

# GERMANY

## The Temple Synagogue in Hamburg's Neustadt

The remains of the former synagogue of the liberal “New Israelite Temple Association” in Hamburg, threatened with decay, are of international importance as an architectural and contemporary document of Jewish history and must be preserved – also in view of the current debate about the reconstruction of the synagogue on Bornplatz – and be put to good use. The ruin was included in the “Top 19 Watchlist” of the most threatened Jewish relics in Europe by the Foundation for Jewish Heritage (London). Hamburg’s Neustadt – an expansion of the city from the beginning of the 17th century – became the residential area for citizens of other religious communities and thus the home of many Jews. In the course of the Enlightenment, religious ties also loosened within the Jewish community, so that liberal aspirations became increasingly important there. On December 11, 1817, 65 Jews from Hamburg founded the “New Israelite Temple Association”, whose statutes aimed at reforming religious life and increasing social integration. The temple association’s prayer book was the first Jewish reform liturgy. The return to “Eretz Israel” in the promised land and the re-erection of the temple in Jerusalem were less important thematically. The texts were bilingual (Hebrew and German), the organ was played in the service. Religious services initially took place in rented rooms in Alter Steinweg, which soon became too small, whereupon a property was acquired in Poolstrasse on which the new synagogue was to be built. The foundation stone for the new temple was laid on October 18, 1842. There had been a delay in the building preparations because after the Great Fire in early May 1842, which destroyed large parts of Hamburg’s city centre but not the Neustadt, temporarily homeless citizens had to be accommodated in buildings that were already scheduled for demolition. The plans for the temple came from the architect Johann Hinrich Klees-Wülbern (1800–1845), who at the same time created the German-Israelite hospital in St. Pauli on behalf of the banker Salomon Heine. Klees-Wülbern was a renowned architect who also belonged to the “Technical Commission” which developed the plans for the reconstruction after the Great Fire. The temple itself was carried out in a generously sized courtyard and was shielded from the street by four multi-storey houses. It was accessible via a passage in Poolstrasse 12-13, with house numbers 11 and 14 also belonging to the complex. The free-standing synagogue building had a grand western front, which was flanked by two slender towers. A tiered arcade arched a large round window and the entrance portal, which men and women were allowed to use together. The tablets of law were placed on the top of the gable. The shape of the round window was based on the Star of David. The facades had Moorish ornaments and neo-classical and neo-Gothic elements. The interior had three naves with two side galleries on a rectangular floor plan. The organ was placed on the



Fig. 1: Poolstrasse 12–13, street facade



Fig. 2: Former west facade in the courtyard

west gallery, where there was also space for a choir. The reading desk and the pulpit were arranged centrally in the prayer room. The pews, arranged in two blocks, were reserved for 380 men, while up to 260 women were to sit in the galleries. The inauguration



Fig. 3: Remains of the synagogue's apse

took place on September 5, 1844 after two years of construction. At the end of the 19th century, many Jews settled in the new urban expansion areas around the Aussenalster in today's quarters of Grindel, Rotherbaum and Harvestehude. The main orthodox synagogue at Bornplatz (today: Joseph-Carlebach-Platz) was inaugurated in 1906; it was set on fire in 1938 and demolished in 1939. Recently, the regional rabbi started a discussion about rebuilding or reconstructing the orthodox synagogue. This also drew attention to the history of the temple synagogue and its decay that had been criticised for some time.

In 1930/31 the temple association on Oberstrasse had a new religious building erected in a modern architectural language. This building replaced the temple synagogue in Poolstrasse, which was initially used as a store, but then had to be sold in 1937. The synagogue in Oberstrasse was forcibly profaned in the "Third Reich" and passed into the possession of the city in 1941. In 1950 the building was converted into the broadcasting hall of the Norddeutscher Rundfunk (North German Radio). While the exterior architecture of the building on Oberstrasse has been preserved and, as an important example of Hamburg's building culture, was a major contribution to the Bauhaus year 2019, the temple synagogue in Neustadt was largely destroyed by bombing in 1944. Remains of the western porch, surrounding walls and the eastern part of the building with the now visible apse niche have

been preserved. The ruins are used for instance by a car repair shop and a gallery, but are subject to severe deterioration. In 2003, Hamburg's monument authority listed the remains of the building together with the well-preserved buildings on the street front at Poolstrasse 11–14. They were also designed by Johann Hinrich Klees-Wülbern, have neo-classical facade elements and accommodated preachers and employees of the temple association. Together with the remains of the temple synagogue, they represent not only an important testimony of Jewish life, but the nucleus of international liberal Judaism, as the monument protection office emphasised in the justification for the listing. The current owner is planning a new building on the property. He received a security order from the monument authority at the end of November 2019. The ruinous state of the remains of the temple has attracted attention and concern among the liberal Jewish communities in Great Britain and the United States. In 2017, the 200th anniversary of the "New Israelite Temple Association" was celebrated in Hamburg with guests from all over the world. Only since 2004 Hamburg has had a "Liberal Jewish Community Hamburg" once again. It wants a public meeting place and place of commemoration to be created in Poolstrasse.

Jörg Schilling



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## Great Frustration in the Bauhaus Year

The number of events celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus in 2019 was probably thousands throughout Germany alone. Even if not everything is Bauhaus that is cuboid and without ornament: the opportunity was very welcome to recall the variety and range of modernity in the early 20th century. The number of buildings from this period that were demolished in Germany in 2019 is – fortunately – significantly lower. The Deutschlandhaus in Hamburg (although it was later greatly altered) is one example: it gave way to a new building by Hadi Teherani that is based on the historic model and certainly has its qualities. In Bad Neuenahr, however, the spa buildings from 1937 will give way to a green meadow. What has happened?

### Taking a cure in Bad Neuenahr

The great period of the health resorts was the 19th century. In Bad Ems, Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Karlsbad, Spa, and many other famous places in Europe the noble, the middle-class and the cultural elites took a cure, drank and bathed. This bathing culture is a genuine European “shared heritage”, for which the World Heritage title is also being sought. Around the healing waters – whether one drank them or bathed in them – a lively social life developed, which found its architectural expression in spa houses, spa hotels, pump rooms, colonnades and other historicist ensembles that still characterise many health resorts today and represent an important asset in terms of value and identification.

The famous Apollinaris Fountain, discovered by a winegrower, was drilled in 1852 in the village of Wadenheim. Four years later the healing springs were developed and in 1858 the first spa was opened which was allowed to bear the name “Neuenahr” with the permission of the Prussian government. The community of Neuenahr was formed in 1875 by merging Wadenheim with two other villages. In the last quarter of the 19th century it experienced its first heyday. The Ahr valley railway, opened in 1880, ensured an influx of spa guests, and the infrastructure was further

expanded. Within a few years around 1900, the facilities that still shape the townscape today were built, including the thermal bath house (1899–1901), the spa hotel and the spa house (1903–05). Especially the latter building, today a casino, represents the splendour of this health resort at that time. Its neo-baroque style shows high design standards and draws on castle architecture. The thermal bath house is also richly decorated in the neo-classical style. In historicism, many things were possible at the same time.

