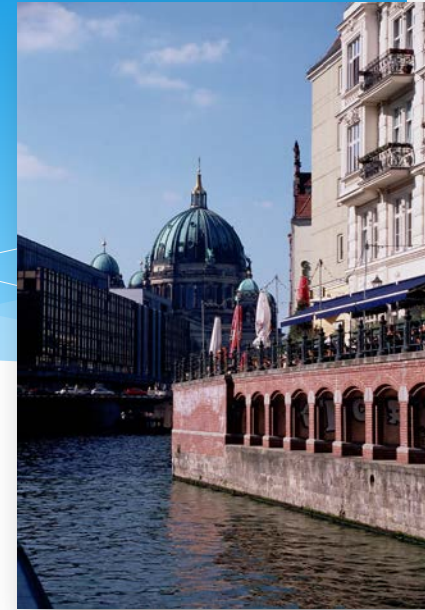
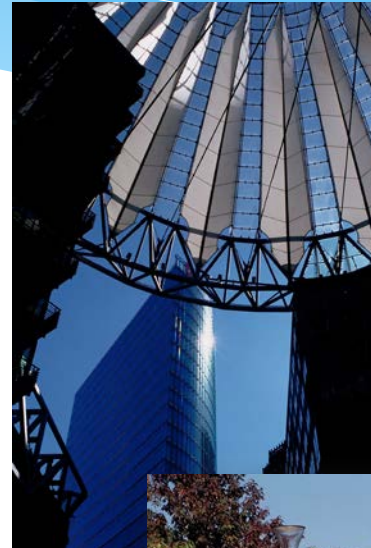


# SRA744 Urban Patterns and Precedents

## Berlin: Origin and Development 1237 to 2014



All photos this page: R.J.Carne 2004-05

### Introduction

*Berlin is the capital of Federal Republic of Germany. It has a population of around 3.3 million and covers an area of some 892 sq.km.<sup>1</sup> The city comprises a diversity of urban spaces including GDR streetscapes (above left), contemporary and classical architecture, riverside walkways and forested green spaces (opp. and below).*

*Berlin was founded in the 13th century – the official founding date is 1237.<sup>2</sup> Since that time it has evolved from a medieval trading centre to a major city. During its long history, Berlin has ‘not merely experienced growth and development but also ruptures, fractures, displacements’, indeed, several times in its history ‘the city has had to start over. Even today, it is beginning again from scratch’.<sup>3</sup>*

*Following some brief comments on methodology and the physical geography of Berlin, the transformation from merchant settlement to metropolis, along with some of the ‘ruptures, fractures, and displacements’, are described.*



RONALD J. CARNE

## Methodology

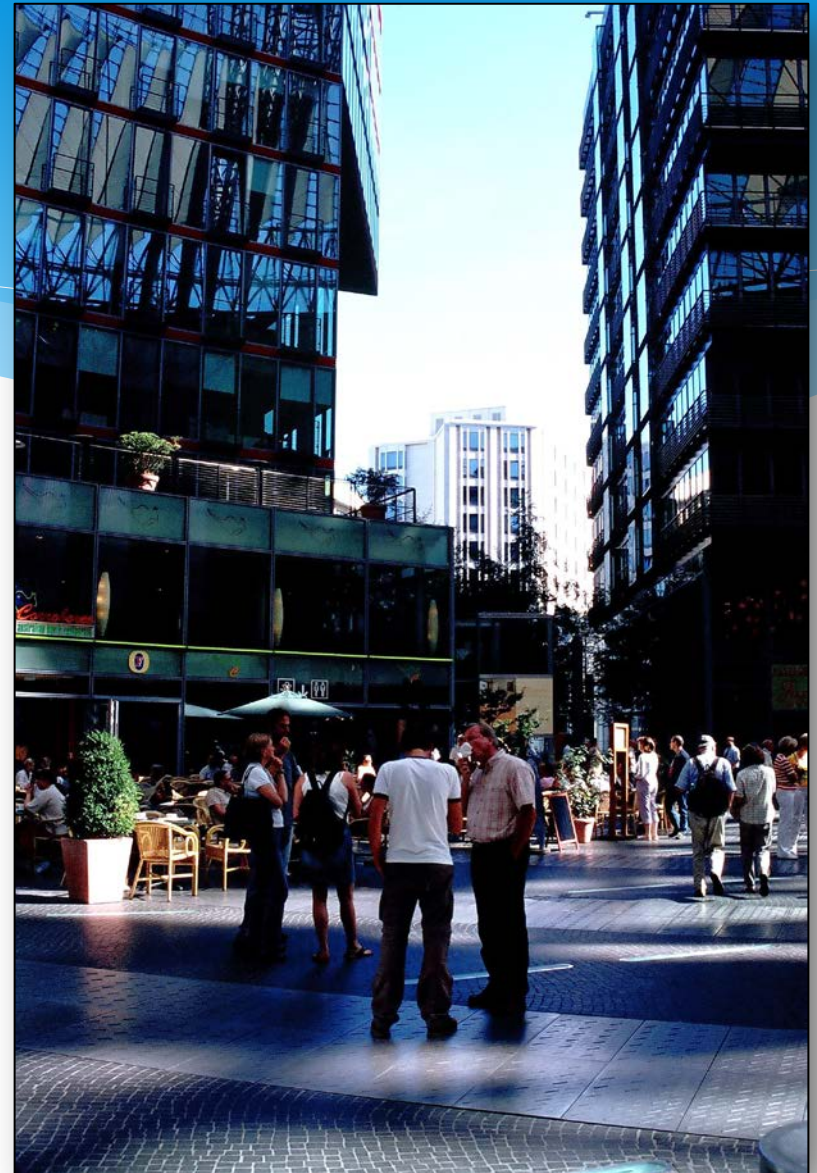
*The approach taken in this visual study is as follows:*

*Step 1. The time from Berlin's initial settlement to the present day was first divided into historically significant periods ('significant' as indicated by literature sources, and generally meaning a period marked by a particular city form and character which is clearly distinguishable from the period before and the one after – in some instances political events are as important as physical planning in determining a 'significant period', WW2 being the most dramatic example).*

