

# RETHINK-REUSE EXISTING STRUCTURES.

**SHOWCASES FROM KREUZBERG IN THE CONTEXT OF IBA ALT  
1984/1987.**

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## ABSTRACT

The 1980's have been an architecturally formative decade for the city of West-Berlin. The decade marks a pivot from an era of expansion on the outskirts of the city towards an era of reconstructing and urban renewal. Crucial in this transformation was the neighborhood of Kreuzberg, which at the time was seeing an episode of rapid urban decay, as well as the organization IBA Alt, which was founded as part of the Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin. In this essay we will examine how the IBA Alt's principles of Careful Urban Renewal impacted Kreuzberg in the early 1980's. After giving a brief historical background of the neighborhood of SO36, we focus on three projects in which the IBA Alt was involved in different capacities. For each of the three projects, we will provide some context of the site, lay out the initial planning process and describe their implementation. Subsequently, we compare the approaches that IBA Alt has taken and show how the principles of Careful Urban Renewal took shape in each of these. While novel at the time, the principles spearheaded by the IBA Alt are currently re-emerging in debates around housing crises in larger cities around the world as well as in the context of Climate Change.

Vertiefungsarbeit  
In-depth Study

Rethink-Reuse existing structures.  
Showcases from Kreuzberg in the context of IBA  
Alt 1984/1987.

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Datum: 13.06.2023





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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of post-war Berlin, the Urban Renewal Programs between 1963-1972 had followed the ideas of the International Congress on Modern Architecture (CIAM). This resulted in a series of housing projects in undeveloped areas of the city as well as the systematic demolition of numerous pre-war residential buildings in the inner city.



Fig. 1. Poster against "Clearance Renewals"

Fig.2. Märkischesviertel housing project in 1971.



By the end of the 60's protests against existing housing policies emerged and spread around the city. Movements like "Aktion 507", organised by students and young architects heavily criticised contemporary urban strategies and their capitalistic approach.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the first squatters emerged. The squatting of an empty factory in the Märkisches Viertel in Northwest Berlin, though it was not successful, represented the first claim of this kind for a humanistic approach of urban development.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1970's, districts like Kreuzberg and Wedding had a landscape of empty and "left to rot" buildings, even though the city experienced a housing shortage.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the 1980's the newly organised Repair Squatting Movement ("Instands(be)setzung") had spread mainly in Kreuzberg and Schonenberg, proposing continual repairing over modernisation and subsequent non displacement of existing tenants.

The political pressure of these mass illegal actions resonated on the redevelopment apparatus in Kreuzberg. The measures that took place in the district compelled citizens, planners, authorities and owners to collaborate in a significant urban revitalization effort, orchestrated by the IBA Alt.

While the endeavours of IBA Alt and the many parties involved in "Careful Urban Renewal" (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) are shrouded in an atmosphere of anonymity and political debates, numerous projects rooted in this form of citizen participation and urban renewal have proven to be successful, offering qualities that extend beyond architectural achievements and are commendable when viewed through the lenses of mainstream urban and architectural thinking.

1 Tagesspiegel, 1968

2 Vasudevan, 2015. P.2-3

3 Pugh, 2015. P.191

## 2 ON THE EDGE OF THE CITY.

Before the conflicts that shaped the deteriorating state of Kreuzberg, this district had been the neighbourhood of the working class; congested and overlooked, holding a conflicting mixture of uses like housing and industry. During the post war reconstructions, Kreuzberg added to this image of slums and war devastation, a third layer of destruction and neglect resulting from the urbanisation actions and outlined plans.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1950's and 1960's plans were being developed that included building a highway with an intersection in Luisenstadt, as well as replacing existing buildings with high rise typologies.

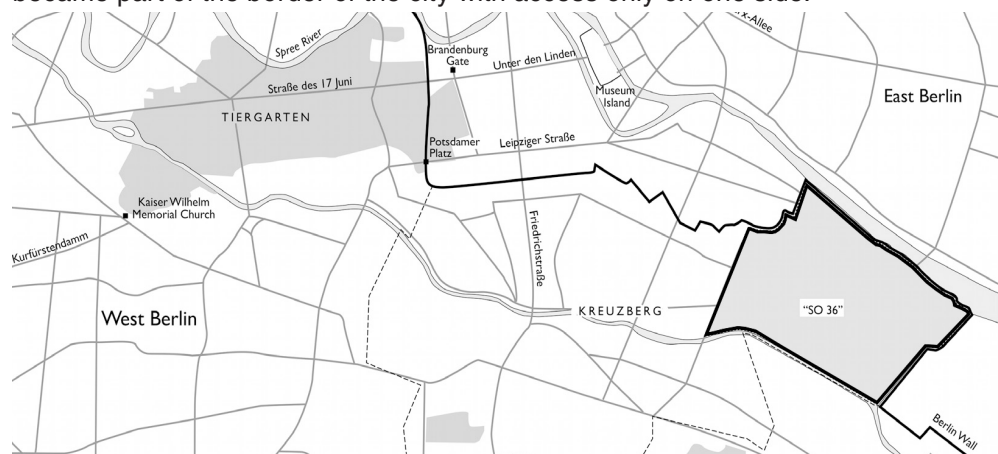


Fig. 3. Highway plan with intersections from the east and south in Luisenstadt, crossing Kreuzberg.

