MEMORY AND SPECTACLE AT POTSDAMER PLATZ:
AN ARCHITECTURAL GEOGRAPHY OF BERLIN'S NEW CENTRE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the landscape of Potsdamer Platz, a hub of commercial and leisure activity in contemporary Berlin, Germany. Once the thriving center of the city, this site was largely destroyed during World War II and, in 1961, enclosed between the two parts of the Berlin Wall. Potsdamer Platz remained a "no man's land" until the fall of the Wall in 1989, when it once again became a desirable site for development. The following years saw this area become Europe's largest construction site as a new city centre was created. Today's Potsdamer Platz consists of flashy corporate architecture and privatized "public" space, emphasizing the importance of capital and consumption, while signs of a distinctly German identity are muted in an attempt to break with the city's troubled past. This is consistent with attempts to increase Berlin's prominence as a major city in Europe and an urban area of global importance. Potsdamer Platz represents a vision of the city's future and thus illuminates debates about the representation of the past. Further consideration of the site's reception indicates that this past is understood in different and interesting ways and is constantly being negotiated as Berlin continues to change.
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Since my first visit to Berlin in 2001, I have been fascinated with this quickly-changing city and its reconstructed centre in particular. Potsdamer Platz is a place that I respond to strongly; I am simultaneously attracted to it and repelled by it. It holds additional interest for me because it is a place where my German grandmother spent time as a young woman growing up in Berlin, although she would certainly not recognize its current appearance.

Through casual conversations with Berliners and visitors, I have come to realize that many other people respond strongly to Potsdamer Platz. I have chosen to investigate the redevelopment of the site for this Master's thesis in order to come to a better understanding of the place, and to look at it in a more analytical fashion. Attracted to the interdisciplinary nature of geography, I bring together work from a variety of sources from academic discourse as well as popular culture. I have found it difficult to do justice to this topic; the following pages offer a discussion of some of the many issues that I have thought about with regard to Potsdamer Platz. I could, of course, go into further detail with each, but in the interest of giving a reasonably broad overview of the important issues, and of finishing the thesis, I offer the following.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs, figures and translations are my own.
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Thank you!
DEDICATION

To my grandmother, Ursula Giese Smith.
1. INTRODUCING BERLIN'S (RE)NEW(ED) CENTRE

"The walls of the streets radiate ideologies."
Robert Musil (quoted in Frisby 2001, p. 303)

This thesis investigates and interprets the built environment of Potsdamer Platz, a hub of commercial and leisure activity in contemporary Berlin, Germany, in order to determine the ways in which memory, history and public space are implicated in the city's redevelopment. Potsdamer Platz was a major transit hub and important centre of the city in pre-War Berlin, reflecting the chaos and excitement of life in the metropolis. After World War II and the construction of the Berlin Wall, Potsdamer Platz became part of the "no man's land" between the two parts of the Wall. As such, this formerly crowded space became a void, existing between capitalist West Berlin and communist East Berlin. When the Wall fell, Potsdamer Platz was seen as a blank space of opportunity and thus a prime area for (re)development in the new Berlin. In the years since Germany's reunification, a new central city area has been formed, and, I will argue, perceptibly shaped by capital. Occasional nods to the past, such as a small piece of the Berlin Wall, or a part of an elegant pre-War building behind glass, serve to accentuate the sleekness of the new buildings.

A new, developed urban centre has been created upon this 'blank slate' created by the Cold War. The collapse of communism and rise of global capitalism have allowed this site to emerge as a place that, I will argue, seems to make a clean break with history. The site represents the aspirations of the new Berlin, and it demonstrates the ways in which the city's identity is being negotiated within its national, continental and global
contexts. I will argue that Potsdamer Platz has become a sanitized and privatized public space of consumption where memory is selectively deployed.

While the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz can be understood to show simply the victory of capitalism over communism, consideration of the site's reception shows that the situation is somewhat more complex than this. Artists, architects, journalists and the public have responded in various ways to issues of memory and public space at Potsdamer Platz and in Berlin more generally. These responses range from critical newspaper editorials bemoaning the artificial feel of the site's buildings to artistic performances commemorating the victims of atrocities. They illustrate the ways in which understandings of place, and attendant issues of memory and identity, are being negotiated in a rapidly changing city.

The redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz can best be understood as a part of broader trends in Berlin's built environment. Radically different governments have held power in this city: monarchy gave way to the Weimar Republic, which was followed by the Third Reich. World War II left Berlin (and Germany) occupied by allied forces. The Soviet sector became the communist German Democratic Republic (East Germany), of which East Berlin was the capital, while the capitalist Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was governed from the city of Bonn. The two nations developed along vastly different paths, and a wall was built in 1961 to separate West Berlin from surrounding East Germany. Berlin thus "came to straddle perhaps the most notorious fault line of all humanity" (Keating 2001, 78). After forty years of separation, the Wall fell in 1989 and Germany was reunified in 1990. As political geographer Fiona Smith (1994) argues, reunification was a complex process requiring significant adjustment as citizens
(re)negotiated their identities within this new national context. This history makes Berlin a particularly interesting city to investigate, since divergent memories and understandings of the past are implicated in the construction and reception of the built environment.

Both new construction and the demolition of old or unwanted buildings has changed the city’s urban landscape over time. Berlin’s tumultuous history has thus resulted in an urban landscape characterized by a mixture of many different styles. Here, questions about the role of history, memory and public space in the creation, preservation and demolition of built form can reveal different ideologies at work. I will argue that a look at how Berlin’s (and Germany’s) built past has been dealt with can shed light on the power relations that have influenced the city’s form.

The importance and complexity of memory in Berlin makes the city’s architecture particularly significant in the formation of identity (Huyssen 1997). Debates about architecture highlight the difficulties of coming to terms with the past. This is an important and contested concept in German culture, known as Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Recent planning policies and decisions demonstrate that a particular understanding of memory and history are mobilized through city redevelopment strategies. The reconstruction of Potsdamer Platz in particular has been promoted by city officials as a vital and symbolic project that is indicative of Berlin’s new identity. Debates and decisions about the built environment are therefore significant not only in Berlin but in all of Germany, as the nation struggles with the complexities of its post-reunification identity in an increasingly interconnected, multicultural Europe.
AN ARCHITECTURAL GEOGRAPHY?

Following the work of a number of urban and cultural geographers (Lees 2001; Goss 1998; Jenkins 2002; Llewellyn 2003), I argue that an ‘architectural geography’ and in-depth analysis of specific structures can be helpful in understanding the meanings bound up with particular buildings. In this study, a focus on architecture will help me to show how the city of Berlin “is reorganizing itself as a permanent exhibition of its own ambitions” (De Leeuw 1999, 58).

Built form is not everything and does not occur in a vacuum. Other factors, including the agency of developers and planners involved in the process of building, should be taken into account in an analysis. As Jane M. Jacobs (1992, 197) suggests,

Seeing the city as a product of contests and negotiations between differently empowered interests which ascribe to it different meanings, values and intents, raises important issues of method. To understand the circulation of meaning in this variably empowered context it is necessary to look beyond the cityscape itself to the discourses and representations associated with it and to their producers or authors...it is also necessary to contextualise the discourses thus explored, through an attention to history, to ethnography, to politics and economics. Acknowledgment of the fruitfulness of this emphasis has produced a number of studies which look specifically at contextualised urban discourses, such as the views of planners, architects and social visionaries.

I attend to the importance of context by situating my site in its historical and political circumstances as I discuss the particular actors involved and discourses employed in the redevelopment process.

As I write about architecture, I must first consider my approach and its consequences. Indeed, “[m]ore often unconsciously than consciously, we evaluate architecture every time we think, write, and talk about it, even in our choices of what to attend to” (Saunders 2007, 130). I thus temper my analysis of Potsdamer Platz with the
inclusion of other voices, additional perspectives, and varying understandings of the site.

William Saunders goes on to tackle the complex question of how best to evaluate architecture. An ideal study, he says,

\[\text{begins in an open-minded, open-hearted, generous receptiveness to its object in all its aesthetic, sensory, social, moral, political, historical, environmental, economic, programmatic, and functional dimensions; is aware of the conditions and limitations of the work's production; strives to understand the architects' intentions and the constraints on realizing those intentions; assumes that architecture can and should be judged with many varying criteria and that tests those criteria through a supple, careful apperception of the built work and its broadest context; respects, acknowledges, and enjoys vastly diverse kinds of architectural achievement; is rigorously self-scrutinizing, wary of its own subjective, class, educational, and group biases (Saunders 2007, 146-7)}\]

among other criteria. This list is instructive in that it raises the possibility of a multifaceted analysis of architecture. At the same time, its daunting length highlights the difficulty of adequately discussing each of these matters in sufficient detail. I therefore link many of these areas of inquiry to my discussion of Potsdamer Platz while maintaining my focus on the complexities of memory and public space as they relate to architectural form.

Scholars differ in their views on the ways in which the built environment should be understood. Peter Marcuse (1998) argues that power relations become visible not through the specifics of the built environment, but rather through the very fact of construction itself. Loretta Lees (2001) additionally highlights the importance of considering the ways in which people interact with the built environment. These approaches inform my interpretation of Potsdamer Platz, but the main thrust of my analysis will concentrate on visual analysis of built form.
METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, I rely mostly on textual analysis of archival material, including newspaper editorials, media accounts and planning documents, as well as visual analysis of built form. I spent part of the summer of 2006 doing archival research in Berlin, where I used several archives to investigate the city’s recent planning history from multiple perspectives. The majority of my time was spent at the Zentrum für Berlin Studien (Centre for Berlin Studies) and the office of the Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung (Berlin’s Senate Department for Urban Development), both located in austere government buildings. I also did research at the Senatsbibliothek Berlin (Berlin Senate Library) and the Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin (Berlin Central and State Library). I employ textual analysis as well as visual analysis to make sense of these archival sources.

Textual analysis

I used two key sources of textual material to investigate Potsdamer Platz. I first searched German news media for coverage of the site’s architecture. In particular, I looked for discussions about how the past is articulated through built form, as well as debates surrounding the use of public space. In total, I searched four Berlin-based newspapers (die Tageszeitung, Berliner Zeitung, der Tagesspiegel and Berliner Morgenpost) and four national newspapers (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, die Zeit and die Welt) for articles using the search term “Potsdamer Platz”. I limited the search to articles published between 1990 (the year of German reunification) and 2007. As expected, I ended up with a very large number of articles. I
went through these systematically, selecting articles that dealt with the key themes of my research. I also saved articles that highlighted the spectacularized construction process. These newspaper articles provide a popular account of the planning and building processes as well as the use of and responses to Potsdamer Platz. While it was easy to find coverage of the construction of Potsdamer Platz in German newspapers, it was far more difficult to find opinions about architecture, memory and public space. While I found letters to the editor to be the best source of the voice of the public, journalists also wrote opinion pieces which proved useful in my analysis.

City archives provided me with access to planning documents, my second source of textual material. These documents offer further insight into the effect of particular policies on the built environment as well as the role of specific actors in the planning and construction of Potsdamer Platz. Of particular importance is the Planwerk Innenstadt (Berlin’s Central City Plan) document, which spells out in detail a policy supporting architecture with a traditional aesthetic. Documents from architectural competitions, including jury decisions and the specific designs of architects, are useful because they show alternative visions for Potsdamer Platz. I was able to use these documents to gain a more informed sense of the planning environment in Berlin in the 1990s.

The archives also contained a variety of promotional materials related to Potsdamer Platz, some of which were published by individual developers, while others attempted to market the site as a whole. Much of this material was geared towards possible consumers, both Berliners and tourists, but some was written with potential investors in mind. The archives yielded one particularly interesting serial item, Potsdamer Platz Journal, which is filled with visitor-oriented information about the
redeveloped site. The first page of each issue included a statement by a prominent public or industry official extolling the virtues of Potsdamer Platz. Filled with superlatives, these statements provided an interesting look into the process of place promotion as Potsdamer Platz was molded into the new centre of Berlin.

These sources constitute the basis for my textual analysis. I analyze the language used from both official channels (planning documents, architectural competitions, architects, politicians, elites) and otherwise (citizens' responses, editorials) to see what meanings are conveyed. For example, much of the official promotional material for Potsdamer Platz makes use of tropes of “rebirth” which I consider with regard to identity and history in Berlin. This textual analysis of archival material has helped me to understand the nuances of the reconstruction process.

Part of this project involves attempts to locate and discuss the voices of the public, and in particular to recognize varying understandings of memory and public space. As the vast majority of my primary research material is written in German, I must acknowledge the politics of doing work in a foreign language and of translation, which have been usefully discussed in the geographical literature (Pred 1989; F. Smith 1996; Helms, Lossau and Oslender 2005; Latham 2006; Müller 2007). At times I quote from various German sources, and these translations are my own. Translation is an “infinitely complex” endeavour (Weaver 1989), and as an outsider to both the culture and the language (having lived in Germany for just under two years, and having studied the language in high school and university), I bring with me my own cultural baggage. Indeed, as Allan Pred (1989, 212) notes, “language…through which personal or shared experience and memory are given voice…cannot be severed from the locally situated
practices of production, consumption, and social interaction in which they are engaged.”
In this vein, Fiona Smith (1996, 162) identifies the problem of both linguistic and cultural
translation, extending it to the project of academic writing. Translation, she says,
“involves interpretations of meaning which relate to social contexts and situations, to the
people who produce them and to the political, economic and social positions of those
involved. The researcher plays a great part in the mediation between foreign language
and final text.” I acknowledge my active role in this process. Though my investigation
of these issues is necessarily partial, my translations, analysis and discussion provide
another understanding of the meaning(s) of Potsdamer Platz.

The multiple and sometimes conflicting voices that I found point to another area
of inquiry: ‘coming to terms with the past’, or Vergangenheitsbewältigung, is a uniquely
German concept that is intertwined with the issues I discuss. The atrocities committed by
the National Socialist regime and East German state-sponsored violence have left a mark
upon German culture that influences national, regional and municipal politics as well as
the daily lives of German citizens. Vergangenheitsbewältigung is the background upon
which the debates about Potsdamer Platz play out, as I will discuss further in Chapter 2.

As a researcher using archives, I was able to locate a number of different views of
the past which have informed my analysis. However, it is necessary to note that archives
are necessarily partial, as someone has chosen what to include and what to leave out.
Carolyn Steedman suggests that “in [the archive’s] quiet folders and bundles is the
neatest demonstration of how state power has operated, through ledgers and lists and
indictments, and through what is missing from them” (1998, 67). I went into the archives
with hopes of finding the voice of the public as well as the voice of elites, such as
politicians, planners and developers. The process was less straightforward than I expected; I found that these voices – particularly those of the ‘public’ – were sometimes difficult to find, and that they required interpretation. A thorough search of a large number of German newspaper articles left me with relatively few opinion pieces on my topic. When I did find this material, the debates often seemed one-sided, as critiques of Potsdamer Platz were far more common than praise.¹ I have engaged in this archival work and translation while keeping in mind the power relations involved in such research, for “[t]hose outside the academy have no voice in our work other than the one we choose to give them” (Duncan and Barnes 1992, 252).

Visual analysis

In addition to these texts from the archives, I visually analyze the built form of present-day Potsdamer Platz. Description and interpretation of the architecture at this site – with careful attention to the utilization of various artifacts to evoke specific pasts – constitute an important part of this thesis. I also discuss and interpret several architectural designs which were submitted to the competition but ultimately not built. As I discuss the built form of Potsdamer Platz, I pay careful attention to aesthetics and

¹I acknowledge that this might represent a flaw in my methodology, which relies on a variety of people to have written about their opinions in a form accessible to me. I did not find a significant range of opinions when I researched responses to Potsdamer Platz. While I cannot be sure of the reasons for this, I suspect that those who are critical of a place would be more likely to write about it in a letter to the editor or online. Although I did systematically review newspaper articles, I suspect that interviews or surveys with people at Potsdamer Platz, for example, might have yielded different results. I do not claim that the opinions I discuss are representative of all public opinion, and I acknowledge that some important voices may be missing.
form – including possible instances of intertextuality within the language of architecture – and investigate how these designs negotiate issues of history, memory and public space.

Gillian Rose (2001) offers tools for a 'critical visual methodology' that can be fruitfully extended to include analysis of architectural form. Arguing that one must take images seriously, consider the social conditions and effects of an image, and reflect upon one's position as researcher, Rose recognizes three sites at which an image (or, in the case of this thesis, a building) can be analyzed: the site of production, the image itself, and its audiencing. My analysis attends to all three of these sites. I investigate the production of these buildings by looking at planning documents and promotional material. Visual analysis of individual buildings as well as multi-structure developments addresses the second area. Thirdly, I consider the reception of Potsdamer Platz by systematically reviewing German newspapers for relevant editorials, letters to the editor and other coverage.

This archival work was supplemented with observation and photographic documentation of the site in question. In an attempt to come to an understanding of the lived spaces of Potsdamer Platz, I have spent a significant amount of time in different areas of the site over the past several years. I have observed the site at different times of day and in various seasons.

I include many photographs, which are intended to supplement my discussion and provide the reader with a better idea of what these buildings look like. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that these photos are themselves representations, and as the photographer of all but a few of these photos, I made choices (including framing, angle, and many others) that affect these images. The buildings’ three-dimensionality, scale and
position in their urban context are difficult to communicate through the medium of photography. Nonetheless, I hope that these photographs provide a useful approximation of the buildings I discuss. Through the use of these images, along with drawn figures depicting the layout of the site, I respond to architectural historian Kenneth Frampton’s criticism that most writing about architecture has “invariably fallen short in terms of documentation, tending to prioritize the written word over either drawing or photographic representation” (Saunders and Levinson 2007, 117).

Architecture is a vital part of everyday life, and the physicality of the buildings I discuss is important. Kurt Forster recognizes that “[a]s we recognize how firmly architecture guides our steps, frames our views, and makes material things intelligible, we are more able to gauge the abundance of meanings that emanate from every building” (2007, 105). I discuss Potsdamer Platz as a lived space, based on my personal experiences there interacting with the built environment and observing others doing so.

**STRUCTURE OF THESIS**

The rest of the thesis proceeds through five chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework for my thesis, which integrates the geographical literature on landscape with scholarship on public space as well as two issues within the field of memory studies. The first of these draws on the links between memory and urban form, while the second involves work specific to the German context. Chapter 3 provides an historical and political background by situating the site within the wider context of the city. A brief look at four key sites in Berlin illustrates two distinct ways that memory is dealt with in the built environment. This chapter also examines the (re)construction
process through textual analysis of city plans and promotional material. I pay particular attention to spectacle and the prevalent discourse of the city’s ‘rebirth’ as the site is marketed as Berlin’s new centre. Chapter 4 looks closely at the built environment of the new Potsdamer Platz, as I describe and analyze the site’s four sub-developments. I argue that the site’s built form shows a particular view of history which erases certain unpleasant pasts. I also argue that Potsdamer Platz is indicative of a broader trend where urban public space is privatized, yet retains the appearance of public space. The fifth chapter considers responses to Potsdamer Platz from a variety of sources: artists, architects, investors, journalists and the public. Here I work from the idea that careful attention to the reception of the site can illuminate alternative understandings of Potsdamer Platz (and wider issues of German memory). I argue that these can complicate the narratives of erasure seen in the previous chapter. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes my findings and considers the wider implications of the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz in terms of Berlin’s position as a German, European and global city. It also considers how some of my conclusions might be fruitfully applied to globalizing cities, in Europe and beyond.
2. LANDSCAPE, MEMORY AND PUBLIC SPACE

Three major academic literatures inform this thesis: landscape interpretation, memory studies and public space. Each of these literatures has been shaped by recent debates within as well as beyond the discipline of geography. I draw insight from each body of work and explore the ways in which they interact and inform my analysis. I do not view these literatures in their entirety, I rather focus on scholarship that provides an effective framework for my analysis of Potsdamer Platz.

THE INTERPRETATION OF LANDSCAPES

Landscape interpretation is well established within cultural geography and related disciplines (Duncan and Duncan 2004; Duncan 1990; Schorske 1980). Although there is no one literature on landscape interpretation, I draw inspiration from a school of thought that treats landscape as a text to be analyzed. Interpretation of landscape can reveal symbolism and ideology, and this literature can assist in my investigation of Potsdamer Platz as a culturally important site. In the following chapters, this thesis will investigate the ways in which the ideologies of particular actors have been written into particular landscapes.

If landscape is a text, it can be read as well as written. Considered in its cultural context, landscape can communicate meaning; exactly what meanings are derived from a landscape can vary widely, and the agency of the interpreter is important to keep in mind. Many scholars draw upon literary theory in their interpretations, paying particular
attention to the role of discourse in the creation and maintenance of landscapes. As the
“social framework of intelligibility within which all practices are communicated,
negotiated, or challenged” (Duncan 1990, 16), discourse is ever-present but often under­
appreciated. A focus on discourse highlights the way meanings are made, and sometimes
the way ideologies are deployed in the quest to achieve certain ends.

Landscapes, according to this approach, are “constituent elements in socio­
political processes of cultural reproduction and change” (Duncan 1990, 11). Landscape
is a central part of everyday life; it both reflects its cultural context and is a constitutive
part of that culture. It is deeply coded: “as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, it
acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced,
experienced, and explored” (Duncan 1990, 17). Attention to the ways that culture is
communicated as well as reproduced can lead to a nuanced reading of landscape.

This literature calls for two steps in order to effectively study landscape: a
concern for what the landscape shows, and attention to how exactly this occurs. Such
attention not only to the meanings conveyed through landscape, but also the production
and maintenance of these meanings, can lead to an effective and contextualized analysis.
First, the landscape can be judged with regard to its success as a “concrete, visual vehicle
of subtle and gradual inculcation” (Duncan 1990, 19). Secondly, the tropes found in a
landscape, which “encode and communicate information by which readers may, or may
not be, entirely persuaded of the rightness, naturalness, or legitimacy of the hegemonic
discourses” (Duncan 1990, 19), must also be examined. Literary devices such as allegory
and synecdoche may be used to approach and understand these discourses.
The scholarship discussed here, which treats landscape as a text to be analyzed, often engages with literary theory. One writer who is particularly influential is French semiologist-cum-poststructuralist Roland Barthes. For example, Barthes is often present in the work of James and Nancy Duncan, who explicitly discuss his influence in the understanding of landscape. They draw from Barthes that “the reading of landscapes is a political, albeit often passively political, act”, adding that “unless one can penetrate well beyond the superficial obviousness into one or more of the secret histories of landscapes, it will be a naively conservative political act” (Duncan and Duncan 1992, 36). These secret histories of landscape are of immense value, as they reveal the hidden and perhaps counter-hegemonic voices and meanings that are necessary to achieve a more complete, nuanced reading of landscape.

Barthes’ essay “The Eiffel Tower” is indeed a particularly useful early example of landscape interpretation. His reading of this important French cultural symbol suggests the multiple meanings it can have for observers. The Eiffel Tower, Barthes says, “furnishes its observer...a whole series of paradoxes, the delectable contraction of an appearance and of its contrary reality” (1982, 249). In this same piece, Barthes uses the monument as a lens through which to view history. He sees in the tower different “moments” in Paris, musing upon what events occurred at that very spot at different times throughout history. The Tower is vital; it “discreetly fixes, with its slender signal, the whole structure – geographical, historical, and social – of Paris space” (ibid., 246). Additionally, he highlights the symbolic potential of built form. In a sweeping discussion of the spaces of Paris, he sees different buildings and areas as representative of different areas of human existence, such as pleasure and commerce (ibid.).
Readings of landscape can be made more valuable through consideration of reception and the attendant possibilities of contestation:

[Local accounts of the nature and importance of a given landscape, while situated within and structured by a general cultural discursive field, can at times differ sharply either within or between groups. There is always space within the limits of that discursive field for contestation to take place. Such discursive spaces...could prove to be one of the most fruitful areas of research into the signification of landscapes (Duncan 1990, 17).

