

## **Architect Erich Schelling's (1904-1986) work during National Socialism**

### *Erich Schelling: Tabular resume*

\* Born September 11, 1904 in Wiesloch

1910-1919 Attended Elementary School and Secondary School (Humboldt School) in Karlsruhe, 1919, Minor Secondary Diploma

1919-1921 Apprenticeship as a Draftsman at the Pfeifer & Grossman architect association, Karlsruhe and Mühlheim an der Ruhr

1921-1923 Bricklayer apprenticeship at the Friedrich Pfeifer construction company, Karlsruhe

1923-1928 Studies in Architecture at the State Technical College in Karlsruhe (today it is known as University Karlsruhe – Technology and Commerce); work at multiple architecture firms during his years of study and/or between semesters: Otto Herrmann (Ottenhöfen), Hermann Billing building atelier, Pfeifer & Großmann architect association

1926-1927 Head of the Structural Ceramics Department at the "Großherzoglichen Majolika Manufaktur" factory, Karlsruhe, façades and interior design

1928 State Exam for clerical technical service (with distinction); short-term Assistant in the Structural Engineering Department, State Technical College in Karlsruhe.

1928-1929 Assistant at the Josef Graf architecture firm

1930 Finished high school

1930-1933 Studies in Architecture at the Technical University (TH) in Karlsruhe (today known as the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology); teachers: Hermann Alker, Hermann Billing, Max Laeuger, Otto Ernst Schweizer

1931 Preliminary draft for a "new settlement in the Rhine Valley"

1933 Award for the best diploma dissertation at the TH Karlsruhe (the university's medal)

1933-1935 Assistant and construction supervisor at the Hermann Alker architecture / construction firm

1933-1945 Member of the SA (as of 1937 Scharführer - Squad Leader, 1943 Truppführer - Troupe Leader, 1944 Sturmführer - Storm Leader)

1933-1945 Member of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste (the Third Reich's Imperial Chamber of Fine Arts)

1933-1945 Member of the Deutschen Arbeitsfront - DAF (German Labour Front)

1934-1945 Member of the Nationalsozialistischen Volkswohlfahrt – NSV (National Socialist People's Welfare Organisation)

1935 Military Service at the Pioneer Battalion in Ulm

As of 1935/36 Freelance Architect in Karlsruhe; private houses and industrial buildings

1936--1939 "Führer-Verlags" publishing house on Lammstrasse (today: "Badische Neueste Nachrichten" - Newest Baden News), renovation/new construction and interior design

1937 Teaching position at the State Technical College, Karlsruhe (Design and Architecture): Appointed to Baden Civil Service, initially as an "Assistant Teacher under contract" (March 1937)

1937 District Vocational Consultant for the DAF

1937 Member of the NS-Student relief aid

Approx. 1937-1943 Member of the National Socialist Teacher Alliance (NSLB)

Approx. 1937--1945 Member of the National Socialist German Technology Alliance (NSBDT)

1937-1945 Member of the NSDAP (Member no. 4,141,667)

1938 Appointed into Civil Service as an unscheduled Lectureship Assessor at the State Technical College, Karlsruhe

1939 Appointed as Professor at the State Technical College Karlsruhe and appointed as scheduled Civil Servant 1939)

1940 Marriage to Margarete Derkum

1940 Official leave of absence from teaching due to "important economic-political tasks" (October 1940)

1940-1942 Draft for the "New Strasbourg" competition

Approx. 1940-1943 NSDAP Gau School in Strasbourg, restructuring and interior design

Approx. 1941-1944 Representative interiors of additional buildings in Strasbourg, including individual rooms in the Reich University as well as offices of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, on order from the NS-regime

1943 Military Service Cross Class 2 without swords (at the suggestion of the Head of Civil Administration in Alsace, Robert Wagner)

Approx. 1944/45 In French internment camp

1945 Return to Karlsruhe

1945-1948 Resides (officially registered) in Bühl (Kappeler Forest)

1948-1986 Resides in Karlsruhe, where he runs an architecture office; Architect of many residential and administration buildings plus culture, sports and industrial buildings, including the Schwarzwaldhalle (1952-1953), the Volksbank office building (1954-1955), the Wildpark stadium (1954/1978), a building extension of the BGH (1957-1960), an LVA administration building (1958-1963), The Nancy Hall (1964-1966) as well as housing blocks on order from Volkswohnungen GmbH (1961-1971)

1949-1960 Industrial and administration building for FAG Kugelfischer factories in Schweinfurt

1954 City Hall in Schweinfurt

1955-1986 Nuclear Research Centre Karlsruhe: Basic planning and development of the general building plan plus the new construction of many operating buildings

1961-1966 State Theatre Schweinfurt

1966 Appointed to the Karlsruhe City Planning Committee

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1967 Marriage to Set Designer and Interior Architect Trude Karrer, who Schelling had been working together closely with for several years

