

THE IMAGE OF VIENNA: CITY AS MUSEUM OR DYNAMIC DEVELOPED METROPOLIS?

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Abstract. The article discusses trends of Vienna's architectonic spatial development. Vienna is a city that, on the one hand, lives in its historical architecture and city planning and, on the other hand, has allowed innovative building in certain areas. Historical development of Vienna was analyzed, underlining aspects which have had the most impact to the current urban fabric. Since in the federal country of Austria Vienna is a state and a municipality at the same time, it has created its own special planning instruments and regulation for city planning. In achieving more successful city planning results, city planners have admitted that development of informal planning is necessary, paying large attention to involving society in the planning process.

Keywords: urban design, urban planning tools, skyscrapers, citizen partnership in planning.

Introduction

It is the Alpine landscape which is mainly associated with Austria. Other images are related to the Danube monarchy, well known by its imperial entity. Advertising tourism in Austria, enjoyment of the landscape was offered alongside culture as stimulating motive. Vienna, as the former imperial capital, is a place with very rich history and cultural heritage, great number of significant museums and memorials of man of mark, monuments, parks and various attractions. Flow of tourists from all over the world has turned the city into the most popular tourist place in Austria. According to data of Vienna municipality, published on <http://www.wieninternational.at>, in 2007 tourist overnight stays in Vienna were almost 10 million nights. Author of this work made an inquiry in Riga in 2009. Its aim was to ascertain their views on city design. 18 % of the respondents named Vienna as the most beautiful city in Europe. But what do they expect from it?

Historical Development of Vienna

Speaking of Vienna's development from 1780 until 1910 P. Hall in his book „Cities in Civilization” (1998) named it „City as principle of pleasure”, pointing that Vienna perhaps had the longest golden era – more than a century (Hall 1998: 159). The period between 1780 and 1830 was the golden era of music. During this time, Vienna became a general city in Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was the

third biggest city in Europe after London and Paris. At the same time, P. Hall remarks that the quality of life in it was as in the traditional European city: overpopulated, unhealthy, communal, loud, full of life (Hall 1998: 177). It was a street-oriented city: walking outdoors was significant in all classes of society. In Vienna, as in a traditional city, people lived on the streets and used houses whereas people in most modern cultures use the streets and live in houses (Hall 1998: 177), which testifies the importance of the public space at that time. Although the author notes that today city dweller's life takes place at home, it seems that this tendency is changing nowadays.



Fig. 1. Plan of Vienna in 1850

In 1857, the capital of the empire of Habsburg monarchy developed as an unusual urban relic. While city fortifications in other major European cities were taken

down already in 17th century, the medieval city of Vienna had remained imprisoned in fortification walls which had lost their importance a long time ago. Behind the walls, suburbs were slowly developing but they developed aloof because a several hundred meters wide band, called Glacis, was kept around the city. The emperor Frantz Joseph's I autocratic decree of tearing down the city wall in the middle of 19th century marked first urban expansion in Vienna related to the downtown and suburbs. It was necessary to create a space for buildings whose reason of occurrence was administration and affection, as well as new dwellings, by tearing down fortifications of the medieval city and revealing a connection between the old city inside the walls and areas, quickly extending beyond them (Haiko 1992: 8). In 1892, an international competition for overall plan of regulation was announced. Radial streets that began from the center of concentric Ringstrasse were offered. This decentralized system was intended to allow boundless growth to the metropolis (Architekturzentrum Wien 2009).

At the same time, rapid industrialization and huge immigration caused an explosion in urban areas and population growth. Extensive provinces of the city with its industrial manufacturing areas and residential blocks characterized western neighborhoods outside the previous fortifications and consolidated social structure of the city until today. Control scheme of the Danube assured the new building land close to the city centre, developed in kilometers long street network. From 1857 till 1914 the city was provided with incredibly productive infrastructure, planned for 4 million inhabitants (Paal 2003: 231). Also Vienna city public transportation system was created.

Vienna in the 20th Century

With more than 2 million inhabitants until 1910, Vienna was one of the largest cities in the world. It was the economic and administrative center of a multinational nation. In 1908 Austro-Hungary expanded for more than 676 thousand square meters and by 1910 it became the third most densely populated region in Europe with 51.4 million inhabitants (Architekturzentrum Wien 2009). P. Hall notes that period from 1780 till 1910 represents two very different kinds of achievements asking a question what do they have in common. The answer is obvious – Vienna, its inhabitants and the society of Vienna whose significant constant respect have stood over this long period of time (Hall 1998: 160).

