

3 CULTIVATED INTERIORS

The 1935 Renovation of the Prince Regent Square Apartment

Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 film *Triumph of the Will* glorified Adolf Hitler as the titanic leader of a great and unified nation. Whether speaking to rapt audiences from the podium, saluting SA and SS troops in the medieval streets of Nuremburg, or paying tribute to fallen soldiers at a war memorial, Hitler displayed the mastery and gravitas of a statesman. This highly ideological documentary of the Nazi party's 1934 Nuremburg rally helped to lift the stain of the brutal Röhm putsch that had occurred just weeks earlier, and which had seemed to confirm in the world's eyes Hitler's blood lust and the chaos of political life in Germany.¹ But with the approach of the 1936 Olympic Games, which Hitler hoped would be an international public relations victory for his regime, and as he prepared to enter a new phase of diplomatic negotiations for expanded territorial claims, the man with a thousand faces determined to remodel his image once more in order to secure his next round of political goals, which required the respect and trust of foreign nations. Architecture would play an important role in this makeover and not only in its most public and monumental forms, such as in the Nuremburg rally grounds designed by Albert Speer. On a diplomatic level, the renovations and expansions of the Old Chancellery spoke of a confident new style

in the government district. And even in the ostensibly private sphere of Hitler's home life, changes signaled a self-possessed maturation.

In 1935, the Atelier Troost renovated and redecorated Hitler's spacious Prince Regent Square apartment in Munich at the extravagant cost of 120,000 Reichsmarks—or more than ten times the average income earned by a doctor in Germany that year.² Unlike the Chancellery, Hitler paid for the work personally, from the account his publisher maintained for him, which by then overflowed with royalties from *Mein Kampf*. The high price tag bought him an apartment in which he felt confident to host world leaders such as Neville Chamberlain and Benito Mussolini. The commission to the Atelier Troost testifies to Hitler's satisfaction with their work at the Chancellery and to his trust in their ability to give the right architectural form to his domestic needs and identity. Because this was the most private of his residences, Gerdy Troost and Leonhard Gall could work on a different, more intimate scale than at either the Chancellery or the Berghof. Nonetheless, they found other ways to communicate that this was no ordinary home.

The state of the apartment before the Atelier Troost began their work is not entirely clear. From 1929 until the renovation, the residence appears to have been occupied by a group of adults: Hitler, his niece Geli Raubal (until her death in 1931), and two couples. The first couple, Erich and Maria Reichert, had been Hitler's landlords for nine years on Thiersch Street, where he had lived with them and their daughter. Antonie Reichert would have been sixteen at the time of her parents' move to Prince Regent Square, but there is no indication that she came with them. Erich Reichert identified himself as a businessman, although his finances apparently required taking in a lodger.³ Hitler described the Thiersch Street apartment they had shared as having four to five rooms.⁴ Presumably, when the couple moved, they brought their furniture with them.

The other couple, recent newlyweds Georg and Anni Winter, also moved in with Hitler.⁵ Georg Winter had worked as a valet for General Franz Ritter von Epp, through whom he had met Hitler. In October 1929, the thirty-three-year-old Winter was hired as a packer at Eher Verlag (Hitler's publisher), and also helped occasionally in the apartment, including serving at dinner parties. Anni Winter, Georg Winter's twenty-four year old bride, became Hitler's cook and house manager.⁶ In later testimony before a denazification tribunal, Winter successfully argued that Hitler had asked him to join the SS in 1930 in order to wear the uniform when

serving at table or otherwise helping his wife with official functions and thus make a suitable impression on party bigwigs. Although he did not serve in the SS, promotions in rank followed, resulting in an ever more imposing appearance. His employer's vanity about livery, Winter claimed, cost him a long and harsh internment at the war's end, which he barely survived.⁷

It is not known whether the Winters brought their own furniture when they moved to 16 Prince Regent Square. Hitler himself seems to have had very little. In a 1948 interview, Anni Winter stated that he had brought only his bedroom furniture from Thiersch Street and then began to add new things.⁸ Gerdy Troost later recalled that the apartment had been eclectically furnished, mostly by Hitler's friends. In 1929, Hitler's wealthy admirer Elsa Bruckmann had purchased some furniture for the apartment from the royal cabinet maker, Moritz Ballin. Eye witnesses later claimed that at this time Hitler also acquired a few cherished pieces by Paul Troost from the Munich Vereinigte Werkstätte.⁹ On the whole, however, Anni Winter remembers the apartment being sparsely furnished before the 1935 renovation.

