

Industrial Heritage and Pathways for Cultural-Creative Development in Bamberg, Germany

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Submitted: 17 January 2024 **Accepted:** 18 June 2024 **Published:** 2 August 2024

Issue: This article is part of the issue “Industrial Heritage and Cultural Clusters: More Than a Temporary Affair?” edited by Uwe Altröck (University of Kassel) and Janet Merkel (TU Berlin), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.i341>

Abstract

This article contributes to the ongoing authorized heritage discourse, following recent heritage concepts such as open heritage, and examines the industrial heritage and pathways for cultural-creative development in the city of Bamberg, Germany. Bamberg is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but not on account of its industrial heritage, although some former industrial sites are located within the borders of the current World Heritage Site. We describe three adaptively reused sites that have slightly differing forms of protected status (listed building and ensemble) and show that authorized listing helps to ensure the survival of buildings and material structures over time as documents of an industrial past. However, other industrial sites need the engagement of locals, and refer to what Laurajane Smith describes as heritage as a cultural process. Diverse concepts and cultural-creative developments are evident in the reuse of industrial sites in Bamberg, but these contribute little to urban development strategies. When industrial heritage assets feature in the city’s development strategy, they are seemingly leveraged to drive real estate projects, such as at the former Erba textile site. Additionally, the Otto-Friedrich University (through its Am Zwinger building), and an engaged bottom-up initiative to reuse a former boiler house, enable slightly different development pathways—knowledge-based versus art-based, respectively. The university has a long-term perspective and promising impulses for heritage uses, whereas the Kunstraum (Art House) initiative still struggles to secure support for its medium-term prospects. We argue that the industrial heritage sites need authorized support *and* agency through engagement, to ensure long-term perspectives for cultural-creative uses.

Keywords

art; Bamberg; industrial heritage; reuse path dependency; UNESCO World Heritage; university

1. Introduction

Industrial heritage may appear to be a clear concept, but it is not. We struggle with inaccuracies and overlapping of concepts, policies, and practices between heritage and monuments respectively listed buildings. Translation issues in the international field of the UNESCO World Heritage Programme are an additional aspect. (The English–German translation suggests *Kulturerbe* for heritage, which is protected by federal or national laws on monument preservation: *Denkmalschutzgesetze*). The work of Laurajane Smith is highly influential in demonstrating that heritage value is not inherent to objects, but instead derives from cultural *processes* through which local people (re)use, appropriate, and give meaning to a place and its physical structures (Smith, 2006; see also Harrison, 2012). She and subsequent scholars counteracted the so-called authorized heritage discourse, which in her view was closely connected to the formal and exclusive procedures of implemented policies, regulations, and laws such as the *Denkmalschutzgesetz*—defined by national and federal state institutions and, as such, “authorized.” Industrial heritage was criticized if this only considered the most beautiful, monumental, and representative buildings of a heritage site while overlooking the facilities serving production, labourers’ housing, or infrastructure. The light shines brighter and more frequently on company directors than on the workers who generated the added value of industrial empires. This highlights the importance of recognizing the politics of class in industrial heritage discourses (Smith & Campbell, 2017). Other scholars pointed out that “industrial heritage is not only about identity and memory, traditions, and labor movements; it belongs to cities, sites, and their transformations. Beyond being cultural heritage, industrial heritage is an issue in planning” (Oevermann & Mieg, 2015, p. 3). Other scholars, such as Meier and Steiner (2018), worked on differentiating the concepts of monument (*Denkmal*) and heritage, and highlight:

To be sure, these two alternative positions interact in multiple ways, and it is precisely this that makes the distinction, and Lowenthal’s presentation of it as a thesis for discussion, so fruitful for conservation: the affirmative, present-oriented and accessible “heritage object” versus the academically-validated, historically-contextualized *Denkmal*, which is different from it and for that reason may also prove difficult or unwieldy. (Meier & Steiner, 2018, p. 20)

Pendlebury (2013) integrates both perspectives and describes heritage as an assemblage of objects, regulations, and practices. From a theoretical point of view, Euler-Rolle (2022) points out that heritage conservation considers and includes multi-perspectives within institutionalized frameworks. Open heritage (Oevermann, Polyák, et al., 2023) is one recent conceptualization that integrates places and their physical structures with the importance of people and their doings. This integrated, actor-related focus allows us to understand creative agents as part of the actor constellation in defining, securing, and reusing industrial heritage sites, not the least in revitalization processes.

