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BERLIN

THE SECRET ATLAS



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04.

Philippstraße 12-13
U6 (Oranienburger Tor)

ANIMAL ANATOMICAL THEATRE

Elevator to the final act

Hidden away in the Charité, Berlin’s university hospital, the animal anatomical theatre is an impressive building built in 1790 by Carl Gotthard Langhans, who found his inspiration in Andrea Palladio’s Villa Rotonda in Italy. The bull skulls among the bas-reliefs over the outer windows hint at the building’s purpose. This type of theatre emerged across Europe to satisfy the growing interest in surgery and the human body. Berlin already had the anatomical theatre of the Collegium Medico-Chirurgicum, located since 1713 in the nearby Charité building complex. However, demonstrations performed on human bodies were not sufficient to meet the needs of the army: to the ruling class, animals used for military purposes – mainly horses and bulls – were just as important as soldiers. Therefore, in order for veterinarians to acquire the necessary knowledge, a second theatre dedicated to the dissection of animals was built. Nowadays, Berlin’s human anatomical theatre and the original building of the Charité complex no longer exist, but the building still referred to in German as ‘TAT’ gives an authentic idea of what these theatres were like. At the entrance, a small permanent exhibi-

tion details the history of the building and its architectural elements. Markings in the middle of the floor outline the area where the manually operated elevator hoisted the dead animals. And in addition to the particularly steep tiers of seats, the main attraction of the auditorium is its domed ceiling and the remarkable animal-themed grisaille paintings found there. Since 2012, the Hermann von Helmholtz Center for Cultural Techniques (HKZ) uses the TAT as an innovative exhibition showroom and a centre for exchanges between scientific culture and the practice of exhibition making. *For more information about the theatres see the following double page spread.*

In contrast to the many human anatomical theatres (there are eight in Germany alone), there were only half a dozen animal anatomical theatres across the whole of Europe.



03.

Littenstraße 12–17
U2 (Klosterstraße)

FOYER OF THE BERLIN COURTHOUSE

Incredible architecture inside and out

Whilst the Berlin Regional Court (Landgericht Berlin) building itself is not exactly a secret in Berlin, most people who are familiar with it have no idea that it is open to visitors. Yet it houses one of the most beautiful interiors in the whole city.

After passing through security at the entrance on Littenstraße (a passport or ID card is sufficient), visitors are greeted by a spectacular sight: a circular hall 30.50 metres high, adorned with rich decorations blending several styles.

Particularly noteworthy are the sandstone columns and two magnificent staircases adorned with knights in armour, as well as the white wrought-iron balustrades of the staircases, typical of Jugendstil (Art Nouveau).

