

ARCHITECTURAL RECONSTRUCTIONS:
THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMANY

by

ANDRÉ HARRMANN

(Under the direction of Professor MARK EDWARD REINBERGER)

ABSTRACT

This study examines architectural reconstructions in the territory of the reunited Germany. To evaluate the current developments, the time frame since 1945 will be briefly analyzed separately for both parts of the divided nation. In the following, distinctive cases will be investigated to varying depth from their historic roots, through their phases of destruction, up to their current reconstruction or controversies thereabout. The case studies will be compared to each other. Despite a great number of very specific reasons to decide in favor of one historic layer or the other, it can be said that there are currently two main tendencies, namely politics aiming to correct or generate history, and secondly, to correct and beautify urban fabric. But it will also be shown that especially the latter is increasingly influenced by investors and less by urban planners or other experts.

INDEX WORDS: Germany, Dresden, Frauenkirche, Berlin, Stadtschloß, Hohenzollern, Palast der Republik, Braunschweig, Brunswick, Frankfurt am Main, Historic Preservation, Contemporary architecture, Demolition, Rebuilding, Reconstruction, Archeological reconstruction, Urban planning.

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DEDICATION

To my future wife Barbara Zabel, who had to make arrangements for our big day, while I was hiding behind the computer screen or doing research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The discussions and decisions surrounding the reconstruction of buildings are certainly not a contemporary phenomenon. Natural disasters, demolition by neglect or just the renaissance of a certain layer of history has always led to the recreation of bygone architecture. But the attitude towards ruins and their reproduction or reconstruction has changed immensely throughout history. No single universal answer or approach can be found. Succeeding societies have put different emphases on this issue and agreed on different solutions more or less unanimously. The destruction during military conflicts certainly adds a much larger dimension to the topic. Especially the Second World War, initiated by Germany, brought tremendous devastation. With the required rebuilding of the cities after the war, the question regarding the built heritage also had to be assessed anew. A thorough consideration of the pros and cons is increasingly important, since it is, thanks to modern technology, possible to reproduce virtually everything to an almost authentic degree, at least materials-wise.

In this thesis, the period after the reunification of Germany in 1990 up to the most current developments in the field of reconstruction will be investigated. Despite the rather short time frame, which is certainly one of the most interesting phases of German history, a high number of reconstructions were encouraged. This was to an extent not anticipated some years ago. But first, the developments in both parts of the divided nation from 1945 to 1990 will be briefly discussed to show the circumstances that finally led to the ever-increasing desire to recreate bygone architecture, especially in recent years.

For West Germany, Frankfurt am Main will serve as an example to show the changing approaches. Despite being the city with the most modern and largest high-rise buildings in Germany, Frankfurt also seems to be first in line in reconstruction matters – immediately after the war and also again today. But more importantly, principles in the field of reconstruction were discussed in Frankfurt and set for all of West Germany, especially immediately following the war. The range of notable projects

started in 1946/48 with the reconstruction of the *Paulskirche* (St. Paul's Church). Also, the discussion about the house-cum-museum *Goethehaus* shaped the approach to the destroyed built heritage. Some years later, the changed objectives in urban planning led to the recreation of the *Römerberg* square in the heart of Frankfurt. The city also seems to be willingly responding to the most current trend with the reconstruction of the historic *Palais Thurn und Taxis*, which is being used to beautify a tremendous shopping and entertainment complex in the downtown.

Also, the East German approach will be briefly discussed, though emphasis will be more on the general conditions than on specific projects. The historic outline starts with the so-called “architecture of national traditions”, which parodied itself in a gingerbread style, mainly oriented on the Soviet model. The demolition of reusable ruins and sometimes even of almost undamaged buildings due to political considerations will be investigated. Finally, some of the notable and high-quality reconstructions, particularly in Dresden, will be briefly evaluated. Also, some aspects of the redevelopment of the historic quarter *Nikolaiviertel* in Berlin will be presented.

The main chapters focus on the most current developments and approaches. Since reconstructions are above all case-by-case decisions, representative projects will be discussed and investigated in varying depth. Three specific cases will be presented in detail to typify the very different histories of the reconstruction projects, which are either currently being discussed, under reconstruction or already finished. In order to understand the present situation, the different historic backgrounds of the three selected cases will be closely investigated, with special focus on the period since their destruction in World War II.

The first case study is about the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, undoubtedly the current German reconstruction project with the most attention world wide. But it is at the same time also the least controversially discussed one – indeed, it is almost unanimously approved by conservationists, mainly because it was and still is regarded as a one-of-a-kind approach. This support from most quarters of society is mainly due to the circumstance that the area with the ruins was basically conserved through the decades following the war and, as such, ready for the decision in 1991 to reconstruct the church – a decision

which came almost as fast as the one for the reunification of Germany. This church, which was reconsecrated in 2005, is undoubtedly one of the strongest symbols of reconciliation after the war and also of the reunification of Germany. But the present study will also look at how the preoccupation with the church changed the approach in Dresden during the reconstruction project and how the reconstructed church fostered developments in its vicinity which are no longer tolerated by opponents of reconstructions in general.

The other two main cases, the palaces in Braunschweig and in Berlin, will be investigated in much more detail than the church in Dresden. This is required for two reasons. First, the decisions which led to the demolition of both palaces can provide for a good comparison of the urban planning approaches as well as the political squabbles in the eastern and western parts of the divided German nation in the 1950s. The assumption is that, due to the different systems, the political impact on architectural and urban planning matters was rather different. In Braunschweig, a more democratic decision process is presupposed, contrary to that in the communist part of Germany. But how strong was the political impact on the decision-making processes in general, and how much influence did the individuals in charge and in power have in particular? The expectation of an ideological background is supported by the fact that in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the historic palace was replaced by a contemporary palace for the people, which even housed the parliament of that since-dissolved state.

Secondly, both cases will be used to show the current decisions and discussions in the reunited Germany. In both projects certain similarities are obvious, but on the other hand, they have both aroused a range of different and highly political and controversial questions. In Berlin, politicians decided for the removal of an important layer of modern German history and in favor of the rebuilding of an old Prussian palace. Is history repeating itself, although the political system has changed? Also, the economical point of view will come into consideration, as the removal of the existing and structurally sound building carcass, just to recreate another building complex, seems irresponsible. A contrast to Berlin is the case in Braunschweig, where on more or less empty grounds a new shopping center will arise, which includes the reconstruction of some historical façades. Here, the financial potency of an investor is seen as a salvation

to the city's problems. But can this mix of commerce and recreation, topped with the supposed fulfillment of a need for authenticity, really be a solution? Since the palace in Braunschweig combines all those contemporary questions and also exemplarily shows the approach to a difficult recent past, it will be used as the main case for this thesis. But it needs to be remembered that the palace in Berlin, especially due to its much more varied and controversial pre- and post-war history, which even includes the building and demolition of a contemporary building on its site, is more widely known and currently discussed. If investigated only from a political and historical perspective, it would certainly deserve even more attention than the project in Braunschweig. However, because of the circumstances mentioned above and due to the fact that the discussions in Braunschweig have more or less been finalized, that palace will be the main focus of this study.

All three main cases represent certain distinguishing aspects which can also be found in other projects, since they have inspired further reconstructions. Therefore, some of these subsequent projects will be briefly described as well. It will also be shown that successful reconstructions are too often exploited to justify even further projects, while ignoring the different historic backgrounds. Since many of the current reconstructions seem to be influenced or made entirely possible by investors, some concurrent endeavors in Potsdam and Frankfurt will also be briefly investigated. These complement the main case study of the Braunschweig palace and put it in a broader context.

This thesis concentrates on individual buildings or smaller building complexes. If certain larger urban planning objectives play a determining role for or against a specific reconstruction project, this background information will be provided. But the tendency in thinking away from the loosely arranged city back to an almost historic urban fabric, which certainly shares some of the same origins with the reconstruction wave, needs to be investigated separately. It would also be beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the different approaches in dealing with the Nazi past and the outcomes of this in both parts of the divided Germany. However, some significant differences which eventually found their expression in the built environment, especially in the decision for or against a particular building, will be pointed out

where relevant. Furthermore, this thesis does not address reconstructions which have been done mainly for educational or recreational purposes.¹

But these are certainly not the only limitations on the treatment of such a broad and controversial subject. Since the intention is to investigate the developments in just one geographical area, it is not the objective to compare the current German projects with other cases in Europe, let alone worldwide. But particularly the approaches in the former eastern bloc could provide for even further insights in this field.² Considering the specific situation of the two reunited parts of Germany, certain parallels could be drawn to concurrent symbolic cases of uniting or separating nations.³ Equally, the numerous reconstructions predating the time frame selected here would be beyond the scope of this study.⁴ But it needs to be considered that such earlier examples are often used to justify current intentions. Every one of these cases on its own could certainly provide enough material for further investigations. But as already stated, this thesis will focus on current German projects to show and compare their developments, especially from their demolition to the present day. These cases will be investigated particularly under the assumption that the attitudes towards the buildings and their history must have changed with increasing time and distance to the destruction.

Since mainly German sources will be used, quotations are largely provided in the original in addition to the English translation. Also, throughout the thesis, German expressions for people, their titles and places will be used, usually also providing their English equivalent on their first occurrence in the work.

¹ There are several interesting examples, for instance the rebuilding of a ring-shaped Slavic fortified settlement made from wooden palisades and filled with earth, originally dating from the ninth century, which was recently reconstructed near *Raddusch (Spreewald)*.

² Here especially the large-scale reconstructions in Poland right after the war, e.g. the rebuilding of whole cities like *Warszaw* (Warsaw) and *Gdańsk* (Danzig).

³ This is certainly true for the highly symbolic case of the *Stari Most* (old bridge) in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been blown up in 1993 during the civil war. The sixteenth century bridge has been reconstructed, using the same techniques as Turkish builders once did. In addition to the re-connection of the two parts of the town, the reopening in 2004 also stands for hope and reconciliation. The recent reconstructions in the former Soviet republics on the other hand must be evaluated in light of the newly gained independence, connected with the wish to create or at least strengthen national identity and historic roots.

⁴ For instance, the *Michaeliskirche* (St. Michael church) in Hamburg, which was destroyed by fire in 1906 and reconstructed immediately afterwards.

Rebuilding in West Germany: 1945 until the 1980s

After the war it was quite obvious that it would not have been possible to rebuild the destroyed historic towns and cities to their former extent. Furthermore, the primary task was to provide housing and efficient means for industry and trade in order to bring people back to work. This was mainly done by architects and urban planners, who were usually not dealing with historic preservation. Most of them saw the unique chance to reorganize the cities based on the contemporary ideal of a loosely arranged urban fabric with interwoven zones of efficient infrastructure, living quarters, commercial zones, pedestrian areas and public squares and parks. The all-too-often unfortunate results of that approach will be investigated in detail in the chapter about the situation in Braunschweig.⁵ But at the same time, most of the historic infrastructure systems and city patterns were retained. This is basically owing to the circumstance that those systems, damaged but still repairable, had to be used due to economical restraints.⁶

Despite those tremendous rebuilding tasks, there have also been a handful of controversies about the question whether to reconstruct singular important and valuable buildings. In Frankfurt am Main⁷ for instance, the discussions were about two highly symbolic cases: the *Paulskirche*, the church where Germany's first freely elected national parliament assembled; and the *Goethehaus*, the birthplace of Goethe and thus regarded as a symbol of German identity as a "nation of poets and scholars." With their history, both buildings were seen as representatives of more fortunate layers of German history, characterized by a certain unity and a common ground. To tackle these buildings was obviously a quite demanding task in the time after the Second World War, which was characterized by the moral guilt for the war and its destruction and the burden of a nation which was now divided.

In Frankfurt, like in most other German cities, the foremost planning tasks after the war were focused on infrastructure and housing.⁸ But the situation in Frankfurt was special, since many efforts were

⁵ See section "The Emptiness in the Heart of Braunschweig" on page 86.

⁶ Beyme: *Leitbilder des Wiederaufbaus in Deutschland*, 9-31.

⁷ *Frankfurt am Main* in the following just called *Frankfurt*.

⁸ Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 197.

made in the expectation of being named the West German capital.⁹ The city had served certain local and nationwide capital functions throughout its history, but at the same time had never had the importance of Berlin or the significance of Dresden. Frankfurt had an important imperial seat, was the electoral and coronation site of German kings and Holy Roman Emperors, and later the site of the Federal Diet of the German Confederation.¹⁰ But the most outstanding moment in its modern political history was certainly the assembly of the national parliament in the *Paulskirche* in 1848.¹¹ Within less than a year, the delegates produced a constitution, regarded as the most liberal, democratic and egalitarian of its time.¹²

Having been almost completely destroyed during heavy air raids in 1944, the church was rebuilt immediately after the war, supported by donations from all parts of the nation, both financial and in kind.¹³ The *Planungsgemeinschaft Paulskirche* (planning committee), under the direction of the architect Rudolf Schwarz, decided in favor of a simplified, contemporary design, basically conserving the burnt-out elliptical drum-shaped body of the church. “The large ruin was by far more magnificent than the original building ... of almost Roman violence.”¹⁴ But it was certainly more than just the appreciation of the ruin and the limited financial resources which led to the decisions for a stripped-down rebuilding. The church was furthermore intended to become a true memorial and not just the recreation of a bygone moment in history. To facilitate their intention to keep history visible, the architects just added a simple flat roof instead of the former high-pitched one, and installed plain windows instead of the historically correct ones, to enclose the space (compare Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-3). And it was also intentionally decided to redesign the complete interior. A new basement and a very low, almost swamping, additional floor to serve as an entrance area were added. From that foyer, the visitors were required to walk up one of the two flights of stairs, resulting in the deliberately “strong impression of ascending from dark and

⁹ It was decided in 1949 that Bonn should become capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 197-198.

¹⁰ For details on the federal diet see footnote 440. Kalusche, VII-VIII.

¹¹ The national parliament *Deutsche Nationalversammlung* (German national assembly) met in the *Paulskirche* from May 1848 to June 1849.

¹² Hils-Brockhoff, 4-5.

¹³ Even the East German governing political party SED (Socialist Unity Party) provided financial support. Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 204. Hils-Brockhoff, 71.

¹⁴ “Die große Ruine war weitaus herrlicher als das frühere Bauwerk ... von einer beinahe römischen Gewalt-samkeit.” Schwarz, quoted in Hils-Brockhoff, 72.

oppressive depth to the light and freedom of the open space.”¹⁵ (Figure 1-4) The hall was equipped with a very plain interior, including simple pews, a lectern, a gallery and an organ (Figure 1-5 and Figure 1-6). In the following years, the impressive interior space was used as a venue for miscellaneous events.¹⁶



Figure 1-1: The *Paulskirche* before the war.¹⁷



Figure 1-2: The inside after the air raids.¹⁸

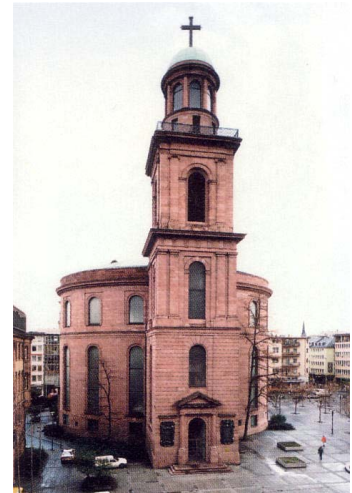


Figure 1-3: The church at around 1980.¹⁹



Figure 1-4: Stairs.²⁰

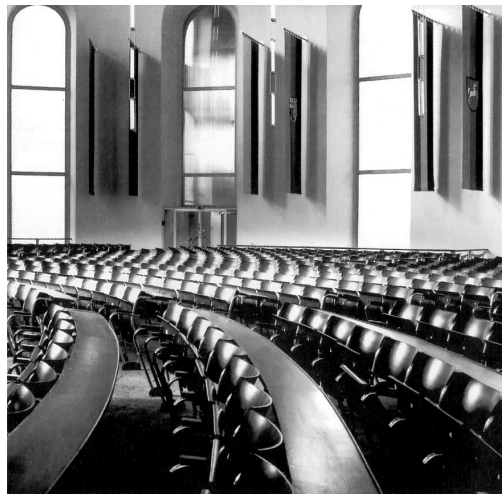


Figure 1-5: Inside of the church in 1948.²¹



Figure 1-6: The Lectern.²²

¹⁵ “Das Erlebnis dieses Aufstieges aus dem Dunklen und Drückenden ins Helle und Freie ist stark ...” Schwarz, quoted in Hils-Brockhoff, 72.

¹⁶ Bartetzko: *Ein Symbol der Republik*, 108-125.

¹⁷ Hils-Brockhoff, 1.

¹⁸ Ibid, 71.

¹⁹ Ibid, 6.

²⁰ Photo taken by the author in 2005.

²¹ Hils-Brockhoff, 75.

²² Photo taken by the author in 2005.

Other early West German rebuilding projects after the war followed the example of the *Paulskirche*, namely to create a usable building, while at the same time respecting the ruins and their history – a notable example is certainly the *Alte Pinakothek* in Munich.²³ In other cases, ruins were intentionally preserved as memorials and just complemented with new building parts, as was the case with the *Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin and with the *Aegidienkirche* in Hannover.²⁴

Despite the early case of the *Paulskirche* and other minor instances of appreciation of historic buildings, the general objectives of rebuilding in West Germany were still focused on modern redevelopment, which was especially true in Frankfurt. Even under those conditions, the reconstruction of the *Paulskirche* was not very controversial. First of all, it was possible to use the remaining enclosure of the building, and secondly, there was less opposition to the restoration of churches in general.²⁵ But above all, the building was regarded more as a national memorial to the revolution of 1848/49.²⁶

After the *Paulskirche* the other notable reconstruction project of that time in Frankfurt is certainly the *Goethehaus*, where Johann Wolfgang Goethe was born in 1749 and where he spent most of his youth until he was sent to Leipzig in 1765 to study law at that renowned university. The property in the *Hirschgraben* street in Frankfurt with two smaller buildings was bought by Goethe's grandmother in 1733. In 1755/56, Goethe's father extensively remodeled the buildings and merged them into one stately house. The property was eventually sold in 1795 and further changes were made by the following owners. The *Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* (society of history and archeology) bought the building in

²³ *Alte Pinakothek* (art collection) in Munich: The museum building, originally designed by architect Leo von Klenze and built in 1826-1836, was partially destroyed in the war, especially in the middle part. The architect Hans Döllgast repaired the building in the 1950s, while keeping the damages visible by closing the lost parts of the façade with simple brick walls without any decoration – a straightforward and economical approach, demonstrating modesty in the post-war era. Beseler: *Volume II*, 1400-1402. Nerdinger, 461. Kähler, 128.

²⁴ For details about the *Gedächtniskirche* (memorial church) in Berlin and the *Aegidienkirche* (church of St. Ägidius) in Hannover see pages 44ff.

²⁵ Churches were the first buildings to be repaired and rebuilt after the war, at least in the western parts of Germany, supported by available financial and administrative resources and encouraged by the requirements of the parishes. Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 43-44.

²⁶ Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 204.

1863 and removed all the later changes in order to return it to its original condition representing Goethe's time in Frankfurt. At that time the *Goethehaus* museum was established.²⁷

Towards the end of 1944, the upper floors were completely destroyed, leaving just the masonry of the first floor behind.²⁸ First of all, this much larger extent of destruction was certainly the most obvious difference to the case of the *Paulskirche*. But the discussion built up to even more of a fight between traditionalists and modernists in the field of reconstruction. One side demanded the acceptance of the “ruling of history”, because it was said to be a “final one.”²⁹ And Walter Dirks further saw the destruction of the *Goethehaus* as a direct consequence of the German nation of poets and scholars abandoning Goethe's spirit and morals. Above that, it was pointed out that a reconstruction would mean the final loss of the *Goethehaus*, since it would misrepresent the history of the place and the memento still connected to the remaining ruins. One would go through the recreated house and must feel that “Goethe had never lived here.”³⁰ Therefore, Dirks called for the “courage to take leave.”³¹

But especially this latter demand was inverted by the supporters of the reconstruction, by claiming a “courage to loyalty”³² – the loyalty to Goethe, since he “...commands us: courage, hope and productivity.”³³ The proponents of the reconstruction saw the chance to not just recreate the building, but also to restore Goethe's spirit and to create a symbol of peace and reconciliation. According to them, the preservation of the ruins could be misinterpreted as an accusation against the former enemies, and a memorial of war at that specific location would have prevented a reflection of the humanity which originated and dispersed throughout the world from that particular building.³⁴ Many artists and politicians supported the initiative. In the years 1946-51 the outside and inside was precisely reconstructed, incorpo-

²⁷ Beseler: *Volume II*, 825-826.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “...den Spruch der Geschichte annehmen, er ist endgültig.” Dirks, 201.

³⁰ “...hier hat Goethe nicht gelebt.” Ibid, 200.

³¹ “Mut zum Abschied.” Ibid, 201.

³² “Mut zur Treue!” Hartmann, 203.

³³ Taken from a letter from the American writer Thornton Wilder, supporting the reconstruction project. Quoted in Hartmann, 203.

³⁴ Hartmann, 202.

rating large parts of the historic substance.³⁵ The proponents of the reconstruction often invoked the will of the people. Though never really investigated before the start of the reconstruction, that aspect was certainly proved to be true by thousands of visitors making the house and museum into an economic success in later years.³⁶ Many of those certainly do not know that what they are visiting is a reincarnation of the building. And finally it also needs to be remembered that the building at the time of its destruction was also not authentic anymore – the current building is therefore more like a good copy of the 1863 phase, when the historical association selected Goethe's era as the one to be restored. (Figure 1-7)



Figure 1-7: The reconstructed *Goethehaus* with the adjacent *Goethe Museum* in Frankfurt.³⁷

From today's point of view, both reconstructions, the *Paulskirche* and the *Goethehaus*, can be regarded as memorials, representing the historic preservation approaches of the post-war era. The discussions about the *Goethehaus* certainly represent the peak of the arguments about built heritage and reconstructions in particular. Ensuing restoration projects in Frankfurt, like the city hall and the theater, were

³⁵ Beseler: *Volume II*, 826.

³⁶ Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 205.

³⁷ Presse- und Informationsamt der Stadt Frankfurt am Main.

less controversial.³⁸ This is also true for most of the other reconstruction projects of those years. But there were not many anyway, because the focus of urban planning, and with that of public interest, was rather on more large-scale endeavors. Certain layers of architectural history were not even regarded as worth being protected until the mid 1970s. As a result, complete quarters were cleared of their façades, which were in the style of Historicism, dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.³⁹ The consequences, especially of those urban planning objectives in West Germany, will be discussed in detail in the chapter on the city of Braunschweig.⁴⁰

Such a large-scale reshaping of the urban environment can also be found in Frankfurt (compare Figure 1-8 and Figure 1-9). The area between the historic *Römerberg* square not far from the *Paulskirche* was severely damaged in the war, leaving basically just the cathedral and the historic city hall behind. It is quite interesting to note that in the immediate post-war years, small-scale construction had started, picking up the historic streetscape, and as such trying to merge remaining buildings with new developments. Following that, modern building blocks were erected between the large empty area and the river (to the right in Figure 1-9). This was very much in keeping with the emerging notion to regard historic monuments as museum objects, representing a concluded period. According to this view, it was therefore appropriate to break with continuity.⁴¹ During the later stages, even the early small-scale buildings were removed to facilitate the giant new city hall in the early 1970s (to the left in Figure 1-9). The whole scheme was completed with an over-sized square, made entirely from concrete, including even the regularly spaced, integrated stools, for which the area is also referred to as the *Höckerzone* (bump zone).⁴² From today's point of view it can be said that the whole area was transformed into one of the most large-scale urban planning *faux pas* of the 1970s. (Figure 1-9) This brisk modern development in Frankfurt was certainly supported by the fact that the city, which had always been a commercial center, experienced

³⁸ Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 205.

³⁹ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 66. Gormsen, 15. For further details on *Historismus* (Historicism) see also footnote 50.

⁴⁰ See section "The Emptiness in the Heart of Braunschweig" on page 86.

⁴¹ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 45-46.

⁴² Beyme: *Frankfurt am Main*, 207-211. Borchers, 12-21.

tremendous growth in that field and developed into the German city with the most and largest office complexes.⁴³



Figure 1-8: Frankfurt's historic center with the Römerberg square circa 1932. The steeply pitched roofs of the historic city hall *Römer* can be seen at the lower edge of the photo.⁴⁴

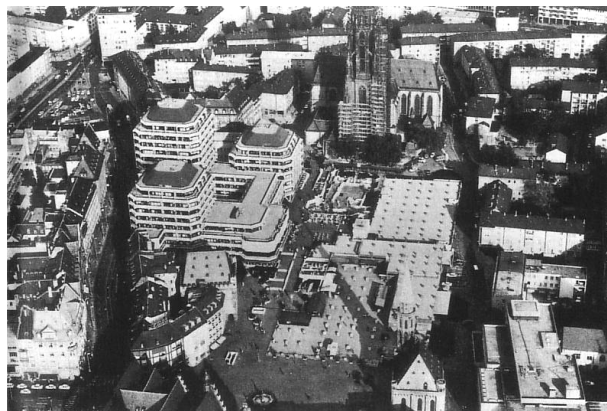


Figure 1-9: The new city hall complex on the left. And the new large square between *Römer* and cathedral, from the late 1970s. The regularly arranged elements on the square are stools and benches, made from concrete.⁴⁵

This was certainly not just a phenomenon in Frankfurt. The approaches to rebuild the cities were also largely dependent on the particular situation at the different locations, namely on the self-image of the city before the war and the expectations of the future. Also, very personal influences of the particular mayors and building officers were decisive.⁴⁶ Despite some efforts of municipalities to protect certain designated buildings and quarters, the deciding factor was, above all, private investors not widely accepting and appreciating built heritage. First, the prosperous times of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (the so-called “economic miracle” of the 1950s in Germany) put a certain economical pressure on the historic centers, which were increasingly required to provide larger spaces for imposing commercial real estate

⁴³ See also section “Frankfurt: The Palais Thurn und Taxis” on page 124.

⁴⁴ Beseler: *Volume II*, 802.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 803.

⁴⁶ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 45.

For West Germany, those factors will be more closely investigated in the chapter about the developments in Braunschweig. See “Developments up to 1959” and the subsequent section.

and to serve new functional requirements. Later it was the slowing down of the economy that prevented a concern for or any semblance of historically evolved cityscape and architecture.⁴⁷

The destruction of the historic cities as a consequence of unfortunate urban planning approaches and also the meaninglessness of modern architecture have been pointed out repeatedly since the mid 1960s.⁴⁸ The growing complaint was that the rebuilding processes of the 1960s and early '70s in the notion of stark Modernism had led to a second destruction of the cities. But it was not before the second half of the 1970s that those social and economical matters were reevaluated by larger parts of society and that it was acknowledged that utopian modern urban planning approaches had failed. The emerging free-ranging Post-Modernism by no means promoted the rebuilding of the cities to their historic extent nor the accurate historical reconstruction of individual buildings. It was furthermore argued that a critical-reconstruction-approach should provide for a more humane built environment.⁴⁹ Another influential event was certainly the *Europäisches Denkmalschutzjahr* (European year of historic preservation), which was held in 1975. The following years were especially characterized by an increasing appreciation of historic heritage, and in particular of the previously neglected architectural periods like *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau), the eclectic *Gründerstil*,⁵⁰ and also the modern buildings from the 1920s. These new objectives

⁴⁷ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 68.

⁴⁸ For instance, internationally by Robert Venturi in 1966: *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. And the same author in 1972: *Learning from Las Vegas*.

But also with particular reference to the situation in Germany by Wolf Jobst Siedler in 1964: *Die gemordete Stadt*. (The murdered city.) and by Alexander Mitscherlich in 1965: *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte. Anstiftung zum Unfrieden*. (The inhospitableness of our cities. Instigation to discord.).

⁴⁹ *Kritische Rekonstruktion* (critical reconstruction): A term coined by the architect Josef Paul Kleihues during the *Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA)* in Berlin (international building exhibition, conceived in 1979 and at first intended to present designs and actual buildings in 1984, which was later postponed to 1987 and split into an old-building and a new-building section. Nationally and internationally renowned architects, like Rob Krier, Aldo Rossi, Hans Hollein, Hans Kollhoff and others contributed designs or finished building projects to that undertaking.) The inherent approach of critical reconstruction aimed for a variety in small entities, suggested looking back to historic building types and patterns and demanded the incorporation of existing historic fabric, but at the same time accepted experimental architecture. This approach certainly did not promote historically accurate reconstructions of building ensembles or parts thereof. Frank, H., 23-24. Nerdinger, 164-169. Kähler, 184-187.

⁵⁰ *Gründerstil* (literally: founder style) in Germany: The *Gründerjahre* (literally: founder years) was a period of economic growth and expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century, especially after 1871. This development was accompanied and continued by tremendous building activities until the early 1920s, supported by the increasingly industrialized manufacturing of building and decoration elements. The architecture is characterized by the eclectic use of various historic architectural styles, mostly baroque with classical elements – Historicism at its best.

emerged after the rebuilding of West Germany was more or less finished, which included some preserved monuments, but at the same time also large scale contemporary developments of former historic districts.⁵¹ Therefore, these circumstances led to an inclination towards correction of the cityscapes and, though contrary to the post-modern idea, even reconstructions of removed buildings but also of entire districts.⁵²

Frankfurt responded to this trend, interestingly with an intensity similar to the one some years earlier, when the modern movement was enforced. The most prominent result of the change in objectives was the comprehensive redevelopment of the area around the *Römerberg* square. It was not just that the original dimensions of the square were recreated in 1983-84. Following a design competition in 1980, it was also decided to screen the modern buildings with copies of the façades of the historic timber-framed buildings. This was done as true to the original as possible, based on old photos.⁵³ But “original” in this case did not mean the conditions at the time of the destruction during the war, when the façades were covered with natural slate cladding. Instead it was decided to select the appearance of each house at the time of its initial construction.⁵⁴ Though the approach to reconstruct these long-gone façades was heatedly discussed, it was acknowledged even by conservationists that in particular the *Römerberg* square required an enclosure in the historic patterns.⁵⁵ Today, the recreated square is a popular area for Frankfurters and tourists alike. Just a tiny plaque on one of the buildings informs visitors of the fact that the plot had once been empty for about forty years. On the plots right behind these “historic” houses, two slim rows of Post-Modern buildings were built at about the same time, picking up the historic street pattern and thus recreating two former lanes.⁵⁶ (Figure 1-10 and Figure 1-11)

⁵¹ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 46.

⁵² Saldern, 45-47.

⁵³ All submitted designs from the competition in: Borchers.

⁵⁴ Kalusche, 81.

⁵⁵ Borchers, 158-160.

⁵⁶ Kalusche, 77, 80.



Figure 1-10: A row of in total six buildings at the *Römerberg* square, reconstructed in 1983-84. The tower of the cathedral in the background.⁵⁷



Figure 1-11: Post-Modernism behind the reconstructed row.⁵⁸

At about the same time as the project in Frankfurt, there was a decision in Hannover in the early 1980s to redevelop certain quarters of the city to satisfy the changing *Zeitgeist*. One of these areas was the *Holzmarkt*, a square in the historic part of town where only a few of the adjoining buildings had survived the war. In contrast to the approach in Frankfurt, it was decided to not rebuild the façades original to that place. A post-modern building complex was designed instead, referring in shape and scale to historic buildings, in order to create the desired humane environment (façade on left in on Figure 1-13). But to even further develop the post-modern approach of contextualism, it was decided to incorporate architectural elements distinctive of the region. These elements were not just used as inspiration or seen as part of the whole scheme. It was intentionally decided to decorate the complex with a precise full-scale copy of the façade of a building which had never occupied that space. (compare Figure 1-12 and Figure 1-13)

⁵⁷ Photo taken by the author in 2005.

⁵⁸ Ibid.



Figure 1-12: The market square in Hannover before 1930.⁵⁹



Figure 1-13: The reconstructed façade of the *Leibnizhaus* between a postmodern building and an original one.⁶⁰

But what had happened? The façade in the center of the complex originates from the so-called *Leibnizhaus*, named after the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who lived in the building until his death in 1716. The building was also notable from the art-historical point of view, since it was a fine example of a distinctive regional architectural style, the *Weserrenaissance*. All but a small section of the prominent bay window was destroyed in 1943 and shortly after the war even those surviving parts were disposed of.⁶¹ (Figure 1-14) This building was regarded as having a façade appropriate to beautify the new square and to create a certain historical importance. It seems at the very least quite arbitrary to simply select a layer of history which in this specific case was not even original to the selected location.

⁵⁹ Saldern, 46.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Beseler: *Volume II*, 277-278.



Figure 1-14: The remnants of the *Leibnizhaus* in Hannover after the war.⁶²

Further cases followed. One of the most prominent examples was certainly the *Knochenhauer-amtshaus* (butcher guildhall) in Hildesheim. The quite large building, which was regarded as the most famous half-timbered house in Germany, was completely damaged in the war.⁶³ In 1961, a contemporary hotel was built at the former location of the guildhall, just opposite the city hall. And that modern building, despite its notable architectural value, was eventually removed some years later to allow for an accurate reconstruction of the historic house in 1985. The adjacent buildings have not been recreated, but just faced with copies of their historic models.⁶⁴

Especially the reconstructions at the *Römerberg* fueled further policy debates. What the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt said in the early 1980s about the *Paulskirche* can be regarded as symbolic for these new views in Frankfurt, but also for West Germany in general: “It was certainly not only the limited funds which back then prevented a historically accurate reconstruction, but also the proximity of the dreadful events of the recent past must have created a hesitation to approach history. Nowadays, with greater time and distance, it is easier for us to rediscover all aspects of German history and with that –

⁶² Saldern, 45.

⁶³ Beseler: *Volume I*, 297.

⁶⁴ Paul: *Der Wiederaufbau*, 46.

beyond the abyss of the recent past – those eras and events which can fill us with pride.”⁶⁵ Under these changing objectives, even the return of the *Paulskirche* to its pre-war conditions was discussed in 1983, just four decades after that subtle memorial was created. It took until 1988 to finally decide to renovate the church, while still in most parts respecting the reconstruction concept of the late 1940s. But it was also reasoned that “the time had come to renovate and redesign the windows.”⁶⁶ Therefore, a more small-scale, almost historic re-design of the windows was commissioned, obviously not realizing that this greatly diminished the character of the building – but in the late 1980s, a first wave of reconstruction had already swept away many good intentions.

The approaches briefly described here and projects from the 1980s in Frankfurt, Hannover and Hildesheim certainly went beyond the original intentions of urban planners, architects, and especially of conservationists. They were facilitated by the emerging interest in historic authenticity, which was accompanied by increasing heritage tourism. But they were mostly aiming to beautify the cities and to strengthen an obviously insufficient sense of place. It needs also to be pointed out that reconstructions were not the rule in the 1980s, when, above all, the priority was to re-urbanize the cities.

Rebuilding in East Germany: 1945 until the 1980s

The postwar-era in the eastern parts of the divided German nation was even more influenced by economic restraints. Here, contrary to the West, the rebuilding was less supported by the occupying forces. Even worse, the Soviets claimed reparation payments for the losses during the war and therefore dismantled large parts of the remaining industrial plants – certainly not a good start for East Germany. Moreover, the theoretical methodology in the East was determined by the Soviets, who established a new social and political system that was basically modeled after their communist ideals. But it also has to be

⁶⁵ “Es waren wohl nicht allein die fehlenden Mittel, die seinerzeit vor einer historisch getreuen Rekonstruktion zurückscheuen ließen. Auch die Nähe der furchtbaren Geschehnisse der jüngsten Vergangenheit müssen eine Scheu vor jeder Berührung mit der Geschichte erzeugt haben. Uns fällt es heute mit mehr Abstand leichter, die ganze deutsche Geschichte und damit auch jene Epochen und Ereignisse wiederzuentdecken, die uns mit Stolz erfüllen können.” Walter Wallmann, quoted in Bartetzko: *Denkmal für den Aufbau Deutschlands*, 57. Bartetzko: *Ein Symbol der Republik*, 125.

⁶⁶ Hils-Brockhoff, 94.

considered that, especially in the eastern parts of Germany, most of the new leaders had spent the previous years fighting against the Nazis, with many of them imprisoned and tormented in concentration camps. They were looking for a progressive fresh start, which entailed the all-inclusive disapproval and punishment of the just dismissed regime, of its leaders and lackeys and also of its signs and symbols. The German Democratic Republic (GDR), founded in 1949, regarded itself as not being the successor of any former German state, but rather as an independent entity without any responsibility, legal or otherwise, for the recent history. The political elite created a national identity which was based on the claim to being the first and only democratic state on German soil. Undoubtedly, the developments in the East finally led to a bizarre totalitarian regime which condemned all unwanted developments under the justification of eliminating fascism and militarism once and for all. But to generalize about the various approaches to the built heritage as being merely an ideological attempt at self-exoneration or the seeking of a scapegoat would also not be the only truth – especially not for the East.

Supported by the centralized administrative system and the radical approach to private property, the East was in the years immediately following the war even more than the western parts seen by many visionary architects and urban planners as the place to implement their theories of a highly functional city.⁶⁷ This short phase, which lasted until about 1950, was in large parts even contrary to the Soviet approach, and became therefore increasingly inappropriate during the Cold War. Walter Ulbricht,⁶⁸ who supposedly appreciated the German built heritage, learned about Stalin's architectural doctrines during a trip to the Soviet Union in December 1949. With him, several East German officials also traveled to Moscow on the occasion of Stalin's seventieth birthday.⁶⁹ However they also met the president of the architectural academy and were familiarized with current Soviet urban planning objectives. The findings

⁶⁷ Hoscislawski, 38-48. Beyme: *Leitbilder des Wiederaufbaus in Deutschland*, 11.

⁶⁸ Walter Ulbricht: At that time Secretary General of the East German Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED*) and deputy prime minister; from 1960 head of the *Staatsrat* (state council) and with that, head of the German Democratic Republic.

⁶⁹ Participants: Minister Lothar Bolz (head of the delegation), Walter Pisternik (a former trade union representative, now head of the General Building division in the Building Department), Waldemar Adler (technical director of the building industry), Edmund Colleijn und Kurt Leucht (both head of the planning department in the city of Dresden) und Kurt Liebnecht (director of the institute for urban planning and building). Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 112.

of this trip made up the *16 Grundsätze des Städtebaus* (16 principles of urban planning), which were adopted in July 1950 and later developed into the *Aufbaugesetz* (rebuilding law) in September 1950. From that point on it was no longer architects and planners, but rather the central government determining the further developments in urban planning.⁷⁰ But also influential individuals pushed through their own personal intentions, which was in particular true for Ulbricht (Figure 1-15).



Figure 1-15: Walter Ulbricht in 1953, attempting to remove the *Frauenkirche* from a model of Dresden showing the enlarged *Altmarkt* square with the intended high rise, representing “national building traditions”.⁷¹

In short, the main objectives of these guidelines were individual architecture, its organic implementation, the acceptance of built heritage and historic urban networks but also the elimination of existing flaws in architecture and urban fabric. Resulting from these principles, architecture and town planning in East Germany in the early post-war era were determined by the so-called *Architektur Nationaler Bautraditionen* (architecture of national building traditions).⁷² This development was promoted and enforced by the Soviet government not only in East Germany, but also more or less in all countries of the then communist bloc. It can be clearly seen as Stalin’s attempt to develop a counterpart to the modern architectural style, which he dismissed as being under American influence. Though it was by far not

⁷⁰ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 111-112. Topfstedt, 10.

⁷¹ Gretzschel, 129.

⁷² Hoscislawski, 65-70.

intended to rebuild the East German cities to their pre-war appearance, reconstructions were certainly not contrary to this approach.⁷³ The methodology in East Germany was much more restrained than in other countries of the political bloc, like for instance in Poland, where whole city centers were reconstructed as a consequence of that doctrine.⁷⁴ However, it needs to be acknowledged that the conditions in *Warszaw* (Warsaw) and *Gdańsk* (Danzig), for example, were different from Germany, which makes generalization problematic. This is particularly true for the popular comparisons between immediate post-war reconstruction in Poland and the current projects in Germany. The first difference was certainly and is still today the historic German attitude of *konservieren statt restaurieren* (preservation instead of restoration), which was established by Georg Dehio in the early 1900s.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the situation in Poland immediately after the war was special, since the cities were destroyed in the course of a war of aggression and in a systematic scheme aimed at wiping out Polish culture. The reconstructions were above all a result of the intention to create a visible manifestation of the culture and history of a nation, which was too often suppressed between more powerful forces.

With the administrative reform of 1952, the GDR abandoned the existing structures, consisting of five large and more or less independent *Bundesländer* (states) in favor of a new *Bezirk* (district) structure. Due to the smaller sizes of the new administrative districts and the severed links, this step put more power and control in the hands of the central government in Berlin. Because of this circumstance and the more rigorous handling of private property, it is obvious that the GDR government had much more influence on urban planning issues than their western counterparts.

It can be concluded that the general conditions in the immediate post-war era were generally in favor of historic preservation, which would have also included reconstructions. Firstly, there was a more politically neutral approach to the built environment resulting from the denial of responsibility for history – which even led to a programmatic appreciation of the built heritage. Secondly, the centralized governmental system would have enabled a widespread implementation of these policies.

⁷³ Kirchner, 149.

⁷⁴ See footnote 2.

⁷⁵ Scheurmann, 48-59.

Following the theoretical manifestos, “good architectural traditions” were selected as being worthy of protection or even further development and utilized in new building projects. Indeed, new buildings in the 1950s were very nationally oriented and in most instances even referenced regional models. In Berlin, Schinkel’s classicism was acknowledged, certainly for its inherent democratic principles and for its suitability for the intended grand redevelopment of the East German capital, which culminated in the building of the *Stalinallee* (Figure 1-16). In the north, the German brick Gothic style was favored, which can be seen for instance in the *Magisträle* street in Rostock. In Baroque Dresden, the *Altmarkt* (Old Market Square) was redeveloped during that time. Though the Baroque era was quite controversial from the point of view of the East German historian, this architectural style, typical for Dresden, was used to decorate the buildings on the square. All these urban redevelopment projects have one thing in common, namely they were of large scale and usually not respectful of the particular historic urban organization. The new market square in Dresden for instance, though at first glance dating from the Baroque period, certainly went far beyond the historic scale, mainly in order to provide enough open space for the anticipated rallies and parades.⁷⁶



Figure 1-16: A boulevard in Berlin, built in the 1950s:⁷⁷ the *Karl-Marx-Allee*, formerly *Stalinallee*, representing “national building traditions”.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Nerdinger XIII. Topfstedt, 10-11. See also Figure 1-15.

⁷⁷ This construction section was designed by Herman Henselmann and his team from 1952-1958. Nerdinger XIII.

⁷⁸ Kähler, 131.

These large-scale building projects are usually referred to as a grandiose Stalinist style of the post-war era and are too often dismissed as being just *Zuckerbäckerstil* (gingerbread architecture) with snippets of embroidery. Despite their – from the urban planning perspective – disadvantageous large dimensions, the inherent idea to provide a mixed use of retail, recreational facilities and high quality housing in the city centers was and certainly still is today an advantage over the more commercialized western cities. Ironically, this was made possible mainly by the rigid and centralized planning approach of the East German government.⁷⁹ It needs to be pointed out that the resources to support the ambitious building schemes were tremendous.⁸⁰ From today's point of view, these urban developments are increasingly acknowledged as a sovereign achievement of the GDR in those early years and also officially acknowledged as part of history and accordingly protected under preservation laws.⁸¹ It is quite interesting that certain aspects of that regionalism are quite comparable to that of the approaches of Berlin and international Post-Modernism some years later.

In order to pursue the intended large-scale projects from the early 1950s, greater areas had to be cleared, which included even the removal of intact and lesser-damaged buildings. At the time, it was purported that design flaws needed to be eliminated, and this was used to justify the demolition of some valuable pieces of architecture of the otherwise appreciated built heritage. The removal of the palace in Berlin in 1950 was mainly a consequence of this approach, though its Prussian history was also a factor.⁸² But it also needs to be pointed out that such demolitions were the exception rather than the rule in the 1950s.

With Stalin's death in 1953, this architectural doctrine immediately came to a turning point – in the Soviet Union at least. In the GDR, this circumstance caused at first nothing more than uncertainties about what should be done, since the appreciation of national building traditions had been imposed only a

⁷⁹ Ibid, 130.

⁸⁰ The dissatisfaction of the East German people with the political but more so with the economical situation led to the uprising of 17 June 1953, which interestingly started with strikes by construction workers from the building sites of the *Stalinallee*. Kähler, 130.

⁸¹ Nerding, XIII. Kähler, 130.

