BUILDING AND CITY: THE POLITICS OF THE PLAN
By the time the Fuchsenfeldhof was nearing completion, the Social Democrats’ first five-year building program was well underway. More than fifty private architects had been hired, and in 1924 construction began simultaneously on more than forty sites throughout Vienna. The commencement of large-scale building operations also marked the beginning of a new planning strategy. The new building sites, though located (as before) in relatively dense urban areas, were to be larger than hitherto, and the blocks themselves were to be bigger, comprising only “large building groups.” Each was to contain as many dwelling units as possible, while still adhering to the Social Democrats’ guidelines regarding density, organization, and program.¹

The new buildings were also to be brought “into line with existing and projected building as specified in the city’s Generalregulierungsplan” (general development plan) of 1893.² This was a complicated process requiring reciprocal adjustment:

It was necessary on the one hand to align the new building projects with the general development plan, and on the other to modify the Generalregulierungsplan itself to accommodate new traffic and transportation requirements, new town planning concepts, as well as the very particular building standards [imposed by the municipality] for the new municipal housing blocks. The result was a profusion of novel, and sometimes difficult to master, problems. Often the existing configuration of city blocks and building lots, based on the speculative system [under which the development plan itself was originally drawn up], and the new building standards were incompatible.³

The problem was thus an urban one: to reconcile the programmatic and spatial requirements of the new structures with the existing development plan; to contravene without violating the legal building code. The new buildings therefore established a dialectic between the old spatial order of the city plan and the new order of the Gemeindebauten.⁴

SITE CONDITIONS According to city officials, there were four typical site conditions with which architects commissioned in 1924 had to contend. The first was “a complete city block . . . bordered on all sides by existing streets. As a rule the type which emerged was a simple perimeter block [Randverbauung] with spacious courtyards in the interior.” Often, however, a few lots had already been built upon. In such cases, “it was seldom possible to find a solution using the simple system of perimeter block construction. The existence of buildings in the interior of the built up lots required a planning strategy [known as] Lückenverbauung [infill building] . . . In such cases it was necessary to deploy the building masses in a way that would mask the firewalls and airshafts of the old buildings, and at the same time yield a satisfactory garden/courtyard solution.”⁵

A third site condition offered considerably greater possibilities. “Where the municipality owned several adjacent city blocks, the intervening streets could be closed to vehicular traffic, circulation redirected, and the blocks linked in such a way that a large building complex [Grosswohnanlage] spanning two or more city blocks could be accommodated.” In such cases “it was possible, despite the constraints of the existing street plan, to break free of the usual pattern of development, and to give the architect free rein; an opportunity previously only afforded by monumental, public building commissions in Vienna.”⁶

A fourth condition existed only in the so-called expansion zone, on the periphery of the city, where it was not necessary to consider the prescriptions of the development plan. Here, aside from “taking into account major traffic routes, zoning restrictions regarding building height, and elastic guidelines regarding building type, designers had a free hand” to design entire landscaped “residential quarters” (Wohnviertel). Often, “in order to explore all possibilities, commissions for many of these larger planning projects were awarded by competition.”⁷
Each site-dependent solution to the problem of reconciling new building standards with the existing Regulierungsplan implied a different relationship between building and city.\textsuperscript{9} When we examine these various solutions, the spatial politics of those relationships and the organizing function of the Gemeindebauten themselves become clear.

**THE PERIMETER BLOCK: BUILDING AGAINST THE CODE** In terms of its building footprint, the perimeter block remains firmly contained within the city plan, but (as city officials also noted) it allows the architect considerable “freedom in the development of the plan.”\textsuperscript{19} Indeed, the problem of accommodating as many units as possible on the site, while maintaining the low density, stack organization, and courtyard access specified in the building office guidelines, was resolved in a variety of ways.

One of the most coherent groups of large Gemeindebauten was built alongside Hubert Gessner’s original Gemeindebau, the Metzleinstalerhof, on the Margareten-Gürtel. This area (see map, figure 6.1, sections DE-3 and 4), where the Gürtelstrasse, following the line of the old Linienwall, curved southeast around the district of Margareten, had early on been targeted by the socialists for large-scale development.\textsuperscript{10} Demolition of the outer defense line in the 1890s had freed large expanses of open land for development. The area had been regulated, and street and building line plans drawn up. But the blocks had not yet been parcelled into building lots. Indeed, much of the land that had previously abutted the inside wall of the old defense line was still agricultural and had been used during World War I for allotment gardening.

The core of the Margareten-Gürtel development, the work of Hubert Gessner and the firm of Schmid and Aichinger, was built between 1924 and 1927.\textsuperscript{11} The first building to follow the Metzleinstalerhof on the site was Hubert Gessner’s Reumannhof, built in 1924. It was named after the first mayor of Red Vienna, Jacob Reumann (who had retired in 1923), and was intended to be the centerpiece of the new development.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the largest Gemeindebauten to date, the Reumannhof comprised 485 apartments, 22 stores, a child-care center and kindergarten, several meeting rooms, and central laundry facility; it occupied 6,603 square meters on the Margareten-Gürtel just north of the Metzleinstalerhof.\textsuperscript{13} Gessner’s original design (figure 8.1) was unusual and became immediately controversial. Spanning two blocks, it had at its center a twelve-story tower set back from the street and flanked by two six-story perimeter blocks enclosing courtyards. The tower, Gessner explained, was to be 40 meters tall, “approximately . . . twice the height of a contemporary Viennese apartment building.”\textsuperscript{14} Its base was to cover an area of 550 square meters and to contain six three-room apartments on each floor, for a total of seventy-two apartments in all. Heralded as “the first skyscraper in Vienna,” Gessner’s Reumannhof design sparked furious public debate regarding the appropriateness of high-rise housing, and tall “skyscraper” construction for any purpose, in Vienna.\textsuperscript{15} The general consensus among professionals and nonprofessionals was that Vienna did not need skyscrapers. Unlike the island of Manhattan, the argument went, Vienna was neither congested nor circumscribed in area. There was still plenty of building land available outside the old city center; and even in the center there were many single-story buildings with large courtyards in the inner districts that had survived since the eighteenth century, offering possibilities for development. High-rise housing, particularly in the absence of elevators (which were not provided in the Reumannhof tower, though space was provided for them to be added later—once the city could afford to install and run them), was considered to be not merely an inconvenience but an imposition on the inhabitants of such buildings.\textsuperscript{16}
Gessner offered a contextual defense of his design. The building was not a skyscraper at all, he claimed. “Just because a building has six more stories than another isn’t cause for designating it a skyscraper,” he wrote. Its height was in fact a function of its site and was calculated, he argued, according to the width of the street onto which it faced. The street in this case, the Gürtelstrasse, was not only extremely wide but also had a large public park on the other side, so that the Reumannhof fronted onto an open area approximately 120 meters across. The site was therefore appropriate, even particularly well-chosen, for a building of extraordinary height.

But Gessner’s design was in fact less a response to site than to developments outside Vienna, and to the search that engaged Europeans as it did Americans in the 1920s for a new scale and system of building in the metropolis. After World War I, European enthusiasm for the skyscraper was newly associated with the idea of the “specialist city” or business core of the modern metropolis. In German-speaking countries, a number of well-publicized competitions—Berlin Friedrichstrasse (1921), and Hamburg Messehaus (1924–1925), as well as the international competition for the Chicago Tribune building, which attracted thirty-seven German entries (1922)—focused attention on the tall building as both a new office type and an architectonic solution to inner-city congestion.

In Vienna, two other highly publicized projects for skyscrapers on prominent sites were under consideration in 1924. The first was a twenty-four-story office building on the grounds of the Rossauerkaserne, adjacent to the Danube Canal on the Ringstrasse. The second, a proposal of Leopold Bauer, was for a twenty-five-story office building on the site of the old Naschmarkt adjacent to the Karlsplatz. Like the German competitions, they were for office buildings only and did not include housing or any other residential component. Neither did the slightly earlier (1922), and likewise unrealized, design by Adolf Loos for a multifunctional high-rise complex, intended to be a cultural “forum” with theater, restaurant, café, hotel, and other recreational facilities grouped around open courtyards, sited on the grounds of the former Palais Modena (later the Modenapark) in district III.

The international discourse regarding the skyscraper as a modernizing instrument of urban land reform in the 1920s culminated in Raymond Hood’s proposal, “A City under a Single Roof,” published in 1929 (just before the stockmarket crash) in The Nation’s Business. In that article Hood suggested gathering together commercial, residential, cultural, and professional premises in large multiform complexes, each occupying several city blocks. Such microcities “under a single roof” would solve transportation problems in metropolitan centers by eliminating commuter traffic, thus reintegrating urban functions and civic life.

European Social Democrats—and, it seems, Viennese building authorities in particular—were favorably inclined towards the new American megastructures, not so much to solve traffic problems in the city as to provide an integrative model of urban social and infrastructural organization. It is not without significance that Franz Musil, before he became director of the Vienna Stadtbauamt in 1925, traveled to the United States “to study the spirit of world citizenship in its living workshop” in Boston, New York, and other major cities. “This kind of Americanism,” wrote
the Viennese critic Max Eisler, who interviewed Musil for the German journal Moderne Bauformen in 1925, "can only have a positive impact on the mature development of Viennese building." 24

Not only building officials but also architects in Vienna evinced an interest in the synthetic forms of American urbanism in the 1920s. Gessner himself suggested that "in a metropolis ... dwelling (or residential, floors) should only really begin on the fourth or fifth floor above ground since at that level big-city dwellers are offered what they so urgently need: sun and fresh air. If church spires and cupolas tower over the sea of inner-city buildings, why should not dwelling and office towers be admissible, so long as they do not deprive their neighbors of light and air? Once the first tall building [Hochbau] is built in Vienna, its advantages will be grasped. For Vienna a new era will begin, as it did when the old city walls came down." 25 Here Gessner was echoing arguments put forward a few years earlier by the German architect and advocate of high-rise housing Bruno Möhring, who in 1921 suggested placing residential towers in landscaped parks. 26 But the image evoked by Gessner—of tall buildings with a business base and residential superstructure—can be related more directly to August Perret's similarly organized "Avenue of residential towers," published in L'Illustration in 1922; it was part of a theoretical project, "Tower Cities," which occupied Perret and Charles Lambert, an architect in his office, in the early 1920s. 27 Certainly, the towered housing block that integrated work and living space in the city was part of the socialist conception of the modern metropolis, figuring in Neurath's "Städtebau und Proletariat" as well as Ludwig Hilberseimer's "Hochhaus Stadt" (high-rise city), developed in the same year as Gessner proposed his Hochhaus scheme for the Reumannhof. 28

And despite the controversy over the height of the Reumannhof tower, it appears that the Social Democrats endorsed Gessner's scheme. "Until now such projects were not feasible," Der Tag reported in January 1924, "because they violated the regular building code. The current city administration, however, taking into account the housing crisis and prevailing conditions has reserved the right to approve such projects if they meet with general approbation and can be architectonically integrated into their sites. Thus the execution of this project has been approved by the city, and is moving ahead." 29 But the municipality subsequently withdrew its support. Franz Siegel announced on 10 January that "The project of architect Gessner, like a whole range of other skyscraper projects, ... is not being considered; we will in this year ... build a large [housing] complex on the Margaretenburg, but it will not be over normal height." 30 Gessner was forced to redesign the Reumannhof, reducing the tower to six stories of apartments capped by two "penthouse" floors of artists' ateliers with terraces and balconies. The new design was presented to the city council and approved on 30 May 1924. Construction began two weeks later. 31

Even with the tower reduced to eight stories, Gessner's executed design (figure 8.2) was scaled to the larger context of its site. 32 The 180-meter-long facade fronting onto the Margaretenburg dominated not only the boulevard but also the 20,400 square meter Haydn Park beyond it. This was one of the Social Democrats' largest new public gardens, designed in 1925 by Josef Joachim Mayer; it was located on the site of the former Hundsturmer Cemetery, where the composer Josef Haydn (after whom the new park was named) had at one time been buried. 33 At the northern end of the park was a playing field of approximately 6,000 square meters for outdoor sports and gymnastics. The remainder of the park was furnished with benches, paths, playgrounds, changing rooms, public toilets, and a milk bar.

The revised Reumannhof design resembles another popular multifunctional American building type that had gained currency in Europe before World War
I; the grand hotel, open to the street and furnished with a wide range of social and physical amenities. But the baroque composition of the new scheme (figure 8.3) is also filled with cultural memory and local associations. The large central pavilion and the forecourt with flanking wings and side courts, as well as the palette of the Reumannhof's red and yellow stucco facades (see plates 2 and 3), recall Vienna's eighteenth-century garden palaces—including Schönbrunn, just a few miles west of the Reumannhof itself. But, as was so often the case in Red Vienna, the historical and typological reference is evoked only to be subverted by its new context. Unlike the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century garden palaces of baroque Vienna, including the Palais Belvedere and Schwarzenberg (see Wieden district IV, figure 2.4, sections I-9 and I-10), which are close to the city center and extend the order of the internal spaces across vast gardens that unfold behind them, the Reumannhof has neither landscape nor gardens but rather the untidy proletarian district of Margareten stretching out behind it (figure 8.4). Yet the Reumannhof does project forward and, like the
8.4 Top: Aerial view of Reumannhof and Metzleinstalerhof just after completion (before Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger's Herweghof, Popphof, and Matteotthof were built behind and adjacent to the Metzleinstalerhof), photo ca. 1925. [Das Neue Wien (1927), 3:84].

8.5 Reumannhof, central pavilion, photo ca. 1925.
BUILDING AND CITY

buildings on the Ringstrasse, is oriented toward the grand boulevard in front of it (figures 8.5, 8.6, and plate 4). Gessner’s accomplishment in the Reumannhof is to combine this larger presence with a local presence, provided by shops, cafes, clinics, park spaces with benches, and trellises along the street, that are scaled to the pedestrian and the daily life of the district.

The Reumannhof is the defining monument of the Margaretengürtel development, which was soon dubbed the “Ringstrasse of the Proletariat” (figure 8.7). But unlike its namesake, the Proletarian Ringstrasse did not demarcate a boundary; it served instead to link together districts that had been separated by a wall and fosse for more than two centuries. These connections were reinforced by the three large Gemeindebauten designed by Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger, built alongside the Reumannhof and Metzleinstalerhof between 1925 and 1927 (figure 8.8). The first two, the Herweghhof and the Julius-Popphof, front onto the Margaretengürtel. Conceived as a pair, the facades facing the boulevard mirror each other in terms of massing and ordonnance, even though the Popphof, with 400 apartments, is almost twice the size of the Herweghhof. Inside, however, the courtyards of the two buildings are

8.6 Reumannhof, street facade along Margaretengürtel, photo ca. 1925.
8.7 Top: "Ringstrasse of the Proletariat." From Die Unzufriedene, 30 August 1930: 1.

