

Zeppelin Field – A Place for Learning

A Project to Maintain a
Very Special National Heritage

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Preface



*Dr. Ulrich Maly
Lord Mayor*

Like no other city, Nuremberg, both the “City of the Nazi Party Rallies” and the venue of the International Tribunal of War Criminals, has been linked to the era of National Socialism and the judicial reckoning of this time by the Allied Powers. In 1935, the ignominious “Nuremberg Laws” were proclaimed here. They have remained synonyms for the criminal Nazi regime world-wide. The “Nuremberg Trials” of 1945/46 marked the birth of international criminal jurisdiction.

The building relics on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds are conspicuous reminders of Germany’s darkest past. But they also created a very special responsibility. Since about 30 years, the city and its citizens have dealt with the Nazi past with increasing intensity. In 1985, the municipality established the first exhibition on the history of the Nazi party rallies, then in the hall inside the Zeppelin Grandstand. In 2001, with financial support from the Federal Republic and the Free State of Bavaria, the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds was opened in the Congress Hall. In over 15 years, around three million people have visited this centre. Since 2006, an Area Information System has been available on the historical grounds. Since 1995, the City of Nuremberg has presented the International Nuremberg Human Rights Award. And in 2010, the City opened the memorial site Memorium Nuremberg Trials in the Palace of Justice.

Since 1973, all buildings on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds have been listed as historic monuments. Monumental Nazi vestiges, such as the Zeppelin Field, the Congress Hall and the Great Street, are testimony of a dictatorial regime which in Nuremberg expressed its claim for world domination. On the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, the Nazi party staged its unprecedented state and party celebrations.

The Zeppelin Field, including its grandstand and the rampart-like stands, is the only complex on the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds which was designed and implemented by Hitler’s architect, Albert

Speer, and which was actually the scene for annual Nazi mass events between 1935 and 1938. Although the City of Nuremberg has annually invested significant sums into the maintenance of these buildings, now, 80 years after completion, the damage to the buildings is significant. The damage has meanwhile progressed so far that only a speedy general refurbishment could prevent permanent ruin. Following an intensive survey and a pilot refurbishment of two sample areas in 2015 and 2016, the City Building Department has presented reliable figures. Refurbishment of all buildings on the Zeppelin Field – to be implemented over a period of twelve years – is expected to cost around 73 million Euros.

There are several reasons supporting the argument for this maintenance. If nothing happened, the City sooner or later would have to fence in the entire Zeppelin Field for safety reasons, for the danger that passers-by could be injured by wobbly steps or falling masonry would be too great. The public would be permanently deprived of the entire area. In addition there would be the danger of an unwanted mystification. And letting the forums where the perpetrators celebrated themselves and their “Führer” fall to ruin would make it more difficult to remind people of the National Socialist regime and its crimes. This might contribute to playing down this regime of terror. And it would not do justice to the victims either. But the idea of demolishing the structures completely is also out of the question. For this would mean clearing away the Nazi history, disposing of it.

With the National Socialists’ crimes against humanity in mind, particularly a democratic Germany is permanently called upon to do everything in its power to make sure that this will never happen again. The building relics in Nuremberg can serve to demonstrate how the criminal Nazi regime staged itself. Nowhere in the then German Reich rituals designed to align everybody with the “national community”, to create discipline and to prepare the people for war were held to the

same extent. This makes the Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field outstanding historical places for learning which would also underline the importance of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds on the national and international memorial scene. Renowned academics therefore also consider the maintenance of the site to be necessary.

The Zeppelin Field is an authentic place for learning. We know about many people’s need to deal with the past particularly on such sites. This also will open up different routes of access in the teaching of history. The further the Nazi era recedes into the past, the more important will these buildings be which can be seen and entered. By providing more information, the City of Nuremberg therefore wants to make sure that the stone vestiges will continue “speaking” to us in the future. An extended concept for the use of this space for experience and for teaching has been proposed.

Maintaining the Zeppelin Field and its buildings will be a costly and complex enterprise. This is not about a restoration or even a re-building, but about safeguarding the status quo in the long term so that future generations will continue to have the opportunity to deal with the past in their own way. The City of Nuremberg faces up to this task, in the knowledge that this is also about a special national heritage. There are no comparable Nazi buildings anywhere else.

The project is still in its early stages. Nuremberg has already made its contribution with preliminary tests and by developing an overall plan for this refurbishment. Within its financial possibilities, the City will also provide means for the implementation of the project. But we will not be able to fulfil this task on our own. Significant financial support by the Federal Republic and the Free State of Bavaria will be necessary. First replies have given reasons for hope that future talks might be crowned with success.

Dr. Ulrich Maly

Overview of the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds



In 1927 and 1929, the National Socialists held their first party rallies in Nuremberg. Between 1933 and 1939, they extended the area around Lake Dutzendteich for the annual staging of their party rallies. The grounds comprise an overall area of about eleven square kilometres. In 1934, the architect, Albert Speer, was commissioned to design an overall plan. The central venues were to include the Luitpold Arena, the Zeppelin Field, the March Field (not shown in the picture), the Congress Hall and the German Stadium. After the beginning of World War II, on 1 September, 1939, building was largely stopped.

Zeppelinfeld

From 1933, the National Socialists used the Zeppelin Field for their Party Rallies. Between 1935 and 1937, the overall site with the grandstand ❶ and the rampart-like stands for spectators ❷ was constructed. Up to 200,000 people could gather on the field. Large parts of the central area are now used for sports.

Luitpold Grove

In 1933, the Nazis had the Luitpold Grove converted into a paved congregation area with stands for 50,000 spectators (Luitpold Arena). This is where massed parades by Nazi organisations, such as the SA and SA, with up to 150,000 participants were held. The ritual commemoration of the dead was the climax event. The “consecration” of new flags and standards concluded this stage production. After 1945, the City of Nuremberg converted the area into a park again. The Luitpold Arena, partially destroyed in World War II, was demolished.

Great Street

The Great Street, 60 metres wide and 2 kilometres long, was to be the central axis of the party rally grounds. When work was ceased, 1.5 kilometres had been built. But the street never served its function as a parade road.

Congress Hall

The Congress Hall was intended for NSDAP party congresses and for up to 50,000 people. The unfinished shell (1937–1939) was built to a height of 39 metres. Since 2001, the north wing of the horseshoe-shaped monumental building has housed the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds.

German Stadium

Right next to the Great Street, the German Stadium was to be built, as the world's largest arena, for 400,000 spectators. The foundation stone for the German Stadium was laid on 9 September, 1937. Work never proceeded beyond the excavation. Today's Silbersee Lake, in the hollow filled with water from the water table, is a reminder of this project, characteristic of National Socialist megalomania.

Municipal Stadium

The Municipal Stadium was built in democratic times, between 1926 and 1928. Later, the National Socialists used it for their purposes, and during their party rallies turned the sports arena into the marching ground mainly for the Hitler Youth. After 1945, the sports arena was repeatedly converted and modernised. In 2006, it was the venue for five matches in the Football World Cup.

