

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY AS A COMMON CONCERN

*European conference on
architectural policies*



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WALLONIE-BRUXELLES

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Architecture
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CityTools Grounded
Urbanism

0 Introduction

For over 20 years, the European Conferences on Architectural Policies (ECAP) have been a means of sharing, on an international stage, the main concerns regarding the quality of our built and unbuilt environment, and its evolution.

Over the past few years, these policies have been widely developed at both European and national levels. As the climate transition has gradually become part of political agendas, numerous declarations and initiatives stress the importance of considering a more cultural perspective in favour of a technical-economic one in this transition, based on the development of a common, high-quality 'Baukultur'.

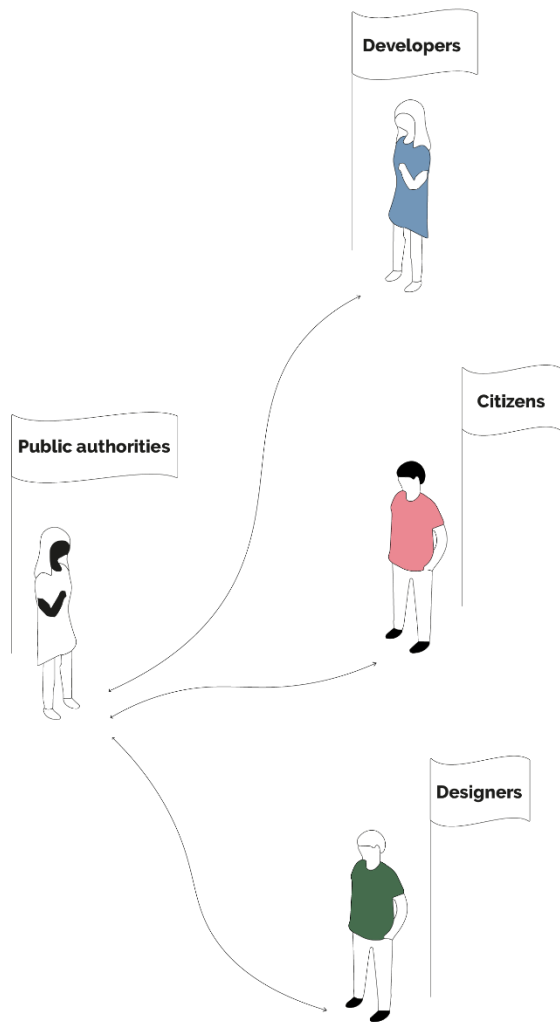
However, while tools have been created to provide a better understanding of this quality, the spaces where it can be tangibly established together have yet to be developed.

One of the many questions raised is that of the 'co-construction of public action', in terms of the ability to mobilise the various actors in a project. Although they have been invited to review their practices, many public organisations are still largely at a loss as to how to implement this renewal.

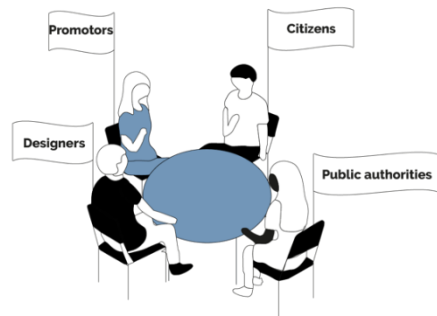
In project development, how can public project leaders interact with such diverse actors as private developers, designers and, even more so, citizens? What role do these different actors play? When? And through what mechanisms? Above all, how can we make the question of project quality central to these interactions?

