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CMYK

Sabinovská a Majakovského
Prešov, Slowakei

ARCHITEKTUR
zerozero

BAUHERRSCHAFT
Mesto Prešov

FERTIGSTELLUNG
2005

SAMMLUNG
A10

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„CMYK“ housing, Presov

Zerozero transformed the greyscale monotony of a housing estate with its powerful geometric concept.

von Maria Topolcanska

The housing estates of Central and Eastern Europe are one of the many paradoxes of the „new“ European physical environment. Still inhabited by a large proportion of the population, they are often in a distressingly poor state of repair.

In the Slovakian capital Bratislava, no comprehensive makeover concept has so far been brought to bear on this problem. Instead, partial and unsustainable interventions provide superficial fast-track solutions usually amounting to no more than plastering and painting the prefabricated facades or attaching a superstructure to the body of the prefabricated building.

Far away from the capital in eastern Slovakia, a smart conceptual proposal for the overall transformation of the living environment has recently been successfully applied in the city of Presov. The housing blocks in question were constructed in the 1950s, when the state started to build housing estates for the growing post-war urban population. The construction of these urban structures in the centre and on the outskirts of every town and city became an instrument of state housing policy. In most



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cases, urban planning and functional zoning provided these residential districts with a controlled urban environment. So too in this relatively small housing estate whose location next to the city's football stadium served to inscribe it in local people's consciousness. The simple architectural form of the ten blocks of low-cost apartments, repeated in series, was derived from traditional tent roofs.

Over time, a process of physical and social deterioration took place in what had started out as an oasis of new healthy living. Designed as an open plan neighbourhood, the district became an urban island occupied mainly by low-income or unemployed people. At that time, the interest of the local officials was minimal and the quality of life gradually deteriorated even further and it shared the fate of many other places in Slovakia: densely inhabited by Roma people and abandoned by officialdom.

A drastic rethinking of the place itself and of the potential of social housing in contemporary Slovak society was necessary if the neighbourhood was to be saved. In 2001, the City of Presov duly held an open, anonymous competition for the revitalization of this problematic housing estate.

That ideas competition was won by the newly founded architectural practice zerozero which was subsequently commissioned to redesign the old housing blocks, providing 190 new rental apartments and new infrastructure. Construction started in 2002, with the first apartment blocks being delivered in 2004; the second and final phase is currently taking place.

The simple geometry of the existing estate and the proportional scale of the surrounding buildings formed the basis of the new project. In order to introduce some much-needed social heterogeneity, a mixture of apartments – differing in size and standard – was proposed. „Change of image – the design of a new urban icon" was the radical notion behind the project. The spatial enlargement of the old housing blocks was achieved by remodelling the traditional pitched roof buildings into a composition of abstract figures. The new flat-roofed, two-storey extensions to the former three-storey blocks add a necessary degree of volumetric animation and provide for easy spatial orientation in the new neighbourhood.

Although the strong CMYK colours initially proposed for the front facades of the cantilevered prisms ended up a pale mixture of blue and white, the strong geometrical profile of the original architectural proposal remains. The fact that the project was

recently awarded the local ARCH magazine 2005 prize shows that this is powerful enough.

DATENBLATT

Architektur: zerozero (Indri?is St?rmanis)
Bauherrschaft: Mesto Prešov

Funktion: Wohnbauten

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Ansichten