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### Old houses become single-family homes : Bausparkassen, Denkmalpflege and reuse architecture, 1977–2002

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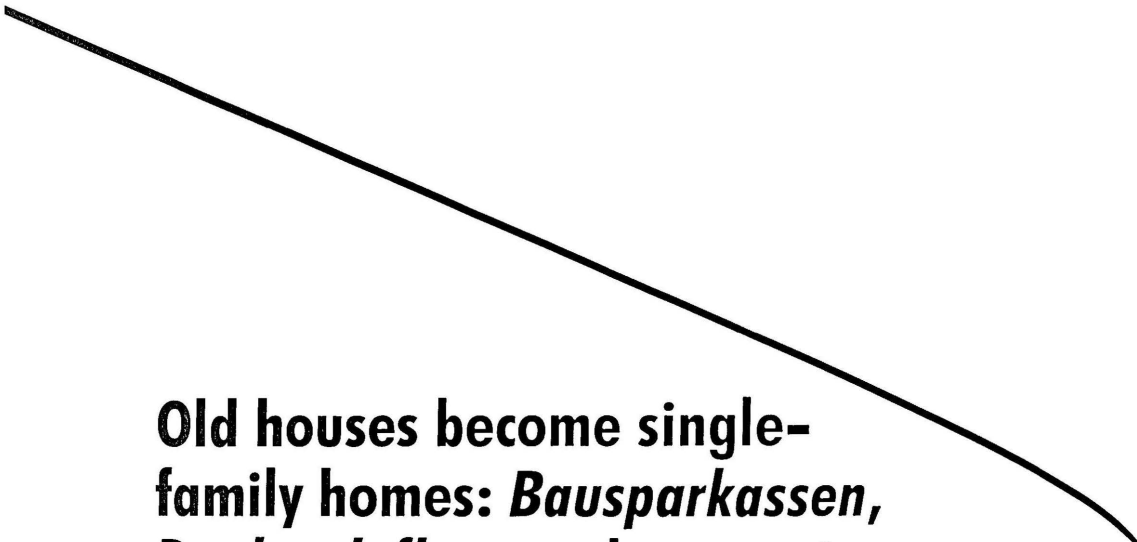
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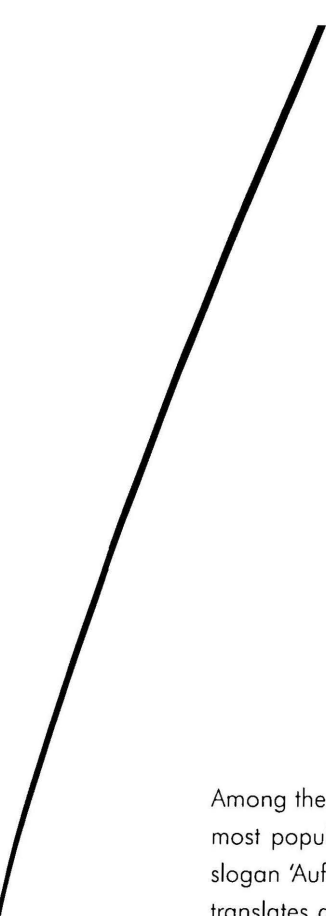
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**Old houses become single-  
family homes: *Bausparkassen*,  
*Denkmalpflege* and conversion  
architecture, 1977–2002**

Johannes Warda



Among the great German home loan banks, the *Schwäbisch Hall* bank is the most popular. With its iconic brick logo, the smart fox, and the well-known slogan 'Auf diese Steine können Sie bauen – *Schwäbisch Hall*', which roughly translates as 'you can build on these bricks'<sup>1</sup>, the bank's name has become the German byword for financing the *Eigenheim*.<sup>2</sup> While popular memory as well as urban history for a long time equated the West German system of financing homeownership by *Bausparkassen* with sprawling suburban areas made up of newly built single-family homes, I will elucidate a hitherto unknown part of these banks' vision of housing.

