

GERMANY

The Upper Middle Rhine Valley – Conservation and Development Issues Related to the World Heritage Property

Some of the problems related to development pressures with possible negative impact on the outstanding universal value (OUV), the authenticity and integrity of the 65-km-long property were already presented in *Heritage at Risk 2006/07* (pp. 67–69) and *Heritage at Risk 2008–2010* (pp. 62–64), namely the plans (developed even before the inscription on the World Heritage List in 2002) to connect the federal highways on both sides of the river by means of a bridge in the vicinity of St. Goar and St. Goarshausen. In 2012 the government of the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate decided to give up the plan for a bridge for the remaining legislative period and to implement – as requested by ICOMOS – an extended ferry service on a probationary basis until 2016. As the legislative period of the government is due to end in 2016, the report of the ICOMOS advisory mission of December 2012 recommended to the World Heritage Committee that the “World Heritage Master Plan”, elaborated in an exemplary participatory process in 2012, should provide for a clear definition of an acceptable form of river crossing.

The ICOMOS advisory mission was invited by the State Party in August 2012 to evaluate the operation of a cable car in the city of Koblenz, located in the World Heritage property. As proposed by ICOMOS the scope of the mission was broadened to also address other current development issues, such as the development plan for the Loreley Plateau, including a summer bobsleigh track and large-scale hotel buildings, noise from the railway and alternative energy production installations such as wind turbines and pump storage stations.

The **cable car system** was built from 2009 to 2010 for the 2011 National Garden Show, connecting the left bank of the Rhine (the city of Koblenz) with the Ehrenbreitstein fortress on the right bank. The agreement of the World Heritage Centre was based on the promise given by the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Culture to start dismantling the construction in autumn 2013. As the cable car’s base station is located in the immediate vicinity of the eastern part of St. Kastor, the oldest and most important medieval church in Koblenz dating back to Carolingian times, from the very beginning not only ICOMOS, but also the Archbishopric of Trier considered it as not being compatible with the OUV of the property, as it harmed its authenticity and integrity. In 2012 the State Party noted that the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate reserved the right to extend the cable car’s operation by two years, to June 30, 2016, and requested that the temporary cable car system be even allowed to remain in operation until June 30, 2026 (the technical deadline of operation). The mission concluded that the cable car system is not compatible with the



Cable cars connecting the city of Koblenz with Ehrenbreitstein fortress (photo: C. Machat)



Cable car base station near the medieval church of St. Kastor (photo: C. Machat)

OUV of the property and recommended the dismantling, with the initially agreed deadlines to be respected. Unfortunately, during its 37th session in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from June 16–27, 2013, the World Heritage Committee did not follow the recommendation and accepted the proposal of the State Party to continue the operation of the cable car until June 2026.

However, the World Heritage Committee decided to follow the other recommendations addressed by the ICOMOS mission



The Loreley seen from the other side of the Rhine (photo: C. Machat)

and included in the report of the World Heritage Centre: On the **Loreley Plateau** behind the legendary steep rock, the core and centre of the whole property, a development plan is in progress to improve the compatibility of tourist activities, traffic and parking with the site. Investors intend to develop the site by erecting several large-scale hotel buildings and installing a summer bobsleigh track. The latter has already been built, and the mis-



Loreley summer bobsleigh track (photo: C. Machat)

Visualisation of hotel project on the Loreley Plateau at night
(© B. Burkhardt)



sion report concluded that it is not compatible with the OUV of the property and therefore recommended that the final permit should be refused, thus ensuring that the track will be dismantled. The project for three hotels on the Loreley Plateau, developed in 2012, is not compatible with the OUV of the property, either. In particular the six-star hotel, due to its position on the edge of the plateau and its dimensions, would seriously alter the cultural landscape and damage its authenticity and integrity. A project for a smaller hotel may be possible if it complies with the development plan for the plateau. The World Heritage Committee recommended that the State Party on the one hand deny approval for the large-scale hotel building; on the other hand, it encouraged the State Party to consider viable solutions for a smaller-scale redevelopment in consultation with the Advisory Bodies and all stakeholders. As a consequence, ICOMOS Germany asked the decision-making authorities of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate to initiate an architectural competition for a development plan of the cultural landscape of the Plateau.

