

POTSDAMER PLATZ ARKADEN

Berlin, Germany

Development Team

Owner/Developer

DaimlerChrysler Immobilien GmbH
Berlin, Germany
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Project Manager

**ECE Projektmanagement GmbH
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Architect

ECE Architects
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Master Planner

Renzo Piano Building Workshop
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Potsdamer Platz, in the heart of Berlin, symbolizes the nation's reunification and points the way into the future for this old and new capital. Before it was reduced to rubble during World War II—and later cut in half by the construction of the Berlin Wall—the square was a shining symbol for the metropolis. After the war, the square remained a no-man's-land until the reunification of East and West Germany. The demolition of the wall presented a compelling opportunity to revive the square with a totally new mix of uses, and the area around the square became the largest building site in Europe. The new federal government assigned the largest of four quadrants to a development team led by what is now the Daimler-Chrysler Group. Between 1993 and 1998, a completely new urban district arose around Potsdamer Platz—office buildings, apartments, shops, and cultural institutions—characterized by striking modern architecture and civic planning concepts. At the southwest corner of this new district is Potsdamer Platz Arkaden, a three-level, 40,000-square-meter (430,556 sf) retail center.

Managed by ECE Projektmanagement GmbH and Company on behalf of debis Immobilienmanagement (DaimlerChrysler Group), with the cooperation of public authorities, the Potsdamer Platz Arkaden houses more than 120 shops, restaurants, and cafés. The developers' ambitious goal—to integrate this new shopping boulevard into the heart of the district, filling it with bustling life that would make it attractive to residents and visitors, large companies and independent businesses, and investors and retailers from within Berlin and beyond—clearly has been achieved.

Italian architect Renzo Piano's design guidelines produced a transparent complex of glass, brick, ceramics, and terra-cotta. A 16-meter-high (53 ft) glazed space-framed roof spans the 180-meter-long (591 ft) shopping boulevard, which follows the square's original street pattern and is open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This covered boulevard runs from north to south, ensuring access to natural daylight, which is softened in the southern section by glass surfaces covered with graphic prints. A double row of trees set in planting beds within the Arkaden also reinforces the avenue atmosphere. Because of its central location, city officials were closely involved in the project's planning, particularly with regard to infrastructure and traffic access. A new tram station was built to allow direct access to the city's tram system from the basement of the Arkaden, and a direct link to a planned regional railway station will be added in the future. The center also contains parking for 4,000 cars on three basement levels and in a nearby multistory structure.



