

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House no. 12

Highlight 1

Architect

Josef Frank, Wien

Interior Design

Josef Frank, Wien

Address

Woinovichgasse 32

Constructed Area

83 m²



With a living space of more than 100 m², the detached house of Josef Frank – the initiator and artistic director of the Vienna Werkbund Estate – goes well beyond the requirements of a small home. Frank had in fact stated that the aim of the Werkbund Exhibition was to create ‘single-family homes of the smallest kind’. There were certain specifications (such as a flat roof and uniform treatment of façades and fencing), but the architects were left considerable freedom of planning. The intention was to create the widest possible range of terraced and detached houses, which would then serve as models for future housing estates.

Frank’s choice of a two-storey design was apparently in response to the wishes of a potential buyer who subsequently pulled out. The light-green house occupies a corner plot within the estate, and is connected with the neighbouring transformer station by means of a flat arch. The slightly raised entrance is reached by steps at the side of the building, leading into a ground floor that is divided into three horizontal zones: the first begins in the entrance hall, which is flanked by the kitchen and a secondary room; the second zone is taken up by a living room that runs the full width of the house; the final zone contains the bathroom and two bedrooms, accessible from a small ante-room. The narrower first floor is reached by an open staircase in the living room; it is occupied by a further living space that runs parallel to the garden and is fronted by a terrace. The ground-floor living room, which was designed to permit cross-ventilation, has access to the garden through a glazed triple door, opening directly on to a sitting area shaded by a pergola. Similar types of single-family home – with a recessed first floor and terrace – had already been realised by Frank in several earlier projects (Haus Scholl in Vienna, 1914; Haus Claëson in Falsterbo, 1924–27).

The groundplan of the house corresponds to the vision of interior design described by Frank in his 1931 article, ‘The House as Path and Place’. As he wrote, ‘A well organised house should be planned like a town – with streets and paths leading to places free of traffic, where relaxation is possible’. In order to achieve this, Frank shifted windows and doors away from the main axes of the rooms, so creating a series of discrete living spaces: the dining area, for instance, was located on one side of the living room, and was connected with the kitchen by a door under the stairs; the garden side of the same room featured a desk and various chairs; and these two spaces were divided, as historic photographs show, by a day-bed and a table. The various mobile furnishings and materials of house no. 12 all came from the firm Haus & Garten, which Josef Frank had founded with Oskar Wlach in 1925.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11

Highlight 2

Architect

Josef Hoffmann, Wien

Interior Design

Josef Hoffmann, Wien (House 8, 9)

Wilhelm Jonasch, Wien (House 10)

Wolko Gartenberg, Wien (House 10)

Willy Legler, Wien (House 11)

Address

Veitingergasse 79, 81, 83 and 85

Constructed Area

84 m² (House 8 and House 11)

66 m² (House 9 and House 10)



The four single-storey terraced houses in Veitingergasse were designed by the architect Josef Hoffmann. Already sixty-one at the time of the opening of the Werkbund Exhibition, Hoffmann was a prominent figure – a co-founder of the Wiener Werkstätte and Austrian Werkbund. His contribution to the Viennese model estate involved two standard houses of differing size, which he arranged with mirror symmetry – thus with an identical inner and outer pair. The broad horizontal block of the row is broken on the street side by the vertical accents of four glazed staircase towers, which are set back slightly from the façade and continue above roof level. On the garden side, Hoffmann articulated his façade in a decidedly Baroque manner – using the double-recessed fronts of the two outer houses in combination with the projecting terraces and stairs of the smaller inner pair. The variously sized lattice windows of the main storey are placed on the outer surface of the building, whilst the rectangular windows of the relatively high cellar – which serves as a form of socle for the design as a whole – are set into the wall.

Both types of raised single-storey house are entered via stairs on the street and garden sides. The outer pair of houses (nos. 8 and 11) occupies an area of 84 m² each, with all rooms accessible from a central corridor. The inner pair (nos. 9 and 10) is smaller: each flat takes up an area of 66 m², and has rooms directly accessible from the entrance hall. All the flats have a generous roof terrace, which was intended for sunbathing.

