

WOHNUNG UND WERKRAUM AUSSTELLUNG

WUWA

WROCLAW WERKBUND EXHIBITION

LIVING AND WORK SPACE

1929-2014

THE WUWA ESTATE



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PREFACE

WuWA is one of the six model housing estates created by the Werkbund, built in Europe at the turn of the 30s of the last century. These estates were an experiment of special importance, and it influenced the development of modern architecture of the twentieth century. Currently they are unique objects of immeasurable cultural value, fully protected by the Historic Preservation Officer.

The first estate was Weissenhof in Stuttgart, built in 1927. It was not only an outcome of a one-of-a-kind collaboration between European avant-garde architects, but also acted as a meeting place and a trigger for the international modernist movement in general. In only five years the following model housing estates were built in: Brno (1928), Wrocław (1929), Zurich (1931), Vienna and Prague (1932).

An innovative look at the urbanisation process, overpopulation in cities, society's expectations in terms of living conditions and the ability to apply the latest technologies in construction – these were the challenging aspects of the post-war period that urban planners and architects had to face. The Werkbund housing estates are proof that the European architecture avant-garde was an international movement to be reckoned with. In spite of major disagreements between individual representatives and tendencies, the sections of the Werkbund were able, in collaboration with cities and public institutions, to create and carry out local housing exhibitions. They expressed the optimistic attitude towards the modern democratic world where it is possible to fulfil the needs of the population. Even though the housing exhibitions did not fully manage to meet the stated aims, namely, creating inexpensive housing using prefabricated elements, they presented new ideas in the field of construction and architecture.

Thus the WuWA housing estate is a unique complex of cultural heritage on a world scale. Fortunately it has been preserved to this day unchanged, unlike the Stuttgart housing estate whose many buildings were damaged during the war, or Prague and Brno where individual houses were largely rebuilt. Additionally, its attractive location directly next to the Centennial Hall, the Zoo and Szczytnicki Park with the Japanese Garden is undoubtedly its huge advantage. Despite that,

the inhabitants of Wrocław and tourists alike are largely and almost unaware of its existence. What is WuWA? – this question was asked to 230 random people passing through the Market Square, the Centennial Hall and the district of Śródmieście. 203 of them (106 of 130 surveyed were inhabitants of Wrocław) searched for the answer using clues such as "theatre", "coffeehouse", "shopping centre" or "hotel".

In Stuttgart, Vienna or Zurich the housing estates of the Werkbund attract a large number of tourists, not only professional architects, but also fans of urban tourism from all over the world.

This book is one of the elements of the project "Programme of promotional activities to strengthen the recognition of the WuWA housing estate in Wrocław as a tourist destination", co-financed by the European Union in cooperation with the European Regional Development Fund, under the Regional Operational Programme for the Province of Lower Silesia for the period 2007–2013. The main aim of this project is to carry out actions that will make WuWA appear on the map of tourist sites in Wrocław, and will also widen the knowledge of its cultural heritage and create an accessible database of information for the widest possible audience. A special part of the project was the "Thursday debates", meetings with the residents of the estate who, like no-one else, know it "inside out" and provided many useful and interesting suggestions. Apart from this book, there is also a web page about the estate: www.wuwa.eu which contains not only information about the history of the place, but also the latest news and information about upcoming activities and events. It also looks to other Werkbund housing estates.

In June 2014 the WuWA housing estate is having its 85th anniversary, and even though the estate requires further renovation, the very idea is still fresh. What is more, the solutions presented by the authors are nowadays not only valid, but also inspirational for the youngest generations of architects and urban planners. This is the case for the authors of the model estate Nowe Żerniki, which is being built as a part of the European Capital of Culture 2016 programme, who say: "Today, after over eighty years, Wrocław is rejoining the avant-garde architecture".

1

THE WUWA EXHIBITION AND WROCLAW IN THE 1920s

The inter-war period was an absolutely extraordinary time for Wrocław. The local authorities working closely with a group of innovator-architects made a huge contribution to the tremendous growth of the city. At that time Wrocław, was a unique place on the European landscape: a place with perfect conditions to develop solutions for the housing problems of that time. In 1924, the first master plan of the City was elaborated; in 1926, new construction law was introduced and in 1928, various suburban districts were incorporated into the territory of Wrocław.

In the inter-war period, the co-authors of the WuWA Exhibition: Prof. Adolf Rading and Prof. Hans Scharoun, conducted their lectures on architecture at the Academy of Arts and Crafts. Between 1903–1932, the Academy, under the guidance of three great head teachers: Hans Poelzig, August Endell, and Oskar Moll, was the first school, ahead of the famous Bauhaus with its head office in Dessau, to start introducing major reforms. As a result, young architects were well-prepared to solve issues regarding the preparation of the WuWA Exhibition. The housing estate, which was built for the occasion of the exhibition, is one of six such estates in Europe.

On the one hand, the main aim of those model housing estates by the Werkbund was to demonstrate the first post-war efforts to solve the housing problems of Germany. Thus, it presented what had already been collectively developed in the field and was generally considered successful and innovative in its efforts. On the other hand, they aimed at collecting and promoting the largest possible number of new solutions to deliver to each and every inhabitant what Ernst May identified as "the right portion of dwelling". The exhibitions, which attracted numerous visitors, were the way to convince people of the new living style and taught them, the future users, how to live in modern houses. People for whom these new model houses (prototypes for mass housing estates) were meant, very often did not know how to use them. That is why the exhibitions had also an important educational aspect.

The authors of those exhibitions can also be considered pioneers of twentieth century architecture. They paved the way for new ideas in urban planning and housing architecture, even though they could often not see the potential issues with their new solutions, even though some of the proposed ideas were utopian or had already been implemented by other authors earlier. These were times of real "housing hunger" when the need to find an inexpensive and functional model flat had become a state matter.

The WuWA model housing estate by the Werkbund takes a special place in the history of the development of the modern European dwelling. The authors of the estate aimed to present medium and small sized flats of great social importance and tested the new emerging technologies and construction materials in the tough Silesian climate. The solution to this problem was especially pertinent to Wrocław which at that time was one of the most overcrowded German cities.

The exhibition was to draw attention to the Province of Silesia and to make people realise that *Wrocław was not Vladivostok and Silesia was not Siberia*¹.

The authors of the WuWA estate proved that the application of new technologies and reasonable use of them could promote new lifestyle and cultural values. Artistic creativity and technical approach did not exclude each other. The style that was created adjusted to the new social and industrial environment. The new style, dominated by plain surfaces and minimal decoration, was especially well-suited to large number of anonymous users and to mass production principles.

The authors of the WuWA Exhibition attempted to achieve three aims: mass production and low cost construction, individualisation of needs and artistic value. Some of them tried to combine these aims into the common idea: social flat – community of tenants.

The model housing estates by the Werkbund were to initiate a new era of construction, free from traditional attitudes and change people and their lives forever.

¹ Georg MÜNTER, *Wohnung und Werkraum. Ein Versuch die Werkbund – Ausstellung in Breslau 1929 zu würdigen*, "Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst", vol. 13, 1929, p. 441.

WROCLAW ARTISTIC COMMUNITY AND SITUATION IN GERMANY

2





1 Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, roof terrace of section no. 27, view from the north-west, 1930, The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-9



2

Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, garden terrace on the ground floor of section 26, view from the first floor (T. Effenberger is the man in a white shirt and a bow-tie, holding a cigarette), 1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-32



3

The hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, designed by Hans Sharoun, view from the garden (south), middle section and the right wing of the building, 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 463

WERKBUND

DER RING

RFG

BAUHAUS

ARTISTIC SCHOOLS
IN WROCLAW

CIAM

WROCLAW ARTISTIC COMMUNITY AND SITUATION IN GERMANY

2.1 WERKBUND

The Werkbund was an organisation established in Germany in 1907 as a meeting place for progressive manufacturers, architects and designers cooperating with industry. Its main aim was to design objects for mass production that would also have artistic value².

In the interwar period the Werkbund became involved in a project whose aim was to solve the housing problem at the time. It did so by tackling the difficult task of creating a programme for construction of affordable and small flats for mass consumers. This programme was to give a quick fix to the housing needs of the countries suffering the consequences of war. Throughout Europe such model housing estates were created, however, it was in Germany where this trend was most prominent. They worked on a new living space layout, its better use, whilst lowering the construction cost of a single flat. The best way to achieve the lowest possible cost was to reduce the size of the flat. For this reason a model called "Existenzminimum" ("Minimum dwelling") was created. It presented the idea of a flat whose rooms employed the minimal space with respect to their functions.

New rules of modern housing architecture were largely determined by the German Werkbund³. Herman Muthesius, who was one of the founders of this organisation, proclaimed an agenda for modern architecture: "More content and less art"⁴.

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- 2 Sigfried GIEDION, *Przestrzeń, czas i architektura*. Warszawa 1968, p. 510.
 - 3 Adolf VETTER, *O znaczeniu idei Związku uszlachetnienia pracy dla Monarchji Austriackiej*. Published by Miejskie Muzeum Techniczno-Przemysłowe w Krakowie. After: B.A., *Wystawa Werkbundu we Wrocławiu, "Rzeczy Piękne"*, 1930, p. 70. Only in 1927, after organising "Die Wohnung" exhibition and building the Weissenhof in Stuttgart housing estate, did the Werkbund gain international recognition.
 - 4 Hermann MUTHESIUS, *Sztuka stosowana i architektura*. Kraków 1909, p. 40. After: Ernest NIEMCZYK, *Nowa forma w architekturze Wrocławia pierwszego trzylecia XX w. In: Z dziejów sztuki śląskiej*, ed. Zygmunt Świechowski, Warszawa 1978, p. 421–422.

New rules of modern housing architecture were largely determined by the German Werkbund. Herman Muthesius, who was one of the founders of this organisation, proclaimed an agenda for modern architecture:

MORE CONTENT AND LESS ART



4

Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, view from the garden (north-west), sun terrace, 1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1032-12

2.2 BAUHAUS

The designer-engineers of the time had to meet new requirements which led to fundamental changes in the education system. In 1919 Walter Gropius founded a school, Bauhaus, based in Weimar, and later in Dessau and Berlin, whose main goal was to educate new generations of modern designers and engineers. Their future task was to solve issues concerning healthy and rational housing architecture.

In his theory and the organisational rules of Bauhaus from 1923, Walter Gropius wrote: *Over the last few generations architecture has become (...) decorative (...). In its decadence (...) it has lost its link with new technologies and materials (...). We want to create bright and organic architecture (...). We want architecture to be adapted to our world of machines, radio and fast cars: architecture resulting from a transparent and functional approach to forms*⁵.

5 Przemysław TRZECIAK, *Przygody architektury XX wieku*. Warszawa 1984, p. 143.

2.3 DER RING – THE RING

At the turn of 1924 in Berlin, in the office of Mies van der Rohe, a group called "The Ring of Ten" was formed. Later on, in 1926 it was joined by other members and thus renamed "The Ring". At the time it was the elite of German architects including among others, Hans Scharoun and Adolf Rading⁶. Members of the group promoted new rules of modern architecture: they fought against tradition, historicism and eclecticism and in particular they were against decorating buildings with characteristic, old, historical styles.

2.4 CIAM

The International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM – Les Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne⁷) was founded in 1928 in Switzerland in "La Sarraz" castle. It became known as an excellent environment and platform for even the most avant-garde architects to freely exchange their views. Members of this organisation met periodically at congresses where they discussed important topics concerning modern architecture and urban planning.

The second congress in Frankfurt am Main (1929) was significant to the development of the concept of a modern flat. It was accompanied by the exhibition "A Flat for the Existential Minimum"⁸. The exhibition presented projects of small flats from existing housing estates in different European countries: among others from Księże Małe in Wrocław⁹.

In 1930, rational construction methods were the main topic of the 3rd CIAM Congress in Brussels, where the participants argued over the optimal height of urban dwelling-houses.

- 6 Jürgen JOEDICKE, Hugo Häring – jego czasy a współczesność. In: Hugo Häring w jego czasach, budowanie w naszych czasach. Exhibition catalogue, ed. Christa Otto, Stuttgart 1992, p. 9; Stanisław LATOUR, Adam SZYMSKI, Powstanie i rozwój architektury współczesnej – narodziny nowej tradycji. Szczecin 1976, vol. 2, p. 8; Adolf Rading. Bauten, Entwürfe und Erläuterungen. Ed. Petera Plankucha, Schriftenreihe der Akademie der Künste, vol. 3, Berlin 1970, pp. 8–9. Among others, the following architects were members of "The Ring" group: Hugo Häring, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn, Walter Gropius, Bruno i Max Taut, Hans Poelzig, Ernst May, Otto Barthning, Walter Curt Behrendt, Peter Behrens, Richard Döcker, Otto Haesler, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Arthur Korn, Karl Krayl, Hans i Wassili Luckhardt, Adolf Meyer, Bernhard Pankok, Walter Schilbach, Karl Schneider, Hans Soeder, Heinrich Tessenow, Martin Wagner.
- 7 Hugo Häring, the Secretary of "Der Ring" was the first German delegate at the first CIAM Congress.
- 8 "Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum".
- 9 Wanda KONONOWICZ, Ewolucja osiedla mieszkaniowego we Wrocławiu okresu Republiki Weimarskiej – Księże Małe, In: Architektura Wrocławia, vol. 2, Urbanistyka, ed. Jerzy Rozpędowski, Wrocław 1995, p. 470.



House no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, 1929. Innen-Dekoration, 1929, vol. 40, no. 11, p. 413

2.5 SOCIETIES AND HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

Before World War I little attention was paid to flats for the so-called "wide social masses". At that time a lack of accommodation and its poor quality were the main issues. The influx of people from the land lost by Germany after World War I made this issue even more relevant. In 1925 in Germany there was still a deficit of over 900,000 flats¹⁰. In spite of the fact that the country was depleted by the war and compensation, Germans decided to put a lot of effort in building new housing estates which became a model for solutions for contemporary flats. After 1924 the German economy was stimulated by foreign capital which had flooded in and the "golden twenties" began¹¹. After the World War I in many cities the authorities tended towards a more social democratic bias, which enhanced the possibilities of executing bigger housing concepts for the working class.

Amendments in construction law, introduced in Berlin in 1925 and later on in other German cities, precluded the growth of the so-called "tenement barracks" (these were cramped and high-rise developments with badly illuminated and unhealthy flats, characteristic of large European cities of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century)¹². They also banned the use of basements as flats, which improved living conditions, but also enhanced the need to construct new housing estates. This law also determined the standard area of a flat, the quality of sanitary fittings, sun exposure conditions and ventilation, and also protected the tenants from excessive rents.

As a consequence, many public organisations, associations and housing cooperatives were created to deal with the construction of rational housing estates. They were subsidised by local authorities and governments of those particular states¹³. Many large and modern housing estates were built as part of their more general city expansion plans. Berlin and Frankfurt am Main were the two leading cities taking part in this movement since their authorities (Martin Wagner – the Berlin City Construction Advisor from 1926, and Ernst May – the Frankfurt am Main City Construction Advisor from 1925) fully accepted the ideas presented by the architect-community workers.

¹⁰ Helena SYRKUS, *Spoleczne cele...*, p. 141.

¹¹ Hans Jörg RIEGER, *Die farbige Stadt. Beiträge zur Geschichte der farbigen Architektur in Deutschland und der Schweiz 1910–1939*. Zürich 1976, p. 105. Construction associations were given huge support, which resulted in a boom in communal housing. Between 1925–1930 every year over a billion Deutsche Marks of public funds was allotted to housing construction development. Between 1924–1933 only 5% of flats were built without the subsidies in Berlin.

¹² Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Wrocław – Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego w okresie międzywojennym*. Wrocław 1997, p. 7.

¹³ Among others they were: DEGEWO (*Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaus*, GAGFAH (*Gemeinnützige A.G. für Angestellten Heimstätten*) and GEHAG (*Gemeinnützige Heimstätten Spar- und Bau A.G.* In Wrocław, the following organisations were considered prominent: *Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau A.G.* (*Towarzystwo Osiedlowe Wrocław SA*) and *Siedlungsgenossenschaft Eigenheim*. *Eichborngarten G.m.b.H.* (*Spółdzielnia Osiedlowa Własny Dom*. *Eichborngarten Sp. z o.o.*).



The hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, roof terrace, *Innen-Dekoration*, 1929, vol. 40, no. 11, p. 409

In the interwar period the whole of Germany, as well as Wrocław itself, were perceived by commentators as very special places in Europe. The Polish architect, Edgar Norwerth, who visited Wrocław wrote, *"that among German cities, Wrocław undoubtedly holds a leading position when it comes to a healthy and systematic approach to affordable housing"*.¹⁴

2.6 RFG

In 1926, in Germany, the National Research Association for the Economy of Architecture and Housing – the RFG¹⁵ was created. Its main goal was to study and optimise the notion of living space.

At that time, it was believed that it was necessary to use strict scientific methods to design a rational dwelling, in that, having taken into account biological, psychological and sociological needs, it is necessary to define the minimal living space, depending on the size of a family¹⁶. This concept was elaborated by the RFG and was introduced to conduct and finance research on rational development

14 Edgar NORWERTH, *Wystawa mieszkaniowa we Wrocławiu*, "Architektura i Budownictwo", 1929, p. 334.

15 The abbreviation stands for the German name of the Association – Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen.

16 Helena SYRKUS, *Spoleczne cele...*, p. 212.



7

Semi-detached house
no. 26/27, designed by
Theo Effenberger, garden
view (south-west), 1930.
The Wrocław Museum of
Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-1

8

Semi-detached house,
designed by Theo Effenberger,
garden terrace on the roof of
section no. 26, view from the
south, 1930. The Wrocław
Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIIb 533-8



8

and to support model housing estates¹⁷. The most prominent members of the RFG were the architects who tried to bring to life the directives given by the Association in their designs¹⁸. The RFG not only dealt with the internal layout of the flats, their surface area, new materials used and introduced technologies to minimise the cost of construction, but also looked at their location in relation to the cardinal directions, which would allowed for rational exposure of the rooms to sunlight, and thus healthy living conditions.

As a result of the research carried out by the RFG, the optimal flat surface area for a defined number of family members was concluded to be: 45 m², 57 m² or 70 m²¹⁹. Research into the most applicable types of flats for a particular surface area was carried out in the experimental housing estates to establish the most functional features²⁰. In general, the small and medium flats built in the Werkbund model housing estates met the requirements set out by the RFG.

The activities of the RFG also influenced the shape of many other German housing estates that were not under the supervision of the RFG. Very often they were created by architects who believed the directives set out by the RFG were right or that they were members of the research association and felt obliged to execute its programme on a larger scale. A good example can be seen in the district of Księża Małe in Wrocław which was built, among others, by Gustav Wolf (a member of the RFG) who formulated the conditions that should be fulfilled by a rational dwelling: *a bed for each member of a family, a bathroom for each family, smaller bedrooms and utility rooms for the benefit of the living centre of a flat*²¹. At that time, the living centre of a flat was its living room with kitchenette. It was a totally new approach to house design. The living room was connected to the kitchen – a laboratory, also referred to as a living kitchen: it was the place for family integration, at a common table, often the only meeting point in small flats.

17 Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Ewolucja osiedla...*, p. 455. Among others, the RFG was especially interested in the following housing estates: Törten in Dessau (1927), Weißenhof in Stuttgart (1927), Spandau-Haselhorst in Berlin (1928), Dammerstock in Karlsruhe (1929), WuWA in Wrocław (1929). Walter Gropius (head of Bauhaus and vice-president of the RFG) built the Törten housing estate in Dessau as one of the first under the auspices of RFG.

18 *Ibidem*, *Trotzdem modern. Die wichtigsten Texte zur Architektur in Deutschland 1919–1933*. ed. Kristiana Hartmann, Wiesbaden 1994, p. 46. The RFG was founded on December 14th 1926, registered on January 21st 1928, even though it had authority from September 10th 1927, and was dissolved on June 5th 1931.

19 Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Ewolucja osiedla...*, p. 457; Christine NIELSEN, *Die Versuchssiedlung der Werkbundausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum"*, Breslau 1929. Master's thesis, typescript, Philosophischen Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn 1994, p. 27.

20 Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Ewolucja osiedla...*, pp. 456–457. Research for the RFG on the projections of the small flats was carried out by Aleksander Klein.

21 *Ibidem*, p. 457.

2.7 ARTISTIC SCHOOLS IN WROCŁAW

The Wrocław artistic schools played a key role in the preparation of new generations of architects who would be able to face the problems of the late 20s at times of a huge housing crisis. From the beginning of the 20th century in Wrocław there were two applied arts schools: the Municipal School of Arts and Crafts²², opened in 1900, and the National Academy of Arts and Crafts²³ which, after a hundred years of existence, then began to change its direction. The Municipal School of Arts and Crafts had substantial influence on progress: especially in the arts. However this was not exercised in the same way at the Academy of Arts and Crafts²⁴.

After Hans Poelzig²⁵ took over the Academy of Arts and Crafts in 1903, its "golden era" began. Poelzig started a reform which was continued by subsequent headmasters – from 1918 by August Endell and from 1935 by Oskar Moll – up to April 1st 1932 when the school was closed as part of the cost-cutting project of Brüning's government. Poelzig was an advocate of the "synthesis of the arts" ("Gesamtkunstwerk") which was the outcome of cooperation between artists from different artistic fields whose common sphere was architecture²⁶.

August Endell was very much an experienced artist and knew how to select professors for the Academy²⁷. During Oscar Moll's term of office the Academy went through its peak of development²⁸.


At the turn of the 1920s, the schools of arts and crafts started preparing students for direct cooperation with industry to design products for mass production. In the mid-twenties all the work of the professors and students of the Academy was influenced by Bauhaus functionalism. WuWA was built at the height of the Academies' activities which became a meeting place for people with different artistic views; from expressionists, exponents of "New Objectivism"²⁹, to advocates of the constructivist avant-garde. The Academy created perfect conditions for the growth of free-thinking modern artists and the unrestricted growth and development of students was encouraged. As a result, young architects were well-prepared for the duties given to them in 1929 within the Werkbund exhibition in Wrocław.

22 Maria STARZEWSKA, Zarys rozwoju śląskiego szkolnictwa w zakresie rzemiosł artystycznych. In: *Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej*, ed. Piotra Łukaszczyka, vol. 15, 1991, p. 20. In 1900, a special Crafts School was founded (*Handwerkerschule*). In 1903 it was renamed as *Municipal School of Arts and Crafts* (*Städtische Handwerker- und Kunstgewerbe Schule*) and it was managed by Dr Richard Heyer until 1927. After that, its headmaster was Gustav Wolf: co-originator of the WuWA exhibition. The main goal of this school was to prepare craftspeople-artists for autonomous work, while the Academy of Arts and Crafts concentrated on the design process, rather than the craft itself.


23 *Staatlichen Akademie für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe* Prior to 1911 was a school by Royal appointment – *Königliche Schule*.

24 Piotr ŁUKASZEWICZ, Osiągnięcia wrocławskiej Akademii Sztuki w zakresie form użytkowych. In: *Ten wspaniały wrocławski modernizm*. Post-conference material from the Commission for Architecture and Urban Development of the Wrocław Division of PAN, ed. Olgierd Czerner, Edmund Małachowicz, Stanisław Lose, Wrocław 1991, Wrocław 1998, p. 32.

25 Janusz DOBESZ, Hans Poelzig i wrocławska Akademia Sztuki. *ibid.*, p. 14. cf. *idem*, *Bauhaus z wrocławskiej perspektywy*, "Sztuka", no. 4, 1989, p. 34–37.



The pre-war avant-garde community of architects was gathered mainly around the Academy of Arts and Crafts³⁰. At the time, this school educated future architects using the most modern teaching techniques. When WuWA was being built, Hans Scharoun and Adolf Rading were lecturers at the Academy and Moritz Hadda, Emil Lange and Heinrich Lauterbach were students of Poelzig. The education system at the Wrocław Academy was compared to the methods used at the Bauhaus school. Hartmut Frank referred to the school as Bauhaus before Bauhaus³¹ since educational reorganisation in Wrocław started even prior to World War I. The Academy laid the grounds for enterprises such as WuWA.



26 *Ibidem*; Anna MARKOWSKA, *Problemy ekspresjonizmu i funkcjonalizmu w twórczości Moritza Haddy (1887–1941)*. Doctoral thesis, typescript, Instytut Historii Architektury, Sztuki i Techniki Politechniki Wrocławskiej, Wrocław 1998, p. 27.


27 The following lecturers worked for the Academy during his term: Matisse's student, Oskar Moll (from 1918), Otto Müller (from 1919); members of "Die Brücke" – Konrad Kardoff (from 1929), architect Adolf Rading (from 1919), architect Hans Scharoun (from 1925) and Robert Bednorz.

28 *Ibidem*. Thanks to him, the following great artists worked at the Academy: Josef Vínický (from 1928), Johannes Molzahn (from 1929), Oskar Schlemmer (from 1929) and Georg Muche (from 1931): the latter three were connected to Bauhaus.

29 "Neue Sachlichkeit".

30 Poelzig, Endell, Moll und die Breslauer Kunstakademie 1911–1933. Exhibition catalogue, Berlin 1966.

31 Hartmut FRANK, *La Scuola d'Arte e d'Arte Applicata di Breslavia tra il 1896 e il 1914*, "Casabella", no. 491, 1983, p. 40.



THE PRE-WAR AVANT-GARDE COMMUNITY
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Gallery-access block of flats no. 1,
view of gallery, 2014. Photography
by Natalia and Ernest Dec

GALLERY-ACCESS BLOCK OF FLATS NO. 1

Mr Sylwester Szkudlarek,
Administrator

From the outside, gallery-access block of flats at 2 Tramwajowa Street seems to be a plain construction from the times of Socialism. It is one of the experimental buildings of the WuWA housing estate exhibition. Considering that its tenants do not want to sell their apartments, it has turned out to be a very successful experiment indeed.

We encountered a few tenants of Tramwajowa Street who told us about their community, their happy childhoods spent on the galleries where they had learnt to ride a bicycle and played football. The gallery, also known as the balcony, understandably appears in many of their stories. It is a place where everybody knows everybody: like in a small village these communities full of neighbourly interaction, have become such a rare sight these days.

The building operates under a shared ownership scheme where most of the shares belong to private individuals and the rest to the City of Wrocław. After long discussions, the community decided to join the Program Wsparcia Konserwatora Miejskiego (Historic Preservation Officer's Support Program), even though they had already partially renovated the houses themselves.

We learnt about the history and technical condition of the building from its Administrator, Mr Sylwester Szkudlarek. We also met Mrs Katarzyna Brycha and Mr Edward Łyszczarz who are tenants living in the building to get their opinions. During my visit to Tramwajowa Street, Mr Krzysztof Lato, an architect preparing the renovation project dropped by.

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: Can you give some general information about the technical condition of this building?

Sylwester Szkudlarek: In the post-war period the house was intended for habitation even though it wasn't prepared for that. Before the war the building was heated via a central boiler house, located in the nearby tram depot. Unfortunately, this installation was damaged during the war, so after the war every tenant installed their own heating system. This devastated the building to a great extent. During the war, a few apartments had been destroyed, shelled and then partially renovated. Right after the war, due to a general lack of accommodation, there were no safety regulations concerning construction. Therefore people would fit whatever solution was available. Gas was supplied even though this building had no flue: or any ventilation at all for that matter. In 1929, the designer assumed that it would be sufficient to air the rooms just by opening a window. Nowadays that's unacceptable and the fact that there isn't any exhaust ventilation is of huge discomfort for the tenants.



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Gallery-access block of flats
no. 1 – staircase, 2014.
Photography by Natalia
and Ernest Dec

GHL: Let's go back in history. In the 40s the apartments were occupied irrespective of their condition, right?

SS: Yes, they were occupied and everyone managed them as they saw fit. The apartments retained their intended character and up to this day there are original cork floors; but some of the tenants moved on and changed the doors, the windows and floors.

GHL: Tell me, please, what renovation works have been targeted at the building? You must have been administering it for over a dozen years now?

SS: Prior to my involvement, the building was governed by another administrator and there were no major works carried out. It was painted in the 60s, but as the tenants say, the original colour had been grey. The roof was partially renovated too. As the chimney wasn't being used any more, the installation for it that was created on the ground floor in the former laundry room was closed off on the roof. The roof was repaired and new tar was laid to protect it from water damage. Yes, so there were some renovation works completed: but some harm was done too. Some things were modified, but from my

point of view inappropriately, which destroyed the character of the roof. The roof is flat, but used to have beautiful eaves finished with a concealed concrete gutter. This special feature was lost after hideous drainpipes were mounted. Old drainpipes and gutters were mounted on the façade. The building comprises two parts connected in the middle over the entrance where a movement joint is located. The installations on both sides mirror each other and under the staircase on the left, a shaft was created to hide the electrical elements. The electrical installation was entirely replaced three years ago.

GHL: Did you order a construction test, load capacity analysis or technical condition tests?

SS: That was necessary. The documentation we have shows that it is a reinforced concrete construction with a framework filled with concrete slag blocks. The walls were insulated with cork from the inside.

GHL: Has the cork insulation been preserved?

SS: Partially. It's been preserved in those apartments where no heavy repairs were made. The building isn't really warm though. As for current conditions: it re-

quires extra insulation. In the 60s a communal boiler house for the surrounding buildings was built in the "Pancernik" hall of residence and this house was supplied by it. However in winter, due to bad pipe insulation there was no warm water and the pipe leached heat into the lawn: as a result there were eighty metres of heated path. There was never warm water immediately: sometimes it took even twenty minutes to let all the cold water run through! Our usage levels must have been sky high! Three years ago we negotiated with FORTUM to supply the building with a high pressure pipeline which goes through some rooms of the building. The boiler was placed in the old drying room on the ground floor. In the first year we made thirty percent savings.

GHL: Were there issues with humidity, since the building was cold?

