Chapel of Reconciliation
Berlin-Mitte / Bernauer Strasse

History
The old and first reconciliation church (build in 1894) was blown up by the GDR border troops in 1985. After it has been inaccessible in the death strip since 1961, the fall of the wall in 1989 forced the reconciliation parish to redetermine its position. Practicable solutions had to be considered first. The dedication of the citizens’ initiative Bernauer Strasse is well remembered. Rather soon it was quite clear the reconciliation parish also carries a large responsibility for the historical questions. The “Gedenkstaette Berliner Mauer” and the “Buerger-Buero”, an organisation for the victims of the GDR/SED-dictatorship, are well known examples for this. Also the question of a “church in the city” profile had to be reconsidered as well in Bernauer Strasse. This process was shaped by the return of the bells of the old reconciliation church as well as the altar and the excavation of foundation remains. Our answer of all these questions is the chapel of reconciliation, a modern ramming loam construction on the foundations of the destroyed old reconciliation church, in which the saved altar and the bells found again their place.

Chapel
The chapel of reconciliation has three areas:
A large open-air church square with the bells-stand, which was the floor space of the old church The colonnade beneath the roof of the chapel with its seats which is still in the open The small interior protected by the loam walls contains the old altar as well as a new loam altar which holds the vasa sacra and the Maurertotenbuch (book for the killed victims of the wall) All three areas uncover traces of: The threshold of the historical church door, the path through the former death strip and the volume of the old church. All this can be seen in the open-air church square. The colonnade represents the apsis of the destroyed old church with the duct of the basement.
In the chapel is a walled church door, part of the wall of 1961. Instead of reconstructing the old this new shape aims for transformation, of appropriation of history with today’s options and for the present life.

Technical Informations
Three bells by Bochumer Glockengußverein 1894: 1300kg-ø150cm, 850kg-ø130cm, 500kg-ø110cm.
Historical altar: red sandstone plate (3,10x1,20cm, ca. 2000kg), Organ company Walker 1965 (2 manuals, 1 pedal). Mass loam wall: strength 60cm, height 7m, length 43m, diameter chapel between 10 and 14 m, altar niche: pit height approx. 11m, cellar depth approx. 4m, altar area 390t ramming loam mixed with broken bricks of the destroyed old church. Outer Skin: wood lamellas. Total costs: 971.454 Euro.

Service
Sunday service at 10a.m. | Tuesday – Friday 12a.m.: prayers for the victims of the wall | Friday 6 p.m: Coventry ministry of reconciliation | Saturday 12a.m.: prayers | Visitors are welcome Wednesday – Sunday 10a.m. – 5p.m.
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