

Maren Harnack, Sebastian Haumann, Karin Berkemann,  
Mario Tvrkovic, Tobias Michael Wolf, Stephanie Herold (eds.)

## Community Spaces

Conception, Appropriation, Identity





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Proceedings

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## **Community Spaces**

Conception, Appropriation, Identity

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editors:

Maren Harnack  
Sebastian Haumann  
Karin Berkemann  
Mario Tvrtkovic  
Tobias Michael Wolf  
Stephanie Herold

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E-Mail: [publikationen@ub.tu-berlin.de](mailto:publikationen@ub.tu-berlin.de)

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Mario Tvrtkovic

**Composition & Cover design**

Mario Timm

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# Introduction

Sebastian Haumann, Maren Harnack, Karin Berkemann,  
Tobias Michael Wolf, Mario Tvrtkovic

Large scale housing estates of the modern era belong to the most contested parts of our building heritage. Universally unloved by contemporary architects and the lay audience alike, they are often considered unworthy of the investments required to keep them in a habitable state. Demolition and wholesale redevelopment are often seen as favourable options when investments cannot be further postponed. This discussion tends to neglect the view of the inhabitants of these estates, who have lived there for considerable proportions of their lifetime, and who have appropriated houses, the public realm and the spaces provided for community purposes.

Community Spaces such as community centers, schools, churches, hospitals, shopping districts but also parks, open spaces and sport-grounds, were central to plans for housing projects and urban redevelopment, especially in Europe during the decades following World War II. They were to amend the urban structure and in many cases they were expected to enable a superior form of communality and urbanity, be it under socialist regimes or the democratic welfare state. In the original plans of the 1950s-1980s community spaces were thought to be particularly important points of identification for the “new societies” housing estates and redevelopment projects were expected to foster. Community spaces were planned in order to hold the housing estates and neighborhoods together – as well designed and attractive built environments, as social hubs and especially as symbolic anchors. Quite often, they boasted prominent design features, intended to serve as recognizable markers of the programmatic subtexts.

While planners and politicians conceptualized community spaces with their potential to shape identification in view, communities tended to appropriate such spaces in different ways and to reinterpret their meanings. In short, local residents – as well as the broader public – possibly identified with community spaces, their individual features and with the ideas and practices they associated with them in significantly different ways than originally intended. Today, the continuing tension between intention and appropriation of community spaces can be understood as an indicator of identification processes. However, while this tension also appears to be one of the major challenges in the preservation of the architectural heritage of the 1950s-1980s, it might also provide unexpected opportunities.

The development of community spaces is inextricably intertwined with the history of housing policies and urban planning. The provision of public space, namely parks and squares was already a feature of the planned extension of cities during the 19th century.

Beginning with the turn of the 20th century such spaces gained added programmatic value. Community spaces were considered to serve a distinct sociopolitical function. The Garden City Movement for instance, as one of the most influential currents in this phase of planning history, demanded that communal gardens and centralized facilities such as washhouses were added to housing projects in pursuit of the far flung goals of social reform. In the interwar period modernists took up this impetus in their plans for housing estates. And even in the plans proposed under totalitarian regimes in the decades leading up to World War II such ideas played an important role, albeit under very different ideological premisses. As part and parcel of housing policies of the 20th century, community spaces distinguished themselves from older forms of public spaces by the intentions and aspirations that were connected to them. In these concepts, community spaces were not just a nice to have add-on to the provision of mass housing primarily aimed at the material well being of urban dwellers – they were an essential feature of housing schemes. Facilities for shared use of the residents were expected to foster a specific kind of sociability and to work counter the perceived dangers of mass society, alienation and social antagonism. This general rationale was shared by all proponents of planned mass housing despite greatly diverging political worldviews.

In general, the provision of community spaces was geared at three different aims. Firstly, they were to provide a point of common identification among residents. Design would often underline their character as symbolic anchors of the life within housing projects, and it would represent estates or urban districts undergoing redevelopment within a broader public. This would certainly vary greatly in relation to the political context. Secondly, community spaces were planned as nodes of social life and catalysts of integration and societal coherence. They were thought of as places where residents would mingle. Of course, this aim did not equal unlimited inclusion but could deliberately exclude certain groups, as in the “*Volksgemeinschaft*” of Nazi Germany. There were also very different approaches, some of which considered aspects of everyday life as part of the public domain, which should be conducted in communally used spaces consequently – shared kitchens in early Soviet housing being a case in point. Thirdly, community spaces were meant to politically activate residents. Again, the specific goals of this activation could vary greatly with the political context. For example, community spaces could be used as a background for political manifestations in support of ruling regimes, but they could also be considered to be fostering the “empowerment” of users.

In more material respect, the large scale projects of which community spaces were part of have also been crucial in alleviating the severe housing shortage, which had accumulated since the times of industrialisation and was aggravated by the destruction of housing during World War II. The scale of housebuilding in the 1950s and 1960s was based on a far reaching societal consensus, that housing is a basic amenity like e.g. transport and healthcare. The amount of money and the effort going into it would be unimaginable

by today's standards. Industrialised building methods and prefabrication became the means to complete large numbers of homes to a high standard, after conventional building methods had proven to be too slow and too expensive. For almost everybody who moved into one of the flats it was an enormous step forward, moving from dilapidated, overcrowded and often overpriced accommodation into bright and modern flats.

However, as the crisis of large scale housing policies set in around 1970, the expectations connected to the community spaces appeared to have been grossly exaggerated. To begin with, many inhabitants moved in before community spaces and infrastructures were fully finished and spent years waiting for the arrival of shops, public transport and other facilities, of which some were never built. As many large scale housing estates were located in peripheral areas where land was cheap and readily available, the lack of transportation proved difficult – and especially tricky when shops and amenities were missing as well. More widespread car-ownership has partly solved these problems, but the increasingly diverse and mobile lifestyles connected with this have also exacerbated the erosion of local infrastructure. The perceived physical and social decline of newly built housing and urban structures was primarily discussed as the decline of their community spaces. Images of playgrounds strewn with litter and unkempt greenery were commonplace. Vandalism also left its unsettling mark on bus stops or underground passages. Certain facilities – typically youth centers – were made out as hot-beds of drug abuse, anti-social or even criminal behavior. In this disillusioned view, community spaces did not foster communication but a sense of danger. Their symbolic value was perverted to represent social disintegration and political indifference. Of course, these stigmatized spaces could hardly be understood as the foci of identification. While this was reflected in the repeated reconceptualizing of housing policy in the socialist states, the subsequent debate took a different turn in Western Europe. In Western Europe, commentators immediately pointed to the fact that the actually built structures foiled the expectations connected to community spaces. They criticized the monotonous design and the formal restrictions that seemed to discourage appropriation, identification and the residents' interest in their surroundings. This criticism went hand in hand with the devaluation of the premisses under which community spaces had been planned. Post-modern approaches to planning questioned whether identification, social integration and political activation could – and should – be planned for at all. Nonetheless, there was also a host of tangible reasons that underpinned the decline of community spaces, first and foremost the economic conditions under which community spaces were developed and maintained. By 1973 economic growth had come to a halt. In many cases, community spaces as part of housing and redevelopment projects had not yet been realized when financial restrictions tightened. The same restrictions also led administrations to cut down maintenance budgets. Hence community spaces were left either incomplete or in a deteriorating condition. This trend towards the financial neglect was further aggravated by a general reorientation of housing policies in Western European countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s. While in some

countries the provision of housing ceased to be a concern of state intervention altogether, like in Great Britain, other governments prioritized the refurbishment of old housing stock at scattered sites, as was the case in West-Germany.

Nonetheless, the stigmatizing discourse exceeded the existing social and economic problems by far. Despite the factual challenges facing community spaces, which had been planned as part of larger housing estates and redevelopment schemes during the decades after World War II, it was primarily the image of decline that conveyed the strong sense that social disintegration, political indifference, and a lack of identity were major shortcomings of these kinds of built environments.

Today, most community spaces within housing estates or wholesale redevelopment schemes have reached the age of 40 years or over and require major investments. This poses fundamental questions about the economic viability of refurbishments on both ends – the owners have to decide between demolition and renovation, the tenants fear rising rents as well as displacement. At this point a fundamental divergency between the residents' inside view and the outside view of the general public comes into play. The inside image is very often a positive one, whereas the outside tends to focus entirely on the failures. Correspondingly, the residents mostly would opt for refurbishment, whilst many others may think that the chance to demolish these concrete eyesores and replace them with something else should not be missed.

Residents very often love their flats and spend a considerable amount of time and money to adapt them to their needs and wishes. In contrast to that the communal and public spaces often look neglected and unused. This physical contrast might lead to the assumption, that residents do not care about these spaces or that they do not mean anything to the residents. In fact, they are simply lying outside area the residents are responsible for, which does not mean that they do not feel responsibility beyond their flat: Many of them are lobbying the owners to achieve better maintenance or they are engaged in community activities to improve living conditions and to promote the neighborhood as a whole.

However, we still know very little about what residents actually experienced once housing estates were built and redevelopment projects completed. While residents themselves were among the first to lament the lack and neglect of facilities including community spaces, they apparently also developed strategies to adopt and improve the situation. Attempts to counter the problems of housing estates and redeveloped districts from within often developed specifically around community spaces and the concern about them. Neighborhood organizations as well as informal groups frequently demanded city officials and housing administrators to improve the condition of community spaces as they emerged as unruly political actors. Tracing the activities of the civil society within housing estates and their view and appropriation of community spaces will also give

further insight into processes of identification. The hypothesis being that locals did attach (positive) meaning to community spaces through personal experience as well as collective construction however incomplete and unkempt these spaces were – in this sense they did become monuments worth preserving.

In a formal sense, the need to preserve community spaces as the centerpieces of post-war housing and redevelopment projects is not at all obvious, neither to broad public nor to specialists. As objects that are a reminder of the past and an expression of society's cultural and historical self-image, the preservation and upkeep of monuments is defined to be in the public interest. Over time, our understanding of monuments develops through public discourse. Social and cultural change calls for a continuous reassessment of what is worth preserving and subsequently requires the updating and the repertory of monuments. It is up to debate, whether the large scale architecture and urban design of the post-war era meet the requirements to be listed.

In fact, community spaces hold a key to tackle this challenge: administrative grading, listing and preservation of monuments is always linked to the specific object and its special value. In contrast to masterpieces of famous modern architects, the large housing estates and wholesale redevelopment projects of the post-war era with their prefabricated concrete buildings and their vast dimensions are more difficult to define and evaluate. Dealing with community spaces in estates and redeveloped districts can be an approach to this problem. Community centers, schools, churches, hospitals, shopping districts but also parks, open spaces and sport-grounds through their social functions have often been of distinguished design, sometimes by well-known architects. Research on these objects of the post-war modern period opens up new perspectives on the contemporary ideals behind the planning concepts as well as the actual usage and appropriation. It can also give hints at how and what to preserve as valuable parts of this heritage and where to preserve the urban structure and green spaces rather than individual architecture

In this vein, the contributions to this volume explore the original conceptualization and the subsequent appropriation in their relevance for the development of and especially the identification with community spaces in housing estates and redevelopment projects. To this end, they bridge interdisciplinary divides and draw together architectural analyses of individual buildings, public spaces, the morphology of housing estates and their urban design on the one hand and research on the conception, the public perception, and the use of individual features as well as complete ensembles of community spaces from historical, sociological and political backgrounds on the other hand.

Marta Sequira traces the ideals of public space in LeCorbusiers' work to the architect's engagement with the Roman forum and the Greek agora. Sequira demonstrates that the provision of a "gathering place" was actually a major concern in the concepts of this

pioneer of modern architecture and urban planning. Sergiu Novac describes how civic centers were integrated into redevelopment plans for Romanian cities and towns under varying political and economic circumstances. The implementation rested on a complex nationwide development program which eventually stalled and left behind open space that was appropriated in many ways after the fall of socialism. Continuing the inquiry into socialist policies, Piotr Marciniak analyses the development of community spaces in Polish housing estates after World War II. He draws attention to the main turning points in the conceptualization of such spaces over half a century. Antonia Fernández Nieto and Marta García Carbonero show how housing schemes based on similar conceptual premisses in Francist Spain were implemented to cope with the influx of migrants to Madrid. They go on to compare these premisses with the actual appropriation of open space and streets of the newly built housing estates.

Sabine Klingner and Małgorzata Popiołek present the case of the redevelopment of West Berlin's Brunnenstrasse district. The scheme devised to replace the existing 19th century housing stock paid particular attention to the provision of community spaces and eventually gave rise to innovative forms of rehabilitation. The analysis of public art at London's Warwick and Brindley Estate by Sharon Irish provides yet another, even more detailed, view on the design and usage of community spaces. Irish shows how residents are addressed and express themselves through specific artistic interventions in public. Gunnar Klack's contribution concludes this volume with the study of a specific type of communally used ensemble of buildings and community spaces: the Schlachtensee students' dormitory at the Free University of Berlin.

All contributions to this volume are based on papers presented at the conference "Community Spaces. Conception – Appropriation – Identity" held in Darmstadt in September 2012. We would also like to thank the other discussants and the participants in the network "45+ Post-War Architecture in Europe" of which this conference was a part.



# **Toward a Gathering Place.**

**Le Corbusier's City after World War II**

*Marta Sequeira*

## Toward a Gathering Place. Le Corbusier's City after World War II

*Marta Sequeira*

The public spaces in Le Corbusier's plans are usually considered to break with the past and to have nothing whatsoever in common with the public spaces created before modernism. This view is fostered by evidence that highlights their innovative character, and also by misinterpretations of some of Le Corbusier's own observations and liberal use of words like *civilisation machiniste* ['machine civilization'], *l'esprit nouveau* ['new spirit'] and *l'architecture de demain* ['architecture of tomorrow'], which mask any evocation of the past. However, if we manage to rid ourselves of certain preconceived ideas, which underpin a somewhat less-than-objective idea of modernity, we find that Le Corbusier's public spaces not only fail to break with the historical past in any abrupt way but actually testify to the continuity of human creation over time. This is what this article aims to demonstrate through a careful analysis of two of Le Corbusier's public spaces dating from the period immediately after the Second World War.

The findings presented here focus on the reconstruction of the city of Saint-Dié (1945 – 1946), which never actually materialized (Fig. 1), and the Marseille Housing Block (1945 – 1952) built on Boulevard Michelet (Fig. 2). These projects were paradigmatic: for while Le Corbusier considered Saint-Dié to be a prototype of a modern city, he saw the Marseille Housing Block as a prototype of his collective residential buildings. Planning began on both of them at around the same time, in 1945, in the context of the post-war reconstruction of France. The Saint-Dié rebuilding project involved eight housing units, which became the starting-point

for the Marseille Housing Block; then, during a later phase, various stages of the Marseille plan were incorporated into the Saint-Dié units. While the Marseille Housing Block may be understood as an exemplary model of Le Corbusier's housing units, Saint-Dié may also be considered as exemplifying the urbanistic context of these units. However, in these two projects there are two spaces – the Saint-Dié civic centre and the roof of the Marseille

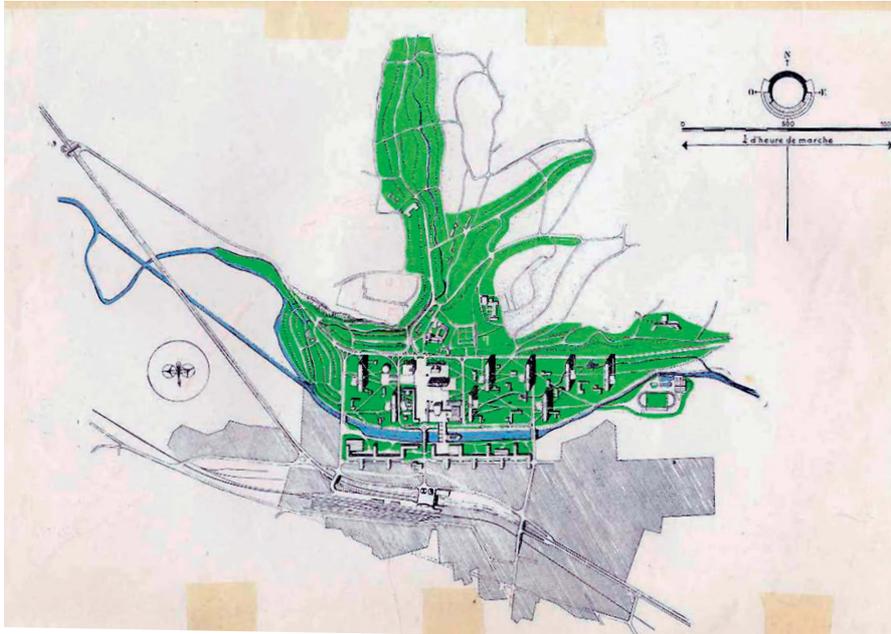


Fig. 1: Plan of Saint-Dié

Housing Block – that have not attracted the attention they deserve. The civic centre is a gathering place serving the entire city. On the scale of the housing unit (effectively a vertical city) the terrace plays the same role. Together these examples epitomise Corbusian thought



Fig. 2: Marseille Housing Block

in the period immediately after the Second World War with regard to the places for the public life of the city.

Thus, the civic centre of the city and the terrace of the housing block are similar kinds of spaces. However, five features revealing the essence of each one and the archetypes that underpin their respective design distinguish them. More than once Le Corbusier demonstrated a strong analogy between Graeco-Roman architecture and the logic of modern production. In *Vers une architecture*, for example, photographs of silos, cars, aeroplanes and ships are mixed up with photographs of Greek and Roman buildings [Le Corbusier, 1923]. A number of authors have also analysed the relationship between some of his individual architectural works and certain buildings of Classical Antiquity (Greek and Roman) that he was personally familiar with. This paper extends the notion of this analogy to Corbusier's design of the public space.

As both the Saint-Dié civic space and the Marseille Housing Block were designed to glorify the collective, clues for identifying the urban spaces that might have served as models for them may perhaps be found in Camillo Sitte's *L'Art de bâtir les villes* [Sitte, 1902]. Although Le Corbusier later disagreed with Sitte's perspective on urbanism, his admiration for the cities of the past was largely stimulated by the writings of that architect and historian. *L'Art de bâtir les villes* had certainly influenced Le Corbusier a great deal in his youth, particularly as regards the choice of urban spaces that should be analysed. Although Sitte's observations focus particularly on the cities of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, his interpretation of later periods is largely informed by Greek and Roman design. Sitte emphasised this fact and, in the introduction to the book which Le Corbusier owned, praised the remarkable qualities of the squares of antiquity:

[...] "depuis l'Antiquité les caractères principaux de l'architecture des villes ont bien changé. Les places publiques (forum, marché, etc.) servent, de notre temps, aussi peu à de grandes fêtes populaires qu'à la vie de tous les jours. Leur seule raison d'être est de procurer plus d'air et de lumière et de rompre la monotonie des océans de maisons. Parfois aussi elles mettent en valeur un édifice monumental en dégageant ses façades. Quelle différence avec l'Antiquité! Les places étaient alors une nécessité de premier ordre, car elles furent le théâtre des principales scènes de la vie publique, qui se passent aujourd'hui dans les salles fermées."  
[Sitte, 1902, p. 11]

In the introduction, Sitte's discourse focuses particularly upon the squares of ancient Greece and Rome. He describes two exemplary models: the Forum of the city of Pompeii and the Acropolis of Athens. The Pompeii forum is described analytically, accompanied by

two diagrams – a drawing in perspective that shows what it would have looked like before the eruption of Vesuvius, and a ground plan showing what it looked like after excavation:

“La place est entourée de tous côtés de bâtiments publics. Seul, le temple de Jupiter s’élève sans voisins. Et la colonnade à deux étages qui entoure l’espace entier n’est interrompue que par le péristyle du temple des dieux lares faisant une plus grande saillie que les autres bâtiments. Le centre du forum reste libre, tandis que sa périphérie est occupée par de nombreux monuments dont les piédestaux couverts d’inscriptions sont encore visibles. Quelle impression grandiose devait produire cette place!” [Sitte, 1902, p. 15]<sup>1</sup>

He then goes on to the Greek square, claiming that the Acropolis of Athens was the most successful creation of its type, an example to be followed:

“Le place du marché d’Athènes est disposée dans ses grandes lignes selon les mêmes règles, autant qu’on peut en juger d’après les projets de restauration. Les villes consacrées de l’antiquité hellénique (Olympe, Delphes, Eleusis), en sont une application plus grandiose encore. Les chefs-d’œuvre de l’architecture, de la peinture et de la sculpture s’y trouvent réunis en un tout imposant et superbe, qui peut rivaliser avec les plus puissantes tragédies et les symphonies les plus grandioses. L’Acropole d’Athènes est la création la plus achevée de ce genre. Un plateau élevé, entouré de hautes murailles, en est la base. La porte d’entrée inférieure, l’énorme escalier, les admirables Propylées, sont la première phrase de cette symphonie de marbre, d’or et d’ivoire, de bronze et de couleur. Les temples et les monuments de l’intérieur sont les mythes de pierre du peuple grec. La poésie et la pensée les plus élevées y sont incarnées. C’est en vérité le centre d’une ville considérable, l’expression des sentiments d’un grand peuple. Ce n’est plus un simple quartier, au sens ordinaire du terme, c’est l’œuvre des siècles parvenue à la maturité de la pure œuvre d’art. Il est impossible de se fixer un but plus élevé dans ce genre, et il est difficile d’imiter avec bonheur cet exemple splendide ; mais ce modèle devrait toujours rester devant nos yeux dans toutes nos entreprises, comme l’idéal le plu sublime à atteindre.” [Sitte, 1902, p. 16 – 17]<sup>2</sup>

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1 Although Le Corbusier would only have seen this space during his 1911 “Journey to the East”, he had already studied it during his stay in Germany, precisely when he had access to Sitte’s book. He gives it as an example in the sketch of his book project *La construction des villes*. In a passage from Chapter 2 of the book, *Des éléments constitutifs de la Ville*, he writes: “Le Forum de Pompéi, [...], nous signale en A un moyen, employé de tous temps avec grand succès, [...]” [Jeanneret-Gris, 1992, p. 108].

2 Although Le Corbusier only visited this space in 1911 during his “Voyage to the East”, he gives it as an example in his sketch for this project for the book *La construction des villes*. In a passage from Chapter 2 of the book, *Des éléments constitutifs de la Ville*, he writes: “Si on parle de Venise, on voit sa Piazza, [...], [si on parle] d’Athènes, [on voit] l’Acropole, [...]” [Jeanneret-Gris, 1992, p. 135].

Although Sitte denies that it is possible to reproduce the great public spaces of antiquity throughout his oeuvre – rather pessimistically, Sitte says: “Nous ne pouvons plus créer des œuvres d’un art aussi achevé que l’Acropole d’Athènes. Même si nous disposions des millions que coûterait une œuvre semblable, nous ne pourrions l’exécuter. Il nous manque les principes artistiques, la conception de l’univers commune à tous, vivante dans l’âme du peuple, qui pourrait trouver dans une telle œuvre sa représentation matérielle. [...] Le constructeur de villes doit avant tout s’armer d’une extrême modestie, et, à vrai dire, moins par manque de ressources que pour des motifs plus essentiels” [Sitte, 1902, p. 144]. – he nevertheless claims that, as the principles that inspired these constructions were historically contingent, they were always open to reinterpretation. Sitte claims:

“Supposons qu’on veuille créer dans une ville nouvelle un quartier à la fois grandiose et pittoresque, ne servant qu’à la représentation et à la glorification de la vie communale. Il ne suffirait pas de dessiner à l’aide de la règle des alignements parfaits, il faudrait aussi, pour obtenir les effets des anciens maîtres, avoir sur nos palettes leurs couleurs [...] La vie moderne pas plus que la science technique moderne ne permettent de copier servilement la disposition des villes anciennes. Il faut le reconnaître si nous ne voulons pas nous abandonner à une sentimentalité sans espoir. Les modèles des anciens doivent revivre aujourd’hui autrement qu’en des copies consciencieuses ; c’est en examinant ce qu’il y a d’essentiel dans leurs créations et en l’adaptant aux circonstances modernes que nous pourrons jeter dans un sol devenu apparemment stérile une graine capable de germer à nouveau.” [Sitte, 1902, p. 145]

In 1910, Le Corbusier undertook a trip to Germany documenting the journey for his first book on town planning, *La construction des villes*, and precisely in order to obtain Sitte’s book. For some time, he had been particularly concerned with the study of medieval architecture. However, he did not take long to assimilate Sitte’s message and realised that he would have to study the public spaces of antiquity to understand the essence of a public space, medieval or any other.