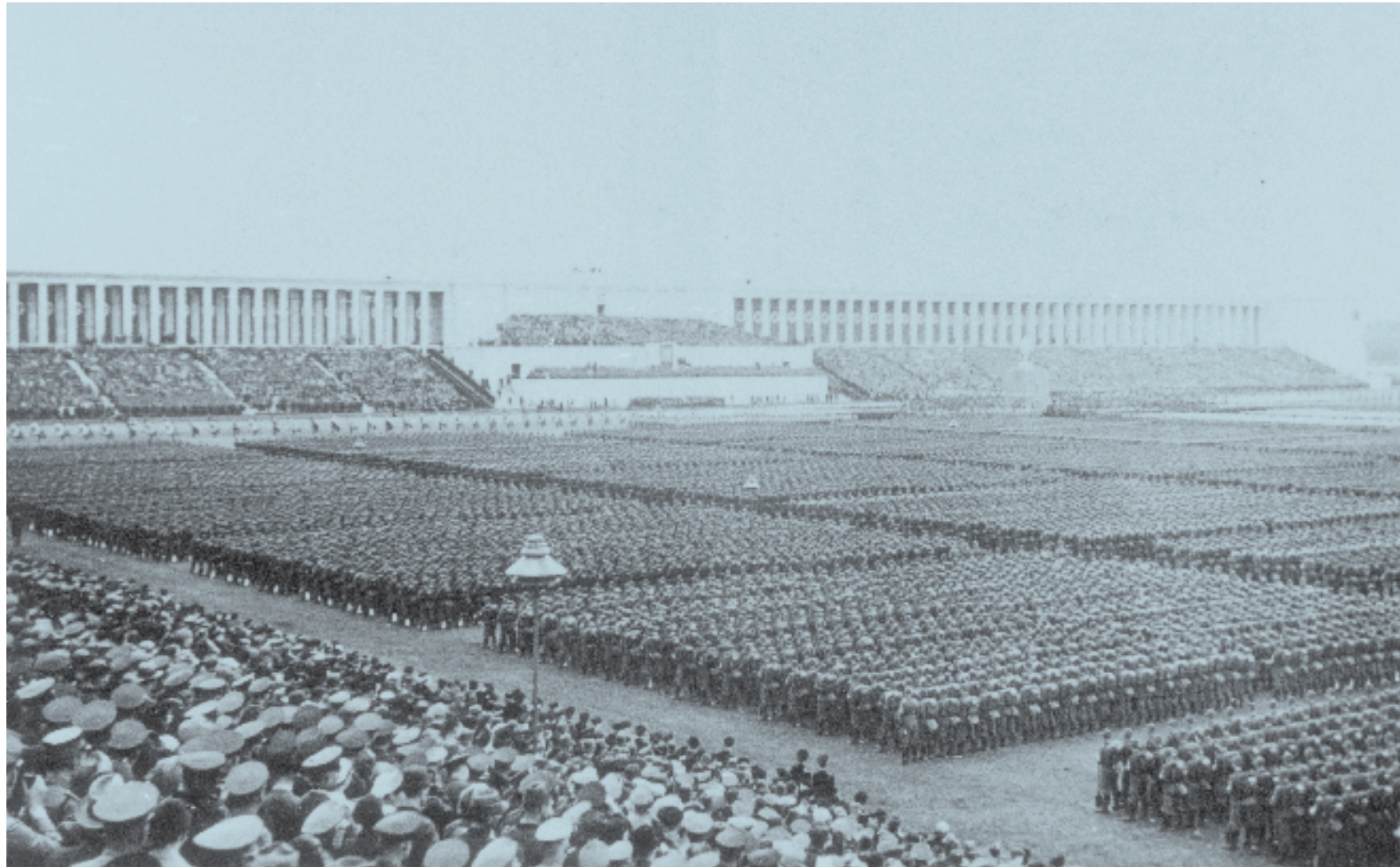
Place of Perpetrators and Nazi Show Stage

For the National Socialists, the party rally grounds were the central stage for their self-display between 1933 and 1938. The party rallies were the most important and costliest event of the National Socialist calendar of events. Many iconic images of Nazi propaganda were created during the party rallies. They were shown in school text books, in press reports and in TV documentaries.

Upon closer examination, the actual happenings of the party rallies turn out to be a repetitive sequence of marches, “march-pasts”, parades, speeches and torchlight processions. Stage-managed mass choreographies were also part of the party rally programme which finally lasted for an entire week.

As early as in 1927, the National Socialists came to Nuremberg for the first time to hold a party rally here, then a second time in 1929. For them, Nuremberg was a particularly “German city”, and they integrated the romantic Old Town into their propaganda as a decorative and symbolic backdrop.

First of all, the National Socialists could only use existing halls, open spaces and parks in the city. Their marching formations still had to squeeze in between flower beds and fountains in Luitpold Grove, and at that time building their own backdrop for their propaganda was not even considered. Clashes with opponents of the National Socialists in Nuremberg and numerous election campaigns prevented any further NSDAP party rallies being held in Nuremberg until 1933.



Roll Call of the Reich Labour Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst) on the Zeppelin Field in 1936.

However, when the National Socialists came to power, the framework changed completely. During the “Party Rally of Victory” in 1933, Hitler decreed that in future all party rallies were to be held in this city. Nuremberg became the “City of the Party Rallies”. One of the largest building projects in Nuremberg was begun. In 1934, Albert Speer was commissioned with an overall plan for the Party Rally Grounds. To implement his design, the recreation area around Dutzendteich was carved up, the sports areas belonging to the award-winning stadium complex of 1928 were destroyed, and the zoo was demolished and relocated to another site.

Speer’s Nuremberg buildings are an expression of an unimaginable gigantomania which did not only follow practical purposes, but in its core was to express in stone the Nazi regime’s claim for world domination. In 1935, construction of the Congress Hall for NSDAP party congresses was begun at Dutzendteich lake, but never completed, because with the beginning of the war, building was largely ceased. The Great Street for the Wehrmacht’s parades was carved out of the existing park and lake landscape as a gigantic swathe towards the south east. The March Field was planned as the south-eastern end of the grounds. But only a few of the towers were actually built for this gigantic field which was intended for show manoeuvres by the Wehrmacht. Neither did the German Stadium project for military sports events proceed beyond the very early stages. The plan to build “the world’s largest stadium” for 400,000 spectators marked Albert Speer’s and Adolf Hitler’s final turn towards megalomania.

An Altar for Hitler – the Design for the Zeppelin Field

The only area, besides the Luitpold Arena, which the National Socialists completed by 1938 was the Zeppelin Field – which until the construction measures had been a meadow for various events, called “Zeppelin Field” since 1909 when an airship landed there. Albert Speer designed the Zeppelin Field as a cultic space with a clearly visible hierarchy. On three sides, the field for the party rally participants was framed by spectators’ stands on rampart-like structures, also comprising 34 towers with six high flag poles each. Seen from the outside, these towers were a strong structural element, giving the entire field a fortified aspect. From the inside of the field, the towers were almost not recognisable as towers. The ramparts were to underline the impression of belonging and community for the marching masses.

Separated from the spectators’ stands by a wide marching road, the Zeppelin Grandstand, 370 metres wide, completed the fourth side of the assembly. This grandstand was higher than the other spectators’ stands and was especially emphasised by a double row of pillars on top as well as by two massive wings. A further heightened area in the centre was reserved for guests of honour. Swastika reliefs on both wings, two large fire bowls left and right, as well as a gilded swastika sculpture in the centre supported the building’s sacral character which Albert Speer said to be modelled on the historical Pergamon Altar (reconstruction in the Pergamon Museum, Museum Island, Berlin).

Hitler’s rostrum is positioned in the centre of the grandstand. All participants of the party rally who were on the field, including the political leaders, for example, had to look up to the “Führer” just as much as the other spectators. Seen from afar, the rostrum was further emphasised by the golden swastika placed above and by a swastika flag draped on it. The rostrum was positioned on the main

axis of the Zeppelin Field so that, for example, the men of the Reich Labour Service would always march towards the big swastika and the rostrum, thus getting ever closer to Hitler. The grandstand served to confront the “Leader” with his followers in such a way that every year his leadership was symbolically re-confirmed and thus strengthened. You had to line up before him and pledge allegiance to him. The spectators were witnesses to this staged oath of allegiance and thus became part of the “national community” which took a subordinate role to the “Führer”.

