

1.2. Summary

Open space rehabilitation for Vienna's municipal housing developments of the 1920s-1980s

Open space rehabilitation and improvement in municipal housing developments – Practice-oriented analysis and solution proposals based on concrete examples

Starting point

The improvement of open space quality in existing municipal housing developments calls for particular attention: the present research project looks at open space rehabilitation in selected housing developments of the City of Vienna from a technical, spatial-analytic and activity-oriented angle.

The focus is on how to further the development of open spaces in municipal housing projects so as to ensure better housing environment usability and improved open space serviceability.

Demographic change, varied needs in open space utilisation and novel leisure patterns call for open space redesign in existing housing developments. This project proposes measures to restructure and reshape open spaces in keeping with the latest findings of open space research. Rehabilitation demand is assessed on the basis of the functions and roles of open space for different living environments and life contexts.

Objective

The objective lies in boosting the residential value, experience quality and socio-ecological function of open spaces to improve the quality of living in housing developments and hence to cover open space demand in qualitatively and quantitatively sustainable fashion.

Due to the changing needs of the population, demands for a structured provision of open spaces are increasingly differentiated. Maintenance, area restructuring and open space zoning as well as improved appointments combined with ecological aspects are to safeguard high-quality open spaces for the future.

10 point programme

The objective of the research project lies in deriving a solid argumentation basis from the facts collated to enhance open space quality in housing developments. Summarised in a “10 point programme for the sustainable development of open spaces in housing construction”, strategies like identification, social security and the curbing of vandalism are proposed as guiding principles for the rehabilitation and creation of open spaces in Vienna's subsidised housing developments. In this, the focus is on the practical implementability of the research findings provided to users.

Selection of examples

Open space structures from the eras of the 1920s/1930s, 1950s/1960s and 1970s/1980s are characterised by the defining building typologies of the respective periods. For this reason, the analyses of the present research project look at different building typologies and systematise an open space typology that allows for generalisation to include other open space situations beyond this research project.

On the basis of an analysis of 55 housing developments, 5 representative examples were selected jointly with Wiener Wohnbauforschung (Vienna Housing Research), Wiener Wohnen (Municipal Housing Association) and Wohnfonds Wien (Vienna Fund for Housing Construction and Urban Renewal) and subjected to an in-depth study. It was attempted to identify open space planning solutions that would effectively improve typical open space situations.

Open space situation in 1920s/1930s housing developments

Many of these housing developments feature large-scale open spaces enclosed by buildings and ample open space structures. However, Vienna also offers many examples of very small courtyards with pronounced shade coverage. High-quality materials and clearcut structures continue to prove their validity to this day. However, the large lawns are often no longer up to modern-day utilisation intensity and open space appointments likewise fall short of current

utilisation demands. New facilities for play, rest and exercise are thus called for.

Open space situation in 1950s/1960s housing developments

Due to the typical building arrangement in rows, the open spaces of 1950s/1960s housing developments are often designed as transition zones or greened distance spaces.

Open space rehabilitation for projects from this era should differentiate them functionally into access and circulation, activity and rest areas and moreover reshape sub-zones into spaces that are intimate or open, private or common, accessible to the public at large or to residents only.

In view of the demographic changes in these developments, the open space demand of children and adolescents should be taken account of. At the same time, targeted activity incentives for adults and elderly persons in open space must be created as well. Co-determination options are likewise suited for these open space situations.

Open space situation in 1970s/1980s housing developments

The open spaces of housing developments from the 1970s and 1980s with their large-scale blocks fall short in the field of design and ambience quality and present no pleasant or appealing atmosphere. The lack of open space appointments of these high-rise projects should be compensated e.g. by the planting of trees, the provision of seats and the designation of specific areas for different user groups. Private or common facilities (community gardens, tenants' gardens) should be considered to strengthen identification with local open spaces. Targeted control through the choice of specific appointments can endow housing projects with more open space for all age groups.

The demand for open space rehabilitation of Vienna's municipal housing developments as well as solution proposals that make full use of the available spatial potential are clearly visualised by means of schematic sketches, plans of open space concepts and photos.