

WOOD HOUSING SEESTADT ASPERN

Housing in collaboration with querkraft architekten

Vienna, Austria 2011-2015

Client: EBG Gemeinnützige Ein- und Mehrfamilienhäuser Baugenossenschaft reg.

Gen.M.b.H, Vienna

Gross floor area: 19,600 m² above ground level

A sequence of parallel building volumes differentiated in terms of scale utilises the large building plot D12 in the south-eastern part of the Seestadt Aspern. The **complex with a total of 213 apartments and eight shops** apparently consists of a group of clearly recognisable individual timber houses in the form of slender, compact individual volumes.

The staggered layout creates different kinds of courtyard-like spaces and a variety of visual relationships.

The various parts are connected to each other by **three rows of access decks that run in a north-south direction**. These three circulation routes offer a varied spatial experience provided by a sequence of light-flooded staircases, internal corridors and open access decks onto which communal terraces are docked. The **serial, linear basic structure** offers great **flexibility in laying out very different types of apartment** and consequently allows a good mix of residents. The apartment floor plans are conceived flexibly. They can be altered later in a variety of ways. Although they have an excellent energy balance the buildings still open generously to the outside. Combined with the use of timber as a construction material this gives the entire complex both lightness and depth.

Articulation

The **housing complex is articulated into seven building parts ranging in height from four to seven floors above ground level** and an underground garage. The strong articulation of the building volumes creates a lively, south-facing

open space that offers a variety of spatial relationships. The **inner courtyard is a semi-public zone that forms the common heart** (canyon) of the complex, which is connected to the pedestrian zone and is surrounded at ground floor level by the communal rooms.

Landscape and Space

What is known as the **canyon, an area with several changes of level and seating steps at the heart of the complex, offers all the residents an opportunity to meet there and experience community.** It serves as an encounter space and a playing area for young people. At places the wooden cladding lining the walls of the ramp grows out of the wall and forms sloping surfaces to lean against or clamber up. Large horizontal surfaces are connected with the wall and form areas to lie on or to use in different ways.

Together with a number of grassy hillocks the **green courtyards with wing-shaped terraces that deliberately project into the middle of the central courtyard form an organic landscape.** Hills, trees and shrubs with small crowns screen the private terraces. The network of paths leading through the hilly landscape is deliberately restricted to prevent the development of corridor-like routes. Meeting places are formed at junctions in front of entrance areas, laundries and the playground for small children.

The **articulation of the façade is continued in places as ground marking**, at the entrance areas it becomes denser and **articulates the zone in front of the shops and businesses with street furniture.** This introduces life to the front area with, for example, outdoor seating for customers. Raised beds of shrubs not enclosed by fences together with strips of lawn form a buffer in front of the studio apartments. Generously sized areas are cut out of this buffer to provide access or to create spaces in which to spend time.

Structure and Ecology

The highly insulated external walls are built of wood. These **prefabricated wooden walls** are produced in the factory at an ensured high level of quality **using native wood** and wood-based materials, with stone wool as insulation. In the façades wood is evident in the form of larch boarding. The party walls and internal partition walls were also produced in the factory, where they were prepared to accommodate the building services. Thanks to **the high level of prefabrication and speedy assembly on site** the impact on the environment as well as the amount of noise, dust and fumes can be minimised.

The **concrete frame allows freedom in designing the façade** and permanent flexibility in the floor plans. All the ducts are concentrated in a clearly defined zone of ancillary spaces beside the circulation. The central positioning of the services shaft allows the apartment types to be mirrored from floor to floor. The appearance of the façade is structured by projecting prefabricated loggias and balconies; the façade develops into a freely played game.

Elements

The **consistent use of industrially prefabricated building and construction elements** offers **materials and surfaces of high quality** while also enabling the **construction period to be kept extremely short**. The combination of structural precast reinforced concrete with timber construction elements as infill combines the demands of fire protection with an economical building method.

ABOUT Berger+Parkkinen

In 1995 Tiina Parkkinen and Alfred Berger founded Berger+Parkkinen Associated Architects. In the same year they won the international competition for the Embassies of the Nordic Countries in Berlin.

Numerous successful competitions and distinctions followed, including finalists of the Mies van der Rohe Awards, short-listed of the State Awards for Architecture and Sustainability. Regular lectures and exhibition activities in Europe, India, Mexico, and USA, i.a. Venice Architecture Biennale, London Architecture Biennale, Galerie Aedes, Berlin.

Berger+Parkkinen fabricates individual and sustainable solutions to a wide range of programs. The office has vast experience in all planning phases and as General Planner. The practice has developed specialist expertise in all major areas of architectural design and urbanism. Transdisciplinary approach to each project combines different professionals working on innovative ideas. This vast expertise provides clients with the confirmation of a far-reaching track record for successful project delivery and design excellence. Respect for various backgrounds and cultures is a key feature of the office philosophy.

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