

Because of its geographically convenient location, Berlin is central to European trade. The construction of the West Harbor in the borough of Moabit offered Berlin the chance to join in the nationally growing barge traffic.

Today, comparable constructions as well preserved in their entirety as the West Harbor are very rare worldwide. The authenticity and integrity of the harbor's handling equipment in its original socio-cultural context is unique.

The fate of the handling equipment of the heritage-protected West Harbor has been discussed over the last few years with the goal of preserving this technical and industrial cultural asset for future generations as a physical testimony to the economic and technical expansion after the First World War.

During construction of the Harbor in western Berlin, especially that of Basin 2 and the surrounding handling equipment and buildings, aesthetic concerns were already in the foreground. The technical equipment of the West Harbor originally included 35 cranes. Two cranes, constructed in the same way and symmetrically positioned in the central area of the harbor, are still preserved today.

The fundamental criteria that differentiate the two types of cranes from one another indicate their differing fields of application and the overall construction concept of the harbor. The two cranes are thus, together with the overall construction, each significant and irreplaceable. If one were to remove a part of the building structure or a crane from the harbor, the harbor would lose significance and informative value. The original concept of the harbor would no longer be recognizable.

The goal of the concept for the cranes' preservation presented in this Masters Thesis is to bring about a situation in which it is possible to experience their age, value the work they have performed and simultaneously give a clear, consistent picture of the site. In the process, attention is given to keeping the costs to the owner (BEHALA) low, and still respecting the maxims of historical preservation and conservation ethics.

Because of the complexity of the requirements, the development of the concept required a constant mediation between generally accepted conservational practice and practically realizable approaches. Essential was the decision made at the beginning of the process to secure the equipment against future movement. The fixing of the entire equipment array has the advantage that the occurring loads can then be deduced to remain constant. The static evaluation of the system is thus simplified and follow-up inspections will be less expensive.

The first survey done by Civil Engineering students showed that the steel framework meets safety requirements necessary for the ongoing usage of the area. Staves that are no longer sufficient to support the static load must be replaced or augmented. For corrosion protection in exterior areas, pigment systems will be used because of their longer durability. Coating will occur locally and based on the current situation of the equipment. In interior areas of the crane buildings, an almost purely conservational concept will be used. Repairing roofs and windows and sealing all openings against the intrusion of pigeons will already be a decisive step in substance protection. Thereafter, the surfaces of the machines and controls must be cleaned of droppings and lubricant residues. Finally, the old coating, which is peeling away, will be reformed and fixed in place with synthetic resin. Temporary, transparent protective coatings will be used only on bare metal surfaces.

In order to emphasize the cultural value of the harbor, the research has been expanded to a national typological comparison. Some preserved equipment has been found. None is still so closely bound to its original context as that in Berlin West Harbor: on its original site in a harbor area that still supplies Berlin.

Authors:

Ulrich Stahn Dipl. Rest. (FH)

Contact:

Ulrich Stahn

Am Treptower Park 18

12435 Berlin

Ulrich.stahn@trikonberlin.de

www.trikonberlin.de