He was not disappointed when, in 1911, he visited the public spaces of Ancient Greece and Rome recommended by Sitte – the Athens Acropolis and the Forum of Pompeii. During his visit, Le Corbusier intensively studied the composition of public space in Classical Antiquity. Having thus imbibed Greek and Roman compositional strategies, it was natural that he should apply this knowledge when he came to design the two gathering places for his city in the period immediately after the Second World war, creating one in the image of the acropolis and sanctuaries (as happened at the genesis of the first Greek ‘agoras’) and the other with the compositional strategies of the forum.

In fact, while the civic centre of the city and the terrace of the housing block share characteristics of those great urban paradigms of antiquity, the agora and the forum, they are also distinguished from each other by aspects that are also those that distinguish the two ancient models.

Let us look more closely at two exemplary cases, the Agora of Athens and the Forum of Pompeii and the formal characteristics of the two Corbusian models, the civic centre of the city and the terrace of the housing block (Fig. 3):

1. The agora and the civic centre both have a square ground plan while the forum and the terrace of the housing block are rectangular.
2. The agora and the civic centre have no physical boundaries to prevent their overspilling the space allocated to them, while the forum and the terrace are limited all around by a wall.
3. The agora and civic centre are organised non-hierarchically, while the forum and terrace have one particularly feature that stands out in relation to the rest.
4. The agora and civic centre are crossed by pedestrian routes that link various points of the city, while the forum and terrace have a pathway running around their perimeter.
5. From the agora and civic centre, the surrounding landscape is glimpsed between buildings; in the case of the forum and terrace, it appears above the perimeter wall.

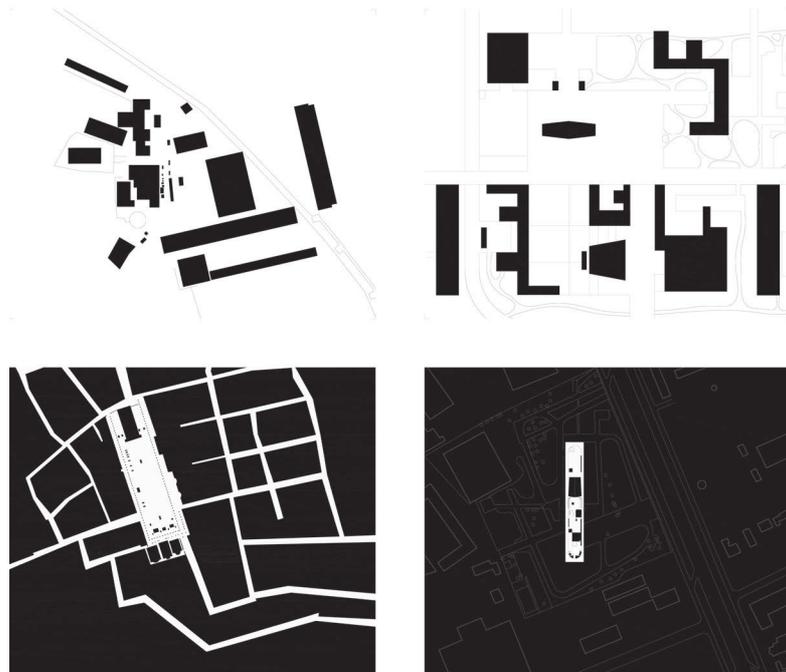


Fig. 3: Agora of Athens and civic centre of Saint-Dié; Forum of Pompeii and terrace of the Marseille Housing Block

Sitte's *Art of Building Cities*, which Le Corbusier read in his youth, sought to demonstrate that life in antiquity was more conducive to the existence of these gathering spaces than modern life. Sitte even went as far as to announce, in a pessimistic moment, the death of the public square, provoked, he claimed, by the drastic transformations that had taken place in the daily life of the people:

“Dans notre vie publique, bien des choses se sont transformées sans retour, partant bien des formes architecturales ont perdu leur importance de jadis. Nous sommes obligés de le reconnaître. Qu’y pouvons-nous si les événements publics sont aujourd’hui racontés dans les journaux au lieu d’être proclamés, comme autrefois en Grèce et à Rome par des crieurs publics dans les thermes ou sous les portiques? Qu’y pouvons-nous si les marchés quittent de plus en plus les places pour s’enfermer dans des bâtiments d’aspect peu artistique ou pour se transformer en colportage direct dans les maisons? Qu’y pouvons-nous si les fontaines n’ont plus qu’une valeur décorative, puisque la foule s’en éloigne, les canalisations amenant l’eau directement dans les maisons et les cuisines? Les œuvres sculpturales abandonnent toujours plus les places et les rues pour s’enfermer dans les prisons d’art nommés musées. Les fêtes populaires, les cortèges de carnaval, les processions religieuses, les représentations théâtrales en plein air, ne seront bientôt plus qu’un souvenir. Avec les siècles la vie populaire s’est retirée lentement des places publiques, qui ont ainsi perdu une grande partie de leur importance. C’est pourquoi la plupart des gens ignorent complètement ce que devrait être une belle place. La vie des anciens était plus favorable au développement artistique des cités que notre vie moderne mathématiquement réglée.” [Sitte, 1902, p. 139 – 140]

Sitte blamed the public's avoidance of the squares on alterations in lifestyle. Le Corbusier on the other hand, noting the same phenomenon, blamed it upon the squares themselves, which had lost their vibrancy largely failing to keep up with the social changes that had taken place. According to him, the solution lay in architecture and in town planning and was therefore within reach of society.

Amongst the rough drafts of his unpublished book, *La construction des villes*, he writes:

“La vie publique s’est retirée de la place, aujourd’hui; il est à se demander si elle s’est retirée de soi-même ou parce qu’il n’y a plus de place. L’Antiquité avait ses forums, où, sous un ciel généreux, se réunissaient les foules pour discuter des intérêts communs, intérêts auxquels participait plus directement qu’aujourd’hui, le citoyen grec ou romain” [Jeanneret-Gris, 1992, p. 103].

In a summary of 1915 he criticised ironically the lack of forum-style spaces in the contemporary period:

“L'Antiquité avait le forum. Le Moyen-Age a encore besoin d'un forum civique à côté de la basilique religieuse pour des cérémonies en plein air, les fêtes religieuses devant le dôme, les fêtes civiques devant l'Hôtel de Ville pour les marches et les foires. Aujourd'hui : une halle pour les marches... ; la vie politique est confinée dans le journal. La vie familiale, le soir. La chaussée à largeur constante est plus utile pour les voitures.” [Jeanneret-Gris, 1992, p. 170]

In studying Greek and Roman public spaces, Le Corbusier was not seeking an archaeological space lost in time, but rather a place that reflected its previous role as a stage for action for the inhabitants of the city. For him, the agora and the forum effectively transposed a human ritual into architecture and town planning. They were public spaces par excellence, the centres of their respective groupings. They constituted true monuments to themselves, the memory of places which, over various generations, had supported a particular community, giving it identity. The agora and the forum were politically and socially the true heart of urban life fulfilling the centralizing vocation of the cities they belonged to. Through their temples, administrative buildings, commemorative monuments and honorific inscriptions, this was where all the signs of municipal dignity were found and where all generations, one after the other, learned or recalled what it meant to belong to a community.

The civic centre of the city and the terrace of the housing block are no more than the modern expression of the Greek agora and Roman forum. They result, in fact, from the continuation of the typological transformation of those spaces according to the criteria of the time they were designed. For Le Corbusier they constituted meeting places, establishing and representing the public domain, where collective activities could take place, as in the square of any city. They constitute the city and the housing block as social places, representing and modelling collective values.

The civic centre thus forms a true agora, performing for the modern city a role that is in all respects similar to that performed by the public square in ancient Greece. Like the Greek public square, the civic centre was the centre of political life, a place of democracy, of decision-making, a meeting-place for the citizens, where collective sentiments were expressed at moments of great exaltation, and where the course of the collective life of the polis was regulated. This was where the administrative services of the city had their headquarters, where the most important theatrical performances and exhibitions took place. The most important trades were concentrated here and it was the meeting point par excellence for the city as a whole. As Le Corbusier indicates, “Le centre civique est le lieu éminent de la cité,

son cœur et son cerveau. C'est là que, par des monuments et par des actes, se développe la vie urbaine et que s'inscrit son histoire." [Le Corbusier, 1945, p. 44]



Fig.4: Donkey giving rides to children during a fête held on the terrace of the Marseille Housing Block

Similarly, just like in a forum (the place for great commemorations, where the most representative dates were celebrated by the inhabitants of the city), Le Corbusier proposed that the important anniversaries of his Marseille Housing Block community (such as its official inauguration on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1952) should be celebrated on the terrace. The forum was the centre of political life where recent events were analysed, municipal matters discussed, electoral rallies held, candidatures for municipal elections debated, where community representatives were elected, where the duumvirate that presided over the council made speeches to the people from high up on the tribune, and where the temporary prefects, appointed by the emperor, would announce the conclusions of their investigations. Hence, it was on the terrace that Le Corbusier proposed that the residents would make their speeches, just as he himself did, along with Eugène Claudius-Petit, French Minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism, and a representative of the residents at the official inauguration of the Marseille Housing Unit on a rooftop crowded with residents and guests. In the forum, solemn ceremonies were celebrated in honour of illustrious personages; hence, Le Corbusier proposed that the terrace should be used for ceremonies in honour of various

personalities (indeed, it was there that he himself was awarded the medal of Commander of the Order of the Legion of Honour by the minister Eugène Claudius Petit on the day of the official inauguration). In a forum, teachers gave lessons and punished bad students by making examples of them; hence, Le Corbusier proposed that lessons should be held on the terrace for the youngest members of the Housing Block (who were portrayed as beaming with genuine happiness). As in the forum, where athletic and gladiatorial contests were held, Le Corbusier also proposed that the terrace could also be used for physical exercise. Just as the forum was the centre of cultural life, where religious festivals, music festivals and pantomimes took place, Le Corbusier proposed that cultural celebrations of the Housing Block should take place on the terrace, such as those occurring during the annual fête where the whole community would be present. Young or old, all had a role to play in the fête: from the musician playing a traditional melody to the dancer accompanying him, the mother waiting anxiously in the wings, the dancer gyrating on the improvised stage, or the citizen that participated in this place of entertainment and socialization. There was even a donkey to give rides to the children around the terrace (Fig. 4).

In designing these public spaces, Le Corbusier basically recreated the spaciality of the public squares of antiquity, sites for the representation and glorification of the collective. With his refined historical knowledge, but also a sense of abstraction (which presupposes one of the most precious conquests of modern thought, namely the voluntary suspension of succession and temporal compartmentalization, as well as the subsequent evolutionary explanations and cataloguing), he resorted to a synchronic vision of the public spaces of antiquity, binding the past to the present and establishing contacts and overlaps between them. Le Corbusier had already affirmed this in “Esprit grec – Esprit latin – Esprit gréco-latin”, published in the magazine *Prelude* in 1933:

“ESPRIT GREC – ESPRIT LATIN

ESPRIT GRECO-LATIN

Bien entendu, ce sont ici des mots dont le contenu s'évade du vase primitif, antique, et exprime des situations nouvelles, des situations qu'on pourrait appeler 'proportionnelles', c'est-à-dire équivalentes, de même nature.” [Le Corbusier, 1933]

Le Corbusier also had a true historical sense, as defined by T. S. Eliot, an author that figured in his personal library:

“...the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe

from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity." [Eliot, 1951, p. 14]

The great models of antiquity are not analysed in accordance with their position on a chronological map; rather they become permanently available, ready to be evoked at any moment. These archetypal places, which belonged as much to Corbusier's biographic memory as to the collective memory of the history of architecture, were brought to mind through anamnestic devices (Le Corbusier's postcard collection, his photographs, his travel drawings). These places may thus be understood as a kind of pool of available potential resources. In moving from the great public spaces of antiquity to an architecture of the present, Le Corbusier did not merely copy its forms in a servile way. What he proposed was not a regression, but a reintegration of the values of these forms. He subjects them to analysis, manipulating them and establishing an active relationship with them: he distinguishes the permanent from the temporary, the essential from the accidental, displacing their basic components and extracting their most profound compositional rules. For Le Corbusier, the exemplary models of antiquity become the raw material of the present, ready to be cognitively transformed and thus prolonged and renewed.

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## PICTURE CREDITS

Fig. 1: Plan of Saint-Dié (L-C, Fondation Le Corbusier H3-18-205-002)

Fig. 2: Marseille Housing Block (1950s, Fondation Le Corbusier L1-13-6)

Fig. 3: Agora of Athens and civic centre of Saint-Dié; Forum of Pompeii and terrace of the Marseille Housing Block.

Fig. 4: Donkey giving rides to children during a fête held on the terrace of the Marseille Housing Block (Fondation Le Corbusier L1-16-82)



**The Civic Center.**

**Failed Urbanity and Romanian Socialism in its 'Second Phase'**

*Sergiu Novac*

## **The Civic Center: Failed Urbanity and Romanian Socialism in its ‘Second Phase’**

*Sergiu Novac*

The contemporary Romanian city very often leaves the observer with the impression of something that is ‘unfinished’. The apparent repetitiveness of the predominant modernist housing estates is striking; straight, wide boulevards delineate these estates and lead directly to the monumental administrative buildings that dominate the city centers. However, a closer look reveals that this repetitiveness is very often ruptured by striking details. Surprising juxtapositions of old and new structures, small private enterprises at the ground floors of the housing estates (grocery shops, pawn shops, internet cafes, currency exchange offices, real estate offices), advertising billboards, rainbow colored blocks of flats that benefited from EU thermal rehabilitation funds puncturing an otherwise monochromatic landscape, new suburban areas for the rich, newly constructed churches and, more recently, crisis struck abandoned or unfinished real estate developments, all make up for this feeling of something that is not yet complete.

This issue has been picked up by several strands of scholarly literature that deal with post-socialist cities in an attempt to explain the changes through the appearance of a market economy, of collapsing infrastructures, public debt, deindustrialization and new structures of ownership [Andrusz et al., 1996; Hamilton et al., 2005; Stanilov, 2007]. The rapid social changes that took place after the collapse of state socialism had an important effect on the way cities were transformed. However, in questioning whether there is something specific

about the post-socialist city, a new urban formation, different from the capitalist city, or just a transitory phase leading to the latter, one should not forget that the initial question in this debate was asking, what the socialist city actually is [French and Hamilton, 1979]. The focus on the post-socialist city very often tends to obscure the fact that socialist urbanity was not a bulked experiment with a linear development, but rather a process that was being continuously adapted to shifting national and regional political and economic circumstances, in the same way that the post-socialist city proved not to be a fruitful analytical working concept and gradually lost its relevance [Bodnar, 2001; Bodnar, 2009].

This article traces the 'unfinished' character of Romanian cities back to socialism by looking at the shift in the planning discourse related to public urban spaces. The main aim is to explain how, in the process of advancing from 'first phase socialism' to 'second phase socialism', the perspective of the state towards the concept of the socialist city shifted, and why the attempt to put this shift of perspectives into practice eventually failed. The purpose is not to give a fully-fledged historical narrative of the process, but rather to focus on the transition in the urban planning discourses related to public space in Romania from the late 1960s to the 1970s, in particular the move from 'community centers' to 'civic centers'. The main material that this article uses are publications by Romanian planners from that period but also personal interviews conducted with local planners in one specific Romanian city, which will be used as an example in the last part of the article. However, this discursive shift does not stand alone, therefore it will be put into a broader comparative context of political and economic transformations that Romania was undergoing during that same period.

Finally, I believe a note on 'failure' is necessary which connects to my previous point. I do not intend to offer a simplistic explanation of this process, reducible to either particular agents or to a structural cause. In other words, it is not the 'failure' of certain individuals or institutions, nor is it state socialism that was deemed by default to fail. I also don't find James Scott's [1998] explanation of this process fully satisfying. Indeed, states attempt to apply the character of "calculability, legibility and simplification" upon their subjects, but they do not fail in doing so only because of micro-struggles that escape this logic at ground level [Li, 2005]. We are dealing here with a process that is more subtle and complex, located in the space between the object of expert knowledge and the reality on the ground. This object is obviously development, in this particular case the development of the Romanian socialist city. But failure is already there, in the way this distinction between the object of development and the subject to be developed is being constructed [Mitchell, 2002] and implemented because every new attempt of improving society and its translation into reality brings about new aspects that require improvement. The analytic advantage of this approach is that it goes beyond direct causal explanations like, for instance, 'failed policy', and tries to unravel complex assemblages that have led to a certain outcome.

## COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND THE CITY IN EARLY ROMANIAN SOCIALISM

The recurrent starting point for Romanian planners who dealt with public space during socialism was C.A. Perry's idea of the neighborhood unit. Perry, who was affiliated with the Chicago School of urban ecology in the 1920s and 1930s, envisioned vicinity as the main characteristic of human contacts in urban space. For him, it is not enough to build proper housing for the urban dwellers. Planners also have to think of ways through which to create a feeling of community [Perry, 1931]. Community feeling has to be stimulated by some sort of public institution – for Perry the most suitable being the elementary school for small areas and the so-called 'community center', an agglomeration of different public services, for bigger residential areas. Only through the establishment of community centers could the transitory character of urban encounters be transformed into meaningful face to face interaction. This idea was very attractive to most modern political regimes, from interwar social democracies, communists and national socialists, up to the post-war socialists in the Eastern bloc. After all, the neighborhood unit suited the paternalistic welfare states very well, for all the public social interactions were being filtered through a state institution. It is not by chance that in *'Contributions to Community Center Progress'*, compiled by Perry himself after the *'Community Center Sessions'*, and held on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1920 in Cleveland under the guidance of the National Education Association, the motto states: "A community center is an Americanization center" [1920]. At the same time, as one of the Romanian planners of the late socialist period notes, Perry's solution came to suit the "structural differentiation of the urban organism very well" [Derer, 1985, p. 77].

"The neighborhood unit accepts the existence of causal relations between the type of ambient, the organization of the community and the individual behavior. These relations lead to the rationalization of social services, according to the demands of a community the size of which it determines. The daily use of services (school, shops, community center) gives life in the neighborhood unit a certain cohesion that explains why Perry's proposal (and the various versions that followed it) was considered to be the basic mode of structural differentiation in the contemporary city" [Derer, 1985, p. 77–78].

On Romanian ground the urban community center and the debate around the neighborhood unit did not become important until after the Second World War, together with the rapid industrialization and subsequent urbanization of the country and the acute need for mass housing. However, the community center was not a completely unknown topic in the interwar period, albeit it was used mainly when it came to 'rationalizing' rural settlements. In a popularization book concerning the new socialist territorial organization program of the country, the Romanian anthropologist Henri Stahl notes that the issue was already of main concern for the first Romanian sociological school of Dimitrie Gusti in the interwar

period. While Gusti had not been able to put his plans into action because of political and economic limitations, Stahl argued that by the time he was writing, the socialist society had reached a level of development that was high enough to put Gusti's ideas into practice [1969].

A leading role in what Gusti called "cultural action" [1938] of sociology as an engaged science was the 'cultural center'. In an attempt to make out of culture (rural or urban) the connecting device between eugenics and nation building, Gusti argued that health, work, the soul and the mind should be the focus of the sociologist's improvement strategies [Gusti, 1938, p. 324]. In other words, the school, the church, the medical facility, the local administrations' headquarters and the cultural center should be brought together in one place, in order to properly organize community life. The cultural center plays a leading role in this context, for it is the institution that transforms a "social community into a cultural community" [Gusti, 1938, p. 332]. It creates the institutional framework for all the other leading members of the community and representatives of the institutions mentioned above to get together and 'cultivate' the people. The problem for Gusti was not so much to create community by creating a space where dwellers could meet and have face-to-face interactions – a situation that was already given in villages – but to create a national 'cultural community' by creating the space where people met under the auspices of the state. If under Perry's supervision "a community center was an Americanization center", under Gusti's supervision, a cultural center was a Romanization center.

By the time that Gusti was writing, the late 1930s, the neighborhood unit had already become a basic working concept in international modernist planning, creating some of the most famous and long enduring planning schemes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Corbusier's *unite de habitation*, the Soviet microraion experiments or the working class housing estates of Vienna and Berlin. In Romania, in terms of planning residential areas, the combination of these two influences, the neighborhood unit on one hand and the cultural center on the other, inspired three different waves of approaches during socialism: residential quarters (1952–1960), microraions (1958–1975) and the so-called residential complexes in the final period. The microraion superseded the rationalist residential quarter, which had followed an aesthetic approach favoring monumental structures over cost-efficient ones, after Khrushchev's famous 1954 speech "On useless Things in Architecture":

"At the 1959 regional competition in Moscow a new type of organization for residential zones was proposed, that would prove more elastic in its relation to the city, easier to adapt to the natural environment, according to the standards of industrial construction techniques and, foremost, more productive. Organizing residential areas according to microraions, by reinterpreting some of the elements of the 'neighborhood unit' theory, contributed to adapting planning to the specific context of Romania (as well as other socialist countries)" [Derer, 1985, p. 146].

The microraiion constitutes the basic urban unit in a city organized in hierarchical structural units<sup>1</sup>. This shift in planning residential areas led to the building of the first grand residential ensembles, functionally divided into complex structural units – sectors, neighborhoods, microraiions, and residential groups – with the social and cultural facilities being spread across the territory according to geometrical criteria. This approach was later criticized as an “invitation to monasticism” because it stressed the primacy of the building against the city” [Derer, 1985, p. 171].

By the late 1960s, the concern for the integration and functionality of the *microraiions* in relation to the city also became of interest for sociological research. This interest led to the publication of some of the very few urban ethnography studies of the socialist period. The group from the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Bucharest, led by Miron Constantinescu, started their research from the basic premise of Perry’s ‘neighborhood unit’, stating that the ideal according to which the residential areas are built, should fit Lewis Mumford’s standard of “small communities, built at a human scale” [Constantinescu et. al, 1970, p. 298]. On the one hand this notion shows an emerging concern for the actual scope of the main urban planning instruments that were in use at that time. Housing the new urban working class is not enough; building up a community, better yet a ‘national’ community and integrating it in urban life through well-developed urban services is just as important as the continuous development of the industrial basis of the country. These publications were also an intrinsic critique of urban development (obviously remaining inside of the limitations of permitted critique) because the results of the research project show that there were still important problems in terms of social integration of the new urban dwellers and that many of the necessary facilities were still lacking.

On the other hand, this emerging interest did not result in a continuous research agenda on urban community development. Quite the contrary, the early 1970s marked a shift in the interest of the state towards urban planning issues, a shift that was intended to leave the ‘neighborhood unit’ behind and start experimenting with different, more pervasive planning instruments. Romanian socialism was entering its ‘second phase’.

## **THE CIVIC CENTER AND THE FAILED PROMISES OF ‘SECOND PHASE’ SOCIALISM**

During the late 1960s Romania entered a phase of transition. Nicolae Ceaușescu became the head of the Romanian Communist Party in 1965 and soon afterward the country was put on a path of reform. Following the open critique of the Soviet invasion of Prague in

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<sup>1</sup> “The microraiion is an organic residential ensemble, meant to be a unity whose population is connected with the daily socio-cultural services providing institutions (...). It is delineated by collecting streets or natural objects; vehicle traffic should be minimized as much as possible inside the microraiion” [Derer, 1985, p. 150].

1968, Ceaușescu won the attention of Western leaders and, at least for a while, Romania became known as one of the most progressive socialist countries of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the party initiated a program of national development to reduce the economic dependency on the Soviet Union, while at the same time strengthening the ties with Western partners. During this period Romania signed several loan agreements with the International Monetary Fund and also a series of bilateral economic trade agreements with Western countries [Crowther, 1988]. In effect, Romanian planners acknowledged the country's entry into its 'second phase of development'. This meant that planning had to be thought of in a different manner, considering that Romania was now a country of medium development, which had surpassed the first phase of war recovery economy.

In theoretical terms, this shift was an attempt to move from the fixed hierarchy of the neighborhood unit towards a mobile, flexible hierarchy of streets and public squares. The Systematization Law of 1974 represented a paradigm shift because it aimed at building a unified network of settlements in the entire territory of the country. Although being used mainly as a tool to accelerate the development of smaller settlements and to equalize the geographical imbalances of the country in terms of economic development, systematization also had a much more pervasive scope:

“In the Romanian context, sistematizare is more than just a method for the physical transformation of villages and towns. It is, firstly, an ideal of how spatial planning should be integrated with economic planning (planificare) and socialist development. Second, systematization is a program for developing (or in some cases phasing out) each settlement in the country, from hamlet to metropolis. Third, systematization involves an organizational structure in which national objectives, regional imbalances and local potentialities are to be harmonized into a centrally administered state policy, codified by law” [Sampson, 1984, p. 75].