*Step 2. Key events for each period were then noted. The selection of these was somewhat subjective, but included events relating directly to physical planning (e.g. a Plan); architecture which seems to mark the period in question; significant increases in population; consolidation/alteration of city boundaries; and developments in transport. There was also an attempt to 'sketch-in' major political events, since these in some instances do much to influence the planning regime (Berlin of the National Socialist Era is possibly the best example of this).*

*Step 3. Graphic (photos, images, plans and maps) were then added to illustrate the text, or in some instance stand alone as an indication as to urban form and character. A final page comprises a photo-montage, the author's own interpretation of the 'new Berlin', at least as it was in 2005.*

*Step 4. Reflections. Not surprisingly, a very complex picture of Berlin emerged from Steps 1 to 3. This final step uses an entirely text-based section in draw out some of the main lineaments. The analysis is, of course, far from complete, and so some suggestions are made as to how it could be extended to provide a fuller picture of Berlin's origin and development .*



*The Sony Centre, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin (Photo: R.J.Carne 2004).*



## Physical Geography

### Location and Biophysical Setting

Berlin is located some 180 km south of the Baltic Sea, 190 km north of the Czech-German border, and 89 km west of Poland (latitude 52° 31' N; longitude 13° 24' E ). It is situated on the edges of the Tetlow and Barnim plateaus within a broad glacial valley traversed by the Spree River.<sup>4</sup> The latter runs through the city itself (A).

The Spree River is an attractive and prominent feature of Berlin. Like most rivers in large cities its natural form has been substantially altered via engineered works.

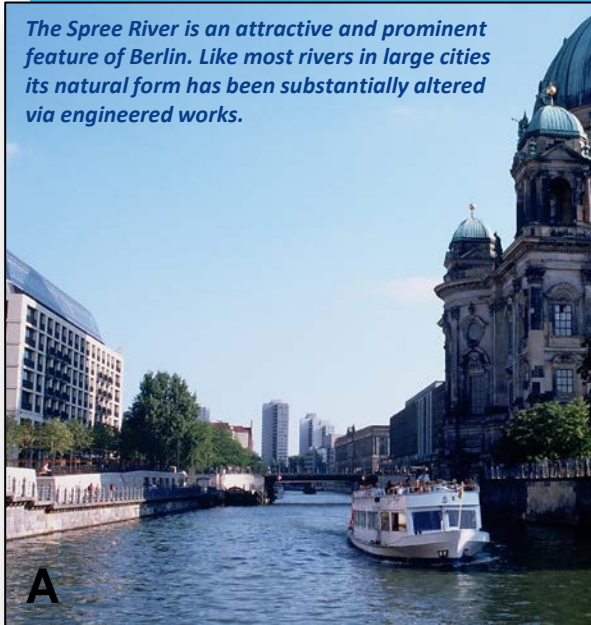
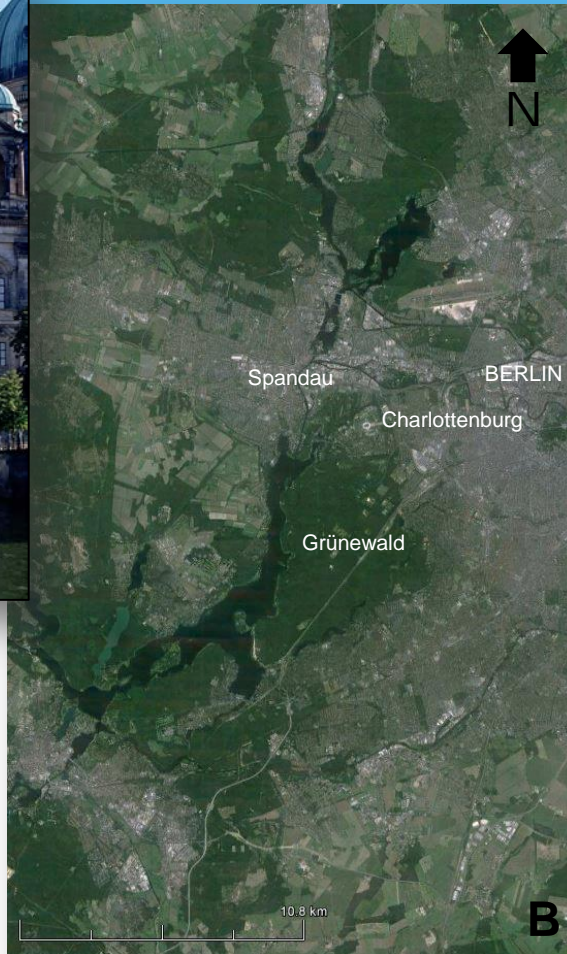


Photo: R.J.Carne 2004-05



The Grünewald (Green Woods), part of Berlin's extensive 'forest-lake' landscape setting.<sup>6</sup> This image also illustrates the diversity of land use (see Table 1).



Location of Berlin<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: Land use in Berlin: % of total area in 2011<sup>1</sup>

Buildings	41.4
Business/industry	0.9
Recreational areas	11.9
Transportation	14.9
Agriculture	4.2
Woodland	18.3
Water	6.7
Other areas	1.7

During the initial period of settlement, less fertile soils were planted to forest, whereas the better, moister soils were developed as meadows and fields.<sup>4</sup> The city itself is built mainly on sandy glacial soil, today standing within an extensive area of forest-rimmed lakes (B). Length of the city border is 234km; greatest E-W expanse 45km, N-S 38km.<sup>1</sup> Altitude ranges between 34 to 60m asl. Highest natural elevation (the Müggelberge) is 115m. Land use categories with % area are shown in Table 1.