Creative quarters in capital cities or metropolitan regions, such as in Berlin, Oslo, or Marseille (Bergsli, 2015), are often associated with revitalization; however, resulting increased real estate values and gentrification may limit long-term options for—and ultimately displace—creative agents. Furthermore, the role of intermediaries and brokers, cluster, and network managers for the innovative and creative scene is recognized for large cities such as Berlin (Merkel & Suwala, 2021); but what about “small cities” that have an industrial history but are not known for cultural clusters and creative industries, nor for their industrial heritage? We address small cities here not in a geographical understanding, but in the understanding of open heritage, which took an

intensive look at small heritage places. They are small in the sense of being neglected through poor awareness of heritage assets and their value for urban development strategies, or the lack of integrating community stakeholders within them (Oevermann & Szemző, 2023). The article addresses the research question: What kinds of cultural and creative agents are active in such places, how do they understand and use industrial heritage, and what roles do municipalities play in supporting them?

Bamberg (Germany) is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage city with a significant industrial past. Industries were located along waterway sites that are now attractive for urban development. However, we hypothesize that Bamberg largely overlooks its industrial history and heritage, except in horticulture and brewing, as well as the actors who are engaging in adaptive heritage reuse of these sites. Rather, Bamberg is framed as a historic medieval and baroque city with an exceptional built heritage of residential quarters, churches, and a centre with a historic town hall.

Somewhat at odds with Bamberg's image as a historic medieval and baroque city, all three of our analysed industrial sites have protected status and two are located within the boundaries of the historic city: The remaining buildings of the former Erba textile factory are listed (German: *Denkmale*), whereas the two sites Am Zwinger 4 & 6 and the former Kesselhaus (boiler house) located on Untere Sandstraße are—due to their location—both within the Historic City of Bamberg, but are not themselves listed as elements of that ensemble (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 2024). Although the article does not analyse the interdependency of heritage status and the survival of industrial buildings, we assume that protected status has helped to secure these built structures: Notably, in the case of the former Erba complex, only the listed buildings were conserved and adaptively reused, whereas the other structures were demolished. In the field of heritage conservation, we speak about the *longue durée*, which are the long-term historical structures of a place and building, as a value.

Many towns were shaped through industrial heritage sites and have gained protected status. A specific type is the industrial town, such as Rjukan in Norway, which—in contrast to Bamberg—was granted UNESCO World Heritage status specifically for its industrial heritage with its garden city (UNESCO, 2015; Wergeland, 2022). This type of small city would also be of interest for examining how the confluence of industrial heritage and cultural clusters might become more than a temporary arrangement.

The concepts of cultural clusters, creative industries, and tourism all include creative agents, artists, and institutions of art, culture, or higher education, although these agents are somewhat diverse. The main arguments concerning the “Creative City” (Laundry, 2000), “Cities and Creative Class” (Florida, 2005), “Cultural Quarters” (Legnér & Ponzini, 2009), or culture-creative-orientated development (known from the Ruhr area of Germany; Behr et al., 1990) and many more all overlap, but are not synonymous in their understandings of creativity, innovation, and creative agents. We are unable to analyse those concepts here, but consider in more detail three creative-innovative agents and their slightly different functions within the heritage (re)use and urban development: museums as drivers of culture-led development (Aspen, 2013; Bergsli, 2015); the role of universities in generating knowledge and innovation (Mieg & Töpfer, 2013); and places for the arts, which are created through community-driven processes of locally based, often marginalized, small-scale urban developments with potential for sustainability and communing (Szemző et al., 2023). In this article, we examine the reuse of industrial sites and buildings in Bamberg by the municipality and Otto-Friedrich University as an agent of higher education and driver of economic development; as

well as a bottom-up initiative by artists to adapt and reuse the Bamberg Kesselhaus (boiler house of the former hospital).

We aim to shed light on the relationship between industrial heritage and urban development, which is affected by long-term processes, persistent built environments, and perceptions about what constitutes the heritage of a place (Oevermann, 2019). There is broad awareness of how industries have shaped European cities over the last two or even three centuries. Schott (2014, p. 14) uses the concept of path dependency to explain not only the long-lasting processes of urban development but also the dependencies within development paths. This concept is based on an understanding of cities as built entities, with focus on the long lifetimes of physical and built structures and their traces: They might be adapted, extended, or transformed, but still shape urban layouts, sites, and uses. With a set of political-administrative regulations and laws, together with perceptions and practices, this material and immaterial inheritance inevitably moulds the development processes of cities and locations. In the field of heritage conservation, we talk about the *longue durée* (Braudel, 1977) of a place, and thus connect past, present, and future. Research on the rediscovery of industrial heritage sites in Berlin (Hoppe & Oevermann, 2020) shows a *longue durée* that includes changes to the places, functions, and—most importantly—the agents involved.