Systematization had the purpose of creating a mobile, flexible hierarchy of goods, information and labor not only at an urban level, but at the level of the entire settlement network – something that the localized neighborhood unit could have never accomplished. And this unified, systematic network had to be represented and made functional through a different built environment. What this meant was that the network of settlements was to be connected by polarizing nodes that would eventually converge into a hierarchical poly-nuclear system. These polarizing nodes were to be civic centers of six different types, according to the importance of the settlement in question [Cucu, 1977]. The first degree center was allocated to the capital, the second degree centers to the 17 municipalities existing at that time, the main cities of the country, while the sixth degree centers were assigned the new urban centers, villages promoted to the status of towns as part of the new development program. Thus the shift in paradigm represented by the Systematization Law

was both one of content and of scale. After housing the newly urbanizing industrial working class had been the main concern of neighborhood development until the 1960s, planners could start to experiment with public spaces that went beyond the confined spaces of the neighborhood.

The dry, technical talk of planners from this period, related to the implementation of the civic center concept, reveals a set of contradictory processes that were defining the transition from 'first phase' to 'second phase' socialism. The neighborhood unit became too restrictive in the context of urban planning. The microraisons were reproducing atomized enclaves which did not fit the newly emerging model of urbanity. The socialist city had to be thought of in a more flexible, integrative manner. At least, this was what professional planners were arguing for. At the same time, there was no doubt about the fact that this new hierarchical model of spatial planning had the purpose of redistributing, better yet re-centering state power at urban level. This seems to me an important point to make because planners were ultimately mid-level state bureaucrats not a distinct field operating outside of state power. For this very reason they were located at the center of these contradictions, between the 'plan' and reality on the ground. In the final part of this article I will also turn to the way in which these contradictions were translated at ground level.

“In contemporary urbanism two tendencies can be distinguished regarding the creation of urbanity in a public space: social contacts based on the neighborhood unit and those of a collective space (...). In a collective space, urbanity is influenced by some spatial-constructive premises, through which a continuous polarization of people can be attained, a fluctuation of them (...). This intention is fundamentally different from the communitarian contact promoted by the neighborhood idea. It allows for the establishment of interactions between people and public spaces in a much more complex way than the neighborhood unit” [Jurov, 1979, p. 23].

Romanian socialist planners were also taking over the international critique of modernism through some suggestions in their writings. It might seem somewhat surprising, but the first attack against modernism came from Ceaușescu himself during his opening speech of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the Union of Architects in 1971. Similarly in tone to Khrushchev's modernist manifesto in 1954 but radically different in content, Ceaușescu insisted that modernism had killed the street, the traditional locus of the social in Romanian culture, and insisted upon a “return to the street” with special attention given to specific local traditions [Zahariade, 2003, p. 77]. Between 1973 and 1975, when the package of laws that were meant to reorganize the territory of the state were passed, the professional debate about urban and rural planning and, more generally, development flourished. Romanian planners participated in international conferences and got to know the intellectual shift that was taking place around that time in world architecture. All of a sudden, public space was not to

be located inside of the housing projects anymore, but at street level, on the street and in the open public square.

However, this phase turned out to be very short lived. In reality, the Systematization Law signaled a renewed shift towards strong centralization. What at first sight looked like a potential critical stance against modernism soon turned out to be something completely different. 'Second phase' socialism made Romanian planners of this period feel increasingly trapped between the tension of international critical debates in architecture and the political and economic realities of the country. Starting with the oil crisis and leading up to the Volcker shock of the late 1970s, which made the interest rates for external loans go up, Romania stepped deeper and deeper into economic crisis. The reaction of the Romanian leaders to the shift towards 'flexible accumulation' in the West was to increase their push for industrialization based on heavy industries and fasten the level of urbanization, just as they were doing before, a move which gradually isolated the country in the 1980s and eventually led to the end of the regime [Crowther, 1988].

By the time Romania was running deeper into economic crisis in the early 1980s, planners were faced with a series of factual problems that complicated the possibility of realizing a new model of urbanity. The main investments in cities were being directed towards housing again. The main challenge for planners was only to meet a target of apartments to be built annually. The interest of the state towards social, cultural or even commercial facilities was falling behind. The projects for new civic centers mostly remained on paper. Even in the case of second degree urban centers, where the plans for the civic center of the city had to be approved directly by a presidential decree [Sampson, 1984], an actual approval of the project did not necessarily mean that the required funding would be granted for construction.

## **LOCAL ENTANGLEMENTS: THE 'NEW CIVIC CENTER' OF BRASOV**

In the final part of this article, I will briefly focus on a specific civic center project in order to clarify some of the previously discussed issues. The main point is to show how this assemblage of discourses and political-economic factors was translated at ground level. The example that I will use is Brasov, a 'second degree' city. Brasov played an important role in the urban network of Romania as the second most industrialized and economically prosperous city of the country after the capital Bucharest for almost the entire period of socialism. Brasov's civic center project started in the early 1960s in the context of the relocation of the old railway station of the city. The first consistent redevelopment program of the area, dating from 1969, although already being called a 'civic center' proposed a 'community center', a modernist housing estate with socio-cultural and commercial facilities (Fig. 1). The project remained on paper for a set of reasons. For one, it would have implied that the old neighborhood – the first working class area of town dating back to the end of the 19th

century – had to be completely demolished first. The problem with this was not the potential opposition of the residents but the entire logistics of the endeavor, mainly the fact that there was no available housing stock at the time in order to relocate the people. However, a second and much more important reason was the fact that this project was designed during the transition towards ‘second phase’ socialism. Very soon afterward, the project simply became obsolete and the search for a new design began.

It was only in 1987 that a new design was approved. This time it was called specifically the ‘New Civic Center’ of Brasov. The project was interesting in many ways, trying to combine an intricate set of requirements and resolve many of the existing contradictions. The new civic center was meant to connect the medieval center of the city with the new railway station and the large housing estates located at the outskirts of the city. It also combined a

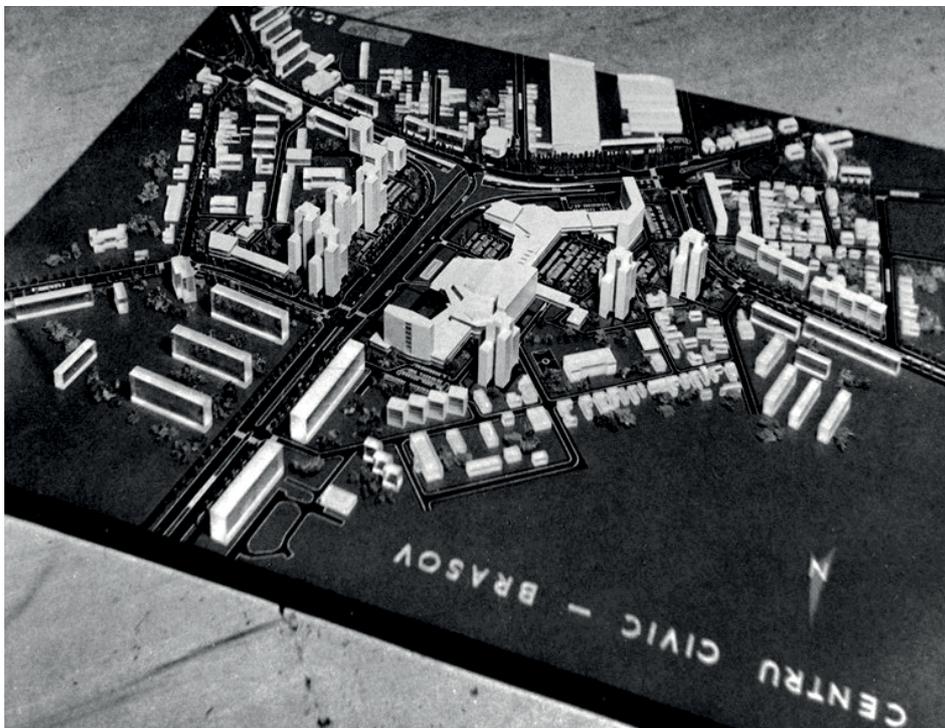


Fig. 1: Model of the Civic Center project for Brasov, 1969

series of cultural and commercial functions with a political one. The main square of the civic center was supposed to be the seat of the new political-administrative center of the city and region, to have a cultural center and three different commercial centers. One of the latter was particularly interesting, the so-called ‘commercial galleries’ which was an enclosed passageway that directed pedestrian traffic similar in concept to the Parisian arcades. This main island of the civic center was supposed to be encircled by a large boulevard and flanked with high rise residential blocks (Fig. 2). The demolition works of the old neighborhood commenced in 1987 and were conducted with great urgency. This was particularly strange because by that time everybody was fully aware of the deep economic crisis of the country and local planners knew that funding for the project would prove to be a big problem.

At this point the story becomes particularly relevant. Despite its apparent conceptual unity a civic center was the product of a combined set of local actors, managing different types of resources and having various degrees of influence over the central administration. For instance, there were rumors circulating among local planners that the speed of the demolitions was due to the impending visit of Ceaușescu in 1987. If local administrators

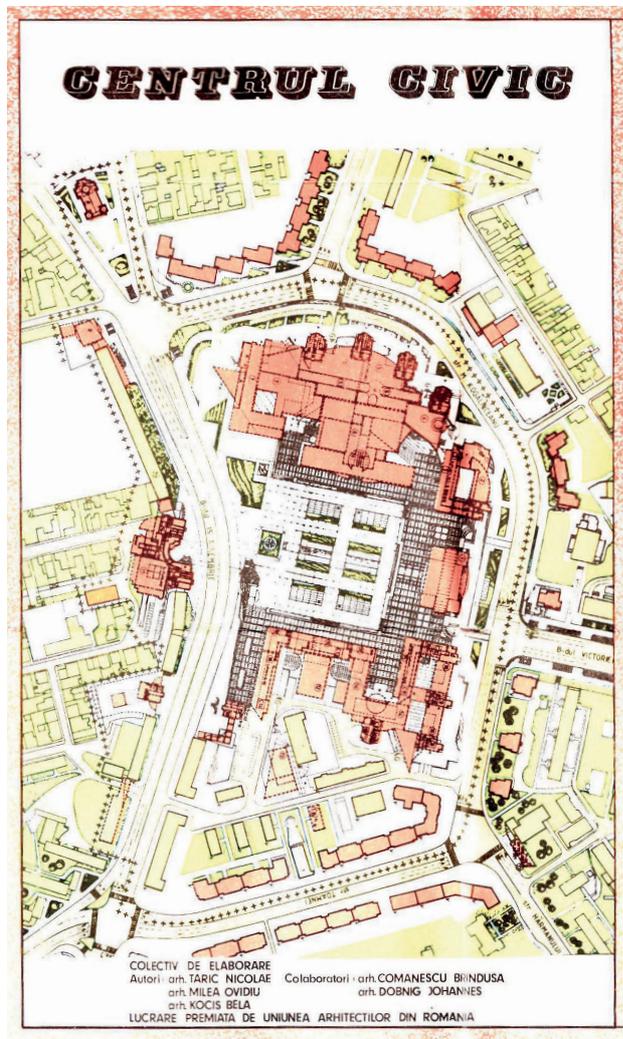


Fig. 2: Model of the Civic Center project for Brasov, 1987

could demonstrate to the party leader that construction work had already begun, it was hoped that additional sources of funding could be secured from the central administration for the project. However, Ceaușescu cancelled his visit to the city. This anecdote, even if difficult to confirm, reveals the fragility of such projects even in a centralized state.

Yet there were other reasons as well which without a doubt weighed heavier than these circumstantial events. They had to do with the structure of funding for such projects. Again, a civic center was a conceptual unit only on paper. In reality, the construction of each building was funded by different institutions depending on its function. The commercial galleries were funded by the 'Consumption Cooperative', the cultural center by the 'Workers

Union', the 'House of Fashion' by the 'Craftsman's Cooperative', the political-administrative center directly by a special state fund, while the residential buildings were funded by another, separate, housing fund. By 1987 most of these institutions were severely underfunded. There was barely any food to be found on the shelves of existing commercial units. Therefore the construction of other such facilities was almost out of question. Interestingly enough, even the political-administrative center did not receive funding from the central administration. Among all of these, only one unit was still heavily funded, namely housing. It comes as no surprise that the blocks of flats were the first ones to be built in the period between 1987 and 1989. The core of the civic center remained mostly empty. Even intricate schemes devised by local planners in order to get the entire project running did not prove successful. For example, as some of my interview partners explained, residential buildings that were facing main boulevards received an extra 5% funding for aesthetic brush up. Planners used to redirect these types of funds into some of the other buildings so that construction could at least commence. The end of socialism left the civic center of Brasov unfinished. While the residential buildings were almost completed, the main buildings located in the core of the civic center barely had the foundation work set. The 'New Civic Center' of Brasov ended up looking more like a scar in the middle of town than a new urban center.

## CONCLUSION: ARCHAEOLOGIES OF CIVIC CENTERS

This contribution has retraced the development of the civic center as a planning instrument born out of the transition towards the urban developmental paradigm of so-called Romanian socialism in its 'second phase'. However, it also attempted to reveal more than that. On one hand, it showed how the transition from 'community centers', based on the idea of the neighborhood unit, to the idea of the supposedly "more complex" 'civic centers' failed to be implemented. As a consequence, community spaces in residential estates were neglected and later became the target of crowding with additional residential constructions – a direct effect of the 'back to the street manifesto'. Civic centers which were supposed to bring the idea of urban public space to a whole new level were also not implemented in the way envisioned by the new paradigm for a series of disparate reasons.

On the other hand, the article also attempted to make a point about the 'failures' of planning. While the story was presented here in a chronological manner, in reality the reconstruction of the narrative began at ground level through the case of the 'New Civic Center' of Brasov. It is for this reason that the method is best described through what I prefer to call an 'archaeology of a civic center'. Ultimately, an 'archaeology of a civic center'<sup>2</sup> is an archaeology of power. It starts from the material emptiness of Brasov's 'New Civic Center' and attempts to reconstruct the complex assemblage of economic, political and technical factors that lead to failure. I insist on this point because the 'local', as a unit of analysis, is at least on the

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2 For more on the specific use of the term archaeology in material culture studies and anthropology, see Buchli 2000.

same level as the state when it comes to defining the outcomes of a planning project. In other words, it is not the failure of the state, if by 'state' we mean a locus of centralized power. Rather, the state operates in different manners on different levels and is also heavily influenced by external factors, as I have attempted to show. Therefore, looking at how a development project comes into being and is subsequently translated into practice is an exercise of looking at how a 'plan' becomes fragmented at different levels of the state and at how this fragmentation is recomposed at ground level. Brasov is an example of an extreme case. The unfinished civic centers were not the norm in late Romanian socialism. In most cases, when it comes to large cities, the projects for civic centers remained on paper, while in the case of small towns or villages advanced to the status of towns the projects were in many cases completed. Yet the particularity of each case does not contradict the value of a singular case because what is of interest is rather the distribution of power among various actors that engage in making the civic center.

I see the advantage of an anthropological perspective in the possibility of shifting the focus from the 'why' to the 'how' of failure. This shift of focus has two advantages. First, it gives the opportunity of looking into the details of socialist planning practices. The second point is political and relates to the first. Such a perspective enables us to move away from explanations that attribute the urban malaise of the Romanian post-socialist city (or any other post-socialist city) exclusively to the grand failure of state socialism. This brings us back to the introduction of this contribution. The reason why the 'unfinished' character of the post-socialist Romanian city was referred to in quotation marks is that in reality a city is continuously in the making. The power dynamics between actors change, new elements come into play and the idea of the development plan itself becomes much more diffuse. Even in this more recent context, an 'archaeology' of urbanity done along the same lines is rewarding. However, this would require much more space. Therefore this article just sets the grounding for what is ultimately a contemporary question, the understanding of public spaces in the contemporary Romanian city.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## PICTURE CREDITS

Fig. 1: Model of the Civic Center project for Brasov (1969), photo by Arh. Gruia Hilohi.

Fig. 2: Selected design for the 'New Civic Center' of Brasov project (1987), From Brasov City Map, 1987, Tourism Publishing House.

**From Social Housing Estate to Urban Community.**  
**Public Space in Residential Estates in Poland after 1945**

*Piotr Marciniak*

# From Social Housing Estate to Urban Community.

## Public Space in Residential Estates in Poland after 1945

*Piotr Marciniak*

### A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Large housing estates erected after World War II greatly impacted on the image of many towns across Poland. The development of the urban planning concepts behind these estates provides an interesting case study on how approaches to social space evolved. This paper will present the various concepts in the context of the social, political and economic transformations over time. It will consider the period between 1945 and 1989, i. e. from the end of World War II to the end of communism in Poland. The subsequent years will be ignored due to the insufficient time perspective and the need to use completely different tools to describe and analyse them.

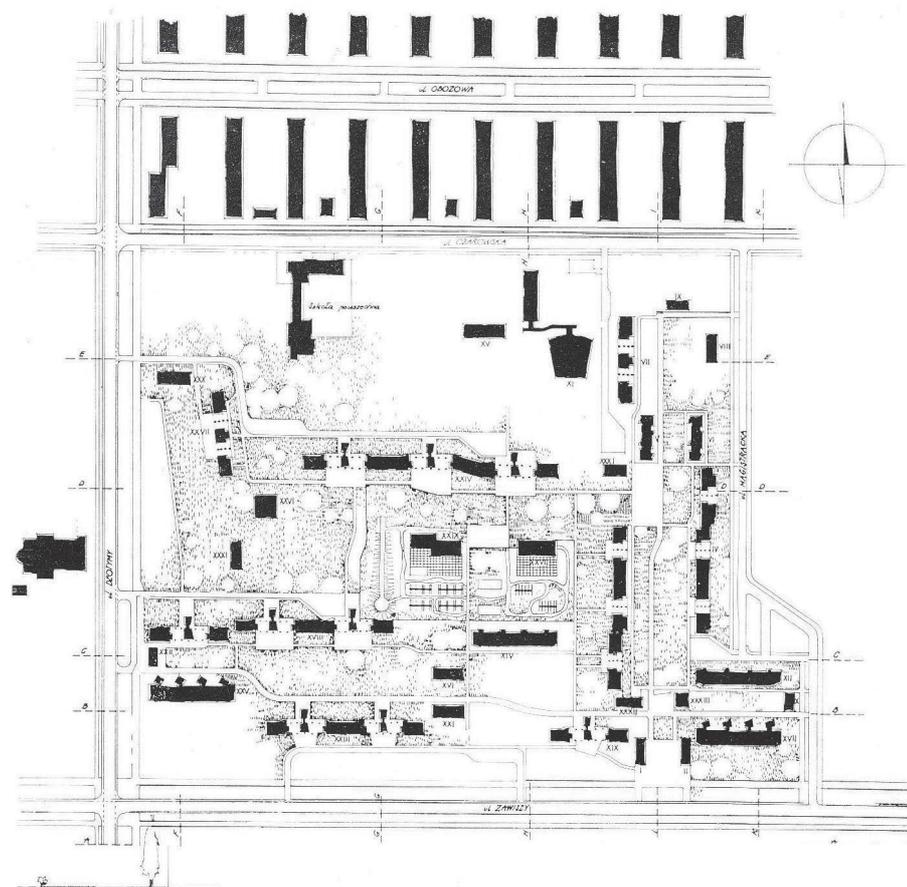
Obviously, such a brief presentation cannot include all the ideas, principles and notions pertaining to social space. My intention is to reveal the most interesting and significant proposals regarding social space within large housing estates in Poland, especially those which affected the subsequent generations of designers.

### THE 1950S

In Warsaw, the designers of the first post-war residential estates made explicit references to the avant-garde models and traditions of the Interbellum, especially to the social housing estates erected by the Warsaw Housing Association before 1945, designed by architects like Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, Czesław Przybylski or Helena and Szymon Syrkus [Minorski, 1970]. These estates in turn, in their structure and the relatively free variation of forms, referred to the tradition of the British Garden City Movement [Orlańska et al., 1968].

One of these prototypes is the Na Rakowcu Estate realised in the early 1930s by the Warsaw Housing Association. Its designers, Szymon and Helena Syrkus, who took part in the works of CIAM, used it to define the main principles of a modern residential estate which included the social involvement of architects. The buildings, set in a linear arrangement, were intended for workers and meant to be inexpensive. They provided an internal toilet and were designed in collaboration with their future residents. The estate featured a community house including a bathroom, club, kindergarten and laundry room.

These principles were adopted in one of the Syrkuses' showcases, the Warsaw Housing Association's "Na Kole" Estate built in the 1950s (Fig. 1).



Projekt układu przestrzennego II kolonii osiedla WSM na Kole — w poziomie parterów

Fig. 1: The Warsaw Housing Association „Na Kole” Estate, Szymon and Helena Syrkus

Prior to its realisation, the designers re-activated their contacts with other CIAM groups, which WWII had interrupted, and discussed their design studies with colleagues from countries like the United Kingdom, France, the United States and Sweden. The spatial typology of the estate stemmed from the “Functional Warsaw” town planning concept. Its individual districts were divided into neighbourhoods for 10,000 residents and these were then subdivided into smaller complexes/settlements. The neighbourhood, designed as a

complex of freestanding buildings, became the basic unit within the urban structure. It was based around a primary school and some public facilities, all within the maximum distance of 500 children's footsteps. The humble residential standards, in particular the floor space of the flats, were compensated by providing various communal spaces on the urban scale. The project was intended to include a laundrette (replacing areas for washing machines in the individual flats), community buildings, youth centres, pubs and other common facilities, many of which were never erected. This points to one of the most significant features of community spaces within housing estates in the People's Republic of Poland: they were always designed but seldom realised. Critics wrote: "Consequently, the estates built at the time became groups of flats only. The character of socially functioning neighbourhoods was lost. At a time when people from rural areas migrated to cities quite rapidly, this was all the more dangerous as it intensified the decline of responsibility for the management of the entire estates ... which resulted in the devastation of buildings and their surroundings" [Syrkus, 1976]. Nevertheless, residents today feel more positive about this estate, writing in blogs that "the Warsaw Housing Association's Na Kole Estate is, at present, one of the most beautiful areas in Warsaw" [Janusz, 2012]. The Na Kole Estate was an actually implemented example of the idea of the neighbourhood and strongly affected other architects. In 1946, the project was presented in the United States and was highly praised by Lewis Mumford who invited its authors to visit examples of the Neighbourhood Unit Concept. This, I believe, must have made an impact on the final Na Kole design.

In the early 1950s, this approach to designing space within residential estates was severely criticised and designers started to favour principles based on historically informed models over functional analysis, marking the beginning of the so-called 'socialist realism'. The practical implementation of these principles started after 1956 and followed their basic programme guidelines. These included the hierarchical spatial layouts of the residential complexes comprising units (intended for approximately 2,000 to 2,500 residents), neighbourhoods (for 8,000 to 10,000 residents) and districts (comprising four to six neighbourhoods and intended for over 10,000 residents). Each neighbourhood was supposed to include appropriate infrastructure for education, sports and recreation. Due to the availability of schools and commercial centres the size of these neighbourhoods ranged, ultimately, from 5,000 to 15,000 residents [Wojtkun, 2004].

## **THE 1960s**

In the early 1960s a new approach to urban planning developed. Based on the agenda of functionalism and the Athens Charter it aimed to limit the dimensions of town centres to the major and necessary commercial requirements whilst housing was to be provided in separate large residential districts. The necessity to build over 1.8 million flats between 1961 and 1965 to ease the massive housing shortage resulted in the growing popularity of

large scale solutions. The planning of whole urban districts became the dominant form of housing construction. The notion of social equality, which resulted in the need to provide everyone with easy access to housing regardless the costs and quality of the outcomes, also led to attempts of solving the housing problems through the industrialisation of housing construction and through prescriptive centralised action. These aimed to speed up the construction process and imposed specific qualitative and quantitative standards.

These principles were enforced within effective laws. In 1961, the Chairman of the Construction, Urban Planning and Architecture Committee issued the main framework for designing residential estates defining such estates as the basic unit within the structure of residential areas and specifying a programme of basic commercial amenities and green areas for such a unit [Kasperski, 1973]. This also included educational, sports and recreation facilities.

Estates were not the only models for other projects. The development of housing construction in the 1960s was also significantly affected by the realisation of the so-called “Super Unit” in Katowice.<sup>1</sup> This was an attempt to transfer the ideas implemented in Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation and the principles of Soviet collectivism to Poland. Today the massive building, which is nearly 190 metres long and 51 metres high, houses roughly 3,000 people in 762 flats. Similarly to Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation, the Super Unit was planned with a full programme of services situated along an indoor gallery. However, this never developed beyond the planning stage and, as later commentators stated, “It is simply a sleeping facility, despite the plans to furnish it with commercial ones. There were even rumours that the authorities wanted to create a model collective block following the example of similar Soviet projects. The flats were to be without kitchens and the residents were to use a common eating place instead. Fortunately, common sense prevailed ...” [Malkowski, 2012]. All that has materialised of these plans are the corridors on the second, eighth and fourteenth floors as well as lifts which stop on every third floor.