The explosive development broke with the World War I, collapse of the monarchy and founding of the Republic of Austria in 1918. In 1919 Vienna became the first metropolis, led by social democrats. This period is called the Red Vienna era, in which the policy of developing empty lands to huge living missives was realized. Building of the communal dwellings continued even after the authoritarian regime, which came to power in 1934. Private sector's building programs were supported with an intent to destroy old houses which were an encumbrance to the city traffic and to create a dense, compact, modern city.

After the World War II an intensive rationalization, industrial mass production and mass consumption were highlighted and architecture followed this tendency (Architekturzentrum Wien 2009). New living houses were projected in both: downtowns' old vacant plots in the 19th centuries building areas and in periphery of the city, not connected with current public transportation system. The only possibility how to reach them was by cars. In general, tendencies of urban development were similar to other European metropolises – to improve availability of vehicular transport.

In 1960, Vienna was behind the rest of Western Europe in economic and cultural development. Stagnancy of population growth allowed to retain infrastructure, built in the beginning of the 20th century, without modernization and modification (Paal 2003: 233). Changes to urban planning strategy started in the 70s when the city was opened to international trends. In that time, two giant city planning projects that changed the city fabric – as did Vienna Ring or the Danube control scheme in sequence of centuries - were developed. One of them was creation of the Danube island by digging a channel that would regulate overflow of the river and the other one was UNO City building in northern shore of the Danube, on the historical north-south axis - it symbolized the first step of including the river in the city development.

Changeful geopolitical situation in the early 90s established new dynamics in the Vienna city development. The country that used to be the easternmost European country has become a Central Europe country – it was caused by breakdown of the Berlin Wall, opening borders with Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and other countries. Joining the European Union in 1995 also made changes in the country and its planning. To a large extent this has affected its capital city Vienna too.

Contemporary Urban Planning System

Austria is a federal state that consists of nine regions, each with its own legislation, creating a complex planning system, as every state develops its own spatial strategy. The country has no national plan. Federal ministries develop field plans. In parallel with the official distribution, a strong informal institutional cooperation exists, for instance, Austria Regional Planning Conference (ÖROK) (Hofer, Puchinger 1995: 25) which is Austria's designers conference where the planning is discussed at the national level (Giffinger 2009). Each of the nine states is responsible for the national and regional planning, legislation for the planning of its realization and working out cities and local government plans. Each state has got its own planning legislation and administrative procedure.

Vienna is the biggest city in Austria who plays a double role – as a state and municipality and it has created its own, special planning instruments and regulation (Ryser, Franchini 2008: 9 (CD)). Prof. R. Giffinger underlines that such situation is beneficial for the Vienna city because there is an opportunity to combine both: state and local planning instruments. This issue is more complicated to the neighboring municipalities because they are dependent on conditions of their state. In Vienna, regional planning and land development planning is done by the Urban Planning Department, as a part of municipal administration. All decisions on the future of urban development – the whole city or certain parts of it – are approved by the City Council. Before the approval the new land use plan is given to the public discussion (Paal 2003: 235).

In Austria, land use plan functions as a formal local planning instrument in which the permitted land use is defined and municipal territory is divided into zones for certain purposes. It is legally binding for land owners. They are not allowed to build a house that is not in conformity with the zone, defined in the plan. Existing buildings that do not comply with the plan may exist but they should not change the building structure. Here are few exceptions, such as renovations (Ryser, Franchini 2008: 11 (CD)). Another formal instrument is urban context plan which demonstrates areas where the buildings and plots should be located. There are numbers for land utilization, the maximum building height, construction type (closed, open, terraced houses) and different additional possible specifications, regulating building design. These plans are made by initiative of the owner or investor for building permits in the local administrative body whose competence is building (Ryser, Franchini 2008: 11 (CD)). In the Vienna city these two documents are combined into one (Hoffer 2009).

Also there are so called local development plans that set long-term aims of municipal spatial planning at the general level for 10 year long term. It includes a lot of general description and numbers of all the municipalities and the development it wants to conduce and achieve. The current Vienna city development plan *Stadtentwicklungsplanung* (STEP05) approved by the Municipal Government in 2005 is developed to ensure spatial planning guidelines in Vienna. It defines where and how building, business and housing will be developed in the city. STEP is being worked out since the early 80s, every ten years. It is said that in STEP05 for the first time planning territory did not stop with the city boundaries, it also takes the spatial relation to the neighboring city and Slovakia capital of Bratislava into consideration. The urban development plan notes 13 target areas in which the city should give most of the attention in the coming years. It is mentioned in the plan that in the coming years and decades Vienna will lose its traditional south-west orientation as the main in the city development and will replace it with impulses and opportunities in all directions. Spatial development scheme shows that Vienna will continue to focus development on territorial axis which are available by high-capacity public transport that is necessary if Vienna's inhabitants chose to access their jobs and infrastructure of the city center without using a car.

