Collective Gathering for an Inclusive Inventory

RETO WASSER, ORKUN KASAP

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Neben der Erhaltung von bereits geschützten Objekten gehört die Auswahl und Inventarisierung von zukünftigen Objekten zu den Kernaufgaben der Denkmalpflege. Dies spiegelt sich auch in der denkmalpflegerischen Lehre der Architekturstudent*innen an der ETH Zürich wider. Neben den Methoden der institutionellen Denkmalpflege untersuchen die Studierenden in der Lehrveranstaltung *Zukünftige Denkmäler* potenziell zu erhaltende Objekte und erfassen diese in Form eines Inventareintrags in einer Datenbank. Das Ergebnis ist eine umfangreiche Sammlung von über tausend Einträgen zu neueren (1980–2000) und neuen Bauten (nach 2000) in der Schweiz, die nicht nur über die Objekte selbst, sondern auch über die Auswahl- und Bewertungskriterien Auskunft gibt. Diese Sammlung gibt auch wertvolle Einblicke in die Wahrnehmungen und Wertvorstellungen der Generationen „Z“ und „Alpha“, welche die größte Gruppe der Kursteilnehmenden bilden.

Im Frühjahrssemester 2024 verlagert der Kurs unter dem Titel *Future Heritage* seinen Schwerpunkt auf die Identifizierung von Objekten und Erbe von Minderheiten, Randgruppen und Menschen ohne Lobby. Das Seminar war auch als wichtiger Teil des Vermittlungs- und Ausstellungsprojekts *A Future for whose Past?* konzipiert, das von ICOMOS Suisse und der ETH Zürich anlässlich des 50-jährigen Jubiläums des Europäischen Denkmalschutzjahres initiiert wurde. Das kollektive Wissen der vielfältigen Gruppe von 137 Studierenden wurde als demokratische Grundlage für die gemeinsame Diskussion eines inklusiven Inventars genutzt, das unter anderem auch Schutzobjekte für die queere Community, Personen mit Migrationshintergrund oder Obdachlose berücksichtigt. Dabei stützten sie sich auf politisch etablierte Inventare auf Bundes-, Kantons- und Gemeindeebene in der Schweiz und hinterfragten die bisher angewandten Auswahlkriterien, immer ausgehend vom zur Diskussion stehenden Objekt und versuchten, diese entsprechend zu erweitern.

ABSTRACT

Aside from the preservation of objects that already have protected status, one of the core tasks of monument preservation is the selection and inventory of future objects. This is also reflected in the teaching of monument preservation to architecture students at *ETH Zurich*. In addition to the methods of institutional monument preservation, students participating in the *“Future Monuments”* course investigate potential objects for preservation and register them in a database in the form of an inventory entry. The result is an extensive collection of over a thousand entries on recent (1980–2000) and very recent (post-2000) buildings in Switzerland, providing information not only on the objects themselves but also on the selection and evaluation criteria. This collection also provides valuable insights into the perceptions and values of the „Z“ and „Alpha“ generations, who make up the largest group of course participants to date.

In the spring semester 2024, under the title *“Future Heritage”*, the course shifted its focus to identifying objects and inheritance of minorities, marginalised groups, and people without a lobby. The seminar was also conceived as an important part of the outreach and exhibition project *“A Future for whose Past?”* that was initiated by *ICOMOS Suisse* and *ETH Zurich* to mark the 50th anniversary of the first *European Architectural Heritage Year*. The collective knowledge of the diverse group of 137 students was used as a democratic basis for the joint discussion of an inclusive inventory that also takes into account protected objects for the queer community, persons with migration background, and homeless people, among others. In doing so, they drew on politically established inventories at the federal, cantonal, and municipal levels in Switzerland and questioned the selection criteria currently applied, always starting from the object under discussion, and attempted to expand them appropriately.

Reto Wasser, Orkun Kasap, Collective Gathering for an Inclusive Inventory, in: Coady Schäbitz, Hönig (Hrsg.), Heritage and Democracy, Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net 2025, S. 86-95, https://doi.org10.11588/arthistoricum.1649.c23819

A Future for Whose Past?