By looking at each of these actors in turn, **the conference aims to examine how they can be mobilised by the public authorities.**

In preparation for the conference, **we hope to be informed about interesting projects by the EDAP and NEB partners.** Can you in one sentence describe the case study, indicate why the project fits the theme and provide us with a contact (mail and phone)? **We look for two supplementary projects per roundtable session.**



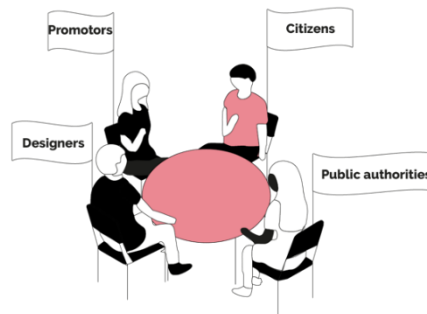
Three interactions, seven thematic workshops



Interactions with Developers

Workshop 1.1.
Providing support for the private project of a developer/investor

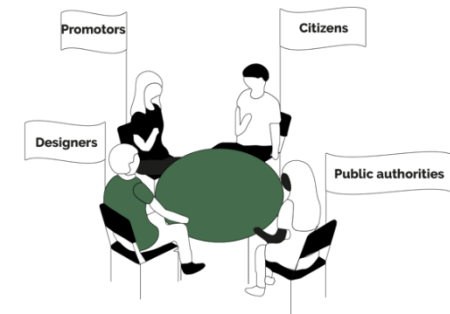
Workshop 1.2.
Getting support from the investor developer for a public project



Interactions with Citizens

Workshop 2.1.
Getting support from citizens for a public space project

Workshop 2.2.
Getting support from users for a housing project



Interactions with Designers

Workshop 3.1.
Designers assisting public authorities

Workshop 3.2.
Design Expertise embedded in a policy context

Workshop 3.3.
Design Research informing policies

Preparation of the conference

For each theme, we will look at a Belgian case study representative of the current local political practices. We provide a summary of the project's history, and identify, based on a "classic" project procedure timeline, the key turning points in terms of spatial quality.

Standard project procedure timeline



Preparation: these are all the stages before the launch of a project. This phase covers several key stages, such as drawing up regulatory or strategic plans, purchasing land, carrying out technical studies to gain a better understanding of the site, launching studies to define or programme the project to determine the requirements, etc.

Procedure: Once the framework has been established and the idea for the project defined, the second phase consists of selecting the team that will develop the project. This phase involves drafting specifications, analysing tenders and bids, and then awarding the project.

Project development: Once the project team has been appointed, the project development phase begins. This includes preparing a preliminary design, applying for planning permission, drawing up a pre-construction file, and, finally, supervising the construction work.

Use: Once the site is completed, we will discuss the usages, management, maintenance, and life of the project.

02 **Theme 2**
Interactions
with Citizens

Introduction

We propose to discuss two types of interactions between public authorities and citizens:

1. Supporting citizens as part of a public space project: This theme examines projects which involve citizens who are directly or indirectly affected by the redevelopment of a shared public space. The target audience is therefore not entirely known (people living in the area, or using the public space).
2. Supporting users of a housing project: This theme addresses the involvement of (future) residents in a housing project. The public concerned is already known and the relationship with the project is more straightforward.

2.2: Getting support from users for a housing project

- How can the (future) users contribute to improving the quality of a housing project?
- Through what mechanisms and at what stage in the project process?