⁸² Topfstedt, 11. Kirchner, 150. The demolition of the *Stadtschloß* in Berlin will be investigated in detail in section "The Removal of the Historic Palace".

few years earlier to distinguish itself from their western counterpart.⁸³ But from 1955 on, it was mainly due to financial restraints that the building efforts in the East became more focused on mass production in order to provide sufficient housing. Urban planning in the East of the 1960s, but in the following decades as well, was in certain aspects quite similar to the West, though even more concerned with new developments on the outskirts of town, because large-scale renovation and preservation of historic buildings was just too expensive.⁸⁴ Also, architecture in the East was characterized by contemporary approaches very similar to the developments in the western parts of Germany and elsewhere in the world. This is particularly true for numerous prestigious building projects of the late 1960s and the following years.⁸⁵

Though the political determination in both Germanys was more or less to generously redevelop the cities, in the East this was admittedly much more influenced by the ideological will to display power and superiority. Furthermore, it was much easier in the GDR to push through that approach.⁸⁶ The often criticized wave of demolition in the GDR dates mainly from the 1960s, when the supposed appreciation of the built heritage was finally rejected in favor of the functional city. Victims of that new approach were for instance the *Stadtschloß* in Potsdam in 1959/60, but also the *Bauakademie* in Berlin.⁸⁷ With the following sweeping removal of mostly churches and also some palaces in the late 1960s, ideological and political considerations became more and more apparent. This is certainly true for the demolition of the *Paulinerkirche* in Leipzig in 1968 and the *Garnisonkirche* in Potsdam in the same year.⁸⁸ Wartime

⁸³ Hoscislawski, 132-140. Beyme: *Ideen für eine Hauptstadt*, 245-246.

⁸⁴ Though mass-produced blocks of flats can be found in almost every country of the world, the large-scale urban projects in East Germany certainly went beyond the scope of contemporary cases. The *Plattenbauweise*, using prefabricated reinforced concrete slabs, was the prevailing building method for new housing developments in the GDR from the mid 1950s on. These buildings are characteristic of many newly developed neighborhoods at the outskirts of East German towns and in cleared districts but were later also used as infill houses in historic quarters. In addition to the aspect of housing requirements, these quarters were and still are today seen as representing the Socialist way of life.

⁸⁵ See for instance the TV-tower in Berlin (1964-1969, see Figure 1-17) but also the *Palast der Republik* (1972-76 see section “The Creation and Operation of a Contemporary Palace”).

Kähler, 130. Hoscislawski, 140-152, 229-244.

⁸⁶ Topfstedt, 15. Hoscislawski, 225.

⁸⁷ For the Potsdam *Stadtschloß* (city palace) see section “Potsdam: The Stadtschloß and Other Isolated Landmarks”. For *Bauakademie* (School of Architecture) see page 28.

⁸⁸ *Paulinerkirche* (Leipzig’s university church). For *Garnisonkirche* (Potsdam’s garrison church) see section “Potsdam: The Stadtschloß and Other Isolated Landmarks” and footnote 410.

damage, which had once served as a pretense for demolitions in the immediate post-war period, can certainly not be used to explain these decisions.⁸⁹

In addition to the official policies in the East, the methodology during all phases was also highly selective, since certain periods were completely denied and rejected, not just because of their supposedly lower architectural value but also for ideological reasons. This was particularly true for the *Gründerstil*,⁹⁰ an architectural style which was regarded as representing the worst of capitalist society, namely the wealth of the ruling class and at the same time the poor living conditions and suppression of the working class. However, the showy eclectic decorations were not removed, as was usually done in West Germany.⁹¹ In East Germany these large historic quarters were, if not in the way of larger infrastructure or building projects, more or less preserved in their post-war condition.⁹²

In the late 1970s, the East was not very dissimilar to the West in that the realization began to take hold that a merely functional approach led to unsatisfactory results.⁹³ Yet at the same time, Post-Modernism and the western approach of new urbanism was, obviously due to ideological considerations, at least verbally rejected.⁹⁴ Despite this general official distinction, the particular approaches were quite similar, which once again included the legitimization of reconstructions in the East: “Even in the case of complete destruction one does not have to live with the loss of historic buildings. As long as these buildings are still vivid memories in the consciousness of the citizens...”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Topfstedt, 16-17.

⁹⁰ See footnote 50.

⁹¹ See page 12.

⁹² Gormsen, 15.

⁹³ Hoscislawski, 312-322.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 322-327.

⁹⁵ “Auch bei völliger Zerstörung sollte man sich nicht mit dem Verlust historischer Bauwerke abfinden. Solange diese Gebäude noch als bildhafte Erinnerung im Bewußtsein der Bürger lebendig sind ...” Stahn: *Das Nikolai-viertel am Marx-Engels-Forum*, 8.



Figure 1-17: Aerial view of the *Nikolaiviertel* quarter in Berlin after its rebuilding in the 1980s with the reconstructed church in its heart.⁹⁶



Figure 1-18: Inside the “new historic” quarter.⁹⁷

Based on the new policies, a competition was held in 1979 to redevelop the *Nikolaiviertel*, the oldest quarter of Berlin, just across the river from the contemporary *Palast der Republik*.⁹⁸ Most interestingly, it was a church (*Nikolaikirche*) which was reconstructed from its ruins as the focal point of the district. In addition to certain other original reconstructions, it was regarded as appropriate to copy some other buildings from nearby locations and even to modify them as appropriate for their new functions and spatial arrangements. Almost as a demonstration of the superiority of the pre-manufactured building systems, infill *Plattenbauten* were erected in a very historicized Post-Modern fashion.⁹⁹ The “new historic” quarter was finished in time for Berlin’s 750th anniversary, which was one of the main justifications for the project to begin with and which supposedly endowed it with superior ideological qualities.¹⁰⁰ Based on that argumentation, the East German government was able to provide the differentiation

⁹⁶ Topfstedt, figure 42.

⁹⁷ Photo taken by the author in 2006.

⁹⁸ For the *Palast der Republik* see section “The Creation and Operation of a Contemporary Palace”.

⁹⁹ Topfstedt, 230.

¹⁰⁰ Stahn: *Berlin*, 15.

it so required from the Post-Modern movement in the West and its reconstructions. As with other prestigious projects of that time in the East, a strong political dimension is quite obvious.

Despite all the economic restraints and changing policies in the GDR, certain reconstruction projects were initiated and completed during all phases. The reconstruction of the *Zwinger* in Dresden, for instance, commenced immediately after the war in 1945, was substantially accomplished during the 1950s, when national building traditions were esteemed, and was finally finished in 1964.¹⁰¹ At about the same time the ruins of the *Semperoper* (opera house), were at least on the exterior secured and reconstructed during a first phase from 1952-57. After some years of inactivity the decision was also taken in 1965 and after to more or less authentically reconstruct the interiors and to add a contemporary addition at the back of the opera house. The construction work started in 1977 and the historic venue was finally reopened in 1985.¹⁰² The case of the *Semperoper*, but also the developments in Dresden in general, show that despite the centralized governmental system in the GDR, certain regionally distinct approaches remained. This theory is also supported by the fact that the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* were retained and that its possible rebuilding was never completely rejected, not even by the East German government in Berlin.¹⁰³

It is furthermore quite interesting that there were often cases of uncertainty, and with that, exceptions from the official policies, especially in times of changing directives – a circumstance one would at first not expect of a totalitarian system. This was even true for the developments in the capital of the GDR, as the cases of the *Bauakademie* and the *Stadtschloß* prove.¹⁰⁴ The *Bauakademie*, an important work by Schinkel, who after all belonged to the group of appreciated architects, was at first to be reconstructed after being severely damaged during the war. By November 1953, the shell including walls and

¹⁰¹ Löffler: *Das alte Dresden*, 132, 427, 451.

¹⁰² Magirius: *Die Semperoper*, 271-303.

¹⁰³ For further details on the general approaches in Dresden and on the *Frauenkirche* in particular see chapter “The Case of the Frauenkirche in Dresden”.

¹⁰⁴ The building of the *Bau- und Kunstakademie* (School of Architecture and Arts), also known as *Bauakademie* was situated right across the river opposite the main entrance of the *Stadtschloß* (city palace) in Berlin (see Figure 5-2 on page 133).

The case of the *Stadtschloß* will be investigated in section: “The Removal of the Historic Palace”.

ceilings was finished and ready for its final interior completion. From 1954 on, the building site was shut down, awaiting the outcome of the continuously changing and updated intentions for the large empty area, including the site of the meanwhile demolished *Hohenzollern* palace. Though the *Bauakademie* was still widely appreciated as a valuable piece of the built heritage, it was also dismissed by some East German politicians as being in the same line with Prussian military institutions – a false assumption owing mainly to its distinctive dark-red brick façade. But it was once again planning policies which finally led to the belief that it would not be feasible to incorporate the building into the intended large-scale development of the area. Yet, at that time considerations were still being made to move the building out of sight or to dismantle it for a reconstruction at a completely different location. Finally, the *Bauakademie* was carefully dismantled in 1961/62, with the valuable terracotta slabs and decoration marked, photographed and catalogued. Some years later, the East German Foreign Ministry was built at its location, owing its gigantic dimensions to the false assumption that it would one day be used for a united Germany (see Figure 5-13 on page 158).¹⁰⁵

Decisions on the buildings near the *Bauakademie* also seem to be nothing more than a quite arbitrary selection or rejection of historic layers: the *Hohenzollern* palace was removed, but with one of its portals including the so-called Liebknecht-balcony reconstructed at the contemporary governmental building just across the square; and the royal stables, the cathedral and the *Altes Museum* (Old Museum) were reconstructed true to the original.¹⁰⁶ As early as during the demolition of the palace, the discrepancy between the official policy of appreciating valuable architectural heritage and its destruction had been pointed out.¹⁰⁷ In summary, it can be said that the approaches in the East towards historic buildings and decisions for or against reconstructions were usually decided case-by-case.

¹⁰⁵ Geist: *Die Bauakademie*, 118-121. Eckardt: *Volume 1*, 38. Kirchner, 151.

¹⁰⁶ For *Altes Museum* (Old Museum), cathedral and *Stadtschloß* (city palace) see Figure 5-7 on page 140. For the current location of the Liebknecht-balcony see Figure 5-13 on page 158.

¹⁰⁷ Letter dated 6 January 1950, from Johannes Stroux, President of the Academy of Sciences, sent to Friedrich Ebert, Mayor of Berlin. Quoted in Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 134.

Developments in the Reunited Germany

The years after the reunification were certainly distinguished by the tremendous rebuilding efforts, particularly in the reestablished eastern German states. Here, enormous financial resources, both public and private, were invested. In East Germany, many buildings but also complete quarters had been more or less conserved in their poor condition since their destruction in World War II. But on the other hand, these quarters had not suffered to such a tremendous extent under large-scale redevelopment as their West German counterparts, certainly with the exception of some high-profile examples, especially in the larger cities. Therefore, special emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of these historic quarters and buildings, which was usually done with great care and high quality. These mostly medium-sized residential buildings usually required partial reconstruction of lost building elements, but sometimes also complete façades were reconstructed. Many of the smaller-scale reconstruction projects were, due to their nature, implemented almost unnoticed behind the screened scaffolds, and were welcomed positively after their completion. The building shown in Figure 1-19 and Figure 1-20 is a relatively prominent example of that time, since it was also affected by one of the largest bankruptcies in Germany after the war – the Schneider bankruptcy.¹⁰⁸ After its reconstruction, it became part of a larger complex, comprising three

¹⁰⁸ After reunification, the private investor Dr. Jürgen Schneider became, in addition to his construction activities in the western parts, increasingly involved in prestigious properties in the new eastern states of Germany, especially in Leipzig. But as it later turned out, most of his more than 160 properties were not profitable at all, causing him to apply for more and more loans. The banks provided the money willingly, not even suspecting Schneider's deceptions with manipulated floor plans and profit forecasts. In 1994 he went underground, leaving open bank loans of more than DM 5 billion and DM 600 million in other obligations behind. In comparison to that tremendous amount, Hilmar Kopper, the head of the *Deutsche Bank*, used the term "peanuts" to describe the DM 50 million of open bills from building contractors involved in *Deutsche Bank* financed projects. This rash statement during a press conference caused quite a dent in the image of the bank. Schneider was later caught in Miami, Florida in 1994. And the findings during the following trial in 1997 cast an even larger shadow on the involved banks, since they were also made responsible for the scandal. Schneider, who was sentenced to a rather short imprisonment, was increasingly regarded as the smart guy who tricked the banks. And many people saw in him the driving force behind many prestigious building projects, which would have otherwise not been approached, or at least not with the same momentum and excellence. After Schneider was released from prison in 1999, he published several books about economics in general and his former properties in particular. Frey, 13-22, 67-71, 293-295, 337-367, 370, 386. Frank: *Paläste*, 93. Schneider: *Alle meine Häuser*. Schneider: *Bekenntnisse eines Baulöwen*. Schneider: *Top oder Flop*.

adjacent buildings, which are now interconnected through an underground garage and a common glass covered yard in the back.¹⁰⁹



Figure 1-19: In the historic center of Leipzig: *Barfußgäßchen* no. 15. The building was severely damaged during the war. The two remaining floors were covered with a flat roof and were in use as such until 1991. The building was demolished in 1993 and replaced by a reinforced concrete frame with a copy of the historic façade.¹¹⁰



Figure 1-20: After 1996: The new corner building no. 15 is now part of a larger complex consisting of nos. 11, 13 & 15.¹¹¹

It was also a time of economic confidence, but more so that of a prospering building industry. In addition to the rehabilitations and reconstructions, numerous notable contemporary infill projects were also completed in historic quarters. Aside from these outstanding examples, too many new building projects were decided out of economic considerations that were based on often overly optimistic forecasts. To endow them with a certain, supposedly artistic importance, these investment blocks were usually decorated with the very same architectural elements.¹¹² That these early boom years were followed by an

¹⁰⁹ Schneider: *Alle meine Häuser*, 160-161.

¹¹⁰ Gormsen, 61.

¹¹¹ Photo taken by the author in 2006.

¹¹² In Leipzig, for instance, the investors had a passion for round glass towers to crown many of their new investments. Those decorations are now derogatively referred to as “biscuit tins”.

increasing economic decline, is today very apparent in the many vacant, newly built office blocks spread throughout the nation and unoccupied, oversized industrial estates at the outskirts of almost every community. The Schneider bankruptcy in 1994 was the earliest and certainly the most dramatic symptom of that adverse development.¹¹³ And yet, the achievements of that first stage of rebuilding, which lasted until about 1995, are remarkable. The speed of some projects from their inception to their execution is certainly also owing to the unconventional approach in a time of great political change, when it was required to adopt completely new administrative systems.¹¹⁴ However, the large-scale out-of-town shopping facilities, which were also authorized, still draw customers from the cities.

During the years since reunification, discussions in the field of building culture in general and contemporary architecture in particular have been highly controversial. This was also fueled by the ongoing new urbanism movement and by the emerging question of how to deal with East German built heritage and with lost architecture in particular. The larger reconstruction projects, which will be described in the following chapters, were especially discussed in all segments of society. These topics were certainly not new on the agenda, as the brief overview in the previous sections showed, but the extent certainly went beyond everything approached so far. The latter was at first true for the East, but soon applied to the entire nation. The case of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, which will be described in detail in the next chapter, can be regarded as the first large project of that kind.¹¹⁵ Here, the ground was also laid for further controversies. Many pursuant initiatives referred to the success of that particular reconstruction. It will be further investigated if such a comparison is appropriate.

In addition to the building demand, the situation in the new eastern states of the united Germany was, and still is, different to their western counterparts for another reason – there has been tremendous migration, mostly to the disadvantage of the East. But it is also true that particularly the larger cities, like Dresden and Leipzig, have been able to at least slow that process. The situation in Potsdam, a city with approximately 130,000 residents south of the new capital Berlin, is particularly interesting. Here

¹¹³ See footnote 108.

¹¹⁴ Gormsen, 17-21.

¹¹⁵ See chapter “The Case of the Frauenkirche in Dresden”.

the circumstances are special, since this rather small city, which is also the state capital of Brandenburg, did not suffer such a loss, but experienced a substitution of about 60,000 of its residents during that migration process.¹¹⁶ Such a fluctuation obviously requires even more urban and cultural support to keep the existing and to welcome the new citizens. The need seems to be even greater of providing identifying symbols, which these days are so often sought in a shared history, although most of the newcomers as well as most of the current residents have never seen the original buildings themselves. Potsdam is full of such potential identifying symbols, already finished or waiting to be recreated, ranging from buildings in the palace complex *Sanssouci* to the uncovering of historic watercourses. Some of these will be presented in the section “Potsdam: The Stadtschloß and Other Isolated Landmarks.”

¹¹⁶ Leicht.

CHAPTER 2

THE CASE OF THE FRAUENKIRCHE IN DRESDEN

The *Frauenkirche* (Church of our Lady) in Dresden is certainly the most widely known and appreciated reconstruction project of the recent German past. Since the circumstances which finally led to the successful implementation were quite unique, the *Frauenkirche* is regarded as a one-of-a-kind approach. The unaltered ruins were used to once again recreate a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (all-embracing work of art). The urge for reconciliation was also supported by the former enemies in war. But urban and architectural objectives, namely to once again re-establish the view from across the Elbe, were decisive as well.

Other solutions to similar cases will be briefly investigated in this chapter. This is not just limited to the German *Gedächtniskirche*, as Coventry Cathedral will also be concisely presented to evaluate immediate post-war approaches. The successful rebuilding of the *Frauenkirche* is often used for comparisons and to justify further reconstruction projects, which, however, are often completely contrary to this unique case in Dresden. In addition to the initial objectives, the project received a second dimension, namely the increasing shift towards originality and beautification. The latter also encouraged the developments at the *Neumarkt*, the square surrounding the church.

A Historic Overview

It was in the eleventh century when the first church was built at the *Frauentor* (Our Lady's Gate) just outside the Dresden city walls. The church *Zu Unser Lieben Frauen* (Church of our Dear Lady)¹¹⁷ was the only parish church at the time of the Reformation in 1539, when Dresden converted to Evangelical-Lutheran worship. But the building no longer met the demands of the growing community at

¹¹⁷ The former full name *Zu Unser Lieben Frauen* was later changed to *Frauenkirche*.

the beginning of the eighteenth century. This was also the time Mathäus Daniel Pöppelmann built his world famous baroque *Zwinger*.¹¹⁸ The gothic church was therefore also not in accordance with the design guidelines demanding a baroque town layout and façades in Dresden. The city council decided in 1722 to replace the old church.¹¹⁹

It should be stressed that Saxony's king at that time, August der Starke (Augustus the Strong), was a Catholic convert. He became Elector King Frederick Augustus I in 1694 and converted to Catholicism in 1697 in order to acquire the Polish Crown as King August II. His Saxon subjects were allowed to keep the Protestant religion and he not only tolerated the building of the Protestant church but also supported the construction with tax relief. He made the work possible in the first place and it is usually said that this circumstance made the *Frauenkirche* an important symbol of religious tolerance. But keeping in mind that August der Starke only converted in order to get a royal title, it seems that he was not particularly concerned with religious beliefs. It can be argued that he was mainly interested in having a new piece of magnificent architecture in his capital.¹²⁰

George Bähr, the State Master Builder and the most talented Dresden baroque architect after Pöppelmann, was assigned that task. The available plot of 40m by 40m in the existing cityscape and the notion to build a Protestant church with emphasis on the word rather than a separated chancel at the end of a long church led to the centralized design of the new building. Bähr's first drafts were rejected and changed several times. It was not until 1726 that the final design was agreed upon. The cornerstone for the church with the central dome above the Greek cruciform was laid the same year. Ongoing arguments about construction details and financial difficulties delayed the work. The church was to be financed mainly by the citizens and they took great interest and active participation in every stage of the building process unlike in the case of the court church, which was built by the king and completely financed through taxes. In order to collect money, pews and chapels were named in recognition of donors, which

¹¹⁸ The pleasure palace in Dresden, built 1709-1732.

¹¹⁹ Gretzschel, 53. Müller, 9-12. Löffler: *Die Frauenkirche*, 1-4.

¹²⁰ Krull, 21-23.

made the completion possible. This involvement of the townsfolk contributed to a strong association with the church, which became a people's church connected with the everyday life of all social classes.¹²¹

The not yet finished *Frauenkirche* was consecrated in 1734 and two years later Johann Sebastian Bach himself played on the famous *Silbermann-Organ* (organ built in 1736 by the court organ maker Gottfried Silbermann).¹²² Soon after, the church became a place for concerts due to the excellent acoustics for organ concerts. The circular interior was dominated by the eight slim columns which supported the inner dome. Balconies for the worshippers hung between those columns and provided an impressive space together with the chancel, altar and organ in the choir.¹²³ (see Figure 2-1 to Figure 2-4)

The church was unique in many ways. Just before the work on the dome was about to start, George Bähr proposed a sandstone structure instead of the wooden dome intended in the first place. Many concerned people disliked that suggestion, but August der Starke was a keen proponent of such bold ideas. But one has to admit that, in the end, the stone dome was constructed because copper for roof covering had become extremely expensive by that time and it was much cheaper to use the sandstone from nearby quarries. However, this decision put the church in a small circle of buildings with such a feature. But even more, it was the only dome known at that time with such a powerful elongated concave form built in stone (Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2). Construction was finished in 1738 and the placing of the cross on top of the 94-m-tall building in 1743 completed the church, which was later called the *Steinerne Glocke* (Stony Bell) because it appeared to be built from a solid piece of stone.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Delau, 60-61, 74-75, 92-93. Gretzschel, 57-65. Müller, 24-32.

¹²² For details on the organ and on Silbermann see John, 48-52 and Delau, 106-107.

¹²³ Krull, 201, 217. Müller, 46-52. Gretzschel 190-191. Löffler: *Die Frauenkirche*, 27. John, 53.

¹²⁴ Müller, 32-52. Delau, 100-101, 116, 138-139. Krull, 35-36.



Figure 2-1: *Frauenkirche* and *Neumarkt* (new market square) in 1930.¹²⁵

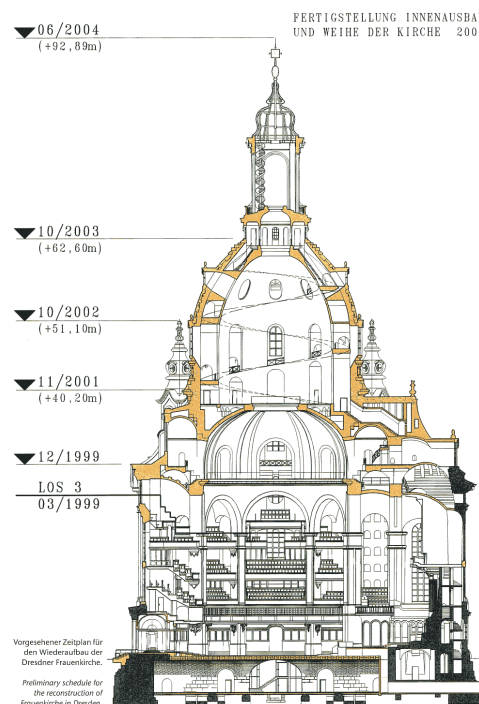


Figure 2-2: Section through the building and preliminary schedule for its reconstruction.¹²⁶



Figure 2-3: View of the northern galleries in 1930.¹²⁷

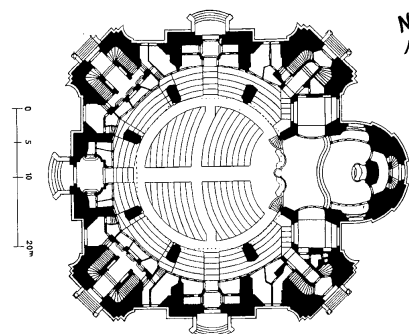


Figure 2-4: Floor plan first floor.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Krull, 37.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 214.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 38.

¹²⁸ Müller, 35.

The building survived the Seven Year War and bombardment by Prussian canons in 1760. The Prussian king Friedrich der Große supposedly said out of respect: "... then leave the brick-head standing."¹²⁹ Several changes and minor repairs were carried out in the nineteenth century. A stroke of lightning after the turn of the century marked the beginning of continuous repair to the church. The building had to be closed several times by building inspectors. Detailed site measurements were carried out in the 1930s including a mapping of all building damage. The last restoration was finished in 1942 after the security of the dome was enhanced through the installation of three reinforced concrete rings on the inside of the dome walls and improvements to the foundation. Also, extensive changes to the Silbermann-Organ were made.¹³⁰

Work of Art or Memorial of War?

The project was initiated with the intention to build a bald protestant church in keeping with Lutheran teachings. But especially the interior became far more than a simple house of worship. It was an impressive theater-like interior with parquet seats and balconies and a stage-like chancel. All this was decorated by an Italian stage painter adding faux marble and paintings of note. (Figure 2-3) The church was an architectural masterpiece of European Baroque architecture and possessed one of the world's most unique domes (Figure 2-1).¹³¹

But also the structural details built in stone by the master carpenter Bähr were innovative. The eight columns were backed up by flying-buttress-like structures – two for each column. But unlike in Gothic churches, this structure was masterfully hidden behind the balconies. It was intended to distribute the load from the lower inner dome and the doubled outer shell onto different parts of that structure (Figure 2-3). But cracks occurred in the building immediately after the final completion, which required continuous repair throughout the years. However, later investigations showed that the failures were not

¹²⁹ Friedrich der Große: "Dann bleibt der Dickkopp eben stehen!" Quoted in Krull, 217.

Friedrich der Große (Frederick the Great) was the byname of Friedrich II (1712-1786), who was king of Prussia from 1740-1786.

¹³⁰ Müller, 65-71, 77-79. Gretzschel, 86-91, 98-110. John, 54.

¹³¹ Müller, 61-62. Gretzschel, 150-153.

exclusively caused by a presumably incorrect load bearing system, which one should be aware was just based on experience without any detailed calculation methods or computer simulation as employed nowadays. The columns took more load than anticipated by Bähr and the foundation of the eight columns had not been designed for that. This caused unequal settlement resulting in a shift of the complete structural system, which made the problem even worse. It has to be kept in mind that the foundations in general were originally not built for the load of such an enormous stone dome but for a much lighter wooden structure. Also, in those days it was technically not possible to provide for adequate anchoring between the interior columns and the frame behind in order to avoid the shifting of the masonry. Despite those problems, the structure was an engineering masterpiece at the time.¹³²

The *Frauenkirche* is often compared to the *Church of Invalides* in Paris, which had been finished half a century before the *Frauenkirche* was designed. Both churches were built with a rather classical façade, crowned with a typical baroque dome percée and furnished with an impressive baroque interior. Bähr's two-shell-dome was, especially due to its elongated concave form, unique in Europe. The *Frauenkirche* was also an inspiration for other church buildings to come.¹³³

But the *Frauenkirche* was not just a significant piece of architecture and engineering in its own right. The dome was a crucial scenic part of the famous silhouette seen from across the Elbe River. Bernardo Bellotto, also known as Canaletto, created the famous painting depicting this view in 1748 (Figure 2-5). Dresden, often called *Elbflorenz* (The Florence on the Elbe), was acknowledged as one of the world's most beautiful cities because of architecture and artistic treasures. It was the residence of Saxon Prince Electors and of kings. Before World War II, Dresden was a magnificent arrangement of numerous baroque churches, palaces and squares mostly built in the nineteenth century: the *Brühlsche Terrasse* (terraced gardens on top of the former fortification system at the river, landscaped in the sixteenth century), *Sächsische Kunstakademie* (academy of fine arts), the Legislature, the *Residenzschloß* (main residential palace, 1530-35) with the *Hofkirche* (court church or cathedral, 1738-43), the *Zwinger*

¹³² Siegel, 72-79.

¹³³ Ibid.

(pleasure palace, by M. D. Pöppelmann, 1711-22) and the famous *Semperoper* (opera house, by G. Semper, 1838-41 and rebuilt after a fire 1871-78) and countless valuable residential buildings. The renaissance palace, the court church, which is seen as the last major example of an early roman baroque cathedral, the rococo pleasure palace, the French baroque influenced *Frauenkirche* and the renaissance revival opera house, together with many other renaissance and baroque buildings formed a unique harmony despite their different architectural styles.¹³⁴



Figure 2-5: Painting by Bernardo Bellotto, also known as Canaletto, 1748: *Dresden vom rechten Elbufer unterhalb der Augustusbrücke*.¹³⁵ (View of Dresden from the right bank of the Elbe river downstream from the Augustus bridge) This is a view of the city showing the skyline already dominated by the *Frauenkirche* in the left part of the painting. The court church to the right was still under construction.

Dresden had experienced little damage in World War II, but on the nights of 13-14 February 1945 the overcrowded and vulnerable city was destroyed in a firestorm of bombs. The end of the war was foreseeable at that time and no fighter planes or anti-aircraft guns at all were left in Dresden. The raids succeeded in obliterating the historic inner center comprising an area of 15 square kilometers, kill-

¹³⁴ Krull, 22-24. Müller, 22-24.

¹³⁵ Müller, 17.

ing, according to different estimates, between 35,000 and 150,000 people.¹³⁶ No military targets or industry of importance were destroyed. (Figure 2-6) At first, the *Frauenkirche* appeared to be the only surviving structure in that area. But the extensive fire inside the church led to the failure of the sandstone columns and the church completely collapsed on 15 February 1945 (Figure 2-7).¹³⁷



Figure 2-6: Plan showing the inner city of Dresden.¹³⁸



Figure 2-7: The northwest tower of the *Frauenkirche* in the middle of Dresden's ruins, photo taken in 1951.¹³⁹

The attack was the most savage bombing by the Anglo-American forces against civilian targets and is usually seen as an act of revenge towards the end of the war – revenge especially for the German blitz attacks on London and Coventry in 1940-41. But it has not yet been clarified why the area bombing on the non-military historic center of Dresden was done at all. There is speculation about a decision in 1944 to carry out a raid on some city in Germany which had not yet been bombed by that time, in order to break the German resistance once and for all. Since 1942 the policy of blanket bombing was believed to

¹³⁶ Public Record Office, Estimates are difficult and not reliable due to thousands of refugees in Dresden at that time.

¹³⁷ Müller, 99-102. Gretzschel, 111-118.

¹³⁸ Müller, 91.

The Royal Air Force marked the approach direction with an arrow and the sector to be destroyed. No military targets were within that area, even the orientation aid, a soccer field, was a civilian facility.

¹³⁹ Krull, 42.

have an effect on morale.¹⁴⁰ The Soviets supposedly supported this tactic but later distanced themselves from the decision and used the raids as a convenient propaganda tool against the “imperialistic” West during the Cold War period.¹⁴¹ Also, the British Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Winston Churchill, who certainly authorized the attack, tried to disclaim any responsibility afterwards, leaving all the disgrace to Sir Arthur Harris, the head of the bomber command. Harris was denied the peerage given to all the other service chiefs, and his forces were refused a campaign medal. The British later tried to reassess his reputation and honored him 1992 with a statue in central London. This decision led to widespread official protests from Dresden and other severely bombed cities.¹⁴²

Immediately after the war the people of Dresden began to rebuild the city with several historic buildings including the *Zwinger* and the baroque buildings around the palace. All the important structures on the Elbe River destroyed in 1945 have since been reconstructed with the exception of the *Frauenkirche*.¹⁴³ First efforts to save the remnants and to rebuild the *Frauenkirche* and the surrounding *Neumarkt* (new market square) were undertaken. But it was also from early on and in later years considered to remove the ruins. Cultural artifacts and archival material from the church were salvaged. Several reusable architectural pieces were registered and safely stored beginning as early as 1948. The concept of scientifically accurate reconstruction was investigated, which means that the attempt was made to figure out how to salvage undamaged stones and how to find out about their original location in the building. In 1952 it was realized that such a reconstruction might be possible, but not feasible in the near future because of the enormous amount of time and funding needed for such a project, and it was agreed to keep the rest of the ruins in place and in this way to conserve the stones. Several dedicated people kept the vision of a reconstruction alive in the following years, but most importantly, those preservationists and architects prevented the removal of the ruins. “We did not have building fences in those days. That is why we planted

¹⁴⁰ Public Record Office.

¹⁴¹ A commemorative plaque installed at the church in 1982 stated that “... the ruin commemorates the ten thousands dead and reminds the living ones to fight against imperialistic barbarity and for a peaceful future of mankind.”

¹⁴² Müller, 84-104.

¹⁴³ Krull, 47-48.

wild roses to protect the precious rubble” wrote a contemporary conservator.¹⁴⁴ The ruins had already become a memorial of war by that time and the overgrown and weathered sandstone boulders contributed to a picturesque scene.¹⁴⁵

That the silhouette of the *Frauenkirche* was the last missing element in the view from across the river, was also recognized by the politicians in charge (Figure 2-5). But it is furthermore commonly known that the government of the GDR was certainly not interested in the reconstruction of churches. It was ideologically problematic for the resolutely atheist socialist government to care for religious places, even in cases of architectural significance. Other churches, like the University Church *Paulinerkirche*¹⁴⁶ in Leipzig were purposefully destroyed to emphasize the rejection of any religious views and “subversive acts” supposedly connected with it. Churches in general and especially this church in Leipzig were a place of political opposition in the former GDR, but the destruction of a particular building did not lead to the containment of those movements. It is said that after the clouds of dust had vanished, the way to the *Nikolaikirche* was cleared – to the church which consequently was the home for political opposition in Leipzig and from which major impulses leading to the political change in 1989 originated.¹⁴⁷ Churches played a crucial role in the movement which eventually initiated the reunification of Germany. Also the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden became a focal point for the East German civil rights movement beginning in the 1980s.¹⁴⁸

The church is not just of architectural and religious significance, but also a symbol for social and political struggle since the war, both in the GDR and in the reunited Germany.¹⁴⁹ Dresden and the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* have been a strong reminder of the cruel war which was initiated by Germany.

¹⁴⁴ Hans Nadler: “Bauzäune hatten wir damals nicht. Deshalb pflanzten wir Heckenrosen, und die kostbaren Trümmer waren geschützt.” Quoted in Krull, 48.

¹⁴⁵ Gretzschel, 120-122, 134-135. Krull, 47-48. Roßberg, 65. Nadler, 34.

¹⁴⁶ The *Paulinerkirche* used to be the church of the Leipzig University. The church was demolished in 1968 despite the fact that the building survived the war in very good condition and that the University used it. The official justification for this was the modernization of the entire university complex in the following years. Later, a colossal Karl-Marx-relief was installed at the façade of the new building, right at the location of the former church.

¹⁴⁷ Koch, 3. Roßberg, 65-66, 69. Magirius: *George Bährs*, 71.

¹⁴⁸ Delau, 17. Krull, 48. Gretzschel, 138-139.

¹⁴⁹ Blobel, www.friendsofdresden.org

But the name of Dresden also stands alongside Hiroshima as a symbol of the destructive consequences of modern warfare on civilians and as a reminder that the ends do not always justify the means.¹⁵⁰ The visible ruins of the *Frauenkirche* were kept as a permanent war memorial for more than 45 years.

Churches as victims of war are by no means only typical for Dresden. Coventry, for instance, was the first British city to be devastated by German air raids and also lost its cathedral. The old church from the fourteenth century was destroyed almost completely and the ruins of the nave and the 92-m-high bell tower were left unchanged on site and kept as a memorial of war. A new cathedral was built between 1955 and 1962 at right angles to the old preserved ruins, using the same red Coventry sandstone but employing contemporary architecture. Both parts of the cathedral act as a memorial and as a living church in a modern city.¹⁵¹ (Figure 2-8)

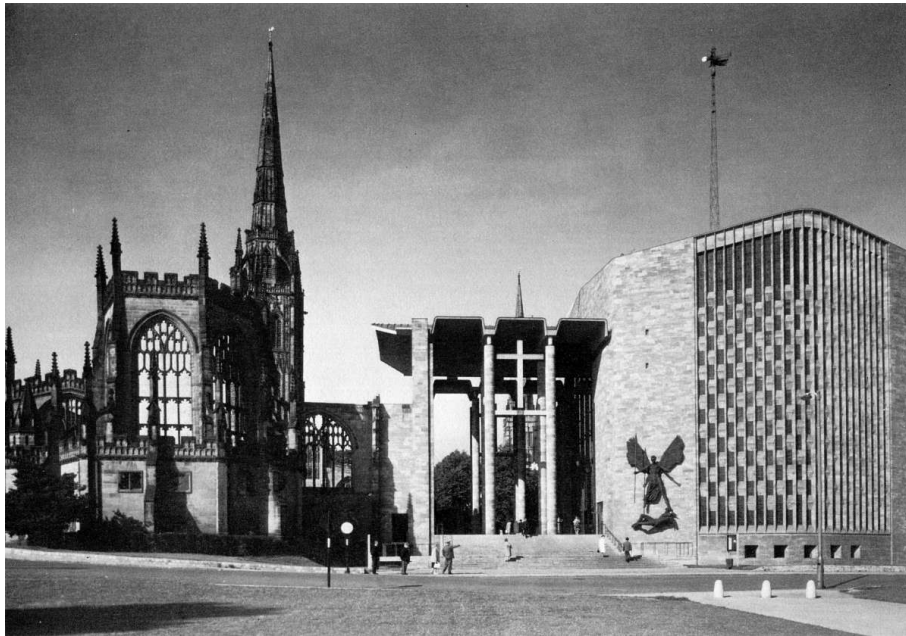


Figure 2-8: The new Coventry Cathedral, adjoining the remnants of the old.¹⁵²

Another case is the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Emperor Wilhelm Memorial Church) in Berlin, built at the end of the nineteenth century, which was destroyed by British bombs in 1943. The

¹⁵⁰ Public Record Office.

¹⁵¹ Johnson, 264-267. www.thecoventrypages.net/cathedral

¹⁵² Johnson, 265.

ruins became a memorial soon after and a landmark in the western part of Berlin. Several options were discussed in the years following the war. The essence of the discussion was the view that the old church may not have been an outstanding work of art, but that it was a major item in the memories of the older generation and that the tower deserved to be saved as a memorial. Above that it was also a crucial focal point of the urban environment. The rhetorical question was raised whether the society in the western part of Germany was really morally better than that in the eastern communist part, which purposely destroyed churches and palaces.¹⁵³ It is interesting to note that the people were not rejecting modern church buildings per se but that they were just trying to keep history visible.¹⁵⁴

Under the pressure of the citizens it was finally decided to keep the remains of the church, and to incorporate the ruins of the tower within a contemporary new church, although this caused traffic problems in the center of Berlin. A church and a separated tower, both with an octagonal plan resembling the eight-corner shape of the old remaining church tower, but with modern honeycombed blue glass walls were finished in 1961. The architect Egon Eiermann purposefully did not alter the tower ruin, but placed all three parts of the church on one pedestal. Very similar to Coventry Cathedral, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* is a strong memorial but also a working church. Several documents of war and symbols of conciliation such as a Cross of Nails, the symbol of Coventry's international ministry of reconciliation, are to be found in the memorial. The Coventry Litany of reconciliation is worshiped every Friday in the church. Eiermann said during the inaugural ceremony in 1961: "My new church could be built in any city, but together with the ruins of the tower it is a unique building, and just doable in Berlin."¹⁵⁵ (Figure 2-9)

There are many other less prominent cases, where ruins were intentionally preserved with only some minor adjustments. A prime example is for instance the *Aegidienkirche* (church of St. Ägidius) in Hannover. Here, the exterior walls of the ruins were structurally secured and just partially reconstructed

¹⁵³ Oster, 8-11. Beseler: *Volume I*, 140.

¹⁵⁴ According to a survey conducted by the Berlin newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* on 24 March 1957: 92% of interviewed people voted for the keeping of the church ruins, 58,8% would approve modern church buildings or additions in general. *Der Tagesspiegel*: 24 March 1957.

¹⁵⁵ Egon Eiermann: "Meine neue Kirche könnte in jeder Stadt stehen, aber mit der Turmruine verbunden ist sie ein einmaliges, nur in Berlin mögliches Bauwerk." Quoted in Oster, 11. Nerding, 151. Oster, 8-11. Beseler: *Volume I*, 140.

after the destruction in World War II. The tower was equipped with a contemporary new bell housing and several works of art were installed after the former church became a designated memorial in 1954.¹⁵⁶ (Figure 2-10) The distinctiveness and much stronger memorial effect of those places may be the best arguments against accurate reconstruction in such cases. But despite numerous courageous examples, many churches have been reconstructed throughout Europe and even more ruins have been cleared away.



Figure 2-9: The ruins of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin, next to the contemporary tower.¹⁵⁷

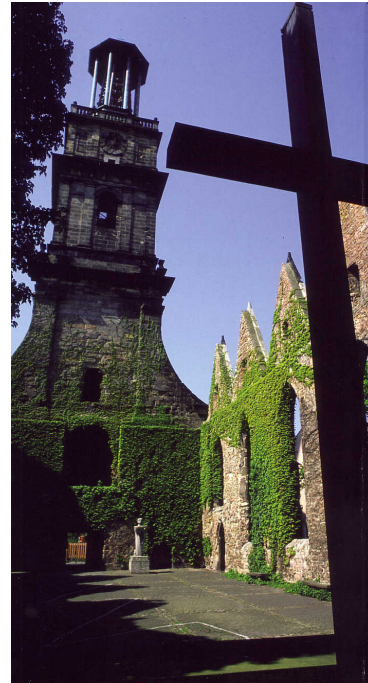


Figure 2-10: The inside of the war memorial *Aegidienkirche* in Hannover.¹⁵⁸

The case of Dresden seems to be different to other casualties of war in many ways. First of all, the *Frauenkirche* was basically left unchanged, more or less waiting for the start of the reconstruction, and the church seemed to be the only missing part in a greater piece of art. Maybe only a ruin, left on its own, could not fulfill the function of a valuable memorial – instead the *Frauenkirche* had been seen as the only major remaining wound unable to be healed. But the discussion to reconstruct the church did not start with the final collapse of the political East German system. Certainly fueled by the redeveloped

¹⁵⁶ Beseler: *Volume I*, 252-255. Puschmann, 33-35.

¹⁵⁷ Photo taken by the author in 2006.

¹⁵⁸ Puschmann, 2.

Nikolaiviertel in Berlin it was also in Dresden that several efforts were made in the early 1980s to reconstruct the church as the center-piece of a reborn historic quarter.¹⁵⁹ But in Dresden the changed architectural and urban planning policies resulted only in some Post-Modern hotel buildings of arguable quality.¹⁶⁰

Time went by after the bombardment which was, after the victory over Germany, seen as an unquestionable act of patriotism. Views had changed and also many people from abroad saw the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* as the last visible reminder of a wound in their minds. People from Germany and all over the world contributed to the healing. It seems that this enforced waiting time has made the reconstruction possible in the first place. People can repair both the wounds left by the war and by the communist era.

The proponents of the reconstruction established the public opinion that the *Frauenkirche* was, first of all, a work of art and that the church should become a symbol of peace instead of the war memorial represented by the ruins. The importance of the rebuilt *Frauenkirche* as an architectural monument, as a religious edifice and as a symbol of world peace was always stressed.¹⁶¹ But is it possible to change the character of that site just by the process of a reconstruction? Maybe a memorial in the form of the ruins itself or with modern supplementary additions could have been a more powerful memorial of war and a symbol of peace. “The rubble of the *Frauenkirche* symbolized the destruction of common cultural values in the horror of the Second World War. ... Now the *Frauenkirche* is rising once again. It will be completed in a new century and a new age for Germany and its international partners, one symbolized by the desire for peace, reconciliation and cooperation”, as “Friends of Dresden”, a U.S. American organization supporting the reconstruction idea, outlined.¹⁶² There was obviously no need for an unpleasant reminder of the war or for the politically complicated but still interesting and important part of the history under the GDR. A new century has begun – is there no need for memorials of war anymore?

¹⁵⁹ For *Nikolaiviertel* in Berlin see page 27.

¹⁶⁰ Paul: *Dresden*, 333.

¹⁶¹ Blobel, www.friendsofdresden.org

¹⁶² Ibid.

The parties involved in the bombardment reevaluated the role they played in Dresden at the end of the war. As mentioned earlier, it was Winston Churchill who had the ultimate responsibility for this attack and it is even argued that this controversial policy might have “cast doubt upon Churchill’s reputation as the heroic icon of twentieth century British history.”¹⁶³ And the London columnist Rowan Moore wrote in the *Evening Standard* on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the destruction of the *Frauenkirche*: “In Dresden you learn what it’s like to be German, forever on the edge of apologising for the atrocities of your country.”¹⁶⁴

The Reconstruction and its Consequences

On 13 February 1990, 45 years after the destruction of Dresden, the trumpeter Prof. Güttler and thirteen other supporters of the rebuilding of the *Frauenkirche* announced their intent in the *Ruf aus Dresden an die Weltöffentlichkeit* (The Call from Dresden to the Worldwide Public). After some discussions, the decision was made in 1991 to reconstruct the church. Also the entire process of the rebuilding of the church was loaded with symbolic events. It was in 1989 in front of the *Frauenkirche* where the former German chancellor Helmut Kohl promised in a famous speech that *Blühende Landschaften* (flourishing and blooming landscapes) would come to the former GDR. He was certainly not talking about the roses around the ruins of the church. People in the east and the west were enthusiastic in those times about the political change, but this metaphor became one of the most controversial visions in the following years of progress but also of disillusionment for many people. It was not a surprise that Kohl was one of the first who took up the *Ruf aus Dresden* for the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*. He asked people to spend money for the project rather than giving him birthday presents for his sixtieth birthday in 1990.