The attractive landscape and the spa gardens planned by Peter Joseph Lenné offered opportunities for recreation in the fresh air. In addition, guesthouses and hotels, as well as upscale apartment buildings and villas, were erected. Unfortunately, especially many hotel buildings have fallen victim to a renewal of substance. The town is currently enjoying an unbroken influx of pensioners, and therefore accordingly equipped apartments or “residences” are often on offer. However, their design quality leaves a lot to be desired, but that is another story.

### Late development project

The state recognition of the healing character of the Neuenahr springs came surprisingly late, only in 1927, and since then the community has been allowed to call itself “Bad Neuenahr”. A unique building project, which had few parallels at its time, was part of this development. In 1927, the Kur AG announced the competition for a new spa complex. The spa gardens were also to be redesigned, and a new pump room was to be built in the centre. The old cast-iron pump room was demolished and even the course of the Oberstraße was changed. This was done to combine the relevant facilities into one unit. The competition was well received throughout Germany. The jury was made up of important representatives of the German architectural avant-garde of the 1920s – for instance, Ernst May, who two years earlier, as a city planning officer, had proclaimed the “New Frankfurt”.

The winner of the competition was Hermann Weiser, who, in his time, was a well-known architect. As a master student of Peter Behrens, co-founder of the Deutscher Werkbund, Weiser was influenced by the debates of the time on contemporary architecture. Weiser originally planned a complex that art and travel guides today would undoubtedly call “influenced by the Bauhaus”. He dispensed with traditional stylistic devices and chose cubic forms, large glass surfaces and flat roofs. No “Bauhaus”, but still in the spirit of the Neues Bauen. Construction was delayed until the 1930s, began in 1933 and was only completed in 1937. Now the buildings were strikingly more traditional: The division with cornices and pillars is more of an abstract neo-classicism, even close to Behrens’ ideas from the 1910s. But this makes the relationship to the adjacent neo-classical thermal bath house all the more interesting!

### Time layers provide information

The complex has been preserved in this form until today; a café wing was added in the 1970s. The Great Pump Room was given a graphic ceiling design of suspended concrete elements. The frames and partitions of the large glass surfaces, providing a view of the spa gardens, were replaced. In this process, the profiles naturally became wider. But regardless of such typical contemporary changes, much of the spirit of the Neue Sachlichkeit is still evident in the buildings today. The complex is as important as a few contemporary German ensembles, including Bad Mergentheim and Bad Elster. Although many spas were (partially) modernised



Fig. 1: Bad Neuenahr, spa park and spa buildings (photo Michael Lentz, 2019)

in the 1920s and 1930s, such extensive new buildings as in Bad Neuenahr remained exceptional. Once again in the second half of the 20th century, numerous spa facilities with a functional character were built. For its time, however, Bad Neuenahr can claim to be special, even unique in quality and scope. The rotating concert shell, which can be directed inwards as well as outwards – towards the open-air concert – is a detail of rare charm.

Bad Neuenahr thus is particularly interesting as here one can trace the development of bathing culture from the 19th century to the present: from the garden design of Lenné to the beton brut additions of the recent past, for whose evaluation we are still too close.

### Demolishing and building new

However, the town of Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler does not wish to subscribe to this complex cultural heritage; on the contrary, it wants to have something new. Full of empathy one may have a certain understanding for this attitude. It is clear that taking the cures (in modern terms: wellness) today follows different procedures than in the 19th century or in the 1930s. Even the 1970s are no longer a model for people's demands today. Other services are expected today and the expectations, also of new target groups, are high. However, to make such modernisations of existing buildings possible is precisely the core idea of monument conservation. It does not want to preserve and use buildings like a museum, but rather in a life-related and new way. In this respect, monument conservation is always prepared to make changes and allow appropriate further developments. And if nothing really works anymore, a high-quality redesign is also possible.

However, there has been a fierce debate for years if nothing is possible with the existing buildings. The town, which took over

the facilities from the Kur AG a few years ago, understandably argues that there is a need for modernisation. Conservation is allegedly not possible for technical reasons. The basic attitude of the town which is not prepared to commission an expert opinion explicitly on the redevelopment options remains the crucial point. On the contrary, the existing building was only examined for its unfitness to be preserved, which gives the conflict its unpleasant taste. *Honi soit qui mal y pense* of the fact that the new building would also increase the size of the accompanying buildings, which could be rented out as upscale apartments, offices and shops. With this knowledge, the town's asserted wistfulness about the loss of heritage is difficult to distinguish from false tears.

Years ago, the state monument authorities *nolens volens* approved the demolition, unfortunately a partial victory for the town which thus further legitimised the decision to dispense with an expert renovation report. It is hoped that the decision was made in Mainz due to insufficient information. This could have been remedied.

The demolition seemed to fit into the town's plan all too well, because at the state horticultural show planned for 2022, Bad Neuenahr wanted to present itself with a new building. Why was it never considered what added value a well-restored Bauhaus ensemble – let's call it that for advertising reasons – would have had? These are questions that were asked, for example, by the local citizens' initiative "Lebenswerte Stadt" committed to the preservation and renovation of the spa facilities.

### **"Where there is danger, saving measures will also grow?"**

It is obvious that the Neuenahr spa facilities need to be renovated and modernised. At the same time their outstanding importance





Fig. 2: Inside the pump room (photo Michael Lentz, 2019)

is undisputed. Numerous nationwide monument organisations, including ICOMOS Germany, therefore signed an appeal in August 2018 for the preservation of this heritage and presented it to the town. The Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz even went as far as to promise financial support for an expert renovation report in order to achieve the long-needed change of perspective, possibly including further subsidies. The Rheinischer Verein für Denkmalpflege und Landschaftsschutz and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Kur- und Bädereuseen offered to support the town in order to establish helpful contacts and to bring a positive narrative to a broad public.

Nevertheless, the town has not deviated from its basic attitude. Even though it was prepared to hold several meetings with representatives of conservation advocates, a conservation report and its possible consequences were clearly ruled out. It claims that the non-sustainability has been proven and in addition, the state monument authorities have already agreed... ha ha!

More than a year after the appeal, the town council invited tenders for the demolition work and then awarded the contract. This now hovers over the ensemble like the Sword of Damocles. Perhaps the demolition will already be completed by the end of 2019. The fact that the investor has meanwhile disappeared: no problem! Then there will be a green meadow for the state horticultural show at this site, so the mayor says. One has to bite one's tongue not to call this ignorance and barbarism. Subsidies from the state capital are supposed to help with the conversion into a kind of cultural centre, even the municipal library is supposed to move into the new building.

In the dispute over the prerogative of interpretation, the town naturally interprets the fact of the loss of cultural heritage quite differently: With "the future project starts", a municipal press re-

lease advertises for the redesign of the Kurpark properties, which are now to be "significantly upgraded". Apart from all the jingling of words about sustainability and public utility, the town is at least honest enough to admit that the new building is meant to shape the "modern townscape" and that it does not intend to refer to the architectural heritage at all. For those in favour of preserving the ensemble, it is absolutely frustrating that this important cultural heritage could not be saved, even though every conceivable help had been offered. What remained was to physically oppose the demolition, to hope for a miracle or legal finesse. Hoping for insight, on the other hand, might be in vain.



