



**Figure 1** The Kurfürstendamm, ca. 1910 (Wikipedia Commons)

# Luxury Apartments with a Tenement Heart

## The Kurfürstendamm and the *Berliner Zimmer*

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The residential architecture that defined Berlin's famous boulevard of luxury, the Kurfürstendamm, has receded within the collective memory of Germans and non-Germans on account of the narrative that historians and novelists have presented over the past eighty years. Those writers have focused upon the boulevard's upscale entertainment and retail life, which blossomed in the 1920s. However, the majority of buildings that defined this two-mile avenue were opulent apartment houses completed before 1914, when entertainment and retail establishments were permitted to occupy only the street-level spaces of a few buildings in the boulevard's easternmost section. To appreciate the context in which the Kurfürstendamm was created requires an understanding of this dominant building type, heretofore not examined to any appreciable extent by scholars.<sup>1</sup> It also requires an appreciation of the importance of a local planning arrangement, the so-called *Berliner Zimmer*, or "Berlin room," which was used by architects in the majority of Kurfürstendamm buildings. This peculiarity had been present since the 1840s in the typical, modest Berlin *Mietsbaus*, or apartment building, and it was also an aspect of Berlin's infamous *Mietskaserne*, or tenement rental "barracks" of the 1860s. Created as a response to space limitations, the

*Berliner Zimmer* tradition proved to be resilient and tenacious, and it quite unexpectedly continued within the vast, opulent apartments of the Kurfürstendamm.

The broad, tree-lined Kurfürstendamm was Berlin's most fashionable residential address from 1890 until the Second World War (Figure 1). Its residents stood at the apex of the *Grossbürgertum*, or haute bourgeoisie; as historians Karl-Heinz Metzger and Ulrich Dunker note, "Rudolf Martin's 1913 Yearbook of the Millionaire listed no fewer than 120 millionaires who lived directly on the Kurfürstendamm."<sup>2</sup> This new, well-traveled, and cosmopolitan segment of German society looked toward similar classes in London and Paris for lifestyle cues, yet their sprawling apartments often were little more than aggrandized versions of the modest *Mietsbaus*. Historians have previously recognized some similarities between the *Mietsbaus* and luxury residences; for example, Dietrich Worbs writes: "It is remarkable that despite the many differences in size, hygiene, and comfort, these apartment houses, whether for the working class, middle class, or even upper class, all share the basic plan. Moreover, this was a common feature not just for a few years but for the relatively long time span between the unification of Germany in 1871 and the period of highly developed capitalism around 1900."<sup>3</sup> But although this phenomenon has been recorded, the question of why this "remarkable" planning model spanned so many social levels has not been answered. What preserved this element of modest local housing in the luxury apartments of a cosmopolitan elite?

## The Kurfürstendamm and the *Grossbürgertum*

The Kurfürstendamm takes its name from Kurfürst (Elector) Joachim II, who built a hunting lodge in the forest of Grunewald in 1542. The road that connected this hunting lodge with the royal palace in Berlin passed through marshlands. The early Kurfürstendamm was a passage used by princely riders; aspects of this identity were retained well into the twentieth century. Until the 1930s, a bridle path was maintained in the center of the avenue, running alongside the streetcar tracks, but by then the Kurfürstendamm had been transformed from a semirural riding pathway into an urban boulevard. This change, completed within fifteen years, was launched by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, as recounted by Karl-Heinz Metzger and Ulrich Dunker:

On February 5, 1873, Bismarck wrote a much-quoted letter to the General Cabinet in which the first thoughts about the construction of a particularly splendid street appeared. Bismarck promoted a large project . . . it would reflect upon the rapid growth of Berlin, which was now an imperial capital, and he reasoned: "So the street of the Kurfürstendamm that now presents a narrow vista, this will become, with foresight, a main passage for vehicles and riders. . . . Then Grunewald [a western park] will become for Berlin what the Bois de Boulogne is [for Paris]."<sup>4</sup>

Bismarck defined the role envisioned for the Kurfürstendamm: the royal riding trail to Grunewald was to become a grand boulevard, explicitly to rival the major avenue of Paris, the capital of a nation recently defeated by Germany in war. A consortium of banks and holding companies financed construction of the avenue, which commenced in 1880. The first lots were sold in 1885 to several members of the *Grossbürgertum* who elected to build villas. However, this initial period of single-family house building lasted only a few years and not many villas were built. By the early 1890s, they were being supplanted by apartment buildings.<sup>5</sup> The establishment of the German Empire in 1871 had increased governmental ministries, displacing wealthy Berliners from older apartment buildings in the central sections of the city. Metzger and Dunker note that the western districts—Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorf, and Schöneberg—"became competitive for prestige, as to offer the best amenities to new dwellers. The Kurfürstendamm [which began in Wilmersdorf and ended in Charlottenburg] became known as a glittering development."<sup>6</sup>

Egon Jameson offers a rare account of the Kurfürstendamm during the years around the First World War. He is careful not to consider the two-mile-long boulevard as a monolithic entity, noting that during this period retail and entertainment began to appear in its easternmost

blocks. His words, however, underscore the original purely residential ambience of the Kurfürstendamm as an enclave of the *Grossbürgertum*:

The street of the *flâneur*, that part of the Kurfürstendamm with cafes, wine bars and shops, was principally from the Gedächtniskirche [Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church] to Uhlandstrasse . . . Beyond Uhlandstrasse, the *flâneur* was turned away. There began the luxurious dwelling street of the highest snobs . . . even the conductors of the electric streetcars only pressed delicately on their warning-bell button, in order to disturb nobody. The shops were situated on the side streets. Not even a bold businessman would have been able to afford the rents on the Kurfürstendamm.<sup>7</sup>

The exclusively residential character of the boulevard was not an innovation; the same segregation of functions had been seen in the apartments designed for the first generation of Berlin's *Grossbürgertum* in the 1860s, in the fashionable Tiergartenviertel, which flanked the southern border of Berlin's major park, the Tiergarten.<sup>8</sup> Buildings in this quarter were designed without street-level businesses, a sharp departure from the mixed-use *Mietshäuser* that were the standard throughout the rest of Berlin. To Tiergartenviertel residents of the 1860s and Kurfürstendamm residents of the 1890s, street-level shopping was a reminder of more modest, socially-integrated living arrangements, and this reminder was evidently to be avoided. New Berlin neighborhoods had less socioeconomic diversity, a trend that also occurred in other European cities, such as Paris.

Berlin's emerging *Grossbürgertum* had had a full generation to express itself architecturally in apartment building design before the advent of the Kurfürstendamm, but along the new avenue its display of affluence reached new heights. Alexander Reissner provides an introduction to its opulent world:

It was in the Kurfürstendamm that the rich and the newly rich competed with one another in the display of their wealth. Under the reign of Wilhelm II, most of the solid vestiges of Prussian tradition were destroyed. Pomp and display of real and unreal wealth was the order of the day. Nothing could be more suitable for such pomp than the enormous apartments with their huge reception rooms that were now under construction in the Kurfürstendamm area.<sup>9</sup>

Heretofore the consumption of luxury goods had been limited to members of the traditional Prussian nobility, and they purchased such items from small firms that catered to them in relative privacy. It also occurred within

the traditional Prussian ethos of frugality, although for the aristocracy this was more metaphysical than literal: one furnished one's residence in a manner that was strictly appropriate to one's rank. However, luxury had now become detached from its societal mooring because for the new *Grossbürgertum* it was money, not lineage, that was the entrée to the possession of such goods. In a symbiotic relationship with this class, the new department stores of the 1880s established a new pattern of consumer behavior wherein purchasing became a public matter conducted within the vast halls of retail palaces.

Nowhere was this new conspicuous consumption more pronounced than along the Kurfürstendamm. Reissner offers a cascade of images that practically stumble over one another, evoking its rhythm and pace:

In later years, the whole district round the Kurfürstendamm would be called somewhat derogatively W.W. (double West End). The two letters signified a whole way of life—huge cars, if possible, bearing the name of Horch, rich furs, large diamonds, scent, noise, nannies, parties and holidays in St. Moritz, as well as the occasional suicide when the husband could not meet the bills any longer, especially after the First World War. It also meant afternoon teas with music in grandiose new restaurants, cafés, and smaller tea rooms where one met—and one's dog could meet the dog of the neighbor: poodles, Pekinese, Airedales and pinschers.<sup>10</sup>

Reissner focused upon the public displays of the *Grossbürgertum*'s wealth. In private, members of this new social group furnished their vast apartments along the Kurfürstendamm in a likewise opulent manner. These buildings were outfitted with the latest technology: electric lifts, central vacuum systems, commodious bathrooms, and electric lighting throughout. This last attribute might appear to be rather ordinary to a contemporary reader, but as late as 1910, only 2 percent of Berlin apartments had electricity; 42 percent had gas lighting, and the remaining 56 percent still depended upon oil and tallow lamps.<sup>11</sup> In their seminal study about the Berliner *Mietshaus*, Johann Friedrich Geist and Klaus Kürvers identify seventeen levels of apartment dwellings. The most commodious apartments in 1914 consisted of nine rooms, and for the privilege of renting such a *bürgerlich* apartment in a fine but unexceptional neighborhood, one paid 2,000 to 4,000 Marks, but 5,500 to 12,000 Marks for one on the Kurfürstendamm.<sup>12</sup> Despite this dazzling display of affluence by the highest members of Berlin's *Grossbürgertum*, the bourgeois core of their self-identity was manifested in the layout of their residences, whose planning had its origins in the humble *Mietshaus*.

