

The Calwer Strasse in Stuttgart

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The project of the Calwer Strasse in Stuttgart – the capital of Baden-Württemberg in Germany – which I intend to present to you, was a direct result of the course for conservation at the Rome Center of ICOMOS. To this course I was sent as a freshly accepted conservator by the government of Baden-Württemberg in 1971 and there I had the great chance to learn about the relations between conservation and urbanism – a matter not at all familiar to the members of the conservation – office in Stuttgart at that time.

The course took six months and was organised by the most outstanding specialists in the field of conservation – such as Pierro Gazzola, who in 1959 was the leading head for the foundation of ICOMOS, Professor De Angelis d'Ossat, the organiser of the course and other worldwide known university teachers in the field of conservation such as Prof. Philoppot, Prof. Massari, Foramitti Insall and Brichet. I still am thankful to this eminent teachers.

The second favourable circumstance for the conservation of the Calwer Strasse was, that the Land Baden-Württemberg, for which I am still working, got in 1972 a new law for the conservation of monuments which has a paragraph for the protection of historic centers ("Gesamtanlagen", not only for single buildings. This paragraph was a consequence of the UNESCO – convention of 1962 for the "protection of environment".

In Germany the idea to protect "historic centers" by a special law was completely new. So the "Denkmalschutzgesetz" of Baden-Württemberg served as an example for many other lands in Germany.

I considered it as my personal challenge, to apply this law someplace and so to combine, what I learned in

Rome with the new legal base of my work as a conservator. Therefore our office did not take the normal procedure, which is, to react on demands for advice and financial support. In this case the Landesdenkmalamt was active, by himself in pointing out the historical and artistic importance of a neglected part of the capital, whose center was destructed in the second world-war to about 90%, but some small streets with their old – fashioned houses survived war – and postwar destructions.

Certainly the representative of the Landesdenkmalamt did not realise, which kind of development he did start – a development, which included later an important office of architecture – the office of Kammerer & Belz, an insurance – company – the ARA, (now "Württembergische Landesversicherung"), the system of public transports and an important group of tenancies. Also the city of Stuttgart called the restoration of the street her "contribution to the year of conservation" (1975).

Looking back, I dare to say, that the success of the project was simply in the fact, that there were just in the right time the right people, whose interests were melting together to this what is now known as "the Calwer Strasse" on a national and international level and to what I want to attract your attention now.

By doing so, I want to point out:

1. The historical and artistic importance of the street and its protection,
2. The competition and the performance,
3. The economical impact,
4. The evaluation after two decades,

and to illustrate this by photos.

The Historical and Artistical Importance of the Street and it's Protection

The Calwer Strasse lies in the so called "Reiche Vorstadt" of Stuttgart – a region, which was added to the capital of Wurttemberg in the 17th century. Already the name explains, that there were living at the time basically rich people – mostly commercants and some peasants. A model of the city shows the way, how the buildings were set and partly they are still here. By the time the condition of the street became so bad, that already about 1900 reconstruction – works were started. The first world-war with it's consequences stopped these works and there was basically no change till to the early 1970s. But at this time the houses reached a condition, which could not be any longer accepted.

There were two basic reasons for the decay: First of all the houses were separated by heritage in too many owners. On the other side the owners were not informed of the intentions of the city – planners. So the owners often moved out and decided, not to invest any more. Investment in these houses would have meant a incalculable risk, because always there was the threat, that the whole area would be torn down. Some of the owners also used a real destruction – policy, which had the simple recipe, to compress in their property a tenantry of a lower and lower social class, without taking into consideration, what were the consequences for the people – and all the street.

At this time the office of conservation recognised the quality of the street and its importance for the city, because three centuries of city – history were condensed in a very small area.

Any kind of style was represented there – the framework – house and the baroque palace, as well as the art-nouveau-building of the early 20th century. Also the history of the houses was sometimes more than of local interest. In the house No. 50 for example was born an important pioneer of the textile – business, Panagiot Wergo. He had an open house for the poets of 19th

century such as Kerner, Schwab, Holderlin and Uhland. The last one met there for the first time the niece of the owner, who later became his wife. The situation of the street close to the city – center added to it's importance.

