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ABSTRACT

The fall of the Berlin Wall ushered in a tumultuous period of rebuilding in Berlin's central district, the Friedrichstadt portion of Mitte, during the 1990s. This article examines the application of the theory of Critical Reconstruction to the rebuilding of the area during this period, while also providing an overview of the political, economic and historical factors that shaped Berlin city planners' choices. Drawing on case studies from within the Friedrichstadt, I discuss the complex political machinations that led to the adoption of this approach as a guiding principle for Berlin's reconstruction, and the implications of these choices for the city's future.

Reinventing Traditionalism

The Influence of Critical Reconstruction on the Shape of Berlin's Friedrichstadt

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Introduction[1]

The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 transformed the central neighborhood of Mitte, formerly the heart of the Prussian and Weimar capital, into an area on the outskirts of both East and West Berlin. The southern part of this neighborhood, the *Friedrichstadt*, named after Friedrich Wilhelm I, was split almost perfectly in half by the new boundary [Figure 1, p.58]. Thus relegated to the borderlands of both East and West, the Friedrichstadt remained largely untouched and dilapidated for the bulk of Germany's separation. In the 1980s a few building projects were pursued by both sides, but the biggest change came after German reunification and the Berlin Wall's removal in 1990. The decision a year later to move the capital back to Berlin from Bonn made Mitte once again the center of the capital of Germany, and the whole city experienced a tumultuous period of rebuilding, earning Berlin the title as the 'biggest construction site in Europe.'[2]

This flood of building projects and real estate speculation in the early 1990s quickly caused city planners to recognize that an overall guiding vision was needed if Berlin was to become anything other than a playground for ambitious architects. To provide a set of guidelines for rebuilding, Berlin planners and a close-knit circle of theorists and architects implemented, using various political channels, the approach of "Critical Reconstruction." Developed during the previous two decades by theorist and architect Josef Paul Kleihues, this planning concept advocates a combination of new and restored buildings to create an urban environment that draws upon historic forms in order to embody, according to its proponents, the true essence of the historic European

[2] From 1949 to 1990, Berlin served as the capital of East Germany. However, given the politics of reunification, there was no question at the time of reunification in 1990 that the seat of the new German government would located in Bonn, home of the former West German government. The vote in 1991 to move the reunified government back to Berlin was a controversial and momentous one. See Michael Z. Wise, *Capital dilemma: Germany's search for a new architecture of democracy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 57-59. The title 'biggest construction site in Europe' also played a large role in the city's own tourism marketing campaign. Tourism has grown significantly in the last decade in Berlin, based largely on the fascination with Berlin's self-reinvention. See Karen Till, *The new Berlin: memory, politics, place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 33.

metropolis. The results of this planning approach can readily be seen in Berlin's newest building projects, especially those in the Friedrichstadt, where building has focused on large office and commercial properties. Critical Reconstruction's main tenets also constitute the backbone of the *Planwerk Innenstadt* (the inner city building plan), adopted in 1999.[3]

Critical Reconstruction's influence on the shape of the city has been momentous, for though it did not become an officially institutionalized part of Berlin's planning culture until after reunification, its application to urban renewal projects reaches back into the 1970s and 80s, when young Berlin architects on both sides of the Wall were working to establish new, historically-oriented building trends. Thus the shape of Berlin for the last quarter-century has been heavily influenced by the concept of urban renewal, of which Critical Reconstruction has been the most prominent and most influential incarnation, and the results are readily visible in the urban landscape. This paper traces the history of Critical Reconstruction's development, from its roots in the polemics against Modernism in the 1960s to its present incarnation as the guiding planning approach for Berlin city officials. Its evolution, and application, over the last three decades reflects both general trends in Western architectural theory and a particular set of intellectual, political and historical factors unique to Germany and, in particular, Berlin.

Critical Reconstruction has drawn heated criticism from many sides, including architects, philosophers, theorists, journalists, academics and the general public. Its proponents have been accused of underhanded political maneuvering and have even at times been called "fascists" for their often rigid adherence to their own architectural and city-planning philosophies. Though some of these critiques are integral to the development and history of both the planning concept and the city, not all are relevant to this paper. The criticism of, and debates between, architects and architectural critics will be briefly discussed for their importance to the development of city planning policy. For the most part the validity of accusations concerning political power struggles and a "cartel" of architects wielding authority over planning decisions will not be investigated, as a thorough look at the last two decades of Berlin city politics would be outside the scope of this paper. Most important for this inquiry is not how political power in Berlin was wielded, but what its ultimate effect was and how that relates to the theory of Critical Reconstruction.[4]

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[3] Hans Stimmann, "Das Gedächtnis der europäischen Stadt," in *Von der Architektur- zur Stadtdebatte: die Diskussion um das Planwerk Innenstadt*, eds. Erik-Jan Ourwerkerk and Hans Stimmann (Berlin: Braun, 2001), 9.

[4] There are resources available for those interested in the political struggles within the city government and the bodies commissioned to rebuild the city. See Elizabeth A. Strom, *Building the new Berlin: the politics of urban development in Germany's capital city* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001); see also Gert Kähler, ed., *Einfach schwierig : eine deutsche Architekturdebatte: ausgewählte Beiträge 1993-1995* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1995); and see Terje Nils Dahle, *Berliner architekturdebatte* (Stuttgart: IRB-Verlag, 1995).

Figure 1. Map of Mitte, showing the Friedrichstadt.
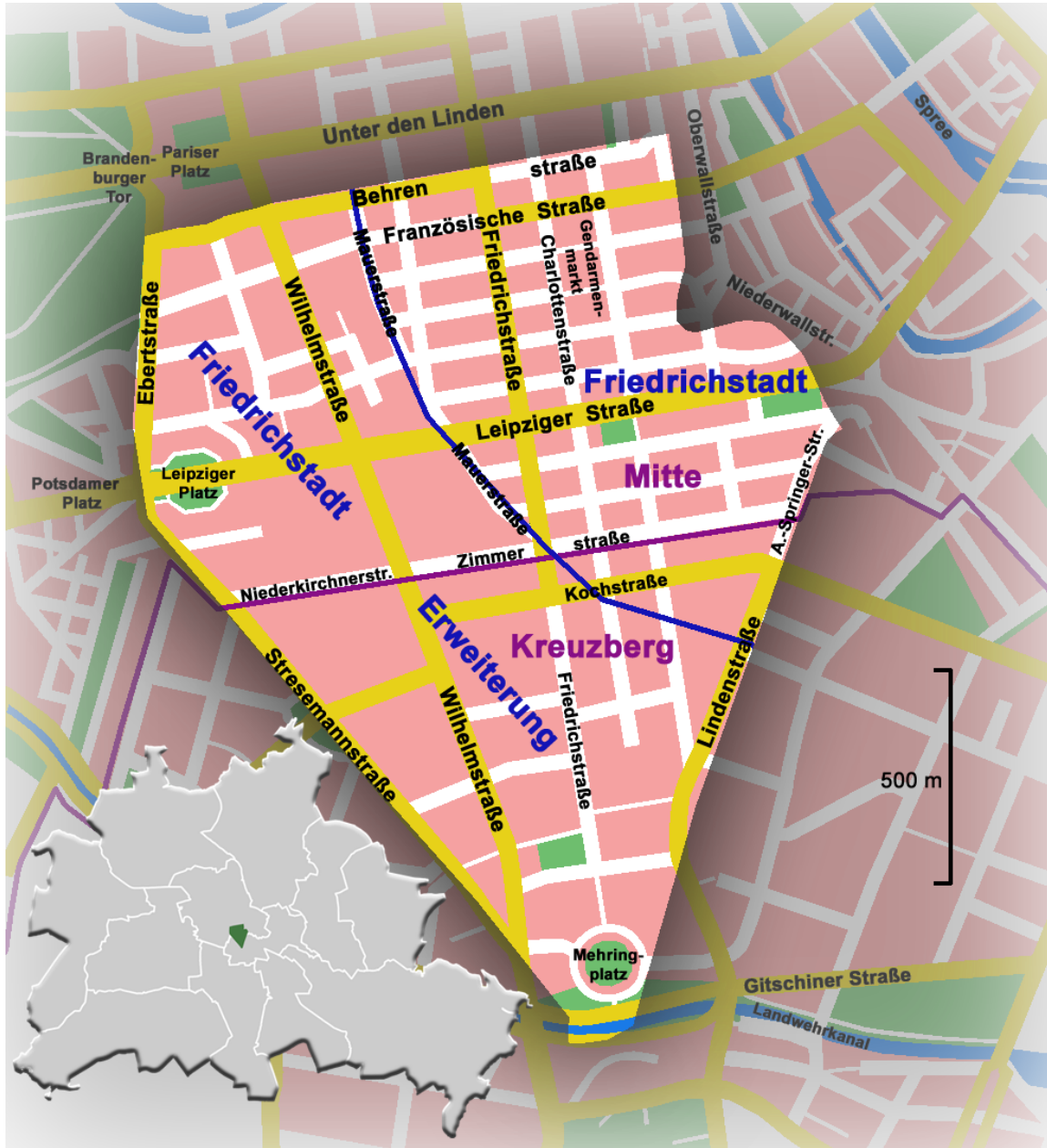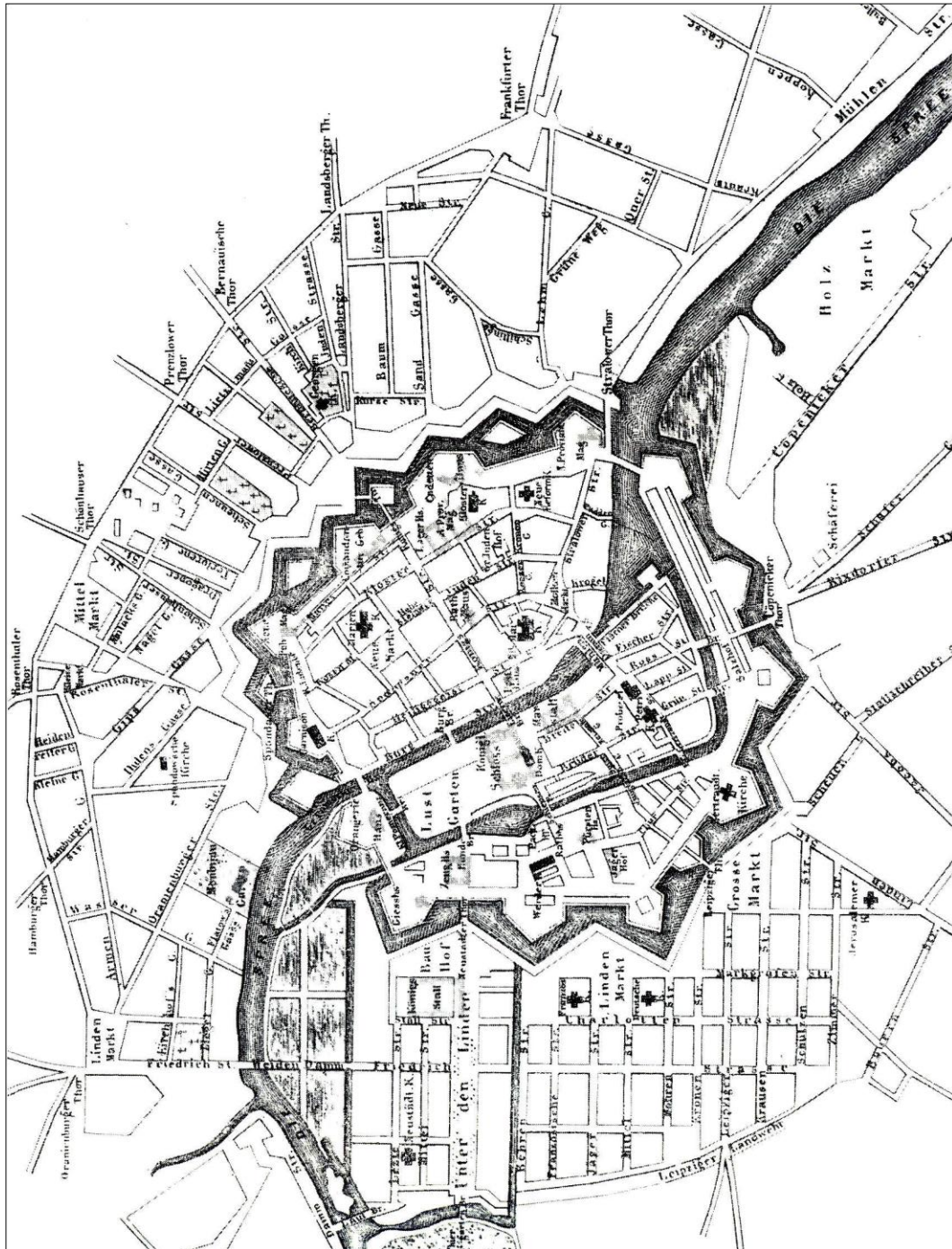
Figure 2. Berlin's medieval city walls and subsequent grid development.

