

# Journal of Urban Culture Research



Chulalongkorn  
University



Volume 20 Jan - Jun 2020  
Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts Chulalongkorn University  
ISSN 2228-8279 (Print) ISSN 2408-1213 (Online)

# *Journal of Urban Culture Research*

*Volume 20 Jan - Jun 2020*

*Published jointly*  
*by*  
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and Osaka City University, Japan

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ISSN 2228-8279 (Print) ISSN 2408-1213 (Online)

*JUCR is listed in the following citation databases*

Thomson Reuters Web of Science Core Collection, Emerging Sources Citation Index – ESCI

Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers – NSD

Thai-Journal Citation Index – TCI

Asean Citation Index – ACI

Scopus – Elsevier

*JUCR is archived at*

United States Library of Congress

Cornell University Library – John M. Echols Collection on Southeast Asia

*Publishing statistics*

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## Contact Information:

Journal of Urban Culture Research

Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts

Chulalongkorn University

Phayathai Road, Pathumwan

Bangkok, Thailand 10330

Voice/Fax: 662-218-4582

Email: [jucr.chula@yahoo.com](mailto:jucr.chula@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.cujucr.com](http://www.cujucr.com)



This volume is dedicated to the Covid-19 caregivers. Our cover is a collage of a street art images from Chulalongkorn University's "Chula Art Town" as one of the first projects by the Faculty of Fine & Applied Arts' Art For Community organization – ART4C (see [art4c.org](http://art4c.org)). High resolution images are online under Google's Arts & Culture platform, see (<https://tinyurl.com/chulaarttown>).

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# The Rebuilding of Memory Through Architecture: *Case Studies of Leipzig and Dresden*

Nataša Danilovic Hristic<sup>+</sup> & Nebojša Stefanovic<sup>++</sup> (Serbia)

## Abstract

The focus in the paper is on the physical reconstruction of the city core. This is especially important in areas that have suffered discontinuity in the development, as a result of the historical flow of events and war disaster. The specificity of the German cities is the combination of the cultural heritage of different periods that survived the war destruction, renewed structures, more or less according to the originals and reconstructed parts of the urban tissue in the style of the contemporary epochs and trends. One of the important conclusions is how we treat our urban heritage, no matter from which period dates. The rebuilding of the architectural content creates a testimony of duration, lifestyle, and adaptability. The beauty of the city and its identity is in visible layers set in unique dialogue.

**Keywords:** *Urban Renewal, Reconstruction, Protection, Heritage*

<sup>+</sup> Nataša Danilovic Hristic, Research Fellow, Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia, Serbia. voice: +381 64 1428330, +381 11 3207346 fax: +381 11 3370203 email: [natasadh@iaus.ac.rs](mailto:natasadh@iaus.ac.rs) website: [www.iaus.ac.rs](http://www.iaus.ac.rs).

<sup>++</sup> Nebojša Stefanovic, Research Fellow, Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia, Serbia. voice: +381 63 8144530, +381 11 3207309 fax: +381 11 3370203 email: [nebojsa@iaus.ac.rs](mailto:nebojsa@iaus.ac.rs) website: [www.iaus.ac.rs](http://www.iaus.ac.rs)

## Introduction

Contemporary principles of urban renewal and reconstruction highlight the necessity for a comprehensive approach when it comes to the treatment of cultural and historical heritage and architectural legacy. Terminologically speaking, urban regeneration (rehabilitation, revitalization, renovation, improvement, revival, Renaissance, remodeling, etc.), is expanding the concept of urban reconstruction. While the 'regeneration' refers to the integral process of overall prosperity, including the spheres of social and economic improvement and development, the term 'reconstruction' is more associated with a smaller or narrower segment and interventions on the physical structure (Roberts, et al 2016, Colquhoun, 1995). The aim of urban renewal is to upgrade the life quality in the settlement, following development strategies, through overcoming of indicative problems and thanks to the recognized potentials, with the introduction of new stimulating content, in a sustainable and resilient way. Measures and policies, as well as effects, can overflow to the area of:

- Economic development (to encourage local small and medium-sized enterprises and job creation, to redirect industrial production in the tertiary industry, to develop tourism, etc.),
- Social welfare (to obtain of social services standards, to express worries about sensitive groups, their visibility and inclusion),
- Ecological conditions for a healthy environment and a range of interventions in the urban structure (Wagner, et al, 1995).

