

Siemens headquarters – A history in pictures

1847–2016

“What the public thinks of us, how it judges and evaluates us, is also very largely governed by the look of our buildings,” said the then head of the Supervisory Board, Ernst von Siemens, in 1969. With this statement he identified what we now call corporate architecture as an integral element of corporate identity. To mark the opening of the new headquarters in Munich we’ve put together a series of pictures of Siemens administrative buildings. They range from the workshop at the rear of a courtyard in Berlin where everything began almost 170 years ago to the present new building.

1847–1899: Conversion of an existing building in Berlin

The “Telegraphen-Bauanstalt von Siemens & Halske” commenced operation on October 12, 1847, in a Berlin apartment building complex. The 150-square-meter workshop was situated in a rear building at Schöneberger Straße 19, right opposite Anhalter station. The firm’s two founders lived in the same building. At first the company employed ten people, mostly locksmiths and mechanics. The capacities of the first workshop were soon exhausted; in 1852 Siemens moved to the nearby Markgrafenstraße 94. In the previous year the company had acquired a plot together with a four-storey residential building, the conversion of which had now been completed.



Workplace and apartment in one –
View of the first workshop of
Siemens & Halske, Berlin undated



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In the following decades, surrounding properties were bought up to create a compact complex of factories consisting of several residential buildings converted into production facilities and a factory building.

1901: Siemens & Halske moves into its first Berlin administrative building

At the end of the 19th century “due to the long-felt inadequacy of the old business premises,” Siemens & Halske (S&H) embarked for the first time on the construction of a new administrative building. The representative Jugendstil building in the center of Berlin was erected between 1899 and 1901 from plans by the civil engineer Karl Janisch, who had been appointed a few months previously. It contained the administrative and sales departments of the expanding electrical engineering company.

At the same time, a large complex of factories and company apartments was created on the extensive premises of the Nonnenwiesen north-west of Berlin. There were initially no plans to build a new administrative building in what later became “Siemensstadt.” However, the city of Spandau, to which the Nonnenwiesen belonged, was very interested in having the headquarters of such an important company and trade tax payer as Siemens within its boundaries. At the urging of the city, Siemens commissioned Karl Janisch and his colleague Friedrich Blume to draw up corresponding plans. The building at Askanischer Platz 3 was sold in 1912 to the Accumulatoren-Fabrik AG (today Varta).



Representative building in Berlin – Premises on Askanischer Platz, Berlin circa 1903



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1910–1913: Construction of the main administrative building on Nonnendammallee in Berlin

In fall 1910 work began on a building on the corner of Nonnendammallee and Rohrdamm for the “Construction and Accounting Office” of the booming heavy engineering department (Dynamowerk). This was the first step in the direction of a central administrative building which was to house both the administrative departments of the Siemens-Schuckertwerke GmbH (SSW) founded in 1903 and those of Siemens & Halske AG. The first employees began working in the new administrative building in January 1911.



Buildings for the „Construction and Accounting Office” – Work on the first stage of the building, Berlin 1910

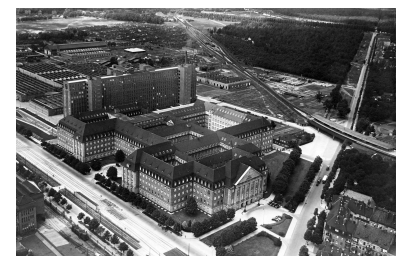
By the end of 1913 the second building stage had almost been completed and the administrative employees working in central Berlin began to move to Nonnendamm. After only a few months, around 3,000 people were working in the multi-storey building, a complex composed of several wings. Most people worked in so-called office halls with up to 100 workplaces. Comfort and separate offices, and rooms with elegant furnishing, were reserved for the Managing Board, senior managers and holders of commercial and registered powers of attorney and for the reception of visitors.



