Restoring Berlin’s Unter den Linden: ideology, world view, place and space

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Abstract

Berlin’s Unter den Linden, a primary thoroughfare and ensemble of historic architecture and nationally significant cultural institutions, lay in ruins at the close of the Second World War. The buildings, public spaces, and public art forming this street bore testimony to diverse facets of German history, presenting a range of semantic issues to those interested in their future. Differences in key groups’ world view resulted in different interpretations of these spaces, thus different approaches to policy development with regard to their future. Initially, the German cultural elite was determined to restore significant architecture, asserting architectural value while avoiding mention of ‘Prussian’ or ‘German’ identity. However, the German communist leadership viewed these same structures as testimony to ‘Prussian–German militarism’ and sought their effacement. The Soviet Military Administration remained largely indifferent to all but spatial value until 1947, when they began to use architecture to represent the Soviet Union. Finally, with the founding of the German Democratic Republic and import of Soviet ‘socialist-realist’ urban theory, architecture considered progressive was restored as national cultural heritage, although sites with considerable ‘militaristic’ content prompted more debate over their future.

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Introduction

From the standpoint of historical geography, Berlin’s Unter den Linden is one of the most interesting and important boulevards in the history of the twentieth-century urban design.
Emerging as a focal point for the residential expansion of Berlin in the seventeenth century, transformed into a via triumphalis in the early nineteenth century, serving as a regal, imperial thoroughfare for the Kaisers in the before the First World War, and co-opted by the Nazis for grand ceremonies in the 1930s, Unter den Linden lay in ruins at the end of the Second World War. From then until the end of the century, Unter den Linden became a different sort of battleground, one involving competing ideologies and visions of the socialist and capitalist city. In the process, the boulevard’s collection of premiere cultural establishments and historically significant architecture were continually reinterpreted and redefined to meet new Cold War exigencies. Here I examine the social, political and cultural dimensions of the process leading to this restoration, revealing an interesting web of changing relations, particularly in the critical period of communist rule in the GDR. Different social groups, including the Soviet Military Administration (SMAD), German communists, and the German cultural elite (architects, planners, art historians) displayed distinct approaches to the reconstruction of the street based on their world view and political ideology, beliefs about architecture and urban space, and interpretations of the immediate political context. These factors changed over time for the SMAD and German communists, resulting in sweeping changes in the treatment of the urban environment. Further variation occurred as sites with different histories and identities were responded to with considerably different approaches. Planning under communist regimes during the Cold War had a tremendous effect on the morphology and character of central and eastern European cities yet, until recently, the dynamics of communist planning have received scant attention.

Cultural geographers have become increasingly interested in the interpretation of urban landscapes and the politics of memory, especially as related to national identity, and more recently, political ideology. Research on German national identity, landscapes, and commemoration has focused primarily on three issues: their use by Nazis as political propaganda, their importance to Holocaust remembrance, and their role in political competition between East and West during the Cold War. A number of recent monographs by German architects, planners, historians and art historians have drawn from formerly inaccessible East German archives to shed new light on the practice of planning and architecture in Berlin during the Cold War. Some of this work has included significant examinations of their political and/or commemorative dimensions, yet most has focused on either one individual building or city building more generally. Rudy Koshar’s *Germany’s Transient Pasts* comprehensively examines the relationship of historic preservation to cultural politics and changing definitions of nation in Germany. This study examines similar issues, while introducing a distinctly geographical perspective through an additional level of analysis investigating the interplay between the spatial qualities and place-based meanings of several sites on one street. Examining the statements and actions of the SMAD, German communist officials, and the German cultural elite towards key historic structures on Unter den Linden elucidates how their ideological values, understanding of nation and heritage, beliefs about the relationship between society and space, and perceptions of political context affected decision-making regarding these places, and how complex place-based meaning can complicate the interpretive process.

The political transformation of Berlin and Germany during these years was dramatic, precipitating clear effects on interpretations of the urban landscape. In May 1945, Berlin was divided into four sectors, each governed by one of the four victorious powers. Unter den Linden and the historic core of the city lay in the Soviet Sector with the boundary to the British Sector passing...
just west of the Brandenburg Gate. The Communist Party of Germany (KPD, later SED) strove to appear independent of the Soviet system, calling for an ‘anti-fascist, democratic regime’. East–West tension began its steady climb in late 1946 and increased significantly with the approval of the Marshall Plan and the Soviet veto of anti-communist Ernst Reuter’s (Social Democratic Party of Germany [SPD]) election as Mayor of Berlin in June 1947. Within months, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) changed its self-depiction from participant in the ‘anti-fascist front’ to leader of the ‘battle for German unity’ — against the Western forces. The failure of the London Conference in December 1947 and the onset of the Blockade of Berlin in June 1948 all but sealed the fate of the city. Finally, separate East and West Berlin governments emerged in late 1948 and the GDR was founded on 7 October 1949.

The physical reconstruction of the city ran parallel to this political reconstruction. At war’s end, Unter den Linden’s architecture was severely damaged and heaps of rubble blocked the street. Berlin’s planners and historic preservationists struggled with limited success to secure funding for provisional repairs to secure historic buildings against weather damage and looting. The SMAD initially displayed little interest in architectural value, but sought to bring buildings spatially suitable for activities serving political purposes into a usable state. Undertaking provisional repairs and renovations for utilitarian purposes rather than restoring architectural integrity, the SMAD was clearly not applying a socialist-realist perspective. In Summer 1947, the Soviets began taking an interest in architectural value in select cases, typically involving self-representation. Yet during this same period, German communist policy-making ensured the neglect and further decay of much national architectural heritage associated with the Prussian–German monarchy and military, because they viewed buildings as expressions of their patrons, and held the Prussian monarchy to be the font of German militarism.

The founding of the East German State enabled the restoration of Unter den Linden’s historic structures and spaces by establishing a political–economic framework capable of large-scale reconstruction and empowering a government interested in city building as a political tool; the restoration and accompanying rhetoric was intended to show the strength of the new economic and political system. Alternatively, these historic buildings could have been demolished in favor of new structures, and many German communists would have applauded. The adoption of Soviet Marxist–Leninist ideology and its accompanying theory and method of art, socialist realism, proved essential to its restoration, although it failed to save the Berlin Palace (Berliner Stadtschloss). In that case, Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the SED, imposed his personal preferences with disregard for the implications of socialist-realist theory and for the protest of cultural elites in East and West Germany, as well as the pleas of his own advisors.

Socialist realism presented a comprehensive theory of the relationship between art, architecture, urban design and society. It held architecture to be both a functional object and an art form. As an art form, it is a reflection of society, which conversely, could shape society, making it inherently political. Its political contribution would occur within a nation-state, which Marxist–Leninism viewed as the necessary vehicle for social progress in the capitalist and socialist eras. Thus, progressive art must appeal to national consciousness and is built on national traditions. As all nations contained both progressive and reactionary traditions, architectural styles could be progressive, i.e. classicism, or regressive, i.e. late nineteenth century eclecticism. Progressive architecture could be sponsored by the Prussian monarchy, as its design and production by the premier German architects and laborers made it national cultural heritage. Historic buildings
considered progressive were to be preserved as ‘living witnesses to these traditions from which everyone learns’, and would be given a content appropriate to the new society. Architecture was viewed dialectically as a unity of form and content. Content, in turn, was held to be a unity of theme, which is similar to function or pragmatic purpose, and idea, an expression of societal values or ideals. Existing buildings were to maintain a continuity of theme, which would be adapted to express the societal ideas of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The introduction of socialist realism was orchestrated by Lothar Bolz, long-time Moscow-exile and director of the GDR’s Ministry of Building, with the approval of Walter Ulbricht. Socialist realism was politically opportune, as it provided a theoretical frame for combining the practice of architectural and urban design with an extant nationalist discourse. Bolz seized upon this connection, and was the leading proponent in instrumentalizing the reconstruction of Berlin as propaganda in the SED’s ‘Battle for German Unity’, calling for its use as a ‘lever to activate the consciousness of the entire population of Germany’.

