

Letters from Peter Behrens to P. Morton Shand, 1932–1938

by ALAN WINDSOR

This collection of twenty-four communications from the German architect Peter Behrens (1868–1940) to the English writer Philip Morton Shand (1888–1960) comes from the Morton Shand Archive. I am grateful to William Whittam, who is working on the Shand papers, for having let me read and translate them. None of Shand's letters to Behrens appear to have survived, as Behrens's house was looted in the closing stages of the Second World War, and no single large collection of letters from Behrens's personal estate has yet come to light.

Philip Morton Shand was educated at Eton, King's College, Cambridge, at the Sorbonne, and in Germany. In his *Times* obituary of 6 May 1960, André Simon wrote that Shand spoke French well and German better. During the First World War, after service in the artillery, he was a Superintendent of prisoner-of-war camps, where his languages were of particular value. His first five publications (1926–29), following the translation in 1914 of a play by Arthur Schnitzler (*Liebelel*, 1894; in English *Playing With Love*), were principally on French food and wine.

When living in Lyon in the early 1920s he was invited by Christian Barman, then editor of the *Architectural Association Journal*, to review the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs of 1925. He visited a number of the architects who were designing pavilions for this exhibition, and published an article in the July 1924 issue of the *Journal*. From that time onwards he wrote many articles on modern architecture in Europe, mostly published in the *Architectural Review*. His book on 'the Architecture of Pleasure', *Modern Theatres and Cinemas* (Batsford, 1930) was widely read, and he translated *New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Faber & Faber, 1935) by Walter Gropius.

On leaving school in Altona, Peter Behrens attended the Gewerbeschule in Hamburg and the Kunstschule in Karlsruhe, before studying painting in Düsseldorf and Munich. Following an early career as an artist, he was drawn during the 1890s into designing porcelain, glass, and furniture, before joining the Künstlerkolonie in Darmstadt in 1899. He there designed his first house (1901), for himself and his family, and in 1907 was appointed as artistic adviser to the AEG in Berlin. His activity there eventually ranged from the design of the firm's products to that of its factories and housing, although he had no formal training or qualifications as an architect. Among his assistants in the team he brought together Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret. In 1922, after achieving many substantial architectural works, he was appointed Professor of the Master School for Architecture at the Akademie in Vienna.

During the period when these letters were written, Behrens was teaching and working in Vienna, whilst keeping up his practice in Berlin. As it records, at the beginning of the correspondence he had recently completed the large and luxurious Villa Gans (often wrongly spelled Ganz) at Cronberg in the Taunus and the Ring der Frauen in Berlin, and was working on the State Tobacco Factory in Linz. In 1936 he moved back to Berlin, to take over the Masterschool for Architecture at the Akademie der Künste following the death of Hans Poelzig.

Behrens's letters cast some light on his attitude to the work of Adolf Loos, on his state of mind during the later stages of his career under the Nazi régime, and touch on the curious vicissitudes of one of his favourite schemes, that for *Terrassenhäuser*, with which he was much engaged during the 1920s. They reveal that he took out a patent, unknown until now, relating to a development of this idea.

1.

Professor Dr. Peter Behrens
Architekt B.D.A. Z.V. D.W.B.,
Honor. Corr. Member of the
American Institute of Architects.

Berlin W 35, Genthiner Strasse 13h
Tel B2 Lützow 5656

February 26 1932
Mr. P. Marton [*sic*] Shand
1, Edwardes Place,
Kensington,
London W.8

Dear Mr. Marton Shand,

I remember with pleasure your visit about one year ago when you took an interest in my work, and were particularly interested in a large country house which at that time was in the course of erection for a lady in the Taunus hills near Frankfurt on the Main. The completion of this house unfortunately was delayed by the hard times, but now it is completely finished already for some time, and I have a great number of very good photographs of this house.

I do not know whether you are still inclined and in a position to make a publication of this house. If so, I should like to be informed of your intentions, and then shall remit you a complete set of the photographs from which you can select suitable material for your publication.

Kindly requesting you to let me have a reply informing me of your decision,
I beg to remain very truly yours
Behrens.

This letter, typed and in English, marks the beginning of their correspondence and friendship. The letters after Behrens's name stand for Bund deutscher Architekten, Zentralvereinigung der Architekten Österreichs, and Deutscher Werkbund.

The house Behrens refers to is that for Clara Gans (or Ganz) near Cronberg. A patron of the arts who was friendly with Alexej von Jawlensky and Wassili Kandinsky, Gans was one of the five daughters of Dr Adolf Gans, a founder of the Farbwerke Cassella (which merged with Hoechst before the First World War), and the villa (begun 1930) was a gift to her from her uncle Leopold. Exceptionally large and luxurious, it was built with little regard to expense.

Dr Gans had known of Behrens's work since the time Behrens built his first house (1901) on the Mathildenhöhe when he was a member of the artists' colony at Darmstadt. Leopold Gans was familiar with the Headquarters building (1920–24) Behrens designed for the Farbwerke Hoechst.

2.

March 9th 1932.
P. Morton Shand
16 Raphael Street,
Knightsbridge,
London SW 7

Dear Mr. Shand:—

I beg to thank you for your kind letter which I received in the meantime and which is dated March 1st.

I am very glad to gather therefrom that you still remember our meeting in Berlin and our discussion regarding the country house to be erected by me in the Taunus hills. I am delighted all the more as I learn from your letter that you intend to write an article concerning this in an English periodical with which you are connected.

I am of the opinion that in connection with this building in which I realised new principles in many respects, you will be able to write something regarding your impression of the modern movement.

Enclosed I beg to remit you all of the photographs which I have at my disposal at present. May I request you to mark in some way or other those photographs which you consider suitable for reproduction together with the article which you intend to publish, and to remit the material to me after having made your choice, as I have no other copies at present. Thereupon from Berlin I shall send you new copies of the photographs selected and marked by you.

I am delighted to learn from your letter that probably you will come to Berlin again in the course of this summer. I would be very much obliged to you for an opportunity of having the pleasure of your company, as I would particularly appreciate a possibility of discussing with you all matters pertinent to the modern movement.

Requesting you for the favour of an early reply, I beg to remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours

Peter Behrens.

This letter, typed and in English, with the same printed letterhead, again refers to the projected article about the house for Clara Gans. The request for the return of the photographs, marked, along with the text of the proposed article, suggests that Behrens prudently wished to see the article in advance. Morton Shand's article appeared in the *Architectural Review*, 72 (October 1932), 121–23. In Germany the house was reported on in *Bauwelt*, 25 (1932).

3.

April 20th 1932.

Dear Mr. Shand:—

Some time ago, on the 26th of March, 1932, I forwarded you the photos you chose from the collection sent to you. I hope that you received them and that they served your purpose.

At the time I was about to start on a journey, and therefore was not able to enclose an accompanying letter. I would like to make up for this now and especially to tell you that I was very pleased with your very kind letter of the 16th of March, in which you expressed so favourable an opinion of my building. I thank you for your kind lines.

In order to meet also with your further wish, I beg to forward you herewith a short building specification which I, however, enclose in German. May I assume that you sufficiently master German, or have an opportunity of having the contents translated over there. If not, please let me know, and I then shall let you have a summary of it in German [*sic*].

I learn with great interest that you wrote an article about modern bridges. The bridge in the illustration enclosed by you was not designed by me. With bridges I was always unlucky, having twice received first price [*sic*] in competitions, whereas the execution then was placed in other hands. The designs for these bridges are contained in the monograph on my work published by Baedeker of Essen. In view of the fact that drawings will not be of much use to you, and moreover the article will have been finished already for a long time, I think that it would be of little purpose to send you this book.

I shall be pleased to show you designs of bridges made by me, when you come to Berlin. I shall be glad to see you on your visit here in the course of the forthcoming summer, and therefore would ask you to inform me in time of your arrival in Berlin, in order that we shall not miss each other.

Awaiting with great interest your further news, I beg to remain, dear Mr. Shand,
yours very sincerely,
Peter Behrens.

This third letter, typed and in English, was accompanied by a list of numbers referring to 56 photographs, of which 18 are ticked. It may be assumed that the promise of 'a summary in German' should Morton Shand not have mastered the language sufficiently represents a slip: a summary in *English* would make more sense. It is unlikely that Behrens knew much English; the letters were most probably translated for him by his secretary. Shand's reply to this letter must have reassured Behrens that he could read German, as all the following letters are written in that language.

The article by Morton Shand with reference to bridges was probably 'Iron and Steel', which was eventually published in the *Architectural Review*, 72 (Nov. 1932), 171–75. Drawings for a suspension bridge by Behrens (1911) are illustrated in Fritz Hoerber's *Peter Behrens* (Munich, Müller & Rentsch, 1913). It was to have been over the Rhine at Cologne. The other designs Behrens refers to were for bridges in Vienna (Brigitta-Brücke, 1924) and Cologne (Köln-Mülheimer, 1927). They appear in Paul Joseph Cremers, *Peter Behrens: sein Werk von 1909 bis zur Gegenwart* (Essen, Baedeker, 1928).

4.

den 21. Mai 1932.

Sehr verehrter Herr Shand!

In der Anlage übersende ich Ihnen heute 2 Grundrisse von dem Landhaus einer Dame in Cronberg im Taunus.

