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The Heritage of the Berlin Modern Style. Nomination of Housing Estates for Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List

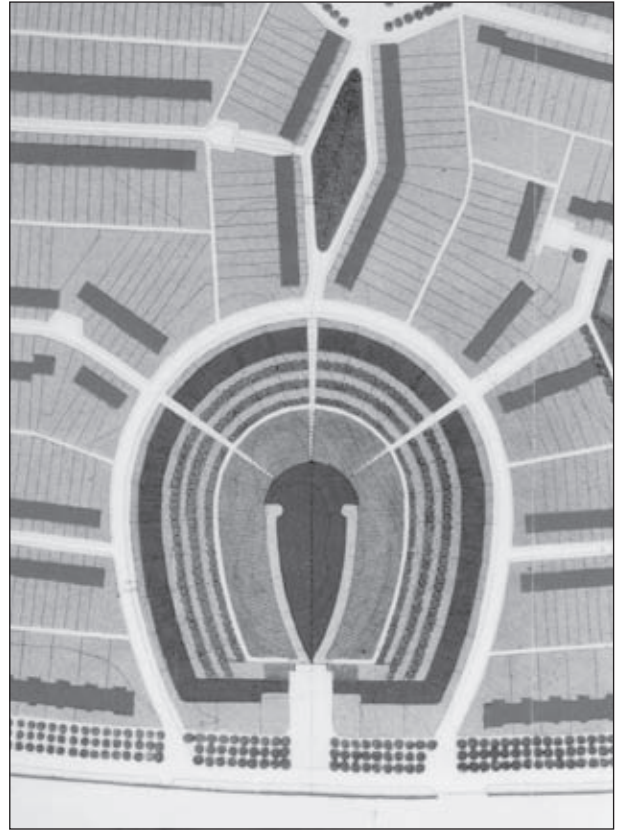
“As the second artistic capital of Europe, after Paris, Berlin was clearly likely to produce work of interest, but it contained, in addition, a remarkable group of architectural talents. No other centre in the early Twenties could have boasted, as Berlin could, more than a dozen progressive architects of more than average competence, sufficiently resilient in mental constitution to take in their stride a major aesthetic revolution, from Expressionism to Elementarism, and to design in either style with equal vigour and assurance.”

(Rayner Banham, Theory and Design in the First Machine Age, London 1960)

Between the two World Wars – or more precisely between the November revolution in Germany of 1918 and the taking of power of the national socialists in January 1933 – Berlin developed into a metropolis of modern art. After merging with surrounding towns and villages in 1920 “Greater Berlin” was according to area one of the world’s largest cities (876 square kilometres) and with respect to the population number it came third after New York and London. Berlin was considered to be the biggest industrial city of the European continent, a traffic hub and European air hub as well as a location on international fairs and media.

The legendary “Golden 20s” present Berlin as leading world centre of culture and arts. Internationally renowned artists lived and worked here. The “Weltstadt” (metropolis) of the Weimar republic, as Martin Wagner called it, was one of the main international locations of avant-garde arts and of the cultural dispute between tradition and modern age. Many artists, authors and journalists, painters and sculptors, theatre and film makers, musicians and actors of international standing visited the city or had contacts with it and thus were inspired by it or hoped to be well received here. Others lived and worked here at least for a while or permanently.

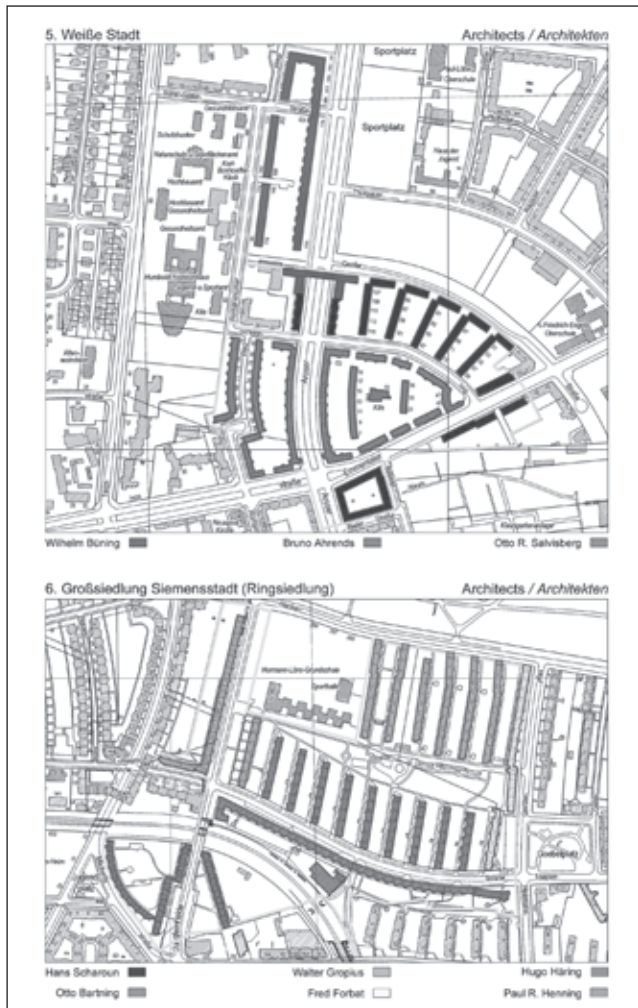
The end of World War I, the collapse of the German Empire, the overthrowing of the monarchy and the proclamation of the republic gave rise to new hope in politics and arts and some of it was related to an utopian hope for socialism. The time after the November revolution was characterised by the quick development of critical – usually anti-bourgeois and often international – groups of artists like the “Club Dada” (1918 with Richard Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, George Grosz, John Heartfield, Hannah Höch, etc.), the circle of the Berlin constructivists (1922 with Naum Gabo, El Lissitzky, Laszlo Moholy-



