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WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

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**WORLD MONUMENTS FUND AWARDS
FIRST WORLD MONUMENTS FUND/KNOLL MODERNISM PRIZE
TO
BRENNE GESELLSCHAFT VON ARCHITEKTEN MBH**

**AWARD GIVEN FOR MAGNIFICENT RESTORATION OF THE LANDMARK
BAUHAUS-DESIGNED ADGB TRADE UNION SCHOOL IN BERNAU, GERMANY**

For Immediate Release—New York, NY, July 7, 2008 . . . The **World Monuments Fund** (WMF) has awarded its first **World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize** to **Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH**, headed by partners **Winfried Brenne** and **Franz Jaschke**, for its restoration of the **ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau, Germany** (1930). Designed by Hannes Meyer, second director of the Bauhaus, and Hans Wittwer of the Bauhaus architecture department, the ADGB School is a seminal Modern building whose survival was unknown to Western architectural historians for decades. The Modernism Prize will be presented to the architects by **Bonnie Burnham**, WMF President; **Andrew Cogan**, CEO, Knoll, Inc.; and **Barry Bergdoll**, chairman of the jury and The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), at a dinner on Thursday, July 10, in New York City.

“The World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize was established to demonstrate that Modern buildings can remain sustainable structures with vital futures,” said WMF President **Bonnie Burnham**. “It is an integral element of our Modernism at Risk Initiative, which WMF launched in 2006 with the generous support of founding sponsor Knoll, Inc., to concentrate our efforts on the special problems of 20th century art and architecture. This is the inaugural Prize and we are very happy to award it to Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH for its superb restoration of a highly significant but little known Bauhaus-designed landmark. We hope the story of this building and its survival and dramatic rescue by a highly talented architectural team working with the ardent support of the owner and local community, will inspire the preservation and restoration of other great Modern buildings.”

“Knoll is especially pleased to have taken a leadership role in the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk Initiative,” said Knoll CEO **Andrew Cogan**. “The WMF/Knoll Modernism Prize reflects our unwavering commitment to Modern design. We are excited that the 2008 jury has recognized a project so

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closely associated with the Bauhaus, which had a profound influence on our founders, Hans and Florence Knoll, and continues to inspire our company today.”

Pleased with the outcome of their project, Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke remarked, “The discovery of the ADGB School—a building born out of a truly functionalist approach that nonetheless strayed from the classic ‘white’ Modern scheme—provided the challenge of restoring a structure that had seen many alterations over the years. Stripped of these additions, the original design of the building revealed itself to be practical and flexible, allowing us to preserve this masterpiece and give it a contemporary use with only subtle interventions.”

The Modernism Prize jury was chaired by **Barry Bergdoll**, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at MoMA, and included **Jean-Louis Cohen**, Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture at New York University; **Kenneth Frampton**, Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia University; and **Dietrich Neumann**, Professor of the History of Art and Architecture at Brown University and Vincent Scully Visiting Professor for the History of Architecture at Yale University. The jury praised the restoration project, noting that “Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten’s restoration of the ADGB School is a heroic achievement that overcame the challenges presented by a complex site: neglect, political turmoil, early Modern building technologies, and limited financial resources.”

Inaugurated in 2008, the World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize will be awarded biennially to a design professional or firm in recognition of an innovative design solution that preserves or enhances a Modern landmark. The Prize, a component of WMF’s Modernism at Risk Initiative, honors an individual project or body of work and is intended to raise awareness of the influential role that Modernism plays in our architectural heritage. (*See page 3 for more information on the Initiative.*)

The ADGB Trade Union School (1930)

The ADGB Trade Union School was built using an innovative design, and sumptuous colors were employed throughout. It was constructed of yellow brick, on a 12-acre forested site, as connected buildings that housed administrative facilities, a glass-block ceiled dining hall, dormitories, classrooms, and meeting and physical education spaces. These facilities were all linked by the building’s most distinctive feature, an external red steel and glass corridor overlooking the countryside.

The School was designed by architect Hannes Meyer and his colleague Hans Wittwer. Meyer was appointed the first head of the Bauhaus architecture department by Bauhaus founder and its first director, Walter Gropius, in 1927. When Gropius left in 1928, Meyer became director, and brought Wittwer into the architecture department. Meyer and Wittwer imbued their architectural plans with Marxist ideals and took a radical functionalist approach, believing that architecture should derive from the needs from the user and thus should not be considered art.

