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STRABAG Bratislava and UNIGLAS®

2010-03-26

A Group Headquarters with a Sense of Humour

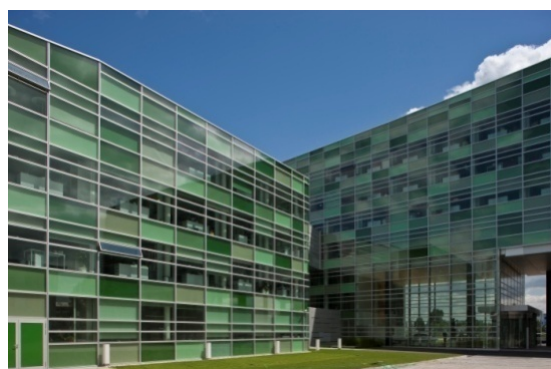


Construction development is running at top speed in Bratislava. The Austrian construction group STRABAG has completed the first section on a new headquarters there. The glass and windows were produced by Petschenig glastec, a partner of UNIGLAS® - based in Austria, but also located in Bratislava since 2005 - which manufactures toughened safety glass to the state of the art in glass processing and prestressing technology.

Dynamism

For Bratislava, capital city of Slovakia, the fall of the iron curtain was the initial spark for growth in all areas. Bratislava is located conveniently for transport, on the Danube not far from the Austrian and Hungarian borders, and is about an hour's drive from Vienna.

Towered over by a four-sided castle, the Pressburg, the old city is in a late baroque style from the time of Queen Maria Theresa. The periphery is characterised by extensive residential areas in a housing block style, as is to be found in all socialist countries in the former Eastern Block.



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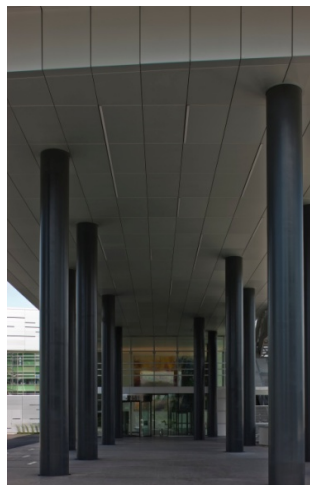
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Meandering Ensemble

East of the inner city, the new group headquarters combines the already existing branch of STRABAG with ZIPP GmbH, a construction company that develops and produces cement parts and turnkey buildings. The two companies moved into the first construction section at the beginning of the year. The other sections are to be rented to third parties. The Viennese planning firm MHM architects has designed a meandering development for the roughly 1.5 ha, rectangular piece of land. The stretched-out, mostly 6-storey structures, towered over by a 16-storey block of flats, are largely on stilts, and the upper end is sometimes slightly slanting. This lends a degree of lightness to the construction's dimensions.



Functional Building with a Twist

The reception area is impressive: the main entrance is set far back from the main access road. Visitors reach it through 7.75 m high rows of supports arranged in an offset pattern, which can be regarded as a reinterpretation of a historical portico. The central eye-catcher of the otherwise unadorned entrance hall is an elegant, white, nine-metre long reception desk that looks like a sculpture. The reception, which is located almost in the centre of the floor plan and from which the upper levels are accessed, offers

the advantage of quick routes to other areas. The storey floor-plans are unspectacular, clearly laid out and functional: on both sides of the centrally located areas for access, supply and secondary rooms, the offices are arranged on the outer edges, with each usually having two workplaces opposite each other. All offices are naturally lit and ventilated. The structure is interrupted by meeting rooms and common areas. The economically allocated range of rooms reflects the organisation of the group headquarters. Rooms can be put to other uses, however, without any problems. On the top storey, roof gardens allow a magnificent view of Pressburg.

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The building, which is restrained in design, contains the company's extensive art collection, with works by renowned artists.

The installation "House Attack" by the Viennese artist Erwin Wurm is especially striking and an indication of STRABAG's fields of activity that can be seen from far away. On the edge of the roof is a classic single-family house that looks as if it has fallen head first from nowhere and always seems in danger of falling further. The house is "turnkey": complete with doors, windows, gutter and downpipe, and, yes, even window-boxes and a letter box.

Previously, "House Attack" was installed on the roof of the Museum of Modern Art – MUMOK – in Vienna, and it now draws smiles from the passersby and visitors in Bratislava.

Constructive

Even the facades indicate the content of the administration building: a building company works here. The post-and-beam construction of continuous, delicate-looking aluminium profiles stretches over the outer skin like a net. Transparent glass elements, sometimes designed as top-hung windows, alternate with opaque "shadowboxes", which are arranged in the area of the lintels. In the building block construction of these "shadowboxes", the colour-giving level, consisting of aluminium façade plates in three different green shades, was positioned several centimetres behind the transparent insulation glass units. Despite the substantial dimensions, this results in a lively-looking facade with spatial depth. All of the special-function glass in the façade has been manufactured and supplied by Petschenig glastec. The company, which has been based in Leopoldsdorf since 1965, not far from Vienna, has also been producing toughened safety glass TSG and enamelled toughened safety glass close to Bratislava since 2005. Petschenig glastec is one of the first partners and a founding member of the alliance UNIGLAS® in Montabaur.

In Bratislava, it is above all UNIPHON® sound-insulating glass and UNISUN® anti-sun glass that have been used.

Following the "green" construction section with a yellow one and then a red one produces a refreshingly colourful ensemble, far removed from any architectural drabness of the past.

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