How the furniture was arranged and who lived in what rooms cannot be determined, with the possible exception of Geli Raubal. After the war, Winter reported that before the 1935 renovation, she, her husband, and Hitler occupied one wing of the apartment, and Raubal and the Reicherts the other. When Raubal died, according to Winter and other witnesses, Hitler closed off her room and preserved it unchanged as a sort of shrine.¹⁰ If this is true, the one room in the apartment conspicuously not renovated in 1935—the room beside the library—can be assumed to have been hers (fig. 15). This is also the room identified as belonging to her by Hitler's secretary, Traudl Junge.¹¹ Moreover, its location facing Prince Regent Square matches the description given by the police who investigated her death.¹² Hitler's bedroom after the renovation, with its own private bathroom, was located at the far end of the opposite wing, and it seems likely that he had occupied this same room before 1935. If this is the case, then Hitler and his niece did not live adjacent to one another, as some have speculated, seeing in this presumed spatial proximity evidence of other intimacies. Indeed, the door that directly connected Hitler's room (via the bathroom) to its neighbor and that has contributed to rumors of clandestine encounters did not exist before the renovation. This neighboring room, erroneously identified as belonging to Raubal, had previously been a small maid's chamber and was expanded into a comfortable guest room only in 1935.

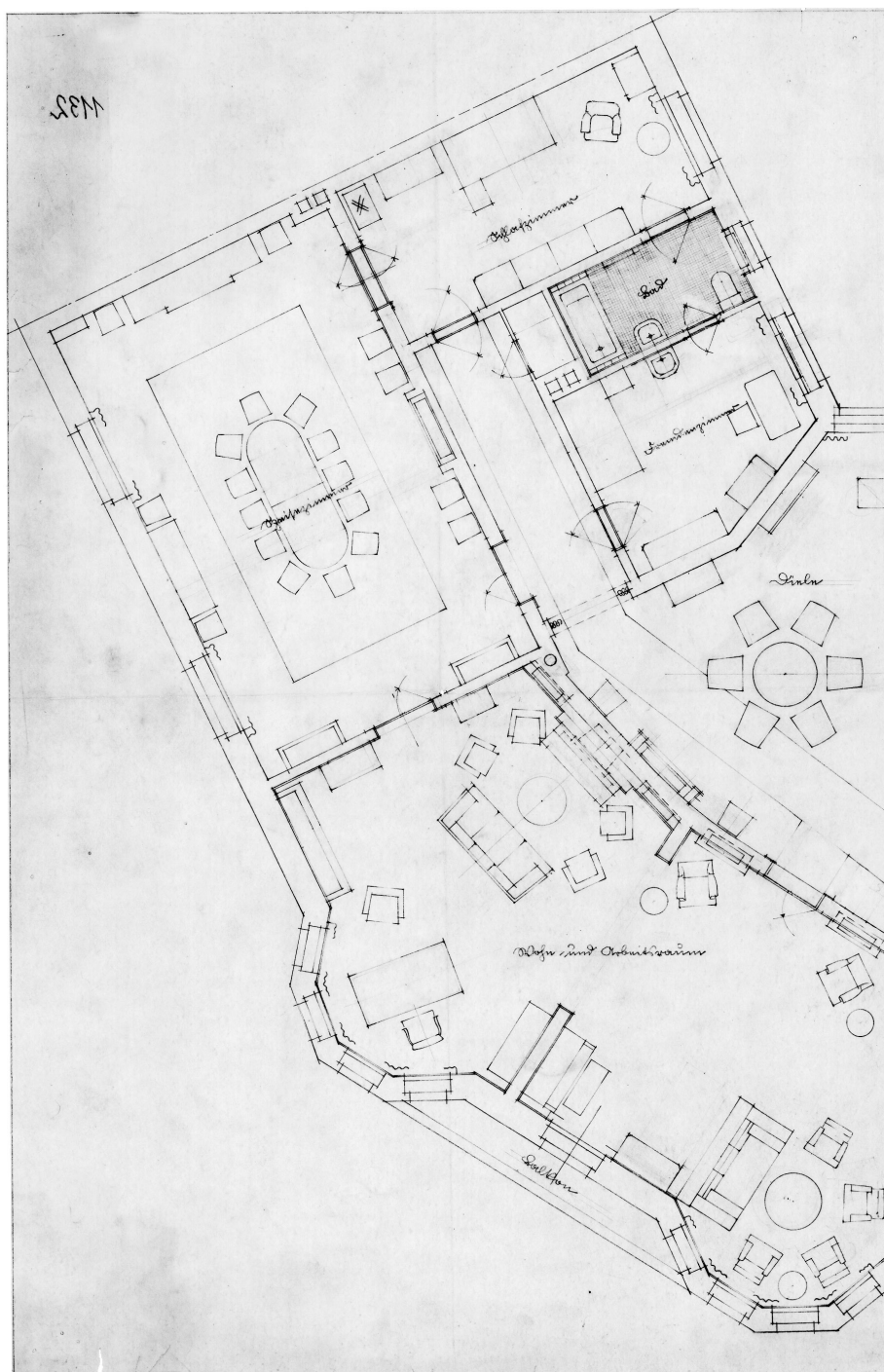


Fig. 15. Undated floor plan of Hitler's apartment on 16 Prince Regent Square in Munich after the 1935 renovation by the Atelier Troost.