1968-1970 Administration and reactor plant building in Grenoble (France)

† November, 14, 1986, in Karlsruhe

### **Erich Schelling's work during the NS-era**

Until his death in 1986, Eric Schelling was active as an architect during the second half of the 20th century, mainly in Karlsruhe where he lived and ran his office from. He was responsible for many major building projects here, including the architecturally outstanding Schwarzwaldhalle (1952-1953). He was also responsible for extensive building activities over a long period of time at the Nuclear Research Centre, Karlsruhe. In addition, he also worked as an architect in Schweinfurt and Grenoble (see "Tabular Resume" above). Even during the NS-era, Schelling worked as an independent architect in Karlsruhe and Strasbourg.

#### *Work as an architect in Karlsruhe 1933-1940*

After his studies in Architecture at the State Technical College Karlsruhe (1923-1928, graduation with distinction), Schelling studied Architecture at the TH Karlsruhe from 1930 to 1933. His teachers included Hermann Alker, Hermann Billing, Max Laeuger and Otto Ernst Schweizer (more on how they influenced his understanding of architecture, cf. Erhardt, pg. 15 ff.). In the meantime, he also went back to school to get his high school diploma (1930). Hermann Billing, in whose building atelier Schelling had already worked during his studies at the State Technical College (1925), helped the young architect to get into TH Karlsruhe. As part of an Otto Ernst Schweizer event, Schelling finished the preliminary draft for a "new settlement in the Rhine Valley" (1931). The young architect passed the exams to become a graduate Engineer with distinction (diploma exam on May 12, 1933); he received the "University Medal" for the best final dissertation.

After that, Schelling worked for two years (May 1933 to May 1935) in the Hermann Alker building atelier and construction office, as an Architect and Associated Professor at TH Karlsruhe (cf. Roos in detail on Alker 2011, pg. 38 ff.). Only military service, served with the supplemental company of the Pioneer Battalion in Ulm (05/01-10/03/1935), interrupted his activity there. In a work reference letter, Hermann Alker summarised all of Schelling's important activities during his time at the building atelier:

"Mr. Schelling worked on building plan treatments for a whole range of building tasks based on my designs. Thus he worked on plans for the paramilitary sports facility at the university stadium Karlsruhe, the expansion of the Karlsruhe university stadium into Gau marching grounds, as well as on a large new hotel building and a large administration building. Particularly valuable was his participation in the plan processing and development of construction plan drawings for the extensive renovations of the Wolff & Sohn ["Kaloderma"] business buildings in Karlsruhe, plus the printing and publishing building of 'Führer' publishing and the 'Bad[ischen] Presse' for the Südwestdeutsche Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft (South-western German Print and Publishing Company). Furthermore, Mr. Schelling also worked in detail on the plan treatments, including the detail drawings, for the Thingstätte open-air theatre in Heidelberg and Karlsruhe, which were designed by me (04/05/1935, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 101496)."

Alker had received the assignment for the Thingstätte from Goebbels in March 1934; the client was the Reich Propaganda Ministry. The facility, built in the style of an open-air theatre with approximately 8,000 seats, was inaugurated in June 1935; the Thingstätte in Karlsruhe (here the client was Gauleiter and Reich Lieutenant Robert Wagner) was not realised (Ross 2011, pg. 298-302, 379).

Alker was extremely satisfied with Schelling's achievements, and "thanks to his in-depth, practical, educational background" he was able to entrust him with tasks like site supervision during the conversion of the university stadium into Gau marching grounds and extensive and difficult printing plant renovations. Schelling left his atelier, Alker concludes, solely "in order to achieve an absolutely independent position" - an intention that he felt Schelling was "suitable for in all ways".

From then on, Schelling worked as an independent architect in Karlsruhe. Documents that were passed down with his estate document the construction of private residential buildings (Lenz residential building, 1936; Boser residential building, 1940; two-storey, free-standing single-family homes with pitched roofs), the new construction of two residential buildings in an already existing block development in Ettlinger Straße 16-18 (1937) as well as renovation work on the Adler Inn in Varnhalt 8 wine tavern, 1938) and Café Kaiser (1939).

At the same time, Schelling continued to work on a large project: The conversion and new construction of the 'Führer Publishing' publishing house (Lammstrasse 1b, 3 and 5). 'Führer Publishing' published the highest circulating newspaper for 'Gau press' at the time: 'Der Führer'. The main body of the NSDAP Gau Baden'; the publisher responsible for the newspaper was Gauleiter and Reich Lieutenant Robert Wagner (at length Syré 2016). Schelling was entrusted with conversion work on the 'Führer Publishing' building back when he worked with Hermann Alker. In October 1936, Schelling reported "a major conversation project for 'Der Führer' publishing" which he was working on at the time - since October 1, 1936, "as a completely independent architect" (19/10/1936, resume, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496).

