

CALL FOR PAPER

20TH-CENTURY HOUSING HERITAGE IN EUROPE: CONSERVING, PARTICIPATING, AND ADAPTING

The conference focusses on housing concepts and built settlements of the 20th century, which often explicitly addressed hygienical, ecological, communal, and social issues and necessities. We ask how these heritage values can be conserved for the sake of sustainable futures. Forms of use, social interaction, and participation might contribute to the care and careful adaptation of such sites, but also create conflicts. Various actors – from business, politics, conservation, and civil society – define, appropriate, and manage this housing heritage and need to be involved. The conference also examines housing and climate policies, development pressure, and vacancy as powerful contexts.

We aim for an exchange of theories, reflections, and approaches in practice within the European context of conservation and planning; and specifically address those settlements that have gained listed status due to their artistic and architectural values, their planning ideas and urban design, and their social concepts. How do different actors value and manage these settlements today?

Research shows that heritage values, social concepts, and sustainable futures defined by inhabitants and housing communities may differ from those of owners, politics, or heritage authorities. We note three important trends that take effect on housing heritage:

Firstly, heritage places are used for economic benefit. This can reinforce rising land and rent prices, as housing in general is increasingly commodified and upgraded, especially in cities facing development pressure. For the middle classes with an affinity for culture, living in a listed building might serve as mark of distinction; in turn, landlords may increasingly select particular types of tenants. These two factors strengthen gentrification and homogenisation processes amongst residents, and have an exclusionary effect that explicitly contradicts social concepts and needs.

Secondly, we observe housing vacancies in structurally weak regions and marginal districts, where population decline, housing preferences, as well as a lack of investment have contributed to the deterioration of settlements. Owners may oppose certain restrictions and costs associated with formal heritage designation, and potential residents may dislike the very characteristics for which heritage settlements are listed, such as their historic layouts, apartments, and communal spaces. Thirdly, we must carefully protect our listed heritage assets and adapt them for and due to the challenges of climate change. Some settlement concepts and building structures might not meet future requirements, such as reducing car dependency.

Organised by

TU Wien – Denkmalpflege und Bauen im Bestand
Prof. Heike Oevermann and Team
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar – Stadtplanung
Prof. Barbara Schöning and Team

In cooperation with the

Bundesdenkmalamt Österreich – BDA / Heritage
Conservation Authorities Austria
Österreichische Gesellschaft für Architektur – ÖGfA /
Austrian Society for Architecture

Venue

TU Wien, Festsaal, Karlsplatz 13, 1040 Wien
November 28th, 2024 to November 30rd, 2024

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While these trends might play out differently at different places and beyond the conflictive arena there might be opportunities for residents to create a sense of belonging due to the conserved cultural and architectural qualities of housing heritage.

We want to understand in more detail if and how heritage values shape community participation, community-building, and common care for the settlement and how do residents in turn (re)discover and (re)define and appropriate heritage values. Not least, we want to address how processes of resident appropriation and identification but also issues of property, tenure and place might foster or prevent historic settlements to be conserved and adapted to future needs.

The five sub-themes are discussed Thursday November 28th, starting 11.30, and Friday November 29th, starting 8.30 in the conference room (Festsaal der TU Wien), for the evenings and Saturday November 30rd activities are planned in cooperation with the Bundesdenkmalamt Österreich, BDA and the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Architektur, ÖGfA.

Sub-Themes

The conference is organised along five sub-themes. Contributions should address at least one of these themes:

- Heritage Values, Diverse Actors, and Built Settlements

We address the interlinkages between the heritage values of the inventories, values that constitute the social concepts and often include immaterial dimensions, and those that are defined by the various citizens who live in, use, or own these settlements. How do these values represent certain (professional) groups and correspond with the built settlements and their structure, spaces, and material? How can we conserve them as complex structures that represent not only material but also conceptual heritage values? What ambivalences does heritage status produce with regard to the historic concepts for which the housing was created?

- Ownership, Tenure, and the Appropriation of Heritage

We observe that there are differences between the private, residential claims to heritage objects versus the public interests that heritage status entails. In buoyant housing markets, heritage status is considered a potential asset of profit, whereas in shrinking regions it sometimes appears to hinder the conservation of housing and forms of use that reflect the original concepts. How do different forms of ownership and tenure in different spatial contexts and housing markets impact the definition and appropriation of such settlements by different groups? Do ownership or rental support communal forms of sharing and securing?

Key-note Speaker

John Pendlebury, Professor of Urban Conservation,
School of Architecture Planning and Landscape,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

Research Cooperation Partners

ICOMOS-President Germany: Prof. Tino Mager, Prof.
Even Smith Wergeland, Oslo School of Architecture and
Design, Prof. Massimo Visone, Università degli Studi di
Napoli Federico II, Hanna Szemó, MRI Budapest

Publication

A conference proceeding will be published in the ÖZKD
(English / Open Access), Special Issue Nr. 3 or 4 / 2025.

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- Accessibility, Uses, and Forms of Living

We discuss how social concepts can be considered and brought into futures. We seek deeper insights on how settlements can be maintained and adapted for upcoming housing needs and requirements as well as sustainable spatial developments in general. Nowadays, who actually gets access, owns, and cares for these buildings; who lives in and uses them? Have lifestyles changed over time, and are the architectural concepts of the settlements still alive?

- Participation, Diversity, and Sense of Belonging

We analyse if and how housing heritage addresses diverse groups and forms of living. We are interested in understanding how and which participation processes and formats might strengthen social interaction and/or the sense of belonging; and which built structures, actor constellations, or other conditions help. Which kinds of social action require certain typologies, architectural features, or forms of ownership and uses? Does participation help to manage the settlements carefully and align with formal protection requirements?

- Best Practices

We want to reflect the environmental, economic, and social aspects of dealing with housing heritage. The contributions show cases of best practice in heritage conservation of 20th century housing settlements, indicate the criteria applied for best practice, and present who has defined them. What do heritage conservation responses look like, that support the conservation of social housing concepts and offer benefits for sustainable futures? We are also interested in the aspect of long-lasting concepts and the commonly used differentiation of short-, medium-, and long-term interventions, uses, or restoration works. How do management instruments integrate conservation, participation, and adaptation needs?

Information

As a research project at the interface of academic and institutionalised preservation, we aim to make the findings and discussions accessible to broader audiences within the field of listed residential buildings, especially tenants and other stakeholders.

Contributions should address at least one of these presented sub-themes, please indicate your choice.

Abstracts (maximum 300 words) and a short vita (maximum 50 words) should be submitted to Luisa Omonsky/Johann Gallis (wohnenimdenkmal@TUWien.ac.at) before March 28th, 2024. Responses will be given by mid-May, 2024.

We cover travel cost approximately up to an amount of 300€ for the presenters. The conference is free of charge.