

EVERYDAY HOUSING ISSUES



**On privatization,
refurbishment
and protest**

Project documentation

for the exhibition

June 18, 2025 - February 1, 2026

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Greetings

Marcus Gwechenberger
Head of Department for Planning and Housing
City of Frankfurt am Main

How do we want to live? And above all: How will we be able to live? These questions are more relevant than ever. The CityLab exhibition *Everyday housing issues* at the Historical Museum Frankfurt focuses on central topics of our urban development: non-profit orientation, social justice and questions of ecological housing. The example of Frankfurt's twin city Tel Aviv also underscores that housing is an issue that concerns people worldwide.

The exhibition presents three Frankfurt neighborhoods that once stood for a new understanding of housing: the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate in Westend, Knorrstraße in Gallus and the Henri-Dunant Estate in Sossenheim. Today they are part of a debate surrounding refurbishment, privatization and displacement. The voices of community residents make it clear how much housing has become a social flashpoint.

The city of Frankfurt is responding to this development with a comprehensive range of housing policy instruments: from zoning guidelines and revised funding conditions for new and existing buildings, to the strengthening of non-profit investors. New channels for dialogue and cooperation are also helping to bring interest groups together to find joint solutions for a complex challenge.

In line with the New Leipzig Charter, we are systematically developing Frankfurt as a fair, productive and green urban area. Our goal: Housing in Frankfurt should be accessible for everyone—affordable, sustainable and fit for the future.

Ina Hartwig
Head of Department for Culture and Science
City of Frankfurt am Main

This year, when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the legendary “New Frankfurt” urban planning project initiated in 1925, many challenges of that era will seem familiar. Even then, affordable housing was in short supply in our growing city, and business-minded landlords took advantage of the high demand by converting every last corner of their often dilapidated buildings into living space. We face similar problems today.

At the time, Mayor Ludwig Landmann and his city planning officer Ernst May promised to provide every Frankfurt resident with affordable housing that would cost no more than a quarter of a monthly salary. The city itself was to act as builder and landlord with large-scale housing associations. Standardized floor plans and houses were to guarantee quick results and



Campaign for the 100th anniversary of New Frankfurt, Bureau Sandra Doeller

low rents, and big new housing estates were to be developed on the outskirts of the city.

The problem of housing shortage is still with us today. This demonstrates that modern utopias such as the New Frankfurt mass housing concept were not the panacea and ultimate solution celebrated at the time. From today's perspective some of their approaches have acquired a bit of a patina, such as the Frankfurt Kitchen or the fully planned self-catering garden. Nevertheless, they still contain fascinating and contemporary ideas for us today: The Frankfurt Kitchen is the forerunner of our modern fitted kitchen.

A critical examination of these and other concepts from the late 19th and 20th centuries is worthwhile: The Frankfurt tradition has great potential to inspire us for our present-day challenges—and not just in housing construction.

The modern human and housing

Doreen Mölders
Director, Historical Museum Frankfurt

Modern human beings (*homo sapiens*) are not necessarily dependent upon living in permanent buildings. In fact, the sedentary lifestyle is a fairly recent development: First permanent human settlements were only built around 11,000 years ago. Considering that *homo sapiens* is around 300,000 years old according to what we know today, that is a short period of time.

11,000 years later, around 3/4 of the world's population lives in cities—and the trend towards urban growth shows no sign of slowing down in Germany as well. Each of these movements increases the pressure to adapt in order to enable all people a decent minimum standard of living, which includes housing. The solution to the social question is thus rightly linked to the issue of housing.

The first utopias of socially compatible housing were developed at the end of the 18th century by early socialists such as Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. But it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that experiments with model projects began. In Frankfurt am Main, Mayor Ludwig Landmann initiated an urban reform program intended to address the housing shortage, but above all to also make housing more efficient and modern. The result was New Frankfurt, with its more than 12,000 residential units designed by architects of the New Objectivity movement such as Ernst May and Martin Elsaesser.

The New Frankfurt housing estates were built in a public-private partnership (PPP), combining profit with public welfare-oriented goals. To mark the Bauhaus anniversary in 2019, the CityLab exhibition *How do the people live? Touring the Ernst May Housing Estates with the CityLab* took a close look at life today in the New Frankfurt settlements of the 1920s. With the current exhibition *Everyday housing issues. On privatization, refurbishment and protest*, the HMF goes one step further, taking the 100th anniversary of New Frankfurt as an opportunity to examine the city's tradition of planning and public welfare construction in terms of its legacy today.

The result: Over the last 40 years there have been particularly drastic sales of social housing units to large real estate companies, as redevelopment now serves to maximize profits. The stories of tenants in the Knorrstraße Estate (formerly rail workers' housing estate), Carl-von-Weinberg Estate (New Frankfurt) and

Henri-Dunant Estate (post-war modernism) stand for one of our major current social issues: What should a public-oriented housing market look like today?

The CityLab exhibition is part of the 100th anniversary of New Frankfurt, organized by the City of Frankfurt. I would like to thank the participating partner museums Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Museum Angewandte Kunst and the *ernst-may-gesellschaft* for their excellent cooperation! My heartfelt thanks go to the CityLab team under the direction of Susanne Gesser for conception, planning and realization of the exhibition. Katharina Böttger, Angelina Schaefer and Noah Nätscher curated and realized the exhibition with great expertise and empathy for the needs of the CityLab participants. Thank you very much! Above all, I would also like to thank the CityLab participants who shared their experiences and stories on the controversial topic of housing with us and the public, as well as the close cooperation partners at the Goethe University, especially Tabea Latocha and Sebastian Schipper.

Without financial support exhibitions like this would not be possible. I would like to thank the IKEA Foundation, the Kulturfonds Frankfurt Rhein-Main, the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Friends and Sponsors of the HMF and our long-standing partner the Frankfurt Active Neighborhood Program for their support.



How do people live? With the CityLab through the Ernst May Estates, Jens Garber, 2018, HMF

Editorial— 15 years CityLab

Susanne Gesser
Director, Frankfurt Now!

A CityLab exhibition is always a joint effort. Suggestions for exhibition topics often come to the museum from the urban community—as in this case, from urban researchers from the Goethe University Frankfurt. Collaborative and participatory development is the essence of this format. For 15 years the Historical Museum has been providing an exhibition space with CityLab that invites the urban community to actively and co-creatively help shape the museum as a cultural venue. The city and its urban culture serve both as the main topic and object of investigation, as well as a frame of reference. Issues concerning and animating urban society are confronted here, including topics of burning importance that are relevant to current living situations.

Housing and affordable living space have been pervasive issues running through almost all CityLab exhibitions since its inception. This should be of no surprise, since the amount of publicly subsidized housing has fallen by 50 percent in the last 20 years. The exhibition format welcomes reflections on the past, and visions of the future have an explicit place in it. A key feature of CityLab is the opportunity for each participant to formulate individual views, experiences, fears and wishes on a particular topic—and to incorporate them into an exhibition contribution, expressing and positioning themselves within a safe museum environment. It is designed to present Frankfurt from the view point of its inhabitants, collecting as many individual perspectives as possible, while also representing as broad a spectrum of society as possible. The CityLab is an experimental field of cultural participation for all those who take part, as well as for the museum itself. We never know at the beginning of a project what the final result will be. The CityLab can also be a meeting place, a place of exchange, self-representation and empowerment. Here we can see how the people of Frankfurt experience their own city.

The issues of housing and affordable living space, along with the fear of displacement, were already highly

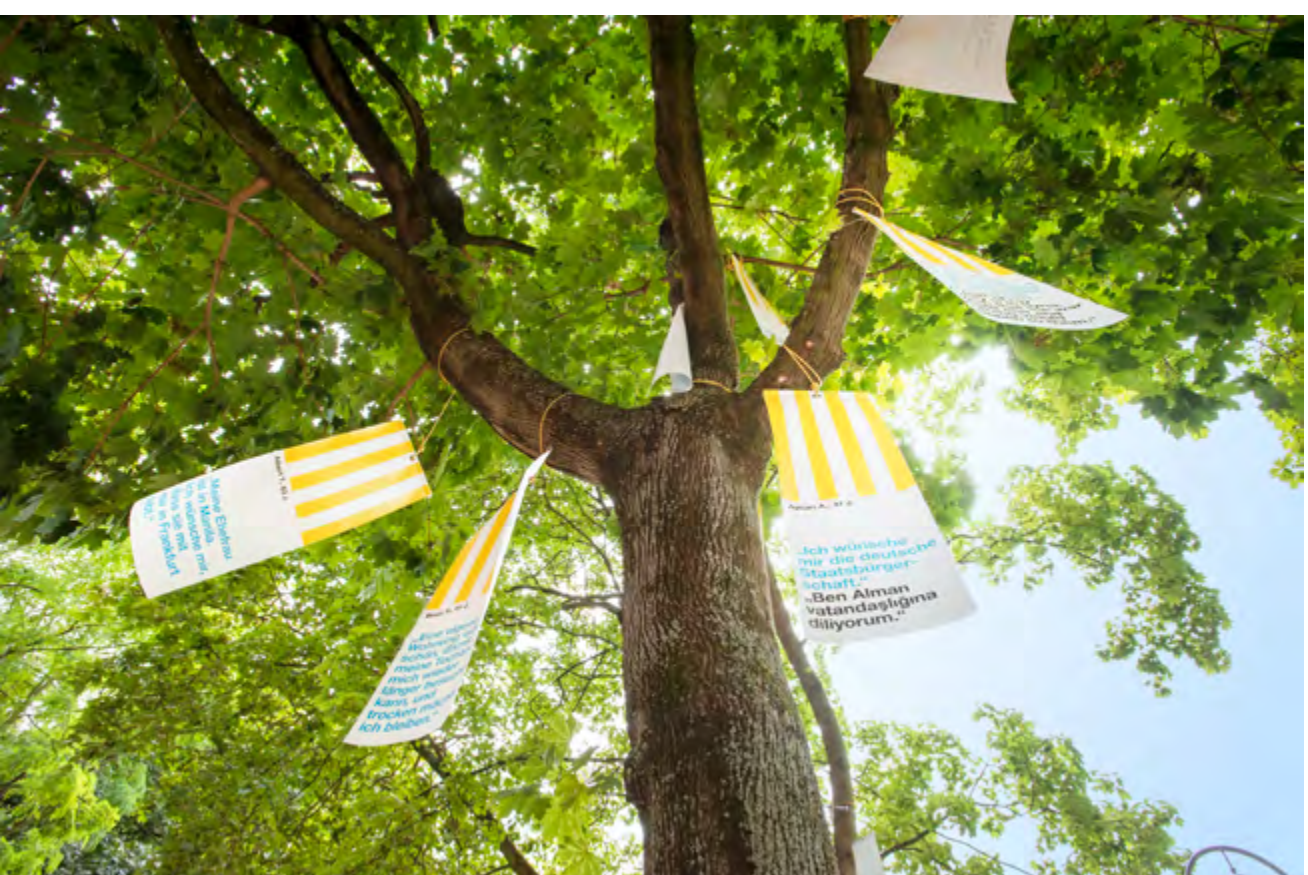
topical in the first CityLab exhibition *Ostend 2011. CityLab on the move* (2011) which opened 15 years ago. The installation “28sqm” by the Bornheim Jugendladen recreated a real East End one-room apartment on a 1:1 scale out of cardboard. It highlighted the experience of living in cramped spaces, as a counter-design to costly modern high-gloss architecture. Participants commented in the exhibition catalogue on how important the project was to them: “The Jugendladen project was greatly appreciated by the Historical Museum as well as the general public, and led to exciting encounters between several generations within the 28 square metres. The museum’s invitation led us to an extremely productive engagement with the East End.”

The following CityLab exhibitions also took up the topic of housing extensively: in 2014, homeless men took part in the CityLab *park in progress. CityLab on the move in the Wallanlagen*. Themes of housing and displacement also pervaded the 2013 and 2015 CityLab projects in Ginnheim and Gallus. In 2019 we examined very specifically how housing in the Ernst May estates has changed over the last hundred years.

The current exhibition *The Housing Question—Then and Now* extends the horizon beyond Frankfurt and illustrates that the housing crisis is not only a local issue, but a global one. The example of Frankfurt’s twin city Tel Aviv-Jaffa shows that urban development there has also triggered gentrification processes in many neighborhoods and led to displacement. Protest movements have formed in both cities. Thanks to the close cooperation with the Institute of Human Geography at Goethe University Frankfurt and Tel Aviv-Jaffa University, this aspect was added to the CityLab process and incorporated into the exhibition.

This publication documents the exhibition *Everyday housing issues. On privatization, refurbishment and protest*. It contains all contributions from the three Frankfurt housing estates as well as from Tel Aviv-Jaffa. As always with our participatory exhibitions, these texts were written by our co-curators themselves. A look into the future envisions the housing estate of tomorrow, and guest contributions by Gabu Heindl, Firdes Firat and Carolin Genz discuss the exhibition’s subtitle: Privatization, Refurbishment and Protest.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all sponsors and cooperation partners, but above all the CityLab participants for their commitment, as well as the exhibition designer Thomas Rustemeyer and the graphic designers Anna Kraus and Charalampos Lazos. My very special thanks go to the curators Katharina Böttger, Angelina Schaefer and Noah Nätscher.



EVERYDAY HOUSING ISSUES

On privatization, refurbishment and protest

Katharina Böttger, Tabea Latocha, Noah Nätscher,
Angelina Schaefer, Sebastian Schipper

The current decade has seen the housing question in Germany once again becoming the “social issue of our time”. Rising rents and property prices in every major German city are jeopardizing social cohesion as the majority of the population struggles to find affordable housing. In Frankfurt, rents have risen by an average of 60 percent over the last ten years. Half of Frankfurt’s residents are entitled to public housing, while at the same time more and more low-priced apartments are losing their non-profit status. This “new” housing shortage is however a recurring problem: in 1873, Friedrich Engels had already demonstrated in his work “The Housing Question” how housing markets lead to supply bottlenecks. Today, in addition to the social housing issue, climate change presents us with ecological challenges. The ageing building sector consumes around a third of our total energy requirements. It needs to be refurbished, but who should bear the costs and responsibility for the ecological turnaround when many people are already at their financial limits?

The CityLab project *Everyday housing issues. On privatization, refurbishment and protest* deals with the “return of the housing question” to Frankfurt. Starting from the city’s tradition of public welfare it focuses on the non-profit housing sector, which requires companies to cover their costs and thus ensure affordable rents. This tradition can be seen in the early railroad housing estates built by the *Deutsche Reichsbahn* for its workers around 1900, but also in the New Frankfurt urban planning program from 1925 to 1930, which created housing estates and developments for “subsistence level” income groups. In the post-war modern era, numerous publicly-subsidized housing estates and low-income housing were constructed for the expanding urban population.

The *Wohnungsgemeinnützigkeitsgesetz* (non-profit housing law) that had made these benefits possible for decades was abolished in 1990. As a result, many companies privatized formerly non-profit apartment units or turned rental businesses into profit-making ventures. Widespread protests were organized at that time against the sell-off of social housing. Today, comprehensive energy-efficient refurbishment measures have reignited these protests. Tenants often feel that necessary maintenance measures were neglected for decades, now buildings are being expensively refurbished at the residents’ expense. The socio-ecological housing issue contains enormous potential for social conflict—then as now.

Urban researchers from the Goethe-University Frankfurt, in collaboration with CityLab, are revisiting tried-and-tested instruments of housing policy geared towards the common good. What can we learn from the past and present for sustainable housing construction and a progressive housing policy? The exhibition focuses on three Frankfurt housing estates: the Knorrstraße Estate for railroad workers in the Gallus neighborhood, the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate built in the New Frankfurt era in Westend, and the post-war modernist Henri-Dunant Estate in Sossenheim. An excursion to the twin city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa illustrates that the housing issue is not a local problem, but affects people all over the world. The desperate situation of many residents there led to one of the largest political protests in Israel in 2011.

The exhibition also ties in with the 100th anniversary of the New Frankfurt urban planning program, which is being commemorated this year. As part of these celebrations, the CityLab examines what still remains from the promise of non-profit housing policy, as well as good architecture and housing for all.

On summer tour through the Henri-Dunant Estate, Jens Gerber, 2024, HMF



Workshops held with CityLab participants touched on their personal stories and experiences, as well as the complex topic of the rental housing market. For example, we addressed the structural decay of housing estates and rising rents. CityLab participants, who either live in, conduct research on, or are politically active in housing communities, discussed the lack of transparency often found on the part of big housing corporations during refurbishments, as well as successful protest initiatives and setbacks. This direct exchange is reflected in the subjective contributions by CityLab participants, and has strengthened a sense of cohesion in the communities. In the course of the process, CityLab contributions were supplemented with the findings from the research project and the historical expertise of the museum team.

During the development process, the museum team faced the challenge of translating the human geographers' research findings and the complexities of the housing issue into an accessible presentation that integrated suggestions from CityLab participants for exhibition contributions. The process-oriented CityLab method proved to be an advantage: a long unanswered question in preliminary discussions was how macro-level research findings could be communicated to visitors, while at the same time leaving room for the subjective, micro-level perspectives of CityLab participants. The answer emerged during the collaboration and is now reflected in the structure of the exhibition. The museum team created a framework that provided a level of context and conveyed historical knowledge about housing developments and the housing market.

Work Process

Researchers at the Goethe-University Frankfurt were the initiators of the CityLab project *Everyday housing issues*. At the Institute of Human Geography, researchers examine social conflicts related to the ongoing housing crisis, focusing on the interests of population groups most impacted by housing shortages and displacement. In the spirit of collaborative and transdisciplinary research, they collect viewpoints from the civic community such as tenants' associations, climate and rent policy movements, social organizations and affected tenants. The institute seeks to disseminate the knowledge they gain to the wider public—CityLab provides the right format for this purpose.

Since 2010, the Historical Museum Frankfurt has been using CityLab to develop participatory and contemporary exhibitions on topics affecting the city. This exhibition combines knowledge gained from the German Research Foundation (DFG) project "Home and Housing in Urban Regeneration Processes: Studying the Macro through the Micro in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Frankfurt am Main" by Bernd Belina, Sebastian Schipper and Tabea Latocha (Frankfurt) and Tovi Fenster, Lee Broide and Noy Thaller (Tel Aviv) with the experiences of the civic community. Research questions posed by the project were taken up, developed and collaboratively addressed with residents and other affected parties in a participatory exhibition process.



On summer tour through the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate, Jens Gerber, 2024, HMF

The central focus remained on the second, primarily sensory level of the CityLab participants, where residents share their experiences and stories of living in the community.

The comparatively small number of CityLab participants created gaps that influenced the structure of the exhibition. The Institute of Human Geography had established contacts with neighborhood residents. In addition, the CityLab team visited the three Frankfurt housing estates in the summer of 2024 to get a feel for the neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the number of participants remained relatively small and decreased over the course of the process. The low number of CityLab participants is in itself a telling result of the participatory exhibition process, illustrating how existential the housing issue is and the fears it triggers among tenants—as well as the lack of social structures enabling people to talk about their pressures and burdens. Especially in the midst of a refurbishment project such as the current one in the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate, it is a very sensitive matter to ask residents about these issues.

This was already evident in the research project and points to an ethical problem that goes beyond the housing issue: the difficulty of including the voices of those most affected by social inequality. The researchers hoped to meet this challenge by collaborating with the CityLab. At the same time, the question arises: What do people gain from participating when they find themselves in an existentially threatening situation? Do they even want to tell their story, or even see the museum as a place that represents them? And do the museum's methods reach them sufficiently?

A further hurdle was the complexity of the topic—and here the open-ended nature of the CityLab process stood in the way of itself: it was not clear at the beginning to many participants how the issue of housing would ultimately be presented in the exhibition space. The aim of the city museum is to tell and present the stories of people in Frankfurt. To this end, the museum and researchers need to find better solutions for the future.

Outlook

The exhibition also shows that it is worth protesting and campaigning for self-determination in the field of housing. It was important not only to present the social challenges and serious problems in the area of housing, but also to show solutions.

The result was a synthesis of research and urban laboratory: What do we learn when we bring together the multi-layered knowledge of residents, people working in housing estates, and those who research or explore them artistically or culturally? In the area of the exhibition that looks into the future, we reflect on its starting point: How can we in the 21st century build on the tradition of a common welfare-oriented housing policy that once existed in Frankfurt? How can the construction of housing benefit the general public? What new ideas and utopias can we imagine?

The instruments of housing and rental policy are another important part of this area: What laws do we need at the federal and state level? What options do city councils have? What can tenants do to improve their situation? The exhibition area “Future” invites us to collectively consider how we imagine fair housing. Many practices on the rental market are legal, but do we feel they are legitimate? The answers to these questions say a lot about our sense of justice and overall social conditions. By confronting this topic, utopias for a better future are conceivable.



Housing Issues and Urban Regeneration in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

Tovi Fenster

In many countries worldwide, housing markets have been liberalized in the past decades and issues around affordable housing are back on the political agenda due to rising house prices and rents that have spurred major protest movements (Schipper 2018). In the two twin cities Frankfurt and in Tel Aviv, urban regeneration policies have become important tools of urban development and resulted in vast displacement of current residents (Ben Arie and Fenster, 2020, Botbul-Tal, Fenster & Kulka 2015, Fenster & Kulka 2016, Sa'di and Fenster, 2022, Mösgen & Schipper, 2017; Schipper & Wiegand, 2015; Schipper, 2025, 2015b). In this respect, the two cities represent challenging similarities and differences that contribute significantly to the discourse on the role and importance of urban regeneration in (re)producing the housing question.

While a range of similarities exists between the two cities and their housing markets, especially concerning economic (de)regulation and current shortages, several major challenging differences between Germany and Israel's housing markets are evident.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the two countries is the renter/ownership ratio. Germany is a renter society: 58% of households are renters (Statistisches Bundesamt 2019: 17). In Frankfurt, about 80% of households live in rental housing units. In contrast, Israel is an owner society; 68.1% of housing units are owner-occupied nationwide and 42.5% in Tel Aviv-Jaffa (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023: 157, 163). This structural difference can result in different positions vis-à-vis urban regeneration and protest on the part of the residents.



Shack in Givat Amal Bet before evacuation and demolition, Lee Broide, 2021

The second significant difference is that discriminatory practices based on ethno-national categories affect current housing struggles differently in the two countries. In (West) Germany, so-called guest-workers in the 1960s and 1970s and migrants and refugees in subsequent decades have been discriminated against in the housing market and in urban planning in ways that have been critiqued as racist (Ronneberger & Tsianos, 2009), as reflected in recent housing struggles in Frankfurt (Blank 2021). In Israel, housing regulations and discriminatory government institutional practices are mainly based on class and ethnic issues especially regarding Jewish and Palestinian Arabs but also among Askenazi and Mizrahi Jews (Bimkom, 2015, Minerva Center for Human Rights, 2024). To that fact, one should add the private developers' massive initiations for high-priced housing which result in a steep rise of housing prices (Schipper, 2015a). Thus, planning and development of regeneration projects was intended to provide new housing for the elite at the expense of the have-nots—Mizrahi Jews (of Middle Eastern and African descent) and Palestinians (Margalit, 2012, Fenster, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2019, Schipper 2015b, Ben Arie & Fenster, 2020).

Urban Regeneration in Israel and Tel Aviv

Urban regeneration is a process aimed at revitalizing and renewing urban areas through physical redevelopment, economic investment, and social improvement. Urban regeneration in the Israeli and Tel Aviv context refers to the revitalization of neighborhoods and infrastructure, often through demolition of existing buildings and high-density redevelopment. In Tel Aviv, this process includes initiatives like the regeneration of Givat Amal Bet.

Housing policies and urban regeneration in Israel

From the beginning of the 20th century and the beginning of the Zionist activities in Palestine housing policies were one of the main planning mechanisms used to create and construct Jewish spaces and places as part of the state to be. These activities have been accelerated after 1948 when the state of Israel has been established when tens of thousands of Jewish refugees came from Europe and Arab countries. These Jewish immigrants were often populated firstly in deserted Palestinian homes and houses in former Palestinian cities such as Jaffa and in Palestinian villages (such as what is today Givat Amal Bet) after the former residents had either fled or were dispelled during the 1948 war. Later on, new development towns designed mostly for Mizrahi Jewish immigrants have been built especially during the 1970s up to the 1990s and far away from the urban centres in the periphery of the country. The importance of the housing for national politics is expressed in the fact that the first Israeli national plan, the Sharon plan of 1951, has been based on national and social goals related to housing policies (Kallus and Law Yone, 2002,



Fenster, 2012]. The plan established a hierarchical national urban network of metropolitan areas, regional cities, development cities and rural areas and formulated a housing policy for Jewish spatial distribution and a vast constructions of public housing in Israel especially in development towns but also in Tel Aviv.

From the 1990s onwards and following international trends, urban regeneration began to be the main tool for housing provision and urban development. The Israeli government initiated urban regeneration projects with the goal to improve the physical condition of existing social housing schemes built back in the 1950s mostly in development towns and mixed Jewish-Arab cities (196 neighbourhoods all over Israel) with the goal to improve the standard of living in these deteriorated neighbourhoods mostly populated by Mizrahi Jews. Despite the government's good intentions, the physical renewal of neighbourhoods did not last long and soon the deterioration and neglect returned to dominate in these areas.

The introduction of neoliberal urban policies had their effects on the development of housing in Israel and Tel Aviv from the 2000s onwards with the growing involvement of private developers who gain government incentives to carry out housing projects most of which take place in central Israel where the demand for housing is high resulting in ongoing neglect of peripheral areas. The National Authority for urban regeneration

established in 2016 initiated a formal line for urban regeneration projects for neighbourhoods rather than for single buildings. In addition, the 2040 National Strategic Plan for Housing in Israel dictated that 1.5 million housing units will be built between 2017–2040 in order to meet predicted population growth needs. One third of this housing stock to be build will be materialized through urban regeneration projects mostly by the destruction of existing buildings and the building of new ones rather than the more sustainable addition of floors to and retrofitting of existing buildings.