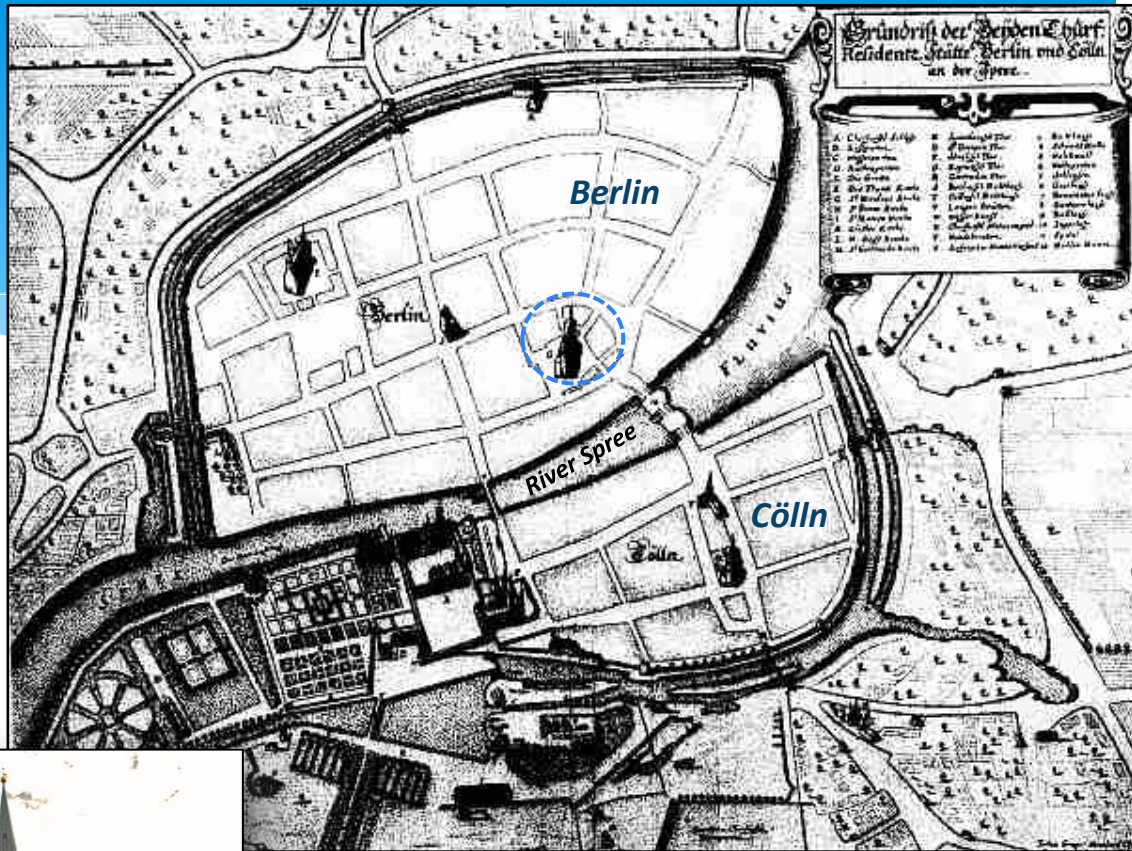
## Medieval Trading Centre

1200s to 1600s

Berlin emerged at the end of the 12th century from the two merchant settlements - Berlin and Cölln - located on opposite sides of the River Spree. <sup>2</sup> The 1652 map (opp.) shows locations – Cölln was situated on an island (now called Museum Island) within the Spree.

Some key dates:

- 1237 First recorded mention of Cölln, and official founding date of Berlin.
- 1307 Berlin and Cölln form a union, and in 1360 Berlin-Cölln becomes a member of the Hanseatic League (an association of merchants and cities). <sup>2</sup>
- 1400 By this time the combined population of Berlin and Cölln was around 8,500. <sup>2</sup> There were 3 town halls, 3 hospitals, several churches and monasteries – in total about 1,100 buildings.



Map of Medieval Berlin 1652. <sup>7</sup> This map was produced some time after the period noted here, nonetheless, the basic form of the initial settlement is readily apparent. The location of major buildings (churches, town hall) is also shown.

Opposite - the restored Nikolaikirche (St. Nicholas's church), built around 1230, <sup>2</sup> it is the oldest medieval church in Berlin. Its location is circled in the 1652 map (Photo: Europe-cities <sup>8</sup>).





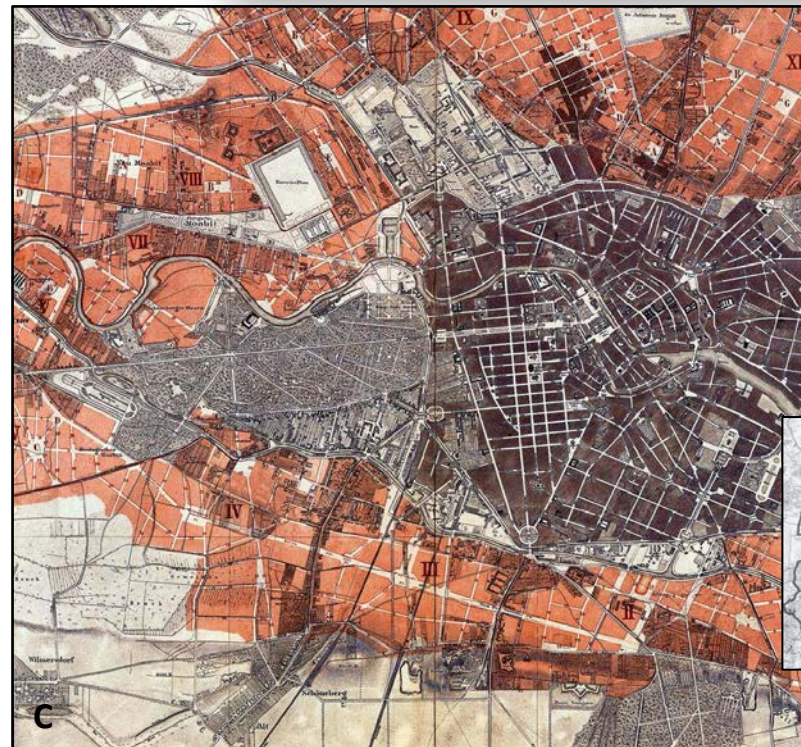
## The Royal Capital 1701 to 1871



Photos this page: R.J.Carne 2004-05

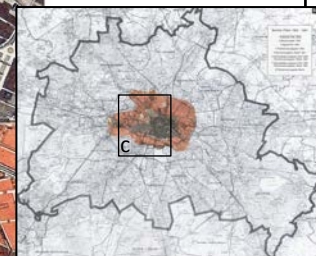
### Important events included:

- 1701 - the elector Friedrich III is crowned Friedrich I, King in Prussia. Berlin becomes the seat of power, and in 1709 is expanded to include the five towns of Berlin, Cölln, Friedrichswerder, Dorotheenstadt, and Friedrichstadt.<sup>2</sup> Population is around 55,000.
- From 1740, Berlin develops as a centre of the Enlightenment. Under Friedrich the Great the city undergoes a period of intensive construction – many of the buildings around the Unter den Linden are from this period.<sup>2</sup> Included are Humboldt University (A), formerly the Prince Heinrich Palace constructed in 1756.
- 1791 – the Brandenburg Gate (B) is officially opened.
- 1800 – population was around 170,000. Private and public buildings numbered 7,200.
- 1862 – the Hobrecht Plan formulated. This plan provided the foundation for modern Berlin - 'generous greenspaces and multifunctional squares' were characteristic, and the 'broad streets lent themselves to planted central streets'.<sup>9</sup> The area included in the plan was twice the size of the existing developed area and included 14 city districts (indicated by Roman numerals in Plan C opposite). Overall, the 'plan may be credited with providing a robust network of streets which has enabled Berlin to enjoy an exemplary system of public transportation and maintain green spaces.'<sup>9</sup>
- 1871 - by the end of this period population had risen to 826,815 within the city boundaries and 105,169 in surrounding suburbs.<sup>2</sup>



Hobrecht-Plan 1862

Portion of the Hobrecht Plan. Includes the area shown in Inset C below - the total plan area (salmon tone) is also shown in relation to the present day boundary of Berlin (solid grey line).



Ausschnitt im Maßstab 1 : 25 000

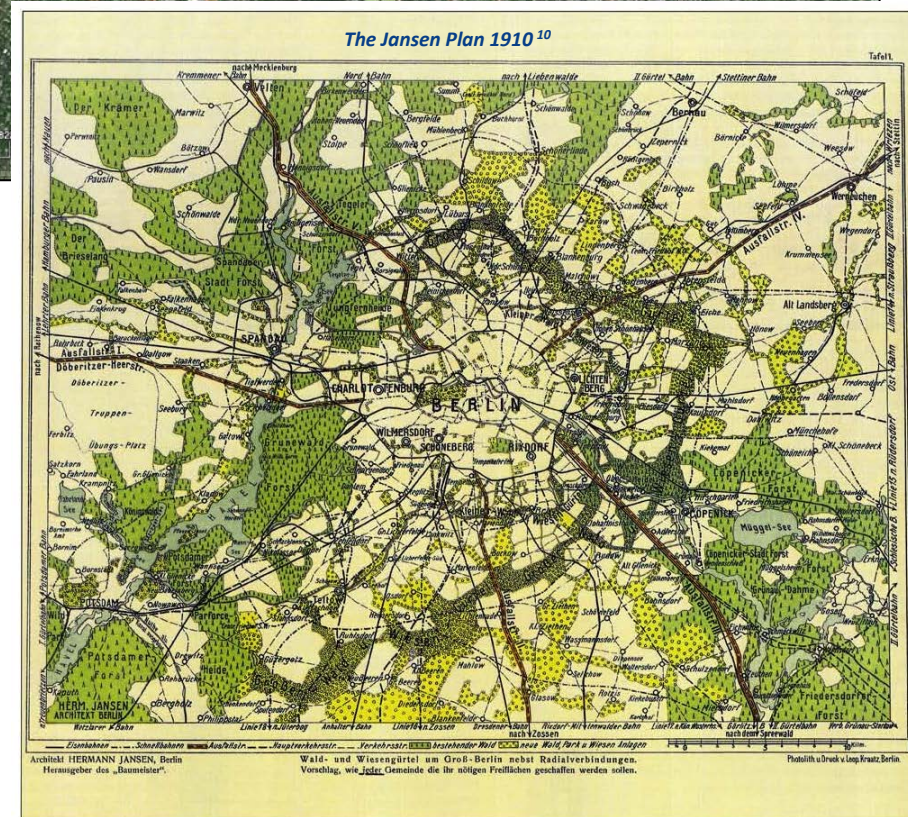
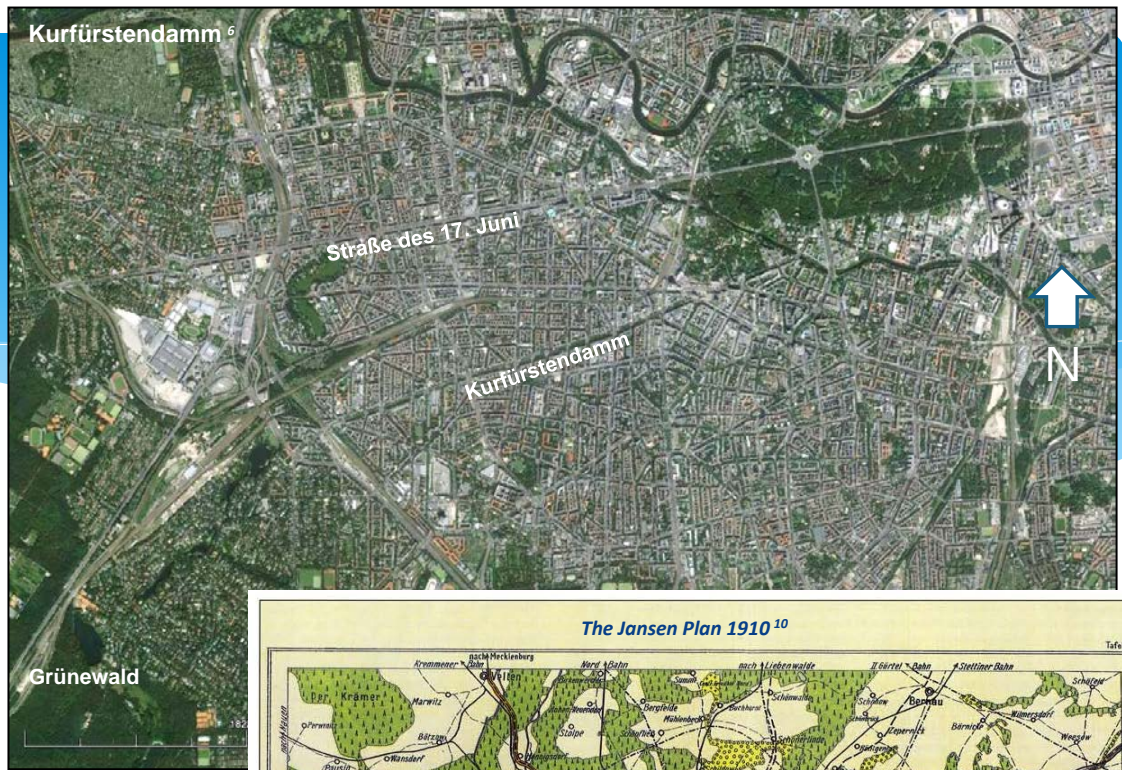


