

The final version of the pre-print text at hand is published in: *Consuming Architecture. On the occupation, appropriation and interpretation of buildings*, eds. D. Maudlin and M. Vellinga, Routledge 2014, 70-88.

Transformation unwanted!

Heritage-making and its effects in Le Corbusier's Pessac estate

Anita Aigner

Abstract

Scant attention is paid in architectural discourse to the way buildings (physically and symbolically) change over time – above all in the case of modernist ‘masterpieces’. Forty years after Philippe Boudon’s pioneering study *Lived-in Architecture: Le Corbusier’s Pessac Revisited* (1972 [1969]) documenting the transformation from pristine art-objects to adapted, lived-in homes, this study addresses the site’s ‘return to the original state’. From the perspective of critical cultural sociology, the process of ‘purifying’ preservation is presented here as a cultural struggle in which a normative aesthetic (implicitly incorporating notions of architecture as ‘original’ and ‘correct’ habitation) is enforced against the ‘bad taste’ of culturally destitute residential groups. On the one hand, this paper attempts to elucidate the requirements and conditions essential to the process of ‘inappropriate’ transformation ‘from below’ – here termed as ‘vernacular-isation’. On the other hand, based on empirical data, it analyses the socio-cultural process of ‘heritage-isation’, which recently culminated in (unsuccessful) UNESCO candidatures in 2009 and 2011. It addresses the mechanisms of value production as well the questions, which actors are involved in the making of heritage and what impact does the estate’s ‘second life’ as heritage have on the social context.

Keywords: modernist architecture, heritage, architectural heritage, lived-in monument

Introduction

Users (as far as they are not famous, artistically inclined clients¹) are largely ignored in architectural history research pivoting on work and author. As ‘internal reading’ does not embrace discussions on the evolution of architecture over long periods of use, and as any lay

¹ The clients and the previously invisible life and working partners of famous ‘pioneers’ of modernist architecture have increasingly become focus of interest in the field of architectural history over the last ten to fifteen years. Cf. for instance B. Colomina, ‘Collaborations: The Private Life of Modern Architecture’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58:3, 1999, 462-471.

interventions which alter the appearance of buildings are considered by those within the architectural field to be nothing other than a deformation of the ‘work’, monographs and exhibitions on modernist icons usually do not include any images of modified architecture.

A specific example of this is illustrated by the first exhibition on Le Corbusier’s Pessac housing estate in 1972, which failed even to mention the greatly altered appearance of the estate.² No pictures, not even a single word referred to the widespread nature of dilapidation and individual transformation among the houses.³ For the curator, the architectural historian Brian Brace Taylor, there was ‘naturally’ no reason to concern himself with the fate of the estate houses after years under the aegis of the residents. Totally prejudiced by the logic and perceptual structures of his field, Taylor ignored a study,⁴ published three years before the Paris exhibition and translated into German in 1971 and English in 1972, in which the French architect Philippe Boudon approaches the estate from a socio-architectural perspective.⁵ A book which had caused a furore, above all among left-wing students and planner circles critical of functionalism, because it had ventured the unheard-of: Boudon had presented the buildings of an icon as they looked after 40 years of use – i.e. in their totally, as architects like to term it, ‘deformed’ state. He introduced the residents as active designers into architectural discourse, focussing on experienced everyday reality whilst also (implicitly) calling the thought patterns of architectural history into question.⁶

However, it is not only Taylor’s work that is characterised by a certain denial of reality. There are also other relevant publications such as the *Oppositions* issue edited by Kenneth Frampton in 1979 which covered Le Corbusier’s early work,⁷ and the architectural guidebook on the *Quartiers Modernes Frugès* (QMF) published in 1998.⁸ What this interpretations of the ‘work’ have in common is a *pictorial politics of the original*: one is

² Boudon informed me in September 2008 that he had visited Taylor’s exhibition and was very surprised that

³ The exhibition, organised by the Fondation Le Corbusier and Harvard University, presented the results of the American architectural historian Brian Brace Taylor’s work – also spadework for his dissertation – and made them available in a two-volume exhibition catalogue. B. B. Taylor, *Le Corbusier et Pessac. 1914-1928*, Paris: Spadem, 1972.

⁴ It is clear from the bibliography of the exhibition catalogue that Taylor knew of Boudon’s book; the socio-architectural consideration of the estate, however, must have been so alien to him that he only turned his attention to the pressing question of user transformations in the concluding words of his dissertation (Taylor 1974) two years later, making mention of Boudon, albeit in a rather disparagingly way, criticising his work methodically and implying the author of viewing Le Corbusier’s architecture as ‘fascist’. B. B. Taylor, *Le Corbusier’s Prototype Mass Housing 1914-1928*, Ph.D. Harvard University, Cambridge/Mass., 1974, p. 143-4.

⁵ P. Boudon, *Die Siedlung Pessac - 40 Jahre Wohnen à Le Corbusier. Sozio-architektonische Studie (Pessac de Le Corbusier 1927-1967. Étude socio-architecturale*, Paris: Dunod 1969), Gütersloh: Bertelsmann. 1971.

⁶ Cf. the foreword by Spiro Kostof in R. Ellis and D. Cuff (eds.), *Architects’ People*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. IX-XIX.

⁷ *Oppositions* 15/16, 1979, Le Corbusier 1905-1933, ed. by K. Frampton, MIT Press.

⁸ M. Ferrand, J.-P. Feugas, B. Le Roy and J.-L. Veyret, *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès. The Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, Basel et al.: Fondation Le Corbusier and Birkhäuser, 1998.

always confronted with the same historic images of Le Corbusier buildings from the 1920s, i.e. with images selected by the author showing the ‘ideal state’ of the houses shortly after completion on the one hand, while being presented with the ‘pure’, ‘revitalised modernity’ of the present day on the other. This is the case in the above-mentioned architectural guidebook where only restored buildings are shown on the title page and in a series of images spanning 10 sides.⁹ (Fig. 1) Here ‘defilements’ by users are masked out in order to perpetuate the ‘purity’ of the architect’s original intention. (Fig. 2) This is in effect a *dominating iconic practice* in the architectural field that favours the ‘work’ over life and adopts the state of the completed building as a yardstick.



Fig. 1 (left) Cover page of the ‘architectural guidebook’ *The Quartiers Modernes Frugès* (1998), showing the ‘pure’, ‘revitalised modernity’. © VBK, Vienna 2013

Fig. 2 (right) Individual transformation in the Pessac estate (Aigner 2008)

An attitude that takes account of alterations carried out by the users of architecture themselves is not to be taken for granted within the academic field of architecture. Quite the opposite is true: the research perspective centered on work and author is quite natural and predominant, producing just that rigidly fixed image of ‘original’ which is being prescribed as an aesthetic norm upon the residents at Pessac today. While Boudon was still making a case for these individual adaptations as evidence of the functioning and success of the estate at the end of the 1960s, and Henri Lefebvre still inclined to understanding the ‘social, collective and

⁹ Due to it being unavoidable in ensemble views of whole streets, houses in an unrenovated state (mostly in the background) also slip into 3 of the 20 images for all that.

individual work as a work' in his foreword for Boudon,¹⁰ a preservationist approach has taken hold which is geared towards totally eliminating the individualisations, or what might be called the 'work of the users' – at least as far as the external appearance of the estate houses is concerned.