A consideration of the possibilities for contestation will inform my analysis of responses to Potsdamer Platz (see Chapter 5), as I investigate how multiple understandings of this landscape are made evident through the site’s reception.

Power relations are certainly evident through the inclusions and exclusions inherent in particular landscapes. An important area of inquiry that I take from this body of literature is attention to how and by whom landscapes are written, as well as their reception. In this vein, a juxtaposition of the outsider’s and the insider’s readings can help to defamiliarize the relationship between landscapes, dominant ideologies, and political or social practices. It can illuminate the way dominant ideologies which are communicated through the medium of landscape reproduce social and political practices (Duncan 1990, 18).

Indeed, the position of the landscape reader is inextricable from their interpretation. A government official who was directly involved in decisions about the reshaping of a particular landscape, for example, would quite possibly understand that landscape as representing something different than would a non-elite individual. To give a rather simplistic example, a landscape could represent ‘progress’ to the official, while it might communicate suffering and exploitation to a labourer. As Duncan and Duncan put it simply: “Landscapes are...not as innocent as they appear” (2004, 7). Thus, a
contextually-informed landscape reading that uncovers the ‘secret histories’ of landscape through attention to competing discourses is needed.

Another way of interpreting landscape is to adopt an iconographic approach, where the above-discussed literature’s attention to discourse and literary theory is replaced by art historical methods. Iconography renders landscape “a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings” (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988, 1). This approach, and its attendant focus on image, has been effectively adopted and put to work within geography, as scholars “consciously sought to conceptualise pictures as encoded texts to be deciphered by those cognizant of the culture as a whole in which they were produced” (ibid., 2). This approach can be used to make sense of things both big and small, as “every culture weaves its world out of image and symbol” (ibid., 6). Here, descriptive attempts are images implicated in multiple layers of meaning. An iconographic approach seems well-suited to discussing particular buildings, which can be seen as images and symbols. In contrast to the focus on discourse seen in work on landscape-as-text, this literature conceives of landscapes as ideological ‘ways of seeing’.

Landscape interpretation has been fruitfully applied to the urban environment, as a number of geographers have shown that a concentration on architectural and other built form can be a helpful way of understanding power relations as well as cultural meaning (Goss 1993; Sidorov 2000). Following these scholars, a starting point for my thesis will be that the built environment of a city can be an important expression of meaning and identity; urban form is culturally significant and can illuminate important processes, particularly with regard to memory and identity formation. The urban landscape contains
a "density of visual messages" (Berger 1977, 129) and it is the job of the landscape interpreter to discern ways in which these reflect, as well as constitute, culture.

A concentration on historical processes in an analysis of the built environment can lead to a richer analysis. Historical periods and political changes affect, and are affected by, landscape. Indeed, it is imperative that the interpreter be aware of paradigm shifts where meanings are radically altered. The site discussed in this thesis, for example, is very much a product of fundamental changes in culture and everyday life. An example of such a successful historical approach is Carl Schorske’s (1980) cultural history of Vienna, which exemplifies the possibilities of landscape interpretation that engages with urban form. The development of Vienna’s Ringstrasse is understood as “an iconographic index to the mind of ascendant Austrian liberalism” (Schorske 1980, 27). Such a contextualized study of buildings brings to light the ways in which societal values are celebrated through architecture. Attending to individual buildings as well as the larger urban, cultural and political context, this type of analysis is thorough and penetrating. The recognition that “[b]oth spatial organization and aesthetic style reveal the needs and aspirations of the builders and their clientele” is instructive in my own analysis of Potsdamer Platz (Schorske 1980, 47), as this literature demonstrates the scholarly possibilities inherent in a close look at the actors who shape the built environment. Finally, the reception of the built environment is important: in the case of Vienna, “[a]esthetic criticism had its anchorage in broader social issues and attitudes” (Schorske 1980, 62). Here, social, political and cultural significance is found through a careful reading of fin-de-siecle Vienna’s Ringstrasse. This work is an instructive example of how a concentration on built form can illuminate cultural meaning and political process.
Landscape readings must remain attentive to context, however, as there is “more to municipal development than the projection of values into space and stone” (1980, 25).

Other work on urban landscape provides an excellent example of how a geographical approach to individual buildings can be fruitful. Landscapes, and particularly urban environments, are “both cultural products and cultural commentary” (Domosh 1996, 4). Thus, it follows that “looking to cultural context to understand and explain landscape, and interpreting the landscape to understand and explain cultural context” is a useful endeavor (Domosh 1996, 4).

Power can be strongly linked to and articulated through the built environment (Zukin 1991; Yeoh 1996). A focus on architecture will help me to show how the city of Berlin is being reinvented such that certain actors’ ambitions are evident in the landscape of Potsdamer Platz. Thus, the built environment “does not merely mirror historical change, for social relations and ideologies are partly reproduced through it” (Goss 1992, 159; see also Duncan 1990).

My discussion invokes a particular meaning of landscape that differs from that prevalent in German culture. As I suggest that landscape is a means of investigating German culture, it is important to note that when I speak of landscape, I do so as a means of understanding culture as realized through the built environment. In the German cultural context, the idea of landscape (or Landschaft) is tied up with the German nationalist project and indeed with the ‘Blut und Boden’ (blood and soil) ideology of National Socialism, according to which the ‘race’ of ethnic Germans is deeply rooted to Germany’s natural environment (forests, for example). Although the histories of violence resulting from National Socialism are certainly implicated in German
landscapes, I would like to focus attention on the distinction between landscape as an investigative tool, and *Landschaft* as an instrument of ideology.

**LOCATING MEMORY IN CULTURE**

The interdisciplinary memory studies literature provides a framework through which I examine the built environment of Potsdamer Platz. This literature is varied and substantial; indeed, the “memory industry in publishing” is pervasive, such that “there is hardly a topic that could not be discussed under the rubric of memory” (Hansen and Huyssen 1997, 3). I highlight two particular strands: the first discusses the ways in which memory has influenced urban built form and vice versa, while the second considers the unique status of memory in German culture and investigates societal taboos and the limits of representation, while establishing a link between identity and the nation’s troubled history.

Within the literature, memory in the German context is at times intertwined with discussions of memory and urban form. I will discuss them separately, though, as I highlight key claims of each. I contend that memory is an important and complex part of the culture in which Potsdamer Platz was built, lived in, destroyed, barricaded, (re)designed, rebuilt, and reintegrated into the city of Berlin.

**Memory and urban form**

Memory is intricately linked with place (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004), and with cities and urban form in particular (Crang and Travlou 2001, James-Chakraborty 1999;
This interpretive tradition has benefited from scholarly work in a number of disciplines, most prominently architectural history, geography and literary theory.

It is important here to consider what exactly is meant by memory and history, as the words can be ambiguous at times. In some constructions of these terms, the word ‘history’ is an official narrative, while ‘memory’ is an inherently personal, subjective thing. In this sense, history contrasts with memory:

against history’s rationality, the reveries of memory rebel. Against history’s officialism, memory recalls hidden pasts, the lived and the local, the ordinary and the everyday. Against history’s totality, memory’s pluralism blooms (Abramson 1992, 2).

This distinction between official, public history and informal, private memory further establishes the need to consider multiple voices. The official history of a building, for example, may differ substantially from other, less dominant narratives of place. Similarly, the everyday nature of memory is important, as memory is formed by many, seemingly minor interactions with people and places (Moran 2004).

It is important to establish what exactly is meant when discussing memory and architecture. One useful formulation distinguishes between memory through architecture and memory in architecture (Anderson 1995). The former consists of “architecture serving the causes of memory in society”, while the latter is “the operation of memory within the discipline of architecture itself” (Anderson 1995, 23). When I speak of memory here, then, I am referring to memory through architecture.

Cities are closely intertwined with memory. As population centres and hubs of creativity and commerce, cities are at the centre of knowledge production, control
capacities for production, and seats of government. Urban areas have been irrevocably shaped by natural disasters, wars and crime. Specific places within cities can trigger memories; where and what these places are can vary widely depending on who is experiencing the city.

The city is a “palimpsest: a space on to which meaning is inscribed, and then obliterated as new meanings are inscribed on top of them,” where memories must be sought out (Donald 2000, 149). This metaphor of a scroll which is written and rewritten, but with traces of previous content remaining, is often employed to describe urban memory (see also Huyssen 2003). A number of scholars draw on the work of Walter Benjamin, who saw memory as “the medium in which dead cities lie interred” (Benjamin 1979, 314). Benjamin’s (1979, 1999) concentration on the city as a site for memory has influenced the contemporary understanding of this notion (Savage 2000). Gilloch (1996, 67) interprets Benjamin’s writings about cities such that the dense networks of streets and alley-ways are like the knotted, intertwined threads of memory. The open spaces of the urban environment are like the voids and blanks of forgotten things. Lost times are like overlooked places.

When the city is experienced, it is often the built environment that is most noticeable. However, buildings are not the only important indicators of memory: voids are also signs, often indicating a place where something once was. This contrast of presence and absence, of “stories told and not told,” is a meaningful part of the urban fabric (Till 2005, 10). The significance of voids should not be underestimated, as they are often filled with meaning (Huysen 1997, 2003; Shusterman 1997). As I will demonstrate in Chapter 3, Berlin’s voids are of great importance; they are signs of absence, and reminders of violent regimes. Potsdamer Platz was a void, for a time: a depopulated, nation-less space.
Although the experience of memory in the city is often highly personal, urban areas can also reflect the collective memory of a society. National identity and nationalism are complexly intertwined with memory (Said 2000), but also with cities as sites of memory, and as places where everyday life plays out (Edensor 2002). The creation and marketing of cities as collections of historical fragments raises a number of questions (Philo and Kearns 1993). For example, how – and with what effects – is "memory" utilized for purposes of profit? The use of ‘authentic’ memory sites in a decontextualized and spectacularized manner can be seen in many contemporary cities, and I will give a concrete example of how this is seen at Potsdamer Platz in Chapter 4.

There are a number of ways in which built form can evoke memory. These range from the memorial, the chief purpose of which is commemoration, to ordinary buildings which have other primary purposes but which may reference the past through style or symbolism. Memorials are an example of the explicit articulation of the past through the built environment. Work within geography has concentrated on the creation of memorials as well as their reception (Grenzer 2002; Johnson 2001; Young 1993; Benton-Short 2006). These structures present a particular view of the history, which is often tied up with nationalism in that it reflects dominant conceptions of memory within a specific national context. At the same time, the histories that memorials present are not necessarily accepted by the viewer. The observer’s agency cannot be neglected, and has led to the contestation of particular memorials (see Azaryahu 2003; Charlesworth et al. 2006).

Influenced by the humanistic tradition within geography, other scholars have understood memorials to function as “theaters of memory” where “groups and officials
assume that a particular type of place can shape the public memory of the past and that this memory, in turn, can influence social understandings of the present moment" (Till 2001, 275). Such use of memory to create national identity speaks to the power of the state. A critical view of this process might seek to determine what is included in these instances of ‘public’ memory but also, perhaps more importantly, what is left out. A “pedagogic”, “official version of a collective memory” where “a peremptory and apparently confident architecture told citizens what the past meant and where they fitted into its narrative of the nation” can be contrasted with “a more performative, less disciplined way” of remembering (Donald 2000, 149). This could, for example, be seen in the difference between visiting a war memorial, and simply walking through city streets and recognizing memory sites of personal significance.

The metaphor of stages can be employed to assert the importance of the spatial aspects of memory. According to this theory, memory functions “within a time-space matrix by re-collecting events of the past while simultaneously restaging them through a variety of representational practices” (Johnson 2003, 168). Again, Roland Barthes’ work is influential here in the interpretation of acts of memory, where remembrance “engaged the population in a complex interpretative exercise”, involving “dialogue between remembering and forgetting, between providing moral legitimacy or denying it” (Johnson 2003, 168).

This literature foregrounds the importance of space in the construction of memorials, including the significance of the location of new memorials in relation to pre-existing ones. Where a building or monument is situated can have a profound effect upon how it is understood. Memory is a constantly-changing phenomenon, and certain
memories are often forgotten as other memories take precedence (Johnson 2003). The broader significance of memorials thus becomes clear: “[m]emory as re-collection, remembering and re-presentation is crucial in the mapping of historical moments and in the articulation of identity” (Johnson 2003, 2).

Official memories as represented in the urban landscape change over time and with circumstance and, as such, are always partial (Jordan 2005; Koshar 1994, 1998, 2000; Landzelius 2001, 2003). One form of representation is historic preservation, which can be seen as “a process of creation and containment in which traces of the tensions and clashes of the larger political culture are indelibly present” (Koshar 1994, 216).

Concerns of whose memory and how it is represented are highlighted with regard to the importance of public process:

[a] politically conscious approach to urban preservation must go beyond the techniques of traditional architectural preservation (making preserved structures into museums or attractive commercial real estate) to reach broader audiences. It must emphasize public processes and public memory (Hayden 1995, 72).

Practices of historical preservation are further implicated in the understanding (and contestation) of the built environment:

What is officially or popularly sanctioned as a valued past has implications for those groups who are, or are not, represented; for those settings which are, or are not, preserved. Thus understood, the past is politically-weighted and has an impact on the geography and form of our cities...The past has become part of the processes of production and consumption associated with capital accumulation. The past has become commodified” (Jacobs 1992, 194).

Another aspect of memory to consider in terms of built form is the significance of time (Jordan 2005). Many architects want their buildings to be timeless – perhaps to negate the effects of forgetting or, for example, deaths of those with lived experiences of
atrocities (Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin provides an interesting point of contrast to this tendency, as his building has been intentionally designed to change over time. The Jewish Museum will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.)

The particular salience of architecture in Berlin, and its complex ties to a troubled history, also link it closely with issues of identity. This also had the effect of delineating the possibilities of architectural expression; certain types of architecture, for example neoclassicism, were effectively ‘off-limits’ in postwar Germany, as they retained a strong association with the fascist National Socialist regime and its atrocities (James-Chakraborty 2000). Instead, the international modern style of architecture was embraced. This was ‘safe’ in the sense that it had no connection to the violent events of World War II.

Memory through urban form is not limited to buildings: streets have also been repositories for memory (Hebert 2005). Everyday life takes place on streets, as do acts of protest and resistance. Street names have been discussed in the geographical literature both in their function as a way of representing history (Azaryahu 1996, 1997) and in their potential for contestation (Pred 1990). Street structures are an integral part of built form, and streets themselves are implicated in the transformation of public space (see next section).

Some of the literature on memory in the built environment effectively puts these concerns to work through the analysis of specific sites. These case studies, rich in empirical detail, also illuminate wider issues surrounding the representation of the past. One particularly symbolic building is the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) in Dresden, a former East German city near the Czech border which was almost totally
destroyed by Allied firebombing in World War II, the subject of Kurt Vonnegut’s novel *Slaughterhouse V*. This building was seen as victim of both World War II and the German Democratic Republic, which led to the ‘undoing’ of a problematic past (James 2006). The building came to be symbolic of German victimhood. Here, as at other sites, competing understanding of history, as well as differing ideas about the symbolism of particular buildings, complicates the meanings of urban landscapes.

**Memory in the German context**

Memory has become an important and inextricable part of German identity, both in former East Germany, former West Germany and in the (re)unified Federal Republic (Ben-Amos and Weissberg 1999; Gillis 1994). A significant part of the memory studies literature explicitly discusses the German experience, including the influence of the nation’s troubled past on culture and everyday life. This scholarly work is of particular use to me as I consider meaning and identity in Germany’s capital (Assmann 1995; Herf 1997; Maier 1993, 1997; Koshar 1998, 2000; Kramer 1996; Ten Dyke 2001a; Till 2005; Young 2000). This literature highlights the complex and varying experiences of memory in Germany. In so doing, it complicates the dominant narrative of spectacle and the power of (multi-national) capital to shape urban space seen in this thesis.

Germany’s fractured past, including the atrocities of National Socialism and the violence perpetrated by the East German government, has led to a pervasive (but contested) concept of coming to terms with or ‘mastering’ the past, known as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This term denotes a major challenge in German identity: how to negotiate identity as a citizen of a country where government-sponsored genocide
killed millions of people, and where millions of German citizens were complicit in the killings. The challenge of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is ongoing, as younger generations who were not alive during the Holocaust must negotiate feelings of guilt and responsibility for the actions of their forebears. Significantly, this is very much a West German concept. From its earliest stages, the East German project took for granted that ‘they’ were not the same Germans who were involved in National Socialism and the Holocaust – their socialism was seen as the opposite of fascism. Now that the Wall has fallen and more than 15 years have passed since reunification, the situation has changed. These differing views of roles and responsibility with regard to history adds to the complexities of contemporary German society.

While the centrality of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* within German society is an important area of inquiry, some scholars have noted that such a focus can be limiting. These scholars advocate questioning the very structures of this thinking, seeking to “inquire into the historical development of the categories of the past and the present that enable historical subjects to think at all of memory and to use it in culturally significant ways” as well as to “examine the power relations, social identities, and everyday situations that memory work served” (Confino and Fritzsche 2002). Conceptions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* tend to focus on the National Socialist past (e.g., Niven 2000). This is particularly true with regard to the academic literature on German memory, some of which does not adequately discuss the East German experience (see Till 2005 for one example of this).

East German identity is itself a complex and contested idea (Berdahl 1999a, 2005; Borneman 1991; Fulbrook and Swales 2001; Herb 2004; Ten Dyke 2002) The fall of the
Wall in 1989 brought about the *Wende*, or change, which was in many senses a paradigm shift as East Germany was ‘annexed’ or ‘colonized’ by the Federal Republic of Germany. This literature has discussed the concept of *Ostalgie*, or nostalgia for the East, which is a prominent issue in reunified Germany (Berdahl 1999b; Betts 2000; Blum 2000; Jozwiak and Mermann 2006). Such nostalgia, perhaps understandable in a nation rendered ‘placeless’ (Hörschelmann 2001), is also risky in the sense that it can tend toward *Verharmlosung*, or the belittling of the realities of an oppressive government (Fulbrook 1997). In particular, the large number of people killed trying to escape East Germany by crossing the Berlin Wall are a sign of the regime’s violence.

Much mainstream literature about Germany and Berlin does not take East German culture seriously enough, uses bias-filled language to discuss all things East German, and seems to take for granted West Germany’s superiority (for one example, see Richie 1998). Discourses such as these contribute to the erasure of East German pasts (see Chapter 4). The voices of East Germans are, on the one hand, downplayed as nostalgist, and on the other hand, the variety of opinions which characterize any group of people are homogenized as the ‘East German’ voice is assumed to be unitary (Hörschelmann 2001). This can be seen, for example, in urban planning debates where East German voices are marginalized at events which claim to provide a forum for ‘public opinion’ (Bockmeyer 1995). Also, the published material on these debates includes few, if any, contributions from East Germans (e.g. Stimmann 2001).

The concerns of humanistic geography have been applied to Berlin, as the remembered pasts and futures of the city are discussed. The “new Berlins imagined in the past and historic Berlins imagined today” are significant in the shaping of the
contemporary city (Till 2005, 5). Again, Walter Benjamin's work is influential here in discussions of layers of memory. This concept is particularly interesting considering the many changes (political, economic, spatial) that have characterized Berlin in the past and continue to do so in the present. Further, the idea of haunting, or of ghosts, is employed to talk about that act of "selectively remembering particular understandings of the past through place" (Till 2005, 9; see also Bell 1997; Ladd 1997; Pinder 2001; Pile 2004; Edensor 2005; Kligerman 2005). In this sense, hauntologies influence the highly personal nature of memory and place making, as "[p]laces are not only continuously interpreted; they are haunted by past structures of meaning and the material presences from other times and lives" (Till 2005, 9). The focus on the present when talking about memory is important; with so many past events of central importance, this work reminds me that I am interpreting the landscape of Berlin as it is now, a place where memories of the past are constantly being renegotiated.

Memories of particular events can fade or become less clear with time, or even become distorted. This has been seen in particular with the events of World War II (Geyer 1997). As well, a group of people might not share the same memory. For example, all former East Germans likely do not have the same feelings about a particular building from the German Democratic Republic. Memories of different pasts can be entangled with feelings of nostalgia, discomfort or even guilt. The writings of Maurice Halbwachs (1980) and Pierre Nora (1989) have made important contributions to the study of memory and have influenced contemporary academics to continue in this tradition by looking at, among other things, how memory is linked to specific places. However, the importance of grounding theory about remembrance should not be overlooked, lest we
"forget that practices such as the formation of collective memory are social practices whose outcomes are unpredictable and whose language depends entirely on an endless, broken chain of experience and anticipation" (Koshar 1994, 230).

The myriad difficulties surrounding working through the past have led scholars to pose a number of intriguing questions: "To what extent does the traumatic and violent bent of German history in this century, including the after-history of both genocide and mass destruction, simultaneously mandate and hopelessly overdetermine any memorial practice?". Furthermore, "[a]re there structures in German public culture that would 'protect' forms of remembering and memorial representation from being contaminated by [the mass-mediated nature of memory culture]?" (Hansen and Huyssen 1997, 3). While answering these questions may be difficult, particularly considering that representations of the past are often contested, they are important to consider. These questions highlight the difficulties of confronting memory in a society that has been compelled to deal with its past for such a long period of time.

The issue of representation of the Holocaust is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is an important point to touch upon. Adorno’s (1981) infamous statement about the unrepresentability of the Holocaust – that it is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz – has been extremely influential. His idea has been taken up by many scholars, has often been misquoted, and has become an “academic truism”, as a large number of books inspired by or referencing the idea of “after Auschwitz” have been published (Rothberg 1997; Morris 2003). These concerns were manifested in the Historikerstreit – or historian’s dispute – within German academia (see Rothberg 1997; Maier 1993, 1997; LaCapra 1994, 1998; Friedlander 1992; Hornstein and Jacobowitz 2003). A series of
contentious debates about the very nature of the Holocaust dominated academic discourse. The main point of the discussion was whether the Nazi Holocaust was a singular event, or whether it could be compared to other genocides. This debate became strongly polarized, and the ‘comparative’ side of the argument became conflated with right-wing politics. The complexities of “overcoming the past” remain enormous (Habermas and Michnik 1994). Though atrocities are becoming more distant through the passage of time, the challenges of Vergangenheitsbewältigung remain. This is particularly difficult in the context of reunification, as two contentious, overlapping histories and two largely distinct identities now occupy one national space. Fiona Smith recognizes the difficulties inherent in this project, as reunification makes appeal to a shared past (historical legacy) of nation-statehood superseded by a period of separate state development. During that period, separate lived experiences of nation(s) and state(s) emerge, strengthening over time and making a return to the pre-division condition impossible (F. Smith 1994, 228).

THE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

Engagement with scholarship on public space will help me to illuminate the political and material issues surrounding access to and use of Potsdamer Platz in its role as Berlin’s new centre. It will also link the site to broader processes occurring throughout the world. Much of the literature on public space is critical of trends in urban areas whereby public space becomes privatized, securitized and controlled (Atkinson 2003; Fyfe 1998; Goss 1993; Jackson 1998; Kohn 2004; D. Mitchell 1995, 2003; N. Smith and Low 2006). Some of this literature identifies and describes the ‘end of public space’ or ‘destruction of accessible public space’, often seeing these trends as an extension of
broader processes of neoliberalism. Case study sites, such as New York and Los Angeles, reveal specific ways that urban public space has been transformed, usually with consequences for social justice.

