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international working-party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

Newsletter

7

June 1992



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Hubert-Jan Hendrik.

Newsletter 7

June 1992



The Latvian Stock Bank,
designed by Karr and Beatge
in 1930, is located at 13
Kalkustreet in Riga.
See essay on Modern
Movement architecture in
Latvia on pp. 34-37.

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**The Second DOCOMOMO Conference
enjoys patronage from**

Dr. Frederico Mayor,
Director General of Unesco

Prof. Peter Canisius,
President of the German Unesco
commission



**The Second DOCOMOMO Conference
is organized under the auspices of**

Catherine Lalumière,
Secretary General of the Council of Europe



**The Second DOCOMOMO Conference
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District Government of Sachsen-Anhalt



Bauhaus Dessau



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3	Editorial
4	News
5	
6	
7	
8	
10	
11	
12	Reviews
14	
15	
18	
20	
22	
23	National reports
28	Working parties
32	Articles
34	
38	
42	
44	
46	
50	
53	
56	
60	

Second International DOCOMOMO Conference
The Getty Grant Program
Sotheby's helps register Eileen Gray furniture
Modernist park saved
Krasnoye Zamia Factory
Bundesschule Bernau
Modernism in Montréal
Postgraduate course & Second SAS Symposium
Modern Architecture Restored Symposium
Exhibitions and conference & Visions Revisited
Extensive research on the history of building technology
Redoing it in style
New publication on Tapiola
Functionalist calender

Lithuania's architecture 1918-1940
Modern Movement architecture in Latvia
Czech and Slovak neofunctionalism
The Mercurius building at Wormer, the Netherlands
The Haus am Horn
Bergpolderflats, a built modern manifesto
The New House / Novy Dum
Two faces of functionalism in Gdynia, Poland
Henri Van de Velde's only work in the USA
Restoration of Aalto's House of Culture

In the 1920's and 30's the Modern Movement was an important international architectural development, especially in Europe. The cultural, economic and technical results of this movement are still noticeable today. Characteristic of this movement is among others that buildings were designed with a relatively short functional as well as technical life expectancy in mind. Therefore most of these buildings are in a bad condition at present, or they have been altered, sometimes beyond recognition. Due to their social and cultural value it is important to saveguard some of these for the future, in one or another way.

The International Working-party for the Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement DOCOMOMO was initiated in 1988 by the University of Technology in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, further to a research project on how the preservation of these buildings can be obtained in a coherent and effective way. The foundation of the Working-party is meant to advance an effective inventory, documentation and preservation of the most important Modern Movement buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of that period. The aim of the Working-party is to come to a network for exchange of experience and know-how and to draw the attention of the general public to the significance of this part of the cultural heritage.

The initiative is directed to:

- those who are involved in policy-making (legislation, financing, management),
- those who are professionally interested in the protection of early modern buildings, sites and neighbourhoods (architects, urban designers, art-historians, critics) and
- those who are responsible for their actual restoration (researchers, technical specialists, consultants)

FROM THE EDITOR

With the dates of the Second International DOCOMOMO Conference rapidly approaching, the seventh issue of the Newsletter has been composed of information and essays from a number of countries.

Some so far quite unknown chapters in the historiography of the Modern Movement are opened in the essays on Latvia and Lithuania, where modern architecture in a way symbolizes the history of independence. The modern architecture of Gdynia is discussed in another contribution, while Sedlák's text on Novy Dum touches one of the main themes of the next conference.

Yet, the practical issues have not been forgotten. The contributions on the Haus am Horn, the Mercurius building, and Bergpolderflats deal with the many problems of reuse; historical, functional and technical. The restoration of Aalto's House of Culture is an interesting example of a balanced approach.

Within the DOCOMOMO network some actions have been lost, like the case for the Bergpolderflats. But reading about a succesful neighbourhood campaign in Brazil, an auctioneer helping in registering sold pieces and a modernist' ball to safeguard the Fenix building in Poland, will make you feel better!

An important aspect of DOCOMOMO is reflected upon by Kubicková and Sedláková, with their contributions on the meaning of the Modern Movement for contemporary architecture.

I hope to meet you all in September.

Wessel de Jonge, secretary DOCOMOMO International

An important message to all you members is that mr. John Michael Drabbe, member of the Managing Board of ABN AMRO n.v., has been found willing to become honorary treasurer of the DOCOMOMO Foundation, the legal body of DOCOMOMO International. Apart from his position at ABN AMRO, Michael Drabbe holds executive positions for, among others, the Rotterdamse Schouwburg Foundation and the Netherlands Dance Theatre.

Second International DOCOMOMO Conference

16-19 September 1992, Bauhaus Dessau, Germany

The Second DOCOMOMO International Conference centers on two main themes, being 'neighbourhoods and functional concept' and 'registers of Modern Movement architecture'.

The development of the housing estate was a major issue for the architects and planners of the Modern Movement. The results of their social, architectural and technical experiments still form an important part of the way things are done today. However, many of these estates have been dramatically changed over time. The main theme of the conference is the question what to do with this important fact of the 20th Century heritage particularly in view of possible conflicts between the social needs of today and historical as well as architectural values.

The programs and registration forms have been mailed May 25th, 1992. Please note the limited capacity of the Bauhaus of 200 participants. After speakers members of national working parties will enjoy preference. Other experts will be accepted by order of date of reception of their final registration forms.

Please note that the area-code for the former GDR and for Dessau will be changed.

Karl-Heinz Burmeister, DOCOMOMO Conference Office
c/o Bauhaus Dessau
Gropiusallee 38, Postfach 160
O-4500 Dessau, Germany
tel. 37-37-4919 (after July 26th: 49-340-4919)
fax 37-47-5222 (after July 26th: 49-340-5222)

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The Getty Grant Program

Financial support for conservation

The Getty Grant Program is part of the J. Paul Getty Trust, a private operating foundation dedicated to the visual arts, art history, and related fields of the humanities.

The Grant Program was established in 1984 to foster work of exceptional merit in the history of art and the humanities for which resources are otherwise limited.

It supports a diverse range of projects, that promote, among others, the conservation of architecture.

This article briefly outlines the possibilities and conditions for financial support in that field.

Criteria

The Architectural Conservation grants are intended to support projects, that will serve as models for the development of appropriate conservation philosophies in the countries and regions in which they are located.

Nonprofit organisations may apply for funds to conserve buildings that are of outstanding architectural, historical and cultural significance. In order to qualify for consideration, a building must have received the highest national-listing designation available, and be open to the public or used for the good of the community.

The project must be endorsed by the owner, the conservation organization which will monitor the conservation work and, if applicable, a local government authority.

Projects must relate solely to the repair and conservation of the historic fabric of the building. Funds are not available for operating expenses or endowment funds, indirect costs, building construction, routine maintenance, adaptive reuse, capital improvement etcetera. It will be an advantage if the project includes a training component for professionals and craftsmen.

Categories

Three categories of support are available:

- 1 Project Identification Grants (for preliminary research about the building's conservation needs) and
- 2 Project Preparation Grants (for the detailed planning necessary to develop a conservation plan including drawings, specifications, structural survey and budgets)
- 3 Project Implementation Grants (funds are available on a highly selective basis to fund the execution of a comprehensive conservation plan.)

Funds are also available, on a limited basis, to support other exceptional opportunities for

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training in architectural conservation.

(Also, it should be mentioned that the Getty Grant Program provides support for other categories as well, such as research scholarships, publications, cataloguing of museum collections etcetera. The Getty Grant Program has a short term initiative for special projects in Central and Eastern Europe. Information about any of these programs can be requested from the address below.

Regardless of the category, most grants are between \$2,000 and \$250,000, the majority are under \$50,000.)

Applications

If any of our readers believe they may have a conservation project that conforms with the eligibility criteria mentioned above, they should send a 'preliminary letter of inquiry' confirming the points, mentioned under 'criteria'.

In addition, they should describe the scope of work for which assistance is requested, the amount of funding necessary, and which one of the three grant categories they wish to apply for (see 'categories').

Photographs highlighting the structure's significance and its current state of repair should also be included.

Only after a project has been determined to be eligible for consideration, will the appropriate application forms be forwarded to the applicant. Deadlines for formal application are April 10 and October 10 each year. The application review process takes about six months.

Therefore applications must be made at least six months in advance of the commencement of the work.

Modern architecture

So far, very few awards have been made for the conservation of 20th Century buildings. This stems from the fact that virtually no eligible inquiries have been received and is certainly not a program prejudice against modern architecture.

Information brochures can be obtained in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

For more information, DOCOMOMO members in Europe can also contact Karin Blanc, The Getty European Office, 13 rue Casimir Perier, 75007 Paris, France, fax. (310) 7539197.

All inquiries should be made to:

Timothy Whalen

Program Officer

Getty Grant Program

401 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000

Santa Monica, CA 90401, USA

tel. (310) 393 42 44

fax: (310) 395 86 42

Sotheby's helps register Eileen Gray furniture

As a result of the DOCOMOMO campaign to prevent the dispersion of the set of Eileen Gray furniture from Villa E-1057*, the auctioneers of Sotheby's offered their help in making a register of the pieces.

The auction itself took place on October 13th of last year and could not be stopped by a blitz-campaign initiated by DOCOMOMO. The owner of the villa is said to have had the furniture sold in order to finance the restoration of the house itself. Yet, experts who closely watch the developments concerning the house, remain critical about these objectives.

Since the set was likely to have been part of the most complete entity of house and furniture relating to Eileen Gray in existence, the DOCOMOMO campaign centered not only on the individual pieces, but mainly on the importance to keep the collection together. This way, we hoped to ensure possibilities for future documentation and scientific research on both the villa and the furniture in their coherence.

Principally, Sotheby's does not give information on purchasers at all, due to protection of their client's privacy. However, the auction house replied to a written request of the Irish Working party and offered to facilitate the composition of a register by DOCOMOMO, by forwarding related correspondence to the relevant purchasers.

In cooperation between the International Secretariat and the Irish group, a series of letters will be sent to the purchasers in order to find out where the various pieces are now and to sound the kindness of the new owners to allow scientific research being carried out after the original furniture.

Although the dispersion of the set could not be prevented we hope that the main aim of our action will be achieved this way, so that the campaign will at least have been partially successful. We'll keep you informed.

* See Newsletter 6, pp. 9 and 10.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Do you want 600 colleagues and experts on Modern Movement architecture in Europe and the America's to know about your research or case? Are there new developments in conservation policy in your country? Do you need International support to save your favorite MoMo building? Send in your texts with pictures before October 1, 1992.

At the DOCOMOMO Council meeting in Eindhoven delegates expressed their appreciation of the Newsletters. Main aims of the publication should be to inform members about each others activities and to publish requests for support for actions that are being undertaken in other countries. In doing so, the Newsletter should form a 'bridge' between the international conferences, that are to be organized every two years.

This general concept for the Newsletters requires activities from DOCOMOMO members. News and matters of present interest should be sent to the International Secretariat. These could be information on national policy concerning Modern Movement architecture, interesting cases, essays on recent research, technical developments etc., including pictures (will be returned). Also should be sent in reports on activities of your national DOCOMOMO working party and acts of meetings. On the basis of this information, we can compose a national DOCOMOMO report on your country as well.

Newsletter 8 is planned for November. Deadline for that issue is October 1, 1992, for texts and illustrations. Please send your texts both on paper and on floppydisc if possible.

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Modernist Park saved

A successful community effort in Brazil

by *Ayrton Camargo e Silva*

A small note published on December 1983 in a São Paulo newspaper aroused the awareness of the city's population. The first modernist house in Brazil, built in 1927 by Gregori Warchavchik following the directives of international architectural trends*, was about to be demolished. With its three acres of gardens, the first landscape project to give due importance to native plant species in Brazil, the estate represented the remaining green area in the district that was equally threatened with devastation. On that month a large real estate company had set up its sales office on the property, to sell apartments of a residential building development consisting of four 15-storey towers.

Prompt action

Right away the indignant neighbourhood residents began to gather daily in front of the house, in a spontaneous demonstration against the imminent destruction of a historic building and the devastation of its surrounding green area.

Also, a designation motion for the landmarking was submitted to the landmarks commission, which served to precariously guarantee the preservation of the estate. In Brazil, once the designation motion is submitted to the competent agency, the property in question is declared untouchable until the agency's final ruling.

A number of unlawful procedures were identified at once: the construction company did not have a permit to install its sales office in the house, the building permit for the residential complex had not been officially granted etc. In other words, it was an unlawful operation that permitted the residents' committee to submit a complaint, evoke the effective law and make an attempt to preserve the park. In their effort, the committee even requested continued police surveillance to prevent the house from being demolished by assault following the removal of the unauthorised sales office.

Official listing

Concurrently, the news media reported daily on the committee's struggle for the estate. As it turned out, this news coverage was highly important as it put pressure on the landmarks agencies to manifest themselves promptly in favour of its preservation. In São Paulo a petition gathered more than 10.000 signatures in defence of the property. Every Sunday the committee held dance, art and music events in front of the park in an attempt to establish the location as a cultural centre and their own struggle as a cultural movement.

On October 20, 1984, the estate comprised by the house and its grounds was finally granted landmark

status by the state landmarks commission. In January 1986 the designation motion was validated by the federal landmarks commission. Nonetheless, for the residents' committee legal protection was only the first step. After all, in addition to the physical preservation of the estate, their effort involved securing the public usage of the property, which had been abandoned in 1977.

Cultural centre

An opinion poll conducted at the Lasar Segall Museum during an exhibition on the movement for preservation of the Modernist Park, indicated the public's desire to have the property transformed into a cultural centre. Based on this conclusion, the group of residents proposed that the Department for Culture, together with the landmarks preservation agencies, the Lasar Segall Museum and the Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, should design a cultural project to be carried out in the park after its opening to the public.

Early 1988, the project was submitted for approval. Excited with its quality and content, the Secretary of Culture dedicated to allocate public money to sponsor the cultural activities in the park. Besides that, the group began to seek sponsors for the emergency work, necessary for the restoration of the decaying estate. Thanks to the pressure exerted by the residents committee, than officially gathered under the Associação Pró Parke Modernista (the Pro Modernist Park Society), the restoration work was done in 1989. The money was being provided by a bank in compensation for having unlawfully demolished another historic building.

Modernist Park

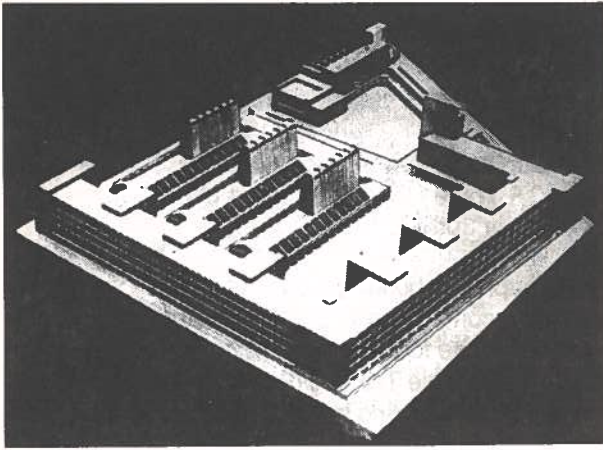
After that, the Society and the estate owners signed a contract by which the Society detains the legal title of the property. This contract permitted the definitive opening of the Modernist Park to the public from September 1, 1990.

Eversince, the Modernist Park has welcomed visitors on Sundays thanks to the voluntary work of society members. The program of cultural events, also initiated and organised by volunteers within a tight budget, includes concerts, art exhibitions, theatre, video features with programs on modernism etc.

By now, the Park's extremely high maintenance costs leave no surplus money for the already reduced team of workers to expand their activities or to carry out the necessary restoration and repair work.

For more information, please write to:
Associação Pró Parke Modernista
c/o Ayrton Camargo e Silva
Rua Louis góes, 1120/5
04043 São Paulo-SP, Brazil

* see *DOCOMOMO Newsletter 6*, pp 42,43.



Top: model of the originally planned factory for 8000 workers. The relatively well-known powerplant can be found at the far end (see also photo in Newsletter 6, p. 4). Middle: a sketch by Mendelsohn of the dye workshops (in the middle of the model) with the ventilation shafts. The recent photo at the bottom shows one of the workshops as they were executed.



Krasnoye Znamia Factory

Erich Mendelsohn in St. Petersburg

by Maria Makagonova

The 'Krasnoye Znamia' textile plant designed by E. Mendelsohn is one of the most noticeable monuments of the Modern Movement in St. Petersburg. Originally, Mendelsohn was given a commission to do expertise on some projects for the factory that had previously been designed by Leningrad architects and to make a counter-project. This counter-project was approved as a basis for further elaboration in October, 1925, during a visit of E. Mendelsohn to Leningrad. The definite design was approved for the second time in the Spring of 1926.

Mendelsohn proposed the erection of several buildings along the perimeter of a quadrangle (administration, main building, powerstation, workshops). The big inner yard was crossed by three dye-workshops, buildings crowned by horizontal ventilation shafts based on a new system, used by Mendelsohn for the first time in the Hat-plant in Lukkenvald in 1921.

The construction began in the Summer of 1926, and was completed in 1928. Mendelsohn's design was realized only partially and with simplifications. A four storey building with a clear concrete structure, the powerstation (the best known part of the whole complex) and two dye-workshops were actually constructed, the latter however without the ingenious ventilation system. Unfortunately, this made the whole complex poorer and simpler. The concrete framework and the ribbed walls are analogous to the construction system used in Lukkenvald.

At present only the expressive powerstation building can be seen. The other buildings are hidden behind later additions and annexes deep into the yard.

Experts in St. Petersburg feel that it is absolutely necessary to reopen this yard and let the people who wish to see the factory walk about it. Also, the ugly extension spoiling the side facade of the powerstation should be demolished. All this will make the 'Krasnoye Znamia' factory better known. Anyhow, like the other industrial buildings of St. Petersburg, it is not included into the list of national monuments. So its destiny and safety entirely depends upon the will of the company. It goes without saying that this causes many problems in restoration and protection.

Maria Makagonova is researcher of the Museum for the History of St. Petersburg

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Bundesschule in Bernau

Association active for its preservation

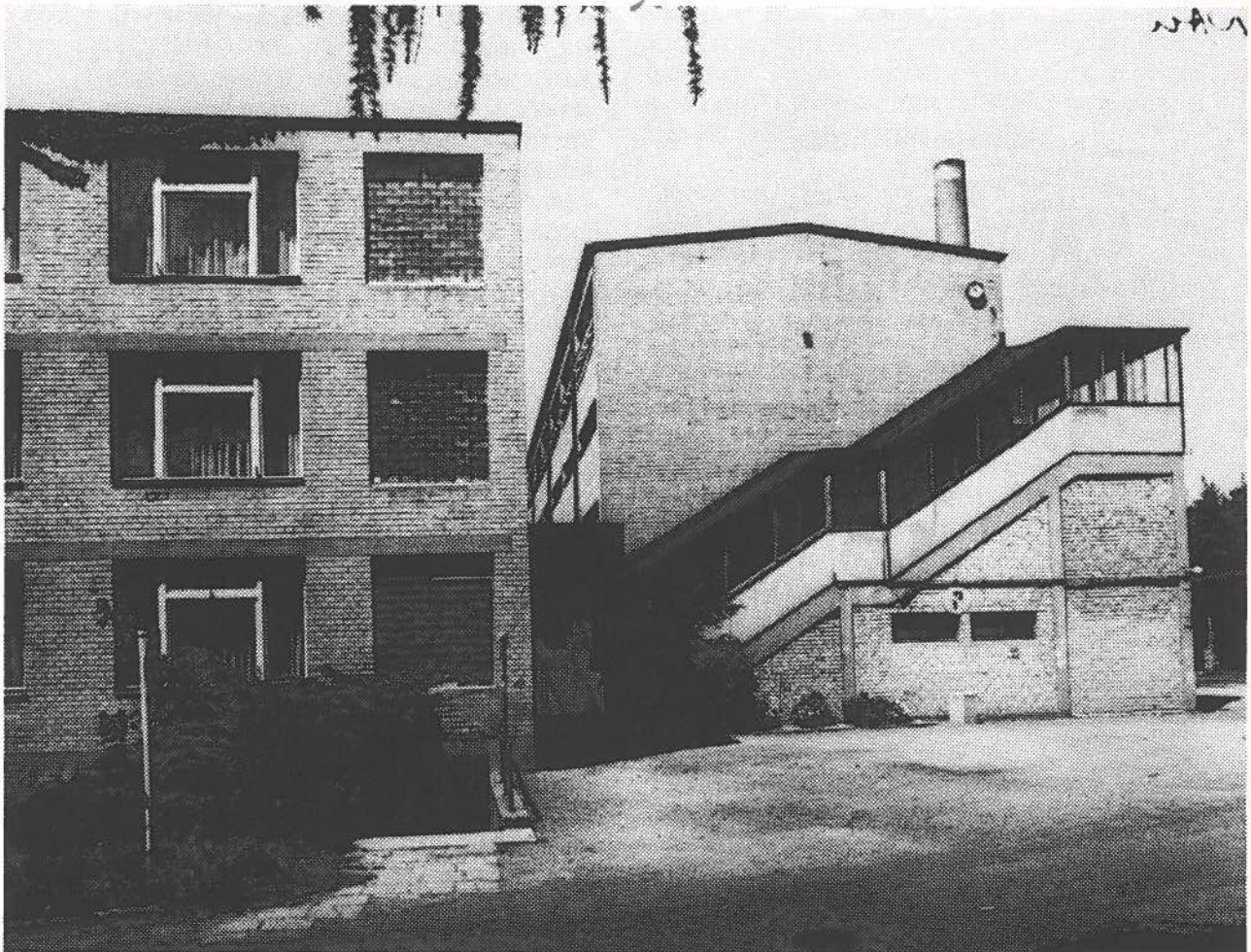
by Klaus-Jürgen Winkler

On May 4th, 1990, a nonprofit association for the preservation of the building of the former Bundesschule (Federal Trade Union School) of the ADGB (German TUC) in Bernau near Berlin was officially registered. The ensemble, today protected as an architectural monument, was constructed in 1928-1930 according to the structural designs of the architect Hannes Meyer (in collaboration with Hans Wittwer) and is one of the significant testimonies to the Bauhaus architecture in the period after Walter Gropius. In addition, it is considered a classical example of rational functionalism in the architecture of the early Modern Movement. Its dispersed layout integrated into the landscape had a stimulating effect on the design and construction of residential schools. It was the only central Trade Union School in Germany in the interWar period and it was almost completely financed by membership fees. Yet, it performed its function for about three years only, when it was taken in by the national-socialist regime for its political education

purposes. It was only after the Second World War that it performed educational tasks for the Trade Union again. In the end the Hannes Meyer building was only part of a not very systematically designed large complex of buildings of the GDR Trade Union College. This school vanished together with the GDR Trade Union and it was closed on September 30th, 1990.

The complex of buildings has since been managed by a trust company and a new form of ownership is expected to be found, although not in legal succession of the Trade Union. The fate of the original schoolbuilding is uncertain, even precarious.

It was only in the late 1970's that a public interest in the Bauhausinstitution in the former GDR developed and only in the 1980's there were successful efforts of attracting the attention to this important historical heritage (although it was listed as a building of historical value by the district government) which was situated on an off-limits territory not accessible to the general public. Three years before the peaceful revolution in the former GDR, the first concepts and ideas were developed concerning the reconstruction of the complex, especially how to bring the Hannes Meyer building step by step to the culturally required level. The ideal condition was thought to be an approximate



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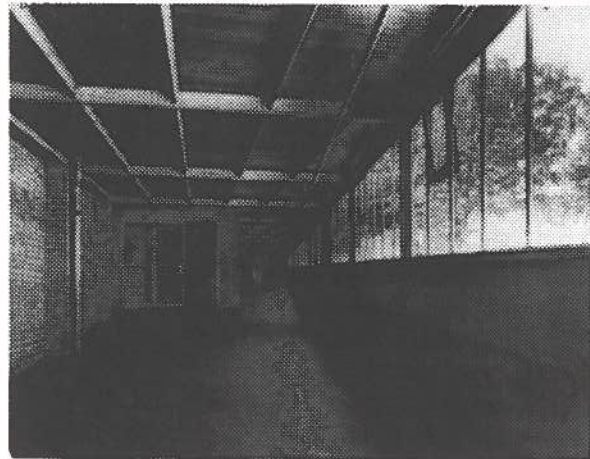
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retransformation to the original state. Present considerations are similar, but they still remain theoretical cogitations because of the unclear legal position with respect to property and utilisation in the former GDR.

The association for the preservation of the Hannes Meyer building consists of experts, supporters and interested culture-conscious laymen. Its objectives are 'the promotion of the preservation of monuments and landscape, especially the conservation of the buildings of the former Trade Union School as an architectural and cultural monument in general'. It intends to be a moral and professional agency operating in many fields. Recently, in June 1991, it organized a conference for experts, which worked out a guiding paper for the support of the commission on historic monuments and the initiation of urgent repair and construction work. The association's activities appeal to a wide public. It organises e.g. guided site tours for interested people and intends to publish its concerns in various ways. New active members are always welcome.

For more information contact the association at Fritz-Heckert-Straße 1, Bernau, O-1280 Germany, tel. 62287

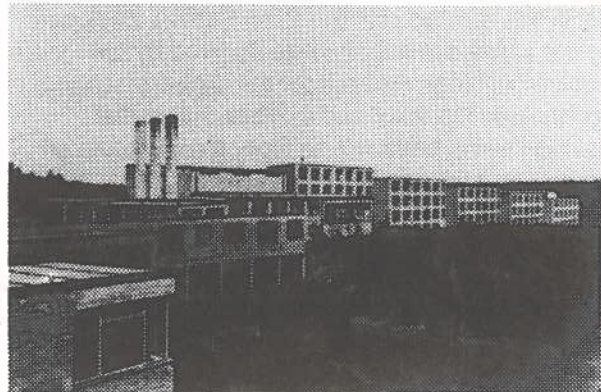
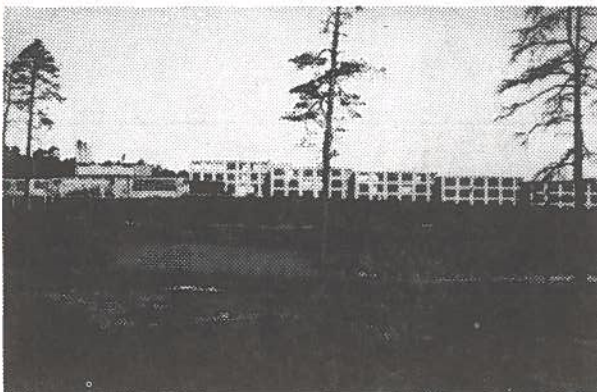


Left: the Federal Trade Union School at Bernau, designed by Hannes Meyer with Hans Wittwer in 1928-30.

The school building on the right is connected with the boarding facilities on the left, actual situation.

Right: a contemporary photo (1930) of the glass corridor (photo: Bauhaus Bildarchiv HAB Weimar) and an impression of the actual situation (photo: A. Wilaschek, Berlin / Bauhaus Bildarchiv, HAB Weimar).

Bottom: two contemporary photo's giving a general overview of the Gewerkschaftsschule in Bernau. (photo's: Bauhaus Bildarchiv HAB Weimar)



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Modernism in Montréal

By Jean-François Bédard

Created in the spring 1989 to protest alterations made to the Westmount Square, one of the last works of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Montréal Moderne is an organisation composed of architects, professors, students and historians who seek to document and communicate information about modern architecture in Montréal. With the help of a grant from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Province of Quebec and under the direction of France Vanlaethem, professor at the University of Quebec in Montréal, members of Montréal Moderne have recently completed a study on the works of Mies van der Rohe in Montréal. Like most of the corporate buildings designed by Mies in the last ten years of his life, his Montréal projects have been neglected by his historiographers. Be it the Westmount Square (1964-69), a multifunctional residential, retail and office complex, the Esso Service Station (1967-68), Mies' only building of this type, and the High Rise Apartment Blocks N° I, II, and III (1967-69) designed for Nun's Island, the most important postWar townplanning operation in Canada, or the unrealised tower scheme Dominion Square Centre (1968-69), the Montréal projects reveal the vitality of Mies' search for original solutions in architecture and urbanism.

Realised at the end of a lineage of the urban office buildings begun in 1959 with the Federal Centre in Chicago, the Westmount Square demonstrates the exceptional sophistication used by Mies in the composition of tower and pavilion forms on a plaza. The subtle variations in the structural grid and in the articulation of the curtain walls are eloquent of the refinements Mies enriched his apparently simple design strategy. The other Montréal projects reflect the varied aspects of Mies' North American practise: derived from the Highfield House in Baltimore, the High Rise Apartments are notable for their sensitive relation to the landscape and the other dwelling units set within this garden city; the Esso Station, designed for the same community, was inspired by the service buildings realised for the Illinois Institute of Technology Campus and exhibits the spatial qualities of the court house type. It constitutes an interesting exploration by Mies of vernacular North American building types such as the drive-in restaurant for Indianapolis (1945-46).