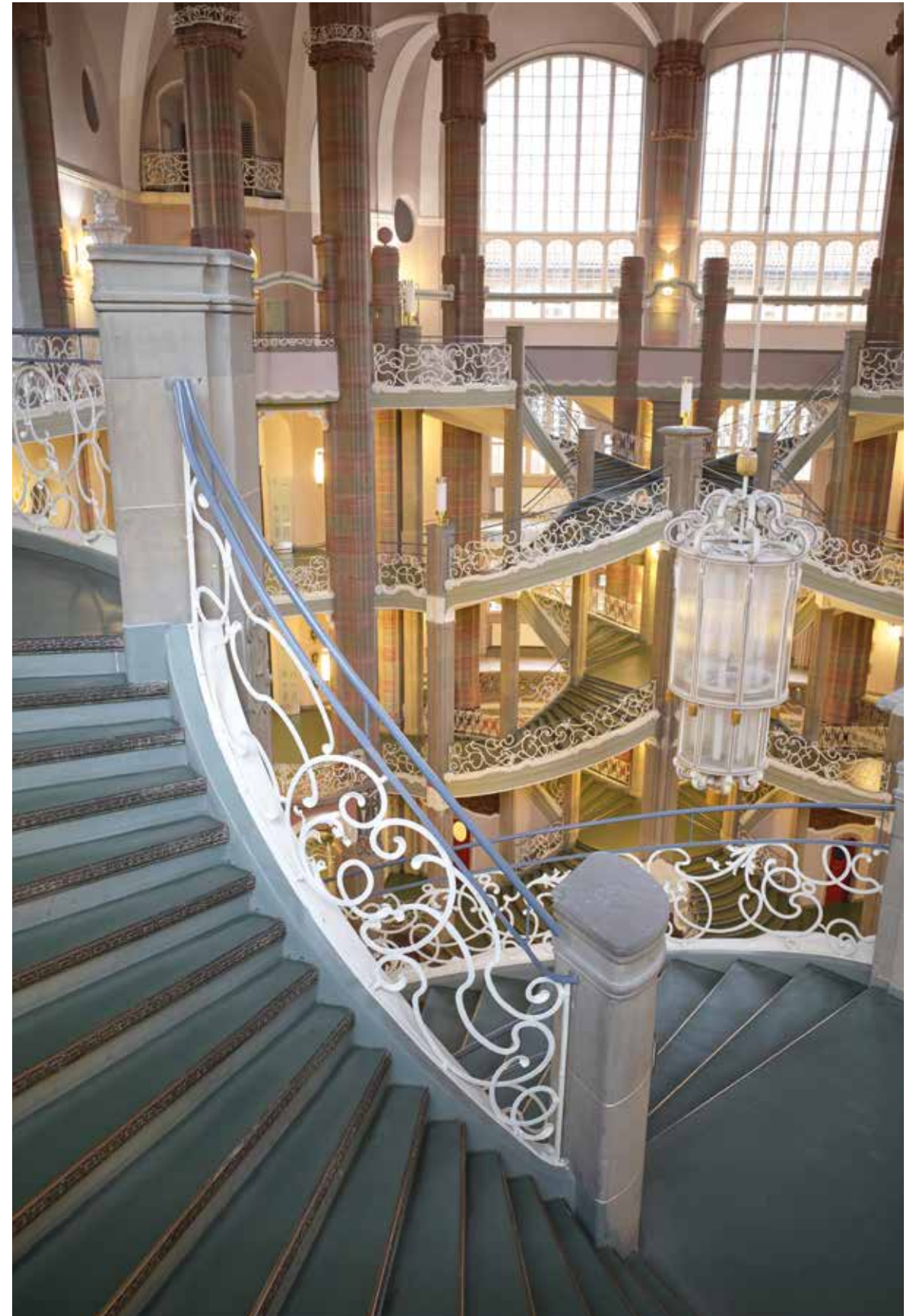
As you ascend to the upper floors, you can admire the superb chandelier suspended in the centre of the hall,

as well as the atrium in its entirety (1,000 m²).

Opened in 1904, the building was designed by architects Paul Thoemer, Rudolf Mönnich and Otto Schmalz to house the civil division of the Berlin Regional Court and the Mitte District Court. With its five kilometres of corridors and 3,000 windows, it was one of the city's largest buildings.

The building suffered extensive damage during the Second World War and was partially rebuilt after the war, although in 1968–69 an entire wing that had not been damaged was demolished to make way for Grunerstraße.

Having also housed the GDR Supreme Court, it currently accommodates several civil chambers of the Regional Court as well as the Court of Appeal of the Berlin Regional Court.





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10.

Schützenstraße 6–6A
U6 (Kochstraße Checkpoint Charlie)

THE MICHAELSEN PALACE

A magnificent example of German Art Nouveau

At No. 6 Schützenstraße, the Michaelsen-Palais, also known as the Hotel Roter Adler, is one of the most representative examples of German Art Nouveau (Jugendstil) in central Berlin. It is easy to overlook, however, as the most interesting part of its façade is located at the very top of the building. Among the many figures depicted there, just below a massive representation of the Greek god Hermes, are two famous men: Charlemagne (on the left) and Emperor William I (on the right). Between them, Saint George struggles to slay the dragon (a symbol of good fighting against evil), while the bust of the ‘Iron Chancellor’ Otto von Bismarck stands out clearly, lower down on the right, at the level of the pediment. The building was constructed between 1903 and 1907 by the Berlin architect Otto Michaelson, after whom it was named, at the request of the contractor Emil

Voigt. Barely a year after construction was completed, Voigt had to sell the building due to financial difficulties. The building was subsequently acquired by the Swiss insurance company Winterthur, which set up its offices there. During World War II, the Michaelsen-Palais was used, among other things, as the criminal court of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as a hotel. It was after the fall of the Berlin Wall that Winterthur regained possession of the building, which was renovated in the early 2000s.

Note the entrance gate at No. 6, one of the most beautiful in the city.



© Siwecki, Marek

04.