Gleichzeitig teile ich Ihnen mit, dass das Haus ohne Möbel und Gartenanlage RM 450.000.– gekostet hat.

Ich freue mich sehr über Ihre Nachricht, dass Sie im Juli nach Deutschland kommen, und bitte Sie, mir frühzeitig mitzuteilen, wann Sie einen Ausflug nach Berlin vornehmen wollen, damit ich das Vergnügen habe, Sie persönlich hier begrüßen zu können.

Mit hochachtungsvoller und freundlicher Begrüßung

Ihr sehr ergebener

Behrens.

2 Zeichnungen als Drucksache.

Dear Mr Shand!

I am sending you today an enclosure with two groundplans of the country house for a lady in Cronberg in the Taunus.

At the same time I might tell you that the house, without furniture or the landscaping of the garden cost RM 450,000.

I'm very pleased to hear that you are coming to Germany in July and I beg you to let me know in good time when you are going to undertake a trip to Berlin, so that I will have the pleasure of welcoming you here.

With respectful and friendly greetings,
Your devoted
Behrens.

2 Drawings as printed material.

This letter is typed and in German.

5.

Berlin W62, Wichmannstr. 7
Tel B5 Barbarossa 5616

den 9. Juli 1932

Sehr geehrter Herr Shand!

Der Universitätsprofessor Dr. Max Eisler in Wien wendet sich an mich der Bitte, ihm eine Auslese von Photographien des Hauses einer Dame im Taunus zwecks Veröffentlichung durch ihn in "The Studio" zu übersenden. Es ist mir bekannt, dass Professor Eisler bereits öfter Mitarbeiter dieser englischen Zeitschrift gewesen ist.

Ich persönlich hätte gegen seine Absicht nichts einzuwenden, nur möchte ich ihm eine Zusage und Material nicht eher übergeben, ehe ich weiss, ob die Absicht des Professor Eisler auch Ihre Zustimmung hat.

Ich frage deshalb bei Ihnen an, ob Sie einen Verlag für eine Veröffentlichung der Ihnen seinerzeit übersandten Photographien gefunden haben und wann gegebenenfalls diese Publikation durch Ihre Hand erfolgen würde oder ob Ihnen ein gleichzeitiges Erscheinen im "Studio" unbedenklich erscheint.

Ich will Professor Eisler nicht, bevor ich von Ihnen eine Nachricht, um die ich recht bald bitte, erhalten habe, weder eine Absage noch eine Zustimmung geben.

Indem ich hoffe, dass es Ihnen gut geht, bin ich
mit freundlichsten Grüßen,
Ihr sehr ergebener
Behrens

Dear Mr Shand!

Dr Max Eisler, Professor at the University of Vienna, has approached me with the request for me to send him a selection of photographs of the 'House for a Lady' in the Taunus for an article by him in *The Studio*. I am aware that Professor Eisler has already often contributed to this English journal.

I personally wouldn't have anything against his intention but I am reluctant to give him my assent or hand over any material until I know whether Professor Eisler's project has your agreement.

For that reason I am asking you if you have found a publisher for the photographs sent to you, and if, should it come about, it would affect your publication, or if it would be unobjectionable to you for it to appear in *The Studio* at the same time.

I won't give either a refusal or an agreement to Professor Eisler until I have word from you, which I must ask you to let me have as soon as possible.

Hoping that all goes well with you;
I am, with best wishes,
Yours sincerely
Behrens

The house was illustrated in *Decorative Art 1933*, *The Studio Year Book* (London, 1933, pp. 34, 121), perhaps on the initiative of Professor Eisler, but with captions only. It was also illustrated in an article by J. J. P. Oud, 'Towards a New Architecture', *The Studio*, 105 (1933), p. 253.

6.

In a similarly punctilious way, on 15 August, Behrens informed Morton Shand that he had let a Frau Käte von Porada have some pictures of the Gans house with a view to publishing them in the French fashion magazine *Vogue*. He assured him that it would in no way compete with the forthcoming one in the *Architectural Review*.

7.

den 6. Oktober 1932

Mein sehr verehrter Herr Shand!

Inzwischen habe ich die Zeitschrift "The Architectural Review" vom Verleger übersandt bekommen und mich sehr gefreut über die schöne Darstellung meines Haus, das ich im Taunus erbaut habe. Nun liegt mir daran, Ihnen meinen herzlichen Dank auszusprechen, dass Sie diese Veröffentlichung bewirkt haben.

Allerdings bin ich der Meinung, dass es noch schöner gewesen wäre, wenn nicht nur mit Aphorismen versehene Abbildungen in dieser bestimmt hervorragenden Zeitschrift erscheinen wären, sondern ein ausführlicher Text von Ihrer Hand, der mir eine besondere Freude bereitet hätte. Und wenn Sie mir in Ihrem freundlichen Schreiben vom 26. September d.J. die Aussicht geben, dass Sie so etwas noch vorhaben, so bin ich sehr gern bereit, Ihnen diese Aufnahmen noch dort zu lassen.

Zu einer solchen Absicht können Ihnen dann vielleicht auch Aufnahmen dienen von einem Hause, das ich für den Professor Lewin vom Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin-Schlachtensee geben habe. Ich schicke Ihnen separat als Drucksache 6 Photographien.

Grundrisse dieses Hauses kann ich Ihnen in den nächsten Tagen zugehen lassen.

Vom Haus Ring der Frauen, das anlässlich der vorjährigen Bauausstellung erbaut wurde, besitze ich leider nur eine Photographie, die ich Ihnen ebenfalls zusende. Ich habe aber den Photographen Max Krajewsky, Berlin-Charlottenburg, veranlasst, Ihnen weitere Photos zuzusenden, die Sie verwenden können.

Hierzu muss ich jedoch bemerken, dass ich für diese Aufnahmen nicht das Reproduktionsrecht habe, da Herr Krajewsky die Aufnahmen auf seine Kosten angefertigt hat und Sie sich mit ihm wegen der Ueberlassung in Verbindung setzen müssten. Wie mir Herr Krajewsky mitteilte, würde er Ihnen das Reproduktionsrecht für RM 5.- pro Bild überlassen. Grundrisse vom Haus Ring der Frauen kann ich Ihnen in den nächsten Tagen selbst übersenden.

Mit Interesse hörte ich, dass Sie sich auch an Herrn Professor Popp in Wien wenden wollen wegen Photographien von der Fabrikanlage der Oesterreichischen Tabakregie in Linz. Ich werde Mitte diesen Monats selbst wieder in Wien sein und Gelegenheit haben, Professor Popp darüber zu sprechen, ob und welche Photographien zugesagt werden können.

Für Ihre freundlichen Zeilen, die Sie handschriftlich Ihrem diktierten Schreiben vom 26. September hinzufügten, bin ich Ihnen besonders dankbar. Ich darf Ihnen sagen, dass man sich immer freut, wenn man einem Menschen im Leben begegnet, bei dem man auf gleichgeartete Gesinnung stösst. Ich möchte Ihnen nur sagen, dass ich mich sehr gefreut habe, Sie vor einiger Zeit bei mir gesehen zu haben, und dass ich nichts mehr begrüssen würde, als sehr bald wieder die Gelegenheit zu finden, mich über uns gemeinsam interessierende Dinge des Lebens und der Kunst persönlich und mündlich mit Ihnen zu unterhalten. Denn ich glaube, dass mehr wie alle schriftlich dargelegten Ansichten Worte von Mund zu Mund von grösserem Wert sind.

In dieser Hoffnung bin ich
mit freundlichstem Grusse
Ihr sehr ergebener
Behrens.

My very dear Mr Shand!

In the meantime I have received the journal, *The Architectural Review*, sent over by the publisher, and I am very pleased with the beautiful presentation of the house [of mine], that I built in the Taunus. I must express my heartfelt thanks to you for having brought about this publication. Of course, in my opinion, it would have been even better, if it had appeared in this distinguished specialized journal not just with illustrations provided with brief remarks but rather, a full text by you, which would have given me a special pleasure. And as you promise in your kind letter of 26 September this year that you have something of the sort in mind, I am really delighted to let you keep the photographs.

For such a project, pictures of a house I have built in Berlin-Schlachtensee for Professor Lewin of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute may be of use. I will send you, under separate cover, as printed material, six photographs. I can forward groundplans of this house in a few days.

I'm sorry that I have only one photograph of the 'Ring Der Frauen' that was built on the occasion of the Building Exhibition last year; I will send it to you as well.

I have asked the photographer Max Krajewsky of Berlin-Charlottenburg to send you further photographs which you can use. I must point out here that I don't have the reproduction rights to these pictures, as Herr Krajewsky made them at his own expense, and you will have to enter into an agreement with him for their release. Herr Krajewsky informs me that he would let you have the reproduction rights for RM 5 per picture. I will send you groundplans of the 'Ring Der Frauen' myself shortly.

I hear with interest that you wish to approach Professor Popp in Vienna for photographs of the Factory Complex of the Austrian State Tobacco Company at Linz. I will be in Vienna in the middle of this month myself, and will have the opportunity to discuss with Professor Popp if photographs can be promised, and if so which.

I am especially grateful for the kind handwritten lines which follow your dictated letter of the 26th September. I may tell you that it is always a joy to meet someone in life in whom one encounters a similar disposition. I would only like to say to you that I have been very glad to have met you here some time ago, and that I would welcome nothing more than the opportunity, very soon, to talk personally over the things in Life and Art in which we have a common interest. For I believe that, more than all the opinions most beautifully presented in writing, face-to-face discussions are of far greater value.

