Historic Preservation as Change Management: Methods in Context

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The city of the future in Europe is currently – and in contrast to the expanding Arab and Asian cities – being imagined less in images of futuristic architecture, but rather as a compact agglomeration of short distances in a high-quality green environment, with intelligent mobility concepts, a pronounced sharing culture and a resource-saving new construction practice. This is all the more true for the high-density metropolises. In view of the man-made climate crisis, the motto here must be: the city of the future has already been built. Therefore, it is important to orient visions to the existing building stock and to a culture of further building ["Weiterbauen"], repairing, repurposing, questioning needs, upgrading and maintaining. New neighborhood or commons projects are already shaping urban neighborhoods and are increasingly being used as living labs, future workshops or fields of experimentation. Participation and knowledge transfer are important prerequisites for this. Within the sustainable development of metropolises, monuments play an important role as symbolic proofs of duration and identity, as does historic preservation with its expertise in the care and preservation of existing buildings and structures.[1]

It is no coincidence that some of their central concepts have found their way into the current discourse on architecture and urban development, which gives priority to 'building without new construction' (Bund Deutscher Architektinnen und Architekten 2019, para. III: "Respect for the Stock").

1. Substance and Process Values

Metropolises are not original objects of historic preservation. Having originated as an object-oriented discipline concentrating on selected testimonies of high culture, the

1 The understanding of sustainability in this paper refers to the Brundtland Report, see United Nations (1987, ch. 3 "III. Enabling Sustainable Development", Art. 27–30) and the linking of intergenerational and international social justice, economic growth, participation and ecology.

subject has continuously expanded its field of activity in relation to the societal development of the last 200 years and has reached its maximum spatial expansion in the period following the Second World War with the care of monuments in large cities on the one hand and the care of cultural landscapes on the other. Both of these special concerns are not regulated in Germany by the laws of the federal states on historic preservation, but they are taken into account in conjunction with regional planning and building law and with nature and landscape protection, respectively.

Thinking about historic preservation in big cities was developed in the context of the reconstruction debates after the Second World War and was discussed within the discipline for the first time in the period around 1960. Here, the example of the Hanseatic city of Hamburg, which had been severely destroyed during the war, was seminal: dealing with the growing uniformity of the buildings, the orientation toward traffic flows, city formation, and the significance of high-rise buildings (Grundmann 1962).[2]

Thereafter, metropolitan historic preservation played an important role within the framework of the *European Year of Monument Preservation* in 1975 with the model city project West Berlin (rehabilitation of the tenement city; see fig. 1) and, following on from this, in the context of the *International Building Exhibition* in Berlin in 1987 with concepts of Hardt-Waltherr Hämer for careful, socially compatible urban renewal (Hardt-Waltherr Hämer; Cutolo 2015; Bodenschatz et al. 2012).

Cultural landscape thinking, on the other hand, dates back to the late 1970s and 1980s and responds to a new understanding of historic preservation as an "environmental therapy" or "environmental ethics" (Petzet, 1975; 1988; my translation) or – critically turned – as "monumental ecology" (Sauerländer 1993; my translation), i.e., to the environmental awareness that has been gaining strength since the 1970s. Only then are the landscape contexts of a monument perceived as integral components of the monument's character, and formative cultural landscape elements identified as worthy of protection.

Finally, in 1994, the monument theorist Wilfried Lipp described the preservation of large cities and cultural landscapes as new 'areas of hope' or 'areas of expectation for monuments' for his discipline and emphasized the necessarily associated methodological shifts: both metropolitan as well as cultural landscape require "an expanded concept of monument, namely a fluid, to a certain extent 'strolling' concept of monument" (1994, 11; my translation). According to Lipp, in the metropolis, the question of "preserving change" arises in a similar way as in the case of the *per se* non-static cultural landscapes – only thinking in terms of process values, which are adequate to the change, can do justice to the new tasks (1994, 11; my translation).

