



*International Expert Meeting (April 23-25, 2020, Berlin)*

***Cities and Historic Textile Complexes:  
Typology, Good Practice, and Global Perspectives for Conservation***

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in cooperation with TICCH, Mark Watson (Historic Environment Scotland), and Prof. Bartosz M. Walczak (Łódź University of Technology)

Venue: Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Georg Simmel Center, Mohrenstr. 41, R 415, 10117 Berlin-Mitte, Germany (April 24, 2020)

Excursion to Forst, Lausitz, Brandenburg with INIK (April 23, 2020)

Optional guided tour: Deutsches Technikmuseum and Gleisdreieck area in Berlin (April 25, 2020)

For nearly three centuries, the textile sector led industrialization and urbanization in Europe. Textile entrepreneurs introduced multi-storey mill complexes to urban contexts, implemented steam-powered machinery for spinning and weaving operations, and established a global trade network based on transport, skills, knowledge, and power. Textile industries consequently changed cityscapes and urban spatial structures of many European cities. Mill complexes and their infrastructure (canals for power and transport, railways, warehouses etc) form part of a local historic urban landscape, and represent global chains of production. This textile heritage includes tangible traces, buildings and artefacts with transcultural dimensions, as well as various aspects of living heritage.

Several previous studies have developed our understanding of the technological and architectural contributions of the textile industry. The decline of the textile sector in much of the world has meant that converting and repurposing these historic industrial complexes has become a new opportunity and important task in many European cities. Ongoing practice in architecture, planning, and conservation shows historic textile complexes to be urban and architectural structures that can be conserved and enhanced by conversion to new uses.

Going beyond this, and adding to analysis of technology and architecture, three questions arise for research:

- 1) How to describe, identify, and value the historic urban landscape of the textile industry; does the TICCIH typology<sup>1</sup> properly cover urban industrial types?
- 2) What constitutes good practice for conservation and enhancement when converting mill complexes?
- 3) What are the relationships between textile heritage sites in Europe and the world; and among the people involved in textile production? How can we critically discuss these in heritage conservation, by and for whom?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ticcih.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/the\\_international\\_context\\_for\\_textile\\_sites\\_ticcih.pdf](http://ticcih.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/the_international_context_for_textile_sites_ticcih.pdf) located at <http://ticcih.org/ticcih-thematic-studies-and-published-reports/>



By recognizing global transcultural dimensions of knowledge and power, we might gain insight into other meanings and values—besides technological and architectural values—of this shared heritage.

The expert meeting in Berlin will discuss historic mill complexes in towns and cities<sup>2</sup>, aiming to identify an urban industrial typology to facilitate the description and valuing of these complexes, and good practice criteria to provide orientation in conversion processes. In this context, a typology is understood as an instrument of analysis, used in thematic studies by TICCIH and other classification systems, in inventories, listings, and heritage conservation. Herein an urban typology focuses on the larger scale mill complexes, their spatial composition, the configuration of different buildings and building types connected to communities in an urban setting,

Additionally, we seek to discuss approaches that will better understand the global networks and transcultural dimensions (knowledge, traditions etc) of this heritage. What are the global networks of knowledge, trade, and power in the textile industry? What meanings do elements of textile heritage have for local people and for global workers? What do we share when conserving textile heritage sites? How can we understand and take into account global and transcultural aspects in inventories and conservation practice?

Leading foci of the contributions that we invite are to identify:

1. the historic urban spatial structures of textile-industry complexes. The first main question is: What are the spatial and built forms of historic textile mills in cities?  
Accordingly, the expert meeting will suggest and discuss an urban typology, contributing toward classifying historic mill complexes and better understanding the past and present transformations of cityscapes and these urban spatial structures.
2. good practice in converting historic textile mills. The second main question is: How are the conservation and enhancement of these historic urban spatial structures handled in practice? Design and planning practices should be comparatively analysed and what is more or less good practice will be discussed.
3. global, transcultural, and living heritage: How might we critically reflect, conserve, and use the various meanings, knowledge, and global networks embedded in local heritage sites?

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<sup>2</sup>While the built history of textiles started as handicrafts and with rural water-powered mills, this meeting focusses on mills in towns and cities, mostly driven by steam power and electricity. Rural landscape complexes and company towns inside and outside cities may be addressed again in Łódź in 2021, following the attention given to those landscapes at preliminary meetings in Terrassa, 2001, Euskirchen, 2003, and in Sedan in 2007.



## Preliminary Programme

### Tuesday April 23, 2020

- 10.45 -11.15 am Registration and meeting point at GSZ in Berlin (insert map link to venue)  
Taking the train to Forst, leaving from Alexanderplatz in Berlin
- 1.30 – 6.30 pm Co-operation with INIK: Guided visit, input and discussion at Forst, woollen mill town on the eastern border
- Apr. 8.15 pm Return by train, arriving at Alexanderplatz / GSZ in Berlin

### Friday April 24, 2020

- 9.00 am – 6.00 pm Workshop session at GSZ
- 9.30 – 10.30 *Part I: The international context for textile sites given by TICCIH and ICOMOS*  
A research perspective on conservation and conversion
- 11.00 – 1:30 *Part II: Urban industrial typology and good practice*  
Historic urban landscapes and textile complexes, from Manchester to Łódź
- 3.00 – 6.00 *Part III: Perspectives: Globalisation, transcultural dimensions, and living heritage*  
Sharing heritage with India, Iran, and further afield  
Conclusion and further steps

### Saturday April 25, 2020

- 10.00 – 12.30 am Additional offer: Guided tour at Deutsches Technikmuseum, textile displays, and Gleisdreieck in Berlin

#### **Call for participation for the meeting with 25-30 persons**

*The organisers invite researchers and practitioners in textile mill heritage to contribute to the expert meeting. Please send an abstract (not more than 350 words) and short CV to [heike.oevermann@gsz.hu-berlin.de](mailto:heike.oevermann@gsz.hu-berlin.de) to apply to join this meeting. Places are limited so some submitted themes may be suggested as more suitable for the follow-through big meeting in Lodz, Poland, in the Spring of 2021 that will finalise the TICCIH comparative study.*

*Submission deadline: September 20, 2019*

*Feedback will be communicated by the end of October 2019.*

*The meeting charges no fees but travel and accommodation expenses are not covered.*

#### **Pre-announcement: TICCIH scientific conference in April 2021, in Łódź, Poland.**

There is the opportunity to also apply for the follow-up TICCIH scientific conference which takes part in April 2021, in Łódź, Poland. A publication of the TICCIH comparative study is projected to be completed in 2021, incorporating much of the knowledge gained at earlier meetings of the Textile special interest group in TICCIH, in time to be presented at the TICCIH Congress in Montreal in September 2021