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WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Twenty-first session

Naples, Italy
1 - 6 December 1997

Information document: Third State of conservation report
of the Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin.

The Bureau, at its twenty-first session (Paris, 23-28 June 1997) requested a report from the State Party on the State of conservation of the site for examination by the World Heritage Committee.

Translation

**Third Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site
"Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin"**

At its meeting in June 1997, the Office of the World Heritage Committee considered the detailed Second Report presented by the German side on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site. The German authorities noted with satisfaction that the Office recognized and commended the many efforts made to improve the protection of the World Heritage Site and its surroundings. The German authorities regard this as encouragement for their intention to attach extremely high priority to conserving the entire cultural landscape of Potsdam.

When evaluating the Second Report, the Office requested further information on and assessments of the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site. On behalf of the Government of Land Brandenburg, I am pleased to comply and provide the following details.

1. Progress of the application procedure to extend the World Heritage Site

On the basis of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of February 1996 intensive work is currently being carried out on the final version of the application to extend the site. The Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation, Berlin-Brandenburg and the Land Capital City of Potsdam are cooperating closely on this. The Brandenburg Directorate for the Conservation of Monuments and the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture are directly involved. Drafting an application of the appropriate quality has proved to be more complicated and more time-consuming than originally expected. The main reason for this is that the proposed area extension consists of a large number of smaller ensembles, landscape units and street complexes; the necessary documents have to be collated for each of these. As things stand at present, I anticipate that the application will be submitted before this year's Committee session.

2. Progress on the elaboration of a master plan for the Potsdam cultural landscape

The urban master plan is intended to facilitate better and earlier coordination of the concerns of urban development and monument conservation in the various parts of the city affected by the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The master plan's main function is to identify at an early date and to resolve frictions arising from conflicting objectives and interests. It is intended as a stimulus for the elaboration of solutions to concrete problems by the relevant political and administrative levels. Preparation of the master plan is being financed with urban development

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funds from the "Urban Development and Monument Conservation" programme of the Federation and Länder.

In May 1997 the Ministry for Urban Development, Housing and Transport and the City of Potsdam agreed on the remit, area and mode of preparation of the master plan, thus enabling the actual drafting to begin. The area affected comprises the districts between the areas belonging to the UNESCO World Heritage Site (including those to be added), as well as the wider environs of the palaces and parks and thus the whole of Potsdam's inner city, including all the historic suburbs.

Representatives of the various offices of the City of Potsdam, the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation and the Brandenburg Directorate for Monument Conservation are holding half-day working sessions on a three-weekly basis to consider spatially coherent sub-sections of the overall area covered by the master plan. These working sessions, which all involve site visits, are led by an external moderator; the results are documented in maps and in written texts. The current state of urban planning, ongoing construction projects and monument conservation objectives are presented and discussed for each area. This provides a starting-point for the formulation of possible solutions and master plan targets.

The experience made in the first working sessions, which considered the environs of Sanssouci Park, showed that there was broad agreement between the City and the monument conservation authorities on the substantive goals and ideas.

It did, however, also become clear that more extensive use of existing planning instruments (development plan, principles of conservation) and the early identification of planning alternatives (perhaps by holding competitions) by the City could make a substantial contribution towards avoiding conflicts. On the other hand, monument conservation regulations must be made more concrete, so that they can more easily be fed into urban planning. This applies particularly to those areas which are as yet less affected by the pressure for development.

Other Land ministries responsible for various policy fields are participating, and they have an observer role in the drafting of the master plan. The intention is to involve the public in later stages of the planning. The recommendations arrived at in the context of the master plan are to be submitted to the municipal decision-making bodies for consideration.

Owing to the scale and complexity of the spatial area to be considered, the master plan is not expected to be completed before the second half of 1998. An interim report on results to date will be presented at the end of this year. The World Heritage Committee will be informed of the outcome.

3. Results of the urban development competition "*Grüne Mitte*" - *Alter Markt/Lustgarten* (Green Centre - Old Market-Place/Pleasure Garden)

The City of Potsdam put this major urban development project out to tender across the EU at the beginning of March 1997, opening it up also to participants from Switzerland and the countries of Eastern Europe. It was a two-stage competition, for urban development concepts and for their realization. From the 320 applicants, the organizers selected 50 participants in a lottery held under legal supervision. In addition, 15 noted architects/landscape architects were invited to participate.

Fifty-seven offices took part in the conceptual competition, which was an anonymous procedure.

With an eye to the Federal Garden Show to be held in 2001, the remit was "an overall concept of urban development and landscape gardening to restore and reinvigorate the historic city centre".

