



BW Bank

By Wittfoht Architekten



HI-MACS® optimises architectural requirements and spatial design

Re-design of BW Bank Branch at Königstraße 3 in Stuttgart



Banks are a firmly established element of the inner city landscape. Traditionally, impressive facades are designed to enhance the reputation of such institutions, giving them presence.

*With a view to re-interpreting this traditional image, the **Baden-Württemberg Bank (BW Bank)** commissioned the re-design of the ground and upper floors of its branch at Königstraße 3 in Stuttgart to provide a contrast. Attractive interior details finished with **HI-MACS®** form the core style of the re-design. Stuttgart-based firm **wittfoht architekten** took on the task of re-designing both floors.*

On completion of comprehensive renovation work, the building was re-opened on February 2012. In re-designing the service area on the ground floor and the precious metal and currency bureau on the first floor, the factors of security, work station layout and a customer focus needed to be taken into consideration. Offices for Private Banking and the Bank's customer business are located on levels 2 and 3. Level 4 had already been turned into the Bank's training centre in 2011.

Managing the social relationship



The brief for the interior of this branch of the **BW Bank** was to give it a human face through the use of a harmonising formal language. **Wittfoht architekten** has achieved this through the use of colour, form and materials. The Stuttgart architects have used the circle as the guiding principle. *"A circle is at one and the same time the simplest and most significant form of layout, as all points are equi-distant from the central point. There is no foreground or background, beginning or end"*, says **Professor Jens Wittfoht**. Totally the right shape in this instance: the requirement was to create an interior design facilitating smooth working processes and interaction with customers within the bank – architecture used to manage social and business relationships. The circle is also a highly appropriate symbol for the cycles operating in the banking sector – you only have to think of your own Giro account (*Italian giro = turning*).

The precious metal and currency bureau for the BW Bank, giving private individuals a wide choice of currency and a comprehensive advice service, was moved from its location on Klein Schlossplatz to the branch at Königstraße 3 as part of the re-design. The massive new see-through facade overlooking Königstraße has given it a much higher status. With its round exhibits in cylindrical glass cabinets, the currency bureau forms a meaningful integral element of the overall design. Combined and individual elements are designed to guide customers through the bank – starting from the pedestrian zone, via the semi-public area in the SB hall to the service area and customer advisor alcoves.



Materials used to produce lighting effects

The architectural presence of the bank in the city environment created by the new glass facade is clear evidence of a new understanding of its customers. The facade of the ground floor provides a stark horizontal contrast to the pedestrian zone and is designed to create depth through lettering and the layering of structures and materials.

The fascinating building material of glass is used as an optimal design feature and meets the basic human need for daylight and visual contact with the environment outside the shell of the building. The constantly changing impression given by the glass as the light plays on it also engenders sensory impressions and creates ever-changing architectural images in the city environment. The existing glass facade has been decorated with various huge BW Bank logos and a translucent pattern, giving glimpses of the SB hall, but without impinging on the private areas for making withdrawals. Important security aspects have been addressed by creating discrete transparency between internal and external spaces.



An area is partitioned off by a type of double wall between the SB hall and the service area incorporating specific banking facilities such as cash machines and safety deposit boxes, meaning that general banking processes are not disturbed. Wittfoht architekten chose HI-MACS® for this monolithic partition for its optical depth. The clever use of lighting alcoves gives the wall unexpected lightness.

The HI-MACS® colour white **Lucent Opal** not only emphasizes the specific features of the Solid Surface material but also suggests superior quality through its translucency, which reminds one of alabaster. Brown and gray shades were used in addition to the white to pick out certain areas and break up large surfaces from an optical point of view. Special areas such as leather seating lining parts of the entrance areas were deliberately created in beige to increase the sense that you can linger in a safe and warm place.

The salient performance properties of HI-MACS[®] are evident right from the SB area: a protruding bag shelf has been created under the cash machines in the wall from this thermo-formable material. This use of its properties is clear proof of the ideal application of this resistant material in areas of the bank accessible throughout the day. There are no areas vulnerable to deliberate damage plus plenty of scope for creating three-dimensional homogeneous shapes and superior surface quality.



Entrance hall



The right-angled gallery that once separated the ground and first floors has been closed off. A new and smaller ceiling aperture now features in the entrance hall area. On entering, visitors are automatically guided to the left towards the reception desk, tellers and service desks – all made of HI-MACS®. The round ceiling aperture breaks up the stark horizontality of the entrance hall.

Three different-sized light rings are suspended asymmetrically from the first floor ceiling. These increase the draw effect of the opening and create the link to the currency bureau on level 1. The architects' lighting concept is based on four lighting options: lighting alcoves on the walls, linear pendant lights, lighting rings and the accentuating window lighting.