SS: The north wall is quite damp and a crack appeared which exposed it to the elements. The damp penetrates this wall from the inside and mildew appeared on the first floor. If a wall is compromised in this house, then the gap inevitably penetrates the whole wall.

GHL: How thick are the external walls?

SS: These walls aren't thick: about thirty centimetres. That's why the community believes the walls SHOULD be insulated. Considering the fact that this building is listed as a monument, we can't apply external insulation, but we're considering using an internal one made of modern materials to eliminate the damp. We've been thinking about using special two-centimetre boards in the building. This house could be totally different if it were used for non-typical housing purposes such as a hotel or a dormitory. There wouldn't be so much damp, intensive laundry activities or cooking, and these walls would work differently. But we've got what we've got and we have to improve these conditions for those who live here.

GHL: What are the neighbours like? I've heard that many of them have lived in the same apartments since after the war. Did some of them buy the apartments and knock them through?

SS: There are a few families that remember the post-war times as well as some younger folk too. Some of them sold their apartments and left the country. One of the neighbours bought his neighbour's apartment and then another,

so now he has three. When the City Conservation Support Programme started, we had a meeting with the City Historic Preservation Head Officer and there was a fuss that the renovation was going to be very expensive, but at the same time plans for bringing the surrounding area into order became feasible. Everybody knew that the surroundings would be more attractive. I then asked if anyone was ready to sell the apartment. There was not a single person eager to sell. Not a single person. Everyone acknowledged the fact that it might turn out positively, even though the restoration costs might be considerable. They still believe that the Administrator will manage the costs well. In recent years we've even managed to renovate the heating system in such way that nobody was financially burdened.

GHL: I've heard that you applied to the City Conservation Support Programme for a subsidy to renovate the façade and it all came to nothing.

SS: First, we designed the insulation for the building, but the Historic Preservation Officer rejected the proposal. Now we've formulated new documentation, but prepared it with the help of the Historic Preservation Officer. If we are to receive

a subsidy, the renovation has to be carried out according to the Historic Preservation Officer's requirements. I hope we are successful with the application.

Mrs **Katarzyna Brycha** from apartment 16

GHL: Were you born here?

KB: Yes, on Tramwajowa Street, at home.

GHL: What is it like to live here? What do you and the tenants of WuWA like and what don't you like?

KB: There are many things we don't like. It's high time we took care of the housing estate once and for all.

GHL: Does your house have many flaws?

KB: There's no ventilation. The staircase hasn't been renovated. The main issue is that nothing is being done here: it's all dirty.

GHL: Have you attended any of the meetings with the City Historic Preservation Officer concerning the renovation?

KB: I have attended the one with the Administrator and the Officer and I believe that this place will ultimately change. Now it looks terrible. The tenants don't take care of this place at all. On the gallery all you can see is the constant laundry hanging out to dry. It looks like a place for single mothers.

GHL: There is certainly a wide variety of residents... Have you seen many renting students around?

KB: Up until recently there haven't been any and now two apartments are rented by students, but we have no objections to them. Well, maybe at the time of Juwenalia* they do disturb us a bit. The tenants themselves have changed and they're different than in the past. The old ones are dying out, some young people inherit the apartments from their grandparents. Once there were so many of us, now many widowed people live here, like me after my husband's death. My daughter has built a house and doesn't want to even hear about moving here. She says that this building looks like a refugees' house.

GHL: But the apartment is big enough for single occupancy, isn't it?

KB: The size is OK, but there's no ventilation. When I was a little girl, I was poisoned by carbon monoxide gas. Our neighbour-doctor from the end of the gallery almost didn't save me in time: so the lack of air circulation is nothing to go crazy about. What is though is the fact that the bathroom and kitchen are tiny. It's so small that a dish washer won't even fit in, even though the apartment has been modernised.

GHL: They've always been quite modest apartments, isn't that right?

KB: I don't know who lived here before the war. However, I remember a newsreel in which I saw our house from pre-war times and on the third floor or maybe on all of the floors hung German swastikas banners. I don't remember the occasion, some sort of convention or something. Once upon a time I used to go to the cinema only to see the newsreel: I absolutely loved it. And this image lodged in my memory.

I also remember that at the beginning there was a gas cooker at home and the flue went out through the window. The radiators were installed much later.

GHL: Do you have a social life as a community of neighbours?

KB: No, only elderly have one. We're all going to Milicz for a carp fishing holiday. In the past, when my husband replaced

cars, we would celebrate the fact on the balcony with some home-made wine. My husband made delicious wine. When we were children, nobody would lock their doors here, we wouldn't eat in our own homes but we would go from one apartment to another and eat in all of them; here noodles, there dumplings... And when we went to play football, there were so many of us. We would run around the park: and the caretaker chasing us! All sorts of strange things happened.

SS: People integrated then.

KB: Those were different times. Nobody would lock their doors. Window grates or door phones were unthinkable then. Now, in our old age, a lack of a lift has become a problem.

Mr **Edward Łyszczarz** moved into Tramwajowa Street in the 1950s and with his family he lives in a ground-floor apartment. His son, **Zbigniew Łyszczarz**, also took part in the interview.

GHL: Do you remember when the building became listed? Was there anything exciting going on?

ZŁ: No, not really, I didn't see anything in particular.

GHL: So people simply didn't know anything about it?

ZŁ: Maybe they didn't know... the flats were being sold and none of the documents stated they were considered of national interest. People alter the flats, change doors, and nobody actually cares.

SS: Well, it's obvious that it all will have to be replaced. What do you think the idea behind that is?

ZŁ: But they're mounting new doors.

SS: What for? It all has to be changed.

ZŁ: Nobody informed us.

SS: I'm informing you now: hold on with the windows, don't change them yet; the idea is to unify them all. The windows will have profiles so that they look like the original ones that were here before the war.

GHL: Are there any windows from before the war still around?

SS: Yes.

GHL: What kind? Double, casement?

SS: Yes, but few remain. The windows in the basement are the original ones. Of course, they're painted over and I've already thought about cleaning them up. They can be reglazed as they aren't warped and they're located in a warm place: in perfect conditions really. Their most characteristic elements are the tin frames which are kind of unique and all in all they have to be cleaned up.

The wooden elements are in quite good condition: all of them need to be cleaned

and repainted of course and then they will be good for further use for many, many more years. The new windows are going to have aluminium casements with double glazing and will be framed with wood outside.

GHL: What other original elements are still here because as we know, many of them have disappeared?

SS: Those small windows on the second and third floors are original. In apartment 15 the original floor has survived.

SS: Could you say more about the house? Do you remember the post-war era?

EŁ: And pre-war too!

SS: You came here not long after the war. Can you tell us anything about what was here, which elements are original and what it was like right after the war?

EŁ: I'll tell you everything in detail. I've been here since 1954. On the ground floor used to live some architect-engineer who moved to Łódź. There were many more of such pioneers; the elderly passed away, the younger and their children stayed here.

GHL: When you moved in here in the 50s was the building fully occupied, did each family get a whole apartment?

EŁ: Each family had their own apartment. The house was surrounded with a low fence, a nearby building had a barrier as well and no unauthorized person could

enter the gate. So cars couldn't drive in here, there weren't any of them around at the time anyway.

SS: There was more greenery and it was all well-kept...

EL: There were trees around like birch and other large trees, but our former caretaker didn't like them, so she had them removed. We didn't do any major changes. We brought some soil to level off the ground level a bit. There were some holes and unevenness.

GHL: When you were allocated an apartment here, did you know anything about the building? In the 50s it was pretty much different from the norm.

EL: No, we only knew that Germans lived here before the war. And there, where the construction site is, was a kindergarten. It wasn't a German kindergarten, but a venue for the Hitler Youth.

GHL: Well, it was built as a kindergarten, and later on, in Hitler's times, it was assigned to the Hitler Youth.

EL: And those buildings next to ours, this one and the small one laid crosswise, were built simultaneously and had some sort of social function. (pointing)

EL: Yes. And small chimneys were everywhere...

GHL: Even after the war? What were those?

EL: No, they were everywhere before the war. Later on, when people were fixing the roof, they built them on and there's no sign of them now. These were small chimneys going out of the wall, some kind of vents. There was central heating here.

GHL: Some sort of flue?

EL: Yes, there's still one in my apartment.

GHL: Can you still find a similar hole in your basement?

EL: In the wall, it was used by former tenants during the war to heat the apartments since the central heating was off. And in the basements were piles of fuse powder. Guns were laid out on the sills in the basement. Later on we threw this powder out into the refuse behind the house. There was enough that if someone had thrown a lit cigarette on it... we didn't realise what a danger it was.

GHL: The building wasn't subject to any major damage during the siege of

Wrocław. When you were moving in, were there any signs of war damage inside?

EL: No, there weren't any, somewhere a bullet penetrated an apartment, that's all.

GHL: You've lived here since the 50s. In the 70s the building became listed. Did you know at the time that it had been registered as a monument?

EL: No, we didn't know a thing, the apartments were allotted by the City and everybody just moved in.

Ms Jagoda Lotz, a student, is renting an apartment at 2 Tramwajowa Street.

GHL: Ms Jagoda, you are a student of the Faculty of Architecture and have lived here for three years. What is it like to live here?

JL: What is it like... well, it all started when I was renting a small room in apartment 18 with my sister: four students lived there. We didn't know one another when we were moving in, we had separate rooms, but it was really nice because we would always meet the landlady or each other on the balcony to talk or to party. We've become very close to our neighbours. There are a lot of elderly people and you can chat to them. They took us into their community.

GHL: Yes, they all know each other because they moved in here a long time ago.

JL: They've lived here for a longer while. There are younger people as well, but it's rather hard to connect with them: but those elderly people are the best. When our family got bigger, we were offered the option to move into apartment 2. It's much prettier laid out enfilade, so it fits our family situation better. We aren't students any more. So we moved in, my husband and I, my sister and her room-mate. We also occupy the balcony. It's even better than before, since the apartment is at the very end of the balcony and nobody really comes as far as this end. It acts just like a small garden just for us. Our neighbours envy us slightly, but we also have a good relationship with them. It is a large family and we hang out together sometimes. We always say "good morning" to one another. This gallery really enhances the community.

GHL: Are tourists becoming a problem, are there a lot of them?

JL: No, they just walk about and take pictures. I often see some groups that stand with the guide who tells them stories; but to us it's not a problem at all.

GHL: As a tenant you can't really make a decision about anything in the building, but are you interested

in what is going on with the WuWA revitalisation project?

JL: Yes, mainly due to our education, we're both students of architecture, our room-mate too. We're really concerned about what is going to happen to it, concerning its historic preservation.

GHL: Have you seen the project for the public space?

JL: Yes, I have. I know that the square on Tramwajowa Street is to be developed, which is really exciting because there's not much going on around there. I'm a rather concerned that they want to build a car park instead of a lay lawn. In autumn when the acorns fall, it's like heavy hail. The cars would be battered.

GHL: There are too few parking places.

JL: Unfortunately yes. The area hasn't been too over-developed on that front, but I love the view on those huge oaks and they have to stay: they're monuments too.

GHL: From your point of view, what is great about the interiors?

JL: The Xylolith floors are the best, we have them in the bedrooms, without any other carpets, and it's really pleasant to walk barefoot on it because it essentially is a warm-under-foot material.*

GHL: Are there more details preserved in the first apartment you used to live in?



Gallery-access block of flats with service area, view from Wróblewskiego Street, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

JL: No, there were floor panels already. There, the layout of the rooms is also different, as there is a tiny room which was created to replace where the living room connects with kitchen and vestibule.

GHL: Each apartment is different here, isn't it?

JL: Yes, I've been to many of them when I was making inventory drawings of the building and yes, as you say, each of them is different, they even differ within one floor. I don't know to what extent it might be due to the changes introduced by the tenants.

*An artificial building material made of a mixture of magnesia cement, sawdust, and wood dust, with an addition of finely dispersed mineral substances (talc, asbestos, marble floor) and alkali-resistant pigments.



An interview with Tomasz and Marek Kosendiak who have lived in the house at no. 2 Tramwajowa Street since their birth.

TK: My mother's parents lived in this house after they arrived in Wrocław. Our grandfather was transferred to Wrocław to reorganise Poczta Polska (the Polish Post) straight after the war. After moving from Lvov he became one of the managers: primarily in the district of Karłowice, then in the district of Biskupin.

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: I was wondering why someone would choose this particular house. The flats are quite small. I believe it was the location that gave a better feeling of security.

TK: People were eager to occupy this house because all its windowpanes were intact. It was commonplace to keep LMGs (Light Machine Guns) and pistols at home till 1952.

MK: On the balconies.

GALLERY-ACCESS BLOCK OF FLATS NO. 1

GHL: I heard from one of the tenants that guns were kept on the window sills of the utility rooms and you're saying that they were also kept on the balconies?

TK: We've heard stories about the balconies. As we were told, after the war there were trenches and anti-aircraft shelter tunnels laid out in a zigzag shape in front of the house. Since this building has no basement, it has no shelter. On the first floor, above ground level are those utility rooms. The building is situated in a hollow and in such a way that the first floor balconies are level with the top of the Odra embankment. People were mindful that the Odra might overflow, so the building was also designed to prevent people's property from being flooded. The street level is a bit higher and further on, the ground descends towards the park. In old German pictures it is clearly visible that in this area there used to be many ponds which were subsequently buried. In our time open drainage ditches existed with water gates running towards Szczytnicki Park. Later on they were also buried and now the water flows through pipes. When our grandparents were moving in they saw the windows, the carpentry and all the doors were broken because people

who had been evicted still would lock the doors upon leaving. All the carpentry was bent and warped and things kept falling off. There have been no conservation works for the last 50 years. There has been no culture of doing these jobs professionally. Wood conservation done incorrectly may do more harm than good. The windows were shelled, the building was riddled with bullet holes.

GHL: Someone said there's only one...

TK: (laughter) No, there was one bullet hole here (pointing at it), one or two: and they went all the way through. There were smashed cupboard doors, holes in the walls and one broken window. For many, many years these holes weren't repaired.

MK: When they finally decided to deal with these holes, it was the nesting season and residents were also protesting because they would have filled up the holes with the sparrows still inside.

GHL: At the beginning, after the war, were there many people coming and going?

TK: Up until 1955 there was a lot of migration.

MK: We know that from stories we've heard.

TK: Our grandfather was well-educated:

he could read German as well as Polish due to the fact he graduated from secondary school in the Austrian annexed territory. When they came here, it turned out that people who had been exiled by the Germans in 1945 had lived in their flat. There is so much discussion regarding the exiles nowadays and how they were kicked out by their fellow countrymen. They left the flat furnished; even leaving their personal belongings.

MK: Our parents told us things like suitcases and bags would be left standing in hallways.

TK: Pictures on the walls, bits and pieces everywhere...

GHL: ...and books.

TK: Yes, there were many books in this flat. They still exist today: often lent to people. My brothers collected some of them: me too. They're written in Blackletter script. Our grandfather would read them and sometimes translate them for the children. Everything that was German was considered Nazi, so for example, we would eat the stamps.

In revenge. If there was a swastika on a stamp, we would bite it off and spit it out.

MK: Or tear them up, one way or another. I don't know who had lived in our flat, but we found some water colours which I still

have somewhere: perhaps painted by its former tenant. There were also religious books, religious mass books, historical elaborations and an encyclopaedia "Germania".

TK: Someone bright must have lived here, maybe even a preacher, I don't know: I couldn't find him in the Census.

MK: His name was probably Klimek, but I'm not sure.

TK: The belongings found in the flat by our grandparents were registered.

MK: Catalogued...

TK:...but the officials came and grandfather had to pay for everything: the furniture, the wardrobes.

MK: We have a list. Do you have it, Tomek?

TK: Somewhere, yes...

MK: There was, for example, a table – five zloty, sofa – thirty zloty...

TK: When grandma came to this flat and saw all those things, she realised that the individuals here had been treated in exactly the same way as they had been treated. Our grandparents, who also had been evicted from their homes,

understood those people very well. Mum told me that their grandparents would pray for those people, as they didn't know their fate. Our grandparents prayed for the evicted because they believed those people had been hurt in exactly the same way: just as our grandparents or parents. The cross, which was hanging on the wall of this room stayed in the exact same place until mum's death in 2003. Only recently did I think to move it, but during all the time it was a timeless object related to this flat. And the bullet in the entrance door, the shrapnel which is embedded in it: a lifelong witness.

GHL: It should stay there forever!

TK: It's there and it'll stay there.

GHL: Was the ground-floor flat built later on, do you remember that?

TK: We know only stories about it. Right after the war, copper kettles or rather baths under which there were furnaces with chimneys were removed from certain rooms. There was a laundry room and a drying room which were turned into a flat later on. Actually, the drying room is still there. Three years ago we turned it into a central heating unit. Initially, people did what they could to heat the place and



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Gallery-access block of flats no. 1, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kemper, view for the gallery (north-west), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

they also ran businesses from the ground floors. There was a silkworm production space in the drying room. In the other rooms, our neighbour from flat 3, Mr Orlik; a railwayman, a carpenter and a handyman, had his workshop. Back then times were different. As children we would spend whole days exploring the entire district, hanging out in the nearby playgrounds, namely, the debris in Chełmońskiego Street by the Zoo.

GHL: Do you remember those ruins?

MK: They were definitely there in the 60s.

TK: Those were times when hordes of children would run around with bows or plumes in their hair; to the Śląza stadium, the Zoo, around the warehouses of the Wrocław Film Studio, where a cardboard "Rudy"* stood.

TK: This house was like a kindergarten; as there were so many children and everyone looked after them. If any of us was hungry or thirsty, we could get food and drink at any of the flats.

MK: There was only one entrance, so an adult could keep an eye on all of us. When it would rain, all life moved to the balcony (what the residents call the gallery – editor's note). I learnt to ride a bike on this balcony; some thirty metres long, roofed over. There was also a sporty

rivalry among us. Later on, when we gave up the games of cowboys and Indians and moved onto sports; we played football. On the nearby field we played matches: third floor versus the rest of the world, or our building versus the rest of the world. We were visited by teams from Grunwaldzki Square, or even Śląza. Once we even drew with them: 2:2.

GHL: Was the hairdresser's here all that time? How far back can you remember?

TK: Yes, we remember it. The hairdresser's was here since way back. Prior to that there was a tram stop, but we don't remember what it looked like; or if there was a shelter for that matter, like before the war, or was it already a built-up place.

MK: Our mummy would mention some milk bar** she always used to go to.

TK: By the entrance, on the right wall there used to be old fashioned mail boxes: built into the wall. I think that if we knocked on the wall hard enough we'd find them again.

GHL: Somebody mentioned that on the corner there is a bricked up spot where a Virginia creeper once grew up the wall. Was it like that?

MK: Yes, it was planted in a semicircle, at the corner of the building.

TK: It grew very well thanks to the roughness of the plaster and concrete. The building was covered with foliage, just as Centennial Hall is. It had its charm, but anything could get into the flats: rats and other animals.

MK: Our grandfather lived in the corner-room of flat 19, on the top floor. He died in the 60s. He was a post office worker and a nature lover. The Virginia creeper grew up to his room, and there were tall hawthorn bushes by the front steps. On a few occasions we had a squirrel in our flat; different birds and jackdaws. The Virginia creeper was removed when they painted the façade: that was maybe in the 70s.

TK: Now, within the WuWA renovation project, we would like to install some ventilation, since there isn't any.

GHL: The building had so-called "natural ventilation" which was acceptable at the time of its construction.

TK: Well, when the windows are draughty and the wind passes freely through the gaps, then we might call that ventilation. Generally, people manage the situation here in the two following ways: some

* A name of a fictional army tank from a Polish TV series "Cztery pancerni i pies" produced between 1966–1970.

The original tank, used as Rudy, was a medium tank T-34/85.

** A special place where people would buy fresh milk at the times of communism.

don't open the windows at all and their flats are humid; others open the windows, air the rooms and their flats are dry. However, if you open the windows, the street noise is unbearable. When we had the original windows, we were so used to the noise that we blocked it out.

GHL: So you changed the windows? What were the original ones like?

TK: The original windows had double glazing, two sashes that opened independently, and a mullion*. They also had brass fixtures and fittings. However, supposedly during the war they were substituted for cast-iron ones because the Reich's need for metals was so high that they took all those handles and fittings. Some of those handles have survived though. Apparently, lesser patriots didn't want to give them away to their home

country. Those handles were elegant. MK: I remember that, I think in 1963, Gomułka** was to visit Iwaszkiewicz*** at his home in May 9th Street while he was the president of the National Council. The Administration gave blue paint and brushes to all residents living along the route to Iwaszkiewicz's house and made us paint the windows. For a while all our windows were painted blue****.

TK: The colours here were really odd, since everyone painted them as they wished and as their own fantasy would tell them. It was not until later when Mrs Sobótkowa from flat 18 organised for us all to paint the balcony.

MK: Once or twice a year.

TK: She made us, the younger generation, take part. Well, she didn't make us, but asked and it would've been rude to decline.

GHL: I was really surprised that almost nobody has sold their flat and that so few of them are now rented to students.

TK: My daughter took my flat and she's renting hers to students. Generally, people who moved in around here in the mid-60s were either retired or simply poor. What are they to sell? Where are

they to go? Some of us decided to buy our flats, for example, a neighbour was afraid that the City would raise rents and she couldn't afford it, and the purchase cost was very low at the time.

GHL: How many of the flats are owner-occupied?

TK: Twenty percent belongs to the City; eighty percent is in private possession.

MK: Three or four people have council flats.

TK: But they've already applied to purchase outright. It's hard to sell such flats now. They look quite ok, but people don't really trust them. Yet we had no intention to invest in this building because just as it has its advantages, it certainly has its disadvantages. It's hard to live here due to the lack of fresh air, the low ceilings of the rooms and the problems with the top floor flats which tend to overheat in the summer.

GHL: But now, after the restoration, the insulation is going to be much better, right?

TK: Well, the roof is ready now, the insulation was improved slightly but it didn't really help at all. We are really counting on this mechanical ventilation

* A mullion is a vertical element that forms a fixed division between units of a window, door, or screen, or is used decoratively.

** Władysław Gomułka was a Polish communist leader. He was the de facto leader of Poland from 1945 to 1948, and again from 1956 to 1970. He was a member of the Communist Party of Poland (Komunistyczna Partia Polski, KPP) established in 1926.

*** Bolesław Iwaszkiewicz was the president of the National Municipal Council and National Council of Wrocław between 1958–1969.

**** At the time of socialism in Poland many such awkward actions were taken to make a place visited by someone important look pristine as if everything were perfect and prosperous.



13

Gallery-access block of flats no. 1, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, the galleries, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

idea. When it comes to the general appearance of the building, the new gutters, especially the one in the front, really mar the building. The old ones were hidden inside the balcony floors. Now the Historic Preservation Officer has agreed to install additional ventilation elements as they seem to look natural and fit the concept of this building. The overall aesthetics, the body of the building etc. look solid, but in fact, the renovation of this old house is going to be very expensive. A few weeks ago we heard on TV that the City has another WuWA building chosen for renovation. Can I make one more comment? There's so much money allocated for renovation and huge subsidies and so on, but no one's really interested. As far as I know, this is the initiative of just two people from the condominium. The hardest thing is to convince the rest of the residents to participate in these projects.

GHL: Was that the case with your building?

TK: Yes. We did really strange things to encourage people to sign the consent for the renovation. The City Historic Preservation Head Officer came twice, someone else came too: they explained and explained...

MK: Fine, but if someone had taken out a loan to change the windows and now, after 3 years, somebody comes along and tells them to change them again and pay for them to boot, even if it's only 10% of the total amount, they still have to bear the mess and inconvenience again, it's no wonder it all turns out like that.

GHL: Certainly, but they should be happy that they don't live in Germany where they would have to pay a fine for removing the old windows from a building that has been protected by the Historic Preservation Officer for the last forty years.

TK: Only now are we preparing a project to renovate the whole building. Who was the real landlord of this building then? It was the City because it had most shares in it. It was the City

Administration in Prusa Street and the branch in Jezierskiego Street. Look at what they've done – each window is different! Why did the former landlord carry out such renovation works? They changed the entrance door downstairs and didn't know it's a national monument? If the authorities set such a bad example, people don't care. One of them changed the windows, then the other, one company came and mounted the windows in one way; another company installed them in a different way. Now it's a huge problem. What is the Historic Preservation Officer to say? "Remove these windows and leave those?" So the reply would be, "Remove all of them and mount identical ones instead."

GHL: But does everybody know it's a monument? Do all the residents know what WuWA is? When did you realise that? In the 90s, when the first historical publications about WuWA appeared, or earlier?

TK: Earlier, sometime during the time of Martial Law...

MK: We had to write something for school...

TK: We knew about the history of this building. Our friends' parents had an

IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT THIS HOUSE WOULD BE A RUIN IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE TENANTS WHO HAD DONE SOME RENOVATIONS ON THEIR OWN.

album. They showed us that such an exhibition had taken place.

MK: We already knew about the exhibition when they wanted to build a coffee bar here, which was before Martial Law; so that must have been in 1980 at the latest.

GHL: It became listed more or less at that time.

TK: Well, generally everyone would always say that this house... Once a guy came to complete a valuation. There was some change in the law and it turned out that if my mother had died and I had died, then my wife wouldn't have been able to become the main tenant. The City wanted to sell the flats, so we decided to buy. Then the adjuster

came and said the year of construction is 1960! My mum said, "Sir, it's 1930. We moved in here in 1945." He replied, "Nah, you're talking nonsense: I have to check that. 1930 then the ceilings are going to be wooden." That was the assumed knowledge of the professionals. Then how knowledgeable would you expect the residents to be? People who live here know that it's an awkward building which had radiators before the war. It's shocking for people when they learn that there were fridges in the US before the war: or washing machines even. Some people have some imagination and technical knowledge, others don't; some are really interested in their environment, others aren't at all. One moves in and without asking anyone they start redecorating; they change the doors, paint the walls purple. People ask, "What on earth are you doing?" They answer, "Get the hell out of here." As if they didn't feel they're part of the community.

GHL: Do you remember what the hall of residence (Rading's apartment building) looked like after the war? I've heard that it was pretty much close to the original project.

TK: Our mum told us that they were vast and posh apartments. At the time

they were moving in people would go looting there. There were some paintings, carpets and god knows what else. It was a kind of apartment building.

GHL: But each apartment was different.

TK: It was turned into a hall of residence in the 60s. "Pancernik" ("Battleship") I'm not sure.

GHL: And when were the roof terraces built? Also, was it at the time when you were still children?

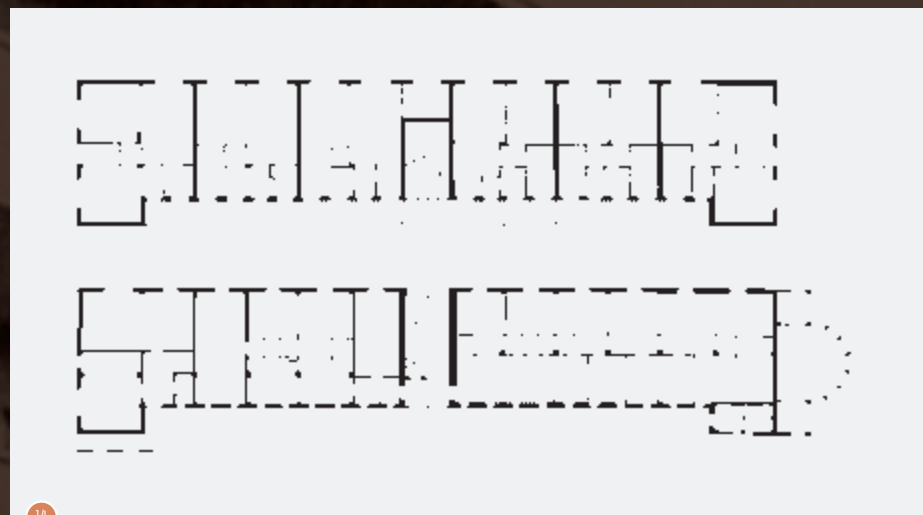
TK: I don't remember.

MK: I don't recall this building to have

changed a lot from the 60s onwards. Recently the façade has been painted, that's all.

TK: And they've installed all those aerials. I don't recall any major changes either.

MK: It might have been earlier. I remember it as a dorm since then.



14

Plan of the ground floor and a typical floor plan of the gallery-access block of flats (below). Fig. Dr Jadwiga Urbanik



CONCEPT OF THE EXHIBITION AND THE WUWA HOUSING ESTATE

3

15

The model housing estate by the Werkbund, bird's-eye view,
1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-29



16

Detached house no. 35,
designed by Heinrich Lauterbach,
garden view (south-west), 1930.
"Rzeczy Piękne", 1930, p. 74

LAUTERBACH AND RADING

RFG

CIAM

MODEL HOUSING ESTATES
BY THE WERKBUND

3

CONCEPT OF THE EXHIBITION AND THE WUWA HOUSING ESTATE

3.1 THE WERKBUND EXHIBITIONS AND MODEL HOUSING ESTATES

In the interwar period, the Werkbund was preoccupied with finding new solutions for affordable houses and flats that were much in demand at the time. The exhibitions in the 20s and 30s acted as a kind of review whose crucial elements were the model housing estates presenting new concepts of form, colours, materials, construction technologies, and interior design of the dwellings.

The new solutions for living space, which were totally different from the existing ones, became the subject of research. The designers wanted to achieve the maximum effect with minimal surface area and minimal cost.

On the initiative of the German Werkbund and its regional Swiss, Austrian and Czechoslovakian counterparts, many of the model housing estates were built within five years. They were the following: in 1927 – Weissenhof housing estate in Stuttgart for the exhibition "Contemporary Dwelling" ("Die Wohnung"); in 1928 – housing estate "New Home" ("Nový Dům") in Brno in the district of Žabovřesky, for the exhibition "Contemporary Czechoslovakian Culture"; in 1929 – housing estate in Wrocław for "the Living and Work Space Exhibition" (WuWA – "Wohnung und Werkraum" Ausstellung); in 1931 – housing estate "Neubühl" in Zurich in the district of Wollishofen; in 1932 – housing estate "Baba" in Prague in the district of Dejvice; and in 1932 – housing estate "Lainz" in Vienna.

