



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 for the International Tribunal of War Criminals, has been linked to the era of National Socialism and the judicial response to it by the Allied Powers. In 1935, the ignominious “Nuremberg Laws” were proclaimed here. They have remained synonyms for the criminal Nazi regime worldwide. 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. For about 30 years, the city and its citizens have been dealing with the Nazi past with increasing intensity. In 1985, the municipality established the first exhibition on the history of the Nazi party rallies, then 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 the following 10 years, two million people visited this centre. From 2006, there has been an Area Information System about 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.

Monumental Nazi vestiges, such as the Zeppelin Field, the Congress Hall and the Great Street, are testimony to a dictatorial regime which in Nuremberg expressed its claim for world domination and worked to create the supposed “people’s community” and prepare people for the disastrous World War II. 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 1939. Although the City of Nuremberg has annually invested significant sums into the maintenance of these buildings, nearly 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. The City Building Department gave a first estimate of between 60 and 75 million Euros for this work.

There are several reasons for carrying out this maintenance. If nothing is done, the City sooner or later will have to fence in the entire Zeppelin Field for safety reasons, as the danger of passers-by being injured by wobbly steps or falling masonry is too great. This would mean that the public were permanently deprived of the entire area. There would also be the danger of unwanted mystification. In addition, letting the forums where the perpetrators celebrated themselves and their “Führer” fall into 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.

With the National Socialists’ crimes against humanity in mind, a democratic Germany is 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 were rituals designed to align the population to a national identity, to create discipline and to prepare the people for war held to the same extent. This makes the Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field outstanding historical places for learning and also underlines the importance of the former

Nazi Party Rally Grounds on the national and international memorial scene. Renowned academics agree that maintenance of the site is necessary.

The Zeppelin Field is an authentic place for learning. We know that many people need to deal with the past, particularly by visiting such sites. The site also opens up different routes of access in the teaching of history. The further the Nazi era recedes into the past, the more important these buildings which can be seen and entered will become. 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.

Maintaining the Zeppelin Field and its buildings will be a costly and complex enterprise. This is not about restoration or even 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 about a special national heritage.

The project, designed for a period of at least ten years, is still in its early stages. Nuremberg has already made its contribution with preliminary tests and by developing an overall plan for this refurbishment. As far as finance permits, the City will also provide the means to implement the project. But we will not be able to fulfil this task on our own. Significant financial support from the Federal Republic and the Free State of Bavaria will be necessary. First responses have given reason for hope that future talks might be successful.

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 ① and the rampart-like stands for spectators ② 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 Performance Venue

