

= IG Farben Building =

The IG Farben Building , officially known as the Poelzig Building , is a building complex in Frankfurt , Germany , which currently serves as the main campus of the University of Frankfurt . It was built from 1928 to 1930 as the corporate headquarters of the IG Farben conglomerate , then the world 's largest chemical company and the world 's fourth largest company overall .

The building 's original design in the modernist New Objectivity style was the subject of a competition which was eventually won by the architect Hans Poelzig . On its completion , the complex was the largest office building in Europe and remained so until the 1950s . The IG Farben Building 's six square wings retain a modern , spare elegance , despite its mammoth size . It is also notable for its paternoster elevators .

The building was the headquarters for production administration of dyes , pharmaceutical drugs , magnesium , lubricating oil , explosives , and methanol , and for research projects relating to the development of synthetic oil and rubber during World War II . After World War II , the IG Farben Building served as the headquarters for the Supreme Allied Command and from 1949 to 1952 the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) . It became the principal location for implementing the Marshall Plan , which supported the post @-@ war reconstruction of Europe . The IG Farben Building served as the headquarters for the US Army 's V Corps and the Northern Area Command (NACOM) until 1995 . The US Army renamed the building the General Creighton W. Abrams Building in 1975 .

In 1995 , the US Army transferred the IG Farben Building to the German government , and it was purchased by the state of Hesse on behalf of the University of Frankfurt . Renamed the Poelzig Building in honour of its architect , the building underwent a restoration and was opened as part of the university in 2001 .

= = History = =

= = = The site = = =

The IG Farben Building was developed on land known as the Grüneburggelände in Frankfurt 's Westend District . In 1837 , the property belonged to the Rothschild family . In 1864 , the city 's psychiatric hospital known as " Affenfelsen " or " Affenstein " , was erected on the site . The name Affenstein derives from an ancient Christian memorial that once stood here on the road outside Frankfurt . It was known as the " Avestein " as in Ave Maria but in the local Frankfurt dialect it was called the " Affe Stein " . Here , Dr Heinrich Hoffman hired Alois Alzheimer to work in the hospital , where they both explored progressive methods of treating the mentally ill . The Grüneburgpark was established in 1880 on the larger western part of the site .

= = = Early history = = =

IG Farben acquired the property in 1927 to establish its headquarters there . In the 1920s , IG Farben (full German name Interessen Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie Aktiengesellschaft) was the world 's largest drug , chemical and dye conglomerate . Frankfurt was chosen because of its centrality and its accessibility by air and land .

In August 1928 , Professor Hans Poelzig won a limited competition to design the building , among five selected architects , notably beating Ernst May , the then Head of Urban Design for Frankfurt .

Work on the foundations began in late 1928 , and in mid @-@ 1929 construction started on the steel frame . The building was completed in 1930 after only 24 months , by employing rapid @-@ setting concrete , new construction materials and a round @-@ the @-@ clock workforce . Later in 1930 , the Frankfurt director of horticulture Max Bromme and the artists ' group Bornimer Kreis developed designs for the 14 hectares of parkland that surrounded the building . The grounds , and the complex as a whole , were completed in 1931 at a total cost of 24 million Reichsmark (150

million DEM , 76 @. @ 8 million EUR in 2016) .

= = = Second World War = = =

IG Farben subsequently became an indispensable part of the Nazi industrial base . The building was the headquarters for research projects for the development of wartime synthetic oil and rubber , as well as the production administration of magnesium , lubricating oil , explosives , and methanol . The building was used by IG Farben for 15 years .

During World War II , the surrounding neighbourhood was devastated , but the building itself was left largely intact (and inhabited by the homeless citizens of a bomb @-@ ravaged Frankfurt) . In March 1945 , Allied troops occupied the area and the IG Farben Building became the American headquarters of General Dwight D. Eisenhower . Eisenhower 's office was where he received many important guests ; including General de Gaulle , Field Marshal Montgomery and Marshal Zhukov . It was there that he signed the " Proclamation No. 2 " , which determined which parts of the country would be within the American zone . Eisenhower vacated the building in December 1945 but his office was still used for special occasions : the constitution of the state of Hesse was signed there , the West German Ministerpräsident received his commission to compile the Grundgesetz (German constitution) and the administration of the Wirtschaftsrat der Bizone (Economic Council of the Bizone) was also located there .