The buildings with house numbers 3 and 5 were completely demolished by the spring of 1937, and the neighbouring building (Lammstrasse 1b) was almost completely gutted. A four-storey new building was constructed with facade design and interior "striking parallels to the Reich Ministry of Aviation in Berlin" (Erhardt 1999, pg. 34, quote pg. 35). The centre of the main facade is decorated with a balcony above which a mighty Reich's eagle is mounted. Ingrid Erhardt considered the building, which was completed in 1939, to "satisfy the National Socialist architectural view" of Erich Schelling (Erhardt 1998, pg. 179). It is documented that Schelling was entrusted with site supervision of the conversion work (see above) even before his time with Hermann Alker (until May 1935), and that he continued to work as an independent architect on the building measures for "Führer Publishing"; upon completion Schelling was clearly considered to be the responsible architect. There are repeated references in literature of how Schelling took

over leadership from Alker for work on the publishing building in 1937 and/or 1938. The reason for this was Alker's move to Munich, where he was appointed "Head of City Planning in the capital city of movement" in September 1937. In June 1938, he broke with Adolf Hitler, which led to Alker's immediate dismissal. After that, the Baden Gauleiter Robert Wagner also broke relations with Alker (out of loyalty to Hitler). Alker then had to transfer two of the assignments he had received to his colleagues - and the Gauleiter of Baden wanted him to transfer the conversion of the publishing house to Schelling (Voigt 2012, pg. 185, FN 174 and Roos 2011, pg. 383).

On April 21, 1940, Schelling married Margarete Derkum (born 1914 in Duisburg); they had one son during the marriage.

### *Teaching position at the State Technical College*

Parallel to his activity as a freelance architect, Schelling taught from 1937 at the State Technical College in Karlsruhe (architecture professorship) - not at the TH Karlsruhe as is occasionally read (for instance in Bräunche 2013, pg. 90). Officially hired as an assistant teacher, while being recruited he was given the prospect of a quick unscheduled appointment as well as a "scheduled appointment as professor" (02/03/1937, the Minister of Cultural Affairs No. D. 2491, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496; this was Schelling's condition). In fact, one year after being hired he was appointed as the unscheduled Lectureship Assessor (March 1938); in September 1939 he was finally appointed as scheduled Professor - and scheduled Civil Servant (see also GLA, 235 no. 8141). He took on the position of Prof. Karl Winter, who retired in 1937. Disputes erupted about the official employment title "Associate Professor", evident from documents in his personal file. Schelling insisted on being allowed to have the professor title, otherwise he would have to cease his teaching activities at the State Technical College immediately.

As a Lectureship Assessor, his teaching responsibilities included 24 semester periods per week (from summer semester 1939). However, the teaching load was reduced by ten hours at Schelling's request, "because he must work on various plans on order from the Reich Lieutenant" (18/04/1939, Director of the State Technical College to the Minister of Cultural Affairs, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496). The sources did not mention what plans were being referred to.

In October 1940, Schelling turned to the management of the State Technical College with the request for immediate leave of absence:

"Major economic-political tasks require my immediate leave of absence. Director Gärtner is aware of all of the details that justify my application for leave. The leave of absence is prospectively 1 year" (10/10/1940, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496).

Schelling was given a leave of absence for the reasons listed - withholding his salary. His leave of absence was extended for another year after he made another request on

October 8, 1941. He no longer returned as a teacher to the State Technical College - however he had the professor title granted to him until his death in 1939.

### *Member of NS-organisations*

Erich Schelling was a member of several NS-organisations: According to archival documents, Schelling joined the SA Storm Detachment on November 24, 1933. He served in the SA as Foreman and then as a Squad Leader in 1937. In 1934 he was appointed as an SA Troop Leader and as an SA Storm Leader in 1944.

Schelling was a member of the NSDAP since 1937. Corresponding identical entries were found in both member indexes (the central index and the Gau index) in the archive of the former Berlin Document Center (BDC) in the Federal Archive Berlin: Architect Erich Schelling, born on 11/09/1904 in Wiesloch, residing on Stefanienstrasse 58 in Karlsruhe, was accepted in the NSDAP local group Karlsruhe (Gau Baden) on 01/05/1937 with member no. 4,141,667. The entries were based on Schelling's "Application to be accepted into the National Socialist Worker's Party", which he signed and which are also archived in the BDC. Schelling made the application on 31/05/1937 (from April 1933 until April 1937, there was an admission block into the party; back-dating to 01/05/1937 is not unusual).