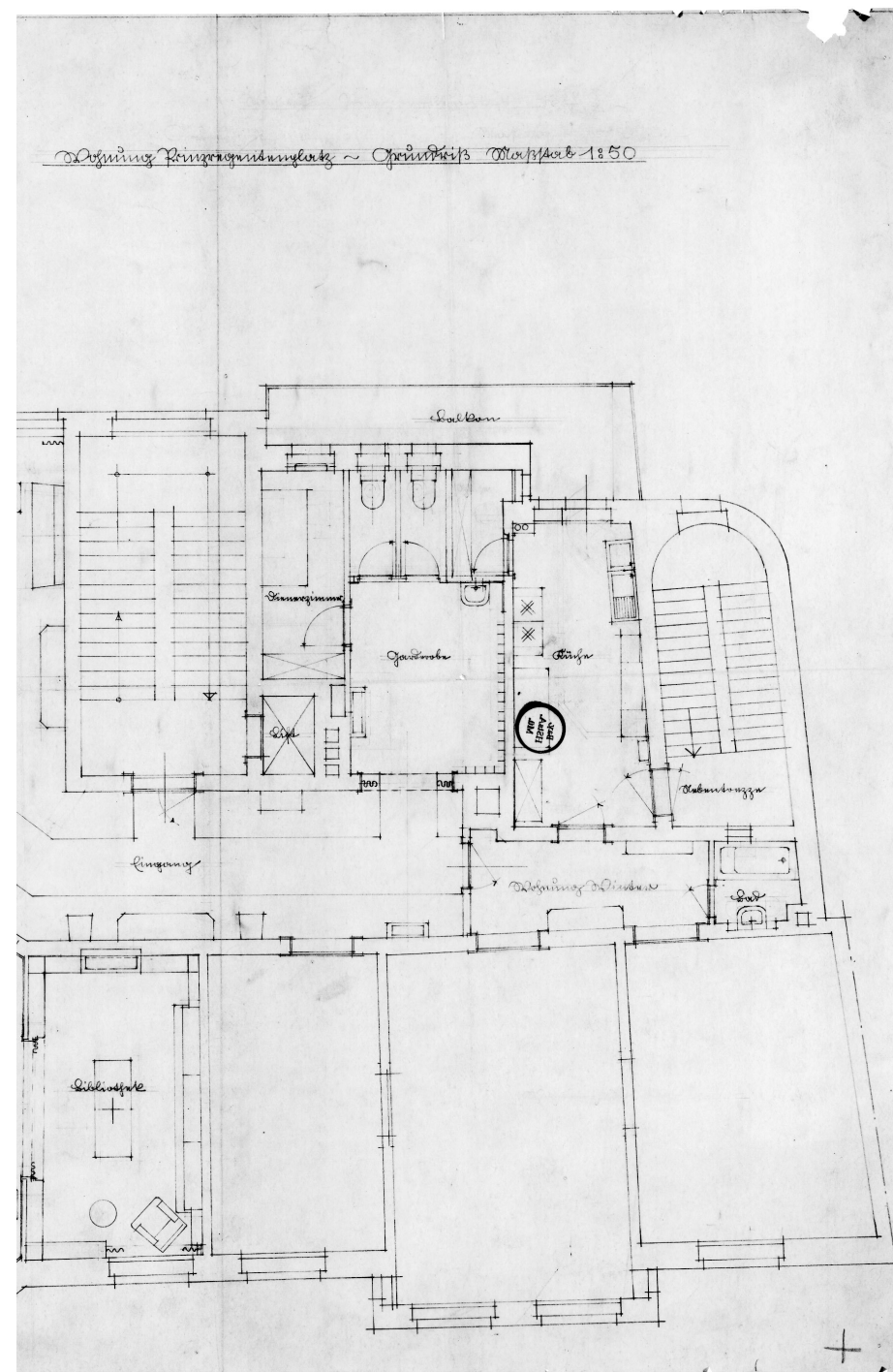
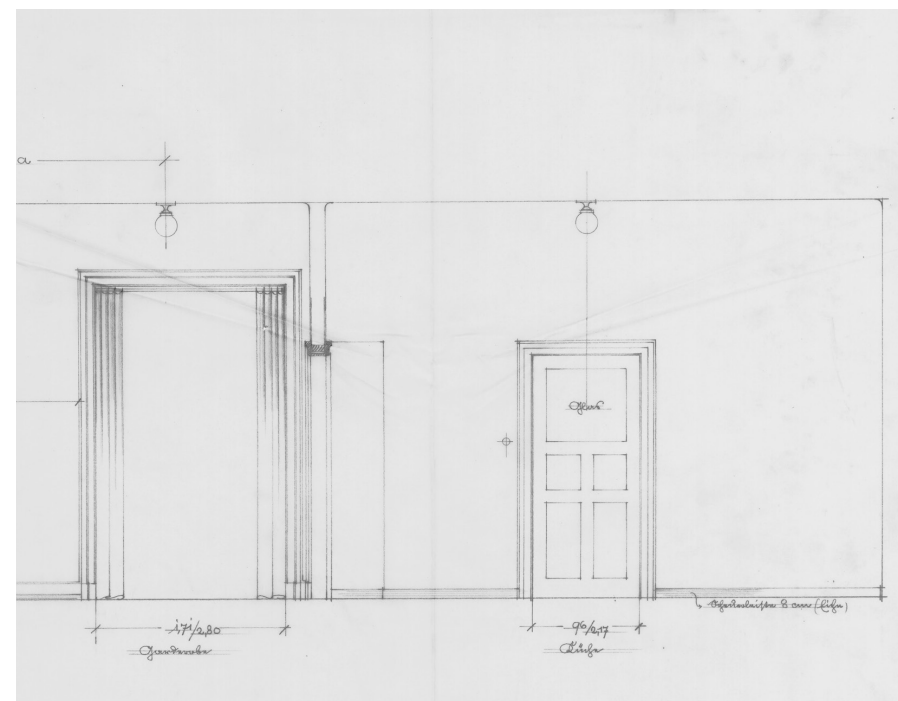
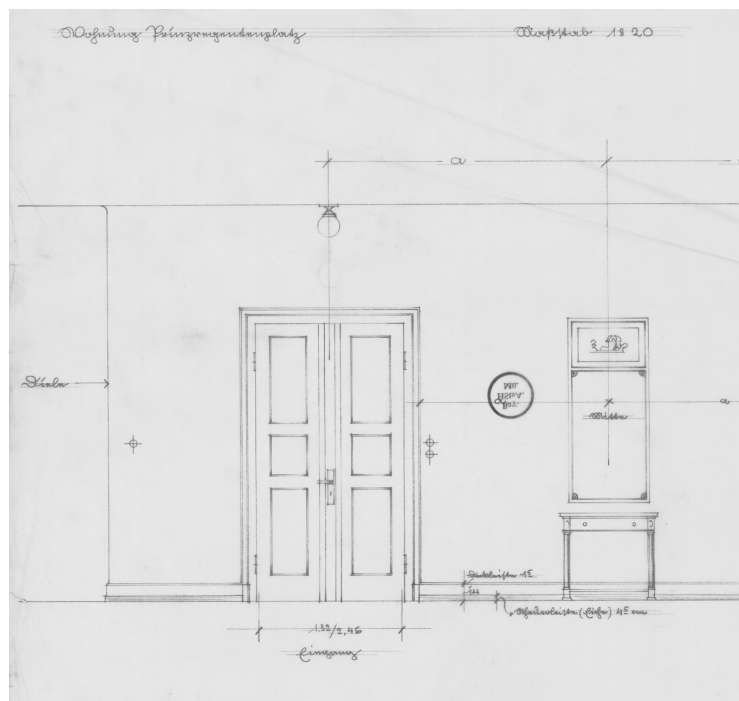




