CALL FOR PAPERS

"The Heritage of the Modern Olympic Games. Historic Sports Facilities between Conservation and Conversion"
Munich, Olympic Park, 7-8 November 2019

International conference of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the City of Munich, in cooperation with the Bavarian Heritage Conservation Authority and the Deutsche Akademie für Städtebau und Landesplanung (DASL), as well as with partner organisations from sport and monument conservation

Occasion and Aim

In 2020, the Summer Olympics will take place in Tokyo. The Japanese capital was already the venue of the Games in 1964. As before in Rome and later in Mexico and Munich, some of the Olympic buildings gained worldwide reputation, such as Kenzo Tange's constructions, which shaped the medial appearance of the Olympics worldwide. More than half a century later, some historic Olympic buildings, such as the stadium, are no longer available as venues for the upcoming games, but will be replaced by new venues. In addition, there are more and more reports from Olympic cities about buildings and facilities threatened by loss of function, vacancy, decay and becoming sports ruins only a few years after they were put into service for the temporary sporting event. In the year before the Olympic Games of 2020 in Japan and as a follow-up of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and its motto "Sharing Heritage - Sharing Values", the questions of sustainability and responsibility for the preservation of the international heritage of the Olympic sports facilities will be addressed in the Olympic city of Munich.

In 1896 the first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens. Initiated by the historian and pedagogue Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), in a time of increasing nationalism they were intended to promote cross-border understanding through sporting competitions in the spirit of the antique Olympic Games. Not least for this reason, a Greek antique stadium was favoured as the first venue over the other discussed venues in Paris and London. The Panathenaic Stadium east of the Acropolis in Athens, built from 330 BC, had only been excavated by Ernst Ziller in 1870, a few years after its discovery. It was renovated for the games and offered space for 50,000 spectators.

Up to the turn of the millennium, the Olympic Games were held in Athens (1896), Paris (1900), St. Louis (1904), Athens (1906), London (1908), Stockholm (1912), Antwerp (1920), Paris (1924), Amsterdam (1928), Los Angeles (1932), Berlin (1936), London (1948), Helsinki (1952), Melbourne (1956), Rome (1960), Tokyo (1964), Mexico City (1968), Munich (1972), Montreal (1976), Moscow (1980), Los Angeles (1984), Seoul (1988), Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000). These Games have not only grown in terms of popularity as a sport, mass and media event. They have also left behind a great heritage with regard to architecture, urban planning and garden history.

Previous ICOMOS Activities

The international conference is organised by ICOMOS Germany and the Bavarian capital of Munich, in cooperation with partner organisations and institutions from sport and culture. It will follow on from the 2001 Berlin ICOMOS conference "Sports - Sites - Culture. Historic Sports Grounds and Conservation" (published as ICOMOS - Journals of the German National Committee XXXVIII; download at: https://www.icomos.de/admin/ckeditor/plugins/alphamanager/uploads/pdf/HefteXXXVIII.pdf). The International Day of Monuments and Sites, for which, on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro) in 2016, ICOMOS had used the theme "The Heritage of
Sport”, offers another starting point. On this recent occasion, the ICOMOS Documentation Centre in Charenton also published in 2016 the online bibliography “The Heritage of Sport” (https://www.icomos.org/images/Doc_centre/BIBLIOGRAPHIES/Bibliography-sport_and_heritage2016OK.pdf).

Using the example of the modern Olympic Summer Games, the event aims to analyse the role of sport in the modern society of the 20th century and explore and discuss the conservation chances and conflicts of Olympic Summer Game sites in a European and worldwide context. It will also ask about the importance that sport itself attaches to its architectural, landscape gardening and visual heritage and about the self-responsibility of the world of sport for the monuments of sport.

The Heritage of the Olympic Games – Potential and Risks

Olympic facilities are subject to a particularly high pressure of change and threat. This initially concerns the continued and subsequent use of the sports facilities and the accommodation and supply facilities built for the Games. Added to this are the constantly increasing requirements and standard improvements of sporting competitions. The difficult challenges involved in maintaining Olympic facilities include, for example, expansion and modernisation measures such as transforming them into pure seating stadiums or pure football stadiums or adapting them to the changed conditions of a medialised and economised sports business.

Not only the architectural testimonies are worth preserving. In many cases, the facilities were planned as "Olympic parks" and thus as works of garden and landscape design. Between the wars, the idea of building a sports park was not so much seen as a structural, but as a garden architectural task. The stadium – with a football field and facilities for high and long jump, discus throwing and shot put as well as an adjoining swimming stadium – was regarded as the crown of an entire sports landscape, which was to be used not only during the time of the competitions in the sense of a theatre stage, but daily as a sports facility by a broad public.

Regarding the idea of the "Olympic Park", the Berlin Olympic site (1936) and the Munich Olympic facilities (1972) for example are closely related, while the architecture could not be more different. Helsinki (1940/1952) and Rome (1960), on the other hand, did not take up the idea of a closed park. Instead, they carefully placed the sports facilities in long-standing and identity-giving public parks across the city area. Numerous architectures, including the Palazzo dello Sport and the Palazzetto dello Sport in Rome, built according to plans by Pier Luigi Nervi, the Munich buildings by Behnisch & Partner with Frei Otto, Fritz Leonhardt and Günther Grzimek, or the halls for the Olympic Games in Tokyo according to plans by Kenzo Tange, are considered today among the highlights of European architectural history, also in terms of construction and material history.
Conference Structure and Call for Papers

A two-day conference is planned: Arrival Wednesday, 6 November 2019; conference on Thursday and Friday (7 and 8 November 2019); departure Saturday, 9 November. The two-day core event will cover the following topics/sections:

Welcome, Opening

1. Introduction – sports history and architectural history of the modern Olympic Summer Games
2. Inventory – monument protection and loss of monuments at Olympic sites of the 20th century
3. Between continuity and change – the Olympic heritage of the interwar and post-war periods
4. Olympic cities – sport as a factor in urban and landscape planning
5. Olympic buildings – case studies on stadium and hall architecture (conservation, conversion, re-use, location and continuity of use)

Discussion: cooperation and World Heritage potential of Olympic sites

In addition to contributions on historic Olympic sites in Germany, contributions on 20th century Olympic facilities from all over Europe, but also on non-European key examples of the modern Olympic movement are welcome.

The conference languages are German and English.

There will be no participation or conference fee.

ICOMOS Germany and the City of Munich have applied for funds to reimburse travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses for external speakers. A lecture or publication fee is not intended for speakers or moderators.

Applications should include an abstract of a maximum of 2500 characters (including spaces) and a short CV of a maximum of 500 characters. The applications should also indicate which Olympic sites or Olympic Games of the 20th century are to be addressed in the presentation and which of the five above-mentioned thematic sections is to be given priority.

The conference lectures should not be longer than 20 minutes. An illustrated conference publication of all contributions is planned for the Olympic year 2020 in the series ICOMOS - Journals of the German National Committee.

The submission of abstracts and CVs is requested until 15 March 2019 to:

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