

FORUM AND ATRIUM

Visitors are welcome

The large, covered entrance area – the forum – is accessible to everyone. It combines several functions and leads to the covered courtyard of the Agency, the atrium, which is semi-public and accessible mainly to Agency staff. It is also open to external visitors in the framework of guided tours. The atrium also serves as an artery from which the office areas can be reached.

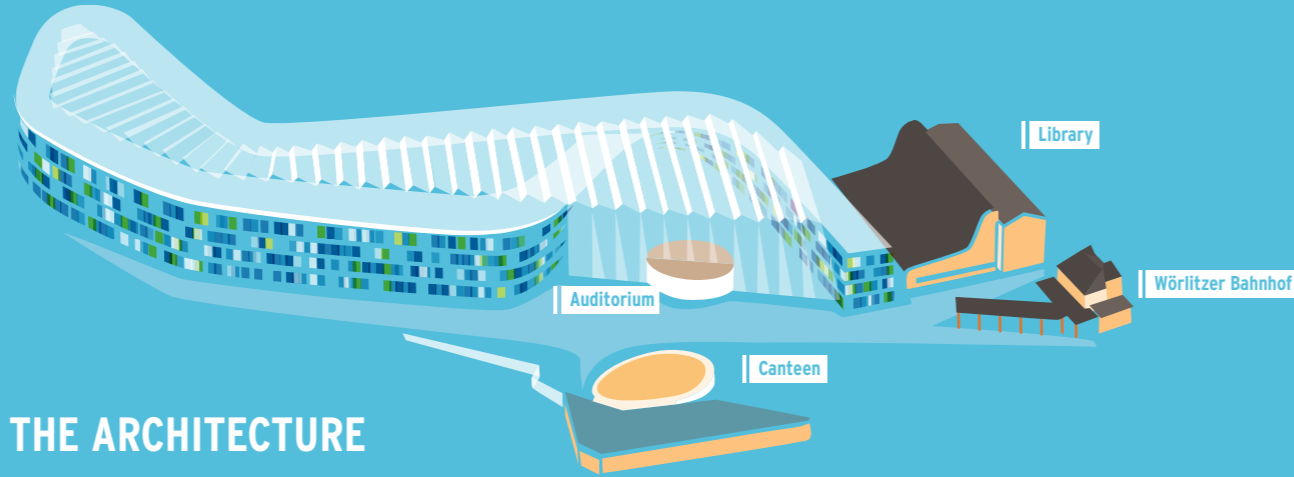
The circulation principle is based on the structure of a tree, the forum representing the 'root', the atrium the 'trunk', the bridges the 'branches', and the corridors the 'twigs'. From the three bridges in the atrium the walkway branches off to the right and left, leading to the offices of the Agency's divisions and administrative department.

AUDITORIUM AND OTHER BOULDERS

Bush-hammered surfaces indicate special uses

On the ground floor, the interior façade of the atrium is interrupted by so-called boulders. These five elements house special-purpose facilities such as filing units and the print shop. The façade of these 'boulders' is made of bush-hammered concrete. They are conceived as part of the park landscape which extends deep into the building.

The largest boulder is found in the forum and houses the auditorium. By breaking through the glass façade, it mediates between the exterior landscape and the interior spaces. The auditorium is accessed from the forum. Its walls are clad with acoustic wood panelling and are thicker in parts to accommodate secondary functions such as control and interpreter booths or the inclined elevator for barrier-free access. The auditorium can be rented for external events.



THE ARCHITECTURE



The colour scheme of the façade forms an important part of the architectural idea.



The three groups of bridges play a key role in the building's circulation system.



The five 'boulders' made of bush-hammered concrete are part of the park landscape that extends deep into the building.



12 m² is the standard size of the 780 naturally ventilated and uniformly furnished offices.



The roof of the connecting hall climbs to a height of up to 15 m, letting daylight in and ensuring good ventilation.