The motto of the *European Architectural Heritage Year 1975* was *"A Future for our Past".* Fifty years later, in the face of the consequences of war, climate change, migration, communication technology revolutions, and civil and human rights activism, we are faced with the question of whose past is meant by „our" and to what extent we can speak of a common past. The project *„A Future for Whose Past?"*, carried out by *ICOMOS Suisse* together with the *Chair of Construction Heritage and Preservation* at *ETH Zurich* and numerous other national and international partners, is foregrounding discussion of whose heritage is at stake and who decides or has a say in what is important for society to preserve for the sake of remembrance.

Although the project raises questions that are relevant at a broader societal level (e.g., how the memory and heritage of different disadvantaged groups are recognised and represented in a society undergoing an accelerated process of diversification), the focus is on monument preservation, the related mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and the different societal actors that play various roles in these processes. In this context, the discussion seeks to determine how specific knowledge and legal regimes define what is recognised as cultural heritage worthy of protection, which conditions have contributed to their formation, and whether heritage conservation practice can be thought of and practiced more inclusively from the perspectives of those who have been given only limited or no consideration. Such a discussion presupposes that the groups concerned participate in this discussion and contribute their views on the topic, their experiences, and of course the places and objects that they consider relevant.

During the course, architecture students were encouraged to develop an awareness of the different value layers and qualities embedded in the built environment – especially those that are less obvious than others – by discussing a wide range of objects in terms of their suitability for designation as monuments; and whether all relevant values are recognised for objects that are already protected. This enables students to develop an understanding of the complex social context within which they will operate in their future careers.

Description of the Teaching Project and Method

The *"Future Heritage"* teaching project was offered in the 2024 spring semester as a core seminar in the Master's degree programme in Architecture at *ETH Zurich* as an adaptation – with a specific focus – of the *"Future Monuments"* course taught in the previous fall semester. Both courses are dedicated to teaching the theory, methods, and applied principles of monument preservation as a discipline, and incorporate selected writings, lectures, and guest contributions illustrating and discussing the subject matter over the course of the semester. The *"Future Heritage"* seminar focused on the relationship between tangible objects and the intangible heritage of minorities, marginalised groups, and people without a lobby. The students examined inventories at federal, cantonal, and municipal level within Switzerland, focusing on the selection and inventory of future protected objects rather than on the preservation of already designated monuments, although both are central tasks of monument preservation. One central question was which groups are currently excluded, consciously or unconsciously, by institutional monument preservation when deciding what heritage to preserve in the future.

The shift in the subject matter also required an adjustment to the teaching format. At the beginning of the semester, lectures were used to convey theoretical positions on heritage and the basics of practical monument preservation, which were supplemented by various guest lectures over the course of the semester. Florence Graezer Bideau, professor at *EPFL Lausanne*, gave an introduction to heritage studies and the topic of intangible heritage, while Rune Frandsen and Maria Kouvari from *ETH Zurich* and Helen Wyss, historian and architect, presented examples of minority heritage and their current recognition in their guest lectures. The most significant change to the format concerned the formation of working clusters, the distribution of students into different focus groups, and the discussion method. The 137 students were divided into smaller groups in order to approach the still-new subject area together in a seminar-like teaching environment. Together with the students, a list of possible types of discrimination was drawn up, including on grounds of skin colour, origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, disability, and class. This also helped to define the associated minority interest groups. In the next step, based on this initial approach to the topic, the students were asked to

look for several related objects associated with one or more of the interest groups, to bring related image material, and to present them in the group, so that different objects or buildings and their associated interest groups could be discussed. This process allowed for the students to slowly develop positions and related arguments in favour of protecting of these objects, while also realising the challenges associated with doing so.