Britz housing estate in Berlin-Neukölln, 1925–30, arch. Bruno Taut. General layout

Nagy, Oskar Nerlinger) or the group of the Blue Four (1924 with Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Alexej Jawlensky). Some of them were also working at the Bauhaus in Dessau (1924–1925) and Berlin (1932/33). In addition to the avant-garde of the visual arts the avant-garde of the fine arts and literature was also present in Berlin with renowned and innovative representatives, such as the directors and authors Bertold Brecht and Erwin Piscator, Alfred Döblin and Erich Kästner or the journalists Carl von Ossietzki, Kurt Tucholsky and Egon Erwin Kisch. Composers and musicians like Max Bruch, Arnold Schönberg, Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler confirmed the reputation of Berlin as an experimental area for innovative aesthetic and political concepts.

New media – mainly the rapidly developing film and cinema branch in addition to radio broadcasting – quickly found producers and an audience in the open-minded and cosmopolitan city culture of Berlin. The Universum Film AG (UFA), founded in 1917 in Berlin, became the largest company of its kind outside the USA and Berlin was considered to be the world’s most important film



Development plans for Weiße Stadt, 1929, arch. B. Ahrends, O. Salvisberg et al. and for Siemensstadt, 1929, arch. H. Scharoun, O. Bartning, W. Gropius et al.



Siemensstadt, Berlin 1929, front page of „La construction Moderne“, January 1932

and cinema location after Hollywood. Directors and actors like Wilhelm Murnau, Fritz Lang and Marlene Dietrich had their debuts or experienced their breakthrough as artists in Berlin before they emigrated to the USA. In 1927 Walter Ruttmann created a monument of the film and cinema avant-garde of the city with his montage film *Berlin – Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (Berlin – Symphony of a City). The film *Metropolis* by Fritz Lang, produced in Berlin in 1925/26 by UFA and first shown here in 1927, was declared Memory of the World by UNESCO in 2001. Legendary cinemas of the Berlin modern age like the cinema Babylon by Hans Poelzig or the Universum-Kino by Erich Mendelsohn are monuments of architecture that remind of the rise of the new medium.

European metropolis of modern architecture

Architecture and urban development played a key role in the reform movement in arts and social affairs, which was a main characteristic of the revolutionary period of 1918/19 and the short cultural upswing of the Weimar Republic up to the world economic crisis in 1929/30. The “November group”, which included representatives of the fine arts (Max Pechstein, Käthe Kollwitz, Cesar Klein, Rudolf Belling etc.) and architects (Erich Mendelsohn, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Hans Poelzig and others), and the Berlin “Arbeitsrat für Kunst” (Working Council for Art) which was founded at the same time and included young architects like Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, Otto Bartning, Adolf Meyer and many others provided lots of impetus and fulfilled a kind of catalyst function for the subsequent phase of consolidation. The revolutionary impetus is reflected in an early appeal of the Working Council formulated in 1918 by the architect Bruno Taut. With this impetus these initiatives demanded in their manifestos a radically new connection between arts and life and attributed a leading role to architecture in building a new society and environment. “Arts and the people must be united to form one entity. Arts shall no longer be reserved as enjoyment of only a few but they shall be by the life and happiness of the masses. The aim is to unite the arts under the umbrella of a great architecture. From that moment onwards the artist alone is shaping the people’s feelings and in this role he is responsible for the visible appearance of the new state. He must define the design from the sculptures up to the coin and the postal stamp”.

