

Key Note Bettina Quäschning, visitBerlin

ERIH Annual Conference 2019, Deutsches Technikmuseum

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm very honoured to be invited here to the annual conference of the European Route of Industrial Heritage.

In particular, I'd like to thank the German Museum of Technology Foundation and the Berlin Centre for Industrial Heritage. Without your commitment, as well as the European Union funding, this conference would not have taken place – and so the topics we are discussing today would not have the attention they deserve.

It is a pleasure to see so many people here and be able to welcome you to Berlin.

As you may know, when this city was an emerging industrial metropolis, it was dubbed the "Electropolis". Integrated into Prussia's growing rail network, Berlin was a hub for mechanical engineering and railway construction in Germany. It was also location for chemistry and science.

Through such global players as AEG, Siemens, Borsig, Schwarzkopf and Schering, this history has been given a face and an identity. Such locations as Siemensstadt or Borsigwalde are inscribed in Berlin's topography and its mind-map.

Ever since those days, Berlin has been seen as a city casting off its provincial structures and rapidly recreating itself as a modern metropolis. And as it developed, it advanced to become a model for Europe's water, energy and transport systems.

This city is also shaped by historical and political tipping points which have always fed the myth of Berlin. In today's world, Berlin's industrial heritage determines, sometimes unconsciously, the perception of today's city landscape – and it offers visitors, urban explorers and residents an almost endless array of industrial heritage. The traces of that heritage permeate the city, inviting fascinating major as well as minor discoveries.

Wilhelmian quarters and reform architecture, UNESCO World Heritage residential estates, a former forced labour camp, transport structures and utility installations as well as such cultural venues as the Kulturbrauerei, E-Werk or Berghain exemplify a network of sites which can, in general, be classified as industrial heritage.

As Head of Partner Relations at Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH - visitBerlin, I'd like to share with you our experiences and new impulses in relation to the city and its industrial heritage. I would like to start an exchange of views with you on marketing approaches which (at long last) integrate industrial heritage in the long term and, over the coming years, aim to link it with other themes to tourist services.

So where is our starting point in visitBerlin?

We build on a (“simple”) plan – the Berlin Tourism Plan 2018+, which takes a qualitative perspective on tourism for Berlin, and seeks to further develop its marketing approaches.

This Tourism Plan offer diverse starting points.

(As is the case everywhere), the aim here is to strengthen sustainability and quality tourism. The objective is to provide broad tourist services to relieve spaces and districts overchallenged by tourist demand through touristification. This also implies the need to strengthen local tourism in the boroughs. Hence, this is ultimately directed to steering the flow of tourists, and to do so on the basis of existing content and, from that, developing exciting and attractive tourist services. The target groups are not primarily those visiting Berlin for the first time, but returning guests as well as Berliners viewed as visitors to their own city.

In this context, the crucial task is to generate new reasons for our visitors to come to Berlin. And a major side-effect of making the authentic locations of residents visible in the city is how this also enhances a sense of identification.

So what does industrial heritage mean in Germany’s capital city today for a modern Destination Marketing and Management Organisation (DMMO)?

First of all, it offers a seemingly unlimited number of places and stories and hence potential points of connection.

But it also means, for example, fractures in the city’s history. The years 1933, 1945, 1961, and 1989 represent some of the historical watersheds which have also shaped, in their unique way, Berlin’s industrial landscape and the approaches to dealing with the city’s industrial heritage.

The question now is: How can we appropriately maximise the potential offered by the diversity of industrial heritage to attract tourists?

Before I try to answer this question, I’d like to slightly shift the focus by taking a step back and, through an analogy, illustrate how industrial heritage could be approached in future.

As you no doubt know, 2018 marked the centenary of the Bauhaus, the famous school of art and design. In the run-up to this important anniversary and at the latest in 2018, visitBerlin faced the task of how to approach this centenary.

