

THE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION OF THE

OLD TIMBER-FRAMED CENTRE OF

QUEDLINBURG

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Quedlinburg is one of the most important towns of monuments in the German Democratic Republic, a circumstance that has made it a very popular attraction for tourists. Such well preserved centres as Quedlinburg have become very rare indeed. The historic value is not limited to single buildings. The special importance of the old town of Quedlinburg, which goes far beyond the border of our country, lies in the entirety of its centre which has remained complete and virtually unchanged in its layout and historical architecture since medieval times. Its large number of secular and ecclesiastical buildings give an uninterrupted survey of its history from the 10th to the 20th century. The multitude of well preserved buildings enable the visitor to study the continuous development of the timber-framed architecture from the 14th to the 19th century.

The house Nr. 3 in the alley Wordgasse, right in the middle of the town, is a post - and - beam structure which is probably the oldest existing example of timber-framed building. Many of the other houses date back to the flourishing era of timber-framed construction in Lower Saxony of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The old town has not suffered from any losses regarding its original stock of historical buildings. Both World Wars passed it without leaving any destruction worth mentioning. The preservation of its original urban structure and layout and its unique historical stock of old timber-framed buildings has given its outstanding historic, scientific and artistic value. As a result of this it has been placed on the "List of Monuments of Special National Importance and International Artistic Value" since 1962. When the "Law on the Maintenance and Utilisation of Monuments of the German Democratic Republic" was passed by the People's Chamber of the GDR on 19th June, 1975, the old town of Quedlinburg was incorporated in the "Central List of Monuments in the GDR" in conformity with Article I, § 5, Section 1 of this law.

Quedlinburg is first mentioned as "villa Quitlingaburg" in a document of King Heinrich I of 22nd April 922. This was probably the name of the still older village which is said to have been situated in the area of the subsequent old town which was eventually integrated in the St. Blasius Quarter.

The area around the Burgberg and Münzenberg hills, and near Wiperti Church, formerly the royal court of King Heinrich I, was ideal for agriculture so that it was settled in the earliest times of history. Excavations revealed findings which testify to human settlements dating back to the end of the Ice Age, the early Stone Age, as well as to the Bronze and Iron Ages. The Germanic refuge fortification on the Burgberg hill became the governing point of the area in Carolingian times. In their capacity as governors and lay abbots of the Hersfeld abbey, the counts of the Lindolfinger dynasty acquired extensive land on the northern side of the Harz mountains with the result that Heinrich I, German king since 919, set up the centre of his reign here. The court on the Burgberg hill included a convent of canons. The King was buried on the church of this convent in 936. This church was not the first ecclesiastical building on this hill. The King's widow founded a nun's convent which was maintained right up to 1803 as a foundation for ladies of rank. The newly built convent church of the abbess Methilde was consecrated in 1021. It was destroyed by a fire in 1070. In the period up to 1129 the present convent church was built as a cruciform basilica with the Saxon sequence of pillars. The richly furnished convent received many privileges, making it the spiritual and cultural centre of a wide area for several centuries. The exceedingly well-kept household of the wealthy convent towards the end of the 10th century, the frequent presence of the German Emperors and the Reich assemblies here, underline the political importance of the convent, and consequently the significance of Quedlinburg for the entire Reich. This also had a major influence on trade as the decisive economic element of the period. In 994 the Abbess of the Reich Convent gained the right to hold markets, as well as the privilege of mintage and customs. These conditions made it possible for the settlement on the banks of the river Bode to become a town.

The first farmsteads were founded in the vicinity of the Burgberg hill for reasons of protection. This area was called "Westendorf" and it maintained a special position within the town right up to the late medieval ages.

A Benedictine nunnery was founded on the neighbouring Münzenberg hill in 986, while the Wiperti monastery was built in the Royal Court for the canons of the court. The five settlements on the north-eastern side of the Burgberg hill were soon merged to form the old town. The new town, planned on a simpler yet more generous scale, arose next to the old town on the area between the eastern banks of the Mühlgraben and the banks of the Bode from the middle of the 12th century onwards. In the initial period the two towns remained independent of each other, but in 1330 the two became united and were eventually surrounded by a common wall. Several suburbs then arose such as "Am neuen Weg" and "Am Gröpern". The appearance of the town had been characterised by massive, fortified dwelling houses (residential towers) and by timber-framed houses of post - and - beam construction up to the height of the Middle-Ages. With the 14th and 15th centuries greater prominence was given to the timber-framed houses. This style of architecture reached its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries and became characteristic of entire streets. Such architecture had been preserved to this very day.