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The forum (entrance hall) is open to visitors during the building's opening hours:

Mon to Fri	6:00 am to 10:00 pm
Sat	6:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sun/hols	8:30 am to 4:00 pm

The visitors' room (information material) and the library in the forum are open:

Mon to Weds	9:00 am to 3:30 pm
Thu	9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Fri	9:00 am to 2:00 pm

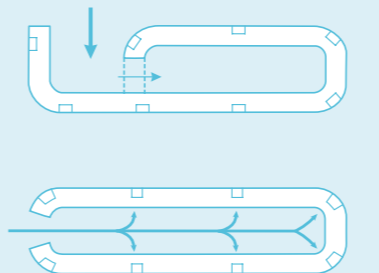
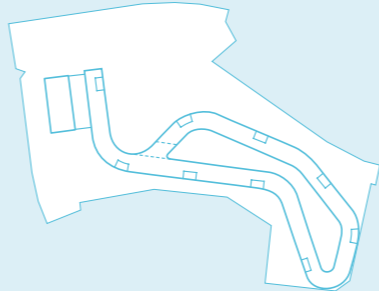
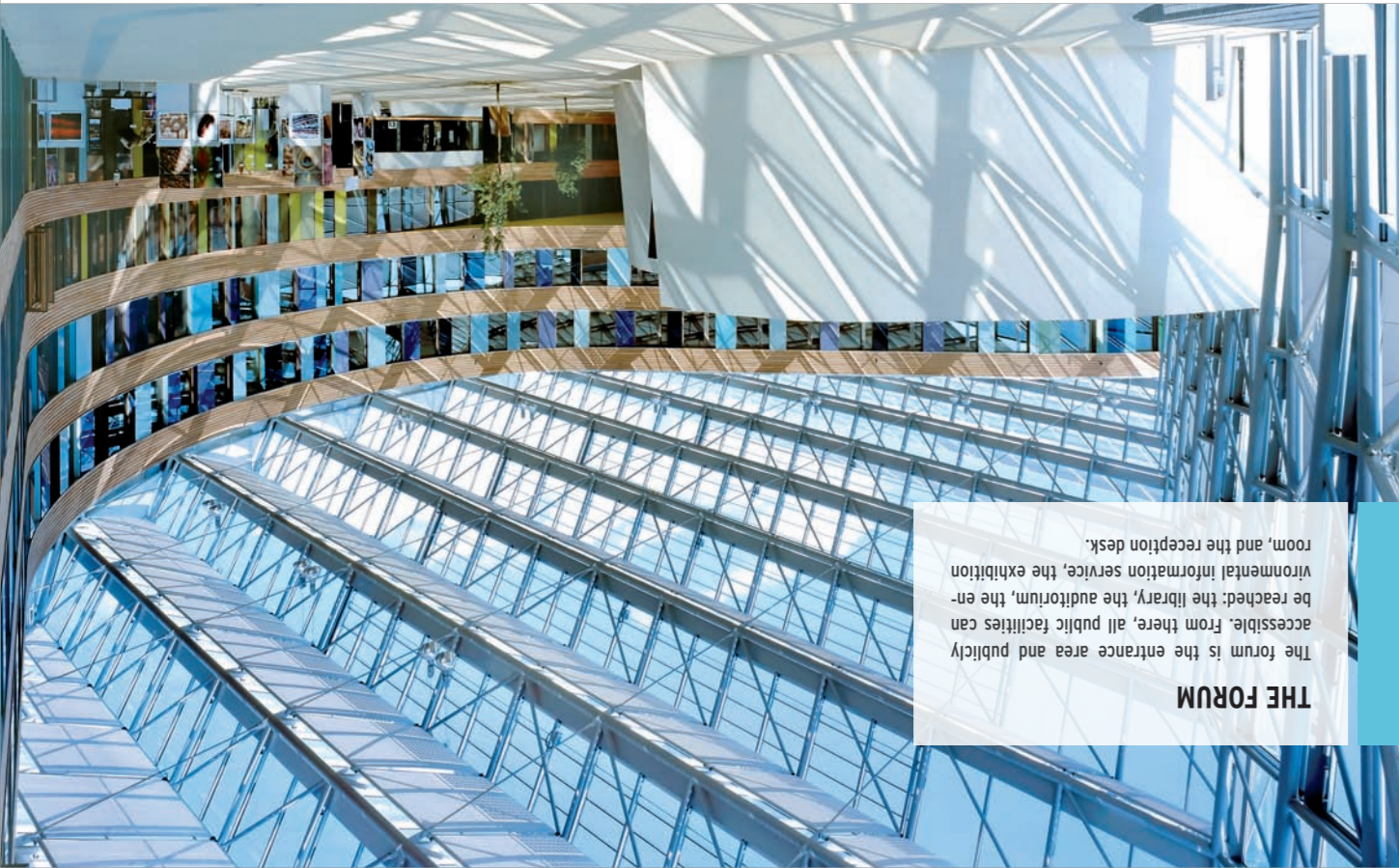
Visitors who would like to learn more about the architectural and ecological design of the new building and visit the atrium can join a guided tour. For more information about this, ask at our visitors centre or visit our website (www.uba.de).