This teaching format was repeated in different constellations throughout the semester. The groups were initially structured according to interest groups such as origin or religion, and later in the semester they were divided according to building use. This mutual exchange enabled the students to gather a broad overview of relevant objects and arguments, and also learn the necessary content through discussion. At the end of the semester, each student was asked to compose an entry in the Future Heritage database for a particular object that they had selected in agreement with the teaching team. Each entry consisted of a detailed description of the object and an appraisal based on the discussions during the semester. The building description presents characteristic features such as history, urban design, architectural concept and specific features, construction, and current condition including any transformations of the building. In the appraisal, students were asked to formulate a clear argumentation regarding the building's status as a witness and its worthiness of future protection, with a focus on the significance of the property as the heritage of minorities, marginalised groups, or people without a lobby. The contributions recorded in the database were presented by the students to invited representatives of various interest groups at a joint closing event. The final event served to reflect, together with the invited guests, on a potential future inventory of protected objects.

The following section presents seven examples from the 137 extremely diverse submissions that students worked on as part of the semester described above. The examples retain the basic structure of the student submissions, starting with a building description and a subsequent appraisal. From a teaching perspective, the aim was to promote a scientific way of working. Nevertheless, the students employed different methods in conducting their independent research on the individual objects, for example, due to the lack of written or audio-visual material concerning the Albanian Mosque in Zurich Seebach. As such, in addition to literature and archive research, the students' work also included inspecting the buildings, including photographic documentation and often verbal dialogue with protagonists and users on-site.

Escape Route Drainage Channel/Rohr Diepoldsau, Canton St. Gallen
Student: Romina Züst

Diepoldsau is a Swiss municipality in the St. Gallen Rhine Valley and lies largely to the east of the regulated River Rhine. Since the 16th century, the river also marked the national border with Austria. Recurring floods in the 19th century led to the regulation of the river, and in 1923 the Rhine was diverted into a new riverbed, the "New Rhine," to the west of the natural course of the river. The original course of the river, the "Old Rhine," still forms the national border today.[1]

As part of these measures, a drainage canal, the so-called "Rohr (Canal Pipe)", was built between Diepoldsau and the municipality of Lustenau, which lies on Austrian territory. The „Rohr" collects the pressurised water from the New Rhine and diverts it under the Old Rhine to Vorarlberg, Austria. The canal pipe, half of which protrudes from the water, is 310 meters long and 2.5 meters high. It was constructed on-site from reinforced concrete using wooden formwork.[2,3]

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Old Rhine was often just a narrow trickle, thereby providing a route for many Jews to flee to Switzerland. Initially, these refugees entered the country legally, but after Germany's annexation (Anschluss) of Austria in March 1938 the number of emigrants rose sharply. A refugee camp was set up in the municipality of Diepoldsau, from where many Jewish refugees made their way to other countries. After an entry ban was imposed and the border crossings were closed following Kristallnacht (November 1938), the border area was secured with barbed wire and monitored. A border gate was also installed on the canal pipe.[4]

The drainage canal played an important role in the escape of many people facing imminent persecution, as it was used as a crossing route over the Old Rhine. In addition to those using the canal to escape, people on both sides of the border helped the refugees. For many Jews during the Second World War, the "Rohr" thus marked the crossing to a safe country. Even though the main escape route

Fig. 1: Escape Route, barrier on drainage channel, Diepoldsau, Canton St. Gallen (2024).

ran along the natural border of the Old Rhine, many people used the "Rohr" to directly cross the border from Austria into Switzerland.[5]

Romina Züst emphasised that the "Rohr" has historical value and is part of Diepoldsau's cultural heritage. To ensure that the events remain in people's memories, the "Rohr" should be preserved as a local testimony to the past. It also pays tribute to the risky work of those assisting others to escape, who acted out of solidarity despite official prohibition. In remembrance of these tragic events, the memorial site should remain visible as a means to recognise the associated intangible heritage.