Tough this big project of motorized infrastructure was eventually cancelled between 1976 and 1977, these kind of radical interventions promoted a massive displacement of people and systematic speculation of the existing buildings in Kreuzberg. As a result, the vulnerable stratum of the residents remained in place: elderly residents, unemployed citizens and immigrant workers and their families, living in buildings that were left to the elements and envisioned to be demolished in the near future.<sup>5</sup>

The east side of the district, known by its former postal code "SO36" was part of this desolating landscape. This region had a special geographical location, product of the Wall in divided Berlin. It bordered to the north and east to the Wall and to the South with the Landwehrkanal. This gave it a special condition, as it became part of the border of the city with access only on one side.

Fig. 4. Kreuzberg SO36 in divided Berlin.



<sup>4</sup> Lacerda Neto, 2020. P.1

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P.2

### 3 SO 36 AND IBA ALT

In February 1979, the Citizen Initiative SO36 (Burger Initiative SO36) occupied two buildings in Kreuzberg and started the repair squatting movement "Instands(be)setzung".<sup>6</sup> This consisted of the repairing of buildings while occupying them, "...on one hand to point out the longstanding deterioration and emptiness of the apartments, and on the other hand to create acceptance of this method of civil disobedience..."<sup>7</sup> This action was soon replicated in other buildings of the neighbourhood.

Repair squatting was not a unified movement. They were spread into different groups with different interest and needs, but the general motivation was the discontent with the neglect of standing buildings and the modernisation plans that purported a massive displacement of inhabitants.

In March 1979 the "Südost Express", a newspaper published by the citizens of SO36, stated the described the situation of Kreuzberg as:

*"...One of the most run-down areas of Berlin is SO36 - everyone who lives here notices that. Many of them don't want to live here anymore... Dirty, gloomy facades and streets, hardly friendly green, extreme air pollution, destroyed houses by the owners. The housing standard is far behind from what had to be in a society of the Federal Republic and West Berlin... what has come out for us?"*

The initiative SO36 would become a prominent civil organization that helped organize squatting, repairs, and other events in the area SO36 of Kreuzberg. Identifying and trying to solve problems and needs of the neighborhood independently.

This scenario of squatting and the competition "Strategies für Kreuzberg" that was taken as a measure brought to light the operations of the IBA Alt, that worked in parallel with IBA Neu.<sup>8</sup> In comparison with the tasks of the IBA Neu, it would focus on the Careful Urban Renewal of the existing buildings and urban structures. Originally, SO36 was not included in the demonstrations areas of the exhibition. Nonetheless, by the pressure of the citizen representatives, by 1979, Kreuzberg SO36 had been declared the "Demonstration Area 6" of the IBA.<sup>9</sup>

On March 17th, 1983, the authorities approved the principles for Careful Urban Renewal<sup>10</sup> as legally binding guidelines to approach demonstration areas like Kreuzberg SO36 and Luisenstadt. These principles included general organizational guidelines such as preserving the social structure referred as "Kreuzberg Mischung" by involving residents and business owners in decision-making. Specific strategies were proposed to address built elements and the urban structure, such as strategically repairing buildings, minimizing demolitions, and

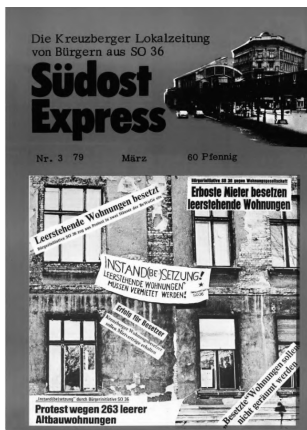


Fig. 5. Südost Express cover page. March 1979 Nr. 3

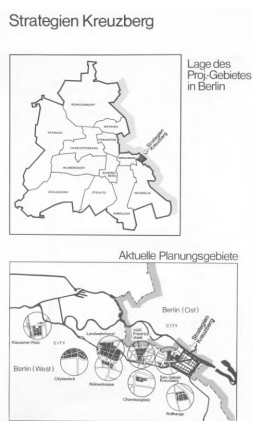


Fig. 6. Planning area for the competition "Strategies for Kreuzberg"

6 Pugh, 2015. P.191

7 Holm and Kuhn, 2011. P.646

8 Cutolo, 2012. P.148

9 Ibid

10 Lacerda Neto, 2020. P.4



enhancing facades and green spaces in courtyards.

In general, the overarching guidelines emphasized prioritizing repair over renovation, renovation over modernization, and modernization over new construction<sup>11</sup>, while considering the existing social and economic structures.

The IBA Alt approach followed a scale of benefit from the useful substance, aligning with the modern perspective of ecological reuse. However, the reasons for this approach were multifaceted. The careful reuse of functioning elements aimed to preserve the substance of the historical buildings as well as minimize intervention costs and, consequently, keep rents at a more affordable level, thus ensuring the residents' continued presence in a suitable neighbourhood.