Windows

Because all of the internal architectural features have been made from HI-MACS® Lucent Opal, all of the various areas of the bank are linked as an optical continuum extending from the reception desk in the entrance hall to the SB and service area on the ground floor and the currency bureau on level 1. *"Thanks to the seamless properties of HI-MACS®, all items appear to be poured from the same mould", say wittfoht architekten, "which enabled us to use specific approaches to enhance the various spaces within the bank."*

Cylindrical windows framed by HI-MACS® on the ground floor and level 1 appear to hover in the space and reveal parts of the coin collection. Seamless glass covers are located over the sealed substructure. Light outlets in the ceiling cylinders suspended above light up the whole display. *"The ceiling cylinders appear to sprout through the ceiling and connect the ground floor and upper levels", says Professor Jens Wittfoht. The emphasis of the circle as a design element lends presence, lightness and a new clarity to the space.*



First level

Two glass elevators – forming part of the structural design – line the long stairway up to level 1. The smaller ceiling aperture between the ground floor and level 1 made it possible to gain extra space on level 1, which was used to the best effect by putting in striking display cabinets. Changing the flooring from hard stone to soft thick-pile carpet now designates the display area and increases the exclusivity of the coin collection.

The standard properties of the HI-MACS® made it possible to create the flowing forms defining the concept. The material is of a similar hardness to stone, but can be worked like wood.

"We chose HI-MACS® for a number of reasons. Firstly, the material needed to be both robust and solid, which has symbolic significance for the bank, secondly we were looking for a hi-tech material with a warm haptics and thirdly we were fascinated by the translucency and optical depth" said the architects. The bank also love the homogeneous appearance created by HI-MACS®. With its effect of depth, the white material underscores the reserved elegance of the office areas and superior quality of the currency bureau. The aim was to create a calm aesthetic balance between layout and coordination through form and colour and eliminate any inconsistencies".

Project: Baden-Württembergische Bank (BW Bank)

Architect: wittfoht architekten, Stuttgart, www.wittfoht-architekten.com

HI-MACS® fabricators: Wüst Praxis - Inneneinrichtungen GmbH, Pforzheim

Photography: Andreas Körner, Stuttgart www.a-koerner.de

Material: HI-MACS® Lucent Opal

Press office for Europe:

LG Hausys Europe

Mariana Fredes

mfredes@himacs.eu

+41 (0)22 879 54 83

Pictures: www.himacs.eu/press

HI-MACS® Natural Acrylic Stone

HI-MACS® is the **New Generation** of solid surface. It is composed of 70% natural stone powder derived from bauxite, 25% high quality acrylic resin and 5% natural pigments. Designed and produced by **LG HAUSYS**, a world technology leader, it is distributed across Europe from **LG Hausys Europe** headquarters in Geneva.

It is a product of highest quality, and is inert and ecological. Its versatility allows users to mould and transform their ideas into reality with possibilities far beyond those offered by materials traditionally used in the world of architecture and design.

The most prestigious groups have adopted this product which adapts to the most demanding needs with its extraordinary characteristics; it is completely non-porous, has the highest level of durability and thus does not lose its colouring. It also has uniform thickness, allowing for perfectly imperceptible joints!

Easy to fabricate, **HI-MACS®**, with its excellent thermoformability properties, lets you adapt the material to the desired shapes and to create a range of designs that is nearly infinite.

HI-MACS® is used by the most prestigious companies, and many well-known architects and designers such as **Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, David Chipperfield, Ron Arad, Marc Newson, Elke Delugan Meissl** and **Joaquín Torres**. Some of the most notable projects made out of **HI-MACS®** include the **Prado Museum** and the **Hotel Puerta América** in Spain, **Leonardo Glass Cube** and the **Porsche Museum** in Germany and the **Zara** flagship store in the Westfield Shopping Complex in London, UK.

HI-MACS® is available in more than 100 colours, comprised of the following ranges: **Solids, Granite, Sand, Pearl & Quartz, Volcanics, Lucent, Galaxy, Marmo**, and the new recycled range of colours **HI-MACS® Eden**. Eden is **GREENGUARD** Certified for indoor air quality as a “**Low Emitting Product**” which can help your projects achieve **LEED® credits** in sustainable design, under the Green Building Rating System managed by the **U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)** – A clear benefit for constructing sustainable buildings.

HI-MACS® is manufactured in 3, 6, 9 and 12 mm thicknesses. Furthermore a wide range of sinks and bowls is available.

HI-MACS® is synonymous with the very best quality thanks to a production process that it is one of the world's most innovative, sourcing the finest materials that result in a harder, flatter more resistant product. Many international certifications backup the outstanding quality of **HI-MACS®** concerning environment, hygiene, fire resistance and processes as ISO 9001 and 14001, Greenguard, NSF, LGA and IMO MED (Module B and D), among others.

HI-MACS® is in a league of its own with its quality assistance, guaranteed by **Quality Club**, a network of expert and approved fabricators. Thanks to the quality of the material, we can offer the longest warranty package currently on the market: 15 years.

HI-MACS® The New Generation Inspired by Architecture

www.himacs.eu/press

Press office for Europe:
LG Hausys Europe
Mariana Fredes
mfredes@himacs.eu
+41 (0)22 879 54 83

Pictures: www.himacs.eu/press