The introduction in this article to Bamberg gives the impression that its industrial past is neglected in favour of the more glorious and appealing baroque period, and that industrial remains are demolished due to a process of homogenization as a historic (baroque) city. This argument is somewhat evident, but even here our in-depth analysis reveals a more complex picture. Some extant industrial structures, especially buildings and their adaptive reuses, still provide evidence of Bamberg's industrial past and offer space for higher education and artistic initiatives that support cultural-creative agents and cultural-creative-oriented development.

2. Material and Methods

In order to pursue our research question, we conducted a case study of Bamberg to examine adaptive reuse, the role of creative agents, and public-private cooperation. We generally followed a mixed-methods research approach.

First of all, we follow the methods of heritage conservation and art history as they are used to identify heritage assets and values through description. These methods are part of the authorized, or to put it in other words, institutionalized heritage discourse and practices. In the authorized heritage discourse, buildings and sites are given value because of their historic, artistic, or cultural meanings that are manifested in substance, material, and visual integrity (Euler-Rolle, 2022). The laws protect the latter, but not cultural processes. Therefore, we look at the historic urban development of Bamberg in describing the substance, material, and visual integrity of the industrial sites and their urban settings, informed by maps, material from the city archives, as well as site visits. A building mostly includes different layers of time and also maintains descriptive characteristics over time. We employ methods commonly used in the field to understand historic architecture (Cramer & Breitling, 2012) and historic towns (Gunzelmann, 2017), and to analyse the development of urban environments and industrial heritage over time, including conservation and conversion (Oevermann, 2021).

The analysis of historic maps and archive material provides findings on path dependencies (Schott, 2014) and the *longue durée* of a place (Braudel, 1977) and its built structures, and tells us about its constitution as a

heritage site. Prior protection status is another and important indication of a heritage site, and also informs us about one aspect of official support. The federal state (for Bavaria, the Bayerisches Amt für Denkmalpflege), together with the municipalities (the Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde), define and support heritage protection in Germany. We assume, as already mentioned, that official listing was a precondition for the adaptive reuses of our cases; without this, these structures might have been lost like so many others. On this basis, we select three cases of industrial heritage reuse of buildings and sites, which are introduced and discussed in detail.

The analysis is informed by 12 informal interviews (November 2021–July 2022) with staff of diverse municipal institutions, such as the Bamberg World Heritage Visitor Centre and the planning department, with persons engaged in civic heritage initiatives, and with university faculty and staff, to understand the role of heritage in the discourse and practices of the municipalities. The guiding question in the interviews was how to understand the potential and challenges of conserving built heritage while also facilitating Bamberg's urban development. This includes the industrial heritage sites and the agents involved in their (re)use.

At first, the informal interviews were intended to inform research hypotheses. However, these informal interviews allowed access to interviewees and argumentations that otherwise tend to avoid frank discussion due to their professional role and function. Furthermore, they also provided in-depth information about our Am Zwinger 4 & 6 case study. In some of these interviews with university faculty and staff we discussed knowledge about the professional careers of the alumni and reflected on innovation and job opportunities (November 2021–May 2022). A mapping initiative, which was in preparation at that time and is now online, allowed us to provide some indication in understanding the role of universities in generating knowledge and innovation (Mieg & Töpfer, 2013). Two of the three current authors have studied and taught, respectively, in the buildings at Am Zwinger 4 & 6 for at least one year.

We examine recent urban developments, as well as strategies for the future, through analysing municipal documents referring to Bamberg's urban development. Following a general survey, we chose two central documents for our research question, which we reviewed using a document analysis method (Mieg & Oevermann, 2015, pp. 61–71). The document analysis helped us to understand the (non) supporting role of the municipalities.

Additionally, one expert interview (Mieg & Näf, 2006) with the chair of the Kunstraum (English: Art House) initiative (October 2022, Bamberg Kesselhaus case study) was conducted to better understand ongoing processes in this case. This expert interview explicitly addressed the aforementioned creative-innovative agent that, on the one hand, creates a museum space and asks whether this kind of museum is a driver of culture-led development (Aspen, 2013; Bergsli, 2015); and on the other hand, the same agent adaptively reuses places for art through community-driven processes of locally based, small-scale urban developments with potential for sustainability and communing (Szemző et al., 2023). These methods (interviews and document analysis) allow us to determine the cultural and creative agents reusing the site; how, by doing so, these agents come to understand “their” industrial heritage; and how far they are supported by the municipality.

