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by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

PROVISIONAL CAPITAL: NATIONAL AND URBAN IDENTITY IN THE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING OF BONN, 1949-1979

by

Samuel L. Sadow

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This dissertation explores the physical transformation of Bonn in the postwar period, with a particular focus on the 1960s and 1970s, as the city accommodated the West German federal government. Bonn’s long campaign in the 1960s to redraw its municipal borders and the federal government’s construction of several high-rises in the city and its neighbor, Bad Godesberg, were the most concrete markers of Bonn’s evolution as a capital city in this period. The complex political processes and sometimes bitter conflicts behind each of these developments paralleled the gradual and successful entrenchment of democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, the close entanglement of Bonn’s urban space and federal architecture with West German national identity confounds our expectations about the ways that capital cities represent the values of the political systems and cultures that build them. Individually and collectively, Bonn’s government buildings offered little in the way of symbolic forms onto which citizens could project their growing sense of national identity and attachment to the democratic institutions that they housed. At the local level, the public universally despised the invasion of their cherished landscape. By focusing instead on the processes behind the planning initiatives and the reception of the new buildings, this dissertation demonstrates that Bonn’s perennially unfinished and provisional federal districts perfectly expressed the conflicting forces at work as West Germans consolidated their identity as members of a democratic and pluralistic civil society.
Acknowledgements

A lot of what is involved in writing a dissertation—researching and reading in libraries and archives and writing at one’s desk—is completely solitary in nature. However, undergirding that hermitic work are networks of support and assistance without which the primary task would be all but impossible. To leave them unacknowledged would be unconscionable.

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Introduction

On May 10, 1949, Bonn became the provisional capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Only two days after ratifying the West German Basic Law (Grundgesetz), a Parliamentary Council (Parlamentarischer Rat) established at the direction of the three Western powers occupying Germany—France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America—convened in the central rotunda of the Museum Koenig in Bonn and selected that city over Frankfurt-am-Main by the narrow margin of 33-29. In the campaign leading up to the vote, officials from Bonn and the state of North-Rhine Westphalia aggressively promoted the city as an ideal site for the provisional capital. Bonn was relatively small and unknown, and thus seemed to pose little threat to Berlin as the once and future capital. In a nation that was still in ruins, Bonn possessed sufficient intact facilities for the fledgling government. It was close geographically to both Western Europe and the important industrial Ruhr region, and the occupation forces maintained a relatively small presence in the city. Over the next forty years, far longer than even the most pessimistic members of the Parliamentary Council would have predicted—until a similarly narrow vote in the Bundestag on June 20, 1991 returned the capital of a reunited Germany to Berlin—the federal government’s presence in Bonn would cause radical transformations in the city along social, political, economic, and not least, physical dimensions.

Previously a small, quiet city of university students and pensioners on the scenic banks of the Rhine, Bonn became a city of politicians, diplomats, bureaucrats, and lobbyists and one of the most densely populated cities in the FRG. A city whose greatest claim to fame was being the birthplace of Ludwig van Beethoven became the site of the most important political discussions
and decisions facing West Germany, from Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s decisively pro-Western Hallstein Doctrine to Minister of Economics Ludwig Erhard’s midwifing of the Economic Miracle, and from Chancellor Willy Brandt’s pioneering Ostpolitik to Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s successful shepherding of the country through reunification with the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Bonn, a city of medieval churches, Baroque and Rococo palaces, and 19th-century villas along the Rhine, was swiftly reshaped by a profusion of immense concrete, steel, and glass administrative complexes and modernist high-rises.

This dissertation explores the physical transformation of Bonn in the postwar period, with a particular focus on the 1960s and 1970s, as the city accommodated the West German federal government. The following narrative demonstrates that in many ways, Bonn’s evolution as a capital city in this period parallels the gradual and ultimately successful entrenchment of democracy in the FRG. The most concrete markers of this development were the new buildings constructed for Parliament and the federal ministries, along with the concomitant dramatic reshaping of Bonn’s cityscape and geography. Their forms, starting with the first new federal buildings in Bonn—the Bundestag (Hans Schwippert, 1949; Figure 1) and the Foreign Office Building (Hans Freese, 1953-55; Figure 2)—reflect the specific contours of West German democratic principles and cultural values: pragmatic and functional, based on hard-won and messy compromises, full of partial victories, highly local, provisional.

At the same time, the close entanglement of Bonn’s urban space and federal architecture with West German national identity confounds our expectations about the way that capital cities communicate the values of the political systems and cultures that build them. Individually and collectively, Bonn’s government buildings from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s offer little in the way of symbolic architectural forms that unambiguously express the power, prestige, or
confidence that accrued to West Germany as it emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s as a pillar of
the N.A.T.O military alliance and the third largest economy in the world. Indeed, even in the
decidedly ostentatious form of a high-rise, the projects at the heart of this dissertation display an
extreme reluctance towards staking out any identity for the nation at all. However, Bonn’s
architecture is not mute. In its very reticence, it communicates a modesty and humility that
thoroughly captures the identity of a nation struggling and succeeding to demonstrate a renewed
commitment to democratic institutions while simultaneously negotiating a monstrous past and
the hardening ideological and geographical divisions of the Cold War.

Historians such as Deborah Ascher Barnstone have attempted to forge connections
between aspects of the architecture’s modernism and West German democracy via the metaphor
of transparency. However, this analysis oversimplifies both modernism and democratic
governance and thus captures only a tiny sliver of the relationship between architecture and
politics in Bonn.¹ This dissertation’s fine-grained history of the key planning and architectural
developments in Bonn between the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and Willy Brandt’s
administration shows that it is a mistake to assume straightforward and stable connections
between built form and identity. Close attention to the processes behind the planning policies and
buildings as well as local context and reception reveals a more complex relationship; Bonn’s
perennially unfinished and provisional federal districts perfectly expressed the conflicting forces
at work as West Germans consolidated their identity as members of a democratic and pluralistic
civil society.

Bonn’s transformation took place in the broader context of a Europe that was piecing
itself together after the catastrophe of World War II destroyed its cities and traumatized its

¹ Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in Postwar
Germany* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1-86.
citizens. The reconstruction of buildings and spirits proceeded differently in each country, and was determined significantly by their various roles in the war. Thus, even though its global empire crumbled and material shortages slowed the physical reconstruction of its heavily bombed capital, London, the United Kingdom’s role in the moral and military victory over fascism was beyond question. British national identity quickly assimilated its victor status, and the country’s leaders took a prominent seat at the discussions that shaped the postwar world order. In the war’s immediate aftermath, France largely forestalled a reckoning with the Vichy government’s collaboration with the Nazi regime, instead valorizing the worthy French Resistance and laying claim to being a liberated and thus innocent country and people. By maintaining its innocence, France could pivot to reasserting its prewar cultural eminence with Paris at the epicenter, even as the West’s cultural center of gravity was fast shifting to New York. The war experience led to profound changes in both France and the United Kingdom, but their place among the victorious Allies allowed for substantial continuity in fundamental aspects of their identities as nations.

Postwar Germany faced almost diametrically opposed circumstances, as the experience of World War II left German identity, a tenuous concept to begin with, in a state of near total bankruptcy. Germany as a nation had only come into existence in 1871 with Wilhelm I’s proclamation of the German Empire comprised of Prussia and its neighboring—and often unwilling—German-speaking kingdoms and duchies. In the Wilhelmine era, the imperial government alternately cultivated a sense of national belonging among its subjects and suppressed the various religious and regional identities within its borders by way of imposing a distinctly Protestant and Prussian definition of German-ness on the citizenry. The loss of World War I and the abdication of Emperor Wilhelm II in 1918 undermined any progress that German
rulers had made in establishing a stable national identity, as the country’s government, its
borders, and its very existence were at the mercy of the United States and its allies. The
democratic Weimar Republic that emerged from the defeat never laid claim to a national identity
resilient enough to sustain it through the consecutive political and economic crises of the late
1910s and 1920s that crippled the government’s legitimacy from the day of its founding. This
opened the door for the rise of Adolf Hitler to Chancellor in 1933 and his subsequent declaration
of the Third Reich under the banner of National Socialism. Hitler articulated the most forceful
vision of German national identity since Wilhelm I, but it was based on an anti-Semitic ideology
of racial superiority that the Führer used to license a ruthlessly expansionist policy of annexation
and conquest towards Germany’s neighbors, a brutal policy of repression and terror towards its
own citizens, and the attempted extermination of Jews, Slavs, and other ethnic groups deemed
inferior from all of Europe.

Finally, Hitler’s definition of German identity led him to embroil the continent in a
savagely destructive war, in which the country’s ultimate loss was total. The Allied military
campaign left considerable portions of the Germany’s cities, housing stock, transportation
networks, and economic capacity in ruins. Moreover, the collective descent of the nation into
National Socialism and the subsequent devastation and military defeat left every aspect of what it
meant to be German suspect and open to radical redefinition. With the ruptures of 1871, 1918,
and 1933 still fresh in the country’s historical memory, the Germans left to pick up the pieces
after 1945 had little in the way of precedents or models with which to reconnect or emulate, as
they moved from occupation through reconstruction and denazification towards reclaiming
sovereignty.
To compound the problem for Germany, in 1949—after years of increasing tension between the Allied occupying powers and the Soviet Union—the country split irreparably in two with the declaration of the democratic Federal Republic based in Bonn followed shortly by the foundation of the socialist German Democratic Republic based in East Berlin. The opposed ideologies of East and West Germany and the emerging superpowers that sponsored them had a dramatic effect on each side’s capacity to form and project a coherent, affirmative national identity. The Soviet Union provided East German identity with an anchor in its imposition of an ideology in which to be a communist was to have always been anti-fascist. The retrospective absolution from Nazi crimes for those who would adhere to communist principles—chief amongst which was obedience to the edicts of the ruling Socialist Unity Party—short-circuited any processing of guilt or acceptance of responsibility for the Holocaust and World War II, but it also permitted East Germany to construct a relatively strong national identity that could animate the country’s social structures and cultural production.

As its capital city, East Berlin came to embody the evolution of “actually existing socialism” in the GDR to a high degree. As a direct descendant of the royal Prussian—and after 1871 the imperial German—capital, Berlin has drawn scholarly attention as an avatar of German national identity. The remarkably quick succession in which Berlin and its citizens experienced imperial, democratic, National Socialist, communist, and finally again democratic regimes, makes it particularly rich territory for the study of the relationship between architecture, urban planning, and politics.² In this vein, historians have examined numerous examples of East Berlin’s architecture—including such projects as the Stalinallee (Figure 3), the Palast der

Republik (Figure 4), and not least the Berlin Wall (Figure 5)—analyzing the ways in which they both intensified and mediated the public’s identification with the government and the ruling Socialist Unity Party.³

East Berlin’s twin to the west has provided these same historians with a natural point of comparison. Like East Berlin, West Berlin was the recipient of a tremendous amount of government largesse in the form of prestigious architectural projects from internationally famous architects, including the development of the Hansaviertel (Figure 6) in 1957, with buildings designed by Alvar Aalto, Oscar Niemeyer, and Walter Gropius and buildings by Hans Scharoun and Mies van der Rohe in the Kulturforum (Figure 7). Unlike East Berlin, West Berlin was never a political power center, and as an exclave was quite economically, demographically, and culturally eccentric to the main body of West Germany. However, its position on the symbolic and geographic front line of the Cold War led the FRG and its allies to turn West Berlin into an ideological showcase for the West. In this context, West Berlin’s impressive architectural heritage serves as an ideal case study for the ways in which design became an instrument for the projection of soft power and ideology in Cold War statecraft.⁴ The same isolation and eccentricity, however, make it easy to overestimate the extent to which these buildings are definitive representations of West German national identity, and the anomalous local context in


⁴ For an analysis of the way that Berlin became a center for concentrating soft power in the Cold War face off between the Western capitalist democracies and Eastern socialist states, see Greg Castillo, Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
West Berlin, including its political, economic, and historic aspects, point towards a more internationalist understanding of its postwar urban development.

In West Germany, democracy was no less an imposition by the United States than socialism was for the GDR by the Soviet Union, but national identity was a far more fraught issue. The Western powers made acceptance of responsibility for genocide and the war a precondition for re-admittance into the Western European community, which combined with processes of denazification\(^5\) and reeducation—however truncated and imperfect—greatly inhibited the formation of any sense of national pride across many spheres of public life. With such a devastating demonstration of the menace of nationalism in their immediate memories, avoiding speech and action that raised the specter of a return to those beliefs and behaviors became imperative.

The division of the country also contributed to West Germany’s inchoate identity, as the initial legitimacy of the FRG as the democratic successor to the Third Reich was predicated on its claims to being a provisional entity. This designation allowed the FRG to disavow responsibility for the current, illegitimate division of the country at the hands of the Soviet occupiers in the East and position itself as a placeholder for the democratically elected government of the entire German people, a future condition predicated on free and fair elections in all German lands. This curtailed any expressions of a positive national identity in the Bonn Republic because they could too easily be construed as an acceptance of disunion and the forsaking of Germans trapped in the East. By and large, West Germans responded to the near complete incapability to assert a national identity with a combination of a sort of collective amnesia with regards to the immediate past, a resolute focus on the enormous task of physical

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\(^5\) The Soviets also initiated a process of denazification in the former Nazi territories, but it quickly became a pretext for arresting political opponents of the regime and eliminating dissent.
and economic recovery, and a compensatory turn to the local, where history and identity were less charged and more easily recuperated.6

Bonn’s cityscape registered all of these currents. For the first two decades of its tenure as capital, there was a near absolute silence amongst federal and municipal planners on issues of representation in national buildings, as they focused single-mindedly on the practical, functional, and economic considerations in accommodating a quickly growing bureaucracy. This was certainly the case in the 1950s when the prospect of reunification remained even faintly on the horizon, but its persistence into the 1960s—after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 foreclosed most thinkable paths towards a political union and after the Bund’s7 engagement of such leading architects as Egon Eiermann and Sep Ruf—is more indicative of an inability on the part of planners to conceive of a West German capital in such idealist, nationalist terms. Even when the dam started to break in the late 1960s, the first efforts to consider Bonn as a capital city were marked by a similar, functionalist approach. When questions of how to represent the West German polity finally entered the picture in the early 1970s, federal planners and local activists both proposed a definition of democracy that foregrounded respect for the rights of the individual citizen. This may have aligned well with democratic politics as it was practiced in the FRG, but it proved stubbornly difficult to translate into large-scale designs that satisfied all of the local and national constituencies that had a stake in the outcome. The upshot was that few buildings made

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6 These German responses to the Holocaust, World War II, and the Cold War divide are explored with depth and nuance in Alon Confino, Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Konrad Jarausch, After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

7 Throughout this dissertation, I will use the German word Bund as a synonym for the West German Federal Government. All translations from German are by the author unless otherwise noted.
it from the drawing table to execution, and Bonn’s government districts were left incomplete, with only a few isolated high-rises to mark the Bund’s presence.

Those projects—the office tower for Bundestag members designed by Egon Eiermann (1965-69; Figure 8) and the two towers for federal ministries designed by Planungsgruppe Stieldorf (1969-75; Figure 9), along with the mostly unrealized plans to create a parliamentary district—epitomize Bonn’s transformation into a capital city. As a mid-sized German city, Bonn had been quite typical. It has a pedestrian commercial center arranged around several plazas, a medieval church, a university, and the main train station, all of which are surrounded by largely residential neighborhoods. As a capital city, however, Bonn became utterly unusual. A large majority of federal buildings, including the Bundestag and Chancellery, were located in marginal or interstitial sites and are not well integrated into the surrounding urban fabric (Figure 10). Many important ministries occupied—and still occupy—repurposed barracks or villas with little indication of their presence beyond a plaque at the entrance. In the selection of Bonn as the capital, the very existence of these structures was a significant point in the city’s favor. In spite of Bonn’s building stock having suffered mightily during the war, the city’s boosters could point to numerous large, intact, and vacated sites in which to house ministries.

However, the preference for adaptive reuse was also a way for the new government to maintain as modest a profile as possible, and this self-effacement fit with the extreme ambivalence of West Germans towards their national identity and geopolitical circumstances. The federal high-rises and the Bund’s even more ambitious proposals interrupted this modesty in spectacular fashion, and although they gave the government a prominent material presence onto which the public could begin to project a sense of collective identity, their appearance was difficult to assimilate into a capital city and nation, the existence of which was still provisional.
At the local level, they were extremely controversial for the way they dominated and seemed to disrespect the surrounding landscape, creating a severe sense of dissonance between federal architecture and its immediate urban context.

There are still echoes of the discord between Bonn and the federal buildings that radically altered its space in the sense of disbelief, commonly expressed by visitors to the city, that it ever could have been the seat of a national government, much less that of one of the world’s largest economies. Throughout its tenure as capital, journalists, diplomats, and even chancellors frequently disparaged Bonn’s distinctive and occasionally irreconcilable blend of provincialism and power politics. A 1986 article in the Los Angeles Times collects many of the most incendiary insults, including Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s reference to Bonn as a “collection of crippled villages,” and an unnamed American correspondent’s description of the city as “half the size of a Chicago cemetery—and twice as dead.”8 Such remarks may be unfair, but there is no avoiding the fact that Bonn lacks the pomp and scale of many other capital cities. Some of this criticism was aimed at the city’s lack of nightlife and cultural amenities, but nothing did more to engender perceptions of contradiction or shortcomings in Bonn than the built environment of the city itself.

On its own, however, the evident inability of federal planners to think in terms of national symbols and identity is wholly insufficient to explain Bonn’s idiosyncratic and contentious appearance. A dense constellation of social, political, and economic factors shaped Bonn’s postwar development. These ranged from party politics in the Bundestag to the legal minutiae of the planning process to the vicissitudes of individual planners and the whims of prima donna architects, but they were all underlain by a fundamental tension between local and national

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8 Even the title of the article contains an insult. William Tuohy, “Village-Class Capital: Bonn—It Rhymes With Yawn,” Los Angeles Times, March 28, 1986. The second quote has also been attributed to Berliners, replacing Chicago with Berlin.
interests and prerogatives that emerged soon after the Bund arrived. While federal planners’ focus on practical concerns allowed them to avoid thornier issues of symbolism and representation, their preoccupation with basic functional requirements was also dictated by the need to accommodate a federal bureaucracy that ballooned rapidly after 1949. In a mid-size city like Bonn, where by 1966 the federal government employed approximately 22,400 people in a metropolitan area with roughly 300,000 residents, the sheer magnitude of this need badly strained virtually every aspect of urban planning, including housing supply, zoning, land prices, traffic, public transportation, and public service provision, as well as such regional issues as municipal boundaries and intercommunal relations. Moreover, the federal government’s presence in Bonn placed enormous pressure on the political process surrounding planning itself, occasionally pushing it to the breaking point.

Even though federal law unequivocally gave planning authority to local governments, Bonn initially found itself ill-equipped to negotiate with the Bund as an equal partner, and the Bund was ready and able to take advantage of its considerable leverage as an employer and land owner in order to get its way. On one hand, the national government had to meet an almost insatiable need for functional space, often in blatant contravention of Bonn’s nominally provisional status as capital. On the other hand, for many residents of Bonn and its neighboring towns, the federal complexes appearing along the B9 highway that ran through the city constituted an invasion that seemed to bring nothing except unbearable traffic and the utter disfigurement of the mythologized Rhine landscape. This confrontation between the local and the national is at the core of Bonn’s postwar architectural and planning history. As environmental conditions and quality of life deteriorated in the late 1950s, the municipal government engaged in increasingly forceful efforts to retain control over its urban space and provision.

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conserve its traditional identity, and the imperfect compromises that it reached, more than anything else, determined the evolution of the city’s urban landscape and the forms of the federal buildings that populated it.

In the conflict between the Bund and Bonn, perhaps the single greatest source of tension centered on the effects of federal development on those aspects of the city’s physical space that had become the most potent focal points for the development of a strong sense of local identity. Across West Germany, local identity created a sense of collective belonging and compensated for a shattered national identity during the painful process of rebuilding and rehabilitation.10 Bonn experienced an intensified version of this dynamic, as the transformation of the city into the seat of the national government raised the idea of national identity in an immediately visible way. Moreover, to a great extent local identity in Bonn derived from the city’s landscape and historical architecture, with the immutable Rhine River itself as the original and foremost source. Residents perceived the proliferation of federal buildings in the city and the new and uncertain identity that they portended as a threat to cherished local monuments and the closely held associations that had accrued to them in local collective memory.

This was even further compounded by the fact that Bonn laid claim to nearly two thousand years of recorded history, dating back to a Roman military settlement founded in the 1st century BC. This history included a stint after 1597 as the seat of the powerful Cologne Archdiocese and the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven in 1770. During the height of German Romanticism, Bonn’s picturesque location at the foot of the “Seven Hills” (Siebengebirge: Figure 11) made the city an important tourist destination. Atop the Hills’ most famous peak stands the ruin of Burg Drachenfels (“Dragon’s Rock”), a 12th-century castle built by Archbishop Arnold I of Cologne that was destroyed during the Thirty Years’ War (Figure 12) and linked by

10 Confino, _Germany as a Culture of Remembrance_, 81-91.
legend to Siegfried, the hero from *The Song of the Nibelungs*, and his triumphant battle against the dragon Fafnir. In the 19th century, popular interest in nature, the Middle Ages, and national creation myths like the *Nibelungs* combined with easier rail travel to draw visitors from all over Europe to Drachenfels and, by proximity, Bonn.  

Mirroring the Drachenfels on the opposite side of the Rhine, although at lower altitude and without the attachment to German mythology, is the Godesburg (Figure 13). Built a century after Drachenfels and destroyed somewhat earlier—in 1583 during the Cologne War—the ruins of the Godesburg sit imposingly on top of a volcanic outcropping and loom over the middle of the town of Bad Godesberg. Natural springs are found in the vicinity of the castle, and the restorative powers that several 18th-century Electors attributed to their waters led to the establishment of Bad Godesberg as a prominent spa town, further contributing to robust tourism in the Bonn area. In the postwar era, both Drachenfels and Godesburg underwent extensive renovations—the latter designed by the prominent German architect Gottfried Böhm—which enhanced their attraction as tourist sites by adding modern services and conveniences.

The twinned peaks with their medieval ruins are only two of the most prominent reminders of the tight connections between the landscape, history, and myth and the Bonn region’s well-developed sense of local identity. Given these long-standing relationships, it was inevitable that the growth of the federal government in Bonn and its voracious need for space would create friction between the Bund and its host city. Any interventions into the landscape, and particularly those at the scale proposed by federal planners, threatened to disrupt the delicate

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11 Ironically, it was the English poet Lord Byron who first brought Drachenfels to international attention with a poem of the same name, which he wrote while making his way up the Rhine in 1816.

12 The term “Bad,” indicating that it is a spa town was only added to the city’s name in 1925.
equilibrium between the city’s space and the local public’s identification with it. The public’s most outraged and determined responses to planning developments in Bonn invoked precisely that threat to local identity. Such tension could play out between cities as well, as Bad Godesberg repeatedly invoked its traditional identity as a spa town as part of its justification for resisting Bonn’s campaign during the 1960s to expand its municipal boundaries to include the surrounding towns.

Bonn framed that campaign in terms of planning necessity and maintaining a functional metropolitan area. As the actual capital city, Bonn received the majority of the stresses and burdens of accommodating a federal bureaucracy, but the communities on its borders felt the impact intensely as well. Although these communities often played the role of release valve, offering space and flexibility when both began to dwindle in Bonn, they also hosted many of the ancillary institutions that accompanied a federal government, such as embassies, think tanks, and advocacy groups, and they were important sources of housing for the region’s ballooning population. The intensive development in Bonn’s suburbs was outside the purview of its municipal planning authorities, but it nevertheless contributed to their difficulties because so much of the city’s infrastructure and services were shared. Thus, Bonn led a long campaign in the 1950s and 1960s to incorporate the neighboring towns, particularly Bad Godesberg to the south, Duisdorf to the West, and Beuel on the other side of the Rhine, into a single municipal entity, Greater Bonn (Groß-Bonn). These communities strongly resisted Bonn’s overtures, rightly fearing a dramatic loss of autonomy in any such regional integration and not wanting to sacrifice their independence and identities in the service of helping Bonn counter a similar perceived threat from the federal government.
The imperative to find or create office space for its workforce put the Bund on a collision course with Bonn, but this conflict over space implicated numerous other forces, cumulatively encompassing the entire political economy of urban planning and building in the capital city. The most material of these forces was finance. For the federal government, creating new infrastructure was expensive, and any building proposal was inevitably caught up in budgetary debates around how best to allocate limited government resources. The cost of the Bund’s building projects in the 1960s would become a major point of contention for Bundestag members, and the controversy would frequently spill out into the public through the press’s coverage and commentary. Furthermore, as the Bund became a dominant participant in Bonn’s limited commercial real estate and rental markets, it distorted prices and invited financial speculation, threatening to push out non-governmental businesses and institutions. For Bonn, the presence of the federal government proved to be incredibly expensive. The costs of expanding services for a growing residential and commuter population outstripped the city’s tax base. State-level financial subsidies from North-Rhine Westphalia were not enough to fill the gap, and until Bonn forced the issue in 1969 (see Chapter 3), the Bund insisted that the Basic Law all but prohibited federal support for localities.\(^{13}\) The city was forced to go into debt, and by July 1965, Bonn had the highest municipal debt in the FRG: 175 million Deutschmarks (DM), or 1200 DM per resident. Bonn’s changing demographics further exacerbated the problem, as the population density in the city soared to nearly 4,600 people per square kilometer—the highest rate in the country—imposing severe new strains on the city’s infrastructure and services.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) The Bund insisted that federal subsidies or reimbursements were only permitted for individual projects where the effects of federal activity could be concretely documented. Bonn and its neighbors routinely took advantage of this legal avenue, but it was far from adequate.

\(^{14}\) Both figures are from Der Spiegel, “Bonn: Schulden und Ehre,” July 14, 1965, 44-45. The article compares Bonn’s per capita debt with Hannover (953 DM) and Cologne (623 DM).
Bonn’s Mayors, City Managers, Council members, and public quickly and correctly identified the Bund as the source of the city’s planning crisis, but they also viewed the federal government as the entity with both the responsibility and, crucially, the means to help solve it. This made Bonn’s representatives receptive to proposals for development and construction projects because such plans also offered opportunities to address the city’s planning problems. Often this was done in the context of the plans themselves, by increasing parking supply or modifying roads. However, as Bonn’s fiscal situation and ability to meet its citizens’ needs declined in the early 1960s, economics assumed a much broader and more central role in land use, zoning, and development negotiations with the Bund. Bonn’s demands of the Bund became divorced from any specific proposal, pushing the limits of what was legally permissible under the West German Basic Law (Grundgesetz) and becoming a major point of tension between the two sides. Bonn would eventually extract substantial financial concessions from the federal government, but not before the complete collapse of the relationship between the city and the state.

For many politicians, concerns about budgetary fitness and the economics of federal development in Bonn could also serve as a convenient proxy for the more abstract and intractable problem of the capital city’s “provisional” status. At the national level, that status hampered the formation of a distinctly West German identity. In Bonn, it proved to be a major irritant in the planning process and an impediment to both the city and the Bund’s abilities to meet their needs. In the first months after the founding of the FRG in the West and GDR in the East, there was genuine uncertainty about the potential duration of a divided Germany and sincere hope that the two sides and their Cold War sponsors, the United States and Soviet Union, respectively, could reach an accommodation that allowed for reunification. Under such
circumstances, it made little sense to build extensively in Bonn. Instead, adapting the city’s existing building stock to meet the temporary new demand for office space seemed an expedient solution to the problem.

Nevertheless, as the months and years passed and no clear path to reunification emerged, the government in Bonn still had to perform the duties of a national government—write laws, regulate the economy, conduct foreign relations, and (after 1955) prepare for the national defense—and these duties required an increasing number of personnel who needed space to work and live. Within a year of relocating to Bonn, several ministries reported that they were running out of space, and by the mid-1950s virtually every department was feeling the pinch. Yet because Berlin remained the historical and presumptive future capital of Germany, many politicians, representing significant portions of the West German populace, were hesitant to commit more to Bonn, either financially or with a greater physical footprint. While they framed their objections primarily in terms of the good of the Republic—such as loyalty toward Berlin or a desire to avoid moves that might jeopardize any imminent thaw in relations with the East—they also extended their concern to the city, not wishing to leave it with a host of brand new buildings that would sit empty after the imminent restoration of Berlin as the capital.

Conflict in the Bundestag over Bonn’s provisional status tended to break down along party lines. The Social Democrats (SPD) were generally more pro-Berlin and anti-development, while the Christian Democrats (CDU)—albeit sometimes begrudgingly and with conditions—were more supportive of new development in Bonn. This party alignment was established during Parliamentary Council debates in 1948-49 over which West German city would host the new

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15 See, for example, a memo by Heinz Oeftering, the head of the Finance Ministry department that at the time included the Federal Building Agency, addressed to the Federal Ministers and prefacing a draft of a cabinet presentation on the state of federal accommodations in Bonn, December 22, 1950 (BArch, B 157/34).
government. At the time, the SPD, led by Kurt Schumacher, strongly backed Frankfurt-am-Main, a traditional SPD stronghold with an outsized place in the history of democracy in Germany, while the CDU, with Konrad Adenauer at the helm, supported Bonn, a city with a minimal international and political profile. The SPD would subsequently use objections to federal building proposals, couched in terms of Bonn’s provisional status, as a way to challenge Bonn’s legitimacy and thwart its primary rival for control of the Bundestag. Thus, West German party politics also became deeply implicated in federal planning issues, and the two sides would remain mostly unchanged in their orientation towards Bonn until the ascension of Willy Brandt as the first SPD Chancellor in 1969.

This presented a paradox for the federal building officials whose job was to find suitable accommodations for all federal employees. There simply was no way to accomplish the task in Bonn without new construction, but any new building ran the risk of appearing to violate Bonn’s provisional status. This certainly was the case with the Federal Foreign Office building, which upon its completion in 1955 was one of the largest administrative complexes in the country, and which prompted the headline in the Belgian socialist newspaper, *Le Peuple*, “In Bonn, the provisional becomes final.”16 The tensions surrounding the federal government’s ability to meet its need for space while preserving the illusion that it was prepared to return to Berlin at a moment’s notice opened up very different fault lines in the planning process than those induced by economic pressures. Where financial considerations ultimately pitted federal and local interests directly against each other, Bonn’s provisional status aligned federal building officials and the pro-development municipal planning offices against the pro-Berlin or fiscal conservative factions in the Bundestag.

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Bonn’s provisional status and the problems it created for federal building officials and local urban planners were inextricably caught up in West Germany’s Cold War circumstances, but the nation’s recent history also impinged significantly on the postwar politics of federal architecture. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime’s racist and hyper-nationalist rhetoric, its reification in the bombastic and dehumanizing neoclassicism of its official architecture (Figure 14), and the inescapable association of both with the horrors of the Holocaust understandably made the country’s new governors skeptical towards grand national symbolic statements. In the early years of the Federal Republic in particular, federal officials were keenly aware of the potential for negative associations with National Socialism in the government’s buildings. When the Bund housed several ministries in Bonn in barracks that had been built for the purposes of the Nazi Wehrmacht, Heinz Oeftering, a department head at the Finance Ministry, whose section at the time included the Federal Building Agency (*Bundesbaudirektion*), framed the decision explicitly in terms of essential expediency given the government’s pressing needs.\(^\text{17}\) Such pressing practical needs were very real for the new national government, but they also offered planners an effective way to sidestep the more difficult problem of trying to assimilate a tragic and guilt-ridden history into the design of new national symbols.

In their analyses of Bonn’s federal architecture, Deborah Ascher Barnstone and Michael Z. Wise have both placed a great deal of stress on the reliance on modernism—beginning with Hans Schwipprts’s Bundeshaus—as evidence of a self-conscious and emphatic rejection of Nazi monumentalism and embrace of modernism’s historical connection to progressive politics in Germany.\(^\text{18}\) However, that prevalence of modernism in federal architecture reflects more the rise of a postwar generation of architects, such as Egon Eiermann and Günter Behnisch, who had

\(^{17}\) Finance Ministry department head, Heinz Oeftering, letter to all of the Federal Ministers regarding accommodations in Bonn, March 23, 1950 (BArch, B 157/331).

been trained either during the heyday of the Neues Bauen movement of the 1920s or in the 1950s when the modernist idiom had become conventional, rather than an ideological commitment.

Nevertheless, the legacy of modernist architecture in Germany serves as an ever-present cultural backdrop to the creation and reception of the modernist buildings that mushroomed around Bonn after 1949. Proponents of federal development occasionally attempted to exploit the functional or aesthetic tenants of modernism as a way to build support for building proposals and establish the legitimacy of their design preferences. For example, federal planners justified the high-rise form as preserving a maximum amount of potential green space at ground level in language strongly evocative of Le Corbusier’s modernist urbanism of the 1920s, particularly the idea of the “tower in the park.” However, the emerging critiques of modernism in the 1950s and 60s blunted these arguments, and the local public’s emphatic rejections of the concrete, glass, and steel buildings intruding into their city’s historical fabric turned the architectural style into an aggravating factor in the relationship between the Bund and its host.

The press, led by Bonn’s two major daily newspapers, the General-Anzeiger and the Bonner Rundschau, abetted the public in its efforts against federal development. Both papers closely covered the Bund’s planning activities in the city, disseminating descriptions and, crucially, images of the various proposals and interviewing local and national politicians and planning officials. Their editorial coverage of federal planning proposals for the city, as manifested in regular opinion columns and letters to the editor, was almost uniformly negative.

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20 The turn against modernist design principles and theories of urban planning in the decades after World War II was an international phenomenon exemplified by Team X’s splintering from C.I.A.M. in 1953 and the publication of Jane Jacob’s The Death and Life of Great American Cities in 1961.
and amplified public concerns, making them difficult to ignore. Indeed, in the 1960s, a feedback loop emerged in which local reporting on federal building plans elicited public criticism, which caused the press, sensing a controversy, to scrutinize federal development more intensely, with each new revelation they uncovered sparking a louder public outcry.

Occasionally, national news outlets, such as the weekly magazine, Der Spiegel, or the daily Die Welt, would report on federal building activity in Bonn. Although their attention was more sporadic and geared towards a broader audience, it was not necessarily any friendlier. National reports naturally prioritized national concerns, such as the effect on the federal budget rather than the impact on the local landscape, but they reinforced an atmosphere of skepticism towards federal building that could easily transform into outright opposition and cause problems for elected representatives. Thus, for federal building officials desperate for both funding and political legitimacy for their designs in Bonn, the press could be the most direct way for them to communicate with the public, but it was more often a persistent obstacle in that it gave the public an equal platform with which to respond and counter the efforts of planners.

The public’s participation in urban planning discussions found official sanction in West German planning law, particularly the Federal Building Law (Bundesbaugesetz) of 1960. This law, which replaced and unified the patchwork of local and state-level planning laws that had emerged in the immediate postwar era, set the terms, rights, and obligations of participation by private and public stakeholders in every level of the planning process, including zoning, development planning, the exercise of eminent domain, appraisals, infrastructure provision, and administrative procedures. As such, the Federal Building Law provided the legal framework for the development of the buildings and complexes at the center of this dissertation. Crucially for Bonn, the law established local autonomy in urban planning by vesting authority in towns and
municipalities\textsuperscript{21} and promoted civic engagement by requiring the public disclosure of plans and the solicitation of public comment.\textsuperscript{22} These provisions in particular would prove to be imperfect but indispensable tools for Bonn’s local planning officials and public as they faced down the Bund in the late 1960s. Combined, they provided the leverage to win valuable and long-sought concessions from the federal government in exchange for granting it permission to seek more radical transformations of the city’s space.

The Federal Building Law governed the planning process in the FRG, and it became an important fulcrum in the relationship between the country and its capital city. However, the technical, legal aspects of planning accounted for only one piece of the overall process of conceiving and executing a government building. At the federal level, decisions about where and how to build had to be made through an arduous legislative process and implemented by a cumbersome bureaucracy. Building proposals first had to clear the Bundestag’s Budget Committee (\textit{Haushaltsausschuß}) before being considered by the entire body. This not only required the hard work of democratic coalition building, it also meant working within a legislative schedule with a crowded agenda that was not always propitious for building officials’ quick development timelines. Furthermore, changes in the composition of the Bundestag’s party blocs, determined approximately every four years, could dramatically alter those agendas, further complicating the Bund’s efforts to build suitable accommodations, even for the Bundestag itself. Bonn’s City Council also had authority to approve or block federal building projects, particularly in cases involving zoning or land use issues, thus further compounding the legislative obstacles facing federal planners. For the local authorities, many city planning decisions were subject to

\textsuperscript{22} Bundesbaugesetz, § 2 (6), Bundesgesetzblatt, 345.
review and approval at the state level, usually by the North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) district president (*Regierungspräsident*) in Cologne, adding yet another wrinkle to the process.

Outside of the legislative sphere, federal building proposals were also subject to the discretion of multiple federal ministries and agencies, each of which could claim responsibility for different aspects of any building proposal. Chief among these was the Building Department (*Bauabteilung*) of the Federal Treasury Ministry (*Bundesschatzministerium*), which had the broadest authority over federal building efforts and was responsible for tracking the Bund’s space needs, which made the department acutely aware of any shortfalls in Bonn and placed it under the most intense pressure to remedy them. Immediately subsidiary to the Building Department was the Federal Building Agency, which was in charge of most aspects of a building project’s execution, including site planning, blueprints, and construction management, and the Agency handled many federal projects entirely in-house. Even when an outside architect, such as Egon Eiermann, was involved, he would work closely with the Federal Building Agency in the creation of detailed construction drawings. The Federal Ministry of Finance (*Bundesministerium der Finanzen*) was responsible for budgeting and tracking expenditures for building projects and thus demanded input in the planning phases. The planning process also naturally involved whichever ministry or agency was the nominal “client” for a project, and in cases such as the Bundesrat and Bundestag or Chancellor, satisfying the client could prove difficult. By comparison, Bonn’s municipal planning bureaucracy—which was centralized in the City Planning Office (*Stadtplanungsamt*) under the control of the elected City Manager—was quite streamlined.

At the federal level, the Chancellor had the authority to establish, eliminate, and reshuffle ministries and agencies in accordance with his policy priorities. The constantly shifting
bureaucratic landscape—with the attendant changes in department designations and official titles—can make it difficult to track the responsibilities of the various parties involved in the planning process. For example, Chancellor Adenauer placed the Building Department during his first administration in the Finance Ministry but shifted it in 1957 to the newly created Federal Ministry for the Federal Patrimony (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftlichen Besitz des Bundes), which was renamed in 1961 as the Treasury Ministry. When Chancellor Brandt eliminated the Treasury Ministry in 1969, the Building Department moved back to the Finance Ministry, but only until 1972, when it was shifted to the Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Building, and Urban Development (Bundesministerium für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau).

The byzantine bureaucracy surrounding the federal planning and building process made it the subject of persistent attempts at reform, many of which proved counterproductive. Often the first step in such attempts was the creation of a committee, working group, or advisory council within and across ministries, and their proliferation only added to the red tape facing federal building projects while at the same time increasing expectations and pressure for projects to remain on time and on budget. In the late 1960s and into the 1970s, reform efforts centered around the demand for open competitions for every federal building project. The local Bonn public along with key outside interest groups, such as the Association of German Architects (Bund Deutscher Architekten or BDA)—whose members stood to benefit greatly in terms of

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23 The Ministry for the Federal Patrimony was the successor to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit), which itself succeeded the Federal Ministry for Marshall Plan Affairs (Bundesministerium für Angelegenheiten des Marshallplanes).

24 The “Bundesbauministerium” (Federal Building Ministry) has an even more fractured history. Founded as the Federal Ministry for Housing (Bundesministerium für Wohnungsbau) when a housing shortage was one of the most pressing issues facing West Germany, it was renamed four times between 1949 and 1972, adding Regional Planning and Urban Development to its portfolio and trading Housing for the more general “Building.”
exposure and commissions from such competitions—were the principal advocates for open competitions, and they were largely successful in implementing this reform. However, competitions added yet another procedural layer to the process and ended up dramatically lengthening development timelines, as briefs had to be written, entries had to be solicited, and juries had to be convened.

Amid all of the procedural complexity and inertia inherent in legislative bodies and large bureaucracies, we should not underestimate the influence that individual officials and planners could exert on the planning process and on the development and final form of federal building projects. Wolfgang Hesse, Bonn’s City Manager from 1964-1975, was the first to suggest linking federal development in Bonn to increased and unrestricted financial aid from the Bund, and in so doing he dramatically shifted the tone and substance of federal-municipal relations. Eugen Gerstenmaier, the Bundestag President from 1954-1969, almost single-handedly shepherded Egon Eiermann’s Bundestag office tower project through the legislative process. Critics of the building rewarded Gerstenmaier by permanently linking his name to the unpopular edifice with the derisive nickname “Lanky Eugen” (Langer Eugen). Within the federal planning bureaucracy, there was a strong tendency for officials to remain within the same agency or department for their entire professional careers and gradually work their way through the hierarchy. Thus, an official such as Johannes Rossig, who started out as an assistant in the Building Department in the early 1950s and eventually became the department’s longtime chief, was involved in hundreds of projects and ultimately came to mold the federal building process itself.

The thick tangle of economic, political, legal, and procedural issues involved in building for the Bund—especially when one takes into account the local role in the process—offered numerous opportunities for projects to fail or be indefinitely postponed under any number of
pretexts, from budgetary to functional to aesthetic. Thus, it is not surprising that, relative to the pace and ambition of federal building proposals in the 1960s and 70s, so few plans reached fruition. The failed projects—and the reasons for their failure—are as important to understanding Bonn’s evolution as the West German capital as the plans that came to completion. When we consider not only the skyscrapers but also the gaps in Bonn’s skyline where skyscrapers might have been, we get a much clearer picture of a capital city shaped by democratic forces. The confrontation between local and national needs, desires, and prerogatives in Bonn led to compromises that culminated in a hybrid identity for the city that confounded expectations for a capital representing a major economic and NATO military power. Beyond Bonn, the following study demonstrates that close attention to local context and conditions when dealing with ostensibly national symbols raises significant questions about the extent to which we should consider them as such.

Bonn’s postwar architectural legacy is emblematic of West German history and national identity in that it was the product of an essentially democratic approach, with freedom and power distributed throughout a complex, malleable, and negotiable system. What critics have described as unpretentiousness or self-effacement in Bonn’s federal landscape and linked to a corresponding modesty and moderation in politics and government in the FRG is in reality the result of a planning process that enshrined local autonomy and encouraged civic participation. The city’s physical evolution is concrete evidence of West Germans learning through daily practice the difficult lessons of democracy and establishing via those efforts one of the most robust and successful representative governments in the modern world. Initially, Bonn had to force its way to the planning table, but the extraordinary steps that the municipal government and
the local public took to preserve what they valued about their city ultimately resulted in a capital city that is as much a local as a national phenomenon.

**Literature and Methodology**

This dissertation is a contribution to a field of study centered on the complex relationship between architecture and urban planning, politics and political institutions, and identity. Capital cities offer ideal subjects for such inquiries, and scholarship on national architecture in capitals from Washington, D.C. to Berlin to Brasilia and beyond is varied and robust. This scholarship is based on the premise, articulated by Lawrence J. Vale in the preface to the second edition of his seminal study of capitals, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, that the “… architecture and urban design of government districts can become a diagnostic tool for understanding political relationships” because they are the “… setting through which we express ideals like democracy, or freedom, or other kinds of national values, and this colors the way the citizen sees and perceives the government.”25 Vale’s work provides a useful framework and vocabulary for thinking about capital cities, but his subsequent case studies give clear favor to the formal analysis of architectural forms, style, and visual symbolism as the primary bearers of meaning in national buildings and the principle sources of any projections of national identity and political ideologies to the public.

