

# PCP Forum 34/2020: Baukultur and Protection of cultural property

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## **Isabelle Chassot: Editorial.**

Dear reader,

There is something promising about the concept of *Baukultur*. It reminds us that building is culture and creates space for culture. *Baukultur* offers new perspectives about a field that in recent decades has been overwhelmingly viewed from a functional, technical or economic standpoint. It focuses on people and their relationship to space. It asks how we want to design the space around us so that we and subsequent generations can inhabit it jointly, safely, healthily and happily.

The pursuit of high-quality *Baukultur* is of collective importance. It transcends individual interests and excludes no one. It is concerned with the careful stewardship of architectural heritage, landscapes and natural resources. It creates new values that are sustainable and long-lasting.

Across Europe, there is a growing realisation that the current challenges in relation to our living environment require a holistic and people-centred response. The concept of *Baukultur* is therefore gaining traction. Many countries are in the process of formulating a national policy on the subject, while the European Union and the Council of Europe have begun to include *Baukultur* quality standards in their strategies and position papers. Trade associations and organisations are also actively involved, taking action that is designed to appeal to a wider public.

If *Baukultur* is to honour its promises, efforts will be needed on a broad front. We thank the Federal Office for Civil Protection (FOCP) for honouring its promise to produce a publication dedicated to the subject. This issue of PCP Forum explores the complexities of *Baukultur* and documents the latest policy developments in Europe and in Switzerland. We call on you to play whatever part you can to support high-quality *Baukultur*.

## **Nina Mekacher: The Advent of Baukultur.**

It has long been generally recognised that two of the central challenges facing society today are the high-quality development of our settlements and the careful management of the landscape. There is a slowly growing acknowledgement that culture must be an integral part of this process and that policies designed to promote a high-quality *Baukultur* can produce effective, future-oriented solutions.

The Davos Declaration: Towards a High-Quality *Baukultur* for Europe, which was adopted by the European Ministers of Culture in January 2018, has had a galvanising effect. In Switzerland the Interdepartmental *Baukultur* Policy, which was released in 2020, sets out concrete goals and measures. In particular aiming at efforts to expand and enhance the *Baukultur* knowledge and expertise of the authorities, developers, planners, builders, and the general public. It promotes an interdisciplinary approach wherever possible, and fosters social participation.

A fundamentally new understanding of roles is needed so that a broadly supported *Baukultur* can develop beyond the Federal Administration's sphere of influence. Everyone – from experts to the local community – must engage with the issue of space and its quality.

## **Bernhard Furrer: The Many Facets of Baukultur.**

In all its manifestations, the nature of the places where we live has an enormous influence on our well-being. A high-quality living environment should interest society as a whole. *Baukultur* is the name given to this way of thinking.

Contrary to the literal meaning of the word, *Baukultur* is an all-embracing concept that includes aspects like landscape and green design, environmental issues, as well as social cohesion and integration. It also covers the processes that lead to the shaping of an environment worth living in, and the results of these creative efforts (used here in the broadest sense of term). Such an approach requires cooperation between experts from a wide range of disciplines, and concerted public participation.

The broader aim is to ensure a high quality of life in rural areas, villages, conurbations and cities in the long term and to promote the emergence and preservation of a cultural identity.

## **Elsa Brunner: Baukultur in Austria.**

*Baukultur* is a relatively new policy issue. The *Baukultur* Advisory Council was created in 2008 to provide federal agencies with assistance and guidance on the subject.

Taken together, the Federal Building Culture Guidelines and Incentive Programme adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2017 and the third *Baukultur* report published in the same year constitute a comprehensive, forward-looking federal strategy. The Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning is another important source of expertise. Furthermore, the number of policy agreements is rising thanks in particular to partnerships established within the framework of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2011 (or *ÖREK* partnerships). The most recent agreement concerns the strengthening of town and city centres. The 2019 policy agenda was dominated by the submission of the federal government's *Baukultur* strategy to the federal states and the subsequent debate, as well as taking steps to coordinate it with other relevant strategies like the 'Master Plan for Rural Areas' and the 'Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030'.