Each of the estates had its own regional and national characteristics and were influenced by the then prevailing situation in the Werkbund. Their construction took place from 1927 to 1932 so at the time of economic growth and crash. The estate authors were not given the same full artistic freedom in each location. For example: in Stuttgart, the only imposed element was the flat roof; in Brno, Prague and Vienna

Living room, designed by Theo Effenberger,
1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIb 533-26



the presented houses were an outcome of a compromise between the architect, the investor and the future owner; in Zurich the architects had to comply with strict urban rules for housing estates. In Brno a number of plan guidelines and final house shape definitions had to be taken into account. Very often certain experimental solutions were deliberately rejected not to end in financial fiasco: old and reliable construction methods and materials were used instead. But in addition to that, in most of the housing estates, the proposed designs were often too expensive for ordinary users.

Thus not all of these houses can be treated as examples of independent and unconstrained architectural expression in the theme of modern dwellings. Nonetheless, the model housing estates by the Werkbund did play an important role in the history of contemporary architecture. The buildings presented were designed according to the following five rules of modern architecture by Le Corbusier which he formulated in 1915: columns, flat roofs – gardens, open floor plan, the free façade and long strips of ribbon windows³².

32 Helena SYRKUS, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego 1925–1975*. Warszawa 1976, p. 46. Supports are a logical consequence of applying the reinforced concrete and/or a steel construction. The open floor plan, free façade and long-strip windows are logical consequences of using support columns which take over the functions of support walls used in the traditional construction of houses.



18

Houses no. 1, 3–6 and 7, designed by Paul Heim, Albert Kempler, Gustav Wolf, and Adolf Rading, view from the street (south-west), 1929. "Architektura i Budownictwo", 1929, p. 324



20

20

Kitchen, designed by Theo Effenberger, 1929.
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIIb 533-14

21

Detached house no. 35, designed by
Heinrich Lauterbach, hallway, 1929.
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIIb 1032-7

3.2 SILESIA SECTION OF THE GERMAN WERKBUND

In 1925, the Silesian Section of the German Werkbund (Schlesischer Landesverband des Deutschen Werkbundes – the DWB) was founded and was headed by Wrocław architect, Heinrich Lauterbach. Even though the Werkbund was thought to be a very progressive organisation (proof of which was the exhibition in Stuttgart), many of its members were in favour of a more traditional approach towards architecture. The prestige of the Silesian Section increased dramatically when they launched the initiative of a new housing exhibition. They had the intension of becoming its patron and propose solutions within the concept of "Neues Bauen" ("Modern Architecture").

The exhibition took place in 1929 under the name "Living and Working Space Exhibition" ("Wohnung und Werkraum" Ausstellung – WuWA). Its aim was to present different types of small and medium flats of huge social importance.

- 33 ROTHENBERG Adolf, *Die Werkbund – Ausstellung 1929 in Breslau*, "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau", vol. 27, no. 47, 1929, p. 341. Rothenberg wrote that the preparation of the exhibition took three years.
- 34 Johannes CRAMER, Niels GUTSCHOW, *op.cit.*, p. 138.
- 35 Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Wrocław – Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego...*, p. 49. Max Berg held the post of City Advisor for Construction from December 17th 1908 to January 30th 1925.
- 36 Lubomir ŚLAPETA, Vladimir ŚLAPETA, 50 Jahre WuWA, "Bauwelt", vol. 70, no. 35, 1979, p. 1427. In his letter to Ernst Scheyer from Detroit (May 27th 1961) Heinrich Lauterbach wrote: Behrendt engaged Poelzig from the board of the DWB in Berlin as an intermediary. They had known each other from Wrocław. Poelzig introduced two other intermediaries between the City, the Wrocław Housing Estate Association (Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau A.G.), ten architects, Effenberger, and Heim, who had had some connections with the Association (executing projects in the districts of Popowice and Sępólno) and were ideologically closer to Behrendt than Rading and me.
- 37 "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, no. 25, 1929, p. 289.



21

3.3 LAUTERBACH AND RADING

There is no reliable data relating to the earlier plans of the Wrocław exhibition³³, nor on the architects and location chosen for its purposes³⁴. The Administration of Wrocław had a rather negative attitude towards architects thinking differently from the norm. When Max Berg³⁵ declined the position of City Advisor for Construction in 1925, the Wrocław Construction Office lost the main advocate of "Modern Architecture". It is known that the negotiations with the City authorities lasted till the autumn of 1927 and did not go smoothly forcing the parties to compromise. Hans Poelzig³⁶ acted as a mediator. "Before the plans of the exhibition were finally approved, a hard battle had been fought in the local parliament and the press. In spite of the difficult economic situation, the decision was made to commit funds to the exhibition³⁷". The initiator of the enterprise was Heinrich Lauterbach, the founder and chairman of the Silesian branch of the German Werkbund³⁸. In his letter to Vladimir Šlapet (Prague, October 17th 1967) he wrote: "(...) I've put forward the proposal of an exhibition with a model housing estate called WuWA (...), I had worked on its concept before I knew anything about Weissenhof³⁹". Therefore perhaps the concept of the exhibition was created simultaneously with the Stuttgart concept for a housing estate, or even ahead of it, however, this seems to be unlikely⁴⁰.

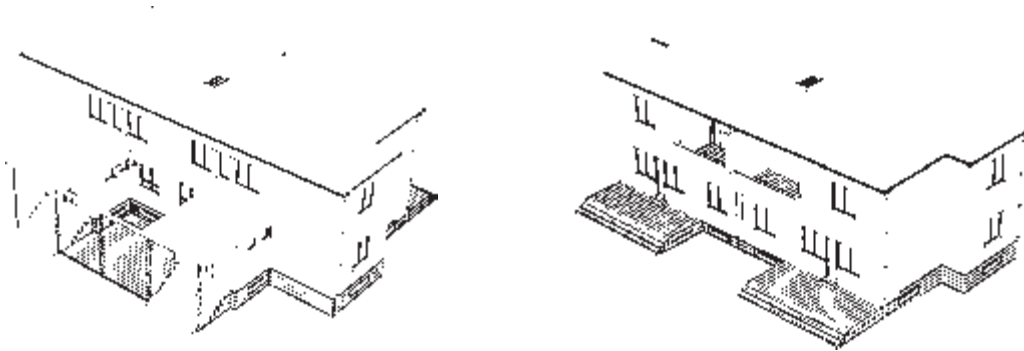
It was most probably a group of young architects from Wrocław under the leadership of Heinrich Lauterbach who put forward the idea of an exhibition. They wanted to have a chance to present their own views on modern housing⁴¹.

38 Lubomír ŠLAPETA, Vladimír ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1427.

39 *Ibidem*.

40 The idea that Wrocław had come up with the project of an exhibition with a model housing estate earlier than Stuttgart is rather unlikely since the Stuttgart plans had been published in the professional press in advance. The architects invited to participate in "Die Wohnung" exhibition would have had to have known about it much earlier since they needed the time to prepare their projects, and besides, two of the architects; Adolf Rading and Hans Schauron, were from Wrocław so the information must have been passed on by them to Wrocław. Fourty years after the exhibition in Stuttgart, Heinrich Lauterbach wrote to Vladimír Šlapeta: Perhaps time has effaced the facts or it was just the desire to get the credit for a great idea. Whereas in "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe" (vol. 10, no. 25, 1929, p. 289) it was written that according to the old good custom, the origin of an idea is not crucial until the idea becomes a success. It is now being widely disputed who should get the credit for this idea. Maybe we will learn one day how and when the concept of an exhibition was born.

41 Young architects coming from Academy society had huge trouble landing big design projects. They could only take part in competitions and tried to obtain private commissions from rich and bold investors.



22

House no. 29/30, designed by Paul Häusler.
Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz

The idea was accepted by the Wrocław Academy of Arts and Crafts where Hans Scharoun and Adolf Rading worked. The management board of the Werkbund in Berlin appointed Rading as the chairman of the working committee of the hall exhibition, and Heinrich Lauterbach was appointed as Art Director. The Wrocław Trade and Exhibition committee took care of the organisation of the exhibition. Professor Johannes Molzahn from the National Academy of Arts and Crafts was responsible for the advertising campaign.

3.4 EXHIBITION INAUGURATION

As Dr Otto Wagner, the mayor of Wrocław, highlighted in his inaugural speech, this exhibition was a local venture and its aim was to draw special attention to the Province of Silesia and its capital city⁴². The exhibition was opened on June 15th 1929. The closing date was initially on September 15th 1929; however the exposition drew so much attention that the opening time was extended till the end of September⁴³.

The opening of the exhibition was a huge event for the City. The ceremony took place in the Centennial Hall. The government was represented by: the Reich's Minister, Dr Theodor von Guérard, who came on behalf of the Reich's president who was the honorary patron of the exhibition, Paul von Hindenburg; and State Minister,

42 "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, no. 25, 1929, p. 289.

43 *Ibidem*, p. 130, 449.

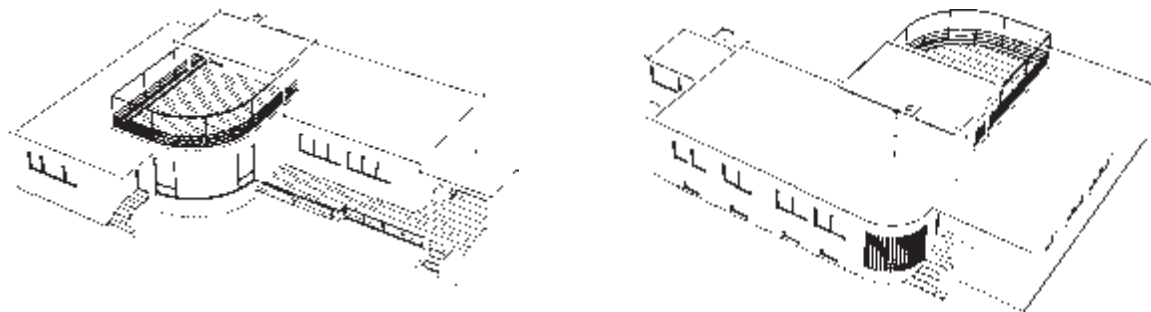
44 *Ibidem*, p. 289.

45 *Ibidem*, pp. 289–290.

46 Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen.

23

House no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach,
Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz



Heinrich Hirtsiefer. First, senior organist, Mr Burchert performed a pipe organ piece, then choirs of the Wrocław Teachers' Singing Society joined in and finally the Male Singing Society sang. The mayor of the City gave his opening speech in which he highlighted the aims of organising such an exhibition, its significance for the eastern Province and issues concerning the financing of the enterprise⁴⁴. Next, minister Guérard spoke, emphasising the extraordinary importance of this exhibition for Silesia and Germany⁴⁵. In addition, there were also representatives of the authorities, council and labour organisations, industry and consular corps, deputies of the Reichstag and the Landtag, college deans and the press.

3.5 THE RFG

It was significant to the rational housing development movement, that members of the National Research Association for the Economy of Architecture and Housing – The RFG⁴⁶, Adolf Rading and Gustav Wolf were present in Wrocław at that time. The RFG carried out research into the rationalisation of flats and financially supported the model housing enterprises. WuWA housing estate was built under the auspices of the RFG, but without their financial support.



24

Advertising brochure for the Wroclaw (Breslau) WuWA exhibition, front cover, designed by Johannes Molzahn, 1928–1929.
The Wroclaw University Library,
Silesia – Lausitz Cabinet, cat. no. Yn 1155b[3]

THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION WAS
A HUGE EVENT FOR THE CITY. THE CEREMONY TOOK
PLACE IN THE CENTENNIAL HALL.

3.6 HOUSEWIVES' ASSOCIATION

The new form of the flats, so much needed by interwar society (especially in Germany) was shaped by social changes, in particular by the role of women within families; especially in the working class. On the one hand it concerned women's struggle for emancipation and their importance in society; on the other hand, the necessity to undertake professional work⁴⁷ made it difficult to take care of the children and run the household. There was a change in the mentality of a traditional German "Hausfrau" ("Housewife"), who transformed into a working woman: aware of her social role. The more innovative architects who observed this process, had the attitude that their work in housing development would be a kind of mission for the benefit of the working people.

Members of the Wrocław Housewives' Association⁴⁸ took part in designing and arranging the interiors of WuWA houses. In order to advise on household matters, representatives of the Association were appointed to the Main Commission and the Commission for the Construction of the Exhibition.

The Housewives' Association appraised the Werkbund's exhibition in Stuttgart. Apart from recognising the exhibition, the Association introduced the so-called "Negative Wish List" with seventeen claims towards new construction. The task of the architects from Wrocław was to take these directives into consideration. Unfortunately, not all of them were successfully applied.

47 *Paid employment became necessary since many men were killed during the war: many of them were physically and mentally wounded. Women had to get involved in production, work in trade, offices, schools, hospitals, etc.*

48 *Ausstellungen in Sichtweite. Werkbundaussstellung in Breslau 1929, "Stein, Holz, Eisen", no. 10, 1928, p. 216; Eleonore GOLDEN-JAENICKE, Nachklang. Hausfrauliches zur Werkbundsiedlung Breslau 1929, "Ostdeutsche – Bauzeitung – Breslau", vol. 27, no. 82, 1929, p. 613, 614. The Commission for the Construction of the Wrocław Housewife's Association was founded in 1924 (Baukommission des Hausfrauenbundes Breslau).*

NEGATIVE WISH LIST

1. We don't want houses and flats where our children won't grow up healthily.
2. We don't want flats consisting of one room divided only with half-height walls which don't allow for isolation from noises and smells.
3. We don't want flats to be decentralised with long corridors, multiple rooms with only one access door or with bathrooms, bedrooms and children's rooms in extensions or annexes.
4. We don't want flats without halls or space for walk-in storage.
5. We don't want staircases and corridors that are insufficient for daily use.
6. We don't want flats without larders for provisions and appliances.
7. We don't want houses without basements, attics and drying rooms.
8. We don't want open terraces exposed to inclement weather.
9. We don't want terraces or roof gardens without appropriate protective barriers.
10. We don't want balustrades which might cause someone to fall instead of preventing accidents.
11. We don't want huge doors and windows which make house cleaning more difficult and more expensive and give little thermal protection.
12. We don't want ill-considered location of bathrooms, we want them to be located between the parents' and children's rooms.
13. We don't want children's rooms where they sleep in bunks and there is no room to play or learn.
14. We don't want bedrooms with beds hidden in the walls.
15. We don't want living rooms to be simply passages to other rooms.
16. We don't want kitchens to be so small that only empty and unused would they look sufficient. Imitations of the "Mitropa " kitchens are out of question here.
17. We don't want furniture and appliances whose form and materials contradict the real life needs of their users and do not allow you to recognise the material they are made of.



An interview with Mr and Mrs Piotr
and Dorota Haško, owners of house no. 37.



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Detached house no. 37,
designed by Ludwig Moshamer,
entrance view (north), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

DETACHED HOUSE NO. 37

Grażyna Hryniewicz-Lamber: If you could choose to live in a different house in WuWA, would you do it?

Dorota Hańko: No. I know that all the other houses in the neighbourhood are beautiful. It's hard not to be impressed by the glazing and the terrace from the garden side of the house next to ours, but I saw this house inside and went for it immediately. I knew I would never see anything more beautiful than the cylindrical form of the living room: it's visible from the entrance hall. I felt that my search had ended. It's not maybe too impressive from the outside: I mean now it is, but you know what it looked like when we went to see it in the past: it was devastated. When we became committed to restore the original appearance of the house, we didn't foresee such huge public interest though. We have tours and individual visitors here too. Sometimes when returning home, I hear passers-by commenting on my house. And more recently, I even heard someone wondering if this house is in fact old or new.

GHL: I was really interested to hear Mrs T. Boniecki's comments about your intentions, in that you were very much determined to buy this house.

Piotr Hańko: Yes, that's right, we lived in the district of Biskupin for many years, over twenty years in fact, but this house has always been "the apple of our eye".

Once we were passing by and we saw the previous owner doing some garden work. From then on we started talking about buying this house and after very, very long negotiations...

DH: Almost two-year long negotiations.

PH: After two years we managed to buy this house.

DH: But we'd known the property for some twenty years, or even more. We would take our child for a walk here and now our child is an adult. At the beginning we thought this house wasn't anything special because of its condition.

PH: We bought the house after a partial renovation which was totally out of line with the concept of conservation. We have photos from before the refurbishment; the condition of the house was documented by the previous owner. This individual on the other hand, bought the house from its first owners after the war.

GHL: So it wasn't in the same hands since the war?

PH: No, it wasn't. We've kept the documentation from the 1946 Census. The man from whom we bought the house was its owner for ten years. He partially repaired it, but in quite complicated circumstances as it was still occupied by the previous owners who had maintained their legal right to stay in the house for life*. The house was literally falling apart: water pouring down and plaster coming off the

* It is a common practice in Poland for elderly people to sell their houses while maintaining the legal right to occupy them for life. The new owners can move in to a house after the death of the last person entitled to maintain this right.

wall. In documentation from 1998 you can see how much was destroyed and the estimated cost to put it right.

GHL: I see, so the people who could stay here for life were the first post-war owners of the house?

PH: That's right. And our predecessor completed the work without any Preservation Officer's consent, permission or project. Ultimately, he didn't move in the end. Maybe he was tired of waiting and decided to sell the house.

DH: Buying it, we took into account the possibility that we might have to wait a while for it to become available, but we loved this place so much that we were determined to wait. We even bought an apartment as close as possible to the house, just to wait and be close at hand.

PH: And keep an eye on the house.

DH: Right, to keep an eye on the house. But we had to sell our previous house... We didn't even enter this house not to make the elderly people think we wanted to evict them

PH: We only entered it just before buying.

DH: When we finally got in, I knew right away I would do absolutely everything to live here one day, even though the smell

inside was terrible, everything was covered in mildew and the elderly residents lived in only one room: the living room. When we saw the layout of the rooms, we didn't even want to check the technical condition: we made our choice.

PH: The windows were new, also wooden but brown coloured, the cheapest available, but divided in a wrong way. The roof was totally changed: slanted at different angles. The body of the building was different.

DH: We knew this house before it experienced a complete renovation in 1998. It was a total ruin as you can see in the photos. After that, the house became awkward; the proportion was lost, it looked like a henhouse. We felt bad about it, because the place was so beautiful and it had been so awfully treated. So when the chance of purchasing it became feasible, we thought it would be right to restore its old appearance. Of course the Historic Preservation Officer had their own ideas about it, but our cooperation went really smoothly.

GHL: You must really love this house to have had the courage to buy it in such a bad condition.

DH: Yes, others would have run a mile.

PH: And the City had the right to veto your application.

DH: Yes, we took so much of a risk buying this house. Before signing the Deeds we had to sell our previous house and we still weren't sure if the City would execute their right to veto or not.

PH: We waited a month for the decision of the City Council, not knowing if they were going to buy it or not.

DH: Yes, we paid for the house and waited. If the City had executed their right of veto, we would have had neither the WuWA house, nor our previous house. The Council would have given us back the money, but after some time of course.

GHL: Which year did you buy this house?

PH: 2007.

[We're visiting the house. Many of the interior solutions recall the original design, for example, the kitchen wall tiles, the ground-floor toilet, the radiators which look pre-war: even though they're replicas. The rule here was to retain any of the original details and create solutions that would evoke modernism, but not too literally where it wasn't possible.

26

Part of Mrs Dorota Haško's
porcelain collection, 2014.
Photography by Natalia
and Ernest Dec



Detached house no. 37, designed by Ludwig Mochamer, stairs and landing, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



The bathrooms and the kitchen are kept in an art déco colour palette: white with black details: but the furniture and appliances are modern. The doors with their constructivist handles, the built-in wardrobes, the beautiful winding stairs with original wooden balustrade and external terrace balustrade are the elements that have been restored.]

DH: Not everyone wants to restore the interiors to the way they were built originally, but we really tried, for example, the wood flooring looks exactly as the original one [it's herringbone pattern parquet in rustic oak] and there is neither gypsum plaster, nor gypsum walls. We

chose a special mineral plaster, similar to that used before the war. Of course, it was more expensive and its application much more difficult as the resulting surface isn't perfectly smooth.

PH: There is unevenness to it, so not a perfectly smooth end result: but it's inevitable.

GHL: Are all the floors new?

PH: The old ones were rotten, before the renovation water poured in through the collapsed roof.

GHL: Frankly speaking, I was shocked at the condition of the house in the

pictures from 1998. I can't imagine it having been so devastated.

DH: We bought it when it had already been repaired.

PH: Secured.

DH: And malformed. The resulting situation was that we had to remove the rotten wooden floors, dry everything out, insulate and lay new concrete.

PH: When we bought the house from the previous owner who had completed this "renovation", the water was pouring in everywhere; there was only one layer of tar on the roof...

DH: As a consequence of the renovation, the house was in such a bad condition

that we had to remove almost everything and start from scratch. At one point there were no windows, as they were being replaced, there was no roof, only the walls as if a bomb had gone off in here. "The starry skies above me..."*. It all looked appalling and on top of that the mould-attacked plaster was removed. The owner of the company doing the exterior renovation told us he could build exactly the same house from the foundations up for less money. Of course we wouldn't have built a house here... During the works all sorts of smart ass specialists wanted to add their two pennies worth; for example, to remake the steep stairway all the way down to the basement or move it elsewhere. Finally, my husband had enough and he said, "Gentlemen, this house is visited by architects and students from all over the world. Do you think that you and I know better and we'd come up with anything better?" And so that brought the relentless commenting to a halt. We were really angry that someone would want to change anything, while we loved absolutely all of it. Naturally, we kept certain changes: we didn't restore all of them. For example, we didn't restore the

partition walls between the kitchen and the servant's room and in the bathroom we decided to keep the existing layout of the walls. Originally there were three doors, which made sense actually. The lady of the house had her own entrance to the bathroom through which she could go to the children's room and when the master of the house came back home a bit tipsy, he could use the bathroom without waking her and the children up... When we bought the house, it had already been changed so now there's only one door and there's no bath, but there is a shower. This solution meets the requirements of a modern bathroom. These changes aren't too serious since the layout hadn't been original anyway. We did our best to keep the rest as it was.

GHL: But the new interior recalls the modernist style.

DH: Yes, right. We wanted to make a tribute to the original shapes. We've preserved original furniture which we restored from junk. I don't know if anyone else would actually dare to do what we did. The dining table, now in the living room, was in extremely poor shape but fortunately a furniture restorer did it up for us so now this rather small, elliptic art déco table extends. Ten people can now sit comfortably and dine thanks to

its restored mechanism. The chairs are from different sets, but there are also two simple and inconspicuous chairs signed by Thonet, and another elegant art déco table. The dresser was bought by us. We wanted something that would fit with the other restored pieces of furniture and the overall characteristics of this place. It is practically impossible to find original modernist furniture on the market, and we simply couldn't afford contemporary reproductions of the modernist "icons". We therefore decided to buy furniture from that era or keep the ones we had.

GHL: Have you preserved all the original details that were in good enough shape to use? The doors, for example?

DH: Ninety percent of the doors: only one is new but identical to the others, I can't tell one from another at the moment. They were made of painted plywood. Everywhere we could, we kept the original door handles; only the entrance door hasn't got one. But our ambition is to find a similar handle. It's really hard to track them down though. I'm always browsing Allegro** and antique fairs and I'm sure I'll find one at some point. The lamps in the living room are most probably originals. The Historic Preservation Officer drew our attention to them and told us to keep them, even

* "The starry skies above me and the moral law within me" – Immanuel Kant

** Allegro – a Polish online auction website

though they aren't in the pictures from the times of WuWA exhibition. They must have been installed later on.

GHL: This house was well-thought out in terms of its functions: there are a lot of built-in wardrobes and storage space, right?

DH: I have a different angle on it. People nowadays have more possessions. For example, we have more clothes; in the past people had fewer things but they were better-made and therefore they had longevity.

GHL: Yes, but there were hats, fans and gloves...

DH: OK, but because of our eclecticism we also have hats, fans and gloves with the jeans and trainers. I think I'm like that myself and so is my house there is a combination: a bit of new and a bit of old, a bit of kitsch with a few key items of greater artistic value.

GHL: Tell me something about the porcelain.

DH: This porcelain comes from Żary, Sorau is the pre-war name, where there was a manufacturer called Carstens. This set, which I absolutely love, is from the end of the twenties and turn of the thirties. It's one hundred percent original

because the factory was destroyed and looted and after the war and they never restarted production. Besides, this plain-styled, cream-white coloured porcelain service with gold details couldn't have been produced later. During Nazi times, gold had other usages than ornamentation... Hitler forbade using gold reserves other than for military purposes. There's a story connected with this porcelain. I saw this amazing service on the Internet at the same time when the first negotiation talks concerning this house took place. These talks were

extremely intense and long. I never lost hope and I believed that if I bought these cups – I imagined myself on the terrace in the terrace drinking tea from them – then it would have started a positive chain of events. I had huge trouble getting hold of these cups. Someone would outbid my offers on Allegro continually but finally I managed to buy my first two cups. The courier delivered them and from then on the negotiations took the right direction and we managed to buy this house. Our great dream came true.



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Living room with door to the garden, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

GHL: Do you think that this house should be self-indulgent? Or is it just your hobby that is decadent?

DH: This house is not supposed to be an exhibition model house. I like harmony but I don't feel the necessity to own something of a particular brand or from a particular designer or for something to fit all together perfectly. Home is a place where you simply live and celebrate family life.

GHL: You were the first ones to show how appealing it could be. I hope that when the garden reaches its full potential, the house will regain its standing and it will be a complete success.

DH: We hope so too. We never thought cooperation with the City Historic Preservation Officer would cause any trouble. We've heard that some people are really dissatisfied with the communication and that the Historic Preservation Officer imposes certain requirements on them. We had some sort of mutual respect with the officer who oversaw our construction site. He was very much content with our



Living room, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

work and we were with his hints, so our cooperation was nice and smooth.

GHL: But I also think you chose a contractor who is very much experienced when it comes to monument restoration.

DH: The cooperation went really well. We have had a very good experience with both the officer and the contractor. Of course, the vital element of it all was the design created by the architect, T. Boniecki. And we were simply lucky to qualify for the subsidy. Buying this house we didn't know anything about that, we were planning unthinkable loans, then the credit crunch kicked in and our financial

capability changed radically. We wanted to do this renovation thoroughly and we were afraid we would have to compromise a lot. Thanks to the City subsidy program we were granted a reasonable amount of money to renovate the exterior and we didn't need to make extra savings elsewhere. When the house wasn't under the supervision of the Historic Preservation Officer, the renovation works went in a totally different direction. For example, take this plinth made of red brick. Each of these bricks has been manually treated with a special lacquer. When you're renovating a house that is not a monument you don't really pay attention to this type of detail. We, however, would need to choose the right colour of bricks

we needed for a new chimney stack. The outcome is that the house looks incredible, but since we had done some repairs in our houses before, we knew what to do to make this one look good and not to pay a fortune in the process. Here we had to take into account higher costs but it was all worth it. Also the subsidy from the City was a positive surprise to us.

GHL: Exactly, and you are the new pioneers here, which makes people very much interested in your house.

DH: Just imagine the situation: last winter, right after we moved in, in a total mess, absolutely exhausted, we saw two ladies coming down the path to our front door. When I opened the door they said they wanted to see our house inside. To my response that it's a private house they said, "OK, but it's a national monument." – "Right, but a private one," I replied. "But the information board says it has been renovated with public money," they said pointing at the board in front of our house. "Yes, but only the exterior." – "When can we see it inside?" I didn't want to be rude, but I also didn't want to let those ladies inside either; however kind they were. I was really perplexed that someone might have thought that if it's a monument, they have the right to see it. When I finally calmed down after this curious visit my husband told me I should have invited them to the Museums at Night* event.



View from the garden, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

GHL: Have you seen the winning project for the public space development competition? What do you think of it?