In 1977, the bank introduced another marketing feature that helped consolidate the brand's popularity: *mosaik*, a customer magazine. From 1977 until 2002, it appeared four times a year. The number of distributed copies ranged between 2.3 and 3.4 million per annum. The magazine was mailed to all bank customers and was available to take away in the branches of the *Genossenschaftsbanken* [German cooperative bank association], located in city centres as well as in small villages. The very first issue featured the historic Eltz Castle on the Moselle River as Germany's 'most beautiful' and 'best preserved' high medieval castle (N.N. 1977). The Eltz Castle article served as the overture to *Schwäbisch Hall's* love affair with *Denkmalpflege*, *Altbauerneuerung*, and *Stadtsanierung* [historic preservation, refurbishment, and urban renewal]. The home loan bank did not just publish recommendations for recreational outings to heritage sites. Soon, it seems, *mosaik* became a special interest magazine for renovation-related topics. In almost every issue

it provided its readers with feature articles about historical buildings and old towns – and thus articulated the general leaning towards different forms of nostalgia at that time. Based on these findings, this chapter seeks to challenge the dominant narrative of the West German home loan policy as resulting in consumerist attitudes forgetful of the environment.

This said, a couple of questions arise as to the entanglement of homeownership and historical buildings and the existing building stock in general: In how far did the concept of the detached single-family home relate to the socio-cultural changes in the 1970s and 1980s? How did the boom of the historic city and the growing interest in old buildings interfere with the popular making of the single-family home as a financial product? The analysis departs from a micro study of refurbishments of single-family dwelling featured in *Schwäbisch Hall's mosaik* magazine: How did the magazine reconcile the topics of old houses and building new homes? What were the editorial strategies of presenting old buildings in *mosaik*? Which topics emerged alongside the introduction of the old building theme? And why was *Schwäbisch Hall* interested in old buildings at all? This chapter presents a close reading of architectural reality edited by *mosaik* magazine between its first issue in 1977 and its relaunch in 2002, when the magazine was renamed *house and more*, unveiling a multifaceted story of home loan banks, conversion architecture and diversifying lifestyles.

### **Financing and popularising renewal and conversion: endeavours in 1970s and 1980s lifestyles**

The fact that *mosaik* began to appear in 1977 coincides with fiscal regulations which were important for financial products offered by *Bausparkassen*. Following a growing general interest in urban renewal, West German federal legislation from then on promoted the renovation and purchase of old buildings. The *Gesetz zur Förderung der Modernisierung von Wohnungen* (WoModG 1976, or housing modernisation act) was introduced, which subsidised housing renovation and retrofitting of new routines and functions concerning layouts, heating, sanitarian and kitchen facilities etc. Additionally, the income tax regulations were revised to allow tax deductions for building renovation costs. Two years earlier, in 1975, the European Cultural Heritage Year marked a peak in the popular and political awareness of the many threats modernist renewal policy of that time meant for the built heritage (Petzet 1975). Grassroots movements in many European cities took issue with the prevailing practice of replacing historic inner-city quarters with mass housing and commercial buildings (Baumeister et al. 2017).

The arising movements ranged from anti-demolition protests to house squatting to experimenting with alternative and participatory planning processes. In cases such as the International Building Exhibition Berlin (IBA) in the 1980s, DIY renovation projects and cooperation with house squatters even became part of the official municipal renewal policy. The obsession with old buildings at that time went far beyond the common cause of historic preservation. Moreover, a growing awareness of the transformative capacity of old buildings in general developed, which is expressed in numerous publications on architectural conversion, ranging from one of the first coffee-table books (Cantacuzino 1975) to Claus Arendt's (1977) 'Altbau-Erneuerung', the first German language DIY guideline of its kind. Right away, the first issue of *mosaik* published in early 1977 informed its readers about the new tax benefits for their investments in old building upgrades, featuring an interview with West Germany's secretary of finance (N.N. 1977a and c). The legal criterion for the tax incentives supporting modernisation projects referred to buildings as 'old' after a life span of 20 years, which is a common period of time for regular modernisation work. Yet soon, *mosaik* went even further and turned to much older buildings. The magazine portrayed *Schwäbisch Hall* clients and their renovation projects, covered urban renewal campaigns in small and medium-sized West German cities, and featured home stories with celebrities of the time.

The magazine premiered with a cover story about popular German actor Gustav Knuth and his wife (who actually lived in Switzerland). Knuth was famous for playing down-to-earth characters at the *Ohnsorg Theater* in Hamburg (which stages plays in Low German) and in 1970s German TV series with local colour. The second issue featured a story about actress and author Barbara Rütting's renovation project, an old farmhouse in the foothills of the Salzburg Alps. Rütting and her husband, Lutz Hochstraate, then director at the *Schauspielhaus Salzburg*, bought the run-down farmhouse in the late 1960s and made it their new home. During the hard work of renovating, Rütting says, she became a farmer: 'The farm has changed our life' (Recht 1977: 13, 15). Apparently so, Rütting also became a pioneer of the postmodern whole-food movement. Her organic cuisine cookbook, in which she shared the experience of living in the countryside, soon became a bestseller (Rütting 1976). She continued to advocate for a lifestyle of health and sustainability, resulting in her becoming a member of the Bavarian Parliament for the Green Party in the 2000s. Here, just as with the Eltz Castle article, *mosaik* was perfectly in tune with the *Zeitgeist* of the 1970s and early 1980s. Alternative lifestyles became mainstream, and a notion of nostalgia and the longing for the old town were widely shared (Fischer 1980; Becker 2017: 101).