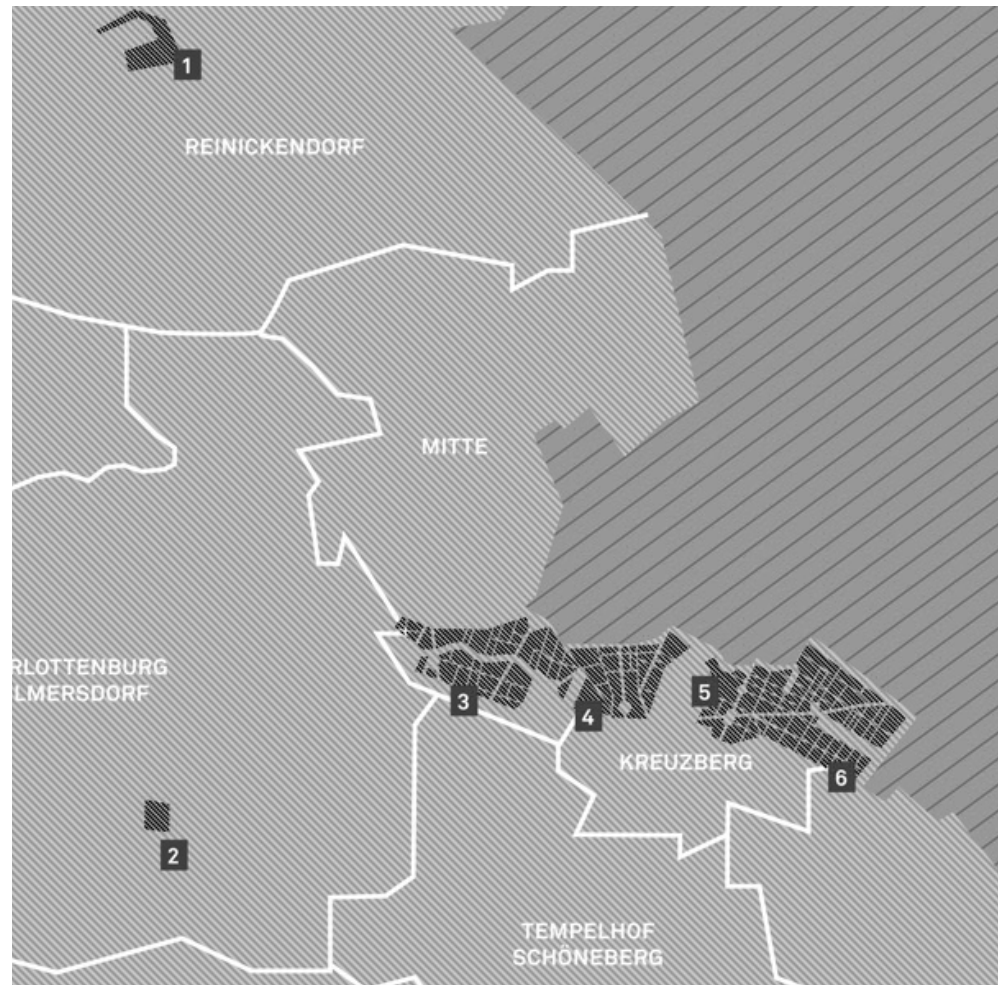


Fig. 7. Demonstration areas IBA 1984. No. 5 Luisenstadt, No.6 SO36

11 Lacerda Neto, 2020. P.5

## 4 CASE STUDIES

The intricate political and social dynamics surrounding Careful Urban Renewal have been extensively documented in literature. However, the detailed descriptions of the numerous repair programs conducted by the IBA Alt primarily originate from the documentation produced by the IBA itself. This includes records of participation processes, competitions, and neighbourhood studies. It is within this context that a previously dilapidated neighbourhood became the setting for innovative approaches that were considered ground-breaking at the time.<sup>12</sup>

The projects undertaken by the IBA Alt encompassed a diverse range of initiatives, making classification challenging due to their case-by-case nature. However, a common underlying principle that emerged was a mindset of re-evaluation and reuse. This simple yet significant principle can be observed in the majority of the documented projects in Kreuzberg SO36. Despite the unique circumstances of each case, different strategies were employed within the comprehensive framework of re-evaluation and reuse, resulting in a spectrum of approaches tailored to the specific context of each project. To showcase this spectrum, we will present three projects in Kreuzberg SO36 in which IBA Alt was involved in different capacities.

The first project, "Regenbogenfabrik", was drawn up on the base of the found social structure. Constrained in time and resources, the project consisted of the minimal intervention possible, being repair and adjustment the strategy towards the architectonic object.

The second project, "Dresdener Straße Day Care", is the result of a larger transformation of resources. Turning a run-down parking garage into a children's facility.

The third project, "Retirement home at Köpenicker Straße", entailed predominantly new buildings. However, it was designed in a way that complemented an existing old structure in order to create a single project.

<sup>12</sup> Cutolo, 2012. P.148





Fig. 8. Showcases map in Kreuzberg east. 1. Regenbogen fabrik, 2. Dresdenerstrasse Daycare, 3. Retirement home Köpenickerstrasse.

- 1 Regenbogenfabrik
- 2 Dresdenerstrasse Day Care
- 3 Retirement home Köpenickerstrasse



#### 4.1 REPAIR-REUSE. THE "AS FOUND".

The Regenbogenfabrik is a project in Block 109. The block is located between Lausitzer, Reichenberger, Manteuffel Street and Paul-Lincke-Ufer Street. Post-war, the block had largely retained its original structure from the 19th century. The factory itself had been built in stages from 1876 to 1960. The buildings created a series of small courtyards, that served the residents and were used extensively as gardens and the low height of the factory allowed sunlight to reach the courtyards.<sup>13</sup>



Fig.9. Axonometric drawing of the Block 109 and the Regenbogenfabrik before reparations.