This being the case, more than 40 years after Boudon, the process of the 'aesthetic reconquest' of the buildings is of interest today: the question of how and in what way the 'prevailing taste' has engrossed the Pessac estate; but also how and by whom the making of heritage has been managed; how the social structure and the perception of the residents have changed in the course of this symbolic upgrading, how the residents react to the practices and rules of monument conservation and to the efforts of making the estate part of a World Heritage Site. In order to investigate this, I have held discussions with residents on site, referred to newspaper reports, homepages and film material, e.g. the documentary film *Pessac – Leben im Labor* (2004) by Julia Zöllner and Claudia Trinker.¹¹

User Transformation – Vernacularisation

The two experimental housing estates which Le Corbusier constructed in collaboration with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret for the industrialist Henri Frugès in the 1920s near Bordeaux were as good as unrecognisable when Philippe Boudon visited them some 40 years after their completion. In particular, the workers' estate at the village of Lège some 50 km west of Bordeaux, which comprises of 6 detached family houses and a community centre built in 1924 to bind the workforce of a saw-mill to their workplace, had been completely transformed. The everyday language, the dominant image of a house in the area had been superimposed upon the purist, modern buildings: pitched roofs had been put on the cubic structures; the gables were faced with wood; the long windows were reduced to a traditional format and provided with rustic shutters. Overwriting with 'familiar' elements had led to a 'transformation into the rustic', to a 'rustication' and 'regionalisation'. (Fig. 3, 4)

In contrast to Lège, where the nature of transformation is relatively homogeneous because the estate remained the sole property of one owner even after being sold, the existing 51 detached, semi-detached and row houses¹² on the estate at Pessac, completed in 1926, were

¹⁰ Boudon, *Die Siedlung Pessac*, pp. 11-12.

¹¹ Zöllner, J. and Trinker, C., *Pessac – Leben im Labor*, Vienna: Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion, 2004, DVD 53min.

¹² The housing project, which directly followed that at Lège, was originally planned for 130-150 housing units; as building work on the first two sections was accompanied by countless difficulties and the client faced financial ruin, only 53 of the houses based on 5 house types were realised, of which only 51 are extant today due to bombing of two units during World War II. Cf. Ferrand et al.: *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, p. 26, 113.

(and are still today in part) very heterogeneously transformed owing to individual property tenures. The spectrum ranges from an emphatically original individualisation with no reliance on models (such as the property shown on the cover of Boudon's book, which has honeycomb-like, organically shaped flowerboxes) to decoration with traditional stylistic elements found in country house and villa architecture (such as plaster reliefs framing openings and structuring the purist façades), and to transformations that seem more or less improvised and makeshift. Not only decorative 'embellishments' but also extensions to increase living space, the walling-in and walling-up of terraces and arcades, the deployment of new windows and roofing materials along with the signs of deterioration brought on by age due to insufficient upkeep and maintenance, all of these factors have contributed to change on the estate.

Vernacularisation represents an exercise in appropriation, whereby an architectural formal language outlandish for the users is translated into a familiar formal language and buildings are overwritten with familiar formal elements. In the case of the estates at Lège and Pessac, I hold that vernacularisation is a visible sign for the houses and users *not being compatible*. More precisely: the house as an aesthetic pre-structured object and the *habitus* of the user (considered by Bourdieu as 'practical sense' determining, among other things, whether and in what way a house is creatively occupied) do not match. This 'not matching', which is in fact more of an 'incompatibility' of tastes, a collision of class-specific taste patterns, has various causes. On the one hand, on an abstract general level, it has to do with social relations, the production conditions of 'Fordist housing'; on the other hand, on a concrete and particular level, it is due to a fortuitous meeting of two 'compatible' people (the architect and his client). It is this basic constellation of an aesthetically sophisticated producer and unknown user that makes it possible that people 'without taste' come to live in houses developed by people 'with taste'.

In any case the experimental dwelling houses in Lège and Pessac, cleansed of all surplus (i.e. decoration) and stripped of all familiar elements (flat roof instead of sloped roof, horizontal bands of windows instead of the conventional vertical window) contradicted every idea of what constituted a 'normal' house (especially the regional prototype, the 'échope bordelaise') and must have seemed like foreign bodies to the rural population at the time, objects from another universe. To a certain extent, they really were objects from a different universe: namely that of architecture, a relatively autonomous cultural field of production,¹³

¹³ For Bourdieu's field-concept cf. P. Bourdieu, *Die Regeln der Kunst. Genese und Struktur des literarischen Feldes (Les règles de l'art)*, Paris 1992), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001 (1999), p. 360ff; P. Bourdieu and

where self-referential laws and rules govern, and in which the architect does not only feel obliged to comply with the wishes of his client and the needs of the users. Here it is also a question of constantly positioning oneself with distinct solutions for the already existing, facing the competition and placing a stake on a ‘game’ in which recognition can be won. While Le Corbusier definitely wanted to make a contribution towards alleviating the housing shortage, comply with the wishes of his client and achieve a maximum of home comfort for socially disadvantaged classes with minimal funds, he also wanted to create ‘architecture’. He wanted to cause a sensation in professional circles with his example of modern, (seemingly) cost-effective housing, to set the tone and take the next step in his professional career. This veiled self-interest, this unconditional interest in form derived from the field must be born in mind if one wants to understand what made it possible for such an advanced architectural programme for the lower classes to be developed.

But Le Corbusier was aware that ‘the people’ would not be enthusiastic about the new architecture of their own accord: ‘Well, let us not have any illusions. Workingman [...] will hate our houses; they will call them “boxes”.’¹⁴ Although he was anticipating the rejection of his cubist aesthetic,¹⁵ he assumed that the residents would develop the ‘matching’ taste through habituation. Indeed, he actually presumed that the modern house would *educate* the residents to a modern lifestyle. However, many residents at Pessac did not adapt their taste to the modern house but the house to their taste.

The residents, who were recruited from the lower income strata,¹⁶ did not have the cultural means that would have permitted them to take up possession of the modern estate houses in accordance with the underlying aesthetic ‘intention’. This does not mean that the modern house was not accepted as a utilitarian object designed for a certain use. People naturally appreciated the modern comforts of the houses, their equipment with sanitary facilities, hot water and electricity, the light if narrowly dimensioned rooms, the garden with its potential for seclusion. Nevertheless, due to their aesthetic disposition, they were not able to satisfy the demands the modern houses brought with them as aesthetic objects. They were

L. J. D. Wacquant, *Reflexive Anthropologie (Réponse pour une anthropologie réflexive)*, Paris 1992), Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2006 (1996), p. 127ff.

¹⁴ Le Corbusier, *1929 Feststellungen (Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme)*, Paris 1929), Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg 1987, p. 94.

¹⁵ This is also expressed in the sales prospect for the houses: ‘The external appearance is not always pleasing at first sight; but experience has shown that the eye very soon grows accustomed to these *simple and pure forms*, and, before long, finds them more beautiful than the complicated and cumbersome forms found in sculptures and ornaments.’ P. Boudon, *Lived-in Architecture. Le Corbusier's Pessac revisited*, Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press, 1972, pp. 17-8.

¹⁶ According to Frugès, the fact that purchases were made in the framework of the Loucheur law meant that mainly poor, low-income families moved in. Boudon, *Die Siedlung Pessac*, p. 24; for the difficult circumstances of sale and occupancy see also Taylor, *Le Corbusier's Prototype Mass Housing*, Kap. IV, p. 124-5.

not in the position to recognise the artistic design quality in the estate as a subtly composed structure of consistent colour and proportion both coherent and complete in itself; one which could be ‘destroyed’ when it is further developed contrary to its aesthetic structure.