Strategies of conservation and development basing on a clear perception of the existing potential and their rich use in the future. The principles of preserving heritage and reconstruction fit into the general concept of renewal, "completed transform of passive to the prospective way, abandoning the principle of resolving the fate of architectural heritage through static conservation – like a museum" (Danilovic Hristic, 2016). The active protection of the urban unit and dynamic rehabilitation involves integrating heritage into contemporary trends of life by emphasizing the identity of space. For this purpose, is possible to apply all available methods and measures:

- Protection of the original context and form that are valuable specimens of the urban network,
- Re-design of public space (Duque, 2001),
- Change of use or recycle of space and objects,
- Selective removals and replacements for devastated objects that are not worthy.

There are possible interventions such as a modern annex and interpolation of the new architecture in the ambient, by taking into account the context, relations, proportion, and scale, but also building a radically different form in the historic urban environment.

### Selection of Examples from Germany

Sensibility in the choice of topics and measures of urban reconstruction and re-generation is very important because it's not just questioning physical restoration of the urban settlements or individual structures, but also the relationship with the collective memory and experiencing the city, restoring the key details that lack and protection of valuable heritage (Ricart, 2015). The word "retention" which refers to the power of memory keeping and supplement of persistence, could be used too. It reflexes need, or at least ability, to extend lifetime and recollection, especially if it has a value in the sense of identity and continuity. The term came into the use as a description of the strategic goals in the field of urban reconstruction. Cities in Germany, have many layers of the urban and architectural heritage, but also gaps that arise as a cause of World War II (International Seminar, Bilbao and Gernika-Lumo). The eastern part of the country specifies also large-scale urban forms, resulting in the socialist post-war period of reconstruction (Larkham, 2018). Bearing in mind that according to the official list of cultural heritage around 75% locates on the territory of former East Germany, neglected for many years and deserves seriously funding.<sup>1</sup>

A comprehensive and integral approach in urban practice in Germany provides an overview of creative methods, retention which integrates the strategies of preservation and protection, allows the renovation and remodeling of historical districts (Tiesdell et al, 1996), residential zones and public urban spaces (Hewitt, 1994). It correspondences with the strategy that includes a neighborhood economic development, encouraging and empowering of local businesses and self-employment, particularly in the sector of the creative economy, improving the environment, animation, facilitation and education of inhabitants through various processes of participation (in the framework of the planning process, social inclusion, acceptance of cultural diversity, etc.). The starting point is examining the city from multiple aspects and analyzing its potentials and weaknesses, then improving all spheres of city life and finally, dedication to the detail, especially related to the evoking memory of the place (Stig Sørensen, et al, 2015). Of course, funding numerous projects in the field of urban reconstruction requires a serious budget, achieving it through co-financing of federal, State (regional) and local (city, municipality), but also through a private-public partnership, EU funds, and programs or from donations. Selected examples of urban renewal and reconstruction from two ex-East Germany towns, Leipzig and Dresden, provide insight visualization of applied models to accomplish following goals:

- Physical improvement of historic heritage,
- Recycling of brownfields,
- New use and treatment of public spaces,
- Interpolation of contemporary architecture in a historical context,
- Reconstruction in original form or the spirit of the ambiance,
- A change of land use or the redesign of the architecture and urban development concepts from the previous era (Danilovic Hristic, et al, 2019).

As a strategic aim, recognized and based on the historical conditions of development and the potentials of the city, Dresden highlighted a strong cultural identity, art, creativity, and tourist offer, while Leipzig's key reason focused on the trade and fair character of the city (Danilovic Hristic, et al, 2018).