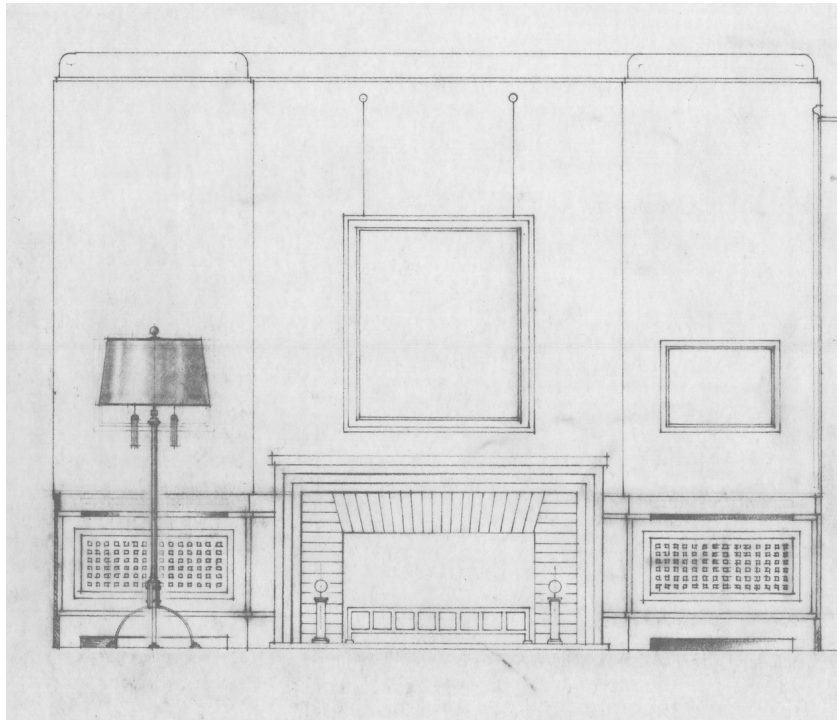
Fig. 16. Contemporary view of the foyer of the first-floor apartment, 16 Prince Regent Square in Munich, showing original Jugendstil decoration that also existed in Hitler's apartment before the renovation.

