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Source: *Assemblage*, No. 2 (Feb., 1987), pp. 46-61

Published by: [The MIT Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171089>

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Peter Testa

Unity of the Discontinuous: Alvaro Siza's Berlin Works

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Current architectural production is moving in many directions at once. With the demise of the positivist mythology of the modern movement and its doctrinal belief in progress and functionalism, architecture has become increasingly uncertain of its grounding. While the conditions of contemporary architectural production resist easy summary, two terminal positions stand out: a frenetic, rootless eclecticism and recurrent appeals to order and origins. The very existence of such opposing positions points to a basic dichotomy underlying cultural production in our time: Architecture demands criteria — a grounding in disciplinary principles and social practices. Yet the contradictions of modern society and our self-conscious historical perspective do not allow for the certainty of universal principles and stable normative frameworks.

The work of Alvaro Siza as it has evolved over the past ten years evidences a particularly acute perception of these contemporary concerns. What is decisive about Siza's architecture is the precision with which he situates his works within the continuity of the discipline of architecture — interpenetrated with the contingencies and circumstantialities within which his works are produced and used. Siza probes for limits while refusing to accept them as absolute. His effort is to bring diverse and conflicting phenomena together, while still driving toward the fundamental. What is at stake in any work by Siza is less a theological quest for origins than the revelation of a complex circumstantial reality — of a site, of a discipline, of a history.

1 (frontispiece). Alvaro Siza, project for Frankelufer block, Kreuzberg district, Berlin, 1979, sketch



It is hardly surprising that the multifaceted nature of Siza's architecture comes most sharply into focus in his works for Berlin, a city in which successive stages of construction and destruction are inscribed. Drawing upon a substantial body of earlier work and anticipating more recent production, Siza's proposal for the restructuring of three contiguous urban blocks in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, commissioned in 1979 by the International Building Exhibition (IBA), provides a physical model through which we may explore in some detail the issues and ideas involved in his research. As in previous works for the cities of Oporto and Evora and in current projects for Venice and the Hague, Siza, in Kreuzberg, assumes existing forms and the objective reality of the site as the point of departure for new proposals. Characterized by a tension between the form of individual buildings and the form of the city, between a fragmentary intervention of isolated pieces and the systematic recuperation of a preexisting fabric, Siza's proposals break through the boundaries of a given spatial organization or conceptual system to reassert and expand certain principles of architecture in a particular time and place.

Berlin: Conventions and Contradictions

The IBA approaches the reconstruction of the city on a block-by-block basis. Its objectives have developed in the wake of previous urban renewal efforts that have met with strong opposition from local residents. In Kreuzberg the authorities established a program that, in the words of one IBA official, sought to "work with and not against the urban form," in an effort to demonstrate that "urban quality is the outcome of an integration with an existing urban fabric."¹ This is a program that reflects the contradictions of a system that has removed itself from the possibility of a global restructuring of the urban environment, but remains committed to dealing with subsystems and fragments of the city. It is a program based on a critique of postwar reconstruction projects, and implicitly suggests the renewal of a preexisting order in which it places positive value. This orientation is reflected in the majority of projects commissioned by the IBA, in which we find the repetition of former morphological patterns and, in particular, the consolidation of the conventional perimeter block.

Siza's proposals have met with substantial resistance from various sectors. Rejecting both a sham reconstruction and an autonomous self-sufficiency, his proposals pursue the contradictions present in the IBA's reconstruction program and in a city without a single or logical resolution. Constituted through a plurality of contradictory events, Siza's Berlin works break down barriers and hierarchical taboos — revealing many of the standard terms of the debate on architecture in the contemporary city as reductive and counterfeit.

Siza's proposals find support in an analysis of Kreuzberg, but also develop in response to a more global understanding of the historically determined condition of Berlin. Of Berlin, Siza has observed:

Berlin is a limited city. It was destroyed by the war, as so many other cities, but was not systematically reconstructed. The separation, the wall, made an urban reconstruction plan impossible. It is the non-realization of this plan that is largely responsible for the fragmentation [of the city].

In Berlin there was neither systematic destruction nor systematic reconstruction. The duality old city / new city does not exist in Berlin. Here we are obliged to slip our projects between new fragments and old fragments which never complement each other, which may never be reduced to a unity, but which exist as parallel realities.²

In keeping with these observations, Siza summarized the intentions of his proposals for Kreuzberg in the following manner:

In Berlin they wanted to recuperate a block of Kreuzberg to house the inhabitants. It was necessary to take into account the layout, analyze the reasons for the fragmentation of this sector. I sought to assemble these fragments without hiding their reality, and to bring them closer to other fragments. It was necessary to use a system here. . . . I chose that of the nineteenth century.³

The nineteenth-century system of which Siza speaks is that set of conventions that established a common set of references for the speculative developers who built Kreuzberg. Through this system the large blocks of the district were subdivided into more or less regular lots on which were constructed a common residential building type of five to six stories — forming a continuous built perimeter with commercial establishments incorporated into the ground