Blaschkoallee 48/Riesestraße 20–22
U7 (Blaschkoallee)

SRI MAYURAPATHY MURUGAN HINDU TEMPLE

Object of veneration



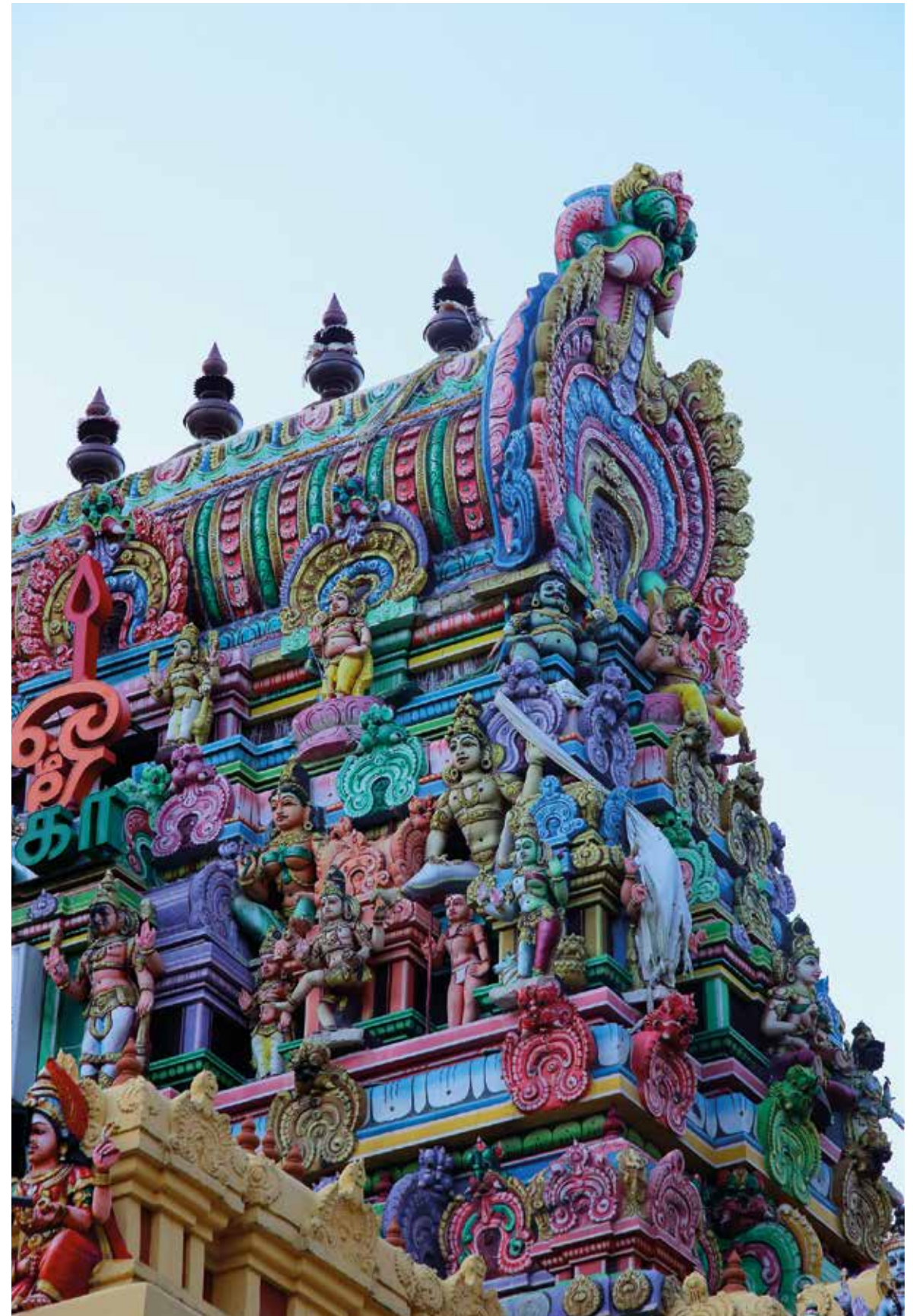
The brightly coloured Sri Mayurapathy Murugan temple with its red and white stripes stands out in stark contrast in the middle of the rather banal buildings of the Blaschkoallee and the Riesestraße.

Two rainbow-coloured towers (*gorupas*) rise five or seven metres high over them and are home to a wide range of Hindu gods.

