

Basic Renewal 'Zirkusgasse 47'

The housing-estate in the Zirkusgasse 47 was constructed between 1950 and 1952 in the densely built-up 2nd municipal district. The six-storey high building features a semi-public courtyard as a common space for the 191 flats and eight stairwells. During the basic renewal process, (only) 67 flats were refurbished and 31 new attic flats constructed. Furthermore, the stairwells and the courtyard were upgraded and balconies or loggias were applied to the façade.

All the construction work was done in coordination with the inhabitants: the personal needs of the tenants were considered alongside the improvement of the building itself. Ultimately, the tenants have to decide if they can afford a fully-renovated flat.

Why 'soft urban renewal'?

From a purely technical point of view, the renovation of an inhabited building is more complicated than the renovation of a fully empty building. The advantage of this additional expense is at social level.

Renovation since 1984 (managed by wohnfonds_wien):

6,988 housing estates with more than 330,000 flats have been renovated

1.067 GWh savings in heat energy

The strong tenants rights ensure that replacement in Vienna cannot happen. The result of urban renewal is a more diverse spread of inhabitants, because the 'old' inhabitants are not replaced, but 'new' inhabitants are attracted to the modern flats, especially in the attic floors. Both groups can benefit from improvements to the common spaces (courtyards, barrier-free staircases, elevators, etc.). This is helping the old inhabitants to be more accepting of the construction work.

Moderate densification

In addition to the 191 existing flats, 31 new flats were constructed through an attic conversion. This small increase of 15 percent of new flats is a moderate densification, but is socially and ecologically sustainable. The inhabitants are able to stay in their flats and in familiar surroundings, and through refurbishment instead of demolition and reconstruction, grey energy is saved.

Costs:

€ 7,173 million in total building cost
(i.e. € 7.2 billion)

€ 5,022 million in housing promotion
(i.e. € 5.0 billion)



Vienna



Through the series 'In Dialogue about Urban Transformation' we present urban experiences and good practise collected by EUROCIITIES working groups (WG). Many European cities are faced with the challenges of (rapid) growth and socio-demographic change. To achieve and ensure sustainable development, cities focus on inward development with densification, energy efficiency, and socially-balanced solutions. The ways of reaching these goals vary between the cities. Nevertheless, each example provides guidance or inspiration for others to improve dialogue and participation. The tools, methods, and approaches we present include outstanding visualisation, involvement, co-design, GIS-modelling, and more.

WG Integrated Urban Development
(Economic Development Forum)
We exchange on integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, using peer-exchange to improve day-to-day practice in projects and urban development. Our focus on urban transformation and densification includes emphasis on participation, dialogue and multilevel governance, carbon neutral planning/renewal and its social impact, as well as resourcing integrated projects. These complex issues often overlap: therefore, we seek exchanges with other working groups!

WG Housing (Social Affairs Forum)
WG Housing gathers representatives from more than a dozen cities. Our objective is to raise awareness of the importance of housing for social cohesion in European cities by comparison of national/local housing policies and development of recommendations with regard to: affordable housing, social housing and housing of special target groups, mixed-use urban developments, housing and social cohesion, rehabilitation of existing housing stock, transfer of know-how.

www.eurocities.eu

Imprint

Publisher
City of Munich
Department of Urban Planning and Building Regulations
Blumenstrasse 28b
DE-80331 Munich
www.muenchen.de/plan

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Version 1a
October 2014

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Urban Development Planning

Vienna In Dialogue about Urban Transformation

'Soft Urban Renewal' – Moderate Densification and Dialogue



City of Vienna

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In Dialogue about Urban Transformation
is a joint publication of the City of Munich
and other member cities of EUROCIITIES

Vienna: Dynamic Population Growth

Vienna's population has grown from 1.55 million in 2001 to 1.76 million in 2014, and – according to the latest projections – this dynamic population growth of about 17,000 people per year will continue over the coming years. These conditions make new strategies for urban housing policies necessary in order to ensure an adequate stock of affordable housing and a diverse social mix in different neighbourhoods and in the individual segments of the housing market.

