BERLIN 2050 – Connectivity, Density, Mobility

For a period of three years the O’Neil Ford Advanced Studios focus on Berlin, Germany investigating and exploring physical growth strategies applicable to the metropolis as a whole.

Goal of each studio is to articulate principles, to identify local characteristics and potentials that are both universal and specific, leading to a comprehensive physical master plan valid for the entire city rather than accepting growth by chance and availability.

In previous studios led by Wilfried Wand and myself, areas were identified that have the potential to serve as emerging urban districts such as the harbor site, the trade fair area, the underused area around a train station.

Other obvious areas for densification are the low density and mono-functional housing settlements of the 1960s and 1970s both in East and West Berlin.

Less obvious are intentional densification strategies for the existing main corridors and main boulevards so typical for Berlin leading from the center outwards like a spider web.

In 2017, studios investigated Köpenicker Str. (1860-1920) in the east, the Avus (1930) in the West, and the Karl-Marx-Allee (1960) in the center. All results will be available for the studio 2018.

STUDIO TASK SPRING 2018

The Spring studio 2018 will concentrate on a clipping of the city right outside the eastern edge of the inner city marking the beginning outskirts along the River Spree traditionally the industrial corridor of the city.

Particularly this sector has a fragmented and often abruptly changed built pattern due to its vicinity to the former border.

Since 1990, the river Spree became a dynamic and most distinctive development area of the united Berlin.
The studio will investigate urban strategies and concrete typologies:

- To improve the **connectivity** of the neighborhood within the larger city context and increase the density of the area
- To develop mixed-use typologies and neighborhoods to increase the **density** of the neighborhood by 100% and to provide a share to accommodate new population in the rapidly growing city
- To apply contemporary concepts of **mobility** to implement and absorb the new proposals into the city map by transportation and public space concepts

**RECENT HISTORY OF THE SITE**

The border line between east and west ran parallel to the river Spree from the center eastwards. Therefore the river lost most of its former industrial functions, including the bridges crossing the river and its former use as a harbor and corridor for transportation.

After reunification the river banks accommodated –in lack of a clear official strategy for re-use- a multitude of experimental and anarchic activities including illegal clubs, temporary occupation, cheap spaces for start ups and informal public spaces. The best internationally known projects are the swimming pool, the Spreefeld co-living complex and the Holzmarkt coworking project.

These projects all occurred in the newly combined central districts Friedrichshain- Kreuzberg (FHXB) which are known for their diverse and politically active or creative business population that reacted strongly against any kind of speculative development by squatting empty buildings and street combats against gentrification processes.

The section of the city the studio will investigate comprises

- Land along the northern side of the Spree river stretching from Oberbaumbrücke to Oberschöneweide (the former industrial site and headquarter of the AEG and its supplying industry)
- Residential fragments realized within the principles of the former extension plan 1910 Groß-Berlin (residential developments begun between the 2 world wars and a harness race track incl. park like landscape)
- The residential development of the 1960ies along Treskowallee = the main corridor cutting through the former Sowjet military district and barracks connecting the airport with the central representative boulevard Frankfurter Allee/Karl-Marx Allee
- The post war leisure park (with a zoo, soccer club etc. and a huge children’s center but also second home/weekend residential neighborhoods)
- A collection of buildings of the former East German Secret Service (German Russian Museum, the Stasi Museum, the “Fahrbereitschaft”, an art project with reminiscences of the Stasi headquarter)
- Adlershof, a high end life science research campus initiated by the Berlin government
- and islands of allotment gardens/community gardens throughout the area
CURRENT ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

Almost 30 years after reunification, Berlin is still a laboratory for urban design and cultural shifts. Local specificities are about to be painted over by international real estate expectations and related gentrification processes.

Local economic specificities are:

- a distinct divide of incomes (precarious jobs in the creative and service industry, in the manufacturing sector, versus comfortable incomes in the public service sector)
- a high proportion of children and young adults receiving social welfare benefits both in former West and East Berlin
- a high proportion of self-employed and small businesses depending on venture capital
- low cost-of-living expenditures and a proletarian working class culture
- a legacy of public property and social housing stock throughout the city
- a legacy of public mobility infrastructure
- inexpensive commercial premises within the city limits
- a cultural climate supporting barter economy, cooperative live-work models, digital maximation and extroverted social activities

For the past 10 years blatant political misjudgements and negligent foreshortening of resources such as selling out public housing stock led directly into an ongoing city wide process of gentrification and rapidly increasing rents endangering the cultural base of Berlin.

