

THE NEED FOR COMPROMISE , AND OTHER LESSONS FROM WESTERN GERMANY'S MODERN VERNACULAR/

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ABSTRACT

The everyday architecture of Western Germany produced between the end of WWII and the mid-1960s is best described as its "Grey Architecture." Though it dominates many of Germany's cityscapes, it is largely ignored in the discourse on the built environment primarily because it is usually viewed as a product of compromise and inferior design. When interpreted as a form of modern vernacular, however, it stands for the appropriation of the modernist architectural vocabulary by a broad circle of architects. In this light, it becomes evident that Grey Architecture was a specific mode of building, a response to strong, external, economic, temporal, societal, and legislative conditions. Such conditions of architecture remain dominant today, and continue to determine how our built environment is produced. Taken to its conclusion, the concept of mode as a "way of working" determined by external circumstances implies that all modalities of architecture should receive attention, in "high" as well as in "low" building tasks. The discussion of heteronomous modes, especially, could open up new ways of influencing the production of the built environment, of interpreting the vernacular in a way that is directly related to essential modern ideas.

GREY ARCHITECTURE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF PIECEMEAL RECONSTRUCTION

During the Second World War, many of Europe's cities were severely destroyed by aerial bombing, sieges, and other acts of war. Germany, the aggressor, was strongly affected; between 1939 and 1945, almost every large German city was bombed. The "second destruction" of the post-war years added to this. Many still intact pre-war buildings were torn down, allegedly clearing cities for reconstruction.¹ Andreas Tönnesmann described the reconstruction phase as "probably the greatest collective building effort of the 20th century."² Hous-

ing stock was severely depleted during the war, while the population of the country grew because of refugees from Eastern Europe.

The reconstruction of Germany's cities between 1945 and the middle of the 1960s was conducted in a multitude of ways and styles, ranging from tabula rasa solutions over reconstructions of historical ensembles to solutions in which different approaches were mixed. Outside of the cities, buildings and building complexes were developed and planned on a larger scale, while existing city structures were usually reconstructed in a piecemeal way. Corresponding to the socialistic, centralistic governance system of the German Democratic Republic, Eastern Germany's housing stock was mainly reconstructed in the former way. While large-scale reconstruction could be organized industrially and with large planning groups, there was little incentive for individual owners to begin reconstruction. In contrast, a large proportion of the reconstruction in the capitalistic, market-oriented Federal Republic of Germany was undertaken incrementally, as it encouraged owners of individual parcels to reconstruct in expectation of financial gains. As a result, the fragmented, pre-war ownership structures were often redeveloped parcel by parcel by private investors, also supported through state loans and subsidies.³

The differences in how these urban structures were produced are also mirrored in the architectural expression of the buildings. At first glance, many similarities can be observed, such as the façade materials—usually plaster or tiles—or standardized windows. While the larger building complexes more often accord to clear architectural principles, the piecemeal reconstruction is more often unclear in its architectural expression.

In these individually reconstructed buildings, an architectural mix referring to both the modernist and the neo-classicist vocabulary is employed. The windows

are usually arranged in a conventional way and combined with other elements such as shallow pitched roofs or projecting bays. Many of these buildings look as if separate ideas had been aggregated. Elements such as entry doors and shop windows are arranged in an additive fashion, and not in accordance with other elements or an overarching concept. Architecturally and urbanistically, this additive fashion characterizes today's West German streetscapes. (z 1)

In the current discourse on post-war architecture, this production largely stays in the background. While exceptional examples are increasingly discussed,⁴ and large-scale developments are gaining attention as well,⁵ the incremental post-war building activity is regarded as unremarkable and architecturally uninteresting. A discussion of these buildings has only recently and reluctantly begun.⁶ The main reason for this distaste seems to be their un-architecturalness; because these buildings were not designed according to principles that can be described by established architectural theories, they usually fall out of the roster

of architectural criticism.

