

IM BESTAND (THF)

„BOTH AND“ VS „EITHER OR“
ARCHITECTING CONFLICTING INTERESTS

„Both And“ vs. „Either Or“ Architecting Conflicting Interests

For years, the housing demand has exceeded the existing housing stock in Berlin. The Stadtentwicklungsplan Wohnen 2030, the official strategic guideline of the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, states that 200.000 apartments need to be created within the next 10 years to house a still growing population.

This demand coincides with a lack of vacant building land, which is the result of Berlin's "Ausverkauf der Stadt" – a phase of sell out of building land after the reunification in the 1990s. The economic reality of Berlin as a shrinking and deficient city was origin and justification for a period of privatisation of land and property, leaving the city-owned housing associations with only a few options for inner-city housing development today.

One of these options is highly controversial: the site of the former Tempelhof Airport, which was closed in 2008 and has been vacant ever since.

Today the landing strip, a 300-hectare big open field, is used as one of the largest urban open spaces in the world. Since the closure of the airport became apparent in the early 1990s, dozens of proposals to reuse the space were made. The interests colliding at site were too diverse to realise any of these plans though.

In September 2011, the citizens' initiative 100% Tempelhofer Feld was founded, framing the ecological value of the green and recreational space in the inner city and opposing the construction of new housing as intended by the Berlin Senate. The master plan was successfully overturned by a Berlin-wide referendum preventing the development of the site: on 25th of May 2014, 64% voted in favour of it – a clear articulation of public interest.

The slogan put forward by the initiative: "Either a field for all or for a privileged few" was populist precisely in what was excluded from the discussion: A dialogical understanding of interests.

Instead of creating the dichotomy of "either – or" we suggest using "both – and" asking: who builds where for whom? Together with the students, we will develop new narratives for Flughafen Tempelhof. In contrast to the most recent proposals, the initiative becomes the starting point of our planning, as we agree with the ecological goals and principles.

Furthermore, we will look into the existing housing stock of Berlin, that is the basis for any calculation on future demand. What does "200.000 apartments" actually mean? For how many people do we plan which kind of apartments? And could we re-frame the demand, if we better understand the needs of future-Berliners?

Thus, the studio is not aimed at merely producing a maximum number of apartments by replicating existing models, but to anticipate the societal transformations we, as architects, are part of. Between social, ecological and economic parameters.

Note: As part of the studio, students are asked to visit Berlin over the first weekend of the class. During this prolonged weekend, we will meet a number of experts on the studio-topic as well as visit a small number of selected large scale housing projects. Furthermore, there is an integrated seminar week in the form of a five-day-long film class, which will take place in Zurich.

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