

City-Hof e.V. · Hanssensweg 9 · 22303 Hamburg

Open letter
to the representatives of
ICOMOS, UNESCO-World Heritage Centre and -World Heritage Committee

City-Hof and World Heritage Site „Speicherstadt and Kontorhausviertel with Chilehaus“ in Hamburg

Hamburg, May 16th 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

we are approaching you with this open letter because with the pending demolition of the listed City-Hof and the planned new development of the area we find our World Heritage Site in danger.

Under the impression, that World Heritage Coordinator Bernd Paulowitz is biased and not acting in favour of the World Heritage Site but in favour of the stakeholders, that want the City-Hof torn down out of economic and ideological reasons.

Likewise we are concerned that he and other representatives of the Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg (FHH) are trying to persuade ICOMOS and UNESCO that the planned demolition of the City-Hof has no consequences to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site „Speicherstadt and Kontorhausviertel with Chilehaus“.

Because Hamburg's Senate wants to demolish the City-Hof already in summer 2018 time is of the essence. This is why the most important points, in our opinion, are discussed in the annex.

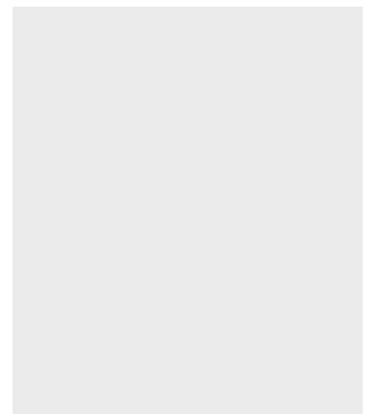
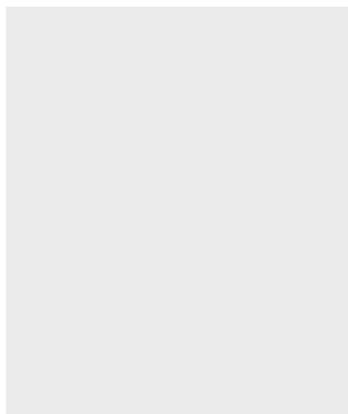
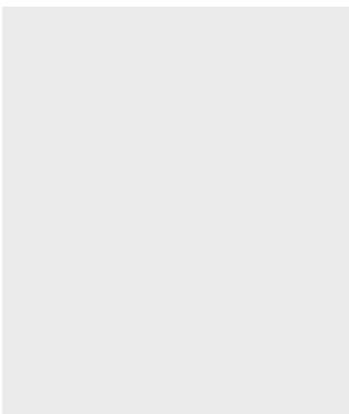
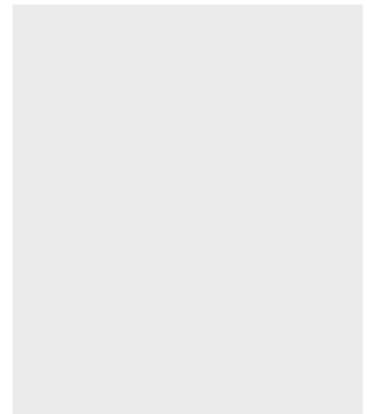
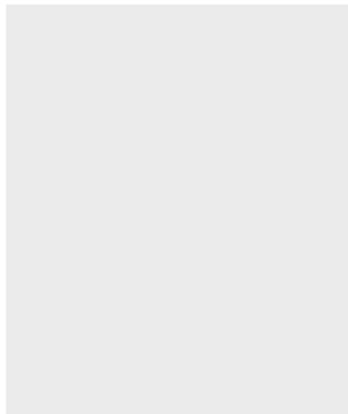
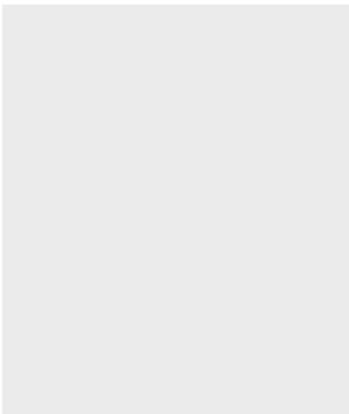
We appeal to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to take a critical approach, to not tolerate the demolition of the listed City-Hof by architect Rudolf Klophaus located in the buffer zone and with documentary value for the core zone (speaking of the Mohlenhof by the very same architect), to preserve the World Heritage within its context and to criticise FHHs non-transparent proceeding as the owner of a historical monument. Please check every attempt

to devaluate the City-Hof or present it as isolated thoroughly and objectively.