As this dissertation demonstrates, Bonn is particularly fertile ground for developing new insights into the connections between the built environment, politics, and identity, but this is more because it confounds rather than conforms to Vale’s assumptions. The scholarship on the

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architecture and urban planning of Bonn is sparse, but what work has been done has largely been consistent with Vale’s approach. For example, Barnstone’s study, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in Postwar Germany*, asserts that transparency was the central metaphor in Bonn’s federal architecture linking it to West German democratic politics. In doing so, she reduces the concept of transparency in architecture to the ability to see through glass and political transparency to the ability of the citizen to be physically present and witness government proceedings. This oversimplification is incommensurate with both the multiple ways that transparency can operate in a structure and the complex relationship between a democratic government and its citizens, and it offers only a superficial understanding of the relationship between architecture and politics in Bonn. The German architectural critic, Ingeborg Flagge, has disparaged Bonn’s unfinished federal districts as evidence of the Bund’s lack of will to express any ideals in built form. This might be true in a very narrow sense, but it also ignores the fact that the absence of buildings in Bonn is the result of the kinds of democratic processes that undergird the ideals that Flagge would presumably wish to see expressed more concretely.

Against this reductive critical approach, Bonn’s rather extreme idiosyncrasies as a capital strongly support a broadening of identity to include both national and local identity and a de-emphasis of form and style in the analysis of its postwar planning history. Specifically, the peculiar interaction between Bonn’s status as a “provisional” seat of government—an almost singular phenomenon in modern history—and its two thousand-year history, which fostered a strong sense of local identity and attachment to the landscape, led, among other things, to Bonn remaining resolutely independent from its newfound role as a political power center. This

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26 Barnstone, *The Transparent State*, 1-86.
unusual condition militates in favor of close, careful attention to local history and context when considering Bonn’s transformation into a national capital. To that end, this dissertation presents rigorous and detailed reconstructions of several pivotal moments in the architectural and planning history of Bonn.

In order to achieve a fine-grained picture of events, this dissertation relies overwhelmingly on primary sources, including governmental memos and reports, personal correspondence, and proceedings from the West German Bundestag found in local and federal archives, as well as the ample contemporary coverage of planning issues found in the local and national press. Contrary to analyses that present strong connections between built form and national identity, the history below demonstrates that the federal planners and lawmakers tasked with creating space for a growing bureaucracy in ways that respected Bonn’s provisional status barely considered representational concerns and symbolism in their deliberations. On the other side of the equation, the local residents whose lives and space were most directly affected by each new federal construction project viewed them almost exclusively in terms of their disfiguring effects on the local surroundings. Those who were in a position to create national symbols were preoccupied with more prosaic concerns, and the most immediate historical audience for the buildings saw them as anything but national artifacts. This is not to deny national identity any role in interpretations of Bonn’s federal architecture, but to insist that any capital city’s identity is always a hybrid and that the national piece may not be so easily or firmly rooted in formal elements.

This dissertation is also a contribution to the history of West Germany. The historiography of postwar Germany is vast and rife with contentious debates, not least of which concern the response of ordinary Germans and their governments to the cataclysm of National
Socialism and World War II. With regard to West Germany, two major questions that have preoccupied historians have been how the population successfully negotiated the transition to democracy and how citizens managed to recover any sense of collective identity in the context of total political and moral collapse. The history of the country’s provisional capital offers instructive answers to both, and these answers support and build on the conclusions of historians such as Alon Confino and Konrad Jarausch.

In *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, Confino demonstrates the unique centrality of the German concept of *Heimat*—a concept that can span local, regional, and national registers of identity—in constructions of national identity throughout modern German history, including the Bonn Republic. In West Germany in particular, *Heimat* “allowed one to link to a selective personal and collective experience of the Third Reich, while sidestepping moral questions.”  

In both the federal planning proposals in Bonn and the local response to them, that selective experience of the Third Reich amounted to its almost total effacement. However, the public mobilized other, more ancient aspects of its history as a bulwark against dealing with the problematic issue of a new national identity that—with the influx of politicians and the conversion of many of its buildings—arrived earlier and more noticeably in Bonn than elsewhere in the FRG. Over time, the strong local identity also proved to be an integrative force. As the local public pushed back against the most ambitious federal projects, using arguments grounded in the effects of those projects on the city and landscape, the compromises and accords that the Bund and Bonn achieved opened space for the city to begin to accommodate the federal buildings in its space and assimilate its national role into its identity.

Those types of debates and compromises play a central role in Konrad Jarausch’s *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*. In Jarausch’s account of the emergence and

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28 Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, 91.
consolidation of democracy and civil society in the Federal Republic, neither the imposition of a new political system by the United States nor its acceptance at an intellectual level by the conquered Germans was enough to make the country democratic. Rather, democracy had to be “founded anew from within and learned through active participation.”29 Within this dynamic, local self-government was particularly important in the broader reorientation because it allowed citizens to play a role in solving their own problems.30 Overall, it was the small day-to-day acts of self-government—voting, criticizing elected officials, protesting, participating in citizen movements—and then witnessing the fruits of their labors in steadily improving material conditions and responsive, responsible governments that cemented a spirit of democracy in West Germany. Bonn’s postwar planning history bears excellent witness to this evolution. To the extent that Bonn is a democratic capital, it is because its architects and inhabitants worked extremely hard at the practice of democracy in the course of its creation, getting better at it with each conflict. With history as a guide, these efforts become legible in Bonn’s peculiar landscape.

In its narrow focus on a single city over a defined and relatively brief period of time, this study is decidedly a microhistory. However, even as it contracts the field of study to a few square miles over a few decades, there is a corresponding dilation in the approach towards interdisciplinarity. It moves far beyond traditional architectural or planning history to incorporate political, social, and legal history, as well as aspects of geography and political science. Given the inherently political nature of the architecture in question and of the processes behind its planning and execution, this last part is particularly important, and the analysis below takes strong cues from the theories of statecraft and politics developed by James C. Scott in Seeing

30 Ibid., 134.
Like a State. Scott’s analysis offers a useful framework in which to consider the behavior of federal and municipal officials and the public in Bonn.

According to Scott, in order for modern states and their agents to develop and implement regimes of administration and control within increasingly complex societies, they must first rationalize those societies based on their observable characteristics and extrapolations of their needs. These rationalizations, necessarily based on a limited set of objective criteria, inevitably include significant mismeasurements, misapprehensions, and blind spots. In the eyes of the state, however, the flattened model comes to stand in for society itself and forms the basis for official policies and initiatives. In example after example, Scott demonstrates how large-scale state action based on such rationalized models of society will ultimately impede rather than facilitate a functioning social order, often with tragic results for the populations in question. To counter this dynamic, Scott posits practical knowledge and informal processes dispersed across society serve as an indispensable check against and palliative for the destructive actions of the state.

While the stakes in developing the FRG’s capital were not nearly as high, the rationalizations not as severe, and the blind spots not as glaring as in the large-scale social engineering projects around the world that form the basis for Scott’s analysis, federal and municipal planners in Bonn were very much “seeing like a state.” It was a state with exquisite technocratic vision but that steadfastly refused to see itself in any of its proposals. In their inability to contemplate the projection of a positive national identity as one aspect of their role in planning the capital city, officials also blinded themselves to the deeper and potentially threatening resonances their buildings would have for Bonn’s residents, who were busy fashioning and claiming a highly localized identity for themselves. With increasing urgency and

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32 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 1-10.
volume, the city’s residents resisted federal proposals until they finally succeeded in changing the process behind their creation, reshaping it to better account for a broader spectrum of local needs and desires.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation unfolds essentially chronologically, notwithstanding significant temporal overlap between the chapters dealing with the critical events of the 1960s in Bonn. That decade, culminating in the crucial turning point of 1969, is the centerpiece of this study because it saw the federal and municipal governments, as well as the local public, finally struggling to come to terms with what it meant for the nation and the city to transform Bonn into the functional capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. The struggle took place largely in the arena of architecture and urban planning, as the Bund initiated several large-scale, long-term development projects intended to accommodate the growing bureaucracy of a modern national government and as Bonn sought to manage the effects of that growth and assert control over its space and identity through an effort to restructure the political geography of the entire region.

The space and identity that Bonn fought so hard to control and preserve during its tenure as the West German capital, however, were inseparable from the city’s two-millennia history and its particular place on the western bank of the mythic Rhine river. For residents of postwar Bonn, that history, along with the local identity that they drew from it, was firmly rooted in or associated with specific aspects of the environment, individual buildings and natural landmarks, the relationships between them, and ancient divisions between the communities in the area. For the first time in the 1960s, the proposals by both Bonn and the Bund seriously threatened to
change or disrupt many enduring and identity-affirming features of the city and region. In order to provide a vivid sense of the stakes involved in these transformative confrontations, Chapter 1 offers a geographical and historical overview of Bonn’s development as a city, primarily through the lens of architecture and urban planning, dating back to the Roman Empire. Additionally, the chapter sets the stage for the struggles of the 1960s by describing the architectural history of the first decade of Bonn as the capital, a period in which the concept of the provisional held much greater sway with politicians and planners and prevented local and federal officials from adequately addressing a number of slowly building urban planning problems.

Chapter 2 picks up right around 1960 with the beginning of Bonn’s concerted campaign to redraw its boundaries and incorporate the neighboring communities, including Bad Godesberg and Beuel, which sat on the opposite bank of the Rhine. The ostensible motive for this integration was to give Bonn the capacity to regulate the rampant growth in the suburbs and provide adequate municipal infrastructure and services for the entire metropolitan area. The consolidation of planning authority for the entire area into a single planning office under the direction of a single City Manager also gave Bonn far greater leverage to check the Bund’s increasingly ambitious building agenda. However, Bonn’s neighbors, in particular the wealthy and self-sufficient Bad Godesberg, tenaciously resisted the merger with Bonn, and the episode demonstrated clearly that Bonn’s fight to preserve its traditional identity from obliteration at the hands of the Bund in no way precluded the city from posing a similar threat to its smaller neighbors. The animated discourse that took place around Bonn’s proposals and the numerous counter-proposals for reforming regional administration and planning further resulted in a substantial normalization of the city’s status as capital towards something more enduring.
Chapter 3 turns from intra-communal relations to the planning and execution of the first major federal building project of the 1960s in Bonn, a process that led to the first major clash between Bonn and the Bund over the sale of a prime piece of city-owned land. The project—a 30-story office high-rise designed by Egon Eiermann for Bundestag members—marked Bonn as the capital city more starkly and clearly than anything that preceded it, sparking controversy among federal officials and lawmakers as well as the local public. For federal legislators, the building seemed in both size and expense to undermine Bonn’s provisional status and thus Berlin’s place as the legitimate German capital. For locals, the building’s scale marred the cherished Rhine landscape and Bonn’s skyline, and the tower’s extreme conspicuousness threatened to leave little room for any identification of the city besides as the federal capital. To add to this discontent, the negotiations between the Bund and Bonn over the land and zoning for the skyscraper failed to deliver any guarantees from the Bund for assistance with Bonn’s growing financial and urban planning difficulties, many of which were directly attributable to presence of the federal government.

In Chapter 4, the architectural and political strands laid out in the two previous chapters come together in the fall of 1969 with serious consequences for the city and the federal government. After the successful execution of the Parliamentary tower, federal planners set their sights on the next major project, a massive complex of high-rises for numerous federal ministries on the northern edge of Bad Godesberg. The Bund completed two of the towers, but in the course of carrying out a second phase of the development with two additional towers, local residents suddenly found that they had a significantly enlarged platform from which to express their growing disaffection with federal architecture in Bonn and the legal authority to affect it in a Bonn that doubled in size and population with the incorporation of Bad Godesberg and the
other neighboring towns. The tempest reached the highest levels of the West German government with Chancellor Willy Brandt stepping in to stop any further federal construction in the capital. In the aftermath, Bonn finally forced the Bund to offer the city substantial financial support and enact reforms in the planning process, introducing greater transparency, competition, and most importantly, local input on all projects.

Finally, the dissertation concludes with an analysis of the status of identity—national and local—in Bonn’s urban space as the uneasy truce took hold between the Bund and the city in the wake of the events of 1969-1970. The agreements, discussions, and planning competitions that emerged from the collapse of the Bund-Bonn relationship seemed to augur a period of rapid progress in addressing each party’s priorities, but any optimism quickly yielded to stasis on many fronts, as several new layers were added to an already sclerotic planning process. The kind of transformative projects envisioned in the early 1970s never materialized. Bonn was more secure than ever in its status as a national capital, but the slow pace of construction left it visually and architecturally as one of the most peculiar capitals in the world. Beyond the solitary high-rises, West Germany’s capital offered few visible symbols around which a strong national identity could coalesce. However, the lack of such structures and symbols was the result of a set of processes that reflected democratic values far more concretely than an inert building ever could. These processes also finally allowed Bonn’s residents to preserve important aspects of local history and identity while in practice a new national identity as democratic citizens became ever more entrenched.
Chapter 1: An Historical Survey of Bonn Through its First Decade as Capital

The city of Bonn straddles the Rhine River just under thirty kilometers south of the much larger Cologne, around seventy kilometers south of Düsseldorf—the state (Land) capital of North Rhine-Westphalia—and only around seventy-five kilometers east of the French-German border. Bonn sits at the northernmost end of the so-called “Romantic Rhine” and marks the transition between the Middle Rhine and Lower Rhine, where the river emerges from a series of gorges and steep valleys into the broad plain that takes it to its delta in the Netherlands. Thus, to the south of the city on both sides of the Rhine, the landscape rises dramatically, creating constantly shifting scenic vistas of steep vineyard-covered slopes topped by craggy peaks and ruined castles. These natural formations hem in the city along the river on both sides as they taper off towards the north. On the western side lies the plateau that forms the northern-most edge of the Eifel mountain range, while on the eastern shore sits the Siebengebirge.

The broadening of the Rhine and gentle flattening of the landscape from south to north around Bonn also help explain site’s suitability as an Ancient Roman castellum, the foundation of which in 11 BC marked the beginning of over two thousand years of continuous settlement, making Bonn one of the oldest cities in Germany. In conjunction with the landscape, this impressive history, inconsistently preserved and carefully curated, provides the foundation for modern local identity in Bonn. As with the landscape, local identity adheres primarily to the physical markers of the city’s history, such as monuments, buildings, and the city plan itself. Federal building proposals after 1949 never directly endangered this architectural patrimony—and in some cases, where they incorporated existing buildings, they even helped to preserve it—but the accumulation of large and highly visible federal buildings dramatically changed the way that the city looked and felt to its residents. The city’s postwar building spree, and its
associations with the federal government, threatened to overwhelm the eclectic mix of medieval, Baroque, and 19th-century architecture from which the local public drew collective meaning. While Bonn initially viewed its role as the provisional capital as an honor, as time passed and the Bund’s presence grew, and problems arising from its newfound status as the capital mounted in the 1950s and 60s, the city came to view its new identity as political power center with increasing ambivalence.

**Roman and Medieval Bonn: Garrison Town to Christian Stronghold**

Considering the history of Bonn through the lens of its architecture and urban planning helps us to account for the contours of the local public’s identity—an identity that the federal government in a sense inherited when it arrived in the city. This history also explains the distinctive physical condition of Bonn in 1949. This condition—comparatively intact, with significant usable office space and habitable housing stock—became a critical plank in Bonn’s campaign to become the capital. This relatively healthy urban condition also affected subsequent federal development, by determining which sites and spaces in and around Bonn were available to the federal government and, among those, which were acceptable development sites for the city and its residents. Except for the presence of the city itself, little remains of Bonn’s illustrious Roman past. Those artifacts that have been recovered—such as human remains, grave markers, weapons, and coins—have been removed to museums. From its beginnings as a small military outpost, Bonn grew by the 2nd century AD into a permanent legionary fortress with a peak population, including soldiers and ancillary industries and tradesmen, of around 17,000. A significant Roman military presence persisted in Bonn until the collapse of the empire in the 4th
century AD, after which the fort’s structures and the surrounding settlement were absorbed first into a succession of small Frankish kingdoms before becoming part of the Merovingian and then Carolingian empires.

Over this same period, Christianity gradually took hold in the Rhineland. In Bonn, the location of worship sites determined key lasting features of the cityscape as early as the 4th century, when local Christians established a shrine dedicated to the martyrs St. Cassius and St. Florentius, Roman legionaries who according to legend had been executed in Bonn during the 3rd century. The site of this shrine—already embellished by 400 AD with a small church-like structure—marked an enduring cornerstone for the city of Bonn, eventually becoming the site where the Bonn Minster (Bonner Münster) was completed nearly a millennium later (Figure 15). Worshippers renovated, rebuilt, and expanded the sanctuary several times between the 4th and 8th centuries, before the shrine received official recognition during the Carolingian period with the endowment and construction of the Collegiate Church of St. Cassius and Florentius. The Carolingian structure was razed around 1050 to make way for a larger basilica and an adjoining cloister in the newest Romanesque style. Completed episodically over the next two hundred years, it represented a unique configuration of a three-aisled basilica with double choirs, a single crossing and transept in front of the long eastern choir, an octagonal tower and spire over the crossing, and twin towers flanking the choirs.¹ In the midst of construction in 1166, the provost of the Collegiate Foundation, Gerhard von Are, had the relics of Cassius and Florentius translated from their grave site beneath the ancient shrine to the high altar of the new church, and their elaborate new reliquary combined with the imposing new surroundings advertised Bonn as a site of significant wealth and religious power. The Bonner Münster marked the spiritual heart

¹ Bonn’s main church also became a model for the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin after Kaiser Wilhelm II spent time studying at the university in Bonn.
of the city, and as the rest of Bonn grew around it, came to mark its commercial core as well. Today, as throughout most of the 20th century, the basilica defines one side of the city’s largest pedestrian plaza, the Münsterplatz, the other sides of which are filled with stores, businesses, and restaurants (Figure 16). Until the construction of several high-rises in the 1960s, the church’s tower and steeple were the city’s tallest and most visible and recognizable landmark.

The Münsterplatz is at the western edge of Bonn’s historic district (Altstadt), which—though it has been much altered since it first developed during the Middle Ages—is still easily identified by its dense network of twisting, narrow streets punctuated by open squares and plazas. It was originally defined by a formidable city wall (Figure 17), which was built in the second half of the 13th century but was then gradually dismantled over the intervening centuries both by destructive conquests of the city and the city’s organic expansion outward. With the removal of the final gate, the Sterntor, at the end of the 19th century, the city constructed a monument to its erstwhile wall in the form of a model gate, also called the Sterntor, several blocks from where its progenitor had stood (Figure 18). While it may be an historicist simulacra of a medieval city gate that bears little physical resemblance to the original, its crenellations, portcullis, and rough-hewn stone immediately connect the viewer to Bonn’s history as a walled city. Moreover, Bonn’s city wall left other indelible markers, as its footprint is still discernible in the Altstadt’s street plan, where a series of roads traces a path dividing the dense medieval core from the more open urban development that followed (Figure 19).
Early Modern Bonn: Rise of the Prince-electors to the cult of Beethoven

The construction of the city walls cemented Bonn’s status as a city, and the Altstadt and its immediate surroundings remain the city’s social and commercial center. From the 13th century onward, due to the city’s proximity to Cologne and status as a Free City technically outside the authority of the titular rulers of the Electorate of Cologne, Bonn became a favorite alternate residence for the Prince-electors. This ensured that Bonn accumulated modest levels of wealth and prestige as it grew steadily into the Early Modern period, but it failed to protect the city from the ravages of periodic aggression by neighboring powers or natural disasters such as floods and plagues. The presence of a Prince-elector made Bonn particularly vulnerable to violence during the religious wars of the 16th century in the wake of Martin Luther’s Protestant Reformation. The conversion of Prince-elector-archbishop Gebhard Truchsess von Waldburg to Protestantism in 1583 threatened the balance of power in the Holy Roman Empire’s electoral college, precipitating the Cologne War. Backed by the Pope and by Spanish and Bavarian armies, Ernest of Bavaria (r. 1583-1612)—a scion of the powerful southern German Wittelsbach dynasty and Gebhard’s replacement—expelled the Protestant but in the process devastated much of the territory around Cologne, including Bonn and the Godesburg castle (see Fig. 13).

The rise of Prince-elector-archbishop Ernest heralded the beginning of nearly 180 years of Wittelsbach rule in the Electorate of Cologne. In 1597, Ernest dramatically altered Bonn’s fortunes by making permanent what had been merely a preference amongst Prince-electors, naming the city as his Residenz, the official seat of his electoral administration. This was Bonn’s first stint as a political power center, but the extraordinary depredations caused by the Thirty Years’ War and the frequent conflicts of the 17th century initially severely stunted any of the
material benefits that might have resulted from the elevated political status. However, after a final siege and occupation of Bonn during the War of Spanish Succession in 1703, the 18th century witnessed a prolonged boom in the city. A succession of Archbishop-Electors transformed the city with extensive building projects that updated it with contemporary Baroque and Rococo trends and imparted a substantial and lasting element of Bonn’s present physical character.

Archbishop-Elector Joseph Clemens of Bavaria (r. 1688-1723) laid the foundations for two of Bonn’s largest and most opulent palaces. For his primary urban palace, the Residenzschloss (Figure 20), Joseph Clemens relied on designs by Enrico Zucalli, the Swiss-born court architect to the Wittelsbachs. Construction began in 1697 but was interrupted by the 1703 siege of the city, which briefly forced the Archbishop-Elector into exile. After his return to Bonn, Joseph Clemens turned to the French court architect, Robert de Cotte, to renovate and complete Zucalli’s palace, as well as to design a second residence, which was to be the Archbishop-Elector’s rural summer retreat just outside the city walls in an area called Poppelsdorf. Begun in 1715, the Schloss Clemensruhe, or Poppelsdorfer Schloss (Figure 21), replaced a medieval castle that had been destroyed in 1689 and clearly advertised the wealth of the Wittelsbach Electors. Joseph Clemens also commissioned de Cotte to design a grand thoroughfare connecting the two palaces, resulting in the half-mile long Poppelsdorfer Allee, a broad parkway flanked by tree-lined streets (Figure 22). Its construction required the slighting of a substantial section of Bonn’s city walls, marking the end of Bonn as a fortified city but also removing a significant restraint on its physical expansion. Poppelsdorfer Allee’s noble patronage and carefully contrived beauty quickly made it a nucleus for settlement and growth that lasted.

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2 Two earlier occupations occurred in 1673 during the Franco-Dutch Wars and 1689 during the Nine Years’ War.
into the 20th century, particularly amongst the city’s elite. The palace buildings on either end of the street, combined with the elegant, mostly 19th-century townhouses that line the wide expanse of grass in the center, render the Allee still among Bonn’s most picturesque locations.

Clemens August (r. 1723-1761)—Joseph Clemens’s nephew and successor, and the last Wittelsbach Elector of Cologne—increased the pace of building in his domain, completing and expanding his uncle’s projects in Bonn while initiating the creation of several new palaces, cementing his place as one of the great arts patrons of the 18th century. His crowning achievement was not in Bonn but rather in Brühl, a small village halfway between Bonn and Cologne, where beginning in 1723 Clemens August had built the spectacular Schloss Augustusburg (Figure 23). Initially, he commissioned his own court architect, Johann Conrad Schlaun, to renovate a ruined medieval castle in Brühl into a modern Baroque palace. After completion of this initial work in 1728, Clemens August turned to the Bavarian Wittelsbach court architect, François de Cuvilliés, to redesign the surrounding park and gardens, embellish the façades, modernize the interiors of the main residence, and design the Falkenlust. Finally, from 1740-46, the Elector commissioned the German Rococo master, Johann Balthasar Neumann, to create a monumental staircase near the main entrance of the Augustusburg (Figure 24). Together with stucco and fresco collaborators, Neumann created an extravagant decorative scheme that glorifies its patron in the extreme and endures among Germany’s great Rococo masterpieces.

In Bonn, Clemens August enlisted Balthasar Neumann again to finish the summer palace, Schloss Clemensruhe, and he continued work on the urban Residenzschloss based on de Cotte’s designs. Clemens August relied extensively on the services of the French architect Michel Leveilly, whom Joseph Clemens had brought to Bonn in 1719 on the recommendation of de
Cotte, Leveilly’s teacher in Paris. Leveilly supervised the construction of the Falkenlust in Brühl when de Cuvilliés had to return to the Wittelsbach court in Munich, and in Bonn he used the same architect’s plans to construct the Koblenzer Tor (Figure 25), a triumphal Baroque gate integrated into a wing of the Residenzschloss that ceremoniously marked the entrance into the city on the main road from the city of Koblenz to the south. Leveilly got the opportunity to execute his own design in a new City Hall (*Rathaus*) for Bonn (Figure 26), commissioned by Clemens August in 1737 to replace the one destroyed in 1689. Now referred to as Old City Hall (*Altes Rathaus*), Leveilly’s building defines and presides over the Altstadt’s other major square, the Marktplatz, in similar fashion to the Bonn Minster and the Münsterplatz, and it still houses the offices of the mayor and serves as the backdrop for local ceremonial occasions.

The final Archbishop-Elector of Cologne, the Archduke Maximilian Franz of Austria (r. 1784-1794), left his indelible mark on the city less through architecture than by his patronage of a singular musical talent, Ludwig van Beethoven (b. 1770). In terms of architecture and urban development, Maximilian Franz left a larger impact on Bad Godesberg, where in 1790 he acquired the mineral springs and began transforming the town into a health resort with such amenities for the public as spas, lodging, scenic promenades, and entertainment facilities. Chief among these last was the Redoute (built 1790-92; Figure 27), a festival hall in the Neoclassical style by uncle-nephew architects Michael and Adam Franz Friedrich Leydel. Here the Archbishop-Elector hosted balls and concerts, including a 1792 recital by a young Beethoven for the Classical master Franz Joseph Haydn. This meeting led Maximilian Franz, who already employed Beethoven in his court orchestra, to sponsor the 22 year-old musician’s travel to Vienna to enter Haydn’s tutelage. Beethoven never returned to Bonn, and composed all of his major works after leaving the city. Nevertheless, as his fame grew rapidly in his adopted city and
spread beyond, Bonn was quick to claim him as its native son, and his influence on the city’s identity is overwhelming. In 1845, only eighteen years after his death, Bonn erected a large statue of the composer in the center of the Münsterplatz and inaugurated a music festival in his honor that still occurs annually in a concert hall that also bears his name, Beethovenhalle (Figure 28). By 1889, his family home had been turned into a museum dedicated to Beethoven’s life, and his name now appears on streets, cafés, and official promotional materials all over the city. As the rhythms of national politics and the edifices of federal government began to dominate the city, the diminution or loss of the automatic association between Bonn and its hometown hero became a significant source of anxiety for local residents and planners.

**Bonn in the 19th and Early-20th Centuries**

Bonn’s tenure as the seat of an Electorate came to an abrupt end in October, 1794 when the French Republican Army of Sambre-et-Meuse occupied the city and forced Maximilian Franz to flee to the Habsburg stronghold of Vienna. This marked the beginning of over twenty years of French rule in the city, and after 1801 it was part of the Rhin-et-Moselle department in Napoleon’s French Empire. With the formal dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, Bonn entered a completely new political world with only its palaces to mark its former position of prominence and power. As part of the agreement that emerged from the 1815 Congress of Vienna, where Europe’s great powers met to piece the continent back together in the wake of Napoleon’s defeat, Bonn became part of the Rhine Province of the Kingdom of Prussia, then under the rule of King Friedrich Wilhelm III. From there, Bonn entered the German Empire upon its declaration by Emperor Wilhelm I in 1871.
In many ways, Bonn hardly seems to have registered its relegation from the seat of an Electorate of the Holy Roman Empire to a small city on the far western edge of Prussia, as the city experienced another extraordinary boom during the 19th century, becoming one of the wealthiest cities in the kingdom. Unprecedented peace and stability in the region along with the acceleration of the industrial revolution, even in late-to-industrialize Prussia, provided the conditions for rapid population growth across the entire kingdom and particularly in its cities. Bonn benefited from these trends, growing from just over 10,000 residents at the end of Napoleon’s reign to over 80,000 by 1905.\(^3\) In 1887, the Prussian government granted Bonn the status of “independent city” (kreisfreie Stadt), splitting the city from the surrounding Bonn County (Kreis Bonn) and placing it directly under provincial authority, an administrative arrangement reserved for larger cities. In 1904, Bonn substantially expanded its territory by incorporating the surrounding towns of Poppelsdorf, Kessenich, Endenich, and Dottendorf (Figure 29). Bonn would turn to the incorporation of its smaller neighbors as a way to control its development again after becoming the capital, but in the postwar context of a federal democracy with robust civil liberties, this would prove to be a much more difficult strategy to implement (see Chapter 3).

In the 19th century, Bonn’s specific circumstances engendered a particular kind of growth that distinguished it from its industrializing counterparts in the region. Its proximity to those industrial centers along the Ruhr river, such as Essen and Duisburg, where coal mining and steel production were powerful economic engines, and its position on the Rhine River, a major transportation and trade conduit, attracted businessmen and magnates. However, the beauty of

the surrounding landscape—which was quickly being bound to national myths and Romanticist ideals, and was relatively free of the factories and proletarian housing estates that were markers of the economic and social upheavals currently wracking the kingdom—made the city especially popular as a site of tourism, leisure, and especially retirement with members of the newly-rich industrialist class. By the eve of World War I, Bonn could count two-hundred millionaires amongst its residents, and it was the third-richest city in Prussia.⁴

In 1818, soon after Bonn’s accession into Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III established the University of Bonn (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn) as a successor to an earlier academy that had been shuttered during the French occupation. It was one of only six universities in Prussia at the time,⁵ and the king’s action thus inaugurated Bonn as an important center of research and learning. “University town” became a pillar of Bonn’s local identity on par with its history as the residence of Cologne’s Archbishop-Electors and its contemporary evolution into an enclave for the upper class and destination for Romantic tourism. It helped that the city’s new identity was immediately and quite literally situated within the context of the historical, as the University of Bonn took over the two vacated Electoral palaces, the Residenzschloss and Poppelsdorfer Schloss, as its primary buildings.

As the University grew in size and scope in the 19th century, it added buildings at a rapid clip, beginning with an anatomy building designed by university architect Friedrich Waesemann in 1821.⁶ In 1824, the Prussian master Karl Friedrich Schinkel imposed his authority as head of the Prussian Building Commission on the project and revised a planned cupola over the main

⁵ The others were in Berlin, Greifswald, Königsberg, Halle, and Breslau. Of course, the other German states had their own august and ancient academic institutions.
⁶ Today, the building serves as the Academic Art Museum, housing the university’s extensive collection of plaster casts of antique sculptures.
anatomy theater into the current colonnaded drum. This marked the first of two times that Schinkel would emend designs for the university, with the second coming in the 1840s when he removed exterior ornamentation from an astronomical observatory by Waesemann’s successor, Peter Joseph Leydel. Subsequent university architects, most notably August Dieckhoff and Jacob Neumann, added several more large buildings in the second half of the 19th century, all straightforward, functional structures clad in various modes of academic classicism with occasional nods to the Italian Renaissance.

The university’s initial reoccupation of historic structures foreshadowed the Bund’s actions during its first years in Bonn over two centuries later. In both episodes, such adaptive reuse proved to be a limited but viable strategy for successfully embedding a new identity for the city within its historical landscape. However, unlike the federal presence after 1949, the university’s expansion occurred in the context of the organic growth of the city in the 19th century and coincided with increased urban development activity around the Bonn region. The school’s campus provided a nucleus for the renovation of the surrounding Südstadt, the neighborhood just to the south of the Altstadt. Using the Poppelsdorfer Allee—the parkway that once connected the Archbishop-Elector’s palaces and now connected the university’s main buildings—as both a border and a cue for the character of the new district, Paul Richard Thomann, Bonn’s city architect (Stadtbaumeister), proposed a precinct filled with elegant blocks of large townhouses that were intended for university professors, military officers, and other members of the local bourgeoisie. Südstadt’s conversion into a wealthy residential neighborhood over the next 50 years, roughly 1860-1910, was paralleled by a similar conversion of Nordstadt,

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8 These include Dieckhoff’s Chemistry Institute (1864-67), Neumann’s Physiology Institute (1875-78), and a New Anatomy Building (1868-72) designed by Dieckhoff and finished by Neumann.
the area just to the north of Bonn’s historical center. Here, however, modest historicist facades of the three-story multi-family apartment buildings that line the streets demonstrate a more middle-class focus.

Begun slightly later, Bad Godesberg’s creation of the Villa Quarter (Villenviertel) along the Rhine to the north of the town center aimed at an older, wealthier clientele that might be drawn to the local health spas. The large freestanding and duplex villas display the variety of stylistic tastes of retiring members of the moneyed class in turn-of-the-century Germany, including the complete spectrum of historicist revivals, more contemporary Jugendstil, and even Bauhaus inflected modernism in the latest examples from the 1920s. After 1949, Bonn and Bad Godesberg’s villas would enter the service of the federal government, housing the Chancellery and Presidency, several federal agencies and ministries, federal state delegations, and, particularly in Bad Godesberg, many foreign embassies. The adaptation of existing buildings to new uses was always more palatable to the local public than new construction, because it left the cityscape intact, changing its tenor while allowing traditional associations to coexist relatively comfortably with Bonn’s new role as capital.

Bonn’s 19th-century prosperity and location on the Rhine between regional Prussian capitals Cologne and Koblenz earned the city a stop on the route of one of Prussia’s earliest rail lines, run by the Bonn-Cologne Railway Company (Bonn-Cölner Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft). The company was founded in 1837, and by 1844 it had completed the line between its eponymous cities and was planning a southward extension to the town of Rolandseck, which opened in 1856. Three years later, the line extended south beyond Koblenz, where it tied into the main rail network of the neighboring Grand Duchy of Hesse. Being on a trunk line of Germany’s proliferating railways was a stimulus for economic growth that brought with it an accelerating
flow of people and goods, along with a measure of prestige. Cities like Bonn constructed ever larger and more ornate train stations as conspicuous symbols of the status that the railway conferred and heralds of arrival to and departure from the city. To that end, Bonn completed its neo-Renaissance travel palace in 1885.

However, for Bonn, the specific route of the rail line through the city brought with it significant disadvantages. Over the protests of the university, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV allowed the Bonn-Cologne Railway Company to bisect the city along an east-west trajectory, separating the Altstadt from much of Südstadt (see Fig. 19), with only a few crossing points. More egregiously, the railway cut across the Poppelsdorfer Allee near the former Residenzschloss, marring one of the city’s most attractive and cherished thoroughfares. The king commissioned his Garden Director-General, Peter Joseph Lenné, to design the intersection of the parkway and the railroad, which mitigated but did not eliminate the adverse effect of the cleavage. With increased rail traffic and the advent and spread of the automobile in the mid-20th century, the division of the city by the railroad became more of a functional problem, as the limited crossings severely restricted the flow of traffic from one part of the city to the other. The issue remained relevant for Bonn into the postwar period, but the only feasible solution—the excavation and burial of the rail lines in underground tunnels—could only be carried out by the federal government and the German Federal Railway (*Deutsche Bundesbahn*). Federal planners periodically raised the possibility of solving Bonn’s railroad problem as a potential bargaining chip in exchange for the city’s approval of the Bund’s plans elsewhere.

Another sign of Bonn’s rising fortunes in the 19th century was the entirely locally-financed construction of the city’s first bridge over the Rhine in the 1890s (Figure 30). This bridge connected Bonn with the town of Vilich (renamed Beuel in 1922), more tightly integrating
the communities on either side of the river, which had previously been connected by ferries. Such flourishing came to a sudden end in Bonn, as it did for the entire German Empire, with the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. Bonn emerged from that war physically intact but once again under French occupation, a situation that would persist until 1926. Nevertheless, Bonn’s population continued to grow, reaching a pre-World War II peak of over 100,000.9

The city’s experience under National Socialism was typically brutal. The Nazi Party installed its own mayors in all of the city halls in the region immediately upon assuming power in 1933. Local civilians and members of Adolf Hitler’s SA paramilitary forces destroyed all of the city’s synagogues during Kristallnacht on November 10, 1938, and the Nazi terror machine completely decimated Bonn’s small Jewish population. Those that had not successfully fled or emigrated by 1941 were transported to concentration camps and murdered in the Holocaust.10

Like many cities along the strategically critical Rhine, Bonn paid a heavy price during the Allied bombing campaigns of World War II. American and British bombers raided Bonn forty-three times between 1940 and 1945, ultimately destroying almost twenty percent of the city’s housing and damaging over seventy percent of it.11 American troops entered Bonn without a fight on March 9, 1945, but after the German surrender, Bonn and the Rhineland were placed under British occupational authority, and political rehabilitation and physical reconstruction of the city began. The British moved quickly to create the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) by merging the former provinces of Westphalia and the Rhineland, and they reconstituted the local governments. However, initial rebuilding efforts were slow, hampered by shortages, and

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9 Ennen and Höroldt, 365.
10 Ibid., 322-323.
11 Bad Godesberg, on the other hand, was largely spared wartime damage. Hartwig Beseler, Niels Gutschow, and Frauke Kretschmer. Kriegsschicksale: deutscher Architektur: Verluste, Schäden, Wiederaufbau: eine Dokumentation für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, vol 1. (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1988), 377-396.
focused on restoring the housing supply. Activity picked up in the late 1940s, exemplified by the rapid planning and reconstruction of the Rhine bridge (Figure 31), which the Nazi Wehrmacht had destroyed during their retreat from Allied Forces in 1945.

The Selection of Bonn as the Provisional Capital: Modesty as a Virtue

Bonn’s path to becoming the provisional capital began with the Six Powers Talks between the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, which took place in London during the first half of 1948. The talks resulted in the introduction of the Deutschmark and a call for the Western occupied territories to form a national government, prompting the Soviets to withdraw from the Allied Control Council and launch their blockade of West Berlin. The suddenly frozen relationship between occupying forces set Germany on an irreversible path to postwar division, and rendered Berlin infeasible as a potential capital city for the new state that would soon emerge from the Western zones. The Six Powers asked the Minister-Presidents of the eleven German states under Western control to convene a Parliamentary Council (Parlamentarischer Rat) in order to draft a new constitution that would be the basis for forming a government to rule the new country.

Karlsruhe’s mayor proposed his city as a host of the Parliamentary Council, and similar proposals followed from Koblenz, Frankfurt, Bonn, and Celle. Hermann Wandersleb, North Rhine-Westphalia’s Chief of the State Chancellery, lobbied for Bonn on the basis that its former Pedagogical Academy, a Bauhaus-style building designed by Martin Witte in the early 1930s (see Fig. 1), could provide an ideal meeting place for the Council. On August 13, 1948, the Minister-Presidents held a vote over the phone in which eight chose Bonn. The Parliamentary Council
opened its proceedings on September 1, 1948 in the large central rotunda of the city’s natural history museum, Museum Koenig (Figure 32), and one of its first actions was to elect as Council President the former mayor of Cologne and future first Federal Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer. The Council’s primary task was drafting a constitution, but the members were highly conscious of the exclusion of the eastern part of the country from the process and insistent that any document that they approved be provisional and open to revision once East-West relations resumed, a prospect that in 1948 still seemed imminent. Thus, rather than calling it a “Constitution” (*Verfassung*), the Council opted for “Basic Law” (*Grundgesetz*), which more clearly signaled the supposedly temporary nature of the West German state that it defined.

Establishing a new national government, however provisional, immediately raised the question of where that government would be housed. In selecting a host city, a principal concern was to avoid any appearance of foreclosing the possibility of reunification or in any way forsaking those German brethren remaining under Soviet authority. As Bonn was already successfully housing the Parliamentary Council, it seemed natural that the city would be a prime candidate to become the capital, and Hermann Wandersleb began preparing the application on the city’s behalf. At the same time, the Minister-President of Hesse, Christian Stock, again put forward Frankfurt, which had been Bonn’s main competition in the Parliamentary Council decision.¹² Frankfurt appeared to have location, size, and history on its side, as it had been at the center of the failed 1848 democratic revolutions in Germany, and its St. Paul’s Church had served as the meeting place of the country’s first Parliament. Frankfurt was also home to the Bizonal Economic Council (*Wirtschaftsrat*), an important precursor to the West German Bundestag, and thus the city already served some limited capital functions.

¹² The mayors of Stuttgart and Kassel also put their respective cities forward as candidates, but Stuttgart lacked the support of the residents, and the Minister-President of Hesse would not support another Hessian city to compete against Frankfurt.
However, in the context of a German people and nation still under occupation and rapidly fracturing into two, Frankfurt’s strengths were also its weakness, while the factors that recommended Bonn as a suitable site for the Parliamentary Council continued to work in its favor. Even though large parts of its urban core had been destroyed, Bonn could credibly claim to have ample space in undamaged buildings outside of the city center to house federal organizations. To emphasize this point and present the selection of Bonn almost as a fait accompli, the state government hired Hans Schwippert to begin renovating the Pedagogical Academy into a parliamentary building in November 1948, six months before the Council’s May, 1949 vote designating Bonn the (provisional) capital.

Bonn’s location on the west bank of the Rhine in the British Zone of Occupation had several ostensible benefits. The city had the backing of the British, who wanted to bring important institutions into their zone after much of the postwar governance and administration had revolved around Frankfurt in the American Zone. It guaranteed that the Rhineland, against some of the more draconian suggestions by the French government to partition the region, would remain an integral part of Germany. Furthermore, Bonn’s distance from the Soviet zone and proximity to the rest of Western Europe made it seem safer in the event of invasion or military conflict with the East. Bonn also more easily satisfied the demand that the West German capital be entirely free of occupation military forces as a way to avoid undue foreign influence on domestic affairs. Frankfurt—where the American military government established its headquarters in Hans Poelzig’s IG Farben building (1928-1930)—had an enormous foreign military presence that would have been extremely difficult to relocate. However, by 1948, Bonn only hosted a residual Belgian force that could vacate the city quickly and without complication.
Ultimately, the decisive factor in Bonn’s favor came down to its more modest status, reflected in its smaller size and lower historical stature, which lent the city a naturally provisional character as a capital. In the wake of National Socialism and World War II, Bonn’s two-hundred years as the seat of an electorate in the Holy Roman Empire seemed as remote as its Ancient Roman roots. Bonn’s supporters, and more generally proponents of striking the most conciliatory and least divisive posture in forming a new government, assumed that selecting a less populous, less prominent city would pose little threat to Berlin as the legitimate German capital and leave a clearer, easier path to reconciliation and reunification. To that end, the Basic Law initially avoided even specifying a capital city or seat of government, so that the law would not have to be amended later.\(^{13}\) Were the government placed in a larger city of greater prominence like Frankfurt, the concern was that it would too easily become entrenched, diminishing Berlin’s status as a symbol for united Germany and an impetus for striving towards reunification.

While Bonn’s fundamentals—size, space, location, and history—all spoke in its favor as a more credible choice for the provisional capital, the city and its supporters, especially soon-to-be Chancellor Adenauer, also shrewdly navigated the selection process to ensure victory. Adenauer had not been involved in the decision to host the Parliamentary Council in Bonn, but once Bonn was a serious contender to become the provisional capital, the Christian Democratic Union leader, who now lived in the small town of Rhöndorf just across the Rhine from Bonn, threw his considerable influence and skill behind the campaign. Perhaps his most critical contribution was to reframe the decision between Bonn and Frankfurt along political party lines. The Rhineland, including Bonn, and Frankfurt were each political strongholds for and drew the bulk of their support from the two major political parties then coalescing in postwar West Germany.

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\(^{13}\) Only in 2006 was Article 22 of the Basic Law amended to include language identifying Berlin as the capital.
Germany, respectively the CDU and its chief rival, the Social Democratic Party. Adenauer capitalized on this split, portraying the selection of Frankfurt as a defeat for the CDU and then maintaining total discipline among the twenty-seven members of his party at the Parliamentary Council’s vote on May 10, 1949. By picking up three votes from the smaller center-right Free Democratic Party and a couple of local SPD supporters, Adenauer tipped the ballot in Bonn’s favor, although only by four votes, 33-29.

However, Adenauer’s canny exploitation of political rivalries to secure Bonn’s place as the seat of the West German government was not without negative consequences for the city. It left an embittered SPD that saw the close partisan vote as grounds for attacking the legitimacy of Bonn as the capital and questioning the Parliamentary Council’s authority to make a decision seemingly outside the scope of writing a constitution. When the first sessions of the new Bundestag began meeting in September, the SPD immediately reopened the capital question. A second vote was held on November 3, 1949, and Frankfurt again lost, this time 200-176. Even ratification by the Bundestag would not stop routine challenges to Bonn’s legitimacy and legislative maneuvers that wreaked havoc on the federal and municipal governments’ capacity to plan adequately for the realities of housing a growing bureaucracy, culminating in 1956 with a complete halt in federal building activity. As a compensatory gesture in 1949, the Bundestag vote for Bonn was accompanied by a resolution, passed with an overwhelming majority, affirming Berlin as the capital and stating that government functions would return to that city as soon as free and open elections were held across the Soviet Zone of Occupation. The resolution reaffirmed Berlin’s place and underlined Bonn’s provisional status while at the same time essentially guaranteeing the division of Germany would endure by setting conditions for
reunification that could never gain the acquiescence of the authoritarian governments in the Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic.

