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Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

International working party for
documentation and conservation

of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

composed by national/regional working party of:

0.1 Picture of building/site



depicted item: Altstädter View Southeast

source: Dietrich Klatt

date: 2007

	db code
1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden	
1.1 Current name of building: Altstädter Schule	3
1.2 Variant or former name: Altstädter Volksschule	4
1.3 Number & name of street: 7 – 9, Sägemühlenstr.	5
1.4 Town: Celle	6
1.5 Province/state: Niedersachsen/Lower Saxony	7
1.6 Zip code: 29221	8
1.7 Country: Germany	9
1.8 National grid reference:	10

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1.9	Classification/typology: EDC public (primary school)	11
1.10	Protection status & date: listed monument	12
2	History of building	
2.1	Original brief/purpose: elementary school	13
2.2	Dates: commission/completion: 1926 – 1928	14
2.3	Architectural and other designers: Otto Haesler (1880 – 1962), Karl Völker (1889-1962)	15
2.4	Others associated with building	16
2.5	Significant alterations with dates: About 1980 reconstruction of the main hall with a new suspended ceiling that hides the original central rooflight made of glass bricks. Additional walls were installed due to fire safety requirements. Windows with a different layout of the glazing bars replaced the old windows. The original color scheme was painted over and the building was given new light fixtures.	17
2.6	Current use: public school	18
2.7	Current condition: good condition in general, but due to transformation major changes to the original design concept	19
3	Description	
3.1	General description: Two symmetric classroom wings flank a central hall used as gymnasium, assembly hall, cinema and for dance and theatre performances. Gymnastic apparatuses and spheric lamps were installed in a steel truss construction. Movies were projected onto a aluminum-bronze covered wall. Today the original glass brick-roof light is hidden behind a suspended ceiling. The original colour scheme with its red, black and bright colours is partially covered by wooden wall sheeting. The furniture of the class rooms (design: Otto Haesler) as well as the kitchen (design: Anni Haarer) were originally designed according to the latest modern principles of education.	20
3.2	Construction: The building was erected with standard brick walls and steel hollow brick slabs with steel reinforcement. The major load bearing elements were made out of reinforced concrete. Downstands along the exterior walls carry the slabs and allow maximum space for continuous natural lighting of the class rooms. The original wooden double windows were subdivided horizontally into three sections. The lower part had a fixed glazing that allowed to cultivate plants right behind it, the middle bay was openable for cleaning reasons and the upper part had moveable glass shutters to allow proper air ventilation. A special feature is the round design of the corners inside the building with a radius of up to 1,0 mtr. Originally the toilets had no doors to force pupils to behave cleanly but after parent's protests doors were installed after one year of utilization	21
3.3	Context: The building is located right next to a neogothical hospital dating from the end of the 19 th century. The contrast between the pure modern cube of the school and this over detailed and engraved brick work building with its overwhelming representative appearance could not be greater. History becomes visible as history of style, social evolution and ideas. On the west side of the school, Haesler built a house for the rector in modern style. This "Rektorwohnhaus" was also erected in standard brick. In the inside many additional walls are installed. The old-windows are nearly complete. After an examination in 2005 the outside colour-scheme was reinstalled.	22

4 Evaluation

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4.1	Technical: First multi functional central hall of the “Modern Movement” with ideal natural light conditions due to the glass roof made of “Luxfer-Prismenglas” glass bricks. Intelligent structural systems with down stands and minimum columns along exterior walls allow maximum glazed space for ideal natural light in the class rooms.	23
4.2	Social: Progressive education concept with a focus on hygienic, household and economical aspects particularly in the study kitchen. After the opening more than 1000 visitors had to pay an entrance fee which was used to finance pupils catering.	24
4.3	Cultural & Aesthetic: The idea of a “primary school” was realized in an extraordinary way with contemporary modern structural systems and materials. Principles of the “modern movement” were merely implemented very early (1926): truth of construction, impressive appearance with minimized detail efforts, clearness without any needless elements, stringent design principles, developed based on the usage of modern structural and building elements, maximum light and air ventilation for teacher and pupils. The compact and symmetric building gains its aesthetical qualities by the plasticity of the building mass and is wellstructured by the elaborated design of the glass elements.	25
4.4	Historical: Up to today the building acts as a model due to its originality, functionality and efficiency, because of the intelligent layout of the classrooms and last but not least because of the unique and perfectly useable central hall.	26
4.5	general assessment : The reconstruction of the central hall, of the windows and the repainting and removal of the additional wall true to original would change this building in to an extraordinary example of the “Modern Movement” as it was originally.	27
5	Documentation	
5.1	principal references: Völckers, Otto: Die Neue Volksschule in Celle, Hg. Englert & Schlosser, Frankfurt am Main, 1928 Haesler, Otto: Mein Lebenswerk als Architekt, Hg. Deutsche Bauakademie Berlin (Ost) 1957 Oelker, Simone u Klatt, Dietrich: Architekturen zu Bauten von Otto Haesler in Celle, Hg. Stadtarchiv Celle, 2000 Oelker, Simone: Otto Haesler, Eine Architektenkarriere in der Weimarer Republik, Hg. Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 2002	28
5.2	visual material attached: Photos, site plan	29
5.3	rapporteur/date: Dietrich Klatt, 10 th June 2007 Translation: Sebastian Klatt 2007	30

6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member:

date of examination:

approval:

Wp/ref. no:

NAI ref. no:

comments:

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depicted item: Altstädter Schule, central hall
source: Haesler-Archiv im Stadtarchiv Celle
date: 1928

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