

Two German Architectures: Confrontation, Competition and Co-evolution in Divided Berlin

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The citizens association *Bürgerverein Hansaviertel e. V.* was founded in 2004 as a non-profit organization with the purpose to exert itself for the preservation and the care of the listed buildings and landscape components in Berlin's Hansaviertel. The membership structure, nowadays 140 members, is very heterogeneous and marked by a distinct amount of engaged and competent citizens. The membership includes architects, artists, lawyers, gallery owners, representatives of the media, politics as well as of the public administration. The civic association works with numerous cooperation partners in the field of Berlin's post-war architecture and operates in a growing number of demanding projects inside the Hansaviertel.

Origin of the World Cultural Heritage application Interbau 1957 and Karl-Marx-Allee

Since 2006, the civic association has been involved in working for a World Heritage nomination of the Hansaviertel and has carried out projects, venues and arrangements, exhibitions and symposia in collaboration with its cooperation partners (Akademie der Künste, Förderverein Corbusierhaus, Schaustelle Nachkriegsmoderne, Grips Theater and Bücherei am Hansaplatz). In addition, information has been generated about the history and origin of the Hansaviertel within the scope of the Interbau 1957 for the sustainable development and the preservation of the quarter and information and studies have been assembled in different written articles and publications, maps, etc as well as on the web page www.hansaviertel.eu.

In 2011 the civic association founded a working group dealing with the further development of the UNESCO nomination. The available network was developed and additional contacts and cooperations were further established.

With great commitment of the civic associations *Bürgerverein Hansaviertel e. V.*, *Hermann Henselmann Stiftung*, *Förderverein Corbusierhaus*, the project "Two German Architectures – Karl Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957" aiming for a joint World Heritage nomination of the buildings in Karl Marx-Allee in East Berlin and of the buildings of the Hansaviertel/Interbau 1957, the convention hall and the Corbusierhaus in West Berlin a plan was drafted and presented in a press conference on July 6, 2012 at the Akademie der Künste at Pariser Platz in Berlin. The project is borne by the three civic associations and their cooperation partners "Akademie der Künste", "Haus der Kulturen der Welt", the Berlin conservation department (Landesdenkmalamt Ber-

lin), the Senate of Berlin represented by the Senate Administration for Urban Development.

On July 31, 2012 the Senate of Berlin decided to recommend to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany the joint East-West project as one of two Berlin candidates for the World Heritage tentative list. The application was compiled until January 2013 together with the associated partners and is now in the selection process of the Standing Conference. A preliminary decision for a further selection of this project to be nominated is expected by mid 2014.

Specific features of the application

The application area in East Berlin includes the buildings along Karl-Marx-Allee, formerly "Stalinallee", and in the West the buildings of the "Interbau 1957" at the Hansaviertel, including the "Kongresshalle" (since 1989 "House of the Cultures of the World") and the apartment block *Unité d'Habitation*, type Berlin ("Corbusierhaus").

Besides its architectural and town planning uniqueness, the special characteristics of the application areas are emphasized by their geographic position during the Cold War on the demarcation line between East and West Berlin and by the political context of its origin after the Second World War, in the field of tension between the states of the Warsaw Pact and NATO.

The different town planning schemes had their origin in the competition and confrontation of contrasting political systems reacting to each other. They are a document of an interacting development.

Scope of the application Interbau 1957 Hansaviertel

The following introduction to the application area of the Interbau 1957 relates to the explanations regarding the content of the common application, which Thomas Flierl, chairperson of the Hermann Henselmann-Stiftung, will further explain afterwards.

Before World War Two, the historic Hansaviertel consisted of approx. 140 buildings in the Wilhelminian style, which had been erected between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries in the typical Berlin perimeter block development. The quarter had approx. 18,000 inhabitants at that time. Mostly entrepreneurs and bankers,



Flatowallee 16, Unité d'Habitation, 1956–1958 von Le Corbusier, 2007
Flatowallee 16, Unité d'Habitation, 1956–58 by Le Corbusier, 2007

but also politicians, scientists, doctors, theologians, painters, designers, sculptors, authors, architects and actors lived there.

