



Berlin, 28 June 2023

PRESS KIT

Exhibition

“Blockaded Victors – Divided Berlin. 75 Years Airlift”

Tempelhof Airport (Platz der Luftbrücke 2, 12101 Berlin)

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Press images for free download: mhm-gatow.de/de/ausstellungen/luftbruecke

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PRESS INFORMATION

16 June 2023

“Blockaded Victors – Divided Berlin. 75 Years Airlift” Open-Air Exhibition at Tempelhof Airport / Platz der Luftbrücke

2023/24 marks the 75th anniversary of the “Airlift”, an event closely linked with Berlin’s history. To mark the occasion, the Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr at Berlin-Gatow Airfield, the Allied Museum Berlin and the Museum Berlin-Karlshorst are presenting at Tempelhof Airport the special exhibition “Blockaded Victors – Divided Berlin. 75 Years Airlift”, which has been jointly developed.

The exhibition will be shown in the open air from 29 June 2023 to 12 May 2024 in the square in front of the departure hall of Tempelhof Airport – the central approach site of the Airlift – and covers the entire period of the Berlin Blockade 75 years ago. Admission to the exhibition is free. Close to the Airlift Monument, which was erected in 1952, the Allies in Berlin, the architectural heritage will host an exhibition for the first time.

For the first time, three contemporary history museums in Berlin are jointly dedicating themselves to the historical event of the airlift.

“The 75th anniversary of the Airlift once again recalls the paramount importance of freedom and democracy. Thanks to the will and commitment of the Western allies, West Berlin endured throughout. With this joint exhibition three very different museums are bringing the history of the Berlin Airlift to life. That’s great!”

says Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin.

“The blockade was a drastic and momentous experience for Berlin, the airlift a magnificent achievement by the victorious U.S. and British powers. But there is more to the Airlift than this success story. Our exhibition aims to reveal the context and background, and to show the relevance of the events for people then as well as today.”

says Dr. Doris Müller-Toovey, project manager of the exhibition.

The story of the success and achievement of the Airlift is widely known. The exhibition adds further perspectives to this narrative: How did the blockade and airlift come about in 1948 in the first place? What policies did the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, as victorious and occupying powers, pursue towards Germany and Berlin in the early post-war years? What do the blockade and the airlift have to do with the division of the city? How did Berliners experience this period? And what role does the Airlift play in Berlin’s culture of remembrance? The exhibition explores these questions in four chapters: Blockaded Victors, Divided Berlin, Airlift, and Myth and Commemoration.

The exhibition is presented in four languages for the entire period of the Berlin Blockade, 75 years ago: English, French, German and Russian. A handout in Ukrainian has also been prepared. An online publication will accompany the exhibition. Information on the accompanying programme with lectures, readings and film screenings is available on the exhibition website.

The exhibition was designed by tecton Berlin.

The exhibition is realised with the support of Tempelhof Projekt GmbH.

Venue: Square in front of the former departure hall of Tempelhof Airport

Opening: 28 June 2023, 7 p.m.

Duration: 29 June 2023 to 12 May 2024

Price | Opening hours: Admission is free | The exhibition will be accessible at all times.

Website: mhm-gatow.de/de/ausstellungen/luftbruecke

PRESS CONFERENCE

28 June 2023, 11 a.m.

with Dr. Doris Müller-Toovey (Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr at Berlin-Gatow Airfield, project manager), Dr. Jürgen Lillteicher (Director, Allied Museum Berlin), Dr. Jörg Morré (Director, Museum Berlin-Karlshorst) and Jutta Heim-Wenzler (Managing Director, Tempelhof Projekt GmbH)

As part of the press conference, there will be an advance press tour of the exhibition.