3. Kreuzberg district, circa 1920, aerial view



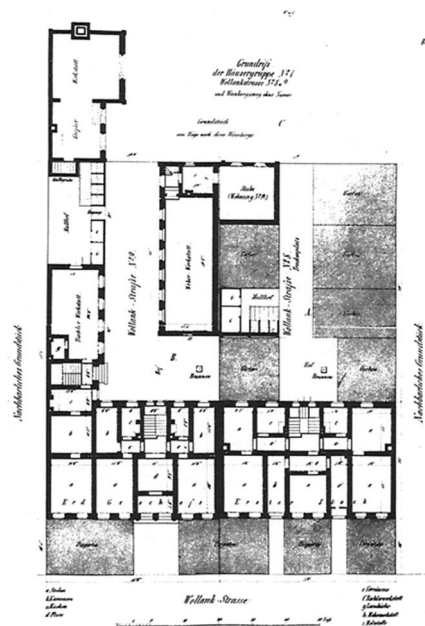
2. Kreuzberg district, Berlin, 1978, sketch



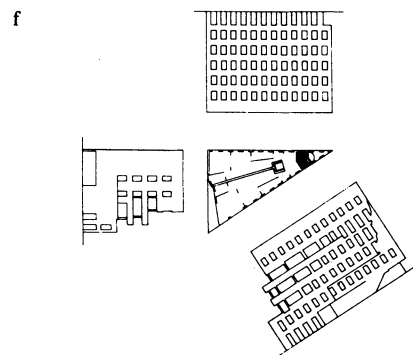
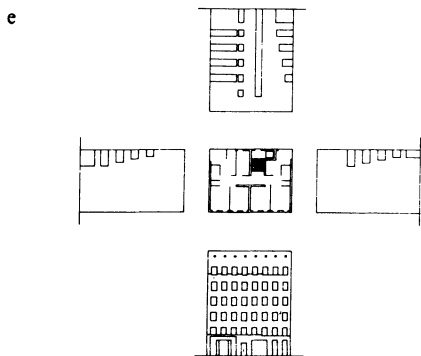
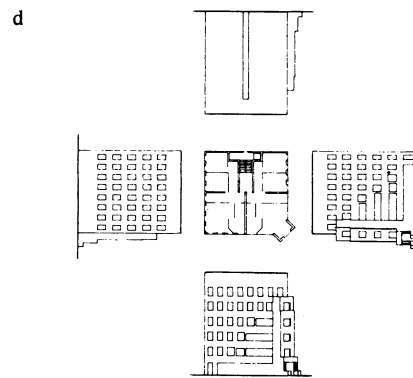
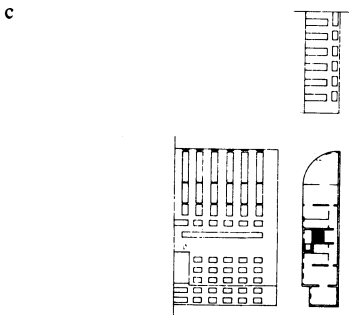
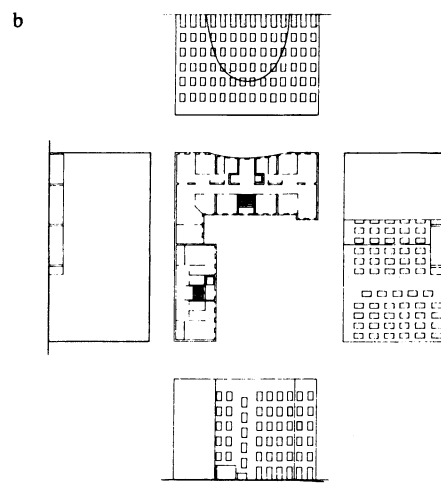
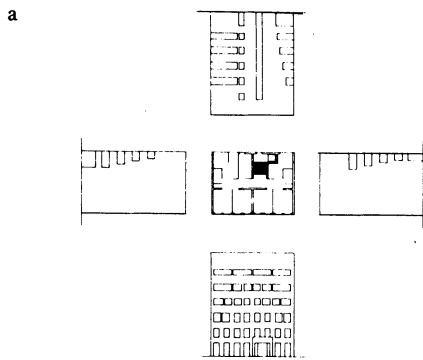
4. Kreuzberg district, nineteenth-century apartment block



5. Kreuzberg district, Kottbusserstrasse, corner building



6. Berlin apartment house, 1849, ground-floor plan



7. Alvaro Siza, project for Frankelufer block, Kreuzberg district, Berlin, 1979, typical floor plans and elevations



8. Frankelufer block, circa 1978, aerial view



9. Frankelufer block, view showing opening

floor along major thoroughfares.⁴ Extensions carried out over time, perpendicular to the street, have formed the typical L-shaped buildings and interior courtyards of this area.

