HOUSING IN VIENNA
Innovative, Social and Ecological
Curated by
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Dear readers,

Vienna, the federal capital of Austria, is famed throughout the world for its culture and hospitality but also for its commitment to environmental protection, for its high level of social security and excellent quality of life. Our city regularly achieves top rankings in eminent international surveys on the quality of life in major cities. In the Mercer Study 2007 Vienna took third place worldwide and first place within the European Union. Viennese housing policy has made an important contribution to these excellent results; after all, satisfaction with one’s home is usually intrinsic to the quality of life.
In our city not only is there a long and successful history of social housing, urban renovation, too, is carried out in a socially reasonable way. Using the funds of the Vienna housing subsidies system year after year thousands of affordable and high quality dwelling units are erected and the renovation of thousands of existing apartments is subsidised. This makes a wide range of reasonably priced, high standard apartments available to the people of Vienna. The construction of subsidised new buildings is tied to strict economic, ecological and architectural criteria. In this way the city ensures the construction of affordable apartments that meet exacting climatic and environmental standards and offer high levels of domestic quality and comfort. By taking the internationally acclaimed path of “gentle urban renewal” rents remain reasonable, even after comprehensive renovation work has been carried out, and the residents affected are not forced to move to other districts of the city. Consequently there are no ghettos in Vienna, and the Austrian capital is one of the safest and most socially aware major cities in the world. This unique path taken by Viennese housing policy, which is regarded internationally as exemplary, is documented in the publication “Housing in Vienna: Innovative, Social and Ecological”.

I hope you enjoy reading this exhibition brochure and that it provides you with much interesting and absorbing information about Viennese housing policy. I would be particularly pleased if the publication awakens your interest in making a personal visit to our beautiful city of culture and residential quality.

Dr. Michael Ludwig
Executive City Councillor for Housing, Housing Construction and Urban Renewal of the City of Vienna
INTRODUCTION

Housing as an essential cultural expression of life

At the turn of the last century, the housing situation in European cities was deplorable. This was a result of the Industrial Revolution, which drove millions of workers into the cities. Vienna, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, had just completed the Gründerzeit, an era of rapid industrial expansion that had started around 1870. The razing of the medieval bastions opened the city to the surrounding villages and the ornate Baroque structure of the old city was supplanted by rational tenement buildings. This structure continues to exist to this day.
Social housing established itself in Europe and especially in Vienna in order to counteract the miserable housing conditions. Social housing means the government assumes public responsibility and control over the level of rents and the quality of housing architecture. Housing is thus extricated from the free market, while lower rents allow for lower wages and hence higher economic productivity. Housing as a system is understood as an important instrument that within a city allows for social equilibrium and prevents gentrification and slumification. In addition, the public control of housing ensures a certain degree of architectonic quality.

Red Vienna has attracted international attention with its “super blocks” designed by architects who for the most part trained under Otto Wagner. While these architects still followed a traditional language of design, the new residential complexes represent a Modernist paradigm.

After the Nazi era and the period of reconstruction after World War II, the system of housing construction in Vienna was further refined in the 1980s to suit present-day needs. These complexes responded to the various urban development situations with a high degree of architectonic quality. Exemplary solutions were realized. Public support, political responsibility, committed developers, and outstanding architects continue to guarantee livable apartments for all population groups with an architectonic attitude that proclaims housing as an essential cultural expression of life.

Dietmar Steiner
Director Architekturzentrum Wien
Housing in Vienna
Innovative, Social and Ecological
Wolfgang Förster
Housing development in Vienna occupies an exceptional role worldwide. Almost 60% of all Viennese households are in subsidised homes, 220,000 of these are in rented public housing. The city invests in the completion of 5,000 to 7,000 subsidised apartments per annum — about 80% to 90% of the volume of new homes completed every year. Innovative and environmentally friendly architecture should be available to all strata of society. This comprehensive model for a social, planned and environmentally sustainable housing policy has been developing continuously in steps since the end of the first world war, and is still being developed today in an ongoing process.

The housing shortage in Vienna prior to 1918

The population of Vienna rose fivefold in the second half of the 19th century from around 400,000 to well over two million. No less than 95% of all apartments had neither a WC nor running water; and consisted of a kitchen and one room not infrequently shared by more than 10 occupants. Tens of thousands of people were homeless and lived as 'Bettgeber', renting the use of a bed for a few hours a day. The housing situation in Vienna was the worst in Europe. From the outside the tenement buildings imitated the Renaissance façades of the Ring Road palaces, leading the architect Adolf Loos to speak of a “Potemkin’s City”.

The squalor of living conditions was, of course, also a political issue and the cause of repeated civil unrest. Despite this, it took until 1917 before rent controls were eventually introduced to provide protection against arbitrary evictions and rent increases. Much of this legislation is still in place today.
The housing situation worsened still further following the end of WWI. The atmosphere was one of revolution. A text by Otto Bauer published in 1923 describes how the freezing and hungry masses occupied the hinterland of Vienna with no regard for the laws of trespass. The working classes began reclaiming the land surrounding the cities and industrial sites, cultivating vegetables and breeding small animals on it. The housing shortage became more acute. These smallholders began to build huts they could live in on their plots. The Siedlerbewegung finally emerged from the efforts of these individuals. Gradually these initiatives by the masses themselves grew into a whole system of communal building. (translated from Die Österreichische Revolution)

Confronted by the concerns of the settlers’ organisations in several demonstrations with gatherings of up to 100,000 people, the City of Vienna finally offered its support in the form of the redesignation and purchase of sites, and by providing building materials and professional assistance. In return the settlers organised themselves into cooperatives. These cooperatives established their own workshops — a brickworks, for example, or for window production. Settlers had to commit to working on the building site (mostly for 2000 hours per house), usually helping to build an entire estate, with the individual houses being allocated by lot on completion. The quality of the design and construction of these approximately 15,000 terraced houses on 50 estates is astonishingly high. Adolf Loos in particular, for a while head architect at the City of Vienna Siedlungsmont (local authority department), played a decisive role in advising on the architecture for these cooperatives. His project to design what he called “a house with one wall” (a low cost and easily erected terrace house with supporting separating walls and non-load bearing exterior and interior walls) was partly
realised at Heuberg in this context. His assistant Margarethe Schütte-Lihotzky designed what was probably the very first fitted kitchen in the world for a simple house on one such estate, later developing the principle to produce her famous Frankfurt Kitchen. The Werkbund architect Josef Frank also planned several of these estates employing a heavily rationalist architecture of terrace houses. Consequently, the Wiener Siedlungsbewegung formed much of the foundation for what was later to attract interest worldwide as the housing of Red Vienna.