## Suburban dreams meet inner-city reality

Under the title of 'At home in the middle of the old town', a 1978 feature article portrayed the inhabitants of a newly renovated building in the historic centre of the City of Sindelfingen (N.N. 1978), located in south-western Germany near Stuttgart. Unanimously, as the article stated, they couldn't imagine to live anywhere else (6). 'I had everything I wanted in my professional career,' said Jürgen Wald, a former engineer. 'Money, lots of business travel. But at some point, I realised that I was just a consumer and didn't live the life I wanted.' Together with his wife, Wald revitalised the store and workshop on the ground floor of the old house, once used to manufacture spinning wheels and bleach wool. The mayor of Sindelfingen described the case of this house as the initial moment of revitalising the entire historic town. 'Our inhabitants are extremely

### In der Altstadt ist kein Zimmer frei

Die Celler verdanken ihre schöne und lebendige Altstadt zwei wichtigen Dingen: dem Traditionsbewußtsein ihrer Geschäftsleute und, so meinen sie, der „Verwandtschaft“ zum englischen Königshaus.

Das mit dem englischen Königshaus muß man erklären: Die englischen Könige Georg I. und Georg II. stammen direkt von dem letzten Celler Herzog ab. Und in Celle ist man fest davon überzeugt, daß deshalb während des Zweiten Weltkrieges keine Bomben auf Celle fielen. Doch es gibt in Deutschland viele Altstädte, die den Krieg zwar heil überstanden, die Nachkriegszeit aber nicht. Und hier kommt das Traditionsbewußtsein der Celler Bürger und Geschäftsleute ins Spiel. Die dachten nämlich nicht daran, aus ihren Fachwerkhäusern in der Altstadt auszuweichen, sondern sie blieben da wohnen, weil es eben Tradition ist, daß ein Geschäftsmann über seinem Laden wohnt. Das war schon bei der Stadtgründung im 13. Jahrhundert so – und so ist es noch heute. Noch etwas begünstigte die Erhaltung der Celler Altstadt: Sie ist samt Schloß und Französischem Garten rings vom Stadtgraben umschlossen. So war es praktisch gar nicht möglich, daß sich von außen her Modernes in Beton und Plastik einschleichen konnte. Nun ist die Celler Altstadt

aber ganz und gar kein Freilichtmuseum. Im Gegenteil: Sie ist ein quirlender lebendiger Stadtteil mit einer gesunden Bevölkerungsstruktur. Fast alle alten Häuser haben im Erdgeschoß ein Geschäft – vom Tante-Emma-Laden bis zur schicken Boutique. Viele Gaststätten und Cafés kommen den Touristen entgegen, die zu Tausenden die Altstadt besuchen. Sie ist nämlich sehenswert, die Celler Altstadt. Die ältest datierten Fachwerkhäuser sind aus dem 16. Jahrhundert. Sie sind im typischen niedersächsischen Stil gebaut und wunderschön bemalt. Sprünge Sprünge in Latzen und Platt schmücken die Fassaden. Selbst die Barockbauten sind in Fachwerk ausgeführt, denn Steine gibt es nun mal nicht in dieser Gegend. Aber: Das Fachwerk der Barockbauten ist rein konstruktiv und farblich der Ausfäschung angelegentlich. Die Fassaden sind durch Giebel und reich gegliederte Eingangszonen geschmückt. Die Altstadt von Celle wird von den Bürgern als Mittelpunkt ihrer Stadt akzeptiert. Wohl haben viele Häuser keine Zentralheizung,



Figure 1: Half-timbered houses, an epitome of the historical city (1979).

