

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Luther Memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg
<i>Location</i>	Eisleben: Halle Region, Land Sachsen-Anhalt Wittenberg: Dessau Region, Land Sachsen-Anhalt
<i>State Party</i>	Federal Republic of Germany
<i>Date</i>	23 October 1995

Justification by State Party

This nomination is made under **criteria ii and vi**, as set out in paragraph 24 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (1995).

As authentic settings of decisive events in the Reformation or in the life of Martin Luther, the memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg have an outstanding significance for the political, cultural, and spiritual life of the western world that extends far beyond the German borders. They are also artistic monuments of high quality, with their furnishings conveying a vivid picture of an historic era of world and ecclesiastical importance.

The two houses in Eisleben represent the key dates in Martin Luther's life, his birth and his death. Because of the way in which they illustrate the way of life of the Reformers and their contemporaries they provide material evidence of the social and spiritual background of the historic events.

Luther Hall in Wittenberg is considered to be the guardian of the Luther traditions, and Luther's Room within the building, which has almost completely preserved its original appearance, is of special significance. In 1825 the artist Johann Gottfried Schadow aptly summarized the aura of this room: "Thousands of passers-by from our country and from abroad have visited this room as a place of pilgrimage. It would not be easy to find a place more suitable for bringing Luther's spirit to our mind in its personal form." These comments are equally applicable to Melancthon's House, since it, too, has survived almost unchanged. Contemporary records show that the Town Church was one of the main sites of Luther's activities. His sermons can be timed exactly to the hour when they were delivered; it is known where he was standing when he delivered them and what the subjects were.

Despite repeated destruction and reconstruction, the Castle Church still houses the undamaged tombs of the two Reformers. The Propositions Portal is revered as the starting point of the Reformation. The church itself became a national monument to the Reformation, with its late 19th century furnishings, and so it also bears witness to Wilhelmian ecclesiastical politics.

In addition to their direct link with a movement of faith of world importance, the Luther memorials are also early witnesses to an awareness of monument conservation and of efforts to preserve their original state as far as possible. These began soon after Luther's death, with the objective of creating a memorial to the Reformation. The buildings were therefore conserved, but also changed in structure for the purpose, with the reverent preservation of Luther's living room in the Augustinian monastery, the establishment of the *Museum Lutheri*, and the furnishings of the "Splendid Hall" in the house in Eisleben in which he was born.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the Luther memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg constitute a group of individual *monuments*.

History and Description*History*

In the 15th and 16th centuries Eisleben owed its great prosperity to copper and silver mining, and this drew Hans Luder, father of the Reformer, there in 1483, to settle in the Petriertel district. Martin Luther was born on 10

November 1483 at lodgings in a house in a street then known as Lange Gasse. The family moved in the following year to Mansfeld, some 10 km distant from Eisleben.

After studying philosophy at Erfurt University, Martin Luther joined the Augustinian Order in 1505. He stayed there until 1510 when, following a visit to Rome, he transferred to the newly built Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg, where he also held the chair of Bible studies at the university. He lived in a cell in the south-western part of the monastery, in a tower-like annex projecting over the town wall, and it was here that he began his study of the Epistles of St Paul in 1515. Two years later, on 31 October 1517, he launched the Reformation by nailing his 95 Propositions to the north door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. They were intended as an appeal to scholars to exchange opinions on the vexed question of indulgences, and resulted from his long study of human guilt, repentance, and possible absolution, which had been the subject of numerous sermons over the preceding two years from the pulpit of the Town Church, where he had been the preacher since 1514 (and where he was to remain in the same post for the rest of his life).

Luther developed his views on the authority of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of salvation by faith in publications in the years that followed, actions which led to his being excommunicated and banished from the Empire by the Imperial Diet of Worms in 1521. Frederick of Saxony extended his protection to Luther, whom he sheltered in his castle of Wartburg, enabling him to begin his translation of the Bible into German. He returned to Wittenberg in March 1522, where his duties as preacher at the Town Church had been taken over by the radical reformer Andreas Bodenstein, known as Karlstadt. Karlstadt, unlike Luther, did not eschew violence and encouraged the disruption of church services. Luther's leading disciple, Philip Melancthon, called the Reformer back to Wittenberg, where he restored the policy of non-violence in his famous invocative sermons. He followed these up with a long series of sermons devoted to his beliefs. A crucial event was the installation of Johannes Bugenhagen, one of Luther's supporters, as parish priest of Wittenberg in 1523, elected not by the Chapter of the All Saints' Foundation as was customary, but by the parish and the town council "according to St Paul's evangelical teaching." Luther devoted himself to the replacement of the Latin Mass by a version in the vernacular, and his German Mass, first used in October 1525 in the Town Church, is still in use today.

