

A Long Journey

It was forty years after the end of World War II, on 24 July, 1985, when a small provisional exhibition entitled "Fascination and Terror" was opened in the Zeppelin Grandstand of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, and the city officially and publicly started to deal with its architectural heritage from the Nazi era. Three years later, the symposium "The Heritage – Dealing with Nazi Architecture", initiated by the city's culture department, gave further impetus.

In **1988**, the CSU party group, in a paper concerning further action on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, recommended an extension of the exhibition "Fascination and Terror" and a revival of the grounds as a sports and recreation park. In **1989**, the SPD party group demanded that a Museum for Modern History should be established, financed by a public law foundation. In autumn **1991**, an "Initiative Group Congress Hall" made recommendations for the establishment of an "Information Centre Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds" in the rooms of the north wing of the Congress Hall, to supplement the exhibition "Fascination and Terror".

In **1994**, the then director of *Nuremberg Municipal Museums*, Dr. Franz Sonnenberger, in the context of his plan for modernising all of Nuremberg's museums, also introduced the idea of a Documentation Centre on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. The "Nürnberger Nachrichten" on 21.10.1994 commented: „ ... a vision, which must seem utopian for the time being". The City Council adopted the plans for the future, but did not grant any finances.

In **1997**, things got moving. The previous year, a "pavilion solution" including the north wing of the Congress Hall had been developed and put forward with the City's Building Department. Prof. Dr. Gregor Schöllgen, historian at Erlangen University was commissioned by *Nuremberg Municipal Museums* to produce an "expert report on the future use of the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds as a museum". The publisher of the "Nürnberger Nachrichten", Bruno Schnell, made the first concrete contribution to the project, with an initial subsidy of 250,000 DM. This was followed by grants from the cultural committee of the Middle Franconian Regional Council and the Culture Foundation of Stadtparkasse Nürnberg.

In **1998**, Austrian architect, Günther Domenig, won the international design competition for the Documentation Centre and was commissioned to draw up initial plans. After some discussion concerning the reduction of the additional costs caused by the new design, in autumn **1999**, finances were finally secured, with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free State of Bavaria contributing 6 million DM each, and thanks to grants from additional public and private sponsors, and by the City of Nuremberg.

On 28 January, **2000**, building works for the Documentation Centre officially started in the north wing of the unfinished Congress Hall – not by turning the first turf, but by breaking out a stone from the existing façade. The topping-out ceremony was held in November of the same year. One year later, on 4 November, 2001, Federal President, Johannes Rau, handed the institution over to the public.

This folder also includes the following information texts on the Documentation Centre:

- 01 Heading for Success: The First Seven Years
- 02 The Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds
- 03 *A Brief History of the Documentation Centre***
- 04 The Architecture
- 05 The Permanent Exhibition "Fascination & Terror"
- 06 Educational Programme
- 07 General Information

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