



Between Walls

courtyard and garden for an innercity residential ensemble
Greifswalder Straße
Berlin (D), 2018

planning: 2015 - 2017
realization: 2018
33 units

775 sqm open space
client: BAJ1 Ltd
architects: ABKW, Jochen Klein
Architekten

collaborator 100Land: Lorenza Manfredi

Urban open space is conditioned by buildings. At the same time, architecture and the life in the houses is shaped by the surrounding landscape. In densely built up Prenzlauer Berg, in Berlin, a turn of the century residential ensemble was fully renovated and extended by new buildings and annexes. With a strong individual character, the compact sequences of open spaces liaise the individual parts of the ensemble as they pervade it.

The initial momentum for the design concept was driven by the find of a historic brick wall along the rearward border. From this wall the aesthetic of plain brickwork was further developed for all of the open spaces. This includes low walls that structure and attribute spatial functions, but also the exposition of the brick pattern in the passages between the yards, and two brick-clad sunken garden spaces along the new building in the ensemble. Brick surfaces also characterize the interiors of the apartments in the older parts of the building. The surface treatment with a thin, almost transparent slush of mortar is the same for all the walls.

Stepping into the yards from the lively urban context of Greifswalder Straße one passes through a large wooden gate, designed by Jochen Klein Architects and reaches the apartments passing over a pavement of midsize granite pavers. The vivid surface of the material connects urban and living spaces. The granite material serves a functional and conceptual connection. However, a change of texture from pavement to gravel also marks a boundary and denotes a change in the degree of privacy. The rear part of the garden yard serves as shared space, yet, it doesn't lead to any further entrance.



The yards are equipped with wooden elements that serve play and rest. In the first yard, entrance is marked by the impressive wooden gate and a large wooden bench. The bench is a simple but elegant piece of furniture that embraces a sculpturally growing honey locust tree. The wooden material theme continues in the garden yard next to the sand box in the form of a play-box that concurrently serves as toy and seat. As a sequence of open spaces, the gravel strewn corridor along the partially greened brick wall, a lawn at its end and a brick-lined sandbox at entrance to the garden yard, all serve as openly accessible play areas.

In the garden yard, the ground floor terraces, decked with the same Garapa wood, are separated from yard and paths only by low brick walls. The private space is thus sharply defined, the walls, however, create and safeguard the overarching spatial quality of a lushly green garden yard.

Next to the green walls and many climbers on the facades, the strips between walls and paths and small private vegetation patches next to the terraces are planted with grasses, perennials and low shrubs. The planting concept aims to create a simple, but elegant garden atmosphere. At Greifswalder Straße, enriched by shared green spaces, urban life thrives between brick walls.









