

flamingo balconies Stern / Hannover/ Germany 2009

Challenging economical times may seem bleak, but they also have a positive side: enhancing the awareness of, and improving the value of the existing environment in which one lives. In the heart of the European city, this quality lies in the nearness of human proximity to cultural life, leisurely activities, and life/work relationships. The "Südstadt" / neighborhood of South Central Hannover embodies these qualities, being in walking distance to the downtown area and the downtown lake, Lake Maschsee. Mainly constructed and shaped during the 1930s under Karl Elkart, head of the city planning department, Lake Maschsee takes its place as the emblem of the city. The lake serves as a softening device, contrasting the hard masonry building forms with its organic footprint. Materialized in delicately constructed masonry - as continuing the legacy of the Hannover School of Architecture from the mid 19th Century – these buildings stand in high contrast next to the airy, extroverted buildings of the "White Modernism" style. The more traditional architectural Modernism of the Südstadt emphasizes the rigidity of city blocks, which are architecturally introverted, as they open up to the green interior courts of the blocks. The goal of this project is to carefully adapt this system to the contemporary needs of Hannover's citizens, who these days vacation at home in order to spare money during economic tough times. For Dr. Stern, owner of a multi-story brick Südstadt apartment building, the contribution became adding balconies to the street façade in order to encourage and initiate vitalization and socialization to the public realm. At first glimpse, almost unnoticeably, the balconies subtly add to the grain of strongly-framed white windows, and seem to have flipped down from them. The balconies are kept pure and clean in the form of white slabs, seemingly hovering over invisible wooden decking. A light minimalistic guardrail with a meshed fabric serves as a visual privacy protection device. As the decks project out from the building like tongues, keeping the structural and thermal interference with the building as minimal as possible, they rest on an external structural member. Distanced by bolts, the decks hover over three horizontal building-attached steel tubes, which merge into a single post, lightly touching the ground.

narcissistic standard



balconies



attached to urban blocks



30's expressionist



building



deserving



custom-made subtlety



touch light strategy



corner accentuation



cantilevering



floating



balancing



composing



leaning