Schelling was a member of the German Labour Front (DAF, date of admission according to files: 15/12/1933). In March 1937, when he was appointed to the State Technical College, he was a District Profession Consultant for the DAF (there is no evidence of the exact period of this position), since 1934 he was a member of the Nationalsozialistischen Volkswohlfahrt - NSV (National Socialist People's Welfare Organisation). Schelling is listed in 1937 as a member of the NS-student relief aid, the only group of "older gentlemen" acknowledged by the NSDAP, who were alumni of universities and colleges (in 1938 changed to the NA-Older Gentlemen's League).

In addition, as an architect Schelling was also a member of the Reichskammer der bildenden Künste (the Third Reich's Imperial Chamber of Fine Arts) (1933-1945, he was part of the National Socialist Teacher's Association (NSLB, disbanded in 1943), and he was a member of the National Socialist German Technology Alliance (NSBDT).

According to surviving sources there was no doubt about Schelling's political reliability (from the point of view of the NS-regime). On the occasion of his appointment to the State Technical College in March 1937, the answer to the respective question was: "The Gau Human Resources Department has no concerns regarding Schelling's political reliability" (05/03/1937, the Minister of Culture and Education, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496). Upon being appointed as professor in September 1939, there were no objections beforehand with regard to his "ideological stance and reinforcement" (30/06/1938, appointment of Graduate Engineer Erich Schelling as Professor, general assessment, *ibid.*)

*Work as an architect in Strasbourg 1940-1944*

In June 1940, the city of Strasbourg was conquered and occupied by German troops as part of the "France campaign". Adolf Hitler appointed the Baden Gauleiter and Reich Lieutenant Robert Wagner, who Schelling knew from Karlsruhe, as the Head of Civil Administration.

Although Strasbourg was not one of the preferred "Führer cities" of the Third Reich, while visiting the city a few days after it was captured Hitler was said to provide a sketch, or had one made, for the power and administration centre of the future "Oberrhein" Gau of "New Strasbourg" (Voigt 2012, pg. 35-45, on the scepticism of Hitler's authorship pg. 37, also Roos 2013, pg. 106). The sketch (on a city map) which connected Strasbourg with Kehl on the right bank of the Rhine River with a new Rhine bridge, and monumental road axis in the shape of a flat Y, served as the basis for an architecture competition to re-design Strasbourg in autumn 1940. The competition revolved around the planning of a new city district on the Rhine that would contain all the important buildings of the cultural and political life of the new Gau capital city. Erich Schelling was one of the eight invited participants who were selected by Albert Speer - under whose supervision the non-public competition took place - and Robert Wagner (cf Voigt 2012, pg. 49-95, also Roos 2013) (alongside the two "Alsace immigrants" Paul Schmitthenner and Richard Beblo, and Hermann Alker, Hans Möhrle, Wolfdietrich Panther, Joseph Schlippe and Alfred Wolf from Baden).

Gauleiter Wagner, who was very satisfied with Schelling's work on the "Führer Publishing" building in Karlsruhe, is said to have campaigned on behalf of Schelling. In addition to the "successful interior design" (quote from Erhardt 1999, pg. 38), the Gauleiter liked the entire construction so much that he offered Schelling additional assignments (see Voigt 2012, pg. 185, FN 174). As described above, in spring 1939, Schelling said that the reason for requesting a teaching load reduction was his work for the Reich Lieutenant.

Schelling's plans and models for the competition to re-design Strasbourg were not passed down (there is probably only one model that was passed down - from Schmitthenner, Roos 2013, pg. 111). However, in the estate there are five photographs of the model as well as a programmatic text written by Schelling with the title "Construction of a City District in Strasbourg for the Purpose of Community" (25/11/1940). The photographs prove that Schelling deviated from the stipulations of the "Hitler Sketch" and selected the shape of a flat T as the basis (as did the other three competition entries from Alker, Beblo and Schmitthenner), with a north-south as well as an east-west axis. Two open spaces "with unconventional shapes" characterise the (says Voigt 1994, pg. 24) design. There were various models that inspired the monumental building: The opera house refers to a design by Hans Poelzig, the monumental Gau Hall referenced the planned "Soldier's Hall" by Wilhelm Kreis in Berlin. The shape of Schelling's Gau Forum is reminiscent of the "ideal shape" of Otto-Ernst Schweizer's marching grounds" (Voigt

2012, pg. 52, cf. also Erhardt 1999, pg. 43-45, and Erhardt 1998, pg. 179). Schelling had been Schweizer's student and assistant over the course of his studies at the TH Karlsruhe (detailed descriptions of the competition entry and the release of the photographs from Voigt and Erhardt). According to Wolfgang Voigt, Robert Wagner told Schelling, his sponsored architect, that "his plans are the best and he can count on getting the assignment" (Voigt 1994, pg. 25). Other sources suggest that Richard Beblo was Wagner's favourite (cf. Bräunche 2013, pg. 91, FN 47). However, the outcome of the competition was not decided, because neither Speer nor Hitler - who had expressly insisted on making the final decision - came back to Alsace to assess the submitted designs.

