

Stephansplatz

PREVIOUS STATE

Stephansplatz in front of St. Stephen's Cathedral, the **most important architectural monument and landmark of Vienna**, has been existing in its present-day defined physical boundary only since the end of the 19th century. In its original state Stephansplatz, Stock-im-Eisen-Platz and Graben were three independent squares separated by several houses. Today they form an independent sequence of public spaces.

The restructuring of Stephansplatz was part of an **EU-wide design competition** in 2007 to redesign the pedestrian zone of the first district of Vienna, including Kärntner Straße, Stock-im-Eisen-Platz, and Graben; a **total area of approx. 30,000 m²**. An almost 40-year-old surface should be replaced by a new pattern of natural stone slabs. An essential task of the renewal was to design the surface in such a way that damage would not occur afterwards. Special value was placed on the functionally appropriate choice of the pavement, which in this case resulted in **large format plates** to secure a comfortable use for all people, especially for disabled persons.

Stephansplatz as a **central square for all Viennese** is also a **magnet to thousands of tourists**. A general renovation was inevitable. An additional need was to create a public space for encounters that invite one to stay, while giving an attractive entrance worthy of St. Stephen's Cathedral.



Before the intervention | The renovation of the 40-year-old surface was long overdue.



AIM OF INTERVENTION

The redesign of Stephansplatz was part of a 2007 EU-wide design competition. The winning project of this competition, which was carried out by the City of Vienna's Municipal departments 19 and 28, was the design of Clemens Kirsch, who was commissioned with further planning. Due to the planned, but then unimplemented relocation of the Dombauhütte, the redesign of Stephansplatz was paused in 2009 to be completed in 2017.

Surface pattern: The concept of »music notation« sees two surface patterns as an **abstract matrix** for directional (Kärntnerstrasse, Graben) and non-directional (Stephansplatz) paving; differently colored foundation slabs (staves) of granite in combination with particular colors (notes) in the form of lines and abstract crosses. The Stock-im-Eisen-Platz as the transitional space between the individual zones is designed as a monochrome area in which the different directions of the adjacent urban spaces are taken up and superimposed on the arrangement of the joints between the stone slabs.



View from above | Construction site | September 2017



Large format plates | Construction site | August 2017



Group picture of the project participants



Ceremonial laying of the final stone | November 2017



Location in Vienna's first district

Phase 1 Phase 2: Stephansplatz



DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION

The surface of Stephansplatz was completely renovated between March 13, 2017, and November 10, 2017. The construction area comprised the complete Stephansplatz including the adjacent junctions of the Rotenturmstraße, the Brandstätte, and the Schulerstraße as well as the entire Churhausgasse.

The street surface of Stephansplatz was **designed according to the winning concept of the 2007 competition** and fits seamlessly into the overall picture of the pedestrian zone built in 2009 in the area of Kärntner Straße, Stock-im-Eisen-Platz, and Graben.

36,400 granite plates and granite stones (14 cm thick) were used **on a total of 10,700 m²**. The granite that was used in the paving of Stephansplatz came mostly from Austrian quarries. Only two specific varieties were delivered from Sweden and Italy. The essential design elements also include **new street lighting and new seating**.

The work was coordinated by the Road Administration and Road Construction Department (Municipal department 28). The optimal coordination of the work contributed to a **speedy construction process** with minimal impact on the residents and neighbours.

Total cost of the project: approx. 11.5 million euros.



Stephansplatz, with Magdalenenkapelle, 1609 | Drawing by © Jacob Hoefnagel



Stephansplatz, approx. 1900