Musikpavillon (Music Pavilion) at Merkurplatz, Winterthur, Canton Zurich
Student: Emanuel Bosonnet

The Musikpavillon (Music Pavilion) Merkurplatz was commissioned by the city of Winterthur in 1990 and designed by architect Arnold Amsler. It was erected in 1992 as part of the redesign of Merkurplatz in order to make the rather uninviting surroundings more attractive. The architect's design idea was to incorporate the axis of the former Merkurstrasse as a historic entrance to the city.[6] The pavilion, which still stands today, is open and illuminated throughout, but is neither heated nor insulated, as auxiliary spaces such as storage, cloakrooms, and toilets were not implemented as planned. The structure consists of three parts: a platform, a cantilevered folded plate canopy, and a rear wall alongside which a curved bench offers additional recreational space. The rear wall is supported by eleven large steel L-beams that fan out to form a gentle curve. The top four segments of the rear wall are made of slightly translucent fiberglass, the lower two of sheet metal. Water is collected in a horizontal gutter over the roof and then runs off via a rain gutter at the back of the pavilion.

Emanuel Bosonnet describes the pavilion as a place originally intended for musical performances, but which became a meeting place for individuals in Winterthur facing issues of alcohol or drug dependency. This made the pavilion a symbol of the challenges and ways of dealing with social problems in the city. According to Bosonnet, the unrestricted accessibility and visibility of the pavilion indirectly enabled general awareness of the existence of marginalised people in the city. The gathering of those on the margins of society made the challenges of dealing with addicts visible and led to important po-

litical changes. At a socio-political level, this led to an improvement in low-threshold services for people with drug dependency in Winterthur. The pavilion thus represents the political and social learning process that accompanied the policies implemented in Switzerland as a response to issues concerning drug dependency.

The Musikpavillon should be preserved as a monument, as it is not only an architectural testimony to the city's history but also represents the versatile function of protecting the basic human needs of all the city's inhabitants. It offers protection from the weather, a place to rest, and a platform for social interaction.

STEP d'Aïre wastewater treatment plant, Vernier Canton of Geneva
Student: Shirley Rellstab

The "station d'épuration des eaux usées d'Aïre" (STEP d'Aïre) wastewater treatment plant is located on the western outskirts of Geneva, directly on the banks of the Rhône. It was planned between 1964 and 1967 by the engineer Heinz Weisz and the architect Georges Brera.[7] The complex is embedded in the gently sloping landscape facing the Rhône. Brera's design aimed to find a common scale for the various buildings and to incorporate the terrain and green spaces. The complex's most visually striking structures are the administrative building (La Versaeuse) and sewage sludge treatment facility (Porteous).[8] The Porteous rises some 10 m above the Rhône and is supported by five external concrete beams. The building is organised in three levels: the lowest level houses the landing stage and access for trucks; the middle level sewage sludge filtration and a thermal power plant; and sludge is dried on the upper level. In the 1990s, STEP d'Aïre was restructured and the Porteous building was decommissioned. It stood empty for around 20 years until the *"Prenons La Ville"* (Occupy the City) collective occupied the building in the summer of 2018.[9] The squatters and the cantonal council subsequently agreed to convert the building into a cultural centre. Since then, the former sewage treatment plant has been gradually renovated and prepared for its new use.[10]

Fig. 2: North facade, STEP d'Aïre wastewater treatment plant, Vernier Canton, Geneva (2024).

Shirley Rellstab sees the STEP d'Aïre as an important architectural and cultural heritage site. Architecturally, the plant is a contemporary witness to the 1960s, when the construction of sewage treatment plants presented a challenge as a new type of building task.[11] The design by Georges Brera and Heinz Weisz was groundbreaking for many subsequent projects and exemplifies the post-war trend for brutalist architecture in Geneva.[12] The ways in which the complex is integrated into the landscape and the buildings interact with their surroundings are also praised as outstanding. Since 2020, the Porteous, like the complex as a whole, has been on the city of Geneva's inventory of buildings worthy of protection. The building's recent past and current use as a cultural centre give it great cultural and social significance, and the occupation and conversion of the Porteous into a socio-cultural centre is a unique example of cooperation between activists, cultural workers, and public authorities, which presents itself as a model for the whole of Switzerland. The Porteous offers space for a diverse range of art, nature, sport, music, and leisure activities and is particularly valuable for young people and the alternative cultural scene in Geneva. The Porteous's legacy of squatting and the canton's support make it both an important part of Geneva's squatting history and a potential future heritage site for the squatter community.