Red Vienna, 1918–1934

Following the introduction of a general, more equal and direct electoral system, the Social Democrats won an overall majority in the Council in 1919. Housing was to become the core issue for the new communal policy. The decisive issue for public housing remained the financing. The key tax revenue, partly earmarked for specific use, came from land tax, value added tax and a tax on housing development introduced in 1923 that was staggered according to the size/s of the homes concerned. Accordingly, a simple working class apartment was taxed at an average annual rate of 2.083% of its pre-war rentable value, this went up to 36.4% for luxury homes. This marked increase is what distinguished the financing of public housing in Austria from that of other European countries.

By 1934 the Vienna Council had completed a total of 61,175 apartments in 348 housing complexes as well as 42 housing estates with 5,257 homes. In 1934 one tenth of the population of Vienna already lived in public housing, in complexes which included assembly rooms, public baths, kindergartens, communal laundry facilities, small shops, libraries etc., — representing a significant step in the development of a social and democratic basis in the housing sector. Accordingly, emphasis was placed on wanting to “promote the emancipation of the housewife” by providing communal facilities for carrying out household chores. All of the social achievements were to be concentrated in the public housing developments, clearly distinguishing
them from the private capital-based city of the 19th century, with the improved infrastructure they provided, for instance kindergartens, also benefiting other residents in the locality.

The 1923 building programme stipulated two types of apartment: the smaller of these (35 sqm) consisted of one room with a kitchen, a separate entrance area and a WC, while the larger apartment (45 sqm) had an additional small bedroom. Each apartment had to have its own WC and running water, as well as a separate entrance hallway. The ‘Wohnküche’ (kitchen bed-sit) became the epitome of the ‘council flat’ in Vienna; they did not have bathrooms or central heating to keep costs down. As courtyards with green were completed in lieu of the dark backyards so the disparity between well lit streets and gloomy accommodation around dark backyards vanished. In contrast to Gründerzeit blocks, access to these developments was now via public, semi-public and almost private space — generally achieved by arranging entrances to the staircases in the courtyards themselves. These courtyards were open and public, and still provide a network of green space for pedestrians in many places today.

Eventually the local housing authorities also prescribed standardised elements. Doors, windows, door furniture and other fittings, banisters and railings, water fixtures and sanitary fittings, gas stoves, and even park benches were ordered altogether in large numbers after a call for tenures, sometimes ordering to meet demand for a full year’s building programme at once. This explains why public housing completed in the 1920s remains recognisable within the urban fabric despite the broad diversity of the architecture itself — as symbols of a new approach to building and identity in the Gründerzeit city. A tendency, in most cases, towards a certain monumentality shows the origins of many of the architects concerned in the school of the major fin de siècle architect Otto Wagner, who built and propagated an emphatically metropolitan approach to architecture. The larger housing complexes in particular are demonstrative reinterpretations of the late-Gründerzeit urban texture.

Karl Marx Hof became the symbol of Red Vienna. The building, planned by Karl Ehn in 1927, contained 1,200 apartments and numerous communal facilities (including communal laundries, kindergartens, a library and its own furnishing advice centre). It is not only characterised by the impressive architecture in the monumental centre tract, but also by the generous planted quad-style
courtyards. Only 30% of the site was built on — in contrast to the private speculators’ projects of the Gründerzeit where this figure was up to 90%. Other remarkable buildings are Reumann Hof, Rabenhof, George Washington Hof and the Sandleiten housing complex, which has over 1,600 apartments. Well known architects of the time were commissioned to draw up the plans, among whom were Peter Behrens, Josef Frank, Herbert Gessner, Josef Hoffmann, Clemens Holzmeister and Adolf Loos. The Vienna Werkbundsiedlung was completed in 1932 according to a proposal by Josef Frank, one of the founders of the Werkbund, as a pilot estate project of simple buildings by the City of Vienna. Among the most notable contributions are the semidetached houses by Adolf Loos, the row of houses by Gerrit Rietveld and the house by Richard Neutra.

Austro-Fascism (1934–1938) and the second world war (1938–1945)

Following the closing down of parliament and the ban on all political parties except for the Christian-Social Vaterländische Front, civil war broke out in February 1934 between the Social Democrat Schutzbund and the Christian-Social Heimwehr (militias) with the army opening fire on numerous public housing developments — in a not merely symbolically charged conflict. The violent end of Red Vienna also meant the interruption of its social housing policy. Around 60,000 Jewish tenants had their property confiscated under the Nazi regime. The war led to the eventual destruction of 87,000 homes, about 20% of the total — and more than had been built by Red Vienna.

Public Housing after 1945

The City of Vienna, although heavily scarred by war damage, starvation and division into four sectors, set down the key goals for communal policy in 1945 during a conference on postwar reconstruction, which included a relaxation of the densely built-up urban centre, increasing the density of the...
Peripheral zones with garden settlements and the holding of architecture competitions. The housing deficit was quantified at 117,000 homes.

The first major council building project following the end of the second world war was the Per-Albin-Hansson-Siedlung planned by Franz Schuster; a project that pursued the interwar idea of the garden city. The building project was completed with the support of a Swedish government aid programme. Large-scale urban expansion began from the 1960s onwards, with over 10,000 subsidised homes being scheduled for completion annually. In the 1970s public housing was focused largely on criteria such as the incorporation of generous areas of green, the protection of the environment and the provision of adequate local supplies and infrastructure. The Am Schöpfwerk estate is particularly interesting in this context, completed under the supervision of Viktor Hufnagl, where a series of young architects were given the opportunity to realise their visions together. The Alt Erlaa estate of receding terraced homes (by Harry Glück, 1976) with over 3,000 apartments and a particularly extensive infrastructure (which includes swimming pools on the roofs) set new standards in socially orientated Viennese housing. New estates like, for example, Biberhaufenweg (Tesar, Pruscha, Häuselmayer, Wafler) or the Wienerberg development (according to a master plan by Otto Häuselmayer) and infill projects, as they were referred to, are typical of the 1980s. An attempt was being made to counter the monotony of the urban expansion projects by breaking them up with individual pieces of architecture.