A Brief History of Building in Berlin and the Friedrichstadt

Constituting a key part of Mitte, the area called the "Friedrichstadt" has been a focus for urban renewal projects using the approach of Critical Reconstruction from the late 1970s onward. The Friedrichstadt was built in the late part of the 17th century by ruler Friedrich Wilhelm, "The Great Elector," who was at the time sponsoring heavy military investment to conquer neighboring Slavic lands. [5] The Friedrichstadt was developed mainly as a place to house his growing army, but also as a place for the burgeoning civilian population that had already spread beyond the bounds of Berlin's medieval city wall. This and another district to the north, named Dorotheenstadt, were developed on a grid plan that presented an ordered contrast to the winding streets and jagged walls of the older city [Figure 2, p. 59]. [6] This original form of the district is often now referred to as the "baroque street plan" of the Friedrichstadt.

Berlin grew at a slow but steady pace throughout the 18th century, reaching a population of 150,000 by 1800. [7] Rapid industrialization during the next century caused a population explosion, as the city drew factory workers from the neighboring countryside. By the 1870s, when it became the capital of Bismarck's German Empire, Berlin's population had grown to over a million and many suburban towns had sprung up around the city center. Thus the Friedrichstadt, formerly located on the edge of the medieval city, found itself part of the booming center, or Mitte.

The city's population continued to grow throughout the Weimar period (1919-1933), reaching a high point of 4 million after the annexation of the new surrounding suburban districts in 1920. [8] Around this time, Friedrichstrasse, the main north-south axis of the Friedrichstadt, became a center for commercial activity and nightlife. Close to the entertainment district surrounding Potsdamer Platz and serving as the main connection to the grand east-west boulevard of Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse and the surrounding area constituted a prominent part of central Weimar Berlin, known for its association with the *demimonde*, bawdy theaters, and for housing the newspaper district. [9]

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[5] Brian Ladd, *The companion guide to Berlin* (Rochester, N.Y.: Companion Guides), 3-4.
[6] Herman G. Pundt, *Schinkel's Berlin: a study in environmental planning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 12.
[7] Ladd, *The companion guide to Berlin*, 5.
[8] Ibid., 5-6; See also T.H. Elkins and Burkhard Hofmeister, *Berlin: spatial structure of a divided city*, (London: Methuen, 1988), 24.
[9] Ladd, *The companion guide to Berlin*, 90.

World War II wrought terrible destruction on the city, especially in Mitte, not only through air raids but also through heavy shelling during the last dramatic week of the war, when the Russian army had to fight its way street by street through the city.[10] Post-war reconstruction commenced slowly, overshadowed by political struggles over the division of the country and its capital. Finally, in the 1950s both East and West Berlin governments, separated politically but not yet divided by a wall, both sponsored prominent building projects: in the East along the newly-christened boulevard of Stalinallee, and in the West through the first *Internationale Bauaustellung* (International Building Exhibition or *Interbau*) in the Hansa Quarter.

1961 saw the building of the Berlin Wall and the definitive division of the city, rendering the still war-torn Friedrichstadt a border zone [Figure 1, p. 56].[11] While most of the Friedrichstadt was too close to the wall and too void of prominent historical buildings to warrant immediate restoration, the areas directly to the north and northeast of the Friedrichstadt were partially restored during the late 1960s and early 70s to house East German government buildings. Though the commercial center of East Berlin remained further east, along Stalinallee and at Alexanderplatz, the northern part of the Friedrichstadt was still rife with historical and political significance, making it a conspicuous and meaningful location for official ministries and offices. The former site of the Prussian Stadtschloss (City Palace), demolished in 1952 and renamed Marx-Engels-Platz, became home to three new government buildings, and the Soviet Embassy established itself on the opposite end of Unter den Linden, near the Brandenburg Gate.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the wall, commercial amenities in West Berlin became focused around the shopping and entertainment district of the Kurfürstendamm (or *Ku'Damm*), insulated from the Wall by a few kilometers. The bombed-out and downtrodden southern Friedrichstadt, now part of West Berlin, and the neighboring area of Kreuzberg became an enclave for immigrant populations, and later also for the squatters and punks for which West Berlin became well-known. Thus the divided Friedrichstadt was a prime area for pursuing reconstruction projects for both East and West Berlin governments, as it was a historically significant neighborhood that was visibly in need of repair. As will be discussed below, political factors contributed to the recognition of this area as a viable place for renewal as well.

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[10] Frank Russell, *Architecture in progress : Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1984*, Architectural design profile (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 34.

[11] While the West German government was relocated to Bonn after the war, East Berlin remained the capital of East Germany, or the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

Building Traditions in Berlin – the *Mietskaserne*

Berlin is best-known for its five-story apartment houses, the majority of which were built during the industrial boom of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. This type of building has become an essential element in the architectural repertoire of those Berlin architects looking to re-establish traditional building approaches. In the previous century their dimensions had tended to reflect contemporary building code limits, as developers took advantage of the population explosion to extract as much return as possible from their building investments.[12] Usually between 50 and 100 feet wide on the street side, this building type was especially known for its series of courtyards, often two or three deep, reaching into the center of the block. Soon dubbed with the nickname "*Mietskaserne*" or "rental barracks," they became notorious for the dark and crowded living conditions they encouraged: one-room apartments housing whole families, lack of plumbing, and dark stains everywhere from burning coal for heat.[13]

The unpleasant living conditions in these buildings contributed to planners' post-World War II distaste for traditional urbanism, motivated as well by the Modernist philosophies articulated in the Charter of Athens. However, especially in places where little refurbishment was undertaken during the mid-twentieth century, this building type still dominates today, notably in the districts of Kreuzberg and Prenzlauer Berg. With the more recent return to traditional urbanism, the apartments in these districts are now generally considered spacious and pleasant, and the courtyard itself has even become a focus of tourism.[14] The five-story apartment building with inner courtyards is also one of the principle building types used in new construction in Berlin according to the concept of Critical Reconstruction.

The Critique of Modernism and Shifts in City Planning Approaches

Housing programs and city planning in both the East and West during the 1950s and early 60s focused mainly on large satellite housing estates, parking lots, and

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[12] Helmut Geisert, "Models for the Reform of Urban Housing," in *City of architecture, architecture of the city: Berlin 1900-2000,* ed. Thorsten Scheer, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Paul Kahlfeldt (Berlin: Nicolai, 2000), 41.

[13] Brian Ladd, *The ghosts of Berlin: confronting German history in the urban landscape* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1997), 101; See also Geisert, "Models for the Reform of Urban Housing," 44.

[14] The *Hackesche Höfe* (Hackesche Courtyards), a series of interconnected courtyards in the former handworker's district in Mitte, is one of Berlin's most popular tourist attractions. It should be noted that courtyard architecture was a popular type for factories as well, and small industrial operations were often mixed with housing in these buildings.

wide, auto-friendly avenues.[15] Such a radical diversion from earlier building and planning styles not only reflected the spirit of the time, as the Modernist approach articulated by CIAM *(Congrès Internationaux de l'Architecture Moderne)* became the standard, but, for West Germany in particular, symbolized a new beginning, untethered to Germany's violent recent history. For the East, though Modernism with its cosmopolitan Bauhaus legacy was officially denounced by party leaders, practical concerns over housing held sway, and large apartment blocks presented an efficient solution to shortages.

Beginning in the late 1960s, as theorists throughout the Western world began to think of new ways to approach city planning, West Berlin too saw the birth of a polemic against the hegemony of Modernist city planning and architectural practice. It was becoming apparent to the new generation of architects that the Modernist approach, with districts zoned according to function, did not achieve the utopian dream of community life it had promised, and slowly the pendulum began to swing back toward traditional urbanism as a way of creating better living and working environments. Works by postmodern theorists such as Aldo Rossi, whose book *The architecture of the city* (1964, translated into German in 1966) was widely read among the young generation of West German architects at this time, provided a notable basis for the development of anti-modernist ideas there.[16]

In 1968, the anti-Modernist stance was taken up formally in Berlin by a group of young, left-leaning architects and architecture students at the *Technische Universität Berlin* who called themselves "Campaign 507." They organized an exhibition called *Diagnose zum Bauen in West-Berlin* (Diagnosis on Building in West Berlin) and published a manifesto along with it, demanding, among other things, that the government focus on "replanning the city center rather than creating reservations," i.e. secluded housing estates.[17] As part of the general politically left-leaning milieu of the late 1960s, Campaign 507's tactics included actions such as squatting and communal living, and much of their manifesto included ideas that were blatantly socialist. Their ideas would later be integrated into a much different political climate, but their articulation of a wider vision for state-

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[15] Wise, 41. Wide avenues in the East and West had very different uses: while in the West most could afford to have a car, in the East individual auto ownership was rare. Wide avenues in East Berlin were built and used mainly for military parades and marches on important state holidays.

[16] Stimmann, "Das Gedächtnis der europäischen Stadt," 15. Though the work of American postmodernists, such as Robert Venturi, was known in Germany at this time, thinkers in Berlin tended to shun his theories as too consumer-oriented or even "destructive." See also Annegret Burg and Hans Stimmann, *Berlin mitte: die Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur* (Berlin: Birkhaeser, 1995), 211.

