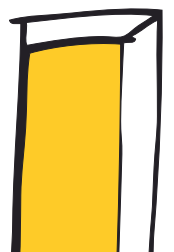
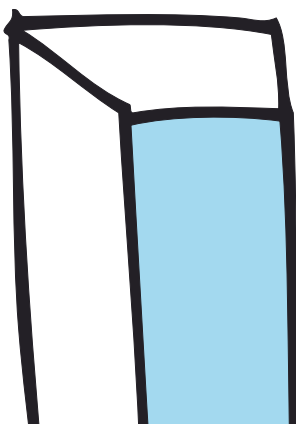
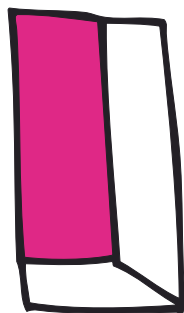
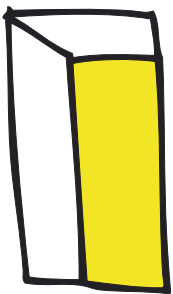
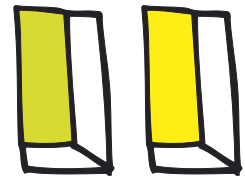
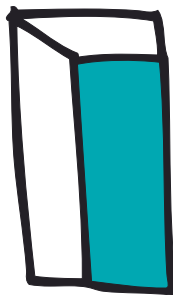
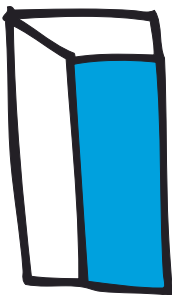
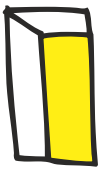


TOWARDS UNIVERSALLY AFFORDABLE & AVAILABLE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR RIGA

RIGA CITY ARCHITECT'S OFFICE'S CONFERENCE
2019





THE MOBILE CONFERENCE OF THE RIGA CITY ARCHITECT'S OFFICE IN 2019, THE KNOWLEDGE WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND AND DISCOVERED IN THE URBANITY **UNIVERSALLY AFFORDABLE & AVAILABLE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR RIGA**

Until now, at the Riga City Architect's conferences we have been exploring and discussing issues that are important to Riga. Now it's time to go outside and dive into the city for knowledge.

09:30 Arrival

*Each participant can register for participation in **two** tours – one in each cycle.*

10:00 The first part of the tour accompanied by architects and researchers' narration

1. Artis Zvirgzdiņš: A City Block of Riga. The Idea of Building a Complex Housing Block in the 20th Century Urban Planning of Riga
2. Aleksandrs Feļtins – Diversify Your Memories! Think about Pļavnieki!
3. Oskars Redbergs: 9 Conditions of Riga. Residential Buildings Replacing Former Fortifications in the Historic Centre of Riga in the 20th Century.

13:00 The second part of the tour accompanied by architects and researchers' narration

4. Evelīna Ozola: Experimental Prefabricated Buildings in Riga
5. Ivita Ose: The Economical Housing in Riga in the Early 20th Century
6. Inga Karlštrēma: A Wooden Dwelling in Riga at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries

15:00 mini-Conference and discussion

The Riga City Architect's Conference focuses on prospective development of an affordable and diverse housing programme for Riga highlighting discussions with several presentations by experts.

- **Susanne Bauer**, Senior Research Fellow, Representative of the Municipality of Vienna to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and Chair of Eurocities Working Group on Urban Development;
- **Edmunds Valantis**, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Economics;
- **Aivars Gontarevs**, Chairman of the Board of the house managing company "Rīgas Namu Pārvaldnieks".

The discussion is moderated by **Gvido Princis**, City Architect of Riga

We will discuss the current situation and things to be done in the future in order to develop a sustainable housing policy in Riga and in Latvia.

18:30 Final discussions and reception

Conference supported by

UNIVERSALLY AFFORDABLE & AVAILABLE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR RIGA

#home_for_everyone

Everyone has the right to a home and life in dignity, security and peace. International laws on human rights lay down the minimum standard of this right, and each Member State that has ratified them should make every effort to provide it.