Applying socialist realism, the East German political and cultural elite decided that state-run parades would proceed along Unter den Linden and culminate in the Lustgarten, which was to be expanded into a much larger ‘Marx-Engels Square’ through the demolition of the Berlin Palace. As a backdrop for these parades, Unter den Linden’s historic buildings would associate the new state with German national culture, and the Plan des Neuaufbaus von Berlin, approved by the Politburo on 15 August 1950, designated numerous buildings on Unter den Linden for restoration. Soon thereafter, the Berlin Planning Commission (PkB) began searching for new uses for these structures, thus the symbolic value of their architecture as national cultural heritage was primary, whereas their spatial capacity and potential future function was secondary.

SMAD representatives reviewed the new plans for Berlin in October 1950, and indicated that construction needed to be accelerated on Unter den Linden, especially in the area visible from the sector border. Although Bolz’s primary interest was the reconstruction of Marx-Engels Square (area of former Lustgarten and Berlin Palace), he acknowledged the political necessity of following this advice. He proposed a design competition for Unter den Linden open to all Germans, East and West, and received Ulbricht’s approval. Bolz informed East Berlin’s Mayor, Friedrich Ebert, that a competition announcement was required, emphasizing the need to take advantage of its propagandistic value. In January 1951, the competition area was expanded to include the Brandenburg Gate and the Lustgarten.

A complete draft for a competition ‘Central Axis Berlin’ lay on Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl’s desk in August 1951. Unter den Linden was divided into three sections, from west to east: (A) Pariser Platz to Wilhelmstrasse; (B) Wilhelmstrasse to Charlottenstrasse; (C) Charlottenstrasse to the former Palace Bridge (the eastern end). Section A would include embassies, hotels and administrative offices and few existing structures were to be preserved; the Brandenburg Gate was to be restored, while Pariser Platz was to maintain an enclosed character. Section B would contain buildings for political organizations and ‘people’s own’ economic organizations, upscale restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, etc. In Section C, which contained many of the oldest historic structures, all existing buildings were to be preserved.

The competition was never held as resources and attention soon shifted to the massive Stalinallee development, as the National Building Program (National Aufbauprogram) focused on constructing housing for workers on Germany’s first ‘socialist’ street. However, restoration projects
were regularly undertaken on Unter den Linden throughout the life of the GDR, often focusing on one key structure with considerable press attention.

**Bridle path — ‘via triumphalis’ — urban center**

Unter den Linden evidences a centuries-long layering of Prussian—German architectural history originating in 1647, when the bridle path leading from the western edge of the medieval city was built into a representative boulevard lined with six rows of trees. Adjoining secondary streets were laid out in a grid, typical of late seventeenth-century Renaissance urban design, and began to fill in with residential development. 24

Early in the eighteenth century the Arsenal (Zeughaus) and Crown Prince’s Palace (Kronprinzenpalais) were constructed on eastern Unter den Linden (Fig. 1). Later that century, the city’s medieval defensive wall was demolished and a wall encompassing the new portions of the city was constructed as a customs barrier. The ‘Quarre’ (Pariser Platz) was built at the western end of Unter den Linden, and in 1791 the Brandenburg Gate was constructed. At the eastern end of the street, space opened by the removal of the old city walls was used to construct the ‘Forum Fridericianum’, which included the State Opera, Hedwig’s Cathedral, and Royal Library (Kommode). Additional projects included a princely palace to the west of the Arsenal (now Humboldt University), and minor representative structures (Fig. 2). 25

Following the successful War of Liberation in 1815, the monarchy initiated a new round of construction transforming Unter den Linden into a ‘via triumphalis’. 26 The wooden bridge connecting Unter den Linden to Spree Island was replaced by the representative Palace Bridge, including numerous classical sculptures. The Schinkel-designed Neue Wache (New Guardhouse) replaced an older non-representative guardhouse, and was flanked by statues of victorious Prussian generals. The construction of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Palais completed the basic form of the ensemble on eastern Unter den Linden. Nearby, the Singakademie was completed and the facade of

the Crown Prince’s Palace was built to its present form. In 1853, a height limit of four stories was
established for new construction on Unter den Linden, to help maintain its architectural
integrity.27

The founding of the Empire in 1870 brought a construction boom to Berlin, adding commercial
and industrial buildings of increased scale and eclectic architecture, primarily to the western and
middle sections of Unter den Linden (from 1897, five stories were permitted). Variations among
classical buildings had been quite minor in comparison to those rendered by this large-scale, his-
toricist architecture, attributed to an increased bourgeoisie desire for self-representation. On east-
er Unter den Linden, the State Library was inserted in an architecturally appropriate manner.28

There was little new construction during the Weimar Republic and Nazi Era. In the 1920s, the
Dresdner Bank, lining the rear of Forum Friedericianum (communist-era August-Bebel Square,
now Opera Square) added two additional stories under protest from architects, planners and
art historians.29 The following sections analyze the processes leading to the reconstruction of
key historic structures on Unter den Linden.

State Opera

The treatment of the State Opera (Staatsoper) illustrates early Soviet interest in the spatial rather
than architectural value, and the radical impact of socialist realism on the preservation of national
architectural heritage after the founding of the GDR (Fig. 3). The State Opera was constructed be-
tween 1741 and 1743 in the classical style. During the war, the interior of the State Opera was
heavily damaged, the exterior less so. Viewed from a socialist-realist perspective, the building represents the best of Germany’s progressive traditions in both form and content.

In Summer 1945, at the behest of the SMAD, the Berlin Magistrat (Administrative branch of municipal government dominated by the Communist Party) began renovating the State Opera and several other theaters to facilitate the restoration of theater activity in order to reeducate the German population by restoring humanistic national traditions and to present a positive image of the Soviet Union. German and Soviet classics, as well as works banned by the Nazis would be presented. Most of the buildings were of modest architectural and historic value, and were chosen for their spatial capacity; there is no indication that the State Opera was thought of any differently.

After the founding of the GDR and the adoption of the Plan des Neuaufbaus von Berlin, which called for the full restoration of the State Opera, the PkB developed a program to restore the building to its original form and function as a conservatory and obtained approval from the Ministry of Building. In June 1951, in the presence of ‘famous German composer Erich Kleiber’, the government decreed that the building be reconstructed as an opera with extensive consideration for the original architecture. A committee was formed to collect and examine the original plans, and a second group under architect Richard Paulick carried out the design work. The project was estimated at a cost of DM 21 million, far more than granted to any project prior to the state founding. Paulick described the restoration as ‘a culture-building [process, which] documents most effectively our will to peace, our battle for peace, the will to preserve and care for our cultural heritage, in order to fill it with a new content and develop it further in new buildings’.

