

UNESCO declares Hamburg's Speicherstadt and Kontorhaus District a World Heritage Site

The UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has approved Hamburg's application for the "Speicherstadt and Chilehaus with Kontorhaus District" to be included in the UNESCO's World Heritage list. The decision was made at today's Committee meeting in Bonn, Germany. The Committee, which comprises 21 UNESCO member states, has acknowledged the outstanding universal value of Hamburg's urban, maritime warehouse complex and office district from the early 20th century. Hamburg now has its first World Heritage Site.

Hamburg's First Mayor Olaf Scholz comments: "I am absolutely delighted about this success. We, the people of Hamburg, can be proud of our city's new World Heritage Site "Speicherstadt and Chilehaus with Kontorhaus District". We have been able to convince the world's most high-ranking expert committee of the unique national and international role of the Speicherstadt and the Kontorhaus District. This unique role becomes particularly clear when comparing these sites with maritime warehouse complexes and modern office ensembles of the early 20th century in cities around the world. We are aware of this great honour and we will be happy to assume the responsibility to protect and convey this heritage."

The World Heritage Committee based its decision on the belief that the Speicherstadt and the Kontorhaus District are "an outstanding example" of buildings and ensembles which "illustrate significant stages in human history". The outstanding universal value of the two monofunctional but complementary areas is reflected in Hamburg's historic warehouse district with its connecting network of roads, canals and bridges dating from 1885 to 1927 and in the modern red-brick architecture of the office building ensembles for port-related use from the 1920s to 1940s.

The Speicherstadt is the world's largest historic warehouse complex. It extends over 26 hectares in the heart of Hamburg's port and comprises 17 building complexes in the style of Gothic red-brick, with more than 300,000 m² of storage area. High-value goods such as coffee, tea, cocoa, spices, tobacco, and, in recent decades, oriental carpets, have been stored behind the thick walls of these warehouses. In addition to its architectural highlights, tourism venues such as the Hamburg Dungeon, the Speicherstadtmuseum and the Miniatur Wunderland – the world's largest miniature railway – make the Speicherstadt one of Hamburg's tourism hotspots. In recent years, innovative enterprises such as advertising agencies, a theatre, fashion showrooms and restaurants have also located to the Speicherstadt.

Situated just opposite, the Kontorhaus District in the south of Hamburg's old town went down in architectural history as Continental Europe's first business district. Built in the 1920s and 1930s under the baton of Fritz Schumacher, the most eminent buildings include the Chilehaus, the Messberghof and the Sprinkenhof. The Chilehaus, which is reminiscent of a ship's bow, represents the most significant artistic and architectural achievement of German Brick Expressionism. It strongly influenced brick architecture of the 1920s and 1930s in Northern Europe and is also one of Germany's first high-rise buildings. On an area of 250 x 600 metres, the Chilehaus continues to be used mainly for office purposes. More recently, however, various restaurants, cafés and tourist attractions have also located here.

To learn more, please visit www.weltkulturerbe.hamburg.de (World Heritage Site), www.chilehaus.de (Chilehaus), and www.hhla.de/speicherstadt (Speicherstadt). Tourist attractions and special offers relating to the Speicherstadt and the Kontorhaus District can be found at www.hamburg-tourism.de.

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