Growing inwards

Beside the development of new city districts, like the 'Seestadt Aspern', one of Europe's largest urban developments, brownfield conversion and inner city densification plays an important role in Vienna's housing strategy. A closer look at the spatial distribution of past population growth shows that, since 2001, the population of inner city districts grew considerably, by about 75,000 inhabitants (about 10 percent). According to Vienna's new urban development plan (STEP 2025), the strategy of 'growing inwards' is as important as urban

extension. As an already densely built-up and inhabited city, further densification is a big challenge for Vienna, requiring dialogue, participation and cooperative development to ensure high-quality solutions and broad acceptance.

Area renewal offices promote dialogue-between all actors

The Viennese model of 'soft urban renewal' has over the past 40 years developed different methods of dialogue, not only with inhabitants but also with landlords, local activists and cultural initiatives. A dialogue on urban transformation, especially in built-up areas, needs to involve all these actors and take into account all their different interests.

The local urban renewal offices are not only organising, guiding and promoting this process, but also giving marginalised groups a stronger voice. Vienna's areal renewal offices ensure that urban renewal in Vienna combines upgrading, moderate densification, dialogue and a strong social responsibility.

Vienna's Model of 'Soft Urban Renewal'

Dialogue at building level

For four decades, Vienna has been successfully promoting renovation activities by applying its concept of 'soft urban renewal'. The aim is to preserve the existing basic fabric of a building wherever possible, and to improve it where it is reasonable, practical and affordable for the tenants. This so-called 'basic renewal', the renovation of an occupied building, makes a close dialogue between the landlord and the tenants, from the beginning of the planning process, essential. Basic renewals are limited to the communal areas and empty flats in a building. Other activities may include the conversion of the attic and the creation of business premises on the ground floor. Occupied flats are only upgraded with approval from the tenants. In the long run, strong tenant rights ensure that urban renewal in Vienna does not trigger replacement and gentrification.

Dialogue at district level

The results of this long-term upgrading process are not only visible in individual buildings, but also at district level. A lot of city quarters have gone from old and declining to dynamic and prospering areas.

To institutionalise a closer dialogue between all actors at district level, in 1989 the so-called 'block renewal' was established. Block renewals aim to upgrade densely built-up urban areas in a sustainable way. In addition to the socially compatible renovation of residential buildings, these are also intended to upgrade the neighbourhood, create appropriate open space or improve local supply.

Outlook

Over the coming decade, buildings from the post-war era will be a particular focus of attention. Many of these buildings do not fulfil today's standards of thermal insulation, accessibility for people with disabilities, or supply with social infrastructure. Hence an integrated strategy of renovation and upgrading of this building stock is necessary to take into account both the social and technological aspects of urban renewal.

Furthermore, many housing estates from the post-war period contain upwards of 100 flats. For block renewal of such a scale, the planning should consider all the different aspects of urban renewal at district level. The following two examples show how dialogue on urban transformation at its different levels in Vienna is managed.

Block Renewal 'Floridsdorfer Spitz'

In spring 2014, the City of Vienna launched an urban renewal initiative in the centre of Floridsdorf, Vienna's 21st municipal district. Urban renewal of this scale has to demonstrate concrete potential, from small improvements in public space to renovation of large housing estates. Therefore, a team of different experts worked to evaluate the potential, inform and activate inhabitants and local entrepreneurs, and consult local experts.

Evaluation of potential by two block renewal areas

First of all, two block renewal areas 'Am Spitz Süd' and 'Am Spitz Nord' were identified by the wohnfonds_wien, a city-managed fund that has been coordinating urban renewal activities in Vienna since 1984.