interested in old buildings,' he added. Responding to the demand, according to the article, it was common practice for many municipalities in south-western Germany to buy up old houses in order to restore them. *mosaik* presented a variety of reasons for living in the old town. An article about Freiburg, also located in south-western Germany, summed up the most important ones: 'a car-free inner city, the vibrant street life of students and locals mixing and mingling, the picturesque old town' (Recht 1980: 6). Freiburg, which had been vastly destroyed during the Second World War, appears as a perfect example of post-war city planning and careful renewal where 'people matter, not cars'. Urban density and the variety of leisure activities, as goes the message between the lines, offer a high standard of living. Apart from promoting the image of avantgarde urban lifestyles in the shell of the old town, the magazine also catered to a rather conservative and nostalgic fascination with old cities. In a 1979 report about Celle, a small city in Lower Saxony, a number of pictures of the iconic half-timbered buildings (fig. 1) epitomised the ideal of a well-preserved German historic town (Plate 2013).

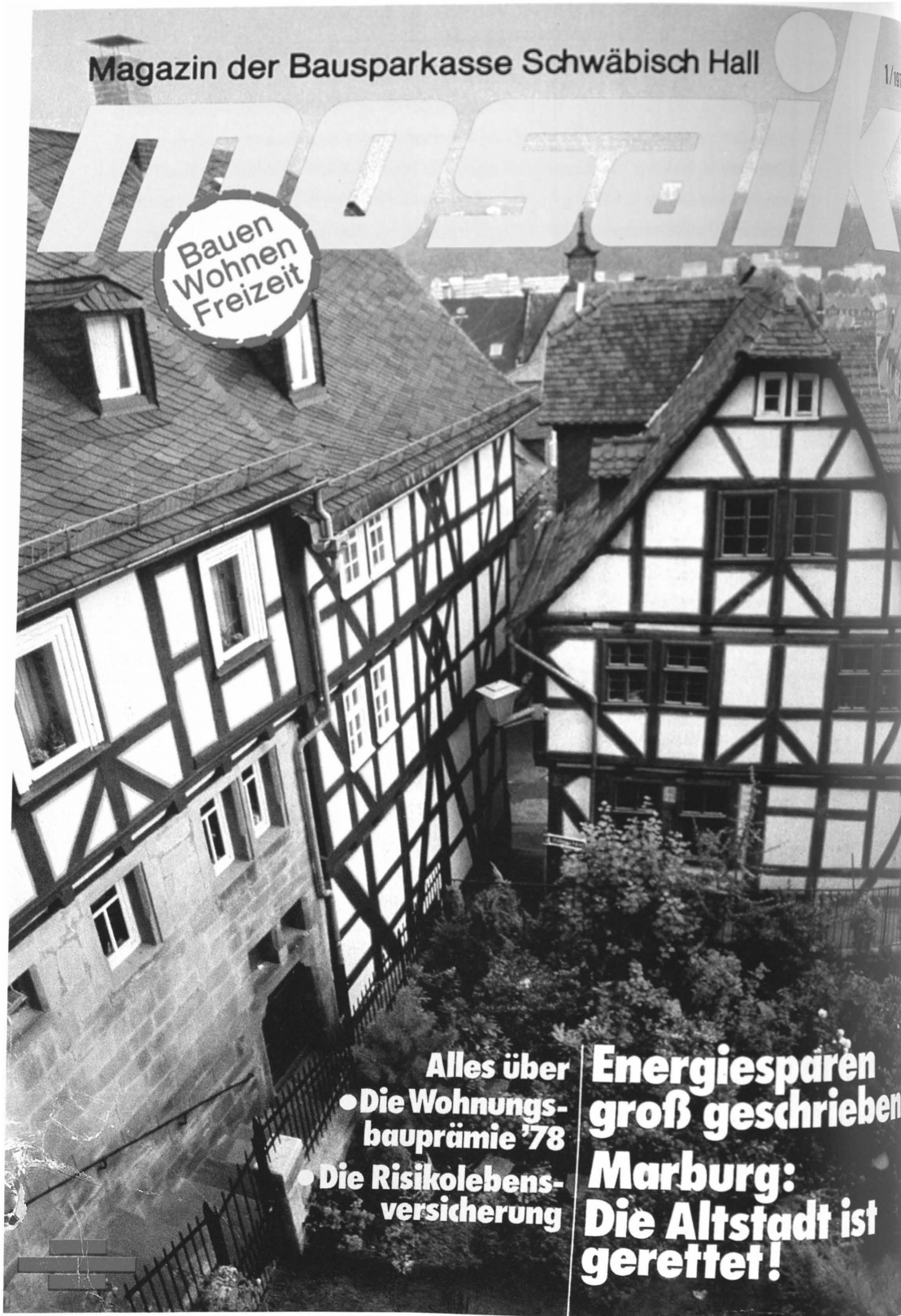
Throughout the magazine's existence, the old town reoccurred frequently as a topic and was a cover story more than once. In the 1970s, the city of Marburg became a well-received example of careful urban renewal, withdrawing plans to demolish old buildings in the inner city (Klotz 1978: 113ff.). 'Marburg's historic old town has been saved', a 1978 *mosaik* cover exclaimed (fig. 2). Until well into the 1990s, the magazine celebrated historic cities, presenting them as an 'oasis' (1999a: 14) or following the track record of their renewal, for example in the case of Ettlingen in south-western Germany. Praised as the 'most beautiful historic town' (N.N. 1991a: 52), the article tried to look behind the scenes of a success story and find out what it takes to keep the process of urban renewal alive for more than 20 years. According to the architects and planning officials in charge, Ettlingen took the wise decision to stick to the pedestrian scale of the old streets and alleys, not allowing cars in the inner city. Likewise, plots of land designated for new buildings were kept in a size similar to the city's medieval footprint (54f.).