At the start of the 1980s subsidised urban renewal emerged as a key arena for putting housing policy into practise, leading to the internationally widely respected model of socially oriented gentle urban renewal. ‘Social’ as the City provides renovation grants to ensure that rents remain affordable even following extensive renovation work; ‘gentle’ because tenants are able to remain in their homes during the renovation work or are provided with alternative accommodation. This means that socially weaker strata of the population are not forced into areas where rents are lower, so preventing the formation of ghettos.
1. The Habitable Periphery

Increasing focus has been given to urban expansion from the mid-1980s onwards. In contrast to the large-scale estates of the previous decades, with a more differentiated architecture (as the result of one- or two-stage competitions) and aiming to integrate a range of developers. Urban diversity and social mix were the goals. A number of exciting experimental projects were also completed in this context, for example, Pilotengasse housing estate (Krischanitz, Herzog & de Meuron, Steidle) or Traviatagasse housing estate (master plan by Raimund Abraham).
Urban planning rigidity (master plan Raimund Abraham) and severe geometry used in the layout of the buildings provide an emphatic counter-model to the shapelessness of the periphery: various housing typologies (terrace house, courtyard buildings, stepped buildings, mixed forms) with an introverted quality that assures the residents a high degree of privacy.
Given the lack of urban features in the area, this terrace housing estate with 200 dwelling units in the northeastern periphery of Vienna seems to seek its own centre. Three rows, each curved to form an elongated segment of a circle, enclose an imaginary centre. The row along the western edge is straight and closed, the eastern one is broken up into a colourful assembly of individual buildings (colour concept Oskar Putz) with their own gardens. The ends of the rows in the north and the south also employ an individual handwriting within the rational overall order.
The extension of the Underground line U6 to Siebenhirten has made the area to the south of Alt Erlaa attractive for new housing developments. In accordance with urban guidelines established by Hans Puchhammer and Rudolf Prohazka here under the motto “optimising the costs of multi-storey, ecologically sensible housing blocks” an estate has been created on the urban periphery that shows various forms of urbanity. The nearly 400 apartments offer a high degree of flexibility, as a number of movable wall elements contain no services and were built directly on top of the completed floor construction.
Following urban planning guidelines by Ernst Hoffmann and Elsa Prochazka since 1993, extensive areas in Kagran-West, previously partly used for agricultural purposes, have been growing continuously into a dense residential district.
On the basis of a master plan devised by Adolf Krischanitz a compact ensemble of ten subsidised apartment houses with 42 dwelling units dedicated to the different structural and formal possibilities of concrete as a material was built on this 7,800 m² site in Vienna-Hadersdorf. The 10 freestanding concrete buildings form a colony with a varied configuration that links the villa type (single family house feeling) with the aims of multi-storey housing. The project represents a successful move in the fight against urban sprawl on the periphery of the city.
Peter Märkli  

house 1

Adolf Krischanitz  

house 2a
Stefan Kießling (Otto Steidle)  • house 4

Marcel Melii/Markus Peter  • house 5
On the basis of a jointly worked out development plan six teams of architects carried out a loose series of individual buildings that, apart from the four-storey end element on Kirchfeldgasse (unit 6), were erected in an open building pattern. A path that is partly sunken into the site, known as the ‘Flanierdrift’ extends through the entire garden space as a main axis that offers different possibilities of use. The complex that consists of 40 units offers a number of communal areas and terraces in the form of ‘square’, ‘passeggeway’ and ‘lane’ as well as individually delightful plans to provide a form of urban living seldom encountered in the field of subsidised housing.
Housing developments were facing new challenges in the 1990s as a result of social change — with increasing heterogeneity and the emergence of a plurality of lifestyles. Experimental housing projects were completed under the heading ‘Themed Housing’, and the experience gleaned has flowed into the whole subsidised housing sector. Examples of such projects are Compact City (BUSarchitektur) combining workspace with living space, Frauenwerk-Stadt (Ullmann, Prochazka, Peretti, Podreka) entirely planned by women architects, the car-free Autofreie Mustersiedlung (Schindler, Szedenik) and integrative housing projects such as Integratives Wohnen (Schluders, Kastner). The most radical housing project subsidised to date is the Sargfabrik (Baukünstlerkollektiv 2) in the densely built-up 14th District of Vienna. The latter project was planned by a private initiative in a former coffin factory where the units are organised in the form of flexible, variable boxes providing a comprehensive range of leisure activities that include a restaurant, a sauna, venues for different kinds of events and kindergartens — all of which benefit the entire neighbourhood. The first complex was awarded the Adolf Loos Prize, and has since been followed-up by the Miss Sargfabrik project in an adjacent block.

\section*{2. Themed Housing Estates}

Housing developments were facing new challenges in the 1990s as a result of social change — with increasing heterogeneity and the emergence of a plurality of lifestyles. Experimental housing projects were completed under the heading ‘Themed Housing’, and the experience gleaned has flowed into the whole subsidised housing sector. Examples of such projects are Compact City (BUSarchitektur) combining workspace with living space, Frauenwerk-Stadt (Ullmann, Prochazka, Peretti, Podreka) entirely planned by women architects, the car-free Autofreie Mustersiedlung (Schindler, Szedenik) and integrative housing projects such as Integratives Wohnen (Schluders, Kastner). The most radical housing project subsidised to date is the Sargfabrik (Baukünstlerkollektiv 2) in the densely built-up 14th District of Vienna. The latter project was planned by a private initiative in a former coffin factory where the units are organised in the form of flexible, variable boxes providing a comprehensive range of leisure activities that include a restaurant, a sauna, venues for different kinds of events and kindergartens — all of which benefit the entire neighbourhood. The first complex was awarded the Adolf Loos Prize, and has since been followed-up by the Miss Sargfabrik project in an adjacent block.
This project initiated by the Women’s Office of the City of Vienna is tailor-made from the details of the floor plans to the urban layout to meet the everyday needs of women. The complex comprises 360 apartments, a kindergarten, integrated disabled apartments, a communications centre, six integrated old person’s apartments as well as retail units along Donaufelder Strasse.