It is because of this difficulty of description and the indeterminacy in many aspects of their design that I chose to describe this form of building as "Grey Architecture."⁷ Stylistically, this architecture is located in a grey area between avant-garde modernism and an ornamentally reduced form of neo-classicism. It was explicitly meant to form the quiet, inconspicuous "grey" background of post-war West German cities. And finally, it has a clear tendency towards grey tones in its outer appearance.

Once noticed, it is hard to ignore it - Grey Architecture is omnipresent in West German cities. But these buildings are relevant not only because of their sheer mass and the present need for renovation; their formal expression and urban integration also promise to add to our understanding of how modernity entered everyday practice, and to hold useful conclusions for the present discussion.



Figure 1: A typical street in the city of Essen in Western Germany. Photocredit: Benedikt Redmann.



Figure 2: House No. 28 today. Photocredit: Benedikt Redmann.

CASE STUDY VIEHOFFER STRASSE 28

Because the development of West Germany's Grey Architecture took place incrementally, the emergence of this form of building must be observed on the basis of singular case studies. In this section, one building—Viehofer Strasse No. 28 in Essen—will be presented as a case study. The building and the block surrounding it were chosen because of the variation they present in a comparably small stretch of urban fabric. Each building was developed by another architect for another client. By studying these buildings, patterns can be derived that are representative of the grey building production as a whole.

The city of Essen lies in the Ruhr area, which represents an apt environment for studying Grey Architecture. The area was severely destroyed during the war



Figure 3: House No. 28 in the late 1980s. Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28.

and then rebuilt very quickly, as the steel and coal mining industries were important for the so-called economic miracle of post-war Western Germany. With the structural decline of coal mining and the steel industry, economic development was basically halted in the 1960s, keeping much of the Grey Architecture intact. Also, the almost complete absence of a grown building culture in the Ruhr area gave it a predisposition for the development of a “pure” form of Grey Architecture.

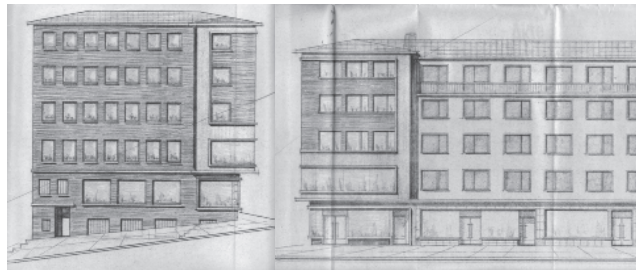
The most striking observation on the building history of No. 28 is the constant adaptation that characterizes all stages of its development. Building experts played a more or less serving role. Aside from a lot of small changes made by the frequently changing shop owners, a façade renovation in 1990 actually made this building the “grey” building it is today (Figure 2). The original façade had been covered by tiles, a typical ar-

chitectural motif of that time (Figure 3). Building files show that this version was the final step in a series of iterations drawn by the architect Walter Ehrecke (1906-1964). While the first version is dominated by a modernistic strip window (Figure 4), this window is reduced in the following iteration (Figure 5) to finally make way for a symmetrical, more conservative version (Figure 6), which is very similar to the final version (Figure 7). These architectural decisions were probably based on economic necessity; the owner of the house, an inn-keeper, first planned a radical expansion of his bar to four stories and a demolition of the existing building. (Figure 8) When he passed away and his widow took over the project, it became more modest. Much of the existing structure was used in the final design, making the building a transformation⁸

For Walter Ehrecke, his flexible role in the building process was probably not problematic. He was a typical representative of the architects who were responsible for much of the piecemeal reconstruction of the West German cities. Most were builders rather than academically educated architects. After an education in a specific craft, they usually went through a brief higher education as architects or engineers before starting to work. Due to the war and a high demand for architects in the reconstruction period, some even took on the task of self-taught reconstruction. An example of this is Hans Engels (1918-1980), who built a substantial part of Essen's inner city. Engels entered the war when he was 21, and never had a higher education. He started his business in 1946, mainly building Grey Architecture in the first years. Later he went on to build for large insurance and petroleum companies all over Germany.