Below the heightened VIP stands, there was a large foyer, known as the “Golden Hall” today because of its gilded ceiling mosaics. Via two stairwells inside the grandstand, a



*Swastika flags on a tower of
the spectators’ stands on Zeppelin Field.*



Zeppelin Field, view towards the Grandstand, 1937.

cast iron door was reached, positioned above the rostrum and exactly below the golden swastika. The “Führer”, according to Speer’s original plans, would have been able to step down to the people assembled in the Zeppelin Field area, from above, as it were. But Hitler liked to drive up in a car during the party rallies, and so entered the grandstand from below, from the crowd of spectators. This, too, was calculated. Hitler wanted to stage himself as the “Führer” who came from the people and remained connected to them.

This staging of the “Führer” as coming from the people meant that Hitler probably never set foot in this foyer, the “Golden Hall”, historically known as the “Hall of Honour”.

The hall was only completed in 1939, and was to be used for the first time during the party rally of that year. Large sculptures created for the four niches in the foyer by Kurt Schmid-Ehmen were never installed. At short notice, the “Party Rally of Peace” was cancelled. On 1 September, 1939, National Socialist Germany attacked Poland and unleashed World War II. The “Golden Hall” is the only remaining interior planned by Albert Speer. It is an impressive example of Nazi architecture’s resemblance to stage sets.

“Girls’ Dances”, Tanks and the “Light Dome”

The Zeppelin Field was the most important event location for the party rallies. While the Luitpold Arena was firmly established as the site for the cult for the dead of the SA and SS, numerous events were staged on the Zeppelin Field. During the roll call of the Reich Labour Service, tens of thousands of labour service men lined up before the “Führer”. Large parades and show manoeuvres of the Wehrmacht were held on the Zeppelin Field. Tanks drove up, flak was fired at aeroplanes thundering over the field at low altitude, in 1938 the prototype of a helicopter landed on the Zeppelin Field. On the “Day of Community”, young men demonstrated “virile strength” in manoeuvres with tree trunks, while young women in so-called “girls’ dances” personified the female role of future mothers

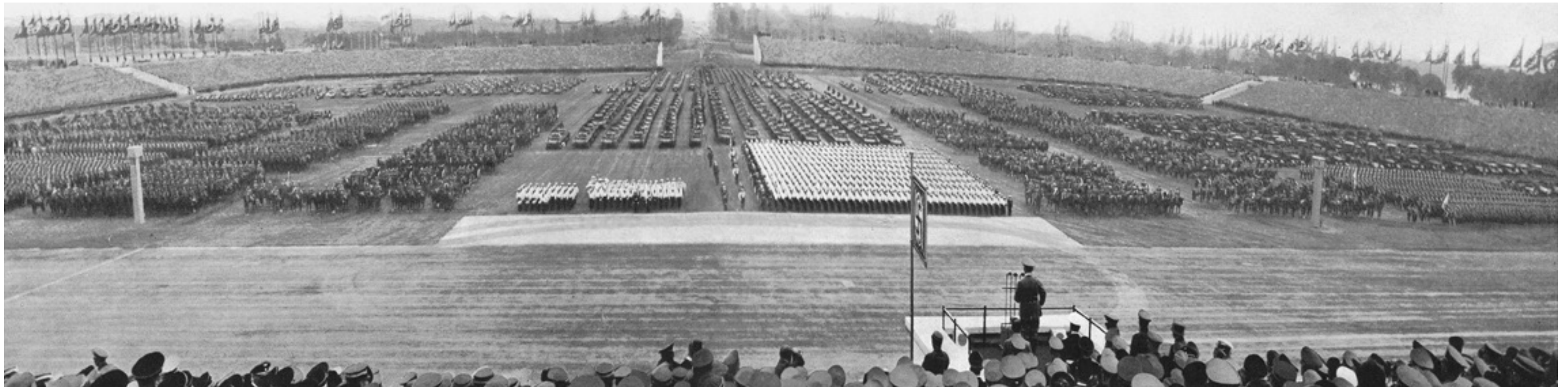
desired by the National Socialists.

The evening roll call of the political leaders on the Zeppelin Field served as a demonstration of the National Socialist “people’s community”, the climax of the staged celebration. The “Light Dome” generated by numerous flak searchlights positioned around the Zeppelin Field was to symbolise the “people’s community”, with an extravagance hitherto unknown in propaganda exercises.

The last party rally was held in 1938. While the preparations for the “Party Rally of Peace” were well under way, the Rally was cancelled without any reasons being given, just a few days before its planned start on 2 September, 1939. On 1 September, 1939, Hitler Germany attacked Poland, unleashing World War II.



“Girls’ Dances” on the “Day of Community”, 1938.



Panorama picture of a march-past on the “Day of the Wehrmacht” during the 1938 Party Rally.



Demonstration of anti-aircraft guns on the Zeppelin Field, 1936.

Photographs, film footage, even drawings and paintings documented the construction of the Zeppelin Field and the various events during the party rallies. Newspapers and magazines, the first TV reports as well as radio reports and the film "Triumph of the Will" (1934) by Leni Riefenstahl made sure that the Zeppelin Field was well-known both at home and abroad as a National Socialist propaganda stage.

So it did not come as a surprise that the US army was well aware of the significance of the area it had conquered in April 1945. On 22 April, 1945, two days after the victory parade on Nuremberg's Main Market Square, a second major parade was staged by the US Army on the Zeppelin Field, finishing with the symbolic blowing up of the big golden swastika in the centre of the grandstand.

This blasting, also recorded on film, is a counterpoint to the numerous images of the Zeppelin Field distributed by the Nazi propaganda, serving as a world-wide symbol for the defeat of National Socialism.



Grandstand lit by the "Light Dome", designed by Albert Speer, 1937.



Blowing up the swastika on top of the grandstand, 1945.

“Soldiers’ Field”, Car Racing, Music, and Sports – the Zeppelin Field after 1945

In the first decades after the war, the Zeppelin Field became a place which was mainly owned by the Americans, later on by the Americans and the Germans. First of all, US soldiers removed all symbols of the National Socialist reign. The US Army painted a large white A on a blue circle with a red rim on the towers and on Hitler’s rostrum – the sign of the Third Army. The words “Soldiers’ Field” were em-

blazoned in large lettering to the left and the right of the rostrum. The field where the Wehrmacht had presented its soldiers, tanks and aeroplanes only a few years ago, was the venue for US Army parades every year. This was a clear sign by the victors given against the still horrific backdrop of Albert Speer’s almost entirely preserved prestige architecture.

Until the 1990s, the Zeppelin Field was used mainly by the Americans – as a sports field and as a field for holding German-American popular festivals. It was only after the complete withdrawal of the US Army from its Nuremberg



US military baseball team on the “Soldiers Field”, around 1950.



Open-air concert with Bob Dylan, 1978.

base in 1995 that this open field was available for the city again.

Soon after the war, Nuremberg citizens used the grandstand and its surroundings for many different events. In 1946 and 1947, the Nuremberg Trade Unions staged small-scale Mayday celebrations on the grandstand on 1 May. In 1953 and 1955, major “Days for Germans from

the Sudeten Region” were held, and political speeches were made from Hitler’s former rostrum. The Zeppelin Field even seemed suitable for celebrations with a religious background: in 1963, American preacher, Billy Graham, held a “major Evangelisation” event on the Zeppelin Field, and in 1969, Jehovah’s Witnesses staged their World Congress here, with 150,000 participants.