Blatantly absent from the editorial content is the contested counterpart from the 1970s and 80s nostalgic discourse of the old town, namely the so-called anonymous mass housing projects and satellite cities at the urban periphery. *mosaik* did not employ the juxtaposition of 'old' and 'new' (as 'good' and 'bad'), which has been a common strategy of heritage publications since the 19th century (Petzet 1975: 28f.). One prominent exception was the *Gropiusstadt*. The district in the south of West Berlin served as the setting for Christiane F.'s 'Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo' (1979), an autobiographic report about a

Magazin der Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall

# Mosaik

Bauen  
Wohnen  
Freizeit



- Alles über
- Die Wohnungsbauprämie '78
  - Die Risikolebensversicherung

**Energiesparen  
groß geschrieben**

**Marburg:  
Die Altstadt ist  
gerettet!**

**Figure 2:** A 1970's issue: Saving the 'old' town (1979).

lost generation living in the modernist satellite city, winding up in drugs and prostitution. *mosaik* picked up this topic in its youth section on the occasion of the book launch (N.N. 1980: 38; this being the only example of a negative account of mass housing. The topic has never been brought up again in the years after).

Although the single-family home as a particular Western typology is by and large a suburban phenomenon (Harlander 2001), its context – suburbia and the suburban infrastructure – was hardly addressed in the popular discourse of the time. The editorial coverage in the *mosaik* magazine depicts the single-family home as an autonomous entity without a particular place and time. This impression is supported by the many full-page advertisements for pre-fabricated single-family houses in every issue. Except for a certain variety of regional architectural designs attributed to the homes offered, they could be commissioned and built everywhere in Germany.<sup>3</sup> The detached single-family home as an easy-to-consume and customisable product strikingly contrasts with *mosaik's* editorial strategies to introduce the historic city centres with their dense neighbourhoods as a place worth to be considered for family living: Each portrayed city and its historic centre is treated as a particular place with its own history and a tradition everybody can choose to be part of. Most importantly, the articles open up the perspective for the material strategies behind the creation of an urban atmosphere and particular flair, which is framed historically but points towards a sustainable, urban future.

### **Old houses become single-family homes**

Not only presented *mosaik* the old town, and thus inner-city dwelling as a young, fashionable and desirable lifestyle. The very act of converting old houses into private homes was also granted ample editorial space. The topic of new life in old buildings was addressed in almost every issue. Under varying headlines – ‘*Modernes Wohnen in alten Mauern*’ (*Modern living within old walls*, Recht 1988: 6f.), ‘*Neuer Glanz in alten Mauern*’ (*New splendour within old walls*, cover 1/1997), ‘*Frischer Wind in alten Mauern*’ (*Wind of change within old walls*, cover 4/1999), for example – *mosaik* reported about the experience of families buying old houses, renovating and living in them. The 1978 story ‘*Das Ulmer Haus*’ (*The Ulm house*), referring to the city of Ulm in south-western Germany, was the first portrait of a *Schwäbisch Hall* client and her project of refurbishing a medieval town house (Recht 1978). Although quite costly (400,000 *Deutsche Mark*), owner Anna Burgmayer set



Hier arbeiteten jahrzehntlang Männer und Frauen – heute wird in der „Fabrik“ gewohnt. Und zwar bequem, modern und individuell. „Man hat hier immer Gesellschaft, wenn man will und kann alleine sein, wenn man das möchte“ freuen sich die Bewohner der ehemaligen Wäscherei in Darmstadt-Bessungen.