On the other side of these mainly pragmatic and often slightly anarchic builders were understaffed and overwhelmed building authorities. Planning documents had often been destroyed during the war and staff was diminished. In this situation, the number of building

applications rose substantially as reconstruction took on speed. As a result, builders like Ehrecke and Engels were able to push ahead with their work quite undisturbed. Breaches of regulations or instructions were



often not (or only softly) sanctioned.
Figure 4: Design submitted to the building authorities on March 6th, 1957.
Photocredit: building files Viehofer Strasse 28.

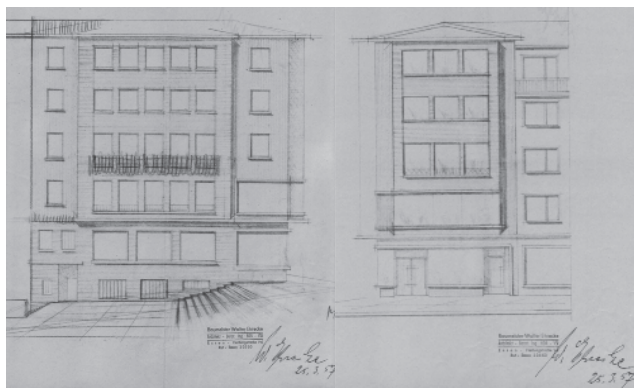


Figure 5: Design submitted to the building authorities on March 25th, 1957. Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28.

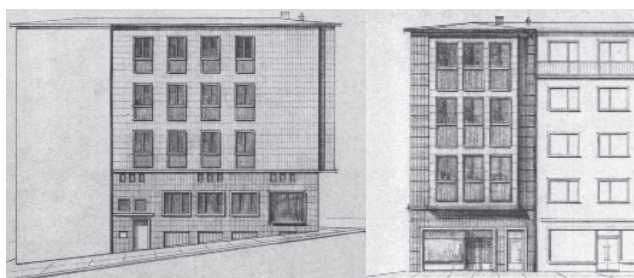


Figure 6: Design submitted to the building authorities on March 25th, 1957. Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28.

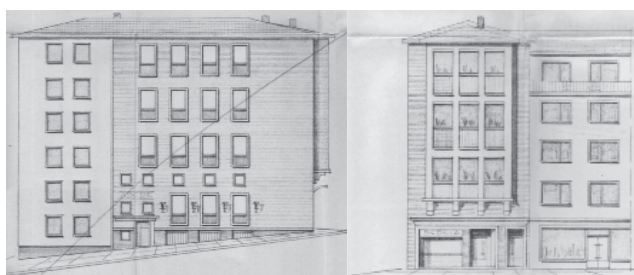


Figure 7: Design submitted to the building authorities on March 25th, 1957. Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28

A study of No. 28, its neighboring buildings in the Viehofer Strasse, and a number of other cases in Essen indicate that the builders of Grey Architecture employed three distinctive design methodologies, pragmatically adapted to the conditions at hand and derived from their specific education. The first method was direct *contextuality*, meaning that the builders, for instance, integrated the authority's requirements such as eaves and forms (if they were enforced) almost directly into the design. The second method was *referentiality*, which involved an often very direct adoption of solutions from contemporary buildings in the same city or region, as well as from buildings published in widely distributed books of the time such as Hans Volkart's *Schweizer Architektur* (1951). Especially the Swiss and Scandinavian modernism of the inter- and post-war period were taken up as references, as they came from neutral countries without any ideological ballast.⁹ The third method was addition, by which contradictory and disparate requirements were added to an overall picture without aiming towards an absolute integration. For instance, an analysis of the facades of Number 28 and its neighboring buildings shows how they were each designed in the commonly accepted degree of modernistic expression, the window formats gradually shifting from vertical to horizontal. The resulting street elevation clearly shows this additive method (Figure 9).

