

BERLIN BAUGGRUPPEN

Snapshot

Year built: 2014

How built (private, government): Private

Block area: 1400

Density: 1 dwelling/58m²

Building design (diversity, scale, height, materials, accessibility, entry): Consistent with surrounding developments

Site planning (people access, cars, open space, setbacks, landscaping): A communal outdoor space and sheltered bicycle parking are shared by the residents. Residents can also access the adjacent futsal courts and train station.

Social impact (engagement, neighbours): The project was cooperatively funded by the residents, who were also given great opportunities to customise the internal layout of their dwellings. The communal garden is evidently well-used with its cubby house and veggie patches

Affordability (demographic): Provided that one could pay for the shared cost of land up front, the total project cost was significantly lower than comparable developments in the area. This was due to efficient construction, shared spaces, and the ability to 'self-build'. Living in a community oriented development is inherently more affordable as people share things and help each other out.

Features

Ausbauhaus Neukolln in Berlin is an innovative example of the cooperative development model known in Germany as a Baugruppe. A Baugruppe (lit. "building group") is a residential development that is initiated and funded by its residents and is usually characterised by an agreement to share certain facilities, raising a sense of community and keeping costs down.

Berlin firm Praeger Richter Architects initiated the project by locating a site, preparing a concept design complete with cost estimates, and finding interested home buyers who were willing to share risks and up-front costs. According to the architects, there was a window of just two weeks to

complete this process. Apart from this stringent deadline, a big challenge was to find affordable land. From previous experiences on similar projects, the architects knew that financing the project would only be feasible if the 24 participants were able to pay for the cost of the plot up-front.

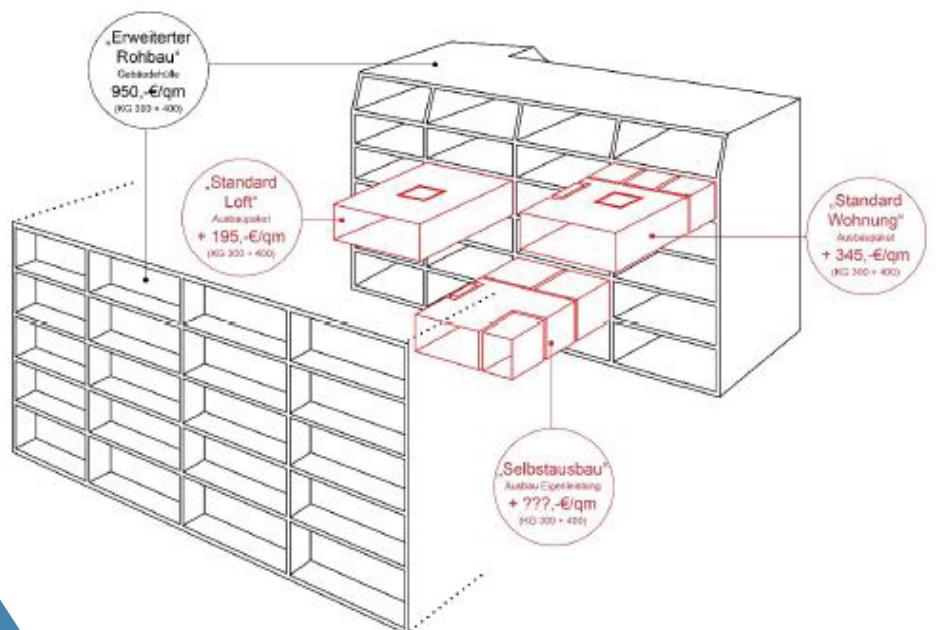
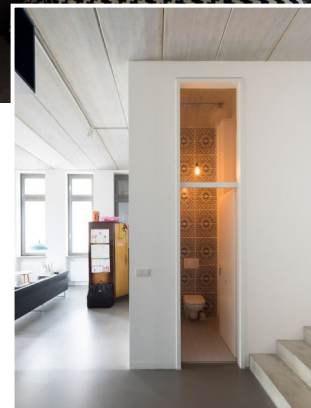
In order to keep costs down while maintaining high architectural quality, the architects conceived of an innovative system that contractually separated the construction of the bare shell of the apartments ("Rohbau") and the internal construction ("Ausbau"). Each participant in the cooperative bought one of the 3 metre-high bare pre-cast concrete apartments for a cost of 1300 Euro per square metre, and was given 3 choices for the "Ausbau": 1) buy the apartment with the interior already constructed, 2) buy the apartment with only a bathroom core constructed, or 3) build the interior entirely by oneself.

Building the interior oneself proved very attractive for people wanting to save money by putting time and effort into personalising their home. In one apartment, a resident metal worker built some very creative stainless-steel joinery that partitions the apartment into a living/dining space, a bathroom/laundry core and 3 bedrooms. The concrete walls, floor and ceiling were all left bare to complete an industrial look.



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The Ausbauhaus Neukolln is a community-oriented development that balances quality with affordability

Ausbauhaus Neukolln

All 24 units have an equator-facing balcony or terrace, with the terraces on the ground floor bleeding into a communal garden with fruits and vegetables growing and a cubbyhouse in the corner. Residents can also take advantage of the dedicated bicycle parking, adjacent futsal courts and nearby train station.

The Ausbauhaus Neukolln is a community-oriented development that balances quality with affordability; and for apartment living offers unbeatable potential to individualise.

This kind of project confers huge benefits on communities but due to the various challenges they face needs to be actively encouraged in our cities and towns. Some councils in Germany for example set aside public land specifically for community oriented developments.



Site Plan

