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International working party for  
**documentation and conservation**  
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the  
**modern movement**  
**ISC/R members update 2003**  
*for office use only*

**Full Documentation Fiche 2007**  
**composed by national/regional working party of: Germany**

**0. Picture of building/ group of buildings/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden**



depicted item: Bauhaus Dessau, view from southwest  
source: Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, photo M. Brück  
date: 2005

**1. Identity of building/ group of buildings/ group of buildings/ landscape/garden**

**1. 1 Data for identification**

current name: Bauhaus Dessau  
number(s) and name(s) of street(s): Gropiusallee 38  
town: Dessau  
province/state: Saxony-Anhalt  
post code: 06846  
country: Germany  
national topographical grid reference: -  
current typology: ADM/EDC/MON  
former/original/variant typology: EDC (Bauhaus, school for design and municipal vocational business school)

comments on typology:

### **1. 2 Status of protection**

protected by: Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt

grade: monument

date: 1974

valid for: complete building and site

remarks: first discussion about listing the building in 1945, since 1964 on a tentative list for monuments in GDR

protected by: UNESCO

grade: world heritage site

date: 1996

valid for: complete building and site, including buffer zone

### **1. 3 Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)**

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s):

visual relations:

functional relations:

other relations: The Bauhaus Building is listed as world heritage together with the Masters' Houses in Dessau and the Bauhaus sites in Weimar.

## **2. History of building**

### **2. 1 Chronology**

*Note if the dates are exactly known (e) or approximately estimated = circa (c) or (±)*

commission or competition date: June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1925: decision of the city of Dessau to construct a new building for the Bauhaus school

design period(s): (e) 1925-1926

start of site work: 1925, topping out ceremony March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1926

completion/inauguration: inauguration (e) December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1926

### **2. 2 Summary of development**

commission brief: The Bauhaus was an avantgarde school with an interdisciplinary approach to seeking new solutions in design, art and architecture. The school was founded in 1919 in Weimar, moved to Dessau in 1925 and worked there until its closure in 1932. At the same time the Masters' Houses were erected and the semi-rural Dessau-Törten Settlement was planned by Walter Gropius as an example for industrializing and rationalizing the building process. In the following years some more Bauhaus architecture was built in Dessau.

design brief: By 1923, Walter Gropius had already formulated the basic principles of work at the Bauhaus, expressed eventually in the motto "art and technology – a new unity". Three years later, he put this concept into practice with the Bauhaus Building in Dessau, and created a "built manifesto of the Bauhaus ideas". The design of the building fused functionality and aesthetics into one, in keeping with the intentions of the Bauhaus manifesto.

The building consists of several parts arranged asymmetrically on a property on both sides of a street. The large glass surfaces, particularly those of the curtain wall, are characteristic of the Bauhaus. The exterior walls were painted in white colour under flat roofs and a roof terrace.

building/construction: The building consists of a concrete skeleton with brickwork infill, but also includes load-bearing brickwork stanchions and walls. The outer wall surfaces were rendered, as

well as the inner walls. Some are treated with neat lime. The ceilings were formed with reinforced block floors, with the one exception of the mushroom slab ceiling over the basement of the workshop wing. The window frames were made of steel profiles. The famous glass curtain wall facade was taken to its logical conclusion as never before.

original situation or character of site: The construction site was outside the city center on a green field, but prepared for buildings following a development plan of the city of Dessau.

## **2. 3 Relevant persons/organisations**

original owner(s)/patron(s): The City of Dessau

architect(s): Walter Gropius (1883 - 1969)

landscape/garden designer(s): -

other designer(s): Following persons are named by Walter Gropius as assistants in his architectural office: Karl Fieger, Friedrich Hirz, Max Krajewski, Fritz Levedag, Otto Meyer-Ottens, Ernst Neufert, Heinz Nösselt, Richard Paulick, Herbert Schipke, Bernhard Sturtzkopf, Franz Throll, Walter Tralau, Hans Volger

The interior design was planned by the workshops of the Bauhaus:

furniture and interior fixtures: joinery workshop (Marcel Breuer)

lamps: metal workshop (Marianne Brandt, Max Krajewski)

fabrics for furniture and curtains: weaving workshop (Gunta Stölzl)

colouring inside and outside the building: wallpainting workshop (Hinnerk Scheper, main

vestibule: L. Moholy-Nagy)

designation: typography workshop (Herbert Bayer)

consulting engineer(s): -

building contractors (selection):

Bauhütte Anhalt G.m.b.H.