Photo credits: Reinhard Görner, Jan Bitter, Silvia Sinah, nora systems GmbH
Drawings: sauerbruch hutton | Text: Umweltbundesamt, Z 5

THE BUILDING'S ARCHITECTURE

A convincing design idea implements ecological requirements

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The characteristic form of the main building arose from a simple yet convincing idea and its consistent refinement by sauerbruch hutton architects. The first task was to create 780 standardised offices without making the building appear to be a mere administrative box. The simplest form would be to set up the offices in a string, one after the other, which would appear as a two-sided bar (1). Adjustment to fit the size of the plot, and the need from an energy perspective to make the building as compact as possible required it to fold back in on itself, which creates a 'snake' with an atrium (2). The need to have an internal area on the one hand and a publicly accessible one on the other could only be met by offsetting the ends of the 'snake'. One part of the building closes in on itself to create a 'private' space while the other part opens to the outside (3). Finally, the peculiar shape of the plot meant that the 'snake' had to be bent, with its front end adjoining the existing Building 109, which is part of the library (4).

From idea to blueprint

THE SNAKE



THE SITE

Peculiar shape presenting a particular challenge

The site of the Federal Environment Agency lies in the former *Gasviertel* (gas quarter), which between 1855 and 1991 contained a gasworks and numerous factories and businesses. The structures adjoining the site are heterogeneous: to the north and east, residential houses built in the *Gründerzeit* style; to the south, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings mixed with retail development from the 1990s; and westwards, finally, rail and road infrastructure with its transition to the *Dessau-Wörlitzer Gartenreich*.

The actual shape of the plot results from the availability of individual lots at the time. In the south, it forms a very compact area which becomes narrower in the middle and veers to the east in the northern part. This gives the site its peculiar shape whose development presented a particular challenge.

BANDS OF COLOURED GLASS

Reflecting the urban surroundings

The colour scheme is an important part of the architectural idea, supporting the intention in urban development to never show the building all at once, but just in fragments. The façade consists of eight horizontal stripes - four alternating bands of timber and glass. The bands of untreated larch cover the breast and ceiling area of each storey and will eventually take on a silver-grey hue through weathering. The glass bands comprise the windows, which are set back about 30 cm, and glass 'blocks' of varying width and colour in between, which are flush with the timber bands. The night-time cooling shutter in each room is integrated into the window jamb, which is 30 cm deep.

