

**Identification**

<i>Nomination</i>	The Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar and Dessau
<i>Location</i>	The Free State of Thuringia, Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt
<i>State Party</i>	Federal Republic of Germany
<i>Date</i>	11 October 1994

**Justification by State Party**

As the first sites of a cultural development within Modernism, which was to have worldwide influence in the visual arts, applied art, architecture, and urban planning, the buildings of the former Art School and of the Applied Art School in Weimar deserve the highest possible ranking from the point of view of preserving historic monuments for both their historical value and their artistic value because of the murals. They have additional relevance as original architectural achievements by Henry van de Velde, which in some respects may be considered to be precursors of Modernism.

The Haus am Horn is worthy of the highest evaluation from the historical and artistic points of view as the only surviving architectural Bauhaus structure in Weimar and as the first practical architectural statement of this educational institution, and also as an experimental structure of the New Building Style (*Neues Bauen*) for a planned "Bauhaus Settlement" (which was largely realized in Dessau). The Haus am Horn is unusual as an experimental building that continues to serve fully functionally in accordance with its original purpose. Since it has been almost entirely preserved in material terms it has a very high degree of authenticity. It embodies the original concept of the single-family house and is a monument to experimentation with modern building technologies (concrete block construction).

Comparative evaluations with, for example, the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt (which did not have the same influence on the development of modern art) or the experimental residential building (now used as an office) from the Prague architectural exhibition confirm that the monuments of the artistic renewal movement and the birth of Modernism in Weimar are of the highest quality.

The Bauhaus building in Dessau is a central work of European modern art, embodying an avant-garde conception directed towards a radical renewal of architecture and design in a unique and widely influential way. From the point of view of art history this building must be considered to be one of the most important monuments of modern building style and as a building that most fully reflects the creative principles of Functionalism. It stands at the very beginning of the worldwide development of this type of building complex. The power of its artistic expression is not equalled by any other Functionalist building.

The institution of "State Bauhaus" is embodied in this 1926 building, as is the strand of German architecture which made a special contribution to the creation of the new style of contemporary architecture now recognized all over the world. For this reason the building has double significance in the cultural history of the 20th century: it is an historic monument to the institution itself and an artistic monument from the earliest period of contemporary architecture.

The creativity of the Bauhaus was based on the use of industrial resources, striving to develop the appropriate artistic forms for that purpose. It was a centre for new ideas and consequently attracted progressive architects and artists. It made a major contribution to breaking "the power of tradition," not only in the field of architecture but also in the design of articles of everyday use and in advertising, creating a new language of form that is still influential today.

The Bauhaus represents the urge to develop a modern architecture using the materials of today (reinforced concrete, glass, steel) and construction methods (skeleton construction, glass facades), based on function. From its form the building dispenses with the traditional, historical symbols of representation. In a severely abstract process the architectural forms - both the subdivided building structure and the individual structural elements - are reduced to their primary, basic forms; they derive their expression, characteristic of Modernist architecture, from a composition of interpenetrating cubes in suggestive spatial transparency.

The Bauhaus building is an example of the educational model developed by the institution under the direction of Walter Gropius (1919-28), Hannes Meyer (1928-30), and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1930-32), which was to have a major influence on the renewal of artistic and industrial design in the 20th century.

A series of other buildings were erected in Dessau that were closely related with the Bauhaus and built under its supervision, which demonstrate not only the architectural but also the social ideals represented by the institution:

- the Törten settlement (Walter Gropius, 1926-28);
- the Törten *Konsum* building (Walter Gropius, 1928);
- the employment office (Walter Gropius, 1928-29);
- the Steel House (Georg Muche and Richard Paulik, 1926-27);
- the Fieger House (Carl Fieger, 1926-27);
- the Corn House (Carl Fieger, 1929-30);
- the Arbour Houses - *Laubenganghäuser* (Hannes Meyer, 1928-30).