[17] Andreas Schätzke, "A Matter for the Polis: cities, architecture and the public in Germany," in *Josef Paul Kleihues: the art of urban architecture*, eds. Josef Pual Kleihues, Paul Kahlfeldt, Andres Lepik, and Andreas Schätzke (Berlin: Nicolai, 2003), 57.

sponsored urban renewal remains a key historical point of development for Berlin city planning.[18] As architectural historian Gert Kähler observes, Campaign 507 was the definitive starting point for the building trend that would rule Berlin for the next three decades:

> It was not the beginning of thought about the city and its critique,
> but it was the beginning of a public discussion on the subject: for the
> first time, a number of architects and urban planners as well as
> several teaching assistants from the Technical University Berlin
> voiced the opposition to official building policy in Berlin. The same
> individuals are still largely dominating the current debate – which
> only goes to show how serious and determined they have been from
> the beginning.[19]

While groups such as Campaign 507 were undoubtedly influenced by Postmodern architectural thought, the turn back to traditional urbanism and against the functionalist approach of Modernists in West Berlin also had much to do with broader intellectual and political currents in late 1960s West Germany, where the notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ("coming to terms with the past") was becoming an important issue. Whereas Berlin's first planners after the destruction of World War II sought to distance themselves both physically and ideologically from what they saw as the mistakes of the Wilhelmine, Weimar and Nazi periods by adopting a Modernist approach, the next generation of architects and planners blamed not the war but Modernism itself for the emptiness and dissatisfaction they felt in the urban environment. Victimhood, always an ambivalent topic for Germans in the aftermath of the Second World War, could now be claimed at the hands of misguided Modernists rather than the more politically problematic Allied bombs. "The European and especially the West German urban landscape," wrote Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, one of the most active proponents of the movement back toward traditional urbanism, "has clearly been destroyed less by the war then by the planners who, because of their abstract, biased and global conception of a city which in their view is an addition of quantitative functions, have turned them mostly into cheerless and desolate places."[20]

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[18] Schätzke, 59.

[19] Ibid. See also Gert Kähler, "As the Steam Began to Rise …," in *City of architecture, architecture of the city: Berlin 1900-2000,* eds.Thorsten Scheer, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Paul Kahlfeldt (Berlin: Nicoai, 2000), 382. As Schätzke points out, while groups such as Campaign 507 may have started out as relatively isolated and oppositional, the politics of reclaiming the inner city and rethinking city planning became more mainstream during the 1970s and triggered the well-known wave of squatting *Mietskaserne* in West Berlin.

[20] Victor Magnago Lampugnani, "The Facts and the Dreams: AD Interview," in *Architecture in progress : Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1984*, Architectural design profile, ed. Frank Russell (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 19.

The political mood under West German Chancellor Willi Brandt, whose policy of *Ostpolitik* encouraged the official recognition of East Germany (also known as the German Democratic Republic, or GDR) as a legitimate entity by the West, also had a significant effect on Berlin city planning during the early 1970s. Architects and planners began to recognize that the Wall, originally regarded as a temporary measure, was destined to remain a permanent part of the landscape, one which entailed a new attitude toward neighborhoods such as the Southern Friedrichstadt. "Despite the traditional significance of the district for the city as a whole, its fringe position in relation to the 'city' area of west Berlin has become increasingly obvious," wrote a group of planners in the 1980s. "New urban planning considerations for the future role and structure of this part of the city only emerged after the so-called Eastern bloc treaties were signed in the early seventies, confirming the division of the city."[21]

Another important event during the 1970s was the European Council's recommendation to celebrate "European Architectural Heritage Year" in 1975. The numerous events and publications surrounding this theme contributed to the raised awareness among both architects and the public regarding the worth of the old city center as a living space.[22] This awareness also crossed the Wall, affecting planning and building projects in East Berlin, most notably in the Northern Friedrichstadt. [23]

Josef Paul Kleihues and the Genesis of Critical Reconstruction

One of the signatories of Campaign 507 was Josef Paul Kleihues, who, after studying under well-known architect Hans Scharoun, had founded his own architectural practice in Berlin in 1962.[24] The need for a new approach to architecture implied in the critique of Modernism that emerged in the late 1960s became of central importance to Kleihues during the 1970s, when he began to develop his own building concept and promote a return to traditional urbanism. During these years he organized a major series of exhibitions on new architecture through University of Dortmund, where he was chair of design and architectural

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[21] Hildebrand Machleidt, Wolfgang Süchtig, Katharina George, and Günter Schlusche, "South Friedrichstadt," in *Project report, internationale bauausstellung Berlin 1987*, ed. Carola Wunderlich (Berlin: S.T.E.R.N., Behutsame Stadterneuerung Berlin, 1991), 94.

[22] Schätzke, 61-63.

[23] Hanno Rauterberg, "History – That Was Yesterday," in *New German architecture: a reflexive modernism,* ed. Ullrich Schwarz (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 313.

[24] Christin Haberlik, and Gerwin Zohlen, *Die baumeister des neuen Berlins* (Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung Beuermann, 1997),85. Scharoun had been the author of one of the first plans for the city after World War II. Called the "Collective Plan," it was hotly debated and was never realized. See Josef Paul Kleihues, "From Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City," in *Berlin / New York: like and unlike: essays on architecture and art from 1870 to the present,* eds. Josef Paul Kleihues, and Christina Rathgeber (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 395.

theory.[25] Then, along with Wolf Jobst Siedler, a prominent Berlin writer, Kleihues published a series of articles in the *Berliner Morgenpost* newspaper titled *"Berlin: Modelle für eine Stadt"* (Berlin: Models for a City) during late 1975.[26] Siedler had already published several editions of a book called *Die gemordete stadt* (The Murdered City), in which he bemoaned what Berlin had become in the hands of Modernist planners:

> [O]ne need not come from Rome, Paris or London to see the scars and holes in the cityscape that the removal of buildings, tower blocks stuck at right angles, and the violent introduction of street routes have left behind. Even the visitor from Munich or Hamburg senses the ruthlessness with which a new, and this time state-controlled, *Gründerzeit* has cut into the substance of the city, creating conditions such that soon nothing more will function in the city except for the traffic.[27]

Siedler obviously shared the distaste for Modernist planning that had recently become popular among architects, as well as their penchant for claiming victimization at the hands of post-war city planners. With his prominence as a columnist and publisher, he thus made a powerful ally for Kleihues, who shared his views and was able to put the ideas expressed in Siedler's book into a more focused architectural context.

In addition to his publishing and exhibition efforts, Kleihues spent the 1970s developing an approach to architecture that would incorporate traditional concepts of city planning and building with the useful technological and theoretical innovations of Modernism. In his writing, Kleihues clearly showed himself influenced by the anti-Modernist stance, especially in that the historical starting point for his concept of architecture was the destruction wrought on Berlin by the twin tragedies of the Second World War and Modernist town planning. Kleihues writes that, "As the homeless Berliners were sifting the ruins of their dwellings and patching them up as best they could to keep out wind and rain, neither of the planning committees (of Berlin) felt it necessary to advance a program of reconstruction, basing their projects instead on further demolition to make way for a gigantic street system and extensive rezoning measures."[28] What

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[25] Schätzke, 60.

[26] Ibid., 63-64.

[27] Wolf Jabst Siedler, and Elisabeth Niggemeyer, and Gina Angress, *Die gemordete Stadt; Abgesang auf Putte und Strasse, Platz und Baum* (Berlin: Siedler, 1993), 196.

[28] Kleihues, "From Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction of the City," 395.

was left, "fell victim during the first two post-war decades to a, from today's perspective totally incomprehensible, demolition fervor."[29]

Kleihues was also greatly influenced by Aldo Rossi's *Architecture of the city*. In particular, Kleihues admired Rossi's ability to connect the social and political concerns of architecture with aesthetic ones. "The bridge that Rossi spans," he wrote of the author's critique of functionalism, "from the economic and political relationships to the, in a narrower sense, artistic forms, the emphasis on this double purpose of architecture, was historiographically and theoretically a meaningful new beginning."[30] But while Kleihues had an affinity for Rossi's overarching concept of architecture, he also viewed his own approach as distinct from Rossi's in that it was "more open, more ready to experiment."[31] His entailed not just a return to the traditional city form, but a critique of that same form using the strategies developed by Modernists:

> We cannot concern ourselves with a fight in which one or the other side, tradition or Modernism, finally succumbs…but rather with freeing the possibilities that have kept themselves hidden in the reductionism of the previous epoch of the Modern, to open to the Modern an additional decisiveness. To adapt Adorno's concluding sentence of "Negative Dialectics," "Our attempt is united with the Modern even in the moment of its downfall."…The "critical" strategies of the Modern thus couple themselves with the traditional ideas of reconstruction.[32]

Thus Kleihues's approach was twofold: on the most general level, he sought to connect the aesthetic concerns of architecture with the larger socio-political sphere by creating an architectural concept that would encompass both overall city planning and individual building design. On a more specific stratum, the design of both was to be based on traditional forms, modified and improved upon using a critical approach adopted from Modernism.[33] These two ideas became the central features of Kleihues's architectural and city-planning concept, which he named "Critical Reconstruction."

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[29] Josef Paul Kleihues and Gerwin Zohlen, *Ausgewählte Texte* (Berlin: Internationale Bauakademie Berlin, 2004), 49. My translation.

[30] Ibid., 53

[31] Ibid.

[32] Kleihues and Zohlen, *Ausgewählte Texte,* 37.

[33] He also referred to this as "poetic rationalism" or "dialectic architecture." See Josef Paul Kleihues, "New building areas, buildings and projects," in *Project report, internationale bauausstellung Berlin 1987*, ed. Carola Wunderlich (Berlin: S.T.E.R.N., Behutsame Stadterneuerung Berlin, 1991), 6.

In his writings on Critical Reconstruction, Kleihues also clearly delineated his theoretical position in relationship to other contemporary architects. He critiqued what he termed "Postmodernism" in architecture, calling it "consumer-oriented," and claiming that the "anything goes" approach of Postmodern theorists and architects had led to a "speculative rhetoric" and "regressive history": in other words, to historicism without a foundation in tradition, and to a denial of Modernism as a valid critique of that tradition.[34] These points suggest that Kleihues's criticisms were aimed at American, rather than European, Postmodernists: while he was influenced by European Postmodernists like Rossi, he was opposed to methods such as Robert Venturi's, which entailed a more playful, freely mixed and, in a sense, superficial combination of aesthetic and structural elements. For Kleihues, the American Postmodernist disavowal of Modernist functionalism embodied an ironic and dangerous repetition of the Modernist denial of recent history, as well as a penchant for commercialism. These critiques would become of central importance in Berlin during the 1990s, when architects deemed too heedless of tradition were either passed up for ones more aligned with the approach of Critical Reconstruction, or forced to adhere to strict building guidelines which limited them to acceptable forms.[35]

Critical Reconstruction and the International Bauaustellung (IBA)

Kleihues's concept of Critical Reconstruction became the foundational approach for the *Internationale Bauaustellung*, or IBA, of which he was named director in 1979. It was in this series of urban renewal projects that the first detailed descriptions, as well as physical applications, of Critical Reconstruction were realized. The idea of holding another building exhibition like the Interbau of 1957 had already been on the minds of Berlin planners for some time when in 1978, partly due to public pressure from Kleihues and Siedler's *Modelle für eine Stadt*, the suggestion was formally put forward.[36] The exhibition was originally set to open in 1984, with Kleihues and Hardt-Waltherr Hämer as co-directors: Kleihues in charge of new building, and Hämer overseeing urban renewal projects.[37]

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[34] Kleihues and Zohlen, *Ausgewählte Texte,* 35-36.

