Siemens in Munich for 125 Years
– an Illustrated History

Siemens & Halske opened its first so-called Technisches Büro (technical bureau) outside of Prussia in Munich on January 20, 1890. It had already completed several projects in the growing city of Munich, the capital of Bavaria and official residence of Bavaria’s monarchs. Its first major contract came from the Königlich Bayerische Eisenbahndirektion, which ordered 170 pointer telegraphs in 1856-57. Ten years later, Munich saw the first practical use of a Siemens dynamo during construction of the Braunauer railway bridge. To illuminate the railway building site after dark, Siemens & Halske shipped an arc light system from Berlin to Munich, along with a dynamo to driven by a road locomotive.

1879 – Electric lighting for Munich’s main station

Before establishing the Munich Distribution Office, Siemens & Halske works with independent representatives. The L. A. Riedinger firm of Augsburg arranges for Siemens & Halske to be awarded the contract to equip Munich’s new main train station with differential arc lamps in April 1879. It takes only a few months for 50 arc lamps of 360 candlepower each to be installed in the four naves of the platform hall. By August, the Centralbahnhof is the first train station in Germany to have electric lighting. In subsequent years, Siemens & Halske is awarded numerous contracts for projects to light roads, public institutions, businesses, and industrial operations.
1886 – First electric streetcars in Munich

A predecessor of today’s Siemens AG builds Munich’s first electric streetcar. The initial line begins running the 750 meters between Schwabing, at that time a suburb of Munich, and the Ungererbad swimming pool in September 1886. The client is the engineer August Ungerer, who wants to spare people headed for his outdoor swimming pool the ten-minute walk from Schwabing. The streetcar travels at a maximum speed of 17 kilometers per hour.

1890 – First sales office outside of Prussia

The number of electrification jobs keeps growing as the popularity and use of electricity increase. Siemens & Halske therefore establishes the company’s first sales office outside of Prussia in Munich on January 20, 1890. Known as the Technical Bureau, it is located at Galeriestrasse 15 a and managed by the engineer Adalbert Planck, a brother of the future Nobel laureate Max Planck. In the early days, Planck only has the support of a secretary. The bureau’s first customer is Duke Carl Theodor in Bavaria, an ophthalmologist in Munich who orders mobile electric lighting for his practice.

1892 – First major contract for the Technical Bureau

Construction of the electric power plant in Erding, a small city in Upper Bavaria, is the Technical Bureau’s first major contract. The three-phase system is used to generate power for the first time. The new technology makes it possible to transmit electrical energy over long distances with few losses. The responsible project manager makes his report to Siemens & Halske in Berlin on September 18, 1892: “The station sent power to the city for the first time yesterday. Operation was not disrupted. The machine held up well. About 80 incandescent lamps and six arc lamps lit up. There was great joy in the city.”
1903 – Move to Prannerstraße

The power engineering departments of Siemens & Halske merge with Elektrizitäts-Aktiengesellschaft vorm. Schuckert & Co. to form Siemens-Schuckertwerke GmbH in March 1903. The Siemens & Halske Technical Bureau moves into the offices of its former competitor following the merger. The joint Technical Bureau of Siemens-Schuckertwerke is now located on the bel etage of a prestigious townhouse at Prannerstraße 15. It is run by Fritz Hülss and Karl Martin. The territory served by the Bureau, which has branches in Augsburg and Kempten, includes Upper Bavaria, Lower Bavaria, and Swabia. The house next door is acquired in 1928, and the two serve as the center of Siemens business operations in Munich for decades.

1909 – Automatic telephone exchange in Munich-Schwabing

The first public telephone exchange in Germany begins operation in Berlin in 1881, with callers connected manually using switchboards. Munich soon has its own local system. Manual call switching reaches its limits in the early 20th century as the number of subscribers continues to grow, so local calling is automated. Munich is the first major city in Europe to launch an automated telephone switching system, in 1909. The system installed by Siemens & Halske at the new Munich-Schwabing exchange is initially designed for 2,500 lines. As automatic switching spreads, the telephone operators, known as “switchboard ladies,” are increasingly unnecessary.

1927 – Acquisition of Isaria-Zählerwerke AG

Siemens-Schuckertwerke acquires Isaria-Zählerwerke AG in 1927. Founded in 1909, Isaria and its electric meter factory on Hofmannstraße become the nucleus of Siemens manufacturing in Munich. To be able to supply telephone systems in Bavaria, Siemens & Halske must document that it has a plant in Bavaria, so meter manufacturing is moved to Nuremberg after the acquisition, and the Munich factory – now part of Siemens & Halske – is converted to manufacturing telephone equipment.
1931 – First police and fire alarm system
Siemens & Halske develops the first police call boxes in 1912, but they are not successful on the market until much later. Employees of the Technical Bureau install the first system of this kind in Munich (population 730,000) in 1932. Some 230 police call boxes are operational by the late 1930’s, considerably improving public safety.
Things are quite different for road safety, with city administrators proving very hesitant to install traffic signals. There is only one traffic light in Munich before World War II – at the dangerous intersection of Luisenstraße and Karlstraße.