3. Small Industrial Heritage Cities: Municipalities, Heritage Sites, and Creative Agents

The informal interviews revealed both the specific situation of Bamberg and also some differences compared with acknowledged industrial heritage cities. We used this information to formulate two assumptions. Both are based on the observation that, from a general perspective, Bamberg does not suffer from urban development problems such as budget deficit, shrinkage, segregation, or neglected quarters. Bamberg and its university do not face major financial challenges (due not least to Bavaria having one of Europe's strongest economies). However, only some branches are seen as important for future urban development—namely tourism, the university, and a few companies of importance to the automotive supply chain. Furthermore, the city of Bamberg specifically acknowledges the university as an agent in future development:

In view of the general expert discussion about “creative cities” and “knowledge-based urban development” there should still be some inspiration to be gained here. A detailed analysis of the potential of universities could provide a number of starting points and impulses for the (economic) development of Bamberg to come to light. (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, p. 27, own translation)

The field of heritage conservation is explicitly addressed: “co-operations, especially in smaller regional projects in the field of business informatics, for example, but also in the context of world heritage, heritage conservation and conservation renewal, which certainly offers further potential” (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, p. 27, own translation). However, industrial heritage barely features; instead, the city is defined as such:

Bamberg is known beyond the city boundaries for its culture: World Heritage Site, Philharmonic Orchestra, E.T.A.-Hoffmann theatre and—since the end of the 1990s—the Villa Concordia. Bamberg advertises itself with the slogan “Cultural City of Bamberg—Experience World Heritage.” (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, p. 28, own translation)

We argue that Bamberg largely overlooks its industrial history and heritage, as well as the actors engaging in adaptive heritage reuse of these sites. Our first assumption is that Bamberg's municipalities lack awareness about their own industrial heritage sites and their potential contribution to urban development such as is evident in Berlin (cf. the introduced rediscovery of industrial heritage; Hoppe & Oevermann, 2020). Heritage and heritage institutions—be they part of authorities, city-related institutions, or civic initiatives—conduct research, identify, value, conserve, and mediate mainly the historic medieval and baroque city. Industrial sites or post-war architecture are undervalued, including: the Kesselhaus (industrial); one of the Regnitz bridges; and a post-war 1960s office building located close to the main station, which is under threat of demolition and might be substituted by a newly reconstructed building of a “more historic” appearance. In contrast, the assets designated as part of the World Heritage Site are maintained in excellent condition.

Our second assumption is that there is community engagement in this town, working on conservation and adaptive reuse of industrial sites to meet the local need for art and art production. Bamberg's residents express differing perspectives, including through their interest in and engagement with particular heritage sites and dimensions of the city. Overall, few Bamberg residents are engaged in creative fields, and are thus poorly represented compared with the extensive creative constellations present in cities such as Berlin. Therefore, we do not expect to find creative clusters in Bamberg. Instead, we use the approach to identify creative-innovative

agents (as previously introduced) and their contribution to the reuse of industrial heritage sites and to urban development. Conversely, we examine how municipalities support these agents and their activities. If such support mechanisms are transient, as this thematic issue asks, we answer with two argumentations. Firstly, built structures that have survived with the help of heritage listing for more than 50 or 70 years are already one aspect of a long-lasting arrangement; but, secondly—and more importantly for this thematic issue—the present reuses of these structures by creative agents might be threatened by a lack of municipal support.

4. Bamberg

The town of Bamberg retains a layout and architecture dating from the medieval and baroque periods and that constitute its World Heritage status. The status is based on an in-depth inventory (*Großinventar*) and informed conservation. This continuity is well documented, starting with the first inventory in 1834 and based on early provision for protection from 1899 (Gunzelmann, 2012b, pp. 721–722). In stark contrast, Bamberg also has many manufacturing and industrial buildings/sites. Shipping, brewery, horticulture, textiles, and engineering were important branches of its urban history. In 1900, larger industrial sites such as the Erba textile factory were located at the edge of the city, which provided space for their huge structures. In the small plots of land dating from the medieval-baroque urban layout and built structure, we see small factories that gradually expanded across several plots to meet their needs for additional space (Gunzelmann, 2012a, map number 11). In consequence, and different to industrial towns such as Rjukan, Bamberg has never had a dominant industrial urban morphology.

The larger buildings and structures, such as the Erba textile factory and the Bamberger metal goods factory, which were mostly located at the urban fringes of their time, were mainly demolished in the 20th century. Manufacturing and industries that were located within and part of the historic urban layout have been more lightly adapted, reused, maintained, and partly demolished (in the case of chimneys). Nevertheless, the industrial history of these buildings is nearly unrecognizable (Gunzelmann, 2012b, map numbers 11, 12, 13, 23, 24). Generally speaking, manufacturing and industrial heritage (except the culture of brewing) have been lost over time, a trend that is today well documented (Gunzelmann, 2012a, pp. 1650–1651, 2012b, pp. 553–692).

