

### From Garden City to Factory Aesthetic

Garden City Movement preceded by example of suburban development at **Bedford Park**, 1870-1895, with patron Jonathan Carr, a textile magnate, sponsoring architects E.W. Godwin and Richard Norman Shaw (e.g., **Turnham Green**, 1875) to create healthy, attractive dwellings near the city, but with advantages of the country. Garden City Movement begins in England and spreads outward in much the same way that the Arts and Crafts movement did. Ebenezer Howard, social reformer, author of the book, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in 1898; re-issued in 1902 as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. Howard leads the formation of the English Garden City Association forms in 1899; Howard envisions "deurbanization:" decentralized communities in green garden factory towns of up to 32,000 people each. Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, **Letchworth Garden City**, founded 1903, 30 miles outside London; Arts and Crafts ideals and dream of common ownership of property to improve community and hinder speculation. Parker and Unwin do many more suburban developments that are not strict garden cities. In Germany, the Garden City Society is founded in 1902 on the English model. Richard Riemerschmid, plan for **Hellerau Garden City**, Dresden, 1908, which becomes the home and factory town of the German Workshops for Handcrafted Art – a leading Werkbund company, and the company for whom Riemerschmid produced the "machined furniture" designs of 1906. German Workshops **Furniture Factory Complex**, 1910, Dresden-Hellerau, by Richard Riemerschmid, along with **Hellerau housing** by Riemerschmid in the same year, reflects a German vernacular approach aligned with National Romantic "homeland" sentiments. Muthesius's **Hellerau housing** (also 1910) reflects English precedent of Parker and Unwin's Garden City movement work. Riemerschmid's Hellerau factory and houses evoke village and farm buildings in a 'national romantic' gesture disdained by aspiring industrial modernists like Gropius.

Peter Behrens's students Adolf Meyer and Walter Gropius design the far more minimalist/classical **Fagus Shoe-Last Factory**, Alfeld, 1911. Conscious refinement of industrial language of steel, glass, and brick, while at the same time drawing on classical principles of symmetry, suggestion of pilasters or a portico. Open, well-lit interior office spaces benefit from use of steel and glass. Debts of this German design to German-born American architect Albert Kahn, a Detroit-based factory designer for Ford Motor Company at Highland Park. Kahn as alternately an industrial architect and accomplished arts and crafts architect who produces, for example, the **Grabowsky Co. Factory**, Detroit, 1907, which Gropius and Meyer see in journals.

Peter Behrens hired in October, 1907, by the German General Electric Company (the "AEG," or Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft) in Berlin. Peter Behrens as "Mr. Werkbund," and as the Western World's first corporate image designer: Behrens is the AEG's chief in-house design consultant, designing everything from corporate letterhead to furniture, electric appliances/products to factory buildings and workers' houses. Making the modern factory monumental: **AEG Turbine Factory**, Berlin, 1909, assisted by architect-apprentices Walter Gropius, Adolf Meyer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and the engineer Karl Bernhard. The turbine factory as a "temple of work" that draws on classical image of Greek temple, yet uses modern materials and spatial/mechanical conceptions. This version of the 'factory aesthetic' promotes image of respected, even exalted workers in a modern corporate culture (references Ruskin's values) and simultaneously serves as a built symbol of corporate identity. Note hinged steel frame and interior crane for hauling finished turbines, non-load-bearing (yet monumental) corner pylons, infill glass windows for natural light, and tension between modern industrial language and classical formality.

Offshoots of Garden City theory: planned suburbs like Ernst May, satellite suburban estates: Projects at **Niederrad** and **Roemerstadt**, Frankfurt am Main, Germany 1927 Bruno Taut, "**Britz Horseshoe Development**" of 1925-30, in which an aesthetic of "new objectivity" ("Neue Sachlichkeit") is meant to represent the architecture of a new, more equitable society sympathetic to the needs of workers and the middle classes. The **Werkbund Exhibition "The Dwelling"** in Stuttgart, 1927, planned by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and featuring houses by Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and other leading lights of the "New Building" (Neues Bauen) – flat roofs, no ornament, inventive spatial and structural schemes intended to glorify the modern architect's embrace of industrial techniques and a new aesthetic sensibility that underscores the "modernity" of these architects' radical conceptions.