Estates did, nonetheless, continue to be the main place of residence. An excellent example of an architect’s sense of scale and the prospective residents’ needs was the Sady Źoliborskie Estate designed by Halina Skibniewska (Fig. 2). As the design work started in 1958 the estate was, on the one hand, a reference to the social estate idea and, on the other, an attempt to move away from the ‘Wohnung für Existenzminimum’ concept. The latter materialised in a flexible layout of flats and quiet space between the buildings. The whole area comprised five sections (the last of these was completed in 1973). Tight connections between the individual buildings were adopted from the social space concept. The new neighbourhood was erected on the site of a former allotment garden. Halina Skibniewska decided to preserve

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<sup>1</sup> In the foreground The Silesian Insurgents’ Monument, a monument to those who took part in the three Silesian Uprisings of 1919, 1920 and 1921, which aimed to make the region of Upper Silesia part of the newly independent Polish state – one of the most important public spaces in Katowice

the existing greeneries and to compose the unpretentious five-storey-high buildings into the existing setting. As soon as the residents moved in, they could enjoy the view from their windows. The local school, nursery and kindergarten were located on the outskirts of the



Fig.2: "Sady Żoliborskie" Estate in Warsaw, Halina Skibniewska



Fig.3: The "Rataje" residential district in Poznań, Jerzy Schmidt, Regina Pawuła, Zdzisław Piwowarczyk

neighbourhood. Commercial facilities were also provided including the Sady Milk-bar which, over time, achieved cult status in Warsaw [Trybuś, 2011]. According to later commentators, "The success of Sady Żoliborskie was a result of its designer's knowledge as well as her social and architectural sensitivity. Everybody liked the estate. Varsovians were going there for walks or to show the place to people from other towns, whilst top-ranking officials invited formal visitors to see it" [Majewski, 2010].

Nonetheless, small, cosy estates like Sady Żoliborskie were rare. It was far more common to build entire districts in the rapidly growing towns. An example of such a residential district designed from scratch was Rataje in Poznań, intended to accommodate 140,000 people [Marciniak, 2001]. The urban layout and the distances between buildings were determined by the construction work requirements and limited by the maximum reach of crane arms (Fig. 3). This had a direct and not very positive impact on the arrangement of the buildings and contributed to their uninspired appearance. The Rataje project designers wanted the district's geometry and organisational structure to impact on the inhabitants by "putting, to some extent, the way they lived in a certain order" [Pawuła et al., 1960].

There were plans to place all amenities related to living, working, commerce, leisure and transport in one neighbourhood centre. The flat was considered the smallest urban unit. It was assumed that the residents would include single people as well as families. The designers wrote: "Single people should be provided with flats offering privacy whilst complexes of such flats should be arranged around central premises intended for common use ... Accordingly, for example, pensioners' homes will be located among residential buildings" [Pawuła et al., 1960]. These principles indicate that the mixing single people and families was expected to

create personal contacts between them and to enhance their sense of responsibility for the estate.

Primary schools were intended to constitute community centres in the individual estates, complemented by nurseries, kindergartens, recreation areas for children and adults (including a swimming pool) and local commercial centres. An important feature of the communal spaces in the Rataje project was the estate-specific greenery system. According to the designers, the green areas were meant follow pedestrian paths leading from estate centres to the residential neighbourhoods [Brendel et al., 2009].

## **THE 1970s**

The 1970s saw the realisation of gigantic residential complexes still based on the ideas of the Athens Charter, but also referring to some other original ideas of Polish architects. The spatial model featuring the commercial centre as a crystallisation point had obviously become a permanent feature which can clearly be seen in the example of the Stegny Estate in Warsaw. Nonetheless, many estates, for instance the Przyjaźni Estate in Wrocław, did not have any commercial facilities at all.

One of the most interesting examples of how communal and commercial space was integrated into residential developments is the residential and commercial complex at Plac Grunwaldzki in Wrocław, designed by Jadwiga Hawrylak-Grabowska. It links the residential tower blocks with the horizontally shaped commercial stretch. The pedestrian level includes a variety of functions: shops, cafés, and exhibition halls constituting a multifunctional urban centre. The total image was complemented with a new and fresh approach to the aesthetical dimension of constructions that differed from the ‘socmodernism’<sup>2</sup> of the times. This was one of the first building structures in Poland to exhibit a new, somewhat brutalist aesthetic in residential buildings. As most other new estates in Wrocław, the Plac Grunwaldzki development, designed by Jadwiga Hawrylak-Grabowska, was promoted as an affordable or even inexpensive solution. The aesthetics of the buildings was a result of the building technology. It employed prefabricated façade panels with characteristic round openings [Małachowicz, 1978]. Referring to the sculpture-like approach to the façade, the project was compared to the work of the French avant-garde group “Le mur vivant” [Molicki, 1996].

The way in which social space in new urban complexes (and whole cities) were constructed was greatly influenced by the work of Oskar Hansen, in particular by his concept of Open Form. The Helsinki-born descendent of a Norwegian millionaire, Hansen was a Polish architect,

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2 The word “socmodernizm” is used to describe the modernist works of post social realism architects in the People’s Republic of Poland.

theoretician and painter. He developed a concept of future urban areas called the Linear Continuous System (LCS).<sup>3</sup> His ideas were applied in the “Przyczówek Grochowski” Estate and Słowackiego Estate in Lublin (Fig. 4). They were spatially organised around the following

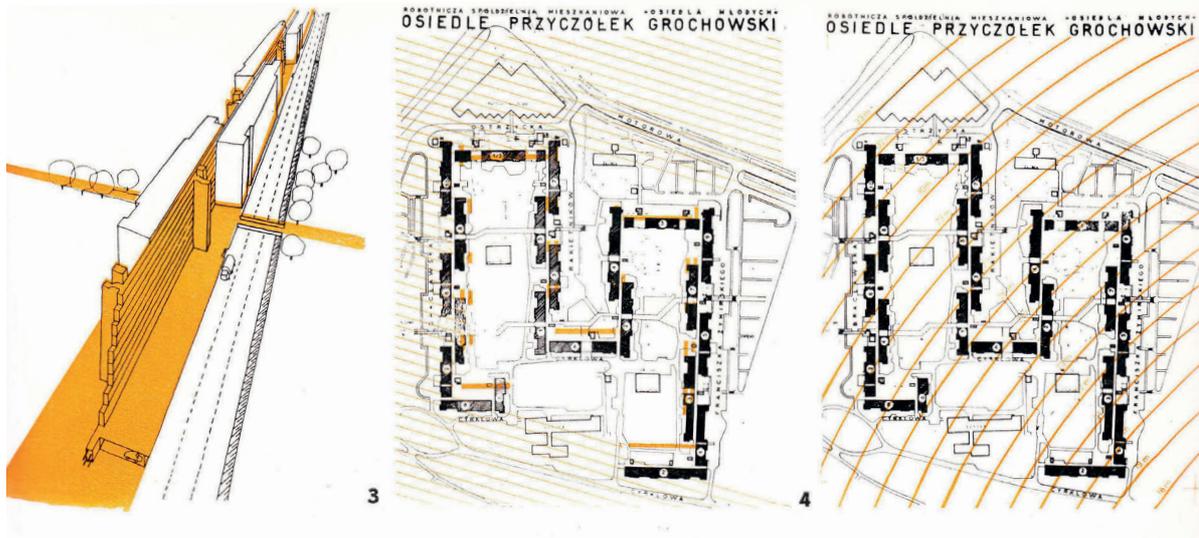


Fig. 4: Linear Continuous System (LCS); practical application – Przyczówek Grochowski Estate in Warsaw

principles: horizontal segregation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, linear concentration of developments, one single circulation channel harmoniously connecting the various features of the commercial structure (e.g. garages, shops, kiosks and laundrettes) and the interaction of the circulation system with the residential zone via roofed pedestrian paths on all levels [Szafer, 1979]. This resembled in some ways the multilevel structure of traffic segregation and the combined residential and commercial functions in London’s Barbican. Oskar Hansen’s works heralded new linear layouts making a great impact on Polish (and many other) urban planners.

A noteworthy achievement was the realisation of the Ursynów Północny Estate in Warsaw, which promoted the idea of the so-called ‘group allotment’. In this case the basic spatial principle was to enable a maximum variation of development forms and an intimate scale of units (Fig. 5). Buildings of different heights were arranged into small neighbourhoods around inner courtyards. The major element of the communal space comprised internal pedestrian paths: small streets providing meeting places for the residents. The streets were modelled on Warsaw’s most beautiful downtown street, Nowy Świat, as well as on other historic areas.<sup>4</sup>

3 Oskar Hansen’s theories are used and developed by Svein Hatløy at the Bergen School of Architecture, Norway.

4 The obvious influences also include solutions from a Polish competition project for the new city of Espoo, Finland, designed by Jan M. Chmielewski and team. The major feature of its form is a street perceived as a socially integrating space.

On the Ursynów Północny Estate, the commercial facilities for the estate were planned in three tiers. The basic centres were situated in each housing block. Second level centres served four blocks and third level ones concentrated general municipal services [Dobrucki, 1975].



Fig. 5: "Ursynów Północny" Estate in Warsaw, Marek Budzyński and team, from 1971 – idea of the so-called "group allotment"

Among the main crystallisation points of social activities were schools which, apart from providing education, were also connected to other public amenities, e.g. clubs, libraries and music and sports halls.<sup>5</sup> The designers of the Ursynów Północny Estate, Marek Budzyński and his team, wrote that it was "an attempted reference to the Warsaw Housing Association's Sady Żoliborskie Estate and to other prior experience" [Budzyński, 1975].

At this point I would like to mention the social role played by churches in Poland. The secularisation of the state propagated by the communist authorities resulted, among other things, in the abolishment of religion lessons from schools. Subsequently, these were transferred to the local parishes which had a great impact on the character and functional programme of church developments. The new churches, for instance the Lord's Ascension Church in Ursynów, still performed their liturgical functions, but also opened up to their parishioners' other needs. Consequently, they became multifunctional centres of worship, religious counselling, tuition and culture. The church complexes now accommodated

<sup>5</sup> Several years earlier a similar concept was created for Winogrady District in Poznań. This was referred to as the "Winogrady Walking Centre" and included the construction of several smaller second level centres offering a commercial programme for 75,000 users and one third level centre for approximately 190,000 users. The idea was never implemented.

presbyteries and classrooms, but also meeting places for adolescents, students and members of religious movements. Sometimes they also featured family counselling centres, nurseries and kindergartens. Parishes, at the time, did not only cater for religious needs but also provided venues for cultural events: exhibitions, concerts and theatre performances. Quite often they were also influential centres of underground political life.

## THE 1980s

The late 1970s saw a slow down of the massive developments driven by loans from the West. In the early 1980s Poland was experiencing an unprecedented recession which official propaganda tried to conceal. In this difficult situation, new ideas began to flourish and residential design displayed, to lesser or greater extent, an inclination towards new urban planning concepts defying the modernist stance of the previous era. At this time, the construction of the small town of Zielone Wzgórze started near Poznań, designed by Jerzy Buszkiewicz and his team, in collaboration with Augustyn Bańka, an architectural psychology expert. It proved to be a unique experiment. The urban arrangements of Zielone Wzgórze referred to the notion of small towns and were inspired by historic examples. Its Design was based on the classic principle of a commercial centre, concentrated around a market square. Spatially, it anticipated a functional city solution and returned to the notion of districts developing around commercial centres with a central square – all consistent with historical standards. “Today, good urban planning is not only created by laws and regulations. It also develops from cultural experience and from using architecture that is ‘indicative’, historical,” wrote a commentator at the beginning of the decade [Kosiński, 1984]. In Zielone Wzgórze the designers re-introduced the use of neighbourhoods and this was, indeed, the re-application of historical roots. As a result, in Zielone Wzgórze the market square became the most important venue for social communication. This was consistent with Rob Krier’s proposals presented in *Urban Space in Theory and Practice* in which he morphologically emulated the layout of towns based on traditional squares, streets and boulevards (as an antidote to the CIAM versions of the functionalistic city). It was also consistent with the American concepts of New Urbanism. In Zielone Wzgórze the continued critique of the traditional suburbia was given an opportunity to create spaces of identity. Post-modern rhetoric offered a means to revisit the traditional social and communal values by using traditional architecture and urban planning [Steele, 2005].

## A SHORT REFLECTION

Despite the excellent ideas which stood behind them, a major trait of many estates was that communal spaces were planned but never constructed. They provided neither functioning landscaping, nor commercial, or sports facilities. The problem of community spaces (or

the lack of these) was seen as extremely important and led to some top-down attempts to mend this deficiency. In 1976, the housing association authorities issued a resolution for the provision of appropriate residential conditions in association-owned estates. In the resolution this was understood as a full implementation of services in line with the architectural design of the area and the effective instructions. It is interesting to note that a book about Polish architecture written at the time includes a specific section called “Social Space” complementing a more general chapter on housing construction [Szafer, 1981].

The construction practice was appalling. During the entire existence of the People’s Republic of Poland, prefabricated developments prevailed, mainly executed in precast concrete slabs. The latter’s role in the evolution of residential designs fitted into the ideology of productivism promoted in communist countries. Communal space was marginalised in a vast majority of Polish residential estates and complexes which effectively remained huge sleeping facilities. The mostly planned communal areas, similarly to landscape parks, were not constructed at all or only as heavily truncated and watered down versions of the original designs.

However, it should be noted that today most residents are fond of their estates. A survey conducted by *Gazeta Wyborcza* showed that 77% respondents liked living in Ursynów and only 5% did not. The respective positive responses regarding other estates in Warsaw ranged from 56 to 63% [Happach, 2011]. In Poznań the greatest attachment to their area of residence was found among the inhabitants of a block estate (51% respondents of whom only 31% stated that they felt no such attachment) [Kotus, 2005]. This proves that it is also possible to find positive examples – in all those districts where communal spaces were paid attention to.

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Fig. 1. The Warsaw Housing Association „Na Kole” Estate, Szymon and Helena Syrkus, 1947-1956, source: Syrkus H., *Kuidei osiedla społecznego 1925-1975*, Warszawa 1976

Fig. 2. “Sady Żoliborskie” Estate in Warsaw, Halina Skibniewska, 1958-1973, source: [www.skyscrapercity.com](http://www.skyscrapercity.com)

Fig. 3. The “Rataje” residential district in Poznań, Jerzy Schmidt, Regina Pawuła, Zdzisław Piwowarczyk, 1963, source: photo Jerzy Unierzyski

Fig. 4. Linear Continuous System (LCS); practical application - Przyczółek Grochowski Estate in Warsaw (Oskar Hansen, Zofia Garlińska-Hansen, 1969-1974), source: *Architektura* No 10/1971

Fig. 5. “Ursynów Północny” Estate in Warsaw, Marek Budzyński and team, from 1971 – idea of the so-called “group allotment”, source: *Architektura* No 9-10/1975

## **The Dream of Welfare.**

**Identity and Community Ideals in Madrid's Housing Estates of the 1950s**

*Maria Antonia Fernández Nieto, Marta García Carbonero*

## The Dream of Welfare. Identity and Community Ideals in Madrid's Housing Estates of the 1950s

*Maria Antonia Fernández Nieto, Marta García Carbonero*

“To save their bodies and souls!”<sup>1</sup> Such was the claim of Spain's National Housing Institute's general director as he launched the first National Housing Plan (Plan Nacional de la Vivienda) in 1955. This groundbreaking residential programme intended to put an end to the shanty neighbourhoods that rapidly grew around Madrid sheltering the migrant population that came from the countryside in search of work<sup>2</sup>.

During the first two decades after the Civil War (1936–1939), the Spanish government officially recognized the social concern that had been at the heart of the architectural debate in many other European countries during the interwar period. Though clearly inspired by such archetypical proposals as Das neue Frankfurt, with its ‘Trabantenstädte’, or Abercrombie's London Plan, with its neighbourhood units, this Spanish initiative took place under radically different circumstances: it was promoted by a dictatorial government, it prioritized ownership over rental and its target occupants were national migrants with an agrarian background rather than urban proletarians long established in the city. Thus, the

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1 Claimed by Luis Valero, then General Director of the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda (National Housing Institute) in the article “Los poblados de absorción de Madrid” in: *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*. Nr. 176–177/August–September 1956, p. 45–49.

2 The everyday life of these shanty towns is well portrayed in the novel *La piqueta* written in 1959 by Antonio Ferrer, Madrid 2009.

resulting neighbourhoods tried to convey a sense of place by incorporating urban features that evoked the physical and social setting of the migrants' rural hometowns, yet avoiding folklorism.

This contribution shows which elements of public space and community facilities were used to foster a sense of belonging in those who had left their rural life behind. It asks how modernism and tradition coexisted symbolizing a better future, yet not forgetting the past. With a fifty year perspective, it will also explore how these ideals have survived changing social and urban conditions, as well as the pass of time.

After the Spanish Civil War the lack of success of Franco's economical policy of autarchy led to a rash increase of migration flows from the countryside to urban areas that rapidly turned the outskirts of cities into a landscape of improvised housing<sup>3</sup>. The need to provide these neighbourhoods with the essential urban infrastructure – together with the official concern to erase this tangible proof of the country's poverty – was the rationale behind the I Plan Nacional de la Vivienda (1<sup>st</sup> National Housing Plan) of 1955. This plan proposed to build 500.000 dwellings within the following five years and was further developed into a more specific strategy for Madrid [Ministerio de Trabajo, 1955].

The plan for Madrid comprised four components conceptualized in four consecutive phases: the so-called Poblados de Absorción, or take-over units, which aimed at relocating the population of the shanty towns in new homes within provisional settlements; the Poblados Dirigidos, which were built under the direction of young architects in charge of all scales of planning, from the master plan to the building on site, much in the fashion of the German interwar Siedlungen; New Urban Centres for better-off sections of the population; and typified neighbourhoods which were to have the scale of a district in their own right. These last two proposals were never realized, but the first two tackled the residential problems of Madrid with an urban perspective on the whole metropolis [Fernández-Galiano et al., 1989, p. 20].

The Poblados de Absorción, built between 1954-1956, were temporary constructions developed to relocate the illegal settlers in order to free the grounds for the main roads into the city. They consisted of some outstanding architectural examples by Alejandro de la Sota [De la Sota, 1989, p. 30–33] and Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza [Revista Nacional de Arquitectura, 1956, p. 145–170] which recalled the simple architecture of rural villages with patios and small squares, resorting to the simplicity of vernacular architecture through the filter of Modernism. They provided a first experience to approach the second phase, the Poblados Dirigidos or Directed Units (Fig. 1).

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<sup>3</sup> The situation was already denounced as early as 1945 in newspaper headlines such as the one published on the November 9th issue of the *Diario Arriba* newspaper: "A Belt of Shanty Neighbourhoods Blocks Madrid. Its Expanse already exceeds that of the Urban Area".

The Poblados Dirigidos were permanent settlements integrating a more ambitious plan to structure Madrid's future growth and to reorganize the city "from the outskirts to the centre" [Fernández-Galiano et al., 1989, p. 19], in the words of Julián Laguna, then director of the Comisaría para la Ordenación Urbana de Madrid (Madrid's Urban Development Commission). The overall scheme promoted the city's extension with a set of satellite neighbourhoods gravitating independently within a green belt around Madrid, which strongly recalls Ernst May's 1928 extension plan for Frankfurt.



Fig. 1: Poblado de Absorción Fuencarral B by Alejandro de la Sota

Thus, the outskirts of Madrid were designed around seven Poblados Dirigidos – Entrevías, Fuencarral, Caño Roto, Canillas, Manoteras, Orcasitas and Almendrales – most of them erected in the surroundings of existing villages to profit from their infrastructure [Bataller et al., 2004, p. 174–186].

A strong sense of belonging was fostered in these neighbourhoods of the second phase through several measures. In the first place, Francist housing policy was based on the family, – the larger, the better – and on property housing rather than rental. This encouraged a more permanent, long run relationship to the place the new settlers lived in and to the community around them.

Another factor strengthening a sense of belonging – although not intended in the planning – was the fact that the original shanty neighbourhoods, and thus, the following Poblados Dirigidos, were settled by people from the same villages or the same regions. Previous acquaintances, the same dialects and even similar ways of cooking helped to build a familiar network of identification within the overwhelming metropolitan life. The limited size of

the Poblados Dirigidos encouraged a further identification of these new districts with the physical realm of the user's former villages.

As in Frankfurt's 1928 plan, the Poblados Dirigidos were satellite suburbs with clear boundaries that stood in the outskirts with little connection to Madrid's centre. The green belt drafted in the master plan was never laid out. Instead, the new settlements stood like islands in the barren landscape of the Castilian plateau. This physical isolation lent each of them a differentiated profile within the city as a whole that helped shape their urban identity.

An additional measure fostering the sense of belonging to the new neighbourhoods was the so-called 'personal contribution' in the building process. The financial regulations of the Plan Nacional de la Vivienda expected the new owners to come up with 20% of their new homes' total price at the start, paying the rest in reduced monthly rates during the following 50 years [Fernández-Galiano et al. 1989, p. 201]. Since most of the future users could not afford the initial payment, the plan devised a system of compensation through self-construction of the new homes. On weekends, the future inhabitants could work off their 20% of the cost on site, guided by a group of young architects who got the chance to gain a first professional experience while spreading the design principles of modernism.

Self-construction was the most differentiating feature of the Poblados Dirigidos, imposing simple building methods and a high ratio of low-rise housing in order to prevent labour accidents among non-professional workers. Although mid-rise apartment towers were built for those who could not work on site (elderly people, widows, waiters working on Sundays, etc.) a high percentage (at least for Madrid's standards) of these settlements was made up by two-storey row houses, similar in scale to the inhabitants rural hometowns. The Poblados were modern villages within a larger city.



Fig. 2: Playground at Caño Roto with seesaws and balance toys designed by sculptor Ángel Ferrant

The settlements were laid out as modernist loose arrangements of open blocks that left different kinds of open spaces between them. Playgrounds, squares and pedestrian streets were meant to transfer the community life of the inhabitants' rural background to the new districts. To underline this link with the citizens' home region, a sandpit at Caño Roto's playground (Fig. 2) was even filled with *albero* – the yellow sand of bullfight rings – shipped directly from Seville [Arquitectura 1959, p. 2–17].

Following CIAM's post-war concern for civic centres [Mumford, 2002, p. 204–215], public facilities grouped around an open square were planned in all new neighbourhoods. The church, a small theatre and shopping facilities located at the centre of the settlement were to provide the core of community life, while primary schools and small shops were scattered at less central locations. However, the tight budget and the lack of official interest once the shanty towns were removed hindered the building of all but the parish centre, the schools and the shops. Libraries, secondary schools or medical facilities would only come after decades of citizen associations' struggle. During this long period of shortage, the church took up the main role in community life, often also providing the most recognisable architectural symbol of each neighbourhood.

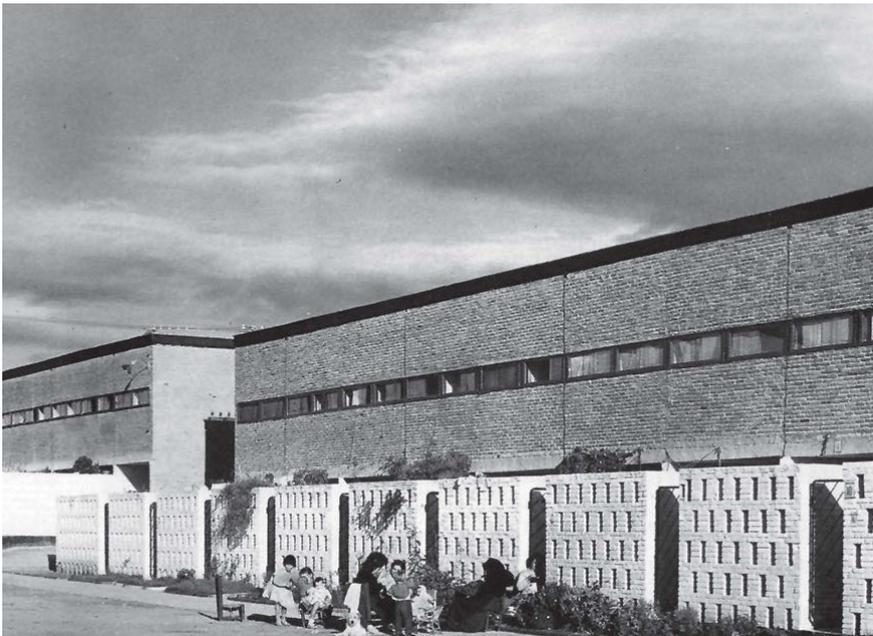


Fig. 3: Women gathering in front of the row houses at Entrevías

Like many international urban proposals of the time, most master plans included segregated systems for pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Pedestrian streets allowed to keep rural habits such as the women gathering in the evening in front of the house to knit or do crochet while having a chat. According to Jaime de Alvear, one of the architects most thoroughly involved in the building of Entrevías (Fig. 3), it was in the row housing rather than in the flats where this 'horizontal' relation among the neighbours was best achieved [Fernández-Galiano et al., 1989, p. 178].

