

Berlin as the Showdown City: Architectural Symbolism in the Capital of the Cold War

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1. Introduction

As Soviet and Western occupying forces assumed control of Berlin in the wake of World War II, the obligation to oversee Germany's structural and political recovery necessitated extensive consideration of the desired architectural landscape. Alongside the increasingly polarized objectives of Soviet and Western powers in Berlin, the competitive drive to compose Berlin's reconstructed image represented the parallel yet opposing trajectories of East and West Germany. As the Berlin of World War II was rampaged by the Red Army and bombed by Allied forces, both East and West Berlin inherited structural insecurities and the inescapable need to rebuild, both to sustain life and mind.¹ Rebranding Berlin's identity effectively ushered in a new vision for the future, one riddled with practical and political motives. Much as architects Bruno Taut and Walter Gropius had advocated for a watershed break with Germany's design past in the years following World War I, East and West Berlin adopted new architectural imagery to symbolize the nations' progression into the coming era.

Symbolizing a departure from Berlin's Nazi past, the importation of architectural design representative of the nations which were sustaining Berlin served not only as practical solutions to the city's redevelopment, but also as opportunities for Germany's occupying powers to entice the city's residents with the allure of new ideology. Projecting power through architecture served both to represent the incoming prosperity and commitment of the Soviet Union and the West to the success of their corresponding portions of Berlin, as well as to establish an unofficial scoreboard between the two adversaries. To this end, the development of two separate German states, the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (FRD) and the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (GDR)

¹ Rubin, Eli. "Amnesiopolis: From Mietskaserne to Wohnungsbauserie 70 in East Berlin's Northeast." *Central European History* 47 (2014): 342.

materialized first with the fragmentation and occupation of Germany and Berlin in 1945, then confirmed by the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.²

This investigation will present three aspects of Berlin's Cold War architecture: the creation of a main urban avenue, architectural centerpieces within main urban avenues, and residential architecture in East and West Berlin. The history of Berlin's recent development will guide this analysis, referencing its rapid industrialization and significance as a showcase city under Prussian and German leadership. Secondly, a presentation of Berlin's geography will display the axial nature of the city's development and depict the discordant effect of the Berlin Wall's construction. Then, the development of West Berlin's main urban avenue, Kurfürstendamm, will be presented alongside Kurfürstendamm's centerpiece, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church), to illustrate the role of recent history in constructing a post-war societal narrative. Through analysis of East Berlin's Stalinallee and its nearby centerpiece of the *Fernsehturm* (Television Tower), the contrasting architectural design of East and West Berlin will further a comparison of Stalinallee and Kurfürstendamm as rival centers of urban attraction. Next, strategies in East and West Berlin to provide sufficient housing, the most urgent post-war necessity, will compare West Berlin's Interbau 57 and Interbau 87 projects with East Berlin's development of districts Marzahn and Hellersdorf. In conclusion, the objectives of post-World War II reconstruction in East and West Berlin will be intertwined to accentuate the common urban needs in East and West Berlin and to highlight the symbolic architectural differences that defined East and West Berlin's divergent Cold War-era development.

² Arandelovic, Biljana and Dushko Bogunovich. "City Profile: Berlin." *Cities* 37 (2014): 5.

As East and West Berlin followed polarized architectural and political trajectories, this essay analyzes the dualistic qualities of development in both Berlins to support the following research question: to what extent does Berlin's architectural development of main urban avenues, architectural centerpieces, and residential architecture during the Cold War reflect the polarized ideological dichotomy between the Soviet Union and the West?

2. The Architectural Significance of Berlin through Empires

As Germany's capital city, Berlin has served as a significant architectural showcase city across several centuries of leadership. Defining Berlin's development in the 1700s, Friedrich Wilhelm I. adorned Berlin with the glorious palaces Stadtschloss and Schloss Charlottenburg. Yet it was under Friedrich der Große that the Sans Soucci's beauty adorned the Hohenzollern Empire, as a luxurious summer palace with groomed gardens and orangery.³ Continuing the Hohenzollern Empire's stronghold in Berlin, the architectural developments of Karl Friedrich Schinkel in the early 1800s elevated the cultural niveau of the city, with the development of Unter den Linden's hallmark structures.⁴ The Siegessäule's (victory column) prominence, first located opposite of the Reichstag Building, before its relocation to the traffic circle of Tiergarten, commemorated Prussian victories in the Wars of German Unification. The Reichstag Building's promise "*dem deutschen Volke*" (to the German people) showed aspirations for newly unified Germany, while the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) and its associated Wilhelmine-era architecture returned to ostentatious Romanesque influences.⁵ In the wake of World War I, the now UNESCO-protected "Modern Housing Estates" of Bauhaus-

³ Arandelovic, Bogunovich. 2.

⁴ Stangl, Paul. *Risen from Ruins: The Cultural Politics of Rebuilding East Berlin*. Stanford University Press, 2018. 132, 163, 164.

⁵ Zill, Rüdiger. "A true witness of transience!: Berlin's Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche and the symbolic use of architectural fragments in modernity." *European Review of History* 18.5-6 (2011): 817.

affiliated architects were constructed across Berlin, optimistically welcoming the clear future of society.⁶ With the rise of the Nazis and Adolf Hitler, the Third Reich facilitated Berlin's development, as grandiose planning by Albert Speer conveyed the regime's aspirations for Germania, overhauling the existing city landscape to create new prominent axes and garish government buildings.⁷

Throughout these centuries, Berlin endured conflict between tradition and modernity, executive power and citizen-driven momentum. Through it all, architecture prevailed as a refined means to assert victory and ideology. Soviet and Western occupying powers in the post-World War II era inherited the historical weight of monuments to the past and were tasked with the internal quandary of incorporating such monuments into modern political and architectural identities. The design of Berlin was an architectural playground for leaders of the past, and this quality did not wane in the Cold War era.

3. Imagining the Map: Geography and World War II Destruction

The geography of divided Berlin is categorized by the existence of two city centers, corresponding to each half of the Western and Soviet sectors. In East Berlin, the Alexanderplatz complex and its neighboring Stalinallee are comprised of a vast plaza at the urban center of eastern Berlin. The transit hub and crossroads of the eastern city is anchored today by the *Fernsehturm* (Television Tower), whose silver sphere emerged within the GDR-era as a recognizable landmark of futuristic east Berlin. Extending eastward from Alexanderplatz, Stalinallee is framed by the towering entrance of Strausberger Platz, whose showcase qualities

⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. *Berlin Modernism Housing Estates*. 2019. <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1239/>>.