According to socialist realism, both the form and the content of the State Opera were models of ‘progressive’ architecture, thus it was chosen as a showpiece of preservation. Although opera was considered a progressive cultural tradition, it began as a function of courtly salons, thus spaces housing opera were usually linked with the palace. Here it was located in a free-standing building adjoining the Forum Friedericanium, which was taken as an expression of a struggle, ‘to free
[opera] from the servile role to which absolutist monarchy had belittled it'. The building’s architecture was viewed as a ‘breakthrough to early classicism’, preceding progressive changes in the opera itself, which would reveal, ‘the opposition between the ascendant bourgeois against the dissipate life of the absolutist princes’. Having simultaneously shown a ‘progressive content and a new form’, it was an ideal choice for the new state’s seminal restoration project.

**Singakademie and Palais am Festungsgraben**

In contrast to the State Opera, the restoration of the Singakademie and adjoining Palais am Festungsgraben, marked the commencement of Soviet interest in Berlin’s architecture for purposes of self-representation, and the selective application of socialist realism as part of a cultural—political response to increased East—West tensions (Fig. 4). The Singakademie, a small concert hall, was constructed in the neo-classical style between 1824 and 1826 for Berlin’s choral society, a bourgeoisie alternative to the courtly opera. Thus, from a socialist-realist perspective this building, like the State Opera, represented a progressive tradition both in terms of its form and content.

The Singakademie was obliterated to near its foundations during the war, while the Palais am Festungsgraben escaped with moderate damage. In 1947, the SMAD commandeered and reconstructed both buildings, displaying an interest in Prussian—German heritage at a time when many German communists preferred its effacement. This new ‘House of Soviet Cultures’ opened

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*Fig. 4. The former Singakademie was reconstructed as the theater portion of the House of Soviet Cultures in 1947. Later renamed Maxim-Gorki-Theater, the building still bears this name today. Photograph by author, Autumn 1999.*
a theater in May 1947, proclaiming it an ‘act of great significance for our cultural life and peaceful understanding between peoples’. The building’s connection with German classical heritage was indicated as a basis for its present use, which, according to one SMAD representative, included introducing the population of Berlin to the cultural life of the Soviet Union thereby enabling them to receive a ‘truthful image of the country’. Soviet and German theater performances and art exhibitions would demonstrate their common classical heritage.

In June 1947, ‘The Society for the Study of Soviet Culture’ (renamed ‘Society for German-Soviet Friendship’ in 1949) was established and given control of the building. After the founding of the GDR, control of the House of Soviet Culture was transferred to the new German state, as ‘proof of the generosity of the Soviet Union and its trust in strengthened German democracy’. The state seal was added to the Tympanum on the facade of the theater building, demonstrating the new state’s close association with the Soviet Union and respect for Soviet Culture.

In socialist-realist terms, the new use represented a continuity of theme as a venue for classical culture, while its societal idea was shifted to emphasize Soviet Culture, to rectify popular bias. Since May 1945, Soviet cultural politics had been concerned with transforming the German populace’s negative image of the Soviet Union. This extension of Soviet interest to representative architecture was likely a response to increased East–West tension in the summer of 1947, as the hardening of sectoral boundaries provided greater incentive for long-term investment in cultural politics.

Neue Wache

Although subject to the same ideological and political forces as the previous cases, the Neue Wache’s particular place-based and spatial qualities resulted in a considerably different path to reconstruction and rectification. The Neue Wache was designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel and is considered one of the most significant nineteenth-century classical buildings in Germany (Fig. 5). Despite the efforts of planners and preservationists to restore the Neue Wache, it was left to decay during the early post-war years, ignored by the SMAD because it lacked spatial value and intentionally neglected by the Magistrat because it was associated with Prussian–German militarism. This later characteristic resulted in extensive debate over its restoration and especially its reuse after the founding of the GDR when other historic structures faced little controversy.

Early history

The Neue Wache, a new royal guardhouse, was built between 1816 and 1818, following victory over Napoleon in the War of Liberation. The upgraded status of militarism in Prussian society was evident in its design. The basic form synthesized elements of a Roman castrum, four corner-towers and an interior courtyard, with a Greek temple, the entrance portico in the Doric order. Winged goddesses of victory appeared on the portico’s entablature, Victoria as a conquering hero graced the tympanum, and statues of Prussian Generals Scharnhorst and Bülow flanked the structure. Additional militaristic expression included a display of cannons looted by the Prussian army in the surrounding chestnut grove (expanded after the Franco-German war of 1870/1871) and the changing of the guard in front of the building, a popular attraction for Berliners.
With the end of the German monarchy in 1918, the Neue Wache lost its function and various new uses were considered. In 1930, the Prussian government decided that the New Wache would be renovated as a national memorial for the fallen veterans of the First World War, citing the significance of its role as a monument to the War of Liberation. A design competition was held calling for a simple, solemn design appropriate to the graveness of the time. Heinrich Tessenow’s winning entry was implemented with minor changes. Interior partitions were removed to create a single room focused on a ‘large, dark, sarcophagus-like stone’ bearing a gold and platinum plated oak wreath. This ‘Gedächtnisstätte für die Gefallenen des Weltkrieges’ (Memorial for the fallen of the World War) was dedicated on 2 June 1931. Once in power, the Nazis designated the memorial, ‘Ehrenmal für die Gefallenen des Weltkrieges’, marking a shift in emphasis from quiet remembrance of the dead to glorifying soldierly death. ‘Hero’s Day’ activities were centered there and, whereas two police officers surveyed the building during the Weimar Republic, a military watch was returned to duty.46

The Neue Wache after the Second World War

The Neue Wache was heavily damaged in the Second World War. The interior had been burnt out and the far right side of the portico had collapsed. For Berliners, the Neue Wache remained a memorial as they continued laying flowers at the ruinous structure. A preservationist assessed the damages and proposed provisional repairs to secure the building for a negligible expenditure, yet the communist-controlled Magistrat did nothing. In 1949, suggestions from German communist organizations included demolition, reconstruction as a Goethe-memorial, and reconstruction as a gateway to the House of Soviet Cultures. In contrast, Tessenow proposed leaving the building in its present condition as a historical reminder, a rejection of the militaristic past.47

In early 1950 a further section of the portico collapsed, but later that year the Politburo’s ‘Plan des Neuaufbaus von Berlin’ marked the building for restoration.48 The Berlin Planning...
Commission continued to consider arguments for demolition, before acknowledging that it must be preserved. The result, however, was a provisional emergency repair, which employed inappropriate materials, removed sculptures from the tympanum and entablature, and removed the statues of Generals Scharnhorst and Blücher.