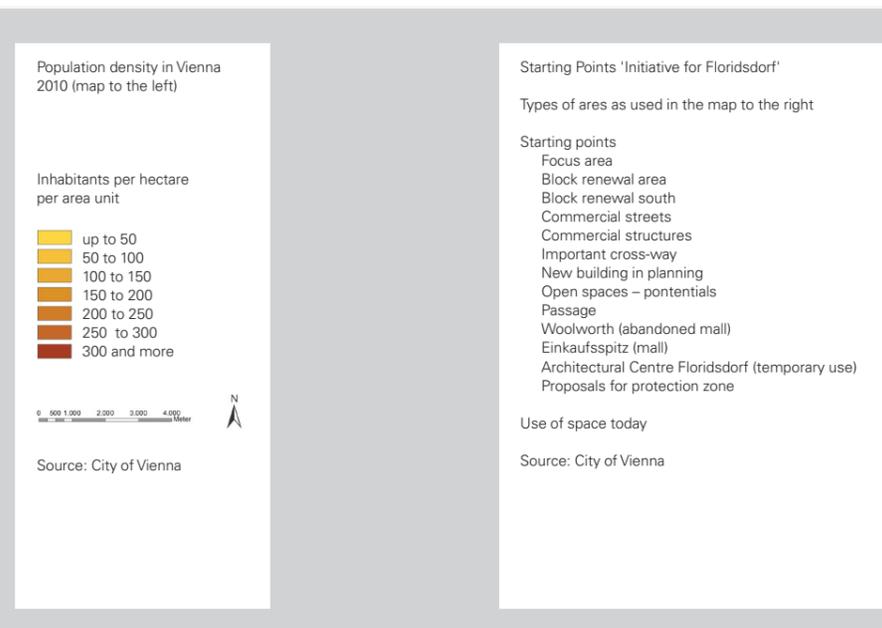
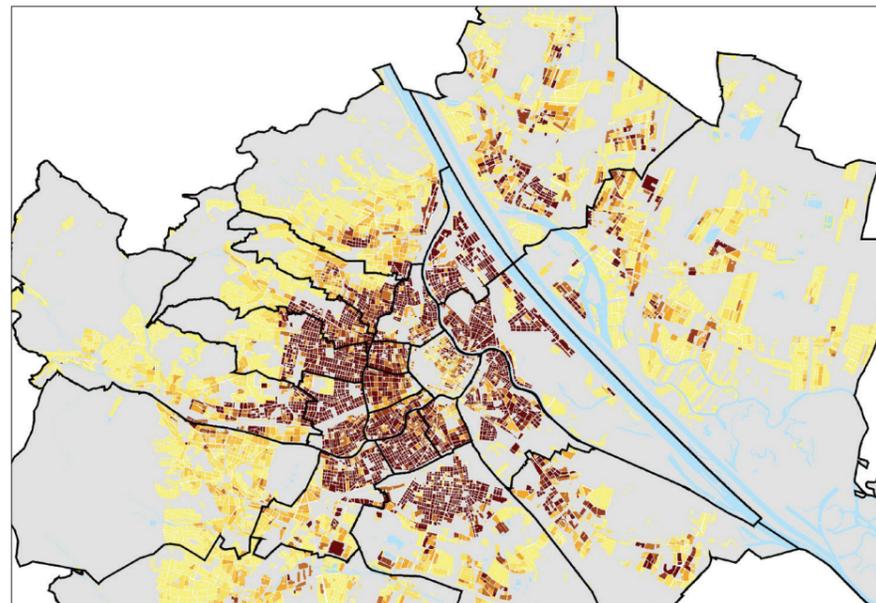
In the first phase, two teams of architects and landscape planners evaluated potential for improvements in open space and for renewal activities. All property owners were officially contacted.

Area renewal office as contact and information hotspot

Meanwhile, inhabitants, landlords and local businesses are consulted by the local area renewal office for their ideas and proposals for the area.

All these findings, analyses and ideas will be collected up until the end of 2014, and in spring 2015 more detailed concepts for key location should be developed in dialogue with property owners who are interested in upgrading or developing their property.

Vienna Population Density 2010. Inhabitants per hectare per area unit (section of the original map)



Starting points 'Initiative for Floridsdorf' (City of Vienna) (section of the original map)