The association of architects initiated in 1923/24 by Mies van der Rohe, Max Taut, Erich Mendelsohn, Hugo Häring, Hans Scharoun and others under the name of “Zehnerring” (ring of ten, later “Zwölferring”, i. e. ring of twelve), abbreviated as “Der Ring” (The Ring), was extended to 27 members as from 1926 and turned into a kind of “Sezession” of German architects. It provided a common platform for many different move-

ments of modern age architecture between the two World Wars and brought together representatives of *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) and Bauhaus as well as representatives of organic architecture. The housing estate Siemensstadt in whose design leading members of the Ring participated was called “Ring settlement” in the vernacular. The greatest significance of this circle of architects, however, results from its enormous external impact as multiplier for modern architectural programmes. In 1928 its activities provoked the strictly conservative counter-initiative “Der Block” (the block) – an association of nationally minded colleagues created by Paul Bonatz, Paul Schmitthenner, Paul Schulze-Naumburg and others.

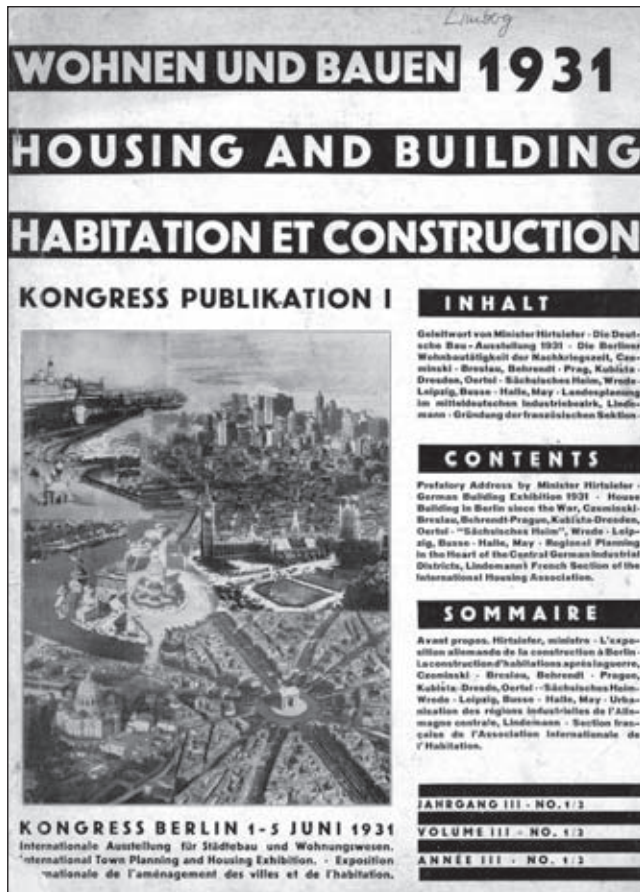
In the 1920s Berlin also became an ever more attractive location for renowned architects from outside who wanted to take a stance in the ongoing architectural debate by means of holding lectures, exhibitions or designing buildings. Buildings like the Bundesschule des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (School of the general German trade union federation) at Bernau on the outskirts of Berlin built in 1928 and designed by Hannes Meyer or the Shell-House (1930) by Emil Fahrenkamp are showing this to the present day. Berlin was able to assume this role of international meeting place of modern age artists between the two World Wars and of a centre of international architectural dispute due to a cosmopolitan opening which had started already before World War I and which developed rapidly during the years of revolution and inflation. Guest lectures in Berlin and exhibitions or study visits to this city as well as lecture tours, study visits and working visits of German planners and architects abroad intensified this international exchange of opinion and experience. Colonies of foreign artists from the neighbouring European states, in particular from Russia (“Charlottengrad”), Italy and France and even from America were visible signs for this new dialogue - new because it involved people across the borders of states and kinds of art.

During the Emperors’ rule the interest of the German reform movement in architecture, housing construction and crafts had focussed on the “English example” (Stephan Muthesius), i.e. in particular on the English garden city movement, the arts and crafts movement and the bourgeois housing construction on the island, and acknowledged the development in France, Belgium, Holland or especially in the United States only marginally. The Berlin architects and architectural journalists in the Weimar Republic were mainly influenced by developments taking place in Russia and Holland. In Holland the housing law of 1901 had made possible an efficient work of the housing companies and had promoted them. For instance Bruno Taut travelled through the Netherlands in 1923 for studying settlements which had been erected with state subsidies. Erich Mendelsohn was invited for a lecture tour to Holland as early as 1920 and in 1923 he held his forward pointing lecture on “Dynamik und Funktion” (Dynamic and Function) in Amsterdam. Let us mention

just J. J. P. Oud, Theo van Doesburg and El Lissitzky as representatives for the large number of foreign architects and artists whose work was perceived as particularly inspiring in Berlin during those years.