The merger of the old and new towns brought the architectural development of Quedlinburg to a temporary end. Commercial life in the town reached a climax during this period. Quedlinburg became a member of the Lower Saxon League of Towns in 1384, and the Hanseatic League in 1426. Its attempts to gain direct Reich sovereignty in a struggle against the Count failed as a consequence of which it lost all its urban privileges in 1477. The town was then downgraded in its political and economic importance to a small regional town by the policy of the abbess of the convent who was supported by the Counts of Saxony. The Electors of Saxony retained their sovereignty over the convent region until it was sold by August the Strong to Brandenburg in 1698, thereby paving the way for the transfer of this former Reich convent to Prussia. This finally took place in 1803. Quedlinburg, as a small agricultural town, was linked to the railway network in 1862.

Quedlinburg grew beyond its medieval walls as a result of small-scale capitalist industrialisation. It is estimated that the number of inhabitants of Quedlinburg around 1330 was about 3500, and this figure rose to 5000 by 1500; In the 19th century the population rose from 7400 in 1803 to 23000 in 1900, while in 1973 a total of 30500 citizens were counted. Following its liberation from Hitler fascism, Quedlinburg experienced a marked economic rise which has made the town the political, economic and cultural centre of the district.

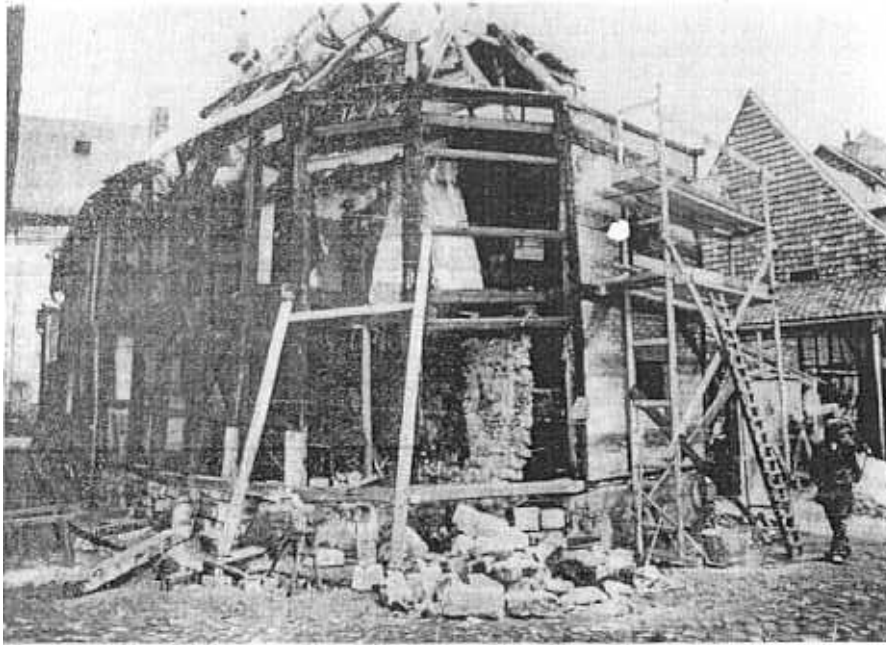
## MONUMENT CONSERVATION WORK ON THE TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES

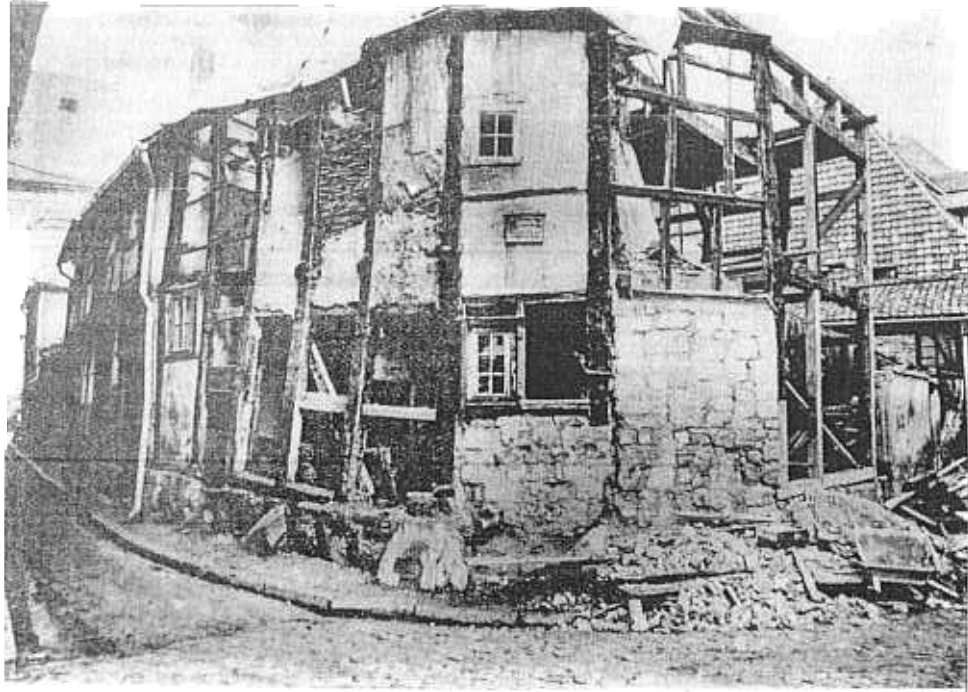
In preparation for the planned comprehensive architectural conservation of the old timber-framed centre of Quedlinburg, extensive conservation and repair work has been conducted on the most valuable buildings of the town in recent years. The Institute for Monument Preservation conducted test restoration schemes on individual houses in order to establish the best methods for the reconstruction and conservation of timber-framed buildings. The resulting suggestions ranged from the careful conservation of the particularly valuable houses to the replacement of buildings by new ones of the same size as those around them, from the utilisation of the old buildings for residential purposes to the installation of hotels.

Three typical examples of monument reconstruction work on timber-framed houses are presented here.

The timber-framed house No. 3 in Wordgasse - This is a building in post - and - beam construction and it is the oldest in the town. Only very few of these houses have been preserved to this very day, and this particular building must be regarded as one of the most important of its kind. Axed soft wood (spruce) was used for its construction. The supporting framework of the 2-storey building is composed of several frame-like trusses which are kept at the desired spacing by tie-beams. Such a truss consists of two posts and a cross beam with mortice and tenon jointing at ceiling height.

The tenons are bolted together by one of two wooden pegs. This construction is held in a statically stable condition in the direction of the axis of the beams by halving the struts between the beams and the posts. This truss construction was prepared on the ground and then raised on a sandstone masonry base with sill where it was connected by tenons. The tie-beams were simultaneously pushed into the previously prepared mortice holes while the structure was being raised. After all the trusses had been set up in this manner, the head beam was placed over the post tenons as an end block. Vertical bracing in relation to the axis of the beams was completed by diagonal member trusses mounted on the inside of the posts. The rafters of the collar beam roof were then placed on the past tenons protruding from the head beam. Consequently a pair of posts is always associated with a corresponding pair of collar beams, with the exception of the hipped part of the roof.





The framework construction of the post - and - beam house forms a self-contained constructional system which is stable in itself. The construction in these main elements is very fine and differs from the constructionally supporting components and their joints, as well as from the structure to fill the wall, and from the connecting parts. The cross-sections of the tie-beams diminishes upwards with the natural taper of the posts. These tie-beams are not joined flush with the outer surface of the posts by tenons. They are recessed by a few centimeters, mainly for the purpose of holding the wall-filling structure consisting of wickerwork covered with clay to which straw has been added. The tie-beams were also plastered with the result that an uninterrupted plastering surface was obtained from the sill to the head beam between the posts.

Approximate dating of this post - and - beam house in Quedlinburg made it possible to conduct comparisons with medieval timber-framed houses in the towns of the Harz mountains and in the Altmark region. The results confirmed that this timber-framed house No. 3 in Wordgasse is the oldest of its kind and the most consistent in its manner of construction. Its emphasis on the high posts and its plastered surfaces going beyond the tie-beams follow similar trends which prevailed in the dressed-stone architecture of the 14th and 15th centuries.

The post - and - beam construction method went out of use when, in the 16th century the storey-by-storey division of house facades asserted itself in the timber-framed houses, involving deeply undercut sillbeams and carved beam heads and bearing blocks.

The house was still inhabited up to 1965. It had been reconstructed several times, and in the end it was kept together by various provisional construction measures. Repair work was urgent so that comprehensive restoration was started in May 1966 and completed in October 1968. In view of its great value as a monument in its original form of construction and appearance, and in order to re-establish and preserve this old form as a timber-framed monument for sight-seeing, it was decided not to use this house for residential purposes any longer.