⁷ Rubin, Eli. "Amnesiopolis: From Mietskaserne to Wohnungsbauserie 70 in East Berlin's Northeast." *Central European History* 47 (2014): 339.

lend a deliberate nod to monumental Soviet style. Stalinallee's progression toward the rougher industrial side of East Berlin exists in contrast to Unter den Linden, East Berlin's other prominent avenue, which courses westward from Alexanderplatz. Unter den Linden's east-west axis slices through the core of Berlin's oldest quarter and is framed by the Humboldt-University, Berlin State Opera, and Museum Island, before ending at the Brandenburg Gate. Flanking the abrupt Berlin Wall, the vast Tiergarten of Western Berlin extends through the heart of undivided Berlin but comprised the eastern fringe of the West Berlin. Split by the east-west axis of Straße des 17. Juni and extending toward Ernst-Reuter Platz, Tiergarten approaches West Berlin's city center and its historically prominent Kurfürstendamm. Nestled in the core of Kurfürstendamm, the restored remnants of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) are framed by the Bahnhof Zoo train station, while Kurfürstendamm's glimmering theatres beckon to pedestrians.

The methodical flow of Berlin's geography is chopped by the indiscriminate path of Berlin's sector division, and beginning in 1961, of the Berlin Wall. Much as with the abruptness of the city's segmentation at the Brandenburg Gate, neighborhoods and prominent avenues were similarly divided by the course of the Wall. The once-bustling Potsdamer Platz, immortalized by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in his expressionist *Straßenszenen* of the 1910s and a location of affection in the 1987 Wim Wenders film *Der Himmel über Berlin*, experienced a drastic purge of identity with the construction of the Berlin Wall through its wide intersection.⁸ As a significant intersection for both vehicular and rail traffic, the grinding halt of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin's heart exemplified the urban tragedy of the city's new circumstance. Such was also the fate of

⁸⁸*Der Himmel über Berlin / Wings of Desire*. Dir. Wim Wenders. 1987. Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. *Potsdamer Platz*. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

Bernauer Straße, near the boundary of districts Prenzlauer Berg and Wedding. With the Berlin Wall's track splitting the avenue, apartment buildings were left adjacent along its boundary, with windows overlooking the Wall's "no-man's land" dead zone.

The discordance of Berlin's divide resulted in the architectural need to dualistically recreate the disconnected halves of each respective Berlin, either through the unification of a concise urban center or through the creation of top-notch residential spaces. In both circumstances, new construction of modern architecture validated the new status of Berlin's division, contributing to the ideological platforms of East and West Berlin. Convincing its residents of the importance of the post-World War II ideological conflict, ideology in East and West Berlin provided new purpose for the city's residents, as reconstruction of the city elevated prospects for the future.

3.1 Nazi-era Destruction

Also essential in comprehending the geography of Cold War Berlin is the cataclysmic progression of the Nazi regime and the subsequent destruction of the city as induced by World War II. Complexes realized under the Nazi regime, such as the Tempelhof Airport and the administrative complex at Fehrbelliner Platz, standardized the aesthetic of Nazi era architecture (and are important in the modern architectural discourse – as monolithic Nazi designs became a strategy to *avoid* in post-war reconstruction).⁹ Even the relocation of the Siegessäule fed the ideological purposes of the Nazi regime, reiterating Albert Speer's aspirations toward axial structure.

⁹ Ladd, Brian. "Double Restoration: Rebuilding Berlin after 1945." *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover From Disaster*. Ed. Thomas J. Campanella and Lawrence J. Vale. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 119.

Extensive bombing raids pursued by Allied forces in World War II, along with the 1945 Red Army's conquer of Berlin, contributed to the onslaught of destruction endured by the city.¹⁰ In the immediate wake of World War II, as well as during the lingering recovery from the conflict, Berlin's urban devastation was so extensive, mountains of rubble were piled in the city's sparsely populated outskirts.¹¹ Restoring the operational functionality of Berlin in the wake of World War II became the primary task of Allied forces, as Western and Soviet forces claimed their sectors of the city and established bastions of corresponding influence. To this end, the emphasis on concepts of city center allowed East and West Germany to embrace support from their sustaining powers. The city center concept was a means to convey the arrival of new geopolitical allegiances; in this competition, East and West flaunted prosperity, providing hope for residents of Berlin. Although this depiction was inconsistent with the destroyed majority of Berlin, and contrary to the larger tension of the Cold War, architecture represented external commitment to the city's survival.¹²

4. West Berlin's City Center: Ku'damm as *Flaniermeile* and Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche

Kurfürstendamm's reemergence from Berlin's crumbled landscape exemplified the importance of the avenue as a *Flaniermeile* (strolling promenade) of the western city. Positioned at a crossroads of the district Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Kurfürstendamm has long been associated with an air of importance, as its central location and often elite clientele, combined with its heightened cultural status with theatre and other entertainment, confirmed its importance in the pre-war era. As Berlin's historic city core lay in East Berlin, West Berlin's need for its own city center easily landed on Kurfürstendamm, a determination reflective of the avenue's

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹¹ Ladd, 118.

¹² Spencer, Robert A. "Divided Germany and the Thaw." *International Journal* 14.4 (1959): 254-255.

significance in the Weimar era and impacted by the prominent train connections of nearby Bahnhof Zoo.¹³ Touted as the *Schaufenster* (show window) of the West, the consumerist landscape of Kurfürstendamm, enabled by the nearby *Kaufhaus des Westens* (Department Store of the West) and *Marmorhaus* (Marble House Theatre) fueled the city's sense of normalcy after World War II.¹⁴

As eyewitness and NATO-sponsored writer James R. Florent reflects upon the contrasts between city centers in his 1961 essay, "Flight to the West," the concerted effort to proceed with normal life is overt in the West Berlin urban landscape.

"To the west is the Kurfürstendamm, about five to six kilometers long, with shops where you can find everything, cafes, restaurants that are always full, and especially at night, its extraordinary illumination that makes it compare to Broadway. All this is flooded [*sic*] a teeming crowd, eager to live, who make purchases, go to the movies, to the theater and to concerts, and can afford once a week in one of the best restaurants in the 'am Zoo' area, where dinner costs about 16 DM. In the East the same road which is located in line with the first is the Stalinallee, the former Frankfurterstraße. All along it are only dull gray administrative buildings and few stores in which there is nothing, or goods of such poor quality that East Berliners prefer to shop for western goods."¹⁵

Contributing a historical presence to the glamour of Kurfürstendamm, Kurfürstendamm's centerpiece, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church), is perched at the intersection of Kurfürstendamm and Budapester Straße. As a church built from the plans of Albert Schwechten, its purpose and its namesake commemorated the Kaiser and his unifying actions to create the German empire. Its construction is shrouded in symbolism, as the date upon which the foundation for the church was laid, March 22, 1891, was the thirty-second birthday of Kaiser Wilhelm I, and the church's consecration in 1895 aligned with the twenty-

¹³ Arandelovic, Bogunovich, 10.

