

R A U M G E S T A L T U N G

The land issue.
A narrative study on housing
Forschungsfeld
WS 2020/21

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Figure front page:
Siedlung Alte Heide, München
Architect: Theodor Fischer
Redrawing: F.Kramer, 2020

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„Bodenparzellierung ist Sache der Spekulation. Die Bauweise, die Hausform und die Wohnungsproduktion werden durch die Spekulation bestimmt.“

cf. Eberstadt, Rudolf, Die Spekulation im neuzeitlichen Städtebau, Reprint of the publication from 1907, London, 2018, p. 1,

I. The land issue

Preface

The idea of the research seminar „*The land issue*“ arose from the scientific question of my ongoing PhD thesis, which deals with the land issue in architecture and investigates under which conditions the parcelling of land influenced housing developments from 1890-1930.

Recently, the land issue returned to the focus of public attention, due to the re-emerging debate on land and rental market prices in Germany and other European countries. However, the land issue exists as a (political) topic in architecture since common land disappeared and land became a product.

The debate reached a climax in the late 19th century due to the ongoing industrialisation and the oppressive living conditions resulting from the densification processes of big cities like Berlin or Frankfurt. One of the reactions was the *Garden City Movement*, which expressed itself in numerous writings about the land issue and can be seen as a counter position to the existing conditions in housing of that time.

Selected publications from 1890-1930 are examined within the PhD thesis. One of the protagonists is the economist and urban planner Rudolf Eberstadt, to which the Swiss architect Hans Bernoulli refers to in his publications on the land issue. In this context Hans Bernoulli can be seen as a key figure, who acted as a political architect, as described in the latest publication by Sylvia Claus and Lukas Zurfluh. At the same time, especially after coming back to Switzerland, Bernoulli designed various housing projects (Baugenossenschaftliche Siedlungen) with the aim to stand up against speculation phenomena and densification processes.

Bernoulli's way of thinking architecture makes furthermore reference to Camillo Sitte and his book *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* from 1889. The thesis understands this scientific discourse between Sitte and Bernoulli as a framework and therefore Sitte's publication as the starting point of a new discussion on the land issue, exploring in how far Hans Bernoulli's publication from 1946, *Die Stadt und ihr Boden*, can be seen as an end point of this debate.

In four chapters the thesis clarifies the cultural-historical background of the land issue, contextualises the land issue in urban planning theory and shows by analysing built examples how the influence of the land issue became visible in the selected housing projects.

This third and last chapter of the PhD thesis is the initial point for the research seminar in WS 2020/21 with the aim to critically examine the role of the selected housing developments from various decades and to describe and analyse their appearance in its context, so that conclusions can be drawn for future urban developments, addressing new questions of housing.

Aldo Rossi: *L'architettura della città*, 1966

In his book *L'Architettura della Città* from 1966 Aldo Rossi refers to the Swiss architect Hans Bernoulli. He doubts that Bernoulli's idea to bring back the land into the public authorities would lead to a better architecture or create specific typologies.

Regarding the land issue, Rossi asks:

„Abbiamo anche visto come questi piani, dal punto di vista costituivo si pongano alla pari di qualsiasi altro fatto urbano determinato; in questo caso essi costituiscono un inizio. Tra le forze che presiedono in massima parte ai questi piani vi sono le forze di natura economica ed è interessante studiare, dato che la possibilità di questo studio ci è offerta da un ampio materiale, come queste forze si applichino. Questa applicazione si manifesta nella città capitalistica attraverso la speculazione; questa rappresenta una parte del meccanismo, dei modi, attraverso cui le città crescono.“

cf. Aldo Rossi L'Architettura della Città, 1966, p. 179 (Reprint, Milan, 2018)