Each building block is integrated in the overall urban planning concept by means of differentiated outdoor spaces such as squares, footpaths, greens, garden courtyards and play meadows. Particular attention was paid to providing sufficient natural light in the circulation areas leading to the apartments as well as a variety of views. The windows of the kitchens and living rooms face in different directions. Artist Johanna Kandl was responsible for the design of the footpaths that form the internal circulation system of the complex; Maria Auböck planned the green spaces.
This project built as the outcome of a developers’ competition with a total of 244 subsidised 1 to 5-room apartments provides an exemplary approach to the theme of car-free housing. In a unanimous council decision the Vienna Garage Legislation that requires one car parking space per new apartment was suspended for this development. The savings thus made could be used to provide communal rooms, additional play areas and ecological extras in the design — in accordance with the residents’ wishes. The development has its own car-sharing system for residents as required. In addition to the use of solar energy and ground heat the project also has high levels of façade thermal insulation and a sophisticated wash water system.
The Verein für integrative Lebensgestaltung (Association for Integrative Living) started constructing the Sargfabrik complex in the early 1990s with the aid of the architectural collective BKK-2 on the site of a former coffin factory (Sargfabrik). The new, fluorescent orange building with 73 apartments was completed in 1996. In addition to apartments, the complex features numerous additional facilities for communal use, such as kindergartens, seminar rooms, a coffeehouse, and a Turkish bath with a swimming pool. Primarily conceived for people who depend on an affordable, socially functioning infrastructure, the demand for apartments in the Sargfabrik soon became so great that a successor project was initiated.
In the immediate vicinity, a second site was purchased and the Miss Sargfabrik with 39 dwelling units was constructed. Its concept incorporated suggestions for improvement and analyses contributed by the Sargfabrik residents. An intelligent split-level system with low ceiling sleeping areas and taller living areas further increases the density. All the apartments are entered from a deck that has a staircase at either end facing onto the interior courtyard. Miss Sargfabrik also features innovative community facilities and all of the communal rooms can be used by the residents of both buildings.
The Compact City in Vienna-Floridsdorf – a convincing argument against monofunctionality in architecture and urban planning – was awarded the Otto Wagner Urban Development Prize in 1998 as a pilot project. Workplaces in or very close to the apartment form the basic structure of the entire complex of 59 apartments, 12 studios, 10 workshops with yards, restaurants, offices, 4 small boxes for commercial enterprises, shops, and play areas. An escalator on Donaufelder Strasse leads alongside a large supermarket up to an urban slab with a comprehensible scale, which is lined by orange rendered rows of housing and offices and is lent a rhythm by a number of small pavilions. By becoming a place of connection the individual apartment loses its monofunctional quality. Motorised traffic is extremely restricted in order to provide the additional footpaths required.
This estate addresses the issue of integrated living for immigrants from various countries — with a mix of 50% native Austrian and 50% immigrant residents as part of a special integrative housing programme. The estate comprises 112 rented apartments extending along a narrow, elongated north-south oriented site in Vienna-Simmering. The apartments in the block are reached from open access decks that link to the spacious circulation cores of the compact buildings (2 apartments per floor or staircase). Elevating the building resulted from the basic urban planning intention of cross-ventilating, as it were, the elongated development at pedestrian level by means of open links to neighbouring green spaces.
standard floor
3. Garden Settlements

With the projects of what has been termed the New Settlers Movement, the aim was to continue in the tradition of dense low-level housing estates in the urban fabric providing a broad range of different homes to counter encroaching suburbanisation. The first competitions were held by the developers themselves in 2005, examples here being Paulasgasse (Geiswinkler & Geiswinkler) and Orasteig (Stelzhammer, König, ppag architects).
The four rows of the complex – three running west-east, one north-south – with 65 dwelling units consist of two-storey terrace houses stacked on top of each other; the units on the upper level, to which planted roof gardens and adjoining loggias have been allotted, are reached from covered access decks. As the building is set back from second floor level the side wings also receive sun in winter, ensuring screened outdoor spaces, optimal views and the maximum exploitation of sunlight for the residents. The reinforced concrete load-bearing structure, complemented by the use of prefabricated infill timber elements for the external walls, allowed a low energy concept to be implemented despite the large areas of glazing. Additionally, the use of prefabricated timber elements also means that the loggias and covered seating areas can later be easily converted into indoor rooms.
ORASTEIG housing complex

unit A

2005–2009
Edi-Finger-Strasse/Luckenschwemmgasse,
1210 Vienna

Walter Stelzhammer
Client: Wien Süd

Close to the historic core of Stammersdorf, on the edge of the vineyards, a loose development with around 430 dwellings is being constructed as the outcome of a developer’s competition that was based on the theme of the ‘new settlement movement’. Three low building elements define a central square with the aim of creating a compact neighbourhood. The circulation system based on short routes as well as the individuality of the apartment types (different types of floor plans) produce a small-scale but yet ‘ordered’ development structure, well suited to the particular location on the periphery of the city. The entire settlement area is designed so that it is, for the most part, free from traffic, allowing the creation of different kinds of communal and green areas. In the tradition of the classic 1920s model of developments on the urban periphery planting beds are laid out for all the tenants.
ORASTEIG housing complex
Unit B
2005–2009
Edi-Finger-Strasse/Heribert-Meisel-Gasse,
1210 Vienna