Spread across the façade are seven 'families' of colour, the colour family of each section of the building responding to the urban features it faces. For instance, in the section facing the northeast - towards the city - warm reds predominate whilst the western façade reflects the greens and blue-greens of the park. The bands

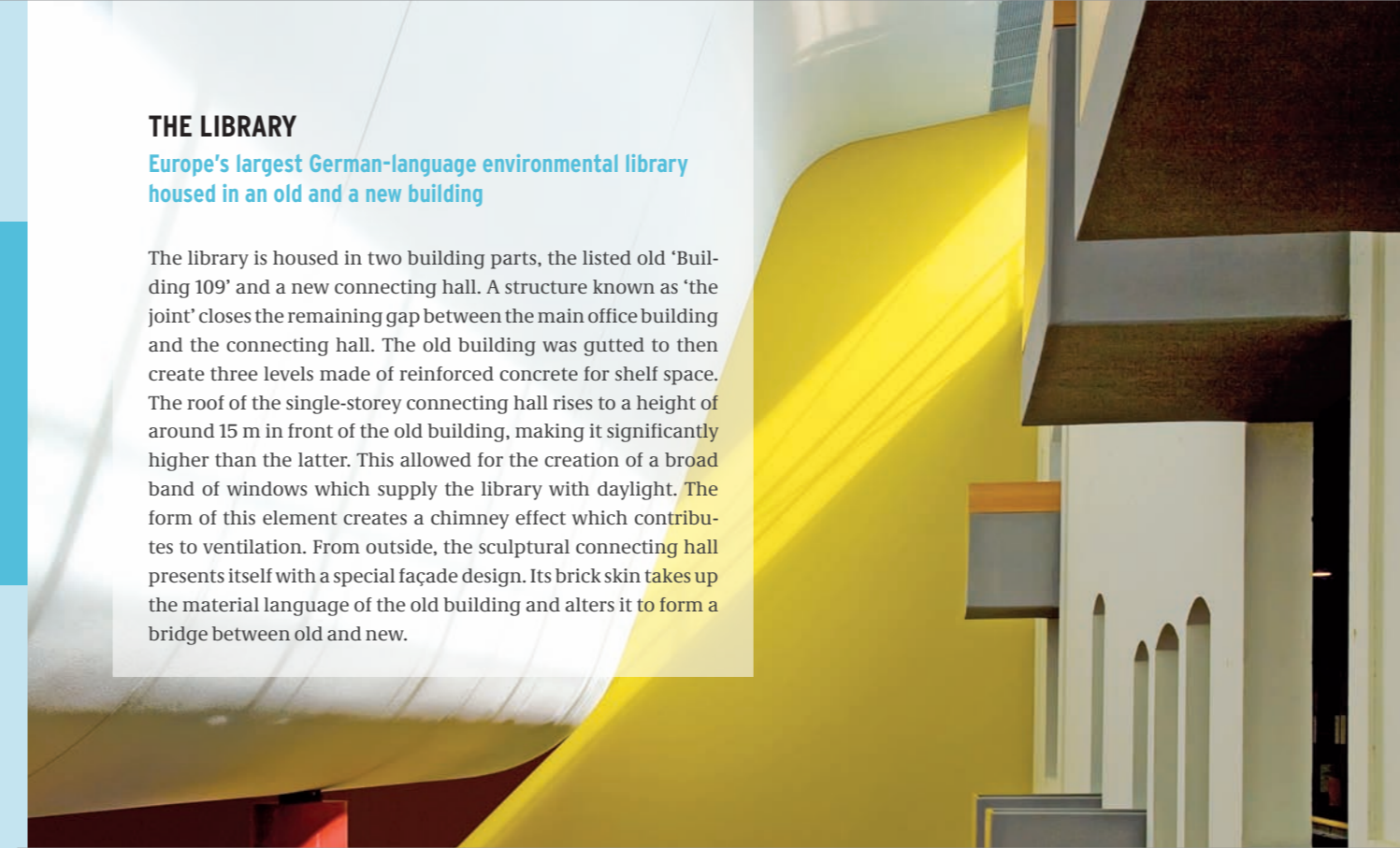


of glass of varying colour and the shape of the building break down the uniformity created by the rows of identical offices and lend the building its particular character.