Montréal Moderne will participate to the DOCOMOMO conference held this year in Dessau and will at this occasion communicate the results of its research on the architecture of Mies van

der Rohe in Montréal. An other presentation given at the conference will describe Montréal Moderne's current research project, a first inventory of modernist architecture in Montréal.

Jean-François Bédard is secretary of Montréal Moderne

Westmount Square, designed by Mies van der Rohe in 1964-69.
Photo: Jean Claude Humi



Postgraduate Course 1992-1993 Safeguarding of the Built Patrimony Rehabilitation, restoration, conservation

A postgraduate course on preservation of historic buildings is scheduled for next season in Geneva, Switzerland. The course is directed to all those who are active in the field of preservation of the built patrimony.

The historic horizon corresponding with this course, although in theory not excluding anything, is to explain upon the principles of the works of the contemporary period and the Industrial Age. This specific orientation assures a certain effect complementary to other foreign postgraduate courses, that are largely dedicated to the monuments of the antique.

Principally the course consists of:

- an introduction and an overview of the social, artistic and technical aspects related to the preservation of historic buildings.
- a concept of conservation as testimony of social history.
- a familiarization with the methods and techniques appropriate to the rehabilitation and conservation of built works

The course will be subdivided into four modules, with a total of 720 hours, from October 1992 until July 1993. The respective themes of the modules are: Theory and practice, History, Diagnose and choice of intervention and Intervention techniques. Individual postgraduate studies can be arranged for August until October 1993. All courses will be given in French.

It is possible to conclude the course with a master's certificate for conservation of the built patrimony.

The course is being organized by the Département d'Architecture, Institut de Théorie et d'Histoire de l'Architecture - Institut de Technique du Bâtiment (EPFL) and the École d'Architecture de Université de Genève (EAUG).

Information can be obtained from:

Secrétariat de l'ITHA-DA-EPFL
12 Avenue de l'Eglise-Anglaise
1006 Lausanne
Switzerland
tel. 021-6933213

Invitation to attend the Second SAS International Symposium in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia

The Slovak Architects' Society, SAS, inspired by the success of its international symposium held in 1991, is planning for September/October 1992 a second international symposium on the theme 'Regional Character of Functionalist Architecture'.

The symposium aims at introducing some of the particularities of functionalist architecture in the various European regions. Although this architecture has been called 'International Style', in many countries it had its own regional character, often only in the work of some architects.

The Slovak Architects' Society will present at the symposium the personality and the works of architect Emil Bellus. We expect from the foreign participants to express their opinions on that matter and to present the specific features in their own countries.

Part of the symposium will be an exhibition on the same theme and an excursion to some towns in Slovakia.

We would like to invite two representatives of the architectural association of each country. The stay of the participants (7 days) will be paid by the Slovak Architects' Society, the travel costs to and from Czechoslovakia is on the account of the sending organisation or the participant himself.

As far as this event, similar to the one in 1991, is organised within the framework of our exchange program, we would like to remind you that SAS expects invitations from the participating countries to similar professional events for SAS members under the same conditions.

We are looking forward to your early reply with a confirmation for the participation of your architects at the symposium. Further detailed information and the application form will be sent before June 30th, 1992.

For more information, please contact:

Doc.ing.arch. Stefan Slachta, CSc
President of SAS
Panska 15
81101 Bratislava
Czechoslovakia
tel. 0042-7-335711/ 331078
fax. 0042-7-335744

Modern Architecture Restored Symposium

Architectural Association London,
29th February/1st March 1992

by A. Peter Fawcett

It is a popularly held view that existing literature on interWar architecture in Britain has given more prominence than was due to manifestations of modernism; that the Modern Movement was essentially a continental phenomenon developed when Britain remained essentially isolated from such progressive events. It was therefore fitting that DOCOMOMO should hold its first UK symposium at the Architectural Association, the spiritual 'home' of British modernism during those pioneering years.

It is also fitting that Dennis Sharp should open the symposium with a discussion of the Bauhaus for it was its leading members who were to give such a shot in the arm to progressive architecture in Britain during their brief stay in the latter half of the 1930's (Gropius arrived at London Victoria station on October 18th, 1934 and left for Harvard in March 1937). The Bauhaus paralleled exactly the course of the Weimar Republic sharing the traumas of economic collapse and political change that characterized the period.

Sharp reported on the interesting programme of restoration instituted at Henri Van de Velde's School of Arts and Crafts, a re-ordering and re-modelling of an existing building, exactly contemporaneous with Macintosh's Glasgow School of Art. The famous staircase graphic murals and the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition are being restored as is Van de Velde's distinctive fenestration.

A shift to discussing the Dessau enterprise contested much of the accepted orthodoxy of attribution concerning this seminal building. Designed in Gropius' Dessau office by Carl Fieger a graduate of the Mainz Kunstgewerbeschule who had joined Gropius' Weimar office when the threads of practice were re-established after the First World War, it was restored by the GDR in 1975. Given the vicissitudes which the building has endured (particularly during the Third Reich) the restoration is an outstanding achievement. From 1933 the Bauhaus Dessau was a training school for regional Nazi party leaders. Discussion by the writer with a Dessau art historian reveals the irony of Speer's office establishing a branch briefly in the Dessau Bauhaus building during the Second World War. The glazing to the workshop block was

completely removed and replaced by brickwork infill with small windows openings. This infill was well set back from the edge of the concrete slab so as not to overload the cantilevered floor. The same source in Dessau confirmed that a temporary timber pitched roof had indeed been erected for a short period, now it seems for ideological reasons, but to protect the failed roof slab during repairs. All of the curtain walling to the workshop block has been replaced in extruded aluminium sections (the originals, like the existing fenestration to the administrative 'bridge', were most definitely constructed from steel sections).

Gropius' Törten housing, like the remaining Bauhaus masters' houses after over six decades of neglect and infelicitous modification, present even more demanding challenge for the restorer but Hannes Meier's balcony access housing in Dessau has survived remarkably intact, although now surrounded by indifferent suburban housing.

Whilst architectural practice in Britain by ex-Bauhaus teachers spanned a mere three years, Lubetkin's influence upon the course of modernism in Britain was more permanent. John Allan of Avanti Design, lifelong student of and enthusiast for Lubetkin's oeuvre, described in great detail his practice's meticulous restoration and re-ordering of the Penguin Pool at London Zoo. In some ways this building has come to represent British modernism in the interWar years, in itself an interesting reflection of British attitudes to the new architecture which found its application to 'trivial' zoo building acceptable.

Lubetkin, still alive when Avanti's work was commissioned, was consulted on the re-ordering. His somewhat clumsy solution was sensibly modified by Avanti to produce an exemplary piece of sensitive restoration of a Grade 1 listed building. More problematical is Lubetkin's equally assured Finsbury Health Centre of 1938, now in a seriously dilapidated state in need of urgent attention. However, like Gropius and Fry's Impington College, Finsbury demonstrated that the new architecture could fulfil the similarly progressive aspirations of new developments in education and health care.

Similar problems beset John McAsland's work at Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill, one of the first all-welded steel framed buildings in England. The ninth Earl De La Warr was the socialist mayor of Bexhill, a protagonist of modernism for its associations with such a political ideology. As with Lubetkin's work, many of the problems facing McAsland arise from its progressive structural method. Like Finsbury Health Centre, Bexhill has been in constant use since inception and has consequently suffered the

interventions of indifferent custodianship. As with Owen Williams' Boots 'wets' factory in Beeston, the restoration of such working buildings raised questions of English Heritage's role in overseeing such re-ordering. Certainly McAsland's views on this aspect of English Heritage's work were more than robustly expressed.

James Dunnett, an ex-employee of Ernö Goldfinger, has long promoted that architect's work in Britain. Current discussion surrounds the potential purchase by The National Trust of Goldfinger's own house at Willow Road, London (1937), complete with purpose-made furnishings, fabrics and paintings. However, Dunnett's undiluted enthusiasm for the 'Perretesque' Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London, (1966) is less infectious. Its imminent demolition will not be perceived by many as the huge loss which Dunnett has expressed on several locations. Many DOCOMOMO delegates remained unconvinced by Dunnett's eulogy of this controversial building.

Perret's Le Havre development would have been unthinkable in postWar Britain when a burgeoning New Town movement looked more to a garden city tradition than to any continental notion of urbanism. However, Perret's work in La Havre after four decades is exhibiting decay in its reinforced concrete structure which presents equally demanding problems for our French DOCOMOMO members. Perret has never had a huge following amongst British enthusiasts in some measure explained, no doubt, by Perret's apparent inability to satisfy our innate concerns for the picturesque.

A day of varied symposiac activity was followed by Christopher Dean's tour of prominent modernist buildings in London embracing Berlage, Mendelsohn and Chermayeff, Maxwell, Fry, Connell Ward and Lucas, Wells Coates and Tecton from the interWar period with Benson and Forsyth, Richard Rogers *et al* representing recent history. By way of reinforcing their strongly held convictions, DOCOMOMO delegates visited the banal PoMo offerings of London's docklands. The contrast of an architecture dependent upon eclectic surface trappings certainly added perspective to the work and aspirations of DOCOMOMO and seemed an apposite finale to the success of their first British symposium.

Peter Fawcett is a member of DOCOMOMO-UK

EVENTS

The International Secretariat has been informed about the following events:

2nd International DOCOMOMO Conference

Bauhaus Dessau, Germany

16 - 19 September, 1992.

inquiries: Karl-Heinz Burmeister

DOCOMOMO Conference Secretariat

c/o Bauhaus Dessau

Gropiusallee 38

Postfach 160

O-4500 Dessau

Germany

DOCOMOMO-UK, annual lecture

'The politics and practice of modern

conservation', by Jean-Louis Cohen

Royal Institute of British Architects

3 June 1992

inquiries: Christopher Dean

DOCOMOMO-UK

First DOCOMOMO-NL Seminar

'Modern Movement Restored Today'

Aula Kon. Academie Beeldende Kunst

1 July 1992; 14.00-17.30h

Prinsessegracht 4, Den Haag, the Netherlands

DOCOMOMO-UK, general meeting

lecture by Henri Ciriani

28 October 1992

inquiries: Christopher Dean

DOCOMOMO-UK

Conference DOCOMOMO-Scotland

'Visions Revisited'

University of Glasgow, Scotland

10 October 1992

inquiries: Paul Stirton

DOCOMOMO-Scotland

2nd International SAS Symposium

'Regional Character of Functionalist Architecture'

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia

September / October 1992

inquiries: see elsewhere in this issue

Postgraduate Course

'Safeguarding the built patrimony'

Lausanne, Switzerland

October 1992 - June 1993

inquiries: see elsewhere in this Newsletter

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Exhibitions and conference

Modern Movement in The Netherlands
December 1991 - February 1992

By Maria Makagonova and Jan Molema

During the first DOCOMOMO conference in Eindhoven Boris Kirikov, then chief of the scientific department of the Museum of History of Leningrad, and Jan Molema of the Dutch foundation 'Analysis of Buildings' agreed on the exhibition of 'The New Movement in the Netherlands, 1924-1936' in the halls of the museum. Later mr. Kirikov created the conception of the exhibition 'Constructivism in Leningrad architecture', using materials from the museum related to the theme of this exhibition. All the preparatory work in Leningrad was done by Mrs. Makagonova and Mr. V Avdeev. Both expositions were opened on December 27th, 1991, till February 1992. The ceremony of the opening gathered about 100 visitors. The expositions were shown in the exhibition halls of the museum situated near the so called 'New Holland' quarter of the city.

On January 23-24th, a conference 'Modern Movement architecture of 1920-1930' was held. Many specialists took part in it with reports or in discussion. Prof. V.G. Lisovsky and Mr. Kirikov talked about the creative work of architects O.R. Muntz and A.I. Dimitriev. Both architects began to work early in the 20th Century and were the representatives of the rationalist approach in architecture. During 1910-1930 they designed and actually constructed housing areas and public buildings. In the works of these architects all the peculiarities of Leningrad constructivism were clearly displayed such as the connections with expressionism and classic traditions.

T.M. Semenova observed how types of communal houses were developed in Soviet architecture. The idea of communal houses was new, it consisted in new ways of housing planning with communal services. The topic of social housing was continued by G.G. Kelch. He talked about early prerevolutionary sources of the idea of communal housing.

M. Makagonova spoke about the Krasnoye Znamia plant by E. Mendelsohn (*about which you can read more elsewhere in this Newsletter*), built in Leningrad in 1926-1928. This building is a hardly known work of this famous architect, but the plan for a huge complex was only partly realized.

T. Suzdaleva, the author of a book about the outstanding Leningrad architect N.A. Trotsky (1895-1940), showed many slides of both his well known and hardly known works.

M.N. Mikishatiev spoke about public buildings in Leningrad of the early 1930's (Trotsky, E.A. Levinson, I.I. Fomin, D.P. Bypshkin) and he showed the turn from constructivism to modern

classic. This was very typical for the Leningrad architecture school devoted to classical traditions. The problems of safeguarding and restoring the Narkomfin building in Moscow were discussed by V.H. Rezvin (Moscow) I.V. Chepkunova from the same city had a report about the system of education in Vchutemas. Its pedagogical system was a whole and its main task was to teach students to learn and to use the constructivist method.

The report of A.U. Malahieva was theoretical - 'The life of ornament in architecture'. She showed how ornament played an active role in the formal language of the Art Nouveau and in 1920-1930 became a part of the structure and the geometrical basis of the architectural form.

S.P. Savarikhin showed with many examples of building in Russia between 1960 and 1980, how the principles of constructivism influenced contemporary building practice.

Many reports entailed discussion. The conference showed a wide spectrum of research of Modern Movement architecture in the examples of Leningrad, Moscow and Europe.

The Dutch exhibition travelled later to Bratislava, Brno, Prague and is going to Budapest and Dessau. Anyone interested in exhibiting should contact dr.ir. Jan Molema, Hooikade 11, 2627 AB, Delft, The Netherlands.

Visions Revisited DOCOMOMO-Scotland's inaugurating conference

A one day conference on postWar modern architecture and building in Scotland chaired by Kirsty Wark at the University of Glasgow, Boyd Orr Building, has been planned for Saturday 10th October 1992.

During the first three decades, this country experienced a dramatic wave of rebuilding and new construction on a scale unknown since the early industrial revolution, driven with powerful political, social and architectural forces. The conference will attempt to examine these influences, on their own terms. Key central and local Government figures from those years will recall the tremendous pressures for rehousing and replanning; while the afternoon session will investigate, in greater detail, the role of architects in Scotland's modern architectural revolution.

The costs for the conference will be £15.00, students £8.50, including a light lunch.

*For more information and subscriptions, please contact:
Paul Stirton, DOCOMOMO Scotland
History of Art Department, 7 University Gardens
Glasgow G12 8QQ, Scotland*

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Extensive research on history of building technology

But will public buildings remain vulnerable in Italy?

The history of building technology is a relatively popular theme for researchers, in Italy. Their surveys prove to be a great help when considerate restoration is the issue. Over the last months, two main international conferences on this issue took place in Rome, disclosing many new facts and connections.

Yet, at both occasions a forceful discussion arose, centering on a peculiarity in Italian law that seems to deprive public buildings from proper conservation.

by *Maristella Casciato / Wessel de Jonge* *

The history of technology, either with respect to materials, constructions, regulations or standards, up to now suffered from a certain mistrust. This is probably due to the uneasy communication through the diverse languages spoken by technicians, maybe also simply because of a cultural delay, that derives from considering the technically excellent architectural solution as the result of a brilliant intuition, rather than a mature fruit of circumstances concerning experiments in technology and the application of materials. In 1986, the idea to let this language speak for itself, dared Eugenio Battisti of the Civil Engineering Department of the Tor Vergata University in Rome to announce a program for research on the history of construction technology. The objective was to reflect on the identity and the particularities of that language, connecting the intellectualism of the design with the artisanal handicraft, as well as to redirect this question out of the academic world, to the building industry. Not surprisingly therefore, the first conference on the theme 'the way of construction' (Il modo di costruire) was organized in collaboration with the National Association of Building Industry ANCE, in June 1988.

The second conference with that name, last November, consisted of three days, the third entirely dedicated to the issue of 'the preservation of the Modern'.¹

Concrete technology

The lectures, twenty-nine in the first two days, illustrated the strong development in the history of building technology over the last ten years as well

as how a culture has spread in this field, that is based on the profound analysis of fundamental sources, like construction reports, tender documents and handbooks.

As could be expected, the development of reinforced concrete was emphasized. Margherita Dotta Rossa of the Turin Polytechnics' Department of Mathematics dealt with the systems and patents, like Hennebique's, that formed its origins. Riccardo Nelva of the Department of Building Engineering of the same university, illustrated this showing the first applications in industrial buildings and large structures in Italy.

Another chapter was the construction of great infrastructural works and buildings related to that, such as railway stations. Maria Caterina Redini of the Technology Department of the University of Rome, explained on the seaside colonies of the 1930's as an example of the connection between their symbolic value and the moral motives of a 'sane' society.²

As was underlined by Sergio Poretti, Department of Civil Engineering of Tor Vergata University, a crucial event in construction technology took place in the 1930's, which was the transition of reinforced concrete constructions from an 'exceptional' technique into a current one for loadbearing constructions.

In this way, the constructive technique changed into an architectonic one. The construction of Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como summarizes all of these: a concrete structure made into a monument by cladding it entirely with white marble.³

A loadbearing frame in reinforced concrete again is a characteristic feature of the Casa GIL in Trastevere, designed by Luigi Moretti in 1933-37 and subject of Rinaldo Capomolla's lecture, as well as the Mathematics Department in the University Campus of Rome by Gio Ponti and illustrated by Stefania Mornati, two buildings that represent a dialectic relation with the modern, within the restrained network of the roman academic world.

Proposal from the Building Industry

The conclusive round table discussion centered on a proposal to change the Italian law with respect to the historic patrimony. This law should not just be considered as obsolete, since it still has the capacity to set standards that shouldn't be underestimated. It would be necessary, rather to improve many a chapter dedicated to these problems that are becoming more and more serious and that might appear incurable when confronted with European standards.

It was stressed by various speakers that the Italian policy concerning listing shouldn't be done away with just like that: it should rather evolve into a proper instrument of recognition, making itself more useful and effective.

As put forward by Claudio De Albertis, vice

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president of ANCE, the Italian building industry will orientate itself on the process of preservation and maintenance of contemporary structures more strongly within the next ten years. To improve the quality of these activities, it will be necessary to introduce a technological quality control system just as well in the field of restoration and reuse of structures of the 19th Century.

The ANCE proposal for a uniform law tends to surpass the concept of legal listing when an active protection is concerned, that is capable of reintroducing the economic aspects into the world of conservation. Within the frame of 'assets and liabilities', the proposal explicitly mentions the necessity to establish a system that could guarantee an adequate internal efficiency of preserved objects. Measures like the assignment of interventions in the historic patrimony as tax free, were put forward as possible positive stimuli.

After the participants expressed their approval with the ANCE initiative, the attention moved to the operational field and a number of practical questions was raised.

Although no definite answers emerged, certainly the objective to invite technicians, designers and institutions to meet and to speak a common language, was successful. One agreed on the importance of the decisive moment to select a certain type of intervention for protection and preservation.

Conservation Act

On this point, the ANCE proposal was rather clear: it favours the establishment of commissions within the already existing structure of the 'soprintendenze' (superintendencies for conservation of monuments of culture) which will decide upon the interventions for restoration or preservation to be carried out, on the basis of new criteria to identify objects. These measures should then be imposed on the proprietors, according to the standards drafted and validated by the commission. It has been clearly stated that, when dealing with public buildings, this same mechanism should be imposed on the State. (Being public, all of these buildings are considered as it were automatically listed under the Conservation Act. Paradoxically, this appears a rather weak instrument in practice, since most ministries that own public buildings totally ignore this fact. As most Modern Movement architecture in the country was commissioned by the State in the 1930's and is still owned by it, this peculiar condition in Italian law deprives many a modern building from proper restorationwork. W.J.) In this way, will the degradation and abuse, frequently imposed on the modern patrimony, be avoided? On short term it will certainly have an effect in more than one respect: in the field of legislation and standards, in stimulating the

financial world, in specializing the building industry, in technology, in editing the catalogue of our patrimony and, last but not least, in deepening the knowledge on construction techniques applied in the realization of many 'monuments' of the modern era.

Protection of public buildings

In view of the emerged critique on the inadequate protection of public buildings, expectations were high when six months later another conference was held on a similar theme, and this time with the participation of the Ministry of Culture. The meeting was being organized for last May, by a national association among engineers and architects in the field of restoration, ANIASPER. On the first day of the conference 'Il restauro dell'Architettura Moderna' ⁴, the floor was given to a number of officials from various institutions professionally dealing with preservation. Some local 'superintendencies' are considering to soon ignore the legal conditions, that deprive public buildings from effective protection. In doing so, they hope to provide a certain legal basis for a more considerate policy with respect to preservation of these buildings.

The 'superintendencies' of Rome, of course, should play an important and stimulating part here, due to their general trendsetting role in national policy. However, some specialists who are concerned with these problems already for some years, expressed their grave disappointment later that afternoon, since not any of the speakers on the first day referred to this serious matter at all. Their contributions rather summarized the problems already very well known among specialists, or even reintroduced the bygone discussion on the somewhat painful historic connotations of modern architecture in Italy. It seems that Italian conservation authorities are thereby not yet able to develop an adequate policy to improve the chances for public MoMo buildings. This was in sharp contrast with the remarks made the next day by Paolo Portoghesi, of La Sapienza University in Rome and consultative architect for the restoration of Adalberto Libera's EUR Conference Palace of 1937-52. After stating that society is apparently not yet used to the idea of conservation of the modern, neither willing to pay for it, he identified the care for this cultural heritage an ethic commitment, even if it represents a then critical culture.

Specific technology

The preceding introduction on the restoration of the Conference Palace by Antonio Gallo Curcio, from La Sapienza University in Rome, was one of the number of lectures on specific technical problems related to restoration of Mo Mo structures, to which the second conference day was dedicated.

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Giovanni Morabito of the same university, gave a general introduction to the theme, identifying principle differences between the conservation of modern and pre-modern architecture. Also, he opened the discussion on how to deal with this in practice.

Quite a few speakers dealt with specific technical problems, among them Pier Giovanni Bardelli, vice rector of the Turin Polytechnic, in his contribution on the concrete of Le Corbusier's Habitation in Marseille, Sergio Poretti, explaining on his research on marble claddings, Alberto Artioli, architect of the 'superintendence' of Lombardia, reflecting on the restoration of Terragni's Casa del Fascio⁵, and architect Gabrielle Guarisco, dealing with the treatment of the stone cladding of the Santa Maria Novella railway station in Firenze. This kind of detailed and specific research will provide an indispensable source of knowledge for future restorations everywhere.⁶

The problems with the Guggenheim Museum in New York with respect to building physics were presented by ICCROM executive secretary Jef Malliet. This building suffers from severe thermal problems, due to the poor air circulation as a result of the building's layout as well as the lack of thermal insulation in the outer skin. The original outer wall, consisting of a spiral concrete parapet covered by gypsumboard on the inside leaving some air in between, is proposed to be improved by adding some glassfoam between concrete and board. Although the concrete structure appears hardly to be carbonated at all and proves to be sound in that respect, the lack of dilatations for thermal expansion seems to be a problem that might become more serious after insulating the facade.

Case studies

Some other lectures embraced the subject of revitalising historic MoMo buildings more generally and in an international context.

Wessel de Jonge gave a critical overview of the preservation of modern architecture in Europe, concluding with a short introduction to the restoration of the Gooiland Hotel in Hilversum, the Netherlands. Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, of the Milan Polytechnic, reflected on the restoration of the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, Germany. Unfortunately, his lecture lacked critical information on how these works were carried out.

Highly stimulating was the contribution by Tapani Mustonen of Alvar Aalto architects Ltd. from Helsinki on the renovation and restoration of the House of Culture in that city. The result of the works carried out there (see elsewhere in this Newsletter) proves that a balanced and careful approach can lead to successful revitalisation, in harmony with both the contemporary requirements of the owner and the historic character of such a building.

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The built and the unbuilt heritage

The final round table discussion took an interesting turn when the item of restoration charters was brought up - more and more unavoidable when the preservation of MoMo architecture is studied.

Antonio Gonzales from Barcelona, Spain, made a strong point for involving the original design approach into the concepts of conservation, stating that the material aspect is only one side of the problem.

Wessel de Jonge added to this, that a complete documentation in addition to the preservation of original drawings, in some cases could provide a more adequate conservation than a desperate repair of the artefact itself.

Like during the first DOCOMOMO conference in 1990, the paragraphs on material authenticity of the Charter of Venice were discussed.

ICCROM director Andrzej Tomaszewski concluded with a reflection on the Eastern concepts of authenticity. Apart from historic artefacts (the 'material'), in Japan also cultural traditions (the 'spiritual') as well as the artisan's ability to continuously renovate the cultural heritage (the 'living') are protected by law, while in the West this is limited to the first category.

It is clear that still a lot of discussion is needed on the question of a conservation charter fit for both the built and the unbuilt heritage of the Modern Movement in architecture. ANIASPER scheduled a conference on that theme for next November and it is to be hoped that a vivid and fruitful discussion will result from it.

1. The papers of the conference 'Il Modo di Costruire; 150 anni di costruzione in Italia' are expected to be published by EdilStampa, Rome, in September 1992, in their original language.

2. See DOCOMOMO Newsletter 5, pp. 43-51.

3. See note 5.

4. The proceedings of the conference 'Il Restauro dell'Architettura Moderna' are expected to be published in the course of 1992 by ANIASPER, via Santa Rosa 25, 01100 Viterbo, Italy.

5. See Artioli's critical guide 'Giuseppe Terragni; La Casa del Fascio di Como', Rome, 1989.

6. Sergio Poretti, Alberto Artioli and Pier Giovanni Bardelli will explain on their themes in detail at the Second International DOCOMOMO Conference in Dessau, 16-19 September 1992.

* *The part on the conference 'Il Modo di Costruire; 150 anni di costruzione in Italia' is a partial translation of the review 'L'edilizia si racconta' in Costruire 105 pp. 99-101 by Maristella Casciato, who is researcher at the Tor Vergata University in Rome and coordinator of DOCOMOMO Italy. Wessel de Jonge, architect, researcher of the Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands and secretary of DOCOMOMO International, is the author of the other part.*

Redoing it in style

New exhibition by DOCOMOMO-UK

By Hugh Pearman

When does a building become historic? How old does it have to be before it acquires its significance that makes people fight to save it? A century? Fifty years? Thirty years? The answer, if we're going by case history, is just 17 years. That is the age of Britain's youngest listed building, which happens to be an insurance company headquarters in Ipswich. But the textbook example of a modern building that was listed, fell into decay and was saved during the architect's lifetime, it is a little structure that most people would hardly regard as a building at all: the Penguin Pool at London Zoo. It forms part of *Modern Architecture Restored*, an intriguing exhibition at London's Building Centre.

'Listed' means that a building is officially deemed to be of architectural or historical significance, and is placed in one of the three categories of importance, making it more or less difficult (though never impossible) to bulldoze. English Heritage recommends, and the Department of Environment decides, which buildings should be listed and which not. The 1975 Willis Faber building in Ipswich, designed by Norman Foster with his then associate Micheal Hopkins, was last year listed Grade I - the highest - because it was threatened with radical alterations. The listing process, however, is no guarantee against decay and neglect. Hence this modest show at the little Building Centre gallery in London's Store Street. It tackles the increasingly important subject of how to rescue dilapidated buildings that were built in modern materials.

Nothing looks quite so shabby as a white-rendered, thin shell concrete and glass building that has gone to seed. This is not an architecture that ages gracefully; it must be kept pristine or it will simply flake away to nothing. The exhibition shows buildings that have been successfully restored, as well as buildings at risk, and buildings for which rescue plans have been drawn up. Examples range from Finland to Australia, from Walter Gropius's Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany, to the boots factory in Nottingham by Sir Owen Williams. When we see a good restoration - such as London Zoo's Penguin Pool, a geometrical masterpiece with interesting spiral ramps, designed by Berthold Lubetkin and opened in 1934* - the results are breathtaking, even today. In many occasions the exhibition uses crisp original photographs of the time: in contrast, on

display is a set of corroded steel window frames from Lubetkin's High Point apartment block in London, reminding us of the fragility of these buildings.

The exhibition is the first public appearance in Britain of the work of a memorably named international organisation named DOCOMOMO. Its full title is awesome: the International Working Party for the Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement. In the UK, DOCOMOMO's banker is Lord Palumbo, who owns and has restored two canonic Modern Movement houses: the Farnsworth House in Illinois by Mies van der Rohe, and the Maison Jaoul in Neuilly-sur-Seine by Le Corbusier, both in the show.

Palumbo and the English Heritage jointly funded much of the restoration work on the Penguin Pool, which was carried out by John Allan of Avanti Architects in 1987, in collaboration with Lubetkin himself and the original engineers, Ove Arup and Partners. Allan relates the problems of such a task: for instance Lubetkin, then in his 80's had forgotten his original colour scheme for the building, assuming that all the concrete surfaces were white. But paint tests revealed that the underside of the spiral ramps and an upper canopy were originally pale blue. The lost colour, along with the flaking thin concrete, was restored.