Housing Policies in Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv-Jaffa is the second largest city in Israel. It's population exceeds some 480,000 people (5% of Israel's population) whereas the largest city Jerusalem consists of almost double that number. Despite being only the second largest city, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, like Frankfurt, is considered as a 'Global City'. That is a city that serves as a local cultural and economic gateway to its region. Whether located higher or lower on the World Cities roster, at the local and regional scale it serves as both business center and cultural hub (Alfasi and Fenster, 2005, 2009). 88.2% of its residents are considered as Jewish and the rest Muslim and Christian. Labor migrants consist of 22,900 which is 14% of the numbers of labor migrants in Israel. 212,800 households live in Tel Aviv-Jaffa with an average of 2.2 people per household as

compared to 3.3 in Israel. 42.5 % live in owner occupied flats as compared to 68.1% in Israel. Which means that more than half of the flats in Tel Aviv-Jaffa 52.5% are rented as compared to only 28.7% in Israel overall. 482,600 people are employed in Tel Aviv-Jaffa but 62.9% do not live in the city.

The number of urban regeneration projects in Tel Aviv-Jaffa has increased in the past few years to the extent that the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality established a special department for promoting urban regeneration projects. The municipality promotes some 125 urban regeneration plans mostly 'destruction and re-built' category with 41,000 new housing units mostly in South and East of Tel Aviv and one huge project in North Tel Aviv. Recently, the municipality began to promote the concept of 'neighborhood regeneration' rather than 'one building regeneration' like in many cities around the world. The municipality initiates the neighborhood regeneration project and approves the plans and private developers materialize them. The two case study neighborhoods in Tel Aviv Givat Amal Bet and HaTikva are also part of these current trends but with criticism regarding the discrimination of the existing residents most of whom are part of the middle lower class vis à vis the new residents who have the possibilities to purchase high-priced flats in such new built projects.

The case of Frankfurt's twin city Tel Aviv-Jaffa shows that the housing question is not a local, but a global phenomenon intertwined with multiple national and urban policies. Not just in these two cities but in many major metropolises worldwide the increasing dominance of private developers on the housing market and their interest in building high-priced condominiums threatens the home of existing residents. This has evoked the formation of protest movements who fight for a right for housing for all.

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Housing is a very complex issue and many technical terms are often used to explain it. The wording in this introduction has thus been kept as simple as possible to make the topic understandable for most people.

Why is there less and less affordable housing?

One reason is the shrinking amount of social housing. Non-profit apartments are affordable and landlords do not make a profit.

There used to be a law promoting public, non-profit housing called *Wohnungs-Gemeinnützigkeits-Gesetz* (non profit housing law), through which the government supported the creation of more affordable living space.

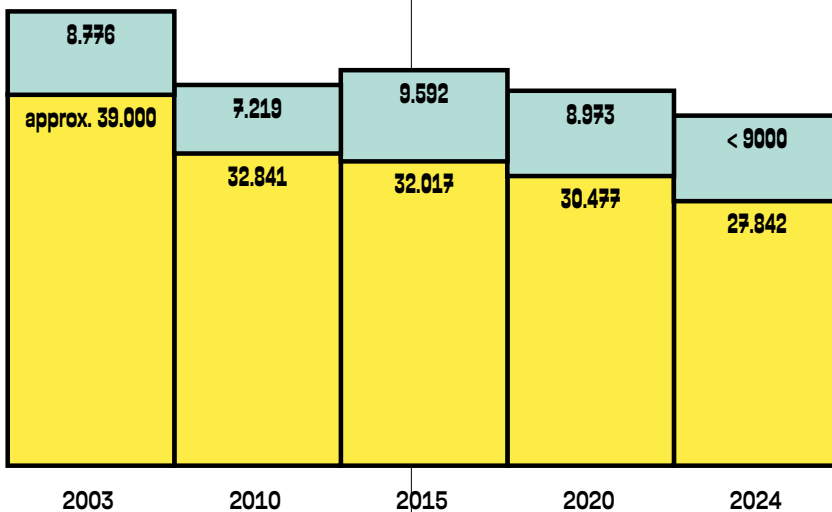
The law was abolished in 1990.

This transformed the housing market. Many non-profit apartments were sold to large companies seeking to make a profit. Affordable living is not a priority for them. This is called marketization.

Public housing belonging to the city, state or federal government has also been sold to large companies. That is called privatization.

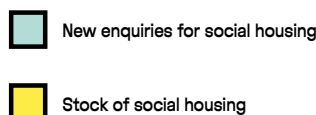
Stock and Demand of Social Housing

Frankfurt a. M.



Source, unless otherwise stated:

Housing market reports (Housing office) and Statistical Yearbooks (Citizens' office, statistics and elections) of the City of Frankfurt am Main; Housing market reports of the IHK Frankfurt am Main



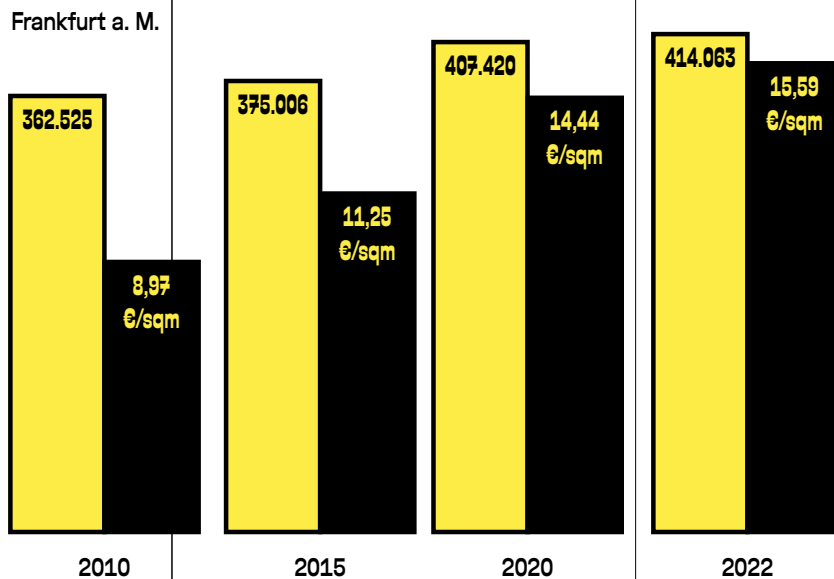
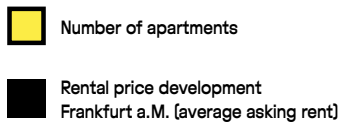
Vonovia

Vonovia is the largest real estate company in Europe. It owns around 550,000 apartment units, with 16,000 of those in Frankfurt. Vonovia wants to earn a lot of money, which means making a profit from the rents people pay. In 2022, almost half of the rents were for profit.

GWH

GWH is also a large housing association. It used to be called *Gemeinnützige Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH Hessen* (Hessian Non-Profit Housing Association), and was only a small firm in Hessen before the state government took over responsibility for the apartments. The company has belonged to the Helaba Bank since 2000. Now it is simply called *Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH Hessen* (Hessian Housing Association), and owns around 50,000 apartment units.

Number of apartments and price development



Why does this affect especially large cities such as Frankfurt or Tel Aviv?

Frankfurt and Tel Aviv are large cities where many companies and banks are located. Local politicians assist organizations seeking to open new businesses.

This results in a growing number of firms and banks in these cities, which increases the number of people seeking work and accommodations. But there is not sufficient housing for them.

Rents thus become more expensive, which is welcomed by companies that build and rent out apartments. They are making large profits.

Why do houses need to be renovated?

Older houses need to be upgraded regularly to make them last longer. This is called refurbishment or urban regeneration. People feel safer and more comfortable in them.

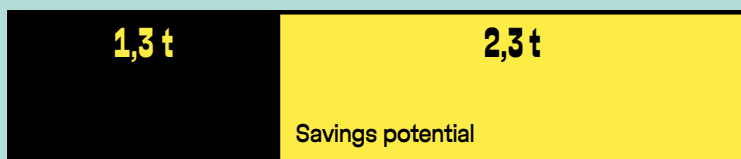
Older houses also consume a lot of energy, which damages the environment. Making modifications to older houses helps save energy and is climate-friendly.

Buildings are torn down sometimes and new ones constructed, consuming a lot of energy. It's much better for the environment to renovate these structures.

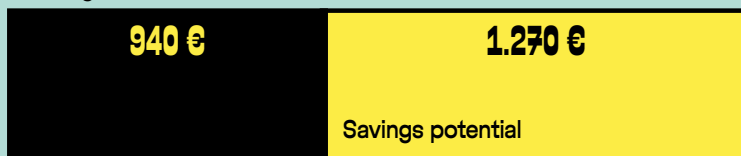
*70 sqm living space,
51–100 sqm apartment building,
natural gas central heating
www.co.online.de, prepared by heizspiegel.de, Status 09/2023

Potential for saving of an average apartment* through renovation

Emissions

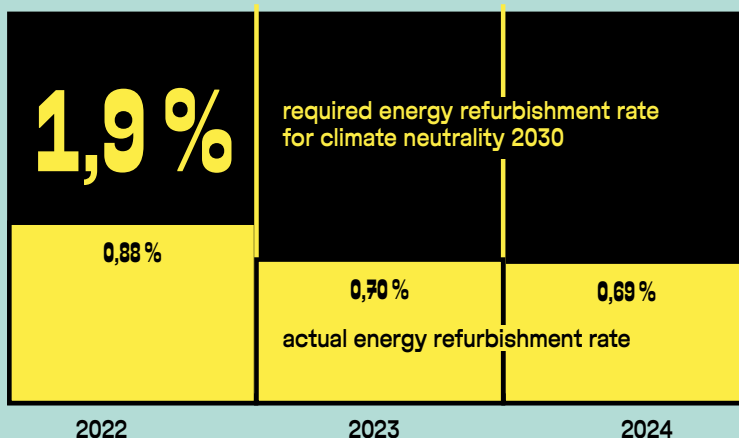


Heating Costs



Refurbishment rate Frankfurt

BuVEG / B+L (Renovierflächen nach Segment),
destatis; Status 10/2024

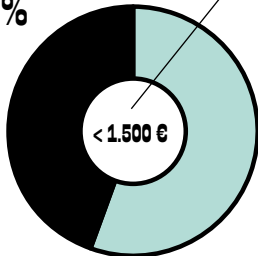


Average rent burden of tenants by household income in Germany

*Share of gross rent in net household income

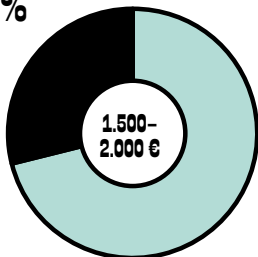
Rent burden Income

44,7%



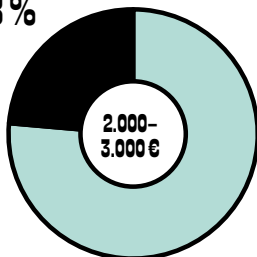
< 1.500 €

28,9%



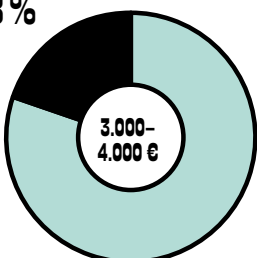
1.500-2.000 €

23,8%



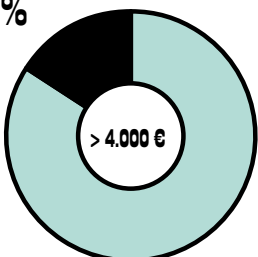
2.000-3.000 €

19,8%

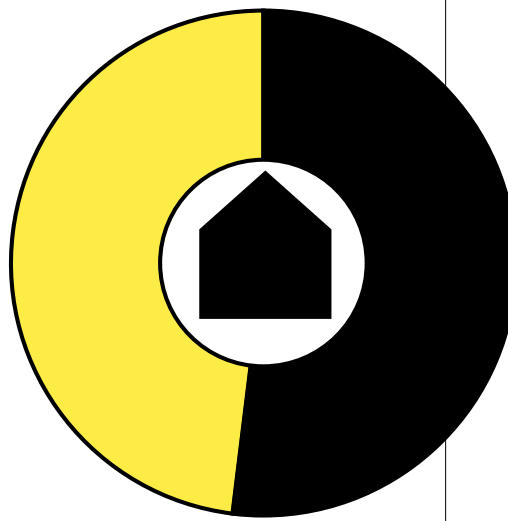


3.000-4.000 €

15,9%



> 4.000 €



52%

of Germans are afraid that housing in Germany will become unaffordable

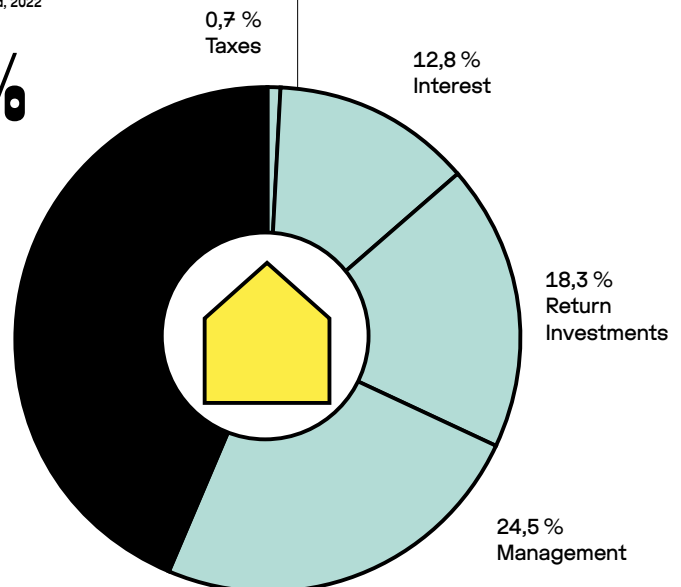
Rainer Radtke, Statista: Umfrage zu den größten Ängsten der Deutschen 2024

Use of rental income using the example of a profit-oriented housing company

Knut Unger, rosalex: Vonovia: Ein Problem, das immer größer wird, 2022

43,7%

Payout to shareholders



When does renovation become a problem?

Many companies that rent out apartments seek to make a profit. When older houses are refurbished tenants often end up paying the bill, and the companies can demand higher rents.

Houses are generally refurbished in a standardized fashion, which is more efficient for businesses. But then all housing estates begin to look alike and can lose their uniqueness. Tenants' particular wishes are rarely taken into account.

In addition, many tenants fear rents will increase and force them to move out. Refurbishment can thus put residents at a great disadvantage.

How do tenants deal with this?

Many tenants say that they are feeling bad because of the renovation. What is happening on the construction site is rarely explained to you. There is a lot of noise. Some houses are not repaired properly. Rents are getting higher.

Not everyone agrees. Together they speak their minds loudly. This is called protest. Other people from the city help them.

Others have no strength to protest. They can't change the fact that things are bad. They may even have to move away. Then people with more money move into their apartment.



Squatters in Frankfurt-Westend,
Bockenheimer Landstraße
Abisag Tüllmann, HMF Ph11406

ON THE EXHIBITIONS ARCHITECTURE— The Plasterboard One-Man Panel

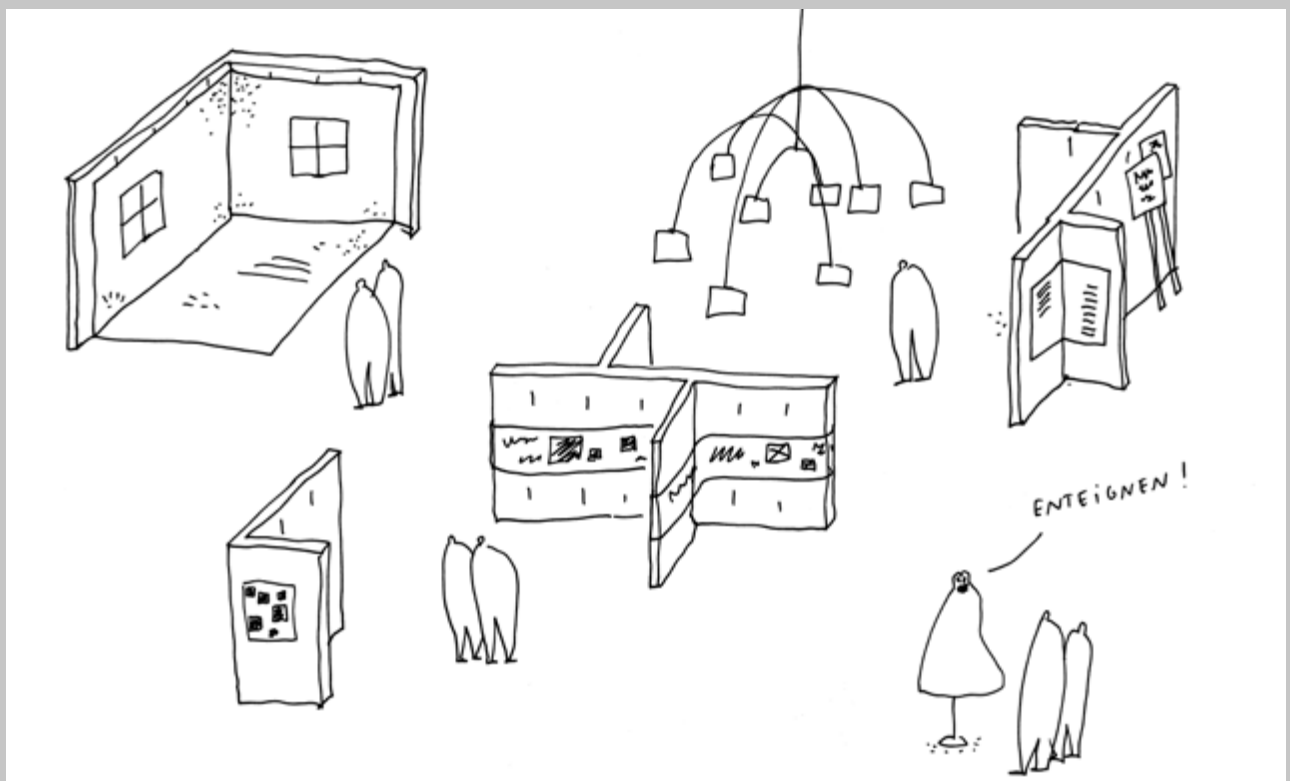
Thomas Rustemeyer

The basic conflict that defines the housing question lies in its competing dimensions. Housing is, first and foremost, a human right: everyone inevitably needs a place to live. On the other hand, housing is also a commodity that generates profits; rents therefore tend to follow the logic of the market. This dichotomy highlights the conflict between the demand for human rights versus profit desires and capital interests.

As the exhibition illustrates, conflicts can escalate over the issue of renovation: Tenants want to live in an affordable apartment that is in good and comfortable condition. On the other hand, many tenants fear that they will no longer be able to afford the rent after the refurbishment. Landlords are allowed to pass on modernization costs to tenants and so increase their revenue. Noisy and dusty construction sites along with the associated uncertainties are an additional burden.

This conflict is the basis for the exhibition's spatial design, which addresses housing issues in an abstract way: plasterboard structures divide the museum space into room-like areas on the scale of an ordinary apartment. The surfaces of the spatial structures are raw and remain in an un-plastered, unfinished state. The contributions of the CityLab participants are presented

in the divided rooms of the space. The “plasterboard one-man panel” used to construct the spatial structure—its size and weight allow for easy transport and assembly by just one person—is a standard product employed extensively in renovation projects. After the exhibition closes, the “one-man panels” will be dismantled and can be used for their original purpose: the renovation of residential buildings.



The Plasterboard one-man panel in the exhibition architecture,
Thomas Rustemeyer, 2025





RR- ASSE



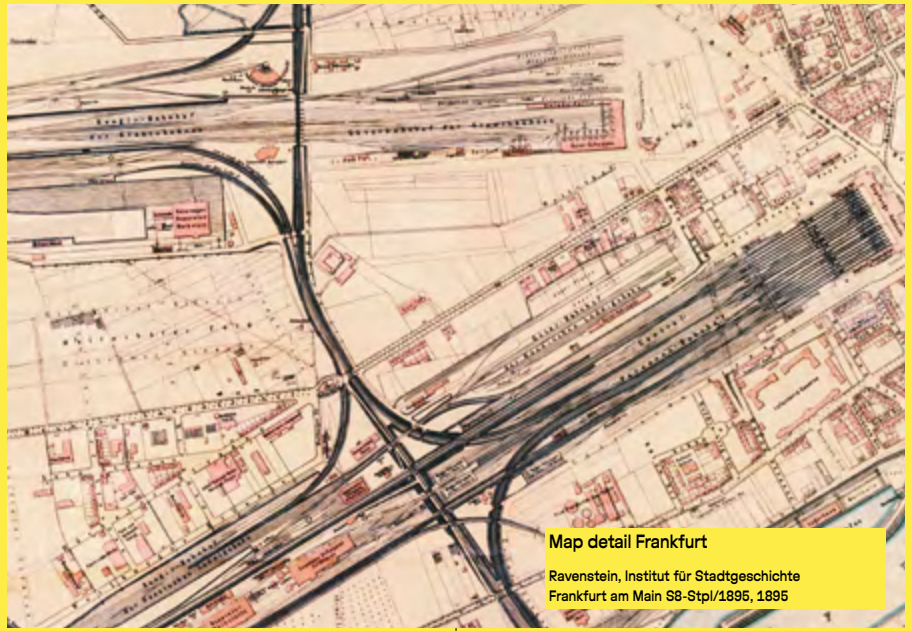






1880s

During the era of industrialization, many craftsmen and manufacturing companies settled in west Frankfurt beyond the freight yard. These included the Royal Prussian central garages for rail freight wagons, known as the *Bahn-Ausbesserungswerk* (rail repair workshop) in today's Gallus neighborhood.



Map detail Frankfurt

Ravenstein, Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main SB-Stpl/1895, 1895

1890s

Non-profit foundations and municipal housing enterprises were constructing workers' housing for the large number of workers near local businesses at that time. One example is the Knorrstraße, then named Sossenheimer Straße, constructed by the Deutsche Reichsbahn. The so-called railway workers' flats were managed by the *Eisenbahner-Wohnungsbaugesellschaft* (railway workers' housing association) as public property and managed on a non-profit basis. This process guaranteed affordable rents. The Gallus district grew quickly and developed into a working-class neighborhood.

Leasehold housing block Gallus

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main S7A 1998/12.255, 1901



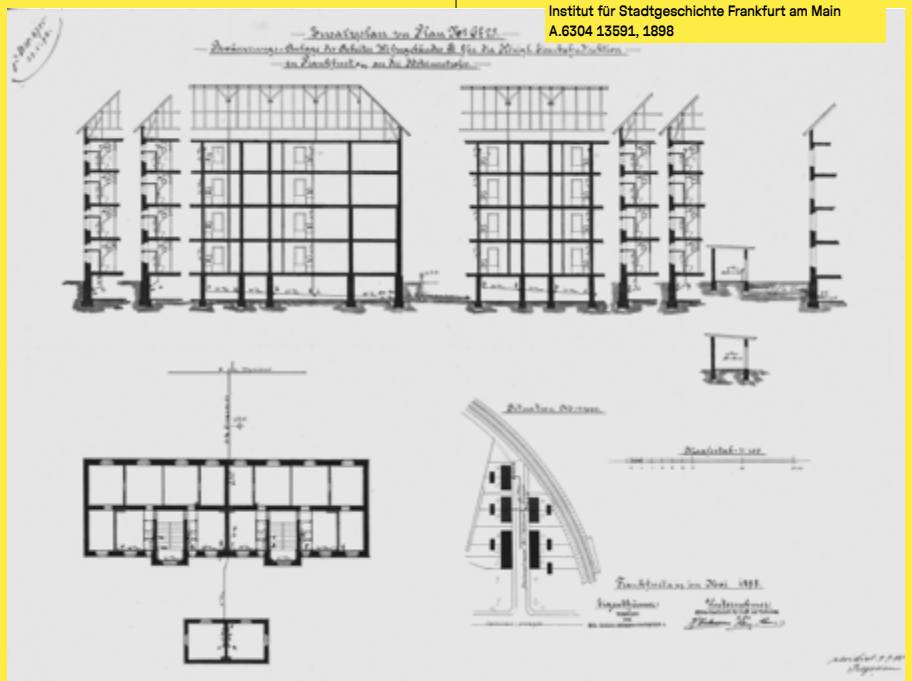
Irrigation design for planned workers' housing

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main A.6304 13591, 1898



Rail repair workshop with gatehouse

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main S7A 1998/12.567, 1940





Hellerhof housing development in foreground and railway workers' block center right

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main
S7A 1998/12.212, 1928

1950s

During the Second World War bombs were dropped particularly onto the Gallus neighborhood because companies producing war material were based there. The houses in the Knorrstrasse were likely also destroyed, as the current complex with 110 apartments was erected around 10 years after the end of war. The housing estate remained in possession of the non-profit *Bundesbahn* housing association.