= = = Cold War = = =

From 1945 to 1947 , the IG Farben Building was the location of the Supreme Headquarters , Allied European Forces , and was the headquarters for the US occupation forces and Military Governor . On May 10 , 1947 , permanent orders to military personnel prohibited further reference to the building as the " IG Farben Building " , and instead called for it to be referred to as " The Headquarters Building , European Command " . The United States High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) and his staff occupied the building from 1949 to 1952 .

After 1952 , the building served as the European centre of the American armed forces and the headquarters of the U.S. V Corps . It later became the headquarters for the Northern Area Command until 1994 . The IG Farben Building was also the headquarters of the CIA in Germany , which led to its sobriquet ' the Pentagon of Europe ' . On April 16 , 1975 , the US Army renamed the building the General Creighton W. Abrams Building . The renaming did not have full authority in law , because the US was technically leasing the building from the German government and thus was not the rightful owner .

On May 11 , 1972 , three bombs were set off by the West German terrorist group Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction , i.e. , the Baader @-@ Meinhof Group) . Two bombs went off in a rotunda in the rear entrance of the IG Farben building , and a third exploded in a smaller building behind the IG Farben building that was serving as the US Military 's officer 's club . Lt. Col. Paul Bloomquist was killed by the last bomb , and dozens of Americans and Germans were injured . The IG Farben building was attacked again by the same group in 1976 and 1982 . Consequently , the publicly accessible adjoining park became part of a restricted military zone which also included the military living quarters and work areas at the rear of the building .

= = = Recent years = = =

Following German reunification , the US government announced plans to fully withdraw its troops from Frankfurt , Germany by 1995 , at which time control of the entire site would be restored to the German Federal Government . It was suggested that the building could become the location for the European Central Bank . In 1996 , the state of Hesse bought the building and associated land for the University of Frankfurt . The buildings were refurbished at a cost of 50 Million German Mark (about US \$ 26M or 25M ?) , by the Copenhagen @-@ based architecture practice Dissing + Weitling and were handed over to the university . The complex now houses the Westend Campus of

the university , which includes the departments of Philosophy , History , Theology , Classical Philology , Art and Music , Modern Languages and Linguistics , Cultural and Civilization Studies , the Center for North American Studies and the Fritz @-@ Bauer @-@ Institute .

= = = Renaming controversy = = =

The university 's tenancy of the building sparked a debate regarding the name of the building . Former University President Werner Meissner had started the controversy by renaming it the " Poelzig @-@ Ensemble " (Poelzig @-@ Complex) ; to him , renaming the building would free it from associations with Nazism . Students and , in increasing numbers , members of the faculty insisted on confronting the building 's history by retaining its original name , the " IG Farben Building " . Meissner 's successor , Rudolf Steinberg , upheld the university 's decision to retain the name , but he did not enforce a uniform nomenclature within the university 's administration . After the grand opening of the building in 2001 , AStA chairman Wulfila Wido Walter objected to the " misuse of Hans Poelzig " [sic] and proposed leaving the name of the main building unchanged , and calling the smaller casino building the " Poelzig Casino " ; this proposal won little support . By 2004 , the " Poelzig @-@ Ensemble " proposal had become a moot point ? the debate was overtaken by strong political lobbying for an appropriate commemoration and memorial of remembrance : Vice President Brita Rank set up a permanent exhibition inside the building , and a memorial plaque ? for the slave labourers of IG Farben and those who had perished by Zyklon B gas ? was installed on the front of the building . The Senate of the University agreed on a joint initiative by the student senator of the Green University group , David Profit , and Angelika Marx the senator of the United Services Union , to name a place on the new campus 's western end after the former slave labourer Norbert Wollheim .

Despite the renamings by the University and the American military administration , the building is still usually called the IG Farben Building by the general public . The association of the building with Nazism has been hard to shake off , partly because of the close involvement of IG Farben with the Nazi regime and partly because of the building 's imposing and monumental appearance . Der Spiegel wrote of its " Smell of Guilt " . Only with the departure of the Americans , the subsequent renovations , and the use of the building by the university has the building 's association with the Third Reich in the popular consciousness receded . As of 2010 , the building is referred to as IG Farben Hochhaus on the campus map .