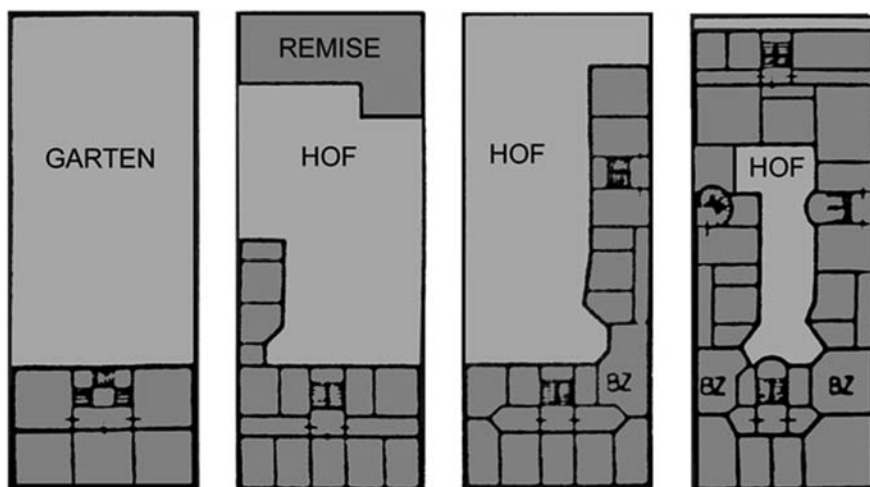
## The Berliner Zimmer: Mietshaus Legacy

Since the 1840s, four-story *Mietshäuser* had been common in Berlin.<sup>13</sup> To maximize use of expensive city real estate, lots were narrow and deep and developers evolved a plan type system that began with a building that fronted the street, called the "front house." Attached in a perpendicular fashion to this rectangular segment were wings that led into the site on one or both sides. A counterpart to the front house, called a "cross building," followed the side wings, and the process was repeated until the lot was filled.<sup>14</sup> What resulted was an assembly of rectangular buildings separated by inner courtyards. Speculative real estate being what it always seems to be, the size of these courtyards was a matter of contention between developers, who favored as small an area as possible, and housing advocates, who viewed courtyard size as a crucial indicator of quality of life.<sup>15</sup>

The *Berliner Zimmer*, which became a defining feature of Berlin *Mietshäuser*, was invented to solve the problem of providing light and air to the major public spaces while finding a convenient location for the family dining room. The well-lit space in the front house was reserved for the reception rooms needed by middle-class families that routinely consisted of a *Wohnzimmer* (living room) and *Salon* (parlor). Where the family had its meals was perceived to be less important, yet it had to be in close proximity to the rooms at the front. The solution was to place the dining room in the corner where the side wing met either the front house or cross-building (Figure 2). Therefore, the dining room usually was quite dark, with its only window facing the courtyard. Berliners, with their sardonic sense of humor, gave the room the honorific appellation *Berliner Zimmer*, and it became celebrated in local lore and literature. In a working-class *Mietshaus*, like that shown in the second plan in Figure 2, a *Remise*, or depot, where coal was stored, often occupied the cross or rear building.

The *Berliner Zimmer* was developed in tandem with the evolution of a staircase design that allowed the layout of a passageway large enough for a carriage to pass into the courtyard behind the structure that fronted the street. In *Alter Wohnhäuser in Berlin*, Erika Schachinger documented the evolution of this stairway and the dining room in *Mietshaus* design during the final decades of the eighteenth century, when increasing congestion within the city forced builders to begin expanding buildings backward into back lots that previously had been gardens:

The development of the backyards with side and cross wings continued . . . Gradually a special staircase by the side wing was established that also served to integrate the side wing into the front building. With that arose the so-called *Berliner Zimmer*



**Figure 2** Development of a Berlin *Mietshaus*, starting with a front building (left), progressing to a coal depot in the rear, then enclosing the garden with side wings to become a courtyard; *Berliner Zimmer* marked “BZ” (Wikipedia Commons)

that has become so significant in the floor plans of nineteenth-century Berlin. For the most part, this room in the corner between the front building and side wing had totally inadequate lighting and ventilation. One therefore sought to resolve this connection between the front building and side wing in a fortuitous manner. Many of these attempts amounted to giving the room better exposure through a special form.<sup>16</sup>

If the wing and front house met in a ninety-degree angle, then the *Berliner Zimmer* usually possessed only one window, placed where the side wing sprang from the front building. This provided scant daylight, which illuminated only the rearmost portion of the space. If the corner was chamfered “in a fortuitous manner,” additional expense was entailed, but illumination could be increased if the window was placed in this chamfer. The width of the chamfer was variable, and the wider the chamfer, the wider the window could be. Architects at the close of the eighteenth century utilized this solution, exemplified by the oval *Berliner Zimmer* at Neue Grünstrasse 27, designed by the architect Johann Gotthard Langhans in 1796.<sup>17</sup> However, in most Berlin apartment buildings, especially those built during the years of explosive population growth during the last half of the nineteenth century, the *Berliner Zimmer* was a rectangular space illuminated by one window set in the rear of its side wall.

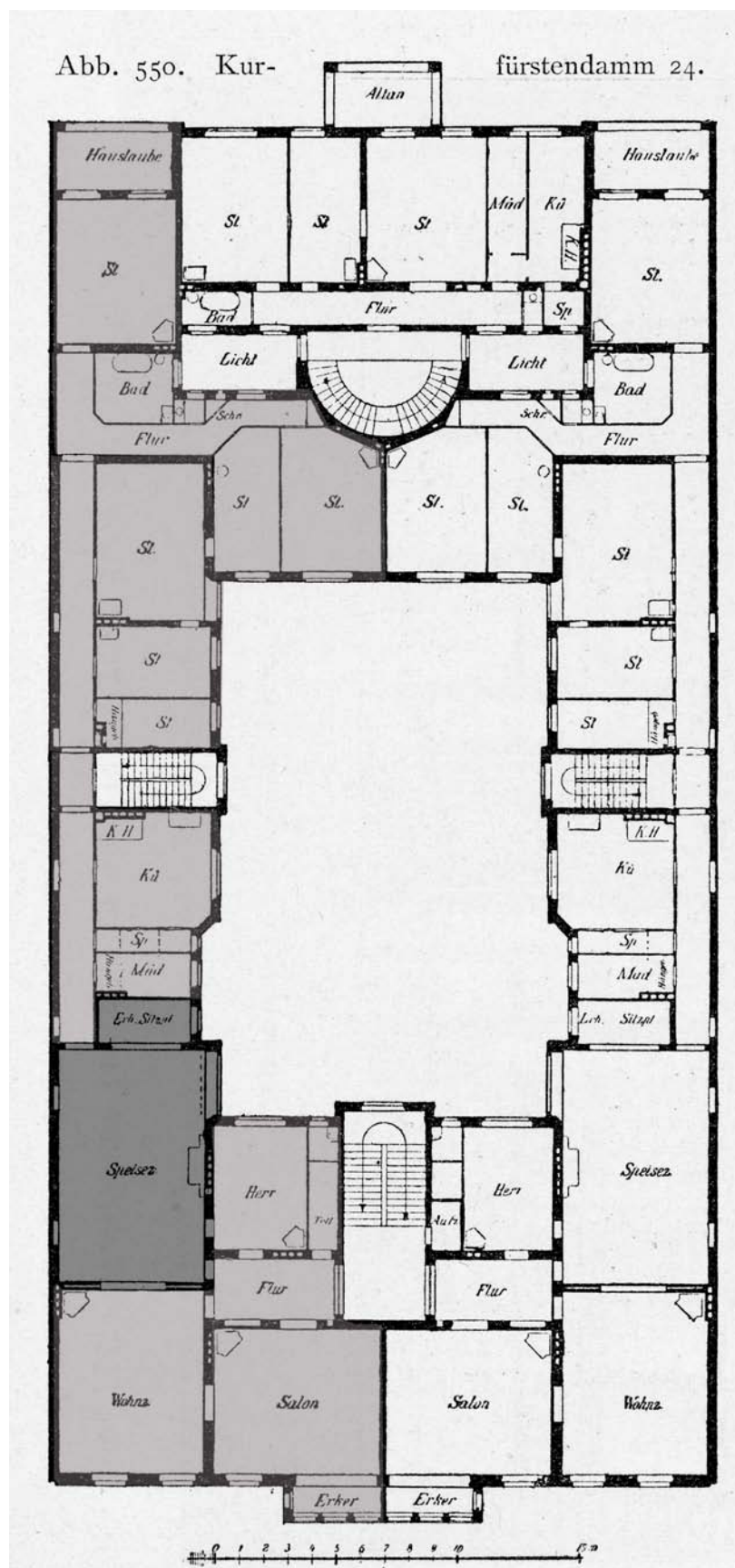
The *Berliner Zimmer* was the largest room in a residence, which would usually indicate its top ranking in the hierarchy of spaces. Yet its status was ambiguous because, unlike the reception rooms fronting the street, which were served by a corridor, the *Berliner Zimmer* was also the only passageway between the front and rear sections of the apartment. The functioning of the dining room was thus compromised by having to serve also as a route of circulation, and,

because the room spanned the full width of the side wing, it fragmented the circulation pattern, cutting off the hallways in the front portion of the home from those in the private, rear section. In lavish apartment buildings, the dining room eventually broke free from its dark *Mietshaus* placement, but this distinctive compartmentalization of circulation continued.