8.8 Plan showing new Gemeindebauten along Margaretengürtel (north and east of Metzleinstalerhof) by Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger, ca. 1925. [Das Neue Wien (1927), 3:65].
remarkably different. Since both were built on the escarpment of the old Linienwall, they had to accommodate dramatic shifts in grade. In the Herweghhof (figure 8.9), this is done by means of broad terraces linked by a central T-shaped staircase with flanking pergolas that gives the courtyard space the quality of a Renaissance palace courtyard, reinforced by the concrete pilasters and imbricated columns that flank the Siebenbrunnenfeldgasse entrance inside the courtyard. By contrast, the Popphof courtyard spaces are tall and narrow (figure 8.10), intricately woven around an internal block that bisects the courtyard and mediates the dramatic drop in grade from the Margaretengürtel to the Siebenbrunnenfeldgasse. The feeling of the spaces, reinforced by the jagged profile of the stepped gable ends along the Einsiedlergasse, evokes the town square of a medieval hillside village rather than the terraced garden of a Renaissance palace.

Begun somewhat later, the Matteottihof can be understood as a response to the urban conditions created by the two earlier blocks. Set back from the Margaretengürtel, it provides a link between the new edge and the old interior of Margareten. Correspondingly the Matteottihof has two entrance fronts; one facing a narrow park between the Herweghhof and Popphof (figure 8.11), the other straddling the Fendigasse, which at the time was a significant access route connecting the area outside the Gürtelstrasse to the interior of Margareten. This is the principal entrance front of the Matteottihof (figure 8.12), a monumental gateway that functions as the entryway into its courtyard and the district behind it. The parti is not unusual in itself. Bruno Möhring, for example, published a series of designs in 1921 for monumental buildings bridging streets, which he proposed for various sites in Berlin. Magazines of the 1920s are filled with designs for megastructures straddling city streets, few of which were actually built. But the significance of Schmid and Aichinger’s monumental entrance piece on the Matteottihof is that it does double duty as
courtyard entry and city gateway; it provides access to both the interior of the Hof and the public space of the district behind it, merging city street and Gemeindebau courtyard.

Collectively, the Herweghhof, Julius-Popphof, and Matteottihof perform several urban operations. Exploiting the irregular topography of the site and existing street patterns, they bind together and mediate the passage between the broad “Ringstrasse of the Proletariat” and the old fabric of Margareten, creating a spatial environment that is both intimate and grand. Every transition from open to enclosed space, from terrace to street, from courtyard to entryway is carefully considered; mediated by connecting stairs and views (figures 8.13 and 8.14), facilitated by inscriptions, lamps, illuminated signs, and other markers of place embedded in the fabric of the buildings themselves. The effect, described by a contemporary observer, is “an odd air of invitation . . . [that] compels the stranger to wander through the courtyards, and under archways: unexpected . . . lights and shadows beckon him on,” and almost imperceptibly merge the spatial order of the historic city with that of the new socialist Gemeindebau.  

Between 1927 and 1932 the “Ringstrasse of the Proletariat” extended northward along the Margaretenfelt (figures 8.15 and 8.16). During these years other Gemeindebauten were built on both sides of the Gürtelstrasse, as well as schools, a bus depot, and an employment office. Individually, each new Gemeindebau performed the same sociospatial function of opening the interior space of the city block on which it was built by means of one or more open courtyards, embedding the municipality’s new public facilities in the courtyard space, and connecting the new communal space to the public space of the street. In each case, the existing spatial grid of the city remained intact, but the way in which the spaces in that grid were apportioned and used was radically different from before. Together, the Gemeindebauten that constituted the Ringstrasse of
8.11 Top: Herwegghof (left), Popphof (right), Matteotthof (center back), photo ca. 1928.

8.12 Matteotthof, entrance bridging Fendigasse, photo ca. 1928.
8.13 Right: Matteottihof, view of courtyards across Fendigasse, photo ca. 1928.

8.14 Matteottihof courtyard, passage under laundry, photo ca. 1928.

8.15 Opposite: Aerial view of Gemeindebauten along the Margaretenburgerl, photo ca. 1960.
8.16 Map of Margareten-gürtel area showing new buildings (crosshatched), June 1929. [General-Stadt-Plan, VIII-5, 1929].
the Proletariat allocated not only private but also public living space to a social class that had previously had access to neither. Often the allocation of public space was achieved by careful siting, by disposing the masses of the new buildings so that they enclosed or otherwise forged connections to existing squares, parks, and streets around them. Though they left the underlying spatial organization of the city essentially unchanged, by their presence they changed its significance.

**Karl Ehn and the Logic of Type** No architect conceived the transformational potential of the *Gemeindebau* as an urban building typology delimited by the city plan more clearly than Karl Ehn. Best known as the architect of the Karl-Marx-Hof, Karl Edmund Ehn (1884–1959), along with fellow Wagner students Hubert Gessner and Schmid and Aichinger, played a central role in the Social Democrats’ building program.

Thirteen years younger than Gessner and a year older than Schmid and Aichinger, Ehn completed the three-year course of Wagner’s master class just before Schmid and Aichinger entered the school in 1907. After graduating, Ehn worked briefly as site architect (Bauleiter) for the firm of Badstieber & Reiner and then as project architect for the Slovenian Max Fabiani (1865–1962), one of Wagner’s best-known early assistants, who worked in Wagner’s office from 1894 to 1898. Around 1900 Fabiani had designed several important apartment buildings in Vienna, with glazed commercial space below and tile-faced apartment floors above (including Portois & Fix, 1899–1900; see figure 9.2), which advanced the direction of Wagner’s famous apartment buildings of the 1890s on the Wienzeile. Later (1905–1914) Fabiani was architectural advisor to Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Habsburg throne, and built throughout the empire in Slovenia, Trieste, Gorizia, and Vienna. Fabiani was working on one of his most famous prewar Viennese buildings, the neobaroque Urania Cultural Center (1905–1909), while Ehn was in the office. In 1908 Ehn left Fabiani for the Vienna Stadtbaumat, where he remained until his retirement in 1949.

As a person Ehn has remained enigmatic. The son of a joiner or cabinetmaker (*Tischler*), he appears to have been the perfect civil servant, rising steadily within the ranks of the Stadtbaumat. In 1927, the year after he received the commission to design the Karl-Marx-Hof, Ehn was promoted to *Ober-Stadtbaurat* (senior architect). In 1950, following his retirement, he received the honorary title *Senatsrat* (senator). Evidently proud of his academic qualifications, Ehn signed his drawings “Karl Ehn, Akademischer Architekt” (academic architect), something that fellow Wagner students Gessner, Schmid, and Aichinger never did. By his own account (given in 1959), Ehn belonged to the Social Democratic party briefly from 1927 to 1929; but otherwise he remained politically unaffiliated throughout his long career. Yet as a city employee who began service in the empire, who achieved professional recognition and acclaim for his work in the service of Red Vienna in the 1920s and early 1930s, who continued to work through the 1930s and 1940s during the Austro-fascist Dollfuss and Schuschnigg years, on through the anschuss with Nazi Germany, World War II, and into the Allied occupation of Austria after the war—without loss of status—Ehn would appear to have been able to please many masters. Ehn’s personal affiliations are unknown; he never married and appears to have lived by himself, latterly in district XIX not far from the Karl-Marx-Hof.

Ehn’s second large *Gemeindebau*, the Bebelhof of 1925–1926, is an archetypal perimeter block (figure 8.17; see also map, figure 8.16, section A-3 and 4). Built around the circumference of a trapezoidal city block, it contained 301 apartments, eighteen shops or other commercial premises, five ateliers or workshops, a large meeting hall, a tuberculosis clinic, a youth-care facility, a playground, and a wading pool. All these facilities were accommodated with absolute clarity
and control; the shops on the street at the base of the main facade; the residential zone above, set back from the street and separated from the public zone by a balcony extending the entire length of the facade (figure 8.18); and the two zones pulled together into a monumentally conceived street frontage where battered pylons and cylindrical projecting bays topped by flag poles flank the entrance and seven-story towers contain the corners. Except for the clinic on the northeast corner, which has its own entrance on the Längenfeldgasse, the Bebelhof is entered from a single entryway at the center of the Steinbauergasse.44

The courtyard (figure 8.19), which occupies the entire interior space of the block, is large and open. But its spaces are highly articulated. Movement through the courtyard is precisely choreographed. Circulation and service areas are demarcated by paths and paved walkways that skirt the central garden space and the city’s new “Colonia System” garbage containers housed in roughcast reinforced concrete enclo-
8.18 Top: Bebelhof (XII), Karl Ehn architect, 1925–1926, photo 1926.

8.19 Bebelhof, view of courtyard, photo 1926.
ures. Concrete pergolas originally framed the wading pool and playground in the center of the courtyard. Other parts of the courtyard, planted with grass and provided with park benches and other garden furniture, indicate their designation for adult use.

The highly programmed organization of the Bebelhof courtyard spaces is best understood in light of the observation by city building officials in 1926 that the courtyards were not always used or valued by residents of the new buildings, because they were a type of space—part public, part private, enclosed yet freely accessible—that was unfamiliar to those for whom they were provided. The issue of estrangement is significant. Though familiar in its forms and even its organization—which did not differ much from the public parks in all Vienna districts—the new garden/courtyard was verfremdet, or made strange, by enclosure within the courtyard of the building; that transformed the public park into an ambiguous public/private courtyard.

A similar ambiguity exists between the Bebelhof and the city block it occupies. By hollowing out the center of the block, the Bebelhof and other Gemeindebauten like it transform territory that was private, and traditionally occupied by building, into space that is both public and freely accessible, though contained within the built-up perimeter of the city block. While in its footprint the building and city block are one, the traditional ratio of mass to void has been reversed; as a result, in plan the Bebelhof looks like a figure-ground inversion of the traditional city street and block.

In the Lindenhof (figures 8.20 and 8.21) designed in 1924 and sited on a long narrow block in Vienna's district XVIII, Ehn internalized not only the city park but also the street and flanking sidewalks around it. Exploiting the topography of the site, Ehn created a series of stepped terraces in which the public facilities of the Hof are located. In the middle terrace is the linden tree (from which the complex derives its name), a day-care center with large meeting hall, and a playground; on the lower level is a youth center and library; on the upper level is a park with benches, paths, flowerbeds, and fountains. Open at both ends, the Lindenhof appropriates the public space of the Sittesques city square for its communal courtyard.

The Lindenhof was planned in conjunction with the more or less contemporary Pfannenstielhof across the Kreuzgasse, designed in 1924 by Erich Leischner, also a Stadtbauamt architect. This block was actually designed to bridge a new street and tram line that were to pass through it (see figure 8.21). In the end the street was not built, but a new semiclosed public space was created in the center of what would otherwise have been an impenetrable city block.

Perimeter Block Variations The need to provide as many housing units as possible on a given site without compromising the city’s standards of hygiene, building density, light, air, and space led to a wide variety of different planning solutions. A common one, particularly when a block was long and narrow, was “to pull the front of the building back from the building line [Baulinie] and place a forecourt or garden courtyard in front of it.” A good example is the Simonyhof (figure 8.22) built in 1927 to 1928 in district XII, where, because of the availability of land with good railway connections and other urban infrastructure, a large number of Gemeindebauten were built. Unique among Gemeindebauten, the Simonyhof was named after its architect, Leopold Simony (1859-1929), who was an “elder statesman” of worker housing and housing reform in late imperial Vienna. Together with Theodor Bach, Simony had designed the Kaiser Franz-Josef I-Jubiläums-Stiftung (Jubilee) houses in 1898.

Open on one side, the Simonyhof courtyard is configured as a large forecourt fronting onto the Koppreitergasse. Such generous forecourt spaces, and the resulting break in the building line, were unusual for Vienna, particularly in buildings of Klein-
8.20 Top: Lindenhof (XVIII), Karl Ehn architect, 1924–1925, photo 1926.

8.21 Site plan of Lindenhof by Ehn and Pfannenstielhof by Erich Leischner, 1924–1925, showing projected (unexecuted) street and tram line. [Bittner, Neubauten (1926), I: 18].
buildings, which use a rich palette of colors, materials, and vernacular architectural forms, dramatically open up the block to the street, displaying the parks, playgrounds, and other facilities within them. The Thuryhof (figure 8.23) even draws the street through one of its courtyards, slicing a diagonal pathway across it from the Markgasse to the Fechtergasse. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this willful opening of the courtyard to the street is the Liebknechthof (XII, 1926–1927), by Karl Krist (see map, figure 8.16, sections B-2 and 3). Here the building meanders through the center and along the peripheral corners of a triangular site to define a series of enclosed, semienclosed, and open courtyards that connect its spaces to the surrounding streets.

Another solution to the problem of fitting as many units as possible on a shallow site, while maintaining low density, was to insert a low, single-story wing along the south side of the block. This option, used by Siegfried Theiss and Hans Jaksch in the Quarinhof (X, 1924) and by Emil Hoppe and Otto Schönthal in the Züricherhof (X, 1928–1930), solved many problems. It maximized use of the site yet allowed light into the courtyard; at the same time, it maintained the building line and gave the structure a continuous street front along a major thoroughfare. This method of completing the perimeter block became a relatively standard technique for dealing with long narrow sites—particularly on busy streets, where the low street-fronting wing could be used to house the public facilities of the Gemeindebau and to shield the courtyard from street noise and dirt. Such was the case in Hoppe and Schönthal's Züricherhof, where the low screen provided a continuous commercial street front along the busy Laxenburgerstrasse. In the Quarinhof, Theiss & Jaksch used a similar parti, although there the low block containing the kindergarten was located at the narrow end of the rectangular block, probably because it both faced south and fronted onto a public garden across the street.
Often, as in the Hanuschhof (III), begun in 1923, in which the two strategies we have just looked at were cleverly combined, the most difficult sites brought forth the most ingenious solutions. The architect, Robert Oerley (1876–1945), one of the most prominent members of the profession in interwar Vienna, had no formal training as an architect. Instead he had studied painting and drawing at the Kunstgewerbenschule (from which he graduated in 1896), and subsequently trained as a cabinetmaker in his father’s workshop. It was apparently while he was working for his father on the family house that Oerley decided to become an architect. He subsequently acquired a masterbuilder’s and then an architect’s licence, became a member of the Vienna Secession (from 1907 to 1939) and a founding member of the Austrian Werkbund, and from 1915 on served as vice-president of the Zentralvereinigung der Architekten Österreichs (Central Association of Austrian Architects). Before World War I he had built a few large factory buildings, but he had specialized in single-family houses and built several villas in Vienna's middle-class suburbs. He worked best at small scale with a rich palette of materials, and he was known especially for his interiors and furniture designs. This work, as well as the plans and surface ornament of his later Gemeindebauten, including the Hanuschhof, shows a fondness for complex geometric figures and patterns.

