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Banque et Caisse d'Épargne de l'État

Luxembourg

Boulevard Konrad Adenauer 100
Luxembourg 2950 Luxembourg

Commission

1973

Completion

1980

Original name

European Investment Bank, EIB Luxembourg

Original use

Administrative purposes/office spaces

Current use

Administrative purposes/office spaces

Architects

Denys Lasdun

Concrete by reinforcement

Reinforced concrete

Construction method

Precast concrete, precast element, Facade cladding

Architectural concrete

Exposed aggregate concrete, Colored concrete

Structural types

One-dimensional/concrete frame, Two-dimensional/[waffle] slab

Description

Denys Lasdun is one of the masters of Brutalist architecture in Britain, whose major work is the National Theatre on London's South Bank. It was fundamental to the development of English architecture in the 1970s, although the process of its conception and construction was extremely complicated. Exhausted by the time it was completed, Lasdun then received the commission for the headquarters of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg, in a location that differed radically from the dense and complex urban site of the London building. And yet, many of the design decisions in this new project were a consequence or evolution of the previous one, especially the configuration in terraces or overlapping trays of varying sizes, establishing a clear dominance of the horizontal component.

The Luxembourg building is of considerable size and was initially located in a non-urban environment. As such, the program could be spread out over a large area, in a centrifugal floor plan with four wings that stretch out into the landscape, culminating in spacious terraces that merge with the forest. The horizontal spans of the edges of these terraces, finished with prefabricated coloured concrete panels with exposed aggregate, together with the free-standing exterior pillars, are responsible for generating the building's characteristic image.

The section in relation to the landscape is especially interesting: like other buildings by Lasdun, its massing is pyramidal; in this case, it adapts to the sloping topography so that some of the building's wings descend into the landscape, extending the platforms on the lower floors as they slide down the mountainside. Part of this effect of merging with the landscape has been lost as the surroundings have become more densely constructed with the creation of a campus for the headquarters of corporations and European institutions.

Links

RIBA

Concrete Quaterly 134, 1982