

The Commons

Participatory urban neighborhood, Vienna, Austria

Main authors

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Summary by the jury

Located in the city of Vienna, Austria, the project identifies a set of rules for establishing a sustainable urban neighborhood based on democratic principles of governance, communication, and participation. Instead of proposing a pre-designed urban tissue, the strategy tenders a collective pattern based on a grid of gardens that structure the area. The gardens function as a framework for physical and social development, outlining a porous fabric with low environmental impact and a collective space – re-programmable in time, while furthering ownership capacity-building. The area will first operate as an urban park; a matrix of gardens is inserted around existing trees. Gradually the district grows around these gardens and the shared open space. The approach establishes a minimally-invasive intervention that will develop over time according to the needs of the society at every step – a continuous process of small scale growth and appropriation, with autonomy at every stage.

Appraisal by the jury

The jury especially commends the focus on questions of procedures, including stakeholder participation and its effects on physical form. Particularly interesting is the changing relationship between built and un-built areas that is constantly negotiated and re-negotiated in a process that engages a range of relevant parties. The proposal offers a method for a step-by-step urban densification, combining both bottom-up/top-down and formal/informal practices – to create an urban commons.

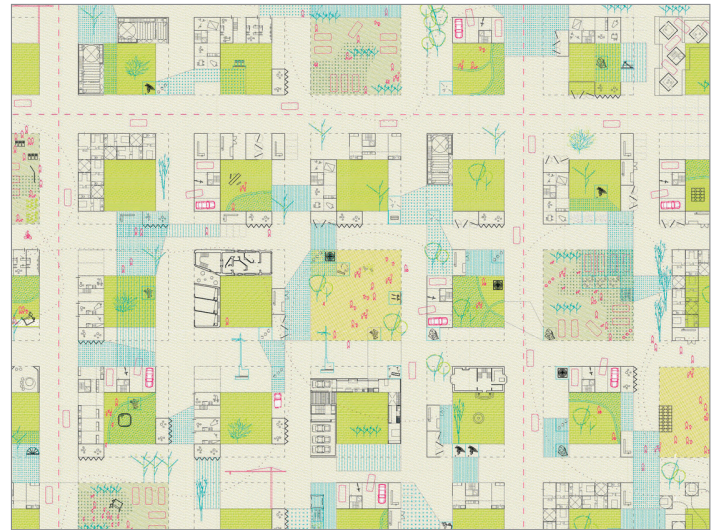


Image 1: Liquid city: Instead of a pre-designed urban tissue, a controlled growth process is proposed. The initial grid of gardens is the support of the urban, which will develop in time through small-scale gradual appropriations. The result will be a liquid city that works as a complete urban configuration in all stages of consolidation, satisfying the current societal needs, but is also able to adapt itself to any contextual change or future necessities.

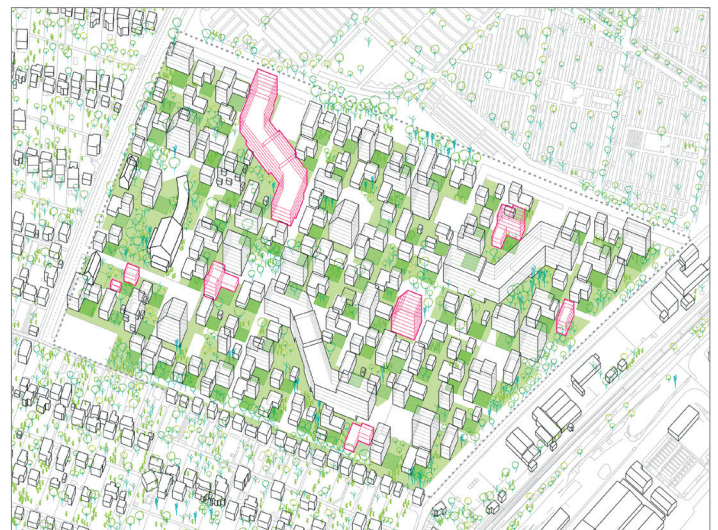


Image 2: Eco-city: Sustainable urban development of a piece of the city. We use the green open space as a support of the buildings, and not vice versa. Land consumption is minimized in favor of green space, keeping a respectful attitude towards the existing landscape as well as the environment, but always without losing compactness and density. Diversity of actors and investment capacities are represented here, generating a multi-scalar intervention.