From what can be gathered by reconstructing the design process, and from talking to contemporary wit-



Figure 8: The building in 1950, equipped with a provisional roof.
Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28.

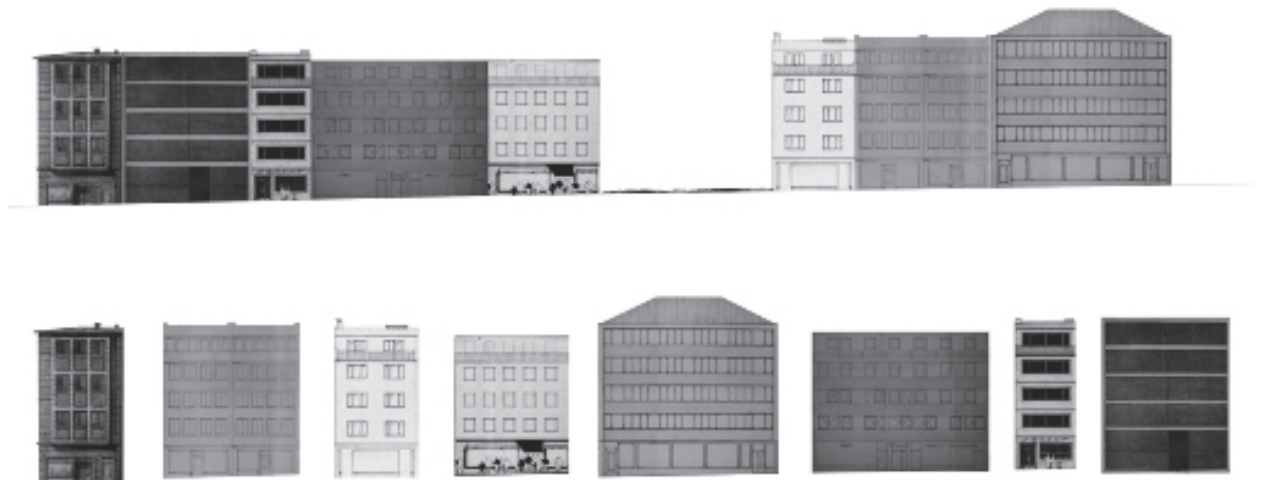


Figure 9: Boucsein.jpg The facades of Viehofer Strasse No. 2-28 ordered by the date of completion, from 1956 (left) to 1963 (right). Photocredit: Building Files Viehofer Strasse 28.

nesses, the builders worked according to a conscious choice. They followed an evolutionary, as opposed to revolutionary, understanding of what it meant to be modern as an architect. They viewed modern building technology as an enhancement, but not as a tool to change society.¹⁰ In this, they worked very much in accordance with their clients, but also with a general sentiment present in the large majority of society, which has been described as “no experiments” for the West German post-war period.¹¹

GREY ARCHITECTURE AS MODERN VERNACULAR

This close connection to society leads to the question of whether Grey Architecture is a form of vernacular architecture, as suggested by the term “Grey Architecture,” derived from a colloquial expression. As vernacular architecture is only marginally treated in the German-speaking discourse because it was contaminated by the national socialist abuse of traditional architecture, so we have to turn to definitions from the Anglo-Saxon discourse. Here, Paul Oliver is one of the most prominent advocates of vernacular architecture. He describes it as “buildings of the people,” “built to meet specific needs, accommodating the values, economies and ways of living of the cultures that produce them.”¹² Grey Architecture accorded to what the majority of the people deemed appropriate for reconstruction at the time, favoring a reconstruction without major innovations. And although this did not apply to formal aspects—the Wilhelminian style of building was despised as a reminder of the pre-war era¹³—the results were not supposed to be so revolutionary as to put everything in question that had been there before. It was the aim of Grey Architecture to communicate conventionality and prosaicism in a time of insecurity.