Roads in Safiental, Safien Canton Graubünden
Student: Clément Estreicher

During the Second World War, many soldiers of other nationalities found refuge in Switzerland. In June 1940, around 40,000 men from the 45th French Army Corps, including 12,000 from the 2nd Polish Jäger Division, fled to Switzerland via the Jura mountains.[13] The Polish soldiers had to remain in Switzerland until the end of the war, while the French were able to return after a few months. The Polish internees were initially housed in the Büren an der Aare internment camp before being distributed to around 500 smaller camps throughout the country from 1941. They were put to work in construction and agricultural projects, and in total performed more than 8 million working days, including the construction of 450 km of roads and 63 bridges.[14]

The Swiss authorities deployed the internees in remote areas so as to avoid both competition with the local economy and also integration. Around fifteen road projects were undertaken in the canton of Graubünden, including six roads in the Safiental.[15] The valley offered almost complete social isolation and at the same time the projects served Switzerland‘s military interests. The roads in question in the Safiental were mainly built from locally available material. The forest path from Stägä to Glasspass consists of flat stones set vertically into the ground to ensure stability, whereas the path from Turrahus over the Tomül Pass to Vals was partly dug into the mountainside with picks and shovels, resulting in artificial terracing. The Tomül Pass has been classified as a “historic transport route of local importance” and is protected due to its remaining original substance, including bridges and retaining walls.[16] However, traces of the daily life of the interned soldiers have almost completely disappeared and the work camp under the Alperschällihorn was completely dismantled after the war.

One example of the “collective forgetting” of the internment of thousands of soldiers during the Second World War is the internment camp in Büren an der Aare. The land on which the camp stood was returned to its owners in 1946 and put back into agricultural use. Today, only the building of the former laundry remains. The descendants of the Poles interned in Switzerland have been campaigning for its preservation since 2018, although the Federal Council does not consider the laundry to be a building of national interest.[17]

Fig. 3: Path in Safiental, between Stägä and Glasspass, built from local limestone set vertically into the ground (2024).

According to Clément Estreicher, preserving the memory of the internment of soldiers and the associated architectural heritage is closely linked to Switzerland‘s identity, as the internment of soldiers in accordance with the Hague Convention and the equal treatment of all belligerent countries were central elements of Switzerland‘s policy of neutrality during the war.[18] The preservation of these historical sites should therefore be considered of great importance, in addition to safeguarding the intangible heritage of Polish internees in Switzerland during the Second World War.

The Beast Skatepark, Zurich, Canton of Zurich
Student: Elisa Nadas

In 2011, the city of Zurich granted the Stadionbrache Association permission to temporarily use and organise non-commercial activities on the site of the former Hardturm Stadium for three years until the completion of a new football stadium. The site cov-

ers more than three hectares and consists of a green space, the ruins of the stadium stands, and a large asphalt-covered area. In the southeastern part of the green space, the Zurich skateboard scene began building a DIY skatepark, including a concrete pool called the "Bowl". Construction began in July 2011 and was carried out by the skaters themselves in the form of voluntary work.[19] Bowls are a foundational feature of skateparks, since skateboarding was revolutionised in the 1970s when transposed to empty concrete swimming pools that featured rounded corners and transitions. Other modules such as a "quarter pipe," kerbs, and spine feature were also added later.

The fact that the skatepark was built by the skaters themselves makes it uniquely authentic and symbolises the freedom and creativity of the skateboard community.[20] DIY projects like this are often an expression of resistance and independence from the norms of public space and offer a platform for personal and collective forms of expression.[21] Elisa Nadas described the DIY skatepark on the site of the former Hardturm Stadium in Zurich as a remarkable example of the creative and independent use of public space by a community. As such, the skatepark is considered not just as monofunctional sports infrastructure, but also a cultural symbol. The "Bowl" is a unique example of DIY culture in Zurich and has become an important place for the skateboard community, demonstrated by their commitment to the continuous development and expansion of the skatepark.[22] Elisa Nadas also writes that the skatepark, as a future monument, could emphasise the importance of community appropriation and design of public spaces. It stands for the history and memories of the skateboard community in Zurich and contributes to the city's cultural identity. Preserving the skatepark would preserve not only the physical structure, but also the values and culture it represents. The skatepark is a living example of the community's ability to actively shape and use its environment, and should be recognised and protected as such.