Aside from the "Neues Strasbourg" competition, Schelling was repeatedly employed by the NS-Administration of the Gau of Baden(-Alsace), especially "as a specialist for representational interior design" (Voigt 2012, pg. 52, Voigt 1994, pg. 24). And so he tackled the renovation of a private villa on Antwerpener Ring (Rue d'Avers) into a "Gau School" (1940-1943, see Ehrhardt, pg. 36, Voigt 2012, pg. 185, FN 175).

After completion of the "Gau School Castle" in 1943, a report in the Strasbourg *Stadtanzeiger* newspaper described and praised its interior design, which Schelling selected "with exquisite taste". The Gau School Castle in Strasbourg was a place of political schooling in line with the NS-Regime, with the "'fanaticism' of the teachers from the 'Gau Baden-Alsace'" (Wiemann-Stöhr 2018, pg. 326). Schelling was also responsible for the interior design of individual buildings at the Reich University Strasbourg. In the estate there are also eleven coloured gouaches that give an impression of the planned interior. The design of individual rooms at the university attributed to Schelling has been maintained right through to the present (for instance, the Senate Hall; I thank Dr. Gerhard Kabierske from SAAI for this information and the corresponding recordings). Furthermore, Schelling was involved in the new construction and conversion of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs as well as the new construction of an administration building at the Reich University (1940-1944, Erich Schelling 1994, pg. 13, 19 and 206). The sources also provided information on the design of the interior rooms, such as modern office furnishings (I thank Prof. Frank Engehausen for this reference).

Schelling had a second architecture office in Strasbourg (since 1942, according to Manfred Koch) that had to be "closed due to the effects of war at the end of 1944" (Erhardt 1998, pg. 179). According to his own statements Schelling had four employees in 1943 (28/05/1948, registration form, GLA, 465 h no. 30083). According to Wolfgang Voigt, the work in Alsace, especially for the "New Strasbourg" competition, was "extremely well-paid". Schelling himself recorded that his taxable assets increased by over 40,000 RM to 121,000 RM from 1943 to 1945 alone (according to the estimated entries in the registration form it was about 30,000 RM in 1934).

Private housing construction was restricted greatly during the war and therefore virtually at a standstill. There is a design by Schelling, dated in 1942, for the new construction of

the German Natural Stone Works at Karlsruhe Rhine Harbour, which is part of the estate; however, the construction of the building was no longer executed. It wasn't possible to determine the reason why Schelling turned directly to Albert Speer in Berlin, in 1941: Only a reply letter from Speer has been archived in the Berlin Federal Archive, where he tells Schelling that he (Speer) was not responsible for "recognising degrees of urgency" and so he could not help Schelling further (21/10/1941, Albert Speer to Professor Erich Schelling, BArch, R 3/1599, VI. 29, 1940-1945).

During Schelling's time in Strasbourg he was appointed as an SA-Troup Leader (1943) and also as an SA-Storm Leader (1944). For this purpose - at the recommendation of Robert Wagner - he was awarded the War Service Cross of the 2nd class without swords (on 01/09/1943, with decision from 14/01/1944, registry comment, GLA Karlsruhe, 235-1 no. 10496).

On 17/09/1942, Schelling was taken out of service (see personal file GLA, 235-1 no. 10496, about this and the following documents). He stated his kidney disease as the reason for it: In Spring 1938, he had to undergo kidney surgery and as a result he was on sick leave for three months. Schelling filed a complaint against Civil Engineer Pietro Marzona, who asserted that Schelling bribed a doctor "to get out of military service again" (In his absence, Marzona - who had meanwhile been withdrawn - was given a monetary fine).

### *Failed escape from Strasbourg*

There is a document in the GLA Karlsruhe from February 6, 1945, that refers to the events in Strasbourg from October 23, 1944, the day of the invasion of allied troupes in the city (06/02/1945, Ministry Advisor of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs Herbert Kraft to the Reich Lieutenant and Gauleiter Robert Wagner, GLA, 235, no. 34779). The document revolves around a report from Erich Schelling (in the form of a notarized witness statement, also signed by him). The background for the report are inquiries about the whereabouts of Ministry Director Karl Gärtner, an active member of the NSDAP since 1930, a high ranking NS-official at the Baden Ministry of Cultural Affairs since 1933 (recent details about him and his function Wiemann-Stöhr 2018, pg. 183-196). On the occasion of Gärtner's promotion as the Ministry Director in 1939, he was certified as being proficient in "the national socialist world view, not only with regard to knowledge, much more it has become a fundamental basis for his entire way of thinking, acting and feeling" (quoted from Wiemann-Stöhr 2018, pg. 183). Gärtner was responsible for the establishment of the NS school system in Alsace, he was "one of the most distinguished party members in Ministerial bureaucracy" (Engehausen 2016) and the "key man" (Liessem-Breinlinger 2005) at the side of the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Paul Schmitthenner. With support from the Gauleiter, the "fanatic party man" (Engehausen 2015 a) had major authority in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (cf. also Hauer 2013, pg. 178 ff.).

