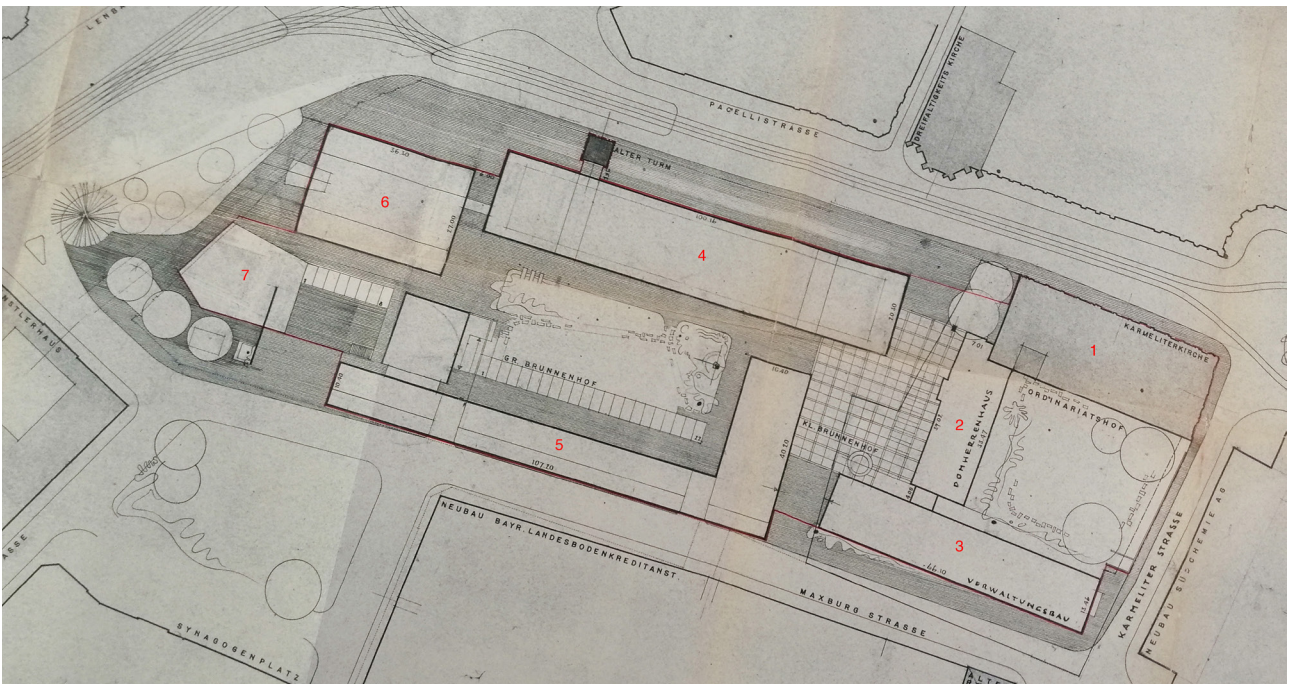


Figure 20: Site plan of the Neue Maxburg (1 Carmelite Church, 2 Canon's house, 3 Administrative building for the Archbishop's Office, 4 Pacelli block, 5 Max block, 6 Lenbach block, 7 Café and restaurant house; numbers added by the author)

4.2 ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY FOR A HUMANISATION OF PUBLIC BUILDING

The architectural design of the Neue Maxburg, which was a collaborative effort between Ruf and Papst, is composed of several distinct volumes (see Figure 20). The eastern section of the site consists of a canon's house and an administrative building designated for the Archbishop's Office of Munich, which the architects arranged like a courtyard around the old Carmelite Church. Towards the west, there is the 27m-high Pacelli block and the two-storey structure of the Max block, which form a publicly accessible courtyard called "Großer Brunnenhof" in their centre. On the westernmost end of the site, there is the Lenbach block, which rises to 23 meters in height, followed by a two-storey café and restaurant building. Each of the three main blocks, named after the adjacent streets, comprises ground-floor shops and facilities. While the Pacelli and Lenbach block house two Munich courts on their upper floors, the first floor of the Max block serves as a general office space. All buildings are reinforced concrete skeleton structures ("Die Bebauung des Maxburg-Gelände in München", 1947).

The Neue Maxburg serves as an exemplary demonstration of Ruf's skill in harmoniously integrating a new building into an existing urban context. By intentionally deviating from the closed perimeter block development initially proposed by Meitinger, Ruf and Papst create a freely arranged, vibrant spatial composition of green spaces, plazas, and an inner courtyard, which all blend seamlessly together. Additionally, the play of the varying building heights leads to an effective integration of the project into the urban fabric. For instance, the facilities for the Archbishop's Ordinariate are of the form and height as the Carmelite Church, whereas the Pacelli block was raised and placed behind the old building line, a technique which Ruf already employed in his design for Theresienstraße. This decision not only creates an extensive pedestrian zone in front of the Pacelli block's retail spaces but also highlights the old tower of the former Herzog-Maxburg as a notable landmark (see Figure 21). The two buildings located to the south, namely the Max block and the two-storey café and restaurant building, are kept low to preserve the view towards the neighbouring "Künstlerhaus" and the "Frauenkirche", one of Munich's most important landmarks. This thoughtful gesture, evident in a 1950s postcard (Figure 22), demonstrates Ruf's deep respect for the urban context and his sensitivity towards preserving the visual connections with essential landmarks that are important to Munich society.