“Das Neue Berlin” (The New Berlin) was not only the title of the “monthly journal for the issues of the city” founded in 1929 by its urban development councillor Martin Wagner (following the example of Ernst May in Frankfurt) – it also shows that Berlin understood itself to be the capital of a new culture of architecture and building. In no other field of culture Berlin profited as much from being the “avant-garde centre of the universe” as in the field of architecture and urban development. A major proportion of its cultural and urban identity was based upon the large-scale urban development projects and building activities of the years between the two World Wars. Berlin owed its reputation as international centre of urban development reform and modern architectural movement to audacious and visionary forward-looking programmes as well as new, sensational buildings which became widely known by means of publications and lectures as programmatic contributions to a new culture of building. Utopian and mainly expressionist projects like the architectural fantasies of Bruno Taut (“Auflösung der Städte” – dissolving of the cities, “Die Stadtkrone” – the town crown, “Alpine Architecture”, etc.) or Hans Scharoun’s organic design of the “Volkshaus” (people’s house) contributed to the reputation as well as never realised contributions for competition or design ideas like Mies van der Rohe’s glass high-rise building project for Berlin or the radical proposals for urban restructuring reflected in Ludwig Hilberseimer’s city architecture. Even sculptures and buildings from those years which were lost later like the expressionist audience hall of Hans Poelzig’s Großes Schauspielhaus (large playhouse) or the monument for Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht by Mies van der Rohe have found their way into the collective memory of buildings and images.

Yet, Berlin’s position as main location of modern architecture and urban planning is mainly founded on the buildings and urban developments which have actually been implemented. One of the “incunabula” of world architectural history of the early 20th century is the AEG-turbine hall by Peter Behrens (1909) which paved the way to a new type of aesthetics for industrial buildings. After World War I expressly modern trade union buildings were erected by Bruno and Max Taut as well as Erich Mendelsohn (ADGB-house at Wallstraße, the book printers union-house at Dudenstraße, DMV-house at Late Jakobstraße), contributions to a new type of office building architecture by Peter Behrens and Bruno Paul (Alexander and Berolina-houses at Alexanderplatz, Kathreiner-house at Kleistpark) or the Haus des Rundfunks (radio broadcasting house) by Hans Poelzig as well as the Funkturm (radio telecommunication tower) by Heinrich Straumer at the fairgrounds. As far as design is concerned they are examples for the radical turning away from the architec-



“Housing and Building”, congress and exhibition in Berlin 1931

tural views of the German Empire and functionally they reflect completely new tasks to be fulfilled by buildings. Together with school buildings and public social facilities like Strandbad Wannsee (Martin Wagner, Richard Ermisch) with their programmatic design they are highlights in the city in the sense of a modern, cosmopolitan and egalitarian city architecture.

However, the new architecture made its main architectural and social contribution for a modern image of cities and society in the field of housing and settlement construction. In this respect we have to mention in particular the spacious tenement estates at the margin of the inner city expansion areas and at the outskirts which were made accessible by modern city transport and included into the metropolis by the formation of Greater Berlin. Regardless of the outstanding villas or groups of residential buildings for open-minded bourgeois circles or important houses of artists or architects the large settlement for mass housing represent the reform of building and social reform which took place between the two World Wars in the field of urban development and housing. Nowhere else the social intention and dimension of the debate on architecture and urban development of the modern age between the two World Wars was more clearly reflected than by the non-profit or co-operative housing development projects of those years.

Housing construction in Berlin grew enormously since the mid 1920s in particular under the Social Democratic urban development councillor Martin Wagner (1926–33) who was an excellent organiser and multiplier of reform politics. The main precondition for this great achievement was the purposeful bundling of instruments of state intervention and promotion in building and housing legislation as well as the financing and management of large amounts of flats. A housing programme which had been considered unimaginable to that time was implemented thanks to consistently standardising design, planning and construction works as well as providing political support for forming very rationally working construction companies and large non-profit housing companies. During the post-war misery 1919 until 1923 Berlin had built approximately 9.000 rental flats with public subsidies and between and 1930 another 135.000 flats were built.

Berlin's contribution to the cultural World Heritage of the 20th century

In the 1920s Berlin became known in particular as city of modern architecture and thus entered its name on the book of world architectural history. The *Kunstführer Deutschland* (arts guide for Germany) whose first issue of the volume Berlin. *Kunstdenkmäler und Museen* (Berlin, monuments of arts and museums) was published in 1977 claims that the re-design of Berlin during the first third of the 20th century was of world standing – “perhaps this is the only architectural achievement of Berlin which really deserves this rank.” Yet, in contrast to the Berlin Schinkel-school of the 19th century and also to the progressive “Amsterdam school of architecture” or especially the conservative “Stuttgart school of architecture” of the 20th century the Berlin modern age of the years between the two World Wars appears to be less closed and school-forming. Its transnational and even intercontinental influence was based on the manifold biographical inter-twinings of its main actors and even more on their enormous amount of lecturing, publishing, travelling and teaching at home and abroad. To this we have to add many buildings which were built by its protagonists and students in many parts of the world. Visits to other countries or emigration due to the world economic crisis and in particular due to the persecution of Jewish, socialist or opposition artists and architects during the Nazi rule contributed to spreading the Berlin examples of modern age between the two World Wars all over the world. As examples for the above let us mention Bruno Taut (1880–1938) who went to Russia together with some co-workers in 1931, than had to emigrate to Japan in 1933 and got an appointment in Istanbul in 1936 or Martin Wagner (1885–1957) who emigrated first to Turkey in 1936 and then to the USA in 1938 to work there as professor for urban development at Harvard University.