Belgian case study: Transvaal

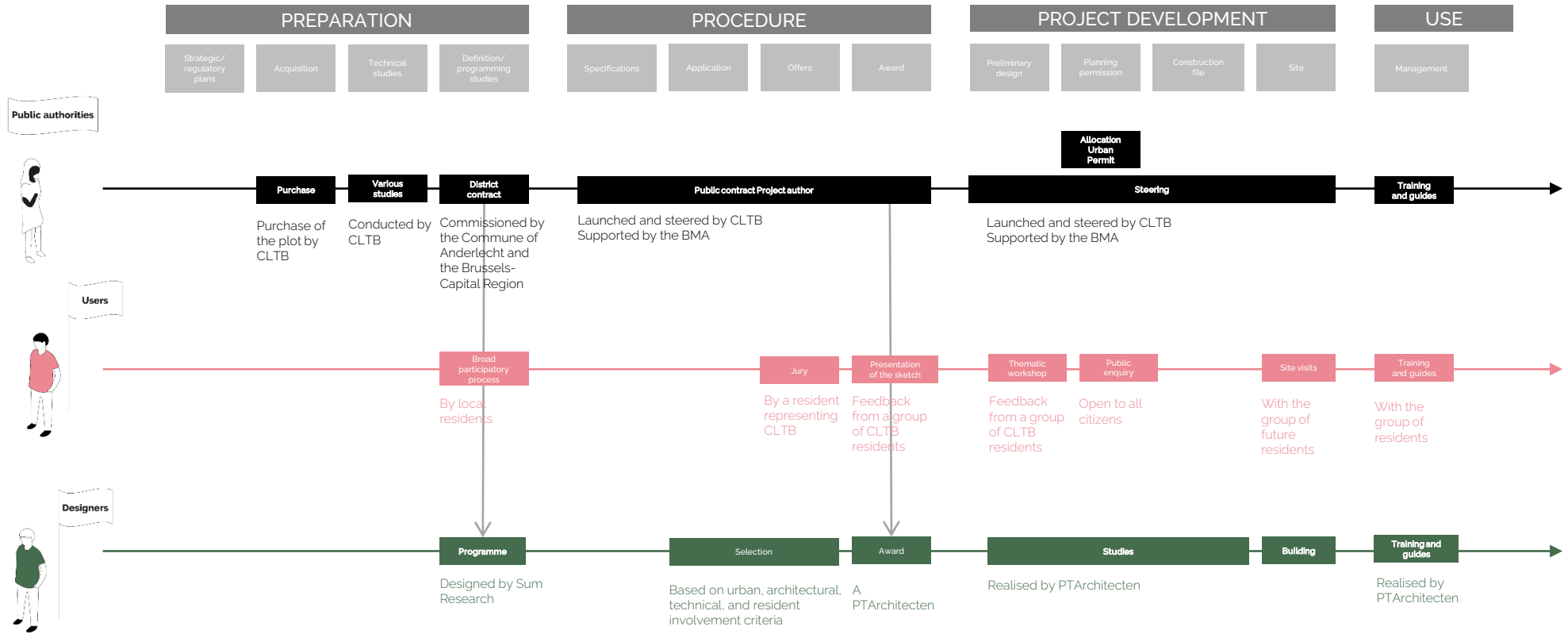
- Rue Transvaal, Brussels - Belgium



Photomontage of the project © PTArchitecten

Transvaal

- Timeline



Transvaal

- Narrative

As one of Brussels' many housing operators, the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) pursues a specific policy: through an innovative formula, it enables many families to acquire their own home at a price adapted to their income, while retaining ownership of the land. In return, the families pledge to minimise the resale price of the home, thereby ensuring that homes remain affordable over the long term. The ambition of this policy is to enable the inhabitants of Brussels, and more specifically the most disadvantaged, to have access to suitable housing and to play a full role in shaping the city of the future.

In 2010, the SumResearch engineering firm was selected by the Commune of Anderlecht to carry out the Canal - Midi Neighbourhood Contract* programme. A comprehensive participatory process is being conducted with residents to draw up an investment programme to revitalise the area. One of the programme's projects involves the construction of cooperative housing based on the "Community Land and Trust" (CLT) model on derelict land. The existing adjacent crèche will be renovated, and 28 additional places created.

The CLTB acquired the land and, in 2019, launched a competition for a full architectural brief for the construction of a 15-unit flat block, a communal garden, and community facilities. The competition was supported by the BMA*.

Visit similar
projects
© CLTB



Transvaal

A group of residents of existing CLTB housing is involved in drafting the specifications programme. A representative of this group participates in the jury and helps to select the winning team of architects, PTArchitecten.

The designers are selected based on BMA* criteria. In addition, there is a quality criterion for the participatory process used to develop the project. As soon as the contract has been awarded, the designers are invited to present their sketches to the group representing the residents. Initial feedback is given in a group meeting to help the design team refine the preliminary design, based on their everyday uses. Three themes are tackled: the layout of communal spaces, the layout of private homes, and thermal and acoustic comfort.