¹⁴ Pugh, Emily. "Beyond the Berlin Myth: The Local, the Global and the IBA 87." *Berlin: Divided City 1945-1989*. Ed. Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake. New York: Berghahn, 2010. 157.

¹⁵ Florent, James R. *Flight to the West -- a Photo Essay*. NATO. Washington D.C. : United States National Archives and Records Administration , July 1961. 4.

fifth anniversary of Germany's victory in the Franco-Prussian War.¹⁶ Similarly, the church itself is symbolic in its representation of a burgeoning German identity, with its odes to Romanesque architecture and assertive presence in the median of the Kurfürstendamm and Tauentzienstraße.¹⁷ The church remained unharmed during World War II, until 1943, when Allied raids at last targeted the building.¹⁸ The structure's imposing form was decimated, its size drastically reduced, and its wreckage a mere shell of its former self.

While the hollow shell of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* remained intact until the late 1950s, it assumed a symbolism of an entirely other sort. Once a showcase building for the German Empire, nationalist tendencies had been strongly discouraged by West Germany's occupiers. As reconciliation with Germany's past remained a sensitive subject, life around the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* continued with a strange air of normalcy, as the church remained in its partially destroyed form while the neighboring Zoo-Palast theatre was rejuvenated to house the renowned Berlinale film festival. Thus, the tension between the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*'s origins during the German monarchy, its fate in World War II, and the glamorous consumerism of post-war Kurfürstendamm provided an uncomfortable juxtaposition within West Berlin.

With these preceding influences, the decision to commemorate the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* property, retaining the structure as is to be seen today, was a circuitous and unforeseeable process. Particularly due to the comparison to Berlin's *Stadtschloss* (city palace), which was demolished by the GDR in 1950, measures to retain the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* were considered key in differentiating West Berlin's discourse with Berlin's

¹⁶ Zill, 817.

¹⁷ Zill, 817.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

past, thus encouraging West Berlin's citizen support for the retention of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*'s location and remaining spires.¹⁹ The West Berlin Senate's design contest for the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* property ensured the continued symbolic presence of the church, if not its continued physical presence, although Egon Eiermann's 1957 winning design proposed the razing of the remaining structure of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* and the construction of a sleek modern church, stylistically consistent with the neighboring Europa-Center.²⁰ Lacking the status of other monument-protected buildings, the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* was unprotected by West Berlin authorities, yet extensive objection of Berlin residents demonstrated the collective importance of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*'s presence in the Western city core.²¹ From this citizen-led uproar, Eiermann was urged to reconsider his design, and a new, integrated monument, retaining the shell of the original *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*, emerged.

Completed in 1963, the octagonal cubed stained-glass sanctuary and hexagonal tower placed around the shell of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* combine modernist simplicity with the lingering grandness of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*'s shell. Cubed mosaic, a motif seen both in Eiermann's church in Pforzheim and in the German Embassy in Washington D.C., included intricate details, with all mosaic cubes showing different abstract designs. The illuminating blue glow on the interior of the octagonal sanctuary combines the modern design of the structure with the serenity of a religious structure, while the interior of the remaining *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* displays the surviving religious mosaics of its original construction.

¹⁹ Alvis, Robert E. "The Berliner Dom, the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, and the Ideological Manipulation of Space in Postwar Berlin." *East European Quarterly* 31.3 (1997): 369.

²⁰ Kappel, Kai. "Raster vs. Ruin: The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche in Berlin." *Egon Eiermann: Architect and Designer*. Hatje Cantz Publishers. 52.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Similarly, retaining the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*'s chopped spire assumed its own symbolic importance, as the scars of war attest to the destruction of beauty and order induced by conflict. With its structure visible from neighboring Bahnhof Zoo, thus greeting all visitors to West Berlin upon their arrival, the monument cements the role of Germany's past in the heart of central West Berlin. Images of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche's symbolic oversight of the city appear through its peripheral role in the Wim Wenders film, *Der Himmel über Berlin*, as the perch for angels listening to the internal quandaries of passersby.²² Included in the memories of visitors and residents alike, the structure's postcard-style associations incorporated itself into the psyche of the city, connoting a careful vigilance over the strained urban aftermath of Berlin, silently warning, "*Nie wieder Krieg!*" (Never again war!)

Kurfürstendamm's newfound function, to propel visions of the ideal Western consumer society and to integrate the depth of Germany's tumultuous past, led to its variance of architectural styles and purposes. While Kurfürstendamm endured extensive damage during World War II, which led to the extensive destruction of the avenue's *Altbau* (pre-World War II structure) constructions, the combination residential and commercial area saw extensive reconstruction efforts, both to recover the prominence of Kurfürstendamm and to establish a return to normalcy after the war. In striking contrast to the neighboring *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*, the cosmopolitan purpose of Kurfürstendamm embraced a sense of capitalist consumption, in stark contrast to the bleak consumer landscape of East Berlin.

Composing a new narrative for the post-World War II future involved extensive processing of the hardships and atrocities of the Nazi era. The mere unavoidability of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* in West Berlin enables prominent contemplation of the city's past,

²² *Der Himmel über Berlin / Wings of Desire*. Dir. Wim Wenders. 1987.

tracing its imperial associations with the resulting tragedy of war. In the age of the Cold War, East-West relations and even the hope for eventual reunification relied upon Germany's shared history before the divide of Germany. Placing a precedent of importance upon the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* interestingly did not detract from the commercial purpose of Kurfürstendamm, but instead allowed the monument to assume a symbolic, even artistic, meaning.

5. East Berlin's City Center: *Fernsehturm* and the Importance of Centerpiece

While West Berlin reclaimed the pre-war *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* and Kurfürstendamm, the development of East Berlin's city center was a well-orchestrated break from the past, with the construction of new monuments largely unhindered by previous historical burdens. With Alexanderplatz at the core of this development, the towering *Fernsehturm* (television tower) quickly became representative of East Berlin, with Walther Ulbricht, Leader of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED) declaring the *Fernsehturm* the "emblem of Berlin."²³ Constructed from 1965-1969, the *Fernsehturm*'s slender concrete tower, topped with a silver globe restaurant and viewing platform, is visible across Berlin's landscape. As an engineering project unprecedented in Soviet-allied nations, the *Fernsehturm* represented a utopian vision for the future, by depicting East Berlin and the GDR as economically and technologically advanced.²⁴ In contrast to the crumbled Mitte district, whose historic structures were instrumental in Berlin's elite imperialist identity, the investment in construction of the *Fernsehturm* dodged the historical responsibility of Germany's past.²⁵ While East German

²³ Gumbert, Heather. "Building the East German Television Tower." *Berlin: Divided City 1945-1989*. Ed. Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake. New York: Berghahn, 2010. 90.