Solid furnishings – Managing Board member's office, Berlin 1920s

1922/1929–1930: Expansion of the main Berlin administrative building

The architect Hans Hertlein started working for the company in 1912. Three years later he succeeded Karl Janisch as head of the Berlin Siemens-Werke's construction department that had been established at the turn of the century. During the 1920s, the administrative building was extended twice under Hertlein's direction. The final building with a layout rather like a Baroque palace had a floor space of 75,600 square meters – the equivalent of seven football pitches. With workplaces for around 4,000 employees, it remained the headquarters of Siemens until 1945; all relevant strategic and entrepreneurial decisions had their origin here.



Impression of a Baroque palace – Aerial view of the administrative building, Berlin 1930



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1949: The Ludwig Ferdinand Palais becomes the new administrative seat of Siemens & Halske in Munich

After World War Two, four-fifths of corporate assets were destroyed. In view of the politically unstable situation in the traditional location of Berlin, the company management decided to transfer the headquarters of Siemens & Halske to Munich. In fall 1949, the new Munich central administrative offices opened in the Ludwig Ferdinand Palais at Wittelsbacherplatz 2. The building was erected in 1825 from plans by Leo von Klenze, the court architect of Ludwig I, King of Bavaria. With its acquisition of the Neoclassical city palace in 1957, Siemens emphasized the importance of the Munich location. In the postwar years, the electrical engineering company developed to become one of the largest private-sector employers in the Bavarian capital.



Headquarters in the heart of the Bavarian state capital – Ludwig Ferdinand Palais, Munich 1949

1948–1953: Siemens-Schuckertwerke opens the Himbeerpalast in Erlangen

Virtually no building in Erlangen is as closely associated with Siemens as the so-called Himbeerpalast (“Raspberry Palace”) at Werner-von-Siemens-Straße 50. Built between 1948 and 1953, the complex was designed by Hans Hertlein to resemble the brick buildings of Siemensstadt in Berlin. It was the last major building that Hertlein planned for the company. The man who had dominated Siemens’ architecture in and outside Germany for more than 35 years retired in 1951.

On completion, the office building had 46,000 square meters of floor space. It housed the administrative departments of Siemens-Schuckertwerke, whose registered offices were transferred from Berlin to Erlangen on April 1, 1949. The building was ready for occupancy in time for the company’s fiftieth anniversary celebrations in April 1953 and was opened in the presence of Ludwig Erhard, the German Minister of Economics. Around 4,000 employees worked in the administrative complex at that time. In 1991, the Himbeerpalast, which owes its nickname to the reddish color of its façade, was listed as a protected building by the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments – as the first postwar building in Erlangen.



Resembling the brick buildings in Siemensstadt – „Himbeerpalast“, Erlangen 1953



Clearly visible thanks the reddish colour – Himbeerpalast from the air, Erlangen 2015



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1955–1957: Expansion of the main administration building in Munich

By the beginning of the 1950s, capacities at the Wittelsbacherplatz location were exhausted. As a result, Siemens announced a competition for the construction of a new administration building to be situated directly on Munich's inner ring road. The Munich architects Hans Maurer and Eduard von der Lippe won the commission. In cooperation with the central building department of Siemens & Halske, implementation of the partially modified design was begun in 1955.

By 1957, a six-storey building with recessed ground and top floors had been created around a nearly square inner courtyard. The flat roof swings out concavely on all four sides. Besides offices, the building complex at Oskar-von-Miller-Ring 18 housed exhibition and training rooms as well as three lecture halls. The elegantly proportioned building set a trend for Munich's postwar architecture. In 1999, Siemens sold the administration building to Münchener Rückversicherung. A year later, it was placed on the list of protected monuments.



