

Brno, 29 February 2012

Tugendhat Villa: authentic façade on restored house

The Tugendhat Villa, a masterpiece by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, represents an “icon” of modern architecture. However, it did not become an icon instantaneously although discussions about it sparkled right after its completion. It only became an iconic work later once people noticed that it was a source of inspiration for future development of architecture: materialisation of the idea behind the entire artistic movement.

To prevent from distortion and loss of such an important source of authentic information, the designers and other experts involved in the house renovation chose a method pursuing maximum preservation and presentation of the original – its authentic shape. This means that the renovated villa **is not presented as a brand new but as an architectonically integral set of restored originals.**

One of these restored originals is a set of external wall and ceiling plasters, which are also most visible at first sight. This is a restored original with **approx. eighty percent formed by plaster preserved from 1930 with its defects and traces of scratches.** At a closer glance, everyone can see that it does not look new. Thus, the visitor may “stroke” the same plaster face side as the one stroked by Fritz Tugendhat and his family. It is a face side of plaster bearing traces of manual work of several masons each with a slightly different specific style and different relation to carefulness. An attentive eye may also find traces of further decades of the house life - all modifications – either carried out without any respect or made in an effort to help the house.

Such traces in the form of anticipated installation grooves, cracks and seams after reconstruction work can be found everywhere where the condition of the house allowed for the restoration and presentation of the original plaster face side with only a subtle unifying coating. In approximate one-third of the remaining surfaces the original was too fragmentary and therefore it was restored and covered with a thin layer of new plaster.

The overall result may be to a certain extent assessed already, although **one more lime coating is still missing and will be applied once the whole work becomes absolutely mature, sometime in the 2012 season.** This is the outcome of the work carried out by the designer, contractor’s restorer, advisor’s restorer, conservationists and other experts including those from abroad. The common ground for the work was the awareness that the work is carried out on the authentic tangible original as well as its later development. As part of Mies’s concept of the house design there were no special demands placed on the plaster, it was not highlighted as the principal artistic value but as a part of it. The protective function of plasters and their sustainability for the future have not been omitted, either. The selected restoration method thus strikes a balance between the notional borders of these facts.

Source: Ing. arch. Marek Tichý, co-designer of the villa restoration

Brno City Hall Press Centre

e-mail: tis@brno.cz

phone: 542 172 026

fax: 542 172 124

www.brno.cz

The press service at www.brno.cz provides topical press releases, plan of events, photo gallery, audio media (mp3 formats) and downloadable files.