The client, London Zoo, wanted certain alterations, such as new nesting boxes and a bigger highlevel diving tank for the 34 blackfooted penguins. Lubetkin wanted to redesign this bit to, as he saw it, improve on the original. But he was restrained: practical alterations could be made, said English Heritage firmly, but this was a 1930's building, and they wanted no postWar stylistic amendments, even when they were from the hand of Lubetkin himself.

Although the British public is notoriously resistant to the appeal of modern architecture, white 1930's modern has, by and large, now gained acceptance. The exhibition shows schemes being drawn up for such monuments to the era as the De La Warr pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea by Mendelsohn and Chermayeff, a seaside pleasure palace in the European ocean-liner style. Many of the current generations of modernist architects, the practices of Rick Mather, Munkenbeck and Marshall, or Throughton McAslan, for instance, cast some of their work in the idiom of the 1920's and 1930's, skipping over the post-war years. In some cases, the preoccupations overlap: for instance, Throughton McAslan, which has designed a 1930's style apartment block in London's Rotherhithe, are the architects for the restoration of the De la Warr pavilion.

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This leaves the *difficult* modern buildings, those that are appreciated by the cognoscenti but largely ignored or even hated by the public. The stumbling-block is raw concrete. There are good buildings in raw concrete and bad buildings in raw concrete: most people see only the material, not the architecture. At the Modern Architecture Restored exhibition you will find not only pretty little things such as the Pinguin Pool, but also difficult stuff like the work of Ernő Goldfinger. His Alexander Fleming House, a constructivist composition of office blocks, at London's Elephant and Castle, is a masterwork, but unfortunately built in raw concrete. So it is imminently due for demolition, when it could well have been repaired and spruced up. Or there is Sir Denys Lasdun's 1957 Peter Robinson store on The Strand in London, now New South Wales House. One of the most significant shop designs of the century, it is out of fashion and therefore faces the chop. English Heritage, fully aware of the threats to good buildings of the recent past, failed to persuade the DoE to list it. Instead, the Department obligingly issued a certificate of immunity against listing.

Lubetkin best summed up the British ambivalence to the modern. John Allan's forthcoming book** on this unique architect, who died in 1990, quotes him as saying: 'There is, in this country, an immensely proud tradition of progress that has changed the course of world history, but there is also another tradition that brings back the birch, the noose, and the Old Sea Shoppe. It is up to us to choose.'

For information on possibilities for exhibiting 'Modern Architecture Restored', please contact UK coordinator Christopher Dean. (see elsewhere for full address)

* For more information on the restoration of the Pinguin Pool, see DOCOMOMO Newsletter 3, pp. 25-27

** 'Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of Progress', by John Allan, will be published by RIBA Publications in May 1992.

Article by Hugh Pearman previously published in The Sunday Times, February 23, 1992.

Hugh Pearman is a member of DOCOMOMO-UK

EXHIBITIONS

Modern Architecture Restored
Architectural Centre
Cambridge, United Kingdom
20 July- midst of August 1992

Bauhaus Dessau, Germany
Opening 21 August 1992

Trade Union School, Bernau
Bauhaus Dessau, Germany
Opening 21 August 1992

A chair makes history
Bauhaus Dessau, Germany
Opening 21 August 1992

New Movement in the Netherlands 1924-36
National Department for Conservation OMF
Budapest, Hungary
3 July-August 1992

Bauhaus Dessau, Germany
Opening 21 August 1992

Cubism in Prague
Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, Germany
28 September - 20 November 1992

Czech and Slovak neofunctionalism
Cultural Centre, Budapest, Hungary
Opening early July 1992

Marcel Breuer, Design
Bauhaus Archiv, Berlin, Germany
23 May-29 August 1992

Konstruktivistische Internationale 1922-1925
Sammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen
Düsseldorf, Germany
23 May-16 August 1992

Die Wießenhofsiedlung
Shushev Architectural Museum Moscow, Russia
Opening 15 July 1992

Eileen Gray
Design Museum, London, United Kingdom
until 5 July 1992

Gerrit Rietveld 1888-1964
Centraal Museum Utrecht, the Netherlands
28 November-21 February 1992

De grote utopie / The great utopia
Russian Avantgarde 1915-32
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Netherlands
until 23 August 1992

PostWar reconstruction architecture of Rotterdam 1945-1970
Schielandhuis, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
until 19 July 1992

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New publication on Tapiola

A monument of postWar functionalist design in Finland

A combination of an architectural guidebook and a critical history of the planning of Tapiola has been published in Finland in May 1992 simultaneously in English, Swedish and Finnish, as part of the 30th Anniversary of the founding of this outstanding garden city.

by *Timo Tuomi*

In 1951 Väestöliitto, an organisation founded in 1941 to promote better housing and social politics in Finland, bought a large area of forests and agricultural land in West Helsinki. In order to get as broad political and economical backing as possible an organisation called the Housing Foundation (Asuntosäätiö) was formed, with member organisations ranging from trade unions to philanthropical foundations. The Housing Foundation got an energetic leader when the young lawyer Heikki von Hertzen became its chief executive.

English garden city

Maybe the most influential planner in Finland during the decades around the second world War, Otto-I Meurman, had already made a plan for a new suburb in Tapiola (then Hagalund) for the former landowner. Meurman's plan for a garden suburb consisted mainly of detached houses in natural surroundings along winding lanes and with a small community center after English examples. The Housing Foundation started to adjust Meurman's plans and hired, apart from Meurman himself, some of the leading architects of the younger postWar generation, namely Aulis Blomstedt, Aarne Ervi, Markus Tavio and Viljo Revell. PostWar restrictions, lack of building materials and an aim for quantity rather than quality had to be taken into account. Mainly because of the state-guaranteed loan-system for new housing, the majority of detached housing as originally planned by Meurman was replaced by flats and terraced housing. Also the average floor areas were strictly controlled by the loan authorities. This was contrary to Meurman's original garden suburb ideals, but the need for a large number of cheap houses was the priority in the 1950's.

High or low?

The difference between various generations of architects and their diverging planning ideals was an interesting theme during the early years of

building in Tapiola. The group of architects chosen to develop Meurman's original plan made a strong plea for developing building methods as well, proposing large scale construction with prefabricated elements. Because the new techniques were unknown to builders, it soon turned out that in small experimental projects it was more expensive and often more time-consuming as compared to more traditional building methods.

Perhaps more important from the architectural point of view was the discussion on highrise apartments and point blocks. Meurman and many others were convinced that houses should not rise above the tree-tops and should not exceed 3-4 floors. This was in strong contrast with the ideas represented by Blomstedt, Ervi and Revell in particular, who were in favour of Corbusian planning ideals and wanted to use highrise to create strong vertical elements and bold silhouettes in a town-shape. As it turned out the general need for a larger quantity of dwellings made the ideas of the younger generation more advantageous, and they got the chance to design 7-8 storey apartment towers in Tapiola.

Balanced composition

One of the planning principles in Tapiola was that each architect should design different housing types for a whole length of a street, so that the visual unity of each particular curving 'street-shape' would be a balanced composition. Especially in the earliest eastern part (residential cell) of Tapiola, this principle helped to create one of the most outstanding residential areas ever to be produced in Finland. It also gave a chance to some of the most gifted architects of the time to each develop their own refined versions of modernist residential architecture, although economical restrictions were severe. For example Aulis Blomstedt never got through his idea of roof terraces in his famous Ketju(chain)-houses of 1954. As an example of Blomstedt's extremely high professional and artistic ethics can be mentioned that when the Housing Foundation wanted him to design a larger version of the Ketju-house later, he refused.

CIAM principles

Many of the residential projects of the 1950's aimed at realising the 'Wohnung für das Existenzminimum' ideal. One of the architects, K.A. Pinomaa, remarked on the subject already in 1954: 'One must find the average and the result is naturally that a program developed and logically realised after this as a guiding principle does not satisfy anyone really well, but on the other hand does not suit anyone badly, if you want to bring the situation to a head. We may have standard doors, windows, kitchens and a whole apartment, all we are lacking is a standard family that would live in

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A photo of the Tapiola Garden City in the 1950's

it.' The modernist ideals promoted by CIAM concerning townplanning and residential architecture began to be realised in larger scale in Finland only after the Second World War. After the War, the circumstances for planning plain functional buildings was also forced upon the architects because of the great economical difficulties and the need to build a large number of low budget houses. Architect Hilding Ekelund had already foreseen and summarized the postWar functionalist aims in 1940: 'It is clear, that we must avoid all unnecessary and expensive grandeur and a much greater meaning must be given to the increase of the number of rooms and floor area apartments than the external grandeur and unnecessary "conveniences". This also holds true for the exterior of a building: all meaningless

decoration must be banned and an uncomplicated, clear facade creates always the best frame for a dwelling that is meant for modern, clear thinking people. The nature takes care of the decoration: freely growing trees, climbing plants, lawns, rocks and flowers are the prettiest decorations.'

Cultural heritage

Almost from the time they were built, older parts of Tapiola have been considered outstanding examples of architecture and planning of the 1950's. The value of Tapiola is now also being understood from the point of view of cultural heritage. New, not yet ratified renewed plans for some areas of Tapiola aim to guarantee that especially the earlier parts of the garden city will not be 'densified' by planning more buildings right to the carefully planned and spaciouly built areas. The unforeseen rapid growth of traffic is a problem, because it has resulted in changing some of the lawn areas, that have been carefully balanced with the building masses, into parking lots. The biggest single change in Tapiola took place in the early 1970's. The commercial center of Tapiola, designed by Aarne Ervi after Corbusian principles as a sculptural play with the solids and voids of the building masses, was further developed with solid and heavy masses of a new commercial building in that period.

Timo Tuomi is official of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities and is coordinator of DOCOMOMO-Finland.

Functionalist calender

by Mariet Willinge

Architectural calenders or agendas are not new as a phenomenon, but they prove to be a good tool to enlarge the knowledge over a facet of an architectural style or an architect. Also they can be used as an introduction to architecture in general. Furthermore such a calender could serve as an advertisement for a museum by showing a part of its collection in a relatively inexpensive way. Examples can be found of all these options, some more convincing than others, but whatever theme is chosen, in general these calenders or agendas are provided with beautiful and striking photo's or drawings.

The Norwegian Architectural Museum has published a calender dedicated to Norwegian functionalism. The calender fulfills all the criteria that can be requested. The pictures are well chosen, and well printed, there is an explanation in two languages, the calender part can be cut off easily at the end of the year, so that a series of attractive pictures remains. In short, the calender serves its functions.

However, I have a few remarks. To spread the Norwegian functionalism internationally, as well as for a broad public, an introduction on the theme would have been desirable. The subject is quite interesting, but it needs more information, especially for laymen.

The sheets themselves give limited possibilities for information about the printed projects. Therefore, but also considering a clear layout, it would have been better if a more extensive explanation about the architect and his works was printed on the back

of the sheets. Another advantage would have been that the pictures would have been more prominently placed on the sheet.

The printed designs provide a nice overview of Norwegian functionalism, although it is unfortunate that a year consists of only 12 months.

Already in 1925, when the Norwegian classicism was still on its highlights, Lars Becker expressed his ideas about a new architecture. Rightly, the calender begins with his design for the Skansen restaurant, the first functionalist design in Norway. The plans date from 1925, when indeed Becker himself also enters an architectural competition with a clearly classicistic signature, the new university in Blindern, near Oslo. Other well-known pioneering functionalists as G. Blakstad and H. Munte-Kaas also entered the competition with classicist' designs. As can be seen on the March page, the classic background was quite evident in the early works of these and other architects. The transition into the new style was a smooth one, without any clear damarcation.

Remarkably, little attention is given to (social) housing, a theme that was subject to passionate debates, in particular among modern architects and which resulted in many interesting designs.

Anyway, this theme isn't treated in this calender. Were there no satisfying pictures available, or was housing from that period not interesting enough? Happily, today a lot of attention among architects and conservationists is given to housing from those times, as appears from a successfully conducted lobby to preserve a housing block designed by the originally German architect T. Schroder (October). Many of the depicted buildings serve a public function. They show the international trends in functionalism clearly, for example the Schultz Building of 1932, by F.S. Platou (April) and the Sundt & Co. Department Store of 1938, by Per Grieg (November).

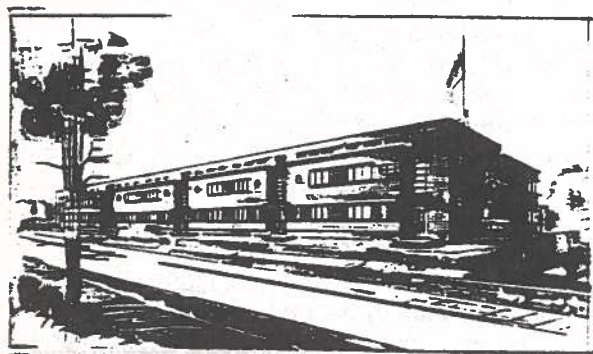
A very impressive exception is formed by the sheet of September, on which a marvelous drawing is depicted of the villa Ditlev-Simonson in Oslo, designed by architect Ove Bang. This design shows the influence of Le Corbusier explicitly. The year is ended with an intriguing competition design by A. Korsmo, K. Knutsen and A. Nygaard of 1935 for the exhibition that was organized by the Oslo Association of Crafts and Industry in Oslo in 1938. Theme of the exhibition was Vi-Kan, We Can!

With the presentation of this calender, the Norwegian Architectural Museum can consider this theme to apply to itself.

The calender can be bought from the museum for NOK 120.=

Mariet Willinge is director of the Documentation Department of the Netherlands' Architectural Institute and member of the Netherlands' DOCOMOMO working party

Page of March showing Schroder's housing block in Kristiansand (1938) which was saved from demolition.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Oktober 1992

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National Reports

Based on received information from the various countries, the following national reports could be included. We will be glad to receive any information on documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement in the participating countries, as well as news on your national DOCOMOMO working party **before October 1, 1992**. A selection of sent in information will be published in Newsletter 8, due for November 1992.

Argentina: a unique collection of photos discovered

Most of the significant activities of the Argentine working party in the last month has been linked with the initiatives and preparation of documents to be presented at the first International Congress on Conservation of the America's heritage within the celebration of the Quincentennial of the Discovery. An important delegation of DOCOMOMO, Argentina is supposed to be there (July, Canary Islands) trying to build up interest on behalf of the 1920's/1930's architecture. We hope to find other DOCOMOMO members there!

The advanced joint research program with the Centre for Urban and Rural Conservation of the University of Buenos Aires, working on technical, historic, etc. aspects of the period, has ended in documenting on the concurring important facets of the investigation. It proofs the early townscape concern of the 1920's/1930's professionals and how they managed to handle in worst cases a proper design sympathetic with the 19th Century urban context.

As a sideline to the above mentioned research, a most important discovery has been made, the existence of a complete photographic (and forgotten) architectural and urban record, (1910-1950) especially good in documenting the building boom of the 1920's/1930's in Argentina.

Our members are now setting in order, classifying and restoring some of it's negatives (mostly glass) of this unique collection saved on the verge of being destroyed.

The inventory of this period's examples is still growing with the objective to present the general results at the conference at the Bauhaus Dessau.

(Report: Argentine coordinator Mabel Scarone)

Belgium: two important exhibitions

The Belgian DOCOMOMO Working party draws the attentions of DOCOMOMO on some recent initiatives and activities concerning MoMo architecture in Belgium.

A major exhibition has been announced on the Belgian architect, designer and painter Henri Van de Velde (1863-1957), one of the key figures of

20th Century modernism (see: DOCOMOMO Newsletter 5, June 1991, on the listing as historical monument and urban landscape of Henri Van de Velde's Technical School in Leuven, built 1936-42). The exhibition will take place in different European cities (Hagen, Weimar, Neurenberg and Berlin in Germany, Zürich in Switzerland, Ghent in Belgium). The exhibition in Ghent will be held at the 'museum voor Sierkunsten' (Museum of Decorative Arts), which is also the owner of an important collection of MoMo furniture by a.o. Huib Hoste and Gaston Eyselynck.

Currently (28 April - 27 May) an exhibition is shown at the 'Hoger Architectuurinstituut Sint-Lucas' (the St. Luke School of Architecture) in Ghent on 'Renaat Bream: De vroege jaren' (Renaat Bream: the early years), organised by the St. Luke School, the 'Centrum voor Architectuuronderzoek Sint-Lucas' (the Centre for Architectural research St. Luke) and 'Interbellum' (an association concerned with interWar design, art and architecture), on the occasion of the nomination of Renaat Bream as a honorary member of Interbellum. The introduction by Luc Verpoest at the opening of the exhibition will be published in the forthcoming issue of Interbellum (May-June 1992). Renaat Bream (1910) is considered the most distinguished representative of late-modern architecture in Belgium after the Second World War, 'both for his often imposing achievements and because of his theory and his ideological stands' (Francis Strauven). The exhibition concentrates on Bream's training (at the Royal Academy and the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp) and his early career (he stayed for some months, in 1936-1937, at the atelier of Le Corbusier in Paris, rue de Sèvres, 35), and shows a.o. several drawings of his Lijnstad project (a Linear city) of 1934. In 1985 a monograph on Renaat Bream by Francis Strauven was published by the Archives d'Architecture Moderne in Brussels (René Bream: Les aventures dialectiques d'un moderniste flamand/The dialectical Adventures of a Flemish modernist).

The forthcoming Open Monumentendag 1992 (Open Monuments Day on September 13th) will focus on the architecture of school buildings (elementary, secondary and university education). Belgium has a very important 19th Century heritage of school buildings, most of them still in use (but not always in a very good condition), some others successfully renovated for new functions. Through the creation of an extensive infrastructure already in the 19th Century, school architecture of the Modern Movement is rather rare: one has again to point to Henri Van de Velde, more particularly the Technical School in Leuven and the University Library and Art History Institute in Ghent (1932-36), undoubtedly his major modern achievements. As to the conservation of Modern Movement architecture in Belgium, a first step has been taken

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in the (rather long) procedure for the legal protection as a monument of the Sanatorium Joseph Lemaire in Tombeek, (near Brussels) built in 1936-37 by architect Maxime Brunfaut (1909) and of the surrounding park (also designed by Brunfaut) as a landscape. The building is actually unused and its future function is completely uncertain, even if the building is in a rather good condition. All suggestions are welcome.

(Report: Belgian coordinator Luc Verpoest)

Brazil: seeking official recognition

Up to now our main activity is to carry out a strategy to officially establish a Brazilian DOCOMOMO working party. First contacts have been made with some experts on Modern Movement architecture throughout Brazil and they have demonstrated great interest in participating in DOCOMOMO. Nevertheless, thinking about the continental dimension of our country, some troubles were detected: long distances, regional differences, high costs, bureaucracies. For this reason a provisional working party was established sponsored by the Department of Architectural History of the University of Bahia. We intend to organize a national seminar about Brazilian Modern Movement architecture. During this meeting, the DOCOMOMO-Brazil statute will be discussed as well as a proposal to create other local working parties. By now we are just waiting for the officialization of this group by the high University's direction, which is fundamental to make financial support possible.

In view of the seminar organisation, the provisional working party prepared a plan of action for 1992. As first step, recently a questionnaire was sent out to several heritage institutions in Brazil about Modern Movement architecture's documentation and conservation. The answers will be very important to have a broad picture of our real situation.

In January/February, answering a request from prof.dr. Mahlberg (Wuppertal, Germany), we tried to find some references about the German architect Hans Lüttgen, who, according to Mahlberg's report, had lived in São Paulo (Brazil) during the Second World War. Unfortunately, after some interviews and bibliographical research, no Lüttgen's notice was found. By now we are waiting further information in order to continue the research.

To conclude, the group that commanded the campaign to preserve the first MoMo building in Brazil (residence of G. Warchavchik) wrote a condensed report about their experiences (See elsewhere in this issue). We would like to emphasize the importance of this popular movement in Brazil, that hindered the demolition of the building and now is trying to get a grant to restore it.

(Report by provisional coordinator for Brazil, Anna Beatriz Galvão)

World Architecture International:

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France: a register of modern buildings to be protected

The DOCOMOMO Section Française today counts approximately fortyfive members and meets on a regular two-monthly basis in Paris. To make the association better known in France, the newsletter is being spread among the professional press and a few main newspapers.

The group is preparing several papers for the conference at the Bauhaus Dessau and intends to present a provisional register of Modern Movement architecture in France.

An outline for the elaboration of an educational program on the restoration of the modern patrimony has been drawn up. Sophie Rousseau and Jacques Répique are in charge of this project, on which we hope to report in more detail soon.

The French group started to compose a register of Modern Movement architecture that has been or is to be restored.

The local Association of Friends of Le Corbusier in Pessac contributed to this archive a precise documentation of the state of restoration of the well known Frugès quarter.

Also, the group decided to concentrate on safeguarding a number of specific buildings, on each of which a file will be compiled containing information on the present condition and situation with respect to listing and possible developments. Among these are the dancing La Batterie by Pierre Barbe in Roquebrune sur Argens, the Golf Club of Beauvallon by Pierre Chareau, the Villa Cavrois in Croix-Lille and the utilisation of the Villa Noailles in Hyères, both by Mallet-Stevens, Prouvé's Aluminium Pavillion in Lille, Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy, the Saint-Lô Hospital by Paul Nelson, the Grange-Blanche Hospital in Lyon by Tony Garnier and the Église de Royan by Gillet and Laffaille.

It has been officially recommended to include the Hotel Latitude 43 in Saint Tropez, designed in 1932 by Pingusson, in the supplementary register of Monuments Historiques, in connection with a study conducted by Cécile Briolle and Jacques Répique.

Further to the confirmation by Paris' mayor Jacques Chirac to consider the reconstruction of Le Corbusier's Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau in the Parc Montsouris (see French report in Newsletter 5), the French DOCOMOMO section approached the Fondation Le Corbusier to join forces in this project. Quite unexpectedly, the foundation's response was negative. The working party decided to go on with their efforts in favour of the reconstruction anyway and will continue their talks with the authorities.

(Report composed by the editor on the basis of the minutes of meetings of the French section)

Great Britain: continuous activities

The exhibition 'Modern Architecture Restored' was opened by Lord Palumbo on 12th February 1992. A review of the presentation is printed elsewhere. There was a very good attendance at the opening party which was followed by a dinner for as many of the contributors who could be present. It was especially happy for DOCOMOMO-UK to welcome the French contributors who were introduced by Dr. Judi Loach. They included Jacques Michel, Rene Lahousse, Marylene Ferrand, Jean-Pierre Feugas and Bernard Le Roy. In celebration of the great effort of FFL architects a cake was made representing one of their reconstructed houses at Pessac. We are very pleased that an increasing number of institutions have asked to present the exhibition and we hope it will be on view at the Bauhaus for the DOCOMOMO conference in September.

During the time of the exhibition, which was extended for an extra three weeks, the first UK Symposium was held at the Architectural Association which was welcomed by Alan Balfour, the new AA Chairman.

The papers given at the Symposium will be published in the future issues of the UK Newsletter, the funding for which is still being collected. Professor Peter Fawcett reviews the proceedings elsewhere in this issue.

The DOCOMOMO-UK Annual Lecture has been given on 3rd June by Professor Jean-Louis Cohen, whose book 'Le Corbusier and The Mystique of the USSR' has just been published in an English translation.

The Annual General Meeting for DOCOMOMO-UK members will be held on October 28th, and will be followed by a lecture by Henri Ciriani.

Individual and corporate membership is increasing and there are now some 150 members. We hope to steadily increase this number during the next year.

With regret we have accepted the resignation of John Allan as chairman, but we are very pleased to welcome Dennis Sharp to take over.

We have been immensely grateful to Lord Palumbo for providing three years of 'start up' finance and we are now urgently seeking permanent funding for our activities.

(Report: UK coordinator Christopher Dean)

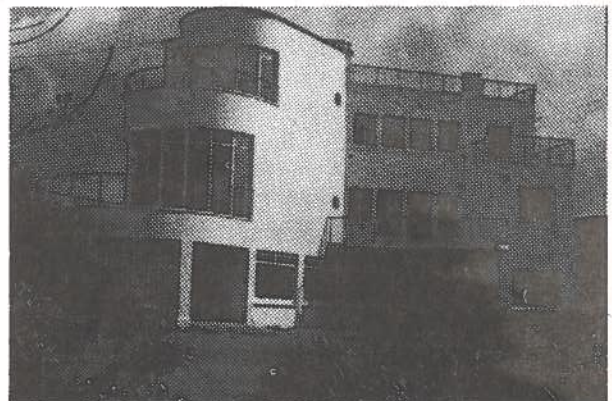
Ireland: extensive new research

Progress in compiling the Irish DOCOMOMO register has generally been rather slower than anticipated, due in large part to the extent of new research being undertaken by our working party. The strategy we adopted involved us in conducting an initial broad survey of buildings of the period with a view to defining the scope of the subject area in Ireland. This part of our work is now well advanced and we have recently begun testing the preliminary list against a set of criteria derived from the Netherlands MIP survey, in order to develop the Irish register. We plan to present at the Second International Conference a provisional register only, comprising approximately 100 buildings and structures. Our aim is then to complete and finalise the Irish register during the following two years. We are working in parallel on plans for an annual series of small public exhibitions and catalogues on Modern Movement architecture in Ireland. The first exhibition will take place in the Autumn at the Architecture Centre in Dublin, and will focus on Irish buildings and structures which are currently at

Former DOCOMOMO-UK chairman John Allan closely watches, while coordinator Christopher Dean cuts the cake representing one of Corbu's houses at Pessac at the occasion of the opening of the exhibition 'Modern Architecture Restored'. Definitely, the reconstruction of the real thing was no piece of cake at all!



Micheal Scott's private residence, near Dublin, is one of the fine examples of Modern Movement architecture in Ireland.



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risk, as well as recording those which have already been demolished or badly disfigured. The exhibition will be organised in conjunction with the Irish Architectural Archive.

We were very pleased to welcome Wessel de Jonge to Dublin on 30 April for his lecture to the Irish Concrete Society on 'Conservation of "Throw-Away" Buildings for Eternity: Restoration of Modern Movement architecture in the Netherlands'.

(Report: Irish coordinator Shane O'Toole)

Japan: Takamasa's French-Japanese House jeopardized

Recently an action to safeguard the French-Japanese House in Tokyo has been started by some French experts working in Japan.

The house was founded after the initiative of Shibusawa Eiichi and Paul Claudel in 1924.

The Japanese architect Yoshizika Takamasa designed the building and today, it is being regarded as a main representative of Modern Movement architecture in Japan.

The building is now threatened by demolition for economic reasons, since it occupies a valuable lot in central Tokyo.

DOCOMOMO International supported the initiative for safeguarding the house by sending a letter.

Anyone who wishes to support the case should get in touch with the preliminary DOCOMOMO representative in Japan, Véronique Brindeau, Sugunami-ku, Kamitakaido 2-5-2, Tokyo 168, Japan.

(Report composed by the editor)

The Netherlands: appeals to safeguard two Modern Movement buildings

The MoMo-register and the legal form of the Netherlands Working Party; these were the main issues in the last period. Apart of course from the attempt to save the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam and Bergpolderflats in Rotterdam. The Olympic Stadium is threatened with demolition.

The local municipality has decided in favour of demolition, but the user has made an appeal to the Minister of Culture to list the building under the Monuments Act. A decision has not yet been taken. To discuss how MoMo buildings in our country can be protected against the sometimes disrespectful local authorities, such as has been the case with the Stadium, the Bergpolderflats (see article elsewhere in this issue) and the Sphinx buildings (see Newsletter 6), DOCOMOMO-NL will organize a debate on these and other cases on the 1st of July. Members in the Netherlands will be informed soon; see 'Events'.

In order to be able to present a MoMo-register in Dessau in September, DOCOMOMO-NL has drawn up a list with the 'top 30' of Modern Movement buildings and neighbourhoods in the

Netherlands. This 'top 30' will be the basis for discussion about which buildings should be added, which buildings should be removed and in which order of importance they should be. In this way the top-rank of the register can be put up, forming a basis for further discussions, additions and actions.

Also the legal form of DOCOMOMO-NL has been a matter of consideration. Up to now, the workingparty has no legal status at all, we are just a group of individuals, without a budget, given hospitality by the Netherlands Department for Conservation. When coming into action however this was a handicap. Petitions and appeals appeared not to be admissible. In order to be able to develop legal action, we will become a foundation soon. We will keep you informed!

(Report: DOCOMOMO-NL Secretary Rob Docter)

Poland: a Ball to safeguard MoMo architecture

One of the most interesting architectural realisations in interWar Krakow is the building of the Vienna Insurance Association FENIX erected in the heart of the old city, in the Market Square. At the time when the building was erected, there was a heated polemic concerning the introduction of modernist forms into the medieval tissue of old Krakow. Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, one of the most eminent Polish architects, presented a few versions of the elevations, combining in various

Left: the Fenix building in the heart of Krakow entailed a heated discussion.

