

## **Library 21 - vision for a new central Library in Stuttgart, Germany**

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### **1 Introduction**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to be here in Barcelona and to have the opportunity to present the plan of Stuttgart's future central library which hopefully will open in 2003. My name is Ingrid Bussmann and I am the deputy head librarian of the Stuttgart City Library in Germany.

Within the past three years I have had the chance to visit Barcelona twice and I really have enjoyed this exciting city. There are some links between the Stuttgart City Library and Barcelona. Richard Meier's Museum of Modern Art here in Barcelona has been a great inspiration to me in developing new ideas for our future library. We also profited tremendously from our teamwork with the Diputacio de Barcelona, Servei de biblioteque -, especially Assumpta Bailac, as well as several of the public libraries in the diputacio network in the European project "CHILIAS- the virtual children's library" And there are lots of contacts between our municipality and the municipality of Barcelona. So I feel a bit familiar here.

But back to the issue of my presentation:

First I would like to introduce you to Stuttgart and the Stuttgart City Library .

Then I would like to describe the steps involved in planning our new central library, explain our prerequisites, our philosophy, the space requirements and the architectural competition.

And finally, I would like to present the winning draft to you and give you a short overview of what is to come in the future.

### **2 Who we are - City Library Stuttgart**

Stuttgart is the capital of Baden-Württemberg in the south of Germany with approximately 500.000 inhabitants in the City and 2 million in the region. Although Stuttgart is a small "cosy" city in comparison to Barcelona, it is one of the largest metropolitan areas in Germany.

Surrounded by hills and vineyards, it is a nice place to live. Yet it is also a modern industrial centre with important well-known companies such as Daimler Chrysler..

Our central library, formally an old dancing palace for two princesses, was built by an Italian architect about 150 years ago. It is an attractive old building and many people ask us why we want a new library..

With approximately 5000 m<sup>2</sup> floor space, the building is the smallest metropolitan central public library in Germany. And that is our problem. .The music department, the acquisition and cataloguing department as well as the technical services department have already been moved to another building . This is neither the most efficient solution for the internal organisation of the library, nor for the user.

Presently the central library's book stock, including the children department, is about 250.000 volumes. The entire library system, including the 16 branch libraries, holds a book collection of approximately one million. In the future we will need a media stock of about 500.000 volumes for the central library. And exactly for this purpose we need a new building.

People in Stuttgart like their Public Library. One and half million visitors borrow about 3 and a half million books and media per year within our system: Thereof 700.000 visitors come to the central library (including the music department) and borrow more than a million books and media. We have more visitors than the famous sport stadium . This has been a very convincing and helpful argument in the decision making process of our local authorities.

The Stuttgart City Library is unique, ambitious, creative, innovative, visionary, open to new challenges, future-oriented, a lively and attractive cultural place for learning and information, literature and reading promotion and experiments with new technologies.

We offer free Internet access for the public in our central library as well as in all of our branches, PCs for multimedia, CD-ROMs and - of course - the public online catalogue.

We organise more than 1000 cultural events per year within the system, approximately 140 take place in the central library. We have 167 positions in the system and a total budget of about 10 million Euro, thereof about 1 million Euro are allotted for the acquisitions budget. A user fee of 10 Euro is charged yearly for all adults over the age of 18 years.

The planning stages of a new library

## **2.1 How to get a new library**

Several accumulating factors played a role in the decision making process for the new library:

- The Lord Mayor of Stuttgart and the members of the City Parliament are impressed by the philosophy and popularity of the Public Library. They feel committed to education and culture and literature promotion and understand that the library has become a real centre in cultural and educational life in the City.
- Stuttgart is an important industrial centre . To increase access to the City the German Railway Society plans a gigantic transformation of the main train station. As a result of this transformation, the City of Stuttgart will gain more than 100 hectares of new urban development area behind the station..
- In a first planning competition architects developed their vision of this new area, an attractive city centre in Stuttgart with shopping centres, offices, flats and restaurants, coffee shops and so on.
- This new development area has raised a lot of discussion in the City with its pros and cons. The advocates recognize the challenge to create a new City centre for the next millennium, the adversaries fear it endangered to become a boring commercialised "sleeping area". Thus, all responsible people have decided to create attractive public institutions to make the new centre lively.
- The Lord Mayor and the members of the City parliament see the library as such an important and attractive place - a unique sign for education and culture in the middle of all the city's commerce. They also expect the library to attract commercial investors to the new centre, as the library draws so many visitors. (We expect about 1 million visitors there).

All these factors induced the local parliament in December 1997 to decide in favour of building a new library in the area now called Stuttgart 21.