Inside the centre of this Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva, various other colourful gods are venerated. The main god in the temple is Murugan, one of Shiva's sons, just like Ganesh.

Built between 2009 and 2013 by the Indian architect Govindan Ravi Shankar, the Murugan temple is connected to the Tamils from Sri Lanka who came to Berlin in the 1980s at the outbreak of the civil war in their country.

Today, there are more than 1,100 of them living in Berlin and they have recreated their country's spiritual environment in Neukölln.



01.

An der Apostelkirche 1
U1, 2, 3, 4 (Nollendorfplatz)

WINDOWS OF THE CHURCH OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Windows made of thousands of liquor bottles

Inaugurated in 1874, the Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche (Church of the Twelve Apostles) does not initially stand out from other churches built in similar Neo-Gothic style. Yet walking around the outside, it becomes clear that some of the windows are not simple panes or stained glass; they are actually made from the bottoms of more than 50,000 gin bottles.

Berlin was the most heavily bombed city of the Second World War. Official figures vary greatly, but according to some estimates, the total weight of all the bombs dropped on Berlin amounts to 450,000 tonnes. Assuming that the average bomb weighed 250 kilos, this would represent about 2 million bombs.

Unsurprisingly, Berlin suffered from a shortage of windows in the post-war period; to replace the windows of the city's various churches, the city had to make do with what it could find. So, as early as the spring of 1945, the local religious community undertook to renovate the Church of the Twelve Apostles, which had been badly damaged in the bombings of 22-23 November 1943.

The family that owned the GILKA spirits company came up with a truly novel idea, and generously offered thousands of bottles to help rebuild the gigantic windows that had been destroyed.

Renovated in 2018-19 thanks to a federal grant of 28,000, these extraordinary windows are now classified as historic monuments.



01.

Nassauische Straße 66–67
U2, 3 (Hohenzollernplatz)

THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS OF THE CHURCH ON HOHENZOLLERNPLATZ

Exceptional plays of light

Built between 1930 and 1933 by architect Ossip Klarwein, the Kirche am Hohenzollernplatz (Church on Hohenzollernplatz) is hardly a hidden gem, with its 66-meter-tall steeple, 40-meter-long nave, and 20-meter-high interior. But who, apart from the parishioners, has visited its exceptional interior?

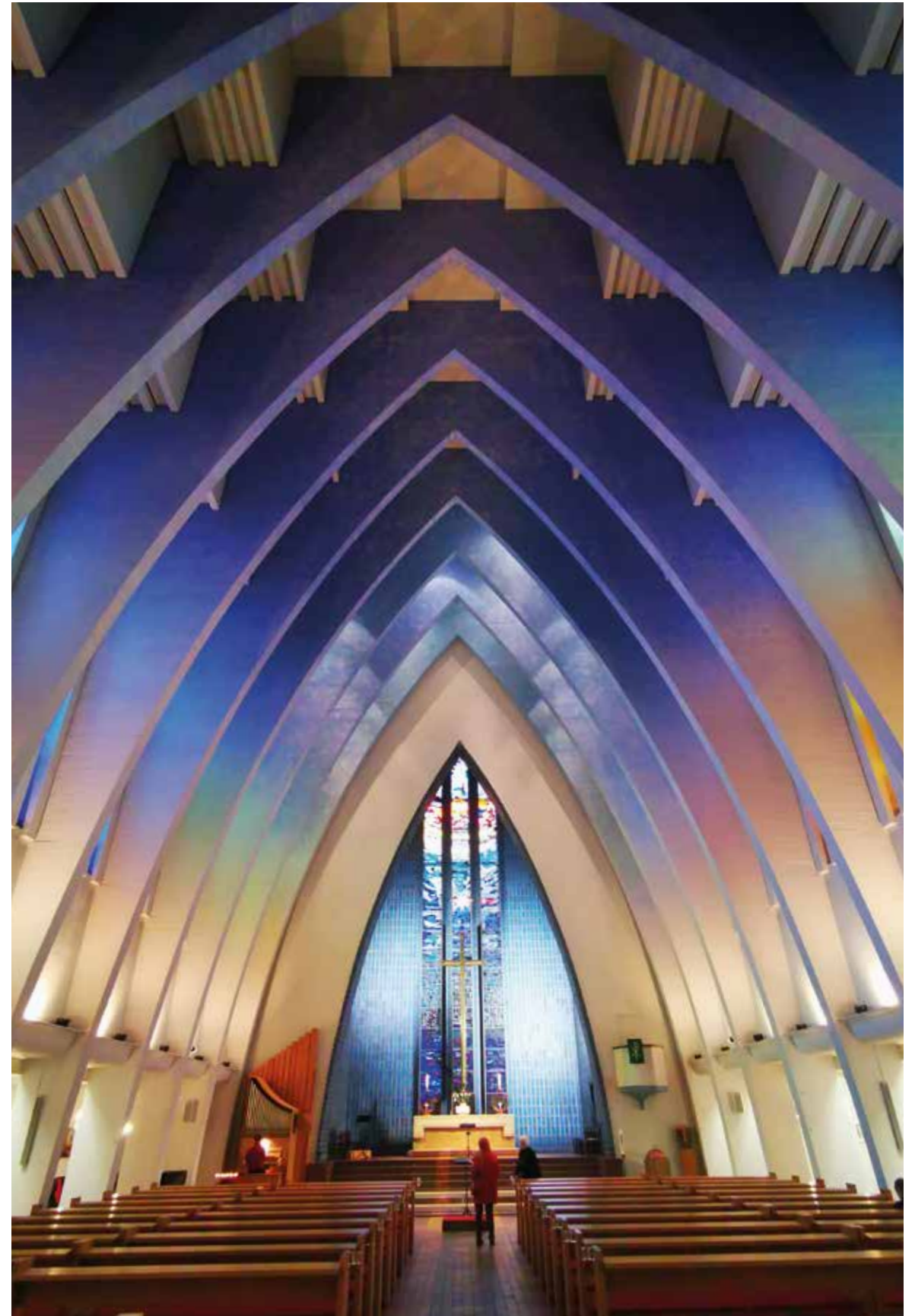
Upon entering the church, one is indeed struck by the exceptional play of light created by the side stained-glass windows and the immense stained-glass window behind the altar: these cast shades of yellow, red, and blue throughout the vast church, inviting visitors and parishioners alike to sit for a moment and enjoy the spectacle.