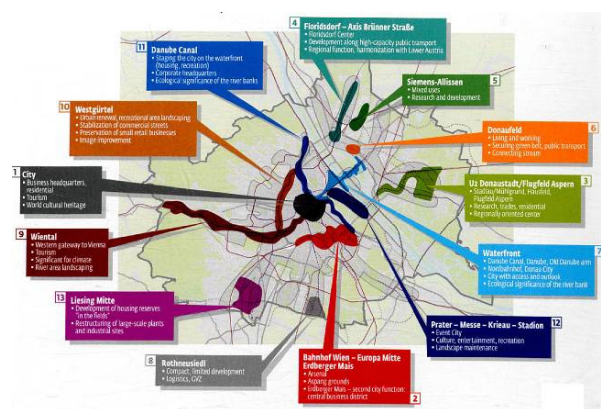


Fig. 2. Key areas of action for urban development in Vienna defined in STEP05

STEP05 tends to urban economic upgrowth, development of the transport system. But it is necessary to note that minimum attention is being paid about the city's cultural and historical values which makes it more attractive to so many of its visitors. But STEP05 highlights projects which have „achieved international notice in the European level through international competitions or by significant architecture. It conduces a positive image of the city as a place for business. Such projects are West-

bahnhof, Gasometer Erdberg, Bahnhof Wien – Europa Mitte, Aspang-Gründe, Nordbahnhof, Donau-City and others.” (Vienna City Administration Municipal Department 18 Urban Development and Planning, 2005: 40) But there are very contradictory opinions about the most of them.

Skyscrapers in Vienna

Donau City, which’s masterplan was developed in 1992, symbolizes the vision of Vienna on the Danube. Its site is defined politically therefore access to it was financed from the society funds, but a smaller part of the use was defined at the political level. This demonstrates a shift towards the development of investors. It was planned that the Donau City will become the second city center but, despite its placement at the river bank near the subway lines and main highway, the expected did not realize - masterplan for the city landscape of three lower levels for the green belt were not realized (Boeckl 2005: 35), as well as the range of services is limited.

Wienerberg City area originally was not planned for extensive development but in recent years a business park and Twin Towers were realized there, symbolizing the development of a modern investor city. It is noted that its choice of location does not indicate urban planning (Paal 2003: 241) directing criticism to the low public transport access to the area, despite living houses built there. Conception of the city development here seems to be focused on the maximum use of area. Only after the investors had got a solid profits by finding use to this until then valueless real estate, the city began to plan there kindergartens and schools; also, from the society funds, as soon as possible, a subway line needs to be provided (Boeckl 2005: 34).

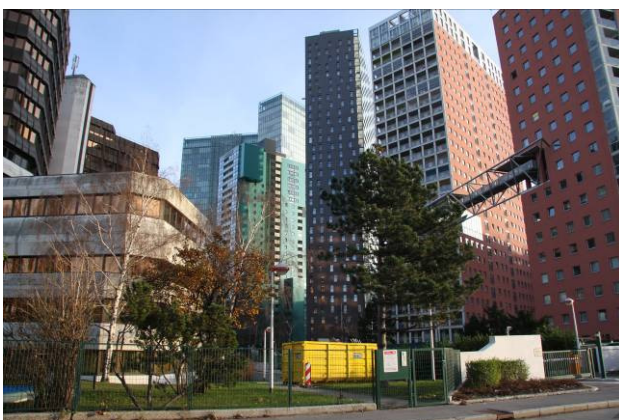


Fig. 3. View to the structure of Wienerberger City

Millennium City, whose building started in 1997, is located close to the river and the subway station. It is

characterized by large-scale blocks, which also include the public space. Millennium tower with its stores and apartments is a visible landmark in the water land development area.

