Contributing to the German “spirit of thoroughness” ... and the environment.

In the heart of Berlin, in the Stresemannstrasse, at the Potsdamer Platz, the “Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning” (BBR), viz. the departmental office of the “Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety” (BMU), has been expanded by an attractive 1,300 m² new building. It has been designed according to the modern, sustainable and ecological “passive house” concept.

Decomo undertook the delivery and erection of the facade cladding to the new building and the cornices, coping stones and the frontage of the existing building. The new building’s facade has been clad with prefabricated architectural concrete panels with a dark yellow acid etched finish. It is composed of profiled 3.45 m high elements which are separated at each floor level by a horizontal 40 cm high spandrel. To one edge, the units have a right-angled return, while on the other, the return is to an obtuse angle, which together form the 30 cm deep reveals. The new cornices and frontage in architectural concrete embellish the facade of the old building.

Recently, Decomo obtained ISO 14001 certification (Environment Management System) and is, therefore, the perfect construction partner to realise such projects in the future.

The onerous requirements of the passive house concept meant that 20 cm – and in some places, even 30 cm – of insulation had to be installed within the cavity wall. A well thought-out design for fixing the concrete elements to the structure, which was recessed by 50 cm, was extremely important on this particular project.

Where, at one time, the Berlin Wall stood against the old building, there is now a magnificent, sustainable office building. The 18 m brightly painted concrete elements of the Wall have been successfully integrated into the building and have managed to keep their original position. They are part of the central information and exhibition area of the Ministry for the Environment. In this way, their long existence and protection against decay have been safeguarded. With this innovation, the Ministry for the Environment holds the evidence of German history that stands as a memorial and symbol for a peaceful new beginning.
The facade cladding has been carried out partly in architectural concrete and partly in a white metal cladding. The total finished acid etched surface in architectural concrete amounts to 9,600 m². The brownish-grey, acid etched, concrete ornamental facade was designed, produced and erected by Decomo. It consists of interlaced slender columns and curved beams. Hild und K Architekten, with as business card “braided facades”, was chosen as the winner of the facade design competition.

The facade has been carefully constructed from frames, T-shaped elements, self-supporting beams and columns, with the challenge to hide the joints between the elements as far as possible. The complex woven look makes the design and production of the outer and inner corners, more difficult. The building appears repetitive, but because of the diversity of radii, one gets a multitude of unique pieces (741 different units out of a total of 1,368).

Furthermore, the assembly and erection were a particular challenge, as the very slender and heavily reinforced concrete bearing structure gave little scope for fixing the panels. Moreover, the glazed window frames had been assembled beforehand, and sealed for air and watertightness on the structure behind it.

Erection of the 13-tonne balconies, which are vertically loaded on 2 corbels, was a mammoth undertaking. Two threaded rods in the lateral upright partitions absorb the horizontal tensile forces.

That it can freeze hard and snow a lot in Munich is something we have experienced personally! But we only suspended erection at temperatures between minus 7 and 10 degrees Celsius!

Decomo achieves ISO 14001 certification for environmental compliance

Our efforts for developing an Environmental Management System (EMS), were rewarded with the Certificate for Environmental Compliance ISO 14001. This award reinforces our commitment to make a positive contribution to sustainable construction. To this end, particular investments and work were done for the permanent improvement of the health, safety and well-being of the employees, with attention to water, energy and waste management.

Decomo SA
Boulevard Industriel 96
7700-Mouscron, Belgium
+32 (0)56 85 07 11
tel: +32 (0)56 34 48 91
fax: +32 (0)56 34 48 91

Decomo UK Ltd
180-186 Kings Cross Road
London WC1 9DE, UK
tel: +44 (0)20 7689 8058
fax: +44 (0)20 7689 8059

info@decomo.co.uk
www.decomo.co.uk