

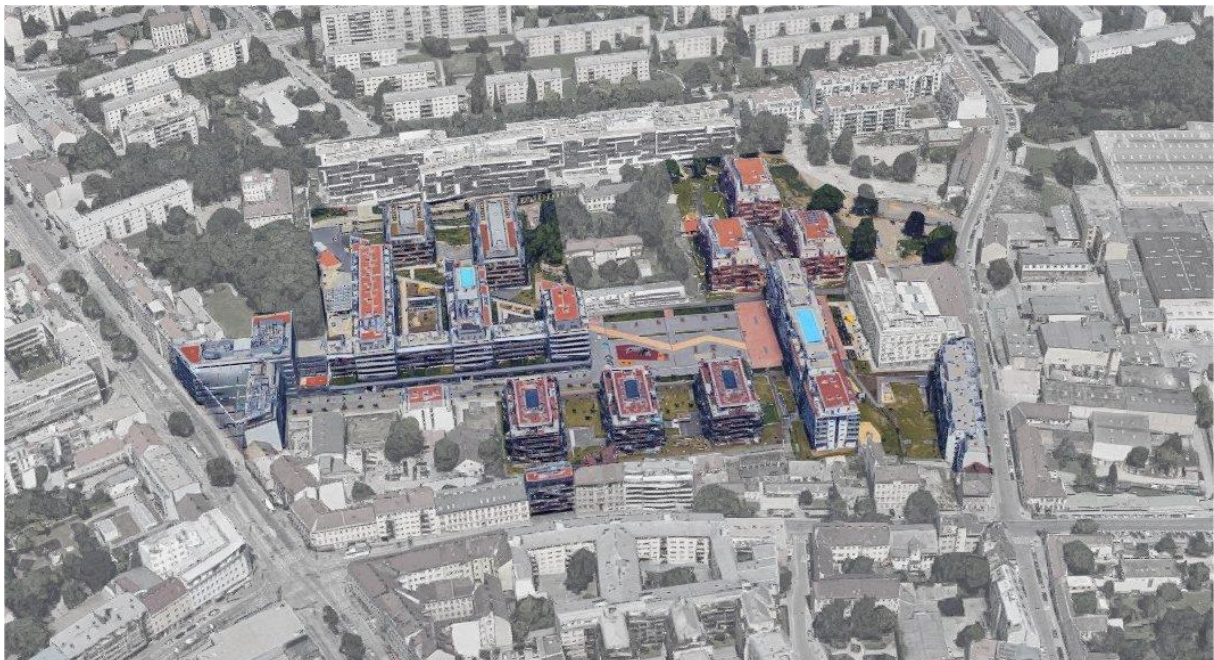
# DEVELOPING NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN INNER-CITY DISTRICTS

PROMOTING ADDITIONAL VALUES FOR THE SURROUNDINGS

Ein Projekt im Rahmen der Wiener Wohnbauforschung im Auftrag der MA 50

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## SUMMARY



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# **Developing new residential areas in inner-city districts – Promoting Additional Values for the Surroundings**

## *Abstract*

Planning inner-city residential areas on former railway, military and production areas faces complex conditions, but creates attractive residential locations that not only provide good returns, but also add value to the city. In the course of the project we will examine the ways in which new neighborhoods are embedded in their environment and how these relationships can be strengthened. The methodical design is based on case studies which are drawn from the field of subsidized housing in Vienna. New built housing areas can positively influence their surroundings if impairments to the quality of life of residents are avoided. Planning process should enhance qualities of the environment and compensate for deficits. Important approaches are the creation of links and networks as well as an offer of complementary services. In doing so, the added value for the environment can be optimized by systematically entangling of urban and socio-spatial approaches.

## **Context and Aim of the Project**

In Vienna, various new subsidized housing districts have been built which have to fit into existing structures. Former railway, military and production areas are transformed for predominant residential use so that attractive residential locations are evolving. These real estate developments not only bring good returns for investors but can also create added value for the city.

