

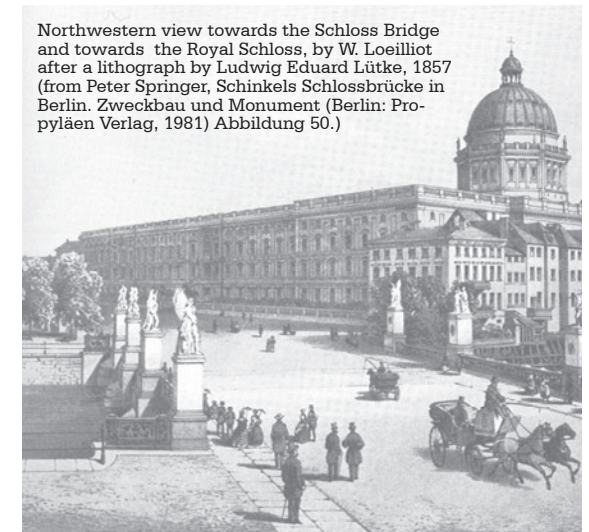
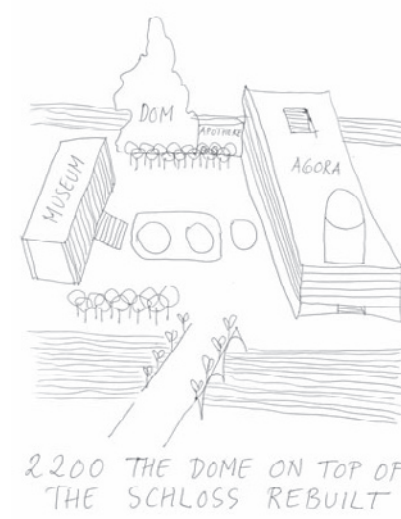
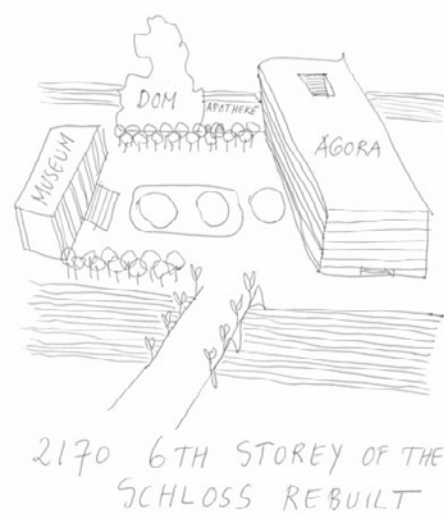
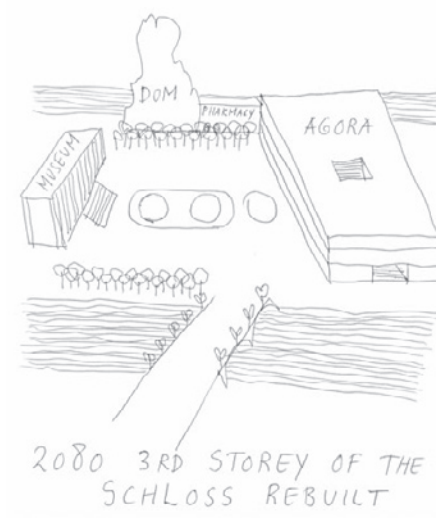