The presentation of the old tower serves not only as evidence of Ruf's skilful handling of an existing context but also demonstrates the principle previously described of combining tradition and modernity, which plays a pivotal role in Ruf's vision for post-war architecture. Papst and Ruf restored the tower to its original form and appearance, but they also connected it to the Pacelli block using a transparent intermediate building, thereby integrating it into the overall concept of the new building. According to Meissner (2017), the architects developed the proportion system for the façade of the Pacelli block based on the geometric structure of the tower façade, creating another bridge between old and new. The sequence of the various inner courtyards of the new building can also be seen as a reinterpretation of the old courtyard structure of the former Herzog-Maxburg, as depicted in Meitinger's plan (Figure 17).

However, the major difference between the courtyards of the old Herzog-Maxburg and the newly created ones is that the newly created courtyards are open to the public, and particularly the "Große Brunnenhof" became a popular meeting place for the people of Munich in the years after its construction (Sep Ruf Gesellschaft e. V., 2019, p. 24). The one- or two-storey shop fronts of the Pacelli, Lenbach and Max blocks not only give the buildings a human scale but also fill the entire building complex with everyday life, with shoppers and strollers wandering through the courtyards and arcades or sitting in the cafés and restaurants (Figure 22). The public functions and transparent, inviting design of the ground floor facades merge the interior and exterior spaces. Ruf achieves this transparency by setting back the supporting structure: while the supporting structure on the upper floors lies within the plane of the façade, the columns in the shops are set back behind the shop windows (Meissner, 2017, p. 175). From a distance, this creates the impression that the upper floors are floating on top of the ground-floor shops (Figure 21).

The entire building complex is characterised by the lightness and transparency that are typical of Ruf's post-war architecture. The glass skin enveloping the ground floor zone, as well as the upper floors' facades opening to all sides, indicate an aristocratic court society no longer exists here that aims to create a boundary between itself and its „subjects“. Instead, a transparent administration of justice stands at the head of a new democratic society. The two pictures of the Lenbach block, which housed the Ministry of Justice, depict this transparency. The light-flooded entrance hall (Figure 23), which opens even more to the outside at night (Figure 24), embodies a clear liberalisation of the jurisdiction. The court's session hall's placement on the Lenbach block's west side, with floor-to-ceiling windows providing a view of the old Palace of Justice where numerous trials of injustice took place during the Nazi regime, is another indication that Papst and Ruf aimed to demarcate from the Nazi era and express a new democratic administration of justice through their design (Schmidt-Grohe, 1982, p. 203).

The Neue Maxburg's light architecture contrasts with the heaviness and massiveness of the neoclassical public architecture of the Nazi era and exemplifies new ideas for public life and the new „spiritual atmosphere“ of the post-war period. The architecture does not serve to intimidate the seeker of justice or the accused, nor does it claim to be representative, but instead invites the citizens into its interior and exterior spaces, representing the humanisation of public buildings after the war. Papst and Ruf's design for the Neue Maxburg serves as a restrained expression of a transparent administration of justice as the cornerstone of a liberal, democratic post-war society in Munich.



Figure 21: Pacelliblock and the old tower



Figure 22: Postcard of the inner courtyard Großer Brunnenhof with the Frauenkirche in the background



Figure 23: Entrance hall Lenbachblock



Figure 24: Lenbachblock at night

4.3 MUNICH'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL WORLD COMMUNITY

Notwithstanding the positive values behind Papst and Ruf's design, the project ignited one of the liveliest public debates regarding Munich's reconstruction during the post-war years. Conservative critics, including state decision-makers and renowned representatives of the city's art and architecture scene, publicly declared themselves opponents of the project. Consequently, protests from the population ensued after the first press reports were published, which were countered by supporters of the project. An analysis of the published press articles will reveal the value systems that underpinned this debate and why the discourse surrounding the Maxburg was of great significance to Munich.

In the article „Wortgefecht um die Maxburg“ (Battle of words over the Maxburg) (Hahn, 1954, p. 4), the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported on a group of prominent Munich residents led by architect and senator Bernhard Borst, who had written an open letter to the Bavarian state, the builders and the architects of the project. The letter was signed by over 60 Munich residents, including many professors from the Academy of Fine Arts and the Technical University of Munich, as well as renowned names such as conductor Hans Knappertsbusch, composer and music educator Carl Orff and actor Gustav Waldau. In their letter, the group criticised the height and dimensions of the buildings, the flat roofs, as well as the open arrangement of the volumes, which would lead to an unbalanced distribution of the building masses. The article further reported that the Association of German Architects had sent a statement to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* refuting that the open arrangement of the Neue Maxburg would damage the historically evolved cityscape of Munich. The sequence of publicly accessible squares was a typical element of Munich's old town, and the colour scheme of the façade was inspired by the former Herzog-Maxburg. Sep Ruf even responded personally to the newspaper's inquiry, stating that the citizens who were dissatisfied with the design had neither seen the plans nor the models for the new building and, therefore, were not in a position to judge the project. (Hahn, 1954). A later issue of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a letter to the editor by Senator Bernhard Borst (Hier spricht der Leser, 1954, p. 5), in which he criticised the project's lack of integration into its historical context and claimed that the building had nothing to do with Munich's unique cityscape and could just as easily be located in any city in America (Hier spricht der Leser, 1954).