However, the embedding of new residential quarters in the "built city" is subject to complex conditions: The demand for affordable living space and the pressure to the use of open spaces and parking lots are increasing, as are the heterogeneity of the population and concerns about increasing social densities. In addition, costs for technical and social infrastructures are rising. Ideas about the emerging of new neighborhoods therefore increasingly address existing resources and deficits in the environment, which are identified from the point of view of the already resident population. The STEP 2025 also stipulates that the "continuing construction of the city" should be oriented towards the existing city and the needs of its inhabitants.

In recent years and decades, attempts have been made at the "interface of subsidized housing and urban space" to implement urban planning, mobility-related and open-space planning objectives at the level of building projects through quality specifications and procedures. At the same time, social neighborhood-related approaches became more important. The project investigates the question of how new quarters are embedded in their surroundings and how these references can be strengthened.

## **Methods**

Using case studies from the area of subsidized housing, different approaches are outlined to promote benefits for the surrounding district. The case analyses are based on on-site surveys, the analysis of planning and text documents as well as on interviews with 17 experts from the fields of administration, area management, urban planning, open space planning, non-profit housing development and science.

The sample covers different areas as well as a wide range of planning strategies and benefits. In agreement with the funding sponsor, finally the area of the "former Mautner Markhof-Gründe" in the 11th district, the development area "Wolfganggasse" in the 12th district, the area of the "Theodor Körner-Kaserne" in the 14th district and the area "Attemsgasse Ost" in the 22nd district were selected.

## **External Benefits from New Residential Quarters**

Planning processes for inner-city new housing districts can add values for the surrounding area in particular if they take into account their urban context and the interests of the local population. Participation processes show that the handling of the existing building fabric, its functions and its symbolic content, the design of fringes as well as the supply of green spaces are central concerns of the population when new structures are built. Concerns relate primarily to the loss of parking spaces,

the loss of "green and nature", to "concrete blocks" that "obstruct the view". Wishes usually concern green spaces, the redesign of sidewalks and open spaces as well as local amenities and social infrastructure.

As a result, new residential quarters can have a positive effect on their surroundings if significant impairments to the quality of life in the surrounding area are *avoided*, existing site qualities are *upgraded* and any deficits are *compensated* for. For this purpose, it is necessary to establish urban and social-spatial relationships, connections and networks with the environment, as well as to offer complementary functions or services. In addition, the added values should be communicated specifically to the population.

### **Considering Interests and Needs of Residents**

Involving the population increases the "*responsiveness*" of planning processes. This way feelings of being overlooked or over-privileged by urban development can be reduced. The participation approaches examined in the course of the case analyses provide examples of how the interests of the residents can be systematically obtained through dialogue-oriented or through intermediate actors. One crucial factor is an early, accurate and continuous information policy, which deliberately overcomes communication thresholds.

Formal participation tends to reach comparably well-situated people. There are various approaches to increase the "social reach" of participation processes, including social space analyses, fairness-checks,<sup>1</sup> advisory boards<sup>2</sup> or outreach approaches. Experts propose to strengthen the role of members of different target groups. Political districts are an important level of communicating urban development processes. These often represent an "arena" for the hosting of conflicts. At the same time, at this level media information on building projects is particularly dense. Strengthening the mediating role of political districts can help to treat conflicting municipal issues in a forward-looking and integrative manner.

Another way of taking into account the needs of the local population is to provide accompanying projects to improve the quality of life. Neighborhood-related transformation due to new construction and redevelopment are thus placed into an overarching framework, which indicates a positive overall development.

Networking between new residents and inhabitants can also be promoted by strengthening the function of educational offers as "neighborhood infrastructure". For example, Viennese adult education centers offer places close to home that promote networking of people in the district. Neighborhoods therefore function as learning and teaching places aside from school education. In order to enhance an appropriate networking of educational institutions, so-called "Bildungsgrätzel" were created in Vienna.