Dessauer Dachpappen- und Teerproduktfabrik. Dessauer Kohlenhof Willy Kohlmann

Hundt, Otto. Bau-Glaserei

Junkers und Co. Dessau, Gasapparate

Klößner Werke AG

Köppe, Carl. Kunstschmiedearbeiten, Eisenkonstruktionen

Kolb & Co. Kupferschmiederei, Apparate- und Rohrleitungsbau, Zentralheizung

Naumann, Georg. Steinholzfußboden- und Estrichfabrik Duramentwerk, Terrazzo-Fußböden

Norddraht Rostock. Schmiedeeiserne Fenster für die Industrie und in Sonderausführungen für Schulen und Wohnbauten, kittlose Glasdächer

Plöger, Karl. Zentralheizungen, Lüftungs-, Trockenanlagen, Warmwasserbereitungen

Pertz, Carl. Hochbau

Richter, Robert. Unternehmen für Hoch-, Tief-, Beton- und Eisenbetonbau 1925 - 27

Wagner, Robert. Eisenwarenfabrik, Möbel (Rowac-Schemel)

## **2. 4 Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site**

name(s): -

association:-

event(s):-

period:-

## **2. 5 Summary of important changes after completion**

1) type of change: alteration: for the use of the building and ideological changes

date(s): 1932 - 1945

circumstances/reasons for change: The institution of the Bauhaus Dessau School of Design was, on the instigation of the NSDAP (the National Socialist Germans Workers' Party), closed on September 30th 1932. The construction of a shallow inclined roof over the studio building sealed

the roof terrace, through which water often permeated into the building. Newspaper articles testify that this measure also provided a welcome occasion for renewed polemic against the architecture of the Bauhaus. During the Second World War, in addition to a number of other air raid protection measures, the Bauhaus was given a coat of dark camouflage paint.

effects of changes: In some aspects the special quality of the building was destroyed.

persons/organisations involved:

2) type of change: destruction caused by air raid

date(s): March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945

circumstances/reasons for change: In an air raid on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1945, a number of bombs hit the Bauhaus Building. In addition to the heavy damage inflicted on the upper floors of the workshop wing and the north wing, the glass curtain wall was, but for a small remnant on the east-facing façade, destroyed.

effects of changes: With the curtain wall façade the most famous part and view of the building was lost.

persons/organisations involved:

3) type of change: emergency repair

date(s): ca. 1946 (including change ca. 1960)

circumstances/reasons for change: Since the structure of the Bauhaus was preserved, it was possible to carry out emergency repairs to the building, in the immediate post-war period, whereby the façade of the workshop wing was bricked and fitted with single wing windows. In 1959, the makeshift punctuated façade of the workshop wing was replaced by a façade incorporating horizontal rows of steel windows and railings.

effects of changes: The view of the building changed completely, but it was possible to use it as a school again.

persons/organisations involved:

4) Type of change: reconstruction

date(s): 1976 – 1978. Re-opening was celebrated on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1976, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its inauguration.

circumstances/reasons: Important constituents of the *1976 Reconstruction* included, in addition to the betterment of the facilities and the eradication of hygienic deficits and constructional damage in accordance with the user's wishes, the reconstruction of the curtain wall according to the historic model, and the restitution of the original layout of rooms in the festive area. The renovation of the other parts of the building continued until 1978, and included work on the roof terrace above the studio building, the replacement of large areas of plaster both inside and out, and the replacement of windows on the bridge, the north wing, and the studio building.

effects of changes: The original figure and artistic impact was reconstructed: the mutual interpretation of inner and outer space, the mutual interpenetration of form and function. The "Wissenschaftlich-Kulturelle Zentrum Bauhaus (WKZ)" was established, incorporating a collection and an archive based on the history of the Bauhaus.

persons/organisations involved: Participants included representatives of the City of Dessau, of the office for the preservation of historical monuments and of the Dessau municipal archives. The Volkseigene Betrieb Industrieprojektierung (VEB IPRO) prepared the data for the reconstruction of the Bauhaus Building on behalf of the City of Dessau.

5) type of change: general renovation

date(s): 1996 - 2006

circumstances/reasons for change: The extensive work on the building ranged from the regeneration of the supporting structure and the shell of the building to the reconstruction of the

original layout of rooms, from the functional improvement of technical installations to the work on surfaces in the Bauhaus Building. Following the completion of work on the building in 2006, the overall project will be concluded with the configuration of the outdoor facilities.

effects of changes: As a result of the renovation work it is possible to have a much more complex perception of the Bauhaus, because now the sophisticated disposition and design of the building can be experienced. With the discovery and restoration of the colours and the differentiated design of the surfaces, the original aesthetic of the Bauhaus is once again revealed.

persons/organisations involved: Project direction: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation: Omar Akbar, Monika Markgraf. Realisation: Landesbetrieb Bau Niederlassung Ost. architects: Brambach und Ebert, Hans-Otto Brambach, Halle/Saale. Pfister, Schiess, Tropeano und Partner, Ruggero Tropeano, Zürich. Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Johannes Bausch, Dessau. Restoration analysis: Restaurierungsatelier Schöne, Halle/Saale.

