

THE TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS FOR WOOD PRESERVATION

IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

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The volume of building projects is laid down in the G.D.R. in annual, five year and long-term plans. Urban construction and monument preservation within the scope of town planning for example are determined largely in this connection by a major task for the entire GDR: the solution of the housing problem for all GDR citizens by the year 1990.

The preservation of monuments of cultural historic value within this scope is very largely a task of the building industry. Apart from housing construction enterprises which build housing and official buildings with pre-fabricated construction parts and industrial production methods, increasing numbers of modernising and building repair enterprises participate in the construction of modern housing and premises for official use within existing historic buildings.

In most towns of the GDR, therefore, increasing numbers of building enterprises are accomplishing specific work of monument preservation. This also marks the extent and intensity of the initial and further training of experts and specialists at the existing enterprises.

With intent of the most effective implementation of the specific provisions concerning the protection, preservation and utilisation of architectural monuments laid down within the Monument Preservation Law of 1975, the "Monument Preservation Centre" was founded in January 1977 on the instructions of the Minister of Culture, for the construction of special capacities for monument preservation. That Centre directs newly established Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprises, which above all mobilise and develop special capacities for the accomplishment of preservation and restoration work on architectural monuments of particular historic significance, included in the central monument registry of the GDR. These monument preservation enterprises therefore foster, mediate and promote manual and crafts skills and modern techniques of restoration.

I should like to take these Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprises as an example to demonstrate the forms of training in operation and envisaged for the future, of specialists of wood work and restoration.

So far the GDR has 5 Monument Preservation Enterprises of this kind, in Berlin, Dresden, Erfurt, Schwerin and Halle-Quedlinburg. They are associated with a number of intensely developing restoring workshops in other towns. At present roughly 600 workers are employed at these enterprises; their number is envisaged to rise to 1,600 by the year 1985. 120 apprentices are being trained annually, approximately one third of them as joiners and carpenters, including 6 girls.

These enterprises have specialized workshops for stone, metal, colouring, glass, ceramics and wood working. Certain enterprises have been assigned a directing function in the respective domains of work. The Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprises in Quedlinburg for example, is in charge of the carpentry branch. Quedlinburg, a town of over 1,000 years of age,

with an abundance of timber-frame architecture of all styles, from the 14th to the early 19th century, offers extensive material for investigation, models and ranges of activity for these enterprises. Within a two-year period of training apprentice are taught all the practical skills of carpentry, as well as all the historic and methodical aspects to be observed in regard to restoration work.

Despite the fact that these special monument preservation enterprises have only existed for a short time, apprentices are already being trained in compliance with monument preservation requirements, on the basis of the training directives for the building industry. In close cooperation with specialized craftsmen with experience in the field of monument preservation, the young workers are taught how to reconstruct and repair timber-frame buildings, roof structure, floors, ceilings, panelling, staircases, etc....

Training begins with the production of simple wood structures; these are explained in theory, then drawn by the apprentice and produced as a model 1:1 in accordance to prescribed procedures. In this practical experiments with new construction parts continues throughout the training with an increasing complication of structures, such as may occur, e.g., in intricate roof structures. Generally the practical training takes place side by side with the theoretical instructions (approximately 25 per cent of the training hours), mainly within the scope of concrete work of monument preservation.

In the case of Quedlinburg this work consists in the restoration of the numerous timber-frame houses. The Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprises in Quedlinburg is envisaged to become a central workshop for the training of carpenters, for further qualifications and specialized courses.

The Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprise of Erfurt, with its restoration workshop in Weimar-Wohlborn, is the pilot enterprise for cabinet-making and furniture restoration. The training of apprentices there is in the hands of masters with an educational training and high professional qualifications. As in Quedlinburg, the apprentices in Weimar are also taught in the first place how to handle, treat and apply their tools.

After acquaintance with wood as working material and the first practical experiments, the first work operations are undertaken under the guidance of the instructor. These include the reconstruction of door and window frames for a small castle, to be used as a centre of cultural activities and further training.

In this way, the young building workers learn their craft within the scope of directly useful work, which will in the future repeatedly confront them with new problems. All apprentices of the Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprise have the opportunity to continue their qualification in evening courses, at technical colleges and university institutes, after the completion of their apprenticeship and a period of practical work of good quality. Their training at the Nationally Owned Monument Preservation Enterprises of the GDR therefore gives them wide prospects for applying their acquired skill and knowledge in the preservation and maintenance of valuable historic architecture in the GDR.

That about some aspects of specialists for wood preservation in my country. Now some aspects on our situation concerning the restoration of timber-frame architecture.

We have experiences with the methods of replacing morbid wood constructions by new elements or we used other supporting constructions to maintain timber-frame houses. We are starting with collecting experiences with structural consolidation of wood as a building material.

Therefore we formed a working group for the "Structural Consolidation of Wood" at the beginning of this year. That working group is called to undertake activities at a national level in the sphere of the preservation of wood within the scope of monument preservation in the GDR, to promote and coordinate such activities and to attend to the application of the results of researches in practice. The group is guided in its work by the latest theoretical and practical standards of national and international work and tasks, in particular within the scope of ICOMOS. The results of the work are to be conveyed to the International Specialized Committee on Wood of ICOMOS.

The working group "Structural Consolidation of Wood" will in particular deal with the following major problems :

- the investigation of procedures to examine and preserve wood as a construction and repair material for sculptures and installations.
- the coordination of cooperation with industry and scientific institutions in the distribution of research themes on preserving materials and their production and on specific investigation methods.
- drafting of recommendations on the initial and further training of specialists.

RESUME

LA FORMATION DES SPECIALISTES A LA TECHNIQUE DE PRESERVATION DU BOIS EN R.D.A.

Le nombre croissant des entreprises de construction spécialisées dans la préservation de monuments justifie la création d'un "Centre de Préservation des Monuments" en 1977 où une formation intensive est donnée aux spécialistes.

Ce Centre dirige les 5 entreprises nationales spécialisées dans la préservation des monuments, existantes en R.D.A.: Berlin, Dresde, Erfurt, Schwerin, et Quedlinbourg.

Ces entreprises possèdent des ateliers spécialisés dans la pierre, le métal, les couleurs, le verre, les céramiques et le bois.

Il est assigné à chaque entreprise un domaine particulier, à savoir, la charpente pour l'entreprise de Quedlinbourg, la restauration des meubles pour celle d'Erfurt...

La formation est à la fois théorique et pratique, sous la direction d'un instructeur. Les apprentis peuvent se perfectionner d'autre part par les cours du soir, pour acquérir l'habileté et les connaissances suffisantes dans la préservation et l'entretien des monuments historiques.