The Hanuschhof (figures 8.24 and 8.25) was built on a narrow triangular piece of land between the Danube Canal and a major service station of the municipal Strassenbahn (streetcar). Oerley's plan for the Hanuschhof made maximum use of the available area by zigzagging the building in a meander pattern of setbacks around the perimeter of the block. The idea of the setbacks—or street courtyards (Strassenbühfe), as they were called in Vienna—was perhaps informed by Eugène Hénard's famous proposals for "boulevards à redans" in Paris, published between 1903 and 1906 in Études sur les transformations de Paris, which Le Corbusier assimilated into his "immeuble villas" designs during the same period. Oerley’s Strassenbühfe combine Hénard's simple rectangular setbacks with the latter's "boulevard à redans triangulaire." But a more likely model for Oerley's scheme existed closer to home. In the last years of the empire, some of the most advanced housing (in terms of physical planning) was that provided by the municipality for its employees. One notable example, built in 1913 for municipal tram workers (across the Danube Canal from the Hanuschhof site), had a distinctive meander plan and made use of similar setbacks.

Inside, the Hanuschhof frames a semicircular courtyard with garden and playground oriented toward the canal, along which Oerley placed a low, two-story structure containing the bathing and laundry facilities, library, kindergarten, and custodian's apartment.

8.25 Hanuschhof, from across the Donube Canal, photo ca. 1926.
This low block brought light and air into the courtyard and afforded the apartments in the other blocks extended views across the canal to the Prater, Vienna’s largest public garden and amusement park. In the Hanuschhof, therefore, Oerley combined a series of forecourts with a large central courtyard and low, southeast-facing screening block. Yet there is an integrity to Oerley’s scheme that derives from a consistent use of the site’s own triangular shape, which is carried through the scheme at every level of the design: in the setbacks, projecting bays, and even the corner stair plans.

Other, more commonly used perimeter block typologies derived directly from traditional Viennese urban housing types. One in particular, a reinterpretation of the nineteenth-century Durchbaut (passage house), was a serial arrangement of linked courtyards. Two examples are the Janecekhof by Wilhelm Peterle and the Beerhof by Karl Schmalhofer, two interrelated blocks in district XX.64 Aligned end to end, the two Höfe (figure 8.26) were designed in concert in 1925. As in the prototypical Durchbaut, the serial courtyards in both are linked together internally by passageways that cut through the center of the block. Also like the original Durchbaut, the Janecekhof has large arched entryways at either end. But whereas passage through the Durchbaut, as the name implies, is linear, along a single directional axis, circulation in and through the linked courtyards of the Gemeindebauten is multidirectional and dispersed, since the courtyards open not only onto each other but also out to the streets around them. Once again, the typological form, in this case the Durchbaut, is transformed by its new context. Transposed from midblock infill building to freestanding perimeter block, the linked courtyard building assumes a curiously contradictory aspect. Though the monumental boundary walls of the perimeter block appear massive and contained, they are in fact a completely porous membrane through which the daily life of city and Hof filters as it flows back and forth between street and courtyard.

Another perimeter block composition with firm typological roots in Vienna was the baroque ordonnance of large central court flanked by smaller side courts, adopted by Gessner to monumental effect in the Reumannhof. Leopold Bauer, in the Vogelwiedhof (XV) of 1926, an overtly historicist neo-Renaissance design, reversed the syntax of Gessner’s parti by enclosing the central courtyard and flanking it with open side courts.65

There were many other permutations of the perimeter block. Each of the variations we have looked at so far—blocks with open courtyards, with a low
screening block on one side, with setbacks or with structures housing communal facilities inserted into the courtyard; a series of linked courtyards; or a combination of forecourt and side courts—had its own variants. In each case the plan was developed by reconciling the programmatic and spatial requirements of the Gemeindebau to the existing conditions of the site. And in each case the determining characteristics of the site were themselves changed by the solution they brought forth.

But there were other ways in which the underlying organization of the city plan was actually transformed by the Gemeindebauten. One of these was through a type of construction called Lückenverbauung, interstitial or infill building.

**LÜCKENVERBAUUNG AND THE SPATIAL POLITICS OF HINEINWACHSEN** Translated literally, Lückenverbauung means “building to fill in the gaps.” A type of building that is often overlooked, it nevertheless accounted for approximately half of the new buildings constructed by the municipality, particularly in the city’s older and more densely settled districts. Like the new “red” Hof, the Lückenverbauung was also strategic, but it usually functioned incrementally and its impact was cumulative, apparent only gradually over time.

The city’s Lückenverbauung was done in a deceptively unobtrusive way. In built-up areas, where large parcels of land were not available, the municipality would acquire small clusters of vacant lots and use them to reconfigure the existing urban fabric. Sometimes this was done incrementally, sometimes in a single building operation.

An example of the former is the construction around one of the earliest Gemeindebauten, the so-called Erdbergerhof in district III. The original structure, built in 1922 (discussed briefly in chapter 7), occupied two midblock lots on the Drorygasse (see figure 7.5). Though it was entered from the street, it also had two small courtyards at the back. In 1925 a
second building (figure 8.27) was built on a vacant lot at the northeast end of the block. This later building, designed by another architect (Bruno Richter), fronted onto the Dietrichgasse, where a large portal gave access to its internal courtyard. In the interior of the city block this courtyard (figure 8.28) was joined to the neighboring courtyard of the Erdberghof. The older building was reconfigured so that its internal spaces could be accessed from the courtyard, and the two buildings were merged to constitute a single unified Gemeinde-Hof with a communal entrance on the Dietrichgasse.

In the mid-1920s other Gemeindebauten of the early 1920s were added onto in this way, transforming them from traditional street-fronting buildings into communal Gemeinde-Höfe. Occasionally this kind of internal transformation was achieved in a single building operation. Three examples will suffice. In each, two or more sites on a city block, fronting onto different streets and therefore without any visible connection to each other, were joined internally at the center of the block. Here, as elsewhere, the available sites were midblock parcels, left over after the prime corner lots (usually snapped up first) had been developed privately before World War I. The Franz-Silbererhof (III), by Georg Rupprecht, named after a socialist union leader and built in 1927 not far from the Erdberghof, has three facades, each facing onto a different street (figures 8.29 and 9.22). In the interior of the block they are joined by a narrow internal wing and a large central courtyard from which all of the 152 apartments in the complex are accessible. From the streets it is not evident that the buildings are spatially connected. The same is true of the Schüttauhof (II, now XXII), designed by Alfred Rodler, Alfred Stutterheim, and Wilhelm Tremmel and built on the north bank of the Danube in 1924. The Schüttauhof (figure 8.30) has two facades, each five or so midblock lots long, that face onto parallel streets on opposite sides of the block. The facades, quite differently articulated,
appear unrelated from the street, but they are connected internally by the shared courtyard that occupies the entire central portion of the block between them.

The third example of this kind of interstitial building, and the most interesting because of the difficulty of the site, is Pragerstrasse 56–58 (XXI) (figure 8.31). It was designed by three architects, Felix Augenfeld, Hans A. Vetter, and Karl Hofmann, and built in 1925. Like the Schüttauhof, it cuts through the block and has facades on the Pragerstrasse and Koloniestrasse. In this case, however, the cut, though deep, is narrow; and in order to maximize the available space, light, and air, the building zigzags through the site—carving out two courtyards and an internal world only visible, as in the architects' drawing of the building, from an aerial perspective.
The significance of this kind of internal transformation is made particularly clear by a cluster of small Gemeindebauten built incrementally in the late 1920s (another period during which there was a great deal of Lückenverbauung) in Penzing (XIV), one of Vienna’s already densely built old working-class districts. Here, on six adjacent blocks, in an area bordered roughly by the Hüttdorferstrasse, Drechslergasse, and Gurkgasse, sixteen separate buildings, varying in size from 13 to 247 units and designed by seventeen different architects, were built over a period of five years.

Facing onto different streets, the new buildings (figures 8.32 and 8.33) appear unrelated. In the interior of the blocks, however, they are linked together by common courtyards, which are the access points to the apartments and to the communal facilities provided in the different buildings. Without actually breaching property lines, the parklike spaces of these courtyards also serve the privately owned older tenements abutting them, supplying them with air, light, and greenery and, significantly, also opening them up to view. By exposing the hidden backlands of the old tenements, as the Arbeiter-Zeitung pointed out, the new buildings guaranteed that “the difference between the old building standards of private capitalism and the new standards of the [socialist] Gemeinde can be studied” in situ. They also ensured that working-class misery could never again be hidden behind stately street facades.

This kind of Lückenverbauung was a method of intervention with considerable resonance not only at the time but for the future as well. Without destroying anything or displacing anyone, Lückenverbauung steadily transformed the living conditions of Vienna’s working population by opening up the existing living space in the city to air, light, and view. In many ways, such construction is the spatial correlative of the Austro-Marxist concept of hineinwachsen, the slow growth toward socialism from within capitalist society.
8.32 Lückenverbauung: Meiselstrasse 73 (now XIV), elevations, section, and site plans, by Theo Schöll, 1928.

8.33 Lückenverbauung: Gründorgasse 4 (now XIV), site plan and front elevation, by Heinrich Ried, 1928, showing courtyard abutting Meiselstrasse 73.
(discussed in chapter 1). Externally, from the street nothing substantial has changed (see plate 27). New buildings have been inserted into the city block and gaps in the building line have been filled, but otherwise the physical aspect of the street has remained the same. Inside, however, the spatial character of the block has been radically transformed and its spaces appropriated for new social uses.

**PLANNING IN THREE DIMENSIONS** So far we have looked at the relationship between the Gemeindebauten and city in terms of the immediate relationship between building and site. But the impact of the Gemeindebauten built after 1923, particularly those which occupied an entire city block, extended far beyond the boundaries of their sites and engaged the city not only in plan but also in elevation.

Often the new large Gemeindebauten were used explicitly to reconfigure the existing urban topography and infrastructure. The Schlingerhof (figures 8.34 and 8.35) in Floridsdorf (XXI) is a case in point. Built from 1925 to 1926, on the site of an old gasworks in the heart of Vienna's industrial zone, it was designed by Hans Glaser and Karl Scheffel to frame and provide storage facilities and support services for a new district market, the Floridsdorfer Markt, which would replace the old (no longer tenable) market at Am Spitz. The site had many advantages for both the market and the Schlingerhof. It was near the Floridsdorf railway station and adjacent to a major north-south traffic artery, the Brünnerstrasse (the old road to the industrial center of Moravia), as well as to the largest concentration of nineteenth-century workers' housing in Vienna, most of it built in the 1870s and 1890s for factory and railway employees.
The Schlingerhof forecourt, which embraces the marketplace, is fronted by a continuous row of shops surmounted by four stories of apartments and a clocktower. Behind it are four more enclosed and semi-enclosed courtyards. The Schlingerhof had many of the standard services provided in the larger Gemeindebauten: child-care center, kindergarten, youth center, public library, central laundry, restaurant, and Kaffeehaus, in addition to 477 apartments and thirty-one shops. The basement, however, was given over to market and city. It housed several workshops and branch facilities of the Department of Sanitation (responsible for street cleaning and sewers), as well as offices, storage, and two freight elevators for the market. The Schlingerhof was thus a strategic insertion into the existing fabric of Floridsdorf that provided this neglected working-class district with a major new commercial, social, and cultural hub around which the district itself would gradually be transformed from a factory zone into new socialized urban quarter.
Often such larger-scale transformations were effected by grouping together or clustering Gemeindebauten into "neighborhoods. In district XI around the newly created Herderplatz (figure 8.36) a group of discrete buildings, designed by different architects, was built around one of the first municipal housing blocks, the Alfons-Petzoldhof, built in 1923. Yet the idea for the development originated even earlier than this. The elliptical Herderplatz first appears (projected, but not yet built) on the Regulierungsplan of 1907. During and immediately after World War I, the trapezoidal area bordered by the Lorystrasse, Grillgasse, Drischützgasse, canal, and railway tracks had been planted with "wild" allotment gardens. In 1922 a school was built in the center of the square; apparently, the idea to develop the area into a residential quarter had already taken shape.

Between 1924 and 1929 five large Gemeindebauten were built around the square. Each added a range of social services and other public amenities to the area: a dental clinic, child-care and bathing facilities, workshops, ateliers, a workers' health insurance office, and a pharmacy, as well as a number of commercial premises. Together, the cluster of Gemeindebauten around the Herderplatz (figure 8.37) created a socialized urban enclave in an area that had formerly had little urban character of infrastructure and few, if any, amenities. Like the Schlingerhof, therefore, the Herderplatz was a strategic implant on the city's urban edge, intended to function as the germ of a new residential quarter, which it was anticipated would develop around it. More Kleinstadt than Grossstadt in its forms and spaces, this was urbanism conceived locally, in terms of the public space of everyday life—focusing on neighborhood, community, and the city's edge rather than its center.

Elsewhere, however, in areas where the scale and order of the big city were more firmly established, the generative Platzmachtung of the Gemeindebauten was conceived not only locally but also more broadly, tak-
8.38 Top: Site plan of Lassallehof (II), 1923 and Heizmannhof (II), 1925, by Hubert Gessner. [Die Wohnhausanlagen der Gemeinde Wien im II. Bezirk Vorgartenstrasse, Lassallestrasse (1926): 7].

8.39 Lassallehof seen from the corner of Lassallestrasse, and Vorgartenstrasse, photo 1926.

Considering the larger structure of the city, Hubert Gessner's Lassallehof, built in district II on a commanding site at the crossing of two major streets a few blocks from the Prater and the Reichsbrücke (which connected the center of Vienna to the extremely popular new "worker's beaches" on the upper Danube), is a good example of this. One of the earliest large Gemeindebauten planned, the Lassallehof was also the first building for which a design competition was held. Gessner, who won second prize, was awarded the commission together with a team of younger architects in his office: Hans Paar, Friedrich Schlossberg, and Fritz Waage.

Like the other large Gemeindebauten, the Lassallehof (figures 8.38 and 8.39) embedded the municipality's new public services deep within its internal courtyards. But it also carefully wove these facilities,
which were accessible from the street as well as the courtyard, into the existing urban infrastructure. The building itself had a monumental presence on the street; a row of shop fronts and a public library along the main street, as well as an eight-story tower with two floors of artists’ studios at the top. The tower both dominated the Lassallestrasse and commanded a broad prospect from the Reichsbrücke to the Praterstern. A beacon visible from a great distance, it made the Lassallehof a landmark of the district and the focal point for further Social Democratic development of the area, including another Gemeindebau by Gessner directly across the Lassallestrasse. This building, the Heizmannhof, which housed not only 213 apartments, a kindergarten, central bathing facilities, and artists’ studios but also a fire station, was even more than the Lassallehof, intricately interwoven with the sociotechnical infrastructure of its surroundings.

