

Geschäftsstelle

Beate Bornemann

Montag und Donnerstag 14.00 – 16.00 Uhr

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Detmold, 25.07.2022

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear members, dear friends,

the board of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation in Lippe e.V. has written a statement on the dispute about the courtyard synagogue in Bruchmauerstraße 37 in Detmold.

Statement of the Board of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation in Lippe e.V. on the dispute about the courtyard synagogue at Bruchmauerstraße 37 in Detmold

For some time now, we have been following the dispute about the courtyard synagogue at Bruchmauerstraße 37 in Detmold with great concern and anger.

It is amazing and a stroke of luck that this unique, historically extremely valuable testimony to Jewish history of our city of Detmold has held up until today. The erection of the core structure has been dated to the year 1633. And the synagogue is not only of great importance for our city's history: it is considered the earliest evidence of the type of freestanding synagogue in northwestern Germany. It is a unique testimony to Jewish history. Only two early modern courtyard synagogues survive in all of northern Germany. The current owner wants to demolish the building and build a parking lot on the property. An effort to preserve the Jewish prayer house is not evident. On the contrary, photographs taken in recent years show that the synagogue is falling more and more into disrepair and it seems only a matter of time that this so important building will soon cease to exist. Such a loss is indescribable.

In city walks and in the latest edition of her book "Auf jüdischen Spuren. Ein Stadtrundgang durch Detmold" Gudrun Mitschke-Buchholz points out the historical value and background of the early modern synagogue. Based on this, a [city tour in digital form](#) and an exhibition opposite the courtyard synagogue at the Bruchmauer were created by the Israel-AG of the Grabbe-Gymnasium under the direction of Dr. Oliver Arnhold and Elisabeth Hecker.

The chairman of the Jewish community of Herford-Detmold, Prof. Matitjahu Kellig, is highly committed to the preservation of the synagogue: He reports in various articles in

the media about the high importance and the scandal of the decay of the synagogue. His demand: The courtyard synagogue should be restored and there should be e.g. a museum to the Jewish history in Detmold - a place of meeting and dialogue. The high significance of this testimony of early modern Jewish traces in Detmold has been spread besides in the last weeks in different media all over Germany.

In addition to the courtyard synagogue, there are two other notable testimonies of early modern Jewish history in Detmold in the immediate vicinity: (1) A mikvah, a Jewish immersion bath for ritual purification, located under the street approximately on Freiligrathstraße 2. Only a small plaque indicates its existence underground. (2) The house where Leopold Zunz was born, which stood in Krummen Street and was demolished in 1909. A plaque commemorates him, who was an important reformer of Judaism. Including this, a small early modern Jewish quarter in Detmold can be assumed around Bruchmauerstraße. An important chapter and thus part of Detmold's city history.

Unfortunately, in conversations with citizens of Detmold, we often had to realize that this part of the history of our city is largely unknown or only incompletely known. The early modern Jewish history of Detmold is not anchored in the collective memory in Detmold. We would like to change this.

We therefore demand the visualization of Jewish traces in Detmold, the preservation of these traces, to bring them into the commemorative culture of the city and thus into the collective memory. A mikvah buried under the ground, a famous Jewish reformer who is largely unknown in Detmold and an early modern courtyard synagogue left to its decay are a scandal and cast an unjustified light on Detmold's culture of commemoration and remembrance. It appears that the city's early modern Jewish history is being hidden. We, the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, know that this is not so. Through our always good cooperation with, among others, the city and the archives, we know that the reappraisal and the commemoration and remembering of Jewish traces in Detmold is a matter of the heart common to us.

Together we - and by this we mean not only the institutions, associations and organizations, but every single citizen of Detmold - should work for the preservation, the visualization and the dissemination to the public of these Jewish traces in Detmold. We should value these traces of Jewish life for what they are: a very special cultural asset and a valuable part of our city's history. We should be aware that it is a stroke of luck that the courtyard synagogue and the mikvah have been preserved all these years and we should work to ensure that they will be preserved in the next 100 years as well. We as the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation support any legal-legitimate efforts to preserve the synagogue.

Furthermore, we call on Mr. Schnelle to sell the courtyard synagoge to the city so that an appropriate restoration and use in the sense described by Prof. Kellig will be possible.

If you share our thoughts, we would like to call on you to make this clear with your signature. A list is available in the office of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation in Haus Münsterberg. The office is always open on Mondays and Thursdays from 2 to 4 pm. If it is not possible for you to come to Haus Münsterberg during this time, please call us (05231-29758) or write us an email (GfCJZ-Lippe@t-online.de).

We are also currently planning a vigil in front of the courtyard synagoge. As soon as the preparations are completed, we will inform you about the meeting place and time of the demonstration.

We all hope that the dispute about the synagogue will come to an end in the near future and that we will find a solution. Let us work together for the preservation of the courtyard synagogue and traces of Jewish life in the history of Detmold!

For you all warm greetings - in the name of the entire Executive Board