Hans Bernoulli: *Die Stadt und ihr Boden*, 1946

„Mit andern Worten: All den schönen und guten Dingen, die sich aus der Untersuchung alter Städte ergeben, all den großartigen Entwürfen zu neuen, unerhörten Schöpfungen fehlt vorerst einmal die Hauptsache, der Grund und Boden, auf dem sie entstehen können und sich danach frei entwickeln sollen. Der gewissenhafte junge Mensch stellt die Bücher, die er so sorgfältig durchgelesen, wieder in ihre Reihen. Er ist zweifelnd geworden und unsicher: Mit dem Grund und Boden scheint da etwas nicht in Ordnung zu sein,...“

from the introduction of Hans Bernoulli's Die Stadt und Ihr Boden, Zürich, 1946

The Swiss architect and urban planner Hans Bernoulli publishes in 1946 the book *Die Stadt und ihr Boden*. In the introduction he refers to the important writings of Le Corbusier (*Städtebau*), Raymond Unwin (*Die Grundlagen des Städtebaus*) and Cornelius Gurlitt (*Handbuch des Städtebau*). But, according to Bernoulli, the essential question has not been bespoken in one of the publications: the land on which all the beautiful and good designs can become an architectural being. The young man who reads the books has become doubtful: „*there must be something wrong with the land*“, he writes.

To follow the property question, Hans Bernoulli publishes numerous articles and writings regarding the land issue, with the aim to claim for the return of the land to the public authorities. Only this procedure, he is convinced, would lead to a beautiful and good architecture. Whoever writes about *Stadtbaukunst* ignores one question, the prerequisite of all work, the land property, he says. Bernoulli follows this topic under the pressure of the seriousness of the situation, (Bernoulli means the reconstruction of the cities after WWII) and therefore his book can be understood as a research about the land issue by analysing historical, political and formal conditions in landscapes and cities. According to Bernoulli, the property question is the essential subject for understanding transformation processes in urban planning.

The origin of his position arose as a counterreaction to industrialisation processes and the spatial effects of the city expansions in Paris, London, Barcelona and Berlin. He criticises the housing production during that time as speculation-friendly and the living conditions as too dense and unhuman. His book can be therefore described as a polemic against speculation phenomenons and as a claim for a change in urban planning.

References: The Garden City Movement

One reference for Bernoulli's ideal is Raymond Unwin, his projects and the Garden City Movement in England (1898) and Germany (1902). The influence of the Garden City Movement is obvious in Bernoulli's built work. As a spatial composition his realised housing projects in Switzerland reveal a different architectural position which further develops the idea of the Garden City Movement. Bernoulli designed low-rise and dense housing quarters for several Swiss Housing Cooperatives (*Baugenossenschaften*) with the aim to avoid speculation phenomenons. The influence of Raymond Unwin relates

as well to formal questions. One of the typological examples is the applied idea of a living courtyard (*Wohnhof*) that has been finally realised in his project at Hardtturmstrasse in Zürich (1923-1930) and refers directly to Unwin's studies of Garden City Letchworth.

References: Rudolf Eberstadt

To understand the origin of Hans Bernoulli's ideas and ideals, the work of Rudolf Eberstadt seems to be an essential one. As part of the introduction of *Die Spekulation im neuzeitlichen Städtebau* from 1907, with the title *Das Spekulationsproblem*, the main point of interest is mentioned: the economic growth from the end of the 19th century onwards and the associated densification processes of the cities. According to Eberstadt, these conditions prepared the road for speculation. Furthermore, he mentions another topic: the relationship between construction, form, housing production and speculation.

„Bodenparzellierung ist Sache der Spekulation.

Die Bauweise, die Hausform und die Wohnungsproduktion werden durch die Spekulation bestimmt.“

cf. Eberstadt, Rudolf, *Die Spekulation im neuzeitlichen Städtebau*, Reprint of the publication from 1907, London, 2018, p. 1,

Eberstadt states, that he will concentrate on the topic of land speculation. In accordance with the turn of speculation-theory in the outgoing 19th century he sees production and speculation as two opposite factors. Therefore, he analyses speculation as an independent factor.