In that hope, I am, with most friendly greetings,

Yours very sincerely,

Behrens.

The material Shand was putting together came out in his 'Scenario for a Human Drama' part III: 'Peter Behrens', *Architectural Review*, 76 (Sept. 1934), 83–86.

Alexander Popp (1891–1947) designed the Austrian State Tobacco Factory in Linz, 1931–34, in collaboration with Behrens. At first his pupil, he was later to succeed Behrens as Professor at the Vienna Academy. Morton Shand's brief article on the Tobacco Factory appeared in the *Architectural Review*, 73 (Feb. 1933), 56.

The psychologist Dr Kurt Lewin (1890–1947) emigrated in 1933 to the United States, where he eventually became an American citizen. According to Christopher Wilk (*Marcel Breuer, Furniture and Interiors*, London, 1981, pp. 92–93), Breuer was called in to remodel the kitchen and the interiors of the Lewin House because of mistakes which Behrens had made.

8.

A letter from Behrens's secretary, 18 October 1932, enclosed two black-and-white tracings of the groundplans of the Lewin House, and one print of that of the 'Ring der Frauen'.

9.

Professor Dr. Peter Behrens
 Architekt BDA DWB
 Ehrenmitglied der Zentralvereinigung
 der Architekten Österreichs
 Hon. Corr. Member of the American
 Institute of Architects.

Wien, VII.,
 Karl Schweighofergasse 3 III
 Tel B 30 4 95
 20.II.35

Mein verehrtester Herr Shand,

Meine Tochter, die Sie kennen, die Redakteurin der Zeitschrifts "Die Dame" (Ulstein Verlag) ist zur Zeit in Paris und wird demnächst auch nach London kommen. Am einen Irrtum aufzuklären möchte ich gleich mitteilen, dass sie nicht ein Fräulein, sondern Frau Fiedler-Behrens zeichnet.

Sie würde es als einen besonders glücklichen Zufall ansehen, wenn Sie und Ihre Gattin ihr gestatten würden, Sie zu besuchen.

Sie wird sicher von sich hören lassen und Ihnen vielleicht manches Interessante über Kunst und Wesen in Deutschland erzählen können.

Wie immer bin ich mit den besten Empfehlungen an Mrs. Shand und freundlichsten Grüßen.

Ihr sehr ergebener
 Peter Behrens

20.II.35

My dearest Mr Shand,

My daughter, whom you have met, and who is the editor of the periodical *Die Dame* (Ulstein) [*sic*] is in Paris at present, and soon will also be coming to London. In order to clear up a misunderstanding, I would like to tell you right away that she isn't a 'Miss' but signs herself 'Frau Fiedler-Behrens'.

She would take it as an especially happy opportunity if you and your wife would permit her to visit you. She will certainly let you hear from her, and perhaps she will be able to tell you much of interest about art and culture in Germany.

As always give my kindest regards to Mrs Shand, and my friendliest greetings

Yours very truly
 Peter Behrens

Behrens's letter from Vienna, where since 1921 he had been Professor, conducting an Academic Master School, is hand-written. This reflects his warm feelings for Shand, as well as being a courtesy customary in German-speaking countries where the writer is asking a favour. His daughter Petra was always close to Behrens.

The letter is addressed to 73 Ladbroke Grove. Putting his Honorary Corresponding Membership of the American Institute of Architects on his letter-heading, and continuing to do so until at least 1937 would suggest that Behrens was not aligned with 'anti-foreign' political attitudes. The publisher's name should be spelled 'Ullstein'.

10.

Professor Dr. Peter Behrens
 Architekt B.D.A. Z.V. D.W.B.
 Honor. Corr. Member of the
 American Institute of Architects.

Berlin W62 Wichmannstrasse 7
 Tel. Barbarossa 5616
 den 9. März 1935

Mein sehr verehrter Herr Shand!

Gestern bin ich wieder einmal in Berlin eingetroffen, um mich hier für kurze Zeit aufzuhalten. Ich hatte schon Gelegenheit, mit meiner Tochter zusammenzusein, die mir begeisterte Berichte über ihren Aufenthalt in England mitteilte und mit besonderer Herzlichkeit und Freude von ihrem Zusammensein mit Ihnen und Mrs. Shand schwärmte. Obwohl ich nicht zweifle, dass sie selbst Ihnen gegenüber Worte des Dankes gehabt hat, so liegt doch auch mir daran, Ihnen und Mrs. Shand für die freundliche Aufnahme, die Sie meiner Tochter zuteil werden liessen, meinen herzlichen Dank auszusprechen.

Bei dieser Gelegenheit möchte ich Sie freundlichst bitten, zu veranlassen, dass der Verlag von "Architectural Review" mir je zwei Exemplare von den Heften, in denen Aufsätze von Ihnen über mich gestanden haben, nach hier zu senden. Ich lasse den Verlag bitten, eine Rechnung beizufügen, die ich von hier aus begleichen kann. Es liegt mir daran, für mich noch zwei von diesen Exemplaren zu besitzen, da ich die ersten anderweitig abgegeben habe, und würde auch gern Exemplare in Wien zur Verfügung haben. Ich wäre darum sehr dankbar, wenn sich diese Zusendung baldigst ermöglichen liesse, da ich mich nicht sehr lange in Berlin aufhalten kann und sie der Sicherheit halber gern persönlich mitgenommen hätte.

Indem ich Ihnen auch für diese Bemühung schon im voraus meinen Dank ausspreche, bin ich mit der Bitte, mich Mrs. Shand angelegentlich zu empfehlen,

mit herzlichem Grusse,

Ihr

Peter Behrens.

My very dear Mr Shand!

Yesterday I came to Berlin yet again, in order to stay for a short while. I already had the opportunity to meet up with my daughter, who gave me a rapturous account of her stay in England and enthused with especial warmth and pleasure about being together with you and Mrs Shand. Although I've no doubt that you have had thanks from her about it, it is also up to me to express my hearty thanks to you and Mrs Shand for the kind reception you extended to my daughter.

May I take this opportunity to ask if you would be so kind as to request the publishers of the *Architectural Review* to send me, here, two copies of each of the issues in which your articles about me appeared. Please ask the publishers to enclose a bill that I can settle from here. I am asking to obtain another two copies because I passed on the first ones, and I would also like to have copies available in Vienna.

I would be grateful if this despatch could be made as soon as possible, as I cannot stay very long in Berlin and would like for safety's sake to take them with me myself.

Whilst expressing my thanks to you in advance for this trouble, please remember me to Mrs Shand.

With hearty greetings,

Your

Peter Behrens.

The articles referred to in this letter (typewritten) in which the life and work of Behrens is discussed, appeared in the issues of the *Architectural Review* for August 1934 ('Scenario For a Human Drama' II, 'Immediate Background', pp. 39–42), and for September 1934 ('Scenario For a Human Drama' III, 'Peter Behrens', pp. 83–86). The series of articles, in seven parts linked by the 'Scenario' title, appeared between July 1934 and March 1935. They were stimulated, Shand wrote in part I ('Forward'), by the recent publication of F. R. S. Yorke's *The Modern House* (London, Architectural Press, 1934), and were designed to review the background to the development of modern domestic architecture.

When considering the degree of Behrens's conformity with the ideology of the new Nazi régime, it is noteworthy that he was pleased with the articles, anxious to possess copies, and evidently not at that time embarrassed by the comment Shand made on the Taunus house in his article on Behrens which

appeared as 'Scenario' part III. Shand there described Villa Gans as 'the first and last country house to be built in the new architecture . . . it already stands empty, for the opulent Jewish family it was designed for has judged it best to flee from Germany'.

Whether Clara Gans wholly abandoned the house as early as 1935 is not clear. She emigrated to Switzerland, where she lived near Basel until some time in the 1950s.

I am informed by Georg Krawietz (letter to the author of 12 August 1993) to whom I am grateful for the biographical information on Fräulein Gans, that the Nazis set fire to the house some days after *Kristallnacht* (9 November 1938), destroying the lavish rosewood panelling of the dining room walls and ceiling among other things. The house, which remained empty during much of the Second World War, fell into disrepair and was vandalized. An article by Franz Josef Hamm in *Der Architekt*, 4 (1975), 171, describes its then-ruinous condition. Today it is lived in once more, but is much altered and divided up.

In 1935, Behrens was obviously keen to have copies of Shand's article to show to other people in Berlin and Vienna, and was not evidently concerned about the political repercussions of some of Shand's outspoken remarks. Of course the comment quoted above does not necessarily imply friendship on Behrens's part with the Gans family, but it could not help but highlight an association, even if purely professional, of a nature that Nazi critics would automatically condemn, quite apart from drawing attention abroad to the barbaric state of affairs already prevailing in Germany.

It may also be noted that earlier in the article, Shand referred to Behrens's participation in the Weissenhofsiedlung exhibition (with obvious sarcasm directed at its politically motivated critics) as 'the solitary example of the work of the older generation at that 1927 exhibition of "cultural Bolshevism"'.