Since the restoration of independence of the Republic of Latvia in 1991, housing as a basic need of human life has been explored in the discourse of architecture and politics only fragmentarily, mainly leaving solution of this issue to the free market. Meanwhile, the Portuguese Parliament adopted a law in July 2019 which has established a legal basis for treating housing as one of citizens' rights.

According to the laws and regulations on human rights, adopted by the UN¹², and the majority of states, assistance in provision of housing must be primarily provided to persons who are unable to exercise these rights themselves due to objective reasons (health, economic status etc.).

The right to housing includes a wider set of concepts, not limited to *dwelling* only; therefore, professional discussion has to focus not only on the minimum standard of housing, but also on the minimum standard of living space, including:

- 1) support schemes, affordability of housing to everyone who are unable to provide it themselves;
- 2) compliance of housing with decent standards of living;
- 3) sufficient accessibility of services and infrastructure around housing;
- 4) reasonable location of housing, access to the labour market, proper healthcare, education etc.

Consequently, the discussion about diverse housing in Riga, which is accessible to everyone, must be expanded to designate a much wider living space. This concept of space includes more than a place of residence and public open space around it. It also includes the environment around the dwelling, which ensures access to services and needs that allow an individual to function properly in the modern society.

#standard of accessibility, diversity and quality

Agreeing that housing in its broadest sense must be accessible to every member of society, it is time to expand the discussion. It is necessary to define various forms of accessibility, the extent of its diversity and the quality standard of housing in residential buildings, which we as a society are ready to promote by means of taxpayers' money.

Accessibility of housing must be viewed both from the economic point of view and in terms of its location in the city to eliminate physical obstacles to access to living space. As regards finances, according to the OECD Economic Survey on Latvia³ and a market survey conducted by the Ministry of Economics⁴, about 80% of households in Latvia cannot afford to rent housing that meets modern building standards and energy efficiency requirements because their income is insufficient. The location of the dwelling in the city must be assessed in the context of accessibility of public transport, labour market, education and health care services. The efforts of municipal authorities to reduce the proportion of private transport should not be disregarded, and the city should strive to approach the international goals in curbing of climate change. The issues of environmental accessibility for members of the public with reduced mobility and other limitations should not be neglected, including difficulties encountered

¹ UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted the General Comment No.4 in 1991.

² Article 25 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that every person has the right to housing.

³ The OECD Economic Survey on Latvia (2017) <http://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Latvia-2017-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

⁴ In the informative report "On the support for construction of rental housing in regions", prepared by the Ministry of Economics, it is estimated that almost 80% of households cannot afford the current rent payments for a 50 m² apartment and utility payments (450–530 €). It is assumed in calculations that housing expenses may not exceed 30% of the total household budget. <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40463859>

by elderly people and young parents in their daily movements. Accessibility must be provided in all market segments: rented housing, purchased housing and social housing.

An important aspect in renovation and improvement of the total available housing stock is preservation of **housing diversity** in terms of type and quality of the living space, and categories of price and rights of use. The selected market support mechanisms should promote emergence on the market of publicly as well as privately funded and developed living spaces.

Finally, during the discussion, it is necessary to define **the standard of housing and living environment in Riga** by assessing the quality, provision and accessibility of the existing stock. The standard must be a guideline, laying down the minimum requirements both for newly built living spaces and for works aimed at reconstruction and improvement of energy efficiency of the existing buildings.

It is high time the housing issue was solved. The end of service life of buildings constructed during the Soviet period (40–60 years) and the impressive proportion of these buildings (occupied by approx. 60% of inhabitants of Riga) set a clear time frame for solving this issue.

#a_step_towards_a_discussion

Since 2011, the Riga City Architect's Office has been addressing various issues related to the need for accessible and diverse housing in Riga. Over these years, the Office has organised several conferences and conducted studies, initiated discussions among experts of various levels, launched pilot projects, encouraged involvement of students and academicians in exploration of this topic, and has represented the municipality of Riga in various European housing-related initiatives.