Project data

Context	Landscape, urban design and infrastructure
Client	ARE (Austrian Real Estate)
Background	Private commission
Planned start	January 2016

Further authors

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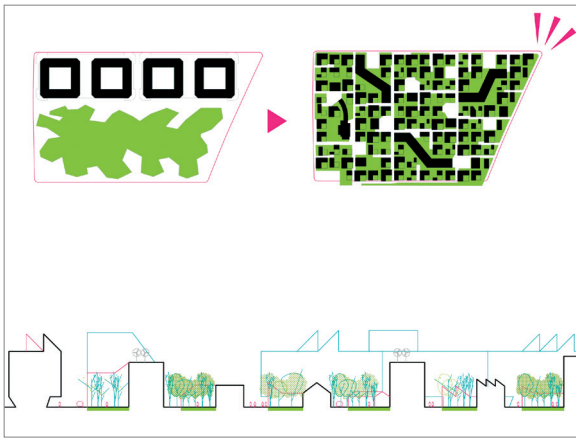


Image 3: *The Commons (Garten STADT)* vs City Block: we look for a human and local scale based district.

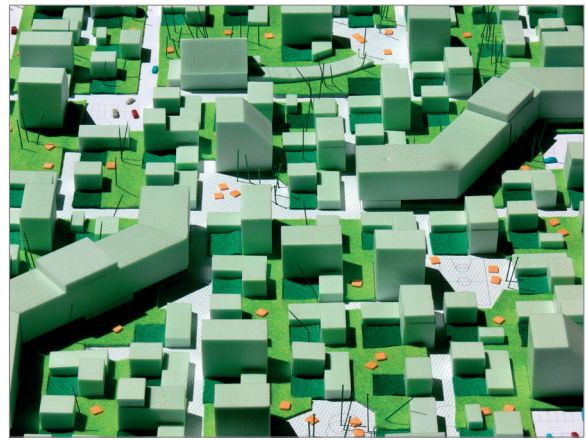


Image 4: Porosity, not only in the urban fabric, but also in the low ecological footprint.

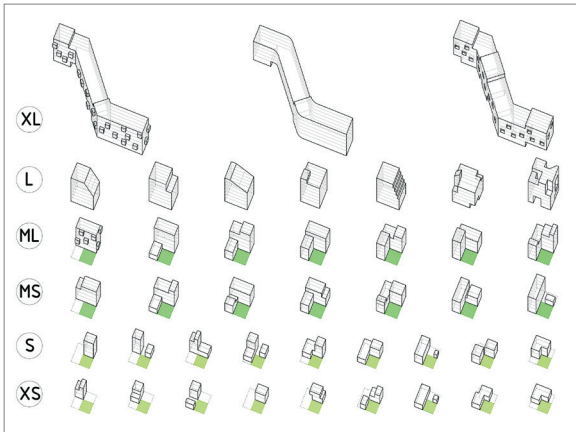


Image 5: Flexibility, which guarantees social and economic balance, where everyone can find what they need.

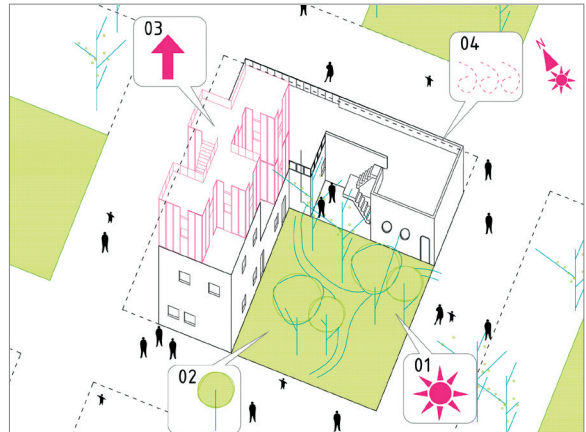


Image 6: 1. Garden south orientated; 2. Keep the existing trees; 3. Growing housing; 4. Northern wind protection.

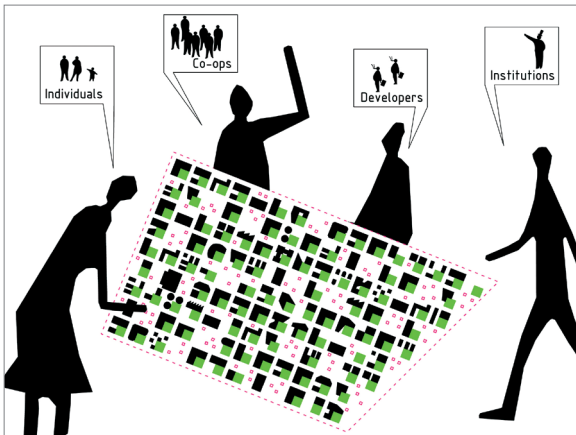


Image 7: Game-board: Democratic urbanism, in which different actors and needs can take place.



Image 8: Diversity of urban scenarios is possible in the common space, thanks to urban-post-it appropriation.



Image 9: Pedestrian area based on alternative mobility. Peripheral road traffic, minimized transport demand.



Image 10: *Allmende*: collective, reprogrammable, low-maintenance open space for the community.