

AC Meeting October 23. – 25. 2010 Berlin

Visited Projects

Hans Otto Theater, Potsdam



Playing theatre in Potsdam

To The pleasure of the inhabitants dedicated theatre was opened in 1795 under king Friedrich Wilhelm II in the Potsdam town canal. In the vernacular "canal opera" called house place offered for 700 guests. At the end of the Second World War the theatre was shot by fightings around Potsdam in fire and severely damaged. The ruin was teared down in 1966.

In 1946 the Brandenburg land theatre was founded and found his play site first in the castle theatre in the new palace.

The opening was committed with Iphigenie on Tauris by Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

A new temporary play place was opened on the 16th of October, 1949 with Goethe's fist I by the former restaurant society house and concert garden „to old Fritz“ in Zimmerstrasse.



In 1952 the theatre received the name „Hans Otto of theatre“ after actor Hans Otto who was murdered in 1933 as a communist and trade unionist by the Nazis.

A reconstruction agreed in 1968 of the Potsdam city centre with town hall and theatre – the opening was planned for 1974 – was delayed. In 1985 a theatrical construction was planned once more; the opening was planned for 1993 to the 1000-annual celebration of Potsdam. Still before the Fall of the Wall the laying of the foundation stone took place in 1989.

Nevertheless, the already finished shell was torn off in 1991.

The veteran play site in Zimmerstrasse was closed at the same time because of architectural and security defects. Spare play sites were found meanwhile in the shipwright's lane and in the Heinrich man's avenue.



In the old market a temporary theatrical house was established which should serve first for five years as a central play place and received from the Potsdam audience directly the nickname "tin-can".

In the shipwright's lane a play site was furnished in 1998 for child theatre and youth theatre.

In 1999 followed the decision to establish the long expected new theatre of the capital of Potsdam on the cultural area newly to be opened and trade area shipwright's lane (in the Berlin street). In April, 2003 the first spavin sting was put; in October, 2003 the laying of the foundation stone occurred.

For the construction time the director of Hans Otto theatre, Uwe Eric Laufenberg (2004-2009), put his first both playing times under the motto "on the way" and lured the spectators to exotic play places, as for example into the orangery in the park Sanssouci, in the pavilion on the friendship island or the French church. Also in the "tin-can " was played furthermore – she should have been up to her final closing in June, 2006 during fourteen years the accommodation of Hans Otto of theatre.

Cost for new Hans Otto Theater rised up to 26,5 Million Euro.

The New building

Architect and Pritzker prizewinner Gottfried Böhm sketched a 5-storey theatrical building with bowl-shaped, cantilevered roofs. Concrete and glass are the prevailing materials.

A listed gasometre was integrated into the construction body. On the side of the deep lake an also listed former chicory mill borders on the theatrical construction; today she accommodates a restaurant.

Upper entrance hall and stage hall have glass window fronts which release the look about Havel to the castle park of Babelsberg. For the evening stage performances the hall can be darkened completely.

The hall offers place for max. 480 spectators. Under the spectator's rows 50

elevator platforms are arranged with which the auditorium can be lowered adaptably and be raised. The backstage can be opened to the circular interior of the gasometre.

An orchestra pit enables the stage also for big music stage performances.

The concrete arrangement of the design and the execution of construction was lead out by Paul Böhm, the son of Gottfried Böhm.



New Hans Otto theatre was officially opened on the 22nd of September, 2006. within the scope of a ceremony the cultural and commercial relevance of the new theatrical location was appreciated under presence by Federal President Horst Köhler and the Brandenburg Prime Minister Matthias Platzeck for the city of Potsdam and was pointed out to the expected signal effect for the new federal states.

The opening found a wide media echo in the whole of Germany. On the week-end from the 22nd to the 24th of September five premieres stood on the programme, under it two premieres, a German-speaking première as well as Gotthold Ephraim Lessings "Nathan der Weise".

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