Right: the poster announcing the DOCOMOMO Modernist' Ball in favour of the building.



ways the architectural avantgarde with some historical elements. During World War II, the decorative elements of the front facing the Market Square, had been changed in a way that toned down slightly its modernist appearance; the only authentic fragment had been preserved on the side elevation.

The original decoration has also been preserved partly in the interiors, among others on the first floor, where since the year 1933, there has been a dancing hall and a cafe which have played a significant role in the cultural and social life of the city.

In January of the current year it was decided that the cafe and dancing hall should be liquidated. The Polish Section of DOCOMOMO undertook a wide variety of propaganda activities both by radio and TV in favour of preserving both venues in their unaltered, authentic shape. The culminating point of this action was a Modernist Ball which was held on the last day of the existence of the cafe. The Ball, which became a veritable event in Krakow's social life, had previously been advertised on six consecutive Thursdays in special broadcasts of Radio Krakow. At the same time, M.J. Zychowska acquainted the listeners with the most interesting realisations of this period in architecture, while K. Styrna-Barkowicz spoke about the cultural life and fashion at that time. The above information was illustrated with quotations from newspapers and magazines published in the thirties. The Modernist

Ball ended the carnival season as it was held on March 3rd. It was organised by the world famous Krakow cabaret Piwnica pod Baranami (Under the Rams) together with the Polish Section of DOCOMOMO, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the completion of the FENIX building itself. The scenario of the Ball-happening was to recreate the atmosphere, together with the whole setting and fashion, which accompanied the most elegant balls organised in the carnival season 1932/1933.

The splendidly lit up facade of the building, the horse-drawn carriages bringing the illustrious guests and the 'famous tenor singer Jan Kiepusza' singing operetta tunes, had attracted crowds of Krakow residents. The guests were obliged to wear costumes and hair-styles characteristic of the thirties, and the band played musical hits from those days. The board of the Polish section of DOCOMOMO attended without exception, headed by Prof. A. Olszewski who came specially from Warsaw, in the company of his wife.

Fragments of this spectacular event, recorded by Polish TV, were later included in a film about Krakow modernism which was shown on the following day. The film (entitled The Ball, an unconventional account, realised by M. Osterwa-Czekaj, in accordance with the concept of K. Styrna-Barkowicz and M.J. Zychowska) aroused a big interest among the viewers and in this way fulfilled our expectations by acquainting the general public with the values inherent in Modern Movement architecture.

(Report: Polish secretaries K. Styrna-Barkowicz and M.J. Zychowska)

Sweden: a conference and a handbook

The Swedish DOCOMOMO Working group is busy preparing a conference and a handbook (ca. 50 pages of text and pictures) which we will call 'Take care of our functionalistic inheritance!' The conference will occur on 15th October 1992 in Stockholm, and the handbook should be available at the conference. The conference will discuss what is left of the typical buildings from the late 1920's and 1930's in Sweden, in what state they are, how to register them, what the laws say about taking care of them, and we will show good examples of how to conserve them. The following day we will make an excursion by bus to interesting buildings from the 1930's in Stockholm. We will invite architects, antiquarians, and other people dealing with, and interested in buildings and neighbourhoods from the 1930's. The conference will be held in a building from the period, the Building Society House from 1927 by architect Sven Markelius. This building was partly destroyed some years ago but is now restored.

(Report: Swedish coordinator Eva Rudberg)



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Lithuania's architecture 1918-1940

When Lithuania became an independent state after World War I modern architecture was embraced as one of the most important architectural concepts, largely due to its character being clearly distinguishable from the traditions of the Czar Empire. After the Second World War, Soviet policy was aimed at obscuring Lithuania's history as an independent state, and the architecture of the Modern Movement was threatened to be forgotten. Thanks to the Museum of Architecture this has been avoided and it alertly opened its archives to disclose the rich national history of modern architecture shortly after Lithuania regained its independence.

By Morta Bauziene

In February 1991 the Lithuanian Museum of Architecture arranged an exhibition 'Lithuanian architecture in 1918-1940'. During the 20 years of the museum's activities, we have collected a great deal of projects considering this period, but we had no possibility to show these exhibits to the broad public. The main principle of Soviet officials was to erase the history of independency from the people's memory. A lot of prohibitions forbade to show town plans and building designs. Unwilling to resign ourselves to this position, we collected exhibits and put them in storage. When the freedom wind had blown, we hurried to acquaint our visitors with this period of great importance.

Rebuilding a country

When the Lithuanian independence was declared (1918), all grave measures were taken to rebuild the country. Having been a part of czar Russia for 120 years, Lithuania had been treated as a distant province.

Second-rate architects who tried to introduce the traditions of great Russian cities into cosy Lithuanian towns were sent here. The European architecture was being created in the province, where landowners used to invite architects from the Netherlands, Germany, France, Sweden, Italy (Rokiskis, Plunge, Rietavas, Palanga manors). Taking into account the damages made by the War and the mixture of old traditions with the ones thus upon us by the czar administration, it was necessary to change the administrative structures and the attitude to the developments of towns and boroughs. That was why the controlling institutions,

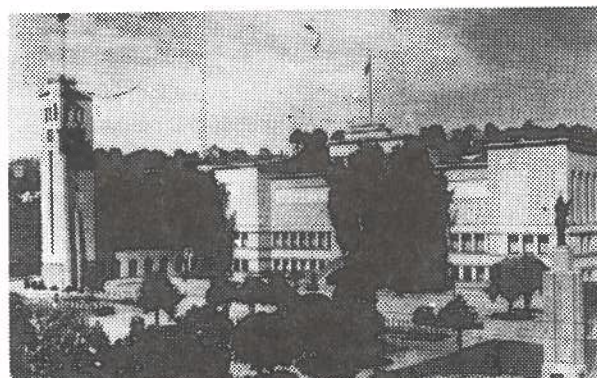
such as Cities Rebuilding Commissariat, the later Inspectorate of Construction, were organized. Already in the first part of the third decade, the borders of many towns were precisely defined and the sites for new buildings were fixed. While projecting new urban layouts, the centres of towns and boroughs were treated not only as economic objects but the architectural traditions were also taken into account. Construction was carried out all over Lithuania. Particularly many schools, museums, hospitals and office buildings were built. Special governmental programs for educational offices were being carried out. A number of competitions for a variety of preparatory projects were initiated, including schools, office blocks for banks, churches, museums, a town hall and Kaunas University. Also, typical projects for rural constructions were arranged. In our exhibit, we show some architectural designs that have never been realized, either due to the fact that another design was awarded or to the Soviet occupation of 1940 and the Second World War.

It is an interrupted Lithuanian architectural concept. The innovations of constructivism and functionalism in Lithuania were adopted very carefully and in the period between the two world Wars, when many of the towns were rebuilt, a number of creative individuals revealed themselves, thus laying the foundations of a rationalist architecture.

Yet, not only creative preferences, but also financial means, and the capacities of the building industry determined architecture. Not all of it is outstanding, a great deal of it is even ordinary, but we do not try to estimate architecture in such a



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way in our exhibition: we present a retrospective view of it. That is why the peripheral architecture, created by the same architects as in the temporary capital of Lithuania, Kaunas, makes up half of the exhibition. These architects graduated from Russian, Italian, German and French universities and worked in Lithuania in 1920-1940. They brought home the trends, styles and fashions from the different schools. The exhibition shows all the tendencies of Lithuanian architecture. Academic, neo classical and eclectic tendencies predominated here until 1930. The most significant buildings were designed by architects M. Songaila, E. Frykas and V. Dubeneckis who graduated from the Petersburg University. In 1988 in the Lithuanian Museum for Architecture an exhibition in honour of the 100th anniversary of V. Dubeneckis birth was arranged.

In 1923 the State Theatre was reconstructed according to the design of V. Dubeneckis and M. Songaila. The baroque pediment left by the architects in this building gives the impression of representation and continues the lasting baroque tradition in Lithuania, while at the same time the plan is laconic and functional.

In the 1930's, M. Songaila prepared designs for the State Bank and the building of the Faculty of Physics and Chemistry of the University of Vytautas the Great, in which the classical elements of symmetry, harmony and proportion were evolved. In the other bank buildings, designed during the 1940's for the Lithuanian periphery, M. Songaila left the clear academical point of view and rather often he strayed to decoration of facades.

This trend partly was shared by S. Kudokas, a doctor in architecture who graduated in Rome. His way to rational architecture led towards the gradual simplification of the eclectic and classical language. In 1935 he designed the Officers Club in cooperation with K. Krisciukaitis.

Most creatively, the classical heritage was interpreted by V. Dubeneckis, who prepared projects for the Museum of Vytautas the Great and the Medical Academy buildings in 1931. The building of the Museum occupies almost an entire block. It is a compact, almost square-form (45x40m) building, with two inner courtyards and two exuberant entrances. In front of the museum a representative square was formed. V. Dubeneckis passed away in 1932, but the modern architectural traditions he initiated were continued by Kaunas University graduates J. Jasiukaitis and F. Bielinskis.

Visitors of the exhibitions can see several projects designed by V. Landsbergis-Zemkalnis: the building of 'Pieno Centras' (Milk Centre; 1931-34), a six-storey palace with a clear composition, as well as the untraditionally solved corners in the Palace of Municipality and the Public Library. Known for their restrained monumentality, and the clear inter-

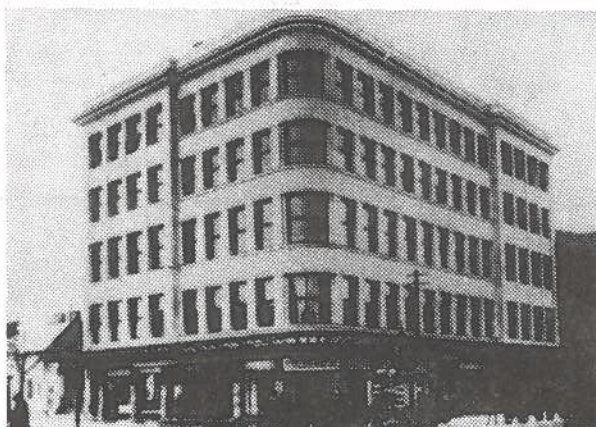
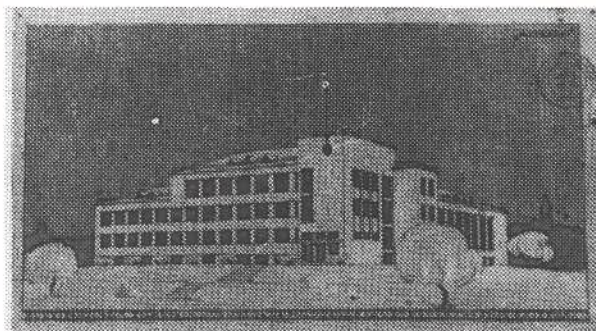
pretation of the situation are his public buildings. The exhibition includes design, drawings, old photos and picture postcards. These exhibits show the buildings as they were planned by their creators. Part of the buildings have been altered since, while others were destroyed during the Second World War.

In reconstructing Lithuanian towns during the first postWar decade, typical Soviet designs were being introduced under compulsion. Architects from Moscow and Leningrad were sent to lead the design workshops and studios. The rational architectural concepts formed in 1920-1940, were interrupted and many famous architects emigrated.

The period of 1920-1940 has been researched and published too little. Our exhibition is the first attempt to survey this so important period of Lithuanian architecture.

Morta Bauziene is staffmember of the Lithuanian Museum of Architecture in Vilnius,

Far left: elementary school, designed by S. Kudokas (1934): Broken down in the Second World War.
 Left: the Museum of Vytautas The Great in Kaunas. Designed by V. Dubeneckis (1930). The square was destroyed in the Soviet period. Renewed in 1989. Photo shows the state of 1936.
 Top: the High Technical school competition project by A. Lukosaitis (1936).
 Bottom: 'Pienocentras' in Kaunas by V. Landsbergis (1936)



Modern Movement architecture in Latvia

sources of a historical heritage

The architectural heritage of the 1920's and 1930's in Latvia shows a rather broad variety of stylistic currents; however, the leading style definitely was functionalism or Modern Movement architecture.

The roots of the Modern Movement in Latvia go back to Art Nouveau or Jugendstil architecture from the beginning of the 20th Century. Professor Krastins of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Riga discloses a hardly known chapter in the dissemination of the Modern Movement in architecture.

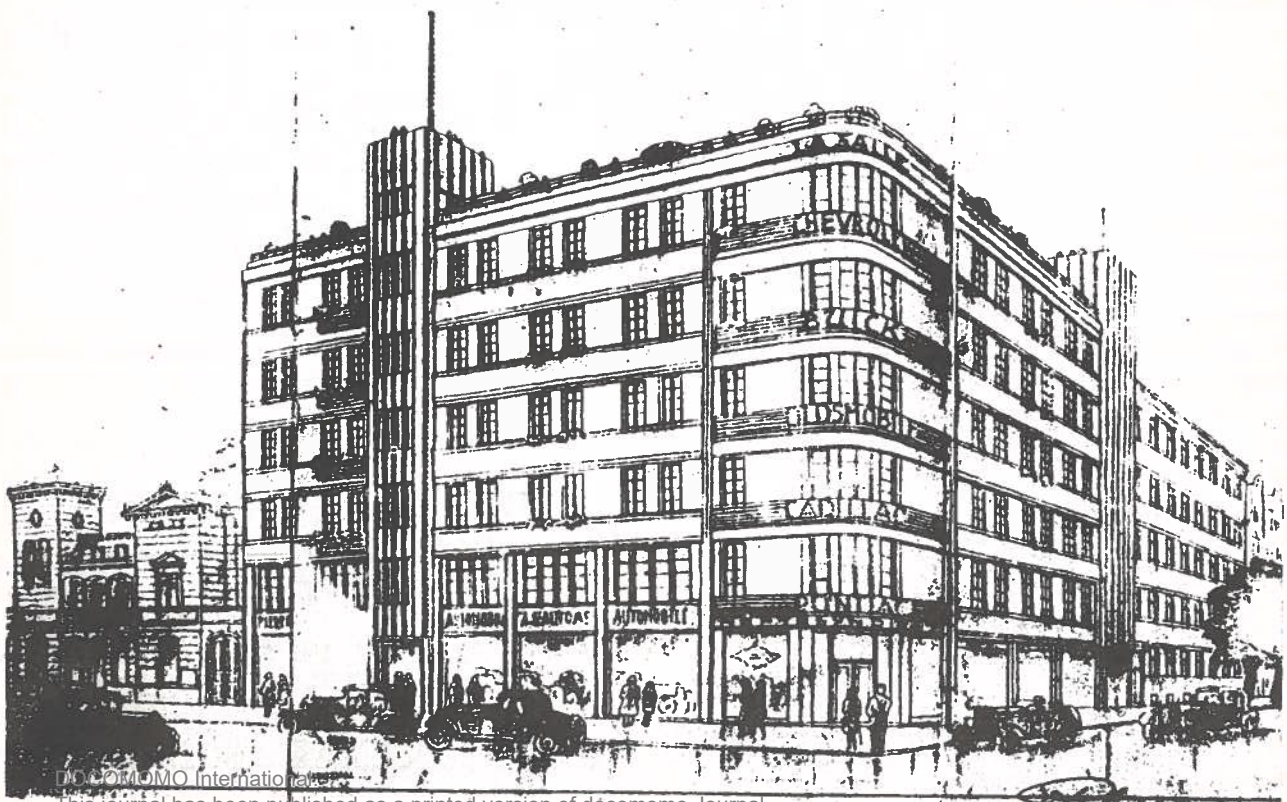
*by J. Krastins**

In contrast with the Modern Movement, many Art Nouveau buildings are decorated with rich and magnificent ornaments, although ornamentation does not determine the essence of this style. All the various modern styles in architecture are rooted in the Art Nouveau, since its designing methods were based on an artistic expression, taking the tangible technological constructions within the architectural structure of a building as a starting point: functionally well organized and convenient in lay out, applied building materials, structure etcetera.

Art Nouveau roots

Most consistently, these methods were embodied in the rationalist trends within the Art Nouveau,

which were most characteristic for the architecture of Riga, the Capital of Latvia. Riga can be considered to be the Latvian capital of Art Nouveau as well, since more than one third of the buildings in the downtown area are in that style. In historiography, a widely spread method to search after the origins of Modern Movement architecture is to look amongst those Art Nouveau buildings of the 20th Century or even the second half of the 19th Century, whose appearance can be more or less directly associated with the characteristic language of the architectural forms of the late 1920's and 1930's, usually by contradistinguishing them from the more general tendencies in contemporary stylistic developments. Nevertheless, the dissemination of this style,



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mostly among rationalist Art Nouveau buildings, has a regular nature and it is not only the result of the far-sightedness of one or another individual artist.

Early Modern Movement

In Riga, for example, there are several such apartment buildings, built in the so called Rational Romanticism style - at 70 A. Cakastreet (1910, by A. Vanags), at 23 Certrudesstreet, at 70,70a and 70b, Lacplesastreet (all 1909, by E. Laube), and others. Horizontal lines are accentuated in the geometrical composition of cubic volumes and there is even a touch of a ribbon-window motive here and there. Trade buildings with a frame construction were built by P. Mandelstamm in 1910 and 1911, by J. Gailis in 1912, and others. Here, the uninterrupted glazings of the lower floors seems to date from the second half of the 1920's. The apartment building at 5 Mierastreet (1912, by A Schmaeling) is hard to distinguish from a typical Modern Movement building of around 1930.

Wounds of the War

Latvia was heavily destroyed during World War I. In 1918 the sovereign Latvian State was founded, but a hard struggle for liberty continued on several fronts for more than a year. The next six years passed mainly by removing the ruines and healing the wounds the War had caused. During the second half of the 1920's an extensive constructuion program was started. In about fifteen years, more than eighthundred schools, several hundreds of cultural centres, tens of health care

institutions, post offices, telephone exchanges, banks and railway stations have been built or completely reconstructed. Thousands of farms with farmhouses and the necessary annexes were built. Already in the beginning of the 1930's the housing crises in Riga and other larger cities in Latvia had been solved, mainly due to private initiatives. Mostly two-storey blocks were built, with one, two, or a few more apartments on each floor. In the region of Mezaparks, which began to be developed in the beginning of the Century according to the popular garden-city concepts of that time, about 350 private houses were built in the period between 1928 and 1932. Several municipal tenement houses must be mentioned which were built in Riga according to the examples of the Vienna housing program, including some fine examples like 3 Auseklastreet (1927, by P. Dreijmanis), 15 Asarastreet (1929, by O. Tilmanis) and others .

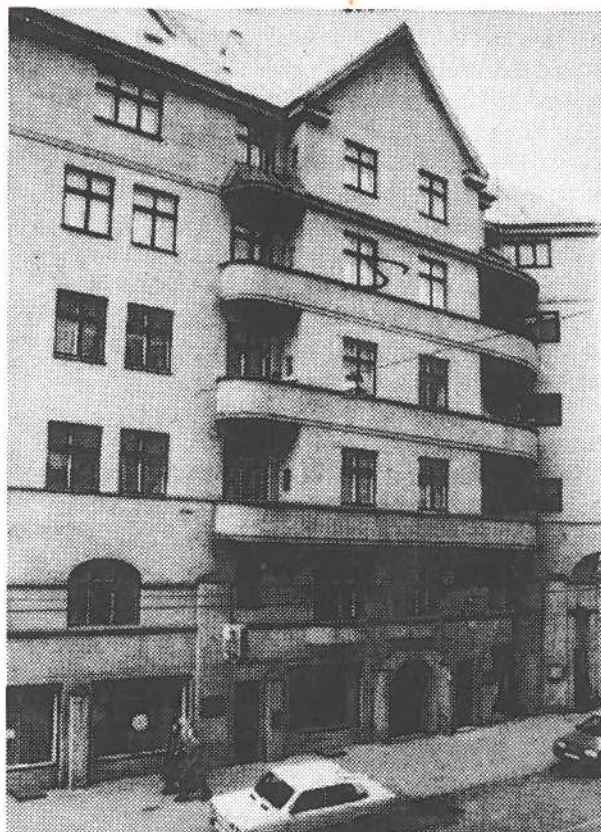
A matter of style

The question of architectural style gained a special actuality in those days. Numerous publications on this theme can be found in Latvian professional literature and periodicals of that time.

In the end of the 1920's and the beginning of the 1930's, most authors worked in a great variety of styles. Professor E. Laube, for example, emphasized that the declaration of only one style and the denial of the others, means to act against the spirit of the time. ¹

Yet, while trying to determine the dominating style,

Left: commercial building with offices and flats, a project by P. Mandelstamm from 1928, that was realized at 51 Elizabetesstreet in Riga. Note the advertisement signs for American cars.
Right: flats at 5 Mierastreet, Riga, designed by Schmaeling in 1912.

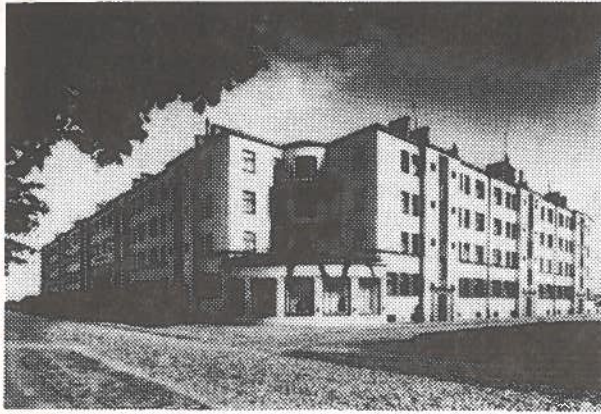


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already in 1928 the architect J. Rutmanis openly recognized 'the first serious steps in the direction of constructivism (i.e. Modern Movement - J.K.)'.² A year later the art critic V. Pengerots discerned an indisputable move towards constructivist art, although with a remark of its being not 'an absolute final form of art'.³

Already in 1932, architect H. Pirangs declared: 'Our slogan is the new utility'⁴, but architect A. Birzenieks stated that for a long time it was being talked about 'the new utility in art; after a short fight it celebrates a victory'.⁵ Also architect G. Dauge referred to modern architecture as 'the style of efficient basic forms', indicating that 'sound, decorative forms always grow out of these basic forms'.⁶ Apart from 'constructivism' and 'the New Utility' (German 'Neue Sachlichkeit', Latvian 'Jauna Lietiskiba'), functionalism was one of the most spread designations of Modern Movement architecture.

In 1934, while establishing Ulmanis' authoritarian regime in Latvia, the necessity of a Latvian constructivist art was stressed more often. At the same time a certain ideological reaction grew against an abstract theoretical and made up internationalism⁷, proclaimed to be an 'alien Eastern Cubism for our spirit'⁸, pointing out that 'the international forms according to the oriental example' are 'destructive to the development of our architecture'⁹, therefore we should get rid of 'an empty conventionalism and temporary influence of a fashion'.¹⁰

Cosmopolitans

E. Laube called the vocabulary of Modern Movement architecture 'abstract, smooth, bare, quite often poor, dull, sometimes even repulsive'.¹¹

Yet, writing about the twenty years of development of an independent Latvian architecture, he had to admit that 'from all the trends, the international modern architecture, which came from the Old Europe under the names of 'New Architecture', 'Applied Architecture' or 'Functional Architecture' was tried to be realized most intensively'.¹²

The general European context of Modern Movement architecture is obvious and therefore J.



Rutmanis referred to the representatives of this style in Latvia as 'cosmopolitans', who stuck to Western European' efficient forms and finishes, 'imitating German and French examples in composition, affecting the proportions of volumes and the pattern of facade openings'.¹³

Numerous works

One of the pioneers of Modern Movement architecture in Latvia was civil engineer T. Hermanovskis. Many public buildings throughout Latvia, but most of all housingblocks in Riga (at 8 (1926), 6 (1928) Marijasstreet, 6 (1927), 4 (1928) and 2 (1930) M. Nometnustreet, 8 Bergenesstreet (1928), 9 L. Laicenastreet (1929) and others) have been built after his designs. Architect P. Mandelstamm realized a trading office and a dwellingblock in Riga at 51 Elizabetesstreet (1928), a dwelling at 40 Bruniekustreet (1929) and several other buildings, characteristic for the Modern Movement. In the variety of early Modern Movement works in Latvia are included a sanatorium 'Saulstari' in Ogre (1928) and an office building of a health-fund in Riga at 17 Certrudeststreet (1929), built by the architect K. Bikse, as well as the people's house in Riga, at 29/31 Bruniekustreet (1929) designed by the architectsfirm Karr & Baetge. Several works by this architectsfirm in Riga are almost perfect examples of the Modern Movement's artistic expression. Some examples are the Printer's and Publisher's Club at 43/45 Lacplesastreet (1930), the Latvian Stock Bank at 13 Kalkustreet (1931) and an office and apartment house with a movie theatre 'Aina' at 19 Valnustreet (1935). All these architects were graduates of the Riga Polytechnical Institute or the Faculty of Architecture of the Latvian University after World War I.

Local vocabulary

The Modern Movement in architecture has left obvious traces in the architectural aspect of many towns in Latvia. In many places it acquired a definite local vocabulary, but in general it developed under the influence of the Western European achievements in constructivist art of that



time. In Latvia many things arose simultaneously with analogous ones in other countries. Also today, the regeneration of the spoilt, deformed environment, that has degraded during the fifty years of Soviet occupation, can apparently only be solved within the context of West European experiences and traditions.

J. Krastins is a professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Riga University of Technology in Latvia. The original text has been considerably edited.

Notes:

1. E. Laube, Musu tagadeja celtnieciba (Our Present-day Construction), Latvian, 7 Dec. 1928
2. J. Rutmanis, Arhitektura Latvijas valsts pastavesanas pirmajos desmit gados (Architecture during the first ten years of the Latvian State), Ilustrats zurnals, 1928, n° 11, p.326.
3. V. Pengerots, Dazas domas par konstruktivismu (Some thoughts about constructivism), Daugava, 1929, n° 7, p.892
4. H. Pirangs, Arhitektoniskas stila formas Rigas pilsetas ainava (Architectural stylistic forms in the landscape of Riga), Riga ka Latvijas galvaspilseta, Riga, 1932, p.120.
5. A. Birzenieks Moderna celtnieciba (Modern construction), Jaunakis zinas, 11 Nov. 1932.
6. G. Dauge, Jaunais stils arhitektura (The new style in architecture), Burtnieks, 1933, n° 10, p.211.
7. G. Dauge, Par nacionalu arhitekturu (About national architecture), Burtnieks, 1935, n° 10, p.744.
8. P. Dreijmanis, Ka javeidojas Rigas celtniecibai (How must the construction of Riga develop), Briva zeme, 25 Jan. 1936.
9. P. Kundzins, Piezimes par Latvijas arhitekturu (Notes about the architecture of Latvia), Students, 1 Febr. 1935.
10. P. Kundzins, Jauna tiesu pils, (The new court palace), Sejejs, 1936, n° 11, p. 1164.
11. E. Laube, Arhitekturas gars atjaunotaja Latvija (Architectural spirit in reconstructed Latvia), Latvijas Arhitektura, 1938, n°4/5, p.III.
12. E. Laube, Latvijas arhitekturas cels 20. gados (20 years of development of architecture in Latvia), Latvijas Arhitektura, 1938, n° 4/5, p.137.
13. J. Rutmanis, Latviesu arhitektura 19. un 20. gs (Latvian architecture in the 19th and 20th Century), Makslas vesture, V. Purvisa, visp. red. Riga, 1934, p.257

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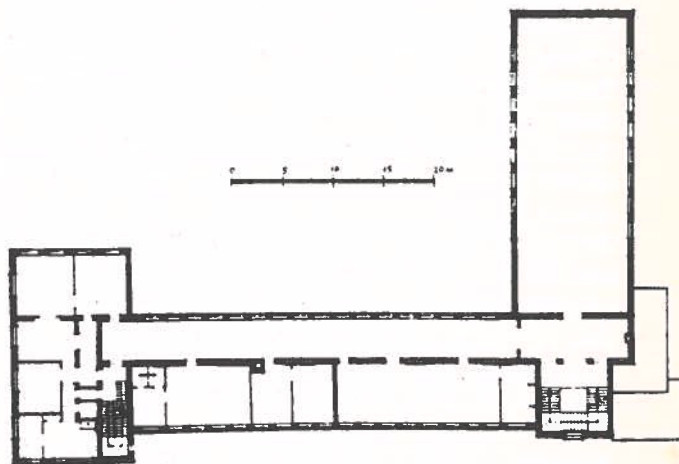
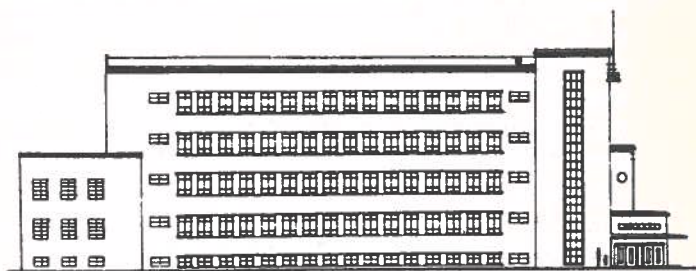
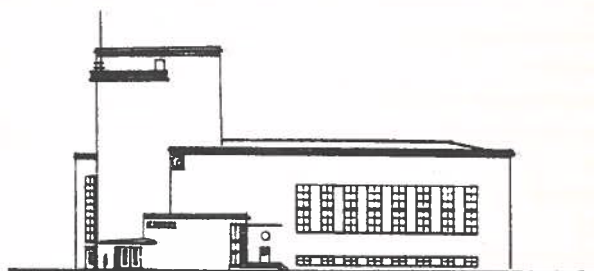


Far left: municipal social housing at 15 Asarastreet, designed by O. Tilmanis in 1929.