We kindly ask for registration before **12 noon on 27 June 2023 at the latest**: schroeder@museum-karlshorst.de

OPENING

28 June 2023, 7 p.m.

Programme:

Welcome

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Rudolf J. Schlaffer, Director of the Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr, Dresden

Words of greeting

Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin

Jutta Heim-Wenzler, Managing Director of Tempelhof Projekt GmbH

Lieutenant Colonel Ralf-Gunter Leonhardt, Head of the Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr at Berlin-Gatow Airfield

Curatorial introduction

Dr. Doris Müller-Toovey, Head of Museum Development of the Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr at Berlin-Gatow Airfield

Musical accompaniment

Music Corps of the Bundeswehr

Please register by 21 June 2023: schroeder@museum-karlshorst.de

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours of the exhibition are offered on an alternating basis by the three cooperating museums. The guided tours can be booked online. **The exact dates are on the website.**

Bookings: mhm-gatow.de/de/ausstellungen/luftbruecke

Information on lectures, readings and film screenings accompanying the exhibition is available on the exhibition website: mhm-gatow.de/de/ausstellungen/luftbruecke

EXHIBITION STRUCTURE

On the square in front of the departure hall, a large entry-way awaits the visitors. Through this they enter the exhibition, as if through a picture frame on which a continuous luminous band presents the title of the exhibition in four languages.

The themes of the exhibition are presented across three pavilions, a large media wall and a large image wall. Adopting the quadrilingual format of the Allied Control Council announcements, the text is presented in German, English, French and Russian.

Visitors have access to additional information via QR codes.

- 1) **Intro** (Walk-through frame as a staging element with text, material for a quiz and title in four languages running as a luminous band)
- 2) **'Blockaded Victors' Pavilion**
 - The End of an Alliance of Convenience (geopolitics and interests of the four victorious powers, May 1945)
 - Fragile Agreements (Potsdam Conference, June 1945)
 - Failed Conferences (Foreign Ministers' conferences, until December 1947)
 - Control of Germany (occupation regime of the victorious powers, 1945–48, Allied Control Council)
 - Separate Ways (occupation policy in Germany and Berlin, 1945–48)
 - Blockade (event, expansion of borders)
- 3) **'Divided Berlin' Pavilion**
 - City of Sectors (situation in Berlin after the end of the war in 1945)
 - Berlin Votes (first elections and conflicts, 1946/47)
 - Disputes over Money (currency reform/s in Berlin, 1948)
 - Split in the City Administration (situation in June 1948, beginning of administrative division, July 1948)
 - Frontline City – Capital (creation of the partition in 1949, foundation of the Federal Republic and the GDR)
 - Supplying the City (everyday life of the Berlin population)
- 4) **'Airlift' Pavilion**
 - The 'Little Airlift' (in spring 1948)
 - The Airlift Decision (background)
 - A Gigantic Undertaking (development, improved logistics)
 - Crisis Diplomacy (negotiations, including United Nations)
 - Civilian Involvement (the Germans and the airlift)
 - Airlift Without a Blockade (airlift continues until September 1949)
- 5) **Commemoration Wall**
 - Myth and Commemoration (differing forms of remembrance in Berlin, change of perception of the Western allies in West Berlin).

PRESS IMAGES

Free download: mhm-gatow.de/de/ausstellungen/luftbruecke

We will send you the password for the download on request.

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We would be happy to provide you with further press images on request.

For questions about press images or rights of use and copyrights please contact Bianca Schröder schroeder@museum-karlshorst.de or Jutta Dette dette@museum-karlshorst.de.

From 26 June, we will also be able to provide you with photos of the exhibition site.

1.



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2.



© design: tecton GmbH, MHM Berlin-Gatow

3.



© AlliiertenMuseum/Slg. Provan

Aerial supply

In order to secure supplies to Berlin, the USA and Great Britain initiated the airlift from July 1948. Initially, only the most necessary goods can be flown in, at just under 700 tons per day. State-of-the-art transport machines such as the C-54 Skymaster make it possible to bring up to 8,000 tons of production and supply goods to Berlin every day.

4.



© AlliiertenMuseum/Slg. Provan

Blocking of the transit route

To supply their sectors, the Western powers also use the Magdeburg–Berlin motorway. From 24 June 1948 this route to and from Berlin is closed to the Western powers. Potsdam-Dreilinden, summer 1948.

5.