¹⁶³ Public Record Office: <http://learningcurve.pro.gov.uk/herosvillians>, accessed on 05 August 2002. A revised version is now available on www.learningcurve.gov.uk/heroesvillains, accessed on 18 October 2005: “cast doubt” has been weakened to “cast a shadow”.

¹⁶⁴ Moore.

What began quite modestly in those times resulted in successful international fundraising. Therefore the *Frauenkirche* was largely financed through private donations, resulting from probably the largest private fundraising campaign ever conducted in Germany. The idea brought together citizens, acting together for a common goal. The *Frauenkirche* used to be a people's church, related to everyday life much more than the court church or any other of the outstanding buildings in Dresden. It is obvious that the emotions put into the city and the memories were a major driving factor for the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*.

The local and worldwide efforts were organized in numerous different groups:¹⁶⁵ *Stiftung Frauenkirche Dresden* (The Dresden Frauenkirche Foundation or Frauenkirche Institute) was the organization managing the project. The *Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Wiederaufbaus der Frauenkirche Dresden e.V.* (The Society to Promote the Rebuilding of the Frauenkirche in Dresden) was the fundraising arm of the project, which originated from the “Call from Dresden”, announced in 1990. The society offered memberships and organized the donation activities. Over 6,200 members in 23 countries paid membership dues. The *Wiederaufbau Frauenkirche Dresden GmbH* (Rebuilding of the Frauenkirche in Dresden Company) operated souvenir shops and coordinated the marketing activities, which were supported by “The Dresden Frauenkirche Foundation” and “The Society to Promote the Rebuilding of the Frauenkirche in Dresden”. Several sponsors supported all these activities. One of them was the *Sächsische Zeitung* (Saxon Newspaper), which was seemingly no longer able to report about the project free of its own interests. But it needs to be acknowledged that today's publications in general do not try to argue about the pros and cons but rather defend a settled opinion for either side, which is most often in favor of the project. This was just different to a certain degree at the early stages of the development, where the proponents already praised the reconstruction as a victory over modern architecture and the odd voice was heard.

Countless local and international supporting organizations, such as “The Dresden Trust” in the United Kingdom, supported the project from abroad. The trust collected enough money to finance an

¹⁶⁵ www.frauenkirche-dresden.org/my_html/builder1.htm

accurate copy of the original eight-meter-high baroque Orb and Cross, to complete the dome of the reconstructed church. The success of the projects, as one can read in the Trust's publications, was mainly because "behind Dresden ... there is a deep underlying symbolism. Dresden represents some of the best as well some of the most terrible elements in British-German history."¹⁶⁶ Also, this act of reconciliation was loaded with a symbolic background: the owner of the English foundry is a son of one of the bomber pilots of 1945.

Another organization which played an important role for the awareness of the project and for the collection of money was the American-based foundation "Friends of Dresden". The organization was initiated by the German-American scientist Prof. Günter Blobel, who donated the majority of his Nobel prize money to the reconstruction project.

Lots of individual private donors and companies donated money or they supported the reconstruction in other ways. The German bank *Dresdner Bank AG*, for instance, published the so-called *Stifterbrief* (donor certificate) and *Stifterkarte* (donor card). Eleven renowned artists have donated works to the *Dresdner Frauenkirche Foundation*. A *Stifterkarte* consisted of a registered reproduction of one of these artworks together with a small original stone fragment of the *Frauenkirche*. The *Stifterbrief* allowed interested people to symbolically adopt a stone or even a seat in the *Frauenkirche*. It is interesting that especially these efforts were very similar to those used for the church's original construction.¹⁶⁷

All these activities together had a strong opinion-forming effect. It is obvious that the opponents of the reconstruction were not able to make themselves heard anymore to the same extent that the reconstruction was praised. This leads to the impression that an overwhelming majority supported the reconstruction.

The project is usually described as an archeological reconstruction, which means that the newly finished building was intended to exactly meet the available well-documented measurements of the historic original and that even existing old stones from the large heap of rubble were placed in their

¹⁶⁶ Russel, 1.

¹⁶⁷ See page 36.

original location. It was possible to identify most reusable stones by the original symbols used by the stonemasons, by the detailed measurements done before the war and by calculations regarding the course and direction of collapse of the building. All the available data for every single old and new stone has been incorporated in a full digital model of the *Frauenkirche*. As such, it was the goal that 40 percent of the reconstructed building should consist of original stones in their original location. This approach also meant that tremendous additional costs arose from reusing existing elements in their condition as found on site rather than adapting them for easier handling. Bigger fragments were for instance kept in one piece rather than cutting them in halves. One such element was a large piece of sandstone from one of the towers, called *Schmetterling* (butterfly) due to its distinctive form. It was possible to salvage and reuse this 90-ton item as one piece and to install it at its original location. The result of the archeological approach is that even hidden details are built as true to the original as possible. But more importantly, the work on such a single prominent piece of stone like the “butterfly” has also raised more public awareness and with it more money for the reconstruction project.¹⁶⁸

The procedure used is also sometimes referred to as anastylosis, “...that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts ...” as described in Article 15 of “The Venice Charta”.¹⁶⁹ Old stones were reused as much as possible and required new elements were quarried at the same site as the original ones. But contrary to the provisions of The Venice Charta, the new stones will not be recognizable from the original ones after a couple of decades.¹⁷⁰ Also, many of the original stones had to be repaired, for instance with steel reinforcement, in order to be reusable at all. Beyond this, the latest technology has been used, making financing of the project feasible in the first place and avoiding mistakes made in the original design and construction. George Bähr was not able to calculate everything as exactly as can be done nowadays. He was not able to transform his vision into reality without design and imple-

¹⁶⁸ Hergersberg, www.frauenkirche-dresden.org

¹⁶⁹ Müller.

¹⁷⁰ The dark color of the sandstone is not due to dirt, and is also not a crust, but is the result of an increasing amount of certain metals which are drawn to the surface of the stone. It takes approximately thirty to fifty years to get this appearance. See also Figure 2-11 and Figure 2-12 for the current appearance.

mentation flaws, from today's point of view. Additional efforts were necessary to avoid failures in the future.

There has even been discussion about building a reinforced concrete dome covered with sandstone, instead of the original sandstone structure.¹⁷¹ The argument about the construction of the outer shell reminds one of the quarrels about the stone dome at the time of construction. As was the case then, the final decision about that important detail was left undecided until a relatively late phase in the project. A cheap compromise would not just have been against all the best preservation intentions but would also have led to an image problem, and so it was finally decided to approximate George Bähr's construction as closely as possible. However it was necessary to improve certain construction details: parts of the masonry were laid out at an oblique angle to improve the distribution of the loads to the exterior parts of the supporting structure. The geometry of those finished details is the same as with the horizontal stone layers originally built. A steel tension ring with reinforced concrete anchors was to be added to the base of the cupola in order to allow for the structure to act as originally intended by George Bähr. And six high strength post-tensioned steel inlays within the dome shell were used to substitute for the original four cast iron anchors.¹⁷²

Thus, lots of hidden new technology has been incorporated in the building. It simply could not have been an exact copy of the original from a technical point of view. The fabric which was still in place was reinforced and complemented with improved quality and somewhat different technology than was used originally. The project had to follow historic preservation intentions but also current building codes almost three centuries after it was built. Provisions for the disabled had to be incorporated, including an elevator in one of the towers. Stairs had to be wider and with a different rise and run ratio than originally, and modern double-glazed windows were used. In order to improve long-lasting qualities of durability, the mortar contains small amounts of Portland cement, a material which was not yet available at George

¹⁷¹ Grunenberg.

¹⁷² Stoll.

Bähr's time. Mortar and stones had to be carefully selected, especially for the stone dome. And it was for the dome not possible to reuse old stones at all due to problems related to climatic impact.

Nevertheless, in the end it can be said that the finished product is as close as possible to the original. (Figure 2-11 and Figure 2-12) Knowing that, it seems inappropriate that most of the improvements mentioned above are practically being kept secret, almost overshadowed by the reports on the progress made with the accurate archeological reconstruction and later by the finished church. The reconstruction became much closer to the original than was initially intended. It seems that with the successful fundraising, and the sufficient financial backup, it became possible to respond to the current trend of providing beautiful places. Especially in the final stages of the *Frauenkirche* project, namely during the interior decoration, the respect for the surviving parts of the original building seem to have been lost. With the colorful restoration of the altar, one of the last remaining traces of history has been painted over.¹⁷³ (see Figure 2-13)



Figure 2-11: The finished church in 2006.¹⁷⁴



Figure 2-12: Detail.¹⁷⁵



Figure 2-13: The interiors.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Bartetzky, 279.

¹⁷⁴ Photo taken by the author in 2006. (Compare Figure 2-1)

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. (Compare Figure 2-7)

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. (Compare Figure 2-3)

A main motivation for the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche* was, aside from the impressive inner space, the completion of the famous view as seen from across the Elbe. But this would not have necessarily required an authentic reconstruction of the building. Why was it not decided, for aesthetic and idealistic reasons, to just simulate the inner and outer shape with a contemporary steel or concrete frame – to build a memorial of war, even more vivid than the ruins? It can be argued that such a memorial without any specific use would have lacked sufficient support and funding. But functionality does not necessarily depend on the authenticity of the *Frauenkirche*, since church services, concerts and lectures would also have been possible in a modern interpretation of the historic building. The contemporary framework suggested could have been complemented with a glass casing for that purpose. But it is as simple as it sounds: it would never have been possible to raise so much interest for such a project and to collect the funds needed.

Chances are that the *Frauenkirche* will be just another church, despite all the architectural individuality and political significance. The differences between old and new stone will fade within a few decades. People will forget about the history and they will be amazed by the appearance of what many of them will assume to be the original building.

The just-completed rebuilding of the *Frauenkirche* certainly gave a boost to other reconstruction activities in Dresden. The close-knit street system of the city, which included many restorable ruins, was cleared after the end of the war in large part in favor of parade-ground-like avenues. Many of these buildings are not very much different from what was built in the western part of Germany in the 1960s and '70s. They are what they are: mostly just functional building blocks. But the rejection of this goes together with other phenomena characteristic of the years after the political change in the eastern part of Germany: the renaming of streets and even cities and the deletion of monuments – the urge to erase the visual reminders of the communist era.

Many people in Dresden saw rebuilding as much historic fabric as possible as the only option, although almost nothing was left for instance at the *Neumarkt*, the square surrounding the site of the *Frauenkirche*. Already in 1995 there were plans to redevelop this area. Back then, the intention was first

of all to regain the street system with its typical small-scale allotments. Furthermore, the declared goal was to use contemporary architecture, but to respect the historic scale of the area and to reconstruct only some so-called *Leitbauten* (key buildings) to their original appearance. This objective has meanwhile shifted, mainly owing to demands from investors but also because of the current Germany-wide beautification movement. Instead of modern architecture, large-scale building complexes with copies of supposedly original façades, which are even required to be subordinated and modified to the contemporary demands on them, are already under construction or anticipated. Honest modern architecture is obviously not regarded as being appropriate for the unique square around the *Frauenkirche*. But that it has now also been decided to remove the only authentic layer of the area, namely the basements, which even survived the period after 1945, just to facilitate parking garages under the new developments, seems to be especially inconsistent.¹⁷⁷

One has to wonder if Dresden can be put back together as those visions suggest. It seems questionable to demand that all new buildings in the area should have to conform to the shapes and patterns of the long-gone pre-war city. It is ironic that similarities can be drawn to the rigid guidelines once applied after the war. And it is also ironic that this experience with disastrous examples of modern architecture and city planning is the cause for such architectural conservatism currently evident in Dresden, which on the other hand is completely in opposition to the notion of the energetic ruler August der Starke, who made baroque Dresden possible in the first place. Such buildings cannot be more than shadows of the old.

But the case of the *Frauenkirche* did not just influence the developments in Dresden. Also during the discussion about the *Paulinerkirche* in Leipzig, references have been made to the successful execution of the reconstruction of the *Frauenkirche*. The university in Leipzig is currently being completely remodeled, which also includes the removal of the building currently occupying the site of the former church. During this process it was repeatedly demanded by some to authentically reconstruct the church in order to correct the decision of the East German government for its demolition. The scheme that

¹⁷⁷ Bartetzko: *Die Oberbürgermeisterin möchte*, 33.

was finally approved will reference the historic university buildings, and in particular the *Paulinerkirche*, but in a contemporary way. This is certainly an encouraging approach.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ For further details on the *Paulinerkirche* see also page 43.

CHAPTER 3

THE CASE OF THE BRAUNSCHWEIG PALACE

To understand and evaluate the current discussions and decisions in Braunschweig, a short chronological overview is required to show the development of the area east of the *Bohlweg* street in Braunschweig.¹⁷⁹ Main emphasis will be given to a description of the unexecuted parts of the initial design and the politically significant years during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. This is followed by a detailed outline of the questionable behavior of the city council in the late 1950s, which politically pushed through the demolition of the palace in 1960 against all objections from architects, art historians and preservationists. Finally, the most current developments will be explained and evaluated. It will be shown that the decisions for demolition and later for the rebuilding are much more complex and highly controversial than one would expect and that many interesting parallels can be drawn between the different phases of history.

In addition to the political dimension, the case of the palace in Braunschweig can be seen as one of the last unfortunate fatalities of the hard-line belief in progress in urban planning. It has obviously taken some years until the decision has been gradually reevaluated by the people in charge and citizens involved. But the new intention in Braunschweig, namely to recreate the façade of the demolished palace as part of a giant shopping mall project, is a testimony to the post-modern belief in the good old times as being the answer to the current structural problems – but in this specific case this idea is driven by hard economic factors. Certainly, since German reunification there has been an ever-increasing desire for bygone architecture, and this fostered the current project in Braunschweig. But the “commercial palace” also added a new dimension to that field, both in size and methodology. It will also be shown that the circumstances which led to the demolition of the palace in the first place and to its recall half a century later were much too diverse and specific to just reproach the spirit of the times.

¹⁷⁹ English: Brunswick.

A Historic Overview until World War II

Since the Middle Ages, the property in the *Bohlweg* street belonged to the Cistercian monks of Riddagshausen, which was a small village nearby. At that time, the Dukes of Braunschweig, which was one of the Welf Duchies,¹⁸⁰ had their seat in nearby Wolfenbüttel. They used the estates during their visits to Braunschweig. During the eighteenth century the property was enlarged several times and miscellaneous buildings were added, which eventually led to the development of the baroque palace complex *Grauer Hof* (Grey Court), named after its distinctive color. But it was not before 1754 that the Dukes finally moved their capital seat from Wolfenbüttel to Braunschweig. The Grey Court was partially destroyed by fire in 1830 during a revolutionary upheaval, and the unpopular Duke Karl II was forced to leave the country. His brother William, who was proclaimed his successor in 1831, became an able and popular ruler until his death in 1884.¹⁸¹ Soon after the fire, it was decided to remove the severely damaged but still reparable palace and to build a new up-to-date residence.¹⁸²

Peter Joseph Krahe, the architect of the last stages of the Grey Court, presented the design for a grand and spacious complex outside of the city limits, which would have led to the development of a new quarter. But the Duke decided in favor of the design of the young Carl Theodor Ottmer, who suggested building the new residence on historic grounds on the *Bohlweg*.¹⁸³ The decision against the development of a completely new district on the outskirts of town was first of all based on financial consideration.¹⁸⁴ But the choice of the location for the new seat of government also emphasized the closer connection between the new duke and his people and thus symbolically confirmed the new rights of citizens and peasants in the constitutional monarchy. It was obviously intended to heal the wounds after the detested

¹⁸⁰ Guelph dynasty.

¹⁸¹ After 1919 the Duchy of Braunschweig became a state of the Weimar Republic and was later incorporated into the state of Lower Saxony, which it is still today.

¹⁸² Historical facts taken from: Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, Pieper, Giesau, Wedemeyer/Willemsen, Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*.

¹⁸³ Although Ottmer's first design was, like Krahe's, also based on the premise of erecting the new residence outside of the city limits.

¹⁸⁴ Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 143.

duke was forced to leave Braunschweig and most likely also to avoid a certain emptiness at the historic location.

Braunschweig's residents took great interest in the building of the new palace too. In 1831 they sent a letter to the duke, expressing their wish to have the new palace built at the original location.¹⁸⁵ The citizens even offered their support, and pointed out that an expansion of the city would lead to deserted areas within, but that an inner beautification on the other hand could revive the whole city. They also wrote that "...the streets near the palace have been stimulated by the congregation of citizens and visitors for centuries, and thus commerce and businesses have thrived."¹⁸⁶ The merchants in the *Bohlweg* street obviously saw economic advantages in having the palace nearby.

The architect Carl Theodor Ottmer was born in Braunschweig and studied from 1816-1819 at the local *Collegium Carolinum*.¹⁸⁷ With the support of his teacher and patron, Peter Joseph Krahe, Ottmer was able to leave Braunschweig in 1822 and continue his studies in Berlin at the University and at the renowned *Bau- und Kunstakademie* (School of Architecture and Arts, also known as *Bauakademie*). While in Berlin he was influenced and supported by Schinkel. Until 1830, Ottmer designed and supervised several outstanding residential and theater building projects throughout Germany and he traveled to Paris and Italy in 1827/28. When the Duke of Braunschweig commissioned him for the design of a new palace in Braunschweig, Ottmer had just turned thirty and had been appointed *Hofbaumeister* (Master Builder at the royal court of Braunschweig) only some years earlier, so that the project was certainly beyond everything he had achieved so far and it was to become his most important work (Figure 3-1).¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Letter from 27 January 1831. Extracts quoted in Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß*, 2.

¹⁸⁶ "...daß die dem Schlosse zunächst liegenden Straßen durch das Zusammenströmen der Bürger und Fremden seit Jahrhunderten belebt wurden, daß Handel und Gewerbe sich erhoben." Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Germany's first Technical University developed from the Collegium Carolinum in the 19th century.

¹⁸⁸ After the palace project Ottmer designed several other buildings mainly in Braunschweig, including the new train station. He was also a lecturer at the local Collegium Carolinum. Ottmer died on 22 August 1843.

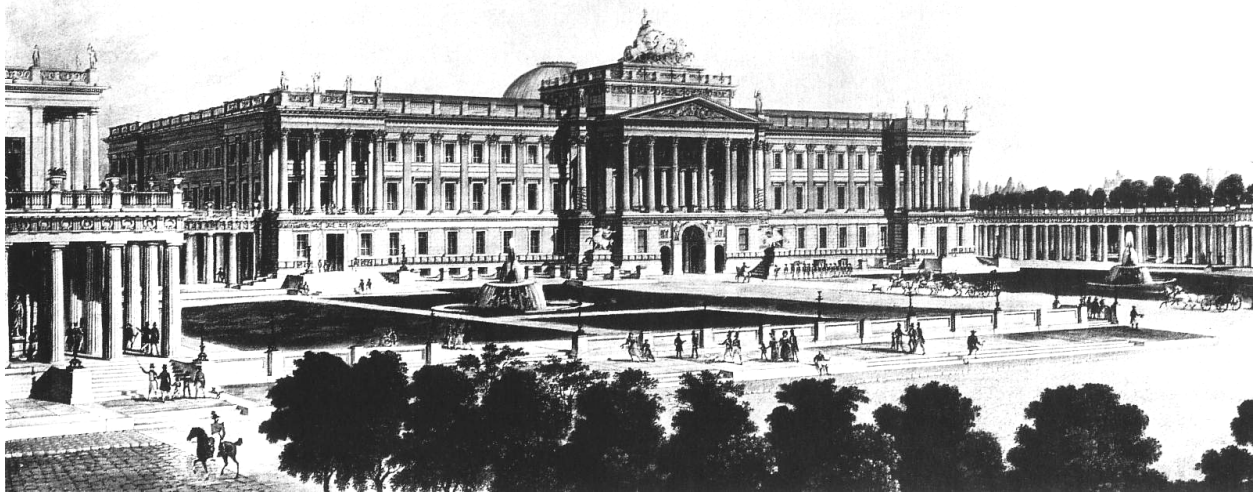


Figure 3-1: Intended design, engraving 1836. Based on an original drawing by Ottmer.¹⁸⁹
(The colonnades shown were never built.)

The remodeling of residential palaces was certainly not an unusual task in Germany during that time, due to the ongoing reshaping of the political systems. The palace in Braunschweig could be seen as just another residence for one of the 49 German dukes, but it was unique in many ways. It is regarded as the last large residential palace in Europe entirely designed and built as a whole by one architect alone. The palace was not just the largest building project of its kind of the period but also the most important and influential one in the area.¹⁹⁰

Ottmer's design was in later years often dismissed as uninspiring eclectic historicism but is at the same time increasingly regarded as virtually revolutionary, because Ottmer ignored almost all contemporary solutions for organizing such a prominent façade. The palace was built in a period of revolutionary political changes, accompanied by collapses and reinstatements of more or less authoritarian regimes, in times of neoclassicism and visionary architecture. But presumably to emphasize the legitimacy of the future resident, Ottmer was looking back to older sources and decided in favor of a baroque elevation scheme along the lines of the large palaces built in Paris, Berlin and Potsdam during the preceding two centuries.¹⁹¹ The five-part system of the main façade, consisting of projecting pavilions with columns and

¹⁸⁹ Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß*, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 232.

¹⁹¹ Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 141ff. Giesau, 90-99.

continuing pilasters in between, all resting on a contrasting rusticated base, was obviously just right to allow for the required splendor of the residential palace, suitable for the new monarch (Figure 3-1). It can be assumed that the decision in favor of that baroque scheme, as a reference to the architecture of the Prussian monarchy and the French *ancien régime*, was influenced by the Duke himself.¹⁹² Ottmer completed that underlying scheme with strong classical elements, influenced by antiquity and classicistic buildings he knew from his time in Berlin. The latter is often cited in seeing the palace as the only true example of Schinkel's influence in Braunschweig. And Ottmer was obviously also influenced by Schinkel's unbiased design approach, which placed more importance on appropriateness than simple imitation of antiquity. "Such a step toward baroque assimilation, which was unique in the German architectural history of the 1830s, and which is apt to be misunderstood, was just made possible only by Schinkel's theories..."¹⁹³ as Wedemeyer wrote in one of his numerous articles and books about the palace. He also praised Ottmer's achievement in creating a unified whole by a balanced blending of rejected baroque and contemporary late classicistic elements and theories, and he emphasized his ability to use those sources in an unbiased manner. Ottmer created, according to Wedemeyer, a unique and appropriate architectural style, the *Braunschweiger Residenzstil* (Braunschweig's Capital Style) – a style characterized by expressive and voluminous late classicistic forms with unmistakably baroque influence, a style also to be found in later buildings in Braunschweig, like the train station. The interior of the palace was much more in the contemporary classicistic style, with numerous references to Schinkel's buildings in Berlin.¹⁹⁴

The small building site and the close proximity to the surrounding buildings was quite a challenge for the erection of such a grand palace. Ottmer decided in favor of a symmetrical and compact U-shaped building, slightly offset from the location of the former palace, and with the main 115m long (126yds) west façade being parallel to the *Bohlweg* street (Figure 3-2). His design also included the layout

¹⁹² Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 29 and 151.

¹⁹³ "Nur Schinkels Lehre ermöglichte diesen, in der deutschen Architekturgeschichte der 1830er Jahre einmaligen, leicht mißzuverstehenden Schritt der Barockaufnahme..." Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 150.

¹⁹⁴ Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 29, 147, 151, 171. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 58-75. Giesau, 88-89.

of the grounds, especially the Palace Square in front of the building. It was intended to embrace the square and to promote it to a lavish court of honor much like at baroque palaces, but using a rather classical language with three rows of restrained Doric columns in precise quarter circles, supporting a full pediment. Those colonnades were to terminate in prominent two-story-end-pavilions right on the *Bohlweg*. The representative square was to bridge the rather short distance of 60m (66yds) between the palace front and the public, thus enhancing the already impressive palace, but also linking it to the urban surroundings (Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2). A similar design was intended for the garden side, but here forming a square enclosure, also symmetrically arranged and completed with a round pavilion, which would have provided a certain degree of privacy at the inner courtyard, amidst the surrounding town.

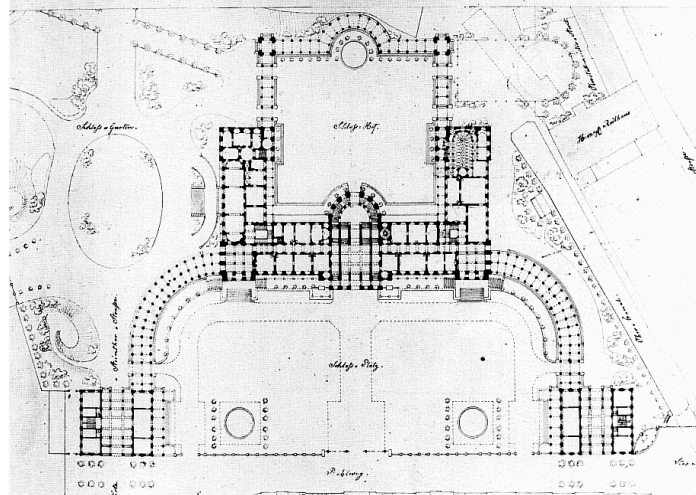


Figure 3-2: Detail from site plan, drawn by Ottmer in 1831, showing the intended palace building.¹⁹⁵

Both courts can be seen as a crucial element of the palace design, but they were never constructed, mainly due to financial restraints.¹⁹⁶ Instead, plane trees were planted later to simulate the scheme. But only those courts could have appropriately emphasized the underlying centralized idea of the building, and they would have also enclosed but at the same time opened the palace grounds on both sides in a well-balanced manner. Ottmer also designed the colonnades to provide for a smooth visual transition

¹⁹⁵ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 19.

¹⁹⁶ In September 1839 it was decided to abandon the lavish colonnades. Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 155.

between the rather high palace and the surrounding buildings, especially at the backyard. Finally, the intended round pavilion, placed in the back colonnades in the axis of the building, would have been a balanced counterpart for the substantial rotunda at the back of the main wing.

It was also neglected to provide for a transition of the new back garden to the older park, thus increasing the strong contrast. Unlike its predecessor, the new palace was intended to be a free-standing centralized monument with a small distance, but still clear differentiation from the surrounding town, representing in stone the dignity and power of its resident. But what had started as a grand scheme became plain and empty. An iron fence erected together with a row of trees between the expressionless square and the *Bohlweg* and the omitted linking buildings contributed to a visual isolation of the palace in the town.¹⁹⁷

Ottmer also designed numerous sculptural components in a classical manner to exuberantly complete the palace and to praise its monarch (Figure 3-1). Just a small fraction of the intended statues, wreaths, shields and other classical ornamentation was completed when the Duke moved into the finished north wing in 1837. The whole building was brought into use in 1841, certainly making it the focal point of the capital, with numerous events of more than just regional importance. In the following years several changes were made, but the colonnades, though more or less seriously discussed during the following years, were never built. Only certain sculptural elements were added in the 1860s, like the pediment and the quadriga with Braunschweig's patron *Brunonia* on the middle pavilion (Figure 3-3). However, especially the pediment and the sculptures on the two freestanding columns to either side of the middle pavilion were not in accordance with Ottmer's classical design at all, but rather resembled style and figures from the middle ages. This can be seen as a clear violation of the otherwise very classical portico.¹⁹⁸ The two large equestrian statues in front of the building date from 1874.¹⁹⁹ The impoverishment particularly of the main west facade, the missing frame, which would have been provided with the colonnades, and the clumsy completion of the surrounding park, contributed to a certain degree of indifference to the palace.

¹⁹⁷ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 21ff. Giesau, 84.

¹⁹⁸ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 42f.

¹⁹⁹ Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 171.



Figure 3-3: Picture postcard. The fence shown in front of the palace was salvaged from the Grey Court and erected in front of the new palace in 1837.²⁰⁰

The first editions of one of the most trusted art guides of the early twentieth century, the Guide to German Artistic Monuments by Georg Dehio, did not even include the “new” palace, built in the 1830s. Instead, those editions from 1912 and 1928 just briefly name the Grey Court, which was destroyed almost a hundred years earlier, and the guides only mention a gate and the royal stables which were both spared from the fire of 1830.²⁰¹ Also, the completely revised 1935 edition did not fully appreciate the palace. Just two lines seemed to be sufficient to describe the palace: “Colonnades, designed, but never built, would have added to the impression of the truly royal²⁰² building.”²⁰³ This description can be interpreted in many ways, but mainly just acknowledges the building as being important above all due to its size and function and also for its contribution to the cityscape and civic pride. It can be said that the art historian of the time carefully implied that the building was not a unique masterpiece, and yet of a certain, more than just regional, importance. This view was to prevail throughout the existence of the palace.

²⁰⁰ Spies, figure 424.

²⁰¹ Gate and stables were situated at the back entrance of the palace, at the so-called *Ackerhof*. See also footnote 297. Dehio, Georg: *Handbuch der Deutschen Kunstdenkmäler. Band V. Nordwestdeutschland*, 67.

²⁰² It should be noted that *fürstlich* not only translates to “royal” but more so to “lavish”.

²⁰³ “Kolonnaden, geplant, aber nicht ausgeführt, hätten die Wirkung des wahrhaft fürstlichen Baues noch gesteigert.” Dehio / Gall, 52.

But as Wedemeyer tried to show, there were also numerous national and international commentators during the time of its construction, who praised the “good taste”, “grand work” and “beauty of the form and proportions”.²⁰⁴ However, this appreciation, according to Wedemeyer, got lost in the middle of the twentieth century.²⁰⁵ And even he admitted that the palace had almost no consideration beyond regional research.²⁰⁶ He also wrote that it was not before the last third of the twentieth century that notable research was undertaken to document the palace and its history.²⁰⁷

A fire in February 1865 completely destroyed the interior of the north wing and the northern part of the main wing with the rotunda, including all ceilings and roofs, leaving mainly just basement and walls behind. Rebuilding started soon after, recreating most of the former interior spatial arrangements and decoration, but using the latest building technology, not in existence at the time of the original construction of the palace, to rebuild ceilings, roof structure and the dome.²⁰⁸

This circumstance, but also some unusual technical details from the initial construction in the 1830s, resulted in an interesting mix of different technical details, including valuable examples of emerging modern steel construction, as was shown during several building surveys after the Second World War.²⁰⁹ The vaults in the basement were built using bottle shaped elements made from clay based on an Italian design, the ceilings were made from composite corrugated metal profiles supported by riveted steel girders, the roof structure utilized an early form of steel trusses which still had cast iron elements, and the frame of the double dome consisted of double T-profiles. Interestingly enough, the cornices were made from cast iron. This material was also used for certain interior decorative elements, like the stairs including the railings.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 49f.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Wedemeyer: *Residenzschloß*, 141. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 114.

²⁰⁷ Rainer Theobald published his dissertation in 1976 about Ottmer in general and the Braunschweig palace in particular. Wedemeyer together with Eva-Maria Willemsen published in 2000 a voluminous work, for the first time trying to comprehensively document the palace including all available design drawings and approximately 700 furnishings and other objects.

Theobald. Wedemeyer/Willemsen.

²⁰⁸ Hecht, 125. Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 234-235.

²⁰⁹ Pieper, 235. See also page 79 for a detailed overview of the surveys.

²¹⁰ Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 234. Pieper, 235.

During the First World War parts of the palace were used as a military hospital. But other than some technical and sanitary improvements, no further changes were made until Duke Ernst August (dynasty of Cumberland) finally abdicated on 8 November 1918, which marked the birth of the *Sozialistische Republik Braunschweig* (Socialist Republic).²¹¹ For some weeks the palace became the stronghold of the *Räterepublik* (workers' and soldiers' council) and later of the *Revolutionäre Aktionsausschuß* (revolutionary council). Prostitutes and communist soldiers inhabited the palace until April 1919, as observed by contemporary local media.²¹²

Several different uses were imposed on the building in the following years, simultaneously or successively, including the natural history museum, a library and the studio stage of the nearby State Theater. Also, several authorities and some schools of the Technical University, the school which evolved from the *Collegium Carolinum*, occupied parts of the building. All uses shared a close rapport with the new modern democratic political attitude of the *Weimarer Republik* (Weimar Constitution or Weimar Republic).²¹³ At that time the palace with the square was the most prominent landmark in town and decisively contributed to a sense of place, which even led to some obscure developments, as Figure 3-4 shows. The building had become a major identifying symbol for Braunschweig.



Figure 3-4: Postcard used to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the local butcher association, including a picture of the palace for no apparent reason.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Haegen, 142.

²¹² Contemporary statement, quoted in Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 78.

²¹³ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 78.

²¹⁴ Spies, figure 904.

The Sinister Part of the History

The Nazi movement became established in Braunschweig quite early, incited by several factors. Due to major dissent between the established parties, the outcome of the 1930 election in Braunschweig was a coalition between several conservative parties and the Nazi party NSDAP²¹⁵ – more than two years before the NSDAP became the largest political power in the German Reichstag.²¹⁶ Braunschweig can be seen as an experimental arena for the Nazis, who intended to develop a template for future ideas. Also, it was the Braunschweig Nazis who naturalized the Austrian Adolf Hitler in 1932 and delegated him as Braunschweig's representative in economic matters to Berlin.²¹⁷ After the National Socialists finally took power in Germany in 1933/34, gradual preparation for war influenced all parts of society, although this was officially denied by the Nazis. Braunschweig already had industrial potential and was situated in the heart of Germany, and therefore, based on the experience of the First World War, supposedly too far away for potential air raids. The behavior of the local authorities, who had already anticipated economic benefits, and other political circumstances led to a comparatively brisk affiliation with the eventually fatal developments in Germany. Braunschweig quickly became one of the centers of the military industry in Germany. New factories and residential areas were built during that time of economic growth.²¹⁸

Between 1936 and 1939, the Technical University in Braunschweig established four new colleges: construction of airplanes, engine sciences, aerodynamics and aviation meteorology. The German Aviation Research Society had its headquarters near Braunschweig. Finally, at the outbreak of the war, the institution for air-raid protection went into operation, establishing codes for the construction of bunkers.²¹⁹ With three airfields in operation, Braunschweig also became an important base for the German Luftwaffe. A military hospital, numerous barracks and other installations of the German Armed Forces were situated in or near Braunschweig.²²⁰

²¹⁵ *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party).

²¹⁶ National parliament.

²¹⁷ Haegen, 142.

²¹⁸ Berndt, 7-8.

²¹⁹ Biegel: *Bomben auf Braunschweig*, 9ff.

²²⁰ Ibid.

Braunschweig also became a major center of Nazi ideology and was intended to serve as an example. The cathedral was declared *Staatsdom* and *Nationale Weihestätte* (National Cathedral and National Shrine) and several military and other institutions were built in or near Braunschweig.²²¹ In 1935 the *Waffen-SS* (armed division of the *Schutzstaffel* [SS], which was the Nazi elite corps) established a military-academy in the Braunschweig palace, the *SS-Junkerschule*.²²² It was not just the largest and most impressive building in town, symbolizing power and authority, it was also the site where the break with the recent past of the democratic Weimar Constitution became most apparent. And this step can also be seen as a disapproval of the ideals of the absolute monarchy symbolized by the palace. This is to a certain degree contrary to the approach at the palace in Berlin at about the same time, where the Nazis accepted the Prussian tradition, whose military background obviously better suited their conception.²²³ It can be assumed that the establishment in the heart of Braunschweig was seen by most of the populace and local authorities as an honor and a chance for new prestigious political importance of their town.

The *SS-Junkerschule* in Braunschweig was the second after the corresponding school in Tölz, and it was in those schools where the SS trained their future military leaders, who were intended for fighting with the regular armed forces, but who were also assigned to criminal tasks as well as to “guard detachments” in concentration camps. This was not just like any other military academy – this school was intended to create a new Nazi elite, the soldiers of the Führer.²²⁴ In order to facilitate the academy, the state government remodeled the ducal palace in close coordination with the *Waffen-SS*, using tax money. Lecture halls, dining facilities including an officers' mess, living quarters, administrative offices and other facilities were incorporated into the building. Several other Nazi organizations established their offices in the palace, including in 1941 an administrative branch office of the concentration camp *Buchenwald*.²²⁵

²²¹ Biegel: *Herzöge, Revolution und Nierentisch*, 149.

²²² The name of the first school in Tölz had been *SS-Führerschule* since 1934 (SS-leader-academy – the title *Führer* was also used by Hitler to define his role as absolute authority in the Third Reich). But in 1935 the schools in Braunschweig and Tölz were renamed to *SS-Junkerschule* (SS-squire-academy).

²²³ However, the Nazis did not utilize the palace in Berlin for their cause. See also page 144.

²²⁴ Berndt, 36.

²²⁵ Ibid, 23.

The Nazis recognized early on the potential of the *Bohlweg* street and the impressive public square for their numerous parades and rallies. It was as early as 1930/31 that up to 100,000 Nazi troops marched past the palace, which served as a massive backdrop for the stand for the *Führer*. On 10 May 1933 the Nazis carried out one of the largest book burnings on the square. With the renaming of the square to *Platz der SS* (SS Square) and the establishment of the numerous organizations in the palace, the Nazis had completely wiped out any reminders of the despised monarchy and civil democratic systems.



Figure 3-5: Sentries from the *SS-Junkerschule* (SS military academy) in front of the main entrance in 1939.²²⁶

The ongoing developments made Braunschweig a major target for the Allies. Several air raids led to the destruction of the city with the loss of almost all the historic half-timbered houses. Also, the palace was badly damaged during several attacks towards the end of World War II.²²⁷ The inside completely burnt out, leaving no interior decorations undamaged. And the north wing was lost almost completely (see Figure 3-6 and Figure 3-7). And yet, it would have been possible to reconstruct the building using the remnants, as later structural investigations proved.²²⁸ Despite the destructive fire, even certain

²²⁶ Mewes, 49.

²²⁷ The southern and western wings were damaged on 20 February 1944. The palace burnt out on 15/16 October 1944 after being hit by an incendiary bomb. The north wing was severely damaged on 31 March 1945. Beseler: *Volume I*, 210.

²²⁸ See next section “

Developments up to 1959”, including an overview of the reports on page 79.

parts of the roof trusses would have been able to be reused.²²⁹ It should also be stressed that the central focus of the palace scheme, the main west façade, was in large parts undamaged.



Figure 3-6: The ruins – south west corner.²³⁰



Figure 3-7: The ruins – garden side.²³¹

Developments up to 1959

As in almost all other regions, the first task of the post-war era in Braunschweig was to clear off the rubble and provide housing. The situation in Braunschweig was particularly difficult, since half of the living quarters were destroyed and the city suffered under the load of an exceptionally high number of refugees, especially from the east, and also a very high number of “displaced persons”, originating from the numerous factories which employed forced laborers.²³²

The general conditions seemed to be in favor of the palace, since the ruins were not in the way of urban redevelopment nor was the area, in the heart of Braunschweig, required for new traffic routes. But, other than bricking up the windows and doors on the ground floor, little was done after the war to protect the valuable remnants of the palace, though required funding for preserving the ruins from further decay was continuously discussed since 1949. On the contrary, the central debris recycling plant for Braunschweig occupied the complete palace square in front of the ruined building from 1947 to 1954, certainly increasing the impression of an eyesore.²³³ Also, certain valuable works of art were stolen during

²²⁹ Pieper, 235.

²³⁰ Schreiber, 34.

²³¹ Ibid, 35.

²³² Biegel: *Herzöge, Revolution und Nierentisch*, 156-158.

²³³ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 96.

that time from the building.²³⁴ Braunschweig lost its state capital status after the war, leading to a loss of identity and moreover political and economic influence. The new owner of the property, the state government in Hannover,²³⁵ was very reluctant to be involved at all, almost purposely slowing down any efforts to develop the property, resulting in a continuous back-and-forth until the clearing of the ruins.

Eventually in 1952, Gottfried Hartweg, the head of the state building authorities in Braunschweig, published suggestions for repairing the main and southern wing of the building, which included mixed uses for a large civic hall, studio stage, restaurants and a small auditorium. He also intended the layout of a park, protected from the traffic behind the building and thus very much in the spirit of Ottmer's intentions. Despite certain frictions between the involved parties, it was finally decided to further develop that project, but with a modern new addition instead of the damaged north wing. But neither the intended design competition nor the already approved finances for securing the ruins became reality.²³⁶

In December 1954, Friedrich Wilhelm Kraemer, a well known architect and professor from the Technical University in Braunschweig, suggested, as a variation to the above plans, preserving the conditions of the ruined northern part instead of the intended modern addition. This scheme would have undoubtedly led to a romanticized, almost memorial-like result, which was obviously not in the spirit of that time, at least not in Braunschweig.²³⁷ It was one of the earliest plans with the option to reconstruct the severely damaged parts in the future. As compensation for the reduced floor space, Kraemer suggested building a large modern complex in the northeast corner of the park to house the civic hall and further offices. He withdrew his drafts in 1955 since the city announced, under the influence of the increasing

²³⁴ For instance, the copper cladding of the Quadriga was dismantled and sold to scrap metal yards. Knappe, 9.

²³⁵ English: Hannover.

²³⁶ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 96-98.

²³⁷ Concurrent to the discussion in Braunschweig, other ruins were intentionally preserved, like the *Gedächtniskirche* (memorial church) in Berlin and the *Aegidienkirche* (church of St. Ägidius) in Hannover. (See pages 44ff for further details about those specific cases and section "Rebuilding in West Germany: 1945 until the 1980s" about historic preservation activities in general.)

public awareness, further activities including a design competition, but again with no further implementation.²³⁸

After the lethargic inactivity of the local government during the preceding months, Braunschweig's chief building officer Rünnes published two designs in late 1954 and early 1955. He suggested repairing the main and south wing, but also completely removing the damaged northern wing. In his first draft he intended to erect a modern addition instead of the north wing, corresponding with the first ideas of 1952 (Figure 3-8). In his second draft he suggested building the required modern civic hall in the northeast corner of the park, much like Kraemer's intention. At that time, the city also initiated further activities including several inspections of the building. The new initiatives should be seen in connection with Braunschweig's emerging intentions to have the property transferred back from the state government in Hannover, because it was mutually realized in Braunschweig that it would be much easier to develop the area – one would assume under incorporation of the palace, based on the most recent planning.

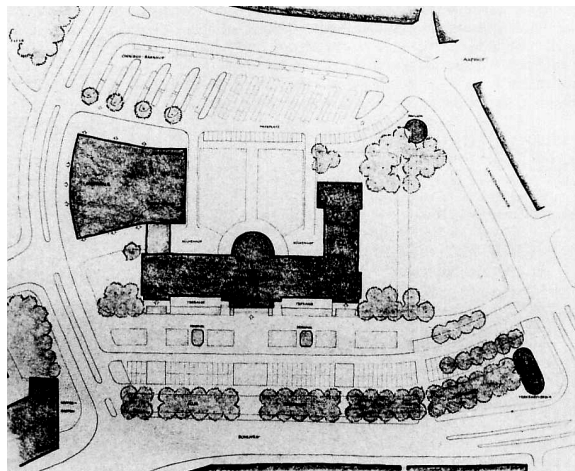


Figure 3-8: Design by Rünnes, from 1954.²³⁹

²³⁸ Kraemer's suggestions were also rejected in 1960, when he introduced his plans again during the final stages of the existence of the palace. It should also be stressed that Kraemer's initiative was one of earliest efforts of the local university to actively contribute to the discussion. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 98-99.

Kraemer was chief municipal building officer (*Stadtbaurat*) for a short time after the war until he became professor at the Braunschweig Technical University in 1946. Gerkan, 9.

²³⁹ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 96.

In 1955, the city of Braunschweig officially asked the state government to transfer the property. The minutes from the negotiations between the city and state government seem to confirm the intention to utilize the palace for the new civic hall.²⁴⁰ But from today's point of view, it can be inferred that it was rather the state government who wanted to get rid of the burden, since it was regularly confronted with citizens demanding the rebuilding of the palace. The Secretary of the Treasury in Hannover was quite happy about the deal, as the State of Lower Saxony was able to shift the responsibility for the ruins and possible cost for its destruction to the local government.²⁴¹ They also reasoned that a "noteworthy, architecturally artistic value cannot be granted to the building, according to the opinion of real experts."²⁴² It was obviously expected to be easier for the local government to pursue the removal of the ruins.