Initiative for World Heritage Nomination

When the preparations for updating the German tentative list for the UNESCO World Heritage began in 1995 two Berlin proposals for the heritage of the 20th century were on the agenda: one of them was the industrial heritage of Berlin's "Electropolis", i. e. in particular the monuments of industry and technology of the then worldwide leading electrical engineering and power supply companies of Berlin from the first third of the 20th century and the other one was the heritage of modern architecture and social housing development of the Weimar Republic. In 1997 the conference of ministers of education and cultural affairs of the German federal states gave priority to the six large housing estates of the Berlin modern age. This was based on the fact that for approximately 40 years experience had been gathered in conserving the housing estates of the Berlin modern age created between the two World Wars and on the wish to complement the World Heritage List with the architectural heritage of the 20th century and mass housing in cities as result of industrialisation and urbanisation since these are insufficiently represented to date.

Berlin above all owes its worldwide reputation as a metropolis of modernism to its housing developments. The built results bear witness to a social and residential-political renewal programme which united the goals of a democratic life-reform movement with the ideal model of modern town planning and a new architectural design in a striking way. Designed by prominent representatives of the "New Architecture" and supported by state-furthered co-operatives and housing societies, the reform movement in Berlin realised an incomparable programme of social apartment building within just a few years. This apartment building project set new standards. Some of the Berlin pioneer projects of the residential reform of the 1920s attracted attention and admiration throughout Europe already at the time they were built. A number of the housing developments later found their way into the standard works of the history of 20th-century architecture as models of their kind. The majority of the most famous housing estates is still in generally excellent condition, thanks to painstaking maintenance measures of their aware monument owners. Together with their gardens and surrounding public parks the historical sites of classical modernism possess high quality as monuments, at the same time still offering excellent living quality today.

The selection of six nominated housing estates for the World Heritage convention of UNESCO includes for the moment: the „Tuschkastensiedlung“ (Ink box estate) called Garden City Falkenberg at the south easterly outskirts designed by Bruno Taut and Ludwig Lesser (1913–15), the development Schillerpark in the district Mitte/Wedding, likewise by Bruno Taut (1924–30) and the so called „Hufeisen-Siedlung Britz“ (Horseshoe estate Britz) („Fritz-Reuter-Stadt“) in the southeast by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner (1925–30). In the following



Exhibition catalogue of GEHAG Housing Estate, 1931

years further listed building and garden ensembles were erected: the „Wohnstadt Carl-Legien“ (Residential city Carl-Legien) by Bruno Taut and Franz Hillinger in the neighbourhood Pankow/Prenzlauer Berg (1929–30), the large housing estate called „Weiße Stadt“ (White city) by Bruno Ahrends, Wilhelm Büning and Otto Rudolf Salvisberg as well as the garden architect Ludwig Lesser in the north (1929–31) and in the west the „Ringsiedlung Siemensstadt“ named after and designed by the group of architects called „Der Ring“ (The Ring), a group which consisted of various architects that worked under the artistic guidance of Hans Scharoun and Martin Wagner as well as the garden architect Leberecht Migge (1929–32).

Amongst the listed sites of the 20th century, which were inscribed on the World Heritage List in the last years, are also some prominent examples in Germany. The Bauhaus sites in Weimar and Dessau (Thuringia and Sachsen-Anhalt) belong to the key testimonies of modern architecture, as well as the mine Zollverein in Essen (Northrhine-Westphalia) as an example of an industrial monument and an art ensemble of the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity). For the first time, through the nomination of the Berlin sites for the World Heritage List, important issues of the building of housing estates, more precisely social housing of the 20th century in Europe, will be represented.

The nominated Berlin sites are of outstanding universal value due to the cause that they have retained their historic appearance over a long period of time not only in their building substance, but also in their original usage as historical housing sites which have endured for generations and are still in demand up to the present day. The historical usage continuity and the social character of the reformed housing estates being available and affordable for a wide range of citizens still create one part of the authenticity and attraction of these housings as well as listed addresses. The quality of housing and the usage quality are defined in the value for their listing, if you take seriously the function and social character of these sites in their cultural-historical understanding. The owners of these designated World Heritage sites deserve special thanks, where they carried out exemplary conservation and restoration measures within these housing estates respecting the quality of the listed sites and the social tradition of these buildings and garden heritage sites.