Some of these scholars have expanded the field of analysis from the traditional urban realm:

By ‘public space’ we mean the range of social locations offered by the street, the park, the media, the Internet, the shopping mall, the United Nations, national governments, and local neighborhoods…Public space includes very recognizable geographies of daily movement, which may be local, regional, or global, but they also include electronic and institutional “spaces” that are every bit as palpable, if experienced quite differently, in daily life (N. Smith and Low 2006, 3).

Indeed, the number of possible sites of analysis is quite large. As my site is an urban space, my discussion of the issues surrounding public space will draw largely from scholarship analyzing space within cities. This is not to dismiss other sites and scales of analysis, which are of great political importance.

The concept of public space is also fundamentally shaped by its context. The way it is discussed in the majority of the literature presupposes advanced capitalism. Additionally, much of the writing on these issues is specific to the context of the United States. As my site is embedded in a different national context, I find this U.S.-centered work to be useful, but I do not claim that it is entirely applicable to my site.

The meaning of “private space” is surely different in Berlin, until recently a divided city, the Eastern part of which did not have an equivalent concept of “private property” until 1990. A shift ‘from people’s property to private property’ (Reimann 1997) has consequences for East German identity and for understandings of public space. I seek to situate my case study within wider trends in public space in Europe (La Varra...
Central city squares have traditionally been symbolic of the city’s identity, and have served as gathering places for all. Many post-socialist European cities are being transformed, their city centres becoming gentrified and their culture commodified.

Privatized public spaces are often spaces of exclusion. As Mike Davis puts it, “Today’s upscale, pseudo-public spaces – sumptuary malls, office centers, culture acropolises, and so on – are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass ‘Other’” (1990, 226). Again, although the context is different, the exclusionary practices recognized here an important, often covert issue. These privatized spaces are recognized as a “seamless continuum of middle-class work, consumption and recreation” (Davis 1990, 231).

Other scholars are more attentive to the place of culture in their analysis of public space. This work recognizes that “[p]ublic spaces are the primary site of public culture; they are a window into the city’s soul...an important means of framing a vision of social life in the city” for both locals and tourists (Zukin 1995, 259). In this formulation, public spaces become fruitful sites for analysis. They are places where everyday life is lived and, importantly, places where memories are negotiated.

As both site and sight, meeting place and social staging ground, public spaces enable us to conceptualize and represent the city – to make an ideology of its receptivity to strangers, tolerance of difference, and opportunities to enter a fully socialized life, both civil and commercial. ... We can understand what is happening to public culture today if we look at what is happening to public spaces (Zukin 1995, 260).
The way public spaces are lived can show much about a society. Attention to the use of these spaces, as well as the responses of those who bring the places to life, has an important place in the analysis of these sites. Furthermore, such sites are crucibles of national identity. The defining characteristics of urban public space – proximity, diversity, and accessibility – send the appropriate signals for a national identity that will be more multicultural, and more socially diverse, in the years to come (Zukin 1995, 262).

It follows that trends of privatization send a different message, namely one of exclusion.

Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1994) expands these concerns, and has been fruitfully engaged by geographers (Ley and Olds 1988, Johnson 1999, Kearns 1993, Pinder 2000). Although certainly not limited to issues of public space, Debord’s description of a society ruled by commodity and image is apt. Spectacle is instrumental in the blurring of boundaries between public and private space that results in the creation of pseudo-public spaces. Such a landscape of spectacle is a place where “[a]ll that once was directly lived has become mere representation” (Debord 1994, 12). Pseudo-public spaces create the appearance or image of public space without actually providing a freely-accessible space for the public. Relatedly, the intent of spectacle is “to restructure society without community” (Debord 1994, 137, italics in text), as everyday human interaction, shared experiences and collective memory fall by the wayside. The society of the spectacle renders public space placeless: “[j]ust as the accumulation of commodities mass-produced for the abstract space of the market inevitably shattered all regional and legal barriers...so too it was bound to dissipate the independence and quality of places” (Debord 1994, 120). Central cities, for example, are losing their unique
qualities to homogenizing redevelopment. Such projects turn public gathering places into commodified landscapes offering a seemingly endless choice of retail options.

Additional scholarly work on public space draws on the idea of the city as spectacle (Boyer 2002; Sorkin 1992). Although again describing American cities, this literature identifies a number of key characteristics of cities that have broader relevance. Contemporary urban spaces have been overtaken by placelessness, obsession with security, and simulation, trends which have “the potential to irretrievably alter the character of cities as the preeminent sites of democracy and pleasure” (Sorkin 1992, xv). The ‘city as theme park’ (Sorkin 1992; Mitrašinović 2006) is an increasingly common paradigm in urban redevelopment, where simulations of history prevail.

Scholarship on the privatization of public space has crystallized around one particular, seemingly ubiquitous form: the shopping mall. The mall began as a suburban phenomenon, but has more recently intruded into the urban realm, where it is representative of the importance of consumer culture within cities (Harvard Project on the City 2000). Urban shopping malls internalize the high street, bringing the activity of shopping, once intricately linked to urban fabric, into its own enclosed spaces. Here, the internalization of retail activities is accompanied by greater control over the space, often resulting in securitization. These shopping centres have become exclusive places where not all are welcome:

Although the modern mall presents itself as public space, private ownership allows a degree of management that main street retailers cannot attain. Not only is the atmosphere not welcoming of the poor ‘underconsumer’, but those who disrupt consumption, such as political leafleteers, rowdy teenagers and street-people, can be escorted from the premises (Goss 1992, 167).
Through detailed analysis of built form, shopping malls are also shown to be carefully constructed spaces of consumption. These malls are designed to facilitate the sale of commodities; every aspect of their design and appearance has been carefully chosen to control consumers’ movements and choices in order to maximize consumption and, thus, profits (Goss 1992, 1993).

Scholarship on the ‘end of public space’ may lead to an overly-simplified reading of complex urban areas. More nuanced scholarship has emerged which describes the varying and contrary nature of public space. While remaining critical of many of these processes of privatization, this work argues that some measures of securitization may be necessary for certain members of the public (e.g., women and children) to be comfortable there (Lees 1998). The idea of public space may change when safety of the public is a consideration for, conversely, “the safe use of public spaces by all citizens...may be undermined if safety comes at the cost of excluding groups defined as dangerous or non-consumers” (Atkinson 2003, 1830).

In this sense, processes of securitization can be simultaneously detrimental and beneficial to the larger public. Public space, it follows, is ambiguous and complex:

Much of the confusion, I would suggest, stems from a singular understanding of the street, and of public space more generally, as either free and democratic or repressed and controlled. Public space is both at the same time. It is simultaneously a space of political struggle and expression and of repression and control. The challenge is to appreciate these complex modalities and to make the most of the positive while resisting the worst (Lees 1998, 238).

While Lees opens up some interesting possibilities, she is too optimistic about “the potential of the imaginary, immaterial, and electronic spaces” (1998, 239). I believe these cannot truly replace physical public spaces as sites of contestation and
demonstration. Also, similar to W.J.T. Mitchell, whom she quotes, her optimistic view of
technology would benefit from further consideration of whether electronic networks, as
both seem to suggest, are necessarily a democratizing and liberating force (W. Mitchell
1995). Ultimately, Lees is not attentive enough to the dangerous potential for
surveillance and misuse of these new electronic spaces.

Discussions of public space are not fully separate from other concerns at
Potsdamer Platz: they can intertwine with issues of memory, memorials, representation
and politics (Benton-Short 2006), as these debates and contestations often play out in
public space. Similarly, memorials are often located in public space, perhaps to
encourage visitors and engage as much of the public as possible. Thus, landscape,
memory and public space come together at times.
3. HISTORY, POLITICS AND CONSTRUCTION AT POTSDAMER PLATZ

“To reflect upon history is also, inextricably, to reflect upon power.”
Guy Debord, 1994, p. 98

Berlin is located in the geographical centre of the European Union (Figure 1). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Potsdamer Platz became its thriving centre as well as one of the busiest squares in Europe. This central city square has undergone remarkable changes over the course of the last century, as it has been profoundly shaped by spatial and political changes in Berlin. Potsdamer Platz is now the centre of Germany’s capital in terms of both its geographic location (Figure 2) and its prime place in city marketing strategies. Tracing the development of this site over time will allow it to be placed in its proper historical context and provide a background for the analysis of its current built form.

Figure 1: Berlin occupies a central location within the European Union
THE HISTORY OF POTSDAMER PLATZ

As a major transit hub and an important center of the city in pre-War Berlin, Potsdamer Platz reflected the chaos and excitement of life in the metropolis. A place of commerce and technology, the site came to represent the harsh realities of modernity, which sometimes engendered feelings of alienation (seen in writings by Simmel (1997) and expressionist artwork by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Georg Grosz).

Although Potsdamer Platz translates as Potsdam Square, it is in fact not a true city square but rather a busy intersection. In the early twentieth century, this intersection and its surrounding area were defined by technology – including the first traffic signal in
Europe, installed in 1924—as well as noise and crowds (Figure 3). Urban historian Brian Ladd (1997, 117) notes that Potsdamer Platz “was Berlin because Berlin was the city of bustle and speed...For Germans, the incessant movement of Berlin was the real and visible embodiment of the hypermodern urbanity they associated with the United States—thus it was an ‘American city’, or a ‘German Chicago.’” Writing in 1924, journalist Joseph Roth further describes the mood of the time:

> The announcements of music halls, movies, the promotion of cigarettes, the fervor of business advertising— their nightly blaze above the roofs of Potsdamer Platz—drown, suffocate, and obliterate any of the political battle cries in an inferno of light and noise and colour. The machinery of this half-Americanized city remains clinical and performs its myriad sober functions without passion, without being brushed by even a whiff of political conflict (Roth 1996, 190).

Berlin at this time was characterized by vice, seen through rampant prostitution, a thriving black market, gambling, and other illicit activities (Rowe 2003). Ernst Ludwig
Kirchner's painting *Potsdamer Platz* (Figure 4) and woodcut *Frauen am Potsdamer Platz* (Figure 5) depict prostitutes as part of the street life in early twentieth century Berlin. Kirchner's streetwalkers symbolize the reputation for depravity for which the city was infamous (Simmons 2000) as well as the desperation felt in culturally rich yet economically troubled Berlin. Here, “crowds of sneaking pimps, gussied-up whores, love-hungry pedestrians, and reeling druns” could be seen engaging in “[t]he business of pleasure, the tireless, well-oiled machinery of thrills” (Roth 1996, 191).

Potsdamer Platz was also a centre of café culture and cabaret (Jelavich 1990), but mostly it was a place dominated by traffic. Automobiles, symbols of modernity and independence, came together in the multiple intersecting streets that met at Potsdamer Platz. A poem by celebrated cabaret artist and writer Erich Kästner entitled “Visitors
from the Country” illustrates the loud, bustling chaos of 1920s Berlin through the eyes of tourists:

Distracted, they stand at Potsdamer Platz
And find Berlin too loud.
The night glows in kilowatts
A young lady says hoarsely: “come with me, my dear!”
And shows far too much skin.

Astonished, they don’t know anything
They just stand and stare.
The trams rattle. The cars screech.
They would really rather be at home.
They find Berlin too big.

It sounds as if the city is groaning
Because someone is scolding it.
The houses twinkle. The subway thuds.
They’re not used to all this.
They find Berlin too wild.

Scared, their legs buckle.
The do everything backwards.
They smile, perplexed. And they wait stupidly
and stand around Potsdamer Platz
Until they are run over
(Kästner 1998, 149).

Potsdamer Platz remained the centre of the city in an increasingly troubled Berlin, where economic collapse was followed by the rise of National Socialism. Under the Nazi regime, the infamous Volksgerichtshof – a party-run ‘people’s court’ – was located at Potsdamer Platz. Established in 1934, and presided over by a judge named Roland Freisler, this court gave out death sentences to enemies of the regime. Hitler’s plans to rebuild Berlin made their mark upon the landscape, resulting in parts of Potsdamer Platz being demolished in order to create architect Albert Speer’s planned North-South axis.
World War II bombing destroyed most of the site’s remaining buildings (Figure 6).

After the end of the war, the informal economy took off and the black market thrived at this site. Alexandra Richie (1998, 639) describes “an alternative underground economy in which the basic unit of exchange was the cigarette. Five cigarettes bought sex; twenty-five cartons bought a Leica camera. Many GIs made small fortunes in this way: the western soldiers were heavily involved in the black market despite official attempts to close it down”.

Following World War II, Berlin was divided into sectors which were occupied by American, French, British and Soviet forces (Figure 7). East Germany was established, dividing the former Federal Republic into two parts, one capitalist, one communist. Potsdamer Platz, the bustling center of Berlin, was profoundly affected by the spatial
transformations occurring within the city. A wall was built in 1961 to separate West Berlin from the surrounding communist East Germany. Potsdamer Platz was the first place blocked off for the Berlin Wall’s construction, perhaps because it had previously been the busiest border crossing. Any buildings that were left on the Eastern side of the border were cleared in order for the wall to be built. The site of what had been Potsdamer Platz was situated within the 100 meter area between the inner and outer wall, often referred to as the ‘death strip’ (Figure 8). This was the only place in Berlin where the two parts of the Wall were far apart from one another. Potsdamer Platz quickly became a place on the margins, a blank space defined by the Wall. Transformed from a central area to a “no-man’s-land”, this formerly crowded space became a void, existing between capitalist West Berlin and communist East Berlin. As such, Potsdamer Platz shifted from a symbol of modernity to a symbol of Berlin’s division.

The Wall was a major attraction in West Berlin. Tourists – and visiting
government officials, including John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon – would stand on a
platform and look over at the wasteland that marked Potsdamer Platz. The image of
Potsdamer Platz as a void was famously recorded by Wim Wenders in his film Der
Himmel über Berlin (literally “The Skies Above Berlin”, but usually translated as “Wings
of Desire”). Here, an old man searches for the place he once knew, lamenting “ich kann
den Potsdamer Platz nicht finden!” (“I can’t find Potsdamer Platz!”). Potsdamer Platz
remained a wasteland for decades.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Potsdamer Platz was again transformed. The
site changed back from periphery to core overnight. As a central yet empty area,
Potsdamer Platz represented a space of opportunity for capital and thus was a prime place
for (re)development. This first took shape through informal activity, which provides an
interesting parallel to the post-World War II black market. A lively scene unfolded in the
transformed space of Potsdamer Platz after the fall of the Wall:
the former no-man's-land was first taken over by hot-dog stands, bazaars, caravans, street vendors, and buskers. As transitory zones these former borderlands became thresholds where symbols and myths of a collapsed empire were exchanged for the new fetishes arriving from the West. As such, the inter-city borderlines turned into passages for Western goods (bananas, Coca-Cola) and paraphernalia illustrating the 'fall of the Eastern powers' (uniforms, medals, pieces of the Wall, watches, matryoshkas, etc.). This mutual 'exchange of gifts' was the initiation ritual for a new nation and the start of, what some later would call, ‘the colonization of East Germany’ (De Leeuw 1999, 59).

Referring to this series of events as colonization is significant, as the East German national space was quickly and completely taken over by the reunified Germany. The collapse of communism and resulting triumph of capitalism is a recurring theme in Berlin, particularly with regard to redevelopment (Wise 1998). Indeed, the events of 1989 represent a paradigm shift which affected the landscape of many post-socialist nations in material ways (Foote, Toth and Arvay 2000). The erasure and changes in built form that often occurred have had a significant effect upon cultural identity (Neill 2004). This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

THE POLITICS OF BUILDING IN BERLIN

In order to fully understand the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz and its significance for the city of Berlin, it is necessary to step back and consider the wider politics of building in the city. I will depart from Potsdamer Platz to discuss Berlin’s central city plan as well as four sites in central Berlin, which will serve as examples as I identify and describe trends in the planning and construction of the redeveloped city. These sites demonstrate how memory and public space have been dealt with in different ways. My point here is not to give a sense of debates about built form; I will discuss
these debates in Chapter 5 as they relate to Potsdamer Platz. Rather, I attempt to provide a background against which an analysis of the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz can be better understood.

As a capital city, Berlin is a place where national identity is articulated (Gittus 2002; Heckner 2002). A new German identity has been formed here, as the city’s built form has changed considerably since the fall of the Wall. The massive privatization of formerly public property that occurred after reunification further emphasizes the links between buildings and particular regimes (Reimann 1997). Provisions for property restitution were included in the German unification treaty, and claims were filed for 2.7 million separate pieces of property in former East Germany. In central Berlin, as much as 90% of land was subject to claims. Restituted owners were mostly from the west, and the vast majority sold their property after restitution (Blacksell and Born 2002). The Investment Priority Law, passed in 1992, favoured economic development over private claims, allowing Berlin’s government to disregard claims for areas it deemed important for potential major investments (ibid.).

Berlin is a city-state with a strong planning tradition. Its state (Land) and city governments are integrated and presided over by a mayor. Two government bodies, the Senat (Senate) and Abgeordnetenhaus (House of Representatives), are involved in urban planning issues. Berlin is generally autonomous in terms of its planning politics; the federal government is usually not involved.

One particularly influential figure in Berlin’s government was Hans Stimmann, an architect and city planner who became the city’s Building Director in 1991. He was a major force behind the Planwerk Innenstadt (Central City Plan) and the associated
rhetoric of 'critical reconstruction', which advocated traditional designs such as rectangular, low-rise stone buildings and shunned high-rise, glass and metal structures.\textsuperscript{2} A very particular view of history – drawing upon traditional European ideals of urban design and building aesthetics – was effectively legislated through Stimmann’s policies. As Stimmann states,

\begin{quote}
My symbol is the recovery of an uninterrupted history... The fracture as leitmotif for architecture and city building is false... We must build the inner city so that we recognize the traces of our history. Berlin must not look like Hong Kong or Tokyo, Berlin must look like Berlin (Piepgras 1995, 3).
\end{quote}

Under this dogma, public spaces were usually city squares in the European tradition, while construction in a historical style ensured the evocation of particular pasts through the built environment.

Although architects were not directly employed by the city, certain designers, for example Josef Paul Kleihues, enjoyed a close relationship with the city and were often awarded contracts. There is some amount of antagonism between adherents to two ‘camps’ of architectural thought. One group tended to favour low-rise buildings, which are the norm in Berlin. An opposing camp embraces technology and modern aesthetics. Conflict can most clearly be seen over skyscrapers, as the first group sees such buildings as largely antithetical to Berlin’s character, while the other considers them an important element in city building. Because architects adhering to the values of the Planwerk Innenstadt were much more likely to get work, the competition allowed a small group of architects and officials to dictate the style of much of central Berlin’s new built form. At

\textsuperscript{2} Although the Planwerk Innenstadt was officially approved by the Senate in 1999, this date is misleading, as the plan’s major tenets were influential throughout the 1990s under the direction of Hans Stimmann.
the same time, the restrictive environment dissuaded others from participating in architectural competitions (Steinmetz 1997).

One particular goal of the Planwerk Innenstadt (Central City Plan) was to ‘re-centre’ Berlin. In Stimmann’s words, “the first task was to convince the Berliner public that the deplorably riven current condition of the centre...was a problem” (Stimmann 1999, 6). Memory and public space are implicated in this shift: Stimmann counts occasional remains of the wall as part of this ‘problem’, as well as the undefined open spaces prevalent in Berlin. Here we see the beginnings of a planning policy that would remove traces of the past while trying to control, or “define”, public space. An explicit decision was made to (re)create a centre between the Alexanderplatz in the east and Zoologischer Garten in the west, as “the identity of the city should be focused here” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1999a, 3133).

Dismissed by some as “plastic surgery” (De Leeuw 1999, 61) and described by others as a “reclamation of the historic center” (Guratzsch 1999), the effects of the Planwerk Innenstadt were controversial. It is valuable to look at the rhetorical strategies employed in the Plan to further the Berlin government’s goals, including the “modification of public space through reurbanization and mix of uses, according to the model of the European city” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1999a, 3133), while remaining aware of the complex histories that have shaped Berlin’s urban space.

Ironically, while claiming to “draw balance from this history” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1997b, n.p.) and to advocate a design brought on by a dialogue with place and memory, this plan instead issues a command which is not sensitive to history. Less desirable pasts are erased through the central city plan’s selective deployment of
historical building styles. While Stimmann claims that historic buildings “are in large part the crystallization point of society, and they possess a timeless validity” (Stimmann 1997, n.p.), his actions show that he favours a particular style: low-rise, rectangular, classical buildings. Thus, Stimmann’s conception of “historic buildings” ignores most of the twentieth century.

The Planwerk Innenstadt aspires to “an urban planning concept that is true to the specific identities of the historic centre and the Western city, and promotes the process of linking the city and its society (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1999a, 3131). But even in this statement of intent, a selective view of the past is evidenced. The plan refers to Mitte – a part of former East Berlin – as the “historic centre”. In contrast to this, the central area of former West Berlin is called “City West”. Instead of “City East”, as might be expected, Mitte’s euphemistic label implicitly discounts the East German era. Berlin’s “real” centre, it follows, shifted from the “historic centre” to “City West” when the Berlin Wall was built. Such systematic disregard for the legitimacy of East Berlin’s centre is seen not just in this one instance, but rather throughout the entirety of the plan and indeed in other planning documents.

The plan continues, “the historic centre should, in light of its one-time urban-historical meaning, be subject to appropriate use in terms of the city’s significance” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1999a, 3131, italics mine). Again, the importance of this area is seen as fundamentally separate from the time when it was part of East Germany. This dominant formulation of German history – which sees the existence of East Germany as an interruption in the greater historical narrative – is also seen in the city’s promotional strategies, which will be discussed in greater detail later.
This inherent Western bias, and attendant systematic devaluation of the East, is implicated in the rhetorical strategies of powerful actors in Berlin’s redevelopment.

The restrictive Planwerk Innenstadt has exemplified what is known as the Berliner Streitkultur, or culture of disagreement in Berlin, where architecture has become a major issue of debate among both professionals and the public. As one frustrated commentator wrote, “One could almost think that the fate of a society lies solely on the shoulders of architects and their buildings in the city” (Meuster 2001, 141). Indeed, the Planwerk Innenstadt was contentious, with criticism voiced in opinion pieces in local and national newspapers and architecture periodicals. A typical critique took issue with the limited view of history inherent in the city’s planning decisions:

Berlin has changed fundamentally, and its territorial, societal and political rebirth requires a contemporary engagement with urbanity...However, Prussian simplicity cannot be the only unit with which Berlin is measured, since definitive things occurred after 1945 that can’t be ignored...Berlin needs an innovative, pluralistic politics of urban development” (Frielingsdorf 1994, 26).

Here, a journalist for the left-leaning Tageszeitung takes issue with planning rhetoric. While such critiques were most prevalent on the left, they were by no means limited to particular political affiliations, and were in fact seen throughout the political spectrum of German (and even international) media.