Fig. 17. Atelier Troost, elevation drawing of the hallway in Hitler's Munich apartment showing the main entrance (left), wardrobe (middle), and kitchen (right), c. 1935.



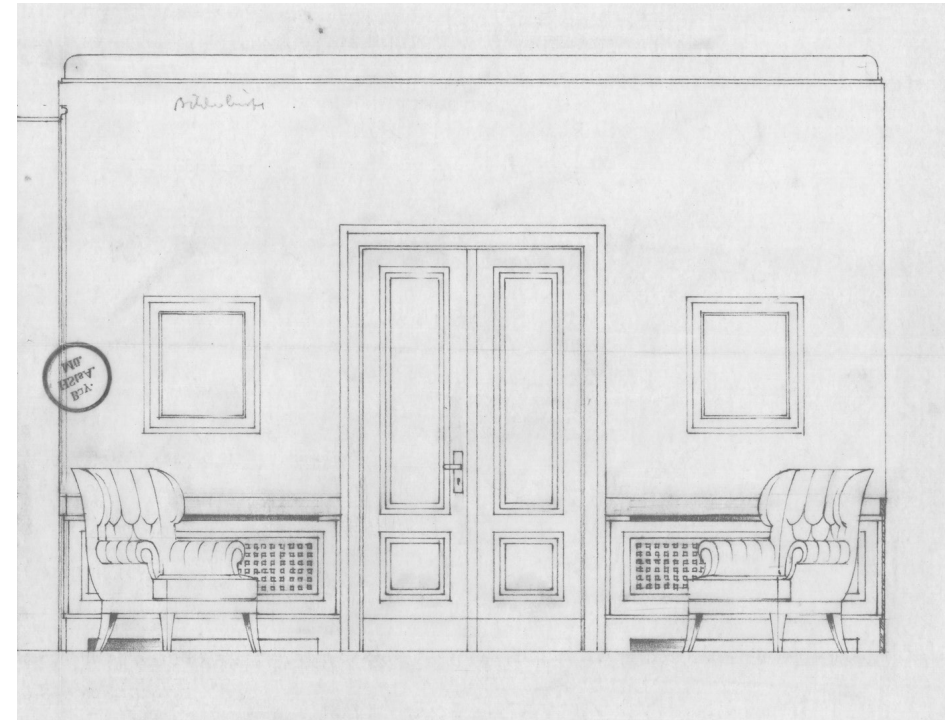
In more general terms, the apartment's appearance prior to the renovation can be reconstructed on the basis of architectural plans and of other floors in the building whose original interiors have been preserved. When he designed the building in 1907–08, the architect Franz Popp employed the Jugendstil forms that were then popular in Munich. Curvilinear wooden moldings as well as rounded arches above doorways gave the apartments an elegant, but also historical feel (fig. 16). Hitler did not like Jugendstil, according to Gerdy Troost, which he considered “too extreme.”¹³ In the 1935 renovation, all such Jugendstil decoration was eliminated from the apartment and replaced with the starkly plain rectilinear forms characteristic of the interiors of Paul Troost's party buildings on Königsplatz and House of German Art (fig. 17). The removal or reduction of walls also increased the impression of a bright, open interior (see figs. 2, 15). The result as it is experienced today is strikingly modern and spare, although the relative emptiness of the apartment, now used for offices, contributes to this effect. When Lee Miller arrived here in the final days of the war, having hours earlier witnessed the starving and dead in Dachau concentration camp, and photographed the interiors of Hitler's home, she avoided conveying any of that sense of light and

Fig. 18. Atelier Troost, elevation drawing of the interior walls of Hitler's renovated living room in his 16 Prince Regent Square apartment, showing the new fireplace (across from Hitler's desk) and the double door leading into the foyer, c. 1935.



modernity, which must have seemed impossibly at odds with what she had just experienced. These were not, in any case, glossy photographs for an architecture magazine spread, but images of American soldiers occupying a dictator's lair. Most of the images seem to have been taken at night or with the curtains drawn. In some instances, she may have rearranged objects to heighten the sense of a claustrophobic jumble (such as in Hitler's bedroom), even though her text described the apartment as "quite spacious" and "very simply laid out." The resulting dark, cramped interiors published in the July 1945 issue of *Vogue* magazine thus do not prepare one for the airy interiors encountered in the apartment today.¹⁴

