

OPEN SPACES IN SUBSIDISED HOUSING

Case studies from Vienna

The design of open spaces has gained importance in subsidised housing over the last decade. The demand for self-determining, community-oriented and generation-spanning living has increased. Families with children, single parents and senior citizens are voicing their demands, the result of which is many-levelled combinations and overlaps of use. Additional challenges arise due to migrations and altered employment relationships, all of which is inevitably reflected in the open spaces.

Planning the outside facilities unfolds in the face of this complex, partially contradictory background and has to find an extension of the offer: on rooftops, terraces and differently designed, multi-purpose spaces. Thematic emphases in construction competitions (Bauträgerwettbewerben) have brought additional impulses that have led to new solutions in subsidised housing.

The results of recent years are varied, in design, in the appropriation but also in management and maintenance of the outdoor facilities. The increased significance placed on the open spaces in subsidised housing however does not carry a proportional increase of financial means. Therefore the question, which constellations and solutions in the design of open spaces have proven their value for daily use and have potential for further development is all the more important.

The study delivers a qualitative analysis of selected open space designs in subsidised housing from the past ten years. It basically asks which design approaches, which landscape images, but also which organisational constraints have proven themselves as sustainable in daily life and which have not. At the centre of this study lies the appropriation of open spaces by the inhabitants and by visitors. The daily life of differently designed open spaces is described and analysed as a complex weave of spatial, constructional and vegetable, as well as social and organisational variables. It's a matter of displaying the respective specific constellations of the visible and invisible design in the open space, which could offer references points for future designs.

Against this background, the aim was to capture a maximum bandwidth of constellations in the framework of a qualitative study. Demanding open space design in the sense of special conceptual approaches or exceptional solutions were just as sought after as unusual framework conditions and experimental approaches that are at least indirectly reflected in the open space. Additionally, simpler examples that are high-quality if inconspicuous at first glance were considered. Specific attention was paid to the urban context, the flanking open space as an intervening factor in the daily life of housing projects. In total, the study examined 14 objects. 13 objects were developed in the last ten years, seven as the result of a construction competition (Bauträgerwettbewerb).

Each of the selected projects was examined in an intense case study. Starting from the survey of objective structural characteristics, planning documents and available literature, qualitative methods were primarily used. Each project was examined for several weeks during different seasons and times of day in the terms of participatory observation. Besides this, interviews with dedicated inhabitants, house managers or

the responsible custodial agents were carried out in order to round off, supplement or qualify the observations and impressions.

The outcome of the case examples and in-depth analyses is a weave of results and information that become a sum-total in the reader's mind. Beyond this different general conclusions can be drawn from a number of detail results, which can be important for future projects in relation to the visible but also in relation to the invisible design of open spaces in subsidised housing.