Fig. 3 (left) Lège estate in 1927 (archive Boudon) © VBK, Vienna 2013

Fig. 4 (right) Transformation into the rustic, Lège 1967 (archive Boudon)

It is important to note that alterations were not always triggered by an aesthetic need. At Pessac construction defects and structural damage were often the impetus for adaptations. The destruction of a large number of window panes during the war occasioned many residents to change their windows altogether. The example with the long horizontal windows is particularly telling and also demonstrates that the modern house brings with it the demands of an entirely new lifestyle. The windows running over the whole width of a room call for a certain kind of furniture (an equally horizontally oriented selection of low furniture), for a certain skill in interacting with these new types of openings, and in so doing they reveal requirements unachievable for many of the residents. Naturally habit played a role in the reduction of these long windows to windows of ‘normal’ size. Nevertheless, many adaptations must be understood as stemming from everyday practicality: What was the cheapest solution? Which materials were readily available? Did local workmen recommend a certain solution? It is only from this perspective of day-to-day practices where, besides aesthetic preferences, financial capacities and availabilities also play a role that the transformations suddenly attain a sense and logic.

As Boudon demonstrated in his interviews with long-established residents, the positive assessment of the interior contrasted with the negative one of the exterior.¹⁷ That is why some of the first residents decided upon ‘beautification’ measures for the façades. Even though neither a counterculture nor a self-confident ‘culture of the lower classes’ can be presumed here,¹⁸ we are still dealing with an intention to stylise corresponding to the culture of a certain lifestyle, that is to say, an expression of a popular culture in an ethnological sense. The first residents left their mark in accordance with aesthetic notions corresponding to their origins and lifestyle (the absence of style or intentions of stylisation included) – and this self-confidently, with joy and creative pleasure, and without the least idea that they were committing a misdemeanour or feeling non-compliant.

This is evident in a letter addressed to Le Corbusier in 1931 by a house owner, who was also a representative of the quarter’s residents’ association, in which he proudly reports of the ‘true wonders of interior and exterior decoration’ accomplished by his neighbours – for instance, a wisteria painted on a house wall; as other owners wanted to improve the appearance of their houses, which looked rundown when they moved in,¹⁹ he asks the architect to send him a standard pattern for façade decoration for the house type ‘gratte-ciel’ (skyscraper).²⁰ The cultural conflict pinnacles here: on the one side there is the ‘layman’ to whom the house is still ‘unfinished’ and for whom it is clear that it is in need of personalisation and improving interventions, and is therefore seeking the architect’s advice in good faith and without realising that he is asking the impossible of him. On the other side is the architect who has allowed for a certain flexibility and potential for adaptation in the house interiors, but does not understand the exteriors as neutral structures for further treatment. This is clear above all else in a letter written to his construction manager, in which he expresses his disgust at the bad taste of the people:

‘I cannot understand how you, who witnessed the spirit in which Pessac was constructed, could have let house No. 14 fall into such a state of ruin. It now resembles some gaudy piece of architecture, the likes of which are found in pseudo-modern spa towns. Similarly, I simply cannot comprehend how you can have

¹⁷ Boudon, *Die Siedlung Pessac*, pp. 87-96.

¹⁸ For the argument that no authentic culture of workers or the lower classes exists cf. P. Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft (La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998, pp. 616-7; P. Bourdieu, *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*, ed. by M. Steinrück. Hamburg: VSA, 1992, 39-8.

¹⁹ Although completed in 1926, the houses stood empty for years: the comparatively high price (unlike the architect had indicated, neither an efficient ‘Taylorised’ planning nor an ‘industrialised’ building process had taken place, which would have led to a minimisation of the costs), difficulties with the local authorities (the plots remained without amenities for years, i.e. without water, electricity and gas supplies) and, not least, poor accessibility delayed and made the sale of the houses difficult.

²⁰ Letter from M. Gabriel to Le Corbusier of 21.5.1931; (FLC H1-17-84)

allowed the arcades to be filled in and the staggered house types to be painted with wisteria. It is truly horrendous and utterly tasteless. (...) some effort would have been made to prevent people from tampering with it and degrading it through their fatal incompetence. And what's more, all these charming people are complaining that they did not receive any advice or guidance.'²¹

Even if Le Corbusier, when addressed on the transformation of the estate, later admitted: 'It is always life that is right and the architect that is wrong',²² we are still dealing with an absolutely 'classic' reaction of an artist-architect: adaptations by users contrary to educated taste are (more or less instinctively) rejected; people who do not have the means to comply with the desired form of occupancy are to be 'educated' to an appropriate use with prescriptions and building regulations. The fact that Le Corbusier envisaged an expiry date for his buildings must also be considered in connection with this reaction. He anticipated an average lifetime of 50 years for the modern house. That was the length of time a house could be expected to accord with a family's needs. Newer houses were to be built for the children, more in tune with the tastes of that generation, and these 'will make the frequent and unnecessary adaptation work superfluous, which is responsible for constant transformation in our eyes.' (cited in Fayolle-Lussac 2005:203) One does not have to agree with this tabula rasa mentality, the idea of a world that is to be continually reconstructed. However, if Le Corbusier had been taken literally, the buildings at Pessac might well have been replaced in the 1970s when their structural integrity had obviously become a problem. However, it was precisely at that time work was begun to protect the houses.

Becoming a monument: mechanisms of value production

The *Quartiers Modernes de Frugès* (QMF) had a difficult standing from the outset: eyed with suspicion by the local government, the mayor and the responsible officials, not to mention years of being neglected as far as amenities and infrastructure are concerned;²³ heavily criticised and questioned by architects, building contractors and specialists in the 'social question'; initially denigrated by the local people as the 'Moroccan estate' and 'sultan's quarter' and later rated an 'eyesore'. It is all the more astounding then that the quarter is praised today as a cultural hotspot for tourists by the municipal authorities and the French press,²⁴ entered to compete for recognition as a UNESCO world heritage site,²⁵ visited by

²¹ cit. in Ferrand et al. *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, p. 110.

²² Letter from Maurice Besset to Philippe Boudon of 28.9.1966 (FLC H1-20-137)

²³ Cf. the comments of the then town councillor and later mayor in Boudon, *Die Siedlung Pessac*, p. 25; and the assessment of the local officials, the critical report by Bouny of 1st September 1925 (FLC H1-17-139)

²⁴ C. Courtois, 'Week-end "Le Corbusier" à Pessac', in *Le Mode*, 20th January 2005 ; cf. also the homepage of the City of Pessac: <http://www.pessac.fr/content/cit%C3%A9-frug%C3%A8s-le-corbusier> [28.06.2011]

architects and people interested in culture from all over the world and accepted by the citizens of Pessac as a famous attraction. How can this change, which was tellingly described by Bruno Fayolle-Lussac as the development ‘from stigmatisation to monumentalisation’,²⁶ be explained? How can it happen that residents now talk of their houses as ‘architecture’, and are at least partially proud to live in an ‘architectural artwork’?

