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

Full Documentation Fiche 2006 **composed by national/regional working party of: Germany**



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

depicted item: Foto
source: Archiv LDA
date: um 1933 (ca.)

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

1. 1 Data for identification

current name: Katholische Pfarrkirche St. Bonifatius (Catholic Parish Church St. Bonifatius)
former/original/variant name: Katholische Pfarrkirche St. Bonifatius (Catholic Parish Church St. Bonifatius)
number(s) and name(s) of street(s): Platz der Freiheit 1
town: Bad Dürrenberg
province/state: Saxony-Anhalt
post code: 06227 block:/ lot:/
country: Germany
national topographical grid reference: /
current typology: REL
former/original/variant typology: REL
comments on typology: -

1. 2 Status of protection

protected by: Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt
grade: monument
date: registered 1993
valid for: complete building
remarks: -

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

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

visual relations

functional relations:

other relations: free, elevated location on an ash heap, decisive for the design concept

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2. History of building(s) etc.

2.1 Chronology

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

commission or competition date: "closed competition" 1931

design period(s):

Consultation of the building plans between architect and owner is recorded for March 24, 1931

start of site work: Laying of foundation stone: July 26, 1931 (e)

completion/inauguration: inauguration October 18, 1931 (e)

2.2 Summary of development

commission brief:

The building of the church was made possible by the listing of the project as a priority project of the church building program of the Bonifatius society. The commissioning of the Leipzig architect and government master builder Rudolf Straubinger (1896-1973) followed as the result of a closed competition (participants are unknown) organized by the parish priest Gunkel from Lützen. The contract was approved by the chair on May 2, 1931. The designer of the altar mosaic and the glass windows, Odo Tattenpach/Berlin (life dates unknown) was also chosen by priest Gunkel. Gunkel knew that Tattenpach had been working for a protestant church in Leipzig (probably Versöhnungskirche Gohlis-Nord). He was also able to show a recommendation by the renowned Stuttgart architect Hans Herkommer.

design brief:

Little is known today about the framework and the development of the design. Only the condition to abandon the bell tower is handed down (possibly due to the tight financial situation and the difficult condition of the building site).

Odo Tattenpach presented three alternative designs for the altar mosaic: enthroned Christ, last supper scene, crucifixion group, Gunkel chose the crucifixion design for financial and aesthetic reasons.

building/construction:

The construction took three months. On average about 25 workers were employed at the same time. The commission of the altar mosaic took place 14 days before the inauguration of the church. The execution of the mosaic was done by the Leipzig firm Mewes as the most inexpensive contractor (the company had worked with Tattenpach on the Leipzig Versöhnungskirche as well)

completed situation:

original situation or character of site:

The building was erected on a formerly empty ash heap.

2.3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s):

The building was erected for the Catholic Church community Bad Dürrenberg (part of the archiepiscopal general vicar district Paderborn). The impulsive force was parish priest Gunkel from Lützen who carried out the project which was funded through donations from the Bonifatius society.

architect(s):

The government master builder Rudolf Straubinger from Leipzig is the commissioned architect. Dipl. Ing. Sonnen is mentioned during the negotiations of the contract.

landscape/garden designer(s): -

other designer(s):

Design colored glazing and altar mosaic: Odo Tattenpach, Berlin

consulting engineer(s):

unknown

building contractor(s):

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/extension: Nachgründung

date(s): 1936

circumstances/reasons for change: An expertise verifies major problems caused by movement, cracking and settling of the ground

effects of changes:

Extensive securing measures are carried out. The building does however remain unchanged. It is possible that a vestibule will be added to the priest's apartment during these measures which will cause minor disturbances of the outer building.

persons/organisations involved:

Herbert Gonner, expert

2) Type of change: alteration: Redesign of the

date(s): 1981

circumstances/reasons: Renovation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the inauguration

effects of changes:

Changes of the interior decoration and the lighting:

New altar and tabernacle, extension of the mosaic to the floor, removal of the altar barrier, change of the lighting situation by breaking windows into the formerly closed brick cylinder of the main room, replacement of the 12 small individual windows in the aisles with a window band as high as the room, now colored glazing (designs Rudolf Brückner-Fuhlrott), new flooring and lights

persons/organisations involved:

Rudolf Brückner-Fuhlrott (1908-1984), Designs for the new colored glazing

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 church is located on a former ash heap at the entry of the town which gives it a character that dominates the urban context

The cylindrical main building with a low dome together with several low covered annexes forms a suspenseful group of buildings. An upright standing rectangular body, flanked by two retreating lower side parts, is rising above the entrance in the west. Single-storey aisles which follow the circular geometry of the main building are leading to a horseshoe-shaped two-storey utility and housing unit in the east.