On 1 April 1955 the state government sold the property for DM 1.2 million and granted a subsidy of an equivalent amount to the city in the same year. Braunschweig was required to use the ruins as the basis for a reconstruction of the palace, or to partially conserve the remnants of the palace, or to remove the ruin completely. And it also would have been possible to erect a completely new building in the dimensions of the former palace. It was further required to start with any activity within 3 years and to be finished within 5 years after the day of turn over. A contractual penalty of not less than one million DM was also agreed upon in case the deadlines were not met.²⁴³ Placing the responsibility for such a project solely in the city's hands was a unique and fatal process, and it marked, from today's point of view, the beginning of the end of the palace.

New drafts followed immediately and with them numerous resolutions from the municipal government to rebuild the palace and confirming its importance – but all rather hesitantly, and in the end neither funding was provided nor a competition was held.²⁴⁴ After all efforts by the city had seemed to

²⁴⁰ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 102.

²⁴¹ As implied in the government bill of 5 March 1955. Quoted in Hecht, 126.

²⁴² "Ein besonderer baulich künstlerischer Wert wird nach Meinung wirklicher Experten dem Schloß nicht zugesprochen..." Quoted in Hecht, 126.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ The tenet resolution to preserve the palace due to its value as architectural monument and landmark, and to invite the citizens to support its preservation, was passed by the city council on 18/19 January 1956, but with the abstention of the SPD caucus. Hecht: *Zum Abbruch des Braunschweiger Schlosses*, 126. Knappe, 10.

come to a standstill, the *Schloßbau GmbH* (Palace Construction Company) announced its intentions in September 1956, which were beyond everything seen so far, since they included even more specific uses for the building than before. But more importantly, they offered the required financial potential. The *Schloßbau GmbH*, an association of private financiers and architects further developed their initial suggestions during the following two years, and even the contract between Hannover and Braunschweig had been mutually extended by two years in 1958, thus avoiding the agreed penalty.

After several changes and new incentives from other potential investors, a detailed and comprehensive planning scheme was almost ready for approval in 1958. It was again proposed to repair the less damaged parts of the building and to replace the north wing with a modern addition, yet keeping it in the dimensions of the original outline of the palace. Miscellaneous cultural and gastronomical uses were intended for the area within the historic outline of the building, but a giant new addition at the garden side, to house a multi-purpose area for an audience of 4,000, was also part of the project (Figure 3-9 and Figure 3-10). Interestingly enough, the addition to the back seems like a contemporary interpretation of Ottmer's original intention (compare Figure 3-10 and Figure 3-2).

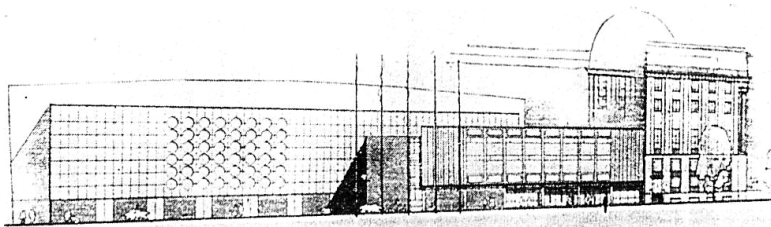


Figure 3-9: Design of the *Schloßbau GmbH*. The sketch shows the northern façade of the palace with the intended civic hall at the back (here on the left).²⁴⁵

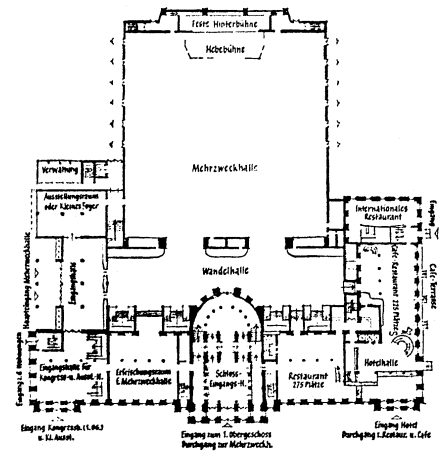


Figure 3-10: Floor plan.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 3 December 1958, page 20.

The newspaper also conducted an opinion survey, using those drawings (for results see page 81).

²⁴⁶ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 18 December 1958, page 18.

The largest part of the funding for the DM 17 million project would have been provided by the *Schloßbau GmbH* under the condition of a long-term lease and guarantees from the city for the required additional funding.²⁴⁷ This grand scheme was constantly discussed and repeatedly reduced until October 1959, when the city finally decided to separate the requirement of a civic hall from the palace project. With that decision, the *Schloßbau GmbH* was forced to withdraw from the project – after three years of intensive but fruitless planning.

Following the failure of the ambitious plans, the city authorities themselves started again to pursue their own designs for the area. Since it was by that time almost decided to not incorporate the civic hall in the palace, the potential uses for the building were greatly diminished.²⁴⁸ Four plans were published by the city in November 1959, all more or less suggesting the reduction of the remnants of the palace, mainly to provide sufficient space for large-scale infrastructure projects with multi-lane traffic routes. These plans had nothing in common with the designs published so far, which more or less had shown a certain continuity in at least partial conservation of the palace and an intended mixed use. Instead, the new plans suggested four more drastic ideas: to remove just the side wings, to build a 16-story high-rise building behind the middle pavilion, to retain only the main façade or to demolish the complete building with the exception of the portico. Of those plans, only the last one was to receive even the slightest chance. But in April 1960, even that fourth suggestion to keep the central focal point of the former palace as a memorial and visual enrichment to the area was abandoned. It would have undoubtedly enhanced the final built scheme.

Two other buildings whose situation is comparable to that of the palace in Braunschweig should be mentioned at this point. Both were also severely damaged during the war and a controversy started in the mid 1950s about the further development and use of the ruined buildings. Following that process, the *Neues Schloß* (New Palace) in Stuttgart was partially reconstructed and retrofitted in 1957-63 to incorporate offices, despite the urgings of urban planners and progressive architects to demolish the

²⁴⁷ A security of approximately six million DM would have been required. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 154.

²⁴⁸ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 108.

ruins. And the *Leineschloß* (Palace on the Leine river) in Hannover was converted at about the same time to house the parliament of Lower-Saxony, the very administrative body which played a ruinous role in the Braunschweig case. There had obviously been no political objections in the state capital to use a former monarchical palace to house a democratic body.²⁴⁹ In light of these concurrent cases, what happened in Braunschweig can therefore not be regarded as simply an inevitable consequence of the spirit of the time. There must have been other circumstances finally leading to the unfortunate developments in Braunschweig, which will be investigated in the next section.

The Final Death Blow

If the sequence of events in Braunschweig up to the end of 1959 was characterized by continuous though slow back-and-forth, then everything happened at once during the final stages of the ruins. Even more individuals and lobby groups became involved and contributed to an increasingly controversial dispute. The major arguments, which finally led to the removal of the ruined building, will be discussed, but it will also be shown that they are by no means a watertight justification for the final decision.

First, financial restraints were made out by the local and state government to be the major reason for not being able to rebuild the palace. Certainly Braunschweig's economy suffered from the close vicinity to the East-West German border, and despite being the center of a heavily industrialized part of Lower Saxony, the area never fully participated in the potential of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (the so-called "economic miracle" of the 1950s in Germany).²⁵⁰ But despite that, merely seeing the monetary aspect would be too easy, considering that funding for the project would have been minor in comparison

²⁴⁹ Beseler: *Volume I*, XVIIIff.

²⁵⁰ Braunschweig was situated in the so-called *Zonenrandgebiet* (border area between East and West Germany) and was cut off from long established economic regional interactions by the new border, especially from the agricultural resources and markets to the east, to which Braunschweig was more closely connected, compared to the western areas. Established traffic routes were cut, making the area even less accessible. In the years following the war, the economic and infrastructural objectives in those areas were often bouncing between the vision of German reunification and increasing need for further reorientation to the west. Also more refugees from the east came to Braunschweig in comparison to other regions.

to other tremendous rebuilding efforts of the time.²⁵¹ Also, the city knew about cost estimates, saying that rebuilding of the palace to accommodate office space or cultural use would have cost DM 15.5 million, including landscaping.²⁵² On the other hand, DM 12.3 million²⁵³ of public money were calculated to be spent on the demolition of the ruins, basic landscaping of the area, and comparable new construction projects somewhere else. It is almost needless to say that there were also numerous other differing numbers introduced by the opposing groups, which were ever more divergent the farther the discussion went.²⁵⁴ Beyond that, the project of the *Schloßbau GmbH* would have placed an even lower burden on the public budget, a detail which was ignored by the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who just argued about the underlying unpredictable risk of that project.²⁵⁵ Nonetheless, financial reasons were determined to be the main justification to abandon the palace. But the contrary is true – good financial sense would have led to the appreciation of reusable building fabric rather than its destruction.

²⁵¹ In 1959, it was estimated that the rebuilding of Braunschweig would cost DM 730 million. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 115.

The new train station was under construction at that time – a hundred-million-DM project, mainly financed by the Federal Railway Company, but requiring the city to provide about DM 32 million for infrastructure and other items to develop the intended new district around the train station. Kraemer, 20.

²⁵² Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 236.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ DM 5.7 million for the reconstruction, according to estimates from the early 1950s. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 152.

DM 7.5-10 million for the reconstruction of the main wing and demolition of the side wings (the first of the four plans from the municipality, dated November 1959). Ibid, 109.

DM 10.5 million for the same scope as above, but according to another estimate. Ibid, 116.

DM 12 million for the rebuilding of the palace (government estimate in 1955 during the transfer of the property to Braunschweig). Ibid, 102. Hecht, 126.

DM 15.5 million for the project of the *Schloßbau GmbH*, but mostly privately financed. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 152.

DM 25 million for the rebuilding of the palace. (But based on an authentic reconstruction, including the interiors, as estimated by Egon Schiller, the Chair of the SPD caucus in the city council at the time.) Schiller, open letter.

The same amount was also cited by Adolf Arndt (SPD, Member of the German Parliament). Arndt, 525.

DM 1.9 million for the first stage of the landscaping. Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 163.

DM 11.8 million for the second stage of the park design (already anticipated in 1960), comprising the comprehensive remodeling of the whole area, including new streets, an underground car park, fountains, pavilions etc. Ibid, 110, 157, 163.

DM 27 million for both stages of the landscaping and the new convention center at the train station, calculated according to Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 121. (The building of the convention center was part of a total redevelopment of the area around the train station, with additional DM 32 million. That scheme became a crucial element of the city's new urban planning objectives to further disperse the compact city. See also footnote 260).

²⁵⁵ Schiller, in his open letter.

Instead, owing to the contemporary objectives of urban planning, new developments at the fringes of the city to accommodate the emerging needs of the citizens were fostered – with consequences which had already been predicted by the merchants at *Bohlweg* more than a century earlier, and which eventually have led to a critical reevaluation of the approaches of that time in later years. Despite the somewhat hesitant impact of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, Braunschweig converted itself even more quickly to a car friendly city with wide avenues, multi-story and underground car parks, shopping centers and also with one of the infamous pedestrian areas in its downtown. Such developments, which will be further discussed in the next chapter, were undoubtedly impelled by the above-average war destruction in Braunschweig, but also by governmental incentives focused on the border areas to enhance infrastructure.

Finding an appropriate use was declared the second major problem of the building. But this also should be seen as a direct consequence of the contemporary and politically approved planning approaches. As has already been shown, the city authorities deprived the palace of any potential profitable use. But as the years between 1918 and 1935 suggest, there used to be a continuous need in Braunschweig to accommodate administrative offices and public organizations. The situation after the Second World War probably required even more room, and numerous potential uses had been suggested in the 1950s.

The third argument against the building was the supposedly insignificant artistic value of Ottmer's project, which one should remember was never fully implemented. It needs to be acknowledged that rebuilding in Braunschweig was evidently slow compared to other parts of West Germany due to the limited financial capabilities mentioned above and also due to the above-average destruction during the war, especially in the city center. Stretches of wasteland remained unused as late as the 1970s.²⁵⁶ At an early stage the concept of *Traditionsinseln* (Islands of Tradition) was established, which was enthusiastically regarded as being the starting point to redevelop an awareness for historic continuity and to stimulate the motivation to rebuild the city.²⁵⁷ The acquiescent concept, as it was also labeled in later years, led

²⁵⁶ 90% of downtown Braunschweig has been destroyed during the war. Beseler: *Volume I*, 205.

See also next section "The Emptiness in the Heart of Braunschweig" about the hesitantly development of Braunschweig after the war.

²⁵⁷ Evers, 148.

to the preservation and reconstruction of five designated areas.²⁵⁸ Those included the *Burgplatz* (Castle Area), which can be regarded as the historic origin of Braunschweig, and even the area opposite the palace grounds was declared as worthy of protection (see Figure 3-15), but the artistic value and social importance of the palace was obviously not sufficient to be included in that scheme.

Instead, the state government and increasingly the city council completely denied any historical and cultural importance of the palace, as discussed earlier.²⁵⁹ The palace in Braunschweig can clearly be seen as a victim of the common disregard for nineteenth century architecture in times of uncompromising purism of the modern movement. Many architects and historians of the time and with them the politicians in charge dismissed the building as being an example of eclectic historicism, just obstructing the path to modern urban planning and to the final victory of functionalism. But other experts also took an open stand to emphasize the architectural significance of the building, like Professor Hecht and Professor Flesche from the Department of Architectural History at the Technical University in Braunschweig in their open letter forwarded to the city council in early December 1959.²⁶⁰ Perhaps only a few years later the changing urban planning objectives and emerging Post-Modernism would have prevented the destruction of this truly impressive piece of architecture.

A fourth counter-argument was the structural condition of the ruins. Three expert opinions were available by December 1959. The first was basically a one-page letter from Professor Kristen, the head of the *Institut Baustoffkunde und Materialprüfung* (Materials Testing Institute at the University). It was more like a response to an inquiry from the chief municipal building officer, who expressed concerns regarding the stability of the masonry, assuming that extensive floor plan changes required for large-scale uses would not be feasible.²⁶¹ This “report”, which basically just briefly confirmed the opinion of its financier, had been one of the reasons for the city to reject the plans of the *Schloßbau GmbH* just two months

²⁵⁸ Labeled in such a negative way in: Beseler: *Volume I*, 205.

²⁵⁹ See footnote 242 on page 73.

²⁶⁰ Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 236

²⁶¹ 18 June 1959 from Kristen. The report was mainly prepared to assess the suitability of the building for the project of the *Schloßbau GmbH* (see page 74). Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 119ff.

earlier. But in the meantime two more reports, which followed a new site visit, had been submitted to the local building authorities.²⁶² Professor Kordina, another expert from the university, wrote in one of them that 60-80% of the remaining masonry was in reusable condition, and he even suggested in the other report preserving just the façade and combining it with a new modern building. Those two later reports partially contradicted the first one, simply because they were based on more detailed and differentiated investigations, but they also continued its statements, namely that extensive floor plan changes would require new structural elements for adequate distribution of the loads. Other than that, the remnants would be perfectly fine for any project whatsoever. As with the financial question, every involved party simply picked the most suitable parts from the available paperwork for their cause or they tried to construct contradictions between the reports to undermine their value, though both was mainly true for the ruling SPD.²⁶³ It should be noted that the optimistic assumptions of the two expert reports from Kordina were confirmed and in parts even surpassed by further investigations, performed during the demolition of the building.²⁶⁴

Finally, the political history of the building, ranging from monarchy to Nazi rule, seemed to be the last nail in the coffin. This subject area was probably the most decisive, but at the same time the least publicly discussed one – or to be more accurate, it was mainly just used by the advocates of the palace to show up the supporters of the demolition. But it is also quite obvious that the Social Democratic Party SPD had ideological difficulties with, if not even antipathy against, the former users. It is quite fateful that all other buildings in Braunschweig which were used to serve the Nazi cause have been saved and vested

²⁶² Expert reports:

19 November 1959 from Kordina, who succeeded Kristen as head of the Institute in the same year.

4 December 1959 from Pieper/Kordina. Ibid. Also partially quoted in Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 237.

Professor Kordina was the head of the Institute of Structural Building Analysis at the Technical University and

Professor Pieper was the head of Institute of Building Material Sciences at the Technical University.

²⁶³ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig (1993)*, 121.

Also, the percentages to describe the reusable masonry have been interpreted in different ways and mixed up during the discussions (certain percentages were based on the dimensions of the original building and others on the remaining ruins). Bodemüller, 230.

²⁶⁴ See final report of the *Schloßkommission*, April 1960 (page 84).

with new functions.²⁶⁵ It seems that the palace, which undoubtedly had a much wider historic background than many of those buildings, was used as a scapegoat – and it can even be seen as a symbol for the repression of memories of the recent past in large parts of society after the war. From today's point of view, there was a clear inclination since the early 1950s at all governmental levels to remove the palace, which is especially true for certain parts of the SPD, who gained more and more influence as time went on.²⁶⁶

But it should be stressed that it was the urgent need to act somehow that finally released the wrecking ball. The agreement of 1955 between state and city was about to terminate on 1 April 1960 – for the second time, after it had already been extended two years earlier. Maybe even more significantly, the approaching elections later in the year 1960 urged the SPD to present the next council with a fait accompli. Schiller, the head of the SPD in Braunschweig, later put it this way: “The people were also waiting for a quick decision.”²⁶⁷ However, according to a survey conducted by the local newspaper, the citizens would have favored another kind of decision. In December 1958 almost 80% of the more than 3,000 participants answered that they would prefer a modern civic hall built behind the original historic façade of the palace, similar to the project from the *Schloßbau GmbH* (Figure 3-9). Only less than 4% wanted to see just a landscaped park in the heart of Braunschweig.²⁶⁸ But the latter was to become reality in the following years.

After a decade of discussions, debates and resolutions, more or less aiming to supposedly preserve the ruin or to even reconstruct the palace, it was during a session of the city council on 21 December 1959 that for the first time the demolition of the building was put onto the agenda. The SPD, who happened to be the ruling party at that time, decided with a majority of 24 votes to 22 in favor of the demolition of the palace. The opposition appealed, saying that the quorum of 25 members required for the first vote had not been met, resulting in a new vote on 20 January 1960, with an even smaller margin of 24 votes from the SPD to 23 from all five opposition parties. It was therefore officially decided

²⁶⁵ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 79.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 107, 154.

²⁶⁷ “Auch die Bevölkerung erwartete eine baldige Klärung.” Schiller, 238.

²⁶⁸ Results of the survey published in the local newspaper *Braunschweiger Zeitung* on 19 December 1958.

to completely demolish the palace with the exception of the portico at best, to landscape the area and to build a new civic hall at another location.²⁶⁹

Those months were characterized by opposing accusations and a more or a less skillful legal hair-splitting farce from both sides about the legitimacy of contracts, decisions, reports and testimonials.²⁷⁰ The first activities after the council meeting in December 1959 were initiated by the Technical University of Braunschweig. Professor Hecht, who had earlier advocated the preservation of the palace, successfully encouraged the heads of the architectural and art history departments of all West German universities and the members of the *Koldewey-Gesellschaft*²⁷¹ to sign a resolution against the demolition of the palace. That resolution and further letters of protest were sent to the Lord Mayoress in Braunschweig and to F. Knost, the president of the administrative district of Lower Saxony.²⁷² Together with those letters, the Dean of the college, Professor Bodemüller, informed the administrative bodies on 13 January 1960 that the university had constituted an experts committee (*Schloßkommission*) to provide support in all technical and design questions.²⁷³ But those endeavors were turned down during the council meeting on 20 January 1960 because the “...statements from the professors have not provided anything of importance.”²⁷⁴ Any further debate was completely avoided during that council meeting, which was basically seen as a burden anyway, necessary only because the opposition parties had appealed against the first vote. Instead, the SPD pushed through their motion to reject a new debate and they lamented that they “...would have been thankful, if the professors would have expressed their opinion in such detail

²⁶⁹ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 121, 125, 162.

²⁷⁰ The opposition for instance tried to prove the contract of 1955 invalid, because a new by-law from the same year requiring a subordinate authority to approve any transfer of property with artistic and historic value had supposedly been neglected. The ruling party countered that the new law became valid nine days after the contract was signed. Knape, 12.

²⁷¹ *Koldewey-Gesellschaft – Vereinigung für baugeschichtliche Forschung e.V.* (Koldewey Society – Association for architectural history research).

²⁷² On 13 January 1960 and 25 January 1960 respectively.

The resolution and letters were published in *Bauwelt*, 29 February 1960, 229f.

²⁷³ Bodemüller, 229-230.

²⁷⁴ “... die Stellungnahmen der Herren Professoren hätten nicht wesentlich Neues gebracht“. Council member Ließ (SPD). Minutes from the council meeting on 20 January 1960, quoted in Kohl: *Das Residenzschloß in Braunschweig*, 236 and Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 124-125.

5 years earlier.”²⁷⁵ This was a clear distortion of the facts, since the university and other experts had continuously expressed their opinions and tried to contribute to the preservation of the palace.²⁷⁶ Also, objections from Günther Grundmann, the head of the West German Association of State Conservators,²⁷⁷ were dismissed by Knost with the comment that “no law stipulated the involvement of the Lower-Saxon State Conservator in that procedure.”²⁷⁸ Obviously the government put more emphasis on proving the lawfulness of their decisions than in trying to find a mutual compromise. The question about the pros and cons of the projects became a pointless political dispute between the opposing parties in the city council, which is confirmed by the circumstance that all parties always voted uniformly, without any diverging opinions of individual members. The legal proceedings were obviously more important than the object of which it all was about.²⁷⁹ Despite the illustrated objections and further protests from miscellaneous organizations and individuals, the demolition of the building started on 18 March 1960.

Even with the evidently clear stand of the city government, Lotz, as representative of the city in that matter, initiated several talks with the university’s *Schloßkommission* (palace experts committee) between February and April 1960. This was done under the pretence of discussing the preservation of parts of the building, or to at least coordinate the careful dismantling of valuable fragments, intended for later reuse in the park or at other locations. But according to Hecht, those meetings with Lotz and his successor Weber were characterized by deliberate misinformation from the city about further intentions and schedules.²⁸⁰ It became obvious that, contrary to initial intentions, the building was intended to be entirely removed and that the city had no intentions at all to weaken their previous decisions. But even

²⁷⁵ “... wären wir froh gewesen, wenn sich die Herren Professoren schon vor 5 Jahren so eingehend geäußert hätten.” Ibid.

Bodemüller protested against that accusation in his open letter addressed to the chief city commissioner, Mr Lotz. Bodemüller, 229-230.

²⁷⁶ See page 71 for the efforts from Professor Kraemer in 1954.

²⁷⁷ *Vereinigung der Landesdenkmalpfleger in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*.

The letter dated 23 February 1960 was published on 14 March 1960. Grundmann: *Letter from the Association of State Conservators*, 285.

²⁷⁸ Answer letter from F. Knost, the President of the administrative district of Lower Saxony: “Damit entfiel in dem jetzt durchzuführenden Genehmigungsverfahren die Beteiligung des Herrn niedersächsischen Landeskonservators.” Quoted in Grundmann: *Umsonst alle Proteste*, 87.

²⁷⁹ Grundmann: *Umsonst alle Proteste*, 87.

²⁸⁰ Letter from Lotz dated 5 February and meetings on 7 March, 23 March and 6 April 1960. Hecht, 129-130.

worse, the city representatives tried to utilize the experts committee to pretend that the dismantling was scientifically supervised and approved.²⁸¹ The *Schloßkommission* immediately withdrew from that “cooperation” and published its final report soon after, demanding again a stop to the demolition and describing the structural stability of the building as more than sufficient for any reconstruction project, which was confirmed by the observations during the demolition.²⁸²

While the *Schloßkommission* was at least able to communicate with the city government, the overwhelmingly large group of concerned citizens, who expressed their views in numerous readers’ letters and also during a large demonstration in front of the palace, was not even heard (Figure 3-11). The protest was initiated by the former municipal building officer Gottfried Hartwieg and Richard Borek, a local businessmen and storekeeper. Borek placed two desperate and spiteful full-page announcements in the local newspaper, appealing to the conscience of the residents and a historic responsibility in times of “...smug prosperity of this traditionless epoch.”²⁸³ And he was certainly also concerned with the future economic development of the area, as the merchants on the *Bohlweg* were in 1831. The demonstration became a success, but it also needs to be acknowledged that those initiatives came too late and that an earlier outcry from the residents might have saved the palace.



Figure 3-11: On 23 April 1960, between 2,000 and 3,000 residents demonstrated against the demolition, which had already started some weeks earlier.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 129.

²⁸² Final report published in the local newspaper *Braunschweiger Zeitung* on 11 April 1960 and in *Bauwelt* on 2 May 1960.

²⁸³ “... im satten Wohlstand dieser traditionslosen Epoche.” *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 21 April and 23 April 1960.

²⁸⁴ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 121.
(5,000 demonstrators according to other estimates.)

Many fought in favor of the palace – not just for the cause of protecting a valuable witness to the past but also to avoid damage to the reputation of the nation in the eyes of the worldwide public. It was argued that especially the close proximity to the other German nation put an even larger responsibility on Braunschweig.²⁸⁵ The case of Braunschweig can clearly be seen in one line with the wrecking of the palaces in Potsdam at about the same time and in Berlin some years earlier. Grundmann fiercely wrote in 1960: “Now we are seen as barbarians, as the barbarians on both sides of the border, not esteeming the traces of history when trying to push through political convictions, be it with the rules of an authoritarian or a democratic political system.”²⁸⁶ The decisions in Braunschweig, which were highly political, seem especially incomprehensible since at the same time the West Germans condemned the occurrences in the eastern parts of the divided nation. Grundmann pointed out that those interventions from the west could now easily be answered with: “You are not any better!”²⁸⁷ Also the university referred, in their letter from 25 January 1960, to the responsibility “...which we have to consider carefully in the border area.”²⁸⁸ And to even further aggravate that argument: another building by Carl Theodor Ottmer, the *Singakademie* in Berlin,²⁸⁹ was granted with the privilege to be reconstructed after the war – east of the border! West of the border in Braunschweig, the demolition of the palace was completed on 12 August 1960, leaving an emptiness behind, which from then on was named *Schloßpark* (palace park).

²⁸⁵ Bodemüller, 229.

²⁸⁶ “Nun stehen wir da als die Barbaren, und zwar als die Barbaren hüben und drüben, denen nichts heilig ist, was die Geschichte hinterlassen hat, wenn es darum geht, politische Überzeugungen durchzusetzen, sei es mit den Spielregeln eines autoritären, sei es mit denen eines demokratischen Prinzips.” Grundmann: *Umsonst alle Proteste*, 82.

²⁸⁷ “Ihr seid ja auch nicht besser!” Ibid, 83.

²⁸⁸ “...welche wir als Zonengrenzgebiet unbedingt zu beachten haben.”

The letter from the university addressed to F. Knost, the President of the administrative district of Lower Saxony. Published in *Bauwelt* on 29 February 1960, page 229.

²⁸⁹ The Berlin Singing Academy was initially designed by Schinkel and later by Ottmer, who also oversaw the building process from 1823 to 1827. The building was reconstructed after the war, renamed as *Maxim Gorki Theater* (Maksim Gorky Theater) in 1952, and is still in use as such.

The Emptiness in the Heart of Braunschweig

After the removal of the remnants of the palace, an unpretentious park was laid out during the first implementation stage in 1961-1963, with a more comprehensive design already anticipated. The initial design for that second stage in 1973 turned out to be quite controversial, because the architectural office Bofinger suggested reconstructing the portico at its original location in the park as backdrop for a multi-purpose stage (Figure 3-12 and Figure 3-13).

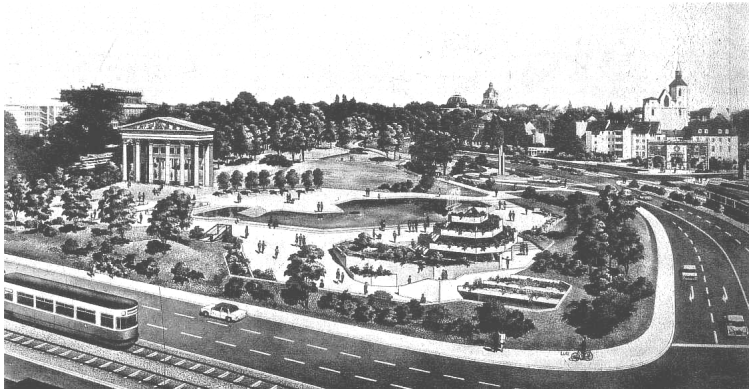


Figure 3-12: Initial design for the second implementation stage in 1973, with a reconstructed portico. The new street is shown on the right.²⁹⁰

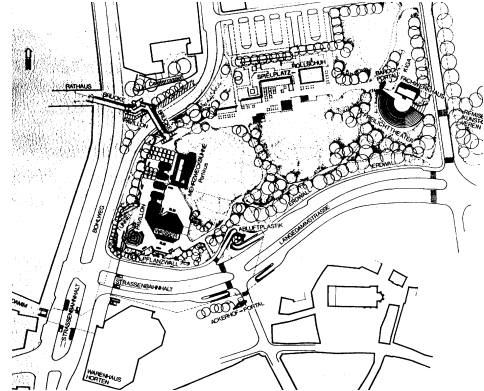


Figure 3-13: Plan view of the park with the new street, which cuts off the Magni Quarter to the south.²⁹¹

Konrad Wiese, the municipal building officer, praised the portico as the essential intellectual centerpiece of the whole scheme.²⁹² At first the conditions seemed to be in favor of the concept, which had already been discussed during the demolition of the palace. Despite the overhasty developments in 1959/60, the more valuable larger pieces from the palace, like columns, capitals and most of the portico, were marked, cataloged and brought to a landfill with the intention of protecting those elements in a sand bedding until a potential later reuse. But the landfill had meanwhile been claimed by allotment gardeners, growing vegetables on top of the valuable rubble.²⁹³ Moreover, the resurgence of the centerpiece of the palace would have obviously brought up too many unpleasant memories of the discussions and decisions

²⁹⁰ Original drawing from architectural office Bofinger & Partner. Photo in Wiese: *Braunschweig*, 31.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 50.

²⁹² Ibid, 51.

²⁹³ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1993), 145.

just 14 years earlier.²⁹⁴ Instead, the scheme of Bofinger was watered down, and it was finally decided to just incorporate the saved capitals from the portico in the already designed water basin (Figure 3-14 and Figure 3-16). At that time, several other sculptural elements from the palace were also almost arbitrarily stuck to miscellaneous buildings in and around Braunschweig, such as the museum and train station, but also to private properties – an unsatisfactory compromise.

The second implementation stage, which was completed in 1974, also included the “reading pavilion” at the basin and a two-story parking garage for 1,000 cars, built under the park. A street has been cut through between the park and the *Magni-Viertel*, the historic quarter on the other side of the new 6-lane street.²⁹⁵ And the *Bohlweg* has been widened as well during that reshaping of the area. The new parking garage also served as part of a pedestrian tunnel system, linking the park to the *Magni-Viertel* and to the downtown area to the west of *Bohlweg* street. The *Magni-Viertel* was already designated earlier as one of the “Islands of Tradition”, but suffered from being cut off from the rest of the “shopping city”. Therefore, the comprehensive redevelopment of the area included the building of a large department store right at the edge of the historic quarter opposite the park. This decision was based on the idea that “...crowds of consumers from the outskirts should be washed ashore...” to the shopping facilities in and around the department store.²⁹⁶ This was obviously seen as the only way to preserve and develop the historic quarter. Interestingly enough, the modern upgrade of the area with the new street meant a decrease of the size of the park and also required the removal of certain historic structures, like the *Ackerhof-Portal*,²⁹⁷ which had survived all the previous improvements and which was still included in Bofingers’ initial scheme (shown in the lower middle part of Figure 3-13). That former gate to the palace garden was dismantled in the early 1970s and deposited for later reuse.

²⁹⁴ Wedemeyer: *Das ehemalige Residenzschloß zu Braunschweig* (1986), 24-25.

²⁹⁵ The new street is today called *Georg-Eckert-Straße*, but is on Figure 3-13 misleadingly labeled *Langedammstraße*, which is the name of the historic route in the heart of the *Magni-Viertel* (see also Figure 3-15).

²⁹⁶ “... mit gewaltiger Flut die Konsumentenschwärme aus der Peripherie heranschwemmen soll ...” Evers, 149.

²⁹⁷ The *Ackerhof-Portal* (gateway to the Ackerhof square), was built in 1771 at the entrance to the gardens of the Grey Court, relocated to the royal stables behind the building before 1807 and redesigned in Napoleonic times. It served as a sort of back entrance to the palace. Spies, 444f.

Linked with the tunnel to the “consumer-streams” on the other side of the intersecting multilane roadways, the department store was seen as the “bridgehead of the inner-city pedestrian precinct.”²⁹⁸ However, the further constructive development of the historic quarter in the late 1970s and ‘80s was not so much fostered by the huge shopping experience, but rather encouraged through the emerging attitude in urban planning to break with such projects.



Figure 3-14: Aerial view of the park.²⁹⁹



Figure 3-15: The large department store with the “Island of Tradition” Magni Quarter behind.³⁰⁰



Figure 3-16: Close up of the valuable capitals in the emptied water basin.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Evers, 149.

²⁹⁹ Original photo from office Bofinger & Partner. Photo in Schreiber, 33.

³⁰⁰ Evers, 148.

³⁰¹ Schreiber, 33.

Contrary to the notorious messages of image campaigns,³⁰² the real impression of Braunschweig is often described as that of an incomplete temporary solution. It is quite obvious that the rebuilding, in the years following the war, of a city with such severe destruction as Braunschweig has to be done under certain constraints and that the result is often apt to be not a pleasing one. There are political and architectural breaks in history still visible today. When dealing with the recent history one could get the impression that Braunschweig's residents, especially in the past years, had a rather ambivalent relation to their town. It seems that they fell into some sort of adjustment to the circumstances instead of developing real civic pride.

Walter Ackers, an outsider who moved to Braunschweig some years ago to work in his profession as architect and urban planner, and to later become professor at Braunschweig Technical University, described the problems of the city in a book, which was written in the context of Braunschweig's application to become *Kulturhauptstadt Europas 2010* (European Capital of Culture in 2010). He wrote about the face of the *Bohlweg* in front of the former palace as being a "standardized sacrifice of form ... miserable architecture from the poor postwar era ... a fragmentary temporary solution"³⁰³ And he also described the visual and economic decline of the area, as he wrote about "Fish or French Fries – fast food in top locations."³⁰⁴ Finally, he cynically concluded that the *Bohlweg* is probably the only area in Braunschweig where one could feel a touch of metropolis, but mainly through the disadvantages of being "Noisy, frantic, dirty, ugly and anonymous ..."³⁰⁵ Ackers also identifies the main problem of Braunschweig, which is, according to him, the side by side of nostalgia for medieval times and the cruel penetration of the city with sober modern functional zones. He says that the areas do not complement each other, but they rather prevent a development of a higher order. "The city has been split. Here the islands for the history. There

³⁰² "Brunswick ... is the second largest city in Lower Saxony and a cultural and economic centre in the region. The city, with its extensive pedestrian areas, has a lively, interesting and varied centre which invites visitors to explore ... Five "Islands of Tradition" and Other Sights Worth Seeing serve as a charming and picturesque backdrop connected by streets, lanes and arcades with numerous specialty stores, boutiques and department stores." www.braunschweig.de/english/city/sights/index.html

³⁰³ "Das Gesicht des Bohlweges: Standardisierter Gestaltverzicht ... Armselige Architektur aus armer Nachkriegszeit ... ein lückenhaftes Provisorium" Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 68.

³⁰⁴ "Fisch oder Pommes – in besten 1A-Lagen breiten sich Schnellimbisse aus." Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 84.

³⁰⁵ "Laut, hektisch, schmutzig, häßlich und anonym ..." Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 90.

the flow of traffic. Here the paradise for pedestrians. There clear run for the motorists.”³⁰⁶ In addition, there are still patches of undeveloped land waiting for awakening since the end of the war. Ackers made out the uncertainties of the postwar period as the main reason for the unsatisfactory condition: “One could feel the problems of rebuilding, the ideological fight between modern times and traditions.”³⁰⁷ Undoubtedly, Braunschweig can be seen as a city with image problems.

Konrad Wiese wrote in his retrospective about his time as chief municipal building officer from 1965-1990, that even in 1965 “... it took you back to the 1950s, because the rebuilding in other German cities had been brought to an end in the mid 1960s.”³⁰⁸ He further described the palace square as being, especially in the 1960s, the “... heart of Braunschweig and at the same time the height of disappointment and disillusionment.”³⁰⁹

The current situation in many places in Braunschweig and especially in the area around the former palace is dominated by the notion of modern urban planning and architecture for abstraction and uniformity. The existing shopping center just across the park, a typical example of that time of visionary Modernism, is a large abstracted building block without windows (Figure 3-15). But what would costumers see anyway – Ackers answers that rhetorical question: “Streets without sidewalks, like Bohlweg ... a park without residents around. A palace garden without palace.”³¹⁰ Braunschweig seems to be parceled out into individual zones separated by fences and wide roadways, with the sole purpose of efficiently handling private and professional processes. Those spaces have the “charm of storage rooms.”³¹¹

The park also turned out to be of rather disputable quality. Following the second implementation stage there were more or less constant attempts to upgrade the quality of the area. The well-known

³⁰⁶ “Man hat sich die Stadt geteilt. Hier die Inseln für die Geschichte. Dort die Flüsse für den Verkehr. Hier das Paradies der Fußgänger, dort die freie Fahrt für die Autofahrer.” Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 10f.

³⁰⁷ “Man spürt die Probleme des Wiederaufbaus, den ideologischen Kampf zwischen Moderne und Tradition“, Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 10.

³⁰⁸ “... fühlte man sich 1965 in Braunschweig in die 50er Jahre zurückversetzt, war doch der Wiederaufbau anderer deutscher Städte Mitte der 60er Jahre abgeschlossen.” Wiese: *Planen und Bauen in Braunschweig*, 2.

³⁰⁹ “... als Herzstück Braunschweigs zugleich den Höhepunkt der Ernüchterung und Desillusionierung dar.” (*Stadtbaurat*) Wiese: *Planen und Bauen in Braunschweig*, 2.

³¹⁰ “Straßen ohne Bürgersteig wie Bohlweg ... Ein Park ohne Bewohner ringsum. Ein Schloßpark ohne Schloß” Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 62.

³¹¹ “Charme von Abstellräumen”. Ackers: *Stadt im Sinn*, 11.

postmodern architect O. M. Ungers was commissioned by the city in 1976 to provide a detailed assessment of the area. His design included the free and loose installation of several remnants from the palace, including the portico, in the heart of the park. (Figure 3-17) Later, the architect Stephan Braunfels recommended a comprehensive redesign of the *Bohlweg*, including a rectangular building made of glass at the site of the former palace. Additionally, he intended the glass structure to be framed by two quarter circles of trees, obviously to the memory of Ottmer's unexecuted colonnades. (Figure 3-18)

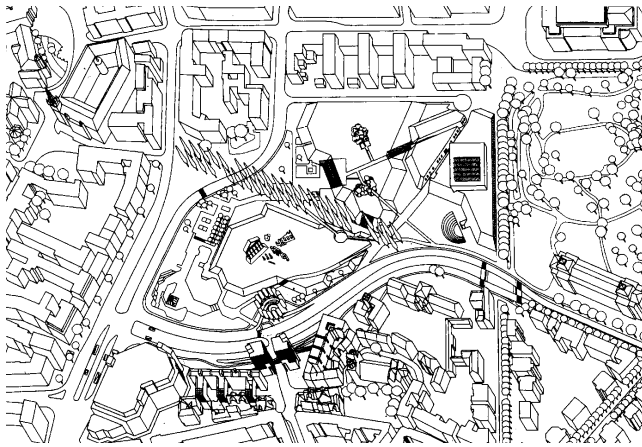


Figure 3-17: Design by Ungers, 1976.³¹²

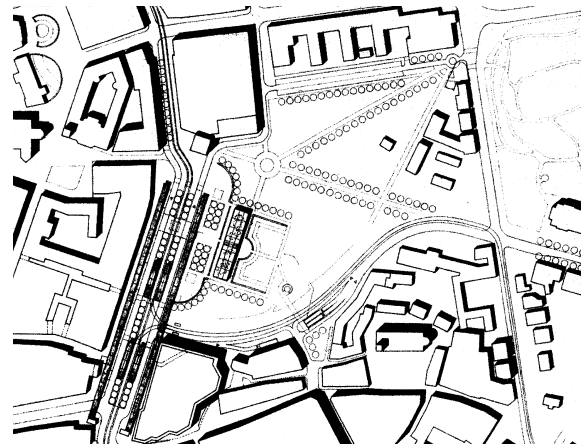


Figure 3-18: Design by Braunfels, 1993.³¹³

But still in 1989 the park was described as being the biggest problem of urban planning in Braunschweig and it was further complained that the area had no boundaries, but a blurred outline – a chaotic space without shape.³¹⁴ Yet for some reason, the excitement from the heyday of modern urban planning also survived even up to the early 1990s. A guide book, for instance, praised in 1991 the visionary city fathers who “... met the needs of the people, by providing opportunities for a meaningful use of their spare time and short breaks ... There, where the palace of the dukes of Braunschweig once stood, nowadays the heart of the city pulsates” – and further on the park was described as being a “... cheerful and lively rest area with cozy lounge-style seating ... a meeting place for youngsters ... brightly painted

³¹² Design by O. M. Ungers, K. L. Dietzsch, H. Kollhoff and Th. Will. Ungers, 308. Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 24-27. Figure taken from Ungers, 308.

³¹³ Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 24-27. Figure taken from page 27.

³¹⁴ Konrad Wiese (chief municipal building officer) in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 29 March 1989, page 9.

garden chairs at the pool, from which stick out four capitals – remnants from the one-time palace.”³¹⁵ In other words, the palace has been reduced to some insignificant elements in the new green enlarged heart of downtown. The park, intended to be grand and spacious with pleasant benches and lawns, obviously aroused different feelings and opinions. It was also a symbol for the final liberation from, but moreover for the negation of a partly disputable past. The cited optimistic visions might have been true at a certain time in history, and maybe even until the area was again enclosed by a construction fence in April 2005, but there have always been other voices increasingly documenting disorder, crime, drug dealers and other diseases of modern civilization not wanted in the neighborhood. The contrasts, which eventually led to increasingly fierce discussions, will be further investigated in the next section.

A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing?

Wiese concluded in 1990 that the demolition of the palace “... has never been emotionally comprehended and that it probably never would be.”³¹⁶ And he also further criticized the lacking engagement on behalf of Braunschweig’s citizens in the shaping and development of their city. It seems that both of his complaints have changed 10 years later.

Following shining nationwide and international examples, general considerations to reconstruct lost architecture started also in Braunschweig in the late 1980s, which resulted in a handful of projects finished in the early 1990s. Stimulated by those and also by the developments throughout Germany and Europe, the case of the palace in Braunschweig came ever more perceptibly back onto the agenda by the mid ‘90s. The interest in the palace was certainly boosted in 1996, when new plans for a multiplex cinema at the location of the former palace were released (Figure 3-19 and Figure 3-20).

³¹⁵ “...trugen dem Bedürfnis der Menschen Rechnung, Möglichkeiten für eine sinnvolle Gestaltung ihrer Freizeit und Arbeitspausen zu schaffen... Dort, wo sich einst das Residenzschloß der Braunschweiger Herzöge befand, schlägt heute das grüne Herz der Stadt ... heiter beschwingte Ruhezone mit lauschigen Sitzgruppen ... Treffpunkt junger Leute ... weiß lackierte Gartenstühle am Wasserbecken, aus dem vier Säulenkapitelle aus dem Wasser ragen – Relikte des einstigen Schlosses ...” Zeidler, 69.

³¹⁶ “...der aus meiner Sicht bis heute emotional nicht bewältigt ist und wohl auch nicht wird.” Wiese: *Planen und Bauen in Braunschweig*, 26.