Wenn aus Mietern Eigentümer werden

# Vom Fabrikhof zum Wohnhof

Mitten in Darmstadts Stadtteil Bessungen liegt „Die Fabrik“: Klotzige Backsteingebäude, hoher Kamin, die Nachbarhäuser direkt angebaut. In dieser Fabrik wohnen 24 Menschen – junge, alte, acht Kinder, Familien, Singles, Alleinerziehende. Es ist keine Wohngemeinschaft im üblichen Sinne und doch ist es eine.

Denn die Familien, die diese Fabrik mit hohem Einsatz an Geld und Eigenarbeit zu einem ungewöhnlichen Wohnhaus umgebaut haben, leben für sich – in kooperativen Eigentums- oder Mietverhältnissen. Aber sie leben auch zusammen in einer Gemeinschaft, in der man immer jemand findet, der einen zuhört, der hilft, in der die Kinder überall offene Türen und freundliche Zuwendung finden, in der keiner allein sein muß, aber jeder allein sein kann, wenn er will. Vor mehr als hundert Jahren wurde die „Fabrik“ gebaut – allerdings war es damals eine Fabrik im üblichen Sinne, sondern eine Großbäckerei. Im Laufe der Jahre wurde ein Gebäude nach dem anderen in die enge Situation des städtischen Stadteils sukzessive „eingeschoben“, so daß eine sehr dichte Bebauung entstand. Die Fabrik steht auf einem Grundstück von nur etwa weniger als 100 Quadratmetern, überbaut sind davon 500 Quadratmeter. Diese Fabrik schuf 1965 – für Wäschereien dieser Art gibt es keinen Bedarf mehr. Um die Gebäude nicht ganz verkommen zu lassen, wurden sie vermietet – stichweise auszugeben. Eine Jugendorganisation zog ein, ein kleiner Lebensmittel- und eine Handvoll Blumen, die bei primitiver, aber billiger Unterhaltung blühen.

Wie selbst Sie es

Figure 3: New forms of family dwelling: conversions of a factory (1984).

out to restore the building, which turned out to be of outstanding heritage value. Burgmayer said she wanted to give back to her native city the house's former beauty. The article presents the preservation authorities as helpful pool of experts and informs about the renovation funds available there. Up to 50 percent of the extra building costs caused by the status as a listed landmark, according to the article, are likely to be reimbursed by public funds. Among the individual persons or single families devoted to renovating old buildings, the high number of collaborative projects *mosaik* reported about stands out. Whereas *Baugruppen* (building communities) have become more popular in Germany only over the course of the last two decades, the mere fact of starting a renovation project as a group was discussed in *mosaik* long before that. The magazine portrayed a group of families who bought an old laundry facility in suburban Darmstadt, located in the State of Hesse, and converted the building into a multi-family dwelling (Recht: 1984).<sup>4</sup> The inner courtyard was kept as a common area designed by all inhabitants, while the apartments built into the shell of the factory building were planned individually (fig. 3). The article emphasised the simultaneity of private space, where people can retreat to, and

a sense of community that manifests in daily practices, such as eating together outside or children playing in the courtyard. Most notably, 'Oma Else', grandmother to one of the families moving into the factory, remarked, 'I used to live by myself in a detached single-family home and felt very lonely. Here, with my veranda facing the courtyard, I meet people all the time.'

In the context of the rather siloed concept of the single-family home as a living environment, moving into an old building, or converting a factory into a family dwelling, does stand out as unconventional. While younger people are explicitly addressed, the variety of editorial content simultaneously included the needs and interests of a larger audience, speaking of new, more liberal forms of living. The articles sought to address a particular generation and milieu. While the main target audience of the bank selling building saving plans remained young families and their spatial needs, the feature stories of new home owners in old buildings introduced yet another, more unconventional way of life and its protagonists: sort of the 'creative class' (Florida 2002), as one would call it nowadays. This finding is supported by the fact that most of the portrayed owners of old buildings were architects who took on the task of building an unconventional home for themselves.