Architectural heritage of Bruno Taut as candidate for the World Heritage List

The majority of highly significant heritage conservation areas which are nominated as World Heritage Sites is linked to the oeuvre of Bruno Taut (1880–1938). With the exception of his childhood spent in his native city of Königsberg, including his school and student years, Bruno Taut lived and worked in Berlin for most of his life, namely from 1908 to 1932. On the list of Berlin monuments, Bruno Taut is represented by over 40 entries and hundreds of addresses. They bear witness to principal stages of his professional and architectural career from the late Imperial era before World War I until his emigration in 1933, as well as a broad spectrum of architectural tasks with the apartments and estate-houses occupying a position of central significance. The list of monuments also reflects important working relationships of his Berlin years, such as the formal office collaborations with Arthur Vogdt, Franz Hofmann and his brother Max, and the temporary projects undertaken together with Heinrich Tessenow and Bruno Ahrends. These also include collaborations with renowned artists and garden artists, such as Karl Schmidt-Rotluff from the artists' community "Die Brücke" and the landscape architects Ludwig Lesser and Leberecht Migge, and co-operation with important contemporary building owners, city planners and architect colleagues such as urban development councillor Martin Wagner or Franz Hillinger of the GEHAG.

At the top of the scale of popularity and fame are a number of residential developments, as Bruno Taut designed them for Berlin after his return from Magdeburg in 1924. His row-houses on the Trierstrasse, called "Papageienhaus" (Parrot House) strike the eye again today because of their blue-yellow-red colouring. They had

been disfigured during the Third Reich as "degenerate art" and are now presented since their last restoration – furthered by the Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz (German Foundation of Monument Protection) – in powerfully expressionistic colours. Four other Taut developments have come into the centre of public interest recently because they are on the Federal Republic of Germany's application list for the UNESCO World Heritage. In 1997 the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the 16 German Federal States nominated the so-called "Ink Box Estate" Garden City Falkenberg (1913–15), the residential ensemble in Britz known as the "Horseshoe Estate" (1925–31), the development by "Schillerpark" (1924–30) in Wedding as well as the "Residential City Carl Legien" (1929–30) in the district of Pankow as World Heritage candidates. Two of the residential developments by Bruno Taut still completely belong to the historical building owners, the Building and Apartment Co-operative Housing Society of 1892, which still ideally maintain their developments Falkenberg and Schillerpark, restoring them when necessary and modernising them at a contemporary living standard. They were awarded the Ferdinand von Quast Medal in 1993 by the Senator for Urban Development for exemplary achievements in the field of monument conservation and restoration. The large housing estates Britz and the "Residential City Carl Legien" are also maintained at a high level by the apartment concerns GEHAG and BAUBECON as well as by a few private home owners who are restoring their homes step by step. The formal proposal of the Federal Republic of Germany was sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris in 2006, and altogether include six Berlin housing developments from the time between the World Wars, two from the former eastern and four from the former western section of the reunified German capital.

The housing projects of Bruno Taut and others are key testimonies of the 20th century and programme buildings of Berlin modernism and of social apartment building in Europe. As world-class monument ensembles – like the Bauhaus developments in Weimar and Dessau, the "White City" in Tel Aviv (Israel), the Rietveld-Schröderhuis in Utrecht (Netherlands) or the Haus Tugendhat in Brno (Czech Republic) – they will represent the "Modern Movement" on the list of World Heritage sites of mankind.

Housing estates in the Berlin Modern Style are filling gaps of the World Heritage List

The Berlin initiative was confirmed in its views by the Montreal Action Plan of ICOMOS (2001) which had been prepared during the international ICOMOS conferences in Helsinki (1995) and Mexico (1996). Also the study presented by ICOMOS in February 2004 on request of UNESCO on the balance of the World Heritage List

“The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps – an Action Plan for the Future” stated that there was a lack of items from the past century and requested the signatory states of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention to review and improve their priorities in a dialogue with experts of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), DOCOMOMO (Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods), TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage), etc.

The six housing estates of the Berlin modern age between the two World Wars which have been nominated represent – also in the international context – key products of social housing development of the 20th century. The housing estates which were chosen combine in unique ways developments of architecture and urban planning of modern mass housing construction as well as approaches to reforming social policy and housing policy, which influenced the European architectural debate even beyond Berlin and Germany. They are neither singular model projects nor individual prototypes as they had been presented as sample collections for solving the housing question at the world exhibitions of the 19th century or the alter building exhibitions of the Werkbund movement during the 20th century. They are neither special nor isolated solutions as they had been implemented and presented in industrial centres or conurbations as examples by philanthropic or non-profit actors already before World War I. Rather, these six chosen estates are examples for many housing areas mixed with green spaces in Berlin as they were erected between the two World Wars and exist today. From the point of view of urban development these spacious estates represent an alternative form of development and housing in contrast to the extremely dense tenement areas of the 19th century.