Noise from the railway is a permanent problem heavily affecting the quality of life of inhabitants and the experience of visitors to the property. The mission recommended that efforts to reduce noise in the most effective and sensitive way be reinforced, but cautioned against sporadic measures leading to unsightly solutions, such as noise-protection walls. It suggested that short-term solutions, including improvements to the technical infrastructure, noise reduction of vehicles, be realised, while also developing a long-term solution, for instance another rail transport corridor. In summer 2013 the European Commission started a consultation procedure for “effective reduction of noise generated by rail freight waggons in the EU” (“Railnoise 2013”), and on September 30, 2013 the “Association World Heritage Upper Middle Rhine Valley”, which runs the property since 2005, contributed with a petition signed also by a representative of ICOMOS Germany. In the meantime, the technical department of the national railway company informed the public about the bad condition of three tunnels (Bank-, Bett- and Kammereckttunnel) on the left

bank of the river opposite the Loreley area and about the technical necessity to develop alternative solutions for restructuring and/or building new tunnels. A working group, including all the stakeholders of the area and also the Advisory Bodies, was formed that started to consider all technical possibilities and alternatives with respect to the OUV of the area.

Based on the recommendations included in the ICOMOS advisory mission report the World Heritage Committee in its Decision 37 COM 7B.75 requested “the State Party to closely monitor the situation related to **alternative energy production installations** such as wind turbines and pump storage stations, complete the related sightline study, and submit this study to the World Heritage Centre for examination by the Advisory Bodies”. In the meantime, the sightline study has been completed and from the very beginning has caused conflicts of opinions and positions between the different stakeholders. The political pressure for the erection of wind turbines is well known, because they are highly subsidised by the state and assure an important income for the communes. At the same time the visual effect and also impact (not only) on the Upper Middle Rhine Valley and its buffer zone are known. The property is located in two different federal states, in Rhineland-Palatinate and in Hessen, where different legal systems apply. For the property itself, both federal states have declared that no wind turbines will be permitted. For the buffer zone, however, the regulations are different: In Rhineland-Palatinate the erection of wind turbines is excluded if incompatible with the OUV of the property, i.e. where it would result in a visual disturbance, while in Hessen, with no precise and area-wide regulations, every case would have to be examined separately. This is one of the reasons for the request included in the ICOMOS advisory mission report that procedures need to be clarified and decision-making authorities defined.

Christoph Machat

The town of Hirzenach affected by railway traffic
(photo: www.pro-rheintal.de)



Stralsund, multi-storey car park at Fahrwall, Schagemann und Schulte 2011 (photo: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stralsund,_F%C3%A4hrwall,_Parkhaus_Am_Hafen_%282012-03-04%29,_by_Klugschnacker_in_Wikipedia.jpg [1 June 2013])

Parking in Historic Town Centres: the Examples of Stralsund and Wismar

In Stralsund and Wismar, the successful preservation of the World Cultural Heritage depends considerably on a continuous adjustment and adaptation of traffic and parking concepts. The urban framework plans set up in the early 1990s envisaged an extension of the pedestrian areas, a reduction of through-traffic, traffic calming by means of 30 km/h zones, and the strict introduction of priority-to-right regulations. These aspects became part of both towns' management plans ten years later. The expertises commissioned in 2012 illustrate the changed situation ten years after the inscription on the World Heritage List in 2002. Several ensembles, individual buildings, entire streets and squares have been preserved and renovated; gaps between buildings have been filled. The influx of new inhabitants into the historic centres and rising numbers of tourists have enlivened both towns to a very pleasing extent. However, they also confront the towns with new problems. With regard to parking new solutions will have to be found for the various demands (residential parking, parking for customers and for deliveries, parking for visitors, employees and commuters) if derelict areas are no longer available as interim solutions. The declared and fundamental goal is a reduction of traffic in the historic town centres by limiting the number parking spaces and concentrating the parking possibilities on the outskirts.

In 1997, Stralsund erected a pre-fab multi-storey car park (267 parking spaces) at Weingartenbastion, close to the Frankenwall on the south-eastern fringe of the old town. Between 2003 and 2005 this was followed by an underground garage (260 parking spaces) on the opposite side of the town, at Knieperwall in the north-west. So far the erection of apartments on top of the underground garage has not yet worked out. Excavations at this construction site had unearthed a part of the archaeological heritage of this town – the latter being an integral part of the World Heritage. The Hiddenseer Hof was a Cistercian settlement in Stralsund, erected in the first half of the 14th century, later to become derelict and



Wismar, old town with harbour, on the lower edge of the picture the south-eastern fringe of the old town (photo: U. Jahr, Ingenieurbüro Jahr, Objektplanung – Bauüberwachung, Burgwall 2, 23966 Wismar, photo 2012)

to be re-erected. After the Reformation it served as accommodation, was destroyed by fire in the 17th century and once again re-erected. Parts of the rediscovered cellars were integrated into the new building by using viewing windows. Thus, the “readability” of history is insured. However, the quality and execution of the new buildings are not satisfactory; they diminish the original intention quite considerably.

