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Minimum Documentation Fiche 2011

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

composed by national/regional working party of: Germany

0.1 Picture of building/site



depicted item: Berlin, Stadtbad Mitte
source: Tino Mager
date: 2011

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

db code

- 1.1 Current name of building: Stadtbad Mitte
- 1.2 Variant or former name: Stadtbad Berlin
- 1.3 Number & name of street: Gartenstraße 5

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1.4	Town: Berlin	6
1.5	Province/state: Berlin	7
1.6	Zip code: 10115	8
1.7	Country: Germany	9
1.8	National grid reference: +52° 31' 46.06", +13° 23' 34.40"	10
1.9	Classification/typology: PBS	11
1.10	Protection status & date: Protected monument since 1977.	12
2	History of building	
2.1	Original brief/purpose: public bath, swimming pool, sauna	13
2.2	Dates: commission/completion: 1927 – 1930 (official opening 14-5-1930)	14
2.3	Architectural and other designers: Carlo Jelkmann, Heinrich Tessenow	15
2.4	Others associated with building: Glass painting: Max Pechstein. Bronze sculptures: Ernst Hermann Grämer, August Kraus. Founder of the preceding institution: James Henry Simon.	16
2.5	Significant alterations with dates: 1945 slight damage of a window and the pool floor by allied bombing, reopening five months later. 1985 – 1993 extensive restoration.	17
2.6	Current use: swimming pool, sauna, rehabilitation and wellness centre	18
2.7	Current condition: generally good	19
3	Description	
3.1	General description: Stadtbad Mitte consists of three parallel wings with lateral and centric connections. Thus, the complex forms four patios. The street facing punctuated brick-facade is divided into five symmetrically arranged sections and adjoins apartment buildings. It houses water tanks, a sauna and a russian-roman bath. The middle wing contains the changing rooms and is covered by a glass roof. The rear wing contains a 50 m x 15 m pool, its walls and ceiling feature large-scale windows.	20
3.2	Construction: Front building: masonry, yellow facing brick laid in flemish-bond coursing, steel and brick ceiling construction, windows framed in limestone. Hall: pool, lower walls and walkway form a single piece of ferroconcrete; higher walls and ceiling made of a steel frame construction and glass.	21
3.3	Context: The bath replaced a predecessor from 1888 to cope with the increasing number of inhabitants in Berlin Mitte. Most apartment buildings did not provide bathrooms at that time. The Stadtbad Mitte contained 98 bathtubs, 50 shower baths, 25 medical baths, a russian-roman bath, steam- and light baths, a massage room and a large swimming pool. Carlo Jelkmann, the architect, managed to successfully integrate the huge structure into a pretty narrow street with residential buildings. Heinrich Tessenow, who fulfilled the modern ideal of light, air and sun by creating a bright, clear and airy facility, designed the interior.	22
4	Evaluation	
4.1	Technical: The innovative design of the bright rear wing is characterised by extensive glass windows in all four walls and in the self-supporting ceiling. It impressively shows the enormous	23

capabilities of steel frame architecture in combination with glass. The windows could be opened by a sophisticated mechanism and therefore provided pleasing climatic conditions during summer. Double walls allow for air circulation between inner and outer windows to avoid water condensation, the walkway around the pool is heated. For the interior, Tessenow used new materials to meet hygienic and aesthetic requirements. Porcelain plates and a special joint sealer guarantee an enduring sterile appearance. Four patios allow for good air circulation. The general design gave the guideline for later swimming pools. At the time of opening, Stadtbad Mitte was the largest indoor pool in Europe. The Stadtbad also has an own water supply by two deep wells. The rapid construction made it a showcase example of functional and technological building.