Fig. 3: Demolition of the spa buildings in spring 2020 (photo Michael Lentz)

### Status of May 2020

*In spring 2020, the Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz once again offered the city of Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler financial support for a restoration report. The offer was rejected with the argument that there was a damage survey and that the site could not be restored. By April, the buildings were completely demolished, except for the rotating music shell, which is protected as an individual monument. The city then publicly presented the new building plans of a Bonn architectural office. There has been no critical discussion about this; a real architectural competition for this important new building project has never taken place. The funding has not yet been secured. Instead of Bauhaus now: green field and big plans in Bad Neuenahr.*

Dr. Martin Bredenbeck

## Illegal destruction of Berlin's St. Hedwig's Cathedral Started in October 2019

As suspected by Sabine Schulte (Berlin Conservation Authority) in *Heritage at Risk 2014–2015*, pp. 42 f., Archbishop Heiner Koch decided in 2016 against the widespread protest of experts and lay-

men to destroy and replace the listed interior of Berlin's Roman Catholic Cathedral by a completely new design (the result of a competition of 2013–14). The now abandoned post-war interior designed by the West German architect Hans Schwippert, which after the heavy air-raid destructions of 1945 filled the 18th century shell of the domed Pantheon-type-building, was considered a unique monument for several reasons: Consecrated in 1963 by Cardinal Bengsch, it represented the unity of the Catholic Church and the fraternal collaboration of Western and Eastern artists and artisans during the Cold War and in the very heart of the socialist satellite nations. The artistic expression in this extraordinary case united features of functional Western post-war modernism with a solemn neoclassicism, which in the late 1950s was still valid in socialist architecture and crafts. Tradition and innovation were perfectly balanced. Anticipating the final results of the Second Vatican Council, Schwippert moved the altar closer to the centre, which allowed already to celebrate Mass versus populum. Reflecting the old tradition of a circular confessio in front of the altar, he also opened the floor of the nave and installed broad stairs down to the crypt, which became a sanctuary for the beatified provost Bernhard Lichtenberg (1875–1943), a victim of the Nazi terror. Martyrdom thus could be experienced as a profession of faith in the abhorrence of current history.

The whole wealth of these artistic, emotional, historic and theological values will be erased by the new interior (architects Sichau/Walter/Zogmayer): The crypt is to be closed in favour of a neutral circular space, while benches will be arranged around the altar in the centre. The elaborate décor and furnishings, including the stained-glass windows, the organ and the bronze-crys-

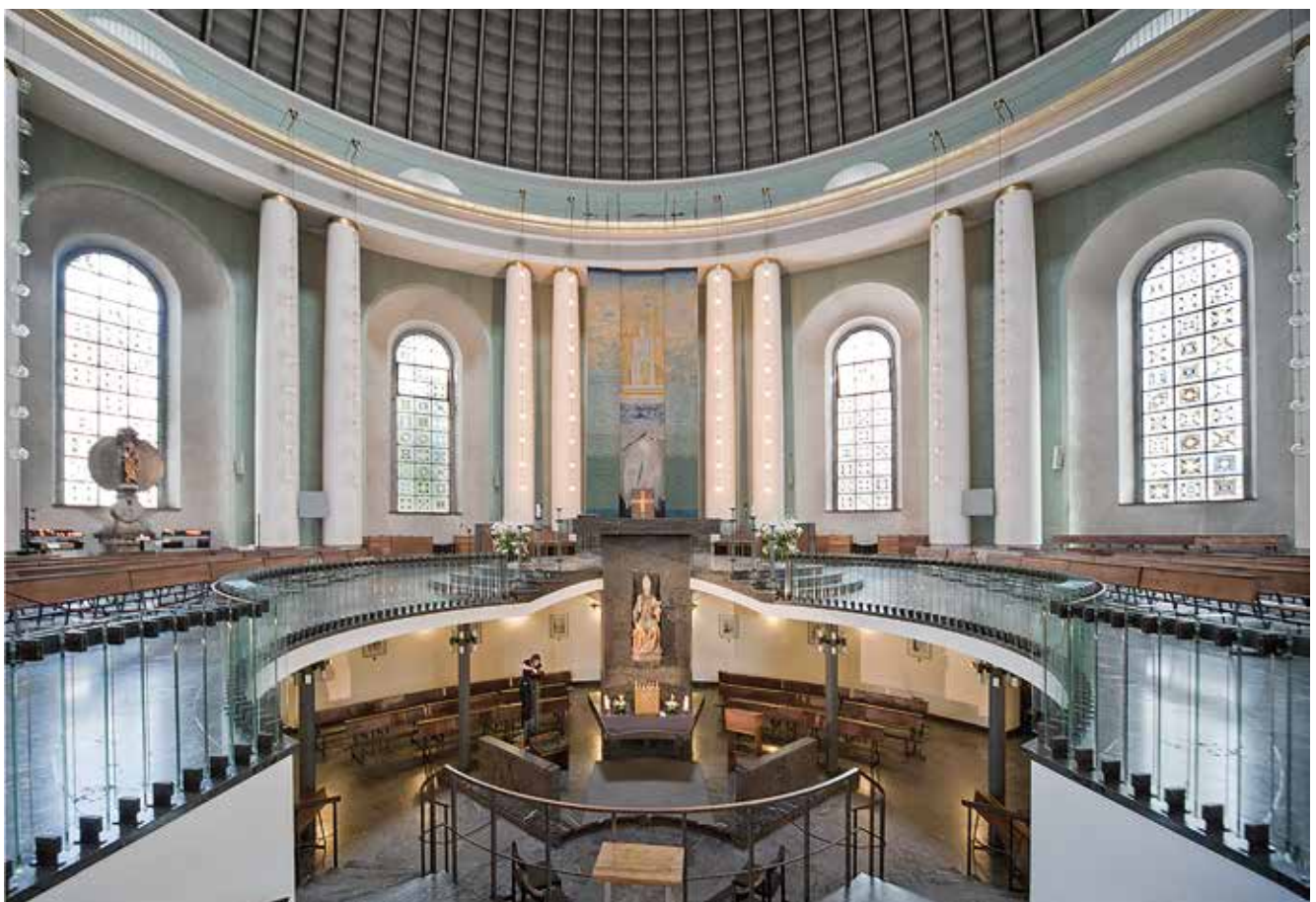


Fig. 1: The interior of the Cathedral before the demolition (photo Wolfgang Bittner, 2014)





Fig. 2: The interior in August 2020 (photo Magdalena Thiele)



Fig. 3: Visualisation of the planned redesign of the circular communion room with the altar in the middle (© Nighnurse Images, Zürich)

tal balustrades have already been dismantled since October 2019. The monumental marble stele, which connected the lower altar in the crypt and the main altar in the nave, has been irreversibly destroyed. These destructions – declared as “preparatory measures” by the archdiocese – were illegal, because up to now the archbishop has not presented a building-permit and so far has no destruction permission. Moreover, a lawsuit about the titles of the copyright-holders in regard to the interior and its furnishings was postponed to March and now again to July 2020. In the meantime, the destruction and transformation of the widely intact copper covering of the dome – matching the new project, but declared only as an independent “energetic refurbishment” which needs no planning permission – was started in March.