In 1978, the firms Comforta and AWE bought Lausitzer Strasse 22a/23 and Reichenberger Strasse 50/51, and additionally in 1980 the factory in the courtyard. The early plans for the block included multiple demolitions in Lausitzer Straße and in Reichenberger Straße as well as the factory in the courtyard. Additionally, a series of modernization measures and new buildings were proposed.<sup>14</sup> The reports of the Regenbogenfabrik edited by STERN, commissioned by IBA, argue that the project implied the demolition of more than 100 affordable units in relatively good conditions, and with the further demolitions, the destruction of small courtyards. This would have displaced about 250 residents because the social housing fees would have increased far above the average price.<sup>15</sup>



Fig.10. Children activities in the squatted factory.

On the 14th of March 1981, during a period of political instability in Berlin, a group of activists squatted houses 22, 22a, 23 on Lusitzerstrasse and the factory within Block 109 (Instandbesetzt). Just three days after the squatting, the factory backyard was cleaned up and a celebratory event took place.<sup>16</sup> Repairs and renovations continued, and the courtyard served as a playground for the children. Festivals, parties, music, theater, and similar events were organized on the factory compound. This helped legitimize the squatting with the residents and conveyed the possibility to use the building as a community and children centre. The high engagement with the activities held in the factory demonstrated the pressing need for recreational spaces and pointed out the feasibility of such a project in the Block.

<sup>13</sup> International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1982. Document Nr. 638. P.6

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.P.10

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.P.11

<sup>16</sup> B. Sichtermann and K. Sichtermann, 2017. P.73

In August of 1981, the building chancellor approved this proposal by the request of the tenants and stipulated a promise to maintain the rent fees.<sup>17</sup>

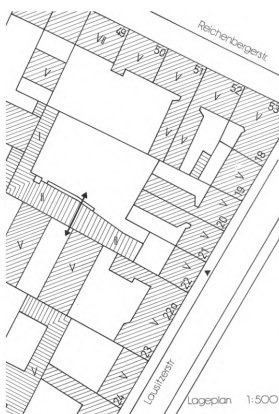
The tenants, squatters and activists formed the Association “Regenbogenfabrik Block 109 e. V.,” which gave them an organizational structure that was rather uncommon for the anarchic squatting movement at the time. With the experience of the previous community events, they had a unique advantage of understanding the specific needs, preferences and dynamics of the people involved, while carrying out the development of the factory.

The factory was divided into three zones: the children’s play area, the community area and a cultural zone. Several social activities were implemented, such as the Regenbogen Kino, a cinema presenting films from Germany and Turkey, facilitating better understanding of both cultures. It was in this context, that the Regenbogenfabrik Association sought assistance from the IBA Alt.



Fig. 11. Celebration in the Culture Centre Regenbogenfabrik.

Fig. 12. Proposed entrances to the Regenbogenfabrik from neighboring buildings.



The approach towards the factory entailed the preservation of the historical outline of the block, that as it was observed, worked at a urban scale. Most importantly the success of the project lies in the understanding of the functioning social structure as it was found, and thus its preservation. The moto for this was a hand on hand work with the residents and squatters to make a suitable place for what was already the a successful case of social interaction.

Fireproofing, insulations, emergency exits, minimum heights, correct illumination, elimination of high chemical pollution areas, among others were the aspects that had to be secured to make the change of use. Enhacing adjustments were also made, such as the connection of the rooms that compounded the factory and the landscape planning of the courtyard. Additional entries from the adjacent courtyards were also contemplated<sup>18</sup>, which in a way portraits the community centre as a convergence point for the neighbours.

In this sense, the tangible task of the architects reframed to an expert advisory on technicalities to comply with building regulations and to repair the building. As

<sup>17</sup> International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1982. Document Nr. 638. P.5

<sup>18</sup> Ibid P.14-15

simple as It may sound, this supposed a challenging task that required a number of creative solutions, since this kind of repurposing projects were not commonly assessed by the regulations.

The Regenbogenfabrik still exists today working under the same collective principles.<sup>19</sup> From its occupation and development in the early eighties until now, the factory works positively still as a community and children centre. This suggests the success of the intervention, on one hand, attributed to the commitment of the citizens and on the other to the precise assesment by the planners on when to carry a high impact construction, as well as the challenging place making seeking with the existing resources. A task that far from a showcasing picture, is a showcasing long-term functionality.