## **Material appropriation**

The editorial themes of renovation and the old town introduced the readers to the field of historical and natural building materials, a thoughtful management of architectural resources and the advantages of urban living. A step further into details, the magazine did not only encourage the bank clients to buy old homes but also to engage in their renovation hands-on. The section 'Modernisieren und Renovieren' (modernisation and renovation) with how-to advice columns was part of the editorial concept of *mosaik* from the first issue onwards. Next to financial advice as mentioned above, dealing physically with historical buildings is treated as a manageable task for prospective homeowners: 'Keine Angst vor Denkmälern' (Don't be afraid of listed buildings) (N.N. 1994). The practical topics resonated with a general receptiveness of Germans of the post-war, boom years generation for the DIY movement (Voges 2017). DIY and sustainable lifestyles came together in the issue of environmentally sound materials and building physics. Up to date with the discourse of the 1980s, *mosaik* introduced the theme labelled as 'Baubiologie' (building biology) (Neubeck 1989). In mainstream architecture, the awareness for this issue grew around new buildings, whereas refurbishment projects



Figure 4: Do it yourself: heritage conservation (1982).

were handled rather pragmatically, using a toxic mix of materials for energetic retrofitting. An outspoken yet subtle critique of the building industry and its materials is conveyed in the 1982 story of a catholic youth association-rehabilitation collective (fig. 4) in a small town in south-western Germany. The group began its career of saving Rottweil's built heritage in the late 1970s when the 17th century barn house of the parish was slated for demolition. The group informed the preservation authorities and began restoring the building, using traditional building techniques and materials (Recht 1982: 6). After this initial success, the group took on the role of a local preservation task force. Craftsmen and building experts shared their knowledge with the group who stepped in to consult owners of old buildings about the question whether the buildings could be saved or not. The goal was to convince the owners to restore the buildings carefully and to use local building materials only. For its practice, the group imposed the 10-kilometres rule: Only building materials such as clay, brick, and wood, new or reused from demolished buildings, that could be acquired within this radius were considered suitable for the group's

projects (Recht 1982: 10). 'Old houses are built from stone, wood, chalk, and clay which makes them very elastic and thus durable,' a leader of the group summed up their building philosophy, 'concrete and iron, added later on, caused much of the damage old buildings suffer from today.' (Recht 1982: 11) Thus prepared for the challenge of architectural recycling, *mosaik* started to include conversion case studies of houses that had already been built as single-family homes in the post-war period. Articles about the transformation of buildings from the 1950s and 60s appeared in the 1990s (N.N. 1991b; N.N. 1993). Just before the 2000s, the iconic prefabricated single-family home, the 'Fertighaus', had become the object of transformation (fig. 5). *mosaik's* efforts to promote the conversion of old buildings and thus to acquire a new group of saving plan clients, culminated in a competition among the readers of the best refurbishment project (N.N. 1999b).

**THEMA**

**V**or fünfzehn Jahren kaufte die Familie Biel-Klages ein kleines Fertighaus in einem großen Garten. „Es war nicht unser Traumhaus, aber wir wussten, dass wir ein Traumhaus daraus machen konnten. Jetzt endlich ist es größer und schöner.“

**IN EINEM SCHWÖRERHAUS STECKT FRISCHE DRIN!**

**Fertighaus: Erstaunliche Verwandlung**

Die Lage war gut: zentral im Ort und dennoch ruhig im Grünen. Der Garten besticht schon durch seine Größe: 900 m<sup>2</sup>. Das waren für die Familie Biel-Klages Gründe genug, das Fertighaus aus dem Jahr 1972 in Nordstemmen/Niedersachsen zu kaufen. Obwohl das Haus winzig war, 108 m<sup>2</sup> zum Wohnen auf zwei Etagen. Obwohl die Wände des Hauses gerade mal 12 cm dick waren. Obwohl die Haustür auf der Rückseite des Hauses lag. Zehn Jahre lang arrangierte man sich, aber als die beiden Kinder größer wurden, wurde es eng im Haus. Es wurden neue Fenster fällig, die alten waren allmählich blind und undicht geworden. Die Giebelwand auf der Wetterseite war schadhaft, der Hauseingang sollte endlich zur Straßenseite verlegt werden.

**Familiengeschichte:** Als die Familie Biel-Klages das kleine Fertighaus in dem großen Garten kaufte, war gerade der Sohn geboren. Für eine vierköpfige Familie wurde das Haus zu klein – nun wurde angebaut.

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Figure 5: As time goes by: transforming a 1970s prefabricated single-family home (1999).