## **2.2 The vision - 16 points**

In the summer of 1997 we were asked to provide a programme for the new library building. In accordance with our conviction that the programme of a library building represents the

philosophy of a library, we have created our vision of the new library 21 summarised in 16 points- a library for the next millennium welcoming the future.

- Our Library 21 serves as a base for the Knowledge Society of the future. It accepts the digital challenge with unusual experimental set-ups.
- Our Library 21 assumes a media-based educational responsibility, for both, children and adults.
- Our Library 21 develops strategies for coping with the "information overload".  
Neil Postman: "Turning raw knowledge into improved knowledge".
- Our Library 21 is a base for life-long, self-directed, self-controlled, open learning.
- Our Library 21 is a place for innovative learning. Innovative learning is an opportunity for seeking solutions to the complex problems of our time.
- Our Library 21 is a literary meeting-point. The tradition and the future of literature and of the bookculture are cultivated by animations, dialogues, meetings with authors, by exhibitions, events.
- Our Library 21 plays its part in the evolution of the world of work.. It places special emphasis on the provision and procurement of information, materials for further study, advisory and expert services in the "work, career, business" sector.
- Our Library 21 is dedicated to the City of Stuttgart and provides a platform for artists and authors in the region.
- Our Library 21 inspires and motivates people.
- Our Library 21 is open almost 24 hours a day, giving people with unusual working schedules in the Global Village the opportunity to use the library. To achieve this aim at least one "open end area" will be created.
- Our Library 21 is a platform for a virtual library, a navigator in virtual worlds and a content provider in data networks..
- Our Library 21 is hospitable, offers the opportunity to meet and communicate with initiators of festivals and events for the City and the region.
- Our Library 21 creates networks and close co-operation with nearly all cultural and educational institutions in the City, the region, national and international.
- Our Library 21 is cost-effective and based on business principles.
- Our Library 21 is a well managed organisation with good working conditions for the employees.
- Our Library 21 welcomes the future.

### **2.3 Brief and Organisation diagram**

As a consequence of our aims, the second part of the programme (brief) offers a description of the qualitative factors, space requirements, patterns of operation, economic, technical and ecological questions and a diagram with the specific idea and organisation of our future library. Based on our philosophy we have planned the new library with 8 learning studios covering the topics of main interest, the so called "art rooms" such as the literature department, art department, music library, the children's media centre and the open end area with a coffee shop and facilities open for use from 7 o'clock in the morning till 12 o'clock midnight. We have created so-called "strolling paths" to inspire people to browse through the library and explore the world of books, literature, art and information. The "heart" of our library, an area within the library which we have described as representing a traditional library setting, a quiet area for reflection, yet imaginative and provocative, has proven to be the greatest challenge for the competing architects. This area was quite a mystery to the architects and each responded to our description with their very own personal interpretation. It was a particularly exciting

aspect of our programme and the competition. The winning architect overwhelmed us with a very interesting proposal which we feel fits not only our description perfectly, but our expectations as well.

## 2.4 Space requirements

### 2.4.1 The basic figures

<b>Stock (planned)</b>	Books and media	total:	500.000 ME
	<b>thereof:</b>		
	8 Learning Studios	240.000 ME	
	Literature department	80.000 ME	
	Art department	30.000 ME	
	Music library	90.000 ME	
	Children's media centre	60.000 ME	

<b>Expected use</b>	<b>Visitors per year</b>	1 Million
	<b>Visitors per hour</b>	About 550
	<b>Loans per year</b>	2 Million
	<b>Loans per hour</b>	550
	<b>Enquiries</b>	600.000
	<b>Enquiries per hour</b>	165
	<b>Virtual Library</b>	More than 2 Million
	Access to databases per year	

<b>Opening hours</b>	Mon-Sun 10.00 - 20.00	Per week	70 opening hours
		Per year	3.650 opening hours
<b>Open End Area:</b>	Mon-Sun 7.00 - 24.00	Per week	119 opening hours
		Per year	6.205 opening hours
<b>Staff</b>	Space for about 100 people		

### 2.4.2 Space requirements in detail

<b>Total Space for functions</b>		<b>11.210 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>additional</b>	space for public toilets, staircases, lifts,	
<b>thereof:</b>		
	Heart	500 m <sup>2</sup>
	Open End Area , issue desk	1.020 m <sup>2</sup>
	8 learning studios	3940 m <sup>2</sup>
	Literature department	1.050 m <sup>2</sup>
	Art department	610 m <sup>2</sup>
	Music library	1050 m <sup>2</sup>
	Children's media centre	1050 m <sup>2</sup>
	Auditorium	350 m <sup>2</sup>
	Director, Management, Administration	1.230 m <sup>2</sup>
	Store	270 m <sup>2</sup>

The detailed programme can be found on the Stuttgart City Library homepage:  
<http://www.stuttgart.de/buecherei> - Bibliothek 21 (in German).