SMALL-SCALE “TINKERING” WITH THE URBAN FABRIC Throughout Vienna small interventions, often in the form of modest corner additions onto existing buildings, had an impact that extended far beyond the parameters of their sites. Many of these buildings were designed, like the clusters of larger perimeter blocks we have just examined, to redefine the edge of existing city blocks and function as connective tissue, mediating and negotiating the distance between divided or hitherto unconnected urban areas. It seems plausible that the typological origins for this kind of intervention are to be found in Haussmannian urbanism. Certainly in Haussmann’s modernization of Paris in the 1860s and 1870s, corner buildings were frequently used to mediate the transition from taller buildings on the main streets to lower buildings on the side streets.

A particularly effective intervention of this kind is the Pestalozzihof (XIX) of 1926 by Ella Briggs, the only woman architect other than Margarete Lihotzky to receive a commission from the municipality of Red Vienna. Briggs appears to have been exceptional in many ways. Married before World War I (possibly to an American), she was born Ella Baumfeld in Vienna in 1880, and studied painting at the Kunstgewerbeschule from 1901 to 1905/1906. She subsequently studied architecture at the Technical University in Vienna (from 1916 to 1918) before transferring to the Technische Hochschule in Munich, where she completed her training and received the degree of Diplom-Ingenieur in 1920. Between 1920 and 1923 Briggs worked in architectural firms in Vienna, New York, and Philadelphia. From 1923 to 1936 she practiced independently in Vienna and Berlin, where she built a number of apartment buildings and small houses. In 1936 Briggs, who was Jewish, emigrated to England; she continued to practice in London, where she lived until her death in 1977.

The Pestalozzihof (figures 8.40 and 8.41) occupies a corner site in an area in district XIX that at the time was without basic urban infrastructure such as paved streets and sidewalks. The building itself was a multifunctional complex. It housed a kindergarten, dedicated to the pedagogue after whom the Pestalozzihof itself was named, and 119 standard Gemeinde-Wien-Type apartments, as well as a Ledigenheim or residence for single tenants, ateliers, shops, and a substation of the municipal electrical works. Though not a large building, the Pestalozzihof had considerable impact on the area, creating an urban condition and commercial nexus where none had existed before.

Generally the architects commissioned to design such small corner buildings tended to exploit the high visibility of their sites by infusing their designs with an eye-catching, dynamic plasticity. Frequently these corner interventions became what Fritz Neumeyer has called “polemical islands of modernism” in the historical city—fragmentary insertions that introduced a new and intentionally dissonant syntax of modern “streamlined” or mechanistic forms. These included curved bands of strip windows, such as Erich Mendel-

8.41 Pestalozzihof, photo 1926.
sohn was building in Berlin and Stuttgart at the time; in some cases constructivist sculptural masses fragmented the corner itself into an abstract composition of boldly projecting balconies and deep voids. An example of an emphatically “modern” treatment of the corner is Fritz Juddmann and Egon Riss’s block of 1928–1919, at Diehlngasse 20–26 (V) (see figure 9.21), where balconies at the corner and the entire wall along the Brandmayergasse dissolve into deeply undercut horizontal planes, joined vertically by broad planes of mullioned glazing that enclose small verandas.

The masterpiece of small-scale tinkering to largescale effect was an even more modest corner building on the Weimarerstrasse (XVIII) of 1924–1925, designed by Karl Dirnhuber, an architect and engineer who trained at the Technical University in Vienna and then worked in the office of Theiss & Jakob for six years. In 1922 Dirnhuber began practicing on his own, and between 1924 and 1929 he designed five Gemeindebauten (three smaller ones on his own and two larger ones in conjunction with other architects), as well as a number of single-family houses for private clients. The Weimarerstrasse building (figures 8.42 and 8.43), which contained twenty-three apartments, two ateliers, and space for a lending library, is interesting for its combination of streamlined and organic forms: balconies wrapping the corner, smooth convex planes alternating with deep voids, wavelike curves and countercurves along the Weimarerstrasse facade.

But Dirnhuber’s building is most notable for its masterful urban composition. Not only does it terminate the block with a powerful sculptural gesture, but it functions as a hinge between the built fabric of the district on the east side of the Weimarerstrasse and the new Schubertpark (also designed by Dirnhuber) on the west side of the street. (The park was built directly behind the new building, on the site of the old Währing Cemetery in which Beethoven and Schubert had been buried. Dirnhuber won the competition for the park in 1921, but it was not executed until 1925.) The Schubertpark, which consisted of a public garden with playground and milk bar, as well as a walled “memorial park” with monuments to the composers, was on land two meters or so above the level of the Weimarerstrasse. Sited at the junction of street and park, Dirnhuber’s building functions as a linchpin that negotiates the steep drop in grade by extending the concrete walls of its terraced forecourt across the landscape to form angled retaining walls that zigzag up the hill alongside the ramps that connect the street to the park.

There are many more examples of small local interventions that function as connective tissue between divided or previously unrelated urban areas. Sometimes, as in the case of the Weimarerstrasse building, the connection forged also served to shape new public space. Often, however, the reconfiguration was perceptual rather than actual, achieved by enclosing or otherwise connecting the new buildings to existing squares, parks, or streets around them, while leaving the underlying spatial organization of the city plan essentially unchanged.

But there was yet another way in which the spatial organization of the city was actually reconfigured by the Gemeindebauten. That was through the most famous structures of Red Vienna, the Gemeindebauten that bridged streets and spanned several city blocks to create “superblocks.”

THE SUPERBLOCK AND THE POLITICS OF SCALE
We have already looked at some Gemeindebauten, like Schmid and Aichinger’s Matteotti Hof and Leischner’s Pfannenstielhof, that extend over city streets to join together two or more city blocks. In both these examples, and in the many other instances where the device was used, it not only was a linking mechanism but also provided the means for increasing the number of units that could be accommodated on the site. But another important consequence was not explicitly intended: these buildings, in which the city street was
8.42 Left: Weimarerstrasse 1 (XVIII), ground- and first-floor plans, by Karl Dimhuber, 1924-1925. [Bittner, Neubauten (1926), 1:21].

8.43 Weimarerstrasse 1, photo ca. 1925.
incorporated into the space of the Gemeindebauten, themselves introduced a new relationship between building and street in Vienna.

In the first five years of the building program, between 1923 and 1927, a significant number of large superblocks were built in dense, long-urbanized areas, where for various reasons—generally awkwardness of shape, size, and location of blocks or issues of ownership—clusters or portions of city blocks had remained undeveloped or only partially developed.9 One of these was a ragged collection of small urban fragments: a triangular wedge-shaped block and one-half of its neighbor in Döbling (XIX), abutting the Gürtelstrasse where it curves north to cross the Danube. In 1925 three Wagner School architects—Karl Dorfmeister, Rudolf Frass, and Rudolf Perco, who associated with each other on other Gemeindebauten but otherwise practiced independently—were commissioned to design the Professor-Jodlhof for the site.90

A relatively small complex, with 271 apartments and a dozen or so shops, the Jodlhof did not enclose the interior space of the two blocks in its courtyard but rather the street that divided them, leaving external parks on the leftover corners of the triangular site (figures 8.44, 8.45, and 9.14). As a result, what would normally be outside the building—the street—is inside it, and what would normally be inside the courtyard—the garden—is outside it. But there is a further reversal. Although the street, where it penetrates the Jodlhof, is conscripted into the space of the courtyard, it is not contained by the courtyard but continues on through it and out into the district of Döbling in both directions (figure 8.45). The Jodlhof then, more emphatically even than the bridge buildings we have looked at so far, reverses the traditional relationship between inside and outside, building and street, so that the boundary between Hof and city is now not only unclear but indeterminate.

The masters of this kind of intervention were Schmid and Aichinger, whose urban superblocks were tightly woven into the existing fabric of Vienna while nevertheless remaining distinctive in terms of their own spatial organization. Am Fuchsenfeld, built in 1924 to 1925, was Schmid and Aichinger's first superblock of this kind. It was situated directly across the Längenfeldgasse from the firm's earlier Fuchsenfeldhof.91 Am Fuchsenfeld itself spanned four city blocks that had been reconfigured several times since the original Regulierungsplan for the district was laid out in 1892 (see map, figure 6.1, sections B-1 and 2, C-1 and 2). Sliced on the diagonal by a new street (the Rizy-gasse) in 1904, and then diced again along the grid in 1910, when the area was parceled into building lots, by 1924 it was an irregular cluster of angular fragments that had been developed on its eastern edge along the Malfattigasse.92

Schmid and Aichinger's response was to reconfigure the site again. Instead of conforming to the Re-
8.45 Jodihof courtyard, view along penetrating street, photo 1926.
8.46 Top: Am Fuchsenfeld (XII), site plan, showing relationship to earlier Fuchsenfeldhof (left), by Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger, 1924–1925. (Das Neue Wien (1927), 3:84).

8.47 Am Fuchsenfeld, ground-floor plan. (Bittner, Neubauten (1926), 1:31).
gulierungsplan, they chose to give the building its own willfully independent footprint (figure 8.46). By bridging the two streets that intersect at the center of the site, Schmid and Aichinger increased the volume of the building, making it possible for Am Fuchsenfeld to accommodate the 604 apartments and large number of communal facilities in its program in a single continuous structure that spans all four blocks on the site, as well as the streets that bisect it (figures 8.47 and 8.48). The boundary between this inner public zone and the public zone outside Am Fuchsenfeld is marked by towering gateways that both signal points of entry and function as markers of the new commercial-communal nexus where the facilities (twenty-nine shops, baths, laundries, a kindergarten, a day-care center, a clinic, and meeting and lecture halls) that serve both the Hof and the district outside are located. At Am Fuchsenfeld, therefore, the footprint of the building superimposed upon the old Regulierungsplan introduces a new relationship between the socialist Gemeindebau and the city, in which each participates in the other (figure 8.49).

In the Rabenhof (III), Schmid and Aichinger’s masterpiece of this type of intervention, the instrumental, organizing function of such superimposition is especially clear. Won in a limited competition, the commission was for a complex of buildings to be executed in three phases between 1925 and 1928. They were to be located in one of Vienna’s old inner suburbs, on a difficult but strategic site not far from the city center and midway between the principal places of employment for the working population in the district: a major cargo terminal of the southern railway line, the Danube Canal, and the central stockyards and municipal markets. The site itself (figure 8.50), unlike the other superblock sites we have looked at so far, had to be cleared of existing buildings: a disused military barracks (the Krimsky-Kaserne) and a dense cluster of dilapidated small workshops and laborers’ cottages, which constituted one of the few classic slums in Vienna. The land had to be acquired piecemeal because the city lacked effective expropriation laws. The Rabenhof, therefore, was designed and built in parts (figure 8.51).

The first area to become available was between the Baumgasse and the Rabengasse, a semirural lane that curved through the site and that for centuries had been an important link between the two principal thoroughfares of the district. This lane became the central spine of the complex, along which were placed many of the social services, cultural facilities, and cooperative stores provided in the Rabenhof; around it the interlocking network of enclosed and semiclosed residential courtyards grew as the old buildings on the site were gradually cleared away (figure 8.52). Throughout the Rabenhof private, public, and semi-
8.50 Rabenhof (III), site plan of new buildings overlaid on existing street plan, by Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger, 1925.

8.51 Opposite: Rabenhof under construction, photo 1927.
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8.52 Rabenhof, site plan showing new buildings (black and diagonal hatching), planned construction (cross-hatched), remaining old buildings on the site (hatched outline), ca. 1928. (Die Wohnhausanlage der Gemeinde Wien auf dem Gelände der ehemaligen Kramskaserne im III. Bezirk etc. ([1928]): 4).

8.53 Opposite, top: Rabenhof from Rabengasse looking north, photo 1930.

8.54 Rabenhof, view toward Rabengasse and passage from Rüdengasse to St. Nikolausplatz, photo ca. 1930.
public zones are clearly demarcated from each other. Along the street (figure 8.53) a civic brick base identifies this zone as the public, commercial, and collective heart of the Hof. Inside the courtyards (figure 8.54) the communal facilities (laundry, kindergarten, etc.) are likewise distinguished from the stucco-faced residential zone above, where balconies and angular bay windows mark the private living space of the Rabenhof.

At its northern end the Rabenhof bridges the Rabengasse, which is channeled through it via a monumental archway at the base of a block of apartments. The remaining streets (scribed on the Regulierungsplan of 1923) were closed to vehicular traffic. But the routes they traced, and therefore also the existing patterns of circulation in the area, were preserved in lanes and footpaths that cut through the Rabenhof courtyards, connecting them to the surrounding streets via stepped terraces, arched passageways, and gateways. By preserving and reinforcing the existing spatial patterns of the district, this enormous complex—housing between 4,000 and 5,000 people in 1,100 apartments, as well as a library, dental clinic, health insurance office, kindergarten, theater, laundry and thirty eight stores—fit almost seamlessly into the existing urban fabric (figure 8.55). At the same time, however, by incorporating the existing spatial patterns of the district into its plan, the Rabenhof also laid claim to them. Thus the Rabengasse, and the Rüdengasse next to it, at once cut through the Hof and are appropriated by it. They are therefore part of the communal space of the Rabenhof, and at the same time also part of the city. The effect is to blur the boundary between inside and outside—so that Hof and city, with apparently equal claim to the public domain of the street, merge and become one.

The Rabenhof and the many other Gemeindebauten built throughout Vienna that straddle streets to create superblocks are instrumental in other ways, too. Bridging and binding together building, street, courtyard, and public square, the superblocks reintegrate elements of the urban fabric that had been torn apart by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century planning, transforming them into an interlocking network of pluriavalent spaces. Furthermore, the spaces defined by the intersection of the superblock plan and city plan have their own distinctive scale, which differs from that of either city or superblock alone. Though the buildings span several blocks and house hundreds and often thousands of people, the scale of the spaces defined by the intersection of superblock and city block is intimate, idiosyncratic, and peculiar to these buildings.