THE LIBRARY

Europe's largest German-language environmental library housed in an old and a new building

The library is housed in two building parts, the listed old 'Building 109' and a new connecting hall. A structure known as 'the joint' closes the remaining gap between the main office building and the connecting hall. The old building was gutted to then create three levels made of reinforced concrete for shelf space. The roof of the single-storey connecting hall rises to a height of around 15 m in front of the old building, making it significantly higher than the latter. This allowed for the creation of a broad band of windows which supply the library with daylight. The form of this element creates a chimney effect which contributes to ventilation. From outside, the sculptural connecting hall presents itself with a special façade design. Its brick skin takes up the material language of the old building and alters it to form a bridge between old and new.



THE CANTEEN

Pavilion flooded with light invites people to linger

The canteen is a free-standing structure in the western part of the site. It consists of two separate buildings. The solid kitchen block with its functional rooms is clad with brick, developing out of a 'garden wall' which begins as such at the western boundary of the site to then become an acoustic barrier, keeping the noise from the adjacent federal road away from the kitchen area.

The transparent canteen stands like a pavilion in the green space surrounding it. Its roof is supported by slender steel columns whose lively positioning in space is meant to convey the impression of an artificial grove. With its glass façade, its skylights, and the daylight-reflecting pond on its south side, it requires almost no artificial lighting.

THE WÖRLITZER BAHNHOF

Historical building as the old and new 'gateway'

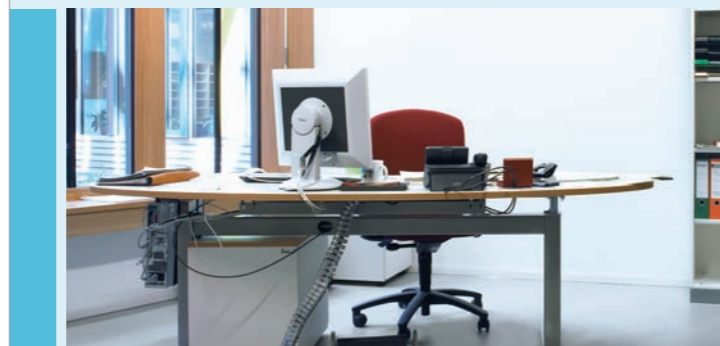
Standing at the site's entrance is a listed building, the old *Wörlitzer Bahnhof*, which now houses the offices of a small work unit of the Agency. The *Wörlitzer Bahnhof* was once the starting point of the Dessau-Wörlitz railway and the gateway, right in the middle of town, to an area of landscaped gardens and farms known as the *Wörlitzer Gartenreich*. The covered area behind the building, which today is used as a bicycle parking facility, plays an important role for the orientation of the main building as it determines its initial alignment.



THE OFFICE CONCEPT

Greater flexibility and cost-effectiveness through standardisation

The office building is a four-storey, 460-metre-long structure in the form of a 'snake' with office space on either side of a central corridor. The office walls to the corridor are 65 % glazed. This transparency was only dispensed with in certain areas such as



the offices of Agency directors or the Staff Council, whose walls to the corridor are made of plasterboard. The offices have a minimum area of 12 m², both those facing in and those facing out. For public buildings it is permitted to vary office sizes according to hierarchical levels. However, this tends to be a disadvantage in facility management. That is why the size of offices was largely standardised. For offices which could have been 15 m², only 12 m² were planned. The 3 m² regularly saved were combined and transformed into communal rooms at central locations of the buildings, where staff can spend their lunch breaks, hold meetings and keep shared documents, for example.

The conference area with rooms for meetings and video conferences is on the ground floor at a central location accessed from the atrium. There are also meeting rooms on each floor, which are mostly used for internal meetings by Agency divisions.



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