We would gladly arrange a personal conversation in Hamburg where we could explain to you, out of our perspective, what consequences the destruction of the City-Hof and the accelerated redevelopment would have for the World Heritage Site „Speicherstadt and Kontorhausviertel with Chilehaus“.

Sincerely yours,

Marco Alexander Hosemann, Marius Geisler, Amelie Cassada and Tuo Li
on behalf of City-Hof e.V.



Annex

1. Participation of citizens

We see a lack of conversations with the representatives of the action groups that are for the preservation of the City-Hof. Neither Hamburg's Senate nor the entrusted authorities of the administration and planning, nor the Department for Heritage Preservation or the World Heritage Coordinator ever looked for a conversation with action groups like the City-Hof e.V. or the Bündnis Stadtherz. Like the public the action groups were merely informed about the plans, all objections or doubts were ignored.

2. „Klophaus district“

There is no other architect that shaped the Kontorhaus district in the way Rudolf Klophaus (1885-1957) did. Six buildings in this area come from his pen. Constructed over a period of 30 years the Klophausian historic merchants' and residential buildings Mohlenhof (1927/28), Reichenhof (1928), Altstädter Hof (1936/37), Bartholomay-Haus (1937/38), Pressehaus (today Helmut-Schmidt-Haus; 1938/39) and City-Hof (1954-58) demonstrate like a built history book not only the 3 chapters of the urban development and the development of the architecture itself but also the societal and political transformations of those years (see Figure 1-8).

Buildings from the NS-time differ from the structures of the 1920s in the style of the New Objectivity movement in terms of roof forms, open block edges and regarding architectural details as blind gable and architectural decoration – deriving from the „blood and soil“ ideology of that time. Since the clinker was politically contaminated, because the Nazis forced labourers in the KZ Hamburg Neuengamme to produce it in a great extent for their buildings, it wasn't used for exposed or public works anymore.

With this very fact, the City-Hof does not only contrast with its urban design from other buildings in the Kontorhaus district but also with its facade. Thus it embodies the regression of Modernity to Hamburg and is a shining signal for a new start after World War II at the entrance of the city centre – which would be denied with the planned new development.

3. Sight lines

In the application for the inclusion in the UNESCO-World Heritage list one can read that the »[preservation of] the historic buildings, the characteristic overall impact of the Speicherstadt and Kontorhaus ensembles and their typical appearance within the townscape by: [...] Safeguarding the visual integrity of the ensemble in the cityscape by preserving existing

sight lines so that they can be enjoyed as part of Hamburg's cityscape« will be granted.

Furthermore the application says »the continuation of Burchardstrasse offers one of the most important vantage points for views of the Kontorhaus district« and »in addition, the streets surrounding the Kontorhaus district also offer many glimpses of the future World Heritage area, allowing that ensemble to be experienced on a day-to-day basis«.

Unfortunately the arrow depicting the important line of sight on the Chilehaus got a little short in a map of the application and the sight lines from the East on the World Heritage site are completely missing (see Figure 9).

The suspicion that this happened on purpose, to make the impression that the City-Hof doesn't provide sight lines that are worth preserving, and the planned new building wouldn't come with disadvantages concerning the visibility of the world Heritage, is unavoidable. But objectively this is not correct.

Because in our opinion those sight lines are important for the visual experience of the World Heritage site, we mapped and visually captured them (see Figure 10-16). The planned new development would nearly result in a complete blockade of the existing sight lines (See Figure 17).



Figure 1 Kontorhaus district with Klophaus' buildings

(1: Molenhof; 2: Reichenhof; 3: Altstädter Hof; 4: Helmut-Schmidt-Haus; 5: Bartholomay-Haus; 6: City-Hof)



Figure 2 Mohlenhof
 (1; Klophaus, Schoch, zu Putlitz, 1927/28)

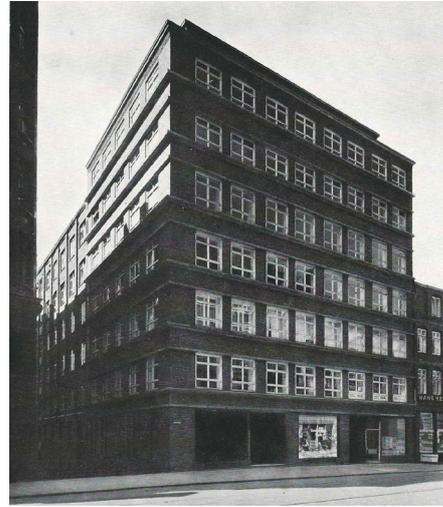


Figure 3 Reichenhof
 (2; Klophaus, Schoch, zu Putlitz, 1928)