Behrens followed this letter with a postcard (no. 11) dated 19 March 1935, asking again if Shand would ask the publishers of the *Architectural Review* to send him two copies of each of the issues containing the articles to him. Having learned that Shand had been ill, and having also heard from his daughter Petra that the magazines had turned up in Berlin, Behrens wrote on 9 April (no. 12) thanking him and apologizing for having pressed the matter.

13.

17 Juni 1935

Mein sehr lieber Herr Morton Shand!

Ich danke Ihnen herzlich für Ihren freundlichen Brief vom 29.v.M., den ich durch meine inzwischen wieder stattgefundene Übersiedlung nach Berlin über Wien nachgesandt bekommen habe.

Ich habe mit allergrösstëm Interesse Ihre gesamte Artikelserie durchgelesen und darf Ihnen mit aufrichtigem Gewissen sagen, dass ich einen ausserordentlich starken Eindruck davon gewonnen habe. Ich würde es in ausserordentlichem Masse begrüßen, wenn Sie die Gedanken, die in diesen Ausführungen von Ihnen enthalten sind, weiter ausführen würden und womöglich als grösseres Buch erscheinen liessen.

Ihrem Wunsche gemäss habe ich die Artikelserie heute noch an Monsieur Alberto Sartoris in Rivaz abgesandt.

Wie ich Ihnen neulich schon schrieb, hat mir meine Tochter sehr viel Liebes von Ihnen und Ihrer Gattin erzählt. Ich kann Ihnen versichern, dass es mir leid tut, jetzt keine Gelegenheit zu haben, nach England zu kommen, da ich wirklich gern ein Weilchen mit Ihnen zusammengewesen wäre. Hoffen wir auf eine kommende Zeit!

In aller Herzlichkeit
Behrens.

17 June 1935

My very dear Mr Morton Shand!

I thank you cordially for your kind letter of the 29th of last month, which I received after it had been forwarded to Berlin via Vienna, another of my changes of address having occurred.

I have read your collected series of articles with the very greatest interest, and would like to say, in all sincerity, that it made an exceptionally strong impression on me. I would particularly welcome it if you were to take the ideas that you express in these studies, and to develop them further, so that they may appear, if possible, as a major book. In accordance with your wishes, I have today sent the series of articles to Monsieur Alberto Sartoris in Rivaz.

As I already wrote to you recently, my daughter has spoken to me very fondly of you and your wife. I can assure you that I am very sorry that there is no opportunity at present to come to England, as I would really like to spend a little time with you. Let's hope for a future time!

Yours very sincerely,
Behrens.

Alberto Sartoris (1901–) the Italian-born Swiss architect and critic, had recently published *Gli elementi dell'architettura funzionale* (Milan, 1932). The series of articles referred to were no doubt from the *Architectural Review*, 'Scenario For a Human Drama', parts I–VII (see notes to letter 10).

14.

Hotel Habsburger Hof,
Berlin SW 11,
Askanischer Platz 1

den 10. September 1935

Mein lieber und verehrter Herr Shand!

Es tut mir ausserordentlich leid, dass ich Ihre Karte vom 4. d. M. erst heute beantworten kann, da ich mich während dreier Wochen zur Kur in Franzensbad aufgehalten habe und von wo aus ich nach einem Umweg über München, wo ich etwas zu tun hatte, erst heute in Berlin eingetroffen bin.

Zur Sache selbst möchte ich mir erlauben folgendes zu bemerken: Da ich erst anfangs nächster Woche wieder nach Wien zurückkehre und dann dort erst Erkundigungen über einen Vortrag, den Sie halten wollen, einziehen kann, so wird natürlich einige Zeit vergehen, bis ich Ihnen überhaupt von Wien aus eine nähere Mitteilung machen kann. Ich möchte Ihnen darum raten, sich durch Wien in keiner Weise für Ihre anderen Unternehmungen binden zu wollen. Ein Umstand, der mir günstig erscheint, ist der, dass, wenn es Ihnen gelänge, einen Auftrag von Prag oder Brünn zu bekommen, sich ja die Reisespesen für Wien günstiger gestalten würden. Ich würde darum vorschlagen, dass Sie den Vortrag nach Brünn in Wien vorsehen. Nur wäre es mir dann natürlich sehr erwünscht, zu wissen, zu welcher Zeit Sie in Brünn sein würden, um bei meinen Verhandlungen, die ich in Wien zu führen gedenke, gleich den Zeitpunkt mit in Betracht ziehen zu können.

Ausserdem glaube ich, dass es doch wohl von einiger Wichtigkeit wäre, wenn Sie mir ungefähr mitteilen wollten, über welches Thema Sie zu sprechen gedenken. Ich würde ja am meisten raten, die Entwicklung der Architektur in England als Gegenstand zu wählen. Denn das wird es noch wohl sein, was in Wien am meisten interessieren würde, wenn Sie von der auch in vergangenen Zeiten immerhin hohen Wohnungskultur ausgehend die Entwicklung zum modernen Stil in England besprechen würden. Also meine Auffassung wäre die: je englischer das Thema aufgefasst werden würde, um so besser.

Dieses hängt in gewisser Beziehung auch mit Ihrem Nachsatz zusammen, mit dem Sie mich nach den Büchern von Loos fragen. Ich persönlich bin ja der Ansicht, dass Loos sehr frühzeitig die Wege zu der heutigen modernen Architekturauffassung gefunden hat und dass in der Tat auch sehr viel Interessantes unter seinen Plänen vorhanden ist. Im allgemeinen aber war er in Oesterreich ein starker Outsider. Es ist Ihnen ja auch bekannt, dass er in der letzten Zeit in Paris gelebt hat. In Wien ist meines Wissens nur ein Haus vorhanden, das er gebaut hat, das heute keine besondere Bedeutung mehr hat. Wie er überhaupt ja doch eigentlich wenig gebaut hat, sondern sich besonders theoretisch hervorgetan hat. Dass er dadurch natürlich ziemlich viele Feinde in Wien

hatte, ist dann wohl erklärlich. Die Frage, ob es zu empfehlen sei, die Bücher zu übersetzen, liegt ja ganz bei Ihnen.

Wenn es eine dankenswerte Aufgabe für Sie nach allen Richtungen hin bedeutet, so liegt wohl kein Grund vor, die Uebersetzung zu unterlassen. Jedenfalls würde ich aber nicht raten in Ihrem Wiener Vortrage etwas über ihn [Loos] zu sagen.

Ich würde mich ja ausserordentlich freuen, wenn es gelänge, unseren Plan, Sie in Wien zu sehen und sprechen zu hören, zu verwirklichen. Vielleicht gewinnen Sie dann selbst eine besondere Anregung, sich auch einmal mit dem speziell Wienerischen in der Kunst zu befassen, ganz abgesehen davon, dass ich sehr glücklich wäre, einige Zeit mit Ihnen zusammen zu verleben.

Mit besten Empfehlungen an Mrs. Shand und herzlichen Grüßen

Ihr sehr ergebener

Behrens.

My dear and honoured Mr Shand!

I am terribly sorry that I have not been able to reply to your card of the 4th of this month until today, as I have been staying for three weeks in Franzensbad for the cure, whence I only got to Berlin today, after a detour to Munich, where I had something to do.

On the matter itself, may I make the following points: As I won't be returning to Vienna until the beginning of next week, and only then will be able to make the first enquiries concerning a lecture you wish to give, it will naturally be some time before, after all, I can give you any more precise information from Vienna. On this I would like to advise you not to tie up any of your other commitments in any way with Vienna. One circumstance that would appear to me to be advantageous, is that, should you be asked to Prague or Brno, the travel expenses to Vienna would be ameliorated. I would propose, therefore, that you consider doing the lecture in Vienna after one in Brno. But it would naturally be very desirable for me to know when you would be in Brno, so that the negotiations that I aim to carry out in Vienna can take the date into consideration as well. In addition I think that it really would be of value if you would let me know roughly what subject you are planning to speak on. I would most of all advise the development of architecture in England as the choice of subject. That would be the topic that would be of most interest in Vienna, if you were to discuss the development, from the high standard of domestic housing in England of the past, to the modern style. So my view would be: the more English the theme were perceived to be, the better.

This undoubtedly has a bearing on your postscript, in which you ask about Loos's books. I personally am certainly of the view that Loos found the way to the contemporary interpretation of modern architecture very early on, and that among his designs there are very many interesting ones. In general terms, however, he was a complete outsider in Austria. It is also known of him, that he lived in Paris in the last period of his life. In Vienna, to my knowledge, there is only one house that he built, which is no longer of any special significance today. He actually built very little altogether; rather, he occupied himself particularly with theory. That being so, it is easy to understand that he naturally had a fair number of enemies in Vienna.

The question, as to whether it is advisable to translate the books, is entirely up to you. If after all it is a worthwhile task for you, there are no grounds for not doing the translation. Anyway, I would not advise you to say anything about Loos in your Viennese lecture.

It would give me the greatest pleasure, if our plan manages to materialize, to see you in Vienna, and to hear you speak. Perhaps you will yourself receive a special stimulus from contact with that which is particularly Viennese in art — not to mention that I would be very happy to spend some time with you.

Best wishes to Mrs Shand, and cordial greetings

Yours

Behrens.

In this typewritten letter, Behrens was clearly doubtful about the influence he might be able to bring to bear on the Viennese. He also presses for an easily acceptable subject, on the lines of Muthesius's *Das englische Haus*, concentrating on the popular theme of the influence of English domestic architecture on the development of that of the twentieth century as a whole.