In terms of typology and functionality the Berlin housing estates which have been proposed for entry in the World Heritage List cover the period of cultural history of the 20th century which is not or only very insufficiently covered by this List: the task of developing mass housing facilities in coherently planned, erected and occupied urban units. Leaving out the eminently significant historic location of war and peace, of political persecution and resistance of the 20th century (concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau = Oswiecim, the rebuilt centre of Warsaw, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Genbaku Dome) as a special category, some cultural World Heritage locations of the 20th century represent correlations of oeuvre and predecessors or early forms of modern age with historic roots in the years before and after 1900 (Town Houses by Victor Horta in Brussels, works of Antoni Gaudi in Barcelona). Other locations represent in a narrower sense the industrial and technical heritage of the 20th century (mine Zollverein in Essen, Germany, Varberg radio station in Grimeton, Sweden, D. F. Wouda steam pumping station, Netherlands). Also the Fagus-Werk (Alfeld) by Walter Gropius on the German tentative list for

World Cultural Heritage rather belongs to this special segment.

Other than the outstanding monuments of modern architecture and residential culture which are represented on the World Heritage List by famous artistic creations like the Rietveld Schröderhuis by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld (Utrecht, Netherlands), the Haus Tugendhat by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, (Brno, Czech Republic) or the architect’s house and studio Luis Barragan (Mexico City, Mexico) the proposed Berlin housing estates represent a contribution with social orientation for solving the housing question in cities and providing tenement flats for workers and petty bourgeoisie. With respect to urban planning the group of chosen Berlin settlements anticipate individual aspects of functionality and International Style as they are represented by the World Heritage locations in Europe (White Town at Tel Aviv in Israel, Le Havre – City Rebuilt in France) and South America (Brasilia in Brazil, Cuidád Universitaria in Caracas in Venezuela). The high-rise residential building of Unités d’habitation in Marseille (1950) by Le Corbusier which appears on the tentative list of France or respectively of Switzerland might be discussed as an interesting object from post war modern age and more vertically oriented example with completely different typological features from a different period.

The nominated Berlin housing estates continue the tradition of the model settlements of the early industrial and early socialist age from the 18th/19th centuries and of the garden town movement as it is represented in the World Heritage List by utopian settlements like New Lanark (Scotland) by Robert Owen or the philanthropic textile workers’ village of Saltaire (England). In contrast to these World Heritage locations of industrial culture, which also include the company town of Crespi d’Adda in upper Italy, they are not model urban settlements in rural areas but city-scale solutions using large series in the dense urban space of an industrial metropolis and as such they became characteristic for the 20th century.

Monument conservation as appreciation of cultural heritage

The housing estates of the 1920s were appreciated as monuments of modern architecture and urban development and also of social housing already soon after the end of World War II and the liberation from Nazi rule. The large housing estates which have been proposed for entry in the World Heritage List were already acknowledged as important monuments of building and art history in the first post-war lists of the city, which had been divided in 1948. The Ring-settlement of Siemensstadt, for instance, was already presented in the lists of the *Bauwerke und Kunstdenkmäler von Berlin* (Buildings and Art Monuments of Berlin) for the city and district of Charlottenburg (1961) and the district of Spandau (1971). Parts of the



World Heritage Sites of the 20th Century (2005)

- 1 *Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Poland)*
- 2 *Historic Centre of Warsaw (Poland)*
- 3 *Works of Antoni Gaudi in and near Barcelona (Spain)*
- 4 *City of Brasilia (Brazil)*
- 5 *Skogskyrkgarden, Stockholm (Sweden)*
- 6 *Bauhaus and its sites in Weimar and Dessau (Germany)*
- 7 *Hiroshima Peace Memorial – Genbaku Dome (Japan)*
- 8 *Wouda Steam Pumping Station, Lemmer (Netherlands)*
- 9 *Major Town Houses of the Architect Victor Horta, Brussels (Belgium)*
- 10 *Rietveld Schröderhuis, Utrecht (Netherlands)*
- 11 *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas (Venezuela)*
- 12 *Tugendhat-Villa, Brno (Czech Republic)*
- 13 *Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, Essen (Germany)*
- 14 *White City of Tel Aviv – the Modern Movement (Israel)*
- 15 *Luis Barragán House and studio, Mexico City (Mexico)*
- 16 *Varberg Radio Station, Halland (Sweden)*
- 17 *Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by August Perret (France)*

estates were legally protected and officially entered in the list of monuments already before the European Monument Conservation Year 1975. Among them is the construction phase of Siemensstadt designed by Hans Scharoun and the central area of the Horseshoe settlement in Britz (entered in 1959) and Weiße Stadt in Reinickendorf (entered in 1971). The highly developed awareness for the significance of the monuments shared by owners and residents and also by architects and politicians who identified them with the achievements of the modern age between the two World Wars contributed decisively to assuring that the estates were treated carefully even before getting legal protection and thus they have come down to us in a state of conservation which is really rare.