Proposals were sought for the architectural and spatial organization, utilization and design of 3 areas:

- *Lustgarten, Paradeplatz* and the hotel site in the south-west
- Architectural presentation of palace outline and structure, supplemented by proposals for changes to traffic routing in *Breite Strasse* and *Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse*
- development of the Havel shoreline to give a framework to the *Alter Markt* to the south-east (construction plots around the *Palais Barberini*).

On 28/29 May 1997 the jury selected ten projects for the realization competition. At the same time the jury recommended to the City four projects for inclusion in the "*Palais Barberini*" competition planned for the end of the year.

The outcome of the first stage of the competition was discussed in the five competent committees of the City of Potsdam and presented to the City Council on 16 June 1997. The discussion of the result led to a decisive Council resolution on putting the *Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse/Breite Strasse* junction in the area of the destroyed *Stadtschloss* (City Palace) back in its original state.

The realization competition was a cooperative, discursive procedure in order to acquaint the participating offices, in mutual discussions, with the special nature of the location, the conclusions to be drawn from the requirements of the World Heritage Committee and the urban development programme for the 2001 Federal Garden Show.

At its meeting on 28/29 August 1997, the jury unanimously agreed to award first prize to the plans submitted by the Joppin, Dietz, Willecke partnership, Berlin (Annex 1) and to recommend that the City proceed with this project. The jury assessed the plans thus:

"Their outstanding feature is that clear structures are used to pursue, reinterpret and present the historical ensembles. The urban ensembles, with their cleverly placed spatial architectonic edges are related to each other through axes and spatial links ... Altogether this plan will enrich the city with a series of subtly interconnected ensembles which, especially in terms of the palace setting, are in a position to give this historic place spatial and substantive significance."

The measures in the open space are to be implemented in the following order of priority:

1. completion of spatial installations on the palace site
2. redesign around the moorings
3. establishment of the visual-spatial relationship between *Marstall* and *Brauhausberg*.

In all cases a gradual realization of the project may have to be considered. Reinvigorating the historic site of the destroyed palace for the 2001 Federal Garden Show by means of a presentation to scale is a convincing interim step in the decision on the future use and design of the centre.

Together with the generous opening of a vista from the new *Lustgarten* to the Havel and the *Brauhausberg*, filtered through a Lenné-type row of trees and the fairground which opens onto the city, the large expanse of the former Thälmann stadium will be restructured and upgraded through modest construction activities. At the same time, the city, with the eye-catching *Nicolaikirche* (Church of St Nicolas) will again be visible from the water. The competition proved that the historic structure and the spatial quality of Potsdam's cultural landscape must be the decisive points of reference for inner-city planning.

4. Results of the urban development competition for the *Quartier am Bahnhof*

As outlined in my Second Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site, Deutsche Bahn AG put out to tender an EU-wide, single-stage urban development realization competition for the "New *Quartier am Bahnhof*" (former Potsdam-Center) in May 1997. This was in response to the justified criticism by the World Heritage Committee that earlier plans did not take adequate account of Potsdam's cultural landscape. The aim of the competition was to develop a lively new city district by the *Potsdam-Stadt* railway station with mixed uses including services, offices, flats, cultural and tourist attractions. The new quarter is to be clearly distinguished from the historic city centre, retaining an independent character, while at the same time taking account of the special features of the area and the links resulting from its incorporation into the Potsdam cultural landscape. The jury was composed of renowned German

and foreign experts along with representatives of the Federation, Land Brandenburg, the City of Potsdam, the German UNESCO Commission, the monument conservation authorities and members of the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation, Berlin-Brandenburg. At its first meeting on 3/4 July 1997, the jury selected 28 of the 276 applications received and recommended them for further consideration in the second phase of the competition.

At its final meeting on 30 September 1997 the jury decided by a large majority (13 votes to 2) to award first prize to the Engel, Prof. Zillich, Moraca partnership (Annex 2). Further work is to take place on the basis of this draft. The individual aspects of the draft are to be further developed in accordance with the jury's comments and taking account of the basic idea underlying the project. Further development of the station arcades (plots 9-12), which were not included in the competition, will take place on the basis of the results of the façade competition. The jury assessed the plans as follows:

"The draft plans propose a pattern for urban development and construction that will make discernible a link with Potsdam ensembles such as the *Holländisches Viertel* (Dutch Quarter) or the *Russische Kolonie* (Russian Colony). They provide an idea for variations and changes that can be further expanded, and their clear structure is convincing ... The plan integrates the idea of the Potsdam cultural landscape with urban development concerns and to that extent makes a strong forward-looking statement on the identity of an independent quarter ... The overall spatial concept with the wedge-shaped opening from *Zentrum-Ost* at the *Nuthebrücke* towards the historic city centre creates a unique link between these two very different districts ... Existing Potsdam elements have been blended into a striking new cityscape with no pretence at historicity. The grove at *Neue Fahrt* can be an independent architectonic form with a view onto the historic city centre. The new cityscape is also to be welcomed from the point of view of monument conservation."