As the repairs were underway, the PkB considered possibilities for the building’s future use including the previously mentioned Goethe-memorial and a gateway to the House of Soviet Cultures, along with an exhibition space/Schinkel museum, and a memorial (Denkmal) for the victims of imperialistic wars. Walter Pisternik of the Ministry of Building (MfA) reported on the meeting to Willi Stoph of the SED’s Central Committee, favoring the memorial idea, while warning that it may, ‘remind a portion of the people of the past purpose [but this could be remedied by covering] the preceding content over with the [new] content, “victims of imperialistic wars”’. Alternatively, the Magistrat’s Department of Education suggested that the Neue Wache become a ‘Guardhouse of Peace’. As Unter den Linden is the ‘approach for parades heading to Marx-Engels Square, the political center of the capital of Germany’, the Neue Wache, would serve those fighting for peace now and in the future, rather than yesterday’s victims, who would be honored in cemeteries. The intention was to restore the original function for a new purpose, thereby providing an assembly ground for ‘peace-fighters’, while preserving cultural heritage and acting as a ‘symbol of...national achievement’.

Both the ‘memorial to Victims of Fascism and war’ and ‘guardhouse for peace’ were inconceivable prior to the introduction of socialist realism. Both distinguished artistic value from political content to preserve architecture as national heritage. In the former, the most recent theme, war memorial, would be maintained, whereas the idea would change from glorifying the deaths of German soldiers to quietly remembering all victims of imperialistic wars. The latter concept reclaims the original theme of guardhouse, combined with a new societal idea, fighting for peace. The result is a symbolic guardhouse for peace, instead of an actual guardhouse defending the monarchy. Concerns about misinterpretation by the public rather than theoretical correctness were undoubtedly the basis for the indecision that followed, as the Berlin SED suggested further proposals be developed with ‘a content that represents our battle for peace in an appropriate form’.

The matter did not return until 1955, when the Historic Preservation Department, prompted by Berlin’s Deputy Mayor, Waldemar Schmidt, called for the reconstruction of Tessenow’s interior due to its artistic and symbolic value. This form necessitated the continued use of the structure as a memorial, and the following year, the Magistrat resolved that the Neue Wache be renovated as a Memorial (Mahnmal) for the Victims of Fascism and both World Wars. In 1957, the shoddy renovations from the early 1950s were removed, and the building was reconstructed. Tessenow’s interior was restored with the original, partially melted granite block remaining in place.

Yet, the state-leadership retained reservations regarding the structure’s militaristic connotations. It remained peripheralized until December 1959, when in light of the upcoming Fifteenth Anniversary of Liberation Day in May 1960, the Politburo renamed it, ‘Memorial (Mahnmal) for the Victims of Fascism and Militarism’ and ordered minor modifications to the interior. The restored statues of these ‘generals of the Wars of Liberation against Napoleonic foreign-rule’, removed in May 1951, would be placed in the park next to the State Opera. The turn to ‘national history writing’ in 1952 meant that these generals were no longer part of a reactionary tradition, due to their roles in the progressive War of Liberation and were now suitable for display.
in public, their original location was avoided due to fears that it would encourage militaristic interpretations of the memorial. As an additional safety measure, all iconological and rhetorical references to their identity were to be removed (including the Prussian Eagle) beyond the personal names, birth and death dates of the generals.

In February 1960, the Berlin Magistrat ordered the renovation of the Neue Wache according to the designs of the Politburo; though the Berliner Zeitung attributed the decision to the Berlin Magistrat. The memorial was dedicated on Liberation Day, in a ceremony including Walter Ulbricht, Otto Grotewohl, and ‘many well-known personalities’. Deputy Mayor Schmidt called for the remembrance of ‘victims of two world wars who were driven to their deaths by German militarism’, and declared that this militarist legacy had been overcome in the GDR, but needs to be realized in the ‘Western Zone’. Such use of the memorial as a storehouse from which to retrieve years of tradition in service of East German policy endured as long as the GDR.

In January 1969, the Politburo approved the renovation of the interior of the Neue Wache for the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the GDR. The melted granite block was removed and replaced with a prismatic glass block bearing an eternal flame just behind the tombs of the unknown soldier and the unknown resistance fighter, and the state seal of the GDR was engraved on the back wall; remembrance of war was sanitized and placed directly in service of state.

The trajectory of the Neue Wache is illustrative of the complex dynamics of the society–space relationship during these years. During the early post-war years, German planners sought restoration for architectural value, German communists' sought effacement of a symbol of Prussian–German militarism, and the SMAD remained indifferent due to its lack of spatial capacity. After 1949, socialist realism provided a theoretical basis for fully rectifying and restoring the building, however, continued concerns about its militaristic associations resulted in a considerable delay in finding an appropriate new theme and led to the spatial severing and iconographical cleansing of the statues of Generals Scharnhorst and Bülow.

The Arsenal

Like the Neue Wache, the Arsenal (Zeughaus) suffered from associations with the Prussian military tradition, however, it was rectified considerably earlier due to an exceptional confluence of Soviet interest in its spatial capacity and representative value, and the mobilization of key German cultural and political elites in Berlin (Fig. 6). The Arsenal was built between 1695 and 1730 to store weapons and other devices of war. In 1877, no longer suited to its original purpose, it became a historical museum for weaponry, artillery, and engineering, and a storehouse of the trophies, uniforms and personal effects of the royal house and famous military leaders. The Arsenal survived the Second World War with moderate damage, but many sculpted stone elements were destroyed.

From symbol of Prussian militarism to art museum

Almost immediately after the war, the future of the Arsenal became a subject of contestation. Key participants included the SMAD, Deputy Mayor Ferdinand Friedensburg (CDU), Dr. Katz of the Magistrat’s Planning Department, and Professor Ludwig Justi from the Magistrat’s Office of State Museums, formerly Director of the National Gallery in Berlin.
In Summer 1945, the SMAD, interested in the Arsenal for its spatial capacity, arranged for control of the building to pass to Katz and prompted the Magistrat to carry out minor repairs to make the ruinous structure habitable. In October, the Allied Control Council ordered that the contents of the museum be liquidated, that the building become a ‘symbol of peaceful reconstruction’, and be made available for exhibitions. In December, the SMAD pressured the Magistrat to speed up their work so that the exhibition, ‘Products of Industry and Workshops in the Soviet-Occupied Zone’, could open on time. The Magistrat financed the exhibition and completed some repairs, yet lacked sufficient materials and left the Arsenal partially exposed for the winter. Throughout 1946, the building continued to be used for exhibitions serving Soviet interests. In response to this neglect, Berlin planning and historic preservation staff members sought funding to effectively preserve the structure and argued for its full restoration. They lauded its architectural value and depicted the building as free from militarism; references to its significance thus tended to avoid the topoi ‘German’ and ‘Prussian’, in favor of ‘Berlin’, ‘European’, ‘international’ and ‘world’. The Magistrat approved limited funds in September 1946, but building materials were lacking and it was claimed that an official Soviet command was necessary in order to receive preferential treatment in the distribution of material and labor.

In early 1947, a city staff member brought the Arsenal to the attention of Dr. Justi, who enlisted Mayor Friedensburg to argue for its use as a museum. In July, Friedensburg convinced Soviet Deputy-Commandant Alexej Jelisarow to verbally order the building’s transfer to the Magistrat’s Museum Administration, and have the SMAD assume responsibility for its reconstruction. On 15 July, Friedensburg reported on this meeting to the Magistrat, and a conflict emerged between Justi and Katz, who preferred using the building for exhibitions and noted that the Soviets had reneged on several verbal agreements regarding the building over the past two years. A staged public discussion followed in the Soviet organ, Tägliche Rundschau (TR). An essay on 6 August 1947 attacked the Planning Department’s inability to restore the building and its inappropriate
use for exhibitions. Katz responded, claiming to act in the interests of the working class, asserting that an outdated ‘Wilhelminian, militaristic view demands a museum’. TR concluded that the goal was not to restore the war-like character, but to display art being stored in damp cellars.