The mediatisation, that is to say the building being made known through ‘the media’, and its identification as a work by a famous individual play an essential role in the estate becoming a monument and upgraded to be legitimate cultural heritage. Completely unknown in the 1920s (except among experts with a particular specialism), Le Corbusier became an internationally renowned architect in the 1960s. His death on 27th August 1965 triggered a broader reception of his person and work, and also led to the ‘discovery’ of the QMF at Pessac. Not only did *Sud-Ouest*, a large regional daily newspaper based in Bordeaux, report on the estate immediately, but also local television.²⁷ Authorities could not (anymore) afford to be critical and emphasised the estate to be ‘the most modern architecture of the century’.²⁸ All this media interest sensitised the mayor (Jean-Claude Dalbos) to the previously little appreciated architectural ‘jewel’ in his town, and he applied to have the estate listed a year later. His letter to the French minister of culture André Malraux shows how the legitimacy of the author (to a certain degree produced and imported from ‘outside’) is used as substantiation for special value being placed on the estate: ‘this work [...] is, due to the standing of its author, a historic monument today and it would be unforgivable to allow its decline’.²⁹ The local authorities also contributed to embedding the estate and its protagonists in the cultural memory of the local population with celebrations and tributes: a celebration was held in the presence of town dignitaries to mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the buildings on 19th June 1966 in the QMF, followed by a further broadcast on the estate a few months later on national television.³⁰ More than anybody else, Frugès stood alongside the ‘great architect’

²⁵ ‘Report de la candidature Le Corbusier’: <http://www.pessac.fr/content/report-candidature-corbusier> [28.06.2011]

²⁶ B. Fayolle-Lussac, ‘De la stigmatisation à la monumentalisation du Mouvement moderne: l’œuvre de Le Corbusier en Gironde’, in J.-Y. Andrieux, Jean-Yves and F. Chevallier (eds.) *Reception of Architecture of the Modern Movement: Image, usage, heritage. Actes de la septième conférence internationale de DOCOMOMO*. Presses universitaires de Saint-Etienne, 201-205.

²⁷ L’architecte Le Corbusier. JT Aquitaine - 31/08/1965 - 03min07s
<http://www.ina.fr/art-et-culture/architecture/video/BOC9109240408/l-architecte-le-corbusier.fr.html> [20.06.2011]

²⁸ Fayolle-Lussac, ‘De la stigmatisation à la monumentalisation’, p. 203.

²⁹ The letter was printed in *L’Avenir de Pessac*, 10 November 1966 (FLC X2-5-72)

³⁰ Cité Le Corbusier à Pessac Gironde. JT 13H - 13/03/1967 - 04min10s
<http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF97028666/cite-le-corbusier-a-pessac-gironde.fr.html> [20.06.2011]

in the limelight, having been made an honorary citizen of the town at a great ceremony in 1968.³¹

The academic production instigated by Boudon and Taylor at the end of the 1960s also contributed to the estate being valued and recognised as legitimate cultural heritage. Boudon, who had stayed on the spot for a long period during his field research and had had talks with 40 residents about their houses and the architect, had certainly not only left traces on the of the residents' perceptions. He must have raised consciousness of the problems with his focus on the adaptations, especially among professional and culturally interested circles (as much locally as within the field) and, even if unintentionally, abetted criticism of the 'criminal' neglect suffered by the building and therefore may have acted as catalyst for restoration. Taylor, whose exhibition ensured wide coverage of the estate in the French daily press,³² also contributed to the general appreciation and renown of the estate and its 'creator' with his historic evaluation. Academic discourse co-produces the symbolic value of the object (even if it merely affects to record it) and is therefore indisputably a fundamental prerequisite for an upgrading to monument status. However, preservationist practices at Pessac were initiated by a private owner rather than from 'outside' by experts (architects, curators of monuments, architectural critics).

After the application for entry onto the list of national *Monuments historiques* was turned down in 1967 and 1968 (due to the estate being considered an 'early work' and the difficulties expected in renovating it because of private tenure),³³ the 'resurrection of Pessac' was revived by an initiative of an admirer of Le Corbusier. The owner of the house at No. 3 Rue des Arcades decided to restore his house to its 'original state' in 1973 – it was then entered onto the list of national monuments in 1980; at the same time the whole area belonging to the so-called *champ de visibilité* (field of view), anything within a maximum of 500 meters from the monument, also became subject to preservation regulations. Henceforth the department for the preservation of monuments had the right to appeal against any alterations or additions to the estate. Following a request by another owner for support in restoration work to *CEREL ARIM Aquitaine* (the regional authority for the preservation of monuments), the whole area was listed as a protection zone for architectural, urban and

³¹ Hommage à Henri Frugès qui a été fait citoyen d'honneur de la ville de Pessac, in *Sud-Ouest*, 18 February 1968.

³² P. Paret, P., 'Le Corbusier a construit à Pessac avant de bâtir à Marseille', *Sud-Ouest Dimanche*, 2 July; L. Curzi, L., 'Le Corbusier et Pessac (1914-1928) premières expériences d'habitats "sauciaux"', *Liberté*, 11 July 1972; 'Le Corbusier à Bordeaux-Pessac', *Clefs pour les Arts*, June 1973.

³³ Fayolle-Lussac, 'De la stigmatisation à la monumentalisation', p. 204.

landscaped national heritage (*ZPPAUP* - Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural, Urbain et du Paysage) in 1982, which provoked an irreversible process of renovation.

The first step to be taken was the performance of a study in 1985, which ascertained the extent of transformation to the individual houses and worked out a restoration programme for the whole estate.³⁴ The ‘rescue’ plan, elaborated by a working group comprising architects, curators of monuments and one sociologist, primarily focussed on getting control over *exterior* changes (whether resulting from a lack of maintenance or individualisation). The measures aimed at ‘restoring the visual and aesthetic aspects of the exterior construction elements of all the houses in accordance with the original, recommended realisation. [...] The entire volumetry, the silhouette, the *tracé régulateur* and the texture of the façades’ surfaces, the position, the form and the proportion of openings [...].’³⁵ As far as the interiors were concerned, the residents were to be encouraged to keep the internal organisation of the respective type houses, particularly the form and position of the stairs, the chimneybreasts and the sanitary facilities.

The house owners were encouraged but not forced to participate in the renovation project, which was supported financially by the state (by the City of Pessac, the Communauté Urbaine de Bordeaux, the Conseil Général de Gironde of the region of Aquitaine and the ministry of culture). In order to provide both a model renovation site and information centre, the commune purchased the house at No. 4 Rue Le Corbusier in 1983, which now functions as a museum after exemplary renovation. Furthermore, nine private houses and four others bought in 1994 by the *L’OPAC Aquitanis* (the regional authority responsible for social housing) as well as the entire public space, including fencing, were renovated by 1995. The completion of the renovation project was followed by animated reports on the renovation ‘in the spirit of the original’ in specialist publications³⁶ and the daily press,³⁷ often accompanied by a pictorial comparison of ‘before’ and ‘after’. The authors of the study that had been conducted in preparation of the work, some of whom were also responsible for the

³⁴ *Pessac. Le Corbusier - Sauvegarde et réhabilitation des Quartiers Modernes Frugès*. Study conducted under the academic direction of Marylène Ferrand, Jean-Pierre Feugas, Bernard Le Roy (architects in Paris) and CEREL ARIM Aquitaine (Centre de restauration et d’échange de logements, Association restauration immobilière de la région Aquitaine); in collaboration with Marie-Cécile Riffault (sociologist, professor at the Ecole d’Architecture Bordeaux) and Jean-Luc Veyret (architect in Pessac), 1985.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 76-77.

³⁶ J.-B. Faivre, ‘Pessac. Les “Quartiers Modernes Frugès”’, *La Pierre D’Angle* 14, 1994, 29-35; 1994; E. Dupuy, ‘Pessac couleur Corbu’, *D’Architecture*, May/June, 1996; ‘Pessac redécouvre Le Corbusier’, *Les Cahiers de l’ANAH* 82 (L’agence nationale de l’habitat), June 1997, 6-8.