**Federal Architecture in the First Years as Capital**

In the first few months of the Federal Republic’s existence, there was enough available space in Bonn to house the government in otherwise vacant buildings around the city. These spaces were purchased or donated to the Bund by the occupation authorities, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, or the city itself. Bonn could meet its obligations in a manner that fulfilled the promises it had made in its application and accorded with its placeholder status. Several large ministries took advantage of unoccupied military and police barracks (*kaserne*), the internal structures of which made them easily convertible into office space. The Ministry of Economics (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft*) settled in the Gallwitz-Kaserne (built 1936-38), a former Nazi Wehrmacht artillery garrison (Figure 33); the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Forests (*Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten*) took over the Troilo-Kaserne (built 1936-38), a former Wehrmacht infantry barracks (Figure 34); and the Ministries of the Interior (*Bundesministerium des Innern*) and Finance respectively occupied the Düppel-Kaserne (built 1913) and the Husaren-Kaserne (built 1907; Figure 35), neighboring former Prussian army barracks in the northern district of Bonn-Castell. In all of these cases, financial and logistical necessity trumped any discomfort stemming from the use of buildings with Imperial or National Socialist associations.¹⁴

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Other ministries were housed in Bonn’s numerous villas, which came with more neutral historical ties and offered both sufficient size and a more dignified aura suited to official and representative functions. The Ministry of Justice (Bundesministerium der Justiz), after a brief time sharing space with the Finance Ministry, was given the Rosenburg, a Neo-Gothic mansion built for a university professor in 1831 on the city’s southwestern outskirts (Figure 36). Haus Carstanjen (built 1881; Figure 37), named for the Cologne banker who built it as his summer villa, served as the headquarters for the Ministry for Marshall Plan Affairs (Bundesministerium für Angelegenheiten des Marshallplanes) and then the Ministry for the Treasury. Its location in Bad Godesberg indicates that Bonn’s capital functions were already spilling beyond the city’s borders in the early years of the Federal Republic, and the Haus Carstanjen was far from the only such case. The Gallwitz-Kaserne and Troilo-Kaserne were both located in the village of Duisdorf, which bordered Bonn to the west, and many of the larger houses in Bad Godesberg’s Villa Quarter were acquired by foreign governments as embassies and ambassadorial residences. The United States took control of a 19th century villa, the Schloss Deichmannsauae (Figure 38), on the southern edge of Bad Godesberg, first as the headquarters of the Allied High Commissioner of Germany and then as the American Embassy. The fact that so many federal and international organs found homes outside of the technical seat of government was an unremarkable matter of expedience, but this government sprawl would become highly relevant to Bonn’s campaign in the 1960s to incorporate its neighbors.

The Federal President (Präsidialamt) and Chancellor (Kanzleramt), concomitant with their prominent roles in the new government, took over two neighboring 19th-century villas just south of the city center that served as both offices and residences and were conveniently located near the new Bundestag. President Theodor Heuss moved into Villa Hammerschmidt (Figure
a Neoclassical villa designed in 1860 by August Dieckhoff for a wealthy industrialist, and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer settled in Palais Schaumburg (Figure 40), built at the same time as Villa Hammerschmidt and enlarged several times subsequently, most notably by Prince Adolf zu Schaumburg-Lippe. The Pedagogical Academy that had hosted the Parliamentary Council became the core of the Bundeshaus, which was the home of the newly constituted West German parliament comprising an upper chamber (Bundesrat) and lower chamber (Bundestag). Hans Schwippert’s 1949 renovations and additions, including the celebrated glass-walled plenary chamber (Figure 41), were some of the only new construction that greeted the federal government when it arrived in Bonn. The low-key Modernism of the original Academy and of Schwippert’s designs offered a fitting setting for a legislative body eager to position itself as a clean break from the horrific recent past. The extensive use of glass offered a small yet felicitous amount of literal transparency to a government that strove for functional and ideological transparency. However, as Deborah Ascher Barnstone’s analysis demonstrates, the interpretation of such formal features as demonstrative concrete symbols of West German democratic values requires an arbitrary overemphasis on a single formal aspect—the transparency of glass—and a reduction of the political relationship between citizens and their elected government to fleeting moments of visual contact across a glass screen.¹⁵

Within two years, however, the Bund had outgrown its secondhand quarters and begun an aggressive and expensive building campaign. Between 1951 and 1954, the Finance Ministry saw its campus around the Husaren-Kaserne enlarged by ten new buildings all designed and executed by the Federal Building Agency (see Fig 35). The Ministry for the Post and Telecommunications (Bundesministerium für Post und Telekommunikation) received an entirely new building designed by Josef Trimborn in 1953 and completed in 1954 (Figure 42). From 1954-56, the

¹⁵ Barnstone, *The Transparent State*, passim.
Federal Building Agency constructed new offices for the Federal Press and Information Office 
(*Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung*) on a plot adjacent to the Chancellery 
(Figure 43). Even though the designs of these buildings, inside and out, were rigorously utilitarian, their size and the speed with which they were conceived and executed already pointed to a Bonn Republic that was more than merely provisional.

The most dramatic indication in that direction during this early period was the construction of the Federal Foreign Office Building. The establishment of a West German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) was a concrete marker of the country’s ascension to full sovereignty as it took control over its foreign affairs, but the ministry’s headquarters—which were designed by the Berlin architect Hans Freese after a nationwide architectural competition in 1951—were one of the largest administrative complexes in the nation at the time of their completion in 1955. Freese’s design earned the pejorative nickname “House of a Thousand Windows” (“*Haus der tausend Fenster*”), and the scale was difficult to square with Bonn’s provisional status (see Fig. 2). That most of this new construction occurred in a relatively compact area south of Südstadt near the Bundeshaus, turning it into an incipient Federal District (*Bundesviertel*), only further suggested that the Bund was settling in for a more permanent stay.

Even with the new buildings coming on line in the mid-1950s, growth in the federal workforce far exceeded the available space in Bonn. In a cycle that even the most disciplined of modern governments would recognize, new office space facilitated a larger bureaucracy, which inevitably created a demand for more space. For example, the massive Federal Foreign Office building was already too small to accommodate the ministry’s entire workforce even before

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16 Other entrants into the competition include a young Egon Eiermann and the early German Modernist, Otto Bartning.
construction began. At the local level, the presence of the federal government in Bonn meant that the capital suffered from an intensified version of the same dynamic playing out in other West German cities; the rapid postwar population growth that both accompanied and underpinned the “Economic Miracle” outpaced the capacity of local and state governments to expand services and improve infrastructure. However, the politics surrounding Bonn’s provisional status also intruded, exacerbating an already unfavorable set of conditions in the city and frustrating attempts to ameliorate their effects.

**The Building Freeze of 1956**

In 1956, Bonn again found its legitimacy threatened in the Bundestag. The influential journalist and CDU legislator Gerd Bucerius initiated the action, but it found its greatest resonance with the SPD, whose members had overwhelmingly opposed the choice of Bonn in 1949 and remained sympathetic to efforts to undermine it. Bucerius served both as Adenauer’s Commissioner for the Economic Advancement of Berlin (*Bundesbeauftragter für die Förderung der Berliner Wirtschaft*) and as the Chairman of the Berlin Committee in the Bundestag and genuinely supported efforts towards reunification. At the time, the Soviet policy of de-Stalinization, combined with more convulsive events like the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, seemed to offer an opening for dramatic change, and Bucerius believed that moving the capital immediately to Berlin could catalyze greater political reconciliation between East and West.

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17 Memo by Konsul Lorz at the Foreign Office, October 3, 1952 (PA AA, B 111, Bd. 6).
Germany. The national press, led by Bucerius’ own Die Zeit newspaper, encouraged and amplified the appeal for a return to Berlin in frequent articles and columns.¹⁸

Bucerius’s initiative and the Cold War developments that prompted it brought the CDU Bundestag member into temporary alignment with the SPD’s agenda, which intertwined patriotic desires for reunification with more factional interests in undermining Bonn’s legitimacy. These latter found expression in an SPD-led investigation in the Bundestag into federal expenditures for accommodations in Bonn, the results of which were quite damaging to the city. At the time of Bonn’s application to become the provisional capital, the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia guaranteed the city financial support to meet its new obligations. However, that support was estimated as a one-time investment of 3.8 million Deutschmarks. This modest figure, which made Bonn more attractive to the Council, almost immediately proved to be fantastically low, and by 1956 construction costs had spiraled to over DM 70 million.¹⁹ The vast discrepancy opened the door to insinuations of fraud and sustained demands that the Bund quit Bonn at the earliest opportunity. Frantic investigations by Chancellor Adenauer’s administration quickly revealed that a move to Berlin would be prohibitively costly and most likely proscribed by the treaties governing Berlin’s status as an occupied city. Nevertheless, the opening gave the SPD and its allies in the Bundestag the momentum they needed, and on October 3, 1956 they passed a resolution halting all new construction projects in Bonn. This prohibition was not repealed even once it became clear that moving the government to Berlin remained impossible.²⁰

Moreover, the building freeze (Baustopp) in Bonn was not accompanied by a temporary halt in government hiring. This forced the Bund to move any expansion in its bureaucracy into

¹⁹ Uelzmann, 66.
²⁰ For a more in-depth discussion of the origins and history of the building freeze and its meaning in the context of Bonn’s development as the capital of West Germany, see Ibid., 76-99.
rented quarters, which had unintended adverse consequences for Bonn and the surrounding communities. With the Bund now adding enormous demand to a rental market with limited supply, rents soared, not only substantially raising costs for the government but also for any other business that leased office space in the city.\textsuperscript{21} The prospect of high rental income drew in commercial developers, who rapidly bought land and constructed office complexes, often solely for the purpose of leasing them to the federal government. The most prominent of these projects was the large development by the German insurance conglomerate Allianz built on a site adjacent to the Bundeshaus known locally as the \textit{Tulpenfeld} (Tulip Field). Designed by the West German architect Hanns Dustmann and completed between 1964-1968, the complex centered around an 18-story high-rise and provided some 37,000 square meters of office space, virtually all of which was leased to the FRG (Figure 44).

For the first couple of years, the federal government adhered strictly to the building freeze;\textsuperscript{22} but by the beginning of the 1960s, federal planning officials in the Ministries of Finance and the Treasury slowly began to reintroduce proposals for new federal construction and, in apparent defiance of the law, win approval for them from the federal cabinet and Bundestag. The first major project to be executed as the government gradually retreated from the \textit{Baustopp} was a new sprawling facility for the Federal Ministry of Defense (\textit{Bundesministerium der Verteidigung}) in Duisdorf. Its successful completion represents the power of necessity to overcome political hurdles and the quickly growing clout of the newly formed West German military, especially in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} An article from May 1966 in \textit{Der Spiegel} reports that the Bund’s annual rental costs nearly doubled between 1962 and 1966 from 2.4 million to 4.4 million Deutschmarks. \textit{Der Spiegel}, “Baupläne: Hauptstadt zur Miete,” May 16, 1966, 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} In a letter dated April 8, 1958 to the Federal Minister for the Federal Patrimony (\textit{Bundesminister für den wirtschaftlichen Besitz des Bundes}), Hermann Lindrath, Chancellor Adenauer flatly rejects a proposal to construct or expand five buildings, even at a relatively modest cost of 15 million DM, as “politically unacceptable” (…\textit{politisch nicht zu vertreten}). Letter from Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Federal Minister for the Federal Patrimony Hermann Lindrath, April 8, 1958 (BArch, B 136/4670).
\end{itemize}
the context of the FRG’s entry into NATO. Its location on the outskirts of Bonn was a response both to a need for space and security concerns, but it also points to another negative consequence of the building freeze. The political and practical difficulties of large-scale development in the city of Bonn pushed federal planners to seek alternatives just across the city lines. The resulting haphazard and uncoordinated growth across the Bonn region was not directly under Bonn’s control, while still adding great pressure to the center’s infrastructure.

By the end of the 1950s, the apparent legal, political, and financial constraints on the Bund’s ability to suitably plan for and accommodate its workforce were beginning to severely threaten the efficient functioning of the legislature and administration. The resulting disarray redounded to Bonn’s detriment, for with its would-be primary planning partner so hamstrung, the city alone had neither the financial nor the administrative capacity to manage the region’s rapid transformation. Even as the impediments to building began to fall, the Bund found that Bonn’s extraordinary history—embedded deeply in the architecture and urban space of the city itself—militated against the large-scale development that the federal bureaucracy desperately needed. Bonn’s medieval core and the immediately surrounding districts—which contained the city’s most important historical landmarks, however damaged by war—were already mostly claimed by older institutions and prior uses. This pushed the Bund further to the outskirts, where it used barracks and villas, two available and easily repurposed building types. However, Bonn’s postwar population growth pushed dense settlement into these outskirts—along with the attendant traffic, pollution, land speculation, and other modern inconveniences—at the same time that the federal government began planning large new parliamentary and ministerial campuses, including multiple high-rises, in those same places. Suddenly the presence of the federal government and its detrimental effects on the growing city were impossible to ignore.
Bonn the university town, the gateway to the Romantic Rhine, the provincial retirement destination, seemed poised to become completely effaced by Bonn the national capital, and the local populace was unprepared for the scale or swiftness of the changes. The city pushed back in attempts to manage the transformation on some of its own terms, as well as to gain support for its own planning agenda and receive fair compensation for its losses. It encountered a Bund that, in quietly resuming building activity, tried to minimize exposure and the potential for conflict by moving that activity just outside of Bonn and putting its planning process behind closed doors.

The lack of local input and control in the face of growing problems, a changing cityscape, and a shifting identity were prime motives behind the actions taken by Bonn and its increasingly frustrated residents in the 1960s. The city’s first major initiative—the redrawing of its municipal borders to include its immediate neighbors on both sides of the Rhine—was only indirectly aimed at the Bund. In enlarging itself, Bonn primarily sought to gain the necessary planning authority in order to tackle the issues then plaguing the entire region, but one salutary effect of integration was that the newly enlarged municipal entity also finally had the political and legal leverage to force the federal government to meet its demands for assistance and an active role in the process. Bonn’s campaign for regional consolidation, however, came at the cost of alienating the outlying communities that were the targets of its ambitions, threatening them with the same kind of loss of local identity that Bonn feared suffering at the hands of the Bund.
Chapter 2: Making “Groß-Bonn”: Regional Planning and the Struggle to Redraw Bonn’s Municipal Borders, 1961-1969

Although it is not clear exactly when Bonn’s administrators first realized that expanding the city’s municipal borders could be an effective solution to its growing financial and urban planning problems, Bonn submitted its first application to incorporate all of the communities along its borders in September 1953. At that point, Bonn’s interest was only in annexing its two largest neighbors, Beuel and Bad Godesberg, and its motives were primarily economic. Fueled by explosive growth in the four years since becoming capital—there was never any doubt about the underlying reason for Bonn’s trajectory—the city’s municipal debt was 228 DM per capita and rising. Integrating Beuel and Bad Godesberg—both of which were in a much stronger financial position at the time—was a straightforward way to reduce that burden. Yet neither city reciprocated Bonn’s interest in the idea, and the proposal would lie fallow for nearly a decade. In the 1960s, when Bonn re-launched its campaign to incorporate outlying communities—this time gathering momentum from a growing chorus of supporters—the neighboring cities remained unresponsive, and even became openly hostile to any suggestion of integration.

Regional integration may have made economic sense for Bonn from a very early point, but the city’s increasingly unmanageable problems across the entire spectrum of its planning responsibilities made a merger seem more and more like the only sufficient solution. The building freeze of 1956 and the havoc it wreaked for Bonn and Bund alike and the slow, quiet actions that the Bund took to skirt around the moratorium drove Bonn in the early 1960s to begin to make the case for incorporation in much greater detail and with much greater urgency. Achieving Bonn’s objective, which quickly expanded beyond the incorporation of Beuel and

Bad Godesberg to include the collection of smaller villages and towns along the city’s border, as well as a complete reorganization of the area at the county (Kreis) level, required legal and legislative action by the Minister-President (Ministerpräsident) of North Rhine-Westphalia and the state’s parliament (Landtag). This would take nearly a decade of constant proposals and counterproposals, careful coalition building, and public dialogue.

Bonn was placed in the somewhat ironic position of trying to colonize its neighbors as a way to forestall its own colonization at the hands of the Bund. Bad Godesberg and the other towns resisted, fearing not only the end of local self-government, but also that Bonn would co-opt their commercial activity, shift resources away from their communities, and trample on their traditional character. For both sides, the fear that the cities would lose their physical and historical character amid the changes—and disaffection with the distinctly modernist shape of those changes—was tied directly to the residents’ sense of local identity. Bad Godesberg saw its identity as a provincial spa town being completely erased as it became merely a district of its larger neighbor, and Bonn saw its identity as a picturesque university town being completely subsumed by its new position as the West German capital. In Bonn’s case, its fears had already been made manifest in the sale of the Gronau for the purposes of a quickly rising skyscraper (see Chapter 3).

When the so-called “Bonn Act” (Bonn-Gesetz)\(^2\) finally passed on May 13, 1969 and went into effect on August 1, the effect on the city and its relationship with the federal government was immediate and profound. The consequence of the law for the political geography of Bonn and the surrounding region was dramatic consolidation. In a stroke, Bonn roughly doubled its population to almost 300,000, but it more than quadrupled its territory from 31 square kilometers

\(^2\) The full title of the law was “Gesetz zur kommunalen Neugliederung des Raumes Bonn.”
to approximately 140 square kilometers. It incorporated the towns of Beuel and Bad Godesberg along with the smaller villages on its western and northern borders, Buscheidorf, Duisdorf, Ippendorf, Lengsdorf, Lessenich, and Röttgen, which had previously belonged to the intercommunal district (Amt) of Duisdorf. The newly created Greater Bonn (Groß-Bonn) remained independent (kreisfrei) from the surrounding county, but a single entity, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, replaced the two counties, Landkreis Bonn and Siegkreis, which had previously been separated by the Rhine. All told, ninety-six communities were reduced to a mere twenty following the municipal consolidations implemented under the Bonn Act (Figure 45).

The law also temporarily dissolved local governments and administrations until new elections could be held to reconstitute municipal councils and offices based on the new political map. For Bonn, the state government in Düsseldorf appointed Franz Meyer, the Minister-President of NRW from 1958-1966, to serve in a custodial role until a new city council could be seated. This caesura in local governance, although brief, came at a crucial moment for federal planning in the city. The Bund was on the verge of finalizing the second phase of a project with Bad Godesberg that envisioned seven high-rise office towers along the city’s northern edge and would have gone a long way towards solving the federal government’s space shortage while also radically changing the urban character of the city. However, as described in Chapter 4, the new political geographical alignment forced federal and municipal planners to retrace many of their steps for the project. When Meyer, Bonn’s temporary steward, took unilateral action to maintain the momentum of reorganization, the move was disastrous for the Bund, which was simultaneously experiencing its most dramatic political upheaval since 1949 with the election of its first SPD Chancellor, Willy Brandt.
The reorganization of the Bonn region was controversial, particularly in the wealthy and economically vital communities of Beuel and Bad Godesberg, but it was far from unique. The creation of Groß-Bonn and Rhein-Sieg-Kreis occurred in the context of a decade-long wave of local government reorganization (*Gebietsreform*) across North Rhine-Westphalia and the other states of the Federal Republic beginning at the end of the 1960s. These regional reforms, almost all of which led to the significant consolidation of villages and communities, were intended to streamline a cumbersome patchwork of local jurisdictions that was a legacy of earlier, mostly 19th-century reforms, and the issues involved were similar across the country. Rapid population and economic growth, along with the reconstruction and expansion of rail and road networks in the 1950s, triggered greater integration at the local level between neighboring communities and especially between larger cities and their suburbs. Integration meant sharing the benefits of economic growth, but it also meant sharing the stresses and strains of that growth, such as demand for municipal services that outstripped supply and increased traffic from commuters. The multitudes of small municipal administrations and planning departments were neither equipped to tackle such intercommunal developments nor were the myriad available forms of legal coordination and cooperation adequate for the kinds of long-term, large-scale, and often expensive investments that the growing towns and regions required. Regional reorganization and consolidation established communities that were in stronger economic positions, with larger, better staffed planning departments, and, crucially, the legal authority to devise and carry out the measures necessary to equip their territories with adequate infrastructure and services. The same

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dynamic held for Bonn, and proponents of integrating Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and other towns into the capital made the case for it in similar terms.

**The Effects of the Bund on City Planning in the Capital**

The presence of the federal government was having a profound impact on the pace and nature of urban growth in Bonn, and so the Bund naturally figured into the arguments both for and against regional integration. With Bonn’s selection as the seat of the West German federal government in 1949, legislators and bureaucrats were not the only arrivals. The Bund attracted numerous ancillary organizations—foreign delegations, trade groups, and lobbyists, to name a few—that both supported and subsisted on governmental activity. Thus, the extraordinary growth experienced across the FRG in the postwar era came earlier and more intensely to Bonn than to other cities, and the distortions and stresses that it caused were much more severe. By 1955, Bonn’s population was already 139,201, a nearly forty percent increase over its prewar high in 1939, and Bad Godesberg’s population had grown by a whopping eighty-eight percent to 57,245.\(^4\) In comparison, although it grew substantially from wartime lows, Cologne’s population over the same period was still well below its 1939 level while the nearby cities Dortmund and Essen had only eclipsed their prewar population by around eleven percent each.\(^5\)

The growth in Bonn had the further complication that a significant portion of new arrivals to the city were transitory, such as Bundestag members who returned to their home districts when

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parliament was not in session or embassy employees assigned to the city for a fixed term. These impermanent residents presented a problem for local planners trying to determine future needs for services and housing, and even as they carried out the quotidian business of making Bonn into a national capital, they held little stake in contributing to or protecting the local identities that their very presence was beginning to threaten.

The federal government quickly consumed virtually all of Bonn’s available residential and office space, and the city’s roads, utilities, schools, and other services could not keep pace. Furthermore, Bonn’s provisional status discouraged the kinds of integrative and holistic planning measures and infrastructure creation that might have mitigated or prevented the problems that began plaguing the city and lowering the quality of life to the point that its population actually began shrinking in the early 1960s. The space shortages within Bonn drove people and development into the suburbs, a particularly vexing trend for Bonn’s city planners, who could do little more than watch while the Bund planned massive installations just across city lines, paying scant attention to broader urban planning concerns and imposing on towns that were even less well equipped to accommodate the growth in population and demand for services that came with it.

The Bund’s presence was drawing the entire region into a planning crisis. As regional reorganization became a centerpiece of Bonn’s response, the most often rehearsed justifications for extending Bonn’s borders revolved around improving the quality of life for the city and region’s residents: expanding roads and transit networks to improve connectivity and reduce traffic, improving sewer and water provision systems, preserving green space and protecting the

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environment, and increasing the housing supply. It would also help solve more prosaic problems, such as the fact that telephone calls between Bonn and Bad Godesberg were considered to be long-distance while they were two separate cities. Bonn’s leaders argued, ultimately with success, that expanding the city’s territory to include that of its neighbors would give its planners the legal authority and the financial resources via an expanded tax base to execute such measures. In making its case for incorporating the neighboring communities, city officials turned a harsh spotlight on the federal government and its clear and singular role in the city’s chaotic development and mounting difficulties. Acknowledging the Bund’s transformative role in Bonn initiated another, related discussion regarding the function of Bonn as a capital city, its role in representing the nation, and the relationship between a capital and a national government.

For local officials and planners, this discussion would significantly shift their assumptions surrounding these fraught issues, and altered assumptions brought with them different expectations and demands from the federal government. Critically, in the emerging discourse on the meaning of Bonn as the capital, the concept of the provisional assumed a new, diminished position, as Bonn’s planners rightfully began to identify Bonn’s provisional status as a major contributing factor behind the inadequate planning and resources that the Bund had put into the city during its first decade as capital. One of the earliest observers to make this argument was the West German journalist, Wolfgang Höpker, who published a scathing review of city planning in Bonn in the September 1960 issue of the national journal, Der Monat. Höpker accused the municipal and federal politicians in Bonn of using the provisional as an excuse to abdicate any responsibility for Bonn’s health, leading to a city that poorly served its residents and

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7 The American journalist and intellectual Melvin Lasky founded Der Monat in Berlin in 1948 with Marshall Plan funds as a staunchly anti-communist literary and political journal. It was later revealed that the magazine received funding from the United States Central Intelligence Agency.
its national government. He rejected incorporation as a solution and suggested instead that the regional administrations collaborate within the bounds of planning law.\textsuperscript{8} The force of his arguments struck a nerve with Bonn’s planners, who circulated the article within the City Planning Office as an appendix to a draft of their earliest application for the incorporation of six communities in Amt Duisdorf.\textsuperscript{9}

Höpker’s article was also prescient, for a year later events on the Cold War stage caught up with local circumstances in Bonn to cast overwhelming doubt on the wisdom of continuing to treat Bonn as a provisional capital. The construction of the Berlin Wall by the GDR in August 1961 opened a new chapter in the relationship between East and West Germany and indefinitely suspended any prospect for reunification. The impact on attitudes towards Bonn was felt immediately at all levels; three days after the enclosure of West Berlin, Chancellor Adenauer stated that he wanted to make Bonn “one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe.”\textsuperscript{10} Even though politicians would continue to invoke Bonn’s provisional status throughout the 1960s as justification for their opposition to federal building projects, it became more and more of a shibboleth detached from political reality. With such a pronouncement from the Chancellor, planners at the federal and municipal level very quickly ceased to acknowledge the provisional as a legitimate guiding principle for the city’s development.

\textsuperscript{8} Incorporation was too statist for Höpker, who developed his center-right political instincts through associations with Gustav Stressemann’s German People’s Party (\textit{Deutsche Volkspartei}) during the Weimar Republic. Wolfgang Höpker, “Hauptstadt auf Widerruf: Bonn — oder das Provisoriumm als Ausflucht,” \textit{Der Monat}, September, 1960, 20-28.

\textsuperscript{9} The six communities were Buschdorf, Duisdorf, Ippendorf, Lengsdorf, Lessenich, and Röttgen. Bonn City Planning Office, Draft of “Unterlagen für eine Raumordnung im Bereiche der Bundeshauptstadt Bonn,” August 1961 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/214).

Local officials pressed the argument that it was in the Bund’s best interests to support healthy, long-term urban development in its capital city and furthermore that the Bund had a responsibility to provide material and political aid to its municipal host. Federal officials were just as quick to shift their expectations, and even with the building freeze still technically in effect, the Chancellor’s pronouncement coincided with several major regional planning initiatives from the Bund, as federal planners refocused their attention on fulfilling the government’s long-neglected space requirements. However, the primary objective of enlarging and rationalizing federal infrastructure in Bonn colored any presumptions of responsibility on the part of the Bund towards the city as such, and the resulting gap in expectations became a significant source of friction in federal-municipal relations. So long as the region remained fragmented, and federal planners could look across Bonn’s city lines for suitable development sites, Bonn had little leverage with which to force the Bund to acknowledge any responsibility toward the city. In the context of the regional planning debate, there were federal officials who saw the deteriorating conditions in the region and the increasing tensions between Bonn and its neighbors as a threat to the Bund’s plans and the well-being of its workforce, and they advocated for more proactive involvement in the capital’s affairs. However, the greater consensus among federal officials was that the Bund had little to gain and risked a great deal through seeking to participate in the various regional planning organizations and associations that the municipalities were proposing, and they relied on political and legal pretenses to avoid taking a stance on the issue.

In addition to the city’s growing debt and strained infrastructure and services, the Bund’s ambitious building agenda, which emerged in 1961 in a series of discussions between federal,
state, and local officials, also helped thrust regional reorganization to the top of Bonn’s agenda. The Bund’s proposals, which included new ministry buildings across the region, a new bridge over the Rhine in southern Bonn or northern Bad Godesberg, and the underground burial of the federal rail line passing through the city, seemed to offer coherent, long-term solutions for both the lack of federal office space and for several of the region’s growing planning problems. Local officials from both Bonn and its neighbors welcomed the federal engagement in regional planning, but the scope of the proposals raised difficult questions regarding the division of financial responsibility and practical control amongst the affected communities and the state and federal governments. In the context of these major construction or regional planning proposals that originated with the Bund, all parties seemed content with the suggestion of forming formal Working Groups (Arbeitgemeinschaft) composed of representatives from each stakeholder as the best way to coordinate the initiatives.

**The First Regional Reform Proposals**

Bonn’s City Planning Office advocated the creation of Working Groups in its subsequent regional planning proposal, but in one case it also went beyond this compromise approach. The three-stage regional plan from August 1961 included establishing a planning Working Group

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12 The working group option was proposed by Heinz Langer, an official in the NRW’s Ministry for Regional Planning, Housing, and Public Works (Ministerium für Landesplanung, Wohnungsbau, und öffentliche Arbeiten) at a June 22, 1961 meeting between Langer, Wolfgang Leuschner of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, and Günter Schubert of Bonn’s City Planning Office and seconded by Bad Godesberg’s City Manager, Fritz Brüse, in the larger federal planning meeting on July 7, 1961. Meeting Minutes, June 23, 1961 and July 12, 1961, respectively (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/171).
with Beuel and Bad Godesberg and a Special Planning Committee (*Sonderplanungsausschuß*) with the surrounding counties, Landkreis Bonn and Siegkreis. It also proposed the immediate incorporation of the six villages in Amt Duisdorf.\(^{13}\) Bonn framed its justification for annexing Buschdorf, Duisdorf, Ippendorf, Lengsdorf, Lessenich, and Röttgen in largely altruistic terms: it provided the means for these small municipalities to manage adequately their rapid growth. However, the focus on the smaller villages was also strategic. In 1961, Duisdorf was already home to several ministries, including Economics, Food, Agriculture, and Forests, and Labor and Social Affairs, all of which were the subject of expansion plans, while at the same time the Bund was planning a sprawling new development for the Ministry of Defense. The Defense installation was particularly galling because of its apparent haphazard conception and its lack of consideration for the landscape and other city-planning concerns.\(^{14}\) Duisdorf was under the most immediate threat of unwieldy overdevelopment, and its annexation would give Bonn’s planners the ability to halt the Bund’s plans or at least modify those plans to the city’s benefit. Despite these efforts, the Defense Ministry was completed according to the Bund’s wishes and expanded several times during the 1960s. It became an important negative reference point for Bonn’s planners as they continued to build their case for regional reorganization.

Two months later, in a speech to the City Council, the leader of the Council’s majority CDU faction, Robert Streck, made it clear that the city’s regional planning policy would be one of integration, not collaboration. The speech was markedly vague on numerous points, including the conditions that were making integration necessary, the causes of those conditions, and the

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\(^{13}\) Bonn City Planning Office Assistant Klaus Martin, Notes from August 1, 1961 Meeting between Bonn City Planning Office and officials from the NRW Interior Ministry, August 2, 1961 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/214).

\(^{14}\) Bonn Director of Building Günter Schubert, Memo regarding the Bund’s plans for the Ministry of Defense in the Hardtberg, December 14, 1961 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/171).
specific structure of any merger. But once Streck stated, “[t]he Bonn region must be consolidated through the ‘integration’ of all of the individual communities that are dependent on each other … economically, in terms of transportation, and culturally … under an agency that represents and enforces the unified will of the entire region in these matters,”\textsuperscript{15} there was no turning back for the city.

Despite certain ambiguities in Streck’s declaration, the reaction of Bonn’s neighbors demonstrates that they took it as the opening salvo in an attack on their sovereignty and that the “agency” (\textit{Organ}) to which Streck referred could only mean Bonn’s own municipal administration. The state government in Düsseldorf asserted that municipal borders should not be changed. Fritz Brüse, Bad Godesberg’s City Manager, insisted that the region’s problems could only be solved through cooperation that preserved the independence of every municipality. Hans-Josef Bost (CDU), mayor of Amt Duisdorf, objected in the strongest terms, charging that Bonn had done nothing but “complain and think of itself” (\textit{gejammert und an sich gedacht}) without any constructive effort at solving its problems through cooperation.\textsuperscript{16}

With all its neighbors and the state government aligned against any form of integration, no matter how vaguely defined, the political environment for achieving Bonn’s aims was far from conducive. Nevertheless, the city pressed ahead, making its case in earnest by inviting North Rhine-Westphalia’s Minister-President, Franz Meyers, and the Cologne District President (\textit{Regierungspräsident}), Franz Grobben,\textsuperscript{17} to a meeting on December 20, 1961 in Bonn where

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\textsuperscript{17} The state of North Rhine-Westphalia is subdivided into five districts (\textit{Regierungsbezirk}), with Bonn located in the Cologne District. The districts have no legislative powers and deal primarily with administrative issues between their constituent cities and counties.
Mayor Wilhelm Daniels and Bonn’s city planning leaders offered their arguments in person. In a series of methodical presentations in the august space of Bonn’s Old City Hall, the city’s representatives aimed to convince the state authorities that redrawing Bonn’s boundaries was the only suitable option. The arguments would become far more detailed and elaborate in subsequent iterations, but this early outline already presented all of the key arguments in support of consolidation as well as the final form of Bonn’s proposal for integration, on which the city would offer no compromise.

The presentations focused on the regional issues that were most pressing for the area’s residents at the time: housing and transportation. Franz Schmidt, Bonn’s City Manager, noted that the arrival of the Bund and all of the attendant institutions had displaced housing in Bonn to the point that there was virtually no more available space for residential development within the city’s borders. Ludwig Marx, Bonn’s City Planning Director (Stadtbaudirektor) asserted that solving the city’s transportation problems would require no less than two new bridges over the Rhine, a new beltway around the city, and the burial of the train tracks, which would create more land for development on the surface. Furthermore, Marx asserted that housing development in the suburbs and transportation planning must be closely coordinated to ensure that people were settled along transportation routes. Another city planning official, Dr. Berndt, proceeded to explain why alternative solutions involving some form of legal intercommunal cooperation were insufficient. Working Groups were restricted to an advisory role without any authority to initiate or steer projects on their own. Public Law Agreements between communities (öffentlich-rechtliche Vereinbarung) were too weak because all parties held veto power over any proposal. Special Purpose Associations (Zweckverband) were useful only for discrete, well-defined

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18 Minutes from the meeting between NRW Minister-President Franz Meyers and Bonn’s City Administration, December 20, 1961 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/214).
projects and not for the kind of long-range, comprehensive planning that city planners in Bonn envisioned for the region. Special Planning Committees and so-called Planning Associations (Planungsverband), which had authority to develop region-wide plans and coordinate transportation development, were preferable to Working Groups, Public Law Agreements, and Special Purpose Associations, but such associations still did not have the legal power to execute the plans that they developed and they required a cumbersome and expensive administrative apparatus.19

For Bonn’s leaders, it seemed that any agreement under which the city had to share planning authority would be either too weak or too narrowly empowered, and the only way to extend Bonn’s unilateral authority was by enlarging the city. On this issue, Berndt offered a compromise structural framework for the intended regional reorganization that Bonn hoped would allay its neighbors’ fears regarding the loss of autonomy. Instead of incorporation or annexation (Eingemeindung), Berndt proposed the creation of an overarching community with administrative districts, alternatively called a Gesamtgemeinde mit Verwaltungsbezirke or Großgemeinde. Rather than Bonn taking over Bad Godesberg or any other town, all communities would give up their independence in order to reform as a single municipality with a completely new administrative structure.20 The towns and cities would become constituent districts, keeping their borders and retaining some administrative autonomy, such as pertaining to cultural life, and thus would ostensibly be able to maintain and nurture distinct identities. Bonn could claim to be surrendering its sovereignty in equal measure to its neighbors for the greater good of the entire

19 Ibid. For a more exhaustive list of the legal options available to Bonn, see Bonn City Planning Office, “Raumordnung Bonn: Lösungsmöglichkeiten,” December, 1961 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/191).
20 Ibid.
region, and in sharing the sacrifice, the city aimed to defuse claims that its proposal was nothing more than a power grab.

In closing the meeting, Mayor Daniels endorsed Berndt’s idea and offered several supplementary points in its defense. First, he noted that the total population of the united communities would be greater than that of Bonn, and thus Bonn would not necessarily be a dominant force in the newly created city. This may have seemed pedantic, but proportional representation for Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and the other towns on the City Council became an important negotiating point as Bonn neared an agreement on redrawing its borders. Second, Daniels pointed to the expansion and reorganization of Berlin into Greater Berlin in 1920, when the city absorbed Charlottenburg, Neukölln, Spandau, and a host of other previously independent towns and unincorporated territory in the Province of Brandenburg, as a model for Bonn. Drawing attention to Berlin was always a risky idea in the provisional capital, but the creation of Greater Berlin was perhaps the best historical example of Bonn’s current proposal. Finally, the mayor asserted that, in its current condition, Bonn gave the impression to observers that the Federal Republic was incapable of establishing an appropriate capital city and thus reflected poorly on the Bund’s image inside and outside of West Germany. Doubling the city’s size to 300,000 people would quickly allay doubts regarding Bonn’s legitimacy. 21 Thus, Daniels appealed to the vanity of state representatives while also claiming a positive connection between the state of the capital and the reputation of the nation, a link that Bonn would continue to proclaim and exploit in the coming years.

Bonn’s first official articulation of its vision for its future was met with a barrage of critical reactions in the local press during the following days and months. In an interview with

21 Ibid.
the *Bonner Rundschau* the day after his meeting with Bonn officials, NRW Minister-President Meyers was decidedly guarded, stating that the situation needed much more study before he could endorse a particular solution and insisting that Berlin was certainly not a useful comparison. He also pointed out that the legal bar for redrawing community boundaries was extremely high, requiring not only the demonstration of urgent public interest but also the acquiescence of the residents of the affected communities.22 Meyers’ circumspection was the most positive official public response that Bonn’s proposal received, but his insistence that the process would take time was a clear rebuke to local officials, who viewed their city as already beyond the crisis point and who were technically still awaiting action by the state on the 1953 application to incorporate Bad Godesberg and Beuel.

In their public responses, officials at different levels of West German government—excluding those representing Bonn—unequivocally rejected Bonn’s proposal. This overwhelming opposition reframed the public debate, shifting it away from efforts to solve the region’s pressing planning problems and constructing it in binary terms that seemed to pit Bonn unfavorably against the democratic principles of the FRG. Writing in the *Bonner Rundschau*, Georg Kliesing (CDU), the Bundestag member representing neighboring Siegkreis, declared that the difference between incorporation and Bonn’s proposition to eliminate all previous territorial distinctions and found an entirely new metropolis was “completely negligible” (*vollig unwesentlich*). Kliesing then defended the status quo: “[t]he maintenance of local self-government and the preservation of the greatest possible number of small and mid-sized communities is of higher national political importance for the strengthening of the democratic

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consciousness in our people.” Bad Godesberg’s City Manager Brüse also dismissed Bonn’s proposal as incorporation by another name, claiming that Bonn would hold a substantial majority of seats in the resulting city council and thus would be free to impose its will unilaterally on the combined city. Even though Bonn’s plan was structurally and legally distinct from incorporation and had a successful historical model in Berlin, through repetition opponents were able to win the semantic battle and make “incorporation” the standard term to denote any proposal to change municipal borders.

*Eingemeindung* was a far simpler concept than Bonn’s proposal for a *Gesamtgemeinde*, and to the extent that the former implied the complete subjugation of the community being incorporated, it made for an easy straw man against which to rally strident opposition. Against incorporation, officials posed the concept of self-government (*Selbstverwaltung*). In the wake of the National Socialist dictatorship and with an awareness of the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and its satellites, West Germans viewed the right of every community to control its own affairs to the greatest extent possible as a bulwark against centralized autocratic rule. They enshrined this principle in the West German Basic Law, reaffirmed it in the Constitution of North-Rhine Westphalia, and further reinforced it in the Federal Building Law of 1960. With such a popular and unimpeachable doctrine deployed in rhetorical battle against an act that appeared so inimical to it, the specifics of Bonn’s circumstances and the relative merits of the various options on the table for ameliorating them faded from the discussion. For example, Paul Lücke, the Federal Minister for Housing, Urban Development, and Regional Planning (*Bundesminister für Wohnungswesen, Städtebau, und Raumordnung*), explicitly rejected

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incorporation, not because it was an inferior solution for regional planning problems, but because it violated the “… basic principle of self-government, on which our democracy rests …”\textsuperscript{25}

With the debate confined to \textit{Eingemeindung} versus \textit{Selbstverwaltung} it was difficult for Bonn officials to gain any traction with their counterparts in neighboring administrations, the neighboring publics, or state officials in Cologne and Düsseldorf. The emotional resonance of appeals to protect political autonomy immediately blunted Bonn’s more practical arguments for reform, which concerned municipal service provision, land use, housing development, and enlarging the tax base. Underlying the aggressive assertions of political and administrative independence was the heartfelt concern to preserve cultural autonomy, local historical character, economic well-being, and the ability of a tight-knit community to continue to shape its own identity into the future. In rejecting incorporation, the Bad Godesberg Mayor, Heinrich Hopmann, described his vision for the city in largely cultural terms. He wanted to strengthen the city’s traditional associations as a spa town by increasing the number of spa facilities while also forging a new identity, based on the presence of numerous embassies within its borders, as a city of diplomats and international meetings and congresses.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{The Grobben Plan}

In March 1963, in an attempt to solve the regional planning riddle, District President Franz Grobben broke the stasis with the unveiling of his “Statement by the District President in Cologne on the Reorganization of the Bonn Region,” which quickly became known as the


“Grobben Plan.” Grobben’s report and recommendations were by far the most thorough and detailed to be produced so far, and he appended to the main document numerous tables presenting the relevant demographic and economic data and trends behind his analysis, as well as maps representing the various options under consideration. He even included a complete draft of a statute for implementing his proposals. The plan was up-front in its call for immediate and sweeping reforms across the entire region, but it attempted to bridge the chasm between respecting local autonomy absolutely and Bonn’s desire for completely centralized control over the capital region’s planning affairs. This involved the recognition that the region’s current political geography was counterproductive to large-scale, long-term, and integrated planning, and the “Grobben Plan” included the limited redrawing of community borders and the incorporation of several communities into Bonn. The “Grobben Plan” represented a major step forward in solving the regional planning conundrum, but in trying to forge a third way, the District President satisfied almost none of the affected communities. Ultimately, the “Grobben Plan” failed to rally sufficient support, and the Bonn region’s planning problems would remain unresolved for several more years.

Grobben identified the Bund as the primary driver of the region’s unmanageable growth in the postwar era, but in doing so he indicated that the region had a responsibility to provide a functional urban site for the federal administration and parliament. The need to fulfill this responsibility became the basis and guiding principle behind Grobben’s regional reforms. He criticized the previously suggested planning organizations as too impotent (Arbeitsgemeinschaft), too narrow (Zweckverband), or too unwieldy (Planungsverband), but his objections to Bonn’s proposal to reconstruct the region as a single new municipal entity struck a very different tone.

Grobben asserted that community life might suffer in the former towns with the loss of financial independence and that consolidation would exacerbate a growing trend towards urbanization and the alienation of mostly rural suburbs from a monolithic urban core, while disregarding the principle of self-government. Instead, Grobben emphasized Bonn’s provisional character and deference to Berlin as reasons to prevent the doubling of the city’s population through the expansion of its borders. He insisted that the creation of Groß-Bonn, and in the image of Groß-Berlin no less, would be a direct challenge to the meaning of the erstwhile capital.  

Although Mayor Daniels’ reference to Berlin was the most appropriate available comparison, the analogy appeared to have backfired. It invited opponents to declare Bonn’s provisional status a relevant counterargument to consolidation, a point that had previously gone unmentioned. It is no coincidence that in the wake of the Grobben Plan, Bonn’s position vis-a-vis Berlin appeared with much greater frequency in both official discussions and press coverage as a justification for opposing the city’s expansion plans. Willi Weyer, the NRW Minister of the Interior who would ultimately become a major supporter of regional integration, put the provisionality argument in blunt terms: “I find it politically not credible to speak of the old capital city and to keep the goal of German reunification in sight while founding a kind of second capital city here in Bonn.” In its official statement on the Grobben Plan, Bad Godesberg devoted as much attention to accusing Bonn of attempting to usurp Berlin’s place in Germany as to decrying the negative effects of the city’s proposals on Bad Godesberg’s functional and

political independence. It is no coincidence that comparisons to Berlin disappeared from Bonn’s subsequent appeals for regional reorganization, to be replaced by other, less inflammatory examples from West German regional planning.