The *Mietshaus* planning tradition was present in the first-generation *Grossbürgertum* apartments in the Tiergartenviertel in the 1860s, and it continued in the development of the Kurfürstendamm. The ubiquitous *Berliner Zimmer* was so well known that its occasional absence was cause for comment. In his memoirs, Gerhard Masur remembered the apartment building to which his family moved in 1904. Number 12 Blumeshof was situated between the prestigious Schöneberger Ufer and Lutzowstrasse, a few blocks away from the start of the Kurfürstendamm. His apartment departed from the usual design, as he recalls: “Instead of the dark passageway-room, that served most Berliners as a dining room, we had an oversized area, almost a hall, with three big windows and a door that opened on a balcony.”<sup>18</sup>

## Berlin versus Paris

Since the Kurfürstendamm was modeled upon a Parisian boulevard, a cross-cultural comparison of late nineteenth-century apartments in Paris and Berlin highlights the distinctiveness of the *Berliner Zimmer* and the associated domestic circulation plan. Kurfürstendamm 24, designed in 1893 by one of Berlin’s most celebrated young architects, Alfred Messel, offers a good starting point (Figure 3). It is an example of mid-block building of the luxury class, clearly indicated by the extremely large courtyard, which greatly exceeded the requirements of the building ordinance.



**Figure 3** Alfred Messel, 24 Kurfürstendamm, Berlin, 1893, plan (shading by author; from Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein zu Berlin, *Berlin und seine Bauten: die Wohngebäude, Mehrfamilienhäuser* [Berlin: Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein zu Berlin, 1896])

This was a building whose high rents would compensate for the loss of rentable square footage needed to create the ornamental garden in its courtyard. A *Mietskaserne* on a similar plot would have had two, if not three small courtyards with cross buildings between, housing twelve families instead of three families on each floor of Messel's building. On the plan, one apartment has been tinted light gray, with its dining room tinted a darker shade.

An architectural journal of the period, *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, devoted two pages to the new building. The text by Otto Sarrazin and Oskar Hofsfeld makes no reference to the placement of the dining room, which is positioned in the traditional manner of the *Berliner Zimmer*. However, the authors supply some clues about the Berlin attitude to this space: "The dining rooms have wooden cornices, high chimneys, and light-colored window glass. Above all else, an elevated sitting area at eye level is very handsomely rendered at the narrow back wall. This cozy card nook or pub has a small green-tiled stove and lead-glazed windows."<sup>19</sup>

The elevated seating area can be seen behind the *Berliner Zimmer*, its lead-glazed window visible on the right and the stove marked in the upper left corner of the alcove. The *Berliner Zimmer* pushes out slightly into the courtyard, and all of its short stretch of exterior wall is opened by a single large window. The dining room is described as possessing a dark, inward-looking intimacy, and the usual *Berliner Zimmer* layout was evidently not worthy of mention, although it adversely affected the quantity of light in the space.

The *Berliner Zimmer* model prevailed in *Grossbürger-tum* apartments all along the Kurfürstendamm and on other streets of comparable exclusivity. The more one examines Berlin plans, the less surprising or noteworthy this seems; it is difficult to imagine handling space differently. A comparison with Paris places this unusual design strategy in perspective.

Parisian architects faced many of the same challenges in laying out apartments on constricted sites as their Berlin counterparts.<sup>20</sup> Yet, the manner of space manipulation in Paris was different. Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre's *Invention de l'habitation moderne, Paris 1880–1914*, provides an excellent collection of Parisian apartment house plans, constructed for the haute bourgeoisie.<sup>21</sup> The most demanding situation a Parisian architect encountered was a narrow, deep, mid-block location, and a good example of this is the apartment building by Alfred Fasquelle erected in 1900 on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées (Figure 4).

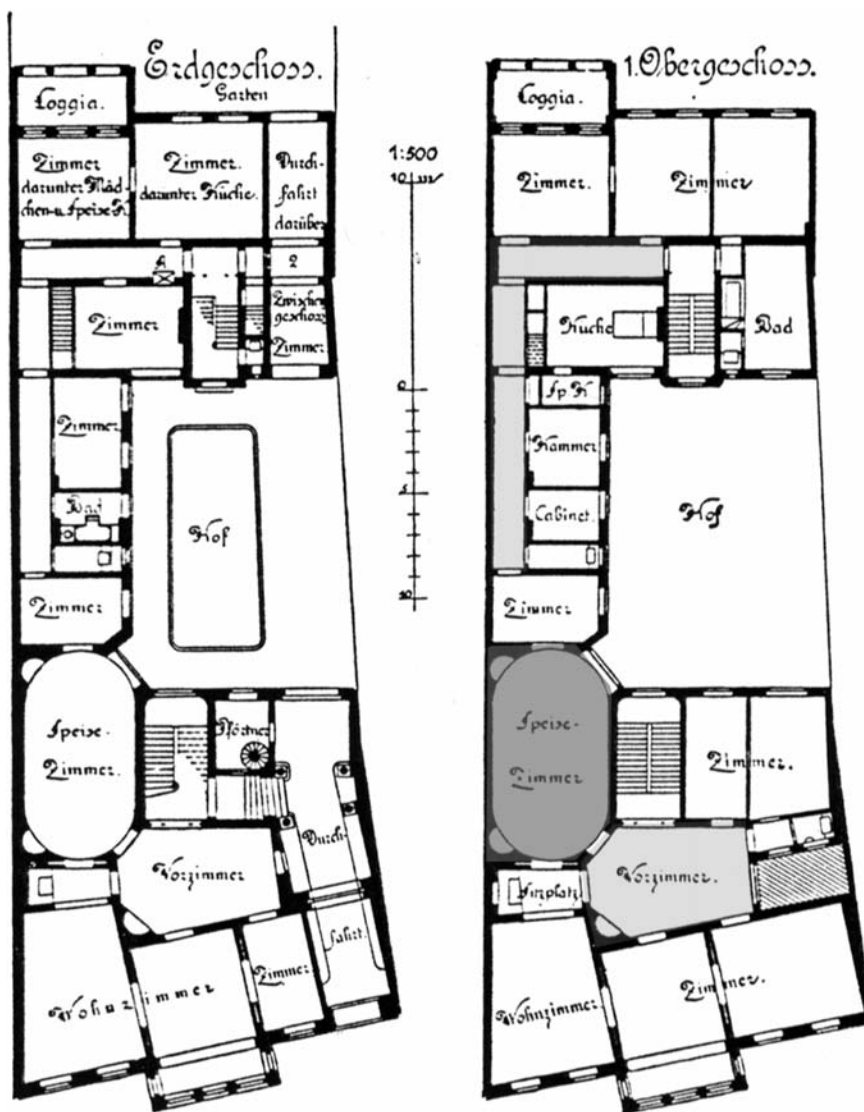
Two aspects of Fasquelle's plan are noteworthy. The *salle à manger* (dining room) was pushed deeper into the site than a *Berliner Zimmer*, displaced rearwards by the placement of a staircase and *galerie* (hall). The second characteristic was a continuous, uninterrupted flow of circulation throughout the apartment via a tri-level hierarchy of hallways and corridors. The most important *galerie* was the widest and longest, running behind the line of front reception rooms. A secondary *galerie* or *antichambre* was placed perpendicular to the principal one, and provided a ceremonial route to the dining room, underscoring the dominant size of that room. The third rank of circulation space was the narrow corridor running the length of the side wing, connecting bedrooms and service spaces and designated *couloir*.

It is clear that different priorities operated in Parisian and Berlin luxury apartments. Potential room space in Paris was sacrificed for clarity and continuity of circulation, which also preserved the uncompromised functions of the major rooms. The width and length of *galeries* indicate the importance given to ceremonial procession: their ample volumes prepared one for entering the prestigious reception rooms that faced the street or the dining room that looked into the generous courtyard through two windows that permitted it to be well lit. The secondary *galerie* leading to the dining room occupied an area that could have been used for a functional room. Grouped along the party wall were a service stair and air shaft that provided natural light for the main *galerie* and also pushed the dining room to the rear. While this arrangement had manifest advantages, a Berlin architect would have seen that a useful room had been sacrificed.