This year, as part of drafting up *The Development Programme for 2021–2027*, the Riga City Architect's Office has been entrusted with a task of heading working groups of thematic planning for the programmes *Accessible and Diverse Housing* and *Urban Environment Promoting the Quality of Life* which are primarily aimed at finding ways how within the existing legislative framework to provide the inhabitants of Riga with a high-quality living space in their homes and outside them.

The Agency has also emphasised the necessity for the programme *Accessible and Diverse Housing in Riga*, and it has been approved. The programme should include the conclusions adopted in the final report of *The EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership⁵ (2016–2018)*, adapting the conclusions to the local context. The report emphasises the necessity to find a better regulatory framework at the level of EU institutions for activating a policy for accessible and diverse housing in Europe, especially in the new EU Member States, and to facilitate allocation of new sources of funding for fulfilment of this objective, and to promote exchange of good practice and experience among states and municipalities.

To start the work on an extended programme *Accessible and Diverse Housing in Riga*, we, working in the sector and decision-makers, have to think outside the box and find the possible solutions beyond the existing legislative framework. Probably, new solutions will require a new regulatory framework and a new approach to cross-sectoral cooperation. However, in order not to lose target and keep concentrating on the major challenges that Riga is facing, the Riga City Architect's Office will divide the discussion into the following thematic blocks:

- 1) renovation, improved energy efficiency, and quality of the existing housing stock;
- 2) building of new housing stock by using state, municipal and private resources;
- 3) establishment of new financial support mechanisms for revitalisation of housing stock;
- 4) creation of a modern standard for indoor spaces, accessibility of services and public open spaces, thus supporting the future living environment.

⁵ *The EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership commenced its work in 2015, aiming to find a better regulatory base, new sources of funding and strengthen knowledge exchange formats for ensuring accessible and diverse housing in the European Union. The Housing Partnership published its final report at the end of 2018, and its full version is available for reading online at <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/housing/housing-partnership-final-action-plan-0>*

A CITY BLOCK OF RIGA.

THE IDEA OF BUILDING A COMPLEX HOUSING BLOCK IN THE 20TH CENTURY URBAN PLANNING OF RIGA [ARTIS ZVIRGZDIŅŠ]

A city block is one of the basic elements of the urban structure. Although the modernist attitude towards this cornerstone of the traditional city was highly controversial or even contemptuous, today the concept of a city block is seen in a new light when we can talk about a paradigm shift in urban planning and remarkable urban revival processes all over the world.

In the context of housing, worth mentioning are the 20th century efforts to implement complex development projects in the city blocks of Riga. These are examples where the entire block or at least its significant part was built to a single design integrating a unified outdoor space within the block into it as well. (The first and most notable example of this development in Riga is Bergs Bazaar, which started in the late 19th century and continued step by step, but technically it is not a housing project.) In capitalism, in the centre of Riga, parallel to a street building, there was a second and often a third house located at the depth of the plot, with a courtyard serving to a purely utilitarian purpose.

Forburga Quarter and Ķergalvis House, built shortly before WWI, are the most successful early attempts to break with tradition by building residential houses with a more spacious area within the blocks. A few blocks of flats, inspired by Vienna in the late 1920s, are interesting and valuable elements of Riga's historic urban structure. Housing estates or large-scale residential areas with a completely different type and scale of blocks (superblocks) formed by freestanding standard buildings appeared in Riga in the post-war modernist period. In the public open space of these estates there is no distinction between the outside and the inside of the block, no subtle distinction between public, semi-public and private spaces which characterises traditional city blocks. During the late period of modernism and postmodernism – in the late 1970s and 1980s – efforts were made in Latvian architecture to return to the basic values of urbanism, including the rehabilitation of a traditional city block. Thus, there are buildings of Series 103 grouped or inserted into city blocks, as well as several special projects in the centre of Riga and other towns and cities.

During the tour, you could see several examples of the city blocks of different periods.