### Methods of Interpolation and Recycling Used in Leipzig

Leipzig today has about 600,000 inhabitants (with the surroundings, about 1.1 million), and traditionally is known for its commercial character, as a significant educational center and the nucleus of the publishing industry. It has, following specific urban functions and land use, developed locations like vast trade show space and the huge railway station. The importance and primacy of the town have changed through the time, until the historical events that eventually were marked as a crucial role in the fall of communism and the crumbling of the Berlin's wall. Leipzig became a symbol of the unifying process of the two parts of Germany, thanks to the persistent protests and gatherings of citizens in front of the Church of St. Nicholas (Ascher Barnstone, 2004). According to implemented surveys and indicators of economic growth today, Leipzig is the most desirable city to live in Germany,<sup>2</sup> and won the popular nicknames "East German's boom city," "Hipercig" and "a better Berlin."

Insisting equally on the development of the commercial sector, which is in line with the tradition of the city, and public content in segments of culture and education gives results. Creative city scene (Zukin, 2004), a chance for the beginner's initiatives and the lifestyle of citizens, contributed a lot to the strategy "renew and continue what was started a long time ago" (Haase, et al, 2012). The last two and a half decades were dedicated to intense work on the restoration and protection of the cultural and historical heritage,<sup>3</sup> creating better housing conditions, urban compactness and recycling of unused or abandoned sites (Sawicka, 2017), the rebuilding of the cultural identity of the city, necessary changes in traffic networks and public transport, many infrastructure projects and shaping of public spaces (Neill, 2004), (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Leipzig: city in the process of renewal, pedestrian zone, 2010.

The following analysis of two examples, both in the historical center of the city,



which has elements of Renaissance and Baroque style combined with the structures created in the time of industrialization (the style in Germany known as *Gründerzeit*), will illustrate an approach to the urban renewal of the city, during the post-war period and after unification.

On one of the city's main squares Augustusplatz, where the concert hall Gwand-hause is situated and on the other side of the square is the Opera House with attractive fountains, at the beginning of the pedestrian zone in Street Grim-maische, skyscraper<sup>4</sup> of 36 floors, built in 1968-72. With its height of 150m, it is the highest building in the city, in form of an open book with a sharp peak, which belonged to the campus of the University, so the citizens called it "wisdom teeth" (*Weisheitszahn*). The concept was to commemorate and highlight the center of the urban environment by a dominant building. Later the State Government of Saxony sold the structure to the investment bank, as an office building and later in the period 1999-2002 in reconstruction the aluminum façade replaced by grey granite, and on the top of the roof opened the observation deck. The University of Leipzig, founded at the beginning of the 15th century, significantly contributed to the status of the city and the development of the publishing industry, with special reference to formatting the disciplines such as law and judiciary. Right next to the skyscrapers was the site of the Church of St. Paul, demolished in 1968, during the Communist regime, to make room for the new building of the University. After reunion of Germany and long debate, a compromise was found to build a mainly secular and in the smaller part the sacral buildings (segmented for religious use), named 'Paulinum,' with an appearance that associates to the architecture of the former temple, but is completely modern in its expression.<sup>5</sup> The University building was officially opened in 2017 and immediately became a new symbol of the city (Fig. 2). This is an example of how tradition and memory of the place are important and how contemporaries should regard the layers of heritage and decisions for earlier periods.



Fig. 2. Leipzig: Augustusplatz, Paulinum 2010-2017 (source: [www.campus-augustusplatz.de](http://www.campus-augustusplatz.de)).

