

## Press Release

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### Mobile student dorm in Passive House Standard inaugurated

#### Project in Vienna could serve as a model for low-cost accommodation for refugees

*Darmstadt, Germany.* Adaptable housing space is scarce in many cities. Even more so when affordability is decisive. A solution now presented in Vienna, Austria could set a precedent: a mobile student dorm. The building consisting of prefabricated residential units can be set up within a few days, for example on plots that are temporarily not in use. If the building site is needed for something else, the dorm can simply be moved to a different place. The project in Vienna doesn't just facilitate low rents, it has also achieved the Passive House Standard, meeting the highest demands for energy efficiency and comfort. And the system could also be used in other ways – for example as sustainable accommodation for refugees.

"Attractive living space for 40 students was created within a record-breaking short time of just one week", says Günter Lang who was involved in the project as a consultant. "The building clearly demonstrates that one does not have to compromise in terms of quality even in the case of temporary solutions." The [PopUp-GreenFlexStudios](#) in Vienna's new city district of Seestadt Aspern consists of ten residential units arranged around an attractive atrium. The construction costs of 1.140 Euro per square metre of total floor area were far less than the local average. Students pay no more than 350 Euro for a room, including ancillary costs and utilities.

The project which was completed in September was initiated by Christoph Chorgherr, who is the planning spokesperson for Vienna's Green Party. The background for his idea was the acute shortage of affordable suitable building sites for the construction of student dorms. But in his [Blog](#) the politician emphasises the versatility of this concept – especially in view of the current demand for additional housing for refugees. Lang, who as the head of the [Passivhaus Austria](#) network is promoting more energy efficiency in the building sector, also sees great potential here for low-cost yet high-quality building solutions.

The covered 250 square metre atrium serves as the communal area of the building, including a lounge space, washrooms and a kitchen. This area is naturally lit using daylighting strategies. Each of the residential units has four rooms, two bathrooms and an additional common room with a mini-kitchen. In addition to the high architectural and structural quality, the compact energy and building systems concept also comes with many innovative features. The individual residential units are designed to be fully self-sufficient.

"The new student dorm in Vienna is yet another example showing that energy efficiency and affordable housing are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, a substantial profit ultimately remains with the Passive House Standard due to the low running costs," says Dr. Wolfgang Feist, director of the Passive House Institute. "Even if construction has to take place within extremely short notice at the lowest possible costs, compromising on energy efficiency would be a big mistake. Better energy efficiency isn't just a good idea from the environmental point of view, it also provides better construction quality and lower overall costs."

"Whereas the construction of conventional subsidised social housing with a heating demand between 25 and 40 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a incurs construction costs of 1.450 Euro per square metre in Vienna, this student dorm with a heating demand of only 15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a could be built at a cost of 1.140 Euro per square metre, including solar shading for the summer," says Lang. "This impressively refutes all preconceptions that energy efficiency does not pay off."

Over a third of the energy used in industrialised countries is used for running buildings, most of this goes towards heating and cooling. This consumption is reduced by up to 90 percent in a Passive House building, which at the same time offers an optimum quality of indoor air. The benefits of this construction standard can be experienced by everyone during the [International Passive House Days](#) from 13 to 15 November, when hundreds of Passive House buildings in many countries will be opened to the public. The new student dorm in Vienna can also be visited, a panel discussion about sustainable housing will be held here on 13 November.



The new student dorm in Vienna shortly after completion.



The building consists of prefabricated residential units.



Passive House expert Günter Lang next to the building.



Inside view of the atrium.

*Photos: Lang Consulting*

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