The municipality had great interest in developing and integrating Quartier 17, the largest derelict area in the centre of Stralsund, into the historic centre. The archaeological finds were an important corrective for the already planned parking spaces. In general, the decision to install a new commercial quarter in the heart of the old town and to provide parking spaces for this purpose undermines the concept of parking on the outskirts. Against opposition – not only from ICOMOS, but also from the conservation department, from the town itself as well as from citizens and the Altstadtverein – the claim for town repair was asserted. Excavations in the area of Badenstrasse exposed well preserved cellars dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries. They also showed clearly the damages caused by the Second World War in the southern section of the quarter that measures 5,000 m². As a result of these excavations, in order to preserve these testimonies the number of parking spaces was reduced from 235 to 188. Furthermore, in the course of the discussions it was also possible to move the drive for deliveries, to preserve the upper layers and making them visible in the new building. For the new construction the Berlin architects Kara und Hoffmann have suggested an architecture divided into small sections. The roofing ceremony was in November 2012.

Basically, the multi-storey car park “Am Hafen” situated at the northern Fährwall, which opened in June 2011 after plans by the

Potsdam architects Schagemann und Schulte, is in accordance with the pursued parking concept. All the same, it also shows the limits of such a concept: The construction with 280 spaces, against which residents had protested for a long time, tries to adapt to the Hanseatic building tradition in its choice of materials. Nevertheless, this cannot visually reduce the enormous volume of this building. – In the coming years the existing car park of 165 spaces at Neuer Markt is meant to disappear altogether or to be considerably reduced. Apart from the Alter Markt where the city has already removed all parking spaces, the Neuer Markt is one of the most important places in the old town. Stralsund is planning a call for tenders for this area.

In Wismar the situation is similar. A new parking concept, as in Stralsund prepared by IVAS (Ingenieurbüro für Verkehrsanlagen und -systeme Dresden) in 2011, reacts to the demand for parking spaces in view of a decreasing supply and aims for a classification of the parking zones for residents, employees, customers and visitors of the town, allowing different lengths of parking. The conflicts caused by the concept of parking on the outskirts of the historic centre also become evident in Wismar. On the south-eastern fringe of the old town, after the demolition of an oversized office block, an urban replanning has been under way for years. Part of this replanning is to provide parking spaces to relieve the town centre. After initial plans for 380 spaces the number was raised to 500. A draft for a master plan allowed a spacious new multi-storey car park. Thereupon, the town commissioned an expertise on the ramparts and fortifications and immediately reacted to the results. The number of parking spaces is now 400 and the height of the permitted new buildings has been considerably reduced. Consequently, the view of the historic centre is not obstructed. By

adapting the green areas to the now visible medieval moat in front of the town wall another correction has been achieved.

Just as in Stralsund parking in the centre is also being discussed in Wismar: within the framework of a civic participation regarding the urban development of the quarter around the tower of St. Mary's Church (in accordance with § 137 of the code of German building law) the citizenry in January 2014 voted in favour of an overall concept for the quarter. Regarding the traffic objectives it says: "In the area around St Mary's Church parking spaces for residents and non-residents should be provided in well-balanced proportions. The various user groups, residents, customers, visitors, tourists and the handicapped, must be taken into due consideration."

Sigrid Brandt and Jörg Haspel

The Kant-Garage in Berlin-Charlottenburg, Listed Multi-Storey Garage in the Style of the New Objectivity, Threatened to be Demolished

The Kant-Garage is clearly visible among the rows of houses in Kantstrasse in Charlottenburg. According to the decision of the owner, Berlin's last remaining multi-storey garage from the 1920s is to be demolished for economic reasons. The necessary application for demolition has already been filed with the municipal monuments authority. This garage, opened in October 1930, which survived the Second World War without any major damages, has been situated in Kantstrasse 126–127 for more than 80 years. It bears the rather pompous, typically Berlin-style name "Kant-Garagen-Palast".

