Press release

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Contact:
Annalena Fürholzer
BAUER Group
BAUER-Strasse 1
86529 Schrobenhausen, Germany
Phone: +49 8252 97-1075
public.relations@bauer.de
www.bauer.de/en

BAUER Spezialtiefbau Completes Challenging Foundation Engineering Works in Hamburg's Wandsbek Markt District

- In Hamburg's Wandsbek Markt district, BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH carried out challenging specialist foundation engineering works in the basement of a former Karstadt department store.
- Working in confined spaces and with limited headroom, BAUER installed retaining structures using jet grouting (HDI), secured existing foundations, and installed micropiles to support new stairwells.
- BAUER carried out the works on behalf of Union Investment from February to August 2026. The contract was worth approximately EUR 2.2 million.

Hamburg, Germany – A former Karstadt department store in Hamburg's Wandsbek district is being transformed into a new mixed-use district. On behalf of Union Investment, BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH carried out challenging specialist foundation engineering works in the basement of the former department store. The scope of work included installing retaining structures for future elevator pits, securing existing foundations, and installing micropiles for the foundations of new stairwells.

Specialist Foundation Engineering in Existing Structures
Working within existing structures places particular demands on planning and execution. Unlike on an open construction site, space and freedom of movement are limited. Existing structural elements define the constraints and must be taken into account when installing new structures. At the Wandsbek Markt project, BAUER faced an additional logistical challenge: the site setup area was located on the upper level, while the specialist foundation engineering works were carried out in the basement. Some materials therefore had to be lowered by crane. The team also had to route the hoses required for the work over considerable distances.

The works were carried out using KR 702 and KR 704 drilling rigs from KLEMM Bohrtechnik GmbH. Their compact design allows drilling operations to be performed even in confined spaces and with limited headroom.

The construction sequence presented further challenges. While BAUER was carrying out the specialist foundation engineering works, demolition activities were taking place simultaneously on site. The individual operations therefore had to be closely coordinated with all trades involved. This called for careful planning, flexibility in responding to site conditions, and efficient communication between the teams.

Three Tasks, One Goal
To provide retaining structures for the future elevator pits, BAUER Spezialtiefbau used jet grouting (HDI). The process involves drilling a borehole while simultaneously injecting a binder slurry into the ground at high pressure. This creates soilcrete elements that stabilize the ground and provide a

watertight barrier. At Wandsbek, this method made it possible to construct a small excavation pit in confined conditions without having to excavate and slope the surrounding ground over a large area.

Another key task was securing the existing foundations, which remained under load throughout the works. The BAUER team therefore had to plan the construction sequence precisely and take the load-bearing behavior of the existing structure into account. During the HDI process, the injection initially loosens the surrounding soil and can locally cause it to liquefy. The treated ground only develops its load-bearing capacity once the binder has hardened. The individual operations therefore had to be carefully coordinated to ensure that the existing foundations and the transfer of structural loads were properly accounted for throughout the construction process.

The third task involved installing micropiles to support the foundations of new stairwells. Micropiles transfer structural loads into deeper, load-bearing soil layers. They make it possible to install new foundation elements in locations where the use of larger drilling rigs is restricted by limited space. Micropiles can also be used to underpin existing structures when their foundations are not designed to accommodate additional or modified loads. This enabled BAUER Spezialtiefbau to integrate the new foundation elements precisely into the existing building.

Precision in Confined Spaces
Phuoc An Tran, Project Manager at BAUER Spezialtiefbau, was responsible for coordinating and organizing the site operations. Making quick decisions is part of everyday life on a construction site, he explains: “Things can get very stressful on site, and you have to make decisions quickly. It is important to keep a cool head at all times and ask colleagues for support when needed.”

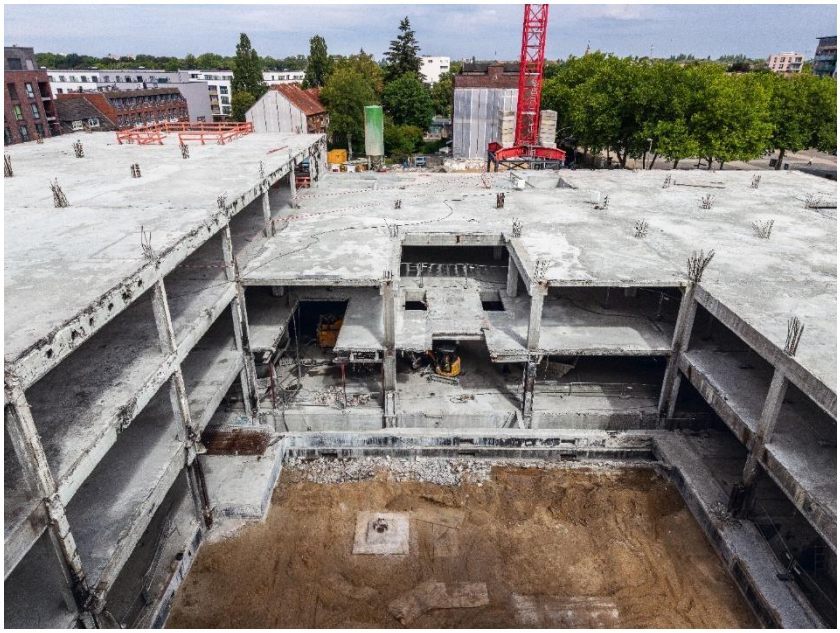
Close cooperation between the office-based team and the site personnel was a key factor in the project's success. Phuoc An Tran particularly appreciates seeing the benefits of thorough preparation and planning: “When you invest a lot of time and effort in preparing and planning the work on site, and everything comes together as planned in the end, it is a great feeling.”

