

World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize

2008 award to **Brenne Gesellschaft
von Architekten mbH**

For the restoration of the
ADGB Trade Union School (1928–1930)
Bernau, Germany
designed by Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer







This restoration highlights and emphasizes a particular approach to historic preservation that is perhaps the most sensible and intellectually satisfying today. Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten is probably Germany's most engaged and thoughtful restorer of classic Modern architecture.

—DIETRICH NEUMANN, JUROR

Pre-restoration



During the period in which the ADGB building was under East German control, it was impossible to find appropriate glass for repairs, so the light-filled glass corridor was obscured by a wooden parapet. Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten restored the original materials and reintroduced the original bright red color of the steel framing.



Many of the building's steel casement windows are highly articulated. The glass in the external staircase opens in a cascade of trapezoidal shapes, like shards of glass.

Despite Modernism's influential place in our architectural heritage, many significant Modern buildings are endangered because of neglect, perceived obsolescence, inappropriate renovation, or even the imminent danger of demolition. In response to these threats, in 2006, the World Monuments Fund launched its Modernism at Risk Initiative with generous support from founding sponsor Knoll, Inc.

The World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize was established as part of this initiative to demonstrate that Modern buildings can remain sustainable structures with vital futures. The Prize, which will be awarded biennially, recognizes innovative architectural and design solutions that preserve or enhance Modern landmarks and advances recognition of the special challenges of conserving Modern architecture.

The inaugural 2008 Prize is awarded to Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH, led by the extraordinary team of Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke, for its superb rescuerestoration of a highly significant but little known Bauhaus-designed landmark, the former ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau, Germany. We hope the story of this building, and its survival and dramatic rescue by a highly talented architectural team working with the ardent support of the owner and community, will inspire the preservation and restoration of other great Modern buildings.

Bonnie Burnham


President, World Monuments Fund

For 70 years, Knoll has used modern design to connect people with their work, their lives and their world. Our founders, Hans and Florence Knoll, embraced the creative genius at the Cranbrook Academy of Art and the Bauhaus School to create new types of furniture for the workplace and home. Their approach, where craftsmanship joined with technology through the use of design, anchors our perspective and shapes the values we endeavor to live by today.

As part of our effort to contribute to the communities where we do business, we are proud to be the founding sponsor of the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk program. We recognize that Modernist masterpieces, cornerstones of our cultural landscape, are routinely being demolished, disfigured or abandoned, and we expect that this program will contribute to raising public awareness about the preservation of this important legacy.

Andrew B. Cogan

CEO, Knoll, Inc.



The restoration resulted in a working building, not just an icon, which will greatly enhance the building's long-term sustainability.

—BARRY BERGDOLL, JUROR

THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND MODERNISM AT RISK INITIATIVE was launched in 2006 to bring international attention and resources to address the key threats and challenges facing many Modern buildings only decades after their design and construction: demolition, inappropriate alteration, perceived obsolescence, and public apathy, as well as the technical problems associated with conserving innovative designs and materials.

THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND/KNOLL MODERNISM PRIZE has been established as part of the larger advocacy mission of the Modernism at Risk Initiative. It is the first award to recognize the architects and designers who help ensure the rejuvenation and long-term survival of Modern structures through new design solutions. Starting this year, the Prize will be awarded biennially to an individual or firm in recognition of a completed project or a body of work. The award is a \$10,000 honorarium and a limited-edition chair manufactured by Knoll.

Knoll is the founding sponsor of the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk Initiative and the World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize.

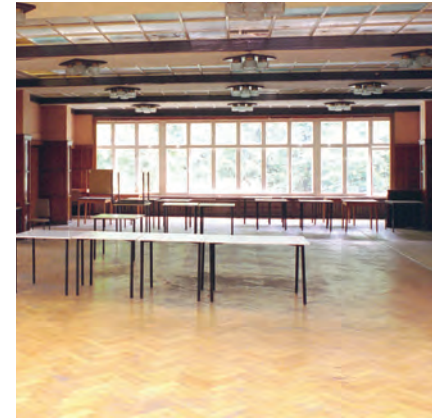
THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's great places where civilization has left its mark. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, our highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve our treasured places. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, we inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. www.wmf.org



Original



Pre-restoration



Under East German rule, inappropriate fixtures were installed in the refectory, the glass-block ceiling was concealed by a suspended ceiling, and the delicate steel window frames were replaced with wooden ones. Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten returned the room to its original design that beautifully integrated the interior and exterior spaces surrounding this common dining hall.



THE JURY

BARRY BERGDOLL

The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture & Design, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

JEAN-LOUIS COHEN

Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, New York, NY

KENNETH FRAMPTON

Ware Professor of Architecture, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, New York, NY

DIETRICH NEUMANN

Professor, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University, Providence RI, and Vincent Scully Visiting Professor for the History of Architecture, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Advisor to the Jury: Karen Stein

Expansive windows with fine steel frames are one of the defining features of the building.