Today in the 21st century, some factories and industries remain active, mostly related to brewing, horticulture, and mechanical engineering. Of note is the Weyermann malt factory, founded in 1888. The family business (Malzfabrik Mich. Weyermann GmbH & Co. KG) expanded to become the global leader in speciality malts and still operates from a historical 19th-century malthouse. Although these agents are not part of any culture-creative-orientated development, they are in themselves innovative. External challenges facing industry mean that only those businesses that re-innovate their own heritage may survive, as shown by research on horticulture in Bamberg (Oevermann, Keech, et al., 2023).

4.1. Adaptive Reuses of Heritage Industrial Buildings

Traces of the urban past can be found in the adaptive reuse of buildings, and here the agents of culture-creative-orientated development come into play. Bamberg provides early examples of adaptive reuse of industrial buildings: Since 1988, the VHS (institute for public education) has been located at the city's former power station. From 1993, most of the industrial buildings at the Kaliko factory site (former

Bleicherei, Färberei und Appreturanstalt 1864) were demolished to construct a concert and congress hall (Gunzelmann, 2012a, map numbers 12, 24), with the former weaving shed repurposed to host small events and a restaurant. The conservation and transformation of three sites and their respective buildings are discussed in more detail.

4.1.1. New Developments: Erba

The Erba textile factory (former Mechanische Baumwoll-Spinnerei und Weberei; mechanical cotton spinning and weaving mill) is located in northwest Bamberg in the immediate vicinity of the city's harbour at the Main-Donau Canal (see Figure 1). In earlier times—while the factory was operational—it was separated from the baroque old town by a now filled-in section of the left arm of the river Regnitz and was accessed via bridges. Many of the residential buildings remaining near the textile factory originally accommodated its workers.

The textile factory was founded in 1858 in the small town of Gaustadt, which was later incorporated into Bamberg. The weaving looms were water-powered up to 1861 when a steam engine was installed. In 1927 the factory merged with the Erlanger Baumwollspinnerei (cotton mill) AG and was subsequently known as Erba. Subsequent extensions resulted in a factory complex of enormous dimensions, forming an urban contrast to Bamberg's small-scale and popular tourist centre. Erba closed due to bankruptcy in 1993 (Dornheim et al., 2012).



Figure 1. The Erba textile factory, 1962. Source: Luftbildverlag Bertram (Memmingen) (1962).

Bamberg's urban development concept highlights the importance of education as a developmental factor and acknowledges Otto-Friedrich University as an agent of a creative city. However, the overall message of the concept is to create a prime location with high-quality housing at the Erba location (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, p. 27). Consequently, the transformation of the industrial site (approximately 20 hectares) followed the rationale of brownfield development, characterized by extensive demolition and utilizing few heritage assets. Furthermore, the site's landscape was revitalized in the context of the 2012 Bamberger landscape exhibition (*Landesgartenschau*). Most of the factory buildings have been lost except for the most characteristic historic building at this site, the multi-storey former weaving and spinning mill, a former water tower, a chimney, and the water-power infrastructure which is still running. The multi-storey weaving mill was reused as a student dormitory until 2016, after which the accommodation was sold on the public housing market. Today the area also includes new university facilities such as a library and lecture halls. The history of the site is not presented publicly to residents, students, citizens, or tourists who now use the area, but one can recognize the historical buildings as parts of Bamberg's textile factory. Workers' issues relating to the site's productive period or present-day urban development are not addressed.

The Erba case shows that significant buildings located at the edge of the city are acknowledged as industrial heritage and an anchor point and as key to the attractiveness of further development. These sites are not part of the historic city ensemble, but Erba's water-power infrastructure, multi-storey buildings, the director's villa, and some workers' housing have protected status (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 2024). However, the heritage approach is limited, as its implementation concentrates on a small part of the site rather than understanding the whole factory as a built resource (Oevermann & Mieg, 2016), and this approach does not offer space for bottom-up approaches which are seen as important for creative-culture-oriented development (Oevermann, Polyák et al., 2023). The historic structures function as flagship architecture for the construction of new, premium housing and follow the path dependency common to many edge sites and cities: demolition and re-invention over relatively short time periods.

We assume that—in contrast to Berlin, where a protest culture against demolition is established, although only sometimes successful—Bamberg's small size might have reduced the potential to create a strong lobby for its neglected industrial heritage; however, further research is needed on this question. The findings of the several informal interviews provide one rationale: The urban heritage of Bamberg is what constitutes the UNESCO World Heritage site; here, the municipality, including the heritage authorities and tourism branch, concentrate their efforts on the integration of heritage conservation and urban development, whereas other forms of urban heritage are less acknowledged.