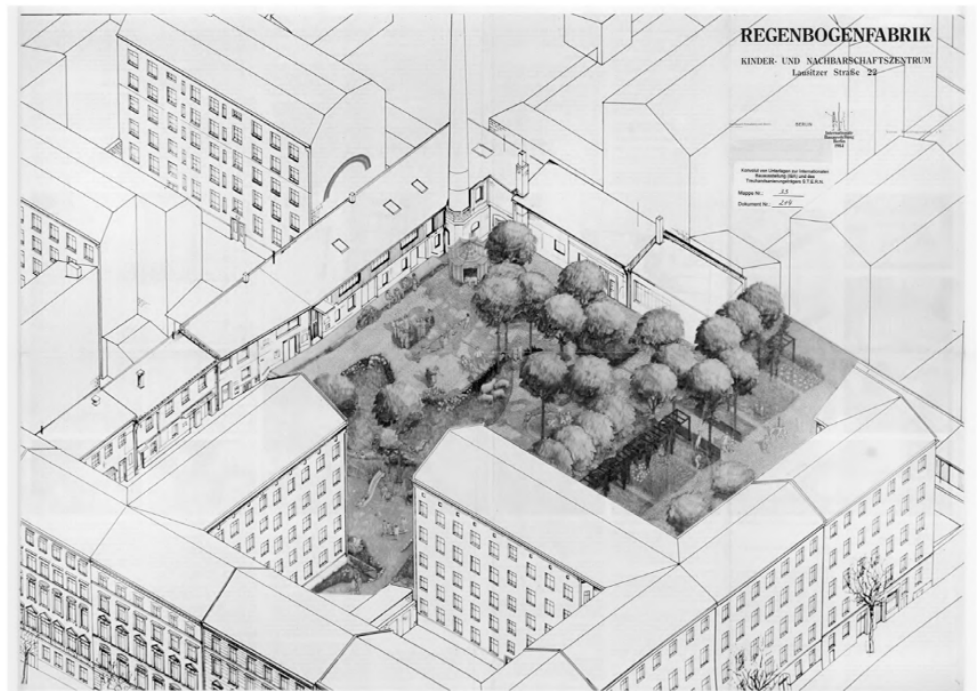


Fig. 13. Axonometric drawing of the renewal project, depicting the greening of the courtyard.

19 Regenbogen Fabrik Association description on website. Consulted on 2023.



## 4.2 TRANSFORM-REUSE. FOR THE SAKE OF THE RESOURCES.

In the previous example of Careful Urban Renewal, the planning was largely driven by social circumstance and the appropriation of the space. The day-care centre in Dresdenerstraße was the result of a different set of motivations.

In 1974, the building was designed as a parking lot to serve the Neues Kreuzberg Zentrum (NKZ). By the demands of the citizens, it hosted a playground on the rooftop, a characteristic often used in modern architecture. Nonetheless, the building saw barely any use since its construction. It was reported to house car-wrecks and to have become a hot spot of vandalism. In July 1978, a demolition request was proposed to the district of Kreuzberg and was approved with no opposition from the public.<sup>20</sup> The Südost Express described the building in an article from January 1980 as an “eye-sore for the Dresdner Strasse but an eloquent testimony of modern architecture and redevelopment practice” and thus was in favour of its demolition, a very unusual scenario between inhabitants and planners in Kreuzberg.<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 14. Parking house in Dresdener Strasse before its transformation.

As a recently built and neglected object, it had no historical property to protect, nor represented a landmark for the neighbourhood, neither was it appreciated by the citizens. It was perceived as a failed piece of infrastructure.

Nonetheless, the IBA Alt, on the basis of Careful Urban Renewal, questioned the demolition of a newly built structure. They argued that prior the decision to demolish, the values of the buildings should be investigated to determine its potential for reuse and commissioned a test project to Spangenberg & Frowein.<sup>22</sup>

20 International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1982. Document Nr. 162. P.92

21 Südost Express, 1980. P.18, Section: "Parkhaus muss weg"

22 International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1982. Document Nr. 162. P.92

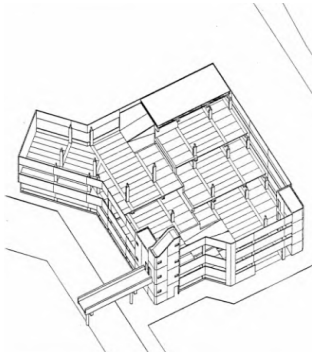


Fig. 15. Structure of the former parking house.

Sprangenberg & Frowein concluded, that the structure of the building was intact and suitable for conversion. The object was a “free-standing building”, with three to four stories in a half-level logic. It was built on regular grids by a column-beam system. The floors relate to each other by a series of ramps. The slabs are flat, and the rooftop was structurally designed to be used and hold a layer of ground for a garden.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the lower levels of the building were shaded by the 10 level NKZ building to the south. For this reason, the architects argued that the utility of a park on the ground floor would be limited. Additionally, they mentioned that solar graphics show that the area with more sun exposure was in fact the old playground in the rooftop.<sup>24</sup>

The architects use three major values of the space. The structure of its kind allowed to enclose the levels from each other with fire resistant and acoustic proofed partitions with no need of major demolitions. The half story levels allowed them to create children’s spaces that communicate visually from floor to floor. The ramps were suitable to be used by disabled kids, and their landing as motor playing areas. They zoned the building such that the children’s areas prominently in the upper levels and the administration on the first levels directly to the street. The rooftop was connected to the building by a staircase aligned to the ramps, and a supervised playground with greenery was proposed on the top.

On the other hand, they made two major transformations to the building. Because of the deep dimensions, the interior spaces had a deficiency on natural lighting. Therefore, the removal of u-shaped slabs on the middle section across the building to place a glass house in the upper floor allowed natural light to flood the interiors.

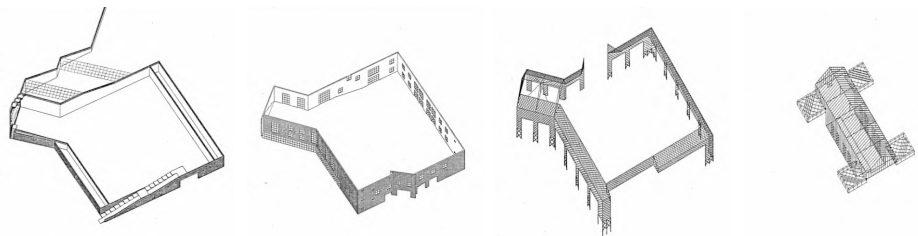


Fig. 16. Axonometric drawings of the main elements of the transformation.