Pre-restoration



The semicircular glass winter garden—whose delicate curvilinear lines countered the rigid angles of the dormitories—had been replaced with a masonry structure during the East German period. Working from the original plans, Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten re-created the room.

A bold external staircase flanks the school building. The steel casement windows are highly articulated, and open in a cascade of trapezoidal shapes. Under East German rule, the area below the stairs and balcony had been walled off with plastered masonry, concealing the graceful asymmetry of the building.



Pre-restoration



The ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau, Germany, is a highly significant monument from the classical age of Modern architecture and an exemplar of Bauhaus design.

After decades of misuse and neglect, the province of Brandenburg, the owner of the complex, decided to restore it and engaged Handwerkskammer Berlin (Chamber of Crafts) to use the building as a functioning trade school.

Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH, under the patronage of Handwerkskammer Berlin, has given this monumental building renewed vitality not only as a Modern masterpiece, but as a working building with a contemporary purpose that pays homage to its original one.

The architects' innovative design and technical approaches to the restoration were grounded in rigorous architectural and historical scholarship. The restoration of the ADGB is a heroic achievement that overcame the challenges presented by a complex site, neglect, political turmoil, early Modern building technologies, and limited financial resources.

Having granted new life to an extraordinary but long-neglected building, the architects' work will increase public and professional awareness of the special challenges of conserving Modern architecture and illustrate the influential role that Modern architecture continues to play in our architectural heritage.

—THE JURY

The resurrection of the ADGB demonstrates that good restoration and conservation can't be limited to a set of technical solutions but is based on and contributes to solid architectural scholarship.

—JEAN-LOUIS COHEN, JUROR

BRENNE GESELLSCHAFT VON ARCHITEKTEN MBH

Architects Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke, partners in the firm Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH, have received two awards for the ADGB project: the World Monuments Fund/ Knoll Modernism Prize and the Unification of German Architects Prize.

Winfried Brenne received his architecture degree from universities in Wuppertal and Berlin, Germany, over 30 years ago. He started his own practice, Winfried Brenne Architekten, in 1990, and, in 2001, established a partnership with Franz Jaschke.

Franz Jaschke completed his graduate studies in architecture in Berlin in 1981. He was employed by Winfried Brenne in 1983, and became a managing partner with Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH in 2001.

Together, Brenne and Jaschke have restored and renovated numerous Modern structures, including buildings by Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn, Bruno Taut, and Hans Scharoun.

Winfried Brenne (left) and Franz Jaschke in front of the ADGB's restored winter garden






The full-height windows of the exterior hallway flanking the dormitories offer a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside.

Pre-restoration





THE ADGB TRADE UNION SCHOOL IN BERNAU (Bundesschule des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes/Federal School of the German Workers' Unions), built between 1929 and 1930, is located 25 miles northeast of Berlin. The school's purpose was to provide further education to members of the trade union movement on such topics as economics, management, labor law, and industrial hygiene.

The building reflected a functionalist view of architecture, yet was extraordinarily sensuous in its use of color and materials, including steel, exposed concrete, glass blocks, and elaborately articulated steel casement windows. Its asymmetry responds to the topography of the site; it was designed to bring the surrounding forests into constant view.

It was constructed of yellow brick on a 12-acre forested site as connecting buildings that housed administrative facilities, a glass-block ceilinged dining hall, dormitories, classrooms, and meeting and physical education spaces. These facilities were all linked by the building's most distinctive feature, an external glass corridor overlooking the countryside.

The school operated for only three years until the Nazi party confiscated the building for use as an SS training facility. After World War II, the school's new owner, the East German Trade Union Federation (FDGB), expanded the site and used it as a training facility for its members.

The survival of the building was unknown to the West until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when architectural historians discovered that the site was largely intact. It was threatened with demolition and redevelopment, but, in 2001, the Province of Brandenburg (the owner of the site) and the Handwerkskammer Berlin (Chamber of Crafts) contracted to reopen it as a trade school.

Since its renovation, the ADGB serves as a trade school once again. Its "rediscovery" and sympathetic restoration help shed new light on the evolution of Modern architecture.

Hannes Meyer built very little, and the ADGB is Meyer's greatest achievement and an important architectural monument from a critical moment in the evolution of Modern architecture.

—KENNETH FRAMPTON, JUROR

The ADGB complex, shortly after its completion in 1930. Immediately recognized as an important building, dozens of professional journals published articles praising the school's functional design.



THE ARCHITECTS



Hannes Meyer

Hannes Meyer (1889–1954) was an ardent Marxist whose view of architecture as radically functional was informed by his political beliefs. He brought this sensibility to the Bauhaus, first as head of the newly created architecture department in April 1927, then as its second director in early 1928, succeeding its founder Walter Gropius.