[35] It should also be noted that he later openly criticized the strict historicism of the likes of Leon Krier, who worked in Kleihues's Berlin office in the 1970s, calling Krier's historical and craft-oriented approach "regressive" and "quixotic." See Kleihues and Zohlen, *Ausgewählte Texte,* 54.

[36] Victor Magnago Lampugnani , "From large housing estates on the outskirts to rebuilding the inner city: urban development debates in Germany 1960-1980," in *Josef Paul Kleihues: the art of urban architecture*, ed. Josef Paul Kleihues, Paul Kahlfeldt, Andres Lepik, and Andreas Schätzke (Berlin: Nicolai, 2003),76.

[37] Schätzke, 65. See also Lampugnani, "The Facts and the Dreams," 17-19. The IBA's work was delayed by political and logistical difficulties, and the exhibition was eventually opened in 1987, the year of the celebration of Berlin's 750th anniversary. This event was celebrated by both East and West Berlin and crowned on both sides by competing urban reconstruction projects: the IBA in the West and the Nikolaiviertel and Platz der Akademie in the East.

As opposed to the earlier Interbau, which had involved only a small, relatively isolated section of the city and had rebuilt it from the ground up, this time the IBA projects covered areas in many parts of West Berlin, with a large number of them concentrated in the Southern Friedrichstadt, and aimed for the integration of new projects with the existing city fabric. Competitions were held for each individual building site, all coordinated, however, under a regional plan drawn up by Kleihues and city officials. Cooperation from the architects was partly ensured by the fact that, as head of the exhibition, Kleihues also had considerable sway as to the choices of who served on the jury (and the winners), a tactic that continued to be used in Berlin planning culture even after reunification.[38] With Kleihues at the helm, the IBA became the first major series of building projects to physically embody both the ideology of Critical Reconstruction, and to apply the necessary political approach to planning later used by the reunited Berlin planning organs to create and implement a *Leitbild* for the city based on Kleihues's ideas.

The IBA gave Kleihues the opportunity to develop a practical set of rules for the application of Critical Reconstruction, in relation to a real set of projects. Using the IBA as a concrete example, he identified three levels of the urban landscape on which his approach was to be exercised. At the most basic level, the ground plan, Kleihues promoted a return to traditional, pre-Modernist urbanism, which put an emphasis on the mixing and integration of urban functions. This in turn affected the second level, that of the street elevation or "structure" of the city, as buildings along a street would need to differ in function but also serve together to create a harmonious whole. The innovative use of traditional forms expressed themselves in the third level — that of a building's "physiognomy" — as well.[39] Drawing on historical building types such as the *Mietskaserne*, Kleihues sought to aesthetically connect the face of the city to its past and to its overall form.[40]

Applying these concepts to the IBA, Kleihues's first goal for the exhibition was to, as much as possible, reinstate the baroque-era ground plan of the Southern Friedrichstadt, thus providing an overall city design that would express the historical form or "gene structure" of the city.[41] This goal proved impossible to achieve, as the funds and political sway needed to accomplish such infrastructural changes was not available to Kleihues and his colleagues at the time. However, in

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[38] Ruby, "The Eternal Return of the Void," in *New German architecture: a reflexive modernism,* ed. Ullrich Schwarz (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 300.

[39] Kleihues, "New building areas, buildings and projects," 6.

[40] Kleihues's use of the term "physiognomy" is interesting, as it implies the ability of the architect, or viewer, to discern the overall "character" of the city through the face of the individual building. The importance placed on the "look" of individual buildings thus becomes an essential part of overall city planning and allows design decisions to be made on the basis of whether a building expresses the "character" of the city. Here we begin to see the roots of the city planning controversy in 1990s Berlin, where decisions were reached based on subjective interpretations of what Berlin's true "character" was (or should be).

[41] Kleihues, "New building areas, buildings and projects," 6.

the 1990s this aspect of Critical Reconstruction came to be of central importance.[42] Secondly, his goal was to integrate new projects into the city fabric that would provide all necessary functions, including work, residence, and recreational facilities, as close to one another as possible, while retaining historical landmarks and existing buildings. Finally, the buildings themselves should conform to the traditional Berlin five-story type, with courtyards behind them. Large blocks were to be split up into smaller parcels, and "differentiated architectural forms" on both the ground-plan and individual building levels were encouraged.[43]

A slew of internationally-renowned architects competed on project designs, which ranged from restoration and addition to entirely new building projects. The eclectic approach used by Kleihues and the IBA officials is readily exhibited in the projects at Kochstrasse 16-19 [Figure 3, p. 72]. According to the IBA Project Report, the aims for the site were to create residential space as well as continue "the tradition of the former Berlin newspaper quarter" by settling another daily paper there. The result was the rebuilding of a classic building, with additions beside and behind it by architect Gerhard Spangenberg, to house the *tageszeitung* [sic] or "taz." The facility also houses a café and restaurant which are open to the public. Next to it, the architectural firm of Schudnagies/ Hameyer was responsible for the construction of a large residential building.[44] The combination of living, commercial, and recreational spaces, as well as the combination of old and new on this site, exemplify the approach of the IBA. The fact that these constitute a mere fraction of the total number of projects, all using this approach, commissioned through the IBA is a testament to its formidable and lasting influence on the shape of the Southern Friedrichstadt during the 1980s. Thus the IBA projects represent Critical Reconstruction's first major mark on the city.

Town Planning and Reconstruction in the East

Just as the Stalinallee project in the 1950s had provided an Eastern counterpart to the first Internationale Bauausstellung in the West, so the GDR also paralleled the IBA in the 1980s with restorations and building projects on the east side of the Wall.[45] Even well before the 1980s, architectural approaches in the East had mirrored those on the other side of the border. As early as the late

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[42] Wolfgang Süchtig and Peter Weiss, "A New Plan for Berlin's Inner City: Planwerk Innenstadt," in *Urban planning and cultural inclusion: lessons from Belfast and Berlin,* eds. William J. Neill, and Hanns-Uve Schwedler (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 65; see also Simone Hain, ""Struggle for the Inner City" – a Plan Becomes a Declaration of War," in *Urban planning and cultural inclusion: lessons from Belfast and Berlin,* eds. William J. Neill and Hanns-Uve Schwedler (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 69-82.

[43] Machleidt, Süchtig, George, and Schlusche, 95. This article gives a good overview of the IBA's specific goals.

[44] Ibid., 93.

[45] This project had entailed the construction of colossal, "wedding-cake" style buildings in neo-classical Stalinist style along a broad avenue in the East.

1960s, Eastern planners had noted the same problems with Modernist city planning as critics in the West. GDR officials recognized the failure of the city model that was zoned according to function, and began to promote the restoration of an urban mix: "What made the old city flexible was the healthy mixing of functions, especially those of living and working, but also those of relaxation and education," proclaimed State Secretary of the Building Ministry Karl Schmiechen in 1968.[46]

Though bureaucracy and lack of funds affected the speed at which ideological changes became physical reality, the currents among GDR architects were ripe for change by the mid-1970s. While Kleihues and his cohorts in the West were promoting a return to the traditional city form, young East Berlin architects were convincing their superiors to pursue similar urban renewal projects.[47] Without openly admitting Western influence, the GDR approach to planning also mirrored the West's in that, despite its acceptance of the Western critique of Modernism, it remained as opposed as Kleihues to Postmodernism's eclecticism. The Eastern architects' reasons, though necessarily articulated in the state-sponsored language of socialism, echoed Kleihues's in many respects: Postmodernism was seen to be a result of "the crisis of capitalism and bourgeois culture," which suppressed the "social function of architecture," accusations not dissimilar from Kleihues's designation of Postmodernist architecture as "consumer-oriented."[48] Moreover, GDR officials contended that the eclecticism of Postmodern architecture threatened to undo the positive developments that were Modernism's legacy, namely its ability to answer to the functional needs of society with the technological advances in building begun with the Bauhaus movement.[49] Thus the approach of the GDR city planners to historical building became not unlike Critical Reconstruction: to restore the historical city form in a functional manner.

The emergence in the East of Western-influenced architectural approaches was also no doubt encouraged by the atmosphere of détente during the 1970s, which,

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[46] Thomas Hoszislawski, *Bauen zwischen Macht und Ohnmacht: Architektur und Städtebau in der DDR* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1991)*,* 312.

[47] Given the level of government control over published material in East Germany, especially that of state-sponsored architects, it is difficult to trace the specific influence of Western architectural thought on East German practice during this time. However, it is unthinkable that the reconstruction projects being undertaken on either side of the Wall, not two kilometers apart, could have failed to influence one another.

[48] Schädlich, quoted in Hoszislawski, 324; see also Josef Paul Kleihues, "Poetischer Rationalismus," in *Josef Paul Kleihues: Ausgewählte Texte,* ed. Gerwin Zohlen (Berlin: Internationale Bauakademie Berlin, 2004), 35-36. The GDR planners also critiqued Krier for his antipathy to industrial building.

[49] Hoszislawski 325-326. The Bauhaus movement was vehemently disavowed in the GDR up until mid-century. See ibid., 314, 327.

[Top to bottom] Figure 3. Kochstrasse 18-19, the Tageszeitung building.
Figure 4. The Gendarmenmarkt with the Konzerthaus (left) and the Französicher Dom.

given the new influx of visiting foreign diplomats to the GDR and increased visibility in the Western public sphere, put pressure on the government to renew its urban landmarks. After building lavish new Modernist government buildings during the early 1970s, later in the decade the GDR turned its resources toward restoring historical monuments, such as the Semper Opera House in Dresden, as a way of showing visitors that they still had, and respected, their cultural treasures. As GDR architect Manfred Prasser noted,

> with the wave of [political] recognition came suddenly hundreds of diplomats, who very soon asked themselves why cultural treasures of the past were being so neglected…[T]hirty years after the end of the war the domes, churches and a theater of the capital of the country which invoked Goethe and Schiller, Thomas Mann and Martin Luther, Bach and Beethoven, lay in ruins. This did not reflect well on the GDR in the diverse international bodies for art, culture and monument preservation.[50]

During this period the GDR undertook some of its most ambitious rebuilding projects in Berlin, including the rebuilding of the Gendarmenmarkt, renamed "*Platz der Akademie*," and the nearby *Nikolai Viertel* (Nikolai Quarter).[51] Both prominent sites in the formerly neglected area of the Northern Friedrichstadt, these comprised prominent restoration and historically-oriented building projects that linked the eastern core of the capital to the artery of Friedrichstrasse. This main north-south avenue had also become a focus for redevelopment at this time; projects stretching the length of the street were planned and begun in the 1980s, including a set of "Passagen" between Taubenstrasse and Französische Strasse, as well as theaters and cultural centers.[52]

Housing two late-18th-century churches and a theater designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the *Platz der Akademie* was one of the most historically significant squares in the area [Figure 4, p. 72]. Along with the restoration of the *Französischer Dom* (French Dome) undertaken at this time, Schinkel's *Schauspielhaus* (Playhouse), rechristened as the *Konzerthaus* (Concert House) because of its new designation as home of the GDR's Berlin Symphony Orchestra, became one of the first projects in which GDR architects attempted a full, historically-oriented

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[50] Manfred Prasser and Lothar Heinke, "Im Grunde genommen ein Wunder," in *Konzerthaus Berlin, Schauspielhaus am Gendarmenmarkt, Bau- und Kulturdenkmale, 102,* ed. Matthias Barth (Homburg: Verl. Ausbildung und Wissen, 1996), 210 (my translation).