After 1947, building on the first motorcycle races around the Zeppelin Grandstand in 1938 and 1939, motor sports established themselves again around the Grandstand now called “Stone Grandstand”. Starting in 1948, supplementing the motorcycle races, there was also car racing, continuing the tradition of the “Noris Ring” after the late 1950s, and still part of the German Touring Car Championship (DTM), attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

In addition to the Noris Ring races, it was mainly a great

number of major concerts by various bands which made the Zeppelin Field well-known beyond the regional boundaries. On 1 July, 1978, Bob Dylan was one of the first to give a major concert on the Zeppelin Field. For Jewish Bob Dylan, it was a very special moment to play right across from Hitler’s rostrum. Concert impresario, Fritz Rau, underlined the importance of this concert in a telephone call with Dylan, emphasising the attitude of the young German generation: “Bob, 80, 000 Germans turned their back to Hitler – and their face to you.” Besides Dylan, in the 1970s and 1980s, many renowned musicians and bands played



The Zeppelin Field as the central venue for “Rock im Park”, 2013



Racing on “Noris Ring” for the German Touring Car Championship (DTM), 2016.

on the Zeppelin Field: the Rolling Stones, Lake, Tina Turner and Udo Lindenberg, but, under the heading of “Monsters of Rock” also bands such as Thin Lizzy or Meat Loaf. Extreme noise nuisance, rubbish and alcoholic excesses resulted in major problems and led to the end of the “Monsters of Rock” concerts in 1987. With a changed concept, open air concerts continued on the Zeppelin Field, since 1997 mainly the “Rock im Park” festival with its central stage on the Zeppelin Field and up to 60,000 visitors.

However, the Zeppelin Field is not only used as an event site, but still is extensively used as a sports field. All year round numerous amateur footballers can be seen on the turf. Many clubs which don’t have their own football fields rely on these sports fields. Since the early 1980s, the Zeppelin Field has been the home of American Football. The Noris Rams have played quite successfully in the premier and second league in the Federal Republic. Parts of the spectators’ stands were furnished with wooden seats and serve as the Rams’ home stadium.

Preserving and Informing

For over 30 years, preserving buildings and informing visitors using the built “visual aids” have been the basis for municipal activities in dealing with the Nazi buildings on the former Party Rally Grounds. The City of Nuremberg is convinced that the original building stock must not remain uncommented, but must be used for the teaching of history.

Preserving the buildings and providing information about the history of National Socialism and the party rallies therefore have been going hand in hand since the early 1980s. In 1983, the City Council decided to refurbish the entry hall of the Zeppelin Grandstand – the so-called “Golden Hall” – which had for a long time been inaccessible to the public. After 1985, the hall was the venue for the exhibition “Fascination and Terror”. The refurbishment of the Great Street between 1990 and 1995 was also implemented with the road’s historic importance in mind. In 2001, this was followed by establishing the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds in the Congress Hall’s north wing.

In 2001, the City staged a competition for urban builders looking for solutions for an overall plan for dealing with the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. Architects and landscape planners developed many good ideas and part solutions. However, the most important result turned out to be that the architects, urban planners or artists could not give a final answer to the architectural remains of the Nazi time. It therefore seemed all the more important not to make any commitments which would prevent future generations from finding their own forms of dealing with the grounds and their history.

On 19 May, 2004, the City Council therefore unanimously adopted the “City of Nuremberg Guidelines for Future Dealing with the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds” (see page 23). Since then, this “basic law” has provided the framework for both city council and administration, also in their day-to-day activities.

According to the guidelines, the established central goals include: preserving the Nazi relics in their current form, using this authentic place for learning in the teaching of history, leaving an option for temporary artistic intervention and comment, and strengthening the area’s leisure and recreational function with a pluralist urban community in mind.

These are the central goals of the policy “The Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg – A German Place for Learning about the History of National Socialism” unanimously adopted by Nuremberg City Council’s Cultural Committee on 7 October, 2011. Preserving the built structure of the Zeppelin Field and the Grandstand is the prerequisite for using the potential of this historic location, mainly for additional educational programmes. This also includes a novel concept for development which is intended to provide those walking in the grounds with many opportunities for cognitive and associative engagement. On 8 July, 2016, the City Council unanimously adopted a comprehensive concept for the use of the grounds and for an extended educational programme (see page 30).

City of Nuremberg Guidelines for Dealing with the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds

Starting Position:

The City of Nuremberg is obliged to deal with the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. It is not a question of whether to do it, but how to do it.

The City of Nuremberg is aware that in doing this it bears the main responsibility for a national heritage. However, this also means that the municipality must not be left to deal with this task alone. The Federal Republic and the Free State of Bavaria continue to share this responsibility.

Goals:

The vestiges of the Nazi era are historical monuments and (teaching) resources and must be preserved in their present shape which is already only the remnant of their former state. (This also means that the spatial impact on their environment must be preserved.) The aim is neither the intentional decay of the built areas nor the reconstruction of parts no longer in existence.

The Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds with its Study Forum is the core institution for dealing with the Nazi Party Rally Grounds and the Nazi era. This educational establishment is to be successively extended according to needs.

Providing knowledge and giving impulses for reflection about the grounds must go further, though. The entire Nazi Party Rally Grounds must also be seen and used as a “place for learning”. This should be done in two ways:

Information panels on the grounds will give concise basic information about the Nazi Party Rally Grounds and the Party Rallies. In addition, further (artistic) interventions will be sought providing politically interested and accidental passers-by and leisure-time users with novel approaches to dealing with the area and the Nazi era. As an important “national heritage” site, the grounds would merit involvement of international artists.

Dealing with the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds must be an open process without a pre-determined end point. An urban planning or architectural “overall solution” valid for all times will not be possible. Nevertheless the city follows certain goals in dealing with this historical site.

The basic principle of these “counterpoints” to the historic heritage is to show reactions to the content and forms of expression of the Nazi era using a different language to that of the originators. In response to the Nazi architecture, built to last “a thousand years”, and its intended ideology, neither mystification nor monumentalisation would be appropriate. Nuremberg wants to counter the totalitarian system of the original builders and their architecture with the democratic and pluralist thinking of contemporary society. Any artistic interventions must therefore be seen as decidedly “temporary solutions” which should by no means be created “for eternity”. Open spaces should not be turned into museums.

The use of the area for various leisure activities is explicitly accepted and desirable. The recreational value of the park landscape is to be further strengthened with suitable infrastructure measures. As a recreational site for casual encounters and informal groups, the area would thus also fulfil an important function in a pluralist urban society.

Further commercial use of the area is not recommended. Any new building applications must be checked for their compatibility with above goals. Basically, no commitments must be made which would deprive future generations of the chance to find their own way of dealing with the area and to find their own answers to the Nazi heritage.

Visitors from all over the World



Group of visitors at the City of Nuremberg's Information Day, in front of the Grandstand, 2011.

As a much visited historical site, the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds have attracted visitors from all over Germany and from abroad. For quite a few years now, the users of the international travel portal, Tripadvisor, have voted the Documentation Centre Party Rally Grounds as one of the top ten of German museums.

A visit to the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds has also met with wide interest on this forum. National and international media reporting has further underlined the appeal of this historic site.

Comparison with previous years shows that interest in the

party rally grounds has continuously increased. In 2015 alone, more than 32,000 people in around 1,400 groups, including 130 from abroad, explored the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, on foot or by bicycle – guided by staff of the association “History for All” and other partners of the Documentation Centre’s Study Forum. The guided tour usually ends at the Zeppelin Grandstand which gives a good overview of the Zeppelin Field. The guided tours offered are mainly used by school classes and students from all over the Federal Republic, but increasingly also by companies as well as private groups of adults.

Brokered by various tour organisers, in 2015, over 5,000 groups with over 230,000 guests took part in a sight-seeing tour of Nuremberg. The former Nazi Party Rally Grounds with the Zeppelin Grandstand are a fixed element – and often the focus of these tours. Bus tours are mainly used by visitors from English-speaking countries (USA, Australia and New Zealand, including numerous US Army veterans) who are visiting Nuremberg.

In addition to more than 230,000 people visiting the Zeppelin Grandstand and Zeppelin Field on a guided tour, there are many individual visitors who use the Area Information System and their travel guides to explore the grounds independently. Their number – based on an estimated annual 250,000 visitors to the Documentation Centre – may be assumed to be at least 100,000 per year. A study undertaken by the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen Nürnberg in summer 2016, and commissioned by the City of Nuremberg’s Department of Culture, provided an evaluation of visitors to the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds and supports this assumption: based on observa-

tion and random sample counts, the number of visitors to the Zeppelin Grandstand alone may be estimated at over 1,000 per day during the summer months.

