

New build in Westend - local borough authority and Deutsche Wohnen sign an urban development contract

Berlin, 13 March 2018. It is one of the largest new build projects for rental housing in the borough of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. Approximately 580 new flats will be built in Westend close to the Olympic Stadium, the Waldbühne (a large, open-air amphitheatre) and Grunewald (a nearby woodland area) as a replacement for around 200 existing flats. Today, Oliver Schruoffenegger, the borough councillor with responsibility for building and housing in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, and Deutsche Wohnen, as the developer, signed the urban development contract that is needed for this project at a press conference. Following an intensive process of consultation between all parties involved, this means that an important part of the planning process has been successfully completed.

The urban development contract

An urban development contract sets out what is most important when a site plan is drawn up and it stipulates the obligations both of the local authority and the private developer in the planning and implementation of a building project. In the case of the agreement concerning this new build project in Westend, the treatment of tenants was a particular priority. Accordingly, specific and reliable general conditions have been established to ensure that existing tenants can stay on the estate. A further core element of this agreement results from the requirements of the Berlin model of “cooperative building land development”. These requirements are met in the contract and include rent and occupancy restrictions in accordance with the stipulations of the federal state of Berlin regarding subsidies for housebuilding. In addition, Deutsche Wohnen is going to build a nursery school and develop the infrastructure of the new neighbourhood.

As Manuela Damianakis, Head of Corporate Communication at Deutsche Wohnen, explains, “The signing of this urban development contract is a major step towards building this new estate in Westend. As the developer, Deutsche Wohnen can now forge ahead with the planning work. At the same time, our existing tenants have a reliable basis for being able to stay on the estate. We would like to thank everyone involved and, in particular, our tenants for their patience. We hope that, together with the local borough and all stakeholders, we can continue the planning process on this sound basis of trust and can quickly make a start to the building work.”

For Oliver Schruoffenegger, the councillor with responsibility for building and housing in the borough of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, the treatment of existing tenants was a matter of particular importance: “In the end, a compromise regarding the treatment of the existing tenants has been found with Deutsche Wohnen in Westend. The compromise ensures that, if interested, the tenants can remain on the estate at rents that are affordable to them individually.”

The new neighbourhood

In Westend, to the north of Heerstraße and near Dickensweg, Deutsche Wohnen is planning to build an integrated residential estate with approximately 580 rental flats, an additional nursery school and commercial units. The new estate will be built on the footprint of the existing one, and will retain its ensemble character and the trees, which are worthy of protection. Particular importance is being attached to sustainability in both the planning and construction of the estate. To this end, Deutsche Wohnen has asked the German Council for Sustainable Building [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen - DGNB] to monitor the project from the very outset. In 2016, the DGNB gave the

project its highest award, the DGNB Platinum Certificate. This was one of the first rental housing projects to receive this award in Germany.

The old estate was basic in design and was built in the 1950s to provide temporary accommodation to members of the British armed forces. It has been owned by Deutsche Wohnen since 2007. Because of the condition of the buildings and their low levels of energy efficiency, it was decided to build new. For this purpose, a two-stage architectural competition was launched which the Senate Department for Urban Development in Berlin together with local politicians and administrators took part in. In the end, the design of the internationally renowned Danish architects' office tegnestuen vandkunsten, which is especially well-known for its pioneering designs for residential estates, was selected.

Focus on existing tenants

The procedure so far has focused not only on construction planning but also on communication with the tenants. For example, an on-site office was set up for the existing tenants with regular opening times and the same contact person throughout. Information about the current status of the project was provided at several events, and the tenants were able to contribute their ideas concerning the layout of the new flats. In addition, the tenants in Westend were offered a tour of Deutsche Wohnen's completed new build project in Potsdam-Babelsberg so that they could see the quality and style of the building work carried out by the company. About 60 tenants took advantage of this offer. The tenants will be regularly informed about the progress of the project in future as well.

It should also be added that the various construction phases of the project are being planned in such a way that the existing tenants can move into their new flats with the minimum of delay. Finally, the existing tenants will be given preferential treatment when it comes to allocating flats or to renting out parking spaces.

Planning milestones

Now that the urban development contract has been signed, the next steps in the development plan procedure will follow. As far as Deutsche Wohnen can tell at the moment, construction work will start in 2019.

Deutsche Wohnen

Deutsche Wohnen is one of the leading publicly listed property companies in Germany and Europe with a business focus on managing and developing its portfolio, which consists mainly of residential properties. As at 30 September 2017, the portfolio comprised approximately 163,500 units in total, of which 161,000 were residential and 2,500 commercial. The company is listed in the Deutsche Börse's MDAX and is also included in the leading indices EPRA/NAREIT, STOXX® Europe 600 and GPR 250.