# The Imperial Capital

1871 to 1918

In 1871 Berlin became the capital of the German Reich, and by 1877 the population was more than 1 million.<sup>2</sup> Some important events in this period include:

- 1882 - the road connecting the city to the royal hunting lodge in Grünewald is rebuilt as the Kurfürstendamm, an avenue modelled on the Champs-Élysées in Paris.<sup>2</sup> Its location in relation to Grünewald is shown in the 2012 air-image opposite. To the north, is Straße des 17. Juni, Berlin's major axis (alignment established prior to the 1880s).
- 1900 – Berlin's population reaches 1.9 million. A total of 2.5 million reside in the greater metropolitan area (includes the city plus 23 outlying suburbs).<sup>2</sup> By 1903 Berlin was the world's largest tenement city, with a total of 1 million apartments.
- 1902 - Berlin's first U-Bahn (underground railway) line operational.
- 1910 - the Jansen Plan (opp.) formulated.<sup>4</sup> This Plan was built around a sophisticated open space concept. Key features included:
  - small inner ring and large outer ring of forests, parks, gardens and meadows; and
  - radial green corridors between the 2 rings, extending into built-up areas.
- 1911 - Berlin's boundaries expanded to include Charlottenburg, Schöneberg, Wilmersdorf, Lichtenberg, Spandau, and the Niederbarnim and Teltow districts (this amalgam becomes the 'Greater Berlin').<sup>2</sup> By 1912 the population was around 2 million.
- 1914 to 1918 - First World War. Ends in Germany's defeat, revolution in Berlin and the proclamation of the 'Free German Republic'.<sup>2</sup>





## The Cosmopolitan City of the Weimar Republic

1918 to 1932

By 1920, Greater Berlin incorporated 7 towns, 59 rural communities, and 27 estate districts. The city was divided into 20 boroughs, with a population of some 3.8 million. The municipal area expanded from 6,500 ha to 878 sq.km.<sup>2</sup> It was now Europe's largest city and a legendary cultural metropolis, the home to artists - Otto Dix, Lionel Feininger, Bertolt Brecht, and Arnold Zweig - as well as scientists like Albert Einstein and Fritz Haber. Some of the key events of this period included:

1921 - the world's first highway is officially opened in Grunewald.

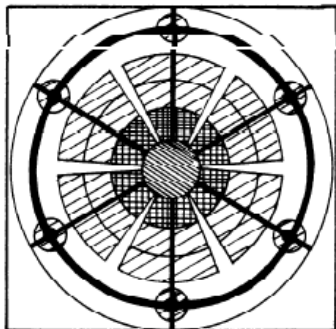
1923 - inflation reaches its peak. Tempelhof Airport opened.<sup>2</sup>

1925 - the 'Hufeisen' (horseshoe) housing estate commenced in Britz, a new synthesis of public housing construction and 'a home of one's own.' The estate was finished in 1931 and is considered an outstanding example of the 'new living' concept in Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

1929 - Wagner's general open space plan builds on the provisions of the Jensen Plan (see previous page). At this time, the Great Depression begins to severely affect Berlin.

1932 - Unemployment climbs, the street are scenes of violent clashes between right and left wing groups, and political change becomes inevitable.

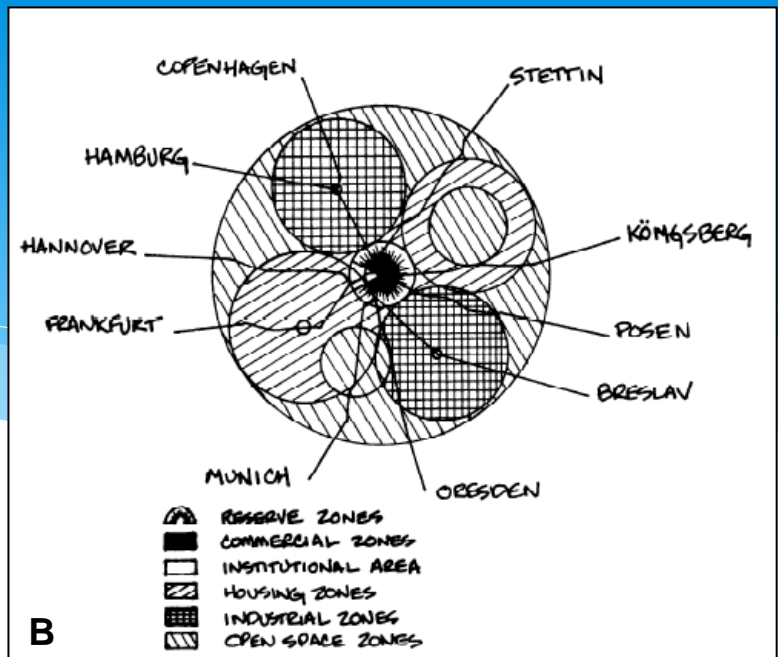
A



— ARTERIAL ROADS  
— LIMITED ACCESS ROADS  
● TRANSIT NODES  
□ GREEN SPACE  
● CENTER CITY AREA  
■ BUILT-UP AREA  
○ SUBURBAN SETTLEMENTS

