

Sep Ruf, Kanzlerbungalow, Bonn



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This title is available in English & German. The German Chancellor's former residential and reception building in Bonn, better known as the 'Kanzlerbungalow' is one of the

German post-war period's most significant high-profile buildings. The 'bungalow' was built 1963/64. The idea was Ludwig Erhard's, and it was planned by Munich architect Sep Ruf. Along with the buildings by Hans Schwippert, Egon Eiermann and Gunter Behnisch, it is among the most outstanding architectural reminders of Bonn's time as the Federal Republic's capital. Situated in the park of Palais Schaumborg close to the Rhine's banks, the building could not be seen by the general public and therefore remained comparatively unknown. The Kanzlerbungalow combines its function of representing the state with that of a home. It shows classical modern influences - primarily that of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe - extending to the contemporary Californian 'Case Study Houses'. The building speaks volumes about the early Federal Republic's sense of its own identity. The question of how the still young democracy should represent itself in its architecture after the years of National Socialism found its answer with a design that combined the need for an appropriate setting for a high public function with an explicit desire to make use of the tools created by the International Style, rather than resort to outmoded formal gestures which had additionally been politically discredited by recent history. The reaction to Sep Ruf's building reflects the often undecided attitude to questions of appropriate state representation of the time. Much praised by architectural experts, the Kanzlerbungalow did not appeal to a number of Erhard's successors. It did however have a not insignificant influence on West German architects in particular, in spite of its very specialised function. It is presently undergoing extensive renovations, and is to be used for exhibitions and other purposes from 2009 onwards.

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