How does all that fit in with the monument protection laws? While Berlin’s Landesdenkmalamt (Conservation Authority) in

2017 denied the destruction permission, its political head, Berlin’s Senator for Culture, gave the go-ahead in February 2018, referring to the constitutional autonomy of the Churches in matters of their property (but of course not without a precise building and destruction permission). Furthermore, his more or less political decision is still dubious, because in 2014 and 2017 two leading Catholic experts in matters of liturgy and also the appropriate papal congregation in Rome had rejected the archbishop’s reasoning that the replacement of the interior was obligatory under liturgical regulations.

The true motivation for this unique destruction scandal is a strong desire for a new self-representation of the Roman Catholic church in the German capital, fostered by Archbishop Koch, who inherited the project from his ambitious predecessor Cardinal Woelki (now Cologne). Financially supported by the Federal Government of Germany and by Berlin’s Senate with considerable sums, the church dignitaries hope to compete with the new architectural highlights around the historic centre and thus to connect their names forever with history by eliminating the theological and political memories of a critical epoch and providing a would-be spectacular stage for pompous ecclesiastical festivities, prominent burials and stately ceremonies. Instead, a professional restoration of the unique post-war invention – as demanded by all experts and many parishioners for a long time – would not only save about at least 60 million euros (to be spent for better Christian purposes), but would also open the eyes of future generations for the once progressive and respectful role of the Catholic Church in our divided world.

For detailed information on the battle about St. Hedwig’s preservation since 2014 cf. the website of “Freunde der Hedwigskathedrale”, including all relevant facts, documents and resolutions [<https://www.freunde-hedwigskathedrale.de/>].

Prof. em. Dr. Adrian von Buttlar  
Former Chairman of Berlin’s Council for the Preservation of Monuments (1996–2009)  
Member of ICOMOS Germany

### **Status of September 2020**

*The action brought by the copyright owners against the distortion of the listed spatial creation by Hans Schwippert and cooperating artists was dismissed by the Berlin Regional Court on 14 July 2020. In addition to the reference to a predominance of powers of the property owner over other rights, the presiding judge Claas Schaper justified the decision, stating: “Nothing will remain of the work”. “We are of the opinion that this is a destruction.”*

*The demolition of interior structural elements, which had already begun in September 2019 and in the meantime had led to an officially imposed building freeze, was subsequently partially legalised by a building permit issued on 16 July 2020 for an application to convert St. Hedwig’s Cathedral, which had not been submitted before 25 February 2020.*

## The Roundhouse in Berlin-Pankow\*

The industrialisation that started in England reached Germany in the middle of the 19th century. The railway network also grew at a great speed. The trains became faster and longer – and with them the locomotives. This meant that the young building type of the roundhouse, which had been developed after 1860, ended again before the turn of the century: The more advanced steam locomotives with a tender required more space than such a building could offer. Germany's last roundhouse was built in Berlin-Pankow in 1893. It remained in operation until 1997 and still exists today as one of two surviving examples in Germany.

reconstructed in the 1990s) in Oranienburger Strasse is also a Schwedler design. Thanks to his position as railway master builder and supreme Prussian building officer, Schwedler is considered the most important protagonist of structural engineering in the German-speaking countries in the second half of the 19th century.

The circular building in Berlin-Pankow offered space for 24 locomotives and is thus not only the last but also the largest of all 25 locomotive sheds of this building type. Its roof spans about 40 metres; the surrounding pent roof is crowned by the dome above the turntable. The filigree iron truss construction is made of radially curved rafters and connecting horizontal rings. Bracing cross members are located between the main beams in the dome surface. This construction, in which each concentric ring forms a solid system, is stable even under unequal loads. Remarkable is



The roundhouse in Berlin-Pankow (photo D. Bartetzko)

After 1900, only ring locomotive sheds were built with a turntable in front of their gates. The roundhouse, on the other hand, combined a central turntable and radially arranged sidings under one roof: impressive buildings with brick walls decorated with typical ornaments of the time, small iron windows and elaborate steel dome roofs. These go back to the engineer Johann Wilhelm Schwedler (1823–1894).

In 1863, the “Schwedler dome” was used for the first time for a Berlin gas tank. The roof of the Berlin New Synagogue (1863,

the low weight of the roof, which is still contemporary today, of only about 30 kg per square metre.

After most of the steam locomotives had been taken out of service, the roundhouse was used for repairs and as a material store. The surrounding Pankow-Heinersdorf depot was used by the GDR Reichsbahn after 1945, most recently by the Deutsche Bundesbahn. Today there are only two roundhouses left in Germany, both in Berlin: one in the Rummelsburg depot (1875) and the other in Pankow. Others have been preserved in Poland



(Piła/Schneidemühl; Bydgoszcz/Bromberg; Tczew/Dirschau) and in the Russian town of Chernyakhovsk (formerly Insterburg). All of them are recognized as technical monuments, some have been restored and converted. The German sheds are left to decay.

The Deutsche Bahn (German Railways) has shown little interest in the two technological monuments and has not protected them against vandalism. There is a demolition order for the shed in Rummelsburg. The building, surrounded by tracks in use, is in a desolate state: its roof is largely uncovered – and right now it offers the most fascinating view of the Schwedler dome. The basic structural substance still seems to be savable, but a change of use is problematic, as safe access to the building on the premises of the Deutsche Bahn is hardly possible. As the building is located on a railway site, the Eisenbahnbundesamt (Federal Railway Authority) itself is responsible for approving the demolition application.

In Pankow the chances could be better – actually. Since 2009, the plant, which was added to the Berlin monument list in 1996, has belonged to the entrepreneur Kurt Krieger, who wants to build around 2,000 apartments, a shopping centre and a furniture store on the surrounding 400,000 square-metre site. Initially, the engine shed was to be included in the project: as a multipurpose hall or part of a school. Soon after that, there was no more talk of this. Obviously, the owner now hopes to obtain the right to demolish the building as its decay progresses. After years of negotiations about the use – he wants more space for business, the state of Berlin wants more apartments and space for schools and public needs – the responsible district office in Pankow has ordered Kurt Krieger to take measures for the emergency securing of the listed buildings. His appeal against this failed in 2019 before the administrative court. It was found that the integration of the engine shed was reasonable, as he had acquired the area with the knowledge that the listed buildings had to be preserved. In addition, he could compensate for the costs of this through building rights on the 400,000 square metre site. Krieger has appealed against the decision; the decision of the Berlin Supreme Administrative Court is still pending at the end of 2019.

However, because the demand for apartments and schools in the Pankow district is great, Krieger can continue to put pressure on Berlin politicians despite his poor prospects in court: He is offering to give up retail space and build more apartments, provided the school buildings are built in place of the roundhouse. Despite the administration's success in court, the responsible Berlin politicians seem to be accepting the deal and sacrificing the presumably last roundhouse on German soil, including other listed railway buildings, to the development of the entire area. In September 2019, the Berlin city government decided to work towards a solution to the still open question of monument protection.