[51] The Nikolai Viertel, completed for the celebration of Berlin's 250th anniversary in 1987, another important occasion for cross-Wall competition, was a reconstruction of one of the medieval city quarters, complete with nostalgic pubs, storefronts and apartments.

[52] Joachim Paltuzki, *Architektur in der DDR* (Berlin: Reimer, 2000), 397.

restoration.[53] In the mid-1980s work was also begun on the French Dome's twin, the German Dome, on the other side of the restored Konzerthaus.

Headed by Manfred Prasser, who had been involved in the building of the GDR's *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republik, seat of the East German parliament) just a few years before, the *Konzerthaus* project was given almost unlimited resources and funding: in the economically-failing GDR a sign that the project was considered politically important. The building had been brutally damaged in the war, and only its outer shell, with trees growing out of it and propped up by security scaffolding, remained.[54] At first, GDR officials had envisioned an historically-accurate restoration only of the exterior, with a modern interior like that of other newly-built government buildings. Prasser, however, favored an interior that would match the outside of the building: "It was clear to us that for various reasons there could not be an historically-accurate reconstruction of the interior…but I found that the outer architecture must fit with the inside."[55] He eventually succeeded in convincing his superiors to concede to his plan of constructing an interior "with the festive character of classical architecture."[56] Allegedly because of the technical constraints of the building's planned use as a concert hall rather than a theater, but surely also because of time and financial constraints, the interior was constructed in a neoclassical style reminiscent of, but not entirely faithful to, Schinkel's original design. As opposed to the exterior, which was reconstructed exactly according to the original building, the only parts of the interior that correspond directly to the nineteenth century building are a few paintings by August von Kloeber that had survived inside the ruin.[57]

The *Konzerthaus's* interior can thus be seen as a first experiment by GDR architects in historically-oriented building. As opposed to Kleihues's approach, where reconstruction in an historical style was always combined with a critical appraisal of its value for the overall design and environment, Prasser did his best to faithfully evoke Schinkel simply for the sake of making the interior look and feel "historical." Such an attempt might have been criticized by the likes of Kleihues for giving the building a naïve, theme-park feel. Still, Prasser's

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[53] The word *Dom* in German often means "cathedral," as in the case of the *Berliner Dom*. Here, however, the word refers to the actual dome atop the church tower. The Schauspielhaus was built in 1818-21 after a fire destroyed an earlier theater on the same site. See Florian Bolk, Arnt Cobbers, and Sally Bixby Defty, *Konzerthaus Berlin*, Die neuen Architekturführer, Nr. 78 (Berlin: Stadtwandel-Verl, 2005), 2.

[54] Prasser and Heinke write that: "If you were good at climbing, you could still get into the building at this time, see the iron curtain before the burnt-out seats and imagine the balconies – the sky fell through the open ceiling, only a couple of pigeons had made the ruin livable" (209, my translation).

[55] Ibid., 216.

[56] Ibid., 219.

[57] Bolk, Cobbers, and Defty, 10.

Konzerthaus stands as a courageous foray into a type of building previously shunned in the GDR, not only in the sense that it was at least partly an accurate reconstruction, but in that Prasser developed, however heedlessly, a historically-oriented architectural vocabulary of his own for the interior. Thus Prasser's design can be viewed as part of a "proto"-Critical Reconstruction movement undertaken by architects on the eastern side of the Wall, whose awareness of the wider implications of their work within Postmodern architectural discourse in western Europe was doubtlessly limited, but who were nevertheless experimenting with methods of historical rebuilding. The same neo-traditional approach was taken further in the reconstruction of the Nikolai Viertel in the mid-1980s, where entire buildings were fabricated in an historical style.

Reunification – New Challenges

The toppling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought with it the opportunity to continue the legacy of historically-oriented building pursued by both East Berlin planners and the IBA, especially in the formerly-split Friedrichstadt. However, the process of reunifying a city which had been separated for half a century was a politically and logistically complex process. The high visibility of Berlin as the new capital of the country and the pressure to quickly develop properties in the inner city in order to meet the need for housing and business space, spurred on by astronomical growth predictions, presented a formidable challenge to the officials and agencies now in charge of building. Thus the application of Critical Reconstruction in the first half of the 1990s met with many hurdles and was not always carried through in the manner its proponents would have wished.

The reunification of the city government itself provided the first daunting challenge to officials. As a result of the *Wende* or "turn," the German term for reunification, not only did the East and West Berlin city governments have to negotiate roles and duties; in the Eastern part of the city, ownership of all properties, appropriated by the communist government decades before, had to be negotiated. In the process of unification the governments of Eastern districts, including that of Mitte, were left intact but forced to adopt the constitution as well as the overall institutions and methods of former West Berlin, putting officials with little experience in fast-paced planning or the market system in charge of what were now high-profile real-estate decisions.[58] The complexities of the West Berlin government structure itself brought an additional layer of

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[58] Elizabeth A. Strom, *Building the new Berlin: the politics of urban development in Germany's capital city* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2001), 58-60.

complexity to the changeover. The city's system now included both a hierarchical system of districts (*Bezirke*), organized under a central city government, and a laterally-organized group of planning offices whose duties often overlapped. Urban development interest groups played a role in helping to set guidelines for public and private development as well.[59] All these groups had to quickly coordinate their efforts to deal with the influx of demand for land and building permits after 1991.

The reprivatization of property proved to be one of the most daunting tasks faced by the post-unification government. Buildings formerly used for different arms of the GDR government now fell under the jurisdiction of different agencies, requiring the creation of a whole new city agency just to mediate the claims of different government branches.[60] Moreover, land claims dating from the Nazi period onward were not only numerous but could be bought up by developers and used to maneuver the sale of valuable property such as that along Friedrichstrasse, which was now once again the main north-south axis in the heart of the city.[61]

The years following November 1989 were marked by exponential development in Mitte, as speculation and optimism drove real-estate prices up. Predictions were rosy: in 1991 Berlin expected the influx of over one million residents and 700,000 new jobs, necessitating massive building measures to provide new housing and office space.[62] Even in the first months following the fall of the Wall, before the two Germanys were officially reunified, preparations were being made by the provisional East German government to try to profit from the inevitable revitalization of the Friedrichstadt. In the summer of 1990, they were already negotiating with private investors over several prominent parcels along Friedrichstrasse.[63] By October of that year, when official reunification took place, the mood was not only optimistic but feverish. Located at the center of the city, close to the future government offices and embassies with their well-paid employees and visiting diplomats, the street was, from a business standpoint, arguably the most desirable in the city.

Officials held considerable sway over development at this time due to the demand for land and building permits, but they were forced to make quick and

[59] Ibid., 29-30.
[60] This was called the *Koordinierungsauschuss innerstädtischer Investation* (Coordinating Committee for Inner City Investment) or KOAI. Ibid., 107.
[61] See ibid., 62-67 and 204.
[62] Michael Mönninger, "Die zusammenwachsende Stadt," in *Berlin Morgen: Ideen für das Herz einer Groszstadt*, eds. Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani and Michael Mönninger (Stuttgart: g. Hatje, 1991), 3.
[63] Strom, 201-2.

sometimes regrettable decisions as well. Given the short timeline for the government relocation from Bonn and the astronomical predictions for growth, pressure on the city to pursue accelerated development was high. This led, in the first years after the *Wende*, to the sale of large-block parcels to development companies rather than the slower and more expensive approach of dividing blocks into small salable parcels. As Elizabeth Strom observes, "[t]he business district of the early-twentieth century was comprised of modest-sized building parcels, usually dozens on each block, each owned by a different business or investment firm. Today's developers are interested in buying up entire city blocks, in other words in buying what had been the property of ten or twenty different owners."[64] While *Bezirk* officials may have chosen to promote slower, small-scale growth, their wishes were quickly overruled by the city government, who favored a quick turnaround and speedy development.[65] The magnitude of proposals allowed the building senator to wrest power from the over-inundated *Bezirk* officials, allowing prominent projects to be pushed through and certain investors favored.[66] Such sales not only ensured that solely large, well-organized developers could build along Friedrichstrasse, but also forced these developers to build high-density commercial space that would make their investments profitable. Thus the shape of the northern Friedrichstadt was largely determined by these first, large-scale sales.[67]

The block on which the Galeries Lafayette store now stands is a good example of the political maneuvering typical of the early 1990s. The complex of which it builds the northernmost part, an ensemble of three mall-like buildings called the "Friedrichstadt Passagen," constituted one of the most prominent building projects of the transition period following the *Wende*. Building had already commenced on plans for a similar shopping center with office and commercial spaces designed by GDR planners in the late 1980s. "At the time of the *Wende*," write Martina Düttman and Felix Zwoch, "there was this massive 'something' that simply made the side streets of Tauben and Mohrenstrasse disappear, sealed off the Platz der Akademie, whose street profile retreated back from the Friedrichstrasse…partly finished, partly already in ruins again."[68] After reunification, the half-finished complex was torn down to make way for new

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[64] Ibid., 203.

[65] Ibid., 105.

[66] This included the removal of GDR monuments for the sake of development, something of which the *Bezirk* planners had disapproved. This type of political maneuvering drew fire from the public sector and prompted the creation of the *Stadtforum* (city forum), a body of fifty experts who met regularly in public sessions to discuss planning and architectural issues. See Strom 60, 102.

[67] Strom, 104.

[68] Felix Zwoch and Martina Düttman, *Bauwelt Berlin Annual: Chronik der baulichen Ereignisse 1996 bis 2001 : 1996* (Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1997), 20; Strom, 203.

developers to pursue the same project in a renewed form.[69] Competition to develop this new complex was fierce; rumors circulated that the French President Francois Mitterrand had even contacted Chancellor Kohl on behalf of Galeries Lafayette, the French department store chain who wanted to buy the parcel. However, German developer Roland Ernst was able to buy up a property claim to a parcel included in the block, and shortly after was awarded the sale, with Galeries Lafayette as a tenant rather than an owner.[70]

Block-size development: The *Friedrichstadt Passagen*

The *Friedrichstadt Passagen* exemplify the inconsistent application of Critical Reconstruction methods to early development projects in reunified Berlin. The Passagen were to run three blocks from north to south along Friedrichstrasse, beginning in the north on the corner of Friedrichstrasse and Französische Strasse, and bordered by Mohrenstrasse on the south. Three gigantic buildings would each fill one full block's façade along Friedrichstrasse. The scale of the projects went against Kleihues's call for varied block façades, but because of the political pressures discussed above, this was overlooked at the time.[71] The original plan put forward for the Passagen was to have a street-level passage spanning the length of the complex. Oswald Matthias Ungers, architect of the southernmost building, condemned this idea for its interference with the historical street plan, a mark of his solidarity with Kleihues's approach to rebuilding the city, which favored preserving or even reinstating the old street plan wherever possible.[72] Partly due to Ungers's protests, the passage connecting the three buildings was put underground, linking the blocks but still allowing foot and auto traffic to move freely at street level. Parking was put underground as well, in accordance with new rules concerning traffic limits in the inner city, another planning realm where Kleihues's ideas had won out.[73]

The *Friedrichstadt Passagen* project follows the approach of Critical Reconstruction in its general orientation towards traditional Berlin city forms, with 22-meter

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[69] Fritz Neumeyer, *Oswald Mathias Unger* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt), 254.