A good contrast with Fasquelle's building on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées is Blumberg and Schreiber's building of the mid-1890s in Berlin at 9 Königsgrätzer Strasse, a street of comparable prestige to the Kurfürstendamm (Figure 5). The building was similar to Fasquelle's, with only one residence per floor on a deep, narrow building site. An imposing *Vorzimmer* or anteroom acts as a central node of circulation for the front building, yet the room's irregular polygonal shape precludes a sense of circulatory or ceremonial clarity. To enter either the largest *Wohnzimmer* or the grand oval of the *Berliner Zimmer* on a central axis, one had to traverse a small, trapezoidal anteroom. Such fragmentation and compartmentalization of circulation is not seen in the Paris building.

A study of sixty Berlin plans has found none with the simple, perpendicular configuration of circulation spaces seen in Fasquelle's building. In Berlin luxury apartments,





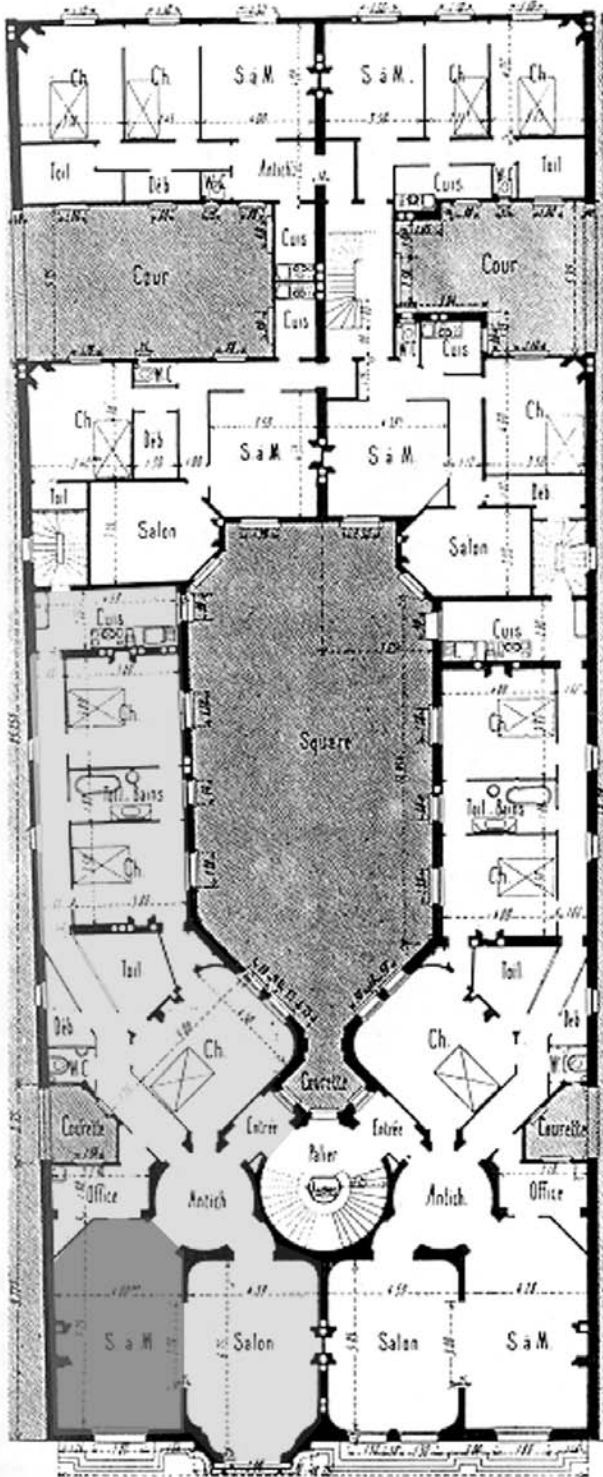
**Figure 5** Blumberg & Schreiber, 9 Königgrätzer Strasse, mid-1890s, plan (shading by author; dining room is darkest) (from Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein zu Berlin, *Berlin und seine Bauten: die Wohngebäude, Mehrfamilienhäuser* [Berlin: Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein zu Berlin, 1896])

This importance assigned to a well-lit *salle à manger* was a reaction to earlier building traditions. Under restrictions enacted in the 1860s by the préfet of Paris, Baron Haussmann, narrow iron balconies were the only protrusions permitted from the façades of buildings. Michelle Perrot notes the effect this had upon the *salle à manger*: “In most buildings constructed between 1860 and 1880, especially in Paris, the dining room received light only from cramped and dark inner courtyards.”<sup>22</sup> In the 1880s, the situation changed, and architects experimented with the new freedom they were accorded. A decree passed on 22 July 1882 permitted façade projections such as bow windows.<sup>23</sup> Eleb and Debarre recount the consequences of this change for the dining room:

In the beginning of the 1880s, the Haussmannian conception of the apartment was criticized in all quarters. This rejection of

monotony raised questions about regulations . . . . The dining room became a veritable rival of the salon, generously endowed with light from bow windows . . . . The architects created, at the end of the nineteenth century, the apartments we can label as anti-Haussmannian.<sup>24</sup>

Fin-de-siècle Parisian architects thus responded to their own local building traditions, but with a degree of experimentation not matched by their Berlin colleagues. The variety of solutions that Parisian architects employed in arranging rooms and circulation spaces is striking. In a mid-block lot on the Rue de Paris à Vincennes, the architect E. Willacy provides a dramatic example of adventurous thinking (Figure 6).<sup>25</sup> Willacy’s building is a good counterpoint to Alfred Messel’s 24 Kurfürstendamm. Both were designed with two major residences per floor, with the



**Figure 6** E. Willaey, 94 rue de Paris à Vincennes, Paris, ca. 1906, plan (shading by author; dining room is darkest; from Emile Rivoalen, *Maisons modern de rapport et de commerce* [Paris: G. Franchon, ca. 1910])

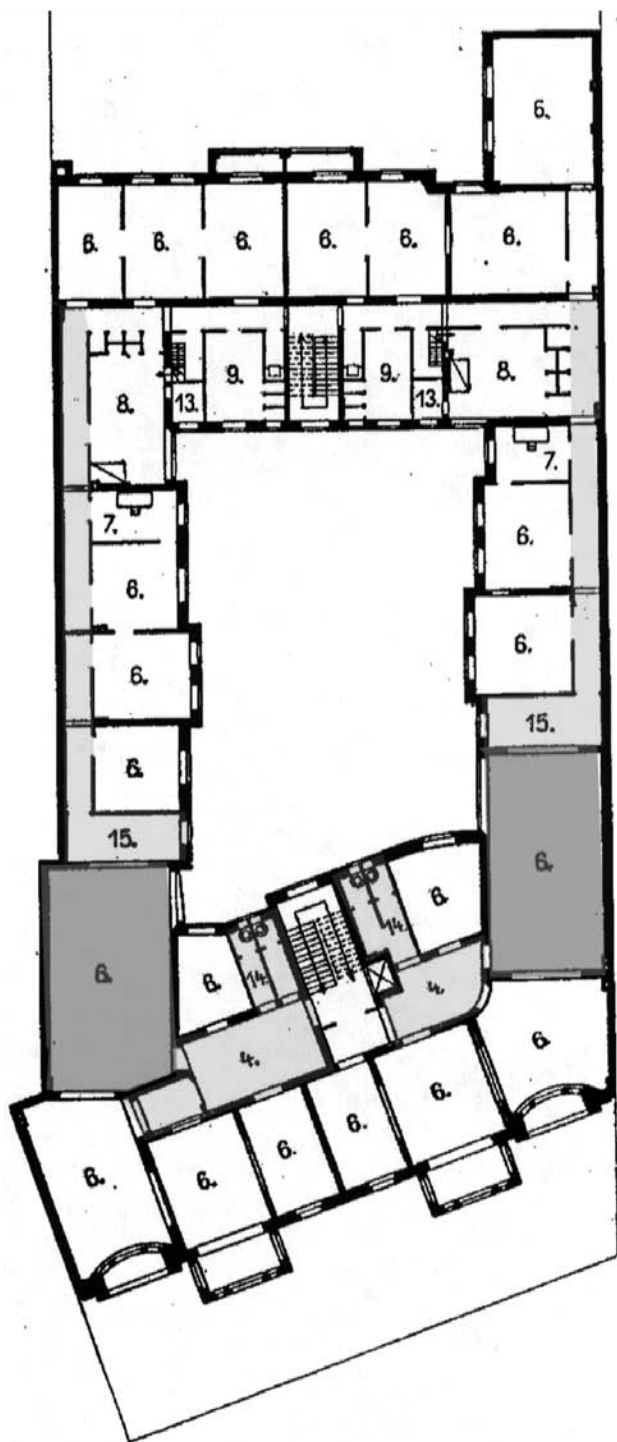
building in Paris having four additional smaller apartments on each level. On the Rue de Paris à Vincennes, a central circular staircase leads to the two larger apartments, each

with an entrance foyer that leads to a circular antechamber. The “dead space” between this antechamber and the retaining wall is filled with an extended, street-facing dining room, a small office, and an air shaft. A diagonally oriented corridor leads toward the rear, pushing the room behind the antechamber into the courtyard at an oblique angle. The result is that the demarcation between front and rear sections is blurred. The axially-rotated room—a bedroom—is part of both the front and the rear; in a programmatic sense, it occupies a transitional position.