DH: We can't wait to see it, but we know – from what our neighbours say – that opinions are split. Now the grounds are embarrassing. People from all over the world come here. I've seen different visitors: Japanese, German, Czech people, English-speakers. They come to see these dense bushes, houses falling apart and more often than not, disfigured houses that are the victims of not-thought-through modifications. We are looking forward to this new development of the public

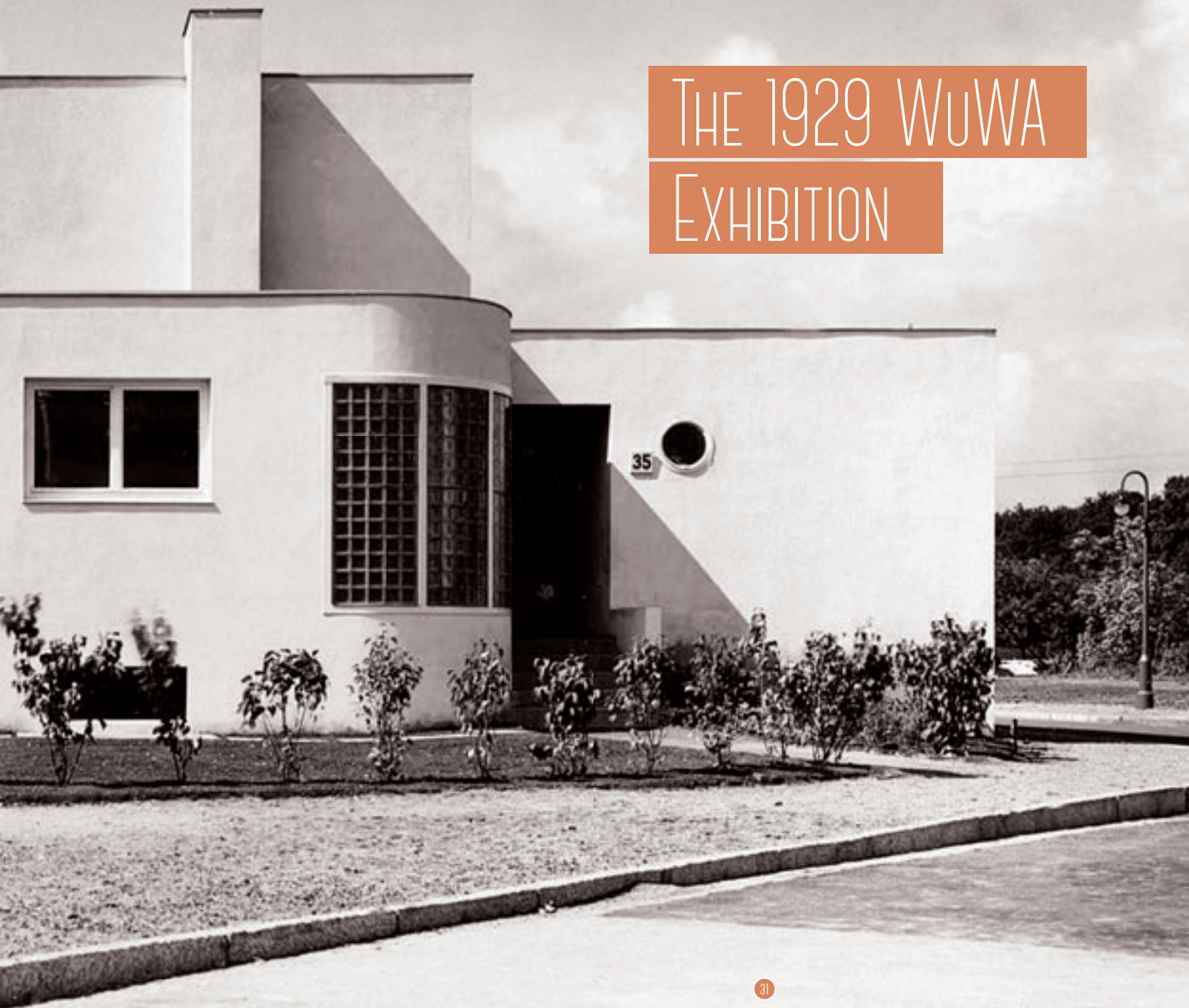
space. I think this place will get a new lease of life and everyone will feel much, much better here. Besides, we can see how many people are coming and how much they're interested in this place. My colleague from work, who has lived in Wrocław for years, didn't know what WuWA is. She saw WuWA for the first time when she was brought here by some Americans. She told me she was so embarrassed when they climbed through some bushes in order to get a better view of WuWA. Now she knows that I live in a very important monument because people from all over the world come to see it.

* Museums at Night is an annual weekend of late openings, sleepovers and special events taking place in museums, galleries, libraries and archive and heritage sites all over Europe.

4



THE 1929 WUWA EXHIBITION



31

Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, view from the street (north-east), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1032-11

THE 1929 WUWA EXHIBITION



32

Single-family terraced houses, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, Heinrich Lauterbach, Moritz Hadda, Paul Häusler, Theodor Effenberger. Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz

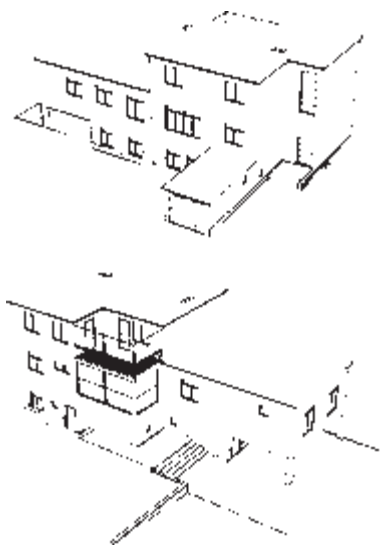
The exhibition and model housing estate in Wrocław were an attempt to solve the problems of functional and affordable housing. Wrocław, as a city in the eastern borderlands of Germany, in the wake the World War I (after 1918) struggled with huge housing issues. The housing conditions of the City were improved thanks to the following events: in 1924 a general City plan was created; in 1926 a new construction law was introduced; and in 1928 the territory of the City was extended into the suburban districts: which meant new land for housing development⁴⁹. Thus WuWA was organised at the best possible time, when new solutions to the housing problems of Wrocław appeared. Prior to this, due to limited available land, Wrocław was one of the most overpopulated cities in Germany⁵⁰. Not only were the number of dwellings insufficient, but their condition was also inappropriate⁵¹.

The exhibition comprised two parts⁵²: the model housing estate and exposition located in the exhibition area around the Centennial Hall⁵³. The second part of the exhibition was located in three main buildings of the exhibition area: the famous Centennial Hall designed by Max Berg, the Four Dome Pavillon by Hans Poelzig and the Trade Hall by Max Berg and Ludwig Moshamer. For the purposes of the WuWA exhibition a few specially-built and simply-designed pavilions were built in the surrounding area.

49 Wanda KONONOWICZ, *Wrocław – Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego...*, p. 15. The city area was extended to three and a half times its original area. *Ewolucja osiedla...*, p. 445–446, 451; idem, *Wrocław w projektach urbanistycznych...*, p. 254–257.

50 Ibidem, p. 16. In 1924, Wrocław was negatively singled out from other German cities (Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt am Main) with a population density per hectare of total surface area (116.3 – Wrocław, 28.0 – Cologne) and gross floor area per hectare (381.3 – Wrocław, 221.0 – Frankfurt). cf. idem, *Pierwszy plan generalny Wrocławia (1924) i początki kompleksowego projektowania urbanistycznego*. In: *Architektura Wrocławia*, vol. 2, *Urbanistyka*, Jerzy Rozpędowski, Wrocław 1995, p. 301; idem, *Wrocław w projektach urbanistycznych...*, p. 249.

51 Ibidem, p. 17. Wanda Kononowicz quotes detailed statistics on Wrocław, which presents the housing situation at the time. In 1916, 76,424 people lived in conditions unacceptable by any regulation, and in 1925, this number grew to 130,000.



33

Detached house no. 28 with garages, designed by Emil Lange. Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz and Dr Jadwiga Urbanik (projections)



- 52 The main source of information presented in this chapter is the original WuWA exhibition catalogue. *Wohnung und Werkraum Werkbundaussstellung in Breslau 1929 vom 15. Juni bis 15. September, Ausstellungs-Führer, Breslau 1929*. cf. *Werkbundaussstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum", "Schlesisches Heim"*, vol. 6, 1928, pp. 286–287.
- 53 In 1913, there was an exhibition to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Nations for which Max Berg designed the famous Centennial Hall (*Jahrhunderthale*).
- 54 Siedlungsgenossenschaft "Eichborngarten" G.m.b.H.

The exhibition in the Trade Hall presented information about the process of building design and construction, new materials (non-ferrous metals, wood, iron and steel, natural and artificial glass, wall and floor coverings and fabrics), paints and colours, new construction methods and construction equipment, lighting, finishing treatments for the flats, interior design, furniture, and utility objects used in a household. Additionally, prototype office interiors and work spaces for an architect, an engineer, a doctor and a lawyer were introduced. There were also example interiors, kitchens, dining rooms, bedrooms, living rooms and whole flats following the principles of "Existenzminimum" using a surface area of about 40 m². In the exhibition building by Hans Poelzig one could see the history of a flat and housing estate developments in different countries (namely: Argentina, Denmark, Great Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and Poland), new ways of developing urban green areas, comparisons to foreign achievements (specifically in: Switzerland, Holland, France, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Denmark and the USA), and green-area developments in Wrocław.

A few other exhibitions took place in the Centennial Hall, namely: an international exhibition of the German Werkbund called "Neues Bauen", a University of Technology exhibition, a Wrocław Housing Cooperative exhibition "Eichborngarten"⁵⁴, and a Bauhaus exhibition from Dessau.

German craft trades, presented in a pavilion designed by Gustav Wolf and built specially near the Centennial Hall, constituted a large part of the exposition in Wrocław. They were craftspeople goods (time pieces, lighting, radiators, and ironmongery) and typical workshops representing the following craftspeople: weaver, glass engraver, upholsterer, paperhanger, locksmith, leatherworker, tailor, potter, hairdresser, photographer, painter, carpenter, bookbinder, shoemaker, engraver, goldsmith, woodcarver, glassblower, enameller, and varnisher.

Outside, there was a model shopping street (with various shops selling items of equipment), communication methods (in a special pavilion), construction machinery, special gardens, greenhouses and gardening equipment. In addition to that, there was a model farm with live and dead stock, land development for children, including a school garden and playgrounds, a day sanatorium for children with pulmonary diseases, a puppet theatre, weekend cabins and even a cemetery art exhibition.

Between July 24th and 27th 1929 Werkbund days were seen for the first time in the eastern part of Germany⁵⁵. The exhibition was to show the attainments of the Silesian Section of the organisation. During the exhibition, the Association of the German Architects held a sitting⁵⁶.

Despite making the events and attractions as convenient and easily accessible as possible for the inhabitants of Wrocław and Silesia⁵⁷, the number of visitors was lower than expected. The exhibition brought losses as the requested public funds were never granted⁵⁸.

- 55 "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau", vol. 27, 1929, p. 483.
- 56 Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimír ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1436 (Bund der Deutschen Architekten – BDA).
- 57 Sonderzug der Rechtsbahn zur Breslauer WuWA, "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, 1929, p. 371. There were advertisements for trains to Wrocław featuring lower ticket prices. "Schlesiens Monatshefte", pp. 399–401. There was also an amateur photographic contest for the best photograph of the exhibition. "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, 1929, pp. 330. In order to promote the novel items presented at the exhibition, the Bureau for Crafts Support run by the Wrocław Chamber for Craftsmanship (Gewerbeförderungsstelle der Handwerkskammer), organised guided tours of the Crafts Hall (July 14th–21st 1929). "Schlesiens Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, 1929, p. 302. The fair corporation (Messegesellschaft) offered free admission to guild members and their families. Wohnung und Werkraum Werkbundaussstellung in Breslau 1929..., Visitors could go to a refectory, open-air cinema (Tageslicht-Kino) and use a narrow-gauge train, the "Liliputbahn" that gave tours around the exhibition.
- 58 Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimír ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*, pp. 1442–1444. cf. Christine NIELSEN, *Die Versuchsiedlung der Werkbundaussstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum"*, Breslau 1929. Master's thesis, typescript, Philosophischen Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn 1994. The organisers' financial fiasco was most probably caused by insufficient state funding and a certain prodigality by the architects. However at the same time, the press wrote about huge interest from the visitors.



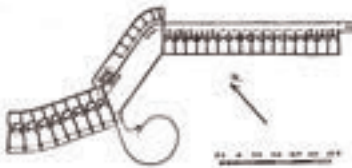
PROFESSOR HANS SCHAROUN - BRESLAU

DACHGARTEN DES WOHNHEIMS MIT FUNKULA

der in der kleinsten Wohnung von Länge mit Koch- und Schlafzimmers erscheint. Bei den Kleinsten schließt er öfters dienestartig den Treppenaufgang ein. Die Teilung in Wohn- und Spielräume wird in den meisten Fällen eingehalten. Eingebaute Schränke zumal in der Küche und die Durchreiche von der Küche zum Speiseraum sind heute für die kleinste Wohnung schon so selbstverständlich wie das Badezimmer. Die Einrichtung der Wohnungen mit Industriemöbeln, Sonderanfertigungen, Kombinationen und »kompletten« Zimmern ergab reizvolle Gesamt-Wirkungen. Lauterbach zum Beispiel kombinierte rot-lackierte Bücherregale mit Rohrstrahlen – als, scheint es, kommen wieder mehr in Mode, – und einem Raschleichen von

gelbem Opakglas auf schwarzen Beinen zu einem ebenso heiteren wie harmonischen Eindruck. Bei einem der Häuser von Hadda führten die Hausfrauen das große Wort und durften nach Gutdünken schalten und walten. Neben der musterghigen Küche ist das helle Kinderzimmer besonders praktisch ausgefallen; durch die fadige Lösung mit Klappflächen und mit Klappbetten wurde ein geräumiger Tagesaufenthalt und ausreichend Platz für zwei Betten

zurückgewonnen. Es waren für Kinder und junge Menschen eine ganz Reihe sehr schöner Zimmer auf der Ausstellung zu sehen, an die licht-erfüllte Wohndiele von Lauterbach, so das gelb-schwarze Jugendzimmerschrank bei Lange, und das stieliche Kinderzimmer bei Moshammer.



PROF. HANS SCHAROUN, GRUPPENTISCHES DES »WOHNHEIMS« BRESLAU 1929

34

Article in "Innen-Dekoration" magazine, describing the WuWA model housing estate buildings, 1929



PROFESSOR HANS SCHAROUN - BRESLAU

BLICK INS RESTAURANT DES »WOHNHEIMS«

Ein »Kindergartenheim« für Feibel und Montessori inmitten der Siedlung und ein großer Kinderbezirk mit Schulgärten, Turn- und Spielplätzen, Planschbecken und Tages-Erholungsheim bewiesen den Nachdruck, der auf den Aufenthaltsraum des Kindes gelegt wurde. Das Spielzimmer des »Kinder-Erholungsheims« von Konwitsch mit seinen buntgeprägten Spielzeug-Regalen und seinen runden Tischchen ist so recht Ausdruck einer Erziehung zu jenem Gemeinschaftsgefühl, das die Architekten der Siedlung in ihrer Gestaltung der Wohnung voraussetzten. Am eindringlichsten wird dieser Gedanke von Rading vertreten, dessen Mietshaus ausdrücklich Gemeinschaftsräume für alle Parteien enthält, der aber auch innerhalb der einzelnen Wohnung kaum noch eine Isolierung des Individuums zuläßt. Seine Wohnungen zeichnen sich durch die starke Betonung der Farbe als Form-Element aus; oft wird die

Funktion eines Raumes sogar mehr durch farbige Absetzung als durch Scheidewände klargelegt. Die Möbel der Kunst-Akademie-Breslau nach Entwurf von Jo Vinecky haben den besonderen Vorteil, daß sie aufs geschickteste dem geringen Maße der Räume sich anpassen. Sie erfüllen ihren Zweck, ohne den Raum zu überfüllen. Die selbe Angemessenheit der Proportion macht die in der Tat winzigen »apartments« des Scharounschen Wohnhotels zu geräumigen und komfortablen Wohn-Einheiten. Der notwendige porzellanene Stempel des Mobiliars gibt die kräftige und bewegte Farbgestaltung freundlich-heilen Rahmen. Die Halle ist ganz auf ein tiefes Blau gestellt, in das die blanken Stahlrohrsäulen silberne Reflexe werfen. Im Restaurant dominiert Rot in vielen Tönen. Und es ist dieser Bau, der in Farbe, Linie und Komposition die dynamische Tendenz am eindringlichsten fühlbar macht. ... ERNST REICHOWSKI *



An interview with Tomasz Boniecki, an architect and author of the conservation works of the detached house by Ludwig Moshamer, on Zielonego Dębu Street



35

Detached house no. 37
designed by Ludwig Moshamer,
full renovation by architect,
Tomasz Boniecki, in collaboration
with Weronika Moszczerńska

DETACHED HOUSE NO. 37

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: So, tell me, please, what did you find there? I can't easily picture what the building looked like when the owners, who were also project investors, bought it. Is it true that the previous owner overhauled the place and you had to struggle with the consequences of it?

TB: Yes, mainly with that. The investors had pictures showing what the property looked like at the time of purchase.

Apart from the fact that the plot was overrun with weeds, we had to deal with the effects of previous illegal repairs. When the roof started leaking the previous owner, instead of fixing it in the conventional way, covered the rotten woodwork with a shallow-sloped gabled roof; but they didn't really care to do a good job and hide it behind the existing eaves. The rafters jutted out from edge of the building. What's more, there were no gutters, so the water would simply pour down when it rained, but just a bit farther from the wall. The upper part of the roof was repaired in the same way where there were small rafters inserted and covered with boards and then covered with tar. What was the condition of this house? It was a disaster. Later on the investor came into some extra funds, so they decided to insulate the house with polystyrene foam.

GHL: The previous investor?

TB: Yes, the previous one. He changed the windows to brown ones with gold mullions. But the house was soaking wet from top to bottom and it all came up from the basement. It was all very damp: uninhabitable. Some old floors have survived, part of this wood has been preserved I think, but generally it was all a wreck.

GHL: Did the present investor decide to buy this ramshackle dwelling only because of its location?

TB: No. They just wanted it full-stop. They wanted to live here, in this house. And they had been hunting for it for many, many years. When the renovation started, the investors didn't live in the house and we had been preparing this project before the subsidy was granted. Luckily, they didn't have money so they didn't start the work immediately and then they subsequently received the funds from the Historic Preservation Officer's Program. The house was in a terrible condition, there was nothing of it to look at really. That's what it was like when it comes to the construction issues.

GHL: And the functionality? Currently the layout is slightly different than what it was in 1929. There's a problem with partially preserved or rather

partially not preserved partition walls in the kitchen.

TB: Not preserved... When it comes to the practical functions we have preserved them all: apart from in the kitchen when somebody simply removed the servant's room. As a room it became irrelevant to keep it, right? And instead a larger kitchen was very much useful.

GHL: Yes, it's huge.

TB: Well, it is big. Not huge, but big. If you have a big house for two people with a grown up child who comes and goes as they please, why not have a vast kitchen? It's been generally accepted that if a partition wall in a kitchen is removed once, it won't be reinstated again.

GHL: Have the sliding walls, visible in the old drawings, been preserved? In the designs of the exhibition houses there were many such walls dividing the living rooms. Are there any signs of their existence still?

TB: Now it's a long span interior. This sliding wall, visible in the photographs, was there before the war but it wasn't there when we took charge of the property.

GHL: You've mentioned that some objects have survived. Wall lights, right?

TB: Yes, wall lights, but I'm not sure

where they were installed originally. We also found a servant's bell and a panel with room numbers on it.

GHL: Have you overhauled the bathroom?

TB: Yes, the door layout has been changed [there were three doors into the bathroom in the original project; to the hall and two adjacent bedrooms]. The investor used their own creativity here. The idea was to adjust the house to their needs though. On the ground floor there is a vast master bedroom with en suite and apart from that, upstairs there's a room with bathroom, and additionally there's a WC downstairs by the entrance. We've only added the technical elements such as ventilation in the bathroom, kitchen, and basement as there wasn't any. Despite having insulated the basement, there's still some damp at the lowest point – the drain.

GHL: I thought, most probably wrongly, that a house of this sort, a middle

class house - a house of such size for a small family is a luxury – it should have been built well. You've mentioned that some walls, or rather certain constructions here could be considered worthy of Robinson Crusoe.

TB: Who was hurriedly building a shelter for the night...

GHL: Is the whole house built like this?

TB: I think yes. We've uncovered the structure in a few spots, mainly upstairs where the internal peat insulation had been removed.

GHL: Was there insulation upstairs only? Was it removed anywhere else?

TB: We uncovered it upstairs but I don't remember if that was the case downstairs. When we saw the brickwork upstairs, we knew it had been reworked at some point. It's a house clearly built for exhibition purposes only. It was built quickly and with just any materials that were to hand. It's actually a surprise that there is any brickwork at all. Just plaster applied on gypsum board would have only made it survive a year, tops.

GHL: Theoretically, the houses had been built to be sold, so they couldn't be total disasters.

TB: Anyway it's not really that bad. Well, not dramatically bad, oh come on, let's not make it sound so terrible.

GHL: What details have survived? Did you find any woodwork or anything like that?

TB: No, nothing. Everything was restored from scratch, but more under the project architect's supervision rather than according to the project itself. Oh, the terrace balustrade upstairs has been preserved. It was used to hang curtains and awnings from it. It was there, nothing else. A certain solution had been used here. The drainpipe of the terrace was actually located within the wall. Neither inside, nor outside the house, but as part of the wall. Well, it's a rather naïve solution because all you need are a few leaves to fall into it to clog it up, and if it leaks, the water then can pour out into the bedroom downstairs...

GHL: Was it a bit of design adventure for you? Was it tiring?

TB: In this case the investor was aware of the historical value: they knew what they had bought and what they were letting themselves in for. Adventure? I don't treat it as an adventure. The brief was to read and interpret the intentions of the first designer, Moshamer. Our aim was to reproduce the exterior as accurately as possible, using modern construction technologies. This architecture isn't very much different from what is built nowadays, so it wasn't much of a challenge to me. Neo-Gothic architecture

would be. I know nothing about it and I wouldn't even agree to take on such a project. Modernist-era buildings are the oldest monuments I'm able to engage with: older monuments are out of the question. I'm just not a specialist: period. Going back to the interiors, it would be wonderful to have a chance to restore them in the spirit of the 30s: but it's impossible. People who are going to live here are real-life users and they don't want to have a wall unit that was a novelty even then or a bed you can see here now. They want to have their house designed differently. They don't want a radiator positioned here for example, but under the window, where it should be.

GHL: At that time a radiator was an important element. It wasn't hidden as much as it is now.

TB: Yes, it was a symbol of modernity. So we had some technical problems here. We had to compare and adjust the old documentation with current specifications because if we had been told we were not supposed to simply just make the house sound, which means the purpose of the renovation was in fact, to return the building following the original project, and we then found out that the original differs from what we are dealing with, then even with modern means we'd have a hell of a task fitting the most efficient insulation into those roofs. The biggest

challenge was to insulate the upper terrace. There is a protruding cornice where we had to build in the minimum insulation to give the terrace above the bedroom frost protection. In order not to thicken the terrace floor too much, we used polystyrene without a seamless floor to insulate the platform; then apply a wooden top layer on the terrace.

GHL: How detailed did the project have to be? When one changes windows in a monument, they have to make drawings in a 1:5 scale... What were the requirements in this case?

TB: There's only one detail we drew in a 1:1 scale and that's the mouldings around the windows, as the windows had been changed earlier. We didn't restore the original casement windows. We decided to mount composite windows. Besides, it wasn't anything sophisticated. We chose the shape of a gutter with the project architect and then a contractor made a square gutter which was what we required. The most discussed problem was the colours. It was hard to guess the colours from the old black-and-white photos. The final result has some artistic licence to it. We think the original colour might have been the same as the one we used which by the way is greyish. We had made many samples and collectively, with the Historic Preservation Officer, the author of a study about the housing

estate, and the contractor, we chose the colour in which the house was painted. And it looks fine. These houses don't have too many details.

GHL: But you've essentially managed to restore those thin roofs so it's more of a retro creation since the original roofs didn't survive.

TB: Yes, indeed we had to recreate part of them. For example, this small roof was built differently than the original one which hasn't been preserved. That one was made of reinforced concrete. It was a thin concrete layer, and we reconstructed it on a galvanised steel bracket filled with polystyrene foam. Thanks to that we've managed to avoid a thermal bridge in this spot. But it was all detailed in the project author's supervision brief. The construction was overseen in a sort of pre-war style. The foreman, meaning I, after painting the projections of the building in red watercolour, would come to the construction site and consult with the master craftsman who knew how to build, he only needed some advice on the final cosmetic touches (laughter).

GHL: Tell me, would you do the WuWA project again?

TB: I don't know. As of now nobody else wants to hire me...



5

THE 1929 WUWA
HOUSING ESTATE

36

Single-family terraced houses no. 10-22, designed by Ludwig Moshamer (10, 11, 12), Heinrich Lauterbach (13, 14, 15), Moritz Hadda (16, 17), Paul Hausler (18, 19, 20), Theo Effenberger (21, 22), view from the street (north-east), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-6



37

Sections 13-15 of the terraced house designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, living room, 1929/1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1034-2



38

Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, street-side entrance (north-east), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1032-2

LAYOUT OF THE ROOMS

FURNISHING

CONSTRUCTIONS AND MATERIALS

TECHNOLOGIES

ARCHITECTURAL FORM

COLOURS

THE 1929 WUWA HOUSING ESTATE

Resulting from the initiative between the Werkbund and local government, various model housing estates were built by the Wrocław Housing Estate Association SA⁵⁹ [joint-stock company] on the grounds adjacent to the following present-day streets: Wróblewskiego, Tramwajowa, Dembowskiego, Zielonego Dębu and Kopernika⁶⁰. The experimental project demonstrating the types and sizes of the flats, and the techniques and construction materials was created in co-operation with the National Research Association for the Economy of Architecture and Housing – The RFG⁶¹.

Initially it was conceived to invite architects from outside Wrocław: the representatives of the European avant-garde. This idea was discarded because it became obvious that only Silesian architects were able to create projects adjusted to the special climate of Wrocław, as this city has the most awkward climate as one could ever imagine⁶². However, Heinrich Lauterbach points out a different reason in his letter to Vladimir Šlapeta: *Since the idea came from the Wrocław*



39

Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, view from the street (north-east), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, 533-4



40

Multi-family section no. 9 of the terraced house, designed by Theo Effenberger, view from the street (north-east), 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 456

- 59 Formerly: Grüneicherweg, Uchłirzweg, Zimpeler Strasse, zur Grünen Eiche, Finkenweg.
- 60 Werkbund Ausstellung. Wohnung und Werkraum..., p. 1. On behalf of the Association (Siedlungsgesellschaft Breslau A.G.) Johannes Piecha was the Construction Supervisor. The Construction Committee comprised eighteen members and was led by the City Construction Advisor, Fritz Behrendt. Wanda KONONOWICZ, Wrocław: Kierunki rozwoju urbanistycznego..., p. 49. Fritz Behrendt took this post (after Hugo Althoff left for Gdańsk) shortly before the opening of the exhibition. He held this position from April 18th 1929 to January 31st 1934.
- 61 Gustav LAMPMANN, Ausstellungssiedlung Breslau 1929, "Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung", vol. 49, 1929, p. 468. Trotzdem modern. Die wichtigsten Texte zur Architektur in Deutschland 1919–1933. Ed. Kristian Hartmann, Wiesbaden 1994, p. 46. cf. "Bauwelt", vol. 28, 1927, p. 685. RFG (Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen) was founded on December 14th 1926 (officially registered on January 21st 1928; after: Wanda KONONOWICZ, Ewolucja osiedla..., p. 454.) and dissolved on June 5th 1931. Werkbund – Versuchssiedlung in Breslau. Ausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum", "Die Baugilde", vol. 11, no. 13, 1929, p. 998. The RFG wanted to take possession of the experimental housing estate in Wrocław to take advantage of its results in the construction industry.
- 62 Adolf ROTHENBERG, Die Werkbund – Ausstellung 1929 in Breslau, "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau", vol. 27, no. 47, 1929, p. 341.
- 63 Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimir ŠLAPETA, op.cit., p. 1427. The following individuals were the most involved in the project: Prof. Adolf Rading; Prof. Hans Scharoun from the Academy of Art; its headmaster, Prof. Oskar Moll; Prof. Gustav Wolf – the headmaster of the School of Arts and Crafts; and Theo Effenberger.
- 64 All of them were already experienced in designing housing estates, in the 20s they had large design commissions and had designed for other estates in Wrocław (Popowice, Sepolno Księża Mała, etc.). Apart from Theo Effenbergera, all of them worked under the direction of Max Berg in the City Construction Office.

Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, view from the window to the terrace and garden, 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1032-1



- 65 Heinrich Lauterbach, Moritz Hadda, Paul Häusler and Emil Lange were young and unknown architects: students of Hans Poelzig.
- 66 Gustav Wolf was the headmaster of the Municipal School of Arts and Crafts (Städtische Handwerk- und Kunstgewerbeschule) and representative of the elder generation. Before WWI, as a co-worker of Paul Schmitthener, he designed the "Green Kartowice" – garden housing estate. He was a determined opponent of "Neues Bauen".
- 67 Wohnung und Werkraum..., op.cit., p. 3.
- 68 Paul HÄUSLER, Die Versuchssiedlung Grüneiche, "Breslauer Illustrierte Zeitung", 1929, Sonderausgabe, Wohnung und Werkraum Ausstellung Breslau 1929. In: Lubomir ŚLAPETA, Vladimir ŚLAPETA, op.cit., p. 1428.
- 69 Johannes CRAMER, Niels GUTSCHOW, op.cit., p. 138. The construction works started in October. Before winter only the construction site was prepared. The construction of the houses started twelve weeks before the opening date. Apart from Rading's and Scharoun's houses, on June 15th 1929 all of the houses were ready to be presented to the visitors. cf. Walter BARANEK, Architektonische Bocksprünge auf der "WuWA", "Schlesische Handwerk und Gewerbe", vol. 10, 1929, p. 357. Rading's and Scharoun's houses were finished at the end of July and then they were open to public.
- 70 Ausstellung 1929 "Wohnen und Werkraum", "Schlesisches Heim", vol. 6, 1928, p. 171. cf. Ernest NIEMCZYK, Nowa forma..., p. 447.
- 71 Adolf ROTHENBERG, op.cit., p. 341.
- 72 Vladimir ŚLAPETA, Rading e Breslavia, "Domus", no. 704, 1989, b.n.s.
- 73 Franz, HAHNEL, Grünplanung und Sondergärten auf der Ausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum" in Breslau, "Gartenkunst", vol. 42, no. 9, 1929, p. 136. The surroundings were designed by the landscape architects: Fritz Hanisch, Erich Vergin, Paul Hatt, Kurt and Julius Schütze. Special attention was given to the small gardens by the ribbon-windowed houses. The dry laid retaining stone wall, and terrain steps highlighted the height difference, and low perennial plants emphasised the horizontal lines.

DWB group (Deutsche Werkbund) and the costs were mainly absorbed by the City of Wrocław, it was their wish to have only architects from Wrocław involved in this project. Rading and I made our choice with the approval of the City Board. All of them were members of the Werkbund⁶³.