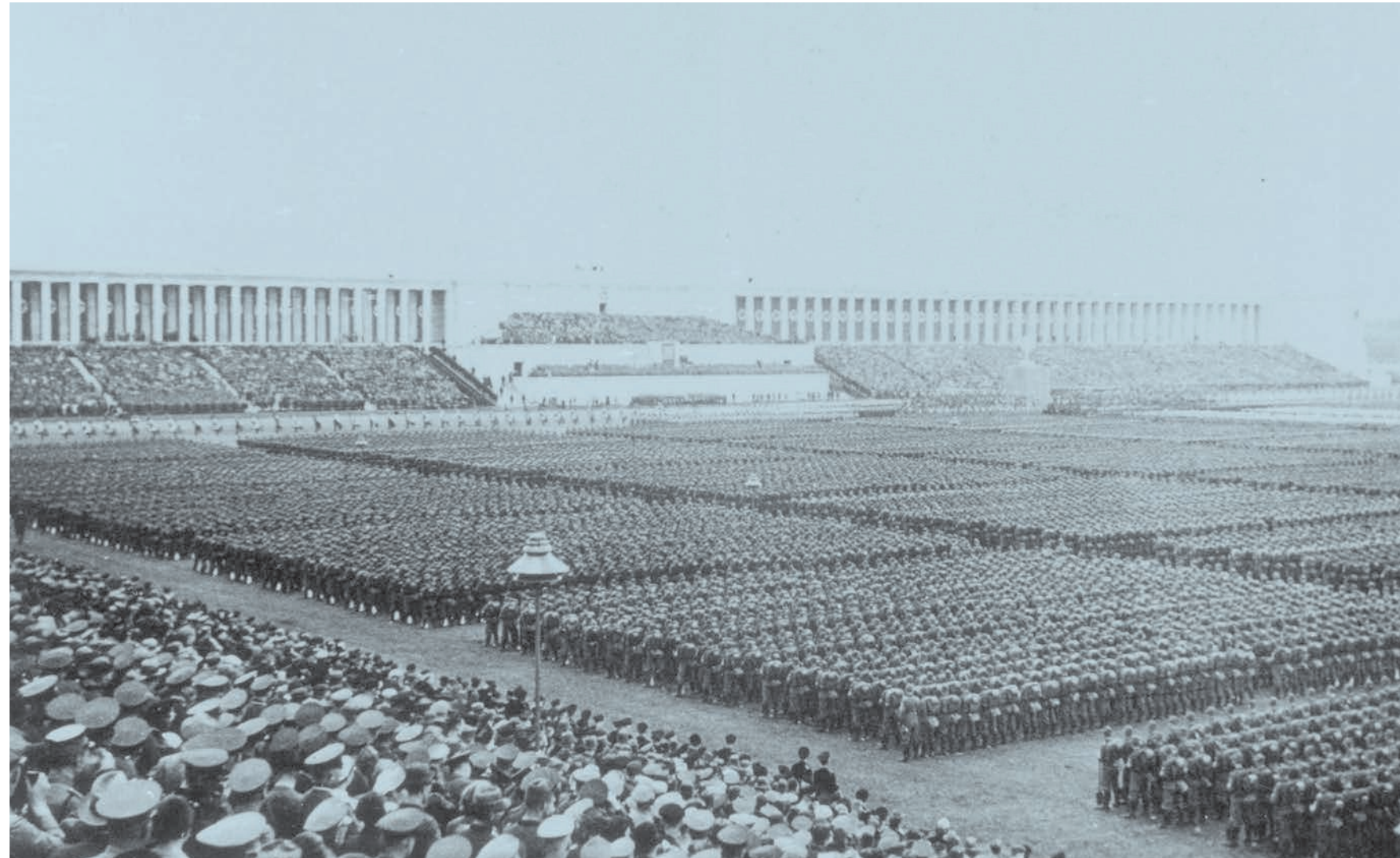
For the National Socialists, the party rally grounds were the central stage for their self-display between 1933 and 1938. The party rallies were the most important and costliest event of the National Socialist calendar of events. Many iconic images of Nazi propaganda were created during the party rallies. After 1945, they were represented in school text books, in press reports and in TV documentaries.

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

At first, the National Socialists could only use existing halls, open spaces and parks. 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.

However, when the National Socialists came to power, the framework changed completely. During the “Party Rally



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

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 to draw up an overall plan for the Party Rally Grounds. To implement his design, the recreation area around Lake 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 gigantism which not only fulfilled practical purposes, but at 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 Lake Dutzendteich, but was 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 1937 was the Zeppelin Field – which beforehand 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 spectator stands on rampart-like structures, 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 such. The ramparts were to underline the impression of belonging and community for the marching masses.

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”.

Separated from the spectator 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 spectator stands and was particularly emphasised by a double row of pillars on top as well as by two massive wings. A further raised 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 idea of

the building’s sacral character which Albert Speer said was 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.



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



Zeppelin Field, view towards the Grandstand, 1937.

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

As a result of Speer’s planning error, the “Golden Hall” was completely useless. As far as is known the foyer was never used during party rallies. In many cases – including the building of the Congress Hall – there were no plans for the use of the gigantic constructions already built or still to be erected on the grounds. Thus the buildings and marching grounds which were only “played on” once a year during the party rallies turned out to be a collection of unused spaces and wasteland which were attributed a pseudo-religious character.