One of the primary challenges now is improving the legal, financial and structural framework.

## **Christian Hanus: The Role of Baukultur Within Post-Disaster Reconstruction**

A series of severe earthquakes in central Italy between August 2016 and January 2017 led to the large-scale destruction of historic towns such as Norcia, Amatrice and Accumoli. In response, several academic institutions began exploring the conceptual issues surrounding the future reconstruction of the historical town. One of the ideas which emerged from this process was the creation of a *Scuola di Ricostruzione* in Accumoli, as had been done in the town of Venzone (Friuli) which in the 1970<sup>s</sup> had also been destroyed by a devastating earthquake.

On 12 November 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding on the creation of a *Scuola di Ricostruzione* in Accumoli was signed at an official ceremony. To house the school, work began on building an earthquake-proof, prefabricated timber structure overlooking the old town. The reconstruction project is coordinated by Danube University Krems and the town of Accumoli, and can count on input from eight other universities and research institutions, as well as the town of Venzone. The project's partner institutions are currently developing an inter- and transdisciplinary teaching and research programme centred around the holistic reconstruction of the built cultural heritage of Accumoli.

The school focuses on rebuilding not only the physical structure of the town but also its economic and social structures and its cultural and religious life. Underpinning its work is the understanding of *Baukultur* as the product of and testimony to all physical and intangible conditions. The development of reconstruction plans is a collaborative process in which the school's students and

teaching staff work hand in hand with the Accumoli authorities, as well as the local community and planners.

## Reiner Nagel: *Baukultur* in Germany

*Baukultur* constitutes the sum of human endeavours to shape our built environment. How we plan and build is a cultural accomplishment. For a *Baukultur* to emerge, individual interests must take a back seat in favour of solutions that optimally benefit the community by offering sustainable, aesthetically pleasing and usable spaces.

In Germany, construction volume in 2019 was valued at around 431 billion euros. Despite the economic boom, few of these projects did much to advance *Baukultur*. At the same time, land take remains high, with some 60 hectares used every day for housing and transport.

In 2007, a foundation under public law was established in Germany – the *Bundesstiftung Baukultur* – to address issues like these. It operates independently and, recognising the essential contribution that *Baukultur* makes to quality of life, works to promote it. The mission of the foundation is to make the built environment a shared concern, which is why it advocates high-quality building design and construction. It also functions as a platform for fostering public discussion on *Baukultur* through events, joint projects, and publications, and for expanding and strengthening existing networks. More than four million people in Germany are involved in planning and building projects every day and generating added value for *Baukultur*. Every two years, the foundation submits a report to the federal government and federal parliament on the state of *Baukultur* in Germany.

This article explains how the foundation deals with *Baukultur* issues in urban and rural areas, as well as in relation to Germany's built heritage. It is currently preparing its fourth annual report, which this year focuses on public spaces. Given the increasingly individualistic nature of today's society, public spaces provide a unifying framework for mutually beneficial co-existence.

*Baukultur* is set to become part of our collective international vocabulary and become shorthand for cooperative, results-oriented planning and building processes, as well as high-quality design and construction

## Eva Battis-Schinker, Robert Knippschild: *Baukultur* Along the German-Polish Border

The article presents the research strategy and initial findings of the REVIVAL! project on the regeneration of historic town centres in the German-Polish border area. Conducted as part of the wider programme *INTERREG Polen–Sachsen 2014–2020 [Poland–Saxony]*, project participants include four German and six Polish small and medium-sized towns with distinctive historic centres and three research institutions from both countries. Their shared objective is to devise practical regeneration measures and carry out academic research in order to avert the threatening physical decay and loss of function of the old town centres due to structural changes in the region.