In the European context, Vienna is an admirably active skyscraper city. The physical look of the city has changed more in the previous two decades than in 80 year long term before them. Resigning from skyscraper forbiddance conducted appearance of these buildings in several parts of the city. Some of these skyscraper areas, built on previous decades, are mentioned above. But in this issue, the city has experienced reaction from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. For example, in the central part of the city, near Wien Mitte station, where several subway stations meet, the city wanted to intensify building by creating new skyscrapers. Permission to build was already been given but the project was stopped due to UNESCO objections about including Vienna in the list of endangered monuments if the project will be realized. Similar problem appeared when the city wanted to build skyscrapers near the Schonbrunn Palace (Hoffer 2009).

After long discussions about the skyscraper issues in Vienna, the Vienna city skyscraper conception was formulated. It defines the areas where skyscrapers are strictly forbidden but, at the same time, theoretically they are allowed anywhere else. M. Boeckl in his book „Vienna New Urban Architecture” (2005), asked about skyscraper development the political chief of Vienna city planning R. Schicker who notes that it is determined that such development should take place in a spot where public transport and existing connections are perfect but few realized projects, not provided with this infrastructure, needs to be marked as separate cases. M. Boeckl accents that in any individual case the developer has to prove suitability with range of researches. While these aspects may be shown more or less objectively, the question arises – whether there would not be disagreements between the protected territories and any of the individual cases where decisions about the city design and sustainable separated towers or their clusters could be made. It could become an issue of political confrontation which could not be replaced with any regulations, no matter how valid they would be. (Boeckl 2005: 138)

Question of Urban Design

It is observed not only in Vienna that the land market and property rights are prone to overtake planning and sustainable development as a public interest defender. Planning has a large-scale architectural tradition, including economics, social and environmental conditions but frequently leaves design as a separated task to be imple-

mented by itself. That has caused reaction in several countries. Especially this applies to countries which have not found instruments to control the development to assure high quality development proposals which usually are collective cooperation between funders, real estate sector and construction industry (Ryser, Franchini 2008: 29). Vienna too has established three independent organizations, which discusses the architecture of the city.

In Vienna, land use plan functions as a formal planning tool for the city design regulation, providing only a few possibilities for this issue. The regulation is provided through urban design competitions (*Baurägerwettbewerb*) (Scheuvs 2009). These competitions are managed by the city institution that deals with organization of the competitions, jury selection another similar tasks (Hoffer 2009). At the end of a year, a book where all of them are collected is being published. It is a good political planning instrument for the promotion of these contests. However, urban planning professionals in Vienna note that a key role in the planning result should be establishing of a democratic progress of urban planning process. Formal tools of urban planning ensures that the society needs to be informed but it does not ensure that it really should be involved in the planning process. Prof. R. Scheuvs accents that both: formal planning tools, set by legislation, and informal planning tools, which think and creates quality needs to be used in the city planning. Vienna has identified the need to define the master plan as a planning tool by which cities may regulate the design. To achieve this goal, a project was created under R. Scheuvs' guidance; within its framework, guidelines for creation of the master plan were made (Scheuvs 2009). The project is expected to be finished at the end of February 2010.

New Slant on the Realization of Urban Projects

If realized city planning projects, characterized by skyscrapers, usually receive more criticism than praises, city planners in Vienna are proud of newly realized Kabelwerk project. It is a successful example of revitalization of a degraded territory and use of the informal planning process (Pamer 2009). As V. K. Pamer, representative of the Vienna municipality, notes - usually architecture and function always is a priority in the projects but in this project the planning began in different direction by planning the public space first and only then thinking about the architecture which needs to go in into the defined public space. Kabelwerk is a former cable factory that, with few disruptions of service, has worked since the beginning of the 20th century. Today, from around 82.000 people who live in 12th district, nearly every of

the old-established families had someone who had worked in Kabelwerk. This is the reason why it is very important to develop this district for the society and to involve the society in the planning (Pamer 2009). The cooperative planning process citizens worked together with developers, municipality and architects.