In 1970 the Berlin Association of Architects and Engineers (Architekten- und Ingenieurverein zu Berlin) published an initial scientific inventory in the series *Berlin und seine Bauten* (Berlin and its Buildings) covering the

entire city of 171 Berlin housing estates and settlements built between 1919 and 1945. This inventory provided the basis for protecting further estates in the western part of the city. The legal opportunities were expanded with the Denkmalpflegegesetz der DDR (Monument Conservation Act of the GDR) (1975) and the Denkmalschutzgesetz von Westberlin (West-Berlin Monument Protection Act) (1977) and these laws were used by the responsible curators on both sides of the Iron Curtain for protecting the most important monument sites of social housing of the modern age between the two World Wars. As early as 1977 Gartenstadt Falkenberg (Ink Box Estate) and Wohnstadt Carl Legien in the eastern part of the city were entered as “monuments of the culture and way of life of the working classes and strata of supra-regional significance”. Further parts of the “Horseshoe settlement” in Britz (Neukölln) were protected as large-scale monuments in the western part in 1986. After the Berlin

Wall was opened and the law on harmonisation of the legislation in the Land of Berlin (1990) was adopted and since the first Denkmalschutzgesetz of the united German capital (Monument Protection Act for the entire Berlin territory) came into force in 1995, all six of the nominated settlements have enjoyed equal protection as monument sites (entire estate, overall design), in all cases also including all green spaces and outdoor facilities or the parts which are protected as historic gardens.

Hardly any other city in Germany and probably only few in Europe have embarked upon new roads in monument conservation that early and started to deal with the heritage of the 20th century. And hardly any other city has comparable experience in the field of legal and practical monument conservation of settlements of the 1920s. In consequence of the European Monument Conservation Year (1975) and in connection with preparing for its 750th anniversary (1987) the West-Berlin Authority for Monument Conservation launched four pilot projects in 1978 for a more comprehensive stock-taking and analysis of damage as well as for developing restoration and repair technologies that were suitable for the heritage of the 1920s settlements. In co-operation with the respective housing companies they produced comprehensive and detailed documentations for all important buildings, elements and historic building materials and designs which form the indispensable basis for planning the refurbishment and developing long-term monument conservation concepts.

Among the West-Berlin model projects which were executed in the 1970s–1980s and which were made known far beyond Berlin by means of publications, exhibitions and lectures at home and abroad are also three of the settlements which have been proposed for entry in the World Heritage List: the Horseshoe settlement in Britz, the Ring-settlement of Siemensstadt and Weiße Stadt in Reinickendorf. As early as in 1985 the Deutsches Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz (German National Committee for Monument Conservation) and the Gesamtverband gemeinnütziger Wohnungsunternehmen e. V. (Federation of Non-Profit Housing Companies) used the Berlin experience as basis for holding an inter-communal conference and issuing a federal documentation on monument conservation of settlements of the 1920s. In 1990,

after the border was opened, the experts in monument conservation and the legal owners of the settlements in the eastern part of the city (Gartenstadt Falkenberg and Wohnstadt Carl Legien) could rely on this basis both with respect to methodology and in practice. The responsible co-operatives or respectively companies restored the protected residential buildings and outdoor facilities gradually so that they were re-established in an appropriate historic and artistic state.

In the past 25 years the Berlin conservation of historic buildings and gardens has created benchmarks in Germany and in a dialogue with colleagues from other European countries for the appropriate conservation and restoration of settlements and housing estates of modern age architecture. During ICOMOS's International Day for Monuments and Sites in 2002 on the topic of "Conserving Monuments of 20th Century Heritage" the Landesdenkmalamt Berlin participated with guided tours and events presenting the settlements of the modern age period between the two World Wars which have been nominated for entry in the World Heritage List. Berlin was one of the initiators of the strive for establishing the International Scientific Committee of ICOMOS for "20th-Century Heritage" and in this committee it is represented as founding member by the Berlin Landeskonservator (chief curator). Berlin offers a platform in the network of international monument contacts and European monument conservation co-operation. Most recently the so-called Berlin Appeal on "Periodic Reporting on the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" adopted in November 2005 by 75 representatives from 40 European countries attracted international attention for the German capital.

The selected six settlements are not only key representatives of modern urban development and architecture, but they also convince with their almost unadulterated authenticity. Even to date they are firmly anchored in the cultural awareness of the city and in great demand for being attractive residential areas. Their entry as World Heritage would mean enormous appreciation and further impetus for the responsible political and conservation authorities and involved parties. The relevant parties in Berlin are fully aware of the fact that an entry in the World Heritage List is not only a great honour but that obligations also arise from it.