This feature did not exist when the building was first constructed: the church was in fact largely destroyed on November 22, 1943, during an Allied bombing raid; the

original organ, frescoes, and paintings were almost entirely destroyed in the ensuing fire. The current beautiful stained-glass windows are recent: they were created in 1990–91 by the German artist Achim Freyer.

Every Saturday at noon, during NoonSong, a Mass is sung by a professional choir.

The church is a fine example of Backsteinexpressionismus (Brick Expressionism), an architectural style typical of northern Germany.



10.

Versuchsanstalt Dynamik Maritimer Systeme
Müller-Breslau-Straße 15
S3, 5, 7, 9 (Tiergarten)

A VISIT TO THE UT2

The world’s largest cavitation testing station

Viewing the 35-metre-high UT2 building from afar (a hybrid of giant pink pipelines and stranded container ships), it’s hard to imagine the interior. But inside, it’s like a cargo vessel dedicated to scientific research. UT2 stands for *Umlauf-und-Kavitations-Tank 2* (Circulation and Cavitation Tank No. 2). Cavitation is a phenomenon whereby the movement of a ship’s propeller blades creates different kinds of

bubbles underwater, whose energy, when they implode, has the potential to damage the propeller itself. In extreme cases, these bubbles can have the same destructive effect as a hammer on metal. UT2 simulates real-life conditions of stress on moving propellers; it is the world’s largest testing station used to study these kinds of currents. The main pipe, in which masses of water move during experiments, runs along the ground inside the building. The surrounding walls are covered with open galleries, crowded with machines, control consoles, measuring equipment, and archive cabinets – not dissimilar to the hold of an oceanographic ship. This explains why researchers refer to different levels as ‘decks’ rather than ‘floors’. The circulation of water through the looped pipe (120 metres long, 19 metres high, and 8 metres in diameter) is powered by two diesel boat engines capable of carrying 3,300 tonnes of water at a flow speed ranging from 4 to 10 metres per second.



© Jacek Ruta/TU Berlin



© Philipp Lohöfener

02.