Another example is the railway station, which is dating from 1915, with 24 tracks, functioning as a center for the intercity and international trains, serving as connection with the airport and part of the urban transport system. The station building itself, in addition to its basic functionality, orients towards the needs of all passengers and has a shopping mall on multiple floors. The building, and even more the rail tracks, occupy a huge space in the center of the city. Back in the late 19th century, professionals observed the need to put railway traffic underground and made plans to build a tunnel, but suspended the works for several times, due to historical events, so realization finally happened in 2013, by constructing of two underground platforms. The tunnel took over a part of the traffic, and through the process of reconstruction, a phase by phase, the plan is to reduce urban land occupied by tracks. This is a major investment in the infrastructure project, but with a higher goal. At the same time, in 2011, the city announced an international competition for urban renewal, reconstruction and landscape design of 40 hectares of ex rail land.<sup>6</sup> Urban recycling resulted in a new open public space, park, which lacked in central city zone and a supplement to the urban matrix with the new residential buildings (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Railway Station Leipzig Hauptbahnhof (top left, source: [www.bahnhof.de/bahnhof-de/Leipzig](http://www.bahnhof.de/bahnhof-de/Leipzig)), the first prize for recycling urban land of the railway station (right, bottom left; source: [www.studiowessendorf.de/wessendorf/Stadtraum\\_Bayerischer\\_Bahnhof](http://www.studiowessendorf.de/wessendorf/Stadtraum_Bayerischer_Bahnhof)).

### Restoration and Reconstruction of Historical and Post-war Parts of Dresden

In early 20th century Dresden, the capital of Saxony, with a half of million inhabitants, was the fourth largest city in Germany,<sup>7</sup> known and recognized as a center of musical culture, with a strong art scene, particularly expressionist's painting movement and a large number of theater performances.<sup>8</sup> With the uprising of The National Socialist German Workers' Party (commonly called the Nazi Party) to the power, the situation changed, in terms of the restrictions of all kinds of freedom.

The most tragic event was the demolition of Semper synagogue on November 9th, 1939. During the war, the city was spared of major destruction, until the end of the war, when in period February 13-15th, 1944, suffered the bombing of British and American air forces, which killed almost the half of population, destroyed a significant cultural heritage as well as bridges on the river Elba (Beganz, 2007). By signing the capitulation on May 8th, 1945, the Soviet Army entered the city and quickly begun with works on clearing up the ruins, establishing the basic infrastructure necessary for the city life (running water, gas for heating), restoring the tram traffic, then reconstruction of some structures in the center of the city. Shortly they rebuilt the theater that started to operate and reopened the University (Diefendorf, 2015). On October 7th, 1949, with foundation of German Democratic Republic (GDR), began a new era in the urban renovation and partial conservation of the historical heritage of the city core (Pendlebury, 2009), marked with the reconstruction of the individual historical buildings<sup>9</sup> and the construction of more facilities in an identifiable style of that era and ideology.<sup>10</sup> Other structures were mostly rehabilitated and left in "half-demolished" condition, declarative as a reminder of the horrors of war and suffering, but objectively because of lack of funds to continue the process of renewal (Fig. 4). In particular, from some half-ruined buildings grew the weeds, and some urban areas, cleaned of the ruins, served for the parking of vehicles, which is why the feeling of complete and infinitely destruction used to overcome the citizens and visitors (Danilovic Hristic, et al, 2019). The fall of the Berlin's Wall, on November 9th, 1989 and the act of unification of the two German states in October 3rd, 1990, created the conditions for the resumption of intense urban regeneration and renewal of the historical core of Dresden (Engel, Herm, 2011, Macdonald, 2013). Although after the unification the city began losing residents (Camprag, 2018), who were moving to the western part of the country, due to the better conditions of life and work and by the strategy for development which in the forefront put the cultural identity, tourism potential, the sector of university education and developing of the industry of modern information technology, Dresden became again a desirable place to live.

Today, according to the records of a city service for the protection and preservation, there are about 13,000 individual cultural and historical monuments and eight urban areas under the regime of protection. Unfortunately, the decision in 2009, to build a bridge with four traffic lanes on the river Elbe, in the protected zone, regardless of its functional justification, has led to the deletion from the list of World cultural heritage UNESCO of the Elbe Valley in Dresden, 'the significant cultural landscape with a silhouette from the 18th and 19th century, about 18 km in length' (Waldschlößchenbrücke bridge and World Heritage status, 2006). In a series of projects in the central city area, there are three significant designs that deserve presenting, in the field of complete reconstruction of the original building, urban renewal by contemporary architecture but the manner of fitting-in with the historic environment and redesign of structures and public spaces of the post-war period (Fig. 5).