Unfortunately, almost no other photographs exist of the apartment. In 1935, in response to a request by the magazine *Die Neue Linie*, Joseph Goebbels expressly forbid taking pictures of Hitler's domestic spaces in the Old Chancellery (although official and public areas were permissible).¹⁵ Goebbels did not give a reason for his decision, but it reveals that even for the much photographed Führer, some spaces were off limits. Nonetheless,



numerous surviving drawings and plans by the Atelier Troost document the transformation. A floor plan of the apartment indicating the proposed changes, signed on behalf of Gall as the architect and dated January 1935, was submitted to local building authorities in early February.¹⁶ Most of the work appears to have been carried out between February and mid-April 1935.¹⁷ Because of the extent of the renovation, the apartment's occupants moved out; when it was completed, only Hitler and the Winters returned. On April 29, Hitler proudly showed off his new home by inviting three influential female admirers—Unity Mitford, the Duchess of Brunswick (the daughter of Emperor Wilhelm II), and Winifred Wagner—to dinner.¹⁸

Similar to the work undertaken at the Chancellery, although on a smaller scale, the renovation opened up the residence's main living spaces and reorganized its layout to consolidate functions (see figs. 2, 15). Entering the apartment and turning right, one crossed the wedge-shaped foyer and came to what had been a maid's room and separate hall toilet. The toilet



Fig. 19. Neville Chamberlain, Hitler, and Paul Schmidt (Hitler's interpreter) in Hitler's Munich apartment, sitting in the living room niche near the library. Chamberlain visited on September 30, 1938, after the signing of the Munich Accord. Hitler's book and art collections are prominently displayed in this published photograph, emphasizing how his domestic settings served to convey the image of a man of culture rather than a warmonger.

was removed in order to expand the small room, which was then connected to a bathroom that was shared with Hitler's bedroom. Eva Braun may have used this room on overnight stays.¹⁹ Across from Hitler's bedroom, on the south-eastern end of the apartment, had been a square room and, adjacent to it, a narrower room. The wall between them was removed to create a large dining room with a marble mantelpiece (which may have been decorative or covered a radiator) and a table that could seat twelve. From the dining room one entered the largest space of the apartment, with two sets of bay windows. The bay closest to the dining room contained Hitler's study, across from which was a seating area and a newly installed fireplace (fig. 18). The other bay contained a sitting alcove, beside which a wall had been removed to join it to a new library (fig. 19 and see plate 12). Although the space of this living area was more confined than in the Chancellery Reception Hall, the Atelier Troost nonetheless created a sense of an unfolding interior, with one space flowing into another. In their memoirs, Henriette von Schirach and Traudl Junge recalled the appeal of the apart-

ment's large rooms to Hitler. Hitler told Schirach that people needed room to flourish, a comment that would seem innocuous if it did not come from the man who justified genocide on the same grounds.²⁰

This whole section of the apartment was now given over to Hitler, and the western wing, which one entered if one turned left from the foyer, became the service area. The last two rooms in this wing facing the square were made into an apartment for the Winters, consisting of a bedroom, living room, and bathroom. A wall in the hallway directly before their rooms separated their living space from that of Hitler. The kitchen across from their rooms, which served the entire apartment, was expanded and modernized. A maid's room and toilet that had been located beside the pantry in the old kitchen were removed. A preexisting maid's room located within the space of the garderobe (to the left) was slightly expanded.

The Atelier Troost designed much of the apartment's furniture and fittings. The forms tended to be simple, albeit traditional, and ornament minimal. Numerous elements reappear in the later National Socialist buildings on Königsplatz and in the House of German Art, the interiors of which Goll and Gerdy Troost also created. For example, the round coffee table with a dark marble top in the nook near the library, where Hitler received his guests, closely resembles those used in the Führerbau, which housed Hitler's office on the Königsplatz (see fig. 19). The combination of colored marbles used for Hitler's living room fireplace—sand for the mantelpiece and red for the floor in front—recurs in the interior of the Führerbau's grand staircase atrium. Moreover, the grooved linear forms of the mantel (here and in the dining room) resemble the radiator covers in this same atrium and at the House of German Art. The square grid pattern used for the radiator grills in the apartment's living room transforms into the railings of the Führerbau's atrium and outdoor balconies, the latter already sketched out by Paul Troost (see fig. 18). The distinctive door handles, composed of a cube attached to a cylinder, are also found at the Königsplatz buildings and the House of German Art. The dramatic rectangular opening between the library and the living room, framed in dark wood, resembles the striking treatment of doorframes in the Königsplatz buildings and the House of German Art. The Atelier Troost thus developed a versatile decorative style that encompassed both private and public buildings, and monumental and domestic scales. Within a syntax of spare classicism, the Atelier Troost employed a vocabulary of specific forms, colors, and materials that produced a distinctive visual language of power. Whether private or public, the Atelier