At the junction of Gatower Straße and Straße 270
S3, 5, 9 (Pichelsberg) then 15 min by bicycle

THE FIELDS OF KAROLINENHÖHE

A magnificent relic of the history of the drains of Berlin

To the west of the tower of Beringer, level with the right angle formed by the border between Berlin and Brandenburg, a surprising and immense area of countryside begins. By bicycle, this particularly pleasant ride takes you, for example, from the fort of Hahneberg to the Havel. The dirt tracks, installed on a sort of dyke between the fields, feel almost like ancient rice fields. These fields, called Karolinenhöhe, are actually a magnificent relic of the so-called drainage fields (Rieselfelder) which were used in Berlin for more than a century to deal with the problem of sewage. Originally belonging to the autonomous town of Charlottenburg, the Rieselfelder Karolinenhöhe were made into a protected green area covering 220 hectares in 1987. The sewage treatment plants are relatively recent: in Berlin they have only really been in use since the end of the 1960s. Before then, sewage from the capital was taken to different pumping stations, which evacuated them out of the town using underground pressure pipes to some 20 drainage fields (Rieselfelder) covering up to 10,000 hectares of land (Karolinenhöhe, Wansdorf, Schönerlinde, Blankenfelde, Buch, Hobrechtsfelde, Malchow, Falkenberg, Hellersdorf, Münchehofe, Deutsch Wusterhausen, Kleinziethen, Großziethen, Boddinsfelde, Tas-

dorf, Mühlenbeck, Waßmannsdorf, Osdorf, Großbeeren, Sputendorf). Filtered naturally, the sediments were used for market gardening to feed the city of Berlin. The history of these fields goes back to the advent of running water around the end of the 19th century: before it was installed, dry toilets could be found in interior courtyards. Once full, the septic tanks were emptied at night by the Eimer-Weiber (bucket women), who carried the contents, by cart, outside the city. As for the sewage, it was thrown into the gutters (Rinnsteine). Placed between the pavement and the road, they formed a small rut, the width of a paving stone, filled with repulsive trickles of matter which flowed into the Spree. With the arrival of running water, which also supplied enough water to rinse out the gutters, the dirty waters became mixed with the excrement from the toilets and also flowed into the gutters which lined the pavements, forming an open sewer throughout the city streets, the repulsive streams of which not only polluted the Spree but also soaked into the ground and down to the water table. The underground drainage network, with its pumping stations (see page 180) and the system of the Rieselfelder, helped to solve this problem.



08.

Krahmerstraße 6
S25, 26 (Lichterfelde Ost)

THE MÄUSEBUNKER

A little-known masterpiece of Brutalist architecture

Known as the Mäusebunker (the Mouse Bunker), the Research Center for Experimental Medicine (Forschungseinrichtung für experimentelle Medizin), its official name, is one of Berlin's most spectacular buildings.

A masterpiece of Brutalist architecture, this exceptional building, nearly 120 meters long and shaped like a giant warship, stands between Hindenburgdamm and Krahmerstraße, along the Teltow Canal (from which it is hidden by trees).