© John J. Maginnis and Arthur Howard Military Government of Europe, Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center, UMass Amherst Libraries

Meeting at the Allied Command

In Berlin-Dahlem, representatives of the four victorious powers (USA, Soviet Union, Great Britain and France) sit at the conference table to discuss matters relating to the governing of Berlin, which is divided into sectors. However, the conflicting interests of the four powers soon cause tensions. The conflict threatens to escalate, especially on the currency issue. Berlin 18 December 1945.

6.



© AlliiertenMuseum/Slg. Provan

PR successes through aid campaigns

The “shmoo” was an edible character from an American comic book series, who is put to use in the airlift in October 1948. Sweets and candy are already being dropped over West Berlin, then Shmoo figures filled with candy are thrown out of the planes, too. Anyone who finds one receives a ten-pound package of lard for every Shmoo at branches of the aid organization CARE in West Berlin.

7.



© AlliiertenMuseum / Slg. Provan

End of the blockade

On 12 May 1949, the blocked transit routes are reopened. At the Helmstedt–Marienborn border crossing, a large press contingent appears. Later that day, the trucks are welcomed with great cheers in West Berlin.

8.



© Deutsches Historisches Museum

Division of the Berlin police

During the blockade, the police disintegrate into a “Stumm police” in the west and a “Markgraf police” in the east – with the two forces named after their respective chiefs. This separation exemplifies the division of Berlin under Allied occupation. After the blockade, there is a dual structure in all important offices and administrations in East and West Berlin. In this respect, the division of Berlin first took place at the administrative level. Berlin around 1950.

9.



© Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep. 290 (02) Nr. 0255831/photo: k. A. (not released for social media)

Female workers for the airlift

Berlin's airports are expanded with additional runways and buildings or, as at Tegel, completely rebuilt. Women made up around 40 percent of the construction workers in the construction of Tegel. September 1948.

10.



© Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep. 290 (02) Nr. 0012873/photo: Bert Sass (not released for social media)

Hunger rake

As early as the end of the blockade on 12 May 1949, Berlin's Mayor Ernst Reuter announces his intention to erect a monument to commemorate the victims of the Airlift. On 10 July 1951 the concrete sculpture, designed by architect Eduard Reuter, is unveiled in front of 100,000 people. Since then, the square in which the monument – popularly known as the "Hunger rake" – stands has been the principal West Berlin memorial to the Airlift.

11.



© Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-S84620/photo: Eva Kemlein

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Offer from the East

The Soviet side allows the blockaded Berliners to register for food in the Eastern sector. Many West Berliners reject this offer for political reasons. However, the particularly needy part of the population often has no other choice. This woman is officially allowed to export her ten-day ration to the Western Sector after being checked. Berlin, 21 April 1949.

12.



© Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-S81452/photo: Walter Heilig

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Self-sufficiency

Despite the airlift, daily rations in the Western Sector are insufficient. After work or on days off, West Berliners are therefore on the move to stock up on food and heating material from the surrounding countryside of Berlin. Unofficial supplies from the East are hampered by strict border controls. It is crucial to know where food is being traded, but also at which points the border can be crossed unhindered. Berlin, 6 January 1949.

13.



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Protests in front of the city hall against the division of Berlin

Shortly before the start of the blockade, the dispute over money escalates. The city councils of all of Berlin meet to discuss currency reform in the New City Hall, which is located in the Soviet sector. To build up pressure on the issue, the SED protests outside the City Hall against the division of the city. Some also invade the building. Despite the protests, the parliamentary majority decides that both currencies will be valid for the entire city. The SED's request to introduce the Ost-Mark throughout Berlin is rejected. After the session, several deputies are injured by SED demonstrators. One day later, the Soviet side begins to block the traffic routes to the Western sectors. Berlin, 23 June 23 1948.

COMMENTS BY THE CURATORS

Marc Hansen (Museum of Military History at Berlin-Gatow Airfield)

"The airlift and the blockade should be remembered not only in the context of a humanitarian relief operation. As they marked the first direct confrontation between the Western powers and the Soviet Union both events were decisive for the further course of the Cold War. Berlin thus became the symbol of a global political situation which would remain in a state of constant tension for a long time to come."

Matthias Heisig (Museum of Military History at Berlin-Gatow Airfield)

"75 years after the start of the blockade, none of the three Berlin airports through which Berlin was supplied at the time is still in operation. The memory of the airlift, however, has not disappeared, but is visible in many ways in the city."