The main focus of the research is a methodological study that examines the basic assumptions that architectural and built heritage contributes to the quality of life that is specific to historic small and medium-sized towns in peripheral areas, and that research and practice have largely overlooked this aspect. The aim of the study is to come up with an initial set of plans for the development of a tailor-made methodology for surveying the quality of life in small towns. At the same time, its findings could inform strategic recommendations on measures to leverage the potential of built heritage while improving quality of life and sustainable development along the German-Polish border.

## **Dominik Siegrist: The Importance of Landscape and Baukultur For Swiss Tourism.**

Switzerland's attractiveness as a tourist destination is largely thanks to the superior rural and architectural qualities of its varied landscapes, with their historical old towns and areas of local character. The Tourism Strategy of the Swiss Confederation, which was released on 15 November 2017, considers that these qualities are the cornerstone of Swiss tourism, as well as source of untapped potential.

A key factor for successful tourism is the close, regular and institutionalised cooperation between experts in the relevant fields. In addition, cultural and nature-based offerings should be integrated into the destinations' service chains (i.e. the creation of good links between natural, cultural and built landscapes and transport providers, the hospitality industry, etc.). The tourism industry must deliver quality marketing communication that is tailored to the given target group. Input from landscape and *Baukultur* specialists will help to transmit fundamental values and allow the industry to move away from PR stereotypes.

The article shows possible directions that the tourism industry could take, as well as subjects for further debate, such as framework conditions (involvement of various actors, raising awareness among the public and visitors, successful projects in parks or in UNESCO World Heritage Sites, etc.). It also proposes ideas for promotional activities (e.g. flagship projects, Switzerland Tourism marketing campaigns) and education programmes, as well as avenues for applied research to explore.

## **Giancarlo Serafin: Baukultur In the ETH-Domain**

The Federal Council's Interdepartmental *Baukultur* Policy addresses one of the main pillars of social sustainability in real estate management. As the holder of a sizeable real estate portfolio, the ETH Domain can play a major role in helping to shape the built environment in a *Baukultur*-compatible way. It therefore is committed to advancing the vision set out in the interdepartmental strategy.

The examples illustrate how the ETH Domain applies the three main strands of the interdepartmental strategy in its own real estate management strategy:

- The ambitious strategic goals set by the federal government require the ongoing and needs-based development of our real estate portfolio. Before the planning process for each property begins, a general framework is established that takes into account the main overarching issues like urban development, architecture, infrastructure, mobility and green spaces. A high-quality architectural ensemble offers attractive and inspiring learning and research environments, which not only raise the international profile of the ETH domain thanks to their superior design but are also in the interests of its two globally renowned Schools of Architecture.
- The management of the historical building stock of the ETH domain requires an approach which strikes a balance, preferably determined by a neutral body, between sociocultural interests on the one hand, and teaching and research interests on the other. Despite the additional operational costs associated with managing buildings that do not fulfil all of their original functions, the ETH Domain values its historical building stock and considers it an inextricable part of its identity.
- *Baukultur* and the procurement process: As an owner, occupant and operator, the ETH Domain seeks to enhance its contracting skills in favour of advancing *Baukultur* and incorporates standards on appropriate solution- oriented procurement procedures in its own implementing provisions.

The competing aims of architectural quality and research infrastructures' need for functional, pragmatically designed facilities can be an opportunity for high-quality *Baukultur*.

## **Claudia Schwalfenberg: Interdisciplinary. Inclusive. Innovative.**

### **Switzerland's *Baukultur* Policy: Present And Future**

#### *Baukultur Is About More Than Heritage Preservation And Architecture.*

The definitions set out in the Manifest on *Baukultur* and the Davos Declaration can be summarised in three sentences. First, *Baukultur* refers to built living spaces and how they come about. Second, *Baukultur* understands the shaping of our living environment as a cultural practice. Third, a high-quality *Baukultur* benefits individual well being, cultural identification and social cohesion.

Switzerland's first Interdepartmental *Baukultur* Policy also follows this line. The federal government acknowledges the strategic importance of *Baukultur* and considers it a cross-cutting responsibility task that requires the involvement of different sectoral policies and increased cross-sectoral cooperation. Although the Action Plan also identifies pressing social challenges such as climate change as a cross-cutting task, it does not address the issue in sufficient detail. Fostering interdisciplinary, inclusive and innovative approaches to high-quality *Baukultur* will require the interdepartmental working group to operate much more like a think tank.