Once planning permission had been granted, the CLTB formed a group of residents to purchase the units in the Transvaal building. Future residents participate in several site visits with the designers and contractor.

The project is currently in the construction phase. On completion, the designers and the CLTB plan to organise training sessions and provide guidelines on how to use the technical equipment.



Workshops
© CLTB

Transvaal

- Glossary

- **Sustainable neighborhood contract** This urban development tool is designed to improve the quality of life in Brussels neighbourhoods by encouraging citizen participation. This is a limited time and space action plan concluded between the Brussels-Capital Region, the commune, and the residents of a particular neighbourhood. It defines a programme of actions (housing, infrastructures, public spaces, green spaces, socio-economical projects) to be carried out with a defined budget. Citizen participation and an environmental approach are at the very core of all the actions.
- **BMA:** Brussels Bouwmeester Master architect
- **BMA criteria:** Award criteria recommended by the BMA for architecture and open space projects: there are four award criteria for assessing the project proposal in its totality: urbanity, habitability, climate and environmental strategy, and feasibility. The four award criteria form a rigid whole, but when combined with the ambitions of the project as set out in the specifications, their interpretation is tailored to each project. Each of the four award criteria is of equal importance and has a weighting of 25%. In some specific cases, the percentage weighting may be adjusted to a minimum of 20%/and maximum of 40%.

Austrian case : Collaborative Housing Gleis 21

- Viennese model of collaborative housing projects in which future residents themselves develop and plan their housing project in cooperation with a property developer, an architect and a landscape architect.
- Sonnwendviertel Ost in Vienna, Austria



