

Country House Garden of Dr. Max Fraenkel

>> *Deutsch*

Situated in the attractive landscape by the Havel between Berlin and Potsdam, in the late nineteenth century the Landhausbewegung (country house movement; inspired by the English Arts & Crafts movement) also reached Kladow. Along the steep riverbank imposing villas and country houses with high-quality landscaped gardens were built for affluent Berliners.

In the course of this development, in 1923/24 bank director Dr. Max Fraenkel purchased a plot of land on the street Am Schwemmhorn. The previous owner Otto Lüdicke had bought the old brickworks that had formerly operated there, erected a modest country house, and laid out a formal garden with terraces.

Fraenkel first contacted his neighbour, the architect Albert Geßner, who designed for him an impressive entrance area with a garage. Later, Fraenkel commissioned Erwin Barth, landscape architect, university professor, and Greater Berlin city gardens director, to redesign the garden and its subsequent extension. Barth used the topographical features of the steeply sloping terrain to great effect and created a garden of terraces with a variety of themes and functions. Starting from the country house, he augmented the garden theme, which was based on axial structures, by adding a kitchen garden with fruit trees above the area of herbaceous borders and the terrace with roses.

Barth resolved the elevation by building dry stone walls and flights of steps made of Rüdersdorf limestone and red Weser sandstone. Other architectural elements added by Barth were a thatched henhouse and the glasshouse that covered the stables and riding arena. On the bank of the Havel stood a boathouse.

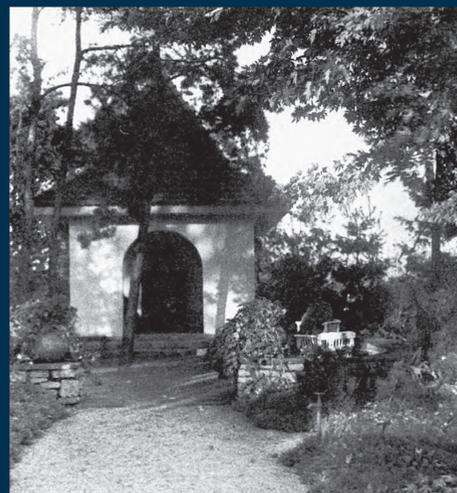
On the extension to the property on its northern side Barth integrated the existing



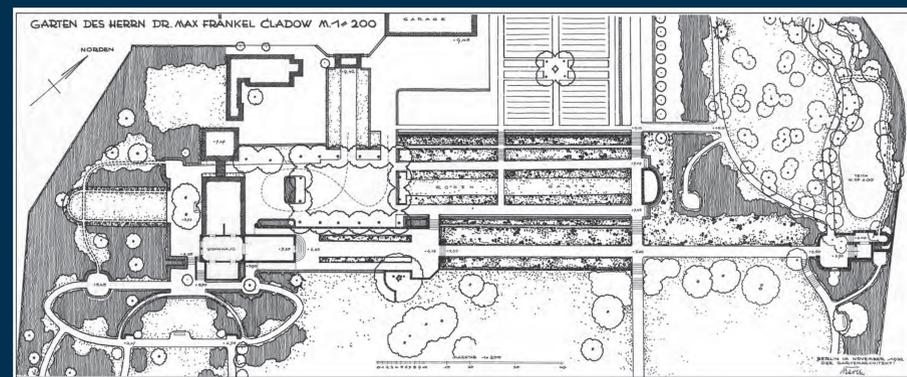
View from the Havel of the country house, the lake wall of Rüdersdorf limestone, and landing stage and boathouse, early 20th century (archive: Kladower Forum e.V.)



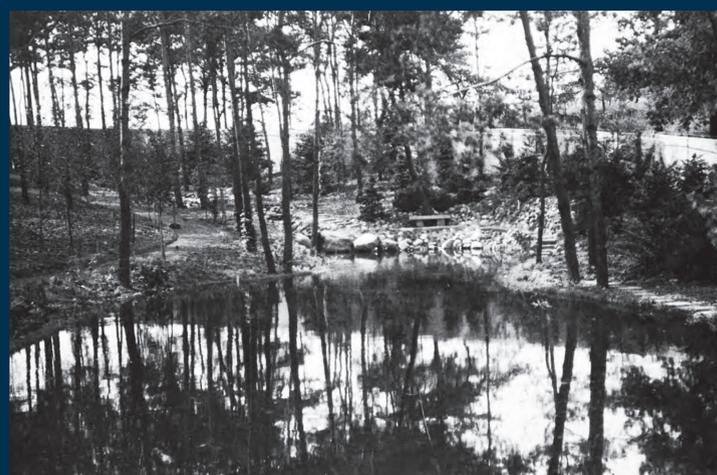
View from the former country house of the summer house obstructed by weekend houses. Photo: Werkstatt Zwo, 1993



The summer house as the end point of the visual axis from the country house. Photo: E. Barth, 1930



Plans by Erwin Barth for the middle central section of the garden, 1932 (TU Berlin Architecture Museum, Inv. No. 40868)



Reflecting pool with seating in the extended area of the garden. Photo: E. Barth, ca. 1930



The desolate summer house in the extended area of the garden. Photo: Werkstatt Zwo, 1993

woodland of pines and oaks into the design and created four ponds on different levels connected by streams. They flowed into a reflecting pool which formed the end point in the transverse axis to the country house of the garden pavilion. In the meadow Barth created walkways and marked them off from the Havel with a path along the bank, from where there are stunning views of the Pfaueninsel (Peacock Island) and the region of the Havel included in Peter Joseph Lenné's enhancement plan.

In 1933 Max Fraenkel, who was Jewish, fled to Paris, and Erwin Barth died the same year, so the development of the garden came to a sudden end. After 1945 the property was taken over by the Federal State of Berlin. Border inspection post, parcelling out, and leasing for sport fishing and to weekenders destroyed the complex and for a long time it was forgotten.

In 1992 the last country house garden created by Erwin Barth became a protected monument and its reconstruction began with restoration of the summer house and excavation of the ponds. From 1999 the walls, steps, and paths were repaired, the special gardens and the henhouse were restored, and extensive new plantings were undertaken.

Together with Albert Geßner's "Guckegönne" summer villa and the Villa Mendelsohn, the country house garden of Dr. Fraenkel represents a valuable example of urban planning, architecture, and garden design of the Berlin Landhaus movement in Kladow.

Werkstatt Zwo: Documentation and concept for the restoration of Dr. Max Fraenkel's country house garden, commissioned by the Senate Administration for Urban Development and Protection of the Environment III — Historic Garden Conservation, Berlin, 1992.

Legal Notice

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