### **3. Description of building(s) etc.**

#### **3.1 Site/building character**

*Summarize main character and give notes on surviving site/building(s)/part(s) of area.*

*If a site: principle features and zones of influence; main elements in spatial composition.*

*If a building: main features, construction and materials.*

##### Exterior:

The building consists of the three-storey workshop wing - the "laboratory of ideas" with the famous glass curtain wall, the three-storey north wing, which housed the municipal vocational business school, the five-storey studio building, where the students and junior masters lived, as well as the single-storey festive area and the bridge. The municipal vocational business school and the Bauhaus were given separate staircases and entrances on the opposite sides of a public street. This street ran between the parts of the building, and was traversed by the bridge, in which the administration for both facilities was located. The sequence of rooms in the one-storey adjoining building included the auditorium, stage and refectory, which could be combined to form one large room: the festive area. These structures did not stand side by side, but intersected one another. The large glass surfaces, particularly those of the curtain wall establish a close connection between the outer and inner space, and between the different parts of the building.

##### Interior:

This design indicates the collaboration in the Bauhaus workshops towards the common goal. The Bauhaus Building can be seen like a little town, and the parts of the building, or the town, are defined not only by function, volumes and façades, but also by spatial structures as well as by the design of surfaces and the use of colour. The colour composition underpinned the articulation of the architecture into load bearing and in-filling surfaces and defines new spaces. The colour helps orientation inside the building. The surfaces were divided into coarse and fine, rough and smooth, and matt and glossy finishes. The interior of the Bauhaus building was created by the Bauhaus workshops.

##### Construction:

The plaster surfaces in the Bauhaus building were mainly applied over a reinforced concrete skeleton with brick in-filling walls, but also over walls built entirely of brick. A slaked, naturally hydrolysed lime was used, and locally-sourced, close grained, primarily silicate-based aggregates with a small quantity of oversize material. An initial coat of spray plaster followed the application of a single layer of smooth trowel plaster, which was then polished with the float. The

basement areas of the building and the southern end of the workshop wing are finished with a grey imbued scraped plaster with a high proportion of mica (Muscovite mica, particle size 3-6 mm). The inner walls were likewise rendered and coloured with glue-bound distemper or treated with neat lime. The ceilings were formed with reinforced block floors (System Ackermann), with the one exception of the mushroom slab ceiling over the basement of the workshop wing. Flooring consisted of Triolin (a synthetic flooring), terazzo, magnesite flooring or cement rifle floor and asphalt flagstones. Walter Gropius describes the roof covering: "the flat, accessible, roofs with brazed asphalt flags on a torfoleum insulating layer, the inaccessible flat roofs laid with cold enamel on jute textile over a torfoleum insulating layer and concrete trim" (W. Gropius, Bauhausbauten Dessau. The window frames were made of steel with diverse form and function.

#### Furnishings:

Some furniture was created in the workshops of the Bauhaus, such as the stool B9 and table in the canteen, the seats in the auditorium, the chairs and tables in the studio building (all by Marcel Breuer) or the door handles (by Walter Gropius). Some furniture was industrially produced, such as: "Rowac" chair in the workshops, "Junkers" heaters and "Midgard" lamps. (See also: 2.3)

### **3. 2 Current use**

of whole building/site:

Today the Bauhaus Building is owned and used by the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, which is a public institution. The Bauhaus Dessau is a centre of research, teaching and experimental design (Bauhaus Kolleg, International Building Exhibition and more). A part of the building is used by the Anhalt University for Applied Science. The building is open to visitors from all over the world and holds rooms for exhibitions and conferences, stage performances and festivals, bookshop and cafe, canteen and more services.

comments:

### **3. 3 Present (physical) condition**

of whole building/site: After renovation in good condition.

of principal components *(if applicable)*:

of other elements *(if applicable)*:

of surrounding area *(if applicable)*: Renovation of the outside facilities is necessary and planned in 2008.

comments: After the renovation the building is in good condition, but needs continuous care and maintenance.

### **3. 4 Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments**

*Indicate, if known, potential developments relevant for the conservation/threats of the building/site*

The building is in an intensive use and there are increasing numbers of visitors. This heavy use may create a problem for the sensible surfaces and areas of the building.