Left: the Latvian Stock Bank, designed by Karr and Beatge in 1930, is located at 13 Kalkustreet in Riga.

Top left: flats at 4 Stabustreet, designed by T. Hermanovskis in 1932.

Top right and bottom right: A. Grinbergs 1933 design for Rigas Pilsetas 10. Pamatskola, a school at 53 Ciekurkalna I Linija.



Our context of neofunctionalism

by Klára Kubickova

Neofunctionalism or the late modernism is still a vivid current in the world of architecture, as also illustrated by the results of the simultaneous architectonic competitions in Venice. There are only few countries having such rich and lively roots for this movement as we do. After the gothic and baroque architectonic styles, it was the functionalism of the 1920's and 1930's that put our country on the architectural map of the world again. The originality and rapid development of functionalist architecture in the territory of the whole of Czecho-Slovakia were remarkable. The tight linkage and interconnections with the close centres of modern architecture, especially Vienna and Stuttgart, but also the mere fact of the formation of a new democratic state, its new institutions and growth of towns played a role in the birth of this phenomenon. The new style became very quickly accepted in the whole spectrum, it became an expressive manifestation also of the young Slovak architecture, it determined the expression of the new centre of Bratislava as well as of smaller towns such as Zilina, Ruzomberok and Piestany. The works of Emil Bellus, Scheer, Frantisek, Wimmer, Weinwurm and Vecsei united into one stream together with the endeavour of Czech architects active in Slovakia and they left a heritage of high level. This tradition was continued also after 1945 when Emil Bellus invited significant representatives of functionalism to become professors lecturing in Bratislava, such as Vladimir Karfik, Eugen Kramár, Emanuel Hruska, and others. Due to their activity a broad base of Slovak architects was trained in the principles of this heritage for the first time in history. Unfortunately, the growing pressure of the totalitarian regime gradually eliminated the first generation of these teachers including Emil Bellus and the hermetically sealed system of education and thinking contributed to the current miserable state of our architecture. The Fifth Exhibition of Architecture in Venice was opened this year for the first time, alternating with the Biannual of fine arts, after an extraordinary short preparation period. Everyone who experienced the remarkably rich show of this exhibition should realize the significantly positive meaning of such a concept both in terms of architectural identity as a kind of arts as well as in terms of initiating a high concept and artistic level of the display of architecture at an exhibition, each pavillion with a different idea and a united artistic concept. The exhibition, of course, also reflected the contemporary political and economical situation of the world. From Eastern Europe only Hungary could present implemented and remarkable pieces (the stream of 'organic architecture'), Yugoslavia had its exhibition in two

Czech and Slovak The heritage of the past and

The assignment given by the Architectonic Sector of the Venice Biannual was simple. The individual state pavillions will present those pieces of their own production the country considers to be important, significant and contributing in the framework of the Fifth International Exhibition of Architecture. And the summary will be a sufficiently objective and rich picture of the developments in contemporary world architecture. Our decision-making was affected by one absolutely clear starting point: in the period of discussion on competences between the republics, in the period of disputes over whether together or seperately, we wanted to prepare a joint exhibition. An exhibition presenting what the Czech and Slovak architecture have in common. Also, the awareness of the fact that the

separate premises (and the Slovenians in a palace off the exhibition area), while the others were showing only projects and so called 'painted architecture'.

Unfortunately, nothing can be changed about the reality that at present neither Czecho-Slovakia can show executed works that would be a contribution to the development of world architecture or would at least keep pace with it. When deciding whether our presentation should be of 'painted architecture' or the existing projects of neofunctionalism, we preferred to show the potential reality. A built work is considered a piece of architecture and out of the displayed projects, five are in progress of being executed. Our exhibition had a clear theoretical concept: it presented a selection of the neofunctionalist current, illustrated with models as well as photos of implementations pointing out the domestic roots of this stream in the 20th Century. The presentation was adequate to the artistically clear geometric and black and white nature of the exhibited projects, photos and models (D.A. Studio Prague).

We are approaching the end of the century and streams and individual manifestations of eclecticism are again asking for the floor in the culture of Europe. The turn towards regional and national roots results in a new evaluation of the domestic values of architecture. This is also one of the reasons why contemporary Slovak architecture

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neofunctionalism

the anticipation of the future

Czechoslovak pavillion in the gardens of Venice is small, only 10 x 17 metres of exhibiton area, and that the division of this beautiful, intimate and at the same time monumental space into two separate parts would be raping of its architecture resulted in taking this approach.

Therefore we decided for functionalism as the basis (maybe also because this movement passes over the whole history of the Czechoslovak state), for also in this unity the differences in the individual national approaches are clearly visible. Or maybe because the common basis is interpreted and developed due to tradition and disposition with the approximately characteristic mastership in both republics. The final collection is a sufficiently significant evidence.

is again drawing from the morphology of the period which, during its prime, equaled the architectonic evolution in Europe in those days.

Neofunctionalism is not a predominant stream in Slovak architecture- the search for our own roots, finding a common language of the newly designed architecture with the existing complexes of valuable historic and modern architecture are becoming manifest within the various creative approaches. The effort for townformability, polyfunctionality, diversity in space and shape prevails. Today it is difficult to predict where Slovak architecture will find its identity at the end of the 20th Century and how the inclination of some authors towards postmodernism will develop, for the attempts for a regional architecture will be materialized.

The linkage with the positive features of functionalist architecture, which undoubtedly exists here and which is presented with a selection of works by authors and teams already mature today, forms one of the lines of continuity within a cracked evolution of its own architectonic culture.

Klára Kubicková is official of the Slovak National Gallery and commisioner for the Slovak part of the exhibition at the Venice Biannual of 1991.

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The poetry of sobriety

by *Radomíra Sedláková*

Naturally, there are enough interesting streams responding vividly to the topical social changes in contemporary Czech architecture. The architecture is also taking breath, relaxing in the won liberty and pluralism, openness, which, however, at the same time even cruelly reveals how crucial were the years of isolation from the active developments in the world. The contemporary Czech architecture is full of searching, fumbling, promises and errors. Full of looking for itself, looking for the true expression of its period, the expression of the society.

This, of course, is a state typical for creative architecture at each stage, each period of its development; therefore it is not possible to argue that the new endeavour can be dated only starting with the year 1989. It is only more clear, free, and maybe hotter, maybe also sometimes with the naive elation, 'everything is allowed now', from that time on.

And nevertheless, a trend maturing quickly toward a sovereign selfconfidence, a trend strict on itself in the proclaimed sobriety and continence, is making its headway more and more. A trend which has already earlier been given the name neofunctionalism, often with the proud attribute: Czech neofunctionalism.

It appeared for the first time at the beginning of the 1970's, when the two, Jan Líněk and Vlado Milunic, at the beginning of their joint creative work formulated a programme which also says:

'Architect's social feeling is the prerequisite without no good architecture can be produced. This is not a matter of false modesty, but respect for the maximum amount of justified requirements from the future users... We consider ourselves to be neofunctionalists with a broad concept of function in which colour and the materials are used with respect to their esthetic and social function.'

Neofunctionalism was manifested in their design of homes for retired people (built only in the first half of the 1980's), at the same time it also appeared in the first studies for the House of the CKD in Prague by Jan and Alena Srámeks which after 1980 became a sort of embodiment of the new concept of Czech architecture, a challenge for a future way.

Of course, a necessary and important external impulse acceded just in time: postmodernism. Its sharp criticism of the modernism of the International Style (which in the late 1970's became an official doctrine under the influence of which Czech architecture started to stagnate), was locked within its own world without any open contacts, without active connection with the

outside world, especially in the case of large public orders.

The only thing that resulted from it was the awareness of its strict limitations, that were defined by the poor building industry (enhanced by its monopoly), the absurdity of construction periods of over eight years from plan to execution as well as ideological barriers. Yet, the storm started by postmodernism was strong enough to penetrate the isolated Czech architecture. Though it was not possible to respond immediately, flexibly and quickly to its conditions, one was able to understand the principles, the essence of the effort. To understand and to go ones own way.

One of the principles was the valorisation of the rich experience of the past architecture. But, of which past?

Some internal reserve, maybe due to the strict rational training, prevented free collages and combinations of style elements. Maybe also the experience with the relatively recent 'development of classical morphology' in the period of the so called socialist realism of the 1950's played its role, that was however not admitted aloud.

The golden era of functionalism was the closest and the most supportive in this situation. The purism and poetry of the 1920's, elated by the new technological possibilities, settled in the 1930's into a pure and upto today remarkable transparency. It is necessary to look back here and to find new starting points among the original principles, cleared of the deposits of later transformations. Then rationality, of course next to its poetic character, was predominant and architecture developed unusually wide and reached a high level.

Apart from other reasons, the sober and reserved elegance of this architecture appealed to the architects of today. Probably not in the least because of the Czech disposition of rationality and reserved manifestations; the poetry of a pure technological solution is closer to them than the langour of romanticism.

This concept of architecture became an active defense against the pomp of the official monumentalism in our country. Due to its connenctions with clear, or even transparent values, it formed an anchor in an uncertain period. Just like sixty years ago, it was proven again (though up to now more in projects than in executed works) that modest architecture can find it's place in the rich historic environment of the Czech towns and cities. In the context of baroque an gothic buildings, popular neorenaissance and playful Art Nouveau, this restrained architecture forms a strong reference point, even more so if the lessons from the past with respect to an isolating and inconsiderate urbanism are taken seriously

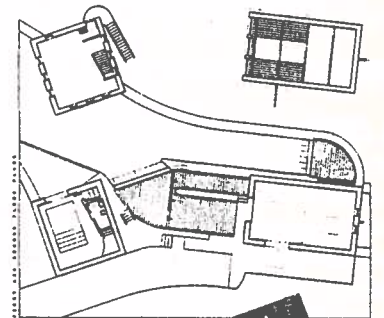
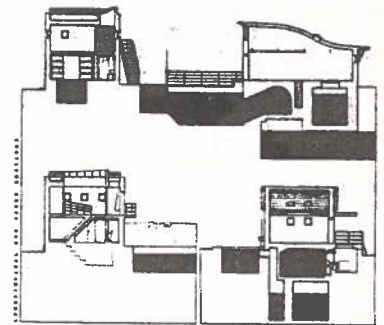
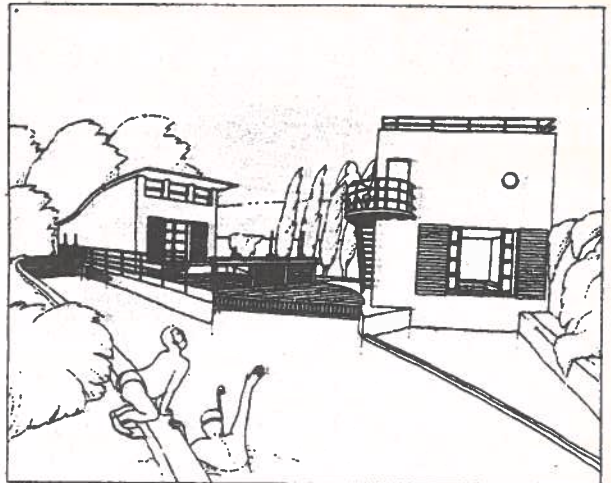
this time

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Reconstruction of the water saw mill 'Drevobrus', Hostinné, 1990. Designed by Roman koucky

Then, like sixty years ago, this new architecture could create a memento of an improving society in a long desired freedom. However, to make full profit of it, one must keep ones head cool and think in a sober and rational way.

To make a choice from the abundance of interesting trends in contemporary Czech architecture was relatively easy. To choose the authors and their works was more difficult, which also reminds of the situation in the 1920's and 1930's. The trends are broad and balanced, without any projecting peaks. It includes also the necessary diversity enhancing its unity and stimulating its further development. There are hard purists mastering a poetic character from an almost unpoetical stringency, there are contemplative pure functionalists, rational constructivists and technologists as well as cynics, approaching everything with a playful and sometimes also grinning exaggeration. Yet, the desire after the truth, the admiration for the purity of shape, function and structure is common to all of them.

The selection was also restricted by the size of the pavillion. Therefore each author is presented only with one work, one which looks forward and making sobriety and continuity manifest: the heritage of the past and the anticipation of the future.

Radomíra Sedláková is official of the National Gallery in Prague and General Commisioner of the Czechoslovak contribution to the Venice Biannual of 1991.

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The Mercurius building at Wormer, the Netherlands

The Mercurius building is part of the extensive plant of the Lassie BV foods company at Wormer. It is one of the industrial complexes established along the river Zaan, some 20 kilometers Northwest of Amsterdam, at the end of the last century. For a larger part it is still in use as a production unit, since replacing the plant would be unpayable because of the very big silo it requires. There is one exception: the Mercurius building. It fell into disuse in 1989 and the owners (De Erven de Wed. J. van Nelle, the same as of the famous Van Nelle factories in Rotterdam) asked for a permit for demolition, by this denying its being a listed building. At present the new owner of the company (Douwe Egberts) is likely to get this permission soon and the building is in real danger. Ed schulte explains on the building and reflect on the possibilities for reuse.

by Ed Schulte

At the end of the 19th Century the first reinforced concrete buildings were erected. Till 1900 applications of concrete were restricted to smaller buildings or parts of buildings. As of 1900 the first multi-storey buildings came into being. Mostly, the constructions of these buildings consisted of columns and a beamed floor. Later on, constructions appeared that span more than one direction, such as scales and mushroomfloors. The latter was being developed in the US after 1906, when Turner built the first one in Minneapolis. He patented this system. He gave them his name with reference to the columns that have the form of a mushroom. Various systems of mushroomfloors came into being, that however mainly differ from each other by the way of reinforcement. In Europe the first mushroomfloor was adopted in Moscow by Lolejt. In 1914 this principle was applied for the first time in the Netherlands in the steam works "De Maas" at Rotterdam.

Developments in concrete technology

The mushroom floor of the Mercurius building is of interest for Dutch architectural history because this construction shows the characteristics of the change from frame to mushroomfloors. The Mercurius building is one in a series that with other (still existing) mushroom floors illustrate the development of those floors. Moreover, the Mercurius building was built at a time that still little was known of theory and calculations of concrete constructions. Characteristic details are the beams near the outer wall. In later constructions these were replaced by half columns, resulting in an equal division of floor areas. Besides, it is remarkable that the floor area is regularly divided over the construction. This involves that the outer floor areas show an increase of the bending moment of about 20%. Solutions for this problem we can see only later in the the famous van Nelle factory (1928) in which a normal column at the edge is used or in the Schunck Department Store

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(Heerlen, 1935) where a cantilever was used. Remarkable in the Mercurius building is the height of the column head, which in fact already shows the development of the mushroom floor into a flat slab.

Extensive survey

In 1988, initiated by the Provincial Government, a research was executed to find out the historical value, the constructional performance of the building and the costs for the repairs needed, as well as the possibilities for its reuse

The historical value was intrinsically surveyed and described by the Historic Building Trust of the Provincial Government, the research into the constructions' condition was carried out by the Delft University of Technology and possibilities for reuse were studied by the Eindhoven University of Technology.

Possibilities for reuse

One of the conclusions of my inquiries into possibilities of reuse carried out in 1988, was that the Mercurius building could accommodate functions now housed in other buildings of the Lassie plant. The qualities of the Mercurius building offer, contrary to the other buildings, real spatial, functional possibilities for housing offices and the concerns' canteen. This canteen could be located on the top floor, also can be thought of the use as a representative area of a part of that floor, and combine the use of kitchen equipment with the canteen. The view is magnificent.

Here under two floors of offices. The ground floor can be used for the entrance, showroom, files storage, etc. Though the total m3 contents for these functions is somewhat bigger than the building in use at the moment, the Mercurius building is more suitable.

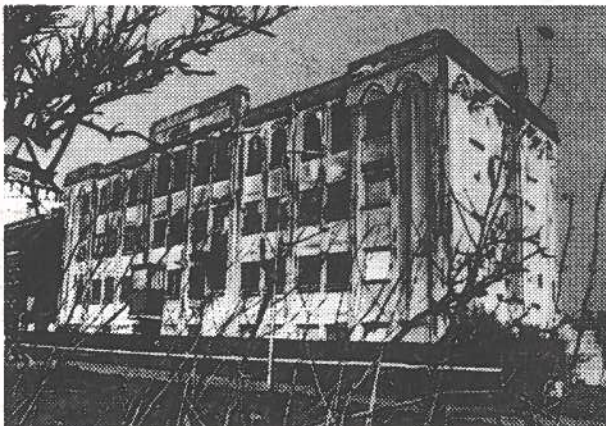
Another possibility is to lay off the building. The site of the building could be opened from the public road in contrast to the present situation. By a

restructuring of the production process the buildings of the 1960's, north of the Mercurius building, will no longer be used. They will be demolished, which will offer an opportunity to connect the Mercurius building with a new road built by the local authorities. In this way, it will be possible to sell off the building to another owner. Demolition of the Mercurius building is not a direct benefit for the concern, since no extensions nor new constructions are needed for the amply housed concern. By the way, it must be said that the other, much older, buildings have been well restored and are in an excellent condition. Today these are again housing the production process. Mercurius is only one too many. Just bad luck! The combination of the two formerly mentioned proposals is of course the third one. The building has excellent opportunities for another owner seeking for the room that the Mercurius building has to offer! An unique site near the Zaan.

Adaptations.

For a new use two important adaptations are required. For a longer stay of people in the buildings it is psychologically required to create a view. Moreover, space is needed for a new technical infrastructure of the building such as heating, ventilation, lighting, sewerage, electricity, etc. Both these applications can be combined in one action; the installation of elevated floors, whether or not carried out as computer-floors. In this way, the height of the parapet will be reduced and the space required for wiring will be created.

The Mercurius building (1922) displays itself as a solid massive along the river Zaan. By its (off) white colour and deviant texture it is a notable building. The Lassie silo (1912) is towering above the peeling mill and the warehouses Donau (1895) and Koningsbergen (1894) going into a special play with the Mercurius building, that sharply contrasts with the brick warehouses.
Photo: Henk van 't Loo



The installation of sanitary facilities, too, is one of the possibilities in this way. Next to this, ways of access and staircases will be needed. Necessary openings in the concrete floors, if any, must depend on the investigation of the quality of the concrete. An elevator will also be possible.

Contemporary requirements

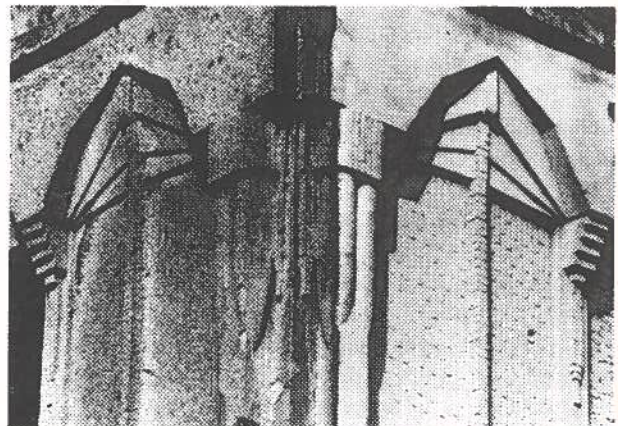
Apart from the constructionally necessary repairs to the concrete of the facades it will be needed to repair the brick walls and the metal windows. Depending on the total physical quality, a fundamental solution must be found for the thermal insulation of the facade, since also this will be a determining aspect for any new function requiring contemporary standards. This could be included in a further research. There are, however, functions possible in which less high standards are required for the thermal insulation. Then, there will be more costs for heating but the profit-and-loss balance can well be economically realistic.

A future for Mercurius?

At this moment discussions around further existence of the building are heated. The positive mentality of the former owner has been replaced by the extremely critical attitude towards maintaining, restoration or reuse of the present proprietor.

The provincial authorities and the National Department for Conservation cooperate with other interested parties, such as the Society for the Preservation of Buildings and Technique 'Zaanstreek', in order to conserve the building. However, the Foundation 'Pal tegen Verval' ('Stand up against Decline') developed a concept for restoring and running Mercurius, supported by a Committee of Recommendation consisting of experts in the field of conservation and architecture.

Ed schulte is an architect and teaches at the Eindhoven University of Technology. He is a specialist in matters of reuse of historic buildings and previously surveyed functional adaptation of church buildings.



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The Haus am Horn (Georg Muche, 1923)

An annex to a Bauhaus museum in Weimar?

The town of Weimar, which is going to apply for the title of 'European Cultural Centre', has sincerely developed new ideas and made new efforts after the peaceful revolution of November 1989, to present and delineate the magnificent stage of the recent history of architecture, the activities of Henri van de Velde and especially of those of the State Bauhaus in a form that is adequate to their historical significance.

By Klaus-Jürgen Winkler

Architectural proof of Van de Velde's Jugendstil, Germany's equivalent of Art Nouveau, has been preserved in the buildings of the Kunstschule (School of Arts) 1904-1911, the present complex of the Weimar College of Architecture and Building, including the rector's office and the faculty of architecture. In addition, there are two villas in the same style within the territory of the town as well as the architect's own residence Unter den hohen Pappeln in the suburbs of Weimar.

The Bauhaus, always on strained terms with the bourgeois local authorities and having its residence in Weimar during the economically most critical period between 1919 and 1925, was only able to design and construct two structures:

Gropius's memorial to the workers assassinated in the Kapp Putsch of 1920 (1922) and the exhibition building Am Horn (1923) designed by Georg Muche and constructed by the Gropius construction office, with Adolf Meyer in charge.

Whereas workshop objects of the Kunstgewerbschule (School of Arts and Crafts) and those by Van de Velde are not too abundant in the collections in Weimar, the workshop objects of the first and heroic period of the School under the custody of the Art Collections in Weimar, which so far have only been displayed - except for great exhibitions - in small parts in some remote rooms of the Weimar castle, are numerous.

Bauhaus museum

The erection of a new museum building is planned, if - as is seriously discussed - the solution cannot be found in the adaptive use of the Van de Velde building, which would present, as a place of historic events, an excellent background. On the other hand, all of its still existing productive functions of research, training and design activities will have to be given up. A modern museum including exhibitions, which could be a general cultural place and possibly even involve creative designing activities in the sense of Bauhaus ideas, is the modern alternative. Questions concerning an appropriate site and the architectural style call for a preliminary elucidation in view of the decision for

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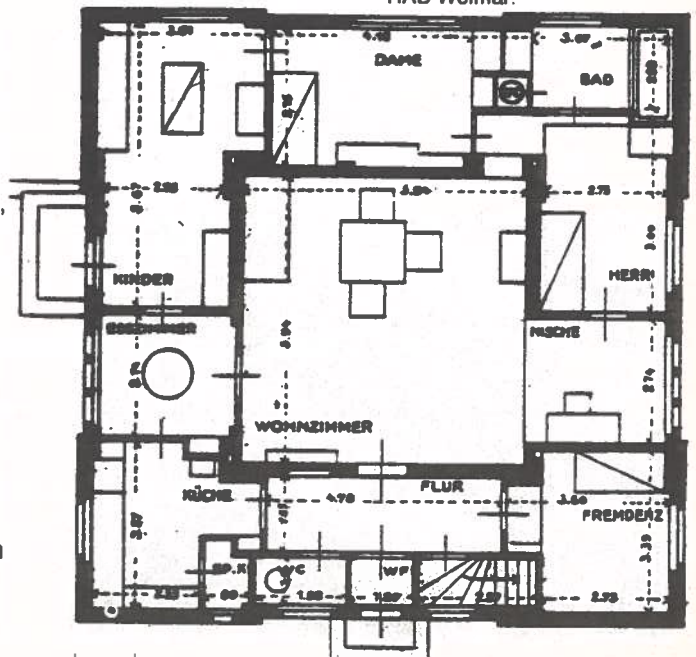
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a Museum of Modern Movement in Weimar. All places where the Bauhaus played an active part would then be respectably presented by means of a museum: Berlin with the Bauhaus Archive, Dessau with the collections in the Bauhaus building and Weimar as well, which after all had been the place of its foundation in 1919.

Well preserved

The preferred object and site is the former experimental building of the great Bauhaus exhibition of 1923, situated at the end of the "Am Horn" road above Goethe's garden pavilion, a house of the early Modern Movement whose original physical fabric is well preserved. In the 1920's and 30's, it was provided with a portico and attached buildings and due to

Left: floorplan of the Haus am Horn, an experiment of the Bauhaus in Weimar, designed by Georg Muche in 1923.
Right, top: the house as it looks today, seen from the road.
Right, bottom: Möckel's design for a Bauhaus Museum including the house in the left corner.
Photo's: Bauhaus Bildarchiv HAB Weimar.

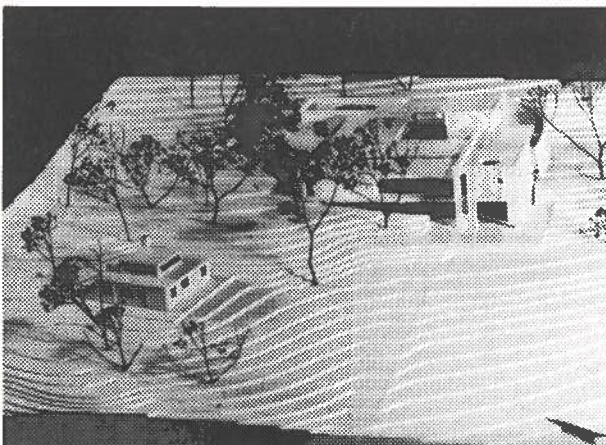
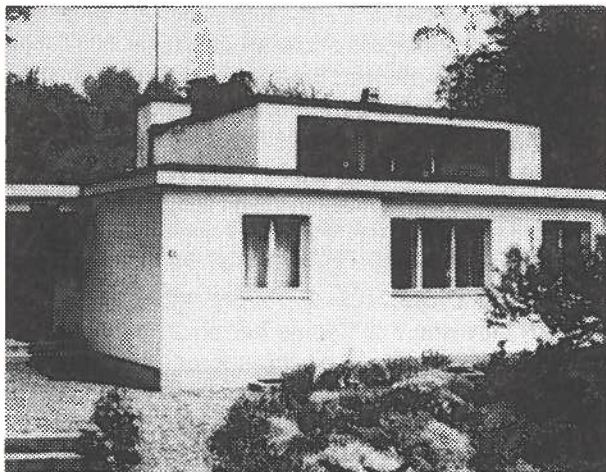


overoccupation during and after the second World War the house fell into decay and became a neglected architectural monument. It was only in the 1970's that it was curatorially preserved and repaired by its inhabitants, who were conscious of its cultural value. As a small museum it was open to interested visitors.

This little house can be said to have been the place where the early Bauhaus architecture could be experienced in an authentic way. For the expert it was an object situated outside the canalised streams of tourists to places of the German classical period. It attracted numerous enthusiasts and performed its function as a small museum where the visitor was individually met nearly around the clock and free of charge. It is almost the same still today, but more recently new views have been expressed, considering this situation inadequate. Now, expanded versions of museum activities are fostered and a wide range of ideas concerning the best site, the connection of the 'genius loci' and the architectural style of the future museum have been developed and already brought about preliminary plans.

A temple visited on slippers?

Last year two diploma papers were completed at the faculty of architecture of the Weimar College of Architecture and Building, dealing with the subject of 'Bauhaus and the Modern Movement Museum in Weimar'. While one paper concentrated on the extension of the complex of the Kunstschule, i.e.



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the Van de Velde buildings, the student Annekatriin Möckel surveyed four additional sites in respect of the optimal suitability in the whole municipal area and subjected them to an analysis in projecting a modern museum into each of them. One site, however, discussed by experts during an architectural symposium, was excluded by her from the very beginning: the former parade ground of the so-called Weimar Gauforum, that gloomy neo-classicistic fabric of national-socialist megalomania designed by Hermann Giesler, Hitler's favourite. This had certainly been the most inappropriate of all sites available, even if the Landesmuseum (Regional Museum) offered a local cultural relation to this idea. But all variants proposed in the paper proved to be inferior to the concept preferring the neighbourhood of the Haus am Horn. According to this project, a modern museum complex will be raised on the traditional plot of the former Bauhaus Settlement (1922-30), up from the exhibition building which is to be completely restored according to the state of 1923. At a respectful distance, the new museum will rise, a solid stepped building with a sound structure and with hidden metaphors, alluding to the formal language of the Modern Movement. Free - in a modern sense - from an overcome modernism and with ecological connections (green roof), the future architect composed an interesting type of architecture. One problem, however, becomes evident in this design: the Haus am Horn, which is to be restored to its original core substance, will become part of a functional ensemble which resembles a memorial complex where the Palladian jewel will be raised to a museum temple which can be visited on felt-slippers. The mummified residential house will become the best museum-piece. Which structural form at the slope of the Goethe park will be compatible with the landscape and how such a museum at a peripheral location can meet all requirements and expectations such as parking lots, certainly requires further considerations. But the design is a first attempt to solve the cultural problems the town of Weimar is faced with and also relates to the curatorial concerns of the historical heritage.