[70] Strom, 204.

[71] On the two northern parcels, the buildings could only fill half to two-thirds of the whole block, as development on the opposite sides of the blocks had already taken place or they included buildings protected by historical monument status. The only building to fill its entire block is Oswald Matthias Ungers's Quartier 205 on the southern end.

[72] Neumeyer, 253.

[73] Hans Stimmann, "New Berlin Office and Commercial Buildings," in *Berlin Mitte: dei Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur,* ed. Hans Stimmann (Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1995), 13. See also Simone Hain, "Struggle for the Inner City – a Plan Becomes a Declaration of War," in *Urban planning and cultural inclusion: lessons from Belfast and Berlin,* ed. William J. V. Neill and Hanns-Uve Schwedler (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 69-84.

rooflines and open courtyards in the middle of each block.[74] Each building in the trio also contains an atrium or "glass gallery" which is intended to refer, through its form of circle, square or octagon, specifically to an historical square of the baroque Friedrichstadt. In addition, each building is meant to refer thematically to an aspect of Berlin city life: the square-shaped "Pariser Platz" gallery in Unger's Block 207 represents commerce with its shops; the octagonal "Leipziger Platz" gallery in Block 206 culture, with a piano bar and café; and the circular "Belle-Alliance-Platz" gallery in Block 205 represents gastronomy with a large gourmet grocery and restaurant area.[75] The underground foot passage that links the three together is also lined with commercial spaces [Figures 5-7, p. 80].

Joined together thematically and physically by the galleries, each building in the *Friedrichstadt Passagen* nonetheless takes a unique architectural approach to historical forms. Ungers's Block 207 attempts to solve the problem of its massive, block-size footprint with the concept of an eight-story "core building" enclosing two galleries or atriums, surrounded by six, six-story "single buildings" that project out of it at even intervals and create separate, recessed entrances in between them [figure 8, p. 82].[76] The "single buildings" are further differentiated from the "core" by a slightly darker color of sandstone in the façade.[77] Though its typically Ungeresque matrix of square, symmetrically-organized windows separated by square sandstone façade elements differentiates it from the more rectangular façades typical of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings, its stone-clad surface and tendency to reflect in its large windows the surrounding buildings, including those on the Gendarmenmarkt, allow it to blend into the streetscape. The building is paradoxical: its massive size and repetitive, almost monotonous façade could have served to make it not only noticeable, but overpowering. Instead, Ungers's choice of neutral color and his simple, relatively undifferentiated matrix design allow the building to stay unobtrusive to the viewer. As Paula Winter comments in *Bauwelt Berlin Annual*, the building "threatens to disappear as soon as one looks away," as the "the building does not show itself, despite the differentiated coloring, despite the deep openings," and the, "unmistakable squares abstract the body of the building that they cover."[78]

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[74] The Passagen form itself is an historical one. Siegfried Kracauer commemorated the Berlin Passagen his famous essay *Abschied von der Lindenpassagen* (Farewell to the Linden Passage). Many of these arcades lined Friedrichstrasse at the turn of the century. The *Friedrichstadt Passagen's* own marketing campaign used the ideas of *fin de siècle* flanerie frequently as well.

[75] Neumeyer, 253-4.

[76] Haberlik and Zohlen, 179.

[77] Neumeyer, 255.

[78] Haberlik and Zohlen, 180.

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[Top to Bottom]   Figure 5. The Galeries Lafayette atrium with a gourmet food court. Figure 6. The Quartier 206 atrium with a café and piano bar. Figure 7. The Quartier 205 atrium, surrounded by shops.

Its neighbor, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners' Quartier 206, abstractly references nineteenth century façade décor with a variegated "prism" design on the exterior [figure 9, p. 82].[79] Covered in light limestone with narrow, horizontally-oriented windows, up close the façade appears both more conspicuous and more daring than Ungers's. It is not until one sees the building from a distance that the complex façade resolves itself into a jagged decorative motif that recalls the plaster-adorned buildings of the previous century. The triangular tops of each prism, which from street-level appear to create a sharply delineated and uneven skyline, appear from a distance like dormers in a mansard roof. The interior also recalls the splendor of the previous century with its black-and-white checker motif and atrium with a piano bar and a sweeping spiral staircase, given a starkly modern touch with the addition of an escalator through the center of the gallery.

Jean Nouvel's Galeries Lafayette building is the most explicitly modern of the *Friedrichstadt Passagen* trio, with an imposing glass façade that curves around the northwestern corner of its block [Figure 10, p. 82]. The interior "gallery" area is made up of two cones, one rising up from the ground floor and one extending from the ceiling, creating an enclosed glass section that sheds colored rays of light into the lower café and gastronomy level, while providing a space for seasonal displays on the main level. The assertion, made by many, that Nouvel circumvented the rules of planners in order to build the façade out of glass is false: the laws governing façade design had not yet been instated at the time his design was approved, and indeed have never explicitly ruled out glass as a material.[80] The debate over glass as a building material did, however, become the focus of a very public and vehement debate between a few prominent Berlin architects, critics and journalists in the early 1990s. In the years following its construction, as Brian Ladd notes, Nouvel's building "seemed to clinch the arguments of the opponents of glass architecture: panes were frequently shattering and raining glass on passers-by; all the windows had to be replaced."[81]

In different ways, the three buildings comprising the *Friedrichstadt Passagen* each embody elements of the Critical Reconstruction approach. All conform to the traditional Berlin eaves height, and incorporate mid-block courtyards into their design. Each draws thematically and aesthetically on aspects of Berlin history as well. However, their sheer size excludes them from consideration as true examples of Kleihues's concept. Berlin Building Senator Hans Stimmann, a strong proponent of this approach, was also one of the first to look back on the

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[79] Annegret Burg, "Downtown Berlin : building the metropolitan mix," *in Berlin mitte: die Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur*, ed. Hans Stimman (Berlin: Bauwelt, 1995), 103.

[80] See, for instance, Ladd, *The companion guide to Berlin*, 99.

[81] Ibid., 99.

[Left to right] Figure 8. Oswald Matthias Ungers's
Quartier 205. Figure 9. Pei Cobb Freed & Partners' Quartier 206.

Figure 10. Jean Nouvel's Galeries Lafayette building.

Friedrichstadt Passagen project as a failure in terms of Critical Reconstruction, not, as has been speculated elsewhere, because of its specific architectural elements such as glass façades, but because of the size of the building parcels. Actually, in terms of an aesthetic language, the buildings that make up the *Friedrichstadt Passagen* can all be interpreted as good examples of Kleihues's approach. What Stimmann regretted about these projects was the fact that they "set the stage, and unfortunately also the scale, for an entire series of project ideas…large, multi-lot buildings with relatively homogenous uses."[82] This went directly against Critical Reconstruction's call for varied, mixed-use streetscapes, and Stimmann spent the next few years campaigning for an overall development plan that would not only reinstate the historical street and building codes, but would require small-scale investment in individual block parcels.

Unfortunately, after the building and buying frenzy directly following the *Wende*, in the late 1990s property prices dropped dramatically. The predicted influx of workers and jobs never came, and Mitte was left with millions of square meters of empty offices and a plethora of "for rent" signs. This situation proved favorable, in one way, for Galeries Lafayette, which was soon able to demand lower rent from its property owner.[83] But lack of residents and jobs also meant lack of customers, and despite lower rents it took years for the store to turn a profit.[84] By 2001 the overall prospects for the city's economic and physical growth were meager. For Stimman, Berlin was, "in contrast to the exploding boomtowns of the world, a city with negligible economic and population growth, with the associated lack of demand for property."[85]

Hans Stimmann and the institutionalization of Critical Reconstruction through the Planwerk Innenstadt

A rguably the most influential politician on Berlin city planning since the *Wende,* Stimmann worked tirelessly throughout the 1990s to try to implement Critical Reconstruction in a meaningful and lasting way. He was made Building Senator directly following the *Wende,* a position he held, though under several different titles, until term limits forced him to retire in 2006.[86] Originally trained as a mason, Stimmann studied engineering at the *Technische Universität Berlin* during the mid-seventies, and then served in both Berlin and his

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[82] Stimmann, "New Berlin Office," 11.
[83] Strom, 206.
[84] Bea Gottschlich and Kirsten Reinhold, "Berlin ist eine Herausforderung: Interview mit dem Galeries Lafayette-Chef Philippe Houze," *TextilWirtschaft,* February 26 (2004): 92.
[85] Stimmann, "Das Gedächtnis," 23.
[86] Anreas Tzortzis, "Berlin's Post-Wall Master Builder Retires," *The New York Times*, Sep 27, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/27/arts/design/27stim.html (accessed February 14, 2010).

home town of Lübeck, as a planning consultant and Lübeck's Housing Senator, before accepting the post of Senate Building Director in Berlin in 1990.[87] The term "senator" is misleading, as the position is essentially that of a cabinet secretary, reporting directly to the mayor. As Building Senator, Stimmann served as head of the Department of Construction, which was later integrated with the Department of Urban Development.[88] While many probably expected him and Kleihues to face off over the position, Stimmann instead became Kleihues's ally in the government sector, a faithful and tenacious representative of Critical Reconstruction who shouldered the difficult task of promoting an overarching architectural and city-planning theory in political circles.[89] Kleihues was thus left in the enviable position of being free to pursue his own architectural and theoretical endeavors, while still having a hand in shaping the city.

Once in office, Stimmann immediately encouraged Kleihues's ideas of a return to traditional height limits and the "guiding image of the 'European City'": street-level commercial spaces topped by housing or office space that would create a pleasant, pedestrian-friendly and urban atmosphere.[90] He also promoted the typically "Berlin" building type, discouraging experimental, deconstructivist, or otherwise untraditional designs or building materials.[91] As seen in the *Friedrichstadt Passagen* projects, these parameters were generally accepted by all planning agencies and applicants, and were passed into law immediately following the *Wende*. Many other aspects of his approach, however, were hotly criticized by architects and journalists, and often met with political opposition as well.

One of these was Stimmann's staunch support of Kleihues's vision to reinstate the baroque-era street plan. The main conduit for this effort was the *Planwerk Innenstadt* or "Inner-City Plan," whose objective was to present Stimmann's, and by proxy, Kleihues's overarching planning concept for development for the neighborhood of Mitte. Its main concerns were re-integrating "monostructurally developed" areas of housing or commercial activity, i.e. those zoned for single uses, the development of publicly-owned land in the East and a "reduction model" for traffic.[92] Debate over the theoretical and aesthetic aspects of the plan were colored by political criticisms, as the plan gave Stimmann almost unlimited power over the reclaimed land. By narrowing streets, many of which had been

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[87] Anreas Ruby, "The Eternal Return of the Void," in *New German architecture: a reflexive modernism*, ed. Ullrich Schwarz (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 296.