The Kant-Garage was built in the architectural language of the *Neues Bauen*/the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity). The two Hans Poelzig pupils Hermann Zweigenthal (1904–1968) and Richard Paulick (1903–1979) designed this garage for businessman Louis Serlin. The actual form was developed together with the Berlin architect's office Lohmüller, Korschelt & Renker that specialised in multi-storey garages. The impressive curtain wall covering the entire back wall of the building like a glass skin and the spectacular double spiral ramp are ascribed to Zweigenthal. In 1991 the garage was included in Berlin's monument list. From the time between 1907 and 1937 barely a dozen multi-storey garages have survived in Germany. According to Berlin's monument council (2010) the Kant-Garage "is not only an outstanding monument of the *Neues Bauen*. It is also a unique technical monument of automobilism in Germany." This exceptional status has to be seen in connection with the way the building was executed and the unusual state of conservation of the garage. The curtain wall on the rear side of the building made by the Frankfurt glass-roof factory Claus Meyn KG is largely intact. Inside, one finds the cleverly designed sliding gates made by the Paul Heinrichs factory in Tempelhof.

In 1930, this monument was one of only two multi-storey garages in Europe with a double spiral ramp. On this special type of ramp cars use one spiral lane to drive up and another to drive down. The Kant-Garage was the only German multi-storey garage to be designed that way – and remained so until 1957. On a worldwide scale there is only one older garage of this type



Illustration of the Kant-Garage from *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, 1931



The exterior today (photo: www.bauwelt.de)



Detail of the interior (photo: www.bauwelt.de)

with a double spiral ramp: the Richmond Garage of 1928 (107 N, 6th St., Richmond, Virginia) by Lee, Smith & VanDervoort. The Kant-Garage is authentic and a key example of this new building type. It is a testimony to a largely forgotten cultural history of the automobile. Even listed examples of this type have been destroyed: in 1983 the "Hochgarage Stephanstrasse" in Krefeld (1928) by Carl Stauth, in 1997 the "Clover Leaf" filling station in Hannover (1952) by Gerd Lichtenhahn, in 2011 the "Parkgarage am Zoo in Berlin (1956/57) by Hans Bielenberg, and



General view of the ICC with the Radio Tower in the background (photo: Alfred Englert)

most recently the “Holtzendorff-Garage” in Berlin (1928/29) by Johannes and Walter Krüger.

What a magnet this carefully restored Kant-Garage could be in and for Berlin’s district of Charlottenburg: After all, it is already an inherent part of the sightseeing programmes of international tourists interested in the remaining witnesses of the Weimar Republic. The first step, however, would have to be its restoration in line with general conservation standards. The present owner, the Kantgaragen Grundstücksgesellschaft mbH (Pepper Immobilien), will most likely not be able to fund such measures. From the cultural-historical perspective, however, the demolition would be inexcusable.

René Hartmann

Uncertain Future for International Congress Center (ICC) Berlin

”Silver whale” – “spaceship” – ”space station”. These metaphors have been used to describe the International Congress Center of Berlin. Designed by two of the city’s architects, Ralf Schüler and Ursulina Schüler-Witte, the ICC was completed in April 1979, after 10 years of construction. Prior to that, the Congress Hall in Tiergarten (1957) was Berlin’s first attempt to highlight the city as a conference location.

The function of the ICC was intended to be much larger in scope: it was planned to be ”Europe’s Congress Center”. In addition, for those entering the city using the Avus from the west, the ICC had ”a purpose similar to that of the Brandenburg Gate in the past” (Helmut Börsch-Supan, *Bauwelt* 1979). Today, the future of this architectural landmark on the island of West Berlin

is uncertain. For years, those responsible for economic and urban development in Berlin disagreed about refurbishment and uses that would preserve and modernize this architectural symbol of West Berlin as a cultural hub.

The ICC Berlin is a structure that integrates aesthetics and function. A striking symbol at the time because of its high-tech architecture, it was a display of progress, modernization and internationalization and has shaped architectural and urban history. This grand edifice in Berlin is comparable to the Centre Pompidou in Paris (1971–77), Lloyds in London (1978–86) or the University Hospital in Aachen (1971–85); places that have already been designated historic monuments, or – as in the case of the Centre Pompidou – have been accepted as undisputed national treasures.