The organiser of the exhibition invited eleven architects, giving them full artistic freedom. They were: Paul Heim, Albert Kempter, Theodor Effenberger, Ludwig Moshamer⁶⁴, Heinrich Lauterbach, Paul Häusler, Moritz Hadda, Emil Lange⁶⁵, Gustav Wolf⁶⁶, as well as Hans Scharoun and Adolf Rading⁶⁷ who had already taken part in the Stuttgart exhibition.

The main aim of the housing estate was to show new types of affordable small and medium-sized flats which were of significant social importance at the time. Inevitably, this meant also presenting new forms of housing, new technologies and construction materials. The new technologies were to be tested in the tough Silesian climate first-hand. Paul Häusler, one of the designers of the estate, gave his opinion about the aim of building model houses: "What shall we aim for? At the sun, for fresh air, for living space and beside that, for a fine interior design when it comes to its technical and sanitary conditions"⁶⁸.

The new buildings were open to the public for three and a half months⁶⁹, then for two years they were rented by the Wrocław Housing Estate Association in order to test their new architectural functionality⁷⁰.

The housing estate owes its general layout to Adolf Rading⁷¹ and Heinrich Lauterbach⁷². Apart from the houses, the surroundings were also part of the exhibition. There were gardens for public use, as well as private ones designed by landscape architects⁷³. There was also a single-storey kindergarten of a totally new type which was designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter (no. 2). The project



42

Single-family terraced houses, no. 13, 14 and 15, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, view from the street (east), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1034-1

assumed that the exhibition would consist of thirty-seven buildings. The selection of buildings included detached houses and also sections of

terraced buildings making them separate exhibition objects. However, five of them were never completed (no. 8, 23, 24, 25 and 34)⁷⁴. The exhibition presented 103 small flats (45–60 m²) and twenty-nine larger flats. In total 132 flats of different functions and purposes were exhibited.

The process of construction took only three months⁷⁵. The interiors that were ready were opened to the public⁷⁶. After the exhibition closed, the estate became an artistic district. The new houses, hailed as "ultramodern" by conservative circles, were occupied predominantly by the employees of the Academy of Art, architects, singers and writers. Among others, they were: Günter Grundmann (in the hotel house by Hans Scharoun), Johannes Molzahn, Gerhard Neumann, Robert Bednorz, Georg Muche (in the high-rise apartment building by Adolf Rading), Johannes Drobek (in the gallery-access building by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter), Heinrich Lauterbach (in the terraced house no. 15 designed by himself), Oskar Schlemmer (former Bauhaus teacher, in the terraced house no. 14, he also had his studio in the Rading's house), Hans Scharoun and Theo Effenberger (in their respective houses from 1926, located opposite the housing estate)⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ *Wohnung und Werkraum...*, op.cit., p. 82, 96, 112.

⁷⁵ Gustav LAMPMANN, op.cit., p. 461. Thanks to professional management (Municipal Construction Advisor Bauschmann and Engineer Hers) and despite tough weather conditions (severely low temperatures) the housing estate was finished on time.

⁷⁶ Rading's and Scharoun's houses weren't finished on time and were opened to public while the exhibition was already in progress.

⁷⁷ Breslauer Adreßbuch. 1929–1933; Christine NIELSEN, *Die Versuchsiedlung...*; Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimir ŠLAPETA, op.cit., p. 1442; Beate SZYMANSKI-STÖRTKUHL, *Adolf Rading we Wrocławiu 1919–1933. In: Ten wspaniały wrocławski modernizm. Post-conference material from the Commission for Architecture and Urban Development of Wrocław Division of PAN*, ed. ed. Olgierd Czerner, Edmund Małachowicz, Stanisław Lose, Wrocław 1991, Wrocław 1998, p. 111.

43

Plan of the WuWA model housing estate,
1929. Fig. Dr Jadwiga Urbanik

- Existing houses
- Demolished houses
- Never erected houses

Designers:

- 1, 2 Heim, Kempter
- 3–6 Wolf
- 7, 8 Rading
- 9 Lange
- 10–12 Moshamer
- 13–15 Lauterbach
- 16, 17 Hadda
- 18–20 Häusler
- 21–27 Effenberger
- 28 Lange
- 29, 30 Häusler
- 31 Scharoun
- 32, 33 Wolf
- 34, 35 Lauterbach
- 36 Hadda
- 37 Moshamer





44 Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel for trainees of the National Labour Inspectorate, designed by Hans Scharoun, living room with kitchenette, in the right wing of the building, reconstruction, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

5.1 FUNCTION, LAYOUT AND FURNISHING

The housing estate can be divided into two parts: one presenting multifamily houses of different types; another presenting detached and semi-detached houses⁷⁸. Unlike in Stuttgart, more attention was paid to the small flats. Facing a lack of accommodation and the world crisis it was crucial to create ideas for affordable flats and find inexpensive construction methods. On the one hand, model houses for mass housing were presented which were associated with community lifestyle; on the other, single-family terraced houses of the "Existenzminimum" type. The experiment was not only limited to presenting small tenement flats, there were also single-family houses of a higher standard (with a surface area above 150 m²), with effective architectural form, a well-thought-out plan and good composition within the surroundings: houses that understood the need for light, air and sun. The houses were designed according to the five rules of modern architecture created by a French architect, Le Corbusier.

78 Kurt LANGER, *Die Ausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum" in Breslau, Sommer 1929*, "Ostdeutsche Bau – Zeitung – Breslau", 1929, p. 36. Heating and warm water were supplied from a heating station located in the nearby tram depot (adjacent to the estate). There were no coal-burning stoves but gas ones (apart from house no. 31 by Hans Scharoun, which had its own heating station in the basement), thanks to which the estate was free from smoking chimneys.



The hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, left wing of the building, view from the garden, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

- 79 Johann Friedrich GEIST, Klaus KÜRVERS, Dieter RAUSCH, Hans Scharoun – *Annäherungen an sein Werk. Wohnheim in Breslau 1929–1990, Hanseatenweg 10, "Zeitschrift der Akademie der Künste", I, 1991, p. 54. The earlier draft version of the project from 1928, concentrated on the south corner of the estate, at the junction of Olzewskego and Tramwajowa Streets where in 1929 Adolf Rading's house was built. This building comprising a four-floor middle section and two lower wings was to be a stylistic link between the gallery-access house by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter and the terraced houses along Tramwajowa Street. The axonometric projection of this version of the project is kept in the collection at Akademie der Künste in Berlin (the Academy of Arts in Berlin).*

Many different functional solutions and house layouts were presented. The architects made an effort to plan bedrooms for each resident of a house, separated from the others; and on the other hand, the living room was connected to other rooms for day activities. The bedrooms and the living rooms were situated along the east-west axis. It was a very ahead-of-the-times concept. In those days an average inhabitant of a German city lived in a cramped flat with little daylight and most of all, was probably located in so-called overcrowded "tenement barracks".

Houses designed by Adolf Rading (no. 7) and Hans Scharoun (no. 31) are the two prevailing and basic models for the whole concept. Along with the gallery-access building by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter (no. 1) they are the three largest buildings in this estate.

At the WuWA exhibition, Hans Scharoun presented an all-new hotel housing type of accommodation for singles and childless couples (no. 31)⁷⁹. He believed that the rapid and marvellous development of large cities did not have to mean copying the same traditional types of flats which had been designed and built for many years. Scharoun presented innovative solutions for its functionality, formality



46

Semi-detached house no. 29/30, designed by Paul Häusler, view from the street (north), 1929. "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau", vol. 27, 1929, p. 447



47

Semi-detached house no. 29/30, designed by Paul Häusler, view from the garden (south), 1930. "Rzeczy Piękne", 1930, p. 75

and technology. The house for singles and childless couples was a new and unique function for a building. The building consisted of the residential sections (left and right wings) comprising forty-eight small two-level flats, and a common zone with the restaurant, hall and roof garden. The right wing held sixteen flats for childless couples⁸⁰ (of 37 m², with balconies), the left wing held thirty-two smaller flats for singles (of 27 m²).

The concept of raising young people in the sense of togetherness was an inspiration for Adolf Rading who designed house no. 7. Initially, there were ten floors designed⁸¹. The architect wanted to turn an exhausted and resigned human being into a productive and active one, believing that the solutions proposed by him would have such influence on people. Many of the functions of the house were "socialised" and the residents had more time for work, study or fun. This arrangement of houses also had its impact on women's "liberation". The architect noticed the necessity of creating those solutions that would allow women to work and freed them from everyday chores such as running the household or raising children. This was connected to on-going changes in society especially in the German family structure and the necessity of taking up professional work by women.

The frame construction allowed for full freedom in arranging the flats, that's why on each floor there are eight different flats of the same surface area (57 m²). It was clear that colour played a very important role as an element of form and even in the arrangement of the functions in a flat. Very often the function of a certain part of

80 Edgar NORWERTH, op.cit., p. 328. The flats are designed to accommodate exactly two people, an unexpected third member of a family would make it absolutely impossible to continue living in such flat.

81 There is no consensus in the available sources when it comes to the number of floors considered. Heinrich Lauterbach mentions six, whereas Ernest Niemczyk, Peter Pfankuch, Beate Szymanski speak of ten, and Christine Nielsen mentions both numbers. Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimir ŠLAPETA, op.cit., p. 1427. This is what Heinrich Lauterbach wrote about Adolf Rading's building to Ernst Schreyer (Detroit, May 27th 1961): Without Althoffa (the Municipal Construction Advisor – Stadtbaurat – who influenced the local authorities to organise and finance both the exhibition and the housing estate – editor's note) "this exhibition would not have taken place. The City Construction Officer (Stadtbaudirektor) Behrendt was not in favour of the "New Building" and there was some personal friction present as well. I still remember his unpleasant speeches. This might be why Rading's high-rise block of flats was not built up to the designed six floors. It was the first high-rise building situated in a housing estate of flat-roofed developments. And to this fact I can owe a debt of gratitude that the second of the detached houses designed by me was never built". (house no. 34 – editor's note). Christine NIELSEN, Osiedle Werkundu we Wrocławiu.... The author wrote that Rading's "Kollektivhaus" cannot have ten floors due to building regulations. cf. MEINCK, Stahlskelettbauten in Breslau, "Der Stahlbau", vol. 6, no. 20, 1933, p. 155. Initially the building of more floors was planned but the limited funds given to the exhibition made it impossible to construct such a tall building. cf. Georg MÜNTER, op.cit., p. 442; Edgar NORWERTH, op.cit., p. 330.



High-rise block of flats no. 7, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the street (north-east), 1929. "Architektura i Budownictwo", 1929, p. 325

a flat was revealed through contrasting colours rather than via dividing walls⁸². Aside from that, according to the concept of the "house community", some rooms were designed to be a common space for all the residents of a flat. Adolf Rading's model building was a prototype which was to be copied on a mass scale in other

high-rise housing estates⁸³. Perhaps Hans Sharoun and Adolf Rading were inspired by solutions of American origin they had seen, such as the "boarding house" or the "apartment building", or the USSR concepts of "communal houses".

The model house by Gustav Wolf was a multi-storey block of flats. The intention of the architect was to design flats, located on the same level, which would have the advantages of detached houses, namely: separate entrances, staircases and basements⁸⁴. Considering their purposes, all the rooms are of minimal size. This building represents a functional layout of the interior. All the bedrooms and living rooms were located towards the South while the kitchens and bathrooms towards the North.

The main advantage of the gallery-access block of flats by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter (no. 1) is the reduced communication aspect (one staircase for six flats on each floor entered from the gallery, which altogether makes: twelve×48 m² and six×60 m²). The galleries are located towards the West and the living rooms and bedrooms towards the East. Heim and Kempter's gallery-access block of flats had not been seen in Silesian architecture before: it was a test to see if such a construction could survive the unique climate of Eastern Germany⁸⁵.

82 Edith RISCHOWSKI, *Das Wohnhaus als Einheit, Häuser und Räume des Versuchs – Siedlung Breslau 1929, "Innen-Dekoration"*, vol. 40, 1929, p. 410.

83 Beate SZYMANSKI, *Der Architekt Adolf Rading (1888 –1957) – Arbeiten in Deutschland bis 1933. München 1992, pp. 141–147. In 1928, Rading had already presented a plan of a whole housing estate with high-rise blocks of flats in the same layout as the house presented at WuWA.*

84 This is how Gustav Wolf explained his conception in "Breslauer Illustrierte Zeitung", 1929, special issue "Wohnung und Werkraum". In: Lubomir ŚLAPETA, Vladimir ŚLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1432.

85 Adolf ROTHENBERG, *op.cit.*, p. 342; Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, p. 443. cf. Paul HEIM, *Das Laubenhaus, "Breslauer Illustrierte Zeitung"*, 1929, Sonderausgabe "Wohnung und Werkraum". In: Lubomir ŚLAPETA, Vladimir ŚLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1432.

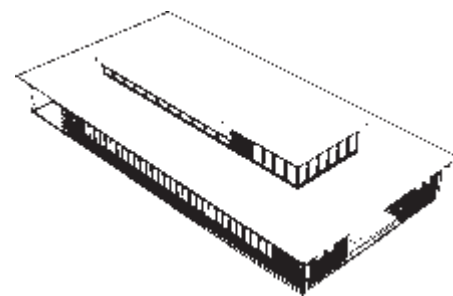


49

House no. 2, kindergarten, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, a postcard view from the playground (south), 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, City of Wrocław Construction Archive

Paul Heim and Albert Kempter also designed the new kindergarten based on the "Fröbel" and "Montessori" methods (no. 2) and could accommodate sixty children⁸⁶. It was a ground-floor building with a wooden façade, its main room was located centrally and had extra skylights located in the part of the roof protruding upwards from a flat roof. The main room was surrounded by smaller rooms for groups of children. The layout of the kindergarten was strongly influenced by the new pedagogical methods, widely applied in Germany at the time.

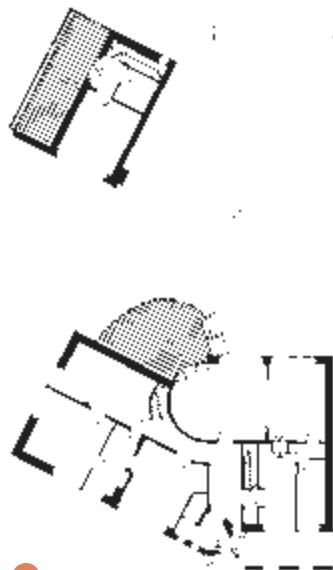
The next option for tenement housing is a terraced block of flats (no. 9–22) with small flats of 45 m² to 90 m² which was divided into segments designed by many different architects. These are solutions that can be treated as "Existenzminimum" flats: so much popularised in the interwar period in Germany. The corner segment by Emil Lange has a staircase leading to four flats upstairs, which allowed him to make a saving of 40% of the surface area allotted for communication uses. The living room and kitchen were located on the east-west axis. Common ancillary rooms were also designed.



50

House no. 2, kindergarten, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter. Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz

86 Guido HARBERS, *Wohnung und Werkraum. Werkbund – Ausstellung Breslau 1929*, "Der Baumeister", vol. 27, no. 9, 1929, p. 298. It was a "Fröbel" and "Montessori" type of kindergarten applying modern teaching methods. The "Fröbel" method (devised by German educator Friedricha Wilhelma Augusta Fröbel (1782–1852) who was a student of Heinrich Pestalozzie and spread his methodological concepts in Germany) is a method of pre-primary education based on the assumption that school is a garden, the child is a plant and the teacher is a gardener nurturing the plant-child and is facilitating its growth accordingly to its needs. Fröbel put a lot of emphasis on the harmonious physical, mental and moral development of the child. He created so-called "children's gardens" where children could become occupied with activities that were not practiced by their parents, such as active participation in tasks, self-reliance or coexistence with their peers. The main tools applied in this method were activities involving

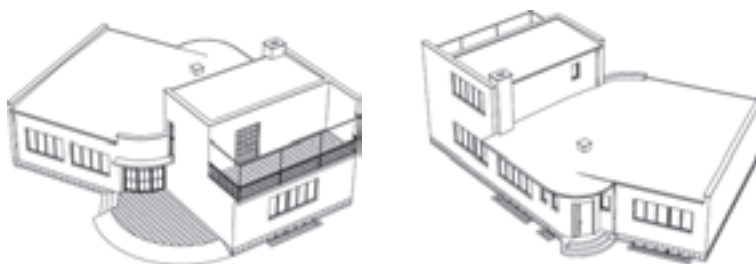


51

House no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, ground floor and first floor projections. Fig. Dr Jadwiga Urbanik

physical movement, singing and crafts. Specially designed toys, such as colourful solid balls played a crucial role as well. Fröbel had many supporters and followers in Europe, which triggered a movement of "children's gardens" also called the Fröbel gardens. 4, Warszawa 1966, p 30). The "Montessori" method (developed by Italian doctor and educator Maria Montessori [1870–1952], was developed in the first half of the 20th century in Rome where in 1907, the first "Montessori" kindergarten was established) and is a pre-primary education system in which the nature of the child is idealised. A child is given the maximum freedom for spontaneous activities and comprehensive development of his or her senses. This method did not focus on developing team work skills or imagination (acc. Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN, vol. 7, Warszawa 1966, p. 454).

87 Christine NIELSEN, *Die Versuchsiedlung...*



52

House no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz

The remaining segments, designed by Ludwig Moshamer (no. 10–12), Heinrich Lauterbach (no. 3–15), Motitz Hadda (no. 16–17), Paul Häusler (no. 18–20) and Theodor Effenberger (no. 21–22) constitute a complex of very plain and economical flats. They have similar sizes but different internal layouts. Downstairs there are the living rooms with kitchens and terraces connecting them to the gardens, upstairs there are the bedrooms with bathrooms. Only the corner segments (no. 21–22) have larger flats (no. 21 – 148.86 m², no. 22 – 94.2 m²), including one with a workshop.

The detached houses present a similar solution. They are tenement flats of a higher standard and surface area above 150 m², an effective architectural form and well-thought-out plan. In all of them the "day" zone is separate from the "night" zone. Rading believed that *a house that is not open to the garden, the air and the sun is an absurdity*⁸⁷. All the single-family detached houses presented this idea with massive glazing aspects facing the gardens.

Certain solutions should also be regarded as innovative: such as the large terraces located at garden level or on the roofs of the buildings (for example, houses no. 26–27 by Theo Effenberger, no. 35 by Heinrich Lauterbach, no. 36 by Moritz Hadda); the option of connecting two rooms with a glass or an accordion door (for example, houses no. 29–30 by Paul Häusler, no. 35 by Heinrich Lauterbach, no. 37 by Ludwig Moshamer); and embedding part of a building on supports which made the construction far less costly (therefore there is no basement under this part of a house – house no. 28 by Emil Lange).

The interior design was a matter of separate study. The new interiors, meant for a "new user", required special furnishing. Small flats of the "Existenzminimum" type, supported at the time not only by the architects, but also the authorities⁸⁸, could not have been furnished with traditional furniture (owned by many generations of German families) which was not adjusted to the size of the new interiors. They did not match the plain interiors created by the functionalists. Bright pastel interiors were to be a preferable background for austere furnishing in more intensive colours.

The title of an article by Heinrich Lauterbach about the housing estate in Wrocław, *An interior not overcrowded with furniture*⁸⁹, shows the exact character of those interiors. Built-in wardrobes, bookcases, kitchen cupboards or serving hatches were as obvious elements of a flat as the bathroom. The built-in furniture did not take up space in the rooms: they gave the impression that the flats were more spacious. Lauterbach believed that the better the flat's layout is planned regarding the user's needs, the easier it is to design the furnishings. The problem was that at that time, the architects were designing for an unknown user, so they imagined an ideal user and their possible necessities. The fear of non-built and free space was overcome. It was believed that for young generations, that were used to sport and led active lifestyles, a free space in a flat was a must. A piece of furniture had to meet those needs and be in a place where it was actually needed; providing comfort and not taking too much space.

Many Wrocław architects designed both the flats and the furniture in them, attempting to fit them to the future users' needs in the optimal way. The ideal they were aiming for, were pieces of furniture produced on a mass scale⁹⁰. An accessible piece of furniture, available to all, was to be easily substituted at any moment. The flat was shaped by the user who, according to their needs and financial capabilities, gave it a new, individual character.

In almost all the model houses one could see light-looking chairs and armchairs made of bent steel or wood; instead of springs, straps of fabric spread on the furniture's frames were used, which ensured great flexibility in the seat.

Furniture by Josef Vinecký from the Academy of Art, designed for house no. 7 by Rading had a special advantage, namely, they fitted the small interiors excellently. They fulfilled their functions not "filling" the interior.

Everything in the detached house by Heinrich Lauterbach seems to float in mid-air, wrote Edith Rischowski to show the character of the interior⁹². The architect designed the armchairs (in house no. 35) which were adjusted to the different needs

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- 88 *Aussichten des diesjährigen Wohnungsbau – Forderungen für den Kleinwohnungsbau, "Schlesisches Heim"*, 1928, p. 171. During the third general meeting of the Construction Associations in Flensburg on June 12st–23rd 1928 it was settled that, taken into account the limited funds for housing development available in 1928 (1.8 billion Deutsche Marks, compared to 3.2 billion Deutsche Marks in 1927), only housing constructions with flats of small sizes have any chance of execution.
- 89 Heinrich LAUTERBACH, *Der unverstellte Wohnraum, "Innen-Dekoration"*, vol. 40, 1929, p. 418–420.
- 90 "Thonet" was a firm whose products were in common use in modern interiors. Thanks to the fact they appeared light and were simple and plain, they were perfect for a functional interior. Products of this firm were also used in Wrocław, for example, in house no. 31 by Hans Scharoun.
- 91 Working for the Academy of Art, Josef Vinecký specialised in furniture design with the application of modern materials.
- 92 Edith RISCHOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 401.

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Single-family terraced houses,
no. 13–15, designed by Heinrich
Lauterbach, living room, 1929/1930.
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIIb 1034-2



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64

Single-family terraced houses, no. 15, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, living room with the dining room with serving hatches, 1931. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1037-1

of the residents⁹³. They were light-looking armchairs made of steel tubing and meant for a living room with a grand piano, and a metal and glass desk for a study. Here a red varnished bookcase was arranged with shining metal chairs and a table with black legs and a matt yellow glass top⁹⁴. The interior design in this house showed perfectly how the style penetrated the whole concept: from the urban planning, through particular buildings, to the furniture.

The interiors by Theo Effenberger (no. 21, 22, 26–27) were furnished with slightly heavier, plain, wooden pieces made of polished birch with a subtle grain, which contrasted nicely with the light walls.

In the house by Moritz Haddy (no. 36) there were more traditional wooden pieces, and upholstered in lively colours. Special attention was given to the child's room with foldaway beds and table, thanks to which there was more space available during the day⁹⁵.

The furnishing in Hans Scharoun's flats (house no. 31), well-adjusted to their size, made the small rooms appear vast and comfortable as accommodation. The necessary "puritan" austerity of the fixtures is accompanied by the strong and lively

93 Heinrich LAUTERBACH, *op.cit.*, p. 419. People need different seat heights, depending on their height, sex and age, (...) which is why chairs should be adjustable.

94 Edith RISCHOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 409.

95 Adolf ROTHENBERG, *op.cit.*, p. 343. The author of the article highlighted that the size of beds should be adjusted to the new small interiors and reduced from 1.05 by 2.0 m to 0.9 by 1.9 m.

96 Werkbund Ausstellung. Wohnung und Werkraum..., *op.cit.*, p. 109. cf. Idea of Thonet. Furniture made of wood and steel tubing. Exhibition catalogue, ed. Gerhard Bott, Nürnberg 1989, p. 244, 246, 248. Hans Scharoun's house was furnished by: "Thonet-Mundus" I. und J. Kohn, Bugholzmöbelfabriken A.G., Wien-Berlin and Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller, Berlin-Neukölln. The architect used a standard



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Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, study, 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1035-4

56

Detached house no. 35, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, living room, armchair and table made of steel tubing, 1929. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1032-4

bent armchair by "Thonet", model 6009, later to become the B9, in the living rooms of the left and right wings of the house (this armchair was created anonymously by "Thonet" after 1900 and was often used by Le Corbusier and German architects as a part of their interior design); in the hall – square tables made of steel nickel-plated tubing by "Thonet", model B10 (the table was designed in 1927 by Marcel Breuer for "Standard" which was acquired by "Thoneta" in 1939); spring-seated armchairs by "Thonet", made of steel nickel-plated tubing, plaited seat and arms, model MR20 (armchair designed in 1927 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, original plaiting by Lilly Reich, frame by "Berliner Metallgewerbe", Josef Müller); in the restaurant – standard bent wooden chairs, probably by "Thonet" (similar to no. 651 from 1906, the only difference is the shape of the backrest).

colours of the common-use spaces (the hall and the restaurant). The peculiar style of Scharoun's architecture was highlighted by the occasional furniture made of steel tubing designed by Scharoun himself (for example, the bookcase in the hall, the sofas in the living rooms in the left wing and the desks in the rooms in the right wing) and the built-in pieces of furniture (the bedroom wardrobes in the left and right wing, and the cabinets in the living rooms). The remaining items were standard pieces made by "Thonet"⁹⁶. Scharoun was a master of lighting design, which he proved by designing the hall and the restaurant of house no. 31.

Only the semi-detached house (no. 32–33) is seen as very different to the rest of the WuWA interiors. It was designed by Gustav Wolf, the dean of the Municipal School of Arts and Crafts where huge emphasis was placed on the study of crafts and the manufacturing of unique items. The furnishings of this house were designed and manufactured in the workshops of the school, in particular: the furniture, lighting, curtains, upholstery, iron grates, glass, leather, and the porcelain goods. In the dining room the walls were fully wood panelled and furnished with corner dressers, which gave the room a hexagonal shape. The dressers were made of pine with marquetry details. Both the exterior of the house and the interior furnishing were in agreement with the traditional concept of architecture which was still wide-spread in many German cities at the time.



5.2 ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND COLOUR SCHEMES

Even though the model housing estate by the Werkbund was presented as an example of functionalism in the 20s and understood as an architectural trend giving solutions to plain bodied houses, it was not stylistically unified. Functionalism was not a uniform trend. It is not an easy task to point out individual houses as different formal trends since they have features allowing them to be associated with either functionalism with strict geometrical divisions, the "international style" and "organic architecture", "white architecture" or the trend of "colourful cities" ("Die Farbige Stadt").

Very often functionalism is regarded synonymously with the so-called "international style", with its white-plastered cubes and natural links to Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe or Walter Gropius. Up to now, certain differences have been noted. For the functionalists, the plain form, free from unnecessary decoration, was a result of the users' needs and the technical possibilities. Orthodox functionalism praised everything that was measurable, scientific and useful and its advocates were driven only by the guidelines of functional features, disregarding any kind of decoration. For that reason, the architect should first study the needs of the future user and the basic functions of the flat, then create a simple draft, then an optimal plan, add the third dimension and as a result achieve a piece of truly functional architectural art. Only a few buildings from WuWA fit this category and they are: the eight-unit tenement house by Gustav Wolf (no. 3–6), the gallery-access block of flats by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter (no. 1) and the terraced houses (no. 9–22). These are plain, simple-bodied constructions, without any decoration, mainly functional but not artistic pieces⁹⁷. Perhaps the banality of their form is an effect of the assumption of the whole exhibition, namely, finding a solution for a small and affordable flat for an average user.

The trend of functionalism with strict geometrical divisions was represented by the following elegant, yet following strict rules of geometry, buildings: house no. 7 by Adolf Rading, detached or semi-detached houses no. 26–27 by Theo Effenberger, no. 28 by Emil Lange and no. 29–30 by Paul Häusler. House by Adolf Rading

97 Adolf ROTHENBERG, *op.cit.*, p. 444. Gustav Wolf referred to his house no. 3–6 as "a purely functional" building.

(no. 7) has a non-solid construction appearance; its body comprises two separate cuboids constituting separate residential sections which are connected via a common staircase. It also offers interesting solutions in the upper part where certain geometrical bodies are suspended in such a way that the play of light and shade highlights the façade. The rather heavy body of the building was made more appealing by the use of the loggias and light-coloured façade with contrasting dark window recesses of different shapes. From the point of view of "pure" functionalism they were considered unnecessary elements: simply decorative. Perhaps the building would have had better proportion if the designed number of floors had actually been built. As a ten-floor high-rise building in an estate of low-scale developments it would have achieved an additional advantage of appearing to have a light body. The semi-detached house no. 29–30 by Paul Häusler has a certain severity due to its cuboid body. The only element that rendered it more attractive was a small roof positioned above the entrance supported by two thin, differently proportioned poles. The detached houses by Theo Effenberger (no. 26–27) and Emil Lange (no. 28) are similar in their cuboid construction.

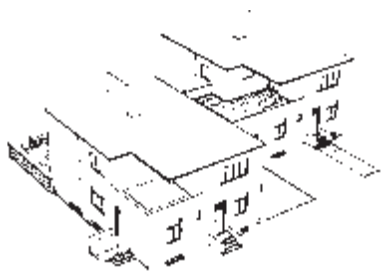
For the functionalists, the form of a house was to be a result of the user's needs. This was a common assumption made by architects in the circles of Mies van der Rohe, as well as Hugo Häring and Hans Scharoun who despite that notion, were critical of one another. The only criterion was the concordance of form and function. Thus the inconsistency was not in the assumptions, but in their execution. Peter Blundel believes that the only real functionalist of the interwar period was and till recently unnoticed, is Hugo Häring, creator of the trend called "organic architecture"⁹⁸.



Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, view from the street (south-east), 2014

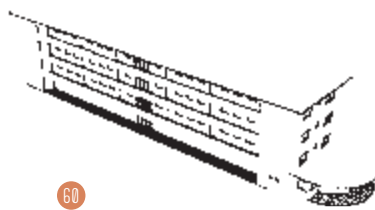
98 *Ibidem*, p. 17.

