



# ÖGNI POSITION PAPER SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Created by the Working Group on Social Sustainability



# 1.

## THE TARGET OF THE POSITION PAPER

People spend up to 80% of their lifetime in real estate. We have been making sure for a long time that these properties are ecologically valuable and keep people healthy. We now want to expand this view to include mental health and help people feel comfortable in the buildings in which they live and work.

ÖGNI wants to position social sustainability alongside ecology and economy as an equally important factor in the sustainable consideration of real estate. Social sustainability does not only consist of soft facts, we want to make social sustainability measurable and assessable. Our aim is to incorporate social sustainability assessment criteria into the DGNB certificate together with our European partners.

In order to achieve social sustainability, it is necessary not to continue to view buildings singularly, but always in connection with their surroundings and their inhabitants. We want to create awareness that every building has a role to play in the interaction with its surroundings, which must be fulfilled. This socio-cultural integration of the property into its immediate surroundings and the quality with which this integration takes place, increases the value of the affected neighbourhood and thus of the individual properties.

This position paper is intended to make clear that the mere provision of space for living and working is not a promising business model for the future. In the future, those buildings will be successful in which space with infrastructure is offered. The range extends from the basic equipment for digitisation to mobility concepts and the operation of shared areas.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that modern real estate has to exhibit a high degree of flexibility in order to be successful for owners and tenants. Lack of flexibility is a cost driver in the use of buildings for living and working and should therefore be avoided. The connection of several buildings to one quarter helps to increase flexibility.

# 2.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Quarters – a holistic approach

The realisation of a building that is also socially sustainable can only be economical if the requirements are distributed over several buildings and individual buildings take over functions for an entire neighbourhood. Modern trends in contemporary urban development require a holistic view of neighbourhoods: mobility, energy production and supply, the connection of work and living or the fulfilment of infrastructural requirements are neither effective nor economical without the inclusion of several buildings in a neighbourhood.

The networking of buildings with each other requires a planned design of the public areas between the buildings and a network-forming, barrier-free access to common areas located in different buildings, without neglecting the need for security. Quarters must not be monofunctional, but have to be lively and in harmony with their surroundings. In addition to planning implementations, such as a good setting of open spaces and network-forming paths, functional communication channels are also needed to bring tenants and landlords closer together.

### Operation of real estate

Affordable living is also defined by the size of the housing units. Microliving is not a concept for lifelong living and can only be helpful as a temporary solution. A minimum size of approx. 30 m<sup>2</sup> is targeted for the housing unit. Small housing units will only keep people mentally healthy if there is a supply of generous, operated communal areas.

Common rooms only make sense if they are run professionally. The "party room" in the basement, which is not operated, does not fulfil any social sustainability requirements. Particularly suitable common areas are divisible and expandable and thus adaptable possibility spaces. These possibilities range from socially used areas, service offers, to shopping areas or sports facilities.

### Flexibility

Modern buildings must have a high degree of flexibility to accommodate future developments in technology or living conditions. Digitalisation, smart homes, changes in working environments or a sheltered life in old age will become reality in the life cycle of a building without being able to plan exactly in advance today. Telephone reception and WLAN are prerequisites for participating in digitization. Standardization that takes account of future developments is becoming increasingly important in the interaction of different buildings.

The portfolio of real estate owners and operators will be expanded in the future to include a broad range of services: The operation of communal areas, mobility concepts, the provision of digital infrastructure and its flexible adaptation to the individual needs of residents, the organisation of the interaction of different buildings in a neighbourhood or the production, storage and use of energy are possible services that will determine the quality of the property in the future.

### 3. GRAFIC REPRESENTATION



Figure 1: In addition to the numerous basic needs such as security, maintaining social contacts, etc., the holistic consideration of quarters comes first and has to combine all other factors. In the same way, the two other main points - the operation of real estate and flexibility (both in terms of construction and concept) play a decisive role in a lively and sustainable neighbourhood.

Mobility and intergenerational living are further indispensable cogwheels in the complex structure of neighbourhood considerations.

## 4.

# WHAT MATTERS

### LIVING

In order to build sustainable buildings and plan entire neighbourhoods, it is necessary to do justice not only to ecological and economic factors but also to social sustainability. In addition to aspects such as social responsibility, equal opportunities, generational and gender justice, this also includes the need for security, quality of life, basic needs, well-being and comfort. Only where there are active social relationships, people do feel comfortable in the long term. This basic need is independent of age and affects all social classes. If people feel comfortable in their living situation, there is no desire to change their living situation - on the contrary, they strive to maintain this situation for as long as possible.