One can only hope that an interested public will dissuade the political decision-makers from giving in to poker with Kurt Krieger: the demolition of the Rummelsburg engine shed alone would be sacrilegious. If in Pankow however the then last round locomotive shed of Germany would also be sacrificed, one would have to call this rightly scandalous.

Daniel Bartetzko

## Berlin: Brutalist Icons Threatened by Demolition

Berlin is in danger of losing two icons of post-war architecture at once. Two large research facilities, both superb examples of brutalist architecture, are facing demolition because their owner, the Charité, one of Europe's largest university hospitals, is questioning their aesthetics and their profitability. They were both built for the Freie Universität Berlin during the 1960s and 1970s and have since served as major sites of research and education: the Institute for Hygiene and Microbiology, 1966–1974, by architects Fehling+Gogel, and the Central Animal Laboratories, 1967–1981, by architects Gerd and Magdalena Hänska and Kurt Schmiersow. The Charité runs public hospitals as well as the research and education departments of Berlin's university medical schools. It recently earmarked the two sites for demolition and redevelopment. Protecting both buildings as heritage sites is legally possible but would require swift action by Berlin's senate and the monument authority. They hesitate stepping forward because there was little sign of public interest in the past. However, leaked demolition plans have sparked strong public response as well as a whole list of newspaper articles, both local and international. A petition for rescuing both buildings has been able to collect more than 1000 supporters within the first two weeks. Will the heritage authorities reconsider their stance at the very last moment?

The Animal Laboratories are one of the most radical examples of high-tech brutalism. Their exterior is both iconic and highly functional. Blue ventilation pipes protrude like cannons from a futuristic battleship to ensure stable climatic conditions. Pointed windows provide indirect, controlled sunlight for the laboratories. The various prefabricated façade elements make the internal functions like the interposed floors for the building's HVAC and technical systems immediately legible from the outside. Due to cost overruns, construction was completed only in 1981, after more than a decade of work. Due to the structure's appearance, it quickly gained the nickname Mouse Bunker (Mäusebunker). Today, the Mouse Bunker is only partially in use, since live animal experimentation has been quite controversial, and this field of research has been greatly reduced. In 2003, the Charité took over this facility and renamed it Research Institutes for Experimental Medicine, removing any hints at animal experimentation.

Vis-à-vis, hidden behind shrubs and trees, is the Hygiene Institute. Its overall shape is much more sweeping and extravagant. With its lively, dynamic geometry and unapologetic use of exposed board-marked concrete it is a prime example of organic architecture and brutalism alike. The architects Fehling+Gogel are known for their expressive and irregular designs. They followed the models of Hans Scharoun and Frank Lloyd Wright in their desire to make their creations as varied and multi-parted as possible. In contrast to the high-tech Mouse Bunker, the Hygiene Institute is made of beautifully textured in-situ concrete. It certainly is Berlin's largest and possibly most exquisite example of *béton brut*.

Strict functional demands of specialised research institutions have inspired great architectural innovation and given rise to highly original buildings around the world. It is no coincidence that some of the most celebrated works by Louis I. Kahn and I. M. Pei are scientific research facilities. However, medical research methodologies have changed significantly and require dif-

\* The article, updated for this publication, first appeared in January 2017 (in German) in the online magazine *moderne-REGIONAL* ([www.moderne-regional.de](http://www.moderne-regional.de)).

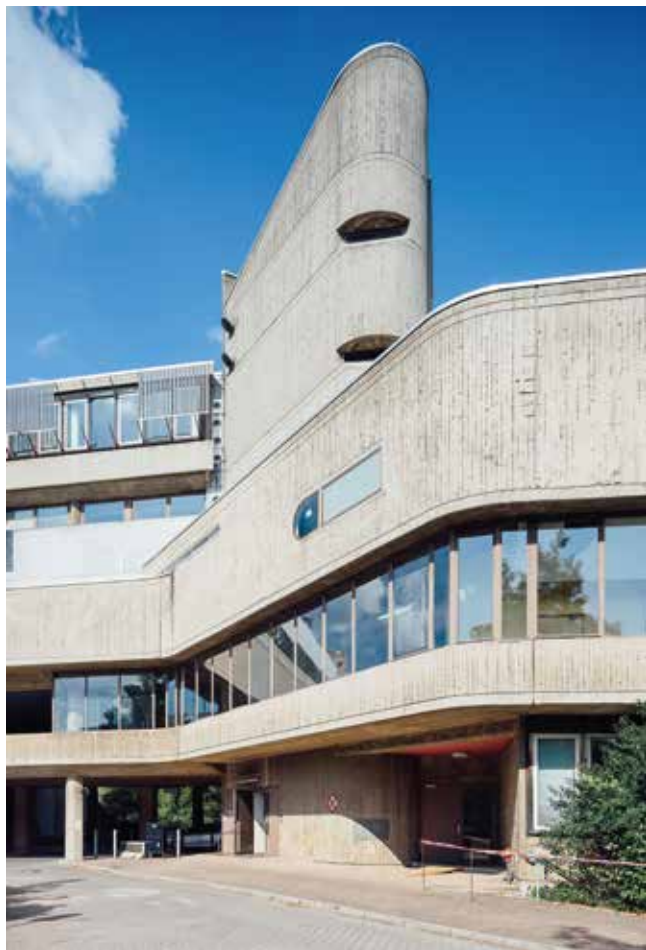


Figs. 1 and 2: Gerd Hänska, Magdalena Hänska and Kurt Schmersow, Central Animal Laboratories, 1967–1981, threatened by demolition (photos Felix Torkar)

ferent types of spaces today. Concerns about the reuse of such highly specialised structures are legitimate. There is no denying that these buildings are difficult. However, they also feature some true assets. The interior spaces of the Hygiene Institute are well

lit and allow for a multitude of flexible future uses. The Mouse Bunker features a sturdy concrete structure and abundant ventilation. This building is quite well suited to serve as archival storage space or as a data centre. The use of asbestos appears to be an





Figs. 3 and 4: Fehling + Gogel: Institute for Hygiene and Microbiology, 1966–74, threatened by demolition (photos Felix Torkar)

issue only at the Animal Laboratories. However, it was only used in the technical installation rooms as insulation for HVAC piping and could thus be removed relatively easily. The construction quality of both buildings is very high. Neither of them has had to undergo significant repair or remodeling. Considering the cultural heritage aspect of unaltered, authentic physical substance, this is as good as it gets. The Mouse Bunker, in particular, has become an icon of brutalist architecture in recent years. It was featured in numerous publications and is a popular backdrop for film productions. An article in the British newspaper *The Guardian* named it on its list of remarkable brutalist structures worldwide and the exhibition *SOS Brutalism* presented it as one of the most prominent examples of brutalism in Germany. There is widespread public appreciation for both buildings and their cultural significance. But this recognition must now be condensed into visible public action. It is not too late to protect the buildings from demolition and preserve them for future generations. The coming months will decide their fate.