The bedroom, placed at an angle, functions apart from the routes of circulation. Double windows provide ample illumination. It could easily have been designated the dining room, since that function had no fixed location in Parisian apartments. Willaey’s design was disciplined by the requirement that every major room had to have a window located in the center of a wall. The reluctance to depart from an orthogonal arrangement of space, evidently powerful in Berlin, was less in Paris. In Willaey’s hands, rooms and corridors were rotated at will, and the peculiar, odd-shaped bits of square footage that resulted were utilized as light wells or storage closets.

Paradoxically, Willaey departs from an orthogonally rigid arrangement of rooms yet unifies the composition through a smooth flow of circulation spaces. Like Alfred Fasquelle’s building on the Champs-Élysées, his design was imbued with a sense of ceremonial progression. An intermediary space permitted one to enter the salon on its central axis, underscoring its position atop the hierarchy of spaces, whereas no such emphasis was given to the *salle à manger*. Willaey’s manipulation of space was the continuation of a long French tradition of ingenious mediation between axes and spaces, a practice that was perfected in the design of Parisian *hôtels particuliers* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In contrast, the influence of Berlin’s *Mietshaus* tradition is evident throughout the apartment architecture of the Wilhelmine elite, such as the mid-block building at 37 Kurfürstendamm, built in 1906 by Kurt Berndt (Figure 7). The non-orthogonal relationship between the front building line to the site admittedly presented a greater challenge than Fasquelle or Willaey faced, yet the French architects would have responded differently. In Berndt’s hands, there is a harsh juxtaposition of the front building portion and the side wings. The halls and anterooms that might have acted as mediating entities between these skewed axes instead attempt to cling to strictly orthogonal shapes. When sacrifices of right-angle corners were made, they occurred awkwardly, especially in the apartment on the left in the plan, where the large *Berliner Zimmer* and adjacent reception room are disfigured by such a jarring juxtaposition.



**Figure 7** Kurt Berndt, 37 Kurfürstendamm, 1906, plan (shading by author; dining room is darkest; from *Berliner Architekturwelt* 8 [1906])

The plan of 37 Kurfürstendamm is a vivid example of a half-century of *Grossbürgertum* housing: on mid-block sites, Berlin architects retained the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition and its resultant compartmentalization of circulation. On corner sites, the situation in Berlin was different. Obtuse-angled

corner sites did not pose challenges, as they generally offered an abundance of space with which to work. Acute-angled lots, however, presented the ultimate challenge to architects working within the *Mietshaus* tradition. The cramping in of the site reduced the size and viability of courtyards, as everything except the front line of reception rooms jostled for less space. Hallways, anterooms, stairwells, kitchens, sleeping quarters, and servants' rooms all had to be accommodated and provided with some natural light. The answer was to have the dining room face the street, breaking it out of its *Berliner Zimmer* placement. Because the courtyard was constricted by the site's acute angle, a secondary court labeled a *Nebenhof* (side court) or *Lichthof* (light court) also was used. However, despite the flexibility that such sites required, the planning of Berlin buildings was still significantly less adventurous that seemed to be the norm in Paris.

The building at 110 Kurfürstendamm, designed by Max Bischoff and Willi Witt in 1907, provides an excellent example of an acute-angled site (Figure 8). It apportions space between the two residences with almost a surgical delicacy. The larger apartment, which contains one extra rear room, faces the Kurfürstendamm and features an open-air balcony between the salon and the *Speisesaal*.<sup>26</sup> The slightly smaller residence, largely fronting the side street, turns the corner with a curved salon. The floor plan resembles a tightly fitted puzzle. Two major axes control the arrangement and orthogonal shape of rooms, the only deviation being a third axis that bisects the corner angle of the site. This third axis begins in the curved salon and proceeds inward through the principal stairwell, a side court, and a stairwell for servants. Clustered around this pivot are the hallways, kitchens, and storage areas. These spaces absorb the impact of the irregular site with angled walls, so that the major rooms, with the exception of the curved salon, retain their orthogonal shapes and the linear sequence of spaces.

It is not immediately evident how traffic circulates, since the circulatory spaces in each apartment are fragmented. A fair amount of natural light is received in the *Diele* (hall) through large windows that open into it from the *Nebenhof*. While the *Diele* appears to be the opening note in a generous circulatory program in each apartment, the dining room thrusts into the corridor system, choking it by 50 percent or more. It is intriguing that the grand *Speisesaal* on the Kurfürstendamm side has two doors on its rear end, almost suggesting an alternative to the route of passage offered by the unlabeled corridor behind it. It is as though some retention of the dual function of a *Berliner Zimmer* was intended, for the logical place to put the exit from the largest room in the residence would have been at the center of its rear wall. However, a window looking into the corridor has been



**Figure 8** Max Bischoff and Willi Witt, 110 Kurfürstendamm, 1908, plan (shading by author; dining room is darkest; from *Berliner Architekturwelt* 10 [1908])

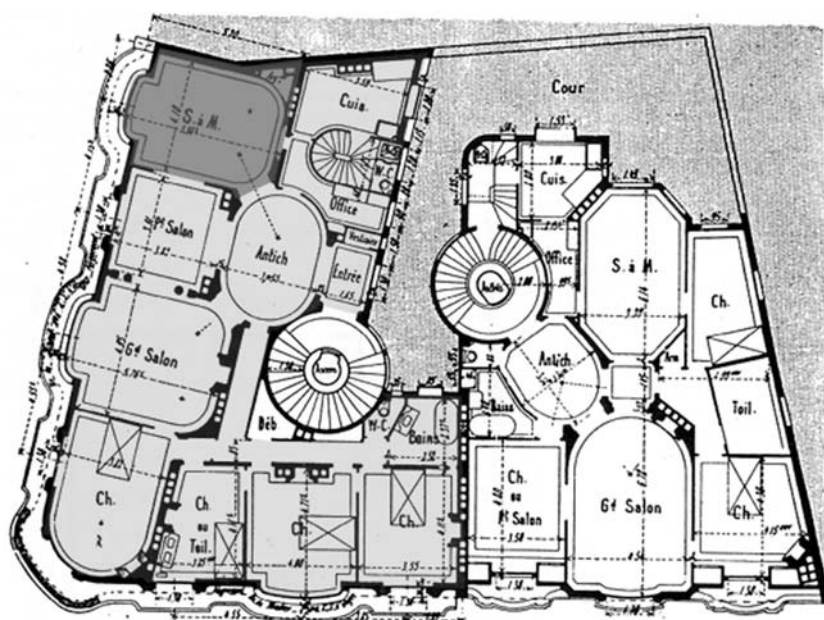
placed there instead. While at 110 Kurfürstendamm, the *Speisesaal* may have been released from its traditional *Berliner Zimmer* position, in true *Mietshaus* tradition, clarity of internal circulation in the apartment has fallen victim to the competing requirements of reception room grandeur and courtyard size.

A Parisian point of comparison for 110 Kurfürstendamm is a building of 1900 by Adolphe Bocage at the intersection of Boulevard Raspail and Rue de Fleurus (Figure 9). It, too, has two large apartments per floor, an acute-angled corner site, and a location of comparable social prestige. However, the building on Boulevard Raspail organizes space dramatically differently than was done on the Kurfürstendamm. The apartment that rounds the corner is clearly marked as being the dominant space, organized around two main axes that follow the contours of the lot. Where a third axis was used in Berlin to resolve the acute angle, in Paris this is accomplished by a succession of curved spaces—circular principal stairwell, semi-circular service stairwell, oval antechamber, and partially curved kitchen and office.

With the exception of a *chambre à la toilette*, every room along the two major axes is bilaterally symmetrical. The *chambre à la toilette* is an irregular polygon, and this resolves

the meeting of the two axes in the front of the residence. The bedroom on the corner has a curved fourth wall, and both the *salle à manger* and *grand salon* feature rounded corners and bow windows. The bulge of the *grand salon* is not permitted to protrude into the hallway, unlike the *Speisesaal* on the Kurfürstendamm. Instead, an oval antechamber accomplishes the alignment of interior walls, while also being on axis with the corridor. The result was a continuity and flow of circulation areas that is absent in 37 Kurfürstendamm. Both buildings exhibit a sense of ceremonial progression throughout the major reception rooms, but the Paris building complements this with a similar sense that permeates its hallways and impressive oval *antichambre*. A greater variety of major room shapes also characterizes Adolphe Bocage's building.

This comparison suggests that even when the dining room was detached from its *Berliner Zimmer* placement, late in the Kurfürstendamm's pre-World War I history, fragmentation of circulation continued. This tenacity of the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition at first seems puzzling, since Berlin architects incorporated other Parisian features—and they were designing for a clientele that looked to Paris as a model of luxurious life. Perhaps unfamiliarity with the French journals explains



**Figure 9** Adolphe Bocage, 38 rue de Fleurus, Paris, ca. 1907 plan (shading by author; dining room is darkest; from Rivoalen, *Maisons modern de rapport et de commerce*)

German imperviousness to French thinking, but a brief look at the urban and legal milieu in which Berlin architects practiced is necessary before any conclusions are reached.

