

Villa Hugel

History



**The Villa
Hügel:
"single-family
house" and
industrial
monument**

The residence Hügel 1, located in the Bre-deney district of Essen, is said to be reg-istered in the land register of the city of Essen as a single-family house. With 269 rooms, 8,100 m2 of living and usable space and beautifully situated in a 28 hectare park overlooking Lake Baldeney, the villa is far more than just an entrepreneur's residence – it is a symbol of Germany's industrialisation.

Villa Hügel, built between 1870 and 1873 by Alfred Krupp (1812-1887), was intended by its owner to be a home and refuge for his family and himself, far away from the noise and heat of the Fried. Krupp steelworks. At the age of just 14 he assumed initial respon-sibility in the company on the death of his father Friedrich Krupp (1787-1826). In the fol-lowing decades he subsequently expanded the company to become one of the most important industrial enterprises of the 19th century. Villa Hügel also provided an appro-priately dignified setting for representations, receptions and festivities. Emperors and kings have been guests here, entrepreneurs from all over the world, as well as politicians and heads of government from many nations.

Meeting of
Stanford
scholars in the
Garden Hall





Design and construction

Above:
Villa Hügel,
second year
of construction
1871

The construction of Villa Hügel and the landscaping of the park were Alfred Krupp's primary concerns during the last 20 years of his life. Based on his own sketches and designs, the first of which date back to 1864, a building was created that primarily met functional criteria, and, according to the owner's wishes, the formal design was of secondary importance. Krupp thus repeatedly fell out with renowned architects who did not want to or could not follow these specifications.

The new residence into which Alfred Krupp moved with his wife Bertha and their son and heir Friedrich Alfred in January 1873 was described by contemporaries as unostentatious and simple. However, what cannot be seen by the outside world is the meticulousness and high personal commitment with which Krupp planned and developed the entire site, but above all the complex building services. It was only years after the family moved in though that the heating and ventilation system, which had been repeatedly redesigned, finally functioned in a way that made living bearable at all times of the year.

**The villa
through the
generations:
1888 to 1902**

The next generation designed the interior of the villa from 1888 onwards in a much more splendid and comfortable manner. Friedrich Alfred (1854-1902) and Margarethe Krupp (1854-1931) laid the foundation for an art collection and an outstanding collection of Flemish tapestries from the period 1500 to 1760.

For the family, but also for the entertainment of their numerous guests, tennis courts, riding facilities with stables, rooms for reading and games and even a social house with bowling alley and library were built.

Life at Villa Hügel became more busy under the second generation of its residents, epitomised by a sharp increase in the number of servants: in 1876 the owner managed with 66 employees, but by 1902 his son required 570 employees to run the estate. His granddaughter Bertha even had 648 people in work at the beginning of World War I.

Skating pond
in Hügel Park,
February 1895.
Bertha and
Barbara Krupp
with Uncle
Winterfeldt.





1902 to 1915

Above:
View into the
Upper Hall

At the age of just 16, Bertha Krupp became heiress to the global company following the premature death of her father in 1902. Four years later she married Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach, and took over Villa Hügel as mistress of the estate. With their seven children the young family brought new life into the villa, but also had changed requirements in terms of use and design.

At the time the company was generating excellent profits, enabling Bertha and Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach to commission the most extensive renovations to date. The court architects of Kaiser Wilhelm II as well as renowned art historians and only the best handicraft firms were consulted for advice, planning and execution of the work. By the war year 1915, the canopied forecourts in front of the Main House and Small House, the elaborate interior design of the Lower and Upper Halls and a gallery for paintings had been completed. Two large new series complemented the existing collection of tapestries.

1915 to 1952

At the beginning of World War I, contemporaries described Villa Hügel as reflecting the concepts of an "upscale" style of living in consummate form. It survived the economic and political catastrophes of the following three decades almost unchanged. Structural changes and new acquisitions had to stand back during this time, as the economic situation of the company had been too poor since the outbreak of World War I.

In 1931, after the death of Margarethe Krupp, the family moved into the Small House for a short time because the running costs for the villa were barely affordable. In 1943, Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach took over the Fried. Krupp company as sole owner. He was to be the last member of the family to inhabit the villa. In April 1945, the incoming Americans confiscated the entire property and made it the headquarters of the Allied Coal Control Commission. It was only returned to the family in July 1952. Today, the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation is owner of the property. Its headquarters are housed in the former guest house of the Krupp family.

In Hügel Park:
the headquarters of the
Alfried Krupp
von Bohlen
und Halbach
Foundation



The Villa Hügel today

Following the events of the war, Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach and his mother Bertha decided to no longer use Villa Hügel as the family residence. They now made the house available to the general public, especially for the promotion of art, science and culture. The first important art exhibition took place as early as 1953, followed by further internationally acclaimed exhibitions. The villa remained the place for receptions and representation of the Krupp Group until the end of the 90s of the 20th century.

In 1984, the "Kulturstiftung Ruhr" was founded with headquarters in Villa Hügel. Its founder Berthold Beitz set its objective as "giving new impetus to the cultural life of the Ruhr region". It continues the tradition of exhibitions at the villa.

Since 1955, the Small House has accommodated the Krupp Historical Archive, Germany's oldest business archive, which holds extensive written material and outstanding collections of historical industrial photographs and films. The Small House accommodates a permanent exhibition on the history of the Krupp company, the owner family and the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation.

Transmedia
real-time
installation
"kontraste"
by joeressen+
kessner as part
of the anniversary
"150 years
of Hügel", 2023





The park

Above:
Jean Spronger,
Small Seated
Figure, bronze,
around 1965

When planning the extensive Villa Hügel Park, Alfred Krupp had precise conceptions: he wanted to have "a forest of trees" that he could "enjoy during his lifetime". He had mature trees of native species brought in and planted, and for the purpose, special wagons were built according to the French model. He achieved his goal: by 1883 the villa was surrounded by a spacious park and dense forest.

Friedrich Alfred and Margarethe Krupp expanded the park after 1888, had greenhouses and display houses constructed and also planted rare exotic plants. The upper terrace garden was designed more ornamentally and the two sphinxes in front of the Main House were created around 1900.

The park assumed its current design from the late 1950s to the 1970s, based on the model of an English garden. For some years, the original, still existing structures of the park have now been rendered visible again by an intensifying of maintenance and care.

View of
the park



The Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation

The Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation is the legacy of Dr.-Ing. E. h. Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, the last personal proprietor of the Fried. Krupp company. In his will, he stipulated that all of his assets should pass into the possession of a charitable foundation after his death. This was made possible by a renunciation of inheritance by his only son Arndt von Bohlen und Halbach.



Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach (right) and Berthold Beitz

The Krupp Foundation began its work in January 1968. As the largest shareholder of today's thyssenkrupp AG, the Foundation uses the income it receives exclusively for charitable projects in the areas of science, art, culture, education, health and sport as defined in the Articles of Association.

Accordingly, it provides young scientists with freedom for their research, encourages artists to follow their path and enables further education for young people.

The Chairman and Managing Member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation from 1968 to 2013 was Prof. Dr. h. c. mult. Berthold Beitz. Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Ursula Gather has been Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees since 2013.

Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees
Ursula Gather





Villa Hügel,
Belvedere

Address Villa Hügel, Hügel 1, 45133 Essen
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Opening hours Villa Hügel and
Krupp Historical Exhibition
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Hügelpark
Tuesday to Sunday, 9.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Guided tours Phone: +49 (0)201 61 62 917
E-mail: info@villahuegel.de

Foreign language guided tours are available.

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