Elegant design – Administration building on Oskar-von-Miller-Ring, Munich 1958



Well proportioned – View of the inner courtyard, 1957

1959–1962: Expansion of the administrative building in Erlangen

Starting in 1955, Hans Maurer advised Siemens & Halske in all architecture-related matters. In 1959, his area of responsibility was extended to include Siemens-Schuckertwerke in Erlangen. In cooperation with the company's building and operations office, he erected a 17-storey office building directly across from the Himbeerpalast. The design of the 62-meter-high reinforced concrete skeleton structure was based on contemporary high-rise architecture in the U.S. Its façade was a quadratic grid with alternating lines of clear glass and laminated blue glass windows.

In the fall of 2010, the building, which had been a listed historic monument since 2009, was sold. Siemens has leased the building back until the 50-hectare Siemens Campus in the south of Erlangen is completed.



Highest office tower in Bavaria at the time – The Glass Palace, Erlangen 1962



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1968: The Ludwig Ferdinand Palais receives its present appearance

The palace at Wittelsbacherplatz 2 is the headquarters and symbol of Siemens AG, which was established in 1966. For many years, the main entrance was located on the building's east side, which faces Odeonsplatz. In 1968, an outdoor staircase was constructed on the building's south side. It is to this staircase, which is based on a design by Hans Maurer, that the building's Wittelsbacherplatz façade owes its present appearance. In 1978, Wittelsbacherplatz was redesigned. What had previously been a parking lot was converted into a pedestrian area on the edge of the downtown pedestrian zone.



Elegant façade, representative appearance – Palais Ludwig Ferdinand, Munich 1978

1997–1999: Construction of the Munich SiemensForum

At the end of the 1990s, the company's Munich headquarters were expanded at Oskar-von-Miller-Ring 20 by the addition of the so-called SiemensForum. The complex filled one of the last gaps in the Munich cityscape caused by the war. The history of the office building began in 1983, when renowned New York architect Richard Meier won the design competition. However, concrete planning was delayed until 1991 by work on the office and laboratory complex on Munich's Hofmannstrasse.



Office building with aluminium panels and glass – Model of SiemensForum, Munich 1997

In cooperation with Siemens Immobilien Management (today Siemens Real Estate), which was established in 1994, and Gunter R. Standke, Siemens' head architect, work was begun in 1997 on an office building for around 1,000 employees. The façades of the reinforced concrete skeleton structure, which enclosed two inner courtyards, were covered by white aluminum panels and generously articulated glazing. The building's most striking feature was a publicly accessible rotunda, which housed, among other things, exhibition spaces, an auditorium and a café-bistro. The first offices were ready for occupancy in June 1999. In September of that year, the new SiemensForum was opened as a platform for dialogue with customers and the general public. In 2013, after work had begun on the new Munich headquarters building on Wittelsbacherplatz, the SiemensForum was sold and leased back until 2016.



Meeting place with publicly accessible rotunda – SiemensForum, Munich 1999



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2010–2016: New design for the Munich headquarters

In the summer of 2010, Siemens decided to redesign its headquarters building on Munich's Wittelsbacherplatz. Shortly after the announcement of the new construction project, the company and the city of Munich announced an architectural competition, which was won by Henning Larsen Architects (HLA) of Denmark. The winning design combined tradition and the future. The historic Ludwig Ferdinand Palais and its adjacent building were renovated and seamlessly integrated into a new state-of-the-art structure.

Within a few years, one of the world's most modern buildings arose in the heart of Munich. Combining an advanced architectural design with high-efficiency technologies, the new building meets the highest standards for sustainability and resource conservation and provides a modern, inspiring work environment for some 1,200 employees on about 45,000 square meters of above-ground floor space. The ground floor – which includes green inner courtyards, a café, a restaurant and a fountain – is publicly accessible. This passage provides the citizens of Munich and visitors to the Bavarian capital with a new footpath between downtown Munich and the city's museum district. The address of the new headquarters: Werner-von-Siemens-Straße 1.



Tradition meets future – Design by Henning Larsen Architects, 2011



Futuristic, highly efficient and sustainable – Final works prior to the opening, Munich 2016