The long-term variability leads not only to a high level of housing satisfaction into old age, but also to a significant reduction in housing costs. Changes in the housing situation due to dissatisfaction, changed living conditions or age-related factors are always associated with high costs. The aim of project developers should therefore be to create structural and conceptual flexibility in a neighbourhood through forward-looking planning in order to be able to respond to future needs and thus ensure long-term housing satisfaction.

For example, Active-Assisted-Living (AAL) aims to develop products and services for older people in order to enable them to live a life as long and as self-determined as possible within their own four walls. This is a good interface to the technology of so-called "smart homes" - both areas can be seen as a logical unit - users are already accustomed to the technology and it just shifts its importance in their lives (from "I want" to "I need").

In the future, real estate may no longer be seen as a single object, but has to be seen as a quarter together with other buildings. A differentiated range of various forms of living, high-quality public spaces and community facilities for young and old make urban quarters attractive, worth living in and sustainable for all generations.

With the change in household structures, such as the growing proportion of single people, single parents and older people, and with new concerns and challenges - such as intergenerational living, working at home, unemployment and part-time work models - new and expanded demands for open space are emerging by residents to their direct living environment. In the development of neighbourhoods with a positive social and intergenerational mix, it is therefore important to focus on the needs of the various consumers with regard to floor plan, living environment and service qualities. All in all, apartments/houses should have as flexible floor plans as possible, which can be adapted according to the demands or the living situation of the households. In order to promote cross-age encounters, community facilities in particular, but also open spaces as meeting and communication spaces in the neighbourhood, are ideal options. Encounter does not only need space, but also opportunities.

Community facilities form the basis for a lively, active community - but only if it is also run and animated. An ideal organisational structure would be within the housing complex or across several neighbouring complexes, which takes care of common themes and

concerns. On the one hand the common facilities are filled with life, on the other hand rules of use are communicated, which ensure that the common rooms are kept in good condition. This requires various communication channels and information as well as advisory services in order to achieve synergy and development potential.

It is essential to take into account the feeling of security as a central prerequisite so that the communal areas and services in the urban quarters are used by all age groups without fear. The structural design can create the essential conditions for this (clarity, lighting, etc.). Visual references to lively public places and the spatial and functional linking of open spaces and community facilities contribute to more social control.

In addition, the topic of mobility is becoming more and more important and neighbourhood development is a particularly good opportunity to create sustainable mobility offers. Here, people can be reached at a time when they can rethink and change their mobility behaviour. In addition to the increased use of public transport and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, the topic of "mobility as a service" is becoming increasingly important. New mobility services such as (electric) car sharing, rental bikes, transport bikes, e-charging stations, etc. can be booked and used via the smart phone using digital apps. Thus, on the one hand, alternative means of transport are to be promoted and, on the other hand, the use of one's own car is to be made unnecessary through sensible planning, e.g. through the provision of "rentable office spaces" for home workers, nearby school and kindergarten places or valet parking, and thus the production costs for parking spaces are to be saved.

Together with urban planners, project developers and real estate managers, ÖGNI has set itself the task of defining and dealing with social issues such as intergenerational housing, mobility, affordable housing, the operation of communal areas and the flexibility of buildings. In this way, these topics, which until now have been referred to as soft facts, are to be treated, evaluated and lived with the necessary seriousness and commitment.

## **WORKING**

Every day people waste a lot of time and money commuting from home to work and back. The economy, but also the families lose a lot of valuable time, which can be used more sensibly. Digitalisation now offers many opportunities to be productive independently of the workplace - it will not be possible in every profession or function, but the flexibility of work design will generally increase.

In the fight for the best workers, the workplace and its flexibility will play a role that is currently underestimated. The sustainability of a building in which people work and spend a large part of the day can be an argument for the commitment of a new employee, it is an argument for the health, motivation and commitment of the workforce.

Social sustainability in the workplace is expressed in various forms. Accessibility is mandatory and partly legally prescribed, women's parking spaces in garages, gender-appropriate cloakrooms and social rooms are standard. Infrastructure and easy accessibility are becoming increasingly important, and modern companies are paying more and more attention to infrastructure for communication as well as for retreat. Additionally, spaces to develop the creative powers of employees are getting more

important.

