

Chart. 20 | Construction History and Use until the End of the War

After the spectacular laying of the foundation stone in may 1936, calm returned to Prora. For two more years the project was developed and excavation works were performed. In spring 1938 the building construction started. Up to the summer the so called sleeping apartments, i.e. the accommodation blocks stretching along the beach and the buildings on the periphery of the fair ground were completed.

On the 1st September 1939 building works were ceased. The construction firms were withdrawn for other war related building works. Only a small building crew stayed in Prora and made war prisoners and forced labourers finish parts of the building. Some parts were used for war related purposes as the whole KdF organisation was utilized for the war.



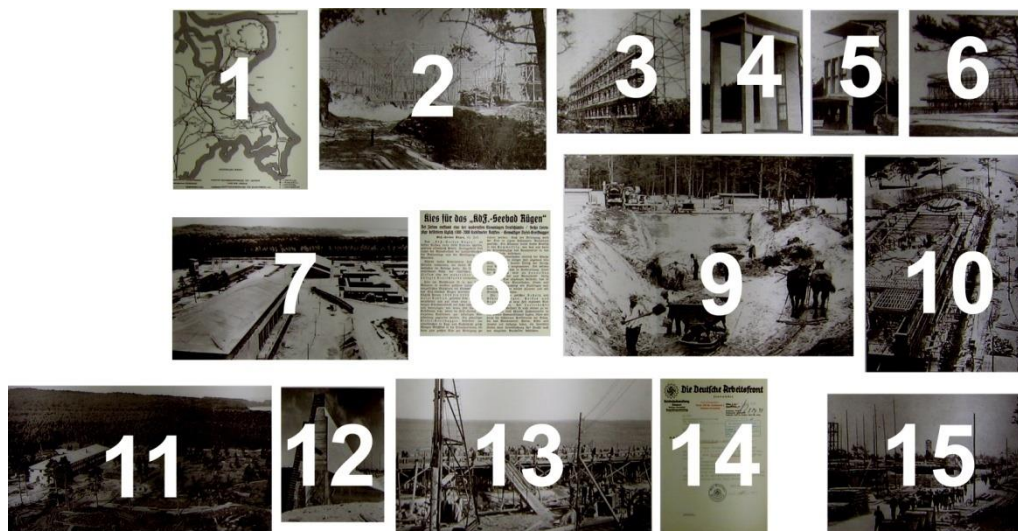
1. A view of the festival grounds from the northern Sleeping Accomodations, 1938

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Chart. 21 A+B | The Construction Site

The construction of the sea side resort was tackled by nine large building contractors: Philipp Holzmann AG, Siemens-Bauunion, Dyckerhoff und Widmann, Polensky & Zöllner, DEUBAU, Hochtief, Beton- und Monierbau, Boswau und Knauer as well as Sager und Wörner. 48 smaller building companies were also involved in the realisation of the construction project. The contractors brought in skilled workers and construction managers. Only unskilled and transport workers were employed from the region. All together approximately 2000 workers were occupied. Willi Heidrich from Cologne was the project manager, he had already worked with Klotz at the elite Nazi Party educational complexes. He co-ordinated the entire construction site and put through a good pace. The KdF-spa became a prestige construction site of the “Third Reich”. The mason brigade of the company Hochtief came to Prora before working on the new Reichskanzlei in Berlin. The company Sager und Wörner built the wharf. The other eight big firms had to construct respectively one of the eight accommodation blocks. The firms rivalled in pace. Hochtief was the only company using a crane and celebrated the topping-out ceremony first. A new railway track, a new access road and a construction road parallel to the coast made the construction site accessible. Additionally, material was delivered via a gangway at the beach. Shingle was transported from Zirkow by a narrow gauge track system. A grout factory was built at the face. In April 1938 foundation work started, half a year later the first topping-out ceremony took place. When the war started in 1939 building work was extensively ceased. For the workers it was probably a good time at first – working relatively free and unstrained on a commission accepted as reasonable, in a nice countryside. Hans Schulten who came to Prora as a member of the construction management, a young man at the time, says: “I come from an old social democratic family and my father had already warned me back then. But I switched because I didn’t see the danger of a war. I thought it was brilliant what happened there, if this really benefits the ordinary worker... I was thrilled. And I got a flat, a marriage loan, I could marry my wife. This was wonderful, also for my wife.”