Access by car was mostly restricted to the main roads, this being one of the elements that were to change rapidly over the following decade. The increase of private transportation during the 1960s would eventually reduce the extent and quality of the public domain, as cars took over the free spaces among the housing blocks. Only the private streets between the row housing, which lacked the minimum width to let cars through, remained as the most enduring realm of social exchange.

Along with the official initiative of the *Pobladros Dirigidos*, private construction slowly took off. While private firms started to raise new neighbourhoods searching for the highest economic output, non-profit Christian organizations initiated housing programmes with a similar social concern as the public proposals. *El Hogar del Empleado* – an altruistic association founded by jesuit father Tomás Morales – might be pointed out as one of the most successful ones in providing new homes for clerks and qualified labourers that arrived in the capital city searching for career opportunities.

A decree of 1955<sup>4</sup> demanded all companies of more than 50 employees to provide housing for at least 20% of their staff within the following five years. Within this legal framework, *El Hogar del Empleado* launched a programme to provide housing for its affiliates that shared many of the official intentions, though aimed at a modest, yet better-off section of the migrant population. Though some of the new developments were located at consolidated areas of Madrid<sup>5</sup>, it was in the outskirts where they would realize their most ambitious master plans [Hurtado Torán, 2003].

Unlike the previous examples, the settlements planned by *El Hogar del Empleado* had no single family housing since self-construction did not take place. Instead, all neighbourhoods had slab residential blocks with free spaces among them. Green open spaces expanded the small interiors of the dwellings, designed for single employees or medium to larger families.

Following the organization's Christian ideals, there was a further concern about meeting the social and spiritual needs of the inhabitants. Not only the church, but also schools, kindergartens, shopping facilities and community rooms were built to provide the setting for everyday life. A more specific design for the spaces among housing blocks has preserved its original function as space for children's play and social relations better than in the neighbourhoods constructed as *Pobladros Dirigidos* under the auspices of the national government.

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4 Decree of July 1st 1955.

5 Among them, those in calle Cadarso, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Nuestra señora de Aranzazu or Nuestra Señora de Montserrat. See María Antonia Fernández Nieto: *Las Colonias del Hogar del Empleado, La periferia como ciudad*, Ph, D, Dissertation, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2006.

At the Colonia Loyola (Fig. 4), housing blocks were arranged in a double ring that flanked the main road, leaving a community garden at its core where people could meet away from the cars. Less explicit in this sense, though equally efficient, the Colonia de Lourdes kept the vehicle roads narrow and winding, in order to set them back from the urban scene. Slightly elevated lawns kept the pedestrian streets at a distance from the first floor flats' living rooms, its retaining walls performing as seating for informal talks and gatherings.

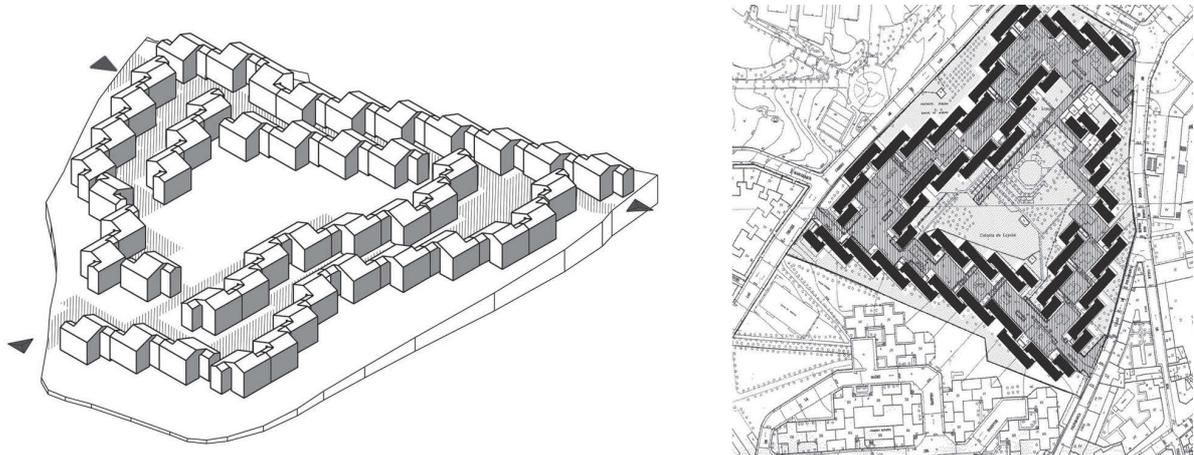


Fig. 4: A private development: the Colonia Loyola by architects Ferrán, Mangada y Romany

From a 50 year perspective, both the official and the private settlements have suffered mainly from the increase in car use, which has taken over the free spaces between the buildings. Many of the initial pedestrian streets have also been severely transformed in order to meet security regulations such as firefighter and ambulance access, while landscaping has suffered from a lack of maintenance, partly due to its original ambiguous definition: it was neither clearly public, nor private, resulting in neglected realms not suitable for community life. However, the strong identification of the community with their neighbourhood and the lifelong struggle of citizens' associations for urban betterment have prevailed until today [Martín Arnoiriaga, 1986].

If we take a look at the new neighbourhoods of Madrid's most recent extension, we can see how much communal quality they are lacking. They have been planned as large gated communities that house facilities – mainly swimming pools, soccer pitches and gyms – at their central courts. No shops have been installed at ground level to avoid competition with the districts' shopping malls with large department stores located by the highways that connect the metropolitan suburbs. The wide avenues, wholly devoted to traffic, remain empty of community life. A critical interpretation of the social concern behind the housing developments of the 1950s would surely result in a better city for the near future.

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- Fig. 2: Playground at Caño Roto with seesaws and balance toys designed by sculptor Ángel Ferrant. Photograph by Joaquín del Palacio (Kindel)
- Fig. 3: Women gathering before the row housing at Entrevías Fernández-Galiano et al.: *La quimera moderna*. Madrid 1989, p. 53
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**The Redevelopment Area Wedding-  
Brunnenstraße in West Berlin.**  
The Project and its Implementation

*Sabine Klingner, Małgorzata Popiołek*

# The Redevelopment Area Wedding- Brunnenstraße in West Berlin.

## The Project and its Implementation

*Sabine Klingner, Małgorzata Popiołek*

The urban renewal programme in West Berlin was launched in the early 1960s and although it was initially estimated to last 15 years, it actually continued until the late 1990s. It was one of the largest urban renewal undertakings in the history of European public housing policy. Over the course of 30 years 140,000 residents and 56,000 residential units were affected.

Several areas in the districts of Wedding, Schöneberg, Neukölln, Charlottenburg, Reinickendorf and Kreuzberg benefited from the programme [Suhr et al., 1991, p. 26]. The selection criteria were high density of housing, sub-standard living conditions in the buildings and inadequate social infrastructure of the area [SenWohnBau, 1964, p. 134]. The main objective of the programme was to eliminate the poor living conditions of the 19th century tenements by replacing them with modern housing estates [Suhr et al., 1991, p. 33]. Urban renewal in West Berlin also had a very clear political dimension. Having been sealed off from the surrounding socialist GDR, West-Berlin became the 'showcase of the West'. Therefore the city received generous financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany [Schmidt, 2008, p. 150 – 151]. The implementation of the programme was extremely costly, led to the demolition of fairly intact 19th century urban fabric, and was later regarded as having destroyed the previously existing social coherence of the local networks through a

rather arbitrary re-housing programme in various large scale housing developments built on the edges of West Berlin, such as Märkisches Viertel. Soon the public opinion dubbed the first urban renewal programme “Kahlschlagsanierung” [Bodenschatz, 1987]. The hostile attitude towards the results of this early phase of urban renewal in Berlin resulted in a persisting lack of interest in the architectural and urban achievements of this project until now. One of the aims of this contribution is to look at this first urban renewal programme in West Berlin from a new perspective and to show its intentions as well as its tangible accomplishments.

As a case study, we investigated the part of the redevelopment area Berlin-Wedding-Brunnenstraße (SWB) which is located east of Brunnenstraße. The article presents this very unique urban concept putting aside the wider implications of urban renewal in West Berlin as well as the unquestionably regrettable loss of 19th century tenements which almost certainly would have been protected under the current German heritage laws. In this paper, we are looking at this particular district because it was the earliest urban renewal project in Berlin and at the same time the largest one, with around 40,000 inhabitants on 186 hectares affected [Suhr et al., 1991, p. 38]. Also, the project was located in an extraordinary urban situation. As a result of the Berlin Wall being erected in 1961, this area was an urban peninsula for decades, surrounded by the wall on three sides. Located centrally before 1961, it became isolated and thus functionally marginalized. Overnight, the building of the Wall transformed the busy shopping promenade of Brunnenstraße into a cul-de-sac.

The layout and typology of the area before renewal was based on the 1862 Hobrecht-Plan, which had created narrow building plots. The land in Wedding had been parcelled in the 1860s and consequently developed as a low-rent residential district for working-class inhabitants. Each plot was densely built up, with rows of rear and cross tenements enclosing several tiny courtyards. It was one of the first working-class residential areas in Berlin. By the end of the 19th century the area was completely built up [Geist and Kürvers, 1980, p. 188–190]. During the Second World War one third of the buildings in the area were destroyed. Before urban renewal began, 1,500 residential units had been built on the plots of buildings destroyed during the war [Suhr et al., 1991, p. 35]. The new apartment blocks were arranged in rows (Zeilenbau) positioned opposite or perpendicular to each other rather than fully closing the urban block structure.

According to the first reports on urban renewal in Berlin published in 1964, the remaining pre-war housing stock showed various problems: tenements were closely interspersed with workshops, plots were excessively overbuilt, buildings were situated too close to each other, the majority of rooms were north-facing, ventilation and sunlight were inadequate, and many residential units shared hallways, toilets, bathrooms, and kitchens. [SenWohnBau, 1964, p. 134; Suhr et al., 1991, p. 29–30].

The urban renewal programme followed the Athens Charter (1933) as well as Johannes Göderitz' book *Gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt* [Structured and green city]. The main objective was to demolish, restructure and redevelop the whole area according to these ideas. The state of the art concept included opportunities for outdoor recreation and social infrastructure. It also aimed for the separation of functions such as living, working, recreation and mobility. On top of this, the framework for the new urban structure intended not just to improve the living conditions in the area, but also to facilitate its societal renewal. Planners assumed that particular deficiencies of the housing stock corresponded with specific characteristics of the social structure in a given area. By changing the built environment, they expected to also influence the social composition [Suhr et al., 1968, p. 1356].

The first urban renewal proposal for the Wedding-Brunnenstraße district by Hans Stephan (director of urban development authority in Berlin 1956–1960) and Friedrich Führlinger was shown during the exhibition *Die Stadt von morgen* [The City of Tomorrow] in 1957 [Schmidt, 2008, p. 100–101]. Before the Wedding project began, the technical state of the buildings and the living conditions of residents had been researched by a team of architects, sociologists, and other specialists. It turned out that 80% had no indoor toilet, day light exposure was not up to modern standards, ventilation was not sufficient and that in general the tenement blocks were built too closely together. In addition to this, many of the buildings were neglected, there were too few recreational spaces, and social infrastructure was insufficient. Interestingly, according to most of the experts, there was no need to demolish the entire neighbourhood. Instead, they suggested that the main buildings facing the street (Hauptgebäude) could be refurbished and only the tiny, cluttered courtyards should be cleared [Bodenschatz, 1987, p. 179; Schmidt, 2008, p. 176]. People living in the area were described as rather poor, but healthy [Balg, 1958, p. 423]. In a different report Peter Koller, professor of architecture at TU-Berlin, demanded that "(...) one should try to find a way of leaving the people of Wedding where they are and what they are" [Suhr et al., 1991, p. 34–35].

In April 1963, the West Berlin Senate invited all university schools of urban planning in West Germany and West Berlin to submit proposals for an urban redevelopment plan including preliminary enquiries for the district around Brunnenstraße. The objectives were to tackle the slum-like living conditions, reduce the number of inhabitants and increase the amount of public, green recreation area. The master plan was expected to make transparent the economic, social and structural implications of the individual designs, quite a challenge for urban planning practices [Suhr et al., 1968, p. 1356].

Most designs advocated an entirely new urban layout with no regard at all for the existing road network and the perimeter block structure. Fritz Eggeling's (Professor of urban planning at TU-Berlin) winning proposal was one of only two that based their designs upon the existing street network. Eggerling also integrated some aspects of Gerhard Fehl's urban analysis into

the master plan, for example urban structural elements such as landmarks (churches, parks) and the course of streets [Fehl, 1968, p. 1347]. Maintaining the existing roads created huge financial savings, as the entire existing underground infrastructure could be kept in use; it also facilitated easy orientation in the visibly transformed area. The plan was not limited to high standard social housing but also promoted 'innovations' such as cross ventilation and natural lighting. As a result of these qualitative requirements each apartment building was strictly orientated to west/east or north/south, to enable the living room to be directed to the west or south, regardless of whether it would be facing the street or the inner courtyard.

Eggeling's idea was to regenerate the area in stages to ensure that modifications could be made as the regeneration process evolved. He believed that in order to achieve a gradual transformation of the renewal area it was necessary to develop it in a continuous and constant process [Suhr, 1982, p. 1998]. To this end a mathematical matrix was developed [Meier, 1968, p. 1353] to keep track of the transformation of social, commercial and economical structures, which then fed into the redevelopment master plan [Suhr, 1982, p. 1998]. An important design aspect of the Eggeling plan was to modify the concept of the functional city with its division into functionally distinct zones of dwelling, work, recreation and transport. Eggeling and his team, the Arbeitsgruppe für Stadtplanung AGS, (Working Group for Urban Planning) identified a 5th function: the public or open zone, which was running counter the idea of absolute functional separation and instead combined them all. They believed that the integration of all four functions would eventually create urbanity. Therefore it was important to them to provide a framework for the area incorporating all functions [Suhr, 1982, p. 1998]. In this concept, streets were not only seen as spaces of mobility, but also provided room for other functions such as recreation and dwelling. The historical perimeter block structure and the related hierarchy of public and private spaces was replaced by AGS's concept. Their 'new layout' was not the arrangement of different buildings in a given space. Instead, they created an urban open network of built structures, which shaped the greater space as a sequence of individual zones developing along the borders of the stages of the urban regeneration process [Suhr, 1968, p. 1357 – 1359].

The redevelopment area Berlin-Wedding Brunnenstraße was planned as an inner-city residential area in the heart of Berlin. Its location though, surrounded as it was on three sides by the Berlin Wall, gave it the unique, isolated quality of an enclave, largely cut off from the rest of West Berlin. Nevertheless, the Working Group for Urban Planning (AGS) group examined the overall urban structure of Berlin regardless of the Berlin Wall. On this basis, the AGS developed a structural framework for the entire city of Berlin from which it then generated the functional and spatial elements of the individual areas. Therefore the master plan maintained the Brunnenstraße as a thoroughfare to the historical centre of Berlin continuing through the East Berlin border and preserving the shopping and service function. [Suhr, 1982, p. 1960]. Likewise, AGS's master plan envisaged Swinemünderstraße,

running parallel to Brunnenstraße, as continuing southwards into East-Berlin as a green promenade (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Open green space: Swinemünderstraße with Diesterweg Gymnasium

The master plan was organised around Brunnenstraße and Swinemünderstraße as the main north-south axes. Stralsunderstraße was proposed as east-west axis and Vinetaplatz was expanded to become an urban park, which was supposed to constitute the heart of the recreational area (Fig. 2). The Swinemünderstraße and Stralsunderstraße were designed as a continuous green belt to which every courtyard of each apartment block was connected and which was running through the Humboldtthain public park. In addition to this, all the courtyards of all building blocks were interconnected so that they could be used by the public.



Fig. 2: Plan showing green spaces and recreational areas

It was important for the AGS group to alleviate social inequality, hence existing schools were extended and new ones were planned as calculated by the mathematical matrix. Housing for the elderly and kindergartens were also integrated into the master plan. These functional requirements were provided per inhabitant and especially designed mathematical formulas

were used to calculate demand. This meant that during the regeneration process changes were monitored, assessed and integrated accordingly [SenBauWohn, 1973, p. 23.]. During the entire regeneration process the master plan matured in architectural style and various design approaches were applied, but the first and foremost objective was still to achieve good housing standards for the socially deprived inhabitants with generously proportioned public recreation and leisure areas.

The urban renewal project was implemented through various housing associations which were chosen according to their financial capability. These associations bought the land from the private landowners and, together with the West Berlin Senate, selected the architects to design the apartment blocks. The entire process was managed through an invited tender process, whereby not only the design was taken into account, but also its cost efficiency. From 1963 until 1966 the AGS group worked as a consultant for the renewal of Wedding-Brunnenstrasse. Their task was to indicate where it was most necessary to start redevelopment, to produce and continuously update the master plan and to define the contents for the urban renewal programme. The group also generated development plans for individual building blocks. During the realization they coordinated the designs of the various architects commissioned by the property developers and housing associations for each block [Suhr, 1968, p. 1356].

Early in the design phase the AGS group insisted on underground parking for the entire development, seeing this as the only means to achieve the coherent free flowing green recreation area. But this proved extremely challenging to realize. Each tenement block was in a different stage of decay and individually owned, which delayed the demolition of blocks scheduled for redevelopment. Only after all tenements of a building block were decanted and demolished was it possible to excavate the underground car parks. Between 1970 and 1978, after tenements were cleared, large scale development did eventually begin. The intersection of Swinemünderstraße and Stralsunderstraße were widened as the main pedestrian streets linked to Vinetaplatz. The Swinemünder- and Stralsunderstraße contained most of the social amenities such as the Diesterweg Gymnasium (secondary school), a public library, a nursery home and kindergartens. They were expected to become the heart of the regenerated district east of Brunnenstraße.

In 1973, the landscape architect Hans-Peter Flechner won the competition to design Vinetaplatz, Swinemünder-, and Stralsunderstraße as a recreation area. The implementation was supervised by the DeGeWo housing association and lasted well into the 1990s. Brunnenstraße, in AGS's scheme, was planned with shops and various services on both sides of street right up to the Berlin Wall (Fig. 3). Later this was considered uneconomical by the Berlin Senator for Planning and Housing and therefore amenities along Brunnenstraße were reduced to a minimum.



Fig. 3: Shopping street: Brunnenstraße

While the redevelopment progressed, the political decision making changed as well. In 1982 the German Institute of Urban Design published an analysis highlighting the negative aspects and results of large scale urban redevelopment. For instance, redevelopments took longer than planned and costed more than expected. Newly constructed apartment blocks were often surrounded by run down tenements and were already showing signs of neglect. At the same time the mood of the occupants darkened. They felt frustrated and insecure because the social infrastructure in the redevelopment areas had broken down or was still non-existent after years of building. The small corner shops had not been rebuilt and with them a significant aspect of the social fabric of the area had disappeared [Becker, 1982, p. 384].



Fig. 4: Modernized tenements in block 243 by Werner Weber and Gino Greth

With the European Year of Monument Preservation in 1975, the Senator for Planning and Housing increasingly favoured the renovation of the nineteenth century Wilhelminian tenements. In the late 1970s, the Wilhelminian era tenements and their characteristic façades

became to be seen as attractive again. There were experiments carried out trying to keep the existing façade structures while making internal modifications to improve the hygiene and living standards. Amongst the best examples were the tenements in block 243, modernized by Werner Weber and Gino Greth. Weber and Greth added elements of modernism to Wilhemian style buildings (Fig. 4). The façade structure was kept and painted in a modern colour scheme developed by the young artist Claus Peter Koch and completed with modern balconies. The entire internal layout of the flats was redesigned, the rear buildings with their small courtyards were demolished, and the site was opened up as a public recreation space. The project by Hardt-Waltherr Hämer in the Puttbusserstraße (block 235) was another example of preserving Wilhemian style tenements. In contrast to Weber and Greth, Hämer not only kept the street façade but also the internal layout. This was the beginning of a new regeneration approach described as ‘cautious urban renewal’, which aimed not only at maintaining the urban fabric but also the existing social composition of the area.



Fig. 5: Block 270 by Joseph Kleihues

In 1970, while developing block 270, Joseph Paul Kleihues referred to the concept as ‘critical reconstruction’ (Fig. 5). In contrast to contemporary architects, Kleihues adapted the block structure in the context of an entirely new architecture. He abandoned the small scale structured façades and designed the entire block with a homogenous façade and a newly organised internal layout [Vinetaplatz in Berlin Wedding, 1977, p. 1134]. This was revolutionary and its example of re-establishing the typical Berlin typology made its way into future redevelopments, for example in the 1984 – 1987 International Building Exhibition (Internationale Bauausstellung) in Berlin.

Most of the built fabric as well as the open, communally used spaces are still existing today. However, the Diesterweg Gymnasium with the attached public library will be demolished because it is too expensive to refurbish. One of the old peoples' homes and the formerly very important exhibition pavilion have been left to decay because no-one was prepared to take over the buildings. The regenerated area of Wedding-Brunnenstraße is exposed to a much bigger threat than gradual decay, however. Lush open spaces, an important characteristic of the Brunnenstraße area, are increasingly being built on in Berlin's inner city area. It could be seen as disposable, an object of speculation for further development by the Berlin regional housing and planning department. The nearby Mauerpark is facing a similar fate, as it will be partially built up with expensive luxury apartments. This would densify the urban structure: a development which definitely would have been frowned upon by the urban planners and architects involved in the regeneration plan of the 1960s. There is now little recognition from official bodies for the living environments created in the decades from 1960 to 1980. More than that, this is a severe misunderstanding of the design features and aesthetics of an area like Brunnenstraße, which might result in the loss of an important example of first phase urban regeneration.

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## PICTURE CREDITS

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- Fig. 2: Plan showing green spaces and recreational areas. Photo: Sabine Klingner, Małgorzata Popiołek
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# **Art in Public at Warwick and Brindley Estate, London**

*Sharon Irish*

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After the Second World War, large sections of London (among other cities) had to be rebuilt because bombing had destroyed so many neighbourhoods of flats, pubs, shops, schools, and streets. Of course the social relationships among neighbours also had been disrupted, if not ended by death. The London County Council promoted construction of high-rises, also called tower blocks, in order to provide urgently-needed shelter on scarce land for London's inhabitants. This push to build flats in towers "could happen in England because the form of public housing, which made up about half the housing output, could be strongly influenced by one authority, the central government" [Ash, 1980, p. 99].

The introduction of tower blocks, however, has met with cycles of enthusiasm, contempt, and promotion over the last five decades. Post-occupancy evaluation of these towers has varied widely, from those grateful for indoor plumbing, central heating, and more space for their families, to hostility toward cheap concrete construction – "mass housing 'monsters'" – and alienation and fear about the social climate [Ash, 1980, p. 112]. Author Miles Glendinning summarized the mixed reactions to post-war housing design:

"The 'heartland' of post-war social housing was undeniably Western Europe, where the balance of socialism and capitalism was reflected in an intricate mosaic of individualized state policies and solutions, both political and socioarchitectural, that frequently featured dramatic clashes between intellectually high-flown initial aspirations and extreme rejection and/or alienation on the part of inhabitants" [2010, p. 49].

Bureaucrats and artists attempted to address the shifts in building type and arrangement in these new developments through art that connected residents to their new neighbourhoods. In the postwar decades, the diversity of artistic approaches – in scale, material, theme, and setting – was matched by equally diverse responses from viewers, novice and expert alike. The terms ‘Modern’ and ‘British’ “were under question and both revealed(...) a plurality of diverse and even contradictory meanings” [Tickner and Peters Corbett 2012, p. 12]. Margaret Garlake, writing of public art in Britain after World War Two, argued that “the process of physical reconstruction... suggest[ed] ways in which a secular and non-commemorative public art might assume some communal significance... One of the functions of postwar public art was to be the visual, symbolic reinstatement of a sense of community“ [1998, p. 213]. Reinstating community after the cataclysm of world war is not easily done, of course, and the results were and are inconclusive. Yet art produced for housing estates under the aegis of the London County Council was informed by the ‘process of physical reconstruction’ as well as by the histories of the sites where reconstruction occurred, as I shall discuss. As Garlake averred above, public art took cues from the actual reconstruction to create ‘communal significance’: in the case of Warwick and Brindley Estate, art in some public spaces used concrete as a sculptural material and referred to local history.



Fig. 1: William Mitchell, *Two Doves*, in memory of Robert Browning, 1961, on the Warwick and Brindley Estate, London

The London County Council recognized the complexity of ‘the public’ (Kierkegaard called the ‘public’ a “monstrous abstraction” in 1962), and acknowledged that no one technique or theme would suit everyone. As Garlake noted: “It is one of the paradoxes of postwar public art that though it was largely determined by modernity and the spirit of a renewed society, it represented the prime meeting ground for modernism and tradition” [1998, p. 215]. The

two artworks discussed here engage with both modernism and tradition in compelling ways, in order to grapple with urban alienation and neighbourhood lore.

