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Save the multi-purpose hall in Mannheim!



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In 1975, a team led by Frei Otto designed and built a multi-purpose hall in Mannheim. It now faces demolition despite being a listed building. The art magazine ART (8/2016) asked Christoph Ingenhoven for ideas regarding new use concepts:

“The multi-purpose hall is an exemplary building: a wonderfully ingenious construction, a poetic space, a fine example of timber construction. Who can show me a building of this quality that faces possible demolition? To date there has been so much construction in Mannheim that one wonders: Why does the town administration not move into this multi-purpose hall? The city council, the city planning office, the district surveyors, they could all sit together here. Then they would at least speak to each other. I mean this very sincerely. In other places around the world we build the greatest open-plan offices, always looking to find beautiful, meaningful forms. Yet here we have one that is already built. Demolish it? This must not happen!

The multi-purpose hall was designed from the beginning with flexibility in mind. It could be a wonderful sculpture hall for a museum, a research and development center for one of the major companies in Mannheim such as BASF and Roche Diagnostics, an industrial design company or a university institute. I am convinced that it would be possible to achieve relatively manageable overheads in comparison to those associated with a new building, whilst simultaneously achieving huge spatial value. This will create a space in which one will enjoy working in. Myself included!”