Albanian Mosque, Zurich Seebach, Canton Zurich
Student: Philipp Eitel

The Albanian mosque (Xhamia Shqiptare ne Seebach) run by the „Stiftung der Islamischen Jugend" (Foundation of Islamic Youth), a member of the Association of Islamic Organizations in Zurich (VIOZ), is located on the first floor of a residential building at Seebacherstrasse 67 in the Seebach neighbourhood. The building was erected in 1947 as a masonry construction, with three floors and a basement. The first

Fig. 4: Prayer room, Albanian Mosque, Seebach, Zurich (2024).

floor of the building was converted into a mosque in 2002 and has two entrances, with the main one being on the western side. The northwest part of the first floor has an entrance room with seating and wall shelving, which is used as a sales area. There is an office on the western façade and a room with sanitary facilities for ritual foot-washing in the southwestern corner. The eastern half of the building is used entirely as a prayer room. Although structural changes have been made, they do not interfere with the building's load-bearing structure. The prayer room contains the prayer niche (mihrāb), the pulpit (minbar), and a carpet with an Islamic pattern.[23]

At 10.1%, the proportion of Muslims in the Seebach district is significantly higher than the average for the city of Zurich.[24] The mosque is a central place for practicing Islam in the Albanian language, especially for male members of the community. It is used six times a day for prayer and offers a Koran school once a week. The anteroom of the mosque is used as a salesroom, and the garden at the back is used for leisure activities, underlining the community-building function of the place.

Through direct exchange with the imam and other members of the community, Philipp Eitel found that the user group did not necessarily consider their mosque to be worthy of protection. According to them, only historical uniqueness or special craftsmanship would make it worthy of protection, which this mosque lacks. The preservation of the existing building plays a subordinate role for the user group. The mosque in Seebach is seen as a community that is not tied to one place. If the religious community moves to other premises, the current location loses its significance. Philipp Eitel also states that the subjective significance of the site for the user group is not the decisive factor when it comes to its worthiness of protection, but rather the wider context of dealing with the Muslim minority in Switzerland. The mosque reflects the religious community's engagement with its social environment. The appropriation of existing structures that are not in use enables the practice of Islam and the living out of the community, while deliberately avoiding visibility in public spaces. The structural interventions document the appropriation of the space and its conversion into a mosque. These interventions are unique and stand out from other conversions. The elements that are not firmly attached to the building structure, on the other hand, have no site-specific or artistic individuality and are not worthy of protection.

Le Saxo Bar, Lausanne, Canton of Vaud
Student: Luce Salvadé

Le Saxo, the oldest queer bar still operating in Lausanne, is located on the first floor of the *Banque Cantonale Vaudoise* administration building at Rue de la Grotte 3. The building, designed by architects Charles Brugger, Charles Thévenaz, and Marcel Maillard, who are known for many architecturally significant buildings in Lausanne, was constructed in 1947 as an extension to the original bank building.[25] It is arranged around an inner courtyard and adapts to the steep topography of the surrounding area. The first floor of the building houses various business premises, including the bar *Le Saxo*, which has been open since 1992. The bar was designed as a space for people of all sexual orientations, genders, and ages, and is known for its drag shows and karaoke nights. The bar's interior has hardly changed in the last three decades and is reminiscent of Parisian cabarets.

Luce Salvadé notes in her research that *Le Saxo* has played an important role for the queer community of Vaud canton since 1992.[26] The bar provided a safe space for people of different sexual orientations and gender identities and fostered the growth of the queer community in Lausanne.[27]

Le Saxo's unaltered interior serves as a testament to Lausanne's vibrant queer past, which is slowly disappearing as a result of gentrification and increasing acceptance of the community in non-queer establishments. The architectural design of the space, with artwork and mirrors, emphasises the importance of style within the queer community and reflects the importance of self-expression and celebration in queer culture. The resilience of the bar and its patrons to the changing times emphasises the ongoing need for places where people of all sexual orientations and gender identities can come together, be accepted, and express themselves authentically.