1525 was also the year of another decisive gesture on Luther's part, when he broke finally with his monastic vows and married the former nun, Katharina von Bora. They continued to live in the monastery, which had been dissolved following an assembly of German Augustinians in 1522 who declared themselves in favour of the principles of Evangelical freedom. Luther's household became the centre for reformists from all over Europe, and the family room that he created on the first floor of the building (now known as Luther's Room) was the setting for his "table talks," which were later to be published.

From this time onwards Luther devoted himself to the organization of the Evangelical parishes and their administration, taking the situation in Wittenberg as a model that has survived to the present day. Visitations were introduced to determine the size and number of parishes and their income. With the abolition of the consecration of priests, a method of examination and inauguration of clergymen was developed, the first ordinations being carried out by Luther in the Town Church in October 1535. He was also tireless in evolving the theology and liturgy for the new institution. The statutes of the Lutheran Church, the so-called *Augsburg Confession*, were published in 1530, edited by Melancthon.

Luther returned to the town of his birth, Eisleben, on 28 January 1546 to assist in an arbitration, and he took lodgings in the house of his friend Dr Drachstedt. His health deteriorated alarmingly while he was there, but he remained active until the end: only three days before his death on 18 February he preached a sermon at St Andrew's Church and ordained two clergymen. After lying in state in the church throughout the following day, his body was conveyed in solemn procession via Halle to Wittenberg, where it was laid to rest on 22 February.

Description

The nomination covers six separate monuments: the houses where Luther was born and died, respectively in Eisleben, Luther Hall, Melancthon's house, the Town Church, and the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

Luther's birthplace, Eisleben The house in Luther Strasse (formerly Lange Gasse) is one of the oldest town houses in Eisleben. At its core is a 15th century structure with a steeply pitched roof, the ground-floor plan of which is preserved. Following a fire in 1689 the upper storey was completely rebuilt in timber-framed wattle-and-daub to form the present-day "Splendid Gallery." The courtyard facade has had a double stone arcade with a loggia on the upper floor since 1867; this is based on evidence provided by the arrangement of the doors on the rear facade. The street facade is in characteristic Baroque form. The interior contains many features that commemorate or are associated with Luther. The building has been heavily restored; however, it is noteworthy for a special mixture of historical importance and 19th century Historicism.

The house in which Luther died, Eisleben This house forms part of a group built after a fire in 1498 on the south side of St Andrew's Church. It consists of a standard two-storey house with a long side-building and a

spiral staircase between the two parts. Its door and windows are elegantly decorated. The internal division is original, since the house was never destroyed and rebuilt. Luther had taken lodgings on the upper floor of the front house, and he died in the larger room facing the street, which has an impressive ornamented ceiling. The whole complex is now used as a museum and offices for the Luther Memorials organization. As with the birth house, it has a special atmosphere resulting from the blend of history and Historicism.

The Luther Hall, Wittenberg This forms the rear part of a building complex on the outskirts of the old town, known as the Augusteum. With the building fronting on Collegien Street (now the Evangelical Preachers' Seminary) and a side wing it encloses a picturesque courtyard. The three-storey building housing the Luther Hall was part of the early 16th century monastery; it includes remains of the town wall and of the former Holy Ghost hospital. The facade looking on the courtyard reveals two building stages, the roof with its two gothicized ornamental gables being from the 19th century. Internally there are few details surviving from the Late Gothic monastery; the distribution of rooms is that of the later 16th century. The rooms on the upper storey are those of Luther's day, and some of the furniture probably belonged to him. The building contains an extensive collection of Reformation archives - manuscripts, incunabula, books, paintings, coins and medals, etc. Again, this is a much restored building, combining history and Historicism.

Melanchthon's house, Wittenberg This house in Collegien Street, one of the two main streets in the old part of the town, was built in 1536 in typical Renaissance style. It is a narrow three-storey building crowned by a tripartite round-arched staggered gable. An extension was added later to the house in the form of a gateway with rooms above. The internal arrangement of rooms is original, with Melanchthon's study on the first floor. On the second floor there is a large room used to accommodate students, known as the "Scholars' Room." Unlike the previous houses, it retains much of its 16th century character.