This essay examines community spaces on the Warwick and Brindley Estate in London at two points in time – 1961 and 1991 – through works by two artists. I use these two points in time to explore some changes in shared spaces on a housing estate in west London in the last decades of the twentieth century. I do not intend to instrumentalise the art as only contributing to community-building. Rather, the *juxtaposition* of the two works holds my argument: that ‘mixed development’ must recognize and address the social tensions and transformations that accompany high-density urban living. Public art offers one means to name and direct these tensions, while engaging residents’ visual, kinesthetic and haptic perceptions.

In the immediate post-War decades, monumental public art aimed to “provide an imaginative mental mosaic embracing(...) the sense of a city’s history and its relationship with the flux of present activity“ [Garlake 1998, p. 214]. Sculptor William Mitchell’s *Two Doves* (1961) is a concrete and enduring relief that defines a small open space between two rows of terrace houses on the estate and draws on a slice of the city’s history (Fig. 1). Another cast concrete mural by Mitchell was installed in the entrance lobby of Gaydon House, one of the Estate’s tower blocks, and contributed to the concept of a spatially dispersed ‘mosaic,’ where sculpted reliefs added visual variety to the newly – renovated or – built structures.

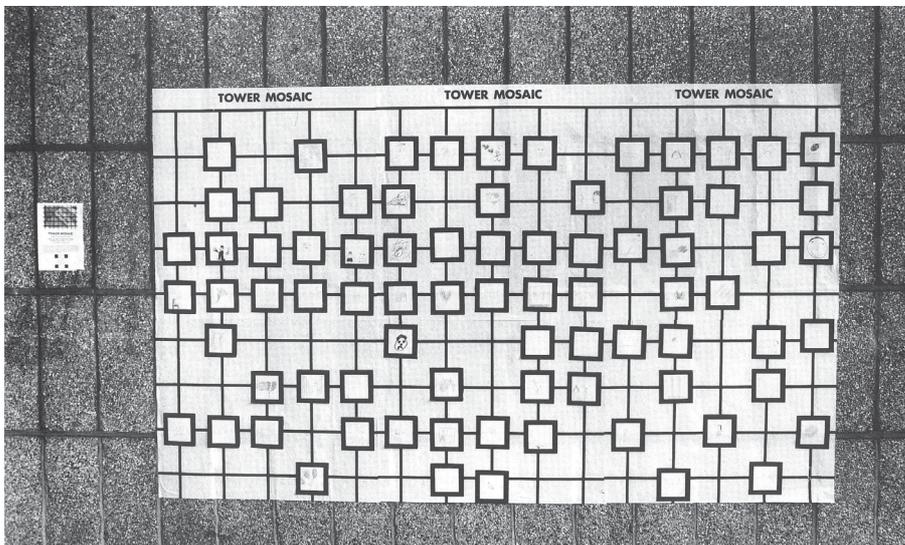


Fig.2: Stephen Willats, *Tower Mosaic*, 1991, displaying drawings in response to problems posed in the *Tower Mosaic Book* after Day 8 of the project, Princethorpe House, Warwick and Brindley Estate, London

Thirty years later, Stephen Willats’ *Tower Mosaic* (1991) was a short-term collaboration with residents in two buildings on the estate, Brinklow and Princethorpe towers. Together with Willats, residents created drawings that then were displayed temporarily on a large paper

grid, or mosaic, on the exterior walls of the towers (Fig. 2). *Tower Mosaic* animated the tall modernist structures from the 1960s with new meanings by appropriating walls and lobbies for creative expression by occupants on the estate. While Willats worked with residents to generate images that were assembled into a collective piece, Mitchell's large relief of abstracted doves demonstrated the commitment to public art on the part of the official bureaucracy. Mitchell's commissioned art was part of regeneration as a "comprehensive and integrated vision" [Imrie, et al. 2009, p. 4] while Willats' art was motivated by the artist's interest in and commitment to self-organised and socially inclusive art-making.

Warwick and Brindley Estate in North Paddington, London, was designed and built by the London County Council (LCC) in the modernist idiom between 1958 and 1962. Sir Hubert Bennett (1909 – 2000) was in charge of the LCC Department of Architecture, having taken over from Lesley Martin in the mid-fifties. The estate includes six 21-story tower blocks, which are clustered in the western half and 23 numbered ranges of low-rise terraces bounded by Paddington train station, the rail lines, and the Grand Union and Regent's Canals (Fig. 3). Under a scheme of 1958 affecting 6,700 residents, the London County Council designated half of the recently-purchased properties in the area to be used for 1,100 dwellings, with a density of about 140 people per acre. The rest of the property was used for shops, garages, schools and other institutions, as well as a canal-side walk and 8.7 acres of badly-needed open space. About a quarter of the extant properties were renovated, while the remainder were war-damaged and required "a full-scale clearance" [Bennett 1960, p. 346]. This area came to be known as the Warwick estate, and soon extended west of Harrow Road over the site of Brindley Street.



Fig. 3: View of Warwick and Brindley Estate, London. Back cover of *Tower Mosaic* documentation booklet, 1992

The Warwick and Brindley estate is a prime example of mixed development, with the six towers and low-rise buildings for families, in addition to an old people's home, a fire station,

and schools. The curving terraces of flats were interspersed with playgrounds, green spaces and abstracted relief sculptures designed by professionals, like *Two Doves* by William Mitchell. As Cleeve Barr wrote in 1958 [Public Authority Housing, p. 35]:

“The mixed development does not mean simply the addition of a few flats in a housing layout(...) It means a balanced development based on a variety of types and sizes of dwelling suited as far as possible to the kinds of families who are going to live in them(...) It implies contrasts in the height and form of buildings, and in the treatment of private and public open space.”

Referred to as total design, mixed development described a process that included “shopping centres, libraries, clubs and community buildings, landscaping, roads and paving, kiosks, street lamps, signs...” [Barr, 1958, p. 50]. This ‘total design’ approach resulted from the ‘comprehensive and integrated vision’ promulgated by the LCC at mid-century.

Political economist Stephen Elkin [1974, p. 41] noted that mixed development not only referred to “visual interest” but also “a cross-section of all classes” that was a goal from the late forties on. Government designers viewed mixed development as a way to counteract the monotony and uniformity of pre-war and early post-war housing. Barr noted as well that “low roofs will be visible from the windows and balconies of taller flats. This creates a new and interesting aesthetic problem...” [1958, p. 37].

The LCC architect Hubert Bennett, who personally designed Warwick Crescent on the estate, had a staff of 3.000 people, with an international cadre of architects. The staff was divided into chief architect and chief administrative officer for each of nine divisions (including schools, housing, fire service, expanded towns, old people’s homes, and colleges. Bennett said that the best architects gravitated toward schools and housing). In an oral history from 1999 at the British Library, Bennett said that once the Warwick site redevelopment plan was approved by Parliament “nothing could stop us from moving as fast as possible.” In 1960, Bennett described the area of central London: “Surrounding the centre is that large belt of obsolete property. The problems of transforming these decaying areas can only be met by comprehensive replanning on a great scale“ [p. 342]. “Replanning on a great scale“ is what the LCC proceeded to do.

The LCC viewed many of the building projects they sponsored as an appropriate setting for public art. The organization had a significant role in shaping post-war public taste. In May of 1948, for example, the LCC organized its first outdoor sculpture exhibit, which turned out to be very popular as people could wander at leisure among works by many leading artists, including Henry Moore and Auguste Rodin. A decade later, the LCC’s Department of Architecture created the position of design consultant from 1957-1965, which drew from an

in-house group of artists with the Housing Division. These artists worked in tandem with the architectural and construction teams because art was considered part of the total design in the newly-designed mixed developments.

William Mitchell was a design consultant intimately connected to the Warwick and Brindley Estate. He was actually born in Maida Vale, a district now included in the estate, in 1925. A great experimenter in materials and techniques, he worked for the LCC from 1957-1965. For the LCC, Mitchell's charge was to design low-cost work that was fully integrated with new styles and methods. Mitchell viewed his art as a "bridge between the preciousness of art and the mass of people." Mitchell produced 49 works at 27 LCC sites; 19 of the 49 works remain as of 2011. The Twentieth Century Society quoted him in 2011 as saying:

"I wasn't interested in something going on a plinth and people walking around it...The clients are not the architects, they are the rate payers. Often they did not want the ultra-sophisticated, a Warhol bean can or pile of rubbish" [Jervis, et al., p. 16].

Mitchell's *Two Doves* (1961) is a precast concrete relief about 4,5 meters in length and 1,8 meters tall; the textures of the aggregate and the abstracted patterns of the doves' bodies and feathers provide many details to savour. The sculpture is dedicated to the poet Robert Browning, who lived in the area from 1862 to 1887. The wall defines a small open space and also visually links the adjacent buildings through energetic horizontals and diagonals that pull the eyes across the plaza (Fig. 1).

The Leader of the LCC (from 1947 until its abolition in 1965), Sir Isaac Hayward, in 1949 recognized the human dimension of design when he wrote: "The problem is one not merely of bricks and mortar but of flesh and blood, of the personality, customs, hopes, aspirations, and human rights of each individual man, woman and child who needs a home" [Pereira, 2012, p. 57]. How does one create a neighbourhood, acknowledging the "personality, customs, hopes, aspirations, and human rights of each individual man, woman and child"?

Stephen Elkin in his 1974 book *Politics and Land Use Planning* discussed the "low level of interest group organization in the city [of London](...) English political culture appears to be closer to the non-participatory end of the scale than the American variety," he noted. Elkin claimed that "political deference" was a "major strand in British political culture" [pp. 95 – 96]. This strand is something of a vicious cycle, because Elkin also provided evidence that the LCC did very little consultation with residents until after the plans had been finalized [p. 104]. A housing group in 1977 called this cursory consultation "false participation" [A Street Door of Our Own, p. 46]. On the Warwick and Brindley estate, the LCC engaged in 'total design,' in which experts – from social scientists to artists, from architects to engineers –

decided what would create a neighbourhood, reinforcing the political passivity of the would-be estate residents.

Tower blocks are entwined socio-technical systems, where the structures shape the lives of those living there and, in turn, not-so-passive residents alter the structures over time. Curator Brigitte Franzen has noted that

“[t]he architecture formed the context for the living conditions, which made certain actions on the part of the people who lived in them inevitable. Whether it was in the careful decoration of flats, the expressions of graffiti in the hallways or on the outside of buildings...[artist Stephen] Willats observed a special energy... to create self-empowered situations which countered the regulated world of the tower blocks with an alternative world” [2010, p. 97].

While the early sixties were marked by top-down decision-making in government-sponsored housing, ‘user-generated urbanism’ [Parry, 2011, p. 31] emerged in the work of London-based artist Stephen Willats in the next decade, drawing on vernacular intelligence that communities already possessed, and extending “the building site to take into account the local engagement both with materials and with users” [Awan, et al., 2011, pp. 48, 60].

In 1991, Willats joined with residents of the then 30-year-old Warwick and Brindley Estate to create *Tower Mosaic*. (In 1990, Willats had worked with individuals on the estate to make smaller scale works, such as the triptych, *A View over the Balcony*. He often returns to the same locations and works with people he already knows from previous projects.) For *Tower Mosaic*, Willats focused his organizing in two buildings on the estate, Brinklow and Princethorpe towers, inviting six residents to photograph objects in their living spaces, especially those items that “denoted a relationship with someone else,” and discuss the pictures with him [Tower Mosaic 1992, n.p.]. Then Willats used the images and texts from the interviews to make a booklet with queries to which other participants drew their responses. He noted in the project’s documentation: “With the help of the participant I always devise a question; I consider the question as a basic stimulus to interaction between people, and in my work it is addressed specifically to the audience” [2012, p. 29B]. The first problem posed to participants, for example, was to “make a drawing(...) showing how the objects [pictured] might influence how you feel about yourself.” The photographed objects included an upholstered armchair with pillows, a small electric fan, a woven handheld fan, some fuzzy slippers, and a basket of fruit; each item was affixed to a black, uneven polygon and linked to the other items with dark black lines with a pinwheel effect (Fig. 4).

Words from one of the residents who had made the photographs accompanied the images. For the images just described, the text read:

“I spend my whole day inside here now, so I have to adjust again, all my life I’ve been working, sometimes I’d leave home at half seven, back at nine in the night, and it’s like I had to learn my house all over again, because when you work you’re too tired to notice certain things. I enjoy looking at my plants. I talk to them, they grow nicely, and then I look around I might see a space, and I say I could buy this and put it there or fit something there. I just like looking at things that I put there.”

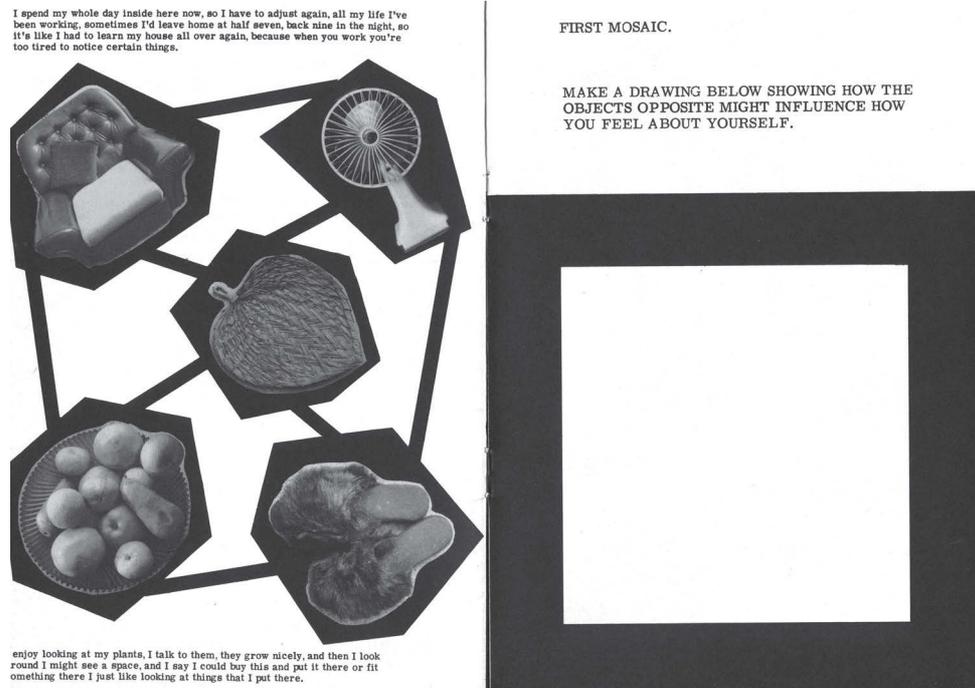


Fig. 4: Stephen Willats, *Tower Mosaic Book*, 1991, Problem posed for First Mosaic. Courtesy of Stephen Willats.

There were three other sets of images with text in the *Tower Mosaic* booklet that led people to consider their relationships with another person, their immediate surrounding community, and the larger world. One commentary accompanying the second prompt in the *Tower Mosaic* book about “your relationship with someone else” captures a resident’s frustrated isolation:

“Lots of times I’ve gone to say hallo to someone that I’ve spoke to previously and I think, yeah, well we’re start saying hallo now and they just walk by and so I think, well, sod you, I am not saying hallo to you again.”

Residents were invited by a volunteer to draw on a table in the lobby (Fig. 5). The drawings that were generated by these text-and-image collages over a two-week period (29 April – 12 May, 1991) were then displayed in a mosaic-like manner on gridded paper pasted to the wall of the tower’s base. As one might expect, the drawings ranged widely in subject matter and

skill level, from child-like scribbles to a pregnant woman in profile, from a bleeding heart to embracing arms, from a bloodshot eye to a broken world. The display of these drawings on the exterior wall gave people a chance to see the variety of forms and ideas created by their neighbours, altering a common space for a brief time. As Franzen wrote: “[Willats] bundles information, makes it readable and feeds it back into the residential systems” [2010, p. 89].

In 1992, Willats wrote in the *Tower Mosaic* catalog: “... The very fabric of the estate, its physical structure, and the language and experiences of residents was central to the origination of *Tower Mosaic* (...) Brinklow House and Princethorpe House (...) were considered to be part of the work’ [n. p.]. The black-and-white photographs that Willats used as prompts for



Fig. 5: Volunteers were available in the building foyers to invite participation in *Tower Mosaic*, Stephen Willats, 1991. Courtesy of Stephen Willats.

participant drawings were taken in residents’ spaces, of objects chosen by them. The large paper gridded with squares certainly mimicked the concrete panels of the lower storey of the Brinklow tower. Thus “the very fabric of the estate” – a fabric that included the residents and their relationships – was indeed the key aspect of *Tower Mosaic*. While the final product was markedly different, Mitchell’s *Two Doves* was also informed by the materials and context of the estate.

Willats co-created art projects at many estates across England and Scotland and in Berlin from the early 1970s on. Of the settings for these projects, Willats wrote in 1988: “I see modernist housing developments as monumental symbols of planned, modern social thinking which are filled with a casual mosaic of objects and signs that exist in random

displacement with each other, and, sometimes even in overt alienation” [n. p.]. Employing the idea of a mosaic allowed the juxtaposition of various elements so that they “occup[ied] the same space, they are made to coexist, so as to transform psychologically the meaning of that space” [n. p.]. In *Between Buildings and People* [1995], Willats reflected:

“The physicality and inflexibility of the living space’s structural mass means that it is the inhabitants who must adapt as soon as they move in. This feeling of restriction and passivity is strengthened by the rules and regulations that accompany the life within its confines. For the interiors of the housing blocks do not adapt themselves to the inhabitants’ requirements; they cannot influence the planner of their own living spaces, they can only modify its surfaces and position objects within it to state their own identities and values” [p. 25].

In the *Tower Mosaic* text-and-image collages that Willats made with estate residents, it is clear that people modified their modernist surroundings as best they could to make their flat suit their needs. One man quoted in a collage commented: “[P]ossessions as such don’t mean much to me at all, they’re sort of inanimate. There’s nothing to them really except sentimental value.” A woman, on the other hand, used objects to spark her imagination: “I’ve got different kinds of things around just to make it like a fantasy place.” Objects infused living spaces with emotions that otherwise may have been monotonous and overly-controlled. Curator and art centre director Emily Pethick described these collaborations that began with a small number of residents and expanded over time to include more and more people, responding to the initial collages:

“A number of Willats’ participatory works have used multichannel approaches as a way to describe an object, situation or event through time from a number of philosophical perspectives. They use the fabric of the environments that he is working in, which encompasses not only surrounding physical structures and available resources but the behavior of people in particular time and place-specific situations” [2010, p. 111].

While Willats was working in Berlin (1979 – 1980), he “coined the term ‘counter-consciousness,’ which stands for people’s capacity for self-organisation and counter to the officially conveyed political, social or national consciousness and the construction of identity associated with it” [Franzen, p. 93]. Willats’ idea of ‘counter-consciousness’ was manifest in spaces designed by the LCC, for example, supporting the capacities of estate residents to express themselves. Recognizing this, the 1988 *National Tower Blocks Directory* included a two-page insert about Willats because of his collaborative art-making with inhabitants. The editors noted: “...Stephen’s art is our art. By tower block tenants, about tower block tenants and for tower block tenants” [p. 62].

William Mitchell's approach to art-making for the LCC was for tower block and other estate residents, but not by them or about them. Mitchell's *Two Doves* drew on historic associations to the neighbourhood, such as Robert Browning's occupancy as well as the poet's frequent avian imagery. Further, Mitchell's relief has material relationships between his concrete sculpture and the concrete framing of many of the estate structures. Mitchell's sculpture certainly provides visual interest along the canal that it faces. To apply Elkins' concept of 'mixed development' to the artists' uses of public space: A variety of art forms – whether by Mitchell or Willats or some other designer – placed across the estate at different times, appealed (one hopes) to a cross-section of classes and nationalities that are housed on the estate. Mitchell's work might be seen as attempting to link past residents to current ones, and open spaces to adjacent structures; Willats' work aimed to connect the residents themselves through shared creation and exhibition. Contemporary participatory art practices like Willats' layer new meanings onto past structures through spatial and symbolic appropriations by current residents. That Willats created a context to "shape the environment around residents" priorities' helped estate housing remain relevant to the occupants of postwar council flats. *Two Doves*, Mitchell's contribution to mid-century 'total design,' remains a significant part of the estate's 'intricate mosaic' of socioarchitectural solutions that Glendinning, quoted above, described in 2010.

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- Fig. 1: William Mitchell, *Two Doves*, in memory of Robert Browning, 1961, on the Warwick and Brindley Estate, London. Cast concrete. Photo: Sharon Irish
- Fig. 2: Stephen Willats, *Tower Mosaic*, 1991, displaying drawings in response to problems posed in the *Tower Mosaic Book* after Day 8 of the project, Princethorpe House, Warwick and Brindley Estate, London. Photo: Stephen Willats.
- Fig. 3: View of Warwick and Brindley Estate, London. Back cover of *Tower Mosaic* documentation booklet, 1992. Photo: Stephen Willats.
- Fig. 4: Stephen Willats, *Tower Mosaic Book*, 1991, Problem posed for First Mosaic. Photo: Stephen Willats.
- Fig. 5: Volunteers were available in the building foyers to invite participation in *Tower Mosaic*, Stephen Willats, 1991. Photo: Stephen Willats.



**Spaces with an Educational Mandate.**

Dormitory for the Free University of Berlin. Designed by Hermann Fehling, Daniel Gogel and Peter Pfankuch, 1956–1959

*Gunnar Klack*

## **Spaces with an Educational Mandate.**

Dormitory for the Free University of Berlin. Designed by Hermann Fehling, Daniel Gogel and Peter Pfankuch, 1956 – 1959

*Gunnar Klack*

In modern architecture and urbanism community spaces appear in various manifestations. How purpose and design of those spaces were related, differed from project to project. In extreme cases, community space could be conceived as not much more than a backdrop for a freestanding building. In other projects however, great efforts were made to design the community spaces or even explicitly state their educational purpose. The dormitory for the Free University of Berlin, Studentendorf Schlachtensee, is a case in point. Here the community space is the most prominent design aspect. When the Free University first announced their plans for building a university-owned dormitory, the educational purpose of community spaces was stated explicitly and it was given a top priority in the design. The community space is integral to this project, not only in terms of floorspace but also in its importance for the concept. The following paper will briefly introduce the project and the responsible architects, before focusing on the proposed educational purpose of its community space and finally it will take a brief look at its current status.

Studentendorf Schlachtensee is the Free University of Berlin's student accommodation facility. It was recognized as a heritage site in 1991, but nevertheless had been threatened by demolition in the late 1990s. When the dormitory opened in November 1959, it was the largest students' accommodation facility in Germany up to that date [Conrads, 1959].

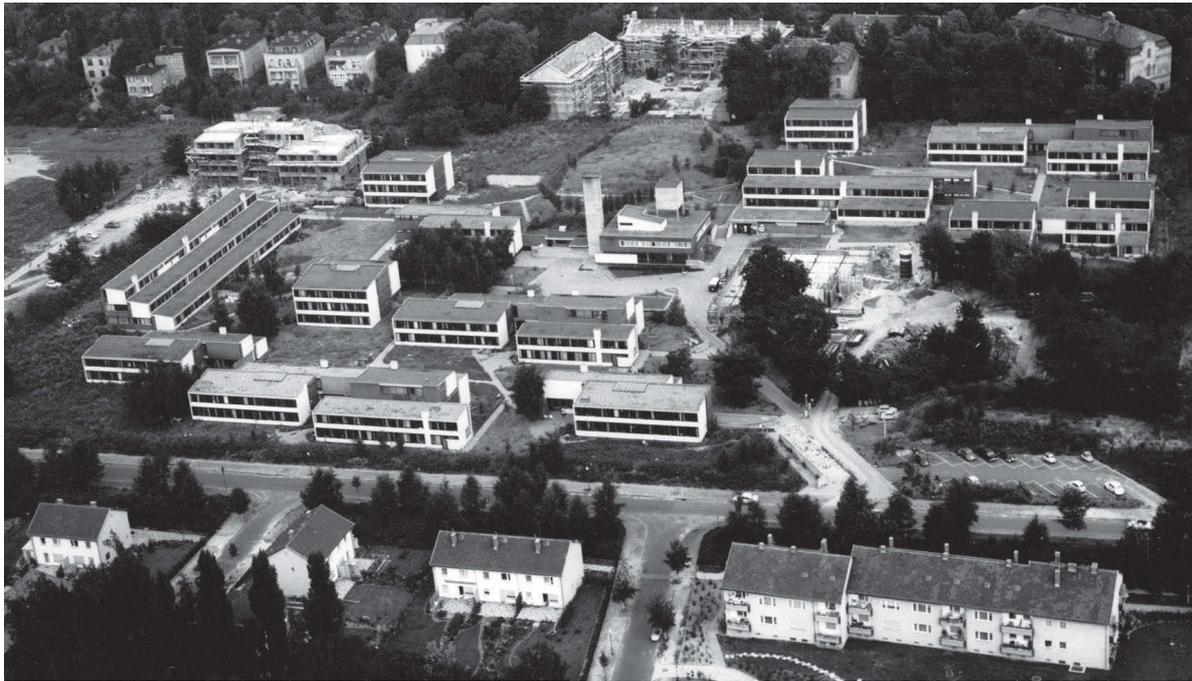


Fig. 1: Studentendorf Schlachtensee: aerial view, taken during the time of the second stage's construction 1962 – 1964

The facility incorporated a number of unique features, all of which responded the overlapping discourses of education reform, cultural identity, urban design and political cold war propaganda. The dormitory is located in the same district as the Free University, close to the south-western edge of Berlin. Sited on a five hectare plot of land, the dormitory consists of 28 separate buildings [Barz, 2009]. Therefore the German name Studentendorf refers to the spatial layout of the estate, as 'Dorf' translates into 'village' (Fig. 1). The estate indeed features a village-like structure: communal buildings for assembly and administration are located in the village's centre. Twenty-three residential buildings accommodating approximately 30 students each are spread across the complex mostly in parallel lines, albeit without strict regularity, hierarchy or symmetry (Fig. 2). The landscaped open space flows around the buildings, shaped with shallow valleys and hills (Fig. 3). The landscaping itself is recognized as a heritage site, as its designer was Hermann Mattern (1902 – 1971), one of Germany's most highly esteemed landscape architects [Barz, 2009].