House no. 8 (which was one of the few to be sold in the course of the Werkbund Exhibition – for 45,000 shillings) and no. 9 were furnished by Josef Hoffmann himself: historical photographs show furniture that seems slightly too large for its setting. Hoffmann is believed to have placed particular emphasis on colour, as the journal *Innendekoration* revealed in 1932: 'Two of the houses have also been furnished by Hoffmann, and with great attention to the establishment of harmony between variously coloured rooms. Thus, in the larger house, the bedroom of the parents is in a rich blue, whilst that intended for a daughter is in pink and the secondary room green; the living room, meanwhile, with its white walls, effectively gathers together these optical impressions. For all its simplicity, the resulting atmosphere is filled with warmth and culture.' The furnishing of house no. 10 was undertaken by Wilhelm Jonasch and Wolko Gartenberg, whilst that of house no. 11 was the work of Willy Legler

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 25, 26, 27 and 28

Highlight 3

Architect

André Lurçat, Paris

Interior Design

André Lurçat, Paris (House 25)

Pierre Pinsard, Paris (House 26)

Marcel Roux, Paris (House 26)

Hermann John Hagemann, Wien
(House 28)

Address

Veitingergasse 87, 89, 91 and 93

Constructed Area

38 m²



André Lurçat was one of the best known representatives of functionalism in France and a founding member of the CIAM – Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture). His terraced houses for the Vienna Werkbund Exhibition are among the most striking on the estate, with their closed, block-like design and rounded staircase towers that project forward from the façade. The unwelcoming character of the street front is enhanced by the few narrow windows – almost like arrow slits – and by the high walls of the front gardens. The garden front, however, presents a complete contrast: Lurçat here opens up the rooms of both upper storeys with continuous bands of south-facing fenestration. The row of white houses with dark-green windows features a continuous roof terrace (only accessible from house no. 25) and a prominent inscription on its narrow, city-facing side: 'Werkbundsiedlung 1932'.

All four south-orientated houses offer a living space of 68 m², which is clearly divided into three functional areas corresponding to the three storeys. Since each house occupies an area of only 38 m², it was necessary to keep circulatory spaces to a minimum. Around half the ground floor is left open: alongside the working rooms, which include a washroom, cellar, and store-room, there is a covered sitting area with access to the garden (later walled up). The staircase tower, which is set forward from the body of the building and was furnished with artificial stone steps, leads to a first storey with living room, kitchen, secondary room, and lavatory. The storey above has a small ante-room leading to two bedrooms, which are divided by a bathroom. Criticism of André Lurçat's buildings concentrated not only on the forbidding character of his design and his choice of fenestration ill-suited to the local climate, but also and particularly on a groundplan that required so much climbing of stairs.

André Lurçat intended his houses to contain flexible furnishings, such as foldable beds and tables. His groundplan drawings show possible scenarios for day and night furnishings: on the second floor, for instance, the beds could be folded up and made to 'disappear' into the wall when not required, creating additional living space for the inhabitants during the day. Lurçat was not alone in his attempts to rationalise flat design by using built-in furniture: this had been the subject of numerous congresses, publications, and exhibitions since the early 1920s.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 31 and 32

Highlight 4

Architect

Oskar Wlach, Wien

Interior Design

Oskar Wlach, Wien

Address

Veitingergasse 99 and 101

Constructed Area

49 m²



These two-storey terraced houses at Veitingergasse nos. 99 and 101, painted pale green with horizontal white stripes, were designed by the architect Oskar Wlach. After completing his studies in Vienna at the Technische Hochschule (under Karl König) and the Akademie der bildenden Künste (under Friedrich Ohmann), Wlach began collaborating with his fellow student Oskar Strnad in 1907. Six years later they were joined by Josef Frank, the future organiser and director of the Vienna Werkbund Estate. Along with their shared educational background and artistic outlook, the three architects were also connected by their Jewish origins. A further joint initiative was the company Haus & Garten, which Wlach and Frank founded in 1925, offering a wide range of functional objects and furnishings for internal and external spaces.

Wlach's houses at the Werkbund Estate are entered through a recessed doorway, which lies three steps above ground level and has a curved wall leading into the interior. A central hall provides access to the kitchen, living room, and a secondary room; it also contains stairs leading down to the cellar and up to the first floor. The living room is set two steps lower than the hall, occupying the whole breadth of the house and opening into the garden through a large quadripartite window and a glazed double door. The outside area in front of the door functions as a sitting space, sheltered by the projecting wall of the living room and shaded by a pergola. As in many other houses of the Werkbund Estate, the areas for living and sleeping are located on separate storeys. The two identically sized bedrooms on the first floor look south into the garden; to the north are a smaller room, bathroom, and lavatory. In contrast to the small openings on the north side, Wlach's fenestration on the garden side was relatively generous. The tripartite French windows of the southern bedrooms had to provide all the necessary light and air, since the groundplan chosen inhibited cross-ventilation.