Like the strategic insertions of the Lückenverbauung, the superimpositions of the superblock have an operative, organizing function. By imprinting a new scale of urban building on top of the old, the urban superblock makes clear both the economics and politics of its scale: no longer is the speculative builder of Vienna’s tenements developing the city lot by lot, but the socialist municipality is building according to its own scale and for itself. Most of all, it is the coexistence of parallel spatial structures that not only makes the relationship between building space and city space seem ambiguous, fluid, and indeterminate but also sets up a dialogue between them. By preserving the old order (of the Regulierungsplan) the Social Democrats allow the new order (of the superblock) to engage it, to enter into debate with it, and to call it into question. But it is important to note that the intraurban superblock functions as a critique of the historical city not because it disrupts the existing order, but precisely because it—like Adolf Loos’s Haus am Michaelerplatz of 1910, which had enraged the Viennese half a generation earlier—engages the existing order in a way that problematizes it by polemically “exposing what is present.”95 The political instrumentality of this procedure, and the difference between it and the procedures of radical architectural practice at the time, become clear when we examine the most famous counter-
project of Red Vienna, the Winarskyhof and the associated Terrassenbaus projects of 1923–1924.

COUNTERPROJECT: TERRASSENHAUS-WINARSKYHOF Like the Rabenhof, the Winarskyhof was a superblock, in this case spanning three city blocks and containing 760 apartments, a library, a meeting hall, shops, ateliers, and workshops. Unlike the other Gemeindebauten, however, it was a project of the Österreichische Verband für Siedlungs- und Kleingartenwesen (ÖVSK). The Winarskyhof was in fact the last in the series of projects and planning proposals put forward by the ÖVSK in 1923 to 1924 in an effort to redirect the socialist building program toward dispersed low-density development. The first of these projects (discussed in chapter 5) was for the ill-fated Generalarchitekturplan (general architectural plan). The second, which followed from it, was a series of Terrassenbaus (terraced housing) projects, out of which the Winarskyhof itself evolved.

Terrassenbaus Projects In 1923 three architects who had been involved in the Generalarchitekturplan project—Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens, and Oskar Strnad—prepared designs for Terrassenhäuser, apartment blocks with garden terraces, which they and Otto Neurath (under the auspices of the ÖVSK) proposed to the city as high-rise garden alternatives to the perimeter block construction embraced by the Stadtbauamt.

The idea most likely came from Loos, who had experimented with Terrassenbaus forms before the war. In 1912 he had built his first house with terraces in Vienna, the villa for Gustav Scheu, in the suburb of Hietzing. By stepping back the upper stories of the house, Loos explained, he had been able to give the second-floor bedrooms and third-floor rental unit ac-
cess to their own private outdoor space on large terraces. The type, Loos argued, was not (as his critics claimed) alien and therefore inappropriate to Vienna: “The thought of the Orient was far from me in the case of this design. I was merely of the opinion that it would be of great convenience to step out onto a large communal terrace from the bedrooms, which are located on the first floor [above ground]. Anywhere, in Algiers as well as in Vienna.”

Of course, by 1923 both the Terrassenhaus type and the idea of urban roof garden were current. The year before, Le Corbusier had exhibited his “immeuble villas” as well as a model of the Maison Citrohan at the Salon d’Automne in Paris, where he and his sponsors, the Groupe de L’Habitation Franco-Americaine, were promoting the high-rise garden apartment as “A New Formula for City Housing.” In an article in Die Neue Wirtschaft in 1923, Loos himself made a case for the terraced apartment building as a housing form particularly well suited to urban proletarian living: “It has always been my desire to build such a terraced house for workers’ housing. The fate of the proletarian’s child from its first year of life to its day of entry into school seems particularly harsh to me. The child, locked up by its parents, should have the prisonlike flat opened up by the communal terrace, which allows for neighborly supervision.” The idea was hardly new; Henri Sauvage and Charles Sarazin, who had designed worker housing in Paris before World War I, had built an apartment building with stepped terraces on the rue Vavin in 1912, and Loos himself had already adapted the Scheu House type to proletarian purposes. In 1921 he prepared designs for Siedlung row houses with roof terraces, which were never built but which he used to illustrate a lecture delivered in London at the Royal Institute of British Architects in March 1922. The Terrassenhaus schemes prepared by Loos, Behrens, and Strnad in 1924, however, were not theoretical exercises; they were site-specific designs for an area between the Favoritenstrasse and Laaerbergstrasse in Vienna’s district X. Loos’s block (figure 8.56), which faced south onto the Inzersdorferstrasse (now Kennergasse), was an adaptation to multistory living of his earlier schemes and the volumetric Raumplan he had employed in them. The building was composed of two slightly curved parallel blocks with stepped profiles. Each 84-meter-long block contained two different types of quarters. Those opening onto the south-facing terraces or Hochstrassen (elevated streets) were two-story apartments, organized like Loos’s Siedlung houses with spaces for daytime activities on the lower level and nighttime activities above. Storage areas for these units were located behind the apartments themselves, in the interior of the block. Facing north were one-story apartments, provided with balconies. At ground level were workshops and, along the Staudiglgasse, studio apartments.

Loos’s Terrassenhaus clearly owes something to Sauvage and Sarazin’s building on the rue Vavin, and—in concept, if not design—to Michael Brinkman’s Hochstrasse and duplex apartments in the Spangenberg housing estate in Rotterdam, completed a few years earlier. But Loos’s project is also a remarkable attempt to recuperate his own proletarian Gartensiedlung house (with its work and rest zones, and vital connection to the outdoors) and to give it an urban multilevel life. It was rejected by city housing authorities, officially because the cost was considered to be prohibitive, but Loos’s prickly relationship with building authorities in Vienna certainly did not help in gaining acceptance for his revolutionary scheme. Margarete Lihotzky, who was closely associated with Loos at the time, attributes the city’s outright rejection of the scheme to Loos’s mocking reply, “fire stations,” when he was asked by a Social Democratic politician what the “underside of the the terrace” was intended for.

Nevertheless, Loos continued to develop the Terrassenhaus concept in two subsequent projects of the same year—a scheme for twenty villas with roof ter-
8.57 Terrassenhaus Project design, by Oskar Strnad, 1923. [Das Kunstblatt (1924): 110].

races on the Cote d'Azur and the Grand Hotel Babylon—both of which also remained unexecuted. The second project is particularly interesting for its skylit communal core in which swimming pool and skating rink were to be located, showing the promise of Loos’s stepped section as a communal housing type. In fact, fifty years later a Terrassenhaus, designed by Viennese architect Harry Glück, was actually built on the Inzersdorferstrasse near Loos’s site. This structure, built in 1974, had a parking garage and large self-service grocery store in the “underside of the terraces,” and a swimming pool on the roof. The Hochstrasse of course had its own significant later life, most notably in Alison and Peter Smithson’s Golden Lane housing project in the early 1950s.

Peter Behrens’s Terrassenhaus scheme for the same site was more conventional and, as Pommer and Otto point out, also foreshadowed his later Weissenhofsiedlung building of 1927. Developed out of an unexecuted project of 1911–1914 for AEG (the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft) housing, known as Siedlung Oberschöneweide, and designs for “double garden houses” published in 1918 in a brochure, “Vom sparsamen Bauen” (“On Economical Building”), Behrens’s scheme consisted of single-story apartments with terraces, stacked so that the apartments decreased in size and depth as they rose through the building.

Oskar Strnad’s scheme for the tenth district site was the most ambitious (figure 8.57). Unlike Loos and Behrens, he attempted to address the larger program of the Generalarchitekturplan, which was to integrate new forms of high-and low-rise housing into the existing fabric of Vienna. Occupying almost the entire site between Favoritenstrasse and Laaerbergstrasse, Strnad’s project consisted of several structures: a large elliptical apartment block with stepped terraces facing inward onto a central park, a tree-lined allée, a number of small houses distributed throughout the park, and low-rise row houses outside the ellipse. The most interesting aspects of Strnad’s project are its historical and typological references. After 1919, Strnad worked primarily as a theater and set designer, and together with the director of the Volkstheater in Vienna (Alfred Bernau) he had developed a design for a theater in the round with tripartite stage for the production of “Drei-Szenen-Theater” (three stage theater). Beyond the obvious reference to the Greco-Roman amphitheater, Strnad’s scenic composition—with its inward-facing elliptical terraces, picturesque landscape, and even the small pavilions distributed
throughout the park—is clearly indebted to John Nash's first design of 1811 for Regent's Park in London. Equally interesting is the relationship between Strnad's elliptical apartment block, published in *Das Kunstblatt* in 1924, and Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner's horseshoe-shaped Hufeisen housing estate built between 1925 and 1927 in Berlin-Britz, an exurban site perhaps better suited to the social spectacle shaped by the figure of the plan. Strnad's scheme, like the other two, was rejected as too expensive.

**Winarskyhof** In late 1923, as compensation, the ÖVSK and the architects who had worked on the failed Generalarchitektenplan and rejected Terrassenhaus projects were awarded the largest commission yet given to “private” architects. To the original group of five architects the ÖVSK added four more: three from its Baubüro—Margarete Lihotzky, Franz Schuster, and Georg Karau (later replaced by Karl Dirnhuber)—and the fourth Oskar Wlach (who was in private practice with Josef Frank and Oskar Strnad). Together, the newly assembled team of nine architects was to develop a scheme for a three-block site bordering a railway viaduct that arced through the district of Brigittenau (XX).

The original plan (figure 8.58), dated November 1923, was for straightforward perimeter block construction, with each architect taking one segment. This scheme was soon abandoned and the project re-conceived (figure 8.59) as a superblock spanning the two rectangular blocks and a smaller perimeter block on the adjacent triangular site. Again each architect was apportioned a discrete part of the whole (with Loos, Lihotzky, Schuster, and Dirnhuber allocated the triangular block, later named Otto-Haas-hof). Internally, the parts are all more or less uniform in their apartment plans and stack organization.

In elevation, however, each segment is an individual essay or signature piece of its designer. None of the schemes had terraces, though some, in particular
balconies as continuous horizontal bands and used them to visually bind the corner.

Loos had originally proposed a Terrassenbau with two-story units that stepped down into the central courtyard, for the entire triangular block. His much more modest executed building (with which, according to Lihotzky, he had little to do, after handing the project over to her when his Terrassenbau design was rejected in early 1924) is a laconic grid of windows on otherwise unornamented stucco facades. Inside, the courtyard facade (figure 8.60) is broken down into classically balanced segments, four bays wide, flanked by narrow stairwell bays that project forward from the building line.

The urbanity and classical repose of Loos's segment contrast markedly not only with Dirnhuber's dynamic sculptural composition but also with Franz Schuster's original design for the facade on the Passettistrasse. Schuster's design is equally laconic, but by means of narrow vertical rows of exposed brick inserted at intervals along its length (eliminated in the built structure) the facade breaks down into smaller local symmetries, in their attenuated proportions and detailing reminiscent of the balanced Tessenow-inspired composition and intricacy of his Siedlung house facades (discussed in chapter 3).

Schuster was not alone among the Winarskyhof-Haashof architects who sought to "de-monumentalize" and animate the stolid mass of the block by a play of small-scale surface detail. Oskar Wlach, who was primarily a designer of interiors and furniture, used shallow setbacks, painted window frames, and horizontal stripes to break down the scale of his facade. Josef Hoffmann's segment (figure 8.61), through which the Leystrasse passes and the Winarskyhof itself is entered from the Stromstrasse, has the classical cadences of Loos's block. But these are overlaid with small-scale neo-Biedermeier details—triangular pediments and round-arched openings—that reduce both the sense of mass and the containment of the block itself.118
By contrast, Oskar Strnad (figure 8.62), in the counterpart to Hoffmann's segment—the block bridging the Leystrasse on the Kaiservaterstrasse—conceived a remarkably powerful classicizing composition that dramatizes its dual and contradictory function, as it acts both as entryway and boundary wall. Manfredo Tafuri attributes the perfect balance of static and dynamic principles in Strnad's entrance pavilion to the influence of Peter Behrens and the "solemn syntax" of his own contribution to the Winarskyhof.\(^{119}\) Indeed, Behrens's building (figure 8.63), a freestanding rectangular perimeter block with a low single-story pavilion at one end in which the library and meeting hall were located, is arguably the most coherent and successfully resolved piece of the Winarskyhof; but it is also a more or less self-contained structure.\(^{120}\) Invisible from outside the Winarskyhof, Behrens's building encloses a courtyard within the courtyard of the Winarskyhof itself. Behrens's response to this condition was to reverse the standard organization of the Gemeindebau in his block, turning the Gemeinde-Hof itself inside out by placing the entrances along its outside edge and orienting it away from the courtyard and Leystrasse at its center. Though it incorporates the street into its plan, Behrens's block, like those that encircle it, turns its back on it.

What is the significance of these reversals and inversions? How does the Winarskyhof signify as a counterproject of the ÖVSK? We know that the architects of the Winarskyhof were bound by the same constraints regarding program, building density, apartment size, layout, and stack organization as the other architects commissioned to design Gemeindebauten. But as the Winarskyhof shows, there was considerable room for maneuver within these parameters. Indeed, the municipal guidelines regarding site planning and architectural treatment were both vague and flexible; neither the distribution of building mass on the ground nor the formal language to be employed in the articulation of that mass was specified with any
8.61 Top: Winarskyhof (XX), Stromstrasse facade, Josef Hoffmann architect, 1924, photo 1980.


8.63 Opposite: Winarskyhof, internal block, Peter Behrens architect, 1924, photo 1928.
8.64 Winarskyhof, images published by the municipality in 1926. Top row (left to right): corner Passttlstrasse-Kaiserwasserstrasse, Josef Frank architect; courtyard facade of same; Kaiserwasserstrasse facade, Oskar Strnad architect. Bottom row: Passttlstrasse facade, Josef Frank architect (left); courtyard view of Frank and Behrens blocks (right). [Bittner, Neubauten (1926), 1:plate 22].

clarity or precision. And it was in this regard that the Winarskyhof staked out a position that was polemical in relation to both the “New Vienna” and the “Old.”

The Festschrift published in September 1925 to commemorate the opening of the Winarskyhof included the following passage: “In their work the architects wanted to prove that the cubic effect of the massing, the flat roofs, quiet horizontality, spaciousness of building tracts and spaces around them, and the complete absence of decoration on walls and cornice lines can be fully expressive of a truly modern, consciously democratic metropolitan image [Grossstadtbild].” The buildings, however, belie their description. Not only were the walls and cornice lines of the Winarskyhof not completely free of decoration, but the roofs of the buildings were also not actually flat. Yet photographs reproduced in the Festschrift and other municipal publications (figures 8.64 and
8.65 Winarskyhof, images published by the municipality in 1926. Top: Behrens segment with preexisting buildings on adjacent lot at the back (left); Behrens segment facing Strnad and Wlach segments (right). Bottom: Behrens, left, and Frank segment, right (left); Behrens segment with low library wing at back and preexisting buildings behind (right). [Bittner, Neubauten (1926), 1:plate 23].

