

Welcome Address by the President of ICOMOS Germany

The conference “Urbanization to Modernism/Formation of Metropolitan Harbour and Commercial Districts” (Hamburg, 13–14 October 2011), jointly organized by ICOMOS Germany and the Hamburg Ministry of Culture/Department for Heritage Preservation in cooperation with the HafenCity University and the Sutor Foundation, was an international meeting where I could also welcome a number of foreign experts, among them our colleague Alfredo Conti, Vice President of ICOMOS International and President of ICOMOS Argentina. This conference opened by Senator Prof. Barbara Kisseler was once again a successful cooperation between ICOMOS Germany and the City of Hamburg, the earlier cooperation being the symposium in Hamburg-Bergedorf on “Cultural Heritage of Astronomical Observatories/From Classical Astronomy to Modern Astrophysics” (14–17 October 2008; published as vol. XVIII in the *Monuments and Sites* series, Berlin 2009). Both the conference proceedings in this vol. LIV of the Journals of the German National Committee and the proceedings of the symposium on observatories are contributions to the global thematic studies of ICOMOS as advisory body to UNESCO. ICOMOS has already reacted several times to the global strategy for a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List through specialized studies, for instance through the publication “The World Heritage List/Filling the Gaps – An Action Plan for the Future” (vol. XII of the *Monuments and Sites* series, Munich 2005), the so-called Gap Report which in a typological, chronological-regional and thematic framework lists possible gaps in the existing World Heritage List; and with the publication “The World Heritage List/What is OUV?” (vol. XVI of the *Monuments and Sites* series, Berlin 2008).

ICOMOS Germany, which as part of Preventive Monitoring has been looking after the German World Heritage sites for years with the help of a working group (chaired by Giulio Marano), concerns itself with a wide variety of conservation matters, and as advisor is also involved in the successful program of the Federal Building Ministry for national World Heritage sites. The City of Hamburg is represented on the German tentative list for the World Heritage with a remarkable proposal: the Chilehaus with office building district and adjoining warehouse district – a proposal whose significance becomes apparent in global comparative

studies, to which the Hamburg conference has added many new aspects.

The office building district between Steinstrasse and Meißberg, “one of the most remarkable townscapes of the 1920s in Germany” (Dehio, *Handbuch der deutschen Kulturdenkmäler*, Hamburg 1971), developed from a rehabilitation project at the site of a former quarter with narrow alleyways in the old town and became an entire complex of office buildings, with the Chilehaus as figurehead looking like an icebreaker, the former Ballinhaus (Meißberghof), the Sprinkenhof and the Mohlenhof. Together they form an outstanding ensemble in the “brick style” characteristic for Hamburg, also using Expressionist motifs on the facades and inside the buildings. While the office building district is still used in the original way, the warehouse district, erected in the 1880s as part of the free-trade zone and an important testimony to the history of Hamburg’s port and trade, today can only be preserved in its characteristic structure by allowing new utilization concepts. Furthermore, while the warehouse “island” itself is protected as an ensemble, also due to the fact that the brick tradition was continued after the war destructions, the surroundings are presently in a process of change, i. e. through the mega project HafenCity Hamburg creating new landmarks and the not yet completed Elbphilharmonie.

Given these preconditions, apart from the office building district outstanding in many respects, the comparative studies for the warehouse district presented at our conference are of particular interest, i.e. studies that look at “historic urban landscapes” of historic harbor cities with their specific infrastructure, among them cities already on the World Heritage List, such as Valparaiso (listed in 2003) and Liverpool (listed in 2004). On behalf of the German National Committee of ICOMOS I would like to thank the authors for their contributions and the colleagues at the Hamburg Department for Heritage Preservation, Frank Pieter Hesse, Dr. Agnes Seemann and Romaine Becker, for the excellent organization and preparation of this publication printed by hendrik Bäbeler verlag · berlin. Finally, we would like to thank the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media for the generous funding of this publication.

Prof. Dr. Michael Petzet