Bernd von Kostka (Allied Museum Berlin)

"The first major confrontation of the Cold War was won not with weapons and bombers, but with goods and transport aircraft. The logistical feat is still incredible today. Nevertheless, at least 78 people had to pay for these efforts with their lives."

Dr. Jörg Morré (Museum Berlin-Karlshorst)

"It would be a mistake to consider the airlift isolated from the Berlin blockade. The planes were fundamental to the survival of the western part of the city, but the stories that shaped Berlin for decades took place on the ground."

Dr. Doris Müller-Toovey (Museum of Military History at Berlin-Gatow Airfield)

"The blockade was a drastic and momentous experience for Berlin; the airlift a magnificent achievement by the victorious U.S. and British powers. But there is more to the airlift than this success story. Our exhibition aims to reveal the context and background, and to show the relevance of the events for people then as well as today."

Dr. des. Ricardo Neuner (Museum Berlin-Karlshorst)

"Our exhibition shows that the blockade created a crisis situation in terms of power politics, but only to a limited extent in humanitarian terms. The Western allies had to commit themselves to Berlin – and the inhabitants of the Western part to their occupiers. Supply from the air is only part of the story. The blockaded Berliners went to great lengths in their daily lives to make the Soviet provocation come to nothing."

ONLINE PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by an online publication with essays by the curators in German, English, French and Russian. It is published by the three participating museums.

The German version will be available on the exhibition website from **28 June 2023**.

Content:

Introduction

Doris Müller-Toovey

Berlin blockade | Airlift to Berlin (1948/49) – A security policy classification

Marc Hansen

“We’ll stay. Period.” The political decisions of the Western Powers immediately after the blockade of West Berlin

Bernd von Kostka

The Soviet perspective during the Berlin Crisis, 1948/49

Jörg Morré

Starving for Freedom? Supply strategies in everyday life during the blockade in West Berlin

Ricardo Neuner

“Planes plundering us.” An eternal airlift myth?

Matthias Heisig

In the essays, the curators further examine topics addressed in the exhibition. These include the security policy situation in Europe after World War II, the motivations behind the actions of the four victorious powers before and during the first Berlin crisis, the actual supply situation in the Western sectors of the city at the time, and the so-called backlift – an airlift topic that has always been the subject of controversy. The bibliographical references following the essays provide an overview of the research situation on the blockade and the airlift.

BRIEF OVERVIEWS OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS



Allied Museum

Whether the Airlift plane or the guard house from Checkpoint Charlie, the Allied Museum in Berlin's Zehlendorf district recalls an important chapter in recent history. It tells the story of how Berlin became a quadripartite city and a key theater of the Cold War following the victory over Nazi Germany and the entry of the Allied occupying troops in the summer of 1945.

The Allied Museum's permanent exhibition is housed in two historic buildings that offer direct reminders of the presence of Allied troops in Berlin. The first part, in the former US military cinema, the Outpost Theater, illuminates the years 1945 to 1950. Here we address the Allied victory at the end of World War II, the beginning of the period of occupation, and the democratization policies of the Western powers. The focus is on the Berlin Airlift during the Soviet blockade of 1948/49, which brought lasting changes to the relationship between Berlin's population and the Allied occupying forces.

The second part of the permanent collection in the former Nicholson Memorial Library addresses the period from 1951 to 1994. Important emphases include the military confrontation between East and West during the Cold War, the work of the military liaison missions and intelligence services, and everyday life on the military bases. The exhibition also sheds light on the developments surrounding German reunification in 1990, which led to the withdrawal of the Allied armed forces in 1994.

Alongside the permanent exhibitions, changing temporary exhibitions provide a deeper look at especially relevant topics. Comprehensive educational services including overview and thematic tours, film screenings, neighborhood walking tours, and special activities for children round out the program.

The association that sponsors the museum, which opened in 1998 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, includes among its members the United States of America, Great Britain, and France, represented through their embassies. Members of all four countries also sit on the scholarly advisory board, and the Museum maintains a strict trilingual orientation.

