

# New State Parliament in Lower Saxony



Transparency as the key idea – symbolic of the current understanding of democracy.



Site plan, scale 1:2000

## Description

A true new build arose behind the converted, heritage façade, a structure that now renders democracy visible. The plenary chamber that had hitherto been claustrophobically sealed off from the outside now opens at the one end out onto the city, with glass frontage offering a view of Platz der Göttinger Sieben. Openness and transparency consistently define the new plenary chamber; spacious media and visitor galleries flank it, providing insights into politics at work. New space has been gained by roofing over the former inner courtyard: The bright new portico-fronted hall functions as a civic forum with a multipurpose area for events and exhibitions. It is set off from the plenary chamber only by a glass façade and is suffused with a friendly atmosphere. The prestigious Niedersachsentreppe which leads to the visitor zone and administration wing has also been given a new feel. The link to the public space opens the podium out: The Landtagsrestaurant can be accessed from Platz der Göttinger Sieben, and even has outdoor seating. All measures conform to the latest barrier-free regulations.

## Aim of intervention

This was precisely the starting point of the intervention: the new State Parliament as designed in order to reflect the transparency associated with democracy today and thus the changes that have taken place in society. It therefore considers fundamental notions of how democracy functions today. In the age of social media, to a certain extent the political debates are to be opened out to society and rendered visible within the very fabric of the building. The architects took transparency as the key idea for the conversion project. The central focus was likewise on forging links to the surrounding urban space and establishing the building, standing as it does in the heart of the city, as a landmark of democracy.

The design therefore emphasizes the strong symbolic character of the State Parliament while also creating a dignified setting for political debate. The number of parliamentarians and the need for premises for political education had both long since risen. As a result, multifunctional spaces were created for lectures, exhibitions and the like, and visitor galleries and relaxation zones expanded. All steps taken also served to preserve the heritage building, while ensuring that the changes needed for its contemporary use were sensitively made.



Former plenary chamber – claustrophobically sealed off from the outside world.



Legible – a glass seam now separates the plenary chamber in the Oesterlen building from the Classicist portico-fronted hall.