

European Network of Housing Research (ENHR)

Tagung:

Sustainable Urban Areas

Juni 2007, Rotterdam

In der im zweiten Weltkrieg stark zerstörten und architektonisch bemerkenswert wieder aufgebauten und interessanten Stadt Rotterdam fand der internationale Kongress statt.

Einige Personen aus Österreich waren auf der Teilnehmerliste. Für die NÖLAK, Bereich Umwelt und Energie nahm Dr. Schörner mit einem Tagungsbeitrag teil.







TAGUNGSBEITRAG:

Sustainable Urban Development in Lower Austria

Georg Schoerner and **Franz Schoerghuber**

NOe Landesakademie - The Scientific Academy of Lower Austria, St. Poelten, AUSTRIA, georg.schoerner@noe-lak.at ; www.noe-wohnbauforschung.at
Workshop W19 – The Sustainable City

Abstract:

In the last 20 years a dedicated and challenging program (“Lower Austrian village renewal program” – “Dorf- und Stadterneuerung Niederoesterreich”) in connection with other programs and research work from the Lower Austrian Housing Research Program helped to revitalize the city centres. Also a part of the transnational European EUROPAN project was executed in Krems-Lerchenfeld to upgrade the situation in a medium size city.

Keywords:

Regional planning, sustainable development, urban development, housing research projects, European, revitalization.

Introduction:

The fall of the city centres has been in the recent past that problem, which caused largest concerns for the regional planners and local politicians in Austria. In the past 20 years the development of the Austrian small and medium-sized towns was characterized by the fact that the medium-size economy (Trade and production-SME) shifted their activities and/or locations to the edge of the cities; into the 'Greens'; at any case outside of the grown settlement areas.

This had several causes. Above all those that the city administrations didn't react upon the rapidly rising mobility of the consumers; the traffic infrastructure kept low, acceptable passenger car parking offers were just as little as attractive public transport facilities or shuttle services.

The consequences were apparent and bitter: closed or desolate shops within the city centres, prospered trade zones and shopping malls far from the traditional centres.

But 20 years ago also a challenging program ('Lower Austrian village renewal program' - 'Dorf- und Stadterneuerung Niederoesterreich') has been started: With large efforts including mobilization of creative marketing experts and regional planners and provision of public funding it was possible to take countermeasures and to have a revival of the local and town centres. Specific promotion actions complete the efforts. Successes came gradually:

- Many outstanding ideas have been really well accepted and
- Pure shopping areas and shopping malls become a little bit boring faraway all culture offers. They lost their original drive and in this point the new 'revitalization concepts' hooked in which based also on concepts of sustainable development.

Besides of this 'village renewal program' some studies have been elaborated within the 'Lower Austrian housing research program'.

The Lower Austrian Village Renewal Program

A sustainable redevelopment of villages contains social, economic, cultural and ecological aspects for these unique places und is aimed to wake up the efforts of the inhabitants, to improve living conditions in their village by their own. The village and the rural space are strengthened in their cultural heritage and renewed. The regional economic circles are strengthened by the use of regional resources and honorary activities of its inhabitants. „Redevelopment of villages" is an action Programme of the federal province of Lower Austria, the non-profit-association „Redevelopment of villages and cities in Lower Austria" is entrusted to carry out this task. More than 25.000 honorary persons give a big contribution for the development of villages and municipalities in Lower Austria. .The action, redevelopment of villages" encourages the inhabitants of rural space to face responsibility for their local living space and to work together with politicians and the administration on its creation, planning and development.

The main target of Village Renewal in Lower Austria is to strengthen local communities. The model of direct participation of every person interested in the project has been realized in about 700 villages with inhabitants between 100 and 5.000. For larger cities the action of Town Renewal is in operation. The biggest town of Lower Austria has about 50.000 inhabitants.

In 1984 the start came with a “campaign for the village”. By means of abroad awareness and motivation-processes a new consciousness was created, based on former traditions.

City redevelopment is also an action of the federal province of Lower Austria, based on the success of the action „redevelopment of villages’ and was created in 1992. In this process a broad concept and bundle of activities are worked out by inhabitants, politicians, administration and opinion leaders in workshops open to everyone. This concept is confirmed by the local authority and carried out in the following years with financial support by the federal country.

	No. projects	Subsidies Mill. €	Investment Mill...€
In der Aktion Dorf- und Stadterneuerung werden Projekte mit Dorferneuerungsvereinen, Gemeinden und Städten entwickelt und bei Förderstellen eingereicht. Ein Euro an Förderung löst durchschnittlich 4 bis 6 € an Investitionen aus.			
Jahr	Anzahl der Projekte	Förderungen in Mio. €	Investitionen in Mio. €
1997	186	3,90	18,40
1998	268	5,20	26,40
1999	370	7,10	28,50
2000	258	5,00	25,30
2001	339	5,70	26,30
2002	673	9,65	27,62
2003	566	7,86	24,80
2004	530	5,00	30,93
2005	392	5,69	27,00
2006	382	4,08	23,54

700 local organisations and associations used 200.000 honorary working hours in 2005.