Beyond this, the accelerated innovation processes, especially in metropolitan areas, and, as a consequence, the continuous rejuvenation and multiplication of 'cultural heritage' raises fundamental epistemic questions. They concern not least the floating role

2 See also Vancsa (1989), who takes the example of the metropolis of Vienna, which remained largely undestroyed in the Second World War, and discusses it as a historically evolved work of art/monument. See also Architektenkammer Berlin 2019 and Lipp 2008, 340f.

Fig. 1: Cover of the Publication Model City Berlin 1975

of the professional actors between participation in and observation of processes ("Are we actors or witnesses?"; Bradley et al. 2004, 5).[3]

Precisely because of their peculiar link between preservation and change, the preservation of monuments in large cities and the preservation of cultural landscapes offer a variety of starting points for the sustainable development of large areas, since it is not only significant individual monuments or ensembles (town halls, churches, historic town and village centers) that are important here, landscape contexts (green belts, road networks, settlement structures) and large spatial figures (production sites, infrastructures, high-rise dominants, shopping centers, campus universities, airports) that are to be protected, but also the multicultural migrant heritage associated with specific places of memory, as well as experiences of foreignness and identity conflicts. This is about places or spaces of belonging but just as much about diverse cultural practices and immaterial layers of meaning. In this respect, it is precisely what Lipp designates as the

3 Vinken (2010, 14) points out that big cities in the 19th century were often perceived as "chaos" and triggered a sense of the disintegration of conventional orders.

future areas of historic preservation that are linked to a shift in priorities from object values to historically grounded process values.

In English-speaking discourse, the concept of 'change management', adapted from the economic sciences, has been in use for some years now. It does not only address the natural aging, but also action on and with the monument and responds to the adaptation processes that are becoming necessary at ever shorter intervals. This involves controlled change, however "neither the preservation of form nor of substance alone, but the preservation of the monument characteristics of a processual object" (L. Schmidt 2011, 52; my translation; see also, e.g., Teutonico/Matero 2003).

Together with the concept of 'change management', and motivating the thinking in processes of change, the concept of cultural heritage has conquered Western European discourses and with it the focus on social processes of meaning-making that "interpret[s] and make[s] usable the past with regard to our present and future" (Herold 2018, 39; my translation). They go hand in hand with the multiplication, internationalization and regionalization of monument values and authenticity concepts.[4]

2. Living and Dead Monuments

Under a different perspective and in connection with other objectives, the concept of *change management* is also at home in the Western European object-oriented discourse on monuments. Already in the heyday of the debate about material substance and historical testimonial values around 1900, the Belgian architect Louis Cloquet proposed a differentiation between living (*monuments vivants*) and dead monuments (*monuments morts*), in order to propagate a pragmatic path between substance protection and modernization for the mass of living monuments which are in use. This proposal was acceptable for the contemporary architects and subsequently incorporated into an agreement of the International Congress of Architects in 1904 ("Recommendations" 1904).

Cloquet and – with reference to him – the Belgian politician and urbanist Charles Buls recommended the strict preservation of time layers ("conserve, not restore", my translation) only for selected musealized buildings (of high culture) and emphasized for all other the possibility of greater adaptations to changing urban and landscape contexts (Scheurmann 2018, 304–308).

Especially after the First World War, this idea experienced a strong reception with reference to the "living" of cultural heritage, and at the same time a tendential reinterpretation towards a predominantly aesthetically argued understanding of historic preservation. The Austrian art historian Hans Tietze, for example, postulated in 1921 a "new interlocking" (1921, 197; my translation) of historic preservation with life, and the Rhenish Provincial Conservator Franz von Wolff-Metternich advocated a "living historic preservation" (1931, 231; my translation). Other examples could be added. Indirectly, they questioned the substance orientation of their profession with the accusation of "museification" (Wolff-Metternich; my translation) and wanted to remove monuments from

4 *The Nara Document on Authenticity* was groundbreaking in this regard, see ICOMOS 1994.

the "cultural protection park[s] of untouchedness" (Tietze 1921, 197; my translation; cf. also Scheurmann 2018, 309–314; 2019.).

Even though these statements did not explicitly speak of a controlled process of change in historic preservation, the idea of development instead of the notion of a document nevertheless already played a decisive role. This also applies to the pioneer of historic preservation at that time and the first Austrian General Conservator Alois Riegl, who already wanted his innovative 'age value' ["Alterswert"] to be understood as a "development value" (1995, 65; my translation).

In contrast to these positions, today's thinking about process values and *change management* (in the sense of a targeted, value-based management of change processes) reflects a strongly changed approach to the landscape of monuments and historic preservation compared to the early 20th century. This concerns the diversity, the contemporaneity as well as the dimensions of the objects of protection, but also the plurality of values, the globality of interdependencies and the spectrum of the new stakeholders. According to these shifts and the climate crisis, thinking about conservation issues has become an essential common concern of contemporary societies. Questions of the differentiation of cultural heritage, respectively the significance of its layers, continue to play an essential role.

3. Actor Orientation and Participation

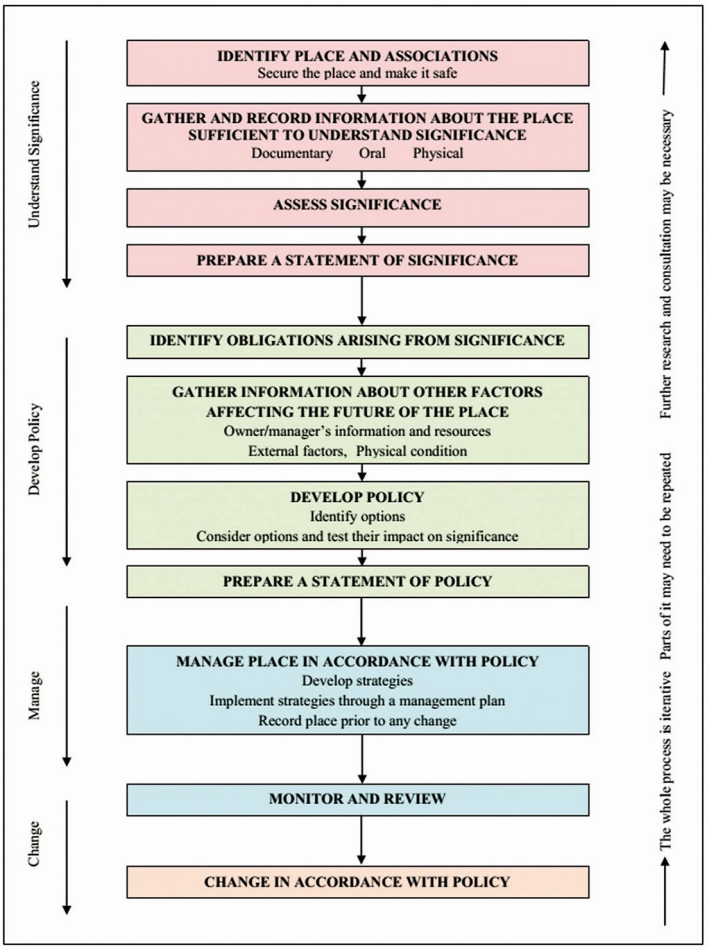
The term "change management" first found its way into an official document of historic preservation in 1999, the so-called *Burra Charter* (first version 1979). This is a position statement of Australia ICOMOS, published in 1979 and updated twice since then, which, among other things, strives for a balanced relationship between *change* and *maintenance* (2000, 6, Art. 15 and 16). The fact that both strategies for dealing with cultural heritage are classified under the title of "Conservation Principles" indicates that the central concept of *Cultural Significance* is based on various tangible and intangible values ("aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value[s]", 2000, 2, Art. 1.2), which find correspondingly diverse forms of expression within the cultural heritage ("*fabric, use, associations* and *meanings*", 2000, 8, Art. 27.2; original emphasis).

It is furthermore clear that the idea of change and its conservational moderation are closely linked to the concept of cultural diversity – understood as diversity of values, but also of the stakeholders representing them. In this respect, the Australian "Conservation Principles" are quite adaptable for historic preservation in socially and culturally heterogeneous metropolises. Even more: the acceptance of change – a reaction to the 'cultural turn' of the 1990s – implies a focus on the attribution of meaning instead of supposedly ontological values and cultural norms and in this respect also responds to the social and cultural preconditions in multi-ethnic and migrant communities – the "'home[s]' of the postmodern global society" (Lipp 1994, 11; my translation).

A further consequence of *change management* – not least in view of the plural needs of identity and memories of the population in large cities and metropolises – is the establishment of forms of participation. In this regard, the 1999 version of the *Burra Charter* underlines the right to "participation of people for whom the place has special

associations and *meanings*, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place" (Australia ICOMOS 2000, 5, Art. 12; original emphasis) and links it within the framework of the so-called *Burra Charter Process* with procedures, including management plans, supervision and monitoring (see fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Schematic representation of the Burra Charter Process



Source: Adopted from the Burra Charter (1999).

A similar change in the relationship between experts and laypeople is also reflected in the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe (*Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*) from 2005.[5] Here, too, it is about the right to cultural participation and

5 The convention has not yet been ratified by Germany, England and France, see www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/199/signatures199

the protection of cultural diversity ("every person has a right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice"; Council of Europe 2005, preamble). The aim of the Faro Convention is not only to promote dialogue between cultures and religions (Council of Europe 2005, preamble), but also to share the responsibility for the cultural heritage and establish forms of participation (Council of Europe 2005, "Section III – Shared responsibility for cultural heritage and public participation").

In its emphasis, the *Faro Convention* – similar to the *Burra Charter* – responds to the changed cultural constitution of modern societies and promotes a democratization not only of access to cultural heritage, but also of its "management". Historically, this was the Council of Europe's reaction to the so-called ethnic cleansing during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Under the changed stakeholder-based perspective, it opened the understanding of cultural heritage to heterogeneous meanings of heritage, memory and monument. The postmodern openness to emotional values and show values ["Gefühlswerte", "Schauwerte"], as opposed to substance values, has also emphasized the increasing acceptance of plural values (Meier/Scheurmann/Sonne 2013).

It becomes clear that contemporary societies are undergoing multilayered transformations and are increasingly determined by economic, ecological and cultural interdependencies. This has resulted in adaptation processes with regard to cultural heritage, its definition, preservation and maintenance as well as the practices associated with it, and has caused developments and processes as well as targeted management of this change to take the place of a fixed catalog of historic preservation values. However, the change in practice does not make experts superfluous, but it does assign them new tasks – including the areas of communication and moderation.

Above all, these adaptation processes respond to the increased importance of sustainability thinking, which necessitates "the active protection of urban heritage and its sustainable management" (preamble) and underlies UNESCO's 2011 *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*, which is important for the development of metropolitan areas. This document also relegates the object- or substance-related values of historic preservation to the background in favor of the perception of diverse cultural and natural layers of significance as well as a value context that takes ecological, societal and economic aspects into account.[6]

At the same time, the recommendation emphasizes the value of the historic especially in dynamic urban spaces ("the most abundant and diverse manifestations of our common cultural heritage"; UNESCO 2011, preamble) and stresses the need to no longer separate preservation, sustainability, and planning concerns from one another. It becomes clear that monument and ensemble protection have changed under the

6 Article 9 of the document defines the understanding of the term *historic urban landscape*: "This wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity" (UNESCO 2011).

premises of current processes of social transformation and the imperative of sustainability "[f]rom an approach where change was at all costs to be avoided" to an "approach where change is to be managed" (Pereira Roders/Veldpaus 2013, 17).

This also concerns the stakeholders. In view of the complexity of evaluation processes, the art historian Hans-Rudolf Meier suggests that monument conservators should become process managers who justify their decisions, communicate them, and thus make them comprehensible and open to discussion (2013, 14).

Such a *management of change* is by no means to be understood as license for arbitrary changes to the monument or to historical sites. It does, however, concede that any measure taken on the monument "changes its status materially and aesthetically" (2019, 102; my translation). Even a "decision for a *non toccare* ['do not touch']" according to monument conservator Bernd Euler-Rolle, "represents a step in the object biography" (2019, 102; my translation).

The commitment to *change management* therefore means a change only insofar as it makes transparent the processes that take place at the monument, in the cultural landscape or in the metropolis, justifies them and moderates among the stakeholders involved.

4. Repair and Sustainability

In Europe, most progress in the opening of historic preservation institutions to the concept of *change management* can be witnessed in England (Historic England 2008).

For some years, however, similar tendencies have also become noticeable in Switzerland and are linked on the one hand to pleas for stronger participatory structures (*Nike-Bulletin* 2020), and on the other hand to a concept of building culture ["Baukultur"] that encompasses monuments, existing buildings and new buildings alike (e.g., Eidgenössisches Departement des Inneren 2017; Bundesstiftung Baukultur 2018).

The common reference in both cases is the idea of sustainability and its implementation in the context of projects of sustainable urban and landscape development. Monuments as well as cultural heritage in its entirety play an essential role as parts of the building culture, providing historical orientation.

For a development of metropolitan regions that bundles sustainable, economic, ecological, social and cultural aspects, the concept of 'change management' respectively the focus on process values offer important links, not least because of their integration into long-term repair strategies. This also applies to the definition and determination of concrete goals for action. What Wilfried Lipp called the exit from "modernity's compulsion to complete" (1994, 10; my translation) is understood as the priority of age and use values over novelty and aesthetic values, or as the acceptance of temporality and traces of age, or also: that old things really look old, or are allowed to look old. "Tolerance for change" is demanded of the institutions, while they should define the "limits of acceptable change" in a comprehensible manner and take into account the significance of the historic for the individual as well as for society as a whole (Pereira Roders/Veldpaus 2013, 17; see also Euler-Rolle 2019, 103).

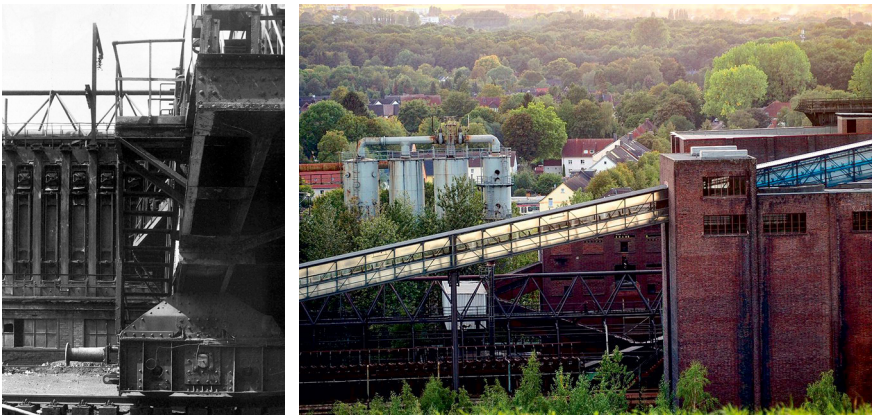
As a proof of duration and longevity, cultural heritage guarantees diverse possibilities of orientation and identification, which are essential and rare especially for residents of rapidly transforming urban regions such as the Ruhr area. In this respect, the historic is to be regarded as similarly scarce and therefore worthy of protection in a similar sense as nature. "[I]f our conservation and management policies are to be sustainable", according to the English monuments administration English Heritage in the year 2004, "they must allow change to continue, rather than wipe the sheet clean every generation. Our decisions about what to lose, what to retain, and what to build anew, will be better, if they are informed by careful understanding" (Bradley et al. 2004, 1).

Particularly in view of climate change and sustainability thinking, it becomes relevant to link the practice of *change management* with an understanding of repair or reconstruction culture that focuses on avoidance (avoiding waste, saving resources) on the one hand and on social as well as individual responsibility (sustainable living, intergenerational justice, respect for what exists) on the other and promotes an "ethics of conservation, preservation and prevention" in the sense of philosopher Hans Jonas (2003, 249; my translation).

In the context of historic preservation, the topic of repair or repair society was focused for the first time in the context of the annual conference of the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments in 1993 and thereafter as the title of two symposia of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1995 and 1996. This involved the "search for a guiding principle" that considers all building development from the perspective of "conservation of energy, resources and buildings" (Petzet/Hassler 1996, foreword, my translation; see also: Lipp/Petzet 1994; H. Schmidt 2000; Will 2020, 487–504).

The direct reference for the Dortmund conference of 1995 was the ongoing transformation of the metropolitan region of the Ruhr area and questions of how to deal appropriately with the material relics of the coal and steel era (see figs. 3/4).

Fig. 3 and 4: Hansa coking plant, before and after shut-down[7]



In this respect, not only the sheer mass and landscape-shaping significance of the industrial architectures posed a challenge; given the growing awareness of the global scarcity of resources, the conference also addressed their material (utility) values, beyond any architectural-historical significance, and their significance as energetic resources within material and substance cycles.

In concrete terms, it was a question of strategies for preserving value, a "culture of repair", and this in a more comprehensive sense than that prescribed by the preservation of monuments (Petzet/Hassler 1996, 14; my translation). In a similar context, historic preservationist and building researcher Uta Hassler spoke of "adaptive change" as the necessity "of combining slow and fast processes, aligning short-term and long-term goals" in order to sustainably preserve the value of the building stock (2011, 5; my translation). She positions herself against the "compulsion of constant renewal" in building and the planning of buildings as "short-term products" (8; my translation). In contrast to new construction, historic preservation was "one of the few fields with an established culture of long-term orientation, resource conservation, and reuse" (Hassler 2011, 10; my translation).

If the idea of repair is nevertheless presented not as a description of the present, but as a vision of the future of the preservation profession, this reflects on a practice of restoration which, not least in form of noble restorations, often serves the expectations of the beautiful old and the shining of the historic in the much-cited new splendor. In contrast, the discussants of the 1990s advocated "delaying time" on a case-by-case basis, granting space to "letting be" and thus enabling new assignments of meaning. Under the primacy of repair – as "part of the spectrum of possibilities in monument preservation" – the focus should be on prevention and care instead of rehabilitation and restoration (Lipp 1994, 10; my translation; see also Petzet/Heilmeyer 2012).

5. Preservation of Monuments or Modification Culture?

In the context of the conference in Dortmund in 1995, the industrial analyst Walter R. Stahel summed up what since then has shaped the discourse on monuments as well as architecture in one way or another: "The most efficient protection is prevention" (1996, 52; my translation).

Care and repair strategies – such as the Dutch concept of *Monumentenwacht* or the Leipzig initiative *Haus-Halten* – have since then not only found their way into thinking about historic preservation; in connection with the growing awareness of the consequences of the climate crisis, the discourse on architecture and urban development has also opened up in this direction. Repair, building in the existing stock, avoiding new construction and life cycle analyses are the associated keywords; locality, reuse

7 Fig 3: *Das Denkmal als Altlast? Auf dem Weg in die Reparaturgesellschaft*. Munich: Lipp, 1996. 6 (Lehrstuhl für Denkmalpflege und Bauforschung, Universität Dortmund, Elmar Wiedenhöver). – Fig. 4: *Kokerei Hansa Dortmund-Huckarde*. Blick vom Deusenberg, 2018. Foto: Lucas Kaufmann, CC BY SA 4.0.

and durability of building materials are the concrete strategies, along with waste avoidance and resource conservation. In a policy paper, the Association of German Architects (BDA) took a stand on this in 2019 with *Positions for Climate-friendly Architecture in Cities and Rural Areas*. With its high consumption of energy and resources, construction – and this is now considered indisputable – is one of the main drivers of climate change. It is obvious that the "increasing heat load, extreme precipitation, flooding along coasts and rivers, landslides, air pollution, drought, and water scarcity" pose considerable dangers, especially for metropolises in poorer countries, and exacerbate existing social problems (*Klimawandel* 2017; my translation).

