



ESACH Report

ICOMOS.DE Student Competition 60plus XXL

[Pleas for the preservation of large-scale structures of architectural and technical heritage built before the German reunification]

Award Ceremony –

4th November 2017 / Venue: Ministry of Justice of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Following the Student Competition “from 60 to 90” of 2015, this year's Student Competition “60plus XXL” was organised by the German National Committee of ICOMOS, the Universities of Applied Sciences in Trier (Faculty of Architectural Studies) and Wismar (Faculty of Design), the *Arbeitskreis Theorie und Lehre der Denkmalpflege e.V.*, the Architectural Association of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as well as the Wüstenrot Foundation.

On the occasion of the international conference “Palace – City – Garden. The Royal Residence as Historic Cultural Landscape” (November 5th–7th, 2017) organised by ICOMOS Germany and partners, the award ceremony took place in the splendid Goldener Saal of the Neustädtische Palais in Puschkinstrasse, today used by the Ministry of Justice and part of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble. Welcoming the audience, Joachim Brenncke, president of the Architectural Association of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, underlined the necessity of a pedagogical approach to the immense and complex structures of the pre-reunification era as evidence of our recent architectural and technical history. Afterwards, Jörg Haspel, President of ICOMOS Germany, pointed out that most of the numerous buildings constructed since the establishment of ICOMOS in 1965 still need to be evaluated – in terms of German heritage

law – regarding their possible heritage quality. This remains a rarely cultivated and challenging field of work. Before introducing the award winners, Oskar Spital-Frenking, professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Trier, reminded the audience that a major problem regarding the built heritage on which the competition focused is the lack of aesthetical appreciation in society today.

Of the 27 submitted papers, which were all exhibited at this ceremony, five student works had been selected priorly by a jury in autumn 2017. Besides research on the planning history and especially on the future use of the megastructures in Germany, the students were asked to consider the buildings' historic quality and memory value, relevant criteria for the possible protection as monuments in legal terms. These requirements led to a crucial observation: There are no false monuments! Since the times of Karl Friedrich von Schinkel and Ferdinand von Quast, conservation on state level has been directed by the purpose of preserving what is considered remarkable evidence of the past. With regard to pre-reunification architectural heritage, a considerable inadequacy has been revealed: the historic quality of a built structure is not the only defining criterion for monument quality in terms of the German Monument Protection Laws. The purpose of monument conservation – as Kersten Heinz put it – is directed towards the future and not the end of a historic process. Consequently, the monument value is based on the property's quality of revealing the contemporary correlations with the past.¹ This could be an adequate approach towards the megastructures of technical and public infrastructure, the complex conference centres or huge housing complexes presented by the award winners:

- With **Suhl – Save Modernism at the *Rennsteig*** (*Suhl – Rettet die Moderne am Rennsteig*), Alexa Linde (Bauhaus University Weimar) illustrated a highly interesting example of GDR architecture. Her paper shows the deep intertwining between techniques, appearance and politics, which becomes visible if one investigates GDR architectural theory.² In Suhl, a model town of Eastern German modernism was erected opposite the historic town centre, creating a unique urban space, where the past literally meets the future – definitely a value that still has to be rediscovered by the local community.
- Vivien Bögelsack (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hildesheim) dealt with the **Motorway Superstructure Schlangenbader Strasse** (*Autobahn-Überbauung Schlangenbader Straße*) in Berlin. This remarkable example of “big stuff” built between

¹ Kersten Heinz, *Kultur – Kulturbegriff – Kulturdenkmalbegriff. Eine rechtliche und methodische Analyse des Kulturdenkmalbegriffs und seiner Auswirkungen auf die Unterschutzstellung von Teilen von Gebäuden*, Frankfurt am Main et al. 1993, p. 203f.

² Roman Hillmann, *Tragwerke und Bautechnik als Denkmalwerte*, in: *Denkmal Ost-Moderne II. Denkmalpflegerische Praxis der Nachkriegsmoderne*, Berlin 2016, p. 139f.

1960 and 1990 is not only outstanding evidence of technical heritage worldwide, but also illustrates paradigmatically the potential thinking of this architectural era of housing resources in a contemporary urban context. Lack of space had been the reason for the construction of this superstructure in West Berlin, but it is still a major concern in many countries with mass migration from the rural areas.

- Barbara Lichtmanová (University of Applied Sciences Wismar / Technical University Bratislava) focused on the **Terrace Building Girondelle** (*Terrassenhaus Girondelle*) in Bochum, which represents the changes in urban living in the 1960s due to social changes. At the Girondelle, the diverse groundplans enable each resident to have a private open-air space, while the structure intentionally saves building ground as a valuable resource in rapidly growing industrialised urban areas.
- With the **Housing Complex Mümmelmansberg** (*Großwohnsiedlung Mümmelmansberg*) in Hamburg Pauline Timper und Nina Pfeil (HafenCity University Hamburg) selected an object which exemplifies the necessity to reconsider the monument criteria for buildings of the second half of 20th century. Architecture of the pre-unification era is characterised by serial construction lacking individuality, which makes the justification of possible monument quality difficult. Nevertheless, East German Modernism – as illustrated by Alexa Linde – “sharpens the awareness for the second glance” by dealing with the heritage of this architectural era in which social progress was the leading motivation in the East and in the West.³
- Students at the BTU Cottbus will know it quite well: the **City Promenade Cottbus** (*Stadtpromenade Cottbus*). With regard to this area consisting of six different architectural elements, Pauline Kriegel (Bauhaus University Weimar) developed a presentation that mainly focused on the potential of reusing this central part of the city. By inviting student initiatives to reuse the space with temporary stalls or studios, Pauline Kriegel intends to revitalise the language of this architectural environment, which is held in low esteem but could become part of the city’s identity by bringing it back into the contemporary social context.

Yet in 2014, Andreas Hild reminded us – during the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Venice Charter – that architectural conservation would face “a whole avalanche of unsolved problems”. Additionally, he suggested the establishment of new criteria for the selection of potential architectural monuments and for the new purposes of use, which

³ Hans-Rudolf Meier, „Welche Denkmale welcher Moderne?“ Ein Forschungsprojekt zum baulichen Erbe der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: Denkmal Ost-Moderne II. Denkmalpflegerische Praxis der Nachkriegsmoderne, Berlin 2016, p. 66.

could only be successful if they could count on broad support in society.⁴ While the call for proposals required research on large-scale and complex architectural, but mostly technical structures from the pre-unification era, the task could also be summarised as a contribution to this necessary contemporary discourse on architectural conservation. The students were invited to explore the intentions or motivations realised with modern materials and technologies – indispensable for understanding our past in its modes of action. In conclusion, the ICOMOS 2017 Student Competition 60plusXXL is an invitation to reconsider that on the one hand the preservation and protection of our material heritage is meant to make this heritage accessible for present and future generations. On the other hand, it is intended to be a contribution and invitation to a major part of society to participate in a contemporary historical discourse.

Prior to the European Cultural Heritage Year 2018, these five prize-winning works by students firstly give important impulses to the question of new chances for conservation, in particular with regard to thinking of a shared responsibility for the selection of “new” monuments and especially for the development of our built heritage. Secondly, the alliance that made this competition possible could prove that the utopia of a “Preservationism 2018” is on its way.

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⁴ Andreas Hild, Jenseits des Mangels. Zur Zukunft der Denkmalpflege, in: Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege, Heft ½ / 2015, p. 147.