Claudia König
→ Client: Gesba
ORASTEIG housing complex
unit C  2005–2009
Edi-Finger-Strasse, 1210 Vienna

ppag architects
→ Anna Popelka, Georg Poduschka
→ Client: Heimstätte & Heimat Österreich
The building of Donau City, which began in 1992, provided an opportunity to complete a whole new district on the left bank of the New Danube. Alongside office high-rises, a school, a church, kindergartens and shops, numerous housing developments have been completed based on a master plan by Adolf Krischanitz/Heinz Neumann that include a high-rise and a volume lying parallel to the river by Delugan Meissl. The Neue Donau residential park (Harry Seidler) and Alte Donau residential park (Coop Himmelb(l)au, NFOG, Peichl) are also in the immediate vicinity. The new districts to the south of the city are similar in character to the major development zones: Wienerberg City (master plan by Massimiliano Fuksas) with terraced buildings and high-rise apartment buildings, Monte Laa on the slab across the motorway (Masterplan Hans Hollein/Albert Wimmer) and Kabelwerk, where a new participatory model was put to the test. In addition there is Gasometer City, one of the largest and most spectacular adaptation projects in Europe and containing about 600 apartments.
Donau City and Neue Donau residential park (Harry Seidler) form a new city district together, made possible by building over the highway. Both developments profit from the attractive waterside location directly on the Neue Donau, and are characterised by a social mix in different category housing, from subsidised rented apartments to free-market penthouse in close proximity, frequently even in the same building.

**Mischek Tower (MT)**

Delugan Meissl Architekten

Elke Delugan-Meissl, Roman Delugan

The streamlined façade of this 135-metre-high tower with 363 apartments that was developed on the basis of wind canal studies to counteract the noise of the wind gives the building its striking appearance. The two sides of this tall vertical slab that differ in terms of horizontal and vertical curvature are staggered with respect to each other. This produces continuous apartments at the free ends of the building that receive light from 3 sides.
Neue Donau residential park (H. Seidler)
A north-side oriented deck access building is connected with an east-west facing hall type by means of a joint that creates the public connection between the large urban square and the Danube (257 apartments).
This section is made up of three buildings: Stiege (stairs) 8 and Stiege 9 are at right-angles to each other and enclose an urban square dominated by Stiege 10 in the form of a cylindrical free-standing vertical element. Access decks lead to the 206 apartments in the buildings Stiege 8 and 9. The 50 apartments in the tower are reached from an external staircase tower.
Multi-story loggias along the circulation zone of this section of the building that contains 266 apartments not only offer an urban approach that is protected from the weather, but also serve as a communal space and establish a relationship to the outdoors. The façade is repetitive and restrained, continuous parapets carry texts in dialect by H. C. Artmann.
Unit D

Delugan_Meissl Architekten
Elke Delugan-Meissl, Roman Delugan

This 180-metre-long building is raised on columns and on the northern side, which faces away from the riverbank, it has glazed access decks and an imposing external open stairs. All 190 apartments are south-facing and have a minimum of one loggia. This side, with its view that cannot be obstructed, is protected by a kind of glass façade that is cut out in the loggia area. A bar code pattern on the glazing by artist Helmut Bohatsch provides protection against both the sun and enquiring gazes.
The four gasometers, part of what was once the largest gasworks on Continental Europe was adapted to become the heart of a multifunctional new district of Vienna. Today the development contains approx. 600 apartments — in-line with the policy of socially mixed housing, with both subsidised rented homes as well as private dwellings, a student residence for 400 occupants, a concert hall for up to 4,000 visitors, offices and a shopping centre.
In Gasometer A by Nouvel the apartments in the 9 segmental building elements are reached from 3 staircase cores and 6 access decks. Some of the façades of the apartments face outwards, some towards the central internal courtyard that has been made as an open atrium. The floor of the internal courtyard forms a glass dome that lights the retail areas and separates them from the housing. The “night-mall” below is connected with the multi-purpose hall in section B and forms a continuous mall level in all four gasometers.
The off-centre ring-shaped new building in the interior of Gasometer B by Coop Himmelblau is connected with a shield-like block attached to the outside of the building on the north. Together they form the residential part. Below the historical entrance level there is a multi-functional events hall in the form of a structurally separate shell.
The basic design principle of Gasometer C by Wehdorn is, on the one hand, the preservation of the historic building substance, on the other planning in accordance with ecological aspects, such as the planting of an arboretum. Open views of the historical dome and the planted internal terraces form the character of the new elements that are divided into 6 tower-like segments. 

Client: SEG. Gesiba
The interior face of the historical building envelope in Gasometer D by Holzbauer was largely left visible, and a three-point star was inscribed in the existing circular plan. The balconies and loggias of the apartments face towards courtyards that are bordered by the skin of the gasometer. In the lower area space was provided for the Viennese City and State Archive.
After the Donau City and the Gasometer City, the Wienerberg City (masterplan by Massimiliano Fuksas) with 1,035 new apartments is one of the largest urban expansion areas in Vienna. In connection with the 138-metre-tall Vienna Twin Tower by Fuksas, a new city district has been created that aims at achieving a particularly intensive connection of living, work, services and leisure. In the northernmost row of the Wienerberg City there are two residential towers by Coop Himmelb(l)au, one by Delugan Meissl as well as the “Monte Verde” by Albert Wimmer; in front are three slabs by Coop Himmelb(l)au and Atelier 4, and in front of these again one block each by Cuno Brullmann and Delugan Meissl. The two latter buildings enjoy the privilege of a south-facing open area in front that could be exploited to provide light for the apartments. To the west, south and east the site is terminated by three residential buildings by Gert Mayr-Keber, Helmut Wimmer and Günter Lautner. The priority in the overall concept is to achieve the greatest possible social mix and mixture of functions.
unit A1, A2, B, Coop Himmelb(l)au
unit C1, Delugan_Meissl Architekten
unit C2, Atelier 4
unit D1, Albert Wimmer
unit D2, Atelier 4
unit E1, Cuno Brüllmann
unit E2, Delugan_Meissl Architekten
unit F1, Gert Mayr-Keber
unit F2, G, Helmut Wimmer
unit H, Günter Lautner
WIENERBERG CITY

**Units F2, G**

Helmut Wimmer

Client: Arwag

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**Unit H**

Günter Lautner

Client: Buwag
unit E1  Cuno Brüllmann
Client: Kalico

unit E2  Delugan Meissl Architekten
Elke Delugan-Meissl, Roman Delugan
Client: Kalico
On the former KDAG grounds in Vienna-Meidling a new city district has been created on the basis of a cooperative planning process that is so far unique in Vienna. It is neither a “theme” development in the standard sense, nor a mono-functional “housing development”. In what is called “wrap-around-architecture” for the first time in recent planning history of the city the urban figure rather than the individual building is dominant. The architecture ‘wraps itself’, so to speak, around the defined public space that shapes the urban image. The entire site is a car-free zone and places richly varied spaces for life (plaza, cultural activities etc.) at the disposal of families.

