

Press Release

MAK with new barrier-free access from the Stubenring

As of the end of May 2021, the MAK has a new barrier-free entrance: an access ramp now makes it easier for visitors with restricted mobility to enter the museum directly via the main entrance on the Stubenring. In cooperation with Mag. arch. Daniel Kerbler, architect Susanne Zottl, who was commissioned by the Austrian Castle and Fortress Authority, has succeeded in finding a solution that more than meets all accessibility, architectural, and aesthetic constraints without altering the exterior façade. According to Teresa Mitterlehner-Marchesani, Managing Director of the MAK, “Facilitating access to the MAK for everyone with restricted mobility has for many years been one of our main concerns. We are delighted to welcome this new bridge connecting the street to our museum and making it even more accessible to all our visitors.”

After a feasibility study commissioned by the MAK in the fall of 2017, the building project was approved by the Austrian Federal Monuments Office, several departments of the Vienna Municipal Administration, the Inner-City District Council, and the Wiener Netze GmbH before building permission was granted on 2 June 2020. Under the direction of the Austrian Castle and Fortress Authority, and with significant financial support from the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport, as well as the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, work began on the project in the fall of 2020. According to Reinhold Sahl, Director of the Austrian Castle and Fortress Authority, “With the conclusion of this project to improve barrier-free access, the museum building, constructed in 1871 in neo-renaissance style according to plans by Heinrich Ferstel, is optimally suited for use in the modern age.”

This barrier-free access represents much more than a purely functional solution to navigating the main entrance stairway. Susanne Zottl’s concept also includes the area in front of the museum. The generously proportioned surrounding pavement on the Stubenring has been raised to form a gentle slope that now transposes into a ramp. This leads with a slight gradient to the already existing entrance to the former MAK Bookshop. Resembling a sculptural object, it corresponds to the *Tor zum Ring* [Gate to the Ring] (James Wines/SITE, 1992) that physically shifts a portion of the outer wall into urban space.

In the interior of the museum too, extensive modifications have been carried out. In the former bookshop, the existing steel stairway and reinforced concrete gallery have been demolished and the room’s generous dimensions restored. A barrier-free elevator connects the MAK Columned Main Hall (ground floor, location of the ticket counter, starting point for the museum tour, and entrance to the MAK Design Shop) and the MAK DESIGN

LAB (lower floor) with the entrance level. A ramp has been constructed to even out the difference in level with the lower-lying foyer, where the cloakroom is located. After consultation with the Austrian Federal Monuments Office, a new entrance has been created in the Columned Main Hall. Access to other rooms on the lower floor, that might potentially be developed later, has been included in planning.

With this new barrier-free access, the MAK also aims to realize its vision of making the area in front of the museum (forecourt, frontage road, and cycle path on the Stubenring) more attractive. Talks are currently being conducted with the relevant authorities to this end. According to Markus Figl, head of the local district council, “In line with its enormous significance amongst Vienna’s museums, through the planned restructuring of the area in front of the main entrance the MAK will also take on a stronger urban presence. Plans have already been discussed in the relevant district council committee and have received the necessary support there. I would very much welcome it if the visibility of this important institution, as seen from the Ring, were to be restored.”

Photo material is available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press).

A presentation on the project may be accessed at the following link:
<https://zotlbuda.at/mak-vienna-barrier-free-entrance/>

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