²⁴ Standley, Michelle. "'Here Beats the Heart of the Young Socialist State': 1970s' East Berlin as Socialist Bloc Tourist Destination." *The Journal of Architecture* 18.5 (2013): 685.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 686.

society asserted an identity consistent with the plight of working classes to build modern society, this mentality paired with the societal tendency to reject fascism and allusions to Germany's past by immediately embracing the Soviet manifestation of Socialism.²⁶ Aligning to the idea that East Berlin would exist as the ideal reactionary opposite to fascism, the allure of the new contributed to the modern image of East Berlin, enticing competition between East and West.

The vast emptiness of Alexanderplatz, now adorned with the *Fernsehturm*, contributes to the plaza's emotional and psychological impact on visitors and residents. When standing below the *Fernsehturm* in Alexanderplatz, the individual's size is minimized in relation to the grand proportions of the plaza. Consistent with the towering entrance to Stalinallee at Strausberger Platz, as well as with the design characteristics of other capital cities in the Soviet bloc, the brute enormity of form asserts cathedralic qualities, encouraging the insignificance of the individual in comparison to the power of the state. Still, Alexanderplatz's importance as a hub of East Berlin, connected in ideological purpose to the neighboring Stalinallee, established its center as a destination for tourists from the Soviet bloc, legitimizing and elevating the status of East Berlin.²⁷

5.1 Stalinallee and the Showcase from Moscow

Extending directly eastward from Alexanderplatz, the development of Stalinallee (later renamed Karl-Marx-Allee) procured a showcase avenue for East Berlin. Parallel in purpose to West Berlin's redevelopment of Kurfürstendamm, the opportunity for Soviet occupying forces to implement a city core rife with socialist symbolism was a means to assert an ideological precedent in the new city. As separate East and West German states were established in 1949, the occasion of Joseph Stalin's seventieth birthday commenced research and design for the area,

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Standley, 685-686.

with Frankfurter Allee's geographic prominence ripe for reinvention. The renaming of Frankfurter Allee to Stalinallee in 1949 follows the Soviet pattern of the cult of Stalin, importing Soviet power and influence to the new center of East Berlin.²⁸ Consistent with the embedded narrative of the Red Army's victory in Berlin to free German society from fascism, the embrace of Soviet-modelled architecture in Berlin ushered in an era of new, enabling selective acknowledgement of the Nazi past. Focusing the core of East Berlin's architectural projects in destroyed areas of the city (as neighboring Friedrichshain, long a socialist bastion in the Interwar period, was mutilated during the 1945 Battle of Berlin), East Berlin enhanced the legitimacy of its newness, avoided a more extensive reckoning with the Nazi past, and promised a clear, peaceful future for the GDR.²⁹

Prominent German architects, alongside the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and Soviet consultants, maneuvered a Stalinallee strategy of "national in form and socialist in content," as references to German architectural history were gradually incorporated into socialist realist designs.³⁰ Overt rejection and hesitant embraces of Berlin's architectural history plagued the initial developmental phase of Stalinallee's ideological forerunner, the nearby residential complex Weberwiese.³¹ While visions for East Berlin's architectural future intersected the Weimar-era ideals of city residential projects, these Bauhaus-related concepts were initially deemed too contradictory to the ideological objectives of East Berlin.³² However, the architectural contributions of Karl Friedrich Schinkel in the core of Berlin served as acceptable references to Berlin architectural heritage, facilitating the nationalist elements of East Berlin's

²⁸ Stangl, 197.

²⁹ Stangl, 190, 215.

³⁰ Standley, 686.

³¹ Stangl, 203.

³² Pensley, Danielle Sibener. "The Socialist City? A Critical Analysis of Neubaugebiet Hellersdorf." *Journal of Urban History* 24.5 (1998): 577.

mission, while justifying the inclusion of a distinct Moscow-influence.³³ An organized trip of German architects to Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad and Stalingrad in 1950, to experience the design elements of socialist realism, likely informed the development of Stalinallee, though the purpose of that trip was more closely associated with residential development of Weberwiese in neighboring Friedrichshain.³⁴

Pressures on architects to promote socialist realism aligned with the Soviet intention of asserting Moscow's dedication to the success of East Germany. Consistent with Moscow's redesigns in the early 20th century to include vast avenues and detail-oriented design aspects, the vision for a new East Berlin was hoped to include similar such features.³⁵ Alongside reports from West Berlin of the construction of "barrack-like apartments," the perception of opportunity to construct considered and cultured residential spaces, with social function allowing demonstrations and dialogue between the government and the people, facilitated new ideological purpose in construction, opposite of that in West Berlin.³⁶ The 1951 decision to implement a design competition for Stalinallee's final design created a superficially democratic process for East Berlin's landscape, and in contrast to the Weberwiese project, was encouraged to pay homage to elements of Berlin's architectural past.³⁷ However, from forty-six submissions, only five were deemed suitable for the intended purpose, with many eliminations occurring when designs were said to be too modernist in form.³⁸

³³ Wagner, Monika. "Berlin Urban Spaces as Social Surfaces: Machine Aesthetics and Surface Texture." *Representations* (Spring 2008): 67.