So it was rather easy, to attract the interest of the media – first the newspapers, afterwards TV – to the street and this fact was of very big help. In February 1973 there was the first rapport of "the last idyl of the city-center" and a "refuge for those, who feel connected to the history of their town." In March of this year the political parties recommended unanimously, that the upper part of the street should be conserved and in May 1973 the authority of the local district (Regierungsprasidium) decided, to follow the recommendation of the office of conservation and to protect the street by law, applying the new legal basis (7.5.73).

Competition and Performance

Thus the administration and the political parties unanimously had the intention, to save the Calwer Strasse as a historical environment, but it needed a powerful investor, who would execute the idea. First the hope was set on an English enterprise (Chesterfield and Ronson), who expressed its interest in buying all the street and to conserve the houses. But this enterprise did not succeed, because the board of directors of a big German insurance – company, the ARA, decided unanimously, to promote the "enterprise Calwer Strasse," because everybody was convinced, that there could be done "something very senseful and beautiful" – these were the words. Later on I will give you more information, which kind of research was done to get to this decision: It was almost none.

On the base of this decision, the ARA set up in 1974 a restricted competition of ideas between six well known architects,

which covered all the region between Calwer Strasse, Rotebühlplatz, Theodor-Heuß-Strasse and Lange Strasse. In this phase it was the duty of the conservation – office, to watch over the following points:

- (1) The historical substance of importance is to be conserved in a reasonable frame. Where the substance itself could not be kept, new buildings had to be constructed in this way, that they fit into the environment.
- (2) The mix of shops, restaurants and apartments is to be conserved. Small shaped size of the unities is a “must”. The size of the buildings had to reflect their use.
- (3) In addition of this, the office of conservation helped by giving as a base of the competition of photogrammetric measurement of the street.

The competition was decided in early 1974 and in the month of June of this year the office of Prof. Kammerer & Belz got the first prize.

The result of this competition was the base for the city of Stuttgart, to set up a masterplan for the area mentioned above. A great many of the urban district councillors objected but by the assistance of the press all ended up to an acceptance of the masterplan, which finally gave a base, that the architects could get the order for the execution of their proposal. So the development turned in a direction, which after the execution was generally accepted.

Before starting with the practical work, any single house had to be carefully examined by its statics and by the rest over. Also the history of each house had to be brought to live by research in the archives. The results of this research had to be discussed with the office of conservation. That a major part of the houses could be conserved, was

much more the result of the comprehensive attitude of the new owners, than the effect of legal pressure, which mostly weakens quickly, if money gets rare.

Metaphorically speaking, the houses of the Calwer Strasse, on which the interest of the conservators had to concentrate, build the backbone of the project. The inner place, which seemed to the architects the “most important of all the project,” is the center or – if you want – the heart; and the tenthousands of pedestrians, which go up and down the large staircase of the public traffic – connection are the blood, which all fills with life.

The Economical Impact

After having explained about the project Calwer Strasse by the point of view of the conservator of historical monuments, I want to give you some information about the economical background, because these facts are essential for the subject, we are treating in this congress.

First of all it is important to know, that the complex was financed without credits, what is usual by insurance – companies, because they have the duty to invest the money of the insured.

There were not many financial and feasibility – studies carried out in advance, but very important for the investors was the fact, that the Calwer Strasse was lying in the city – center and at the cross – point of the newly established city – railway with the federal railway – system and that on this crosspoint was planned a stop.

The ARA did not use the rooms for their own purposes. All the rooms are rented. There were shops on the street – level, offices and apartments on the higher levels and garages under the earth – of course also storage – room and connections to the subway – station.

The apartments appealed very much to the “yuppie” – people in Stuttgart, because they were fashionable and close

to all kind of connections, needed for work and leisure – but not so much to the families, because all this, what children need, was not available: Space for playing, security and proximity to nature. Almost all of the old habitants got new and better apartments, than before the conservation – works were started. Nobody had to be turned out against his own wish. It is a question to be answered each time in any new case, if it is desirable to conserve the old social structures in a restoration – area. What in this case was kept, was the mixture of different functions and a use, which was adapted to the small scale of the quarter. But the general level of the apartments and the shops was ameliorated considerably – of course the prices also increased in the same way.