## **A postmodern material practice: The home loan bank and preservationism as unexpected twins**

Browsing through just one of the many popular magazines that have mushroomed around the single-family home in post-war Germany has turned out an astonishingly high number of articles dedicated to presenting good examples of adapting building stock for use as single-family homes. The infinite history of the single-family home provides us with countless examples of transformations – be it out of life course-related necessities, since families grow or shrink, be it as a practice of cultural and artistic expression. Any piece of architecture, as we have seen, can become a single-family home. And sometimes, the single-family home itself is the object of material transformation. Surprisingly, if one considers the modernisation paradigm and the discourse on urban decay at that time, historical buildings were, without exception, presented as something positive and desirable. Unsurprisingly so, if one considers the intentions behind the *Schwäbisch Hall* magazine: to make money by keeping people building.

The attitude of *mosaik* could be characterised as postmodern and inclusive. While directed at the typical target audience of their products – young families about to build their own home – the magazine addressed a multitude of issues revolving around single and family life and sought to include different models of living and dwelling. In doing so, the magazine en passant promoted particular, more unconventional lifestyles. All featured stories dealt with the overall question, ‘What does it mean to young people to live in an old house?’. In the magazine, the juxtaposition of old and new as an architectural style functions as a synonym for unconventional or avant-garde lifestyles. A bit exoticised in the early years, evoking forms of communal housing such as collectively renovating and living in an old factory, all practices of dwelling, from single households to family homes are presented as equal options of a variety of multiple ways to choose from with the help of a *Schwäbisch Hall* saving plan. Individualism is the message, yet framed by a postmodern sense of plurivalence and the idea of a free choice between different offers.<sup>5</sup>

The above-described material practices of making an alternative kind of not detached single-family home can be understood as part of general architectural trends in the second half of the 20th century. Typically, concepts of architectural recycling are closely linked to ‘historical’ buildings and the design issues of reconstruction, contrast and contemporary competitiveness (Corboz 1976). A closer look at the history of architecture reveals a wide range of much older motivations for keeping existing buildings (and not demolishing

them). The economics of preserving architecture include concepts such as cultural memory and heritage as well as the pre-modern, sustainable practices of repairing, reusing and recycling whole buildings or parts of them for the sake of saving resources. From the post-war boom era until well into the 1970s, these material practices were limited to the field of cultural heritage preservation. Meanwhile, preservation knowledge and reusing old buildings has become a paradigm in architectural design. It has almost become a style of its own (Braae, Riesto 2011). The overlapping concepts of architectural recycling and historic preservation both share the material resource paradigm, i.e. they are interested in the material value of architecture, appropriate materials (and not so much in its artistic qualities or its mere appearance). As I have argued previously, the appreciation for old buildings and the rising interest in historic preservation strategies among architects has developed as a critical reaction to the urban renewal policies during the 1960s and 70s (Warda 2015; 2016). *mosaik* magazine was part of the wave of nostalgia at the time. It promoted recycling architecture, inner-city revival and densification and presented a multifaceted image of historic preservation: one that is about beautiful old cities – which makes the magazine yet another medium of the modernist imagination of the ‘old town’ (Vinken 2010). However, most of all, *mosaik* presented historic preservation as a material practice of appropriating and adapting historical buildings to new uses. The magazine went even further, applying the notion of material transformation to any piece of architecture that has the potential to become a single-family home. Thus, writing on the (cultural and architectural) history of the single-family home, I conclude that it transcends the concept of building new shells for new families. Architecturally, the single-family home goes far beyond the post-war homes and prefabricated houses in suburban housing estates becoming part of the desire for self-fashioning and individual opportunity instead. What remains probably the key element in this is the concept of ownership and the home loan banks’ determination to establish property.<sup>6</sup>

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### Illustration credits

Figure 1: N.N. 1979: 12f.

Figure 2: mosaik 3(1): 1.

Figure 3: Recht 1984: 22f.

Figure 4: Recht 1982: 6f.

Figure 5: N.N. 1999b: 28f.

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### Endnotes

- 1 All translations from German are by the author.
- 2 Yet from the perspective of the history of brands, the Wüstenrot home loan bank is regarded a German standard. Founded in 1921 as a means to deal with the housing shortage after World War I, Wüstenrot was Germany's first home loan bank (Krichbaum 1988: 28).
- 3 Yet in some municipalities, local building codes may impose restrictions on the actual design.
- 4 On the transformation of factories into cultural spaces see Winkelmann 2007.
- 5 See the article by Julia Gill in this volume.
- 6 See the article by Jakob Smigla-Zywocki on the issue of ownership in this volume.