Knorrstraße, 1950s

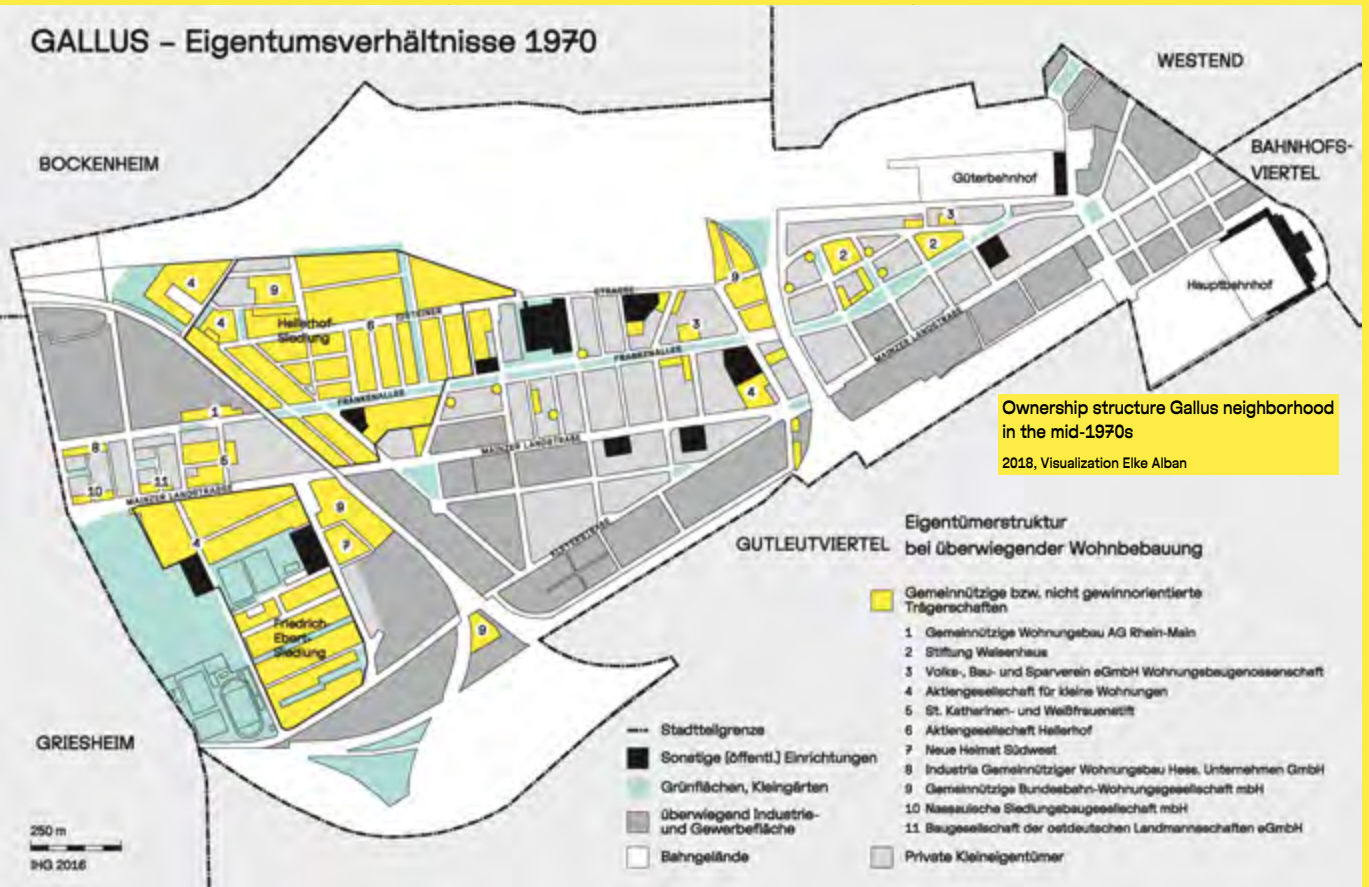
C. Knopp, Sammlung Geschichtswerkstatt Gallus



Destroyed Hellerhof housing

1945, HMF Ph11425

GALLUS - Eigentumsverhältnisse 1970



Ownership structure Gallus neighborhood in the mid-1970s
2018, Visualization Elke Alban

1970s

The freight terminal and the resident companies shaped life in the Gallus neighborhood a long time. However, in the 1970s many factories were closed and demolished, including the *Bahn-Ausbesserungswerk* in 1989. Unemployment rose, at the same time, migrant workers moved into the still affordable apartments. Knorrstraße remained a non-profit housing estate for railway workers. The neighborhood's reputation deteriorated, due also to classist and racist stereotypes.



Residential block in Hufnagelstraße
Heiner Wessel, 1980, HMF Ph1.6849



Turkish grocery store
Heiner Wessel, 1980, HMF Ph1.6838

1990s

The abolition of the *Wohnungsgemeinnützigkeitsgesetz* (non-profit housing law) meant that almost 60% of the apartments in the Gallus neighborhood were no longer bound by principles of a non-profit status, which also included low-cost rents. These gradually rose to market level and many apartments were privatized. At the same time, the neighborhood became more attractive due to its now central location.



Rail workers union (GDED) protest against sale of workers' housing
1999, EVG-Archiv

Auf dem außerordentlichen Gewerkschaftstag forderten die Delegierten die SPD auf, ihr Wahlversprechen einzuhalten und sich gegen den Verkauf der Eisenbahnerwohnungen zu entscheiden.

Railroad settlements in Germany

Printed matter 19/7615, 2019, Deutscher Bundestag

Deutscher Bundestag

19. Wahlperiode

Drucksache 19/7615

11.02.2019

Antwort

der Bundesregierung

auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Caren Lay, Pascal Meiser, Dr. Gesine Löttsch, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE.
– Drucksache 19/7262 –

Eisenbahnersiedlungen in Deutschland

Vorbemerkung der Fragesteller

Bereits kurz nach Gründung des Deutschen Reiches und bis in die 1930er Jahre hinein baute die Deutsche Reichsbahn sogenannte Eisenbahnersiedlungen (in Händen von Eisenbahn-Wohnungsgenossenschaften und Eisenbahn-Wohnungsgesellschaften, EWG) zur besseren Versorgung der Eisenbahnerfamilien mit günstigem und arbeitsplatznahe Wohnraum. Diese Eisenbahnersiedlungen gibt es bundesweit. Mit der Bahnreform im Jahr 1994 sind sie in das Bundes-eisenbahnvermögen (BEV) übergegangen. Gemäß der politischen Vorgabe wurden die Immobilien an Investorinnen und Investoren verkauft. Ein Großteil befindet sich heute im Eigentum der Vonovia SE (früher Deutsche Annington; DER TAGESPIEGEL, „Bundes-eisenbahnvermögen: 114 000 Wohnungen verkauft“, 15. Dezember 2000) oder der Deutsche Wohnen SE. In einigen Fällen soll das BEV noch kleinere Anteile an privatisierten EWG besitzen (vgl. Antwort auf die Schriftliche Frage der Abgeordneten Franziska Brychcy und Katalin Gennburg im Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, Drucksache 18/15079).

Aus Berlin-Lankwitz ist der Fraktion DIE LINKE, im Deutschen Bundestag bekannt, dass die Deutsche Wohnen nunmehr in einer Eisenbahnersiedlung, in der sich 360 Wohneinheiten befinden, mit der Modernisierung der Wohnungen begonnen hat, die zu einer Mieterhöhung in erheblichem Umfang führen wird. Betroffen sind u. a. viele ältere und hochbetagte Menschen, die bereits lange oder gar in zweiter Generation in den Häusern leben. Einige sind bereits ausgezogen, weil sie sich die Mieten nicht mehr leisten können. Es ist fraglich, ob die Modernisierungsmaßnahmen in diesem Umfang notwendig sind. Einige Maßnahmen, die vermeintlich der energetischen Sanierung dienen sollen, werden von Fachleuten in ihrer Wirkung angezweifelt. Andere wiederum verschlechtern die Wohnsituation, wenn die Mieterinnen und Mieter beispielsweise durch den Einbau einer Badewanne das Badezimmerfenster kaum mehr erreichen können. Der Protest der Mieterinnen und Mieter, die sich zusammengeschlossen haben, hatte bisher keinen spürbaren Erfolg. Ihnen bleibt allenfalls der zivilrechtliche Weg.

Die Antwort wurde namens der Bundesregierung mit Schreiben des Bundesministeriums für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur vom 7. Februar 2019 übermittelt.

Die Drucksache enthält zusätzlich – in kleinerer Schrifttype – den Fragetext.

Social Democratic Party (SPD) poster at Idsteiner Straße

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main
S7UI 17.0001, 1990, Renate Ullrich



With the privatization of the German federal railroad *Bundesbahn*, railway workers' housing was transferred to the *Bundes-eisenbahnvermögen* (federal railway authority). The government decided to sell *Bundesbahn* buildings and railway workers' flats to private investors.

Railroad workers tried to defend themselves against the housing privatization with union protests. The protests failed and a large proportion of the apartment units were sold to Deutsche Annington, which later changed its name to Vonovia and became a public traded company on the stock exchange.

2000s

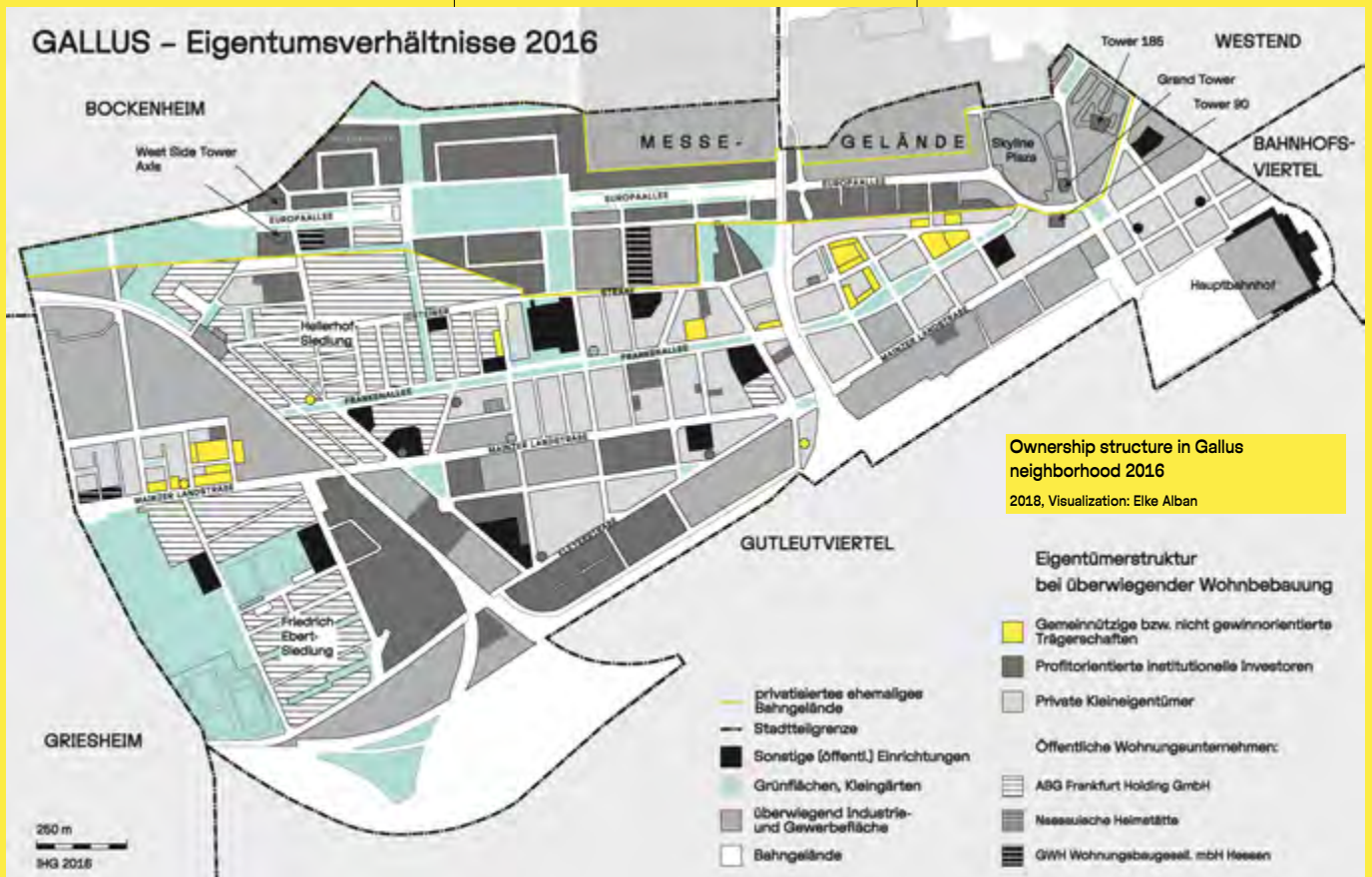
Apartments in the Gallus neighborhood previously managed on a non-profit basis were gradually transferred to profit-oriented investors, also the Knorrstraße into the ownership of Deutsche Annington. This led to an upgrading of housing stock in most cases, accompanied by rising rent levels. New, high-priced constructions in the nearby Europaviertel added to the pressure: Rents rose even more and low-income residents were forced out.



Construction site Europagarten with view of skyline, series Abrisss Frankfurt
Meike Fischer, 2014, HMF Ph25993

2010s

Plans to modernize existing buildings and redensify urban development in the Knorrstrasse were announced. Vonovia introduced a € 13 million investment plan to upgrade housing, add to existing structures, and construct four new buildings. This was intended to close the "aesthetic gap to the Europaviertel". The allocation of all modernization costs, such as construction of elevators and balconies, would lead to a sharp increase in monthly housing rates for residents.



Presseinformation

Vonovia investiert 13,4 Mio € in Knorr-Quartier in Frankfurt am Main

- 110 Wohnungen sind in die Quartiersentwicklung eingebunden
- Neubau von 40 Wohnungen
- Umfassendes Entwicklungskonzept für die Knorrstraße

Frankfurt, 03.03.2017 – Vonovia plant eine umfassende Quartiersentwicklung in der Knorrstraße im zentralen Frankfurter Gallusviertel. Der Bestand von 110 Wohnungen aus den Baujahren 1956 und 1957 soll aufgewertet werden. Darüber hinaus werden acht Wohnungen auf die bestehenden Immobilien gesetzt. Drei Gebäude mit 32 Wohneinheiten werden zudem komplett neu entstehen.

So erhöht sich der Bestand um insgesamt 40 Wohnungen mit insgesamt fast 3.200 m² Wohnfläche in zentraler Lage. Bei den Maßnahmen im Bestand handelt es sich nicht um Luxussanierungen. Klares Ziel ist ein lebenswertes Quartier für die Mieter – und das zu marktüblichen Mieten und in guter Lage in der Frankfurter Innenstadt. Dafür werden zusätzlich Maßnahmen zur Aufwertung des Quartiers umgesetzt.

„Wir entwickeln hierbei nicht nur unseren Wohnungsbestand, sondern auch die Infrastruktur. Dabei saniert Vonovia die Straßendecke, das Kanalsystem und verlegt eine neue Stromtrasse für das Quartier“, sagt Regionalgeschäftsführer Mario Stamerra. Im Quartier werden außerdem 52 Autostellplätze geschaffen.

Die aufgestockten Wohnungen sind mit Kaminen und teilweise Dachterrassen für die Neumieter ausgestattet. Mit den neuen architektonischen Akzenten möchte Vonovia die ästhetische Lücke zum Europaviertel schließen. An den Immobilienbeständen

Seite 2 / 4

werden Fassadenarbeiten und Sanierungen, beispielsweise der Treppenhäuser und der Hauseingänge, durchgeführt. Der Anbau von Balkonen und Aufzügen in einigen Objekten gehört ebenfalls zur Modernisierung.

Mit den knapp 13,4 Millionen Euro Projektkosten bekennt sich Vonovia deutlich zum Standort. Die langfristige Bewirtschaftung der Bestände steht im Fokus. „Vonovia wird die Knorrstraße nachhaltig weiter entwickeln. Frankfurt ist für uns ein wichtiger Standort, an dem wir auch weiterhin investieren werden“, sagt Mario Stamerra.

Vonovia möchte seinen Mietern auch außerhalb der Wohnung ein lebenswertes Quartier bieten. Daher werden nach Abschluss der Immobilienentwicklung die Grünflächen aufgewertet. „Das Knorr-Quartier wird ein Vorzeigeprojekt innovativer Wohnraumnutzung werden. Wenn die Arbeiten abgeschlossen sind, wird es ein attraktives Quartier für Bestandsmieter sowie Neukunden sein.“

Start der Tiefbauarbeiten ist Anfang März. Nach acht Wochen sollen diese abgeschlossen sein, denn danach beginnen die Arbeiten an den Immobilien. Projektabschluss ist voraussichtlich im zweiten Quartal 2018. Die Mieter wurden im Rahmen von Gesprächsterminen bereits persönlich informiert.

Bildvorschau:



BÜ: Noch ein Modell: Die Quartiersentwicklung in der Knorrstraße

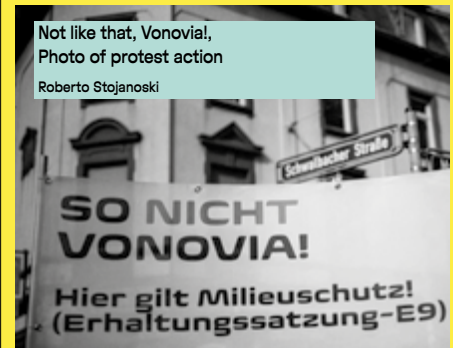


Refurbishment Knorrstraße
Roberto Stojanoski

Residents of the Knorrstraße refused to simply accept construction plans and rent increases without having a say. But neither a joint public meeting with the local advisory council, the city and Vonovia, nor legal action against the planned elevators were successful. The city approved the modernization plans despite milieu protection. Residents were however able to achieve rent reductions for the time during renovations.



Refurbishment Knorrstraße
Roberto Stojanoski



Not like that, Vonovia,
Photo of protest action
Roberto Stojanoski

2020s

Public pressure led the city to admit mistakes in complying with milieu protection, approval of elevators and lack of tenant consultation. The residents of Knorrstraße also protested against the loss of green space by creating their own playground. They received support from urban policy initiatives such as *Eine Stadt für Alle! Frankfurt* (city for all) and *Solidarisches Gallus* (Gallus solidarity).

Following the completion of modernization in the Knorrstraße, basic rents for existing apartments rose by an average of € 3,50 per square meter compared to 2018/19. The housing development was expanded by 40 apartments to 150 residential units through urban redensification and adding floors to existing structures. During the construction phase from 2015 to 2023 404 people* moved out of Knorrstraße.

* corrected retroactively



Protest event in the Knorrstraße with "Solidarisches Gallus"

Roberto Stojanoski

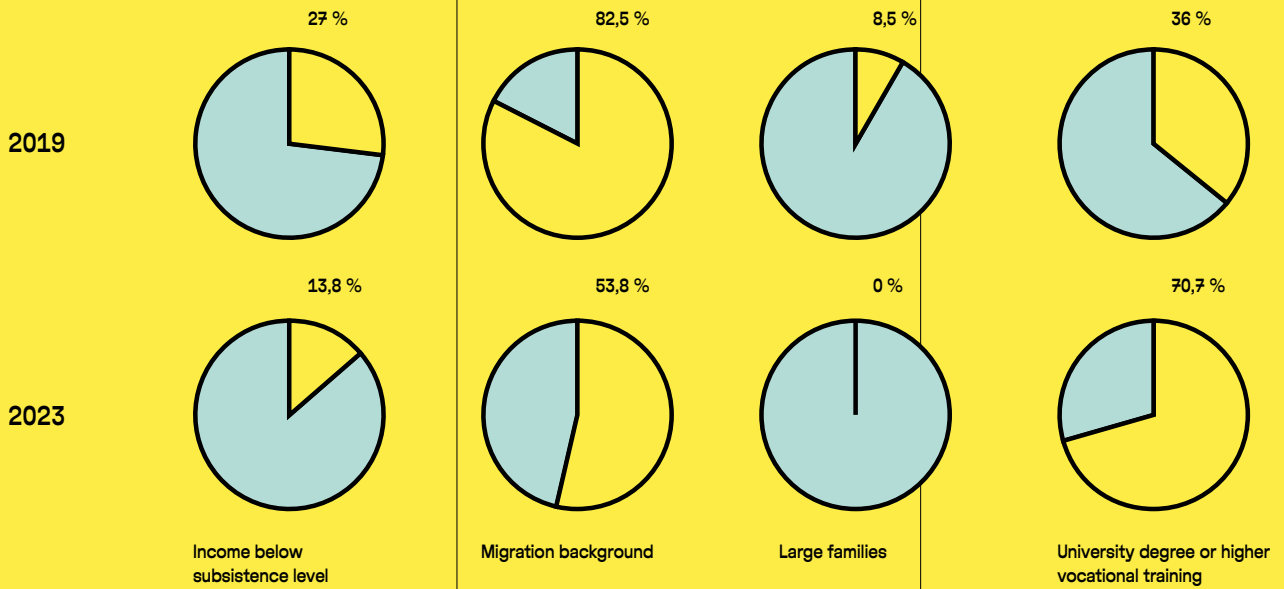


Knorrstraße in Gallus neighborhood

Jens Gerber, 2024, HMF

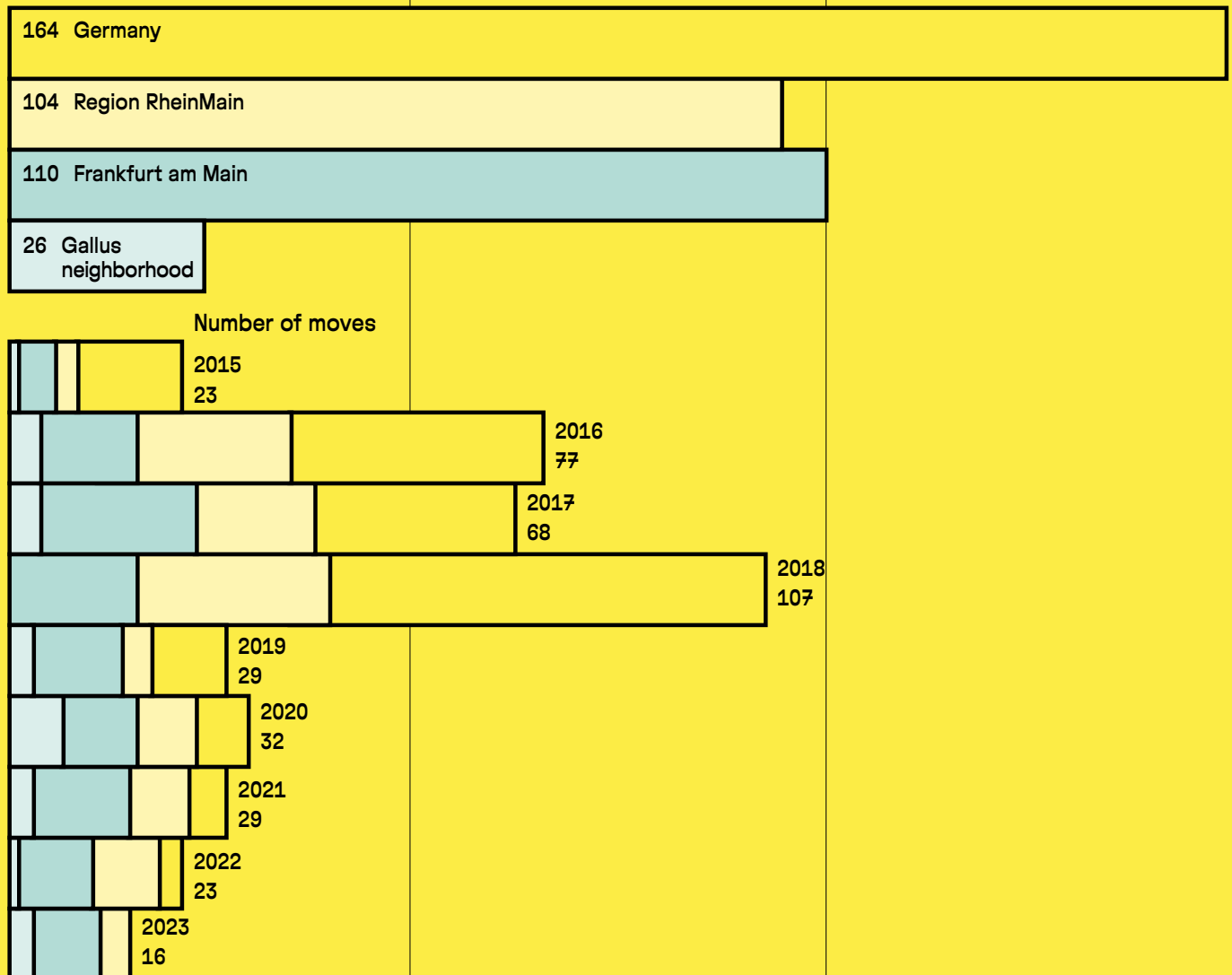
Change in the social structure in Knorrstraße between 2019 and 2023

2023, Goethe University Frankfurt, Institute for human geography



Destinations of people moving from Knorrstraße between 2015 and Juli 2023

2024, Institute for human geography





Roberto Stojanoski

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG—SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF GENTRIFICATION

This CityLab contribution celebrates the triumph of collective resistance by a tenant community faced with the threat of displacement by its landlord Vonovia. The solidarity of residents formed a strong community bond and with collective strategies, campaigns and neighborhood gatherings increased pressure on Vonovia. The point of this contribution is not to simply revel past achievements, but to call for continued solidarity and action today. Community action is possible even in difficult times and can lead to lasting success.

Despite difficult circumstances, the resident community in the Knorrstraße maintained their creativity. The bulletin board displays how humorous and effective forms of public protest helped win battles against the landlord.

In the film I depict how absurd some of the refurbishment measures were.

What we achieved through our protest:

- A 15–25 % rent reduction during the renovation period for all who joined the fight
- B Permanent rent reduction for existing contracts due to the loss of attics
- C Creation of a larger playground, which is now a central meeting point for children and families
- D Implementation of necessary repairs that had previously been ignored





Bernhard Schombera RAILROAD WORKER IN THE PAST

Germany's federal railway, the Bundesbahn, constructed social housing for its employees in the 1960s. As a railroad worker in 1995, my family and I were allocated one of these apartments for rent in the Idsteiner Straße.

When the federal government decided to sell rail workers' apartments nationwide it sparked fierce protests—despite this, the Bundesbahn proceeded with the sale of units. During negotiations the trade union, among others, succeeded in ensuring that tenants were granted a lifelong right of residence or a preferential right to buy.

Most of the railroad workers' units were sold to the real estate firm Deutsche Annington, now stock-listed company Vonovia. Two-thirds of the Idsteiner Straße tenants at the time decided to buy their apartments, using their

right to buy they had fought for. All others had to contend later with exploding rents under their Vonovia lease. Many were forced to move out.

We as a family had immediately decided at the time to accept the favorable purchase offer. As owners we then organized our own property management with our own janitor. This housing model has worked well for us so far. We view it as a good example of community-oriented and self-determined living in our city of Frankfurt.