Figure 4. Dresden: the view of the center after the destruction in World War II in 1945 (left, source: [www.britannica.com/event/bombing-of-Dresden](http://www.britannica.com/event/bombing-of-Dresden)), removal of ruins, 1953 (center, source: [www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschlandarchiv](http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschlandarchiv)), the building of the Academy of fine arts in overgrown weeds, recorded 1991 (right).

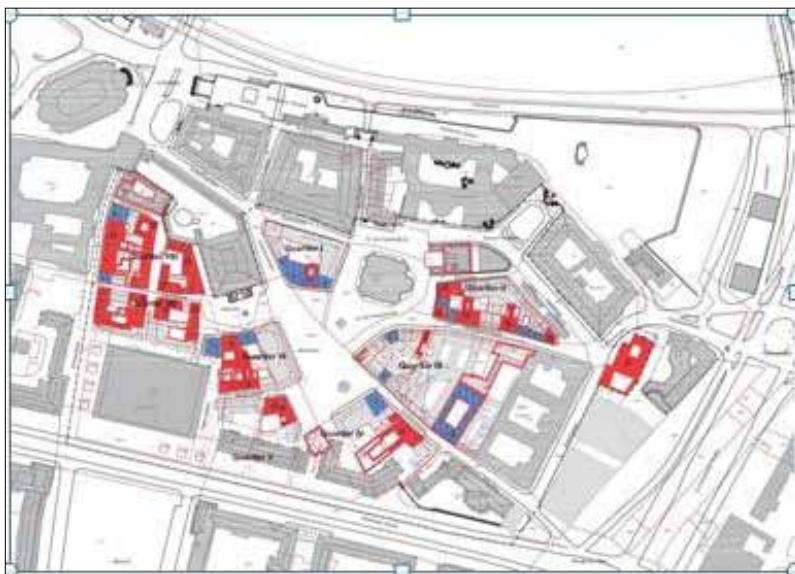


Figure 5. Dresden: urban plan for the reconstruction of the city center with sites of importance (source: [www.dresden.de/en/05/Monument-Preservation](http://www.dresden.de/en/05/Monument-Preservation)).

The decision to complete the reconstruction of the symbolic and iconic Church of our Lady, designed by architect George Bähr, in Neumarkt square was made in 1992, based on the initiative of citizens, after numerous public debates and approval of the project by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony. Construction started in 1994 and initially, planned to be completed by 2006, on the celebration of the jubilee of the city. But the process ran faster than planned, primarily due to funding of 125 million Euros, collected primarily from donations. After 60 years (the opening ceremony was held on October 30th, 2005), ‘the city regained its characteristic silhouette with the dome of the Church’ (Hobson, 2004; Isaacs, 1998), (Fig. 6). For the remains of the Church, ‘maintained’ for decades by the competent services of protection, it took 18 months to clear the piles of rubble of 13m in height, to observe and catalog every block of stone from 22,000 m<sup>3</sup>. Around 40% of the original material had been used again, incorporated into the walls of

the restored church along with necessary remodeling and fitting in. As a result, the difference in color is visible on the façades, which is also a unique testimony to history. Then followed an intense planning process to encompass the site of the Church and the overall appearance of the square. This was the first phase in the reconstruction of the square, that started the same year and consistently implemented block by block, building by building in the surrounding of the square, using interpolation of modern architecture where it was possible, but respecting the horizontal and vertical regulations, the subdivision of parcels and façade rhythm.



Figure 6. Dresden: Church of our Lady, post war situation (top left, source: <https://lehmstedt.de>) and reconstructed church and square, 2009 (right and bottom).