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

The Zeppelin Field was the most important location for events during 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, hundreds 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

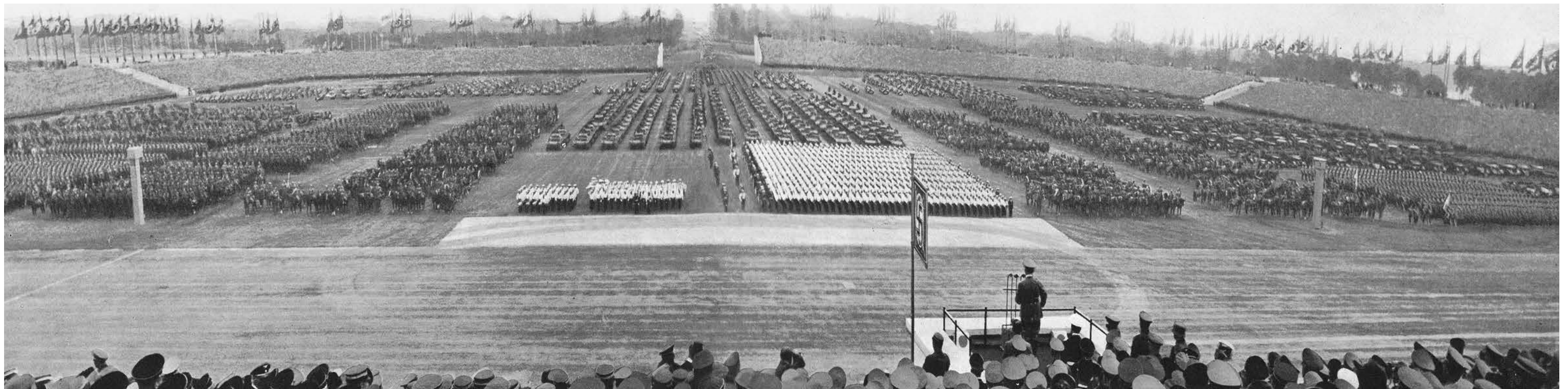
future mothers desired by the National Socialists.

The evening roll call of 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 preparations for the “Party Rally of Peace” were well under way, the Rally was cancelled without any reasons, just a few days before its planned start on 2 September, 1939. On 1 September, 1939, Hitler’s 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.

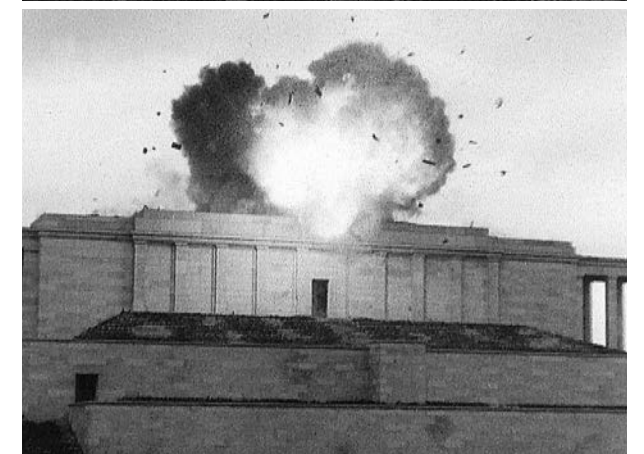
Photographs, film footage, even drawings and paintings documented the construction of the Zeppelin Fields and the various events during the party rallies. Newspapers and magazines, the first TV report as well as radio reports and the film "Triumph of the Will" (1934) by Leni Riefenstahl made sure that 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. 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 in 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 emblazoned 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 before, was now the venue for annual US Army parades. This was a statement by the victors in front of 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.



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



Open-air concert with Bob Dylan, 1978.

It was only after the complete withdrawal of the US Army from its Nuremberg 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 were re-established around the Grandstand now called the “Stone Grandstand”. From 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. Apart from the Noris Ring races, the Zeppelin Field was mainly known outside the region for the major concerts held there featuring various bands.

On 1 July, 1978, Bob Dylan was one of the first to give a major concert on the Zeppelin Field. it was highly significant for Jewish Dylan to perform 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 on the Zeppelin Field: the Rolling Stones, Lake, Tina Turner and Udo Lindenberg, and, under the heading



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



Racing on “Noris Ring” for the German Touring Car Championship (DTM), 2010.

of “Monsters of Rock” also bands such as Thin Lizzy and 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 change of concept, open air concerts have 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.

The Zeppelin Field is not only used as an event site, but is still 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 pitches 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 spectator stands were furnished with wooden seats and serve as the Rams’ home stadium.

Preserving and Informing

For over 30 years, the municipality's role in relation to the Nazi buildings on the former Party Rally Grounds has been to preserve them, and to provide information for visitors, using the built "visual aids". The City of Nuremberg is convinced that the original building stock must not remain without commentary, but be used for the teaching of history.