It is noteworthy that he warns Shand off even mentioning Adolf Loos (1870–1933) in Vienna. To an Englishman, knowing the enthusiasm Loos expressed for English solutions to domestic–architectural problems, it would have seemed natural to discuss his work. Loos had died fairly recently, and in the intervening year between his death and this letter Shand had published translations of *Trotzdem* (1931: ‘Notwithstanding’) and *Ins Leere gesprochen* (1932: ‘Spoken into the Void’) in the *Architectural Review* (Oct. 1934, p. 151.)

Behrens was, however, well aware of the enmity felt towards Loos in Vienna. He knew Loos personally, having been one of the five architects (the others were Loos, Frank, Hoffmann, and Strnad) commissioned in 1920 by the Österreichische Verband für Siedlungs- und Kleingartenwesen to prepare a general architectural plan for Vienna, and in 1923 designs for three apartment blocks providing 700 dwellings.

It is now generally well-known that Loos had many enemies for many reasons, including his admiration for foreigners, his friendships with Jews and Expressionists, and his disenchantment with and criticism of the *Sezession*. Above all, the controversy and hostility which had been aroused by the Goldman and Salatsch building (1910–11) lingered on. It had been built in a severely plain style without carved decoration on a highly sensitive site in the Michaelerplatz opposite the Burgtor, the entrance to the Imperial Palace. (See Hermann Czech and Wolfgang Mistelbauer, *Das Looshaus*, Vienna, 1977.)

Loos's self-imposed exile in Paris referred to by Behrens may also have been a cause of resentment. Born in Brno, Loos had acquired Czech citizenship after 1918, and in 1925, for example, told Hoffmann that he had left Austria for ever; he could not or would not participate in the exhibition at the Austrian Pavilion at the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris, a building on which Hoffmann, Behrens, and others collaborated. Behrens does not mention that Loos had contributed to the 1931–32 Wiener Werkbund exhibition, nor that he eventually returned to Vienna (Kalksburg), where he died. (See Burkhardt Rukschio and Roland Schachel, *Adolf Loos, Leben und Werk*, Salzburg and Vienna, 1982, pp. 302, 308, 388).

Behrens acknowledged the contribution of Loos in terms which are acceptable today. But on the whole he is cool. Loos once characterized Behrens as a ‘*Krawatenmusterzeichner*’ (‘a designer of patterns for neckties’: Claire Loos, *Adolf Loos Privat*, Vienna, 1936, pp. 103–04), and it is possible that Behrens knew of this attitude and so had his own reasons for sharing the widespread lack of enthusiasm for Loos in contemporary Vienna.

Behrens mentioned his three-week cure in Franzensbad, a well-known spa in northern Bohemia. Its hot springs were popular for drinking and bathing, both of which were held to be beneficial to disorders of the heart and the blood. Behrens had suffered from heart trouble as early as 1905, and was eventually to die from a heart-attack.

Karl Scheffler, in *Die fetten und die mageren Jahre* (Leipzig, 1946) remarked that Behrens was always taking cures and treatments, and that he was always in the hands of one or another doctor. Scheffler implied that this was related to Behrens's tendency towards alcoholism. At this period, according to Ernst Plischke, then at the Master School, Behrens had a liking for ‘hard drinks’ (Plischke, *Ein Leben mit Architektur*, Vienna, 1989).

15.

Wien 7 Okt 35

Lieber und verehrter Herr Shand—

Sobald ich in Wien wieder war, habe ich Erkundigungen, über die Möglichkeit Ihres Vortrages eingeholt und mich zunächst an den “Kulturbund” gewandt. Ich machte diesem den Vorschlag in Gemeinsamkeit mit dem neuen Oest. Werkbund die Veranstaltung zu übernehmen. Es ist nicht ganz leicht in Eile so etwas durchzuführen. Ich sende Ihnen daher den Brief, den ich inzwischen

erhielt. Ich habe aber den Eindruck, dass mehr Schwierigkeiten gemacht werden, als unbedingt nötig ist. Meine Absicht war, dass der Kultur- und der Werkbund zusammen ein — wenn auch gewiss nicht fürstliches Honorar — aussetzen würden.

Die Durchführung meines Planes bleibt nun immer noch offen. Aber erleichtern würden Sie mir mein Vorhaben, wenn Sie mir mitteilen könnten über was für ein Thema Sie zu sprechen gedenken, und in welcher Form, ob mit Lichtbildern oder auch mit philosophisch-aesthetischer Einstellung, Sie es behandeln wollen. (Recht viel engl. Wohnkultur!) Wenn ich das weiss kann ich leichter handeln.

Dann der Zeitpunkt! Er ist bei allen Vereinigungen natürlich immer von Wichtigkeit wegen bereits bestehender Programme.

Also schreiben Sie mir bitte bald, damit ich die Eisen die jetzt im Feuer sind, weiter schmieden kann.

Mit angelegentlichen Empfehlungen an Mrs Shand
Herzlichst grüssend Ihr
Peter Behrens.

The letterhead is the monogram 'PB', embossed.

Dear and honoured Mr Shand!

As soon as I was back in Vienna, I made enquiries about the possibility of your lecture, and first of all contacted the 'Kulturbund'. I suggested to them to take on the organization of this project in conjunction with the New Austrian Werkbund. It isn't very easy to get this through in a hurry. I am sending you the letter which I received from them in the meantime. I have the impression, however, that more difficulties are being made than are really necessary. My intention was that the Kulturbund and the Werkbund would together put up an honorarium, even if it were not entirely a princely one.

The realization of my plan is still unresolved. However you would ease my task if you could let me know what you are thinking of speaking on as a theme, and in what way — if with slides or if you want to treat it from an aesthetic or philosophical point of view. (Lots about English domestic culture!). When I know that, I will be able to manage more easily.

Now, the timing! With all organizations, it is of great importance because of previously determined programmes. So, please write to me soon, so that I can hammer away at the irons I already have in the fire.

My special regards to Mrs Shand
Most cordial greetings
Your Peter Behrens.

This handwritten letter reports further progress on the project of Shand's lecture, although Behrens's pessimism about getting his Viennese colleagues to arrange it had not altogether dissipated. His position in the Werkbund was ostensibly a strong one, however. The New Austrian Werkbund had been founded on 24 February 1934, with Clemens Holzmeister as President, Behrens and Josef Hoffmann as Vice Presidents. (See Lucius Burckhardt, ed., *Werkbund, Germania/Austria/Svizzera*, Venice, 1977, p. 111). The new constitution excluded Jews, so Josef Frank, who had organized the 1931–32 Exhibition, emigrated to Sweden.

A telegram of 24 October (no. 16), announced that the lecture, scheduled for 9 November, was assured, and this was followed by an anxious letter of 2 November (no. 17) telling Shand that a 'large and beautiful hall' had been booked, and that all the invitations had gone out. It is evident that Shand's acknowledgement of the telegram had gone astray, and that he had already left London. Behrens asked that whoever might receive his letter to let him have Shand's addresses in Brno, Bratislava or Budapest as a matter of urgency. The letter is addressed to 15 Ladbrooke Grove, as compared to the previous ones addressed to No. 73.

The next communication, of 2 December 1935 (no. 18), recalls with pleasure Shand's visit to Vienna and his lecture. It was, evidently, a great success. Behrens also thanked Shand for having sought out Professor Plesch in London on his behalf. This was followed by a postcard from Albano Terme, Padua (no. 19), representing the entrance to the garden of Petrarch's house, bearing New Year greetings to Mr and Mrs Shand. Behrens remarked that he was taking the 'Fango-Behandlung', the mud-baths (intended for the treatment of rheumatism) for which Albano was known.

20.

New letter-heading, the same as that of letter 9 but with no letters following 'Professor Dr. Peter Behrens'.

Wien, am 20. August 1936

Lieber Herr Shand!

Ich habe Ihnen noch zu danken für Ihre freundliche Karte aus Finnland, die mich sehr erfreut hat. Ich beneide Sie, dass Sie so in der Welt herumkommen.

Vor kurzem ist mir ein Ausschnitt aus der Deutschen Allgemeine Zeitung, die in Berlin erscheint, den ich beilege, zugesandt worden. Das darauf befindliche Bild wird Sie vielleicht interessieren.

Wir haben ja oft über meine Idee des Terrassenhauses gesprochen und Sie waren so liebenswürdig und opferten Ihre Zeit, um einen Besuch in meinem Interesse bei Professor Plesch zu machen. Ich bin jetzt sehr erstaunt, dass der Baugedanke in London bereits eine Verwirklichung gefunden hat, wenn auch nicht in der konsequent durchgeführten Anordnung, wie sie von mir vorgeschlagen worden ist. Ich erzählte Ihnen ja auch, dass ich seinerzeit mein Patent mit dem Patentanspruch und den schematischen Zeichnungen Professor Plesch übersandt hatte und dass er sich für eine Verwirklichung bemühen wollte, wie ich glaube, er sich auch tatsächlich beschäftigt hat.

Es fällt mir sehr schwer anzunehmen, dass von irgendeiner Seite, die interessiert worden ist, meine Idee zur Ausführung übernommen worden ist, da dieses doch eigentlich nicht sehr wohl zum englischen Geschäftsgebaren gehört. Nichtsdestoweniger aber erstaunt mich der Titel "Pyramidenhäuser", denn das abgebildete Haus stellt gar keine Pyramide dar, während meine Blockanordnung ja doch mit regulären Pyramiden gedacht war.

