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The Zollverein UNESCO World Heritage Site

The “most beautiful coal mine in the world”: landmark of the Ruhr area, monument of industrial heritage and symbol for the change of Europe’s once largest coal mine into an attractive location for culture and leisure, education and science

Essen. A coal mine being a UNESCO World Heritage Site? Many people were quite astonished when, on 14 December 2001, the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant in Essen was officially included on the UNESCO World Heritage List as “Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex”. Since then, the industrial monument of Zollverein with about 1.5 million visitors per year (2011–2016) has been the largest tourist attraction in the region; it is the first and so far only World Heritage Site in the Ruhr area and ranges among monuments like the Cologne Cathedral and the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

With a production capacity of more than 23,000 tons of raw coal per day, the Zollverein Coal Mine was once the most efficient colliery in the world. The central Shaft XII, built between 1928 and 1932 according to the plans by Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremmer, is considered a technical and aesthetic masterpiece of modernism. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee appreciated, amongst other things, that Zollverein “is an exceptional industrial monument by virtue of the fact that its buildings are outstanding examples of the application of the design concepts of the Modern Movement in architecture in a wholly industrial context.”

The symmetrical arrangement of the buildings along two visual axes is still impressive today. Twenty individual buildings of Zollverein Shaft XII represent the technical working and production processes of coal extraction according to the Bauhaus principle of “form follows function”. Designed down to the last detail of lamps, stair railings and door handles, the completely maintained complex is a synthesis of the arts and exemplarily represents the social, economic, aesthetic, and industrial history of the coal and steel age.

For more than 25 years, the Ruhr area has been a pioneer in the reuse of large industrial premises. Meanwhile, the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant has become a beacon of this process of change. The European Capital of Culture Year RUHR.2010 as well as the opening of the Ruhr Museum and the RUHR.VISITORCENTER in the converted Coal Washery basically completed the development of Shaft XII as a tourist centre. Since 2011, Zollverein Foundation has played the lead in expediting the development of the Zollverein Coking Plant under the working title of “ZOLLVEREIN 2020!” and has supported its partners, RAG Montan Immobilien GmbH and NRW.URBAN, in the further development of the site into an integrated culture and business location.

Future development: ZOLLVEREIN 2020!

In the years ahead, the more than 100-hectare World Heritage Site will be continually further developed under the motto of “ZOLLVEREIN 2020!”. 2014 marked the start for two new large-scale projects in the area of Shaft 1/2/8. At the former materials stockyard, a new building for the Design

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Faculty of the Folkwang University of the Arts has been constructed, where teaching began in the winter semester of 2017/2018 with around 500 students and 70 employees; it complements the SANAA building already used by the university. Work on a new hotel building in the immediate vicinity is expected to commence in 2018.

Another important component for the development of Zollverein as a business location is the planned new building complex for the administrative headquarters of RAG Foundation and RAG AG providing about 220 office workplaces. This new building will be implemented on the former coking plant grounds in the immediate vicinity to the RAG Montan Immobilien GmbH, a subsidiary of RAG which has been based there since 2012. Construction works for the new project, which is characterized by state-of-the-art sustainability standards, were commenced in May 2016 with the laying of the foundation stone. Approximately one and a half years later, in the winter of 2017, the employees moved into the building, whose shape and façade sensitively blend in with the listed ensemble of the World Heritage Site.

A business incubator is currently being planned in the vicinity of the new administrative headquarters of RAG Foundation and RAG Aktiengesellschaft, for which the former gasometer of the Zollverein Coking Plant will be converted.

Another milestone was set for the development of the site as an event location. The new Grand Hall ZOLLVEREIN® in the former Extraction and Compressor Hall at the Coking Plant is an ultramodern special event location, which provides a venue with a floor area of 3,500 square metres and a capacity for up to 2,500 people since 2017.

The basis for the development of the area into a business and education location is the master plan by Rem Koolhaas dating from 2002. Between the conflicting poles of existing listed structures and new ideas, the unique industrial architecture of the UNESCO World Heritage Site is preserved and simultaneously conditioned for the varied requirements of new uses.

The rental rate of the renovated halls and buildings is now almost 100 percent – a figure that speaks for the successful change and the attractiveness of the site. While in the first three decades after the decommissioning, the majority of investments at Zollverein were made by the public sector, which thus provided seed funding, the World Heritage Site is meanwhile attracting increasing numbers of companies that are investing in new buildings or the renovation of the historic building stock: in the years 2016 and 2017 alone, private investments of approximately EUR 190 million were triggered at the World Heritage Site. The resulting temporary and permanent employment effects are significant.