Chart A:



1. The technical journal “The German Construction Master” dedicated in July 1939 an Article regarding the organization of the construction site Prora. The Map shows the infrastructure logistics

The German Construction Master, 1939

2. In order to get a visual perspective of the monuments, life size models would be built. A model of one of the community houses. It was reported that, "special dining halls would be built above the cellars which could contain up to 1000 people. On top of that a Café, that will serve as a community hall and in the neighbouring floors, Play Rooms, Smoking rooms and reading rooms would be set up".

Stralsunder Tageblatt, 1937

3. Model of one of the accomodation houses.

Stralsunder Tageblatt, 1937

4. Model of a segment of the Entrance Hall, in its original size, 1937.

Pommersche Zeitung, 19th of August 1938

5. Model of one of the Community Buildings

Rügen Local Calendar, 1937

6. Model of one of the Community Buildings

Stralsunder Tageblatt 1937

7. Construction on the southern Fairground and building barracks, winter 1938/39. Left in the backround one can see a façade model.

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8. Propaganda Report in the local press regarding the progress of construction

Pommern Newspaper 1938

9. Digging up earth with a spade, 1938

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10. Foundation of a community Center, 1938.

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11. Clearing construction in order to commence building in Spring 1938; left are the construction barracks. *Archive Documentation Center Prora*

12. The construction of the Quay Wall. The concrete construction was revetted with bricks.

Jürgen Rostock / Franz Zadnicek, Paradiesruinen, 1992

13. Construction of the quay

Arbeitertum, 1938

14. The lack of material for the „non- war related project” was especially apparent when concerning iron. However, even relatively unimportant material required an application to be sent to the highest Reich’s positions.

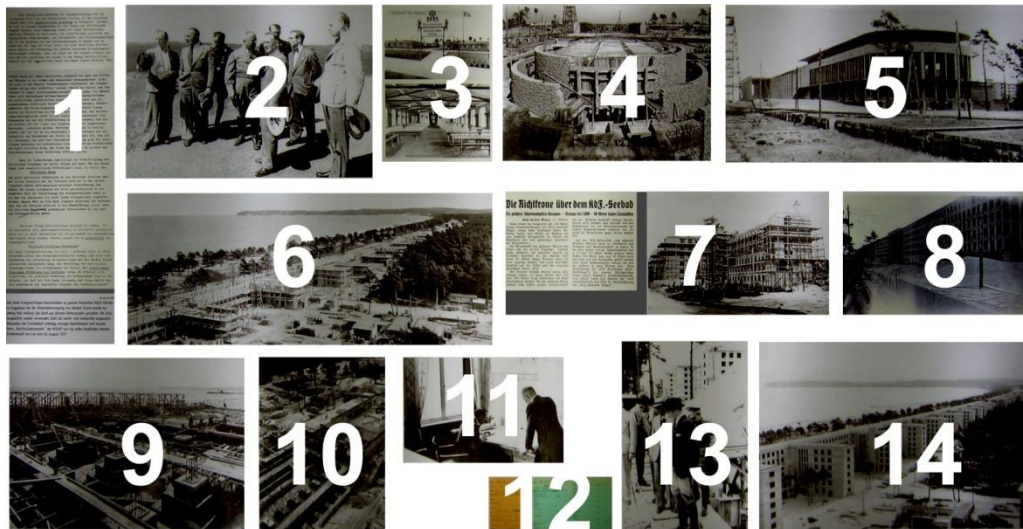
Letter by the central bureau of the DAF to Staff Leader Rittweger concerning purchasing permission for Mischgarn, 8th of July 1938.

Federal Archive Berlin

15. A group inspecting one of the building sites, 1938

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Chart B:



1. Due to the various building projects throughout the German Reich, the supply of material was often lacking. This was the reason that very little wood was used, the roofs were made out of thin cement shells and the molding casts recycled. Iron was especially under strict restrictions and required a special permission from "Reich Treasury Master" of the NSDAP, Robert Ley. Letter design by Ley, from 20th of August 1937.

Federal Archive Berlin

2. Visiting the building site, 1938. Left; Building director Wilhelm Heidrich and Clemens Klotz. In the middle; Robert Ley.

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3. Postcard with motives from the building barracks of the Siemens Construction Union.

Archive Documentation Center Prora

4. Community house during construction.

Jürgen Rostock / Franz Zadniecek, Paradiesruinen, 1992

5. Construction of the southern fair ground, status 1939

Archive Documentation Center Prora

6. Southern accommodation building, with bricks concreted half way, 1938.

Arbeitertum, 1938

7. Accommodation Home with roof crown

Pommerian Newspaper from the 11th October 1938

Arbeitertum, 1938

8. Barebrick work, Seaside, 1939.

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9. Foundation of one of the community houses, seaside 1938.