Ich hoffe, dass es Ihnen gut geht und würde mich sehr freuen, gelegentlich wieder etwas von Ihnen zu hören.

Für heute bin ich mit besten Empfehlungen an Mrs Shand und herzlich grüssend

Ihr ergebener

Behrens

1 Beilage.

Dear Mr Shand!

I still have to thank you for your friendly card from Finland, which pleased me very much. I envy you, for getting around the world so much.

Recently a cutting from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which comes out in Berlin, was sent to me; I am enclosing it. You may be interested in the picture in it.

We have often discussed my idea of the *Terrassenhaus*, and you were so kind as to sacrifice your time on making a visit to Professor Plesch on my behalf. I am now very much surprised that the idea for building in this way has already been realized in London, even if not with the consistency I proposed. I told you also that I had sent Professor Plesch my Patent with the Patent Title and the schematic drawings at the same time, and that he wished to try for a realization, with which I believe he has in fact been busy.

I find it hard to believe that my idea has been taken over and carried out by someone who has an interest in it, as this does not truly accord well with English business practice. Not least, though, I am amazed at the title 'Pyramid Houses', as the building illustrated hardly displays a

pyramid, whilst my block arrangement was definitely thought out in terms of regular pyramids.

I hope all goes well with you, and would be very pleased to hear from you again when it is convenient for you.

For now, my kind regards to Mrs Shand and sincere greetings

Yours truly

Behrens

One enclosure.

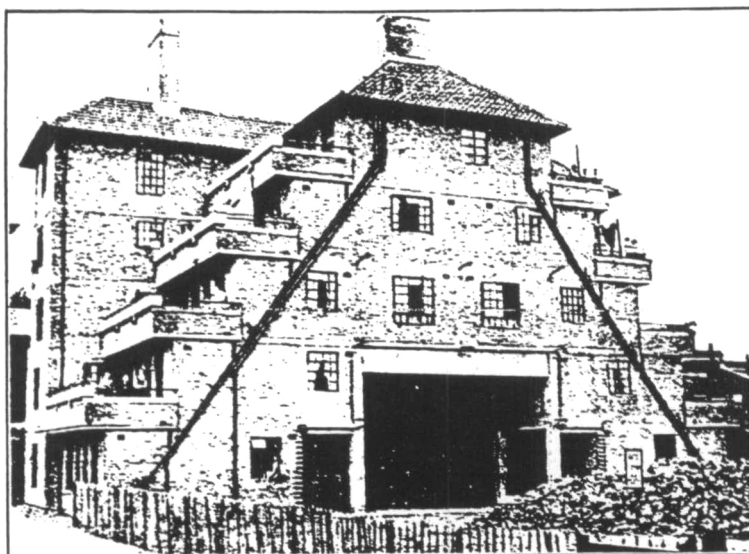
The cutting Behrens enclosed was from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 346 (Sunday 26 July 1936), 16. The page, headed *Bauen und Wohnen*, featured a photograph (Fig. 1) of the recently-completed block of flats in the east end of London, Lennox House, Brunswick Street, Hackney. The caption runs:

A Look at Building abroad. 'Pyramidhouses' instead of 'slums'. The big building-programme of the city of London, in which all houses due for demolition in the slums are to be replaced by modern, well-ventilated houses, has already begun. Of particular interest is a new type of apartment block, in which each storey is set in a pyramid fashion on top of the next, in order to freely offer as much sun and air as possible.

Lennox House was designed by John Eric Michael MacGregor for the Bethnal Green and East London Housing Association. On a reinforced concrete frame, the five-storey building offered apartments

Blick ins bauende Ausland

„Pyramidenhäuser“ statt „slums“



Verf.-Zucht. Hoffmann

Mit dem großen Bauprogramm der Stadt London, in dem alle abbruchreifen Häuser der Glendüviertel durch moderne luftige Häuser ersetzt werden sollen, ist bereits begonnen worden. Besonders interessant ist ein neuartiger Wohnhaustyp, bei dem die einzelnen Stockwerke pyramidenartig aufeinandergeleitet sind, um so möglichst viel Raum für Luft und Sonne freizugeben.

Fig. 1. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 346 (26 July 1936), p. 16. From a feature on Lennox House: 'Pyramidenhäuser' statt 'slums'

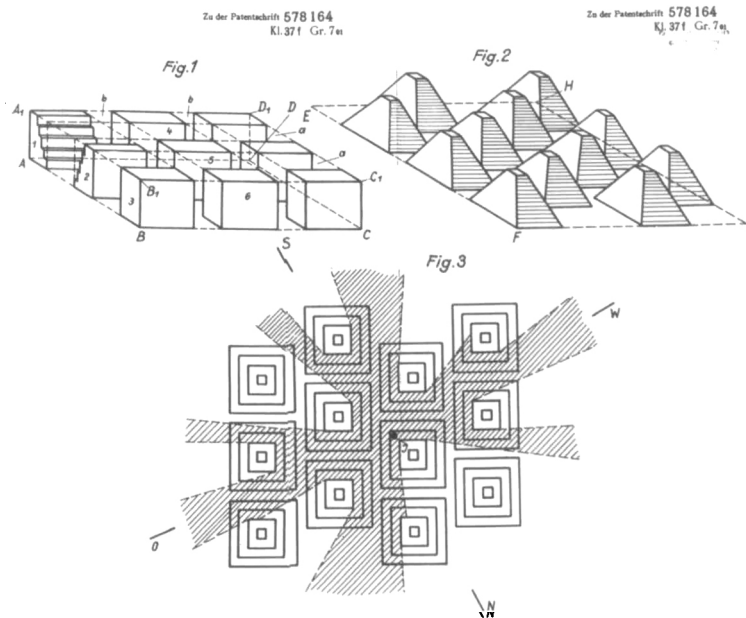


Fig. 2. Peter Behrens: design for an arrangement of many-storied apartment buildings, from his patent No. 578 164 K137f Gr7, 10 June 1933

which, it was said, had balconies open to more than half a day's sunshine, through ventilation from north to south, and a central space on the ground and first floors which was intended as market hall. The thirty-five flats are still in the same ownership and are reported to be popular with the tenants. In 1972 they were cited as a precedent for Patrick Hodgkinson's Brunswick Centre in Bloomsbury (*Architectural Review*, Oct. 1972, p. 254) although Hodgkinson referred to the medieval town of Monpazier in France as a source of inspiration for designing apartments over commercial spaces.

Behrens was granted a patent in Berlin on 10 June 1933 (No. 578 164 Class 37f Group 701) for multistoreyed pyramid-shaped blocks of flats arranged in groups in a precise manner (Fig. 2). In his statement, Behrens set out the principles of his idea, which were a development of the *Terrassenhäuser* he had envisaged in 1920, and which were in turn the basis of the fairly modest expression of the idea in the block he contributed to the *Weissenhofsiedlung* in 1927.

He first listed some of the fundamental characteristics which were agreed to be desirable in urban housing estates: that as much light as possible should penetrate every part of each dwelling; that one building should not cast shadows over the next; that there should be the widest possible uninterrupted view from each dwelling; that, in order to combat such chronic lung diseases as tuberculosis, each unit of accommodation should have easily accessible open-air space adjoining the living room; that sunshine should be reflected so as to warm the walls of the building in winter.

Behrens then explained, with the aid of three drawings, the layout of a housing estate with the pyramid-shaped blocks of flats arranged in staggered rows. A plan demonstrated the field of vision from a point close to the centre of the group of buildings, and in conclusion he claimed that all the desirable characteristics he had outlined would be satisfied by such an estate. He did not use the term *Pyramidenhäuser* itself in this statement, although he remarked that for simplicity's sake (his) fig. 2 represented the blocks of flats as *Pyramidenstümpfe*.

Behrens was clearly very disturbed by the belief that his idea had been pirated, although in fact, and as he says, there is nothing about Lennox House that precisely infringes his patented idea. His

sensitivity over the matter (he returned to the subject in his next letter) suggests another reason for his apparent lack of enthusiasm for the work of Loos, expressed in letter 14.

His attitude then may have been coloured by the fact that Loos published a number of ideas for terraced apartment blocks which closely parallel those of Behrens. In 1923, for example, Loos designed the Inzersdorferstrasse public housing scheme for the Housing Department of Vienna, and later in the same year he exhibited designs in the Salon d'Automne for 'Une groupe de vingt villas construites de sorte que le toit de l'une sert de jardin aux chambres du dernier étage de la maison située en derrière'. Pyramid-shaped projects by Loos, also of 1923, but developed from much earlier ideas, include those for the Mexico City Town Hall Competition and (particularly close to the designs patented by Behrens) those for the Grand Hotel Babylon in Nice (see Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 286).

Professor János Plesch (1878–1957, also known as Johann and, finally, John) was a highly successful doctor, a specialist in conditions of the heart and blood. He practised and taught in Berlin for much of his career but left Germany in 1933 when Hitler came to power and settled in England. His memoirs, *János, the Story of a Doctor* (London, Gollancz, 1947) mention his friendship with Behrens (which dated from before the First World War) along with anecdotes about a host of celebrities whom he treated or befriended, including many famous scientists, artists, writers, actors, and musicians. It is clear from his memoirs that he revelled in acting as intermediary in all kinds of enterprises, from the theatrical to the political. He was brother-in-law to Clara Gans. It has not been possible to determine whether or not he knew J. E. M. MacGregor.