Tourist Highlights

Denkmalpfad Zollverein

The central tourist attraction of the industrial monument is the Denkmalpfad Zollverein (Monument Path), the above-ground facilities of the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant, which are maintained in their original condition. 155,000 visitors took advantage of the comprehensive range of available guided tours in 2017. For comparison: In 1992, it was only 5,000 visitors. 110 trained guides are available for guided tours in up to eight languages and 36 different tour formats. Parallel to the refurbishment of the spectacular paths, halls and machines at the Zollverein Coking Plant, Zollverein

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Foundation is currently working on an innovative communication concept: The new Denkmalpfad Zollverein at the Coking Plant will expand along the entire “black side” of the facilities.

Ruhr Museum

The Ruhr Museum, which was opened in the Capital of Culture Year RUHR.2010 in the former Coal Washery, already welcomed the millionth visitor in 2013. On three levels of this spectacular building, the museum presents the eventful past of the Ruhr area in the categories of Present, Memory and History. Besides the permanent exhibition “Nature, Culture and History of the Ruhr Area”, it most recently attracted visitors from the whole world to Essen with special exhibitions such as the successful public exhibitions “1914 – In the Middle of Europe” (a joint exhibition by Ruhr Museum and LVR-Industriemuseum) and “Rock und Pop in the Ruhr area”. The year 2018 will be characterised by the final phase-out of German coal mining. From 22 January to 2 September 2018, the Ruhr Museum presents the special exhibition “Josef Stoffels. Coal Mines - Photographs from the Ruhr Area” and from 27 April to 11 November 2018, together with the German Mining Museum in Bochum, the large public exhibition “The Age of Coal. A European History” in the Mixing Plant at the Zollverein Coking Plant. A varied supporting programme accompanies the themed year.

Red Dot Design Museum

With about 2,000 exhibits from approximately 45 countries, the Red Dot Design Museum Essen presents the world’s largest exhibition of contemporary design. Innovative and shapely designed everyday objects give visitors an understanding of cultural and country-specific particularities, inform about latest trends and illustrate how design has changed over the course of time. Various special exhibitions complement the permanent presentation of the Red Dot Design Museum.

RUHR.VISITORCENTER Essen and Portal of Industrial Heritage

First contact point for all visitors to the Zollverein World Heritage Site and starting point of many guided tours is the RUHR.VISITORCENTER Essen in the former Coal Washery. Besides tickets for all offers and services at the Zollverein World Heritage Site and in the Ruhr area, visitors can get comprehensive information on the Zollverein grounds and other industrial-cultural highlights in the region.

The Portal of Industrial Heritage presents the industrial-cultural panorama of the Ruhr area and North Rhine-Westphalia. Multimedia productions and innovative information points illustrate 18 anchor points of the Route of Industrial Heritage: former heavy industry locations, which are today used as, for example, museums, event halls, recreational and commercial properties. The panorama film RUHR 360° offers a moving introduction to the Ruhr area. On the viewing platform on the rooftop of the Coal Washery, visitors can enjoy panoramic views all around.

“Carefree Packages”

Local agencies and providers such as the “Bürger- und Verkehrsverein im Stadtbezirk VI – Zollverein (BVV)” offer package deals and events for groups or compose individual programmes for a visit to the World Heritage Site.

Culture and Leisure

Renowned artists are represented at the World Heritage Site with their works and studios: among them Ulrich Rückriem, Maria Nordman with LA PRIMAVERA, the Works Swimming Pool by Daniel Milhonic and Dirk Paschke, the Palace of Projects by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov or the Ceramic

Workshop Margaretenhöhe under the direction of Young-Jae Lee. Special exhibitions, the ZOLLVEREIN® Concerts as well as dance and other performances complement the offer of contemporary art productions at the Zollverein World Heritage Site. Twice a year, the contemporary art ruhr (C.A.R.) fair provides new impetus for the art scene. The international culture festival Ruhrtriennale brings spectacular cultural events, inspiring premieres and new productions by international artists to the World Heritage Site. Besides the annual ExtraSchicht (30 June 2018), the also annual Gourmet-Meile Metropole Ruhr (August 2018) is a magnet for visitors.

At Zollverein Park, visitors and residents can be physically active or relax. Where rock as a by-product of coal production was once stored, nature has reclaimed its terrain. The 3.5-kilometre long Ring Promenade, which surrounds the entire World Heritage Site, is used by cyclists, pedestrians and joggers alike. At central points on the grounds, viewing platforms and barrier-free 3D terrain models provide an overview and orientation.

Special seasonal offers include the Works Swimming Pool and the children's holiday programme, which is jointly conducted by Denkmalpfad ZOLLVEREIN® and Ruhr Museum during summer holidays in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Zollverein Ice Rink in winter (8 December 2018 to 6 January 2019).