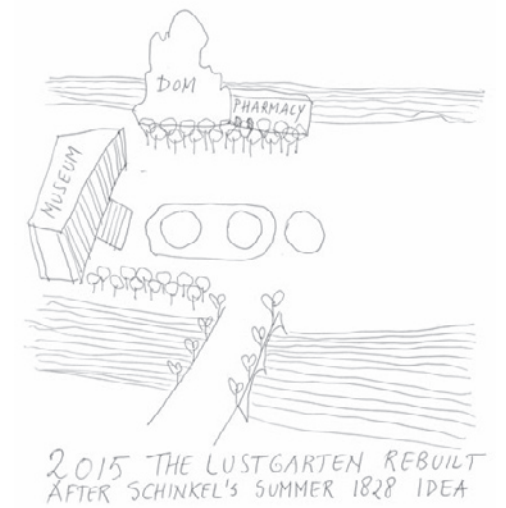
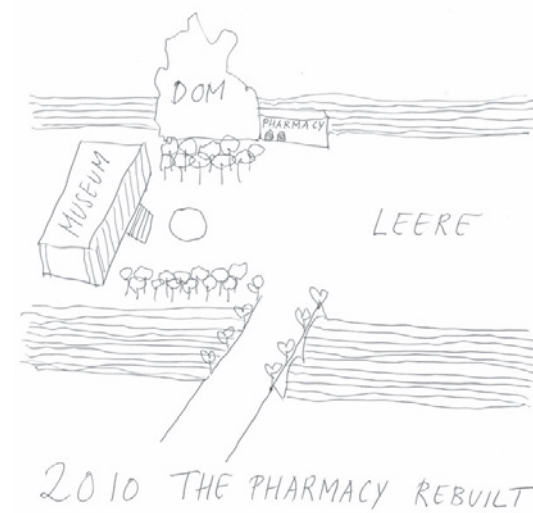
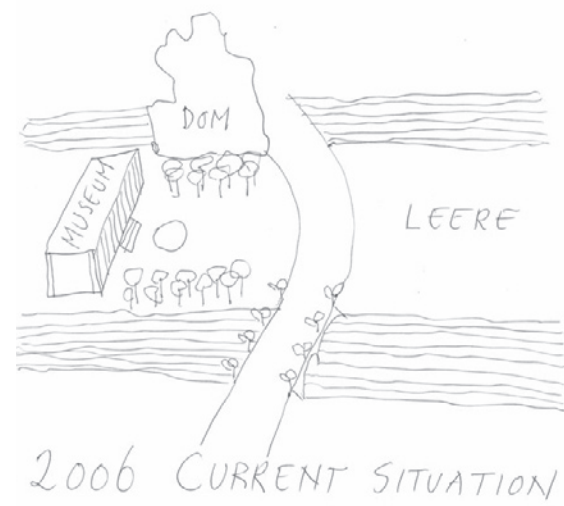
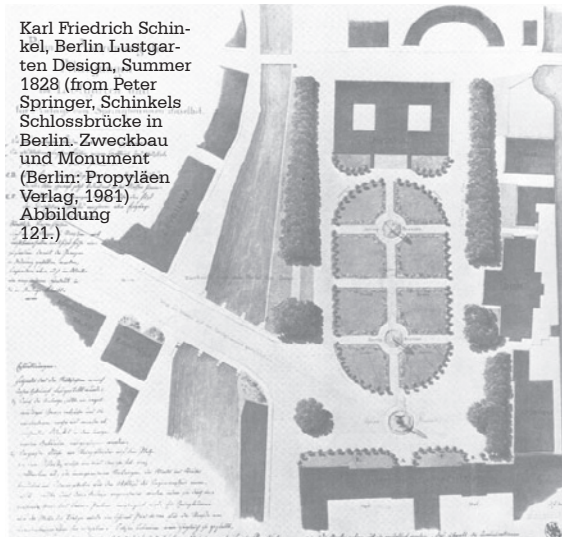
# The Pharmacy