Grobben based his final recommendations on a few fundamental criteria. The area to be included under any regional planning agreement should be no larger than absolutely necessary, but it should incorporate all those communities with a direct stake in the outcome, and the agreement should establish a limited number of equal partners capable of negotiations. Thus, Grobben proposed creating a unique form of Zweckverband comprising five municipalities: Menden, Duisdorf, Beuel, Bad Godesberg, and Bonn. Beuel and Bad Godesberg remained unchanged in this arrangement, but the cities of Menden and Duisdorf had to be created by statutes combining the independent towns within Amt Menden and Amt Duisdorf, respectively, into a Gesamtgemeinde along the same lines that Bonn was proposing for itself. Furthermore, Duisdorf would also see significant parts of the communities along its border with Bonn—Buschdorf, Ippendorf, Lessenich, Duisdorf, and Lengsdorf—separated and incorporated into the capital.

The union comprising the five communities would not conform to the legal definition of Zweckverband that was already available, but would be something sui generis. Labeled a Regional Authority (Regionalverband), it would combine the Zweckverband’s power to carry out discrete, pre-defined tasks with the capabilities of a Planungsverband to create and execute larger-scale integrated planning measures, such as zoning and development plans and the

31 Amt Menden borders Beuel to the east. After the reorganization of 1969, it became the city of Sankt Augustin.
32 Grobben, “Stellungnahme des Regierungspräsident in Köln zur Neugestaltung des Bonner Raumes.”
coordination of transportation and schools. The group would vote on all measures, and each of
the five members would receive votes proportional to their population. In order to guard against
Bonn and Bad Godesberg forming a coalition with an unbreakable majority, non-members
Siegkreis and Landkreis Bonn would also receive votes, a two-thirds super-majority would be
required to override opposition to a decision, and Bonn’s maximum number of votes would be
arbitrarily capped. Even Grobben acknowledged that the arrangement in his plan was extremely
complicated, with ample potential for inefficient administrative redundancies, a questionable
legal form, and a possibly unworkable solution to the problem of local autonomy.33 This was
perhaps an inevitable result of Grobben’s attempt both to give Bonn a measure of consolidation
and to preserve self-government for the most vocal opponents of integration in places like Bad
Godesberg.

Although the communities acknowledged Grobben’s thoroughness and sincerity, they
reacted lukewarmly to his hybrid plan, in ways that reflected their own preoccupations as well as
the plan’s deficiencies. Landkreis Bonn and Siegkreis both criticized the fact that they were not
included as members of the Regionalverband, while also objecting to the violation of the
independence of their respective constituent communities, Amt Duisdorf and Amt Menden.34
Duisdorf and Menden, predictably, rejected being merged, but Duisdorf pointed to the particular
injustice of first having several of its towns carved out and incorporated into Bonn.35 Bad
Godesberg opposed the plan for intervening too much into the affairs of independent
administrations, and the city reiterated its preferred solution of a straightforward

33 Ibid.
34 Bonner Rundschau, “Grobben-Plan kritisch betrachtet,” April 4, 1963, and General-Anzeiger,
35 Bonner Rundschau, “Amt Menden will nicht,” April 25, 1963, and Rhein-Zeitung (Koblenz),
Planungsverband that would coordinate only those planning tasks that affect more than one community.\(^3^6\)

However, in a major shift, Bad Godesberg endorsed Grobben’s spatial arrangement, including the merging of Amt Menden and Amt Duisdorf, and the incorporation of part of Duisdorf’s territory into Bonn.\(^3^7\) This reflected a major step back from the city’s previous staunch defense of the principle of Selbstverwaltung in its opposition to Bonn’s proposal to merge the capital area into a single city. Bad Godesberg’s former City Treasurer (Stadtkämmerer), Kurt Bahlmann, hinted at the reasoning behind this substantial shift in the city’s position in a letter to the editor of the General-Anzeiger several weeks earlier. Bahlmann asserted that Bad Godesberg’s distinct history, culture, and wealth made any infringement of its independence unacceptable. On the other hand, Bahlmann described Beuel and, to an even greater extent, Duisdorf as satellite towns of Bonn without any cultural “self-will” (Eigenwille) or coherent identities as cities, thus rendering them logical subjects for incorporation.\(^3^8\)

This apparent pivot by Bad Godesberg’s municipal officials on the issue of autonomy and redrawing local boundaries defused one of the most resonant counterarguments against consolidation and changed the complexion of the city’s ongoing opposition to Bonn’s proposed reorganization. Having abandoned the principled rejection of incorporation on the grounds of preserving Selbstverwaltung, Bad Godesberg found more specific reasons to resist Bonn’s overtures. On top of its accusation that Bonn was trying to expropriate Berlin’s role as the sole legitimate capital of Germany, Bad Godesberg now claimed that incorporation would not benefit itself as a city, that the issues facing each city were too distinct, and that their commercial centers

\(^3^6\) City of Bad Godesberg, “Stellungnahme der Stadt Bad Godesberg zur Ordnung des Bonner Raums,” May, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186).
\(^3^7\) Ibid.
\(^3^8\) Former City Treasurer Kurt Bahlmann, Leserbrief, General-Anzeiger, April 22, 1963.
were too far apart to integrate. Far from uniting the capital region, Bad Godesberg warned, a merger would only put them into greater competition with each other.\textsuperscript{39}

**Bonn’s Response to the Grobben Plan**

Bonn’s City Council and the municipal administration articulated their official responses to the Grobben Plan in a series of resolutions and public statements in the spring and summer of 1963. In all of these responses, the city’s leaders and planners rejected Grobben’s proposal and reaffirmed their support for the creation of a new, larger city with semi-autonomous administrative districts. Support within Bonn for a *Gesamtgemeinde* crossed political lines, and the leaders of all three major parties in the City Council, Karl Gronwald (CDU), Rolf Ackermann (SPD), and Siegfried Sadtler (Free Democratic Party; FDP), endorsed the idea without reservation.\textsuperscript{40} Although the unanimity within Bonn failed to convince the city’s external opponents, public statements by various Council members and officials significantly shifted and reframed the debate. On the troublesome issues of incorporation and self-governance, Bonn’s provisional status, and Bonn’s function and role as a capital city, these public responses established a rhetorical basis on which the capital would ultimately win the argument.

In the city’s first resolution from May 20, 1963, Mayor Daniels addressed the issue of incorporation, pointing out that, far from an unusual or unnatural act, it had been a common method for community building in Germany. As evidence, he cited Cologne’s incorporation of...
twenty surrounding communities in 1888, Düsseldorf’s similar action in 1908, and Bonn’s own incorporation of the towns of Poppelsdorf, Endenich, and Kessenich in 1904.\textsuperscript{41} Daniels then gave perhaps the most persuasive challenge yet to those who opposed regional integration because of purported threats to Berlin’s status as capital. He enlisted for support none other than Klaus Schütz, a member of the West Berlin Senate and the representative of West Berlin in the Bundesrat. A week before Bonn’s resolution, Schütz made a public statement in which he claimed forthrightly,

\begin{quote}
[the question of a sensible organization in the urban center of the Bonn region has nothing to do with the outstanding problem of if and when Berlin can again fully exercise its rights as the German capital. Indeed, Berlin has great understanding for the problems that have emerged for Bonn through its responsibilities as the provisional federal capital. Regional planning must — wheresoever — always be considered from the point of view of the welfare of the residents of the affected territory and of a functional administration.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

The implicit support of one of the most influential men in West Berlin’s administration and in West German politics more broadly was crucial for nullifying the relevance of Bonn’s provisional status in the planning debate. Afterwards, it was far easier and more convincing for local officials to make the claim that fixing Bonn’s problems and putting the city on surer footing for the future had nothing to do with replacing Berlin and would have no effect on the state’s commitment to reunification with East Germany.

\textsuperscript{41} Remarkably, Mayor Daniels failed to mention that Bad Godesberg had also been the beneficiary of incorporation four times since 1899, including as recently as 1935, under National Socialism, when it incorporated the towns of Lannesdorf and Mehlem. Mayor Wilhelm Daniels in City of Bonn, “Stellungnahme der Stadt Bonn zur Frage der Neugestaltung des Bonner Raumes aufgrund der Sondersitzung des Rates der Stadt Bonn on 20. Mai 1963,” May 20, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186).

Schütz’s statement allowed the city to focus on the particular merits of its proposal and to consider the more political question of the function and meaning of a capital city largely independently of Bonn’s peculiar place in West German politics. For the Mayor, this included an emotional plea that Bonn not be punished for serving as the provisional capital with inadequate and dysfunctional regional planning. In giving precedence to the interests of the Bund, Bonn had forgone opportunities to improve its economy through settling industrial and commercial concerns within its borders, but the city had received little acknowledgement of its sacrifice and no compensation. The Mayor implored the citizens of the neighboring towns to trust Bonn to act in the region’s best interests.43 For Gronwald, the Chairman of the City Council’s CDU faction, the Bund’s neglect of the city had made a joke out of what should be a rallying symbol for the Federal Republic. Gronwald gave no details about his vision for Bonn as a truly representative capital, but his statement built on Mayor Daniels’ earlier appeal and reinforced the idea that Bonn faced both political and functional demands on its space, another reason why the creation of a Gesamtgemeinde was the only logical course of action. Just as with the construction of an adequate road and rail network, turning Bonn into a symbol for the Bund was not something the city could do on its own.44

As part of the same resolution, City Manager Schmidt made the strongest and most detailed case for the practical necessity of a Gesamtgemeinde, basing his argument on the idea that Bonn and its suburbs had become so intertwined and interdependent that they were already effectively a single urban area. Schmidt explained that the current borders served only as artificial impediments to rational planning, and that enlarging the borders and integrating the capital region would merely bring the political geography of the area into line with its evolving

43 Mayor Wilhelm Daniels in Ibid.
44 Bonn City Council Member Karl Gronwald (CDU) in Ibid.
economic and social structure. Schmidt backed up this claim with statistics on transportation and commuting patterns, population growth and density, and land use and housing activity in the area. Still, in order to persuade opponents, Bonn needed to develop a satisfactory answer to accusations that its proposal was anti-democratic and an undue intrusion into the affairs of its smaller neighbors.

That federal and state laws allowed for exactly the kind of changes to municipal borders that Bonn had proposed was not in question. The process by which Bonn could achieve those changes, a statute passed by a duly elected representative body at the state level, was eminently democratic. However, it was also true that those same laws explicitly privileged local autonomy. To break this tension, Bonn attempted to reframe its proposal for a Gesamtgemeinde as preserving rather than violating the principle of self-government in the neighboring communities, and the city based this contention on a shift in the definition of community from the political entities within the current municipal borders to the organically integrated area around Bonn. The capital, along with Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and the other surrounding towns, represented a new community in the truest sense of the word. If they were to form a legal union as a city, that city would possess all of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of independent self-government. In making this case, the Grobben Plan provided an apt foil, as Bonn pointed to the novel formulation of a Regionalverband as constitutionally objectionable. According to Bonn, Grobben’s proposal envisioned the removal of all planning authority to the supra-local union, restricting severely the ability of the members to conduct their own affairs while entailing the

45 Bonn City Manager Franz Schmidt in Ibid.
46 For example, a study from June 1963 by Bonn’s Employment Office found that nearly half of all workers from the capital’s neighbors (yet only one-fifth of those from Bad Godesberg) commuted into Bonn everyday for work, a situation that cost the city over one million DM in tax revenue each year due to tax equalization policies. General-Anzeiger, “Jeder fünfte Godesberger arbeitet in Bonn,” June 7, 1963.
costly and cumbersome duplication of municipal planning administrations. Furthermore, Bonn pointed to the possibility that the new authority could usurp additional local powers as long as it was in the name of planning. The Grobben Plan was a true threat to self-government, while Bonn’s proposal reformed and enlarged local government, augmenting its powers to deal with the present problems but reserving all of its authority for itself.

Bonn brought this case to the public in 1963, most notably in a municipally published brochure entitled “On Regional Planning in Bonn: Questions — Answers” (“Zur Raumordnung Bonn: Fragen — Antworten”). In a series of seven rhetorical questions, the city attempted to explain carefully and exhaustively the difference between incorporation and a Gesamtgemeinde. It flatly rejected the former while extolling the benefits of the latter. Bonn also attempted to assuage fears that it would use the newly formed city as a way to shift its oppressive debt burden onto its neighbors or that the previously independent cities would lose their historical and familiar character. In response to the latter concern, the brochure noted that the towns that had been incorporated into Bonn in 1904 still supported many of their local groups and clubs (Vereine), including singing clubs, sports clubs, and the all-important Rhenish Carnival clubs (Karnevalvereine). Along with the brochure, Bonn officials went on the offensive, demanding that the NRW government allow the citizens of the communities in the proposed Gesamtgemeinde to vote directly on whether they wanted to join with Bonn. Such a referendum would not be legally binding, but Bonn was confident that the result would speak strongly in favor of its plan. Mayor Daniels gave a lengthy interview to the General-Anzeiger touting the

47 City of Bonn, Memo regarding discussion on June 25, 1963 between city officials and District President Franz Grobben concerning his regional planning proposal, July 27, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186).
administrative and functional benefits of a regional merger while also drawing a hard line that the city would not accept any compromise, such as moving forward without Bad Godesberg.\textsuperscript{50} However, if Daniels’ aim was to convince skeptics, he did himself no favors by elsewhere insisting that the \textit{Gesamtgemeinde} must retain the name Bonn.\textsuperscript{51}

In spite of the flurry of activity aimed at permanently resolving the regional planning issue in Bonn, the various sides remained intransigent, and 1963 passed without any legislative action. The state administration in Düsseldorf and Cologne continued to reject Bonn’s proposal and support the Grobben Plan, which by August had received tentative endorsements from all of the other participants, including Bad Godesberg.\textsuperscript{52} Bad Godesberg remained Bonn’s most vocal opponent, and the town laid bare its mistrust when its City Treasurer, Helmut Schneider, accused Bonn’s Press aide, Paul Zurnieden, of deliberately and systematically disseminating false information regarding the extent to which the two communities were actually economically dependent on each other.\textsuperscript{53} This prompted a vigorous response from Bonn City Council Member Ackermann with a point-by-point refutation of the Godesberg Treasurer’s claims and the accusation that the town was making a routine of such baseless, politically motivated attacks.\textsuperscript{54} While such unconcealed and personally directed acrimony between Bonn and Bad Godesberg was rare, the smaller town continued to maintain its absolute opposition to any erosion of its

\textsuperscript{50} General-Anzeiger, “Interview mit Oberbürgermeister Dr. Daniels: ‘Neuordnung ohne Godesberg wäre ein Torso’,” July 4, 1963.


\textsuperscript{52} District President Franz Grobben, Memo to NRW Interior Minister Willi Weyer and Minister for State Planning, Housing, and Public Works Joseph Paul Franken, August 27, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186).


municipal independence, even as it begrudgingly began to concede that dramatic measures were needed to solve the region’s problems.\textsuperscript{55}

**The Bund’s Role in Regional Planning**

With the debate at a standstill and tensions escalating between Bonn and its neighbors, the Bund turned its attention to the issue and deliberated whether or not to become directly involved. Federal engagement with issues of regional planning took place primarily through the Interdepartmental Committee on Regional Planning (*Interministerielle Ausschuß für Raumordnung* or IMARO), which consisted of representatives from each of the federal ministries and had met only sporadically since it was established in 1955. The IMARO first took up the issue of regional planning in Bonn on November 15, 1963 and decided to form two subcommittees, one to consider the desirability of federal participation in the organization of the region (Subcommittee A) and another to consider the constitutionality of the findings of the first (Subcommittee B). Subcommittee B would ultimately have little to discuss except for hypotheticals, as Subcommittee A along with the larger IMARO quickly decided that the Bund had no compelling interest in regional planning around the capital.

Only the Treasury Ministry and the Federal Ministry for Public Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheitswesen*) advocated for the Bund to adopt a policy of active engagement and participation in regional issues in Bonn, with the Treasury Ministry referring to

\textsuperscript{55} Bad Godesberg City Council Member, “Bonn muß geholfen werden. Aber auf sinnvolle Art und Weise,” *Bonner Rundschau*, November 2, 1963.
the issue as “urgently necessary” (dringend notwendig). The Health Ministry supported involvement on public health grounds, arguing that the Bund had a special interest in ensuring proper water provision and sewage facilities for all West German citizens. The Treasury Ministry—which along with the Federal Building Agency oversaw the planning of all federal building projects—gave a far more elaborate set of reasons in support of involvement, all of which related to improving the living and working standards of the federal workforce. First and foremost, the Treasury Ministry noted that Bonn and its neighbors had been receptive to federal building proposals only so long as they aligned with local interests, but the hardening tensions between communities over the regional planning issue had scrambled those interests, complicating the Bund’s efforts to accommodate federal authorities. Achieving a resolution to the regional stalemate was therefore in the Bund’s best interests because it would remove a major obstacle from the already trying process of housing the growing federal bureaucracy. The Treasury Ministry also advocated gaining federal representation in the resulting local institutions. This would allow the Bund to push for more favorable zoning arrangements, better infrastructure, and more economical service provision. The Treasury Ministry even went so far as to suggest that the Bund look into using financial support for supra-regional facilities as a means to extend federal influence over local planning affairs.

The Health and Treasury Ministries were distinctively in the minority, however. Two other ministries—the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development, and Regional Planning and the Interior Ministry—took a more moderate supportive stance, arguing that the Bund should

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56 Friedrich Halstenberg, Head of the Urban Development and Regional Planning Department at the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development, and Regional Planning, Memo to Minister of the Interior Hermann Höcherl regarding IMARO discussions, July 15, 1964 (BArch, B 106/45685).
57 Ibid.
maintain open lines of communication with any regional organization to facilitate coordination of federal and local plans. Otherwise, the ministries on the IMARO and Subcommittee A were resolutely against the Bund’s participation in local or regional planning organizations. Many in the opposition simply asserted that the existing laws were sufficient to secure the Bund’s interests in the Bonn region, but the Ministry of Defense and Ministry for Economics were particularly outspoken. In a memo to Federal Housing Minister Paul Lücke, the head of the Accommodations and Real Estate Department (Abteilung Unterkünfte und Liegenschaften) at the Defense Ministry, Heinrich Kaumann, expressed concerns that the Bund’s involvement in regional planning would constrain its freedom to negotiate with individual communities and would leave it vulnerable to demands that it share in the costs of planning and executing local projects.58 Such concerns betrayed an element of departmental self-interest, as the Economics and Defense Ministries were two of the largest federal organizations located outside of Bonn’s borders—they were both based in Amt Duisdorf—where they enjoyed both more space for expansion and more receptive local governments. With such advantageous conditions, neither ministry was eager to have the Bund participate in an organization that might bring the scrutiny of more skeptical local planning authorities.

58 Heinrich Kaumann, Head of the Accommodations and Real Estate Department at the Federal Ministry of Defense, Memo to Paul Lücke, Federal Minister of Housing, Urban Development, and Regional Planning, July 15, 1964 (BArch, B 106/45685).
**The Göttingen Solution**

With the Bund adopting a public stance of total non-involvement—and even backtracking on its previous renunciation of incorporation in favor of neutrality on the issue\(^59\)—the debate continued to drift sideways. At a public discussion in February 1965 between officials from Bonn, Bad Godesberg, and NRW, tensions were markedly reduced, but neither side had changed its position on the regional planning issue.\(^60\) Several months later, however, the CDU faction in Bonn’s City Council made a new proposal for incorporation that differed markedly from its previous approach and appeared initially as a potentially major breakthrough. Based not on Berlin but on a much more recent regional planning act in the much smaller city of Göttingen in Lower Saxony,\(^61\) the proposal from the Christian Democrats called for the city to merge with the surrounding Landkreis Bonn. Under this plan, Bonn would relinquish the privileges of its independence as *kreisfrei* and become similar in status to its neighbor, Bad Godesberg. The merger would constrain Bonn, but it would also integrate the city into a governmental structure where there already existed institutions and associations to deal with large and small common planning tasks while totally preserving the autonomy of the other communities in the Kreis. Once merged, Bonn and its immediate neighbors—Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and Duisdorf—would

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\(^{61}\) The Göttingen Act went into force on July 1, 1964, merging the previously independent city of Göttingen with Kreis Göttingen.
enter into an Urban Federation (\textit{Stadtverband}) that would be empowered to manage and administer those planning affairs related directly to the presence of the Bund.\footnote{Ernst Geis, “Grünes Licht für Raumordnung: Bonns Eingemeindungspläne sollen endgültig zu den Akten,” \textit{Bonner-Rundschau}, June 24, 1965.}

Perhaps the proposal’s greatest strength was that it received the endorsement—if only as a firm basis for negotiation—of the mayors of several of the neighboring towns. Bad Godesberg Mayor Franz Linz welcomed the idea so long as Bonn agreed to assume an equal place within the Kreis, revealing anxiety that even were Bonn to be bound legally into a well-established structure, it would attempt to dominate its neighbors. The mayor of Amt Duisdorf, Johann Brünker, approved of the idea provided that the rest of the Kreis would not be held liable for Bonn’s municipal debts.\footnote{Ibid.} With similar caveats, the local public in the other surrounding communities approved of the plan even more enthusiastically.\footnote{Bonner-Rundschau, “Bürger sind einig: Fusion Bonns mit dem Landkreis hilft allen,” June 25, 1965.} While important details still needed to be worked out before a final agreement could be reached, within a month the district chapter of the CDU in Bonn had disseminated a draft statute based on the Göttingen Act (\textit{Göttingen-Gesetz}), and hope was building that a solution had finally been reached that would allow the region to address adequately its planning needs.\footnote{Bonner-Rundschau, “Kommunalpolitiker gingen neue Wege: Stadt und Landkreis künftig ‘Kreis Bonn,’” July 22, 1965.}

Bad Godesberg City Manager Brüse effectively halted momentum towards a deal in September 1965 when he unexpectedly rejected the Göttingen model and proposed in its stead a merger of Bonn, Bad Godesberg, and Beuel with the immediately surrounding communities of Landkreis Bonn and Siegkreis to form a completely new Kreis. The new Kreis would then be
subdivided into three administrative districts based around the three largest communities. In announcing his new plan during a meeting of Bad Godesberg’s City Council, Brüse gave virtually no explanation for why it represented a more effective regional planning solution, and representatives from Bonn immediately denounced the proposal. Bonn and Bad Godesberg were once again backing opposing plans for reorganizing the area, and the conflict over regional planning seemed once more at a deadlock.

A Piecemeal Approach

As the prospects for a comprehensive regional planning deal faded again, the individual communities involved began exploring a variety of smaller scale actions that were at times complementary and other times at odds with each other. Duisdorf entered talks with several other towns in Amt Duisdorf about forming a new Gesamtgemeinde called Hardtberg. This integration would eventually come to pass as part of the Bonn Act in 1969—with the communities of Duisdorf, Lengsdorf, and Hardthöhe combining to form the administrative district of Hardtberg within Greater Bonn—but at the time in 1965-66, many Amt officials saw this step toward greater integration within their district as the most effective way to stave off the “hungry Bonn lion” (hungrige Bonner Löwe). Beuel, as the largest community in Siegkreis, sought to establish a local Working Group tasked with coordinating responses to regional planning

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68 By the mid-1960s, the Ministry of Defense’s sprawling campus occupied the entire area of Hardthöhe.
problems and set up a Planning Association to organize and steer future development. The
proposal received the backing of the Kreis and member communities because it strove for
increased cooperation on the right bank of the Rhine while preserving local independence and
autonomy. It was necessary, according to Beuel’s draft document describing the Working Group,
“in case Bonn does not deviate from its current stance.”70 Although these proposals by Bonn’s
neighbors addressed regional planning issues, they were also tactical maneuvers aimed at
preempting or discouraging any future attempts by Bonn to incorporate or merge surrounding
communities.

Bonn perceived these proposals and actions—particularly those advanced by Duisdorf—as a threat to its own planning interests, and responded in kind by opening direct negotiations with individual neighboring communities over incorporation. Amid setbacks in Bonn’s effort to
unite the entire capital region under its auspices, it seemed to adopt a piecemeal strategy of
peeling off some of its smaller and more pliable neighbors to strengthen its position and gain
space for development. The city’s Director of Building (Baudirektor) Günter Schubert even
indicated that if Bonn successfully concluded such smaller scale integration, their would be no
more objection to entering into a Regionalverband along the lines suggested years earlier in the
Grobben Plan.71

Bonn crafted its proposal along the lines of the Göttingen model that appeared to preserve
local self-government and historical character, and targeted its offer to the nearby communities
of Röttgen, Ippendorf, Lessenich, and Buschdorf (Figure 46). The communities would maintain
their directly elected councils and mayors, which would receive a discretionary budget. Although

70 “falls die Stadt Bonn nicht von ihrer bisherigen Haltung abweichen” quoted in Bonner-
71 Bonn Director of Building Günter Schubert, Memo regarding the results of a meeting of Bonn
officials, July 26, 1966 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, B 61/186).
Bonn left undefined the precise division of powers and responsibilities between the smaller district administrations and the larger municipal government, it asserted that the communities could retain control over their libraries, pre-schools, playgrounds, sports facilities, and cemeteries, and would have input at the municipal level on budget issues, planning, public facilities, and property taxes. Negotiations advanced most quickly with Röttgen, a community on Bonn’s southwest border that was notable for its relatively large size (26.48 square kilometers) and tiny population (2,814),\(^{72}\) as most of its area was occupied by the protected Kottenforst nature preserve. Röttgen’s identity was inseparable from its natural scenery and the recreational activities that it afforded, and Bonn promised to protect both. In all incorporated communities, Bonn would establish liaison offices to help manage a five-year transitional period, during which time tax rates would remain the same and Bonn would agree to fulfill their concrete investment demands.\(^{73}\)

By the end of 1966, Bonn was on the verge of completing territorial modification contracts (\textit{Gebietsänderungsvertrag}) with Röttgen and Ippendorf. Röttgen’s local Council voted 15-3 to approve the community’s incorporation into Bonn,\(^{74}\) and a majority of both the residents and administration in Ippendorf expressed support for merging into Bonn. Ippendorf’s Mayor Peter Ohlenhardt explained at a public discussion on the issue that he had previously been firmly against incorporation for Ippendorf. However, now that Ippendorf was faced with a choice between joining the other towns of Duisdorf as Stadt Hardtberg and joining Bonn, the latter

\(^{72}\) Statistics taken from City of Bonn, “Zur Raumordnung Bonn: Fragen — Antworten”
\(^{73}\) See Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Briefing Presentation for meeting of Bonn officials, July 11, 1966 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186), and Bonn City Planning Office, Memo with negotiating points for a final redistricting contract with Röttgen, July 7, 1966 (Stadtarchiv Bonn N 61/186)
suddenly appeared as the “lesser evil” (*kleineres Übel*) because its proposal went much further in maintaining the city’s independence.\(^75\)

Unfortunately for supporters of these particular regional reforms, late 1966 was also extremely tumultuous for state politics in NRW, even as one of the outcomes of the upheaval in Düsseldorf would prove critical for Bonn’s aspirations to integrate the entire metropolitan area around the capital. As the “Economic Miracle” of West Germany’s first decade in existence ebbed in the mid-1960s, NRW experienced its first recession since the founding of the FRG. State elections in July 1966 saw the CDU lose a substantial share of its seats in the Landtag to the SPD, although not enough to give the Social Democrats an outright majority. After a short-lived coalition in Düsseldorf between the CDU and FDP and a tense few weeks of negotiations between all three major parties, the SPD voted to form a government in association with the FDP under Minister-President Heinz Kühn.\(^76\) Willi Weyer would retain his position as the state’s Interior Minister,\(^77\) but the position of District President in Cologne would fall to Heinrich Stakemeier, an expert on regional and urban planning who had previously written about Bonn’s planning issues. His predecessor, Franz Grobben, had actually left the post in June, nominally for “health reasons,” after being arrested in a police raid on a public facility in Cologne that was a known meeting place for homosexual men.

\(^76\) The CDU would remain in the opposition in the NRW Landtag until 2005.
\(^77\) Weyer had been removed from the post for the final week of Minister-President Franz Meyer’s administration but was quickly reinstated by Minister-President Kühn.
The Stakemeier Plan

Heinrich Stakemeier of the center-right FDP was District President for only a few months—he left in February 1967 to become State Secretary (Staatssekretär) in the NRW Ministry for Economics, Small Business, and Transportation (Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Mittelstand und Verkehr)—but he would have an outsized influence on the regional planning debate. Shortly after taking office, Interior Minister Weyer commissioned him to conduct a study of the Bonn region and make a proposal for a planning solution. What Stakemeier delivered several weeks later was the most thorough and detailed consideration yet of the origins of Bonn’s planning problems, the needs of the region as a rapidly growing conurbation, and the city’s role as the provisional capital of the FRG. Stakemeier came to the completely opposite conclusion of his predecessor, Franz Grobben. Placing greatest emphasis on the growing gap between the functions that a capital city must serve for a nation and its national government and Bonn’s capacity to fulfill those functions, Stakemeier determined that the communities of Duisdorf, Beuel, and Bad Godesberg should be united with Bonn into a Großgemeinde.

Stakemeier based his analysis on a straightforward comparison of Bonn with the former German capital in Berlin along with other European capitals. From this common-sense exercise, Stakemeier defined a capital city’s primary function as providing space and accommodations for a nation’s highest governmental authorities, international diplomatic delegations, and representative national symbols. Furthermore, he found that a capital city should also be the seat of political party headquarters and host to representatives from corporate, scientific, humanitarian, and cultural organizations. With such a concentration of national and international institutions, a capital city should exercise special domestic political influence and serve as a
model and leader for other cities in the country. This basic definition may seem obvious, but Stakemeier was one of the first observers and certainly the first significant public official to address Bonn’s planning problems by first establishing a functional model for a capital city against which to measure Bonn. Stakemeier’s moment of clarity came late, but such a definitive connection between local planning and Bonn’s federal role was unthinkable during the 1950s when the capital’s provisional status still controlled the planning discourse. The influence of that status waned only gradually during the 1960s, eroded through the kind of intense debate in which Stakemeier was participating.

The implications of Stakemeier’s line of reasoning spoke overwhelmingly in favor of regional consolidation. The so-called “Stakemeier Plan” (Figure 47) recognized that the efficient and independent operation of the august national institutions entrusted to Bonn—above all the Federal Republic’s parliament as its democratic nerve center—depended on much more than a reliable supply of available real estate, and that ensuring suitable working conditions for the tens of thousands of federal employees in the city required more than simply providing a minimum of office space. Government ministries and agencies should be distributed based on their political and functional relationships with each other and with the elected bodies of the Bundestag and Bundesrat. Whether they were transient foreign delegates, parliamentarians with homes in faraway districts, or permanent civil servants, members of the federal workforce required adequate housing, reasonable commutes via private or public transportation networks, good schools for their children, and attractive cultural, recreational, and other leisure facilities. Finally, Stakemeier asserted that in the face of the city’s enormous and unavoidable responsibilities as the West German capital, the FRG’s prominent political and economic position in world affairs,

and the persistent uncertainty surrounding reunification, Bonn’s provisional status should be all but irrelevant. The city’s capital functions were paramount and must be guaranteed.\textsuperscript{79}

Without assigning blame beyond the mere presence of the federal government and official efforts to adhere to the spirit of the provisional, Stakemeier then laid out the ways in which Bonn was failing as a capital city. A lack of space from the very beginning forced federal planners to improvise, and with a mandate early on to create as light a footprint as possible in the city, there was little impetus to craft a long-range development plan. This led federal government offices and related national and international institutions to end up haphazardly scattered and fragmented across the region. Bonn may have been the seat of the highest powers in the Bundestag, Bundesrat, and Federal President and Chancellor, but it could only accommodate fewer than half of the federal ministries and a small fraction of diplomatic missions. From its inception as the FRG’s capital, Bonn could only satisfy a portion of its basic function of housing a national government. The remaining obligations increasingly fell to neighboring municipalities, especially Duisdorf and Bad Godesberg. Stakemeier pointed out that Bad Godesberg, as home to fifty-two embassies, was already playing a substantial role in West German diplomatic affairs—traditionally a prerogative for a capital city. Moreover, Stakemeier’s analysis of the over fifty million Deutschmarks in federal grants between 1959-66 allocated for local building projects necessitated by the presence of the federal government revealed that over half the funds went to Bonn’s neighbors, with a full third going to Bad Godesberg alone. These funding patterns strongly indicated that the Bund was already treating the entire area as more or less a singular

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
capital city, but they also revealed that Bad Godesberg had a high level of financial self-interest in blocking any merger with Bonn.\textsuperscript{80}

The Stakemeier Plan did not speculate about the deleterious effects that the distribution of the capital city’s functions across numerous adjacent communities might have had on the performance of the federal government. However, it did claim that the informal role outlying communities were playing as host to central government functions was violating the basic tenets and definition of a capital city. The plan also decried the negative impact of this splintered and uncoordinated federal sprawl on government workers and the communities in which they lived. The varying financial and administrative capacities of the towns had exacerbated disparate and unequal local conditions in schools, housing, services, and facilities, with the smaller villages totally overwhelmed by the demands of their recently inflated populations. Housing scarcity near the major administrative centers in the region had contributed to a high-traffic commuting zone in the area. Despite rapidly growing numbers of daily commuters both into and out of Bonn, no regional public transportation authority existed to coordinate routes and tariffs across municipal lines. Deficiencies in public transportation prompted many workers to commute in private automobiles, leading to highly congested roads that were neither good for the environment nor conducive to the wellbeing of the commuters.\textsuperscript{81}

All of these problems would remain intractable and likely deteriorate further as long as the individual municipal governments so jealously guarded their independent planning authority under the guise of local autonomy. Any solution that left the current political map intact would inevitably fail to solve this problem, because the scale of any potential fix virtually guaranteed that at least one community would have to subordinate its parochial interests and compromise on

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
its right to self-administration for the good of the larger region. None of the towns, though, had shown any willingness to sacrifice their own interests, particularly when it involved suffering on behalf of Bonn. Bonn and Duisdorf’s attempts at smaller scale consolidation only shifted the fault lines. The only way to ensure the affairs of the Bund and improve the lives of the region’s inhabitants was the unification of Bonn with Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and Duisdorf into a single city with central control over urban planning, transportation, housing, building codes, schools, culture, recreation, and services. Above all, this amalgamation would unify all of the highest federal authorities and foreign delegations into a single seat of government, thus providing the FRG with a proper capital city.  

The Stakemeier Plan made its author the highest ranking official to date—and the first official above the local level—to openly endorse the approach that Bonn’s leaders had been urging for over a decade: the comprehensive redrawing of the city’s borders as the proper solution for the region’s planning problems. Even though Stakemeier would leave the District Presidency within a few months, the Stakemeier Plan represented a critical inflection point in the regional planning debate, after which momentum amongst key government officials, local and state legislative bodies, and the general public built steadily towards the final passage of the Bonn Act and the creation of a Gesamtgemeinde. The writing appeared on the wall almost immediately after Stakemeier’s report was made public, in an informal poll conducted by a local paper, General-Anzeiger. The poll found that nearly two-thirds of residents in the communities of Amt Duisdorf supported merging with Bonn.  

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82 Ibid.
The usual sources still strongly opposed any fusion of the surrounding towns with Bonn, but overall, 1967 saw the last gasps of major resistance to unification. NRW Interior Minister Weyer—one of Stakemeier’s nominal superiors, who had long rejected Bonn’s proposals for regional integration—stressed that the Stakemeier Plan was “merely a suggestion” (nichts als ein Vorschlag).\textsuperscript{84} Predictably, Beuel and Bad Godesberg also immediately rejected the plan, and the latter staged an exhibition in its community center (Stadthalle), titled “A City Plans for its Citizens” ("Eine Stadt plant für ihre Bürger"), that aimed to counter Stakemeier’s arguments. Accompanied by a brochure defiantly titled “Bad Godesberg: Independent City or Suburb of Bonn?” the show and publication portrayed Bad Godesberg as the ideal small German city, a healthy community with a resourceful, responsive, and responsible government and a place secure in its physical beauty, modest history, and bright future. To support these claims, Bad Godesberg included quotes from officials, planners, and experts at every level of government—including former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer—explaining why Bad Godesberg’s independence should be inviolable. The city also exhibited models for a proposed renovation of its historic center with the implicit assumption that such local improvement projects, along with all that was worthwhile about Bad Godesberg, would be placed in extreme jeopardy were Bonn to assume control of the region’s planning functions.\textsuperscript{85}

The Stakemeier Plan, however, also gave Bonn the impetus to campaign more openly on its own behalf. Bonn’s City Council unanimously endorsed Stakemeier’s recommendations in July 1967, and it asked the local governments in the neighboring communities and the state government in Düsseldorf to act by the end of the year to make the plan a reality. The new sense

\textsuperscript{85} Stadt Bad Godesberg, \textit{Bad Godesberg: selbständige Stadt oder Vorort von Bonn} (Bad Godesberg, Stadt Bad Godesberg, 1967).
of urgency came from recognition that, as much as the lack of coordination and unity in the region had created the current planning problems, the uncertainty that now surrounded the region’s planning future was starting to exacerbate the issue.\(^86\) Bonn supported its position with its own publication, a large format illustrated book that took the Stakemeier Plan as its point of departure and embellished it with a flood of statistics detailing the region’s growth in terms of population and population density, as well as an emphasis on the extreme disparities between communities in the effects of that growth. Bonn also documented the city’s loss of tax revenue, totaling 8.7 million Deutschmarks per year, due to business and industry leaving the city because of a critical lack of space.\(^87\) Most helpfully, the book also included a series of maps of the city, each with a multi-color transparent overlay that illustrated a different aspect of its development. These graphical representations—depicting population shifts (Figure 48), commuting patterns (Figure 49), transportation networks (Figure 50), and the distribution of housing, cultural institutions, and federal authorities—paint a convincing portrait of a region that was already deeply integrated by the presence of the national government. Bonn echoed Stakemeier’s proposal to make de jure what was already a de facto capital city, and thereby empower it financially and administratively to tackle its many planning problems.

**Momentum Builds for Regional Consolidation**

Meanwhile, 1967 saw numerous endorsements for the creation of a unified administration in the Bonn region from individuals and groups that had either previously resisted the idea or


remained neutral. In February, the former State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Housing, Hermann Wandersleb—one of the central architects of Bonn’s selection as the capital in 1949 and a widely respected public servant in West Germany—publicly announced his support for a Gesamtgemeinde for the capital. Internally, the current Federal Ministry for Housing and Urban Development declared its backing for the consolidation of Bonn with its nearest neighbors. At the local level, April saw the Town Councils of Buschdorf and Lessenich, communities in Amt Duisdorf on Bonn’s northern and western borders, respectively, follow the examples of Röttgen and Ippendorf and vote in favor of incorporation into Bonn. Like those other two communities, Buschdorf and Lessenich’s populations were relatively small, but each defection to Bonn’s cause put even more pressure on the other neighboring communities. Shortly thereafter, Bonn received a far more consequential ally in the city’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Industrie- und Handelskammer), which represented the interests of a large swathe of private economic interests in the area. With business demanding the “broadest possible solution” (möglichst großräumige Lösung), followed soon thereafter by the support of the University of Bonn—one the city’s largest landowners and employers besides the Bund—the politics of regional planning were quickly coalescing in Bonn’s favor.

Developments were also unfolding at the state level, where in early 1967, Interior Minister Weyer charged his under secretary (Ministerialdirigent), Paul Eising, with forming a

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88 This was the first incarnation of what would become the Federal Ministry for Housing and Urban Development by the late 1960s.
traveling commission for the purposes of investigating the state of regional planning and the prospect of redrawing borders across all of North Rhine-Westphalia. The existence of the commission all but presumed its ultimate conclusion that NRW required such reforms in order to create a more modern and effective administration in the state. The state’s demographics also spoke strongly in favor of change; of 2,345 independent communities in NRW, 1,901 had fewer than five thousand residents, and 565 had fewer than five hundred. Many of the smaller communities no longer maintained their own schools or streetlights.⁹⁴ Consolidating such small communities with their larger neighbors was the best way to ensure that all residents were effectively served by their local governments. To that end, Eising held meetings with local governments and residents around the state, and although he encountered opposition at every turn, his position was always clear: a given area that relies on shared common institutions and facilities should control them cooperatively and communally, as a single community.⁹⁵

Eising conducted his meetings in Bonn and neighboring communities over the course of several months in the spring and summer of 1967. While the responses from each community were largely predictable, Eising’s commission boosted Bonn’s prospects for achieving its regional planning goals. First, Eising asserted that reforming the region’s administrative organization would have ultimately become necessary in Bonn even without the presence of the federal government; the Bund only accelerated an organic process of growth and integration.⁹⁶ Second, the commission’s statewide scope placed the changes sought by Bonn in the context of much broader political and geographic revisions. This blunted criticism of Bonn’s demands as

⁹⁵ See for example his statements at his meeting with the town of Rheinbach. Bonner Rundschau, “Fliegende Kommission in Rheinbach: Aus Stadt und Land eine Großgemeinde?” July 1, 1967.
controversial or illegitimate, and refuted efforts to malign the city as an aggressor attempting to seize its neighbors’ land, authority, and tax revenue for itself. The Eising Commission placed considerable pressure on its instigator, the Interior Minister, to support its recommendations, which would mean reversing his long-held opposition to the merger of Bonn with its neighbors. However, as a member of NRW’s cabinet and as the leader of the ministry whose portfolio included matters of administrative organization and local affairs in the state, Weyer’s support was essential for any changes to Bonn’s political geography.

**The Weyer Plan and Final Success for Bonn**

Weyer’s support finally arrived in a dramatic reversal, with the public announcement of the “Weyer Plan” in March 1968. The plan, which had the approval of NRW’s cabinet, represented the end game for the regional planning debate in Bonn. With a few minor tweaks, Weyer’s scheme would become law, although not as quickly as he hoped. The plan was both more and less ambitious than its predecessor, the Stakemeier Plan. Weyer called for slightly fewer communities to be included in the new Gesamtgemeinde, but the major parties—Bonn, Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and the better part of Amt Duisdorf—remained constant. The proposal for the surrounding Kreis, on the other hand, was both more expansive and more logical. After removing Bad Godesberg and Duisdorf from Landkreis Bonn, all that was left of the remaining county was an incapacitated fragment that was too small to stand on its own. Stakemeier had proposed to solve this by incorporating the remainders of Landkreis Bonn into its other

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neighbors, Landkreis Köln and Landkreis Euskirchen. This solution added new complications by entangling the counties to the north of Bonn, which were in powerful Cologne’s sphere of influence. To avoid this obstacle, Weyer—relying on a suggestion from a subordinate in the Interior Ministry—proposed uniting the remaining parts of Landkreis Bonn and Siegkreis across the Rhine into a new entity, Rhein-Sieg-Kreis. Such an arrangement would create a unified periphery encircling the newly unified core, and presumably facilitate cooperation between the two on common interests, such as by bringing catchment and drainage into the Rhine under a single authority.