### **References to Existing structures and Buildings**

The case studies show how new housing quarters are embedded in their surroundings in terms of construction typologies, height developments, ground floor uses, open space schemes and the design of fringes.

In general, urban planning of new inner-city residential quarters can be considered from the perspective of grown structures. Important principles in this context are references to existing structures, the scale of buildings and the usability of structures.<sup>3</sup> However, this does not merely mean taking over existing structures, but implies a greater consideration of fringes and margins. This refers

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<sup>1</sup> MA 18 2018: Fachkonzept Öffentlicher Raum

<sup>2</sup> MA 18 2015: Beteiligungsprozess Nordbahnhof. Ein Grätzel stellt die Weichen.

<sup>3</sup> Leyser,-Droste, M. et al. (2016): Weiterbauen historisch geprägter Stadtstrukturen. Die Qualität des Einfügens im städtebaulichen Kontext. In: Forum Stadt, 43 (3), 279-294.

to the design of ground floor zones and window axes, as well as the to the layout and materiality of facades. The example of the "former Mautner Markhof-Gründe" on the Simmeringer Hauptstrasse illustrates that insertion in street-side ensembles is of great importance, especially in case of closing gaps between buildings.

### **Benefits**

In all case studies, reference was made to the surrounding building typologies, above all, to the fact that the area-wide predominant block structures were mainly taken up at the edges of the construction fields. "Building typologies" are usually already defined within the plan document. Especially in recent years, new approaches have evolved, for example by preceding participation processes or by introducing so-called "interlinked procedures" of zoning and public property development competitions .

Basically, with regard to the height of the surrounding buildings, higher buildings have been situated in the interior of the quarter. A significant increase in the height of the buildings from the outside to the inside, was also a response to the results of citizen participation.

An exception in this respect is the area "Wolfganggasse", in which the surrounding stock heights are significantly exceeded. However, this was meant to set an urban accent, which matches to its spatial situation between the railway and the "Gaudenzdorfer Gürtel" and "Margareten Gürtel".

The analysis of the functions – apart from housing – shows that the functional structures in the surrounding areas of the case studies differ considerably. They range from very dense and mixed uses in the area of the "Simmeringer Hauptstrasse" (case study "ehemalige Mautner Markhof-Gründe") to rather isolated uses on the "Donaufelder Straße" (case example "Attemsgasse Ost"). In all case studies, it can be observed that the establishment of complementary services concerning social infrastructures always took place.

### **Conclusion**

Direct benefits of new residential neighborhoods include in particular high-quality open spaces, good walking and cycling routes as well as complementary offers and services at the ground floor level.

Planning that aims to optimize urban added values has to refer to its surrounding architectural, functions and social structures. The case studies show an increasing tendency towards more intensive preliminary planning phases, a holistic understanding of planning and tailor-made social-spatial approaches.

A particular challenge is to ensure the continuity of the flow of information, but also of the values and relevance of urban development objectives. In addition to formal procedures, instruments of coordination, information and quality management therefore play an important role.

A systematic monitoring of the success of these different approaches is crucial in order to be able to assess their effectiveness in terms of achieving planning goals, of fostering the acceptance by the population, accelerating processes as well as activating target groups. With regard to quality management, it is also recommended to re-sharpen the assessment criteria of qualitative assessments and to systematically deal with sensitive margins and fringes. Another effective instrument for promoting the benefits of new inner-city residential quarters are urban planning contracts. An upstream internal clearing in the sense of a district-related social planning could support negotiation processes.

The interaction between the build city and new construction projects can be improved by district initiatives, cooperation and management agencies of ground floor areas. This requires funding schemes, not only subsidies for social housing.

Neighborhood initiatives are a possibility of taking into account the needs of the local population in the context of urban development processes. Projects can pave the way for improvements in quality

of life. Although sharing economy approaches are not appropriate to deal with precarious living and income conditions, there are some starting points in the field of energy supply and neighborly aid. In order to promote the networking among residents of new residential quarters and their surroundings a specific coordination of Area Renewal Agencies and on-site-counselors would be necessary.