

ERICH MENDELSON AWARD 2026

FOR BRICK ARCHITECTURE

Press Release

September 2026

Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

BRICK ARCHITECTURE AT ITS BEST: BUILDING CULTURE THAT ENDURES

Berlin. At the award ceremony on 4 September, the winners of the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture were announced. In reaching its decision this year, the jury placed particular emphasis on three criteria: the design and constructive use of brick as a material, a sensitive approach to existing buildings, and the consideration of social aspects. Based on these criteria, the jury selected the extension of Het Steen in Antwerp by noAarchitecten as the Grand Prix Winner.

“The award-winning projects demonstrate just how contemporary and versatile brick architecture can be,” says Max Wasserkampf, member of the Executive Board of the Bund Deutscher Architektinnen und Architekten BDA. What is crucial, he says, is that brick is not merely used as a defining material, but is understood as part of a holistic architectural approach. “The winners represent an architecture that brings material, place, history and social responsibility into harmony in a remarkable way,” says Wasserkampf.

Grand Prix Goes to Belgium in 2026

For the first time, the Grand Prix goes to Belgium – a country whose building culture has been closely associated with brick for centuries. In the extension and restoration of the medieval castle complex Het Steen in Antwerp, noAarchitecten use brick as a link between the historic fabric and contemporary architecture. The project impressed the jury with its careful development of the historic building fabric and its opening up of the monument as a vibrant public place.

Three “Best in Germany” Awards

In 2026, “Best in Germany” was introduced for the first time as an award specifically focusing on the combination of design quality and sustainable building within German building culture. Three projects convinced the jury: Ein Monolith als Lückenschluss by DMSW Architektur Stadt Landschaft in Berlin-Neukölln, the extension of the Kaiserin-Augusta-Schule by ZILA in Cologne, and the refurbishment and extension of the former Maschinenzentralstation in Hamburg by BIWERMAU Architekten. All three projects share a sensitive approach to the existing urban fabric and the use of brick as a durable, identity-defining material. While DMSW transforms a supposedly unbuildable site into collectively supported residential and working space, ZILA continues the material character of the existing building and its Cologne surroundings with red brick. With the refurbishment of the former Maschinenzentralstation and the reconstruction of the head building

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destroyed during the war, BIWERMAU Architekten restore a piece of the original appearance of Hamburg's Speicherstadt UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Responses to Climate Change

How architecture can create tangible added value for urban coexistence is also a concern for the next generation. The Newcomer Jury awarded Gold to the design Kühlturm ("Cooling Tower") by Deborah Süß, an architecture student at HTWK Leipzig. Conceived as a bus station, the project combines an everyday place of waiting with a publicly accessible cool space for our increasingly overheated cities.

The diversity of the winning projects demonstrates the issues that will shape the further development of building culture – from dealing with the existing built environment and social participation to adapting to a changing climate. What they share is the ambition to create architecture that endures both constructively and aesthetically.

Winner Grand Prix | Het Steen (Antwerp, BE) | noAarchitecten

The extension of Het Steen in Antwerp carefully continues the eventful history of the medieval castle complex. A new wing replaces a 1950s extension, connects different historical layers and strengthens the building's role as a historic place, passageway and urban landmark.

Winner Gold | fo | Hotel Leo (Zurich, CH) | Boltshauser Architekten

The new hotel building creates a new high point on the edge of St. Gallen's city centre. Its greenish brick façade mediates between old and new, while natural materials and a flexible building structure enable sustainable use.

Winner Gold | Residential Building/Apartment Complex | Veemgebouw (Eindhoven, NL) | Caruso St John Architects

The listed VEEM building is converted with minimal intervention and extended by three residential storeys. The distinctive addition, with its green roof courtyard, strengthens its role as a landmark within the Strijp-S district.

Winner Gold | Detached House/Semi-Detached House | Umbau Siedlerhaus Battin (Brüssow, DE) | Klöpfel Zeimer Architekten

A precisely designed interior insertion made of exposed brickwork reorganises a 1950s settler's house from within. The walkable brick sculpture connects the storeys and creates new visual and circulation relationships.

Winner Gold | Newcomer | Kühlturm | Deborah Süß (HTWK Leipzig)

The cooling tower at Bayerischer Platz combines an industrial formal language with traditional principles of passive cooling. Rotated bricks channel cool winds into the interior and create a public place of retreat.