Areas of Activities

Defined areas of activity are:

- Improvement of the village structure and design
- Renovation of buildings
- Utilization of local energy resources (energy plan)
- Assuring and improving the ecology and sustainability
- Socio-cultural renewal
- Improvement of the structure of agricultural processes
- Assuring a reasonable standard of living

How the programme works

The province of Lower Austria bears most of the costs of the assistance to the villages made by the professional motivators and moderators of the process. The provincial

government also pays subsidies for local projects depending on the size of the project with costs between a few hundred € and 15.000 € or more. Never the subsidy can be higher than half of the total costs. Normally the subsidy is much less than 50 %.

Programme of Sustainability

Since 2004 local communities can participate in the programme of Sustainability (Local Agenda 21) within the Village Renewal Programme (“Gemeinde 21”). This programme is not aimed for single villages as centres of living but for the administrative unit of communities. Most communities consist of a handful of villages; bigger town administrations often include a couple of dozen villages.

Special Unit for architecture

Within the administration of Lower Austria an own administrative unit was set up dealing with the issue of architecture in the villages. This unit is called „Ortsbildstelle“. They edit a brochure called „Niederoesterreich gestalten“(i.e. „To design Lower Austria“) six times a year. In former years it propagated the preservation of old buildings, now it has set its main focus on a positive relation between old and new architecture. Also energy-saving buildings are a big issue for this unit.

Working tasks of the program:

1. Information and motivation:

- Model creation and aim for every involved municipality
- Design of workshops and presentation, discussions, round tables, ...

2. Attending processes and development of projects:

- Project-management
- Solving conflicts between interest groups
- Presentation of meetings
- Giving advices for getting grants and aids including the help to fill in the forms
- Supervising grants
- P.R. work

3. Evaluation of the program

Three modules are setting impulses for the stimulation of local centres:

Module 1: Using public building and housing funds for building and renovation

Module 2: Promotion of local shops and small local shopping centres (within the city centres) by a so-called special program NAFES

Module 3: Development and promotion of special measure plans for stabilization of the local trade in town centres

The valuation criteria within the project selection are:

- **Sustainability** - The stimulation of the centre must be in a sustainable way with an increase of dwellings in relation to the existing number of houses
- **Stimulation** of the local centre - a total concept for the stimulation of the local centre should be worked out in a first phase?
- **Architectural quality** – The style of the ensemble should be in a good contrast to up-to-date architecture
- **Economy** - the project must be able to exist on a long-term basis, without subsidies of the public for the daily expenses.

- **Mix** – not only for residential use, also additional important footfall generators such as medical ordinations, post-offices, banks, business or services enterprises, etc.
- **Eligible for financing** – the project has to meet all requirements for getting subsidies.

The EUROPAN Program; Example Krems

Definition

The objective of EUROPAN is to bring to the fore Europe's young architecture and urban design professionals, and to publicise and develop their ideas. Its objective is also to help cities and developers which have provided sites to find innovative architectural and urban solutions for the transformation of urban locations. EUROPAN is a European federation of national organisations, which manages architectural competitions followed by building or study projects, launched simultaneously by several countries on common theme, objectives and rules. The open competitions are anonymous and public calls for ideas on a European scale.

Candidature

EUROPAN is open to any team of young urban and architectural design professionals (architects, urban planners, landscape designers, engineers). Teams may also include young professionals from other disciplines. All candidates must be under 40 years old on the closing date for submission of entries.

Judging

In each country, a national jury of 9 judges and deputies examines all the projects entered in the country. The jury meets in two sessions. During the first one, the jury examines the conformity of the projects in relation to the competition theme; during the second session, the jury examines the short-listed projects in terms of their innovative qualities and suitability to the context. A European forum with the members of the juries and the representatives of the sites is organized in between of the two sessions in order to debate the short-listed projects.

Krems-Lerchenfeld

From 2002 to 2004 during the EUROPAN 7 program for 68 sites, in total 2.000 teams of architects worked out detailed plans. 119 teams were awarded. One of these sites has been Krems-Lerchenfeld.

Krems is located near Vienna (70km) along the Danube and is a historic city of different purposes (founded more than 1.000 years ago). Krems has about 23.000 inhabitants.

The district Lerchenfeld is located not far from the historical centre of Krems but is isolated by infrastructure boundaries. This framing might have supported the inner

autonomy of the area: social infrastructures as well as commercial spaces and sports areas already provide a “sprawled” variety of services.