In September 1947, the Magistrat approved a proposal requesting funds to weatherproof the building, the first of three phases to renovate the building as a ‘Central Museum of Berlin’ — as specified at the July meeting. The exhibit ‘Masterworks of German sculptors and painters’, opened on 20 October, however, four days later General Alexander Kotikow, Commandant of the Soviet Sector of Berlin, transferred the building to the SMAD-controlled German Department of Education. Friedensburg protested the transfer to Kotikow and Jellisarow, who countered that building was ‘too important’ to leave under the control of the Magistrat, because it was ultimately subject to the Senate, which they could not trust — as it was controlled by the western SPD. The building would now serve Soviet cultural political purposes by displaying ‘peaceful German art’ (thereby restoring progressive national traditions), and more directly political purposes, such as the 1948 exhibition on industrial production in the Soviet Zone.

The German historical museum

Soviet intentions for the Arsenal took form in February 1948, when the German Education Administration in the Soviet Zone (Deutsche Verwaltung für Volksbildung) contracted the reconstruction of the Arsenal as a ‘House of Culture’, contributing to the development of ‘our entire people’ — all Germans. The building thus was commandeered into the SED’s proclaimed ‘Battle for German Unity’, and would be restored to its original form and include space for exhibitions and a variety of cultural activities including a theater. In 1949, rubble was cleared and the restoration of the exterior sculpted stonework was initiated.

After the GDR’s founding, the Ministry of Education assumed control over the project, now the ‘Museum of Cultural History’, and restoration was slated to commence on 1 June 1950. However, an interior pillar collapsed and it was determined that the vaulting would be replaced by a steel frame and modern interior in the Linden wing due to temporal pressure as the exhibition ‘History of the Revolutionary Workers’ Movement’ was scheduled to begin in April 1951. The SED’s Central Committee further developed the museum concept and in September 1950, the project became a ‘Museum of German History’, in order to present the new generation of Germans, East and West, with a Marxist–Leninist view of history.

While architects and preservationists considered details of the restoration, Walter Ulbricht expressed concerns that the Arsenal protruded onto the course of parades headed for Marx-Engels Square, and ordered that work be broken off while plans were developed for setting the facade back. The Planning Commission argued against this action on the grounds that the building’s position was not a significant factor in determining the breadth of parades, and the move would not improve the view of the grandstand, but would destroy the symmetry of the building, damaging its function enclosing the Lustgarten. Ultimately Kurt Liebknecht, President of the German Building Academy, managed to convince Ulbricht to abandon his idea. Work on the building was carried out in phases lasting until the mid-sixties.

Examining the content of the building in terms of socialist-realist theory, there existed a continuity in theme, as the building remained a museum, and in accordance with the broader shift in societal ideas, it went from a museum of ‘Prussian and German military history’ to a ‘Museum of
German History’ (*Museum für deutsche Geschichte*), narrated from a Marxist–Leninist perspective. Ulbricht’s threatened alterations resulted from a fixation on spatial capacity due to a disregard for socialist realism, a desire for personal aggrandizement, and a fascination with parades witnessed in Moscow.

Like the Arsenal, the Zeughaus pitted German planners’ aspirations for preserving architectural heritage against German communists will to efface Prussian militarism. In this case, however, the building’s spatial capacity drew the SMAD to immediately order a few emergency repairs. In 1947, the SMAD responded to an intensive preservation effort by the German cultural elite as they recognized the potential use of the building’s symbolic and spatial value in serving cultural policy. With the adoption of socialist realism, the concept of a German history museum with a Marxist–Leninist perspective was developed. Ulbricht displayed the potential for individuals to act in opposition to accepted ideological values, yet in this case, the socialist-realist rules of urban design prevailed.

**Additional sites on eastern Unter den Linden**

Due to limited resources, a number of historic structures on eastern Unter den Linden were not restored until the late 1950s and 1960s, including Hedwig’s Church, the Kaiser Wilhelm Palace, the Royal Library, the Crown Prince’s Palace, the Princesses’ Palace, and large sections on Humboldt University. Socialist-realist interest in ‘progressive national tradition’ was evident in several ways, though not always determinant.

The Kaiser Wilhelm Palace, a severe neo-classical structure and therefore model of progressive architecture, quickly came under consideration for renovation, but other projects soon took priority and it was not restored until 1964. *Forum Friedericianum* was renamed ‘August-Bebel Square’, and restored according to the original design intentions, which included removing the top two floors of the Dresdner Bank, which lined the rear of the square. These floors had been added during the Weimar Era under protest from architects, city planners and art historians, so their removal provided a favorable point of contrast with city building under capitalism. The Princesses’ Palace was slated for restoration as a restaurant and café serving the adjacent State Opera. A terrace would overlook the green space between this building and the State Opera. The green space was to remain ‘intimate and quiet’ with sculptures dedicated to famous opera composers.

Structures considered regressive according to socialist realism were effaced to make room for the progressive reshaping of the urban fabric, as two eclectic buildings from the Wilhelminian Era were demolished to make space for a proposed structure forming part of the entryway to Marx-Engels Square.

The Schinkel-designed Palace Bridge evidences ambivalence towards militarism in Prussian history involving public art. Built between 1819 and 1821, as part of the renovation of Unter den Linden following victory over Napoleon, the bridge included a series of statues depicting ‘the development of a boy into a war hero as a “monument of victory in general”’, based on Greek mythology. Although a testament to classical origins built in a progressive historical era, associations with militarism may have influenced the decision to neglect the bridge beyond the application of concrete patches. It was only in the 1980s that matching sandstone was applied, and the statues were reconstructed.
The equestrian statue of Friedrich the Great, Elector of Brandenburg, set in the middle of Unter den Linden near Humboldt University in 1851 (completed 1836), presents another case of public art and ambivalence towards early Prussian history. The statue marked a decisive shift from idealized to realistic representation in Berlin, and the sculptor, Christian Rauch, is considered one of the greatest German sculptors of the nineteenth century. The base of the statue bore a table listing seventy-four names of leading figures from the period of Friedrich’s rule; one set of allegorical reliefs depicting ruler’s virtues: strength, justice, moderation, and wisdom; another set of reliefs showed scenes from Friedrich’s life. Despite the statue’s artistic merit and the fact that Friedrich is considered an enlightened despot, the statue was removed to Potsdam in Summer 1950, prompting western protest. The move corresponds with the effacement of symbols of the Prussian monarchy and military from the city center, part of a decanonization of Prussian heroes, which was probably delayed until this period when hopes for maintaining national unity were deferred. The desire to improve the flow of parades may have provided additional incentive for the statue’s removal. In 1952, a number of Prussian generals and symbols were recanonized, but others, including Friedrich the Great, were still considered reactionary. The statue was not placed on display in Potsdam until 1962, and was not returned to Unter den Linden until 1980, as part of a broader restoration of Prussian history.