³⁷ P. Meunier, ‘La Cité-Jardin de Pessac réhabilitée’, *La Croix*, 12 October 1995; J. Daurel and H. Lagardère, ‘Le Corbusier à Pessac’, *Sud-Ouest*, 7 January 1995; ‘Pessac: quatre maisons de Le Corbusier’, *Le Moniteur des Travaux Publics et du Bâtiment*, 9 August 1996; ‘Rénovation de la maison municipale Le Corbusier de Pessac’, *Le Moniteur des Travaux Publics et du Bâtiment*, 18 April 2003.

implementation of the renovation programme, produced a publication (initially described as an architectural guide), which, unsurprisingly, does not document the process of renovation and the attending difficulties (constructional, social, economic, etc.), but instead confines itself to being an absolutely classic work history and anticipates the ideal state of the estate on the pictorial level from a conservation point of view, i.e. suggestive of an estate cleansed of ‘deformity’.

In contrast to Pessac, where unrenovated and individually adapted houses can be found to this day, the estate at Lège has been thoroughly renovated ‘true to the original’. After a Japanese visitor notified the press in 1988 that the commune was planning to demolish the houses, the whole housing estate – although Le Corbusier himself had blanked it out of his work documentation³⁸ – was listed in the *Inventaire Supplémentaire des Monuments Historiques* (Additional Listing of Historical Monuments) in 1992. The department responsible for social housing, *OPAC Gironde Habitat*, purchased the seven vacated houses in 1993 and renovated them (with the exception of the community centre) between 1994-1997. The houses are once again being used for their original purpose and are rented to low-income families. The atmosphere on the estate makes a strangely lifeless impression.

Cultural dominance, symbolic power and social conflicts

The approach to the preservation of buildings sketched here represents ‘normality’ for us today. We consider it desirable that the buildings of famous architects who have entered the canon of architectural history should be preserved to endure. We are delighted when ‘works’ that were no longer recognisable as such once again shine in new (old) splendour. However, this process of renovation ‘true to the original’ is by no means a matter of course or natural. It is a relatively new phenomenon historically speaking with a symbolic classification system and a whole arsenal of influential institutional practices as a premise. A critical reflection of preservation practice would usually stem from the question of which objects belonging to their material culture certain groups and individuals (not ‘society’) value and seek to preserve, and by whom and in which way ‘cultural heritage’ is *manufactured* socially.

In this regard the issue of power suggests itself. Following the latest developments in the study of heritage it could be presumed that heritage-making and preservation practices are intimately related to the exercise of power.³⁹ Not only at a theoretical level, driven by the

³⁸ The reason for this denial may be that Frugès had heavily reworked Le Corbusier’s design; cf. T. Benton, ‘Pessac and Lège revisited: standards, dimensions and failures’, *Massilia* 3, 2004, 64-99, p. 70-1.

³⁹ Cf. L. Silva and P. J. M. Santos, ‘Ethnographies of heritage and power: introduction’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18:5, 2012, 1-7; D. Macleod and J. G. Carrier (eds.) *Tourism, Power and Culture: Anthropological Insights*, Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications, 2010; M. Nic Craith, ‘Cultural

questions ‘Whose heritage?’, ‘Who selects and legitimizes heritage?’, ‘On the basis of what kind of knowledge?’, also in case studies grounded on fieldwork anthropologists, ethnologists and social geographers have developed a better understanding of the power relations that characterise the processes of heritage-making and preservation. However, from the perspective of a critical sociology of culture, where interest is directed towards the relationship between culture, power and social inequality, still other aspects and dimensions of dominance come into view. Particularly if account is taken of matters of taste and aesthetics (understood as social practice), as well as the social functions and effects of legitimate culture.

According to Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural sociology, legitimate culture, taste and the norms of aesthetic judgement play an essential role in the perpetuation of social inequality. He argues that legitimate culture (as a product of elites resp. dominant social classes) serves to maintain the prevailing order. Therefore the real aim of cultural dominance – the enforcement of the dominant taste, the perpetuation of inequality – has to be transmuted into its supposed opposite, into selfless love for culture, moral authority or cultural legitimacy. That is why the acceptance of ‘high-culture’ is always experienced as positive and the ‘symbolic power’ of legitimate culture is not considered as violence by those who affirm it.⁴⁰ Furthermore he argues that taste – understood as the ability and capacity to symbolically and/or materially appropriate – is unequally distributed and comes along with distinction. Where norms of taste diverge, taste frequently expresses itself negatively as the rejection of others’ taste.⁴¹ For him social power is exercised wherever ‘popular taste’ is rejected and deprecated.

Having this in mind, the ‘aesthetic reconquest’ of the Pessac-estate could be seen as a *cultural struggle*, in which the taste norms of the ‘cultured’ (experts as well residents) are enforced against ‘inadequate’, ‘popular’ taste. It is the legitimate taste that seeks to supersede, eliminate and exclude the popular taste at Pessac. It is the ‘good taste’ of connoisseurs and experts that is attempting to discipline and dominate the ‘bad taste’ of the residents, who are insensitive to the producer’s aesthetic intention. Aesthetic intolerance does not necessarily

Heritages: Process, Power, Commodification’, in U. Kockel and M. Nic Craith (eds.) *Cultural Heritages as Reflexive Traditions*, Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 1-18; L.-J. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, London, New York: Routledge, 2006; B. Graham, G. Ashworth, and J. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*, London: Arnold Press, 2000.

⁴⁰ Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Sozialer Sinn. Kritik der theoretischen Vernunft (Le sens pratique*, Paris 1980), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999, pp. 228-33, 237, 244; P. Bourdieu and L. J. D. Wacquant, *Reflexive Anthropologie (Réponse pour une anthropologie réflexive*, Paris 1992), Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2006, p. 204ff; L. Peter, ‘Pierre Bourdieus Theorie der symbolischen Gewalt’, in M. Steinrücke (ed.) *Pierre Bourdieu. Politisches Forschen, Denken und Handeln*, Hamburg: VSA, 2004, pp. 48-73; D. Swartz, *Culture and power: the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 65-94.

⁴¹ P. Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft (La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998, p. 104f.

have to proceed aggressively here, nor be openly repressive. The enforcement of the aesthetics of the culturally dominant is, of course, implemented through institutional authority (the statutory regulations for the preservation of monuments; governmental practices of architects and curators of monuments). However, according to Bourdieu this has also and more so been achieved through ‘symbolic power’: through the more or less unconscious acceptance and adoption of the dominating view, through acts of recognition and misrecognition of legitimate culture.

Only the unconditional acceptance of the Pessac-houses as heritage, only the unconditional acknowledgement of Le Corbusier as a ‘great architect’ and all his buildings as ‘great architecture’, only the ability to decipher the aesthetics of his buildings makes it possible for an owner to consciously maintain the house in compliance with the ‘author’s intention’. Whereby those who identify with the aesthetic of the houses tend to demand the same maintenance from the others. To achieve this, it is only partially expedient to demonise, or even prosecute against ‘bad taste’. As cultural dominance cannot assert itself in modern, democratic societies through physical force or political power alone, it is much more effective to establish the ‘legitimacy’ of the buildings as the deserts of great men, as the cultural heritage of the region, nation or even all humankind. Such cultural legitimacy, vouchsafed by law, has the effect of also bringing the less culturally inclined residents ‘to their senses’ and making them see the preservation of the houses as legitimate and desirable.