The Federal Building Minister, the Building Minister of Land Brandenburg, the Mayor and investors presented the result of the competition to the public at a press conference on 1 October 1997. It was unanimously felt that it was right to respond to the criticism made, not least by the World Heritage Committee, with a fundamentally new plan, despite the expense and delay incurred. The result is a feasible and forward-looking solution which is better for the City, for the Potsdam cultural landscape and thus for the World Heritage Site. The authorities involved and the investors have already begun to develop and gradually implement the draft plans.

5. An assessment of the repercussions of the various construction projects referred to in the Second Report on the value of the Potsdam cultural landscape

The repercussions on the Potsdam cultural landscape of the construction and planning projects referred to in the Second Report must be evaluated separately.

The new theatre (VI a) is still in the planning phase. The question of whether the criteria on compatibility with the World Heritage Site agreed with the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation have been met will have to be considered when a construction application is submitted. Only if the criteria are met will construction of the new theatre go ahead.

All the other projects lie outside the buffer zone around the World Heritage Site which is protected by monument conservation rules; however, they are of importance for the overall cultural landscape.

In the case of the villas on *Katharinenholzstrasse* (VI b) and the *Lennéstadt Bornstedter Feld* (VI c), more account could and should have been taken of the specific sensitive characteristics of the planning zone. The alterations made are distinct and have not enhanced the cultural landscape.

The planned "*Potsdamer Fenster*" (Potsdam Window) (VI e) and the Gewoba building (VI f, currently under construction) are projects which will improve the quality of a 1970s housing estate. The huge blot on the cultural landscape caused by the construction of this estate two decades ago cannot be erased. However, the Gewoba building in particular will vastly improve the quality of life for the estate's inhabitants.

Taken individually, some of these projects must be viewed critically in terms of their fitting into the cultural landscape and thus of their effect on parts of the World Heritage Site. Taken as a whole, however, they can be regarded as acceptable because they have not seriously impaired the overall quality of the Potsdam cultural landscape.

There is agreement between the City and the Land Government, however, that there must be no further interventions or alterations in the form of new projects which directly or indirectly have a negative effect on the cultural landscape.

6. An assessment of the repercussions of German Unity Transport Project No. 17 (development of the Havel)

Basically, the comments I made in section V of my Second Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site still hold true. On this matter the Alliance 90/Greens parliamentary group in the Bundestag asked the following question of the Federal Government:

"Does the Federal Government regard the formulation in the Second Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site in Potsdam, namely that damage in the Havel area is to be reduced in stages, as being in contradiction to the World Heritage Committee's demand that the World Heritage Site must not be negatively affected by German Unity Transport Project No. 17?"

The Federal Government responded on 31 July 1997 as follows:

"In the case of German Unity Transport Project No. 17, the plans relating to the area of the Potsdam cultural landscape were modified in coordination with Land Brandenburg and the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation, Berlin-Brandenburg in such a way that there will be no negative effects on or impairment of the World Heritage Sites."

The Federal and Land governments will therefore do whatever is necessary to ensure that this aim is fully achieved in all further measures to realize this project.

7. Summary

The Government of Land Brandenburg is of the opinion that this new report makes clear how meticulously the decisions regarding a more cautious approach to the surroundings of the World Heritage Site are being implemented. The Land Government, in cooperation with all other agencies involved, will ensure that this policy is consistently adhered to. It is grateful to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee for its interest in the conservation of the World Heritage Site and its surroundings, as this has had a positive influence on the protection and conservation of the Potsdam cultural landscape as a whole. The German authorities therefore feel themselves vindicated in the assessment made in the Second Report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site that the World Heritage Site "Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin" faced threats mainly arising from the special situation following the sweeping political changes of 1989/90. They are firmly convinced that they have shown that these threats have been recognized and countered.

Steffen Reiche
Minister for Science,
Research and Culture
of Land Brandenburg

Potsdam, 14 October 1997

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Anlage 2

Wettbewerb „Neues Quartier am Bahnhof“