Other definitions point towards a positive answer as well. For instance, Neasa Hourigan states that vernacular architecture is “not built for import or to impress a cultural elite,” that “the design and construction in question has been undertaken on the basis of utility,” that it “does not rely on its original creator as a defining characteristic” and “is other than Architecture with a capital A.”¹⁴

However, both Hourigan and Oliver mention the absence of the architect in the building process as a de-

fining characteristic of the vernacular. Clearly, Grey Architecture was created by a division of labor between architects, structural engineers, and a number of craftsmen - and, unlike the vernacular architecture that is normally described as such, was not anonymous. However, the builders who were mainly responsible for Grey Architecture had a clear preference towards such notions as convention and tradition, while such issues as authorship were not important to them. Rather, they saw it as their main task to provide a form of background architecture that did not put itself into the foreground in any way.

Also, the people active in the building process were few, compared to later years. The builders were probably the last generalists of the German building culture. Like Walter Ehrecke, they had usually first been educated in a craft connected to the building industry and had then spent a few semesters at a technical college (the “Höhere Technische Lehranstalt”, HTL). Some of the younger builders, such as Hans Engels, were even autodidacts, as the war had interrupted their education. This clearly set them apart from the architects educated at universities, who were allowed to enter the BDA (the “Bund Deutscher Architekten” or German Association of Architects). The importance of this distinction between “high” and “low” architects was even mirrored in the telephone directories of the time.¹⁵

By defining vernacular architecture as “related to their environmental contexts and available resources,”¹⁶ Paul Oliver also touches on the issue of context. Grey Architecture did relate directly to external factors, although they were mostly human-made, such as building laws, economic circumstances, interventions by authorities, norms, and time pressure. Grey Architecture is a direct expression of these laws. It is also this direct relation to external circumstances that provides a clue to how to frame Grey Architecture through theory, or any other form of modern vernacular or everyday architecture.

THE CONCEPT OF MODE

As it is based on non-academic, additive principles, it is hard to describe Grey Architecture through theoretical reflection. One of the possibilities to cover this gap is the concept of mode. Mode is sometimes implicitly

mentioned in the discourse, but definitions of the term are lacking. One of the few instances where mode is referred to in the discourse on planning is an article from 2007 by Kimmo Lapintie. In order to theorize urban space from a practical perspective, Lapintie turns to the philosophical field of modal logic, arriving at a viewpoint of planning as the design and planning of possibilities.¹⁷

Mode can also be used as a way to describe the activities of architects such as Walter Ehrecke and Hans Engels. Modal notions include possibility, necessity, knowledge, belief, and the obligatory and permitted,¹⁸ and it is clear that each of these notions is a strong influence in an architect's practical work. Possibilities are as strong as any other notion, and in fact, even the possibilities differ from task to task.

In this line of thought, mode can be defined a way of working (*modus operandi*) that is determined by task, type, theme and, subject matter. From a practical perspective, it is clear that modes cannot be freely chosen by an architect. Instead, most tasks strongly limit the architecture that can be realized. This was clearly the case for Grey Architecture in Western Germany, which can be designated as a heteronomous mode, meaning that it was strongly influenced by external factors - although there were clearly also possibilities for variations, albeit in a comparatively limited frame.

In return, this means that there are also autonomous modes, where the architect is confronted with completely different conditions. The emergence of high architecture is as much dependent on favorable conditions as on the individual architect's talent. Also, there is a large spectrum in between the two extremes of heteronomy and autonomy in which many building tasks are conducted.

In view of this, the question of mode becomes an essentially modern one, if modernity is seen as a social project and if it is differentiated from the architectural ideas that emerged as "modernism" at the beginning of the 20th century. Modernity as a historical epoch was at least as much a change of modalities as a matter of architectural design. And up to today, the question of how to deal with modal possibilities in the broad mass of building production exists only in a marginal way in

a discourse that is strongly oriented on autonomous modes, which represent a small fraction of the built environment. In this discussion, the concept of mode could provide room for de-mystifications in a discourse that often ignores the fact that modal possibilities are a decisive force in how our built environment is produced.

