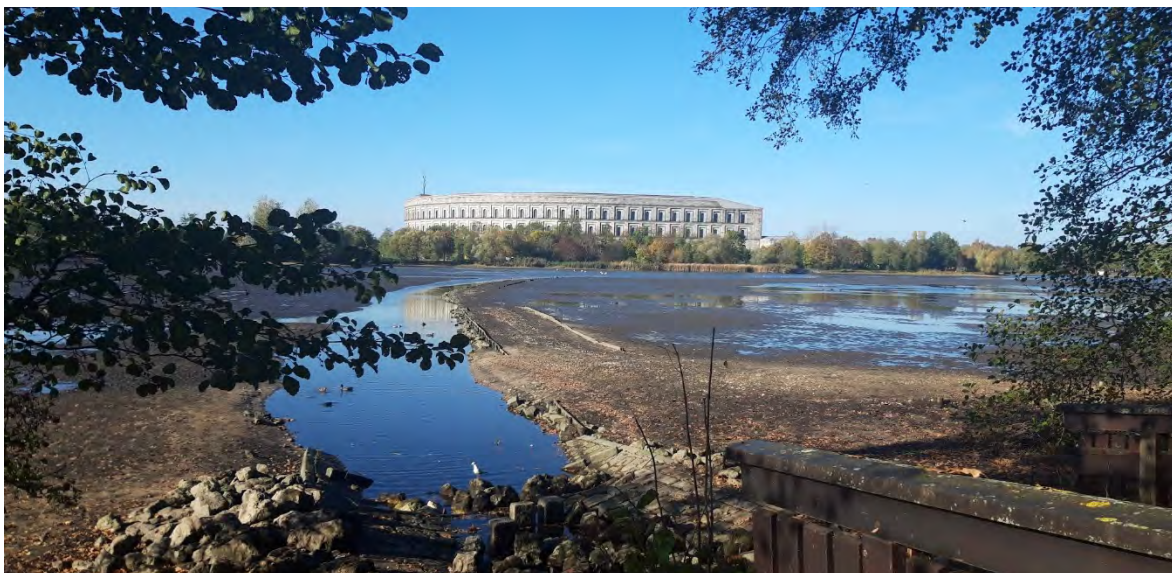


## A Walk around the Dutzendteich (Part Two)

We had a very good walk around the Dutzendteich in perfect weather for the time of year, and, after stopping for lunch, returned to the Dutzendteich or, more specifically, the Zeppelfeld. So, allow me to pick up again from where I left off.



When I was preparing this walk, I discovered that the Dutzendteich had been drained of water to allow fishermen to harvest the carp. This photo taken in October with the Congress Hall in the background also shows the point where the Langwasser stream flows into the lake. Incidentally, one of the great

misconceptions is to think that the Dutzendteich consists of 12 lakes or ponds. In fact, "Dutzend" derives from "dutze" meaning "bulrush" or "reed" and there are many of those in this area. The largest expanse of water, the one seen here, probably came into being in the first third of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with public documents recording that it was acquired by the imperial city in 1495. In the centuries that followed it served as a water reservoir well suited for fish farming, a source of power serving two hammer mills, and also, quite simply, a recreational area for the local population. Back then, culinary needs were catered for by numerous inns and other drinking establishments, far more in fact than today. Later, in May 1912, Nuremberg Zoo was founded on the site of the Bavarian State Exhibition at the Luitpoldhain. After the Nazis seized power, the zoo had to give way for the Reichsparteitagsgelände at the Dutzendteich. However, the popularity of the zoo was such that a new site was soon found in the Imperial Forest at Schmausenbuck. This was opened in 1939.

While in this part of the Rally Grounds it might be worthwhile to take a brief look at the so-called "Silbersee", the highly toxic lake which formed in the remains of the excavated foundations of the Nazi Stadium, which, if built, would have been the largest in Germany.

The Congress Hall, seen in my photo above, was modelled on Roman amphitheatres such as the Theatre of Marcellus in ancient Rome. Its foundation stone was laid on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1935, but at the outbreak of the war work on this monumental project came to an abrupt end. Today it remains in place as the biggest preserved national socialist monumental building and, as such, currently enjoys protected status. It was planned by the Nuremberg architects Ludwig and Franz Ruff and was intended to serve as a congress centre for the NSDAP and would have provided 50,000 seats. The north wing of the unfinished building is now occupied by the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds, which is currently being rebuilt, a small interim exhibition having been opened at the back to provide a modicum of information for the many visitors to the site.

From 1933, the National Socialists used the area for their Party Rallies. The Zeppelin Field – named after the landing of one of Count Zeppelin's airships in 1909 – became the central venue and parade ground for the Rallies. The architect, Albert Speer, chose the ancient Greek Pergamon Altar as a model for the grandstand. The building, erected in 1935–1937, was made of concrete and brickwork, faced with limestone slabs. The original complex was considered a representative example of National Socialist state architecture.

The Zeppelin Field with the main grandstand and Führer's rostrum was the only planned construction work to be completed. It provided space for up to 200,000 people. Here mass parades of the German Labour Service, the Wehrmacht, and of the "political leaders" (office bearers of the NSDAP) would assemble before the "Führer", Adolf Hitler. The "Cathedral of Light" provided spectacular effects, when over 150 particularly strong floodlights beamed right up into the sky.

The visibly lower spectators' stands on the other three sides were divided by 34 tower-like structures, housing toilet facilities. The interior (312 x 285 metres) provided space for up to 200,000 people for the mass events staged by the National Socialists.

Since 1945, the Zeppelin Field has been used in various ways. In the first instance it served as a sports field and parade ground for the US Army up until their withdrawal in 1995. On top of that, the annual Norisring car races are held here – one of Germany's most important motor sports events. The Zeppelin Field is still used as a venue for major rock and pop concerts, for example "Rock im Park".

So, there you have it. Despite its fascinating, albeit dark associations, this part of Nuremberg is well worth a visit. It's a place of scenic beauty constantly changing as the seasons go by and, quite clearly, a place for remembrance and quiet contemplation.

Frank Gillard