The very few images used by Eberstadt to underline his examinations are floor plans of Berlin's well known typology of the *Mietskaserne* and a housing type which can be found in the industrial cities in the Ruhr Area. He evaluates them as good working class houses, which have their origin in the medieval three-window-house typology (*Dreifensterhaus*).

References: Camillo Sitte

Hans Bernoulli's formal position arose at the beginning of his education as an architect in an environment of teachers, who referred to Camillo Sitte's artistic principles in urban planning at southern German Universities (TU München/TU Darmstadt), such as Theodor Fischer, Friedrich Pützer and others. The publication *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* from 1889 has been a key-

literature for Bernoulli's teachers regarding the meaning of public spaces and their composition. An underestimated part of the book deals with the controversial debate in urban planning on infrastructure and hygienic conditions. Sitte speaks about the important role of a good plotification for urban planning:

„Damit ist auch das richtige getroffen, denn in technischer Beziehung wurde tatsächlich viel, in künstlerischer aber fast nichts geleistet und stehen die großartigsten neuen Monumentalbauten meist ungeschickten Platzformationen und Parzellierungen der Nachbarschaft gegenüber.“

cf. Sitte, Camillo, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Wien, 1909

To give an idea about a contraposition to the existing, he further analyses different situations like squares and streets to explore the conditions that led to these beautiful spaces. The publication can be understood therefore as an archive and handbook of beautiful spaces.

„Die hohen Preise der Bauplätze veranlassen ferner noch deren möglichste Ausnützung, weshalb neuerdings eine Menge wirkungsvoller Motive in Wegfall kommen und die Verbauung jeder Parzelle immer wieder dem Typus des modernen Bauwürfels entgegenstrebt.“

cf. Sitte, Camillo, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Wien, 1909

Sitte's publication from 1889 can be seen as the starting point of a controversial discussion about the land issue. Hans Bernoulli's publication can be understood somehow as the end of a discussion by pointing on the ambiguous relation of the land issue and compository questions in architecture and a problem that has not been solved, yet.

Die Bodenfrage - the land issue

The land issue discusses the accessibility of land and the relationship of land, ownership and capital. It includes the transformation processes from agricultural land to buildable land, as well as mechanisms related to ownership and land policy. The land issue describes the formal outcome of the transformation processes in landscapes and cities. As a consequence of the industrialisation in the second half of the 19th century, land became a product. The increase of inhabitants in the big cities and the city extensions of Paris, London, Barcelona and Berlin, provoked the discussion about the availability and the value

of the land. An outcome of the relationship between land price and housing became visible by the phenomenon of the Mietskaserne.

The contemporary debate about the land issue focusses on the political aspect by criticising the increase of rental prices and the impact of globalisation processes on local housing markets.

Apart from historical and political aspects no research about the relationship between the land issue and (housing) and typologies has been developed, yet. Going back to the theoretical discussion of the positions of Sitte, Eberstadt and Bernoulli, the seminar's aim is to follow these theories and to close the research gap regarding the impact of the land issue on formal questions in urban planning.

Research seminar

Building upon the precise analysis of the different theories, the research seminar *The land issue. A narrative study on housing* will examine the built work of selected architects and urban planners with the aim to create a catalogue of housing projects and to explore the land issue's influence on plotification layouts and spatial composition.

The seminar's argumentation follows Bernoulli's thesis and tries to evaluate in which way the relationship between the land issue, the plot and the spatial composition can be described.

II. A narrative study on housing

The seminar *A narrative study on housing* follows the method of a curated collection and a critical redrawing of selected case studies and includes built examples from various periods including the 1920's, a period in which the discussion on the relationship of land and housing reached a peak. We will take into consideration projects which can be seen as references such as one of the first "social housing" projects, the *Fuggerei* in Augsburg which exists until today as a built, utopian-like manifesto.

