

13. Dr. Gabriele Horn, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg

THE PRUSSIAN PALACES AND GARDENS FOUNDATION BERLIN-BRANDENBURG – MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION

The Berlin-Brandenburg Foundation for Prussian Palaces and Gardens (SPSG) was established by the German state on 23rd August 1994 as an independent foundation. The SPSG is now financed by the Federal states of Berlin, Brandenburg and the German government. The foundation administers the main parts of the UNESCO-World Heritage Site “Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin” (532c, listed since 1990/ enlarged 1992 and 1999). We own around 700 sq.m. of protected parks and buildings, and we act as the legal lower management protection service (untere Denkmalschutzbehörde). The ICOMOS statement of April 1990 contains the following: “With its 500 hectares of parks and 150 constructions spaced over time from 1730 (hunting lodge) to 1916 (Cecilienhof), the ensemble of parks of Potsdam is a cultural property of exceptional quality.... Like Versailles ... Potsdam Sanssouci is an outstanding example of architectural creations and landscaping development associated with the monarchic concept of power within Europe.”

The SPSG has its own gardens, construction and restoration departments. Together with the department of palaces and collections, they are responsible for the development of a concept for maintenance and restoration. Following thorough scientific studies, restoration work to buildings, in gardens and to individual works of art are carried out by the SPSG employees, external firms and specialists. Our challenge in the 21st century is to preserve these valuable and vulnerable treasures for future generations while ensuring that they remain on public display. We are committed both to the conservation and interpretation of this work to our many thousands of visitors. Constant care is imperative to prevent deterioration, not least because the buildings, gardens and collection are massive in size and monumental in scale. Its vulnerability is heightened by its age, and the environment in which it is housed. Natural risks, dust, insects, changes in light and temperature and indeed the millions of visitors all pose potential threats to its lifespan. Our strategies allow us to prepare for the future and to leave a legacy of conserved – strong, stable and documented – objects, interiors, buildings and gardens.

A presentation will be made of some examples of the development and measures taken for conservation of our gardens, buildings and interiors over the previous two decades.