Further studies and possibly an international architectural contest should follow as soon as possible in order to create a solid basis for a proper place of memory and reception of the Modern Movement in Weimar. Just now, there is a chance to provide the Bauhaus in Weimar, which formerly could never become a real hometown to the School, with a place appropriate to it, a place where it can be creative in another way and as a historic phenomenon that can be experienced.

Dr. Klaus Jürgen Winkler is a professor at the University of Weimar, and member of DOCOMOMO Germany

Bergpolderflats, a built modern manifesto

Van Tijen's answer to the housing crises related to Duiker's book 'Hoogbouw'

One of the most essential Modern Movement buildings in the Netherlands is Bergpolderflats in Rotterdam. It is the first galleried highrise with an elevator for the housing of workers. The design and construction of Bergpolderflats meant a change in thinking about the organization and realization of new building projects in general and of social housing in particular. The building was delivered four years after the publication of Duiker's book 'Hoogbouw' of 1930 and forms a first true successful expression of those theoretical concepts. The restoration of the building, that today is in great need of repair, has been prepared by ONB architects and has started in the meantime. The technological side of the preparatory work has been explained upon at the Eindhoven Conference in 1990. Like ONB architects, Marian Akse and author Ard Buijsen compared various restoration options before selecting one of these models for further elaboration in their graduation project for the Hogeschool Utrecht.

Recently, the Netherlands DOCOMOMO Working party lost their case in the highest court of appeal in administrative jurisdiction, to prevent the actual renovation of the building. Although the listing documents clearly stated the value for the history of social housing as well, actual renovation implies interior demolition of all but one flat. Also, the selected solution for thermal insulation of the facades by using a second windowframe behind the original, was questioned. However, works could not be stopped after the decision of the court turned out negative. In a future Newsletter we hope to discuss the actual works carried out.

by Ard Buijsen*

Willem van Tijen designed Bergpolderflats in cooperation with Brinkman and Van der Vlugt between 1932 and 1934. It was one of the first occasions where also the contractor and the structural engineer took part in such a design process almost right from the start.

The work of the Brinkman and Van der Vlugt office was likely limited to coordinating and supervising the building process.¹

The building consists of 72 flats, each with a floor area less than 48 square meters. The dwellings are spread over 9 floors on top of a souterrain which contains storage, washing and drying rooms for laundry as well as a central heating unit. The high rise measures approximately 50 x 10 meters and is about 28 meter high.

Social concern

In the 1920's and 30's the living conditions for the workers in Holland had improved as compared to those around 1900 but in comparison to the middle and upperclass, social housing conditions were still very bad. Also, there was an enormous shortage of cheap dwellings. These were the problems to be dealt with by the architects of the Modern Movement who showed a continuous dedication to solve these. Van Tijen, originally not an architect but a civil engineer, published a book about them in 1929, which immediately became a standardwork for modern architects and housing corporations.² In that same year, he founded the n.v. Volkwoningbouw (Social Housing Ltd.) in cooperation with ir. Plate, with the objective to do something about the housing crisis:

Bergpolderflats was one of the first outcomes of this and the building remained in the hands of the corporation until only a few years ago.

In preparing an affordable housing scheme, Van Tijen discovered soon that the construction systems for these buildings had to be changed completely. To this end he started a search for new ways of organizing and designing social housing. Bergpolderflats resulted from these starting points and this is clearly illustrated by the construction of the building. The materials and construction principals show an absolute rationality. This allowed the architect to pursue a shorter construction period and thereby to save money and to keep the rents low, this in contrast with the earlier effort by Duiker and Wiebenga that resulted in Nirwana Flats in Den Haag (1926-29).

Highrise

In 1930 Jan Duiker, one of the protagonists of the Modern Movement in the Netherlands, published 'Hoogbouw' ('Highrise') on the advantages and disadvantages of high rise for social and middle class housing. Including structural and financial aspects as well as social issues, such as living conditions, it became a reference work soon.

Reading this book and looking at Bergpolderflats, one can find a lot of similarities.

Both Duiker and Van Tijen expected high rise buildings to be a solution to the housing shortage of the 20's and 30's. Yet, both realised that it would not be the one perfect solution and that it is certainly not suitable for every household.

In comparison to the traditional technology, in 'Hoogbouw' Duiker introduced a new progressive concept on technology, creating a clear distinction between the different functions and applications of the various materials. According to his ideas, the traditional way of building, with loadbearing facades and partition walls, was unsuitable for

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highrise. This was one of his conclusions after a study he made on highrise in the USA. The technology applied in the construction of skyscrapers there, was almost completely alien to the Netherlands building industry.

Duiker distinguishes the main components and functions of a building as follows:

- main construction,
- separations (external envelope and party walls)
- building physics.

The distinction between the various functions has many advantages. It enables lighter construction due to the precise calculations by the engineer and leaving behind unnecessarily heavy materials in the construction. Duiker wrote about 'the surplus of dead weight, which makes the building unnecessarily heavier'.³

By saving on the weight of the building, the total costs of the construction process are being reduced as well: the foundations can be much lighter and also transport and the assembling of building components is much easier.

The floors as proposed in 'Hoogbouw' support the walls, which means that the walls can be lighter than traditionally and, again, a considerable saving can be achieved.

Facades

No longer supporting the floors, the walls now perform a single main function: a separation, either between inner and outer space or internal.

When talking about facades, there are two main aspects to consider: thermal insulation and sealing the building against moisture and draught.

These two aspects lead to a further step in distinguishing different functions and applied materials.

Rain and wind can be kept out by the use of a light cladding, for example in plywood or steel. Thermal insulation can be obtained by using a light and porous material. In avoiding the traditional

cavitywall this way, not only a saving in weight but also an increase of floorarea in the dwellings will result. The new construction will do with about 12 cm thickness, while the traditional construction requires at least 22 cm.

There's a second advantage in using non loadbearing facades, since these can be designed with less reference to the frame. This allows the use of large glazed surfaces in the facade. With the many openings in a facade this is of course completely in accordance with the philosophy of the Modern Movement with respect to the access of light and air. By using glass, there is also a gain of natural heat in the winter, particularly if the facade faces the south.

Theory and practice

In studying Bergpolderflats, particularly the technical and the social character of the building seem to relate to Duiker's publication of 1930. Concentrating on technology, it is obvious that both architects were of the opinion that the building tradition was not suitable to solve the then existing problems and that the development of alternatives was needed.

To this end, they agreed that the prefabrication of a lot of the building elements would be necessary. In such a case, a close coordination between the participants in the building process is vital and that is why Van Tijen worked so closely together with the contractor and the engineer. For the loadbearing construction of the flats, Van Tijen developed a steelframe which could be completely prefabricated and assembled on site in only three weeks, which was and still is unique for highrise in Holland, particularly for social housing. One of the consequences of a steelframe is, that the plans cannot be changed radically once the structure is prefabricated.

By using this solution, the architect was completely free in designing the floor plans and facades. This allowed Van Tijen to design a most convincing floor plan despite the very limited floor area. Still, after sixty years, this floor plan is a very good example of a dwelling type for social housing. The facades are, in accordance with 'Hoogbouw', constructed of very light materials, using large prefabricated wooden frames that each covered the facade surface of one flat.

The lower part of the frame is cladded with galvanized steel, while the upper parts are fitted with glass. Towards the galleries, the parapets are rather high to give the facade a more closed character. The steel cladding facing the balconies is much lower. The window sashes are steelframed and were selected for their sealing qualities, which were regarded as the best then available. Inside, the parapet is made of light and porous blocks ('Rhenish brick'), that were meant as a thermal insulation as well.

Longitudinal steel girders support both the facade

Bergpolderflats in Rotterdam in the 1930's. Photo: Van den Broek and Bakema architects.



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frames and the timber floors.

The end facades are constructed differently for reasons unclear to us. However, we can say that Van Tijen has again chosen a rational construction, consisting of lime-sand brick on the outside and Rhenish brick on the inside. The waterproofing is achieved with a layer of cement between the two. Again, these facades are supported by steel girders.

The lateral stability of the flat is guaranteed by a steel beam in the middle of the frame. The cross-stability is taken care of by bracingstrips within in the hollow separations between dwellings.

The very short building period proved, that the chosen construction system answered the demands which were set by the Modern Movement. After the completion of the frame, Van Tijen wrote that 'during the construction, the true simplicity in layout and execution, that was pursued in the design to such great lengths, appears to be achieved largely'. He continues: '(...) the external self-evidence, with which the different constructions meet each other, inspire confidence in their inner rationality'.⁴

Actual state

After 60 years, the present condition of Bergpolderflats is poor, mainly due to lack of maintenance. As far as we know any maintenance has been limited to some painting and the enlargement of most of the kitchens by including the storageroom, for which a cupboard had to be sacrificed.

The outdoor parts of the steelframe are not very well kept and are corroded as a result of a direct exposure to the outdoor climate. These damages are very serious and numerous columns and beams, particularly in the end facades, are alarmingly affected. However the inside parts of the frame appear to be in a fairly good condition. The concrete of the galleries and balconies is in a very poor condition. In some places large holes were caused by corrosion of the reinforcement, thereby developing a dangerous situation for the inhabitants of the flats.

Alterations

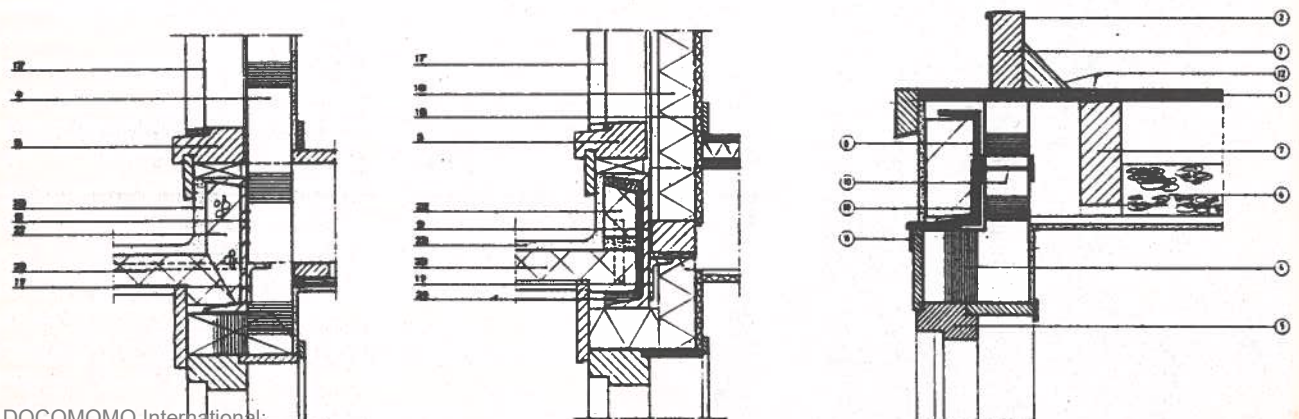
The timber frames in the facade survived quite well, due to the overhanging galleries and balconies. The condition of the paint work is very bad and also the original colours have been lost. The front doors have probably been replaced over the years, which can be concluded from old drawings and photographs dating from the time just after the construction.

About fifteen years ago, the special bevel sided glass sheets enclosing the staircase was replaced by a totally different system. The entrance hall has been changed to ensure privacy by closing it to the public. This change though is not very significant because it is a change for the better.

The flats contained some special features which have been lost over the years. We can think of the use of the external rubbish chute, the roof terrace, the central aerial receiver for radio and the lifting

The original details and the ones proposed by Akse and Buijsen:

The original joint between concrete galleries and facade forms a cold-bridge (far left). The new detail includes thermal insulation between gallery-slab and steel girder (left). Also, a wooden framed inner wall replaces the original in light blocks to increase insulation qualities. The proposed roof detail (far right) showing thermal insulation taking the place of the original inner wall (right). Also, the roof has been isolated on top.



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beam by the staircase. Also, the site has been altered considerably. Originally, Bergpolderflats stood in an open space surrounded by housing blocks. Nowadays it is hidden by many high trees which obscure the building. This is completely against the philosophy of the Modern Movement.

Contemporary requirements

If reuse of the building for its original purpose is the issue, a lot will have to be changed in the building with respect to building physics. Above all, the level of insulation, both thermal and acoustical, is insufficient as compared to today's requirements. The galleries transmit much noise. Also, the acoustic insulation between the dwellings is inadequate and should be matched with current standards.

Another serious problem is the poor thermal performance of the outer skin. Not only is the thermal insulation of the facades quite poor, also cold bridges are formed at each joint between the concrete galleries and the steel frame.

Up to now, these cold bridges are not critical but this might change due to renovation: by improving the thermal insulation elsewhere, these thermal leaks will appear relatively much colder than before, thereby entailing a higher risk for condensation. During restoration, these problems will have to be dealt with in the right way.

Graduation project

In the plans we developed, we have tried to maintain the external appearance as much as possible and to follow the philosophy and the way of thinking of Van Tijen. We have proposed to use modern materials in the detailing, which perform the same functions better than the original materials. Because of this, a higher standard of comfort can be achieved. Although our proposals are rather expensive, we do believe they are worth considering because of the architectural and historical importance of the building.

Another and cheaper alternative is to refurbish the building in a way, that does not come up to today's standards completely. Then, the increase of

problems with respect to condensation would be avoided, because no thermal insulation is added. However, the acoustical problem is likely to remain unsolved.

This option is not favoured by the owner of the flats, but architecturally and historically speaking it would be most beneficial for Bergpolderflats.

A point of special attention is formed by the steel windows. Nowadays, people don't like these anymore because they are expected to develop thermal disadvantages. On the other hand, they are an essential part of the architecture. With this problem one has to deal when restoring Bergpolderflats too. However, to maintain the architectural purity of the building the steel windows should be installed again, as these are the only ones appropriate historically.

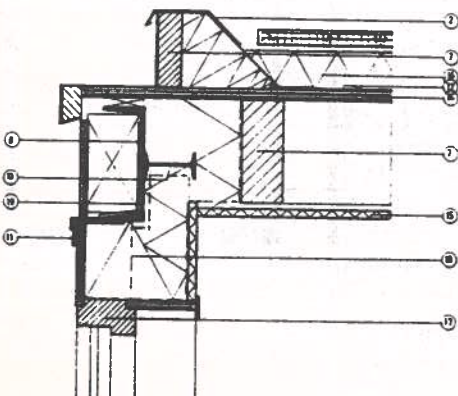
When sticking to steel-framed windows, there are two possibilities: either maintaining the old ones or replacing them by new elements. Also, one could consider the advantage of double glazing, that can be applied in both cases.

Repairing the old windows with single glazing is the cheapest but we may expect problems if the insulation level elsewhere in the building will be raised. This can again be avoided by applying double glass, for which rather cheap glazing elements in PVC strips are available, that can be fitted in old steel frames. Yet, in such a case the appearance of the windows as seen from the outside will change, with rather flat sections instead of the old putty settings.

New steel-framed windows are another possibility. Although not cheap, the quality of these hot-dip galvanized elements is of course much better. To make a proper choice here is a particular problem for social housing complexes like Bergpolderflats.

With the project we have tried to point out that restoring a building like this will not be easy but at the other hand the historical and architectural significance of the building requires a sensitive solution to the problems.

** This article is a partial elaboration of a graduation project by Ard Buijsen and Marian Akse, that won a second prize for the annual graduation awards of the Hogeschool Utrecht, sector Bouwnijverheid. Text has been considerably edited.*



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1. More information can be found in 'Architect W. van Tijen, 1894-1974' by Ton Idsinga en Jeroen Schilt, Den Haag, not dated.

2. 'Grafieken voor het behandelen van verkavelingsvraagstukken', by W. van Tijen en Th.K. van Lohuizen, 1929.

3. See also 'Renovation of the Bergpolder apartmentbuilding in Rotterdam' by Casper van den Thillart, Docomomo Conference Proceedings 1990, pp. 80-83.

4. In 'de 8 en Opbouw', 1934, p. 49.

The New House / Novy Dum

Exhibition of Modern Housing in Brno, 1928

In the series of exhibitions of modern housing arranged in Europe in the late 1920's and 1930's, the development 'The New House' in Brno plays a very important role. Chronologically it closely followed the first major event of this kind, the 'Die Wohnung' exhibition in Stuttgart Weißenhof in 1927. Unlike similar developments abroad, The New House was a private exhibition without any state support.

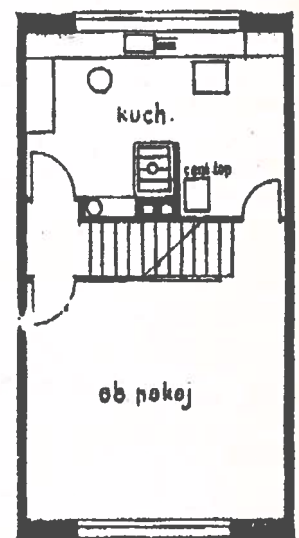
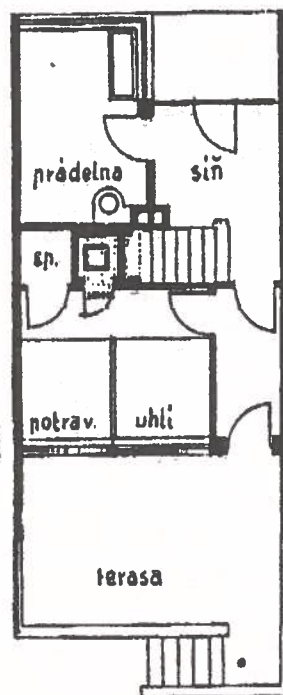
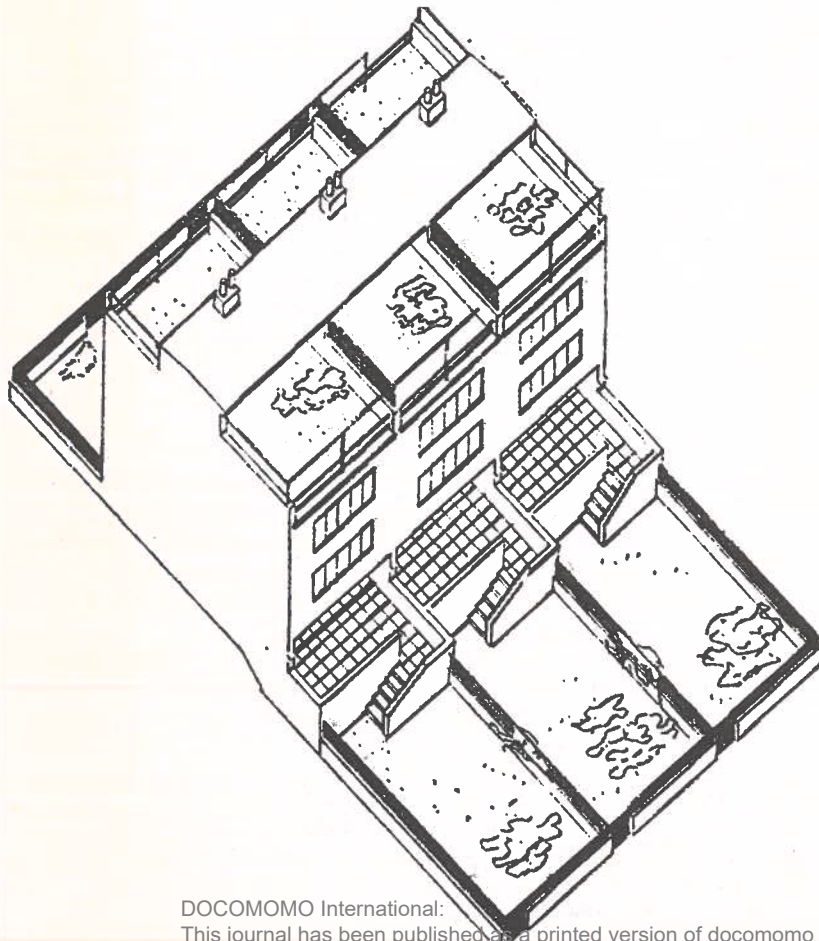
By Jan Sedlák

The firm of building contractors Cenek Ruller and Frantisek Uherka, took up the initiative based on the ideas of the Brno branch office of the Czechoslovakian Werkbund. The exhibition was opened on 27th August 1928 as part of the larger 'Exhibition on contemporary Czechoslovakian culture', which took place on the new provincial fair grounds in Brno as part of the celebrations of the 10th Anniversary of the foundation of the independent Czechoslovakian state. It represented a historical turning point in the history of Czechoslovakian architecture in the interWar period and the triumphant birth of functionalism in this century.

Brno architects

The sixteen detached houses or terraced houses that make up the exhibition were built in the suburb

of Zabovresky at the 'Wilsonuv les' (Wilson forest) in the area of the streets now known as Petrvaldska, Smejkalova, Drnovicka and Bráfova. The site plan was designed by B. Fuchs and J. Grunt. Because of the limited possibilities, the exhibition could not include the displays of building materials, structural methods, interior facilities, plans and models as had been the case in Stuttgart. Nevertheless, a comprehensive catalogue of the designs was published together with answers by the designers themselves to questions from the public about their ideas on housing and from the point of view of the economic situation, as well as concerning the new layout and structural methods. The architects Hugo Foltyn (1906-1944), Bohuslav Fuchs (1895-1972), Jaroslav Grunt (1893-1988), Jiri Kroha (1893-1974) Miruslav Putna (born 1904), Jaroslav Syriste



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(1878-1950), Josef Stepanek (1889-1964), Jan Visek (1890-1966) and Arnost Wiesner (1890-1971) were invited by the contractors to design the houses. With exception of Stepanek from Prague, all were from Brno, mainly representatives of the avantgarde of the interWar period. The age difference between the eldest architect Syriste and the youngest Foltyn was one generation. Foltyn and Putna were the pupils of Kroha, who with Syriste was professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Building Construction at the Brno University of Technology.

Limited possibilities

The main features of the neighbourhood were defined by the initial conditions set by the building contractors who requested terraced housing*, a ground floor with necessary amenities, two residential floors, a flat roof with a terrace, built-in furniture, standardized windows and doors and a rational plan. The designers were given the types of the houses and their approximate cost, but the actual design was left to the architects. Thus, the remarkable unity of style and typology of the development was facilitated and set in advance. Modern building technology was also integrated. With the exception of a brick-built house by Syriste, the houses were constructed with a load-bearing reinforced concrete frame with a light infill of Isostone blocks. The principle of terraced housing*, used in Czechoslovakia for the first time, was not merely the repercussion of Le Corbusier's

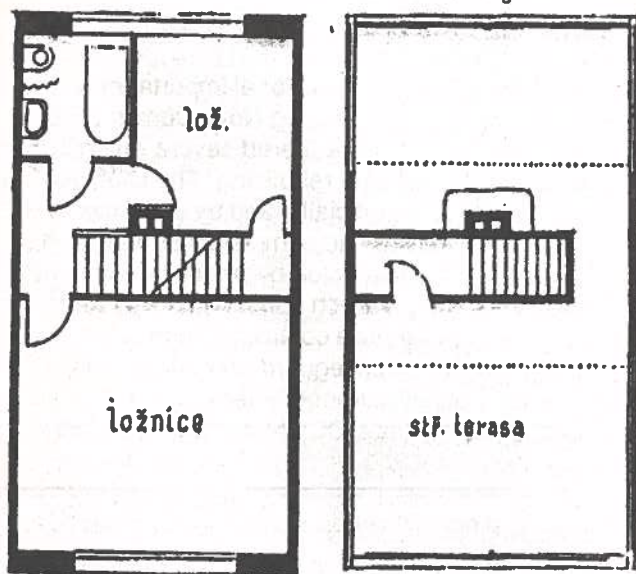
realisation in the Weißenhofseidlung, but a necessity forced upon the architects by the conditions of the site.

International examples

The design and the construction of the Brno development were carried out towards the end of the experimental period of modern Czechoslovakian architecture and at the beginning of the mature functionalist era. This resulted in a certain dependence of some authors on foreign patterns, notably those taken from Stuttgart. The greatest success in the Weißenhofsiedlung was achieved by the maisonnette house and the semi-detached house by Le Corbusier, followed by the publication of his well-known five principles of modern architecture. A maisonnette house derived from the Stuttgart original was made by the twenty-two year old Foltyn. However, it lacked its rational and formal logic in that the maisonnette-type lounge exceeded the possibilities of a safe layout and caused many operational difficulties for its designer, such as a bedroom with a low sleeping niche, a narrow spiral staircase and other negative aspects. The neighbouring house by Putna was based upon the same model but he solved these problems in an organic way. The building designed by the teacher of both above mentioned authors, professor Kroha, is the largest and most expensive house in the development. Its villa character was completely incomparable with any concept realised until that time. In the context of the artist's work it represented a different quality, free of the typical expressive features of its author. This change in style may also be explained by Le Corbusier's example.

Left and bottom: axonometric drawing and plans of Jaroslav Grunts three-family house in Novy Dum.

Next page: Jan Visek's design for the Novy Dum estate. Axonometric drawing



Modern and traditional

The house by Syriste, the doyen of the team of architects, was the only one completely furnished. Although the layout should be respected for its logic and rationality, a characteristic element of traditional architecture was added, being the strip of brickwork around the second storey. Probably this older designer was not able to deal with the rigid formality of the facades and felt the need for only a partial expression in fine-art forms. The semi-detached house by Wiesner is another example of how a Vienna educated and classically oriented architect could cope with the new formal and social requirements. In this previous work he designed only villas for the Jewish industrial bourgeoisie following the example of Adolf Loos. Consequently he was forced to reduce those demanding concepts to a medium sized clerk's house, while continuing to use some elements of his neat morphology. The semi-detached house designed by Stepanek offers an interesting opportunity to compare it with. Stepanek proved to be a firm functionalist whose great flexible layouts were in harmony with the clear, abstract facades,

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the orthogonality of which he combined with cylinder segments, thus achieving a very noble appearance, partly reflecting the organic conception of Sharoun's Stuttgart house.

Cheap and standardized housing

By its practical, economic and architectural viewpoints, the remaining half of the development represents the more realistic approach, based on its own principles and coming up to the main goal of the Novy Dum exhibition, being cheap and standardized housing, thereby bringing modern architecture within the reach of the general public. This is particularly the case of the semi-detached house by Visek which required the lowest building costs and the smallest built-up area. The author got rid of even the smallest possible external influences, so that his realisation makes an ascetic impression. The same success was achieved by Grunt in his three-family house. He was partly inspired by terraced houses in Stuttgart designed by the Dutch architects J.J.P. Oud and M. Stam. Visek and Grunt had had previous experience in designing economic housing based on functionalist' principles. The three-family house by Fuchs should be considered the most successful design in 'The New House'. He was one of the main representatives of the Czech avantgarde between the Wars and was the leader of the Brno architectural school. He individualized the marginal section of his block by a prismatic 'risalit' with a garage, a study and a terrace, thus forming an effective urbanistic accent at the entrance to the settlement. Fuchs' houses reveal a characteristic

feature of his whole creative activity, which was never limited to the utilitarian aspect of a given task, yet he always extended the basic functionalistic conception by aesthetic and psychological aspects. By synthesis and individual transformation of a progressive inspiration from abroad, Fuchs' work is on a par with that of other European centres in avantgarde architecture of that time.

Baba estate

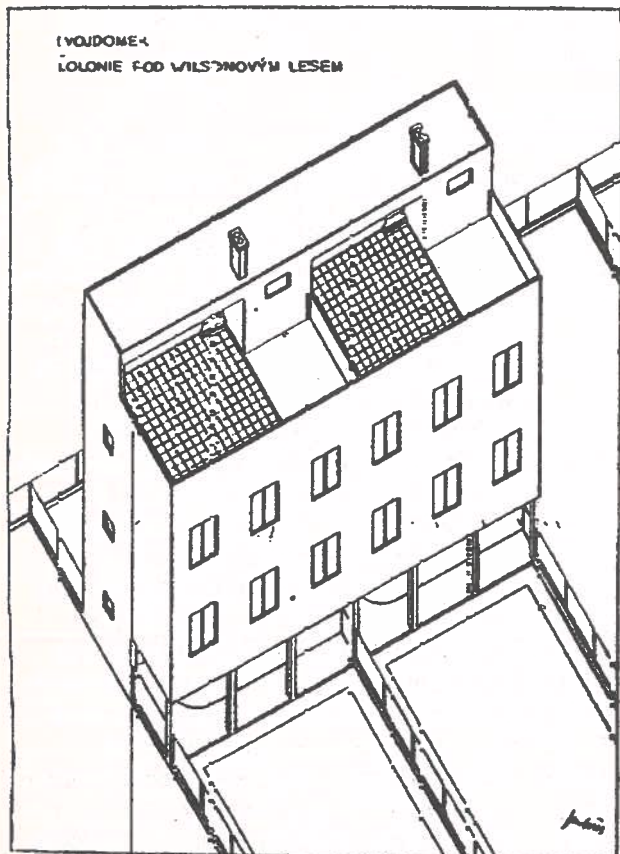
Although the exhibition 'The New House' failed to open until the end of 'The exhibition of the contemporary culture', and the main wave of visitors' interest dropped, and although the exhibition in fact was an economic failure (only one house was rented and none were sold) it represented a courageous and pioneering act in the field of modern housing under the Czechoslovakian and European conditions of that period. Despite the predominant difficult conditions at that time, this exhibition successfully established the principles which only a little later became a more general course. The Brno organisers also catalized the Prague branch of the Czechoslovakian Werkbund that from 1928 designed the very similar Baba estate in Prague, built in the years 1923-33. In order to avoid financial problems, model houses were not built there. Instead, they constructed houses for private customers, that had the necessary funds at their disposal. The conception of these houses, or better villas, often resulted in a compromise based on a dialogue between the architect and the prospective owner. If we compare the Brno houses with similar types exhibited at later exhibitions in Wroclaw (Breslau), Zürich and Vienna today, we should say that a number of them reached at least a comparable standard.