8.65), as well as in contemporary architectural journals, conspired with the written description of the structures to present an image of radical modernity, by suggesting that each segment is a separate structure, a Zeilenbau even, standing free of the others and open to the city. Published versions of site and floor plans (figures 8.66 and 8.67) also tended to suppress the closed figure of the Winarskyhof's footprint. In both the Festschrift and Josef Bittner's nearly contemporary Neubauten der Stadt Wien (1926), for example, the Winarskyhof plan can be read as a series of open-ended Zeilenbauten, laid out in parallel rows across—and seemingly indifferent to—the existing grid of the city.

Yet as the buildings and figure-ground plans of the city attest, this representation belies the closed footprint of the Winarskyhof, which is a perimeter block contained within a perimeter block—which spans two city blocks, but (unlike Schmid and Ai-

8.67 Winarskyhof, first-floor plan, 1924. As published in Bittner, Neubauten (1926), 1:25.
chinger's Rabenhof, for example) closes itself off from the city street that bisects it. Though the Leystrasse passes through its courtyards, the Winarskyhof turns its back on the street that is fenced off from them and remains separate. Thus while in published form the Winarskyhof positions itself polemically in opposition to the socialist Gemeindebauten, materially it sets itself in opposition to the historical city. Though not in fact comprising parallel rows of Zeilenbauten, it was conceived in the spirit of the German row-blocks: in opposition to both the scale and order of the traditional city. Unlike the superblocks by Schmid and Aichinger, which are filled with small-scale adjustments, accommodations, and concessions to established patterns of use and circulation, the Winarskyhof uncompromisingly sets itself apart from the city around it. There is no ambiguity between inside and outside; the boundaries between Hof and city, though breached, are clearly drawn. The Winarskyhof interrupts the continuous spatial narrative of the city in a way that has more in common with avant-garde techniques of intervention and the defamiliarizing procedures of montage than with the complex historically rooted dialectics of Wagner School urbanism. Yet the radical "modernity" of the Winarskyhof—"the flat roofs, quiet horizontality, spaciousness of building tracts and spaces around them, and the complete absence of decoration"—touted in the contemporary architectural press was largely rhetorical, and existed principally in word and graphic image.

The oppositional stance of the Winarskyhof marked it as a counterproject of the ÖVSK. Nevertheless, all of the architects who participated in the scheme (except for Loos, Lihotzky, and Schuster, who had left Vienna by 1926) continued to design Gemeindebauten for the municipality. In these later buildings, which had nothing to do with the ÖVSK, they developed some of the ideas introduced in the Winarskyhof, but they also engaged the Gemeindebau itself as an urban architectural problem.

Later Gemeindebauten by Behrens, Hoffmann, Frank

Peter Behrens designed two further Gemeindebauten. The first, begun in 1924 and completed in 1925, was on the Konstanziagasse in district XXI, an industrial zone with prewar tenements and little existing urban infrastructure. The executed building (figures 8.68 and 8.69), only a small part of the scheme originally conceived for the area, is interesting for the almost equal balance between dwelling space and public facilities: municipal kindergartens, assembly rooms, maternity clinics, a public library with extensive reading rooms, workshops, storage facilities for city street-cleaning equipment, and a fire station. With characteristic clarity, Behrens divided the complex into two parts; an H-shaped residential wing enclosing two courtyards (bracketed by the street-cleaning facilities and fire station) and an institutional "square," open to the street, around which were grouped the large assembly hall, kindergarten, and clinics and which was clearly intended to be a social and cultural nexus for the area. Behrens's buildings establish the spatial conditions for such development with typological rigor. The residential blocks are simply detailed and are scaled to the big city. Together with the public institutional square, they have an urbanity and logic of form that are absent in the more picturesque Kleinstadt conception of some of the other projects of this kind.

Behrens's third building for the Gemeinde Wien, the Franz-Domeshof (1928) on the Margaretengürtel (figure 8.70; see also the map of Margaretengürtel area, figure 8.16, section C-5), occupied all but two corner lots on a long narrow block north of the Metzleinstalerhof. The Domeshof seems to embody both the idea of the Gemeindebau as a distinct urban building typology and Behrens's own conception of urban building as designed to be apprehended in a state of distraction. Straightforward articulation of parts—commercial base, residential superstructure denoted by grouped windows and balconies, commu-
8.68 Top: Konstanziagasse 44 (XXII), ground-floor plan, by Peter Behrens, 1924. 
[Die Wohnhausanlage der Gemeinde Wien im XXI. Bezirk Konstanziagasse etc. (1925): 7].

8.69 Konstanziagasse 44, Peter Behrens architect, 1924-1925, photo 1928.
nating stair, and communal forecourt—is combined with powerful massing and an emphatic corner composition of intersecting cubes, planes, and roof angles that commands a broad prospect, both fixing the form in the mind and anchoring it to the urban grid.

Josef Hoffmann also designed other Gemeindebauten. The Klosehof of 1924–1925 (figure 8.71) was built on the site of a former gasworks in an area slated for development into a “Gemeindebauten quarter” in district XIX. At the time, however, the streets had not even been paved. The Klosehof was an innovative response to this condition. In the middle of a perfectly square courtyard contained by an unbroken perimeter block, Hoffmann placed a tall, narrow freestanding tower. Originally the tower, which housed a kindergarten and laundry in its base and five stories of apartments above, was intended to poke up over the top of the perimeter structure. Hoffmann described his intention: “The building was originally a big square that enclosed a large gardenlike courtyard. But since this solution did not provide enough apartments, it was necessary to build in the overlarge courtyard. In the end I came up with the idea of a tall towerlike middle tract, which would leave untouched the peripheral courtyard tracts and which I wanted to build several stories higher.” This was not permitted—even though, as he claimed, “no one in Vienna could explain why not.” As built, the tower (figure 8.72) was only two
8.71 Klosehof (XIX), ground-floor plan, by Josef Hoffmann, 1924.

8.72 Klosehof tower, elevations and section 1924.
stories higher than the perimeter structure, and therefore invisible from the street. Compositionally, it was designed to introduce what Hoffmann called “rhythm” into the Klosehof; a distinctive set of proportions and irregular grid of windows that would provide a counterpoint to the Klosehof’s balanced street facades (figure 8.73) Hoffmann’s treatment of the Klosehof facades—white rendered cement facing, with projecting window frames painted red; small porthole-like toilet-room windows; recessed balconies; and exposed drainpipes treated as an attached, very thin, giant order framing the stairwell bays—was sharply criticized. Both city officials and residents were unhappy with the Klosehof, which was assailed in the press for its “barrackslike appearance.” Max Ernert (Adolf Loos’s friend and associate) viciously attacked Hoffmann and called the Klosehof “one of the ugliest buildings of the postwar period.” In 1925 and again in 1926 Hoffmann was compelled to defend his design and respond in print to the charge that as an architect to the rich, he had little affinity for this kind of work: “I know and love the ‘little people,’ with whom I have labored in workshops for decades, and I believe, with their help, to have found the definitive type. I believe that building without unnecessary artistic facadism, in a simple unpretentious manner, finding charm in the juxtaposition of wall and window—suits these people. These people often have unrecognized artistic sensibility and are not to be underestimated.”

Hoffmann’s condescending tone may have fueled the bitter controversy over the Klosehof design. But the dispute itself concerned Hoffmann’s idiosyncratic conception of the Gemeindebau as a building type. For him it was a house writ large, because of both its size and its composition of many dwelling units. Viewed in this way, the architect’s task was to develop an economical, large-scale syntax for the refined formal language that he had developed in his houses for private clients before World War I. The solution, which Hoff-
mann suggested he had found in the Klosehof, was essentially an essay on the wall. "For an architect of feeling," he explained, "the wall is a wonderful element of incomparable value. My idea was to emphasize this even more and thereby to give value to the otherwise simple building; to leave the wall itself irregular and occasionally to give it a small decoration—a flower, a leaf, or a piece of fruit—was to employ a completely unusual, unfamiliar, and previously untried method." The tower in particular, "with its monumental walls, with only one window on the sides, offered the rare opportunity . . . which I seized upon with enthusiasm, . . . to give . . . ivy . . . and . . . ails, the indigenous weedlike plants of the Viennese courtyard, a beautiful painterly place" on which to grow. Interestingly, this is how Hoffmann pictured the building—with vines and flowering trees trained along its walls—in the drawing that illustrated his defense of the building in Die Neue Wirtschaft. Both the parti of the incarcerated tower and the idea of the proletarian dwelling place as garden wall, to be organically decorated by nature herself with the common weeds of the traditional Viennese courtyard, were poetic and certainly eccentric in the context of Red Vienna's social program. The tower, however, did have a typological antecedent in one of Vienna's most famous late-eighteenth-century buildings, the so-called Narrenturm (1783) or "fools' tower" of the Allgemeine Krankenhaus (general hospital), by Isidor Carnevale—a cylindrical perimeter block with a (not quite) freestanding building in its center. Though critics of the Klosehof never associated it with the Narrenturm, the relationship of its parti to that of the fools' tower, which like many other eighteenth-century mental wards housed not only the insane but the indigent, may have contributed to the Klosehof residents' uneasiness with Hoffmann's scheme.

In his last Gemeindebau for Red Vienna, a closed perimeter block on the Laxenburgerstrasse in Favoriten (X), designed in 1931, Hoffmann continued his essay on the wall. In this instance he animated the long street and courtyard facades with an intricate surface pattern generated by the superimposed grids of differently shaped and dimensioned windows and balconies with thin iron railings. The result is a continuously shifting interplay of figure and ground across a broad field; a play of surface and mass that alternately dissolves and reasserts the material substance of the wall itself.

Josef Frank also continued to build for the municipality. Between 1924 and 1931 he built three Gemeindebauten and collaborated on a fourth with his partner Oskar Wlach in 1931 to 1932. Frank, unlike Hoffmann, engaged the Gemeindebau as a sociospatial rather than syntactical problem. His first, unexecuted, design for the Wiedenhoferhof (XVII) of 1923 attempted to merge Terrassenhaus, Zeilenbau, and superblock in a single scheme in which a central street, flanked by stepped blocks, is channeled through the base of a long apartment block on the northern edge of the site. In the final executed version (figure 8.74) Frank reversed figure and ground, replacing the central street with a rationalized Zeilenbau that juts into and bisects the large courtyard space enclosed by a nearly square perimeter block. According to Frank two considerations determined the outward aspect of the building (figure 8.75 and plate 20) "accommodation to urban context" and its "characterization as social housing." In order to satisfy both these requirements of site and type, Frank explained, "the facades are generously scaled without any great pileup of masses or superimposed structures. Only the loggias open the building toward the public square on the southwest side. The impression is unified, and the horizontal rows of apartment windows are interrupted only by the vertical accent of the continuous stairwell glazing. The building derives its principal effects from its orange-red color, white window frames, and horizontal coursing." Organizationally, Frank reversed the typical disposition of dwelling and social space in
8.74 Top: Wiedenhoferhof (XVII), ground-floor plan, by Josef Frank, 1924. [Die Wohnhausanlage der Gemeinde Wien, Wiedenhoferhof, im XVII. Bezirk etc. (1925): 5].

8.75 Wiedenhoferhof, Josef Frank architect, 1924, photo 1926.
8.76 Top: Sebastian-Kelch-Gasse 1–3 (now XIV), ground-floor plan, by Josef Frank, dated July 1928.

8.77 Sebastian-Kelch-Gasse 1–3, Josef Frank architect, 1928, photo 1930.
the Gemeindebauten. Instead of placing the communal facilities (workshops, baths, etc.) in the courtyard, he distributed them, along with the cooperative stores and shops, around the periphery of the block. The courtyard tract was a more or less pure residential Zeilenbau sited along a north-south axis with the apartments facing east and west.

In his subsequent Gemeindebauten Frank adapted the formal and organizational principles established in the Wiedenhoferhof to different site conditions. His building on the Sebastian-Kelch-Gasse (1928), a small infill structure in the dense proletarian district of Penzing (XIV), exemplifies Frank’s ability to turn the limitations of a confined and awkward site to extraordinary effect. Carving out a forecourt/garden space along the Sebastian-Kelch-Gasse (figures 8.76 and 8.77 and plates 21 and 22), Frank opened the building to the street, but he also bracketed its communal garden with corner pavilions that clearly demarcate this space from the public domain of the street and the commercial zone of the corner shops at their base. Frank’s last two Gemeindebauten, the Leopoldine Glöcklhof (1931) on the Gaudenzdorfergürtel (XII) (just north of Haydnpark; see figure 8.15) and Fickeysstrasse 8 (designed with Oskar Wlach in 1931) along the Simmeringer Hauptstrasse (XI), display the characteristics of the buildings begun in the last years of the building program when the municipality was strapped for funds and politically besieged. They are self-contained perimeter blocks that—in comparison to the earlier Gemeindebauten,—are coarse-grained in relation to the city plan and lack the subtle adjustments to topography and patterns of use that distinguished Frank’s earlier Gemeindebauten. These and the other perimeter blocks built after 1930, which seem hermetic and disengaged, reflect the political realities of the last years of Red Vienna, when the municipality itself became increasingly an embattled and interiorized enclave.

KARL-MARX-HOF The Karl-Marx-Hof, completed in 1930, is deservedly the central monument of Red Vienna. Careful examination of the building in relation to the historical and spatial conditions of its site and its making reveals that the Karl-Marx-Hof interacts very differently than the Winarskyhof with its specific urban context and with the city as a whole.

The built version of the Karl-Marx-Hof was not the original scheme for the site. The first design, by the Tirolean architect Clemens Holzmeister (1886–1983), was actually much closer to the Winarskyhof than to the final executed design by Karl Ehnl. Holzmeister, who had studied at the Technical University in Vienna before and during World War I, had been awarded one of the Social Democrats’ most important early commissions in 1921 for a municipal crematorium near Vienna’s Central Cemetery. Holzmeister’s gothicizing design for the crematorium was filled with folk references and expressionist details that pleased both anti-clerical socialists and Roman Catholics. Though it was awarded third prize in the competition, it was selected over the winning scheme because “it fit best into the area.” It was perhaps this quality of Holzmeister’s work, its apparent contextualism, that led Franz Siegel to approach him in 1926 regarding the “building-up of Heiligenstadt,” the site selected for the Karl-Marx-Hof. Of his work on the project Holzmeister recorded, “I worked for half a year and developed a fairly regular plan for this enormous project. I started with the family; from the tasks of the family; from the mother who has to cook and at the same time look after children. For example, regarding the kitchen: How do I build a kitchen where a child can sit in the sun? From this problem I developed the entire design. And the whole Siedlung looked very uniform and unromantic.”