20 Case studies

I. Predecessors

- 1521 - *Fuggerei, Augsburg, Thomas Krebs**
- 1767 - *Royal Crescent, Bath, John Wood the younger**
- 1853 - *Cité ouvrière, Mulhouse, Emile Muller**
- 1859 - *Familistère, Guise, Jean-Baptiste Andre Godin**
- 1873 - *Meyer's Hof and the Mietskaserne, Berlin, A.E. Wittig**

II. Projects from 1890-1930

- 1893 - *Wohnanlage Sickingenstraße, Berlin, Alfred Messel*
- 1900 - *A project for Eichwald and others, Camillo Sitte ***
- 1904 - *Letchworth Garden City, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker*
- 1918 - *Siedlung Lindenhof, Berlin, Martin Wagner and Bruno Taut***
- 1919 - *Siedlung Freidorf, Muttentz, Hannes Mayer*
- 1920 - *Welwyn Garden City, Ebenezer Howard/Louis de Soissons*
- 1920 - *Tusschendijken, Rotterdam, J.J.P.Oud*
- 1922 - *Hornbaeckhuus, Copenhagen, Kay Fisker*
- 1924 - *Siedlung Georgsgarten, Celle, Otto Haesler*
- 1924 - *Siedlung Schillerpark, Berlin, Bruno Taut and Max Taut*
- 1925 - *Quartier Kiefhoek, Rotterdam, J.J.P. Oud*
- 1926 - *Siedlung Törten, Dessau, Walter Gropius, Hannes Mayer*
- 1928 - *GAGFAH Siedlung Im Fischtalgrund, Berlin, H.Poelzig, A.Klein a.o.*
- 1928 - *Siedlung Neuhausen, München, Hans Döllgast*
- 1929 - *Friedrich Ebert Siedlung, Berlin, Mebes, Emmerich, Taut*

Please note: projects marked with * can be chosen for the seminar with 3CP. You can choose either as a team of 2 one of the more complex case studies or you can choose one of the case studies with less complexity marked with ** to work on your own.

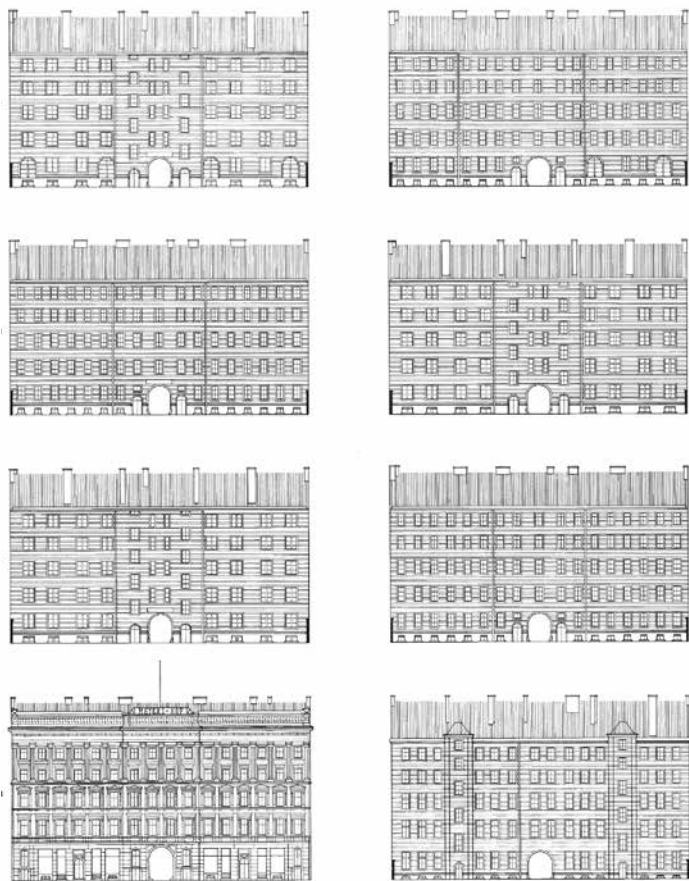


Fig.: Meyer's Hof, Berlin, Source: Johann Friedrich Geist, Klaus Kürvers, Das Berliner Mietshaus, 1862-1945, Prestel Verlag, München, 1980;

III. Ambitions

Descriptive analysis

The research seminar's aim is to analyse the relationship between plot and housing. The research questions that will have to be answered are: In which way did the discourse on the land issue influenced the selected projects? Which idea of city and space is represented by the projects? We will ask and figure out in which way the design process can be described and represented by words and drawings.

