

Tausendfüssler and Brückenfamilie in Düsseldorf (1950-1976). **A technological and symbolic icon** **of post-war reconstruction in Germany.**

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Summary

The redevelopment of a city road network from a logistic and technological point of view often means to clash with huge economic and financial interests and to disappoint citizens' expectations. C (capital city of North Rhine-Westfalia region – Germany) is the emblematic case of an unresolved conflict that was brought about in 1961-62 with the construction of the elevated road called “Tausendfüssler” (the millipede). The difficult relationship between this structure, its complex functional requisites and the traditional image of the city has now led to the decision to demolish the road. As a result, one of the most significative examples of post-war German engineering is bound to disappear.

Keywords: girder bridges; road bridge; elevated road; reconstruction; urban redevelopment; technological innovation; conservation of monuments; Germany; Rhine Valley; Düsseldorf.

1. Introduction

The history of the five famous cable-stayed bridges – Rheinknie-, Oberkasseler- and Theodor-Heuss-Bridge – on the river Rhine and the elevated road in Düsseldorf (1950-1976), built in the 30 years after World War II, is well known [1]. Not only are they a great technological example all over Europe but they also have an extraordinary symbolic value in post-war German reconstruction. Less known is the role of Friedrich Tamms (1904-1980) in this titanic work of urban design and planning. Tamms, architect and university lecturer, was a first-rate technician in the design of the German Autobahn with Organisation Todt [2].

He can be considered, together with Fritz Leonardt, one of the key-characters of German engineering between the two wars [3]. After World War II his work as chief engineer at the Technical Planning office of Düsseldorf was particularly significant. He focussed on the integration of design and functionality of the interventions in the context of territorial planning [4]. Today, his bridges are an integral part of the urban landscape of the cities on the Rhine Valley. Yet, the Jan-Wellem Hochstrasse, nicknamed “Tausendfüssler”, will be demolished. In the near future there is a large city renewal project “Kö Bogen” including some demolition work and the construction of a tunnel.

The borough council project is planning the elimination of tramway and fast roads, which will be replaced by an underground system. This will free up big areas and will improve one of the best central areas overlooking the Hofgarten park. The project funding involved the sale of public land and the opportunity for private investors to redevelop a large area for residential and commercial buildings. The urban redevelopment project was designed by Daniel Liebeskind & P (U.S.) in 2009, while the green area redevelopment will be designed by Molestina Architekten and by FSWLA Landschaftsarchitekten (2009)