

Berlin Proposal for the German Tentative List: Karl-Marx-Allee and “Interbau 1957”



TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION FORMAT



STATE PARTY: GERMANY

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On behalf of

Bürgerverein Hansaviertel e.V., Förderverein Corbusierhaus Berlin e.V. and Hermann-Henselmann-Stiftung,
in cooperation

with the President of the Akademie der Künste Berlin, Prof. Klaus Staeck,
and the Director of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Prof. Dr. Bernd M. Scherer,

under the auspices of

the Mayor of the Borough of Mitte of Berlin, Dr. Christian Hanke,
and the Mayor of the Borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg of Berlin, Dr. Franz Schulz,
and the Chairman of Stiftung Zukunft Berlin, Dr. Volker Hassemer.

Name of Property: Karl-Marx-Allee / Interbau 1957

State, Province or Region: Germany, Berlin

Latitude and Longitude, or UTM coordinates:

Description:

Two German Architectures – Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957.

Confrontation, competition and coevolution in divided Berlin

After the Second World War, the divided city of Berlin was the main stage for the Cold War. In no other place in the world the political confrontation between East and West has left such clear traces in architecture and urban design as in this city.

In Berlin, the competition between the two opposed social systems led to a unique rivalry in urban design and architecture even before the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Over a period of more than twenty years, unique residential neighbourhoods and urban ensembles were built in a constant interplay of construction and counter-construction after plans by renowned architects on both sides. In the eastern part of the city, the area around Karl-Marx-Allee (previously Stalinallee) was thus built; in the western part the International Building Exhibition (Internationale Bauausstellung 1957) saw the construction of the Hansaviertel, the Corbusierhaus at the Olympic stadium, the Kongresshalle in the Tiergarten district, and the Akademie der Künste. Located on either side of the Brandenburg Gate on the great East-West axis, they represent, in unparalleled conciseness, concentration and quality, the two internationally relevant post-war tendencies in architecture and urban design, each promoted by the corresponding occupying power: the eastern model of regional-historicist building ("socialist in content, national in form"), and the western model of the International Style and the open cityscape ("Stadtlandschaft"). What was once built as confrontational urban design and expressed implacable competition can today, after the era of confrontation between the systems has ended and with a critical look at both Regional Historicism and the International Style, be discovered and made accessible, as the joint cultural heritage of a formerly divided Europe in the reunified Berlin.

Description of the component part(s):

This post-war architectural heritage of Berlin, unique in its antithetical constellation and legally protected as listed property since the unification of the city in 1990/91, is concentrated in two main areas of focus:

1. Karl-Marx-Allee I residential area between Strausberger Platz and Proskauer Straße, including

"Wohnzelle Friedrichshain" ("Friedrichshain residential zone", 1949-1951, Architects: Hans Scharoun, Hans Brockschmidt, Helmut Riedel, Richard Paulick/Schmidt/ Zahn, Ludmilla Herzenstein)

Ensemble an der Weberwiese (Ensemble at Weberwiese, 1950-1954, Architect: Hermann Henselmann)