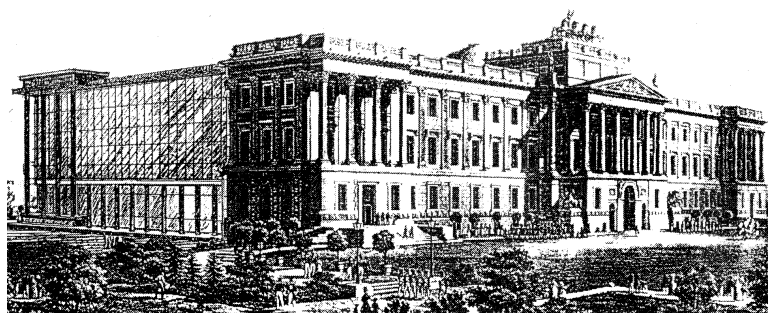


Figure 3-19: Elevation of a multiplex cinema, as presented by Munte and Borek in March 1996.³¹⁷

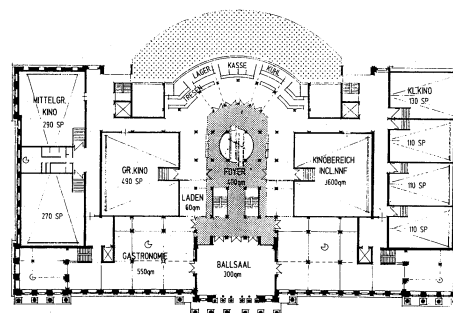


Figure 3-20: Second floor.³¹⁸

The project included the reconstruction of the main west façade, partially incorporating original elements. In addition to the Cineplex, it was intended to bring in restaurants, shops and offices. Two editors from the local newspaper wrote about the pros and cons of the project. The results of a survey which was conducted by the paper showed that the people of Braunschweig took great interest in, but were rather split on that issue.³¹⁹ The city building administration, but also architects, urban planners and historians objected fiercely to the scheme.³²⁰ Though the initiative did not result in any concrete developments, it certainly shaped the public opinion regarding the further development of the area.

The local building contractor Michael Munte and the merchant Richard Borek, Jr. were the driving forces behind that project. Borek was certainly encouraged by his father, who fought against the demolition of the palace some decades earlier, and Munte had been preoccupied with the palace question since 1989, when a group of real estate agents suggested establishing an investment fund to pursue the reconstruction of the palace.³²¹ Also other projects, for instance the establishment of a hotel in the reconstructed palace, had a strong commercial touch from early on. All those ideas were ahead of their time and were eventually prevented mainly by limited financial resources.

In the mid 1990s, Munte also presented a model of the palace to the city, certainly knowing about the effect such a visualization of history could have on residents and politicians in charge. Some

³¹⁷ Ibid, 11.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Comments in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 20 April 1996. Results from the poll in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 22 April 1996 on the front page: of the 16,334 votes 56.2% in favor of the project, 43.8% against the project.

³²⁰ Käferhaus, 9-11.

³²¹ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 23 and 29 March 1989.

years later he even offered to temporarily relocate the traffic from *Bohlweg* and to set up a pedestrian area instead. He intended that project to be Braunschweig's contribution to the International World Exposition "Expo 2000" in Hannover.³²² Those initiatives were simply ignored by the city and the model was later shifted to the Braunschweig State Museum. Even today the building contractor Munte is closely connected to construction matters in Braunschweig and in particular to the developments at the palace grounds.

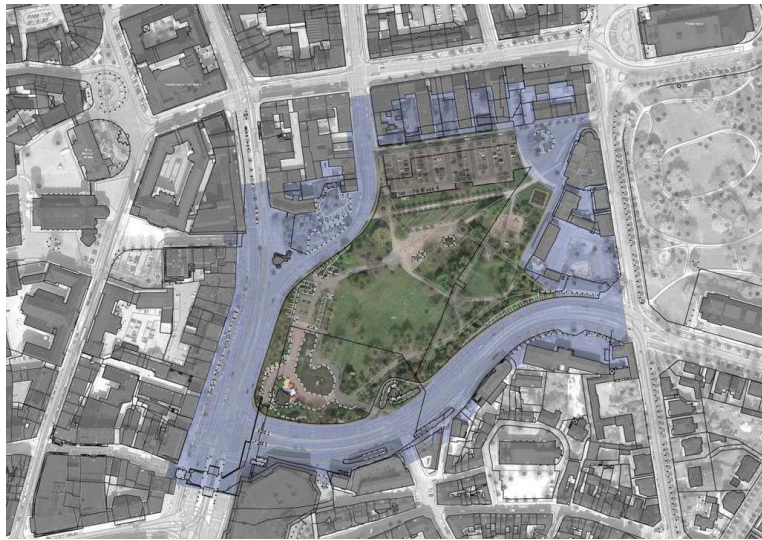


Figure 3-21: Situation in and around the park until 2005.³²³

In the last chapter the diverging opinions regarding the quality of the existing situation were mentioned. The obvious renunciation of urban features meant boredom and dreariness for some, but for others the “green lung” represented one of the last public spaces in an increasingly privatized city (Figure 3-21). This conflict was further intensified since the discussion about potential building activities had started again. The opponents brought up even the remotest arguments for or against the proposed projects, ranging from crime statistics to prognoses about the potential increase of fine dust particles in the air and the number of bird's nests in the park. Similar to previous disputes, every party involved brought up new arguments and reports, contradicting those from the other side, resulting in a continuous

³²² Munte, 4.

³²³ Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 13.

back-and-forth of arguments. But in addition to earlier conflicts, the situation in the 2000s was and still is much more complex, since even further different parties expressed and still express their different views.

It was already shown that the Social Democratic Party SPD, who primarily controlled Braunschweig's city council since 1945, enforced the removal of the palace in 1960 against all objections from residents and experts. But that majority had faded in 2001, and on 8 July 2003 the city council decided in favor of a partial reconstruction as part of a larger shopping and entertainment center. This time it was the conservative Christian Democratic Union CDU who pushed through their objectives with a majority of just one vote.³²⁴ Not just the same majority, although this time the other way around, but also other alarming similarities can be drawn between both decision-making processes.

Things got moving a year earlier when, in 2002, the *ECE Projektmanagement GmbH & Co. KG*, one of Europe's foremost shopping complex developers, suggested building a shopping facility in Braunschweig.³²⁵ ECE already ran several large-scale centers throughout Germany, including the prestigious *Potsdamer-Platz-Arkaden* at the location of the former Berlin Wall, but they also operated smaller complexes like the "City-Point" in Braunschweig. The further developments in the palace park were supported by Gert Hoffmann,³²⁶ the new mayor in Braunschweig since November 2001, and his municipal building officer, who took up the office in 2002.³²⁷ They will eventually redevelop the whole area including a prominent reconstruction within just one term of office. This is worth noting in times of numerous time-consuming regulations and increased public awareness regarding such matters, and also with the knowledge that the other side needed some decades to leave behind an unsatisfactory situation.

Just like any other city, Braunschweig also needs to attract investors and consumers and with them jobs for the citizens, who are, after all, taxpayers. To do so, distinguishing features are required to gain ground in an intensifying competition between municipalities. For instance, the neighboring city

³²⁴ Schreiber, 30.

³²⁵ For further details about the ECE-group see footnote 413.

³²⁶ Gert Hoffmann started his political career in several right-wing organizations, like the National Democratic Party of Germany, NPD. His political orientation was, among other things, influenced by his disapproval of the national coalition government between SPD and CDU from 1966 until 1969. In 1970 Hoffmann joined the CDU. www.braunschweig.de, accessed 20 February 2006.

³²⁷ Schreiber, 32.

Wolfsburg, which is dominated by the Volkswagen plant, highlights and further develops its image as a motor city with an event and adventure culture, which culminated in a gigantic amusement-park-like development.³²⁸ Braunschweig, on the other hand, had always been a center of commerce and trade. After the war, the comparably large downtown area fostered the further development of shopping amenities to serve surrounding communities. But it was also shown that those developments in the downtown suffered from increasing image problems, as did the shopping malls at the outskirts.

In light of the advantages of urban infill compared to consuming new land at the perimeter of towns and cities, one could argue that building new shopping facilities downtown could address both issues. The obvious solution seems to be to simply meet the increasing desire for metropolitan atmosphere in a densely developed city center. This is not just the case in Braunschweig. Other cities nowadays welcome and support almost every potential investor for downtown areas, but all too often by subordinating common urban planning principles, environmental matters and their responsibility for historic structures, with the result of false consumer-friendly urbanity. A recent article about the project in Braunschweig has been titled: “Staging urbanity. Fortification in times of globalization...”³²⁹ Flashy terms like *Citytainment* and *Urban Entertainment Center*, usually borrowed from the English language to describe the new approaches, are used to equip the striving for profits with a pleasing image.³³⁰ But if it is really the case that, according to Rem Koolhaas, “shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity,”³³¹ then this seems to be the only answer.

The initial main and obvious intention of the ECE group was simply to participate in that business in Braunschweig. But this incentive became more and more connected to the question of the palace, which eventually led to the decision to incorporate parts of the historic façade in the scheme.³³² Therefore,

³²⁸ Pump-Uhlmann: *Urbanitätsinszenierung*, 54.

³²⁹ “Urbanitätsinszenierung. Stadtbefestigung in Zeiten der Globalisierung“. Pump-Uhlmann.

³³⁰ The term *Citytainment* was coined by Dieter Hassenpflug to describe the fabricating of urban atmospheres by combining features of the traditional city with strongly retail, staged public spaces and attractions like monuments and landmarks. See for instance Hassenpflug, 192-194.

³³¹ Koolhaas, inside front cover.

³³² The first plans from ECE in 2002 showed an elliptical building and later in early 2003 a rectangular glass structure with a triangular pediment-like steel frame in the center, obviously depicting the shape of the former portico. The municipal building officer compared the latter with the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic) in

the offer from the investor ECE was especially effective, since it touched an emotional wound in the collective memory of the citizens. ECE was able to inspire large parts of the conservative citizenry for the project, mainly due to the circumstance that the missing palace was still very evident in their minds. The fact that the potential healing process is connected with an extensive non-historic development and contemporary use is not seen as such a strong counter-argument. On the contrary, the new development is regarded as the chance to increase the importance and prosperity of Braunschweig.

It is an interesting aspect of the situation in Braunschweig that supporters of the project seem to come from different and, strictly speaking, antagonistic backgrounds. One group was just delighted by the opportunity to put back the clock by constructing a supposedly continuous history, at least in parts. And other advocates mainly saw the contemporary requirement to renew the city, certainly connected with the hope for economic prosperity. Both have learned to live with, or maybe to ignore, the inherent conflicts. Dankwart Guratzsch, a journalist focusing on urban planning and architecture, puts it this way: “I am for the reconstruction of perished palaces and against the occupation of inner cities by shopping malls.”³³³

It was obvious that the ECE project would take up almost all the available property, like the first palace *Grauer Hof* once did until 1830. Therefore, several reports were required to examine different aspects of potential building activities in the area. Walter Ackers, who had already critically assessed the existing situation, investigated the subject in one of his reports and compared several options to develop the area. It is quite obvious that this report from 2003³³⁴ was mainly determined by the functional program and internal organizational structure of an ECE shopping center. The ECE group itself had also provided several of its own suggestions for the external spatial arrangement of the building complex, which were interestingly enough much more subdivided than the final recommendation of Ackers’s report (Figure 3-22).

Berlin (see section “The Creation and Operation of a Contemporary Palace” on page 145). *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 1 June 2005.

³³³ “Ich bin für den Wiederaufbau untergegangener Schlösser und gegen die Okkupation der Innenstädte durch Einkaufszentren.” Guratzsch: *Wieviel ist Braunschweig seine Mitte wert*, 12.

³³⁴ The report is dated by Ackers 18 February 2003. Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 69.



Figure 3-22: Recommendation from Professor Ackers for a suitable development of the area. The plan clearly shows the suggested open passage way cutting the modern part of the complex in two halves. The plan also indicates the location of the former city walls (landscaped area to the right), encircling the urban heart of the city (the castle area with market place and cathedral, shown in the left upper corner). The current pedestrian shopping area is even further to the west of the castle square (not included on this plan).³³⁵

According to Ackers, the new building had the potential to create new valuable urban spaces and to emphasize existing axes in Braunschweig's cityscape.³³⁶ But among other things he also pointed out that this would require the building to be oriented to the exterior and that certain important visual urban interrelations would be respected and further developed. He particularly demanded an open passageway through the building to be accessible at all times and also further covered passages to be open until the late evenings (Figure 3-22). He concluded that the non-compliance with those basic principles would be less of a risk for the ECE-project but more so for the other retailers in the area.

³³⁵ Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 67.

³³⁶ Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 62, 66-67.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that by his own admission, Ackers intentionally did not investigate the architectural value of a potential reconstruction of the building. But the report also lacks an analysis of the compatibility with the city, because Ackers was mainly concerned with the integration of the large building in the cityscape from a morphological point of view.³³⁷ Although already quite obvious in his layout plan, the decision about the palace was to become a matter of the ensuing architectural competition.

Following the miscellaneous reports on urban planning, infrastructure and retail businesses, a design competition was held later in 2003. ECE together with the city invited four architectural offices to provide suggestions.³³⁸ One of the participants was the architect Kaspar Kraemer, the head of the *Bund Deutscher Architekten BDA* (Association of German Architects), adding a certain touch of official professional approval to the reconstruction project.³³⁹

The panel of jurors was made up of the head of ECE group, the chief municipal building officer, four council members from the conservative and liberal parties including the mayor, and finally four architects, who were interestingly more or less renowned for their rather contemporary work. The designs were expectedly similar in their basic organizational structure, because they all shared with the palace building the same starting point. But the planning offices also suggested some exceptional details, like the reconstruction of the rotunda including dome or the breaking up of the large complex into smaller

³³⁷ Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 140.

³³⁸ The four architectural offices were:

Alfred Grazioli und Wieka Muthesius (Berlin / Zürich): The winner of the competition.

AS&P Albert Speer & Partner (Frankfurt am Main): A planning office, especially renowned for its regional and urban development work.

Kaspar Kraemer (Köln): Kaspar Kraemer is the son of Friedrich Wilhelm Kraemer, who fought against the demolition of the palace and who provided in the 1950s one of the early designs, suggesting the incorporation of the remnants of the palace in a contemporary scheme (see page 71).

KSP Engel und Zimmermann (Braunschweig): The office KSP Engel und Zimmermann is an architectural office founded in the mid 1930s by Friedrich Wilhelm Kraemer in Braunschweig (KSP stands for Kraemer, Sieverts und Partner). The office is not affiliated with the architectural office *Kaspar Kraemer*. For further projects and details on KSP see Flagg: *The Architecture of KSP Engel und Zimmermann*.

KSP won the urban development competition in 2002 for the redevelopment of a large area in the shopping district of Frankfurt am Main. That project includes several skyscrapers and the reconstruction of the *Palais Thurn und Taxis* (see section “Frankfurt: The Palais Thurn und Taxis” on page 124).

³³⁹ The Association of German Architects is the publisher of the journal *Der Architekt*, which is known for publishing rather contemporary views and critical reflections on the recent reconstruction movement in Germany.

individual buildings (Figure 3-23). The design from the office Alfred Grazioli and Wieka Muthesius, which was in the end preferred by the panel of experts in November 2003, seems simply to be the largest one with the least expensive details. And even the open passageway through the center of the new addition as shown on Figure 3-22, which was seen as a crucial element by Ackers, had been reduced to a mere functional zone, just providing access to additional shops (Figure 3-24). The winning design was later adjusted, or to put it more clearly, even further watered down to limit the cost, which will be shown later.



Figure 3-23: KSP Engel und Zimmermann – participant at the design competition.³⁴⁰

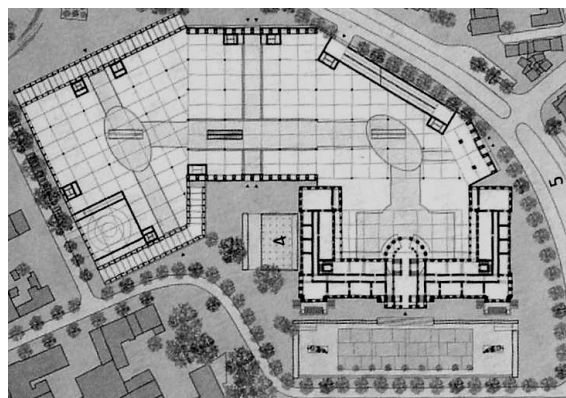


Figure 3-24: Alfred Grazioli and Wieka Muthesius – winner of the design competition.³⁴¹

The current structural problems in Braunschweig have already been made out as mainly originating from the unfortunate concept to primarily provide infrastructure, which should efficiently connect the “Islands of Tradition” and other miscellaneous functional zones like shopping facilities. And an emotional dilemma, particularly at the palace square, is that almost nothing remained from the layers of history despite being greatly influenced by Braunschweig’s checkered past.³⁴² The current project is obviously aimed at addressing both.

The historical aspect is more or less a question of personal opinion and taste – a question about the claim to be authentic and honest or at least accurate. But authenticity is in Braunschweig obviously less important than refurbishing the image of the city, because the latter has been made out as the major

³⁴⁰ Schreiber, 43.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 39.

³⁴² Ackers: *Einkaufszentrum*, 22.

problem, as was shown earlier.³⁴³ Braunschweig applied in January 2004 for the title Cultural Capital of the year 2010, a significant honor, which would have undoubtedly roused the city from its lethargy. Because such an application needs to be backed up by large events and cultural highlights, it was decided that a reconstructed palace should become the architectural climax of the whole scheme.³⁴⁴ The city certainly praised the “palace reconstruction” in their application brochure from January 2004 as being able to “boost a new sense of civic identity...heal and revalue the former center of the city...rectify the demolition...” and also to “...bring back an important part of Braunschweig’s by-gone history.”³⁴⁵ But which historic layer do they mean, when they visually wipe out the last sixty years, including a world war? And to which center do they refer, while ignoring the fact that the palace never used to be the urban heart of Braunschweig?³⁴⁶ It was further stated that “an authentic realization of the endeavor would visualize history in a persuasive manner” and that therefore “the original reconstruction of spatial arrangement, location, contour and material will prove the accusation of being a ‘mock-up’ wrong.”³⁴⁷ Interestingly, referring to the project in public as a being a “reconstruction of the palace”, would later lead to rigorous interventions by the German Press Council, condemning misleading and false news coverage.³⁴⁸ And with the decision to make the palace a central element, the application became vulnerable to attacks from opponents of the building project.³⁴⁹ When applying for such a title like Cultural Capital, it would certainly be better to not have an emotionally divided citizenry, arguing about a crucial element of the whole idea.

³⁴³ See page 89ff about the “The Emptiness in the Heart of Braunschweig”.

³⁴⁴ Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 138.

³⁴⁵ “Selbstbewusstsein der Stadt stärken ... ihre alte Mitte städtebaulich wieder aufwerten und heilen ... den damaligen Abriß ... wieder gutmachen ... ein bedeutsamer Abschnitt der Braunschweiger Geschichte wieder ins Bewußtsein.” Taken from Braunschweig and the surrounding region’s application in 2003/04 to become Cultural Capital of Europe in 2010. Hesse, 19.

³⁴⁶ The palace was the nucleus of political power in Braunschweig, but never the urban heart of the city (see Figure 3-22). The cultivation and recreation of supposedly historic centers, seems to be a central argument for reconstruction projects (see also section “The New Emptiness in the Heart of Berlin” on page 168 about the palace in Berlin).

³⁴⁷ “Die authentische Umsetzung des Vorhabens veranschaulicht Geschichte auf eine überzeugende Weise.” “Die originale Rekonstruktion nach Raum, Lage, Umriss, Volumen und Material wird den Vorwurf der »Attrappe« widerlegen ...” Ibid.

³⁴⁸ See page 109.

³⁴⁹ Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 139.

The other aspect, namely the opportunity to enhance the quality of the public urban spaces, had already been investigated in detail – and regarded as possible by Professor Ackers. But it seems rather questionable that the building could fulfill that high claim, because even with the most historic architectural decoration, a large-scale shopping mall is somewhat contrary to the notion of the historic European city. Admittedly, the palace of 1830 also did not conform with the surrounding small-sized structures, but it was of course intended to be a freestanding building with a crucial visual separation from the surrounding town and to a certain degree also from the subjects of the duke. Furthermore, the palace was preferable linked to the cityscape just by open colonnades – the impressive palace was designed as the center of the whole scheme and not just as a mere façade for an even larger meandering annex. And despite the commendable attempt to break up the contemporary façade into different zones with distinctive characteristics and partly open arcade-like sections, the new development will probably not be able to link the districts and zones around the former park. Most façades of the modern addition just serve as the backside of the shops, which are usually storage and other functional areas, characterized by piled-up boxes.

The objective was to create a dense and diverse urban space. But an introverted shopping mall with just a limited number of entrances cannot provide the required functional diversity of small building lots with façades oriented to the public room, typical for a traditional European city. The investor has also been granted the right to use the public vicinity around the new building complex.³⁵⁰ It can only be hoped that those spaces will become more than mere delivery ramps and other functional zones, since such features would certainly not be able to reverse the negative, parceled-out image of the city.³⁵¹ The layout of the area cannot simply be focused on the entrances of the shopping experience but should rather be interlinked to the city.

It could be argued that the palace was originally also not intended as a truly public space. But that is not quite right, because first of all it was built to represent the dignity and power of the dukes and

³⁵⁰ Pump-Uhlmann: *Urbanitätsinszenierung*, 56.

³⁵¹ See page 89.

thus its façade conveyed that message to the urban spaces around. And it was certainly also built for, in the conception of the time, an important social stratum. It served another public purpose in another era. The citizens were certainly emotionally more linked and paid more attention to the incidents in and around the palace than they will do with the new building and its function.

In the 1830s the palace design was already reduced from a euphoric design scheme to nothing but the U-shaped core building. Also, certain other changes were made by following generations as was described earlier. Yet, both palaces on the *Bohlweg* maintained their strong axial and symmetrical layout on the exterior and also on the inside. And even most of the numerous suggestions after the war shared that common scheme. Ottmer's design has now been even further flattened to a mere façade wrapped around three sides of a tremendous building complex without any obvious spatial orientation. The façade was part of a free-standing building with a comparable small distance, but still distinctive demarcation from the surrounding town. In the near future an apparently historic façade will be trapped on an enormous traffic-peninsula with the square in front reduced to almost half of its original size, owing to the required contemporary infrastructure.

The winning design from the architectural competition in 2003 was still based on the idea that at least the palace would be rebuilt as it was originally erected in the 1830s. This assumption was confirmed by the submitted floor plan, which showed the external outline of the palace and also its original internal spatial arrangement (Figure 3-24). This would have also been in accordance with the earlier statements from the city and other involved parties.³⁵² But instead, the “palace use” has been even further reduced as Figure 3-25 proves. The city, like any other tenant of the future complex, will have to pay rent to establish the city archives, registry office and a library.³⁵³ And since those public functions will be mainly limited to the upper floors of the former palace, which are not attractive enough for commercial use, it can be assumed that ECE more than welcomes this agreement, since it brings in additional cus-

³⁵² See image brochure, used to support Braunschweig's application to become Cultural Capital City of Europe in 2010 (page 101). Hesse.

³⁵³ Pump-Uhlmann: *Urbanitätsinszenierung*, 56.

tomers without reducing the available retail area.³⁵⁴ This last piece of non-commercial function seems to be nothing more than a mere fig leaf to justify the project. The portico will not be the entrance to the “palace” since it will lead directly into the shopping mall as shown on Figure 3-25. There will be almost nothing noticeable of the palace behind the portico.³⁵⁵



Figure 3-25: First floor of the shopping mall “Schloss-Arkaden”. The yellow areas represent “palace use”.³⁵⁶

The official motivation for the whole project, the rebirth of the historic palace, is currently under negotiation, as the thickness of the sandstone layers is being reviewed, even further reducing the façade to a stage prop – a piece of scenery.³⁵⁷ But also original fragments will be reclaimed from the landfill and incorporated into the exterior. The portico, for instance, will consist of up to 80% of original pieces, as the municipal building director recently announced.³⁵⁸ He regarded this as essential “to make authenticity visible” and therefore the “color differences between the stones will be kept.”³⁵⁹ Though he

³⁵⁴ Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 141.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ ECE Image Brochure.

³⁵⁷ Details like the thickness of the sandstone application have not been discussed during the architectural competition and council meetings. During those early stages it was just articulated that the reconstruction should be done in a high quality and as true to the original as possible. Schreiber, 30.

³⁵⁸ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 5 January 2006.

³⁵⁹ “Die Teile sind ... für die Authentizität der Fassade wichtig ... um die Authentizität sichtbar zu machen, bleiben die Farbunterschiede bei den Steinen erhalten ...” Quoted in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 5 January 2006.

did not make a reference to recent reconstruction projects, this follows the Dresden approach, but in a greatly reduced and macabre manner. It is certainly not possible to recreate authenticity, only images thereof. The building will most likely become just another “decorated shed” as Robert Venturi once labeled such commercial buildings.³⁶⁰ Those places are reproducible creations without any serious reference to the surroundings or history of the place, which is also true for the project in Braunschweig, despite, or maybe especially due to the façade of the former palace.³⁶¹

The whole process seems to be comparable to the landscaping project from Bofinger some decades earlier, which had started with the intention to have the reconstructed portico as the central focal point of the area, and which eventually became just a cheap backdrop to guide potential costumers from the parking garage to the shopping facilities.³⁶² In those days, some historic fragments were thrown into the water basin, almost as an excuse, or stuck to the walls of the pedestrian tunnel leading to commercial amenities gleaming from the other side of the intersection. With that in mind, the new project can be seen as being directly in line with the unfortunate general urban planning policies in Braunschweig.

Meanwhile, the city has sold the 25,000 m² large property for € 35 million to the ECE-group and the largest German construction company *Hochtief Construction AG* has commenced with the building. The city will take the entire proceeds from the transaction to develop the vicinity of the new building complex. Another € 13 Million of tax money will be used to excavate the historic fragments from the palace and to support their incorporation into the new building.³⁶³ The dimensions of the project speak for themselves: “There will be three retail stories, offering total sales space of around 30,000 m² and accommodating around 130 outlets, plus parking facilities for some 1,600 vehicles.”³⁶⁴ According to ECE estimates, the shopping center, which is due to be completed in 2007, will serve a target area of more than 1 million people.³⁶⁵ (Figure 3-26, Figure 3-27 and Figure 3-28)

³⁶⁰ Venturi, 103ff.

³⁶¹ Pump-Uhlmann: *Urbanitätsinszenierung*, 56.

³⁶² See Figure 3-12 on page 86.

³⁶³ Rautenberg, 44.

³⁶⁴ Hochtief, 2.

³⁶⁵ ECE Image Brochure. (Braunschweig has approximately 250,000 inhabitants. Brockhaus 2004.)



Figure 3-26: Architectural model, showing the rebuilt historic façades with the modern addition in the background.³⁶⁶



Figure 3-27: Detail.³⁶⁷



Figure 3-28: View from northwest.³⁶⁸

The Quarrels in the City

Similar to the discussion leading to the demolition of the palace in the first place, the current arguments and decisions are much more solid and indigenous, and maybe at the same time trivial, than all the theoretical considerations about city beautification, strengthening of local identity or even theories of architecture and cultural history. The truly moving arguments for or against the palace with or without an attached shopping center are derived from direct consequences for the people involved. The two foremost arguments have already been indicated earlier, namely the acceptance of the park by the residents and the economic situation in general and of the merchants in the area in particular.

The economic questions, which were the foremost driving factor of the current project, also serve as major pros and cons. First of all it was anticipated that local companies could participate in the

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

construction. There have even been rumors that Michael Munte will be the general contractor.³⁶⁹ He described ECE as being “one of the toughest and feared clients in Germany”,³⁷⁰ but his company was certainly just too small for such a project and the local economy might now participate in the project through smaller subcontracts.³⁷¹

More important than the short-term stimulation of local industry are the long-term effects. The current situation is undoubtedly unfavorable, and numerous shops in Braunschweig and especially on the *Bohlweg* are vacant. But it is quite difficult to imagine that 130 new stores in the city center would have a positive impact on the already suffering shopkeepers. At least a substantial re-orientation of the existing trade structure would be required as reports and investigations from other cities suggest.³⁷² Most of the local merchants in Braunschweig are against the new shopping facilities because they do not expect positive effects. Therefore, they became one of the main driving forces behind the *Initiative Innenstadt* (initiative inner city), which opposed the shopping center project.

Similar to the palace, which was certainly not an outstanding architectural masterpiece but still contributed to a positive sense of place in Braunschweig, the park, despite its shortcomings, also seems to be emotionally quite important for large parts of the population. The importance of the park is shown by the fact that many proponents of the building project were organized in an initiative to protect the park, the *Forum für den Erhalt des Schloßparks* (interest group for the protection of the palace park). Despite the disputable quality of the existing park, most opponents pointed out that it still had important ecological and recreational functions, and also served as a valuable inner-city multi-purpose area. Numerous other political and social groups fought against the project.³⁷³ Most of them had their own views about

³⁶⁹ See also page 110.

³⁷⁰ “ECE ist eine der schärfsten und gefürchtetsten Bauauftraggeber in Deutschland.” Munte, 4.

³⁷¹ “...HOCHTIEF is increasingly seeking to involve partner companies from the region concerned.” Hochtief, 2.

³⁷² See Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 143 for a list of reports on the adverse influence of large-scale shopping centers in small and medium sized cities.

It needs to be assumed that most local shops will not open a new branch shop in the ECE-center but rather move into the new facility, leaving more vacant shops behind.

³⁷³ *Forum für den Erhalt des Schlossparks* (Interest group for the protection of the palace park), *Braunschweiger Forum* (local initiative to promote participation of residents in urban planning matters), *Bündnis für saubere Luft Braunschweig* (alliance for clean air in Braunschweig), *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* (the Green Party), *Grüne Jugend* (green youth), *NABU Bezirksgruppe Braunschweig e. V.* (a German environmental citizens organization), *BUND*

what should be done or not done in the area. The only uniting element seems to be that they were against the ECE-project. But they articulated different motivations: against the demolition of the park from an environmental and urban planning prospective; against the building of a shopping center based on economic reasons; against reconstructions on principle or against the modern design from an architectural and historical point of view in particular. It seems that they have not been able finding a common ground to agree on a mutual compromise.

The organizational problem of the opponents became especially apparent as the advocates of the project were well organized and proactive from early on. Their advantage was certainly that they were able to base their campaign on the circumstance that the palace question has been continuously discussed during the past years, stimulated by well-known and respected citizens, like Richard Borek and Michael Munte. And there have been other influential advocates, like Gerd Biegel, the chief of the State Museum in Braunschweig, who always supported a potential reconstruction of the palace. His involvement was certainly driven by personal views, but one should not underestimate the influence of his institution. The proponents of the palace reconstruction knew that a palace without a financier would not be feasible. Mayor Gert Hoffmann³⁷⁴ was by virtue of his office required to support the investment. But for him it became certainly more than this, since it was obviously also a political decision, which the jurist Hoffmann wanted to push through.

Also Kaspar Kraemer, the head of the Association of German Architects, despite not being the winner of the architectural competition in 2003, was still actively involved. During a lecture titled “reconstruction of the Braunschweig palace – treason to Modernism?” he praised the ECE-project as being able

Kreisgruppe Braunschweig (a German environmental citizens organization), *Umweltzentrum Braunschweig e.V.* (a local environmental citizens organization), *Initiative Natur in der Stadt* (a local environmental citizens organization), *Initiative Innenstadt* (initiative inner city), *Robin Wood Regionalgruppe Braunschweig* (an environmental citizens organization), *attac Braunschweig* (a political activist organization), *DGB Kreis Braunschweig* (German labor union), *JUSOS in der SPD* (youth organization of the political party SPD), *Wahlalternative WASG* (a German left wing political party). Those and several other associations and organizations supported the protests against the project. (The list has been taken from www.menschenkette-braunschweig.de, the explanations in brackets are mainly based on the information provided on the organizations' websites.)

³⁷⁴ See page 95.

to “recover history” and further he justified the “desire to have the lost cityscape return.”³⁷⁵ The paper *Braunschweiger Zeitung* celebrated him, saying that the “...representative of 6,000 architects in Germany, made no secret of his positive views about the most important project in Braunschweig politics.”³⁷⁶ One simply cannot avoid seeing a conflict of interests in his behavior. It needs to be added that 93% of the members of the Braunschweig chapter of the association sent an open letter to politicians, expressing their disapproval of the ECE-project and demanding a revision of the current urban planning objectives in the city.³⁷⁷

The only local newspaper, the *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, supported the project, and with that sometimes went beyond their responsibilities as a public press. Since the decision of the city council in 2003, the paper evidently ranged themselves with the mayor and other supporters. Some of their articles sounded like press statements from the city or investors and their style was sometimes cynically compared to serving a royal court. There can certainly be nothing done against tendentious news coverage in a free democratic system, but the German Press Council³⁷⁸ saw a clear case of continuous misinformation and an absence of a required duty of care.³⁷⁹ They justified their censure with the fact that the paper was “continuously referring to a reconstruction and copy of the palace. This is ... wrong and misleading for the reader, since the rebuilding of a two-dimensional object had been continuously presented as a three-dimensional historic building.”³⁸⁰ But the paper saw no fault on their part and even accused the council of taking a stand in that political dispute.³⁸¹ Despite their protestations of innocence, the paper

³⁷⁵ “Wiederaufbau des Braunschweiger Schlosses – Verrat an der Moderne?”, “Rückgewinnung von Geschichte ... Wunsch nach Rückkehr des verlorenen Stadtbildes.” Quoted in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 9 February 2004.

³⁷⁶ “Kraemer, Repräsentant für 6000 Architekten in Deutschland, machte von Beginn an keinen Hehl aus seiner positiven Einstellung zum wichtigsten Projekt der Braunschweiger Politik.” *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 9 February 2004.

³⁷⁷ Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 142.

³⁷⁸ The *Deutscher Presserat* (German Press Council), established in 1956, is made up of ten journalists and ten publishers. It is a voluntary self-regulation and sets out guidelines and investigates complaints against the press. Mey, 68-74.

³⁷⁹ Schöneberg: *Watschen vom Presserat*, 24.

³⁸⁰ “...immer wieder von einer Rekonstruktion und einer Kopie des Schlosses gesprochen. Dies ist ... falsch und für die Leser irreführend, weil die geplante Wiederherstellung eines eher zweidimensionalen Bauobjektes tatsächlich als dreidimensionaler historischer Baukörper dargestellt wird.” The censure was quoted in *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 9 March 2005.

³⁸¹ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 9 March 2005.

tried to be more careful after that incident, but the local authorities continued to refer to the project as being a reconstruction of the palace. They do not have to face a censure, since the council is not responsible for press statements.

Every move from one side has been fiercely responded to from the other side. This even led to some obscure arguments about the color and type of fence erected around the construction site.³⁸² Several conclusions were for instance drawn from Munte's engagement in the palace questions. The professional journal *Bauwelt* raised the rhetorical question: "Will Munte build the ECE-colossus?"³⁸³ The building contractor responded with a letter to the editor, accusing the journalists of deliberately placing inaccurate information in the, according to his opinion, provocative and polemical article. Munte also assumed that they were obviously influenced by other people.³⁸⁴

All sides had basically one thing in common, namely that they knew that something needed to be done in the area, which is to a certain degree even true for the advocates of the park. But the well-organized ECE-group on one hand was able to provide a tangible project, which was backed up by numerous expert reports and supported by influential individuals. And with their offer they also presented a solution for the financial problems the city would have had to face, since an improvement of the area was required anyway. The problem of the proponents on the other hand was that they did not mutually articulate a specific solution and that there were even advocates of the current situation on the *Bohlweg* among them. Certain groups have been able to prevent a number of developments in the past, as was the case in 1996, when architects argued against the Munte-project.³⁸⁵ But they have not been able to provide convincing alternatives including required funding.

The residents, which were organized in the miscellaneous groups, tried to be granted the right to participate in the decision-making processes. Such a citizens' involvement was even praised by the city in the early stages of the project as being "exciting and wanted in Braunschweig" and that "the city would

³⁸² Documentary on www.schlosspark-braunschweig.de, 25 April 2005.

³⁸³ "Wird Munte den ECE-Koloss bauen?" Schreiber, 32.

³⁸⁴ Munte, 4.

³⁸⁵ Käferhaus, 11.

therefore not avoid that discussion, but rather face the challenge.”³⁸⁶ But this was written with the Cultural City 2010 event in mind. What followed was more or less the opposite of an open discussion in Braunschweig. It was shortly after the publication of the construction project that a petition (*Bürgerbegehren*) for the preservation of the park was announced by the *Initiative Innenstadt*, gathering the required signatures from residents with ease.³⁸⁷ But the petition was rejected by the administrative body, saying that it was not in accordance with Lower-Saxon civic ordinance.³⁸⁸ Decisions from other instances like the Higher Administrative Court followed, but also denied the lawfulness of the petition. And most of the other more than three hundred objections from public agencies and citizens had almost no effect.³⁸⁹

When the results of the reports on urban planning, infrastructure and retail were released, the committed residents were offended, because those reports were, though initiated by the city, paid for by the investor.³⁹⁰ The report on the potential economic development was accused of being not independent from the investor ECE,³⁹¹ and the report from Professor Walter Ackers has already been described as mainly aiming to find out the best spatial integration of such a large building in the cityscape.³⁹² His report was therefore deservedly accused of lacking statements about the general consequences on the city as a whole.

³⁸⁶ “Diese Diskussion ist spannend und für Braunschweig gewollt ... die Stadt weicht deshalb nicht aus, sondern stellt sich ihr.” Hesse, 18.

³⁸⁷ A *Bürgerbegehren* is a petition from the citizens of a city or municipality with the goal to conduct a local referendum (*Bürgerentscheid*) on a specific issue. For the petition to be valid it needs to be first announced to the local authorities and then a required number signatures (in Lower Saxony: 10 % of all citizens) has to be turned in within a set amount of time (in Lower Saxony: within 6 months). www.buergerbegehren.de
The *Bürgerbegehren zum Erhalt des Schloßparks* (petition for the preservation of the palace park) was announced by the *Initiative Innenstadt* (initiative inner city) on 23 June 2003 and the petition with 31,524 signatures were handed over to the authorities on 19 December 2003. Approximately 24,000 signatures were valid which was more than the required quorum. www.schlosspark-braunschweig.de

³⁸⁸ It was argued that a petition could not be directed against a zoning ordinance. Schöneberg: *Klagen gegen Disneylandisierung*, 24.

³⁸⁹ Some of the more than 300 petitions are quoted on www.schlosspark-braunschweig.de.

It was for instance argued that the new project would be contrary to the valid urban development plan of the city. The tenancy to facilitate the public use has been questioned. It was criticized that there was inadequate information of the public and involvement of the citizens. Incorrect details of the project, like the distance to neighboring buildings have been pointed out.

³⁹⁰ See pages 97ff.

³⁹¹ Report from GfK Prisma. Pump-Uhlmann: *Schloß-Verkauf*, 140.

³⁹² See page 98.

Shortly after trees had begun to be cut down and the future construction site cleared, several organizations³⁹³ called for protest, mobilizing between 1,500 and 2,500 residents on 21 May 2005 (Figure 3-29 and Figure 3-30). Bearing in mind that the previous campaigns, including the petition with about 30,000 signatures, attracted more protesters, this can be regarded as the last resistance against the project. Also, this demonstration came too late, just like the demonstration against the demolition of the palace had also been too late 45 years earlier (Figure 3-11).



Figure 3-29: Residents linked hands in a human chain encircling the park on 21 May 2005. One of their messages: “Saw off Hoffmann”. The allusion to the recently cut trees is used to express the rejection of their mayor’s political style.³⁹⁴

Figure 3-30: During the demonstration.³⁹⁵

It was not just a demonstration against the ECE-project. The protest was rather driven by citizens’ resentment towards the local authorities. The decision-making process and the methods of the administrative bodies to push through their goals can be compared to the events leading to the destruction of the palace in the first place. It seems that in both cases the politicians in charge were able to prune the influence of preservationists and concerned citizens by skilful legal moves rather than trying to involve all parties and respond to their concerns. It seems that too many discussions in the late 1950s and also in the 2000s were not about the pros and cons of the projects itself but more about the correctness and soundness of petitions and the powers of politicians, preservationists and concerned residents.

³⁹³ See footnote 373.

³⁹⁴ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 16 May 2005.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

It needs to be stressed that, similar to the demolition of the palace, the current developments cannot just simply be explained away by the spirit of the time. There are tangible circumstances, like the recent marginal shift in political power, which facilitated the current project in Braunschweig. Certain social strata gained more influence in recent years. It seems that it became more a question of who decides what should be done in Braunschweig than a question of the content. And the methods to justify and push through decisions recalls the struggles some decades earlier.

The case of the palace in Braunschweig clearly shows that political considerations are more influential than the most serious objections from experts and citizens. And it also shows that layers of history are appreciated or admitted in one era and rejected or negated in the other. This was not just the case in the eastern parts of Germany, as the developments in Braunschweig during the 1950s and '60s prove.

With the shopping center façade, certain elements from history have been almost arbitrarily selected to be recreated, not because of their architectural and historic value but rather for their potential to beautify and improve the city. It can only be hoped that the owner, operator and also the tenants of the complex will be aware of the responsibility which lies in the project. Their commitment is undoubtedly first of all driven by the anticipated profits, and economic success for ECE does not necessarily mean success for Braunschweig. But it is also in their interest that the building will be accepted by the people, and that it will not be an alien element in the city.

The project might be controversial and it has so far just been discussed based on written and printed representations. It will be definitely worth a trip to Braunschweig after its completion to develop a final judgment.³⁹⁶ But it would certainly not create the same perception as other reconstructions, like the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden or even the *Römerberg* in Frankfurt once did.

³⁹⁶ The façade in Braunschweig will be visible from *Bohlweg* street from August 2006 on. *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 5 January 2006.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT'S NEXT? MORE CITYTAINMENT!

In the last chapter, the Braunschweig palace was used to illustrate a specific case in detail from the historic roots and through the war, then followed by the destruction until its current reemergence. But this is by far not the only and last example of such a development with a strong commercial touch, aiming to improve the cities, as the following chapter will prove. And Braunschweig's image brochure, praising its new shopping mall with historic façade, already made references in 2004 to concurrent discussions in Berlin, Potsdam and Frankfurt. It will be investigated if those comparisons are really suitable to support the project in Braunschweig.

The *Stadtschloß* in Potsdam and the *Palais Thurn und Taxis* in Frankfurt will be briefly discussed. The case of the palace in Berlin needs to be addressed separately, since it is too complex and controversial to be seen just under the aspect of this chapter.³⁹⁷ According to the image brochure, the strong polarization in Braunschweig ensued mainly due to the already quite tangible status of the project at that point in time, particularly compared to the other cases, which were about to start.³⁹⁸ But the *Palais Thurn und Taxis* in Frankfurt is also currently under reconstruction, and it seems to be less controversial than the project in Braunschweig. In addition to the palace projects, some concurrent developments, especially in Potsdam, will also be briefly illustrated in the following section.

³⁹⁷ See chapter "The Case of the Berlin Palace".

³⁹⁸ Hesse, 18.

Potsdam: The Stadtschloß and Other Isolated Landmarks

Alexander Otto, the head of investor ECE said in 2003 that “we will build something unique in Braunschweig.”³⁹⁹ But the case of Braunschweig seems to serve rather as an incentive and example for other quite similar projects. And Otto himself should know better, since it is again ECE which is involved in the discussion to reconstruct the *Stadtschloß* (city palace) in Potsdam. There are certain parallels between both cases. But the East German approach seems to be different, undoubtedly first of all historically, but also regarding the current developments. And there are many more building and urban planning issues waiting to be resolved in that small, yet important, city mere kilometers south of the new capital of the reunited Germany.

Potsdam is mainly known for *Sanssouci*, the summer palace of the kings, outside of the historic city limits. But especially Friedrich der Große⁴⁰⁰ increasingly used the *Stadtschloß* in the heart of Potsdam as a place of residence and promoted the palace in the eighteenth century to a true royal seat in addition to the palace in nearby Berlin. The *Fortunaportal*⁴⁰¹ dominated the façade of the palace, which faced the city. That portal is the only building element from the time before the extensive rebuilding of the palace in 1744-51, under the architect Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff.⁴⁰² This particular façade of the palace, together with Schinkel’s distinctive *Nikolaikirche* (St. Nicholas’s church) and the city hall, encompassed the old market square (*Alter Markt*). With the accumulation of these important buildings, this square was promoted to the administrative, spiritual and artistic center of Potsdam.⁴⁰³ (Figure 4-1)

³⁹⁹ Quoted in Guratzsch: *Kulturschloß oder Kaufhauskulisse*.

⁴⁰⁰ Friedrich der Große (Frederick the Great) was the byname of Friedrich II (1712-1786), who was king of Prussia from 1740-1786.

⁴⁰¹ *Fortunaportal* (Gate of Fortuna): erected in 1701/02 and named after the sculpture on top of the sphere roof, depicting the roman goddess Fortuna (in the center of Figure 4-2).

⁴⁰² Giersberg, 55-88, 137.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 6-8.