Gunnar Klack and Felix Torkar

## Focus Eastern Modernism: The Chemnitz Pylon Roof

The bus station opened in 1968 in former Karl-Marx-Stadt (today again Chemnitz) was considered to be the most modern bus station in Europe at its opening. After extensive renovation in 2000, only the dispatcher tower, the so-called “Klapperbrunnen” (a fountain), and the architecturally distinctive pylon roof still remain of the original ensemble. However, these components are now also to give way to other projects. A translocation of the suspended pylon roof is the current decision, but the feasibility of preserving the existing building is doubtful. This is a plea for new ideas and the preservation of the listed roof at the site.

### The bus station as monument

Chemnitz, the “city of modernity”, welcomes bus travelers with an extraordinary aesthetic statement and monument of the Eastern modern art of engineering: the bus station with its pylon roof known and appreciated far beyond Chemnitz as a rare construction of this kind in Germany. The visually and architecturally striking roof spans an area of over 1200 m<sup>2</sup> and is cantilevered by a cable bracing and eight pylons made of reinforced concrete B450.

The unquestionably cityscape-defining bus station is located in the extended inner-city area of Chemnitz in Saxony, a city of 250,000 inhabitants. In 1966, the entire ensemble appeared for



Fig. 1: The Chemnitz bus station with its striking pylon roof is currently still in operation (photo Ernesto Uhlmann)



Fig. 2: The ensemble is embedded in natural elements so that the visual connection to Schillerplatz has been preserved (photo Ernesto Uhlmann)

the first time in the magazine *Deutsche Architektur* as “KOM-Bahnhof”. The building was planned and erected with a high aesthetic and scientific standard: the “Bauakademie” of the GDR had it constructed as a technical experimental building by architect Johannes Meyer and civil engineer Christian Weise. This was an experiment in the theory of structures, an experiment in the collaboration between architect and engineer, and last but not least an aesthetic experiment whose impressive result has a high identification value. In publications of the time from Karl-Marx-Stadt/Chemnitz, the bus station is repeatedly cited as an example of outstanding architecture and lightweight metal construction.

The original ensemble included a roof spanned by steep ropes, a waiting hall below, twelve arrival and departure platforms with roofing, the dispatcher tower, a fountain and a snack bar in an adjacent old building. The transparency of all building structures should be emphasised, which harmoniously shapes the interplay with the park “Schillerplatz” and preserves the park character of the location.

In January 1968, the first buses started from the 12 departure platforms, in 1995 the suspended pylon roof was listed as a monument, around the year 2000 the complex was completely renewed and renovated. In this context, three of the former twelve departure platforms disappeared and large parts of their original roofing were replaced by a contemporary bus platform roofing.

### Current plans: translocation and preservation

Around the bus station, functions and urban layers overlap in a confined space. The architectural diversity and the high mix of uses are representative of the processes shaping the cityscape during the last 200 years in Chemnitz and Karl-Marx-Stadt. Behind the bus station lies the Brühl-Boulevard, a socialist inner-city embedded in a Gründerzeit quarter during the GDR era. For about ten years, it has been developing into an inner-city residential quarter. The former “Aktienpinnerei” situated west of the bus station, a typical building of the golden age of industry, is to be reopened as a university library in 2020. The Schillerplatz as a natural monument functions as a green space between the bus station and the edge of the city centre. The bus station, from

which several thousand people travel every month to other places in Germany and Europe, is centrally located – housing is combined with local recreation, transport and industry, recently supplemented by science and research.

The new university library serves as an anchor for the development of an inner-city campus of the Chemnitz University of Technology. At the same time, the relocation of the bus station from its present location to two new locations in the city area has begun and the areas in front of the old “Aktienpinnerei” are free for new construction. The development plan No. 96/23 of the city of Chemnitz from 2017 is the basis for the construction of two new auditorium and faculty buildings on the site of today’s bus station. The individual cultural monuments “Klapperbrunnen” by Johann Belz and the pylon roof would have to give up their original location.

According to the development plan, these buildings and objects are “in principle to be preserved in an appropriate form” and should therefore not be demolished but moved to another location near the central station. According to the explanations in the plan, “intensive negotiations with the monument authorities” had already taken place. As a result, it is possible to relocate the pylon roof. Evidence for this, e. g. in the form of expert opinions, has not yet been published or named. The undertaking appears questionable, as it was stated as early as 1966 in the explanations on the construction of the roof: “The construction-related mobility of the system as well as the precise adjustment of the construction parts during assembly required special constructive measures at the connections and at the foundation formation”. With this in mind, it seems difficult to dismantle the structure and re-erect it elsewhere. In addition to structural challenges, the question who owns the pylon roof seems to be unresolved: In the comments on the development plan, the operating company of the bus station points out that the “feet” of the roof do not stand on the ground spanned by the self-supporting roof.

### Concerns – reflection

The long development plan procedure (1996/2013–2017), inadequate or missing expert opinions on the feasibility of the