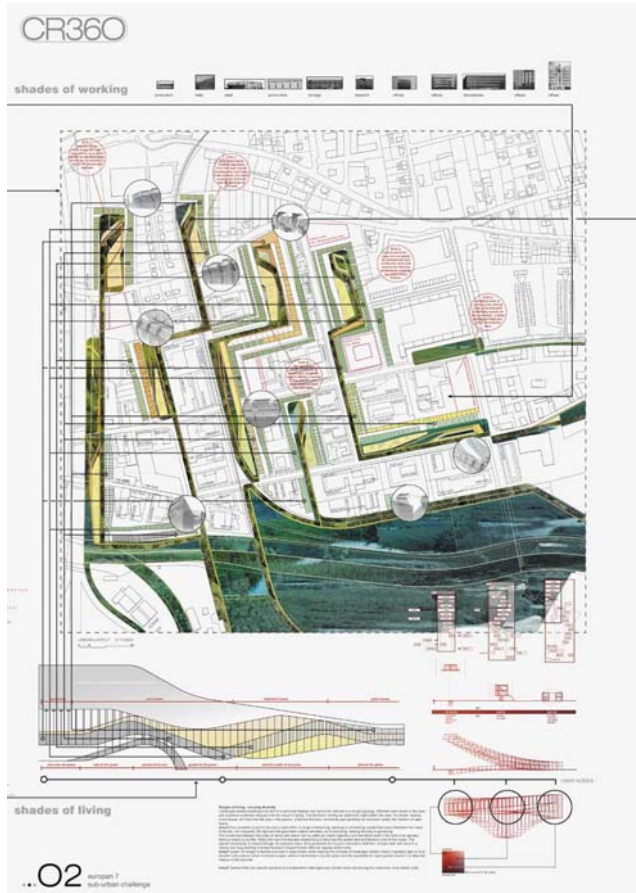
A lot of different alternatives have been evaluated. The examples show only some varieties, like the following award winner project:

The project ***miscZ*** is a strategy for suburban diversity and coherence and has been developed within Krems-Lerchenfeld.

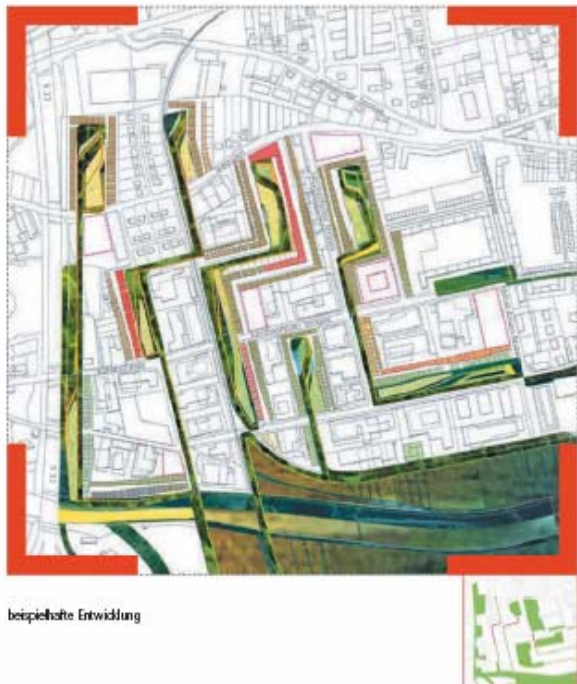
miscZ assumes Lerchenfeld's proximity to the river meadow landscape of the Danube, the direct connection to the regional infrastructural network and the free spirit of spontaneous developments to be its greatest virtues. At the same time it introduces coherence: it infiltrates the district with a 'loose' identity based on strands of usage rather than on image.

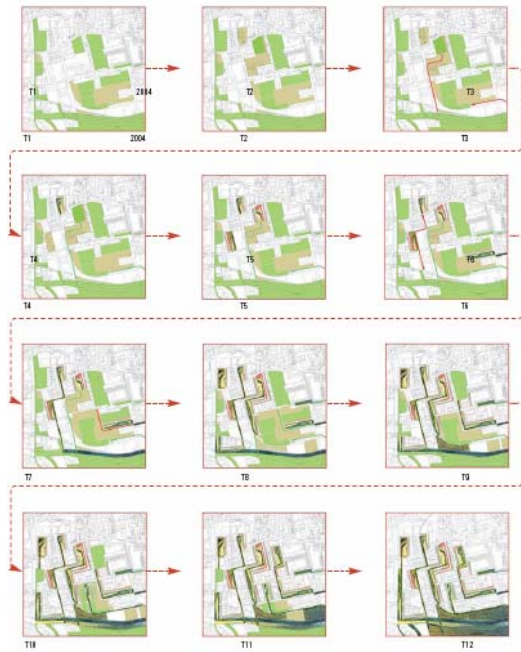
miscZ is a strategy designed to release the site-inherent potentials while resolving the friction between planned and unplanned as a dynamic process over time. It integrates the binding to the traffic system which is essential to the businesses with the individual access of the dweller to the river meadow landscape. It defines areas of untied, dynamic commercial development by placing living environments. Coherence and openness start to coexist.

