After the fall of the wall in 1989, the revitalization of the city center of Berlin, that is located in the former eastern part of the city, became one of the most important directions of the urban planning in Berlin. The leading model of the new planning was called "Critical Reconstruction" of the "European City." That meant reconstruction and maintenance of the street pattern of the 19th century, of the block structure, of the height of the buildings, of stone facades, and of the open spaces. The building type that was introduced to fill and to revitalize the city center, was called "mixed-use commercial building. Comparing this German strategy of downtown revitalization with the revitalization in North American city centers, several similarities are notable. The center is becoming a central business district and not an individual city center. We find a monostructure of functions in the central area of Berlin. This one-dimensional structure can hardly adapt to changing needs of different uses.

The autonomous compounds of the Friedrichstadt Gallerias are directed towards their interior rather than towards the street. Private indoor plazas want to substitute for outdoor public streets and spaces. These commercial buildings lack a direct street relation, and they have direct access from the parking garage.

The tendency of gentrification is obvious in the Friedrichstraße. The new trade spaces and luxury apartments are directed towards high-class shops, high-profile businesses, and high-income professionals.
There are many similarities between the planning for American downtown areas and Friedrichstraße in Berlin. This is remarkable, because the official directing ideas of the German planning were the "Critical Reconstruction" and the "European City". The reconstruction was not critical. It was partly historical, partly economical. The new downtown does not represent a European city, rather it has many components of American central business districts.

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