Reconstruction of a destroyed environment of Altmarkt square, the second example, began in 1953 and in the last decade, it was completed by the construction of the structures on the outskirts of the square (Fig. 7). Space is dominated by a monolithic, socialist and modernist manner, the building of Culture Center on the Northside and rebuilt Tower of the Church of St. Cross from the Southwest side. The building situated On the Westside has a long series of the colonnade. At the first sight, it is hard to guess the period of erection or purposes, but primarily by its volume, material of façades and using of style, it blends with the surroundings.<sup>11</sup> The building was the result of a 1993 architectural design contest for a re-interpretation of former urban commercial milieu, combined with housing, hotel, and office space. Shopping Center ‘Gallery’ is situated within the block, connected with passages. The demolition of the administration building of the chemical company,<sup>12</sup> in 2009, created the opportunity to extend the complex from 3 to a total of 5 urban blocks, achieved in 2011, so now the arrangement has about 44,000

m<sup>2</sup> on 2.5 hectares of surface. Altmarkt square now has a final form, resembles the former one, as much as it is possible, by its architectural style, regulation, and land use.



Figure 7. Dresden: Altmarkt square, the former appearance, before II WW, (top left, source: <https://lehmstedt.de>) and its present form with facade of the Trade Center Gallery, 2009 (right and bottom).

The third example is an intervention in the Prager Street, that connects the main railway station and Altmarkt square. Since its inception in the middle of the 19th century, during the expansion of the city, it was an important commercial center and business street, with the great number of significant and exclusive buildings. After the bombing and massive destruction, the area has been completely left in the ruins and later cleared of. In 1962, city government launched the urban and architectural competition, when different ideas appeared, in the range from the faithful reconstruction of the destroyed, to the completely new forms of the open urban block, closer to the model Le Corbusier than socialist realism (Crowley, et al, 2002). The first prize went to the modernist vision, which consisted of street regulation about 80m wide, on the East side fringed by a continual residential building around 250m length, with G+12 floors, and on the Westside, perpendicularly on the course of the street, there were three skyscrapers as hotels,<sup>13</sup> with lower connection G+2 between them, which had a commercial content. The housing unit is the second in length structure built in Germany (called “Prague line”). Another characteristic of this street is its transition in the pedestrian zone in 1972, one of the first in Germany, modeled according to Lijnbaan in Rotterdam and with the character that is kept until today (Engel, 2014). Located in the northern part of the street is visually caching structure of the movie theater and lecture hall ‘Rundkino,’ in the form of a rotunda with a diameter of 50m and a height of 20m, one of the most imposing architectural structures in the post-war modernism in Dres-

den.<sup>14</sup> The public space between the buildings also included routes of movement, rest areas, fountains, many contemporary art sculptures (Danilovic Hristic, et al. 2012) and well-kept green “pockets.”<sup>15</sup>

After the flooding of river Elba in 2002, it was need to pave again public space and update the green areas. Reconstruction of the residential building started in 2007, and the changes were more in the interior, so residential units increased slightly and the number of flats reduced. The garage was built in the underground a new Ufa Cinema Center,<sup>16</sup> so-called “Crystal Palace”. Reconstruction was carried out in phases and very carefully, in order to modernize and enrich space, but to preserve the spirit of the times when developed. Besides, it managed to retain well a sense of the public space and the physical structure and all essential elements of the original urban plan and architectural solutions (Wölfle, et al, 2006, Nitzschke, et al, 2014). Of course, like any large project, this had controversy too, regarding the department store ‘Centrum’ from 1976/78, that had been characterized by aluminum facades. The city demolished facility in 2006, despite the opposition from the part of the professionals and public, who considered it as worth representative of the socialist period in the architecture. It was planned to be replaced with a new shopping center ‘Centrum Gallery’ opened in 2010. But, architect Peter Kulka still had a relationship with a demolished department store, recurring characteristic façade elements in the shape of the honeycombs. The above-mentioned example illustrates realistic and in some parts even very sensitive and sentimental relationship to one historical period and the architecture of that time, noting essential attributes and qualities and carefully doing an upgrade and modernization. (Wise, 1998), (Fig. 8).



Figure 8. Dresden: Prager Street, model of the awarded design 1962 (top, left, source: [https://lehmsstedt.de/prager\\_strasse.htm](https://lehmsstedt.de/prager_strasse.htm)), Rundkino (below, left), appearance of the Prague street, 2009 (center and right).