The Brandenburg Gate and Pariser Platz

The Brandenburg Gate (Brandenburger Tor), having long ago accrued place-based meaning as a symbol of Berlin, was never threatened with effacement despite a clear association with the Prussian monarchy and military (Fig. 7). After the GDR’s founding, a new interpretation of the monument eventually emerged, based on a claim to recover its alleged original meaning as
a ‘Peace Gate’. Despite some validity, this interpretation suppressed the designer’s intended reference, which was reactionary according to Marxist—Leninist ideology.

**Early history**

The original Brandenburg Gate, a modest structure called ‘Tiergarten Tor’, was built between 1734 and 1738. This gate on the Quarre (later Pariser Platz) was flanked by a small guardhouse and customs house, and palaces were built around the square. The impetus to construct a new gate came from a customs reform in 1786, and the idea of modeling the gate after the Athenian propylaia allegedly originated with the King. The structure and crowning Quadriga were designed by the architect Carl Gotthard Langhans, further developed and constructed by the sculptor Johann Gottfried Schadow (Fig. 7).

The Gate included considerable iconography, bearing explicit symbols of war and peace, enabling a variety of interpretations, but with one intended reference, as indicated by Langhans:

The Quadriga standing on the attic, represents the triumph of peace, the bas-relief below signifies protection through righteous arms, granted by innocence. On the other side was to be set, how through these weapons, seven scattered arrows, are once again bound together.

The acknowledged referent of this iconography was Prussian military intervention to restore the aristocratic House of Orange in Holland, which was threatened by a large-scale democratic uprising. Other prominent iconography included heroic deeds of Hercules (foe of monsters and evildoers), a battle between Lapiths and Centaurs (civilization triumphing over barbarism), Athena (the protector of the state), and Ares (the god of war) sinking his sword into his sheath offering peace, expressing the Prussian state’s self-image as conqueror of evildoers and champion of civilization and peace in Holland.

With victory over the Prussian army in 1806, Napoleon’s troops occupied Berlin and sent the Quadriga to Paris as loot. Napoleon was defeated in 1814 and the Quadriga was recovered and returned to its original place, with the addition of an eagle perched on an oak wreath encircling an iron cross on the goddess’s staff, thereby, ‘reinterpreting the goddess of peace as a goddess of war’. The Quadriga was ceremoniously dedicated by the King on 9 August 1814, and the Gate became a multi-functional ‘National Memorial’ used as a background for public spectacles.

**The Brandenburg Gate after the Second World War**

The Battle of Berlin left the Brandenburg Gate heavily damaged, the Quadriga decimated, and much of Pariser Platz in ruins. Soviet troops raised their flag on the Gate, and later replaced it with a red flag, the international workers’ symbol. A few suggestions emerged for replacing the demolished Quadriga with a new sculpture, but no action was taken. In 1949, the Magistrat resolved to speed up rubble clearance on Unter den Linden and prepare for the restoration of the Brandenburg Gate, which would be left free-standing after surrounding buildings were demolished. Despite protest from the Director of the National Gallery, several ruins along Pariser Platz were razed in preparation for a communist-organized assembly involving East and West German youth in Summer 1950, and by the end of the 1950s all ruins on Pariser Platz had been demolished.
In December 1949, the Magistrat ordered the restoration of the Brandenburg Gate and the transfer of the heavily damaged Quadriga to a museum, but the Quadriga fell to pieces upon removal. The Magistrat attempted to obtain the original Quadriga moulds from the West Berlin Senate in order to reproduce the figure, ‘without the iron cross and Prussian Eagle’. In April 1950, the Magistrat ceased efforts to obtain the moulds, and approved a design competition for a crowning element. Nonetheless, the West Berlin Senate (originally counter-part to Magistrat, now municipal government of West Berlin) soon approved funding for steps leading to the reproduction of the Quadriga. The competition was never held, and in February 1951, the restoration of the Brandenburg Gate was drawn into the Unter den Linden competition.

Restoration work began in early 1950, with much attention being given to damaged sculptures and reliefs, and the middle section, which was to be completed by the start of the Weltjugendfest in July 1951. Work was discontinued in 1952, due to a shift of finances to Stalinallee, the new ‘socialist’ street, leaving a partially complete, shoddy restoration. Magistrat planners and preservationists attempted to obtain funding for measures to safeguard the building again in 1953, but they were unsuccessful. The issue returned in August 1956, as the Politburo assigned East Mayor Ebert with ‘finding a copy of the Quadriga’ and decreed that the red flag would remain on the gate until then.

In September, the Magistrat approved a ‘Beautification Plan for Democratic Berlin’, calling for the restoration of the Gate, and other sites located near major border crossings, train stations and routes leading out of the city — apparently in response to the West Berlin Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA). Ebert then approached the West Berlin Senate regarding the Quadriga, setting off a media war, yet the Senate approved funds for a reproduction in January.

Restoration work resumed on the Brandenburg Gate and much of the shoddy repair work from the early 1950s needed to be repeated. The topping-out ceremony was held in December 1957, and the flanking gate-houses were completed in April 1958. The new Quadriga was transported to Pariser Platz on 1 August 1958, and after difficulty in the mounting process, it was taken to a nearby building for adjustments. The Western press sarcastically questioned if a red flag would be placed in Victoria’s hand. Alterations were in store, as on 31 August the Berliner Zeitung asked for readers’ opinions on a proposal to remove the iron cross and eagle, because they did not correspond to the original Schadow design and the symbols were ‘no longer usable’, due to misuse by fascists. Most published responses rejected the Schinkel insignia as a breech of style and a symbol of war and suffering, which was later taken as evidence of Berliners’ support for a Magistrat resolution on 15 September, stating that there is no room on the Brandenburg Gate for ‘swastikas, iron crosses, and Prussian eagles’. The iron cross and eagle were removed before the Quadriga was mounted on 22 September 1958. Author Micheal Cullen suggests that the reader opinions expressed in the Berliner Zeitung were genuine, as the horrors of war were recent and the manner of posing the questions was set to influence the results in the desired direction. Moreover, the Politburo had already made the decision on 9 September 1958 and used the Magistrat as a cover, allegedly representing the people of Berlin.

In a return to fictive origins, the Eastern Press hailed the Brandenburg Gate as a ‘symbol of peace’. In the eighteenth century, the triumph of peace symbolized by the Brandenburg Gate was a peace restored by a Prussian military action, crushing an anti-monarchical uprising on foreign soil. Whether East German historians, journalists and politicians were aware of this is not clear. The iconographical reference to the triumph of peace over war was maintained, severed
from its specific referent, which in Marxist–Leninist thought represents the victory of reaction over progress. Instead, it was claimed that the semantic shift to a ‘Peace Gate’ was a reflection of the establishment of the GDR, ‘where peace has found its home for the first time in German history’ in contrast to West Germany and West Berlin, where people still use iron crosses and demonstrate ‘that they have learned nothing from history’.119

On 13 August 1961, the Berlin Wall was constructed, running along the west side of the Brandenburg Gate, which was transformed from a gateway to a landmark at the border of East and West.

The future of the Brandenburg Gate was not a subject of debate in the immediate post-war years. Although German communists considered demolishing a wide range of monuments associated with the Prussian monarchy and military, the Brandenburg Gate, as the most recognized symbol of the city of Berlin, could not be effaced without serious political repercussions. The Gate’s lack of spatial capacity meant the SMAD had no pragmatic reason for repairing the structure, while preservationists apparently saw no immediate threat of additional decay. The introduction of socialist realism provided a theoretical framework for reinterpreting the monument, though its application rested on a concealment of the memorial’s original meaning.