Figure 4-1: The *Stadtschloß* in Potsdam. Aerial view from 1935. The *Alter Markt* with its obelisk is framed by the palace, the *Nikolaikirche* (the church in the upper left corner) and the city hall.⁴⁰⁴



Figure 4-2: View of the palace, as seen from the *Nikolaikirche*. The *Fortunaportal* in the center is the focal point of that façade.⁴⁰⁵

The palace was severely damaged during extensive English air raids in April 1945, just 13 days before the soviet Red Army forces invaded Potsdam. Ruins were left behind, which, similar to the palace in Braunschweig, would have easily enabled a rebuilding. In the following years some options were discussed, including the use as a museum or library, but the preservation of the ruined conditions was also suggested. Under harsh interventions, the remnants of the palace were finally demolished in 1959/60 – at about the same time as in Braunschweig.⁴⁰⁶ The decision of the Potsdam city parliament in November 1959 basically just followed the earlier ruling from the *Politbüro*,⁴⁰⁷ which was signed by Walter Ulbricht himself.⁴⁰⁸ The official reason for the removal of the ruins was the intended reorganization of infrastructure in the area, including the building of a new bridge to facilitate the creation of a truly socialist city center.⁴⁰⁹ But Potsdam was also, according to the official historiography of the GDR, regarded as the center of Prussian militarism. Therefore, the removal of the palace and also of the burnt-out tower of the

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 130. *Stadtschloß* (city palace), *Alter Markt* (old market square), *Nikolaikirche* (St. Nicholas' church).

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 136. See also footnote 401.

⁴⁰⁶ For the discussion about the concurrent case in Braunschweig see section "The Final Death Blow" and in particular page 84 about the political dimension of the decision and a comparison of both cases. The *Nikolaikirche* and the city hall in Potsdam were also severely damaged but reconstructed in the 1950s and '60s. Eckardt, 147, 155.

⁴⁰⁷ *Politbüro*: the highest policy-making committee of the communist party (SED).

⁴⁰⁸ Walter Ulbricht was in 1959 deputy prime minister. See also footnote 68.

⁴⁰⁹ Giersberg, 103-111.

Garnisonkirche (garrison church) some years later in 1968, needs to be evaluated under that ideological pretext as well.⁴¹⁰

Similar to Braunschweig, the location of the former political center in Potsdam was also more or less unused, with the exception of some multilane traffic routes. A crucial element of the cityscape was missing, much more so than in Braunschweig. Several suggestions since 1996 to fill that void ranged from an accurate reconstruction to a contemporary building complex. And similar to Braunschweig, the discussions seemed to have taken shape in 2002/03. At that time, rumors spread that the private investor ECE would reconstruct the palace in Potsdam; but to be more correct, a modern four-story building was obviously intended to take up the former courtyard space behind the façades of the historic three-story palace. It was apparently further expected that the state of Brandenburg would pay for the reconstruction of the façades, rent the complex for the next 30 years and grant ECE the building permit for a shopping center on the adjacent site, currently occupied by the University of Applied Sciences.⁴¹¹

ECE later denied the intention to build a new shopping mall, claiming that they already operated a center in Potsdam. But a certain unpleasant touch to the whole discussion remained, firstly because the current ECE-arcade is by no means in the heart of Potsdam, but rather on the outskirts of town at the motorway. And secondly, there are already several shopping malls in or near the historic city center. In 1998, construction of the new main train station in Potsdam began, including adjacent large-scale developments with offices and shopping facilities, just across the river, opposite the historic center of Potsdam. This project was controversially discussed, because it was seen as a rival to the historic center and its retailers, but it also even threatened the UNESCO World Heritage status of Potsdam. Therefore, the guardians of that honor and many architects and art historians dismissed the train station project as a result of the carelessness and submissiveness towards investors, who were yielding even more influence

⁴¹⁰ This is especially true for the garrison church *Garnisonkirche*, which was erected in 1734 to solely serve military purposes. And furthermore, the history of that church was marked by such fateful events like the Reichstag assembly in 1933, where the newly appointed chancellor Adolf Hitler and the German president Hindenburg symbolically demonstrated the unity of old conservative Germany and National Socialism. Mielke: *Denkmalpflege in Potsdam*, 80, 82. Streidt, 16-17. Leicht. LVZ, 16 January 2004.

⁴¹¹ Articles in several newspapers from 2003. For instance: Lautenschläger, 23. Karutz. Guratzsch: *Einkaufszentren hinter Schlossfassaden*. See Figure 4-4 for the current university complex.

and higher profits. The same critics also argued against the reconstruction of the *Stadtschloß*, denouncing its illusionism and dishonesty to history. But the late 1990s was an economically difficult time, and, as a consequence, characterized by an increasing rush for investors and city beautification. This situation was not just typical of Potsdam, but also other, mostly East German, cities.⁴¹²

Until today the ECE-group is involved in the discussions about the palace and further reconstruction efforts in Potsdam in general. The founder of ECE, Werner Otto himself, financially supported the reconstruction of the Garrison Church and the preservation of the historic center and certain buildings of the *Sanssouci* palace complex.⁴¹³

It took about the same time in both cities, Braunschweig and Potsdam, to start with the recreation of the buildings, at least partially. But the case in Potsdam is different. First of all, the increasingly specific discussions in Potsdam are no longer about shopping centers at all. And secondly, there is currently not much more to see in Potsdam than the *Fortunaportal*, the reconstruction of which was finished in October 2002 (Figure 4-3 and Figure 4-4).



Figure 4-3: From left to right: recently reconstructed *Fortunaportal*, obelisk, Potsdam University of Applied Sciences and the portico of the *Nikolaikirche*.⁴¹⁴



Figure 4-4: Emptiness and a high rise hotel behind the portal.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Schoelkopf. Bartetzko: *Gedanken*, 4-5.

⁴¹³ Werner Otto founded the *Otto Versand* (a mail order company) in 1949, which eventually became one of the leading trading and service groups in the world. www.ottogroup.com
In 1965 he established the *ECE Projektmanagement GmbH & Co. KG*. His son, Alexander Otto, became head of ECE in 2000. Also in 2000, Alexander Otto set up the *Stiftung Lebendige Stadt* (foundation for vibrant cities), which acts as a forum for politicians, experts and other involved people, committed to revitalizing European cities as centers of life, work, leisure, communication, culture and trade. www.ece.de, www.lebendige-stadt.de

⁴¹⁴ Photo taken by the author in 2006.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. See also Figure 4-5 for the location of the high-rise hotel.

It is quite interesting to note that this small reconstruction endeavor has been made possible by private funding, including a large donation from a well-known German TV personality. Other celebrities, like fashion designer Wolfgang Joop, contributed to the discussion about the palace with statements like: “Modern architecture is not good enough!”⁴¹⁶ Such increasing involvement, especially of popular public figures, certainly further improved the status of reconstruction projects and also led to favorable or at least more unbiased news coverage and discussions about the palace in Potsdam, but also other current reconstruction projects in general.⁴¹⁷

Today the *Fortunaportal* seems to be marooned on a barren island. This situation is certainly the best advocate for a fast decision to re-urbanize that area as soon as possible. But it is also symptomatic of the whole situation in present-day Potsdam. There are numerous landmarks, both original and reconstructed, and there is also contemporary architecture of notable quality. Only the uniting elements are still missing.⁴¹⁸

The further developments at the location of the former *Stadtschloß* certainly have to address that requirement. It was already decided in 2005 to house the parliament of the state of Brandenburg at that location, assuming the reconstruction of the historic palace at least on the outside.⁴¹⁹ But as of today, the intention is to erect a building in the outer shape and height of the former palace (Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6). It is further anticipated to recreate the complete *Fortunaportal* façade, facing the market square, including the two pavilions, as close to the original as possible (Figure 4-2). This side is furthermore intended to become the main entrance to the complex. And contrary to some earlier ideas, the distinctive space of the inner courtyard will be retained, though it will be smaller than the original one. The other elevations would pick up the historic scheme in a contemporary style. Behind these façades, the required office facilities and the plenary chamber would be arranged on four floors.⁴²⁰ Therefore, not just the vertical organization would be different from the historic building, but also the footprint of these

⁴¹⁶ “Moderne Architektur ist nicht gut genug!” Joop.

⁴¹⁷ Bartetzko: *Gedanken*, 5.

⁴¹⁸ Schäche, 6-8.

⁴¹⁹ And eventually later also the parliament of the possibly united state of Berlin-Brandenburg. Salzmann.

⁴²⁰ Salzmann. Waechter, 1-22.

modern wings needs to be larger than the historic one, to implement all the required uses. The next months will show how that good start can be further developed and implemented. Parallel to the anticipated architectural competition based on the more or less contemporary objectives described above, the *Verein Potsdamer Stadtschloss*⁴²¹ has already started to call for donations to support original reconstructions of the three façades of the Stadtschloß, currently intended to be modern.⁴²² And even the politicians do not seem to concur on that question, as the opinion from the head of the SPD caucus shows, who stated that “we would be on the safe side, if we stuck to the historic model.”⁴²³



Figure 4-5: Feasibility study from February 2006: preliminary model of the intended new parliament building in Potsdam.⁴²⁴

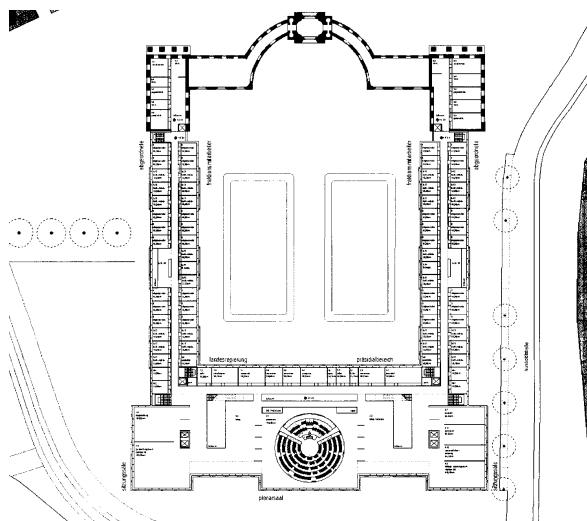


Figure 4-6: Third floor plan. It is intended to complement the already reconstructed *Fortunaportal* (in the upper center part of the drawing) with the two pavilions.⁴²⁵

For a favorable architectural implementation, the people in Potsdam and the potential architects of the parliamentary building do not even have to look that far, since at the *Neuer Markt 5* (new market square no. 5), one of the freshest and most original approaches can be found. But to evaluate this project and to not simply look at the design, a brief outline of its history is required. After the *Stadtschloß* was

⁴²¹ *Verein Potsdamer Stadtschloss e.V.* (Potsdam city palace society): www.stadtschloss-potsdam.org

⁴²² Klein.

⁴²³ Günther Baaske, the Chair of the SPD caucus in the parliament of Brandenburg: “Da sind wir auf der sicheren Seite, wenn wir uns an das historische Vorbild halten.” Quoted in Metzner.

⁴²⁴ Waechter, 22. The tall building block on the right is the high-rise hotel, shown on Figure 4-4.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 11.

finished, *Friedrich der Große* decided to promote the city of Potsdam to a truly royal place. To do so, he financially supported all building activities in the city and in certain cases he himself almost arbitrarily selected façades from across Europe to beautify several buildings. In order to facilitate his ideas, these copies had to be adjusted in scale but also with some alterations to their new locations in Potsdam. This is also true for the copy of the *Palazzo Thiene*, which was built at the *Neuer Markt* in 1755.⁴²⁶ Because the representative two-story façade was basically only selected due to its impressive appearance, it was actually not really suitable for the four story residential building behind that screen – but that was not the intention anyway.⁴²⁷ (Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8)

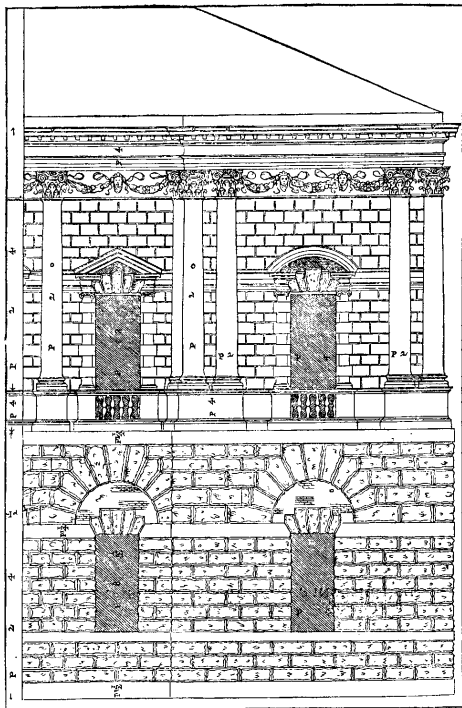


Figure 4-7: The design by Andrea Palladio for the *Palazzo Thiene* in Vicenza (published 1570).⁴²⁸



Figure 4-8: The house *Am Neuen Markt 5* in Potsdam (built by Büring in 1755, lost in 1945).⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ The building in Potsdam is actually not an accurate copy of the *Palazzo Thiene*, which was built in Vicenza, Italy in 1551/1552 with 7 bays. Andrea Palladio originally intended the building to have 11 bays. In his work *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* he published a drawing, showing just two bays of his design (Figure 4-7). The French translation from 1752 of Palladio's book was available to Friedrich der Große. The building in Potsdam is based on this reduced drawing with certain adjustments (compare Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8). Mielke: *Text Volume*, 102-109, 315-316. Schäche, 20-26. Eckardt, 165.

⁴²⁷ Schäche, 24-26.

⁴²⁸ Palladio, 128.

⁴²⁹ Mielke: *Photo volume*, T27.

The area experienced less damage than others in Potsdam and therefore the building was one of the only missing pieces of the otherwise almost complete baroque market square. But the loss was especially grave, since the façade was above all the focal point of the *Schloßstraße* (palace street) leading from the royal stables to the square.⁴³⁰

In 1998, it was decided to close that gap. The architectural office intentionally picked up Friedrich's idea of building beautiful stage-like public spaces. And the result is certainly not an accurate copy of the building from 1755 or even of the Italian original from the 1500s. It is furthermore a baroque layer in front of a contemporary building, which had to respect the organization, but also in return influenced the design of the façade. The first and second floors seem to be arranged behind the rusticated base of the façade, similar to the situation in 1755, but they are actually adjusted to provide for reasonable floor heights. And the upper parts of the façade have been penetrated and reduced to a freestanding curtain, standing 1.20m in front of the actual building, providing even more latitude for the actual stories. This contemporary transparency allows for a view "behind the scenes".⁴³¹

The entire façade, including architectural details, is made from slightly washed concrete, exposing some smaller aggregates at its surface. The backside of that concrete screen is not finished, increasing the impression of a piece of scenery. Behind the upper parts of the façade including the roof, the architects implemented five maisonnette apartments, one behind each of the bays of the façade and each four stories high. Owing to that approach, all residents can experience the best views onto the square but also have to live with the restrictions resulting from the actual incompatibility of façade and building.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Mielke: *Text Volume*, 27. Schäche, 44-47.

⁴³¹ Schäche, 44

⁴³² Tempel, 24-29. Schäche, 34-40, 44-59.



Figure 4-9: The new house at *Am Neuen Markt 5* in Potsdam – since 2002 again an eye-catcher, when approaching the market square, as it was already intended in 1755.⁴³³



Figure 4-10: Close-up of the façade. The cupola of the *Nikolaikirche* in the background.⁴³⁴

The market square in Hannover comes to mind again, where a historic façade from a different location has been attached to a contemporary building as well (Figure 1-13 on page 17). Such a comparison might be true to a certain degree for the “original” building at *Am Neuen Markt 5* from 1755, but even that façade was by far not just a copy, as was shown earlier. And the current approach in Potsdam is furthermore different from the one in Hannover, mainly because it is not just a repetition of an available design. But it is also not the attempt to reference history by hesitantly decorating a contemporary hut with reduced or abstracted details. It is rather an exciting mix of superimposed layers of history and modernity. It is the “idea to let history reflect itself in the contemporary.”⁴³⁵ It is a unique approach, which is more honest and authentic and will probably more easily be remembered than most of the current large-scale reconstructions. And with that, it is able to create the much-implied sense of place, while at the same time fulfilling the even more greatly demanded beautification of the urban spaces.

⁴³³ Photo taken by the author in 2006.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ “Von der Idee, im Neuen die Geschichte widerscheinen zu lassen.” Schäche, 34.

The columnist Dieter Bartetzko and others demanded that Potsdam learn from that example.⁴³⁶ But the city needs to avoid merely copying the approach, since the situation at that location in particular was quite unique. Potsdam has already tried other methods, as the following case will show. Of the three former church towers of historic Potsdam, only the one from Schinkel, opposite the *Stadtschloß*, survived the war and the developments afterwards. That church will again contribute to the recreated *Alter Markt* after the partial reconstruction of the palace (Figure 4-1). The *Garnisonkirche* with its arguable history is about to be reconstructed true to the original.⁴³⁷ But at the location of the third church, the *Heiliggeistkirche* (Church of the Holy Ghost), a contemporary building has been recently erected, resembling the shape of the former church, but appearing almost like a modern sculpture.⁴³⁸ This building complex, in close vicinity to the various reconstruction efforts, but also in sight of the nondescript large-scale commercial train station, seems to be, together with the house at *Am Neuen Markt*, one of the few truly imaginative architectural masterpieces in modern Potsdam. Other than that, the city of Potsdam is more like a typical example of the increasing contrast between more or less authentic reconstructions, of which only some have been presented here, and cheap utilitarian investment blocks, both aiming mainly to attract visitors. But the city also has the potential to combine the scattered existing and intended building gems into a pleasing whole. Several refreshing and unique examples, like the house at *Am Neuen Markt*, but also the current developments at the former *Stadtschloß*, give cause for hope.

Frankfurt: The Palais Thurn und Taxis and Further Enterprises

In the last section, the East German city of Potsdam was chosen to investigate current downtown revitalization initiatives, where reconstructions seem to be an inevitable element. But it was also determined that there is certainly more than just the simple intention to attract tourists and customers. At

⁴³⁶ Bartetzko: *Gedanken*, 7. Tempel, 25.

⁴³⁷ The foundation stone for the reconstruction of the *Garnisonkirche* (Garrison Church) has been laid on 14 April 2005. LVZ, 15 April 2005. Welt, 14 April 2005.

⁴³⁸ Bartetzko: *Gedanken*, 5.

this point, a project will be briefly discussed which seems to be much more akin to the “commercial palace” in Braunschweig.

What had started in Frankfurt with the reconstructions at the *Römerberg* in the early 1980s, resulted in several recreated buildings or parts thereof in recent years. There are currently discussions underway about how to develop the area at the “ugly” city hall, which dates from the early 1970s (see Figure 1-9 on page 13) – and which is about to be removed to recreate the *Alter Markt* (old market square). The suggestions of how to achieve that currently range from contemporary forms to reconstructions in a craftsmanship-like manner. The latter is intended to distinguish themselves from the current developments at the *Neumarkt* in Dresden.⁴³⁹ But not far away from the *Römerberg* another reconstruction project, which is already beyond the stage of theoretical discussions, combines both the city’s love for skyscrapers and historic buildings.

One of Frankfurt’s most elaborate baroque palaces was built in 1732-41 for the owner of the *Reichspost* (Imperial postal system), Prince Anselm of Thurn and Taxis. The *Palais Thurn und Taxis* was mainly based on a design by Robert de Cotte, a French court architect. It was regarded as the only German example of a city mansion in the contemporary baroque style of the French aristocracy. The three wings of the palace and the concave wall with the main entrance portal in its center enclosed a small courtyard. The façade facing the garden was dominated by a rotunda in the axis of the entrance portal. Adding to the simple yet elegant façade, the interiors, especially the moldings, were of superior quality. The small palace was also historically quite important, since the *Bundesversammlung*⁴⁴⁰ used it in the 1880s. After 1907, the ethnology museum moved into the building. In 1944, the *Palais Thurn und Taxis* burnt down completely. Following the war, most of the ruins were removed to provide sufficient space for the development of a large postal and telecommunication center. Only the main portico was preserved and the two corner pavilions with parts of the adjoining wings were reconstructed, but covered with flat tops

⁴³⁹ Bartetzko: *Die Oberbürgermeisterin möchte*, 33. See also page 55.

⁴⁴⁰ The *Bundesversammlung* (Federal Diet), was the legislative assembly of the German Confederation from 1816-48 and 1851-66. In the revolutionary years 1948-49 the political emphasis shifted to the *Paulskirche* (footnote 11).

instead of the original mansard roofs. Right behind those remnants of the palace, several buildings including a distinctive high-rise were erected in the early 1950s.⁴⁴¹ (Figure 4-11 and Figure 4-12)

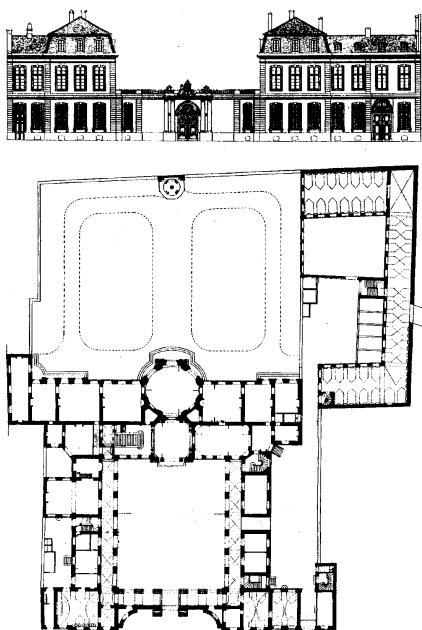


Figure 4-11: The *Palais Thurn und Taxis* in Frankfurt: street façade circa 1900 and plan view of the property.⁴⁴²



Figure 4-12: The telecommunication tower, built in 1953 behind the remnants of the palace.⁴⁴³

This high-rise building was quite controversial, since it was one of the first of its kind in Frankfurt. With its massive stone cladding, it was architecturally certainly also behind its time, and only the cantilevered roof seemed to be in the contemporary notion of lofty glass and steel buildings. Aside from ever-changing parabolic antennas on top of the building, this appearance was well preserved until recently.⁴⁴⁴ In the following years, the nearby street *Zeil* developed into one of the toniest pedestrians shopping precincts in Germany. Thus, the property of the giant office complex, in the heart of a building block, also gained more and more in value. But it became as well increasingly impracticable for the telecommunication group, which still used the buildings. Certainly supported by the fact that there was

⁴⁴¹ Beseler: *Volume II*, 821-822. Kalusche, 18. Lübbecke, 189-236.

⁴⁴² Kalusche, 18.

⁴⁴³ Beyme, 212.

⁴⁴⁴ Bartetzko: *Abbruch-Stimmung*.

mainly just one owner to deal with, the large property was bought by the Dutch real estate and urban development group *Bouwfonds MAB* in 2002.

The distinctive building complex, symbolizing economical growth but also the aesthetics of the early 1950s, has been recently demolished to make room for one of the most ambiguous urban development projects in Frankfurt. Also, the reconstructed parts of the *Palais Thurn und Taxis* have been dismantled again, but only to reemerge as a full-scale reconstruction of the whole palace. It will be one of the four elements of the project *FrankfurtHochVier*,⁴⁴⁵ a building complex starting behind the palace and meandering through the block to the shopping precinct *Zeil*. According to MAB there will be “four times the fun”: a low-rise retail area, a hotel tower, an office tower and the reconstructed palace. Together with its cinemas, restaurants and fitness-centers, the conception is that of an “urban landscape”, where customers and visitors can “work, shop, relax and enjoy.”⁴⁴⁶ Such an inverse city space is citytainment at its best.



Figure 4-13: A computer simulation of the new building complex *FrankfurtHochVier*, stretching from the palace on the left with the new skyscrapers behind to the shopping amenities at the pedestrian precinct to the right.⁴⁴⁷



Figure 4-14: The reconstructed *Palais Thurn und Taxis* in the foreground.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ *FrankfurtHochVier*: *Hoch* literally means “high” but together with *Vier* (four) also translates to the mathematical expression of “to the power of four”. Thus the expression implies: “Frankfurt to the power of four”.

⁴⁴⁶ www.frankfurthochvier.de, accessed in April 2006.

⁴⁴⁷ Mayer, 14.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 15.

At first glance the endeavor seems to be comparable to the case of Braunschweig. But the city of Frankfurt in general and the project in particular is quite different. This certainly does not apply for the time frame, which is about the same in both cities. In Frankfurt it was as early as 2002 when, resulting from a competition, seven master plans from different planning offices were made public.⁴⁴⁹ This certainly proves the assumption wrong that the controversies in Braunschweig were mainly due to being first in line.⁴⁵⁰ In contrast to Braunschweig, there seems to be almost no opposition against the project in Frankfurt, apart from certain opinions in discussion boards on the Internet⁴⁵¹ and some critical articles in newspapers and journals. But most of the available information is mainly about the progress of construction and the new facilities that will be available in the future. And there is no citizens' action group raising their voice for or against the project.

But what distinguishes the two projects from the building perspective? First of all, *FrankfurtHochVier* is, even despite its size, just another complex currently under construction in the metropolitan area. Secondly, the small *Palais Thurn und Taxis* was, compared to the building in Braunschweig, at least in parts tangible in the city until recently. But most importantly, the palace will not serve as a mere façade to mask the new development. There will be, despite the rather short distance, a clear distinction between both parts. The winner of the 2002 competition to develop the master plan, the office *KSP Engel und Zimmermann*, has also designed the two towers.⁴⁵² The scheme was certainly enhanced by the decision to commission with *Massimiliano Fuksas* a second office for the retail area, which will adjoin Frankfurt's pedestrian precinct *Zeil*. According to the most current estimates, the project will be finished by late 2008.⁴⁵³

The functionality of the project in Frankfurt goes even further compared to Braunschweig, namely with its claim to be more than just a shopping mall. It is certainly in the conception of an entertainment center, aiming to fulfill all urban needs. And despite that even stronger commercial touch, it

⁴⁴⁹ FAZ, 26 October 2002, 18 November 2002.

⁴⁵⁰ See page 114.

⁴⁵¹ For instance: www.deutsches-architektur-forum.de accessed in April 2006.

⁴⁵² Flage, 232-236.

⁴⁵³ FAZ, 9 March 2006.

seems to be more accepted and suitable for the particular location. But finally it needs to be pointed out that in Frankfurt a building complex, which greatly determined the urban environment for some decades and which was also architecturally quite significant, has been demolished to make room for these new developments. And with that, parts of the built heritage of the 1950s, which is regarded as an element of the historic town particularly by the post-war generation, has been erased to recreate with the palace an even older historic layer.⁴⁵⁴ This is a circumstance which seems to be also very true for the case of the palace in Berlin, which will be investigated in the next chapter. In Frankfurt it needs to be carefully observed what the developments at the area of the city hall will bring. Chances are that an inevitable compromise between the contemporary retreat to history and commercial pressure to develop the area will result yet again just in citytainment behind supposedly historic façades – despite all the intentions to distinguish themselves from the developments at the *Neumarkt* in Dresden.

⁴⁵⁴ In addition to the telecommunication center it was recently furthermore decided to remove yet another part from that distinctive building ensemble, dating from the early 1950s: The publishing house of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, “symbolizing the moderate post-war Modernism” has been demolished to have even more space for the new development (on Figure 4-13: the building to the left of the palace). FR, 10 February 2006.

CHAPTER 5

THE CASE OF THE BERLIN PALACE

The case of the *Stadtschloß* (city palace) in the historic heart of Berlin is undoubtedly the most controversial and highly political reconstruction project in Germany today. But it should be said in advance: at least from today's point of view it is rather a demolition task than a building project. The question as to which layer of history should be appreciated, is in Berlin certainly more difficult to answer than in other cases. The city palace was for more than five centuries a crucial element of Berlin from the urban and political point of view. But another building took its place after World War II, which was of similar urban and political importance. Both buildings can to a certain degree be regarded as identifying symbols of their time.

Because of the duration of the debate, which basically started immediately after the political change in 1989 and which is still ongoing, a wide range of issues have been on the agenda. The discussions developed around history, politics, ideological considerations and urban beautification and were also influenced by the conflict between the East and the West. It will be shown that it was finally the federal government which decided upon urban planning matters – a procedure comparable to the one some decades earlier in the totalitarian system of the GDR.

A Historic Overview up to 1918

The old dynasty of the *Hohenzollern* was granted the title “Margraves of *Brandenburg*” in 1415, and in 1417 was promoted to the status of *Kurfürst* (Elector).⁴⁵⁵ This newly gained importance required an appropriate seat in the city to symbolize the claim to the new power of the Electors. The

⁴⁵⁵ Mauter, 9.

foundation stone for the palace was laid by *Kurfürst* Friedrich II on 31 July 1443.⁴⁵⁶ The citizens showed their disapproval of this act during the *Berliner Unwillen* (Berlin resentment) in 1448.⁴⁵⁷ After the brief and unsuccessful uprising, Berlin became the electoral residence and permanent administrative seat, which it remained until 1918.

The first parts of the palace were more like a castle than a real majestic residence. The round tower *Grüner Hut* (green hat), which had previously been part of the city wall of the neighboring city *Cöln*, became integrated into the palace building and survived for the whole life of the complex. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the larger new building parts, including a new chapel and additions to the *Grüner Hut*, were built by Kaspar Theiß,⁴⁵⁸ having been commissioned by Joachim II. Two further annexes to the existing complex and a new freestanding building opposite the main wing in 1578-1596 were added by master builder Rochus Graf von Lynar.⁴⁵⁹ (see Figure 5-1)

In the second half of the seventeenth century several modifications to the palace in the contemporary Baroque style were initiated by *Kurfürst* Friedrich Wilhelm II. These included the redecoration of the private apartments starting in 1679. Between 1681-1685, the wing with the *Alabastersaal* (alabaster hall) was added to Lynar's freestanding building. The east side of the so-called *Eishof* near the river was enclosed between 1685-1690.⁴⁶⁰ (see Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2)

⁴⁵⁶ Wiesinger, 7.

⁴⁵⁷ Klünner, 17.

⁴⁵⁸ Also Caspar Theyß.

⁴⁵⁹ Based on Wiesinger, who provides a very detailed description of the palace in the consecutive periods: 7-11, 12, 29-48, 49-74. Also very detailed descriptions in Peschken: *Von der kurfürstlichen Residenz zum Königsschloß*, 22-41 and Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 1*, 28-68, 69-82. For short abstracts see Klünner, 19, Eckardt: *Volume I*, 14-25 and Neugebauer, 11-12.

Albert Geyer published the first major work about the palace and its history, covering the periods of the building until his time as building advisor for the palace in the early 20th century. Most of the following scholars based their research activity on his principle work. Geyer: *Geschichte des Schlosses zu Berlin*. Of note is Peschken, who provided several books about the palace, including an extremely comprehensive tome, consisting of four large volumes including a high quality picture series (see bibliography).

⁴⁶⁰ Peschken: *Von der kurfürstlichen Residenz zum Königsschloß*, 44-50. Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 1.*, 83-102. Petras 10, Wiesinger, 83-126.

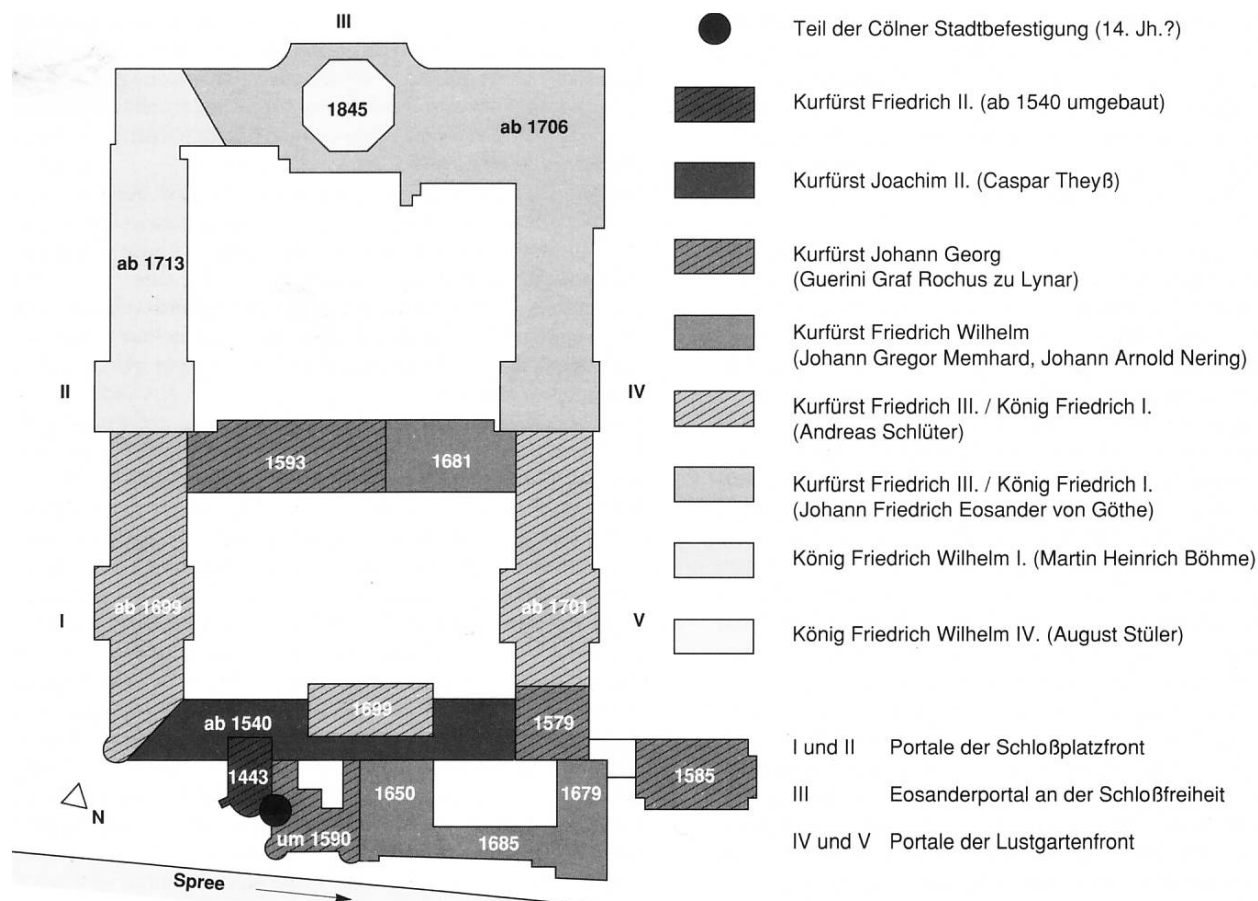


Figure 5-1: Plan of the historic phases of the building. The oldest parts with the *Eishof* court at the *Spree* river are in the lower part of the illustration. Portals IV and V are facing the *Lustgarten* (pleasure grounds), portals I and II the *Schloßplatz* (palace square).⁴⁶¹

It can be assumed that Friedrich III, who was elector since 1688 and a patron of the arts and sciences, commissioned Andreas Schlüter in 1698 to redecorate the palace in a contemporary and representative style. In the following years the development of the palace was characterized by political changes. Friedrich became king in 1701 and wanted his palace to stand in the same class with the residences of other European monarchs.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹ Zettler, 8.

⁴⁶² Elector Friedrich III of Brandenburg declared himself King of Prussia in 1701. This act was approved by the German Emperor Leopold I. Because of his new title, he was from that time on Friedrich I, King of Prussia. Friedrich's reign became the most important phase of the construction history, resulting in extensive descriptions available today. Peschken for instance subdivided the building phases based on the different periods of the ruler Friedrich III/Friedrich I. In his first volume he also provided a very detailed description even of the unexecuted designs of the phase until Friedrich became king. Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 1*, 103-330.

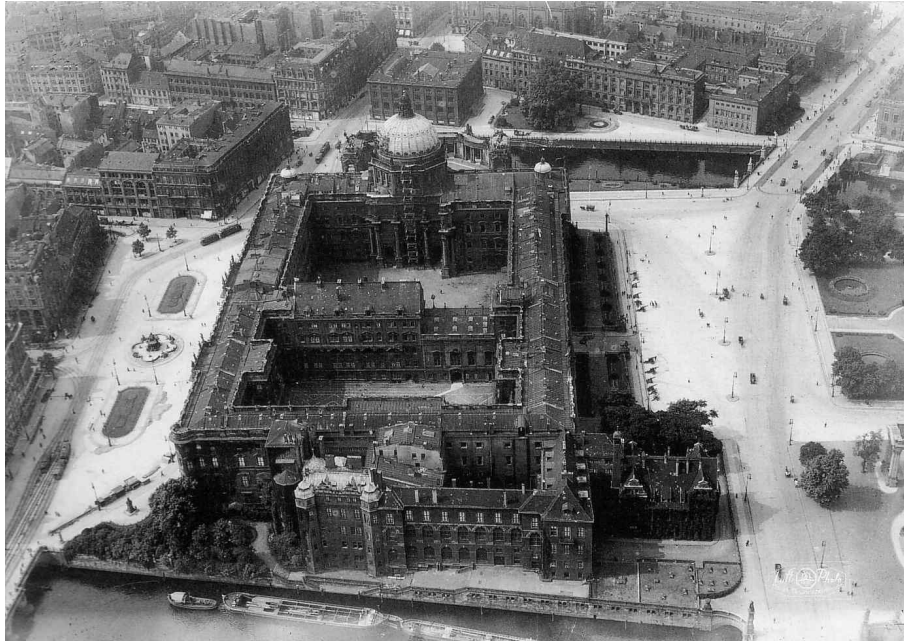


Figure 5-2: Aerial view of the Spree island from about 1913. *Schloßplatz* (palace square) to the left and *Lustgarten* (pleasure grounds) to the right. Schinkel's *Bauakademie* is in the upper center of the photo.⁴⁶³

Little is known about Schlüter's life, since most of his work and documentation about him is lost. He grew up in Danzig,⁴⁶⁴ and was certainly influenced by the city's rich architectural heritage, which ranged from Gothic and Renaissance to Baroque. After he was trained as sculptor in Danzig, he went to Warsaw in 1689 and worked there for the Polish king. For Schlüter it was very important to further increase his knowledge and experience on extensive study tours. Nevertheless, it is not known to what extent he was able live up to his own aspirations. Only shorter trips to France and the Netherlands in 1694 and to Italy in 1696 are documented. In 1694 he became sculptor at the court of Friedrich III.⁴⁶⁵

A turning point in Schlüter's life was certainly his appointment as architect at the *Zeughaus* (arsenal) in 1698. During the previous two years he had already been involved as sculptor on that project. It is said that he had difficulties with the load bearing system and he was also made responsible for the collapse of two pillars, an incident which occurred after he had already left the project. It needs to be added that Schlüter was supposedly never educated and trained as an architect and builder. The baroque

⁴⁶³ Zettler, 28.

⁴⁶⁴ Polish: Gdańsk.

⁴⁶⁵ Hinterkeuser, 9-10, 13-31. Ladendorf, 6-12.

architect Jean de Bodt finished the construction of the *Zeughaus*, after Schlüter withdrew from the project in favor of the more prestigious and time-consuming palace project.⁴⁶⁶

On 2 November 1699 Schlüter was appointed *Schloßbaumeister* (palace master builder). Despite his rather short period as architect at the palace in the early 1700s, he is regarded as the artist who shaped the appearance of the building. The older building parts, including the two small courtyards at the *Spree* river and the parallel freestanding wing, were retained. Schlüter's achievement was to connect those existing facilities with his two new wings, resulting in a new grand inner enclosure. This second courtyard, the so-called *Schlüterhof*, was dominated by Schlüter's façade design with the prominent arcades and the two grand Baroque portals. The central focal point and highlight was certainly the larger and even more decorated and impressive portico at the east side of the court, with the stair case leading to the private apartments of the King (Figure 5-3). Schlüter also transferred the scheme from the inner court to the exterior façades facing the *Lustgarten* (pleasure grounds, portal I) and *Schoßplatz* (palace square, portal V).⁴⁶⁷

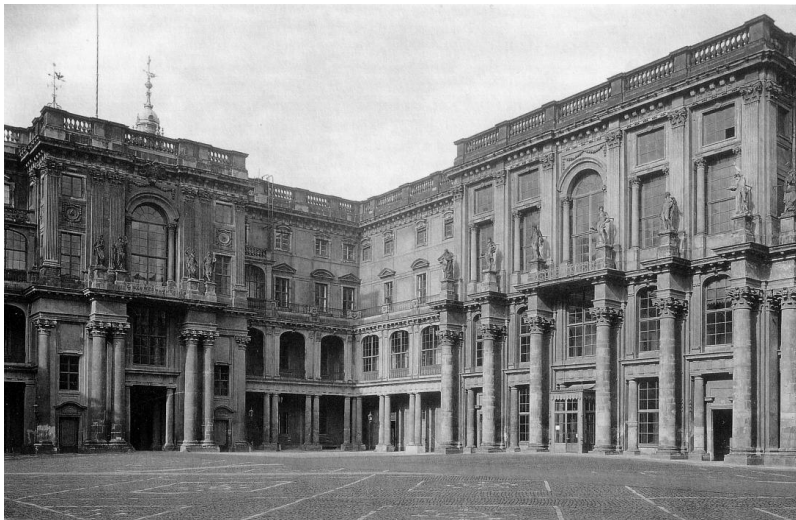


Figure 5-3: The second court yard, the so-called *Schlüterhof*. The main portico with the staircase is shown on the right and portal V leading to the pleasure grounds on the left.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁶ Hinterkeuser, 34, 40-46. Ladendorf, 45.

⁴⁶⁷ Ladendorf, Peschken and Wiesinger give detailed descriptions of Schlüter's work. Ladendorf, 48-113. Peschken: *Von der kurfürstlichen Residenz zum Königsschloß*, 52-57. Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin*. Bd. 2, 35-49, 51-71. Petras, 10-12. Wiesinger, 132-191.

⁴⁶⁸ Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin*. Bd. 2, 39.

Schlüter's greatest artistic achievement can be seen in his organization of the façades, developed from the monumental style of Italian High Baroque. His design is characterized by homogenous fronts consisting of three main stories with sculptural-like pediments, cornices and moldings, complemented by the full-bodied porticos. Sculptural decoration was especially important to him owing to his original profession.⁴⁶⁹ The porticos are characterized by columns and pilasters from different orders, statues, caryatids, reliefs and cartouches. Most of his embellishments are based on ancient mythology, Renaissance ideals and Baroque symbolism. The great splendor and importance of the *Schlüterhof* is shown by the fact that it was still used as reception area for the kings in later decades.⁴⁷⁰

Schlüter's interior design has also been praised as "magnificent and full of symbolic meanings."⁴⁷¹ His use of plentiful "lavish decoration"⁴⁷² and the "wealth and splendor of shapes"⁴⁷³ have been widely admired. "Schlüter's mastery was the unity of sculptural decoration and architecture."⁴⁷⁴ Of note are the sculptures in the large staircase leading to the Kings apartments, depicting the fight of the Olympians against Titans and Giants. The staircase was later described as being "... one of the most beautiful baroque staircases."⁴⁷⁵ (Figure 5-4)

Furthermore, the interaction between the sculptured elements and the numerous wall and ceiling paintings was of remarkable quality, for instance in the *Rittersaal*,⁴⁷⁶ where the first Prussian King was glorified. This room was decorated with Corinthian pilasters with eagle heads and richly ornamented cornices and pediments in the corners of the ceiling, which reached into and culminated in the ceiling painting by Johann Friedrich Wentzel. Especially the painting praised the deeds of Friedrich I and even included a model of the palace itself. (Figure 5-5) All continents were depicted above the four doors lead-

⁴⁶⁹ As sculptor Schlüter also created the well-known equestrian statue near the palace, depicting the Elector Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 11-12.

⁴⁷⁰ Despite being an enclosed inner court, the yard had still in 1786 been called a *Platz* (open square). Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 12.

⁴⁷¹ "großartig und voller symbolischer Bedeutung" Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 13.

⁴⁷² "verschwenderisches Dekor" Wiesinger, 171.

⁴⁷³ "Fülle und Pracht der Formen" Wiesinger, 174.

⁴⁷⁴ "Schlüters Meisterschaft, die plastische Dekoration mit der Architektur als Einheit zu sehen." Wiesinger, 180.

⁴⁷⁵ "... als eines der schönsten Treppenhäuser des Barock." Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 58.

See Peschken for a detailed description of the main staircase. Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 2*, 129-171.

⁴⁷⁶ The *Rittersaal* (Knight's hall) was situated directly above portico V and was used as the throne room.

ing into this magnificent ensemble, representing the whole world around the King.⁴⁷⁷ Schlüter's contribution certainly raised the artistic quality of the building to the highest level and promoted it to the most modern palace in Europe.⁴⁷⁸



Figure 5-4: Main Staircase behind the central portico of the *Schlüterhof*.⁴⁷⁹



Figure 5-5: Ceiling in the *Rittersaal* (Knight's hall)⁴⁸⁰

The collapse of the *Münzturm* (mint tower)⁴⁸¹ in July 1706 brought an abrupt end to Schlüter's engagement as architect of the royal buildings in Berlin.⁴⁸² Yet he continued with his work as sculptor at

⁴⁷⁷ Very detailed descriptions of Schlüter's alterations and additions are in Wiesinger. She, like most of the art historians dealing with the palace, based her work on the tome by Geyer and the book by Ladendorf. The latter wrote in the 1930s the first detailed and scholarly book about Schlüter in general and the palace in particular, with emphasis on detailed descriptions of the ornaments, reliefs and sculptures. Ladendorf, 48-113. For details on the *Rittersaal* (Knight's hall) see: Wiesinger, 178-182 and Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 3, Textband*, 169-175.