The monumentalisation accompanying the medial reception, and the commemorative and persuasion work of the experts and politicians, does not inevitably lead to conformation and submission to the dominant taste. There is still a group of residents at Pessac that does not feel obligated by the dominant aesthetic norms and, consequently, also oppose the programme of renovation ‘true to the original’. These residents cannot understand why they should eliminate their improvements and therefore defend their adaptations – extensions they have grown fond of, such as verandas, garages or conservatories. Even if the reconstruction of their buildings is not prescribed directly and they can continue to live with existing extensions and altered façades (they are only obliged to demolish or remove these when maintenance work is pending), they still feel exposed to debasement. They see themselves as confronted with demands from the ‘cultivated class’ which they neither understand nor can fulfil. In addition to this, some of them cannot raise the finances and shrink from renovating, which is primarily the case with older residents who want to save themselves the inconveniences of a building site. Over the last 30 to 40 years, the situation has on a whole fundamentally changed for the culturally and economically disadvantaged: where earlier they led an ‘innocent life’

unconscious of their ‘blunders’ up to the 1970s, now the process of preservation and renovation has made their ‘incapacity’ tangible. The dominant taste has made them into subjects of inadequacy and into the culturally subjected.



Fig. 6 Resident in his ‘forbidden’ conservatory extension (film still: *Le Corbusier Pessac – Leben im Labor*, 2004, Nikolaus Geyerhalter Filmproduktion 2004 – permission granted)

“No, the municipal government does not check. But the architects walk around to check. Just around my house, an architect lives over there, there’s another one back there. There are four architects living in this neighbourhood who keep a close eye on what people do. And when somebody violates the guidelines, they stop it. You have to follow the rules here closely. They’re very, very strict here. (...) I added this entire section to the house ... the veranda and this part with the dining room. In contrast to the other houses in this row, I built the veranda and the dining room over the building line. I bought the house in 1965, made the changes in 1970. (...) We still benefit from the additions. But the people who move in after me will have to tear down the veranda and renovate the house so it looks like it did in 1926. But the veranda, isn’t it pretty? Why should it be torn down? I think it’s a nice room and doesn’t hurt the environment. It’s good to have a veranda, better than not having one, right? Some people here would rather have a yard, that’s OK. I’d rather have a veranda. But if my successor has to tear it down, I think it would really be a shame. (...) There are some unreserved Le Corbusier fanatics here who want to live like in 1930, and there are some others who want to live like today. Is it better to live like it was 70 years ago, or like it is today? That’s all I have to say about the alterations, but this question decide the architects.”

Only after culture aficionados who wanted to live in a ‘Le Corbusier’ had settled on the estate, only after connoisseurs came to live next door to people with ‘popular taste’ and the entire social topology of the quarter had gradually changed did a cultural conflict erupt over aesthetic issues – a conflict which until then only existed in the user-producer relationship. It is the new, ‘cultivated’ owners who put pressure on the ‘defilers’. They plead for a completely comprehensive renovation of the estate and are doing the necessary mobilisation work: maintaining contact with politicians, co-operating with relevant institutions (e.g. the *Fondation Le Corbusier*), running homepages⁴² about the estate, and founding associations. It

⁴² At present there are two homepages about the QMF operated by residents; one by the owner of the first house to be renovated and ‘listed’: <http://qmf-lc.com/> [24.06.2011]; for the much more comprehensive and up-to-date

is no coincidence that the *Association des amis de Le Corbusier et des Quartiers Modernes Frugès* was founded by the owner of the first house to be renovated and listed as a national monument.



Fig.5 Architect in her exemplary renovated Corbu-home (film still: *Le Corbusier Pessac – Leben im Labor*, Nikolaus Geyerhalter Filmproduktion 2004 – permission granted)

“This housing estate doesn’t belong to its residents. One could say it is part of the world’s cultural heritage. And I don’t understand how individuals can take it upon themselves to change part of the world’s cultural heritage as they please. I think that’s extremely questionable. There are guidelines here which regulate the houses’ development, for the purpose of dealing with people’s typical attitudes, who say, ‘No one warned me, I didn’t know anything about that, I’m just doing things the way I always have.’ So we began an educational program, ‘educational’ in quotation marks because nobody wants to be educated. Together with the city, we worked out guidelines for each and every house, which spelled out precisely what the residents are permitted to do and what they aren’t, and what they’ll have to tear down sooner or later. No one’s obligated to renovate. But whoever starts must restore the original condition. In other words, there’s a garage next to my house now. I can’t change anything about it, not even replace the ruined roofing tarpaper. As a result we can be sure that the garage will deteriorate over the next 30 years to the point it has to be torn down. It is extremely important to us that these little repairs aren’t done: a sheet of corrugated iron here, new insulation there, and three bricks there. But the result of all that is the development, compared to its original state, has parasitic elements. (...) In my opinion the aesthetic quality of a place has the highest priority. It’s a lot nicer to live in a beautiful place, isn’t it? This estate has such a poetry, it would be a shame if people didn’t try to reconstruct it. That doesn’t mean that the people here shouldn’t be allowed to live their lives. But you don’t live in these houses as if they were just any single-family houses, and there are really thousands and thousands of those. There must be enough lovers of Le Corbusier’s architecture to return 50 houses to their original state. There are only 50 houses here!”

Architects are playing a fundamental role in this development, not only those who worked out the conservation programme and accompanied the practical implementation of the renovation work, but also those who have recently settled in the quarter due to its close proximity to the school of architecture in Bordeaux. The latter, as fans of Le Corbusier, are in a sense the ‘ideal’ users. They not only possess the necessary ‘aesthetic disposition’ to reside in these houses but also the special know-how that is helpful for the renovation work. They are proud

page providing an insight into the social life and activities of the residents involved see:
<http://fruges.lecorbusier.free.fr/> [24.06.2011]

to live in an ‘artwork’ which they have reconstructed in detail with much love and hard work. However, they also expect the ‘correct’ treatment of the buildings from the other residents and they complain about those residents who in their eyes are ‘ignorant’.

Indeed, some of the ‘cultivated’ owners hold that the ‘wrong’ owners are the basic problem behind neglected and transformed houses.⁴³ For them it is only a question of finding the ‘right’ residents with financial and cultural capital to achieve the ideal state of an ‘authentically’ restored estate. That is why attempts are also being made to control the allocation of vacated houses. However, political policy appears to be countering to some degree this development of the estate towards becoming the preserve of privileged connoisseurs. The purchase and following renting of the four houses to low-income families by *L’OPAC Aquitanis* indicates to some extent social mix for the future.

Just as the social structure of the quarter changed over the course of time, so too did the attitude of the residents to their own house and to the estate as a whole. Where nobody was much concerned about who had planned the houses when purchasing one in the past, nobody can ignore the famous architect and his client when doing so nowadays. The media hype surrounding the architect (at his death in 1965, his 100th birthday in 1987⁴⁴ and in connection with the application for UNESCO world heritage status in 2009 and 2011) along with the interest shown by the academic, artistic, journalistic and other professional communities has produced the estate’s cultural and symbolic value. The residents are constantly reminded of the cultural value through the reverent attention from outside – one only has to think of the regular visits by experts and architecture students,⁴⁵ not to mention the increasing volume of architectural tourism. This means that the symbolic value, something which only existed in the ‘western art culture system’ initially (i.e. in the heads of those who have learnt or are professionally disposed to recognise and acknowledge the buildings as ‘architecture’ or extraordinary objects), is gradually establishing itself in the consciousness of those who until now simply saw their house as only a house. But the valuation and legitimation of houses as heritage also more and more becomes of peculiar interest for the residents themselves, as the activities in the course of application for World Heritage Site testify.

⁴³ A conviction also to be found in architectural historical attitudes, cf. Ferrand et al., *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, p. 72.

⁴⁴ C. Mandraut, ‘Salon du livre. Pessac signe Le Corbusier’, *Le Quotidien du Maire*, 16th September 1987; ‘Fête du livre/Pessac. Les chiens, les chats et Le Corbusier’, *Sud-Ouest*, 1st September 1987..