Contemporary sources give reason to assume that building bodies were differentiated by the color of the façade, which originally had only a few windows. The tower-like entrance area is emphasized by reduced means of decoration. The lower third of the façade is taken up by the clinker-framed arch portal. The upper part is dominated by a cross-shaped retreat which is surrounded by gold plated clinker and lined with metal. The verticality of the building is being contrasted by the characteristic horizontal lamellae on the side. Despite the limited height of the western building, caused by the financial situation, it is especially this part, especially with its view underneath as seen from the town, that is the most important vertical element of a suspenseful composition. The group of buildings is dominated by the contrast between the circular geometry of core building and the vertical and horizontal elements of the annexes.

Interior:

Other than the exterior, the interior presents a very closed and calm appearance. The view is directed upwards by the dramatic way of lighting which originally intended the lighting to come exclusively through the oculus of the cupola. The space, defined by the low cupola and masonry cylinders which have a smooth plaster surface, is subdivided only near the cupola and the opening of the peak by low ledges. The

reference to classical building typologies (Monopteros, Pantheon) is obvious. The altar mosaic made of glass plates reflects the zenith light and therefore attracts the viewer's attention. Only when turning towards the exit does the building lose its closed appearance and regain its additive character. Aisle-like annexes, separated by clinker columns as well as the organ gallery framed in by a parallel arch and provided with a dynamically designed parapet now come into view.

Construction:

Combination of masonry work and reinforced concrete: reinforced concrete ring foundation, cupola reinforced concrete (diameter 16m, peak height 9m).

Furnishings:

The impressive crucifixion mosaic, made of colored glass plates designed by the Berlin artist Odo Tattenpach is an essential element of the furnishings. The expressive illustration using mostly blue and green tones of color shows the pained figure turning towards the mourning Maria.

The abstract colored glass windows in the aisles are also designed by Tattenbach. They as well as the original altar table made of bricks were lost during the alterations carried out in the 1980s. Original lights and the original tabernacle were preserved in the building but not in situ. Numerous handed down furnishing details (metal plated doors, "Gropius" door handles, etc.) complete the overall impression.

3. 2 Current use

of whole building/site:

The use is the same as at the time of construction:

Parish church with priest's apartment and community hall

of principal components (*if applicable*):

comments:

3. 3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site: The structural condition is good.

of principal components (*if applicable*):

The mosaic at the altar is affected by the piecing near the lost altar table. Original lights and the original tabernacle have been removed but are preserved in good condition. The external plaster has been largely renewed. The parish does possess samples of the original plaster.

of other elements (*if applicable*):

of surrounding area (*if applicable*):

The increased natural cover of the hill does alter the long-range effect somewhat and should possibly be removed.

comments:

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

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

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4. Evaluation

Give the scientific reasons for selection for docomomo documentation

Intrinsic value

4. 1 technical evaluation:

By using reinforced concrete (reinforced concrete ring foundations, reinforced concrete cupola) it was possible to create a long lasting and dignified space for worshipping in a very short construction time (3 months) despite the difficult conditions of the ground (former ash heap). It was very important to avoid major point loads as well as keeping the difficult chemical conditions of the site in mind. In order to ensure the setting of the foundation on this ground rich on sodium sulfate around the ash heap, it was necessary to isolate the elements that would touch the ground with bituminized boards. The technical details have been especially appreciated by the local news. Most comparable, contemporary churches were often influenced by more expressionistic or traditional elements. In this example, however, crafts-oriented manufacturing techniques have a design forming effect only in a few architectural and furnishing details (frame of the main portal, the front of the altar table with clinker and the altar mosaic). The smooth plaster surfaces which comply with the expectation of a mechanical surface treatment are very dominating. The

technique of the glass plate mosaic in the altar area is completely new. Numerous details like the door handles ("Gropius" door handle) etc. are industrially produced and were purchased, according to the priest, for low prices at trade fairs. The same is true for parts of the sanitary and electrical installation (the latter is documented in writing). The priest's apartment was equipped with a central heating system right from the start. Priest Gunkel felt the urge to justify the as inappropriate and luxurious regarded installations.