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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2. Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Odhams, 1952), 7. On the history of Hitler biographies, see Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler* (New York: Random House, 1998); and John Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

3. Notable exceptions include *Die tödliche Utopie: Bilder, Texte, Dokumente, Daten zum Dritten Reich*, ed. Volker Dahm, Albert A. Feiber, Harmut Mehring, and Horst Möller, 5th ed. (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 2008), 52–187; Rudolf Herz, *Hoffmann & Hitler: Fotografie als Medium des Führer-Mythos* (Munich: Fotomuseum im Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1994), 242–259; and Sonja Günther, *Design der Macht: Möbel für Repräsentanten des “Dritten Reiches”* (Stuttgart: Deutsche, 1992).

4. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 85. On Speer, see Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (New York: Random, 1996).

5. Joseph Goebbels, entry for July 14, 1944, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, part II, vol. 13, ed. Elke Fröhlich (Saur: Munich, 1995), 116.

6. Susan Sonntag, “Fascinating Fascism,” *New York Times Review of Books* 22, no. 1 (1975): 23–30; Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, Fabrice d’Almeida, “Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany: An Introduction,” in Pamela E. Swett,

Corey Ross, Fabrice d’Almeida, eds., *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–15; Hans Dieter Schäfer, “Das gesplante Bewußtsein: Alltagskultur im Dritten Reich,” in *Das gesplante Bewußtsein: Vom Dritten Reich bis zu den langen Fünfziger Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 9–87; Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–10; Bernd Ogan and Wolfgang W. Weiss, eds., *Faszination und Gewalt: Zur politischen Ästhetik des Nationalsozialismus* (Nurnberg: Tümmels, 1992).

1. HITLER SETS UP HOUSE

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2. Adolf Hitler’s “Fragebogen für Wohnungsuchende,” September 13, 1929, Zim 117, Stadtarchiv München; Police Registration Report for Ernst Reichert, PMB R80, Stadtarchiv München; Ernst Hanfstaengl, *Hitler: The Memoir of a Nazi Insider Who Turned Against the Führer* (Arcade: New York, 2011), 47.

3. Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*

- (London: Odhams, 1952), 75.
4. Hanfstaengl, *Hitler*, 47.
 5. Oron James Hale, "Adolf Hitler: Taxpayer," *American Historical Review* 60, no. 4 (1955): 833.
 6. Anton Joachimsthaler, *Hitlers Liste* (Munich: Herbig, 2003), 288–289.
 7. H. R. Trevor-Roper, ed., *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941–1944: His Private Conversations*, trans. Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (New York: Enigma, 2008), 161–168; Albert A. Feiber, "'Filiale von Berlin': Der Obersalzberg im Dritten Reich," in *Die tödliche Utopie: Bilder, Texte, Dokumente, Daten zum Dritten Reich*, ed. Volker Dahm, Albert A. Feiber, Harmut Mehring, and Horst Möller, 5th ed. (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 2008), 60–63. For an analysis of *Mein Kampf*, see Neil Gregor, *How to Read Hitler* (London: Granta, 2005); and Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power*, trans. Herbert Arnold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
 8. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's Table Talk*, 165, 554; Feiber, "'Filiale von Berlin,'" 62; Joachimsthaler, *Hitlers Liste*, 271–276; "Hitlers Stiefschwester und die rituelle Küche," *Prager Tageblatt*, September 27, 1931.
 9. Joachimsthaler, *Hitlers Liste*, 287–290; Hale, "Adolf Hitler," 830–842.
 10. Helmut K. Anheier and Friedhelm Neidhardt, "Soziographische Entwicklung der NSDAP in München 1925 bis 1930," in Richard Bauer, Hans Günther Hockerts, Brigitte Schütz, et. al., eds, *München: "Hauptstadt der Bewegung"* (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 2002), 179–186.
 11. "Police Trace Organisation of Bomb-Throwers: Ringleaders Caught," *Scotsman*, September 12, 1929.
 12. See power of attorney and rental documents for Prinzregentenplatz 16, Zim 117, Stadtarchiv München. The names and professions of the building's occupants are listed under the entry for "Prinzregentenplatz 16" in the *Adressbuch der Stadt München und Umgebung* (Munich: Adressbuchverlag der Industrie-und Handelskammer München, 1929), Stadtarchiv München. On the Bruckmanns and their relationship to Hitler, see Wolfgang Martynkewicz, *Salon Deutschland: Geist und Macht 1900–1945* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2009); and Miriam Käfer, "Hitlers frühe Förderer aus dem Münchner Großbürgertum—das Verlegerehepaar Elsa und Hugo Bruckmann," Marita Krauss, ed., *Rechte Karrieren in München: Von der Weimarer Zeit bis in die Nachkriegsjahre* (Munich: Volk, 2010), 52–79. For an overview of National Socialism in Munich, see David Clay Large, *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich's Road to the Third Reich* (New York: Norton, 1997); and Richard Bauer, Hans Günther Hockerts, Brigitte Schütz, et. al., eds, *München: "Hauptstadt der Bewegung"* (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 2002).
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 14. Martynkewicz, *Salon Deutschland*, 76–77, 409.
 15. Hans Ottomeyer and Alfred Ziffer, *Möbel des Neoklassizismus und der Neuen Sachlichkeit* (Munich: Prestel, 1993), 88–89; Ben Barkow, Raphael Gross, and Michael Lenarz, eds., *Novemberpogrom 1938: Die Augenzeugenberichte der Wiener Library*, London (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer/Suhrkamp, 2008), 482–483.
 16. Hermann Historica Catalog (III), Auction 45, October 17–18, 2003, Lot 6558; Hermann Historica Catalog, Auction 46, May 7–8, 2004, Lot 5575; Hermann Historica Catalog, Auction 59, April 15–16 2010, Lot 7272; "Hitler's Desk and Chair Could Fetch \$1 Million," *Birmingham Post*, September 5, 2006.
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 21. Joachimsthaler, *Hitlers Liste*, 324; "Geliebte Hitlers verübt Selbstmord; Jungsellens und