MODERNITY SEEN THROUGH THE VERNACULAR LENS

Although it is usually not valued as such, Grey Architecture is a fundamental part of modernity. It was through Grey Architecture that modern ideals were gradually but surely introduced and made acceptable in German cities. Light and rationally designed buildings were now affordable for everyone, formerly narrow streets were widened, sanitation was implemented throughout the urban structure, and standardized building techniques took hold. Looking at this modernist, everyday architecture of average quality today, one could rightly ask whether it realized "the big dream of the architects of the 1920s,"¹⁹ although it reacted to different modal conditions than the "high" architecture of the time.

German cities were rebuilt in a modernist spirit, but in most cases not in the spirit of a revolutionary highbrow modernism that wanted to get rid of the existing cities and their aesthetic expression and replace them with aesthetic and functional city fabrics. Instead, the reconstruction was conducted in a spirit that prioritized solid craftsmanship and the relation to the existing city structure.

By the end of the 1950s, however, the line of thought and practice of Grey Architects was terminated in Western Germany. The moderate modernism that those builders followed was increasingly marginalized. The technical colleges that had educated architects such as Walter Ehrecke did not fit the increasingly specialized building discipline, and were closed down. In the discourse, modes other than the "high" ones were marginalized because they were not in accordance with categories of architectural criticism. Journals ceased to report on the tasks that most Grey Architects were working on.²⁰ Also, a radical turn towards rational planning and the erasure of all traces of arbitrariness took place. The "high" architects could

adapt to this new direction, but it became fatal for the traditional builders who could not adapt their way of working.²⁰ And later, with Postmodernism, it became ultimately impossible to continue building in a pragmatic modernist way.

These radical seizures still affect Germany's building culture today. The quiet way of building represented by Grey Architecture is almost nonexistent in Western Germany today. And although the processes that followed after the 1960s are complex, it can be assumed that the rise of pre-fabricated houses would perhaps not have had such a strong impact on the German building culture if the moderate modernism of the Grey Architects had been continued consistently, providing an alternative for clients who were not oriented towards "high" architecture.

But most importantly, in Western Germany as well as in most other western building cultures, while new approaches developed and dogmas changed, the proportion of "high" to "low" tasks and the difficulty of theoretically and practically addressing the latter remained the same. Although new theories were constantly formed in relation to the themes of the respective time, modal notions remained the most dominant force in architectural production. And although heteronomy did become an important theme in "high" architectural production starting with postmodernism, this heteronomy usually appears more or less as a quotation. While the postmodern use of traditional elements combines them in an intellectual, often-ironic manner, Grey Architecture takes this mix of elements seriously and treats them as a part of a tradition and a context.

This means that while a reception of Grey Architecture took and takes place through quotations, the production mechanisms and thus the core generating factors of the quoted architecture are often ignored, as is the knowledge about the architects factually dealing with heteronomy in a practical and everyday way. Modern vernacular production such as Grey Architecture was and is mainly used as a theme to transfer a certain practice's work into a field of art, using subversive techniques²² - but it is almost never acknowledged that these transformations can only take place in very few cases and do not carry any relevance for the bulk of the building production. Perhaps this step is also difficult

to take because it would require "high" architecture to accept the influence of external factors and the limits of architectural design.

Seen in this light, if there is a "failure of modern architecture," it seems not to have been a failure to devise "high" theories or solutions, nor to produce iconic works that symbolize them. Rather, it seems to have been a failure to be seriously interested in compromise, or more precisely, with the architecture that necessarily has to make compromises. Typically, Grey Architecture is described by attributes such as banality, compromise, and inconsequence, as a poor solution to challenges that could have been solved better. This perspective, however, overestimates the control architects have over their designs. Often, compromises can only be avoided at the cost of losing a project, which is not an option for those who depend on their contracts, and does not change what is being built in the end. The modal conditions are strongly determined by what is fostered by society, by which principles are put forward and which are not. It is an illusion to think that coherent design can fundamentally change this. Design works inside the systems of social conventions, professional disciplines, and the market, but it has minimal influence on the systems themselves.