For a long time, the city and those responsible were unsure how to manage a centenary when the “natural” venues – such as the Bauhaus Archive or the New National Gallery – were actually closed, even if only temporarily for the centenary year.

Here, Berlin’s Tourism Plan and the historical course of Berlin’s urban design history provided a pointer to a possible answer. The call for tourist services to channel the flow of tourists and improve distribution could and can be met through highlighting the role of Berlin Modernism.

For visitBerlin, the city's historical urban development as a movement from the centre to the outskirts became the starting point for developing the content for a "Grand Tour" of Modernism to mark the Bauhaus centenary in Berlin.

The task here was to identify, prepare content, and market fascinating locations for tourists in Berlin's 12 boroughs away from the core and central sites. Our communication strategy included innovative print products, websites, social media and our own apps. These measures were rounded off by a presentation at the 2019 ITB and such projects as the Tiny House.

To avoid the classic "flash-in-the-pan" effect around anniversary celebrations, it was decided to extend the time horizon beyond 2019 and sustainably prolong the marketing activities at least until the Bauhaus Archive reopens in 2022.

We would now like to apply a similar approach to Berlin's industrial heritage.

Here too, we are planning to base our communication strategy and the development of tourist services on the historic movement from the city centre to the urban fringe – from Berlin's industrial nucleus (nicknamed "Feuerland" in the 19th century) to the north of Berlin, or along the River Spree from Siemensstadt to Oberschöneweide. The aim here is similarly to identify exciting offers and sites across the city and prepare a presentation attracting a broad target audience. Naturally, it goes without saying that this also includes linking these sites to the European Route of Industrial Heritage.

At visitBerlin, we see Berlin Modernism and industrial heritage as intrinsically related, and we bring both these themes together in our marketing.

On our website, as with our themed pages on Berlin Modernism, we will also be focusing more on industrial heritage. The activities already initiated are to be linked more intensively. New themed routes are to be developed or existing routes integrated. visitBerlin's communication activities are also to provide long-term support for (third-party) products and initiatives (outside our own company).

In 2020, other major topics will be on the agenda where, from a tourism perspective, it makes sense to bind these into joint marketing measures with industrial heritage.

For example, Berlin as a "Green City" with its rivers and lakes offers an excellent opportunity to connect with industrial heritage.

After all, barge transport played a big part in developing the city. Down Berlin's waterways, along the Spree and Havel rivers, there is still a lot of industrial heritage to discover and open up to the public. The building materials came from the city's hinterland. There are many things to discover along the waterways and the historical rail infrastructure, just as much as in the surrounding regions, and these can all be included in preparing tourist content and activities to jointly market industrial heritage and Berlin as a Green City, built along the water. Here, the message is more rowing or e-boats, more hiking and bike trails, with "technical visits" creating a trajectory to tomorrow's industrial heritage.

The year 2020 also sees celebrations across the city to mark "100 Years of Greater Berlin". This also offers diverse flexible points for links to the heritage theme and enhancing the depth of focus. The many exhibitions planned for this anniversary, from the Märkisches Museum to the

Kronprinzenpalais or in borough museums, spotlight the diversity of Berlin's centres, the transport system's expansion and electrification, and the development of large urban residential estates – in brief, all issues relating to industrial heritage.

The remit of visitBerlin includes the task of enhancing the profile of themes in industrial heritage through our communication channels, projects and campaigns, awakening the interest of Berliners and visitors, and steering and coordinating offers and activities.

There is no need to invent something new. Berlin and its Points of Interest and the actors in industrial heritage set the scene, and we supply the products.

Here, we need close cooperation with key players in the tourism sector as well as all our partners in the city, and to develop new strategies with them. Our work already has a valuable foundation in the existing networks. Our strengths lie in proactive exchange and cooperation which, together with our broad network and intensive partnerships across the city, all flow into the initiative I am presenting here.

Thank you once again for the invitation to join you today. I'm looking forward to your comments and to interesting discussions with you over the course of the conference.

Berlin, 17.10.2019