

what were seen by many at well below market rates. Sony and Daimler Benz were the purchasers of the two significant parcels but other multi-national corporations hold land as well. There were 17 sites in all. They were attractive because the area is easily accessible – a number of subway and bus lines have their junction at Potsdamer Platz – and because of the Platz's past history. The Platz itself is on the periphery of the scheme and remains a traffic intersection. Perhaps it will become a place in itself when the development at Leipziger Platz and the Lenné-Dreieck site are completed.

The Berlin-oriented Hilmer–Sattler scheme gave way to a more global corporate one designed primarily by Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker. It resulted from a competition organized by Daimler Benz. The design includes high-rise corporate towers at both ends of the site but generally retains the build-to-the-property line requirements and height limits of the Hilmer–Sattler scheme. This new plan specified wide sidewalks, ground floor arcades and façades made of materials such as terracotta, limestone or clinker (reddish-brown bricks). At the same time much of the life generally associated with squares was internalized within the buildings.

Neue Potsdamer Strasse is a weak seam for the overall area and divides the site into two major parts with the Sony site, an island complex of eight buildings, to the north and the remainder of the site, the roughly pie-shaped 50-hectare part containing 19 buildings, to the south. This southern portion is an irregular grid of 10 streets, some new and some revived. At its centre now is the Marlene-Dietrich-Platz. Many of the corporations holding land organized their own design competitions within the general

principles of the overall urban design but boosted by their own corporate interests. The result is a well-crafted set of prestigious buildings designed by internationally renowned architects. The Sony Center (2000) was designed by Helmut Jahn, the Hotel Grand Hyatt (1998) by Rafael Moneo, the Berlin Volksbank (1997) by Arata Isozaki and the Potsdamer Platz Arkaden (1997–8) – another example of internal, quasi-public space – by Richard Rogers amongst others. Renzo Piano designed six of the buildings himself (Figure 8.47).

The Sony Center (a 26,500-square metre site) consists of seven buildings with the interior Forum as its heart (see Figures 8.48 and 8.49). The Forum is an oblong plaza with a central fountain. It is covered by a tented, glass canopy supported on steel beams rather like the spokes on a bicycle wheel and surrounded by five buildings, all but one of which have concave façades encircling the Forum. The public space that was outside in both the Rogers and the Hilmer and Sattler schemes has become internalized and privatized (or, perhaps, private space has been made public). Shops and restaurants surround the Forum and the buildings include the Film Museum and the Esplanade residence (which consists of the breakfast room and the Emperors' room of the Esplanade Hotel which were moved 70 metres from their original location on air cushions). The upper floors of the buildings consist predominantly of offices and expensive apartments. On the interiors facing the internal court the surfaces are clad with mirrored glass. On the corner of the site, as a largely separate entity, is the 100-metre tall Sony Tower. Across the road from the Sony Tower is the 22-storey office and retail building, the Bürohochhaus am Potsdamer Platz,