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CONSULTING

NEWSLETTER 2019/4

Housing News

Graz, Austria

Terrassenhaussiedlung/ Terrace Housing Estate Graz: 50 Years later

The Terrassenhaussiedlung at St.Peter in Graz by Werkgruppe Architects has been recognized as one of the most influential 1970s housing estates. Its brutalist façade reflecting the choice of floor plans and façade elements by the individual residents caused discussions about the city of the future among citizens and experts alike. After almost 40 years it stands also for the question how to deal with these monuments of modernism under today´s conditions. Should they be open to the usual methods of retrofitting? Are they still models for communal living in a society that has changed in many ways? Are the 1,100 residents still content with the results of this participatory pilot project? The last question is the easiest to answer. As housing researcher Andrea Jany has recently found out, residents´satisfaction is still higher than in any other housing estate. As to the future development she suggests to follow the original participatory concept with close resident involvement. This includes the discussion of new uses for the communal areas – like music and hobby rooms. Moreover the residents are encouraged to enter a network of similar estates in Europe for an exchange of ideas and know-how. Graz St. Peter could thus become an example of re-development of such groundbreaking developments from the 1960s and 1970s.

For more info see: https://www.tugraz.at/fakultaeten/architektur/forschung/forschungsprojekte/sonte

Julia Gaisbacher ©

Berlin, Germany
City buys Karl Marx Allee dwellings

As a surprising result of recent discussions about housing problems in the German capital the red-green Senate has now started a spectacular program of re- communalization of privatized housing. As a first step the City has announced to buy more than 670 dwellings in the prestigious Karl Marx-Allee in former East-Berlin where privatization and rising rents had led to residents´ protests. As Lord Mayor Michael Müller from the Social-Democrats has announced this will be the start for a more extensive repurchasing program of former social housing to deal with the disastrous results of privatization and rent increases.

For more info see:
https://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2019/pressemitteilung.829074.php

European Housing Cooperative

The lack of affordable housing in many European countries has led to the foundation of Europe´s first multi-national housing cooperative, the brand-new cooperative "Living in Metropolises" (LIM) is the first to follow the 2006 decision of the EU to establish European cooperatives. All it needs to do this are five legal persons from at least two member countries and a founding capital of € 30,000. A first housing project with 29 flats has just been started at the Berlin district of Köpenick. The cooperative intends to enter Austrian developers´ competitions in the next step.

For more info see:
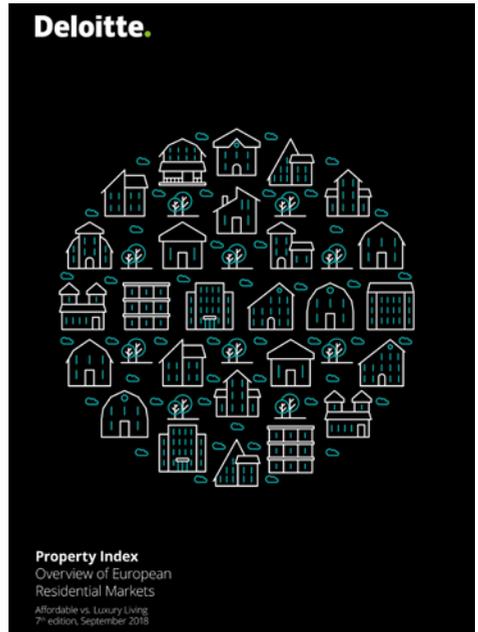https://www.ef-l.eu/our-projects/lim

House Prices in Europe

How long does one have to work to purchase a house? While prices per square meter for a new dwelling in Europe reach average levels like € 4,043 in Norway, € 4,016 in France, or 3,743 in the UK it is interesting to compare how long a person with an average income has to work to buy an appropriate dwelling. This shows surprising results: According to the Deloitte Property Index house buyers in the Czech Republic need more than 11 years, while it is "only" 10 in Latvia, 9 in the UK, and 6 in Austria. Of course, house prices also differ between capital cities and other parts of the same country. Prices in Paris and London, for example, are three times the national average. In absolute terms Paris has the highest average prices per m2 - € 12,910 -, followed by London - € 11,185 – and Munich (€ 7,800), while Vienna remains relatively cheap (€ 4,199).

For more info see:
https://www2.deloitte.com/at/de/seiten/press-release/deloitte-property-index-2018.html

Deloitte.

Property Index
Overview of European
Residential Markets
Affordable vs. Luxury Living
7ᵗʰ edition, September 2018

UN Special Rapporteur on Housing delivers Report

Leilani Farha (Canada) who was appointed special rapporteur to the UN on housing presented her report recently. Farha strongly criticizes the global "financialization" of housing which has left millions without adequate housing. A massive shift of global capital investment has left homes empty and people homeless, argues Leilani Farha. Housing must be seen as a human right rather than a commodity, the report insists. It calls for a global initiative to provide affordable housing to everyone.

