

Architecture and Urban Design



Municipal Department 19



One factor that characterizes a livable city is its architecture. In a very special way, Vienna unites the architectural heritage of bygone eras with modern, state-of-the-art building. This felicitous blend of old and new is a characteristic feature of dynamic and responsible urban development in a cosmopolitan city. Nowhere else can aesthetics, sustainability and functionality be equally perceived than in architecture.



The same holds true for public space: it is the glue that holds urban living environments together, offering unique qualities and opportunities for all the city's inhabitants. Municipal Department 19 is an important guarantor of Vienna's international image as one of the world's top cities for quality of life.

Yours

Maria Vassilakou

Deputy Mayor

Executive City Councillor for Urban
Planning, Traffic & Transport,
Climate Protection, Energy and
Public Participation



Municipal Department 19 – Architecture and Urban Design

Municipal Department 19 (MA 19) is the central planning department for municipal building construction, public space design and fundamental issues of urban design in Vienna. It is also in charge of assessing the compatibility of project applications with the existing cityscape before a building permit is granted. Our staff members aim to raise public awareness of high-quality architecture by providing expert knowledge in this field.

The overall objective of MA 19 consists in making sure the city develops in line with contemporary requirements without jeopardizing the historic building stock and architectural heritage. The focus is always on objective dialogue – even when discussing the emotional aspects of architecture.



**Franz Kobermaier,
Head of Municipal
Department 19**



MA 19 staff ...

... provide expert advice

on questions of design and architecture to citizens, developers, planners and other municipal staff.

... draw up expert opinions

as part of the building permit procedure and as jurors in architectural contests.

... are in charge of planning, doing research and placing contracts

for architectural services in planning projects, for urban development studies and strategic issues fundamental to architecture and design.





... collect digital data

on buildings worthy of conservation as well as design elements in public space, thus facilitating informed decisions.

... provide information

to the interested public by organising information events and compiling folders.

... safeguard quality standards in architecture

by implementing and accompanying architectural competitions and related tender processes, as well as publishing and/or organising the public presentation of their outcome.





The framework conditions for urban development

Vienna is characterised by buildings of outstanding historical value. At the same time, the city's dynamic growth requires modern architectural solutions that are suited to contemporary needs.

MA 19, the Department for Architecture and Urban Design, aims to strike a balance between conservation and innovation in urban design. The basis for modern architectural projects is provided in general plans and concepts drawn up by the City Administration, such as the STEPO5 Urban Development Plan, the Vienna High-Rise Concept and the Protected Zones System. MA 19 examines the fundamental ideas and guiding principles for the development of major urban areas. It also draws up studies on urban design and development issues, which in turn provide the basis for strategic long-term decisions in urban development. Large-scale projects, such as the extension of an underground line, are examined with regard to their effects on urban design. A comprehensive data capture system for Vienna's historic building stock facilitates the assessment of changes to the cityscape.





Expert opinions on development projects

170,000 buildings make up a city. Some of them are highlights of architectural history, many others remain more or less anonymous, supplementing the historical centre to form a large modern city.

Every new construction project must be checked for compliance with the building laws and regulations. The same is true for additions to and conversions of existing buildings. In the context of the official building permit procedure, MA 19 is in charge of assessing whether the project at hand is compatible with the existing cityscape and urban design.

Building projects examined by MA 19 range from advertisements in public space to roof extensions, high-rise buildings and industrial facilities. As a service to developers, guidelines on the most frequent project types are available online.





Planning public buildings

Public buildings form an integral part of a city's identity. Keeping a high standard of architectural quality in this field is a prime concern of the Vienna City Administration.

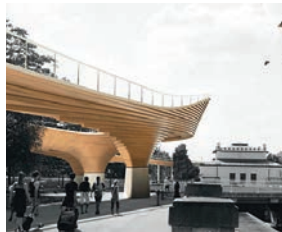
Public buildings that serve as positive examples for architectural design both contribute to the city's visual identity and reflect the cultural role of municipal infrastructure buildings. All projects are based on the principles of functionality and economical management, as well as on ecological criteria like energy efficiency and sustainability.