Gleis21



Bikes and Rails



Grüner Markt



Loft GmbH



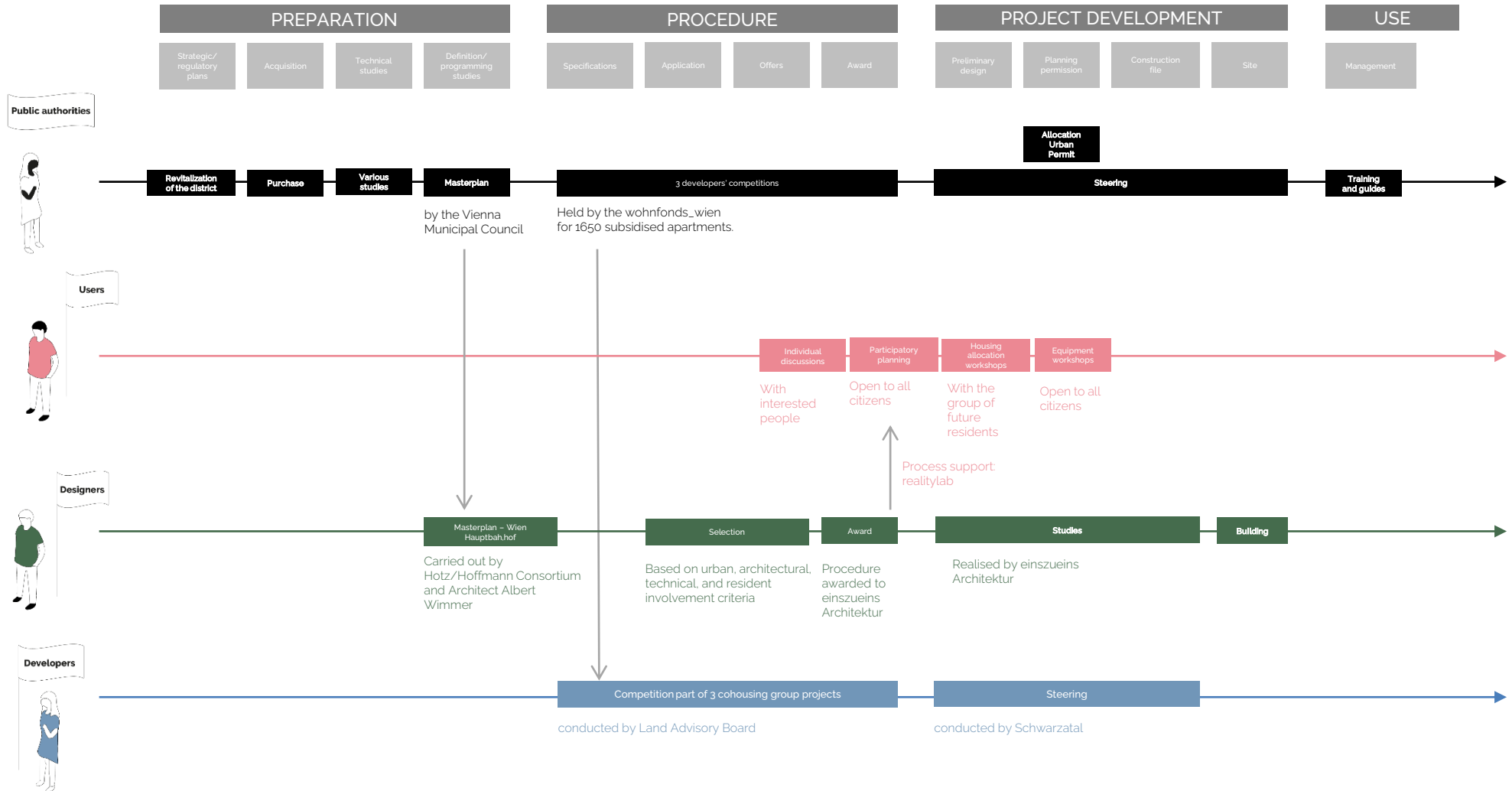
Grätzelmixer



Stadtbalkon

Austrian case : Collaborative Housing Gleis 21

- Timeline

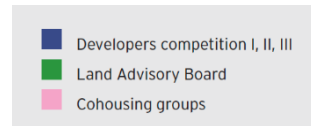
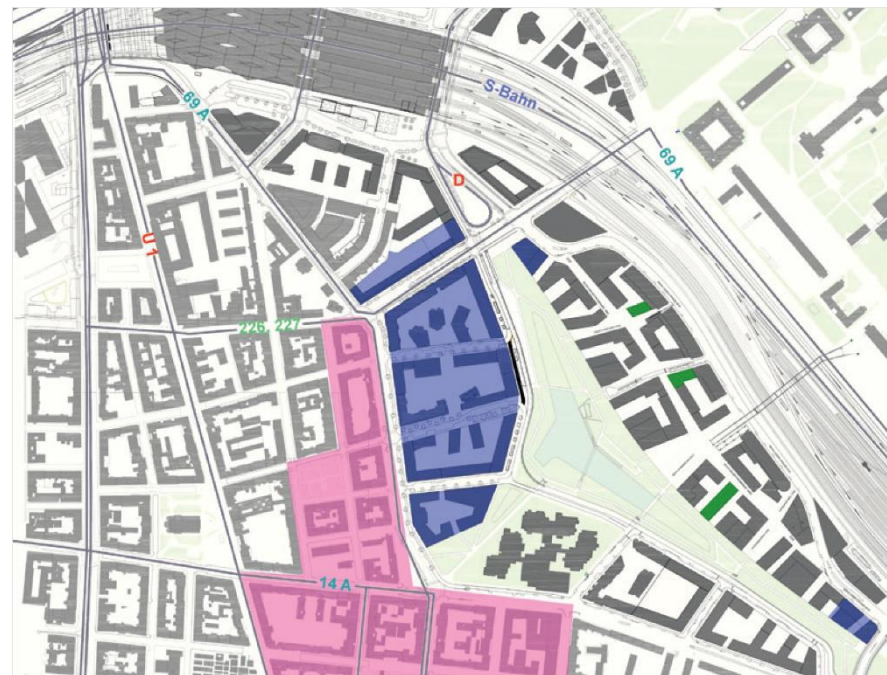


Austrian case : Collaborative Housing Gleis 21

- Narrative

In the architecture competition, plots of land were kept free for cohousing projects and assemblies on which the architect could apply. The submitted competition entries were assessed not only according to the usual criteria of economy, ecology, social sustainability and architecture, but also according to how much the modules could contribute to the revitalization of the district.