For more info see:
www.unhousingrapp.org

Vienna, Austria
No more Fossil Energies in Climate Protection Zones

Following a 2018 new rule in its building Code the Austrian capital has now decided that in "climate protection zones" new buildings must renounce of fossil energy use. Developers must now decide between the use of renewable energies like solar or wind energy or connection to the district heating system which works with heat from waste incineration. According to Vienna´s deputy mayor from the Green Party four of the city´s 23 districts have now been selected as pilot areas to be started this year. As an additional effect building costs are expected to decrease as no gas pipes swill be needed any more.

For more info see:
https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/energie/klimaschutz-gebiete.html

Düsseldorf, Germany
Declaration on Urban Planning Law

The tenth Düsseldorf Conference on Beauty and Viability of the City gathered again a large number of architects as well as politicians and housing experts. This year the discussions concentrated on the legal framework of building and planning. While once again the city of Vienna was presented as a best practice, due to its tradition of social housing and mixed neighborhoods, the German "Baunutzungsverordnung" Land Utilization Ordinance) was strongly criticized as an obstacle to socially sustainable urban planning. At the end more than 50 responsible city representatives signed the "Erklärung zum Städtebaurecht" (Declaration on Urban Planning Law) stipulating a change from car-friendly and low-density urban areas to "freedom from noise and digital".

For more info see: www.stadtbaukunst.de/homepage/konferenz-no-10-4/

Germany
Higher Consumption of Living space threatening Climate Protection Goals

Better energy standards of buildings are practically nullified by higher consumption of living space, says a report by the Darmstadt Institut Wohnen und Umwelt (IWU, Institute Housing and Environment). While the energy consumption per m2 in residential buildings has been reduced by 30 percent between 1995 and 2015 the average living space per head in Germany has increased by 5 m2 every 10 years since the end of WW II resulting in an average of 46,7 m2 per head in Germany in 2019 - roughly the size of dwellings for whole families in cities like Paris or London. In spite of stronger retrofitting efforts energy saving goals are thus threatened. IWU therefore calls for an end of the trend to more living space consumption, e.g. by a resettlement management for the elderly who often live in too large dwellings after their children have moved out.
For more info see:
www.iwu.de/aktuell/

Montgomery County, MD:
Profitting from the Vienna ecxperience

The first Gemeindebau (Vienna Council housing) Centennial Exhibition, Symposium and Community Conversation to combine Viennese officials with American community and local leaders, took place in Maryland suburbs of Washington DC in September.
According to Hans Riemer, Chairman of the Montgomery Council Planning, housing and Economic Development Committee, the exhibition cum workshop, organized in collaboration with the Austrian Embassy, is expected to provide inputs to the local affordable housing program as a number of social housing providers and NGOs participated in the discussions.

The State of housing in the EU

The 2019 report on the state of housing, commissioned by Housing Europe, was recently published by the European Commission. Although based on 2017 figures it demonstrates clearly the increasing housing crisis in most of the EU member countries: more than 10 percent of poor households spend over 40 percent of their monthly income for housing. 156 million people are threatened by poverty as a result of house prices, and the difficulty to find affordable housing is now becoming a widespread phenomenon even in middle class groups. Demonstrations and protests all over Europe show the increasing dissatisfaction of large parts of the population with current neo-liberal housing policies which have turned housing, especially in cities, into big business. The authors propose the creation of a European Investment Fund for social housing calling Ms. von der Leyen´s new commission for action.

For more info see:
www.housingeurope.eu/resource-985/the-state-of-housing-in-the-eu-2017

Vienna, Austria
Kolokation Vienna-Seestadt

Asynkron

Housing for an ageing society is quickly becoming a major topic in many large cities. "Kolokation", a Vienna-based non-profit association, now provides a new solution. The idea is to create a living environment both for senior and for young residents – mainly students and single parents by joint planning and living in a self-organized small community. The young and the elderly (50+) are expected to help each other in their daily lives. While Kolokation´s first project at the centrally located Sonnwendviertel was quickly rented out a second building is now being planned at the Seestadt Aspern area, currently Europe´s biggest urban development project which will accommodate some 20,000 residents in 2030.

For more info see:
https://kolokation-as.net

Munich
## EU cities combine efforts to fight Airbnb

Paris is just one example: 26 percent of its centrally located apartments are not used any more for permanent living. In some central areas schools are now closing due to a lack of permanent residents as more and more homes are rented out to platforms like Airbnb. Other cities face the same problem. Besides cities report huge tax losses as more travelers shift from normal hotels to – often illegal – short term rental platforms. A conference held in Munich in October united city representatives from Germany, France, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands to develop a joint strategy demanding an EU legislation from the newly elected EU parliament and Commission.