663 visitors were interviewed in the course of this study, and about one fifth of them were from abroad, with the majority coming from English-speaking countries (particularly from the USA and Great Britain, but also from Canada and Australia), followed by people from neighbouring European states. When asked about their interest in the grounds, the majority of people interviewed wanted to use their Nuremberg visit to comprehend the mere size of the grounds, to experience history, and to see National Socialist architecture. Referring to their personal learning experience, nearly three quarters of the people interviewed attached major value to a tour of the grounds in addition to a visit to the Documentation Centre. In particular the Zeppelin Field was counted among the sites people absolutely wanted to see.

Citizens from Nuremberg and its surroundings also make use of every opportunity to learn more about history and about future plans for dealing with the Nazi buildings. About 2,000 interested people each attended the two most recent “Information Days Zeppelin Field” organised by the City of Nuremberg in April 2015 and October 2016. In over 60 guided tours, they gained insight into the history of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, and into the current state of the stands and the grandstand, as well as possible plans for further use. Many participants asked about the measures for maintenance of the grandstand and stands, suggested by the City Building Department.

Since the 1970s, the City has repeatedly held conferences and symposiums exploring topics relating to the built Nazi heritage. For the 10th anniversary of the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds, in 2011, experts both from home and abroad, under the heading “Preservation or Decay? The Future of the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg” explored the future of the grounds from an educational, cultural science, tourist and monument conservation perspective. Experts and audi-

ence were agreed in pleading for the preservation of the grandstand and stands. Continuing this series of events, in October 2015, internationally renowned academics again met for the symposium “Maintain! Why? Perspectives for the Zeppelin Grandstand, the Zeppelin Field and the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds”. They supported the City of Nuremberg’s efforts with numerous suggestions for modern ways of dealing with this historic location.

“The testimonies of the darkest chapter of German history must be preserved for future generations as a monument and must on no account decay even further. [...] Conclusion: Save the stone vestiges of Nuremberg!”

Letter to the editor of the “Nürnberger Nachrichten” of 03.10.2013.



Group of visitors at the City of Nuremberg’s Information Day, in front of the Grandstand, 2011.

“If the scope of political education is not only to comprise the remembrance of the victims, but also a critical look at dictatorship, we need both victims’ and perpetrators’ sites. Without celebrations with an educational purpose and without propaganda, the later subordination, exploitation and extermination of the areas occupied during the war would have been unthinkable. And locations of propaganda of a calibre comparable to Nuremberg are today few and far between, particularly in Germany.”

Prof. Dr. Paul Zalewski, Viadrina European University Frankfurt/Oder, during the Symposium “Maintain! Why? Perspectives for Zeppelin Field, Zeppelin Grandstand and the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds” in October 2015.

“This immediate visual experience of a central element of Nazi ideology at the historic site which may be activated as a ‘carrier of memory’ is the reason for the decisive importance of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. [...] This is about the venue of the events, a location to which you can point even after the transformation of centuries and explain: ‘This is where it happened.’ This location provides historic continuity of remembrance.”

Prof. Dr. Winfried Nerdinger, Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism in Munich, during the Symposium “Maintain! Why? Perspectives for Zeppelin Field, Zeppelin Grandstand and the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds” in October 2015.

“Whenever I have visitors from abroad, they ask me to show them Nuremberg Old Town, but also the Zeppelin Field. This crumbling site with its still noticeable shadows of a fallen empire of hell has continued to fascinate visitors. It is necessary to give a face to horror.”

Letter to the editor of the “Nürnberger Zeitung” of 13.01.2014.



The ceiling mosaic in the Zeppelin Grandstand’s hall led to its later name “Golden Hall”.

“The young people want to preserve the Zeppelin Grandstand [...] In a study by GfK [Association for Consumer Research] 68 per cent [of 500 Nuremberg citizens over the age of 14 interviewed by telephone] were in favour of refurbishing the Zeppelin Grandstand, 14 per cent thought that it should be left to controlled decay, 9 per cent demanded that it should be demolished, and 7 per cent said that they were not interested in what happened to this building. In particular people between 14 and 29 years of age were in favour of the preservation of the Zeppelin Grandstand (79 per cent).”

Report by the “Nürnberger Zeitung” of 06.06.2014 about a study conducted by the “Association for Consumer Research”.



The 2016 Information Day also took in the ramparts.

“Nevertheless, with its size and the vestiges remaining today, the former Nazi Party Grounds is an important historic location, for there is no other site remaining from the time of the ‘Third Reich’ which is of this scale and which might be comparable, even in its bad state of repair, giving today’s visitors an impression of the role of mass propaganda and the self-staging of a criminal regime.”

Prof. Dr. Christoph Cornelißen, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main, during the Symposium “Maintain! Why? Perspectives for Zeppelin Field, Zeppelin Grandstand and the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds” in October 2015.

“In view of young people’s enormous lack of knowledge concerning the two German dictatorships during the 20th century, the challenge is to use effective means for better transfer of knowledge, such as political education, both in schools and in extracurricular programmes. Authentic locations, such as the former ‘Party Rally Grounds’ in Nuremberg, play an essential role for historical culture in Germany which is to be maintained and used in cooperation with the respective federal states.”

Excerpt from the coalition agreement of the Federal Government for the legislative period 2013-2017.

“Unlike the former Berlin ministries of Göring and Goebbels, which by being converted into ministries of the Federal Republic were denazified, as it were [...], the Zeppelin Grandstand, in spite of its mutilation – the top rows of pillars were blown up in 1967 – still impressively demonstrates the bourgeois boastfulness, but also the decorative cleverness of the Nazi dictatorship. This is how it must stay.”

Dieter Bartetzko in “Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung” of 30.11.2014.



A guide supporting his explanations with visual aids.

“The building stock [of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds] should be preserved; controlled decay is no solution. For what is to become of the area then? A heap of stones surrounded by a large blocked-off area which becomes a forbidden adventure playground? No, that’s not possible. The Party Rally Grounds are the only remaining Nazi propaganda building.”

Karl Freller, Director of the Foundation for Bavarian Memorial Sites, in a conversation with the “Nürnberger Nachrichten” of 26.06.2015.

“I am a 26-year-old woman from Nuremberg. Whenever university friends come to Nuremberg with me, I take them to the Party Rally Grounds. I only get positive reactions, because it is (still) possible to visit the grounds. For my younger generation this is a means of understanding our national past better. Future generations should not be deprived of this opportunity!”

From the visitors’ book on the “Information Day Zeppelin Field” (24.9.2011)

Future Educational Programmes on the Grounds: New Access and New Topics

The former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg are considered the largest remaining ensemble of Nazi state and party architecture in the Federal Republic of Germany. They are seen as the central site of propaganda and self-staging of the Nazi regime and are internationally perceived as a symbol. Until the present, the grounds and remaining structures have formed a “landscape of remembrance” which shows traces of both the National Socialist rule of terror and the many and varied ways of dealing with the grounds between the end of the war and today.

Since November 2001, the Documentation Centre Party Rally Grounds, in cooperation with the Study Forum's educational partners, has been doing internationally renowned and acclaimed educational work. Increasing visitor numbers, but also changes in society necessitate a structural extension of the centre as well as the further development of content of the programmes offered. In future, the new overall concept will to a larger extent also include the historic site of the former Nazi Party Grounds as an integral part of its three-module educational work:

- the planned *Forum for History Past and Present* – a further development of the Documentation Centre's existing Study Forum – will pool the accompanying educational programmes;
- an extended Area Information System will improve independent exploration of the grounds
- the revised permanent exhibition will be more strongly linked to the grounds. Coordinated in content, didactical methods and design, it will open up manifold possibilities for visitors to access the site and gain in-depth insights.