4.1.2. University Function: Am Zwinger 4 & 6

The properties at Am Zwinger numbers 4 & 6 are located near the Hainviertel district at the southern end of Bamberg's old town, whose residential neighbourhoods are characterized by prestigious villas. The so-called Hollergraben, fed by the left branch of the river Regnitz, runs directly west of the factory. From the mid-19th century until the 1920s, the property opposite (Am Zwinger 15) housed a water-powered veneer sawmill and a workshop that manufactured grinders, turbines, and specialist machinery for sawmills and hop-processing (Flussparadies Franken, n.d.).

The Rupp & Hubrach optical company was founded in 1922 by Max Rupp sen. and Carl Hubrach sen. After its first production facility, the so-called Stelzer'sche Mühle, was bombed during the final days of World War II,

the company relocated in 1945 to two rented properties (Am Zwinger 4 & 6) close to the river Regnitz in southwest Bamberg. The properties were already under roof, and production was restarted in 1946. One of the properties, Am Zwinger 4, was a residential building comprising six flats that were converted into living spaces for the company owners and their families, giving rise to the name “Fabrikantenvilla” (Factory owner’s villa). The second property, Am Zwinger 6, was a former storage building that was reused as a production facility and modernized in 1955. The company continued as a family business until becoming part of the BBGR/Essilor-group in 2003 (Haas, 2015).

Following the sale of the company, the Fabrikantenvilla and production facility were reused as the in-house printing press of the Office for Rural Development (Amt für Ländliche Entwicklung). Otto-Friedrich University took over the properties in 2014 as its need for space increased, and the buildings now host the departments, labs, and lecture rooms for the Master Studies in Heritage Conservation and the Centre for Heritage Conservation Studies and Technologies (Kompetenzzentrum für Denkmalwissenschaften und Denkmaltechnologien). Today, Am Zwinger 6 is occupied by a modern structure that indicates its former use as a glass-cutting workshop through its internal spatial organization and atmosphere. In contrast, the neighbouring Fabrikantenvilla has retained its historical character in parts, which is particularly evident in its interiors featuring stucco-decorated ceilings and a wooden staircase (see Figure 2).

It would be difficult to measure the effects of higher education institutes on urban development, but the connection between access to knowledge and economic prosperity in university towns is much clearer (Heßler, 2007, pp. 19–20). One indication of the relevance of higher education in Bamberg for innovation and employment is the over-representation of offices and firms in Bamberg and the Franconia region. Bamberg hosts six enterprises providing specific services for heritage conservation sciences, mostly researchers and surveyors of historic buildings (*Bauforscher:innen*), with a further four within Franconia, among approximately 70–80 such enterprises in Germany as a whole (Breitling et al., 2022).



Figure 2. Current view of the building Am Zwinger 6. The premises of the Centre for Heritage Conservation Studies and Technologies are located on the ground floor. Photo courtesy of © L. Hans, 2024.

The industrial heritage site is a space of opportunities (Siebel, 2002, pp. 39–40); accordingly, the university created a small and limited environment to connect higher education in the field of heritage conservation and foster the settlement of specific enterprises. The support of the university and its growing student numbers, courses offered, and research labs such as the Centre for Heritage Conservation Studies and Technologies form part of the long-term strategies by the federal government strategy of Bavaria and the municipality of Bamberg (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, 2014). However, being part of the university ourselves for at least one year (2001–2002), it is evident that computer sciences and management (rather than the field of heritage conservation) are the main subjects supported within the university, as they are acknowledged to be part of promising future industries.

In the case of the heritage conservation research lab and, more obvious, the computer sciences and management, the university has expanded its range of courses and opportunities for research, and attracts and educates upcoming professionals, or “talents” as Florida (2005) puts it. In sum, spaces of opportunity are needed by creative agents (which in this case are knowledge-orientated agents)—not only in large cities but also in smaller towns. The difference seems to be in the function of the intermediaries, brokers, or managers for networking and creative-knowledge environments. In Bamberg, the university’s actors connect directly *and* within the university to generate networks and the exchange of ideas.

Due to the smallness of the city, personal contact is the main way of exchanging ideas and developing products. As with any university, there is a certain turnover of scholars and staff, producing a flux of minds and knowledge as fertile ground for innovation; furthermore, the institution provides space and other hardware such as labs for knowledge production. In contrast, the city lacks so-called third places for which Berlin and other big cities such as Barcelona are known, in which individuals might meet, connect, and negotiate project-related business between many creative branches.

4.1.3. Art Space: Boiler House (Kesselhaus)

The boiler house of the former hospital is located directly west of Bamberg’s old town on the so-called Leinritt, the riverside path along the left bank of the Regnitz arm. The modern, functional building (constructed 1961–1963 to plans by Hans Rothenburger, Bamberg’s town planning director) at the northern end of the hospital site consists of a boiler room around 7 metres high, a shed-roof hall adjoining to the south, and basement rooms that were once used by the pathology department (see Figures 3 and 4).