Maybe those creators of Grey Architecture knew that the builders of post-war Germany disregarded the revolutionary avant-garde, and did not feel obliged to its values. They expressed this implicitly through the way they built, and in interviews, an explicit refusal can also be felt. In 1957, Rudolf Pfister, who led one of the most important architectural journals after the war, *Der Baumeister*, said that it was more important that "averagely gifted" architects built many "decent" buildings than that a few "highly gifted" architects built a few excellent buildings.²³

Looking at the emergence of Grey Architecture after the Second World War, it seems worthwhile to pursue the thought experiment that being socially engaged does not mean being uncompromising. This line of thinking is encouraged by the Brazilian case, one of the few building cultures where the vernacular took up modernism in a consistent and productive way.²⁴ Although there is a rich history of the vernacular influencing "pedigree" modern architecture,²⁵ the reverse process

has not been analyzed as frequently. Though Grey Architecture shows how the pedigree modernism of the interwar years slowly became part of the everyday in West German cities, my research is the first step to an analysis of this process.

If we want to continue the modern project and stop our discipline from being marginalized, we must learn to incorporate and affirm other forms of building into our vision of architecture much more forcefully.²⁶ We must talk about and teach how this can be done—how we can develop new architectural methodologies to broadly deal with the modern vernacular. We can look at how it was done by architects such as Walter Ehrecke and Hans Engels, without reservations, and speak to the actors producing “grey” architectures today (where one of the first steps would be to identify today’s grey architects). We will need to dedicate more resources to this, instead of mainly researching “high” modes, which often represent a dead end (respectively an end in themselves). Certain taboos in architectural theory and history have to be overcome.

The most important conclusion, however, seems to be that we have to engage in society to change modal conditions. Notions such as possibility, necessity, knowledge, belief, the obligatory and permitted are given by society and form the field in which architecture takes place. Changing these notions can take place by changing the built environment within the limits of the modal possibilities given to us—which are flexible to a certain extent—and establishing new ways of building within these limits. But it may also be worthwhile to search for ways to influence these notions before the actual commissions are given, before the modal conditions take effect. In the end, this could also mean working in a more vernacular way, closer to society, and less oriented toward professional conventions and codes.

ENDNOTES

1. Klaus von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau. Architektur und Städtebaupolitik in beiden deutschen Staaten* (München; Zürich: Piper, 1987), 130.
2. Benedikt Boucsein, *Graue Architektur Bauen im Westdeutschland der*