³⁴ Taverne, Ed. "The last avenue of the 'Other' Europe. The Stalinist universe of the Karl-Marx-Allee in Berlin." *European Review* 13.2 (2005): 210.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Stangl, 195.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

With a subsequent exhibition at Alexanderplatz of prospective designs and a well-publicized “suggestion box” for Berlin residents to contribute to the architectural design process, East Berlin depicted the Stalinallee design process as a democratic procedure, consistent with the intention to include East Berlin’s residents in the construction of their new boulevard.³⁹ Meanwhile, similarly belittling commentary and ideological threats experienced by the architects of Weberwiese came to the forefront in the Stalinallee design process, with extensive revision processes imposed by Walther Ulbricht and other party leaders.⁴⁰ At last, Hermann Henselmann’s spontaneous design for Strausberger Platz was accepted in a panel of Ulbricht, Wilhelm Pieck, and Otto Grothwohl, and later Soviet review approved and improved Henselmann’s designs.⁴¹

Reminiscent of Gorky Street (today Tverskaya Street) in Moscow, Stalinallee’s broad avenue ranges from 80 to 100 meters wide, complete with bike lanes, sidewalks, and ample additional space. Intended to provide workers space for parades and demonstrations, the Stalinallee fulfilled both a residential and social purpose, consistent with socialist realist design.⁴² Framed by the ivory towers of *Strausberger Platz* on the west and by the crisp white and sage green domed towers of *Frankfurter Tor* on the east, the grandeur of Stalinallee is conveyed through the avenue’s monumental impression. Flanked on both sides with seven- to eight-story beige structures, commercial offerings are housed on the ground level, while residences are placed above. A sensation of enclosure, a concept emphasized by Soviet architectural consultations, prevails in Stalinallee, while the asymmetrical alignment of the vehicular street to the avenue’s south provides a wide sidewalk and gathering space along the

³⁹ Stangl, 211.

⁴⁰ Stangl, 214.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Wagner, 65.

north, sunny side of Stalinallee. Intricate symbolic details adorn each structure, as patterned Meissen tiles and reliefs depicting scenes of labor and reconstruction contributed references of work and production within the Stalinallee's artisanship.⁴³ Long views down the axis of Stalinallee allow the framing towers of both Strausberger Platz and Frankfurter Tor to be visible from the opposite side, while a multi-lane traffic circle at Leninplatz, now *Platz der Vereingten Nationen* (Plaza of United Nations), displays the enormity of Stalinallee and its intersections.

As declared by Socialist Unity Party General Secretary Walther Ulbricht in 1952, "Stalinallee is the cornerstone for the construction of socialism in the capital of Germany, Berlin. It is the cornerstone insofar as these buildings serve the people, and the architecture embodies the development of the art of city building of the new Germany."⁴⁴ However, the avenue's rapid construction in an era already short on materials and financial resources represents the prioritization of Stalinallee as a rallying point for East Berlin and a means to assert Soviet influence, both on the lives of the avenue's architects and within the urban landscape. Financial woes experienced by East Germany in fact make the construction and investment in Stalinallee even more impressive, especially considering the trajectory of the avenue's popularity in the era of Nikita Khrushchev. In the era of destalinization, the renaming of Stalinallee in 1961, coupled with the overt rejection of Stalinallee's architectural design elements, reflected the simultaneous impossibility of sustaining construction of high quality and expensive designs. Rejecting the potential of Stalinallee's role in structuring the aesthetic future of East Berlin served as a convenient solution to the financial strains and insufficient economic might of the East German economy.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

⁴⁴ Stangl, 190.

6. Residential Battlefield: *Mietskasernen* and the Industrial City

Berlin's residential infrastructure of the post-World War II era largely relied on the city's industrial past and ballooning population in the mid-1800s. The city's promise of employment, excitement, or anonymous escape in the industrial era urged the unprecedented influx of rural citizens to the urban environment.⁴⁵ Additionally, Berlin's capital city status and rapid industrialization glorified the city landscape. To accommodate the increasing working-class demographic, the hasty construction of *Mietskasernen* (rental barracks), consistent with the Hobrecht Plan of 1862, led to the widespread development of dedicated *Arbeiterviertel* (workers' quarters) throughout Berlin.⁴⁶

Though the concept of *Mietskasernen* was necessary for Berlin's practical ability to sustain industrial development and acceptable living circumstances, the conditions of the *Mietskasernen*, even at the time of their construction, were of poor and unsanitary quality. Containing small and at times even communal apartments, *Mietskasernen* were outfitted with sparse or non-existent indoor plumbing, inadequate heating or air circulation, and crowded buildings, all with the purpose of increasing profit for property owners.⁴⁷ Compounding these shortcomings in amenities, apartments within *Mietskasernen* were generally occupied by multiple families and were haunted by perceptions of increased crime and degenerate activity, due to the central courtyards and dark allies surrounding the densely constructed buildings. Classified as areas of cultural conflict throughout the Weimar, Nazi, and Cold War eras, *Arbeiterviertel* (workers' quarters) in the core of Berlin, including the districts of Friedrichshain, Wedding, Kreuzberg, and Prenzlauer Berg assumed significance in their association with

⁴⁵ Liang, Hsi-Huey. "Lower-Class Immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin." *Central European History* 3.1/2 (1970): 95.

⁴⁶ Strobel, 26.

⁴⁷ Strobel, 26; Rubin, 336.

workers and communist ideals, yet *Mietskasernen* were architecturally associated with the Wilhelmine era.⁴⁸ Still, the infrastructure provided by *Mietskasernen* comprised the majority of Berlin's residential infrastructure, from the era of their construction, through the Nazi era, and into the Cold War.

Managing the extensive loss of residential space in World War II became the immediate responsibility of Western and Soviet occupying powers. As nearly 500,000 of Berlin's 1.5 million apartments were destroyed by bombing raids or in the Battle of Berlin, city planners in East and West Berlin were acutely aware of the urgent need to restore stability in living conditions.⁴⁹ While some districts required renovation or complete redesign, others were demolished in the war, leaving bare slates for future planning purposes. In managing the sudden housing shortage, both East and West Berlin developed contrasting strategies for designated residential areas of the city. While West Berlin implemented star architects for residential rejuvenation in central Berlin, building on the city's existing urban structure, East Berlin developed extensive residential settlements on the outskirts of the city. To this end, the West Berlin development of the *Hansaviertel* (Hansa quarter), alongside the rejuvenation of existing *Mietskasernen*, supported the city's distinctly western-backed quarters and presented an ideological purpose for the construction. In contrast, the development of distinct suburb-like settlements in the eastern districts of Marzahn and Hellersdorf, intended as self-contained cities within Berlin's boundaries, asserted the utopian principles of the new socialist city.

With efforts to clear Berlin of rubble in the late 1940s, the tense circumstance of the Berlin airlift reiterated the impossibility of a politically unified Berlin, but the American, Soviet, French, and British sector boundaries remained permeable for city residents, as train operations

⁴⁸ Strobel, 26.

⁴⁹ Stangl, 190.

and travel was unrestricted from East to West up until the construction of the Berlin Wall.⁵⁰ The second battle over Berlin, to determine the allegiances and sector preferences of Berlin citizens, ensured that East and West Berlin each strove to present covetable living conditions, to depict ideal ideological lifestyles and to persuade the loyalty of their residents.