Moreover, numerous Munich district associations were also concerned that the erection of „modern and international building blocks“ (Rehm, 1954, p. 9) like the Neue Maxburg would destroy Munich's typical cityscape. In a letter to the editor, a young 22-year-old

Munich interior designer accused the representatives of “Neues Bauen” of making modern buildings like the Maxburg look like „packing crates“ (Vogl, 1955, p. 36). An article in the magazine *Bayerischer Monatsspiegel* (Schandfleck beseitigt, 1989) took an even more critical stance and called the Maxburg a „ghastly monument to tastelessness and ugliness“ (p. 26), claiming that the project’s proponents had no understanding of architectural quality. However, supporters of the project declared that the Maxburg was „one of the most fortunate events in the field of building inner-city commercial areas with genuine city character“ and „European spirit“ (“Die Bebauung des Maxburg-Geländes in München”, 1947, p. 1115) and that the „quite conservative“ (“Die Bebauung des Maxburg-Geländes in München”, 1947, p. 1115) Munich residents did not know how to appreciate the value of the design. Hans Eckstein (1954), the founder of the Friends of New Building, also praised Papst and Ruf’s „successful integration [...] into the urban context“ (p. 32).

In summary, proponents of the Neue Maxburg viewed it as a symbol of Munich’s embrace of a young European building culture, while opponents argued that the modern building would erode Munich’s traditional cityscape. However, the analysis of the newspaper articles reveals that the debate surrounding the building was not limited to a mere clash between architectural tradition and modernity. During a time of social and political upheaval, the aforementioned statements reflect society’s apprehension, or even fear, of increasing Americanisation and internationalisation of the city. The discussion over the preservation of Munich’s identity, therefore, also underscored the issue of defining a “post-war identity” for Munich society. The discourse surrounding the Neue Maxburg can be interpreted as an opportunity for residents to express their concerns regarding the loss of tradition and identity, and to contemplate how far the city and social life should open up to the European and international world. Nonetheless, as a 1957 article in “Bauwelt” argues, Munich had already become one of Germany’s most important industrial cities in the early post-war years due to the economic boom and the rise of crucial industries (“Wer da bauet an der Straßen, muss die Leute reden lassen?”, 1957). Consequently, when the Neue Maxburg was erected, Munich was already on its path towards becoming a major industrial city and a European metropolis with over a million inhabitants. The design by Theo Papst and Sep Ruf was thus a concession to a development that, despite opposition, could no longer be thwarted. With their design, the architects endorsed the internationalisation of the city and the integration of Munich’s society into a European as well as international world community. Another project of Ruf’s, the church St. Johann von Capistran, also emerged in a time when Munich started to gain more attention on the world stage and will be analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RELIGIOUS DOMAIN - THE CHURCH ST. JOHANN VON CAPISTRAN

5.1 LITURGICAL REFORMATION AND THE EUCHARISTIC WORLD CONGRESS

The construction of the church of St. Johann von Capistran needs to be examined in light of the emergence of novel styles for sacral buildings in Germany following the Second World War. According to Goergen (1986), two main factors lead to the transformation of sacral buildings in the post-war years. Firstly, the development of new building materials gave rise to a new architectural expression, which was characterised by lightweight steel constructions, free spanning of large distances, and dematerialisation of building elements (Goergen, 1986, p. 153). Secondly, the Catholic Church had lost a significant part of its influence on social life due to the political measures of the Nazi government, whose propaganda and principle of “Gleichschaltung” could not tolerate a second moral authority besides its own. Simultaneously, the Church’s authenticity suffered from the unspoken knowledge of its complicity in the Holocaust’s atrocities, as the majority of representatives and followers of the Christian congregation in the Third Reich had turned a blind eye to the organised murder of six million Jews by the NSDAP. Consequently, a new willingness and desire for reform pervaded the Church community after the war. This resulted in a newfound tolerance for modern sacral building forms, which the representatives of the New Building movement were able to use for their projects (Goergen, 1986, p. 155).

Furthermore, the construction of St. Johann von Capistran is closely tied to the Eucharistic World Congress held in Munich in August 1960, which was the first major international event in Germany after World War II and attended by guests from all continents. The congress focused on liturgical reform and the associated changes in the architecture of church buildings. It was a preparation for the Second Vatican Council, during which the issue of liturgical renewal was also prominently discussed (Friedel, 1973, p. 269). The pavilion for the closing service on the Theresienwiese fairground, where about a million faithful gathered (Scherer, 1960), was a remarkable example of futuristic architecture, reflecting the mood of change and readiness for reform (Figure 25).

To commemorate this important event, Cardinal Joseph Wendel commissioned Sep Ruf to build the first circular church in Munich. Wendel, who became Archbishop of the Diocese of Munich-Freising in 1952, was considered an advocate of modern sacred architecture. Ruf, a devout Catholic himself, got in touch with Wendel by organising an exhibition for the Eucharistic World Congress (Meissner, 2017, p. 202). The site chosen for the church

building was the „Münchner Parkstadt“ (Munich Parc City) in Bogenhausen, founded in 1954, whose rapid growth required the establishment of a new pastoral district and a new parish by decision of the Archbishop's Ordinariate in 1956 (Meissner, 2017, p. 216). First, the community hall was built in 1958, serving as a temporary emergency church. Two years later, the round church building of St. John of Capistran was completed and consecrated by Cardinal Josef Wendel on 26 June 1960 (Schnell, 1961).

To sum up, the construction of St. Johann von Capistran occurred during a period of ecclesiastical transformation and liturgical reformation, which culminated in the Eucharistic World Congress. The following chapter shall delve into Sep Ruf's ability to capture this atmosphere in his design for the new church building and to express new Christian values through his architecture.