⁴⁵ For years architecture students at the ENSAP / *Ecole nationale supérieure d’architecture et paysage* have visited the QMF to study and draw the architecture on site; the students works are documented on QMF-homepage: <http://fruges.lecorbusier.free.fr/Collaborations.html> [24.06.2011]

On the way to becoming a museum village?

The (at last unsuccessful) UNESCO candidatures in 2009 and 2011⁴⁶ provoked among the politicians and residents an enormous burst of motivation to press ahead with renovation and improvement measures on the estate. As financial support for these measures depends on the buildings being classified as *Monuments historiques* or on their being entered in the *inventaire supplémentaire* (supplementary inventory) of the *Monuments historiques*, many residents have enthusiastically campaigned over recent years for their buildings to become ‘real’ monuments. (It has to be noted that the present dedication as a protected zone (*ZPPAUP*) has brought regulations with it but no immediate financial support for the residents. Even if the status as world cultural heritage is also not linked to direct financial aid from UNESCO, it would have helped to set the competent authority for national monuments under pressure.) The plan of the regional authority for the preservation of monuments DRAC (*Direction régionale des affaires culturelles*) only to give listed status to a small number of houses resulted in uproar and mobilisation among the residents in April 2009. In order to bundle the interests of those residents willing to renovate but insisting on financial provision, the association *Vivre aux Quartiers Modernes Frugès - Le Corbusier* was founded on 18th September 2009.

The work done by association members to inform about obtaining funding has resulted in 20 owners applying for their houses to be listed on the *inventaire supplémentaire* at the beginning of 2010. The fact that the authorities (not least because of the financial crisis) only sanctioned the listing of seven houses was rightly seen by the association as an arbitrary act and criticised as discrimination, mostly effecting low-income families who are faced having to sell their houses. Hopes for the world heritage predicate, which would make it easier to acquire state funding, were responsible for the latest rallying of forces yet in spring 2011. A support committee became active under the presidency of the mayor and also received support from the press. Experts, culture craving citizens and enthusiastic residents took the streets with effigies of Le Corbusier and lobbied for the UNESCO-candidature of the architect’s

⁴⁶ France, along with five other countries, has applied to have UNESCO list the architectural works of Le Corbusier. The international application which comprised of 22 objects initially and then 10 (in both bases including the estate at Pessac) was rejected by the commission at both the first application (in June 2009) and the second (in June 2011); for the dossier prepared by the Fondation Le Corbusier for the candidature see: http://www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/CorbuCache/2049_3775.pdf [25.06.2011]

œuvre, about 700 people signed a petition.⁴⁷ The daily newspaper *Sud-Ouest* summarised the lobby work with the headline ‘All behind Le Corbusier’.⁴⁸ (Fig. 7)



Fig. 7 Residents demonstrating for world heritage status
(*Sud-Ouest* 4.3.2011, Willy Dally – permission granted)

As spokespeople permit themselves to speak ‘for everybody’ and the media also tend to broadcast the dominant voice, it must be remembered that the interests and attitudes of those protagonists who were not involved in the mobilisation struggle usually went unnoticed and remained invisible. As always, a gap exists between reality and the social representation of reality. Thus lost in the struggle for World Heritage is the fact that more than half of the owners (about 30) have not expressed any interest in having their houses classified as monuments. This does not necessarily mean that the owners would be averse to improvements and subsidies, they are merely not prepared to carry out renovation that would force them to reconstruct the original state. Another hidden fact is that it is not so much the owners of unrenovated houses but far more those of renovated houses who are making demands – not least because they are interested to look at ‘purified’ neighbouring houses and also realise that, after 10 years, work on the façades will be due again, and that a face lift is not sufficient when damage or structural defects under the surface need to be addressed.

The seemingly ‘united’ struggle for world heritage status also veils the important fact that the interests of the allies and their ideas of conservation are thoroughly dissimilar: while some of the residents focus primarily on perfecting the external appearance of the estate and

⁴⁷ The call for support and a subset of the petition cf. on the mayors personal website: Pour Le Corbusier, c'est parti à Pessac! 4th march 2011, <http://www.jean-jacques-benoit.fr/article-pour-le-corbusier-c-est-parti-a-pessac-68603783.html> [28.06.2011]

⁴⁸ W. Dally, ‘Tous derrière Le Corbusier. Création d'un comité de soutien pour la candidature à l'Unesco’, *Sud-Ouest*, 4 March 2011; <http://www.sudouest.fr/2011/03/04/tous-derriere-le-corbusier-333015-660.php> [24.06.2011]

correcting their neighbours' 'mistakes', other residents have renovation work in mind which is mainly aimed at improving the comfort of their homes and less stringent as far as individual adaptations are concerned. Three basic attitudes towards monument preservation can be distinguished overall: the 'rigid' supporting attitude, where people with an educated approach to culture submit themselves to the doctrine of the original, (ostensibly) of their own accord and out of firm conviction; the 'moderate' approach, where owners who have already adapted their cultural orientation to the symbolic dominance of the culturally dominant class attest, as it were, to respecting the vision of the author (and exploit his name in the struggle for subsidies) but make no secret about having a problem with rigid preservation regulations and the curtailment of their personal (creative) rights – they proclaim on the QMF-homepage: 'The Quartiers Modernes Frugès must not become a museum artwork.' Lastly, the 'resistant' or 'objecting' attitude, where mostly older, long-established residents are simply not interested in any renovation aimed at obliterating their useful adaptations and 'improvements'.⁴⁹

Politicians, actively participating in this symbolic struggle, are interested in the world heritage seal of approval not only because it would promote government funding for the renovation of the estate but also because it would be a trump card for marketing the town and tourism. However, it is not only politicians but also 'committed' residents who argue inside the logics of cultural politics leering at tourism. Some have, in fact, made concrete suggestions to develop the estate for cultural tourism – and have thus made themselves accomplices to an exploitation of the estate in terms of 'culture industry'. Even if it can be expected that enthusiasm will continue to wane after the second rejection by the UNESCO in June 2011, detailed projects are being considered which are intended to cater for and likewise to boost increasing cultural tourism in the quarter. The development concept (Plan de Gestion) worked out by the commune with the residents includes the establishment a CIAP (centre d'interprétation de l'architecture et du patrimoine), a sort of architecture centre, in a house purchased by the commune. Another idea is to purchase and demolish the house built on the plot of the Le Corbusier building destroyed in 1942, and to reconstruct the 'original' house again – as 'respect for Le Corbusier's aesthetic and vision' demands; students have already produced plans and computer graphics for the reconstruction; could function as an exhibition space for art, an archive and research centre.

These considerations make it patently clear that protecting the estate from the threat of destruction is not the main concern here but capitalisation in order to accumulate and

maximise attention with the goal of manufacturing an added-value product: the symbolic gain should be ‘worth it’ immaterially, and also bring financial benefits if possible. The struggle for world heritage status not only demonstrates that the Pessac-houses not just exist for experts but also for laypeople as ‘authentic masterpieces’, it also shows that the estate has become an object of a ‘value-added industry’ which endows the objects with a ‘second life’, ‘a second life as exhibits of themselves’. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:150) In a certain sense the estate exists twofold: as habitat and as heritage, as home and as museum. For the owners the houses serve as space to live in, for the cultural tourists they exist as exhibition objects, as ‘representations of themselves’. But the two lives do not separately exist, they are entwined with each other – at least for the residents. When some of them think that they have to please tourist needs with renovation measures the ‘display’ becomes prevalent. When they partly demand to reconstruct the ‘original’ and broaden the infrastructure for visitors the residents have already adopted the ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry 1990). The first life has been superimposed by the second.

