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ICOMOS
Deutsches Nationalkomitee



bauKULTUR
BUNDESSTIFTUNG

Monument – Building – Culture. Conservationists and Architects in Dialogue

Colloquium on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of ICOMOS Germany

Organised by ICOMOS Germany, the Architektenkammer Rheinland-Pfalz, and the Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe Rheinland-Pfalz, in cooperation with the Federal Foundation of Baukultur, the Wüstenrot Stiftung, and DOCOMOMO

Mainz, Town Hall, November 26–28, 2015

Partners (to be confirmed): Europa Nostra, Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz, Bund Heimat und Umwelt, Deutscher Kulturrat / Rat für Baukulturrat, etc

Conference languages: German, some contributions in English or French

Starting point

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was founded in 1965 in Krakow and Warsaw, one year after the “Venice Charter” was adopted at the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments and after it was decided to found an international monument organisation that would encompass East and West. In the same year that ICOMOS International was set up, a West German national committee of ICOMOS was established, and apparently there was also a first initiative to found an ICOMOS committee in East Germany.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of this foundation, ICOMOS Germany, the Architektenkammer Rheinland-Pfalz, and the Generaldirektion Kulturelles Erbe Rheinland-Pfalz, in cooperation with the Federal Foundation of Baukultur, the Wüstenrot Stiftung and DOCOMOMO wish to critically reflect on the formation of principles for modern conservation work as well as on a determination of positions of modern architecture. They also intend to discuss the current practice of cooperation between architects, engineers and conservationists in an international context. On the basis of a programmatic speech of the long-time president of Hamburg’s chamber of architects, Walter J. M. Bunsmann, on “Denkmalpflege. Eine Bauschule der Nation” (“Monument Conservation. An Architectural

School for the Nation”, published in Deutsches Architektenblatt, 5/1984), the conference is also going to ask which role or even role model function monument conservation could play for the development of a sustainable building culture that is oriented to the already existing structures. The focus is to be on the work of so-called practical conservation, i.e. possibilities and limits of monument-preserving interventions regarding the architectural, garden and urban heritage, carried out by architects, engineers and other experts on behalf of the owners.

Interdisciplinary dialogue: monument culture and building culture

The dialogue between conservationists, architects and engineers as well as between restorers and technicians is a fundamental basis for the work of ICOMOS worldwide; it also has a long tradition in Germany. The international ICOMOS conference “Architekten und Denkmalpflege” (“Architects and Monument Conservation”) of 1992 – organised together with the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO and the Architektenkammer Baden-Württemberg as a consequence of the Ulm controversy about the construction of a new town hall (1991-93, Richard Meier) at the foot of Ulm Minster – is an example of such irregular talks on architecture and monuments (see ICOMOS – Journals of the German National Committee no. XII, Munich 1993). Points of reference for a current debate about the role of conservationists and architects can be two opposite poles: on the one hand, a historic starting point marked most of all by monument conservation, i.e. the ICOMOS Charter of Venice of 1964 with its principles circulating in conservationists’ and architects’ circles. On the other hand, there is the concept of an interdisciplinary “building culture”, discussed in recent years most of all in building and planning policy.

The 16 articles of the Venice Charter (1964) contain a number of guidelines defining the relation between old and new, preserving and developing. They help to outline common fields of work for conservationists and restorers as well as for architects and engineers. The rule that constituent contributions of all periods to a monument should be respected – and that possibly even contemporary contributions have a right to be preserved as part of the monument’s biography – as well as the rule that stylistic purity and unity should not be an objective of restoration belong to the frequently quoted maxims, both on the conservationist’s and architect’s sides. Part of these maxims is also the demand that additions should blend into the monument harmoniously, but nevertheless be recognisable as contemporary layers.

Prepared by the “Initiative Architektur und Baukultur” (“Initiative Architecture and Building Culture”) started in 2000 and by the setting up of the Federal Foundation of Baukultur in 2007, the call for a culturally ambitious construction and planning practice in Germany has even been heard outside the monument context. In 2000, the Deutsches Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz adopted a recommendation called “Für Nachhaltigkeit und Baukultur” (“For Sustainability and Building Culture”). As one of the first federal states Rhineland-Palatinate initiated a “Round Table on Building Culture” in 2003. The latest Baukulturbericht (Building Culture Report) 2014/15, presented to the public in November 2014 on the occasion of the

5th Konvent der Baukultur (Convent of Building Culture), documents surveys among citizens and experts. These show that cultural and historic heritage plays a major role when it comes to defining the qualities of building culture.

