



Ministry for Economics, Labour
and Transport of Niedersachsen

The extensions built on to Wangenheim-Palace, and also forming part of the Ministry, comprise three office buildings: along Karmarschstrasse, along Leinstrasse and between Leinstrasse and Friedrichswall. Together with the Palace, they enclose a beautiful inner courtyard.

The interior of the Ministry of Economics, as a "museum of the fifties", is more exciting than its external shell. In the entrance hall attention focuses on the end wall with its powerful concrete grid glazed in pastel colours, designed by the Hannover painter Egon Neubauer.

Two emblems on this wall, the scales and the wheel, symbolise commerce and transport. In the connecting corridor behind the Palace a magnificent and impressive feature is to be found: a circular aperture in a projecting wall affords a view of the "giraffe staircase" in its stairwell extending over two storeys.

Among the principal materials typical of the period that are to be found in this building are the ornamental natural stone of the floors, the black-and-white marble and the exposed concrete, in some places ornamented with pebbles. These extension buildings to Wangenheim-Palace will appeal to anyone who is interested in the imaginative multiplicity of shapes and materials that characterise the style of the fifties.

Bibliography:

- Alfons Schmidt, "Hauptstadtplanung in Hannover seit 1945", published by Hannover University, Hannover, 1995
- Harold Hammer-Schenk, Günther Kokkelink, "Vom Schloss zum Bahnhof, Bauen in Hannover", published by Hannover University, Hannover, 1989
- Georg Hoeltje, "Georg Ludwig Friedrich Laves", Steinbock-Verlag, Hannover, 1964



Wangenheim-Palace

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The Wangenheim-Palace – a house with history

Wangenheim-Palace was built in the period 1829-1833. It is considered to be one of Hannover's most outstanding neo-classical buildings. The Royal Master of Works Georg Ludwig Friedrich Laves was commissioned by Count Georg von Wangenheim, who was a member of the Royal Public Works Commission, to build it for him as a private residence.

The building is a three-storey solid masonry structure with 4+5+4 bays. A portico with six Tuscan columns in front of the entrance, surmounted by a balcony with a cast-iron balustrade, gives the building a monumental appearance. The double entrance door is ornamented in typical Laves fashion.

In 1844 a semi-circular bow-window extending over two storeys, the so-called "greenhouse", was added to the front end of the building facing on to Friederikenplatz.

Serving the public for over 150 years

After the death of Count von Wangenheim in 1851, the Palace was purchased by the Kingdom of Hannover for 100,000 reichsthaler, and fitted out as a residence for the Crown Prince. Only eleven years later, the house was sold to the Corporation of the City of Hannover. The Corporation had its coat of arms placed on the gable and used the building as a town hall, until the New Town Hall, only a few metres away, was ready for occupation in 1913.

In 1897 the low-pitched slate roof was replaced by a loftier tiled roof, and in 1931 the two-storey banqueting hall with its musicians' gallery and domed vault was dismantled.

A new beginning with a new purpose

The Palace was burnt out during the Second World War, and after the war the interior had to be completely redesigned. It was used by the city administration for a variety of purposes up until 1954.

After that, the building was purchased by the Niedersachsen State Government; the Ministry of Economics is first listed as the occupier in the City of Hannover directory for 1957.

In its capacity as the dominant architectural element of the Ministry, the Palace, having undergone extensive changes to its floor plan, now accommodates the Minister's office, the conference hall and numerous other offices. As far as the interior design is concerned, the conference hall now occupying the room with the bow-window is particularly notable.



During the rebuilding it was given a vaulted plaster ceiling, a stucco relief on the main wall and a gypsograph on the ceiling of the bow-window recess, to designs by Professor Hans Kuhn of Berlin. The wall relief shows motifs from the fields of commerce and transportation: amphorae as vessels for the earliest traded goods, horses and pigeons as the earliest means of transport and of conveying messages, a coin bearing a head like that of a Roman emperor, and in the middle an allegorical figure bearing a wheel and a pair of scales, representing transport and commerce. The gypsograph on the ceiling of the bow-window recess shows a variety of symbols of craftwork and industry united with the Hannover clover-leaf in the rays of the rising sun.

Pictures:

- 1 | Front view, photo 1983
- 2 | Conference room, photo c. 1908
- 3 | Ornamentation on the facade
- 4 | "Wangenheimsche Palais", watercolour, c. 1850