

Information for the press

ARCHITECTURE: MODERNIST BUILDING DESIGN IN THURINGIA

The spirit of modernism can be found in numerous buildings throughout Thuringia. Jena, Gera, Probstzella, Gelmeroda and, of course, Weimar, are must-sees for any architecture enthusiasts exploring Thuringia on the trail of Bauhaus and modernism. They can even stay overnight in a notable Bauhaus-designed building.

Jena: from the Gropius mansion to the Neufert refectory

The vibrant university city of Jena bears the instantly recognisable hallmarks of Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius and his student (and later colleague) Ernst Neufert, whose striking architectural designs enhance the townscape. Walter Gropius built two houses in Jena in the Neues Bauen architectural style. They were completed using the modular building system, an idea he first conceived in Weimar. 'Haus Auerbach' was built in 1924 as a modern dwelling made up of interconnecting cuboids with roof terraces and a fully glazed conservatory. It was faithfully restored to its original condition between 1994 and 1995. Just a short walk away is another of Gropius's designs, 'Haus Zuckerlandl'. Built between 1927 and 1929, the building follows the characteristically strict geometric principles and was purpose-built to house three generations. Both houses are now privately owned, but parts are sometimes opened to the public on special occasions.

Traces of Bauhaus can also still be seen in one of Jena's public buildings: the Theaterhaus, which Gropius redesigned in 1921 as part of his first commission in Thuringia. Parts of the original theatre survive today, and the building is still used as Jena's municipal theatre.

Gropius's theatre conversion was project managed by Bauhaus student Ernst Neufert. As the author of design reference book 'Architects' Data', which has been reprinted in numerous editions since it was first published in 1936, Neufert is still a household name to architectural students the world over. His university refectory on Philosophenweg in Jena, which he designed together with Otto Bartning, is made up of a cubic steel skeleton with a flat roof and red-brick facade. Neufert's Abbeum, the teaching and research facility for the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, was built around a skeleton of reinforced concrete.

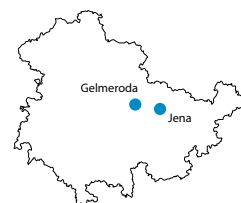
Other notable examples of modernist architecture in Jena include the former workshop of Martin bookbinders on Knebelstrasse, as well as the main Zeiss plant and the Zeiss Planetarium, which were created for (and with) products by Carl Zeiss AG, the internationally acclaimed manufacturer of fine-mechanical optical systems established in Jena in 1846.

Gelmeroda: Feininger's inspiration and Neufert-Box

The name Ernst Neufert is also closely associated with Gelmeroda. The village, which now forms part of Weimar, is worth a visit for its church, which provided inspiration to Bauhaus master Lyonel Feininger for more than 150 works, including his 'Cathedral', that adorned the cover of the Bauhaus manifesto. Gelmeroda is also where Ernst Neufert lived and worked – in a wooden house he built within just six weeks in 1929. To mark 100 years since his birth, the Neufert-Box gallery was built in the

At a glance:

Jena is home to two fantastic examples of Walter Gropius's architectural design: the 'Haus Auerbach' and 'Haus Zuckerlandl'. The legacy of Bauhaus architect Ernst Neufert also lives on in the city, particularly in his student refectory and the Abbeum university building.



At a glance:

The village of Gelmeroda provided Lyonel Feininger with the subject for his famous 'Cathedral', and is home to Ernst Neufert's house and studio, as well as the Neufert-Box.

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garden of Neufert House. The exhibition building, which is designed in accordance with the same principles as Neufert's original house, is also used as a venue for seminars, functions and concerts and as an office for the Neufert Foundation.

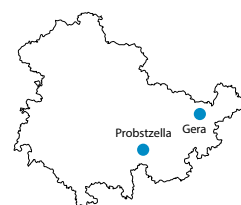
Gera: early modernism and Neues Bauen

To this day, Thilo Schoder is regarded as the greatest exponent of the Neues Bauen architectural style in Thuringia. During his time in Gera from 1919 to 1932, he made an extraordinary contribution to the town's modern architecture. He was a student of Henry van de Velde and one of several architects overseeing the construction of 'Haus Schulenburg' in Gera between 1913 and 1914, a grand mansion conceived by Van de Velde as a synthesis of the arts. The mansion has been restored to its original condition and now houses a private museum. The exhibition includes some of Henry van de Velde's many architectural drawings, book designs and furniture pieces and celebrates his status as a pioneer of modernism and of the Bauhaus Weimar style.

Gera is also a good place to find examples of Neues Bauen, which was practised extensively by Bauhaus graduates and their contemporaries, such as Thilo Schoder. A number of his buildings survive today, for example the Schäfer clinic, now used as an office building, and various residential buildings, such as 'Haus Meyer' and 'Haus Sparmberg'. One of Schoder's designs, a factory for the former silk manufacturer Schulenburg & Bessler, is today protected by a preservation order. Now serving as the head office of a textile company, the building has a Thilo Schoder room, and the decoration and furnishings have been faithfully restored.

At a glance:

During his time in Gera from 1919 to 1932, Thilo Schoder made an extraordinary contribution to the town's modern architecture. Numerous buildings by the former student of Henry van de Velde survive today.



Probstzella: from 'Haus des Volkes' to Bauhaus Hotel

In 1925, Walter Gropius released Alfred Arndt from his studies at the Bauhaus school to complete one of Thuringia's most influential Bauhaus architectural endeavours, the 'Haus des Volkes' in Probstzella. He took over the project when the building was just a shell and saw it through to its completion as an event venue and guesthouse, commissioned by industrialist Franz Itting. The Bauhaus workshops provided all the furnishings and decor for the interior of the multistorey building. With its tower jutting out from the roof, the distinctive cube-shaped building remains a defining Probstzella landmark.

In 2005, this striking property was respectfully restored and reopened as the Bauhaus Hotel and events venue. It also contains a small exhibition on the history of the building, featuring contributions from the architect's daughter.

At a glance:

One of Thuringia's most important Bauhaus architectural designs was completed in Probstzella in 1925 under Alfred Arndt. The 'Haus des Volkes' has now reopened as the Bauhaus Hotel.

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