Preserving the buildings and providing information about the history of National Socialism and the party rallies have therefore 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 site of the exhibition "Fascination and Terror". The Great Street was also refurbished between 1990 and 1995, with the street'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 neither architects, urban planners nor artists could 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 ways of dealing with the grounds and their history.

On 19 May, 2004, the City Council therefore unanimously adopted the "City of Nuremberg Guidelines for Dealing with the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds". Since then, this "basic law" has provided the framework for both city council and administration, and for 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 includes a novel concept for development which is intended to provide those walking in the grounds with many opportunities for cognitive and associative engagement.

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.

Since the 1960s, the Zeppelin Grandstand has frequently been a topic in the national and international media. Numerous tourists from all over the world come here, for example to see the rostrum from which Adolf Hitler enthused the masses of his "people's community". Annually, around 200,000 people visit the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in order to reflect on Nazi history at this site. Interest is by no means declining, but rather increasing.

In 2012 alone, 26,000 people in around 1000 groups, including about 100 groups from abroad, explored the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds on foot, usually starting off with a visit to the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds, and guided by staff of the association "History for All". The guided tour ends at the Zeppelin Grandstand which gives a good overview of the Zeppelin Field. These educational programmes 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.

Also in 2012, the Nuremberg Convention and Tourist Office arranged for 950 groups to take a bus tour of the city with the Association of Nuremberg Visitor Guides, 40 per cent of them visitors from abroad. In the same period, the association "History for All" accompanied over 1,000 bus tours of Nuremberg – all of them guests from English-speaking countries, mainly from the USA, Australia and New Zealand, including numerous US Army veterans. The Zeppelin Grandstand is a fixed element of all these tours.

Assuming an average number of 40 people per bus group, for 2012 alone this would mean that over 100,000 people visited the Zeppelin Field and Grandstand with guided tours. This does not take into account the many individual visitors who use the Area Information System to explore the grounds independently. Their number – based on the annual number of 210,000 visitors to the Documentation Centre – may be estimated to be at least 50,000 per year.

On 30 May, 2011, the Zeppelin Grandstand was again the venue for a military ceremony: veterans from two American infantry divisions involved in the conquest of Nuremberg on 20 April, 1945, solemnly unveiled a plaque commemorating Nuremberg's liberation by the US Army. In English and German, the plaque now points to the grandstand as an international symbol as well as to the responsibility of future generations in both nations to work together to protect and defend the values the Americans fought for back then.

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. On 24 September, 2011, the City held an "Information Day at the Zeppelin Field". The response exceeded all expectations. In 40 guided tours, more than 3,000 visitors gained insight into the history of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, and the current state of the stands and the grandstand, as well as possible plans for further use. Since then, guided tours organised by the Documentation Centre, with particular reference to the Zeppelin Field, have been held regularly and been extremely popular.

Since the 1970s, the City has repeatedly held conferences and symposiums exploring topics relating to the built Nazi heritage. On the 10th anniversary of the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds, in November 2011, experts both from home and abroad discussed "Preservation or Decay? The Future of the Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg". They explored future ways of dealing with the site from the perspectives of education, cultural science, tourism and monument conservation. Over 100 participants used the opportunity to discuss with experts on site views on preserving the structures and concepts for future use. Experts and audience were agreed in pleading for the preservation of the grandstand and stands.



“Demolition is no option, (...) commercial use of whatever kind is no option, and reconstruction is definitely no option. And also repair, restoration (as in restoring a Baroque church) is no option.”

Prof. Dr. Egon Johannes Greipl, curator general of the Bavarian State Department for the Preservation of Historic Monuments, during the symposium in November, 2011.

“The preservation of the grounds should definitely be followed up. More guided tours and visits for the public would be desirable.”

From the visitors' book on the "Information Day Zeppelin Field" (24.9.2011)

Information Day 2011: The guided tours include the rampart-link stands.



“I am a 26-year-old woman from Nuremberg. Whenever university friends come to Nuremberg, 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 way towards 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)

Explaining the “fire bowl” in the “Golden Hall”.

“I am 60 years old, and we have lots of visitors. They all want to see the grounds. Reality has a different impact from films. The grounds and particularly the grandstand should urgently be preserved as a memorial.”