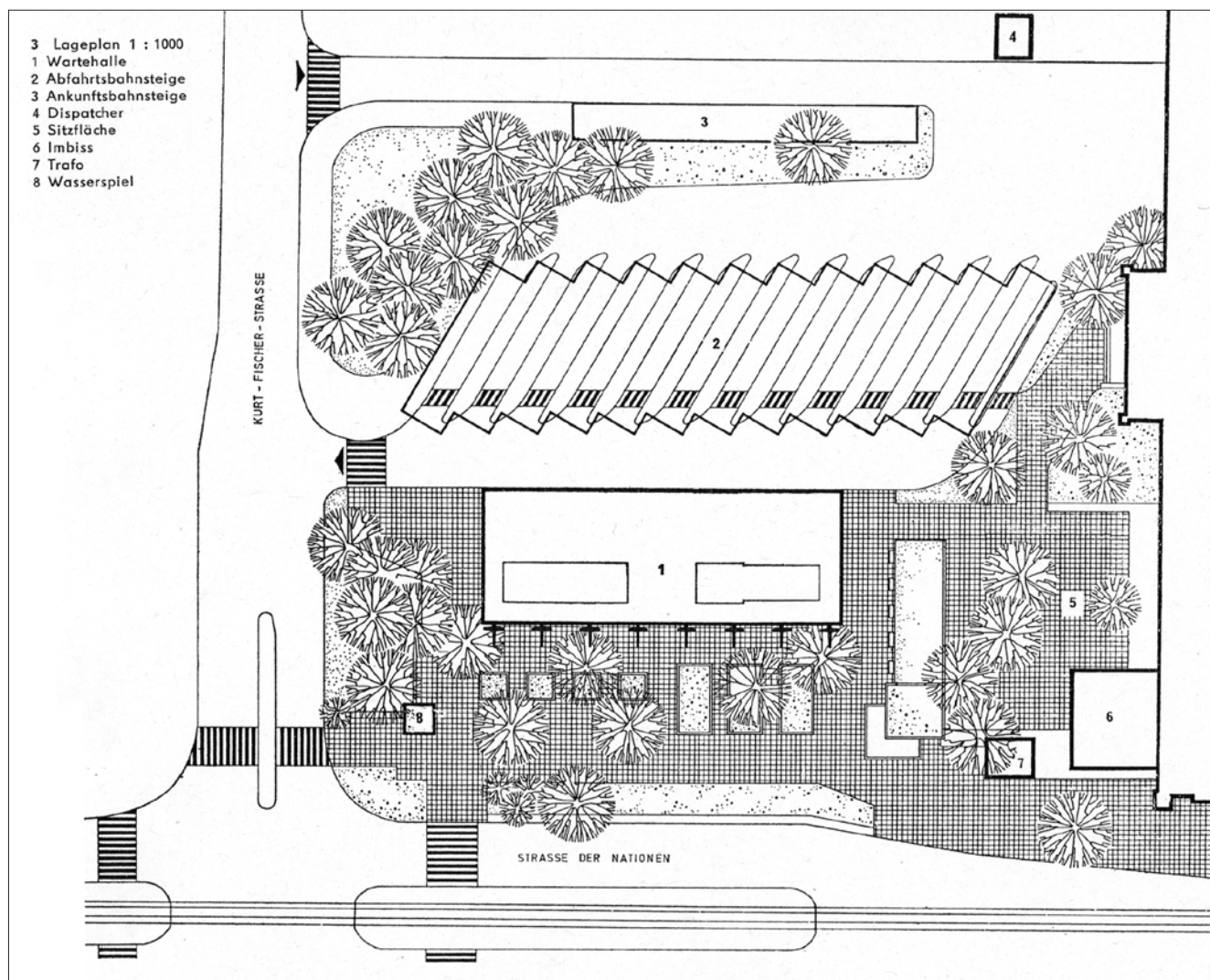


Fig. 3: Site plan of the bus station in Karl-Marx-Stadt with pylon roof, 1969 (© Deutsche Architektur 1969)

translocation of the pylon roof, and the unresolved question of ownership suggest that essential questions about the future of the monument have been postponed to indefinite times and subordinate procedures of urban land-use planning.

According to the available documents, the discussion about the monument has not yet been sufficiently detailed. The protection status of the pylon roof is emphasised in development plan No. 96/23, but the option of preserving the pylon hanging roof at the current location is not negotiated in any publicly accessible statements on the site. A sensitive handling and a cautious contemporary further development of the existing stock in favour of the university uses is not recognisable in the discourse and the decision situation so far.

In the winning design of the urban planning ideas competition, it is stated that “the arrangement of the bus station within this sequence of squares was an urban sin that should be reversed”. In terms of urban planning and urban development strategy, it seems questionable to erect new buildings at a location whose immediate surroundings have numerous vacant buildings, which will also generate further vacancies at another location.

### Plea for rethinking

In an open letter of August 2019, the Initiative Kerberos e.V. as well as well-known personalities, urban researchers, art and architectural historians, conservationists and other friends of the pylon roof from Chemnitz and all of Germany called upon the Free State of Saxony and the City of Chemnitz,

- to publish existing reports on a possible translocation,
- to commission an independent settlement opinion,
- to (re-)check the preservation, the restoration in accordance with monument requirements and the conversion at the current location as well as
- to revise the urban planning framework for the new development in front of the Aktienspinnerei in favour of preserving the pylon roof.

At the editorial deadline of this article, the sender of the letter has not received a statement from the institutions yet.

The 1200 m<sup>2</sup> roof, cantilevered and spanned by steel cables, makes the bus station, including its surroundings of Klapperbrunnen, Aktienspinnerei, Schillerplatz and the facades of the Brühl quarter in the background a unique and identity-cre-

ating building and a testimony to Eastern modern traffic and architectural history. The central bus station and its immediate surroundings are of significance in terms of architectural, urban and transport history.

Here a new understanding and an adequate handling of the cultural heritage of Eastern modern architecture is required: A review of the decisions on the Chemnitz pylon roof need to be carried out in the near future in order to seriously assess the added value in terms of urban development and society and to examine alternative solutions – with the aim of sustainably preserving the ensemble and serving as a model for numerous other decisions on the future of the heritage of this period.

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## F1 (Fertigungshalle 1) and the Material Remains of the Former Heeresversuchsanstalt Peenemünde

‘F1’ (Fertigungshalle 1) denotes a monumental factory building at Peenemünde on the northern tip of the island of Usedom/Germany. It was erected as the main production facility of the experimental plant (Versuchsserienwerk), part of the Heeresversuchsanstalt (Army Research Centre) Peenemünde (HVA), in the years 1939 to 1943, and was dedicated to the first serial production of the A4 aggregate missiles, also known as ‘V2’. In 1936, the HVA was established in order to provide research as well as large-scale production and testing facilities needed for the German rocket programme. It

Structure, design and appearance of the building can partly be conceived on the basis of archival material: F1 was designed as a monumental, three-aisled building of 120 metres width and 245 metres length, in which the central production hall with an inner height of 20.75 metres rose above a low, only four-metre-high ground floor hall. The architectural language applied is essentially modernist, but also displays references to neoclassical detailing, typical of industrial buildings of the National Socialist time. Significant in terms of the history of building technology, the structure combined two innovative building techniques in a previously not employed way: concrete construction shells and prestressed concrete, both concepts that had been developed only a few years prior to the erection of F1. The shed shell construction chosen for F1, based on the halls of the Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg as templates, can undoubtedly be regarded as one of the most outstanding architectural achievements in terms of structural design during those years. The building’s designation as a factory hall in the context of missile production attributes a historical-technical value to F1 that opens the field wide for critical discussion, addressing the reassessment of the problematic role of science in the context of warfare and a totalitarian regime. The fact that the building’s ground floor housed the concentration camp Karlshagen II, which was set up inside F1 from May to October 1943 for around 600 prisoners from Buchenwald, can be considered exemplary for these issues. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the remains of the HVA developed by the Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus (BTU) classified F1 as ‘Category A’, implying that the inherent potential of the building is of outstanding importance for communicating various topics to the public. F1 as a site of archaeological interest can be seen as symptomatic of the problems of preservation encountered regarding the former HVA.

Currently, the whole site including F1 is listed as a monument entailing all buildings, infrastructural elements, and ruins pertinent to it. Considered as a “Flächendenkmal”, protection refers



Fig. 1 Example of structural remains at F1 (© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)

consumed vast resources for the implementation of its building programme. Like most of the architecture of the former HVA, F1 is now a ruin, due both to the Allied air raids of 1943–1944, and to the dismantling, demolition and extraction of building materials after the end of World War Two (Fig. 1). The area was also later used as a military training ground by the National People’s Army (NVA) and, simultaneously and unofficially, as a waste dumping ground by residents from the surrounding municipalities.

to all categories of tangible heritage according to the law in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DSchG M-V §2): single buildings, partial building remains, building ensembles and entire complexes, including their aesthetically significant surroundings, as well as archaeological features. After the German reunification, the municipality of Peenemünde established the Historisch-Technisches Museum Peenemünde (Historical-Technical Museum Peenemünde HTM) in 1991. The museum has been run by a





Fig. 2: Demolished building structure next to the IW  
(© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)



Fig. 3 Damage caused by forest fire in 2019 in the area of F1  
(© HTM Peenemünde GmbH)

private body (Historisch-Technisches Museum Ltd.) of the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the municipality of Peenemünde since 2010. The mission of the museum is dedicated to preservation, research and interpretation regarding the former HVA and its history, for which it established the concept of the 'Denkmalandschaft [monument landscape] Peenemünde'. Based on this concept, single ruins and features are made accessible to the public and used as a didactic means for the presentation of structural evidence from the past.