21.

Wien, am 17. November 1936

Sehr verehrter und lieber Herr Shand!

Ich muss zunächst um Entschuldigung bitten, dass ich bisher nicht den Empfang Ihrer freundlichen Karte vom September und Ihres Briefes von Oktober bestätigt habe. Die Verzögerung ist dadurch entstanden, dass ich inzwischen wieder nach Berlin übersiedelt bin, was seine Ursache darin hat, dass ich den Ruf an das Meisteratelier an der Preussischen Akademie der Künste erhielt und angenommen habe. Ich hatte in Berlin durch meinen Umzug und die Neueinrichtung meiner Arbeitsräume, durch Verhandlungen aller Art derart viel zu tun, dass nicht nur meine private Korrespondenz sondern zeitweilig sogar meine dringende geschäftliche ins Stocken geraten ist.

Es ist ein reiner Zufall, wenn ich Ihnen jetzt von Wien schreibe, wo ich gestern eingetroffen bin, um hier noch Verschiedenes zu erledigen. Meine Hauptaufgabe besteht zur Zeit darin, dass ich zusammen mit dem Kollegen an der hiesigen Akademie, Andri, alleiniger Preisrichter für einen Ideenwettbewerb für ein Kaiser Franz Josefs-Denkmal in Wien bin.

Es ist eine übergrosse Anzahl von Entwürfen eingelangt, worunter sich aber einige wirklich sehr gute Sachen befinden, deren Autoren ich noch nicht weiss, aber vermute. Falls Sie in irgendeiner Ihnen zur Verfügung stehenden Zeitschrift einmal auch solches Material veröffentlichen wollen, was ja möglich sein könnte, da es sich bei dieser Aufgabe besonders um eine stadtbaukünstlerische Lösung handelt, so würde ich Ihnen zur Gewinnung von photographischem Material der besten Ergebnisse gern behilflich sein.

Am 30. November werde ich wieder in Berlin anwesend sein. Meine Adresse dort ist jetzt Berlin W 35, Woyrschstrasse 30, Villa i. Es ist übrigens dieselbe Strasse, in der Sie damals bei mir waren, die damals Genthiner hiess und die man nun nach dem truppenführenden General ungetauft hat. Nur wohne ich jetzt in dem damaligen Haus sondern im Nebenhaus. Diese Mitteilung soll Ihnen zur Erleichterung dienen für den Fall, dass Sie bald einmal nach Berlin kommen, was ich ausserordentlich hoffe.

Für Ihre ausführlichen Erkundigungen und Mitteilungen über das in England publizierte Terrassenhaus danke ich Ihnen sehr. Ich bin nun eigentlich kein besonderer Freund davon, gegen andere Leute Angriffe zu unternehmen, auch möchte ich sehr ungern "The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects" hiefür benutzen, da ich mich doch nicht gern bei dieser sehr vornehmen Gesellschaft durch Beschwerden und Unverträglichkeiten einführen und bekanntma-

chen möchte. Ich habe mir etwas anderes gedacht: Sobald als jetzt in Berlin meine Arbeitsräume instandgesetzt sind und ich eine gewisse Schülerzahl im Atelier habe, möchte ich sehr gern die Idee dieses Pyramidenhauses sowohl im Grundriss wie auch in Aufrissen noch einmal neu bearbeiten und mit guten Darstellungen belegen, besonders mit Berücksichtigung auf eine praktische Ausführung und den heutigen Wohnbedürfnissen, die ja wohl in Deutschland die gleichen wie in England sind, entsprechend. Wenn ich diese Pläne habe, dann würde ich sie Ihnen gern einmal überlassen und vielleicht, falls sie doch ein Interesse an dieser Arbeit behalten haben sollten, sie Ihnen zu einer Publikation zur Verfügung stellen. Bei dieser Gelegenheit könnte man dann ja sehr gut darauf hinweisen, dass meine ersten Entwürfe bereits vor zwölf Jahren entstanden sind, dass das von mir erwirkte Patent vier Jahre alt ist und nunmehr eine Ausarbeitung für heute gefunden hätte.

Vorläufig eilt diese Angelegenheit nun ja nicht. Jedenfalls aber danke ich Ihnen noch einmal für Ihr freundliches Interesse, das Sie meiner Ausarbeitung entgegengebracht haben.

Ich bitte Sie, mich Mrs. Shand auf das Angelegentlichste zu empfehlen und bin
herzlich grüssend
Ihr ergebener
Behrens.

Honoured and dear Mr Shand!

First of all I must apologize for not having acknowledged receiving your friendly card of September and your letter of October. The delay has come about in this way: in the meantime I have moved back to Berlin, the reason for that being that I received an invitation to the Master Studio of the Prussian Academy of Arts, and have accepted.

I had so much to do in Berlin, such as with my removal and the reorganization of my work rooms, and with discussions of all kinds, that not only my private, but even, temporarily, my urgent business correspondence came to a standstill.

It is a pure chance that I am writing to you from Vienna now, where I arrived yesterday in order to wind up various things here. My main duty at present consists in my being, together with my colleague at the local Academy, Andri, the sole Prize Adjudicator for a competition for ideas for a Kaiser Franz-Josef monument in Vienna. Too many designs have been submitted, but among them, however, there are some very good things to be found, the authors of which I do not as yet know, although I can guess. Should you wish sometime to publish any such material in some journal that may be available to you, (which might be possible, as the project particularly involves the solution of a town planning problem), I would gladly be of help to you in obtaining photographic material.

On 30 November I will be back once more in Berlin. My address there is now W 35 Woyrschstrasse 30, Villa i [*sic*]. It is, by the way, the same street where you stayed with me, when it was called Genthiner Street; it has now been renamed after the General Commander-in-Chief. Only I no longer live in the same house, but the one next door. This information should serve to make it easier for you if you come to Berlin soon, which I very much hope.

I thank you very much for your further enquiries and information about the *Terrassenhaus* publicized in England. I don't really like to undertake action against other people; also I would be very reluctant to use the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* for this, as I certainly don't want to introduce myself into that very august company by way of making myself known for complaints and belligerence.

I have had another idea: as soon as my workshop in Berlin is set up, and I have a certain number of pupils in the studio, I would very much like to work afresh on the idea of this *Pyramidenhaus*, in plan and elevations, and with the presentation well drawn up, especially with regard to the practicability of being carried out, and of [~~conforming with~~ crossed out] contemporary domestic requirements, which are very much the same in Germany as in

England. When I have these plans, I would be glad to let you have them sometime, and perhaps, supposing you still should have an interest in this work project, you could put them at the disposal of a journal. This would afford the opportunity to show that my first designs go back more than twelve years, that the Patent I secured is four years old, and that since then it has found a contemporary development.

For the present, this business isn't really pressing. Anyhow, I thank you once more for the kind interest that you have shown in the work I do.

I most earnestly beg you to commend me to Mrs Shand
sincere greetings
Yours truly
Behrens.

The innocuously named Genthiner Strasse (after the town of Genthin, some 70 kilometres from Berlin), was renamed in a climate of militarism. General Fieldmarshal Remus von Woysch (1847–1920), leading the Schleswiger Landwehrkorps, crossed the Vistula in July 1915. Behrens may have known him. Too old to be a combatant, Behrens visited the Eastern Front on a number of occasions during the war, with permission from the Kaiser to wear uniform (letter of 23 March 1939 in the Akademie der Künste file, Berlin).

22.

Letterhead a printed 'PB' monogram on the left in a rectangular cartouche.

Berlin W35
Woyschstrasse 30 J
31. Mai 1937

Mein Leiber Herr Shand!

Ihren freundlichen Brief vom 26. Mai habe ich erhalten und, wie Sie denken können, von dem Inhalt mit grossem Interesse Kenntnis genommen.

Das, wie Sie ausdrücken, bedeutet für einen Architekten zweifellos eine ganz besondere Ehre. Wenn Sie nun auch keinen Dank hören wollen, so werden Sie mir aber gestatten, dass ich Ihnen meine herzliche Zuneigung mitteile. Und wenn mir diese Ehrung zuteil wird — das darf ich Ihnen ja doch wohl sagen —, so entstand sie dann durch das gemeinsame gleiche künstlerische Interesse, das uns immer verbunden hat. Für alle Freundlichkeit und Güte, die mir stets zugewandt haben, dafür darf ich Ihnen aber meinen Dank aussprechen.

Hier in Berlin geht alles sehr langsam voran. Ich habe einige Schüler, jedoch kommt ihr Talent nicht an jenes meiner Wiener Hörer heran, und die Möglichkeit einer produktiven Tätigkeit liegt auch noch in meiner Hoffnung eingeschlossen. Aber man hat es ja im Leben ein wenig gelernt, Geduld zu haben.