Not only “building in existing contexts”, of which the historically or artistically most valuable or socially most highly esteemed components are (or should be) on the monument list, should follow higher standards than the socially disreputable functionalism of the building industry (which has often been responsible for destroying buildings of monument value). Instead, the planning and design of our built environment should in general be culturally more ambitious. The question how the right of building culture, in the meantime legally codified, may lead to procedures and results for our built, horticultural or archaeological heritage that are more compatible with or even beneficial to monuments, forms the current background for this conference dedicated to the dialogue between architects, engineers and conservationists. The conference wishes to start at the interface between architecture and monument conservation, while also paying more attention to the European dimension of this topic. The initiative of the Deutsches Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz (DNK) for a new European Heritage Year is offering a topical occasion for this plan.

Thematic focus: the heritage of the second postwar modernism

For the organisers, one of the thematic focuses is how conservationists should deal with the heritage of the 20th century, especially from the time after the Second World War. *The Madrid Document – Approaches for the Conservation of Twentieth-Century Architectural Heritage*, adopted by the ICOMOS General Assembly in Florence in 2014, provides an up-to-date basis for this discussion. The conference wants to focus on buildings already listed or worth preserving that were erected between the year of the foundation of ICOMOS (1965) and the fall of the Iron Curtain (1989/90). These are buildings that can be subsumed under the term “Second Postwar Modernism” and whose monument value today is often disputed.

The ICOMOS conference in Mainz follows up on a number of previous conferences and publications of recent years: e.g. the plea of the Federal Foundation of Baukultur *Nachkriegsmoderne in Deutschland – Eine Epoche weiterdenken (Postwar Modernism in Germany – Developing an Idea of an Epoch)* of 2008 and the collection of examples *Zwischen Scheibe und Wabe – Verwaltungsbauten der Sechziger Jahre (Between Slab and Honeycomb – Administration Buildings of the Sixties)*, published in 2012 by the Vereinigung der Landesdenkmalpfleger in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Further important incentives for a long overdue debate were provided in 2012 by the international symposium *Brutalismus – Architektur zwischen Alltag, Poesie und Theorie (Brutalism – Architecture Between Everyday Life, Poetry and Theory)*, organised by the Wüstenrot Stiftung in Berlin, as well as by the conference *Klötze und Plätze – Wege zu einem neuen Bewusstsein für Großbauten der 1960er und 1970er Jahre (Blocks and Squares – Towards a New Perception of the Mega Structures of the 1960s and 1970s)*, organised by the Bund Heimat und Umwelt (BHU) in Reutlingen. The most recent example is the symposium in Stuttgart on *Baukultur der Nachkriegsmoderne – Reflektion und Transformation (Building Culture of Postwar Modernism – Reflection and Transformation)* of 2014. The town hall in Mainz (designed by Arne Jacobsen and Otto Weitling, 1968-70, erected 1970-74) as potential conference venue

would be an additional issue to discuss and also provide concrete demonstration material for the present controversy. By focusing on this period the conference wishes to investigate to what extent the Venice Charter of 1964 and later international position papers of ICOMOS are also applicable in practice to more recent monument layers.

Whenever sustainable building culture is concerned, interdisciplinary dialogue must take place on various levels: on the World Heritage level as well as on the ordinary monument level, i.e. in the conservationist's daily routine; in the private and in the urban-public contexts; with regard to individual buildings as well as to urban ensembles; in the discussion of artistic, aesthetic, and historic matters. Architects and conservationists create meaning and are in many respects confronted with similar questions. Whether it is a matter of break, fragment, de-contextualisation, dissolution of contexts, contrast, conflict or synthesis, contextualisation, harmonisation, transition, adaptation, or integration – the preserved and the new components are symbolic of the quality of a building culture that in addition to functional and economic aspects accepts the past of sites and objects as challenge in a productive process.

Groups of topics

Positions: Building Culture and Conservation Culture in Dialogue

Welcome and Introduction

Panel Discussion

I Dialogues: Conservation and Continuation of Construction

I.1 “The Invisible Architect”? On the Conservationist’s Ethos of “the Smallest Possible Intervention”

I.2 Monument Conservation through Intervention – Continuation of Construction

I.3 Open Space – Urban Space – Heritage Space. The Tasks of Urban Heritage Conservation

Evening Events:

1. Opening of the exhibition “Mainz Then and Now” (working title)

2. - from 60 to 90 – Students Fighting for the Preservation of the Architectural and Urbanistic Heritage of the Time before the Reunification (working title, results of a student competition)

II Cooperations: Perspectives

II.1 The Architecture of the Late Postwar Period – a Common European Heritage?

II.2 In the Focus – Conserving and Developing World Heritage Sites

II.3 Closing Discussion: Quality at Second Glance – Do we Need a Heritage Award for Architects?

III Excursion