In his plan, Weyer appeared to justify his reversal of opinion on the issue of enlarging Bonn by noting that, despite the many attempts—which he had supported—to achieve cooperation on planning issues, unbridgeable differences and guarded self-interest had caused them all to fail. Weyer also gave location-specific reasons for the inclusion of each community in the plan. For Duisdorf, the primary rationale was that the various towns did not have the administrative or financial capacity to cope with the growth that they had experienced in the previous two decades. Beuel would become sufficiently fused with Bonn—especially once the planned bridge across the Rhine came online—to be considered an organic part of the city, and as such it offered an ideal complement to the dense urban center by offering expansion space for industry and housing. Regarding Bad Godesberg, Weyer emphasized the extreme extent to which it had already become intertwined with Bonn, and contended that excluding Bad Godesberg from the consolidation would almost certainly lead to constant tension between the two cities in the future due to growth and competition. Surprisingly, given his previous support for the city’s

\footnote{Siegkreis was apparently large enough to function on its own even without Beuel.}

\footnote{The recommendation came from Friedrich Wilhelm von Loebell, an assistant in the Interior Ministry. Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Memo regarding von Loebell’s proposal for restructuring the Bonn region, March 20, 1968 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/186).}
desires, Weyer lightly admonished Bad Godesberg for selfishness amid the planning debates, stating that although the city may have been capable of governing itself, the merger was about improving the administration of the entire region. Notably, the Weyer Plan did not address the issue of preserving as much local autonomy as possible for the incorporated towns. Rather, as a final guarantee against Bonn’s domination of its neighbors, Weyer proposed dividing the new Groß-Bonn into twenty-four legislative districts and allotting only eleven of these to Bonn, thus ensuring that it could not unilaterally impose its will on the other communities.100

After publicly switching sides by coming out with a plan to reorganize and integrate the Bonn region, Weyer’s support was unwavering and he became a critical force behind the passage of the Bonn Act in the NRW Landtag. His proposed timeline for the law’s enactment proved overly ambitious, but only by eight months—a relatively brief period considering Bonn had been agitating for expanding its borders for close to a decade. Weyer gave the affected communities until the middle of May 1968—around two months—to render their formal opinions on the plan, approve it, reject it, or request amendments. Weyer would then revise the plan based on the feedback and render it into a draft law for consideration by the Landtag after its summer vacation. If approved, Weyer hoped that the plan could take effect as early as January 1, 1969. The ultimate goal was to implement all of the changes to city and regional borders before the local elections due in 1969.101

In this, Weyer and his allies succeeded; the Bonn Act went into effect on August 1, 1969, and local elections were held that November. However, the final months leading up to its adoption, and even the first months afterword, were rife with tension. The Weyer Plan already had the support of NRW’s senior administration when it was made public, and Bonn’s City

100 Weyer, “Zur kommunalen Neuordnung des Bonner Raumes.”
Council approved it unanimously on May 30, 1968.102 Furthermore, many of the smaller communities in the surrounding region had previously voiced support for the mergers and consolidation that Weyer called for in the proposed establishment of Rhein-Sieg-Kreis.103 When the SPD members of the Landtag—who constituted the senior faction of the ruling coalition in Düsseldorf and had a near outright majority with ninety-nine out of two-hundred seats—expressed approval for Weyer’s proposal during a party conference, it became immediately clear that there was little remaining in the way of it becoming reality.104 As it turned out, support for Bonn in the Landtag extended to all three factions. This development was revealed in the body’s first procedural action on reorganizing the Bonn region, a vote on October 2, 1968 to send the draft of the regional planning law based on the Weyer Plan to the Landtag’s Committee on Administrative Reform (Ausschuß für Verwaltungsreform).105

However, as the machinery of government finally began to take official action on the issue of redrawning boundaries around the West German capital with salutary prospects for Bonn, the opposition also intensified efforts to thwart it by taking official actions at the local level. The debate continued to rage in town halls and the local press, following basically the same contours of geographically-based opposition and support that it had since Bonn first made its controversial proposal. Bad Godesberg led the resistance with declarations that its independence should be inviolable and that it would never submit to Bonn, while Bonn continued to counter with the claim that it, too, would be relinquishing a measure of its independence for the greater good of

the region. There was a subtle escalation in the rhetoric that Bad Godesberg deployed, as it substituted the broader and loftier concept of “independence” (Selbstständigkeit) for the more narrowly applicable and practical terms of “self-administration” or “self-government” (Selbstverwaltung), but otherwise there was little room left for novel arguments in each side’s position.

As Bad Godesberg and Beuel discovered, there were a host of activist, legal, and procedural avenues remaining to combat what they saw as the impending loss of their communities. A group of citizens in Bad Godesberg founded the Free Godesberg Action Committee (Aktionskomitee Freies Godesberg), which planned to publish and distribute anti-reform pamphlets, initiate poster campaigns around the city (Figure 51), and coordinate a protest in Düsseldorf on the occasion of the law’s introduction into parliament, including presenting the president of the Landtag with a petition signed by all Bad Godesberg residents demanding the preservation of their city’s autonomy. Likewise, citizens in Beuel founded the “Independent Beuel Initiative” (Aktion Selbstständiges Beuel), which cited an obscure paragraph of NRW’s state constitution to demand a statewide referendum on regional planning in Bonn, a move that ironically would have effectively put Beuel’s fate as an independent city in the hands of non-Beuelers.

In their official rejections of the Weyer-Plan, Bad Godesberg and Beuel’s City Councils began laying the groundwork for legal challenges through the state courts, asserting that enacting the plan would be a flagrant violation of the NRW’s constitutional guarantees of local

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With the Landtag’s final passage of the Bonn Act on May 13, 1969, the consolidation plans went into action, and the law’s opponents challenged it in the state’s Constitutional Court (Verfassungsgericht) located in Münster. There were multiple, separate appeals and little time for the court to consider them before the law was originally scheduled to go into effect on July 1, so the court granted a stay that would delay implementation of the law by one month. In the end, this small delay would be the only legal success for Bad Godesberg and its allies. The Constitutional Court, granting wide deference to the state’s political process and legislative decision, sided with the state and upheld the law. The court handed down its final decision on the matter in April 1970, eight months after the law had gone into effect. By that time, however, the enlarged city and its citizens had mostly moved on to challenging and trying to redefine their relationship with a federal government that had until that point taken little responsibility for the problems it was creating in the region.

Regardless of one’s view of the law, however, its passage in the Landtag meant that preparations for the change had to begin and the public had to be informed about what to expect from life in the newly formed “metropolis” (“Metropole”). Until fresh local elections would be held in November, local councils and administrations were disbanded. To manage the transition period, Interior Minister Weyer tapped former NRW Minister-President Franz Meyers to serve as Groß-Bonn’s “commissioner” (“Kommissar”), with powers roughly equivalent to the city council and mayor combined. In addition, Weyer appointed Bonn’s current City Manager,

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Wolfgang Hesse, to continue to serve in his capacity as chief administrator for the city. Hesse wisely began filling the ranks of his office with officials from throughout the region, including Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and Duisdorf, thus ensuring a high degree of integration and continuity when the municipal merger took effect. Even though NRW’s current Minister-President, Heinz Kühn, was a member of the SPD, it was important that both appointees be members of the CDU, reflecting the former political leadership of the communities for which they were acting as temporary stewards. State leaders also created a council consisting of thirty members drawn from the political party associations of the local communities that were to be merged into Greater Bonn to support and advise Meyers. However, Meyers was not bound to abide by the council’s decisions and could act unilaterally in governing the city.

The local press took on the task of explaining to the public the more prosaic effects of the municipal reorganization. Most aspects of residents’ day-to-day lives would remain unchanged. All taxes and fees would remain constant for three years before being equalized across the new city. Trash collection and mail delivery continued as before, although addresses changed slightly. For example, Beuel and Bad Godesberg became Bonn-Beuel and Bonn-Bad Godesberg, respectively. As a way to ease the transition and ensure consistent development across all of the formerly independent towns and cities, including Bonn, Günter Heidecke—who succeeded Heinrich Stakemeier as the District President in Cologne—demanded that the new city perform certain tasks on behalf of each community. For example, Beuel would receive a proper sewage

114 The mayors of Bonn, Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and Amt Duisdorf, Wilhelm Daniels, Franz Linz, Hans Steger, and Johann Brünker, respectively, were all members of the CDU.
disposal facility for the northern part of the city, the renovation of Bad Godesberg’s historic downtown would proceed according to plans that had been in development for some time, and tiny Rößgen would receive new street lights and a new playground. Furthermore, the new city would create local councils in Bonn, Bad Godesberg, and Beuel to represent their particular interests to the larger municipal administration and City Council. Finally, on the first day of Groß-Bonn’s existence, Meyers and Hesse circulated a brief brochure with that day’s newspapers introducing themselves, announcing the coming city-wide elections on November 9, and giving the addresses and contact information for the new district administrative offices in the city. The brochure ended with an optimistic exhortation for “cooperation” (“Zusammenarbeit”).

With the November elections, Wolfgang Hesse remained the City Manager, but Bonn’s Mayor Daniels, who had been a divisive figure during the reorganization debate, left his position to mount an unsuccessful campaign to fill the seat in the Bundestag that had been vacated with former Chancellor Adenauer’s death in 1967. Daniels’s successor, Peter Kraemer, although a native of Bonn, proved to be far more conciliatory toward the formerly outlying communities, and the relationships between Bonn and its freshly integrated suburbs proceeded smoothly. As a reconstituted city of nearly 300,000, Bonn could now pivot to tackle the root cause of its planning problems and the ultimate impetus behind the city’s campaign to redraw its borders: the presence of the Bund. The relationship between the federal government and its seat had continuously deteriorated over the course of the 1960s as the Bund increased the pace of its

development and paid little more than rhetorical heed to the city’s desires and problems, refusing
to assume greater responsibility for the health and condition of its capital city.

A good deal of Bonn’s powerlessness to approach the Bund as an equal negotiating
partner stemmed from the fact that it did not have legal or administrative control over the land on
which the Bund was intending to build. With the creation of Groß-Bonn in 1969, the city finally
gained control over sufficient territory to force the Bund to provide material support to the city in
the form of annual cash grants and to enact extensive reforms in the federal planning process to
guarantee transparency and more substantial local input. The concrete legal and political
consequences of the Bonn Act established the necessary basis for the city’s successful assertion
of control over its planning destiny and urban identity in the following years. However, the
contentious, decade-long debate that preceded the Act precipitated a conceptual and discursive
shift in the capital that was equally important for the city’s planning and identity: the dramatic
de-emphasis of Bonn’s provisional status and the acceptance of the fact that Bonn could serve as
a more permanent capital without threatening Berlin’s rightful place. This opened the door for
the initiation of comprehensive, integrated development in the city by eliminating a major excuse
for the Bund’s previous improvisation and neglect. Finally, the Bonn Act had the effect of
empowering a city and its public and opening a window for protest at the precise moment in
1969 when dissatisfaction with the results of federal projects in Bonn had reached a tipping
point. The public outcry at a federal complex of high-rises in Bad Godesberg, which were now
squarely in the middle of Bonn, would be the final catalyst in triggering a moratorium on federal
building in the capital and a total reset in the federal-municipal relationship.

At the same time that Bonn was engaged in increasingly tense negotiations with its neighbors and with state officials in Düsseldorf and Cologne over expanding its municipal borders and taking direct control over a larger metropolitan area, the city was also trying to defend its interests against the federal government, which during the 1960s began an aggressive campaign to address its need for more office space to house an expanding bureaucracy. The Bund’s efforts resulted in an intense but short-lived building boom in the second half of the decade, capped by major construction projects in Bonn and Bad Godesberg. In Bonn, Egon Eiermann designed Langer Eugen, the parliamentary high-rise (Abgeordnetenhochhaus) nicknamed after the its most unwavering supporter, Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier. At 115 meters, it was one of the tallest buildings in West Germany upon completion in 1969. In a city where few buildings rose above the tree line, Langer Eugen was the federal government’s most prominent architectural statement, the most conspicuous marker of its presence, and the dominant feature of Bonn’s urban space (Figure 52).

The history of Langer Eugen’s conception and development reveals a planning process that, while well defined in law and grounded in democratic principles, pitted Bonn against the Bund. However, in this contest, there were substantial disparities in resources, irreconcilable agendas, and differing senses about the stakes involved in the negotiations. In the early 1960s, office space preoccupied federal building officials in Bonn. For the Bund, the issue of space was serious and increasing every year. According to a draft of a cabinet presentation from May 1964 by Treasury Minister Werner Dollinger, of the 256,000 square meters of space that the Bund required, it currently occupied only 219,000 square meters, of which 16,000 was in emergency
temporary accommodations. The 53,000 square meter shortfall and the federal government’s attempts to fill it substantially through rentals (46,000 square meters) resulted in the payment of spiraling rents to private developers and fragmented federal departments that threatened the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal work force.\textsuperscript{1} This cabinet-level presentation was part of a larger sales-pitch, led by the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department and supported by the leadership of the Bundestag, to convince the entire federal government that it should support a more robust land acquisition and building program in Bonn.

The Bund’s lack of office space was an increasingly urgent practical problem, but solving it proved to be an even more delicate political task. During the fall of 1956, the Bundestag—in a moment of pro-Berlin optimism that a thaw with the East and reunification were close at hand—passed the \textit{Baustopp}. The complete prohibition against any new federal construction in Bonn was technically still in effect. By the early 1960s, this law had started to crumble, but even with such large projects as the Defense Ministry’s complex in Duisdorf, the location on the outskirts of Bonn kept them under the radar. Irrespective of the legal prohibition, many politicians remained averse to new development in more central locations, an apprehension that was often expressed as misgivings about financial costs. As part of the same cabinet presentation, Minister Dollinger addressed both sets of concerns directly, first emphasizing that “the execution of construction projects is always decided with special consideration for urgency and economic conditions,”\textsuperscript{2} and adding in an attachment to the presentation that “the critical basic principle for federal planning is not to build a permanent capital city….\textsuperscript{3} Deference to Berlin, even if only rhetorical,

\textsuperscript{1} Treasury Minister Werner Dollinger, Cabinet Presentation Draft, May 1964 (BArch, B 134/7487), 154-155.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, 162.
\textsuperscript{3} “Überlegung zur Verbesserung der Unterbringung der Bundesbehörden und zur weiteren Entwicklung des Grossraumes Bonn”, attachment to Treasury Minister Werner Dollinger, Cabinet Presentation Draft, May 1964 (BArch, B 134/7487), 172.
was a prerequisite for the federal officials tasked with pushing an ambitious planning agenda through an unsympathetic political environment. Nevertheless, for Eiermann’s high-rise, which was only a piece of a much larger planned expansion and renovation of all Bundestag facilities, the Bund paid 98.5 million Deutschmarks just to acquire the 13.8-hectare piece of land on which the project would be built. This was an enormous sum for the Bund, and it intensified debate within the federal government because it legitimized accusations of irresponsible profligacy by the project’s opponents in the Bundestag and the public.

Even with an advantageous political alignment, the normal course of legislative business was simply not conducive to the swift approval and execution of large building projects. As much as federal building officials stressed the urgency behind the federal space crisis, the Bundestag project was delayed over and over again, as its supporters worked to fulfill the technical, legal requirements of the planning process. From the start, building officials had detailed estimates of the amount of space that the Bundestag needed in order to accommodate all of its members and their staffs, but such exercises were little more than academic when it came to satisfying the project’s various stakeholders. These included the budget hawks and Berlin activists but also encompassed every member of parliament. In the case of the Bundestag, the body was the nominal client and also had final approval of any building proposals through the appropriations process. In addition to the client, the administrators in the Federal Building Agency and the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department found themselves having to mollify an ambitious and imperious architect, as Egon Eiermann asserted authority over virtually every detail of the building’s design. Although Eiermann’s demands often seemed timed to cause the greatest possible disruption, they also displayed a far greater sensitivity to the local context and awareness of the potential political ramifications of building a modernist skyscraper in the heart
of Bonn. In the end, however, his reservations did not prevent him from accepting the commission to design exactly such a building.

When federal officials determined early in the planning process that any significant expansion of the Bundestag would require the acquisition of a sizable piece of land from the city, Bonn instantly became the party with the greatest stake in the process’s outcome. For municipal planning officials and members of Bonn’s city council, the question of the FRG’s commitment to aid the city was far more pressing than the erstwhile capital’s place in the national political discourse. The city’s mounting debt and overtaxed roads, schools, and other facilities, all of which were more or less directly attributable to the presence of the federal government, threatened the proper functioning of basic services, but the Bund’s considerably greater financial resources were an important potential source of assistance. This made the city receptive to proposals from the federal government, as they represented opportunities to force the Bund to redress Bonn’s growing budget shortfalls and infrastructure problems while also steering future development in a way that supported healthy, rational urban planning. In the course of the negotiations between the Bund and Bonn over the *Abgeordnetenhochhaus*, the city’s demands grew more extensive, eventually encompassing almost the entire scope of its planning predicament, and the relationship between the two sides became increasingly strained.

The very different legal, political, and financial constraints on the planning authority of the municipal and federal administrations forced difficult and sometimes lopsided compromises. This mismatch led to overreaching by both city and federal representatives throughout the years-long negotiations. The legitimate concessions, honest mistakes, and shrewd manipulations of the parties became embodied in the final form of the 30-story tower, which immediately became a lightning rod for criticism. Unfortunately, the structure solved none of the problems that it was
intended to address while provoking controversy on multiple political fronts. For the Bund, the high-rise failed to make a significant dent in its space problem, as the Bundestag, its committees, and its staff, which were never the most urgently in need of space to begin with, had already outgrown the building by the time it was completed. Meanwhile, the building’s scale stamped Bonn more clearly than ever as the de facto, permanent capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, making it as much a statement about West German policy towards division as a symbol of domestic democratic politics.

On the more local level, Bonn failed to win any significant material concessions from the Bund, financial or otherwise, in exchange for the land and planning approval for the building. Instead, the city accepted a set of guarantees that the Bund would continue to develop the so-called Parliament and Government Quarter (Parlaments- und Regierungsviertel) surrounding the new high-rise and that it would continue to explore ways in which to help the city improve its precarious financial position. Eiermann’s building exposed the volatile fault lines in the most sensitive planning debates in the capital, and a substantial portion of the local public saw the high-rise as nothing but a total loss for Bonn, aesthetically and functionally. For these citizens, the tower represented the worst aspects of the federal government’s presence in the city, and to add insult to injury, the Bund almost immediately retreated from fulfilling its promises, turning its attention once again to a project outside of Bonn’s boundaries and thus beyond its authority. Dissatisfied citizens turned their anger towards the same development, and in the fall of 1969 a favorable alignment of continued pressure from local officials, strident public protest, and the redrawing of Bonn’s political borders to include Bad Godesberg came together to bring federal development to a sudden halt and force federal officials to make and keep major commitments in support of the capital.
The Federal Planning Council and the Beginning of Large-Scale Federal Planning in Bonn

The Bundestag’s approval of Eiermann’s tower in 1965 marked the de facto end of the Baustopp, but the building’s origins several years earlier took place amidst receding political and emotional sentiment surrounding Bonn’s status and a growing pressure for more space. The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 ushered in a period of détente between West and East, but it also made the prospects for near-term reunification and the return of the capital to Berlin increasingly remote. Against this backdrop, federal planners quietly went back to work, and they began to approach their task in a far more comprehensive fashion, taking into account both the long term needs of a growing federal government and the coordinated integration of their plans into the surrounding urban fabric of Bonn.

To this end, in 1962, the head (Leitender Regierungsbaudirektor) of the Federal Building Agency in Berlin, Carl Mertz, created a Planning Council (Planungsrat), inviting the participation of three of West Germany’s most distinguished architects: Egon Eiermann (1904-1970), then a professor of architecture at the Technical College of Karlsruhe; Sep Ruf (1908-1982), a professor at the Technical University of Munich; and Paul Baumgarten (1900-1984), a professor at the College of the Arts in Berlin. Initially, Mertz and the architects met informally with other federal planning officials, but Mertz soon formalized the group, which came to include, along with Eiermann, Ruf, and Baumgarten, the head (Ministerial Direktor) of the
Treasury Ministry’s Building Department (*Bauabteilung*), Johannes Rossig, and Bonn’s City Planning Director (*Stadtbaudirektor*), Ludwig Marx.⁴

The contract between the Bund and the architects enumerated the Council’s goals as the expansion of the Bundestag building (*Bundeshaus*), a new building for the upper-chamber, the Bundesrat, an expansion for the Press and Information Office (*Presse- und Informationsamt*), a new building for the Treasury Ministry, and “additional, extensive building projects that arise for the highest federal authorities in Bonn and Bad Godesberg.”⁵ Within the Council, the architects were primarily responsible for contributing “urban planning studies related to federal building projects in the Government Quarter and in the area of southern Bonn and Bad Godesberg, with particular attention to overall urban planning intentions and transportation planning in Bonn.”⁶ The architects would also assist in the development of preliminary plans, as well as their execution should they advance to that stage. For all of these duties, along with attendance at twice-monthly meetings, each architect would receive a monthly stipend of 3000 Deutschmarks.⁷

For the architects, the Council also served to cement long-running relationships between themselves and the Bund, making them the architects most closely affiliated with the West German federal government during the middle part of the Bonn Republic. Eiermann had the

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⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The contract initially covered a year-long period running from April 1962 through March 1963, but it was quickly extended, and the Council continued to meet, although more sporadically after 1964, until 1967.
earliest direct engagement with the Bund via an ambitious but unsuccessful submission to the 1951 competition for the Foreign Office building in Bonn (Figure 53), but it was Ruf who executed more buildings in the capital during the 1950s, albeit for a different national client. He played a major role in 1950, along with Otto Apel and several others, in planning the massive headquarters building for the Allied High Commission (HICOG) in Bad Godesberg (see Fig. 38) that would subsequently serve as the Embassy of the United States. With the same group of architects he also helped plan several large housing developments (Siedlungen) in 1951-52 in Bonn and Bad Godesberg on behalf of HICOG and the United States. In 1953, the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) hired Ruf to design their headquarters in Bonn (Figure 54), and in 1955 Ruf won a competition to design the representative office for his home state of Bavaria (Landesvertretung) (Figure 55). During this same period, Ruf designed a house in Gmund am Tegernsee, south of Munich, for Economics Minister and future Chancellor Ludwig Erhard (Figure 56), with whom he had forged a friendship in the 1930s. A decade later, this friendship would lead to Ruf’s most well-known building in Bonn, also for Erhard, the Chancellor’s Residence and Reception Building, the so-called Kanzlerbungalow (Figure 57).

In 1957, the Federal Republic commissioned Ruf and Eiermann to collaborate on the design for the West German pavilion at Expo 58, the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels, Belgium (Figure 58). Ruf and Eiermann’s austere and elegant glass and steel buildings contained West Germany’s first major declaration of its political and economic resurgence to an international public, and it resolutely aligned the Federal Republic with the streamlined forms of postwar Modernist design. The West German pavilion was a huge critical and popular success, and it led

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8 For a complete record of Sep Ruf’s career and oeuvre, see Winfried Nerdinger and Irene Meissner, Sep Ruf, 1908-1982: Moderne mit Tradition (Munich: Prestel, 2008).
directly to the federal building authorities engaging Eiermann to design a new embassy building for the Federal Republic in Washington, D.C. (Figure 59).

Paul Baumgarten’s first project for the federal government came in 1961 with his winning entry in the competition to renovate the Reichstag building in Berlin (Figure 60).9 While Baumgarten’s renovations were not completed until 1969, the plans received strong support from Bundestag President Gerstenmaier and Treasury Ministry officials, which contributed to the government commissioning the architect directly for the design of a new complex for the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht), which, pursuant to West Germany’s founding principles of federalism and decentralization, was based in the southern city Karlsruhe (Figure 61).10

When Ruf, Baumgarten, and Eiermann assembled in Bonn as urban planning and design consultants, they were already familiar, personally and by reputation, to the federal planning officials trying to reshape the city into a functional capital. The minutes from the Federal Planning Council’s meetings reveal the participants as serious about their obligations, and with such broad language in the contract, their activities and output were expansive and ambitious, but also thorough and detailed. As early as May 1962, the Council had assigned individual tasks to the architects. Eiermann received the Bundestag commission while the Council delegated the new Bundestag building to Ruf and new facilities for the national press to Baumgarten. The

9 The idea to rehabilitate the former parliamentary building and prepare it to house the Bundestag at some point in the future first emerged in 1955 as part of the same events and atmosphere that also led to the building freeze in Bonn. Baumgarten’s designs stripped away virtually all of the ornament from the interior and exterior of Paul Wallot’s original designs and modernized and rationalized the floor plans. The most striking feature was the glass curtain wall that Baumgarten placed just behind the columns on the western facade.

10 Baumgarten had also recently won a competition to rebuild the Badisches Stadthäuser on the same site before the city of Karlsruhe transferred it to the federal government. For a complete record of Paul Baumgarten’s career and oeuvre, see Barbara Volkmann, ed., Paul Baumgarten: Bauten und Projekte 1924-1981 (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1988).
expansion of the Treasury Ministry was assigned to the Federal Building Agency in cooperation with the so-called Planning Group (Planungsgruppe), an official sub-group of the Planning Council. The Planning Group consisted of six young architects recommended by and associated with—either as former students or employees—the Council’s senior members. Present for almost every Planning Council meeting, the Planning Group assisted on several federal projects, and after the Council disbanded in 1967, the group formed a private firm that continued to receive large federal commissions, including the ill-fated ministerial complex in Bad Godesberg (see Chapter 4) and the new Federal Chancellery near the Palais Schaumburg.

The scope and scale of the Council’s proposals meant that they held little chance of receiving unfettered approval from either the Bundestag or Bonn’s City Council, and the Planning Council’s lack of success in moving projects beyond conception is indicative of the substantial barriers to development that the federal government faced during the 1960s, in spite of its extraordinary need for space. Of the buildings specified in the Council’s contract, the Bund only executed projects for the Bundestag and the Treasury Ministry, and Eiermann’s Parliamentary high-rise was only an isolated fragment of a much larger plan. The Council continued to consider seriously Ruf’s plans for the Bundesrat and Baumgarten’s ideas for the Press Office, but neither came close to being implemented. Thus, in contrast to the specific tasks laid out in its contract, the Council’s primary function for the Bund appears to have been providing a wealth of planning alternatives from which officials could select feasible and indispensable projects to promote and push through the various bureaucratic, political, and budgetary gauntlets. Under this arrangement, the completion of a project was as much a matter

11 The six members were Manfred Adams, Günther Hornschuh, Peter Türler, Georg Pollich, and two individuals for whom first names were unavailable, Nitschke and Brandel. Building Department of the Treasury Ministry, Memo regarding Planning Council meeting at the Treasury Ministry in Bonn, May 4, 1962 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
of the political clout and personal persistence of its supporters as a rationally determined hierarchy of need amongst government ministries.

**The Bundestag Complex and Eiermann’s Tower**

Eiermann’s tower emerged from the Council’s proposals to expand the Bundestag’s space and create a new building for the Bundesrat, all of which involved a sprawling new complex and the dramatic alteration of the area around the former Pedagogical Academy and Hans Schwippert’s increasingly outdated Bundestag plenary chamber. Initial progress was remarkably swift, but the Council was not starting entirely from scratch. Appended to the architects’ contracts was a set of documents summarizing work that federal officials had already done for expanding the Bundestad. These included a detailed study of which functions and how many members the current buildings could accommodate and a proposal for the expansion broken down to the type, number, and size of each additional room. They also included preliminary ground plans and elevation drawings for the Bundestad (Figure 62) based on the studies. The drawings reveal an expansion plan that was far more modest than the one Eiermann, Ruf, and Baumgarten would develop on behalf of the Bund in the following months. It is based only on enlarging current buildings or appending new wings to them, and the elevation shows the height of the additions exceeding that of the existing structures only by a few stories.

At one of its earliest meetings in February 1962, the Council outlined two potential solutions for the Bundestag complex, one which distributed the various parliamentary functions — plenary chamber, committee rooms, and members’ offices — in distinct but connected buildings around the given site, and one which called for a single structure with the plenary
chamber at its center. Neither yet called for a high-rise. Johannes Rossig, the most senior
government official at the meeting, also pushed for a realistic approach, stating that “the plans
must be determined by circumstances, and for the time being, only such plots of land as are
actually available should be planned.”\textsuperscript{12} However, that realism did not extend to the planning
timeline, and by May the Council was discussing which firms to select for various building tasks,
including structural engineering, elevators, and acoustics.\textsuperscript{13}

The Council proceeded over the next few months with the option that distributed the
Bundestag across several buildings, and by June a high-rise for members of parliament had
emerged as an indispensable component of the discussion. Indeed, it was now one of three
proposed high-rises that Sep Ruf called “visually necessary” (\emph{optisch notwendig}) for the overall
composition of the Government Quarter.\textsuperscript{14} In a letter to Egon Eiermann dated September 12,
1962, Rossig abruptly declared that he was dissatisfied with the Council’s solutions thus far.
Rossig claimed that they were too concerned with demonstrating contemporary design principles
and not sufficiently attentive to the existing city- and landscape or the functional and
representational needs of parliament, and he urged the architects to come to the next meeting
with new ideas.\textsuperscript{15} This was a rare instance of reflection about the Planning Council’s purpose and
approach and a more comprehensive regard for other aspects of the group’s designs beyond the
technical and practical details that had often dominated its meetings.

\textsuperscript{12} Federal Planning Council, Minutes from Planning Council meeting at the Treasury Ministry in
\textsuperscript{13} Federal Planning Council, Memo regarding May 19, 1962 meeting by the Planning Council’s
\textsuperscript{14} Federal Planning Council, Memo regarding June 15, 1962 meeting by the Planning Council,
\textsuperscript{15} Rossig also sent a copy of the letter to Ruf and Baumgarten. Johannes Rossig, head of the
Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Letter to Egon Eiermann, September 12, 1962 (SAAI
EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
At the Council meeting on January 17, 1963, the group arrived at the core components of the development plan that would culminate in Eiermann’s 30-story skyscraper. First, the Council agreed on the construction of a high-rise for the members and committees of the Bundestag. Details such as its final height and size were left to be determined, but they proposed that the tower would comprise the first phase of an expansion plan for the Bundestag that would also include new buildings for the plenary chamber and house the offices of the Bundestag’s political factions (SPD, CDU, and FDP) and library. Second, the Council acknowledged that, in order to accommodate all of this construction and a new building for the Bundesrat in a manner that satisfied broader urban planning imperatives of traffic regulation, parking, and municipal infrastructure, the Bund would have to incorporate the adjacent, city-owned land, known as the Gronau (Figure 63).\(^{16}\)

In the course of the next few Council meetings, the group received feedback on the plans from federal and municipal representatives. The parliamentary leadership suggested that the faction and library building should be the priority,\(^ {17}\) and while both Chancellor Adenauer and Federal President Heinrich Lübke expressed informal approval for the plans, they also voiced concerns about their potential political effects. Bonn’s City Planning Director, Ludwig Marx, presented the proposals to a closed meeting of the City Council, and although they received preliminary support, the City Council insisted that the Bund make every effort to contain its development to land that it already owned before it expanded into the Gronau and threatened the popular sports and recreation center that then occupied the space.\(^ {18}\) Against this pushback, the

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\(^{17}\) Federal Planning Council, Memo regarding February 19, 1963 meeting by the Planning Council, March 1, 1963 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).

parliamentary project received a major boost when Bundestag President Gerstenmaier endorsed the overall plan (Gesamtkonzeption) and expressed his desire to move forward with the development of the high-rise by appropriating the first financing installment in the 1964 federal budget.\footnote{President Gerstenmaier’s remarks are relayed in Federal Planning Council, Memo regarding the May 31, 1963 Planning Council meeting at the Federal Building Agency’s offices in Berlin, June 10, 1963 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).}

Because of his political clout in the Bundestag, Gerstenmaier’s support would be a major factor in winning final approval for the project, but his backing of the high-rise also curtailed any further investigation into possible alternative designs. Changing course might have risked losing the Bundestag President’s backing, but Gerstenmaier’s eagerness to engage with the budgetary process also forced the Council to settle on the high-rise and very quickly left little room for revision. According to the Reich Financial Regulation (*Reichshaushaltsordnung*), a Weimar era budget act that still regulated the FRG’s financial affairs, federal architectural projects could only be included in the budget if plans and cost estimates could be made available for consideration by both chambers of parliament.\footnote{*Reichshaushaltsordnung*, December 31, 1922, § 14, *Reichsgezetzbblatt*, 1923 II, Nr. 2 (January 16, 1923): 18.} This meant that the Council needed to develop plans and determine costs for the high-rise to a level of detail and finality that it had not previously considered and expose the plans to the general public in parliamentary debate, something which it was not yet prepared to do.

**Initial Public Reaction**

This reticence regarding public disclosure is apparent from the very first report in the local press on the Bund’s plans for a new parliamentary complex. In articles appearing on
February 21, 1963, the *Bonner Rundschau* reported the Bonn’s press aide (*Pressereferent*) as “wanting neither to deny nor confirm” that the Bund was planning a 23-story high-rise on the current sport park in the Gronau,\(^{21}\) and the *General-Anzeiger* reported Bundestag President Gerstenmaier declining to release any plans because they were still too preliminary.\(^{22}\) With little information to go on, Bonn’s local officials responded quickly with overwhelming skepticism, objecting to the location of the proposed high-rise in the Gronau, the size of the proposed building, and the apparent insult that it represented to Berlin’s place as the true German capital.\(^{23}\)

At the same time, the plans garnered some initial national attention with an April story in an unlikely and unfriendly venue, the celebrity magazine *Revue*. The article heavily criticized the proposals for usurping Berlin’s position and violating the West German government’s promise that reunification was the highest priority of all national policy.\(^{24}\) To drive home its point about the Bund’s profligacy, the article included some of the first published images of the federal proposals: a photograph of a model of the complex and a schematic site plan of the of the entire area of Bonn between the Altstadt and Bad Godesberg (Figure 64). The images depict a city transformed, but they are also unattributed, supported by little explanation, and difficult to reconcile with each other, as the model does not appear to correspond to any part of the site plan. They likely represent proposals then being exchanged by federal and local officials as part of early negotiations about acquiring and rezoning the necessary land for the Bundestag project, but these discussions moved away from such sweeping plans immediately after they were presented. The *Revue* images were already obsolete when they were published.

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\(^{21}\) *Bonner Rundschau*, “*Bonns höchstes Haus ersteht an der Gronau,*” February 21, 1963.

\(^{22}\) *General-Anzeiger*, “*Bundestag will Europas modernstes Parlament bauen,*” February 21, 1963.

\(^{23}\) The fact that none of the early press reports agreed on the size of the tower, reporting it alternately as 23, 25, and 26 stories, indicates how little information the Bund made available. *General-Anzeiger*, “*Bedenken gegen Gronau-Pläne im Stadtrat,*” February 22, 1963

\(^{24}\) *Revue*, “*Endgültige Hauptstadt Bonn?*” April 14, 1963, 10-16.
Nevertheless, the negative public response was clear and relentless, manifesting in the form of published letters to the editors of Bonn’s two major daily newspapers. Thus, the Bund was forced to disclose and defend its plans in greater detail in June 1963. In a televised interview, Bundestag President Gerstenmaier revealed a model of the parliamentary complex (Figure 65) and addressed the primary public concerns with two claims — that the development would not initially threaten the sports park and that negotiations with the city could not begin until the building freeze was lifted — neither of which would turn out to be true. Later, as the plans came closer to realization and other federal projects began to materialize in the Government Quarter, the lack of transparency and misleading statements surrounding the plans and planning process would become a major point of contention for local officials and citizens. At the outset, the secrecy helped establish an environment that was hardly favorable to a positive reception by local press and politicians and an inauspicious start for the impending negotiations with the city over the sale and zoning of the land.

Gerstenmaier’s appearance on national television to defend the Bund’s plans in Bonn made him the public face of the project that would ultimately bear his name. The model that Gerstenmaier used, which the local newspapers published the next day, shows the Planning Council’s concept for the Government Quarter in basically its final form. It shows the proposed high-rise and other new buildings for the Bundestag and Bundesrat, including new plenary chambers, smaller office buildings for the political parties and the Bundestag President, and a hotel for members and guests, all in relation to the existing Bundeshaus. The Council would develop alternative models over the next few years, but the primary components of a new plenary chamber for the Bundestag, a high-rise office building for Bundestag members, and a new building for the Bundesrat, all grouped along the Rhine would remain the same.

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Architectural details are not included in the model, but the simple, rectilinear forms are indicative of the Bund’s vision of building a thoroughly modernist parliament. While it is far smaller in scope than what had been reported several months earlier in *Revue*, to a resident of Bonn, the model would have made it immediately clear how the Bund intended to change the existing street plan in the area and encroach substantially on the existing Gronau sports park. The fragmentary nature of the model, furthermore, elides and minimizes the impact of the high-rise on the surrounding landscape (Figure 66).

In spite of the press’s initial negative reaction to the Bund’s stilted revelations of its planning activity, the Planning Council plowed on through most of 1963, refining its proposal for a new Bundestag complex and continuing to discuss the other projects on its agenda. In November the development process appeared to have enough momentum that Rossig, in a letter to Eiermann, suggested that the Council had achieved it objective and no longer needed to meet every month.26 Rossig’s recommendation quickly proved to be premature, however, as the Bundestag project became bogged down in the legislative process and unexpectedly complex negotiations with the city. Less than a month later Rossig’s assistant, Wolfgang Leuschner, a senior building official in the Treasury Ministry (*Oberregierungsbaudirektor*), wrote again to Eiermann with concerns that the “political constellation [was] unfavorable” in the upcoming Bundestag debates about federal planning in Bonn, and expressed hope that the Planning Council would assemble in the new year.27

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26 Johannes Rossig, Head of the Treasury Ministry Building Department, Letter to Egon Eiermann in Karlsruhe, November 25, 1963 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
In the same letter, Leuschner also references frequent attacks on the Chancellor’s house.\(^{28}\) The recent change at the top of the federal administration — Chancellor Konrad Adenauer had finally and reluctantly yielded his position to his long-time Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, on October 16, 1963 — had little effect on the Bundestag project, as all of the key officials remained in place, but Erhard brought his own architectural controversy in the form of a new residence and reception building (*Wohn- und Empfangsgebäude*), the *Kanzlerbungalow* (See Fig. 57). Under strict secrecy, Erhard had already consulted with Sep Ruf, his hand-picked architect, about designs in May 1963, and citing extraordinary need, the Chancellor bypassed the normal budgeting process to begin construction in early November, only weeks after taking office. The public and the press initially criticized the building as unnecessary and wasteful, especially in light of Erhard’s renowned fiscal conservatism. As details of the plan became clear, the criticisms turned to attack the building’s severely Modernist aesthetic as inadequately stately for a contemporary head of state. More than anything, the Bungalow’s Modernism represented the dramatic difference in personal tastes between the culturally conservative Adenauer and the more cosmopolitan Erhard.\(^{29}\)

The controversy surrounding Erhard’s new residence in late 1963 only increased the skepticism in parliament towards federal building projects at the exact moment that the Bundestag’s budget committee (*Haushaltsausschüss*) was set to begin deliberations on the first phase of the parliamentary complex. In this context, Rossig’s suggestion that the Planning Council could reduce its activity, which effectively put it on an indefinite hiatus, removed from

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\(^{28}\) Leuschner, Treasury Ministry Building Department, Letter to Egon Eiermann in Karlsruhe, December 11, 1963 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).

the picture some of the most ardent proponents of large-scale federal development. Over the course of almost two years of monthly meetings, the members of the Council, in particular the three core architects, had understandably become convinced of the necessity of their proposals both for the Bund and the city of Bonn. The architects’ sense of ownership of the plans, which was technically included in the contract, also fostered by the Council’s collaborative working method, only intensified such feelings of entitlement.

Furthermore, although they claimed otherwise, Eiermann and his colleagues could likely sense the threat to potentially lucrative and prestigious commissions, and as the Planning Council’s inactivity stretched into 1964, they began to pressure federal building officials to bring them back into the planning discussion. In a meeting in February 1964 between Eiermann, Baumgarten, and the head of the Federal Building Agency, Carl Mertz, the architects expressed their regret at the idling of the Council but insisted that their displeasure had nothing to do with financial concerns. Rather, Eiermann and Baumgarten were chiefly concerned that members of the Council’s Planning Group, all of whom were associates of the architects and on secondment to the Federal Building Agency, were continuing to work on plans without the input and supervision of the Council. Mertz relayed the complaint to Rossig at the Treasury Ministry and recommended that the Planning Council be reinstated as soon as possible on its original terms and that the Bund complete separate contracts with each architect for the design and execution of individual building projects.

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30 The contract states that the architects and the government share rights to the plans developed by the Planning Council. Contract between the Federal Republic of Germany and the architect Egon Eiermann, August 10, 1962 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).

31 Mertz’s discussion with the architects and his recommendation are both described in Carl Mertz, Head of Federal Building Agency, Memo to Johannes Rossig at the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department in Bonn, February 2, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
Rossig acceded to Mertz’s suggestion, and the Planning Council began meeting again in March 1964, but a shift had taken place. Rossig had been correct in his pronouncement that the Council had mostly served its purpose in developing the preliminary concepts for the accommodation of the Bund’s growing workforce. The Council would continue to meet, albeit more sporadically, over the next several years, but it was no longer the focal point of federal planning that it had been in its first months. With the parliamentary high-rise having been singled out as the first phase of construction in the proposed Bundestag complex, federal officials turned their energies to clearing the practical and political hurdles that stood in the way of this more discrete but still monumental task. The Council’s other projects intended for the Government Quarter — Ruf’s design for a new Bundesrat building and Baumgarten’s design for a new Press and Information Office — remained on the agenda at Council meetings, but they took a backseat to executing the high-rise and ultimately were cancelled entirely in the wake of the public backlash in October 1969.

Eiermann Takes Command and Questions the Suitability of a High-Rise

With the design of the high-rise moving into the foreground, the Council’s role receded into one of consultation and support rather than inspiration and origination. Eiermann began to assert himself more forcefully as the lead architect on the project. In the absence of monthly Council meetings, this meant a dramatic increase in the volume of his correspondence with Mertz and Rossig. With a mixture of graciousness and petulance, but also savvy and tenacity, Eiermann pressed his interests, becoming both a crucial champion for the Bundestag project but also at times a tremendous thorn in the side of the federal building officials tasked with
safeguarding their client’s best interests. For most of 1964, Eiermann directed his efforts primarily towards taking total control of the project. The architect flatly demanded that he either be allowed to take over the entire design process for the Bundeshaus or that the Federal Building Agency assume responsibility for the project.\textsuperscript{32} Eiermann struck a more magnanimous tone in his next letter to Mertz, claiming “the work on the Bundestag high-rise is so advanced that [he] must intervene with or without a contract.”\textsuperscript{33} However, the lack of a clear contract to lead the design of the Bundestag project clearly still bothered the architect, and in May he wrote again, this time to Mertz’s superior, Rossig, protesting that he had been working on the Bundestag practically for free while neglecting his other, presumably paying, projects.\textsuperscript{34}

Eiermann’s combative approach continued into the summer when, without warning, he asked to be released from the Bundestag project altogether. His stated reason was not financial but rather that his work on the designs had come to a halt without any apparent prospect of restarting in the foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{35} As Rossig was on vacation, his assistant, and Carl Mertz’s predecessor at the Federal Building Agency, Undersecretary (\textit{Ministerialrat}) Franz Sales Meyer, wrote a frantic reply to Eiermann, urging him to be patient, at least until October when there should be decision about whether to include money for the project in the 1965 budget. With

\textsuperscript{32} Egon Eiermann, Letter to the head of the Federal Building Agency, Carl Mertz, February 24, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
\textsuperscript{33} Egon Eiermann, Letter to the head of the Federal Building Agency, Carl Mertz, March 2, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
\textsuperscript{34} Egon Eiermann, Letter to the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Johannes Rossig, May 2, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
\textsuperscript{35} Financial considerations were nevertheless on Eiermann’s mind, for in asking to be dismissed, he also asked to be paid for his time from December 1963 through June 1964 at the same rate as his work for the Planning Council (DM 3000 per month). Egon Eiermann, Letter to the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Johannes Rossig, and the head of the Federal Building Agency, Carl Mertz, July 17, 1964 (BArch, B 157/4240).
financing in place, the design process would continue. This already represented more than a year’s delay over Bundestag President Gerstenmaier’s enthusiastic pronouncement of May 1963 and demonstrated how easily the FRG’s political processes could frustrate and defer the plans of federal officials. Rossig explained this situation in detail when he finally responded to Eiermann, emphasizing that the highly politicized nature of the Bundestag project in Bonn made it particularly susceptible to delays.

