

THE REICH CHANCELLERY

A WORK ANALYSIS

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THE PRESIDENTIAL CHANCELLERY

ALBERT SPEER

New Reich Chancellery / Exterior / Voßstraße 4 / 1937-1950

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Design 1B

Only photographs of the Presidential Chancellery section of Design 1B have survived. It must therefore be assumed that only a model of the Presidential Chancellery was created for this design as well. In this design, Albert Speer proposed replacing the old portal of the Borsig Palace with a new one. Since Voßstraße was also to be widened as part of the new construction, he planned to shift the angle of the building line slightly farther east.

In this design, he intended the angle of the building line, which had previously been at the property line between Voßstraße 5 and 6, to begin at the end of the main building of the Borsig Palace. The new portal was to be angled 5 degrees to the north. Speer would then have angled the building line of the Presidential Chancellery another 5 degrees away from the portal.

By angling the portal, Albert Speer would have been able to visually soften the break in the alignment of the building lines. In this design, Speer envisioned the new portal as a hinge-like element, positioned diagonally between the Borsig Palace and the street line of the New Reich Chancellery, which angles at 10 degrees. The new portal would also have given Albert Speer the opportunity to relocate the narrow staircase he had created inside the old portal in 1934 during the conversion of the Borsig Palace into the Presidential Chancellery to the outside.⁶

He designed the new portal of the Borsig Palace with a staircase that extended across the entire portal as a grand, representative entrance. Albert Speer intended to adopt the basic concept of the old portal, with its portal supports forming a recessed vestibule. In his design, however, he replaced the columns of the previous portal with four piers standing in

the same positions. Unlike the columns of the old portal, these extended up to the upper floor. Speer did not design the upper floor as an open loggia. Instead, he used the narrower space created by the piers' increased height to install a large pediment. The pediment had a narrow rectangular base but was divided into three square, recessed sections by two vertical divisions. Each section was to contain an unspecified relief. In the pediment, Speer repeated the three rectangular mirrored panels that he had integrated into the individual sections of the attic.

Because the old portal at the Borsig Palace was architecturally overloaded, it stood in stark contrast to the palace's otherwise clear facade design, which was based on Renaissance principles. The new portal, designed by Albert Speer, on the other hand, would have created a harmonious transition between the historical facade and the eastern facade of the Presidential Chancellery, which Speer had also created. The angled design of the new portal and the incorporation of the Borsig Palace's floor and window forms into the east facade would have created an architectural unity between the Borsig Palace facade and the extension's eastern facade. The western portal of the Presidential Chancellery would have formed the center of the new building.

Even though the flanking facades had different floor levels and window heights, they still followed uniform design principles. With this design, Albert Speer therefore achieved the best possible transition from the historical Borsig Palace to the extension of the New Reich Chancellery.

6. The alterations carried out by Albert Speer at the Borsig Palace in 1934 are described in detail in another volume of this book series.



Fig. 22 Design 1B as seen from the entrance of the Borsig Palace



Fig. 23 Design 1B as seen from the entrance of the Presidential Chancellery

Inside the Presidential Chancellery, the portal separated the eastern and western wings. Only the corridor on the ground floor ran on the same level through the

portal and both wings of the building. This was because the ceiling heights and number of floors in the east wing were not coordinated with those in the west wing.



Fig. 59 Section through the corridors and rooms of the Presidential Chancellery on Voßstraße



Fig. 82 View of the three-bay west facade of the Presidential Chancellery

Furthermore, Speer achieved greater harmony between the two distinct facade sections by unifying the building's overall appearance through recurring forms and materials. Based on the design elements of the east facade, Speer developed a net-like framework of bands and mirrored surfaces. He executed the area between the windows

as a parapet cornice. The offset of the cornices with the vertically running bands created a form that, like an external framework, encircled the entire facade. This facade articulation extended across the entire western wing of the Presidential Chancellery and therefore encompassed the three-bay facade connecting it to the Führerbau.

Two windows were set into the western portal wall. The lower window belonged to the guardroom on the first floor, adjacent to the entrance hall, and the upper window to one of the offices on the second floor of the west wing. In the eastern portal wall, Albert Speer could only include the lower window.

This was because, in the east wing, the boundary between the first and second floors ran at the level of the opposite upper window. Due to the different ceiling heights and floor levels in both wings of the Presidential Chancellery, Speer could not achieve symmetry between the side windows in the portal.