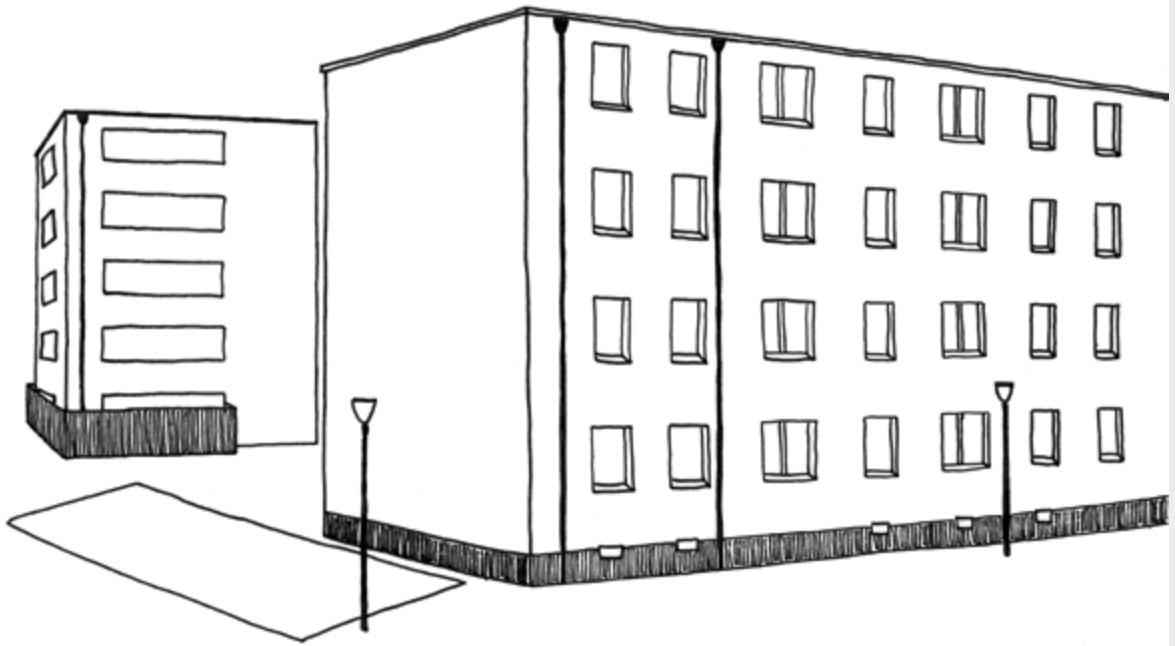
A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING— THE SPECTRE OF EXPROPRIATION

At the annual stockholders meeting of Deutsche Wohnen real estate corporation in June 2019, nine Frankfurt activists dressed as ghosts held up signs reading “Expropriate”. This drew attention to the nationwide campaign “*Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen!*”.

The protest action, along with a press conference held before the annual meeting at Kap Europa Congress Center in Frankfurt’s Gallus district, raised the prospect of expropriating and socializing the real estate group as a way to guarantee tenants’ long-term housing security. It proposed that housing could be democratically organized and controlled in the form of a public law institution. However, expropriation of large housing groups cannot be implemented at the municipal level and requires state or federal legislation.

The activists saw themselves here in solidarity with the Berlin initiative “*Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen!*”, and all others fighting against staggering rents and tenant displacement throughout Germany. They also sought to draw attention to inadequate maintenance, excessive utility bills, ruthless densification, anti-social modernization measures and maximum rent increases by large housing associations such as Deutsche Wohnen and Vonovia.

The nine ghosts were restaged for this exhibition.



EXPROPRIATE VONOVIA—AND THEN?

Practices of profit-oriented housing associations throughout Germany are causing rents to rise steadily. One way to counter this development is to socialize housing in accordance with Article 15 of the *German Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), which would then become public property. Activists from “*Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen!*” (Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen and Co.!) drew attention to this possibility in a nationwide campaign that received support from a million citizens.

Let’s imagine how a possible socialization could play out: The private housing association Vonovia, owner of the Knorrstraße housing estate in the Gallus district, is expropriated by the state of Hesse and hands over the buildings to the local municipal government. The city of Frankfurt

is next faced with the question of what to do with the residential buildings and involves tenants in this decision.






CARL-WEINB-

ESTATE

ESTATE



VON - ERG











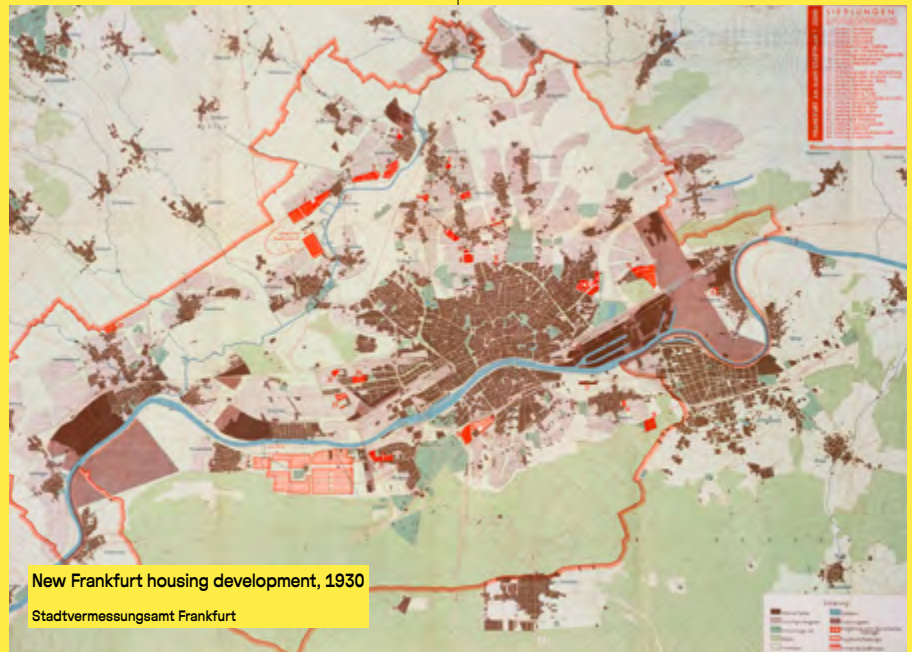




The Hundswiese was also used as a meeting point for civil protest
 Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7Z 1910-2, photographer: unknown

1920s

Frankfurt's Lord Mayor Ludwig Landmann appointed Ernst May in 1925 as city councilor for construction to counter the housing shortage, as well as secure local industry and urban economic growth. In collaboration with a diverse team of architects and planners, around 15,000 apartments were built within five years. The units were spread across 24 housing developments, including Miquelstrasse (now Carl-von-Weinberg Estate), and several groups of residential buildings. The projects were often realized on previously undeveloped plots of land known as greenfield sites. The success of the New Frankfurt urban development program was based on a clear political commitment to modern city planning and a focus on the common good. Contrary to the political objective, however, rent levels in the newly built apartments were not generally affordable for lower income groups.



New Frankfurt housing development, 1930
 Stadtvermessungsamt Frankfurt



View from Hundswiese (dog's meadow) toward the Taunus mountains
 Carl Abt., 1901, HMF C18787

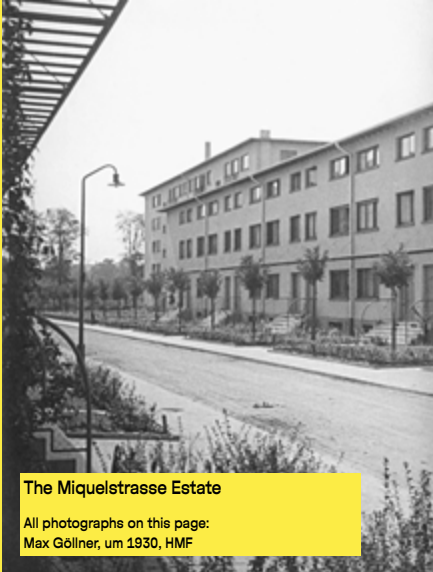


Recreational activities on Hundswiese
 Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7VÖ Nr. 1562, 1928, Gottfried Vömel

“Create homes for us that are healthy and comfortable, even if they are small and above all provide them at affordable rents.”

Ernst May, 1930

The New Frankfurt housing developments were based on three basic principles of modern urban planning: Light, air and sun. Everyone was to have a well-lit and ventilated apartment unit, access to open spaces and public transport connections. In contrast to the architectural splendor of the German Imperial era, these new houses were plain and simple in design. The standardized apartments were mostly designed for the so-called "normal family", with three children.

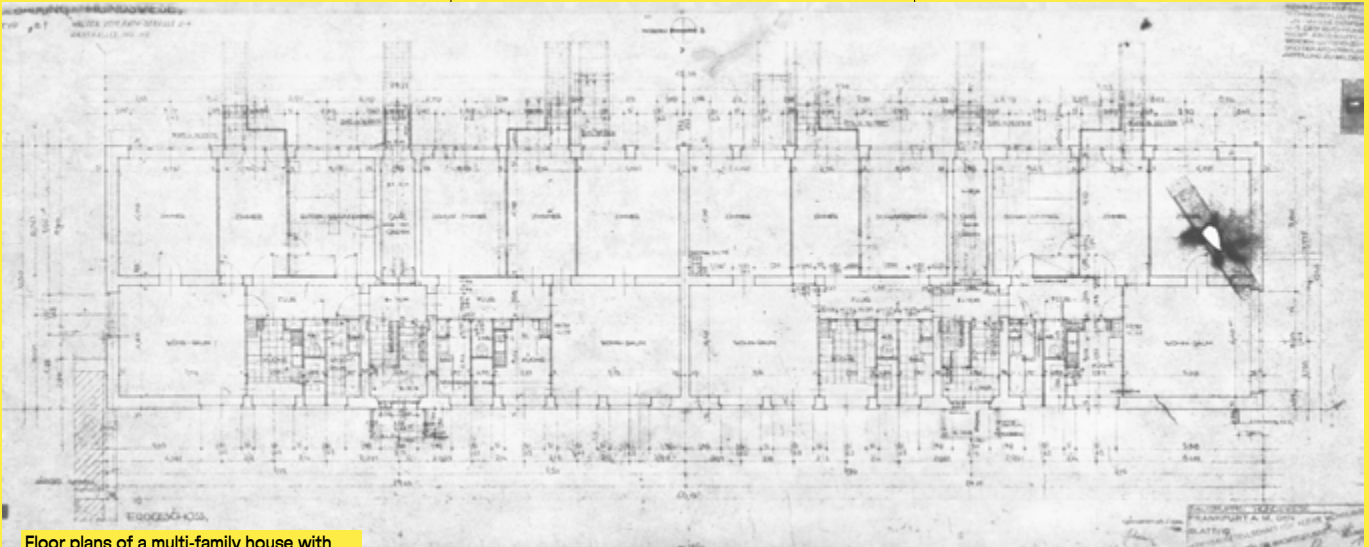


The Miquelstrasse Estate

All photographs on this page:
Max Göllner, um 1930, HMF



The original development plans, including around 1,200 apartments, a retirement home, a home economics and trade school could not be realized due to the Great Depression of 1929. The first 197 apartments between Eschersheimer Landstraße and Hansaallee were built by the municipal construction firm *Frankfurter Aktienbaugesellschaft für kleine Wohnungen*.



Floor plans of a multi-family house with four-room apartments

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main,
S8-DA Nr. 450, 1930, Aktienbaugesellschaft
für kleine Wohnungen



Aerial photo of Poelzig Building, Miquelstrasse Estate visible in background

Fritz Brzoska, 1951, HMF Ph00570



The housing estate was intended for higher-paid administrative employees of the chemical company *I.G. Farben*. Its newly built headquarters, located in the Poelzig Building, was in the immediate vicinity of the residential estate.

1930s

All municipal activities surrounding New Frankfurt came to an end with the transfer of power to the National Socialists in 1933. The Miquelstrasse Estate was extended from Hansaallee to Freseniusstraße by the firm *Ludwigshafen Wohnungsbaugesellschaft*, a non-profit subsidiary of the *I.G. Farben* group for factory housing.



STATISTISCHES VERZEICHNIS		Eigenschaften der Wohnbauten		Anzahl der Wohnungen		Anzahl der Einwohner	
Wohngebiet	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten	Wohnbauten
Miquelstrasse	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Poelzig Building	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Miquelstrasse Estate

Das Neue Frankfurt. Internationale Monatszeitschrift für die Probleme kultureller Neugestaltung. 4. Jahrgang, 1930



Building damage in Kallestraße, corner of Miquelallee

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7B Nr. 1998-5494_13, 1944, not ascertainable

1940s

I.G. Farben's corporate assets were confiscated after the Second World War by the occupying powers, due to its significant participation and profits connected to Nazi crimes and the Holocaust. This included the company's housing stock with the Miquelstrasse Estate, which had suffered only minor structural damage during the war. The housing complex was declared a restricted area. It was used to house members of the Women's Army Corps. The *I.G. Farben* Building remained European U.S. head-quarters until the mid-1990s.



Decorative plate commemorating end of war, with Poelzig Building, formerly *I.G. Farben* headquarters, 1945

HMF X.2011.182_001

1950s

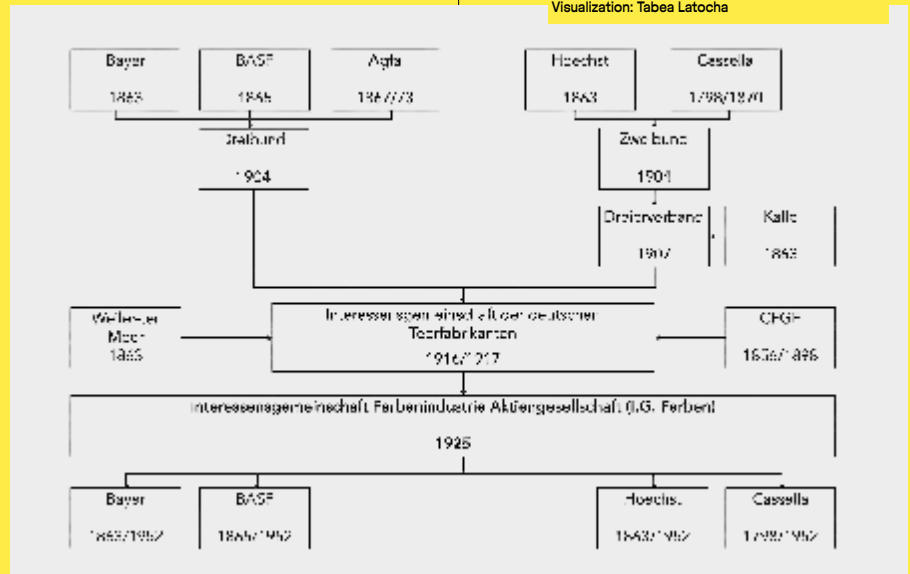
After being returned by the Allies, the western part of the housing estate became property of *Hoechst AG*, one of the four successor companies to *I.G. Farben*. The development was renamed after the Jewish patron and head of the Cassella-Werke group, Carl von Weinberg.

The apartment units were initially only rented to senior employees of *Hoechst AG*. They were very popular due to their central location and high standard of furnishings. Applicants were required to provide proof of their performance within the company. Allocation was also based on family circumstances and urgency: Married couples with children were given preference. Toward its goal of becoming a global market player, *Hoechst AG* pursued a comprehensive internal personnel and social policy, particularly in housing construction.

“Housing construction is one of the major focal points of our corporate social policy. [...] Hoechst has always endeavored to build humane housing. [...]”

Erhard Bouillon, 1974. Member of the Executive Board and Head of Human Resources and Social Affairs of *Farbwerke Hoechst*

Visualization: Tabea Latocha



INDUSTRIAL PARK HÖCHST—Insights into the history of Höchst as an industrial site and development of the Industrial Park Höchst, 2014

ABSCHIED VON HOECHST

Mit der Wende und dem Mauerfall 1989, der Wiedervereinigung 1990 und dem Zusammenbruch der UdSSR 1991 endete der lange Kalte Krieg der Nachkriegszeit. Der Freude über die Wiedervereinigung folgte wieder eine Krise, mit hoher Arbeitslosigkeit und dem anstrengenden Aufbau Ost. Die Unternehmen versuchten, dieser Krise mit einer anderen, globalisierten Ausrichtung ihrer Geschäftsmodelle zu begegnen. So fusionierten zahlreiche Pharmahersteller in Europa und Amerika Mitte der 1990er Jahre zu bisher ungeahnt großen Unternehmen.



Jürgen Dornmann wurde 1994 neuer Vorstandsvorsitzender.

Aufbruch 94

1994 wurde Jürgen Dornmann Vorstandsvorsitzender. Mit seiner „Aufbruch 94“ getauften Strategie begann der Umbau der Hoechst AG. Hoechst konzentrierte sich weltweit auf Pharma, Landwirtschaft und Chemie. Hoechst stieg aus Geschäftsfeldern aus, in denen das Unternehmen nicht weltweit führend war. Das Geschäft mit Textilfarbstoffen, das ursprüngliche Kerngeschäft der Farbwerke, der Keimzelle des Weltkonzerns Hoechst, wurde 1995 von Hoechst in das mit Bayer neu gegründete Gemeinschaftsunternehmen DyStar eingebracht. 1995 kaufte Hoechst das amerikanische Pharmaunternehmen Marion Merrell Dow und verwandelte sich von einem zentralisierten Konzern in eine Strategische Management-Holding. Als sichtbares Zeichen für den Bruch mit der Vergangenheit ersetzte Hoechst sein Logo mit „Turm und Brücke“ durch ein monochromes Quadrat. Und Dornmann zog aus dem historischen Vorstandgebäude in das Gebäude

F 821 auf der südlichen Mainseite.

Von Hoechst zu Aventis

Das Pharmageschäft wurde im neuen Unternehmen „Hoechst Marion Roussel“ zusammengefasst. Das Geschäft mit Spezialchemikalien wurde 1997 an das schweizerische Unternehmen Clariant verkauft. 1998 brachte Hoechst das verbliebene Chemiegeschäft in der Celanese AG in einem sogenannten „Spin-off“ an die Börse. 1999 fusionierte die Hoechst AG, die größtenteils nur noch aus dem Pharmabereich „Hoechst Marion Roussel“ und der Landwirtschaftstochter „Hoechst Schering AgrEvo“ bestand, mit dem französischen Unternehmen Rhône-Poulenc zu Aventis. Das neue Unternehmen wurde kurzzeitig zum am Umsatz gemessenen zweitgrößten Pharmaunternehmen der Welt, doch in der Branche lagen Großfusionen weiterhin im Trend. Die Leitung der Pharmasparte von Aventis wurde in Frankfurt angesiedelt, die der Landwirtschaftsparte im französischen Lyon. Die Firmenzentrale zog nach Stralburg. Damit gab es Hoechst nicht mehr. Das sogenannte „Life Sciences“-Konzept hatte sich für Aventis schnell überlebt: 2001 verkaufte das Unternehmen die Agrochemie-Sparte „Crop Science“ an Bayer. Aventis selbst wurde 2004 von dem französischen Pharmaunternehmen Sanofi-Synthelabo übernommen.



1990s

Under the slogan “Hoechst—New Beginning 1994”, the corporation was transformed into a management holding company. This led to considerable protests among the workforce against cost savings measures, mass lay-offs and the planned listing of the company on the stock exchange. The principles of non-profit housing management were transformed into for-profit housing management.

A refurbishment of the entire estate, planned while still under the management of *Hoechst AG*, was halted by the subsequent sale of apartments. One resident reported that units in only two streets were renovated.

Hoechst AG sold its residential portfolio of over 9,000 apartment units to *Deutsche Wohnen*, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank. This also included the units in the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate. *Hoechst AG* waived social protection clauses in the sale, allowing the new owner *Deutsche Wohnen* to drastically increase rents, who also no longer invested sufficiently in the maintenance of the buildings.

The tenants’ association *Hoechster Wohnen e.V.* was founded by residents to defend themselves against the sale and impending rent increases. Tenants of the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate were also among them.

2000s

Despite rising rents, the estate has gradually falling into disrepair. Failing heating systems, damp walls and mold are affecting living conditions. The vacancy rate in the community was also increasing.



Frankfurt: Ärger über Leerstand von Wohnungen im Westend

05.10.2021, 08:57 Uhr
Von: Christoph Manus



Die Deutsche Wohnen lässt in der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung an der Miquelallee in Frankfurt rund 60 Wohnungen leer stehen. © ROLF OESER

In der Frankfurter Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung stehen 60 Wohnungen leer. Die Deutsche Wohnen begründet das mit Sanierungen und einer geplanten Nachverdichtung.

Frankfurt - Obwohl Wohnraum in Frankfurt sehr knapp ist, lässt die Deutsche Wohnen in der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung in Nähe der Goethe-Uni weiterhin in großem Umfang Wohnungen leer stehen. Wie das Unternehmen auf Anfrage der Frankfurter Rundschau mitteilt, sind inzwischen rund 60 der etwa 400 Wohnungen in der Siedlung ungenutzt. In der Nachbarschaft stößt das auf Unverständnis und Unmut. Zumal der Leerstand in der 30er-Jahre-Siedlung in den vergangenen Jahren sogar weiter gewachsen ist.

Mitte 2017 hatte die Deutsche Wohnen auf Anfrage berichtet, dass rund 20 Wohnungen in der Siedlung leer stünden. Im März 2018 war von mehr als 30 Wohnungen die Rede. Ende 2018 hieß es dann, man habe von Plänen zur Nachverdichtung Abstand genommen und werde Wohnraum, der für eventuelle Neubauten freigehalten worden sei, wieder vermieten.



Eine Stadt für alle! Frankfurt

2020s

Residents and activists from the Frankfurt housing initiative *Eine Stadt für alle!* (city for all) organized themselves to discuss the problems in the community and make them public.



Eine Stadt für alle! Frankfurt

EINLADUNG ZUR MIETERVERSAMMLUNG

KIRACILAR TOPLANTISINA DAVET
ПРИГЛАШЕНИЕ НА СОБРАНИЕ АРЕНДАТОРОВ
ZAPROSZENIE NA SPOTKANIE LOKATORÓW
دعوة لاجتماع المستأجرين

Liebe Mieter:innen der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung,

habt auch ihr einen Brief von der „Deutsche Wohnen“ bekommen? Am **Mittwoch, dem 7. Dezember 2022 um 18:15 Uhr** treffen wir uns erneut für eine Mieter:innenversammlung. Es sind alle willkommen!

Wir wollen uns über die anstehende Modernisierung austauschen, über die nächsten Schritte nach unserem Offenen Brief an die „Deutsche Wohnen“ sprechen und gemeinsam den Fernsehbeitrag „2 Zimmer, Küche, Abzocke“ (mit einem Mieter aus der Siedlung) schauen!

Wer nicht zur Versammlung kommen kann, aber Post von der „Deutsche Wohnen“ erhalten hat, kann uns eine Nachricht schreiben:

✉ carl-von-weinberg-siedlung@riseup.net



Refurbishment in Carl-von-Weinberg Estate

Jens Gerber, 2024, HMF



The Deutsche Wohnen corporation, listed on the German stock exchange, has since been taken over by Europe's largest real estate provider Vonovia. It announced the energy-efficient modernization of 100 of the 400 units and continues to carry this out today.



Deutsche Wohnen Management GmbH
Möhlentorgasse 27a | 10117 Berlin



- per Boden -

Ihr Ansprechpartner
Kundenservice
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030 / 89798 - 1000
E-Mail
kfm-projektmanagement@deuwoa.com
Berlin, 25.11.2022

Geplante Modernisierungs- und Erhaltungsmaßnahmen – Allgemeine Informationen

Vertragsnummer:
Vertragsnummer:
Vertragsobjekt:



Sehr geehrter



hiermit möchten wir Sie über die bevorstehende Instandsetzung und Modernisierung des von Ihnen bewohnten Gebäudes und Ihrer Wohnung informieren. Ab März 2023 wird die Rhein-Main Wohnen GmbH umfangreiche Sanierungsmaßnahmen an Ihrer Wohnanlage durchführen.

Im Zuge dessen erfolgen u. a. die Modernisierung der Badezimmer, die Dämmung des Daches, die Dämmung der Außenwände, die Erneuerung der Fenster in den Wohnungen und Treppenhäusern sowie die Instandsetzung des Daches, des Treppenhauses und der Balkone.

Die Details der Maßnahmen und deren rechtliche Grundlagen werden in der beigefügten Ankündigung der Modernisierungs- und Erhaltungsmaßnahmen beschrieben.

Die Kosten für die Instandsetzungsarbeiten an Ihrer Wohnanlage werden vollständig durch die Rhein-Main Wohnen GmbH übernommen. Ausschließlich die Kosten der Maßnahmen, die die Wohnqualität nachhaltig erhöhen oder zu einer nachhaltigen Einsparung von Wasser und Endenergie in Ihre Wohnanlage und Wohnung führen, werden im Rahmen der gesetzlichen Vorschriften auf Ihre Miete umgelegt.

Current tenants and activists founded the *Mieterinitiative Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung*, a tenants' Initiative in April 2023.



Pressemitteilung

Vonovia modernisiert 105 Wohnungen in der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung

- **Rund 17 Millionen Euro Investitionssumme**
- **Senkung des CO₂-Fußabdrucks um etwa drei Viertel**
- **Profil des Quartiers wird erhalten und stärker herausgearbeitet**

Frankfurt, 27.01.2023 – Nachdem die Deutsche Wohnen im Dezember die Modernisierung der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung in Frankfurt angekündigt hat, gibt Vonovia nun den Startschuss für die Arbeiter. 105 Wohnungen sollen in der ersten Bauphase ab Ende Februar mit einem Aufwand von rund 17 Millionen Euro energetisch auf dem neuesten Stand gebracht werden. Dadurch soll deutlich Primär- und Endenergie eingespart und der CO₂-Fußabdruck um über 70% reduziert werden. Auch Instandhaltungsmaßnahmen sind geplant. Insgesamt hat das Quartier circa 400 Wohneinheiten, die Vonovia in den nächsten Jahren mit einem Aufwand von rund 70 Millionen modernisieren möchte, sollten sich Sanierungspläne, Baukosten und Zinskosten wieder entspannen.

Konkret plant Vonovia eine Dämmung der Dächer, Fassaden und Kellerdecken sowie einen Austausch der Fenster und Außenwände. Die Dachgeschosswohnungen erhalten größere Fenster für mehr Wohnqualität. Zudem erneuert das Wohnungsunternehmen die Dachabdichtung, renoviert die Treppenhäuser und setzt brandschutztechnische Maßnahmen um.