= = = Future = = =

Behind the IG Farben Building , the state of Hesse intends to build " Europe 's most modern campus " to accommodate the remaining departments of the University 's old Bockenheim campus , law , business , social sciences , child development , and the arts .

= = Building = =

In 1928 , IG Farben was the world 's fourth largest company and its largest chemical company . Consequently , the space requirements for the building were for one of the largest office buildings ever constructed . It was designed in the New Objectivity style .

IG Farben did not want a specifically ' Bauhaus ' styled building ? it wanted :

A symbol , in iron and stone , of German commercial and scientific manpower . Baron von Schnitzler , IG Farben Director , 1930 .

The 250 @-@ metre long and 35 @-@ metre tall building has nine floors , but the height of the ground floor varies (4 @-@ 6 ? 4 @-@ 2 m) . This variation is reflected in the roof line which looks taller at the wings than the spine . The volume of the building is 280 @-@ 000 m ³ , constructed from 4 @-@ 600 tonnes of steel frame with brick infill and floors constructed of hollow blocks to provide over 55740 m ² of usable office space " . The façade is clad with 33 @-@ 000 m ² Stuttgart @-@ Bad Cannstatt Travertine marble , punctuated in bands of windows decreasing in height with each

storey . Only at the corners are the glazed strips interrupted for emphasis . The top storey is lit from skylights rather than banded glazing and has a very low ceiling height . It forms a clear building conclusion . Until the 1950s , the building was the largest and most modern office building in Europe .

The IG Farben Building consists of six wings , connected by a gently curved , central corridor . This arrangement provides all of the offices with sufficient natural light and ventilation . This design approach for large complexes offers an alternative to the " hollow rectangle " schemes of the time , with their typical inner courtyards . The prototype of this form is the General Motors Building in Detroit (1917 ? 21) by Albert Kahn . The building presents a very large and weighty façade to the front , but this effect is reduced by the concave form .

The main entrance is at the axial centre of the building , comprising a temple @-@ like portico standing in front of the doors ? a relatively common motif of administration buildings of the time . The entrance arrangement is regarded by some people as slightly pompous : the entrance and lift doors are of bronze , and the ceiling and walls of the porch are clad in bronze plate and copper friezes . The inner lobby has two curved staircases with a sheet aluminum treatment , and marble walls with a zigzag pattern . The axial centre at the rear of the building has a round glazed façade ; here , the view of the buildings at the rear of the site (the " casino ") is maximised by the curved walls that afford vistas to the subsidiary buildings 100 m distant , separated from the main building by parkland and a pool . During the American occupation of the building , this rotunda housed a small kiosk ; later , it was used as a conference room . Nowadays , it is called the Dwight D. Eisenhower room and accommodates a café .

The paternoster lifts that serve the nine floors are famous , and are popular with the university students . After the recent restoration , the university has pledged to preserve them in perpetuity .

Behind the rotunda is an oblong pool with a Nymphenskulptur (German : Nymph sculpture) at the water 's edge created by Fritz Klimsch entitled " Am Wasser " . Behind it stands a flat building on a hill with a terrace ? the casino of IG Farben and the Officers Club of the US Army (" The Terrace Club ") , which now houses a refectory and lecture @-@ rooms .

= = Rumours = =

A number of unconfirmed rumours concern the complex :

Hans Poelzig was not favoured by the Nazi regime and was banned by IG Farben from entering the building after its completion .

General Eisenhower issued orders to preserve the building during the bombardment of Frankfurt , because he intended to use it after the war as his headquarters . It may also have been that the building was saved by its proximity to Grüneburgpark with its prisoner of war camp holding captured American airmen .

Two or three basements are under the Poelzig building , which are sealed and flooded .

A tunnel connects the building with Frankfurt 's main railway station ; some sources contend that only the main building and the casino are linked , and that there is no tunnel to the station .

At the reflecting pool behind the building , the " Am Wasser " sculpture of a naked water nymph was moved during the American occupation . The nymph was moved to the Hoechst Chemical concern in Frankfurt / Hoechst at the request of Mamie Eisenhower (the general 's wife) , who deemed it inappropriate for a military installation . The statue has since been returned to its original location .