Impressive event location

The UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein offers impressive spaces for exceptional events. The building ensemble of the disused Coal Mine and Coking Plant comprising a total event area of 14,000 square metres provides flexible solutions for all types of events such as congresses, meetings, company events, product presentations or private celebrations. On the 100-hectare area, more than 40 rooms and buildings, ranging from small studio equipped with conference technology to large trade fair and exhibition hall, are available. Since 2017, the newly opened Grand Hall ZOLLVEREIN® in the former Extraction and Compressor Hall at the Zollverein Coking Plant complements the available offer. The ultramodern special event location provides an event area of 4,000 square metres with a capacity for up to 2,500 people. The Zollverein World Heritage Site repeatedly won the Conga Award as "Best Event Location in Germany". The SANAA Building and the 'Oktogon' won the coveted Location Award as best event location in 2014. Most recently, Zollverein Foundation won the Location Award 2017 for its event halls in the category "Cultural locations for events".

History: from superlatives of industrial history through to structural change

The coal mine as giant machine and representational building (1847–1986)

German industrial and economic history was written at Zollverein: in 1847, entrepreneur and industrial pioneer Franz Haniel had the first shaft sunk in the north of Essen. While 13,000 tons of coal were mined in 1851, the first year of coal production, the volume had already reached one million tons by 1890. The fat coal deposits in the north of Essen were huge, so that in addition to the original Shaft 1/2/8 the additional three mines 3/7/10, 4/5/11 and 6/9 with a total of eight shafts were built on the Zollverein claim over the following 60 years.

The last shaft of the Zollverein Coal Mine was built between 1928 and 1932 under the influence of worldwide mechanisation and rationalisation efforts. When on 1 February 1932 the wheels of the pit-head frame above the new shaft hall XII started to turn for the first time, an industrial high-performance complex with mostly automated work processes was put into operation, which was oriented by the principle of Fordism that had been imported from the United States – which meant assembly line

production. From then on, the coal mine was considered to be the largest and most efficient colliery worldwide. In 1972, Shaft XII reached its final depth of approximately 1,000 metres. More than 23,000 tons of raw coal were brought to the surface every day - a production capacity which was four times that of an average coal mine in the area. Over the entire operating period between 1851 and 1986, 240 million tons of coal were produced. Up to 8,000 miners were working in shifts both above and below ground, and a total of more than 600,000 people had worked at the Zollverein Coal Mine until it was decommissioned in 1986.

“Most beautiful coal mine in the world”, “technical marvel”, “cathedral of industrial culture” – Zollverein has always been a place of superlatives. Starting out from Zollverein, German industrial and economic history was made: the coal mine was considered the largest and most efficient one worldwide. Fritz Schupp (1896–1974) and Martin Kremmer (1894–1945) were commissioned with the design of the coal mine complex Shaft XII. The young architects had already gathered experience with industrial construction in the Ruhr area. However, this commission presented a special challenge: the new Zollverein Shaft XII should be the first completely streamlined shaft facility. The result was from the start regarded as a technical and aesthetic masterpiece of the modern era, and engineers and architects closely collaborated for its implementation. Furthermore, a model coal mine in the style of New Objectivity had been created at Zollverein, which took account of the need for representation of its owner, Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG, and attracted massive attention among experts. The architects formulated this demand in 1929: “We have to realise that the industry with its enormous buildings no longer is a disturbing element in our cities and landscapes but a symbol of work, a monument of the city, which every citizen shows a stranger with at least the same pride as any other public building.”

Zollverein Coking Plant (1961–1993)

Between 1957 and 1961, the Zollverein Coking Plant was constructed in the same architectural style – also according to plans by Fritz Schupp – west of Shaft XII and put into operation on 12 September 1961. The coking plant also achieved superlative production capacities. Following its expansion in the 1970s, 10,000 tons of coal were “baked” into 8,600 tons of coke on the “black side” in 304 ovens at 1,250 degrees every day. The thereby produced gases were processed into ammoniac, crude benzene and tar on the “white side”. In peak periods, the coking plant employed 1,000 people. As the last still operative Zollverein production facility, it was closed in 1993.

Pioneering phase: preservation of the monument through conversion (1986–2001)

On 23 December 1986, the Zollverein Coal Mine was the last of about 290 coal mines in Essen, the once largest mining city in Europe, to discontinue operations. On 16 December 1986, the unique ensemble of mining architecture had already been put under a preservation order and was thus saved from being demolished. The preservation of Zollverein and other monuments of the industrial era worthy of preservation were part of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Emscher Park, a ten-year programme for the future (1989–1999) initiated by the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The agenda included the conversion of large industrial sites in the northern Ruhr area, which had been shaped by coal and steel for almost 150 years. In this context, Zollverein became the model project and in 1989, the first redevelopment phase aiming at a reuse of the halls and buildings began at Shaft XII, which was consistently based on the principle of “preservation through conversion”. Among other things, Casino Zollverein was set up in the former Compressor Hall in 1996, which is still considered one of the most unusual restaurant locations in the Ruhr area. In 1997, the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen moved into the former Boiler House, which had been converted by the British architect Norman Foster into an extraordinary venue for events and presentations. In 1999,

Zollverein became the central anchor point of the newly created Route of Industrial Heritage – a 400-kilometre long round tour, which opened up the industrial heritage of the region for tourists.