Rossig’s appeal for patience seems to have worked but also may have been unnecessary, as Eiermann’s response reveals an older, familiar, and still-festering complaint as the source of his aggravation. In plain contradiction to his earlier letter, Eiermann asserted that he was not concerned with whether or not the Bundestag project would ever be executed. Rather, the architect again protested that the Federal Building Agency had continued to work on the Bundestag without his input since the Planning Council was initially disbanded in November 1963. According to Eiermann, his continued marginalization in the process was particularly intolerable because Bundestag President Gerstenmaier had now linked him with the project in public press conferences. Eiermann declared again that he needed total control, or he could not be involved. This was the only distinction that was important to him, and about this there could be no compromise. In spite of this ultimatum, Eiermann promised to continue attending Planning Council meetings. The architect’s persistence paid off several months later when, in a meeting with Mertz, the two men agreed that Eiermann would take control of the “artistic supervision”

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37 Johannes Rossig, the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Letter to Egon Eiermann, September 9, 1964 (BArch, B 157/4240).
38 In explaining his position, Eiermann cited his former teacher, Hans Poelzig, as once having warned the younger architect to expect that only two percent of his designs would ever be realized. Egon Eiermann, Letter to the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Johannes Rossig, September 14, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
(künstlerische Oberleitung) of the Bundestag project with the Planning Group assisting with the detailed planning and design work. To ensure clear and continuous communication between the design team and its leader, Eiermann would designate one member of the Group as his primary contact, and the entire team would meet every Monday.  

Even though Eiermann would not receive his official contract to design the Bundestag high-rise until August 1965, he now had the role he desired, and he did not wait long to attempt to assert his control. On February 24, 1965, Eiermann dispatched three letters, including identical messages to Sep Ruf and Paul Baumgarten and the third to Johannes Rossig. Eiermann had independently developed an alternative design concept for the Bundestag expansion, and he was going to introduce it in the upcoming Planning Council meeting on March 8. The lynchpin of the new design was a dramatic reduction in height of the high-rise from twenty-eight stories to eleven and a corresponding increase in the building’s footprint to compensate for most of the lost square-meters. In the letters to Ruf and Baumgarten, which were clearly aimed at ensuring their support for the plan, Eiermann claimed first that his smaller building would save over ten million Deutschmarks relative to the original plans and second that it had always been his opinion that such a high-rise was too alien a form for the Bonn landscape.  

At the Council meeting, Eiermann further justified his proposal by proclaiming that “the new design would make the significance and grandeur of parliament more clearly visible than the

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39 The meeting between Eiermann and Mertz took place on January 29, 1965, but its conclusions are described in a memo from a subsequent Planning Group meeting that occurred on February 3. Robert Glatzer, Ministry Staff Architect, Memo, February 5, 1965 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).

40 The letter to Johannes Rossig made the additional claim that Bundestag President Gerstenmaier would certainly support the alternative based on the economic savings. Egon Eiermann, Letter to Johannes Rossig, head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department in Bonn, Sep Ruf in Munich, and Paul Baumgarten in West Berlin, February 24, 1965 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
anonymous high-rise. Unaccompanied by specifics, Eiermann’s statement was vague, but it was also one of the only instances during the planning process leading up to the building’s construction in which either architect or federal officials explicitly raised the issue of the parliamentary building as a representation of the institution that it housed. However, Eiermann immediately undercut his claims for the revised design’s superior representational quality by asserting that another one of its advantages was its suitability for other uses, such as by the University of Bonn, should the government return to Berlin.\(^4\) Appealing to this emotional issue was certainly a shrewd gesture on Eiermann’s part, and the practical ability to reuse federal buildings after reunification was a point of significant concern for federal and local officials in Bonn. However, the suggestion that the same buildings could house a legislative body and an institute of higher learning suggested further the anonymous character of the high-rise Eiermann had just disparaged.

Eiermann did not take into account that the timing of his about-face was potentially disastrous for the project. Only a week before Eiermann sent his letters, on February 17, 1965, the Bundestag had formally approved two million Deutschmarks for the first phase of construction. This appropriation, the Bund’s first concrete financial commitment to the building measures, was based on distinct plans for a high-rise office tower and was the subject of a long and highly contentious parliamentary debate. The revisions that Eiermann was proposing would have voided the earmark and required federal building officials to resubmit plans and restart negotiations almost from scratch. Even though Undersecretary Meyer and Federal Building Agency President Mertz explained these circumstances at the Planning Council meeting, along with the fact that Bundestag President Gerstenmaier was expecting construction to begin by the

\(^4\) Wolfgang Leuschner, Minutes from the March 8, 1965 Planning Council meeting, March 17, 1965 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
\(^4\) Ibid.
end of the year, the meeting still ended with a resolution to continue to consider Eiermann’s alternative while also moving ahead with the high-rise as planned.\textsuperscript{43} Far from being persuasive, Eiermann seemed only to aggravate the officials for whom he ostensibly worked, as their predicament effectively precluded them from doing anything beyond merely discussing significant design alternatives, regardless of how strong the case for them may have been.

In the time between meetings, a still-exasperated Mertz wrote a long letter to Eiermann, reiterating that changing course threatened to invalidate hard-won legislative battles at the federal level and pleading with him to reconsider his decision. Mertz added that Eiermann was putting Bundestag President Gerstenmaier, who had publicly and forcefully backed the project, in a precarious political position and compromising the ongoing and sensitive discussions at the local level over land acquisition and use.\textsuperscript{44} These political barriers appeared insurmountable, but Mertz also defended the high-rise on architectural grounds and strongly criticized Eiermann’s alternative. If well executed, Mertz argued, the high-rise “can achieve an impressive, spirited, maybe even transparent form, like the Seagram’s [sic] Building in New York, which for me is absolutely the expression of the modern Gothic.”\textsuperscript{45} The allusions to the Gothic and comparisons to Mies van der Rohe betray a combination of pride and fantasy in Mertz’s ambitions for the West German parliamentary complex and serve as a response to Eiermann’s claim that the high-rise inadequately reflected the significance of the Bundestag. He also likely intended to flatter Eiermann, tending to the architect’s ego just before the official described the shorter alternative as a “massive pile” (“massiver Klotz”) completely ill-suited for the Rhine landscape and the

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Carl Mertz, Head of the Federal Building Agency, Letter to Egon Eiermann in Karlsruhe, March 12, 1965 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
surrounding neighborhood. In attempting to use Eiermann’s criticism — that the building was inappropriate to its context — against the architect, however, Mertz undermined his own argument. His invocation of the Seagram Building did not acknowledge the urban context: one amongst numerous skyscrapers along Park Avenue in New York City.

In his response to Mertz on March 17, 1965 and in a letter to Rossig a day later, Eiermann staunchly defended his proposal and issued a prescient warning. He foresaw the folly in building a high-rise on the Gronau and contended that the public would almost certainly reject it, requiring the Planning Council to provide an alternative. Eiermann then addressed Mertz’s claims, repeating his belief that high-rises were not suitable for an open landscape and explaining that the new proposal balanced horizontal and vertical accents in a way that was in tune with the site and the surrounding hills. To Rossig, Eiermann elaborated on his position, but he framed it in more calculated political terms. Eiermann argued that siting a high-rise that close to the Rhine, “one of the most beautiful landscapes in Germany, could represent an act of foolhardiness,” because it risked raising the ire of the entire German populace. Therefore, he felt compelled “to offer a serious alternative, which even if it were hopeless, would free [the Planning Council] from the accusation of having neglected something that had been part of [its] responsibility to investigate and recommend.” That this alternative proved to be, in Eiermann’s opinion, a better solution than the high-rise meant that it deserved serious consideration.

Eiermann succeeded in at least forcing the Planning Council to consider his proposal, which dominated the discussion at the Council’s meeting on March 29. Eiermann recapitulated

46 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
his argument for the lower building, but in a politically and professionally astute move, he also finally emphasized that he would stand by the high-rise if the Council determined that it could not shift planning directions. The federal officials present then mounted the most cogent architectural defense of the high-rise since they had settled on that form over two years earlier. Against Eiermann’s proposal, Undersecretary Meyer argued that the high-rise could be more easily expanded to incorporate other parliamentary functions should the next phases of the overall Bundestag project not be constructed. Meyer also countered Eiermann’s concerns about the high-rise’s representational function by pointing out that it would more likely be the new plenary chamber that carried the responsibility of being the “Parliament Building” (Parlamentsbau).50

Next, Wolfgang Leuschner of the Treasury Ministry addressed the issue of the high-rise’s situation in the landscape, one of Eiermann’s most consistent criticisms. Leuschner asserted that the high-rise, when considered in the context of the area around it, including the high-rise being constructed by the Allianz corporation on an adjacent site and north Bad Godesberg, where the Planning Council and Bund intended to build a series of towers, “should be and should remain the architectural and spiritual center of the future Government Quarter.”51 Thus, the high-rise would perform a representational function, visibly marking, even from a great distance, the location of the heart of West German democracy. Leuschner also noted that jettisoning the high-rise in favor of Eiermann’s proposal would inevitably lead to building more expansively horizontally, contradicting one of the Council’s earlier considerations to preserve as much green space as possible.52

50 Wolfgang Leuschner, Minutes from the March 29, 1965 Planning Council meeting, April 1, 1965 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
At the end of the debate, the Council decided to move ahead with the high-rise while keeping the alternative on the table just in case it became necessary. For Eiermann, the issue appeared to be settled, and on August 10, 1965, exactly three years after signing the first Planning Council contract, he signed a contract to design a high-rise, which clearly enumerated his complete managerial authority over process and personnel. Eiermann’s last-minute proposal to alter the design had forced the federal building officials to justify the construction of a high-rise. They responded that the prestige attached to the high-rise form, its flexibility, the presence or planned presence of other high-rises in the vicinity, the limitations of the site, and the desire to maintain green space all pointed to the suitability of their choice. However, no federal official had an answer to Eiermann’s prediction that the public would never accept a one-hundred-meter tall building in the Gronau, and ultimately, none of their explanations mattered in the face of the political obstacles and certain delays involved in budgetary negotiations in the Bundestag.

**Eiermann’s High-Rise and the Legislative Process**

Those negotiations began at Gerstenmaier’s instigation among the Bundestag’s leadership (*Vorstand*) soon after the convening of the Planning Council. Gerstenmaier sought and failed to include ten million Deutschmarks for construction and another ten million for land acquisition in the Bundestag’s 1963 budget primarily because he could not yet submit the concrete plans and cost estimates that were required by the Reich Financial Regulation. The next year, however, Gerstenmaier took a slightly less ambitious tack and successfully inserted an empty placeholder (*Leertitel*) into the budget under the heading “New Buildings for the Purposes of...”

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of the Bundestag Including Preliminary Facilities.” No funds were appropriated, and the
Bundestag did not debate the issue, but the existence of the line item would facilitate the process
in the following year and it sent a clear signal about the leadership’s intentions. Furthermore,
even though negotiations with Bonn over the purchase price and conditions of sale were still
ongoing in the spring of 1964, Gerstenmaier also convinced the Bundestag’s Budget Committee
to include in the same budget fifteen million Deutschmarks for land acquisition in the Gronau.
Crucially, the budget item had the highly generic title, “Precautionary Land Acquisition for the
Purposes of the Federal Government,” and was drawn not from of the Bundestag’s section of the
budget but rather from the General Financial Administration (Allgemeine Finanzverwaltung)
section. This section also included West Germany’s financial support for West Berlin, a sum
that approached 1.5 billion Deutschmarks in 1964. The relative magnitude of the Bund’s budget
commitments to Berlin and the sensitivity of the issue of support for the embattled former capital
effectively deflected any attention and potential controversy away from the expenditure on land
in Bonn. The final purchase price for the land of 98.5 million Deutschmarks (see below)—over
twice as much as the proposed 48.5 million Deutschmark budget for the high-rise itself—elicited
objections from FDP members in the Bundestag Budget Committee, but they could not stop it
from passing. Subsequently, there was virtually no debate within the larger Bundestag over
appropriating the funds from the same division of the budget.

54 See “Titel 700” in Bundestag Haushaltsausschuss, Mündlicher Bericht des
Haushaltsausschusses zum Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Feststellung des
Ausschuss, Drucksache IV/2080, March 20, 1964, 3.
55 General-Anzeiger, “Haushaltausschuß genehmigt Mittel für den Ankauf des Gronaugeländes,”
December 9, 1965.
56 See for example the inquiry by Bundestag Member Nellen (SPD), Deutscher Bundestag,
The 48.5 million figure for the high-rise emerged in a meeting between building officials from the Treasury Ministry and the Bundestag leadership in November 1964, in which the officials presented formal plans for a twenty-three-story high-rise. Complete plans and costs estimates, even though they were still labeled as drafts, allowed Gerstenmaier to press ahead with a request for twelve million Deutschmarks in initial funding in the 1965 budget with the hope that construction could be well under way by the end of the year. The Budget Committee subsequently reduced the number to two million, but even this small sum became the subject of vigorous debate once it reached the full Bundestag in February. The most strident objections came from members of the Free Democrat Party, who cited both financial concerns and its potential negative impact on the West German commitment to Berlin. Bundestag Member Wolfgang Rutschke (FDP), speaking in support of a motion by his party to halt the project, even pointed to the Berlin Reichstag building as evidence for both the fiscal and political arguments. The Paul Baumgarten-designed renovations of the Reichstag were currently in progress for a total projected cost of 95 million Deutschmarks, and Rutschke asked his colleagues why, if it were so important to restore functionality to the former parliament in Berlin, were they also committing to such permanent and large changes to the current one in Bonn.

The FDP also questioned the premise behind the high-rise project, that the Bundestag faced a critical shortage of space that could only be solved through new construction. Instead, members of the party suggested that organizational reforms within parliament would be more

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effective and more economical solutions.59 However, for the broad group of members upon which Gerstenmaier relied for the building’s approval, the lack of space was a serious issue that was increasingly impeding their ability to perform their legislative tasks. Gerstenmaier convinced these politicians to back a single high-rise as the most pragmatic architectural solution at the time. Nevertheless, they expressed the same misgivings as their more anti-development colleagues towards the Bundestag President’s well-publicized larger ambitions to create an entire federal district around the Bundesrat and Bundestag based on the Planning Council’s plans.60 Thus, they were eager to assert that their immediate support for the 2 million Deutschmarks for the high-rise should not be construed as support for the entire complex. Here, the relatively small amount of the earmark worked in Gerstenmaier’s favor, as it allowed him to make a plausible claim that he was advancing the project incrementally and that the Bundestag could change direction the following year if necessary.61 However, with definite funding in place, construction could begin, and once the Bund broke ground, it was highly unlikely that the Bundestag would pull the plug on the high-rise’s funding even if it refused to approve the larger complex around it.

The following year, with the land deal successfully concluded but construction not yet begun, Gerstenmaier again asked for only the relatively small sum of 3 million Deutschmarks for the office tower. Unlike the previous year, there were no objections within the Budget Committee (Haushaltsausschuß), and the debate by the full Bundestag was far less contentious than the previous year and involved half as many participants. Members from the Free Democrat Party recapitulated their objections, but there was a perfunctory quality to them, and no members

59 See Hermann Dürr’s (FDP) statement to the Bundestag, ibid, 8132-8133.
60 See statements by Hermann Conring (CDU/CSU) and Johann Baptist Gradl (CDU/CSU), ibid, 8134-8135, 8137-8138.
61 See statement by Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier, ibid, 8138-8139.
filed a formal motion to try and reverse the funding. The federal elections in the fall of 1965 also played a role in muting opposition, as they saw the share of FDP seats in the Bundestag drop from sixty-seven to fifty. By the time the 1967 budgetary debates got underway the tower’s steel skeleton was rising quickly, and even though the requested appropriation rose from 3 million to 15 million Deutschmarks, the topic disappeared from parliamentary debates. The appropriation of federal funds for the Bundestag project was perhaps the single checkpoint in the planning process for which there could be no contingency, no “Plan B.” Gerstenmaier’s success in securing majority support for the project, which involved no small amount of public promotion and private arm twisting, led to him being so thoroughly identified with the finished building that it became eponymous with him.

However, approved funding also meant that Rossig, Mertz, and the federal planning bureaucracy were stuck. Focused on accommodating a growing federal workforce and alleviating an emerging space crisis that together were wreaking havoc on Bonn’s urban infrastructure and the city’s planning capacity, the Planning Council made a quick, early decision that set the Bund on the path of high-rise construction. Functional and economic issues dominated that choice, and the project’s supporters overlooked the public’s potential reaction to such a dramatic change in the city’s appearance and space as a point of concern. In light of the building freeze and the lingering skepticism towards large federal building projects in Bonn, federal officials rightfully viewed the construction of the high-rise as a major victory, but as the debate shifted from Planning Council meetings to the Bundestag and City Hall, a disregard for local concerns persisted amongst federal decision makers. Even though there was already evidence for a

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negative public reaction after the disclosure of the Bund’s plans in February 1963, by the time Eiermann attempted to insert local reception as a significant factor in his design concept, the legislative process had advanced beyond the point of no return.

The Sale of the Gronau

That Gerstenmaier pushed for funds for a building intended for land that was at that point still owned by the city is emblematic of the disconnect between federal and local planning goals and assumptions. Although they had been brewing in local press columns and in government offices since the Bund’s plans had first been disclosed, the tensions between Bonn and the Bund materialized as concrete disagreements during the negotiations that led to Bonn’s sale of a 13.8 hectare section of the Gronau. Acquiring the land was the last major hurdle before construction could begin, but it forced the Bund to engage in direct negotiations with its municipal host right at the moment when the city was beginning to experience more acutely the accumulating stresses and strains — urban, structural, and financial — of serving as the capital. A news report from September 1965 put the Bund’s role in Bonn’s problems in stark numerical terms, revealing that each federal employee ultimately cost the city between 100 and 200 Deutschmarks per year. A formal recommendation from the City Council’s City Planning Committee on June 24, 1965 put these desires most broadly and succinctly; in order for the city to be able to satisfy its own needs, it wanted a binding statement from the Bund about its long term plans for its own facilities and financial support for the city.

65 Bonn City Council City Planning Committee, Minutes from the 4th meeting of the City Planning Committee, June 24, 1965 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/162).
Local Bonn officials also clearly felt that they had an obligation to the Bund to facilitate the accommodation of federal authorities, so the task for the city was to arrive at a settlement that satisfied both local and national interests. As the negotiations wore on well into 1965, municipal representatives began to raise serious questions about the feasibility of the Bund’s plans, which, parliamentary approval notwithstanding, always involved far more than a single high-rise, as well as its overall intentions with regard to Bonn’s future development. Technically, the West German Federal Building Law of 1960 gave Bonn, as both the owner of most of the land in question and as the final authority over municipal zoning decisions, all of the leverage it needed to extract significant concessions from the Bund. At the very least, Bonn sought to have the Bund’s obligations to the city reflected in an inflated sales price for the property. However, Bonn ultimately only extracted vague promises from the Bund that it would indeed follow through with its larger objectives for the federal district.

For hundreds of years before the 20th century, the area of the Gronau was primarily agricultural land. This began to change in the 19th century with the construction of the railroad, the settlement of some industry in the area, and the gradual construction of numerous villas scenically situated along the Rhine. The most prominent of these were the Palais Schaumburg and Villa Hammerschmidt, which were occupied by the Federal Chancellor and the President, respectively, after 1949. In the wake of World War I and in the midst of increasing national interest in physical fitness and outdoor recreation, the city built sports facilities on the land. After a brief interlude as potato fields during the depths of World War II’s food shortages, Bonn’s City Council reestablished the athletic facilities with a soccer pitch and running track (see Fig. 63).

66 See, for example, statements in Bonn City Planning Office, Memo regarding May 25, 1962 city planning meeting, June 5, 1962 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).
Despite the proposed site’s proximity to the newly established Bundeshaus and other key parts of the federal administration, the Bund initially disavowed any interest in the land because it sat within the Rhine’s floodplain. In 1960, the city began making plans to renovate and expand the sports facilities to better serve a population that had grown substantially since 1945. However, the work of the Planning Council in the early 1960s quickly changed federal planners’ opinions about the Bund’s needs for land, and as city officials became aware of the Council’s proposal for a greatly expanded Bundestag and Bundesrat complex, it was immediately clear to them that the loss of the Gronau was likely a foregone conclusion. In a June 1962 memo from Bonn’s City Planning Office, the Director of Building Günter Schubert acknowledged the likely loss, and even framed it in terms of the city’s obligation to work with the Bund in accommodating of federal agencies. He also did not let the Bund off the hook, noting its track record of neglect for local urban planning concerns and suggesting that federal designs in the Gronau were an opportunity to put more pressure on the Bund to assist the city.

Later that same month, the Federal Building Agency submitted its official application to rezone the Gronau as an area for the exclusive purposes of parliament and federal authorities. This first application, however, came without information on federal construction plans for the area, and it also included over one hundred parcels of private land without respect for their boundaries. It was only after Gerstenmaier and federal planning officials presented the Planning Council’s preliminary ideas for a Bundestag complex in the Gronau to the city in early 1963 that the municipal administration authorized negotiations with the Bund over the use of the

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68 Director of Building Günter Schubert, Memo from the Bonn City Planning Office, June 5, 1962 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N61/165).
land. In these initial exchanges, Bonn’s City Planning Office was highly critical of the federal plans, describing them as fragmented, disorderly, and not well integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods, many of which would remain residential.\textsuperscript{70} When federal planners raised the issue of Bonn’s provisional status, asserting that they did not want to leave the city with a collection of unusable buildings once the capital returned to Berlin, the City Manager, Franz Schmidt countered that Bonn would be best served by unified, long-term planning rather than the aimless and provisional schemes that the Bund had thus far proposed.\textsuperscript{71}

Federal officials countered these criticisms with a proposal that was far greater in scope and ambition. They proposed the creation of an expansive greenbelt that would extend south along the Rhine from the Bundestag campus to the northern part of Bad Godesberg, where the Bund already had eyes on establishing a second federal complex. Federal buildings would be loosely arranged within this green space, and the city’s major transportation routes, including the federal train lines, would be buried underneath.\textsuperscript{72} This scheme involved a transformation of the city that went far beyond merely purchasing 14 hectares of the Gronau and expanding parliament, and it is likely the scheme that came under such harsh criticism in Revue (see Fig. 64). For officials in Bonn’s City Planning Office, the Bund’s more comprehensive vision for the city appeared to anticipate and address many of their urban planning concerns, including replacement sports facilities, improved transportation infrastructure, and abundant green space, but that very scale drew the criticism that the plans were unrealizable.\textsuperscript{73} Nevertheless, the

\textsuperscript{71} Bonn City Manager Franz Schmidt, Memo regarding the function of Bonn once the capital returned to Berlin, March 20, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N61/165).
\textsuperscript{72} Bonn City Planning Office, Memo regarding discussion on May 7, 1963 about latest planning proposals from the Federal Treasury Ministry, May 8, 1963 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N61/165).
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
apparent willingness of federal planners to engage in such extensive planning exercises was a satisfying enough concession for the city that it moved forward on negotiations over the more constricted plans to expand the Bundestag’s facilities. When politics at the federal level quickly whittled even those more discrete plans down to a single high-rise, the city viewed the retreat as confirmation that the Bund was unwilling or unable to plan for itself while also addressing local interests.

By the middle of 1964, both sides had formalized their demands surrounding the Gronau, and they came quite close to concluding a deal. The Bund wanted to purchase and have rezoned for its exclusive use a 14.4 hectare plot of land along the Rhine just to the south of the current Bundestag. The Bund would use the land to construct a Parliamentary District based on the Planning Council’s suggestions and closely approximating plans and models previously disclosed by Gerstenmaier and other federal building officials. It would comprise new structures for the Bundestag and Bundesrat, including the high-rise tower, expanded facilities for the Federal Press and Information Office, and auxiliary services, such as a restaurant and hotel.

Bonn’s initial conditions for allowing the Bund to proceed with these plans were the purchase of the necessary land from the city and any private owners, the satisfaction of legal zoning requirements, the assumption of costs for any necessary infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and electrical lines, and the creation of replacements for all of the facilities — sports park, stadium, municipal water works, public restrooms, public parking, and several others — that would be displaced by the new Bundestag and Bundesrat buildings. The monetary price for the land was a token sum of 6.8 million Deutschmarks, and Wolfgang Leuschner, who was the lead federal

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74 The list of the Bund’s desires and Bonn’s conditions is first detailed in Bonn City Planning Office, “Bericht über die Umgestaltung und Erweiterung des Parlamentsviertels an der Gronau auf Grund des Ratsbeschlusses vom 9.4.1964,” April 16, 1964 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N61/165).
negotiator with the city indicated that the Bund would agree to these terms. With Gerstenmaier pushing strongly for funds in the 1965 budget, Leuschner and his colleagues had an ambitious development schedule in mind that began with the successful acquisition of the land. Once it owned the land, the Bund could initiate the legal planning process, over which Bonn’s City Council, with additional oversight by state officials in Cologne, had final say. Leuschner envisioned completing this process, which included a month-long public feedback period, in early 1965 and starting construction on the high-rise by April 1. The high-rise would be followed immediately by a new plenary chamber for the Bundestag and new Bundesrat building.

However, local politics intervened, and local elections in 1964 ushered in a new city administration and with it a new City Manager. Negotiations were put on hold during the transition, but when they restarted at the end of the year, Wolfgang Hesse, the new City Manager struck a far more confrontational tone. The most consequential shift in the talks was the decoupling of the city’s conditions from the specific circumstances of building a high-rise in the Gronau. The most contentious new request from the city was a blanket statement of political and financial support from the Bund for Bonn’s future urban development. Gerstenmaier personally appealed to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard to accept such a condition so as not to prolong negotiations and delay construction. The Bundestag, however, determined that the Basic Law already guaranteed compensation to the city for any expenses incurred by the federal government’s presence and activities, and any additional payments would be unconstitutional, as they would constitute special treatment of one city over others. The city countered this by

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75 Wolfgang Leuschner, Treasury Ministry Building Department, Memo, October 5, 1964 (BArch, B 157/4240).
76 Wolfgang Leuschner, Memo, July 22, 1964 (BArch, B 157/4240).
77 Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier, Letter to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, November 6, 1964 (BArch, B 157/4240).
78 Grundgesetz, Art. 106, Abs. 7.
arguing that its function as the provisional capital made it a special case deserving of special
treatment and increased support. In a Building Department memo, Leuschner acknowledged the
constitutional issue, but seemed to side with Bonn, concluding that, for both political and
functional reasons, it served the Bund’s interests to support healthy urban growth in the capital.79

At the first direct meeting between Hesse and the Bund in February 1965, the new City
Manager sharpened the demand for federal support for Bonn by quantifying it. Hesse claimed
that the city administration could demonstrate that the financial burden due to the presence of the
Bund had cost Bonn 25 million Deutschmarks per year, and he asked that the federal government
give an equal sum to the city for the next ten years for its unrestricted use. Hesse insisted that this
money come in addition to the purchase price for the Gronau land, as well as to any funds
required to upgrade the infrastructure and replace the municipal facilities on the site. It could not
replace the financial assistance that the city already received through the established channel
outlined in the Basic Law. This last funding mechanism required the city to apply to multiple
federal departments for reimbursement for each municipal project individually, and Hesse argued
that the process was too complicated, time consuming, and ultimately inadequate to help correct
Bonn’s extensive planning issues in areas such as schools, roads, or fire protection services.
Finally, Hesse made agreeing to this support a precondition for any resolution to the exchange of
the land, and he asked for a meeting with the Federal Ministers of Finance, the Treasury, and the
Interior, expressing confidence that he could convince them in person.80

Three months later, Hesse was granted a meeting with Treasury Minister Werner
Dollinger and Finance Minister Rolf Dahlgrün. He came armed with a legal memo produced by

79 Wolfgang Leuschner, Memo, January 4, 1965 (BArch, B 157/4240).
80 Treasury Ministry Building Department, Memo by an otherwise unnamed official (Ministerialrat) Reich regarding a February 4, 1965 meeting between Building Department officials and Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, March 4, 1965 (BArch, B 157/4240).
municipal lawyers that asserted that the kind of global financial grants that Bonn sought were legal under the Basic Law, but he still failed to convince the ministers to reverse their opposition. Dollinger and Dahlgrün argued that, constitutional issues aside, such a policy would set an untenable precedent for the federal government’s relationship with other cities and that it was politically infeasible so late in the legislative session. The first 2 million Deutschmarks had been approved for construction over strenuous objections in the Bundestag, and returning to ask for another 25 million was out of the question. In the same meeting, Hesse also disclosed the city’s price for the use of the Gronau. Rather than a sale, Hesse proposed a leasehold arrangement, under which the Bund would gain control of the Gronau site for ten years at a price of 1.8 million Deutschmarks per year plus an additional 56.5 million to cover the costs of transferring existing facilities and preparing the land for development. 81

Six weeks later, in June 1965, Gerstenmaier met with Hesse and negotiated a tentative deal for the Gronau that totaled 308 millions Deutschmarks, broken down as a 1 million Deutschmark nominal purchase price for the land, 56.5 million for the transfer of facilities and site preparations, and 250 million as reparations for the costs incurred by Bonn as the provisional capital. Gerstenmaier, who desperately wanted to prevent any further delays and preserve the hard-won federal funds for the project, argued that the one-time lump some of 250 million would ultimately be the cheapest alternative, and Finance Minister Dahlgrün even suggested that in light of such a high price, the Bund could extract more value from the land by also adding buildings for federal ministries. 82 The agreement was extremely short lived, however, as the reparation payment remained an insurmountable barrier, due as much to principle as to its size.

81 Treasury Ministry Building Department, Unsigned report on May 12, 1965 meeting between Bonn City Manager and federal officials, May 12, 1965 (BArch, B 157/4240).
82 These developments happened in two meetings on June 24, 1965 between Gerstenmaier and Hesse and Gerstenmaier and Dahlgrün, respectively. The meetings are recounting in Treasury Secretary Undersecretary Franz Sales Meyer, Memo, June 29, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
The Finance Ministry thus proposed a counter-offer that attempted to get around the issue. The Bund would offer Bonn the full appraised value of the site, 36.5 million Deutschmarks, plus the 56.5 millions for the transfer and replacement costs, and a one-time payment of 25 million, which was framed as compensation for the loss of the Gronau, but stood as a form of reparations, albeit much smaller than what the city thought it deserved.\(^{83}\)

At the same time, Gerstenmaier crafted an offer that took a somewhat different tack, linking the purchase of the Gronau to the amelioration of an unrelated but longstanding urban planning conundrum in the city. In a letter to Chancellor Erhard, Gerstenmaier proposed that in exchange for the Bund’s use of the Gronau, the federal government should agree to finance and execute the burial of the federal rail lines that through the heart of Bonn. These lines, constructed at grade based on King Friedrich Wilhelm IV’s royal decree, bisected the city awkwardly, cutting off the Altstadt from the neighborhoods to its west and south with only a handful of pedestrian and car crossings. Burying them would greatly ease movement around the most congested part of the city and unify the university’s campus, but it was a prohibitively costly undertaking for an already indebted city. Gerstenmaier’s offer would thus give Bonn something of great financial and functional value, but something that would bypass the constitutional issue while allowing the Bund to retain control of the funding for the project.\(^{84}\)

Gerstenmaier would float this idea a few more times, but a consensus was forming amongst federal officials that the best deal would be found in offering Bonn the full purchase price for the land plus replacement costs for the facilities and a token sum to compensate the city for its loss of the site.\(^{85}\) Thus, it appeared that a deal was close at hand when Hesse met secretly

\(^{83}\) Treasury Ministry Building Department, Memo, July 5, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
\(^{84}\) Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier, Letter to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, July 7, 1965 (BArch, B 157/4240).
\(^{85}\) Treasury Ministry Building Department, Memo, July 12, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
on July 12, 1965 with Hans Clausen Korff, the Finance Ministry’s Budget Director, and essentially agreed on a compromise along those lines. From that point, negotiations proceeded quickly over the next several weeks, as the two sides ironed out the sticking points: price, money for reparations, leasing versus purchasing, and the extent of federal development in the Gronau. On each of these issues, Hesse capitulated almost entirely to the Bund’s position. Korff and Hesse arrived at a deal in which the Bund would lease the Gronau for ten years at 1.8 million Deutschmarks per year and pay a lump sum of 80 million that included transfer costs and any notional additional compensation for a total value of 98 million Deutschmarks.86 Johannes Rossig, the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, however, objected to leasing the land, even when Hesse lowered the lump some to 70 million, asserting that a lease would only set the stage for more conflict ten years later. Hesse countered with a sales offer that raised the total amount to 125 million because it included 30 million in compensation for the city’s prior capital investment, i.e. reparations. The Bund immediately rejected this, and Hesse finally agreed to a purchase price of 98.5 million, 36 million for the land and 62.5 for transfer, replacement, and site preparation costs.87

With the price settled, the Bund revealed that it wanted to expand its program, adopting Finance Minister Dahlgrün’s earlier suggestion to include additional buildings for federal ministries, specifically three fifteen-story and four eight-story buildings (Figure 67). This represented a far more intensive development of the Gronau than Bonn had envisioned, and the city argued that the change undermined the agreement, which was negotiated under a

86 This meeting is described in Treasury Ministry Undersecretary Franz Sales Meyer, Memo, July 19, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
87 The negotiations, which took place across several meetings and phone calls in July 1965 between Hesse and federal officials, are recounted in Hans Clausen Korff, Finance Ministry Budget Director, Memo, July 29, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
dramatically different set of assumptions. Federal planning officials responded to the objection with a slightly scaled back version of the idea that reduced the number of new buildings by one, but Bonn insisted that the only valid plans for the Gronau were those for the high-rise and buildings for the Bundestag and Bundesrat. However, Bonn had to be careful with its pushback. City and federal officials had previously agreed that in the immediate transaction, in order to limit delays and potential opposition, only the land required to build the high-rise would be included in the zoning and development applications. This was yet another concession by the city to the Bund’s preferences, as Bonn very much wanted the Bund to submit detailed development plans for the entire Gronau along with a binding commitment to complete them. Although it stopped short of a binding pledge, the Bund was offering something close to a long-term, comprehensive vision, but the content was unacceptable. Bonn’s opposition successfully forestalled any plans to fill the Gronau with mid-rise office buildings, but the consequence was that the Bund backed away from any commitments in the Gronau except for “Langer Eugen.”

The Bund’s obligations in the Gronau were formalized in the official sales contract, which was finalized and signed on October 18, 1965 after a long and contentious debate in a special closed session of Bonn’s City Council. Bonn would receive 98.5 million Deutschmarks in exchange for the land, but the only recognition of Bonn’s larger city planning concerns was contained in clauses that required the Bund to develop the land within ten years or return it to the

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88 Paul Vollmar, Director of Bonn’s Land Registry and Surveyor’s Office (Vermessungsamt), Memo regarding a discussion with the Federal Building Agency, August 20, 1965. (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).
90 Paul Vollmar, Director of Bonn’s Land Registry and Surveyor’s Office (Vermessungsamt), Memo, July 15, 1965. (BArch, B 157/4240).
city and coordinate this development with Bonn’s city planning office.\footnote{City of Bonn and Federal Republic of Germany, Purchase Contract for the Gronau Land, October 18, 1965 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).} This was a far cry from the detailed, comprehensive planning commitment that Bonn sought, and it delayed any consequences of federal intransigence for a decade, which amounted to an eternity in the context of the precarious nature of Bonn’s provisional status. During the Council debate, Hesse justified his concessions to the Bund as tactical. He asserted that if the city refused to make a deal, the Bund would merely shift its development activities outside of Bonn’s borders, where the city would have little control but would still be left with the negative consequences.

Johannes Rossig, representing the federal government’s interests in the debate, appeared to confirm Hesse’s contention that the Bund would engage in such opportunistic hair-splitting between building activity in Bonn versus the neighboring communities. Rossig claimed that the only new construction in Bonn had been the Foreign Office Building and the additions to the Husaren-Kaserne for the Finance Ministry. When a City Council member mentioned the obvious Ministry of Defense in Duisdorf, Rossig replied that it did not count because it was not technically in Bonn.\footnote{Bonn City Council, Minutes from Special Closed Meeting, October 18, 1965 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).} The apparent disingenuousness of this exchange portended the steadily increasing tension between local and federal administrations in the coming years. Hesse already showed his insecurity about the Bund’s intentions in a letter to Rossig written the day after the conclusion of the Gronau contract. The City Manager implored the head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department to keep the Bund’s promise and not leave the Gronau as the site of a single and disconnected high-rise. In doing so, he invoked the local citizens of Bonn, who,
having just witnessed a prized piece of their city being sold, deserved to know what to expect with the completed development.\textsuperscript{93}

Even with the land successfully purchased, the Bund would not start construction on the tower for another year, and Bundestag members would not occupy the building until early 1969. Ironically, Eugen Gerstenmaier would never get to use the building that took his name, as he was forced to resign in January 1969 amid controversy surrounding his compensation. City and federal officials had to push the plans through the legal planning process, which raised a number of minor issues, such as satisfying local and state-level requirements for landscape and nature protection because of the tower’s proximity to the Rhine and its flood zones. Federal planners also needed to wait for the Bundestag to appropriate a second installment of funding and for Eiermann to finalize his designs. In the meantime, federal planners continued to insist to their municipal counterparts that they would develop the Gronau as a parliamentary district in a way that fulfilled the city’s planning desires even as they pursued their own agenda of meeting the federal workforce’s growing space needs and consolidating the fragmented federal authorities into one of only several federally-owned sites. To that end, Rossig reintroduced the idea of adding ministry buildings to the Gronau plans — this time only two — and proposed constructing high-rises for both the Foreign Office and the Postal Ministry on their current sites just to the north of Villa Hammerschmidt and Palais Schaumburg.\textsuperscript{94} For Rossig, the seemingly constant reformulation of federal building plans represented his attempts to meet his obligations while adapting to a political landscape that was more open than ever to large-scale building in Bonn but still contained vocal skeptics and numerous budget hawks. For Hesse and Bonn,

\textsuperscript{93} Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Letter to Johannes Rossig, Head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, October 19, 1965 (BArch, B 157/3446).
\textsuperscript{94} Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Notes taken from a planning meeting with Johannes Rossig and the Federal Planning Council, February 10, 1965 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/188).
however, the ever-evolving proposals appeared as a stubborn unwillingness to commit to the kind of long-term planning and support that the city needed in order to prepare for its own needs.

**Public Reaction to the Sale of the Gronau and the Construction of the High-Rise**

Wolfgang Hesse and Bonn failed in the Gronau negotiations to gain concessions from the federal government that came anywhere close to addressing the city’s growing planning problems and financial burdens. What they received instead were mere promises of future considerations that would never be fulfilled. The Gronau was thus a missed opportunity to resolve some of the developing tensions between the federal government and its municipal hosts, and these tensions found expression in routinely negative coverage in the press that reflected, in turn, growing public dissatisfaction with the federal government’s effect on the city. Nationally, the press had always directed its criticism at the development’s cost, which many thought the country could ill afford, as well as the disruption to Bonn’s provisional status and, by extension, Berlin’s place as the rightful capital, that the building seemed to represent. With revelations that the Bund wanted to build multiple ministry buildings in the Gronau, the national news magazine *Stern* published an image of the working model under the headline, “Bonn itself does not plan on any savings,” and compared a maximal image of the project with all of West Germany’s more pressing social needs (Figure 68).95 One epithet that proliferated early and that aptly captured both the public’s anxieties about wasteful government spending and the legitimacy of a new

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capital city, while tapping into a broader cultural aversion to modernist architecture, was

“Brasilia am Rhein” (Figure 69).96

The local public shared many of the concerns expressed in national outlets, but as the
tower began rising, the criticism intensified and sharpened. Throughout the building’s
construction, the local press passed up no opportunity to reveal cost overruns and apparent
extravagances such as imported teak for wood trim on the façade.97 When local papers published
images of Eiermann’s final model for the building in the days before the first foundations were
laid, they branded it a “silo,” a pejorative term for the severe, rectilinear form of the 30-story
tower98 that alluded to the clichéd anonymous modernist skyscrapers that were filling postwar
urban skylines around the globe.99 Thus, along with “Brasilia am Rhein,” “Manhattan am Rhein”
and its close variation, “Bonnhattan,”100 began appearing frequently as sobriquets for the
Bundestag high-rise, offering sensationalized visions that tapped directly into local fears about
the transformation that the federal government appeared to be trying to impose on Bonn and its
effect on Bonn’s urban space.

In reality, the city was in no danger of obtaining the canyon effect of midtown
Manhattan’s avenues, nor did the Bund give its selected planners anything like the *tabula rasa*
that Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer received on Brazil’s Central Plateau. However, by the end
of 1966, between Eiermann’s building, which was now under way, the Allianz building nearing
completion nearby, and the numerous models that the Bund had disclosed, Bonn’s citizens had

96 The term first appeared in the national press in Der Spiegel, “Neubau-Pläne: Alles in
97 On the teak issue, Eiermann claimed that teak’s greater durability made it the better value. See,
for example, General-Anzeiger, “Experten brechen Lanze für Siam-Teak: Auf lange Sicht besser
98 The tower as constructed would be twenty-nine stories tall.
100 See, for example, General-Anzeiger, “Blick in die Zukunft: Eiermanns Gronau-Skyline,”
legitimate reasons to be concerned that the development threatened to spoil the city’s relationship to the surrounding natural landscape and disrupt Bonn’s established urban space and well-worn patterns of life. As the tower’s steel skeleton rose into the air and the effects of its height on the surrounding landscape became concrete, it only confirmed those fears. Jürg Straßberger, Bonn’s Commissioner for Nature Protection and Landscape Conservation (Naturschutz- und Landschaftspflege), described the impact in the most disparaging manner, asserting that the high-rise “degraded into molehills” the Siebengebirge mountains that formed the city’s treasured natural backdrop (Figure 70).\textsuperscript{101}

For a large swath of the local public, the sale of the Gronau to the federal government for the purposes of a high-rise was, at best, a dubious exchange with vague and questionable benefits for the city. Gerstenmaier remained a constant source of statements extolling the virtues of the building for the Bundestag and its members,\textsuperscript{102} but the primary justification for its construction was thrown into doubt when the legislators began moving into their new offices, and it became clear that, as large as it was, “Langer Eugen” would not be large enough to house all Bundestag members with adequate room for their staffs and secretaries.\textsuperscript{103} Furthermore, at a meeting on February 22, 1967, less than two years after the sale of the Gronau, federal building official Leuschner forthrightly admitted that his department had no further plans on the table for the Gronau and that the next federal buildings would be placed in Bad Godesberg, where negotiations with city officials were proceeding smoothly.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} One local commentator likened Gerstenmaier to a “proud father” admiring his child. Rolf H. Tanski, “Der ‘lange Eugen läßt keine Wünsche offen,” Bonner Rundschau, December 22, 1967.
\textsuperscript{104} Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Memo describing a meeting with Federal Building Officer Wolfgang Leuschner, February 22, 1967 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).
publicly acknowledged that they would not be able to complete the development of the Gronau within the ten-year period stipulated in the sales agreement.\textsuperscript{105} The fears that had driven Wolfgang Hesse to give away so much in the Gronau deal had come to pass despite his efforts.

For Bonn, it seemed, the Gronau deal was a total loss. The entire process, however, had set several important precedents that would prove valuable when citizens turned their attention and their ire to the next flashpoint, the Bad Godesberg development. First, the return of large-scale federal building in the heart of the city signaled the de facto end of the \textit{Baustopp}, which in turn heralded a substantial turn away from a view of Bonn as a merely provisional capital in the eyes of planners, lawmakers, and the public. This paralleled and augmented the conceptual and discursive shift that was simultaneously taking place within the context of Bonn’s campaign to expand its borders. Second, Hesse’s negotiating tactics set the crucial example of linking federal development in Bonn to demands that the Bund address broader local planning concerns that might only be tangentially related to any particular building project. In 1965, Hesse may not have had sufficient leverage to force the Bund to make substantial material commitments to the city, but the city’s realization that the Bund had unmet responsibilities in its capital and Hesse’s initial effort to press that awareness on federal officials and legislators would find ultimate success later in the decade. Third, the planning and construction of Eiermann’s high-rise provided the city with an almost ideal example of a process that seemed to give the Bund free reign while giving nothing to the city in return and established a potent counter-example against which to formulate demands for change. The Planning Council, out of which the entire scheme originated, met in semi-secret without the foreknowledge or the input of municipal officials, and the Council assigned architectural responsibilities to its members, and in the case of Eiermann signed a formal contract, without the slightest mention of an open competition.

democracy that prized political transparency and unambiguously gave power over planning to local authorities, Bonn’s public viewed the process that resulted in a skyscraper on the banks of the Rhine as necessarily deficient.