Im Innenraum können sich die Mieterinnen und Mieter über neue und größere Bäder freuen. Die Warmwasserversorgung soll in Zukunft nicht nur nachhaltiger, sondern auch deutlich sparsamer erfolgen.

Im Außenbereich möchte Vonovia den Charakter der 30er Jahre

Frust in der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung

WESTEND Deutsche Wohnen soll Pläne für die maroden und leerstehenden Bauten vorstellen / Mieterversammlung geplant

VON MATTHIAS BITTNER

Die Farbe an der Balkonbrüstung ist abgeblättert. Teils schlimmer verrostetes Eisen der Balkonkonstruktion durch. Der Rundgang durch die Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung entlang der Miquelallee gegenüber der Goethe-Uni ist kein schöner Anblick. Mieter:innen hatten Vertreter:innen des Ortsbezirkes 2 (Bockenheim, Westend, Kuhwald) eingeladen, um sich ein Bild zu machen - zuvor hatten sie ihrem Ärger in zwei Sitzungen des Stadtteilparlaments Luft gemacht. „Die lassen das absichtlich verfallen“, wirft Hans Laske der Deutsche Wohnen, der die Blocks gehören, vor.

Hans-Jürgen Hammelmann von der Linke-Fraktion im Ortsbezirk widerspricht nicht. Er glaubt, Mieter:innen mit Alverträgen und einer günstigen Miete sollen vergrault und zum Auszug bewegt werden, damit bei Neuvermietungen höhere Mieten zu erzielen sind. Er vermutet sogar, dass die in den 1930er Jahren erbauten Wohnblöcke abgerissen werden sollen. Mit der Neubausung ließe sich mehr Profit erwirtschaften.

Das aber ist Spekulation. Und das ist das Problem. Laut Laske karvierte wilde Gerüchte, was die Deutsche Wohnen mit den rund 400 Wohnungen plant. Von Renovierung und Aufstockung sei die Rede gewesen. Frage man nach, bekomme man keine Auskunft. Das sei unbefriedigend. Nicht nachvollziehbar sei, warum 80 Einheiten aktuell leerstünden.

Conny Petzold von „Eine Stadt für Alle!“ - eine politische Initiative, die sich des Themas Wohnen und all seiner Probleme annimmt - regt eine Mieterversammlung an. Mieter:innen, Politiker:innen sowie Vertreter:innen der Deutsche Wohnen sollten ins Gespräch kommen. Die Vorbereitungen laufen, bisher scheitert es an geeigneten Räumen. „Es müssten Räume in der Nähe sein, weil ältere Mieter nicht so mobil sind“, sagt Petzold.

Wer helfen kann, kann an abg.kampagne@riseup.net eine Mail schicken. Für Freitag, 24. Juni, lädt die Gruppe zum kritischen Stadtteilrundgang zum Thema „Leerstand stoppen! Deutsche Wohnen, Vonovia und Co enteignen!“ ein. Treffpunkt ist um



Kein schöner Anblick: Bröckelnde Fassaden in der Carl-von-Weinberg-Siedlung.

THAMBRUNN



Mieter:innen und Ortsbeirat beim Rundgang an der Miquelallee.

14.30 Uhr an der Ecke Miquelallee/Hansaallee. Jessica Götz hält Petzolds Vorschlag für eine gute Idee, um die jeweiligen Positionen auszutauschen. Ihr Vater Radkoff, der auch in der Siedlung wohnt, stimmt zu. Faken kämen hoffentlich auf den Tisch. Und man könne für sich anschließend eine Entscheidung fällen, ob man weiter in der Siedlung wohnen bleiben möchte oder sich anders orientiere.

Unabhängig von der Idee von „Eine Stadt für Alle!“ plant auch die Deutsche Wohnen eine Mieterversammlung. Das erklärt Gunnar Goldmann von der Unternehmenskommunikation auf Anfrage. Ein Termin steht noch nicht fest. Die Firmenvertreter:innen erwartet so Einiges. Denn die Mieter:innen der Weinberg-Siedlung sind frustriert von der „Hinhaltetaktik“. Robert Schieweck nervt der administrative

Aufwand. „Es wird nur auf Zwang und Drohung mit dem Anwalt reagiert oder wenn man einen Teil der Miete einbehält“, sagt er. Andere berichten, dass immer im Oktober angemahnt werden müsse, die Heizung anzustellen. Die funktioniere dann oft nicht, weil Ersatzteile fehlten. Dächer und Fassaden seien marode, Schimmel in den Wänden die Konsequenz. Zuletzt tat sich laut Laske aber etwas. Acht Wohnungen werden renoviert. „Ich halte das aber für Augenwischerei“, sagt er.

Laut Goldmann stehen aktuell 38 Wohnungen plus die Dachgeschosse leer. Zum 30. Juni sollen man 15 Wohneinheiten übergeben werden, zwei weitere folgen kurz darauf, eine davon bezieht eine Familie aus der Ukraine. Marko Rostock, stellvertretender Leiter Unternehmenskommunikation bei

der Deutsche Wohnen, hatte bereits im Mai gesagt, es sei keine Aufstockung und keine Luxusauflagerung geplant. Diese leerstehenden Wohnungen dienten als Ersatzwohnungen für Mieter:innen, die während der Sanierung ihre Wohnungen verlassen müssten. Im Frühjahr 2023 sollen die Renovierungen an mehreren Zeilen starten. Aufgrund der angespannten Marktsituation im Baugewerbe müsse der Zeitplan aber noch unter Vorbehalt gestellt werden, bittet er die Mieter:innen um etwas Geduld.

Für Freitag, 24. Juni, lädt die Initiative zum kritischen Stadtteilrundgang „Leerstand stoppen! Deutsche Wohnen, Vonovia und Co enteignen!“ ein. Treffpunkt ist um 14.30 Uhr an der Ecke Miquelallee/Hansaallee.



Assembly

Eine Stadt für alle! Frankfurt

Vonovia has announced it will soon be upgrading energy efficiency in the remaining streets. This will have an impact on rents: The monthly rent for a 70sqm apartment will increase by around €200 once the modernization measures have been completed. This corresponds to an increase in living costs of almost 30 percent.



Roxane Raphael

MY FUTURE?

I am a student living together with my family in the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate. It's right in the middle of town and very well connected. Thanks to public transport I can get to school quickly and visit friends all over Frankfurt. My home is surrounded by the typical daily chaos of a big city. Still, the area is beautiful: parks and playgrounds are within easy reach; the West-end campus of the Goethe University right at our doorstep offers me a future perspective. We've lived here for a long time and the community means a lot to me.

My contribution here highlights the advantages of the housing community for me. What you don't see is the increased rent we are paying, even though the buildings are infested with mold. This puts us tenants in a situation where we have the choice between quality of life in an

urban environment and steep rents combined with health risks.

As a member of society, I ask myself: Who are we letting control the real estate market and thus the future of our housing communities? Monopolies in the real estate market result in housing prices that far exceed their actual value. My question is: how can and should politics ensure fairness in the housing market?





Petra R. MOLDY APARTMENTS

Mold comes from years of neglected maintenance. As I climb the stairwell, I am greeted by an extremely unpleasant odor. The doors are open to both apartment units on the second floor: Inside I discover water damage on the walls, ceilings and floors; extensive mold and fungi are growing from the ceiling. The smell is unbearable—I need to escape.

Background: The roof has been leaking for years. Rainwater seeped in, creating a stinking broth that dripped down the walls of the house and through the ventilation into the ground. The moisture rose up into the cellar and climbed the walls. Water and mold came from both above and below.

Entire sections of the façade have fallen like guillotines from the crumbling balconies. And even though use of the balconies is restricted, they can still legally be added onto the rent.

Deficiencies like these are not listed in the rent price index, which makes it permissible to demand full rent and even rent increases in an unrenovated building. Rent reduction is refused.

Information events were held in the context of the refurbishment measures in our housing estate. As a tenant, I was denied access. The reason given: we are NOT AFFECTED.



Magnificent nature vs. a forest of signs
Not specified



Anonymus SIGN JUNGLE

I live in an apartment surrounded by the lush green of a beautiful public park—at least that is what I used to say. But it looks different now: All that is left of the greenery is splintered wood, bare tree stumps and sad patches of grass. Just imagine how beautiful it once was: lovely bushes, majestic trees and vivid flowers!

I could hear the occasional singing of robins, titmice and blackbirds. I would watch the nuthatches climbing, rooks striding about, the crows cawing and pigeons perching while hawks were eyeing their prey. Sparrows would flutter around, the starlings grazed, green and spotted woodpeckers tapped the trees. Also cats—not to mention the hedgehogs and insects: there was always something to see.

Now I gaze on the sad stumps of those once so big and beautiful trees, where the squirrels seemed to always be playing tag. Especially the memory of the magnificent bluebell tree and the large ash tree with the rough bark hurts my heart. They lay fallen on the ground.

But they did leave us signs, a whole jungle full of them!





Goethe University Frankfurt*

DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN NEW FRANKFURT—SEARCHING FOR TRACES

What developmental and educational aims did urban planners have in the 1920s? Are some of them still relevant today? What role do housing development and architecture play?

We addressed these questions in a university seminar on the history of educational and cultural development in the New Frankfurt urban planning project.

We scrutinized the entire urban planning program, its self-portrayal and reception, with the help of various pedagogical theories. We also focused on plans and designs for children and young people. Using the example of the so-called Frankfurt Kitchen, we critically examined the concept of family and care work. We also addressed aspects of remembrance based on the relationship between Frankfurt and Auschwitz.

Our findings show that pedagogical aspects of housing development include concepts of social and political change through architecture.

Tracing these topics is only a beginning, but it demonstrates that an examination of New Frankfurt can also become an area of pedagogical and cultural research.

*Wiebke Aurand, Philipp Bausum, Julia-Marie Eichler, Tim Gernandt, Roya Hashemi, Nora Höfler, Adam Jari, Jasmina Lüdtke, Zehra Özkurt, Susanne Thimm, Yannik Vankadari, Leni Zepke

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF HOUSING ESTATES, THEN AND NOW

On-site grocery stores were designed to provide for the residents of housing estates. We trace the history of both traditional colonial goods stores and modern kiosks within the community. The colonial store has an added global dimension that evokes a history of colonial exploitation. Housing architecture and social infrastructures have contributed to improving coexistence and providing for its residents, and continue to do so today.

NEW FRANKFURT AS A BRAND?

The vision: architecture, design and community interact as a blueprint for society with an educational effect. Inspired by educational research, we explored whether the New Frankfurt urban development program contains aspects of a brand. This includes the magazine “Das Neue Frankfurt”, but also the new city coat of arms designed by Hans Leistikow. We concluded that New Frankfurt can be understood as a successful case of branding. This remains an important point of reference for progressive urban development concepts to this day.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE HOUSING ESTATE

Our pedagogical exploration also traced the daily lives of children and young people in the years 1925–30. We asked questions such as: How many children lived in the housing communities and what were their daily lives like? Were there facilities for children, such as kindergartens and daycare centers? Did the children attend the new nearby Holzhausen School? As the selection of photos shows, there are many documents and sources from other New Frankfurt settlements. However, we were unable to find any information on these questions concerning the Miquelstraße Estate.

IDEAL AND REALITY: WOMEN IN THE FRANKFURT KITCHEN

The Frankfurt Kitchen was intended to make cooking easier and more effective for women. Viennese architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky designed it to optimize housework: short

distances, functional equipment and quick hand movements. The sketch demonstrates paths taken. The chute showcases innovative storage and efficient work processes. But did the kitchen actually reduce the workload? Criticism came from some working housewives: The kitchens remained small, unfamiliar, isolated. Was this progress or confinement? Our objects invite you to reflect.

I.G. FARBEN AND AUSCHWITZ

The history of the Miquelstraße Estate also has links to the Nazi era. The development was intended to provide housing for I.G. Farben employees, a company that also planned and built a large chemical factory in the town of Auschwitz. In the neighboring town of Monowice—Auschwitz-Monowitz—people were held prisoner in a separate concentration camp and forced to work on its construction. Primo Levi was one of these prisoners. He wrote about his time there in the book *“Ist das ein Mensch?”* (Is this a human being?).

THE I.G. HOUSING SETTLEMENT IN AUSCHWITZ

I.G. Farben also provided housing in the town of Auschwitz, today Oświęcim, for its employees who worked in the chemical factory. To this end, they built the so-called *“Bereitschafts-siedlung”* (on-call settlement), which still stands today. Auschwitz was designed to become a “model German town” and the establishment of the chemical industry on site was central to this. Until now it is still unclear whether the housing in Auschwitz and Frankfurt were built by the same I.G. Farben housing company. However, it is reasonable to assume so, even if different architects were involved in each case.

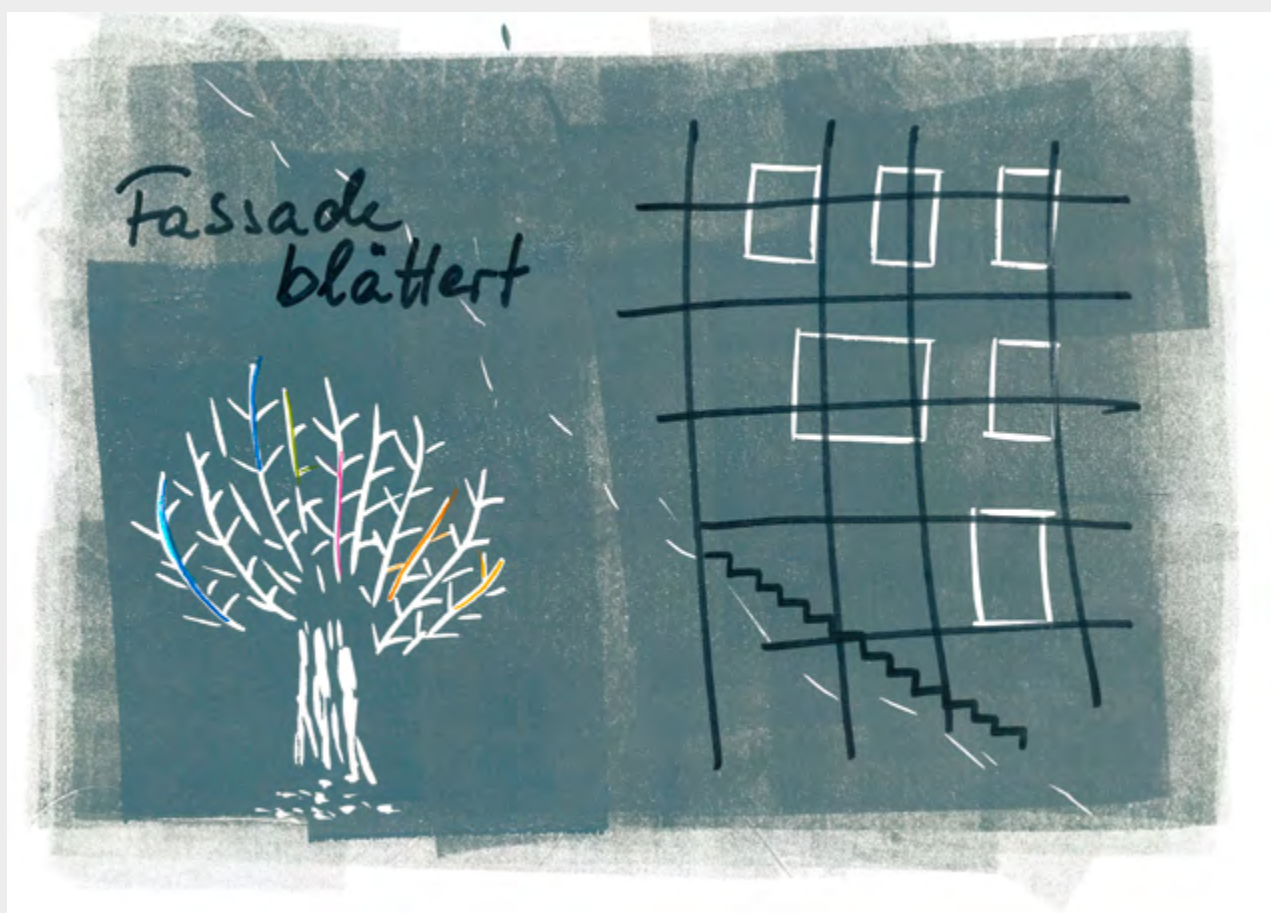


Eine Stadt für alle! Frankfurt & tenants' initiative Carl-von-Weinberg Estate **ORGANIZING PROTEST**

Together we are not alone—this is especially true if someone feels unfairly treated by their landlord. Organizing protest requires a lot of work and resources. Activists from “*Eine Stadt für alle! Frankfurt*” (city for all) have therefore been helping residents of the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate in this regard. Our initiative organizes campaigns against unfair conditions on the housing market.

Since autumn of 2021 we have met regularly to discuss issues affecting the daily lives of tenants. We compiled a list of numerous deficiencies in the housing facilities and wrote letters of complaint to the owner Vonovia. We also informed the local advisory council, municipal housing authority and spoke to the press, which generated numerous media reports. When modernization measures began in spring 2023,

we formulated demands for a socially responsible renovation, and networked with other tenant initiatives. Over the years we have produced hundreds of pages of meeting protocols and a wealth of protest material, which are on display here.



Gabriele Klieber

LIVING IN AN ICONIC BUILDING

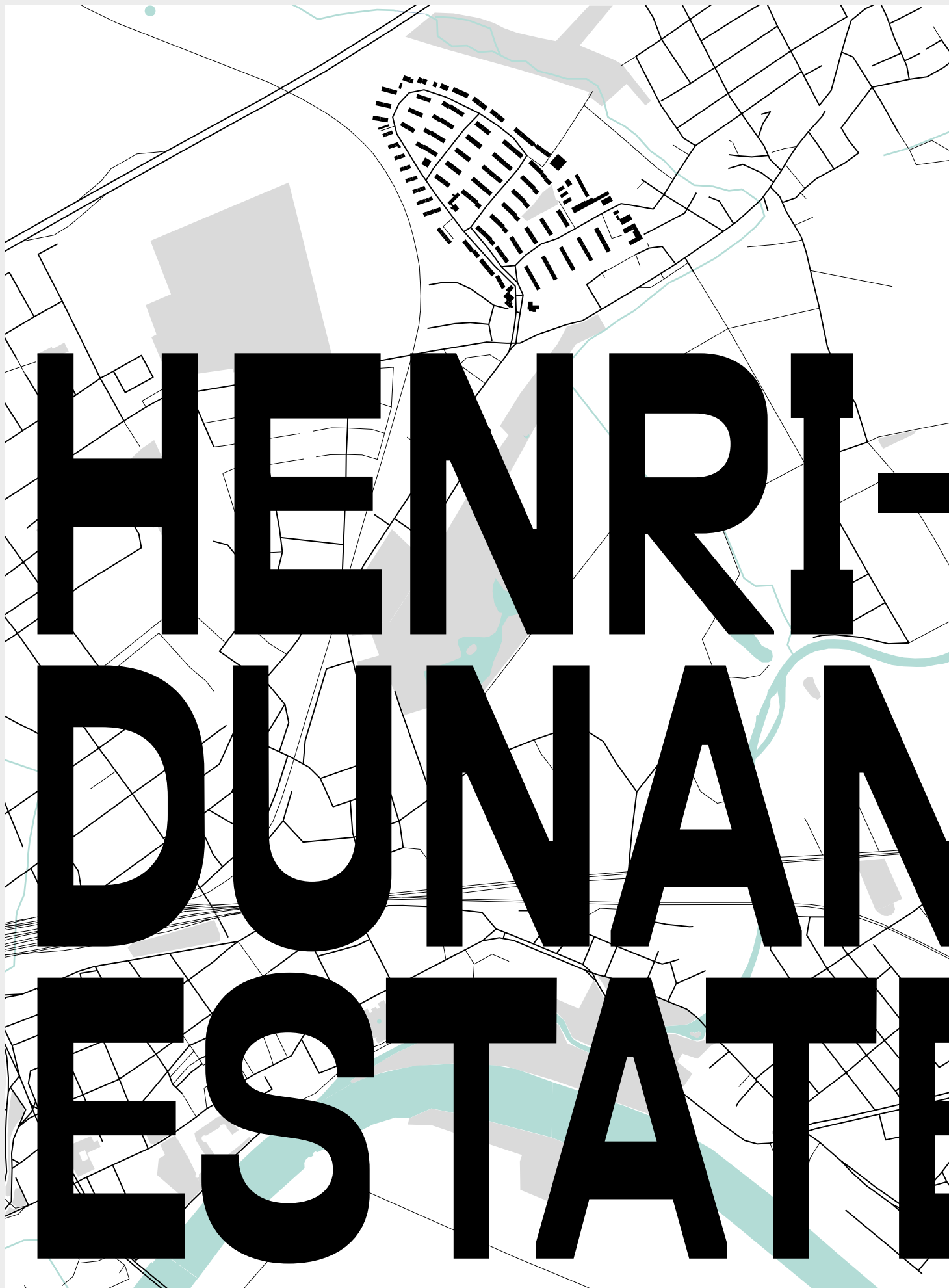
Our almost 100-year-old housing estate Höhenblick is listed as protected heritage. It was built by the New Frankfurt urban development program in a prime location of the Ginnheim district, and was originally intended for senior Frankfurt civil servants and employees. Today a wide variety of people live in these bright, airy apartments: families, singles, couples.

The view toward the nearby estate Römerstadt has since been obstructed by railroad safety barriers, but there is a magnificent view of the Taunus mountains from the communal residential terraces. These were accessible to all tenants until recently. Scaffolding has been erected in the meantime, and the protected heritage boundary fences dismantled. Were they scrapped? When will the communal terraces be available again—in the springtime, when the walnut

trees blossom? Or in summer when the wild lilacs bloom? Will the renovation work be completed by then?

These are among the many unanswered questions that leave longstanding tenants at a loss. Neighbors converse on the stairs and in hallways about the continuing situation. There is a lot of speculation due to a lack of communication with the housing company.

My linocut prints comment humorously on the challenges of refurbishment for residents in a listed heritage building.



HENRI DUNNAN ESTATE











1950s

To address housing shortages following the Second World War, Frankfurt built around 56,000 new apartment units by 1955, many of them for workers and employees. The federal government subsidized construction of social housing through grants and loans.



Destroyed residential buildings in the Friedrich Ebert housing estate
Fred Kochmann, 1947, HMF Ph01725

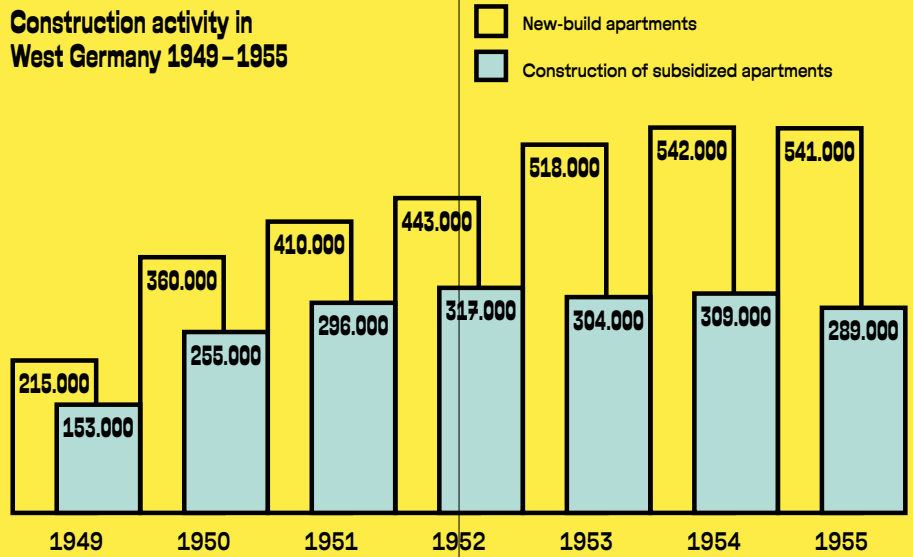


Crude oil cracking plant of Hoechst AG
Landesbildstelle Hessen, 1964, HMF Ph06053

1960s

In 1960 *GEWO*BAG became part of the *Neue Heimat* housing company, a subsidiary of the German Trade Union Federation and largest non-profit housing company in West Germany. The former city planner Ernst May headed the planning department at *Neue Heimat* starting in 1954.

Construction activity in West Germany 1949–1955

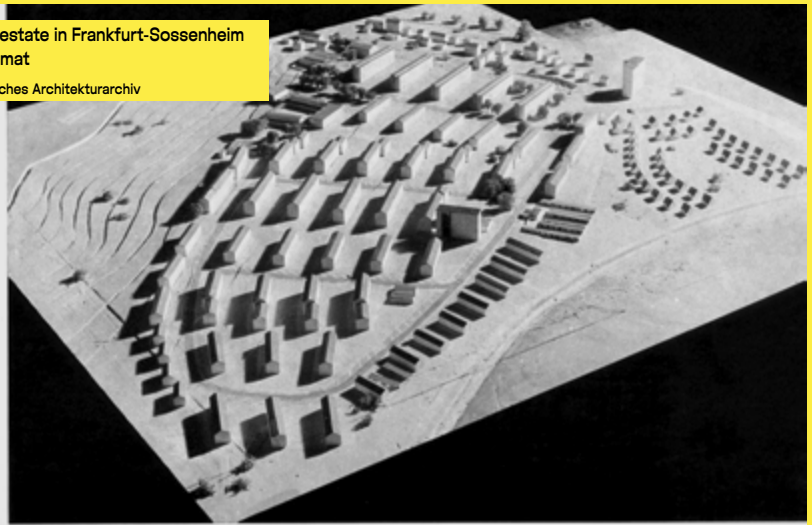


Housing construction in Sossenheim
Kramer-Photo, 1963, HMF Ph14857,5

The non-profit housing association *Frankfurter Gemeinnützige Wohnungs- und Siedlungsbaugesellschaft mbH (GEWOBAG)* planned to construct 1,056 social housing units in the “Sossenheim Nord-West” development, completed by a retirement home, daycare center and a school.