Forum for History Past and Present

In an open exchange and critical dialogue, historical topics will be discussed with their links to the present day. A stronger emphasis on the many layers of this historic site will be an important focus in this work. It would not only address the grounds' function as the venue for the NSDAP's party rallies until 1938. But in addition, the grounds and in particular the Zeppelin Grandstand and Zeppelin Field would also be explored as sites of society's different ways of dealing with the built Nazi heritage in Nuremberg – from the occupation by American soldiers right through to “Rock im Park”.

The educational work done by the new Forum for History Past and Present will necessitate an extension of the space currently available. A project room inside the Zeppelin Grandstand, as well as further new rooms in the Documentation Centre are intended to enable groups to follow a modern and in-depth approach to dealing with the historic site of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. The historic ensemble of the Zeppelin Field allows a better way of dealing with the events of the party rallies themselves, with the techniques of Nazi staging and the actual running order of the massed marches explained and illustrated immediately “on site”. In addition, a new project room inside the Zeppelin Grandstand would open up experimental and creative ways of accessing the history of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. This would conceivably include trying out various forms of expression – from the visual arts, music, theatre and literature to film and photography.

Extended Area Information System – Space for Experiences

Better means of orientation are planned for the grounds, such as marked themed routes and guidance systems between the various stations, services offered for mobile devices, and tactile maps. The various parts of the grounds with their built Nazi heritage are to be made more easily comprehensible in their historic complexity.

The Zeppelin Grandstand and the surrounding ramparts are the focus of visitor interest. Significant parts of both are currently not accessible to the public. Future development is planned to make the entire ensemble area open to the public. This will show the ensemble character of Zeppelin Field and Zeppelin Grandstand and allow new perspectives of the historic site. The view from the grandstand to the event area, which is already possible today, then was mainly the privilege of state and party elites, of guests of honour and media representatives. It will now be supplemented by the perspectives of participants and spectators of the mass events, the view from below. A free and democratic society, using the Zeppelin Field, will in future be able to increasingly make its mark here.

The interiors of the ensemble will also be made accessible to individual visitors. One of the towers of the ramparts will be opened up as an example, illustrating the contrast between the tower's outer fortress-like impression and its banal function as a toilet block. The central tract of the Zeppelin Grandstand (“Golden Hall”) will also be opened to the public. The entrance hall will comprise a central meeting point which as a “subsidiary” of the Documenta-

tion Centre will provide information about the history on site. The materials used in this room will make a significant contribution to deconstructing the room's spatial effect and to placing it in an historical context. The rooms must be apparent to visitors as “historic exhibits” so that the effect intended by the Nazi rulers is not reproduced, but critically questioned.

The Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field are of outstanding importance for a German culture of remembrance. There is no comparable Nazi heritage in all of Germany. Here, a freely accessible field and its built structures with access to the interior spaces will provide good opportunities for dealing with the Nazi regime in a cognitive and associative manner, unlike at any other German site. It is a national task to use this potential for historical-political education with a new, innovative approach to teaching.

The Buildings on the Zeppelin Field: An Endangered Historic Site

Formally, after 1935, the “Special Purpose Association Nuremberg Party Rallies” was the promoter and financier of the Party Rally Grounds. Its members included the German Reich, the State of Bavaria, the NSDAP and the City of Nuremberg whose contribution included making available the land. After 1945, most of the property was again handed over to the City – but now complete with the relics from the Nazi era. In 1973, with a revised version of the Bavarian Law on the Preservation of Historic Monuments, a preservation order was put on all buildings on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. The monumental Nazi style was to be passed down to future generations. Since then, the City of Nuremberg has been challenged even more to safeguard the upkeep of the buildings.



Strong vegetation has affected all ramparts surrounding the field.

Stocktaking

The Zeppelin Field is the largest built structure still remaining on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. The field is almost square in form and comprises an overall area of almost 140,000 square metres. The Zeppelin Grandstand forms its northern side, with a length of about 370 metres and a height (measured at the central block) of about 21 metres above street level. The U-shaped ramparts form the other three sides, including 34 towers and steps for spectators.



Weeds covering the steps of the ramparts between the towers.

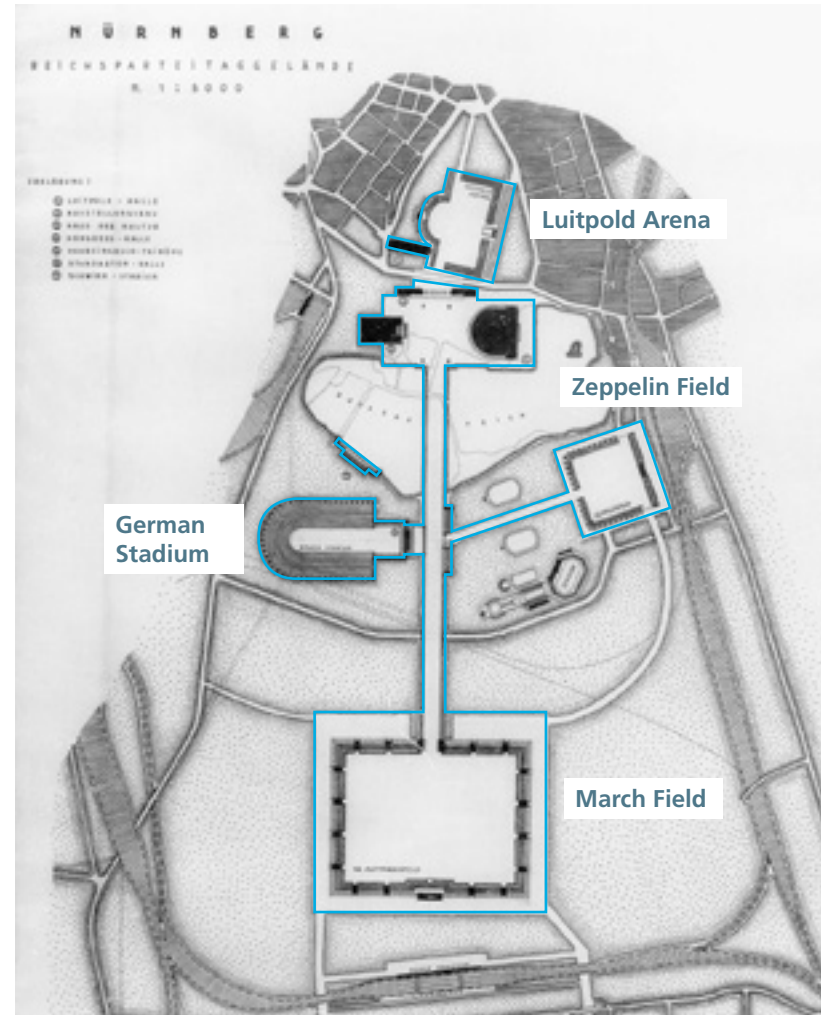
Building History

The grandstand, the towers and the ramparts could not be built in one go, because the building project was far too large. Nevertheless, after 1933, a suitable area with stands and podiums was needed for the party rallies, and the decision was made to use the Zeppelin meadow close to the municipal stadium. On this site, there had been an area with compressed soil for major gymnastics events (designed by the head of the City Garden Department, Alfred Hensel) which corresponded roughly to today's Zeppelin Field.

As in the development of the area surrounding the World War I memorial to become the Luitpold Arena, existing structures were also used here. This can be clearly seen on the site map. All newly planned structures such as the "German Stadium" and the "March Field" are at right angles to the "Great Street", while the "Luitpold Arena" and the "Zeppelin Field" have no orthogonal relation to it.

The Zeppelin meadow was already surrounded by ramparts with steps for spectators to stand on, but for the 1933 party rally, additional wooden stands were erected.