[88] Strom, 101.

[89] Haberlik and Zohlen, 85.

[90] Stimmann, "New Berlin Office," 7, 13.

[91] Ibid., 17-18. This embroiled him in what was termed the 'Architectural Debates of 1993-94' discussed below.

[92] Süchtig and Weiss, 61-65.

widened considerably in the post-war period, Stimmann's department effectively gained control over new plots of land in the inner city on which they could exert better and more specific influence, thus achieving Stimmann's end goal of implementing Critical Reconstruction in the inner city and bypassing any political opposition.[93] "Since 1991 the Senate has tried again and again to make the subject of the individual plot of land part of the debate concerning the reconstruction of the city. With the decision to adopt the 'Planwerk Innenstadt' in 1999 this strategy was given a formal and reliable basis," he wrote in 2002.[94]

As Elizabeth Strom points out, however, "the approval of the *Planwerk Innenstadt* in and of itself means nothing."[95] The government arm in charge of enforcing it, the Department of Urban Development, has no power to actually build anything; all it can do is try to regulate the sale of land and hope that it is used by private investors in the ways put forth by the *Planwerk.* "For this to truly happen," Strom writes, "Berlin's planners will have to become very adept at managing real estate and its development": they will have to try to encourage investment by small owners who share their vision for the city.[96] All this will have to be done in conjunction with the other Berlin governmental organs, including that of the *Bezirke,* as well.

Nevertheless, the *Planwerk Innenstadt* remains an important vision, and marketing tool, for the Urban Development office. Visually embodied in what are called the *Schwarzpläne* (black plans), it shows the individual plots of land in the inner city, with built areas in black and unbuilt areas in white. A quick comparison of the *Schwarzpläne* from 1945, 1953 and 1989 shows how easily the plans let the viewer detect building densities [Figure 11, p. 86]. The *Schwarzpläne* provide the perfect visual "evidence" for the need to accomplish Critical Reconstruction's goals of increasing urban density through the narrowing of traffic boulevards, by illustrating very simply and easily the "unwholeness" of the unbuilt city. Stimmann justifies the use of these plans on a more theoretical level as well, arguing that the groundplans make up "the memory of the city," which, when articulated in black and white, "like individual letters, build words and sentences and tell stories."[97] For him, any empty space constitutes a silence that interrupts the continuous "story" of the city.

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[93] Strom, 110.
[94] Hans Stimmann, "From Masterplan to Architecture," in *Vom Plan zum Bauwerk: Bauten in der Berliner Innenstadt nach 2000.,* eds. Philipp Meuser and Hans Stimmann (Berlin: Braun, 2002), 13.
[95] Strom, 113.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Stimmann, "Das Gedächtnis der europäischen Stadt," 11.

Berlin - Stadtmodelle - Schwarzpläne des Gebäudebestandes

1940

Berlin - Stadtmodelle - Schwarzpläne des Gebäudebestandes

1953

Berlin - Stadtmodelle - Schwarzpläne des Gebäudebestandes

1989

Figure 11. Schwarzpläne, showing building densities in the inner city.

Understandably, this attempt to abstractly rationalize planning decisions has earned Stimmann much criticism from a philosophical standpoint. He has also come under fire from critics because of the *Planwerk*'s goal of tight control over urban development, a goal necessitated by Stimmann's belief in the importance of pursuing a Critical Reconstruction approach. The belief in the need for an overarching city plan that includes overall design as well as building typologies is, as we have seen, an integral part of the approach of Kleihues's theories: an ironic one, considering his criticism of the destruction waged by Modernists who had different overarching plans in mind.[98] In the early 1990s, when investors were clamoring for property along Friedrichstrasse and the applications for construction were piling up, there was an especially great fear, not only among the likes of Stimmann and Kleihues, but among other architects and critics as well, that the building fever would run out of control and Berlin would end up looking like a theme park rather than a metropolis. As Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, likewise a supporter of Critical Reconstruction and one of Kleihues's partners in organizing the IBA a decade earlier, wrote in 1991:

> [Berlin's] motor is building speculation…But to bring this dynamic into sensible urban planning channels and utilize the city, a plan is needed. More exactly: there must be an overarching idea under which the different projects which will come together in the city can be ordered.[99]

The "Architectural Debates" of 1993-94

The overarching, all-encompassing approach necessitated by the will to plan the city according to the tenets of Critical Reconstruction, as well as

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[98] Kleihues's approach, however, to the idea of overarching plans is much more nebulous than Stimmann's. Of the IBA he writes, "I was concerned to find an approach that, instead of striving for a higher unity based on the dissolution of different or conflicting interests, would aim at solving a merely apparent contradiction, by encouraging the free, and in a sense even autonomous, development of separate elements of the city (building, block, street, square) while ensuring their integration into a larger whole […] Although this did not presuppose any priority of urban planning with respect to the individual architectural object in the sense of a value system, it did presuppose the importance of the logic of planning decisions. […] The priority of the plan and configuration of the city of the city thus defined were and remain a methodological constituent of the theoretical concern with the critical reconstruction of the city" (Kleihues, "From Destruction to the Critical Reconstruction," 407).

[99] Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani and Michael Mönninger, *Berlin Morgen: Ideen für das Herz einer Groszstadt* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1991),10. Another concern voiced by several critics is that of gentrification. Hain writes that "Behind these plans – which are argued in aesthetic and seemingly neutral town planning policy terms – the drive to return to the density and street pattern of the past represents a resolution in favor of massive redistribution of public property or wealth and an interest in transforming the population structure in the district" (72). Strom notes that "The thousands of new apartments that would be built through the *Planwerk Innenstadt* were not expected to offer new housing options to the current residents of the central city, most of whom were low- and moderate-income tenants living in subsidized apartments. Rather, they would cater to middle- and upper-class dwellers, the young professional "mit Laptop und Handy (cell phone)" (112).

Stimmann's non-apologetic attitude toward this approach, has led to accusations of a "bully pulpit" or "lord of the manor" tactics.[100] Certainly some of the accusations were well-founded: the juries of design competitions for prominent building sites often consisted of the same few architects, all part of Kleihues's and Stimmann's close circle, and of course they tended to choose their colleagues as the winners.[101] But as Gert Kähler observes in her essay on the Berlin architectural debates, "whenever a 'powerful man' takes a well-defined position in a period of booming growth, this is bound to raise controversy."[102] Kähler states that, "Stimmann's position had a special – rare! – charm in this respect, because he was very straightforward and outspoken in defending it."[103] Criticism of Stimmann and his department's city planning practices constituted one part of the debate about Berlin architecture that raged in both national newspapers and architectural journals in 1993 and 1994. The larger political concerns that Berlin was being rebuilt by a "cartel" of planners and architects, including Kleihues and other neo-traditionalists such as Hans Kollhoff and Max Dudler, were then carried over into concerns about the aesthetic significance of the architecture itself.[104]

Hans Kollhoff, a Berlin architect who had studied under Ungers and was considered part of the "Berlin cartel," advocated alongside Lampugnani a specific kind of "stone" architecture that, according to them, was dictated by the need for continuity in the city. Both took part in the back-and-forth of what are now termed the "Berlin architectural debates." According to historian Gerwin Zohlen, Kollhoff's main idea was "to put the respect for the city over the freedom of expression of individual architects. For him, the city is an inseparable whole which deserves a higher rank over individual artistic expression."[105] Lampugnani, likewise, in an article he wrote for the national magazine *Der Spiegel*, called for a specific kind of architecture that he considered "compatible" with Critical Reconstruction.[106] While Lampugnani abstractly demanded architecture of "uniformity, simplification and permanence," Kollhoff called specifically for stone materials to be used. Whatever their specific arguments, both were

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[100] Strom, 109; Hassemer, quoted in Hain, 73.

[101] While this aspect of the planning process has been hotly criticized, and rightly so, it must also be noted that the planning culture in Berlin revolves around panels of experts and competitions. No matter who the leaders, public input or decisions based on democratic methods such as referenda are not part of the city's political culture. See Strom, 24-27. A public forum called the *Stadtforum* was set up around this time to field public concerns as well. See note 66 [p. 132 of this article]

[102] Kähler, "As the Steam Began to Rise," 381.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Haberlik and Zohlen, 98.

[106] Actually, Lampugnani never directly mentioned Berlin in this piece. See Kähler 386.

immediately accused of being architectural "fascists."[107] The public prominence of these debates probably contributed to the confusion over whether figures like Kleihues and Stimmann disapprove of glass as a building material or favor only "boring" or non-experimental architecture. In fact, at the time of the debates Kleihues found them so banal that he stated that he would like to build solely in glass.[108] Stimmann stood somewhere in the middle: while he has written that Berlin needs a "typology" for buildings and that they should use typically local building materials such as stone or brick, no effort has been made to legally ban glass from Berlin's architectural repertoire.[109]

Though these vehement public debates seemed to dissipate in the mid-1990s without achieving much more than raising an awareness of Berlin architecture in the national and international consciousness, they remain an excellent illustration of the intertwined nature of architectural typology with overall urban planning. To implement an approach such as Critical Reconstruction, some sort of guidance and regulation is necessary at all levels of planning, from street plan to façade material. This necessity has the potential to make such a plan politically and publicly unpopular, as well as expensive and difficult to implement. The tension between a free-market system in which private investment is necessary, and a strategy such as the *Planwerk Innenstadt* which attempts to maintain control over this development while at the same time attracting investment, exemplifies the ambivalent position Critical Reconstruction holds in a city such as Berlin.

Critical Reconstruction at its Best: *Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt*

The *Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt* complex, completed in 1996 on the block directly north of the *Friedrichstadt Passagen*, provides what is perhaps the best example of a successful Critical Reconstruction approach in this area of the city. With a total concept and infrastructural elements designed by Kleihues himself, the complex consists of both refurbished historical buildings and new ones on small lots designed by him and three other architects.[110] In this manner the ideal of overall planning is combined with the wish for individual parcel development. Each building has a separate entrance and separate usage, but all back on the green courtyard in the center of the block.[111] All of the buildings exemplify

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[107] Kähler 386. See also Haberlik and Zohlen 98. On the other side of the debate stood deconstructivist Daniel Libeskind, architect of the new Jewish Museum.
[108] Haberlik and Zohlen, 91.
[109] See Stimmann, "New Berlin Office," 18-19.
[110] Haberlike and Zohlen, 87.
[111] Burg and Stimmann, 60.

Kleihues's ideal historical-modern dialectic, as well as the typology of the mixed-use office, commercial and inner-city residential form.