Im übrigen freue ich mich, dass Sie sich meiner Wohnung in der Genthiner Strasse erinnern. Ich wohne jetzt im Nachbarhaus und bin auch hier ganz zufrieden. Nur den einen Wunsch hätte ich, dass Sie recht bald mit Mrs. Shand mir das Vergnügen machen würden, Sie hier begrüßen zu können. Ich darf Ihnen offen sagen, dass ich sehr oft denke, wie schön es wäre und wie notwendig es mir erschienen ist, mich wieder einmal mit Ihnen aussprechen zu können. Da Sie aber, auch was das Reisen anbelangt, ein unternehmender Mann sind, so hoffe ich zuversichtlich, Sie eher hier zu sehen als es mir möglich sein wird, Sie in England zu begrüßen.

Ich bitte Sie, mich Mrs. Shand gelegentlich zu empfehlen, und bin mit allerherzlichstem Gruss
Ihr ergebener
Peter Behrens.

Mr dear Mr Shand!

I received your kind letter dated 26 May, and as you can imagine, was very interested in its contents. What you announce undoubtedly means a very special honour for an architect. Whilst you do not want to hear any thanks, you must, though, allow me to convey my

heartfelt recognition. If this honour does become mine, — I do, after all, dare to say this to you — it will be the result of the shared and equal artistic interest that has always bound us together. For all the living kindness that you have always offered me, however, I may express my thanks.

Here in Berlin everything is going forward very slowly. I have several pupils, but their talent does not come up to that of any of my Viennese students. And the possibility of a productive professional activity also lies ever included in my hopes. Still, one has learned a little in life, and that is, to be patient.

However, I am glad that you remember my house in Genthiner Strasse. I live now in the neighbouring house, and I am very happy here, too. I have only one desire, that you and Mrs Shand would very soon give me the pleasure of being able to welcome you here. May I say frankly to you, that I very often think how good it would be, and how necessary it seems to me to be, for me to be able to have a good talk with you. As you are, however, an enterprising man, as far as travel is concerned, I confidently hope to see you here, sooner than it would be possible for me to greet you in England.

I beg you to recommend me most warmly to Mrs Shand, and with the most heartfelt greetings,

Your devoted
Peter Behrens.

Shand had obviously informed Behrens that he was shortly to be made an Honorary Corresponding Member of the RIBA, which indeed he was.

Behrens's remarks about his pupils in Berlin, as compared to his multi-national register of students in Vienna, would have been regarded unfavourably by the authorities in Germany if found out, especially since written to a foreigner. His comment on the paucity of work in Berlin, the hopes he expresses to continue with a creative professional life, and his resolution to cultivate patience, are all melancholy thoughts probably related to his position under the new régime, although they are vaguely expressed. Similarly, the unlikelihood of his being able to visit England might be attributed to many commonplace factors, but it is possible that he already knew that he was not going to be allowed to go to Vienna for the Winter Semester of 1937–38 (see my *Peter Behrens, Architect and Designer*, London, 1981, p. 172, n. 22).

23.

Professor Dr. Peter Behrens
Mitglied der Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste
Mitglied und Senator der Preuss. Akademie der Künste
Honor. Corr. Member of the American Instituts [*sic*] of Architects

den 22. 10. 1937

Mein sehr lieber Herr Morton Shand!

Ich habe Ihnen immer noch für einen Brief vom 23. Juli zu danken. Wenn ich erst heute dazu komme, so bitte ich, diese Verzögerung damit zu entschuldigen, dass ich inzwischen immer gewartet habe, eine Bestätigung oder ein amtliches Schreiben vom Royal Institute of British Architects zu erhalten und indem ich darauf wartete dachte ich mir, ich könnte Ihnen dann mit meiner Beantwortung Ihres freundlichen Schreibens die Mitteilung machen, dass diese Bestätigung nun eingegangen sei. Ihr Wort genügt mir natürlich vollkommen, aber ich weiss nicht woran es liegt, dass keine Mitteilung seitens des Instituts an mich gelangt. Dagegen habe ich gestern ein Journal des Instituts bekommen. Ich habe mir inzwischen schon fast gedacht, ob irgendwelche politischen Schwierigkeiten inzwischen eingetreten sind. Aber ich möchte eigentlich nicht daran glauben.

Wie dem nun sei, eine offizielle Mitteilung werde ich ja wohl bekommen und wie ich schon sagte genügt mir ja Ihre Bestätigung durchaus. Aber dieses darf ich heute noch einmal hinzufügen, dass

Sie mir durch Ihren Einfluss, den Sie bei dem Institut genommen haben, eine sehr grosse Ehre erwiesen haben. Und wenn Sie auch keinen Dank dafür hören wollen, so wiederhole ich Ihnen noch einmal, was ich Ihnen unlängst schon sagte, dass ich Ihnen von ganzen Herzen zugetan bin.

Können Sie es nicht einrichten, bald einmal nach Berlin zu kommen. Sie glauben gar nicht, wie sehr ich mich nach Ihnen sehne und auch danach, mich mit Ihnen über alle unsere gemeinsamen Interessen ausplaudern zu können.

Bitte empfehlen Sie mich Mrs. Shand auf das angelegentlichste. Ich bin wie immer mit herzlichsten Grüßen

Ihr sehr ergebener

Peter Behrens.

My very dear Mr Morton Shand!

I still have to thank you for a letter dated 23 July. If I only come to it today, I beg you to excuse the delay, because in the interim I have been waiting all the time to receive an official notification or an official letter from the Royal Institute of British Architects, and while I was waiting for this I thought to myself that I could then, together with my reply to your kind words, let you know that these arrangements would now have been made. Your word, of course, is quite enough for me, but I do not know why no communication from the Institute has been sent to me. Against that, I got a copy of the Journal of the Institute yesterday. I almost wondered, in the meantime, whether or not some political difficulties had intervened. But I really wouldn't like to believe that.

However this may be, I am sure that I will get an official communication, and, as I said before, your confirmation is, after all, sufficient for me. But may I now add, once more, this: that you have rendered me a very great honour through the influence that you have had with the Institute. And even if you do not want to hear any thanks for this, I repeat to you once more, what I already said recently, that I am wholeheartedly devoted to you.

Can't you arrange to come to Berlin very soon. You can hardly believe how much I yearn for you and to be able to have a good long talk over all our shared interests.

Please give my warmest regards to Mrs Shand. I am, as always, with heartfelt greetings,
Your devoted

Peter Behrens.

The Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste was established before 1935, under the aegis of the Reichskulturkammer. Eugen Hönig was President. German Bestelmeyer and Mies van der Rohe were other conservative but not actively pro-Nazi members.

24.

The letterhead of this handwritten letter has the monogram 'PB' printed on the left side, opposite the same address as the previous one.

2. I. 38

Mein lieber und verehrter Freund.

Ich möchte es doch nicht unterlassen Ihnen für Ihre freundlichen Festgrüsse meinen Dank und eine herzliche Erwidderung auszusprechen. Mit grossen Bedauern las ich, dass es Ihnen immer noch nicht gut geht. Es sind natürlich die jetzige Jahreszeit und vielleicht auch das Londoner Klima keine günstigen Faktoren. Aber können Sie es nicht einrichten irgendwo im Süden, Frankreich oder Norditalien, sich eine Unterkunft auf einem höheren Berg zu beschaffen und dort etwas zu arbeiten?

Sie sind, glaube ich zu früh fort gegangen. Solche Unpässlichkeiten muss man radikal beheben, und wie ich von allen Seiten höre, ist die Sonne das wahre und unfehlbare Heilmittel.

Ich bin zu einem engeren Wettbewerb für den Neubau der Deutschen Botschaft in Washington aufgefordert und fanatisch in der Arbeit begriffen. Ein grosses und kompliziertes Projekt. So habe

ich augenblicklich wenigstens wieder eine künstlerische Bestätigung, aber selbst bei bester Lösung glaube ich nicht an einen praktischen Erfolg. Die einzige Freude daran wird mir sein, dass ich es Ihnen einmal zur Aussicht zuschicken darf.

Nun wünsche ich Ihnen und Mrs. Shand nochmals alles Gute im Jahre 38 und bin herzlich grüssend

Ihr

Peter Behrens

My dear and honoured friend,

I must not neglect to thank you for your friendly Christmas greetings and to express my thanks and a heartfelt reciprocation. I read with great sadness that you are still not well. Naturally, it's the time of year and perhaps also the London climate which are unfavourable factors. But couldn't you manage to get somewhere to stay in the South, in France or in Northern Italy, in some accommodation on a high mountain where you could do some work?

I think that you went out and about too soon. You have to tackle such ailments radically, and, as everyone tells me, the sun is the true and unfailing method of cure.

I am invited to take part in a limited competition for the German Embassy in Washington, and I am working frantically hard. It is a big and complicated project. So for the moment, at least, I have an artistic activity again, but even with the best solution I don't believe there will be a practical issue. The only pleasure in it for me will be that I will be able to send it to you sometime for you to see.

Now I wish you and Mrs Shand once more, all the best for the year 1938, and I am, greeting you affectionately, your

Peter Behrens

Behrens was invited to take part in the Washington Embassy competition along with eight other architects, including Paul Bonatz, German Bestelmeyer, and Fritz August Breuhaus. Behrens may have been invited because Hitler, according to Speer, knew the St Petersburg Embassy from pictures and liked it (interview with the author, 18 April 1980).

Behrens clearly did not hold out great hopes of being chosen. In the event, according to Georg Krawietz (letter to the author, 12 August 1993), Hitler personally decided for Breuhaus, although nothing was built, and most of the plans at the *Reichsbaudirektion* were destroyed during the Second World War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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