

The residential villa areas in Wannsee 1870 – 1945.

Pleasure ground of the upper middle class and the location of the Wannsee Conference.

Special exhibit May 2000 – January 2006

The Collignon Villa

Already at the time of Emperor Wilhelm I, the factory owner Hans Collignon purchased large parts of the remaining land of the Alsen Colony which he sold little by little. In 1923, he commissioned the architect Bruno Paul to build a country house on the grounds in no. 72, 74, 76 Am Grossen Wannsee. In addition, domestic offices with a building for the estate manager and a garage were to be constructed. Collignon leased the estate manager's building as office building with small flats to the Ransmayer company from Berlin.

In 1930, the director of the 'Margarine Verkaufs Union' in Rotterdam Sidney van den Bergh purchased the country house. Van den Bergh had taken over his father's business in 1920 and wanted to set up branches in London and Berlin. He moved to Wannsee with his wife Mieke and his three sons and organized the sales business in Germany.

The Jewish businessman, who was born in Rotterdam in 1898, was a keen swimmer, tennis-player and motorist. After he had bought the country house, he had it renovated and some alterations made to it. In 1933, van den Bergh left Germany. From then on, the Metropol Grundstücks PLC managed the property. In 1940, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Main Office) expressed its interest in the 'Jewish property'. Gestapo officials blackmailed the Metropol Grundstücks PLC with offensive threats, accusing it of 'preferential treatment of Jews', and forced it to sell the property for far less than its value. Its negotiating partner was the *Auswanderungsfonds Böhmen und Mähren* (Emigration Fund for Bohemia and Moravia) in Vienna, an SS company. Until the end of the war, the van den Bergh villa was occupied by the SS which intended to set up a radio station in the house.

In 1945, the house was requisitioned by the Americans. When Heckeshorn was redesignated as tuberculosis hospital, it was used to lodge the hospital's doctors.

On 26th September 1956, James van den Bergh sold the property to the Zehlendorf district authority for DM 235,000. Until 1987, the house was used for 'staff accommodation purposes'. Later, the hospital leased it to the Drogentherapie Zentrum Berlin e.V., Jugenddorf Berlin, a drug therapy centre. Conceived as a transition institution, it provides therapeutic accompaniment for adults and children. The Collignon country house has been classified as a historical monument since 4th March 1988. The inner rooms are under a preservation order, too. The former garage has been converted into a common-room for the children living in the transit home which is located in the former house of the *Stammmannschaft* of the Air Raid Protection School.



The Collignon villa today
as drug rehabilitation centre