6.1 West Berlin Residential Architecture: *Hansaviertel*

In West Berlin, the inception of the *Hansaviertel* (Hansa quarter) in 1957 was an official reaction to the construction of East Berlin's Stalinallee. A product of the Interbau 57 (International Building Exhibition 1957), the involvement of star architects Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Oskar Niemeyer represented both the prominence of modern architectural principles in West Berlin, as well as a renewed interest in the architectural impact on community life. The symbolic importance of the Interbau 57 is explained by Karl Mahler, Berlin's Senator of Residential Construction, "Due to its immediate proximity to the sector border, the exhibition will provide for those in the east a powerful testament of the [*sic*] West Berlin's will to rebuild."⁵¹ Mahler elaborated, saying, "[*Hansaviertel* and Interbau was a] lucid declaration of the architecture of the Western world. It should demonstrate what we understand to be modern urbanism and proper housing, in contrast to the false ostentation of the Stalinallee."⁵² Countering adversarial language utilized in East Berlin with the creation of Stalinallee, the full engagement of West Berlin in the newest battleground demonstrated the fiery rhetoric of the Cold War, as well as the existential need to match the accomplishments of the other Berlin. *Hansaviertel*'s intense destruction endured in World War II presented a similar symbolism, as the urge to construct progressively oriented structures presented a departure from the Nazi and Wilhelmine

⁵⁰ Strobel, 26.

⁵¹ Castillo, Greg. "The Nylon Curtain: Architectural Unification in Divided Berlin." *Berlin: Divided City 1945-1989*. Ed. Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake. New York: Berghahn, 2010. 48-49.

⁵² *Ibid.*

past. With a central location between the Tiergarten and River Spree, the *Hansaviertel* emphasized the prioritization of the city center, as Bahnhof Zoo and Kurfürstendamm are in close proximity to the district, while the *Hansaviertel*'s enclosure by the Tiergarten and Spree incorporated a sense of proximity to nature.

As high-rise structures of varying levels, *Hansaviertel* apartments ranged in height from seven to sixteen stories.⁵³ Those designed by Walter Gropius's architecture collective 'The Architects Collaborative' contained three and a half rooms and a kitchen, and were distinguished by their modern accessorizing; appliances and modern kitchen amenities adorned each of the structures.⁵⁴ Proximity to the newly constructed U9 line, with the nearby station Hansaplatz, enhanced the attractiveness of the *Hansaviertel* and promoted urban connections to Kurfürstendamm and the southern shopping mecca Schlossstraße. In contrast to the linear composition of Stalinallee, Hansaplatz' staggered placement of buildings seems to emphasize the district's spontaneity in form, perhaps even symbolizing democratic variance in thought.

Considering the remaining openness of Berlin, as the years of Interbau 57 predated the Berlin Wall, the exchange of ideas and visits by East German architects implies an interconnectedness among Berlin city architects in both East and West Berlin. Evidence of careful East German observation of Hansaplatz developments is seen in West Berlin reports of daily anonymous visits of East German architects and city government officials to the exhibition, alongside subsequent East German press reports, often either denouncing or partially critiquing the *Hansaviertel*'s concepts.⁵⁵ Western rhetoric included several comments by Theodor Heuss,

⁵³Aeman, Anders. *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*. New York: Architectural History Foundation & MIT Press, 1992. 233.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 234.

⁵⁵Castillo, 51.

President of West Germany, who stated, “Hankering for *tradition* elicits no response.”⁵⁶ As architectural historian Anders Aman notes, “The new Germany would be modern.”⁵⁷ While Hansaplatz was the official Western residential architecture response to East Berlin’s Stalinallee, the conveyance of modern housing principles created a potential inspiration for sustainable East German design, and perhaps, for a wave of modern-leaning urban architecture on both sides of the Berlin Wall.

6.2 East Berlin Residential Architecture: Marzahn and Prenzlauer Berg

While East Berlin’s residential investment initially focused on the Stalinallee and its associated Weberwiese development (1952), with Khrushchev’s 1954 mission to create housing “better, cheaper, and faster,” the model of Stalinallee quickly fell out of favor.⁵⁸ The denunciation of Stalin, alongside financial constraints in the GDR, prompted the designation of Stalinallee as a bourgeois and unsustainable housing development. At a time when West Berlin’s residential architecture was provokingly edging toward the sector boundary to East Berlin, housing reconstruction in East Berlin migrated to the *Stadtrand* (city fringe) in northeast Berlin, far away from the intercity border. The creation of the residential districts Marzahn and Hellersdorf on East Berlin’s northeastern edge introduced the next era in East German and Soviet residential design, by utilizing the easily recognizable *Plattenbau* (pre-fabricated building) structure for simple and efficient construction, and by designing contained village-like communities in which socialist life could thrive. As cheaply produced and easily assembled structures, the *Plattenbau* also aligned with the GDR’s economic circumstances, upgrading residential life. All the better, the *Plattenbau* structures contained modern amenities and refined,

⁵⁶ Aman, 232.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Colla, Marcus. "Prussian Palimpsests: Historic Architecture and Urban Spaces in East Germany, 1945-1961." *Central European History* 50 (2017): 212.

simple design characteristics, even utilizing plastic products from East Germany's plastic factories.⁵⁹ Elaborating on the 1960s' success of prefabricated structures in GDR settlements of Hoyerswerda, Eisenhüttenstadt, and Halle, the inclusion of *Plattenbau* strategy as a long-term solution to East Berlin's persistent housing shortage facilitated the development of new residential areas in Marzahn-Hellersdorf.⁶⁰

While the 1960s sealed the border of East Berlin and the 1970s offered a comfortable status for East Germany within among socialist state members of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the newfound prioritization of residential construction came to the forefront of East Germany's domestic policy.⁶¹ Through the Tenth Session of the Central Committee of the SED, Erich Honecker's Housing Construction Program of 1973 launched the GDR's prioritization of inner-city housing rejuvenation.⁶² With a goal of "solving the housing question" by 1990, initiatives to both renovate and construct apartments were implemented, with a projected construction of three million apartments GDR-wide, and 200,000 apartments to be constructed in Berlin.⁶³ To this end, the simplicity and cost-effectiveness of *Plattenbau* structures, paired with the lingering infrastructure of East Berlin's *Mietskasernen* from the pre-war era, enabled this goal's realization.

For its practical applications, *Plattenbau* design quickly rose to prominence throughout East Germany and East Berlin, with the first such projects erected in 1956 in East Berlin.⁶⁴ Several species of *Plattenbau* designs, including the P2 and WBS-70, indicated the increasingly

⁵⁹ Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014. 126.

⁶⁰ Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 121.; Pensley, 570.

⁶¹ Pensley, 569.