The individual storyboard of each project can be related to the following keywords and topics: Cultural-History; Politics; *The land issue; property questions; standardisation and building methods; typological questions; administrative background; the role of the architect; space, form and composition;*

The descriptive analysis includes written expressions as well as pictures, plans and redrawings, which should be curated precisely and retell the story of the project through the lense of the land issue. The individual developed storyboards shall be layouted on the A4 layout-template.

Redrawings

The redrawings shall be developed in different scales.

- 1:333/1:666 for *floor plans, views and sections;*
- 1:2500 for the *figure ground plan; parcelling plan and site plan;*
- *Isometric views;* representing the whole area of the project

The aim is to produce an almost realistic, but abstract image of the projects on the basis of the existing literature and plans, including a research in the archives. The Isometric view should represent the whole area of the project and should include the plots and space-building elements, such as walls or niches as well as the possible anticipated transformation of the private or common spaces.

Fig. p. 15: Kiefhoek workers housing, J.J.P. Oud, Rotterdam, 1925, image from: Ed Taverne, Cor Wagenaar, Mertien de Vletter, J.J.P. Oud The Complete Works, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2001;



IV. Meetings

Date and time	Place	Topic
29.10.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting I - Zoom	Introductory talk: The land issue and other issues; Selection of projects; Organisation of the seminar
05.11.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting II - Zoom	<i>Group discussion;</i> <i>Presentation of selected images and plans;</i>
12.11.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting III - Zoom	<i>Single group discussions;</i> <i>Presentation of selected images and plans;</i> <i>Proposal for redrawings;</i>
19.11.20 [Thu]	Meeting IV	<i>Correction via Mail</i> <i>Submission of the PDF presentation and the pln/</i> <i>dwg file</i>
26.11.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting V - Zoom	<i>Group discussions;</i> <i>Presentation of selected images and plans;</i> <i>Proposal for redrawings;</i>
03.12.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting VI - Zoom	<i>Single group discussions;</i> <i>Presentation of selected images and plans;</i> <i>Proposal for redrawings;</i>
10.12.20 [Thu]	Meeting VII	<i>Correction via Mail</i> <i>Submission of the PDF presentation and the pln/</i> <i>dwg file</i>
17.12.20 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting VIII - Zoom	<i>Mid term crits</i> <i>5 min. presentations per project</i>

Note on the „Meetings“:

Single group discussions: Each group will meet in a separate Meeting

Group discussions: The group discuss and present all together

Correction via Mail: Please send your work process via Mail and you will get a written correction.

Please prepare for every meeting a PDF presentation

Date and time	Place	Topic
07.01.21 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting VIV - Zoom	<i>Group discussions; Redrawings;</i>
14.01.21 [Thu]	Meeting X - Zoom	<i>Single group discussions; Redrawings;</i>
21.01.21 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting XI	<i>Correction via Mail Submission of the PDF presentation and the pln/ dwg file</i>
28.01.21 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting XII - Zoom	<i>Group discussions; Redrawings;</i>
04.02.21 [Thu]	Meeting XIII - Zoom	<i>Single group discussions; Redrawings;</i>
11.02.21 [Thu] 14:00-16:00	Meeting XIV	<i>Correction via Mail Submission of the PDF presentation and the pln/ dwg file</i>
17.02.21 [Wed] 16:00-18:00	Meeting XV - Zoom	<i>Final critics, with Prof. Uwe Schröder 5 min. presentations per project Final presentation of each Narrative Study</i>