Twenty-five years after its founding, the Allied Museum is facing new challenges. In order to inform today's public about the Western powers' role in setting up a liberal democracy in Germany under Cold War conditions, there are plans to re-establish the Museum in a hangar at former Tempelhof Airport, a highly symbolic site in the heart of Berlin that brings together past, present, and future.

<https://www.alliiertenmuseum.de/>

Museum of Military History of the Bundeswehr at Berlin-Gatow Airfield

The museum originated as a private collection, which was adopted by the Bundeswehr in 1987. The museum has been located at its current site since 1994. German history is presented in this authentic historical location, from the secret rearmament during the National Socialist era to the Cold War, when the Royal Air Force was stationed here, to the reunification of East and West Germany. The region around Berlin-Gatow Airfield played an important role already in early aviation in Germany: the first German military airfield opened in Döberitzer Heide in 1910, an airship yard was built near Potsdam, zeppelins and large aircraft were built in Staaken during the First World War, and glider pilots were active in Gatow from the late 1920s onwards.

When the National Socialists came to power, the build-up of an offensive air force began. One of the new air warfare schools was established in Berlin-Gatow in 1934/35. When, after the end of the Second World War, every victorious power was given control of an airfield in Berlin, the Royal Air Force moved into Gatow and remained here until the Allies withdrew in 1993. At this time, the functions of Gatow Airfield were manifold: it served as a military airbase, as an alternative and reserve station for handling all support and supply flights for the British in Berlin, and at times as a civilian airfield. Gatow also played an important role during the Berlin Airlift of 1948/49. About a third of the total cargo landed here.

The permanent exhibition "Zwischenlandung" ("Stopover") is housed in one of Gatow's nine hangars, which are now listed buildings. Across 3,500 square metres, it provides an overview of the development of military aviation in Germany, from its beginnings in the 1880s to the 1990s. A separate exhibition is dedicated to the history of the airfield. The museum takes an integrative approach to military history, purposely including political, economic, cultural and social aspects.

In addition to the aircraft and their historical contextualisation, the museum presents numerous smaller exhibits, posters, documents, photographs, films and interviews with contemporary witnesses. These also include personal items. Among these you can find the prison clothes of a Dutch concentration camp inmate who worked in armament production for the Nazi Air Force in Mittelbau-Dora, or the flight suit of a severely wounded loadmaster of a German Armed Forces Transall, which was fired upon during a mission over Croatia in 1993. The museum's depots hold more than 600,000 objects related to military aviation, especially from Germany, including equipment, documents, photographs and airplanes, some of which can also be seen outside.

<https://www.mhm-gatow.de/de>

Museum Berlin-Karlshorst

The Museum Berlin-Karlshorst is located at a site of world historical importance: in the museum building, the supreme commanders of the Wehrmacht signed the unconditional surrender in the night of 8-9 May 1945 in front of representatives of the Soviet Union, the USA, Great Britain and France. With this, the anti-Hitler coalition fulfilled its common war goal and ended the Second World War in Europe. The Surrender Hall is the centrepiece of the museum.

Today, the museum presents various points of view on German-Soviet history in the 20th century. Through its unique multinational board of trustees, which includes the countries of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, it faces the challenge of continuing its work in the face of the war in Ukraine. Furthermore, the museum facilitates encounters and exchanges about history and memory in the past and present.

Using photos, propaganda posters, everyday objects, weapons and written documents, the museum's permanent exhibition "Germany and the Soviet Union in World War II" documents the war from the perspective of the German and Soviet actors. The museum also focuses on the consequences, which reach into the present day.

In the context of the permanent exhibition, traces of Soviet remembrance culture from the former Soviet "surrender museum" are also presented and contextualised. The museum was originally founded in 1967 by the Soviet troops in Germany and served for political-historical education of the soldiers and the GDR population until their withdrawal.

In addition to the permanent exhibition, the museum regularly shows special or small art exhibitions and organises numerous events, such as lecture evenings, book presentations or cinema screenings. The museum's work is decisively shaped by the fact that it is a project partner of numerous cooperations in Germany and abroad and is thus internationally networked.