## **4. Evaluation**

*Give the scientific reasons for selection for docomomo documentation*

### ***Intrinsic value***

#### **4. 1 technical evaluation:**

The Bauhaus represented the many concerns of purpose-built modern architecture, contemporary materials (reinforced concrete, glass, iron), and means of construction (skeleton

construction, curtain wall façades). The glass curtain wall in front of the load-bearing framework defines the exterior of the workshop wing and openly shows the constructive elements. Gropius, rather than visually amplifying the corners of the cubic body of the building, allowed the glass surface to overlap the edges, thereby creating the impression of lightness.

#### **4. 2 social evaluation:**

Working, learning and living were united in the building. The architecture is understood as “design of life’s processes”. The Bauhaus Building is the vision of a philanthropic modernity, which makes constructive, not destructive use of the given technical and intellectual means towards the creation of a humane living environment. The famous masters, such as Hannes Meyer, Mies van der Rohe, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger oder Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, gave the school a distinctly international and artistic dimension.

#### **4. 3 cultural and aesthetic evaluation:**

The design of the building fused functionality and aesthetics into one, in keeping with the intentions of the Bauhaus manifesto. The cubic structures of the Bauhaus not only varied in their functions, but also in their volumes, their façade designs, spatial structures, surfaces, colours and lighting. That was what Gropius called “Art and technology – a new unit!”

#### ***Comparative significance***

#### **4. 4 canonical status (local, national, international)**

“The form of the building renounces the traditional and historical language of representation. In a strict process of abstraction, architectural forms, structural elements and individual components are reduced to their base form, and reach as a composition of overlapping cubes in a multi-faceted spatial clarity the form of expression so characteristic of contemporary architecture. Bauhaus – both in educational and architectural terms – has become an internationally recognized model of contemporary architecture, and is inextricably linked with Walter Gropius’ name. The Bauhaus building, and other buildings developed and built by the Bauhaus Masters, have become influential representatives of classical modernism, and, as such, an irrefutable feature of the 20th century landscape. Their unbroken artistic brilliance reflects the still incomplete vision of a philanthropic modernity, which makes constructive, not destructive use of the given technical and intellectual means towards the creation of a humane living environment. They can therefore be seen as important monuments to the 20 century history of art and ideas. Although the Bauhaus’ political and socially motivated ideas of social reform may have proven to be a form of wishful thinking, their utopia was at least partly realised, as architecture emerged which to this day bewitches through its practical friendliness, and which, at the end of the 20th century, is a cultural inheritance which belongs to the citizens of all nations.” (Icomos, World Heritage List, Justification by State Party, 1996)

#### **4. 5 historic and reference values:**

The Dessau Bauhaus Building is a key work of Modernism in Europe, embodying its avant-garde and radical revival of architectural and design concepts with a unique, interdisciplinary approach. In the art historical sense, this building must be seen as one of the most important monuments to modern construction as it “best reflects the creative principles of functionalism”. As a complex example of its kind, this building stands at the forefront of a worldwide development. As an exponent of functionalism, the strength of its artistic expression has rarely been surpassed.

## **5. Documentation**

### **5. 1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address): choice:**

Bauhaus Archive Berlin

Klingelhöferstr. 13-14, 10785 Berlin

[www.bauhaus.de](http://www.bauhaus.de)

Gropius Archive at the Busch-Reisinger Museum

The Harvard University Art Museums, 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138,

[www.artmuseums.harvard.edu](http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu)

Archiv der Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau

Gropius Allee 38, 06846 Dessau

[www.bauhaus-dessau.de](http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de)

Bauhaus Universität Weimar

Geschwister-Scholl-Str 8, 99423 Weimar

[www.uni-weimar.de](http://www.uni-weimar.de)

### **5. 2 principal publications (selection in chronological order):**

Gropius, Walter: bauhausbauten Dessau, Fulda 1930, reprint Mainz 1974

Wingler, Hans Maria: Das Bauhaus 1919-1933, 1975

Neumann, Eckhard: Bauhaus and Bauhaus People, 1992

Sharp, Dennis: Bauhaus Dessau. Walter Gropius. London 1993

Kentgens-Craig, Margret [Hrsg.]; Bauhaus Dessau Foundation [Hrsg.], The Dessau Bauhaus Building 1926 – 1999, Basel; Berlin; Boston : Birkhäuser, 1998

