

Figure 9.40 Block 103,
Kreuzberg, Berlin.
(Photographs by June
Greenaway)



Figure 9.41 The Berlin
Government Centre
(Architectural Design, 1993)



use: ‘Over 100 000 square metres of three/ four storey high residential blocks with commercial ground floors are thus spread in a checkerboard fashion throughout the new government district. The central symbolic buildings, the Parliament (the old Reichstag building), Bundesstat and Chancellery, are grouped around a vast artificial lake which will become the largest public space in Berlin’ (Krier and Krier, 1993). This is a project which illustrates clearly the thinking of both Leon and Rob Krier: it is also in the mainstream of current urban design theory (Figures 9.41 and 9.42). Like their project for the new quarter for Venta-Berri in San Sebastian, the arrangement of medium-rise

street blocks with mixed uses arranged as perimeter development is a model many urbanists would advocate for city development (Figures 9.43).

POTSDAMER PLATZ – LEIPZIGER PLATZ: HILMER AND SATTLER

The planning of the area around Potsdamer Platz was the subject of a competition. The district was badly damaged during the Second World War, and by the time of the competition in 1991 the area was an empty tract of land. The aim of the development is to rejuvenate the district so that it becomes a busy part of the city once again. The area was designed to contain a mix of uses – offices, hotels, shopping, restaurants and also residential accommodation. The plan by Hilmer and Sattler defines public spaces, squares, streets and boulevards, together with the density of development and the general building height of 35 metres. The scheme deals with general massing only: ‘Our concept . . . is not based on the globally-accepted American model of an agglomeration of high-rise buildings at the core of the city, but rather on the idea of the compact, spatially complex European town. It is our view that urban life should not develop within the interiors of large-scale building complexes like glass-covered atriums and megastructures, but in squares, boulevards, parks and streets’ (Sattler, 1993). Despite this reference to the compact and complex European town, the drawings of street blocks have the appearance of buildings standing as solid volumes in rows along a wide street. Richard Reid, in his discussion with Sattler, articulated this view: ‘When I look at the plans of your urban blocks, and in particular the diagrams, they



ABOVE: AXONOMETRIC RELIEF PLAN; BELOW: SITE PLAN; OPPOSITE: FLOOR PLANS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Figure 9.42 The Berlin Government Centre (Architectural Design, 1993)

are all a series of enclosed private spaces off the main urban grid. And in a sense that seems to be more like the American rather than the European model’ (Architectural Design, 1993). The formality of this project for the Potsdamer Platz district of Berlin and its overwhelming scale has none of the subtlety found in the work of Leon and Rob Krier for the same city (Figures 9.44 and 9.45).

CONCLUSION

The main ornaments of the city are its streets and squares (Sitte, 1901). It is, however, the street block or *insulae* which forms the boundaries of public space. The street block is also at the interface between the public world of the street and the inner life of the courtyard and its surrounding buildings. Perimeter development is clearly the most effective way of arranging buildings to act as a filter between the public façade and the