1990-2000
While shortly after 1990 - the year of reunification -, the Senate took farseeing action in balancing speculative market forces for the uneven rental housing market in East and West Berlin by launching a building program to erect 80,000 apartments, nothing equivalent is planned now when the city is actually growing rapidly in population.

This public housing program came to an end in 2002. The costs were immense while at the same time the city’s tax income was disappointing and previous Federal programs to support Berlin were terminated by the Federal Government, too. Hectically, plans were made by the Berlin government to eventually reduce the public debts. Berlin fond itself in a serious financial crisis at around 2000.

The city was urged and forced by the Federal Government to reduce its public expenditures and began selling public property and building stock, as well as privatizing its energy grids, water use, airports and railway systems.

The city of Berlin sold large numbers of apartments to internationally operating portfolio managers and drastically reduced the staff of its public housing companies.

No new housing investment or constructions were started.

2000-2010
This was the decade when 2 parallel demographic developments took effect:

- Luxury high end apartments were erected by chance and on available plots by private developers pushing the Berlin real estate market.
- On the other hand, due to affordability and availability there were lots of privately self-initiated cooperative and shared space projects popping up. Land was affordable and a group of architects, lawyers and moneyed entrepreneurs invested in projects testing new models: Reduced private spaces in favor for shared spaces in the apartment building open for use to different parties by appointment.

The best results of this new ownership model are collected in the book

*Self Made City*, ed. Kristien Ring, AA Projects in cooperation with the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, Jovis 2013

**2010-2020**

Although rapid growth has always been the reality for this city throughout most of its history, the 40 post war years of the divided city had turned this trend around.

The population actually shrank in West Berlin and was slightly growing in the Eastern part.

Berlin had close to 4 Mio inhabitants in 1925, 4.5 Mio in 1943, and only 3.5 Mio inhabitants in 1998. After the re-unification the population stayed more or less the same in numbers.

Naturally, there was a loss of population to the periphery and to the countryside, which was neutralized by in-migration to the city.

Yet since 2010, it is quantifiable that the city is steadily growing. Statistics indicate 50.000 new inhabitants per annum since 2012. Since 2002, the Senate of Berlin has not spend a single Cent into residential projects, kept a passive attitude towards speculative profit of private developments and did only the minimum required in terms of maintenance of public infrastructure.

Due to a large number of empty buildings and buildings in poor conditions in combination with high end apartments the housing market could still accommodate a growing number of not very wealthy people and students seeking for an apartment. People moved around within the city and were able to find the right place while working on short-term contracts with little security.

**2020-2050**

Berlin is once again at a crossroad.

Based on the statistics of the past 5 years, 200,000 apartments are needed until 2030, app. 25,000 apartments per year!

These alarming numbers seem to have hit the city officials unexpectedly.

Again, hastily the Senate launched a construction program asking the public housing companies to take charge for the planning and construction of 6.000 apartments per year until 2030 and a financial incentive program to stimulate private developers

But step 1 is missing- a master plan for city-wide densification.

Berlin was known throughout its history for growth strategies with foresight and holistic approach. The expertise of its architects and planners consolidated its position in the international Urban Design history.

Currently the growth is organized by opportunity and chance. This means stress and insecurity for all, for the investors and the population.

There is no thorough debate about city-wide master plans, no debate about physical densification strategies with high-rises, no debate about corridors or city wide areas of
development and its overall effects. Therefore in parallel to the urban design scale, architectural questions needs to be addressed:
What are appropriate principles for housing or mix used typologies in general and what are specific limits and chances in relation to the site?

An evenly spread ratio of densification and growth is required throughout the city. The NIMBY attitude needs to be addressed early in the process or needs to be disarmed by an overall plan that puts things into perspective. Every district has to offer its share, no matter how long common law protected the current situation.

New life styles and work environments that emerged in the past 25 years need to be addressed in this process as well. Pure residential complexes seem not to create the right impulse for urban neighborhoods and the perpetual motion machine called city.