The entire complex is characterised by a mix of different category space and types of architecture — from terraced housing to high-rise — and, alongside almost 1.000 homes, contains a comprehensive urban infrastructure: shops, restaurants, kindergartens, a rooftop pool, a public park, a home for the elderly, and direct access to two Underground stations etc.
unit A1, A2, A3 _ Mascha & Seethaler
unit B _ Schwalm-Theiss & Gressenbauer
unit C1, C2 _ Hermann & Valentiny & Partner
unit D1, D2 _ Martin Wurnig
unit E1, E2, E3 _ pool Architektur
unit F _ Werkstatt Wien Spiegelfeld, Holsteiner & Co
KABELWERK

Mascha & Seethaler
Christian Mascha, Christian Seethaler

unit A1

unit A2

standard floor
KABELWERK

**Unit E1**

**Unit E2**

*pool Architektur*
unit E3

Werkstatt Wien, Spiegelfeld, Holnsteiner & Co

unit F
The new urban district of Monte Laa in Vienna-Favoriten is directly connected to the large local recreation area Laaer Wald. By the spectacular move of building a slab over the A23 motorway it was possible to connect areas of the city that had previously been separated from each other. On a total area of 90,000 m² 810 apartments have been built here. In addition to an architecture that is supportive of the family this new urban district is characterised by a central park. The design of the green space – to plans by American landscape architect Martha Schwartz – divides the park into different levels and contains quiet places, active zones and areas to stroll through.
5. The Urban Context

The Gründerzeit areas of Vienna are in a state of ongoing transition. New housing requirements are being met with small innovative developments, such as Wohnregal (Helmut Wimmer), apartment buildings such as at Laubeplatz (Sarnitz, querkraft architekten) or on Alxingergasse (Geiswinkler & Geiswinkler), forms of assisted living (Troststrasse, Ganahl/Ifsits/Larch/Zwingl) and numerous attic conversions (e.g. Sperrgasse, sigs).
The housing complex with 40 apartments on the corner of a Gründerzeit block grid splits into two tracts at the corner: a southern tract (with front garden) responds to the rhythm of the façades of the neighbouring old buildings with maisonettes, and a west façade with apartments and shops facing onto the street. Between these lies the open entrance hall with staircase as the gateway to and the central axis for the complete circulation. The rear of the maisonettes is lined with glass covered deck access staggered upwards. The architects have compensated for the tightness of standardised floor plans in this building by extensive openings and flexibility for all spatial delineations, by the reduction of all thresholds and fixed static solutions. Uninterrupted beach timber flooring, frosted glass doors and fitted furniture that also serves as partitions take the key themes of openness and generosity into the quality of the detailing.

(Translated excerpt from Stand der Dinge by Otto Kapfinger, Vienna, 1995)
The simple and regularly shaped basic structure can readily accept even the most extravagant vision of its occupants for the interior. The architect deliberately avoided the optical finish on the façades of the three eight-storey prefabricated concrete Wohnregal, as it is called. The variety of possible uses is what first gives the originally rigid structure the desired individuality. The floor plans for the 250 different sized apartments are loft-style open plan, each benefiting from a generous inner and outer spatial layer (deck access and loggias). The neutrality of the individual spaces, which can be opened or closed off, is a convincing method of avoiding forcing any specific direction in terms of lifestyles or ways of living upon its users (flexibility for singles and families).
The housing complex on the rise of Wienerberg contains 400 apartments. The flowing transition from the housing to public space is characteristic of the development. Slim eight-storey slabs closed off to the south with a U with circulation via a 5-metre-wide transitional space with interior deck access, elevators and stairs offer the residents bright spaces that can establish a sense of identity. The slabs are penetrated at height by a perpendicular three-storey protruding block. The stairs to the maisonettes on the upper levels are attached to the outside so as not to disrupt the floor plan. The upper balcony/terrace provides its occupants with an exceptional view over Vienna.
A vacant site in the densely built-up area provided an opportunity to incorporate two different user-focuses (living space and workplace) and two different categories of development (on the street side, with a permitted height of up to 26m and in the courtyard, with a permitted height of up to 9m) into the cityscape. Along Wimbergergasse, which has relatively heavy traffic, the ‘spacious’ façade to the apartment building with 43 dwelling units with two metre deep winter gardens and glass parapets is expressively rhythmic, while the north-facing rear to the courtyard has been upgraded with small ‘Romeo and Juliet’ balconies. The green meandering of the low office tract in the courtyard provide interesting spatial solutions with a range of views within the interior and out over a ‘hilly’ planted rooftscape.
Due to the great success of Frauen-Werk-Stadt I, completed in 1997 in the 21st district of Vienna, a follow-up project was initiated with a focus on “assisted living as well as planning that is compatible with everyday use and fair to women”. The project was realised in 2000 after an open competition had been held by the client. The project with its total of 140 subsidised rented homes (42 of which are suitably appointed for the elderly) is distinguished by a large range of communal facilities. The permeable nature of the perimeter block development in the ground level zone permits barrier-free use of the courtyard. In an exemplary approach to the planning, a domestic environment was created for older people that facilitates maximum autonomy while still providing readily accessible professional assistance at home when required.
TROSTSTRASSE
FRAUEN-WERK-STADT II unit B
2000–2004
Troststrasse 73–75, 1100 Vienna