From the visitors' book on the "Information Day Zeppelin Field" (24.9.2011)

“A Zeppelin Grandstand without fibre cement panels or concrete mock-ups! The stands should be preserved responsibly and recognisably. But for the love of God it should not be a reconstruction.”

The place should remain a memorial. School classes and tourists alike can get a link to the topic via this building. I am in favour of open doors! (...) When you lock things away, people feel patronised. Rightly so! And in addition there is the threat of mystification. (...).”

Michael Kloft, Spiegel TV, answering the question which future he wished for the Zeppelin Grandstand, Nürnberger Zeitung 7.11.2011

“It is beyond dispute that this ruin must be preserved, because of its epistemic value for historians.”

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benz, Technical University Berlin, during the symposium in November 2011



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

The Buildings on the Zeppelin Field: An Endangered Historic Site

Officially, 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, the entire 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.

Stocktaking

The Zeppelin Field comprises the Zeppelin Grandstand, the rampart-like stands on three sides, and the interior field, an overall area of almost 140,000 square metres. The U-shaped ramparts are about 270 by 380 metres. The coping is situated about six metres above the level of the Zeppelin Field. On the inner side, there are steps for spectators to stand on.

34 towers mainly structure the outer side of the ramparts. In spite of their military defensive air, they house profane amenities such as toilets, stores and rooms for technical equipment.



Dense vegetation has affected all ramparts surrounding the field.



Weeds covering the steps of the ramparts between the towers.

The Zeppelin Grandstand

Like all the towers of the ramparts, the Zeppelin Grandstand is completely faced with shell limestone, so-called Jurassic marble. An accentuated middle section and two long side wings ending in two pylons structured the Grandstand. Today, only the northern part of the side wings is accessible. In 1967 the rows of pillars were blown up because facings loosened and blocks of stone fell down. Originally eight stairwells led to the rear of the grandstand via these colonnades.

These stairwells were bricked or concreted up or closed up with concrete, and for the past 40 years, the spaces have not been accessible.

The central part of the Zeppelin Grandstand is completely accessible. The so-called "Golden Hall" is located at ground level, and interior stairwells lead from this hall to the top level of the Grandstand. Both the façades and all seating steps are faced with shell limestone. They are laid on stepped reinforced concrete supports. The entire space below the reinforced steel ceiling was filled up with soil.



Demolition of the rows of pillars on the Grandstand, 1967.



Visitors next to fenced-off areas (left) on the Zeppelin Grandstand.



Everywhere split-off fragments of stone are conspicuous. Many blocks of stone are irreparably damaged.



A cleared stairwell inside the Zeppelin Grandstand.



In many places in the Zeppelin Grandstand, wooden constructions are needed to support the ceilings.



The interior stairwells in the Zeppelin Grandstand were temporarily closed off with wooden roofs.

Assessing the Damage in 2007/ 2008

In 2007, the Municipal Building Department opened up the areas which had been closed off after the blasting in 1967, and had them examined for stability against collapse. It turned out that the debris from the blasting had put massive strain on the ceilings and the walls of the side wings and had to be removed urgently. Damage to the steel construction and broken concrete, caused by rainwater seepage, became visible. This additionally endangered the stability of some of the ceilings. Because of the permanent humidity, in combination with stagnant air, extensive dry rot had developed in all wooden structures – former partitions of the toilets.

In order to secure the building, in 2008, the debris was removed, and temporary wooden constructions were inserted to prop up the ceilings. However, due to the permanently humid atmosphere and the mould and dry rot, the stability of these wooden props themselves is much endangered and they have to be renewed regularly. All conduits for roof drainage are still rotten. This means that rainwater continues to seep into the entire northern part of the grandstand causing further damage.

In the same period, expert engineers investigated the natural stone façades and stairs. They found that the majority of the shell limestone steps and façade areas were irreparably damaged. This is partly due to the strong influence of

the weather or rather the unhindered access of humidity, as well as to the poor quality of the building materials used. Most limestone blocks are permeated by fine cracks. Even though only a few cracks can be seen on the surface of some blocks, major damage becomes visible when they are taken out.