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Best in Germany | Residential Building/Apartment Complex | Ein Monolith als Lückenschluss (Berlin, DE) | DMSW Architektur Stadt Landschaft

On a site in Neukölln previously considered unbuildable, a striking brick building closes a gap in the perimeter block. Its distinctive form translates complex requirements into a concise architectural figure.

Best in Germany | Public Buildings, Recreation and Sport | Erweiterung Kaiserin-Augusta-Schule (Cologne, DE) | ZILA

The extension of the Kaiserin-Augusta-Schule complements the fragmented perimeter block of Cologne's Georgsviertel district. Red water-struck brick and differentiated joint patterns respond to the heterogeneous surroundings while giving the new building a calm identity of its own.

Best in Germany | Office and Commercial Buildings | Maschinenzentralstation (Hamburg, DE) | BIWERMAU Architekten

BIWERMAU Architekten have refurbished the former Maschinenzentralstation in Hamburg's Speicherstadt UNESCO World Heritage Site and given it a new use. The head building destroyed during the Second World War is reconstructed on its historic foundations in its original size and volume. In this way, the listed ensemble regains a part of its historic appearance.

About the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

First launched in 2008 under the name Fritz Höger Award for Brick Architecture, the competition takes place every three years and has been supported in partnership with the Bund Deutscher Architektinnen und Architekten BDA since 2011. Since 2022, it has been known as the Erich Mendelsohn Award for Brick Architecture. The competition's major significance within the world of architecture is underlined not least by the renowned names of the architectural practices honoured in previous editions. The outstanding Grand Prix projects form the premier class, including the Siza Pavilion on the island of Hombroich (2014), the Bremen State Bank designed by Caruso St John Architects (2017), and the two very different Grand Prix Winners of 2020: the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne by Barozzi Veiga and the Nakasone House in Mexico City by Escobedo Soliz. In 2023, the Grand Prix went to Catalan practice Harquitectes for the Clos Pachem Winery.

The 2026 Jury

The independent jury of the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture consisted of the following five architecture experts: Max Wasserkampf (Executive Board Member BDA), Marie Bruun Yde (Bauwelt editorial team), Josep Ricart (HARQUITECTES, Grand Prix Winner 2023), Jórunn Ragnarsdóttir (Lederer Ragnarsdóttir Architekten), and Lena Unger (Meier Unger Architekten).

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The three-member Newcomer Jury consisted of Jeanette Kunsmann (Editor-in-Chief, DETAIL), Jurek Brüggen (undjurekbrüggen, Newcomer Winner 2023), and Benedikt Hotze (Press Officer BDA).

Award Structure

This year's sixth call for entries attracted 533 project submissions from more than 40 countries. The internationally renowned jury, which met in Berlin in early July, selected the best works from all submissions. Ninety-nine projects made it onto the shortlist in the main categories, with a further twenty in the Newcomer category. The final winners were then selected from this shortlist and have now received their awards.

This year, one Grand Prix and 14 further projects were honoured with the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture in Gold, Silver and Bronze. Two projects received the Best in Germany distinction. With eleven Special Mentions, the jury also recognises exemplary details that stand out to a particularly high degree.

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Caption: Het Steen Antwerp, noAarchitecten, Grand Prix Winner at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Kim Zwarts



Caption: Veemgebouw, Caruso St John Architects, Gold Winner for Detached House/Semi-Detached House at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Filip Dujardin

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Caption: Hotel Leo, Boltshauser Architects, Winner of the Gold Award for Office and Commercial Buildings at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Kuster Frey

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Caption: Umbau Siedlerhaus Battin, Klöpfel Zeimer Architects,
Winner of the Gold Award for Detached House/Semi-Detached House
at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Schnepf Renou

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Caption: Kühlturm, Deborah Süß (HTWK Leipzig), Gold Winner
Newcomer at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture
Photo credit: © Deborah Süß

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Caption: Ein Monolith als Lückenschluss, DMSW Architektur Stadt Landschaft, Winner of the Best in Germany Award for Residential Building/Apartment Complex at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Jan Bitter

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Caption: Erweiterung Kaiserin-Augusta-Schule, ZILA, Winner of the Best in Germany Award for Public Buildings, Recreation and Sport at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Sebastian Schels



Caption: Maschinenzentralstation, BIWERMAU Architects BDA, Winner of the Best in Germany Award for Office and Commercial Buildings at the Erich Mendelsohn Award 2026 for Brick Architecture

Photo credit: © Jochen Stöber