



 UrbanMetaMapping

UrbanMetaMapping Semester Talks: Winter Term 2022/23 via zoom, 12.00 - 13.00 (CEST/CET)

Registration via: talks.urbanmetamapping@uni-bamberg.de



September 21:

Birgit Knauer (Vienna University of Technology)

Healthy, beautiful Vienna. City, cityscape and urban transformation in the interwar period

In the 1930s, various measures were taken to adapt the old towns to the increasing traffic, to “loosen up” their densely built-up areas and to replace old, “unhygienic” buildings. Corresponding ideas and methods determined the debates and strategies taken by urban planners and heritage preservationists. Vienna was affected by this renewal process. From 1934 onwards, the city government provided funds to revive the construction industry after the Great Depression and to push on with the renewal of the city.

From 1934 onwards, supported by financial means of the city government, many “outdated” and “traffic-obstructing” buildings which did not meet the requirements of the time were destroyed. In its place, new buildings with more comfortable apartments for the middle class were erected, which also fitted better into the city’s overall plan and thus did not hinder traffic. In addition, subsidies made it easier for homeowners to renovate, among other things, the facades of their houses. As a result, on many old buildings ornaments and structural elements from the late 19th century - which were then considered “worthless” and “tasteless” - were removed. In addition to improving housing conditions and traffic flow, the aforementioned measures were also intended to improve the cityscape. In this lecture Birgit Knauer presents the results of her doctoral thesis, which was published in 2022 by Birkhäuser Verlag (“Gesunde Stadt. Die Assanierung der Stadt Wien 1934-1938”), and an important chapter of the architectural and urban history of Vienna that has thus far been neglected. She examined the “healing” of the city in the years of the so-called “Ständestaat” (1934 – 1938), its dimensions, and the parallel discussions held by experts and the public protesting against the ongoing demolition of historic buildings.



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