Planning theorists were active in this period. The ideas of Wolfe (A opp.) and Machler (B above), for example, were highly influential in the creation of urban regions in the late Weimar period and subsequent National Socialist period.<sup>11</sup>

Opposite. Wolfe's schematic plan for a 'large city'.<sup>11</sup> Note the green space 'wedges' linking the countryside to the city centre - this was thought to 'ventilate' the city and moderate microclimate.



Machler's planning concept for Greater Berlin.<sup>11</sup> Note that developments are set within an open space matrix, and regional linkages are integral to the plan.

Overall, planning in the Weimar Republic represented new approaches toward solving the problems of German cities, it included 'a commitment to improve the health of the masses, the desire to relate man and nature and the pursuit of the development of smaller communities.'<sup>11</sup> However, was such planning effective? According to Mullin<sup>11</sup> the Weimar Era was marked by 'the creation of new models, innovations, schemes and unique plans to attack the problems of the time', but 'the practical performance of town planning agencies was not successful enough to solve the key problems facing the German city.'

This inability to deal with key problems appears symptomatic of governance in the Weimar Republic in general, and set the scene for the next period - Berlin of the National Socialist Era.



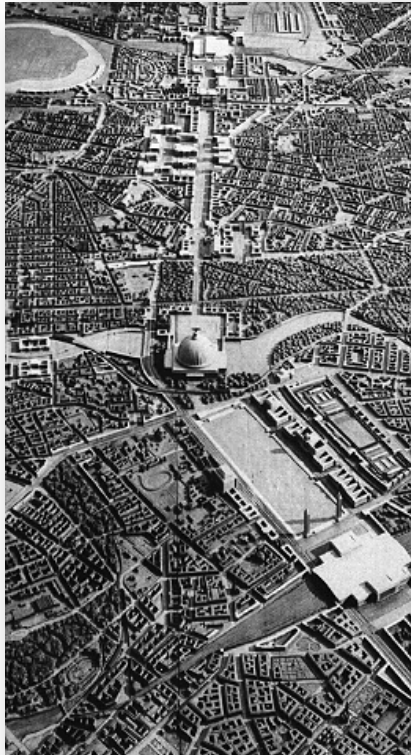
## Berlin in the National Socialist Era

1933 to 1945

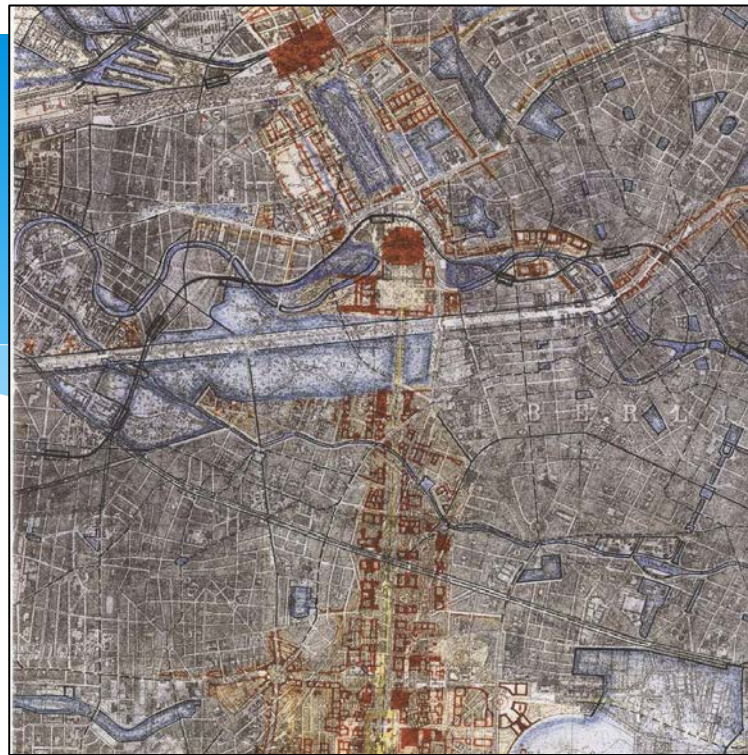
*In 1933 Hitler's rise to power means the end of democracy in Germany. In 1938, Berlin becomes the capital of the Greater German Reich with the annexation of Austria, and in 1939 WW2 begins.<sup>2</sup> A few events specific to Berlin:*

*1940 – city bombed for first time, and in 1943 large-scale bombing begins. Some 1 million residents evacuated and more than 500,000 die.<sup>2</sup>*

*1945 – the Red Army crosses the city boundary and the Battle for Berlin begins. Capitulation treaty signed May 8 in the Berlin suburb of Karlshorst.<sup>2</sup>*



*Speer's Model of Berlin<sup>12</sup>*



*The Speer Plan 1939<sup>10</sup> with detail of the North-South Axis<sup>12</sup>*



*A key feature of the National Socialist era was the work of Albert Speer, Hitler's architect. In the late 1930s, Hitler had stripped the Berlin government of all planning powers. Speer was assigned full authority for the Berlin's planning as the new General Building Inspector.<sup>13</sup> As Mullin points out, theories embodied in planning for the larger cities like Berlin 'focused on the creation of structures, spaces and settings that would further the goal of enhancing the state. Party and government structures were to be centrally located to reflect both permanence and strength, and to be located along main axis roads or upon ceremonial squares.'<sup>13</sup> The main N-S axis for Berlin is shown in Speer's 1939 Plan (above). Note the ceremonial squares, strong regular geometric lines and neo-classical elements in the detail (above right) and model (opp. left). Larger-area plans were also produced by Speer, as evidenced in the plan for Greater Berlin (opp. right).*