Under Meyer's leadership, the Bauhaus workshops' design emphasis shifted from aesthetic to social. Despite the dramatic change, the school turned its first profits under Meyer and obtained the two most significant building commissions it ever received: the ADGB school and a collection of five apartment buildings in Dessau.

Meyer's politicization of the Bauhaus resulted in his being forced to resign in August 1930. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe replaced him. After he left the Bauhaus, Meyer never again built anything on the scale of the ADGB school. He went on to live and work in the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Switzerland (where he died), focusing largely on architectural and urban planning projects based on his Marxist ideals.

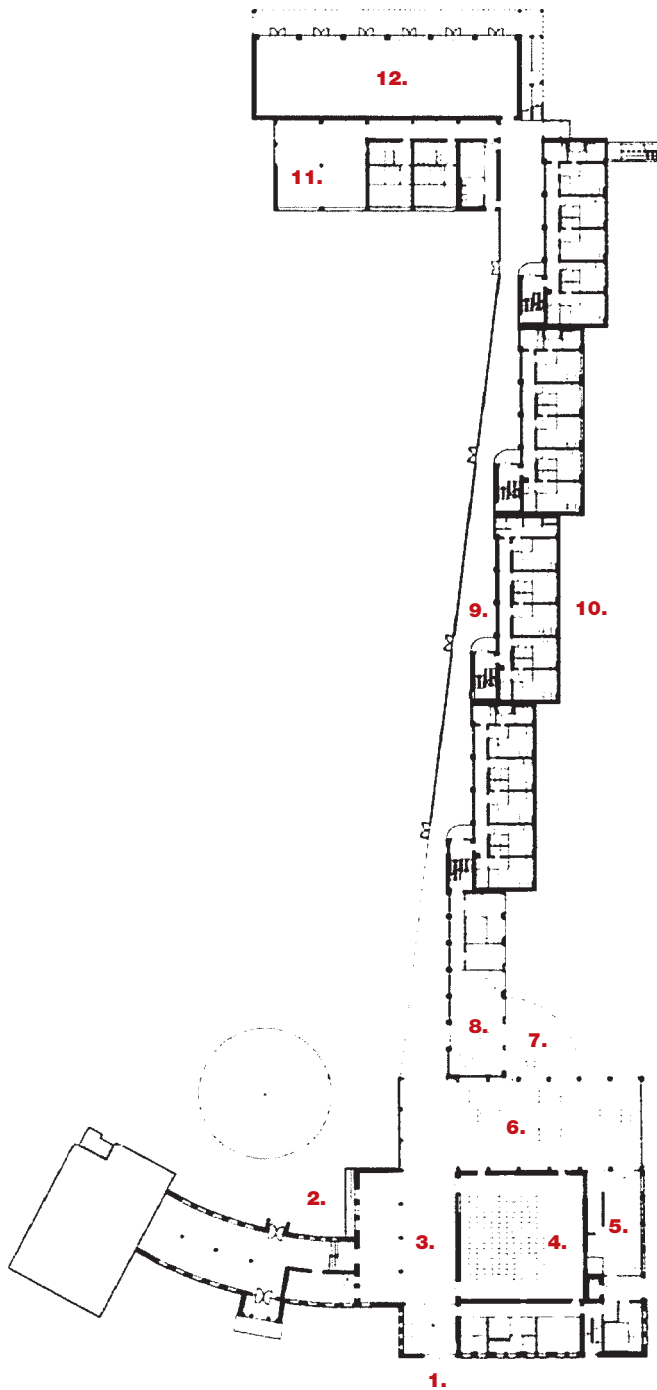
Hans Wittwer (1894–1952), Meyer's partner in the ADGB commission, collaborated with him on projects beginning in the early 1920s. Their competition entry for the League of Nations headquarters (1927) placed third and brought them immediate international attention. Their design greatly impressed Walter Gropius and was one of the reasons he recruited Meyer to head the Bauhaus architecture department. When Meyer became head of the Bauhaus, Wittwer became a member of the architecture department. After the ADGB commission, Wittwer and Meyer argued over the project, with Meyer claiming sole credit for the design. Wittwer quit the project before it was completed in 1930 and left the Bauhaus.

Each dormitory building is identified through the subtle use of color. Small panels of colored glass on each door along the central passageway distinguish the red, yellow, blue, and green buildings. The use of that color then extends into the common hallway of each block, as well as on the walls of each dorm room.




SITE PLAN

1. Entranceway
2. Terrace
3. Foyer
4. Lecture Hall
5. Kitchen
6. Refectory
7. Winter Garden
8. Sitting Room
9. Glass Passageway
10. Dormitories
11. School Building
12. First floor: Gymnasium
Second floor: Classrooms





Innovative construction materials—glass brick, steel, and precise mechanical hardware—were hidden or removed during the East German era. Restoration re-exposed the unique elements of the building and the surprising sensuality of its materials.



To accommodate modern building codes, the school's entry hall had to be reinterpreted. Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten's choices reflect the materials and palette of the original design.

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

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