Holzmeister’s Siedlung, intended for a narrow one-kilometer-long strip of land known as the “Hagenwiese” that lay between the embankment of the Franz-Josef railway line and the Heiligenstädt-
strasse, consisted of parallel rows of Zeilenbau blocks grouped around sunken rectangular gardens. In the Regulierungsplan of 1909 (figure 8.78), this area had been subdivided into small, irregularly shaped blocks. Holzmeister's scheme (figure 8.79) reconstituted the site, allowing only three streets (one preexisting) to cut through it. The buildings themselves were to be three-story blocks with balconies facing the lawns and gardens between them (figure 8.80). Yet despite the apparent openness of the site plan, Holzmeister's Siedlung turns its back on the area around it. Oriented toward grass, sun, and air, and away from the street, the Zeilenbauten are interiorized and disengaged from the area around them; the site itself is far less penetrable than the porous perimeter block construction typical of the Gemeindebauten.

Holzmeister's design was rejected by the municipal building authorities. "I showed the design to Stadtrat Siegel, whose response was, 'This time, professor, you were clearly uninspired,'" Holzmeister recalled. If more extensive deliberations took place, no record of them has survived. But it seems that the commission was awarded to Karl Ehn sometime in 1926, since Ehn's preliminary design for the Karl-Marx-Hof was complete by October 1926, when a photograph of the massing model was published in Die Neue Wirtschaft.

Ehn's scheme (figure 8.81), which was built with only minor changes, was less diffuse, more focused and hierarchical, than that of Holzmeister. Rather than dividing the site into clusters of freestanding row-blocks, as Holzmeister had done, Ehn treated the complex as a single continuous structure, penetrated at intervals by pedestrian pathways and streets that pierce the fabric through broad, round-arched openings. At its center is a large public square, framed by the monumental centerpiece of the Karl-Marx-Hof and flanked by its long enclosed courtyards.
8.79 Top: Design for housing in Heilligenstadt (XIX), by Clemens Holzmeister, 1925. [Clemens Holzmeister (1927): 35]

8.80 Design for housing in Heilligenstadt, by Holzmeister, 1925. [Clemens Holzmeister (1927): 35]

At the time it was built (1926–1930), the Karl-Marx-Hof was the largest single building in Red Vienna (figure 8.82). The size of a small town, it encompassed a total area of 156,027 square meters and, once occupied, housed a population of 5,000 in 1,400 apartments. It had two central laundries, two communal bathing facilities with tubs and showers, a dental clinic, maternity clinic, a health insurance office, library, youth hostel, post office, and a pharmacy and twenty-five other commercial premises, including a restaurant and the offices and showroom of the BEST, the city-run furnishing and interior design advice center (Die Beratungstelle für Inneneinrichtung und Wohnungshygiene des Österreichischen Verbandes für Wohnungsreform). One continuous building more than a kilometer long, its central square (figure 8.83) covered an area of 10,480 square meters; its courtyards together encompassed 127,276 square meters, while its front facade along the Heiligenstädterstrasse was 1.2 kilometers long.

With its scale alone, the Karl-Marx-Hof changed the significance of the very concept of perimeter block, courtyard, and facade. Discussion of the project in the press and city council is telling in this regard. In Die Neue Wirtschaft, Ehn’s scheme was described by city officials as “a garden city–like structure” in which “Siedlung and garden city character are combined with multistory building. . . . Despite its enormous dimensions, this structure will be treated, more than other buildings, in a garden city–like manner.” To describe Ehn’s unified, massively scaled structure as a “garden city” seems incongruous. But when these remarks are considered in the context of the controversy over the municipality’s planning strategy, triggered by the Tenth Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in September 1926 (held in Vienna while Ehn was preparing his preliminary design for the Karl-Marx-Hof), their significance emerges. As we noted in chapter 6, the general consensus of the congress was that the Gemeindebauten had too many stories, the apartments in them were too small, and the courtyards they enclosed were too narrow. Delegates expressed their disapproval of the Viennese buildings during the screening of a film on the housing program; images of the Siedlungen received sustained applause, while footage of the large Gemeindebauten was viewed in stony silence.

The Viennese were quick to respond to the criticism of the international housing and planning community. In the weeks following the congress a steady stream of articles in the Arbeiter-Zeitung, Die Neue Wirtschaft, and other Social Democratic party newspapers quoted the laudatory comments of foreign delegates—particularly from England and Holland, countries whose housing policies were considered to be the most “advanced” in Europe. The Social Democrats defended their own policies, reiterating the reasons for building at high density in the city and ultimately faulting the lack of effective laws of expropriation for making such building necessary in the first place.

Yet even before the town planning congress took place in Vienna, authorities appeared to be moving (rhetorically, at least) in the direction of garden city or Siedlung planning ideals. In June 1926 Siegel had announced that in 1927 “we hope . . . to make the transition to a time when Vienna will be in a position to strive for the real housing ideal: the single-family and two-family house in a garden Siedlung.” At the closing event of the congress, Stadtbaudirektor Musil proclaimed the “end of the period of multistory building in Vienna,” and Robert Oerley, vice-president of the Austrian Association of Architects, announced that he had just been commissioned to design a 1,600-unit garden city in Vienna. Six months later, Franz Siegel declared that “Even the large housing blocks of today are to be considered emergency housing. . . . The municipal administration has always been aware that its multistory housing blocks do not represent the ideal modern building form. . . . The worst of the housing
8.83 Karl-Marx-Hof, central square, photo ca. 1931.
crisis is now over; from now on, therefore, Vienna will move increasingly in the direction of garden city and Siedlung movement ideals. . . . Even this year the construction of a garden city Siedlung . . . will begin, and will consist of only multifamily houses. 149 But when this program—which included the Karl-Marx-Hof—was presented to the city council, opposition councilors were quick to point out that what was described as garden city–like construction was in fact just a "slightly lower multistory apartment building."

The Social Democrats’ use of the term Gartenstadt (garden city), conservative politicians charged, was evidence not so much of a change of heart or policy as of the party’s embarrassment (Sehungsflut) over the recent negative press its program had received. 150

In the end the international congress had little impact on the municipality’s policies regarding building type. Karl Ehn’s laconic statement in the Karl-Marx-Hof Festschrift seems to bear this out: “It was necessary [in 1926] to decide on the type of construction, whether a Siedlung, a garden city, or a compact, closed block of flats. The International Congress of Architects [sic] held in Vienna at just this time, reflected the many different opinions prevailing on this question. The municipality of Vienna decided to carry out the scheme in the form of a closed block of flats, with large garden courtyards.” 151 But when Ehn’s design was presented in June 1927, it was clear that the Karl-Marx-Hof, though not a Siedlung, was not a “closed block of flats” either. A conservative councilor pointed out,

In this project, the courtyards are treated in a wholly unusual manner. We see courtyards in the dimension of 10,000–15,000 square meters. These are in fact no longer courtyards; one can no longer label a space of such dimensions a Haushof (building courtyard). . . . Even large public squares in Vienna comprise only a portion of the area covered by one of these courtyards. . . . A new type has been created: a building without courtyard, since that which is here enclosed is no courtyard, but rather a public space through which streets are channeled. It is impossible that the vast courtyards [of the Karl-Marx-Hof] are only at the disposal of the inhabitants of these buildings. These will be open public places. Compared to what we have built so far, we are building something new: buildings without courtyards, buildings surrounded by public circulation space and squares. . . . It is an “inbetween-thing” [ein Mittelsting] somewhere between an open and closed building form. 152

Indeed the scale of the Karl-Marx-Hof courtyards did more than change the significance of the traditional building courtyard; as further examination will show, the realignment of building and city effected by the “Mittelsting” had far-reaching implications for the relationship between space and politics in Red Vienna.

The Karl-Marx-Hof is carefully adjusted to the particularities of its site between the Stadtubahn station, Heiligenstäderstrasse, and the city’s largest sports stadium on the hill beyond (figure 8.84). It preserves the central square, which earlier city plans show was contemporary with Wagner’s station building. But by framing the square, the Karl-Marx-Hof reconfigures it into the central forecourt of the new building. The square itself, however, remains public and likewise oriented toward the station and the street. The main façade, which fronts onto the station and the (newly appropriated) square, functions at both civic and domestic scale. The semicircular arches, (figure 8.85) reduced in number from nine to six in the final executed scheme, are gateways that mediate the passage between train station, square, and football stadium beyond, while the windows and balconies above mark the apartments within. 153

Though the two large residential courtyards abut the central square, they cannot be entered from it. Instead, they are entered from the streets that run the length of the complex. As in the Rabenhof, the courtyards are penetrated by cross streets, one of which not only cuts through the Karl-Marx-Hof but passes un-
der the railway lines behind it to link up with major arterial roads leading into the city center. The kindergartens, clinics, libraries, and other facilities, as well as the shops and cafés, are all clustered at the points where main streets, cross streets, building, and Hof intersect, creating communal/public nodes serving residents and nonresidents at regular intervals along the 1.2 kilometer street front of the Karl-Marx-Hof. These functions are marked by great hemicycle arches at the base of massive square blocks. Painted sky-blue, they contrast vividly with the shifting planes of the sandstone-yellow walls and red balconies that step up and down the Karl-Marx-Hof's long facades (figure 8.86 and plates 12-14). Inside the courtyards (figure 8.87 and plate 17) the vivid colors and active wall surfaces of the street facades give way to broad uniformly colored wall planes, horizontally striated by long balconies. The sides of the courtyard are so far apart that to the eye the Karl-Marx-Hof seems to consist of widely spaced Zeilenbauten that face each other across vast expanses of lawn. Spatially, the effect is both more open and more fluid than the tightly packed freestanding blocks of Holzmeister's original scheme. Though in plan a perimeter block, the Karl-Marx-Hof is neither an impenetrable fortress nor disengaged from the urban context of its site. Quite the contrary; its spatial order is characterized by a subtle interpenetration of public, private, and communal space that not only allows for the fluid passage between city and Hof but also puts special emphasis on the points of intersection between them.

Yet—and this is one of the reasons for its emblematic status—the instrumentality of the Karl-Marx-Hof extends far beyond the immediate context of its site. Situated at the point where river and railway traffic enter the city from the north, its red arches,
tiered towers, and masts for flying banners are visible for miles. Symbolizing both wall and entry, this emblem of Red Vienna is a symbol of the city itself. The Karl-Marx-Hof became the icon of Red Vienna because its elemental forms and colors most powerfully embodied the idea of Red Vienna. But the full force of that idea really becomes evident only in the plan and its relationship to the spatial organization of the historical city of Vienna. Because of its enormous size, the Karl-Marx-Hof can no longer be perceived or understood as a perimeter block. Instead, in plan, it reads as a figure-ground inversion of the traditional relationship between built and unbuilt territory in the city. But the inverted figure is imprinted upon and coexists with the figure itself—and that is the structure’s political significance.

Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co recognize an “epic tonality” in the heroic forms of the Karl-Marx-Hof that made it “an individual, a symbolic unity prudently counterposed to the urban context.” For them it embodies “the essence of the great bourgeois novel [which] is the drama that counterposes the positive hero to society.”115 But the “epic” quality of the Karl-Marx-Hof can also be related to a very different form of drama. Indeed, the Karl-Marx-Hof performs an operation not unlike the more or less contemporary epic theater of Bertold Brecht. As Brecht explained, one of his intentions was to refunction or functionally transform (umfunktionieren) traditional theatrical practices by exposing the techniques by which they operate. Brecht’s method, described by Walter Benjamin, was to interrupt the action of the drama, often by means of songs, in order to “counteract an illusion in the audience.” The interruption, which for Brecht made this form of theater epic, had an “organizing function”: it “compel[ed] the listener to adopt an attitude vis-à-vis the process, the actor vis-à-vis his role.”116 Brecht’s epic theater becomes instrumental as it exposes the techniques by which traditional theater operates, thereby subverting those
8.86 Top: Karl-Marx-Hof, courtyard from above, photo 1959.

8.87 Karl-Marx-Hof, courtyard showing gardens, kindergarten, and arched pavilions beyond, photo ca. 1931.
techniques and functionally transforming (umfunktionieren) the theater itself into a radical political practice. “Umfunktionierung” is a procedure that operates, and Brechtian epic theater a cultural practice that becomes instrumental, by entering into debate with what is already there. It is a procedure that has much in common with both the insertions of the Lückenerbauung and the superimpositions of the Karl-Marx-Hof, the Rabenhof, and the other superblocks of Red Vienna.

In fact, if we look at some of the superblocks that were built on the periphery of Vienna’s built-up outer districts—in areas relatively untouched by the turn of the century Regulierungsplan, where there was no established urban order—we see much more clearly the significance of this critical engagement with the existing order of the city. Many of the commissions for these building complexes were awarded by competition. Often the competition brief involved urban design of the site as well as the area around it. The peripheral superblocks therefore were conceived as generative. Their purpose, aside from providing a large amount of new housing, was to establish the scale, public spaces, and traffic patterns for future development.

WOHNVIERTEL: THE PERIPHERAL SUPERBLOCK
The first of these large exurban developments was the Sandleitenhof, located in a border zone between districts XVI and XVII, between the hills of the Wienerwald and the factory and tenement development of Ottakring (figures 8.88 and 8.89). It was one of the few areas in Vienna that had been laid out along picturesque lines with winding streets and irregular blocks in turn-of-the-century development plans, though none of this had yet been built. The limited competition for the Sandleitenhof, which included 1,587 units and extensive communal facilities, was held in 1924. The brief specified that the northern portion of the site was to adhere to the existing Regulierungsplan
and that construction here was to be “open form.” Urban design of the southern segment was left to the discretion of the designers, though the buildings here were to be “perimeter block construction.” Both parts together were to mediate between the industrial and semirural zones that abutted each other on the site. The jury of five architects (Heinrich Schmid, Hermann Aichinger, Robert Oerley, Josef Hoffmann, and Clemens Holzmeister) selected three firms—Hoppe, Schönthal, and Matouschek, Theiss & Jaksch, and Krauss & Tölk—and divided the site up among them. Hoppe, Schönthal, and Matouschek were given the large southern segment of the site; the other two firms collaborated on the northern segment.

The two parts remained distinct. The buildings on the triangular northern site are small twelve-unit structures, oriented away from the street to frame small parklike spaces between them. They are richly detailed with elaborate surface decoration derived from a range of vernacular sources. Hoppe, Schönthal, and Matouschek’s portion south of the Rosenackerstrasse is both larger and more broadly conceived. The buildings, linked together in continuous rows, wind through the sloping site to define an interconnected network of open, closed, and semiclosed squares, gardens, and streets. The emphasis is on public space and the Sitteesque composition is scenographically conceived, with framed views, shifting focal points,
and picturesque incident. Whereas the image evoked by Theiss & Jaksch’s segment is a rural village or Dorf (see plate 23), the spatial conception of the lower segment is the provincial town or Kleinstadt.

