

Tenant´s Survey for Timber Construction Projects in Vienna, building site „Mühlweg“

Preface

By amendment of April 2001 the building code of the state of Vienna was modified to make way for the introduction of multi-storey buildings executed as timber construction as well as mixed timber and timber massive construction. These new legal conditions prepared the ground for innovation in construction methods of multi-storey housing in Vienna. So far scientific research has been primarily focussed on aspects of planning and construction. Until now the inhabitants´ satisfaction (e.g. issues such as housing convenience, indoor temperature, motives for housing choices etc.) living in such timber buildings was not surveyed, on account of the lack of suchlike built housing stock.

The FGW, a research institute for housing, building and planning was assigned to carry out a resident´s survey on living quality and housing satisfaction on two multi-storey timber housing projects at Mühlweg in Vienna. The construction site is located in the northeastern part of Vienna and divided into three lots. The residential properties were winning projects in a public housing tender and had been scientifically monitored during planning and construction processes by Holzforschung Austria (HFA). HFA is engaged in timber relevant research and certification authority and was assigned for the technical and scientific steering of the Mühlweg project by the city´s municipality department MA 50, Wiener Wohnbauforschung. FGW examined lot A, consisting of 84 residential units and lot B, 98 residential units.

Method

A standardized questionnaire was designed asking for data concerning size of households, household structures, living area, motives for change and choice of residence, present personal well-being in one´s apartment and within the multi-storey-block, various aspects as to apartment and estate, evaluation of expectations, prospective housing intentions etc.

Due to the above-average return rate of 40 percent of the questionnaire conclusions can be rated of high quality, significant and representative.

Following the interpretation of the statistical analysis for each building site individual interviews with about 10 percent of resident´s who had returned their questionnaire were made in order to enhance results of residential satisfaction on specific topics such as sound insulation and noise perception, aesthetics and heating and energy.

Survey's achievements

The following main results were gained:

- Households:
 - Household structure: Two thirds of households per multi-storey block are single- or two-person-households.
 - Education: The level of education of residents is above average. 38 percent of head of households and their partners got a general qualification for university entrance; about 30 percent have got an university degree.
 - Income: 75 percent have a net household income ranged between 1.500 € and 2.500 € at their disposal. A net household income of more than 4.000 € is exclusively available to couples with children. (lot A: 25%, lot B: 12,5% of responding households).¹
 - Before their moving to Mühlweg nearly 60 percent of residents were living as unlimited principal tenants (unlimited tenancy agreement).
- The present housing situation and living arrangements are regarded as an accomodation solution in the long run by nearly all responding residents.
- Within the valuation of general aspects of the residential housing arrangement and surroundings it was the use of ecological and sustainable construction materials that was regarded highly positive or at least rather positive. The weighting appeared to be similar for the building's aesthetics though occassionally it was noted the timber weathering resistance could be improved.
- Further ratings above average were reached by timber construction, recreational opportunities as well as fire protection and safety aspects whereas public transport connection and workplace's reachability were valued below average.
- Top grades were awarded for sizes of flats, floor plans, the setting of flats inside the building, luminance and light, indoor temperature (especially during winter) as well as for cosiness and living comfort with regard to individual apartments.
- More then 90 percent of households responded that their current living situation came up to their initial expectations. In a concluding overall evaluation the own apartment was appreciated even more than the residential house arrangement itself (eg. architecture, building design, timber construction compared to conventional methods of construction, thermal insulation, open space design, etc.) and its environment

¹ equivalent net household income 2006: Vienna: 1.700 €

qualified for university entrance: 1.840 €

university degree: 2.360 € [source: Statistik Austria]



(security, accessibility, recreational facilities). Lot B performed a little better than lot A, overall resident´s satisfaction is high at both building sites.

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Lebensläufe

Mag. Andreas Oberhuber ist seit September 2007 Geschäftsführer der FGW und hat bereits in seiner langjährigen Tätigkeit als Wohnbauförderungsreferent des Landes Wien profundes Wissen hinsichtlich der Rahmenbedingungen der österreichischen Wohnungs- und Finanzwirtschaft, Wohnungspolitik und vor allem Wohnbauförderung aufgebaut. Der Jurist trat 2003 zunächst als Projektleiter in das renommierte Wiener Forschungsinstitut ein und beschäftigte sich seitdem als Autor zahlreicher Publikationen mit verschiedenen Fragestellungen der österreichischen und internationalen Wohnbauforschung. Zu seinen Kernkompetenzen zählt die Untersuchung von ökonomischen, ökologischen, sozialen und weiteren Effekten der Wohnbauförderung, Systemen der Wohnbaufinanzierung sowie wohnungspolitischen und rechtlichen Aspekten des Wohnungs- bzw. Immobilienwesens.

Dipl.-Ing. Birgit Schuster absolvierte das Studium der Raumplanung und Raumordnung an der Technischen Universität Wien und ist seit April 2003 Projektleiterin der FGW. Sie befasst sich seitdem wissenschaftlich unter anderem mit Fragen der Regional- und Siedlungsentwicklung in Österreich, bau- und wohnungsstatistischen bzw. demografischen Analysen sowie verschiedenen Aspekten im Bereich Innovation und Nachhaltigkeit in der österreichischen Bau- und Wohnungswirtschaft.