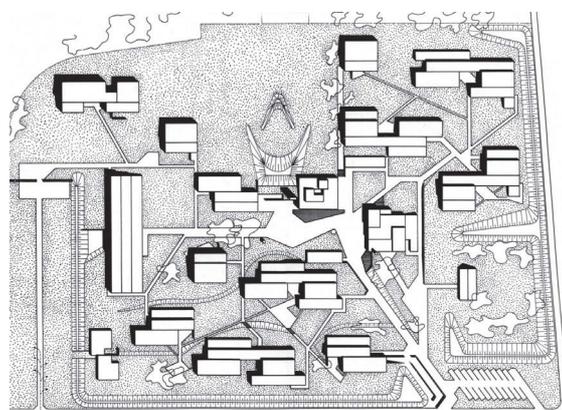


Fig. 2: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, site plan, 1958



Fig. 3: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, May 2009

The Free University commissioned the team of three architects – Hermann Fehling (1909–1996), Daniel Gogel (1927–1997) and Peter Pfankuch (1925–1977) – in 1956 without a competition or any other transparent process of selection. Hermann Fehling had links to the Free University since he and Peter Pfankuch had already designed a canteen building for that university in 1951. Gogel and Pfankuch started out as Fehling’s employees, but with the prospect of a big commission like the Studentendorf the three architects founded a new practice as three equal partners in late 1956. The accommodation complex was executed in two stages. Fehling, Gogel and Pfankuch completed the first stage in 1959, after this Peter Pfankuch left the office. Fehling and Gogel designed the Studentendorf’s second stage, which included two further residential buildings and an assembly hall. The second stage was executed in 1962–1964, another extension followed in the late 1970s, designed by the architects Kraemer, Pfennig and Sieverts. In total, the first and second stage had the capacity to accommodate 709 students; the third stage increased the number to over 1,000. This, still by today’s standards, is a very large student accommodation facility.

Fehling and Gogel successfully continued their teamwork until 1990. Their work from the 1960s and 1970s includes remarkably distinguished pieces of post-war architecture. In those designs, Fehling and Gogel employed polygonal and round shapes as often as possible. The architects’ deviation from rectangular, vertically stacked building methods links Fehling and Gogel to architects like Hans Scharoun (1893–1972) and Hugo Häring (1882–1958), who identified their own work as „organic architecture” [Blundell-Jones, 1999]. The concept of ‘organic architecture’ is also closely linked to the architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) [Wright, 1953]. Indeed, the work of Fehling and Gogel appears to be influenced as much by Wright as it is by Häring and Scharoun. The Studentendorf’s assembly hall in particular shows some similarities to Wright’s design for the Ann Merner Pfeiffer Chapel on the Florida Southern College campus in Lakeland, Florida (1938–1941). Both buildings, the assembly hall in Schlachtensee and the chapel in Lakeland, are communal buildings located in the centre of a university facility. Many of Wright’s designs were exhibited and published in Germany in 1952 [Moser, 1952]. Although Fehling and Gogel never identified their own

work as 'organic architecture', they most certainly belong to the significant contributors to this architectural style [Conrads, 1986].

At the time they were commissioned to design the Studentendorf, their client, the university, stressed the importance of communal spaces. After completing the Studentendorf Schlachtensee, Fehling and Gogel kept a strong emphasis on communal spaces as part of their own agenda. Their focus on communal spaces became apparent in most later projects and the architects would highlight this achievement when talking about their work [Sewing, 2009].

So, how are communal spaces woven into the Studentendorf's design and why were they so very important to the client? Most of the Studentendorf's interior and exterior space are communal spaces. The open space between the buildings is communal space, and, with a low-density 'village'-layout, this area has been designed for community interaction (Fig. 4). Other contemporary student accommodation facilities in Germany were significantly smaller and consisted of a smaller number of larger buildings rather than many small buildings. Studentendorf Schlachtensee was the first large dormitory in Germany to be conceived around its own campus. Furthermore, within the residential houses themselves a radically



Fig. 4: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, May 2009

large portion of space has been dedicated to the community. Private rooms are small and they were supposed to be used only for sleeping and solitary study. All other functions, such as kitchens, dining rooms, lounges and bathrooms were communal (Fig. 5). This layout, radically geared towards collective living, would normally be expected from a monastery or a kibbutz rather than from a student accommodation facility. In Schlachtensee, communal space makes up more than 50% of its floor area, and the architects had to develop an intricate system of stacking and shifting rooms to achieve a spatial solution for this task.

The proposal for a university-owned dormitory dates back to the foundation of the Free University in 1948. The combined effort of French, British and US-American institutions in rebuilding West-Germany as a free democracy included a so called Re-Education programme. This Re-Education programme included rebuilding cultural institutions in Germany, such as broadcasting stations, theatres, museums and concert halls. Those institutions were not

only intended to promote democratic thinking, also their administrative and organisational structures should employ democratic principles.

Most important, this Re-Education programme included a reform of the education system. Schools and universities were obliged to include democratic structures. New guidelines for education were written, and the new founded Free University of Berlin was built following those Guidelines. Among other ideas, this education reform intended to foster a sense of community among the students. This was seen as a prerequisite for the education towards free and democratic thinking, which was thought to be possible only if the students themselves were organized as social groups and understood themselves as such [Zünder, 1989]. This idea would have a profound effect on student accommodation, since community-building was not only happening while studying, but also during leisure time.

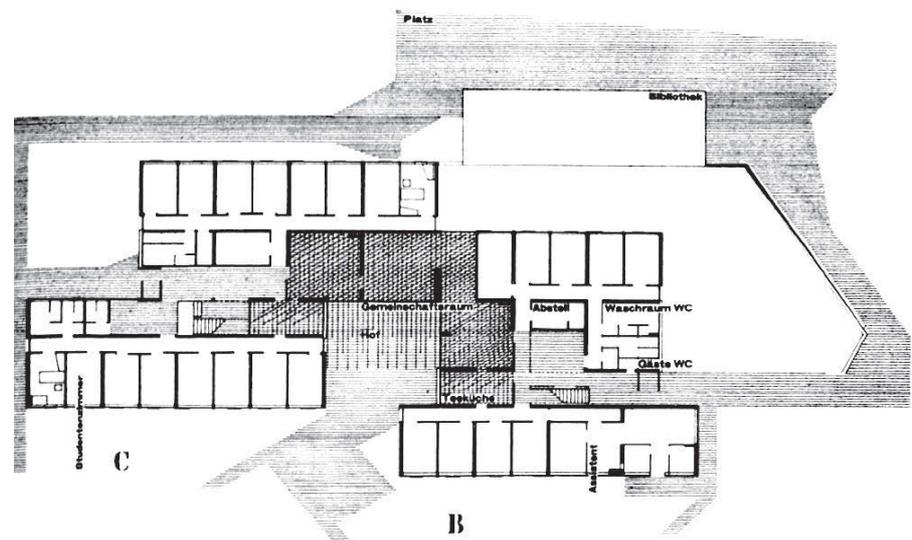


Fig. 5: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, ground floor plan of a residential building. Communal space is located in the centre of the building around the stairwell

At the time the Free University was founded, no standard typology had been developed for student accommodation in modern architecture. Until the 1950s, all buildings dedicated to student accommodation in Germany were owned by small private institutions and fraternities. Among those, the fraternity houses were the only places that provided community space for students outside the university. And since fraternities played a significant role in the rise of National Socialism in the Weimar Republic, after 1945 the fraternities' political influence was feared in Berlin. Administrators at the Free University concluded that a strong community among the students would limit the fraternities' influence. The accommodation facility proposed for the University was therefore conceived not only as a dormitory, but also as a social and educational facility. Professor Walther Killy (1917 – 1995), who oversaw the development of the project, wrote the design brief in 1956 [Zünder, 1989]. The brief stated that the proposed accommodation facility would a) have its own extracurricular

teaching program, b) would be designed to feature a maximum amount of communal space, c) would be organized as a self-governing democratic entity.

Money for the construction and the extracurricular teaching program had to be raised before construction could commence, since the European Recovery Program – the so-called Marshall Plan – had been phased out in 1952. Larger donations were necessary for the dormitory project, and the Free University considered the US State Department and the Ford Foundation as potential donors. When a donation was officially requested in 1956, it required a first architectural design. Since Hermann Fehling had been conferring with the University's student union about a future dormitory since 1953, he was able to quickly produce a design when asked. Still, a major shift in the concept was needed to convince the US State Department: The educational purpose now was no longer to counteract the students' potentially national socialist upbringing or the influence of the reactionary fraternities. Rather, it had to be aimed against communism. Studying in West Berlin was not uncommon for students from East Berlin before the Berlin Wall was built. A ratio of up to 30% students from East Berlin was projected to attend western universities in 1956, therefore an education towards freedom and democracy in the University's dormitory was seen as an effective tool in the anti-communist containment policy [Zünder, 1989].

All three aspects of the Studentendorf's original concept are more or less reflected in the actual built environment. Firstly, the dormitory needed space to host the extracurricular teaching program. Secondly, the internal system of democratic self-governance was reflected in the design: Each residential house represented one electoral district. Each house would elect one representative, who would then participate in the assembly or take office in the village's own administration. The system of pathways through the complex reflected the movement of the elected students to the administrative buildings in the village's centre. Relatively little consideration was given to the movements of students between houses, therefore an informal system of self-created pathways has emerged over the last decades. Today it is a challenge to reconcile the newly generated 'paths of desire' with the original layout – a layout that is part of the protected heritage site.

The third by far the biggest impact and the most defining and characteristic feature of the Studentendorf, was the large amount of communal space. The clearly stated educational goal was to create a strong sense of community among the students and the main tool to achieve this was the use of communal space. This spatial configuration makes it very hard to run the facility profitably on a free housing market, because rents are calculated by the amount of private space. Judging by the amount of private space only, the apartments in the Studentendorf are relatively expensive. The unprofitable nature of this layout led to difficulties after the ownership of the complex was transferred from the Free University to a municipal operator in 1971.

From a societal perspective the commitment towards community space was a huge success. The students' community and their commitment towards democratic reform and free thought grew far stronger than expected. As early as the first term of the self-governed administration, students demanded more rights and actual power. The self-governance allowed the students to make decisions about their own concerns. But those decisions still had to be approved by the Free University, so the actual power of the self-governed democracy was very limited. It was immediately named a pseudo-democracy (in German: "Sandkastendemokratie") [Zünder, 1989]. The Studentendorf's student community wanted to have a voice in the selection of the extracurricular teaching programme, and they wanted to invite speakers from East Berlin – a marked affront towards the donors' anti-communist stance. Also, the students quickly challenged the strict rules about nightly visits and gender segregation. The whole process of the students' claim for self-determination, the students' social emancipation, which would later lead to the uprising of 1968 was starting very early in the Studentendorf Schlachtensee. In 1964, the village's 'constitution' was altered to grant the self-governed students administration more powers. But with this decision, the Ford Foundation cancelled any further funding for the extracurricular program [Zünder, 1989].

Life in the village changed further after 1968, when the its representative system was replaced with a direct democracy with a plenum. One decision made during the brief time of plenary sessions was a veto against rent increase. The resulting financial trouble led the University to cancel the self-government all together. The experiment in self-governance was considered to be a failure, but the experiment of using community space as an educational tool nevertheless must be considered a success. Today, the Studentendorf is especially popular with students from foreign countries. It is easy to become part of the inhabitants' community, since the spatial arrangement of small private spaces and large communal spaces is still in use. Even so, there have been significant alterations to the internal communal spaces in each building: For instance, the number of communal bathrooms has been decreased and lounges have been converted to spacious kitchens [Külbel, 2012].

What makes the Studentendorf Schlachtensee so special is its very specific spatial configuration. Moreover, the original extracurricular teaching program, the self-administration and its village-like layout add to the Studentendorf's uniqueness. Student accommodation facilities with small bedrooms and large communal spaces are quite common, though. For instance, the Hill College House at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia features a similar internal structure. Eero Saarinen designed it in 1958. The Dexter Ferry Cooperative House, a dormitory at the Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, also features this spatial configuration. Marcel Breuer designed the Dexter Ferry Cooperative House in 1949–1951.

Even though the historic significance of Studentendorf Schlachtensee was never disputed, the complex has been slated for demolition several times. The ownership was transferred to

the municipal service provider for all student related topics, the Studentenwerk Berlin in 1971. The Studentenwerk – although state owned – has to ensure economically successful operation of its facilities. The high ratio of communal space complicated a profitable operation of the Studentendorf Schlachtensee. After all, its design was optimized for the task of community building, not for the housing market. Insufficient maintenance throughout the 1970s led to the physical decline of most of the Studentendorf's buildings. Demolition and replacement was first proposed in 1982, and was formally approved by the state parliament of Berlin in 1985. The first request to grant heritage protection for the Studentendorf dates from 1986 and was approved in 1991. Incidentally, another design for a replacement dormitory in case of demolition was proposed in 1988 by the original architects Fehling and Gogel.

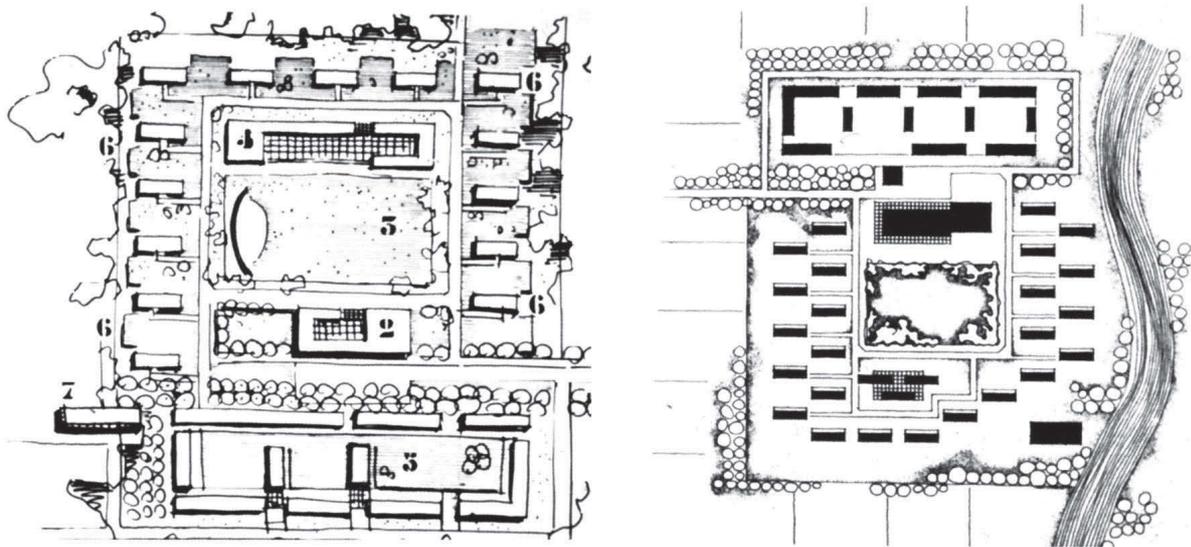


Fig. 6: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, extension from 1976–1978, architects Kraemer, Sieverts, Pfennig. Left side of the image: house 2, first building stage 1956–1959, architects Fehling, Gogel, Pfankuch

In spite of the dormitory's listed status, demolition was proposed again in 1998. This time plans were stopped by civil action. Protesters demanded the facility's protection and its continued operation. These demands were finally met, when a newly founded housing cooperative took over operation in 2003. Since then, the accommodation complex is slowly and continuously being renovated. The process is moving on gradually from one house to the next to ensure continuous operation of the facility. The buildings are upgraded to modern standards of insulation without distorting the original proportions. Insulation panels are only allowed to add four centimetres to the walls, trying to recreate the original appearance as closely as possible [Külbel, 2012]. The high degree of public space still puts economic pressure on the present operation. One crucial contribution to the economic feasibility throughout the last four decades was the extension from the late 1970s by Kraemer, Pfennig and Sieverts (Fig. 6). It was built with high density and highly efficient floor plans and therefore helps making a profitable operation possible today.

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- Fig. 2: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, site plan, 1958. In Schilling, Martina (ed.): Freie Universität Berlin. Ein Architekturführer zu den Hochschulbauten. Berlin: Braun, 2011, p. 172.
- Fig. 3: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, May 2009, photo by Matthias Seidel.
- Fig. 4: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, May 2009. In Gruss, Peter, Klack, Gunnar und Seidel, Matthias (ed.): Fehling+Gogel. Die Max-Planck-Gesellschaft als Bauherr der Architekten Hermann Fehling und Daniel Gogel. Berlin: 2009, p. 94.
- Fig. 5: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, ground floor plan of a residential building. Communal space is located in the centre of the building around the stairwell. Bauwelt, 1959, Nr. 51/52, p. 1496.
- Fig. 6: Studentendorf Schlachtensee, extension from 1976–78, architects Kraemer, Sieverts, Pfennig. Left side of the image: house 2, first building stage 1956–59, architects Fehling, Gogel, Pfankuch, in Schilling, Martina (ed.): Freie Universität Berlin. Ein Architekturführer zu den Hochschulbauten. Berlin: Braun, 2011, p. 177.



# The Authors

## SHARON IRISH

Sharon Irish is the coordinator for the Center for Digital Inclusion at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Trained as an architectural historian at Northwestern University (Illinois, USA), Sharon researches intersections among public art, architecture and urban space. Her most recent book was on the US-based artist Suzanne Lacy (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

## GUNNAR KLACK

Gunnar Klack studied architecture at the Berlin University of the Arts and the Glasgow School of Art. He completed a doctoral dissertation at the Technical University of Berlin. Work includes journalistic writing (Spex, Zeit-Online, Die Welt, Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung) and exhibitions (Fehling + Gogel, 2009; Re-Vision-IBA '87, 2012).

## PIOTR MARCINIAK

Doctor Hab. of Architecture Piotr Marciniak, architect, engineer and architecture historian. He is a Senior Lecturer at the Architecture Faculty of the Poznań University of Technology. His research interests include the modern architecture of Central Eastern Europe as well as the cultural heritage, architecture of national and ethnic minorities and theory of architecture.

## MARÍA ANTONIA FERNÁNDEZ NIETO

María Antonia Fernández Nieto is a Ph. D. architect teaching Architectural Design at Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid, where she has focused her research on social housing. She is the group leader of the Aliseda 18. Espacio de Regeneración Urbana research project. Her architectural designs have been published in international media, such as A10 (The Netherlands), Architecture Review (Malaysia) or Designfun (United Kingdom).

## MARTA GARCÍA CARBONERO

Marta García Carbonero is a Madrid-based architect and a frequent contributor to journals such as Arquitectura Viva, AV Monographs and L'Architecture d'Aujourd'Hui. After working as an architect in Berlin, Frankfurt and Hamburg, she is currently lecturer for Contemporary Architectural History at the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid (Spain). Her research interests concern contemporary architecture and landscape, in particular 20th century cemeteries, the subject of her Ph. D.

## SERGIU NOVAC

Sergiu Novac is a PhD candidate at the Department for Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Central European University, Budapest. His main fields of interest are urban sociology, science and technology studies, development studies and energy politics.

**SABINE KLINGNER**

Sabine Klingner is an architect with an additional qualification in civil engineering. She has worked in various architecture firms in Ireland since 1998. She graduated in civil engineering in Cottbus in 1991, completed her architecture degree in Erfurt in 1995 and most recently finished an MSc in heritage conservation at the Technical University of Berlin in 2012.

**MALGORZATA POPIOLEK**

Malgorzata Popiolek is an art historian, specialised in history of architecture and city planning. She studied art history and conservation of monuments in Warsaw, Freiburg im Breisgau and in Berlin. Since 2012 she is writing her PhD at the Technical University of Berlin about Reconstruction of Monuments in Post-War Warsaw and its European context.

**MARTA SEQUEIRA**

Marta Sequeira is the Director of the Department of Architecture at the University of Évora, where she taught in the Master and in the PhD in Architecture. She is also a researcher in the Centre for Art History and Artistic Research of the same university. She has won the ICAR-CORA Prize for the best doctoral thesis 2011.

# The Editors

## **MAREN HARNACK, FACHHOCHSCHULE FRANKFURT / MAIN**

Maren Harnack, Prof. Dr.-Ing. studied architecture, urban design and social sciences in Stuttgart, Delft and London and completed her PhD at the HafenCity University in Hamburg. She is currently teaching at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. She is a founding member of the urban design practice and consultancy urbanorbit and has been involved in various research projects funded by the German government and the Wüstenrot Foundation.

## **SEBASTIAN HAUMANN, TU DARMSTADT**

Sebastian Haumann, Dr. phil., is a historian. He received a PhD in 2010 from TU Darmstadt with a dissertation on participation and urban planning in Germany and the USA. From 2010–2012 he was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester and a fellow of the Fritz-Thyssen Foundation. Since 2012 he has been Assistant Professor in Modern History at TU Darmstadt.

## **KARIN BERKEMANN, FREIE KUNSTHISTORIKERIN**

Karin Berkemann, Dr. theol., is a protestant theologian as well as an art historian. From 2008 to 2010 she has been working for the State Conservation Office of the German federal state of Hessen, since 2013 she has been Curator of the Gustaf-Dalman-Collection at the University of Greifswald, since 2002 she has been conducting various independent research projects in the field of modern architecture, actually as co-editor of the online magazine [www.moderne-regional.de](http://www.moderne-regional.de).

## **MARIO TVRTKOVIC, HOCHSCHULE COBURG**

Mario Tvrtkovic, Prof. Dipl.-Ing. studied architecture and urban design at TU Darmstadt (diploma) and BUGH Wuppertal. In 2008 he founded urbanorbit together with Prof. Maren Harnack. Between 2005 and 2013 he worked as Assistant Professor in Urban Design at TU Darmstadt. Since 2013 he has been Professor of Urban Design at Coburg University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

## **TOBIAS MICHAEL WOLF, LANDESAMT FÜR DENKMALPFLEGE HESSEN**

Tobias Michael Wolf, Dr. phil., is an art historian. He studied history of art and history at the Technical University of Dresden and Heritage Conservation at the Technical University of Berlin. Since 2007 he has been working for the State Conservation Office of the German federal state of Hesse, actually as co-editor of the online magazine [www.moderne-regional.de](http://www.moderne-regional.de).

**STEPHANIE HEROLD, TU BERLIN**

Stephanie Herold studied art history and cultural anthropology in Bamberg, Bergen (Norway) and Berlin. After graduating she completed a Master in Conservation at the TU Berlin. Since 2008 she is research assistant at the Chair of Heritage Management of the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning at the TU Berlin. Besides working on her PhD on the role of beauty and beauty judgments in theory and practice of conservation, her research is focused on post-war and postmodern architecture and city planning.



**Weitere Publikationen aus dem  
Institut für Stadt- und  
Regionalplanung**

## Arbeitshefte



Nr. 78

Sylvia Butenschön (Hrsg.)