In general, ÖGNI sees social sustainability in buildings that are used for work to be largely realised, partly because the economic benefit is much more visible than in residential areas.



## QUARTERS – a holistic approach

Supplementary neighbourhood offers should not be considered at property level alone. It is absolutely necessary to define the district boundaries and to view each individual property as part of this district - it is important to find out what role and function the building has in the respective district. Only the necessary examination of the individual building with the neighbourhood in relation to itself opens up synergy and development potentials that are often not apparent at first glance. For example, a rather uninteresting existing building can be turned into an added value by providing a ground floor area, for the property itself and for the entire quarter. Here it is the task of developers and urban planners to think ahead in order to identify future developments and needs. ÖGNI is of the opinion that in a lively quarter, not every square metre should be allocated a fixed use from the outset.

Negotiable and adaptable neighbourhood spaces/areas allow diversity and variety in the surroundings and thus make the perception of the quarter more interesting. Access to affordable and effective mobility is also indispensable for a functioning neighbourhood. Various sustainable sharing services, such as (electric) car sharing, rental and transport bikes, ensure that workplaces and homes can be reached, but also make it possible to visit recreational, educational and cultural facilities. In addition, a neighbourhood also offers the possibility of avoiding mobility requirements as far as possible, for example through rentable office spaces and co-working opportunities, but also through school and kindergarten facilities within walking distance. From a lively, safe and liveable city to an environmentally friendly smart city, there is no way around developing and designing neighbourhoods.

### Keywords

- Not every property has to meet all requirements, has to be seen as part of the neighbourhood
- At least 20% of the areas in a neighbourhood should be available to additive facilities - this includes not only ground floor zones but also areas on the upper floors or in public spaces
- Creation of open and semi-open spaces and open spaces as well as network-forming paths promote encounters in the neighbourhood and thus the maintenance of social contacts
- A well-designed and usable environment has a high significance for the everyday attitude to life of the inhabitants
- Concerns about factors such as visibility, lighting and accessibility at the planning stage increase the sense of security



## OPERATION OF REAL ESTATE

Community zones and public common areas have to be operated in a meaningful and forward-looking manner. A mere party cellar or a fitness room is by no means sufficient to promote and satisfy social contacts and encounters within a property or even within an entire neighbourhood. It is not only necessary to view each individual property as part of a neighbourhood, it is also essential to operate each individual property. The apartment user can only perceive offers in the property or in the surrounding area if he is also informed about them. This requires a fundamental rethink in the operation of real estate. Whether by neighbourhood and ground floor management, or by well-trained facility management - every user has to be reached and involved.

ÖGNI is of the opinion that sustainability, whether ecological, economic or social, can only be achieved by professional property management. There are a multitude of possibilities to involve the user through useful offers. Realisations such as a well-equipped do-it-yourself workshop, operated FoodCoops, event rooms for seminars and concerts as well as communal kitchens and urban gardening possibilities, promote the community and bring life into the property and the entire neighbourhood. If the user feels comfortable, he or she will not move, on the contrary, he or she will become involved in the community. In addition to the provision of run community areas, the offer to the user has to go even further. In future, the operating costs could include various additional services, such as a compulsory annual pass, a complete package for Internet and telephony or the use of in-house car-sharing services. Intelligent usage concepts turn mere residential buildings and quarters into rooms that are "in operation" around the clock.

### Keywords

- Common areas/spaces should be usable for the group of residents or the entire neighbourhood
- Pop-Up Stores are a good way to bring variety into the neighbourhood
- Considering and exploiting synergies of individual properties
- Concepts for the operation of common areas - creation of organisational structures within or across several neighbouring facilities
- Facilitate the maintenance of bicycles, e.g. a run workshop in combination with a common room



In the coming years, the classic boundaries between living and working, profession and leisure, public and private, will become increasingly blurred. The growing need and the increasing necessity to be flexible, mobile and permanently reachable are reinforcing this trend. This also leads to a change in the living situation. The ideal apartment of the future has to be able to be used for all age groups. Flexible floor plans enable their residents to grow and age with it. Planning and building in advance for technical developments or changes in the life situation of the residents is not easy, but necessary to build or renovate a valuable property.

Different lifestyles, family forms and work models will change the demands on living space and housing construction in the long term. Through an intensive planning process and a flexible floor plan structure, numerous conversion scenarios can already be considered.