99 Piergiacomo BUCCIARELLI, Hugo Häring – architekt i teoretyk. In: Hugo Häring w jego czasach, budowanie w naszych czasach. Exhibition catalogue, ed. Christ Otto, Stuttgart 1992, p. 27. Häring's position was in total contradiction to the one Le Corbusier presented at the first congress of CIAM in 1928. Le Corbusier attributed huge significance to the role of geometry and pure forms in architecture.



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Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger. Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz



60

Gallery-access block of flats no. 1, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempler. Fig. Łukasz Magdziarz



61

Gallery-access block of flats no. 1, north-west gallery view, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

What was the Häring's organic architecture about? For him, the most important factor was how he tackled the scheme. While designing, he wouldn't start from the external form and then move on to the internal, but the other way round: from the interior to the exterior (Le Corbusier would do exactly the opposite⁹⁹), in order to arrive at the optimal form matching the functions of a building. The idea was not to assume any form beforehand but to create it as a result of pursuing the given goals. Häring followed the concept of nature's organic order whose contradiction was, according to him, the geometrical form. He believed that the forms found in nature were ideal for the purpose for which they had been made. The form was the result of the functional processes taking place inside it: the outer construction was only to "support the shell protecting the function". Another characteristic feature of organic architecture was its uniqueness and individuality which were in close connection and harmony with the building's location.

A good example of this trend is Scharoun's building. In 1928, he presented a totally different project which was supposed to be built on the plot where Rading's house stands, to the South of the housing estate. Eventually it was

built in the northern part of the estate. This other design was so different from the first one. The first was so closely connected with the surroundings that it could not have been used elsewhere. It was undoubtedly the most exciting building of the exhibition. The large glazing panels and terraces – in the gardens or on the roofs – gave the effect of an interpenetration between the interior and the exterior of Scharoun's house. The external form of the house, determined by the interior layout, was highly

influenced by the architecture of ocean liners. Taking into account the rule that "technology is architecture's teacher"¹⁰⁰ and knowing the achievements of naval architecture, Scharoun created a building with innovative architecture, dynamic form, soft outline, large wall surfaces, glass division walls and horizontal window lines. The external body of the building was a natural consequence of its layout. The architect wanted to design a house for a particular user and tried to anticipate their needs by organising the layout of the two-room and two-level resident sections whose living rooms were situated towards the South.

Häring's and Scharoun's buildings managed to fulfil the basic functions of supplying light, sun and air, and at the same time they opened the interiors to the surroundings through large glazing treatments and terraces. The detached houses by Heinrich Lauterbach (no. 35), Moritz Haddy (no. 36) and Ludwig Moshamer (no. 37) presented exactly the same philosophy, nonetheless they were criticised by orthodox functionalists as being too extravagant in their form. The arc shape was used in both the projection, and the body of the building, which made the exterior much more attractive. Such solutions were called "the sun seeking houses" because thanks to wide glazed cylinder-shaped walls, slightly protruding from the façade, a maximised inflow of sun light to the living rooms was ensured at any time of the day.

Almost all of the exhibition buildings followed Le Corbusier's rules of modern architecture and almost all the architects opened the houses up to open space, fulfilling at the same time one of the basic requirements of the organic building. However, only some of them went one step further and designed houses according to Häring's rule of "plan shaping".

The only house that was very different from the rest of the buildings was the semi-detached house by Gustav Wolf (no. 32–33) which was the only house with a pitched roof: recalling the rural houses designed by Paul Schmitthenner with whom Wolf had collaborated. This house can still be referred to as a functional piece of art since a pitched roof was indeed a very functional solution in the Silesian climate.

Writing about the WuWA housing estate, Gustav Wolf pointed out its huge diversity and the reasons for this. He was an advocate of simple forms, which he

100 Adolf ROTHENBERG, *op.cit.*, pp. 347–348.



62

House no. 31, former hostel for singles and childless couples, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, view from the garden to the left wing (south), *Innen-Dekoration*, 1929, vol. 40, no. 11, p. 408



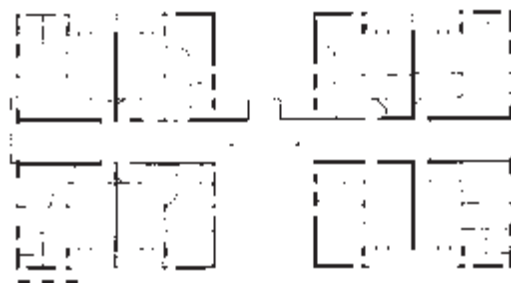
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Semi-detached house no. 29/30, designed by Paul Häusler, view from the street (north-west), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



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Former high-rise block of flats no. 7 currently the Wrocław University "Pancernik" halls of residence, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the street (west), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



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Former high-rise block of flats no. 7, projection of a typical floor plan. Fig. Dr Jadwiga Urbanik

proved by building the eight-unit tenement house (no. 3–6). In his deliberations he quoted Le Corbusier, however his own projects were far from the ideas presented by the French architect.

Gustav Wolf was looking for the reasons for diversity in the capabilities of construction technologies. On the one hand there were cuboid bricks, hollow blocks, geometrical iron angles that, for economic reasons, imposed on the shape of the building. The plainer the form of the building, the lower the risk of negative influence from atmospheric conditions and the easier and more economical was construction. Wolf was definitely a promoter of the shaping of architectural forms in this way. On the other hand, there were new technologies that made it possible to create varied forms, for example, by concrete casting, and the way the flat roof allowed for the division of the body of the house into smaller sections. Development of such dynamic forms had its economic consequences. Wolf criticised the Wrocław buildings which displayed extravagant forms since he believed that they missed the point of the exhibition which was to present affordable houses, which were suitable for mass production.

The colour scheme is always an inseparable element of architecture¹⁰¹. However, it is hard to discuss this topic regarding the Werkbund exhibition, as

101 Maria STARZEWSKA, *op.cit.*, p. 24. August Endell, the dean of the Wrocław Academy of Arts (1918–1925) believed that while designing an object the material is not as important a factor as the shape and colour, and that the construction is a matter of technology. He taught that principle at the Academy so most probably, a generation of students was educated in his sensibilities towards colour.

there is insufficient data on its colour schemes. Not even the slightest fragments of the original colours were left in any of the WuWA houses. Even before the war, some of the buildings were re-plastered. The only pieces of reliable information come from the pre-war professional press. Paint layer testing was only carried out in Hans Scharoun's house which made it possible to determine precisely what colour scheme was used by the architect¹⁰².

Ilse Molzahn wrote about a *glistening white housing estate*¹⁰³. Gustav Wolf also mentioned the uniformity of colour schemes. He believed that the architects accepted the preference for pale colours inside and outside, from white to light pastel shades¹⁰⁴. The buildings from the Wrocław estate can be easily considered examples of "white architecture" which was spreading in popularity across Europe at the beginning of the 30s. Heinrich Lauterbach's house no. 35 confirms this concept. It was arranged in white, black and many shades of grey in which red bookcases and a yellow table were placed, which created a brave and lively contrast. We also know the colour scheme of a multifamily house no. 7 by Adolf Rading. The architect applied three contrasting colours: white, black and red. Using these saturated colours, he divided the rooms into functional sections. To achieve this he not only used the wall surfaces, but also the ceiling which he painted black¹⁰⁵. This solution was close to Le Corbusier's concept of colour in architecture, or Mondrian's colour palette taken from the Dutch group "De Stijl" and from Bauhaus¹⁰⁶. Similar combinations of colours were used in house no. 36 by Morits Hadda which proposed red contrasted with black bookcases¹⁰⁷.

There were also WuWA houses that did not follow the trend of "white architecture". Georg Münter commented on the gallery-access house no. 1 by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, writing that "on the ceiling of the galleries there was a boarding laid radiantly and thus a pattern was created, highlighted by a grey paint"¹⁰⁸. In this case, the approach to the materials used is closer to the expressionist concept by Hans Peolzig (The Four Domes Pavilion and square house in Ofiar Oświęcimskich Street in Wrocław) and to Max Berg (The Centennial Hall)

102 Jan Maciej ŻELBROMSKI, *Badania stratygraficzne ścian zewnętrznych i wnętrza. Dom dla ludzi samotnych, małżeństw bezdzietnych, projekt Hansa Scharouna, rok 1929, Wrocław ul. Kopernika 9. typescript, Wrocław 1993. Research carried out to assess the need for a historical-conservational study. Jadwiga URBANIK, Agnieszka GRYGLEWSKA, Studium historyczno-konserwatorskie budynku hotelowego przy ul. Kopernika 9 we Wrocławiu. Published research for the National Labour Inspectorate (owner of the building), v. 1–4, typescript, Wrocław 1993.*

103 Ilse MOLZAHN, *Eine Frau durchstreift die "WuWA", "Schlesische Monatshefte", Sondernummer – Wohnung und Werkraum, vol. 6, no. 7, 1929, p. 316.*

104 Gustav WOLF, *Die Versuchs-Siedlung Grüneiche auf der Breslauer Werkbundaustellung 1929, "Die Wohnung, Zeitschrift für Bau- und Wohnungswesen", vol. 4, no. 6, 1929, p. 181–196. In: Lubomir ŚLAPETA, Vladimir ŚLAPETA, op.cit., p. 1435.*

105 Ibidem.

106 This architect used similar solutions in his other projects.

107 Edith RISCHOWSKI, op.cit., p. 401.

108 Georg MÜNTER, op.cit., p. 443.



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Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre designed by Hans Scharoun, view from the garden (south), the middle section and the right wing of the building, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

rather than to the trend of functionalism with geometric divisions to which the gallery-access house can be easily identified due to its plain and simple form.

A totally different colour scheme was presented by Hans Scharoun in his house for singles and childless couples (no. 31). This architect worked in an unconventional way: not following any strict discipline. He left CIAM shortly after it was founded in protest against the doctrinal rationalism of Le Corbusier and the concept of international architecture. That is why his works are one of a kind, not copying any formulaic schemes of the international style. Scharoun had a casting vote when it came to the colour schemes. The paint layer testing showed that during the decoration stage he changed his mind and as a result, the building was painted light ochre ("luminous"). All elements of the planking, the external balustrades, the window and door joinery, and metal trellis on the left wing roof were painted a warm mousey-coloured grey. Only the balcony doors of the right wing were the same colour as the façade, namely, light ochre. The reinforced concrete construction for climbing plants on the left wing roof was orange-red, while the reinforced concrete elements of the foundation and retaining walls were left bare and the natural colour of concrete.

In the interiors of the general use spaces (the hall and the restaurant) the architect used strong, highly saturated colours. *The hall was deep blue and as a background it played well with the steel frames of the armchairs which cast*



67 Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, view from the garden to the middle section and the left wing of the building (south-east), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

*silver reflections. The restaurant was dominated by many shades of red*¹⁰⁹. In the residential sections he presented two-colour schemes using pastel colours and dark wooden and chromium-plated elements for the interior furnishings.

The concept of colour in Hans Scharoun's house is close to the colours he applied in his paintings. After his stay in Wrocław, he moved to Berlin where he created numerous watercolours expressing his architectural ideas. Similar colours were present in all his works.

The house for singles and childless couples by Scharoun was one of the buildings within the all-German campaign of 1925–1930 called "Colourful City". In Wrocław, Hans Scharoun, Theo Effenberger, Moritz Hadda (architects of WuWA housing estate) and Hermann Wachlich held positions as the heads of a "building police" responsible for the colour schemes in the city¹¹⁰. The mid-20s were a "calling for colours" which was a remnant of expressionism whose means of architectural expression was also based on colour. At that time in Germany over a million houses were painted in new colour schemes¹¹¹.

109 Edith RISCOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 410. This is the only reference to the colours of this building found in records.

110 Anna MARKOWSKA, *op.cit.*, p. 49–50.

111 In 1927 Adolf Rothenberg in his article *Die farbige Breslau* for "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau" wrote: Our city is now one of the top German cities when it comes to the colourful shaping of streets and squares.

- 112 Technical data comes from: Gustav LAMPMANN, *op.cit.*; Wohnung und Werkraum..., *op.cit.*; Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 285–312, tables 85–100; Rudolf DELIUS, *Werkbund – Versuchssiedlung in Breslau*, "Dekorative Kunst", vol. 37, 1929, p. 272–280; Werkbund – Versuchssiedlung in Breslau. Ausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum", "Die Baugilde", vol. 11, nr 13, 1929, p. 959–1009; MEINCK, *op.cit.*, p. 155–159; O., *Ein Spaziergang nach 3 Jahren*, "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau", vol. 30, 1932, p. 298–300; Archiwum Budowlane Miasta Wrocławia – building project and statistical study; badania obiektu (dotyczy budynku Hansa Scharouna nr 31) in: Jadwiga URBANIK, Agnieszka GRYGLEWSKA, *Studium historyczno-konserwatorskie budynku hotelowego przy ul. Kopernika 9 we Wrocławiu*. Published research for the National Labour Inspectorate (owner of the building), vol. 1–4, typescript, Wrocław 1993.
- 113 All types of constructions were presented in the exhibition hall in section 5. "Outside walls, ceilings, institutional methods, roofs, internal walls – under the direction of Paul Heim and Albert Kempler; construction materials – section 2. "Stone, ceramics, concrete, pumice" under the direction of Adolf Martens; section 3. "Metals, wood, glass, insulation materials" under the direction of Josefa Vineckjego. *Wohnung und Werkraum...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 13–18, 22–26.
- 114 These were "Schima" blocks made of gas concrete. An alternative was a cellular concrete, breeze block or concrete with pumice, or fire resistant particle board by "Tekton", Ligna" or "Heraklith" (pieces sized 50 cm by 75 cm or bigger).
- 115 Other similar roofing materials used at that time were: "Pappoleina", "Tropical" or "Rexitekt".
- 116 "Ostpreussisches Heim", 1929/30, p. VII.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION, MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES¹¹²

The Wrocław housing estate was also an experiment when it comes to construction technologies. The applied methods had been tested before though¹¹³. They were tested here in the particular and severe climate of Silesia. The aim was to find the most cost-effective and most modern construction technology: but something that was also quick and affordable. Special emphasis was put on prefabricated and panel constructions. A framework style was the most applied method, especially in the multifamily houses. It took over the function of the supporting walls and allowed for high-rise buildings and the free-shaping of the façade and the interiors. It was applied as a wooden, steel or reinforced concrete framework filled in with large-format elements. Only some detached and terraced houses were built using more traditional construction methods in which the outside wall was also the supporting constituent.

The framework constructions used in many of the houses presented at the Wrocław exhibition worked very well, however, the material used as the filling agent left much to be desired. The aim was to find light and therefore easy to apply prefabricated units in order to keep construction costs to a minimum. Usually the filling matter was light concrete blocks, widely used in Europe before the war as a thermal and acoustic insulator for concrete walls or as an internal and external lining for a wooden framework¹¹⁴.

At the time, the flat roofs posed a serious problem, not for construction reasons, but because of issues concerning damp insulation and water drainage. In 1929, a widespread type of tar called "Ruberoid"¹¹⁵ had already been used to cover roofs for some thirty-five years. It could be applied directly onto concrete or a wooden framework and came in three colours: grey, red, and green¹¹⁶.



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Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the a hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Sharoun, view from the garden towards the middle section of the building (south), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

THE BUILDINGS FROM THE WROCLAW ESTATE
CAN BE EASILY CONSIDERED EXAMPLES OF
"WHITE ARCHITECTURE" WHICH WAS SPREADING
IN POPULARITY ACROSS EUROPE AT THE BEGIN-
NING OF THE 30s.

The material didn't always work well in the Silesian climate whose characteristic features are high air humidity in spring and autumn, low temperatures in winter and what is the most problematic feature, potentially huge temperature difference between day and night. After three years some technical faults were identified. In 1932, one Wrocław critic wrote about it in "Ostdeutsche Bau-Zeitung-Breslau"¹¹⁷. There were numerous damp patches, plaster falling off and a lot of dampness inside. The reasons for this were not only the materials that absorbed the damp very quickly, but also an inappropriate damp course and the fact that the thermal insulation was laid inside of the buildings, which causes the outer walls to become damp and freeze and thus deteriorate far quicker than usual. The corkboards or chipboards¹¹⁸ used as a thermal insulation are still in a very good condition: however they do not act as insulation anymore.

The different framework constructions used in Wrocław were filled with light-weight materials that were supposed to have low heat loss coefficient. This proved that the architects were very much ahead of their times and were not afraid to experiment. Strides in technological progress in housing construction were not visible in all the Werkbund housing estates as could be seen in the Wrocław one.

117 *O., op.cit., pp. 298–300.*

118 *These were chipboards by "Tekton", "Lignat" or "Heraklith".*



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House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange,
view from the garden (south-west), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

DETACHED HOUSE NO. 28



Mr and Mrs Przemysław and Agnieszka Przewirscy are third generation engineers and since 1946, have lived at house no. 28 at 9 Dembowskiego Street. The property was designed for the WuWA exhibition by Emil Lange. In brief, it is an experimental building with a bridge-like construction. After the war it was handed over to a bridge specialist, a Wrocław University of Technology professor and grandfather of the current owner. The house didn't work well on a functional level, so it was rebuilt in 1930 during which the canopied terrace underneath part of the house was built over, the garage was added, as well as the terrace leading to the garden. During the siege of Wrocław the building was seriously damaged by an aerial bomb and later on, partly looted. After the war, when the Przewirski family as well as other residents arrived, the interiors were modified*. Despite all the modifications, the main body of the building survived, as did some of the windows: which are particularly attractive if viewed from the garden-side.

This interview with the owners contains many technical details. Since both of them are knowledgeable architects, they completed most of the refurbishment of the house on their own.

AP: I once overheard a conversation between a young couple on their bikes who were passing through the area. One of them asked, "Why does the city subsidise this?" – on a neighbour's house there happens to be an information plaque. "I think these are the old buildings that someone talked about some time ago." The other replied, "Old houses!? They have flat roofs!" And they moved on. An average inhabitant of Wrocław or a tourist doesn't know where WuWA starts and where it

ends, why it is so important and what it's all about. And why is a PRL** house so important? It is commonly thought that we all here live in a PRL cube.

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: Has your family lived here since the end of the war?

AP: Since after the war. On the wall opposite the entrance door there is a portrait of my husband's grandfather, professor Franciszek Przewirski. He is, as we call him, the founding grandfather.

PP: Instead of the founding fathers, we have a founding grandfather. Granddad came, moved in and stayed. That is our story in a nutshell. In more detail, grandpa came in 1946 as one of the last to settle here. All his neighbours were his colleagues.

AP: Professor colleagues...

PP: ...who had been trying hard to keep this house for him. Times were hard and the house had already been partly demolished. Certain things were missing,

* The Przewirski family had to deal with the legal co-occupancy arrangement. It was common in Poland at the time that more than one family was allowed to reside in a property.

** PRL – People's Republic of Poland, former socialist name of the Republic of Poland.

e.g. the radiators, the windows and the interior doors because in those times people used whatever was to hand. One of the quoin stones had been destroyed by a bomb which hadn't gone off. The building survived, since it's the only WuWA object with a steel construction apart from the Rading's building, so the bomb only crushed some mortar... The construction here is steel, screwed and hot-riveted. If you dig into the wall a bit, you can find elements that look like they have been taken from Grunwaldzki Bridge*. Grandpa came, patched it up and moved in with his wife. Meanwhile, daddy was freed from a labour camp and travelled to the French Zone of Occupation. Having contacted home, he decided it wouldn't have been a good idea to go back home after being in the AK** for such a long time, so he drafted to the French Foreign Legion. He spent three years there and even became a lieutenant. He dealt with transport, not fighting. He came back and started to study at the Wrocław University of Technology where grandpa had already worked as a lecturer. He was handed his title as professor by Bolesław

Bierut. There is a family story about that: When my father was starting his second or third year of studies, the student union demanded that he should be removed from the university for his improper class background, to put it bluntly, that he was from the rotten bourgeois intelligentsia. It was the same university the grandpa worked at as a professor. Grandpa was always a hot head in these situations, so without much consideration and not telling anyone about it, he sat at his desk and wrote a letter to the deans. To cut a long story short, the letter said, "If my professor's post is to be a hindrance to my son's graduation from higher school, then Mr Bierut may shove this degree up his

you know where." We still have a copy of this letter somewhere. We never received a reply. Grandma had already packed their possessions and was about to leave it all behind, when two weeks later the union head apologised sincerely to dad and the faculty council gave him a social scholarship till the end of his studies. And that's how it all ended.

AP: Professor Przewirski was a wonderful figure. He was born in Austria as Franz v. Putschegl. He came to Lvov to study at the University of Technology and while there he decided that Lvov and Polishness were the best things that had ever happened to him and he decided to stay. He wanted it so much that he even accepted Polish



House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, interior. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

* The Grunwaldzki Bridge in Wrocław is the only road-tram suspension bridge in Poland. It is located a few kilometres away from the exhibition area

** AK – Armia Krajowa, the Polish Home Army Guard operating during WWII



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Family mementos of the owners of house no. 28. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

citizenship and changed his surname. Long before his studies, during his military service, he met his future wife, a Serbian named Zdenka Groo. So, as a Serbian and an Austrian they got married in Lvov and then moved to Poland. Franciszek Przewirski was a road and bridge construction engineer and already a very successful and acknowledged professor in Lvov. He was one of the founding lecturers of the University of Technology. As a bridge specialist he was highly acclaimed: we still have photographs from the works on Grunwaldzki Bridge which he oversaw after the war. The new authorities couldn't afford to insult such a prominent individual as Przewirski.

PP: In particular as grandpa stayed away from politics. He couldn't care less about it.

GHL: *Your neighbour, Mr P. Haško showed me the Census of their house from 1946. Initially, so many people had passed through this house: until the 60s there were already about eight names.*

PP: Many people lived here as well. After grandpa had moved in with his family, other people were relocated. Later on, when grandpa and dad wanted the house to be a single-family one, they had to make those people move out and find alternative lodging. There were a few

people that our neighbours still remember.

AP: We have drawings showing how the house was divided. It's really great to see its ups and downs of life it experienced and stages it went through.

The nearby houses were taken by friends: Professor Opolski (house no. 29); who celebrated his hundredth birthday this year and still going strong as an astronomer. Next to him lived his two sisters: farther on, Professor Rompoldt and Professor Orzechowski. Professor Opolski is an extraordinary figure: his history should be published or filmed. When the professors were taken away from Lvov, some of them were placed in Oflags. They were lucky to end up in a prisoner-of-war camp

for officers somewhere in the later East Germany. The first groups of student of physics and astronomy at the University of Wrocław and the University of Technology studied scripts written by Professor Opolski whilst in an Oflag. When the camp was freed and everyone was going back home, as soon as they possibly could, Professor Opolski disappeared for three months. It turned out that one of the Oflag warders had some connections with the nearby astronomical observatory. After the enfranchisement of the Oflag everyone got on trains going to Poland. Professor Opolski however, got on a bike and rode to this observatory where he spent the next three months. He celebrated his hundredth birthday three days after our new-born son came home from hospital. We have a lovely picture in which the professor is standing by the pram with Michał and is saying with his beautiful, slightly eastern accent: "Well, I knew Franciszek, I knew Leszek, I have the pleasure to know Przemysław, and now Michał – he's the fourth Przewirski in my life". He was still publishing his works

until a few years ago. Marvellous person! Professor Piskozub, a mathematician, lived in the house designed by Moshamer. In his old age, he kept away from everyone... But they all knew one another from Lvov, they came here together and worked at the university from the very beginning. What did the house look like when Franciszek Przewirski came to Wrocław? The plans we have show that the internal divisions were the same as the original ones [according to surviving documents, 60% of the damage affected the quoin struck by a bomb and dislodged various elements and carpentry]. In 1946 it all looked pretty much the same as in 1929. Only the servant's room on the ground floor was joined with an adjacent toilet. Earlier before the war, the terrace and exit to the garden from the ground floor was built, and the portico was built up. Why

was the canopied terrace built up? I don't know. However, the exit to the garden was quite an obvious change, a must even. This house had been designed with huge windows facing the garden which could not be used. The only exit was through a tiny basement door below stairs and up the garden steps.

Here is the first architect's drawing, made right after the war. You can see that the ground floor, unlike the first floor, hasn't been subject to any major changes. The ground floor had been divided in such way that the house could be divided into two apartments. A wall was built through the middle of the house and the door recess between the rooms was filled in. The entrance to the new apartment was via the garden. There were two rooms: a kitchen and a bathroom. The second apartment used the existing entrance. That's how it was officially divided, so that two families could move in and the authorities wouldn't complain about it. Whereas on the first floor... Upstairs a kitchen and a bathroom were created by moving a wall in one of the rooms. The corridor was closed off by the staircase with a sliding door. I don't know if these changes were made before or after the war. Anyway, a living room, a bedroom, a bathroom and toilet were created. A small window on the external wall was filled in order to install plumbing. Sometime later in the bathroom, a stove was added and for many, many years

WE HAVE DRAWINGS SHOWING
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House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, façade details, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, original sliding window, view from the garden (south-west), 2014,
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

this room functioned as a kitchen and a bathroom simultaneously. Later on this long room was split into two parts: one being the kitchen, the other the bathroom. Probably after the war, one of the WCs was added to create two independent apartments and one of the exits to the terrace was filled in. We have a picture of Granny from the end of the 40s, where you can see the house. It was taken before those changes on the ground floor because there are still two doors to the terrace. The front façade in grandpa Przewirski's pictures looks exactly the same as before the war.

PP: Apart from the windows, some of

the windows had vents. There is a very interesting change visible when compared to 1929. A chimney was built here to ground level. In the pictures of WuWA, not all chimneys which had been added right before the war started are visible. Everything points to the idea that the building had been designed to be heated using stoves and later on, the central heating was added. For example, in the corner of the living room there was a plumbing built over with plastered and painted desks. Renovating the central heating, I discovered that there was also plaster and paint under the pipes, so the pipes must have been laid subsequently.

This heating looks like it was installed by force. Every engineer, even then, would have wrung their hands in despair and run for the hills having seen such solutions. AP: Either they didn't have time or forgot, but the house wasn't finished well inside. But this is what we also know about other buildings. They weren't done well at all.

GHL: All of them were built very quickly. All in all, WuWA was built in three months.

AP: Yes. When we were renovating a small awkward shaped bathroom we pulled down one wall between the WC and adjacent vestibule... We discovered

that between the bathroom and the bedroom was a separate WC, a tiny bathroom and a vestibule.

PP: ...we thought we would have found treasure or a walled-in German or at least a pot of gold. It turned out that there was just one extra wall added in this awkward shaped bathroom. As a piece of trivia, the floors were originally covered with linoleum; this additional wall was built directly on the linoleum. After pulling the wall down a thirty-centimetre gap revealed itself. We thought we would have found some treasure, weapons, maps, directions to the underground tunnels of Wrocław, but there was nothing: not even a spider. During the construction, the builders must have made a mistake, so they added this extra wall. The pipes were elsewhere, so it couldn't have been a chimney. Perhaps the shape of the door frames was not as it should have been? Anyway, that was peculiar.

The partition walls weren't well-attached to the rest of the construction either. The house has a steel frame, similar to timber framework but made of steel and filled up with breeze blocks – a kind of “siporex” made of recycled refuse.



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House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, living room, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

GHL: Foamed concrete? It was invented in the States, in the 20s...

PP: Here, it was used as an innovative solution. As I said before, the walls, from top to bottom, were made of bricks and mortar. The ceilings were made of reinforced concrete, but not all; some of them were made of bricks. The window apertures and all external lintels were made of identical profiles; the latter are slightly smaller I-sections, 120-centimetres long and joined into a rectangular frame. This was then bricked into the wall and filled with boards, mineral flax mixed with clay and into that, the windows were mounted. Hence, the workmen who were mounting the UPVC windows were in big trouble because the

drills for steel are inappropriate for concrete and vice versa; so they had to be careful and change the drill bits quickly. And here is a part of the insulation, this particular one is from the next house, but here it was the same, cork and cinder mixed with asphalt...

GHL: Was the mineral flax used here?

PP: Flax? Yes, mineral flax was used in all of the apertures. I removed what I could, but the rest of it is still there, but hermetically sealed in. The original insulation is pressed cork, used partially inside, partially outside.

GHL: Did the external cork insulation erode?

PP: No. And it's still there, it is a thick ground cork mixed with tar. The quoin destroyed by the bomb was later rebuilt using Heraklith board instead of cork; which is why the walls there are much thicker. They consist of a layer of bricks and two five-centimetre layers of Heraklith inside. The roofs are insulated with mineral turf, ordinary, non-impregnated, pressed mineral turf, sometimes even two-centimetres thick...

AP: The ground floor is so so, whereas the upstairs seems to be built from whatever was to hand at that time.

PP: For example, in the bathroom the external wall is one quarter brick thick and this is the north-west gable.

AP: So we can hear exactly what the sparrows sitting on the nearby gutter are talking about.

GHL: What are the humidity conditions?

PP: Ground floor: great; first floor: great if you heat it; the basement: sometimes, especially in spring, the damp comes out because the insulation is so so. Apart from that, there is one more nasty thing that happens. Usually in summer, after a storm and if the windows are tilted, the concrete floor of the basement which was laid almost directly on the ground, floods. And it's not coming up from below. I thought maybe it was something soaking through from the ground, so I put a large industrial fan in the basement to

dry the air. Three hours later it was even worse! However, the biggest problem is the lack of any insulation.

GHL: This is a tough situation. Each WuWA house has its own technical problems because each of them is different. For an owner who is trying to renovate a house this experimental character might be a huge problem.

PP: That's why the standard methods and technologies aren't always the right solution. That's the case with ventilation too. We have created some additional ventilation openings while renovating the place where the old pipe lines used to run. Some of our neighbours at 25–27 Zielonego Dębu Street, where

the apartments are quite similar to one another, have damp problems on the walls because they cook a lot and there's no ventilation because they simply clogged it up: yet other neighbours have no problems at all.

AP: I envy those who had renovated the façades before anyone became interested in WuWA. Those are the ones who didn't care that these are monuments and nobody told them a word about it or gave a single penny of fee. Now, they have new windows, insulated houses and the plaster is not chipping off. I don't have the strength to condemn them, even though I am – I should be against it, but I simply envy them.