1949 – Munich becomes the second headquarters of Siemens & Halske
Four-fifths of the company’s property has been destroyed by the end of World War II. In light of the political instability in Berlin, the company’s traditional location, management decides to move the headquarters of Siemens & Halske to Munich. The new Munich Zentralverwaltung (corporate administration) moves into the Ludwig-Ferdinand-Palais on Wittelsbacherplatz in fall 1949. Siemens acquires the classical building in 1957, a clear indication of the importance of its Munich location. Siemens & Halske is now one of the largest private employers in Munich.

1950’s – Expansion of the Hofmannstraße location
The expansion of Munich into the main location for telecommunications production begins in 1950, with purchases expanding the Hofmannstraße premises to almost 80,000 square meters. Production and assembly facilities for telephone systems, amplification points for long-distance traffic, and radio equipment are joined by the Siemens & Halske research and development center starting in 1955.
1954 – Construction of the new Munich Branch Office ready for occupancy

Most of the Technical Bureau buildings on Prannerstraße were destroyed during World War II. Commercial, technical, and business employees at the Munich Branch Office (as the Technical Bureau was known after 1949) are scattered throughout the city center. Plans for a new office building at Prannerstraße 8 began in late 1951 under the direction of Siemens architect Hans Hertlein. Carl Friedrich von Siemens-Haus, named after the founder’s youngest son, is ready for occupancy in February 1954. The Siemens Archive and Siemens Museum (now the Siemens Historical Institute) are moved from Berlin into the new building at Prannerstraße 10.

1957 – Semiconductor production starts

The development potential of transistor technology becomes clear in the early 1950’s, and Siemens begins planning its own semiconductor factory. Ground is broken on Balanstraße in Munich in 1955, and the new location is ready for occupancy two years later. The corporate administration for components and the transistor production are built on some 60,000 square meters of land. The plant is continuously expanded as semiconductor technology develops.

1957 – Series production of the world’s first fully transistorized computer

Siemens & Halske begins making central processing units and peripheral devices at the Martinstraße location in 1956-57. The company presents the 2002 digital computer, the first series-produced fully transistorized computer, in late 1957. Two years later, the Munich Branch installs the first large computer of that type – designed for technical and scientific applications – at Bölkow-Entwicklung KG in Ottobrunn.
1961 – World’s largest single-shaft gas turbine for the Heizkraftwerk Sendling

In 1959, Stadtwerke München chooses Siemens to equip the Heizkraftwerk Sendling. The plant supplies district heating to the Fürstenried development and the Sendling industrial zone. The fuel comes from a natural gas well in the area around Swabia, some 50 kilometers east of the city. This is the company’s first major gas turbine contract; the turbine and generator, with a capacity of 36,000 kVA, are installed during the second half of 1961. Siemens also receives the contract for implementing a second expansion phase, which goes into operation at the end of 1964. In all, the company supplies two turbo sets, the control room, the machine and power-system protection, and the measurement and control system for the plant.

1964 – First use of household waste to generate power

The first large power plant to burn household waste begins operation in Unterföhring in summer 1964; it is also the world’s first high-pressure steam power plant. Munich becomes the first city in the world to burn household waste to generate electricity and is able to completely dispose of all household waste through the end of the 1960’s. The Heizkraftwerk Nord (Munich north heating and power plant) is completely modernized in the early 1990’s. Siemens and Deutsche Babcock create a consortium that develops a groundbreaking concept for Stadtwerke München. Equipped with an ultra-modern exhaust gas scrubbing system, the plant begins operation in 1992. The plant receives the prestigious “Power Plant Award” environmental prize one year later.

1967 – Move to Richard-Strauss-Straße

By the 1960’s, the cramped premises in Carl Friedrich von Siemens-Haus no longer fulfill modern requirements for efficient offices. Thanks to support from the city of Munich, Siemens begins building a more extensive office complex in the Bogenhausen district in June 1965. The first buildings on Richard-Strauss-Straße are completed two years later, and the Munich Branch Office starts to move in.
The location on the Mittlerer Ring offers good transport connections, making it easier to reach the warehouses and workshops in Freimann and Westend. The Branch Office does not change locations until the fall of 2014, when it moves to Munich-Perlach.

1972 – Siemens technology for the Olympics
The 1972 Summer Olympic Games offer an opportunity to demonstrate Siemens’ power of innovation to an international public. The company supplies power to the large construction site at the Olympic Park and is responsible for the control center and the power for the Olympic Stadium and television transmission center. The public transport system is massively expanded to bring millions of visitors to the venues quickly and safely, with Siemens supplying the electrical equipment for the Munich commuter and subway trains along with signaling technology and emergency call systems. The company also participates in the expansion of the traffic monitoring system, an investment that still influences today’s urban infrastructure.