Jürgen Rostock / Franz Zadniecek, Paradiesruinen, 1992

10. Beginning of construction on the southern building frame, 1938.

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11. Building director Wilhelm Heidrich and a colleague inside the architectural office.

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12. NSDAP Membership card of Wilhelm Heidrich from May 1937, Construction and site Manager.

13. Clemens Klotz and Building Director Wilhem Heidrich with companions during an inspection tour, circa 1939

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14. Building shell of the sleeping quarter wing, Winter 1939.

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Chart. 22 | The Use of Prora During World War II

When the war started in 1939 the workers were withdrawn from Prora and used for war-related works. Some people of the construction management though stayed on Rügen and took charge of the building protection and partial finishes. Just as the entire KdF organisation was commissioned to the war, also Prora was used for war purposes.

After the raid of the Wehrmacht on Poland in September 1939 Polish war prisoners were used in the market garden of Prora as well as in farming and in small enterprises. They stayed there until the end of the war and were housed in the unfinished buildings.

In 1940 approximately 1000 police cadets from Dresden, Stettin and Bottrop – one battalion – came to Prora and had military training. The workers' barracks on the fair ground served as accommodations. After the training the young men were incorporated into a police division. In 1941 they took part in the battles at the river Luga and later in the siege of Leningrad. In 1942 the division was carried over into the Weapon SS and one year later reorganised as the 4th SS-Police-armoured infantry division.

From 1942 up to the end of the war in Prora girls and women were trained in courses lasting several months as German Navy radio operators. In 1943 approximately 500 Russian forced labourers – men, women, children – were carried off to Rügen. These people fixed one part of the southern wing as an emergency accommodation for Hamburg citizens who were left homeless by the allies' saturation bombing of their city. Many forced labourers died. Until today it has been unknown where the bodies were buried. Forced labourers also from France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Holland came to Prora.

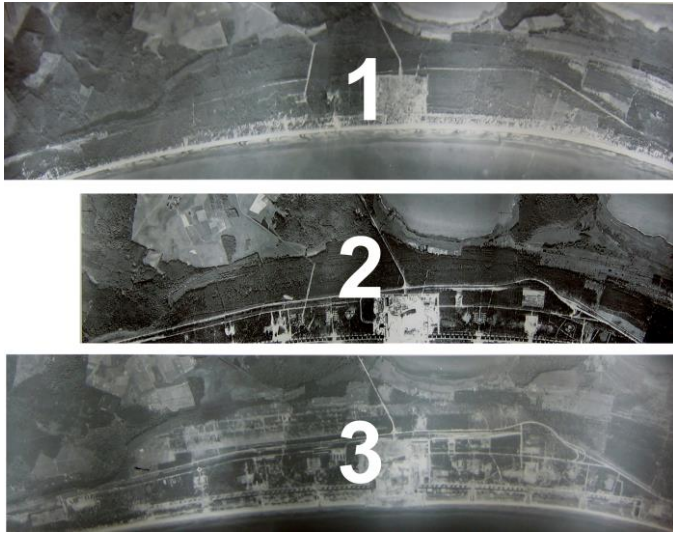
At the meeting of the architects participating in the competition in February 1936 it was notified that the Führer wished for the possible use of the KdF-spa as a military hospital in case of a war. Only one year later Ley spoke about the "biggest military hospital in Germany". In 1944 Prora, in fact, was partly turned into a military hospital – however, seeing as the building complex was imperfect, it was just a small one.



1. Building of the stairwell, winter 1938/39

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Chart. 23 | Aerial views of the "KdF-Seaside Resort"



1. Aerial Picture of the Building Site for the Sea Bath, 1st of May 1937.

The building plot is a dense forest area, the areas for the construction and the central festival hall have been cleared.

2. Aerial Picture of the Sea Bath, 23. June 1943.

The construction sight has been shut down by this time. The long range accommodation houses which are parallel to the beach, have been completed. Only the southern block differentiates itself from the others and is incomplete. The two cell shaped „RAD Settlements“ are to the south and north of the fair ground. The community houses which lead to the water cannot be seen, seeing as they are incomplete. Both areas for the indoor swimming pool have been cleared.

3. Aerial picture of the Sea Bath, 20th of May 1953, during the military use of the compound.

The southern block, as well as parts of the third and fourth block in the north no longer exist. The „Assembly Halls“ in the north are visible.

Source for the pictures: Aerial Picture Data Bank, Estenfeld.