### Urban Planning and Building Ordinances in Berlin

In 1862, the Prussian government adopted a city plan devised by James Hobrecht that looked past the demolition of the city's walls, which was planned for and executed in 1868. Taking cues from Haussmann's transformation of Paris, Hobrecht envisioned the city rapidly expanding along a system of ring roads and broad avenues that would converge in large, star-shaped plazas. From the 1860s through the 1930s, aspects of the Hobrecht Plan were criticized, especially the plan's emphasis on vehicular traffic and the resulting monumentality of the new urban fabric. Ernst Bruch's 1870 critique of the plan identified ten major objections. Bruch noted how the plan forbade the laying out of small streets to complement the larger ones, smaller streets that Bruch felt were necessary to retain a human scale. He argued:

This superfluous width of the streets corresponds to the giant expansion of the city's quarters. . . . Room neither for courtyards nor gardens will remain between buildings. What good is a cheap building if one can steal a glance at the only remaining un-built space within a deep, seventeen-foot courtyard, or the space is completely divided with a cross-building in it. As development progresses, the buildings within such a quarter will reach deeper into the building plots, leaving at last nothing but

a crowd of details such as chimneys within a thick wall interspersed with eight- and seventeen-foot courtyards.<sup>27</sup>

The rapid rise in real estate prices that had begun in the 1850s accelerated after the city walls were demolished in 1868, pushed by Berlin's booming industrialization and the need for vast amounts of worker housing. The *Wohnungsmangel*, or housing deficit, was already a topic of great concern in the 1850s, and its severity increased every decade throughout the remainder of the century. Ernst Bruch noticed that building regulations were designed to answer this need by making it as financially attractive as possible for speculators to erect massive apartment buildings. He witnessed the construction of the first generation of these post-Hobrecht *Mietskaserne*, and his concern about densely built blocks, relieved only by meager courtyards, was based upon building regulations in place in 1870. He observed:

In earlier times, the job of building regulations was only ordinances about narrow streets and fire. The first took care of traffic, and the latter, which concerned protection against the danger of fire, almost exclusively comprised regulations regarding the construction of buildings . . . there was little or no consideration for the healthfulness of apartments . . . . However of much greater influence on this is the whole system, the direction and width of the roads, the size of building blocks. . . . [B]uilding and zoning regulations need to be expanded with one another so as to help those who have been prevented, due to straightened circumstances, to make a claim [for light and air].<sup>28</sup>

Bruch's focus on "the whole system" was also the focal point of critics who lambasted Berlin's approach to planning and housing. Building ordinances, administered by the *Bau-* and *Feuerpolizei*, were viewed as catering to urban planners and building speculators, as opposed to serving the welfare of inhabitants. Sixty years after Bruch wrote his critique, urbanist Werner Hegemann continued the charge in his famous tract of 1930, *Das steinerne Berlin*.<sup>29</sup> He noted that while Vienna's expansion during the third quarter of the nineteenth century had been guided by public competitions, Berlin had been designed by Prussian state authorities who had no interest in such a processes for urban planning. Hegemann wrote: "From the highest authority of the state, the Berlin police headquarters was given the order to prepare a development plan as the authority in charge."<sup>30</sup>

Hegemann then increased the pitch of his rhetoric, stating that the assault [*Übergriffe*] of private speculators against the public good was a dangerous threat to conscientious urban planning. The public needed especially strong weapons [*Waffen*] against this, and he posited that building ordinances could be such weapons. He then recited how, for decades, Berlin's major building ordinances had failed in such a regard, focusing upon the regulation of courtyard size. The ordinance in force from 1853 until 1887 had required only the smallest of courtyards—5.6 meters by 5.6 meters—17 *Fuß* (feet) in the old German measurement system. This size was based upon the turning radius of a horse-drawn fire wagon, which was calculated to be a little over 31 square meters. As Hegemann demonstrated, in a building lot that measured 22 meters wide by 56 meters deep, only three such tiny courtyards were required, and the remainder of the lot could be filled with rentable space.<sup>31</sup> By 1887, the inadequacies of the 1853 law had become impossible to ignore because in the intervening years, apartment heights had increased from four to six stories, making light and air even scarcer within the notoriously damp and gloomy courtyards. In 1887, the minimum courtyard area required by the ordinance was increased to 40 square meters, and in 1897 it was again increased to 60 square meters.<sup>32</sup>

Werner Hegemann's calculations drew upon section 2 of the *Baupolizeiordnung für den Stadtkreis Berlin* of 15 August 1897, which remained in effect until 1925. The section dictated the percentage of a site that could be filled with structure. For the first 6 meters of a lot's depth from the building line, 100 percent of the ground could be built upon. From 6 to 32 meters of depth, the figure dropped to 70 percent, with mandatory courtyards comprising the majority of the unbuilt 30 percent. If the lot was deeper than 32 meters, the figure declined to 60 percent—if the property was located within the confines of the long-demolished city walls—and

50 percent if the site lay beyond those boundaries.<sup>33</sup> In other words, at precisely the point where a side wing would spring forth from a front building, buildable square footage decreased 30 percent, compounding the pressure to utilize every square foot in the narrow side wings. This regulation made decreasing the size of a *Berliner Zimmer* to place a corridor around it—in order to connect front and rear circulation areas—an unpalatable option.

Another section of the 1897 law was devoted to differentiating between spaces intended for only intermittent or short-term use, such as hallways, restrooms, and storerooms, and extended-stay spaces, which were more strictly regulated. Yet, with the exception of required ceiling heights, details were vague: "All rooms designated for extended stays must be dry and supplied directly with air and light through windows of sufficient size and efficient placement." Two subsections later, rooms for extended use that faced courtyards—such as the *Berliner Zimmer*—were addressed, but only two things were stipulated: minimum ceiling heights were set and very constricted courtyards, which were deeper than they were long ("as measured perpendicular to the front") were prohibited.<sup>34</sup> This encouraged the maintenance of the status quo. If the 1897 law had been more demanding regarding air and light, the use of the *Berliner Zimmer* would have declined, since this space was so dark and ill-ventilated.

Berlin's building ordinances and the narrow but deep lot configuration fostered by the Hobrecht Plan offered little incentive for architects to deviate from the usual apartment layout. The *Berliner Zimmer* was an imperfect compromise regarding light, air, and the space's dual functionality. However, by spanning the width of the side wing, the distinctive dining room demonstrated that no square footage had been sacrificed to a secondary use such as a corridor. The positive psychological impact of this efficient arrangement was amplified by the rampant real estate speculation that began in the 1870s, and pressure to conform must have been severe. Werner Hegemann noted that during this period Berlin's land value increased by a factor of between eight and ten, which was double that of London property during the period. Moreover, the value of the land that became the Kurfürstendamm increased 600 times during its two decades of development.<sup>35</sup>

These economic factors discouraged experimentation in apartment planning, yet they do not suffice to explain why the *Berliner Zimmer* model continued to be utilized even in the larger and more luxurious apartments of the *Grossbürgertum*, despite its adverse effects on light, air, and circulation. The spacious courtyards within *Grossbürgertum* apartment buildings were larger than the minimum set by the building ordinance, and their side wings could have been made wide

enough to accommodate a hallway that bypassed the dining room or a rethinking of the room's placement. The extraordinarily high rents charged for such residences would have offset the additional construction costs and the slightly less efficient use of space that such an arrangement would have entailed. Indeed, long-term maintenance costs as a percentage of construction costs decreased as building quality increased, as Johann Friedrich Geist and Klaus Kürvers have calculated, using a 1908 table of land and building values.<sup>36</sup> These two factors—high rents and low maintenance costs—would have encouraged developers and architects of Kurfürstendamm buildings to depart from the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition. But other considerations were evidently more important.

### Placing the *Grossbürgertum* Apartment in Context

The *Berliner Zimmer* resilience within Kurfürstendamm apartment buildings is not merely an architectural curiosity but also another example of bourgeois identity. The controversy regarding Hans-Ulrich Wehler's *Sonderweg* thesis of the 1970s, which had argued that Germany's *Grossbürgertum* and middle class strove to emulate an aristocratic way of life—thereby becoming “feudalized” in the process—has long been disproven, demonstrating that this was not the case. The *Berliner Zimmer* planning feature of the Kurfürstendamm apartment building emphasizes how rooted within bourgeois ethics, values, and behavior the *Grossbürgertum* continued to be through the years of the German Empire. It appears that *Grossbürgertum* residents found little objectionable encountering this familiar room in their grand new residences, for it provided a convenient measure of how far they had ascended the economic ladder. A massive, high-ceilinged, luxuriously furnished *Berliner Zimmer* on the Kurfürstendamm was similar in layout but vastly different in prestige to more modest ones. The *Grossbürgertum* therefore discarded one *Mietsbaus* tradition but retained another, rejecting mixed use to ensure socioeconomic homogeneity while keeping a *Berliner Zimmer* layout—two aspects that can be seen as components of the *Grossbürgertum*'s distinct identity.