⁴⁷⁸ Neugebauer, 35.

⁴⁷⁹ Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 3, Tafelband*, 32.

⁴⁸⁰ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 25. Picture taken in 1913.

⁴⁸¹ The tower was used as water tower and mint. Hinterkeuser, 231-232.

⁴⁸² For a detailed report on the *Münzturm* disaster see Hinterkeuser. Ladendorf gives a shorter overview. Hinterkeuser, 231-256. Ladendorf 108-109, 111-114, 125-130, 136-138. Peschken even provides a very detailed description of the different designs intended for the tower. Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin. Bd. 2., 3-25, 83-127, 205-209.*

the palace until 1713, when he left for St. Petersburg, where he died in 1714. But the incident with the tower, despite not being fully investigated, cast a shadow on his reputation. Only in later years have his achievements been increasingly acknowledged again: “The truly great is significant beyond its time...”⁴⁸³; and it was also said that Schlüter is the first in line “... and not Bodt, Eosander, Glume, Wenzel, when referring to art in Berlin, to the north German Baroque.”⁴⁸⁴

Schlüter was succeeded by Johann Friedrich Eosander von Göthe, who was court master builder until 1713. He added additional wings to develop the next, even larger courtyard, which would later be known as *Eosanderhof* (Eosander yard).⁴⁸⁵ The main entrance to the new inner space also became the main entrance of the palace and the focal point of the new west façade. Eosander copied the triumphal arch of Septimus Severus to provide for an impressive and meaningful appearance, though his intention to build a tower was abandoned. It can be said that Eosander basically continued Schlüter’s work and laid the foundation for the further building activities.⁴⁸⁶

The next generations of palace architects and master builders also respectfully kept up a certain continuity and further developed the whole complex. The architectural composition of the baroque palace built by Schlüter and Eosander was finally completed by August Stüler and Albert Schadow in 1845 und 1853. Where Eosander planned his tower, Stüler and Schadow erected a dome to crown the Eosander portico.⁴⁸⁷

There are diverging scholarly opinions about Schlüter’s capabilities as master builder. The architect Peschken for instance relieved Schlüter of any responsibility for the collapse, making out sandy soil and ground water to be the reason. But Hinterkeuser analyzed Peschken’s opinion about the *Münzturm* case and showed that this theory was never fully proved and that it is also contrary to most of the other scholarly opinions. In his voluminous work, Peschken even ignored the experts who raised their voices immediately after the collapse. Many professionals, e.g. Eosander, the architect Grünberg and the mathematician and architect Christoph Leonhard Sturm supplied reports. Sturm for instance criticized that the interior space became narrower towards the top, while the wall became thicker at the same time. Hinterkeuser, 234.

Peschken’s opinion seems to be too much in favor of Schlüter. Peschken: *Von der kurfürstlichen Residenz zum Königsschloß*, 55-57 and Peschken: *Das Königliche Schloß zu Berlin*. Bd. 2, 122-126.

⁴⁸³ “Das wahrhaft Große hat seine Bedeutung jenseits der Zeit...” Ladendorf, 144.

⁴⁸⁴ “... von ihm ist zuerst die Rede, nicht von de Bodt, Eosander, Glume, Wenzel, wenn von Berliner Kunst, vom norddeutschen Barock gesprochen wird.” Ladendorf, 144.

⁴⁸⁵ The *Eosanderhof* is also called first courtyard, despite being the last one built.

⁴⁸⁶ Wiesinger gives also detailed descriptions for the building period of Eosander. Wiesinger, 192-223.

⁴⁸⁷ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 13.

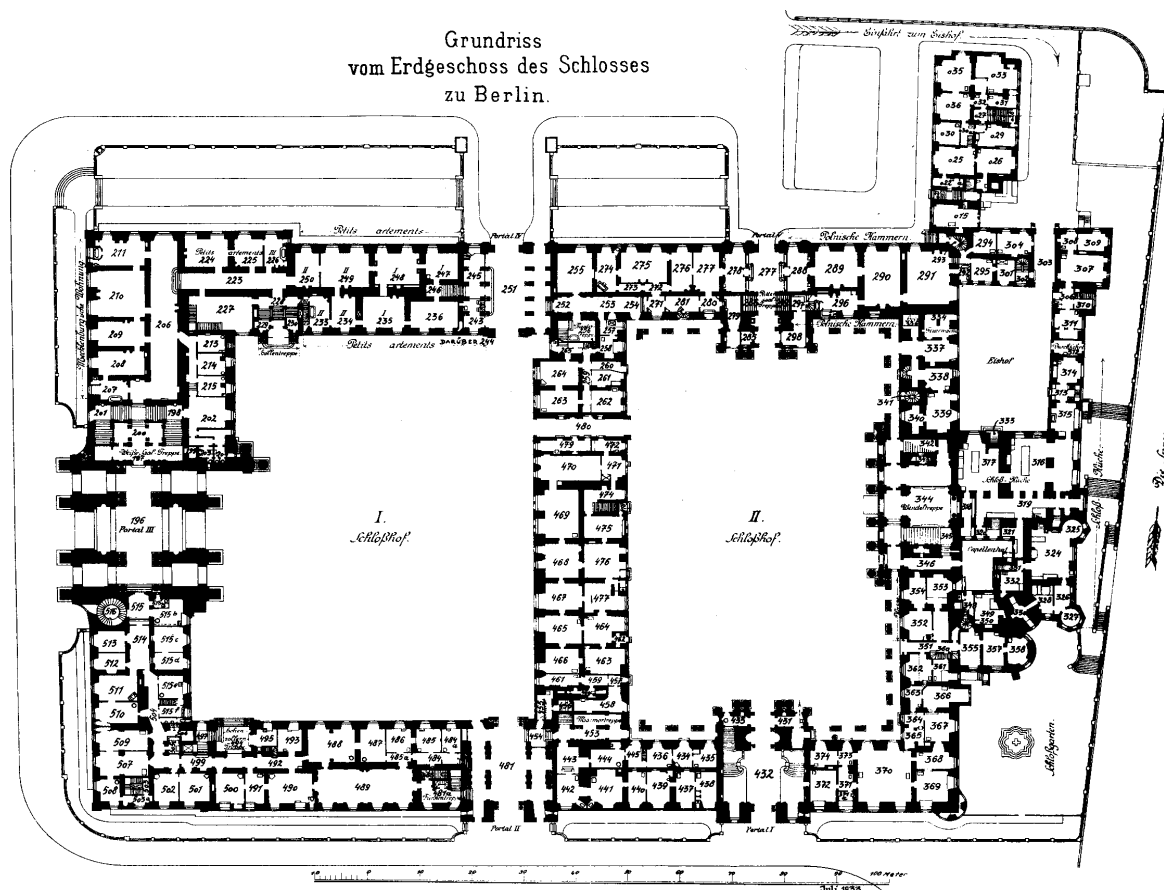


Figure 5-6: First Floor. Plan from 1933. From left to right: *Eosanderhof* (court I) *Schlüterhof* (court II, which was open to the public) and *Eishof*. The *Schloßgarten* (palace garden) right at the banks of the river Spree in the lower right corner.⁴⁸⁸

In the second half the nineteenth century, the Berlin palace was a truly royal and imperial seat. In addition to the oldest parts of the building, it comprised six wings around two courtyards and had a total area of 23,800 square meters with 1,210 rooms on four floors (Figure 5-6). Nearly all kings and emperors used the palace permanently or at least temporarily as official residence, and every resident made minor changes owing to technical improvements and stylistic changes. But it would be too simple to reduce the palace only to its residential function, because throughout the centuries since its erection in the fifteenth century the *Hohenzollern* rulers used the palace for representative purposes and for official receptions.⁴⁸⁹ The palace administration was also housed in the complex from early on, as well as offices

⁴⁸⁸ Peschken/Klünner: *Das Berliner Schloß*, 460.

⁴⁸⁹ Neugebauer, 9-10, 55-56. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 13-14.

and archives.⁴⁹⁰ It was furthermore the financial center of wealthy Prussia and one of the largest gold and silver depots in Europe. In 1808, the royal cabinet was dissolved in Prussia and ministries were set up. From 1817 the new *Staatsrat* (state council) had their sessions in a hall on the ground floor, west of Portal II. Due to this fact, the palace complex was from the beginning also a political and administrative center of Brandenburg, Prussia and later the German Empire. Religious matters were essential as well, since the chapel became – with papal approval – independent as a parochial church soon after its erection. Already in 1465, it was promoted to a collegiate church and was richly endowed.⁴⁹¹

The pleasure grounds were first mentioned in 1471. Friedrich Wilhelm I, who was also known as the “Soldier King”, came to power in 1713 and assigned the pleasure grounds for parades. With the completion of the *Altes Museum*⁴⁹² (Old Museum) opposite the palace in 1828, they were reassigned to their initial purpose. Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the architect of the museum, and landscape architect Peter Joseph Lenné redeveloped the area between 1830 and 1832.⁴⁹³ Initiated by Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1844, terraces were laid out at the palace front facing the pleasure grounds. These terraces completed and continued the landscaping of the area. Under Emperor Wilhelm II further but much smaller terraces were added around the palace in 1901, resulting in a narrow landscaped belt around the building. This Wilhelminian era certainly marked the heyday for the whole area in the heart of Berlin. (Figure 5-7) Contemporary paintings depicted scenes with citizens strolling through the gardens and court II, which was still open to the public through Portals I and V, as once intended by Schlüter (Figure 5-3 and Figure 5-6). Even during World War II the palace with its surroundings had the same friendly and maintained appearance as in peace times, despite the fact that only servants and guards occupied the building.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹⁰ Already in the 15th century, all important councils also resided at the court. Neugebauer, 13-14. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 14.

⁴⁹¹ Klünner, 18. Neugebauer 9-10, 15-16, 45, 50-51. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 15.

⁴⁹² The Old Museum, a truly classical masterpiece, complemented together with the cathedral and the palace the monumental heart of Berlin. From the semi-open platform of the museum the visitors were able to overlook the pleasure grounds towards the palace. Petras: *Die Bauten der Berliner Museumsinsel*, 38-52.

⁴⁹³ Peschken: *Von der kurfürstlichen Residenz zum Königsschloß*, 41-44. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 15-18.

⁴⁹⁴ Neugebauer, 61-62. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 18-30.



Figure 5-7: Panoramic view circa 1903. The pleasure grounds are framed by the *Altes Museum*, cathedral, palace and the river Spree.⁴⁹⁵

After the Monarchy

On 9 November 1918 the palace was the center of the revolution in Berlin. The military had been ordered to protect the building and to open fire in case of an attack, which was anticipated since some of the people who thronged towards the palace were armed. After Philipp Scheidemann (SPD) announced the abdication of the emperor and proclaimed the *Deutsche Republik* (German Republic), the order to open fire was revoked. Later that day, Karl Liebknecht declared the palace to be national property and proclaimed the *Sozialistische Republik Deutschlands* (Socialist Republic of Germany).⁴⁹⁶ The circumstance that he gave his speech from the balcony of Portal IV would later become significant.

On the evening of 9 November, the rebels occupied the palace and the looting of the rooms started. Even though more than 500 rooms were plundered, the overall damage was minor, but very old and valuable records from the royal archives were lost.⁴⁹⁷ Some days later the new parliament confiscated the property of the *Hohenzollern* dynasty including the palace and turned it over to the new Prussian government.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Landesbildstelle Berlin, 52.

⁴⁹⁶ Neugebauer, 62. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 32-33. Peschken/Klünner, 113-114. Michel, 153-156.

⁴⁹⁷ Neugebauer, 62. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 33.

⁴⁹⁸ Even though the *Hohenzollern* had already been deprived of their property in 1918, the required law was only established at the end of 1926. In 1927, the *Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten* (administration of national palaces and gardens) was founded to take care of the valuable palaces. The administration has operated continuously until today, even in both parts of the divided Germany. Petras, 72. Peschken/Klünner, 115-116.

The rebels were forced to leave, and the *Volksmarinedivision* was ordered into the palace.⁴⁹⁹ Even under the protection of the military, further theft and damage occurred. The administrative staff complained about the increasing numbers of soldiers in the palace. As a response, the order to protect valuable pieces of art was given, and Wilhelm von Bode received them for his museum.⁵⁰⁰

In December 1918, it was decided to move the military out of the palace. But the royal stables, which were intended as the new quarters, were not available on time and the soldiers chose to stay on without authorization. The problem escalated when their pay was denied, and they took Berlin's commanding officer as hostage to support their claims. After a short ultimatum the government gave the order to fire on the palace, which resulted in severe damage to the façade facing the pleasure grounds. Also, Portal IV with the "Liebknecht-balcony" was damaged, but the interior destruction was minor.⁵⁰¹

Some of the armed soldiers were shot dead, and the other thirty or so soldiers surrendered. The people allied themselves with the arrested, certainly due to political considerations but also because of the pointless attack on the building.⁵⁰² With that the people of Berlin showed for the first time an affection for the palace. In all previous centuries the palace, regardless of its particular appearance and occupancy, had never been threatened and had become an essential element in the heart of Berlin. Now, in the revolutionary days, the palace was nearly sacrificed for a few soldiers.⁵⁰³ "Was that necessary?"⁵⁰⁴ asked Bogdan Krieger, a conservative archivist, who used to work in the palace and who was still loyal to the abdicated emperor.

After the soldiers had been forced out of the palace in 1918, the building was empty except for some guards.⁵⁰⁵ In summer 1919, the *Hohenzollern* management was allowed to bring large parts of the former monarch's private property to his new residence in the Netherlands.⁵⁰⁶

⁴⁹⁹ The *Volksmarinedivision* (navy division) was part of the republican forces.

⁵⁰⁰ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 33-34.

⁵⁰¹ Krieger, 33. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 34-35. Peschken/Klünner 116-117.

⁵⁰² Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 34.

⁵⁰³ It was estimated, that not more than a total number of 50-60 soldiers were in the palace. Krieger, 33.

⁵⁰⁴ "War das nötig?" Krieger, 33.

⁵⁰⁵ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 36.

With the abdication of the emperor, the palace lost its main function as residence. It was decided soon after the revolution to use the palace at least in parts as a museum. In 1920/21 the Museum for Arts and Crafts moved into the building and was from that time on officially called *Schloßmuseum*.⁵⁰⁷ As a new function, in addition to the collection of objects and their exhibition, the museum had also to take care of the building. The palace complex itself became an exhibit.⁵⁰⁸ From now on public access was not just limited to the *Schlüterhof*.⁵⁰⁹ The exhibition opened in 1921 with 70 rooms on the first and second floor. Another 12 rooms, including the chapel, were later added to the museum. However, the exhibition was criticized, because the arrangement of the displays was said to be incompatible with the historical rooms. Especially showcases and unsuitable furniture disturbed the overall impression of the palace architecture.

In addition to the Museum for Arts and Crafts, 24 private historical apartments were opened to the public in 1926, thus creating a second museum. These included the rooms used by the kings and emperors since Friedrich Wilhelm I.⁵¹⁰ It was the building advisor to the royal court, Albert Geyer,⁵¹¹ who selected the historic layers to be presented. He decided in favor of various epochs based on art historical aspects to recreate sequences of rooms from earlier periods and to remove inadequate installations from the Wilhelminian era. The rooms were completed with furniture, paintings, sculptures, tapestries and china appropriate to the depicted time frame of the particular rooms.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁶ This delivery included everything required for an imperial household: 23 railway freight cars with furniture, 30 cars with other miscellaneous items and two automobiles. Peschken/Klünner, 115. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 36.

⁵⁰⁷ The name *Schloßmuseum* (Museum in the Palace) was just referring to the location, but not to the content.

⁵⁰⁸ Peschken/Klünner, 119-122.

⁵⁰⁹ Even in previous decades it had been possible for certain people with a professional interest in art to visit a few rooms, but this was only possible by exceptional permission, only in absence of the king or emperor and only accompanied by a curator. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 38.

⁵¹⁰ Geyer: *Die historischen Wohnräume im Berliner Schloß*, 11. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 38-39, 57. Peschken/Klünner, 122-123.

⁵¹¹ Geyer was a member of the *Schloßbaukommission* (building committee of the palace) since 1885, and became its chairman in 1909. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 57.

Geyer also published a booklet for the self guided walk through the rooms, including a brief overview of the historic backgrounds of the palace. Geyer: *Die historischen Wohnräume im Berliner Schloß*. Later he also finished his four-volume tome of the history of the palace, which would eventually become the basis for all the following researchers. Geyer: *Geschichte des Schlosses zu Berlin*.

⁵¹² Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 57.

In the years between the two world wars, the Berlin palace was one of the largest museum palaces in Germany and the center of cultural life in Berlin, where concerts were given and exhibitions took place.⁵¹³ In addition to the two museums the palace was also used by civil servants, governmental offices, public organizations and various societies. Even private tenants started to rent rooms in the palace.⁵¹⁴ The maintenance of the palace complex depended also in these years on the available financial resources. At the end of the 1920s the money supply was rationalized, firstly due to the Great Depression, and secondly because of Hitler's economic policies.⁵¹⁵

Certain repairs were done from the start of the 1930s.⁵¹⁶ The inspections which accompanied the construction work revealed several rooms which had not been in use for a long time. Due to several alterations they had not been accessible and apparently deleted from the record drawings. These valuable chambers had been previously used for exhibits until those collections were relocated in the nineteenth century.⁵¹⁷ It was quite a sensation to discover the comparably well-preserved rooms, which resulted in great public interest. But certain repairs would have been required and more importantly, the location of the rooms was not suitable for the large number of visitors expected. It was therefore decided to duplicate

⁵¹³ Ibid, 73.

⁵¹⁴ Users of the palace were for instance: *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft* (emperor-Wilhelm-society), *Phonogramm-Archiv* (phonogram archives), *Amt für Denkmalpflege* (department of historic preservation), *Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft* (German research society for arts and sciences), *Österreichische Freundeshilfe* (Austrian welfare society), *Geschäftsstelle des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* (Office of the German association for theory and history of art), *Schloßbauämter* (palace building offices), *Museum für Leibesübungen* (museum for physical education), *Preußisches Staatstheater* (Prussian state theater).

Especially due to the economical difficulties in the post war era an increasing number of non-profit and welfare institutions used the palace, e.g.: *Zentrale für Kinderspeisung* (headquarters of the soup-kitchens for children), *Vermittlung von Heimarbeit an Mittelständige* (agency to arrange for outwork for small businesses), *Fürsorgeamt für Beamte aus dem Grenzgebiet* (public welfare for civil servants of the border areas), *Gewerkschaft Deutscher Verwaltungsbeamte* (German administrative officials' union), *Studentenhilfe mit Mensa in ehemaliger Schloßküche* (students aid organization with refectory in the former palace kitchen), *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German academic exchange service), *Deutsche Kunstgemeinschaft* (German art society). Neugebauer, 62-63. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 73. Peschken/Klünner, 117-119, 125-126.

⁵¹⁵ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 74.

⁵¹⁶ Peschken/Klünner, 126.

⁵¹⁷ The *Kunstkammern* (art chambers) were used to display sculptures, coins and medals and also art and natural history objects. These rooms contained well preserved wall and ceiling paintings from the Schlüter era and were decorated according to their historical use.

two of the rooms as a highlight of an exposition about “Old Berlin“ in an exhibition center outside of the palace.⁵¹⁸

Later, after the Nazis took over, they accepted the palace as a powerful symbol of Prussian and therefore German history, because for them the building mainly symbolized strength and the tradition of militarism.⁵¹⁹ But unlike the palace in Braunschweig, they did not use the building for their cause.⁵²⁰ Above all, Hitler and his architect Albert Speer had much grander visions for the new capital of the Third Reich. And the palace with the boulevard *Unter den Linden* was not touched by Hitler’s intentions to redevelop Berlin, since the urban development objectives of the Nazis were focused on other areas. But Hitler did include in 1935 the pleasure grounds in his plans for the new Berlin, since parades were an essential part of his regime. With the preparations for the Olympic Games of 1936, the pleasure grounds were comprehensively redesigned. Only a few trees were left and the stairs leading to the *Altes Museum* became a stand for the Führer. The remodeled square included the forecourt of the palace and provided enough space for 27,000 people.⁵²¹

Already at the beginning of the second world war, the historical apartments were closed, and finally the rest of the building in 1941. At the end of the year 1943 the building experienced only minor damage, but in May 1944 the palace was hit.⁵²² On 3 February 1945 Berlin was heavily bombed and the palace burnt out, with only the north west corner of the building spared. During the last days of the war in the course of the fight for Berlin the already ruined palace suffered further damage from grenades. However, the load-bearing walls of the palace were still more or less intact, and even sculptural elements of the *Schlüterhof* survived the war.⁵²³ (Figure 5-8)

⁵¹⁸ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 74. Peschken/Klünner, 126-127.

⁵¹⁹ The esteem for the palace as symbol of the Prussian history but also for its main architect was vividly shown in a movie about Andreas Schlüter, which was produced in 1942. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 76.

⁵²⁰ See section “The Sinister Part of the History”.

⁵²¹ Peschken/Klünner, 127-128. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 75-76.

⁵²² The first major damage led to the decision to further complement the already available photo documentation of the palace to also include the most current arrangements and conditions. Peschken/Klünner, 128. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 78-82.

⁵²³ Neugebauer, 63-64. Peschken/Klünner, 128-129.

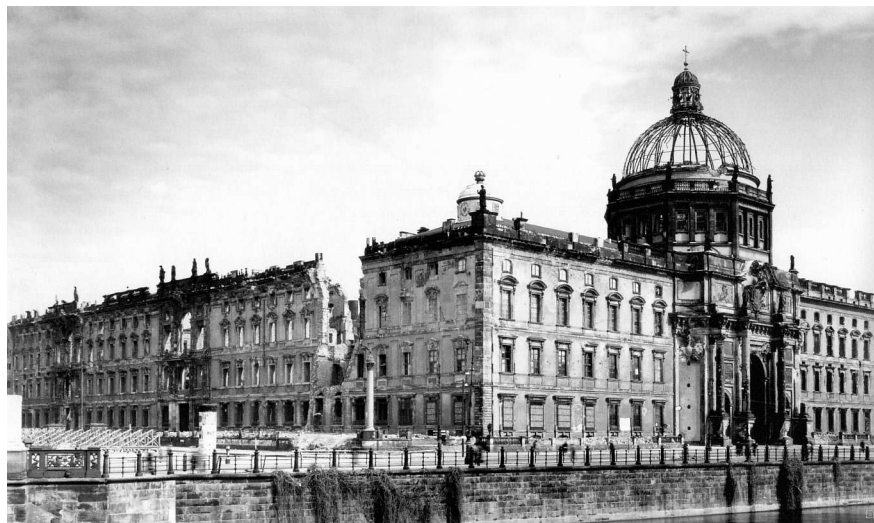


Figure 5-8: The ruins of the palace towards the end of the World War II.⁵²⁴

The Removal of the Historic Palace

The situation in Berlin after the war was quite unique, since the four main Allied Forces controlled the German capital, which was accordingly divided into four sectors. However, in the first years after the war, Berlin was administrated by one city council, controlled by the four Allies. But even at this early stage the Soviets played a key role in Berlin.

The formerly state-owned palaces and the museums of Berlin were from October 1945 on under the administration of the city council. This was the case until the western sectors were united and the separation of the city into East and West Berlin was consolidated by the end of 1948. Then, the city council of East Berlin was responsible for the palaces and museums in its sphere and therefore also for the *Hohenzollern* residence and its surroundings.⁵²⁵ With the foundation of the GDR in 1949, the palace came officially under control of the new government, but actually the building was still under trusteeship of the city council until the end of 1950, which was in fact the end of the palace itself.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴ Haubrich: *Kein Lehrstück*, 202.

⁵²⁵ The territory of East Berlin comprised the whole old part of Berlin including the palace, pleasure grounds, museums island as well as municipal districts in the east, south and north-east of Berlin. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 83, 98.

⁵²⁶ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 83.

The first mayor, still of all sectors of Berlin, was Arthur Werner. Among the 14 city councilors was Hans Scharoun, who was also the head of the department for housing and construction.⁵²⁷ Scharoun was one of the first to raise his voice in favor of the palace. In contrast to him, most of the other city councilors and officials were already against the palace, or at least were not really concerned. One of the major reasons for this, especially right after the war, were strong economic restrictions.⁵²⁸ Nevertheless, even at this stage political considerations had already become apparent. As early as summer 1945, the sessions of the city council were full of ideological polemics. Arthur Pieck for instance said that the palace “also contained a lot of art kitsch” and that nobody was interested in “symbols of the *Hohenzollern* imperialism.”⁵²⁹ It was also claimed that all human and financial resources were needed to meet the housing demand.⁵³⁰ Despite this, Scharoun provided a few plans for preservation and received sufficient funds to get the *Weißer Saal* (White Hall) prepared for public use.⁵³¹ He further stated that it would be possible to reconstruct the exterior true to its original, but he also pointed out, “that the interior of the palace as a piece of art and art historical document was lost forever.”⁵³²

Since Scharoun was responsible for the comprehensive redesign of Berlin, he set up a planning committee, which eventually provided a detailed urban development plan at the beginning of 1946. For the presentation of those designs the White Hall was chosen. It is an irony of history that the first public presentation of modern urban planning took place in the very building which would later become a victim of these new objectives.⁵³³ During this time the decreasing influence of architects became apparent as

⁵²⁷ Scharoun represented the modern architectural movements and his activities were therefore severely curtailed during the Nazi regime. In 1946, still in his days as city councilor, he became professor for urban development at the Technical University in Berlin. He was also head of the newly found institute for construction at the academy of sciences. Later, Scharoun moved from the eastern part of Berlin to the west. From 1955 until 1958 he was president of the academy of arts in the western part of Berlin. Maether, 36. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 83-85.

⁵²⁸ Neugebauer, 64. Maether, 36. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 98.

⁵²⁹ “sondern auch viel Kunstkitsch ... die nur Ausdruck des hohenzollernschen Imperialismus sind.” Senat von Berlin, No. 294.

⁵³⁰ Senat von Berlin, No. 295.

⁵³¹ Maether, 36-41. Peschken/Klünner, 129.

⁵³² “... muss das Innere des Schlosses als künstlerisches und geschichtliches Dokument als verloren gelten.” Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 89.

⁵³³ This exhibition in the palace was the first in a series of four, which took place from mid 1946 until mid 1948: *Berlin plant* (Berlin plans), *Französische Malerei* (French paintings), *Wiedersehen mit Museumsgut* (review of museum pieces), *Berlin 1848* (Berlin 1848.) All exhibitions were very popular with the Berlin people. Especially

well. It was for instance Heinrich Starck, the administrative deputy of Scharoun, who wanted to develop the whole area for rallies and parades. Starck, a successor of Scharoun as city councilor for construction, as well as Munter, Scharoun's successor as city councilor for housing, were both inexperienced in these fields, but were mainly granted the positions because of their political past as anti-Nazis.⁵³⁴

From now on there was an even clearer tendency away from the protection of the palace. In 1948-1949 the building was first partially and then completely closed for the public. This decision was justified with the claim of unpredictable damage in the masonry, although no cracks had occurred so far. Following complaints from museums staff, certain rooms were reopened at least for administrative purposes.⁵³⁵

After the foundation of the GDR, this new nation determined to establish their political institutions in Berlin. They decided for the old historic center of Berlin. Two tasks had to be carried out: firstly a new central square with an appropriate building for the socialist nation had to be designed; secondly this area had to be linked to the city and was furthermore required to be representative.⁵³⁶

Later in 1949, the intention was to merge the whole area into one administrative and spatial unity. Interestingly enough, amidst the emergence of this intention the palace was listed as being capable and worthy of reconstruction. Many well-known art historians also argued against a mere clearing of the historic center. The committee unanimously suggested preserving the *Schlüterhof* in its current state for a possible later reconstruction, but as a compromise to the building conditions also to remove the more severely damaged western parts. In a macabre twist, the building was used for scenes in a Russian war movie. Initially, the intention was merely to use fire works and white flags as decoration, but the whole

the French paintings, which were mostly banished by the Nazis, attracted lots of people.

Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 96-100, 102-104. Maether, 41-42. Peschken/Klünner, 129-130. A detailed inventory of the "Berlin plans" exhibition is given in Geist: *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, 186-220.

⁵³⁴ Scharoun was directly succeeded by the architect Karl Bonatz, who was quite controversial since he worked together with Albert Speer on the grandiose redesign of Berlin in the Third Reich. After Bonatz got dismissed, the office of the city councilor of construction and housing was divided – Starck and Munter succeeded Bonatz. Arnold Munter for instance was trained as a pipe-fitter. He was interned in a concentration camp because of his communist views. Heinrich Starck experienced a similar fate. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 97-108.

⁵³⁵ Maether, 53.

⁵³⁶ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 350.

scene developed into a real bombardment and plundering of the palace. Several residents and again the museum's staff complained about the behavior of the Russians.⁵³⁷

Also in the fall of 1949, Kurt Liebkecht published a *Generalbebauungsplan für Deutschlands Hauptstadt* (General Development for the German Capital). The East German Secretary of Redevelopment, Lothar Bolz, acclaimed the rebuilding of the new socialist capital to be "fast, thorough, appropriate and elegant."⁵³⁸ From 1950 on, the *Ministerium für Aufbau* (Ministry of Redevelopment) was responsible for the development of the new Berlin, and by then the rebuilding should be not only appropriate, but also in socialist manner.⁵³⁹ To be in line with the Soviet socialist building methods, city officials were sent to Moscow from April to May 1950, resulting in the new building principles for the whole GDR.⁵⁴⁰ After the trip to Moscow Walter Ulbricht announced indirectly the demolition of the palace at the third convention of the totalitarian government party SED in July 1950.⁵⁴¹ Ulbricht criticized the urban planning processes of the individual city districts and demanded one comprehensive plan for the development of the whole city. For the city center he intended a huge ground for parades and demonstrations for up to 350,000 people on the area of the pleasure grounds and the palace.⁵⁴² A month later, the rebuilding of Berlin was on the agenda in a government session and the demolition of the palace was decided. Only the official approval by parliament was still required, which was not much more than a pro forma exercise. Kurt Liebkecht already had prepared detailed plans for the wrecking itself and the salvage of selected valuable parts of the palace. Everything was done under time pressure, since the demonstrations on 1 May 1951 were to be held on the new grounds.⁵⁴³

After the government resolution was published, immediate opposition followed.⁵⁴⁴ The director of the Museum for the *Mark Brandenburg*⁵⁴⁵ for instance said that he had never met a person who wanted

⁵³⁷ Neugebauer, 64. Rodemann, 10. Maether, 55.

⁵³⁸ "rasch, gründlich, zweckentsprechend und formschön" Bolz, quoted in Geist: *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, 310.

⁵³⁹ Maether, 56. Munter, 96. Geist: *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, 258-271, 311.

⁵⁴⁰ See section "Rebuilding in East Germany: 1945 until the 1980s".

⁵⁴¹ See footnote 68.

⁵⁴² Senat von Berlin, No. 1063. *Berliner Zeitung*, 27 August 1950, *Neues Deutschland*, 26 August 1950. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 112-113. Peschken/Klünner, 130. Neugebauer, 64. Rodemann, 11-12. Räther, 6.

⁵⁴³ Maether, 69.

⁵⁴⁴ The resolution was published in *Berliner Zeitung*, 27 August 1950 and *Neues Deutschland*, 26 August 1950.

the demolition and that he actually thought that “democracy is the will of the majority.”⁵⁴⁶ Scharoun also picked up an earlier suggestion to preserve the *Schlüterhof* and he further pointed out that this would not even interfere with the current intentions to develop the new parade grounds.⁵⁴⁷ Other architects tried to support Scharoun in his efforts, and it was for instance found out that, during the revolutionary days of 1918/19, Lenin himself wrote a letter, stating his will for a preservation of the palace.⁵⁴⁸ However, all protests were futile. The users of the palace had to move out and the official documentation began.⁵⁴⁹ An art historian was chosen for the selection of the worthy parts, but for him the palace was simply a “symbol of the final decay of that feudalistic and imperialistic power.”⁵⁵⁰ Kurt Liebke, who after all decided on the details of the demolition, was a nephew of Karl Liebke, the famous revolutionary from the days of 1918/19. The balcony where Karl held his speech in 1918 was selected as being worth protecting, and the speech from the balcony of the palace became part of the official historiography of the new East German state.⁵⁵¹

On 7 September 1950, the day after the approval in parliament, parts of the palace were blasted and a second demolition phase started a week later. The supporters of the palace still protested against the wrecking, wrote letters to Wilhelm Pieck, the President of the Republic, or hoped for personal meetings with Ulbricht to stop what already had begun. The general information given in the press was unbalanced, since it was difficult and more or less impossible for journalists to report impartially. The people were

Opponents of the government resolution were for instance Hans Scharoun, Prof. Johannes Stroux (president of the *Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Academy of Sciences)), Richard Hamann (*Nationalpreisträger der DDR* (received the National Price of East Germany) and teacher at the department for Art History at the *Humboldt-Universität* (Humboldt-University)), Prof. Schubert (conservationist in Saxony), Mr. Stengel, (director of the *Märkisches Museum* (Museum of the *Mark Brandenburg*)), *Fachausschuß der Architekten der Kammer der Technik Thüringen* (Committee of architects at the engineering chamber of Thuringia). Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 114, 125. Rollka, 27.

⁵⁴⁵ *Mark Brandenburg* (March of Brandenburg): the principality under the Margrave of *Brandenburg*, located in the northeastern lowlands of Germany which eventually became the nucleus of the kingdom of Prussia.

⁵⁴⁶ “...Demokratie sei der Wille der Mehrheit.” As quoted in Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 114.

⁵⁴⁷ Maether, 74-77.

⁵⁴⁸ Although the letter got lost during the Nazi time. Rodemann, 14.

⁵⁴⁹ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 116-121, 137.

⁵⁵⁰ “Symbol des völligen Verfalls jener feudalistischen und imperialistischen Macht.” As quoted in Rodemann, 15.

⁵⁵¹ The balcony was saved and together with the whole portal IV later incorporated in the *Staatsratsgebäude* (state council building).

GDR historians exaggerated the story. According to them, Liebke and his party forced the emperor to abdicate. Michel, 156-157. See also page 140.

told about the supposedly bad state of the building, regardless of the actual conditions of the palace, and the protesters tried to correct this false impression, but were not allowed to.⁵⁵² This one-sided information about the palace and its demolition was one reason why no big outcry from the people of Berlin was heard. But also the still adverse economic situation and insufficient housing as well as the fear of repressive measures were reasons. There was also no official protest from the West German government or the city council of West Berlin, mainly because West Germany refused to recognize even the existence of its East German counterpart until 1972. Only private correspondence between the architectural experts was exchanged, and the Technical University (West Berlin) appealed to the mayor, of course without any success. West Berlin newspapers had some announcements about the developments at the palace and the international press did not start until November to report about the nearly finished palace demolition in Berlin.⁵⁵³ It needs to be pointed out that it was mainly experts who objected to the demolition, but that the people did not raise their voice. Though the above-mentioned reasons explain this fact, it has also to be assumed that the *Hohenzollern* residence, a palace of the electors and kings, was not one for the people. It belonged definitively to the urban setting in the middle of Berlin, but it was not a place the Berliners wanted to fight for, at least not in those times.

The demolition of the palace went on until the end of December 1950. Even members of the East German youth organizations helped clear the debris. In February 1951, the square was leveled, and the May 1st Worker's Day celebrations were held on the new parade grounds, which were by that time even larger than the one fifteen years earlier. This situation with a square of gigantic dimensions of 240m by 400m would last until 1973.⁵⁵⁴ (Figure 5-9)

Finally, it needs to be stressed that the developments at the palace were less motivated by ideological difficulties with the history of the building itself, than by visionary urban planning objectives, which were after all originating from even larger ideological schemes. Wilhelm Girnus said in 1950 that it

⁵⁵² Hamann for instance tried to refute the newspaper article, but his reply was only published in parts, which gave a false impression, too. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 120-124, 146-147. *Neue Zeitung*, 7 September 1950.

⁵⁵³ Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 125-127, 151-153. Maether, 110-111. Rodemann, 14.

⁵⁵⁴ Neugebauer, 64. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 76, 130-132. The cost of the destruction were also estimated with 10 million mark. Peschken/Klünner, 127-134.

is supposedly required to either remove the cathedral or the palace in order to allow for the desired large scale development of the area, and he further concluded that, if they would have removed an ecclesiastical building, they would have been condemned from the West as iconoclasts. He further said that “we can easily cope with the art historians.”⁵⁵⁵ This was certainly true, since all complaints from them were simply ignored. And as already mentioned, the big outcry from the people of Berlin did not occur, although this is seen differently nowadays.⁵⁵⁶

The Creation and Operation of a Contemporary Palace

After the demolition of the palace, a giant square became apparent, which was used for demonstrations and parades as intended (Figure 5-9). But as early as 1951, first designs for a new building were drawn (Figure 5-10), mainly because the new square soon showed how badly it was suited for the intended use due to its gigantism. But even more crucial was the wish for a “central building” at this location. The first intention was to build a governmental high-rise building which could accommodate the government and at the same time create the desired vertical dominance. In the adjoining low-rise buildings, the parliament was supposed to meet. This was based on the Soviet model, which essentially implied that the executive dominates the legislature. However, this first attempt to develop the square was not executed, since the planned and already under construction *Stalinallee* needed all available economic and human resources.⁵⁵⁷ The central building had to wait.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ “Mit den Kunsthistorikern werden wir schon fertig.” Räther, 38.

Girnus was the chief editor for art, art history and cultural policies of the *Neues Deutschland* (New Germany), which was the official organ of the SED. Petras: *Das Schloß in Berlin*, 125.

⁵⁵⁶ In 1990 it was for instance stated in a newspaper that the Berlin Palace was, despite the worldwide protests, demolished. However, in the article only Scharoun and Hamann are mentioned (see footnote 544 and 552). Also in several scholarly publications protests and controversies are mentioned without any proof for them. Only the usual statements from the experts of both sides are quoted. Mommert. Boddien: *Die Gegenstände*, 10-12.

⁵⁵⁷ See page 23.

⁵⁵⁸ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 59, 63.



Figure 5-9: A vacant square with a tribune intended for the rallies and parades.⁵⁵⁹



Figure 5-10: Model for a governmental building by Richard Paulick, 1951.⁵⁶⁰

Seven years later, when the *Stalinallee* was almost finished, the redesigning of the urban city center was the focus again, first of all because of the emptiness of the square. But the main reason was a design competition for the united Berlin, initiated by the *Deutsche Bundestag*, the parliament of West Germany, and executed by the senate of Berlin.⁵⁶¹ This obviously symbolic act to demonstrate the claim for Berlin as capital of a united and western-oriented Germany, had to be answered by East Germany. They announced their own design competition for a “socialist redesign of the center of the capital of the GDR, Berlin.”⁵⁶² Since the architectural doctrine was at that time radically changing, the task was certainly quite difficult for the participating East German architects, who were still under the influence of the “architecture of national tradition.”⁵⁶³ Also, the Russians advised a building complex without a dominating building and recommended an ensemble building complex similar to the Kremlin in Moscow, which was built in 1961.⁵⁶⁴ In addition to the official design competition, the renowned architect Hermann Henselmann also provided a suggestion. He envisioned a television tower instead of a high-rise building,

⁵⁵⁹ Maether, 120.

⁵⁶⁰ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 62.

⁵⁶¹ Interestingly not a single design for this western tender process included a reconstructed palace. Beyme: *Ideen für eine Hauptstadt*, 244.

⁵⁶² “... sozialistischen Umgestaltung des Zentrums der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin.” As quoted in Beyme: *Ideen für eine Hauptstadt*, 245.

⁵⁶³ See page 25.

⁵⁶⁴ Beyme: *Ideen für eine Hauptstadt*, 244-246. Kuhrmann, 102-105. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 59, 61, 68. Bodenschatz, 100.

which should have a sphere as symbol for the triumph of the successfully started *Sputnik* (Soviet earth satellite). This design was rejected and eventually even the idea of a high-rise on the square was abandoned completely. The still desired vertical dominance in the urban scheme was later provided with a television tower, which was built from 1965-1969 on the nearby *Alexanderplatz* based on Henselmann's design.⁵⁶⁵

In addition to the new architectural objectives, the functional requirements also had meanwhile changed. Because the government was from 1959 on housed in the old council office building, it was only required to accommodate the *Volkskammer* (people's chamber). Furthermore, the building was intended to be suitable for congresses and conferences.⁵⁶⁶ Economic reasons still prevented construction of the new building, although the "center of the (East German) nation"⁵⁶⁷ at the Marx-Engels-square was further completed. The *Staatsrat*⁵⁶⁸ got its own building on the south side of the square in 1962-64, and the Foreign Ministry had its edifice built in 1964-67 on the western side. For the latter, Schinkel's *Bauakademie* had already been removed in 1961.⁵⁶⁹ Portal IV from the historic palace including the Liebknecht-balcony was incorporated into the façade of the new *Staatsrats* building (see Figure 5-13).⁵⁷⁰ Interestingly, reconstructions were also made on the square: the old royal stables were reconstructed on the south side by 1968 and the *Alte Museum* was rebuilt and reopened in 1966.⁵⁷¹ However, the Marx-Engels-square still had its spatial problems. Though the reviewing stand was altered several times, the location remained unsuitable for demonstrations and rallies. Even with a few hundred thousand demonstrators the square seemed empty, and under everyday conditions the area was even more deserted. This situation could definitively only be a temporary one. Therefore, the square had to be enclosed on its still open eastern perimeter, as well.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁵ The *Alexanderplatz* (Alexander square) is situated a little further East to the Marx-Engels-square. Holper, 20-21. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 60-61.

⁵⁶⁶ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 61.

⁵⁶⁷ "Staatsmitte" Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ English: state council. In the GDR the state council was also the head of the state.

⁵⁶⁹ See page 28.

⁵⁷⁰ See also footnote 551.

⁵⁷¹ Peschken/Klünner, 134. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 61-63.

⁵⁷² Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 63.

But new initiatives to further develop the square came only in 1971 with a transition of the political power in the GDR. Erich Honecker took over from Walter Ulbricht as head of the SED as well as of the state. Honecker wanted to distinguish himself from his predecessor, also in urban planning matters. Therefore, he required the central building to be erected as a distinctive landmark as soon as possible. Berlin, as the capital of the GDR, should get the grandest *Kulturhaus*,⁵⁷³ an institution that was built in the heart of all district capitals.⁵⁷⁴ The functions of the building were adjusted and should now include the people's chamber, congress areas, facilities for cultural and sporting events and for festivals but also adequate gastronomical provisions. The new house was required to serve multi-purpose uses and to be open for all citizens and visitors of the GDR. Honecker himself verbally instructed the architect Heinz Graf-funder in 1972 to develop a building which could fulfill all these functions. In April 1973, the architect also received the official order, which no longer included the sporting functions. The construction was scheduled to be from late 1973 until early 1976. And even the name had been found at this point – the new building should be called *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic), which recalled its predecessor, although the two buildings were completely contrary in spirit. In the design a stand was also integrated, intended for demonstrations and parades. The interior of the building should include a large auditorium for 5,000 people, a small auditorium for 700 people, advanced stage and other technical equipment, many offices and conference rooms, reading rooms and a bowling alley. For the exterior appearance it was now determined that the new contemporary palace was to respect the other buildings to a certain degree, but at the same time impress as the most important building on the square.⁵⁷⁵

The new complex was much more than the usual convention center, since it was to have a political dimension in housing the parliament. It was furthermore intended to consolidate the international prestige of the GDR, especially since both Germanys had moved closer together in 1972 with the *Grundlagenvertrag* (Basic Treaty) between East and West. The building should also stand in the same class as,

⁵⁷³ *Kulturhaus*: arts and leisure center. The *Kulturhaus* tradition developed from the *Volkshaus* – a meeting place for the working class for gatherings, political or social, and for cultural events. This tradition developed in the 19th century in England and Switzerland.

⁵⁷⁴ For the distinction between *Bundesländer* (states) and *Bezirke* (district) see also page 22.