According to the report, Schelling visited Ministry Director Gärtner on the morning of October 23, 1944, in his Strasbourg apartment, where Gärtner and his housekeeper were waiting for a command to action to escape together with his "friend" across the Rhine. Schelling informed Gärtner that he had "just met a few men" at the Ministry who were "already ready to go". However, Gärtner was not ready for the escape, so according to Schelling:

"Gärtner sent me back into the city to the Ministry and to the Gau Administration to find out where he could apply himself. So I drove my car [a small Fiat belonging to printing plant owner Karl Fritz] back to the Ministry, where I only met two clergymen and a few Alsatian employees. Oberführer Lohse was just being carried into the Ministry's courtyard. He had been shot in the chest and was probably already dead. [...] Then I drove to the Gau Administration, where I only saw a man in uniform and a few civilians. From there I drove right back to Gärtner to share my observations with him. I had already seen enemy tanks gathered on Bismarckplatz the first time I drove to Gärtner's apartment. The second time I drove by - it must have been around 12:00 - I saw a much greater number of tanks on all the main city streets that I had to drive along. There was machine gun fire on Schiessrain, and I saw a number of dead soldiers and civilians there. Gärtner now explained that he stayed alone in Strasbourg because no one else could be found any more. He was in such an emotional state that he was crying out of anger. In the meantime, a German family that was seeking protection arrived at Gärtner's apartment. Gärtner wanted me to bring this family across the Rhine River safely, while he was waiting for my return. I explained to him that as his friend, I would not leave him behind. The family was understanding and made their way by foot" (GLA, 235 no. 34779).

Afterwards, Schelling goes on to say that he and Gärtner drove back to the Ministry again, where they picked up "Oberführer Lohse" (apparently this was SS-Brigadeführer Rudolf Lohse, SS-Führer and Police Chief Alsace) and tried to flee, together with Gärtner and Lohse's corpse. Their car was met with fire from a tank at Kehler Tor, which shot through the windshield and hit Gärtner in the stomach. He rolled out of the car and fired back and it was no longer possible for Schelling to help Gärtner:

"The shooting from other tanks that had joined and German soldiers from the Kehlertor barracks kept intensifying, and despite all attempts it was no longer possible for me to reach my injured friend. We were only able to communicate by shouting. Gärtner also tried to reach me but always had to give up due to intense shooting" (GLA, 235 no. 34779).

Schelling found out about Gärtner's death, which was dated 26/11/1944 without any conclusive explanation of the circumstances, while he was in the internment camp. He only found out about Gärtner's operation (at the medical clinic at the Reich University Strasbourg) from the "Gau Administration in Baden-Baden".

Schelling's statements could not be verified thoroughly. A French witness report confirms the appearance of Ministry Director Gärtner at the Ministry as well as the presence of clergymen, and also that after an outburst of rage (the witness described Gärtner as alcoholic, fanatical and on an extremely dangerous rampage) Gärtner carried the corpse of SS-Oberführers Lohse outside - and then threw it down (for details Muschalek 2016). Frank Engemann pointed out that Schelling's report could be "material collection for a heroic epic", which "covered the many set pieces that the martyrology of national socialist had used since they began in the mid-1920s" (for details see Engemann 2015 b). Although the truthfulness of the report as well as the intention of its author had to be subsequently clarified, Engemann postulated that Schelling's acquaintance with Gärtner was "apparently far more than just a professional contact."

After the failed escape in November 1944, Schelling was put into a French internment camp, together with other German civil servants who he knew. According to Josef Werner, it was "Alsation concentration camp Schirmbeck [sic!] that had been set up by the SS" (Werner 1994, pg. 13; this refers to the former NS "Security Camp Schirmeck-Vorbruck", which, after being liberated at the End of November 1944, was used as an internment camp). However, he apparently eluded imprisonment. His "adventurous escape" was printed in the "Der Führer" newspaper, which was the main organ of the NSDAP Gau Baden (reference to this under 14/03/1945, Ministry Advisor Kraft, GLA, 235 no. 34779, as well as under 06/09/1948 Graduate Engineer Erich Schelling. Former professor at the Baden State Technical College Karlsruhe, GLA 235-1 no. 10496). The Fiat, with which, according to the report above, Schelling's first escape attempt failed, belonged to publishing house director Karl Fritz. How Schelling got a hold of the car and what his relationship to the party member was remains unclear.