Christine Zwingl
Client: Gesiba
The abandoned four-storey local administration building for the former Vienna-Meidling district courthouse was extensively refurbished. The architects corrected the disparity between the volumes by retaining the street-facing tract and progressively raising the levels around the courtyard tract in receding terrace-like steps, which not only makes sense in delineating different usage but also provides more daylight and numerous outdoor areas. The ‘official’ existing substance was hollowed out, re-insulated and adapted for living purposes. A new terraced building was erected with reinforced concrete on the courtyard tract, which had been demolished up to first floor level. The low ceiling heights compensate here for the loss of surface area. A total of 21 homes were completed. The premises rented to a club for pensioners on the ground floor were planned in close collaboration with the district authorities as well as with the Kuratorium der Wiener Pensionisten-Wohnhäuser.
The urban fabric around Kagraner Platz gained significantly in attractiveness with the extension of the U1 Underground line to Leopoldau, so that the new housing complex gains the advantages of a green setting with a good connection to the city centre. The site in a mixed built-up area (with a permitted height of up to 9m, 12m and 16m respectively) on the threshold to the garden settlement structure of the 22nd District was divided into two contracted sections (Meissauergasse: s&s architekten; Komzakgasse/corner of Meissauergasse: gerner°gerner plus), whereby the offices worked in cooperation despite the different planning approaches to create a harmonious overall appearance and have produced generous social spaces as places for the residents to meet. A total of 146 different types of subsidised rented apartments were completed, 80 of which are in the block with a brightly coloured top storey with a façade of yellow zinc plating with trapezoidal corrugations.
MEISSAUERGASSE
housing complex units B+C
2002–2006
Meissauergasse 21-23
1220 Vienna

s&s architekten

Cornelia Schindler, Rudolf Szedenik
Client: Gesiba
1. private garden
2. loggia
3. covered deck access
4. atrium
5. terrace

ground floor
6. Ecologically Resourced Apartment Complexes

Among the major challenges to be met by contemporary housing developments is an awareness of the handling of natural resources. This means an increasing focus on the reduction of energy requirements for heating by passive houses and the use of wood as a replenishable raw material. The first multi-storey timber buildings (Mühlweg by Dietrich I Untertrifaller, Riess, Kaufmann and Kaufmann) and passive energy apartment buildings, such as the Molkereistrasse dormitory (Baumschläger & Eberle) mark new ways forward for the future of subsidised housing. On the largest environmentally friendly construction site in Europe at Thürnhofstrasse (Reinberg, Thalbauer), the RUMBA project (Richtlinien für umweltfreundliche Baustellenabwicklung — guidelines for ecological building site management) demonstrates the environmentally aware erection of buildings, for instance by reducing delivery traffic, the careful handling of on-site logistics and the pre-sorting of refuse.
Since an amendment to the Vienna building regulations in 2001 (known as the “technology amendment”) multi-storey construction in timber – or in timber combined with other materials – is now possible in the Austrian capital also. This pioneering project in the field of multi-storey housing in timber and timber composite construction in Vienna-Floridsdorf was based on a developers’ competition from which the architects Johannes and Hermann Kaufmann (unit A), Hubert Riess (unit B) und Dietrich I Untertrifaller (unit C) emerged as the winners. In their own living space the residents can experience the comfort of wood as a material used in different house and floor plan types. In addition the project with 254 apartments can boast extremely low heating costs as well as a pleasant indoor climate. Solar energy (additional subsidies for renewable energy) is used to heat the warm water.

As an alternative to the monotonous rows of 1960 development in the immediate neighbourhood Hermann and Johannes Kaufmann developed a four-storey type that offers differentiated qualities of outdoor space. Despite this internal variety the buildings have a clear structure without projections or recesses. The facade of natural larch is accentuated by the use of coloured sliding shutters.
The important functions of the three staggered apartment buildings (each with 27 apartments) and the three urban villas (each with 6 apartments), as well as all wet areas such as kitchens and bathrooms were incorporated in the concrete core, against which the solid timber elements of the four-storey timber structure rest. The timber storeys are distinguished from the solid rendered parts of the building by a back-ventilated cladding of overlapping fibre cement panels.
Dietrich Untertrifaller have developed four passive buildings (heating requirements per square metre and per year 25kW; ventilation with heat recovery system, solar energy system on the roof) that produce the best possible views and visual contacts for all residents. The buildings, in which the staircases serve four apartments on each floor, are organised around a concrete staircase core. All apartments have loggias or wooden terraces at the front. The prefabricated external walls made of solid timber panels (cross-laminated timber from the KLH company) have a thick grey-green coat made of wood fibre panels that emphasises the urban character of the four buildings. This unit also includes a “SOS Kinderdorf”, i.e. a special group housing for children from problematic families, integrated into the housing estate.
Following a developers competition a new residential district is being created against a backdrop of 9 to 11 storey prefabricated panel buildings dating from the 1970s in the area between Thürnlhofstrasse, Roschégasse and Trepkulagasse in Vienna-Simmering. It bears the stamp of numerous architects (including gerner°gerner plus, Martin Kohlbauer, Nehrer & Medek, Harry Seidler/Peretti + Peretti) and is one of the most environmentally friendly building sites in Europe at present. According to RUMBA, the guidelines for environmentally friendly building site organisation, the number of lorry trips should be reduced, dust emission on the building site minimised and waste material produced should be separated according to type as far as possible. Unit 4 with 72 apartments by Reinberg, Thalbauer at the south-eastern corner of the site is part of a large block perimeter development, two buildings react specifically to their situation: one is reached from the north, its maisonettes open towards the attractive landscape through a completely glazed south facade. The east-west facing building is accessed from a central corridor.
MOLKEREISTRASSE dormitory

2003–2005
Molkereistrasse 1, 1020 Vienna

**Baumschlager & Eberle**

Carlo Baumschlager, Dietmar Eberle

Client: Migra

With its striking façade structure of yellow and green rendered areas, brass-coloured sliding shutters and glazing this building accentuates the termination of the block with an urban note. This „guesthouse of the Vienna universities“ was erected as a passive building and provides living space for 278 students in different constellations of individual rooms (from single apartments to four-room flat shares). The standard type consists of two rooms that share a cooking and washing area. The central access corridor is naturally lit from above and ends on each floor in a communal room. Thanks to the sophisticated services concept from the GMI team that ensures a constant, well tempered air exchange it was possible to reduce the heating load to less than 500 hours per year, which represents a 20 per cent reduction in the heating requirements.
Housing Policy in Vienna today

Wolfgang Förster
High Qualities in Subsidised Housing

Subsidised housing in Vienna is the key instrument in the creation and securing of affordable living space, and so for safeguarding and promoting a high quality of life in Vienna. Grants and subsidies are given from both an object-oriented as well as a subject-oriented perspective to achieve three goals: the building of new homes, the renovation of existing buildings and as direct financial support for low-income households.