After the almost complete destruction of the Hansaviertel by bombs during the war, only about 21 buildings had survived. The high degree of destruction necessitated a large amount of new housing space everywhere in the city. The Hansaviertel offered the opportunity to redevelop the quarter, deviating from the previous block edge structure, with a new master plan layout based on the principles of the “Athens Charter”. Here, the “city of tomorrow” was supposed to emerge. The quarter became an experimental ground for the model of a functionally separated, subdivided, scattered city. Within the scope of the International Construction Exhibition (“Interbau”) in 1957 new and varied residential building layouts were meant to be developed and tested.

Parallel to the construction of the Stalinallee in East Berlin politicians in charge in West Berlin at this

Klopstockstraße 31, kath. Kirche St. Ansgar, 1957 von Willy Kreuer, 2007
Klopstockstrasse 31, Catholic church of St. Ansgar, 1957 by Willy Kreuer, 2007





Händelallee 3–9, Wohnhaus, 1956/57 von Walter Gropius und Wils Ebert, 2004
Händelallee 3–9, apartment building, 1956/57 by Walter Gropius and Wils Ebert, 2004

time realized they had to respond to the development begun in the East. Thus the process began in 1953 for the reorganization of the Hansaviertel with the preparation and realization of a master plan competition, for which 98 entries from international architects were submitted. The Interbau 1957 planned nearly at the same time by the Senate of Berlin changed not only the layout of the overall plan of the quarter, but above all the political, town planning and architectural demands of the project for the purposes of an international, sustainable modern age. The Interbau competition jury finally chose apart from German architects twelve architects from abroad for a total of 34 objects to be designed. Internationally acclaimed architects like Alvar Aalto, Oskar Niemeyer, Walter Gropius and Pierre Vago, but also successful German architects such as Werner Düttmann, who designed two prominent buildings in the Hansaviertel, the “Akademie der Künste” and the “Hansabücherei”, completed their buildings for the opening of the Interbau, which took place from July til September 1957 with approx. one million visitors.

Until 1960, the “Kongresshalle” (today “House of the Cultures of the World”) was completed as a present from the USA. The building was designed by architect Hugh Stubbins and is located between the Hansaviertel, the Reichstag build-

ing and the Unité d’Habitation in Charlottenburg, which was designed by Le Corbusier.

Today’s Hansaviertel has approx. 5,800 inhabitants, most of them belonging to the middle class. In comparison to the old Hansaviertel, the available total gross area of housing space has not changed decisively; however, the number of inhabitants has decreased and has shifted the surface relation of built-over areas to not built-over areas to a relation of 1:4 for the benefit of the green areas.

At the site of the former perimeter block structure, green areas with solitaire buildings in a rich variety of typologies were evolved. Up to 17-storey high rise apartment buildings, residential blocks with up to nine floors (partly with maisonette style apartments), row houses and detached houses became distinctive features of the quarter.

A shopping centre is located directly at Hansaplatz. The Hansaviertel provides numerous cultural amenities like the “Hansabücherei”, the “Akademie der Künste”, and the youth theatre “Grips Theater”. In addition, two churches and an elementary school are located in the quarter. Next to the Hansaviertel, a high-school completes the overall social infrastructure in this area.

Within the scope of landscape architecture, differently designed walkways and green areas were created as well as a



Klopstockstraße 14–18, Wohnhaus, 1956/57 von Pierre Vago, 2013
Klopstockstrasse 14–18, apartment building, 1956/57 by Pierre Vago, 2013

remarkable number of artworks such as sculptures and installations.

Prospects

The origin of the new Hansaviertel dates back more than half a century. The future prospects of the quarter are very promising in spite of the challenges faced by the necessary renovation and repair works of the partly insufficient building substance. The quarter's central position in Berlin, adjacent to the government areas, is very popular. Increasingly young families, creative people, well-off citizens and architecture-lovers move to that quarter.

The buildings show their age and are therefore gradually renovated by the owners who follow the relevant conservation guidelines. In spite of available technologies for a contemporary renovation and improvement of the energy-efficiency of the structural fabric of the buildings from the 1950s, the sustainable preservation has become a great challenge for the inhabitants, owners and the representatives of the authorities. These challenges have to be mastered in a dialog between all involved parties and under consideration of all individual interests for the purpose of preserving the cultural heritage.

Aiming for the status as a World Heritage site could contribute to the buildings' protection with further stimulating impulses.