After the 2008 inspection, external experts from the Building Department assumed that 60 per cent of the Grandstand façades and of the towers, and about 80 per cent of the natural stone blocks on the Grandstand steps were severely damaged. The steps are even more exposed to the influence of the weather, since the rainwater can seep in deeper. Meanwhile, fine particles have been washed in below the steps, and there is a permanently humid atmosphere. This causes permanent pitting of the natural stone and undermines stability.

For a long time, the City of Nuremberg has annually repaired the surface of damaged steps, not least to continue to safeguard visitor access to the Grandstand and the occasional use of the Grandstand as a spectator stand for events such as the DTM races. This repair includes removing loose parts and replacing them with mortar. But without eliminating the permanently humid atmosphere below the steps, this is no sustainable repair measure. The structure of the building will be gradually lost. By now, even old repair sites have to be opened up and repaired again.

All the Grandstand's façades (in particular the northern rear façade) were checked for loose parts by 2008, and, if necessary, these were manually removed.



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

In 2009, it became obvious that the number of facing slabs in danger of falling down had increased dramatically. Removing all loose parts would have resulted in the loss of complete stone blocks in the façade and in endangering its overall stability. The City of Nuremberg therefore secured the entire rear front with a fence. Since then, palm-sized pieces of the façade have been seen to loosen from the façade. Some parts of the rear façade which could not be secured with a fence were covered with metal meshing – similar to securing a mountain side.



Securing crumbling ledges with wire mesh.



In many places, the facing of the steps on the Zeppelin Grandstand has collapsed.

The ramparts and towers were also examined in 2008 and 2009. Major damage was found in some of the tower roofs. As a consequence, one of the towers had to be blocked off completely. Some others may only be accessed for control purposes, with protective gear. The conduits for roof drainage are no longer functioning, and they end above ground in the area around the wall bases. This resulted in permanent humidity and thus damage to the overall construction.

The heaped-up soil of the ramparts has subsided by about 80 centimetres in the past decades. Today, the coping of the ramparts is exposed, and thus further damaged by the weather. Due to irregular subsidence of the ramparts and the thick growth of plants, the steps of the spectator stands have also moved and are no longer safe for access.

The interior side of the ramparts is completely cleared of growth once or twice per year. But the layer of humus on the former spectator stands has become so thick that these measures are not sustainably successful.



The rampart-like structure, both on the outside of the Zeppelin Field ...



... and the interior is dominated by lush vegetation in all seasons.



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 in to 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.



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

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 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.

The Next Steps

The goal of planning so far has been making all areas of the Zeppelin Field safe for access, without protective measures such as fences, wire meshing and temporary supporting structures. It is about achieving a state which would make safe access possible at all times. The plan is neither about reconstructing the site, nor about destroying intact parts of the buildings. First of all, a detailed schedule for refurbishing the Zeppelin Field, the ramparts and the Grandstand will be needed, preserving and securing the overall site, and doing justice to the historic location while keeping its character as a historical monument and place for learning.

So far, there is detailed information about the scale of the damages only for parts of the site. Any general refurbishment must be preceded by investigation and mapping of the damage to façades and building structures. This will involve architects and structural engineers, building physicists (for the humidity issues) and geologists (for natural stone issues).

The City of Nuremberg will combine the mapping of damages and the partial refurbishment of selected sample areas based on this mapping. This will allow the practical applicability of the damage mapping to be checked and thus the reliability of the cost calculations. The sample areas comprise part of the steps and of the façade at the eastern end of the Grandstand, as well as one of the interior stairwells. In addition, one of the towers of the Zeppelin Field with its adjacent ramparts will be included in the sample areas. After expert investigation and danger mapping in 2013, the exemplary refurbishment of the sample areas is to be implemented in 2014. On the basis

of information gained during this process, the cost framework for the refurbishment of all buildings on the Zeppelin Field is to be worked out by the end of 2014.

The City of Nuremberg estimates the costs for refurbishing the sample areas in 2013/14 and for the calculations for the general refurbishment at about three million Euros.

The subsequent refurbishment of the entire site is scheduled to last for a period of at least ten years, because most work is strongly dependent on weather conditions and because in addition, existing uses have to be taken into consideration.