- Karl-Marx-Allee between Strausberger Platz and Proskauer Straße (1951-1958, Architects: Egon Hartmann, Richard Paulick, Hanns Hopp, Karl Souradny, Kurt Leucht; the architect of the buildings at Frankfurter Tor and Strausberger Platz was Hermann Henselmann)
2. Internationale Baustellung Berlin 1957 – "Interbau" (International Building Exhibition 1957) including
 Hansaviertel (1953-1957, Planning: Otto Bartning, Gerhard Jobst, Willy Kreuer, Wilhelm Schließer;
 Architects: among others Alvar Aalto, Paul G. R. Baumgarten, Werner Düttmann, Egon Eiermann, Walter Gropius, Gustav Hassenpflug, Arne Jacobsen, Oscar Niemeyer, Hans Schwippert, Max Taut, Pierre Vago)
 Unité d'Habitation, Type Berlin (1953-1957, Architect: Le Corbusier),
 Kongresshalle in Tiergarten (Congress Hall, 1956/58, Architect: Hugh Stubbins)
 Akademie der Künste (Academy of the Arts, 1958/60, Architect: Werner Düttmann)
3. Karl-Marx-Allee II residential area between Strausberger Platz and Alexanderplatz
 (Urban planners and architects: Edmund Collein, Werner Dutschke and Josef Kaiser) including
 Kino International (cinema, 1961-1963), Café Moskau (1961-1964) and Kino Kosmos (cinema, 1960-1962),
 Architect: Josef Kaiser,
 Haus des Lehrers and Kongresshalle at Alexanderplatz ("House of the Teacher" and Congress Hall, 1959-1964, Architect: Hermann Henselmann)

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value:

(Preliminary identification of the values of the property which merit inscription on the World Heritage List)

After 1945, the sociopolitical confrontation between East and West in Berlin led to the construction of two opposed city types. In the East, on Stalinallee, a decorative, Regional Historicism (representative boulevard with "residential palaces" and distinctive squares marked by gateway buildings) developed. In the West, the Interbau 1957 building exhibition demonstratively took up the International Style according to the principles of the Charta of Athens (a nonorthogonal city layout with residential slabs and linear blocks of varying sizes displaying facades with a large proportion of glass and open floor plans, interspersed with open green space). In the face of the destruction caused by the war, both architectural movements turned away from the Wilhelminian tenement city that had been predominant and looked instead for the "new city" and the forms of housing appropriate for it. In this process, politicians in both East and West Berlin understood and used architecture and urban design as a medium for cultivating their image and demonstrating their own social "superiority". While the GDR, following the example set by the Soviet Union, abandoned the architectural and urbanist International Style at the beginning of the 1950s, only to return to it gradually less than ten years later with the industrialisation of civil engineering, again following the Soviet example, the West, over many years, unreservedly defended the concept of the "structured, low-density city interspersed with open green space" ("gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt").

Today, we have the opportunity of understanding this Berlin heritage, born from the *political* confrontation between East and West and the *aesthetical* confrontation between Regional Historicism and International Style, as a common heritage of Eastern and Western Europe and as part of a universal cultural heritage. This reciprocal and characteristically delayed intertwining of East and West and historicism and modernism can be associated with the image of the „double helix“. In a manner of speaking, Karl-Marx-Allee (old and new) and Interbau 1957 store, in the logic of their creation, the architectural and urban design code of Berlin's post-war development.

Immediately after the war, in 1946, the director of city planning Hans Scharoun, who had been appointed by all four Allies together, introduced Post-war Modernism in architecture and urban design uniformly in all four sectors of Berlin with the "Kollektivplan". Even after the political division of the city in 1948, the "Wohnzelle Friedrichshain", built between 1949 and 1951 to the south of the newly named (1949) Stalinallee, is an expression of this model.

In 1951, the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the governing party of the GDR from 1949 to 1989) took a sharp turn in its party line with regard to architecture and urban design. Suddenly, "American cosmopolitanism", the international "Bauhaus style" and the first East German building projects ("Wohnzelle Friedrichshain") found themselves at the centre of criticism. For the next few years, following the example set by the Soviet Union, the GDR pursued an architectural policy of regional orientation and "national traditions". The tower building at Weberwiese, built in 1951/52, became the prototype then carried out in Stalinallee, the "first socialist street in Germany", built up on a large scale between Proskauer Straße and Strausberger Platz up until 1958.

With a slight delay, the West accepted this challenge on the field of architecture and urban design in Berlin. The first construction project to be built explicitly as an answer to Stalinallee was the Ernst Reuter estate, built in the district of Wedding near the border to the Soviet sector in 1954-55 to plans by Felix Hinssen. The second, much larger and programmatic response of the West was the "Interbau 1957" International Building Exhibition, including the Hansaviertel quarter, the Corbusierhaus, the Kongresshalle and the Akademie der Künste.

Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 were built under the management of state institutions, not by private investors. Nor would they have been viable in a free-market economy. This special situation made it possible to realise the dominant political convictions regarding architecture, urban design, and the way to live in a New Berlin without mediation and in an ideal manner, mobilising considerable public resources for the purpose. In both parts of Berlin, as prerequisites for building these projects, the city's historical ground plan was modified considerably and the small-scale ownership structure overcome. In the West, this was achieved with the tools provided by subsidised capitalism, in the East with those of the socialist state.

While Stalinallee, as a traditional corridor street (with residential buildings and shops) on outsized plots, retraced the existing structure dating back to the German Empire, the Hansaviertel broke completely with the previously existing Empire building structure to realise the model of the residential city structured by function, with manifold dwelling forms in green surroundings. In its orientation toward the city of tomorrow as a programmatic rejection of the city of yesterday, the second phase of construction on Karl-Marx-Allee followed the example set by the Hansaviertel.

In contrast to the eastern preference for "national traditions" and architects, the West placed its trust in internationality: a total of 53 architects from 13 countries participated in Interbau 1957.

At the time of their construction, the two urbanistic ensembles were sharply opposed to each other not only as far as their urban design model and aesthetics were concerned. There was also the political-symbolic dimension. Following the violent repression of the uprising of 17 June 1953 in East Germany, in which the Stalinallee construction workers had also played a decisive role, the street Charlottenburger Chaussee in West Berlin was renamed "Straße des 17. Juni" (Street of 17 June). Later, the Hansaviertel was built in the immediate vicinity of this street. Thus, not only did the East-West axis symbolise different architectures and political systems – at the Brandenburg Gate, two worlds collided.

At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, in the course of (inconsequent) destalinisation and a forced industrialisation of the building trade, the GDR once again took up the International Style in its architecture and urban design. The classical example of this second-round, aesthetically independent modernisation is the second phase of construction on Stalinallee (renamed Karl-Marx-Allee in 1961) between Strausberger Platz and Alexanderplatz (1959-64). Here, there is no longer a classical corridor street, although the intention of continuing Karl-Marx-Allee itself as a main thoroughfare through to Alexanderplatz can still be seen. At the Karl-Marx-Allee/Schillingstraße intersection, there is a superordinate social centre, while the "housing complexes" stretch northward and southward of the thoroughfare. The Haus des Lehrers and the Kongresshalle at Alexanderplatz (1962-64) mark the end of Karl-Marx-Allee and also served the purpose of mediating between it and the later-built East Berlin city centre at Alexanderplatz, the area around the Television Tower and Spreeinsel Island.

Historically, criticism of International Style architecture and urban design coincided with the political collapse of the GDR and the Eastern Bloc. So after 1990 postmodern Zeitgeist criticism concentrated on GDR Modernism, while the architecture of the early GDR found rapid acceptance. In an exact reversal of the political and aesthetic confrontations of the 1950s, the "old" Karl-Marx-Allee in East Berlin gained wide recognition in the field of building culture as a "European boulevard", and was restored according to the guidelines for historical monuments shortly thereafter. The Hansaviertel and the "new" Karl-Marx-Allee, on the other hand, had to stand their ground for several years from 1990 onward in the face of the anti-modern Zeitgeist. Today, however, most of these historic monuments, too, have been restored in line with listed property requirements and their value as building culture recognised.

Berlin was marked, like no other city, by the political confrontation between East and West. In this rivalry, historically unique buildings and ensembles were created. Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 were much more than just concrete projects for their particular location; they were always also a promise for the new city, a promise for a better future. Only in correlation with each other can their entire historical and aesthetic significance be gauged. The projects Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 are reciprocally referential, as far as contemporary history and building culture are concerned; together (although at that time politically divided), they form the co-evolutionary structure of a European Post-war Modernism which has now itself become historical.

