

LISTED BUILDING IN HAMBURG MODERNISED WITH WINDOW AND FAÇADE SOLUTIONS FROM HUECK – “OSCAR OF THE PROPERTY WORLD” FOR AMBITIOUS REVITALISATION PROJECT

Half a century after it was first completed, the former Peters office tower in Hamburg’s “City Nord” area is sporting a radiant new look. Dating from the 1960s, this listed building underwent extensive renovation work before reopening in May 2018 as the state-of-the-art serviced apartment building my4walls. This ambitious project has attracted not only widespread praise but also one of the sought-after “Oscars of the property world”, scooping a FIABCI Prix d’Excellence Germany 2020 in the commercial building category. Hamburg-based architectural firm Mevius Mörker planned the modernisation of the building ensemble, which was originally designed by Peter Neve and was typical of its era. The façade was a particular challenge, as it is modelled on the original down to the last detail while also meeting modern thermal insulation and fire-protection standards. This was realised by Lemgo-based BBS Metallbau und Schiffsausbau GmbH with solutions from the Lüdenscheid aluminium systems provider HUECK Systems GmbH.

When Hamburg’s “City Nord” area emerged in the 1960s, it represented a milestone in modern urban development, as the ambitious idea of creating a second business district to take pressure off the city centre was a completely novel concept in those days. Just under five decades later, however, a new usage concept awaited the ageing district. For this revival, the City of Hamburg intended to integrate residential spaces into an area that – until now – had been dedicated exclusively to business infrastructure. In 2012, the authority responsible for the protection of historical monuments classified eight of the buildings from the 1960s as being worthy of preservation. Among those given listed status was the office tower erected for Claudius Peters AG on Kapstadtring in 1966. This 12-storey concrete frame construction, which also includes a single-storey service building with an adjoining pavilion, was built according to a competition design by Peter Neve. The Hamburg-based architect was an adherent of the New Objectivity movement of the 1920s and designed a whole series of landmark buildings in the city. For the building contractor Claudius Peters, Neve designed a stilted, slab-type high-rise building with a service building slotted in underneath. “This ensemble clearly reflects the ideals of modern urban development in that era,” explains architect Christian Mörker.



Image 1: In Hamburg’s “City Nord” area, the listed 1960s office building has been repurposed in line with modern thermal insulation and fire protection requirements. (Source: HUECK)

Horizontally, the glass surfaces of the tower are separated by eaves that wrap around the building in bands. The construction is set a significant distance back from the façade elements, so that the visibly protruding exposed-concrete ceilings lend the building a particularly lightweight appearance. The fully glazed façade is fitted with black glass in the lower third of each storey height. The low balustrades around the individual storeys reinforce the transparent, airy feel. Mörker explains: "As one of the few buildings from the 1960s and 1970s, the Peters building is particularly worthy of preservation – among other things, for its clearly visible curtain wall and unusual all-round balcony design, with a mullion-transom façade spanning the gap between floors." The building's special features include the very narrow aluminium profiles that give it its typical structure. "These slender profiles can no longer be built in the same way, so they're gradually disappearing from the urban landscape," says Mörker.



Image 2: The building is particularly worthy of preservation thanks to its curtain wall with all-round balconies. One special feature are the narrow aluminium profiles that give the façade its structure. (Source: HUECK)

In 2014, Isaria Wohnbau AG acquired the building, which had already stood empty for two years at that point, in order to revitalise it for commercial residential use. Since the my4walls apartment building opened in 2018, it has offered a total of 143 serviced apartments meeting a four-star-plus standard. As part of the extensive renovation project, the entire façade was removed and replaced with a double-glazed façade that meets modern requirements in terms of thermal insulation, soundproofing and fire protection. "The requirements for the building, and especially the façade, were very stringent," recalls Mörker. It was vital to comply not only with the German Energy Saving Ordinance (EnEV) but also with modern fire protection requirements. At the same time, however, the building's listed status meant that the appearance of the façade could not be altered.

Mörker continues: "However, it's very difficult to replicate the slender profiles and unusual proportions of the original, even with modern materials, if you have to take account of thermal insulation, fire protection and static requirements at the same time." In order to reproduce the original appearance in the new façade while meeting modern standards in terms of energy efficiency and statics, the HUECK engineers developed a special construction based on the HUECK Trigon 60 mullion-transom façade in collaboration with the architectural firm, the conservation authority and the metalworking company. The turn-tilt windows were implemented with fixed opening elements from the HUECK Lambda WS 075 series.

"One of the numerous challenges for us were the slender profiles of the façade, which is protected by the building's listed status," says Torge Drews, Head of Sales Planning at HUECK. "But because our HUECK Trigon 60 modular façade system comes with very slender elevation widths as standard, we were able to adapt the system well to the original partitioning and profile thickness of the façade," Drews explains. For reasons relating to statics, however, the elements were designed with greater profile depths. Although these are visible inside



Image 3: The façade's original appearance was reproduced while meeting modern standards in terms of energy efficiency and statics. (Source: HUECK)

the building, they are not perceptible from the outside. But when it came to the windows, it was harder to maintain the original proportions. "With an elevation width of just 25 millimetres, the contrasting opening sashes of the original design were considerably thinner than a modern window sash with adequate thermal insulation. Moreover, less space was required for operation and the gears in those days," says Drews. Here, the solution came in the form of a special supplementary profile on the window's 45-millimetre opening sash, allowing the creation of a recess joint with the actual mullion. This makes the sash look significantly thinner so that, when viewed from the outside, the proportions now look approximately as they did in the 1960s original.

"Our interactions with the regulatory body, the conservation authority, BSS and HUECK were very constructive and were defined by a spirit of mutual cooperation," says Mörker. For the purposes of coordination, he says, the metalworking company first designed a sample façade, which was then optimised in collaboration with the conservation agency. "We'd already implemented a whole series of projects with HUECK in the past. Thanks to their excellent advice, we worked with them on the project's development even in the planning phase and then also implemented it to an excellent standard," says Mörker. The results were a source of great pride and satisfaction for him: "It looks like the old Neve tower, but it's brand new inside and really enriches the previously uniform structure of the City Nord area."

The successful overall concept was honoured with a bronze FIABCI Prix d'Excellence Germany in the commercial category in November 2019. Launched in 2014, this prize is awarded by the German delegation of the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) in collaboration with the German Association of Independent Real Estate Companies (BFW) and has already been described as the "Oscar of the property world" by the *Financial Times*. The top-class jury praised my4walls for its outstanding and exemplary project development: "A successful repurposing of the 1960s office building into modern rented housing."

Project video: <https://youtu.be/4ZyUVNZRzOI>

Project report:

https://hueck.blaetterkatalog.de/app_documents/?catalog=Objektbericht_My4Walls_Kapstadtring_EN&lang=en_GB