Figure 25: Pavillon for the closing ceremony of the Eucharistic World Congress in 1960

5.2 THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY



Figure 26: Church St. Johann von Capistran today

In essence, the development of the new parish by Ruf manifest yet another project that, despite its distinct design language, harmoniously integrates into the existing environment in a restrained and respectful manner. The design comprises three structures in total: the community house situated to the north, the round church building, and the rectory located towards the west (Figure 27). The low height of the single-storey community house and rectory aligns with the scale of the neighbouring residential buildings. The design's typology adapts to the new parc city, with large green spaces separating the structures, which is consistent with the planned provision of ample nature vegetation spaces. The round brick building of the church, rising above the surrounding edifices, is the only structure that stands out due to its height and shape, marking a new point of orientation within the neighbourhood but also establishing a clear differentiation between the sacred space that serves as a new congregation gathering place and the other secular buildings. Rather than a conventional tall church tower or special ornamentation, Ruf creates a unique architectural singularity within the parc city through the distinct and strong design language. Instead of a bell tower, Ruf designs a „bell wall“ made of Nagelfluh, which he situates as a detached structure between the church and the rectory, creating a passageway into the park adjacent to the church. Besides the particular formal language, Ruf also refers to the urban context through the choice of materials. As noted by Friedel (1973), the exterior materials are typical of Munich (p. 274), with Nagelfluh and brickwork also forming the exterior of the Munich Frauenkirche (Friedel, 1973).