Quite independently of the results of detailed expert investigation on the sample areas, the scope and the main points of the necessary works can already be estimated today:

All over the Zeppelin Field, numerous defects such as ceilings threatening to collapse, damaged natural stone facings, and broken steps on the stands are conspicuous. Since it is expected that the majority of the damaged façade elements and steps will have to be replaced, a solution in keeping with the rules for the preservation of historic monuments will be necessary, especially taking into account the overall visual impact. It is by no means the intention to create an impression of a completely “renewed” ensemble. It is most likely that large-scale building elements (e.g. the steps on the Grandstand) will not be fashioned from natural stone, but from cast concrete. The City will liaise with the relevant authorities for the preservation of historic monuments on the final selection of building materials.

What repair work is likely?

Numerous steps on the Zeppelin Grandstand are rotten and have to be replaced. In order to avoid further damage by surface water seeping into the buildings, proper drainage must be ensured. For this, presumably all the Grandstand steps will have to be taken up individually, and a waterproofing layer put down, before the steps are replaced. In addition, all drainage pipes will probably have to be renewed, including their connections to the municipal sewer system.

About a third of the ceilings in the rooms in the interior of the central part of the Grandstand (“Golden Hall” and adjacent rooms) are currently supported by wooden structures. Here comprehensive refurbishment measures using concrete will be necessary to re-establish stability.

In both side wings of the Grandstand, there are several stairwells with derelict toilet facilities. Inserted wooden props do not have a long life expectancy due to dry rot, so here, too, refurbishment using concrete will be necessary. In order to regulate the intruded humidity, a method of simple, but effective transverse ventilation must be created.

At the Grandstand’s façades – currently blocked off or fenced off due to falling masonry – the slabs must either be secured with dowel systems or replaced by new slabs.

The roof waterproofing of nearly all 34 towers on the spectator stands must be refurbished. New roof drainage

conduits, including a connection to the municipal sewer system, will allow the drainage of rain water.

Between the towers, the spectator stands consist of earth ramparts structured into individual steps with concrete stones laid at right angles to the steps. One of the problems is the vegetation which keeps growing back and damaging the fabric of the buildings. Therefore the top layer on the interior side of the ramparts will probably have to be removed and replaced by new material in order to prevent new growth and to compensate for the subsidence of past years.

The refurbishment of the Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field would not only safeguard secure access to all areas of the Zeppelin Field without protective measures such as fences, wire meshing or temporary supports, but also enable economically viable maintenance of the buildings and improved use for sports, leisure and major events. In the course of the refurbishment measures, the aim is therefore to remove annoying barriers and to clear historic sight lines. This would also include shifting some trees on the Zeppelin Field which increasingly obscure the sight lines between the Grandstand and the field.

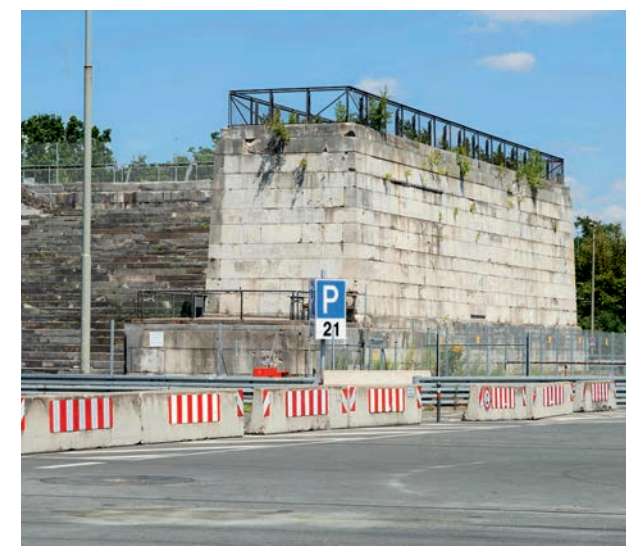
Sample Areas to Prepare for General Refurbishment



The marked sample areas were be thoroughly investigated in autumn 2013. Based on the results, they will be refurbished in 2015.



The refurbishment plan to be developed for Tower 8 will then be implemented on further towers in coming years.



The end part of the side wing is part of the sample areas on the Grandstand.