Notes: _____



Artis Zvirgzdiņš

Artis has a master's degree in architecture from Riga Technical University. He has worked in the architectural offices *Sīlis, Zābers un Kļava* and *Sarma & Norde*. Since 2005, he has been the editor of the architectural platform *A4D*. He has published more than 200 analytical and critical articles on architecture and urban development on *A4D* platform, in the magazine *Latvijas Architektūra*, and in various other editions. He has taken part in research, organisation of exhibitions, workshops and architectural design competitions; he has presented lectures and reports on architecture, urban planning and public open space in universities, conferences and other events.

DIVERSIFY YOUR MEMORIES! THINK ABOUT PĻAVNIEKI [ALEKSANDRS FEĻTINS]

Architecturally, the housing estate *Pļavnieki-2* is one of the most interesting examples of large-scale housing estates in Riga. Its architecture is multi-layered: at the level of articulated forms and structures of the estate, building ensembles and groups of buildings. Nevertheless, this place was stigmatised, various social problems emerged in the 1990s, and its original architecture became dysfunctional in the modern context. In addition, housing estates are often referred to in the plural as absolutely homogeneous, indistinguishable areas in Riga and everywhere else in Europe. The purpose of the tour is to discover the architectural diversity of Pļavnieki and try to revalorise its urban planning values.

We will begin our tour inside the estate, on the playground in Jasmuižas iela, then we will walk around *Pļavnieki-2*, through its various centres and other places, enter *Pļavnieki-1*, and then head back to the starting point. Our starting point is an entrance to a tower block to reproduce a daily routine of an ordinary inhabitant and his or her experience of the housing estate. During the tour, we will look at the variations of the architectural composition where open streets intermingle with closed courtyards. Finally, we will have a closer look at a gradual evolution of the public space, following an imaginary arrow leading “outside” from each building.

Notes: _____

Aleksandrs Feļtins

An urban planner and architect who has graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning of Riga Technical University and Delft University of Technology with a master’s degree in urbanism. After graduation he worked at the Riga City Architect’s Office. Currently, Aleksandrs is a self-employed expert in urban planning and architecture. His research and professional interests focus on post-war residential blocks or housing estates, particularly on their sustainable transformation, considering existing values and future challenges.



9 CONDITIONS OF RIGA. RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS REPLACING FORMER FORTIFICATIONS IN THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF RIGA IN THE 20TH CENTURY [OSKARS REDBERGS]

We will walk around to see various residential blocks built during the 20th century. We will walk along Pulkveža Brieža, Andreja Pumpura, Elizabetes, Rūpniecības, Vīlandes, Ausekļa and other streets to see different types of residential buildings constructed as part of private, municipal and state-initiated housing development programmes.

We will look at different types of residential buildings, i.e. those that combine the functions of a mansion and an apartment house. We will look at different types of apartment houses in city blocks of varying density.

We will argue whether and why the typology of Riga's apartment houses can be successfully adapted to the requirements of modern urban life. We will talk about ensuring functional and social diversity in multifunctional housing estates both historically and today. We will look at the history of construction of residential and apartment buildings and the factors influencing it. We will analyse the construction process of residential and apartment houses in different periods to talk about successful organisational and partnership models involving architects, landlords, tenants, creditors and municipal authorities.

In conclusion, we will look at the way how these examples could influence sustainability and future development of the city.

Notes: _____



Oskars Redbergs

Oskars Redbergs is an architect, educational innovator and curator. His main area of research is the analysis of transformation of post-Soviet/post-democratic cities. He holds a master's degree in architecture from Riga Technical University and a master's degree in architecture from the Academy of Art (Städelschule) in Frankfurt am Main. In 2010, he founded and until 2015 managed the Riga New School of Architecture at RISEBA University. From 2013 to 2015 he was a curator and managing director of the travelling exhibition *9 Conditions of Riga. Regeneration and Transformation of the City Urban Environment and Architecture* as part of the European Culture Days of the ECB. In 2018, having done outstanding work, he received a PhD in architecture from the Brandenburg University of Technology, in UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Preservation Programme for his research *A World Heritage Site. Evaluation of Transformation Projects of Historic Urban Structure and Architecture Implemented in the Territory of the Historic Centre of Riga since 1997*.