House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, view from the garden (south-west), 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 461

6

OPINIONS ABOUT THE HOUSING
ESTATE AFTER THE OPENING
OF THE EXHIBITION



Semi-detached house no. 26/27,
designed by Theo Effenberger,
view from the garden (south-west),
section no. 26, 1930. The Wrocław
Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-2



Semi-detached house no. 26/27,
designed by Theo Effenberger, roof
terrace of section no. 26, view from the
south, 1930. The Wrocław Museum of
Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-8



Dining room, designed by Theo Effenberger, 1929.
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, 533-27



6

OPINIONS ABOUT THE HOUSING ESTATE AFTER THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION

The WuWA housing estate was described as "extended" with low-rise buildings that highlighted the horizontal nature of the low-rise surroundings and their layout¹¹⁹. Attention was paid to the fact that houses were not always favourably situated with respect to the compass points, which made it impossible to let in sufficient amount of light¹²⁰.

On this occasion, unlike in Stuttgart, the estate was also planned with children in mind. It was thought that the fact that the estate was prepared for children at all was more modern than its flat roofs¹²¹. The WuWA kindergarten (no. 2) excited everyone, especially women¹²². It was emphasised that the kindergarten building had refined details, and the limited capabilities of the wooden construction were managed well and used perfectly¹²³. Karel Teige wrote that the kindergarten was a logical complement to the "boarding house" (Adolf Rading's house no. 7); giving children the chance to be free from the family home for a while¹²⁴.

*Particular technical and formal problems and problems concerning the arrangement of houses were solved in the most possible artistic way. (...) Even if there are some flaws, as is natural in experimental projects (...), the overall effect is a marvellous achievement of Eastern Germany*¹²⁵ – they wrote. The style the Wrocław architects created was in accordance with the new social and industrial position of architecture, nonetheless it was also clear that the new buildings did not fully meet the requirements of the average user as they were rented to multiple occupants for the first three years¹²⁶.



119 Edith RISCHOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 401.

120 Gustav LAMPMANN, *op.cit.*, p. 463; Edgar NORWERTH, *op.cit.*, p. 328.

121 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 285.

122 *Ibidem*, p. 289.

123 cf. Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, p. 446; Edgar NORWERTH, *op.cit.*, p. 330; Eleonore COLDEN-JAENICKE, *op.cit.*, p. 615.

124 Karel TEIGE, *Nejmenší byt. Praha 1932*, p. 179. In: Lubomír ŠLAPETA, Vladimír ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1437.

125 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 285.

126 *O.*, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

127 Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, Tafel 98/99. cf. Hans GERLACH, *Die Grabmonumente der neuen Sachlichkeit. Betrachtungen zur Breslauer Werkbundsiedlung*, "Die Wohnung, Zeitschrift für Bau- und Wohnungswesen", vol. 4, no. 7, p. 213–220. In: Lubomír ŠLAPETA, Vladimír ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*, p. 1439.

128 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 288.



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Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, garden terrace of section no. 26, view from the first floor, (T. Effenberger is the man in a white shirt and a bow-tie), 1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-32

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Single-family terraced houses, no. 10–22, designed by Ludwig Moshamer (no. 10, 11 and 12), Heinrich Lauterbach (no. 13, 14 and 15), Moritz Hadda (no. 16/17), Paul Häslar (no. 18, 19 and 20), Theo Effenberger (no. 21/22), view from the garden (north-west), 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 458

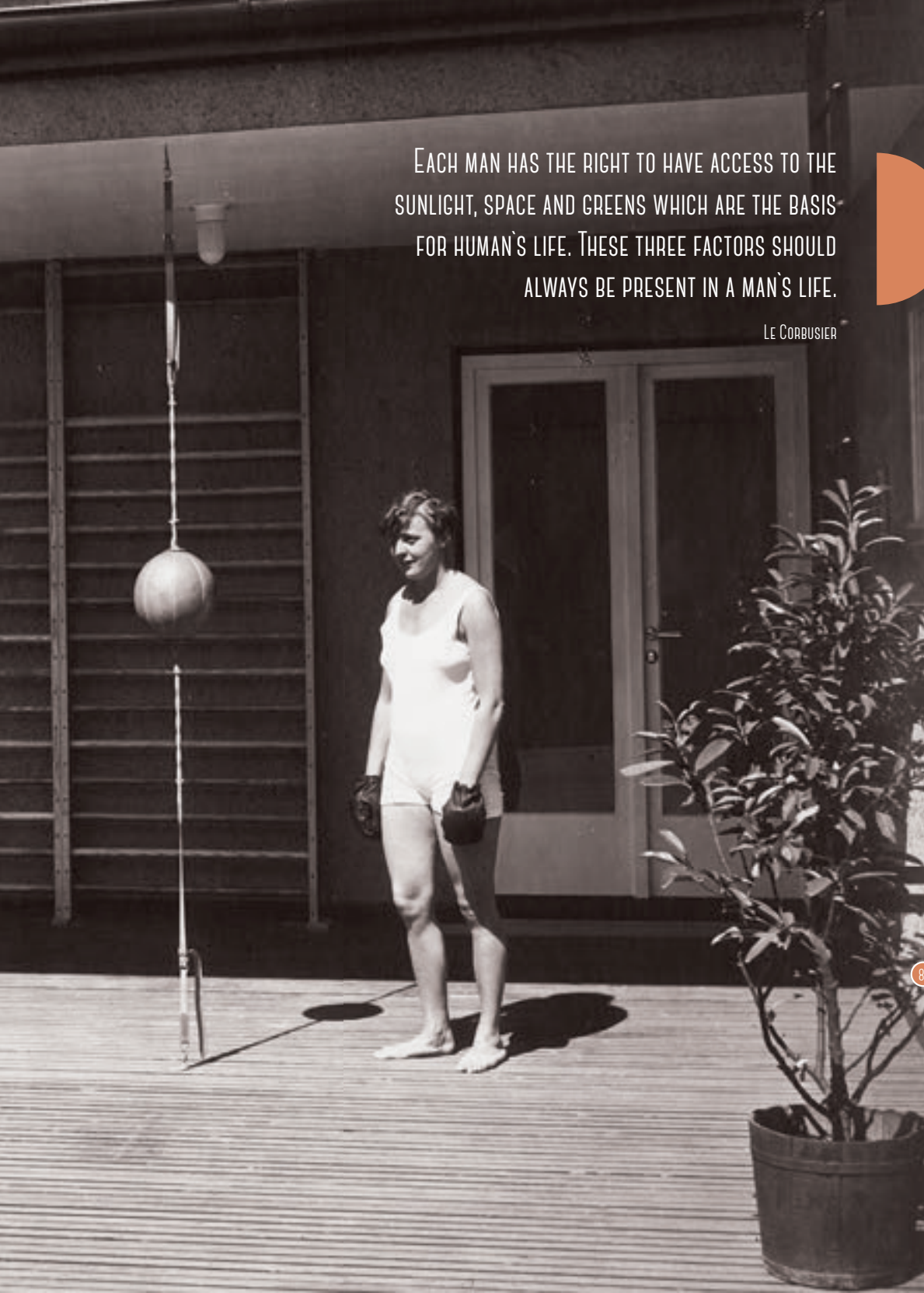
Adolf Rading (house no. 7) was severely criticised for its terrible functional solutions and that too large an area was devoted to communication purposes: the common living space constituted 38% of a flat¹²⁷. On the one hand, the exterior of the house was praised and it would have been even better if the materials used were better quality¹²⁸. On the other hand, it was thought that *splitting the body of the building with sophisticated protrusions and decorative elements, especially in the upper part of houses, evoked an unpleasant memory of the old French secession. However we cannot talk about the proportion of the house as it was not built up to its planned height* – wrote one of the members of Polish delegation visiting the exhibition¹²⁹.

The concept of high-rise residential houses created due to social circumstances was not well-received¹³⁰. The architect attempted to move away from a certain concept of social life in a multifamily house which could have been referred to (undesirably) as a social flat-community of residents. The residents were not only the users of the houses but were also engaged in the process of organising the house. Practically, there

129 Edgar NORWERTH, *op.cit.*, p. 330; Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, p. 442.

130 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 294.





EACH MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE
SUNLIGHT, SPACE AND GREENS WHICH ARE THE BASIS
FOR HUMAN'S LIFE. THESE THREE FACTORS SHOULD
ALWAYS BE PRESENT IN A MAN'S LIFE.

LE CORBUSIER

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Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed
by Theo Effenberger, roof terrace of section
no. 27, view from the north-west, 1930;
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture,
Mat IIIb 533-10

were two common rooms on the ground floor and two on each of the two upper floors, on both sides of the corridor¹³¹. This concept assumed a strong social bond and loyalty. *Did anyone actually believe in this kind of forced community life? The worst enemy of a human is another human when they both are looking for a place to relax and rest – that was the belief before the war*¹³².

The extensive minimisation of the surface area was highly criticised by Walter Baranek, a receiver of the Wrocław exhibition, responsible for the interiors section in the exhibition hall¹³³.

The Housewives' Association was also very critical of the house-community presented by Adolf Rading. It was criticised for its poor conditions for bringing up children, the lack of isolation from the neighbours and the lack of opportunities to rest after work. It was a house for working class multifamily occupancy after all. It was anticipated that such small surface areas would cause a lot of problems with everyday use of the flats and the ability to keep them clean¹³⁴.

The house for singles and childless couples by Hans Scharoun (no. 31) was a highly controversial building from the very beginning of the exhibition. On the one hand, it was praised for its good proportions which made the small apartments spacious and comfortable spaces, its original and bold layout¹³⁵ and good ventilation and lighting¹³⁶, excellent social programme¹³⁷ and its appropriate concept as an apartment for singles. On the other hand, the Housewives' Association, having analysed the flats presented in Wrocław, pointed out certain flaws of this building, such as the way the bathroom ventilation went through to the bedroom, the presence of internal stairs in an already small flat, and lack of doors to the rooms¹³⁸.

The building looks like a ship that has just landed at a peaceful port, there are only the masts missing (...) and the waves, apart from that there is everything: the stern of a vessel, an angular form, hatches, railings, extension arms for the ship's



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¹³¹ Edgar NORWERTH, *op.cit.*, p. 330.

¹³² *Ibidem*, p. 289, Tafel 98. cf. Werkbund – Versuchssiedlung in Breslau. Ausstellung "Wohnung und Werkraum", "Die Baugilde", vol. 11, no. 13, 1929, p. 998.

¹³³ Walter BARANEK, *op.cit.*, p. 357.

¹³⁴ Eleonore COLDEN-JAENICKE, *op.cit.*, p. 615.

¹³⁵ Edith RISCHOWSKI, *op.cit.*, p. 410.

¹³⁶ Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, Tafel 99.

¹³⁷ Gustav LAMPMANN, *op.cit.*, pp. 466–467.

¹³⁸ Eleonore COLDEN-JAENICKE, *op.cit.*, p. 615.

¹³⁹ Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, pp. 288–289.

The hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, restaurant, view from the hall, 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 465

High-rise block of flats no. 7, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the recreational area (north-west), 1929. Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 456

140 O., op.cit., p. 298.

141 Georg MÜNTER, op.cit., p. 444.

142 L.M., Die Werkbund-Ausstellung zu Breslau, "Schlesisches Heim", vol. 7, 1929, p. 55.

143 M. (Ernst MAY?), Die Ausstellung Wohnung und Werkraum in Breslau, "Das neue Frankfurt", vol. 3, 1929, p. 204.

144 Georg MÜNTER, op.cit., p. 443.

145 Edgar NORWERTH, op.cit., p. 330.

*lifeboats which work as a support for climbing plants on the roof. (...) The house is a huge artistic achievement and it is located in an appropriate part of the estate*¹³⁹.

Alongside those enthusiastic appraisals of Hans Scharoun's houses, there were also less favourable opinions about its form, functional solutions and technical shortcomings. *It is an architectonic embodiment of anxiety – they wrote*¹⁴⁰. It was again compared to an ocean liner or a barge, but this time pejoratively. The building received many new biting nicknames regarding its form, for example, "Damasque", and "Morocco" (transatlantic ocean liners).

Both Rading's and Scharoun's houses were widely discussed in the professional press due to their innovative concepts regarding accommodation. Even though they were referred to as "construction caricatures", many people wanted to see them.

Gustav Wolf's eight-unit tenement house (no. 3–6) was described as *a peaceful spot in the chaos*¹⁴¹ within the whole estate. Its exterior was very similar to its interior. The layout of the flats was also very much appreciated.

The gallery-access house by Heim and Kempert was also positively accepted. *"A flat for an average man" – a crucial problem of Wrocław and other eastern cities – was professionally and competently solved in this house*¹⁴². *The gallery-access house is proof that new housing construction is coming out of the experimental phase and is becoming an obvious and solid element of modern art*¹⁴³ – wrote Ernst May who believed the gallery-access house to be the most successful object at the exhibition. *This house was refined to perfection in all its details*¹⁴⁴. The

only thing that needed to be considered was the issue with the galleries and if they should not be closed up with glass due to the inhospitable climate.

Only Polish architects viewed this building sceptically, recalling similar attempts from England where the climate is much milder¹⁴⁵.



Much attention was paid to the detached houses which offered many astute solutions to new social problems¹⁴⁶. The main advantages of the detached houses was a practical allocation of functions to the space and the division of the house into the "loud" and "silent" areas and "day" and "night" zones. On the other hand it was said that *a few talented architects (...) had totally forgotten about the economy which is a decisive element of contemporary residential buildings and yielded to the demon of the exhibition* by designing detached houses of extravagant form and, what is worse, too costly¹⁴⁷. Another critic thought that only some of the detached houses (especially Heinrich Lauterbach's and Ludwig Moshamer's) and Adolf Rading's house had an interesting and dynamic form.

Special recognition was granted to the terraced houses by the representatives of the Housewives' Association who appreciated mostly the two-level flats which allowed for a larger number of beds, flats with separate entrances and basements, where the stairs were straight and not too steep, the bathroom was separate from the WC, and had built-in wardrobes and additional cubbyholes.

Theo Effenberger's (no. 26–27), Emil Lange's (no. 28) and Paul Häusler's (no. 29–30) houses were described as free of any flaws, of plain and calm internal form. A section of Lange's house built on supports was considered rather peculiar. On the one hand, it made the house much more economical; but on the other hand, the result was that two bedrooms had external walls, a roof and an open sided area below, similar to an arcade. The houses that should be given special attention were by Heinrich Lauterbach's (no. 35), Moritz Haddy's (no. 36) and Ludwig Moshamer's (no. 37). By a process of smooth shaping the projection, astonishing spatial forms were achieved.

An extremely different opinion about Moshamer's detached house was presented by his contemporary critic: *When you split a small body of building and move its parts away from each other while making one taller than the other, then the result cannot be justified in any way. A residential house is too small to apply such a formal operation*¹⁴⁸.

Heinrich Lauterbach's detached house was described as *adjusted to a modern human, neither too lofty, nor too excessive. (...) This house energises, relaxes, makes a person calm down and refreshes them to go to work again*¹⁴⁹.

146 Walter BARANEK, *op.cit.*, p. 357.

147 M. (Ernst MAY?), *op.cit.*, p. 204.

148 O., *op.cit.*, p. 298; Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, p. 448.

149 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 287.



Single-family terraced houses, no. 13-15, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, living and dining room with a service hatch, 1929/1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1034-3

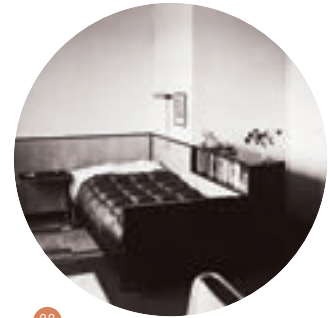


Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, living room, 1929, The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-21

Another building that received a lot of recognition was by Gustav Wolf (no. 32–33): *the simplicity of the form reveals that its author is an experienced architect*¹⁵⁰. On the one hand, this house was regarded as an artistic creation, refined in every detail; on the other hand, it was criticised for being heavy and not dynamic¹⁵¹.

The Housewives' Association gave very positive reviews to the interior design of the house, praising the simple forms of the furnishings and good quality of materials¹⁵². After 1927, the issue that came to the fore was not the formal composition, but the economy of the buildings. Just like in other model housing estates, as was in Wrocław, the unfulfilled condition was that the flats were supposed to be affordable. The new technologies used in an experimental way could not have been inexpensive. The prototype building, that was not yet produced on a mass scale and therefore had no construction industry infrastructure or context around it, was very often well above the norm cost-wise: considering it was also constructed using traditional methods.

The building cost of some of the model houses was way beyond the estimated cost. An analysis of the building costs was carried out for a single-family detached house by Heinrich Lauterbach. It was proven that this house was too expensive for the users it was meant for¹⁵³. The most inexpensive project of all the houses was the semi-detached house by Gustav Wolf¹⁵⁴. The most expensive projects were the houses by Rading and Scharoun. They consumed over half of all the funds given to the whole estate. This is estimated data since the management of the exhibition decided not to reveal the real cost of the estate to the public in order not to



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Single-family terraced houses, no. 15, designed by Heinrich Lauterbach, bedroom, 1929/1930. The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 1037-2

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Detached house no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, view from the side entrance (north), 1929. Published in "Schlesische Monatshefte", 1929, p. 291



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150 O., *op.cit.*, p. 298.

151 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 288.

152 Eleonore COLDEN-JAENICKE, *op.cit.*, p. 616.

153 Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, pp. 450–451.

154 Guido HARBERS, *op.cit.*, p. 288.

155 Georg MÜNTER, *op.cit.*, pp. 452–453.

156 Christine NIELSEN, *Die Versuchsiedlung...*;
Lubomir ŠLAPETA, Vladimir ŠLAPETA, *op.cit.*,
p. 1442.

discourage future owners from buying the most expensive flats. The average cost per cubic meter was calculated and the cost of some houses was reduced in order to raise the price of other houses proportionally. It was believed that this would protect those talented and renowned architects who were given such a responsible task and then wasted money ridiculously. On the basis of the average construction costs the price of rental or purchase was calculated for each flat and house. By this, the success of the exhibition was supposed to be magnified: the main aim of the exhibition was to present economical flats for mass use¹⁵⁵.

This also probably contributed to personal frictions. After the exhibition closed, Adolf Rading, Hans Scharoun, Heinrich Lauterbach, Johannes Molzahn i Josef Vinecký left the Silesian Section of the German Werkbund. The exhibition ended in arguments and envy. It left a bad taste in everybody's mouths, and everybody seemed to forget its unquestionable success before the group was taken over by national socialists who publicly condemned "Neues Bauen"¹⁵⁶.



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Model of high-rise block of flats no. 7, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the recreational area (west). Published in "Die Form", 1929, p. 266



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Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, the right wing of the building, view from the garden, (south), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

HOSTEL HOUSE NO. 31



Mr Jacek Gašior, Assistant Administration Manager at the National Labour Inspectorate's Training Centre in Wrocław, has been taking daily care of the building designed by Hans Scharoun for over a dozen years. He took me for a short tour around the building to show the current renovation works and its interior design. Right from the off he drew my attention to details which might be overseen by visitors, which certainly demonstrated that the design was exceptionally thorough and that my guide knew this building inside out. We walked from the modern building of the Training Centre to the hotel, passing by restored elements of the development: the landscaping, the paths and the terrace in front of the entrance. Inside, we walked through the main hall filled with its vivid colours which had been recreated from paint layer testing and into the hotel wing containing the renovated two-level room 48 and newly-arranged suites. We then moved along the new corridors and up to the recently finished roof.

The roof has regained its original layout with an elegant space for sun-bathing. The details were entirely restored or made to imitate the historical ones. During previous restoration works the roof had been covered with a concrete layer and insulation applied unprofessionally which was so thick it covered two of the old steps linking the roof to the corridor. Many of the original solutions, such as the draining holes on the terraces which had been successively covered with layers of roofing material, have been renovated. Beautiful concrete details have been restored, among others the winding stairs with upturned side edges, the flowerbeds for climbing plants dividing the roof into smaller "artificial beaches" and a ship-like railing, balustrades and trellises. The roof itself could be a tourist attraction, as the view of the building and its surroundings show this "oceanic liner-like" character in its full beauty. Currently it is not open for the public. Of course not everything has been renovated, there is still a lot left for future undertakings, for example, the roofs of the remaining lower wings of the building, the side staircase, some of the rooms and additional elements of the interior design on the ground floor. However, the on-going restoration makes everyone optimistic about the whole building's future, especially those who remember the grey wainscot and overall neglect of the early 90s.

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: What is the history of the WuWA model house for singles and childless couples that later became a hotel and which had been used as a field hospital during the war?

JG: Since the war only one institution has managed this building. It is governed by the National Labour Inspectorate. In the past the Inspectorate reported to the trade unions and later on its status changed. However, for all that time it has been based in this building.

GHL: Did this building become a training and hotel facility for this institution right away?

JG: Yes, from the beginning it was the Inspectorate's school where employees and social labour inspectors were trained.

GHL: When did the first serious renovation works begin? The building was listed (to the register of monuments) in 1972, but I think that the real, professional restoration started in the 90s.

JG: In the mid-90s the then director of the

centre, who still holds this position, (and in the meantime was a Polish MP), initiated the renovation works. At that time the deterioration of the building was patently obvious and its technical condition was dreadful. The director convinced the Inspectorate's authorities to assign funds, as much as were available at that time, and to start the restoration of the building. Meanwhile, Mrs Jadwiga Urbanik, a doctor in Architectural Engineering joined our team. At the turn of 1996–1997

I was employed as the Administration Manager, so it was obvious I would get involved in the renovation. Our awareness of the value and character of this place was growing as we contacted specialists in history and architectural restoration. I observed that the hotel had been renovated without any special attention or care, not to mention the distinct lack of awareness that it is a building of significant architectural value. Put simply, the building was restored using materials



House no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, roof terraces of the middle part and the left wing of the building, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

and technology available in the 60s and 70s. They determined the renovation techniques. It was not until the mid-90s that everybody realised this building was unique. Since it is also a State Treasury property, governed by the National Labour Inspectorate Management Board, it's our duty to take care of this building appropriately, namely, with respect to the art of restoration. We received huge help in this matter from Dr Jadwiga Urbanik and Dr Agnieszka Gryglewska and also got a positive response from the City Historic Preservation Officer. The crucial moment was when we realised it was absolutely necessary to go back to Hans Scharoun's project and his solutions which are still considered modern for our time. We performed paint layer testing on the paints applied and conducted a conservation study which gave us an idea of how it must have been during German times. Basically we all agreed that the colours used by Scharoun would give an amazing effect. We started the renovation process step by step. The subsequent renovation works were based on the knowledge of Dr Urbanik and Dr Gryglewska who gave us hints on solutions and technologies which should be used. Further works were more orderly, carried out more thoroughly and focused on the elements that could be restored. I have to admit we are all delighted with the results.

There's one particular room that was restored to its original condition as accurately as possible. However opinions are split over its success. Some people like it, for example, I like its style, but others don't appreciate it and prefer a different design.

GHL: I've seen this room during a tour with English students. I have to admit it plays a significant educational role. Room 48 had a huge impact on the

students' imaginations. They could compare it with the size of their own flats and see what was considered the logical minimum living space for a couple at the end of the 20s in the 20th century. Having seen it comprised of quite extensive appliances and a vast bathroom and kitchenette, it really got into their imagination.

JG: That's what is really interesting about this room. Even though the living space is quite small, you can find everything



House no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, left wing of the building with emergency escape staircase, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

you need for comfortable living: it's all functional. This room was restored to show the original concept of the designer. However it is now used as a hotel room continuously: we accommodate our guests in it. It even has its fans who always want to stay in it. On the other hand, there are also people who don't appreciate the atmosphere of this space. Its characteristic colours, the linoleum on the floor and the solutions used may give the impression that the room is too cold as a hotel room. Taking into account the fact that the building draws more and more attention every year, we've decided to renovate this type of room throughout the building. We're happy that there are increasing numbers of tours coming and more and more people want to visit our hotel. That's why we wanted to renovate this room faithfully. Of course it doesn't mean we gave up on Scharoun's idea

in the other rooms altogether. On the contrary, we had employed certain solutions in room 48 and decided to apply them in other rooms as well. We've prepared a few rooms to a higher standard when it comes to decoration. They were designed by the interior designer, Adam Sottys. We asked Mr Sottys not to break away from Scharoun's original design, but to make it more modern while keeping the general atmosphere, which would make a contemporary guest not feel like being in a museum. I think it worked perfectly since these rooms are really impressive and people who stay in them are happy as the rooms are functional and eye-catching. This year we have decided to change the project so that the rooms are a better fit to their current function, namely, as accommodation for the trainees: a place where they should be able to study. Our main task is to train our employees and candidates as prospective inspectors. Very often it is the case that people spend two weeks or more here at a time and have to acquire a substantial amount of learning material. Therefore, we came up with the concept as a departure to Scharoun's idea of rooms for childless couples or single occupants. Originally, the two-level apartments had some sort of dining-living room downstairs and a bedroom upstairs. We have divided these rooms into two parts in such a way that there are now

two rooms with a bathroom in between. This provides a reasonable amount of comfort where it was non-existent before and thus confers privacy to the occupants. This solution will soon also be applied to other rooms as well, as we have already started subsequent renovation works on them.

We are going to remove the plaster finish coat and go back to the mineral coat. The existing recesses in the rooms are going to be turned back into kitchenettes as we have decided it to be a very good idea for residents who stay in our hotel for two weeks or longer. They will be able to prepare coffee in a kitchenette equipped with a sink, a place for a kettle and a small fridge. This all significantly boosts the standards of comfort. This idea applied in room 48 and other rooms seems to be the right solution for the needs of the 21st century.

GHL: The bathrooms aren't problematic at all, since they were built to a modern standard, what's more, they are quite spacious for hotel bathrooms.

JG: Yes, they aren't overloaded with equipment though, and have always been plain rather than sumptuous. There's nothing unnecessary: but that was the assumption of the modernists. We've matched the furniture with colours and equipment in the new rooms in a similar

style and we are going to apply it across the hotel as we receive more and more funds.

GHL: That's interesting. Practically, the building is constantly evolving, being completed step by step, getting closer and closer to the original, becoming altogether better and better. You even correct mistakes from previous renovation works. For example, you've changed the white windows to ones that are closer to the original when it comes to the materials adopted.

JG: This building, even though it was excellently designed, has some flaws which result from the imperfections of the materials and technologies of the era. Among others, these are draughty windows and relatively thin walls which causes the building to lose quite a lot of heat energy. We've decided to change the windows to synthetic ones to improve air tightness and therefore reduce heat losses. We've managed to meet the requirements of both key stakeholders, namely, the Historic Preservation Officers and the users, by mounting two-colour windows. The outer frame is grey whilst the inner is white, which reflects the original design of the old wooden windows that were covered with ship paint. This improves the insulation and there is no more wind blowing through our rooms. We've also

managed, as much as it was possible, to insulate the building; however, this has only been possible for the side walls where it wouldn't change the shape of the building and its general appearance. When it comes to the front and back wall, it wasn't possible to apply any insulation since it would make the window recesses deeper and we'd lose the effect Hans Scharoun had in mind. The whole structure would be perceived differently. We've had to change the windows though. Modern technology is very much advanced, so we could mount wooden windows; nonetheless, it is a matter for

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House no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, view from the garden, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



02

future restoration works. As of now, there is no need to change the windows.

GHL: In time, say in a few years, when the current windows are technically insufficient then you will use some other material?

JG: Yes, it will form part of recreating the original conditions. This will be exactly the same as what we're now doing with the plaster used in the interiors. But going back to the flaws, there are plenty of defects which are a result of the very hurried original construction process. For example, the wardrobe recesses are of different sizes in each room. They were building very quickly, so it was irrelevant if the recesses were the same or not. For us it's a real problem since we can't use standard furniture: instead we have to have each wardrobe custom-built. Our biggest concern is that we can't adjust this facility to accommodate people with reduced mobility. If a disabled person wanted only to see this building inside, he or she would encounter serious issues due to the lack of a lift and the



House no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, original radiator in the corridor of the left wing of the building, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

very narrow staircases in the rooms. There's simply no way for a wheelchair to go through. A wheelchair user can currently only enter the main hall and the restaurant. There's no possibility to transport a disabled person from the ground floor to the upper ones. The winding stairs make it impossible to apply other solutions and there's no free space to install a lift shaft. This is the biggest disadvantage of this building. Apart from that, for ordinary users at least, we have the feeling that this building was designed especially to meet our needs.

GHL: How do you cope with tourists? As you mentioned, there are more and

more of them. At some point providing building tours may interfere with the regular work of the hotel.

JG: So far it hasn't been a problem. There aren't that many tourists to actually impede our work. Usually, guided tours contact us early enough and we set a particular date when they can enter the building and if circumstances allow we also show them room 48 and the corridors. It is always possible however to see the hall, the restaurant and the grounds.

GHL: The entrance to the main hall leaves a huge impression. It is especially fascinating to see the windows positioned at unconventional heights.



House no. 31, designed by Hans Scharoun, the right wing corridor, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

JG: The newly restored corridors are fantastic; it looks as if there are ship cabins along them. Nonetheless, a full tour around the hotel should also include a visit to the restored room. Taking into account the modern facilities, the fact that people spend a few days, two weeks or more here, we believe that after full renovation the building is going to fully meet the requirements of the National Labour Inspectorate trainees. On the other hand, we aren't going to depart from Scharoun's original idea when it comes to its functions, or even those unique colours. We can easily say that the accommodation here is even superior to a typical hotel's. At a conventional

hotel, it's unusual to be able to prepare a cup of coffee or a light meal in your own room. Usually, you have to go to a restaurant or bar. Here we don't have to run a typical restaurant.

GHL: That would be my next question. Is it popular for visitors to visit your café?