4. 2 social evaluation:

The erection of the Bonifatius church in Bad Dürrenberg must be seen in the context of the growing population as a result of the development of the industrial region around Leuna/Bitterfeld. The same is true for the neighboring churches in Leuna (protestant Friedenskirche and catholic Christ-Königskirche, both built in 1929/30). Another motive for building a new catholic church was the moving in of the evacuee of the areas which were cut off from the German Reich after World War 1. The reduced architectural language and the selection of the building site (ash heap) and the materials used for the furnishings (e.g. clinker for the altar table) comply with the addressees coming from the workers milieu.

4. 3 cultural and aesthetic evaluation:

The special artistic importance of the church in Bad Dürrenberg lies in the attempt to create a synthesis between traditional architectural typologies while also being subject to a final review strictly focused on Modernism. It also possesses an altar mosaic which had a provoking effect at the time of construction due to the expressionistic language of form. The mosaic was carried out using a complete new technology: glass plate mosaic.

The basic concept of the building is developed out of the conditions presented by the location and the building program itself: the compact arrangement of different functions around the center room allows the use of ring foundations in order to handle the difficult building ground. The suspenseful composition of smooth geometrical bodies on top of a hill complies with the formal concepts of Modernism but at the same time hints at motives coming from revolution architecture. The façade at the entrance might evoke certain associations to traditional western works, the architect does however use approved tricks of modern architecture to compensate the missing bell tower in the urban context. The composition consisting of vertical, horizontal and circular geometrical bodies, as well as the optical enclosure of the tower-like building part and cupola by using sonic lamellae on the side leads to a dynamic entrance area which reminds of contemporary movie theaters like for example the WOGA-complex by Erich Mendelsohn in Berlin. The window bands along the side aisles, as well as the emphasis on the corner of the window openings of the rear living and utility section are typical elements of modern architecture. It must, however, be mentioned that the guiding of the building bodies and the formation of some details remain formally undecided in parts.

The design of the classical interior (compare Pantheon Rom) is completely concentrated towards the altar mosaic. Its expressive illustration was regarded as so shocking, that the general vicar district Paderborn ordered the removal after some discussion and declared the job done on February 8, 1933. The debate seems like the anticipation of the later escalating defamation of the so called "degenerate art" during the national socialist era.

Comparative significance

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

While the local press speaks of a masterpiece and a contemporary art historian speaks of Bad Dürrenberg's most important sight, little is known about the church acting as a direct example in its building and furnishings. From today's view the glass plate mosaic seems groundbreaking. The in its typology classic but in its details very much modern interior seems also to have been an example for solutions which most of all were used during the reconstruction after World War II.

The glass plate mosaic was heavily discussed right from the beginning. Priest Gunkel himself shows his insecurity in a letter to the general vicar district trying to justify his decision on June 7, 1932. He does, however, feel responsible for promoting the development of art by realizing the design. He also explains that the image was accepted by the community and "...has been visited and praised by many visitors from neighboring towns". It was also the destination of an excursion from the school for arts and crafts from Leipzig and was very much praised by the teachers and students alike.

The letter shows that the general vicar district criticized in 1932 at the latest and claims to never have explicitly approved of the mosaic and that it does not comply with the design rules of the church. An art historian who was in contact with the architect Rudolf Straubinger defends Tattenpach in a letter from September 21, 1932 against the accusation of having created an inappropriate work due to his lacking

membership of the Catholic Church and alleged tendency towards communism. The general vicar district does however order the immediate removal of the picture on February 8, 1932 and later declared the job done. The mosaic was covered up with a harmless wall hanging ("Christ as a good guardian") after the managing board of the church refused to destroy the mosaic. The mosaic functioned again as a devotion image after 1945.

4. 5 historic and reference values:

The architecture of the building is without a doubt influenced by a competition and the winning design for the catholic church in Leipzig St. Bonifatius (competition 1928, commissioning Theo Burlage, construction 1929/30).