EXPERIMENTAL PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS IN RIGA [EVELĪNA OZOLA]

In the late 1950s, with the spread of construction of prefabricated buildings in the USSR, there was a hope that in Latvia they could be built to the designs by local architects. In order to get acquainted with the layout principles and production process of the new type of buildings, the Riga Factory of Reinforced Concrete Products for Construction of Prefabricated Buildings organised designing and construction of several experimental houses.

The first experimental building was constructed to the design by architects Modris Ģelzis and Dzintars Driba. It had a convenient layout of flats, meticulously elaborated exterior finish and an elegant staircase solution. Despite architectural and structural advantages of this and several other experimental buildings that followed, the designs developed by Latvian architects were not mass-produced.

During the tour we will see three experimental residential buildings constructed in Iļģuciems, near Saulgožu iela.

Notes: _____

Evelīna Ozola

Evelīna is an architect and urbanist with a master's degree from Delft University of Technology. She explores and writes about the urban environment. She was one of the authors of the Latvian pavilion *Together and Separately* at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition of Venice Biennale. She has studied how political, economic and social conditions influenced the development of architecture of apartment buildings in Latvia in the last century and has published a book on this topic titled *Together and Separately*.



THE ECONOMICAL HOUSING IN RIGA IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

[IVITA OSE]

The luxurious, richly decorated apartment houses located in the city centre still remind us of the period when Riga flourished as an industrial city on the outskirts of the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. However, most of the city dwellers then lived in tiny, modestly furnished suburban flats. People from the country moved to the city to find work and rented simple dwellings without amenities. The most popular type of dwelling was a bedsitter with a kitchen.

The most adventurous and enterprising peasants received education and learnt skills they needed to become bricklayers, painters, potters, builders and thrive in the city. The most diligent and thrifty ones became landlords themselves.

Mārtiņš Sprosts, a farmer's son from Tukums area, learnt the trades of a builder and accountant and worked as a contractor in Riga and Petersburg. Shortly before WWI, he built for himself a wooden two-storey house and a five-storey brick house at Dārtas iela 35 (now E. Smiļģa iela) and passed them on to his family. Mostly there are single-room flats in those houses, and only the owner's flat boasts three rooms. The contractor with the accountant's skills knew what types of flats were in demand and most profitable.

Changes in politics and economics as well as in the society after WWI stimulated demand for affordable but comfortable and hygienic housing. Tiny cramped flats were seen as a social problem.

Construction of municipal houses for rent became popular in Europe, and this approach was also tried in Riga. The board of the city of Riga who sympathised with social democrats was looking towards the "Red Vienna". City officials were sent on business trips to find out how the housing crisis was tackled in other countries. Inspired by *Karl-Marx Hof*, *Friedrich-Engels Hof*, *Bebelhof* and other municipal rental houses in Vienna named after other social democrats and Marxist philosophers, construction of municipal blocks of flats and row houses began in Riga during the interwar period. Until WWII, altogether seven such projects were implemented. The demand for flats in rental houses was huge in the city. The establishment of housing cooperatives was also encouraged. However, these were mostly owners of newly-built private houses who made the biggest contribution to the replenishment of Riga's housing stock in the interwar period.



Ivita Ose

Ivita Ose studied at the University of Latvia, Faculty of History and Philosophy that she graduated in 2009 with a master's degree in history. Her thesis dealt with the study of modern architecture of the inter-war period of the previous century in Latvia, linking it with socio-political and economic aspects. She has given lectures on architecture of residential buildings at events organised by the Latvian National Museum of Art, the Riga City Architect's Office and the Latvian Association of Architects. She has published several articles on history of architecture and interior in the magazine *Latvijas Arhitektūra*, including a series of articles entitled *Aesthetics of Latvian Housing 1920–1940*.

She manages family-owned real estate and runs a home-based design and interior product company.