Peter Strieder, a senior planner in Berlin who eventually succeeded Hans Stimmann in his role of Building Director in 1999, further spoke to issues surrounding the representation of history, promising that “in a critical dialogue the different phases of Berlin’s history will be made knowable in urban space (Strieder 1999, 5, italics mine).
His use of the word *knowable* is interesting. The German word *kenntlich*—which can variously mean knowable, discernable and recognizable—is used here, and is rather vague. It begs the question of how this past will be knowable, or to what extent an individual can *know* history. *Knowable* is positioned in clear and deliberate contrast to *visible* (sichtbar), a term that was not used. It thus follows that history will *not* be rendered visible, but will somehow be knowable. Exactly how this will happen remains unclear. Strieder continues, "[t]he cultural resource of urban history will be made accessible to Berliners as a formative experience in terms of identity" (Strieder 1999, 5). This statement is similarly vague, and its realization seems doubtful, particularly within the restrictive planning environment of critical reconstruction. Again, it is unclear which Berliners he is talking about when he speaks of identity. If East Germans and immigrants are included, it is not explicit, and any material details about how this will happen are absent.

Through a description of four sites at which memory and public space were negotiated within Berlin’s planning system, I hope to provide a broad context within which to situate my discussion of Potsdamer Platz (Figure 9). I next identify two distinctive approaches to history that are prevalent in Berlin’s built environment. The “traditional aesthetic” references pre-war German culture through built form. In contrast, the “contemporary aesthetic” engages with the troubled history of the 20th century.
Unter den Linden: legislating prewar architecture?

Unter den Linden boulevard is central to Berlin’s identity and has historically been the site of the city’s most important buildings. The area surrounding Unter den Linden contains many structures built in a baroque or neoclassical style, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. These include opera houses, a university, and museums. The dominant building style is typified by the Zeughaus (Figure 10), a former armory that now houses the German Historical Museum. Newer buildings (bank and corporate headquarters, hotels and embassies) are built in a similar style. I argue that this traditional style has been used to create a landscape that suggests a nineteenth-century, “royal” Berlin, and by doing so erases certain parts of Berlin’s past – the legacies of
Nazism and communism in particular – that do not fit in with this controlled aesthetic ideal. Thus, the design of Unter den Linden is largely without reference to twentieth-century events. However, it is not the case that nothing has happened here; old buildings have been carefully restored for a specific purpose. Here, a particular ideology is articulated through the built environment (Stangl 2006).

This broad boulevard, planted with rows of trees and decorated with statues of German royalty on horseback, conveys a strongly national history (Johnson 2001). The street is divided by a well-kept median, and traffic is limited. Important reminders of German contributions to the Enlightenment are evident along the boulevard, including institutions of learning (Humboldt University) as well as cultural establishments such as museums and theaters. The notable geographic concentration of institutions of high culture on this street could be seen as an attempt to reconnect with a grand past (Gresillon
The western end of the boulevard is demarcated by the Brandenburg gate, another important national symbol. Nearby, government buildings, embassies and banks converge at Pariser Platz (Paris Square). This square, in both its name and its traditional aesthetic ornamented by gardens and a fountain, suggests the boulevards and high culture of Paris, France, yet retains a distinctly German look.

Sites such as the Lustgarten (Pleasure Garden), now a green space in front of a museum of antiquities, suggest the dominance of this traditional vision and its erasure of "undesirable" histories. The current form of this area mirrors the pre-war aesthetic of lush park space. The site was, in fact, paved over and used as a rally ground by the National Socialist government in the 1930s and 1940s. After the division of Berlin into sectors following World War II, the communist German Democratic Republic government similarly used the site as a space for political marches, rather than a place for pleasure and relaxation. The current site lacks any significant reminder of the past uses of this space, and rather has returned to its nineteenth-century grandeur as an open space for pleasure alongside Berlin’s grand boulevard.

Various other buildings reflect the dominance of this traditional aesthetic. For example, the DZ Bank headquarters located on Pariser Platz was designed by star architect Frank Gehry. Gehry’s typically flowing, metallic designs are not to be seen here. Instead, a plain stone façade faces Unter den Linden, blending in with surrounding buildings. Only when the building is entered can Gehry’s typical architectural motifs be seen. The back side of the building is curved and less traditional; however, this design is not visible from the boulevard. Similarly, a recent addition to the German Historical
Museum by I.M. Pei features a spiraling glass form, but it is located in the back of the building, and cannot be seen from Unter den Linden.

The built form of Unter den Linden boulevard is characterized by a traditional and elitist aesthetic that looks back to a glorified nineteenth-century past, and in so doing erases important historical events that have transpired during the twentieth century. Also reflected in this selective representation of the past are traces of German nationalism and a privileging of the former West Germany, seen through the demolition of East German buildings (McNeill and Tewdwr-Jones 2003). Unter den Linden has become even more important since Germany’s reunification in 1990, when Berlin experienced a need to (re)construct a centre and, indeed, a unified identity (Ladd 2000).

Although it seems that the selective representation of history seen at Under den Linden is widely accepted, this is not necessarily the case. This central boulevard may be seen to represent traditional, German architecture, although some people may understand it differently. One Berlin journalist asks: “What is German architecture?”, then quickly responds to his own question: “Since reunification it is no longer acceptable to simply ignore the nation’s problems, as both German states did for a long time” (Hoffmann 2002).

The Schloss-Debatte: The Palace of Which Republic?

One particular site on Unter den Linden has been at the centre of recent controversy. The Schloss-Debatte, or Palace debate, involved a proposal to replace the
East German Palace of the Republic (*Palast der Republik*, Figure 11) with a reconstruction of the baroque Palace of Residence (*Stadtschloss*, Figure 12) that had originally occupied the site. These plans have garnered government support, and I argue that this plan is an unambiguous example of the dominant traditional vision for this area, which replaces signs of troubled or unpopular histories with replicas evoking a less violent past.

Construction of the original Palace of Residence began in 1698 under Friedrich I. An example of northern baroque architecture, the building was 100 feet high and had 1200 rooms as well as courtyards and sculpture. The Palace's large scale influenced the subsequent construction in Berlin's central area. After Friedrich's death in 1713, various additions were made to the Palace by other rulers, but the form did not change significantly. Many nearby buildings were designed by noted architect Karl Friedrich
Schinkel, who had a profound influence on the boulevard’s aesthetic. The Palace of Residence occupied an important site on Unter den Linden, which had become a major axis in Berlin, and was seen by some as a symbolic meeting place of East and West. After 1918, with no royalty to house, the Palace of Residence was used largely as a museum. A decade and a half later, the Third Reich saw little use for a building so symbolic of the royalty that they despised. By the end of World War II, the palace had sustained major bomb damage, although significant portions of the structure remained intact. In 1950, the communist government of East Berlin chose to demolish the structure and use the area as a space for the East German people. Construction of the new, East German Palace of the Republic did not begin until 1974 and was completed in 1976. A rectangular structure in the high modernist style, the new Palace measured 180 meters long, 90 meters wide and 32 meters high (Neill 2004). The exterior of the building consisted of copper-coloured mirrored glass and white marble slabs. A place of both government activity and leisure, the Palace of the Republic was the site of East
Germany’s vote favoring reunification with their western neighbor. Soon after this, asbestos was discovered in the building, necessitating a cleaning process after which only the shell of the building was left. The future of the structure and its site was uncertain.

The Palace of the Republic is of undeniable importance in the East German collective memory. While it functioned as a seat of government, housing the parliament, it was much more as well: the Palace was an important public space where East Germans could have dinner, sit in a café, go bowling or simply relax. As a place of leisure, the Palace was part of the everyday lives of many East Berliners.

Memories of the East German past are tied up with the idea of Ostalgie, or nostalgia for the East, which is at times invoked to dismiss the legitimacy of any attempts by former East Germans to resist the building’s demolition (Neill 2004). Ostalgie is also intertwined with tourism, when the celebration of East German cultural artifacts (as well as those of other former Eastern Bloc countries) merges with the curiosity of Westerners to experience the Communist “other” (Light 2000). Perhaps this is partially responsible for the success of guided tours of the Palace of the Republic, as well as other cultural events held in the building.

In 1993, a private interest group erected scaffolding around the building and hung a canvas reproduction of the original Palace of Residence. An exhibition inside the structure displayed photographs of the original Palace along with different proposals to rebuild it. Visited by 180,000 people, this exhibition increased enthusiasm for the reconstruction of the royal Palace, and generated debate about the proposals within government and the media as well as in public meetings (Wise 1998). Plans for a reconstructed Palace of Residence would rebuild only the façade, while the interior
would house new functions rather than the royal chambers of the original building. A high-end hotel and a conference centre were two suggested uses for this space.

The proposed reconstruction of the royal Palace and the associated demolition of the communist Palace of the Republic is an issue of great symbolic importance. The two sides of the debate invoke varied understandings of memory, identity, and the proper form of Berlin’s urban landscape. It was seen by some as an aesthetic issue (beautiful versus ugly buildings) and by others as a political debate (varying beliefs about the importance of preservation of history in the built environment and associated issues of identity). A typical argument for the reconstruction of the Stadtschloss dismissed the East German Palast as an eyesore and a reminder of a failed government, and praised the aesthetics of the baroque structure. An opposing argument for the Palast’s preservation claimed that the East German past is worth saving, and that a reconstruction of the Stadtschloss would be inauthentic.

The demolition of the Palace of the Republic and the reconstruction of the royal Palace could also be seen as another example of the victory of capitalism over communism. Michael Wise asserts that communism is “a more vivid and direct memory” (1998, 109), resulting in resistance to the reuse of East German buildings. This highlights again the importance of temporality to an understanding of memory and how it relates to the built environment.

Public opinion about this issue has been both passionate and divided. For example, a survey of 5,500 newspaper readers illuminated the fractured nature of these debates: 37 per cent found the plan for the reconstructed Royal Palace to be “very good”, and 41 per cent found it “partially good”. Seven percent of respondents expressed total
dislike for the plan. The majority preferred the “historic” cityscape to the “modern”
aesthetic as seen in plans for Potsdamer Platz and Alexanderplatz (Berliner Zeitung
1995). These survey results must be treated with caution, however. For one, they may
underrepresent the opinions of former East Germans, as the Berliner Zeitung is a
historically Western paper.

Despite the seemingly low level of disagreement evident from the survey, there
has been considerable public protest surrounding the planned destruction of the East
German Palast der Republic. This debate surrounds an ideologically-complex site of
memory which has very different meanings for the public, depending on how they
understand the building, and whether they grew up in former East or former West
Germany.

Alternatives to the reconstruction plan have been suggested and partially
implemented: the structure of the Palace of the Republic was used for a time as an arts
project known as the Palace of Culture (Kulturpalast). During this time, the building
functioned as a space for the public to engage with various forms of culture: it was used
as a dance club, a venue for showing films, a space for art installations, and a place for
lectures and panel discussions. I attended one such panel discussion where architects and
urban scholars discussed the building’s future. Although suggestions for possible use of
the building varied widely, the general tone of the discussions and presentations was very
much in solidarity with preserving the modernist structure. At the same time, pro-
reconstruction forces also had extensive support. A well-funded private organization
rented a display window on Unter den Linden, where they displayed a model of the
reconstructed Stadtschloss.
In a letter to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a man from Dortmund, a city in the northwest of Germany, suggested a compromise: a combination of the old palace and the (renovated) Palace of the Republic (Herbst 1997). Another reader had a different, seemingly ironic suggestion:

Let the Palast der Republic remain as a major piece of identity and historic property for the former citizens of the East. Touch it up with a few columns. Then you could add a new, blue glass exterior, so the building has a touristic sheen similar to the Gedächtniskirche [memorial church in western Berlin] (Müller 1998).

This response points to the contentious, interlinked issues of memory, authenticity and tourism. The post-unification Communist party, the PDS, also suggested retaining the palace in its then-current form, and turning it into a citizen’s forum. This would serve, they said, as a counterpart to the parliament and government near the Spreebogen as well as to the commerce at Potsdamer Platz (Paul 2000a).

Different opinions on the proper future for the *Schlossplatz* are linked to varying understandings of particular buildings. Dolores Hayden’s (1995) ideas are useful here, as she underscores the importance of acknowledging both the aesthetic and social value of urban landscape. Traditional forces in Berlin’s government see no value in preserving the East German Palace, but do see value in the reconstruction of the royal castle. On the other hand, those protesting the demolition of the Palace of the Republic clearly see social and cultural meaning in this building.

Varying views on the proper fate of the Palast der Republik have been expressed on the pages of local, national and international newspapers. The debate even spread to the United Kingdom when the *Guardian* published a damning article about the Palast:
it is an unworthy neighbour to some of Europe's grandest buildings. And, above all, it is a crumbling monument to a period of Berlin's history that should not be sentimentalised...Only reactionaries now want to cling on to the discredited symbols of a regime which richly deserves its place in the dustbin of history (The Guardian 2006).

Here, the continued presence of a building is equated with sentimentalizing the period in which (and government under which) it was produced. A reader quickly took issue with this assessment, referencing Potsdamer Platz as an example of contemporary building practices, which he contrasts unfavourably with the Palast:

The building, designed and built by the Swedes, was certainly not in the same ugliness stakes of the new monstrous temples to consumerism of Potsdamer Platz. But significantly it was a "people's palace" in a genuine sense, replete with a state-of-the-art auditorium, a theatre, restaurants and a dance hall, as well as a depository for the work some of East Germany's best artists. It was very popular with East Berliners, who demonstrated that affection recently by occupying it and organising an ongoing cultural happening. It is being demolished for one reason only - to erase from history any positive memory of the former society (Green 2006).

Implicit in this letter is a contrast between a true space for the people, as seen in the Palast, and the less "genuine" public spaces seen at Potsdamer Platz. Attention is also paid to its design in the sense that it provided important functional spaces for public activities. Other responses similarly focus on the architectural value of the structure. Another commentator highlights the cultural significance of these functional qualities:

Instead of a closed-off government building, a public building for culture and congresses was created. Instead of post-Stalinist architecture, a work of modernism was created... to this time it is still a singular combination of parliamentary activity, and at the same time public cultural function...This is a quality independent of this or that political use (Eisentraut 2002, 103).

Other Berliners have appealed to the powers that be to keep the building, claiming that it is "worth seeing and worth preserving" (Klopsteg 1997, 15).
A woman named Denise believes that “The Palace of the Republic…should be kept, so that people always think about history. I want my children to see it, and to form their own opinion about it” (The Guardian 1999). Frustration with the wider politics of reconstruction is also expressed: “Why tear everything down, instead of integrating it into the future?” (von der Heide 2005, 40). These responses have in common a desire for the past to be preserved. While these issues of which history is represented in Berlin’s built environment have crystallized around the particularly contentious example of the Palast der Republik, they apply to trends in Berlin more generally. These particular responses position themselves in contrast to hegemonic policies in Berlin. But they also articulate the belief that the visibility of the past is important for future generations.

Potsdamer Platz is again referenced as a point of contrast in a letter to the editors of the Berliner Zeitung:

Keep your cold, ugly architectural ideas, and put them with the other sensory sins at Potsdamer Platz. At least there we won’t see them again. But let us keep part of our identity. Not everything produced by the GDR’s planned economy needs to be wiped out by the planned economy of the ‘free’ market. We won’t let that happen (Neufert 1999, 31).

In this example, the erasure of East German pasts is conflated with the hegemony of capitalism. Potsdamer Platz in particular is understood as a place that is incompatible with East German identity. This writer claims membership in, and speaks for, a group – East Germans in general, it seems – who will not be present at Potsdamer Platz, and who will not allow the erasure of their past. Thus, this particular formulation of East German identity is articulated geographically – through where time is (and is not) spent – but also through resistance. The details and scale of the resistance, however, remain unclear.
A final letter to the editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* supports the reconstruction of the *Stadtschloss* and takes issue with critics of reconstruction:

The duty to one’s own culture and making its identity visible through the reconstruction of original buildings, is more important than the lack thereof resulting from questionable delusions about authenticity…Sometime, the ahistorical anger against one’s own cultural substance must come to an end… (H. Merkel 1996, 8).

Here, a different understanding of what it means to ‘make culture visible’ is articulated. Arguments for preserving the *Palast* have similarly called for the visibility of culture, and thus conflicting understandings of ‘German culture’ are evident. This reader seems to suggest that the challenge of German memory debates and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – coming to terms with the past – has somehow gone wrong. Germans should be able to take pride in their built past, he implies, and reconstruction should not be impeded by cultural taboos. This letter shows that the debates surrounding the *Palast der Republic* are particularly timely, as memories of distant, violent pasts are fading and German identity is being reconfigured in new and interesting ways.

Pro- and anti-reconstruction views are not the only opinions conveyed on this matter. A reader of the *Tagesspiegel* expressed frustration with the debates, declaring, “buildings are always ‘less guilty’ than their apologists. Whatever we build, it doesn’t have to do with our national identity!” (Thierse 2001). This comment points to the centrality of these debates, and also suggests that the built environment is privileged in discussions of identity. This is an important point in a national context where the challenge of ‘coming to terms with the past’ is ever-present.

As of 2007, the *Rückbau* of the Palast der Republik has begun (Senatsverwaltung
Für Stadtentwicklung 2007b; Figure 13). The term Rückbau can be roughly translated to ‘building back’ or ‘unbuilding’ – and this symbolic choice to dismantle, rather than destroy, the Palast is noteworthy. This process is occurring slowly, and the deconstruction process is being promoted as a tourist attraction. A viewing platform near the site allows locals and tourists to have a good view of the process while also learning about the technology used to dismantle the Palast. Also present is promotional material for the site’s future use: current plans involve the construction of a modern building with a façade replicating the original baroque palace. The building will contain space for a museum, library, and event spaces, which will be presided over by the private Humboldt Foundation (Paul 2002).

The Jewish Museum: fractured history rendered in architectural form

The Jewish Museum is a structure created in order to represent a specific experience: that of the Jewish diaspora. Designed by famed architect Daniel Libeskind,
an American born in Poland, this severe building could be seen as a literal "scar" on the surface of Berlin – its zinc exterior is marked by seemingly-random cuts\(^3\), and its very shape, which suggests a lightning bolt, appears jagged and rough. The museum attempts to present the entirety of Jewish history; although the Holocaust is a major focus, it is not a Holocaust museum per se. I argue that this is a prominent example of the "contemporary aesthetic" in Berlin where violent histories are made visible through built form.

The exterior of the Jewish Museum consists of massive zinc façades covering a zigzag structural form that is five stories tall. The metal façade is slashed in various places with angular openings that serve as windows. The zinc that was used in the

\[^{3}\text{In fact, Libeskind devised the pattern for the series of openings on the building's façade by plotting the addresses of famous Jews in Berlin on a map and connecting them. This suggests a view of history where space is of critical importance.}\]
Museum's construction will oxidize over time and eventually change to a soft blue-gray hue (Libeskind 1999). An old Baroque building already present on the site was retained and utilized as the entryway to the new building (Figure 14). Depending on where the viewer is standing, Libeskind’s structure can appear to grow out of this traditional structure, the architecture of which refers to a pre-Holocaust German past. Although the competition for the museum's design referred to the new structure as merely an extension of the Berlin museum, the old museum in fact functions as more of a portal into the interior space of Libeskind’s design (Libeskind 1999). The two buildings are attached, and their proximity juxtaposes the old with the new and the traditional alongside the contemporary, drawing attention to the differences between the two. In this context, Libeskind’s building seems even more harsh, angular and metallic than it would by itself.

Libeskind’s building, perhaps the most aesthetically jarring structure in the city of Berlin, was shaped by the broader politics of building in the city. The architectural competition was a West German endeavour, and Libeskind was awarded the project just before the fall of the wall. His design was approved before Hans Stimmann held the position of Building Director. Libeskind’s museum design was eventually built for 77 million Deutschmarks, equivalent to US$43 million, although there were numerous delays in its construction for political and financial reasons, many of which had to do with German reunification (Spens 1999). Construction commenced in spring of 1993, after the plan was modified to reduce the cost of building the museum.

Libeskind comments on the possibilities of museum architecture: “Museums are being built not only to house particular collections and particular programs, but also to regenerate cities themselves...they are institutions for everyone, and they play a large
role in shaping the evolving view of a city” (Libeskind 1999, 17). This building is also a memorial of sorts; the building itself and its exhibitions are a permanent reminder of the tragic history of the Jews. Through this work of architecture, Libeskind aims to “integrate the meaning of the Holocaust, both physically and spiritually, into the consciousness and memory of the city of Berlin” (Libeskind 1999, 10).

This is an approach that can be successful; although it contrasts strongly with the built form of developments such as Potsdamer Platz, Libeskind’s building is a popular tourist attraction. The Jewish Museum is ultimately a memorial at the same time as it is a museum; it is a sculpture at the same time as it is a functional structure. In an opinion piece in the Tageszeitung newspaper, Helms, Dettling and Gohl (1999) take issue with then-Chancellor Gerhardt Schroeder’s comment that the public should enjoy visiting sites of memory. Instead, they argue, “monuments and museums should be places of silence, calmness and doubt. Places of disturbance and provocation, not of reassuring answers” (Helms, Dettling and Gohl 1999, 10).

The construction of the Jewish Museum may signal a break with ideas of a national past and of German nationhood, reflecting instead hopes for a more integrated, European future. This is shown by the museum’s form, the architect chosen to build it, and the history that it represents.
Berlin’s newest memorial: hypervisible yet selective

The recently-completed Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a large outdoor space covered with evenly-spaced concrete columns, is another example of the contemporary trend in Berlin’s built environment (Figure 15). The Memorial is located in central Berlin, adjacent to Unter den Linden boulevard and its traditional, 19th-century style buildings.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which opened in 2005, is another example of tragic history made visible in Berlin’s landscape. This memorial was designed by American architect Peter Eisenman, and its design has already raised some interesting questions, not the least of which is whether the work is an acknowledgement of German guilt. The memorial is very large, longer than two football fields, and consists of approximately 2,700 concrete pillars varying in height between 3 and 10 feet. Each column is 3 feet wide, a bit less than 8 feet long, and is arranged in a grid with 3-foot-wide stone paths. This gives the visual effect of an endless number of columns, which, though abstract, seems to suggest the huge number of Jewish casualties in the Holocaust.

In this context, the Memorial seems particularly somber. It is clearly located in Berlin for a reason: not because most Jews were killed in the city, but because it is the capital of a nation where National Socialism took root and where genocide was planned. Indeed, as its name states, the Memorial was built in remembrance of the Murdered Jews of Europe, and thus links Berlin to a European sense of identity. One should note, however, the exclusion inherent in the memorial: it does not seek to memorialize any of the many others killed in the Holocaust, such as Roma and homosexuals. It therefore
reflects a very specific history of the Holocaust, where other victims are silenced. The memorial occupies a central space in the city of Berlin and memorializes the Jews who were persecuted in the Holocaust at the hands of German Nazis and their allies. The Memorial is also an example of how, in rendering the nation’s past visible, the Jewish experience is often emphasized.

Responses to this memorial have varied widely. A typical response\(^4\) takes issue with the size and location of the monument: “I don’t think people should make such a big deal about monuments, such as the planned Holocaust Memorial. It’s too big. The government can’t pay for it. If the plan fails for funding reasons, that will be very bad for Germany. It should be smaller, and it shouldn’t be in the middle of the city” \((The

\(^4\) I discussed this with the English class I taught in Germany in 2004/2005. The class was made up of university-age students, all but one of whom had grown up in East Germany. Each student who articulated an opinion on the matter of the memorial was critical of both its size and its centrality. Several students expressed frustration that, as Germans, they must continually apologize for a past in which they had no part.
Guardian 1999). At the same time, wider frustration with memorialization more generally is expressed. A tongue-in-cheek letter to the editor of the Berliner Zeitung references the debates about the new memorial:

Potsdamer Platz as Jew’s Square! Yes! That would be a good ending to a senseless and disgraceful disagreement about the Holocaust memorial in Berlin. This idea is as astounding as it is simple; its effect lies in its simplicity. This one word stands for everything that needs to be said on this issue...This one word holds the contents of libraries! How can a memorial compete with that? (Singelnstein and Singelnstein 1998).