After this, the overall ensemble was constructed in various building stages between 1934 and 1938, with remaining works extending well into 1939. The grandstand's interior was never completely finished. Building was not only regularly interrupted for the party rallies, but the entire structure had to be usable and presentable during this time each year. This can be retraced using old photographs, where the grandstand's exterior changed from year to year. This is why the grandstand construction is so heterogeneous: it literally "grew" over the course of years.



1935 site map.



Zeppelin Grandstand during the 1935 Party Rally. The upper steps and the eagle on the central grandstand were constructed from wood.



Zeppelin Grandstand before the 1936 Party Rally. By that time, the shell of the building and the outer façades were mostly completed.

Treatment after 1945

The Zeppelin Field was not used after 1939, and the last remaining building works inside the grandstand were never completed. The most dramatic change for the grandstand after the war happened in 1967 when the rows of pillars were blown up. Damage to the roof construction (large stones at around 8 meters' height loosening) had been observed and triggered the city administration's decision to take this drastic step.

The detonation caused severe damage to the rest of the building; debris remained inside the building and then pressed against ceilings and outside walls. In the early 1970s, the two so-called "end pylons" were also taken down, again with debris remaining in the interior of the building.

After this, the two long side wings of the grandstand were sealed off from the outside, doors were bricked up; openings to stairwells were closed with concrete. Only the central building with the "Golden Hall" remained accessible. It was only in 2007 that the entrances to the side wings were opened up again in order to enable a survey of the state of repair of the building. A wide spectrum of damage came to light: broken stairs, corroded ceiling armatures, severe infestation with dry rot and mould, destroyed drainage conduits and many other defects which made it clear that urgent action was required.

In 2008, the debris was completely removed from the interior of the building, revealing some perfectly preserved elements from the row of pillars. These parts were salvaged from the debris and stored.



Shortly before the blasting: the ceiling of the row of pillars on the Zeppelin Grandstand is damaged in many places. Experts talk about "total damage".



Demolition of the rows of pillars on the main grandstand, 1967.



Fencing along the complete rear of the Grandstand protecting pedestrians against falling masonry.

Cost of Making the Building Safe

After removal of the debris, the City of Nuremberg Building Department organised a first survey programme of weight-bearing walls, ceilings and natural stone elements. The results were discussed and evaluated with external experts so that an initial costing for making the buildings secure could be calculated. At that time, the Building Department estimated the cost of making the entire ensemble safe at between 65 and 70 million Euros.

In view of this amount, the City of Nuremberg in 2014 decided to commission an in-depth survey at the same time as a pilot refurbishment of some sample areas. The City of Nuremberg provided 3 million Euros for this measure.

A team of experts from various fields was formed: architects, structural engineers, geologists, landscape architects, construction physicists, land surveyors, as well as specialists on natural stone, concrete and harmful substances. In cooperation with the historic monument preservation



In many places, the facing falls away from the steps on the Zeppelin Grandstand.

authorities, various plans were developed for making the different areas structurally safe (façade, steps, interior of the grandstand, towers, ramparts etc.).

The first step was to do intensive surveys. Material from walls, ceilings and stair wells was examined using core drills.

One finding was that even walls deep inside the building were severely imbued with water. The experts particularly focused on the natural stone elements.



The drill cores provide information about the state of the materials in the Zeppelin Grandstand.



Damage caused by humidity is visible everywhere at the outer façade of the building.



Inside the Zeppelin Grandstand, humidity has caused corrosion of the ceiling armatures.

The different “varieties” of Jurassic limestone used in the building were analysed in order to answer the following questions: where does the stone come from, what are its qualities, are particular patterns of damage associated with particular types of stone? Some natural stone slabs were completely removed for this purpose.

The earth ramparts of the Zeppelin Field were also examined. This was to explore in particular their stability. In spite of the original planning and implementation as an area for mass meetings, the ramparts today can no longer accommodate as many people.

In a test field, heavy materials were loaded onto the ramparts, to further compact the soil. But the results were insignificant; there is no economically viable method to compact the ramparts.



Sample refurbishment of the façade ...

After the examination stage, various concepts for the sample areas were developed and implemented by specialist companies. The concepts were tested in practice to find out: Will all natural stone when processed actually behave as the stone in the surveys did? Will there be implementation problems? Will there be additional costs?

By the end of 2016, valuable experience had been gathered during work on the sample areas. Based on this knowledge, the cost of making the entire ensemble secure was calculated. In parallel, the Culture Department developed a plan for use of the site.

Now the cost for making the buildings structurally safe and for implementing the plans from the concept for use of the area are estimated at around 73 million Euros over a time period of twelve years.



... and of stairs on the Zeppelin Grandstand.



Trial on a section of the ramparts: compression with heavy sandbags is unsuccessful.



Two options for refurbishment are possible for the Zeppelin Grandstand: one with a concrete roof that can be walked on ...



... or a very simple sealing of the roof area which can, however, not be walked on.

What is Planned?

The most important issue for preserving the overall ensemble is preventing further intrusion of damp. Humidity is the cause of most damage to the structure, for example corroded ceiling armatures, frost damage to natural stone, infestation with dry rot.

Currently rainwater is still penetrating the former toilet blocks in the side wings. Here, the plans provide a very low roof on the former area of the pillar rows, with two possible options (area can be walked on, area cannot be walked on).

The humidity which has seeped into the interior of the building is to be combated in the long run with a venti-

lation system. Various trials during the sample area stage showed very positive results.

The largest part of expenditure on the building will be needed for work on the natural stone of the façades and on the steps. The goal is to keep as much of the original substance as possible without visually enhancing it. Trial runs in the sample areas resulted in much more precise information about the characteristics of the natural stone used.

For example, in 2009, experts feared that 60 to 90 per cent of the old stones at the façades would have to be replaced. Now expert estimates are 25 per cent. This will preserve the overall visual impression.



Natural stone façade before repairs.



Natural stone façade after sample repairs.



The steps of the Zeppelin Grandstand after sample refurbishment (in the foreground). The overall impression is unchanged.

The replacement slabs will be concrete building blocks matched in colour. Apart from that damaged sections will be levered out and repaired with supplementary mortar. It will be particularly important to repair the seams, so that humidity can no longer seep in.

The same applies to the large steps area on the Zeppelin Grandstand. Here, too, the overall visual impression will be preserved. The interiors of the grandstand and the towers will be made structurally safe. For example, some ceilings will need to be propped up. In most cases, steel props will



Securing ceiling mosaics with a steel net.



Making the interior of the Zeppelin Grandstand safe using steel props.

be used for this purpose. The ceiling mosaics in the side wings will be secured with a steel net, but not restored.

The steps for spectators on the ramparts of the Zeppelin Field do not consist of natural stone like those of the Zeppelin Grandstand, but are of heaped up and compacted soil. Dense vegetation has severely affected the visual impression of the ramparts. The actual use of the steps as a stand for spectators is to be made more clearly visible. For this purpose, the exchange of the top layer of soil to a depth of about 40 centimetres is planned, without further interference with the soil ramparts. The ramparts are stable, but (as opposed to the plans of the original builders) they are not suitable for use by larger visitor numbers during major events.



State of one of the sample sections of the ramparts after the exchange of the top soil layer.



For many years, the Zeppelin Grandstand has been a fixed element of city tours. Every day, visitor groups come to the Grandstand.

Responsibility for our History: Reasons for Refurbishment

In Germany, there are quite a lot of building relics from the Nazi era. In many cases, the buildings have continued to be used. The Olympic Stadium in Berlin has remained a sports arena, the former ministries of the German Reich in Berlin were converted into offices, the “House of Art” in Munich is an exhibition venue – even though, of course, everywhere the style of these buildings unmistakably points towards the time of building. In Nuremberg, the situation is a very special one, though.