Fig. 17. Photograph of the glasshouse courtyard.



In their aim to create an ecological concept to the building, the Working Group for Ecological Urban Redevelopment, proposed the greening of the hall under the glass house and the rooftop with plants that can bridge the lack of green spaces in Kreuzberg and offer a relationship with nature to the children in the facility. Additionally, a wooden structure was proposed on the outside of the building, as an outer skin that goes all the way up to the rooftop garden. The wooden structure was thought to host vertical planting and thus small birds or similar fauna, and to serve as a buffer for the building and a contribution to the greening of the street.<sup>25</sup>

This project is a display of revalue and reuse, as the IBA Alt had been carrying towards old buildings. But in this case, the principle was considered indepen-

23 International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1982. Document Nr. 162. Section "Testenentwurf im Auftrag der International Bauausstellung" P.1-2

24 Ibid.

25 International Bauausstellung und S.T.E.R.N., 1985. Mappe Nr.157. Document Nr.877 Section: "I. Konzept der Öko-kita und planungsstand herbst 1985"

dently of the object's time of production, despite the lack of appropriation, use or claim for it. In this sense, the objective of reusing the former parking building reads as the reuse for the sake of the resources, with the intention of maintaining a coherent discourse towards renewal; that once was the consequence of the discontent over a clearance method.

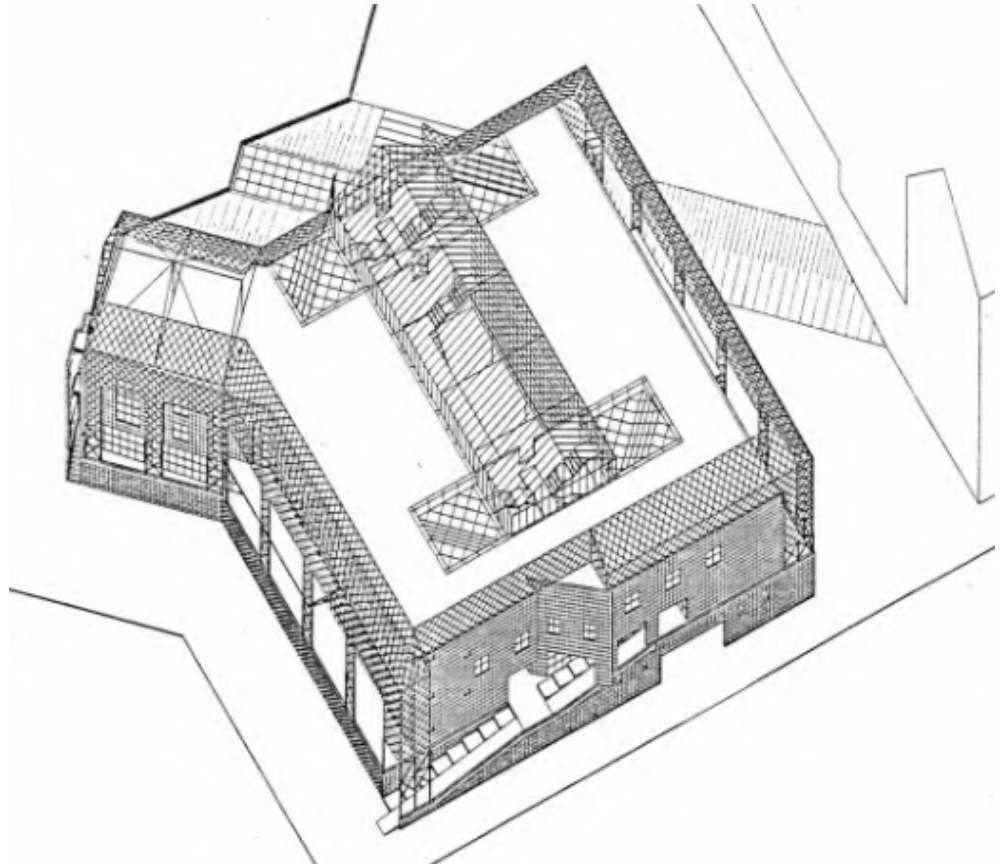


Fig. 18. Axonometric drawing of the Day Care Project.

Fig. 19. Dresdener Daycare in 2012.





### 4.3 COMPLEMENT- REUSE.

The spirit of the careful strategies was also observable in conducted competitions. A study commissioned by the IBA Alt on Blocks 110 to 114 and 119 to 122, outlined the proposal to build a retirement home in the vacant lots 190 to 193 in Köpenickerstrasse. Initially, the responsibility for developing the project fell on the developer GSW. However, the design proposals put forward by GSW were deemed unsuitable, as explicitly stated in the minutes of the IBA Alt.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, the IBA Alt decided to organize a closed competition among three architectural offices: Behnisch and Partner, Stephan Goerner, and Otto Steidle. In January 1982, the IBA Alt arranged a colloquium to familiarize the participating architects with the task of constructing a retirement home in Köpenickerstrasse. This event clearly demonstrated the IBA Alt's intentions to acquaint the contestants with Urban Renewal, including the chronological explanation of the redevelopment events in Kreuzberg and the sensibilization towards the existing resources.<sup>27</sup>