JG: In the afternoon the café is run by a concessionary.

GHL: Recently you've renovated the terrace?

JG: Yes. We have installed an awning, so that in summer our guests can enjoy their coffee in the shade. We've tried to organise longer opening hours, for example, at the weekends it was open all day long, but there were no customers and it was hard to expect the café management to keep its employees staffing an empty café. On fine weather days our guests use the terrace a lot and spend their time in the shade of the awning. Admittedly, it wasn't an original idea of Scharoun's, but the awning fits the building well and makes a stay at the hotel more attractive. We've

also taken care of the landscaping. The grounds were designed by specialists. The plants look better and better each year and I think that in a few years it is going to be really impressive. Recently, I've even seen families with children sitting on the benches in front of the hotel enjoying a sandwich during a break from sightseeing or a walk. Outside night hours the hotel area is open to visitors, so during the day people can walk in the hotel garden. Yet, for security reasons, we don't allow non-residents to visit the hotel. Besides, it'd be hard to keep the place clean if people walked in unsupervised.

GHL: Well, I've seen a hotel room after being visited by twenty students and I scratched my head in disbelief.

JG: Right, we always have to be mindful of this. We can't keep additional staff which would generate unjustified costs and we don't sell entrance tickets as in a museum either. We're doing our best to make the building available for visitors to enjoy.

GHL: Recently you've made some moves to make the building more

popular. You've held an exhibition of the Weissenhof house estate, right?

JG: Yes, we have. We didn't organise it ourselves though. Nonetheless, we're very happy that the City has taken care of this area. I am incredibly impressed that such an extensive revitalisation plan, which I have already seen a few times in person, has been devised. I am sure a truly wonderful area might be created if such a plan was executed. We don't want to stand out from the other buildings; we're part of the whole WuWA exhibition, or even maybe one of its foremost buildings. We want to join this project and bring our building to prominence by doing whatever we can and whatever we can afford. If it's possible to source funds from the EU in the future, we're going to start a wider range of restoration projects and we'll attempt to accomplish them all at once. If not, then in the coming years we're going to continue with smaller renovation projects.

GHL: Does the building pay its own way?

JG: We don't run our own business, we're a budgetary unit. We do our statutory tasks defined by the National Labour Inspectorate and we receive our funds for

them. We do our own training, carry out promotional tasks and conduct additional training for our social partners, but we don't charge for these services.

To the end of 2011 we were a state budgetary establishment "paid" by the National Labour Inspectorate and also by other contractors such as employers and trainees. Since then our organizational and legal status has changed and at the moment we're a budgetary unit and we only carry out the tasks assigned by the state. We have fewer options to accommodate outside guests. If it were a regular, commercial hotel, we'd be fully booked...

GHL: Exactly, especially in such a wonderful location with beautiful architecture and a chance to experience something unique in a historical place.

JG: It is rather inconvenient: on the other hand, we have to carry out the tasks we are assessed for.

GHL: To me it seems it's better for the building since you have more respect for it than a commercial owner.

JG: It is the outcome of a few people's

goodwill. We assemble a team with a common goal, from the General Labour Inspectorate, through the City Historic Preservation Officer, to Dr Jadwiga Urbanik. We want this building to revert to its original condition, so that we aren't embarrassed in front of the residents and visitors to Wrocław. Goodwill is the key solution to any problem. Basically, there are no misunderstandings between us. On the one hand, we know the constraints while renovating a monument since we're in constant communication with the Historic Preservation Officer. On the other hand, the Historic Preservation Officer is also aware of the current functions this building has to fulfil and they take them into account. We've reached a compromise for the benefit of this building.

GHL: You've created a great vision of synergy for all the parties involved...

JG: And that's what it is. There are no conflicts or misunderstandings, if we come across an obstacle, we sit down and solve it. Life shows that Scharoun's design fully matches its current functions and meets our requirements. To me it's a perfect monument.



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House no. 31, former hostel for singles and childless couples, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, hall, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



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POST-WAR HISTORY
OF THE WUWA HOUSING ESTATE



House no. 31, currently Hotel Park, designed by Hans Scharoun, details of the façade, 2014, photo Natalia and Ernest Dec



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House no. 28, designed by Emil Lange, window, 2014, photo Natalia and Ernest Dec

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Detached house no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, view from the entrance's side (north), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

POST-WAR HISTORY OF THE WUWA HOUSING ESTATE

The public was allowed access to the WuWA model housing estate exhibition for over three months in all. Afterwards, the Wrocław Settlement Building Society rented out all the houses for two years to conduct research work on their functionality. The houses were occupied, among others, by artists, architects and writers.

After World War II Wrocław became part of the Polish territory. Fortunately the war activities did not cause any major damage to the housing estate. After the war these houses were

occupied by people who came to an unknown and a largely devastated city. Considering those conditions, it would have been unlikely they could fully appreciate the inherent advantages of this ultra-modern architecture since they came from areas with a totally different architectural heritage. In addition to that, the reality of day-to-day circumstances made it impossible to focus on other aesthetic matters.

Luckily after the war there were few changes introduced to the form of the houses. However, even before the war the forms of the houses were in fact slightly changed (e.g. in house no. 28 by Emil Lange the space under the part of the house supported by posts was built up, and a terrace was built to access the garden from the house side).

After the war only some of the houses were substantially changed. The majority of the houses still exist and are occupied. The ones which didn't survive were the two-family semi-detached house by Gustav Wolf (no. 32/33) which was demolished after the war, and the kindergarten by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter (no. 2) which burnt down in 2006: it was restored according to the original project in 2013.

Major changes to the façade and body of the buildings were introduced in only three of them. In house no. 22 by Theodor Effenberger an additional floor was built over the former ground-floor part. Changes in the body of the house no. 7 by Adolf Rading were the most significant as they substantially altered the then extravagant façade. Nowadays, however, it has become a shadow of its former self. The

Former high-rise block of flats no. 7, currently the Wrocław University "Pancernik" halls of residence, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the street (north-east), 2014

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Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre designed by Hans Scharoun, residential section of the right wing – living room, reconstruction, 2014



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101 Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, view from the garden (south-west), section no. 27 after renovation, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



102 High-rise multi-family section no. 9, designed by Emil Lange, view from the street (north-west), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

external anterooms were knocked down, the space between the two sections in the eastern side of the building was built up, the original shape of the windows and top floor were altered (the terrace and the workshop). House no. 35 was rebuilt after it had been damaged during the war. It was divided into two single-family sections and above one of them an additional floor was built.

The buildings from the estate have generally not changed their primary functions. Exceptions to that rule are house no. 7 by Adolf Rading (a former tenement

house, today a hall of residents) and house no. 31 by Hans Scharoun (a former house for singles and childless couples, today a hotel).

The landscape around the buildings played a vital role in the architects' concept of the estate but as time has passed, it has gone through some unfavourable changes. Many of the trees are in very bad condition and are located in quite unfortunate places. A prime example of a reckless decision made in the estate was to build the new kindergarten in a public green area and to build a detached

TODAY IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT
THE WUWA HOUSING ESTATE IS ONE-OF-A-KIND
ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE

Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, the middle section of the building, view from the roof of the left wing (south-east), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

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104 Detached house no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, original door handle, façade after renovation, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

house on a plot at no. 23 Tramwajowa Street which was previously a part of a terraced development.

Today it goes without saying that the WuWA housing estate is one-of-a-kind on the European landscape. The Wrocław architectural community already appreciated its significance in the 70s: in 1972 house no. 31 by Hans Scharoun was entered into the Wrocław City Register of Monuments, and in 1979 the remaining houses were added, which meant that their functions, construction and construction technologies, as well as the external and internal form of the buildings were protected from that point on. On March 27th, 2007 the whole urban complex of the WuWA housing estate was entered into the register of monuments. As a consequence, the general conservation rule adopted for this estate was to fully restore the houses and the surroundings while keeping the original layout of the old exhibition area.

However, the remit of the Historic Preservation Officer does not cover the day-to-day maintenance of the houses. For many years the WuWA housing estate has been neglected, and the renovation cost very often exceeds the financial capacities of the owners. In 1993, the National Labour Inspectorate started the renovation of the hotel by Hans Scharoun which is being painstakingly continued up to this day.

On the 80th anniversary of the WuWA housing estate in 2009 the Museum of Architecture prepared an exhibition centred around the Wrocław Werkbund estate. Being aware of the uniqueness of this small complex, the City of Wrocław has taken up a range of initiatives to restore it to its former glory. In 2010, the municipal company Wrocławska Rewitalizacja created a "General strategy for the revitalisation of the WuWA housing estate in Wrocław"



Detached house no. 36, designed by Moritz
Hadda, view from the garden (south-west), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

containing a full analysis and assessment of its then condition and presenting possible plans for further activities. One of the main aims was to involve all those stakeholders who are interested in the revitalisation process. Currently there are two types of ownership on the WuWA estate: private, for most of the houses (excluding the building by A. Rading which nowadays belongs to the University of

Wrocław, and no. 31 by H. Scharoun owned by the National Labour Inspectorate and some flats in multi-family buildings) and secondly, municipal for the area surrounding the houses. Funding of the renovation activities is very often too much of a burden for the private owners.

On May 19th 2011 on the initiative of the Mayor of Wrocław, the City Council passed new rules for subsidy for



Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, bathroom of house no. 27, c. 1930.
The Wrocław Museum of Architecture, Mat IIIb 533-12



Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, bathroom of house no. 27, 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



108 On the left eight-unit terraced house no. 3–6, designed by Gustav Wolf, on the right the former high-rise block of flats no. 7, currently the University of Wrocław "Pancernik" halls of residence, designed by Adolf Rading, view from the west, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

persons holding private ownership of a registered building which is a part of the former WuWA exhibition area in Wrocław. The grant-in-aid covers conservation, restoration and construction activities. This programme allows for a subsidy of up to seventy percent of the renovation cost for the façade and garden if the renovation is carried out in accordance with a project approved by the Historic Preservation Officer. The first house renovated with the grant-in-aid was house no. 37 by Ludwig Moshamer. This renovation was definitely an impulse for other inhabitants to take on similar actions further down the line. In 2013, house no. 27 by Theodor Effenberger was renovated. Currently owners of the following houses are

applying for the grant: gallery-access house no. 2 by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, detached house no. 28 by Emil Lange and one of the sections in the terraced house no. 12 by Ludwig Moshamer. Apart from those, owners of the restored house no. 37 have applied for the subsidy for their garden restoration.

On July 8th, 2011 the City of Wrocław opened a contest for the architectural development of the surroundings of the WuWA area. Its aim was not only to create a general idea for the development of communication system, but most of all to give solutions for public area, namely, the landscape, lighting modified to the character of the buildings, fencing,

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Former hostel for singles and childless couples no. 31, currently the hotel of the National Labour Inspectorate Training Centre, designed by Hans Scharoun, residential section of the right wing – living room with a kitchenette, reconstruction, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec



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Semi-detached house no. 26/27, designed by Theo Effenberger, view from the garden (south-west) section no. 27 after renovation, 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

footpaths and communal zones, benches, dustbins, and also the bus stop and information system about the houses. There were 18 projects which met all the formal requirements of the competition and it was adjudicated on September 22nd, 2011. The winning project by the BASIS design agency became the blueprint for the construction documentation.

Around the same time a new solution for the plot of the non-existent kindergarten, which was burnt down in 2006, was presented. The City of Wrocław gave this area of responsibility to the Lower Silesia Chamber of Architects which set themselves the task to restore the building as their training facility. The architects, under the supervision of the chairman, Zbigniew Maćków, created a new project. The functional layout was not changed. The designer attempted to recreate the original character of this building.



Detached house no. 37, designed by Ludwig Moshamer, view from the garden (north), 2014. Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

They applied the same material (a wooden framework and wooden mantles for the external walls), and the same form and dimensions of the original building. The colour scheme was recreated on the basis of the original photographs and very general descriptions of the building from pre-war times. The reconstruction was completed in December 2013. Adopting this new building as the seat of the Chamber will be something more than just a training centre for architects. It'll also serve as an exhibition and lecture area for people interested in architecture, and a place for meetings and discussions.

The WuWA housing estate is spatially connected with the area of the Centennial Hall and the Zoo which altogether are a "free time zone". Alongside the zones of the Market Square and the stadium, it will become one of those three most important places for mass events, offering wide range of cultural, recreational and entertainment functions. The Centennial Hall was entered into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2006. This is also a major factor in raising awareness and widening knowledge about the housing estate and modernist architecture among inhabitants and tourists.

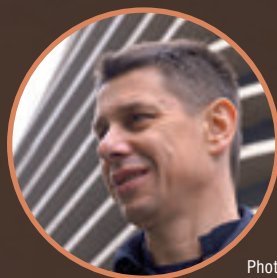
Renovation and maintenance of the WuWA model housing estate is a complicated and lengthy process which mostly relies on the cooperation of all stakeholders. Nowadays the WuWA estate is no longer simply an exhibition area. That is why the right relation between its promotion and the needs of its inhabitants is one of the key challenges of the renovation process.

Building no. 2 – former kindergarten,
currently seat of the Lower Silesia
Chamber of Architects, reconstruction
after fire, view from the former
playground (south), 2014.
Photography by Natalia and Ernest Dec

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HOUSE NO. 2—FORMER KINDERGARTEN



Photography by Marysia Maćków

House number two, a former kindergarten, was raised to the ground in 2006. The single-storey wooden building was destroyed not long after it had been handed over to private owners. A very important element of the housing estate, which played a public role amongst community, had disappeared from WuWA's landscape.

In 1929, the creators of WuWA exhibition had a concept of a spacious, bright and hygienic kindergarten which showed how modern and ahead of its times the complex was. It met social needs that were new for the time. The brilliantly designed building demonstrated modern construction knowledge and a notion of space taken from Maria Montessori's school of thought which to this day is considered modern.

The building comprised a main rectangular play room with vestibule: a waiting room for the parents and lower floor rooms for group activities, a kitchen and bathrooms, etc. to the sides. Light entered the main room through windows in the gable walls. The building was covered with wood and constructed from a system of interconnected, wooden elements.

After regaining the plot in 2011, in addition to the destroyed kindergarten, the Wrocław City Government handed it over to the Dolnośląska Okręgowa Izba Architektów (DSOIA – Lower Silesia Chamber of Architects), under the condition they restore the building.

The architects had been looking for a suitable location for their office, so they eagerly got down to examining the urban revitalisation plans of the WuWA housing estate. These detailed that the regional authorities fund one-third of the kindergarten renovation cost from EU grants, the rest of the funds come from DSOIA membership fees. The restored building will not only serve as an office for the architects' council but also as an exhibition venue for WuWA. It was also important that out front there be an authentic reproduction of the sandboxes and flower beds.

Zbigniew Maćków, Chairman of the DSOIA Council is also one of the contributing designers of the kindergarten restoration project.

Grażyna Hryncewicz-Lamber: What is the urban revitalization of the WuWA kindergarten about?

ZM: In architectural revitalization it is generally acknowledged and accepted that to restore an element of a building one simply recreates it in the same shape and form as it was originally designed. Of course, there is an on-going discussion if such interventions should be visible and should this unoriginality be exposed or not. There are two schools of thought, but I don't see any point in discussing which is better. Each will always be preferred by architects: almost religiously in some cases. When talking about urban revitalisation, we can compare it to architectural renovation. Restoring a neo-Gothic building, we fill in the missing bricks. If there is an urban complex, not a single building, as is the case with this exhibition which consists of twenty-eight objects, then they're like those bricks in the wall: one or two of those objects are missing because they're time-worn. I feel that it is acceptable or even recommendable to fill in these gaps and restore them.

Of course such issues are usually followed by lengthy discussions concerning if we should expose the new elements or should we do it in such a way that no one can tell the old from the new: but that's a different story. In this situation, the need to fill in this urban complex comes from the fact that the missing element is a tiny fragment of a bigger whole. To me, that's the only case when the restoration is justified. If it were the only historical kindergarten, located in Wróblewskiego or Olszewskiego Street, or were not a part of a whole, I wouldn't recommend its reconstruction. It would be inappropriate from the point of view of city development philosophy. In the process of city revitalization we shouldn't go back to single buildings "eaten" by history. That's my personal view: but here the situation is different. The kindergarten is a part of an exhibition consisting of twenty-eight buildings – blocks – I feel we have the right to fill in this one block to be able to refer to WuWA as a whole.

GHL: One of the aims of the exhibition was to show different construction technologies. Is the kindergarten being restored using the same technologies or different ones?

ZM: Yes and no. I think there are a few goals to reach in this project. The first goal, when it comes to the construction technologies used, was to show how efficient the wooden framework is, and what its capabilities are, for example, the pace of construction and its independence from the weather conditions. The second aspect of a wooden framework technology is the possibility of achieving certain heights and ranges; namely, the proportions of the interior, which in turn had a huge influence on the execution of the functional plan. To give you an example, it became possible to create a play room and bedrooms for the children using thin, small-sized construction elements. There were no massive walls or supports: the wooden framework act as a light support.

GHL: In my opinion it's a very functional building, even for today.



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House no. 2, Kindergarten, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, view from the playground (south). A postcard, the Wrocław Museum of Architecture, City of Wrocław Construction Archive

ZM: Exactly. When we decided the course of the reconstruction, we reached exactly the same conclusion. It is a building, like no other building, that can be given a second lease of life in the same shape; without any modifications. The new function we've assigned to this building fits the space 98%, even though it's totally different. The only things that have changed are the toilets because the regulations have changed and the baths have been removed. But this is only a fraction of the kindergarten site. The layout of the amenities is even the same, the toilets will be located in

the same place but the internal walls will be arranged differently.

Going back to the construction technology adopted. You asked if we're using the same technology and I said, "Yes and no." This is because we aren't using the Doecker system by Christoph & Unmack A.G. We managed to make contact with them though. They don't produce precisely the same system any more, but if we had put our foot down, I'm sure it would have been possible to reinstate that solution. However, we have decided it's unnecessary to pursue because the internal structure of the building

is concealed. It would be just for the sake of it. Nowadays, we don't need to remind ourselves what options a wooden framework offers. After eighty years we're many steps ahead in the development of construction technologies. We don't have to prove that using this technology is quick: it's a known fact. We used the wooden framework though, in order to gain the same proportions, the same heights, the distances, the same elements that make the construction appear light, the thin walls, etc. only with the purpose to restore exactly the same space as it was in 1929.

GHL: Were there any problems concerning the project? Everybody tends to have trouble with the choice of colours...

ZM: There was a problem with the colours, since we had no prior information to go on. We arranged a few

House no. 2, former kindergarten, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, view from the north, before the fire, the Wrocław Museum of Architecture. Photography by W. Borski



House no. 2, former kindergarten, designed by Paul Heim and Albert Kempter, currently the seat of the, Lower Silesia Chamber of Architects, reconstruction after the fire, view of the main entrance (north), 2014. Photography by Maciej Lulko

meetings with some knowledgeable and experienced architects: the City Historic Preservation Officer; the author of a study about the housing estate, Dr Jadwiga Urbanik; a specialist from the Lower Silesian Monument Conservation Workshop, Andrzej Kamiński; the architect, Andrzej Poniewierka; the town planner, Piotr Fokczyński; and two designers-constructors, Bartłomiej Witwicki and I. This team discussed the colour of the façade and its elements. There was some detective work involved, as we hadn't found any materials to hand concerning the colour of the walls. We had a couple of black-and-white photographs which we blew up to one metre by one metre squares. We then analysed the photographs under different lighting conditions. Fortunately, the building had been photographed under various lighting situations. Looking at some of the photos where the façades were in the shade, it seems like the building was painted in one colour, without any shade exposing any details. However, in full light, it is clearly visible that there are differences between the colours of particular elements. We concluded that all the window and door frames were pure white. All vertical hardware such as fascia

boards, constituting also the cornices and supports, were also white. On the other hand, the whole façade was one tone darker: it wasn't white. It is clearly visible, especially in the photos with good light, that there is contrast between the white elements and the background. Of course, it was a problem to obtain the original materials because when we searched through Christoph & Unmack's tender, it turned out that these ready-made systems had been produced in only green and claret colours. Claret was out of question, there is no doubt about that; the building was too bright. We thought it might have been a very light pea-green. We asked Dr Jadwiga Urbanik to tell us which choice would be the best. We prepared four large one metre squared colour samples, having chosen the colour of the window frames before using this same method. The six of us spent a lengthy amount of time at the construction site comparing, one by one, each sample and trying to choose the one that would match the colours of the wall base and clinkered brick terrace we had seen in the post-war photographs. Finally, after some long discussions and by process of elimination we arrived at the right shade – white with two drops of

black and a hint of green.

On the last day of our discussions a funny thing happened. We had spent, I think, three days or so putting the finishing touches on the selection when Andrzej Poniewierka brought along his seven-year-old granddaughter who without any hesitation pointed to the same colour as our team of six had spent the last few days choosing.

GHL: I wonder if there is still anyone alive who would have witnessed this era: if there are people on Tramwajowa Street who have been living there since the 50's.

ZM: I haven't thought about that, but we can always repaint it if we discover new information regarding the colours.

GHL: How are you planning to develop the area around the kindergarten? In 1929 people could roam freely around the WuWA exhibition. Is the kindergarten going to be open to the public?

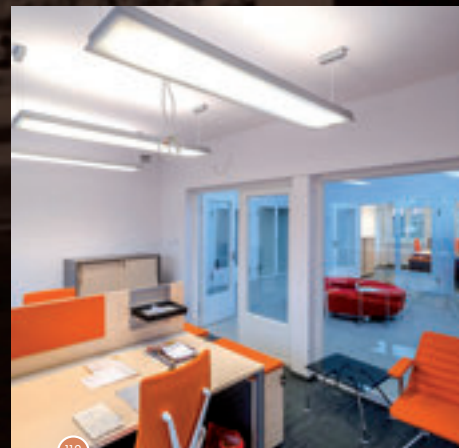
ZM: We want to go back to the idea of accessibility. The former kindergarten was a public building, so we are planning to make it available to everyone: there will be no fence. The garden development will be exactly the

same, a replica, including the flower beds, sandboxes, a large square and benches. The building will be made available; there will be an entrance area with an information office, etc. We want to comply with the requirements of the project that won the competition for the best housing estate public space development.

GHL: How is this going to relate to the whole WuWA estate? As far as I understood, the exhibition part of the building is going to be given to young architects, is that right? Are you planning to make this building a venue to greet and inform tourists? WuWA is certainly lacking such a place.

ZM: That's been our initial plan. We want this site to be a tourist stronghold for WuWA which is already a niche attraction: dedicated to certain tourists. We want this building, especially its front area to serve the tourists who will be able to enter inside. For that purpose we're renovating two display cases in the entrance. They will contain some artefacts such as books and souvenirs

as a part of the permanent exhibition about WuWA. We would like to find a curator for the whole venue and we will be able to prepare the rest of the space for exhibition purposes, for example, there will be display cases, wall mounted information panels and a vast hall with space for a scale model. I imagine that for now at least, when there is still no visual information system, tours will be able to prepare for sightseeing, freshen up, grab some refreshments from a self-service machine and learn the history of WuWA in a nice, dry and warm environment. I'm sure that when this specialised type of tourism develops we will make the seminar room available for lectures or film screenings and use the terrace for relaxation. We require only a few rooms for administration, the rest will be at WuWA's disposal as its flagship building. The second function of this building is to be a place for the Architecture Society's activities. I'd like to see it as another spot on the city map like SARP (Polish Architects' Association), the Museum of Architecture or the Wrocław Contemporary Museum. There will be



House no. 2, former kindergarten, training facilities of the Chamber's training centre.
Photography by Maciej Lulko

an exhibition space for young architects, meeting and training rooms and maybe a cinema devoted to architecture with screenings once every two weeks. We don't want to compete with the Museum of Architecture, but broaden its varied repertoire of architecture-orientated locations with a less formal space; a place where the community can integrate and meet in such a wonderful environment.



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House no. 2, former kindergarten, entrance area to the training centre of the Lower Silesia Chamber of Architects, 2014. Photography by Maciej Lulko

House no. 2, former kindergarten, view from the playground, 2014. Photography by Maciej Lulko

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LIST OF BUILDINGS

OF THE WuWA HOUSING ESTATE



1

GALLERY-ACCESS BLOCK OF FLATS

Address

No. 2 Tramwajowa Street

Surface area

12 flats – 48 m²,

6 flats – 60 m²

Designers

Paul Heim (1879–1963),

Albert Kempter (1883–ca.1941)

Construction

reinforced concrete framework

filled with slag bricks

CURRENT USE

residential house



2

KINDERGARTEN FOR SIXTY CHILDREN

Address

No. 18 Wróblewskiego Street

Surface area

296.3 m²

Designers

Paul Heim (1879–1963),

Albert Kempter (1883–ca.1941)

Construction

“Doecker” system by “Christoph & Unmack A.G.” – system of prefabricated wooden panels for easy installation at the construction site

CURRENT USE

Burnt down in 2006, rebuilt in 2013 as the training center of the Lower Silesia Chamber of Architects.



3

4

5

6

MULTI-FAMILY TERRACED HOUSE

Address

No. 2a Tramwajowa Street

Surface area

2 flats – 60 m²,

4 flats – 45 m², 2 flats – 70 m²

Designer

Gustav Wolf (1887–1963)

Construction

timber framework (beams 10×12 cm) with internal and external “Heraklith” chipboard facing

CURRENT USE

residential house



7

MULTI-FAMILY TERRACED HOUSE

Address

No. 2b Tramwajowa Street

Surface area

24 flats – 57 m²

Designer

Adolf Rading (1888–1957)

Construction

steel framework (space between the pillars 4×3.5 m) filled with “Schima” gas-concrete panels (16×30×50 cm)

CURRENT USE

The Wrocław University “Pancernik” halls of residents. The building was largely rebuilt.





9

MULTI-FAMILY BLOCK OF FLATS

Address

No. 4 Tramwajowa Street

Surface area

4 flats – 45.5 m²,

4 flats – 62 m²

Designer

Emil Lange (1884–1968)

Construction

“Spiegel” steel framework filled with gas concrete “Schima” panels (50×30–40×15 cm)

CURRENT USE

residential house



10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

SINGLE-FAMILY TERRACED HOUSES

Address

No. 6–30 Tramwajowa Street

Surface area

3 flats – 86 m² (no. 10–12),

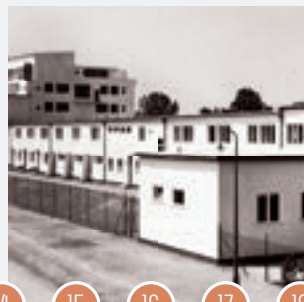
3 flats – 91 m² (no. 13–15),

2 flats – 86.07 m² (no. 16–17),

3 flats – 78 m² (no. 18–20),

1 flat – 148.86 m² (no. 21),

1 flat – 94.2 m² (no. 22)



Designers

Ludwig Moshamer (no. 10–12),

Heinrich Lauterbach (no. 13–15),

Moritz Hadda (no. 16–17),

Paul Häusler (no. 18–20),

Theo Effenberger (no. 21–22)

Construction

reinforced concrete framework filled with cellular concrete hollow bricks (12×14×25 cm) (no. 10–12), wall



19

20

21

22

constructed of slag bricks (load bearing walls between the sections, 25 cm thick) (no. 13–15), reinforced concrete framework filled with 25 cm thick ferro-concrete hollow bricks (no. 16–17), ceramic brick wall, 25 cm thick (no. 18–20), “Kilgus” technology – two vertical slag concrete panels with a gap between them, in places of greater load-bearing, walls filled with concrete and steel inserts (no. 21–22)

CURRENT USE

residential houses





26 27

SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE WITH GARAGES

Address

No. 11–13 Dembowskiego Street

Surface area

2 flats – 185 m²

Designer

Theo Effenberger (1882–1968)

Construction

“Leipziger” technology – two skinned walls constructed of hollow bricks and concrete “Portophor” tie bricks

CURRENT USE

residential house



28

DETACHED HOUSE WITH GARAGES

Address

No. 9 Dembowskiego Street

Surface area

149 m²

Designer

Emil Lange (1884–1968)

Construction

steel framework filled with 17 cm thick gas concrete “Schima” panels

CURRENT USE

residential house



29 30

SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE

Address

No. 23–25 Zielonego Dębu Street

Surface area

2 flats – 148 m²

Designer

Paul Häusler (date unknown)

Construction

two layer, 44 cm thick brick (25×12 cm) wall, gap between two layer brick skins filled with slag

CURRENT USE

residential house



31

THE HOSTEL FOR SINGLES AND CHILDLESS COUPLES

Address

No. 9 Kopernika Street

Surface area

16 flats – 37 m²,
32 flats – 27 m²

Designer

Hans Scharoun (1893–1972)

Construction

ferro-concrete framework (“house of cards” type – “Karteblattbauweise”), applied on “wet”, spaces between frame pillars 3 m and 3.5 m

CURRENT USE

hotel





32 33

DETACHED HOUSE

Address

No. 7/8 Kopernika Street

Surface area

165 m² and 189 m²

Designer

Gustav Wolf (1887–1963)

Construction

timber framework with inner and outer chipboard “Tekton” facing

CURRENT USE

non-existent



35

DETACHED HOUSE

Address

No. 17 Zielonego Dębu Street

Surface area

180 m²

Designer

Heinrich Lauterbach (1893–1976)

Construction

44 cm thick brick wall

CURRENT USE

residential house



36

DETACHED HOUSE

Address

No. 19 Zielonego Dębu Street

Surface area

202 m²

Designer

Moritz Hadda (1887–ca. 1942)

Construction

two layer, 44 cm thick brick wall

CURRENT USE

residential house



37

DETACHED HOUSE

Address

No. 21 Zielonego Dębu Street

Surface area

149 m²

Designer

Ludwig Moshamer (1885–1946)

Construction

two layer, 44 cm thick brick wall

CURRENT USE

residential house



IMPRESSUM

WuWA – Living and Work Space

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