The project was realized within the framework of the subsidized social housing. It is part of a new urban development concept (Sonnenwendviertel Ost) whose urban development concept was developed in a cooperative process. All parking spaces are on the outskirts of the district (between the railway facilities and the residential buildings) and the main access road is free of traffic.



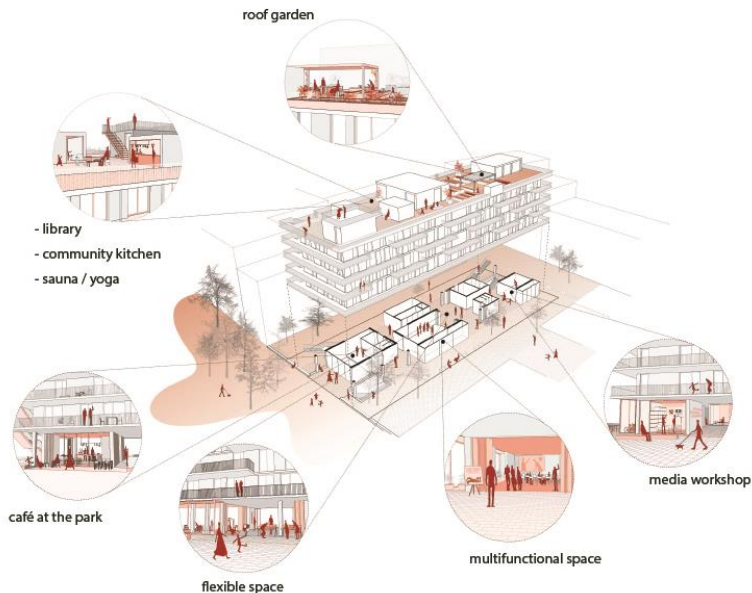
Austrian case : Collaborative Housing Gleis 21

- Narrative

Since cohousing group project "Gleis 21" (Track 21) sees itself as part of the new city district, internal and external communication is very important. The ground floor is designed to be passable and connects the promenade to the park via small areas that can be used in any way ("arena", "space of possibilities") and paths. A restaurant, media workshop and event room are available to all residents of the district. Co-determination is highly important in this project, both for the general areas of the building as well as for the individual apartments for couples, singles, families, young and old, people with a migration background and refugees.

The simple support structure of the building allows for high flexibility for the floor plans. A private balcony is allotted to each apartment on the southeast side. The pergola on the northwest side serves not only for the access, but also as an open communication zone. On the roof, there is a terrace with raised flower beds, a common kitchen with a connected playroom, library, sauna and yoga room. "Gleis 21" also focuses on sustainable mobility with a bicycle room, cargo bikes, an e-bike charging station and car sharing.

https://www.wohnfonds.wien.at/media/Website%20PDF-INFO%20Downloads/English%20Information/Broschure_Sonnwendviertel_2018_englisch_web.pdf



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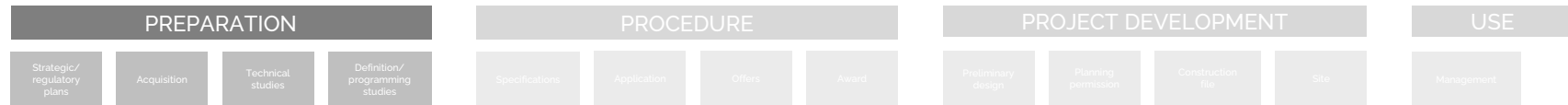
Austrian case : Collaborative Housing Gleis 21