- Nachkriegszeit* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2010), 7.
3. Beyme, *Wiederaufbau*.
4. See for example Michael Braum and Christian Welzbacher, *Nachkriegsmoderne in Deutschland: Eine Epoche weiterdenken* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2009); Michael Hecker and Ulrich Krings, *Bauten und Anlagen der 1960er und 1970er Jahre - ein ungeliebtes Erbe?* (Essen: Klartext, 2011); Roman Hillmann, *Die Erste Nachkriegsmoderne: Ästhetik und Wahrnehmung der westdeutschen Architektur 1945-63* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2011); Olaf Gisbertz (ed.), *Nachkriegsmoderne kontrovers: Positionen der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Jovis, 2012).
5. For a recent example, see Walter Nägeli and Niloufar Kirn Tajeri (Eds.), *Kleine Eingriffe: Neues Wohnen im Bestand der Nachkriegsmoderne* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016).
6. See for example Markus Krajewski and Christian Werner, *Bauformen des Gewissens. Über Fassaden deutscher Nachkriegsarchitektur* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2016) and Boucsein, *Graue Architektur*.
7. I define it as such for the first time, but am taking up a colloquial expression. See Boucsein, *Graue Architektur*.
8. The sources of information on buildings and architects of the Grey Architecture are mainly building files from the city of Essen, interviews with descendants and contemporary witnesses, as well as the few documents left by the architects. Generally, information on the creators of Grey Architecture are hard to come by.
9. See: Andreas Schätzke, “Helvetia docet - Schweizer Architektur im Nachkriegsdeutschland” in *Haefeli, Moser, Steiger: die Architekten der Schweizer Moderne*, ed. Sonja Hildebrand et al. (Zürich: gta-Verlag, 2007), 161–169; and: Hans Volkart, *Schweizer Architektur. Ein Überblick über das schweizerische Bauschaffen der Gegenwart* (Ravensburg: Maier, 1951).
10. Exemplary for this is an article by Rudolf Pfister in the German magazine *Bau-meister*, in which he criticises the Weissenhof Estate from the viewpoint of ‘common sense’: Rudolf Pfister, “Stuttgarter Werkbundaussstellung. Die Wohnung”, *Der Baumeister* 2 (1928).
11. Christoph Hackelsberger, *Die aufgeschobene Moderne. Ein Versuch zur Einordnung der Architektur der fünfziger Jahre* (München, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1985), 35.
12. Paul Oliver, *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xxiii.
13. Beyme, *Wiederaufbau*, 22.
14. Neasa Hourigan, “Confronting Classifications – When and What is Vernacular Architecture?”, *Civil Engineering and Architecture* 3(1) (2015): 22–30.
15. For instance, the directory of Essen from 1952 differentiated between two types of architects: “a) BDA” and “b) Sonstige”, which meant other architects. In 1953, the discrimination was softened by marking the BDA-Architects with an asterisk.
16. Paul Oliver, *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xxiii.
17. Kimmo Lapintie, “Modalities of Urban Space”, *Planning Theory*, 6(1) (2007): 36–51.
18. Lapintie, *Modalities*, 38.
19. X Of the example of post-war single family houses, Klaus-Jürgen Bauer writes that—given that they were cheap, industrially produced, affordable for everyone, typologically consistent, not especially individual and in a sense also classless—they can be viewed as a fulfilment of the big dreams of the architects of the 1920s. See Klaus-Jürgen Bauer, *Minima Aesthetica. Banalität als strategische Subversion der*

Architektur (Weimar: Universitätsverlag der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 1997), 119.

20. In a systematic survey of the most widely read architectural journals of the time, Baumeister shows that from the middle of the 1950s on, the number of contextual tasks decreased rapidly to make room for projects that were not situated in complex urban situations. Store buildings, which had been an important theme at the beginning of reconstruction and are a typical everyday task, completely disappeared from the journals by the beginning of the 1960s. See Boucsein, *Graue Architektur*, 2010, 142.
21. Georg Franck and Dorothea Franck, *Architektonische Qualität* (München: Carl Hanser, 2008), 224.
22. Klaus-Jürgen Bauer, *Minima Aesthetica. Banalität als strategische Subversion der Architektur* (Weimar: Universitätsverlag der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 1997), 15.

23. Rudolf Pfister in *Baumeister* 10/1957, 732. Interestingly, Pfister renounced the star culture in architecture as early as the 1950s. His argument was part of a dispute between “modernists” and “traditionalists” that was flaring up in the post-war period; however, builders like Walter Ehrecke and Hans Engels were not interested in these disputes and viewed them as a thing of the past. See: Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the wake of war: The reconstruction of German cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 60.
24. Fernando Luiz Lara, “Modernism Made Vernacular: The Brazilian Case”, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 63 (1) (2009): 41-50.
25. Francesco Passanti, “The Vernacular, Modernism, and Le Corbusier”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 56 (4) (1997): 438-451, or: Michelangelo Sabatino, *Pride in modesty: Modernist architecture and the vernacular tradition in architecture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).
26. Jeremy Till, *Architecture depends* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009).



Figure 1: Studio Mumbai, “Immediate Landscapes”, handmade prototype, Biennale di Venezia 2016, Arsenale. Photocredit: Biennale di Venezia