As part of its responsibility for maintaining the high quality of architectural design in Vienna, MA 19 is also in charge of planning schools, kindergartens, libraries, utility buildings for the local ambulance and fire services, as well as many other public buildings operated by the City of Vienna.





The City of Vienna plays an important role as a contracting authority in construction projects. To find the best possible solution for every development project and location, it holds official architecture and urban design competitions before awarding contracts for planning services. Detailed information for private investors planning to organise similar competitions is available online. A folder containing the basic principles and guidelines for architecture and urban design competitions was first published in 2003 (“Grundlagen für die Durchführung von Wettbewerben auf dem Gebiet der Architektur und des Städtebaues”). These guidelines also apply to competitions for new construction projects held by MA 19 itself.





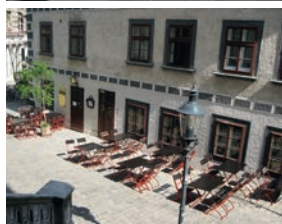
Designing public space

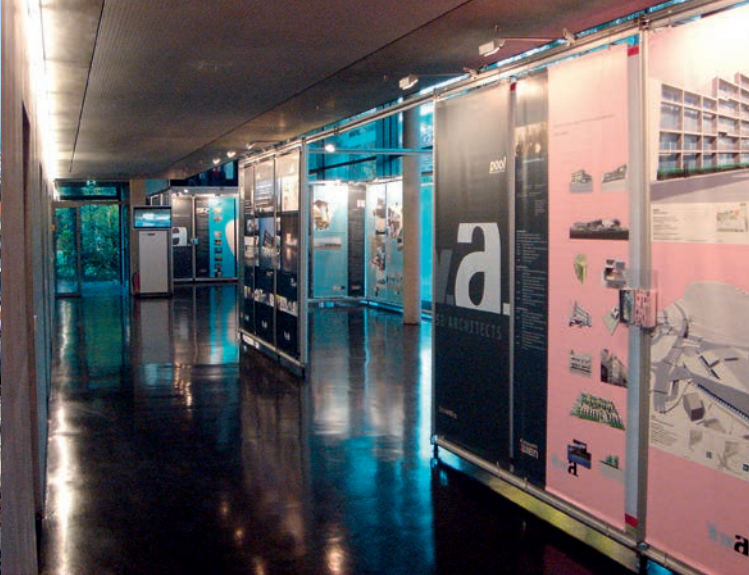
Roads and squares fulfil important integrative and communicative functions in urban life. Given its responsibility for the planning and design of public space, MA 19 aims to ensure that the projects implemented meet both functional and aesthetic requirements.

Public space in a city is increasingly expected to provide room for people to meet, communicate and relax. To adequately fulfil this purpose, it must be geared to its users' needs. This is why the City Administration makes every effort to encourage citizen involvement.

As part of a current study on the reinterpretation of public space ("Neuinterpretation öffentlicher Raum"), urban development plans for the public space are being prepared at district level. At the same time, a different programme ("Programm 50-Orte-plus") concentrates on individual projects that reconcile high quality of design with high effectiveness in creating identity among the local population.

MA 19 is also responsible for examining advertising structures and other forms of private intervention in public space in order to assess their compatibility with the general urban fabric.





Communicating architecture

MA 19 supports a variety of events that further this awareness, such as the “Turn On” Architecture Festival, the Architecture Days, and the exhibition “gebaut” (“built”), which presents innovative and intelligent examples of high-quality architecture implemented over the past year. The department is also in charge of updating www.wienarchitektur.at, an online guide to architecture that includes a calendar of upcoming events. The classroom project “was schafft raum?” helps children and young people understand architecture and urban planning. It is implemented in cooperation with the Vienna School Board as well as Municipal Departments 18 (Urban Development and Planning) and 21 (District Planning and Land Use for Central and Western Vienna). Similarly, several municipal departments work together to maintain the website “Wien Kultur-gut, which contains information on the city’s history, architecture, archaeology and a variety of related topics. To keep citizens well-informed, Municipal Department 19 takes part in local events, offers information folders, engages in public participation initiatives and maintains a continuous dialogue with all interested parties.



www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/architektur

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