- Homosexuelle als Naziführer," *Die Fanfare*, October 31, 1931.
22. "Eine rätselhafte Affäre: Selbstmord der Nichte Hitlers," *Münchener Post*, September 21, 1931; Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 108.
 23. "Eine rätselhafte Affäre: Selbstmord der Nichte Hitlers," *Münchener Post*, September 22, 1931.
 24. "Geliebte Hitlers verübt Selbstmord;" Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 46–48, 109–117.
 25. Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 108.
 26. Hans Frank, *Im Angesicht des Galgens* (Neuhaus bei Schliersee: Frank, 1955), 90–91.
 27. Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler*, 39.

2. HOW THE CHANCELLOR LIVES

1. Adolf Hitler, "Die Reichskanzlei," *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* 3 (1939): 277. According to Birgit Schwarz, despite Hitler's complaints about the bad quality of the state-loaned art, many of the paintings borrowed from Berlin museums at the Chancellery were rehung after its renovation. Birgit Schwarz, *Geniewahn: Hitler und die Kunst* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 140.
2. Hitler, "Die Reichskanzlei," 277.
3. Ibid. I have borrowed from the translation in Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 29.
4. Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 29. In their memoirs, both Christa Schroeder and Traudl Junge repeat an anecdote that Hitler told them about the day he visited Hindenburg at the Chancellery to be sworn in as chancellor. As he entered the Congress Hall, where the ceremony was to be performed, he claims that Hindenburg warned him to "Keep to the walls, Herr Hitler, the floor won't last much longer." It is important to keep in mind that the source for this story is Hitler, who was committed to the narrative of decay. See Christa Schroeder, *He Was My Chief*, trans. Geoffrey Brooks (London: Frontline, 2009), 19; and, Traudl Junge, *Until the Final Hour*, ed. Melissa Müller, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Arcade, 2004), 149.
5. Staatssekretär der Reichskanzlei [Hermann Pünder], ed., *Zur Geschichte des Reichskanzlerpalais und der Reichskanzlei* (Berlin: Zentralverlag, 1928), 67–72.
6. Hitler is often credited (as in the Schroeder and Junge memoirs, see note 4) with having rescued the historic Congress Hall by ordering the replacement of its rotted timber floor with a new steel-girder construction. Arnold convincingly argues on the basis of archival records that the work was done to allow the removal of a weight-bearing wall in the Reception Hall and four columns in the foyer directly below the Congress Hall. Dietmar Arnold with Reiner Janick, *Neue Reichskanzlei und "Führerbunker": Legenden und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin: Links, 2009), 55–56, 172n36. On the 1926 renovations, see also Laurenz Demps, *Berlin-Wilhelmstrasse: Eine Topographie preussisch-deutscher Macht*, 4th rev. ed. (Berlin: Links, 2010), 147, 150.
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8. Gerdy Troost, interview by John Toland, November 5, 1971, transcript for tape C-50, John Toland Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.
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10. Angela Schönberger, *Die Neue Reichskanzlei von Albert Speer* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1981), 21.
11. Hans Wilderotter, *Alltag der Macht: Berlin Wilhelmstrasse* (Berlin: Jovis, 1998), 74.
12. Gerdy Troost, "Adolf Hitler: Erste Begegnung—'Braunes Haus' (Umbau