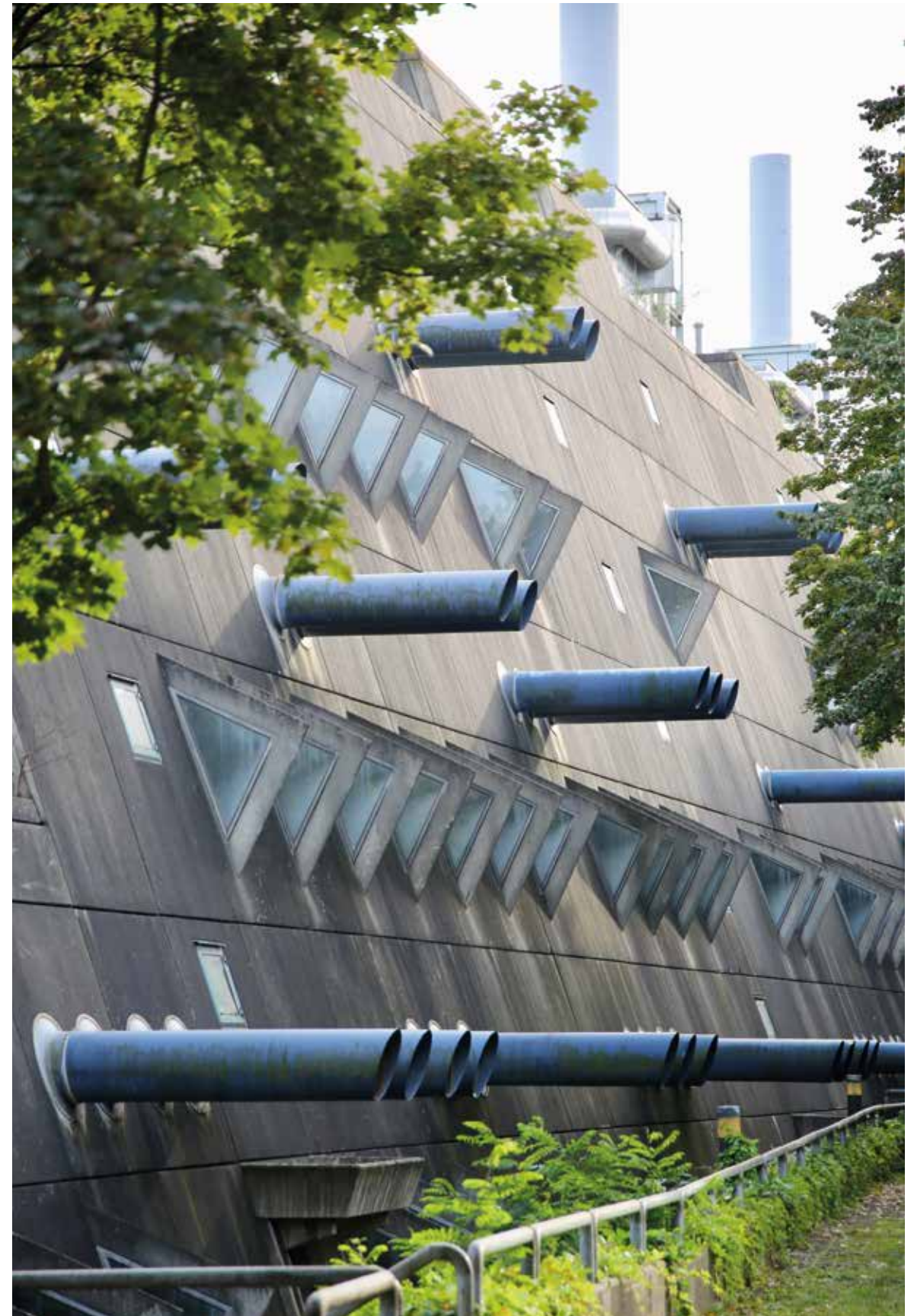
Although the building is no longer in use and not open to the public, you can get a good view of it from Krahmerstraße between the canal and Hindenburgdamm.

The building was designed as an animal experimentation laboratory for the Freie Universität between 1967 and 1970 by Berlin architect Gerd Hänska in collaboration with his wife Magdalena and his son Thomas. Delayed time and again, construction was not completed until 1981.

Built of concrete, the building features a striking truncated pyramid structure. The large blue tubes,

resembling cannons, that protrude from both side walls give visitors the impression of standing before a warship rather than a simple research center.

These tubes once served as ventilation ducts, essential for maintaining adequate airflow within the interior spaces. The protruding triangular windows, visible on the west façade, allowed sunlight to ensure proper temperature and lighting.

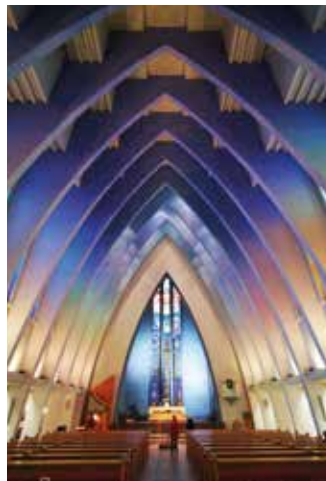


BERLIN

THE SECRET ATLAS

*Far from the madding crowds and the usual clichés,
Berlin remains full of hidden treasures that can only be seen by locals
and travellers who bother to wander off the beaten track.*

An amphitheatre where animals were dissected, a sand dune hidden in a town centre, the outstanding interior of an expressionist church, a building which is a copy of the Farnese Palace in Rome, a concrete construction weighing 12,000 tonnes built to measure the solidity of the ground, a shining performance in the chapel of a cemetery, an unknown masterpiece of brutalist architecture, the first Nazi concentration camp, a house with the underground running through it...



JONGLEZ PUBLISHING

£29.99 – €35.00 – US\$39.95



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www.jonglezpublishing.com

ISBN: 978-2-36195-968-5

