

## ABSTRACT

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This research comprises a contemporary study and an empirical investigation of historical farm buildings, which are contextualized, analysed, and newly interpreted. Taking the example of the so-called ‚Fachhallenhaus‘ and ‚Barghaus‘, located in the marsh area of the administrative district of Steinburg, they are examined as historical buildings in use. Besides their value as part of historic building culture they also represent transformations and present conditions of historical buildings in the countryside. In this sense, the study presents a contribution to the sustainable, characteristic development of rural areas, where agriculture is undergoing changes and is detaching itself from built structures, and where a coherent development strategy is lacking.

The investigation follows a multi-perspective, context-related, cross-scale and prospective approach, taking into account the built environment as well as the user. On a methodological level, it shows how architectural research, characterized by designing, can be combined with the sociological Grounded Theory Methodology, that serves as a qualitative, empirical exploration of the reality of everyday life.

Until now, the buildings have mainly been evaluated as cultural heritage. Most research disregards and often depreciates present day alterations. In this study, the continuing additions to the existing buildings are examined regarding the structural adaptations to changing demands and uses as well as regarding positions and practices of all parties involved. Hereby, the relations of typology and use are being discussed. In addition to portraying the research region, the study contains a contemporary architectural inventory of eleven selected buildings and farmsteads and a comparison to their condition 80 years ago. On this basis, a transferable typological description is developed as a central research component, resulting in a twofold reorganization: the ‚typology of process‘ systematizes processual changes of individual building elements. The ‚typological field‘ serves as a static snapshot and classifies structural and functional forms of transformation. Furthermore, the study conceptualizes a category of ‚durable-transient use‘ and thus an understanding of the buildings that goes beyond the typological reflection, and points out an alternative, programmatic approach between demolition and preservation. This practice refers to a productive adaption that comes with spatial inventions for altered uses. The findings show manifold potentials of the historical buildings, which are inherent in saving resources by disposing of existing building material and in the buildings shaping the cultural landscape. They can be found in the structural, material and socio-spatial characteristics and in the appropriation and adaptation ability with which prospective heritage can be produced. Such

interpretation shifts the perspective from the historical type towards a resource with performative character and potential for building culture. Against this background the analysis of factors influencing the development constitutes a further essential part of the study. In order to detect ‚practices of use‘, owner types are identified and related to the divergent conditions of buildings and to relevant factors. This procedure shows that despite the potential, various challenges are currently preventing the conversion and high-quality development of the building stock and the settlement structure. In conclusion the study points out that the buildings together with their context form a ‚resistant resource‘, whose use seems neither evident nor simple. It could be generated through a renewed regional building culture. This research highlights opportunities and provides orientation as well as applicable knowledge for the development of such a building culture process.