For more info see:
https://skift.com/2019/06/20/european-cities-turn-to-eu-for-help-in-battle-against-airbnb

Woodbury. L.A.: Housing Initiative

While many schools of architecture continue to neglect the topic of housing – regarding it as a social task rather than one of architecture – Burbank/L.A. based Woodbury University´s School of architecture under dean Ingalill Wahlroos-Richter is now responding to a request by L.A. Mayor Eric Garzetti to work on new models for affordable housing. Woodbury has announced a one-year Housing initiative starting in fall 2019 which will include a series of lectures, talks, and exhibitions at centrally located WUHO, the university´s center for experimental exhibitions and multi-disciplinary collaborations. WUHO providing a public platform for investigating the impact of architecture and design on culture, society, and the built environment will also host the exhibition "the Vienna Model 2" in March 2020 to contribute to the development of affordable housing projects for L.A.
For more information see:
https://woodbury.edu/academics/resources/wuho-gallery
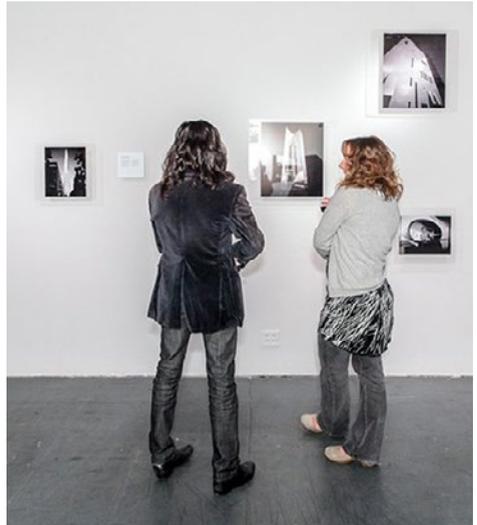
Critical Care: Architecture for a broken Planet

Cambridge, MA (MIT Press) 2019,
ISBN: 9780262536837

Curators Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny present our planet as a patient in need of intensive care. The exhibition of AZW (Architekturzentrum Wien, Vienna Architecture Center) has now been published in a book by MIT Press. Today, architecture and urbanism are capital-centric, speculation-driven, and investment-dominated. Many cannot afford housing. Austerity measures have taken a disastrous toll on public infrastructures. The climate crisis has rendered the planet vulnerable, even uninhabitable. This book offers an alternative vision in architecture and urbanism that focuses on caring for a broken planet. Rooted in a radical care perspective that always starts from the given, in the midst of things, this edited collection of essays and illustrated case studies documents ideas and practices from an extraordinarily diverse group of contributors. Case studies include a variety of examples from Europe, Asia, and South America, and highlight the possibilities of urban planning and architecture to help saving the earth.
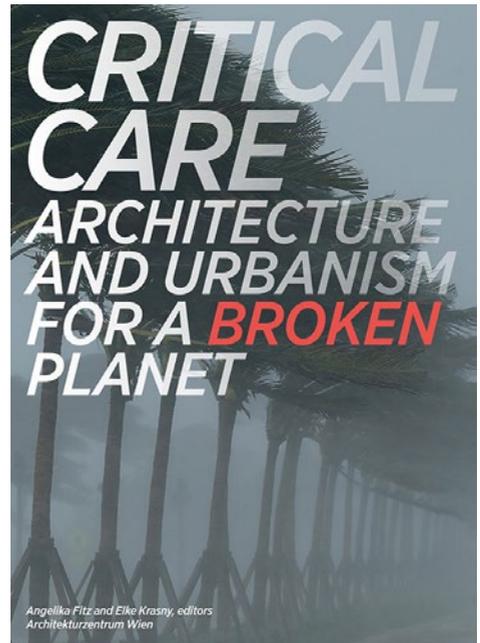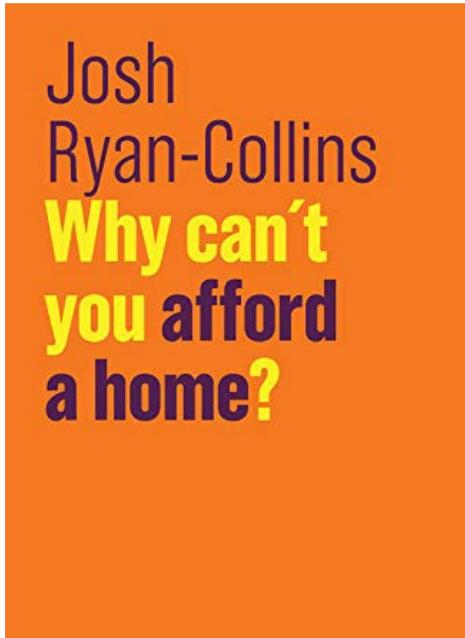
Josh Ryan.Collins: Why can´t you afford a home?
Cambrisdge, UK 2018

Throughout the Western world, a whole generation is being priced out of the housing market. For millions of people, particularly millennials, the basic goal of acquiring decent, affordable accommodation is a distant dream. Ryan-Collins explains why: because housing has become an investment rather than a basic need. Radical reforms are needed to break the cycle. This engaging and topical book will be essential reading for anyone who wants to understand why they can't find an affordable home, and what we can do about it.