The Town Church, Wittenberg The Town Church of St Mary is located near the Market Place in the centre of the old town. It is flanked by parallel rows of houses in the two medieval streets. It is in Late Gothic style, with two massive towers that dominated the townscape. The oldest part is the twin-aisled choir, built at the end of the 13th century; it contains some exceptional High Gothic wooden sculpture, from the workshop of the famous Naumberg Master. The towers are from the mid 14th century; they were formerly capped with Gothic pointed helms that were removed during the War of Schmalkalden in 1547, the tops being restored in 1555. The new nave was built in the early 15th century: because of the limited space of four bays between the choir and the towers, enlargement was achieved by broadening the structure. There is a pointed arch between the choir and the nave. Only very slight modifications have been carried out since then. Most of the interior furnishings are post-Reformation; the most striking feature is the main altar, the work of Lucas Cranach the Elder and the Younger, and strongly influenced by Luther and Melanchthon in its iconography.

The Castle Church, Wittenberg The castle rises above the medieval town, to the west, and the spire of its church crowns the north-western corner. Much of the original character of the castle has been lost, as a result of its having been re-used as a barracks in the 19th century, but the church is largely as it was at the time of Luther. It is a long basilican structure with an eastern apse, a typical example of the German *Hallenkirche* in very late Gothic style. The external appearance is characterized by the staggered buttresses and long, slender windows. There is a filigree roof structure at the east end in neo-Gothic form supporting a *flèche*; the western end has the round tower with its massive belfry, richly decorated with neo-Gothic ornamentation. Access is through the western door: because of its symbolic importance, the second door on the north side, the famous Propositions Portal, is only used on special occasions. Its ogival arch is contemporary with the original construction in 1499, as an inscription testifies. The decoration around the door includes representations of Luther and Melanchthon, and the Latin text of the 95 Propositions is displayed on the bronze doors. The interior underwent a historicizing treatment in Late Gothic style at the hands of the architect Friedrich Adler in the 19th century. However, this does not detract from the dignity of the tombs of the two great Reformers, Luther and Melanchthon, upon which the whole interior focuses. They are in the form of bronze tablets on simple sandstone slabs. The tombs of several other leading figures in the Reformation are also in the church.

Management and Protection

Legal status

All the buildings that are the subject of this nomination are protected as single monuments under the legislation of Land Sachsen-Anhalt, which requires any work that may affect their status or condition to be authorized by the competent provincial authority.

Management

The two houses in Eisleben are owned by the Municipality and are in use as museums. Luther Hall and Melanchthon's House in Wittenberg are owned by Land Sachsen-Anhalt and managed by the Municipality of

Wittenberg as museums. The Town Church in Wittenberg is owned and managed by the Evangelical Town Church parish, which uses it for religious services. The Castle Church is owned by the Evangelical Church of the Union in Berlin and used by the Evangelical Seminary of Wittenberg and by the Evangelical Castle Church parish.

Both Eisleben and Wittenberg have town centre plans that make special provision for the protection of the Luther memorials. No buffer zones are necessary as such, since the town centre plans are well drafted and implemented.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The commemoration of Luther began shortly after his death, and great attention has been paid since that time to the *birthplace*. It was acquired by the Town Council of Eisleben after the 1689 fire, and the reconstruction was carried out with money collected by subscription throughout Saxony and beyond. Basic rehabilitation work was carried out by the Prussian Government Surveyor, Friedrich August Stüler, in 1866, to restore its 1693 appearance. Further restoration work was necessary in 1956 when the building became a museum, and the last major campaign was in 1983, in preparation for the commemoration of the quincentenary of Luther's birth. A new roof was put on in 1990-92, along with refurbishing of masonry, plaster, and paint.

The *house in which Luther died* in Eisleben was in private ownership until 1862, when it was acquired by the Prussian State as a memorial to the Reformer. In 1862-68 it was restored to its mid 16th century state in a remarkable piece of conservation work for its time. The rooms were furnished and decorated in 1894 in an historicizing style, in itself important evidence of the late 19th century approach. Only minimal repair and maintenance work was needed until 1980, when a fundamental restoration was carried out for the quincentenary. The roofs were replaced in 1991, and work on the restoration of the interior took place in 1993-94.

Luther's Room in the *Luther Hall*, Wittenberg, was treated as a memorial to the Reformer from the early 16th century; it was known as the *Museum Lutheri* from 1655 onwards. The first renovation took place in 1697. On the occasion of the celebration of the tercentenary of the Reformation in 1817 there was a call for the restoration and preservation of the building from leading architects such as Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Johann Gottfried Schadow, as a result of which Schinkel's pupil Friedrich August Stüler undertook a study that led to some limited consolidation and restoration measures. Major works were carried out in 1847, involving the introduction of certain Late Gothic elements for which there was little authority. The building became the main Luther memorial centre in 1883, and some rebuilding was required in the first decade of the 19th century to house the large collections. Many of Stüler's insertions were removed when maintenance work was carried out in 1932. Essential work to repair war damage took place in 1945-47. In 1967 Luther's Room was partially restored to its condition in 1629, for which there was sufficient evidence. The historic substance was exposed in a more comprehensive programme of work during preparation for the quincentenary in 1983.