This comment implicitly suggests an interesting point: “difficult” memory sites – particularly those referencing the Holocaust – are often located away from major public gathering spaces and commercial areas. Potsdamer Platz, then, does seem like an appropriate candidate for a site of memorialization. A memorial at that site would serve a different function, as it would be encountered as a part of Berliners’ everyday lives, rather than being a place to seek out and visit. Apart from issues of siting, the debates surrounding this new memorial highlight the difficulties of representation. The final form of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe also shows that, even in cases where the past is rendered hypervisible through the built environment, certain pasts are emphasized and others are neglected.

As I will seek to demonstrate in Chapter 4, Potsdamer Platz represents a new variant on the “traditional” trend seen in Berlin’s built environment. Although different in appearance from the examples above, the site juxtaposes historical elements with hypermodern architecture, and in doing so conveys a selective history through its built form.
PLANNING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF POTS DAMER PLATZ

It is in this context of highly visible articulations of specific histories through architecture that Potsdamer Platz was redeveloped. The vacant land on the site of Potsdamer Platz was sold to four large corporations: Debis, an information services subdivision of Daimler Benz; Japanese electronics company Sony; engineering firm Asea Brown Boveri; and finally the Hertie group of department stores. This land was desirable because it was once again at the geographical centre of the city. Nevertheless, city politicians were eager to secure the presence of large corporations in Berlin, and the city sold this land at below market value. Berlin saw in these companies an opportunity for economic development and global visibility. The investors were attracted by cheap land in a central location.

With an area of nearly 300,000 m², the Potsdamer Platz site encompassed a huge amount of land owned by the Senat government. The largest parcel, containing more than 62,000 m² of land, was sold to Daimler Benz for 92.8 million Deutschmarks (US $58.8 million), while Sony purchased approximately 30,000 m² of land for 97.2 million Deutschmarks (US $61.6 million). Ultimately, an investigation by the European Commission found that both companies had paid significantly less than market price for this prime land (New York Times 1992). Here, it becomes evident that government decisions and planning practices have profound effects on the extent to which corporations can shape the landscape.

The two largest parts of the development are owned by Daimler and Sony, respectively, while two smaller parcels were purchased by Asea Brown Boveri and the
Hertie corporation. Potsdamer Platz itself consists of the multi-street intersection where Bellevuestrasse, Neue Potsdamer Strasse, Alte Potsdamer Strasse, Linkstrasse, Ebertstrasse and Stresemannstrasse come together. The development as a whole, rather than just the intersection, is now commonly referred to as Potsdamer Platz.

The position of streets at Potsdamer Platz is such that land parcels were often triangle-shaped areas (Figure 16). The Sony and Hertie sites are both triangular, while the Daimler Benz site, which is significantly larger, approximates the shape of two triangles placed on either side of Alte Potsdamer Strasse. Asea Brown Boveri owns a
A relatively small parcel of land, which forms an elongated rectangular shape, located along the east side of a park adjacent to Linkstrasse.

An architectural competition was held in 1991 to solicit designs for the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz (see Table 1). First prize was awarded to German architects Hilmer and Sattler in October of that year. Their design was traditional, shunning high-rises for more modest structures organized into a conventional street grid, in what was essentially a recreation of the urban form of prewar Berlin. In December of 1991, the Berlin Senate voted to use the Hilmer and Sattler’s design as a master plan for the site’s redevelopment.

Both Daimler Benz and Sony were unhappy with this traditional design for Potsdamer Platz, since it did not fit with their desires to build large corporate headquarters with identity-affirming skyscrapers that would reflect their power and change the urban landscape of Berlin. They saw this plan as something suited to a small town rather than a major city, and thus this design was antithetical to their visions (Hartung 1991). Together, these two companies commissioned Richard Rogers in 1992 to make another plan which took into account their preferences for the site. Although this design was not part of the official competition, Sony and Daimler Benz made sure that it received a significant amount of publicity. Here, Berlin’s identity was being negotiated through planning practice and built form – while some pushed for Berlin as global city, endeavouring to increase the city’s competitiveness while boosting its tourism, others advocated a view of the city as a locally-based, national capital. Rogers’ designs were ultimately not used, but their popularity may have influenced later revisions to the master plan which allowed greater building heights and densities.
Table 1: Timeline – Building Potsdamer Platz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Berlin Wall torn down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Senate decides to hold an architectural competition for Potsdamer Platz Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct. 3: June</td>
<td>Daimler Benz buys a 62,000 m² site at Potsdamer Platz for DM 92.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Sony buys a 30,000 m² site at Potsdamer Platz for DM 97.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Sixteen architect firms invited to architectural competition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Hilmer and Sattler win first prize in the competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. – Dec.</td>
<td>Hilmer and Sattler revise design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>Senate decides to use Hilmer and Sattler design as master plan for Potsdamer Platz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Architectural competition for Daimler Benz land; 14 architects are invited to design buildings based on Hilmer and Sattler’s master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Investors hire Richard Rogers to create a new plan that would articulated their particular interests and propose solutions for planning that would meet their wishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Architectural competition for Sony land; Helmut Jahn’s design is chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Architectural competition for Daimler Benz; Piano/Kohlebecker design is chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Piano/Kohlebecker present Daimler master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April – Sept.</td>
<td>Runners up from Daimler competition are selected as architects for individual buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Architectural competition for ABB land; Georgio Grassi’s design is chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 22</td>
<td>Final building application submitted for the project</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>March 23-24</td>
<td>House of Representatives approves plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Daimler City construction begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Infobox opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction begins at ABB site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sony Center construction begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>DaimlerCity completed; grand opening on Oct. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction begins on Hertie development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction at Sony Center finishes; grand opening on June 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ABB site completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>Infobox dismantled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hertie development completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further architectural competitions, this time investor-sponsored, were held in 1992 to determine the form of the major corporations' individual sites. Daimler Benz chose a design by Italian architect Renzo Piano, while Sony selected the entry by Helmut Jahn, a German-born, US-based architect. Daimler adopted Piano’s design as the master plan for its site, commissioning runners up in the competition to design individual buildings, while Helmut Jahn designed the entirety of Sony’s site.

Many buildings in the redeveloped Potsdamer Platz were designed by famous global architects. These “starchitects” (Ockman and Frausto 2005) bring a certain amount of international renown to their buildings, which can further serve to sever them from their national context as German buildings and instead bring them into the European or even the global sphere of important works by famous architects. Their reputations make it likely that architectural tourists will visit simply in order to see these buildings. Berlin is a city with a significant number of buildings designed by renowned architects, and as such has become a destination of sorts for the architectural tourist circuit. Indeed, architect Hans Kollhoff spoke to the desire for architecture that brings in visitors:

"Berlin lives from tourists. This city is poor. This is a challenge for the next legislative session...how can we bring more people into the city who will spend money? What must the city look like so its citizens feel at home, but at the same time the whole world gravitates towards Berlin, not least because it’s in a situation where it can organize events for millions of people?" (Quoted in von Gerkan 2006).

The investors quickly began to market the redevelopment, drawing upon history and Berlin’s changing identity as they did so. This ties in with the rhetoric of a ‘new Berlin’, promoted as a city reborn. Edzard Reuter, then-C.E.O. of Daimler Benz and son of former Berlin mayor Edward Reuter, wrote that “the project is truly breathtaking. This
will shape the face of the biggest city between Paris and Moscow. The completely new centre of a metropolis will be built. This is singular in Europe” (Reuter n.d., n.p.). The Daimler Benz promotional material also stressed the importance of Potsdamer Platz as a historic place. It concentrated on a particular historical period – 1920s modernity – largely to the exclusion of others. An interesting take on history is developed here, suggesting that Berlin’s rightful place as centre was merely interrupted: “Had the second world war not suddenly interrupted the dynamic development of the young metropolis, this central position would never have been in question” (Daimler Benz n.d., n.p.). Here, no responsibility is taken for the violence of the past – it is treated as something that simply ‘happened’ – which is particularly ironic considering Daimler Benz’s ties to National Socialism as well as the corporation’s historic and current ties to the arms trade.

In this formulation, Potsdamer Platz was an “open wound”, which could be healed through the creation of “a new, a genuine, a human, an urban neighbourhood” (Daimler Benz n.d., n.p.). Once built, Potsdamer Platz would represent “the entertainment of the capital city: continuity from the best tradition” (ibid.). The promotional material briefly mentions the Berlin Wall, and positions the Daimler City development as a triumph over East German socialism. There are no references to National Socialism, however. The East German past is perhaps a more acceptable history, since Daimler Benz can make reference to it without being implicated in its violence.

In a similar take on the significance of the ‘new Berlin’, but with less emphasis on its history, Sony comments upon the “increasing importance of Berlin not only as capital, but also its future role in Europe” (Sony n.d., 10). The company’s promotional material promised that “one of the most fascinating squares in Europe will be recast, in order to
once again make it into the pulsing centre of a world city” (Sony n.d.). The Sony Center would be “a meeting place and modern Erlebniswelt” – a place of culture and communication – for global citizens, in a space of cooperation between international developers (Sony n.d.). New York City’s Tishman Speyer and Tokyo’s Kajima developers would bring the flair and excitement of their own world cities to Berlin.

Other promotional material for the Potsdamer Platz redevelopment involves prominent politicians and business leaders (including Chancellor Angela Merkel) extolling the virtues of Potsdamer Platz and the importance of the project with regard to reunification and German identity. Ultimately, these events transpired such that Potsdamer Platz was – at least in the view of planners, government officials and developers – poised to be the centre of the new Berlin.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPECTACLE...OR THE SPECTACLE OF CONSTRUCTION

A Sony press release entitled “Visit Tomorrowland” invited interested citizens to visit the site of the new development. This included an urban-planning-themed tour called “Trip into the Future” (Sony Berlin GmbH 1998). This press release is typical of efforts by Sony and Daimler Benz to turn the construction process into a tourist attraction, even as it was being built. These attempts were largely successful in their spectacularization and commodification of the built environment.

Construction on the “blank slate” of Potsdamer Platz began in 1994 and continued until 2004. For a time, Berlin’s redevelopment was the largest construction project in the
The building process itself became a spectacle, designed to draw locals as well as tourists. This is exemplified by the temporary "InfoBox" exhibition, a temporary red structure from which the public could view the construction process, while also reading detailed information about the specifics of the site’s history, planning and future form (Figure 17). The building itself, a bright red raised rectangular structure, became a symbol of Berlin’s rapidly changing urban landscape. For a time the InfoBox was the most popular place to visit in Berlin, with about eight million visitors over a period of five years. In an interesting take on image, spectacle and commodification, it was disassembled in 2000 and sold piece-by-piece by internet auction (der Tagesspiegel 2000b).

Promotional material and media coverage of the construction process in Berlin focused on superlatives: Potsdamer Platz was (and would be) the biggest and best of its kind, characterized by impressive feats of engineering (Engineering News-Record 1996).
The construction site was massive, at about 15 hectares, and required advanced building technology including transportation of construction materials by train, on-site cement mixing and steel bending facilities, and underwater construction (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1996a; Figure 18; Figure 19). The roof of the Sony Center (Figure 20) was promoted as a spectacular achievement in terms of its complex design and construction processes (Bodamer 1999). A book was published in tribute to the beauty and utility of its unique design (Küßner n.d.). Construction on the roof lasted two and a half years, during which time 620 tons of steel, 105 tons of safety glass and 5250 cubic meters of self-cleaning, Teflon-coated fabric were assembled. The roof lets 50% of sunlight through, while keeping out rain and snow (Sony Berlin GmbH 2003). The historic Esplanade Hotel (Figure 21) was moved in another spectacularized part of the site's reconstruction (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1996b). The remains of several rooms in the hotel, weighing 300 tons, were moved 75 meters on air cushions to facilitate the widening of Potsdamer Platz.
Figure 19: Underwater construction techniques

Figure 20: Roof of the Sony Center
Figure 21: Preserved Kaisersaal structure incorporated into Sony building

Straße. Visitors can now eat in these luxurious environs just as they could in the Golden Twenties (Sony Berlin GmbH 2001).

The redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz was met with some resistance, which received little media coverage. Some people objected to the specific buildings that were being constructed, while others protested the planning process characterized by lack of public consultation (see, for example, Stegers 1991, 1992, n.d.a, n.d.b). Certain concessions were made; for example, the Green Party was able to use its power within the coalition government to ensure that additional parks were built, and was also able to partially determine the parameters for building on the Daimler Benz and Sony sites (Hartung 1999). The redevelopment was opposed for various other reasons, particularly by members of the counterculture as well as intellectuals. There was a reaction against the privatization of public space and the dominance of multinational corporations in city
matters, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. Resistance, however, was made more difficult because the site in question was unoccupied, and it was thus difficult for anyone to demonstrate a claim to the land.

The enormous construction site at Potsdamer Platz meant that many jobs involving manual labour were available in Berlin. Large numbers of undocumented Polish and Ukrainian migrant workers were employed here. Berlin is less than an hour and a half away from the Polish border, allowing for a substantial influx of cheap labour from the east. These workers were paid little in comparison with Germans who did the same job, and the workplace was hazardous. A journalist tells the story of workers who used trash bags instead of protective clothing because the cost would have been deducted from their wages; of workers constructing a façade on 20-meter-high, unsecured scaffolding; of scaffolding built from beer crates; and of a man who fell 30 feet to his death, but who wasn’t included in workplace safety statistics because he was an individual contactor (Jennerjahn 1998). Another newspaper article describes foreign workers paid less than half the wages of German workers, and also less than contract wages. These men worked 15-hour days, and inflated "rent" for the barracks in which they slept was deducted from their wages. Another story tells of a Polish worker who was fired for asking how he could become insured (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1998b). The significant role of Poles and other migrant workers in the construction of Potsdamer Platz is part of a history of exploitation which is hidden in the landscape (cf. Duncan and Duncan 2004).

While these workers were largely invisible, the structures they built were heavily
publicized. The grand opening of the Sony Center in 2000 was met with much media attention. Sony threw a party for 2,500 guests from 31 countries, who were fed 17,000 sushi rolls (Paul 2000b). Japanese sake was served in traditional wooden cups, while Sony CEO Norio Ohga conducted the Berlin Philharmonic as they played Beethoven’s 9th symphony (Teske 2000). Here, the linking of Sony with both Japanese culture and German romantic heritage is evident. Similarly, the grand opening of Daimler City was a festive occasion complete with fireworks, attended by over one million people (Figure 22). Over 1,000 journalists were present, and an Australian TV crew broadcast the festivities to Sydney (Paul 1998). The ‘unveiling’ of the new Berlin brought a great deal of attention to the site. As one city booster remarked, “[t]he whole world is looking at [Potsdamer Platz], full of admiration” (Schwenko 2001, 3). Admiration was certainly one reaction, but as I will show, Berliners and tourists have responded to the site in a number of different ways.

Different points of view with regard to the city’s “proper” landscape resonate with larger issues of German nationhood and identity in a European as well as a global context. Gaining an understanding of how different ideologies have influenced space in
Berlin has consequences for more than just the people who live in the city. Notable in the extensive marketing of Berlin are discourses of rebirth, re-creation, and reclaiming. Again, this seems to suggest a city that is victorious over its past. Yet these tropes are contradictory, because, as I will argue later, the past is not acknowledged. Berlin is celebrated as a technologically-advanced, twenty-first-century city, but this is contrasted simply with the absence of such characteristics rather than the historical realities of National Socialism and East German communism.
4. THE URBAN FORM OF POTSDAMER PLATZ

“Potsdamer Platz is quite simply Berlin, the new Berlin that doesn’t forget its past, but leaves it behind”
Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit, 2002, p. 3

Potsdamer Platz is perhaps most popular with Berliners as a place to shop. Drawing 70,000 visitors per day, the site’s redevelopment has created a new centre for Berlin (Lewis 2001). It is here that Berlin has been reinvented; the new buildings serve as an image of the city, representing reconstruction, reunification and worldliness. This place, I will argue in this chapter, erases troubled histories while simultaneously commodifying more palatable pasts. If landscapes are places where “[c]ollective memories, narratives of community, invented traditions, and shared environmental concerns are repeated, performed, occasionally contested, but more often stabilized or fixed in artifactual form” (Duncan and Duncan 2004, 29), then the landscape of Potsdamer Platz reveals that these collective memories are selectively deployed through the built environment.

Urban redevelopment is implicated in processes of production within global capitalism, but it also involves the erasure of what was there before (Lee and Yeoh 2004, McNeill 1999; Olds 2001). Redevelopment can thus signify shifts in image and identity (Chang and Huang 2005). The reconstruction of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin is implicated in wider processes of inner-city renewal in Europe and beyond. As cities attempt to market themselves, they engage in competition for tourists (or, perhaps more accurately, tourist dollars). Urban design is one arena where this competition can be seen, as cities commission iconic buildings by global architects (Gospodini 2002).
I argue that the planning and design of the ‘new Berlin’ do not focus on Berlin’s inhabitants and their past, but rather emphasize global capital through futuristic, placeless design. At Potsdamer Platz, skyscrapers seem to represent the writing of the corporations’ wishes into the landscape. As Hilary Winchester notes, tall buildings can be “a visible expression of the power of large multinational corporations, the size and shape of the buildings themselves constituting obvious symbols of dominance” (1992, 140). Such tall buildings are significant, and have a politics which should not be discounted (Charney 2007; Ford 1998).

At the same time, reminders of particular pasts are integrated in several places throughout the development. Inclusion of historical built form has been discussed in the geographical literature (Jackson 1980; Edensor 2005; van der Hoorn 2003), and it is important to look at the ways in which visual reminders of the past are used, and to what ends. These sites of memory are largely reminders of a grand past – not ruins, as such, which might send a different message. The built environment of Potsdamer Platz and its selective sites of memory are a “constructed vision of historical continuity and collective memory” and as such are indicative of a postmodern landscape (Harvey 1989, 83). Here, “place-bound nostalgias that infect our images of... the city” (ibid., 218) can be seen, part of a larger trend involving the commodification and consumption of urban areas through cultural tourism (Miles and Miles 2004).

In 1999, Berlin journalist Wolf Siedler asked: “will Potsdamer Platz really become the lively centre of the city?”, while at the same time prophesizing: “in another

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5 In arguing that Berlin’s past is selectively represented in the built environment, I do not mean to demonize the city; I recognize that similar erasures have occurred in many other places throughout the world. Rather, my intent is to look at the ways in which built form is implicated in the management of the past.
decade only a few scars from the era of the Third Reich and the time of socialism will be seen in Berlin” (Siedler 1999). As I will show, his forecast of the presence of “only a few scars”, while largely – albeit unevenly – evident in Berlin, can perhaps most clearly be seen at Potsdamer Platz. Whether the site is a lively centre remains an open question, with different possible answers depending not only upon whom is asked, but varying based on what exactly is meant by a lively centre: populated spaces, retail profits, dynamic business activity, booming real estate, or something less easily definable.

THE LIVED SPACES OF POTSDAMER PLATZ

The built environment is given life through the many people who interact with it on a daily basis, and thus an analysis of urban form can be strengthened through attention to the social elements of these spaces (Lees 2001).

Potsdamer Platz is largely a place of consumption; the public can wander around this space, sit by a large fountain, and eat or drink in cafés. There are many tourists, who distinguish themselves by snapping photographs of the architecture and historical artifacts. A significant number of American expatriates gather here, demonstrated by the screening of the 2004 American presidential election in the Sony Center’s large multiplex cinema, where large crowds of people gathered and remained overnight to take in the election results. This theater is enormously popular, boasting long lines for ticket sales throughout the day. American blockbuster films are shown here almost exclusively; when German films are screened, they include English subtitles. Potsdamer Platz is, essentially, a place to spend money.
The culture of shopping has shaped urban areas throughout the world (Harvard Project on the City 2000). However, consumption takes on greater significance here with regard to East German identity. Dominant formulations of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the subsequent collapse of state socialism, describe a 'consumption spree' that occurred when East Germans were finally 'free' to buy what they wanted (Berdahl 2005; Ten Dyke 2001b; Confino and Koschar 2001). The emphasis on consumption at Potsdamer Platz, however, is also a recreation of the consumption of the early twentieth century – described in Chapter 3 – that was centred in part at this site.

A large shopping mall, called the Potsdamer Platz Arkaden, is located on Alte Potsdamer Strasse. Its name echoes Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project and the traditional shopping arcades of Paris (Benjamin 1999; Hetherington 2005; Figure 23).
This shopping centre has 40,000 square meters of floor space and houses 120 stores, services, restaurants and cafés. Many of the stores are national chains which can be found in almost every town in Germany (Tschibo, Saturn, etc.) and several are international corporations that can be found throughout the world (H&M). This three-level, interior shopping passage is covered by 16-meter-high glass roof, and takes the place of the traditional outdoor high street.

The Arkaden mall is immensely popular, having attracted 1.2 million visitors in its first three days of business (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1998a). In 1999, it was one of the five most visited shopping areas in all of Berlin (Haubrich 1999). It is full of people of all ages throughout the day. Shopping malls in Germany are at the forefront of attempts to change the country’s notoriously strict labor laws, and various malls, including the Arkaden, have been successful in gaining permission to extend their opening hours to later in the evening and on weekends. Signs on these malls invite Berliners and tourists to “shop ‘til midnight,” a previously unheard of possibility (Figure 23). Access is easy with 4,000 parking spots available for shoppers. Customers needn’t even go outside to reach the stores – an elaborate underground walkway system connects various parts of Potsdamer Platz, including Daimler City and the Sony Center – rendering the streets optional.

The luxury apartments and condominiums interspersed throughout the Potsdamer Platz development are part of the identity of its largely wealthy, worldly inhabitants. For example, residential properties at Potsdamer Platz are home to many foreign diplomats, leading to suggestions that it has become a ‘Diplomatic Quarter’ of the city. Federal Finance Minister Hans Eichel lives there, as do 44 embassy employees from 17 countries.
Many prominent Germans – mostly from the West – have acquired apartments and
condominiums here (Werth 1999). This is in some ways a nationless space, as it is where
the business and cultural transactions of Germany and many other countries collide.

Potsdamer Platz is often crowded, and is successful in so far as it attracts people
to visit, look and consume (Lewis 2001). Berlin’s city boosters actively promote
Potsdamer Platz as a lively location:

Guests from all over the world and Berliners, eager shoppers and observers,
politicians and artists, casino visitors and film fans: they come together here
and give the place that certain something, that only the core of a world city
has to offer (Kube 2000, 5).

While this is true to some extent, the site is not as lively as it may first appear. Many
offices are empty and real estate is not performing up to expectations (see Chapter 5 for
further discussion of these issues). Although Potsdamer Platz was envisioned by its
planners as a place to be occupied day and night by people pursuing both work and
leisure (Rexrodt 2001), it seems to be daytime leisure that is most prevalent at the site.

Tall buildings at the new Potsdamer Platz are concentrated at the major
intersection itself. This has the visual effect of skyscrapers rising up from nothing
(which, considering the site’s history, is true enough): a small but vertically imposing city
rising from the void. Two skyscrapers each on Hertie and Daimler Benz land, and one on
Sony property, combine to create a distinct, dense area that suggests solidity, height and
innovation, and which can be easily seen and identified from most places in Berlin, a city
with few tall buildings. The buildings convey a sense of massiveness, reaching to the
sky, perhaps suggesting the sky high limits of capital and the market economy. While
some of these buildings project their iconic architecture towards the street, others are
turned inward, conveying a fortress-like aesthetic. Many of the structures are visually striking: pure geometric forms are realized in glass, brick, and other colourful building materials, and surfaces are smooth and glossy. The overall effect of this area is spectacular, particularly at night, when bright, colourful lights command attention, yet these flashy messages come from so many places at once that it is difficult to concentrate.