Figure 4 Altstädter Hof
 (3; Rudolf Klophaus, 1936/37)



Figure 5 Helmut-Schmidt-Haus (formerly
 Hamburger Tageblatt; 4; Rudolf Klophaus, 1938/39)



Figure 6 Bartholomay-Haus
 (5; Rudolf Klophaus, 1937/38)



Figure 7 City-Hof
 (6; Rudolf Klophaus, 1954–58)



Figure 8 Kontorhaus district with Klophaus' buildings (around 1960)
 (1: Mühlenhof; 2: Reichenhof; 3: Altstädter Hof; 4: Helmut-Schmidt-Haus; 5: Bartholomay-Haus; 6: City-Hof)

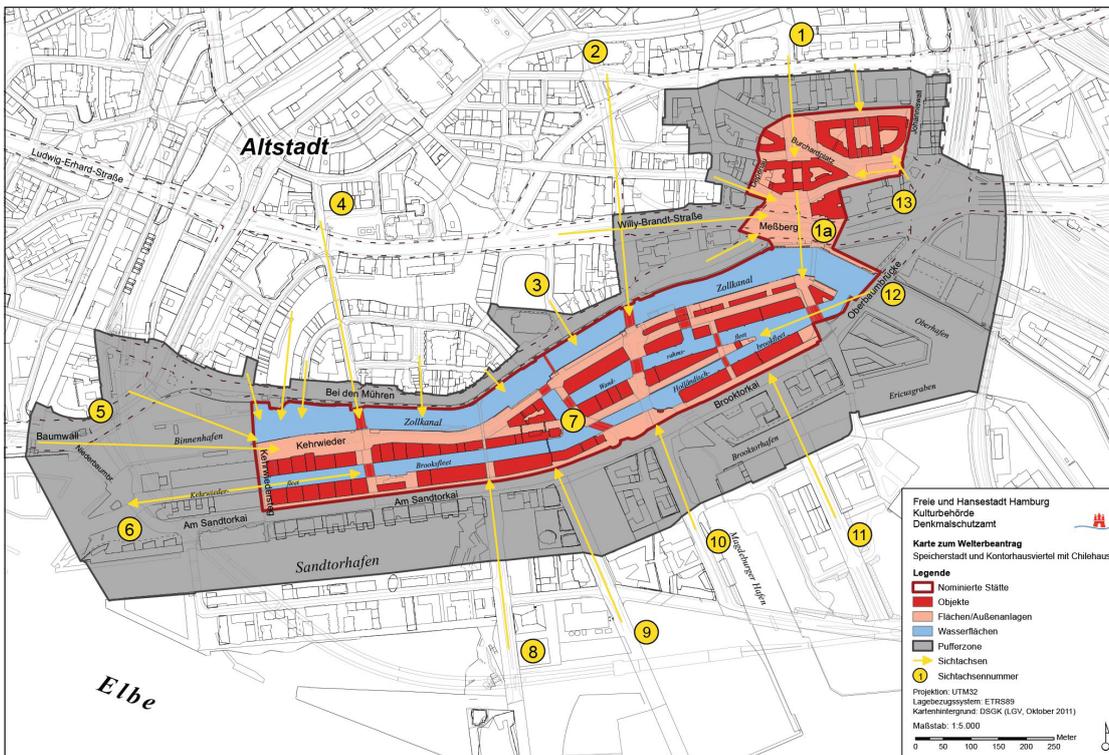


Figure 9 Mapping of sight lines out of the application for the inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list



Figure 10 Existing sight lines with the City-Hof



Figure 11 Existing sight lines from the Deichtor-Square towards the Kontorhaus district (1)



Figure 12 Existing sight lines from the Deichtor-Square towards the Kontorhaus district (2)



Figure 13 Existing sight lines from Klosterwall towards the Kontorhaus district (3)



Figure 14 Existing sight lines from Klosterwall towards the Kontorhaus district (4)



Figure 15 Existing sight lines from Klosterwall towards the Kontorhaus district (5)



Figure 16 Existing sight lines from the Arno-Schmidt-Square towards the Kontorhaus district (6)



Figure 17 sight lines with the projected new construction