### Conclusion

One of the main conclusions, from the case studies, is how we treat urban and architectural heritage, no matter from which period dates. Although today we have more respect for the buildings from the further historical times, we must

not forget that content and the beauty of the city is composed of visible layers of different periods, each set in the dialogue, testifying about identity, duration, lifestyle, and adaptability. The identity and image of the place depend directly on stratification and approach in adding new and contemporary elements, choice of strategy, to highlight the diversity or use of the principle of inclusion. An attitude towards certain epochs, determined and ideologically oriented toward a certain style, also has to be relevant, critically correct, because they are still a part of the heritage and history of the city, like an example of Dresden's Prager Street. Of course, any intervention in the urban tissue is subject to the approval and consensus of professionals, within various aspects: architects, town planners, protection of heritage, landscape architects, engineers of transportation and infrastructure. Even when they work in the same team they do not necessarily have the same attitudes about what are priorities or values, but can reach a consensus or compromise with extraordinary commitment. That reflex the example of the brown-field location of railway tracks in Leipzig. Greater transparency and openness for comments and ideas that come from the public is also crucial for the formation of the final decision, because citizens sometimes have a special sensitivity for the city, based on memory and personal experience of space, like in case of Dresden's Church of our Lady. This is especially important when reconstructive procedures are introduced in the historical areas, where is the need to harmonize the conditions of protection and conservation with the needs of modern life, to what point analyzed examples of Leipzig's building 'Paulinum' or Dresden's Altmarkt square.

### Endnotes

- 1 For the protection of monuments in 2016, in the eastern part of the country has been designated around 65 million Euros, and in the western part about 37, while for urban reconstruction allocates equally over 98 million €.
- 2 GfK Marketing, <http://www.gfk.com>.
- 3 Unlike Dresden, although bombed, Leipzig lost less in terms of heritage, more segmental than overall of the central zone, because significant industrial structures on the outskirts were more targeted.
- 4 Architect Hermann Henselmann.
- 5 Architect Erick van Egeraat.
- 6 First prize won by "Jörg Wessendorf Architekt", Landschaftsarchitektur-"Atelier Loidl."
- 7 After Berlin, Hamburg and Munich.
- 8 Dresden had 8000 seats in theatres, the highest number in Germany.
- 9 Johanneum, the former royal stables, XVI century, today the Museum of transportation (reconstructed in 1950-1960), the Parliament building and Court (Oberlandesgericht) from the 18th century, the Academy of fine arts, Albertinum, Landhaus, Semper Opera House.



- 10 Buildings on the Altmarkt square 1953-1958, reconstruction of Prager Straße 1960, the Palace of culture in 1969, between two square, old and new market (Altmarkt, Neumarkt), an inadequate extension of Police Department building in 1979, removed in 2005.
- 11 Architects: Manfred Schomers and Rainer Schürmann.
- 12 Lindehaus 1966/68.
- 13 Architects of hotel 1968/69: Kurt Haller, Manfred Arlt and Karl-Heinz Schulze.
- 14 Architects 1969-1972: Manfred Fasold and Winfried Sziegleit, in collaboration with Gerhard Landgraf, Waltraud Heischkel and Theo Wagenführ.
- 15 The authors of the design and artistic elements: Leoni Wirth, Vinzenz Wanitschke (fountain), Dieter Graupner (artistic intervention on the walls, coating of ceramics), Josef Pietsch, Johannes Peschel, Wilhelm Landgraf, Karl Schönherr, Siegfried Schreiber and Constantine Meunier (sculptures in space).
- 16 Architectural office COOP HIMMELB(L)AU Wolf D. Prix, Helmut Swiczinsky + Partner. Design won the competition in 1993, and structure was implemented in 1998. German prize for architecture in 1999. [www.coop-himmelblau.at/architecture/projects/ufa-cinema-center](http://www.coop-himmelblau.at/architecture/projects/ufa-cinema-center).

### Acknowledgments

All illustrations in the text, except those that are specifically listed with sources, are the authors' and occurred in the period of 1991-2009/2010. The work was created as part of the research in the Scientific Projects TR 36035 and TR 36036.

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