Note on the „Workload“:

The research seminar offers in WS 2020/21 6CP (6x30hrs) =180 hrs

Contact details: fkramer@raum.arch.rwth-aachen.de [Zoom]

V. Appendix

Siedlung Alte Heide

München, Theodor Fischer 1918-30

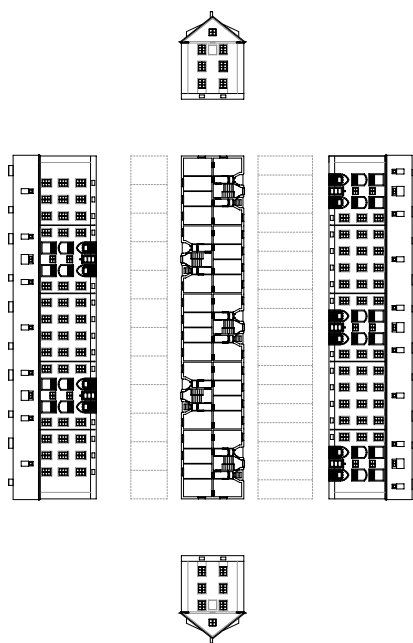


Fig: p.18/19: Theodor Fischer, Siedlung Alte Heide, 1918-1930; Redrawing, F.Kramer. M-Tücke, F.Uusitalo, 2020;



Siedlung Im Vogelsang
 Basel, Hans Bernoulli 1924-34

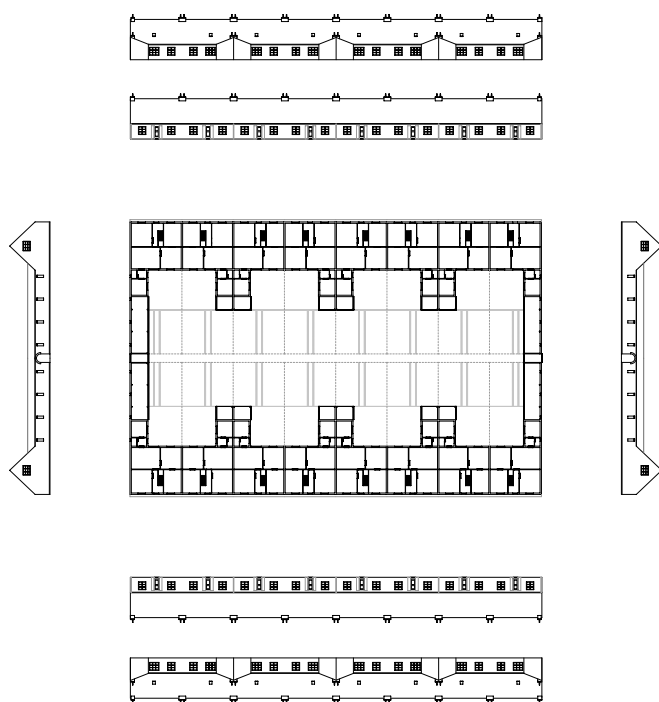
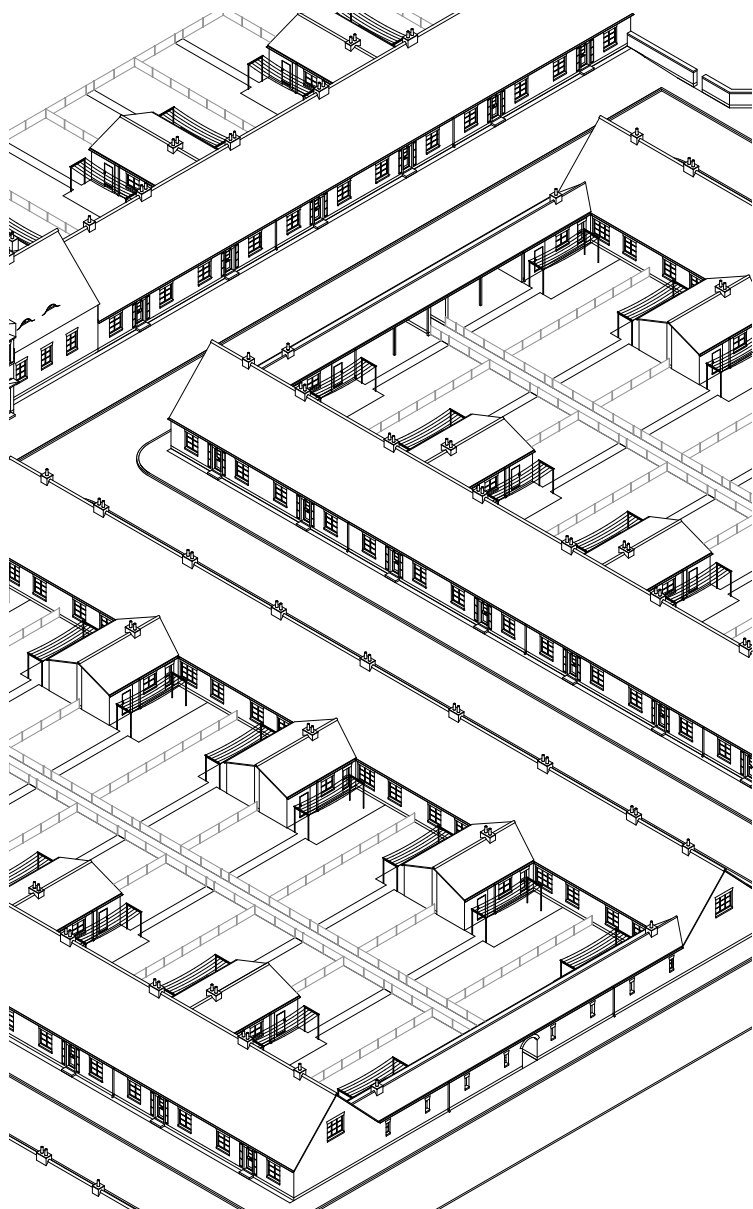