- 4.2 Social: Stadtbad Mitte was designed to fulfil the hygienic needs of Berlin Mitte's increasing population. At the time of construction, less than 2% of Mitte's inhabitants had an own bathroom. The Stadtbad's numerous showers and bathtubs provided a sufficient hygienic supply. The large pool, designed for 313 people, could also be used for sport events. A tribune behind the glass windows facing the middle wing provided space for 1200 spectators. Moreover, the integration of medical baths, a russian-roman bath and a sauna as well as an 800m² sun terrace on the middle wing's roof represent the change from a mere baths towards a modern sports and health centre. 24
- 4.3 Cultural & Aesthetic: Stadtbad Mitte shows a turning point in the development of modern public baths. Former institutions took up the design of classic roman baths and housed relatively small pools in basilica-like halls. Here the architects chose a clear design with straight lines and bright colours. The architecture reflects the aesthetic ideals of the time and also serves the social and cultural public needs. The light-filled interior of the bath is a remarkable manifestation of the modern movements demand for light, air und sun. Max Pechsteins glass paintings of the four seasons in the russian-roman bath and bronze sculptures by Ernst Hermann Grämer and August Kraus underlined the modern claim of the design. 25
- 4.4 Historical: Stadtbad Mitte represents an important step within healthcare architecture. It shows the successful application of modern architecture within the limited space of a residential area. At the same time it provided numerous facilities for a broad range of hygienic and health needs. Built as a baths institution it still fulfils today's needs for a sports and spare time facility, thanks to its large pool and well organized structure. 26
- 4.5 General assessment: Stadtbad Mitte was built to meet the hygienic needs of Berlin Mitte's 300000 inhabitants. Its design with large glass windows in walls and ceiling, white porcelain plates and artworks by leading contemporary artists manifests the modern movement's aesthetic ideals. Being the largest indoor pool in Europe at the time of its opening, it is a model for the efficient application of novel building technology. By combining hygienic, medical and sportive aspects, it provided the way for a new type of public baths. 27

5 Documentation

- 5.1 principal references: 28
 Trost, Heinrich: Denkmale in Berlin – Bezirk Mitte, Petersberg 2003, 553 f.
 Wangerin, Gerda; Gerhard Weiss: Heinrich Tessenow – Ein Baumeister, Essen 1976, 47f.

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5.2 visual material attached: 29
photographs

5.3 rapporteur/date: Tino Mager, June 28 2011 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: Berlin, Stadtbad Mitte; facade
source: Tino Mager
date: 2011