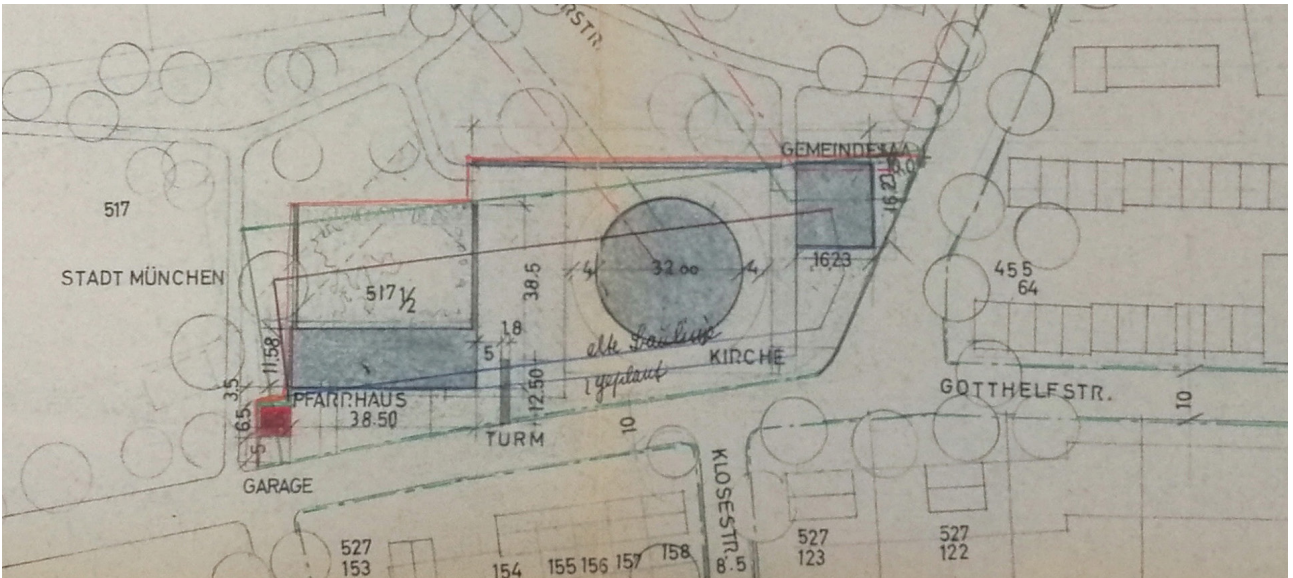


Figure 27: Site plan of the church

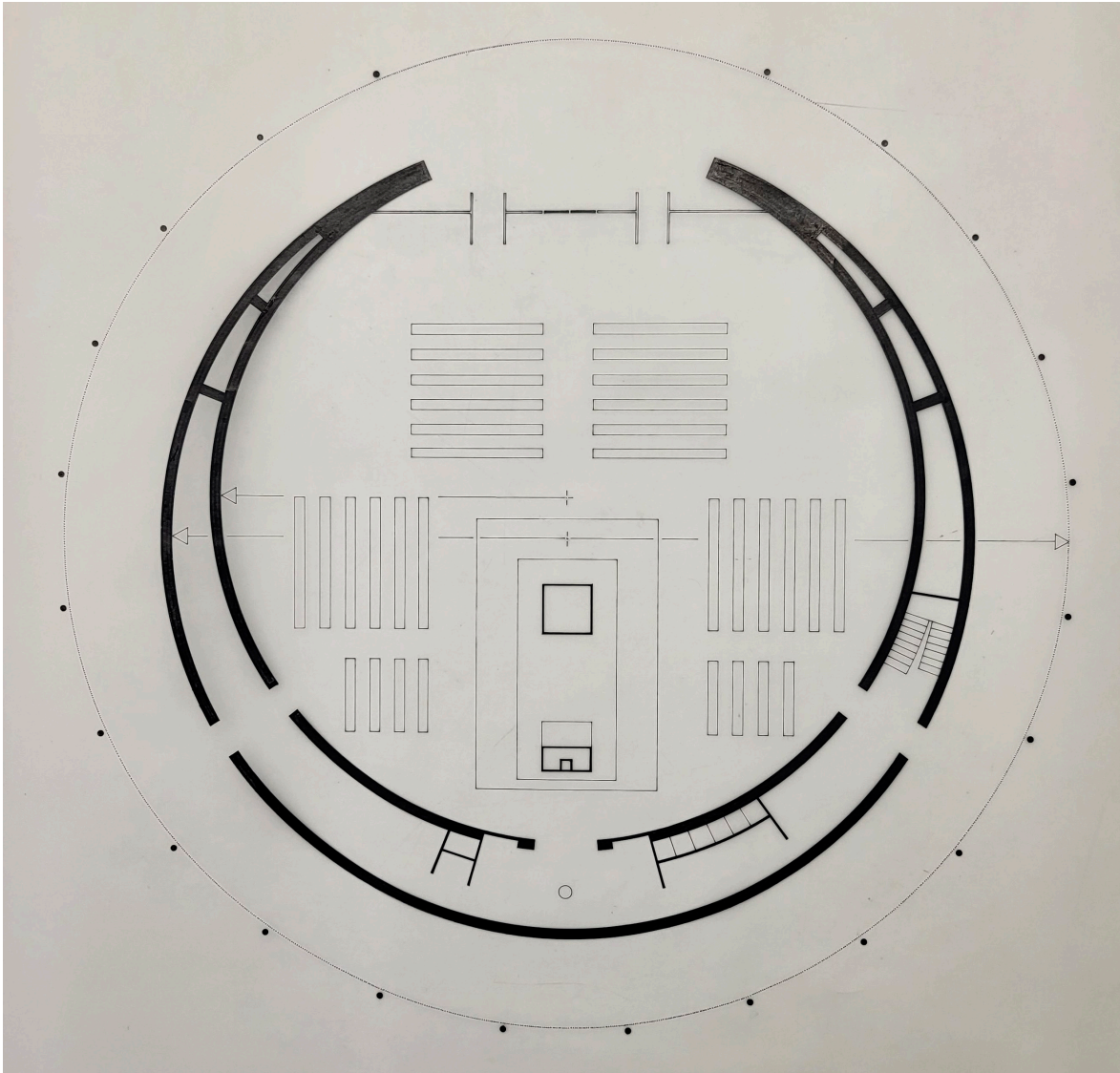


Figure 28: Floor plan of the church

As well as the projects Theresienstraße and Neue Maxburg, St. Johann von Capistran is another example of Ruf's striving for dematerialisation, transparency and lightness. The exterior's reduced materiality is carried through to the interior, where red or clinker bricks make up the walls and floor, a Nagelfluh geometric cuboid serves as the altar, and wooden minimalist benches and concentric, star-shaped ceiling claddings contribute to the simple, pared-down design. The elimination of ornamentation and decoration, combined with a focus on concentration and a reduced number of interior design elements, aligns with the architectural vision of the Friends of New Building. The interior's reduced and streamlined language is emphasised by the consistent course of the brick wall, only punctuated by a few doors and windows at ground level, creating a clear cylindrical shape for the interior. To prevent any disturbance from additions and fixtures, Ruf constructed the round church building as a double-shell cylinder, maintaining the interior's uniformity. The ground plan's shape is based on two eccentric circles, 32 and 28 metres in diameter, whose centres are shifted apart, creating a crescent-shaped space between them that widens to a width of four metres (Schnell, 1961). Spread over four floors within this crescent space, are ancillary rooms, the baptistery, confessionals, sacristy and organ (Church guide of an elementary school class, 1974/75) (Figures 28 and 29).

The main glass portal, which Ruf situated to the west to allow for an ostentatious main altar, is the only large area that interrupts the rotunda and provides a clear orientation of the interior (Meissner, 2017, p. 220). This sixteen-metre-wide window track, made of almost invisibly grouted Sekurit glass that extends from floor to ceiling (Schnell, 1961), creates a unique transparency compared to the opaque brick walls of the rotunda, and interweaves the exterior space with the sacred interior. As a result, it is possible to look into the interior of the church from the adjacent park, while the park's trees can be seen from the interior (Figure 30). Additionally, a light band around the rotunda provides a light and delicate accent in the interior. At the top of the brick wall, a continuous gallery runs around the entire structure and is shielded from the outside by an uninterrupted glass window. This light band separates the brick rotunda from the roof structure, creating the impression that the roof is floating above the brick wall (Figure 31). By using a unique geometric floor plan and breaking up the cylindrical structure with large glass elements, Sep Ruf creates a light and delicate formal language that, despite its reduced materiality and the lack of decoration or ornamentation, is equivalent to the dignified atmosphere of traditional church spaces.