Peenemünde and its potential as cultural heritage place the site within a context of global significance. However, its complex his-

tory and variety of remains in and above ground constitute a challenging task when it comes to the application of methods from archaeology and conservation. Further difficulties arise from contamination issues. Potentially, health hazards could be caused by contamination with ammunition stemming from World War Two and the phases of later reuse by the Russian Army and the NVA. The presence of hazardous substances from the production process of the V2 or even toxic building materials cannot be excluded, either. These issues require the establishment of a methodology addressing practical problems that might be encountered during fieldwork as a prerequisite for further investigation.

Drawing on principles and procedures promoted by the Burra Charter in its statement of polyvalent significance, the CMP addresses major problematic aspects and threats and promotes an appropriate policy concerning the basic understanding of the actual bearers of significance, as well as of the relation of cultural and natural heritage. It further proposes guidelines regarding both the role of the museum and its exhibition concept, and the accessibility and interpretation of a selected number of 10 sub-sites located within the access-restricted area as well as several sites outside it.

Connected to the classification of large parts of Peenemünde as natural heritage, several areas totalling 2.021 ha and containing substantial parts of the former HVA were handed over in 2010 to the DBU Naturerbe Ltd.– a private body held by the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) established on state initiative and dedicated to the protection of the environment. Thus, situated within a nature reserve, the area of F1 requires attention to environmental issues on an equal basis to questions of archaeological research and conservation.

Furthermore, the property situation in general – spreading over the area of two municipalities, Peenemünde and Karlshagen – is quite diverse with a number of private proprietors owning areas that in some cases have already been designated for redevelopment.

### Anthropogenic intervention in the landscape

In 2018, after almost a decade of colliding interests between investors, politicians and citizens of Usedom, the planned flooding of an area of 904 ha between Peenemünde and the neighbouring seaside resort Karlshagen was finally dismissed. The project 'Kompensationsflächenpool Cämmerer See und angrenzende Niederungen' would have required dismantling the Peenestromdeich between Peenemünde and the Baltic Sea. Referred to as the 'Nazideich' by the minister of environment, Till Backhaus, the dyke in question had been built in the 1930s as part of the HVA Peenemünde and therefore constitutes a historic site in its own right. Even worse, the envisioned flooding, intended as a compensation area for the industrial site of Lubmin, would effectively have destroyed large parts of the former HVA, including architectural remains aside from F1 and archaeological features (all information on the project taken from <http://www.kein-deich-rueckbau-usedom.de>).

The potential negative outcomes of designating parts of the former HVA as compensation areas can also be seen in other places. For example, a barrack formerly used by the NVA directly adjacent to the factory hall for repair work (Instandsetzungswerk) next to F1 was demolished in 2019 without further notice, investigation or documentation. While the loss of the building at first glance does not seem too severe, this architectural complex included in fact reused structures from the HVA and was built



Fig. 4 Former 'Wirtschaftsgebäude' at Karlshagen before arson in 2016 (© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)



Fig. 5: Former 'Wirtschaftsgebäude' at Karlshagen after arson in 2019 (© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)

on foundations from the 1930s (Fig. 2). A documentation from the viewpoint of a cursory architectural survey accompanying the demolition process would already have been greatly beneficial for further research on the HVA and its architectural remains.

### Forest fires

In June 2019, a forest fire with three main sources caused by unknown factors threatened to also affect the area of F1 (Fig. 3). While thankfully this wasn't the case in the end, the fire continued for two days in an area of six hectares and at times was declared out of control. Presumably, the fire which had not spread to the fir trees and birches around the various concrete ruins in the area, but only to the undergrowth was stopped around F1 by the former cobblestone and concrete slab road system around the ruins of the factory hall, as well as by game passes. As the main risks for forest fires at Peenemünde are connected to the negligent behaviour of tourists and actions related to trespassing into the restricted area, improvements in tourism management could prove to be beneficial for creating awareness. A higher rate of acts of law enforcement could act as deterrents to intimidate intentional trespassers.

### Vandalism

In early 2019, the 'Wirtschaftsgebäude' – a multipurpose building designated for administrative and other functions at the former 'VKN-Lager' in Karlshagen, a barrack camp erected for the members of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labour Service) during the building phase of the HVA – was partially destroyed by fire (Figs. 4 and 5). As it turned out later, arson was the cause for this destruction, showcasing that even simple vandalism if carried out with sufficient commitment can also eradicate solidly built historic sites associated with the HVA, like the brick architecture of the former Wirtschaftsgebäude, now in a state that is beyond any chance of conservation.

### Looting

Looting – uninhibited by the threats caused by unexploded ordnance – poses a major problem at the former HVA (Fig. 6), as



Fig. 6: Looter's trench at the IW (© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)

illicit dealing in V2 parts is a very lucrative business. Artefacts that can clearly be attributed to F1 for example turn up regularly on eBay. So far, attempts to take legal action have led to no major breakthrough. Nevertheless, numerous looters' trenches appearing regularly in and around F1 testify to the severity of the problem. The issue continued even directly after the above-mentioned forest fire in June 2019, at a time when the fire was not even completely under control again. Furthermore, the aftermath of these illegal actions often seems to involve purposefully vandalising the surrounding surface scatter of artefacts, as proven by distinctive items being moved across great distances within F1 or broken to pieces on site.

### Commercial interests

Parts of the former HVA have undergone destruction through measures driven by economic (investors') interests. For example, the infrastructure of the HVA also included civilian living quarters for its employees. Built as a new settlement with all the amenities of a small town, neighbouring Karlshagen, the former 'Wissenschaftlersiedlung', was heavily air-raided in 1943 and al-





Fig. 7: Signpost detailing redeveloped areas at the site of the former civilian settlement in Karlshagen in 2019 (© P. Schneider/C. Röhl)

most completely destroyed. Nowadays, its scarce remains which lie scattered in a forest next to the seashore have already in parts been erased without prior documentation by the redevelopment of the area into a holiday resort consisting of single housing for vacationists (Fig. 7).

## Conclusion

Assessing the structural remains of the HVA in and above ground on the basis of thorough examination and documentation on site can help to raise awareness of the value of the Peenemünde landscape for scientific research, which is often ignored in its significance for the status of the site as cultural heritage. Yet, contamination and inaccessibility pose challenges, in particular when it comes to archaeological reconnaissance. In cases where neither the preservation of the site's archaeological potential nor its architectural remains can be prioritised, documentation and further investigation consistent with the respective feature or architectural structure are the minimum requirement in order to pay heed to the site's significance as global cultural heritage.

Constanze Röhl and Peter Schneider