The group of seven Masters' Houses, which are indissolubly linked with the Bauhaus, are an especially important architectural achievement. These unpretentious functional buildings are a model example of the basic type of residential building using the same elements in their ground plans. In them a new architectural quality is achieved that was to be very influential in settlement building in the years that followed. Both the architectural and the social principles are of significance, because the Masters' Houses may be considered to be a successful attempt to give individuality to identical ground-plan elements that for financial reasons were obliged to adopt typical forms during the housing shortage following World War I. The original furnishings (furniture, lamps, textiles) provided by the Bauhaus workshops in conformity with the fundamental artistic goal of the institution must be considered to be a special achievement. Much of the importance of the Masters' Houses is their association with the significant 20th century artistic personalities brought in by the directors, Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, and Mies van der Rohe - Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers, Lyonel Feininger, Georg Muche, Oskar Schlemmer, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee.

The Bauhaus has become the symbol of modern architecture for both its educational theory and its buildings throughout the world and is inseparable from the name of Walter Gropius. The Bauhaus itself and the other buildings designed by the masters of the Bauhaus are fundamental representatives of "classical modernism" and as such are essential components of the image of their period of the 20th century. Their consistent artistic grandeur is a reminder of the still uncompleted project for "modernity with a human face," which seeks to use the technical and intellectual resources at its disposition not in a destructive way but to construct a living environment worthy of human aspirations. For this reason they are important monuments not only for art history but also for the history of ideas in the 20th century. Even though the Bauhaus ideas of social reform turned out to be little more than wishful thinking, its Utopia became reality at least to the extent that architecture came into existence whose direct accessibility still has the power to fascinate and which belongs to the peoples of all nations as their cultural heritage as the 20th century moves towards its close.

**Note** The State Party does not make any proposals concerning the criteria under which the property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List in the nomination dossier.

### **Category of property**

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this nomination constitutes a *group of buildings*.

### **History and Description**

#### *History*

In 1919 the Schools of Art and of Applied Arts of the Grand Duchy of Saxony were combined to form the State Bauhaus of Weimar. The building of the former had been constructed in two phases, in 1904 and 1911, to the designs of Henry van de Velde (1863-1957), then Director of the School of Applied Arts, replacing the original structure of 1860, the year the School was founded. The new building is representative of the progressive architectural concepts of the *Jugendstil*, in the transitional phase between Historicism and Modernism. The building was decorated with murals painted by Herbert Bayer in 1923 following the internationally famous Bauhaus exhibition.

Van de Velde was responsible for the design of the former School of Applied Arts (1905-6), also in the *Jugendstil* tradition. Oskar Schlemmer added wall sculptures in 1923; these had disappeared, but have now been replaced by copies.

The Haus am Horn was built to a design by Georg Muche in 1923 as a model building and exhibit, the first practical statement of the New Building Style of the Bauhaus. Annexes (a gatehouse, more rooms, a verandah, and a terrace facing the garden) were made in 1925. However, the original appearance as seen from the road is virtually unchanged. It is the only original Bauhaus building remaining in Weimar.

The Weimar Bauhaus was obliged to close in 1925 for political reasons. Gropius found support for his cultural and political stance in Dessau, along with the opportunity to create a number of large-scale new buildings. These were situated on the outskirts of the town, and comprise the Bauhaus itself and the Masters' Houses (*Meisterhäuser*), all commissioned by the municipality of Dessau and built in 1925-26. The latter were the residences of the successive Directors of the Bauhaus and some of its distinguished teachers.

Hannes Meyer replaced Gropius as Director in 1928, followed two years later by Mies van der Rohe. From then until 1932 the institution enjoyed its most influential period in its struggle for the renewal of artistic and industrial design. It attracted world-famous artists such as Feininger, Kandinsky, and Moholy-Nagy to its teaching staff.