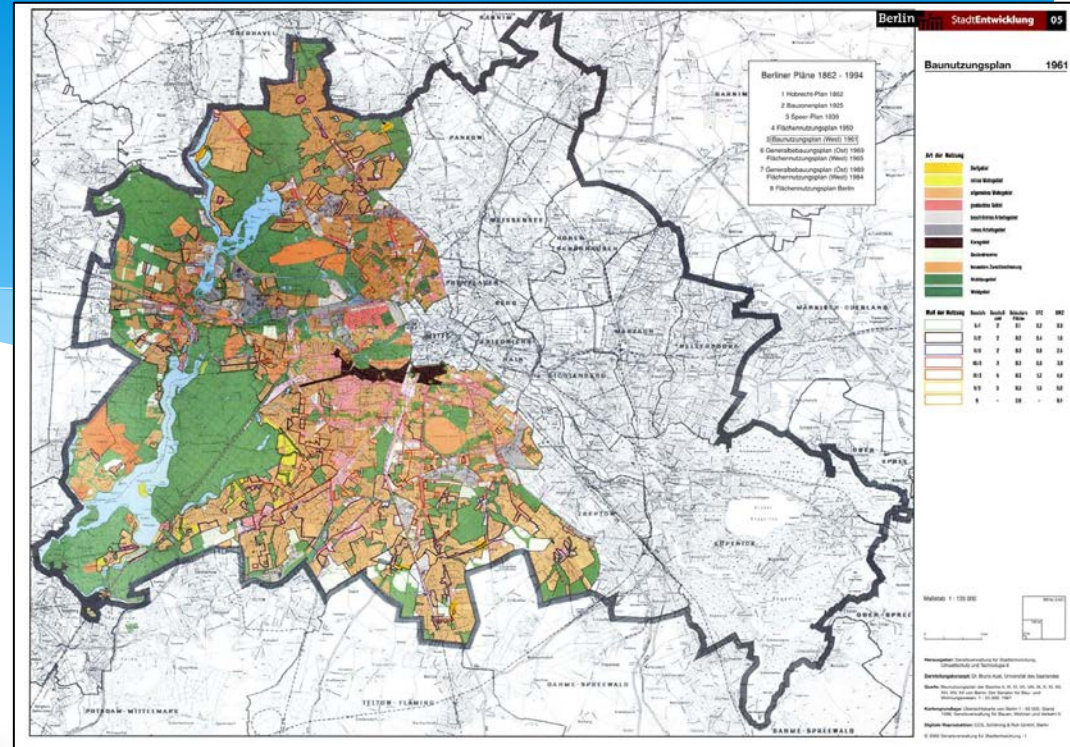


*Plan for Greater Berlin<sup>10</sup>*



## 1945 to 1971

- *1945 - much of Berlin is rubble. 600,000 apartments destroyed. Population is 2.8 million (reduced from 4.3 million).<sup>2</sup> City is divided into four sectors and administered jointly by the USA, GB, France, and the Soviet Union.*
- *1946 to 1949 - Berlin becomes a Cold War hotspot.*
- *1950s – reconstruction focusses mainly on existing city structure, despite the Scharoun Plan advocating comprehensive urban renewal.<sup>4</sup>*
- *1961 – the GDR construct the wall which is to divide the city for over 25 years.*



*This 1961 Plan is a stark reminder of the east-west demarcation - a consequence of the Berlin Wall. <sup>10</sup>*

- *1962 to 1970 - large housing estates constructed on outskirts of West Berlin. Centre of East Berlin developed, GDR apartments constructed (photo opposite).<sup>2</sup> A marked reduction in open space in both the east and west, with a concentration on the needs of motor vehicle based transport systems.<sup>4</sup> Streetcar era comes to an end in West Berlin.*



*Opposite. GDR apartment block in 2005. The foreground trees reflect the success of Berlin's open-space planning after the fall of the Wall (Photo: R.J. Carne, 2005).*



## The Fall of the Wall and Reunification

1971 – 1989

*Selected important events include:*

- 1970s – transport planning continues apace, and at the expense of green space planning.
- 1974 – Tegel Airport opens in West Berlin (see location map)
- 1975 – reconstruction of the Berlin Cathedral begins (photo below).
- 1976 - work begins on largest apartment construction in history of GDR (by 1990 62,000 apartments had been built).
- 1980s – the Federal and Berlin Nature Conservation Acts lay the foundations for a forward-looking environmental planning program for West Berlin.<sup>4</sup>



Restored Berlin Cathedral (Photo: R.J. Carne, 2005)



Remnants of the Berlin Wall (Photo: R.J. Carne, 2005)

- 1982 – new transit highway Berlin to Hamburg opened. Reconstruction of historic buildings continues in the west, while apartment construction in east continues unabated.
- 1989 – following increasing public pressure and street demonstrations the Wall is opened November 9 in Berlin and along the German-German border.