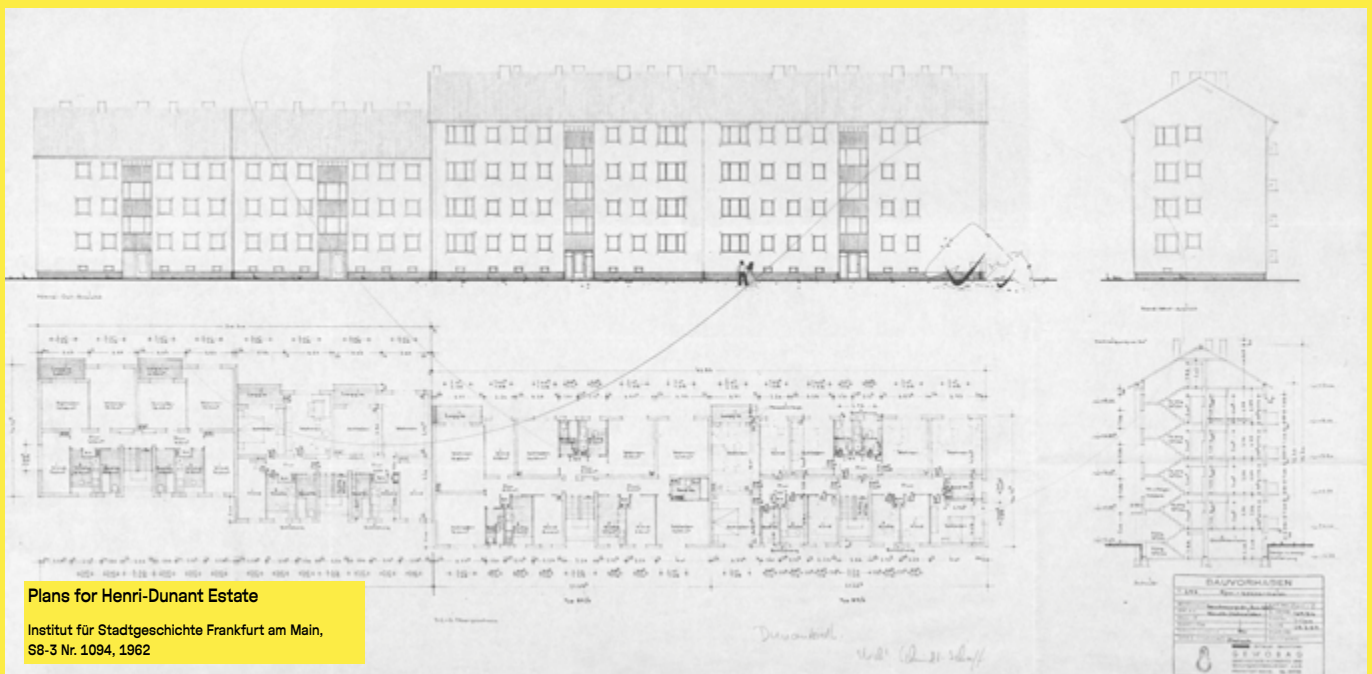
The housing estate was intended to be attractive for singles and families, with a mixture of semi-detached houses and multi-story apartment buildings with units of varying sizes. According to *GEWOBAG*, 50 percent of the apartment units were to be allocated to “refugees”. In addition to persons expelled from former German territories, many migrant workers and working-class families moved into the housing estate.

Housing estate in Frankfurt-Sossenheim
Neue Heimat
Hamburgisches Architekturarchiv



Modell der Wohnanlage „Sossenheim Nord-West”.
Model of the “Sossenheim Nord-West” housing estate.
Modèle de la colonie d’habitation «Sossenheim Nord-West».

Baugelände der Wohnanlage „Sossenheim Nord-West”. Im Hintergrund der Taunus.
Building-site of the “Sossenheim Nord-West” housing estate. In the background, the Taunus Mountains.
Terrain de construction pour la colonie d’habitation «Sossenheim Nord-West». Au fond, le Massif du Taunus.



Plans for Henri-Dunant Estate

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main,
S8-3 Nr. 1094, 1962

Housing estate in Frankfurt-Sossenheim

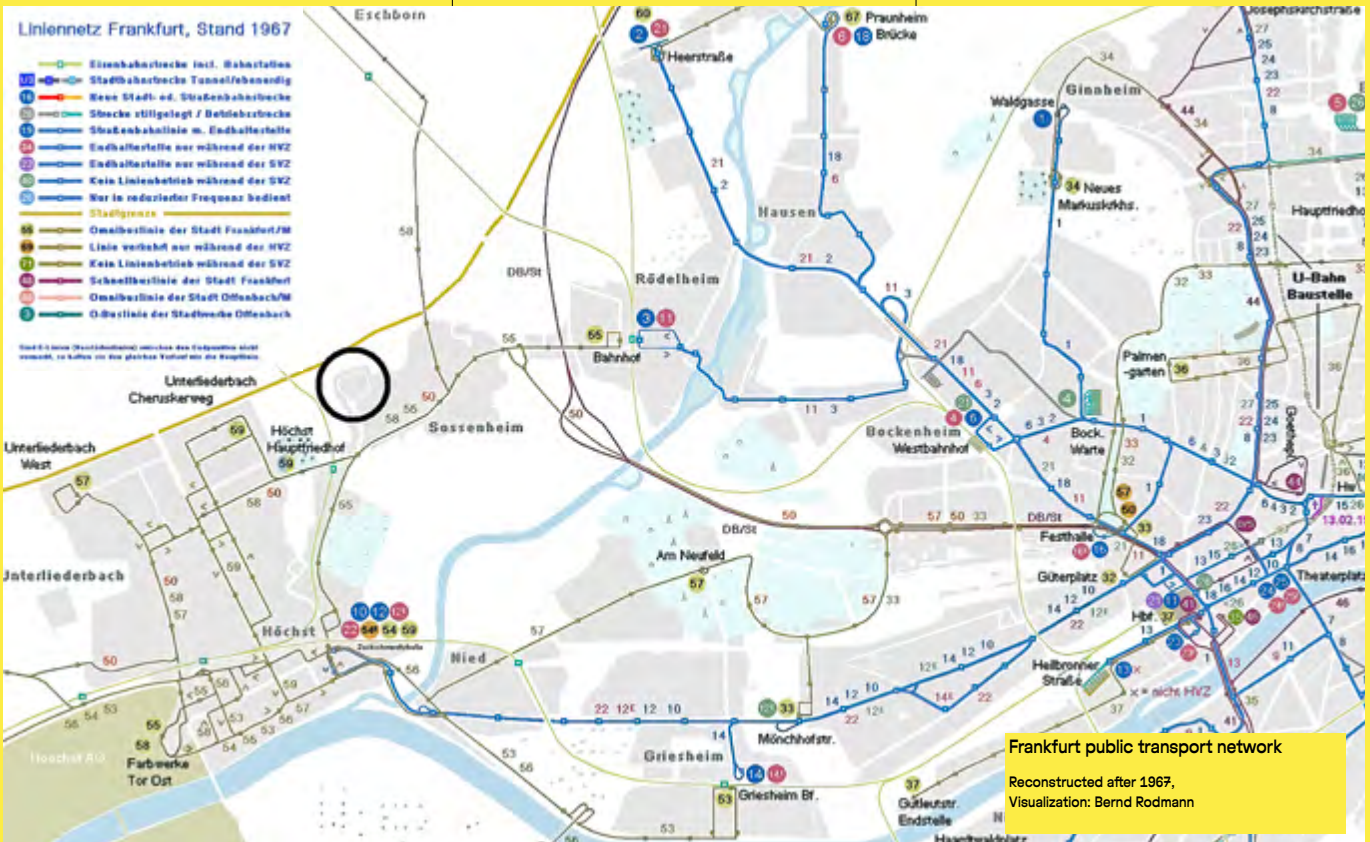
Neue Heimat, Hamburgisches Architekturarchiv



“It’s a bleak, boring housing estate of unimaginatively arranged houses with corridor-like green spaces in between. The site is full of large and small houses with no relationship to each other, no dynamic between built-up and open spaces.”

Hermann Funke, Terraced houses out of the drawer

in: Die Zeit, 52/1962, 28.12.1962



The standardized ribbon development in the Henri-Dunant Estate drew criticism, and the neighborhood lacked infrastructure: There was no local transport connection to the center of Sossenheim or downtown Frankfurt until 1968.



GEWOBAG housing estate in the 1960s

Photographer unknown, about 1967, Heimat- und Geschichtsverein Sossenheim e.V.



Postcard from Sossenheim

1968, Heimat- und Geschichtsverein Sossenheim e.V

1970s

In 1974 the construction of a 16-story high-rise added 96 apartments to the Henri-Dunant Estate.



The high-rise building on the corner of Kurmainzerstrasse and Dunantring

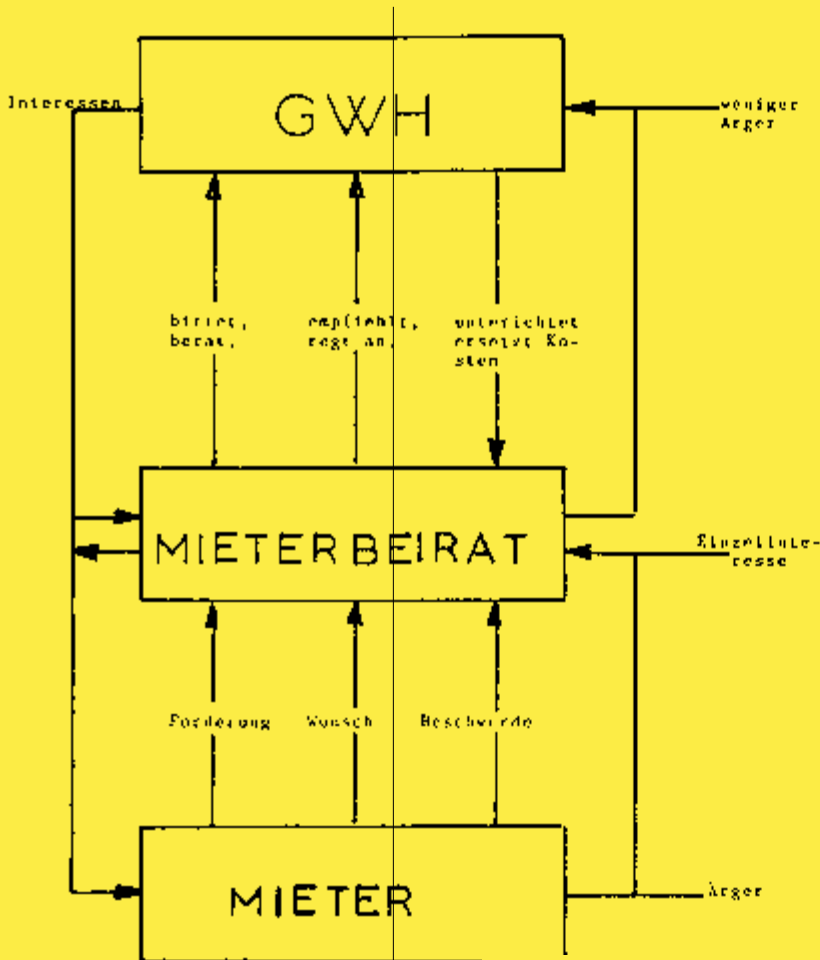
K. Meier-Ude, 1980, HMF Ph12413,6

In 1969 the housing estate was named after the founder of the International Red Cross, Henri Dunant.



Aerial photo of Neue Heimat housing estate in Sossenheim

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7FR Nr. 12455, 1975, Rudi Goebel



Organizational chart depicting role of the tenant board
 Mieter helfen Mietern Frankfurt e.V., Jürgen Lutz

Neue Heimat set up a tenant board to act as intermediary between landlord and tenants. The tenant board in the Henri-Dunant Estate was allowed to have a say in certain decisions, such as the design of outdoor facilities.

"80 percent are satisfied or even very satisfied with living there. Criticism was mainly leveled at apartment furnishings and heating as well certain structural conditions, especially the windows and facades."

Result of a resident survey in the Henri-Dunant Estate by GEWOS

quoted from: Die meisten Bewohner der Dunant-Siedlung sind recht zufrieden, Höchster Kreisblatt, 27.8.1983

1980s

Scandal surrounding the *Neue Heimat* revealed corruption, bogus shell companies and the consortium's high level of debt. Subsidiaries of Neue Heimat gradually all went bankrupt. The real estate group privatized around 60,000 apartments.



The Henri-Dunant Estate was sold to *BGI*, real estate investment arm of the German Trade Union Confederation (*DGB*), which planned to sell the housing estate at a profit. Although the *DGB* promised to protect tenants, many were worried about losing permanent resident rights and the cheaper subsidized rents. They protested against the sale.

Notification about sale of housing estate from Neue Heimat

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, A.01.01 Nr. 5011, 23.9.1985

Neue Heimat

Neue Heimat Südwest Postfach 97 01 09 - 6000 Frankfurt/M 97

An die Mieter der Wohnanlage

6230 Frankfurt am M.-Sossenheim

Neue Heimat Südwest
GewinnUtzige Wohnungs- und
Siedlungsgesellschaft mbH
Verwaltung Frankfurt

Hamburger Allee 2-10
Postfach 97 01 09
6000 Frankfurt am Main 97
Telefon (0 69) 79 04-1
Telex 4 12 00 6
Telefax (0 69) 7 93 08-160
Sprechstunde
Dienstag 8.30-12.00 Uhr
Donnerstag 14.00-15.45 Uhr

Ihr Zeichen Ihr Schreiben vom Unser Zeichen Unser Aktenzeichen

Durchwahl 79 04- Datum 23.09.85

Verkauf unserer Wohnanlage

Sehr geehrte Mieterin, sehr geehrter Mieter,

die angespannte wirtschaftliche Lage der Neue Heimat Wohnungsbaugesellschaften hat es erforderlich gemacht, daß ein Teil unseres Wohnungsbestandes veräußert wird. Auf diese Weise müssen bisher ruhende Reserven mobilisiert und zur wirtschaftlichen Stabilisierung des Unternehmens eingesetzt werden.

Wir haben deshalb seit einigen Jahren bereits eine Reihe von Wohnanlagen in Eigentumswohnungen umgewandelt und den Mietern zum Kauf angeboten. Bei einer Beschränkung auf diesen Käuferkreis ist es jedoch nicht möglich, den bestehenden Notwendigkeiten gerecht zu werden. Es ist erforderlich, daß uns das benötigte Kapital aus einem größeren Verkaufsvolumen kurzfristig zur Verfügung steht. Aus diesem Grunde haben wir in bestimmtem Umfang einige Wohnanlagen, zu denen auch Ihre Mietwohnung gehört, an andere Interessenten verkauft. Wir möchten Sie deshalb davon in Kenntnis setzen, daß wir die von Ihnen bewohnte Wohnanlage an die

BG-Immobilien-Gesellschaft mbH (BG), Frankfurt am Main,

verkauft haben. Die Übergabe erfolgt am 30.12.1985.

Das zwischen Ihnen und unserer Gesellschaft bestehende Mietverhältnis wird durch den Wechsel des Eigentümers nicht unmittelbar berührt. Der neue Eigentümer tritt nach dem gesetzlichen Grundsatz "Kauf bricht nicht Mieta" in die bestehenden Mietverträge ein. Die Verwaltung wird zunächst von unserer Gesellschaft fortgeführt, da wir die verkauften Wohnungen von der Käuferin zurückgepachtet haben. Die Ihnen bekannten Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter unseres Hauses bleiben damit weiter für Sie zuständig.

Aufsichtsratsvorsitzender: Dr. Dietmar Hoffmann
Geschäftsführung: Hilke von Jordan;
Jochen Weidner, stellv.

Bankverbindung:
Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft
Kto.-Nr. 1000 201 400
BLZ 500 10 11

Sitz der Gesellschaft: Frankfurt am Main
Registriergericht: Frankfurt am Main
Registernummer: HRB 7920



Poster protesting planned sale of the Henri-Dunant Estate

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7FR Nr. 1703, 1986, Hubert Gloss

Founded in 1985, the tenants' association Henri-Dunant-Siedlung e.V. received broad support from the labor movement, politicians and the general public.



Rally against the sale of the housing estate

Photographer unknown, 1986, Heimat- und Geschichtsverein Sossenheim e.V.

PROTOKOLL

Neue Heimat - Henri-Dunant-Siedlung

Konstituierende Sitzung

Am 12. November 1984, um 10⁰⁰ Uhr, wurden nachfolgende Personen durch ihre Stimme und durch förmliche Erklärung gewählt:

Mitglieder des Mietervereins - Henri-Dunant-Siedlung

1. Vorsitz: Wilfried	Schwaninger 59/ 60
2. Vorsitz: Fried	Schwaninger 59/ 60
3. Vorsitz: Karl Heinz	Dunemann 50
Beck: Herbert	Schwaninger 59/ 60
Beck: Alfred	Dunemann 117
Beck: Wilfried	Dunemann 10
Beck: Leo	Kraussamer 10/ 101
Beck: Ernst	Schwaninger 59/ 60
Beck: August	Kraussamer 10/ 101
Beck: Gisela	Schwaninger 59/ 60
Beck: Inge	Schwaninger 59/ 60
Beck: Ingrid	Grädelallee 70
Beck: Karl	Dunemann 81
Beck: Klaus	Wiesengrund 100
Beck: Gert	Wiesengrund 100
Beck: Ingrid	Im Heiligen Land 57
Beck: Uwe	Im Heiligen Land 57
Beck: Eva	Grädelallee 59/ 60
Beck: Erika	Dunemann 12

Ulrich Gründgens (Vorsitz); Beate Wiegand (1. Stellv. Vorsitz)
Ulrich Gründgens (2. Stellv.)

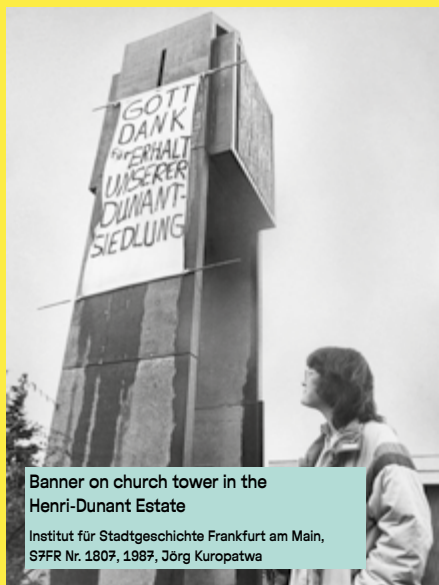
1985, Heimat- und Geschichtsverein Sossenheim e.V.



Protest poster on advertising column

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7FR Nr. 1804, 1986, Wilhelm Ulrich

Resale of the housing estate to the private real estate company *Forum Immobilien GmbH* increased pressure on policymakers—the investors planned to convert the rentals into condominiums. The state of Hessen decided to buy all *Neue Heimat* units in Hessen, on the condition that the sale of the Henri-Dunant Estate be reversed. The state-owned *Gemeinnützige Wohnungsgesellschaft Hessen (GWH)* took over the regional subsidiary of *Neue Heimat* and social housing lock-in period of the apartments remained in place.



Banner on church tower in the Henri-Dunant Estate

Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main, S7FR Nr. 1807, 1987, Jörg Kuropatwa

1990s

Budget cuts at the *GWH* led to a lack of building maintenance. Playgrounds and some other venues were closed. Like many large housing complexes, the Henri-Dunant Estate became a target of criticism. It was considered an aesthetically unattractive urban area and stigmatized as a “social hotspot”.

Henri-Dunant Estate remains non-profit

Familie Hädrich, 1986, Heimat- und Geschichtsverein Sossenheim e.V.



2000s

The Hessian state government sold 80 percent of its shares in the *GWH* housing association to the *Hessische Landesbank (HeLaBa)*. Fearing the consequences of this sell-off, the tenants' association called for a protest. However, it was unable to prevent privatization.

Wer kämpft, kann verlieren.
Wer nicht kämpft, hat schon verloren!
Es ist noch Zeit zu gewinnen!

Protestveranstaltung

Arbeiterwohlfahrt, SPD und Mieterverein
Henri-Dunant Siedlung e.V.
rufen gemeinsam auf zum Protest gegen den
Verkauf unserer Siedlung!

Die Protestveranstaltung findet am Montag,
dem 3. Juli 2000 um 19.30 Uhr
im Stadtteilzentrum der AWO, Donauiring 8,
statt.

Platzkonzert und gemeinsame Aktion für und Nicht-Für den
Frankfurter Mieter. Am 13. Dezember sind die Mieterinnen und die
Mieterinnen der Henri-Dunant Siedlung e.V. eingeladen. Die
Aktion ist kostenlos.

Wir lassen uns nicht verkaufen – Wir nicht!

Veranstaltung 09.30 Uhr	Veranstaltung 19.30 Uhr	Veranstaltung 19.30 Uhr
Milena, handwerk	Milena, handwerk	Milena, handwerk

Invitation to a protest event

2000, Mieter helfen Mietern Frankfurt e.V.,
Jürgen Lutz

“Sonntag den 13. Dezember zwischen zwölf und eins”

Chlodwig Poth, 1993, Caricatura Museum Frankfurt,
K.2009.13833



Sonntag den 13. Dezember zwischen zwölf und eins, Henri-Dunant-Siedlung, Schaumwegerstraße

The apartment units in the Henri-Dunant Estate lost their “publicly subsidized” status. Rents were gradually adjusted in line with local prices on the open market. In the following years, *HeLaBa* realigned the *GWH* towards profit-oriented goals. It removed the word “non-profit” from its name, and since 2012 has been called simply *GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH*.

GWH has been investing more heavily in maintenance and modernization. The company seeks to present itself as future-oriented and sustainable. In 2018, tenants protested against rent increases announced by *GWH* in the Henri-Dunant Estate.

GWH informs tenants about the loss of public subsidies

2000, Mieter helfen Mietern e.V., Jürgen Lutz



Wohnbereich 25
10559 Paris Platz/Mieterheim
von der Höhe/Parisplatz

Grundstück
Nr. 2306/12/10
Fl. 1008/17/27

Hausnummer 25-10
Wohnungszahl
10559/12/10/10
10 11 1
1008/17/27/10/10

Datum
17.08.2001

**WJE 10609: Wegfall der Eigenschaft „öffentlich gefördert“
Selbstbeteiligung bei Kleinreparaturen**

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

die von Ihnen bewohnte Wohnung wurde bei ihrer Errichtung mit Mitteln aus öffentlichen Haushalten gefördert. Diese Mittel sind vollständig zurückgezahlt, weshalb zum 01.01.2001 die Eigenschaft „öffentlich gefördert“ entfällt. Für öffentlich geförderte Wohnungen gelten hinsichtlich der Mietpreisbildung besondere gesetzliche Bestimmungen, z. B. das Wohnungsbindungs gesetz oder das Gesetz zum Abbau der Wohnunvorteilung, die ab dem oben genannten Termin nicht mehr anzuwenden sind. Dafür ist ab dem 01.01.2001 das Gesetz zur Regelung der Miethöhe (MhG) Rechtsgrundlage zur Bestimmung und Vereinbarung ihrer Miete. Soweit in dem mit Ihnen abgeschlossenen Mietvertrag die Eigenschaft „öffentlich gefördert“ für Ihre Wohnung ausgewiesen ist, hat dieses Schreiben vertragsändernde Wirkung.

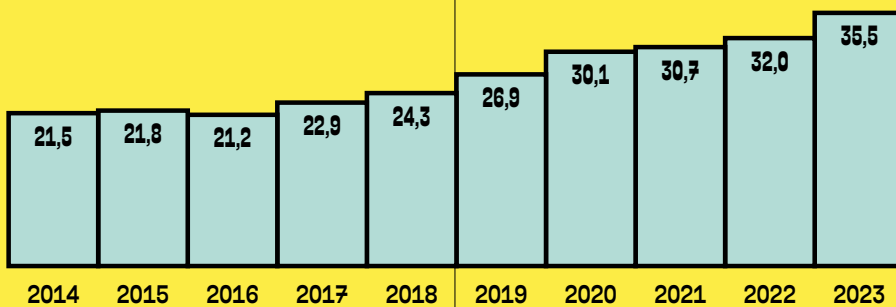
In Zusammenhang damit möchten wir Sie noch auf folgendes hinweisen: In den neueren Mietverträgen ist unter §3 Abs. 7 vereinbart, dass mit Ende der Preisbindung Ende der öffentlichen Förderung der Wohnung vom Mieter Kosten für Kleinreparaturen bis zu einem bestimmten Betrag zu übernehmen sind. Bei Verträgen ab dem 01.01.1990 ist eine jeweilige Selbstbeteiligung von 100,00 DM festgelegt, bei Verträgen ab dem 01.01.1993 wurden 100,00 DM Selbstbeteiligung vereinbart. Die Verpflichtung zur Selbstbeteiligung umfasst vor allem das Nehmen kleinerer Schäden an den Installationsgegenständen für Elektrizität, Wasser und Gas, den Heiz- und Kocheinrichtungen, den Vorhängen, Haussprachanlagen, Antennendosen, Fenster und Türverchlüssen, jeweils soweit vorhanden und dem Zugriff des Mieters unterliegend, d.h. in der Regel: Innerhalb der Wohnung. Die Selbstbeteiligung ist jeweils direkt an die mit der Kleinreparatur beauftragte Firma zu bezahlen. Bitte lesen Sie den entsprechenden Passus in Ihrem Mietvertrag nach.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

© 1998 Gemeinnützige Wohnvereine in der DDR - 1990/1991 Die Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH, Parisplatz, 10559 Paris Platz/Mieterheim von der Höhe/Parisplatz, 10559 Paris Platz/Mieterheim von der Höhe/Parisplatz, 10559 Paris Platz/Mieterheim von der Höhe/Parisplatz

Investments of GWH in maintenance and modernization since 2016 in EUR/sqm

GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH Hessen



Vermieter soll auf die Bremse treten

Zahlreiche Bewohner der Henri-Dunant-Siedlung in Sossenheim protestieren gegen Mieterhöhungen der GWH

VON GEORGE GRODENSKY

Der Mieterbund Höchstler Wohnen schlägt Alarm. Die Wohnungsgesellschaft GWH hat Bewohnern der Henri-Dunant-Siedlung in Sossenheim Mieterhöhungen von 13 bis 15 Prozent mitgeteilt. „Das sind zwischen 50 und 70 Euro im Monat“, sagt Sieghard Pawlik vom Mieterbund. „Drastisch“, findet er das. Betroffen seien mehrere Hundert Mieter mit teils geringem Einkommen.