Conclusions

In the years following the Second World War, the world view and ideology of the SMAD, leading German communists, and the German cultural elite significantly shaped their interpretations of key historic places, structures and public art on Berlin’s Unter den Linden, and consequently shaped policy-making efforts regarding the future form of these elements. Yet these factors were not solely determinant. First, the act of interpretation occurred in a changing political context that weighed heavily in all decision-making. Second, complexities in place-based meaning sometimes resulted in ambivalence towards structures, and subsequent delays in their restoration. Thus, these groups interpreted the historic fabric of Unter den Linden through different sets of assumptions, which shifted as the result of changing political conditions and ideological developments, and were further inflected due to place-based meaning.

Immediately after the war, German cultural elites were concerned with Unter den Linden’s architectural value as cultural heritage. They lobbied the Magistrat for funding and materials to carry out emergency repairs to the Neue Wache, Arsenal, and other historic structures on Unter den Linden. The SMAD initially sought spatial capacity, disregarded architectural value and largely ignored political associations. For instance, they immediately ordered the renovation of numerous theaters with little architectural merit, along with the State Opera, but they were not interested in architectural restoration. Similarly, they prodded the Magistrat to create usable exhibition space in the Arsenal, while remaining silent on the remainder of Unter den Linden’s historic fabric. As the division between East and West deepened, however, the SMAD came to emphasize place-based meaning and architectural value, applying a socialist-realist perspective in key locations. For instance, in May 1947, the Singakademie was reconstructed in original form to serve as a ‘House of Soviet Cultures’, and in July 1947, after some lobbying by German cultural elites, the SMAD agreed on the restoration of the Arsenal. In contrast, the German communist political leadership initially emphasized place-based,
political content over architectural value and sought the effacement of historic architecture and monuments due to associations with Prussian–German monarchism and militarism. This was clearly demonstrated by refusal to approve paltry sums of money for emergency repairs to the Neue Wache, Arsenal, and other structures on Unter den Linden. After the GDR’s founding, the adoption of socialist realism prompted the valorization of architectural quality for representing the state, leading to the formulation of new interpretations of place-based meanings. The Plan des Neuaufbaus Berlins called for the full architectural restoration of all historic structures on eastern Unter den Linden and key structures along the entire length of the street, such as the Brandenburg Gate. Despite this wholesale theoretical approval of all structures considered architecturally progressive, place-based meaning and symbolism remained significant issues to be addressed, as the legacy of the past continued to prove troublesome in certain cases. For example, the place-based meaning of the Neue Wache resulted in considerable debate and delay over its restoration and reuse, as well as the removal and enduring separation of the statues of Prussian Generals Scharnhorst and Bülow, which were integral to its architecture. Similarly, the equestrian statue of Friedrich the Great remained peripheralized in Potsdam for decades. Finally, Walter Ulbricht demonstrated that in special cases, personal preferences can preempt broader ideological currents.

A number of broader conclusions regarding the society–space relationship can be drawn from this study. First, urban spaces, architecture, and public art bear significant social meaning that displays continuity and change through political transformation and may play a role in that transformation. Thus, the newly founded East German State sought to incorporate urban form into the state-building process, by reinterpreting structures of national significance in ways that legitimized state ideals. Second, the expression of a political ideology and accompanying social ideals in architecture may take on radically different forms, depending upon beliefs about the relationship between architecture and society. On Unter den Linden, ironically, the distinction between German communists’ Marxist-inspired perspective on historic architecture and Soviet-developed, Marxist–Leninist cultural theory, translated into the difference between effacement and restoration for some of Germany’s most significant historic structures. Third, complexities in place-based meaning may complicate the interpretive process despite a seemingly clear ideologically established direction. Thus, the socialist-realist view of architecture as national heritage rather than an expression of state could not easily alleviate concerns about the Neue Wache’s origins and history. Finally, the adoption of a new, official ideology may not eradicate or constrain the expression of personal beliefs that are directly contradictory to it. Walter Ulbricht’s desire to set back the Zeughaus facade, compromising the building’s architectural integrity in order to broaden the path for parades is illustrative in this regard. In sum, ideology may figure prominently in interpretation and decision-making with regard to the urban landscape, but is one of a range of forces and should be seen in this context. Despite perceptions in the West of the monolithic socialist state, socialist planning did not emerge as a single, unified and monolithic vision derived from Marxist–Leninist ideology. Rather, planning traditions emerged in fits and starts based upon competing notions of the socialist city, as well as pre-war German and international traditions. Unter den Linden is an excellent place to see this manifestation of debate and compromise, but the same issues had similar effects — sometimes smaller in scale, sometimes larger — on hundreds of cities across central and eastern Europe during the Cold War.
Notes


9. Though the palace was ultimately demolished, its treatment in the post-war era parallels that of the historic buildings on Unter den Linden. In the immediate post-war years, German communists directly confronted and obstructed attempts by planners and preservationists to obtain minimal funding for provisional repairs to the structure. The SMAD intervened in 1947 to renovate a portion of the building as office and exhibition space. The course of the palace radically diverged from Unter den Linden after the founding of the GDR, when Ulbricht declared the building a ruin and ordered its demolition, ignoring the socialist-realist imperative of preserving national cultural heritage and the objections of other communists officials, in order to create a large square in the ‘political center’ of the city for state-run parades. Although the need for such a space is indicated in socialist-realist


11. According to Marxist–Leninism, capitalist nations suffer from severe internal class conflicts and relate to each other in competitive, combative and oppressive ways. Socialist nations would increasingly overcome internal discord and relate to each other according to the principles of proletarian internationalism. The transition into communism, would result in the emergence of an international community of socialist nations with equal rights. Only under communism, would the increasing rapprochement of nations, in the long-term, lead to their fusion in a gradual process. Attempts to force this transformation would be counter-productive, thus for the post-war era in Eastern Europe, a complimentary existent of nationalism and internationalism was in order, with precedence given to the former; W. Böhme et al., *Kleines politisches Wörterbuch*, Berlin, 1978, 597–603.


14. This method of semantically transforming historical sites is evident in each of the case studies in this paper. For example, the Arsenal, which had been a military museum and was intended to become a museum of culture: its ‘theme’ as a museum endured, but the new societal ‘idea’ was to display non-militaristic culture.


16. Although German nationalism remained taboo in the first years immediately after the Second World War, by 1948 it had been fully instrumentalized in Soviet Zone press. This assessment is based on my own review of press accounts of political ceremonies and rallies in the Soviet Zone newspapers *Berliner Zeitung*, *Neues Deutschland* and *Tägliche Rundschau*.

17. L. Bolz, Notes from consultation with Otto Grohtewohl, SAPMO-BA, DH1/44475.


20. L. Bolz to Otto Grohtewohl, Prime Minister of the GDR, 16 November 1950, SAPMO-BA, FBS, 123/16322.

21. L. Bolz to Friedrich Ebert, Mayor of Berlin, 4 December 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 39206.

22. Planungskomission Berlin (hereafter PkB), 12 January 1951, Minutes from meeting, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927.