*By Joost Meuwissen* Why is it that of all the famous buildings which surrounded one of the most beautiful squares in the world, the Berlin Lustgarten by Karl Friedrich Schinkel from the 1820s, all of those buildings became extremely admired and analysed, except for the Pharmacy? Was not the Pharmacy the most important building for most of the people who lived there at the time, before it was demolished in favour of one of the world's worst traffic breakthroughs ever made – the Kaiser Wilhelm Street? Why would the Pharmacy be less important than the Schloss, of which there are as many as there are pharmacies in Germany? The same might be said about the marvellous museum, and the voluptuous, quite eloquent cathedral – a sort of pre-blob. Maybe only the Arsenal (Zeughaus), just opposite the square was not paid that much attention to either, although just as the Schloss it is a masterpiece by Andreas Schlütter. Maybe the Pharmacy was not such a masterpiece of architecture after all but certainly it was the most important function at the square: it is there where you would buy your opium, and your morphine, and all the other things, called medicines at the time, which were only to be forbidden at that other war: the War on Drugs today, from the 1970s onwards. At the Pharmacy you could buy all the important things which were not for sale in any of the other buildings that surrounded the Lustgarten.

The public debate should have been about rebuilding the Pharmacy. Instead it was on whether to rebuild the Schloss or restore the Democratic Republic Asbestos Palace. Ever after the 1996 Berlin Tagesspiegel initiative, the following gremiums's discussions, and along the Bundestag decision to rebuild the Schloss, and to demolish the Palace even after the asbestos boards and sheets had been almost completely removed already, and the sardonic complaints about the lack of money that would prevent to implement the Bundestag's democratic decision after it was made, the debate was about a sort of national symbolism which carefully avoided the past's heroisms (which could be the only fair rationale for such a national symbolism though). To restore the Pharmacy would be the better symbolism for the whole of the site, because it would take the symbolism of the real people into account, not the one of the heroes who already had got their place within the Museum and at the Schloss Bridge. I shall try to explain this, and describe my design idea.

*A Symbolism* Like in the Middle Ages, consider a symbolism itself as the process of realization and build the desired Building, called Schloss, over time. Just as in Schinkel's days, there is a proverbial lack of money now and in the near future. Consider a Gothic cathedral, which was a tremendous collective effort over the generations, and therefore do not hesitate: start laying the bricks right away. Any attempt to rebuild the Schloss would mean to do it in phases. Each generation may add its horizontal layer (storey) on top of the former one. On top of each storey, its roof, would be an Agora each time, which would rise together with the rise of the storeys over time, offering panoramical city views, which would become ever more beautiful over the generations.

Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Berlin Lustgarten Design, Summer 1828 (from Peter Springer, Schinkels Schlossbrücke in Berlin. Zweckbau und Monument (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1981) Abbildung 121.)



Since both the Schloss and the Pharmacy are quite well documented, there would be no need for ongoing quarrels about the meaning of the finishing shape such as the ones within the Milan cathedral building committee, which almost prevented its realisation over the centuries. It requires a procedural approach, in which at the same time each phase would look intensive and perfect on itself. First, abandon the name Schlossplatz, because it should be a building not a square anymore. Call it Lustgarten. To reinstate the Pharmacy would be the first building phase. The Pharmacy's function might be a pharmacy. It would close off the ugly west-east traffic artery and make the square into the quiet and joyful place meant by Schinkel. This square as well as the so-called Schloss Freedom (Schlossfreiheit) are the places where you together with your grandchildren, and they in turn with their ones, and their ones with their ones again, may admire the important Building being built again. At each building phase it would be perfect, just like Peggy Guggenheim's Museum at the Grand Canal in Venice is perfect. The latter one only consists of a basement and ground floor of a palazzo which was never built, and would have been probably less beautiful if the whole of the monstrous palazzo actually had been built. In the case of the Schloss I would emphasize the indeterminacy of its historical height from the urban point of view. Urbanistically, it could have had almost any height. That is the reason its height can be built up in phases now.