<https://www.museum-karlshorst.de/>

Tempelhof Projekt GmbH

Der Flughafen Tempelhof ist Europas größtes Baudenkmal und hat eine bewegte Vergangenheit: Der Ort ist genauso untrennbar mit der Fluggeschichte der Welt verbunden wie mit den Schrecken des Nationalsozialismus, des Kalten Krieges, aber auch mit der großen Solidarität der Berliner Luftbrücke oder der Flüchtlingsunterbringung in den Hangars ab 2015. THF – wie der Flughafen nach seinem alten Kürzel noch heute genannt wird – zählt mit seinen rund 300.000 m² Bruttogeschossfläche zu den größten Gebäuden der Welt und ist selbst aus dem Weltraum noch zu erkennen. Das Flughafengebäude wurde 2011 von der Bundesingenieurkammer als „Historisches Wahrzeichen der Ingenieurbaukunst in Deutschland“ ausgezeichnet.

Berlin steht vor der Herausforderung das zwischen 1936 und 1941 erbaute und denkmalgeschützte Flughafengebäude mit der Dimension eines Stadtquartiers zu sanieren und in eine neue Nutzung zu überführen. THF soll in den kommenden Jahren einer der zentralen Orte Berlins für Kunst, Kultur, Kreativwirtschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung werden. Nicht nur die neue Nutzung steht bei der Sanierung im Fokus, sondern auch die Transformation des alten Flughafens in einen nachhaltigen, ressourcenschonenden und klimaneutralen Kultur- und Bürostandort.

Eine Stadt in der Stadt, bunt und vielfältig mit Kunst, Kultur, Kreativwirtschaft, öffentlichen Nutzungen und Großevents. Große dauerhafte Magneten sollen hier genauso Platz finden, wie kleine kulturelle Interventionen. Ankermieter und temporäre, innovative Nutzer, die spannende Synergien mitbringen, sollen gute Nachbarn werden. Die Basis der künftigen Ausrichtung, Sanierung und Öffnung des Stadtquartiers ist die Vision 2030+, das Entwicklungskonzept für das Flughafengebäude und seine Außenflächen. Im Fokus dieser Entwicklung stehen die Menschen, für die sich der Ort Schritt für Schritt öffnet.

THF wird zudem immer mehr zum Tourismusmagnet. Das Besucherzentrum CHECK-IN am Haupteingang des Gebäudes lädt ein, sich über Zukunft und Vergangenheit des Gebäudes zu informieren. Täglich starten hier die öffentlichen Führungen. Mit der Reihe THFxImpulse und THFxGeschichte werden regelmäßig Themenabende für Flughafen-Interessierte angeboten. Am westlichen Gebäudeteil am Tempelhofer Damm eröffnet der aufwendig und barrierefrei sanierte THF TOWER. Alle Berliner:innen sowie die Gäste der Stadt sind eingeladen, den namensgebenden Fluglotsentower auf der holzgetäfelten Dachterrasse zu besuchen, den Ausblick über Gebäude, Stadt und Feld zu genießen und dem Berliner Himmel ein Stück näher zu sein. Die 1,2 km lange Geschichtsgalerie über die gesamte Länge des Gebäudes wird das nächste Öffnungsprojekt sein.

Die künftige Entwicklung des Quartiers ist ein Generationenprojekt. Ganz besonders, da das Gebäude nie ganz fertig gestellt wurde und Teile noch heute im Rohbau sind. Mangelhafte Bauausführung zur Entstehungszeit sowie unzureichende Unterhaltung in den Jahrzehnten danach haben das denkmalgeschützte Gebäude nach Ende der Nutzung als Flughafen in einem schlechten Zustand hinterlassen. So wird das Ensemble während der Grundsanierung und parallel fortgesetzter Nutzung in den nächsten Jahren eine offene Baustelle sein.

Die 2011 gegründete, landeseigene Tempelhof Projekt GmbH verantwortet im Auftrag der Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen des Landes Berlin mit einem ca. 90-köpfigen Team die denkmalgerechte Planung, Sanierung, Erhaltung, Betrieb und schrittweise Öffnung von THF.

<http://www.thf-berlin.de>