Fig. 95 View of the western narrow side of the portal's vestibule

The windows of the upper three floors of the west facade of the atrium led to the public restrooms in the corridors of the Presidential Chancellery. The single window on the ground floor, however, led

to the corridor connecting the Presidential Chancellery with the Round Hall in the Führerbau. On the lowest floor was a staircase leading down to the basement of the New Reich Chancellery.

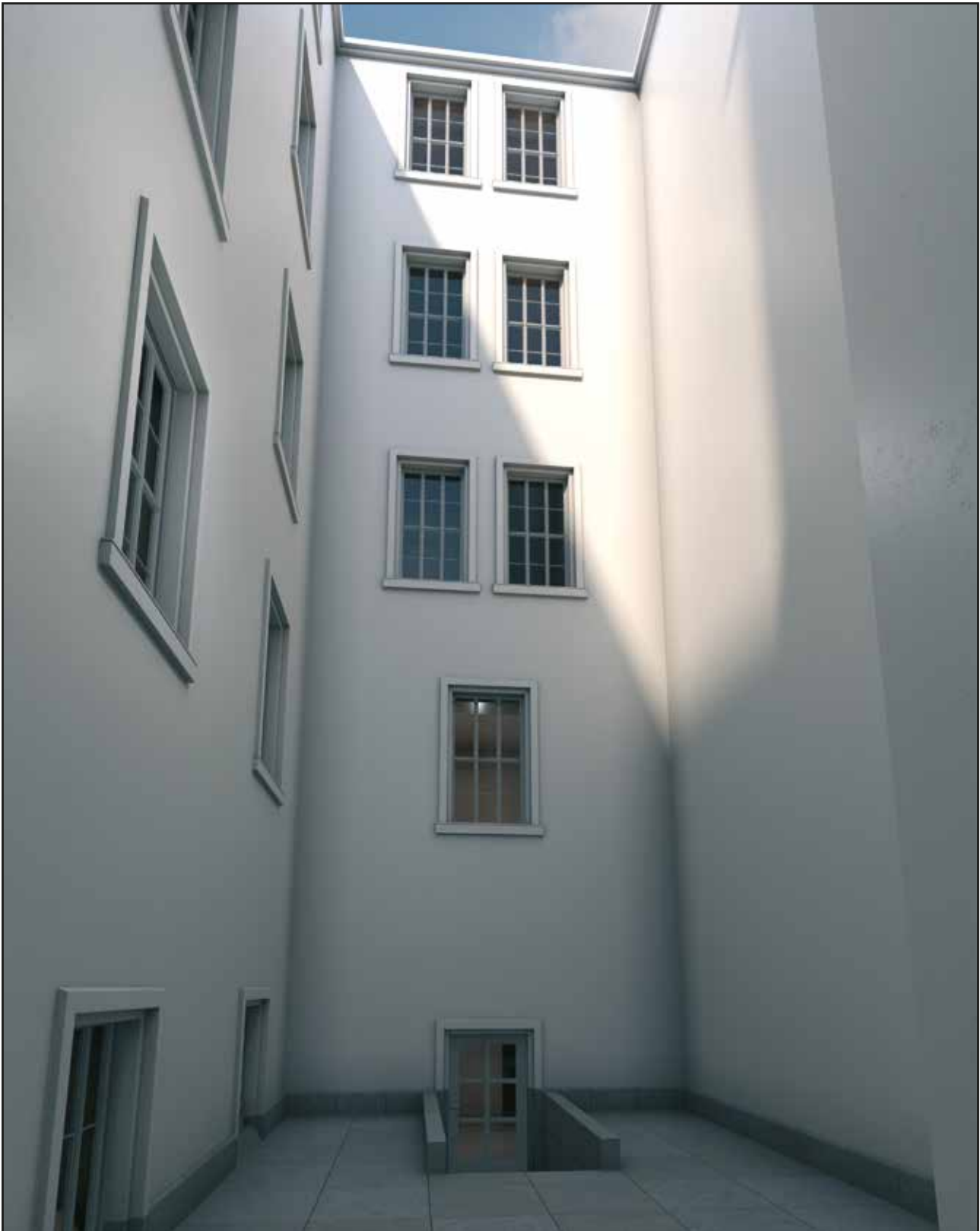


Fig. 118 The west facade was only built when the Presidential Chancellery was connected to the Führerbau



Fig. 122 View from Wilhelmplatz into Voßstraße at night (1939)



Fig. 123 The Presidential Chancellery illuminated by artificial light shortly after its completion (1939)



Fig. 131 This photo shows the partially bricked-up damage to the window openings (1945)



Fig. 132 The Presidential Chancellery portal damaged by artillery fire (1945)