

H @ R
2007

HERITAGE AT RISK *Special Edition*

Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters
Risk Preparedness and the Limits of Prevention

Kulturerbe und Naturkatastrophen
Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Prävention



TUDpress

as already planned; consequently, an interruption of the work begun would only be necessary in certain parts, if at all. The required flood protection of the tunnel would be warranted. The intended use of this crossing by public transport buses would also be possible with a tunnel, just as much as a retrofitting for trams, which was already planned in the feasibility study of 1996.

Crossing the valley by means of a tunnel would largely preserve the visual integrity of the World Heritage once the work is completed.

A comparison of the costs between the so far approved combined tunnel/bridge solution and the recently presented tunnel solution can only be approximate. On the one hand the state of planning of the two solutions differs too much, on the other hand pedestrians and cyclists would not be able to use the tunnel. However, very near to the planned crossing there is a ferry for pedestrians and cyclists, which could continue to be operated (in the case of the bridge solution it would be given up). All in all, from what can be concluded from the available documents even a belated decision in favour of an entire tunnel solution would not lead to a dramatic cost increase.

Therefore, ICOMOS strongly recommends that the tunnel solution, which would be unproblematic to carry out, should be insisted upon.

However, we wish to point out that the tunnel solution is not entirely unproblematic, either. With both solutions the border area of the World Heritage, the so-called "Prussian Quarter" on the right high bank of the Elbe, is going to be affected visually and acoustically by the tunnel exits, to a lesser degree also the left side of the river. But as far as the World Heritage is concerned such disturbances seem tolerable.

Incidentally, the question remains whether such an Elbe crossing is necessary at all. A traffic census made by the City of Dresden in the summer of 2007 has shown that since the opening of motorway A 17 car traffic in the city has decreased by 10.4%.

M.Pz.

18 December 2007

In the years 2006/2007 ICOMOS Germany tried in many other cases to help in conservation questions; it protested against planned demolitions and disfigurements of monuments and sites, and within the range of its possibilities as an NGO it supported the state monument services (*Landesämter für Denkmalpflege*) of the 16 Federal States in critical cases. ICOMOS also commented on dangerous trends in some Federal States to weaken the position of the state monument services in the context of structural reforms of the administration. Below a few examples from a great number of tasks:

Protest against the demolition of the Telephone Cable Factory in Oberschöneweide (Berlin)

With its visible steel frame construction and its radically modern aesthetics the AEG telephone cable factory in Oberschöneweide, built by Ernst Ziesel in 1927/28, was a milestone in Berlin's industrial architecture of the 1920s (see also *H@R Special 2006 The Soviet Heritage and European Modernism*, p. 175). At first a renovation of this building for purposes of the *Fachhochschule* (= technical college) *für Technik und Wirtschaft (FHWT)*, which is being

relocated to the former AEG premises, was planned. However, due to structural problems and the high renovation costs these plans were given up and in 2005 the "unavoidable" demolition of this factory, which had been on the monument list since 1977, was applied for. Sadly, public protest against the destruction, which also came from DOCOMOMO Germany and ICOMOS, was in vain. The building was demolished in 2006.

The mining destruction of Heuersdorf and threats to Nietzsche's gravesite

A number of valuable historic sites in Germany have been destroyed by lignite surface mining. Vast deposits of this low-grade fuel, also known as brown coal, are extracted by the electrical power industry. The mining pits that penetrate several hundred meters into the earth have uncovered petrified trees, mastodon skeletons, artifacts from the New Stone and Bronze Ages, Roman and medieval settlements, as well as the remnants of daily life in more recent periods. Yet modern communities underlie the prerogative of German mining law for devastation wherever coal deposits have been found. While the local population is resettled into new housing, it has proven impossible to transplant more than a vestige of extant historic substance to other locations.

The oldest architectural monument in the village of Heuersdorf near Leipzig (on Heuersdorf see also *H@R 2004/2005*, pp. 82/83) has been the Emmaus Church. This 820 ton stone structure was transported on a flatbed trailer in October 2007 to the city of Borna 12 kilometers distant by the American-owned MIBRAG mining corporation. The church was first documented in 1297, while dendrochronology has established the roof beams to be about 750 years old. The edifice was remodeled after the Thirty Years' War, with the Romanesque arch still framing the nave as testimony to its pre-Lutheran origins. The weathervane above the later

Heuersdorf, transport of the Emmaus Church to Borna, 2007 (Photo: Jeffrey H. Michel)





Heuersdorf, demolition of the village (Photo: Jeffrey H. Michel)

shingled belfry bears the year 1837. Only three 17th century graves were discovered near the foundation during archaeological fieldwork. The diminutive church apparently served as a chapel of the nearby village of Breunsdorf, which has already been lost to the advancing lignite mine. The present name of the structure was conferred in 1959, when Heuersdorf persisted as a Christian community in Marxist East Germany. Both the Emmaus Church and the larger Tabor Church at the southern end of the town were renovated and maintained by the local population, even as 23 villages and 11 churches were destroyed in the immediate vicinity. Yet over 100 buildings in Heuersdorf, including the Tabor Church with its magnificent late classical architecture, are now being broken apart in preparation for mining. More than 40 structures or parts thereof have been entered into the state registry for historic monuments, a matter of no consequence for energy production. Equally notable in the surrounding fields are rows of truncated willows once used for basket weaving, and the ubiquitous fruit trees along village pathways and in the gardens of timbered farmhouses that reflect centuries of agrarian prosperity.

German mining law, enacted in 1980, does not mandate consideration of technological options such as wind power that would make the destruction of human settlements avoidable. MIBRAG intends to devastate several additional communities southwest of Leipzig to serve a new lignite generating station. The planned mining operations would include the town of Röcken, where the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was born and now lies buried. The 12th century church at the gravesite is far more massive than its counterpart in Heuersdorf; rebuilding it elsewhere would thus cost several million euros. Although no definite decision has yet been made by MIBRAG regarding mining operations in Röcken, several organisations have stated very clearly that the place where this world-renowned philosopher was born should be preserved by all means.

Röcken, parish church with graves of the Nietzsche family (Photo: www.wikipedia.de)



Jeffrey H. Michel
jeffrey.michel@gmx.net