Not all of the jurors favored the scheme. Some suggested that “in its entire conception [it] is too soft” and that “a sweet country air [Wachstimmung] hangs over the whole project.” Others apparently favored it for just these reasons, finding its country air appropriate to the site and an antidote to the “abominable character” of the nearby tenements and factories.¹⁶¹

But what distinguishes the Sandleitenhof from the urban superblocks of Karl Ehn—or those of Schmid and Aichinger, for that matter—is not the formal vocabulary of the buildings but the hermetic, interiorized quality of the complex as a whole. Sandleitenhof, set down in the midst of fields and allotment gardens, establishes its own urban conditions.¹⁶² Unlike Am Fuchsenfeld and the Rabenhof, for example, it does not wrest its spaces from the intractable grid of the late-nineteenth-century city. Instead, disengaged from the historic city and the economic imperative of its plan, the urbanism of the Sandleitenhof is a pastiche. Except at its north and southeastern edges, where its buildings meet and engage the existing streets and spatial patterns of the districts of Ottakring and Hernals, the urban conception of the Sandleitenhof is indeed “soft”—its traditionally conceived spaces lack their own history.

In later peripheral superblocks, which were built at considerably lower density, much of the picturesque-ness of the Sandleitenhof disappeared. The Karl-Seitzhof, begun in 1926, was one of the most important of these new large blocks. Named after Vienna’s second Social Democratic mayor, it was intended, like the earlier Reumannhof, to be “a city within the city,” the center of a new district.¹⁶³ The site chosen for the development was in Floridsdorf (XXI), an industrial area north of the Danube, where the city owned a great deal of land. The original idea had been to build several smaller structures on many different sites throughout the district, as had been done in the more densely built-up parts of the city. This was abandoned in favor of a single large complex that would function as the core of the new development.¹⁶⁴

As with Sandleitenhof, a competition was held in order to generate an urban concept for the area. In this case three architects were invited: Robert Oerley, Karl Krist, and Hubert Gessner, who won the competition.¹⁶⁵ The governing principle of his design, Gessner explained, was that the Karl-Seitzhof should not look like a worker’s colony.¹⁶⁶ Certainly, in plan, Gessner’s original scheme bore a striking resemblance to Gottfried Semper’s original design for the New Hofburg (Imperial Palace), which had double exedra facing each other across the Heldenplatz. Like the New Hofburg, only half of Gessner’s original scheme for the Karl-Seitzhof, and thus only one of the exedra-shaped forecourts, was built.¹⁶⁷ The spatial organization of this part (figure 8.90) was determined by a broad central boulevard, which was originally intended to be a shopping street with an open-air market down its center and shops on either side. That plan was not realized, but the residential blocks aligned perpendicularly to the street were built and sited in conformity with Zeilenbau principles along a north-south axis, so that 1,530 or 90 percent of the 1,700 apartments in the Karl-Seitzhof faced east, west, or south.¹⁶⁸

The centerpiece of the Karl-Seitzhof was a hemicycle forecourt framing a formal garden (figure 8.91). Baroque in spirit and ordnance, this forecourt with its great curved facade and triumphal archways was evocative of the industrial buildings that surrounded it as well as of the New Hofburg. In particular the massive blocks of the clocktower (figure 9.6) at the northern end of the curve recall Gessner’s own factory buildings of the 1910s and early 1920s. Gessner, like Ehn at the Karl-Marx-Hof, adopted the spatial language of power, of domination, in the Seitzhof. Yet the
difference between the two buildings is telling; it has to do not so much with massing, proportions, composition, and color as with their positions in relation to the fabric of the historical city. Despite the size, monumental forms, and powerful figure of its plan, the Karl-Seitzhof has little impact on the city beyond its boundaries. Transplanted to the periphery, the enormous superblock (figure 8.92) affects neither the organization nor the operation of the historic city. Like the Sandleitenhof it establishes its own (though very different) urban conditions; it does not engage the nineteenth-century Regulierungsplan. It thus neither grapples with nor enters into debate with the old order but, set apart, remains contained within itself, a “built utopia at the edge of an urban reality very little conditioned by [it].”

By absence rather than presence, therefore, the Karl-Seitzhof reveals the conditions by which the organizing function of the superblock operates, and by which the superblock itself becomes instrumental, transformational, operative. It demonstrates that only when the superblock comes into contact with the existing order, when its spatial organization intersects with and engages the plan of the historical city, does it have an impact on “what is
present.\textsuperscript{170} By itself the superblock transforms nothing.

The George-Washingtonhof of the same year shows this dynamic in a different way. Also one of the new large "garden city-like" complexes inaugurated in 1926, the Washingtonhof—originally known as "Am Wienerberg—Spinnerin am Kreuz," after a late Gothic tabernacle adjacent to the site—contained more than 1,000 apartments and extensive communal facilities.\textsuperscript{171} The commission was awarded to Karl Krist and Robert Oerley after the Karl-Seitzhof went to Hubert Gessner. Originally it was to have been a Siedlung located on a different site.\textsuperscript{172} Both architects had already designed two-family houses for the earlier site, but the George-Washingtonhof was not to be a
Siedlung. Instead it was to be garden city-like: low three-story perimeter block construction enclosing five loosely connected large courtyards (figure 8.93). Not simply a Mittelding (somewhere between an open and closed building form), it was also at first intended to be a hybrid Gemeindebau-Gartensiedlung building type, with each unit allotted its own garden plot (though the gardens were to be ornamental, not productive). In the end, however, the courtyard gardens were communal, each planted with different trees or bushes—birch, lilac, maple, elm, acacia—after which the courtyards themselves were named: Birkenhof, Fliederhof, Ahornhof, Ulmenhof, Akazienhof.

Like the neighboring Siedlung Am Wasserturm (see figure 3.23), the George-Washingtonhof was an experimental project: part Hof; part Siedlung. Its sprawling spaces, as a result, have a hybrid character. Though enclosed, they lack the urban density of the Hof. Though intimately identified with their plantings, with gardening, and with cultivation, they lack the vital connection to the land of the productive Gartensiedlung. The attempt to synthesize Hof and Siedlung results in spaces that are neither Hof-like nor Siedlung-like, that are somehow disengaged from both the city and the land.173

Once again it is at the points of intersection between the new building and existing patterns of use in the area that the George-Washingtonhof engages and affects the larger topography of its site. Situated on the border between two districts (X and XII) and two zones (industrial and residential), and at the intersection of two major traffic arteries (the Triesterstrasse, an old trade route to the Adriatic port city, and the Raxstrasse, a broad east-west boulevard planned in the late 1890s as an “outer Gürtelstrasse” or Volksring) the George-Washingtonhof occupies a key site. Part of its function, according to city building officials, was to act as a “gateway into the city from the south.”174 It did this with considerable ambiguity. Just west of the Triesterstrasse the George-Washingtonhof bridges the westward continuation of the Raxstrasse (where it diminishes in size and becomes Untermeidlingerstrasse) with a monumental double-arched gateway. But unlike the other large Gemeindebauten that bridge streets to create superblocks, the Washingtonhof spans a street that never enters the space of the Hof itself; instead it skirts around it, passing along the outside northern edge into the district of Meidling. Though inscribed with its name, the monumental gateway is in fact the point of entry not into the George-Washingtonhof, but rather to the city.

The largest and one of the last superblocks of Red Vienna was the Friedrich-Engels-Platz-Hof (1930–1933). Its architect, Rudolf Perco (1884–1942), was a curiously alienated figure. Born in Gorizia in the Italian territories of the Habsburg Empire, Perco studied in Vienna and received his architectural training in Otto Wagner’s master class from 1906 to 1910. Subsequently he worked for Hubert Gessner (1906–1911) and Friedrich Ohmann (1911–1912). At home neither in Austria nor Italy, he spent World War I imprisoned in Italy, and returned to Vienna to practice architecture in 1919. Perco’s architectural practice in the
1920s consisted mostly of work for the Gemeinde Wien (three Gemeindebaute including the Jodlhof discussed earlier, in addition to the Engels-Platz-Hof). After 1934 he was without work, though he joined the Nazi Party and denied having had any association with the Austrian Social Democratic Party.175

Much of Perco's architecture was unexecuted. He entered several competitions for large public buildings and monuments in cities throughout the former Habsburg lands. In 1932 he published a number of these projects along with a programmatic treatise, "On the Path toward the Impending Fifth Rebirth of the Antique: A Program for a Genuine Architecture," which called for a synthesis of the figural and the rational in modern architecture, a synthesis of Greek classicism with a rationalized, modular proportional system.176 Perco's unbuilt work, representative of these ideas, was characterized by gigantism and combined a stripped-down classicism with repetitive modularity.

The Engels-Platz-Hof was Perco's first opportunity to build at a scale that approached his imaginary work. It was by far the largest commission Perco had
received from the municipality. The site, 115,300 square meters of open fields, was in Brigittenau (XX) on the former flood plain of the Danube between the river and the canal, and adjacent to the Floridsdorfer bridge. Perco's building (figure 8.94), which encompassed the site, covered only one-quarter of its area. The spaces it enclosed, therefore, were enormous. The central courtyard, as the Arbeiter-Zeitung noted, could accommodate the Rathaus (city hall), one of Vienna's largest public buildings, and still have 2,000 square meters left over. The buildings (figure 8.95) were also taller than the norm: six, seven, and sometimes eight stories high, they towered over the railway sheds and industrial buildings around them. Yet the cubic massing, the constructivist forms of towers (see figure 9.15 and plate 19), the ironwork balconies, brick chimneys, and washhouses were intended to be contextual, evocative of factory buildings, smokestacks, and warehouses.

But the dominant order of the Engels-Platz-Hof is integral to the project itself and derives from Perco's concept of a rationalized, modular classicism. Because of the classical symmetries, gridded surfaces, and extensive use of exposed metalwork, the Engels-Platz-Hof is often related to Otto Wagner's later work of around 1910 and especially to his Grossstadt project of 1911. (The Engels-Platz-Hof actually seems closer to Wagner's first unexecuted design for the Vienna University Library of 1910.) But there are significant and telling differences between Perco's project and Wagner's late buildings.

Though Wagner made extensive use of the grid in the plans and elevations of his buildings, as well as in urban designs such as the projected district XXII for Vienna published in Die Grossstadt, his designs never derived from either an overarching set of mathematical proportions or a system of modular units. Instead, buildings such as the Postal Savings Bank and Neustiftgasse 40 (discussed in the previous chapter) operate at several scales, are composed for many different viewing distances and angles, and repeatedly overlay one set of proportions with another. Perco's building lacks the finely tuned urban sensibility of Wagner's buildings—the accommodation to different viewing distances and the balance of "main idea" and "counterpoint," which Wagner discussed in Moderne Architektur. In the Engels-Platz-Hof, point is without counterpoint. The modular composition of the building negates the notion of balance between point and counterpoint and evinces little interest in the "sensuous effects" produced by that balance, which were fundamental to Wagner's architecture.

The dehumanizing scale and order of the Engels-Platz-Hof are better understood in relation to the political and economic realities of the time. In 1929 the impact of the world economic crisis was exacerbated in Vienna by the withdrawal of federal support for the building program. Politically also Red Vienna was embattled and on the defensive by 1930, when the Engels-Platz-Hof began construction. This was a time, as Helmut Gruber observed, when politics, "instead of providing a protected environment for culture . . . depended more and more on cultural expression." The colossal scale and repetitive cadences of the Engels-Platz-Hof can be understood as evidence of the municipality's loss of control over political events in Austria and the spatial politics of its own program in Vienna. But they also attest to the emergence of a new kind of power in Europe against which the conciliatory Social Democratic policies of Red Vienna would prove defenseless. Karl Seitz's defiant declaration at the official dedication of the Engels-Platz-Hof in July 1933, a few months after Adolf Hitler had established a dictatorship in Germany, is all the more poignant for its hopelessness: "Even if the world is to become filled with devils, this Vienna will stand unmoved and firm [kühl bis ans Herz], a haven of democracy, a haven of the spirit, a haven of liberty, a bulwark against fascism and dictatorship."

8.95 Friedrich-Engels-Platz-Hof (XX), Rudolf Perco architect, 1930–1933, photo ca. 1933.
In this chapter we have examined the relationship between building and city in the Social Democratic program of Red Vienna. I have argued that the new “red” Hof recovered a historically rooted building type, the Hofbau, and thereby reestablished the vital connection between street and interior of the city block in Vienna that had been obstructed since the nineteenth century. In the process, an enormous amount of private space was reclaimed for public use in the city. But the building program did more than recover an indigenous preindustrial urban building typology; it unraveled the planning principles that had enabled the speculative development of the capitalist city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Gemeindebauten created spaces that were part public, part private; that were both open and closed; that were available for circulation and public use but also enclosed within the built-up circumference of the city block; that overlapped with the existing urban grid but undermined the logic of its order. They accomplished this by replacing the analytical structure of streets, blocks, and open squares with multiple-purpose, multiple-use spaces that blurred the boundary between public and private. Even the perimeter blocks and small infill buildings (Lückenverbauung) that remained within the building line of the Regulierungsplan had an impact on the area around them, visually appropriating public space, forging links between divided or previously unrelated urban areas, and establishing new circulation patterns through the porous substance of their own building mass.

But it is the urban superblock that makes the significance of this kind of realignment most clear. Inserted into the existing fabric of Vienna, the Karl-Marx-Hof, Rabenhof, and other large building complexes that bridge streets to form superblocks engage not only the topography but also the history of their urban sites, preserving “what is present” and at the same time introducing their own willfully aberrant scale and organization into the city.

We have no evidence that the intense debate over the contested space of the city evinced by these Gemeindebauten was programmatic. Instead, the spatial ambiguities, contradictions, and multiple codings that result from the intersection of city and building plan seem to emerge (to borrow Otto Wagner’s words) “like a revelation . . . They are, as it were the counterpoint of [the] architecture” itself.185 The political instrumentality of the new buildings lies in the decision of the Social Democrats to build against the code without changing it, thereby allowing the old and new order to coexist. Indeed, careful analysis of building and street plans has revealed a dialectic between old and new, as the new order enters into debate with, and throws into question, the authority of the old.

This process by which the building becomes a radical instrument in the city is, as we have seen, similar to the Umfunktionierung employed by Bertold Brecht in his politically engaged theater during the same period. Like Brecht’s songs interjected into the narrative of the drama, the Gemeindebauten, inserted into the dense urban fabric of Vienna, destabilize as they appear to reinforce the existing order of the historical city. Intricately interwoven with the historical spaces of Old Vienna, the spaces of the New Vienna not only call into question the traditional sociospatial relationships they describe but also generate a discursive space in the city that is tangible, public, and perpetually unresolved.