The Bauhaus was closed down in 1933, the building itself being used for other purposes. The interior was completely destroyed in a 1943 air-raid, and no renovation was carried out until 1956. The Masters' Houses were also badly damaged during this raid, the Director's house being completely destroyed; restoration and reconstruction work was carried out in the 1950s.

#### *Description*

The *former School of Art* is an extended tripartite building with an east wing on four axes. The central portion is triaxial and there is an irregular triaxial west wing, as well as an extension to the south with a hall lit from above. Between plain plaster strips are the huge workshop windows, with unmasked steel bearers, extending to the roof in the central section and opening up the attic roof in the west wing. In the south wing the windows are cut into the wall without any form of decoration, whereas in the north and east facades there is modest *Jugendstil* decoration. The centrally oriented crown with an air dome on the ventilation system is structured as a ridge turret.

The *van de Velde Building* (the former School of Applied Arts) is an angular structure with division created by plaster strips under a traditional attic, given rhythmic form by dormer windows. The south gable has a monumental quality resulting from its arches of natural stone and has window openings traversed by unmasked steel bearers.

The *Haus am Horn* is a cubic building with an originally 12.7 m square ground plan. Set back on the flat roof is a raised structure covering the high central living room with skylights and only one window at eye-level, set in a niche. Modest overhangs and recesses in the facades are reminiscent of corner projections; the openings have no ornament. This model building provided the opportunity for cooperation between all the Bauhaus workshops, furniture being provided by Marcel Breuer and textiles by Martha Erps-Breuer.

The formal style of the *Bauhaus* is concise and allusive. The school building itself is composed of three cubes in an asymmetrical arrangement, with all the sides of equal significance. On the north are the technical teaching rooms, a municipal trade school not administratively related with the Bauhaus. This section is connected by a bridge-like block with the workshop block of the Bauhaus. The two school blocks were given distinctive appearances. On the east, connected with the workshop block by a cross-wing housing a canteen and auditorium, is the five-storey studio and residential building for students. Each of the three blocks has an exterior form related to its function and construction, yet the design methods used blend into a closed system of formal style.

The structure is in reinforced concrete, with a monumental pattern of nuts and bolts covered with industrially tested stone and iron roofs and given variety by means of brick-and-stud work and steel window frames in a logical spatial sequence. Separation of the concrete skeleton from its covering reached a maximum in the workshop building, where the vertical exterior is a transparent glass facade covering all three floors. The character of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* is evoked in the interiors, especially in that part housing the auditorium and canteen.

The complex of *Meisterhäuser* consists of one detached house and three semi-detached, each of two units. They are on a relatively flat site, surrounded by old pine trees. Their external form is determined by their internal function. The residential section is divided into two overlying and interpenetrating cubes. The doors and windows are cut sharply into the surfaces and give life to the structures. A uniform ground plan was used for all

three semi-detached houses, but the components were differently disposed within this plan. The Bauhaus workshops were involved in the interior decoration - door handles by Gropius, furniture by Breuer, lamps from sketches by Marianne Brand supervised by Moholy-Nagy.

## **Management and Protection**

### *Legal status*

The buildings that make up the nomination are variously owned by the Ministry for Science and Humanities of the Free State of Thuringia (former School of Art), the Weimar Academy for Architecture and Building Arts (former School of Applied Arts), the Municipal Corporation of Weimar (Haus am Horn), the City Administration of Dessau (Bauhaus), and the Municipal Corporation of Dessau (Masters' Houses).

The two former Schools and the Haus am Horn in Weimar are protected by listing in the Register of Historical Monuments of the Free State of Thuringia as unique historical monuments, under the provisions of the Thuringian Protection of Historic Monuments Act of 7 January 1992. The Bauhaus is listed in the equivalent Register of the State of Saxony-Anhalt (Protection of Historical Monuments Act of 21 October 1991); it is used by the Bauhaus Foundation for Research, a public foundation. The *Meisterhäuser* are municipal property, but not legally protected.