Figure 29: Photograph of the crescent-shaped space between the two circles



Figure 30: View from the church's interior into the neighbouring parc

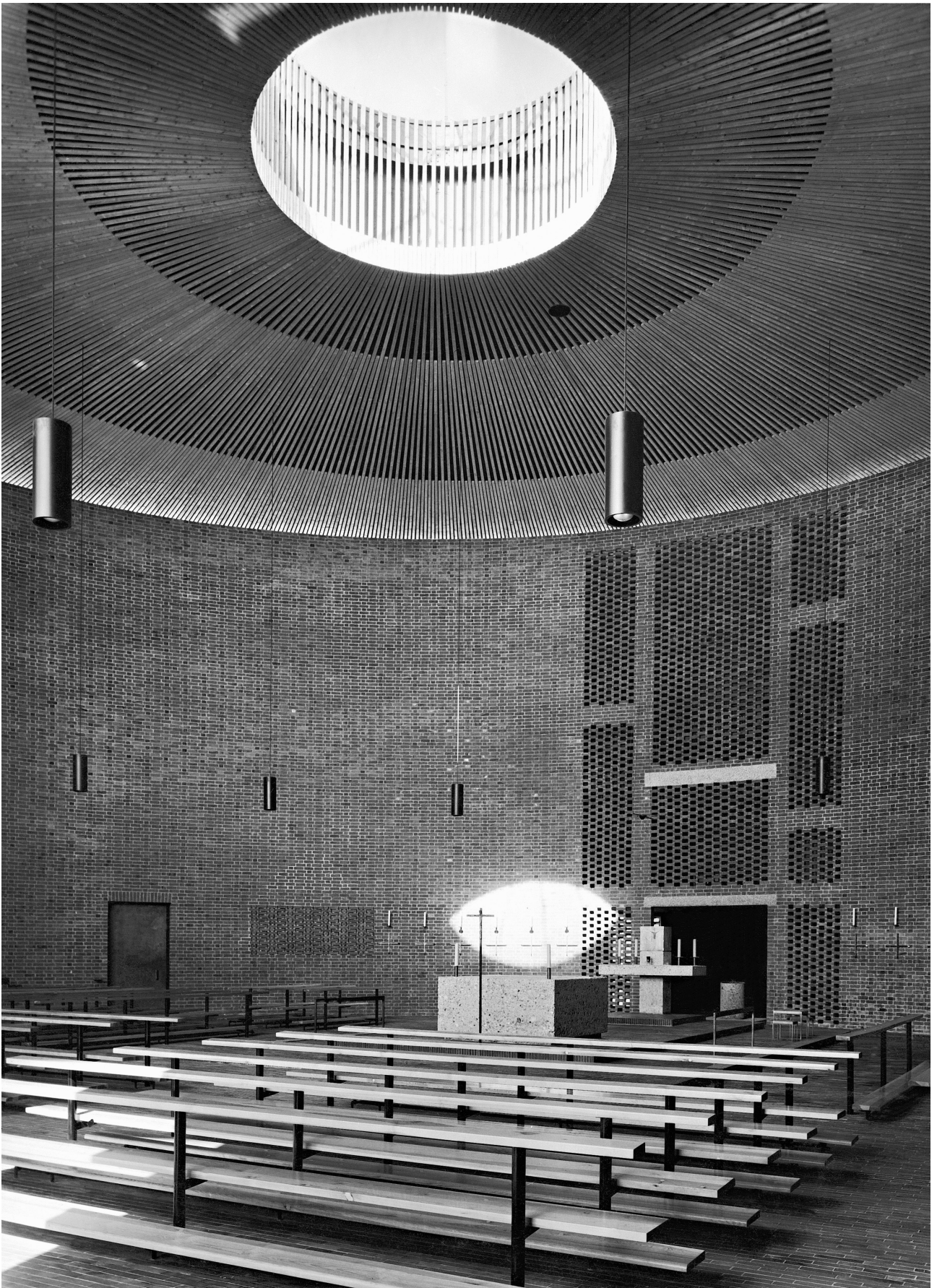


Figure 31: The church's interior and the light band between the exterior wall and ceiling

Ruf achieves the lightness of the seemingly floating roof structure through a technically complex steel construction, demonstrating his ability to combine traditional and modern architectural elements in his design for St. Johann von Capistran. Throughout Christian art history, round houses of worship, such as the Pantheon in Rome, the Palatine Chapel in Aachen, and even the Gothic Hedwigskirche in Berlin, have been constructed over the centuries. Ruf's design for Capistran is thus the „modern realisation of an ancient idea“ (Mayer-Pfannholz, 1960, n. p.), which is reimagined and enhanced by the rotunda's two-shell design and the modern steel construction of the roof, complete with a central glass dome. Like the Pantheon's concrete dome, Capistran has a central light eye, covered by an acrylic glass dome without a sprout, which with a diameter of 5.40 metres was the largest in Europe at the time (Meissner, 2017, p. 220). The steel truss construction of the roof rests on the rotunda's outer enclosing walls, and the tensile forces of the 4.50-metre cantilevered structure are carried by 22 columns spaced 5,30 metres apart. However, these columns are „suspension columns“ that pull and hold the roof in tension rather than supporting it. They are held under tension with the help of concrete cubes weighing several tons that are free-floating and hang from the end of the columns concealed in underground earth pits (Figure 32) (Goergen, 1968, p. 156). As these columns only bear tensile forces and no compressive forces, their cross-section is reduced, contributing to the impression of a light, even seemingly weightless construction. At the same time, the supports define the processional walkway, which Ruf situates in the exterior space (Schnell, 1961), further linking interior and exterior space.