1971–1984 – Construction and expansion of the Munich-Perlach location
To maintain Siemens’ international competitiveness, a “think tank for data technology” is created in Munich-Perlach between 1971 and 1984. The extensive building complex houses both the Data Systems Group and the Corporate Technology Division. Perlach becomes the center of microelectronics, attracting engineers, computer specialists, and scientists from all over the world. Munich is widely known as the “Electronics Metropolis” or “Silicon Bavaria”.

1992 – Electronic and electrotechnical equipment for the new Munich Airport
Siemens plays a major role in construction of the new Franz-Josef-Strauss International Airport, which goes into operation in May 1992 in the Erdinger Moos area. The electrical engineering company provides navigation lights for 130 kilometers of runways, as well as the movement management, power supply, parking control, and IT systems. Siemens Logistics now allows complete turnaround of an aircraft in just 30 minutes.
1994 – First low-floor tram for Munich

The electric tram is an integral part of public transport in Munich. As part of an effort to modernize its fleet, the Verkehrsbetriebe der Stadtwerke München (Munich transit authority) orders 70 low-floor trams (type 2), for which Siemens supplies the electrical equipment. The first railcar rolls out of the Munich tram depot on Einsteinstraße in October 1994, gradually followed by other vehicles through 1997. The new generation of trams is quieter and makes it easier for passengers to board.

1999 – Dedication of administration building on Oskar-von-Miller-Ring

The history of the building on Oskar-von-Miller-Ring dates back to 1983, when the New York architecture firm of Richard Meier wins a competition. However, the project is postponed, and the actual planning work does not start until 1991. Construction begins in 1997, with the first offices move-in ready in June 1999. The new SiemensForum is launched in September, offering a platform for dialog with the public and customers. The new six-story building fills in one of the last gaps in the city center remaining from World War II.

2005 – High-tech for Allianz Arena

The Allianz Arena opens in May 2005, and soccer fans are now accompanied by innovative Siemens solutions from the time they head for the game until the last whistle. Siemens traffic management systems point the way to the stadium. Once spectators arrive, visitor flow control easily gets everyone to the right seat. In the arena itself, 4,250 Osram lights can shine red, blue, or white, and the electricity they need comes from two power supply units by Siemens. An automatic fire protection system with 4,600 fire alarms and 15,000 extinguisher heads keeps spectators safe. A video system uses 90 cameras to monitor the stadium and visitors, maximizing security.
2008 – World’s largest parking control system at Munich Airport

Flughafen München GmbH chooses Siemens to expand the existing Sipark parking control system, which has been used since the parking garage at Terminal 2 was opened. At least 9,000 parking spaces are equipped with individual parking space monitoring and integrated into centralized parking space management by the time the system goes online in 2008. With more than 15,000 parking spaces, Munich Airport has the world’s largest parking control and management system. Drivers can use their navigation systems to reserve parking spaces over the Internet while on their way to the airport. After entering the garage, they are guided to the closest available space.

2010 – World’s first Biograph mMR ready for use in Munich Clinic

Siemens hands over the world’s first Biograph mMR to the Munich Clinic on the right bank of the Isar River in November 2010. Its Nuclear Medicine Clinic immediately begins clinical testing of this medical innovation, which offers new capabilities for diagnosing diseases such as cancer or dementia. Combining magnetic resonance tomography (MRT) and positron emission tomography (PET) in a single unit allows physicians to observe the position of organs in the body, their function, and metabolism simultaneously and in a single image for the first time.

2012 – Virtual power plant in Munich

In April 2012, Munich’s public utility company, the Stadtwerke München (SWM), works together with Siemens to put a virtual power plant into operation. In the first phase, six unit-type cogeneration modules, five hydropower plants and a wind farm in the Munich area are pooled to be operated like a single installation. The core component of these interconnected power plants is the Decentralized Energy Management System (DEMS) from Siemens. It ensures that SWM is able not only to optimally operate and steer its smaller, decentralized energy sources and loads but also to create value by expanding its marketing scope.
2014 – Topping-out ceremony for shell of the new corporate headquarters

In summer 2010, Siemens decides to design new corporate headquarters in Munich to achieve a highly-efficient building complex that will contribute to sustainable urban development. Project fundamentals for the new structure are developed in close cooperation with the city of Munich. The Danish firm Henning Larsen Architects wins the competition, in which over 100 firms participate, in 2011. Two years later, demolition of the old corporate headquarters is complete, and work on the new headquarters can begin. Siemens holds a topping-out ceremony in the building shell in 2014, with work on the façade starting immediately thereafter. The new Siemens headquarters is projected to open in spring 2016.

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