With the “Sun, Moon and Stars” exhibition in the spectacularly converted Mixing Plant, large parts of the Zollverein Coking Plant were accessible to the public for the first time ever. As part of the final presentation of the IBA, 300,000 visitors saw this exhibition in 1999 and 2000, a result that far exceeded the expectations of the organisers.

Furthermore, it was primarily artists and creative people, who discovered Zollverein as an inspiring place in this pioneering phase and moved into the first refurbished halls. From 1992 to 1997, sculptor Ulrich Rückriem used Hall 5 at Shaft XII as a studio and exhibition space. On the abandoned mining site, he presented his artworks in 1992 in the context of documenta IX and simply declared the former coal mine an outstation of this world exhibition of the arts – a novelty in the history of documenta. Today, strollers can discover some of Rückriem’s artworks in the Sculpture Forest at the Spoil Tip between Shaft XII and the Coking Plant, amongst them the monumental granite sculpture “Castell”.

Structural change: industrial heritage and tourism (2001–2017)

The designation as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001 was the starting signal for the further development of the entire premises: in 2002, architect Rem Koolhaas and his Rotterdam-based Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) developed a master plan for the restructuring of the location into an active culture and business centre. The conversion and expansion of the Coal Washery into an exhibition space for the Ruhr Museum and the RUHR.VISITORCENTER Essen was implemented until 2010 as the first physical infrastructural project.

Since that time, about 1.5 million tourists have visited the Zollverein World Heritage Site every year (2011–2017). Until 2009, the number of visitors had slowly but constantly approached the one-million mark. In 2010, when the Ruhr area was the European Capital of Culture, the Zollverein World Heritage Site enjoyed a record attendance of 2.2 million visitors. Besides the growing number of visitors from other federal states and from abroad (every second visitor comes from outside the region), residents of the Ruhr area also highly appreciate the Zollverein World Heritage Site as a destination for an excursion: meanwhile, Zollverein is the most popular destination for leisure activities in the entire region.

In 2017, public attention primarily focused on the Zollverein Park: the Zollverein World Heritage Site was, along with the Grugapark and Lake Baldeneysee, one of the three main venues for the “European Green Capital – Essen 2017”. Various offers ranging from guided tours to publications provided visitors with information on the transformation of the former industrial complex into a 70-hectare park with a biodiverse industrial nature. More than 35,000 people visited the central exhibition “Green in the City of Essen. More than Park and Gardens” in Hall 5.

Zollverein Foundation

The non-profit Zollverein Foundation was established in 1998 by the City of Essen and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, while Landschaftsverband Rheinland is a co-founder. Besides the promotion of culture and monument preservation, the foundation has the central task to maintain the existing buildings and facilities at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Zollverein Coal Mine and Coking Plant in line with monument preservation regulations, secure them and develop them for future uses.

Dates 2018 (selection)

bis 02.09.2018	“Erdgeschichten. Geology in the Ruhr Museum” gallery exhibition
22.01.–02.09.2018	“Josef Stoffels: Coal Mines. Photographs from the Ruhr area” special exhibition
14.–17.03.2018	Dance Platform Germany 2018
27.04.–11.11.2018	"The Age of Coal. A European History" special exhibition of Ruhr Museum and German Mining Museum (DBM) Bochum at the Mixing Plant
01.–03.06.2018	contemporary art ruhr (C.A.R.) 2018, media art fair & photo special
03.06.2018	UNESCO World Heritage Day 2018
30.06.2018	ExtraSchicht. The Night of Industrial Culture
14.07.–02.09.2018	Works Swimming Pool
29.–30.09.2018	29. Großes Zechenfest (Great Coal Mine Festival)
03.10.2018	Türöffnertag "Sendung mit der Maus" (live show of "The Programme with the Mouse")
08.10.2018–03.02.2019	Ruhr Area Images by Albert Renger-Patzsch, special exhibition Ruhr Museum
10.–14.10.2018	lit.RUHR. International Literature Festival
26.–28.10.2018	contemporary art ruhr (C.A.R.) 2018, the innovative art fair
08.12.2018–06.01.2019	Zollverein Ice Rink

Further information is available at: www.zollverein.de/english