In 2003, while living in Berlin, I found myself in the vicinity of Potsdamer Platz. I decided to take a leisurely walk around the site, as I often did, and take advantage of the Sony Center’s “free” wireless internet access. As I neared the Sony Center’s Forum, the large crowds and blocked-off entryways signaled that an event was taking place. It was the German premiere of a Hollywood movie, *Charlie’s Angels 2*, and the Sony Center was effectively turned into an inaccessible place where Hollywood glamour was (briefly) transported to Berlin. Such blockbuster premieres are a fairly regular occurrence at Potsdamer Platz. These events are heavily promoted, and many onlookers show up, hoping to catch a glimpse of someone famous. Yet these affairs are highly controlled, and at times like these the public is not allowed into the Sony Center – only the media (with press passes) and ‘high society’ (with invitations) are granted access.

My analysis of Potsdamer Platz will proceed with a description of the different sub-developments with attention to memory sites and issues of public space within the built environment. I will demonstrate that identity and history are represented selectively at Potsdamer Platz: parts of history are emphasized, while others are silenced. Public space is turned inward and made private, while retaining the appearance and some of the functions of public space.

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*Wireless internet access is “free”, subject to the user’s agreement to a long list of terms and conditions that echo the restrictions governing the physical space of the Sony Center.*
SONY CENTER: AN URBAN ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX FOR BERLIN

The Sony Center, completed in 2000, is made up of eight buildings arranged in an oval-like form, containing business headquarters, cinemas, expensive cafés and restaurants, shops, and luxury apartments (Table 2; Figure 16; Figure 24). The Deutsche Bahn tower, a semi-circular design of steel and glass, rises far above the rest of the buildings to a height of 103 meters (Figure 25). The entirety of the Sony Center was designed by Helmut Jahn, and the individual structures flow so smoothly together that one could be forgiven for thinking that they are one large, interconnected building. The emphasis on glass gives the area a certain luminescence, but instead of lending a feeling of weightlessness, the structures seem heavy and fortress-like, with their contents enclosed behind glass. The exterior walls seem to guard the inner buildings from the outside world, in a sense.

The Sony Center Forum (Figure 26), a circular, semi-enclosed ‘public’ space, is surrounded by gleaming glass buildings and crowned with a volcano-shaped roof upon which coloured light is projected (Figure 20; see discussion of its construction in Chapter 3). It is a sort of city unto itself, where people emerge from underground passages of shops into the semi-enclosed space of the Sony Forum.

If one stands as I did in July 2007 on Neue Potsdamer Strasse, one can see that the majority of Potsdamer Platz is not oriented towards the street. The tall building facades seem to create high walls; visitors can enter the complex through one of several gaps in the glass structures (Figure 27). The Sony Center, for example, is very much an inward-looking space. It does not interact with its surroundings; indeed, it seems out of place as
Table 2: Building details at Potsdamer Platz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land owner</th>
<th>Architect</th>
<th>Number of buildings</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Total floor space in m²</th>
<th>Number of floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAIMLER BENZ</td>
<td>Kollhoff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Office, retail</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piano/Kohlbecker</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Office, retail, dining, residence, entertainment</td>
<td>135,800</td>
<td>6-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lauber/Wöhr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retail, residence, entertainment, Kindergarten</td>
<td>41,200</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moneo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Retail, office, hotel, dining</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Office, retail, residence</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isozaki</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Office, retail</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONY</td>
<td>Jahn</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Office, retail, residence, entertainment, dining</td>
<td>132,500</td>
<td>10-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABB</td>
<td>Schweger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Office, retail</td>
<td>12,100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grassi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Office, retail</td>
<td>34,400</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Office, retail</td>
<td>13,250</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diener</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Office, retail, residence, dining</td>
<td>18,400</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bischoff &amp; Compagnons</td>
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<td>Office, residence</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 24: Floor space by development in m²

Floor space by development in square meters

Sources: Die Zeit 2000; Beteiligung Center 2006; Sony Center am Potsdamer Platz 2006; DaimlerChrysler Immobilien GmbH 2007; InfoBox 1996.

Figure 25: Skyscrapers designed by Hans Kollhoff (left) and Helmut Jahn (right)
Figure 26: Sony Center Forum

Figure 27: Exterior of the Sony Center
there is little attempt to integrate it within its urban context. The glass also renders exterior walls transparent, so the interiors of apartments and offices are easily visible, particularly when viewed from the inner courtyard. This has the interesting effect of making the private public, quite the reverse of the privatizing effect seen in so may places in this development.

The Sony Center represents newness, futurism, and constant innovation through its highly structured and controlled environment. It is a semi-enclosed space, and its interior courtyard is owned by Sony. Although it appears to be a public space, and visitors act like it is a public space, it is really a simulation, and it operates by subtle means of exclusion. This carries with it the danger of normalizing the existence of such spaces (which are already increasingly common in large cities). As Miodrag Mitrašinović (2006, 245) explains, “the basic assumption behind both public officials’ and private interests’ rationale is that private(ized) spaces that recognize basic public functions (such as seating and drinking fountains) will benefit the public at large as well as private owners and developers alike.” While many members of the public may benefit from such amenities, their activities are restricted, and excluded publics gain no benefit whatsoever. In fact, the increasing erosion of public space has largely rendered urban areas exclusive. This has the effect that marginalized people, such as the homeless, are welcome in few – if any – of these spaces. This sort of privatization can be seductive: “‘private’ has been refurbished with an exalted image: the freedom of the market and the freedom of choice and style of life that commodities and wealth can provide” (Boyer 1994, 9). These changes, while perhaps appealing to some, come at a great cost: the loss of truly democratic, public space for all.
The Sony Center is undemocratic in terms of how the public is permitted to interact with it. The Forum in particular can be closed off, in whole or in part, by private security companies. Anyone in the complex is subject to a list of rules of proper conduct, which, among other things, restrict political activities. Posted signs proclaim Sony’s (and the private security company’s) right to remove people from the premises and dictate what behaviour is and is not appropriate: begging and peddling are prohibited; street painting, playing music and other “performance” must be authorized by management; demonstrations and political actions of any kind require prior written authorization from management; the instructions of private security company must be followed; and, ultimately, violations can result in arrest for disturbing the peace. Margaret Kohn (2001, 71) recognizes the significance of such an example of the privatization of public space: “Public sidewalks and streets are practically the only remaining available sites for unscripted political activity.” In the case of the Sony Center, where the street is rendered optional, this is particularly problematic. As private spaces begin to take the place of public spaces, possibilities for free expression and dissent are diminished.

Sony’s promotional material calls the Forum “a Kulturforum for the next millennium, in which the serious business of entertainment is seen as a true challenge compared with established art like classical music or representational art” (Sony n.d., n.p.). This is a reference to the nearby, state-funded Kulturforum museum complex. Sony’s statement seems representative of a desire for commerce to take the place of state sponsored culture. Even the traditionally public forms of the museum are made private. This is seen when Sony’s press material refers to the Esplanade as “a sort of architectural museum” (Sony n.d., 16). This also provides another example of the shift away from
state-sponsored culture, as the historic building – or ‘museum’, in Sony’s terms – contains cafés and restaurants which are only accessible to those who pay to consume (Kaisersaal n.d.).

The Film Museum in the Sony Center is also a more private kind of museum than most. The experience of viewing is individualized, contrasting with the well-lit spaciousness of typical museums, where visitors look at art or objects in a room with other people. At the Film Museum, the visitor moves along a dark, predetermined path, while movie posters, memorabilia and film clips light up as the viewer passes by. Similarly, the experience of sitting in one of Potsdamer Platz’s many movie theatres is intrinsically private; though other people are there, there is no engagement with this public, and the viewing experience is largely a solitary one. The Sony Center, then, represents a new kind of “cultural centre” – where private culture has replaced public, community-oriented culture. A city booster described Potsdamer Platz by saying “[c]ulture takes place here” (Thoben 2000, 2). I would rephrase that statement: culture is commodified here. From public art, to iconic architecture, to commercialized entertainment, ‘culture’ is carefully selected and groomed to represent the global corporations that built, and are headquartered at, Potsdamer Platz.

Further promotional material emphasizes the forward-looking design of Sony’s buildings: “the 4000 m² large public square is a completely new type of space for Berlin, and it anticipates the style and functional design of the twenty-first century” (Sony n.d., 12). If the Sony Center’s forum indeed represents the twenty-first century public square, then it anticipates a move towards privatized, internalized and securitized urban space. Helmut Jahn describes his design as “a peaceful urban oasis” (Jahn n.d., 6), and this
raises several interesting questions, particularly from what the oasis provides shelter. Perhaps this semi-enclosed forum is ‘safe’ from the dangers of real public urban space. This seems contradictory, as the Sony Center is promoted both as a lively place for urban culture and as a peaceful place for relaxation.

The Sony Center provides an interesting parallel to Loretta Lees’ (1998) discussion of the Vancouver Public Library as a fortress-like structure, which can also be considered in the context of wider trends whereby securitization has changed the nature of urban space (Fyfe 1998, 2004; Koskela 2000). In the Sony Center, as in the library, “displacement of the public space of the street by the privatized mall and surrogate street” (Lees 1998, 239) can be seen. Lees argues that the negatives of privatizing and securitizing public space are tempered by the benefits that may occur in terms of greater access for those who may have previously felt uncomfortable in these public spaces, such as women and children. While this argument may hold water in Vancouver, in Berlin it is not clear that there would have been any real or perceived threat to public safety, had Potsdamer Platz been designed differently. Ultimately my critique focuses not on the fact that the Sony Center is a privatized space, but rather that it masquerades as a public space at the same time as it excludes certain publics and restricts the activities that can occur there.

DAIMLER CITY AS CORPORATE LANDSCAPE

The Daimler Benz portion of Potsdamer Platz was completed in 1998. Nineteen buildings consist of 50% office space, 30% retail and entertainment space, with the remaining 20% dedicated to housing (see Table 2; Figure 16; Figure 24). Key tenants
include Debis, Daimler Benz's real estate division, as well as PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the Hyatt hotel chain, Cinemaxx movie theatres, and the Spielbank Casino. It is a hodgepodge of different designs, featuring the work of six architectural firms. Two iconic skyscrapers are immediately visible from the intersection at Potsdamer Platz. The Kollhoff tower at Alte and Neue Potsdamer Strasse is a stepped design clad in red-brown brick (Figure 25). Despite the heavy construction materials, the building seems light as it gradually tapers toward the sky. Square stone columns at its base create an 'arcade' pattern for passersby. The structure's large number of evenly-spaced double windows seem to perforate its surface and render it less heavy. Next to it, the PriceWaterhouseCoopers building by Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker pairs a large, triangular glass area facing the intersection with a more staid, rectangular yellow-coloured terracotta form at the rear. This structure features an interplay of different heights, with the glass front nearly as tall as the Kollhoff tower; the building then raises slightly when solid material meets glass, and then plunges down to about ten stories, matching the height of Richard Rogers' buildings behind it. The unconventional yellow terracotta material is similarly used in Piano and Kohlbecker's other buildings at the site, which, in contrast are relatively low-lying and long (Figure 28). The Weinhaus Huth, one of the only structures to survive World War II bombing and post-war clearance, is integrated into Piano's design (Figure 29). Functioning as a corporate headquarters for DaimlerChrysler, the building contains little sign of its history, including past use by squatters.

Richard Rogers' buildings, in contrast, have a futuristic appearance created by
Figure 28: Buildings at Daimler City by Renzo Piano

Figure 29: Weinhaus Huth, incorporated into the Daimler City development
glass surfaces as a variety of materials in multiple colours is used to create striking geometric forms (Figure 30). These buildings, housing office, retail and residential space, feature terraced surfaces facing outward-projecting cylindrical structures above glass entryways and wide stairways. The aesthetic is all the more jarring when viewed from neighbouring Tilla Durieux park, the green grass of which provides a strong contrast to Rogers’ buildings.

The names of streets and squares in the Daimler City development hark back to grand pasts without acknowledging more recent history: Marlene Dietrich Square references Berlin’s entertainment heyday, while Fontaneplatz (Figure 31) draws upon Germany’s rich literary history. The street names at the site reflect a particular history, and avoid the more troubled parts of the city’s past.
The architecture of Daimler City first appears more traditional in material and form than most other buildings at Potsdamer Platz. Richard Rogers’ futuristic buildings and the smaller details of many other structures belie this, however. Here, earth tones and many lower-rise buildings contrast with the glassy and metallic surfaces seen at the nearby Sony Center. This part of Potsdamer Platz seems disconnected from the rest of the site – separated by a busy street, it does indeed feel like its own small city. These new, state of the art, corporate buildings seem to represent the writing of Daimler’s wishes onto the landscape, for companies tend to develop a set of practices that serve to codify a particular value system and promote a type of self-representation. The construction of a building gives material expression to those practices, and in this sense participates in the definition of a corporate culture (Domosh 1992, 73).
This ‘tradition-meets-innovation’ aesthetic seems well-suited to Daimler Benz. The company has drawn upon (some of) its past in its corporate identity and promotion (Daimler Benz n.d.), particularly as it sought to shape the face of the new Berlin.

Renzo Piano, the architect responsible for Daimler City’s master plan, aspired to create a human, European design at a place he referred to as “a desert full of memories” (Kinzer 1993). Memory, however, does not seem to play a role in his design, a bland, traditional-looking structure of earth tones and terra cotta. Piano’s former assistant, German architect Oswald Ungers, abandoned the project, as he objected to the “Americanizing” nature of Piano’s design (ibid).

Daimler City is clearly designed to prioritize shopping and consumption, as stores and cafés are never far from places where the public might gather. The mall is a “pseudoplace” created solely for purposes of consumption (Goss 1993). Here, we can see the appropriation of the idea of a public square and marketplace for use not as public space but as a shrine to the commodity, and as such it epitomizes the inward turning or “mauling” of public space (Kohn 2001).

ASEA BROWN BOVERI’S PARKKOLONNADEN

Asea Brown Boveri, a Swiss-Swedish engineering company, owns the 16,500 m² site that runs alongside a park adjacent to Linkstrasse on the eastern side of the Potsdamer Platz development. This sub-development, called the Parkkolonnaden, includes five buildings on a long, narrow piece of land (Figure 16; Figure 24; Table 2). The northernmost building commands particular attention; although most of the teardrop-
shaped structure is made of brick, a large part of the curved façade is covered in a giant screen that displays different, mostly abstract images throughout the day and night (Figure 32). The building is effectively rendered a television screen or an electronic billboard (Forster 2007; W. Mitchell 1995). Housing German financial firm Hypovereinsbank, this structure is about 12 meters higher than the site’s other buildings. It is also a site of (unmarked) historical significance, as the Haus Vaterland, an important part of early twentieth century Berlin’s café culture, stood here (Paul 2000c). In its place is chain coffee shop “Einstein Coffee”.

The other buildings at this site are more modest (Figure 33). With the lot and structure sizes determined by Hilmer and Sattler’s master plan, and further aesthetic restrictions determined by architect Giorgio Grassi’s design for the site, the buildings are
essentially each a variation on a square, low-rise brick structure. Although three other architect teams were involved in the design of individual buildings, the restrictions resulted in a group of buildings that – at least when viewed from the exterior – are aesthetically quite similar. Compared to the rest of Potsdamer Platz, and particularly the futuristic buildings across the park designed by Richard Rogers, the Parkkolonnaden’s row of low-rise, traditional brick structures looks tame, and is easy to overlook.

The adjacent park has a sculpted quality, rising at a steep angle and then abruptly lowering. Although covered in grass, the park seems somehow artificial. Sun-seeking Berliners lie here on slanted ground, and ball games are made so difficult by the steep incline that they rarely occur. The effect of viewing the Parkkolonnaden buildings across the park is abstract, as the red-brown bricks of the structures’ pure geometrical shapes, alongside the angled green of the park grass, are uninterrupted by views of the street or other infrastructure (Figure 33).
Asea Brown Boveri's site is the third largest in land area, and was the third sub-development completed at Potsdamer Platz. Upon completion, it served to connect the newly redeveloped city centre to the nearby Kreuzberg neighbourhood, which borders Potsdamer Platz on the southeast.

**HERTIE'S LENNÉDREIECK**

This most recently completed parcel of the Potsdamer Platz development consists of a triangle of land located between Bellevuestrasse, Lennéstrasse and Ebertstrasse, directly to the northwest of the site's main intersection (Figure 16; Figure 24; Table 2). Here, two tall, white buildings face the intersecting streets and echo each other's design (Figure 34). The Beisheim building, designed by Hilmer and Sattler, has the distinction of containing the most expensive apartments in Germany (Köhler 2002). Directly to its east, the Delbrück-Haus, designed by Hans Kollhoff, is similarly massive. This building reflects the appearance not only of the Beisheim Centre, but also of Kollhoff's brick building at the Daimler Benz site, located across the intersection, as it features similar fenestration and stepped verticality.

The Beisheim Centre is conceived of as a monumental tribute to its namesake, billionaire Otto Beisheim. The press has largely responded to Beisheim's project by calling it a German version of New York's Rockefeller Center or Trump Tower (Köhler 2002; Wuschick 2001). Both the Delbrück-Haus and Beisheim Centre are places of extreme luxury. The first 12 stories of the Beisheim building house the five-star Ritz Carlton hotel, while the upper floors contain the Tower Apartments, which cost upwards
of 8,000 euros per square meter. The Delbrück-Haus is similarly home to luxury hotels, expensive apartments and high-rent office space (Wuschick 2001). These buildings feature interior courtyards and green spaces, showing a similar tendency toward internalizing public space as seen in other sub-developments at Potsdamer Platz.

At the opposite end of the site, five comparatively modest, low-rise buildings stand along Lennéstrasse. Designed by Bischoff and Compagnons, these buildings are used for office and residential space. Directly adjacent to Berlin’s large, central Tiergarten park, these buildings face away from Potsdamer Platz and are dwarfed by the neighbouring Beisheim and Delbrück buildings.

SITES OF MEMORY, (PRIVATIZED) SPACES OF CONSUMPTION

As the previous discussion has shown, Potsdamer Platz is characterized by a selective view of history as articulated through the built environment. The Berlin Wall
provides an interesting example of how history is dealt with at the redeveloped site, as the Wall is the lone sign of Germany’s troubled past that is present at Potsdamer Platz. Even its presence, though, is not static. The Wall and its remains are clearly of enormous historical and symbolic importance (Baker 1994; Loeb 2006; Schlör 2006; Throgmorton 2004). Because of this, it can effectively illuminate how memory is expressed and managed through selective preservation and incorporation of ruins at Potsdamer Platz.

The infamous Berlin Wall ran through the current site of Potsdamer Platz, but it is not always easy to tell where the Wall once stood. Its former site is made visible in a few, very specific ways. In the central part of Berlin, the former course of the Wall is marked in the sidewalk with a thin line of bricks. In other places, such as roadways, it is marked with a thin, bronze band. Both types of markings are subtle, and might easily be overlooked. Additionally, the Wall is marked only in certain parts of Berlin. Areas of Berlin further from the centre, which were equally affected by the Wall’s presence, do not have such markings. The centre of the city is, perhaps not coincidentally, the place where tourists are most likely to see Wall markers.

Even these limited historical markers were contentious. Their creation was suggested by affiliated left-leaning parties Bündnis 90 and the Green party, while the Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic Party were opposed to marking the Wall’s site (Fürch 1996). Here, memorialization (on a small, non-monumental scale) is conflated with left-leaning political parties, while more centrist and conservative organizations are linked to, if not a desire to forget the East German past, then a disinclination to make it visible.
Over Easter weekend, 2007, one of the last remaining pieces of the wall at Potsdamer Platz was removed. The city government hired contractors to take away the 18-meter-long segment at night, over a holiday weekend, a time when the public was unlikely to notice. After initial silence on the matter, the government now claims that this section of the Wall is being restored for future incorporation into a new federal building (Connolly 2007). As of summer 2007, only a very small section of the Berlin Wall remains at Potsdamer Platz (Figure 35). It is perhaps four feet wide, displayed without context, and as such does not give a sense of the massiveness of the actual Wall or the violence perpetrated at its site. This well-worn, graffitied piece seems to serve merely as a foil for the clean, flawless, glass surfaces of the Sony Center, next to which it stands. Several more pieces of the Wall were trucked in and placed in a row before the World Cup, and supplemented with didactic signs. These were removed after the festivities were over, however, which seems to suggest their placement for the edification

Figure 35: A decontextualized piece of the Berlin Wall
of tourists who might be seeking the Wall.

The (occasional) presence of the Berlin Wall contrasts with other ‘sites of memory’ at Potsdamer Platz. Remnants of the Grand Hotel Esplanade and its luxurious Kaisersaal (Figure 21) are literally integrated into the futuristic constructions and privatized spaces of Sony’s European headquarters. Proximity to these relics of a grand past can be purchased through dining at expensive restaurants or investment in real estate. This is representative of a trend wherein

[The built environment is continuously demolished and rebuilt as well as “preserved” as a simulacrum. Hence, new spatial structures and modern and postmodern architecture emerge in parallel with objects and areas being selected as monuments that allegedly signify important aspects of the past. Simultaneously, space is extensively commodified in a process where access is increasingly dependent on consumption of, not only movable goods, but of places themselves as they are transformed into spatialized goods for sale (Landzelius 2001, 140)

Although these sites of memory may catch the viewer’s eye and delight with their ‘authentic’ historicism, I argue that what is not shown in this landscape is far more meaningful.

The past that is celebrated or reified is not ‘given’; it is refracted through the present. Histories claimed as being of importance or value are a testament to a range of differently empowered interests and ideologies. Some histories dominate and may even become part of national imaginings, while others may be suppressed, ignored or marginalized” (Jacobs 1992, p. 194).

One of the most significant erasures of the new Potsdamer Platz design is the failure to acknowledge the infamous Volksgerichtshof, a ‘people’s court of justice’ where enemies of the National Socialist government were tried and often given death sentences. Also, the fact that hundreds of people were shot by East German border guards remains
representation of Germany's complex past is not a straightforward endeavor, for "the German national narrative was shattered in a way not permitting of easy suture" (Neill 2004, 20). Although the presence of select historical artifacts may seem to be an acknowledgment of history, these are carefully chosen remnants which serve more to provide spectacle for purposes of tourism, than to present any sort of accurate representation of German history. Such traces of history suggest a trend wherein

the spatial form of the contemporary city reveals a patchwork of incongruous leftover pieces alongside a set of artfully designed compositions. Even though "the public" may be referenced in these well-designed nodes, not one of these places actually addresses the metropolitan whole nor recollects what the city totality requires... [designers] fail to link these sites together or relate them to the layers of history and people that the city actually presents (Boyer 1994, 9).

It is important to be cautious when making value judgments about the built environment and its contested sites. As Jane M. Jacobs (1996, 274) observes, "processes of aestheticization and spectacularization" are not negative per se, but rather "the way in which national and local political agendas (be they agendas of inclusion or exclusion) are manifested." At Potsdamer Platz, however, careful analysis reveals that a landscape of exclusion has been created which does not acknowledge the democracy and multiculturalism so important to contemporary German identity. This occurs because pseudo-public space is off limits to certain members of the public, as its rules restrict behaviour and access. The transformation of public space can also be seen at Potsdamer Platz in other ways, as well, such as at Daimler City's Arkaden shopping mall. A journalist for the *Tagesspiegel* wrote about "the security guards at the Arkaden that seemed so irritating or even threatening five years ago at the grand opening; today you
just look past them” (Maroldt 2003). This illustrates part of the danger of the privatization of public space – it quickly becomes status quo, and is accepted without a second thought.