As a contemporary response to the enormous arrangement of exhibition halls west of the site, built in the neo-classical style of the 1930s, the architects designed a 320 m long, 80 m wide and 40 m high structure. The ICC features a highway along its longitudinal axis and incorporates the traffic landscape surrounding it. It stands broad and powerful between Messedamm, the freeway, and the railroad tracks, flanking it on the east. This specific location required the architects Ralf Schüler and Ursulina Schüler-Witte to design a large, noise-resistant building with a large span.

The result is a construction unit, consisting of load-bearing stair towers, along the flanks of the building stretched trusses and transversely stretched binders. The steel trusses provide the supporting structure to the outside walls and ‘clutch’ the building from above. On the flanks it is held together with an enormous carcass-braced double rail. Building and external support structures are covered with shimmering aluminium sheets, partly in bold red.

The internal design is reminiscent of a town with a central square and a network of roads varying in size. The building is

accessed by a foyer, which extends longitudinally through the building and was termed “Boulevard” by the architects. From it branch off – comparable to crossroads on slopes – stairs and escalators that lead to wardrobes and the rooms on lower and upper levels. The Boulevard and foyer do not merely accommodate traffic; instead, numerous public and semi-private conversation niches are furnished in the original style. 40 halls and 40 rooms differing in size for a total capacity of 20,000 seats, provide ample space for conferences and congresses. The size of the building is shaped by the two largest halls, separated by a towering stage house, clearly seen from the outside. These halls feature particular design elements: Ceiling panels can be lowered to visually reduce the size of the space, and a double floor accommodates multiple uses. The first floor reveals an auditorium complete with built-in congress chairs for a capacity of 2000 delegates. That floor can be raised to be a ceiling, exposing the second, underlying floor, which converts the hall into a 4000-seat grand banquet or ball-room. The special atmosphere of the round hall was referred to as ‘Spaceship Orion’ (German version of Star Trek) because of its futuristic appearance. It is characterized by the combination of different materials: the load-bearing constructions are made of exposed concrete; the balustrades of the gallery floors are clad with plasterboards. The escalators have stainless steel portals, showing a distinctly tech-savvy form like a raised lever.

The main technological element is the ‘Congress-chair’ developed by Ralf Schüler. It provides seating for two and features communication technology, to include simultaneous interpreter system, microphones, channel selection and volume control, which – as he said it – “besides other technical facilities, a communication technology equipment is integrated with a microphone for two seats, a word alarm button connected to each seat, the corresponding indicator fields for the acknowledgement of a request to speak and for the grant to speak, also the facilities for the simultaneous interpreter system, for channel selection and volume control” (AIT 3/1980, S. 234).

The Congress chair is therefore the smallest unit of a comprehensive communications technology. Over time, the ICC’s inherent technology has been replaced by wireless headset communication. The compact equipment consoles are obsolete; however, they maintain a function: technology as historical testimony and memory support.

What does the future hold for Berlin’s International Congress Center, a structure which at this time has not been designated a ‘monument’? The ICC has been the subject of long-standing debate about demolition, remodelling and reconstruction. A synthesis of aesthetics, function, materiality, construction and social context of large buildings, such as the ICC, forms a central aspect in a discussion that must take into account the question of the identity-forming potential of such buildings. The ICC has yet to be designated as ‘historical’ and as such has not yet gained acceptance for its historical dimension. The building is one of the main reference points for the architecture of the Cold War period. It is significant as the interior design and furnishings are largely from the construction period, which gives the building a high degree of authenticity. Major international congresses were held here, which enriched Berlin’s capacity for global communication. The city consistently maintained its influence despite its isolation.

Currently, a re-purposing of the building is under consideration. The CityCube, a new congress and exhibition centre nearby, to be completed in 2014, generates competition with regard to the functional aspect of the ICC, a competition that may render the ICC expendable. In accordance with the criteria guiding monu-



The Boulevard (photo: Alfred Englert)



Conference hall 1 (photo: Alfred Englert)



The round conference hall (photo: Alfred Englert)

ment preservation, current uses of the Center must be maintained while new uses must be secured: this is the only way to ensure the building’s relevance. Nearly unchanged over time, the International Congress Center continues to meet the international criteria guiding the designation ‘monument’ of authenticity and integrity. Hardly any of Berlin’s formative “large buildings” of the 1970s meet that standard. Therefore, the ICC should neither be gutted nor destroyed.

Kerstin Wittmann-Englert
(English translation: Birgit Meany)