Ruf's skilful mediation between tradition and modernity is once again exemplified in the church's entrance portal, which offers a contemporary interpretation of a traditional architectural element (Figure 33). With its three doors, the portal evokes the characteristics of a classic Romanesque three-winged entrance portal a primary and two smaller side entrances. The main portal, characterised by two bronze doors featuring six biblical motifs and scenes, such as Adam and Eve, Mary, and the resurrection of Jesus, is also highly representative in its design. A colourful glass painting, imitating the stained-glass windows of older churches, and showcasing biblical scenes sits above the bronze doors. However, the main portal is exclusively reserved for special occasions such as weddings. Regular services require entry through the side entrances (Church guide of an elementary school class, 1974/75). The lightness and transparency of the metal-framed doors and their reduced height, which aligns with the human scale, present a welcoming gesture to visitors while allowing them to observe the church's interior before entering. Despite the lightness and transparency, Ruf develops a conscious entry into the church space by aligning two doors, creating a small porch between them. The space in between serves not only as a windbreaker but also as a filter zone or a reflective space, allowing for a transition between the secular outside world and the sacred interior.

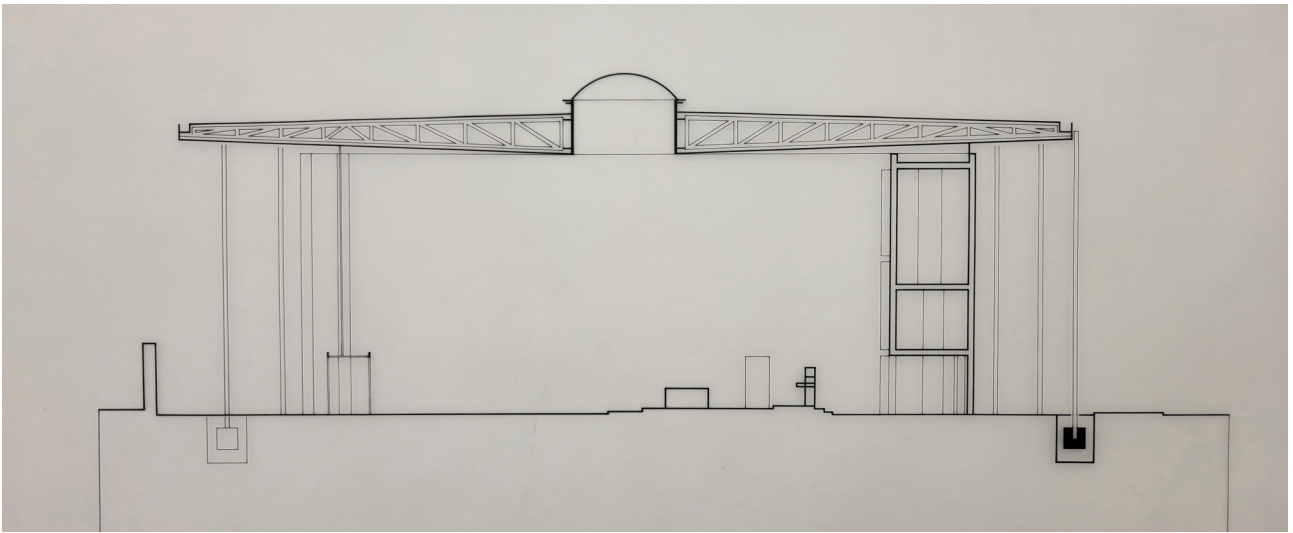


Figure 32: Section of the church building showing the roof construction



Figure 33: Entrance portal

At first glance, the masonry outer wall of St. Johann von Capistran may appear exceedingly massive. However, the presence of numerous light and delicate architectural elements complementing the building gives it a simple and restrained appearance. Behind the reduced materiality and formality, Ruf's intent lies in highlighting the importance of focusing on the essentials and placing people and their community at the centre of Christian dialogue, as I will elaborate on in the following chapter.

5.3 SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND STABILITY

To conclude the analysis of St. Johann von Capistran, I would like to examine the social significance of the building for Munich's post-war society, similar to the approach taken in the previous chapters on the projects Theresienstrasse and Neue Maxburg. Unfortunately, during my research in Munich, I was unable to locate any newspaper articles that shed light on the public opinion of the Munich population at the time regarding the church's construction. Certain newspapers do mention that members of the Building Rights Committee and the city council were „not particularly taken with the idiosyncratic project“ (“Kirche am Rand der Parkstadt”, 1958), referring to the church as a „gas boiler“ (“Schlechte Zensuren für Professor Ruf”, 1960) or even comparing it to a pot (Christlieb, 1960). Although these articles suggest that Ruf's design once again provoked debate, they are insufficient for discussing the social and societal relevance of the building. Therefore, I will draw on existing secondary literature in the following paragraphs.

The sophisticated steel construction of the roof, coupled with its 5.40m wide glass dome, drew the attention of neighbouring European countries even before the Eucharistic World Congress in Munich in August 1960. The dome, made of acrylic glass with a weight of 340kg, was, as previously mentioned, the largest glass dome in Europe at that time. Not only was its diameter impressive, but its manufacture, mounting and transport posed a significant technical challenge. To secure it, for example, a glass fabric-reinforced polyester frame was devised, a solution that had not been employed before (Physical and technical data of the large acrylic dome for St. Capistran in Munich, n.d.). These technical achievements were also reported on abroad, for instance in the Spanish magazine *Revista Informes de la Construcción* (“Sep Ruf: Iglesia de San Juan en Munich”, 1965), indicating that the church building contributed to the development of Munich's new image as an emerging industrial city in post-war Germany, within the European community.