Four historical buildings were extant on the block. On the southern side, a red sandstone building along Französische Strasse, built in 1900 as a wine shop and delicatessen adjoining the well-known Borchardt Restaurant, was remodeled by Müller Riemann Scholz Architects into a restaurant of the same name, topped by office and residential spaces [Figure 12, p. 91].[112] The other three historical buildings are found on the Friedrichstrasse side of the block, one near the corner of Friedrichstrasse and Französische Strasse, and the other two adjoining each other on the northern corner of Behrenstrasse. The more southerly building along Friedrichstrasse was highly deteriorated and collapsed during construction of the buildings that were designed to flank it; its façade was reconstructed to preserve the continuity of the original design, which was almost finished.[113]

In addition to creating the overall design for the *Hofgarten* block, Kleihues designed both the Four Seasons Hotel on the rear side of the block facing Charlottenstrasse, and the narrow studio-office building that neighbors the hotel on Behrenstrasse. The hotel, faced with light-colored Roman travertine stone and featuring both flat surfaces and curved window-bays, combines the traditional, stone-clad eight-story building with simplified and irregular forms, integrating modern elements that nonetheless remain inconspicuous in the surrounding streetscape [Figure 13, p. 91]. In contrast to the massive stone façade of the hotel, the narrow studio-office building, which also houses two shops on the ground level, allows its interiors maximum light by utilizing almost solely glass, accented by metal balcony railings and window frames, in its façade.[114] Matching the exact building and floor height of the hotel, it also echoes the design of the stone building through its curved balconies, which refer directly to the curved window bays of the hotel [Figure 14, p. 95].[115] Kleihues's choice of material for this smaller building can also be read as a commentary on the architectural controversy over stone building that was taking place during its design.[116] While utilizing modern materials such as metal and glass rather than stone for its façade, the studio-office building still achieves a solid, almost stone-like presence due to its neutral color and placement in harmony with the neighboring buildings. Thus it exemplifies Kleihues's attempt to adapt and improve on traditional building types with contemporary building materials and simplified forms.

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[112] Ibid., 43.
[113] Ibid., 60.
[114] Burg and Stimmann, 38.
[115] Andrea Mesecke, Josef Paul Kleihues, and Thorsten Scheer, *Josef Paul Kleihues* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1996), 210.
[116] Ibid., 211; Burg and Stimmann, 38.

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[Top to bottom] Figure 12. The Borchardt Building, part of the Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt complex. Figure 13. Four Seasons Hotel, designed by Josef Paul Kleihues.

Kleihues's narrow office building neighbors a residential building designed by Swiss architect Max Dudler.[117] Like the other two architects for the *Hofgarten* project, Hans Kollhoff and Jürgen Sawade, Dudler studied under Oswald Matthias Ungers and is considered part of the Berlin architects' "cartel."[118] The building, which faces onto Behrenstrasse, contains a greater number of apartments in comparison to the other buildings, thus fulfilling the zoning requirement of 20 percent housing space per block in one building, rather than spreading it solely through the attic or penthouse floors of all the buildings.[119] Concentrating the living spaces in one building allowed Dudler to better fit requirements such as elevators and staircases to the use of residences. Organized as maisonettes, the apartments' "functional rooms" such as baths and kitchens are located in the center of the building, allowing the living rooms to face outward toward the street or courtyard, respectively.[120] Clad in green granite, the outside of the building presents a neutral, rectangularly-oriented façade, which is almost unvariegated except for the two uppermost stories, which step back from the façade plane on one side of the building. Owing to its dark color and conventional design, the building completes the block while failing to draw attention to itself, and sets off its glass and white-plaster neighbors.

Kollhoff's pair of matching buildings along Friedrichstrasse, originally designed to wrap around an existing, historically-protected building, now actually constitute a single structure with varying façades. As mentioned above, the historically-protected building around which Kollhoff designed two office and commercial complexes was in such bad condition that it collapsed during construction. Its Modernist white-plaster façade was reconstructed to preserve the validity of Kollhoff's design, which was almost completed by that time [Figure 15, p. 96].[121] Despite their outer differences, the interiors of all three buildings are integrated into a single structure.[122] This type of differentiated façade is one of the tactics outlined by Kleihues as a possible solution to large-scale building, in that it preserves the illusion of small-scale building without necessitating that every parcel be separately sold and designed.[123] The façades of Kollhoff's two newly-designed portions are almost identical, both using a grey-green granite in a "flat relief" design drawn from prewar Berlin architectural tradition.[124] This

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[117] for plans see Burg and Stimmann, 60.
[118] Haberlik and Zohlen, 36.
[119] Ibid., 34.
[120] Ibid., 34.
[121] Hans Kollhoff, and Fritz Neumeyer, *Hans Kollhoff* (Berlin: Ernst, 1995)*, 248.
[122] There were no references to the older form of the historical building; this would require further research.
[123] Aldo Rossi's project in the Schützenstrasse block to the southeast of the *Hofgarten* is a well-known example of this approach.
[124] Kollhoff and Neumeyer, 248.

tradition is also echoed in the three-tiered vertical differentiation of the building: the ground-level and first floors constitute a "monolithic configuration" with larger stone pieces fitted together, on whose solid base the middle section of four floors use narrower rectangular pieces to delineate the vertical matrix of windows.[125] Finally, the upper two stories are set back from the plane of the façade and have wider windows. The façades of the two Kollhoff-designed sections differ only in the width of their windows: the narrower, mid-block building appears as a compressed version of its corner sibling. "The buildings," according to Kollhoff, "aspire to be conventional, in the best sense of the word: along with similar constructions they set out to give form to a street, a city. Only when looked at more closely do they draw attention to themselves."[126]

The same could be said of Jürgen Sawade's building, which fills the gap between Kollhoff's building and the historical Borchardt building on Französische Strasse.[127] The building houses offices, with two commercial spaces on the ground floor, and is often cited as "noticeable" because of its almost perfectly flat, polished grey-black granite façade containing wide window openings framed with narrow metal strips. A self-proclaimed "purist, rationalist, and increasingly also a minimalist," Sawade's design exemplifies "logically precise construction," whose appeal lies in its technical perfection.[128] However, especially on bright days the building itself is hard to detect due to its highly reflective surface. Rather, one sees clearly the curving glass lines of Jean Nouvel's Galeries Lafayette, which stands across the street [Figure 16, p. 97]. Thus Sawade's building achieves, as do the rest of the buildings in the *Hofgarten* complex, the paradoxical goal of being daring and conventional, unique but conformist, by letting its simple form reflect the streetscape around it.

In walking around this block, one would never suspect that the entire complex was planned by one architect, or that each building's designer had in mind a central idea. The buildings appear (or disappear, as the case may be) as an integral streetscape, only occasionally arousing the viewer to stop and appreciate their aesthetic appeal. Though not a lofty goal, this is in many ways the ultimate achievement of Critical Reconstruction: a cityscape that invites comfortable and prolonged use, not drawing attention to itself though any kind of experimentation, be it ugly or beautiful. The city is knit together through carefully differentiated but matching forms that draw on their historical

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Sawade, along with Kleihues, was one of the signatories of the "Campaign 507" manifesto, and has had his own architectural practice in Berlin since 1970. See Schätzke, 59. See also Haberlik and Zohlen, 169.

[128] Haberlik and Zohlen, 169.

counterparts and improve on those models with contemporary building techniques and materials. Critics may call it boring, authoritarian or even "fascist," but they cannot refute the assertion that in this portion of the city, Critical Reconstruction has, at least according to its own measures, succeeded.

Concerns for the Future

Berlin, once the "biggest construction site in Europe," is now largely finished, yet much about its future remains unknown. The most vital question for the near future is whether the huge amount of investment made in the 1990s will pay off, when and if Berlin's economy improves. In the Friedrichstadt, once home to nothing but yellow cranes and gigantic holes, nearly everything is complete, but the plethora of "For Rent" signs in windows betrays the slow economic growth the area is experiencing. By 2007, Berlin's unemployment rate stood at 19 percent, and nearly 10 percent of office space in Berlin was unoccupied.[129] Another important question concerns the future of GDR buildings, few of which have been designated monuments. The application of Critical Reconstruction to sites in the former East draws attention to its most glaring internal contradiction: the only buildings not considered worthy of preservation or restoration are those from the mid-twentieth century, particularly those associated with the GDR.[130] Condemned by "experts" on both aesthetic and functional grounds, the public debates associated with the demolition of prominent GDR buildings, most notably the *Palast der Republik,* have shown that there is much more at stake in their destruction than simple concerns over land use or even aesthetics. The destruction of such buildings has the potential to alienate half of Berlin's population by destroying its own architectural heritage; on the other hand, GDR buildings carry controversial legacies and remind both former East and West Germans of a painful recent past. As with the destruction wrought by Allied bombs, it has been difficult in the re-suturing of East and West Germany to tell who the victims and perpetrators are, and the fact that some of the buildings stand close to the new government quarter of reunified Germany has made the question of their existence even more difficult to answer.

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[129] *Immobilienfokus Berlin: Büroflachen 2006/2007* (Berlin: Engel & Volkers, 2007), 3. For updated date, see "Das Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg," http://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/ (accessed February 15, 2010).

[130] See, for instance, the refurbishment of Alexanderplatz. With an overall plan by Hans Kollhoff, this too looks to be a textbook example of Critical Reconstruction. See *Alexanderplatz: Städtbaulicher Ideenwettbewerb* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1994).

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Figure 14. Atelier Building, designed by Josef Paul Kleihues.

Figure 15. Hans Kollhoff's design for the Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt complex,
which surrounds a pre-existing façade.

Figure 16. Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt - Jürgen Sawade.

The most common tactic has, so far, been to simply tear down or completely remodel them. As Hanno Rauterberg attests, "[t]he idea was to cast off the uncomfortable history of the GDR by removing all evidence of its existence."[131] While theoretically Critical Reconstruction encourages the incorporation and careful re-integration of historical buildings into the cityscape, the legacy of the GDR is perhaps still too close at hand to be dealt with, and thus continues to fall victim to the wrecking ball. One is compelled to ask what the next generation of young architects will have to say about the ones whose "demolition fervor" removed the last traces of a forty-year regime from the face of the city.

Summary and Conclusion

From its beginnings in the IBA to its current application at sites such as Alexanderplatz, Critical Reconstruction has, over the span of just a few decades, shaped Berlin in a significant and lasting way. Arising at first from general western European currents in architectural theory, Critical Reconstruction was subsequently shaped by political, historical and aesthetic factors that were unique to Germany and the city of Berlin. While its most public phase came after reunification, it had considerable influence on architectural trends on both sides of the Wall prior to 1990. The years directly following the *Wende* saw rapid, large-scale development alongside complex logistical and political issues, which resulted in an inconsistent application of planning approaches. Since then, officials such as Hans Stimmann have worked to improve both their political hold on planning issues and the laws that govern development, so that by the mid-1990s projects such as the *Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt*, which exemplify the Critical Reconstruction approach, were accomplished in greater number. The sharp drop in real estate investment after the mid-1990s has slowed development from the frantic pace it had in the years directly following the *Wende*; however, building projects continue and the ubiquitous yellow cranes are still a familiar site in many districts of the city. It is doubtful that any future development will occur on the scale of those first, booming post-reunification years, and thus it is doubtful that any other planning approach will change the face of Mitte as has the concept of Critical Reconstruction. Still, the land claimed for city use by the *Planwerk Innenstadt,* as well as sites of former prominent GDR buildings such as the *Palast der Republik,* may present areas for future development under a different planning regime in the future.

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[131] Rauterberg, 314.

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