The shops had in the beginning a hard time to exist. The expected 70,000 passengers by day turned out to be not more than 30,000. It needed about five years – quite a long period – until the street was accepted generally as a commercial place. Also it turned out, that the “passage” did not really work, because it did not connect two pedestrian areas. So the fluctuation of the commercial tenants was rather high. Once again this is an example of “learning by doing”. Any passage and any street needs her phase of experience.

Let me now give you a closer look to the **economical details**: The total space between the Calwer Strasse and Theodor Heub – Strasse, which was bought step by step by the ARA, is 4000 m². This space is used in the following way:

shops	4,300 m ²
Storage rooms	2,400 m ²
Office-space	5,400 m ²
apartments	2,282 m ²
garages etc.	1,400 m ² (78 places)
The total is	15,782 m ²

and shows, that the ground was covered by an average of three floors over street-level and a ground – floor, used for garages, storage-rooms and pedestrian connections.

The volume of the buildings is altogether 98 000 m³.

The development of the **financial situation** can be shown by the following figures: The total volume of the investment was at the time (1978) DM 80,000,000. – Today the market value is at least DM 110,000,000. – Separated by the different use, the development of the rents is the following:

shops	1978 DM 30.-/m ² 1991 DM 45.- to DM 150.-/m ²
Offices	1978 DM 15.-/m ² 1991 DM 30.-/m ²
apartments	1978 DM 14.-/m ² 1991 DM 23.-/m ²
garages	1978 DM 110.- for one place 1991 DM 230.-

To these numbers I want to add some remarks:

1. The intention of the owners was from the beginning, to have a certain mix of the branches, but there was no experience in this field. Also everybody was expected to pay the same rent. Meanwhile the owner changed its renting – policy: There are shops, which are considered as important for public attraction such as book – shops. They will pay a much lesser rent (DM 45.-/m²) than a fashion – or jewellery – shop (DM 150.-/m²). There are indexes, showing the amount of the rent, which can be required by the different branches.

2. At the beginning the idea prevailed to give to the shops a protection of competition. This is not any more valid. Today everybody seems to agree: competition animates business. This means for example, that there are different fashion – shops in the area.

3. Another development can be remarked: In 1978 the tenants of the shops were **small enterprisers**, having basically just the one single shop. So their financial background was rather

low. Today we have big – often internationally working – enterprises with branches in many cities. Their qualification for business is already more or less known. So the tendency of concentration is shown also in our example.

4. As far as the **offices** are concerned, there was a yearly increase of 11% by average and I was told, that in this field there was the most stable progress.

5. The rents of the **apartments** did not increase in the same speed. The average was about 4% by year, which corresponds roughly to the increase of the life index in Germany in the last years.

6. By the point of view of the owners, the best investments was the **garages**. There the rents went up in the 18 years, since the “Calwer Strasse” exists in its modern form, about 12% yearly or more than 100%.

It may be of general interest, that all the tenants are complaining about the prices – but at the same time they are prolongating their contracts. – Also it may be of general interest, that it was an unusual situation by this point of view, that the investor was not only looking for a good placement of money, but that he intended to bring an accent to the development of the capital of Baden-Württemberg by restoring a historical street.

Finally I want to stress the point, that the ARA did not accept any public money for subvention and so the project is an example, that the restoration of an almost destructed historical street can be also an economical success.

Evaluation

If we try to look back to the realisation of the Calwer Strasse – the biggest project of the ARA in her history up to now – it is certainly surprising, how quick the work was executed. It just took from 1976 to 1978 – two years – and the architects had to meet high requirements, taking in consideration the complexity of the work. It is still worth to remember, that the streams of pedestrians and public traffic had to be newly directed, that shops, offices and appartments had to be created, and that – last not least – old buildings had to be conserved and adapted to new use in a way, that they could cope with the standards of the office of conservation, which gave the first push to the project and which accompanied it continuously.

How many negotiations had to be carried on, how many contracts had to be signed, how much skillfull work, how much balanced understanding and compromises were necessary to reach the common goal, is nowadays – 18 years after the beginning – only a matter of guess.

But if we ask ourselves, what was achieved, it is the following:

- * The conservation of a highly endangered city – quarter.
- * The winning of a section of real urbanity, which got it's character essentially by the historic buildings.
- * The creation of a new attraction to the capital, which became an example for many other towns.

So for the city of Stuttgart the Calwer Strasse is to be considered as an enrichment. The street became a good address in the town.