Furthermore, Ruf established a novel assembly point that engendered a sense of community and cohesion within Munich society. As Widder (2022) notes, Christian identity was a pivotal element of post-war society, with 96% of all Germans identifying with the Christian faith in 1946. The structured practice of religion and the church community served as an important moral compass during a time when secular public life required complete reinvention. The American occupying powers also relied on churches to stabilise and „re-educate“ (Widder, 2022, p. 295) the nation, as they were meant to support Germany's progression towards democracy. By choosing the circular motif for the ground plan of St. John of Capistran, Ruf's selection of a circular motif evokes a geometric form that has been a symbol of unity and „in-itself-completeness“ (Schnell, 1961, p. 10) since ancient times. The uninterrupted circular structure brings the congregation together around the altar, while its concentration draws service attendees as close as possible to a common centre. With this design, Ruf not only emulates an archetypal form of sacred architecture but also creates a symbol of communal solidarity.

Finally, the construction of St. Johann von Capistran was of significant importance due to Sep Ruf's foresight, as his design anticipated the reform decisions of the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65. Before the Second Vatican Council, it was customary for the priest at the high altar to celebrate in Latin „ad orientem“ (towards the east), i.e. with his back turned towards the congregation. However, the Council decided that sermons should be delivered „versus populum“ (towards the people). This resulted in a vital change in church construction, with the introduction of the free-standing „Zelebrationsaltar“ (altar of celebration) (Boss, 2017, p. 4), around which the congregation often gathered in pews arranged in a semicircle, which was quickly dubbed the „Volksaltar“ (people's altar) by German Catholics (Boss, 2017, p. 4). With the design of the stone Nagelfluh altar, which stands almost exactly in the centre of St. Johann von Capistran under the glass dome, Ruf was thus ahead of his time and promoted the active participation of the congregation in worship even before the Council's verdicts. This not only highlights why St. Johann von Capistran is regarded as „one of the most important sacred buildings of the post-war period in Germany“ (Meissner, 2017, p. 224), but it also demonstrates once again Sep Ruf's talent for translating new social value concepts as well as the „spiritual atmosphere“ of his time into tangible reality.

CONCLUSION

Sep Ruf's contribution to the reconstruction of Munich during the first phase of post-war modernism is paramount. Despite the immense destruction and shortage of resources, he succeeded in creating social housing structures, such as the Theresienstraße residential building, that emphasised high-quality and egalitarian living conditions for all of Munich's social classes and placed the issue of densification of the inner city at the centre of the reconstruction debate. The transparent, loosened-up and publicly accessible design of the Neue Maxburg serves as a clear symbol of the emergence of a democratic post-war society with a horizontal division of power and an independent judiciary. Sep Ruf's individual and modern formal language showcases a new perspective for reconstructing a city destroyed by war, one that does not simply involve exact replication of the pre-war city. In the case of the Church of St. Johann von Capistran, the circular design shows Ruf's advocacy for a revival of ecclesiastical authenticity and the reintegration of Germany into the European and international world community during the Eucharistic World Congress. Throughout these three projects, Ruf's primary concern is the public and the creation of spaces that foster a sense of belonging and community among the population. In light of the atrocities committed in a shameful war, his architecture is informed by the principles of the New Building movement, striving to distance itself from the intimidating, heavy architecture of the Third Reich. By avoiding any overtly symbolic or representational features, his buildings convey a sense of dignity and respect for the people who inhabit them, as well as for the historic context in which they are situated, without any need for representation.

The analysis of the various case studies has demonstrated that certain principles of Ruf's philosophy for post-war architecture, such as the striving for transparency and lightness, are pervasive in all the projects. Nevertheless, the distinct integration into the existing context and the diverse interpretations of tradition and modernity led to the development of three unique projects. Additionally, I was surprised that Ruf's buildings, particularly the Theresienstrasse apartment building and the Neue Maxburg, were subject to such controversial discussions by the Munich public. Despite being a successful architect, Ruf received a lot of criticism, even from fellow architects. It was also unexpected for me to discover the dazzling and charismatic personality concealed behind his rather modest and restrained architectural expression. Unfortunately, the absence of personal writings, coupled with the inaccessibility of the Ruf family archive to the public, constrained my research for this thesis. Insights from this archive would certainly have revealed more intriguing layers to Ruf's world of thought and personal circumstances. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that this thesis has provided a first impression of Ruf's significance for the

reconstruction of Munich and the relevance of his projects for various social discussions of the post-war period. Other facets of his work, such as a closer examination of his other church buildings constructed in Germany in the post-war years, or his role as a professor at the academies in Munich and Nuremberg and his influence on subsequent generations of architects, are certainly interesting topics that can build on this work.

In contrast to many other proponents of the New Building movement, Ruf's post-war architecture in Munich displayed a distinct quality through the interweaving of tradition and modernity. Through this, he developed a formal language and architectural expression that still seamlessly integrates with its context, even after some 70 years since its construction. Thanks to his sensitivity and attentiveness to social and political developments, Ruf successfully captures the „spirit's atmosphere“. His architecture not only provoked discussions on new social, political, and religious values but also assumes his responsibility as an architect to pave the way for a modern post-war society and the future. The central message of Sep Ruf's post-war legacy in Munich is the architect and the artist's responsibility to capture the spirit's atmosphere while simultaneously showing a way forward. Ruf also wished to pass on this calling to the generations of architects that followed him. In his inaugural speech as president of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, he declared to his students: „Whatever past may resonate in the artist's work, [...] he can only speak from the present and, if he is a truly gifted man, lead with a prophetic sense towards the future.“ (Wichmann, 1986, p. 43)



Figure 34: Sep Ruf and the former Chancellor Ludwig Erhard

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