⁶² Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 289.

⁶³ Rubin, 351.

⁶⁴ Pensley, 570.

experimental measures to implement ideal standardized living circumstances. The P2 *Plattenbau* design, presented to the public in the 1962 *Neues Leben, Neues Wohnen* (New Living, New dwelling) exhibition in East Berlin, showed a smaller, preliminary *Plattenbau* design.⁶⁵ Prevailing as the GDR's most prevalent *Plattenbau* design, however, was the WBS-70, shortened from "Wohnbauserie 70." Larger and adorned with modern features, including central air and a full bathroom, the WBS-70 was optimistically deemed a *Vollkomfortwohnung* (complete comfort apartment).⁶⁶ Perks of the WBS-70, contrary to the P2, included the potential for varying building heights, alongside differing internal accommodations, varying numbers of rooms, and thus a perception of adaptability to varying familial needs.⁶⁷

The grandest manifestations of *Plattenbau* as a sustainable residential solution is seen in Marzahn and Hellersdorf, where symmetric *Plattenbau* structures are clustered in layers, visible along the horizon and looming in form. The parallel yet separate developments of Marzahn and Hellersdorf accelerated the GDR's residential capacity, as *Plattenbau* constructions were produced at a rate so rapid, residents could move into the buildings' lower levels, while assembly continued in upper levels.⁶⁸ The result was a densely populated and enclosed micro-society, with provisions for kindergartens, schools, supermarkets, and other amenities included in the Housing Construction Plan.⁶⁹

Marzahn was declared by the SED as "emitting a hugeness of scale" in the 1980s, and Hellersdorf planners sought to avoid the monumentality of its neighboring district.⁷⁰ Yet *Plattenbau* lends itself to vast monotony, both in the similarity of form among WBS-70 designs

⁶⁵ Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 124-125.

⁶⁶ Rubin, 356.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁷⁰ Pensley, 588.

and in the monumental impression of such settlements. Still, the migration of new residents from Berlin's more densely populated and under-developed city core marked a new era in the lives of many Marzahn residents. Young couples or families with children were prioritized in the allotment of new apartments, leading many children to "grow up alongside Marzahn."⁷¹ This metaphor, perpetuated in the East German media, equated the hope and joy of child-rearing with the built environment of Marzahn and Hellersdorf. The clarity of conscience in the newly constructed sterile settlements promoted a commitment to new socialist life, both in practice and through its symbolism. At the time of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, construction was still underway in Hellersdorf, yet the quotas of Housing Construction Program of 1973 had nearly been achieved, with 2.1 million apartments produced.⁷²

Concurrent to the development of *Plattenbau* for East Berlin's outskirts was increasing architectural critique of entirely new residential areas, and the value of inner-city life was quantified by the perceived satisfaction of residents. Alongside the Housing Construction Plan, East German city planners analyzed the existing infrastructural capital in East Berlin, including the practicality of *Mietskasernen*. To this end, the mere existence of *Mietskasernen* as makeshift but under-developed residential quarters led to their inclusion in housing planning and renovation. Life in Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain was touted for its communal aspects, both historically as bastions of socialist development in the early twentieth century and presently, as known artistic and cultural hubs.⁷³ The high population density of Prenzlauer Berg, for example, also fed the district's importance. A two-pronged approach to creating more apartments in Berlin facilitated experimental renovations in central East Berlin, with Arkonaplatz in Mitte and

⁷¹ Rubin, 370.

⁷² Pugh, Emily. *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 298.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 290.

Arnimplatz in Prenzlauer Berg selected for improvement.⁷⁴ Interior renovations of the surrounding *Mietskasernen* added full bathrooms and running warm water to apartments, while the building exteriors saw cosmetic improvements, either with the restoration of design elements or placement of simple stucco coverings.⁷⁵ Arkonaplatz and Arnimplatz, both as garden-like plazas around which *Mietskasernen* were arranged, received similar cosmetic rejuvenation, with improved landscaping and maintenance.

While Arkonaplatz and Arnimplatz renovations were certainly successful in rejuvenating their densely populated districts (and perhaps in inspiring the renovation of *Altbau* buildings in West Berlin), more extensive inner-city renovation was hindered by the terms of the 1973 Housing Construction Plan. As the plan's objective focused on the creation of *more* apartments, renovation of *Mietskasernen* in Prenzlauer Berg and other districts paradoxically reduced the number of available apartments, by increasing their size and livability.⁷⁶ At this crossroads, the efficiency of *Plattenbau* constructions in Marzahn and Hellersdorf solidified the *Plattenbau*'s role in East German residential development.

6.3 West Berlin's Inner-City Residential Theory: Kreuzberg

While East Berlin mediated the prolonged effects of residential shortages, West Berlin also endured the social turbulence of infrastructural shortcomings. In contrast to the stylish development along Kurfürstendamm and the hopeful architecture of the *Hansaviertel*, West Berlin's working-class district of Kreuzberg, trimmed by the Berlin Wall to exist on the fringe of West Berlin, became an area of neglected and often unoccupied *Mietskasernen*. As the home of West Berlin's alternative scene and squatter movements, the Kreuzberger phenomenon, in which

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Rubin, 352.

West Berlin's alternative scene occupied vacant *Mietskasernen*, demanding more efficient processing of housing applications and a streamlined prioritization of inner-city districts, emerged from the stagnant unresponsiveness of West Berlin's residential administration, paired with disincentivized improvements to the existing residential capital.⁷⁷ Sharp disparities between availability and demand for living space in West Berlin exacerbated citizen despair at the question of urban living, especially as the lack of concrete housing solutions in post-war Berlin derailed the city's ability to comfortably accommodate all residents. Meanwhile, a sustainable population of West Berlin residents was imperative for the geopolitical might of the divided city

While the social complexity of Kreuzberg's squatter movement is indicative of the polarization between the accepted West Berlin "establishment" and the rebelliously progressive perspectives of the "alternative" scene, the paradigm shifts in architectural theory from the squatter movement initiated new conscientious architectural priorities for West Berlin's residential construction.

West Berlin's introduction of the Interbau 87, a second Interbau competition in the model of Interbau 57, assumed a similar strategy to the 1973 East German investment in inner-city development, by establishing Berlin's *Mietskasernen* as a pillar of West Berlin's urban rejuvenation. Occurring in 1987, the year of Berlin's 750th anniversary celebration, the political need to realign West Berlin's image with that of a responsive, considerate urban landscape, in light of the unflattering imagery of the Kreuzberger squatter movements, underscored the Interbau exhibition's dualistic inclusion of *Altbau* and *Neubau* (pre- and post-World War II construction) structures.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Pugh, Emily. "Beyond the Berlin Myth: The Local, the Global and the IBA 87." 157.