The Party Rally Grounds designed by Albert Speer, with their various buildings served only one main purpose: as a forum for the glorification of the Nazi regime and the “political Messiah”, Adolf Hitler. A liberal, pluralist and democratic society such as that of the Federal Republic of Germany, however, has no need for places for march-pasts and roll calls for 100,000 to 200,000 people in uniforms, brought into line, or for a megalomaniac Congress Hall for 50,000 party members. This is why the Nazi buildings in Nuremberg could not be suitably, not to mention commercially, used after 1945. This is the difference between the Nazi buildings in Nuremberg and other major state and party buildings erected under the sign of the swastika during the “Third Reich” in Germany.

After 1945, the Nuremberg buildings remained largely in their original state. They were in no way stripped of their original character or even “whitewashed” – by conversion or new usage. Even the Zeppelin Grandstand is only rarely used as a grandstand today. The Zeppelin Field itself in its vast size is of very little practical value. Parts of the area are used as sports fields now.

Until the mid-1990s, the US Americans played sports on the field, and once a year, the ring road around the Zeppelin Grandstand (“Norisring”) is the venue of high class motor sport events. And the Grandstand is occasionally put to other “trivial” uses. But largely, these buildings have been in the way ever since, awkward, cumbersome, challenging. The City of Nuremberg is aware of this. Between 2005 and 2011 the City invested over one million Euros to safeguard access to the Zeppelin Grandstand. In addition, in the same period, over three million Euros had to be spent on infrastructure measures such as paths and roads in the immediate surroundings. The City has not only financed the upkeep of the buildings. With the exhibition “Fascination and Terror” in the Zeppelin Grandstand (1985 to 2001), the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds (housed in the unfinished Congress Hall since 2001), the Area Information System (since 2006), and the Memorium Nuremberg Trials (in the Palace of Justice since 2010), it has kept adding new sources of information. Its information policy aiming to enlighten people is closely linked to the preservation of the building vestiges from the Nazi era. The 2004 guidelines underline this attitude.

In spite of all the repairs, the Zeppelin Grandstand is rotten today. Since 2010, access for visitors to various areas has been prohibited for safety reasons. If there was no refurbishment, this would result in an accelerated decay within the next decade. It must be assumed that sooner or later the spectator steps will have to be blocked off. According to building experts, the site cannot not be preserved without a general refurbishment. First estimates put the costs at between 60 and 75 million Euros.

What Will Happen, if Nothing Happens?

From the point of view of both the City of Nuremberg and renowned historians and conservationists, this refurbishment is necessary, even against the background of this kind of cost. For the consequences of not refurbishing would be significant:

Without measures for their preservation, the Zeppelin Grandstand and the ramparts would gradually collapse. Measures for the safety of passers-by would have to be stepped up so that nobody would be able to enter the dilapidated buildings and possibly be endangered. Maybe the fences would need to become higher and denser. Use of the open space would need to be restricted, and the public would be permanently deprived of large areas – as was the case during the Nazi era. Then, those in power deprived the general public of large, accessible areas in a recreational urban setting. Thus, if the decaying buildings now necessitated further barriers, the autocratic appropriation of the Nazi planners would be victorious, many decades later.

Currently, there are various recreational uses. Inline skaters, tennis players, spectators following a car race, and music fans at rock and pop concerts, all of them a clear sign for a free, pluralist society, in particular at this symbolic site of the Nazi dictatorship. Such uses would no longer be possible in the future.

Instead, it has to be feared that with time, an aura of mystery might develop around the Nazi relics.

You do not have to subscribe to Albert Speer's "Theory of Ruins" – stating that the importance of the regime would still be clearly visible even centuries later, once the buildings were decayed. But mystification might be the result of this decay.

Leaving the site to decay would also mean that City and society would destroy part of their past. The Zeppelin Field is a source of German history. Just as nobody would dream of knowingly eliminating written sources of German history, these building relics must not be left to decay.

This is all the more true, because these buildings are unique. The relics of the former Nazi Party Rallies in Nuremberg are the only building remains in Germany



The "Golden Hall" central location for the exhibition "Fascination and Terror" (1985-2001).

which can clearly show how the regime staged and celebrated itself every year. Nowhere in the then German Reich were there any events even remotely resembling these rituals swearing people in to the "people's community", disciplining them and preparing them for war.

These stone vestiges will succeed in getting across more to future generations and visitors from all over the world than many a treatise, however well-written. The hubris of the Nazi state and its cynical ideology can be comprehended and grasped, both rationally and emotionally, when walking through the grounds and contemplating its buildings. In the sense of continual enlightenment and information about the essence of the Nazi state, the Zeppelin Field (and the Congress Hall and Great Street) are exemplary places for learning and teaching.

Thus the Zeppelin Field, including its stands, is of particular importance for the collective memory of people. It stands for a dictatorial regime which plunged humanity into disastrous war, brought unspeakable suffering to the world, and with the systematic murder of six million Jewish people wrote an unimaginably horrible chapter in the history of humanity. Letting these forums where the perpetrators celebrated themselves and their "Führer" fall into decay, would also make it more difficult to remind people of the Nazi regime and its crimes.



The Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rallies was established in the unfinished Congress Hall.

Outlook

The close link between making the buildings safe and providing a new, extended educational approach in the Forum for History Past and Present, in addition to the planned extension of the Documentation Centre, constitutes a decisive step forward for the Nuremberg way of dealing with the Nazi past and its repercussions.

In future years, it will be the Documentation Centre's task to put into concrete terms the concept for educational work on the grounds, as submitted in summer 2016, in cooperation with expert colleagues across all disciplines. The focus will be on working out a viable concept for dealing with the so-called "Golden Hall" inside the Zeppelin Grandstand. Educational approaches will explore new spaces, ways of access, and topics in pilot projects in order to make visible and critically reflect the various time periods and methods of dealing with this site as they have changed over the course of decades. Demographic change and a society which is increasingly culturally and socially diversified will necessitate differentiated programmes. In response to eyewitnesses falling increasingly silent, new forms have to be developed so that the history of National Socialism and its crimes may be suitably taught to future generations.

At the same time, the existing Area Information System will be extended by adding new locations, view perspectives and additional content, also taking into account today's changed ways of seeing and acquiring information. Here again, the Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field will be the central focus of planned measures, both with reference to refurbishment and access to a wider public. In future, further built vestiges visible on the



Organised guided tours – such as during the 2011 Information Day shown here – always meet major interest.

grounds are to be explored and developed.

Considerations concerning further extension of the educational programmes are closely interlinked with plans for refurbishment of the structures of the overall ensemble. These measures, implemented over a period of around 12 years, are estimated to cost around 73 million Euros. They are also the prerequisite for the implementation of a new “Project Room” inside the Zeppelin Grandstand, as well as for the planned opening up of the entire area to visitors. The building measures in the overall ensemble will be implemented in stages. First of all, the focus will be on the areas used by visitors, as well as on technically particularly

sensitive areas, such as flat roofs and necessary static measures. In spite of these comprehensive building measures, areas for major events are to remain available.

As established by a 2016 study undertaken by the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg concerning visitors to the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, the grounds meet with continuing major interest both from groups and from individual visitors. Motivation and reason for the visit correspond to the “double use” character of the site, both as a historic location and a leisure time area. High importance is attached to both the individual building remnants and the overall grounds: over 70 per cent of the visitors inter-



American veterans during a ceremony on the Zeppelin Grandstand, 2011.



The Area Information System, also on the Zeppelin Grandstand, provides basis information.

viewed considered the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds a meaningful and informative historic location enabling them to gain additional insight. A visit to the grounds – independent of the Documentation Centre – is seen to have a high stand-alone value for gaining knowledge. The Zeppelin Field in particular is a site people absolutely want to see. It may be assumed that this interest will further increase.

The envisaged development stages therefore constitute a unique opportunity for the memorial site “Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds”. Realising the existing concepts worked out by the building and culture departments will in future facilitate education programmes which do justice to the expectations and issues of today’s and tomorrow’s society in all its cultural diversity. The former Nazi Party Rally Grounds can be an excellent example of the successful appropriation of a historically burdened location in a new and democratic form.

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