Contract Value of Approximately EUR 2.2 Million
BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH carried out the works in Hamburg from February to August 2026. The contract was worth approximately EUR 2.2 million. With the completion of the specialist foundation engineering works, BAUER has created the conditions for the subsequent construction phases of the Wandsbek Markt development.

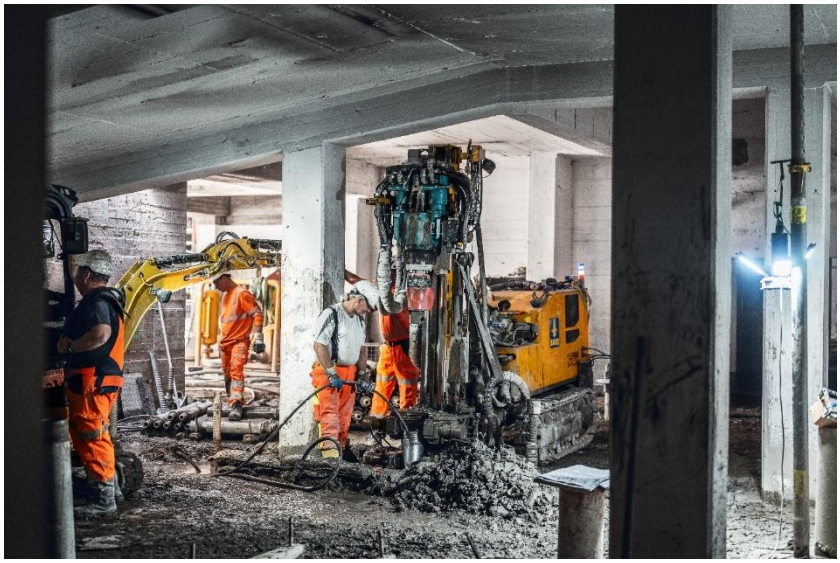
From Former Department Store to a New Neighborhood Hub
Developed by Union Investment, the Wandsbek Markt project is one of the major urban transformation schemes in Hamburg’s Wandsbek district. The former department store site is being redeveloped into a mixed-use district. The historic original Karstadt building, dating from 1922, and the extension added in the 1960s are being incorporated into the new development.

In the future, the district will bring together residential, commercial, retail, dining, cultural, and public service facilities. Plans include new apartments and publicly accessible spaces for people to gather and spend time. Parts of the Wandsbek District Office are also set to move into the development.

Photos: pressebild-press-image-foundation-works-wandsbek-markt-bauer-spezialtiefbau…



(1) A former Karstadt department store in Hamburg's Wandsbek district is being transformed into a new neighborhood hub.



(2) The compact KR 702 and KR 704 drilling rigs from KLEMM Bohrtechnik GmbH were used for the specialist foundation engineering works in the basement.



(3) BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH carried out foundation engineering works inside the existing building.

All images: © BAUER Group

About BAUER Spezialtiefbau Group

BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH, the original parent company of the BAUER Group, has been a major driving force in the development of specialist foundation engineering. It carries out all of the customary processes of foundation engineering, primarily for excavation pits, foundations, cut-off walls and ground improvements on a worldwide basis. In doing so, BAUER Spezialtiefbau GmbH works closely together with their subsidiaries and branches across the globe. Regional networks around the world allow for the quick and flexible application of machines, teams and expertise. BAUER Spezialtiefbau offers their customers individual, creative and economical specialist foundation engineering solutions for demanding construction projects, from planning through to execution. More at https://geotechnical-solutions.bauer.de/en.

About BAUER

The BAUER Group is a leading provider of equipment, products and services dealing with ground and groundwater. The Group can rely on a worldwide network on all continents. Its operations are divided into three forward-looking segments: Geotechnical Solutions, Equipment and Resources. Through the close interaction of these three segments, BAUER combines comprehensive expertise, technological know-how, and many years of experience. This positions the company as an innovative and highly specialized provider of products and services for demanding specialist foundation engineering projects and related markets. BAUER contributes to addressing global challenges such as urbanization, growing infrastructure needs, and the responsible management of the environment and water resources. The BAUER Group was founded in 1790 and is based in Schrobenhausen, Bavaria. In 2025, it employed about 10,500 people and achieved total Group revenues of EUR 1.7 billion worldwide. More information can be found at https://www.bauer.de/en. Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube!