

Historische Archäologie

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The archaeology of a contemporary “Leichenhalle” in Berlin, Germany

Zusammenfassung

Die archäologische-bauhistorische Untersuchung der ehemaligen Leichenhalle des Hospital- und Siechenhauses im Berliner Bezirk Prenzlauer Berg diente der Analyse baulicher Veränderungen dieses Gebäudes. Seit der Entstehung im Jahre 1886 bis zum heutigen Tage war es mehrmals verändert worden. Die ursprüngliche Einrichtung als Hospital- und Siechenhaus diente während der industriellen Revolution zur Versorgung vor allem der ärmeren Bevölkerung. Während des Dritten Reiches wurde die Halle als Feierhalle umfunktioniert und dafür mit einem neuen Boden, das Hakenkreuzsymbol aufnehmend, ausgestattet. Zugleich wurde ein Luftschutzkeller eingerichtet. Mit dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges und der Teilung Berlins fiel der Stadtteil Prenzlauer Berg in den Sowjetischen Sektor. Damit verbunden war die Entfernung aller vom Naziregime errichteten Gedenkstätten und Insignien. Die ehemalige Leichenhalle wurde zu einem Wachhaus der ehemaligen Staatsicherheit der DDR modifiziert und war ab diesem Zeitpunkt nicht mehr von der Öffentlichkeit betretbar. Im Zuge dessen wurden Anbauten errichtet, welche nach der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands wieder beseitigt wurden. Damit spiegelt das Gebäude wieder, welche baulichen Veränderungen unter den wechselnden politischen Systemen vorgenommen wurden. Diese Veränderungen waren getrieben von dem Anliegen, den Bau politisch neu zu besetzen, indem die Symbole des vorherigen Regimes entfernt oder die Nutzung des Gebäudes vor der Öffentlichkeit geheim gehalten wurde.

Summary

An archaeological/historical analysis of the 19th century Leichenhalle in the Prenzlauer Berg district of Berlin was undertaken in order to interpret the physical changes that the succeeding governments of Germany made to the building from 1886 to present day. The original construction was created to deal with poor living conditions during the industrial revolution. Following this, the Nazi party converted public sections of the building to serve as a memorial, incorporating expensive materials into the flooring creating the swastika symbol of the state across the floor while the cellar was modified to make an air-raid shelter. At the end of World War II, Berlin was divided amongst the Allied forces. Prenzlauer Berg became part of the Soviet Sector and attempted to remove all evidence of the former Nazi government. This included the removal of the Nazi memorial, yet the flooring of the monument room was spared. The building was then converted into a security guard house for the Stasi, which continued the Soviet precedent of using the entire building as a

functional structure off limits to the public. Economic GDR architecture was added to the Leichenhalle, contrasting with the relatively expensive multicolored and designed brickwork of the original façade, only to be torn down during the reunification. This building reflects the various uses that a building can serve under radically differing governments during a short period and the problems that can come about historically when the government's attempt to physically erase their predecessors or keep their actions in the building secret.

Introduction

The idea that archaeology deals with the distant past and fragmentary evidence excavated from the dirt is a common perception that most people have of archaeology and the kind often exhibited in museums. This conception of archaeology has led to the misunderstanding and neglect of certain sites of historical significance. This is due partly to their contemporary construction, but also because of the intentional erasure of such sites and perhaps for the reason that certain sites may still be in use. When a site contains all three of these problems (that is to say it is a contemporary site that had a series of occupants erasing the presence of the previous occupants and is still in use), it is often difficult to explain to the public the importance for the preservation of the site or even that archaeology is required. From a historical archaeological and anthropological perspective, these sites offer a unique opportunity to study the removal, whether intentional or not, of the past in our contemporary history. For example, V. BUCHLI and G. LUCAS (2001, 80) have suggested that as soon as monuments and memorials are removed from society, the process of forgetting begins. Whereas both authors have taken the approach of looking at contemporary historical sites such as the Berlin wall as an archaeology of remembering and forgetting within society, reaching into the realm of cognitive archaeology, the archaeology of these sites can also examine the methods and actions of governments that resulted in erasing and replacing the past, echoing George Orwell's 1984 theme that who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.

A prime example of the deliberate eradication of the past is the physical removal of all forms of the Nazi party when the Soviets occupied Germany after World War II, evidence of which can still be seen today. Some sites were not successfully removed and retain the attempt at erasure, such as the Colossus of Prora¹ on the island of Rügen in northern Germany. Consisting of enough concrete and steel to last a thousand year Reich, the epic Nazi project could not be easily demolished by the Soviets and was converted to use as a military base. Other sites like the Domplatz (cathedral square) of Magdeburg that contained a large Sturmabteilung monument were more easily removed and exist now only in art work, photographs and memory. More recently is the destruction of the Palace of the Republic since the reunification of Germany, the removal of the Berlin Wall, and the renaming of streets. In present day Berlin, the seeking out of these remnants of the past has become a tourist market with specialized tours traveling to the few standing (in some cases recreated) relics of the past governments, whether a piece of the Berlin Wall, Check Point Charlie or the remains of a Nazi bunker. While the motivations and intentions for the removal of the physical remains of the past vary and may be historically documented and debated, the general effect is, as V. BUCHLI and G. LUCAS (2001) addressed, forgetting and therein lies the role of archaeology to reveal the forgotten history of these sites.

Berlin is a prime site for the exploration of contemporary archaeological sites that have been erased, re-used and their history forgotten, particularly in former East Berlin. With the succession of drastically differing governments in the 20th century came the attempts to control the present and rewrite the

1 The Colossus at the beach resort of Prora, a Nazi-planned touristic structure, was designed by the architect Clemens Klotz for 20,000 people on holiday that was never completed although it is currently partly in use as a Youth Hostel.

Fig. 1. A postcard from 1889 of the Leichenhalle with the Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhaus und Siechen-Anstalten stretching behind the building; the building today is located at Fröbelstraße 17, Haus 8, 10405 Berlin; Museumsverbund Pankow photo archive no. 030506.

Abb. 1. Postkarte von 1889 mit der Leichenhalle, dem Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhaus und der Siechen-Anstalt im Hintergrund. Die Leichenhalle befindet sich in der Fröbelstraße 17, Haus 8, 10405 Berlin; Museumsverbund Pankow Fotoarchiv Nr. 030506.



past. In 2008, a historical buildings and monument preservation project lead by M. Heise and W. Hansen for the Technische Universität, Berlin to assess the condition and state of preservation of a historical building provided an opportunity for the author to examine a structure that had been in continuous use by the government since its construction. An archaeological investigation of a 19th century Leichenhalle (mortuary chapel) in Berlin demonstrates the various erasures through re-use for new government purposes of control and the modifications and changes that the succeeding governments took when they came to power. The archaeology of the standing building that is still used by the government today, focused on establishing the various building phases of the Leichenhalle, determining room function and time of use, and putting the Leichenhalle into a greater historical context. Historical sources for the building and associated hospital complex were available in the form of photographs, maps, and limited documentation due to its history of use (Fig. 1).

Historical and archaeological analysis

History and original phase of the Leichenhalle from 1886 to 1934

During the industrial revolution and expansion of Berlin there was a tremendous amount of building and expansion taking place. Prenzlauer Berg, a dominantly working class district located northeast of Berlin's center, was incorporated into greater Berlin during the 19th century. This district was originally farmland and a place for windmills, but in the 19th century it was transformed into an industrial site for breweries, thereby lowering the cost and desirability of the land. On the periphery of Prenzlauer Berg, between 1886 and 1889, the Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhaus und Siechen-Anstalten (hospital and hospice), on behalf of the city council, were built based on the plans by architect Hermann Blankenstein (1829–1910) on Prenzlauer Allee (BEHRENDT/MALBRANE 1928).

The hospital complex was built to solve some of the urgent problems that had come with the rapid expansion of Berlin and its millions of inhabitants during the industrial revolution (BERNET 2004). The hospital and sanatoria were

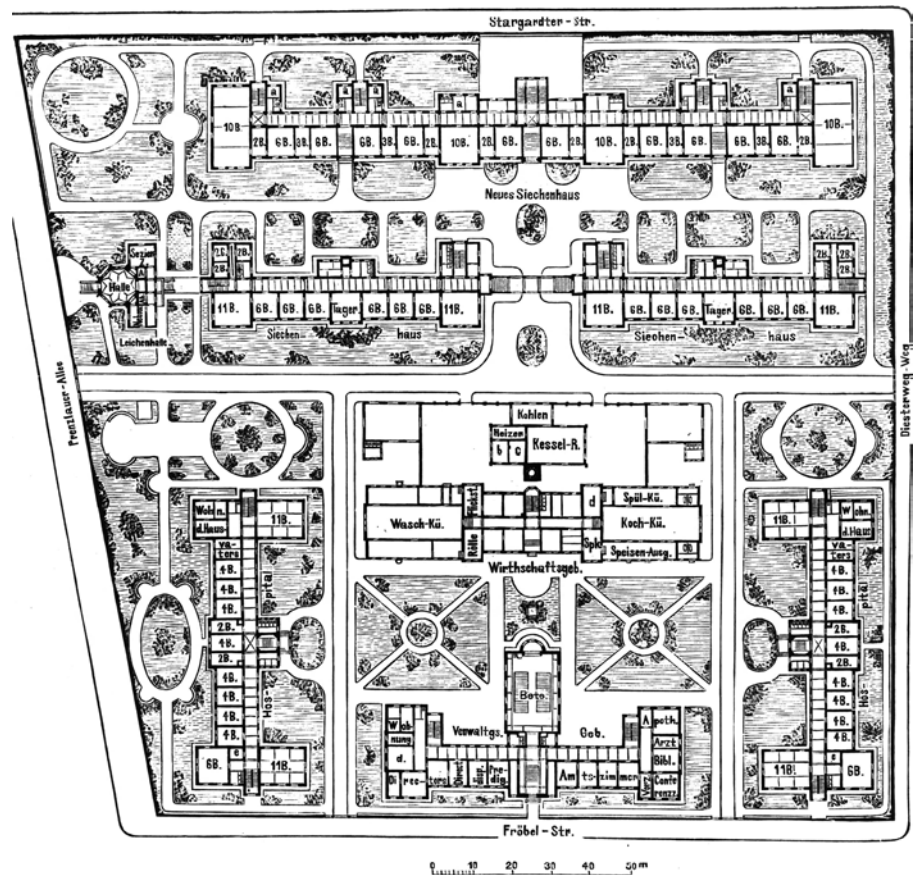


Fig 2. Plan of the Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhaus und Siechen-Anstalten (hospital and hospice); Museumsverbund Pankow photo archive no. 43048.

Abb. 2. Grundriss des Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhauses und der Siechen-Anstalten mit der Leichenhalle links oben; Museumsverbund Pankow Fotoarchiv Nr. 43048.

among the first municipal complexes in Berlin that were built to specifically serve the poorer population (KIELING/BLANKENSTEIN 1987). The hospital was designed similar to another hospital, which opened in 1874 in the Friedrichshain district of Berlin (BERLIN UND SEINE BAUTEN 1877; HAGEMeyer 1897). Blankenstein designed the complex as a symmetrical system: on both sides of the central axis the hospital buildings are mirrored and located in the rear of the complex were the sanatoria for the terminally ill. The Leichenhalle was built as an extension of these sanatoria with a public access from the Prenzlauer Allee. The Leichenhalle and sanatoria were separated from the ensemble of other buildings by a walkway, yet still maintained a symmetrical aspect (WÖRNER 1991; Fig. 2).

Since the hospital primarily served the members of the poor class who were prone to dying, there were an abundant amount of corpses for dissection. An ad for the hospital from 1906 evidences this by stating that “rich opportunity would be offered to a resident doctor in pathological and anatomical education or specialization” (JAKOBY 2006, 33). This was a unique feature of the hospital. The possibility to carry out daily autopsies and other postmortem examinations became an essential reason that after 1918 the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Neurological Research collaborated with this hospital for scientific improvement.

While the state hospital intended to progress society and improve the lives of growing Berlin’s inhabitants, the role of the hospital complex would have been viewed somewhat differently from the eyes of the lower class. Before 1918, the hospital would have had minimum provisions and little qualified nursing. While the hospital provided what was economically possible for the patients (free lodging, nourishment, clothing, medical provisions, and nursing care), it must be kept in mind that this institute was for the poor and death was a part of everyday life. The hospital and the Leichenhalle, in which the bodies were stored, autopsied, and dissected, were continuously in use. For the poor, the hospital complex was, above all else, a place for dying.

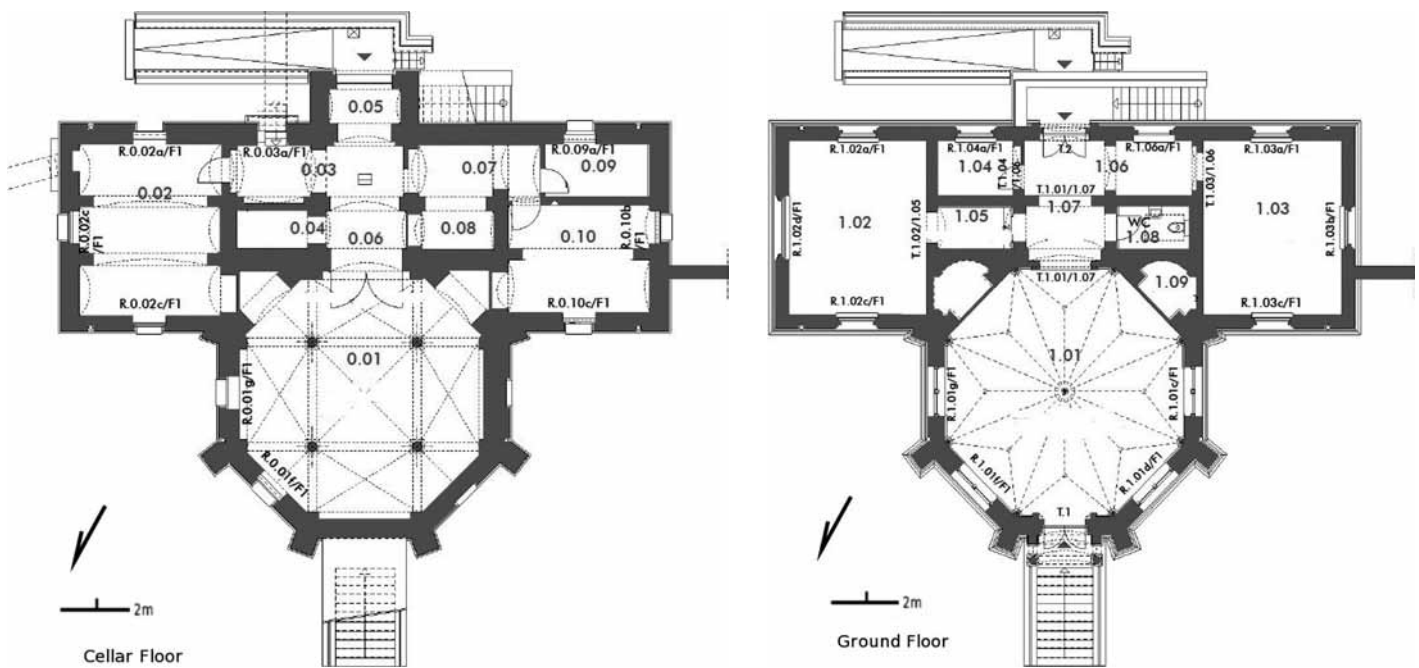


Fig. 3 (left). Map of the present day cellar. Note the access tunnels leading off from R.0.02 and R.0.03 to surrounding structures; from HEISE/HANSEN 2009.

Abb. 3 links). Grundriss des heutigen Kellers. Man beachte die Tunnel, die von R.0.02 und R.0.03 zu benachbarten Komplexen führen; nach HEISE/HANSEN 2009.

Fig. 4 (right). Map of the ground floor of the present day Leichenhalle; from HEISE/HANSEN 2009.

Abb. 4 (rechts). Grundriss des Erdgeschosses der heutigen Leichenhalle; nach HEISE/HANSEN 2009.

The cellar of the Leichenhalle was used from 1886 to 1934 (LEISERING 1994) as a corpse depository. With a floor plan and description in the journal “Berlin und seine Bauten” published in 1896, the use of morgues is well documented. This offers insight to the general use of the Leichenhalle during the original phase. From this source it can be inferred that a staircase in the rear of the building was likely constructed so that the bodies could easily be carried into the cellar where they were washed, prepared and laid out. A staircase such as this is identifiable on historic maps of the Leichenhalle, however no physical evidence of this staircase remains. An internal elevator was used for the vertical transportation of the corpses to the ground floor and there was an additional interior staircase for the corpse handlers and doctors. There are no indicators as to what the cellar rooms may have specifically been used for, but it is known that in general the medical staff working in the cellar rooms stored and disinfected the bodies and prepared them for examination. Blankenstein’s design allowed the stale air from the corpses stored here to be dissipated through the ventilation built into the walls (BÄRTHEL 1997). The octagonal area beneath the chapel could have served as a coffin warehouse and the original construction was heated via stoves suggesting that in the basement were probably situated several ovens (Fig. 3).

On the ground floor was a dissecting room labeled R.1.02, where autopsies were carried out to determine cause of death as well as other forms of research (Fig. 4). Opposite this room, R.1.03 was a room for the clerics where they could prepare for services for the mourners (BORCK et al. 1997). The octagonal area, R.1.01 of the ground floor acted as a chapel during this time and could be reached by two round conches, one that led to the cleric room, R.1.03, and the other to the dissection room, R.1.02. The original paintwork and mosaic from this period can still be seen in one of the conches, R.1.09. The chapel had a specially designed staircase leading to Prenzlauer Allee, that the mourners used when saying farewell to the deceased. In addition to being an entrance for the mourners, T.1 also doubled as a speedy removal point for the bodies to be transported to the local cemetery.

In R.1.02, the entire floor was likely tiled and the lower portion of the large window design opaque (BOLK 1984) while the rest allowed natural light to fill the room. Here the bodies were examined on a dissecting table. This table would have been specially designed with the end of the table leading directly into the ground for immediate disposal of blood and water. One person would be in charge of cleaning and disinfection of the premises and another

for cleaning and sewing the corpses. Not every corpse could be thoroughly investigated due to the overwhelming amount of dead that came in everyday. This created a lack of time and space, but it seems that the Leichenhalle had been designed to accommodate for this. From R.1.04 the body lift could be entered and exited with ease from the dissection room, spending little energy and time moving the bodies. The Leichenhalle not only prepared bodies for burial or acted as a chapel for the deceased's family, but was also one of the few places where doctors were able to perform autopsies on the deceased. Presumably this was a justification by the state for spending money to take care of the dying poor. The need to improve medical knowledge from human cadavers was a unique function of the Leichenhalle not to be found in many hospitals of the time.

There is very little documented on the function of the other rooms and therefore it is difficult to make an accurate statement as to their use. The room layout of the building as it is today barely resembles the original design. New passages have been made through walls, one wall has been completely removed, and others built up. Because of this, the open character of the alter, R.1.07, in the octagonal chapel cannot be realized. Since there were no construction documents to be found, investigation by architectural comparison was done comparing this layout to other mortuaries of the time (HEISE/HANSEN 2009). Only the autopsy room, R.1.02, the corpse lift, R.1.04, the WC, R.1.08, and the cleric room, R.1.03, were entitled on the historic source plans. There is a noticeable division of space in the Leichenhalle during this phase. In the octagonal chapel, the dead were laid out and the mourners could visit and leave through the Prenzlauer Allee entrance, making it a publicly accessible area, while the rectangular area was reserved for mortuary personnel accessed via the rear entrance.

Nazi Phase 1934-1945

Eventually, the population of Prenzlauer Berg became too great for the hospital to cater to their needs. As a result of industrialization, development, and the adaptable Hobrecht Plan² of Berlin, Prenzlauer Berg was no longer on the periphery of the city. By 1933 a new government power, the National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazi Party, took control of Germany and of the city's municipal buildings including the hospital and Leichenhalle. The Nazi party and their ideology, resulted in many high-ranking physicians being fired for political or anti-Semitic reasons (JAKOBY/KUFEKE 2006, 51). An early law passed by the Nazis was the Law for the Protection of Hereditary Health: The Attempt to Improve German Aryan Breed, passed on July 14, 1933 (GHDI-DOCUMENT 2009). This law outlines who should be sterilized and required every physician to report hereditary diseases in their patients. This law surely would have affected the Kaiser Wilhelm Krankenhaus und Sichten-Anstalten complex and its physicians. As a result of the loss of qualified physicians and the increase of patients, the hospital closed in March of 1934; however, even after its use as a hospital ceased, people were still examined there for these purposes, although sterilization was not carried out here (JAKOBY/KUFEKE 2006, 53).

The municipal buildings were converted for use as a Bezirksamt (district office) under the new government (LEISERING 1994) and would therefore need to serve a new function. The other buildings in the hospital complex were used as follows: house 7 = construction administration (Haus 7 = Bauverwaltung), house 1 = finance and revenue (Haus 1 = Finanzverwaltung und Steueramt), house 2 and 6 = welfare and youth department (Haus 2 und 6 = Wohlfahrts- und Jugendamt), house 3 = health department (Haus 3 = Gesundheitsamt), which would be responsible for medical examinations, but not for actual medical treatment, and house 7 = office of education (Haus 7 = Schulamt). The Bezirksamt would have kept track of who was mentally challenged, gypsy (classed as a *Fremdrasse*), or alien strain, under the 1935 Nuremberg Laws as a

2 Enacted in 1862 and named after its creator, James Hobrecht, the plan established a 50-year timeframe for the growing city by devising possible land usage for the surrounding regions of Berlin, planning the union of these regions and the regulation of housing development.

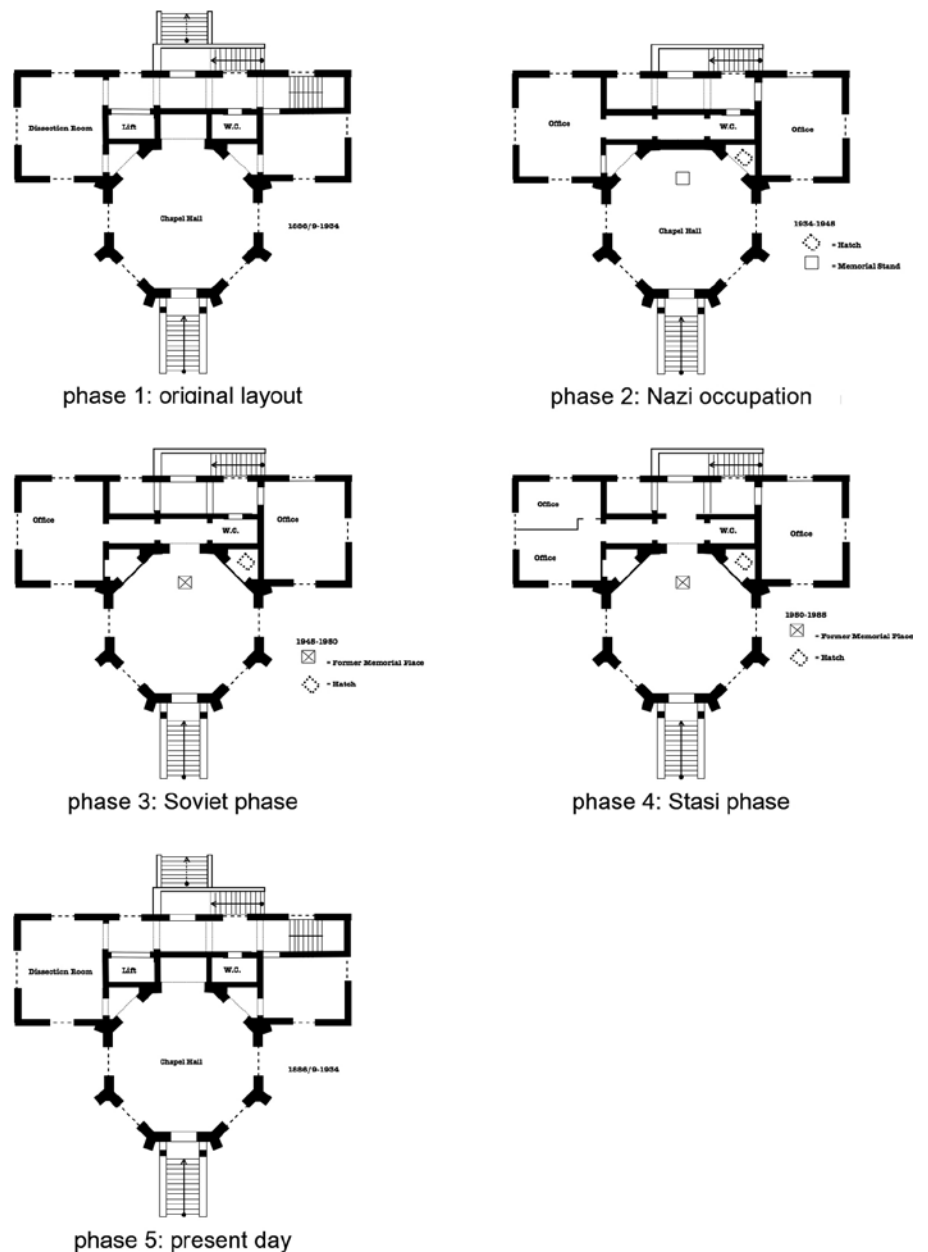


Fig. 5. Ground floor layout of the Leichenhalle through the several occupation phases.

Abb. 5. Grundriss der Leichenhalle während der verschiedenen Nutzungsphasen.

threat to the purity of the German race (TAYLOR/SHAW 1997, 120), or diseased (e.g. alcoholism). In addition to the medical documentation, lineage was also documented; a necessary step for certain Reich party members in order to be married (GDHI-Documents 2009 b). These documentations and records kept at the Bezirksamt all contributed towards creating Nazi Germany's improved Aryan society, which is itself an example of controlling the past blatantly illustrated by Hitler's statement that "Egypt reached its high cultural level on account of the Aryans, as did Persia and Greece" (MEES 2004; GOODRICK-CLARKE 1985).

Due to the structural size and the differences of the Leichenhalle compared to the other buildings, it is unlikely that the Leichenhalle served the same purpose as the surrounding former hospital buildings; however, in regards to the new function of the Leichenhalle specifically, no documentation remains. During this time the interior staircase was blocked off (HEISE/HANSEN 2009) and the conch doorway to R.1.03 was sealed off (Fig. 5). Other modifications during this period are the hatch and ladder in R.1.09 and a remodeling of the floor in the former chapel, R.1.01. During this time the apse, R.1.07, was also closed and in front of this central wall a monument was possibly erected. A central floor plate for this "monument" is still present today in the red stone



Fig. 6. The square base at the bottom of the picture was designed into the basket weave pattern as indicated by the change in pattern around the periphery of it. This differs from the later electrical construction at the top of the picture that worked around the brick pattern and filled the gaps with another material.

Abb. 6. Die rechteckige Basis unten im Bild wurde nachträglich in den Ziegelboden eingefügt, wie die umliegenden Ziegel zeigen. Die elektrische Installation darüber respektiert das Ziegelmuster dagegen.

3 Other structures built during the Third Reich such as the House of German Art and the *Führerbau* (Leader's Building), both in Munich, also feature mosaic tile and brickwork showing the swastika. The incorporation of the Nazi symbol into stone follows the Theory of Ruin Value by Hitler's architect Albert Speer, drawing on the idea that long after great empires had disappeared, the durable architecture would remain for future generations to create ties with the past in a similar vein that Mussolini did with Roman architecture. Hitler reportedly stated during a cornerstone laying in Nuremberg, "But if the Movement should ever fall silent, even after a thousand years this witness here will speak" (HOLTORF 2004).

brick floor (Fig. 6). Witnesses tell of a public waiting room use for R.1.01 and a memorial, where the public were obligated to report and wait while accompanied by guards (KUFKE 2006). R.1.01 flooring seems to support the notion of a memorial. The octagon space has a red brick basket weave patterned flooring that was installed at some point during the 1930s. The brickwork does not match any type found in the other hospital buildings and differs from the black and white mosaic found in the other public access spaces (for example R.1.09). This suggests the Leichenhalle, or at least R.1.01, served a special function. Examination of the brickwork patterning suggests that it could have been a political memorial. Black lines form from the basket weave pattern, creating a number of connecting swastikas, the symbol of the Nazi Party, across the floor. The square plate section for the memorial or monument was carefully designed into that of the brickwork, indicating that it was not a later addition, but incorporated into the floor design. In Osterwieck, Germany, a central building for the city, the train station (ca. 1936) also features the same basket weave pattern suggesting this was a style of the period³. During the Nazi reign the people of Prenzlauer Berg would have been familiar with the swastika symbol and no doubt able to recognize the pattern on the floor. This symbol, like the Aryan pseudohistory, represents a method of the government controlling the past. "We know that all these peoples [of Nordic origin] had a symbol in common: the symbol of the sun ... the swastika" (MEES 2004).

The conch entrance to the former dissection room, R.1.03, was left open and the room was likely converted into a special office for officials. Also during this time, the passage from R.1.04 to R.1.02 was closed and the former elevator shaft was opened to create a new corridor to the WC. The described changes are evident by a strong change in the building's fabric (i. e. denser wall material between R.1.02 and R.1.04).

Further modifications made during this time were the sealing of T.1.01/1.07. The former arch can still be seen from R.1.01. This wall in front of the formal altar could have served as a backdrop for the memorial that stood in front of it surrounded by the swastika covered floor. The conch door, leading to the former clergy area was also sealed during this time while a hatch was placed into the conch. We know that the door was sealed during this time because the paint in the conch matches the rest of the building, suggesting that it was still visible and not sealed up before 1946. The conch hatch was also carefully placed into the black and white mosaic so as to not ruin the design. The careful planning indicates that the hatch was made from above and was a visible part of the chapel area (that is to say, aesthetically pleasing with the tile motif). Like much of the Leichenhalle's history, this remains undocumented, but the structural changes reveal hints of its function during this phase. The hatch and ladder that lead to the basement were constructed at some point between 1934 and 1946. The LS-Sofortprogramm (IGEL 2005) issued 10 October 1940 provides a probable date for the construction, which details Germany's civil defense procedures with its first point being an emphasis for buildings (e.g. municipal buildings) in which there are up to now none or inadequate air raid shelters, do it yourself air raid measures will be adopted. It is possible that at this time the cellar windows, SIII and SIV, were also sealed off (Fig. 7). One reason for the hatch, ladder and the blockage of the windows during this time is that the area beneath R.1.01 was converted into a makeshift air-raid shelter as prescribed by the LS-Führerprogramm. The tunnels running the original lead heating pipes to the near by hospital complex would have acted as an escape route to the other near by structures and vice versa.

For heating reasons during the 1930s the staircase leading to the naturally cool cellar was removed. This was done because the Leichenhalle no longer was serving its original function during which doctors would need to frequently go from the ground floor to the basement. As discussed above, the hatch could have been created as an access to the cellar converted to a makeshift air raid shelter. Had the internal staircase of the original construction not been removed before the need for air raid shelters, then the hatch would have not been needed. Since the cellar was naturally cool for storing bodies,

Fig. 7. Sealed cellar window SIV, possibly an attempt to convert the cellar into a makeshift air raid shelter.

Abb. 7. Verschlossenes Kellerfenster SIV, das möglicherweise dazu dienen sollte, den Keller in einen provisorischen Luftschutzbunker zu verwandeln.



the staircase provided an unnecessary draft for the rooms above and was therefore likely removed.

With the modifications made during the Nazi phase, there was still a separation of the public and private aspects of the building. Without knowing the absolute function of the private spaces, it is difficult to say what occurred in these rooms, however it is likely that they were offices occupied regularly, while the public area more than likely functioned as a memorial or at least a specially designed waiting room.

Soviet and Stasi Phase

Following World War II, the Soviets carried out the task of removing all evidence of Nazism in the borough and the Soviet forces occupied the Leichenhalle and the surrounding buildings (RIBBE 1987). The only evidence of modification made by this government is the sealing of the conch. Artifacts suggest that the conch R.1.09 was sealed at this time and it can be assumed that the other conch was sealed at this point as well. In R.1.09 a soviet newspaper titled "Work" dated 31.12.1946 was discovered which was used to clean the masonry tools used to brick up the conch wall. Also found was a filter for a Papyros cigarette, a popular soviet cigarette known for its powerful tobacco and ability to be smoked quickly. The sealing of the conch severed all access to the cellar from the ground floor. During this time, T.1.01/107 would have been reopened creating the only access point between the octagonal area and the rectangular area. The Leichenhalle was, however, probably still used as offices by the Soviet administration.

After 1950, the Soviets left the headquarters of the former hospital complex and for the next 35 years the Ministry for State Security (MfS), also known as the Stasi, occupied the area in the newly formed German Democratic Republic (GDR). The MfS was in charge of the "safety of the state", which meant the surveillance of East Berlin's citizens. In total, the Stasi had approximately one spy or informant for every 166 people, well more than the Nazi Gestapo who had only one agent per 2,000 citizens (KOEHLER 2000).

A guarded border secured the MfS complex and the Leichenhalle, being so close to Prenzlauer Allee, was utilized by the MfS as a guardhouse and

motorcycle garage. A ramp was constructed in the rear of the building so that the motorcycles could be directly driven into the cellar thereby successfully converting the cellar into a garage. This use as a motorcycle garage is still evidenced today by warnings to motorcyclists to turn off their engines. At this phase, it would make sense that the windows blocked during World War II were opened for ventilation reasons. Bars were placed over R.0.01f/F1, which presumably would have been a window that was opened for airing. Interestingly, there is also evidence of R.0.01g/F1 being sealed from the outside at an undeterminable time. Nearby a garage was constructed and an addition made to the northeast facade (NIII) of the Leichenhalle for automobiles. R.1.01 was no longer open to the public, but was likely a recreation area for the guards. T.1.01/1.07 allowed direct access to the rear door providing easy access to the garage. In almost all of the rooms during this time there was PVC flooring installed and a suspended ceiling constructed.

Near the Leichenhalle a separate garage was constructed, which likely would have been used strictly for automobiles. Evidence of a second garage can be seen today on the façade of the Leichenhalle. It is difficult to imagine how this garage addition appeared. In order to analyze the NIII addition, a brick by brick analysis carried out and a context matrix was created (Figs. 8, 9 and table 1). Although simple enough in design, it is clear that the addition goes directly across the large window of the former dissection room. Oddly, there is no indication that this window area was blocked up at any point. The garage was attached on the side of the building with cement and possibly a tar sealed roof. White paint was used inside the garage on the NIII facade and painted around two square objects during this time (Fig. 10). It cannot be stated with any certainty as to what could have been on the wall especially since there do not appear to be any fasteners put into the brickwork.

The large window and the addition of the garage seem to have taken their toll on the northeastern wall (NIII). Large cracks can be seen forming down the middle of the wall starting above the window and proceeding down below the window (Figs. 10 and 11). This will only worsen with time. It is possible that while trying to make the Leichenhalle a functional garage, the MfS did not consider the effects winter would have on the addition. It appears from context 18 and 19, that above the tar sealing of the sloped roof, stepped shingles were added making the roof similar to that of the other nearby garage (as seen from a historical photograph). This is not beneficial to the structure in particularly harsh winters during which snow would accumulate on the roof adding unforeseen weight to the garage and pressure to façade NIII, which was not designed for this function or these problems.

Like the Nazi phase, there is virtually no documentation of the Leichenhalle's use during this time, except that it was a watchmen post. The other rooms of the cellar floor leave little evidence for what they were used for between 1934 and present day. During this phase, the Leichenhalle was no longer a public and private building, but a restricted structure. The secretive nature of the MfS provides very little historical insight to what occurred in the Leichenhalle.

From 1985 to present

In 1985, the MfS moved into a new building in Berlin-Friedrichsfelde (GRUBITZSCH 1995). Since the complex still remained government property, it was now used as the Bezirksamt for the Prenzlauer Berg district. Starting in 1987, the Leichenhalle was used as an exhibition museum open to the public (HÄDER/WÜST 1994). Following the collapse of the GDR, the Leichenhalle remained a museum. During this time there was an attempt to make the building presentable resulting in a coat of white paint used internally throughout the ground floor. In 1992, an on-site repair task was conducted, commissioned by the city, for the building's preservation, although the repairs were strictly superficial. It is unknown whether it was at this point, earlier or later that the garage addition and construction were removed.

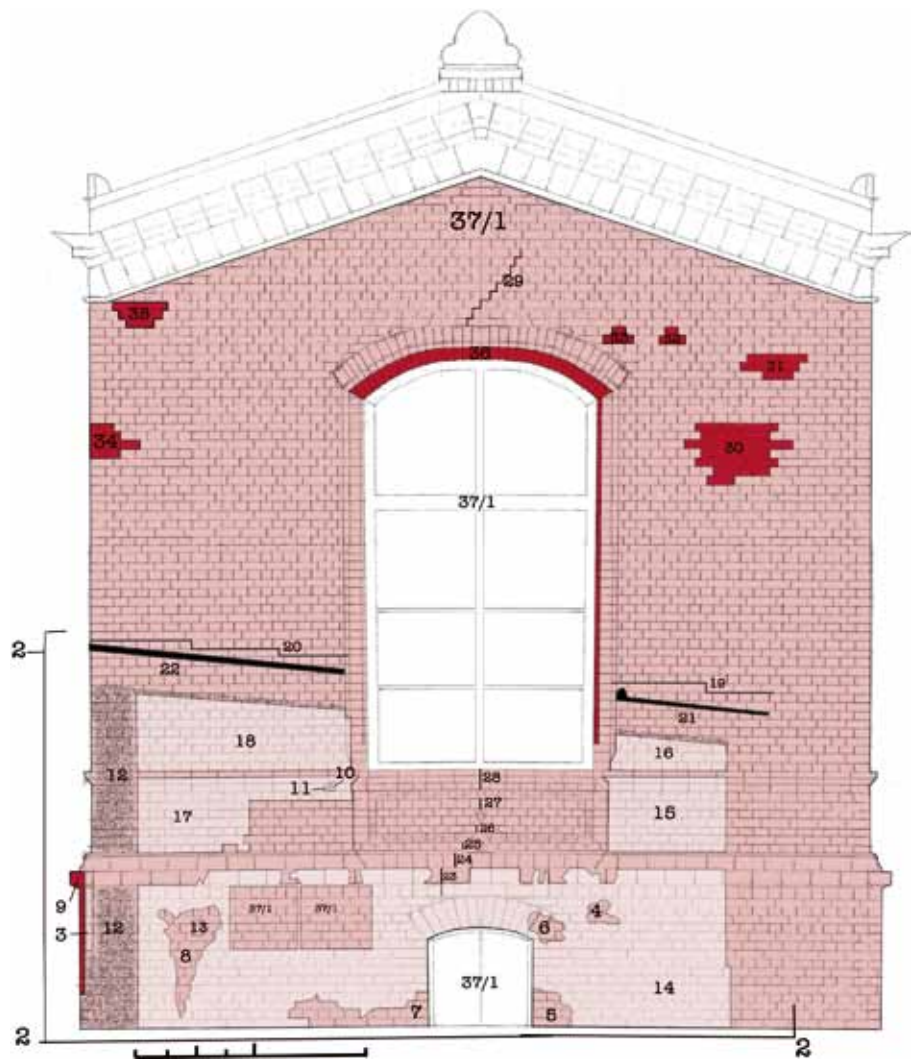


Fig. 8. Brick by brick analysis of the NIII addition of the Leichenhalle.

Abb. 8. Ziegelgerechte Aufnahme des NIII-Anbaus der Leichenhalle.