Rund 60 der Betroffenen haben am Mittwoch vor dem Dunantring 8 gegen die Mieterhöhung protestiert. Pawlik nutzt die Gelegenheit, die Verwaltungsspitze die GWH zu Mäßigung zu ermahnen. Und damit auch das Land, schließlich gehört die GWH zur Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen. „Lasst die Kirche im Dorf“, ruft Pawlik den Entscheidungsträgern im Hintergrund zu. „Mieten müssen bezahlbar sein.“

Die GWH könne es handhaben wie die Frankfurter Wohnbaugesellschaft ABG, sagt Pawlik: auf die Mietprelsbremse treten. Die ABG



Bewohner der Dunant-Siedlung sind in Sorge.

ROLF GIESER

erhöhe über die kommenden fünf Jahre die Mieten um maximal fünf Prozent. „Das hat ihr nicht geschadet.“ Auch die Nassauische Heimstätte, die mehrheitlich dem Land Hessen gehört, habe für einen Teil ihrer Bestände Ähnliches

beschlossen, sagt Pawlik. Der Mieterbund plant nun, Unterschriften zu sammeln. Pawlik wünscht sich aber einen generellen Schulterchluss aller Mieter in der Stadt.

Die GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft verweist derweil darauf,

BERATUNG

Der Mieterbund Höchstler Wohnen an der Bolongarostraße 166 in Höchst ist erreichbar unter der Telefonnummer 069/30 03 48 90. Oder E-Mail an mieterbund-hoechstler-wohnen@gmx.de

Die Bürozeiten sind Montag bis Freitag von 10 bis 12 Uhr; Sprechstunde ist Mittwoch von 16 bis 18 Uhr. sky

www.mieterbund-hoechstler-wohnen.de

dass sie Gebäude und Wohnumfeld „auch in Sossenheim stabilisiert und zu Gunsten unserer Mieter aufgewertet“ habe. Das geht nicht ohne Kapital. „Um nachhaltig und wirtschaftlich sinnvoll im Interesse unsere Mieter investieren zu können, müssen wir in Intervallen unsere Mieten an die Marktgegebenheiten anpassen“, sagt Unternehmenssprecher Marc Hohmann. Als rechtsverbindliche Grundlage diene der Mietspiegel der Stadt Frankfurt, und zwar die Neuauflage von 2018.

Dieser werde in der Mietspiegel-Kommission erarbeitet, in der außer Vertretern des Amtes für Wohnungswesen auch Vertreter der Mieterschutzvereinigungen vertreten seien, die somit maßgeblichen Anteil an der Ausgestaltung des Mietspiegels hätten, sagt Marc Hohmann weiter. Für Mieterhöhungen gebe es feste Kriterien, in der Auflage 2018 habe die Kommission einige davon verändert. Ausstattungsmerkmale und Kriterien jeder einzelnen Wohnung müssten berücksichtigt werden.

Sieghard Pawlik findet allerdings, dass einige der Mieterhöhungen zu hoch ausgefallen, sogar nicht rechtmäßig seien. In manchen Fällen sei ein modernisiertes Bad angerechnet worden, das die Voraussetzungen gar nicht erfülle. Auch einige Abschläge seien nicht berücksichtigt worden, etwa veraltete Haustechnik oder eigene Investitionen der Mieter in Fußböden oder Heizungen. Pawlik empfiehlt allen Mietern, die Erhöhungen prüfen zu lassen. In zwei Fällen habe die GWH den neuen Vertrag bereits zurückgezogen.

Landlord should step on the brakes

Frankfurter Rundschau, 13.9.2018



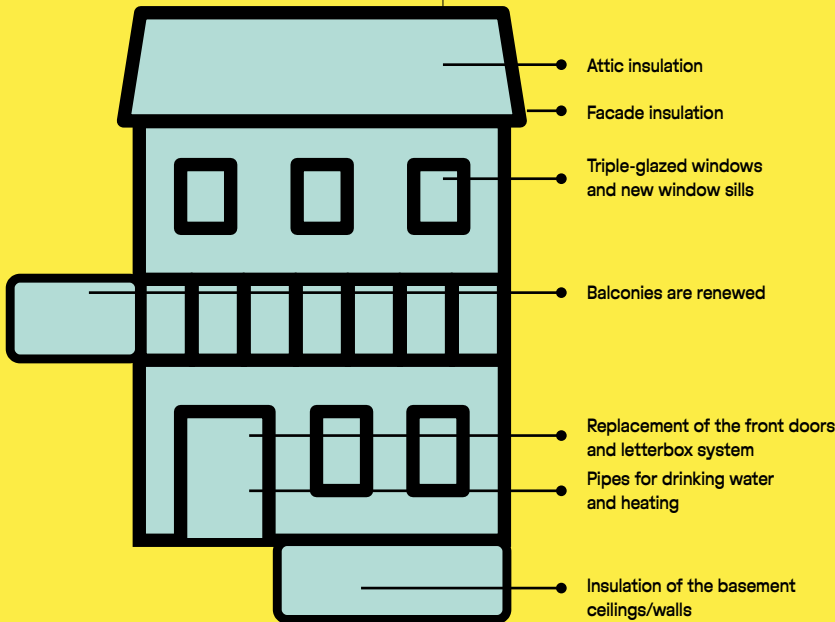
Urban regeneration plan

GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH Hessen

2020s

The Henri-Dunant Estate is planned to become more climate-friendly through energy-efficient urban regeneration of existing buildings. Measures include the installation of a local heating network. *GWH* is going to take over management of the energy supply in addition to renting. The urban regeneration is scheduled to last at least until 2030. Although rents will rise considerably once the project is complete, there is no current protest of residents in the community. The Henri-Dunant Estate tenants' association has not been active since 2023.

Measures on the building



Measures in the apartment

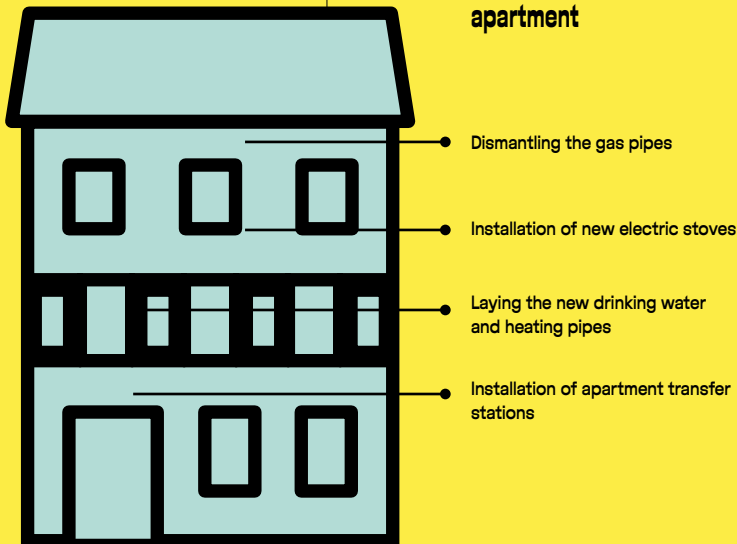


Diagram detailing urban regeneration measures

GWH Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH Hessen





Farbenland daycare

CHILDREN AS NEIGHBORHOOD DETECTIVES AND REPORTERS

We kids live in the Henri-Dunant Estate in Frankfurt. It is already 60 years old and no longer in good condition. That is why renovation has been going on the past few years by the owner, *GWH Wohnungsbaugesellschaft*. Some of our parents are worried that rents will rise and they may no longer be able to afford the apartments. But the changes are also creating exciting new spaces for us: A large playground was added last year, and just recently a modern football pitch.

At our daycare center we've created a large scale model of the entire community out of wooden blocks and street tiles: You can see our daycare center, all the family homes, and everything that is important to us in our neighborhood—especially all the favorite places we visit regularly and explore.

But what was it like here in the past? As young reporters we interviewed the adults, some of whom have lived here for a long time. We learned that families from over 40 different countries live in our settlement. How does that work, living together in such a diverse community? It almost seems like an entire world in miniature!





THE ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT BUILDING

The former retirement complex at Dunantring 8 now houses people from all generations and with very different life experiences. In this CityLab contribution residents share their everyday experiences and what the building means to them personally. Many are concerned about the future: it is still unclear whether the building will be renovated or demolished as part of the modernization plans for the Henri-Dunant Estate.

The high-rise structure was built in 1963 as part of the “Frankfurt Municipal Plan for the Elderly”. As a so-called retirement home, it offered 65 one-bedroom apartments for elderly people with previously inadequate housing. These apartments, equipped with a kitchen, bathroom and balcony, were intended to enable senior citizens to live independently.

The workers’ welfare association *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (AWO) later took over management of the building.

The AWO ran a daycare center for senior citizens in the adjacent community pavilion, which also served as a neighborhood meeting place. For many decades the tenants’ association also met on the premises. Today the center is still managed by the AWO, which organizes a weekly meeting for senior citizens as well as regular events and parties. The pavilion has been the official neighborhood center for the district Sossenheim since 1999.



WHO IS SPEAKING?

This contribution is the result of conversations recorded in the Knorrstraße Estate, the Carl-von-Weinberg Estate and the Henri-Dunant Estate with the original voices of various residents and representatives of a tenant initiative, along with sounds from around the community.

Developing a contribution for CityLab exhibitions takes time. Some contributors have plenty of it, but others do not because of work, childcare, caring for relatives or a variety of worries. They also may not think of a museum as a place that represents them, or where their voice is respected. The perspectives in this exhibition are therefore mostly of those who are able to do so. This led to the idea of recording residents on site, in order to have other voices heard in the exhibition.

The clay model represents the neighborhood from which the voices are coming. It is an artistic representation that leaves room for your own imagination about the surroundings.

Audios: Conception and realization in collaboration with Bela Bärmann

Models: Filippa Pettersson





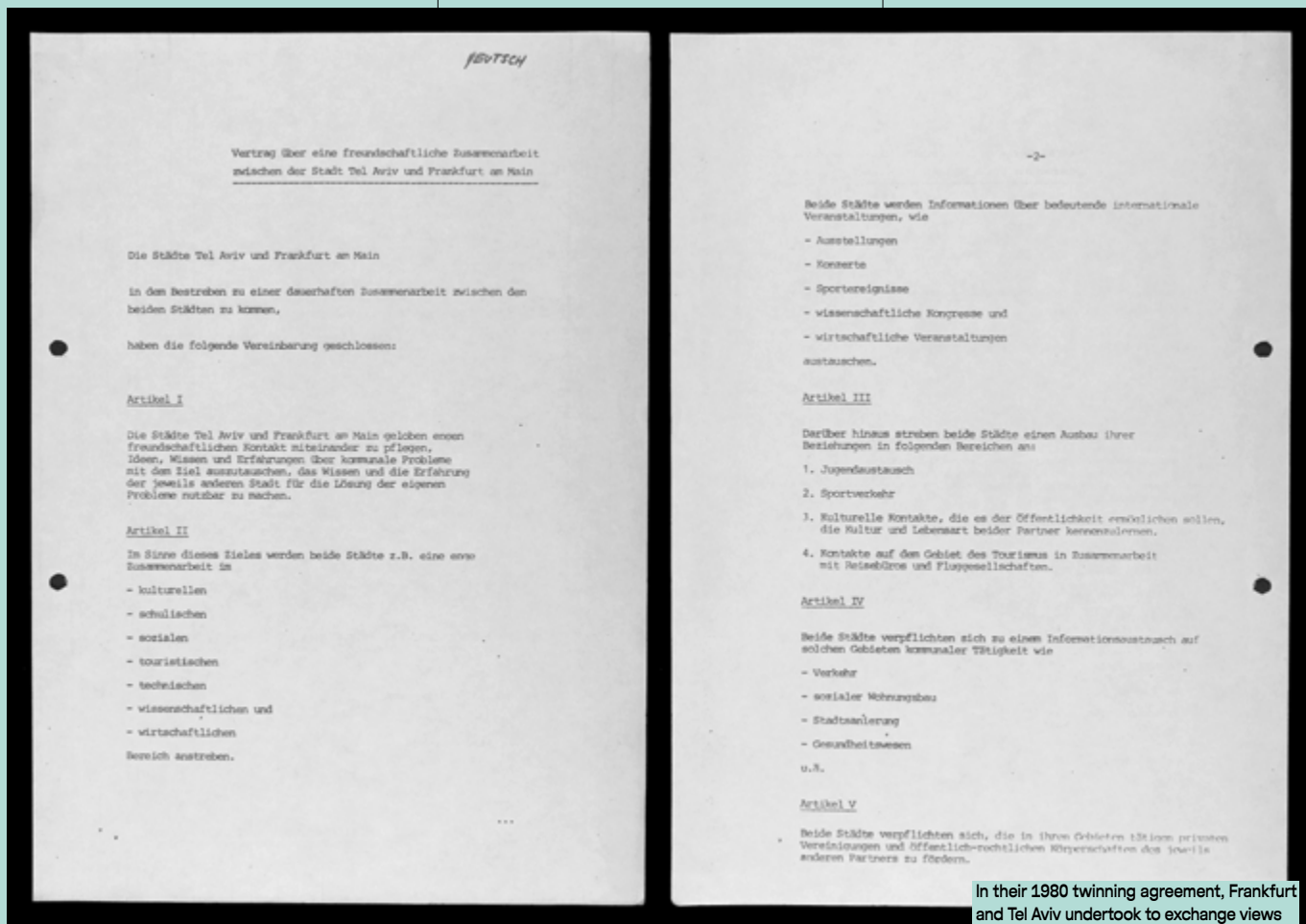
The exhibition contribution is based on the DFG research project "Home and Housing in Urban Regeneration Processes: Studying the Macro through Historiographies of the Micro in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Frankfurt am Main" (Goethe University Frankfurt, Tel Aviv University)

The housing crisis is not just a regional issue. Privatisation processes in urban development are affecting many metropolises around the world. Frankfurt's twin city Tel Aviv-Jaffa is no exception. The desperate situation of many residents led to one of the largest political mobilisations in Israel in 2011. In protest against the neoliberal economic system, tent camps were set up on the central Rothschild Boulevard and other locations, denouncing the rising cost of housing and living and the increasing social polarisation of income and wealth.

The main demands were: A return to the welfare state, tackling social inequality and widespread poverty, and strengthening the political representation of marginalised groups. The exhibition also aims to broaden the perspective and show that the housing crisis is a global one. The liberalisation of housing markets is taking place around the world, with cities competing with each other. This is particularly the case in the wealthy globalised cities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Frankfurt am Main. In both cities, urban regeneration has become an important tool of urban development and has triggered gentrification processes in many neighbourhoods, leading to

displacement. In both cities, protest movements have emerged and tenants are organising.

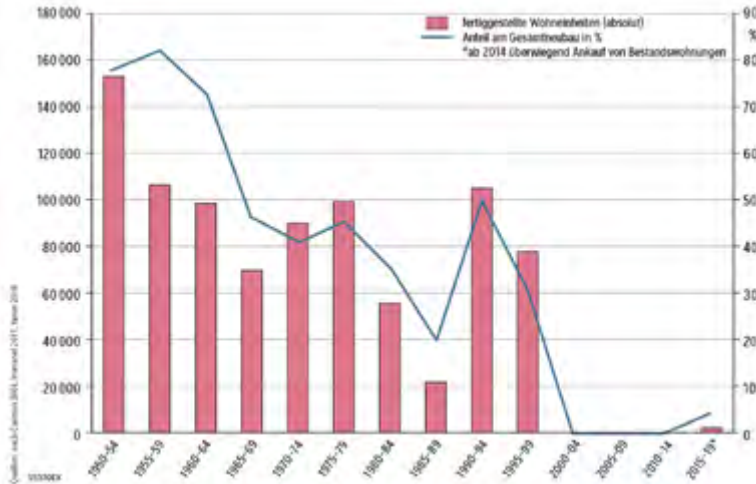
The case studies in Tel Aviv-Jaffa reflect the stories of displacement and resettlement of middle and lower class Jewish Israeli residents whose housing rights have never been recognised by the government. High-rise apartment blocks for the upper class are now being built on the coveted site of a former Palestinian village dating back to 1948.



In their 1980 twinning agreement, Frankfurt and Tel Aviv undertook to exchange views on urban developments and in the field of social housing
Institut für Stadtgeschichte Frankfurt am Main,
A.63.03.737, 1980

**Public housing construction in Israel
1950–2019**

Visualization: Sebastian Schipper nach Swirski und Hoffmann-Dishon 2016, S.22



2011

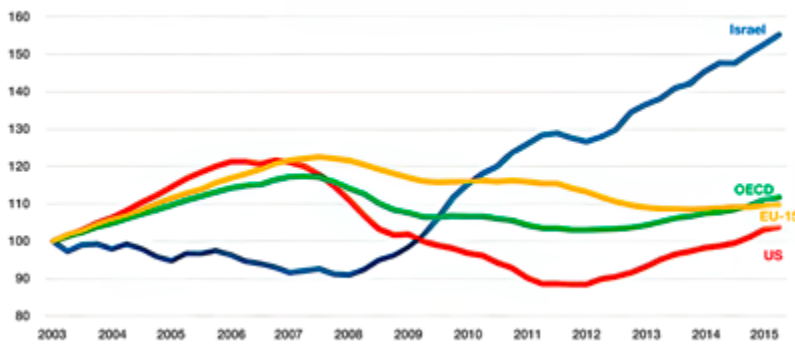
Protest against inadequate health care. The signs read: "Young doctors have to work 36 hours and their exhaustion can cost lives."



Protest facility, Tel Aviv



Tovi Fenster, 2011



**Changes in housing prices in Israel,
US, EU and OECD countries 2003–2015**

Hanel, R., Nachmany, H. (2025). Wohnungspolitik in Israel: Von der zentralisierten Sozialdemokratie zum zentralisierten Neoliberalismus. In: Kumaraswamy, P.R. (eds) The Palgrave International Handbook of Israel. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapur. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2717-0_119-1



Tent camp along Rothschild Boulevard, Tel Aviv-Jaffa
Tovi Fenster, 2011

Givat Amal Bet

Givat Amal Bet, a shack neighborhood in northeast Tel Aviv-Jaffa, was established after 1948 as a neighborhood for middle and lower class Jewish people. The neighborhood was never officially registered, and a long-standing public and legal battle between the residents and the authorities took place. The neighborhood remained in a prolonged state of stagnation, with development repeatedly delayed and residents left in legal and physical uncertainty. After decades of struggle for recognition and rights, the last residents were forcibly evicted in 2021 due to urban regeneration in the neighborhood.

Residential shack, Givat Amal Bet, after evacuation and demolition
Lee Broide, 2021



Residential shack, Givat Amal Bet, after demolition
Lee Broide, 2021



Residential shack, Givat Amal Bet, after evacuation, before demolition. In the background, new towers—high-priced condominiums—being built
Lee Broide, 2021



Demolition of past and present for the construction of luxury residential towers in Givat Amal Bet
Tabea Latocha, 2023

Unpermitted building as resistance in HaTikva
Noy Thaller, 2021



HaTikva

HaTikva neighborhood, located in the south-east of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, is the home of nearly 10,000 residents (2022). It has been established in 1935 as a private initiation of Mizrahi origin Jews (immigrants from Asia and Africa) and has been in their collective ownership until today. The working class migrants purchased land from the nearby Arab village of Salame. Until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Tel Aviv municipality refused to include the unplanned and poor neighborhood in its territory, probably because HaTikva was opposed the city's image as a modern city. Only after 1948, the neighborhood was annexed to Tel Aviv-Jaffa. However, the municipality kept treating the neighborhood as peripheral and did not provide

essential infrastructures or planning. Non-planning has led to physical decline and poor living conditions. In the 1960s public protests emerged in the neighborhood due to the poor living conditions.

After a national political reverse in the 1970s, HaTikva was included in the national neighborhood rehabilitation project. The municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa planned to demolish HaTikva and rebuilt it with proper infrastructure. Therefore the city prohibited any new construction in the neighborhood, a situation that has lasted for decades.

Today, the neighborhood is expected to grow as part of the municipal urban regeneration plans. This includes parcellation programs dividing the collective land ownership into single privately owned plots. This will allow the existing residents to receive building permits and mortgages, and, in turn, open the neighborhood to profit-oriented development by national and international real estate firms. The urban regeneration of HaTikva will significantly change the neighborhood and might lead to displacement of residents.



Map of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Survey of Palestine, October 1935

Micha Granit Maps Library at the Department of Geography, Tel Aviv University



Aerial Picture of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 1949

Micha Granit Maps Library at the Department of Geography, Tel Aviv University, Archive Number p.33_2145_1949 Tel Aviv-Yafo



Aerial Picture of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 2025

Google Maps

Aerial photographs of HaTikva show the development since 1935.

The traces of the former home are clearly visible in Givat Amal Bet
Lee Broide, 2022



Lee Broide, Noy Thaller (Tel Aviv University) GIVAT AMAL BET AND HATIKVA— TWO NEIGHBOURHOODS UNDER DISPLACEMENT PRESSURE

In this contribution, the two researchers examine the impact of an increasingly neoliberal housing policy in Tel Aviv-Jaffa on local residents. Their investigations into the neighbourhoods of Givat Amal Bet and HaTikva reveal significant processes of displacement. Throughout their research, they collected narratives of (former) residents, newspaper articles, photographs, and mental maps produced during interviews. This article presents a selection of their findings.

The DFG-funded research project “Home and Housing in Urban Regeneration Processes: Studying the Macro through Historiographies of the Micro in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Frankfurt am Main” has started in 2021 as research collaboration between the Department of Geography

and Human Environment at Tel Aviv University and the Institute of Human Geography at Goethe University Frankfurt. The two universities have been engaged in a cooperative relationship since 1984, based on the city partnership agreement between Frankfurt and Tel Aviv. This agreement, established in 1981, also emphasizes the promotion of exchange in the fields of urban development and social housing.

תושבי שכונת התקווה מתארגנים למאבק נגד הריסות נוספות



למקלות: יולם מראת ליד פה-סחף חלונות לשבת המוריקין הקירונות
למשה: יושרים ומתקולים בשם התקווה

THE HOUSING ESTATE OF TOMORROW?

Statements
from science,
urban policy
and architecture



Dhara Patel, Katharina Wagner and Astrid Wuttke, Films stills, Holger Friedemuth, 2024

Dhara Patel (urban sociologist, TU Darmstadt):

“The housing developments of tomorrow will have to be more than just a group of buildings. They need to be living environments that foster social inclusivity, environmental responsiveness and democratic participation.”

Katharina Wagner (head of Housing Office, Frankfurt):

“The housing development of tomorrow is what we build today. Our focus should thus be on the needs of residents living in these communities. I believe it is important to see housing construction increasingly in terms of these kinds of requirements.”

Astrid Wuttke (architect at schneider+schumacher, Frankfurt):

“Despite the efforts to achieve economic efficiency, aesthetic quality should also be a priority—similar to what was attempted with the programme New Frankfurt 100 years ago, so there should also be diversity in serial production.”

Dhara Patel:

“We know how to build co-operatives and how to do mixed-income housing. What is really missing is the structural commitment and political will to do so. We need to institutionalize principles of social inclusion, environmental responsibility and democratic participation, so that they don’t just remain optional but actually form the backbone of all housing policies.”

Katharina Wagner:

“One law I would like to reintroduce is a comprehensive system of non-profit housing. Look at the example of Vienna, where there is still a non-profit housing law (*Wohngemeinnützigkeit*) and the opportunity of being a non-profit developer. This all leads to a stable long-term housing market, and by earmarking profits creates further incentives to build in the non-profit sector. We need that again in Germany.”

Astrid Wuttke:

“The goal should be housing as a basic human requirement. It must be possible for people to afford a place to live. How can it be that in Germany the non-profit status of social rental apartments is allowed to expire? This regulation does not exist in Austria.

Katharina Wagner:

“My appeal to landlords is that they should communicate with each other, talk to tenants and focus more on people’s needs. Good housing management also works with a moderate profit and investing generated profits back into your own building stock.”

Dhara Patel:

“Can housing estates be more than just buildings? Yes, absolutely. I think they are the very building blocks of solidarity in terms of creating a community [...] that really prioritizes people over profit.”

Astrid Wuttke:

“You won’t be able to solve the entire problem with existing building stock alone. But adding on to existing structures and filling the gaps in building stock is exactly what will create new communities. This is exciting because these buildings are not just linear elements, but have to organize themselves around something. This creates diversity all by itself.”