⁵⁷⁵ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 63-65. Peschken/Klünner, 134-136. Kuhrmann, 92-93.

and as a kind of competitor to, the new ICC⁵⁷⁶ in West Berlin, which was developed at about the same time as the new *Palast*.⁵⁷⁷ But certainly also the developments at the neighboring sacred building, the cathedral, which was reconstructed from 1975-1981, increased the time pressure. It was seen as required to have the *Palast der Republik* as a meeting place for the citizens finished as soon as possible.⁵⁷⁸

Despite all these planning activities, Honecker avoided announcing the construction of the *Palast der Republik* too early, since he wanted to avoid opposition against his costly project. Therefore, the erection of the building was made public together with a new housing scheme in the resolution of the Berlin city council in May 1973.⁵⁷⁹ The total cost of the construction was estimated to be approximately 250-260 million Marks, but in the end became much higher. The erection required tremendous resources from all parts of the GDR and there were many imports of materials and technical equipment necessary. For the excavation pit, the *Nationale Volksarmee* (armed forces of the GDR) had to help as well as parts of the Soviet armed forces. In the final balance, a sum of 485 million Marks was stated, but even this is not an accurate figure since it is not clear how certain services like the work of the soldiers were calculated. Current estimates resulted in a total sum of one billion Marks, but this cannot be proved anymore and is therefore only speculation.⁵⁸⁰

During the construction of the palace, a major challenge was the so-called “*gleitende Projektierung*” (accompanied planning approach). This basically meant that the building was already in the construction phase, although the team of Graffunder was not yet finished with the planning process. While the work was conducted on the inside and at the bottom of the building, the outside and the top of the new palace were still not conclusively designed. This approach was required due to the short construction period – at the beginning of 1976 the new complex should be ready for opening.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁶ ICC: *Internationales Congress Centrum* (international congress center), built from 1966-1979. Nerdinger, 158.

⁵⁷⁷ Hain: *Das Volkshaus der DDR*, 77-79. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 64-65.

⁵⁷⁸ Bodenschatz, 104. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 64.

⁵⁷⁹ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 65. *Neues Deutschland*, 24 May 1973.

⁵⁸⁰ Beetz, 148-151. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 65-66.

⁵⁸¹ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 67.



Figure 5-11: The Palast der Republik with the TV-tower behind.⁵⁸²

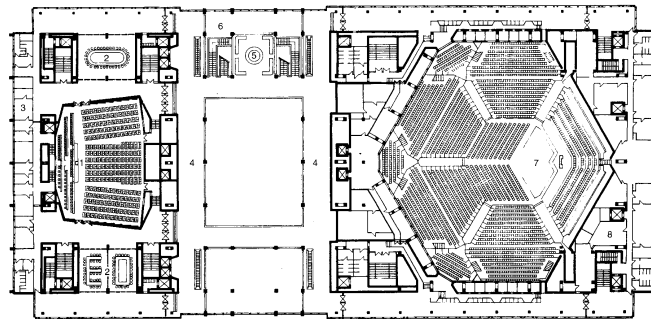


Figure 5-12: From left to right: *Volkshammersaal* (parliament), foyer, great hall.⁵⁸³

The multi-purpose facility was finished on time. The great hall, the smaller hall, which was intended for the *Volkshammer*,⁵⁸⁴ and the foyer in the middle of those two parts resulted in a distinctive tripartition. Also in the building were restaurants, cafés, bars, clubs, a bowling alley, a theater, a post office, a newspaper agent and souvenir shops. One of the advantages of the design was the possibility of an independent use of the smaller hall, which had a separate entrance opposite of the cathedral. But it was also possible to use all three parts of the complex together for certain large-scale events. So it became a

⁵⁸² De Michelis, 44.

⁵⁸³ Beutelschmidt, 251.

⁵⁸⁴ *Volkshammer* (People's chamber): the East German parliament.

building for the people for all its cultural and leisure purposes and also a national symbol, which housed the parliament. (Figure 5-11 and Figure 5-12)⁵⁸⁵

The two halls, both 32 meters high, were linked by the 25-meter-high middle part.⁵⁸⁶ With that, the inner layout was made visible on the outside, resulting in an asymmetrical design. The *Palast* was situated parallel to the river, directly erected at its banks and partially on the site of the former *Schlüterhof*.⁵⁸⁷ Therefore, the square was finally framed, but with its spatial arrangement now very different from the urban setting of the former *Hohenzollern* palace. The new building cut the lengthwise orientation of the greater area. With the transparent middle part it was therefore also intended to avoid a discontinuity and to visually connect the open areas in front and behind of the *Palast*. The latter was especially important, since the TV tower, which was the vertical focal point of the urban concept in East Berlin, was situated to the east of the open area behind the building.⁵⁸⁸ (see Figure 5-11 and Figure 5-13)

Though the *Palast der Republik* was finally opened within the set time frame, not everything was finished. The originally intended Marx-Engels-memorial was postponed and when it was finally erected in 1985, this was done at another location. The intended terraces at the river Spree were never implemented. In the end, the surroundings seemed to have no common design scheme at all. Soon after the opening of the new complex, the 1976 Mayday parades were held on the square and the political leaders took their positions at the reviewing stand, which was part of the new complex. When the first tanks came around the corner onto the square, it did not take long until all the guests left the stand because of the din and the exhaust fumes. After this incident the square was hardly ever used for parades and demonstrations again.⁵⁸⁹ Because the square was now even deprived of its main intended function, the

⁵⁸⁵ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 65, 67. Graffunder, 255.

⁵⁸⁶ The building was 180 meters long, 85 meters wide and covered a site of 15.300 square meters, which was approximately a fifth of the whole Marx-Engels-square with an area of about 81.000 square meters in total. Kuhrmann, 92.

⁵⁸⁷ The very court of the *Hohenzollern* palace which was once open to the public. See Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-6.

⁵⁸⁸ Kuhrmann, 93, 98. Bodenschatz, 101-103. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 67.

⁵⁸⁹ It was again the *Karl-Marx-Allee*, the former *Stalinallee*, where the demonstrations took place. Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 71. See Figure 1-16.

meaninglessness of the area further increased. The intended “central lot” was degraded to a central parking lot.⁵⁹⁰ (see Figure 5-11 and Figure 5-13)



Figure 5-13: Aerial view of the Marx-Engels-square on the Spree island: the *Palast der Republik*, the *Staatsrats* building (with portal IV from the historic palace) and the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁹¹

The *Palast* required huge portions of the *Nationaleinkommen*,⁵⁹² first with the investments for the erection itself and then every year through subsidies. And because of the planned economy system, also the planning of the building was not executed following economic considerations. The budgetary planning was not based on the running of the complex and the offered services, but only according to the instructions of the ruling party SED. So, for instance, all rooms including the technical equipment, the staff and all utilities were free of charge for all users. Another example of the uneconomical planning was the primacy of the engineering over the utilization concept. All beverages for all gastronomical facilities came for instance from one huge tank system, which was centrally positioned in the building and was linked to all the facilities by tubes. Although this was certainly very ambitious from an engineering point of view, it was an economical disaster, since at the end of each day the tubes had to be emptied, as the content of the tubes was not allowed for sale on the next day and therefore had to be disposed of. For this

⁵⁹⁰ Flierl: *Planung und Bau des Palastes*, 68-71. Bodenschatz, 102.

⁵⁹¹ Kuhrmann, 94-95.

⁵⁹² *Nationaleinkommen* (national income): The *Planwirtschaft* (planned economy system) of the socialist GDR consisted basically of two parts. The first part was manufacturing, through which the national income was produced. The second part was the non-manufacturing sector, which used up the national income. Ehlert, 625-626. The *Palast der Republik* belonged to the second division.

feature alone approximately 10,000 Marks were required every month, which were even fixed in the budget. The budgetary disproportion per year was about 33 million Marks revenue to 84 million Marks expenditure. The real costs were even higher, since the figures mentioned do not include the maintenance of the building, which summed up to another 20 million Marks per year.⁵⁹³

In spite of the shortcomings, the *Palast* became a true success with the fulfillment of its intended functions and was highly accepted by the people of the GDR. It really developed into a people's palace. However, from the economical point of view it was a calculated disaster.

The Palace of the Socialist Republic in the Federal Republic

Immediately after the Berlin wall came down the question about the future of the *Palast der Republik* had to be answered. It was obvious that it would not be possible to manage the building in the new economic system, which was quite contrary to the past. But no serious efforts were made to assess potentially required adjustments. This would have included, first of all, a reduced work force but also changes to management and the building.⁵⁹⁴ But other circumstances led to the fast decline of the *Palast*. It was during a session of the first freely elected GDR parliament, where the conditions for the reunification were discussed, when the building was closed due to asbestos contamination – after fourteen years of use as a public venue. This was the commencement of an almost endless series of arguments and discussions about the future of the building – a process which was more about other conflicts than the building itself. The asbestos, which encased the entire structural steel framework and which was supposedly the only reason to abandon the *Palast*, was finally removed in 1997/98. It is too often ignored that regardless of the fate of the building, it was technically required to strip the building down to its skeleton anyway.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ Beetz, 148, 153, 156.

⁵⁹⁴ It would have been required to reduce the staff from 2,000 to 130. Also, the discrepancy between public and administrative area, whereas the latter included numerous rest and recreational rooms for the staff, would have to be corrected.

Beetz, 153, 157.

⁵⁹⁵ Kil, 32. Maier, 78.

In the first years of the reunited Germany, ambitious plans were implemented for a new capital, based on the zoning plan which was officially adopted in 1994. The focus of development was certainly the former border areas, in particular the *Potsdamer Platz*, which became a thriving commercial district. Not far away, at the area around the *Reichstag* and *Brandenburger Tor*,⁵⁹⁶ the new political center developed. The *Palast* was also affected by these processes, which were mostly encouraged by West Germans. There was quite a number of people demanding a copy of the *Hohenzollern* palace. They obviously willingly accepted the fact that with the call for re-creation of the historic building a valuable and interesting artefact of the recent German past was being threatened.⁵⁹⁷

It was as early as 1991 that Joachim Fest, an esteemed German journalist and author, philosophized about a reconstruction. In the same year, Goerd Peschken made the first tangible proposal to regain the palace: he suggested creating major parts of the palace, but without the need to demolish the existing *Palast*. He deliberately wanted to show the historic and the contemporary building including the contradiction between both, even partially utilizing modern virtual reality. Those ambitious plans were not accepted by the public.⁵⁹⁸

But it was also in 1991 that the Berlin conservationists rejected the ideas to reconstruct the *Hohenzollern* palace and demanded a preservation order for the Marx-Engels-square, which was framed by the socialist buildings from the GDR. Almost as a response, the *Förderverein Stadtschloss* (Palace Association) was founded, which was even supported by local and federal politicians, including the mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, and chancellor Helmut Kohl. The call for the “preservation of historic monuments” and “preservation of cultural heritage” was also employed in the case of the historic palace. This seems rather questionable, since there was nothing left to preserve. Though there was no financial support, the involvement of the politicians certainly represented moral support.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ *Reichstag* was the very building in West Berlin in which the German parliament met until 1933 and again from 1999 on. *Brandenburger Tor* (Brandenburg gate) is one of the former town gates and became a symbol for the divided nation.

⁵⁹⁷ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 354-355. Kil, 31. Trimborn, 223.

⁵⁹⁸ Engel, 101. Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 355. Trimborn, 219-220.

⁵⁹⁹ Trimborn, 220-221.

The parliamentary opinion of those early years was split between the political factions: nearly the entire CDU-caucus supported the re-erection of the palace, while almost all members of the SPD-caucus were against it.⁶⁰⁰ This clear distinction was to fade in later years, especially after the shift of political power with the parliamentary election in 1998 – Gerhard Schröder, the new chancellor, supported the reconstruction “simply because it is beautiful.”⁶⁰¹

But still in 1993, reconstructions which would require demolitions of valuable architecture were rejected with a resolution from the *Deutsche Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz* (German National Committee for Monument Protection). They furthermore pointed out that this acknowledgement of built heritage should include buildings from the Nazi and GDR era.⁶⁰² But in the same year, Wilhelm von Boddien,⁶⁰³ a farming equipment dealer from Hamburg, shaped and implemented certainly the most influential event of that early stage. The palace was recreated, at least temporarily, using scaffolds and painted canvas (Figure 5-14 and Figure 5-15).

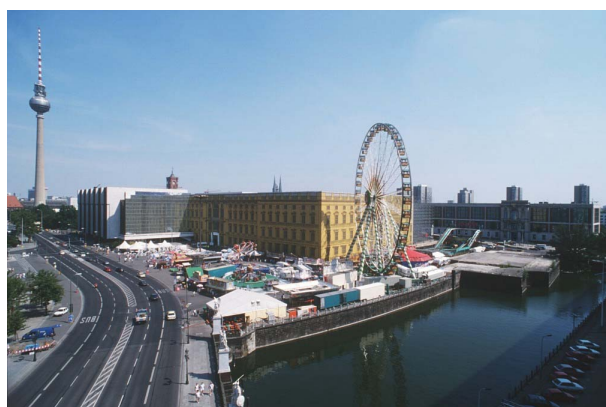


Figure 5-14: A temporary visualization of the Hohenzollern residence.⁶⁰⁴



Figure 5-15: During the assembly of the “palace.”⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁰ Engel, 103.

⁶⁰¹ Schröder: “Einfach weil es schön ist.” Quoted in *Das Schloss – Fassade ohne Inhalt?*, 3. It is an irony of history that chancellor Schröder had his office in the former state council building, where the East German heads of state resided. It is said that he disliked the view from his office onto the abandoned *Palast*.

Engel, 105.

⁶⁰² Haspel, 55-57.

⁶⁰³ Boddien was one of the founders of the palace association.

⁶⁰⁴ Maurice Weiß / Ostkreuz.

The *Staatsrats* building with the original portal IV from the historic palace on the right.

⁶⁰⁵ Jens Röttsch / Ostkreuz.

After that spectacle the public opinion changed.⁶⁰⁶ In addition to this visual aspect, Boddien also set the stage for cultural and philosophical argumentation. He was the one who expressed what many politicians were not openly articulating. According to him, along with the missing palace Berlin also lost its identity. It was argued that “the palace was not just in Berlin – Berlin was the palace.”⁶⁰⁷ This certainly was consistent with the spirit of the time, namely seeking refuge in the values of the past. Also the political course for the historical center of Berlin was set with the urban planning competition *Spreeinsel* (Spree Island). A supposition for that initiative from the federal government and the senate of Berlin was the removal of the *Palast der Republik*. It was the winning design, suggesting a rebuilding of the shape and dimension of the historic palace, which provided the argument for the demolition of the Foreign Ministry building. (see Figure 5-13) But the abandoned *Palast* also had an increasing number of advocates who put their confidence in the vox populi and collected 100,000 signatures against the demolition of the *Palast der Republik*.⁶⁰⁸

Because it was agreed shortly after the reunification that Berlin should become the capital of the reunited Germany, the zoning plan already designated areas for political functions. But later with the decision to also establish the seat of government in the capital, urban planning and architecture in Berlin became increasingly demanding. The governmental buildings in Bonn from the 1970s were unobtrusive and restrained, because of the conscious decision to avoid references to the past, and it was furthermore not required to respond to any existing built heritage of the recent Nazi era.⁶⁰⁹ The drawback of that approach was the lack of identity of that capital, which was therefore even very rarely used as background for TV broadcasts – an approach unthinkable today. In Berlin, symbols of identification were desired and a confrontation with the built heritage became inevitable. First it was considered to establish the *Bundes-*

⁶⁰⁶ Before the event just 11% of Berliners favored a reconstruction of the historic palace, 60% were against it. Afterwards the public opinion had shifted: 35% for the palace and 47% against it. Kil, 33. Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 355. Trimborn, 219-220. Asendorf, 20.

⁶⁰⁷ Wolf Jobst Siedler: “Das Schloss lag nicht in Berlin – Berlin war das Schloss.” Quoted in Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 357.

⁶⁰⁸ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 356-357. Asendorf, 20. Kil, 33.

⁶⁰⁹ Bonn used to be the capital of West Germany and was the governmental seat of the reunited Germany until the move to Berlin.

tag and other governmental institutions on the island in the Spree river, on which the *Hohenzollern* palace once stood and which was later replaced by the *Palast der Republik*. (see Figure 5-7 and Figure 5-13) This plan was abandoned, because the area proved to be too small. At that early stage it was still the intention to develop a complete new governmental district, among other reasons to avoid the usage of buildings from the Nazi and GDR periods.⁶¹⁰ Therefore it was decided to build a grand and large-scale governmental district, which would also have required the removal of certain buildings. Due to a limited budget⁶¹¹ and in response to protests of experts, citizens and the political opposition, who raised their voice against the announced demolition, it became necessary to incorporate existing buildings in the new plans. That this was interestingly not the case for former GDR buildings is proven by the example of the Foreign Ministry, which was demolished in 1995. Though appropriation of Berlin's history was unavoidable, the critical approach to the East German built heritage was not successful. During all those urban development phases the area of the former palace was tacitly regarded as being empty, ignoring its East German aspect. Eventually in 1998 the government released its intentions to not further sustain the *Palast der Republik*.⁶¹²

Despite the declared intention of a reconstruction neither a potential use nor a financial concept was available. After some vague ideas to establish a hotel or a convention center, in 2000 the president of the *Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, suggested setting up the *Humboldt-Forum*. This forum was to unite the non-European art and culture collections of the Prussian cultural heritage foundation, collections of the Humboldt-University and the holdings of the state library, and it should also have a venue area. Though a use was found, the financial aspect was still not resolved. Lehmann called for appropriate architecture and he further said that “remembering should not be based on exterior images or decorative elements.”⁶¹³

⁶¹⁰ Welch Guerra, 3.

⁶¹¹ In 1994 the budget for the move was fixed to DM 20 billions. Welch Guerra, 6.

⁶¹² Welch Guerra, 6. Asendorf, 20. Trimborn, 212, 221.

⁶¹³ Lehmann: “Erinnern dürfe nicht an Hüllen, am dekorativen Element festgemacht werden.” Quoted in *Das Schloss – Fassade ohne Inhalt?*, 3.
Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 357-358.

During the discussions of the last ten years, three basic options have become apparent and are supported by numerous published designs. First of all it would have been possible to retain and modify the *Palast* while at the same time further developing the square as required. Another alternative was to remove the *Palast* in favor of a reconstructed palace. The third possibility, namely to combine elements of the *Palast* with a partial reconstruction of the palace, increasingly lost its supporters. The latter option would have required compromises, since for instance the *Schlüterhof* of the historic palace used to be partially on the site of the existing great hall. A final political decision became increasingly necessary. It was in 2000 that an international experts committee was set up to investigate the “Historic Center of Berlin.” The committee was comprised of representatives from politics, economics and architecture as well as historians and social scientists. They had to answer questions about design, use, financing and urban development.⁶¹⁴ In April 2002, the final report was presented, with the establishment of the *Humboldt-Forum* as the main backup for a reconstructed palace. They demanded a comprehensive urban scheme for the whole area, which did justice to the history of this site and which should be in line with the historic city layout. It was also suggested to reconstruct the *Bauakademie*. Furthermore, contemporary and experimental designs were rejected. However, the state council building from the 1960s was regarded as appropriate. They estimated expenditures of € 670 million, of which € 80 million would be required just for the historic façades.⁶¹⁵ It was intended to use different sources including investors, donations and public funds.⁶¹⁶ Finally, it needs to be pointed out that the committee was mainly dealing with urban planning issues, with lesser focus on the potential use of the particular buildings. In the meantime, still other suggestions were made, mainly demanding the postponement of the palace decision. Apart from retaining the existing situation with the *Palast der Republik*, there was also the suggestion to remove the building and to have a large inner-city garden, similar to the parks in New York and London. With that, the initia-

⁶¹⁴ Asendorf, 20, 22. Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 362-363.

⁶¹⁵ Also for the revitalization of the *Palast der Republik* estimates were available: € 60 million would have been required to bring the building back into use. *Netzeitung*, 15 November 2005.

⁶¹⁶ Asendorf, 22. Mickley, 19.

tors saw the potential to encourage new ideas for the development of the area, which even included such a park.⁶¹⁷

Shortly after the committee concluded, the German parliament followed the report recommendation and voted with a majority of two-thirds for a reconstruction of the baroque northern, southern and western façades as well as of the *Schlüterhof*.⁶¹⁸ The debate which finally led to that decision reflected the arguments of the previous twelve years. Some supported the reconstruction of the palace, others wanted to preserve the *Palast* and a few suggested combining both. The former secretary of commerce, Günter Rexrodt, also wanted to keep the *Palast*, at least partially, because he acknowledged the historic value of this building. But at the same time he added that only the baroque façades would still be able to please the public in a hundred years. Furthermore, he pointed out that a new, non-historic building would not be supported by donations. One Member of Parliament arrogantly declared “that the public majority would not accept another decision other than the one for the historic façade.”⁶¹⁹ By some supporters the historic palace was required to once again become the culmination of the boulevard.⁶²⁰ And the Speaker of the House, Wolfgang Thierse, falsely referred to the tradition of the *Volkshaus*.⁶²¹ He ignored that this was also part of the tradition of the *Palast der Republik*. The left wing party PDS⁶²² suggested allowing for an intermediate use of the now empty *Palast* and to integrate the remnants of the building in the design competition.⁶²³ The general rejection of that idea by the other parliamentary parties shows that the discussion was above all influenced by party-political considerations.

Also in 2002, Christina Weiss, the secretary of state for cultural affairs, pointed out that the available floor space would be far too large for the use being discussed. It can be said that the reasonable sequence of planning stages seems to have been reversed – the use for a building was being searched for,

⁶¹⁷ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 364. Jaeger, 24.

⁶¹⁸ Asendorf, 22. Recommendation in Swoboda, 172-173.

⁶¹⁹ Günter Nooke: “daß ohnehin keine andere Lösung als die der historischen Fassaden eine Mehrheit in der Bevölkerung finden würden.“ Quoted in Asendorf, S. 26.

⁶²⁰ Asendorf, 22, 24, 26.

⁶²¹ See footnote 573.

⁶²² The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) is the successor to the East German Communist Party SED.

⁶²³ Asendorf, 26.

while the decision to erect that space in its over-sized dimensions had already been made. It furthermore does not seem to be reasonable to enforce such ambitious plans without having sufficient financial backup. Because of the lacking funds, the objective had meanwhile shifted more towards private funding, with all the potential consequences that has on the character of the future building.⁶²⁴



Figure 5-16: The remnants of the *Palast der Republik* in early 2006.⁶²⁵



Figure 5-17: Seen from the arcades of the *Alte Museum*.⁶²⁶

Almost as an affront to the current reconstruction plans, the existing building became part of a European-wide university project aimed at facilitating temporary usage of abandoned places within cities. The participants of “Urban Catalyst” pointed out that it is nowadays increasingly necessary to develop programs for existing spaces. Originating from this project the association *ZwischenPalastNutzung* (interim palace use) was founded, which developed different ideas for a temporary use of the *Palast*. In the summer of 2003, initial results were apparent: guided tours through the buildings were given, parts of the building were used as theater stages, and exhibitions were held in other areas of the spacious building. Not only the reconstruction advocates were surprised by the success of the interim use. The politicians also recognized the increasing interest in the existing building and they obviously saw the need to react

⁶²⁴ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 366.

⁶²⁵ Photo taken by the author.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

immediately. In a session of parliament on a night in November 2003, the demolition was finally prescribed by law. The representatives, knowing that limited financial resources would postpone the palace project, were obviously willing to accept an enduring landscaped emptiness until some unknown point in time.⁶²⁷ And it needs to be pointed out that this parliamentary decision was made in a term when there was no PDS-caucus in parliament and when the Green party was in line with the official opinion adopted in their coalition with the SPD.⁶²⁸

To stop the successful interim use of the *Palast*, the supporters of the reconstruction started a counter-claim with their own exhibition of Chinese clay soldiers. Nevertheless, the initiatives to use the *Palast* went on. The building, which by now consisted only of a plain steel framework, eight concrete staircases, unfinished floors and the fading façades, was quite a unique performance venue right in the center of Berlin. The *ZwischenPalastNutzung* association started to collect the necessary money for the next phase of interim use, since a further utilization of the building required adjustments to meet the most current fire and safety regulations. The following utilization was more wide-ranging and became an even greater success with dance and theater performances and sporting events. Also, the entire basement was flooded and as such only accessible with inflatable boats. Furthermore, internationally renowned architects met in the venue for conferences and discussions, which also included workshops and exhibitions on the most visionary suggestions of how to deal with the *Palast*. During one open night alone, 15,000 visitors came, not only from the east and west of Berlin and Germany, but also from abroad. A new generation started to use the *Palast*, unaffected by its history. Especially the success of these exceptional events substantially transformed the building, which was seemingly freed from its ideological stigma.⁶²⁹ Of course, this was denied by the adversaries of the *Palast der Republik*. (Figure 5-18, Figure 5-19 and Figure 5-20)

⁶²⁷ Kil, 32, 35. Hofmeister, 13. *Countdown down*, 15. *LVZ*, 14 November 2003.

⁶²⁸ In the parliamentary election, the PDS did not achieve the 5 per cent of the votes necessary for entry into parliament under the German system of proportional representation. Only two party members were in parliament via direct mandates.

Later, after the dissolution of this coalition the Green party increasingly articulated their view, namely that it is irresponsible to remove a sound structural building without knowing the further proceedings.

⁶²⁹ Kil, 31, 35. Maier, 80-81.



Figure 5-18: Right behind the front façade in 2005.⁶³⁰



Figure 5-19: The basement of the *Palast der Republik* during the *ZwischenPalastNutzung* in 2004.⁶³¹



Figure 5-20: Performances on an indoor lawn during the *ZwischenPalastNutzung* in 2004.⁶³²

The New Emptiness in the Heart of Berlin

After the parliamentary election in September 2005, an increasing number of citizens, including politicians and artist, raised their voice against the demolition of the *Palast der Republik*.⁶³³ But in January 2006, almost as an act of self-assurance, the parliament confirmed its earlier decisions. Only the *Linkspartei* (the former PDS) and the Green party, because no longer adherent to the coalition with the SPD, were against the demolition of the *Palast*. The other politicians repeated their previous statements against the building. Wolfgang Thierse, for instance, said that the *Palast* was the reviewing stand for the ruling party SED until the collapse of the GDR.⁶³⁴ The representative Wolfgang Börnßen (CDU) declared

⁶³⁰ Photo taken by the author in 2005.

⁶³¹ www.volkspalast.com/_vp/photo01.htm, photo 0609. Accessed in April 2006.

Many more photos from the events in 2004 and 2005 are available on that site: www.volkspalast.com.

⁶³² Ibid, photo b013.

⁶³³ *Netzeitung*, 15 November 2005.

⁶³⁴ He referred to the stand, shown in its derelict conditions on the right in Figure 5-16. But with such a statement he simply ignored the fact that this feature of the building was hardly ever used for such purposes (see page 157.)

that “the remnants of the *Palast* have to be removed, because those ruins in the heart of Berlin are just too ugly and spoil this beautiful city.”⁶³⁵ The demolition started in February 2006.

The requirement of regaining the supposed heart of the metropolis had already been exploited earlier in order to support the call for the historic palace. This was ignoring the fact that there is nothing like a one-and-only major center in Berlin. The metropolitan area is rather a patchwork, consisting of more or less individual districts. This developed historically and was also enforced by the political separation of the city from 1945 to 1989. It is certainly true that the historic palace used to be a crucial element in the urban scheme before this time frame and that the *Altes Museum* was now lacking its counterpart.⁶³⁶ But the *Palast der Republik* was also part of an ambitious urban setting, which comprised the area from the square in front of the *Palast* towards the *Alexanderplatz* with the prominent TV-tower.⁶³⁷ (see also page 157 and Figure 5-13)

The Humboldt-Forum is still intended to be one of the main users of the anticipated re-erected palace. The required funds for the building are now estimated to be € 1.2 billion. In the unlikely case of a commencement of the project any time in the near future, it is intended to also incorporate original elements of the *Hohenzollern* palace.⁶³⁸ But the discussion about the Liebknecht-balcony, which is after all the largest surviving part of the historic building, have not yet even started. The juxtaposition of the original balcony at its current location and the copy of it at the historically accurate setting is undoubtedly an interesting thought and would certainly reveal the inherent conflict of the endeavor. If it really were to be executed in this way, the contradiction would disclose and emphasize the historic layers of the site. (Figure 5-13 and Figure 5-14) Ironically, this certainly does not fit into the conception of the reconstruction advocates. And it needs to be considered that the building from the recent past is together with its historic component protected by preservation laws, making a relocation of the historic portal with its significant balcony at least difficult. Interesting discussions can be expected.

⁶³⁵ Börsen: „Der Restpalast muß weg, weil diese Ruine im Herzen Berlins einfach zu häßlich ist und diese schöne Stadt entstellt.“ Quoted in *LVZ*, 20 January 2006.

⁶³⁶ See page 139.

⁶³⁷ Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 359.

⁶³⁸ *LVZ*, 20 January 2006.

While calling for indemnification of political injustice, one should not forget that the wrecking of the historic building cannot be undone. It is from the point of view of historic preservation a fact that the palace was forcefully put out of existence in 1950. The decisions to now remove the consecutive layer of history do not seem to be any better. It is obviously again desired to erase inconvenient visual evidence of the past. With that, the decision-making bodies put themselves in the same line with the autocratic rulers some decades earlier, because they seem to not realize that they are simply repeating history at the same location. And they furthermore seem to overestimate the ideological energy of the slowly dying *Palast der Republik*, which is no longer able to pay tribute to its builders ever since it has been trapped behind a building fence with the national emblem removed from its front.⁶³⁹

Besides its political dimension, the existing building, which is currently demolished, is neither more nor less a typical piece of 1970s architecture. There are numerous other buildings like that spread throughout Germany, which would also have to be removed to beautify our cities, if one follows the argumentation against the *Palast* in Berlin. The circumstance that the current appearance is not beautiful in the bourgeois sense cannot be blamed on the building itself but more so on its negation since 1989. The democratic Germany has had more time to come to terms with the building than the fallen GDR was able to use it. And for many, the current stripped down *Palast* is a wonderful location, which inspires artists and delights audiences.

It would definitely have been better to continue using the existing building until a more constructive solution for the area is found. But the hope of the reconstruction proponents is certainly that the new emptiness in the heart of Berlin will increase the pressure to get a new palace replacement as fast as possible. The new house, which will undoubtedly be the most important German cultural building project of the coming years, will be beautified and wrapped in clothes of the past. The German government seems to be afraid of the recent past but does at the same time not have the courage to look forward to create something new on that symbolic site.

⁶³⁹ The emblem was centrally placed in the front façade of the *Palast der Republik*. The now empty ring shown on the right in Figure 5-18 once framed the national symbols of the GDR (Figure 5-11: centrally placed on the façade of the large foyer).

Is it likely that, if the copy of the old palace is ever implemented, it will be learning from Las Vegas, “namely to create architecture as a decorated shed ... now also in Berlin?”⁶⁴⁰ It would be definitely a selection from its own bygone history – it would be a fictionally Baroque palace, which never existed in that form. It would be “a palace for the Federal Republic in the form of a timeless fabrication.”⁶⁴¹ But until then, there will be only emptiness in the supposed heart of Berlin. (Figure 5-21)



Figure 5-21: “Fantastic! One resides in the middle of a metropolis and still lives like in the country...!!”
“The new charm of Berlin’s center...”⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ “ ‘Learning from Las Vegas’, nämlich ‘architecture as a decorated shed’ zu machen, wie Roberto Venturi das empfohlen hat, jetzt also auch in Berlin?” Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 368.

⁶⁴¹ “Ein Schloss für die Bundesrepublik als zeitlose Erfindung.” Flierl: *Das alte Berliner Schloss*, 369.

⁶⁴² LVZ, 21/22 January 2006.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The case studies presented in the previous chapters show that the most recent motives for or against reconstruction are much more varied than one would first expect. It is not just the *Zeitgeist* or an increasing interest in the collective heritage that are fostering the decision to regain lost architecture. Interestingly enough, even architectural qualities are rarely decisive factors, but rather more or less used as arguments if regarded as appropriate. The main reasons range from the acknowledgement of built environment and urban planning objectives on the one hand, to contemptuous political considerations and strong economic motives on the other.

One of the foremost reasons for reconstruction projects in Germany since 1990 was the call for reconciliation, as was the case with the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden. This aspect is certainly more or less inherent in many other initiatives, but became especially important in East Germany after the reunification. It is obvious that such a successful implementation as in Dresden, which included international support and involvement, would not have been possible in the former totalitarian system. The high claim of establishing harmony between the nations and with the past seems to have been also increasingly exploited in other cases to reject historic truths at the same time. The removal of built heritage of the recent East German past is often called for in order to reinstate that of its predecessors. The declared goal is to revoke decisions, in this case those of the communist regime. The current cases of the palace in Berlin and also of the university church in Leipzig share this political aspect to a certain degree. It is often ignored that history cannot be undone, which is true for the damage caused by the Second World War but also for the demolitions in the post-war era, and equally true in the East and in the West. Even the most accurate reconstruction cannot and should not deny its story. From the top of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden or from the new-old palaces in Braunschweig, Potsdam and possibly Berlin, the influences of war and contemporary planning will be apparent forever.

The recent reconstructions aiming to propitiate history need to be distinguished from seemingly analogous cases from the 1980s and '90s in the western parts of Germany. The decisions in the years after the war were shaped by the need to rebuild the cities but at the same time by a large-scale second wave of destruction of built heritage. This was certainly true for the eastern but also for the western parts of Germany as the case of the palace in Braunschweig proved. It was increasingly lamented that the rebuilding in the 1960s and '70s had led to inhospitable cities.⁶⁴³ The clearing of post-war architecture, for instance in Hannover and Hildesheim, in order to facilitate more or less authentic reconstructions, resulted first of all from the emerging trend to beautify the cities and in order to strengthen the sense of place.⁶⁴⁴

The goals emerging at that time, which are universally described as urbanity, are also the main driving factor behind many of the current developments, for instance in Braunschweig and Frankfurt. These latter projects from the twenty-first century can be regarded as a direct consequence of the 1980s West German approach. Furthermore, the recent successful reconstructions in the territory of the former GDR, though driven by a different claim, certainly boosted these developments. But when comparing the projects since 1990, it is too often overlooked that the Frauenkirche was reconstructed as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (all-embracing work of art). The palaces in Braunschweig and Berlin, on the other hand, will be nothing more than modern buildings designed for contemporary demands, and just decorated with approximate copies of the historic façades. The big fear seems to be that any modern architecture would herald aesthetic decline in the cities. This is commonly the main argument for supporters of reconstructions in general, namely that any modern architecture, especially in the context of historic fabric, would fail.

Transferring a building to a new timeframe certainly requires compromises. It was shown that even in the case of the Frauenkirche adjustments were necessary, but that it was possible to develop a building very similar to the one from the Baroque era because of the reassignment to its original religious purpose. More drastic changes of use, like in Braunschweig and Berlin, certainly require even further-

⁶⁴³ See page 14.

⁶⁴⁴ For those cases see pages 17 and 18 in section "Rebuilding in West Germany: 1945 until the 1980s".

reaching adjustments. The task is to decide on the degree of those compromises. The utilization of a historic building or parts thereof for other than its original purpose is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as certain basics of common sense are respected – this common sense is obviously missing in Braunschweig.

These projects also increasingly intend to achieve much more than the recreation of a particular piece of bygone architecture. The reconstructed buildings are often regarded as being a crucial element of wider urban planning objectives, which is also true for the most current examples in the eastern part of Germany, as proven by the cases in Berlin and Potsdam. Nowadays, large-scale prestigious reconstruction projects are often part of an attempt to regain, develop, or emphasize metropolitan centers. But what is regularly ignored, is that cultural life as a key element of urbanity does not necessarily benefit from the mere existence of palaces or recreations thereof. Yet in Braunschweig, a new shopping facility is, especially because of its palace-like appearance, regarded as being able to solve all the current problems of the city. As with the palace in Berlin, the intention is to generate urbanity.

What is often conveyed as an improvement of the cities not only has to appeal to the residents, but more so it has to attract visitors. Supposedly historic buildings seem to be better able to fulfill this objective. That more recent historic layers have to be removed to accomplish this goal must obviously be accepted as more or less inherent to the approach, whether one likes it or not. The fact that evidence of the timeframe in question is also threatened, as is the case at the *Neumarkt* in Dresden, seems to be incomprehensible. It is obviously not regarded as required to protect authentic representations of the past but more so to create new ones.

Especially in times of economic decline, people very often do not see the need to spend money on the preservation of their heritage and in particular not on the recreation of bygone buildings, knowing that cities have to face much larger problems. The anticipated population decline in Europe, and especially in certain parts of Germany, certainly puts other problems on the agenda. But it is also obvious that in these times of shrinking cities, a sense of place becomes even more important. The task should be to preserve and connect the existing with the new and not to demolish and reconstruct. However, too often

valuable buildings are in the way of new developments or are under threat of demolition by neglect and eventually removed with governmental support. All this is done under the pretext of beautifying the cities.

Such beautification movements are especially encouraged by events like upcoming anniversaries, as the case of Dresden shows. And even an application to become Cultural Capital can serve as a motivation to assess the cityscape anew, as was the case in Braunschweig. The initiators of such applications obviously associate with that honor the need to generate a beautiful and lively historic city center. The cities are obviously increasingly required to entertain their citizens and visitors in order to prevent their decline.

In recent years the once fierce controversies about architecture in general and reconstructions in particular seem to have waned. The architectural columnist Dieter Bartetzko assumed that such discussions might be regarded as an unnecessary luxury, especially in economically difficult times and that the opponents might have recognized that their standpoints are irreconcilable.⁶⁴⁵

It was especially the growing involvement and participation of well-known and respected individuals which resulted in an increasing acceptance of reconstructions by the people and in decreasing opposition from architects and art historians. The *Frauenkirche* in Dresden is certainly the most prominent example of a citizens' initiative being able to raise worldwide support, which necessarily included financial contributions. Yet there have always been demands to better spend such financial resources on apparently more urgent social and urban projects as well. But it needs to be considered that it was only the appealing reconstruction projects that were able to generate these funds in the first place. A contemporary addition onto the ruins of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden for instance, as was once done at the *Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin, would certainly have lacked support, ideologically and financially. It is also obvious that citizens would have not provided the required funds to build anything other than a copy of the *Fortunaportal* at the site of the former palace in Potsdam.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁵ Bartetzko: *Gedanken*, 5.

⁶⁴⁶ *Frauenkirche* in Dresden: see figures on page 53. *Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin: see figure on page 46. *Fortunaportal* in Potsdam: see figures on page 118.

The efforts to reconstruct the former *Hohenzollern* residence in Berlin also emerged from citizens' initiatives, which were increasingly supported by influential advocates. This certainly includes Wilhelm von Boddien, who still stands behind the project with admirable personal engagement. But it was the increasing shift of the whole scheme towards being a high-priority governmental issue, which finally led to the first phase of the project, namely the clearing of the site. The politicians merely followed the presumed public opinion, above all effectively conveyed by Boddien and others.⁶⁴⁷

The case of the palace in Berlin also shows that, in order for a reconstruction project to be successful, it is essential to raise public awareness and convince larger parts of society. The temporary visualization of the *Hohenzollern* palace, the reconstruction of the *Fortunaportal* in Potsdam, or mock-ups and models like in Braunschweig, generate the desire to have more.⁶⁴⁸

The developments in Braunschweig are also symptomatic of the increasing commercialization of reconstruction endeavors. What had started as a citizens' appreciation of the bygone built heritage, developed within just a couple of months to an exploitation of the historic façades for almost solely commercial interests. This development gained increasing support by local politicians. With that configuration it certainly disqualified itself from wider citizen support including private donations. The historic aspect undoubtedly made the investment easier, which is to a certain degree also true for the *Thurn-und-Taxis* project in Frankfurt.

Although the shopping center in Braunschweig can be regarded as an unfortunate combination of commercial and political interests, one should not forget that the investor ECE provided the supposedly only feasible proposal to develop the area of the former palace. This aspect is to a certain degree comparable to the discussion about the further developments at the location of the *Hohenzollern* palace in Berlin, though there was a much wider range of suggestions for the latter. Also in the German capital the advocates of the reconstruction seem to have presented a feasible plan, which appealed to politicians and influential individuals and was therefore backed by them. Despite their, compared to Braunschweig, more

⁶⁴⁷ See also footnote 619.

⁶⁴⁸ *Stadtschloß* in Berlin: see figures on page 161 and footnote 606. *Fortunaportal* in Potsdam: see figures on page 118. Braunschweig: see page 94.

vehement and inventive efforts and the fact that they also tried to protect an existing building at the same time, the opponents of the current developments lost their battle against the decision-making powers as well.

Such political decisions are too often kicked off before larger groups of citizens even become aware of the potential consequences and are able to get sufficiently organized to articulate their opinion. During the lengthy process finally leading to the demolition of the palace in Braunschweig in 1960, the citizens, but also experts and politicians, realized too late that rebuilding the cities after the war required more than providing housing and infrastructure. The current building scheme in Braunschweig was pushed through quite fast by the new politicians in charge, with the disunified opposition to the project not being able to really influence the process. This was also partly due to the fact that they were unable to provide practicable alternative solutions, not least because not all opponents would have agreed on the same suggestion. They might have been against the current commercial project, but not all of them would have unanimously supported one or the other alternative. The opponents realized too late that it was not a question of what should be done with the unsatisfactory situation in the heart of Braunschweig, but how it would be best and fastest implemented. Such an urge for activity is also inherent in Berlin, with the already mentioned difference that there was an even larger and better organized number of people demanding only minor adjustments to the current situation. What distinguishes both approaches even more is the political will in contemporary Berlin to take a first step without having a clue about the implementation and how to provide the funding for this. This is interestingly quite similar to the situation in Braunschweig of 1960 – creating emptiness to wipe out unpleasant heritage.

The recent decision in Berlin to remove with the *Palast der Republik* yet another layer of history, which is in this case the evidence of a since-dissolved state, seems to be again a result of political considerations. This impression is supported by the fact that there are currently no tangible urban planning requirements, since the further development of the area is postponed until an unknown point in time. Quite similar to the demolition of the old Prussian palace, it is not the local authorities and urban planners deciding on the removal of the current building. It is the federal government pushing through the

demolition of an important witness to recent German past. Quite similar to the former East German government, they are simply ignoring the fact that the removal of the existing and structurally sound building carcass, in order to recreate another building complex, is irresponsible from the economic point of view. It can be inferred that historic preservation and appreciation of historic layers was in large parts quite comparable in the timeframe depicted here – irrespective of the contemporary political situations in the East, the West and the reunited Germany.

The case of the Braunschweig palace on the other hand is at least from the economic point of view quite contrary, since the financial potency of a shopping center investor was already made out for the recreation of the three façades of the long gone palace. Similar to the Berlin case, the current decisions seem to be more influenced by political quarrels than sensible consideration of the objections from residents and independent experts. The whole process seems to be like a dangerous mix of commerce and recreation of alleged authenticity.

Ruins in the western parts of Germany that were once established as memorials and in most cases merely modified or complemented, have obviously been embraced by society. The ensemble of the ruins of the *Gedächtniskirche* in the former West Berlin together with their modern additions from the early 1960s is currently not under threat of remodeling. It seems to be accepted and acknowledged enough to not be affected by any beautification initiatives. The situation might be different if the ruins of the *Gedächtniskirche* had survived the partition of Germany in their post-war condition, more or less unaltered like the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden. The same is true if one imagines a building in East Berlin similar to the West Berlin *Gedächtniskirche* ensemble, a configuration which would have undoubtedly added a political dimension to the case. It can be supposed that in both instances this church would have become one of the earliest reconstruction efforts after reunification, very similar to the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden. Or imagine the remnants of the *Gedächtniskirche* being removed after the war, and the site simply being left empty or replaced by a new development. Chances are that calls to regain the lost heritage would have started in the late 1990s.

The methodologies of preservation and reconstruction of buildings can be extremely varied, but in response to Dankwart Guratzsch's argument that "it was never the case that someone would have been interested in the distinctive 'message' which the experts were trying to convey with their individual approach."⁶⁴⁹ I can only say that I certainly hope this is not true.

⁶⁴⁹ "Doch nirgends wollte nach der Fertigstellung noch jemand wissen, welche sehr spezielle 'Aussage' die Fachleute mit der Eigenart ihrer Herangehensweise bezweckt hatten." Guratzsch: *Who wants "honest" buildings anyway*.

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⁶⁵⁰ *Platte* is slang for *Plattenbauweise* (pre-fabricated concrete slabs used to build block of flats, see also footnote 84). In that particular case the title of the article points out the contrasts between the Belvedere on *Pfingstberg* hill in Sanssouci and such housing developments in the city of Potsdam.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland	Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union	Christian Democratic Union (political party in the FRG)
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik	German Democratic Republic (GDR)
DM	Deutsche Mark	German Mark (currency of the FRG until 2001)
e.V.	eingetragener Verein	registered association
€ (EUR)	Euro	Euro (the European currency since 2002)
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung	limited-liability company
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Party of Democratic Socialism (successor to the East German Communist Party SED)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands	Socialist Unity Party (political party in the GDR)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social Democratic Party of Germany (political party in the FRG)
SS	Schutzstaffel	(the Nazi elite corps)