It is ironic that the new face of Germany is distinctly un-German, and rather reflects a European or global urbanity. There is another irony in this corporate-dominated landscape: Berlin is not a financial centre, although it has been visibly shaped by the economic resources of the German state and the European Union. Frankfurt am Main is Germany’s financial capital as well as the seat of the European Bank; Berlin remains very much a city in debt.

If Potsdamer Platz is, as city planners suggest, “a lively expression of a common future for east and west” (Strieder 2000, 3) the extent to which East German culture and identity will have a place in this ‘common future’ is not yet clear (see Hörschelmann 2001). Similarly, if “Potsdamer Platz is the place in the new Berlin where the early division has been overcome in an exemplary and vital way” (Spöri 2000, 3), it remains to be seen whether there will be a place for remembrance in Berlin’s new centre.
5. RESPONSES TO POTSDAMER PLATZ: CHALLENGING THE OFFICIAL DISCOURSE OF REBIRTH?

"Much of the contemporary city may appear to have histories but increasingly they are histories of artefacts not ways of life."
Jane M. Jacobs, 1992, p. 209

Potsdamer Platz, as the new face of Germany's capital, has elicited a wide variety of responses. In the previous chapter I have shown how an interpretation of the landscape of Potsdamer Platz can lead to the conclusion that corporations have shaped the landscape and used 'sites of memory' for their own purposes involving a selective view of the past. I would now like to suggest that things are not quite that simple. History, memory and identity are intertwined with issues of representation in the built environment. As the meanings of Potsdamer Platz are contested and negotiated, it becomes clear that the site means different things to different people, and that these meanings do not always mesh with the official discourse of rebirth. I will thus consider the responses of artists, architects, journalists and 'the public' to this site, while exploring how these people have made sense of Potsdamer Platz as a place. Interestingly, responses have tended to engage more with issues of memory and representation of the past than with concerns about public space. However, I argue that public space is still relevant to the concerns expressed, but unlike memory, it remains implicit in discussions of whose city the new Berlin has become. As Karen Till cogently notes, "existing memory traditions as well as the political economies of place at various scales influence what pasts are to be remembered by whom, where, and in what form" (Till 2003a, 297). She continues,
[a]lthough elites have had more control over the establishment of places of memory in public settings, they cannot control how they are perceived, understood, and interpreted by individuals and various social groups... Because different understandings of the past influence individual and social experiences of the present and future, studies about place and memory provide material and symbolic evidence about how these complex social processes may lead to political action.

It is important to consider local voices, each of which can offer a unique perspective and highlight the significance of counter-hegemonic movements.

Tim Cresswell (1998, 272) argues that

[p]ublic, activist, art often attempts to subvert the everyday spaces of the city to add hidden voices to political discourse. Public art transgresses many key socio-spatial divisions and thus presents a geographer with an intriguing set of issues. Art in public space, particularly when political or activist in nature, transgresses some long-held and almost invisible boundaries of what constitutes appropriateness.

In Berlin, as more and more remnants of the Wall are removed from Potsdamer Platz (see last chapter), the murals painted on them – “public art”, perhaps – disappear with them. Sony claimed in a press release that its construction site would leave a “lasting impression” on artists and serve as a “source of inspiration” for fine art and performances (Sony Berlin GmbH 1998). While it is not clear what they meant by this, artists certainly have responded to the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz in various ways. The responses that I will discuss articulate alternative understandings of Potsdamer Platz, as well as different ways of approaching memory and the built environment.

As one city booster put it, “[a]uthentic places need culture and culture needs authentic places – just to prove that, the investment in Potsdamer Platz is already worth it” (Stölzl 2001, 3). Here, culture and the idea of an ‘authentic’ place are seen as representative of Potsdamer Platz, and are conflated with financial concerns of investment and return. While ‘culture’ may be understood as the key to successful urban
redevelopment, artists – who have traditionally been instrumental in the creation of ‘culture’ – have themselves responded to the ‘authenticity’ and ‘culture’ of Potsdamer Platz.

ARTISTIC RESPONSES

A number of artists have responded to the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz, as well as to broader issues of memory within German society, through photography, performance and other means.

One of the most discussed artistic responses is a project by French artist Sophie Calle entitled *die Entfernung* (The Detachment). In 1996, Calle photographically documented former sites of East German memory, highlighting the ‘erasure’ of material artifacts of eastern culture (and possibly of East German identity). She then interviewed East Germans, asking them about their memories of the object that had been removed, and added selected unattributed quotes as captions to her photographs. Calle’s work highlights the contingent and varying nature of memory, as different people’s memories of the same object often vary substantially. *The Detachment* has been displayed at galleries and museums as well as published in book form. Calle’s piece is an important catalog of East German memory in a context where physical reminders of East Germany are often removed from the landscape. (One of the most prominent examples of this is the fate of the *Palast der Republik*, the former East German parliament building, discussed in detail in Chapter 3.)

The words of Calle’s respondents are fascinating. One person commented upon the removal of a ‘peace dove’ from the side of a building in Berlin’s Nikolaiviertel – and
its subsequent replacement by an advertisement – by saying “I think it’s a shame that it was removed, because it provided a starting-point for discussion” (Calle 2003, 351). Many people would argue that this is exactly the purpose of a site of memory. A response to her photograph of a street sign – Torstraße, which had been called Wilhelm-Pieck-Straße in the German Democratic Republic – shows resistance to the process of renaming: “I find this renaming complete nonsense, a wiping out of identity. I still call it Wilhelm-Pieck-Straße, I refuse to say Torstraße.” Another respondent to the same photograph showed an interesting method of negotiating the memory of this place: “Whenever my childhood, my personal history is concerned, I always say Wilhelm-Pieck-Straße. But when I’m asked to give directions, I say Torstraße. I find the old names important as reminders” (Calle, 1996, n.p.). These responses seem to move towards what M. Christine Boyer (1994, 28) identifies as the “need to establish counter-memories, resisting the dominant coding of images and representations and recovering differences that official memory has erased” (see also Young 1992, 1993, 2003; Hörschelmann 2002).

A very different type of artistic response was devised by Anatol Wicka, a 31-year-old German law student who staged a “happening”-like event at Potsdamer Platz in 2003. 899 people gathered together and fell to the ground at the same moment at the intersection of Leipziger Straße, Stresemannstraße and Ebertstraße, which was the former site of the Berlin Wall. The number of participants represented the number of people who were killed at the East German/West German border. Wicka’s expressed intent was to remember the deaths, and to highlight the inhumanity of the DDR system. In his
words, the “extent of the barbarism will become clear” through this performance (Die Zeit 2003a).

An artist from Cologne proposed an “art event” that would involve rebuilding the Berlin Wall. Christof Blaesius, a former student of business economics, planned to build a 46 kilometer long structure (2.9 km longer than original, due to adjustments to avoid buildings and major roads). This was to be constructed on the occasion of Germany hosting the World Cup in 2006, which was also the 45th anniversary of the Wall’s construction. Artists would be allowed to paint the wall and, as a finale, the Wall would be burned from both ends in a spectacle that would last 80 minutes, supplemented by video installations and dance performances. Blaesius explained his vision as follows:

The World Cup shows that all nations can communicate and cooperate with each other, while the wall separates. Today there are still several divided nations, such as the Koreas, Israel and Ireland, and we want to remind people of both the past and the future in a meaningful way. Walls are not just physical, but also exist in your head (Aris 2003).

This event ultimately did not occur because the artist was unable to raise the 25 million euros needed to carry out the project (Die Zeit 2003b). Nevertheless, it is an interesting proposal that engages issues of authenticity, the purpose of memorials, and the relation of spectacle to memory. Additionally, it is debatable whether such a project might run the risk of belittling the German Democratic Republic’s history of violence.

The most recent artistic proposal for Potsdamer Platz is the “Wall of Light”, an installation that would take place in 2009 and signal the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall (Figure 36). Christian Dirks, the artist who proposed this design, says that memorials, placards and Wall remains aren’t enough: “in order to give a basic sense,
physically, of what the Wall’s division of Berlin meant, there are other possibilities” (Gundlach 2006). One such possibility is a conceptual project involving the partnership of Dirks, a historian by trade, with an architect, a curator and a light designer. This team would recreate the Wall visually, which would involve erecting steel replicas of pieces of the structure every 100 meters along its former path in central Berlin. Laser light technology would be used to create an optic “wall” between the steel pieces. This project would transform Potsdamer Platz into a laser-aided site of memory (Figure 37). The
The artistic team has expressed a desire to integrate this with other artistic 'memory projects' that might take place on the anniversary of the fall of the Wall. Memory and public space are brought together through this proposal:

The project makes public space, and its reclamation and reutilization, its central theme. The installation...uses public space as a stage, as it was once cultivated in the European city for citizens to encounter one another. The project is about the interaction between visitors and passers-by. People can walk through the wall of light, and in doing so experience the fall of the wall symbolically and directly at the same time (Buecker et al. 2007).

This project also engages public space in the sense that it has participation as one of its main goals. It is inclusive in its call for everyone to experience the Wall of Light. At the same time, it is not immune from criticism on representational grounds. For example, Rainer Klemke of Berlin’s Senate Department of Culture, while not strictly opposed to the design, warned of the potential for aestheticization or artistic glorification of the Wall (Gundlach 2006). Another possible criticism is that the design does not highlight the violence or everyday reality of the Wall, which included not just an immense concrete form but also armed border guards. The Wall of Light has a planned duration of six weeks, with an estimated cost of 1.2 million euros.

The above proposals highlight the complex nature of art and monuments. I argue that these artistic responses – if realized – would challenge the look and functions of Potsdamer Platz because they would disrupt the everyday lives of citizens in some small way. The lived experiences of Potsdamer Platz would be changed because these installations would shock people out of their everyday routines. They would be forced to think, and to remember, if only for a moment.
These projects bring to mind the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, a husband-and-wife artistic team who famously wrapped the Reichstag (German parliament building) as a symbol of Germany's reunification in 1995. The wrapping of the Reichstag is another art event that similarly brings up issues of coming to terms with the past, as well as spectacle and the commercialization of art. My purpose in mentioning this is not to create a dichotomy between 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' art, but rather to investigate how it is tied up with other issues of identity and memorialization.

While all of the art I have discussed is in some sense political, it cannot be so easily put into categories of “established” versus “maverick” artists' work; indeed, many artists who begin very much a part of the avant-garde end up becoming commercial in the sense that their work sells for huge amounts of money. Sophie Calle is an example of this, and it would seem that the price of her artwork does not relate to the success of her attempts to engage memory.

ARCHITECTS AS JUDGES

I will discuss two ways in which architects have responded to Potsdamer Platz as a place. The first involves looking at the designs submitted to the initial architectural competition held in 1991 to determine the course of the site’s redevelopment. The second considers architects’ responses to the final built form of the redeveloped site, as articulated in written statements and through interviews. My intent here is not to create a black-or-white differentiation by claiming that some architects represent history through their buildings, and that others do not. Rather, I show different ways in which architects conceive of history, and how this is articulated through their designs.
The winning design by Hilmer and Sattler represents "a continuity with the
traditional cityscape" in the view of city planners (Senatsverwaltung für
Stadtentwicklung 1991, 8). This is achieved through the presence of relatively small,
low-rise buildings. Here, historical awareness is seen through the recreation of traditional
European city form, rather than the creation of memorials or other signs. The history
evoked by the designs is sanitized: the buildings and squares have a pleasant European
quality, which is not marred by reference to atrocities past. Hilmer and Sattler's design
preserves historic built form by integrating the still-standing Weinhaus Huth and Hotel
Esplanade into the new buildings. Some of the other designs submitted to the competition
differ in how they deal with past events and sites, such as the Berlin Wall and the
National Socialist *Volksgerichtshof*.

One way of dealing with history through the built environment is to create
memorials. Joseph Kleihues's design includes a memorial for victims of the
*Volksgerichtshof*, while Hans Kollhoff's submission calls for the creation of a memorial
space at the site of the former National Socialist *Reichskanzlei* building near Potsdamer
Platz. Even without the presence of memorials, important sites can be demarcated in the
landscape. A number of architects have suggested different ways of marking the former
course of the Wall. Richard Rogers, for example, suggested marking the site of the wall
with a water course, a green belt or a footpath. Advocating an adherence to historical
street form, he explained that his design offered [a]n opportunity to rediscover the past.

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I do not intend to suggest that every unjust or violent event must be referenced in the
built environment. I do, however, see significance in different representational choices
through architecture, as they can illuminate various ways that particular architects deal
with the past.
and combine this with the creation of a new image for the future” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1991).

History can also be articulated through built form in other ways. For example, deviation from traditional styles of architecture can be meaningful. Hans Kollhoff’s design includes “verticality contrasting with horizontality”, with buildings situated in a site characterized by “modern, open space” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 1991). The design also involves the integration of the preserved Esplanade and Weinhaus Huth buildings. Kollhoff also advocates a change in function, with less retail space integrated into the site. Instead, shopping would be concentrated in the nearby, upscale Friedrichstrasse. Had this design been realized, it would differ substantially from the present form of Potsdamer Platz, as most ‘public space’ in the current development is intricately linked to consumption.

Daniel Libeskind’s design seems to engage history through abstract, sculptural form. Although it is difficult to know what the site would look like had his plan been realized, his description offers some insight: his design is informed by “symbolic fragments of memory at Potsdamer Platz”; its central elements are the so-called wing as identity-forming symbol and ten lines with structural and connecting functions. The wing leads from the former Potsdamer railway station along the course of the wall and marks the new centre (Libeskind 1997).

In his design, historic squares and old streets are left in their original condition. As his central design motif, the ‘wing’ is a large building, the main level of which is 55 meters high. This is supplemented by multiple gallery levels. The ten ‘lines’ are each compact buildings with between six and eight floors, built as raised structures over between three and nine “air levels” (Libeskind 1997). The ultimate effect is of fractured,
yet intricately interconnected, urban form. History is a fundamental part of this design, with the main structure demarcating the former site of the Berlin Wall.

Several prominent architects have voiced criticism of Potsdamer Platz’s final built form. These responses largely take issue with treatment of public space in the reconstruction of Berlin, including the more specific issues of privatization and suitability of the site for public use. Daniel Libeskind has called Potsdamer Platz “a cultural and commercial dead-end” (Glancey 2004), and Rem Koolhaas condemned the site as “a collage of privacies” (Koolhaas 2006). Both of these architects have a history of conflict with planning authorities in Berlin, and have criticized the ‘restrictive’ planning environment. While such remarks could be dismissed as the bitter words of architects who weren’t awarded contracts, the criticisms recognize the privatization and commercialization of public space and the commodification of history seen in the final built form of Potsdamer Platz.

London-based Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid had a different vision for the space than what was built:

I liked Potsdamer Platz earlier, as a gigantic, empty space. It doesn’t function well as a dense urban space. You get the impression that a new feeling of life has been imported. The meeting of two cities is what made Berlin what it was. Now they are trying to make a normal city out of the two halves, as if it had always been so (der Tagesspiegel 2000a).

Hadid’s response opens up a new possibility for remembrance or memorialization, which calls the entire redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz into question. Had the area been left as urban ‘wilderness’ (an idea echoed by a respondent later in this chapter), the scars of the past would literally still be visible.
Renzo Piano, chief architect of the Daimler City sub-development, was asked in an interview if he felt his work there was successful. His responses raises questions about the representation of history through the built environment:

One has to be very careful not to grow too nostalgic or, on the other hand, too forgetful. The disappearance of the Wall is significant. The desire to forget is typical for Berlin, at least in the morning; in the afternoon, the city becomes nostalgic. One forgets the tragedy of the past and sometimes replaces it with nostalgia. Then I am asked, will Potsdamer Platz be like it was earlier? Of course it won’t! Berlin is no longer the Berlin of the thirties, the population is no longer the same as before, today Berlin is the most multi-ethnic city in all of Europe and is full of bubbling energy. The city has changed fundamentally – that is the true challenge. As an architect I have two possibilities. If I am wise... I’ll stay away from such a project. But if I’m daring, I’ll jump into the cold water and do it, knowing the whole time that nothing in life is perfect (der Tagesspiegel 2000c).

Here, Piano raises an important issue: that preservation of historic environments – whether old or more recent – can be a nostalgic impulse. In such cases, he suggests, associated pasts can be cleansed of their meaning. It is instructive that Piano, as a practicing architect who built in Berlin, sees the prospect of designing in the city as a difficult process involving the negotiation of history and attention to the city’s inhabitants. This position contrasts with the approach of architects such as Daniel Libeskind, who do not claim that history is straightforward, but who do claim to represent particular histories through built form.

MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM

Mainstream journalistic sources such as major German newspapers have published a wide variety of articles about the Potsdamer Platz development. Most articles are simply descriptive, focusing on the size of buildings, complex construction
procedures, vast sums of money involved, and the fame of the architects. Coverage of
the opening festivities of both Daimler City and the Sony Center was particularly
widespread. A typical article glowingly describes the new, tall buildings:

Another piece of elegance in the new Berlin has just been completed... The
transparent architecture gives surprising and breathtaking views of the
dramatic outdoors... The skyscrapers have the effect of being higher, more
powerful, more determined (Die Welt 2000).

A number of readers have taken issue with such coverage on the grounds that it is
not critical enough, which I will discuss in the next section. It must be noted, however,
that the German news media also published critical pieces about Potsdamer Platz.
Although these articles were clearly marked as 'opinion pieces,' they discuss a variety of
issues, ranging from aesthetics, to scale, to the representation of history. One typical
response was critical of large investors who erect buildings “in the dimensions of a small
city” that leave “little room for politics” (Leithäuser 1996, 12).

Although I expected to find wide variation among the different newspapers that I
searched, criticism was fairly evenly distributed across the political spectrum of
publications. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, a relatively conservative newspaper,
did publish a slightly more positive evaluation of the site than seen in other papers,
although columnist Heinrich Wefing still articulated several major criticisms. Although
he describes the Daimler development as “introverted”, “an atoll in the archipelago of
Berlin”, he also seems to recognize the difficulty of building successfully in Berlin,
paying architects Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker the backhanded compliment of
“perhaps the first attempt in 50 years to create a city square in Berlin that hasn’t ended in
a fiasco” with their design for Marlene-Dietrich-Platz (Wefing 1998b, 33). The most
left-leaning paper of those surveyed, Berlin’s die Tageszeitung, generally published the most biting criticism, which often focused on elite-driven decisions made with little public consultation.

Potsdamer Platz also became a place of interest for the English-speaking press, particularly in the United Kingdom. The Guardian in particular has published multiple articles and several opinion pieces about Berlin’s built environment. These articles largely focused on the global architects working in Berlin and the architecture that they created. A typical article describes Potsdamer Platz as a place where “the world’s best architects came and gave it their worst buildings. Only the HQ of Deutsche Bahn, the country's railway firm, has any real panache” (Tempest 2006). Another piece offers a similar message:

It was a huge architectural opportunity to regenerate a large part of central Berlin, which has been completely wasted. They brought in lots of top architects, including Renzo Piano, but it hasn’t worked at all. Everything is very ugly. It looks extremely corporate, with towering buildings (Dean 2005).

The English-language coverage of Potsdamer Platz tended towards general, damning statements without much contextualization. Although these articles dealt mostly with aesthetics issues, one piece brought up the problems of representation in Berlin:

Memory should be caustic, not elegant. In the aftermath of reunification the entire centre of Berlin constituted a dirty memorial - sinister holes in the ground, no-go zones, scorched earth, nightmares. Now the dirt and mess have gone, and so has some of Berlin's raw open wound of a past (The Guardian 2005).

Interestingly, one of the more contextually-informed pieces in The Guardian was a language-learning tool, published in German in uncomplicated prose, which featured the opinions of several young Berliners as they talked about the changes in their city. In this
piece, when asked what she thought about the architectural development of Berlin, an 18-year-old named Sandra replied: “Potsdamer Platz is useless. Even if it used to be the centre of Berlin, today we have Alex[anderplatz] in the east and Zoo[logischer Garten] in the west. A third centre is baloney” (*The Guardian* 1999). A 21-year-old named Mike evaluates the site differently: “Potsdamer Platz has succeeded architecturally. It’s funny that so many people go there and look at a construction site” (*The Guardian* 1999). Here, the inclusion of residents’ voices offers a greater sense of the wider urban context of the site and a sense of the importance of the everyday that is missing from some other accounts.

German press coverage tended to be less exclusively concerned with aesthetic issues than did English language articles. Although these concerns were often present, German newspaper articles were more in-depth in their analysis, as they focused on particular government and planning decisions. Caustic commentary was also present, however. One writer speaks to issues of commercialization but also, ironically, of memorialization through built form, as he describes

>a grotesqueness that sharply illuminates the disastrous collusion of Senate and investors. With the pompous, round Sony Cathedral of Commerce, which mixes administration, shopping, entertainment, culture and the remains of a memorial together like a turbine, not only the companies and the architect Helmut Jahn, but also the politicians and other responsible parties, have created a fitting memorial to themselves (Knapp 1995).

While the opinions of salaried journalists may be interesting, and patterns of newspaper coverage significant, many of these articles do not engage with public opinion or the everyday experiences of Berliners. To this end, several journalists have tried to engage public opinion through the use of surveys (*Putz* 2000; *der Tagesspiegel* 2001). One
survey asked citizens of Berlin which city building they would most like to dynamite. The ‘winner’ – highlighting its central place in the minds of Berliners – was Potsdamer Platz. In another survey by students at Berlin’s Humboldt University, 23.5% of West Berliners and 10% of East Berliners responded that they visit Potsdamer Platz as the centre of the new Berlin. The most attractive features of the development, according to those surveyed, were shops, cinemas and architecture (*Berliner Zeitung* 2000). While negative evaluations of Potsdamer Platz are widespread in the press, these surveys go further in linking such criticism to issues of identity. The discrepancy of opinion between former East and West Germans is noteworthy.

Perhaps to poke fun at the controversial nature of Potsdamer Platz, and the large amount of press it has generated, the *Berliner Zeitung* published two lists on the fifth anniversary of Daimler City’s opening (Table 3). The first includes ten reasons to avoid Potsdamer Platz, while the second expresses ten reasons why “you just have to like it” (*Berliner Zeitung* 2003). The lists seem to be a good-natured attempt to lighten up the heavy-handed critiques that were prevalent. While they include seemingly minor items – complaints about annoying tourists and recommendations for good ice cream – and do not engage the issues of memory and public space seen in other responses, they nonetheless paint a picture of the small details that make up everyday life at Potsdamer Platz.