Finally and most importantly, the appearance of Langer Eugen dominating Bonn’s skyline served to galvanize public opinion, both broadening and deepening skepticism towards federal development in the city. The Bundestag’s tower emphatically marked Bonn as the national capital. The city and the country may have been growing more and more comfortable with that idea, but local residents were dismayed to find that a single building threatened to eclipse millennia of urban history and the cherished traditional identities that had accrued from it, supplanting it with a monolithic, new, and resolutely modernist identity as the West German capital. To compound the problem, the only options that the Bund seemed to offer to the city for future development involved either leaving the Gronau high-rise as a lone giant or surrounding it with many more office “silos.” Thus, when the next opportunity presented itself in the form of the federal proposal to install multiple high-rises in Bad Godesberg, Bonn’s residents seized it. Bearing a sharp sense of aggrievement and a blunt set of demands borne out of the Gronau episode, they took advantage of West Germany’s legal planning process and a political landscape that was in flux at both the local and national levels to force the Bund to suspend indefinitely its building plans in the city. In the hiatus, Wolfgang Hesse, his team of local planners, and the City Council reasserted the city’s prerogatives with profound results for its physical landscape.

The single most important moment in Bonn’s postwar urban planning history since it was chosen to serve as the Federal Republic’s provisional capital in 1949 occurred almost exactly twenty years later, on November 28, 1969, when the newly elected Federal Chancellor, Willy Brandt, declared an immediate halt to all new federal construction in the city. The primary target of this second Baustopp was a massive federal development at the northern edge of Bad Godesberg. Although Brandt’s decree allowed for the completion of two high-rises that were already well under way, it put an end to plans to construct up to five more towers on the same site. The protests that caused the indefinite building freeze were spearheaded by a local group that called itself the Bonn City-Forum Citizens’ Initiative (Bürgerinitiative City-Forum Bonn) and received support from the national architectural professional association, the Association of German Architects (Bund Deutscher Architekten, BDA). Founded by a local art historian named Roland Günter, the Citizens’ Initiative forcefully criticized the proposed development on aesthetic, functional, and procedural grounds.

At its maximum, the proposed Bad Godesberg development consisted of seven towers (Figure 71), which ranged from a modest eleven stories to a more imposing twenty-seven stories, and all of which bore a similar cruciform footprint, garnering them the nickname “Kreuzbauten” (literally, “Cross-buildings”). All of the structures were designated for federal ministries, and altogether federal planners intended the campus to serve as the core of a new Government District, a counterpart to the Parliamentary District that planners still hoped would coalesce around Egon Eiermann’s office tower for Bundestag members and committees only a couple kilometers to the north (Figure 72). Like the Bundestag development, the Godesberg plans
emerged from the Federal Planning Council that Johannes Rossig convened in the early 1960s to develop solutions to the Bund’s quickly growing space shortage (see previous chapter). Rossig’s ultimate goal was to provide office space for the entire federal workforce in Bonn and end the Bund’s costly and inefficient use of leased office space. The space problem, which emerged within months of Bonn becoming the capital, was only getting worse, as an ever expanding federal workforce stretched the organic limits of commercial real estate in the Bonn area and ran up against the first federal Baustopp passed by the Bundestag in 1956.

The Bund’s lack of space and dependence on leases left many federal ministries and agencies splintered and scattered around the city and its suburbs. According to an account compiled by Rossig’s office in 1964, out of twenty federal ministries, fifteen relied on at least some rented space, and five were housed exclusively in rented quarters.1 Thus, a secondary objective of the Planning Council was to consolidate as much of the federal bureaucracy as possible within several discrete districts in and around the city. To that end, in its very first meetings in the summer of 1962, the Planning Council identified two such areas in which to concentrate development: one around the current Bundeshaus, encompassing the Gronau, the Villa Hammerschmidt and Palais Schaumburg, and the Foreign Office and Postal Ministry buildings to their north, and the other on the northern edge of Bad Godesberg. By the mid-1960s, Rossig’s Building Department would add a third site, the area around the Ministries of Defense and Economics building in the town of Duisdorf just to the west of Bonn, giving the Bund a trifocal presence in the region. Of the three, the Bad Godesberg site was the only one without any federal presence already in place. The area along the border between Bonn and Bad Godesberg still had an essentially rural character, and the large expanse of undeveloped land

1 “Raumbedarf und gegenwärtige Unterbringung der Bundesressorts,” attachment to Treasury Minister Werner Dollinger, Cabinet Presentation Draft, May 1964 (BArch, B 134/7487), 175.
with easy traffic links to the Parliament District to the north was a major point of attraction for federal planners. That it was also technically outside of Bonn’s borders, thus bypassing an increasingly fraught relationship with the city and remaining just outside the central battleground of the 1956 building freeze, also spoke in favor of the site.

On one hand, a drastic reduction in the number of locations around the city occupied by federal agencies stood to shrink the Bund’s footprint in Bonn. On the other hand, the consolidation of the federal bureaucracy into several distinct campuses ensured that its presence would become far more visible. When the Planning Council enthusiastically opted for high-rises, which it justified on the grounds of reducing construction costs, maximizing office space, and preserving green space, the resulting federal architectural profile seemed to spell the end of Bonn’s two-thousand year history as a scenic city on the Rhine with a skyline defined by church towers. Federal planners and their supporters in the Bundestag won approval for the first phase of the Parliamentary District, the 30-story office building for Bundestag members and committees, after ignoring objections, including those from the building’s architect, and out-negotiating the city’s administration to acquire the land and requisite zoning changes with almost no strings attached. Although the major debates around the planning and design of that tower had occurred during or before 1965, the delays in beginning construction meant that its physical effects on the city and landscape only became apparent in 1967, just as the Bund was disclosing final development plans for the first phase of construction in Bad Godesberg. The public’s discontent with the outcome of the Bundestag project would form the emotional core and driving force behind efforts to halt development in Bad Godesberg.

The sudden end to a project that represented years of work and careful negotiations came as somewhat of a shock to federal planners. However, the emphatic public stand against the Bad
Godesberg plans was hardly a sudden occurrence. This conflict represented the culmination of several trends in the politics of federal architecture and urban planning in Bonn that had been gradually developing since the 1950s. Nevertheless, the Citizens’ Initiative’s triumph depended on the timely coincidence of several key events in late 1969, including the particular circumstances of the Bund’s plans, the local transition to Groß-Bonn through the city’s incorporation of its neighbors, including Bad Godesberg, and the transition to the administration of Willy Brandt, West Germany’s first SPD Chancellor. With that conjunction in place and against a backdrop of simmering public disaffection with the changes to the city wrought by twenty years of the Bund’s neglect of local needs and concerns, Günter and his collaborators took advantage of a provision in West German planning law to make their case directly to local and federal planning officials. They were loud and persuasive enough to force Chancellor Brandt to suspend federal plans pending a comprehensive review of the planning process and the needs of the federal administration.

The First Development Contract for the Bad Godesberg Government District

The federal plans that finally precipitated the crisis in 1969 were actually the second phase of the Bad Godesberg project, the first phase having officially commenced in May 1967 with a development contract between the city and the Bund. The prehistory of that agreement can be found in the earliest meetings of the Planning Council, where discussion of plans for northern Bad Godesberg occupied equal space on the agendas with the Parliamentary district. The Council’s early projections, seven high-rise office buildings along with numerous low-rise subsidiary buildings for five federal ministries, were quite close to the final proposals submitted
to Bad Godesberg officials, and the Council’s sub-group, the Planning Group, constructed scale architectural models (now lost) of different ideas for comparison and critique by the larger group. Few design details were worked out at this early stage, but Johannes Rossig cautioned the group to avoid the “excessive scale in the proportions of the high-rises” for which Brasilia had gained recognition.² Rossig did not elaborate on the point, but the Council’s subsequent rejection of a concept that included a twenty-seven-story tower as politically untenable in Bad Godesberg and its recommendation to cap the height of any building at fifteen stories suggest that height was the primary objection.³

The Planning Council’s decision to execute Eiermann’s Bundestag tower as the first step toward its larger development goals shifted the planners’ attention to the specifics of that project’s design, the parliamentary approval process, and negotiations with the city, and the activities of the Council itself slowed markedly after 1964. However, the battles surrounding Langer Eugen did nothing to remove the Bad Godesberg project from the federal building agenda nor reduce its scope and ambition, and within months of signing the sales agreement for the Gronau, members of Rossig’s Building Department at the Treasury Ministry had begun negotiations with Bad Godesberg’s City Manager Fritz Brüse over the control of a large piece of land along the city’s northern border. Eighteen months later those negotiations resulted in an agreement, codified in a contract ratified on May 26, 1967, in which Bad Godesberg would rezone the land for the exclusive use of the federal government and make the necessary preparations for it to be developed. For its part, according to the agreement, the Bund would

³ That the buildings would be designed for easy vertical expansion at a later date, however, shows that planners never gave up on height as a desirable means for creating space. Federal Planning Council, Summary minutes from the Planning Council Meeting, March 20, 1964 (SAAI EE, Abgeordneten-Hochhaus).
assume all of the expenses for this preparation, which included the construction of a new access road and linking the site to the municipal water and sewer networks. The Bund also agreed to assume all of the costs and legal responsibilities of acquiring the land from its current owners, the largest of which at the time was a horticultural research institute. The contract further specified that it covered only the first stage of development in the area, comprising office buildings for two federal ministries, which are not enumerated but were understood to be the Ministry for Scientific Research (Bundesministerium für wissenschaftliche Forschung), then divided among ten different locations around Bonn, and the Ministry of Justice, which was less splintered but still eccentrically located in the Rosenburg, a villa on the top of the Venusberg in Bonn’s western precinct of Kessenich.³⁴

Subsequent phases of the development would require their own contracts, and this piecemeal approach, favored by the Bund because it allowed the flexibility to adjust plans based on functional needs and political and financial circumstances, was one of several clauses in the agreement that reflected a negotiation process that was dramatically different from that with Bonn. Whereas Bonn repeatedly tried to pressure the Bund into creating a binding development plan for the entire Gronau site rather than just for the Bundestag office tower, Bad Godesberg’s planners explicitly asked that the site be developed in stages, and they made no demands that their federal counterparts provide specifics for their long-term building plans. Although dividing the development of the Bad Godesberg Government District into stages would prove to be the Achilles’ heel of the Bund’s ambitions, seeing eye to eye on the issue made for a far less contentious relationship between municipal and federal officials. It also helped that unlike with the Gronau in Bonn and its popular public recreation facilities, there was no municipal land at

stake in the Bund’s plans for Bad Godesberg, which removed a major source of tension and a potential flashpoint in public opinion. Furthermore, Bad Godesberg—a city with just under half the population of Bonn in the 1960s\(^5\)—never made financial demands of the Bund beyond those specifically linked to the measures necessary to transform and prepare the site for a large office complex.\(^6\) The most radical request made by Bad Godesberg was that the Bund help pay for the city to acquire a new fire engine for its municipal fire department, but this was easily accommodated by an already well-defined and uncontroversial process in West German law for reimbursing localities for expenses incurred as a result of the federal actions. In this case, City Manager Brüse could point to state and local ordinances that stipulated that numerous new large buildings filled with thousands of workers required the city to expand its capacity to fight potential fires.\(^7\)

**Planungsgruppe Stieldorf**

From the 1967 contract, the next step was the creation of building plans, for which the Bund contracted a newly-formed architectural firm, known at that point as Planning Team (Planungsgruppe) Adams-Hornschuh-Türler after its three principle architects, Manfred Adams,

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\(^5\) In 1961, Bonn’s population was 143,850 while Bad Godesberg’s was 65,119. Edith Ennen and Dietrich Höroldt, *Vom Römerkastell zur Bundeshauptstadt: kleine Geschichte der Stadt Bonn*. Bonn: Stollfuß Verlag, 1985, 365.

\(^6\) The negotiations between the Bund and Bad Godesberg and the official and unofficial agreements between the parties that they precipitated are described in two memos by Bad Godesberg City Planning Official, Walter Viktor, both of which were appended to the final May 26, 1967 development contract. Walter Viktor, Bad Godesberg City Planning Official, Memo to Treasury Minister Kurt Schmücker, February 27, 1967; and Walter Viktor, Bad Godesberg City Planning Official, Memo to Treasury Minister Kurt Schmücker, March 31, 1967 (BArch, B 126/42724).

\(^7\) Bad Godesberg City Manager Fritz Brüse, Letter to Finance Minister Franz Josef Strauß and Treasury Minister Kurt Schmücker, April 19, 1967 (BArch, B 126/42724).
Günther Hornschuh, and Peter Türler, all of whom were members of the Planning Council subgroup. On April 3, 1968, just over a year after the first development contract, the Bad Godesberg City Council approved the firm’s designs for two cruciform high-rises, one twelve stories and the other fifteen, each intended to house an entire ministry and all of its sub-agencies (see Fig. 9). The cruciform shape is immediately reminiscent of Le Corbusier’s urban designs from the 1920s for the Ville Contemporaine (1922; Figure 73) and the Plan Voisin for Paris (1925; Figure 74), but there were more immediate justifications for its use in Bad Godesberg than emulation of a great architect, and its selection was not entirely the decision of the Adams-Hornschuh-Türler team. The basic plans for the entire complex had come out of a two-day long Planning Council meeting in 1967, where the members set forth the city-planning rationale and design principles for the site. At the behest of representatives from Bonn, the group solicited the participation from two other prominent West German urban planners, Max Guther from Darmstadt and Rudolf Hillebrecht from Hannover. Together with the Council the planners agreed that a government district in Bad Godesberg comprising a series of high-rises for ministries would provide an ideal functional and visual counterpoint to the parliamentary high-rise in the Gronau. Such a solution would inscribe the different functions of the federal government — legislative and administrative — into the urban plan and skyline of the capital and allow the Bund to reserve the entire Gronau site for the purposes of the Bundestag and Bundesrat, while the greater height of the Gronau tower would clearly reflect the importance of parliament. The choice of cruciform towers allowed for greater office space in a smaller footprint and thus more open pedestrian space surrounding the structures, while also providing a formal accent that further differentiated the two government districts.8

8 Federal Planning Council, Minutes from the Council Meeting at the Treasury Ministry, Bonn, August 31-September 1, 1967 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/162).
The Kreuzbauten were the first commission for Planungsgruppe Adams-Hornschuh-Türler, which in 1969 would add Georg Pollich and become Planungsgruppe Stieldorf. In spite of the firm’s seeming lack of experience, it was an easy choice for the Bund even as it opened a major source of criticism for the development’s critics. When Johannes Rossig and Carl Mertz originally convened the Planning Council in 1962, it asked the architect members, Egon Eiermann, Paul Baumgarten, and Sep Ruf to recommend a set of younger architects that would form the subordinate Planning Group. Working under the auspices of the Mertz’s Federal Building Agency, this group was responsible for developing and executing the conceptual ideas of the Planning Council in greater detail in the form of architectural drawings and models. Sep Ruf brought his former students from Munich, Manfred Adams and Peter Türler. Günther Hornschuh had studied architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin during the same period that Paul Baumgarten taught at the school. Georg Pollich, who studied under Egon Eiermann in Karlsruhe and worked in his studio, only intermittently attended the Planning Group’s meetings, as he quickly became preoccupied with work for Eiermann on “Langer Eugen,” and his boss ultimately seconded him to the Federal Building Agency in Bonn for the duration of the project in order to ensure that the project was carried out to the architect’s specifications.

In selecting Adams et al., the Bund hired a group of architects who had been present and engaged during the project’s entire pre-history and thus would have been familiar with the relevant government personnel and with their client’s functional requirements and aesthetic predispositions. The architects on the Planning Council had solidified an association between West German government architecture and certain principles and formal traits of mid-century High Modernism, notably the high-rise form itself. At a superficial level, the Stieldorf team’s
adoption of a metal grid motif overlaid on the façade of the Kreuzbauten to articulate the buildings’ interior vertical and horizontal divisions imitates a similar element on Eiermann’s parliamentary high-rise (Figure 75), not to mention numerous other of his and Sep Ruf’s buildings. In urban planning terms, the establishment of separate districts for Parliament and the ministries, linked via a transit network and marked architecturally to communicate their function and status, reflected a distinctly High Modernist preference for segregating different functional elements into distinct parts of the city.

Distaste for the formal austerity and overbearing scale of these particular strains of modernism undergirded a significant part of the public’s growing discontent with the federal government’s designs for Bonn. However, the choice of the architectural firm itself also quickly emerged as an issue, as the myriad advantages that seemed to recommend Planungsgruppe Stieldorf for the project could not make up for the problematic manner in which it received the commission. The Bund sought no alternative designs or competing bids, and there certainly was nothing close to an open competition. Federal planners were well within their rights in handling the project in such a closed way, but to outside observers, especially other architectural professionals, it certainly appeared counter to the principles of transparency and democracy espoused by the government whose highest authorities were to be housed in these buildings. Furthermore, it appeared to confirm a secretive trend in federal building during the 1960s, which began with the convening of the Planning Council itself and gained some high-profile attention with Chancellor Ludwig Erhard’s new residence, the Kanzlerbungalow, the controversy around which led Erhard to exclude the press from the topping-out ceremony in 1964.
The Second Development Contract for the Bad Godesberg Government District

By the time that Bad Godesberg had approved the Adams-Hornschuh-Türler designs on April 3, 1968, the city and the Bund were already well into negotiations over the second, ill-fated, phase of the federal development. For this stage, the Bund projected five more cruciform high-rises on the immediately adjacent land and earmarked them for the Federal Ministry of Labor; the Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Forests; and the Federal Ministry of Transportation (Figure 76). For the design of this phase, the Bund turned to two far more established West German architects, Joachim Schürmann and Fritz Bornemann, who cooperated on the plans in the context of a planning collective (*Planungsgemeinschaft*). However, along with the increased size of the project, Schürmann and Bornemann’s assignment also expanded beyond the architectural design of the buildings to include larger urban planning considerations, including traffic connections to the site, its integration into the surrounding parts of the city, and its relationship to the nearby Rhine landscape, as well as to the other federal development sites just to the north.

Both staunch modernists, Schürmann and Bornemann’s ideas and designs for the site hewed closely to the principles that the Planning Council had laid out in 1967. Like the Adams-Hornschuh-Türler design, they would raise the structures on piers, leaving the ground level open for public pedestrian traffic and unobscured views across the space (Figure 77). They also proposed to minimize the isolation of the buildings by creating multi-use spaces at ground level and establishing as many connections as possible to the surrounding area, especially to a proposed public park between the government’s land and the Rhine. They adhered to the cruciform ground plan, creating a unified ensemble of buildings, but to avoid a completely
monotonous appearance, they introduced variation amongst the buildings through different
heights and widths and through different treatments of the facades. Schürmann and Bornemann’s
most dramatic suggestion, and one which directly contradicted earlier decisions by the Planning
Council, was to increase the height of one building to compete directly with the parliamentary
high-rise, a change, they argued, that would create a stronger affinity between the two districts.
Schürmann and Bornemann made a strong theoretical case for their choices, one based on
functional, economic, and aesthetic considerations. However, nowhere in their analysis of their
designs do they reflect on local desires, nor potential objections to such massive development,
which members of the public had been forcefully articulating in the local press since at least the
first disclosures of federal plans for the Gronau in 1963.  

Across the board, the Bad Godesberg proposals seemed to raise little controversy among
government planners and legislators at the local or national level. In the first half of 1969, at the
same time that federal and local officials were closing in on an agreement for the second phase
of the Bad Godesberg development, the first phase was moving swiftly through the Bundestag’s
appropriation process. In a sign of how far the politics of federal building in Bonn had shifted in
the half decade since the debates over the Bundestag office tower, the 1969 budget included a
first installment of thirteen million Deutschmarks for construction of the Kreuzbauten, and the
West German legislature approved it without discussion.  

Neither was there substantial resistance to the Bund’s proposals from Bad Godesberg’s
planning office and City Council, and the negotiations between city and nation over the second
phase proceeded along a path similar to that of the first. The main difference was that in the

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9 Joachim Schürmann and Fritz Bornemann, Press Release regarding the planning process for the
second phase of federal buildings in Bad Godesberg-Nord, September 19, 1969 (Stadtarchiv
Bonn, N 61/165).
10 Deutscher Bundestag, Plenarprotokoll, 5. Wahlperiode, 224. Sitzung, March 26, 1969, 12338-
12340.
second phase, the development contract and the site plan that was the object of the contract were created in tandem rather than sequentially in an attempt to minimize delays. In early May 1969, the Urban Planning Committees (Bauausschuß) of both Bad Godesberg and Bonn’s City Councils gave their approval of the site plan. Bad Godesberg’s full City Council endorsed the second development contract on May 9, approving the site plan several weeks later. Again, the city’s primary concerns were that the Bund provide for infrastructure and services that were adequate for a development comprising multiple new high-rise office towers. Bad Godesberg would be the responsible authority for executing any such measures, conducting the survey work and hiring the engineering firms, and it would technically own the infrastructure, but the Bund would reimburse the city in full for all costs related to this development. There was some discussion regarding the precise dimensions of the necessary infrastructure and regarding its timing—in particular whether the Bund could occupy the new buildings prior to the completion of all of the required work—but such differences were far more easily overcome than Bonn’s demands for tens of millions of Deutschmarks in unrestricted grants.

In conjunction with the deliberations of the local Urban Planning Committees, Bad Godesberg also publicly disclosed the proposal in the form of an architectural model, photos of which were published in the local press (Figure 78). The final version of the development contract stipulated the construction of only two new administrative buildings in the second

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11 The consent of the neighboring community’s City Council’s planning committee — although not its full City Council or planning office — was required for development plans but was generally given pro forma. The discussion within Bonn’s Urban Planning Committee reveals overwhelming support for Schürmann and Bornemann’s solution with only mild concern about the building’s effects on the landscape. Urban Planning Committee of the Bonn City Council, Minutes from the 57th meeting, May 6, 1969 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 61/165).
12 The terms of the second contract were worked out over the course of three meetings on February 28, March 28, and July 26, 1968. The first two meetings are described in Ministerialrat Reich, Treasury Ministry memo, April 3, 1968; and the third meeting is described in Ministerialrat Reich, Treasury Ministry memo, August 1, 1968 (BArch, B 126/42724).
phase, but the model revealed Schürmann and Bornemann’s full proposal for five high-rises. The model included the two high-rises designed by Adams-Hornschuh-Türler, for which excavations would begin in June 1969, but those structures were dwarfed by their neighbors, particularly the proposed twenty-seven-story tower intended to complement Eiermann’s parliamentary tower. The consequences for the surrounding cityscape were profound. Schürmann and Bornemann arranged the five towers in a rough circle around lower subsidiary buildings, effectively creating a miniature city in hinterlands of Bonn and Bad Godesberg that had previously been almost rural in character. There was immediate criticism, with one local editorial attacking the design in terms that called into question the underlying assumptions of the architects and their federal clients. Where Schürmann and Bornemann envisioned the successful union of expressive variety with function and economy, Hartmut Palmer, a local political journalist and frequent critic of the Bund’s building plans, saw the accumulation of similar high-rises as evidence of the “exponential tedium” (“potenzierte Stumpfsinn”) of architecture and worried that the monotony threatened the well-being of the occupants and, by extension, the operation of the ministries for which they worked.¹⁴

The Consequences of Bonn’s Regional Consolidation on the Bad Godesberg Government District

Any criticism existing in May 1969 was quickly cut short, as local political developments of far greater and more immediate impact on the citizens of Bonn and Bad Godesberg eclipsed any debate over federal construction. On May 13, 1969, North Rhine-Westphalia’s Landtag gave the green light to Bonn’s petition to redraw its municipal boundaries, incorporating the

previously independent communities of Bad Godesberg, Beuel, and several smaller towns on its western border. The change would be effective as of August 1, and the newly created Greater Bonn would instantly double the capital’s population to nearly 300,000. Although the news displaced discussions of federal construction plans, the repercussions of the reorganization for the Bund in Bad Godesberg were immediate and ultimately crippling. A few weeks after the reorganization, Johannes Rossig acknowledged the consequences in a letter to Wolfgang Hesse. With new local planning authorities, the plans for the second phase, which Bad Godesberg had passed without objection only a few months before, were now invalid, and crucial steps in the approval process would have to be repeated.\(^{15}\) Rossig and his subordinates in the Building Department at the Treasury Ministry had long been aware of this possibility, and in the months leading up to the signing of the second development contract with Bad Godesberg, Building Department officials expressed a clear sense of urgency. In light of the local political situation, they sought to accelerate the Ministry’s timeline for the Government District in an attempt to clear all of the regulatory and legislative hurdles before the regional restructuring became reality.\(^{16}\) However, federal planning officials could not have predicted that restarting the planning process within the context of the newly formed Greater Bonn would lead not only to the end of the Bad Godesberg project but also a total overhaul of the relationship between the federal government and its capital city.

The protests that stopped the Bad Godesberg development in October and November of 1969 did not take the form of the disruptive marches or public demonstrations characteristic in the United States and Europe in the late 1960s. Rather, Bonn’s citizens achieved their goal

\(^{15}\) Johannes Rossig, Head of the Treasury Ministry’s Building Department, Letter to Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, August 19, 1969 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/74).

\(^{16}\) Otto Casser, Treasury Ministry Building Department, Internal Treasury Ministry Memo, March 5, 1969 (BArch, B 126/42724).
through persistent and pointed criticism of the federal plans entirely within the framework of the legal city planning process, which in the FRG was governed by the Federal Building Law of 1960. In the case of the federal government’s plans for multiple high-rises in Bad Godesberg, two provisions in the Building Law would ultimately function in tandem to allow for the proposal’s undoing. The first provision required that local authorities disclose all development plans to the public for comment. Specifically, they had to make the plans and any necessary explanatory materials available for public inspection for a period of one month and solicit the public’s objections and suggestions. The authorities then had to consider the public commentary, adjust the plans accordingly, and any public concerns that were not specifically addressed had to be appended to the plans with an explanation. Communities most often fulfilled this legal requirement in the form of an exhibition of blueprints, drawings, and models at city hall. This effectively meant that at any given time after 1960 across West Germany, there were scores of small architectural exhibitions—exhibitions with which the public was invited to engage directly. There is no survey of these shows, the public’s reactions to them, nor of the kinds of changes that the public was able to achieve through participating in the process, but it appears that in the vast majority of cases, the public comment phase of planning rarely, if ever, resulted in derailing a project entirely.

Had the Bad Godesberg Council and administration been able to advance the Government District proposal through this public comment step in the summer of 1969 prior to the incorporation of Bad Godesberg into Bonn, the plans would have become legally binding and closed to further review. However, partially due to the distractions and uncertainties caused by the impending reorganization, Bad Godesberg was forced to delay the process, and it became subject to another crucial provision of the Federal Building Law. The law stated unambiguously

that responsibility for urban planning, particularly the preparation and approval of development plans, rested solely with local authorities.\footnote{Ibid, § 2 (1).} With the creation of a new city in Greater Bonn, responsibility and authority for urban planning technically shifted as well, except that in the changeover, Wolfgang Hesse retained his position as City Manager, thus ensuring a certain continuity in planning priorities and attitudes towards federal architectural projects. Thus, building plans that had been legitimately developed in cooperation with the smaller, more pliable suburb now had to face an interim municipal administration and a much larger populace that, by 1969, already felt betrayed by federal planners and had become extremely skeptical of large-scale federal projects.

The uproar over the Bad Godesberg towers is especially striking in contrast to the near silence surrounding another series of federal high-rises of similar height then in development or under construction elsewhere in the region. In the late 1960s, the Ministry of the Interior—still headquartered in the Düppel-Kaserne in northern Bonn—received a twelve-story building behind the converted barracks (see Fig. 35) while the Ministry for Economics—based in the Gallwitz-Kaserne (see Fig. 33) in Duisdorf—received a fourteen-story addition on its site (Figure 79). Both structures have a simple square ground plan and facades composed of alternating bands of concrete and glass. The local press paid little attention to these projects, and they did not appear in the complaints lodged by the Citizens’ Initiative or the BDA. Their absence from the debate shows that the Bund could successfully expand its space significantly without angering the local public as long as certain criteria were met. First, the buildings for the Interior and Economics Ministries were designed entirely in-house by the Federal Building Agency, and they were constructed on federally-owned land. Thus, they required no external input nor approval from local authorities, and the public had no official forum in which to object. Second, they were built
on large campuses with numerous existing structures, which literally shielded them from the public eye, and unobtrusiveness was a key factor in avoiding controversy.

Public Protest: the *Bund Deutscher Architekten* and the Citizens’ Initiative

In the absence of a functioning City Council in the months after the reorganization, Franz Meyers exercised caretaker authority as Commissioner for the new city. In September 1969, he gave the Government District plans, which had only recently been approved by Bad Godesberg’s now defunct City Council, the green light to proceed with the public disclosure period. Wolfgang Hesse, as the official in charge of implementing the planning process, wasted little time, and a model of the plans was unveiled in Bonn’s town hall on October 7, 1969 (Figure 80). The official model differed from the one disclosed to the public the previous spring in one crucial aspect. Rather than representing all five cruciform office towers designed by Schürmann and Bornemann, which the Bund ultimately intended to build, the model only included the two towers that were explicitly mentioned in the second development contract with Bad Godesberg. This difference went unnoticed in the press, but the more modest vision made no difference to the outcome of the public’s consideration. An internal document, produced by the city after the month-long exhibition had ended, summarizes the public response to the Government District plans and records forty-six written responses supported by eighty-nine signatures. While the numbers may not suggest an extremely widespread movement, the uniform negativity of the responses and the intensity and clarity with which they are articulated makes it immediately clear why Chancellor Brandt and his cabinet shut down the development several weeks later. The
comments attack the project from almost every conceivable angle and make it clear that the only satisfactory way forward was for the Bund to start over entirely. ¹⁹

Many of the comments came from local individuals. For example, an “M. Günter” suggested that the building plans were inadequate for any other future use in the event of German reunification and the relocation of the federal government to Berlin. ²⁰ The demand that government buildings in Bonn be designed with a secondary use in mind had been an important consideration in determining how to build in a provisional capital. Federal planners believed that buildings that could easily be transferred to such large institutions as Bonn’s university, a hospital, or local government when the federal government vacated the city would be more likely to gain City Council and Bundestag approval. Such flexible designs would not leave post-capital Bonn with a profusion of abandoned, unusable buildings. However, construction on the scale of Langer Eugen or the Kreuzbauten seriously strained the credibility of the federal government’s seriousness in approaching that problem just as they belied any remaining rhetoric insisting on Bonn’s provisional status. Nevertheless, they raised the specter of a future Bonn full of empty, deteriorating skyscrapers.

Another local citizen, Friedrich Brink, assailed the cumulative effect of the high-rises on the surrounding landscape. Specifically, he lamented the potentially unflattering contrast of the rectilinear concrete and steel boxes with two of the area’s most important local symbols: the Drachenfels and the Godesburg. Obstructing or detracting from the view of either would be an aesthetic loss for the citizens of Bonn, but the Drachenfels, with its enduring associations with The Song of the Nibelungs, had been a major tourist destination in Europe since the Romantic

¹⁹ Bonn City Planning Office, Internal memo summarizing the public’s responses to the Bad Godesberg-Nord Government District development plans, November 20, 1969 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/74).
²⁰ Ibid.
era. Thus, local critics saw in the high-rises a possible threat to an important national landmark and piece of Bonn’s traditional local economy. Furthermore, Brink made the astute observation that the model worked to conceal all of these consequences by not representing the wider urban context of the structures. Brink implored the new City Council not to succumb to a “craving for status” (Großmannssucht) and to reject the development entirely.21

However, the longest, most carefully considered, and most effective responses came from two groups, the Association of German Architects and the aforementioned Citizens’ Initiative. The BDA was the most important professional organization for architects and urban planners in West Germany and sought through its activities and publications to improve the quality of the country’s architecture and urban design and promote the works of its members nationally and internationally. Bonn City-Forum Citizens’ Initiative was founded by Roland Günter for the explicit purpose of providing a local public campaign to oppose the Bad Godesberg Government District. The BDA broadcast its opposition to the project in a press release on October 23, 1969, while Günter and the Citizens’ Initiative published and disseminated a brochure entitled Regierungsviertel Bonn — ‘Märkisches Viertel’ der Bundeshauptstadt? (Bonn’s Government District — ‘Märkisches District’ of the Capital City?).22 The title itself contained an implicit criticism of the complex in its reference to the Märkisches Viertel, a district of West Berlin where the Association for Social Apartment Construction was in the process of constructing an enormous housing estate. Like the Government District but far more immense, the Märkisches

21 Ibid.
Viertel consisted of uniform high-rise buildings, and it came under attack both for its monotony and for the lack of sufficient infrastructure and integration into the surrounding city.\footnote{Der Spiegel, “West-Berlin: Slums verschoben,” no. 68, September 9, 1968, 134-138.}

The BDA and Citizens’ Initiative coordinated their statements, and their complaints reinforced each other to a very high degree. Both groups agreed that the proposal in question was an abject failure on aesthetic and functional grounds. Neither group challenged the underlying idea of creating a consolidated Government District in Bonn. They recognized that Bonn’s provisional status had consistently sabotaged the Bund’s ability to plan and build for its administrations and had wrought havoc with the city’s urban development and financial health. Indeed, both viewed the Government District as an ideal opportunity for the West German government to give architectural form to its democratic values and ideals and to represent the country’s global stature and geopolitical importance. The model’s fragmentary presentation of the buildings in total isolation from the surrounding city implied a stark separation between the government and the public, a divide that both groups claimed was unbecoming to a democratic society. Furthermore, the aesthetic and representational faults were matched by the deficiencies of the design’s functional program. The critics pointed out that the compositions of federal ministries were subject to dramatic changes with each new federal administration, with agencies and even entire ministries being created and dissolved based on the priorities of the Chancellor, and they claimed that the conventional office space of the Kreuzbauten lacked the flexibility to accommodate such shifts.

While neither group articulated precisely what form large federal structures should take, they were not automatically averse to the modernist style of the high-rises. In its brochure, the Citizens’ Initiative referenced Germany’s leading place in the innovation of modernist design during the first three decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and expressed a desire to recapture some of that
stature for postwar Germany. In a clear sign of the group’s architectural allegiances, the brochure also included extensive quotations by Bauhaus founder and leading German modernist Walter Gropius and by the Norwegian architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz. The unsourced and undated quotes do not deal with issues of style but rather with architecture’s relationship to the society that produces it, its capacity, in the words of Gropius, “to release ethical energies,” and its responsibility, per Norberg-Schulz, to “contribute to an expansion of coexistence.”24 Such observations were hardly groundbreaking in 1969, but in the Bund’s focus on the pragmatics of space and solving the political riddle of building in Bonn and in the city’s determination to address its urban planning problems, more abstract considerations were almost totally absent from the discussion. In demanding a reset for federal construction, the Citizens’ Initiative wanted to reintroduce what its members saw as more fundamental questions about architecture and its connection to a place and people as a precondition for more concrete design decisions.

The Citizens’ Initiative’s brochure called the model on display “shameful” (beschämenswert) and “embarrassing” (blamable),25 but both the Initiative and the BDA reserved their sharpest criticism for the process that had led to the current situation. They decried the Bund’s secrecy in developing the project and commissioning designs entirely behind closed doors. They even went so far as to accuse the Treasury Minister, Kurt Schmücker, of lying about the state of the plans to a member of the Bundestag.26 That federal planners had subsequently announced that the third phase of the project would now be subject to a competition was too

24 In making these points, the Citizens’ Initiative also noted that Bonn’s City Manager, Wolfgang Hesse, was the son of Fritz Hesse, the mayor of Dessau responsible for bringing Walter Gropius’s Bauhaus to the city and staunchly defending it as the political tide turned against the school in the late 1920s. Bürgerinitiative City-Forum Bonn, Regierungsviertel Bonn — ‘Märkisches Viertel’ der Bundeshauptstadt, 16-17.
26 Ibid.
little, too late. The sole remedy was clear: federal planners should immediately cancel the current development and restart the process, which should now be based on an open, public competition of ideas. For the BDA, which advocated not for the interests of individual cities, but rather the disciplines of architecture and urban planning and their practitioners nationwide, open competitions were a significant method for maintaining and improving design standards, as well as ensuring that the BDA’s members had every opportunity to win prestigious commissions. The Citizens’ Initiative took the demand a step further and called for a prior public discussion about the objectives of the Government District as a way to establish appropriate parameters for any competition. For the local citizens group, rational urban planning leading to a more functional and beautiful Bonn was the overarching goal, and an open competition was an important part of reaching that end, but it was only useful to the extent that the local public and local government were included in the drafting process and on the final jury. Robust and direct public participation in the planning process was the key to better urban planning.

The End of the Bad Godesberg Development

At the end of the public comment period on November 7, 1969, no decision from Bonn’s interim advisory council (Beirat) or Commissioner Franz Meyers was forthcoming. The election of Greater Bonn’s first official City Council was not for two more days, and the Council would not meet until the end of the month. Meanwhile, the local press, and increasingly the regional press, kept alive the drum beat of critical coverage, aided by contributions from several prominent West Germans. Over the course of November, Professor Tilman Buddensieg of the Free University of Berlin and Chairman of the Association of German Art Historians (Verband
Deutscher Kunsthistoriker), the famous journalist and politician, Eugen Kogon, and such well-known architects and city planners as Ernst May in Hamburg and Thomas Sieverts in Berlin all voiced their disapproval of the proposed Bad Godesberg Government District.²⁷

When Chancellor Willy Brandt met with his cabinet on November 28 and decided to table the project indefinitely, the rationale closely echoed the refrain of criticism that the public comment phase had unleashed. Planning for a Government District would start from scratch with the initiation of a competition. Brandt could also give a very practical reason for reconsidering future federal development. In convening his first cabinet, Brandt had consolidated several ministries, most notably dissolving the Treasury Ministry and distributing its portfolios between the Finance and Economics Ministries. In the shake-up, Johannes Rossig’s Building Department was reassigned to the Finance Ministry where it would remain until being moved again three years later to the Ministry for Regional Planning, Building, and Urban Development. Major cabinet makeovers were not unprecedented in new administrations, but Brandt’s actions doubled perfectly as a pretense for reevaluating the federal government’s needs for office space in Bonn.²⁸

The decision elicited sighs of relief in Bonn, and the public welcomed the immediate promises of better communication about federal plans in the city.²⁹ Local officials quickly began exploiting their newfound leverage and pressing their planning interests with the Bund. Already in January 1970, City Manager Wolfgang Hesse was wielding the public and its potential disapproval as a threat in negotiations with the Chancellor’s office over its desire to build a new Chancellery. Hesse wanted the Bund to fulfill other promises that it had made to the city, such as

expanding parking around other ministry buildings, before it moved ahead with the Chancellery project, and he noted that such unfulfilled promises were no longer lost on either the City Council or the public.\textsuperscript{30} The new Chancellery, which was ultimately constructed next to the Palais Schaumburg with virtually no local input, would prove to be an early test for the new era of cooperation between Bund and Bonn in planning matters (see Conclusion).

For Johannes Rossig, for whom the Bad Godesberg Government District represented years of work, the building freeze was upsetting, as it laid bare the tensions he faced as he sought to provide the federal workforce with adequate accommodations. In a meeting with other building officials on the same day as Brandt’s decision, Rossig emphasized that he was under enormous pressure to create office space as quickly as possible, pressure that only increased by taking the Bad Godesberg project off of the table. Rossig noted that stopping work on the shovel-ready plans for the Government District in order to hold a competition could delay completion by three or four years, and he expressed dismay that Schürmann and Bornemann’s designs could not simply be altered in height or size to make them more palatable to critics. As an alternative to a lengthy competition, Rossig suggested that the Bund convene diverse panels of experts to develop new plans, which could then be discussed with the public in open meetings.\textsuperscript{31} Bonn’s City Council, City Planning Office, and public would accept nothing short of an open competition, and they pushed for even more far reaching reforms and considerations, adding layers and complications to the planning process that would make Rossig’s predicted building delays of several years seem wildly optimistic in retrospect.

\textsuperscript{30} Bonn City Planning Office, Notes from a meeting between Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Chancellor Brandt’s Chief of Staff Horst Ehmke, and the head of the Chancellery’s Legal Department Ernst Kern, January 9, 1970 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/74).

\textsuperscript{31} Treasury Ministry Building Department, Memo describing a meeting between Building Department Head Johannes Rossig and other Federal Building Officials, November 28, 1969 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/74).
The first major initiative was the creation in February 1970 of the Task Force for Federal Construction in Bonn (Arbeitskreis Bundesbauten Bonn, ABB). The ABB consisted of roughly equal members from federal and municipal administrations, token representation from the administration of North Rhine-Westphalia, and a changing selection of external, independent experts to advise on architectural and planning issues. The ABB’s initial mission was to coordinate the accommodation of the highest federal authorities in Bonn with the urban planning of the city. The group’s first order of business was simply to take stock of the planning situation in Bonn, a task the group construed much more broadly than an accounting of square footage and road congestion. The ABB also wanted to return to more fundamental questions about the state of urban planning in general, the role of architecture in representing a national government, and the desires and concerns of the local public.  

Thus, the group’s first major decision was to convene an Expert Colloquium (Expertenkolloquium) in Bonn as soon as possible. The explicit aims of the colloquium, to which both a host of West German practitioners and the local public would be invited, were to provide federal, state, and local planners with comprehensive information about possible solutions for the city’s problems and give the public an opportunity to present and discuss ideas regarding the integration of the federal government into Bonn. The colloquium was held in September 1970, and the resulting report offered a detailed analysis of Bonn’s planning situation and a comprehensive set of recommendations for moving forward. The colloquium took a balanced

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33 Ibid.
approach, giving equal weight to federal and municipal concerns. In particular, it paid close attention to how the approximately one million square feet of additional office space that the experts estimated the Bund would need by 1980 might be created within Bonn in ways that enhanced the city’s functionality and appearance and respected its residents’ desire to maintain a strong connection to the historical roots of the city. To that end, the colloquium report suggests taking measures to augment the physical presence and civic role of the University of Bonn in the city. It also suggested improving the accessibility and the facilities in the traditional centers of Bonn and Bad Godesberg in order to reinforce them as commercial, social, and cultural hubs. For the Bund, the experts advised establishing a third, administrative pole in the territory between Bonn and Bad Godesberg, bracketed by the Gronau and Kreuzbauten developments then already under way. This government district should be well integrated into the other parts of the city, but it should remain distinct and not overshadow Bonn’s older, more established neighborhoods in scale or profile. Furthermore, the Expert Colloquium recommended reserving a swathe of land immediately along the Rhine between Bonn and Bad Godesberg exclusively for recreational green space.\(^{34}\)

If the ABB and the Expert Colloquium seemed to represent one pillar of Bonn’s demands on the Bund—that for greater local input and a more holistic approach to planning and to the integration of federal buildings into the city—the Bund satisfied a second pillar in the summer of 1970 with the signing of the so-called “Bonn Agreement” (“Bonn-Vereinbarung”). Negotiated in great haste between federal and municipal officials and signed with great fanfare in Bonn’s Old Town Hall, the agreement for the first time detailed the mutual responsibilities and obligations of the Bund and Bonn in the realm of city planning. On the Bund’s side, the contract formally

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conceded that the presence of the federal government had placed extraordinary burdens on the city and committed the Bund to compensating the city financially with federal funds for the next decade. In total, the grants and loans detailed in the contract, all of which would be earmarked for city planning projects and municipal amenities and services, amounted to over one billion Deutschmarks by 1979, over four times the amount that City Manager Hesse had demanded during the Gronau negotiations in 1965. The decade-long time horizon was as notable as the total sum, as it was an explicit acknowledgement that German reunification was not imminent and thus Bonn was the de facto permanent capital of West Germany. To the local public, the Bonn-Vereinbarung was presented as an unqualified victory for the city, and the combination of an official acceptance of responsibility backed by a binding pledge of unprecedented material support led to proclamations that the “stepchild had been adopted” (“Stiefkind adoptiert”).