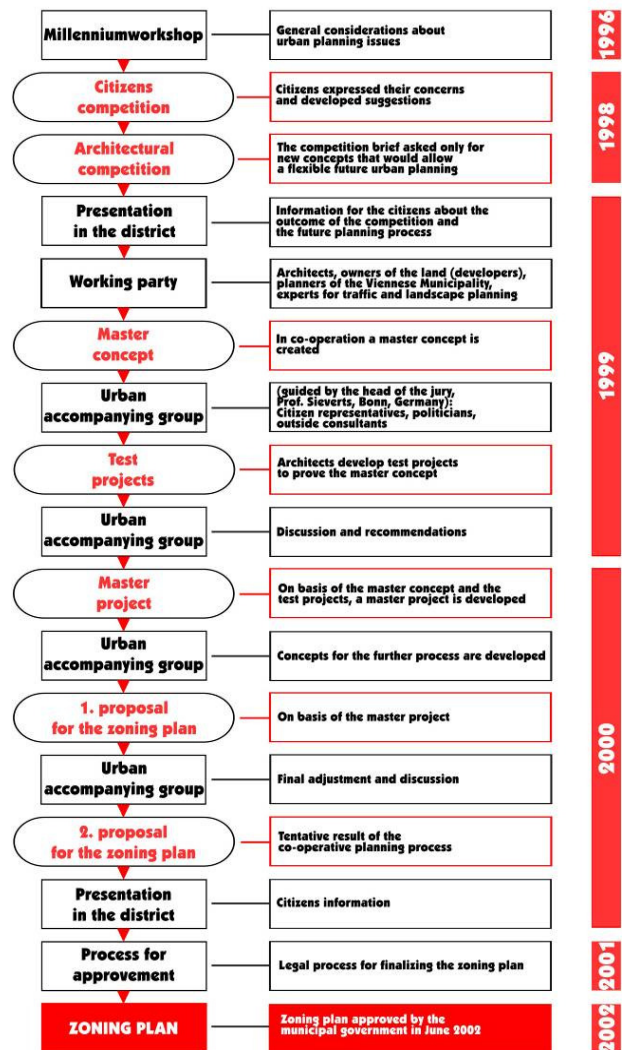


Fig. 4. Kabelwerk planning process

V. K. Pamer stresses that every project requires a critical mass of enthusiasm. Without it, it mostly will fail. Kabelwerk was completed in 10 years which is a very quick term for development of such a large scale project. Kabelwerk can not be viewed as a pure housing development nor a project in traditional meaning but rather as a city block, still so different from others but connected to the neighbourhood (Buchner, Kohoutek, Pamer 2004: 86).

In 2009 one of the largest Vienna city building projects, Aspern Airfield, that covers area of 240 hectares, got its final version. It is one of the 13 urban development target areas, determined in the STEP05. This

project's Master plan concept is based on the idea that cities are perceived through the public space. This means that the accent should be put on design and practical usability of the public space (Aspern Airfield project team and Aspern Airfield planning team. 2008: 8). Therefore in frameworks of the project the public space conception by Gehl Architects ApS (Copenhagen) was made. The document follows from the master plan. Its methods firstly are based on lifestyle, then the urban environment and only then the building is realized. Complete realization of the project is planned in 2018 and the developers of Vienna hope that it will be a successful example of urban design in Vienna.

Conclusions

Vienna's development can not be characterized by steady development of the city but rather as explosions. Development of society and economic changes create dynamic in urban spatial development. Each phase of urban development has its own, characteristic spatial dimension structure, which creates overall spatial composition of the city.

Although now and for the coming decade the essential in Vienna's development will be metropolitan issues, people still visit it to see Vienna of the golden era while people who live there expect high quality urban environment. It is fundamental to appraise existing values and develop without losing them.

Preconditions for the development of urban areas have both economic and political factors as well as public interest in the realization of projects. The work for realization of these projects should go after a plan, accepted by all interested parties, and this is why in city planning major attention should be paid to cooperation between professionals, politicians and society.

Despite the fact that the city has well-developed formal planning system, the work is being done to find the best instruments for informal planning with an intent to improve urban design by involving local citizens in the planning process.

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VIENOS ĮVAIZDIS – MIESTAS KAIP MUZIEJUS AR DINAMIŠKA IŠSIVYSČIUSI METROPOLIJA?

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariamos tektoninės Vienos miesto erdvinės plėtros kryptys. Viena – tai miestas, gyvenantis savo istorinės architektūros ir planavimo kontekste, o kartu ji atvėrė vartus naujoms statyboms kai kuriose miesto teritorijose. Analizuojant Vienos raidą išryškinti veiksniai, turėję daugiausiai reikšmės jos urbanistinio audinio tapsmui. Federalioje Austrijoje Viena – tai federalinė žemė ir miesto savivaldybė vienu metu, todėl ji sukūrė savus miesto planavimo instrumentus ir reglamentus. Siekdami geresnių miesto planavimo rezultatų urbanistai sutaria, kad būtina plėsti neformalųjį planavimą, kai į miesto kūrimo procesą plačiau įtraukiami vietos gyventojai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: miesto planavimas, miesto planavimo instrumentai, daugiaaukščiai pastatai, partnerystė.