Object-oriented support goes directly to the developers to reduce the financing costs, and so the subsequent sales prices and levels of rent. The key aim of this policy is to provide everybody living in Vienna with high quality affordable homes.

As the largest homeowner in Austria, the City of Vienna is responsible for 220,000 of its own rented apartments, however in more recent years the majority of social housing developments have been completed by not-for-profit housing associations. These are given tax advantages and are obliged to reinvest most of the profits in building new homes. Rents are clearly regulated, with the general guideline being the economy rent to cover the cost of the financing plus brutto running costs.

The raising of financing for subsidised new homes is based on fixed, purpose-linked proportions of income tax, corporation tax and of the housing subsidy contributions made by those involved, which are divided among the nine federal states of Austria according to the laws governing revenue sharing. This financing provides a secure basis for the forward-looking planning of social housing on a major scale.

To further reduce building costs, but also
to achieve high standards in both environmental and architectural terms, all new housing projects that are to receive subsidies or grants have to be submitted to the Grundstücksbeirat (a special committee) or be subjected to a competition launched by the City owned “Wohnfonds”. Experts in an interdisciplinary committee decide whether the projects concerned qualify for a grant or subsidy, the winning proposal in a Client’s Competition is selected by jury. The competition process here is slightly different from a standard urban development competition to the extent that it is held among the developers themselves, so that alongside the quality of the planning and the architecture its economic and ecological qualities are also key considerations taken into account. The aim of these competitions is to ensure that tailored housing solutions are found while encouraging innovative architectural solutions and preserving the environment. Since 1998 all subsidised new housing developments have been within the low energy standard threshold (max. 50 kWh per square metre a year).

Vienna: The Housing of the Future

European and global developments also present a challenge for the development of subsidised new homes in Vienna. It is the task of housing policy and the architecture sector to find appropriate solutions:

Homes for all Ages

The proportion of elderly people in the population is rising in Vienna. Since 2004 comprehensive legal measures have been in place to safeguard barrier free designs for living space. In keeping with the declared target of providing all people with an independent life in their own home for as long as possible, different forms of living are increasingly being integrated into so-called “normal” housing development projects. Examples in this context include assisted living, apartments with integrated services and care personnel as well as multigenerational homes.
Integration and Diversity

About one third of all the Viennese have an immigrant background, i.e. they or their parents moved to Vienna from elsewhere. Providing these people with contemporary dwellings while preventing ghettos from forming is a core priority of the housing policy in Vienna. At the same time architecture is being encouraged to provide spaces for direct encounters between native residents of Vienna and ones who have moved here more recently.

With the Gebietsbetreuungen (area renewal offices), Vienna has long enjoyed efficient, low threshold facilities for all issues and for all problems related to domestic space and the home. Occupants are integrated in the finding of solutions by active mediation where conflicts arise. A further step has been taken towards intensifying the level of care and support available with the expansion of this system in spring 2007. The role played by tenants’ representation in the public housing sector was also extended still further with the expansion of this system. As a response to many tenants’ wish for more participation in the decision-making process, since 1989 the City of Vienna has extended tenant rights in public housing complexes well beyond the standard regulations with a participation statute for tenants.

The Environment and Climate Protection

Careful treatment of natural resources and the reduction of CO2 emissions are becoming increasing priorities. Accordingly, in the subsidised housing sector in 2007 the environmental standards have been raised and the level of grants and subsidies for environmentally friendly building increased. Building
on previous successes, thermal insulation and energy-consumption improvements to apartment buildings, passive houses, and experiments with renewal energy sources and raw materials are to play an even greater role. In this context are Eurogate, the largest passive house project in Europe, or increasing reliance on the use of wood as a ‘renewable’ building material for a multi-storey apartment building, the recycling of construction elements and the environment-friendly management of the building work on site.

**Functional and Social Mix**

More emphasis is now being placed on the mix of functions (living space, workplace, leisure pursuits), particularly in the development of major urban expansion zones. This does not only increase the attractiveness of new districts but also contributes to a reduction of unnecessary journeys, and so to better protection of the environment. A reorganisation plan has been worked out for areas of Vienna in particular need of renewal for an offensive which is going ahead in-line with the concept of gentle urban renewal. Not only are old buildings being improved with a high level of grants but entire neighbourhoods are being more attractively redesigned. This not only boosts the local economy but also promotes a socially balanced population structure.
The Compact City

In the face of the increasing demand for new homes, existing building land must be used as efficiently as possible — also to protect valuable green belt land. The challenge to city planners and the architecture sector lies in the combination of high quality living space and high quality outdoor space with a high level of density.

A Diversity of Lifestyles

Lifestyles and ways of living in our society are becoming increasingly more disparate: singles, families, shared apartments and communes. Prospective home seekers must have the opportunity to choose between different types of living space. This means that the architecture of the future will have to be more flexible and provide variable forms of living space and floor plans capable of adapting quickly to changing requirements — for instance, housing dwellings and workplaces under one roof.

Affordable User-Friendly Homes

In a context of the rapid diversification of lifestyles, demographic developments and rising demands regarding the quality of living space and environment, a higher priority is now being given to user-friendliness and suitability for daily use. Home seekers have become critical consumers who want private outdoor space, playgrounds nearby, and well lit access to their homes. These homes must be affordable for all Viennese, though. Good architecture for living space needs to be of a high standard in the future, too, while still representing good value for money. This means that it is essential to continue providing public housing subsidies and grants and to keep developing the system, so continuing to substantiate Vienna’s role as a mother town for public housing in architectural, social and environmental terms.
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