Together with colleagues from Berlin we identified and underwrote a list of 8 principles we intend to follow:

**PREMISES FOR THE SOCIALLY EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE CITY**

1. Involve the public in urban development decisions:
   – develop public participation channels such as exhibitions, interactive web sites, debates to workshops;
   – develop a range of development options with professional designers through transparent competitions.

2. Keep as much of the existing built fabric in use as possible.

3. Mix social classes:
   – ensure that every new building has at least 30% residential use;
   – ensure that every residential use has at least 30% affordable/state-subsidized housing units;
   – ensure that a range of unit types and sizes will be created.

4. Allow any function in every building:
   – construct buildings with flexible typologies to take on different functions;
   – construct buildings with quotidian materials and systems to enable easy maintenance and alterations.

5. Direct main doors and windows towards public space:
   – create recognizable entries;
   – create space at street level for communal functions, shops or restaurants.

6. Create distinct public and private spaces:
   – the denser the city, the greater the need for public space with urban green;
   – the clearer the distinction between public and private, the greater the sense of comfort and security.

7. Provide an equally distributed network of public infrastructures and public transport systems:
   – from educational and health facilities to libraries and municipal offices;
   – from footpaths to railway lines.

8. Bear in mind the new forms of mobility in the design of public space.

Bernd Albers, Barbara Hoidn, Jan Kleihues, Silvia Malcovati, Wilfried Wang
Berlin, August 2017
STUDIO 2018 EXHIBITION

It is agreed with a gallery in Berlin, to have the studio results exhibited in Berlin and discussed in public panels. The first exhibition was held in November 2017 in the architecture gallery on central Karl Marx Allee, the next will take place in fall 2018.

The studio will travel to Berlin in March 10-18, 2017 during Spring Break.

Estimated travel expenses:

€ 1 000  Flight
€  500   Public transportation, tickets, bus
€ 1 500  total  plus food and miscellaneous

The School of Architecture is supporting the trip with Mebane funds $ 1 000 per student

STUDIO SCHEDULE

WEEK 1  Lottery, intros to site
WEEK 2  Collection of material, analysis of site, de-construction of layers and information
WEEK 3  Forming of teams, collecting info on Spree projects, Adlershof, Lichtenberg
         Collecting info on
         Chinese Hudong
         Greek atrium house
         Spanish patio buildings
         Cloister typology
         Vienna Super block
WEEK 4  Pin Up. discussion of analysis, brochure, selection of area and thesis of intervention
WEEK 5  desk crits and outline of research and comparative materials
WEEK 6  research and outline of project specific criteria and material
WEEK 7  Desk crits and Pin up
WEEK 8/9 Berlin trip
WEEK 10 reviewing urban strategy
WEEK 11  Pin up
WEEK 12-15 Finalizing the design concept
### EVALUATION CRITERIA

Establishing grades for projects of a creative nature is more complex than grading in other academic areas. While each project contains certain quantifiable elements by which it may be evaluated, a significant portion of each grade is derived from a broader, more subjective set of issues.

Grading for Intermediate Studios is broken into four components:
- 25% grasp: the ideas and understanding of the project at hand, combined with an appropriate process of inquiry
- 25% process: the consistent and rigorous development and testing of ideas
- 25% resolution: the demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse through representation
- 25% engagement: the active participation in studio activities, leadership, collaboration, group discussions and reviews

Student work will be evaluated according to its rigor and evolution over the semester. Grades are subject to deductions for absences, late work, and late arrivals at the discretion of each instructor.

A student must earn a grade of C or better in order for the course to count toward the degree, and to progress to the next studio.

A grade of C- will not satisfy degree requirements or prerequisites for the design studios that follow.
GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A/A- Excellent
Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, visual language, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. Project is complete on all levels.

B+/B/B- Above Average
Project is thorough, well presented, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C Average
Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class and not pursued with dedication and rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

C-/D+/D/D- Poor
Project is incomplete. Basic grasp of skill is lacking, visual clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required competence and knowledge base.

F Fail
Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when you have excessive unexcused absences.

X Excused Incomplete
Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this evaluation. It may only be used after consultation with the Associate Deans’ offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Work must be completed before the second week of the next semester in which you are enrolling, according to the School of Architecture policy.