Embracing the fact that landscape has become a function of the urban, the site bears a unique chance to facilitate a housing strategy that responds to the multiple relations living and landscape can take on. Viewing the surroundings and actively using the outdoors for recreation becomes the inherent principle in all the ranges of living offered.



Other examples from the EUROPAN 7 final report:





References:

- Wohnbauforschungsprojekt F-2123 Wohnen und Freiraum. Stadtentwicklung in den Randgebieten. Wettbewerbsstandort Krems – Lerchenfeld; DI Bernd Vlay; EUROPAN Österreich, Haus der Architektur, A-810 Graz, Engelgasse 3-5; E-Mail: office@euroman.at; www.euroman.at.
- „Dorf- und Stadterneuerung Niederösterreich“; persönliche Informationen vom Februar 2007
- Documents from www.euroman.at , www.smaq.net (miscZ, in: European 7, European Results - Sub-Urban Challenge, Urban intensity and Housing Diversity, Paris 2004, ISBN 2-915578-57-5, p. 114.); www.raumordnung-noe.at;

General Information:

Niederösterreich (Lower Austria) is often described as the 'province around Vienna' because, from a geographical point of view, Vienna, which is Austria's capital and at the same time a separate federal province, is located in the centre of Niederösterreich - similar to the situation of Berlin and Brandenburg in Germany. Vienna had also been for a long time the seat of the provincial government of Niederösterreich. 1986 St. Pölten was chosen as provincial capital and in 1997, the provincial government, provincial administration and provincial parliament, followed by other important institutions were transferred to St. Poelten. Niederösterreich has the largest area and the second largest population (after Vienna) of the nine federal provinces in Austria. Niederösterreich is bordered to the north by the Czech Republic and to the east by Slovakia, where the river system of Thaya and March marks the frontier line. In the south, the foothills of the Eastern Alps form a natural boundary with Steiermark. In the south-east, Niederösterreich borders to Burgenland and this is where the province also has a share in the Pannonian Plateau, which then stretches into Hungary (4 km away⁹). The Danube plays a very prominent role in both topographical and historical terms. This river, which was once the northern boundary of the Roman Empire, is the lifeline of the region and divides Niederösterreich into a northern part with the Wald- and Weinviertel and a southern part with the Most- and Industrieviertel. The Danube has been of great importance since historical times as a transport artery, and today it forms part of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal, linking the Atlantic to the Black Sea.

Zusammenfassende Eindrücke über die Konferenz und ihre Aussagen:

In den vergangenen zwei Jahren wurde die "Nachhaltigkeit" ein bedeutender Themenbereich. Aber der Begriff ist nicht länger nur auf Umweltschutz, Klimaschutz usw. beschränkt, er wurde zu einem wichtigen Teil des „Wohnens“. Das beinhaltet auch die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Stadt und Umland, die Gestaltung umweltfreundlicher Städte sowie die zugehörigen Transformationsprozesse.

Insgesamt beschäftigten sich 22 Arbeitskreise, teilweise wegen des grossen Andranges in Parallelsessions mit folgenden Themenbereichen; das Referat von Dr. Schörner wurde im Rahmen des Bereiches **The sustainable city** gehalten.

- **Housing Finance**
- **Migration, Residential Mobility, and Housing Policy**
- **Institutional and organisational change in social housing organisations in Europe**
- **Housing and sustainable urbanisation in developing countries**
- **The Residential Context of Health**
- **Spatial planning and governance at the regional level**
- **Tools to facilitate housing and urban processes**
- **Housing and Social Theory**
- **The sustainable city**
- **Housing and Minority Ethnic Groups**
- **Housing Economics**
- **Poverty Neighbourhoods**
- **Housing and urban sustainability**
- **Welfare Policy, Homelessness and Housing Exclusion**
- **Institutional and Organisational Change in Social Housing Organisations in Europe**
- **Housing regeneration and Maintenance**
- **Residential Environments and People**
- **Legal Aspects of Housing, Land and Planning**
- **Home Ownership and globalisation**
- **Housing Markets Dynamics**

- **Metropolitan dynamics: Urban change, market and governance**
- **East European housing & urban policy**

Link der Konferenz: <http://www.enhr2007rotterdam.nl/home.htm>