31. G. Kiederling, *Berlin 1945–1986: Geschichte der Hauptstadt der DDR*, Berlin, 1987, 240–241. The Soviets wasted no time initiating their theater program. On May 14, 1945, General Besarin sent a group of German cultural elites on an excursion to survey the condition of Berlin’s theaters and to register actors, singers, musicians, and technical personnel. Renovations were quickly underway on several theaters, and on September 24, 1945, the Berlin Magistrat passed a resolution for the restoration of a total of eight theaters for a sum of 1,140,000 Reichsmarks — at a time when obtaining several thousand Reichsmarks for historically valuable structures was problematic. These spaces also doubled as assembly halls for the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) and related organizations. See Kiederling, 94; Schulze, File notes, 9 July 1945, LAB, 110/897; Berlin Magistrat, Hauptamt für Stadtplanung, Hauptamt für Hochbau, unsigned memorandum, 1 October 1945, LAB, 110/790; Berlin Magistrat, Hauptamt für...

32. Politburo, Plan des Neuaufbaus von Berlin; W. Pisternik to Ministry of Education, 19 February 1951, SAPMO-BA, H1, 38615; PkB, Minutes from meeting, 18 September 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927; PkB, Minutes from meeting, 23 October 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927.

33. K. Liebknecht, File notes, 28 June 1951, SAPMO-BA, H1, 44476; R. Paulick, 30.

34. Liebknecht, 28 June 1951; C. Mayer, File note for Lothar Bolz, Minister of Building, 9 July 1951, SAPMO-BA, H1, 44476.

35. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme, 30.
36. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme, 32.
37. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme, 32.

40. Neues Deutschland (13 May 1947).
42. Neues Deutschland (24 May 1950).
43. Durth, Düwel and Gutschow, Vol. 1, 86.
44. Kiederling, 240–241; see endnote 26.
45. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, 10–21.
46. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, 21–64.
47. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, 75–78.
49. PkB, Minutes from meeting, 25 August 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927; PkB, Minutes from meeting, 7 September 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927.
50. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden.

51. Michealis to Rebetsky, 14 July 1951, SAPMO-BA, DH2 (K1) A/47.
52. Walter Pisternik to Willi Stoph, Member of Central Committee of SED, 15 February 1951, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 39026.
53. Michealis to Rebetsky, 14 July 1951, SAPMO-BA, DH2 (K1) A/47.
54. Michealis to Rebetsky, 14 July 1951, SAPMO-BA, DH2 (K1) A/47.
55. Ernst Hoffman to Walter Pisternik, 5 September 1951, SAPMO-BA, H1, 38881.
56. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, 80–82.
60. Politburo, 15 December 1959.
64. Stözl, Die Neue Wache Unter den Linden, 84–88. The function of the Neue Wache became a subject of renewed debate since German reunification. For an analysis of the negotiation of meaning regarding the Neue Wache during this era, see Till.
65. Berlin Magistrat, Copy of excerpt from statement from 20 June 1911, LAB, 110/903.
66. Evidence on the actual decision-making process leading to the Arsenal’s reconstruction is especially diaphanous. This section is an interpretation of sometimes dubious accounts in press reports and government records, taking inter-agency squabbling and political circumstances into account.
67. According to Katz, control of the Arsenal had been turned over to the Planning Department after he convinced “the allies” to change their plans to demolish the building in accordance with the Potsdam Conference policy that
the most significant symbolic sites of Prussian—German militarism be destroyed. See Tägliche Rundschau (14 August 1947). In fact, the Allied Control Council did not approve any policy regarding the Arsenal until October, when it determined that its contents must be liquidated. (See Müller, 252.) Justi simply notes that the Planning Department “took” the building from his office and refused to return it. See Ludwig Justi to Karl Bonatz, 28 November 1947, LAB, 110/903. Given the Soviet interest in exhibition space, and the fact that the Magistrat was engaged in repairs to make the building habitable in summer 1945. See Berlin Magistrat, Hauptamt Stadtplanung, Kostenüberschlag über die notwendigen Baumaßnahmen zur Beseitigung Zerstorungen an dem Gebäude des Zeughauses in Berlin, UdL 2, 12 August 1945, LAB, 110/903. Given the SMAD’s complete control over the administration of Berlin at that time, it can only be presumed that it arranged for the building to pass to Katz control at that time.

68. Müller, 250–251.
69. Schwenk to Hauptamtes für Hochbau, 3 December 1945, LAB, 100/903.
70. Berlin Magistrat, Note on Schwenk’s report at meeting, 10 December 1945, LAB, 100/761; Listmann to division supervisor, 22 August 1946, LAB, 110/903; Müller, 251.
71. Müller, 252.
72. Berlin Magistrat, Hauptamt für Stadtplanung, unsigned memorandum, 6 February 1946, LAB, 110/903; Listmann to division supervisor; Scheper, Letter to division supervisor, Hauptamptes für Hochbau, 30 August 1946, LAB, 110/903.
73. Berlin Magistrat, Finanzabteilung, file note, 30 November 1946, LAB, 110/903; Ferdinand Friedensburg, Notes from meeting on 15 July 1947, 16 July 1947, LAB, 110/903.
74. See Ludwig Justi to Karl Bonatz, 28 November 1947, LAB, 110/903.
75. Ferdinand Friedensburg, Notes from meeting on 15 July 1947, 16 July 1947, LAB, 110/903.
76. Tägliche Rundschau (14 August 1947).
77. Berlin Magistrat, Resolution, 8 September 1947, LAB, 100/797.
78. Ferdinand Friedensburg, Notes from meeting on 18 November 1947, 20 November 1947, LAB, 100/803.
82. Müller, Das Berliner Zeughaus, 259.
85. Ministerium für Aufbau, untitled document, undated, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927.
86. K. Liebknecht, Memorandum on meeting with Walter Ulbricht, 4 September 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 39827.
89. Volk, Historische Strassen und Plätze heute, 33; PkB, Minutes from meeting, 18 September 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 38927.
90. Volk, Historische Strassen und Plätze heute, 32.
91. R. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme des Wiederaufbaues der Deutschen Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Deutsche Architektur 1 (1952) 36.
92. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme des Wiederaufbaues der Deutschen Staatsoper Unter den Linden, 35.
93. Paulick, Die künstlerische Probleme des Wiederaufbaues der Deutschen Staatsoper Unter den Linden, 36.
98. Ministerium für Aufbau, Hauptamt Stadtplanung, Termin- und Kostenplan für die vorläufige Umgestaltung des Lustgartens, 19 August 1950, SAPMO-BA, DH1, 39075.


101. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 39.


104. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 51.

105. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 41–71, 75–82.

106. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 93–94.

107. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 85–91.


110. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 90–93.

111. Sekretariat des Oberbürgermeisters, File note, 10 February 1951, LAB, 100/843.

112. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 94–96.

113. Politburo, Resolution, 28 August 1956, SAPMO-BA, DY, 30/56.

114. Cullen, 99; Cullen’s assertion that the Beautification Plan was a response to West Berlin’s IBA is substantiated by examining a copy of the plan published in Berliner Zeitung (28 August 1946): the focus was clearly on sites near border crossings and transportation nodes.

115. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 99–104.

116. Cullen, Das Brandenburger Tor, 103.

117. Politburo, Resolution, 9 September 1958, SAPMO-BA, DY 30/58.