- Glossary

- **Sonnwendviertel** : The new Sonnwendviertel south of Vienna's main train station comprises a total of around 5,500 apartments for about 13,000 residents, 20,000 jobs, a school campus, office buildings and numerous stores as well as a park of about 7 hectares. In the Sonnwendviertel to the west of the park, a perimeter block development with clear edges and protected inner courtyards was realized; the first apartments were occupied at the end of 2013.
- **Wohnfonds_wien**: wohnfonds_wien was founded in 1984 to provide land for state-subsidised housing construction and to supervise the restoration of old houses. From this a programme for urban expansion and renewal has developed, which has gained international recognition. As a limited-profit organisation wohnfonds_wien coordinates property developers, house owners, municipal departments and service centres of the municipality of Vienna
- **Land Advisory Board** Three cohousing group projects with 65 home units were appraised by the Land Advisory Board. As with the developers' competitions, the assessment is based on the four pillars: economy, social sustainability, architecture and ecology. The office of the Land Advisory Board is located at wohnfonds_wien. In the Sonnwendviertel, the Land Advisory Board reviewed three residential projects from cohousing groups.

Questions

- Preparing the ground for high-quality architecture?



Framework:

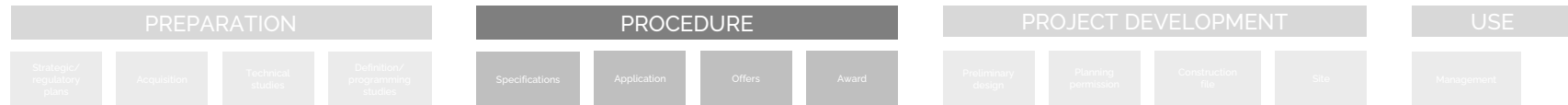
- How can citizens be involved in urban planning and programming studies?

Support:

- How much influence should citizens have in the decision-making process? On the appropriateness of a project, on the urban and environmental vision, on the programme?
- What timing and format are given to this involvement? For example: meetings, workshops, social surveys, temporary occupancy,

Questions

- How can citizens be involved in the choice of designers?



Framework:

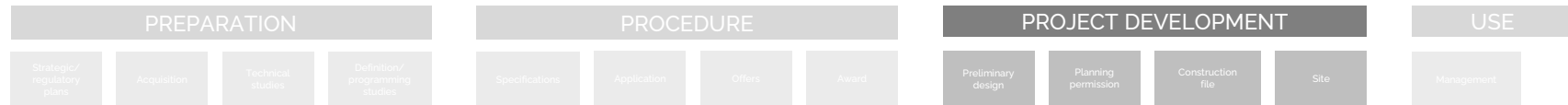
- How can citizens be involved in drawing up specifications or sitting on a jury?

Support:

- How can the jury be made transparent and open?
- How to make the residents understand the complexity of a technical choice?
- How do you select representative residents? For example: a panel drawn at random
- What format should participation take? For example: observers, deliberative vote?
- How should the results of a jury's choice be explained to residents after the competition? For example: exhibition, communication about the winner, etc.

Questions

- How do you refine an architectural proposal through a collective approach?



Framework:

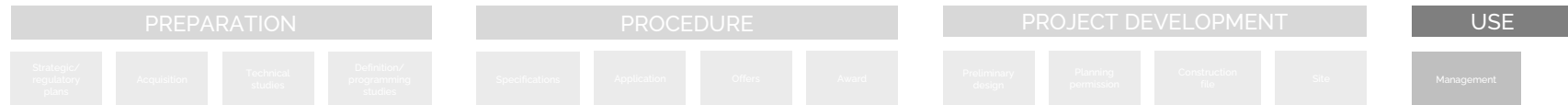
- How to involve the inhabitants in the decisions that will be made during the development of the project? For example: Public consultation during the planning permission phase

Support:

- How can we define the project based on inhabitants' usages
- How can the project be monitored with the inhabitants? For example: Workshop to refine the preliminary design, meetings, site visits, etc.

Questions

- How can a project be managed and maintained in line with the uses to which it is put?



Support:

- How to involve the inhabitants in the building management?



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