While the architectural qualities of the building have already been deemed worthy of protection, the historical and social significance of *Le Saxo* to the queer community should be considered in any future assessment of its worthiness for protection. The preservation of facilities like *Le Saxo* is not only an architectural matter, but also an obligation to honour the history and identity of marginalised communities. By recognising the historical and cultural significance of *Le Saxo,* we reaffirm our commitment to a more just and compassionate society for all.

Collective Collecting

The teaching project proved to be a unique opportunity for students to engage intensively with the fundamental texts and methods of monument preservation and at the same time to actively challenge and question them in the context of the heritage of minorities. In many cases, the students dealt with objects that were either directly related to their own personal background; the places where they grew up or lived; or to social groups and related issues to which they are close or feel connected for various reasons. This motivated them and affected them personally. This discussion was the starting point for the exercise to coherently describe the objects in terms of their material and immaterial socio-cultural characteristics and to develop arguments in favour of their preservation. One challenge, of course, was the neutral and objective evaluation of the objects despite students' personal references.

Unlike in previous semesters, the students were not asked to develop a preservation strategy for the objects they investigated and assessed. More important than the question of what should still be protected and how they should be protected was the discussion about who should have a say in decision-making processes related to monument preservation and thus participate in the construction of a shared past. Nevertheless, discussions during the semester often centred on the question of whether and how objects or places that have become relevant through the use, appropriation, or relationship of one or more groups can be preserved in cases where the use no longer exists; where the object can no longer be used by the group itself for financial reasons or due to changed circumstances; or where protection would make it difficult or impossible for the groups concerned to continue using the object, to maintain their presence, and thus their heritage. In fact, these are fundamental questions that require further attention and research. As part of the course, this process enabled students to recognise the different decision-making criteria behind the inventory and protection of an object and to treat the built environment with more care – both in terms of its physical and intangible qualities.

The final reviews were accompanied by contributions from the guest reviewers Monica Bilfinger, art historian and General Secretary of *ICOMOS Suisse;* Dr. Florian Eitel, historian, anarchism researcher, and museum curator; Dr. Mattia Lento, theatre and film researcher, guest researcher "Seminar für Filmwissenschaft" *University of Zurich;* and Dr. Rune Frandsen, scientific researcher *Federal Office of Culture* (until January 2025), postdoctoral researcher *Construction Heritage & Preservation ETH Zurich*. The discussions provided an opportunity for further questions concerning protecting the heritage of minorities, and their inclusion within associated decision processes. What happens to the original fabric and its preservation – one of the cornerstones of Western theory of conservation – when other immaterial, historical, or other conflicting layers of relevance come into play and start to compete? What are the limits of democratic inclusion, especially when considering the heritage of politically controversial or even prohibited movements or groups? This last question emerged as relevant when it became clear that the overwhelming majority of the objects and groups observed by the students represented a progressive, multicultural, and inclusive understanding of society – one that is being challenged in Europe and many other parts of the world today more than in recent decades. For this very reason, the course was also an opportunity to motivate students to examine our shared past, engage with the most diverse and often under-represented groups in society, and to ask students to look beyond the tangible aspects of our built environment, revealing the often-complex relationship between democracy, representation, and heritage.

Figures

1 Romina Züst

2 Shirley Rellstab

3 Clement Estreicher

4 Philipp Eitel

Endnotes

1 Federal Office of Topography swisstopo. *Artificial and Natural Boundaries*. Retrieved 08 January 2024, from https://www.swisstopo.admin.ch/de/kuenstliche-und-natuerliche-grenzen

2 Historical Archive Lustenau, *Photographic Documentation Construction Site,* photographer unknown.

3 Wikipedia. *Lustenauer Kanal*. Retrieved from https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lustenauer_Kanal

4 Keller, Stefan, Paul Grüninger, and WochenZeitung. *Grüningers Fall: Geschichten von Flucht und Hilfe*. Zürich: Rotpunktverlag, 1993.