The Leipzig Bonifatius church, which is regarded as "the most important church in Saxony between the two World Wars (see LFD Sachsen S.935) consists also of a central building with a cupola and a protruding west annex. The church in Bad Dürrenberg adopts the classic motive of the Pantheon in a reduced way, the more antic Leipzig church shows the reference to the tomb of Theoderich in Ravenna much more direct. The body with its surrounding basilica ring and the bell tower on the side seems much less innovative than the Bad Dürrenberg example. It is much more an important development of traditional forms especially related to the furnishings. Bad Dürrenberg on the other hand shows a denser, dynamic composition which has developed very much out of the special requirements presented by the site itself. The building is characterized by an independent language of form which autonomously modifies traditional typologies in a modern way. Some details, like the arch-like entrance door and the clinker framing, which feel more like disturbing vocabulary of expressionism, show the relation to the Leipzig example.

Single motives (organ gallery with parallel arch, façade cross) also remind of the protestant church Bethanienkirche planned in 1929 by C.W. Zweck and H. Voigt and realized in 1931 and the Versöhnungskirche (competition 1928) by Hans Heinrich Grotjahn built in 1930/32 both in Leipzig). A connection to the Versöhnungskirche is likely since Odo Tattenpach was involved in its furnishings which also established the contact with priest Gunkel.

There is no obvious architectural reference to the two churches protestant Friedenskirche by Herberger and catholic Christus-König-Kirche by Lippsmeier built 1929/30 in the neighboring city of Leuna, Both are fairly simple longitudinal directed buildings with plain interiors. It is, however, interesting that the two churches, like the one in Bad Dürrenberg und unlike the one in Leipzig, do also possess altar mosaics. The Friedenskirchs shows a great glass stone mosaic designed by the Stuttgart artist Glücker. The motive of the illustration, which remind of Schlemmer's work, is peace. The challenging and in its modern appearance also formerly provocative piece of art was completed in 1930 and should have been know to the those responsible for the Bad Dürrenberg building. (Whether this design influenced the one in Bad Dürrenberg, is still to be investigated).

The Bonifatiuskirche in Bad Dürrenberg may be seen as one of the most important catholic church buildings in the center of Germany between the wars. The synthesis of classical motives and strict modern execution, as well as the high quality of the altar mosaic sets this building apart from others at the time.

5. Documentation

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

Archive material of the Katholischen Pfarrgemeinde Sankt Bonifatius Bad Dürrenberg

5. 2 principal publications (in chronological order):

Mitteldeutsche Neueste Nachrichten/Merseburger Korrespondent, 8. 10. 1931

Dürrenberger Zeitung, 18. 03. 1933

Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen (Hrsg.), Die Bau und Kulturdenkmäler von Sachsen: Stadt Leipzig- die Sakralbauten, München/Berlin; DKV; 1995; ISBN 3-422-00568-4

DEHIO, Georg (Begr.)u. GALL, Ernst (Hrsg.), Handbuch der Deutschen Kunstdenkmäler: Sachsen-Anhalt 2., München/Berlin; DKV; 1999; ISBN3-422-03065-4

Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen-Anhalt (Hrsg.), Denkmalverzeichnis Sachsen-Anhalt Bd 6.1:

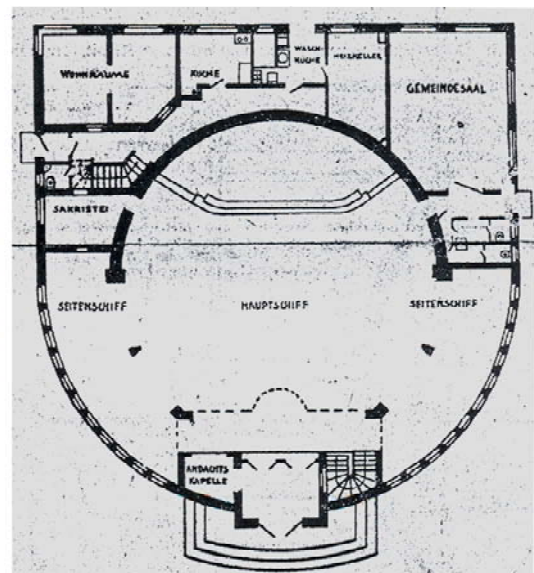
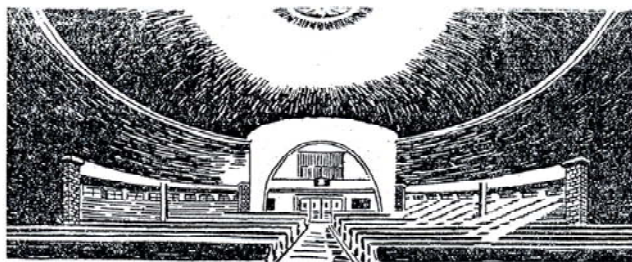
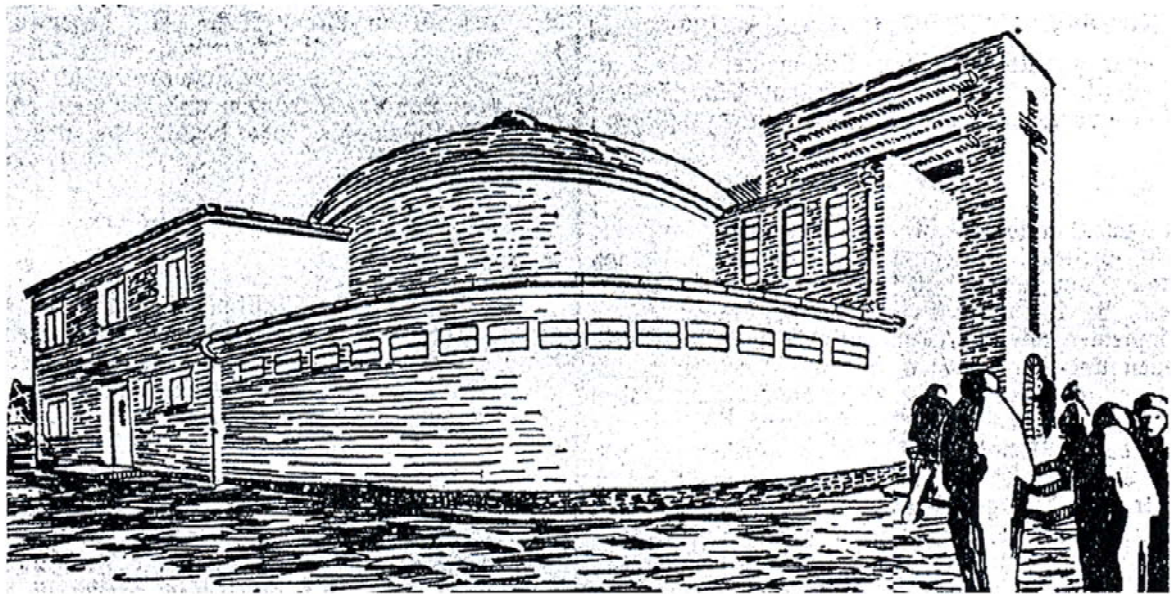
Landkreis Merseburg-Querfurt (I), Halle; Fliegenkopf; 2000; ISBN 3-910147-66-6

5. 3 visual material (state location/ address)

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

Project name and ground floor

Source: Mitteldeutsche Neueste Nachrichten, vom 8.10.1931



Mitteldeutsche Neueste Nachrichten 08.10.1931

recent photographs and survey drawings:



Left: View from south-west, Photo: Christoph Scholter, 18.05.2006

Right: Photo shortly after completion, Archiv LDA, ca. 1933



Altar mosaic, Photo Christoph Scholter, 18.05.2006

Altar mosaic shortly after completion, Archiv LDA, ca. 1933

film/video/other sources:

5. 4 list documents included in supplementary dossier

Keine

6. Fiche report

name of reporter: Christoph Scholter (in coöperator with Dr. Thomas Danzl und Luise Schier)

address: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt

Richard-Wagner-Straße 9

06114 Halle Saale

telephone: Tel 0345/29397-73, fax:- , e-mail: Scholter@LfD.MK.LSA-Net.DE

date of report: Juli 2006

examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section

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

sign and date:

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° :