## 2.5 The planning process

The planning process began in the summer of 1997 in accordance with our philosophy and programme.

The brief was written by our or library director and myself as a culmination of the discussion with our staff and their written contributions. The whole brief was written within a four week period.

The first basic decision of the local parliament was made in December 1997.

The politicians were interested in a public discussion concerning our philosophy and the proposed concept together with experts. This took place in April 1998.

In the summer of 1998 a second decision was made by the local parliament about

- the concept and the aims
- the brief and the detailed programme including the required space
- 45 million Euro for the costs of the building
- half a million additional acquisition budget per year up to the year 2006
- approval of a 15% total budget increase for additional staff and maintenance costs to be appropriated from the opening day on
- our demand that the branch libraries not experience any financial reductions due to the new central library
- the architectural competition

The competition was prepared by a professional company on behalf of the city. They evaluated our first brief without any mayor changes.

### 2.5.1 Competition

As a rule public authorities in Germany are obliged to organise architectural competitions when planning a new public building. The German Ministry of Building has enacted instructions for these competitions. The instructions include such points as ,an announcement of the competition in Europe, the competition has to be absolutely anonymous, the members of the jury have to include professional architects as well as non-professionals such as the director of the library, the Lord mayor and politicians of each party.

In Stuttgart, we had to organise the competition in 2 phases. The two-day jury sessions were prepared by a group of experts who evaluated the drafts according to functional criteria . As representative of the library in this group, I was able to participate in the jury session as well..

In the First Session the jury discussed all of the 235 submitted projects designed by 235 different architects. We had the enormous task of selecting 25 out of the 235 projects, which we felt suitably met our demands and offered potential for further detailed planning. The task of the Second Session was to determine the winners of the competition. At the very end of the session the winning names of the architects were revealed, the secret was unveiled.

This difficult process was intended to give newcomers more of a chance. In Stuttgart, the jury gave prizes to 9 architects.

### 2.5.2 The Winning Project

The winner of the competition was Eun Young Yi, born in Korea and presently working in Germany. He is a real new-comer .

Yi invented a cube to be built of glass bricks - bright and translucent, crystalline, immense. 40 m by 40 m, height 35 m. The cube is surrounded by water. The building can be entered from all four sides.

The design of the building emphasises the enormous significance of the library. It does however, also ignore several restrictions dictated by the city developers. Fortunately, the responsible authorities were so enthusiastic about the project that they decided to waive the city restrictions in this unique case.

Yi's proposed a cube to be the "heart" of the library. The Heart is a space for meditation and communication, and it is the link between the traditional world of print media and the modern world of digital media.

The Heart is surrounded by the so-called "art-rooms": the music-department, the literature-department, the art-department and the administration.

At the top of the Heart Yi created an open funnel, richly illuminated from the ceiling. The funnel inhabits the eight learning studios. And the books are part of the structure.

Yi's scheme provides two different "promenades" as "strolling paths": one takes us around the Heart, and the other ventures between the building and the outside wall (also the escape route). Of course, there are elevators as well.

The auditorium is positioned right below the Heart. The Children's Department has its own place around an open-air atrium.

Yi's inspiring source is his belief in a future rooted in the past. Yi says: "Presently our world is chaotic, bearing little orientation. Therefore, architecture cannot be only functional or modern design. Architecture is obligated to create buildings essential and substantial in the aesthetic aura. One of his key-words is "archaic architecture". His creed is to "make the world beautiful and admirable".

You can easily recognise the power of the archaic shapes, the allusion to the Pantheon in Rome, cloister-libraries, Bouill er and Gunnar Asplunds, altogether recreated in an innovative totality.

## **2.6 The next steps and one open question**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 99 we had a wonderful celebration with architects, politicians and colleagues, to present and announce the results of the competition.

And what is the next step?

We hope that we will be able to inaugurate the library in 2003. But there are still questions that need to be answered.

The German Railway Society is now under new management and this new management is no longer convinced of the expensive project Stuttgart 21 as well as the transformation of the main railway station. And although everyone is enthusiastic about the Library 21, it remains an open question as to when we can start the building. As the cube is suitable to be built anywhere in the city, we are still hopeful our Library 21 will soon become reality and welcome the future.