An application to include these two ensembles in the German Tentative List for World Heritage would advance the reappraisal of these complex historical processes (between East and West and between Regional Historicism and International Modernism) and be a medium and a symbol of a global, universal cultural understanding. This contribution to World Heritage can come only from Germany, and in Germany only from Berlin.

Criteria considered to be met [see Paragraph 77 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

(Please tick the box corresponding to the proposed criteria and justify the use of each below)

(i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii) (viii) (ix) (x)

The topic / The submission „**Two German Architectures – Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 in Berlin**“ fulfils criteria ii, iii, iv und vi of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

(ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture / urban design

Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 document the sociopolitical confrontation and rivalry between the two competing social systems in post-war Europe in a unique manner. In their time, these two urban areas demonstrated the opposing social paradigms and modes of living with the means of architecture and urban design. Both the eastern building policy of "national traditions" in the course of "building Socialism" after the Soviet example and the counterstrategy of a "western Modern Style" can only be explained by the contemporary constellation in then-divided Europe and the strategic rivalry – not only political and military, but also and especially cultural – between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union.

These two complexes, the one a regional-historicist and the other an international-modernist architectural and urban design ensemble, are alternatives to each other, constructed simultaneously or in characteristically alternating phases, each one making specific reference to the other. In no other city in the world can examples of this process be experienced and compared in situ in such good quality. Only here can central phases of the Cold War, in this case even preceding the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, be retraced in reference to architecture and urban design.

(iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which has disappeared

Today, after the end of the political confrontation, the erstwhile politically charged polarisation of the international debate on traditional vs. modern tendencies in architecture and urban design is even more astonishing. As well as representing the lost culture of affirmative political *and* aesthetic confrontation, Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 stand for the Modernist belief in the direct interconnection of policy and aesthetics and in the effectiveness of *one* particular architectural and urbanistic model in establishing and asserting a specific social system. Now that the political division has been overcome, the opposition between Traditionalism and Modernism can be recognised as an intrinsic problem of social modernisation itself. The different types of architectural and urban development manifested in Post-war Modernism present a challenge, and at the same time an encouragement in future to be open to dialogue and development in city planning, i.e. through the coevolution of distinguishable models.

(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history

Karl-Marx-Allee, as a monumental metropolitan main thoroughfare in the form of a corridor street leading to the centre of Berlin, and Interbau 1957, as a free composition of loosely distributed groups of buildings and green spaces, document two entirely different types of urban design of the second half of the 20th century. On the one hand, in the East, there is the type of urbanism which reactivates the tradition of representative street and square design with contemporary building techniques; on the other, in the West, the type of functionalistic urbanism proposed by the Charta of Athens, with inner-city residential zones interspersed with abundant open green space. In addition, Karl-Marx-Allee and the residential buildings constructed in the context of Interbau 1957 and the Hansaviertel offer a range of post-war residential house and floor plan experiments which is probably internationally unique in its density and complexity. These experiments include balcony access apartment buildings, comfortably furnished flats and penthouses in "workers' residential palaces" and industrially planned and constructed buildings made with precast concrete slabs in the East, and a wide variety of types of residential building such as tower blocks, high-rise apartment buildings, terraced houses for one and for two families, atrium houses, and the legendary Unité d'Habitation Type Berlin in the West.

(vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance

Karl-Marx-Allee and Interbau 1957 are directly connected with the workers' uprising of 17 June 1953, one of the most important contributing causes of which was the protest of the Stalinallee construction workers against the decision to raise the work norms. The historic events of 17 June 1953 and their connection with the Stalinallee building project are reflected especially in the literature of outstanding authors [cf. Arno Schmidt, *Das Steinerner Herz* (1956); Uwe Johnson, *Ingrid Babendererde* (1953); Heiner Müller, *Der Lohndrucker* (The Scab, 1956/57), *Die Korrektur* (The Correction, 1957/58), *Germania Tod in Berlin* (Germania Death in Berlin, 1956/71); Stefan Heym, *Fünf Tage im Juni* (1956), *Die Architekten* (The Architects, 1964/65); Anna Seghers *Das Vertrauen* (1970) et al.]