Notably, this former boiler house has both the appearance of an industrial heritage site and fulfilled a technical infrastructure function—albeit of a hospital rather than an industrial (production) site. Nevertheless, it is not commonly acknowledged as either a listed building or a space of opportunity. Further research would be needed to determine whether this perception is attributable to its history as part of a former hospital.

In 1984, the boiler house was decommissioned when the hospital relocated, and stood empty until being rediscovered as an exhibition space in 2011 (Kunstraum JETZT! e.V., n.d.). The initiative for the gradual appropriation of the Kesselhaus was taken by Architekturtreff Bamberg, Kunstverein Bamberg, and BBK Oberfranken (Berufsverband Bildender Künstlerinnen u. Künstler Oberfranken e.V.), all organizations of creative agents. Since 2013, the newly founded association Kunstraum JETZT! e.V. (Art House NOW!) has been a utilization contract partner of the city. However, this has always been for a limited term, and while



Figure 3. The former Kesselhaus in its use as art house. Photo by © H. Oevermann, 2022.



Figure 4. Art House in the Kesselhaus, showing the interplay of the raw building and its use as a space for art exhibitions. Photo by © H. Oevermann, 2022. Further images of the space and activities can be found at https://kunstraum-jetzt.de/?page_id=24,%2012.10.2023

this arrangement has not yet diminished the personal commitment of the association members, it nevertheless formally precludes long-term planning.

The Kesselhaus is currently primarily used for contemporary art exhibitions and is therefore unique in Bamberg, apart from the Villa Dessauer city gallery that allows similar use to a lesser extent. The exhibitions are popular not only within sections of Bamberg's population: The Kesselhaus also generates lively interest beyond the region and attracts visitors from all over Germany. Since its founding in 2013, the Kunstraum JETZT! association has constantly endeavoured to gain broader political and social support for the Kesselhaus as an ideal exhibition venue for contemporary art and culture close to the city. So far, this commitment has often been met with criticism due to its need for maintenance and its incongruous appearance as a 1960s factory building in a historic town morphology. Consequently, there is a lack of financial interest on the part of municipal stakeholders.

The Kunstraum association itself has long since produced drafts, models, and utilization concepts to ensure the long-term use of the Kesselhaus as an art space. Only recently, a feasibility study was also carried out by the city to examine possible future uses for the building, but the results are yet to be presented (personal communication, October 30, 2022). However, the 2011 and 2014 SEKs (*Gesamtstädtisches Entwicklungskonzept*; English: overall urban development concept) lack any definitions or long-term perspectives on creative uses of the Kesselhaus. These strategy papers and others present a 20-year urban development perspective but make no mention at all of this industrial heritage site (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, 2014).

One person involved in the initiative states in regard to the future:

Yes, since it was founded in 2013, the Kunstraum JETZT! association has been working tirelessly to gain broader political and social support for the Kesselhaus and Shedhalle as an ideal exhibition venue for contemporary art and culture close to the city centre, a commitment that has been met with more or less incessant criticism and a refusal of financial backing on the part of the city authorities. (interview October 30, 2022; translation by the authors)

This quotation and other statements in informal and expert interviews show that the municipality lacks awareness not only of industrial heritage (except for breweries and horticulture), but also of its potential function as driver for urban development that integrates industrial sites as a built resource (Oevermann & Mieg, 2016) and its potential to provide space for people and their needs, such as art and other creative industries (Oevermann, Keech, et al., 2023); not to mention the contribution to sustainability and social impact (Szemző et al., 2023). Whether and how the initiatives generate sufficient power and an adequate financial basis to ensure a long-term perspective without the support of Bamberg's municipality or other state institutions will only become apparent in future years.

5. Discussion

This contribution elaborates on how smaller cities revitalize derelict industrial sites and consider the effects of regeneration initiatives. The article shows that there are different cultural and creative agents active, with effects on urban development and industrial heritage conservation; and shows that (and how) industrial

heritage and creative uses become more than temporary arrangements. Furthermore, all three examples show that the authorized listing of buildings and zones is an important regulative; the documents of a neglected history would be further diminished without it.

Our research in Bamberg did not reveal creative clusters in the understanding of “Creative Quarters” (Legnér & Ponzini, 2009); no institutionalized museums as drivers of culture-led development (Aspen, 2013; Bergsli, 2015); nor an innovative and creative scene as is recognized in large cities such as Berlin (Merkel & Suwala, 2021), but instead agents—the university and civic initiatives—that foster innovation and creative branches on a small scale. The universities and the supportive role of the municipality and the federal state can be understood as a contribution to “Cities and Creative Class” (Florida, 2005); and the initiatives reusing the former boiler house as a place for art could be understood as agents of a “Creative City” (Laundry, 2000). However, there are limitations.