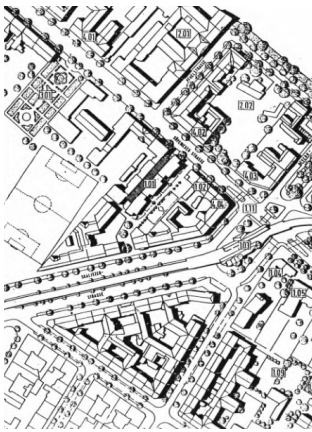
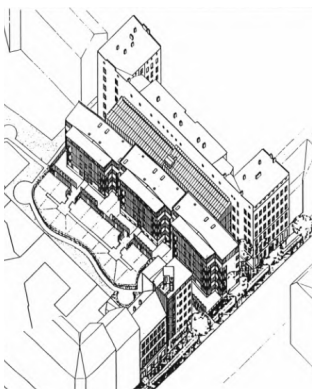


Fig. 20. Urban Plan featuring the project for the Retirement home (1.01)

Fig. 21. Axonometric drawing of the project.



The competition's parameters included the preservation of the old building located on plot number 190, as it symbolized the non-bourgeois life of the block. Additionally, the architects were encouraged to adhere to the pre-war urban outline as much as possible. Furthermore, since the plot was located in a corner of the divided city it was essential to establish a connection with the rest of the neighbourhood.<sup>28</sup>

The recommendation of the IBA Alt was to incorporate the old building on plot 190 but accommodating the necessary 100 dwellings solely on the empty plot was also considered. Previous experiences have shown that such a measure would result in congestion in the area.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, a balanced approach was sought, considering both the preservation of the old building and the efficient utilization of the empty plot to accommodate the required dwellings.

The colloquium served not only as an introduction to the project at hand but also a demonstration of the concept of Building Culture in Kreuzberg as a key element. Which had already its own character, subsequent idea of the Careful Renewal Guidelines and a mirror of other experiences. The Building Culture in Kreuzberg, in the colloquium was defined as a contextual work, that uses the elements of the site, that comprises its inhabitants and the phenomena of everyday life.<sup>30</sup>

The awarded project by Otto Steidle reflects the parameters of the competition and accomplishes the intentions of the IBA of finding an original solution to the task. The urban planning of the ensemble is specific to the place. It features three new buildings on the empty plots that complemented the standing structure at plot 190.

The first building on plot 192 would have 4-5 stories, in a long volume, divided in three smaller units. The second one, in plot 191, is a 4-story height space between the new addition and the refurbished building, acting as a connecting volume.<sup>31</sup>

26 International Bauausstellung and S.T.E.R.N. 1982. Document Nr. 45a. P. 13

27 Ibid. P.3-5

28 International Bauausstellung and S.T.E.R.N. 1982. Document Nr. 45a. P. 11

29 Ibid. P.10

30 Ibid. P.11

31 International Bauausstellung and S.T.E.R.N., 1986. Document Nr. 55. P.2-3

Additionally on the corner plot 193, a 7-story building would be erected. Its small footprint would leave enough space for a green path that connects Köpenickerstrasse with the block courtyard and consequently with the south of Skalitzerstrasse.

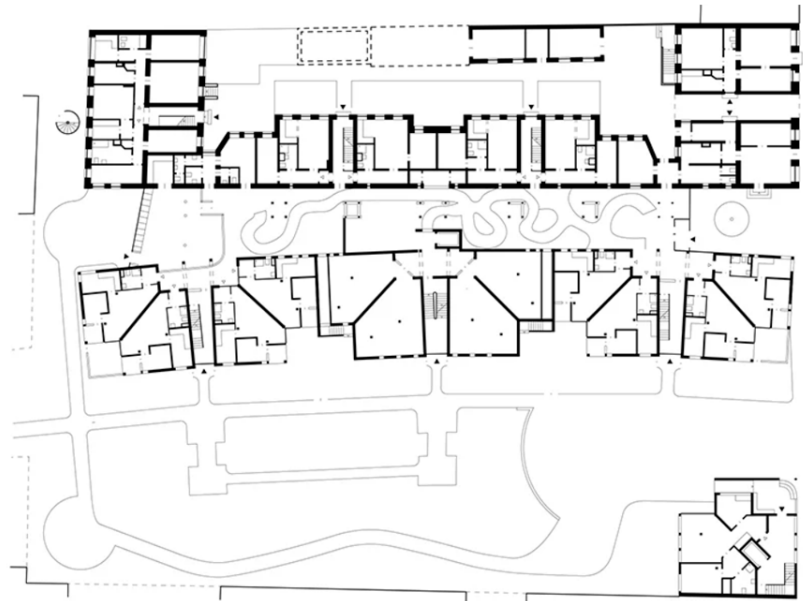


Fig. 22. Floor plan of the project.  
Above: Building on the plot no. 190.  
Below: Complementary project.



Fig. 23. View of the ramps and garden in the connectin building.

Fig. 24. Façade from Köpenickerstrasse, to the right the old building, to the left the complementing building

Fig. 25. Close up photographie of the glass house and the building in plot 190.

The central element between the new and the old part of the building acts as a container of ramps, leading up in a natural movement of people. This “barrier-free” component as a leading role of the project is unequalled by other projects of the time.<sup>32</sup> Function wise, is the perfect location for the vertical and horizontal circulations, but the inner space of this object plays a trinity as a social element, garden space and circulation area.