GOOD EXAMPLES FOR TOMORROW'S HOUSING ESTATES

- **Alt Erlaa**
residential park

- **People's Plan**
West Kensington
& Gibbs Green
Estates

- **Neustart Schweiz**

Alt Erlaa residential park, Vienna, Austria

Realization: 1973-1985
(planning began in 1968)

Number of apartments: 3,200
(for over 9,000 people)

Average rent: approx. 6€/sqm

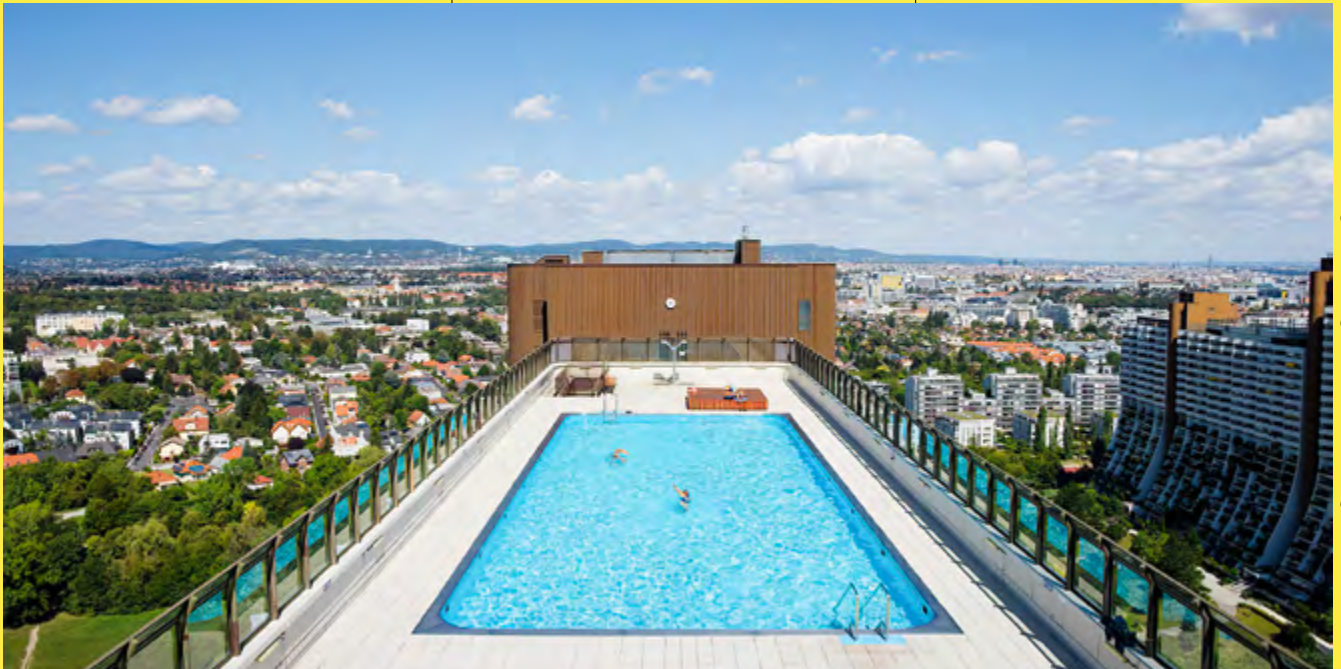
Architect: Harry Glück & Partner,
Kurt Hlaweniczka und Requat&Reinthaller

Client: GESIBA Gemeinnützige Siedlungs-
und Bauaktiengesellschaft (subsidiary of
the City of Vienna)

... social, because the average rent price is at only €6/sqm. The residential park is equipped with numerous infrastructures: Leisure facilities, schools, kindergartens, a retail park and swimming pools on the roofs.

... ecological, because many apartments have been built on a small area. Fresh air corridors and green facades ensure a good climate. The apartments have been extensively renovated—without the rent prices increasing.

... democratic, because an elected tenants' advisory board has a say in everyday life on site. This advisory board has a vote on the supervisory board of the housing company.



GESIBA Gemeinnützige Siedlungs- und Bauaktiengesellschaft



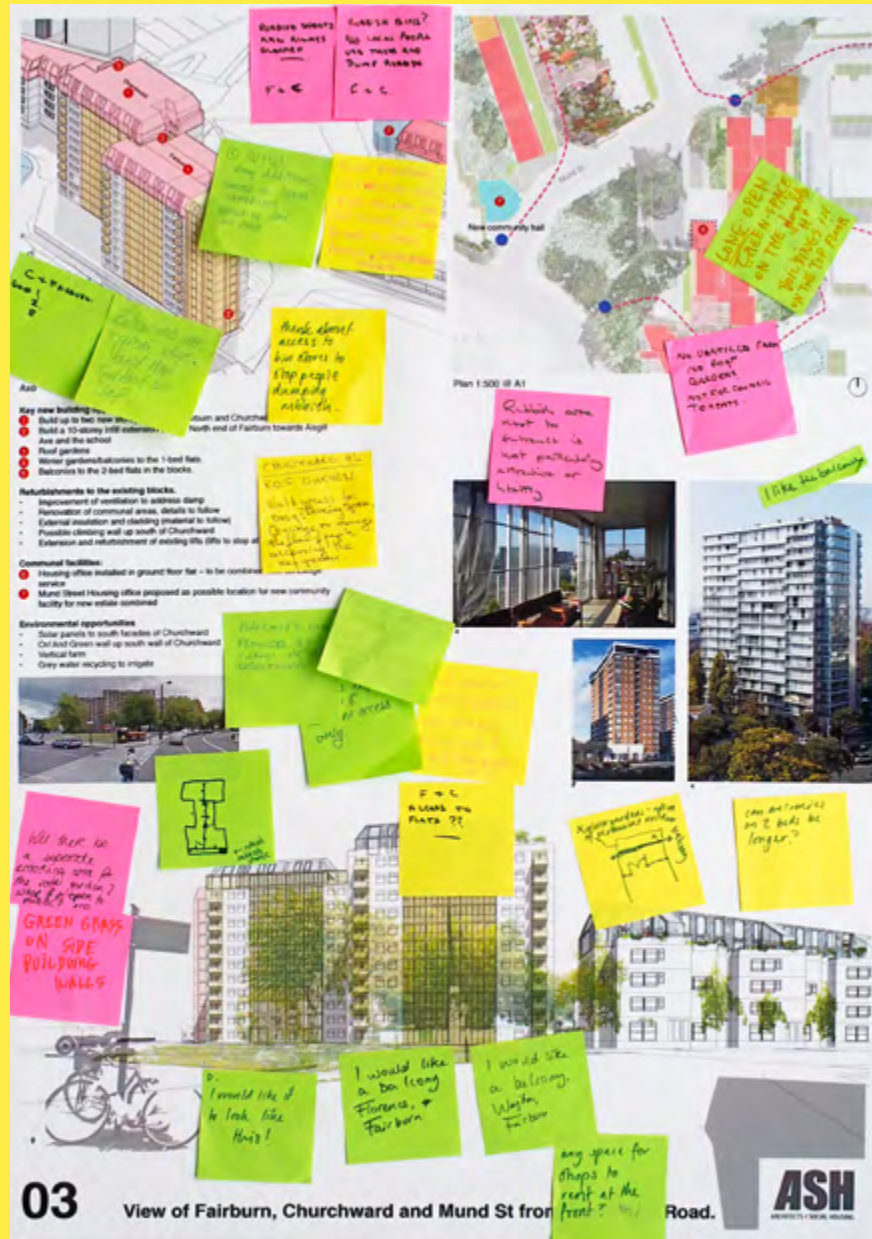
Implementation: 2015–2016
(planning and development of the „People's Plan“ to prevent demolition of social housing and luxury new builds)

Number of existing apartments: 760

Additional planned apartments: 250,
of which 70 for social housing and 180 for private sale to finance the refurbishment of existing social housing units

Architects: Architects for Social Housing (ASH), including Geraldine Dening, Emily Carmichael and Tom Brownill

Developer: West Ken Gibbs Green Community Homes Ltd, an organization run by the residents of the estate



... social, because the existing social housing will be retained and 70 new social housing units will be created. The retrofitting will create barrier-free living space for elderly and disabled people.

... ecological, because the demolition of social homes was prevented. Refurbishment reduces CO₂ emissions. Additional insulation, improved ventilation systems and the installation of solar panels contribute to energy efficiency.

... democratic, because the „People's Plan“ was initiated by the residents themselves and developed together with the architects. The residents control the regeneration process according to their ideas.

Neustart Schweiz—Creating inclusive, multifunctional neighborhoods and districts in Switzerland

Founded: 2010—based on ideas developed during the youth riots of the 1980s and the cooperative movement of the 1990s in the Zurich squatting scene

Housing estates and projects based on the Neustart idea: 10 (half of which have already been realized)

Average rent: calculated according to the cost-rent principle. The rent is calculated according to what it costs to build, operate and maintain the estate

Architects: Various

Clients: The residents



... **social**, because rents are affordable and speculation and profit-making are not permitted. The development of the most diverse and balanced community possible is encouraged. Everyone has the opportunity to contribute according to their needs and abilities, and care work is also organized in the neighbourhood.

... **ecological**, because the multifunctional neighborhoods allow economic cycles to be shaped regionally and sustainably. All measures reduce per capita energy consumption and enable a comfortable life within the planetary boundaries.

... **democratic**, because all residents can have a direct say in how the neighborhood should develop, how they want to live together and what responsibilities they want to take on. They decide together: How should the renovation measures be implemented? Should there be a laundry, an open workshop or an ice cream parlor?



Boris Haberthür

PRO

#HousingForAll: Housing Is A Right, Not A Privilege The potential of protest in the housing question

Carolin Genz

Access to affordable housing and the broad social participation in shaping a sustainable coexistence should actually be a fundamental principle. However, the right to housing is neither protected by law nor guaranteed under current housing policy. Whether it is rising rents in urban areas, vacant speculative properties, the continuous decline in publicly subsidized housing, increased homelessness or the rising number of people slipping into poverty due to high rents: these are real life stories for many in this country, and not simply statistics.

Inadequacies in the current housing system and their consequences pose existential threats to tenants. Driven by the “contradiction between housing as a basic need and as a commodity” (Vollmer 2024, 135, trans. JEL), housing issues have thus repeatedly become the focus of public debate and a flash point for protest.

Imagining Future Protest Practices

Social protests are an important means of addressing societal grievances by challenging power structures and giving a voice to marginalized groups. They also demonstrate how closely housing disputes are linked to the fundamental question of our societal order and

future. Urban spaces serve as stages and “important venues of political negotiation, where the basic organizational premises of our future society should be debated” (Genz 2020, trans. JEL). Protests allow those involved to bring their concerns into the public discourse, thus contributing to the formation of the critical public awareness necessary for social change. They feature a variety of individual and collective practices, strategies and forms of expression. However, “protest always questions a given order, making change conceivable in the first place. It makes way for the future...” (Rogger et al. 2018, 28, trans. XX). Protests are therefore not only criticisms of grievances, but also visions of a better world and ideas for possible futures.

Housing protests in particular have shaped the public discourse surrounding housing and access to affordable living in Germany, with the aim of bringing about social change through activism (see Schoch/Bürgin, 2018, 8). The protests raise larger questions about social justice in urban development and articulate the voice of an active civil society demanding its “right to the city” in an era dominated by the profit-oriented logic of exploitation. In addition to political goals, they also promote cohesion and community within the respective groups. This gives individuals the opportunity to feel they can actively participate in shaping their living conditions and society through their voice and public dialogue. In this context, protest is an important element of democratic decision-making.

The success of housing protests cannot always be measured in terms of immediate change. Even if political or legal reforms do not follow, protest creates an awareness of social, ecological and economic challenges in housing policy. It can sometimes initiate public debates aimed at changing the political framework. The continuous presence of housing protest movements also helps ensure that the issue of housing affordability and fairness remains on the political agenda. Looking to the past, tenants’ associations and housing

TEST

cooperatives emerged from rent protests as early as the 19th century (Vollmer 2024, 134). Years of continued protests have had an impact, such as the campaign to cap rapidly rising rents in Berlin. Although the law was later overturned by the German Constitutional Court, it brought rent caps into the public debate and illustrated how civil society involvement can influence the political discourse and agenda (Deutscher Mieterbund 2024).

After a planned “housing summit” was canceled in 2024 due to the break-up of the German coalition government, an “Alliance for Affordable Housing” was convened with the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development instead. Tenants’ associations and initiatives, along with more than 50 civil society organizations, called for a nationwide rent cap (Haufe 2024). Tenants also took to the streets in several cities, including Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich and Frankfurt as part of the “*Mietenstopp*” campaign. The breadth of the alliance representing civil society is particularly noteworthy: since there are currently no clear parliamentary majorities for quick political solutions to housing issues, civic alliances are becoming increasingly important. They are crucial for jointly developing future-oriented perspectives and discussing the diversity and changing housing needs in our society.

„For politics to take place, the body must appear.“

Protests are often linked to physical presence, as Judith Butler (2011) describes. But who actually has the ability to take part in rent protests, and who does not? Who has the time, energy and resources? What are the conditions that give rise to protest, and which voices are heard in the public arena, in the media, or digitally? Which voices go unheard? Not everyone has the opportunity to create a critical public sphere.

Protest alliances on housing issues are often criticized for being dominated by the “white, German middle class” (cf. Künkel 2016, 139, trans. JEL), resulting in a lack of pluralistic perspectives. Public debates are

shaped by power structures also reflected in language, behavior, and presentation, which reveal social inequalities. Just because someone is present does not mean their needs will be heard and translated into political solutions. By interweaving different media and digital protest practices such as online petitions, social media or flash mob videos, pluralistic narratives can gain visibility without large demonstrations (Genz 2020). In this way, the demands of diverse groups can be widely disseminated and alternative forms of enhancing visibility can be created.

Housing protests in Germany are more than just reactions to individual grievances—they are part of a social uprising against the increasing exploitation of housing and land as a commodity that runs counter to the needs of fair and community-oriented urban development. Protests are crucial to changing housing policy and to establish the demand for socially just and ecologically sustainable housing as a central political issue for the future.

Dr. Carolin Genz is an urban researcher focusing on the critical analysis of urban transformation processes, especially socio-spatial practices in the areas of housing, protest, gender and ageing. She has been a senior researcher and coordinator of the research cluster “Housing in Urban Development” at vhw—Bundesverband für Wohnen und Stadtentwicklung e.V. since 2022.

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The "Retired-Gang from Moabit" was the title of a report by Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg (RBB) on protesting senior citizens from Hansa-Ufer in Berlin, who had banded together against displacement and rising rents. The media's portrayal of their protests also reflected prejudices against elderly people in our society. Photo: Senior citizens from Hansa-Ufer, Berlin 2016. The senior citizens' hats were an important symbol of their community. Originally purchased during the Football World Cup, they were later redesigned with colorful ribbons. This choice shows the pragmatic use of limited means and resources. The hats stand less for political messages and more for practical symbolism and cohesion.



raum-auf-bundesebene_84342_565636.html, last access: 20.03.2025.

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REFURBISHMENT

Displacement Through Refurbishment? Modernization cost-sharing conflicts in socio-ecological housing

Firdes Firat

The recurring housing question involves not only social issues, but also climate policy. Outdated building stock must be refurbished to reduce CO₂ emissions. However, in the current political and legal context in Germany, refurbishment measures conflict with social goals, since their costs can be passed on to tenants and lead to rent increases. This article examines the structural and legal changes required to make renovations both ecological and socially acceptable, with a particular focus on modernization cost-sharing (*Modernisierungsumlage*) as a central area of conflict between climate and tenant protection.

Modernization cost-sharing as a central problem

The current legal situation regarding modernization allows landlords to pass on to tenants up to 8% of the investment costs per year to cover refurbishments (*Section 559 BGB*). Low-income households are often already overburdened by high housing costs even before rent increases due to modernization, leading to further, barely sustainable financial burdens. While energy-efficient refurbishment measures, such as insulating facades and roofs or installing efficient heating systems, reduce energy costs in the long term, the associated rent increases often exceed savings. Furthermore, landlords are not required to reduce

rents back to the original level (*Section 559 BGB*) once the refurbishment costs have been paid off. The cost-sharing levy thus turns ecologically necessary building refurbishment into an instrument for maximizing profits and displacing low-income households. Systematic socio-ecological transformation therefore requires a fundamental reform of modernization cost-sharing. Additional costs for energy-efficient refurbishments should not be passed on to tenants, but covered by public investment or a contribution from the real estate industry. Notable positive examples of socially responsible modernization measures are rare, as the majority of the housing stock is privately owned. Incentives to renovate buildings ecologically without increasing rents are lacking. Non-profit public housing can serve as an alternative, where refurbishments are implemented without increasing rents, as the focus is on the preservation and ecological upgrading of living space rather than on returns.

Tenant participation in refurbishment processes

A further obstacle to a systematic socio-ecological transformation is the inadequate participation of tenants in refurbishment measures. At present, landlords can carry out refurbishments largely without the involvement of tenants, as long as they meet minimum legal requirements. As a result, energy-efficient refurbishments are unilaterally geared towards economic interests without taking sufficient account of social impacts and the interests of residents. To encourage fairer practices and avoid false incentives and displacement, tenants should be involved in decision-making processes and planning at an early stage. Refurbishment measures should be legally linked to social criteria to prevent burdening affected households.

Socially responsible financing of refurbishment measures

The socio-ecological transformation of the housing and building sector requires a rethink of how

The "white estate" in Berlin-Neukölln is affected by intolerable building conditions, but refurbishment would mean high rent increases. Photo: Firdes Firat



modernizations are financed. In order to protect tenants from rising costs, public subsidies should be targeted towards refurbishing existing emission-intensive building stock, rather than towards new construction as the traditional solution to housing issues. Profits from the private real estate sector could be taxed to cover some of these costs. In addition, a legal framework should ensure that modernizations remain price-neutral for sitting tenants. If an energy-efficient refurbishment results in lower heating costs, then any rent increase should not change the total warm rent, or only minimally. For example, if a household pays €700 warm rent before the refurbishment (€500 basic rent + €200 heating costs) and heating costs fall to €100 after modernization, the basic rent should only rise to a maximum of €600 to keep the warm rent stable.

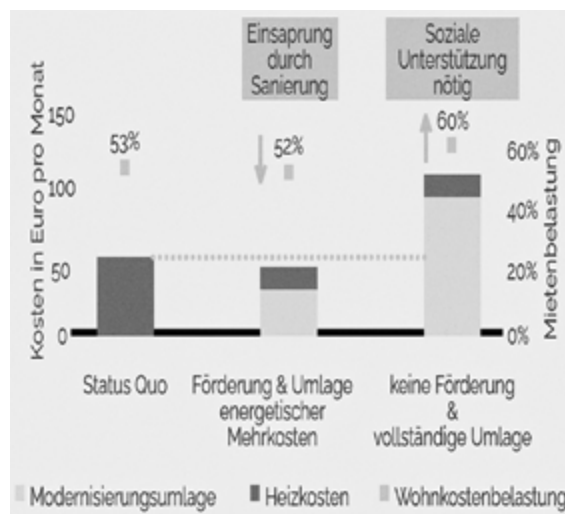
Climate protection measures have their price, but these should not be at the expense of already overburdened households. If climate protection and social justice are to be considered together, refurbishments must be seen as an opportunity to improve the housing situation, not as a strategy to displace tenants.

Political framework and implementation strategies:

A sustainable refurbishment policy requires clear legal guidelines and policies to ensure that ecological refurbishments do not become a social burden. The creation of a climate protection fund for non-profit refurbishments could help to avoid rent increases. The socialization of large housing stocks should also be considered as a climate policy strategy, as profit-oriented housing companies have no vested interest in comprehensive modernizations without rent increases. A non-profit housing organization could specifically combine social and ecological measures and ensure that long-term climate goals are reconciled with social justice. The switch to renewable energy would not have to be promoted through incentives, but could be introduced as a mandatory measure. In order to avoid social hardship, appropriate protections for tenants would be necessary.

Conclusion

Modernization cost-sharing and the profit interests of private-sector housing market players strain the compatibility of social and ecological objectives. Tax reform, coupled with greater public sector control of the refurbishment process, as well as financing geared towards the common good and tenant participation, can pave the way for socio-ecological transformation in the housing and building sector. Ecological measures must not lead to social displacement. Instead, refurbishment should be used as an opportunity to create socially and climate-friendly cities. A coordinated strategy of legal reforms, public funding and greater tenant participation can make this change possible.



Firdes Firat is an urban policy activist based in Berlin. She is completing her PhD at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg with a research focus on socio-ecological transformation in the housing and building sector.

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DEPRIVATIZATION

Deprivatization, Privatization and Re-Collectivizing Living Space

Gabu Heindl

Nothing is as private as home space. At the same time, nothing is so unsuited for privatization as housing. Privatizing home space transforms collective structures where people live, feel at home and can “be private”, into commercial property. Vital infrastructure thus

becomes a monopolized commodity, creating a conflict between housing rights and the right to private property.

The history of the housing programme New Frankfurt illustrates some exemplary aspects of these privatization processes: Currently celebrating its 100th anniversary, New Frankfurt stands for a committed public housing program in the Weimar Republic that represented possible alternatives to anticipated neoliberal privatization processes.

1 DEPRIVITIZATION—IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The New Frankfurt project was a clear commitment to housing as a public responsibility: Between 1925 and 1930 the city administration dedicated itself to solutions for the housing question, constructing 15,000 non-profit

apartments in the young Weimar Republic with the support of progressive housing policies. Two-thirds of the program was financed by funds from the *Hauszinssteuer* introduced in 1924, an income tax on residential properties built before 1918. In contrast to the Viennese housing program Red Vienna, which at that time was 100 percent municipally financed, the rate in Frankfurt was only 26 percent, plus 37 percent private non-profit and cooperative parties, and 37 percent through the municipal *Mietheim-A.-G.* and *Aktienbaugesellschaft für kleine Wohnungen* (today ABG Frankfurt Holding). Rents in the New Frankfurt housing projects were nevertheless barely affordable for those most in need, while the significantly lower rents in Red Vienna were only made possible because they were decoupled from construction costs.

In striking contrast to the Vienna program, Frankfurt responded to the massive land speculation and high land prices at the time with a concrete expropriation strategy. Land for the now familiar Römerstadt and Praunheim developments was expropriated and compensated at slightly less than the lowest market value. City planning commissioner Ernst May referred to the concept of “social-economic efficiency”: “We only recognize economic efficiency that is built on keeping people healthy—a social-economic efficiency.”¹

Non-profit status was officially introduced towards the end of the Weimar Republic in 1930, and enshrined into law in the 1940s with uniform guidelines for non-profit housing companies: the business activities of housing associations were restricted in return for tax benefits. It was taken for granted at the time that subsidized housing would remain non-profit permanently, but this concept was abolished in 1990.² Since then, 45,000 subsidized apartments a year in Germany have been dropped from their limited non-profit status and many were privatized.

2 PRIVATIZATION—LEFT TO THE FREE MARKET

The fate of public housing dating from the New Frankfurt era has played out as anticipated: Post-war liberalization and neo-liberal policies since the 1980s have resulted in the privatization of a considerable number of the apartment units. The *Aktienbaugesellschaft für kleine Wohnungen* (ABG), founded in 1890 and taken over by the municipal government in 1922, was politically mandated in 1990 to generate profits through the private-sector company ABG Holding. As a result, a large proportion of the New Frankfurt estates were transferred to Vonovia’s (Europe’s largest stock-listed real estate firm) ownership, including the Lindenbaum and Hängelstrasse housing units and parts of the Carl-von-Weinberg estate. ABG still manages 25% of Frankfurt’s housing stock—albeit with a private-sector profit agenda and no longer according to “social profitability”. The term “social” has also been consistently degraded in connection with the housing industry, while privatization is ideologically linked to catch phrases such as “necessary incentives”, “increased efficiency”, “sustainability” and “innovative management”.

This is fundamentally absurd, since non-profit housing has generated sufficient income to operate socially and sustainably for more than a hundred years. Private-sector housing management, on the other hand, has clearly increased only the efficiency of owners’ profits at the expense of social standards. The Carl-von-Weinberg estate illustrates the logic of speculative disinvestment that has allowed housing to deteriorate over a long period of time to the point of inhabitability. Dilapidation has proved in practice to be the prelude to upgrading, forced evictions and terminated leases. Forced terminations are part of the profit-oriented system of large housing corporations.

12
WARUM ENTEIGNUNG ? · WHY EXPROPRIATION ? · POURQUOI L'EXPROPRIATION ?
 Wert des Geländes an der Peripherie der Stadt je qm. : · Value of site at the periphery of the town, the sq. m. : · Valeur du terrain à la périphérie de la ville, le m² :

Marktwert 2.50 RM. Market value 2.50 RM. Valeur de marché: 2.50 RM.	Gefordert wurde 15 RM. demanded price 15 RM. Prix demandé 15 RM.	Enteignungspreis 3.50 RM. expropriation price 3.50 RM. Prix d'expropriation: 3.50 RM.
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3 RE-COLLECTIVIZATION—BUILDING PUBLIC-CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS

The current housing and construction crisis can draw on some aspects of the New Frankfurt program in the sense of a critical legacy. In the context of nationwide initiatives to expropriate Deutsche Wohnen, Vonovia and other oversized German housing corporations, it is instructive and even beneficial in this anniversary year to celebrate not only the public pragmatism of Ernst May and his contemporaries, but also to remind ourselves that New Frankfurt was the basis for our modern housing developments. It was a part of pragmatic public policy to expropriate land for housing estates on the outskirts of the city, and compensate owners at 3.50 Reich Mark instead of the 15 Reich Mark demanded on the open market: “For all the hardship that every expropriation represents as an encroachment on free property, there can be no doubt that a modern city pursuing planned urban development can no more achieve its goal without the right of expropriation than the railroad and hydraulic engineering authorities would have been able to expand their network without such coercive means.”³ Today, however, this planning instrument is much more likely to be used for highway construction than for housing, even though it offers a promising opportunity for socialization.

A concept of New Frankfurt that is only significant at second glance could be productive in my opinion. The term public-private partnership (PPP) had already appeared back then—the name given to the co-financing of housing from public and private capitalist funds. In one sub-segment of New Frankfurt the city financed 50% of a project through the *Hauszinssteuer* (real estate interest tax), among other things, while the remaining 50% was financed by housing enterprises such as the building association of I.G. Farben in the case of the Carl-von-Weinberg-Estate—which at the time were still non-profit organizations.⁴

In contrast, PPPs today also include partnerships between the public sector and profit-oriented investors (e.g. Signa) or financial groups (e.g. Vonovia). While this model is rightly subject to strong criticism, there is growing interest in alternative forms of housing construction that bring together non-profit actors and public interests as possible organizational forms for re-socialized housing: cooperative foundations, apartment building syndicates, and public law institutions. Instead of PPP, for public-private partnership, these would be PCP, or public-civic partnerships that would prevent monopolizing home space as commodity. This joint ownership without profit maximization creates alternatives for affordable housing protected from speculation.

These kinds of partnerships, which New Frankfurt had already entered into, were forgotten in the course of the privatization agenda. New Frankfurt’s milestone anniversary would be a wonderful occasion to rediscover its buried potential and bring new forms of housing development and investment to the forefront

again—no longer on greenfield sites, but rather in existing vacancies.

- 1 Ernst May, In: *Das Neue Frankfurt 1930-2/3*, p. 28.
- 2 It was not until 2024 that a kind of non-profit housing was reintroduced, which only covers a fraction of the historical achievements.
- 3 May 1930, p. 32.
- 4 Non-profit housing was to be preferred. Cf. May 1930, p. 26.

Everyday housing issues.
On privatisation, refurbishment
and protest

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