It is gratifying that the *Baukultur* Policy also covers the awarding of contracts, which is an important lever for a future-oriented design of our living spaces. At the same time, we must work together to bolster new forms of cooperation that will make it possible to create the space of tomorrow for the society of tomorrow.

## **Patrick Schoeck: Baukultur And the Landscape.**

This year, the activities of the Swiss Heritage Society are largely given over to '*Baukultur* and the landscape'. The choice of title is a deliberate one. It refers to the federal government's stated intention to devote more energy to ensuring the quality of activities with spatial implications, as exemplified in the European Landscape Convention, which came into effect in Switzerland in 2013, and the Davos Declaration: Towards a High-Quality *Baukultur* for Europe, initiated by the federal government in 2018.

The Swiss Heritage Society has created a national programme featuring over 80 events that tangibly demonstrates where and how progress has been made in relation to *Baukultur*, where problems remain and what challenges the future holds. Framing the debate are the upcoming national popular initiatives on biodiversity and the landscape, which could potentially root the concerns addressed by '*Baukultur* and the landscape' in the Federal Constitution.

## **Rino Büchel, Hans Schüpbach: Building the Future Without Destroying the Past.**

The primary goal of Protection of Cultural Property (PCP) is to preserve existing monuments in their original form, as far as possible. 'Safeguarding' and 'respecting' are therefore the core requirements of both the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and other normative frameworks. The overriding focus is therefore on conservation and preservation, not on ensuring the quality of new structures, as the Davos Declaration calls for. Nonetheless, PCP and *Baukultur* have common interests.

The Davos Declaration explicitly states that *Baukultur* encompasses all existing buildings, 'including monuments and other elements of cultural heritage'; that the 'value and irreplaceability of Europe's landscapes and cultural heritage must be underlined'; that cultural heritage is 'is a crucial component of high-quality *Baukultur*' and should be 'respected'. It also emphasises the role that *Baukultur* plays in shaping identity, which is also a key consideration when it comes to cultural property protection. It is therefore no coincidence that all UNESCO and Council of Europe conventions on culture refer to cultural property as a universal legacy and call for the collective stewardship of this heritage.

The most effective cultural property protection instrument in Switzerland is the federal inventory (PCP Inventory). It is currently being revised and the federal government is expected to approve the new version in 2021/ 2022. One of the important functions it serves is as bridge between the federal government, the cantons and the public.

Good normative foundations – the second aim of the strategy – are already in place thanks to modern PCP legislation that came into effect in 2015.

The PCP Section also actively fosters links and cooperation with national and international partners, especially on topical issues like climate change and digitalisation.

## **Interview With Markus Jauslin and David Külling: Strengthening the Role Of the Federal Government As a Role Model.**

'armasuisse Real Estate, the DDPS centre of expertise on real estate, is responsible for the management of about 24,000 hectares of land and 7,500 buildings and facilities of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS). Within its diversified portfolio armasuisse Real Estate is responsible for the planning and fulfilment of existing and future customer needs, the management of military properties, the construction of new buildings and conversions of existing ones, as well as the sale and dismantling of infrastructures that are no longer required.'

armasuisse Real Estate was also involved in the *Baukultur* interdepartmental working group. It coordinated the opinions formulated by the DDPS as part of the office consultation procedure and provided the General Secretariat with summaries. The head of the Environmental Management, Norms & Standards Section, Markus Jauslin, discusses how *Baukultur* relates to the work of armasuisse Real Estate, e.g. the publication of three inventories (HOBIM, ADAB and IKFÖB, cf. box p. 77), its implications for procurement procedures and in the documentation of federal buildings. In the future, armasuisse Real Estate will focus more of its efforts on exploiting synergies and stepping up dialogue with civil agencies.