**Negative Urbanism** Length and width of the Schloss may have been determined by some geographical and topographical conditions at the Spree Island (Spreeinsel) but the height was only determined by a set of programmatical and aesthetical considerations which must have changed over time. Although the width of the Schloss still might have varied along the length of the island, this possibility became shattered in the 1820s after the erection of the Museum and the extension of a civilian space both inwards into the museum (the whole succession of screenlike spatial vertical layers Schinkel designed behind its front façade) and outwards in front of the Museum towards the Schloss (the Lustgarten with its always quantifiable rows of trees, fountains and busts from the Museum towards the Schloss). Politically, there was no mixture possible between the civilian Lustgarten and the military Schloss at the time. In Schinkel's successive Lustgarten designs, up to the brilliant one of summer 1828, the distance between Museum and Schloss, who were condemned to gaze at each other, was always conceived of and measured from the civilian Museum, not from the Schloss. In a way, the Schloss, being there, remained expelled from the square at the same time. That way, the Schloss was left with only a vertical extendability, a fact which was somehow helplessly pointed out by the point shape of its dome. Its political inability to extend into public space was solved by Schinkel by simply denying this inability in two ways: the frontal distance from the Museum towards the Schloss, and a lateral distance resulting from the conical perspectivist space in front of the School of Architecture (Bauakademie), which somehow looked at something else beside the Schloss. There was no connection whatsoever from the Schloss towards a public space, the only exception being the iconographical one of the military statues on Schinkel's Schloss Bridge (Schlossbrücke), which were mocked at by the people after their erection. Politically, culturally and urbanistically the Schloss was a closed box.

In general, the actual importance of such a historical symbolism today mostly lies in what is left out in the past. In our case it is both the unheroic Pharmacy and the indeterminacy of the Schloss's height which were left out in various ways by Schinkel's designs for the site. In his many designs but especially in his most beautiful Lustgarten design from summer 1828

an aesthetic connection was neither made between his square and the Schloss, nor between the square and the Pharmacy, in the first case through an almost complete denial or what you may call negative urbanism, in the second case through simply hiding the pharmacy behind a row of lindens, which became chestnuts in the design process later on. This row itself, with a row of busts on top of rather high socles of famous civilian Germans in front of it, effectively measured and thus defined the whole of the distance between Museum and Schloss, and should be restored in order to understand the to-be-rebuilt Schloss as the distance evoking historical building it was. Therefore my design idea is to not only re-erect the Schloss but to also literally implement Schinkel's Lustgarten design from the summer of 1828, the result being that the traffic artery should be removed from the site.

**Practical Problems and Solutions** Schinkel's Schloss Bridge design was meant to mark the end of a street as long as the Champs Elysees axis in Paris, which also ended against a royal palace. The Schloss Bridge was never meant to be just a minor link of an even longer, elongated street. For vehicles, routes could be altered. In my opinion, regarding car traffic in Berlin, a certain acquiescence at this spot would be desirable, and hardly cause any problems elsewhere. Between the blob of the cathedral and the adjacent Pharmacy there would be of course pedestrian and bicycle passage ways.

As for the public Agora the officials ask for within the Schloss I explained that historically an extendability on the same level of public space inside and outside the Schloss would make no sense, and would even make the rebuilt Schloss incomprehensible in its environment. Therefore, it is very good that the Agora is on the roof, being solely part of the building, not of the square, not at the same level of the Lustgarten as a sort of inner court extension of that same Lustgarten.

The division of the old Schloss into six or seven of its horizontal layers (storeys), each of which would be realised by a next generation, that is according to a rhythm of thirty years between each of them, means that to build the whole of the old Schloss would approximately take two centuries to go. This makes the enterprise into a rare and therefore very attractive event. It is an example of extreme *ritenuto* which evokes long-term expectations, and offers open possibilities for the generations to come. It might attract a lot of visitors not only on its roof. The same division makes the realisation financially and functionally much more flexible and easier. It means that the official wish to reserve the building for mainly cultural functions (with the adjacent commercial ones such as cafes, restaurants, bookshops, videoshops, cinemas, which nowadays form an intrinsic part of them) might be rather easily realised.

Since building materials do not cost as much as labour anymore, basement, ground, and other floors may have quite heavy constructions, in order to bear the future floors on top of them. Or, on the other hand, empty or negative spots for future load bearing columns may be left out at lower floor levels in order to initially erect lighter and later to-be-filled-in constructions within the always heavier walls of the old Schloss façade.

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*Acknowledgements*

*Hermann G. Pundt, Schinkels Berlin (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1981).*

*Peter Springer, Schinkels Schlossbrücke in Berlin. Zweckbau und Monument (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1981).*