International Place for Learning

The relics of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg are the most important and almost the only building remnants in Germany which illustrate how the Nazi regime staged and celebrated itself every year. The Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field are outstanding historic places for learning which also underline the importance of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in the national and international memorial landscape. The Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field bring home the hierarchical relationship between “Führer” and the people, the concept of establishing a “people’s community” by excluding those “alien to the community”, as well as the stage-set nature of Albert Speer’s architecture. This reveals the questionable show-side of the Party Rallies, intended to mask the violence behind the scenes.

The aim of any refurbishment of the Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field, safe access to the entire area on foot, is not a purpose in itself, but the prerequisite for the intentional (re)possession of a public area which the National Socialists usurped for their purposes. For the first time in many decades, large parts of the Zeppelin Field will again be permanently accessible to walkers, leisure sports enthusiasts and tourists. Using the area in this way, a liberal, democratic society can thus mark a counterpoint to the demons of the National Socialist era.

This offers exceptional opportunities for historic and civic education activities. The major importance of this historic site for (re)constructing remembrance is obvious, particularly against a backdrop of increased mediatisation and fictionalisation of remembrance.



Organised guided tours – such as this one on the 2011 Information Day always meet with major interest.



This view from the Grandstand – with the exposed position of the former “rostrum” – reveals the dimension of the site.

The more distant the time of National Socialism becomes, the less dialogue with eye witnesses will be possible, and the more important authentic locations will be for teaching activities. The City of Nuremberg therefore wants to make the “stone witnesses” in the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds speak by making available additional programmes. Experiencing such buildings first-hand “in 3-D” is of invaluable importance for understanding the era.

This is why the refurbishment of the buildings on the Zeppelin Field will also be the basis for a new, comprehensive visitor concept. Using existing and novel methods and paths, various “viewpoints” are to be created where the intentions of Nazi architecture and Nazi propaganda can be experienced. “Didactic tools” are to be provided for visitors so that they can independently use these “viewpoints”, helping them with orientation, making them want to explore and opening up associations.

Thus, for example, a switch in perspective from the Field to the Grandstand will provide visual understanding of the hierarchical structure of the Zeppelin Field as a symbol for the National Socialist state. It will demonstrate how during the Party Rallies there was a clear allocation of roles for participants and visitors, producing images and emotions conforming with the regime’s intentions.

Doors which are locked today will be opened up for individual or group visits. Visiting one of the 34 towers on the ramparts will contrast the banality of its former use with the stage-managed propaganda. A walk across the width of the field in the enclosed square will give an impression

of how little an individual person counted in the political order of the “Führer” state. A visit to the “Golden Hall” with its cool and impersonal aura, its shimmering mosaic ceiling and its boastful attitude will give an experience of the nature of the Nazi regime which used intimidation as part of its political strategy. Via the “Golden Hall”, access to the former VIP grandstand will be possible, where the view will allow visitors to grasp the scale of the ensemble. Here, the staged relationship between the “Führer” and the “people’s community”, orientation of the masses towards the “Führer’s pulpit”, with the “political Messiah”, Adolf Hitler seemingly far above and at the same time very near, can be experienced at first hand.

The Zeppelin Grandstand and the Zeppelin Field also document the way Nazi history was dealt with after 1945. Starting with graffiti by US American soldiers in the central grandstand area, and swastikas painted over in the stairwells of the “Golden Hall”, right through to the “misused” fire bowl which was originally located on one of the side pylons of the Zeppelin Grandstand and which was colourfully painted in the 1980s. A commemorative plaque on the Zeppelin Grandstand, dedicated by American veterans in 2011, is a reminder of the US soldiers killed during the liberation of Nuremberg.



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



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

For the German culture of remembrance, this location is of outstanding importance. Above all, unlike any other place in Germany, the freely accessible Zeppelin Field with its buildings offers unequalled opportunities for dealing with the Nazi Regime both in a cognitive and an associative way. Using this potential for civic education is also a national task. It is noticeable that for quite some time, interest in the historic vestiges of the Nazi era in Nuremberg has increased far beyond the German borders. Thus, refurbishing the buildings on the Zeppelin Field and a related increase in educational opportunities will also signal

to the world at large how the Federal Republic of Germany is dealing with the built heritage of National Socialism.

Back in 1973, writer Horst Krüger described the Zeppelin Grandstand as an important relic of the Nazi era and demanded: “The fact that something like this existed, such relapse into barbarism, this should be kept for the world to see – for all time.”

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