

## ICOMOS Technical Review

<b>Property</b>	<b>Speicherstadt and Kontorhaus District with Chilehaus</b>
<b>State Party</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>Property ID</b>	<b>1467</b>
<b>Date inscription</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>(iv)</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Plans for demolition of Cityhof buildings and redevelopment within the buffer zone</b>

This review relates to the Hamburg development plans in the buffer zone of the World Heritage property, including the planned demolition of the Cityhof buildings (listed buildings) and the redevelopment of the site through an architectural competition.

The Cityhof buildings in question form part of a very narrow buffer zone at the eastern edge of the World Heritage property. They have architectural merit in themselves, in relation to the history of modern architecture, although the original development by Rudolph Klophaus from the 1950s had its façade replaced in the 1970s.

In 2016, ICOMOS provided a Technical Review based on material provided by the State Party. This questioned the proposed demolition of the buildings. It stated that ‘the buffer zone is not a neutral area but rather an area that is supportive of the World Heritage property in providing its immediate setting and context. The Cityhof buildings are an important part of this setting and context’. Furthermore, it suggested that ‘there is a need to appraise the rest of the buffer zone for the way it supports the property as there cannot be a presumption that protected buildings in the buffer zone can be demolished. Without such an appraisal, it will also not be possible to assess adequately proposed changes in the area’.

It also added that the buffer zone ‘bookends’ the World Heritage property so to speak, and the property and its buffer zone are clearly read as a harmonious whole. Any major change or new development in the buffer zone will impinge on the World Heritage property.

ICOMOS concluded that further consideration should be given to assessing formally the potential impact of the proposed demolition, before any final decision is taken, through a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that considers the impact of the loss of the Cityhof buildings on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property and on the supporting nature of the buffer zone.

An HIA has now been submitted, prepared on behalf of Ministry of Culture and Media / Department for Heritage Preservation.

The HIA sets out the view that the Cityhof is ‘not of significance for the World Heritage property and its associated values and attributes, as it is a monument to post-war modernism’, and thus is set apart ‘in terms of materiality, architectural language and form, and in its urban spatial integration of the values, of the situation and the (architectural) language of the Kontorhaus district’. It concludes that if the Cityhof were demolished, there would be no impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

The HIA also suggests that the Senate has already decided, following clarifications set out in the HIA, that the permit for the demolition will be granted.

ICOMOS considers that that HIA has not fully understood the role of the buffer zone in the way it supports the property. It suggests that, as the Cityhof is separate from the property in terms of date and style of construction, then its demolition does not reflect any loss. The buffer zone supports the property in a variety of ways, as a context for the property, and as an approach and backdrop for the property. At the time of inscription, the ICOMOS evaluation noted the relative narrowness of the buffer zone in places, as well as the need for protection of the wider setting beyond the buffer zone.

The buffer zone, it was noted, becomes an integral component of the State Party's commitment to the protection, conservation, and management of the property, and officially becomes part of the property's overall management system.

The HIA does not give any indication as to how the buffer zone is protected and managed to support the property, nor does it acknowledge what was agreed at the time of inscription. The ICOMOS evaluation further notes that: 'Areas adjacent to the nominated property are protected by Section 8 of the Act [Hamburg Heritage Protection Act], to the extent they are classified as being "of formative significance for [the heritage asset's] appearance or continued existence." A permit from the competent authority is required before these areas may be changed by the erection, alteration or elimination of structural elements, by the development of un-built public or private spaces, or by any other means if such change significantly detracts from the character and appearance of the heritage asset'.

In ICOMOS's view, the demolition of the Cityhof would adversely affect the character of the buffer zone, and thus the setting and context of the property. The Cityhof is not a part of the Kontorhaus district but a valuable part of its setting. The symmetry and height of the Cityhof buildings provide an ideal foil for the buildings within the property, with one complementing the other, and very clearly delineates the boundary of the Kontorhaus District and provides a formal entrance to it. As the HIA acknowledges, 'The Cityhof sets a counter-accent to the Kontorhaus district not only in its architectural form and urban planning position, but also through the materiality [...] The Kontorhaus district is a symbol of the expansion and growth seen in Hamburg during the 19th and first half of the 20th century. The Cityhof represents the reconstruction era and a change in the image that the City of Hamburg wished to portray of itself. The Second World War represents a turning point that can be seen particularly in this change in architecture'. Thus the Cityhof explains the changes to city planning in the post-World War II era.

The HIA also acknowledges that the Cityhof is:

- 'an unmistakable document of contemporary post-war architecture and post-war city construction in Hamburg located at an important place on the outskirts of the inner city and the entrance to the Hamburg inner city, as a block perimeter development, as a document of reconstruction following the Second World War;
- for reasons of preserving the characteristic features of the cityscape due to its strong presence on key city entry roads, due to its beacon-like character for the site of the office district in the south-eastern side of the city centre;
- and because of the fact that the group of skyscrapers forming an outline along Wallring due to their graduation and height development clearly shows the topography of Geesthang and the former ramparts like hardly any other place in the city'.

This counter-play between tightly-grouped buildings of the property and those in the buffer zone, and particularly the Cityhof, has not been adequately analysed in the HIA.

It is suggested in the HIA that there was mention of future plans during the evaluation process. ICOMOS confirms that it cannot, at the time of inscription, assess still-vague proposals. ICOMOS rather concentrates on ensuring that protection and management will guide adequately and sympathetically the future direction of change for the property in general.

In conclusion, ICOMOS does not agree with the conclusions of the HIA in the way it has assessed the relationship between the Cityhof and the property. It remains ICOMOS's view that the Cityhof buildings are important in their own right and provide a valuable adjunct to the setting of the property. As the HIA suggests, the 'potential demolition of the Cityhof monument certainly means a loss in the Hamburg monument landscape, geographically touching the World Heritage [property]'. Although the HIA later goes on to say this monument landscape does not '[play] a constituent role', ICOMOS considers that, while it is quite correct to say it does not form part of the property, it is incorrect to say that it has no inter-relationship with it. The Cityhof was carefully designed as a counterbalance to the periphery of the tightly clustered Kontorhaus buildings.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party should further technical assistance be requested, such as in the form of an Advisory mission.

ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont  
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