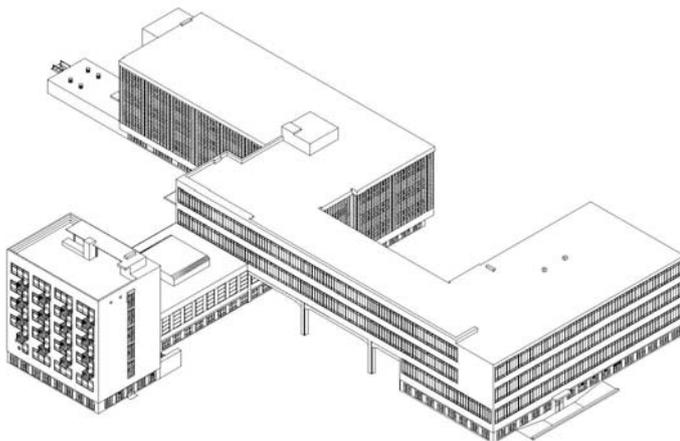
Rehm, Robin: Das Bauhausgebäude in DessauBerlin 2005

Markgraf, Monika: Archeology of Modernism, Renovation Bauhaus Dessau, Berlin 2006

Baumann, Kirsten: Bauhaus Dessau, Architecture-Design-Concept, Berlin 2007

### **5. 3 visual material (state location/ address)**

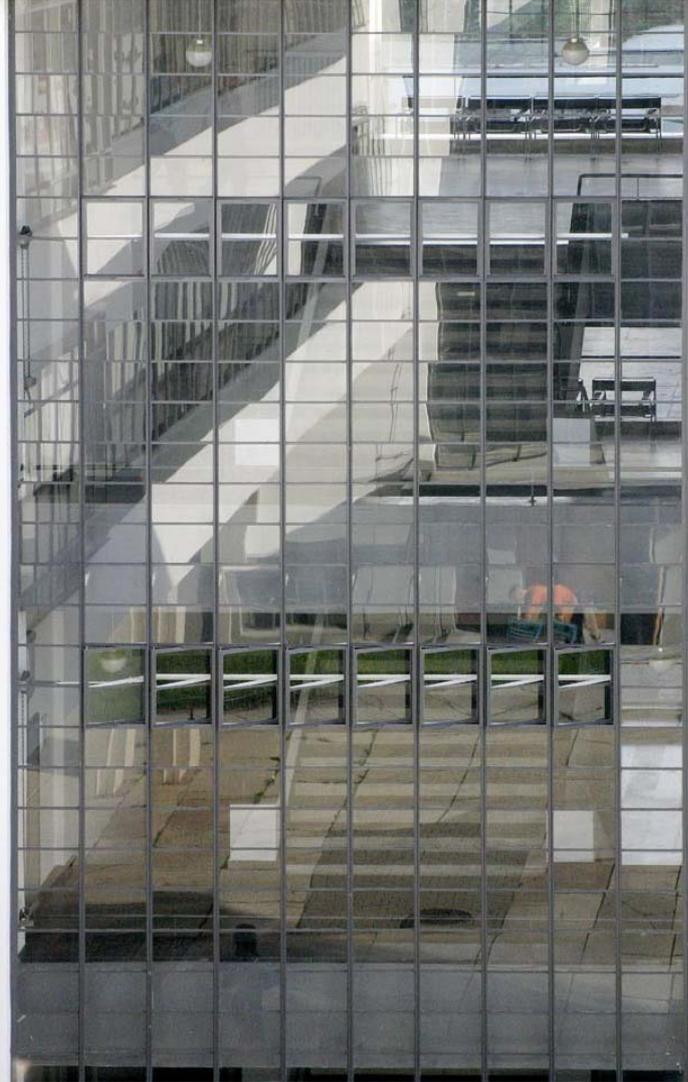
original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:



View northeast, Isometric, 2006:

Source: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation





Façade of the staircase, 2006  
Source: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, photo: M. Brück



Festive area, 2006:

Source: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, photo: M. Brück, © VG Bildkunst Bonn 2007



Workshop wing, 2006

Source: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, photo: F.H. Müller, © VG Bildkunst Bonn 2007



North wing, 2007

Source: Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, photo: M. Brück, © VG Bildkunst Bonn 2007

#### **5. 4 list documents included in supplementary dossier**

#### **6. Fiche report**

name of reporter: Monika Markgraf

address: Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, Gropiusallee 38, 06846 Dessau

telephone: 0049 0340 6508 211, email markgraf@bauhaus-dessau.de

date of report: June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007

#### **examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section**

approval by working party co-ordinator/registers correspondent (name): Monika Markgraf

sign and date:

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#### **examination by DOCOMOMO ISC/R**

name of ISC member in charge of the evaluation:

comment(s):

sign and date:

ISC/R approval: date:

working party/ref. n° :

NAi ref. n° :