A careful examination of the house prior to the restoration work revealed that 65 per cent of the house and roof construction still consisted of its original substance and that about 10 per cent of the original wickerwork in the wall panels still existed. These elements, however, were in a dreadful state. The few remaining original posts were broken in the tenon areas. The tenons of the ceiling beams, so essential for a firm joint with the posts, were missing. Only a quarter of the sill beams were still intact. In order to re-establish the constructional stability of the house and to dispense with all visible and disturbing auxiliary structures, the entire east facade had to be comprehensively reconstructed. It was not possible to retain the original wickerwork filling of the wall panels because they were no longer sufficiently firm. The rafters and one collar beam of the old roof structure still existed, but most of them were broken and their base construction had become partly unusable. The roof was covered by newly made concave tiles with lime bonds.

The post medieval arrangement of the rooms had to be maintained for the restoration of the interior of the house. Windows in different sizes had also been installed in the post-medieval period. These were changed to match them with an original hatch that still existed.

In 1976 the post - and - beam house No. 3 in Wordgasse became the Museum of Timber-Framed Architecture of Quedlinburg, the history of this particular timber-framed house, and examples of the preservation and reconstruction of the town.

Inn and Hotel "Zur Goldenen Sonne". An inscription shows that it was built in 1621. The premises also include a 2-storey side-wing which was built at a later date and reconstructed several times. Since this inn was one of the many important individual monuments of the old town of Quedlinburg, its preservation as an architectural document of its times was therefore essential. The building is located at the Neustädter market which it dominates. The reconstruction of this building monument in 1971 formed the start of the restoration of the entire Neustädter market at its most important point. In the course of the reconstruction scheme the timber-framed inn "Zur Goldenen Sonne" was converted into a residence for single persons working at an institute of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of the GDR. The plan to use this architectural monument was designed to secure all the facilities and conveniences needed by its inhabitants for comfortable living and recreation.

Full consideration was given to the requisite material, technical, cultural and aesthetic aspects of their lives in order to improve the working and living conditions of the employees of the institute. The residence has individual living rooms for a maximum of 60 inhabitants as well as communal social facilities such as a club room, a dining room, a common kitchen as well as additional facilities to make tea or coffee. There is a spacious entrance hall, a walled-in garden courtyard, and a roof-top terrace.

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The entrance passage, blocked by building work in former times, was reconstructed to its original condition to form a meeting place for the inhabitants and their guests. From this point access is provided to all the facilities of the home via a massive staircase leading to all the floors of this 6-storey building.

The living quarters have been set up on three storeys, while a fourth storey has been reserved for the housekeeper's flat. Part of the space in the multi-storey gable roof has also been used with the result that 90 per cent of the total cubic capacity of the building is now utilised. All sanitary facilities have been centralised on each floor, one above the other, and the house has central heating which is linked to a separate boiler house.

The reconstruction and development of the house envisaged the retention or re-establishment of the facades and of the original internal structures. Even the installation of the new staircase with its massive enclosing walls and reinforced concrete ring beams did not make it necessary to interfere with the existing structure of the building. The staircase well was inserted between two main supporting beams of the original ceiling construction after corresponding roof areas had been removed on the individual storeys. The number of steps leading to each floor differs with the varying heights of the individual storeys. The actual steps are supported by a steel structure.

Due to inadequate transverse reinforcement, and to pronounced ground settlement in the past (this has now stopped), the ridge point of the main building is leaning over by 70cm. Various safety measures were necessary to stabilise the existing condition during the first stage of the reconstruction work. This involved the use of tie-rods, sprockets, bracings and struts. Permanent stabilisation of the entire building will be achieved by the massive staircase well. Several steel tie rods have been incorporated in each ceiling. These are linked by their tie plates to the gable and to reinforced concrete ring beams of the staircase well.

Restoration work on the home "Zur goldenen Sonne" was completed by special workshops in Berlin and Erfurt of the Institute for Monuments Preservation of the GDR with the help of local constructors.

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The timber-framed house of Schlossberg No. 8. This building does not come under monument protection. It was erected towards the end of the 18th century, the means used for its erection were very sparing. It was subsequently reconstructed and then extended on the courtyard side. The building is therefore of little value as an individual object, but holds a commanding position within the ensemble around the Schlossplatz. It stands on an elevated point exactly opposite the entrance to the castle and the convent church, thereby making it a visual focal point. It simultaneously forms the border to the square and leads on to the Stoftsberg and to the town quarter on the other side in the valley.