Conclusion

What this article wants to point out is that the connoisseurs’ struggle *for* ‘culture’ likewise is a struggle *against* ‘bad taste’ and the ‘spoilers’ of a masterpiece. Of course, the symbolic upgrading and the heritageisation of the Pessac estate comes along with identification, common actions and the residents’ pride to live in much-valued cultural objects, but it also has triggered tensions between the celebrated architect’s admirers and those residents who still insist on their extensions and modifications. My observations suggest that preservation aimed at reconstructing the ‘original state’ fosters social conflicts, new forms of social control and exclusionary effects.

In comparison to other Modern Movement estates, e.g. the Vienna Werkbund estate (1932), it is noteworthy that the Pessac residents have played an active role in the making of heritage. These private owners of exemplary renovated houses, particularly architects and otherwise culturally sensitive occupants, applied for entry in the list of national monuments and were actively engaged in the fight for the world heritage predicate. Another aspect of the Pessac estate’s story is the reluctance of the authority for the preservation of national monuments that paradoxically is at odds with the interests of the residents and the Fondation Le Corbusier that prepared the UNESCO candidature. The efforts made by the latter indicate that the category ‘World Cultural Heritage’ (ranking highest in the hierarchy of value) should be used as a leverage to achieve national listing and financial support, but also make clear that

a remarkable change has taken place: the goal of preserving is directly linked to cultural marketing; the current practices of valorisation more and more are informed by the logic of the ‘culture industry’ (in the Adornian sense).

The aim of this actor-centred study is not only to bring to mind the ‘invisible’ Pessac residents being resistant and indifferent to preservation and heritage practices, but also to stress that the ‘committed’ residents operate within the logic of a value-added industry or, in other words, have become collaborators in a globalised ‘heritage-regime’. Inasmuch as architecture (both vernacular and ‘high-art’) is a preferred subject of the ‘heritage-regime’, further research and case studies on ‘lived-in monuments’ – based on ethnographic fieldwork and discourse analytical methods – are needed in order to compare different heritage practices and socio-cultural effects of heritage-making in the international context. Therefore, the academic field of architecture would be well advised to open up and turn towards the interdisciplinary field of (critical) heritage studies.

Bibliography

- Benton, T. (2004) ‘Pessac and Lège revisited: standards, dimensions and failures’, *Massilia* 3, 64-99.
- Boudon, P. (1971) *Die Siedlung Pessac - 40 Jahre Wohnen à Le Corbusier. Sozio-architektonische Studie (Pessac de Le Corbusier 1927-1967. Étude socio-architecturale*, Paris: Dunod 1969), Gütersloh: Bertelsmann. (*Lived-in Architecture. Le Corbusier’s Pessac Revisited*, Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press 1972).
- (1985) *Pessac de Le Corbusier 1927-1967. Étude socio-architecturale. Suivi de Pessac II, Le Corbusier 1969-1985*, Paris: Dunod.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft (La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- (2001) *Die Regeln der Kunst. Genese und Struktur des literarischen Feldes (Les règles de l’art*, Paris 1992), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- (1992) *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht*, ed. by M. Steinrück. Hamburg: VSA.
- (1999) *Sozialer Sinn. Kritik der theoretischen Vernunft (Le sens pratique*, Paris 1980) Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- , Wacquant, L. J. D. (2006) *Reflexive Anthropologie (Réponse pour une anthropologie réflexive*, Paris 1992), Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Colomina, B. (1999) ‘Collaborations: The Private Life of Modern Architecture’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58:3, 462-471.
- Ellis, R. and Cuff, D. (eds.) (1989) *Architects’ People*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fayolle-Lussac, B. (2005) ‘De la stigmatisation à la monumentalisation du Mouvement moderne: l’œuvre de Le Corbusier en Gironde’, in J.-Y. Andrieux, Jean-Yves and F. Chevallier (eds.) *Reception of Architecture of the Modern Movement: Image, usage, heritage. Actes de la septième conférence internationale de DOCOMOMO*. Presses universitaires de Saint-Etienne, 201-205.

- Ferrand, M., Feugas, J.-P., Le Roy, B., Riffault, M.-C. and Veyret, J.-L. (1985) Pessac. *Le Corbusier - Sauvegarde et réhabilitation des Quartiers Modernes Frugès*. (Unpublished study, accessible in the FLC/Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.)
- , Feugas, J.-P., Le Roy, B. and Veyret, J.-L. (1998) *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès. The Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, Basel, Boston, Berlin, Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier and Birkhäuser.
- Graham, B., Ashworth and G., Tunbridge, J. (2000) *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*, London: Arnold Press.
- Gravari-Barbas, M. (2005) *Habiter le patrimoine. Enjeux, approches, vécu*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Guillén, M. (2006) *The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical. Scientific Management and the Rise of Modernist Architecture*, Princeton N.J./Woodstock: Princeton University Press.
- Johnson, R. (1986) 'What is Cultural Studies Anyway?', *Social Text* 16, 38-80.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1998) *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Le Corbusier (1989): *1922 Ausblick auf eine Architektur (Vers une architecture, 1923)*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg.
- (1987) *1929 Feststellungen (Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme, Paris 1929)*, Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg.
- (1925) *L'Art Décoratif d'Aujourd'hui*, Paris: Crès.
- Peter, L. (2004) 'Pierre Bourdieu's Theorie der symbolischen Gewalt', in M. Steinrück (ed.) *Pierre Bourdieu. Politisches Forschen, Denken und Handeln*, Hamburg: VSA, 48-73.
- Macleod, D., Carrier, J. G. (2010) (eds.) *Tourism, Power and Culture: Anthropological Insights*, Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications.
- McLeod, M. (1983) "'Architecture or Revolution?": Taylorism, Technocracy, and Social Change', *Art Journal* 43:2, 132-147.
- Moos, S. (1981) 'Standard und Elite. Le Corbusier, die Industrie und der „Esprit Nouveau“', in T. Buddensieg and H. Rogge (eds.) *Die nützlichen Künste. Gestaltende Technik und bildende Kunst seit der industriellen Revolution*. Berlin: Quadriga, 306-323.
- (ed.) (1987) *L'Esprit Nouveau. Le Corbusier und die Industrie*, Zürich: Ernst & Sohn.
- Nic Craith, M. (2007) Cultural Heritages: Process, Power, Commodification, in U. Kockel and M. Nic Craith (eds.) *Cultural Heritages as Reflexive Traditions*, Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-18.
- Resch, C. and Steinert, H. (2009) *Kapitalismus: Portrait einer Produktionsweise*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Ronneberger, K. (1999) 'Bio-Macht und Hygiene. Disziplinierung und Normalisierung im fordistischen Wohnungsbau', in W. Prigge (ed.) *Ernst Neufert. Normierte Baukultur*. Frankfurt, New York: Campus, 432-464.
- Smith, L. (2004) *Archeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*, Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- (2006) *Uses of Heritage*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Silva, L., Santos, P. J. M. (2012) 'Ethnographies of heritage and power: introduction', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18:5, 1-7, DOI: 10.1080/13527258.2011.633541.
- Steinert, H. (1998) *Kulturindustrie*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Swartz, D. (1997) *Culture and power: the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, London, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Taylor, B. B. (1972) *Le Corbusier et Pessac 1914-1928*, Paris: Spadem.
- (1974) *Le Corbusier's Prototype Mass Housing 1914-1928*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge/Mass..
- Urry, J. (1990) *The Tourist Gaze*, London: Sage.