The ADGB School was one of the most important building commissions the Bauhaus ever received. Unfortunately, Meyer’s politicization of the Bauhaus made him a number of enemies, especially in the right-wing press, and this divided the school along political lines. He was forced to resign in August 1930, and his

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role in the history of the Bauhaus was actively downplayed by other Bauhaus figures—especially Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who succeeded Meyer as Bauhaus director—for many years.

The trade school operated for only three years until the Nazi party confiscated the building for use as an SS training facility. After World War II, the school's new owner, the East German Trade Union Federation (FDGB), expanded the site and used it as a training facility for its members. During this time the building was off-limits to the public and surrounded by a security fence.

The survival of the complex was unknown to the West until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when architectural historians discovered that the site was largely intact, though vacant and threatened with demolition and redevelopment. In 2001, the Province of Brandenburg and the Handwerkskammer Berlin (Chamber of Crafts) agreed to reopen it as a trade school, and hired Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH to carry out the restoration.

Since its renovation, completed in December 2007, the complex serves as a trade school once again. Its “rediscovery” and sympathetic restoration help shed new light on the relevance and durability of Modern architecture.

The Winning Project

Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke, partners in Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH, have restored and renovated numerous Modern buildings, including structures by such renowned architects as Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Erich Mendelsohn, and Bruno Taut. Brenne received his architecture degree from universities in Wuppertal and Berlin, Germany, some 30 years ago. Jaschke completed his graduate studies in architecture in Berlin in 1981, and joined Brenne’s firm in 1983. He became Brenne’s partner in Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten mbH in 2001.

The ADGB School was modified significantly when it was in East German hands, presenting a particularly difficult challenge. Brenne and Jaschke carried out meticulous historical research to restore the building according to the original Bauhaus plans.

Modernism Prize juror Jean-Louis Cohen praised the rigorous research of the architects, remarking that they “undertook an almost archaeological study on the history of a misunderstood building.”

The result was spectacular. “The prize winner overcame a number of technical challenges,” noted Mr. Bergdoll, “as the building had been badly treated and adapted over the years. The restoration resulted in a working building, not just an icon, which will greatly enhance its long-term sustainability.”

Mr. Bergdoll will introduce a lecture given by Winfried Brenne and Franz Jaschke on their prize-winning project at the Museum of Modern Art on Wednesday, July 9.

Modernism at Risk

Only decades after their design and construction, great works of 20th-century architecture are being lost to neglect, deterioration, and demolition. While the issue of preserving modern landmarks is gaining prominence in public discourse, the threats they face continue to grow.

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WMF began preserving modern sites in the 1980s when it helped restore seminal Mexican modern murals following a devastating earthquake. Later, it led the restoration of Brancusi's Endless Column in Romania and the battle to save the A. Conger Goodyear House by Edward Durell Stone. More than 20 modern buildings have been placed on the World Monuments Watch, including the Rusakov Club (Konstantin Melnikov), Viipuri Library (Alvar Aalto), the Villa Tugendhat (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe), the International Fairground at Tripoli (Oscar Niemeyer), the Ennis-Brown House (Frank Lloyd Wright), Kings Road House (Rudolf Michael Schindler), and Grosse Point Memorial Library (Marcel Breuer) and Riverview High School (Paul Rudolph), grouped together on the 2008 Watch as "Main Street Modern."

In 2006, WMF launched **Modernism at Risk**, an advocacy and conservation program with founding support from Knoll. The program was established to bring international attention and resources to address the key threats and challenges facing many modern buildings including inappropriate alteration, perceived obsolescence, and public apathy, as well as the technical problems associated with conserving innovative designs and materials.

World Monuments Fund

The World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's great places where civilization has left its mark. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, our highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve our most treasured places. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, we inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. For more information, please visit www.wmf.org.

Knoll

Founded in 1938, Knoll pioneered the principles of modern design in the workplace and the home, from space planning to furniture to accessories. More than 40 Knoll products are exhibited in the permanent Design Collection of The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Headquartered in East Greenville, Pennsylvania, Knoll, recipient of the 2005 Russel Wright Award for the Marketing of Modernism, serves clients worldwide. In North America, the Company distributes its products through a network of more than 200 dealerships and 100 showrooms and regional offices. The Company operates four manufacturing sites in North America: East Greenville, Pennsylvania; Grand Rapids and Muskegon, Michigan; and Toronto, Ontario. In addition, Knoll has plants in Foligno and Graffignana, Italy. The Knoll commitment to high environmental standards is mandated by a comprehensive Environmental, Health & Safety Management Plan. For more information, please visit www.knoll.com or contact dbright@knoll.com.