

Photo of the month - October 2023

The "new" municipal savings bank on Kirchstraße



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The photo shows the former building of the Stadtparkasse Bocholt.

In April last year, the board of the Bocholt Stadtparkasse announced that the vacant building of its former headquarters on the market square would soon be up for disposal and that modern commercial buildings could be erected in its place. The bank's headquarters had been at this address for 67 years before it was moved to the newly built domicile on Neutorplatz in April 2021.

The original building of the savings bank, which was put into use in 1901 on today's Benölkenplatz, was completely destroyed by the bombing of Bocholt on 22 March 1945. Although it was repaired in the following years, the development of the Sparkasse after the war necessitated an extension or a new building.

After detailed negotiations with the heirs of the judicial councillor Koop (d. 1919), the Sparkasse succeeded in acquiring their property on Kirchstraße on 8 August 1950 and an adjoining municipal plot the following year. At the same time, it was decided to invite tenders for a competition, which was won by the Schwert architect Carl H. J. Schmitz from among 21 proposals submitted. He and his colleague from Bocholt, Ludwig Beier, produced the final design of the building with around 9,700 cubic metres of enclosed space. They then jointly took over the construction management.

Consideration for church and town hall

The plans were characterised by a particularly favourable urban design. The floor plan and the constructive structure in two storeys with a high roof were judged to be clear and uncluttered. According to the specifications, consideration had to be given to the built environment, especially to the St. George's Church opposite and the town hall on the market.

After all, this was historic land, considering that the Bocholt town hall, used until 1618, presumably stood on this site! Construction work began on 15 July 1953, and the topping-out ceremony was held the week after the fair. At the inauguration of the new Stadtparkasse on 25 October 1954, Director Josef Rommelsheim, in the presence of numerous guests, read out the wording of a document walled in next to the main portal and emphasised that the Sparkasse had remained true to the idea of serving each individual saver and the local economy since its foundation in 1841.

Among the invited visitors at the opening ceremony was the Bocholt sculptor Hermann Schlatt. He was commissioned by the Stadtparkasse to create a figure in the classical style of a fertility goddess, which was placed on the west side of the new financial institution, where it can still be seen today. In her left arm, this female figure carries a bundle of ears of corn as the ripe fruit of summer and scatters the seed with her right hand. Under the motto "Sow and reap", this sculpture thus embodies the spirit of the economic miracle of the 1950s in the symbolisation of saving and reaping at that time.

The **photo of the month** is presented once a month by the Bocholt City Archive.

Photos and text information come from the holdings of the city archives. The contributions to the picture are written by the following employees of the city archives.

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