Fig.: p.20/21: Hans Bernoulli, Im Vogelsang, Basel, 1924-1934; Redrawing, F.Kramer, M.Tücke, F.Uusitalo, 2020;



Siedlung Westhausen

Frankfurt, Ernst May, Ferdinand Kramer, 1925-30

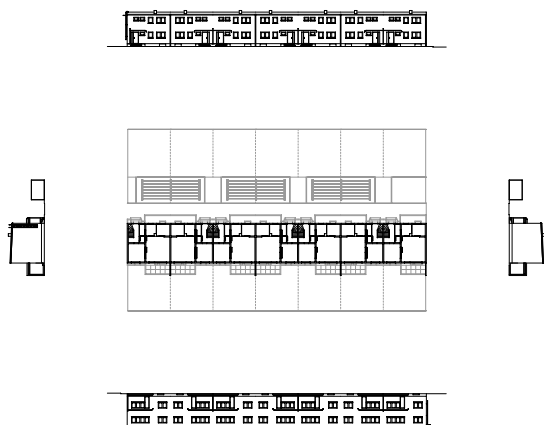
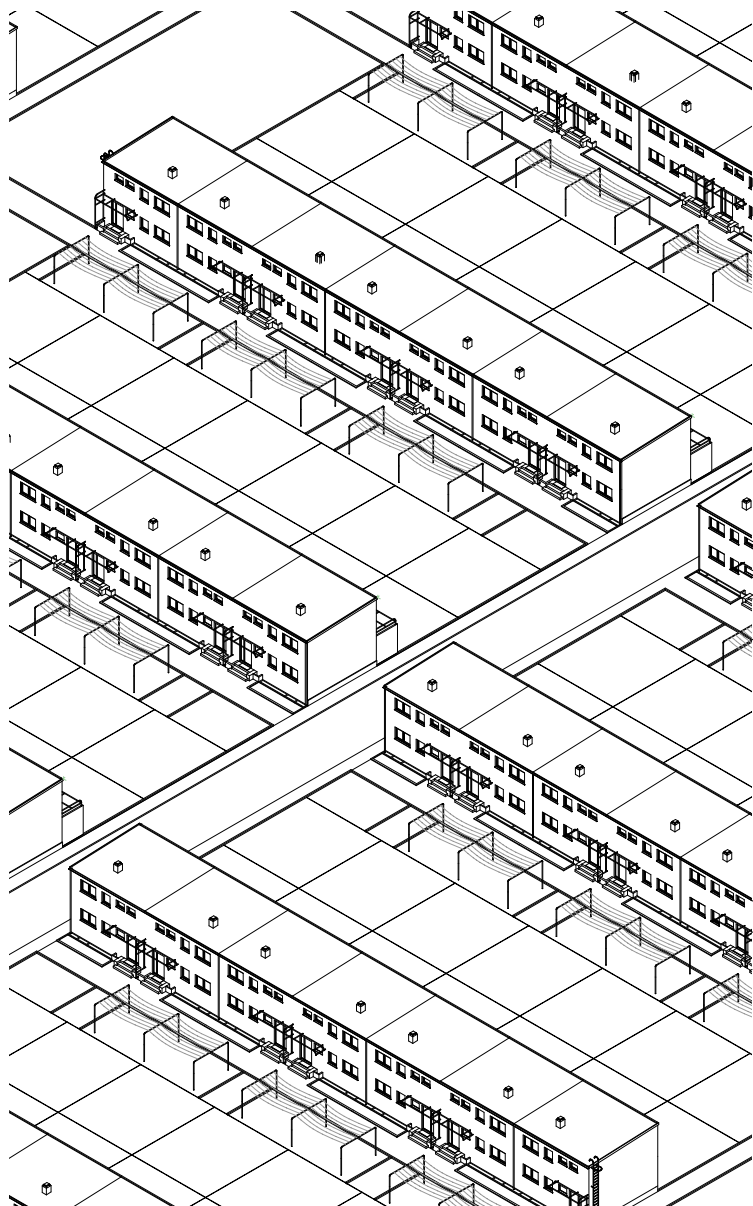


Fig. p. 22/23: Reihenhäuser, Siedlung Westhausen, 1929-31, Frankfurt am Main; Fig. p.23: Siedlung Westhausen, Reihenhäuser, 1929-31, Frankfurt am Main; Redrawing by Moritz Tücke, Gabriela Palauzova, Felix Uusitalo, Sommersemester 2020,



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„Le case d'abitazione e l'area su cui insistono diventano nel loro fluire i segni di questa vita quotidiana. Guardate le sezioni orrizzontali della città che ci offrono gli archeologi; esse sono come una trama primordiale e eterna del vivere; come una schema immutabile. Chi ricorda la città d'Europa dopo i bombardamenti dell'ultima guerra ha di fronte a sé l'immagine de quelle case sventrate dove tra le macerie rimanevano ferme le sezioni dei locali familiari con i colori sbiaditi delle tappezzerie, i lavandini sospesi nel vuoto, il groviglio delle canne, la disfatta intimità dei luoghi. E sempre, stranamente invecchiate per noi stessi, le case dell'infanzia nel fluire della città. Così l'immagine, incisioni e fotografie, degli sventramenti, ci offrono questa visione; distruzioni e sventramenti, espropriazioni e bruschi cambiamenti nell'uso dell suolo così come speculazione e obsolescenza, sono tra i mezzi più conosciuti della dinamica urbana; cercherò per questo annalzarli compiutamente.“

from the introduction of Aldo Rossi's L'Architettura della Città, 1966 (Reprint, Milan, 2018)