However, the agreement also bound Bonn to consider and advance the Bund’s interests in several ways. Just as it was critical to the city that it have input into federal planning activities, the contract stipulated that Bonn coordinate its planning activities and capital investment program with the federal government. Specifically, Bonn had to present its plans to the Bund for official comment, and those comments would be submitted to the City Council as part of its deliberations on the city’s planning policies. The Bonn-Vereinbarung also addressed the content of those policies, requiring Bonn to provide and maintain the infrastructure, facilities, and


services that fulfilled the needs of the Bund, its authorities, its workers, and its guests. Among the specific tasks enumerated as part of this condition, some were quite concrete, such as ensuring the city was well integrated into long-distance transportation networks and providing for adequate fire protection. Others, were more abstract, particularly Bonn’s obligation to establish a “representative cityscape” (“repräsentatives Stadtbild”).\footnote{Bonn-Vereinbarung.} If Bonn was to receive the special treatment befitting its role as a capital city, it would not only have to fulfill the functions of a capital, it would have to look like a capital, as well.

The end of Bonn’s time as a provisional capital seemed to be at hand, brought about by the collision of public opinion with federal plans that, in size and scale, were anything but provisional. There is some irony that Willy Brandt, a life-long member of the Social Democratic Party, arrived in office just in time to preside over the final stages of the shift towards permanence. It was the SPD that had opposed the choice of Bonn in 1949 and that had regularly introduced motions during those first years in the Bundestag aimed at undermining Bonn’s legitimacy, culminating in the first building freeze of 1956. However, Brandt’s controversial new foreign policy dovetailed nicely with the entrenchment of Bonn deeper into the political landscape. The so-called New Eastern Policy (\textit{Neue Ostpolitik}) reoriented the Adenauer-era West German policy towards the Eastern Bloc, and particularly the German Democratic Republic, away from isolation and towards engagement and rapprochement. The move to begin to normalize relations with East Germany greatly eased tensions in the region, and in the long run, it likely contributed to the collapse of the authoritarian and repressive Socialist Unity Party. At the time, however, it reflected the recognition that the political differences between the two Germanys were insurmountable, and division would be the enduring status quo. Thus, the
simultaneous advent of Ostpolitik and the Bonn-Vereinbarung strongly aligned the FRG’s policy towards its neighbor with that towards its capital city.

With the framework for cooperation and mutual support established by the ABB and the Bonn-Vereinbarung in place by the middle of 1970, the two sides were poised to restart the federal planning process, begin resolving the Bund’s space deficits, and address the city’s planning problems. The next step would be conducting a comprehensive and open national competition, and the brief distributed to planners and architects was the first in the history of Bonn’s recent development to place symbolic and representational questions on the same level with functional concerns. The Bund wanted the city and the federal buildings that emerged from this process to project visibly the liberal, democratic values of the Federal Republic and to reflect the internal structure, relationships, and function of the national government. Unfortunately for any prospects of turning Bonn into a “representative city,” the local public had thus far loudly denounced the federal buildings that most threatened to effect precisely that transformation, Langer Eugen and the Kreuzbauten. With those buildings looming permanently over the Bonn landscape as reminders, and with a local public empowered by its recent victories, there were now substantial countervailing forces against any ostentation on the part of the Bund at the perceived expense of the city.

Thus, the issue of representation that erupted in the planning discourse for the Bund in the wake of the turmoil of 1969 and that overlapped neatly with the change in Bonn’s provisional status still had to clear the high hurdle of local resistance to changes in the city’s identity. The various task forces, working groups, and competitions that were convened in the following years were intended to facilitate compromise and advance the Bund’s construction agenda, but their effect was to increase the complexity in the process significantly. This made an already sclerotic
planning process even slower with the result that many of the federal proposals of the early 1970s took over a decade to reach execution, were only partially constructed, or fell off of the design table entirely. This meant that Bonn’s appearance as the federal capital changed little during the decade, and its identity as a city faced little pressure from the Bund, settling into a mode that would remain relatively constant for the remainder of its tenure as capital.
Conclusion: Federal Planning, Democracy, and the Status of Local Identity in the National Capital in the 1970s

The breakdown of late 1969 marked a nadir in federal-municipal relations in the Federal Republic’s still nominally provisional capital, but it also prompted a complete overhaul in how the federal government treated its municipal host, both financially and politically. The Bonn-Vereinbarung formally tied the two antagonists together by recognizing Bonn’s extraordinary role and by establishing a detailed set of obligations that each side owed to the other, including a hefty financial commitment from the Bund to the city. The agreement thus aligned Bonn’s interest in supporting healthy urban development in the capital with the Bund’s interest in maintaining adequate services, facilities, and infrastructure for federal authorities and related organizations and providing a symbolic face for the Federal Republic. With its broadly representative membership and access to expert advice, the Arbeitskreis Bundesbauten Bonn ostensibly offered the platform from which to steer federal development in the city in a way that fulfilled the needs of the city and state while avoiding the pitfalls—a lack of transparency and inclusion and a fraught politics—that had previously plagued it.

Bonn was finally emerging from the shadow of provisionality, a process that had unfolded slowly and in stages over the previous decade. The debates surrounding Bonn’s campaign to reform the region’s political geography and incorporate itself and the neighboring towns into a single entity initially raised key questions about the definition and function of a capital city and about the Bund’s appropriate role in the urban planning of its host. In making their arguments for and against the numerous different proposals for regional reform that emerged during the 1960s, state and municipal officials compiled detailed data about the precise effects of the Bund’s presence on the capital and its suburbs—the financial costs and the strains
on services and infrastructure—which militated in favor of integration. However, this information also strongly suggested that greater involvement in city planning and greater financial support from the federal budget was urgently needed in order to maintain and expand the city’s basic functions. When Bonn finally succeeded in merging with its surrounding communities to form Groß-Bonn, it gave the enlarged city’s administration the legal and political leverage it needed to demand and receive that support.

The Bund’s purchase of the Gronau and its subsequent construction of Langer Eugen, the 30-story high-rise for Bundestag members, continued to entrench Bonn as the permanent capital, while also opening up a major rift between that incipient identity and the traditional character of the city cherished by local residents. Although unsuccessful at the time, Bonn’s demand that unfettered financial support from the Bund be part of any deal that allowed the sale of the land and the erection of the office tower set a crucial precedent by linking federal development with broad subsidies for the city, a link that recast the relationship between city and state by acknowledging that Bonn’s status and the Bund’s responsibilities were both extraordinary. The tower itself—even before it was completed—dominated the city’s skyline so completely that it came into competition with a natural landscape that had been a mainstay of local identity and the area’s economy for centuries. Its scale left any remaining pretense about Bonn’s provisional status in tatters, but it also galvanized the local public against federal development and primed it for more strident resistance to future proposals. Finally, the Bundestag debate over funding for Langer Eugen revealed that, in spite of vocal opposition, there was an appetite within parliament for expanding the Bund’s physical footprint in the capital in order to address its growing space deficits, and the approval of the parliamentary building plans effectively lowered the political threshold for subsequent developments.
The threads that emerged in these first two episodes—pertinent questions about the definition and functions of a capital city and about a federal government’s obligations to it, regional reform and efforts to exert greater control over municipal space and urban planning, public services groaning under the weight of rapid growth and uncoordinated planning, a federal bureaucracy splintered and strained by insufficient and inadequate office space, and public disaffection with the results of the Bund’s efforts to solve Bonn’s problems—all came together with explosive consequences in the next major federal proposal, a complex of high-rise towers to house federal ministries in Bad Godesberg. The appearance of the parliamentary tower had sensitized the local public to what it stood to lose at the hands of unchecked federal development and provided the emotional stimulus for protest. The debates of the 1960s opened the discursive space in which to reconsider Bonn’s status and the Bund’s relationship to its capital city. Finally, West German planning law combined with the successful redrawing of Bonn’s municipal boundaries to provide the legal and political foundation for the success of local protests.

The uproar over the Kreuzbauten and its aftermath in the early 1970s finally brought the issue of identity and representation in federal architecture—concerns that had previously been suppressed by the conflicting imperatives to add office space as quickly and economically as possible and maintain Bonn’s provisional character—to the foreground. With large federal skyscrapers apparently proliferating across the Bonn cityscape and with Brandt’s new policy of détente with East Germany, the concept of provisionality in Bonn held little meaning for future plans, and even the “nominal” aspect of the status continued to recede. In his government policy statement (Regierungserklärung) made in front of the Bundestag on January 18, 1973, Chancellor Brandt referred to Bonn as the “federal capital city” (“Bundeshauptstadt”), marking the first time that term—the normal German term for a capital city—had been applied to Bonn in
an official, public forum.¹ Two years later, the term became further entrenched when the Bund and Bonn renegotiated and extended the Bonn-Vereinbarung. Whereas the 1970 agreement still referred to Bonn with the longer, more equivocal title, “Seat of the Federal Government” (“Sitz der Bundesregierung”), the 1975 contract used the straightforward “Bundeshauptstadt.”² In the official language of the state, Bonn’s identity as the capital of West Germany was beyond question, but the expression of this identity in the city’s space and architecture remained riven by local desires to remain connected to deeper history and traditions that remained irreconcilable with the national need for new office space and desire for clearly national structures.

In accordance with demands made by the Citizens’ Initiative in protesting the Bad Godesberg Government District and promises made by Chancellor Brandt when he cancelled further work on the project, the final recommendation of the Expert Colloquium convened by the ABB in September 1970 was to conduct an open, national planning competition. The goal of this first competition would not be the design of individual federal buildings. Rather, it would establish a baseline of the best ideas for the size, shape, distribution, and sequence of federal development in Bonn and the integration of that development into the existing urban fabric. Individual buildings or complexes would be the subject of subsequent competitions. This deliberate and multi-step process was supposed to yield the best solutions at both the macro and micro scale, but the actual result was to delay any actual construction indefinitely.

² The full German title of the 1975 agreement was the “Vereinbarung über den weiteren Ausbau Bonns als Bundeshauptstadt.” The agreement extended federal financial assistance for urban development in Bonn in perpetuity, stipulating a formula for the division of costs amongst the city, Land, and Bund rather than specifying an amount to which Bonn should be entitled each year for a set number of years as in the earlier Bonn-Vereinbarung. The text of the 1975 agreement is reprinted in Karl-Heinz van Kaldenkerken and Friedrich Busmann, Ausbau der Bundeshauptstadt: 10 Jahre Hauptstadtvereinbarung 1975-1985; Dokumentation (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1985), 118.
The New Chancellery Building

The major exception to this agenda in the early 1970s was the new Chancellery building (Neues Bundeskanzleramt; Figure 81). Declaring an urgent need, Chancellor Brandt and his Chief of Staff, Horst Ehmke, bypassed the planning processes being developed within the ABB and conducted a nationwide design competition for a new office building to replace Palais Schaumburg. The announcement of the competition in November 1970 contravened both the explicit advice of the ABB’s Expert Colloquium, which recommended that all federal authorities be included in the upcoming planning competition, and the explicit requests of Bonn’s City Planning Office, which demanded local input on all federal projects. The Chancellor’s shirking of these appeals was only possible because the building could be constructed entirely on federally-owned land and thus did not require the approval of municipal authorities, but it drew an immediate rebuke from the chairman of the Expert Colloquium, Klaus Müller-Ibold. In the press conference publicly unveiling the colloquium’s results, Müller-Ibold, a well-respected urban planning professor in Dortmund, lambasted the Bund for this evasion and questioned if federal planners had any intention of following the Expert Colloquium’s guidance.

Circumventing the experts’ recommendations did not guarantee swift development, and the new Chancellery building was not completed until 1976, by which time Brandt was out of

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3 Palais Schaumburg remained standing as a representative reception building and additional office space.
5 Bonn City Planning Office, Notes from a meeting between Bonn City Manager Wolfgang Hesse, Chancellor Brandt’s Chief of Staff Horst Ehmke, and the head of the Chancellery’s Legal Department Ernst Kern, January 9, 1970 (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/74).
office. Planungsgruppe Stieldorf—the same group of architects that was responsible for the Kreuzbauten—won the design competition for their austere, grid-like two-story structure (Figure 82), and the jury lauded it for the way it tied together and gave order to the existing structures on the site.\(^7\) This would constitute some of the only praise that the black steel-clad building would receive. Its first occupant, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, famously compared it unfavorably to a bank or insurance building,\(^8\) and its cost—116 million Deutschmarks—was a frequent target of criticism.\(^9\) Even though the building was largely surrounded by parkland and hidden by trees and the wall surrounding the Chancellor’s complex, which softened its impact on the surrounding city, members of the local public heavily criticized that very isolation. The bold rectilinear forms and oxidized black steel cladding made the Chancellery an alien figure in the green landscape.\(^10\)

The “Competition for Federal Buildings and their Integration into the City of Bonn” and Building for a Democracy

Chancellor Brandt’s decision to circumvent the Expert Colloquium did not derail the parallel process for federal development in Bonn, but it was an indication of an imperfect commitment to its principles of cooperation and inclusion. The colloquium’s suggested route for development began with the ponderously titled “Competition for Federal Buildings and their Integration into the City of Bonn” (“Wettbewerb Bauten des Bundes und Ihre Integration in die Stadt Bonn”), which opened in August 1971 after a year of discussion within the Bund, the ABB, and various ad hoc subcommittees (Figure 83). At over two hundred pages, the brief that was

\(^8\) Matthias Hannemann et al., Bonn, Orte der Demokratie: der historische Reiseführer (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2009), 48.
distributed among West German architects was detailed and comprehensive in its demands. Successful submissions would incorporate virtually every aspect of urban planning—housing, transportation, environmental protection, cultural and recreational facilities—and the competition area spanned both sides of the Rhine and the area from the Postal Ministry building in the north to well south of the Kreuzbauten in Bad Godesberg. However, the brief left little doubt that the Bund was the ultimate client and that the consideration of larger urban issues should serve the primary goal of meeting the federal government’s spatial and representational needs.11

Furthermore, within the broad scope of the competition, and in contrast to earlier federal planning work, symbolism and representational qualities received equal emphasis alongside functional issues. In particular, the brief called for entrants to strive to “give expression to the basic principles of democratic political and social order,” which it enumerated as the relationship of the citizen to the state, the establishment and development of a political public sphere (Öffentlichkeit), and the organization of political institutions and bodies. In case the discussion of these principles in the main competition document was too vague, the organizers appended an essay penned by two Interior Ministry officials, Otto Jacob and Eckart Schiffer, titled “Self-Representation of the Democratic State in the Built Form of the Federal Capital” (“Selbstdarstellung des demokratischen Staates in der baulichen Gestaltung des Bundeshauptstadt”). This is the first document in the context of federal architecture in Bonn that closely considers the values at the heart of West German democracy and makes concrete

suggestions for how those might be embodied in the design of government buildings and districts.\textsuperscript{12}

Before their recommendations, Jacob and Schiffer made two preliminary points addressing the Bund’s previous architectural efforts in Bonn and the difficulty of representing democracy in architecture. First, the authors interpreted the Bund’s rejection of self-representation in Bonn out of deference to Berlin and concern for economy as itself a form of self-representation. This perceived modesty may have been appropriate for the first two decades of the Federal Republic, but it had outlived its usefulness as the essential characteristic of the capital city. Second, Jacob and Schiffer astutely noted that attempting to fix the values of a democratic society in concrete and steel is inimical to those very values, chief amongst which are diversity and change. Given this, their prescriptions for the planner focused less on concrete symbols than on qualities that center the design on the fundamental building block of any democratic order, the free citizen. For Jacob and Schiffer, this meant a renunciation of monumentality that might overwhelm the individual and a commitment to accessibility and participation through the creation of welcoming spaces where the citizen might interact directly with politicians and administrators and witness the democratic process in person.\textsuperscript{13}

Jacob and Schiffer left room for some overt symbolism in federal architecture. They directed architects to use the relative sizes of various institutions’ buildings, along with their proximity or distance from one another to reflect the structure of the federal government. Thus, for example, the Chancellery, Bundesrat, and Bundestag should stand in immediate vicinity, while the ministries should be spaced according to the intensity of contact they have to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12} Otto Jacob and Eckart Schiffer, “Selbstdarstellung des demokratischen Staates in der baulichen Gestaltung des Bundeshauptstadt,” 1971, appendix to “Wettbewerb Bauten des Bundes und Ihre Integration in die Stadt Bonn” (Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1990/73).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.}
parliament and the Chancellor. This implied that the ministries should not be concentrated in a single complex of uniform buildings but rather should be distributed and, architecturally speaking, treated distinctly. Moreover, although it is less specific on this point, the essay concedes that architecture should bestow an appropriate amount of dignity on the center of political decision-making in a democracy.\(^{14}\) However, nowhere in their essay do Jacob and Schiffer acknowledge that the federal architecture they describe reflected the identity of a city as well as a nation. Their manifesto offered a useful roadmap for designing national buildings in a federal democracy, but the almost total exclusion of local context from their analysis strongly indicated that—in spite of the new attention on aesthetic issues—the Bund was repeating its past mistakes.

The jury announced the winners of the planning competition in April 1972, with first prize going to the studio of Legge and Legge, a husband-and-wife team based in Lammersdorf, near Aachen. The six ordinal prize winners were published in the architectural journals, *Die Bauwelt* and *Die Bauverwaltung*,\(^ {15}\) and the jury promoted the Legge and Legge proposal as offering the most sensible path forward for federal planning in Bonn, but in many respects it was also the least ambitious. Specifically—and in contradiction to the stated goals of the competition—the jury complimented Legge and Legge for not offering a grand urban planning solution and for basically ignoring the integration of the federal districts into the surrounding city. Rather, Legge and Legge won based on the strength of their basic division of federal authorities into three distinct locations: the area around the Gronau, northern Bad Godesberg,

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
and immediately across the Rhine in southern Beuel.\textsuperscript{16} Beuel had previously escaped the eyes of federal developers, but the other two suggested sites for dense federal building programs were hardly original.

Legge and Legge’s competition model (Figure 84) demonstrates clearly their lack of emphasis on integration. The federal conglomerations are a jumble of large masses, geometric forms, and sharp angles that stand out starkly against the surrounding city, which the planners have represented as a semi-regular grid. Other submissions that won prizes, such as the fourth place entry by Gruppe Hardtberg (Figure 85), proposed distributing federal installations more evenly across the entire competition area. This allowed for tighter integration, but it also entailed disrupting a much larger area of the city during construction. The entry from Günter Behnisch, which did not place but earned an honorable mention, took an even more radical approach to integration. Behnisch’s proposed to mix apartments and federal offices vertically within the same complexes, a concept that the jury called problematic.\textsuperscript{17}

To underline the gulf that still existed between municipal and federal urban development priorities in Bonn, the City Council promulgated a resolution on the topic timed to coincide with the release of the planning competition’s results. The resolution does not mention the competition or its results, but the implicit criticism is clear. Whereas the competition brief and the eventual winner both pointed towards a more intense version of the planning agenda that the Bund had been pursuing since the early 1960s, the City Council’s resolution—reprinted as a brochure and distributed to the public for maximum effect—described the development of Bonn as the federal capital as only one of many competing concerns that had to be balanced and

\textsuperscript{16} Krell, “Der Bund im Bonn,” 842.

\textsuperscript{17} Models and plans from the Behnisch & Partners entry were unavailable, but minutes from the jury’s meeting describe the project in detail. “Protokoll über die Sitzung des Preisgerichts für den städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerb, Bauten des Bundes und ihre Integration in die Stadt Bonn vom 10.4. bis 12.4. und vom 18.4 bis 19.4.1972,” April 1972 (BArch, B 106/45657), 32-38.
coordinated. There is tension between Bonn’s desire to integrate federal buildings into the city and keep the city’s traditional centers free from an inundation of administrative facilities, but overall, the stress placed by the Council on integration serves as a strong rebuke to the planning visions contained in proposals like that from Legge and Legge.

Within Bonn’s City Planning Office, the criticism of the Legge and Legge plan was more direct. In a letter to City Manager Hesse, Building Official Gerd Nieke expressed exasperation that, in spite of the Expert Colloquium and competition, nothing had changed with the Bund except for greatly inflated ambitions. According to Nieke, the Legge and Legge plan was not a functional city planning solution and would not lead to a credible *Bundeshauptstadt*. Moreover, Legge and Legge presumed to make decisions about the location of federal buildings that should have been made jointly and in agreement with the city. To avoid disaster, Nieke recommended all but abandoning the Bund as a development partner to focus on issues that were within its control and stood to improve the city’s quality of life: building recreational facilities, improving roads, and promoting housing construction.

### Developmental Stasis, Democracy, and Local Identity

The extraordinary increase in collaboration between the Bund and Bonn—by 1971, the two parties had formed or joined over a dozen ad hoc committees, working groups, and task forces aimed at addressing various aspects of urban planning in the region—was not closing the gap between their respective priorities and visions for the city. The initial planning competition,

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which was supposed to yield an agreeable framework for moving ahead with individual building
projects, produced a winner that received a chilly reception from local authorities. Subsequent
discussions and competitions would beget no breakthroughs, and the search for comprehensive
solutions and a representative city would ultimately leave the city relatively unchanged.

The follow-up competition to the planning contest (Bauwettbewerb Bundestag und
Bundesrat) focused on designs for the Bundestag and Bundesrat that would anchor a
Parliamentary District in the Gronau. It opened in September 1972, and its results—announced
over a year later—provided no clarity. Even before the winners had been announced, the Bonn
Citizens’ Initiative—the same group that had played a major role in stopping the Bad Godesberg
Kreuzbauten—loudly denounced the competition. Their press release indelicately proclaimed
that “[w]e did not force through the building freeze three years ago so that the same crap could
be built with three years’ delay.”

The ensuing manifesto angrily attacks the competition’s
conception of the West German parliament as driven by planners rather than the legislators who
were the putative clients or the German people whom they represent. The manifesto rejected the
monumentality that the competition seemed to invite and the self-conscious creation of national
symbols and of public spaces that attempt to anticipate or determine their function.

However, in contrast to their protest of the Bad Godesberg Government District, here the
Citizens’ Initiative offered a detailed alternative vision for the Bundestag and for architecture in
a democracy more broadly. First, they called for a height restriction of five stories. The buildings
themselves should be constructed of modest, warm materials and should eschew ostentation.
Interior spaces should be as accessible and inviting as possible for the public, and exterior walls

durchgesetzt, damit nun derselbe Mist mit drei Jahren Verzögerung gebaut wird!,” October 26,
1973 (BArch, B 134/12758).
21 Ibid.
should heavily feature glass to make the interior discoverable from the outside. Outdoor spaces should be public, pleasant, and truly free to be used in diverse, unplanned, and evolving ways. The capacity of spaces, buildings, and neighborhoods to change and adapt organically over time is an important through line in the Initiative’s statement, bound up with the group’s definition of democracy as being fundamentally not about control but rather self-determination.\footnote{Ibid.} The overall impression made by the manifesto is that the Citizens’ Initiative desired the Bund’s presence in the city to be as insubstantial and inconspicuous as possible. Its representative democratic qualities would not emerge from any overt symbolism or grand structures but from its very subordination to the public and the city in which it dwelled. Thus, on one hand, the Citizens’ Initiative’s reaction to the Bundestag and Bundesrat competition was—in form and content—an affirmation of West German democratic principles. On the other hand, it envisioned a capital city that all but disappeared into its surroundings, leaving Bonn’s space virtually undisturbed and allowing the federal presence to co-evolve by design with the host city and the local identity that its citizens drew from it.

Regardless of these new demands, the group’s reappearance in the planning discussion was not an auspicious sign for the prospects of the competition’s success. Indeed it was a total failure. The jury deadlocked on the four first prizes, and the architects were instructed to rework and resubmit their designs so that a definitive winner could be selected. One of the competition winners was Günther Behnisch (Figure 86), who in 1972 was receiving accolades for his design for the Olympic Park and Stadium in Munich. The revision process extended into 1974 and 1975 before being quietly abandoned by the Bund and the ABB along with most of the planning agenda initially laid out by the Expert Colloquium. A year later, federal planning officials retreated to a piecemeal approach of building for individual ministries, for which they began a
cumbersome process of developing complicated rubrics to determine which federal agencies demonstrated the greatest need for new space. Behnisch would have to wait until 1983 for a completely new Bundestag competition, and then it would take another decade before his celebrated Plenary Chamber was completed (Figure 87). By that time, Germany had reunified, and the Bund was making plans to return the capital to Berlin.

The Bund would build again on a large scale, finally completing the Bad Godesberg Government District in the 1980s. The two main additions to the site are sprawling structures, framing a large open concrete plaza called Robert-Schuman-Platz (Figure 88) after the French statesman, and they have housed a changing group of federal ministries and agencies since their completion. However, the buildings are not tall, and their segregation, along with the Kreuzbauten, on a site along the boundary between Bonn and Bad Godesberg limits their immediate impact on the way an individual experiences the city.

As the federal planning process slowed to a near standstill in the 1970s, the city took steps to develop its space and image in ways that also placed important limits on further federal construction. The most consequential measure for the city’s residents and for federal development was the establishment of the Rheinaue, a large park that extends along the Rhine from the Gronau in the north and well into Bad Godesberg (Figure 89). The city opened a competition to design the park in late 1969 as a way to provide a major recreational facility for local residents, connect physically the recently merged cities of Bonn and Bad Godesberg, and create a venue for the decade-hence 1979 Federal Horticultural Show (Bundesgartenschau), which had recently been awarded to Bonn. The green space would also provide a connective backdrop for the Gronau and Godesberg federal buildings, and although local officials were careful in how they framed this point, the creation of the Rheinaue permanently preserved for the
use of Bonn’s citizens an enormous piece of real estate that the Bund may have otherwise considered prime space for expansion.

In its final statement, the 1970 Expert Colloquium asserted that the degree of regard for the interests of the public in the way national buildings are planned is an essential element of the self-representation of democracy.\textsuperscript{23} Although imperfect at times, the West German federal system, which distributed substantial authority downward to states and localities, combined with a dogged media and press, offered a great deal of procedural transparency in federal planning affairs. When the local public discovered that lapses in that transparency had led to failures on the Bund’s part to support their city’s needs and to physical changes in their city of which they strongly disapproved, they pushed back hard, and the Bund reacted by reforming the process to be more responsive and include more input from local stakeholders. At its culmination in the 1970s, this worked to the Bund’s detriment, as seemingly no project could make it through the ponderous, multi-step planning process to construction. Nevertheless, Bonn’s cityscape and federal architecture are finally the result of the kinds of vigorous debate and compromise that are hallmarks of democratic societies, and this discourse occurred within a legal framework that promoted civic engagement and enshrined local autonomy in the urban planning process. As a national capital, the same processes that left Bonn with few and mostly disliked structures on which to project a sense of national identity ultimately redounded to the Bund’s benefit as being more thoroughly if less obviously representative of the Federal Republic of Germany’s democratic rebirth.

An uneasy equilibrium emerged in the federal capital between the national and the local. Still disliked and inescapable signifiers that Bonn’s identity was now and forever bound up with that of the Federal Republic, Langer Eugen and the Kreuzbauten had once been harbingers of the

\textsuperscript{23} Arbeitskreis Bundesbauten Bonn, Report of the Expertenkolloquium.
disfigurement of Bonn’s historical space and traditional identity. However, in the wake of the successful local protests in 1969, which ended the immediate threat that federal high-rises would proliferate, the existing towers began to take on a different cast. Bonn’s idiosyncrasies as a national political power center were ultimately the result of highly localized pressures on federal development that reflected equally local desires and anxieties. As the 1960s and 70s progressed, the cumulative effect of a more assertive local government and public and the new planning rules and procedures put into place in the wake of 1969 was a significant restriction of the number and kinds of federal projects that reached execution. Through the efforts of Bonn’s City Council and administration to advance local interests and finally the intervention of Bonn’s residents, the city’s urban space is defined as much by what was left unbuilt as by the buildings that were completed. The end result was a city that could still claim strong connections to the Rhine landscape and to those aspects of its history—Roman, bourgeois, Romantic, scholastic—that had long constituted local identity even as the landscape was significantly transformed by the city’s federal building. Bonn’s solitary modernist high-rises seem out of place, both in the context of a European capital and especially a mid-size German university town, but it is that relative eccentricity that gave — and continues to give — Bonn its specific character as one of the most peculiar capital cities of the 20th century. We can better understand that peculiarity as provisionality, as Bonn managed to incorporate its national role as one more facet of an intensely local identity.
Epilogue: Bonn after Reunification

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in the fall of 1989 and the ensuing reunification of East and West Germany, the Bundestag honored the promise it had made over forty years earlier and voted on June 20, 1991 to return the capital to Berlin. The extremely close vote—338 for and 320 against—indicated just how much attitudes had changed since the 1950s, when quixotic attempts to return the government to the isolated exclave of West Berlin occurred routinely. However, the transition was slow, and the Bundestag did not meet for the first time in its new home until 1999. In the wake of the 1991 vote, Bonn and the Bund negotiated and passed the Berlin/Bonn Act (Berlin/Bonn-Gesetz), which bestowed upon Bonn the unique title of “Federal City” (Bundesstadt) and divided the federal authorities between the now-former and the current capital cities. Under the agreement, Germany’s Parliament, Chancellor, President, and the majority of ministries would move to Berlin, but Bonn would retain a majority of federal jobs, which minimized the disruption for families in the federal workforce.

In this way, the effect on Bonn of the capital returning to Berlin was extremely muted. The federal bureaucracy, which was perennially constrained for space, easily expanded to fill the buildings and offices vacated by the agencies that moved east. After the Bundestag moved in 1999 and following a complete interior renovation, the United Nations took over occupation of Langer Eugen, making it the headquarters of its Framework Convention on Climate Change. Günter Behnisch’s new Bundestag plenary building—unfortunately completed three years too late in 1992—became the centerpiece of a heavily-used international conference center.

In the early 21st century, Bonn has exchanged its national profile for a more prominent role in international institutions. The presence of the United Nations is a significant part of this,
but Bonn is also home to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development—now housed in the former New Chancellery building—which oversees Germany’s extensive international development and aid programs and thus draws numerous NGOs to the city. Furthermore, the privatization of the Deutsche Bundespost in 1995 yielded the telecommunications conglomerate, Deutsche Telekom, and the shipping and logistics giant, Deutsche Post/DHL, both of which maintain their corporate headquarters in Bonn.

These globalized concerns ensured that Bonn maintained a high degree of economic prosperity and cultural vitality—especially relative to a city of its size—but they have created a new set of fault lines in Bonn’s identity as a city. In some ways, the new battles are familiar, and they continue to play out largely in the realm of the city’s architecture. Deutsche Post’s construction of the Post Tower (Figure 90)—a sleek 41-story glass skyscraper designed by Helmut Jahn—from 2000 to 2002 on a site adjacent to Eiermann’s parliamentary tower led to a rearguard action by local citizens to have the land protected from development under the same landmark status given to Langer Eugen in 1997. Ironically, the very same structures that were once at the heart of the collision between federal architecture and local identity were now being co-opted to forestall what were perceived as further assaults on Bonn’s landscape and the public’s close identification with it.

Wrapped up in these new debates were questions of how to preserve and memorialize Bonn’s brief but profound role in 20th-century history in the face of 21st-century commerce’s unrelenting imperatives to expand, innovate, and refresh. Bonn always had an ambivalent relationship to its identity as a national capital, but the city also quickly assimilated it as a critically important period in local history. When confronted with another set of wrenching transformations to its space and appearance, which threatened to mute or efface entirely the
connection to the eponymous Bonn Republic, the city’s citizens—this time often with the cooperation of the Bund, which also had a strong interest in protecting its historical legacy—moved again to guard their collective urban identity. The result will almost certainly be a new composite, incorporating the city’s new international and corporate outlooks and transmuting them, as the city once did with its national role, into something distinctly local.
Figure 1. Aerial view from 1957 of the West German Bundeshaus, Bonn. In the center is Martin Witte’s original Pedagogical Academy (1930-33) renovated by Hans Schwippert with the addition of the glass-walled Bundestag Plenary Chamber (1949-50; center-left). Photograph by Aero-Lux. Source: Bonn Stadtarchiv, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 05145.

Figure 2. Hans Freese, Federal Foreign Office Building, 1953-55, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.
Figure 3. View looking east of Frankfurter Tor, Hermann Henselmann, Stalinallee (Karl-Marx-Allee), 1952-1960, Berlin. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2012.

Figure 5. The Berlin Wall at the Brandenburg Gate, 1961. Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild B 145/P061246/o.Ang. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 6. Walter Gropius, Apartment House, Hansaviertel, 1956-57, Berlin. Photograph by Manfred Brückels. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 8. Egon Eiermann, High-Rise for Members of the Bundestag (Langer Eugen), 1967-1969, Bonn. Photograph by Horstheinz Neuendorff. Source: Südwestdeutsches Archiv für Architektur und Ingenieurbau am Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Werkarchiv Egon Eiermann.
Figure 9. Planungsgruppe Stieldorf, Ministry Buildings (the Kreuzbauten) for the Federal Ministry of Justice (right) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (left), 1969-1975, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Photograph by Ulrich Weinke. Source: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Bild-00324327.
Figure 10. Map of Bonn, ca. 1990, showing the locations of the major federal institutions. Larger shaded circles indicate larger institutions. Downtown Bonn and Bad Godesberg are circled in black. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Kartensammlung, Karte Nr. Kar 3957. Additions by the author.
Figure 11. View of the Siebengebirge ("Seven Hills") from Bonn with the ruins of Burg Drachenfels visible on the rightmost peak. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.

Figure 12. Ruins of Burg Drachenfels, 12th century, destroyed 17th century, Königswinter. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.
Figure 13. Ruins of the Godesburg, 13th century, destroyed 1583, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Photograph by “Dickbauch.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 14. Albert Speer and Adolf Hitler, Model for the redesign of Berlin (“Welthauptstadt Germania”), 1939. Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 146III-373. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 15. Bonn Minster, Münsterplatz, 11th-12th centuries, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.

Figure 16. Detail of a map of Bonn (1950) showing the Altstadt with Münsterplatz in the lower left. Copyright Stollfuß Verlag Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Kartensammlung, Karte Nr. Be 210.
Figure 17. Map of Bonn showing original city wall, Matthäus Merian, 1646. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Kartensammlung, Karte Nr. Ba 60.

Figure 18. Sterntor, 19th century model of 13th century city gate, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.
Figure 19. Detail of a map of Bonn (1950) showing medieval Altstadt and surrounding subsequent development. Copyright Stollfuß Verlag Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Kartensammlung, Karte Nr. Be 210.

Figure 20. Enrico Zucalli and Robert de Cotte, Residenzschloss (currently the Administrative Building for the University of Bonn), 1697-1703, 1715-1723, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2009.
Figure 21. Robert de Cotte, Poppelsdorfer Schloss, 1715-1723, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow.

Figure 22. Aerial view of Poppelsdorfer Allee with Poppelsdorfer Schloss in the foreground and the Residenzschloss in the background. Source: Andreas Denk and Ingeborg Flagge, *Architekturführer Bonn* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2009), 23.
Figure 23. Johann Conrad Schlaun and François de Cuvilliés, Schloss Augustusburg, 1723-1728, Brühl. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2009.

Figure 24. Balthasar Neumann, Stairwell, Schloss Augustusburg, 1740-1746, Brühl. Photograph by Ostrovskii Aleksandr. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 25. François de Cuvilliés and Michel Leveilly, Koblenzer Tor, Residenzschloss, 1751-1755, Bonn. Photograph by Eckhard Henckel. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 26. Michel Leveilly, Altes Rathaus, 1737, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.
Figure 27. Michael Leydel and Adam Franz Friedrich Leydel, Redoute, 1790-1792, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Depicted in Johan Ziegler, Redoute and Kurfürstenallee, 1792, watercolor on copperplate engraving.

Figure 28. Siegfried Wolske, Beethovenhalle, 1950-1959, Bonn. Photograph by “Wolkenkratzer.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 29. Overview map of Bonn showing the locations of its constituent towns and villages. Source: Peter Ginter, Rainer Gaertner, and Bernd Polster, Bonn (Bonn:Bouvier Verlage, 1998), 6.
Figure 30. Old Rhine Bridge, 1890s, Bonn. Depicted in postcard, ca. 1908.

Figure 31. Kennedy Bridge, 1948-1949, Bonn. Photograph by “Wolkenkratzer.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 33. Gallwitz-Kaserne (Federal Ministry for Economics), ca. 1949, built 1936-1938, Bonn-Duisdorf. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 05085.

Figure 34. Troilo-Kaserne (Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Forests), 1958, built 1936-1938, Bonn-Duisdorf. Source: Bundesbildstelle, 5130/3.

Figure 36. Rosenberg (Federal Ministry of Justice), 1831, Bonn. Photograph by P. Strack. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 16712-1.
Figure 37. Haus Carstanjen (Federal Ministry for the Treasury), 1881, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Photograph by Hamburger Aero-Lloyd. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 10517.

Figure 38. Aerial view of HICOG headquarters, later the United States Embassy, Bonn-Mehlem. In the center of the image is Schloss Deichmannsauge, 19th century. In the foreground is Otto Apel, Sep Ruf, and others, HICOG/US Embassy Building, 1950-1952. Photograph by Aero-Foto A. Schwarzer. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 10955.
Figure 39. August Dieckhoff, Villa Hammerschmidt (Federal Presidential Office and Residence), 1860, Bonn. Photograph by Sachsse. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 06055-a.

Figure 40. Palais Schaumburg (Federal Chancellery), 1858-1860, Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 05235-6(f).
**Figure 41.** Hans Schwippert, Plenary Chamber, Bundeshaus, 1949, demolished 1986, Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 03644-20.

**Figure 42.** Josef Trimborn, Federal Ministry for Post and Telecommunications, 1953-1954, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.

Figure 44. Hans Dustmann, Allianz Buildings (Tulpenfeld), 1964-1968, Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 05146-c.
Figure 45. Map of the Bonn Region showing the outcome of the Bonn-Act, 1969. A consolidated Groß-Bonn is at the center of the newly created Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, which comprises nineteen counties or Kreis. Source: *Der Städtetag* (July 1969): 3.
Figure 46. Map of Bonn highlighting the four communities that voluntarily agreed to be incorporated into the capital. Source: Stadt Bonn, *Neuordnung Bonner Raum* (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1967).
Figure 47. Map of Bonn showing the “Stakemeier Plan” for Regional Reform with community borders. Source: *Bonner Rundschau*, January 19, 1967.
Figure 48. Map of Bonn showing the change in population in various communities since 1950. Source: Stadt Bonn, Neuordnung Bonner Raum (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1967).
Figure 49. Map of Bonn showing commuting patterns. Source: Stadt Bonn, *Neuordnung Bonner Raum* (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1967).
Figure 50. Map of Bonn showing major transportation networks. Source: Stadt Bonn, *Neuordnung Bonner Raum* (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1967).
Figure 51. Bad Godesberg poster campaign against incorporation into Bonn (“Hands off Bad Godesberg!”). Source: General-Anzeiger, November 23, 1968.

Figure 52. Aerial view of the Bundeshaus (foreground) and Langer Eugen with the Gronau sports park still behind it, 1972. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 14812.
Figure 53. Egon Eiermann, Competition Entry for the Federal Foreign Office Building in Bonn, 1951. Source: Südwestdeutsches Archiv für Architektur und Ingenieurbau am Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Werkarchiv Egon Eiermann.

Figure 54. Sep Ruf, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) Headquarters, 1953, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Photograph by “Mkill.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 55. Sep Ruf, Bavarian Representative Office (Landesvertretung Bayern), 1955, Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow, 2013.

Figure 57. Sep Ruf, Chancellor’s Residence and Reception Building (Kanzlerbungalow), 1963-64, Bonn. Photograph by Engelberg Reineke. Source: Bundesarchiv, B 145 Bild-F057336-0002. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 58. Egon Eiermann and Sep Ruf, German Pavilion, Brussels World’s Fair, 1958, Brussels. Photograph by Eberhard Troeger. Source: Südwestdeutsches Archiv für Architektur und Ingenieurbau am Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Werkarchiv Egon Eiermann.
Figure 59. Egon Eiermann, German Embassy, 1962-1964, Washington, D.C. Photograph by “Germanbo.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.

Figure 60. Western entrance to the Reichstag Building, Berlin, with glass curtain wall designed by Paul Baumgarten as part of his renovations. Paul Wallot, Reichstag Building, 1884-1894, renovated by Paul Baumgarten, 1961-69, Berlin. Photograph by Karl E. Jacobs. Source: Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Paul G R Baumgarten Estate.
Figure 61. Paul Baumgarten, Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) Building, 1965-1969, Karlsruhe. Photograph by Tobias Helfrich. Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
Figure 63. Aerial view of the Gronau before the construction of Langer Eugen with the sports park in the center and the Bundeshaus in the foreground. Photograph by Aero-Lux Büscher & Co. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 03277-91.

Figure 64. Model and site plan of the Bundeshaus expansion in the Gronau published in Revue, April 14, 1963, 12-13.

Figure 66. Federal Building Agency, Site Plan showing proposed expansion of Bundeshaus in the Gronau overlaid on existing street plan, 1963. This plan, unlike the model in figure 63 was not disclosed to the public. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Kartensammlung, Karte Nr. Kar-4571.
Figure 67. Federal Planning Council, Model of the Bundeshaus expansion in the Gronau showing the addition of seven ministry buildings (left), 1965. Source: Südwestdeutsches Archiv für Architektur und Ingenieurbau am Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT), Werkarchiv Egon Eiermann.

Figure 68. Federal Planning Council, Model of the Bundeshaus expansion in the Gronau, 1966. The model is slightly more detailed than the one seen in figure 64. Source: Stern, February, 1966, 36-37.
Figure 69. “Brasilia am Rhein:” drawing of the Bundeshaus expansion plans with individual buildings labeled. Drawing reflects model seen in figure 63. Source: Der Spiegel, no. 21, May 20, 1964, 21.

Figure 70. Photograph of Langer Eugen under construction with Drachenfels and the Siebengebirge in the background. Source: General-Anzeiger, May 10, 1968.
Figure 71. Federal Building Agency, Site Plan of the Bad Godesberg Government District, based on designs by Joachim Schürrmann and Fritz Bornemann, January, 1968. The plan shows an eighth Kreuzbau of only seven stories in the upper left. The two buildings by Planungsgruppe Stieldorf (1969-1975) are marked by “J” and “WF.” Source: Bundesarchiv, B 126/42724.
Figure 72. Map of Bonn with the federal development sites in the Gronau and north Bad Godesberg highlighted. Copyright Stollfuß Verlag, 1970. Source: Library of Congress Map Collection. Additions by the author.
Figure 73. Le Corbusier, Ville contemporaine de trois millions d'habitants, 1922. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier/ADAGP.

Figure 74. Le Corbusier, Model of the Plan Voisin for Paris, 1925. Copyright Fondation Le Corbusier/ADAGP.

Figure 76. Joachim Schürmann and Fritz Bornemann, Model for the Bad Godesberg Government District, 1969. The two buildings designed by Planungsgruppe Stieldorf are in the foreground. Source: General-Anzeiger, August 14, 1969.

Figure 78. Model of the proposed second phase of the Bad Godesberg Government District, October 1969. Planungsgruppe Stieldorf’s towers, already under construction, are in the foreground, and Schürmann and Bornemann’s additions are in the background. Photograph by DPA/Landov. Source: Bonner Rundschau, October 7, 1969.

Figure 80. Spectators examine the model for Bad Godesberg Government District in Bonn City Hall, October 1969. Photograph by Georg Munker. Source: Bonner Rundschau, October 11, 1969.
Figure 81. Planungsgruppe Stieldorf, New Chancellery Building (Neues Bundeskanzleramt), 1970-1976, Bonn. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, Fotografische Sammlung, Foto Nr. 14756.

Figure 83. Cover of the competition brief for “Wettbewerb Bauten des Bundes und Ihre Integration in die Stadt Bonn,” 1971. The black line on the map indicates the area of Bonn covered by the competition. Source: Stadtarchiv Bonn, N 1982/283.


Figure 88. Robert-Schuman-Platz, 1983-1989, Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Photograph by “Wolkenkratzer.” Reproduced under a Creative Commons License.
**Figure 89.** Gottfried Hansjakob, Landscape plan for the Rheinaue, 1970s, Bonn. Source: Karl-Heinz van Kaldenkerken and Friedrich Busmann, *Ausbau der Bundeshauptstadt: 10 Jahre Hauptstadtvereinbarung 1975 - 1985; Dokumentation* (Bonn: Stadt Bonn, 1985), 68.

**Figure 90.** Egon Eiermann, High-Rise for Members of the Bundestag (Langer Eugen), 1967-1969 (left) and Helmut Jahn, Post Tower, 2000-2002 (right), Bonn. Photograph by Samuel L. Sadow.


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   B 126: Bundesministerium der Finanzen
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