### **Landesentwicklung und Gartenkultur** **Gartenkunst und Gartenbau als Themen der Aufklärung**

Seit der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts war die Entwicklung ländlicher Regionen ein wichtiges Anliegen in allen deutschen Staaten. Dazu wurden Programme zum Ausbau der Infrastruktur aber auch zur Förderung des Garten- und Obstbaus aufgelegt. Die Tagungsbeiträge der Fachtagung „Landesentwicklung durch Gartenkultur“ beleuchten diese Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen auf dem Lande aus unterschiedlichen disziplinären Blickwinkeln und mit einem besonderen Fokus auf den Themen Gartenbau, Gartenkunst und Landschaftsgestaltung.

Berlin, 2014, ISBN: 978-3-7983-2685-9

**18,50 €**



Nr. 77

Ragna Körby & Tobias Kurtz

### **Das Parlament der Visionen** **Entwurf für einen partizipativen Stadtplanungsprozess**

Kann Bürgerbeteiligung Spaß machen? Bring Beteiligung in der Stadtplanung überhaupt was? Erreicht man immer nur die gleichen Leute? Machen Politik und Verwaltung am Ende doch nur das, was sie für richtig halten? Bürgerbeteiligung ist aktuell ein stark strapazierter Begriff. Alle wollen sie, weil sie eine stärkere Legitimation für die Entscheidungsträger und eine Annäherung zwischen Politik und Bürgern verspricht aber keiner weiß so genau, wie das gehen soll. Die etablierten Formate der Beteiligung werden zunehmend in Frage gestellt, formalisierbare neue Methoden sind rar. Das Parlament der Visionen ist eine Annäherung an dieses Feld mit dem Ziel, Stadtplanung mit anderen Mitteln zu kommunizieren, anders darüber zu reden und vor allem, die dahinter liegenden Vorstellungsvon einer guten und richtigen Stadtentwicklung offen zu diskutieren.

2012, 146 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2415-2

**14,90 €**



Nr. 76

Sylvia Butenschön (Hrsg.)

### **Frühe Baumschulen in Deutschland** **Zum Nutzen, zur Zierde und zum Besten des Landes**

Ein zunehmendes Interesse an ausländischen Gehölzen, die Beschäftigung mit der Pomologie und die Verbreitung des Landschaftsgartens führten in der 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts zur Gründung zahlreicher Baumschulen in Deutschland, über die bislang wenig bekannt ist. Dieser Tagungsband gibt einen Einblick in das Forschungsfeld der frühen Baumschulen. Die Beiträge behandeln die Entstehung der verschiedenen Typen von Baumschulen im Überblick sowie die theoretischen Anforderungen an ihre Organisation und Gestaltung. Als ausgewählte Beispiele werden Anlagen in Hannover, Kassel, Harbke, Schwöbber, Hamburg und Eldena im Detail vorgestellt.

2012, 195 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2414-5

**14,90 €**



Nr. 75

Michael König

### **Regionalstadt Frankfurt** **Ein Konzept nach 100 Jahren Stadt-Umland-Diskurs in Berlin, Hannover und Frankfurt am Main**

Die Suburbanisierung führt in Großstadregionen zu erheblichen Stadt-Umland-Problemen, die erforderliche regionale Koordination scheitert aber meist an politischen Widerständen. Diese Arbeit untersucht die Probleme, Konflikte und Lösungen, mit dem Ergebnis, dass Großstadregionen in einer Gebietskörperschaft existieren müssen. Drei solcher Vereinigungsprojekte (Berlin 1920, Frankfurt 1971, Hannover 2001) werden vorgestellt und der politische Wille der Landesregierung als entscheidender Faktor identifiziert. Aus den Fallbeispielen wird ein Entwurf für eine vereinte Stadtregion Frankfurt abgeleitet. Denn nur durch innere Befriedung und staatliche Unterstützung kann die Region ihre Energien auf den internationalen Metropolenwettbewerb konzentrieren.

2009, 224 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2114-4

**12,90 €**

Das vollständige Programm finden sie unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de)

## Sonderpublikationen



Sylvia Butenschön (Hrsg.)

### **Garten – Kultur – Geschichte** Gartenhistorisches Forschungskolloquium 2010

Der Tagungsband des Gartenhistorischen Forschungskolloquiums 2010 gibt einen aktuellen Einblick in das von WissenschaftlerInnen verschiedener Disziplinen aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven beleuchtete Forschungsfeld der Gartengeschichte. So behandeln die 20 Textbeiträge Aspekte der Gartenkultur aus einem Zeitraum von über 400 Jahren und einem Betrachtungsgebiet von ganz Europa - von den Wasserkünsten in Renaissancegärten über das Stadtgrün des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Hausgärten des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts und Fragen des denkmalpflegerischen Umgangs mit Freiflächen der 2. Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts.

2011, 134 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2340-7

14,90 €



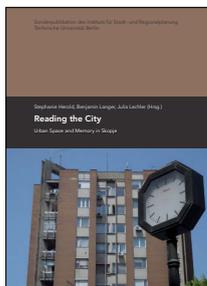
Ursula Flecken, Laura Calbet i Elias (Hg.)

### **Der öffentliche Raum** Sichten, Reflexionen, Beispiele

Der öffentliche Raum ist zugleich konstituierendes Element und Gedächtnis der Stadt. Er ist in höchstem Maße komplex und unterliegt ständigen Veränderungen. In der Entwicklung der Städte muss er deshalb immer wieder neu verhandelt werden. Raumwissenschaften und Stadtplanung haben als integrale Disziplinen den Anspruch, unterschiedlichste Perspektiven zum öffentlichen Raum zusammen zu führen. Dieser Sammelband bietet ein vielschichtiges Bild der Funktionen, Aufgaben und Bedeutungen des öffentlichen Raumes. Er versteht sich als Beitrag, der die aktuelle Debatte bereichern und voranbringen soll.

2011, 250 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2318-6

19,90 €



Stephanie Herold, Benjamin Langer, Julia Lechler (Hrsg.)

### **Reading the City** Urban Space and Memory in Skopje

The workshop "Reading the city" took place in Skopje in May 2009 and followed the hypothesis that every historical, political, and social development and trend is mirrored in the city's built environment. Cities, accordingly, consist of a multitude of layers of narratives and thus become an image of individual and collective memory. Investigating different sites of the city under this focus, the publication shows, how history is mirrored in the urban space of Skopje today, how it is perceived and constructed, and which historical periods influence the city's current planning discourse.

2010, 153 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2129-8

13,90 €



Adrian Atkinson, Meriem Chabou, Daniel Karsch (Eds.)

### **Stratégies pour un Développement Durable Local** Renouvellement Urbain et Processus de Transformations Informelles

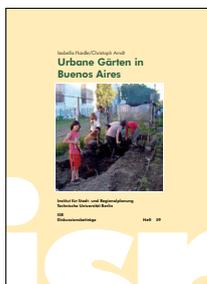
This document contains the output of a conference and action planning workshop that took place in Algiers over five days in early May 2007. The theme of the event was urban renewal with a focus on sustainable development. 62 participants attended the event from 13 countries in the framework of the URDN, sponsored and supported by the École Polytechnique d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme of Algiers. Academics, professionals and government officials from architecture, planning and including the private development sector presented papers and discussed both the technical and institutional issues as to how planning systems and the redevelopment process can be more effective in addressing sustainability issues ranging from the supply of resources, through urban design to concern with appropriate responses to climatic and geographical considerations.

2008, 223 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2086-4

13,90 €

Das vollständige Programm finden sie unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de)

## Diskussionsbeiträge



Nr. 59

Isabella Haidle, Christoph Arndt

### Urbane Gärten in Buenos Aires

Im Zuge der Modernisierung und Industrialisierung im letzten Jahrhundert geriet die Praxis des innerstädtischen Gemüseanbaus jedoch weitgehend aus dem Blickfeld der Stadtplanung. In der Realität verschwand sie niemals ganz, sondern bestand informell weiter. Erst die Krisen der Moderne bzw. das Ende des fordistischen Entwicklungsmodells haben weltweit zu einer intensiveren theoretischen Beschäftigung mit kleinteiligen, vor Ort organisierten, informellen Praxen geführt. Die Interaktion der GärtnerInnen mit der Stadtentwicklung und Stadtplanung rückt seit einigen Jahren ins Zentrum des Interesses. Die AutorInnen versuchen zwischen der Planung und den Ideen der GärtnerInnen zu vermitteln, indem sie mögliche Potenziale und Defizite der einzelnen Projekte aufzeigen und Unterstützungsmöglichkeiten formulieren.

2007, 204 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2053-6

9,90 €



Nr. 58

Guido Spars (Hrsg.)

### Wohnungsmarktentwicklung Deutschland Trends, Segmente, Instrumente

Die Wohnungsmarktentwicklung in Deutschland ist zunehmend von Ausdifferenzierungsprozessen auf der Nachfrage- und der Angebotsseite geprägt. Die Teilmärkte entwickeln sich höchst unterschiedlich. Die Parallelität von Schrumpfung und Wachstum einzelner Segmente z.B. aufgrund > regionaler Bevölkerungsgewinne und -verluste, > der Überalterung der Gesellschaft, > der Vereinzelung und Heterogenisierung von Nachfragern, > des wachsenden Interesses internationaler Kapitalanleger stellen neue Anforderungen an die Stadt- und Wohnungspolitik, an die Wohnungsunternehmen und Investoren und ebenso an die wissenschaftliche Begleitung dieser Prozesse.

Mit Beiträgen von Thomas Hafner, Nancy Häusel, Tobias Just, Frank Jost, Anke Bergner, Christian Strauß, u.a.

2006, 313 S., ISBN 3 7983 2016 0

9,90 €



Nr. 57

Ulrike Lange/Florian Hutterer

### Hafen und Stadt im Austausch Ein strategisches Entwicklungskonzept für eine Hafenbereich in Hamburg

In den zentral gelegenen Hafenbereichen von Hamburg hat in den letzten Jahren ein Umwandlungsprozess eingesetzt, der noch immer andauert. Allgemein zurückgehende Investitionstätigkeit und die unsichere wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, sowie räumliche Besonderheiten des Ortes lassen Zweifel aufkommen, ob die viel praktizierte Masterplanung für eine Entwicklung der Hafenbereiche am südlichen Elbufer geeignet ist. Die vorliegende Arbeit schlägt daher eine Strategie der Nadelstiche vor. Für die Umstrukturierung dieses Hafenbereichs soll eine Herangehensweise angewendet werden, die sich die sukzessiven Wachstumsprozesse einer Stadt zu eigen macht. Durch Projekte als Initialzündungen und ausgewählte räumliche Vorgaben soll unter Einbeziehung wichtiger Akteure ein Prozess in Gang gebracht und geleitet werden, der flexibel auf wirtschaftliche, soziale und räumlich-strukturelle Veränderungen reagieren kann.

2006, 129 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2016-1

9,90 €



Nr. 56

Anja Besecke, Robert Hänsch, Michael Pinetzki (Hrsg.)

### Das Flächensparbuch Diskussion zu Flächenverbrauch und lokalem Bodenbewusstsein

Brauchen wir ein „Flächensparbuch“, wenn in Deutschland die Wirtschafts- und Bevölkerungsentwicklung stagniert oder sogar rückläufig ist? Ja, denn trotz Stagnation der Wirtschafts- und Bevölkerungsentwicklung wächst die Inanspruchnahme von Flächen für Siedlungs- und Verkehrszwecke. Dies läuft dem Ziel zu einem schonenden und sparsamen Umgang mit der Ressource Boden und damit dem Leitbild einer nachhaltigen Siedlungsentwicklung entgegen. Das Gut „Fläche“ ist vielseitigen Nutzungsansprüchen ausgesetzt und dessen Inanspruchnahme ist aufgrund divergierender Interessen häufig ein Streitthema. Dieser Sammelband soll die aktuelle Diskussion aufzeigen, die auf dem Weg zu einer Reduktion der Flächenneuanspruchnahme von den verschiedenen Akteuren geprägt wird. Dabei reicht der Blick von der Bundespolitik bis zur kommunalen Ebene und von der wissenschaftlichen Theorie bis zur planerischen Praxis.

2005, 207 S., ISBN 3 7983 1994 4

9,90 €

Das vollständige Programm finden sie unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de)

## Online-Veröffentlichungen



Nr. 52

Paul-Martin Richter

### **Möglichkeiten und Grenzen gesellschaftlichen Engagements migrantischer UnternehmerInnen**

Wirtschaftliche Aktivitäten und gesellschaftliches Engagement von Migranten geraten (wieder) zunehmend in den Fokus von Politik, Forschung und Medien. In der Arbeit werden Theorien und empirische Befunde zu den zentralen Untersuchungsgegenständen migrantisches Unternehmertum, gesellschaftliches Engagement von Unternehmen und gesellschaftliches Engagement von MigrantInnen als eine erste Annäherung an ein aktuelles und zugleich komplexes Thema in einer Fallstudie zusammengeführt. Eine erstaunliche - aber möglicherweise die entscheidende - Erkenntnis ist dabei, dass die ethnische Ökonomie als Kategorie nicht existiert.

2015, 153 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2712-2 **kostenloser download unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de/impulse](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de/impulse)**



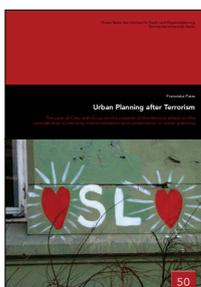
Nr. 51

Benjamin Kasten & Markus Seitz

### **Die Hochstraße in Halle (Saale) Relikt einer vergangenen Zukunft**

Die Hochstraße in Halle (Saale) ist Forschungsgegenstand der Publikation – bestehend aus zwei Teilen. Im Analyseteil (A) Zwischen Abrissphantasien und Unentbehrlichkeit werden der Typus Hochstraße vorgestellt und eingeordnet, von der Historie der Stadt Halle berichtet, die zeitgenössische Begründung zur Errichtung der Hochstraße referiert, aktuelle Debatten über die Hochstraße zusammengefasst und eine Annäherung an den Raum in Form eines dokumentierten Spaziergangs versucht. Im Konzeptteil (B) Labor für eine andere Mobilität wird der Kontext vorgestellt, in dem das Konzept erarbeitet wurde, die Ziele des Labors herausgearbeitet, verschiedene Aktionsfelder benannt, der Prozessverlauf dargestellt und eine Prozesssteuerung konzipiert.

2014, 186 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2711-5 **kostenloser download unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de/impulse](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de/impulse)**



Nr. 50

Franziska Paizs

### **Urban Planning after Terrorism The case of Oslo with focus on the impacts of the terrorist attack on the consideration of security, memorialisation and conservation in urban planning**

This paper identifies possible impacts of terrorist attacks on national urban planning policies. Analysis is based on the case study of Oslo (Norway) and the effects of the terrorist attack on the governmental quarter in July 2011. In order to formulate general statements the cases of Oklahoma City (US, 1995) and Manchester (UK, 1996) are analysed as well. The research investigates two spatial levels – the local level of the attacked site with special regard to the consideration of the aspects security, conservation and memorialisation and the level of the town and its urban planning policy.

2013, 107 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2619-4 **kostenloser download unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de/grauereihe](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de/grauereihe)**



Nr. 49

Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper & Annemarie Rothe

### **Die Kirchenburgenlandschaft Siebenbürgens Strategien zur Erhaltung des europäischen Kulturerbes der Kirchenburgen in Siebenbürgen/Rumänien**

Die einzigartige europäische Kulturlandschaft der siebenbürgischen Kirchenburgen ist durch die Veränderungen seit 1989 in großer Gefahr. Dem über 800 Jahre gepflegten Kulturerbe der Siebenbürger Sachsen droht durch Abwanderung und den demografischen Wandel der Verfall. Neue Ansätze und Strategien zum Erhalt der Kirchen, Wehranlagen und Nebengebäude sind dringend erforderlich. In dem Strategiekonzept werden die Situation der Baudenkmäler und der sie umgebenden Dörfer analysiert und Anregungen für den zukünftigen Umgang aufgezeigt.

2013, 111 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2618-7 **kostenloser download unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de/grauereihe](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de/grauereihe)**

Das vollständige Programm finden sie unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de)

# Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung



2013

## Das Ende der Behutsamkeit?

„Bildet ‚Behutsamkeit‘ noch das unangefochtene Leitbild der Stadterneuerung und Bestandsentwicklung?“ – so das Schwerpunktthema des Jahrbuchs Stadterneuerung 2013. Reflexionen über die Sinnhaftigkeit der ‚Behutsamkeit‘ vor dem Hintergrund des Wohnungsleerstands in vielen Städten in den neuen Bundesländern und dem Wohnungsmangel und den Aufwertungstendenzen in wachsenden Großstädten scheinen angebracht. Die Diversifizierung der Gebietskulissen, die Vielfalt von Problemstrukturen und neue Herausforderungen, wie die energetische Erneuerung des Bestands, stellen das Leitmotiv zunehmend infrage. Wie aber können die Grundsätze der Sozialverträglichkeit, der Inklusion, der Beteiligung, der Nachhaltigkeit und damit der hehre Anspruch der „Behutsamkeit“ weiter entwickelt werden? Neben diesem Schwerpunktthema werden in den Beiträgen Themen der Stadterneuerung in der Geschichte, der Praxis, im Ausland sowie in Forschung und Lehre analysiert.

2013, 380 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2644-6

20,90 €



2012

## 40 Jahre Städtebauförderung – 50 Jahre Nachmoderne

Das Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 2012 ist das 20. Jahrbuch, nachdem kurz nach der Wende 1990/91 die erste Ausgabe erschienen war. Zentraler Anlass für die aktuell geleistete Reflexion über Errungenschaften, Standortbestimmung und Perspektiven der Stadterneuerung war das 40jährige Jubiläum des Städtebauförderungsgesetzes, das bis heute als Besonderes Städtebaurecht in weiterentwickelter Form den rechtlichen Rahmen der Bund-Länder-Städtebauförderung und damit die Stadterneuerung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland maßgeblich bestimmt. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die Herausbildung der noch immer gültigen Grundprinzipien einer Bestandspolitik, die Zug um Zug auf weitere Quartierstypen und stadtentwicklungspolitische Herausforderungen angepasst und übertragen wurden. Dabei geht es sowohl um die beziehungsreiche Nachzeichnung und Einordnung des historischen Wandels in der Planungs- und insbesondere Stadterneuerungskultur als auch um die Reflexion der Wirkungsmächtigkeit nachmoderner Prinzipien in der Bestandsentwicklung.

2012, 369 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2420-6

20,90 €



2011

## Stadterneuerung und Festivalisierung

Seit zwei Jahrzehnten wird das Thema der Festivalisierung der Stadtplanung und der Stadterneuerung kontrovers diskutiert. Kleine und große Festivals und diverse Veranstaltungen unterschiedlichen Formats sind weiter en vogue, und derartige Events werden gezielt als strategisches Instrument der Stadtpolitik eingesetzt. Auch in den letzten Jahren spielen sie als Internationale Bauausstellungen, Gartenschauen und ähnliche Ereignisse für Stadtbau und Stadterneuerung eine besondere Rolle. Anlass genug, dieses Thema – inzwischen durchgängig Gegenstand von Stadtforschung und Planungstheorie – in diesem Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung schwerpunktmäßig aufzunehmen und in den einzelnen Beiträgen aus verschiedenen Perspektiven kritisch zu reflektieren. Daneben werden auch in diesem Jahrbuch neben dem Schwerpunktthema Lehre und Forschung theoretische und historische Aspekte der Stadterneuerung sowie auch Praxen im In- und Ausland in den Beiträgen thematisiert.

2011, 378 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2339-1

20,90 €



2010

## Infrastrukturen und Stadtbau

Das Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung 2010 beinhaltet in diesem Jahr den Schwerpunkt „Soziale und technische Infrastruktur im Wandel“. Die Rahmenbedingungen, der Stellenwert und der Zusammenhang von Infrastruktur und Stadterneuerung haben sich in den letzten Jahren gravierend verändert. Schrumpfende Städte, Rückbau, kommunale Haushaltsprobleme und der Niedergang sowie die Schließung von Einrichtungen, die in früheren Stadterneuerungsphasen mit öffentlichen Mitteln gefördert wurden, machen eine Neubewertung und eine differenzierte Bestandsaufnahme erforderlich, um neue Herausforderungen zu reflektieren. Vor dem Hintergrund des demographischen Wandels sind „bewährte“ Strukturen für Bemessung, Bau, Betrieb und Nutzung von Infrastrukturen im Kontext des Stadtbbaus in Frage gestellt. Neben diesem Schwerpunktthema werden Lehre und Forschung, theoretische und historische Aspekte der Stadterneuerung sowie auch neue Praxen im In- und Ausland in den Beiträgen thematisiert.

2010, 376 S., ISBN 978-3-7983-2230-1

20,90 €

Das vollständige Programm finden sie unter [www.isr.tu-berlin.de](http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de)

## **Portrait des Instituts für Stadt- und Regionalplanung**

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Menschen beanspruchen in sehr unterschiedlicher Art und Weise ihren Lebensraum. Die damit verbundenen Auseinandersetzungen um verschiedene Nutzungsansprüche an den Boden, die Natur, Gebäude, Anlagen oder Finanzmittel schaffen Anlass und Arbeitsfelder für die Stadt- und Regionalplanung. Das Institut für Stadt- und Regionalplanung (ISR) an der Technischen Universität Berlin ist mit Forschung und Lehre in diesem Spannungsfeld tätig.

### **Institut**

Das 1974 gegründete Institut setzt sich heute aus sieben Fachgebieten zusammen: „Bestandsentwicklung und Erneuerung von Siedlungseinheiten“, „Bau- und Planungsrecht“, „Denkmalpflege“, „Orts-, Regional- und Landesplanung“, „Planungstheorie und Analyse städtischer und regionaler Politiken“, Städtebau und Siedlungswesen“ sowie „Stadt- und Regionalökonomie“. Gemeinsam mit weiteren Fachgebieten der Fakultät VI Planen Bauen Umwelt verantwortet das Institut die Studiengänge Stadt- und Regionalplanung, Urban Design, Real Estate Management und Urban Management.

Mit dem Informations- und Projektzentrum hat das ISR eine zentrale Koordinierungseinrichtung, in der die Publikationsstelle und eine kleine Bibliothek, u.a. mit studentischen Abschlussarbeiten angesiedelt sind. Der Kartographieverbund im Institut pflegt einen großen Bestand an digitalen und analogen Karten, die der gesamten Fakultät zur Verfügung stehen.

### **Studium**

Stadt- und Regionalplanung an der Technischen Universität Berlin ist ein interdisziplinärer und prozessorientierter Bachelor- und Masterstudiengang. Die Studierenden lernen, bezogen auf Planungsräume unterschiedlicher Größe (vom Einzelgrundstück bis zu länderübergreifenden Geltungsbereichen), planerische, städtebauliche, gestalterische, (kultur-)historische, rechtliche, soziale, wirtschaftliche und ökologische Zusammenhänge zu erfassen, in einem Abwägungsprozess zu bewerten und vor dem Hintergrund neuer Anforderungen Nutzungs- und Gestaltungskonzepte zu entwickeln.

Traditionell profiliert sich das Bachelor-Studium der Stadt- und Regionalplanung an der TU Berlin durch eine besondere Betonung des Projektstudiums. Im zweijährigen konsekutiven Masterstudiengang können die Studierenden ihr Wissen in fünf Schwerpunkten vertiefen: Städtebau und Wohnungswesen, Bestandsentwicklung und Erneuerung von Siedlungseinheiten, örtliche und regionale Gesamtplanung, Raumplanung im internationalen Kontext oder Stadt- und Regionalforschung.

Internationale Kooperationen, unter anderem mit China, Italien, Polen, Rumänien und dem Iran, werden für interdisziplinäre Studien- und Forschungsprojekte genutzt.

### **Forschung**

Das Institut für Stadt- und Regionalplanung zeichnet sich durch eine breite Forschungstätigkeit der Fachgebiete aus. Ein bedeutender Anteil der Forschung ist fremdfinanziert (sog. Drittmittel). Auftraggeber der Drittmittelprojekte sind die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), die Europäische Kommission, Ministerien und deren Forschungsabteilungen, Bundesländer, Kommunen, Stiftungen und Verbände sowie in Einzelfällen Unternehmen. Eine weitere wichtige Forschungsleistung des Instituts sind Dissertationen und Habilitationen.

Die Ergebnisse der Forschungsprojekte fließen sowohl methodisch als auch inhaltlich in die Lehre ein. Eine profilstützende Beziehung zwischen Forschungsaktivitäten und Studium ist durch den eigenen Studienschwerpunkt „Stadt- und Regionalforschung“ im Master vorgesehen.

Sowohl über Forschungs- als auch über Studienprojekte bestehen enge Kooperationen und institutionelle Verbindungen mit Kommunen und Regionen wie auch mit anderen universitären oder außeruniversitären wissenschaftlichen Einrichtungen.

Weitere Informationen über das ISR finden Sie auf der Homepage des Instituts unter: <http://www.isr.tu-berlin.de/>