Statement of authenticity and/or integrity [see Paragraphs 78-95 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

The historic buildings and green spaces along Karl-Marx-Allee and the projects built for the International Building Exhibition 1957 in the Hansaviertel display a high level of visual integrity and historical authenticity.

All of the buildings and gardens have been listed as monuments for many years. Since 1990, a large part of the housing stock on Karl-Marx-Allee has been restored according to the guidelines for historical monuments and made more energy-efficient. The rehabilitation and restoration of the Kongresshalle in Tiergarten and the Kongresshalle at Alexanderplatz, the Haus des Lehrers and Café Moskau, the Tiergartenpavillon and the Akademie der Künste group of buildings were carried out in close consultation with the monument authorities. For the Corbusierhaus, a monument preservation plan has been negotiated between the authorities and the property owners.

Deficits in finding a suitable future use for the district centre at Hansaplatz, including the entrance to the subway station of the same name, the local amenities and the Grips-Theater, and in its preservation as befitting a listed monument, are to be remedied within the next few years. The monument preservation plan which already exists for the public green spaces in the Hansaviertel is to be extended to include private open spaces and the buildings.

The administration of the Berlin Borough of Mitte and the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment have agreed to establish a development plan for Karl-Marx-Allee II which aims to cautiously develop the area further by densifying it with residential construction respecting the existing building stock and to reactivate the local amenities along Schillingstraße as the district centre.

Comparison with other similar properties:

(The comparison should outline similarities with other properties on the World Heritage List or not, and the reasons that make the property stand out)

At present, objects of post-war urban design are a rare exception on the UNESCO World Heritage List. While the historic centre of Warsaw, reconstructed after 1945 and recognised as a World Heritage site in 1980, was recognised mainly as an extraordinary accomplishment of conservation and restoration, the planned capital city of Brasilia, entered in the UNESCO list in 1987, can be seen as the ideal city of Post-war Modernism, realised and preserved as a symbol of a collective new beginning in inland Brazil.

The Berlin submission "Two German Architectures", on the other hand, stands for the problems of a divided new beginning in Eastern and Western Europe after the Second World War and for the two main architectural and urbanistic trends of the 20th century.

The results of the reconstruction of Le Havre by Auguste Perret (ii, iv), entered in the World Heritage List in 2005, appear to be comparable with the post-war examples set forth by the double submission from Berlin. However, neither was Le Havre an internationally significant stage for the Cold War and the division of Europe after 1945, nor does its reconstruction represent the process of urbanistic and architectural conflict between East and West. Rather, this entry concentrates on the outstanding accomplishment of a single architect in the fields of urban design and architecture.

Moreover, the UNESCO World Heritage List does not yet include a single example of an architectural or urban design exhibition, although these, like the World's Fairs, are to be counted among the fascinating contributions of 19th- and 20th-century cultural history.

A constellation comparable with, or of similar globally political exposure as the reconstruction of Berlin after 1945 does not exist for other divided cities (Belfast, Jerusalem, etc.).

In central and eastern Europe, comparable characteristic transitions from Modernism to traditional architecture and back to Modernism occurred after 1945 under Soviet influence. For this reason, the Berlin submission is open to initiatives by post-socialist state parties of the UNESCO Convention proposing a serial nomination of eastern European objects and quarters which also have these historical breaks as a theme. Conversely, in the case of an intention to nominate monuments of urban design of "Socialist Realism" or "Socialist Modernism", the case of Berlin would provide the indispensable foil for comparison and contrast due to its unique position of having contained East and West in a single city.