A WOODEN DWELLING IN RIGA AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH & 20TH CENTURIES [INGA KARLŠTRĒMA]

We will walk along Kalnciema and Baložu Streets in the neighbourhood of Pārdaugava, in Riga. We will talk about the types of wooden dwellings typical of Riga suburbs at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when most of the inhabitants of Riga lived in wooden houses. We will see a typical worker's home in the so-called Kalnciems Quarter at Melnsila iela 10b where the centre of wooden architecture Kalnciems Quarter is located today. We will also talk about a typical middle-class home in wooded apartment houses lining Kalnciema and Baložu Streets. We will discuss not only the housing standards of that time, but also the ideals and the architecture of wooden houses of that period in the broader context of urban development of Riga. We will find out how the number of one-storey and two-storey wooden houses built at that time changed and what the proportion of wooden houses was as compared to brick buildings. We will walk as far as Āgenskalna iela where the inter-war residential buildings start prevailing in the cityscape, to briefly discuss the circumstances that made wood as a building material gradually lose its significance in Riga's architecture after WWI. We will also stop at the Āgenskalns Water Tower that significantly influenced residential development trends in Pārdaugava after 1910.

Those who cannot join the tour on 14 November, may use the audio guide created by Inga Karlštrēma together with the centre of wooden architecture to learn about the construction history and architecture of buildings in Kalnciems Quarter. Everyone who is interested can ask for the audio guide which is available in Latvian and English every day in the wine shop of Kalnciems Quarter.

Notes: _____

Inga Karlštrēma

Inga Karlštrēma is a historian of art and architecture, a PhD student at the Latvian Academy of Art, a depositary of art collections at the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation. She studies the history of industrial architecture of Riga what has been the subject of more than 10 scientific articles she has written. Inga is an author of more than 20 entries in the National Encyclopaedia on history of architecture. Studying the history of urban development of Riga in the late 19th century and early 20th century, she has focused on the wooden architecture of this period and created an audio guide on the construction history of Kalnciems Quarter.



RIGA CITY ARCHITECT'S OFFICE

The Riga City Architect's Office is a municipal agency established in 2005, its aim is to promote the quality of the architectural process and development of a balanced urban environment, while facilitating the competitiveness of Riga as a metropolis of the region.

The main tasks of the Agency are:

- to provide professional support to architectural projects in order to facilitate the development of a high-quality urban area in the administrative territory of the municipality;
- to encourage the cooperation between the parties involved in the architectural process;
- to promote achievements in Riga's architecture and raise public awareness of architecture;
- to consult on drafting of laws and regulations and observation of principles of architectural quality in urban planning;
- to set requirements for local and detailed plans and construction ideas in the municipality; to define the need for analytical projects and studies in the territory of the city of Riga.

In the recent years, the Agency has prioritised the following issues:

- affordable and diverse housing in Riga, and complex development of apartment buildings;
- efficient architectural design competitions and participation of citizens in urban processes;
- modern mobility based on the use of public transport;
- compliance with the requirements of sustainability and universal design in the sector;
- development of active and former industrial territories commensurate with the interests of city dwellers.

What the Agency does

Although being a small-sized professional institution, together with its partners the Riga City Architect's Office is able to address important issues related to the improvement of the urban environment and living space, and keep these issues on the agenda of politicians, practitioners and wider society until their resolution.

The Riga City Architect's Office is a **mediator** between those involved in architecture and urban development: colleagues in the municipality and professionals of the sector (urban planners, architects, engineers, economists, lawyers and others), as well as clients, owners and users of buildings. The Agency strives to balance the interests of stakeholders and city dwellers, preserve architectural qualities, respect the principles of universal design and sustainability, and enhance the willingness of society to express its views and participate in the urban development process.

The Agency has its own **professional advisory body, i.e. the Riga City Architect's Collegium**, which is made up of representatives of the Agency's partners – NGOs, state institutions and structural units of the Riga City Council.

In order to evaluate architects' work in the city, highlight and popularise achievements in architecture, thus contributing to the development of the urban environment, every year the Riga City Architect's Office awards ***The Annual Prize in the Architecture of Riga***. The travelling exhibition of the displayed works can be seen in the libraries and other public places in Riga.

Every year, the Agency hosts an international **conference of the Riga City Architect's Office** (formerly known as Reinhold Schmaeling's conference, thus named after the former City Architect of Riga of Baltic German descent) in order to have a permanent and open discussion about the urban development processes relevant for the sector and society.