⁷⁸ Pugh, Emily. "Beyond the Berlin Myth: The Local, the Global and the IBA 87." 161.

Reflecting the eternal struggle between old and new, Interbau 87's parallel principles of urban design presented a theoretical contemplation of the residential future of West Berlin. With housing ideas oriented around the "Twelve Principles for Cautious Urban Renewal," the prioritization of existing residential areas within the city core was paired with considered approaches to maintaining community involvement in planned urban renovation, both to retain the social fabric of a location and to best provide for the needs of each community.⁷⁹ Included within the twelve principles is the expectation for the trajectory of *Altbau* development to continue after the course of the IBA Exhibition, thus implementing long-term solutions to the urgency of Kreuzberg's condition.

Ideas presented for housing, however, were not feasible for widespread construction or implementation in West Berlin, though the exhibition did enhance the status of West Berlin, mostly by presenting a successful international forum for architectural ideas.⁸⁰ Thus, while the IBA 87 presented *potential* solutions for Kreuzberg's squatter circumstance, it did not present *practical* solutions for the shortages of residential housing. With IBA 87 so near to the 1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall, the impact of ideas planted in the IBA 87 is uncertain, though the burgeoning desirability of *Altbau* (pre-World War II era) structures today indicate the elevation of *Mietskasernen* to new alluring heights in the Berlin residential landscape. Yet the IBA 87 reflected aspects of rivalry similar to the IBA 57, by promoting new development in contentious areas of Berlin, where the duality of the East-West division was strikingly present and the ability to flaunt modern architecture presented a bold assertion of new architectural theory still visible from within East Berlin.

⁷⁹ *12 Principles of Cautious Urban Design*. 2019. <<https://www.open-iba.de/en/geschichte/1979-1987-iba-berlin/12-grundsatz-der-behutsamen-stadterneuerung/>>.

⁸⁰ Pugh, Emily. "Beyond the Berlin Myth: The Local, the Global and the IBA 87." 162-163.

7. Conclusion

In the years following the end of World War II, Germany sought clarity in design to process the oppressive nature of its past. Yet the sharpest manifestation of this mission appears in Berlin, where the East-West division heightened tensions and encouraged East and West Berlin to assert their grandest visions of the polarized architectural landscape. Despite this divide, both East and West Berlin were afflicted with parallel urban problems, largely attributable to Berlin's unity before the 1945 division of occupation sectors. As the destruction of World War II did not yet differentiate between East and West, East and West Berlin inherited the aftermath of their mutual history. Thus, as East and West Berlin established their independent identities in the post-World War II era, both Berlins grappled with similar urban dilemmas, such as the urgent need for efficient housing and the symbolic need to create new urban centers.

Considering the inherent overlap of their urban circumstances, East and West Berlin's heightened differentiation, as perpetuated by Germany's Western and Soviet occupiers, demanded more drastic symbolism in order to manifest within Berlin's architectural landscape. To this end, the newfound importance of Stalinallee and Kurfürstendamm as symbols of prosperity comprised the showcase qualities sought by East and West Berlin. East Berlin's Stalinallee, designed to align ideologically and symbolically with Moscow's vision for the GDR, found opportunity to reconstruct the heavily damaged district of Friedrichshain and simultaneously import Soviet socialist symbolism to the heart of East Berlin. The impressive monumentality of Stalinallee, alongside its dedication to the avenue's namesake, idolized the Soviet Union and cemented its presence in East Berlin. As both East and West Germany strove to comprehend their identities in the post-World War II era, East Germany's new ideology and new allegiances were validated by the Soviet Union's architectural commitment to East Berlin. In contrast to Stalinallee's new construction, the revival of Kurfürstendamm in West Berlin

hoped to return to the avenue's pre-World War II vitality, by reopening theatres and touting the avenue's popularity. Establishments of the lively pre-World War II era, such as the *Kaufhaus des Westens* (Department store of the West) and *Marmorhaus* (Marble House Theatre), retained their prominent location in the Kurfürstendamm district's commercial zone, and eased Kurfürstendamm's transition to West Berlin's new cosmopolitan center. The duality of the Soviet and Western occupation of Germany perpetuated a parallel duality in urban development, as the showcase avenues of Stalinallee and Kurfürstendamm fulfilled the need for parallel city centers.

Complementing Stalinallee and Kurfürstendamm, the construction of architectural centerpieces *Fernsehturm* (Television Tower) and *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser-Wilhelm Memorial Church) also assumed symbolic roles within the urban centers of East and West Berlin. The *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*, as a centerpiece of West Berlin, became a reminder of the horrors of war, as the church's origins in imperial Germany are juxtaposed with its still-visible destruction from World War II. Egon Eiermann's redevelopment of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche* site retained the shell of the damaged church, solidifying the presence of World War II's aftermath in the midst of Kurfürstendamm's commercial district. Contrasting West Berlin's approach, the construction of the *Fernsehturm* in East Berlin introduced sleek modern design to East Berlin's image. The newness of the *Fernsehturm* protected East Germany from Germany's past, disregarding the burden of Nazi history and facilitating the acceptance of new Soviet socialist ideology.

As the final arena for East-West competition, housing solutions in East and West Berlin were indicative of the city's quality of life and carried the potential to determine favoritism for East or West among the city's residents. With the Interbau 57 Exhibition in West Berlin, the

overt assertion of the East-West dichotomy by utilizing star architects Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius was a call to action for East Berlin, who countered the exhibition with rapid development in sustainable housing solutions. The widespread implementation of *Plattenbau* (prefabricated structures) in East Berlin, including the developments of districts Marzahn and Hellersdorf, displayed the new aspirations for self-contained socialist settlements. However, East and West Berlin's housing strategies ultimately converged on the topic of *Mietskasernen* (rental barracks), as the lingering residential infrastructure of Berlin's industrial age was essential for the urban core of East and West Berlin.

Berlin's significance as a bastion of conflicting Eastern and Western influence enabled the Cold War's extension to the city's architecture, as architectural developments in East and West Berlin displayed a competitive duality and asserted their ideal visions of the future. Therefore, the Cold War's showdown manifested in East and West Berlin's city centers, their architectural centerpieces, and in their solutions to dismal housing circumstances in the wake of World War II. While Berlin's architectural needs converged in each of these circumstances, the divergence of stylistic and ideological associations throughout East and West Berlin's reconstruction was informed by the Cold War conflict and intensified the symbolism of the conflict throughout the urban landscape.

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