Today's condition

In contrast with the international importance of the exhibition of modern housing Novy Dum in Brno, the houses have since suffered severe ravages, due to adaptations and rebuilding. The site was only recently listed officially, and by then one fourth of the houses had completely been rebuilt. The rest had been affected by partial adaptations by private owners. Czech conservationists and architects are therefore confronted with a demanding task to safeguard and restore this remarkable neighbourhood. International exchange within the DOCOMOMO network may also bring useful and welcome assistance.

* The original text reads 'slab on ground houses'.

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Two faces of functionalism in Gdynia, Poland

Both the city and the port of Gdynia were great developments of interWar Poland. Gdynia was built from scratch in 1922-1939, and during those years a small village populated with little more than one thousand people rose rapidly to a great town with a population of over 120.000. Clearly, this increase posed quite a challenge to engineers, architects and urban planners of that time. Their work resulted in a harbour ranking among the ten biggest ports in Europe and in a town which presents an interesting example of modern urban planning and modern architecture.

by *Maria J. Soltysik*

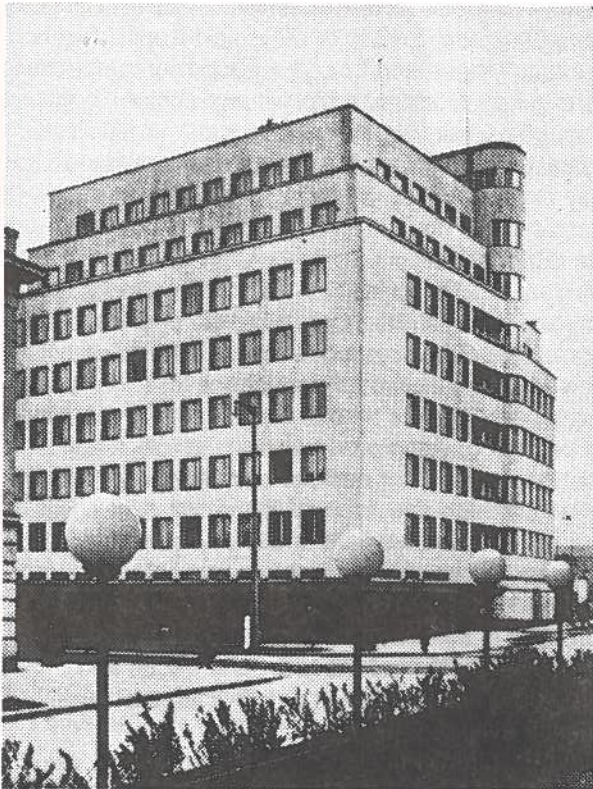
Since the late 1920's the most popular with the architects working in Gdynia were the ideas of functionalism, and in particular two different trends in that movement. The first, which combined a social program for housing with the rigour of a purist and cubist' aesthetic, is often referred to as 'extreme' or 'plain' functionalism. The other, less preoccupied with the social aspects of building, more decorative and relaxed in its plasticity, is characterised as the so-called 'late' or 'refined' functionalism.

The early 1930's.

Until the turn of the 1920's the architecture of Gdynia was very traditional: various editions of modernised historicism including Academic Classicism and Polish Cottage Style were most frequently being used. The introduction of functionalism in the late 1920's was mainly due to a few graduates from the Warsaw University of

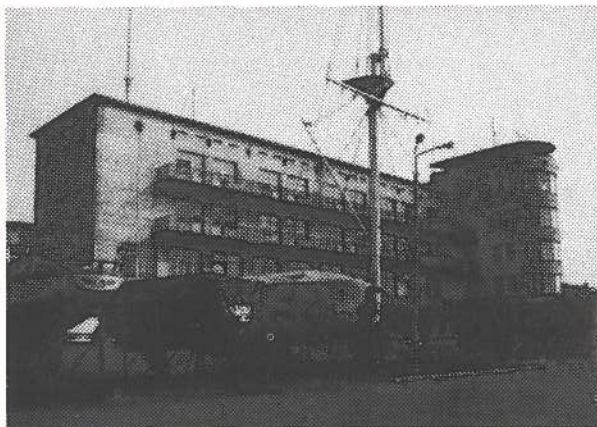
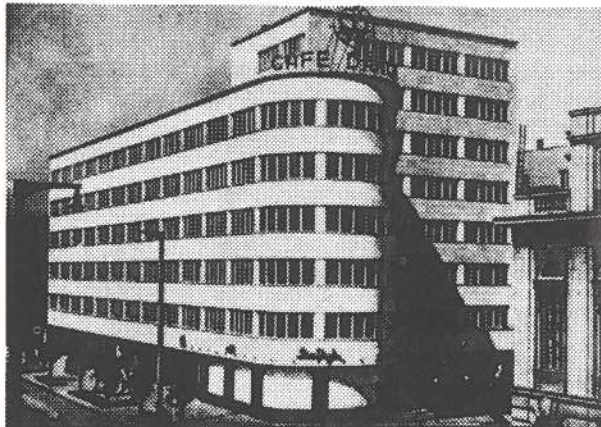
Technology, who came to work in Gdynia. Warsaw was a centre of the Modern Movement in Poland in those days. Starting from 1921 the ideas of Le Corbusier were propagated at the Faculty of Architecture and many became enthusiastic supporters. In 1926 the avantgarde group 'Preasens' was formed there. In 1928 it became a Polish branch of CIAM and transmitted these new ideas not only from France, but from the Netherlands and Germany as well. In the years of

Left: the Domestic Household Bank (BGK) by Stanislaw Ziolkowski, 1935.
Right: block of flats by Stefan Kozinski, 1935





Top: a section of the Grabowek development of the Gdynia Housing Cooperative, 1928-30.
Middle: the Social Insurance Company ZUS, designed by Roman Piotrowski in 1934.
Bottom: the Polish Yacht Club of 1936-37 shows clear naval connotations



the economic crisis (1929-34) the 'apartment for minimal living conditions' was the common concern of all modern European architects, and so it was in Poland.

In Gdynia, too, young architects were among the organizers of various workers' cooperatives for so called social housing. Some of the projects for the Gdynia Housing Cooperative (G.S.M.) were presented at the Second CIAM Congress in Frankfurt and one of them was actually realized in the district called Grabowek.

In 1928-30 the cooperative built there two low-rise blocks with 106 small flats and a garden between them. A motif that later became very popular in Gdynia was used here for the first time: horizontal divisions formed by brick pannels, optically joining the windows and producing a kind of textural ribbons binding the facade to an entity.

Scarcity

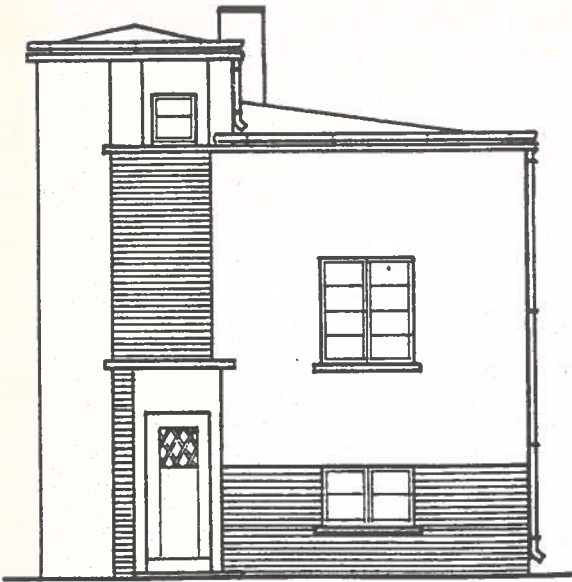
The majority of low cost housing in Gdynia, however, was built by the Society for Development of Housing Estates (T.B.O.). It built a few colonies of small detached and semi-detached houses in the housing estates of Gdynia called Witomino and Redlowo. In 1933 the architect Jerzy Jędrzejewski designed some series of one-family houses using standardized elements, yet in fairly traditional materials such as brick and wood. With their cubical mass, structural detail (though without pillotis or roof gardens) they exemplify a new, machine-age aesthetic and represent a plain sort of functionalism.

If this kind of architecture can in a way be considered as a style of scarcity, that is definitely not true of some modern villas built for well-off clients in the district of Kamienna Góra. One of them, designed in 1935 by Zbigniew Kupiec for the countess Magdalena Los, is a good representative of the purist, Corbusian type of expression, although its loadbearing masonry and traditionally organised openings in the front facade seem to deny an avantgarde origin.

The late 1930's

The year 1935 was the first year of a noticeable increase in Polish economy after the economic depression. Since the legislation of that time allowed considerable tax reductions for developers, the late thirties were the best years in the preWar building production in Gdynia. The most popular kind of edifices built then was the residential high-rise, located in the city centre, with spacious, expensive flats and shops or offices on the ground floor. Although the expression of most of these buildings derives from the syntax of Le Corbusier's '5 points', yet they depart from the purist' composition of the facade surfaces and show visible refinement in detailing as well as some expressionist' tendencies in mass.

The first two buildings which exemplified that were



a block of flats with offices for the Social Insurance Company (Z.U.S.), designed in 1934 by Roman Piotrowski, and the office block for the BGK bank designed in 1935 by Stanislaw Ziolowski. Both architects used a reinforced concrete frame to arrange the spacious, high standard interiors, and these qualities were matched in the exterior with the elegant, sand-stone cladding on the facades. Though less dramatic than in the expressionist manner, Piotrowski set a cubic slab against a dynamically bounded corner of a ribbon windowed facade, while Ziolowski drew up his kind of 'tower' from delicately curved lines of the regularly fenestrated wall.

Marine connotations

The architecture of the bank in a way recalls the forms of naval architecture as does the architecture of the Polish Yacht Club, designed in 1936-37 by Bohdan Damiadzki and Tadeusz Sieczkowski, that is located at the coast. That kind of added architectural inspiration is often found in the functionalist aesthetic, but in such a port town like Gdynia it undoubtedly bears some special, regional connotations. The complex plasticity of the Yacht Club is intensified by the linear divisions on the surfaces of the plastered walls and some other decorative elements, like masts and flagstaffs.

Another example of that expressive and more decorative kind of late functionalism is the residential house at 122 Swietojanska Street, designed in 1935 by Stefan Kozinski. The peculiar shape of the corner walls and the unusual form of the little balconies of that building recall some works of the Amsterdam School, but the arrangement of those balconies, which provide a sort of undulating pattern on the large plane, is quite original.

International Style?

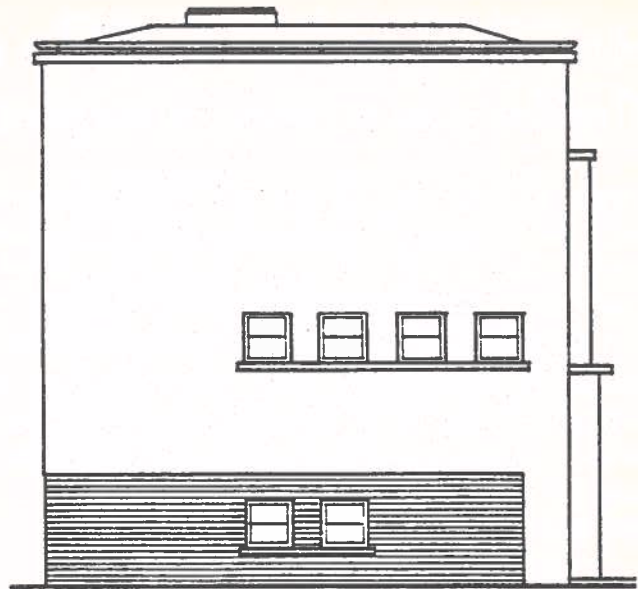
The question still remains how much these

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Two facades of a small one-family house designed by Jerzy Jedrzejewski in 1933 and built by TBO in the district of Witomino

buildings belong to the 'International Style'. While defining the term in 1932 Henri Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson identified the 'open box' as an architectural paradigm of that style, stressing at the same time that '...with skeleton construction enveloped only by a protective screen (...) the buildings are in reality mere planes surrounding a volume.' Similarly, Kenneth Frampton indicated the '... approach which generally favoured light-weight technique and synthetic materials...' as the real means of 'internationality' and 'universality' of modern forms.

Therefore, it could be argued that the advanced technology was meant to be an indispensable feature of the 'International Style' and thus only the most avantgarde of the architectural production of the 1920's and 1930's can be claimed as being truly 'international'. The term 'functionalism', rather stressing the very method of design and not the actual techniques and materials used for erection, seems to be more general and more suitable for the architecture which is not only technologically less advanced, but less rigorous in its plasticity as well.

Maria J. Soltysik is an architectural historian at the Gdansk University of Technology, Department of Architecture and member of DOCOMOMO Poland

Henry Van de Velde's only work in the USA

The Belgian building at Virginia Union University

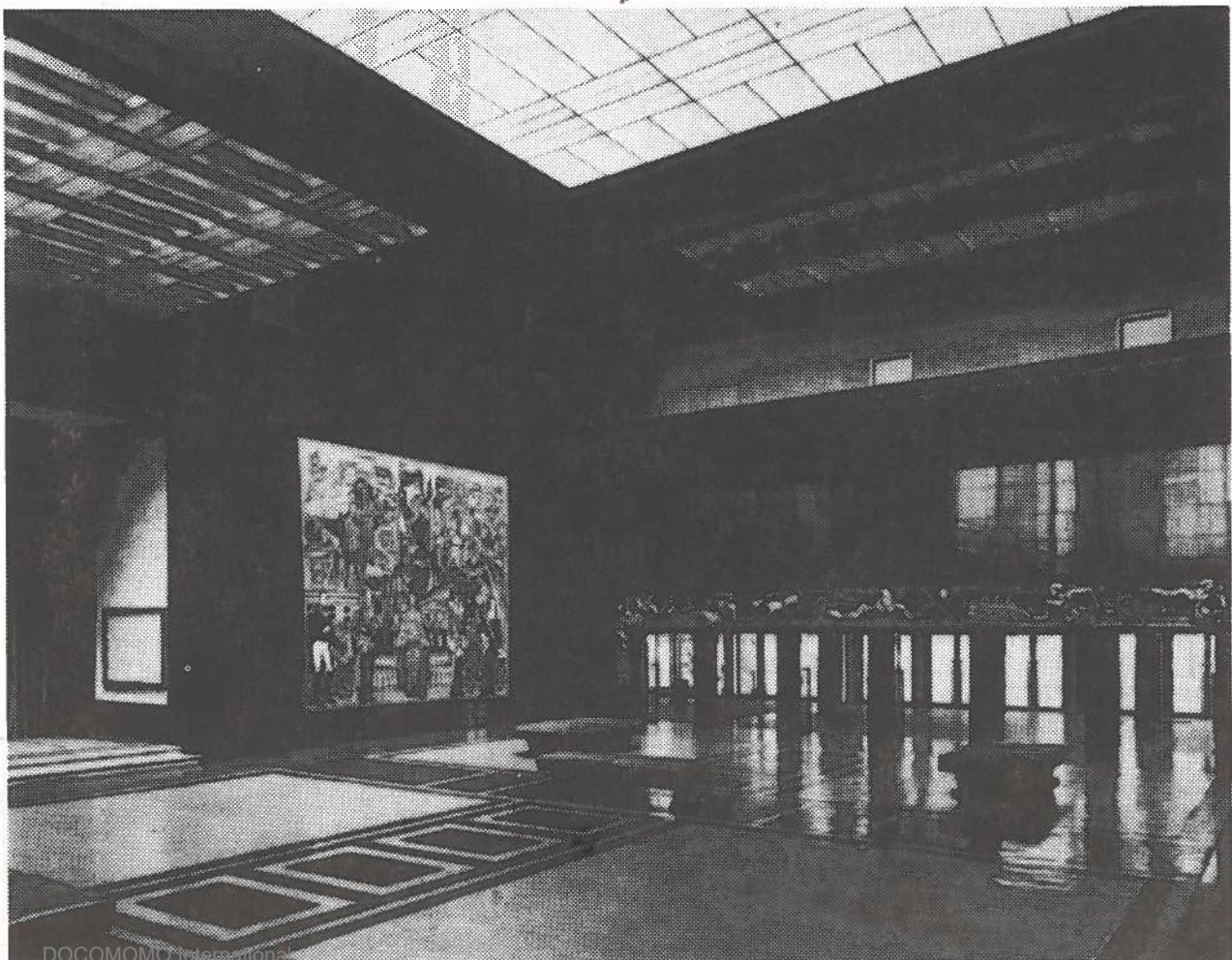
Henry Van de Velde (1863-1957), one of the pioneers of modern architecture, has usually been considered an Art Nouveau and Jugendstil architect. During his exceptionally long career as a painter, designer, architect, author and teacher, he produced important theoretical and architectural works that cover most of the trends of the Modern Movement. The Belgian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939, was dismantled after the exhibition and rebuilt in 1941 with a new plan as an educational complex on Virginia Union University campus in Richmond, Va. After over 40 years of use, the building, which has already been repaired, requires a total exterior and interior renovation.¹

by *Léon Ploegaerts*

When Henry Van de Velde was commissioned in 1938 by the Belgian Government to conceive his country's pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939, he had already acquired extensive experience in exhibition buildings both as an architect and a designer.

The great success of the Belgian Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1937 was a determinant factor in the appointment of Van de Velde as chief architect for the Belgian Pavilion of the New York World's Fair of 1939. In that capacity, Van de

Velde headed a team composed of Victor Bourgeois and Léon Stynen, both architects, and Paul Celis, the structural engineer who had worked on the Belgian pavilion at the Paris Exhibition. Bourgeois and Stynen were representative at that time of the cubist trend of the International Style in Belgium. Bourgeois, an early member of the C.I.A.M., also taught at the I.S.A.D. where he had been appointed by Van de Velde. It is difficult to define the precise contribution of each of the three architects, but Van de Velde's influence can be



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clearly observed.² As in the 1937 pavilion in Paris, the steel structure of the New York pavilion was portable and the exterior materials were the same large red terracotta slabs and dark grey slate, especially selected for their fast assembling capacity.

General layout

Due to the building's location on Constitution Mall, the main entrance was located on the narrow side of the building. Its general configuration was rectangular with an interior court covering approximately 100,000 square feet including the patio. The prefabricated bolted steel structure was composed of three units of various heights and a tower located in the patio whose fourth side was closed by a covered portico linking the two end units. In contrast with the horizontal shape of the building, a 165 foot tall belfry was located in the corner of the landscaped patio adjacent to the end unit allocated to the Belgium Congo section. The belfry, an 18,000 ton steel structure covered by 10,000 square feet of slate and 18,000 square feet of glass blocks, housed a 35 bell carillon. The main unit contained the principal entrance with an atrium, the hall of honour and reception hall, an elevated gallery and a motion picture theatre and the Arts & Crafts section. The restaurant was accessible by an interior staircase adjacent to the

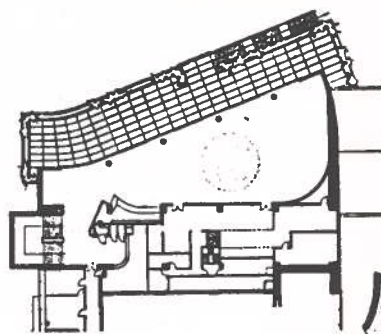
entrance atrium as well as by a long exterior staircase leading to the open terrace. The central unit contained the vast industrial gallery linked on one side to the reception hall and on the other connected through a covered passage to the third unit allocated to the Belgian Congo section.

The large purplish-red terracotta slab walls were animated by large steel and glass plate fenestration and decorated by two bas-reliefs in sandstone. The larger, illustrating the various trades and crafts of the Belgian people, was created by the sculptors Henri Puvrez and Oscar Jespers. The latter, a good friend of Van de Velde's, was teaching at the I.S.A.D. at the time. The other bas-relief, much smaller in size, representing the people of the Belgian Congo was composed by Arthur Dupagne. In the patio, at the foot of the belfry, the sculptor, Antoine Vriens presented a life-size standing figure of the late King Albert I with the Belgian heraldic lion.

Concern for quality

Van de Velde exerted a strong control on all construction details and on the selection and display of the exhibits.³ He chaired the artistic advisory committee responsible for the selection of objects and artifacts. Those objects - old and new - had to be models of good taste and be representative of all social classes of the Belgian

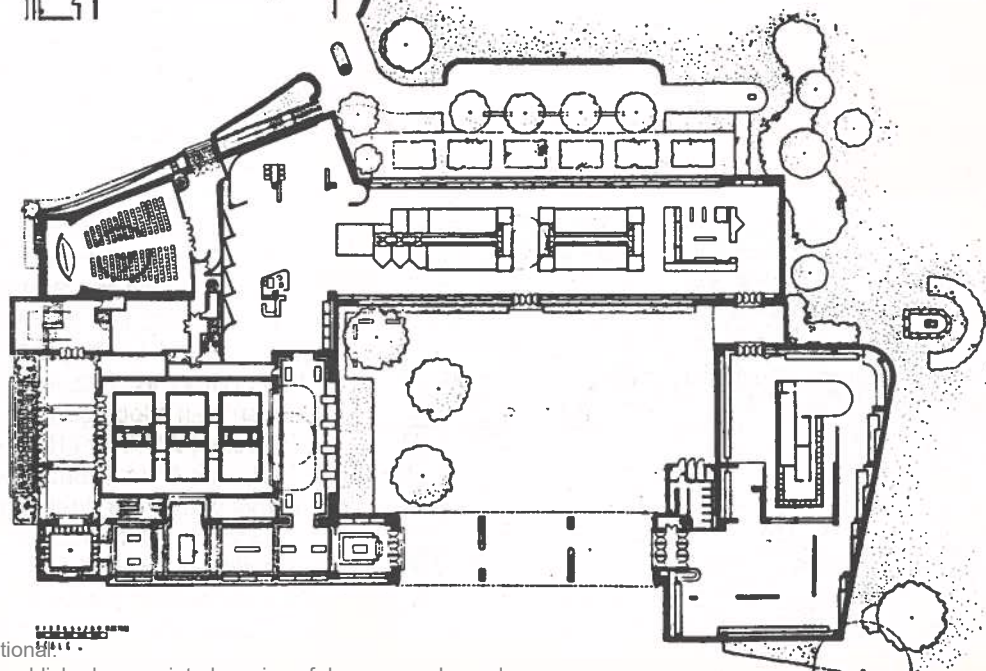
left: Belgian Pavilion, New York Exhibition 1939, view of the entrance from the Hall of honour (LC/V. s.n. Ph. unknown).



ARCHITECTS : HENRY VAN DE VELDE ;
PIERRE BOURGEOIS ;
LÉO STIJNEN.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE SECTIONS

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. ATRIUM | 6. INDUSTRIAL GALLERY |
| 2. HALL OF HONOR | 7. BELGIAN CONGO |
| 3. ARTS AND CRAFTS | 8. BELFRY WITH CARILLON |
| 4. RECEPTION HALL | 9. MOTION PICTURES THEATRE |
| 5. ELEVATED GALLERY | 10. RESTAURANT |



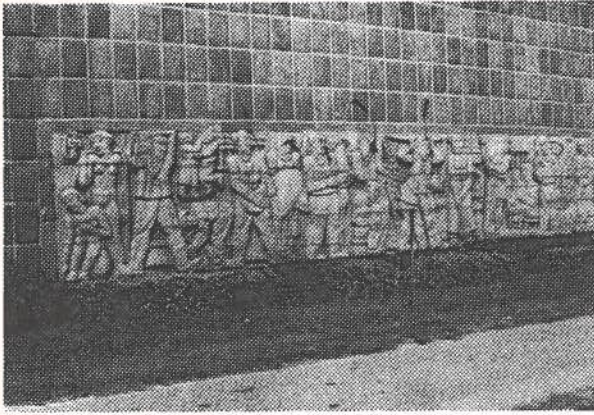
Right: Plan of the Belgian Pavilion, (New York World's Fair 1939 Belgian Section 10, LC/V. s.n.).

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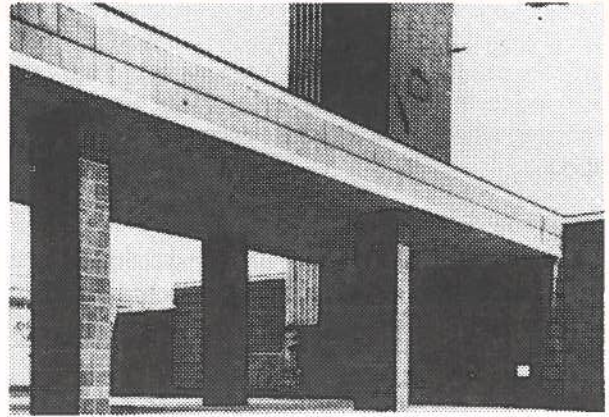
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Top: Belgian building, Richmond, Va., 1942, bas-relief by Henri Puvrez and Oscar Jaspers (Ph. Ploegaerts). Right: Belgian Pavilion, New York Exhibition 1939, view of the portico closing the patio; in the center the sculpture by A. Vriens; in the background, the bas relief by A. Dupagne (LC/V. s.n.).



people. According to his memoirs, Van de Velde was more impressed by the quality of American manufactured products displayed in the fancy stores of New York's Fifth Avenue than by the Manhattan skyscrapers. This inspired his design of the exhibits in the Pavilion's galleries. The building demonstrated this concern for quality. The refinement of all construction details and the finish of the craftsmanship were remarkable. As far as the architectural expression was concerned, the pavilion provided a relatively neutral space for a wide variety of exhibits.⁴ With its typical box-shaped silhouette, large fenestration and almost no exterior decoration, the building belonged to the International Style despite its vernacular materials.

Reconstruction in Richmond

In Van de Velde's mind, the pavilion was supposed to be dismantled after the New York World's Fair and reconstructed in Belgium. He kept alive the idea he already had after the Paris Exhibition to create an extension for I.S.A.D. that could provide training in the field of Arts and Crafts.

The declaration of war and the invasion of Belgium by Germany in May 1940 prevented this project from being realised. Although the United States was still not involved in the Second World War at the time and was neutral towards Germany, it became unrealistic to consider shipping the building back to Belgium.

The Belgian Government-in-exile, through its embassy in the United States then decided to offer the pavilion to the American people as a gesture of friendship, to be used for educational purposes.

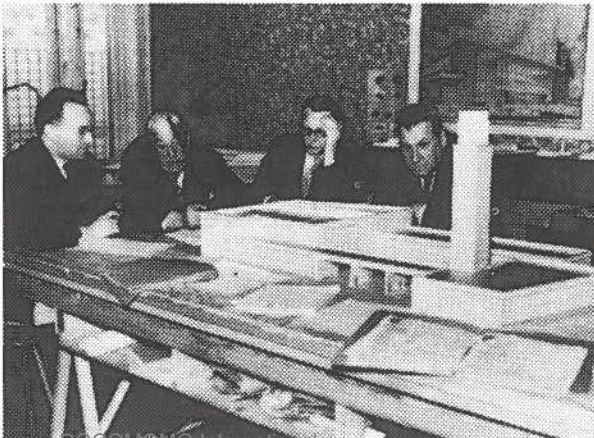
Detailed information about the selection procedures used to donate the pavilion to an academic institution has not been found, but it appears that 27 colleges throughout the United States competed to obtain the building. Finally, the pavilion was allocated to the Virginia Union University (V.U.U.) in Richmond. It seems that V.U.U. was chosen because it possessed a suitable site for the building on campus and because its well-known basketball team had no proper accommodation.

The supervision of dismantling, transfer and re-erection was given to the architect and civil

Opposite page, left: sketch plan of the reconstruction of the Belgian building, Richmond, Va., 1941 (Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er, Fonds HVdV, BR (FS) X/969, recto-verso).

Opposite page, right: Belgian building, Richmond, Va., 1942, Main hall, Science building, and R.L. Vann Memorial tower (Ph. Ploegaerts).

Bottom: J.-A. Goris, H. Van de Velde, L. Stynen, P. Celis (left to right) around a working model of the Belgian Pavilion, ca. 1938 (LC/V. s.n.).