Melanchthon's House in Wittenberg has been largely spared both destruction and restoration. Its original appearance has virtually unchanged since the 16th century. It was extensively restored in 1897 on the quatercentenary of Melanchthon's birth, and it underwent another major campaign, in accordance with strict modern conservation practice, when it was transferred to the municipality in 1954. It was opened as the Melanchthon Memorial Museum in 1967, when the Renaissance garden at the back of the house was created.

The *Town Church* in Wittenberg has been subject, like most places of worship in continuous use, to a number of alterations related to changes in liturgical arrangements, religious requirements, etc. An extensive remodelling by the Italian architect Carlo Ignazio Pozzi began in 1810, following its misuse during the occupation of Wittenberg by Napoleon's forces, during the course of which the interior was given many Neo-Gothic elements. The impact was somewhat reduced during renovations in 1928, but it was the opportunity afforded by the repair work following World War II air raids that provided the opportunity for a closer approach to be taken to its appearance in Luther's time.

The *Castle Church* in Wittenberg was severely damaged during the Seven Years' War and the restoration by the Saxon architect Christian Friedrich Exner was directed towards combining the existing remains with a Baroque building, on a scale acceptable to the Lutheran Church. It suffered again during the Napoleonic occupation. The heyday of the Castle Church ended when the university was transferred to Halle: it henceforth served only the Preachers' Seminary set up in 1815. However, it was seen as a memorial to the Reformation, and Schinkel was commissioned to prepare a report on it. He proposed that it should be restored to its Late Gothic form. Although his proposals were not accepted because of strong objections from the Lutheran clergy, his report is important because he enunciated in it his concept of "the preservation of all monuments and antique values in our country." The castle became a barracks in 1819 and the church its chapel. A further attempt in 1844 to restore the church to its 1500 form, based on a report by the Prussian Conservator of Artistic Monuments,

Ferdinand von Quast, was again rejected by the Lutheran authorities, although his proposal for the new Propositions Portal was implemented.

Pressure continued nonetheless, and in 1883, largely as a result of the personal involvement of Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, a major reconstruction and restoration began under the supervision of the architect Friedrich Adler. This involved considerable rebuilding work and a complete remodelling of the interior, to make it into what the architect described as "a hall of glory of the Reformation." Since then there have been no major changes, but some restoration has been carried out on the fabric.

Substantial funds are now available from various sources - Federal, *Land*, municipalities, and private - for continuing maintenance and conservation work on all six properties.

Authenticity

The close association of these buildings with the Lutheran Church and their role as memorials to the Reformation has meant that they have been the objects of a variety of restoration and reconstruction projects over more than four centuries. Some of these have been directed to the embellishment of the buildings to the greater glory of the Reformation and its great figures, whilst others have consciously sought to return to their forms when the great Reformers were alive. In terms of strict modern conservation practice some of these may be adjudged to have had an adverse effect on the historical authenticity of the buildings. It might also be argued that those activities carried out in the 19th and early 20th centuries have an historicity of their own. It is certain that recent interventions and those to be carried out in the future will be entirely within the accepted conventions of modern conservation. In any assessment of the authenticity of this group of buildings their spiritual meaning must also be taken into account, since most of the actions carried out in the past that would now incur condemnation were undertaken in a religious rather than an historical frame of reference, and so should be judged as such.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Eisleben and Wittenberg in February 1996.

Qualities

None of the individual buildings may be considered to possess outstanding universal value as individual works of art. The two Wittenberg churches have a special value, in that they represent the earliest examples of a Protestant approach to the disposition of liturgical space within a place of worship. However, the over-riding and incontestable outstanding universal significance of the group is their association with Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, which was one of the most decisive events in the religious and political history of the world.

A subsidiary, but not negligible, quality of the town houses in particular is the way in which they represent 19th century German Historicism, as applied to monuments of great importance in German history. Most of the leading practitioners of this style are represented: Stüler, Adler, Wanderer, Pozzi, and Schinkel all contributed in various ways.

Comparative analysis

No valid comparisons can be drawn between this group of monuments and any other.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria iv and vi*:

The Luther memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg bear unique testimony to the Protestant Reformation, which was one of the most significant events in the religious and political history of the world, and constitute outstanding examples of 19th century Historicism.

ICOMOS, October 1996



Wittenberg : église de la ville et chapelle du Corpus Christi
Wittenberg : the Town Church with Corpus Christi chapel