Due to its very bad state of repair the timber-framed house had to be pulled down, with the exception of its cross-vault cellar made of sand stone. Monument preservation considerations made it necessary to reconstruct the building as close as possible to the original with the same subdivision of its facade. A 3-storey building was once again erected, and the two upper storeys were reserved for residential purposes. The inner part has a newly styled 2-storey hall with a gallery-like staircase leading to the individual storeys. On the second floor the stairs lead directly to the halls and living rooms of the flats. The part of the hall facing the courtyard and garden has been glazed over its entire width, and this glazing extends over all three storeys. The ground floor is devoted to the ancillary rooms of the house. The first floor contains a bedroom, a separate WC and bathroom and a flatlet with a combined living room and bedroom for a tenant. The second floor consists of a combination of a spacious entrance hall and a living room which are merged into a single room by a common wooden beam ceiling. The two can be separated by a wide glass door. This is followed by a small kitchen with a dining recess. There is a view from the combined living room and hall to the entrance hall of the ground floor and right across the square to the castle and the nearby Münzberg hill. Central heating has been provided for the entire building.

Conservation work was started in the beginning of 1973, and in just over a year the house was commissioned for service.

## RESUME

### RECONSTRUCTION DE LA VILLE A COLOMBAGES DE QUEDLINGOURG (sur le plan urbanistique)

Within the outline of the preparations for the comprehensive conservation of the old town of Quedlinburg, specialists from the Polish monument conservation enterprise "PKZ" started to repair the valuable timber-framed houses in 1973. Two of these, in Marktstrasse 2 and in Schmale Strasse 13, have been nearly completed, while restoration work on another two houses in Steinweg 68 and Kommark 7 was started in 1976. These houses will contain flats for the local people.

These model cases, such as the described conservation measures and repairs on timber-framed houses and similar examples, as well as plans to utilise gaps and free areas by modern building methods, indicate how historical buildings ensembles in the centre of a town can be used today and in the future, how dwellings can be modernised, and how the historical image of a town can be retained under the conditions expected in a modern urban area. It is realised that a fully modernised building alone cannot necessarily establish a completely new standard of living. This can only be achieved by the complete reconstruction of the entire dwelling with a redesigned interior, a task that is being accomplished through comprehensive urban conservation schemas.

Quedlinbourg, une des plus importantes villes historiques et touristiques de la R.D.A., possède encore un des rares secteurs sauvegardés à colombages. Sa particularité réside dans l'unité de sa structure urbaine. En raison de sa remarquable valeur historique, scientifique et artistique, Quedlinbourg a été inscrite, en 1962, sur "la liste des monuments ayant une importance nationale particulière et une valeur artistique internationale".

Quedlinbourg devait sa fondation au Roi Henri Ier qui y établit le centre de sa souveraineté. Bénéficiant de la riche vie de cour, Quedlinbourg devint au Xème siècle un élément économique déterminant. Ce n'est qu'à partir des XIVè et XVè siècles que des maisons à colombages apparurent jusqu'au XVIIème siècle.

- La maison à colombages de Wordgasse 3 : la charpente portant de cet édifice à 2 étages est constituée par plusieurs assemblages en forme de cadre, alignés en file et maintenus à distance par des bois d'entreboise. Un tel assemblage consiste en 2 montants à travers lesquels, à hauteur du plafond, on a fait passer une poutre. Cette maison, habitée jusqu'en 1965, n'a pu être conservée que par diverses constructions provisoires. Après l'avoir restaurée dans sa forme architecturale et sous son aspect d'origine, cette maison est conservée en tant que Monument témoin de l'art du colombage, parmi les édifices ouverts aux visites. Cependant, une reconstruction de la façade est et du toit a dû être refaite car les éléments anciens de la structure de la maison et du toit sont insuffisamment solides.

- Transformation d'une auberge à colombages "Zur goldenen Sonne" en foyer de célibataires avec toutes les structures pratiques nécessaires pour permettre de loger 60 personnes. Lors de la remise en état, on devait conserver au maximum, ou reconstruire, les façades et les structures originales subsistantes de l'intérieur.

- la maison à colombages, Schlossberg 8 : en raison de l'état extrêmement mauvais de sa construction au XVIIIème siècle, cette maison à colombages a dû être rasée à l'exception de la voûte en arête construite en grès. Toutefois, sa reconstruction dans sa forme d'origine a été déterminée par des raisons d'entretien des monuments. Cette maison est reconstruite avec 3 étages, dont 2 à des fins d'habitation.

A l'aide de modèles tels que les restaurations de maisons à colombages dans le cadre de l'entretien des monuments, nous montrons de quelle manière la substance architecturale historique de centre de villes peut-être utilisée aujourd'hui et à l'avenir.