In what could be considered an underground journalistic response to the development of Potsdamer Platz, Rudolf Stegers created a four-part “zine” which establishes a counter-narrative to official discourses of redevelopment and rebirth starting
### Table 3: The *Berliner Zeitung*’s list of pros and cons of Potsdamer Platz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten reasons to avoid Potsdamer Platz</th>
<th>Ten reasons why you just have to like Potsdamer Platz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsafe conditions</strong>: the steps in front of the Stella Musical Theater have taken out even strong men.</td>
<td><strong>Giant see-saws in the new Tilla Durieux Park</strong>: even pensioners can rediscover their inner child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The multiplex cinemas</strong>: too expensive. And there’s always someone munching loudly on popcorn.</td>
<td><strong>English movies</strong>: all the blockbusters play in their original language at the Cinemaxx and Cinestar movie theatres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The architecture</strong>: Renzo Piano’s terracotta buildings look like factories from a model train landscape.</td>
<td><strong>The architecture</strong>: Hans Kollhoff’s skyscraper with brick façade gives the square a wonderful New York flair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The gastronomy</strong>: no bars for a beer after the cinema, just uncomfortable tourist traps.</td>
<td><strong>Café Gelato in the Arkaden</strong> [shopping centre]: among the best ice cream anywhere in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Berlinale</strong> [film festival]: You never get tickets for the films that you really want to see.</td>
<td><strong>The Berlinale</strong> [film festival]: once a year you get to see high society and watch unique art films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The tourists</strong>: they block the cycling lanes and the escalators, and they’re always asking for directions.</td>
<td><strong>Cheap parking for quick shoppers</strong>: one hour of parking only costs 80 cents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorian Gray und Adagio</strong>: the most tasteless clubs in the city. They wanted the beautiful people, but they’ll have to make do with the normal ones.</td>
<td><strong>Aldi</strong> [discount supermarket] practically next door to <strong>Mandarina Duck</strong> [fashion store]: Be frugal, then spend lots of money on a handbag with a good conscience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The era of construction watching is as good as over</strong>: Almost everything is done being built, and the Infobox is gone. Without it, Potsdamer Platz just isn’t any fun.</td>
<td><strong>Two Imax cinemas</strong>: Thanks to 3-D technology, you can comfortably travel to strange worlds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The wind tunnels</strong>: the drafts here are almost as bad as in Manhattan.</td>
<td><strong>The artificial ponds with reeds</strong>: dangle your feet in and look at ducks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The casino</strong>: whoever enters, loses — 70 euros on average. And for what?</td>
<td><strong>The Grand Hyatt</strong>: elegant foyer, expensive wine. Philosophize about what it would be like to be rich.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with the sale of the land and continuing through Potsdamer Platz's construction (Stegers 1991, 1992, n.d.a, n.d.b). Much of Stegers' critique is implicit; he provides a chronology of the development and building process, and the information and quotes that he chooses to include highlight certain issues. Much of this implied criticism has to do with the lack of public consultation during the planning of the site's redevelopment. Through an assemblage of quotes from various media sources, collage-style graphics and the use of drawings and textual emphasis to draw attention to particular points, Stegers provides an alternative account of the site's redevelopment. For example, he uses a grainy photo of a birthday cake, supplemented with the cut-out figure of a man, presumably an important actor in the redevelopment process, to draw attention to the promotional fanfare surrounding Potsdamer Platz. Other illustrations include a hammer hitting bent nails, a megaphone with quotes coming out of it, and a heart with a tube attached to it (with a quote from Berlin's mayor pasted on top of it: "Potsdamer Platz was the old heart of Berlin. It will once again beat as it did before"). Here, simple drawings are used to draw attention to the symbolism used in the official promotion of the site's redevelopment.

This zine also provides an interesting example of how alternative forms of media can be effectively used to undermine 'official' narratives of events. Zines are self-published, independent, self-designed forms of media that utilize simple, widely-available technology. They do not rely on corporate structures for their production and distribution, and thus seem well-positioned to comment on the redevelopment process from the 'outside'.

Weblogs offer an additional source of opinion about the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz. As a widely available and often free tool, blogs offer any computer-
savvy person with an internet connection the opportunity to publish their thoughts and opinions online. Blogs thus represent a sort of alternative journalism, giving voice to those who might not otherwise be heard. Blogs are only beginning to be discussed in the academic literature, but they have been hailed as the key to an open-source methodology (Blumenthal 2005) as their evolution has been charted (Gopal 2007). Although I was only able to locate a few blogs that discussed Potsdamer Platz, for the purposes of this thesis blogs provide an additional source of ‘public’ opinion, one that is largely free of the selective criteria of other media sources. One blog author posted a picture of a high rise building at Potsdamer Platz, commenting that the structure “somehow looks as if it’s been rendered by computer” (Das Fuchsblog 2005). Another user left a comment of agreement: “That’s right. Potsdamer Platz is artificial, and will always be cold and uncomfortable. I can still remember well what it used to look like… a wasteland… and there was always that big flea market there, do you remember it? At any rate it was more organic back then” (Nickelartist 2005).

Online forums offer a related medium for users to post opinions and comments about various issues. One site in particular, called Qype – short for ‘quality or hype’ – invites users to “share [their] views on the most interesting places in [their] area” (Qype 2007). This site features several “reviews” of Potsdamer Platz. The first strongly criticizes the artificial ‘feel’ of the place:

In the whole square there is not one single piece of green – only in the artificial worlds of the Sony Center can pots of pressed green plants be seen – commercial, consumption-oriented architecture paired with food from chain restaurants behind glassed, air conditioned spaces (Volver 2007).
This user sums up Potsdamer Platz by saying: “You need to have seen it in order to realize what city squares shouldn’t look like” (Volver 2007). This criticism is echoed by another user: “You can safely call it a disgrace. Piles of money wasted for a status symbol that ISN’T made for people” (Alchen 2007).

A similar website called IgoUgo offers a different “review” of Potsdamer Platz. A user writes that the city’s new centre is

worth seeing to marvel at how quickly things can change in the new Berlin. Of course, the architecture is top-rate modern and though some areas have the feel of an upscale mall, it exudes a sense of whimsical and sophistication...the atmosphere is fun and the energy level high. There are many corporations and apartment complexes here, an urban oasis for living and working. It reminded me of Times Square in New York, but on a much larger scale and with brand new high caliber buildings (IgoUgo 2001).

This response references the site’s architecture as a sign of sophistication and urbanity. It is judged favourably against one of New York City’s redeveloped centres, and it seems to be Potsdamer Platz’s architecture that led to this comparison. Thus, attempts by developers and boosters to utilize urban design to mould Berlin into an urban area on par with ‘global cities’ seems to be successful in this particular instance.

Although these statements cannot be taken as representative of any larger public, they nevertheless offer further example of public opinion in a forum where most anyone could share their thoughts. Interesting, too, is the similarity of the above critiques to others seen in different media.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: FINDING THE VOICE OF THE PUBLIC

While major newspapers often publish the words and opinions of elite journalists, letters to the editor offer a possible source of public opinion. Although it is clear that editors select which letters are printed, this forum is nevertheless an important outlet for other, possibly less empowered voices. The pieces I found tended to illustrate the negative perceptions of Potsdamer Platz common among Berliners. This does not necessarily mean that all Berliners hate Potsdamer Platz; rather, these opinions must be understood as letters written by people who feel sufficiently strongly about an issue, and who have the abilities, resources and time to craft a publishable piece.

These published opinions include feelings that Potsdamer Platz is a space only for tourists and for shopping, and thus not a part of the “real” Berlin. To these people, Berlin has city centres other than Potsdamer Platz. Many members of the public were critical of planning practices as the site was designed and built. A criticism often voiced relates to issues of form: Potsdamer Platz, some argue, is not built on a human scale. In this vein, one man writes:

I was there at the beginning of November and I had a panic attack! The agglomeration of sky-high, smooth walls without trees and visible sun, and the artificial landscapes still to come...fills me with terrible misgivings about what else might be built (Westermann 1998, 18).

About five letters to the editor of various newspapers expressed similar criticism. Another reader condemns the place: “I can only say that I find it unbearable, the pure gigantism, to build even higher, even bigger, more colossal, more monstrous. Can’t we finally be a bit more modest? (Zeilinga 1998).
Concerns that Potsdamer Platz does not mesh with its urban context are accompanied by criticism of attempts to make the site into Berlin’s newest centre. As one piece in the Süddeutsche Zeitung put it: “does Berlin really need another centre?” (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1995). Another letter questions the need for construction in a city that already has two centres and has no demonstrated need for further office space: “A thought comes to me: why is all this here at all? Other cities are always so happy when they have centrally-located green space” (Stelter 1996, 10). Here, the reconstruction of the site itself is called into question, and broader issues of land-use planning are implicated. This is a critique of the way city space – public space, in a sense – has been developed, and its criticism of the very existence of a redeveloped Potsdamer Platz is echoed in several other responses. Other letters take issue with the way that the site was redeveloped. One reader takes issue with the sense of placelessness at Potsdamer Platz, a site full of buildings designed by global architects who seem to have little regard for context, when he asks: What does the Arkaden offer that other shopping malls don’t have? Nothing...At H&M [clothing store] and Saturn [electronics shop], I can’t tell whether I’m in Berlin or Leipzig (Untermann 1998).

A number of people take issue with large amount of media attention lavished upon the site, and the near-deification of the global architects who designed its buildings. In a letter to the editor in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, an architect writes in to affirm the tolerance of Berliners with regard to all this writing about architecture, going on to say:

One [Berliner] read with furrowed brow about Potsdamer Platz, where the ‘best-paid architects in the world’ rendezvous. He, and many others alongside him, have known for a long time that no high-quality works of architecture can be found there (Paysan 2006).
A further letter to the *FAZ* criticizes the ‘uncritical’ tone of newspaper coverage. In particular, the reader chastises the paper for discounting the actions of ordinary people, as its coverage of Potsdamer Platz failed to mention resistance to the construction of a traffic tunnel under the Tiergarten park. In fact, the reader points out, almost 20,000 Berliners opposed the construction (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 1994, 12).

Memory and representation of the past are issues not often brought up in these letters to the editor. One reader wrote in to comment about issues of memorialization in Berlin more generally: “[i]n my opinion it’s not just size that counts in a memorial, but rather personal remembrance of the good and bad sides of a people” (Hoetger 1998, 22). Here, again, is a sense that a concern for the everyday is lacking in the redevelopment of Berlin.

Another major critique of Potsdamer Platz casts the site as a place that is not socially inclusive. A true city centre, it is argued, would be accessible to everyone, including the mobility impaired. The Christian Democratic Workforce criticized Potsdamer Platz for a lack of such important features as graded sidewalks at intersections, and demanded pedestrian zones without steps at Marlene-Dietrich-Platz (*Berliner Zeitung* 1998a). A reader expressed a similar complaint, as the design of Potsdamer Platz resulted in a place that he could not easily get around (Erdmann 1998). A German archbishop criticized Potsdamer Platz on further grounds of social exclusion, stating that the buildings show “the power of capital and postmodernism,” sending the message: “look at the economic might of these companies! Have fun and enjoy it” (*Berliner Zeitung* 1998b). According to the archbishop, it must always be clear “that there is poverty, homelessness and other forms of social need and helplessness in our city”
(Berliner Zeitung 1998b) which, he implies, are not visible at, and are incompatible with, Potsdamer Platz. These quotes are representative of the overall tone of letters to the editor in major German newspapers. Indeed, most comments are extremely critical of the site’s redevelopment. Alternative understandings of the place can be seen, however, when attention is paid to the lived spaces of Potsdamer Platz.

**POTSDAMER PLATZ AS REAL ESTATE: ‘WAITING FOR THE UPSWING’**

Developers and planners envisioned Potsdamer Platz as Berlin’s new centre, which would replace the divided city’s centres around Zoologischer Garten in the west and at Alexanderplatz in the east. Whether or not this has been successful is a contentious issue. Potsdamer Platz is extremely popular with tourists, which is evident from the crowds at the Sony Center and Daimler City. Tourism throughout Berlin has been increasing, as well: while the city had 7.5 million overnight stays in 1990, the number of visits more than doubled sixteen years later, with 15.9 million overnights in 2006 (Statistisches Landesamt Berlin 2006).

A survey conducted at Potsdamer Platz sheds light on the varying responses of these visitors. Questions dealt with visitors’ opinions of the redeveloped site as well as its place in the new Berlin. Twenty-one percent of visitors consider the site to be a commercial centre, yet among Berliners surveyed (locals made up 33 percent of the total group), almost all were there to shop. Visitors from outside Berlin, on the other hand, were largely there to ‘see the sights’. Fifteen percent came from the neighbouring state of Brandenburg, while over half were from other German states (Länder) or other countries, which lends truth to the common perception that the site is filled with tourists.
The survey also engaged issues of identity: when asked if Potsdamer Platz was a place of exchange between east and west, only 4 percent answered in the affirmative. 10 percent of Berliners believe that the site is a historically meaningful location, while 18 percent believe that it will become Berlin’s new centre. Survey questions also asked about the site’s architecture: 30 percent of respondents found the architecture interesting, while 16 percent did not like the architecture. A final question affirms Potsdamer Platz’s status as a place people like to visit: 84 percent of those surveyed enjoy spending time at the site (Köhler and Müller 1999).

In contrast to the tourist bustle, the response to Potsdamer Platz by investors, and the performance of its real estate within the capitalist market economy, has been lacklustre. In fact, a significant number of offices and apartments remain empty and developers’ attempts to turn Potsdamer Platz into a city-wide hub of culture, nightlife, dining, and general ‘urbanity’ may not be happening as planned. A recent report shows that 90,000 square meters of office space remain empty, and this number is expected to increase. Several large corporations have moved out, including Sony Music and Verdi, the latter of which was paying 23,500 euros per day in rent. Several other corporations, among them DaimlerChrysler and Deutsche Bahn, are reportedly considering doing so (Die Zeit 2004b). Daimler’s departure would be particularly unfortunate from the developers’ point of view, since that corporation had a major role in securing and redeveloping the land, as well as marketing the site as Berlin’s new centre. Ultimately, the weak economy and overabundance of high-priced real estate in Berlin have led to decreased demand for the expensive properties that Potsdamer Platz has to offer (Die Zeit 2004a, 2004b). A piece in the Süddeutsche Zeitung illustrates the irony of this situation:
While the Christmas-shopping masses fill the nearby shopping mall, it's deserted here, between the Marriot Hotel, Ritz Carlton and Beisheim office and apartment buildings. Only a black-coated woman has strayed near Inge Beisheim Square. “This is a ghost town!” she mumbles in dialect. It has gotten dark early – normal for Berlin winters – and light can only be seen in one part of the Renzo Piano building. Even in the beautiful Kollhoff tower, the red brick of which reminds people of Manhattan, entire floors are empty. A large black raven flies over the cranes at Potsdamer Platz… only two hundred meters and one intersection away from Potsdamer Platz, 18,000 particularly elegant square meters are empty: a modern glass building that serves as a light sculpture at night. The only tenant is a furniture store on the ground floor that specializes in exclusive office furnishings (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2004).

Indeed, although Potsdamer Platz is in many ways a lively hub of activity, in other important ways it is not living up to expectations. Empty apartments and offices, which provide an ironic contrast to bustling movie theatres and cafes, are perhaps a more dire sign of failure than anything else. With major investors considering abandoning the site altogether, the future of Potsdamer Platz is uncertain. As one journalist notes, “[t]he enthusiasm of the beginning has disappeared…with each finished colossus, the initial euphoria fades” (Siedler 1995, 38).
6. CONCLUSION: MEMORIES, HISTORIES AND IDENTITIES AT POTSDAMER PLATZ

“Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority.”
Edward Said, 2000, p. 176

The redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz is at the centre of Berlin’s new and changing identity. Planners and government officials in Germany’s capital seek to align the city with a cosmopolitan Europe and with important global cities, rather than merely with the German nation.

Potsdamer Platz is a landscape of power through which the success of German and multinational corporations is celebrated (Zukin 1991; Marcuse 1998). This central city area is a shrine to entertainment and shopping, where the ambitions of multinational corporations have been written into the landscape through built form. The scale of the buildings leads to the feeling that the city could be anywhere in the world, since the site is not integrated into its urban context. There has been a redefinition of historical meaning through the built environment at this site: Potsdamer Platz is influential in its display of history without memory. Occasional nods to the past are another part of this ‘city as theme park’. A small piece of the Berlin Wall and a part of an elegant pre-War building behind glass are decontextualized and serve only to accentuate the sleekness and innovation of the new buildings. Much of the history of the twentieth century is erased, as powerful actors in Berlin emphasize the city’s rebirth through a major redevelopment project focusing on spectacular new buildings designed by global architects.

Public space is one casualty of this process, as policing and control occur surreptitiously through the presence of security guards, surveillance cameras, and a long
list of ‘rules of conduct’. In the most general sense, the site simulates public space: it is privately owned, yet its gathering places, benches, grassy areas and fountain (erroneously) suggest a place where anyone is welcome. Indeed, In recent years “economic growth has been thematized and envisioned as an image of collective leisure and consumption” whereby “collective space – public space – has been represented as a consumable good” (Zukin 1995, 260). The street is rendered optional at Potsdamer Platz: retail functions are internalized and visitors can navigate the development through underground walkways. This is significant, since streets are both sites for political activity and repositories of collective memories. Indeed, it seems true that “[t]he effort of all established powers…to augment their means of keeping order in the street has eventually culminated in the suppression of the street itself” (Debord 1994, 121).

The Sony Center and Daimler Benz sub-developments are dominated by consumption, particularly in the form of entertainment and shopping. Events such as red-carpet movie premiers offer continuing evidence that the landscape of Potsdamer Platz is characterized by spectacle. While this spectacularized environment seems to distract citizens (with its many flashy focal points) as well as erase memory, it is important to consider whether this “erasure” is complete or merely signals that memory is being dealt with in different, less visible ways.

I have argued that Berliners and visitors have their own understandings of Potsdamer Platz which differ markedly from those promoted by elites and rendered in built form at the redeveloped site. These responses to the reconstruction of a vast central-city area engage with a wide variety of issues, including aesthetics, scale and inclusiveness. Memory and public space are dealt with—sometimes explicitly, and at
other times implicitly – as artists, architects, journalists and members of the public articulate their responses to Potsdamer Platz. Consideration of other memories, histories and identities shows that Potsdamer Platz is a contested place, the meanings of which are constantly being negotiated as Berlin continues to change.

Now that the final phase of the Potsdamer Platz development has been completed, the effectiveness of the site as Berlin’s new centre can be better assessed. This site is often busy: with 70,000 visitors per day it is extremely popular as a space for shopping and commerce (Lewis 2001). But the nature of this space has changed – it is privatized and not accessible to all. The poor and homeless have no place here. Crowds are largely made up of white, middle class Berliners, suburbanites and tourists. Multiculturalism is a difficult issue in Germany, where the legacy of National Socialism’s planned racially pure Vaterland is always in the background. Citizenship based on blood was the rule until 2000, and the country’s sizable Turkish minority remains poorly integrated. Even in cosmopolitan Berlin, Neo-Nazi marches and racially-motivated violence are not uncommon. In this context it is worth considering whether Potsdamer Platz, as Berlin’s new centre, is an inclusive place – for immigrants, for (former) East Germans, and for others.

Berlin is anything but static. Significant development continues to occur throughout the city, especially in the former east. Germany’s redeveloped capital is being actively promoted, and mega-events are being courted, as the city will apply to host the Olympics in 2016 (after a failed bid for the 2000 Summer games). Whether or not Berlin will reach the status of ‘global city’ desired by so many of its boosters, however, remains unclear. Scott Campbell, on the one hand, hypothesizes that “as the cold-war era
fades Berlin will gradually lose its unique identity and function, becoming increasingly assimilated into the political-economic network of European cities” (1999, 179). Stefan Krätke (2001), basing his argument on empirical analysis of the city’s economy, is far more skeptical of Berlin becoming a ‘global city’ in the economic sense.

Debates continue about Berlin’s position on the world stage. City booster Friedrich-Leopold von Stechow claims that “Berlin is a world city... Berlin is the capital of the country that is the most important economy in the European Union, and simply because of that it has world city character” (von Stechow, 2002, 3). Others express doubt, however, comparing Berlin unfavourably with other iconic cities:

Berlin lacks the space-seizing explosion of capitalism, as seen in Chicago, New York, Singapore, or the skyscraper-filled cities of southern China. It lacks the enormous egos of large firms that have erected their symbols of power in Frankfurt and London. Berlin doesn’t even have a wide river like New York, a lake like Chicago, or a bay like San Francisco or Hong Kong, above which its skyline can make an impression (Bernau 2002).

According to this argument, then, economics and geography combine to render Berlin merely a “runner-up” in the game of city marketing appeal. These contrary positions highlight the uncertainty of Berlin’s future. Nevertheless, the number of tourists visiting Berlin is steadily increasing, with noticeable intensification from 2003 onwards. Memory and public space are implicated in these issues, as well. Memory has been linked to foreign policy (Hampton and Peifer 2007), and as particular memories are negotiated, and understandings of the past change while taboos fade, national identity is reconfigured. This can have a material effect on international relations. It also remains to be seen how Berlin will deal with threats of terrorism. It seems possible that such threats, real or imagined, could lead to further clamping down on the rights of citizens and on public space, as seen in the United States (Smith and Low 2006). The author of
an opinion piece in *Die Welt* calls for greater securitization in Berlin. Referring to the events of September 11, 2001 in New York, he writes: “the World Trade Centre could also have been the Reichstag [parliament building] or Potsdamer Platz” (Braun 2001).

Although it focuses on Berlin and the redevelopment of a central site in that city, this thesis has broader significance, both in terms of European identity debates as well as by demonstrating how architectural analysis and the literature on memory and public space can effectively work together. My conclusions can be extended to link processes that have occurred at Potsdamer Platz to other cities. Issues involving the privatization of public space are relevant in many cities throughout the world, as the continuing hegemony of neoliberal forces has led to privatization in multiple arenas, not least in urban space. Furthermore, many cities have histories of trauma; though Berlin’s situation is clearly unique, debates about memory and the built environment might resonate more generally in cities such as Sarajevo and Belfast, to name only two European examples. Considering the legacy of colonialism in other urban areas could also lead to instructive parallels.

In the summer of 2006, Germany hosted the World Cup soccer competition. While the games occurred in cities throughout the country, many of the festivities as well as final and semi-final games took place in Berlin. Potsdamer Platz became a focal point of this celebration, and the site was mobilized as a part of the city’s image promotion. Although no games took place near Potsdamer Platz, the site (and the Sony Center in particular) became a media hub. German media corporation ZDF sponsored the transformation of the Sony Center into a giant arena for viewing televised soccer (Figure
Several large video screens and many seats, were erected in the privatized public space of the Sony Center’s forum. Large amounts of people gathered here to watch the world’s top soccer teams compete. Here, Potsdamer Platz is evidence of attempts by the city (and sponsoring corporations) to create a site of international appeal.

After the World Cup, Potsdamer Platz returned to normal, a place where tourists and Berliners come together, usually to shop or watch movies. At Potsdamer Platz a tension is evident between the official promotion and spectacle of the place, and the actual lived spaces, where real estate is not performing up to expectations, apartments and offices are empty, and DaimlerChrysler, a major force behind the site’s very existence, is considering relocation. Other responses to the site from the public, artists, architects and journalists show further contradiction here, as many people seem to see the redeveloped Potsdamer Platz as something other than the new centre of a reunified European or World City, as official rhetoric would have it.
This thesis has asked a number of questions which remain open. The issues brought up through the case study of Potsdamer Platz, including memory and public space, continue to be contentious matters in Berlin and elsewhere. A recent poll showing that one out of every five Germans wants the Berlin Wall rebuilt (MSNBC 2004) suggests that the past is still a matter of great concern, while raising further questions of identity in post-reunification Germany. It remains to be seen how Berlin will evolve through time, and how memory and public space will be negotiated through the city's future built environment. If, as current German Chancellor Angela Merkel wrote, "Potsdamer Platz is an expression of urban life and a reflection of German history at the same time" (A. Merkel 2000, 3), the questions of whose history and which history remain. At this point, Potsdamer Platz represents a selective, sanitized history to a particular public.
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