



LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

Seminar: “Architekturführer Campus Scharnhorststraße”

Dozentin: Frau Prof. Dr. –Ing. Ursula Kirschner

Transcription -

Of an interview through Matthias Reese,

with Daniel Libeskind

about the new central building of the

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg

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MR: OK, Daniel, so I'm just reading like the questions to you and you just see, what ...

DL: yeah

So, what was the most challenging aspect for the planning of the new central building of the Leuphana University?

DL: I think the most challenging part was to work with student groups in workshops over many years to come up first of all with the program eh with the idea of the building with eh what was needed for the building and also with ah translation of the physical drawings, models that the students made into really a communal conversation and then translation of that into building. So I think that was the most challenging

MR: OK. So, ah and what inspired you on the campus of the Leuphana University when you came first, when, what was your first idea?

DL: What inspired me is the bright light in the students eyes. But I was very depressed by the environment. What inspired me is how can this environment work for us after all in Nazi authoritarian totalitarian machine to to oppress and kill people. How to take this environment and add something to it which was, which was uplifting and which really had a 24 century sense for public and social spaces for students faculty of the and people of the of the city.

MR: Hm, so eh just take some questions about like how you work. So eh how did you methodically approach the project?
(1:15 Min.)

DL: I mean, I mean methodically (I processed it with ... of workshops), I said there were many students for the workshops, the students were not architecture students, but they were given the tools of architecture with theirs computers or pencil or (working model???) , and they were given specific tasks, with that with the tasks of you know eh should the building have windows, eh how many windows, eh how much would a building like this costs, how big should it be, so it, it was a really an education process that let or a pedagogical process that also led to this discussion and realization of what a building could be and how could be translated.

MR: OK, so when you think about the concept like of for the project: like what is the underlining idea, what's the doodle of the project?

DL: I think the, the underlining idea is a kind of Agorá, it's really a microcosm of a city. Because it has many complex functions eh for students, for researchers, for you know lot of scale detouring public spaces, exhibition spaces, eh places to eat and meet, so it's really kind of like a microcosm, a small city made out of different functions that come together around central spaces.

MR: And how that material lies in the architecture as such?

DL: Well It materializes by eh the fact that the building is not like a normal public

building, but like a cluster eh of an old village, more like eh Lüneburg itself, that brings together into the central market eh old activities that actually fronted including of (intravertical?) dimension for the stud..eh for the research person.

MR: So when you think about the start of it how would you and where we are now: how would you describe the hole process from the beginning to now, I mean like what, what has changed, how...

DL: Eh well it was adventure was very different, the building has really an organic... the idea has never changed but the forms of the building, the character of the building has been developed threw many eh realistic tasks.

MR: OK. How would you describe the / your key design principal for the landscape of the, of the... you know there was a competition so and you actually formulated certain ideas for it, like before we did we did we did the competition. Like how would you describe them?

(ca. 3:30 Min)

DL: Well the landscape eh, I think it was important to integrate the building eh in an ecological sustainable way into the green spaces of the university, of Leuphana. But at the same time really was to create spaces where people can extend their activity from within the building into the outside. And also to make a bridge, sort of park across. So really it's a balance between civic spaces which have a public character, and a hardscapes place to sit, talk, have a performance and also green spaces that are really just eh wandering in the forest.

MR: Hm. You talked about the influence of maybe of what Lüneburg and the campus has. So, can you make like some/ can you like point out some more points like how did it influence the blueprint of the central building? Like, eh you mentioned that it has that there is like a relationship between the building as such and the environment. How is that like? What are the elements that you would...?

DL: So, I didn't understand the question.

MR: So, What are the, what are the, I mean you know, how did the campus' history and the city of Lüneburg really influence like the design?