### *Management*

Overall responsibility for protection of the Weimar monuments is with the Ministry for Science and Humanities of the Free State of Thuringia and for those in Dessau with the Ministry of Culture of the State of Saxony-Anhalt, in both cases operating through their respective State Offices for the Preservation of Historical Monuments. Direct management is assigned to the appropriate state and municipal authorities, operating under their respective protection regulations.

In Weimar the status of registered historic monuments guarantees that the requirements for monument protection will be taken into account in any regional development plans (not yet approved for Weimar or Thuringia).

Plans are in progress of formulation relating to the future conservation of both the Bauhaus and the Masters' Houses in Dessau.

## **Conservation and Authenticity**

### *Conservation history*

War damage at the former School of Art, Weimar, was repaired in 1945-46; thereafter work was carried out to restore elements such as the workshop windows and the skylight to their original form in the 1970s and 1900s.

The former School of Applied Arts (van de Velde Building) had first-aid repairs in 1945-46, since when there has been detailed conservation work on the main doors (1976), the murals and sculptures of the Bauhaus period (1979), and treatment of fungal attack in the attic (1986).

When the Haus am Horn was restored to single-family use the interior was carefully restored in 1971-73. General repair work still remains to be done.

The original layout and fabric of the Bauhaus underwent changes as early as 1926-32, in accordance with the principles of successive Directors. Extensive repair work took place in 1934-35. It was painted in camouflage colours in 1941. Temporary clearance of debris and repairs was carried out after the 1943 air-raid, and efforts to restore the building to its original appearance did not begin until 1961, since when there have been a number of specific projects on both the interior and the exterior. A monument analysis project is in progress, designed to establish the parameters for a scientifically valid restoration programme.

The *Meisterhäuser* suffered severe damage during World War II. The Director's house was not rebuilt, a conventional building being erected on its site. The semi-detached houses have suffered considerably as a result of conversion to house several families. Half of one of the houses was reconstructed in 1992.

### *Authenticity*

Although the three buildings in Weimar have undergone several alterations and partial reconstructions, there is no reason to dispute their authenticity (apart from the reconstructed murals in the two Schools). Similarly, despite the level of reconstruction, the Dessau Bauhaus preserves its original appearance and atmosphere, thanks in considerable measure to the major restoration work in 1976. So far as the Masters' Houses are concerned, the restoration work being carried out on one of the semi-detached houses is the result of thorough research and may be judged to meet the test of authenticity. The future of the other semi-detached houses remains in doubt and so it is too early to comment on their authenticity. In the event of their being restored in the same way as No 63 Ebertallee, the question of authenticity would be resolved satisfactorily.

### **Evaluation**

#### *Action by ICOMOS*

ICOMOS consulted DoCoMoMo in respect of this nomination, and a DoCoMoMo mission visited the nominated properties in late January 1995.

#### *Qualities*

This nomination adopts a thematic approach, based on the specific art-historical development in Germany and the worldwide importance of the Bauhaus ideas for the fundamental renewal of architecture, the visual and applied arts, and industrial design. The group of buildings selected for nomination have a logical coherence. All have undergone restoration or reconstruction to a greater or lesser extent, but their overall authenticity is not in question. As such, therefore, they are representative of this crucial and immensely influential 20th century artistic movement.

#### *Comparative analysis*

Weimar and Dessau represent the birthplaces of one of the most significant movements in architecture and art since Palladio (whose contribution is acknowledged with the designation of Vicenza as a World Heritage site in 1994). For this reason comparative analysis is both inappropriate and unnecessary.

### **Recommendation**

That this group of properties be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iv, and vi*:

The group of buildings in Weimar and Dessau that constitute this nomination are the seminal works of the Bauhaus architectural school, the foundation of the Modern Movement which was to revolutionize artistic and architectural thinking and practice in the twentieth century.

ICOMOS, October 1996



Weimar : Haus am Horn



Dessau : Prellerhaus