The three Bamberg case studies show that the city’s manufacturing and industrial history are not generally part of the mainstream perception of Bamberg’s heritage acknowledged by UNESCO, and do not feature in urban development strategies (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, 2014). This is despite the significant influence of urban industry in the city’s history, as shown in the work of Gunzelmann (2012a, 2012b). However, the three sites at least benefit from protected heritage status, and through this have a long-term perspective for their built structures.

A more detailed view shows that the main characteristic, tangible elements of former factories such as the Erba textile factory are conserved and reused. However, the city has designated most of the site as a brownfield housing development. Thus, the university function at the Erba site contributes only modestly to a relationship between industrial heritage, its conservation, and knowledge-based institutions.

More promising is the university function located in the former production site at Am Zwinger 4 & 6. Here the building is conserved and carefully adapted to retain the atmosphere of production, innovation, and a specific place. A stable and long-term perspective of the knowledge-based institutions is strengthened through the urban development strategy (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, 2014) in which the “Creative Cities” approach and knowledge-based urban development are brought together with heritage conservation and their industries (Stadt Bamberg, 2011, p. 27). In that sense, we argue that in this case the confluence of industrial heritage—and more precisely, knowledge-based clusters—and creative agents is much more than a temporary arrangement.

The Kesselhaus case shows how industrial heritage sites may be reused by artists in small cities. The built infrastructure is appropriated and adapted by civil society initiatives, and as such contributes to broadening urban activities. However, the present arrangement of stakeholder constellation, rental contracts, and urban development objectives is fragile and might ultimately prove only temporary. The rediscovery of this heritage does not feature in local urban development strategies, nor has a role within or impact on the main perception of the historical World Heritage medieval and baroque city. Consequently, this art space attracts very little city tourism compared with the visitor numbers in the central part of the small city, such as the historic town hall and the Regnitz bridges. On a positive note, we can assume that its neglected position might at least limit gentrification effects.

The three case studies show different pathways for cultural-creative developments in small towns: It seems that the top-down development of the Erba site uses the industrial heritage as an urban attractor (Bergsli,

2015), but the overall branding as a historic medieval and baroque city overshadows its possible effects. Am Zwinger 4 & 6 contributes to knowledge production and small-scale economies, whereas the Kesselhaus locates bottom-up initiatives for contemporary art. All three approaches understand the built heritage as a resource (Oevermann & Mieg, 2016); furthermore, the Kesselhaus integrates local communities and serves their needs (Szemző et al., 2023), but the latter might ultimately prove to be only a temporary arrangement.

6. Conclusion

The conclusions indicate that “history and heritage” (Meier & Steiner, 2018) matters when we examine “Industrial Heritage and Cultural Clusters: More Than a Temporary Affair,” as done in this thematic issue. Bamberg’s vision of its history and heritage lacks understanding of its industrial heritage, even though their manifestations in built structures are thoroughly described by Gunzelmann (2012a, 2012b) and some are still part of the urban landscape. Cultural-creative agents often help in small and insecure settings, as they have the ability to envision, invent, and enfold perspectives with only modest funding and support, as the open heritage concept and cases have shown (Oevermann, Polyák, et al., 2023). However, authorized cultural-creative urban development strategies—such as that of Bamberg, utilizing the slogan “Cultural City of Bamberg—Experience World Heritage”—narrow the understanding of its own urban history and become small in regard to its industrial heritage. We argue, slightly differently from Smith (2006), that industrial heritage sites need authorized support through listing.

The Bamberg case studies show that long-term perspectives for industrial heritage sites need protection status, and thus instruments of the authorized heritage discourse—otherwise these documents (Euler-Rolle, 2022), built resources (Oevermann & Mieg, 2016), and spaces of opportunities (Oevermann, Keech, et al., 2023) disappear—in addition to agency by cultural-creative communities that understand heritage as a cultural process of use and appropriation, as Smith (2006) suggests. We have found an assemblage (Pendlebury, 2013) of objects, regulations, and practices in all three cases. However, municipal support mechanisms—which can be understood as a (democratically) authorized agent—are transient in the sense that built structures have survived with the help of heritage listing whereas the present reuse of the former Kesselhaus by creative agents is threatened by a lack of municipal support. For the former Kesselhaus, the need for authorized support is explained by its double smallness: due both to Bamberg’s generally poor acknowledgement of industrial heritage and a particular municipal indifference to its initiative-driven activities. The three Bamberg cases indicate the opportunities related to industrial heritage conservation and development; thus, municipalities of small cities should not only support the local agency for industrial heritage but also initiate on their own awareness and valuing processes.

Funding

Funding for open access is provided by Open Access TU Wien.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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