

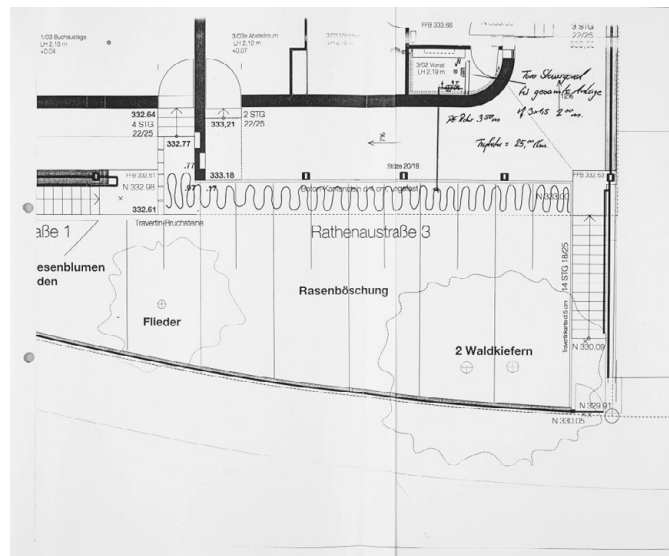


BARBERRY BUREAUCRACY

Paperwork⁴

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Drawing of the garden irrigation system from the maintenance manual of Weissenhofmuseum in Haus Le Corbusier. Detail from the ground floor plan of House 3. Photograph by Mareen Wrobel. © ARCHITEKTUR 109, Stuttgart; © Fondation Le Corbusier/ADAGP, Paris [2021]; © ADAGP, Paris [2021].

Yarrow and barberry, sage and lavender, lilies and mint. When Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret’s *Maisons de la Weissenhofsiedlung* opened in 1927, the iconic terrace was already abloom, uniting the joined homes in a fragrant arrangement of Swabian flora. Over eighty years later, as the storeyed houses were undergoing renovation, the garden was planted once more, the same perennials and herbs painstakingly identified and sown. The reconstruction would not stop shy of horticultural exactitude. And yet, even as the two houses—witnesses to debates on style under national socialism, aerial bombing, neglect, and the myriad additions, subtractions, and modifications of daily use—were rebuilt to replicate their original construction, fidelity was only skin deep. An elaborate drip irrigation system, timed and automated, tended the plants. This document is a plan of that drip irrigation system, found in the maintenance manual of Weissenhofmuseum im Haus Le Corbusier, the small museum that now operates in the house. Compiled by the museum’s director and the renovation architects, the manual is an ad hoc collation of product specifications and maintenance instructions for the house—including the garden.

But how does barberry become part of bureaucracy? As part of The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier—seventeen Le Corbusier project sites around the globe that have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List—the Weissenhofmuseum was a forerunner in establishing the “baselines” that guide

the property as a whole and inform UNESCO's approach to preserving modern architecture in general. Happenstance decisions turn into "best practices"; authenticity becomes a thing to be managed. This is the work of UNESCO: creating standing conferences and committees, via seemingly endless airmiles and emails, to decide what, and where, counts as, and for, preservation. And while a drawing like this might not be found in the official archives of UNESCO, it offers a glimpse into its institutional logic, one predicated on the impossible return to an original lily.

About the authors

Caitlin Blanchfield and Farzin Lotfi-Jam are an architectural historian and an architect, both based in New York City. Their book *Modern Management Methods: Architecture, Historical Value, and the Electromagnetic Image* was published by Columbia University Press in 2019, and their exhibition *Modern Management Methods* was shown as part of the inaugural Open Call programming at The Shed in New York in 2019.