Although the architectural expression shows influences of Tuscany elements, Bruno Taut houses and recollection of Corbusier’s foundations<sup>33</sup>, the composition of the architectural objects depict a careful addition to the existing. The preserved volume is complemented by a second new building that references the openings proportions on facades and the overall tectonics of the existing piece. The element in between form a set back volume that marks an entrance and is enveloped with a translucent material. Its materiality gives it a character of connector between the new and the old and articulates the ensemble.



32 Tell, 2012. Paragraph 19

33 Ibid, Paragraph 15-16



## 5 SAME MOTO, DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

The three recent examples demonstrate the diverse range of projects implemented in Kreuzberg SO36 as part of the IBA Alt framework. Notably, all three examples are a long term success and work today under the same capacity.

These projects were undertaken to address a pressing need for social infrastructure in the neighborhood and as a strategy against displacement. Whilst they share ground principles in their approach to the built structures, their materiality does not immediately reveal their commonalities.

The attitude of "Re-thinking" the existing in the task of postwar redevelopment as a general theme resulted in different strategies; evincing the context base nature of the approach. Repair in order to reuse in the case of the Regenbogenfabrik, Transform to reuse in the Dresdener Day Care and Complement to Reuse in the case of the Retirement Home in Kopenickerstrasse.

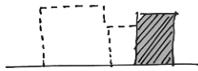
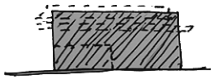


Fig.26. Sketch diagram from the analysis of the showcases.  
1. Repair to reuse / 2. Transfer to reuse / 3. Complement to reuse.

While the projects exhibit similarities when viewed through the lens of their processes, their differences become apparent when considering their underlying motivations. On one hand, the Regenbogenfabrik responded to the "vernacular" appropriation of the place and the limitations this envailed by the measure of preserving the structure. On the other hand, the upholding of the building no. 190 in the project by Otto Steidle aimed the preservation of historical values. While the preservation of the Dresdenerstrasse parking building responded to the intention of manteing a coherent discourse of ethos. These fundamental differences show different degrees of intervention. The Regenbogenfabrik showcases minimal intervention, allowing observers to grasp its original nature. The retirement home hints at its addition to the existing structure, while the Dresdener Day Care may not immediately reveal its previous identity as a parking garage.

Different levels of agency from the different actors can be observed in each project. In the Regenbogenfabrik, the community and established social dynamics played a major role in dictating the project guidelines, while the Day Care initiative was led by planners and architects. The Retirement Home project found a middle ground between the two approaches, as it involved organizing a competition among architects. Sensitization efforts were made by facilitating dialogues between contestants and elderly residents of the area, along with consulting healthcare experts and considering the unique conditions of Kreuzberg.

Overall, these projects demonstrate the diverse approaches, motivations, and collaborative processes employed to create meaningful social infrastructure in Kreuzberg SO36, reflecting the importance of community engagement, historical preservation, and context-specific considerations.

## 6 CONCLUSION

While the projects discussed were developed in the early to mid 1980's, we can identify a number of themes that still dominate today's discussions.

On one hand, the central motivation behind Careful Urban Renewal was to act against gentrification and displacement<sup>34</sup>. In today's Berlin, these topics are still as relevant as they have been in the 1980's. As the reunited Berlin has been reinstated as Germany's capital and sees high immigration and subsequent rise of its population, the pressing need of social and affordable housing is still today a topic of discussion and a cause of demonstrations.<sup>35</sup>

On another front, the measures of "adaptive reuse" are relevant in today's mainstream architecture, albeit, the motivations of today derived from the quantitative care of CO2 emissions rather than the pressing needs of a postwar society. It is important to mention, that the ecological discourse had a peak point during the 1980's. Nonetheless, the discourse encompassed the use of innovative energy resources, waste management and the greening of the city as a health and quality of life measure.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, the Careful Urban Renewal as an approach that diverges from the traditional planning process emphasized the stretching role of the architect. From advisor to innovator. Which, suggest that the primary capacity of the architect remains rooted to the place making phenomenon despite the scale of the intervention, from almost nothing to radical changes. This discourse can as well be found in contemporary architecture practices. For instance, the renowned work of Anne Lacaton and Jean-Phillip Vassal, that in an interview with Mathieu Wellner explain their motivations on the decision of regular maintenance over new design of the Place Léon Aucoc in Bordeaux as:

*"We're always curious about what we are going to find. We think, that there is a lot of potential in what already exists. Every existing situation has its own special quality, and you have to take your time and be curious in order to understand it. The phase of observing and talking with the local residents is very important to us. Only then do we consider what could be done. I think it is very important to take the existing situation as a starting point- this includes existing buildings and the existing atmosphere."<sup>37</sup>*

Based on these insights, it is reasonable to assert that the groundbreaking renewal carried out by IBA and the citizens has left us with a series of valuable lessons that can be applied to contemporary settings.

34 Lacerda Neto, 2020. P.4

35 Zimmermann, 2023. Paragraph 4.

36 Baller, ca. 2019. Section: Second Ecological Movement.

37 Lacaton A. and Vassal J., 2012. P.13

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## 9 DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that the present work entitled:

Rethink-Reuse existing structures

Showcases from Kreuzberg in the context of IBA  
Alt 1984/1987.

has been written independently by me, that no other sources and aids than those indicated have been used and that passages in the work which have been taken from other works - including electronic media - in terms of wording or meaning have been marked as borrowed, indicating the source.

Gonzalez Solorzano Jacqueline

Luzern, 13.06.2023