Notwithstanding the occasional presence of a countess within a Kurfürstendamm building, a sharp distinction between the *Grossbürgertum* and the aristocracy existed before the First World War. In her study *Patricians and Parvenus*, Delores Augustine carefully examines the interactions between these two segments. Inter-marriage, political participation, leisure activities, social entertaining, professions, and land ownership reflect the strong, consistent

self-identification of the *Grossbürgertum*. Augustine's case study was based upon 502 multimillionaires with assets of at least 100 million marks, drawn from Rudolf Martin's 1911–14 *Yearbook of Millionaires of Germany*.<sup>37</sup> Augustine shows that with the exception of a tiny minority who sought titles, the large majority of the *Grossbürgertum* sought to maintain their ranking within bourgeois society. She writes: “a true feudalization in the sense of a real subordination of the bourgeoisie to the aristocracy or a fusion of the two classes, failed to take place. . . . The industrial and pre-industrial elites failed to merge because their values were too different.”<sup>38</sup>

The economic parity that some *Grossbürgertum* members achieved with the aristocracy constituted a new social relationship, one that considered capital to be the primary determinant of status, as opposed to lineage. In his description of how the German nobility maintained its distinctiveness from even the highest levels of the bourgeoisie, Thomas Nipperdy wrote about defining one's aristocratic identity through denial of what was bourgeois and affirmation of what was aristocratic. Thus material consumption, driven by a need to showcase one's wealth, was considered bourgeois, whereas purchasing objects to represent one's lineage and rank within the nobility was considered aristocratic. Maintaining a distance from the merely practical, functional, and rational was essential to being an aristocrat, as was keeping afar from the “dominance of achievement, work and career” that was a major characteristic of the *Grossbürgertum*. These behaviors of avoidance were juxtaposed against those that affirmed an aristocrat's identity: noblesse oblige, formal etiquette, a demeanor of superiority, the legal privileges accorded the aristocracy in everyday life, and the cultivation of leisure. Important also was never to break from one's social class or seek confrontation regarding its values and traditions. Nipperdy then stressed that overarching these ways of denying and affirming aristocratic identity was an ethos of duty.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, the *Grossbürgertum* ethos was based upon education, self-betterment, and consumption designed to showcase the highest achievements of the bourgeoisie. Aside from challenging the economic hegemony of the nobility, *Grossbürgertum* wealth also disrupted what had been a two-part *Bürgertum*, or middle-class citizenry. A *Bildungs*, or educated-oriented middle class, had long existed alongside a *Besitz*, or property-oriented segment.<sup>40</sup> Traditionally, the *Bildungsbürgertum* constituted professionals, academics, and the clergy. The emphasis of this group was on education, and stood in contrast to that of the *Besitzbürgertum* or *Wirtschaftsbürgertum*, which focused on trade, business, and property. Distinctions between the two groups were not always clear, and the terms are best utilized as indications of different

orientations and priorities. David Blackbourn appraises these concepts, noting that “in the first half of the nineteenth century the *Bildungsbürgertum* was the most important constituent part of the German bourgeoisie.”<sup>41</sup> However, the industrial revolution inverted this societal ratio in the second half of the nineteenth century, producing a dominant *Besitzbürgertum* sector, headlined by the *Grossbürgertum* at its summit. Yet the sons of the *Grossbürgertum* were university educated, and a significant percentage pursued academic or professional careers, thereby blurring the distinction between *Besitz-* and *Bildungsbürgertum*.<sup>42</sup> The rise of the *Grossbürgertum* therefore challenged societal norms with the *Bürgertum* while also disrupting the aristocracy’s historic hegemony regarding luxury.

Anxious to define its placement within German society, the *Grossbürgertum* looked to its core bourgeois values, and apartment layout appeared to be one of those as well. It therefore is not surprising that architects designing for *Grossbürgertum* residents continued the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition: the irony that strikes contemporary eyes evidently was not shared by the architects and residents of Kurfürstendamm buildings. Nor did prominent critics of the day such as Karl Scheffler make the point. In his famous 1910 tract *Berlin: Ein Stadtschicksal*, Scheffler delivered a scathing critique of the “pseudo-palaces” of the *Grossbürgertum* based upon the buildings’ elaborate exterior ornamentation, an eclectic jumble of historic motifs that Scheffler ascribed to a lack of education and sophistication.<sup>43</sup> Yet nowhere did Scheffler discuss the layout within such edifices. It was not until Werner Hegemann’s *Das Steinerne Berlin* of 1930 that inadequacies of *Grossbürgertum* plans were discussed, but only briefly with regard to courtyard size of “rental villas” within the suburbs of Berlin.<sup>44</sup>

The *Berliner Zimmer* was not mentioned in Hegemann’s book, which is surprising. When he returned to the city in 1921 after spending several years in the United States, the postwar economic crisis in Germany was in full force. In her history of the Kurfürstendamm, Regina Stürickow reprints what the novelist Georg Zivier had to say about the subject: “In the opulent ten-room apartments on the Kurfürstendamm and in the palatial villas of the Grunewald, inhabitants were forced to accept subtenants. Poor students and bottom-line revolutionaries without property were housed in the salon-like chambers filled with furniture and good central heating.”<sup>45</sup> Due to its size and placement, the *Berliner Zimmer* often was subdivided into a bedroom that could be rented and a passageway that gave tenants of street-front rooms access to the bathrooms, ironically rectifying the problem that the room had posed for so long regarding circulation. The *Berliner Zimmer* acquired a new cultural relevancy

during this time, its lore burnished with a piquant whiff of Schadenfreude as Berliners traded stories about which Kurfürstendamm family had followed this route.<sup>46</sup>

Werner Hegemann’s silence about the *Berliner Zimmer* thus is puzzling yet also understandable, for it underscores the distinct orientation that each historian possesses. There is no single story to tell, and what each writer of history considers evident or important will be distinct as well. The tenacity of the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition reveals a new dimension to history of the Kurfürstendamm that anchors its luxurious residences to the bourgeois *Grossbürgertum* identity, while also acknowledging the irony that working-class tenements of Berlin shared the same feature. The bourgeois, *Mietshaus* origin of the *Berliner Zimmer* tradition expanded along a broad swath of the socioeconomic spectrum, affecting how the city’s inhabitants—even those fortunate enough to live along what was once Berlin’s street of dreams, the Kurfürstendamm—moved within their homes.

## Notes

1. Historiography of the avenue includes three major works. The most complete study of the avenue is by Karl-Heinz Metzger and Ulrich Dunker, who examine the architectural, social, commercial, and cultural history of the boulevard from its conception to the present day; however, they focus more on the circles of Berlin society that congregated on the Kurfürstendamm. Klaus Wiek’s comparison, contrasting the Kurfürstendamm with the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, is a topographical study that examines prewar and postwar developments. It contains a useful map that denotes building lots, invaluable in reconstructing what the Kurfürstendamm was like before the Second World War. Finally, Regina Stürickow’s book provides a strong cultural background concerning the Kurfürstendamm, although her emphasis is on the interwar years. None of these three studies examines the etiology of the Kurfürstendamm apartment house. Karl-Heinz Metzger and Ulrich Dunker, *Der Kurfürstendamm: Leben und Mythos des Boulevards in 100 Jahren deutscher Geschichte* (Berlin: Knopka, 1986); Klaus D Wiek, *Kurfürstendamm und Champs-Élysées: Geographischer Vergleich zweier Weltstraßen-Gebiete* (Berlin: Verlag von Dietrich Reimerin, 1967); Regina Stürickow, *Der Kurfürstendamm: Geschichte einer Straße* (Berlin: Arani-Verlag GmbH, 1995).
2. Metzger and Dunker, *Der Kurfürstendamm*, 34.
3. Dietrich Worbs, “The Berlin Mietskasernen und Its Reforms,” in *Berlin-New York, Like and Unlike: Essays on Architecture and Art from 1870 to the Present*, ed. Josef Paul Kleihues and Christina Rathgeber (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 145.
4. Metzger and Dunker, *Der Kurfürstendamm*, 10.
5. Metzger and Dunker mention this shift: “By 1890, the time of the villa on the Kurfürstendamm was over. The few villas that had been standing were either torn down or had apartment buildings built in their adjacent large gardens.” *Ibid.*, 30.
6. Metzger and Dunker preface this comment by stating that “the inner city of Berlin was required to overtake increasing city functions. The new governmental bureaucracy, along with building for business, dislodged dwellers, so that the west became where to go.” *Ibid.*, 26. Laurenz Demps documents this population displacement in his study of another Berlin street, the

Wilhelmstrasse. Laurenz Demps, *Berlin-Wilhelmstrasse: Eine Topographie preussisch-deutscher Macht* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996).

7. Egon Jameson, *Berlin so wie es war* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994), 110.

8. Hartwig Schmidt examined this in his study *Das Tiergartenviertel. Baugeschichte eines Berliner Villenviertels. Teil 1: 1790–1870* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1981).