The original interior design of both houses was carried out by Oskar Wlach himself: like Strnad and Frank, he avoided furniture that was large and potentially obstructive, preferring light and easily moveable objects that could be adapted quickly to changing requirements. One historical photograph shows the seemingly spacious and light living room of house no. 31 with various mobile furnishings. All of these objects, including the fabrics and lamps, came from the firm Haus & Garten.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 39 and 40

Highlight 5

Architect

Oswald Haerdtl, Wien

Interior Design

Oswald Haerdtl, Wien

Address

Veitingergasse 115 and 117

Constructed Area

44 m² (House 39)

71 m² (House 40)



Houses nos. 39–40 at the Vienna Werkbund Estate were the first buildings realised by Oswald Haerdtl, whose extensive oeuvre shows an almost unique degree of continuity extending from the interwar period into the late 1950s. The long-term assistant and later partner of Josef Hoffmann had studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna under Oskar Strnad and Josef Frank. His work successfully combined influences from his two teachers, despite their strongly contrasting artistic outlooks. As both an architect and an interior designer, Haerdtl was able in many of his works to create a unity of structure and furnishing in the sense of a Gesamtkunstwerk, or total art work.

At the Werkbund Estate, Josef Frank assigned to Haerdtl the angular building plot on the corner of Veitingergasse and Jagdschlossgasse. The group of houses, which makes a closed impression to the street, comprises two wholly contrasting buildings: whilst Veitingergasse no. 115 is a terraced house with a fairly traditional groundplan, its neighbour at no. 117 is of high urbanistic quality and shows sophisticated internal planning. The corner house responds to the nature of its plot – from its terrace and balcony areas to the layout of its rooms. A dominant element is the centrally placed staircase, which begins in open format and serves to divide the various functional areas of the house. The ground floor contains working rooms on the street side (kitchen, secondary room, hall, lavatory), which front the large, angular living room with its free-standing column and access to the terrace. The first floor has bedrooms on the garden side, along with a further living room and bathroom. From here, the staircase continues up to a spacious atelier with surrounding terrace. This almost tower-like addition to the house provides a striking urbanistic accent on the north-west corner of the estate.

The corner house is by far the largest house of the whole estate, and was also, at a price of 65,000 Austrian shillings, by far the most expensive; it is the only house that has its own garage. Both nos. 39 and 40 were furnished by Haerdtl himself. The 1932 report in the journal *Innendekoration* focused on the furnishing of the living room of house no. 40, emphasising that the 'angular internal spaces..., with their tubular steel furniture and fitted cupboards from light-coloured woods, represent a particularly impressive design'.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 61 and 62

Highlight 6

Architect

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky,
Wien-Moskau

Interior Design

Hans Pitsch, Wien (House 61)
Anton K. Strahal, Salzburg (House
62)

Address

Woinovichgasse 2 and 4

Constructed Area

35 m² (House 61)

36 m² (House 62)



These two terraced houses in Woinovichgasse are from Margarethe Schütte-Lihotzky, who was the first woman to qualify as an architect in Austria. They show many similarities to the adjoining pair of houses by Max Fellerer; this applies both to the plot size – at 35–36 m² among the smallest on the estate – and to the groundplans. In all four houses, for instance, the living room occupies half the ground storey, and runs right across the building, parallel to the garden. But whilst Fellerer's entrance to the kitchen was from the hall, Schütte-Lihotzky's design involved access from the living room. Following her intensive engagement with estate housing and the organisation of domestic working space from the early 1920s onwards, she consistently demanded direct contact between living space and the kitchen: on the one hand, the work of a housewife should not be cordoned off from the rest of the house and from family life generally; on the other, such a groundplan minimised the distance between kitchen and dining space – very much in the spirit of rationalised housekeeping. Schütte-Lihotzky reached a wide public above all with her famous 'Frankfurt Kitchen' (Frankfurter Küche), which she was able to realise in numerous estates of the so-called 'New Frankfurt' in the course of her work for the building authorities there under Ernst May between 1926 and 1930.

Schütte-Lihotzky's cube-shaped terraced houses at the Werkbund Estate see functional areas divided between the two main storeys. An iron spiral staircase with linoleum flooring connects the living area on the ground floor with the sleeping area above. The first storey comprises two bedrooms of different sizes and a bathroom. The larger bedroom, which was designed to take fitted furniture and equipped with its own balcony, runs the full length of the house, thus enabling cross-ventilation. The ground-floor living room is generously glazed (fenestration and terrace door), opening the space towards the garden that fronts the house to the south-west.

