

HITLERS BIRTHPLACE WILL BE CONVERTED INTO A POLICE STATION

OFFICIALS HOPE THE BUILDING'S NEW FUNCTION WILL DETER SYMPATHIZERS
FROM MAKING PILGRIMAGES TO THE SITE.

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A stone in front of Adolf Hitler's birthplace reads, "For peace, freedom and democracy. Never more fascism. Millions of dead warn."



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See a short informative video. Copy and paste the below link into your browser

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4bFjVR2Cpk>

Adolf Hitler was born on the top floor of a yellow house in Braunau am Inn, Austria, on April 20, 1889. Authorities debated what to do with the building, **which had become a neo-Nazi rallying point, for years**, but on Tuesday, Austria's interior minister announced that officials have finally come to a decision: The dictator's birthplace will be converted into a police station.

"The future use of the house by the police should send an unmistakable signal that the role of this building as a memorial to the Nazis [has] been permanently revoked," Wolfgang Peschorn, the interior minister, says in a statement.

The decision arrives after a years-long standoff with Gerlinde Pommer, a descendant of the property's original owners. Per a 2017 *Deutsche Welle* report, Pommer's grandparents bought the building in 1913 but were forced to sell it to the Nazi state in 1938. Her mother bought the property back in the wake of the war.

According to Agence France-Presse, Pommer began renting the house to the interior ministry during the 1970s. The government paid her to use the space as a center for people with disabilities, but as Melissa Eddy reports for the *New York Times*, this agreement ended in 2011, when Pommer refused to either renovate the building and bring it up to code or sell the property to the government.

All the while, Hitler's birthplace remained a shrine for Nazi sympathizers.

"It is not so seldom that neo-Nazis stop in front of the house to be photographed making the Hitler greeting," Harry Buchmayr, a Social Democrat who lives in Braunau, told Austria's parliament in 2016.

That same year, the government passed a law allowing authorities to seize the property, sparking a legal battle with Pommer over both the constitutionality of the seizure and the amount of compensation owed.

In 2017, Austria's constitutional court ruled that the expropriation of the property was lawful, and earlier this year, a court granted Pommer €810,000 (nearly \$900,000) in compensation—"less than she had sought," notes AFP, "but still more than she had been originally offered."

Even as officials were taking steps to wrest the property from Pommer's control, questions remained over its fate. While expropriation proceedings were still underway in 2016, the government announced plans to demolish Hitler's birthplace. But many critics argued against destroying the building; some opposed the move because the house is an architectural heritage site, while others maintained that destroying the house would be akin to erasing Austria's Nazi history.

Similar debates have arisen over other sites with connections to the Third Reich. Earlier this year, for instance, officials in Nuremberg decided to conserve the city's Nazi party rally grounds despite objections that the complex should be bulldozed or simply left to decay.

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