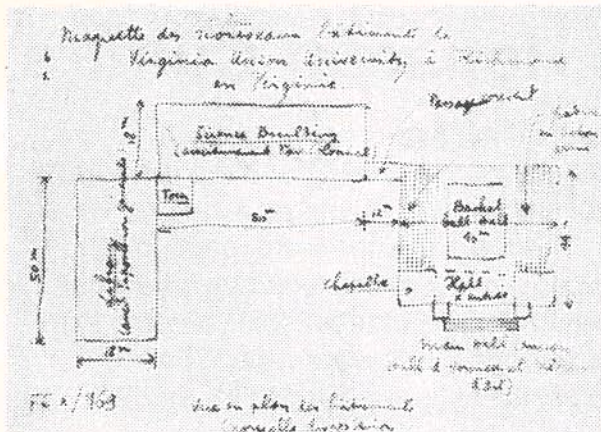


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engineer Hugo Van Kuyck. The on-site engineer responsible for the dismantling and rebuilding of the steel structure was Armand Vermaelen, an assistant of Paul Celis. The reconstruction was made on a revised plan that differed considerably from the original layout. Van de Velde's participation in the revised plans has not been established but he was kept well informed of the transformations.

Selected for restoration

The new layout of the building was conceived to accommodate the V.U.U. program. The various units of the pavilion were reassembled to house the facilities needed by the V.U.U. The former halls of honour and arts & crafts, the Colonial section and the general exhibition gallery became respectively the Auditorium and the Chapel, the Science building and the Library. The 2,000-seat Auditorium was planned to be converted as needed for a basketball court and a gymnasium and was connected to the Science building by a portico. The Library was planned to store 94,000 volumes. The three units were installed on a U-shape with the former belfry relocated at the intersection of the Library and the Science building.

The cornerstone was laid on June 9, 1941. The reconstruction was completed by 1942 - with the exception of the tower because of a lack of funds - at a cost of approximately \$750,000. The tower was later built and named the Robert L. Vann Memorial Tower after an alumnus who was a successful Black publisher. The 35-bell carillon was installed in Palo Alto, Ca. and the tower remained empty.

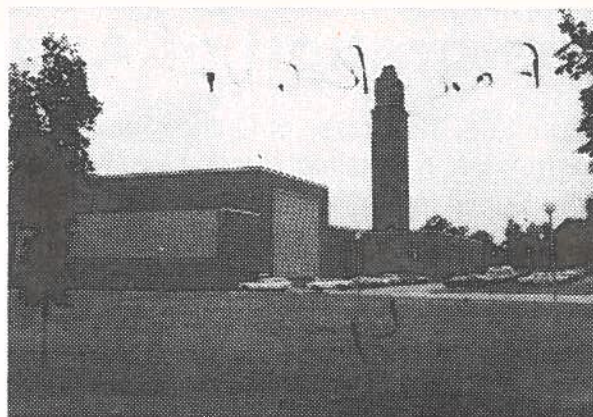
Since its completion in 1942, the building has been in operation. Few modifications were undertaken. In 1947-1948, the interior design of the Library was modified by a local firm of architects. In 1972, the heavy corrosion of the metal supports of the slate facing the tower, forced their partial removal and their replacement by black corrugated aluminium sheets. This temporary repair presents the inconvenience of obstructing the natural lighting normally provided by the glass blocks in the stairwell of the tower and considerably modifies its aesthetic appearance. The building has since been selected for restoration by the Virginia Historic

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Landmarks Commission. While some work was done in the 1970's, the situation has not evolved much since. The building needs a complete inside and outside renovation, including the replacement of some structural parts that are beyond the point of repair. The Belgian building was supposed to be included in a university capital improvement program of \$10 to \$12 million in 1987. To date, this objective has not been realized.

Conclusion

The present preservationist trend in the United States to save representative modern buildings as significant landmarks may raise enough interest to maintain the Belgian building. Past experience has demonstrated that the protection of key modern buildings is threatened either by demolition or by alterations and even repairs made in total ignorance of the technological and stylistic spirit of the time of construction.

The Belgian building belongs to that trend of International Style which tried to be part of its environment instead of being in contrast with it. From the beginning the concept of the building was very functional and flexible as its later transformation has shown. The reconstruction on a new site and with a different plan has demonstrated its adaptability to fulfill new functions which seems to have been satisfactory since its completion.

Léon Ploeghearts is a professor at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, Canada.

1. The article has been developed from a more comprehensive study of the architectural work of Henry Van de Velde. I thank Dr. W.H. Miller, Vice-President, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Va., Mrs. C. Lemaire, former Scientific Advisor, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er de Belgique, Brussels and Mr. P. Pétré, Librarian, Fondation I. Errera, La Cambre, Brussels for their assistance.

2. In the unpublished manuscript of his memoirs in French, Van de Velde explains that Stynen was responsible for the restaurant and the Congo section while Bourgeois was in charge of the cinema BR(FS)X/1-3 (Gd Ms.) 1147.

3. According to Léon Stynen, Van de Velde's concern about shape, texture and color of architectural forms and materials was dogmatic and obsessive, making teamwork somewhat difficult. Interview with L. Stynen, Bogliaco, Italy, July 1980.

4. Interior views of the pavilion show the luxury of materials used which provided a severe atmosphere contrasting with the sobriety of its external appearance.

Restoration of Aalto's House of Culture

Kulttuuritalo, the House of Culture, was Alvar Aalto's third major design in public construction in Helsinki, the first two having been the Rautatalo building and the main office of the Social Insurance Institution. The House of Culture was conceived as a cultural venue and meeting place for the working class of Finland. The first sketches were made in 1952, but the actual design and construction work, which partly overlapped, took place between 1955 and 1958. The construction process was a demonstration of team spirit, since a third of the man-hours required in the project were done as unpaid volunteer work. The renovation of the House of Culture was designed by Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd., under architect Elissa Aalto.

by *Tapani Mustonen*

In the 1980's, the building was increasingly used for commercial purposes, i.e. various rooms were rented out for concerts, meetings, etc. No major repairs had been done in the building since its completion, only minor ones partly inconsistent with the architecture, and the need for renovation became apparent by the late 1980's. The frame of the building had to be repaired and updated, many rooms were dilapidated, technical systems were insufficient and partly out of order and the internal access routes required improvement. The architecture of the building required preservation and partial restoration. It was at this point that the owners of the House of Culture petitioned for and were granted protected status for the building under the Building Conservation Act. This protection laid down certain responsibilities regarding preservation of the building, but also gave access to public funding for the renovation. The House of Culture is the most recent building in Finland protected by law.

Classifying the rooms

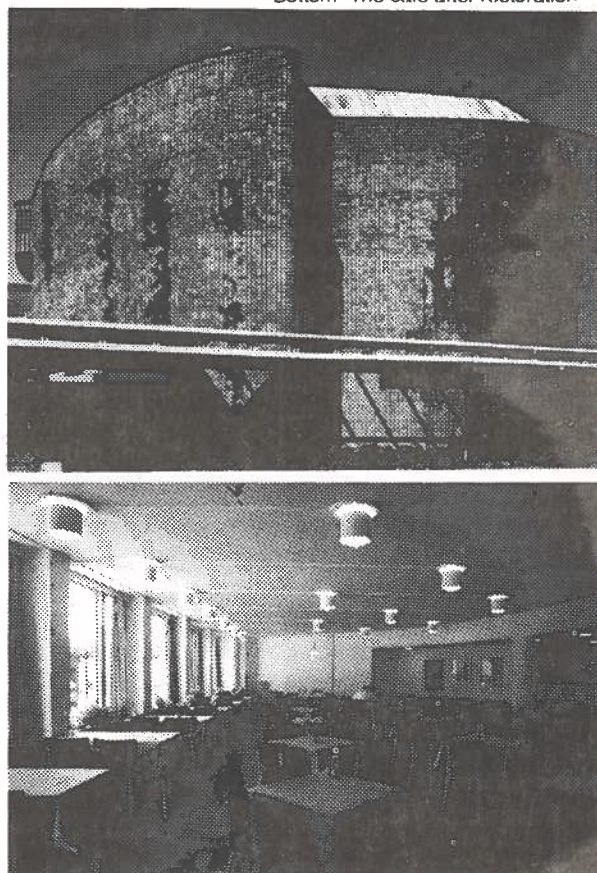
The renovation work was based on a classification drawn up in cooperation with the National Board of Antiquities, dividing the premises into four categories according to their architectural merit and present condition. Valuable, well-preserved rooms were to be preserved with no physical or functional alterations; technical changes of different kinds and certain functional alterations were allowed in conference and office rooms, depending on their location; for the badly damaged rooms (the cafe and cinema), only measures aimed at restoring their original character were permitted. A more radical redistribution of space was permitted in the basement in view of technical and maintenance requirements.

AIMS

The aim of the renovation was to restore the architectural character and ambience of the House of Culture, which had eroded over the years, and to fit the building with the necessary new technology and functions. **The original building**

materials and techniques were followed as closely as possible, in keeping with the protection classification. The overall aim was to make the effects of renovation as invisible as possible. The renovation was designed by the same designer offices as did the original design work in the 1950's. This was only natural, since they had access to the original documents and designs, not to mention valuable personal recollections concerning the design and construction process. This was especially important since many details and measurements were decided on location, due to the voluntary nature of much of the building work.

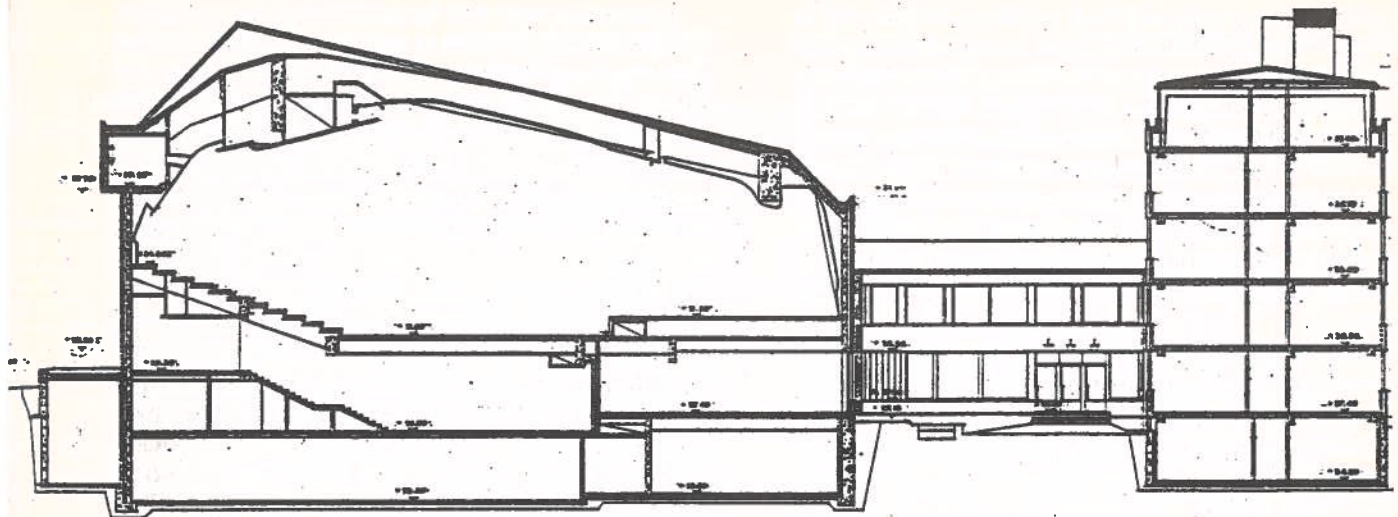
Top: Kulttuuritalo in its present condition. The original brickwork is still in good condition.
Bottom: The cafe after restoration



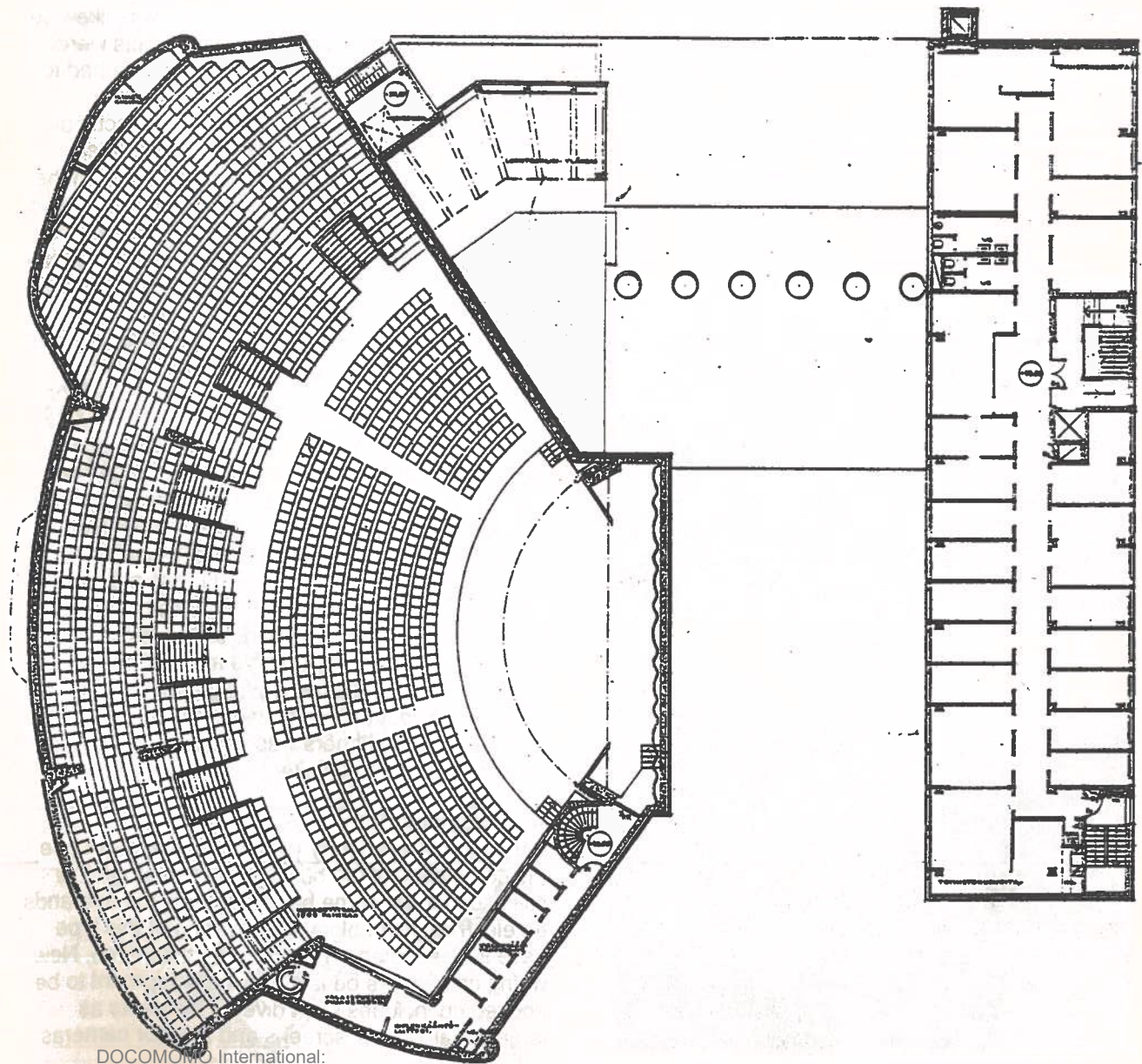
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Plan and section of Aalto's original design of the House of Culture. The organic form of the auditorium can be recognized in the exterior picture on p.60.

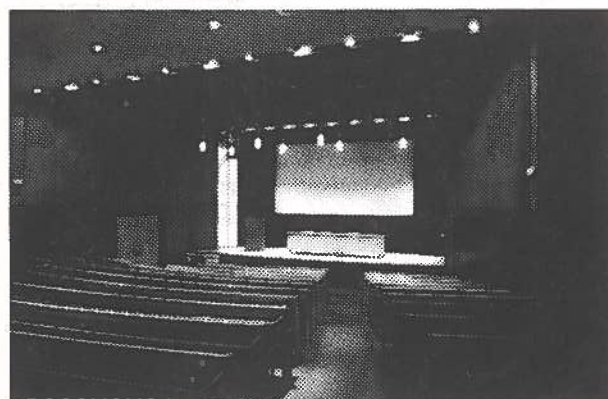
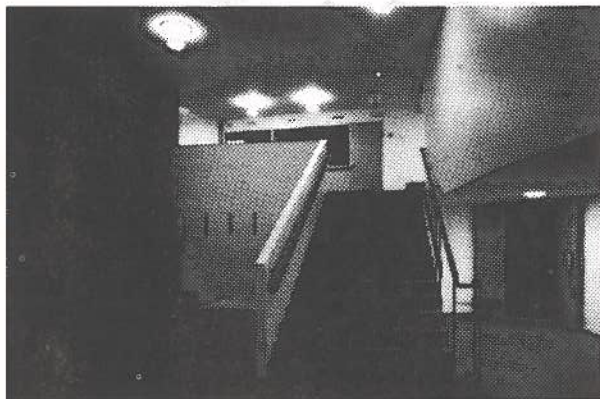


Stagewise construction

A lack of funds forced a division of the renovation work into three stages, the first two of which were completed by Autumn 1991. This caused complications in the technical construction. The technical systems for the concert hall, which was otherwise scheduled for the last stage, had to be built at the beginning of the process to avoid dismantling and rebuilding completed components later.

In the search for surfacing materials, it was found that, fortuitously, nearly all of the original surfacing materials were still being produced. The House of Culture also had reserves of floor clinker and wooden skirting boards, which could be used for the major rooms. The plastic floor covering applied practically throughout the conference and office rooms was replaced with linoleum. Doors were repaired and recycled; the oak veneer on the heavy doors was patched and partly replaced. In the elevations, the copper cladding and the brickwork, using a brick designed specially for the building, required no repairs. On the other hand, the rendered and whitewashed, later latex-painted red-brick elevations to the rear of the building are still in need of cleaning and a coat of silicate paint.

Top: the stairs in the lobby of the former cinema after restoration.
Bottom: the cinema has been changed into a conference room.



Case: the old cinema

The House of Culture project is a showcase for different nuances of renovation. Rooms and details were preserved in their original appearance; some rooms such as the cafe and cinema were restored to approximate the original, but on the other hand new staircases were added, etc. To demonstrate the process, it is a good idea to examine one self-contained entity, the old cinema, which has taken a lot of punishment over the years; most recently, it was used as a discotheque.

The entrance and foyer of the cinema were fairly well preserved, so patchwork and painting of the walls were all that was needed. The small toilets on the box office landing were expanded, taking some space from the former projection booth. This extra space also allowed the inclusion of a cloak-room, and it is still possible to project films through the original projector apertures. The flat floor of the cinema, a later addition, was dismantled and a sloping floor restored. The elegant wooden panelling on the walls was cleaned and nails and screws dating from the disco period removed. The ceiling panelling in the cinema proper was likewise treated. The existing air conditioning ducts were preserved. The lighting level of the cinema had to be increased considerably for which existing lighting fixtures were mainly used. The electrical systems of the cinema proper were completely redone, the wiring ducts being placed beneath the floor or behind the new front wall of the stage. Two interpreter's booths and a technical maintenance room were constructed under the former projection booths at the rear of the cinema. New auditorium seating was provided, since the original tubular-framed chairs designed for the sloping floor had been cropped to suit the flat floor.

Airconditioning problems

The airconditioning work was complicated due to the limited technical space available, the narrow vertical ducts and the stagewise construction. The ceilings of the protected rooms were preserved as they were and the existing airconditioning system had to be retained. In the cafe, the original method of blowing the incoming fresh air directly through perforations in the ceiling panels was reinstated. It was also important to preserve all architectural components such as the louvring and air vents. Continuous cooperation between the architects and the other designers was essential both at the drawing board and on site.

Abstract electricity

Although not even forty years have elapsed since the completion of the building, and although it is still used for the same basic purpose, the demands on electrical technology in a building of this type have increased enormously in the meantime. New wiring can always be laid, but the equipment to be hooked up includes such diverse elements as large speakers, TV screens and monitor cameras.

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Adapting and minimizing all this new technology proved to be a challenge in the House of Culture. Present demands and standards for lighting levels, sound reproduction, security electronics, etc., required close negotiations both among the designers as well as between them and the relevant authorities. This tortuous process was the only way to preserve the overall character of the premises.

The original lighting fixtures in the main rooms were repaired, partly technically updated and repainted. Some disused lighting fixtures were stored away and these were repaired and refitted. New fixtures were manufactured for the cafe according to original designs.

Furniture

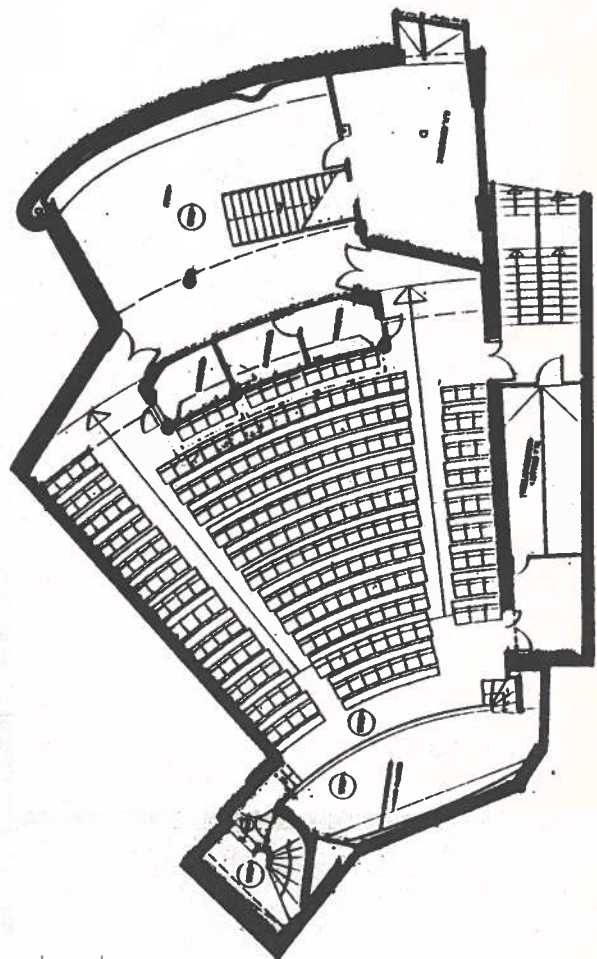
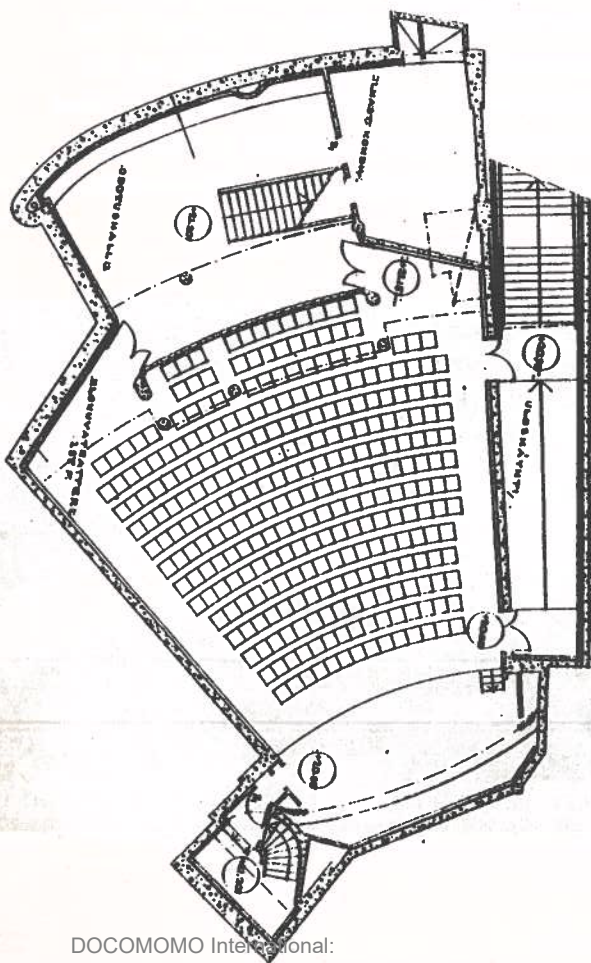
Some of the original fixed furniture was still in place and repairable. Only necessary cleaning, patching or surface treatment was undertaken. In many rooms, the original furniture had been destroyed during redecoration, and thus the cafe counter, for instance, had to be completely redesigned. The moveable furniture in the building was quite heterogeneous, and only a few rooms still had the furniture originally placed there. Some

of the original furniture from the cafe was found on the opposite side of the city, but it became possible to manufacture a new series of chairs for the cafe on the basis of the old models. The major rooms were refurbished with Artek furniture; a classic wooden chair designed by Ilmari Tapiovaara in the 1950's was selected as the standard chair for the conference rooms. The original colour scheme of the building was very clear, as is to be expected from Aalto. The cinema was the only exception to the predominance of light colours, being done in a dark blue-gray with a light cream and light grey colour scheme in the foyer. These colours were retained in the repainting, although the new function of the cinema could have justified a lighter colour.

From the Autumn of 1991, the House of Culture has been open again. The building hosts various concerts, meetings, seminars, etc., and is also the present home of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Tapani Mustonen is architect of Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd., and in charge of the restoration works

Left: the cinema as it was designed by Aalto in 1958.
Right: the conference room in the former cinema, as it was restored in 1991.

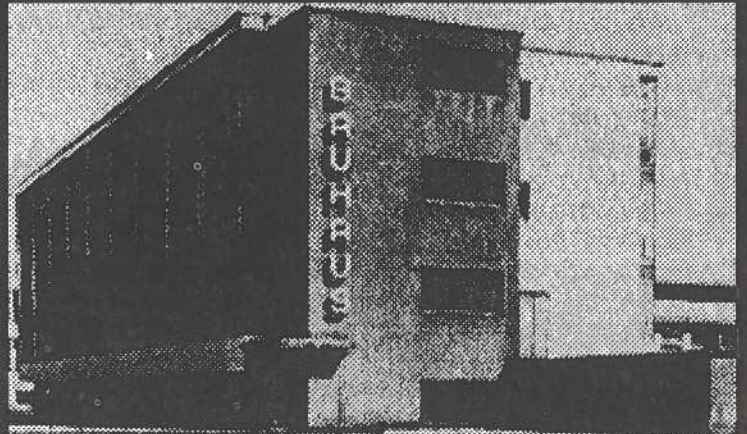


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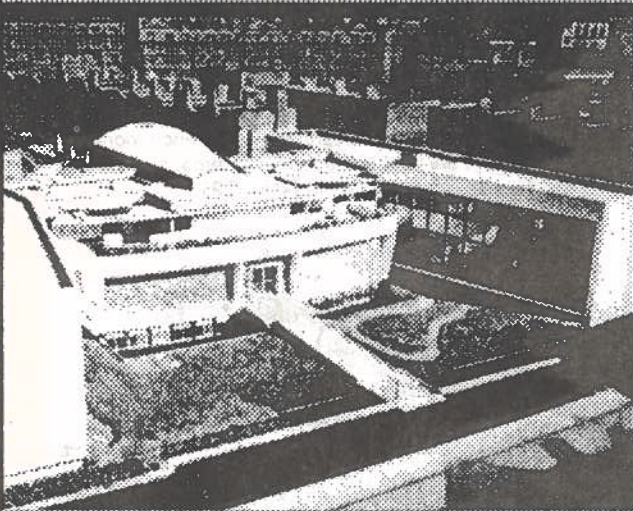
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BAUHAUS, DESSAU - WALTER GROPIUS 1926

CATALYST OF THE

MODERN MOVEMENT

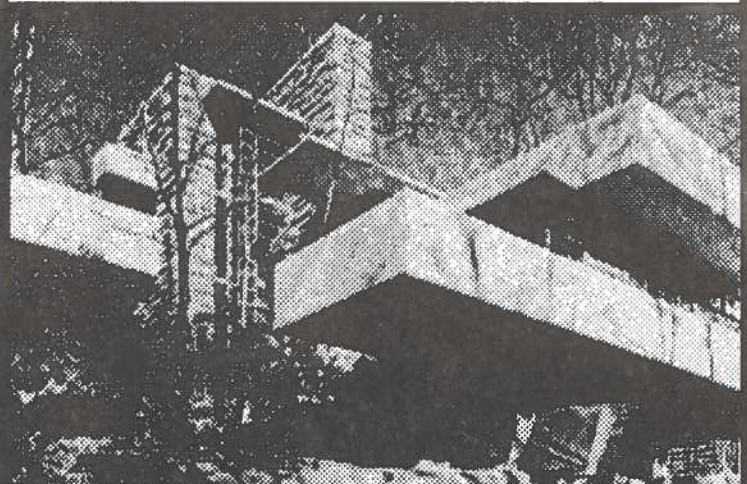


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FALLING WATER, PENNSYLVANIA - FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT 1936

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