## The New Berlin

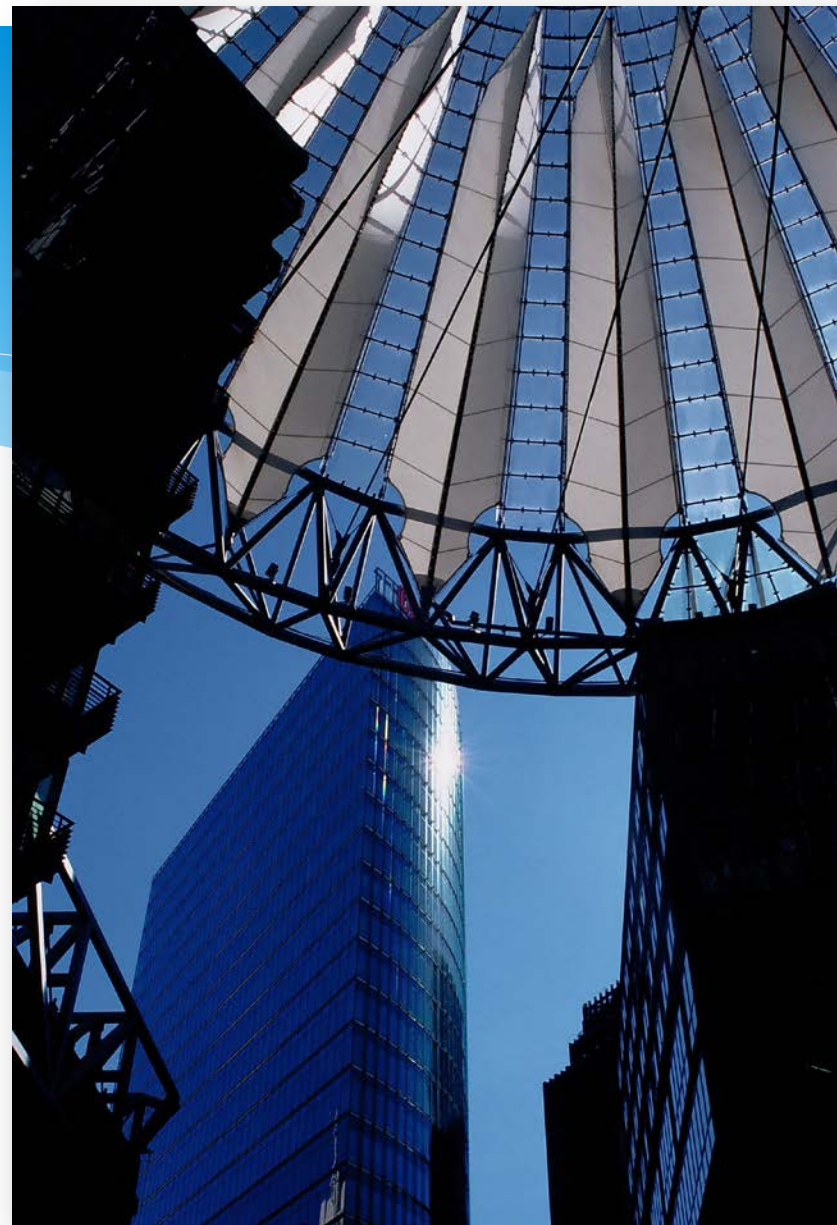
1990 – 2014

*A few important events for this period:*

- 1990 - it is resolved to apply Berlin's Landscape Planning Program to the whole city.<sup>4</sup> Its intention is to integrate nature conservation within the urban planning process.<sup>14</sup>
- 1991 – Berlin becomes Germany's new capital.
- 1994 – the scope of the Landscape Planning Program is broadened to include all planning levels – town planning, urban and district development planning, and regional planning.<sup>4</sup>
- 2000 - new planning priorities set as a response to a decline in building activity and the city's financial crises.<sup>4</sup> The Urban Development Concept 2020 is drawn up.
- 2006 – Berlin's main train station (Hauptbahnhof) opened (photo below), and the following year Humboldt University's restored Museum of Natural History reopens.<sup>2</sup>
- 2012 – Berlin celebrates its 775<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



*The Hauptbahnhof under construction (Photo: R.J. Carne, 2005)*



*Architecture Potsdamer Platz – a thoughtful union of aesthetics and commerce or monument to global capitalism? (Photo: R.J. Carne, 2005)*



## Berlin: a photomontage





## Reflections

*The foregoing demonstrates the complex historical overlays that go toward producing the city-form we see today in Berlin. The diversity of forms (an attempted summary in the preceding photomontage) is striking – green spaces (natural, semi-natural and constructed), and modern architecture juxtaposed against centuries-old restorations. At the larger landscape scale, built forms can be seen extending into the surrounding forest-lake ecosystem, and in turn, nature is being brought back into the city via green corridors. What is most surprising is that the city we see today, was, by the end of WW2 mostly rubble. So what we witness in Berlin's post-war planning history - a relatively short 69 years - is a massive city-landscape restoration project. Interestingly, previous 'plan footprints' have not been totally eradicated, and as I hope this visual essay has shown, previous planning concepts have been re-established and reinterpreted across the time periods examined.*

*This presentation is, of course, a mere snapshot of a very complex temporal and spatial phenomenon. Some areas requiring more detailed research include:*

- Berlin's open-space system – how was it that the ideas of human-nature connectedness were so resilient across time in that part of the world? How did they manifest in planning policy and the physical patterning of urban space? What role for the urban forest in Berlin given climate change?*
- Berlin as a global city – how will new communication technologies influence physical patterning? Are spatial effects manifesting now? Is Berlin 'closer' in cyberspace to Melbourne than, say, Hamburg? What are the nature and consequences of 'digital connectedness' as opposed 'physical connectedness'?*
- Berlin's art and literature – what aspects of Berlin are reflected? Is there any 'feedback' to physical planning, or are art and planning culturally discrete processes? If not, what is the nature of the relationship?*

*These sorts of question and more have been stimulated by this brief analysis. Overall, the study demonstrates the enduring nature of the 'city', and moreover, has engendered in this author a deep respect for the resilience and creativity of the people of Berlin. To conclude, a quote from Brian Ladd's book 'The Ghosts of Berlin':*

*All cities' buildings display their cultural traditions, but the sandy soil of the German capital conceals the traces of a history so fiercely contested that no site, however vacant, is safe from controversy. Each proposal for construction, demolition, preservation, or renovation ignites a battle over symbols of Berlin and of Germany. None of the pieces of the new Berlin will present an unambiguous statement about Berlin's tradition or meaning, but most will nevertheless be attacked for doing so. Berlin faces the impossible task of reconciling the parochial and the cosmopolitan, expressions of pride and of humility, the demand to look forward and the appeal never to forget.<sup>15</sup>*



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