#### *Schelling's denazification proceedings*

After the successful escape from Alsace, Schelling first returned to Karlsruhe. Since the beginning of March 1945, his family, wife and son were registered in Bühl (in Baden-Baden), in Kappeler Wald (City Archives Bühl and City Archives Karlsruhe, Civil Register, Owner/Renter according to City Administration Bühl). Schelling himself was still officially registered at the old address (Richard-Wagner-Str. 16) in Karlsruhe until the middle of August, 1945, and also in Kappeler Wald as of 15/08/1945. The Schelling family lived there officially until November 1948 (Again registered in Karlsruhe at Karlstr. 101 by November 25, 1948). In the registration form for his denazification (end of May, 1948), Schelling entered his address as "Karlstrasse 128". He lived in Bühl from 1945 until 1948, as he records here (28/05/1948, registration form, GLA, 465 h no. 30083). According to Josef Werner, Schelling's activities were limited during this time "to the repair and reconstruction of partially destroyed public and private buildings", mostly comparably "modest tasks" (Werner 1994, pg. 13).

There was no reference to Schelling's work in Strasbourg in the mentioned registration form, and also not in the explanations that he compiled. It says he did not execute any "significant defence or military buildings and work [...], only devoted himself to

architectural, cultural and urban development tasks". Under key word "Politics" the following can be read in the explanations (highlights in the original):

"The Head of the State Building Authorities asked me to join the party (NSDAP) in 1934. I was an artist and was never interested in politics. At first I declined becoming a member of the party and subsequently I was sworn in as a member of the SA in 1934. In November 1937, the SA transferred me as a candidate for the party and I was probably accepted as a member in 1938. Because I did not receive a member book I do not know the exact date (the NSDAP member number that he entered in the registration form was "approx. 4900000, HK). I was not politically active and I did not perform a role. Although I only participated in the SA general Sunday service until 1936, I was give the rank of a Squad Leader in 1937, Troupe Leader 1943, and Storm Leader 1944, due to my professional achievements. I only have my talent as an architect and my rigorous qualifications to thank for my success. All of the work forwarded to me was performed by hiring the best employees and companies irrespective of their political ties."

This is contradicted by Schelling's personally filled out and signed "Application for acceptance into the National Socialist Labour Party". The post-war Director of the State Technical College, Karl Eberle, refers to Schelling's personal relationships to persons in high NS-roles who could have played a role in the awarding of orders and awards (06/09/1948, Graduate Engineer Erich Schelling. Former professor at the Baden State Technical College Karlsruhe, GLA 235-1 no. 10496). According to Eberle, some colleagues considered Schelling to be the "Reich Lieutenant's favourite architect". In any case, Schelling was a "particular favourite of the NSDAP", says Eberle in summary. This was the reason why Eberle spoke out expressly against Schelling's teaching position at the State Technical College (in any case, there was no demand at the time). Unlike what is written in literature, Schelling did not forego the teaching position, instead, in August 1948 - after completion of the denazification process - he was registered back at the State Technical College because the leave of absence from May 10, 1940 [...] was no longer in place since May 1945" (12/08/1948, GLA 235-1, no. 10496).

Eberle brought attention to the fact that Schelling's leave of absence had officially ended on May 10, 1942 - and that three years had passed since the end of the war. Eberle was not aware of what Schelling had been doing in the meantime. It was said that he "had hidden himself away in his summer house in the Black Forest".

In his self-assessment, Schelling had put "Follower or exonerated". On July 23, 1948 he was officially classified as a follower and was given a fine of 800 DM (about this and what follows GLA, 465 h no. 30083; copy of the expiation assessment in GLA, 235-1 no. 10496). In addition, he had to pay the proceeding costs of 203.20 DM. Schelling repeatedly requested "petitions for pardon" because he did not have the necessary funds to pay his expiation (he paid the proceeding costs in several instalments by August 1949). The first "petition for pardon" (03/08/1948) was rejected and the payment of the

entire debt was assessed as being within reason, however the responsible authority at the Ministry of the Interior later reduced the amount to 200 DM (27/05/1952) in order to finally end the proceedings - due to the new legal situation on August 12, 1953.

### *Discussion about Schelling's NS past 2009*

In spring 2009, the DAM in Frankfurt displayed an exhibit in Frankfurt am Main with the title

"For example Schelling. Post-war modern between preservation and demolition".