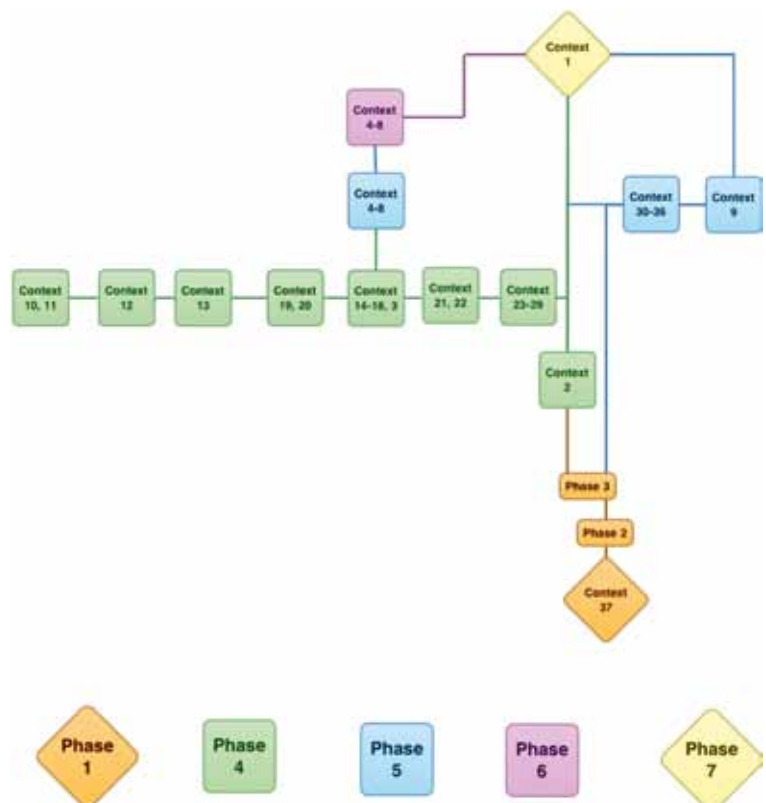


Fig. 9. Matrix of the recorded contexts; image by the author.

Abb. 9. Matrix der dokumentierten Schichten und Phasen.

Tab. 1. Building phases of the Leichenhalle: phase 1 Leichenhalle; phase 2 Nazi Memorial; phase 3 Soviet offices; phase 4 GDR guard house/garage; phase 5 museum; phase 6 medical record archive; phase 7 present day situation.

Context Number	Phase	Description
1	7	present northwest wall and windows
2	4	car garage wall
4-8	6/5	garage paint damages
10, 11	4	electrical additions
12	4	cement/mortar
13	4	electrical wiring
14-18, 3	4	white garage paint
19, 20	4	roof cement
21, 22	4	garage tar
23-29	4	structural damage
30-36, 9	5	brick repairs
37	1	original northwest wall and windows



Fig. 10. White paint and crack below the window of the NIII façade; photo by author.

Abb. 10. Weiße Bemalung und Riss unterhalb des Fensters in der NIII-Fassade.



Fig. 11. Structural damage above the window of the NIII façade possibly caused by the addition of a garage; photo by author.

Abb. 11. Gebäudeschaden über dem Fenster der NIII-Fassade, möglicherweise verursacht durch den Anbau der Garage.

In 2001, the museum was moved to another location and the Leichenhalle remained empty until 2005 when it began use as an archive of patient records by the Public Health Department. In 2009, almost every space had been taken up with the shelves of medical records, obscuring any effective spatial impression the structure had to offer. Today, for patient privacy reasons, the building remains closed to the public, although it was opened for a few hours on the Day of the Open Monuments in February 2009. During this occasion the records were removed from the ground floor and one could recognize the spatial organization of the building on the ground floor. After the Day of the Open Monuments the building was closed off to the public again and continues to be lost behind the surrounding and expanding flora and graffiti.

Conclusion

The Leichenhalle has had a dramatic history over the past hundred years. The building was utilized and physically changed by each government in order to suit their respective needs for controlling society. To briefly summarize this history, the Wilhelm government intended the Leichenhalle as a chapel where the poor could pay respects to the deceased while scientists could gain medical knowledge to improve the health of growing Berlin's inhabitants. During the Third Reich, the Leichenhalle became a tool of the Nazi government to genetically control the future, while the interior was changed to serve as a memorial to fallen Nazi party members with a flooring reflecting images of an imagined history. Later during the Third Reich period, the Leichenhalle was modified yet again, into a makeshift air raid shelter during World War II. After the fall of the Third Reich, the Leichenhalle was controlled by the Soviets and then the GDR where the building was physically converted into a guard-house for the MfS facility where secret interrogations and torture techniques were used on Prenzlauer Berg's citizens to manipulate society. The historic archaeology of the Leichenhalle has revealed the radical changes in the use of the building and the physical alterations that each succeeding government carried out. First as a building for the undesired poor class to a center of registration for Aryan purity and reporting of physical defects while at the same time acting as a memorial to the government. Upon Soviet occupation, the building changed from a public memorial to a secretive center that the public would have feared ever entering. This infamy is still reflected today by building House 3, next to the Leichenhalle, which displays signs with phrases such as „Wer schloss die eiserne Tür?“ (Who closed the iron doors?) and „Wer verschwand im Keller?“ (Who disappeared in the cellar?), recalling when the Stasi used the complex for secret interrogations.

This display of phrases reflecting the Stasi phase ensures that the infamy will not be forgotten, but inversely it covers the past events that took place there and influences people's memories of the site (remember that House 3 was formerly the Nazi Health Department where diseased individuals were examined for sterilization). In this way the archaeology of contemporary periods is a unique field of archaeology in that it is one that concerns recent periods of history that have affected people's lives; that is to say the generation of individuals familiar with the methods of the Stasi are still alive and therefore the very recent memory is emphasized. But the previous periods should similarly not be forgotten. It was the goal of this project to discover the history that was erased through the conversion of the Leichenhalle for various government purposes so that later generations can recognize its importance as a historical site and its history will not be forgotten. The problem that now needs to be addressed is how this site can be preserved and the memory of the site maintained in a way that allows the Leichenhalle to continue functioning as a government building, while still being available to the public in a way that presents the history of the Leichenhalle and its controlling governments lest it happens again.

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