The short-term orientation toward depreciation cycles, materials that are difficult to dispose of, and generally toward expanding, land-sealing new construction is seen as partly responsible for this and calls for course corrections or a climate-friendly architecture and planning practice. Building must "increasingly do without new construction", according to the Association of German Architects in 2019, and "priority is given to the preservation and the material as well as constructive further building ["Weiterbauen"] of that which exists already, and not to its frivolous demolition" (Bund Deutscher Architektinnen und Architekten 2019, Prolog; Postulate III; my translation).

Thus, also in architecture the focus is more strongly than before shifting to the processes associated with building processes (life cycle analysis), including the materials and technologies employed. Here, too, *change management* becomes decisive, and it is precisely at this point that historic preservation becomes a method and knowledge potential for sustainable architecture and urban development. Overall, a change in values is emerging in the building sector that no longer and not *per se* dubs the existing as obsolete, outdated and thus dispensable, but rather appreciates it as a basis for creative ideas and as a material value. In this context, building in the existing stock or building further ["Weiterbauen"] can also adopt the idea of deferring time from the discourse on monuments and make unfinished buildings that are capable of further development available for a growing spectrum of do-it-yourself initiatives. Examples of this include the half-finished residential buildings of the Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena, which were erected in the 2000s as social housing according to the motto "[y]ou provide the frame, and from then on, families take over" (Aravena 2014). One can also refer to the Leipzig project of the 'Guardian Houses' ["Wächterhäuser"], which after the political turnaround of 1989/90 continued to use buildings whose ownership was still unclear, whose redevelopment was seemingly utopian, and whose use was uncertain. With the aim of "keeping the house", temporary craft, artistic or social uses or even stores were brought into the buildings, the substance was secured and successfully saved from demolition – this with the aim of viewing vacancy as a potential for innovation and at the same time securing the historic stock. The association offers further perspectives with so-called extension houses, which are extended by the tenants themselves at low rents and renovated in the long term (http://www.haushalten.org/de/waechterhaeuser_modell.asp).

These and comparable projects in other large cities do not only rely on the idea of repair, but also on active citizen participation and a growing sharing culture in dealing with the architectural heritage. In most cases, the interventions in the historic substance are considerably less extensive and thus more gentle on the substance than in

renovation projects. In addition, they offer scope for multi-perspective assignments of meaning, diverse forms of cultural practice and preserve historic ensembles as attractive living and identification spaces.

6. Summary

As has been demonstrated, the thinking about *change management* in the debate about monuments and cultural heritage has several causes and historical roots. On the one hand, it is related to the erosion of the Western European concept of monuments in the course of the progressive internationalization of discourses. Not only did the global diversity of cultural heritage thus receive greater attention, but the diversity of authenticity concepts and preservation practices has also been changing professional discourses ever since. On the other hand, climate change has updated issues of preservation of what exists and brought monuments – like the old building stock as a whole – increasingly into focus as material and cultural resources, illuminating and enhancing the value of diversity from an ecological perspective. Particularly with respect to climate change and the sustainability paradigm, the boundaries between the building stock and historic testimonies singled out by law have tended to level out. From this perspective, aesthetic and historical testimonial values are losing significance. Currently, the discussion about building culture ["Baukultur"], which can be observed in several countries since the Davos Declaration of the European Ministers of Culture in 2018, testifies to this shift (Déclaration de Davos 2018).

Furthermore, thinking about transformation processes – as these tendencies also show – is changing the 'classic' relationship between experts and laypeople in favor of participatory and do-it-yourself strategies. In historic preservation, the processes have progressed to different degrees. The political appeal to citizens to take into account the scenarios of change through sustainable personal lifestyles and to develop an ethics of frugality is nevertheless leading to corresponding shifts and new values worldwide – also for cultural heritage. Within the urban and architectural discourse, similar changes can be observed, which, under the primacy of largely avoiding new construction, lead to a pioneering approach to heritage conservation practices and, from this broader perspective, prove the discourse participants of the 1990s right, who wanted to recognize areas of hope for heritage conservation in the view of large landscape and urban structures.

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