The occasion was the takeover of Schelling's estate, which had been private up to that point, into the museum archive's inventory. A symposium took place as part of the exhibition (18/02/2009, "Endangered post-war modern") where architect Arno Lederer spoke about Erich Schelling's NS past. Among other things, Lederer was subsequently accused that his presentations arose from the context of his own project, which required the demolition of one of the building's Schelling was responsible for: In 2007, the "Lederer Ragnarsdóttir + Oei" firm won the prize competition from the new owners of the Volksbank building in Karlsruhe (1954--1955) which included the building's intended demolition(cf. Santifaller 2009). Lederer defended his presentation in an article that once again summarised the comments he had made about Schelling's work during the NS-era:

"In the presentation, without attaching value to it I reported that Schelling was a member of the SA and the NSDAP, that he built a publishing house for the 'Stürmer' in Karlsruhe, that he was the planner for the Gau capital city Strasbourg, the University and the Gau School Strasbourg, and that he was appointed professor shortly before the war" (Lederer 2009, pg. 9).

As a matter of fact, Schelling had completed the "Führer Publishing" publishing house; the publisher published the "Der Führer" newspaper" - see above about memberships in NS-organisations (including SA and NSDAP) and Schelling's activities in Strasbourg. Lederer also drew attention to how it might make a difference "whether someone 'only' joined the party or, as in Schelling's example, planned a publishing house for the 'Stürmer' in his mid-30s as Schelling had done". He hereby "deliberately held back" from making a judgement (Lederer 2009, pg. 3) and that it was only referred to here (and because Lederer received criticism that "Schelling's work and biographical data" were "properly researched"). While the publishing house is named correctly in the literature below, until this day [!] the first entry under "buildings" in Erich Schelling's Wikipedia page is: "1939 publishing house for NS-propaganda newspaper in *Der Stürmer* Lammstrasse (today, Badische Neueste Nachrichten), Karlsruhe".

In his presentation, Lederer questioned Schelling's exemplary character as in his published defence - as well as the name of the architecture prize named after him. In his

opinion, the awarding of the Schelling Architecture Prize to Peter Zumthor in 1996 ("three years after his competition success for "Topography of Terror") was "a scandal". In general, Lederer referred to a key question with regard to the 'venerability' of a person (here: the architect):

"You can make it easy for yourself and follow the opinion of representatives from the architecture museum about how Schelling was one of the many architects whose biographical interrelation was connected to National Socialism. This is true and it is part of history, especially that of the reconstruction, which simply cannot be swept under the table. However, this far from suffices as an excuse. How else should we deal with the minority who acted differently?" (Lederer 2009, pg.9).

Werner Durth, Member of the foundation board of Schelling's architecture foundation, which Lederer resolutely named in his "Bauwelt" article, took a stand against Lederer's reply and the positions he put forth (also in "Bauwelt", Durth 2009). Durth, who had been intensely occupied with the role of German architects in the 20th century (cf. Durth 1986/2001), brought attention to the fact that "architects in particular - unless they weren't subject to political and racist persecution prior to 1933 - followed the allure of the "Führer" with excitement" (Durth 2009, pg. 9). Other aspects must also be included when making an evaluation with regard to the historical context, such as the fact that by planning, for instance that of the "New Strasbourg", architects could be released from military service, at least temporarily. In his work published in 1986, Durth kept asking his readers, "How would you have acted in a comparable position?"

"This question is just as relevant as in 1986, when the book was published, and yet it is only rhetorical. Currently, because thanks to research about architecture during the Third Reich, we know that the question regarding the conditions and possible implications of an assignment must always be asked if our profession wants to confront the widespread preconception of architects as compliant henchmen of the respective powers that be. It is rhetorical because only when we look back at the catastrophe of National Socialism, we can recognize the history of complicity and learn from it. However, with what law and measure do we want to assign retroactive blame to those who drafted designs, from our comfortable situation 70 years later? (Durth 2009, pg. 9).

The assessment of Erich Schelling's "venerability" would be about assessing his work during the NS-era depicted above. Schelling's professional activities, his membership in NS-organisations as well as particular special honours and relationships to protagonists from the NS-regime will play a role in this.

It is certain that Robert Wagner, the Gauleiter, Reich Lieutenant and Chief of Civil Administration in Alsace, on whose behalf Schelling worked, was an ardent follower of Hitler and one of the most influential representatives of the NS-regime on the Gau level.:

"Thanks to his brutality and ruthlessness, his organisation and leadership talent, his iron will and his diligence, he succeeded in rising to become an 'outstanding NS-leader in Baden', and thanks to his certain instinct for power he was able to hold this position undisputed for 20 years. He was without a doubt one of the most powerful men in the Third Reich" (Syré 1997, pg. 734).

Robert Wagner, who was responsible for "ruthless expulsion politics stemming from deep anti-Semitic convictions" (Muschalek 2014) remained loyal to Hitler until the end (Syré 1997, pg. 769-778); was sentenced to death by a French military court and executed on August 14, 1946. Ministry Director Karl Gärtner, another protagonist from the "Gauclique" from the inner circle of party leadership in Baden, described Schelling at the beginning of 1945 as his "friend".