The two houses, which were furnished by Hans Pitsch (no. 61) and Anton K. Strahal (no. 62), were both sold during the exhibition of 1932 – as were the neighbouring buildings from Max Fellerer. Schütte-Lihotzky, who already had extensive experience of estate design and had collaborated with leading members of the international avant-garde, was the only woman invited by Josef Frank to contribute houses to the Werkbund Estate.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 49, 50, 51 and 52

Highlight 7

Architect

Adolf Loos, Wien

Heinrich Kulka, Wien

Interior Design

Heinrich Kulka, Wien (House 49, 50)

Adolf Loos, Wien (House 51, 52)

Address

Woinovichgasse 13, 15, 17 and 19

Constructed Area

47 m²



Houses nos. 49–52 in Woinovichgasse were designed by Adolf Loos and his close collaborator and biographer Heinrich Kulka. According to Kulka, Loos' contribution was limited to a few instructions given by telephone: 'Design a gallery house, two or three steps up and down'. Each pair of these cellared, three-storey houses presents a façade with mirror symmetry along a central axis. The houses, with their white walls and green windows and doors, have two entrances each. The main entrance leads through the garden and up three steps to a raised terrace. From here, there is access to the ground storey with its generous living room that faces back towards the front garden. A rear entrance leads directly into the kitchen and adjacent larder, which are both set two steps lower than the rest of the ground storey. In contrast to Anton Brenner (houses nos. 15–16), who opted for a single-storey design in an attempt to achieve rationalised housekeeping, the house of Loos and Kulka is striking for its multiple levels and steep steps. The central living room on the ground floor contains a staircase leading to a mezzanine with a small northern room and a gallery, which runs around the space below, broadening as it reaches its conclusion. The storey above comprises three small (bed-)rooms and a bathroom, all accessed from a central corridor; the two southern rooms are fronted by a continuous balcony.

In this way, the architects managed to extract maximum floor space from a small plot: each house occupies an area of only 47 m², but offers as much living space as 93 m². The famous interior planning of Adolf Loos, which he had perfected above all in his designs for larger villas, is also tangible in the two duplexes of the Werkbund Estate. Loos stressed that different domestic functions required rooms of different heights; spatial efficiency could thus be optimised by setting rooms at different levels and making increased use of stairs (and ramps).

The designs of Loos and Kulka, however, attracted persistent criticism because space-defining elements such as stairs, built-in features, and galleries made it difficult to vary the interior design and respond to the individual requirements of the inhabitants. A further criticism of houses nos. 49–52 was the lack of direct access between the living room and the terrace fronting the house: although the two-storey living room has a large window, the only way into the garden is through the entrance hall.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer

WERKBUNDSIEDLUNG WIEN

Highlights Tour

House nos. 53, 54, 55 and 56

Highlight 8

Architect

Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Utrecht

Interior Design

Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Utrecht
(House 53)

Paul Fischel, Wien (House 54)

Heinz Siller, Wien (House 54)

Josef Beber, Wien (House 55)

M. J. Schmidt, Wien (House 55)

Rosa Weiser, Salzburg (House 56)

Address

Woinovichgasse 14, 16, 18 and 20

Constructed Area

46 m²



The four houses of the three-storey row by the Dutchman Gerrit Rietveld are situated opposite the pair of duplexes by Adolf Loos in Woinovichgasse, which here broadens to form a small square. Rietveld, who with his Haus Schröder in Utrecht had created an icon of modern architecture in 1924, was closely connected to the Dutch group of artists, De Stijl, and, like Josef Frank, was a co-founder of the CIAM. Along with André Lurçat from France, Gabriel Guévrekian from Teheran, and Hugo Häring from Germany, he was one of the few foreign architects invited by Josef Frank to contribute to the Vienna Werkbund Estate.

With their precise north-south orientation and light-yellow façades, his four houses all feature a projecting entrance hall with sideways access. On the left of the hall is the kitchen, on the right a staircase ensuring efficient communication with the rest of the house. Straight on is the large living room, which occupies the full breadth of the building and around half of its surface area. This space is opened towards the long, narrow garden by an almost square window and the terrace door. The hall stairs lead to the first and second floors, which contain pairs of variously sized bedrooms and a bathroom. The upper storey is set back from the façade on both the street and garden sides, making way for balconies that run the full breadth of the house.

The tall, slender houses, each comprising a living area as large as 101 m², are strikingly open to their external spaces on both garden and street sides – a stylistic element typical of modern architecture in the Netherlands. Rietveld's organisation of internal space also differed from the groundplans of other houses in the Werkbund Estate. He varied the height of his rooms in a manner comparable to Loos, but showing a distinctive arrangement of rooms on different levels: the height of each space was determined by its function, and the paired rooms on the first and second storey were set at slightly different levels from each other (with the garden-side spaces higher). On the street side, the ground-floor kitchen and the bedroom above it have lower ceilings, facilitating a second-storey room of greater height. On the garden side, in contrast, the high ceiling of the ground-floor living room creates a more generous space, but at the expense of the rooms above it. House no. 53 was furnished by Rietveld himself, showing an economical use of modern tubular-steel furniture and leaving a sober impression. House no. 54 (where part of the kitchen was sacrificed to create a larger living room), on the other hand, was furnished by Paul Fischel and Heinz Siller with greater application of wood and various textiles (curtains, cushions), creating a far more homely atmosphere.

Text: Anna Stuhlpfarrer