5 Gasser, Paul, and Kurt Metzler. *Fluchtweg Rohr noch offen: Roman*. Diepoldsau: Rheinpress, 1983.

6 City Archive Winterthur. *Musikpavillon Stadtgarten – Construction History*. 12 May 1993.

7 Fumagalli, Paolo. "Organizing a Function, Finding a Form: Aïre-Geneva Wastewater Treatment Plant." *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen*, no. 7/8 (1989).

8 Marchand, Bruno, Georges Brera, and Aurélie Buisson. *Georges Brera architecte*. Gollion: Infolio, 2019.

9 Association Porteous. "Genève: première victoire pour Porteous." *Squat!net*, 17 January 2019. https://fr.squat.net/2019/01/17/geneve-premiere-victoire-pour-porteous/

10 RTS. "Le premier espace réhabilité de Porteous ouvert au Vernier." *RTS Info*, 09 June 2024. https://www.rts.ch/info/regions/geneve/14090785-le-premier-espace-rehabilite-de-porteous-ouvert-au-public-a-vernier.html

11 Département du territoire, Canton de Genève. *Le patrimoine industriel à l'honneur avec la mise sous protection de deux bâtiments de la STEP d'Aïre*. Press release, 07 May 2020.

12 Fumagalli 1989 (See note 7).

13 Jubin, Serge. "Il y a soixante ans, 40 000 soldats français et polonais trouvaient refuge dans les Franches-Montagnes." *Le Temps*, 10 June 2000.

14 Rucki, Jerzy. Die Schweiz im Licht – *Die Schweiz im Schatten: Erinnerungen, Rück- und Ausblick eines polnischen Militärinternierten in der Schweiz während des Zweiten Weltkrieges*. Kriens, 1997.

15 Landwehr, Dominik. "Polenwege im Safiental." *Blog des Schweizerischen Nationalmuseums*, 11 July 2023. https://blog.nationalmuseum.ch/2023/05/safiental/

16 Federal Roads Office FEDRO, *Federal Inventory of Historical Routes in Switzerland (IHR).*

17 Thoele, Alexander. "Une boîte pour ne pas oublier les internés polonais de la Seconde Guerre mondiale." *SWI swissinfo.ch*, 20 July 2023. https://www.swissinfo.ch/fre/culture/une-bo%C3%AEte-pour-ne-pas-oublier-les-intern%C3%A9s-polonais-de-la-seconde-guerre-mondiale/48595666

18 Swiss Federal Archive. *Grenzübertritt französischer und polnischer Truppen*. Video, 19 June 2015. https://youtu.be/Avzsxsi66Og?si=_XW9IccqFGVxOhr8

19 The Beast Zurich. *Stadtmacher-Archiv*. Retrieved June 2024, from https://stadtmacher-archiv.de/stadtmacher/the-beast/

20 Wyss, Helen. "Das Erbe einer Subkultur: 'Gefundene Räume' und gebaute Orte der Skateboard-Szene." *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 52, no. 1 (2024): 64–72.

21 Yates, Emmy A. *The Development of Do-It-Yourself Skateparks in Contemporary Urban Environments*. MSc Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2022.

22 Riffaud, Thomas. "Construire son propre spot: la philosophie Do it yourself dans les sports de rue." *Espaces et Société*, no. 175 (2018).

23 The information on the mosque is based on interviews with members of the mosque community, as no further documentation on the history of the building could be found.

24 Statistik Stadt Zürich (Ed.), *Quartiersspiegel Seebach,* Zürich, 2024.

25 Marchand, Bruno (Ed.), *Architecture Du Canton de Vaud* (1920–1975), Lausanne, 2012, p. 240.

26 Lécuyer, Thomas. "Jacques Carando connaît la chanson." *Lausanne Cités*, 13 May 2022. https://www.lausanne-cites.ch/portrait/jacques-carando-connait-la-chanson

27 Debey, Amèle. "À Lausanne, les gays ne font plus vraiment bande à part." *Lausanne Cités*, 3 December 2023. https://archives.lausannecites.ch/lausanne-les-gays-ne-font-plus-vraiment-bande-part