DL: OK. Well, immediately the campus eh influenced the project by being taken as we a... the exact opposite of what it achieved. The campus is a closed regimented eh series of row caserne, row buildings for soldiers with a large skill corridors for marching. Eh it's an oppressive eh atmosphere. So how can to enlive them? Of course we can run of eh these building and make them usable for people and that's all for the good. And there are some buildings from the 70s and a nice library and so on of course. The building has been slightly updated the campus, it has been all these... (ca. 5:10) But it needs some majorly invention, so that the whole center of where you are can have a purpose. And so creating building that is a very (complex...??), that has many different eh rising and kind of landscape all that's integrated into a roof, topography and the fact that the building is not just one but a cluster of forms. I think eh it recreates the campus and makes it, gives

it a emblematic and social sense of gathering, rather than simply a private iced way of being. So, Yah, its mentory the reinvigorate the campus and it picks up the own elements of the city, the great city how build in the front eras, the front kinds of architecture but really in a...you know... having a fluent and continues circulation. So thats the process of the idea

MR: So do you think that the new architecture was eh like created by Mr. von Mansberg. Did it, was it relevant for your design? Or did you like, was it like....

DL: Well, of course it was a good architecture of its time, it was very limited and score. Eh and eh you know every architecture likes to when it was build. It is a very fine building, very important building. But, but eh the new building for Leuphana is, the central building is a totally different kind of building. It's not a monofunctional building, its not just a repetition of a certain idea of, of program, but it has to give eh many different scales of activity. And I think that's important. It has a very big rank from very public to very private eh to very intimate activity.

MR: OK. Just the finalize, there are 3 questions to sustainability ehm: So, how would you feel about sustainability eh within your architecture in general and also like an, is it like a national matter, or is it something that is like relevant for you eh for eh all your projects? So, what is, what is your...?

DL: Well, you have to be really stupid not to be interested in sustainability, that is the key principal of architecture across thousands of years. Its how you orient the building, how much light comes into building, how you can reuse the space of this building in interesting ways after you know 30, 40 years, how you can properly create proportions that are based on human scale, how you can economize on the model energy the building uses and even give energy back to environment. So this is not new, this is not a style of sustainability, but really taking inter account the best you know technology's, the best new practices for water, for landscape, for heating, for cooling, and making a building that really is an efficient building and a compact building.

MR: Ok, So do you see the central building also like with regard to that as an entrance building to the campus?

DL: It is an entrance building. The building right now has, you know has a very eh unimportant entrance, eh an entrance by, by, by default. Eh but I think this is a new entrance, a new public entrance that the building lifts up in fact and you can even drive up to it in a bus or in a group to enter the main lobby of the building, so definitely it changes the kind of the orientation of, of eh where the center of the eh campus is. And where is the center? The center with there's park space? The center with there's a lot of public space and the center is not where you have the oppressive caserne but really a place of gathering.

MR: Ja. So, so what is your vision like for the use of the central building, like how do you in envision it? How it'll be used?

DL: Well, it's made for thousands of people to be used. Its made for eh people from the

city, it is made to be organized in a way that eh it's efficient, so that the large auditorium isn't used in once a day or once in a month or once in a week, but the day is a 24hours cycle in the which of the flexibility of programs can be used by in an out of thought. For example you can take that dry large auditorium and can get rid of the chairs very efficiently and a big exhibition of, of you know of industry. And I think that's a part of the idea of the building is to bring the building to an to share in real events that concern not only students, not but also their possibility getting jobs the world outside and so on...

MR: What is your prime, what is your prime hope for the building? For the use of the building?

DL: Well, my prime hope for the building is that people are inspired to study and look out of the window in a different angle and see something that they have never realized before. So, Ja, the prime purpose for the building is to really eh emphasis the fact that the building is based on creativity. It is not like any building that has ever build in the world, it is not like any campus building that I have build for anyone. It is an original building and I think it is so original as the original programs of Leuphana as the creative students who come from all over Germany and beyond, eh to give inspiration, to enhance education, to offer freedom eh and show a space that is truly democratic in the sense in which it can be used eh and, and share.

MR: OK. Thank you very much!