In the future, technology will be part of everyday life and accessible everywhere. Above all, the creation of structural flexibility is a must (piping, internet, mobile telephony, etc.) in order to be able to react to rapidly advancing technological developments.

The flexibility of housing forms will also bring economic advantages. Barrier-free housing, new age-supporting technologies and the possibility of adapting the size of housing to the respective requirements allow people in old age to lead a largely self-determined life and thus relieve taxpayers' money by reducing care costs.

These developments have to be taken up by developers as well as various technology providers and producers in order to be part of the living of the future.

## Keywords

- Design a housing mix that is as diverse as possible - promotes social intermixing
- Flexible long-term design of infrastructure in the property (water pipes, electricity, etc.)
- Adaptability of the object during technology update - Consider future developments
- Concepts for sustainable building development also have to take into account changing physical and cognitive abilities (Smart Home / AAL interface)
- Dealing with compaction - an important issue especially in large cities
- Exchange platforms in the quarter - regulated by property management - possibility of changing apartments

## 5. BEST-PRACTICE-EXAMPLE



When it comes to Vienna International Airport, many people think exclusively of the flight business, but AirportCity Vienna has much more to offer. With more than 20,000 employees in the aviation and non-aviation sectors, AirportCity is slowly becoming a small world of its own, or rather a well-functioning quarter. AirportCity Vienna was the first business campus in Austria to be awarded the DGNB/ÖGNI quarter certification in GOLD for comprehensive sustainability.

AirportCity has an ambitious goal - to become the world's most energy-efficient airport of its size. Besides the yields from solar energy and geothermal energy, EVN is building a biomass power plant in the immediate vicinity. In addition to energy optimisation, AirportCity is pursuing further strategies towards a sustainable quarter. In addition to day and event rooms, office buildings and co-working spaces with broadband connections of up to 10 Gbps and maximum flexibility, AirportCity also offers two hotels with more than 900 rooms, various restaurants, retail and a fitness centre. Apart from that, services such as its own post office, a car registration office and its own health centre are also available. AirportCity makes an enormous indirect contribution to environmental protection simply through its own post office. The daily avoidance of long distances by over 230 local companies to the post office in Schwechat means that more than 16 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> can be saved every year. All this data is also reported in the EMAS-certified AirportCity environmental report. In 2020, the range will be expanded to include a bilingual kindergarten with space for up to 150 children from the age of 12, as well as various event areas for cultural activities.

Thanks to its direct flight connections, generous storage and logistics areas as well as direct links to the motorway and rail, AirportCity offers major players an important transport hub. This flexibility creates new synergies - routes become shorter and more efficient.

AirportCity Management is aware of its task and responds to the suggestions and wishes of its customers. In order to further promote networking between the individual companies and their employees, in addition to the short distances and the numerous meeting areas, all the companies located here are regularly invited to joint events. Here a stage is created to present the own company, which often results in exciting synergies. Good cooperation and a mutual knowledge of the settled companies create a feeling of cohesion and thus vacancies can be avoided.

The quarter AirportCity Vienna thus fulfils all three pillars of sustainability to the extent possible:

- Ecology: production and use of non-fossil energy sources, connection to the public transport network, avoidance of additional routes through the provision of a comprehensive infrastructure
- Economy: state-of-the-art, well-equipped company locations, secure supply of energy and internet, provision of networking platforms to facilitate future partnerships
- Social: state-of-the-art workplaces, infrastructure such as kindergartens, shopping facilities, etc. that make working life easier for people with families and children, meeting places for social interaction.



# 6.

## OUTLOOK AND GOALS

In its efforts to anchor social sustainability in the real estate sector, ÖGNI will concentrate primarily on the topic of housing.

In the discussion on "affordable housing", we see opportunities to reduce the size of living space and to compensate these restrictions by the construction of operated communal areas by strengthening social sustainability. This has the additional positive effect that the increasing isolation of people, especially in the city can be counteracted with spaces for social interaction.

By introducing social sustainability in the European quality certificate DGNB, we want to make social sustainability measurable and be ready for new developments, especially concerning mobility as well as energy production and supply.

# 7.

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# 8.

## SUPPORT ÖGNI

ÖGNI is the contact for all questions concerning social sustainability. Within our network, we offer an extensive pool of experts for questions, events and projects as well as advanced tools such as the European Quality Certificate DGNB for quarters and various types of buildings.

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