9. Alexander Reissner, *Berlin 1675–1945: The Rise and Fall of a Metropolis* (London: Oswald Wolff Ltd., 1984), 96.

10. Ibid.

11. Siegfried Ascher, *Die Wohnungsmieten in Berlin von 1880–1910* (Berlin, 1918), quoted in H. J. Teuteberg and C. Wischermann, *Wohnalltag in Deutschland 1850–1914* (Münster: F. Copenrath, 1985), 141.

12. Johann Friedrich Geist and Klaus Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus, Bd. 2 1862–1945* (Munich: Prestel, 1984), 469–70.

13. Studies of the Berlin *Mietshaus* revolve around two major works: Walter Hegemann's *Das Steinerne Berlin* (The Berlin of Stone) from 1930, and Geist and Kürvers' monumental three-volume set from the 1980s, *Das Berliner Mietshaus*. These are excellent sources for general background about the housing problems of Berlin, and some information about the Kurfürstendamm apartment building can be gleaned from them. Geist and Kürvers present a staggering array of topics, charts, photographs, and documents about the *Mietshäuser* of Berlin. Their subjects include politics, technology, materials, demographics, and design. Walter Hegemann's book is considered to be the classic polemic against the legacy of the overcrowded, unsanitary housing that the working-class *Mietshaus* exemplified. Walter Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin: Geschichte der Grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* rpt., 4th ed. (Wiesbaden: Friedrich Vieweg & Sohn Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988).

14. In his survey of Berlin building history, Günter Peters follows the rise of this mode of construction. In 1800, 6,906 front- or street-facing buildings constituted Berlin's housing stock, principally family houses. Whatever side or rear buildings existed were independent units that had been constructed at intervals, and were positioned in haphazard arrangements within a typical building lot. By 1840, the number of front buildings increased to 7,994 but the number of rear buildings jumped to 7,813. By 1871, these figures reached 13,951 and 9,886, respectively. The use of rear and side buildings had become formalized into a system of side wings and cross buildings, all part of concentrated building campaigns. Nicholas Bullock and James Read confirm this trend: "While earlier developments had normally been limited to a front or 'street' block alone, those constructed from the 1840s onwards consisted of side and back buildings as well so that the site was used very much more intensively with four-storey buildings." Günter Peters, *Kleine Berliner Baugeschichte: Von der Stadtgründung bis zur Bundeshauptstadt* (Berlin: Stapp Verlag, 1995), 114; Nicholas Bullock and James Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France 1840–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22.

15. *Mietshäuser* were constructed to house a variety of socioeconomic groups, from the working class to the bourgeoisie, and this entailed some variation in courtyard dimensions, landscaping, plot depth, and the number of cross-buildings. In districts such as Kreuzberg and Wedding, the innermost courtyards of *Mietshäuser* were often filled with illegal *Werkstätte* (workshops). These shacks housed a variety of small manufacturing businesses. Thousands of these workshops supplied Berlin's clothing and machine-parts industries, both the largest of their kind on the Continent.

16. Erika Schachinger, *Alte Wohnhäuser in Berlin. Ein Rundgang durch die Innenstadt*. (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1969), 20–21.

17. Ibid., 47.

18. Gerhard Masur, *Das Ungewisse Herz: Berichte aus Berlin—über die Suche nach dem Freien* (Holyoke, Massachusetts: Blenheim Publishing House, 1978), 6.

19. Otto Sarrazin and Oskar Hofsfeld, "Berliner Miethäuser," *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 13, no. 21 (1893), 218.

20. Vienna, with its Ringstrasse development preceding that of the Kurfürstendamm by a generation, might initially appear to be a logical alternative. However, blocks along the Ringstrasse were almost square in shape, different from Berlin's massive rectangular blocks with their narrow, deep lots. This influenced plan design: due to block size and shape, a single Ringstrasse building often filled an entire block, thus eliminating many restrictions regarding internal space arrangement. The authoritative source regarding Ringstrasse architecture is the monumental multivolume series *Die Wiener Ringstrasse Bild einer Epoche: Die Erweiterung der inneren Stadt Wien unter Kaiser Franz Joseph*; see vol. 7, by Klaus Eggert, *Der Wohnbau der Wiener Ringstrasse in Historismus 1855–1896* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972). Although Eggert focuses upon the apartment house, he also examines hotels and private palaces. The term *Mietshaus*, which etymologically can be used to describe any multifamily rental building, is not used when discussing Viennese apartments. *Mietshaus* emphasizes a person's economic status: *Mieter*, or renter. In Vienna, however, the older, pre-industrial term *Wohnhaus* (dwelling) is used to describe *Grossbürgertum* apartments; *Wohnhaus* stresses residing, and can refer to a private home as well as a multifamily dwelling. In addition to this difference in semantics, *Grossbürgertum* apartments in Vienna were derived from the urban *Palais* form, as Klaus Eggert's analysis demonstrates. These factors strongly suggest that a comparison between Berlin and Vienna apartment plans would be of limited relevance to this essay.

21. Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre, *L'Invention de l'habitation moderne: Paris 1880–1914* (Paris: Editions Hazan et Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1995).

22. Michelle Perrot, "Private Spaces," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 4, *From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, ed. Michelle Perrot, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 367.

23. Eleb and Debarre, *L'invention d'habitation moderne*, 262.

24. Ibid., 294.

25. Ibid., 309. An extensive search to discover this architect's first name has proven fruitless: even records within the Ministère de la Culture list the architect merely as "E. Willaey."

26. The terms *Zimmer* and *Saal*, as in *Speisezimmer* and *Speisesaal*, appear to have been used to make a subtle distinction in Bischoff and Witt's plan. A *Saal* usually designated a hall of ceremonial importance, such as rooms in a palace: *Thronsaal* (throne room), *Tanzsaal* (ballroom), and *Marmorsaal* (marble hall); *Zimmer* would never have been applied to such honorific spaces. In 110 Kurfürstendamm, the dining room of the front apartment is labeled a *Speisesaal*, whereas that of the side apartment is termed a *Speisezimmer*. Both rooms are of the same size and prominence within their respective residences, so a difference in ceremonial importance is not the issue. Rather, I suspect that Bischoff and Witt employed the use of *Speisesaal* to signal that this particular residence fronted the Kurfürstendamm, and therefore was of higher value than its neighbor across the hall.

27. Geist and Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, 151.

28. Ibid., 149–50.

29. Hegemann, who studied at universities in Philadelphia, Paris, Berlin, and Munich, was one of the early twentieth century's most influential urbanists, working in both Germany and America. His extensive knowledge of cities in both nations made him singularly qualified among his peers to assess urban conditions in both nations. This duality resulted in two classic books: *The American Vitruvius: An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* of 1922, coauthored with Elbert Peets, and *Das steinerne Berlin: Geschichte der grössten Mietkasernenstadt der Welt* of 1930.

30. Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin*, 209.

31. Ibid., 211–13.

32. Geist and Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietshaus*, 231.

33. Section 1, §2, Baupolizeiordnung für den Stadtkreis Berlin vom 15.

August 1987, rpt. in *Die Baupolizeiordnungen für Berlin und seine Vororte*, compiled by A. Rößler, 2nd ed. (Berlin: U. W. Hann, 1908), 3.

34. Ibid. Section 3, §37, Baupolizeiordnung für den Stadtkreis Berlin vom 15. August 1987.

35. Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin*, 222, 248.

36. A Kurfürstendamm building was designed to last 200 years, whereas a Mietskaserne of the lowest category had a designated lifespan of ninety years, with respective maintenance costs of 0.4 percent versus 1.2 percent. "The worse the building class, the higher are the maintenance costs." Giest and Kürvers, *Das Berliner Mietsbaus*, 258.

37. Rudolf Martin, *Das Jahrbuch der Millionäre Deutschlands* (Berlin: Martin Verlag, 1911–14), 19 vols.

38. Delores L. Augustine focuses exclusively upon this issue in her study of the highest levels of the Grossbürgertum. Delores L. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus: Wealth and High Society in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, Ltd., 1994), 244–45.

39. Thomas Nipperdy, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866–1918. Band 1. Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1998), 418.

40. The use of the term "propertied" regarding this traditional division of the Bürgertum refers more to the aspect of small business ownership, as opposed to land ownership.

41. David Blackbourn, "The German Bourgeoisie: An Introduction," in *The German Bourgeoisie: Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (New York: Routledge, 1993), 6.

42. The first German university to accept women as regular students was in Baden in 1899. Prussian universities did not follow suit until 1908. Delores Augustine notes that university education was "not in keeping with one's class" regarding Grossbürgertum women, leaving the majority of the 1,132 German female university students in 1909 to come from the middle ranks of the bourgeoisie. Still, she notes that two daughters of Grossbürgertum families pursued a university education to become physicians. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus*, 119.

43. Karl Scheffler, *Berlin: Ein Stadtschicksal* (Berlin: Erich Reiss Verlag, 1910), 188–90.

44. Hegemann, *Das Steinerne Berlin*, 275.

45. Stürickow, *Der Kurfürstendamm*, 71.

46. An indication of the prevalence of dividing *Berliner Zimmers* during the 1920s is provided by some of the personal reminiscences that Jörg Plath gathered from Berliners in his compilation of tales about the room. Jörg Plath, *Mein Berliner Zimmer* (Berlin: Nicolai Verlag, 1997).