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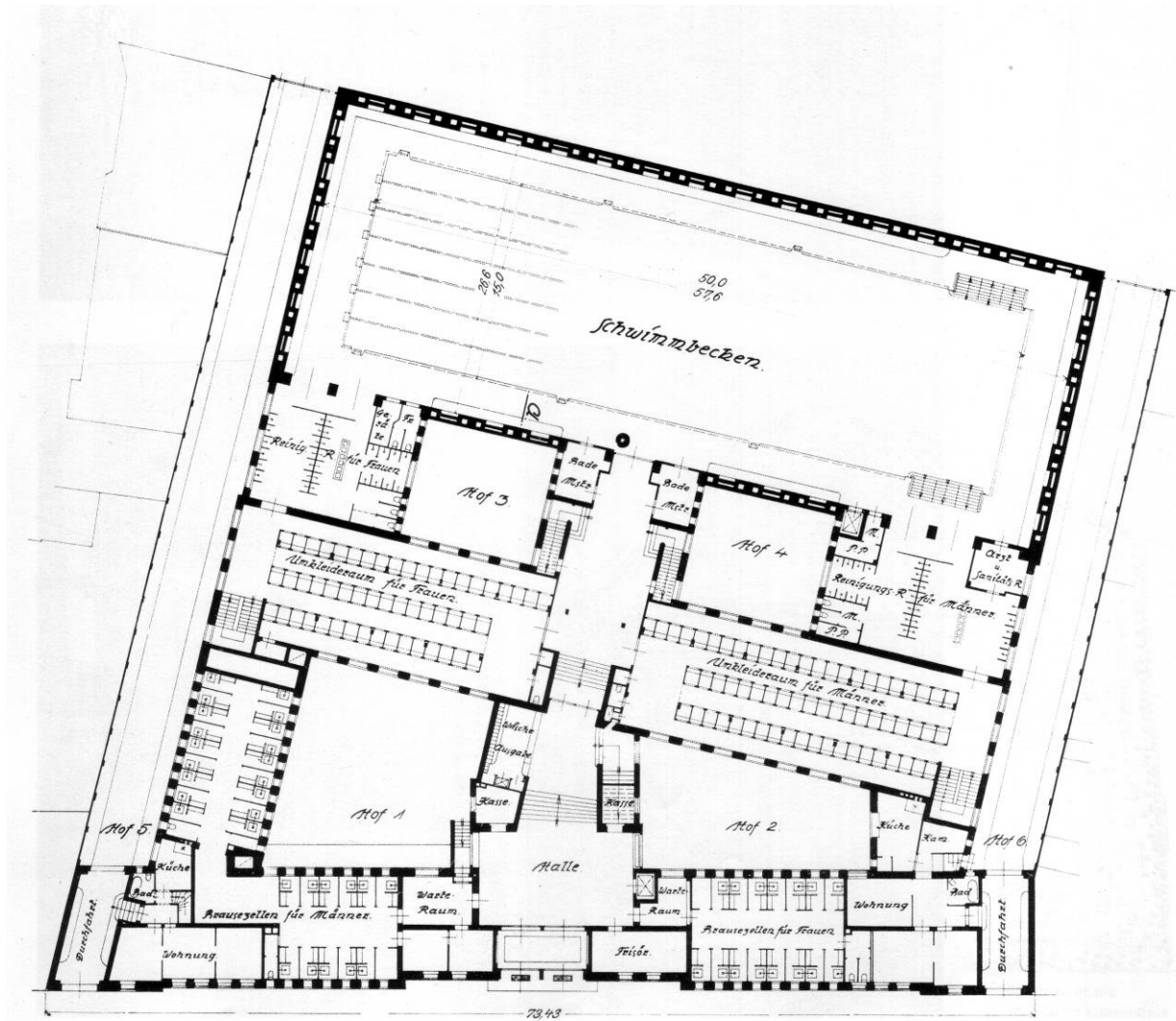
depicted item: Berlin, Stadtbad Mitte; rear wing
source: Tino Mager
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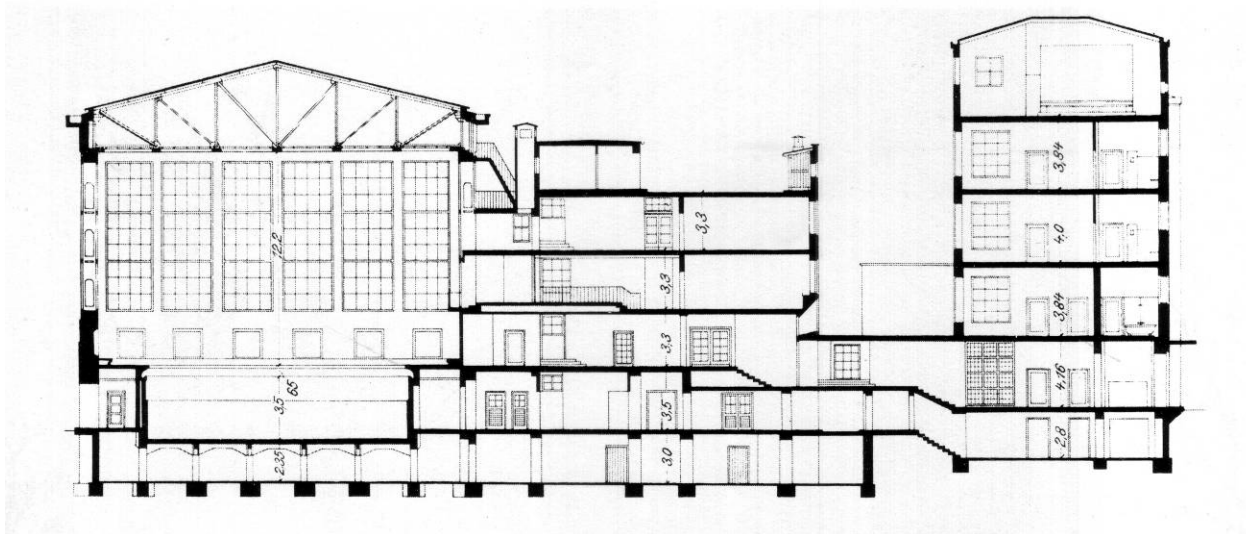
depicted item: Berlin, Stadtbad Mitte; floor plan
 source: Deutsche Bauzeitung 64. Jahrgang, 1930, Nr. 59/60, S. 447.
 date: ca. 1927

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depicted item: Berlin, Stadtbad Mitte; section
source: Deutsche Bauzeitung 64. Jahrgang, 1930, Nr. 59/60, S. 446.
date: ca. 1927

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