Siza's insertions combine to form a system derived in part from the typological and morphological characteristics of the nineteenth century, in some cases modifying the existing typology only slightly. Siza's buildings are all composed of simple volumes, with street level porticos and, in most cases, a tripartite division of the façade; they continue the conventional use of repetitive window openings; and, in some cases, the plan layout with its U-shaped stairs accessing two units per floor closely parallels that of the traditional buildings of Kreuzberg. Siza also redeploys the pattern of corner buildings developed as special urban episodes.

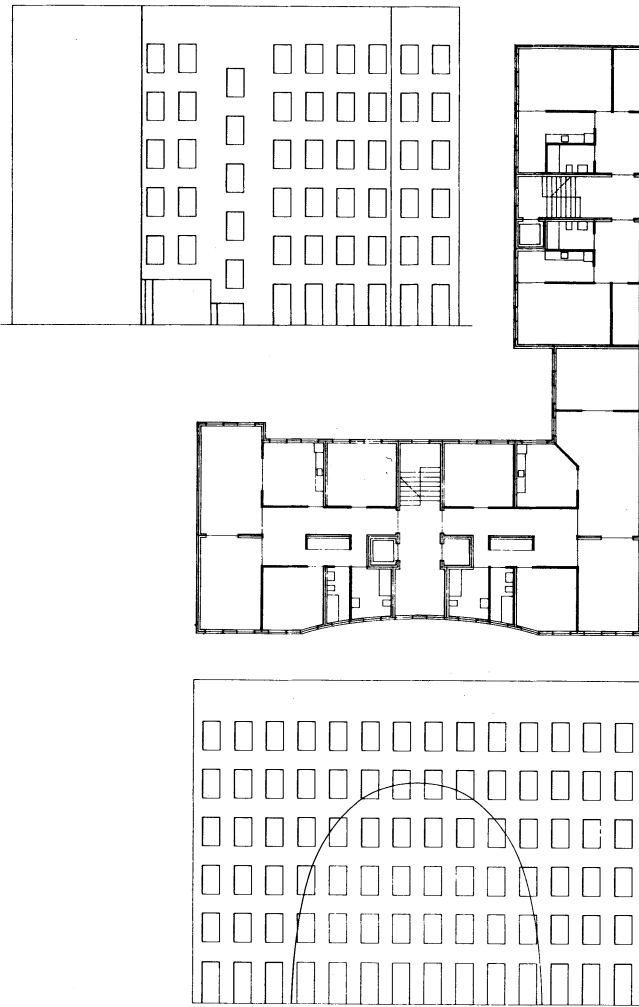
Siza adopts many of the nineteenth-century conventions, yet subtle transcriptions and significant departures can be detected. He does not employ a neoclassical architectural vocabulary; the formative devices and typological elements found in Kreuzberg are abstracted. Transformations in the planning of the buildings include the elimination of the typical half-story ground floor and half basement, which is replaced by ground-floor porticos, and the combination of closed and open room arrangements. But the most significant departure is enacted on the level of the relation of the building to the block and the reinterpretation of the spatial structure of the block itself.

Frankelufer: Two Worlds

In the block of Frankelufer we may identify the basic elements of Siza's strategy. In this large block marked by a fairly continuous perimeter, Siza's interventions involve the addition of new buildings and the partial structuring of public space within the interior of the block. Grouping together the four buildings proposed for this block, we find not only that each refers to its particular situation, but that a line of reference exists from one to another: each one in some way implies the other. Moreover, the outlines of former, now destroyed structures and traces of old property lines, walls, and fences are superimposed with existing constructions, together forming a network of references and



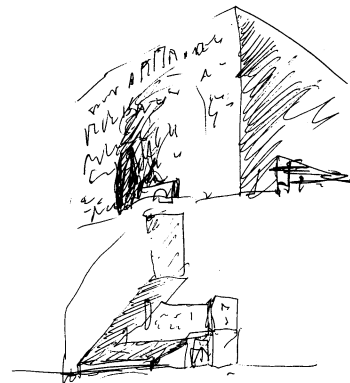
10. Alvaro Siza, project for Frankelufer block, 1979, ground-floor plan and street elevation



11. Siza, project for Frankfurter block, building B, 1979, street elevation, plan of typical floor, and inner block elevation

alignments that suggest themselves as a contextual matrix within which Siza locates his constructions.

Siza recovers the depth of this large block for use as dwelling with his isolated, fragmented buildings set back from the street. Adjacency, parallelism, and complementarity with former and existing structures are the means by which Siza seeks to reconstruct dismembered buildings and renew a disfigured district. If his interventions are developed out of an understanding of the enduring and transposable nature of typological schemes, they are not moribund types but actual buildings, complete organisms with a life of their own, resonate with an urban community. Aligned and askew, Siza's insertions discretely introduce a geomet-



12. Siza, project for Frankfurter block, 1979, sketches

rical order that begins to give structure to the interior of the block while simultaneously relating the interior spaces to the street space and the city. Joining here, separating there, Siza juxtaposes two conflicting urban orders: that of the city as a continuous fabric and that of a heterogeneous collection of object-buildings.

The large, L-shaped building B focuses many of the issues involved in Siza's project for Kreuzberg. We may read this structure either as a reversal of the typical Kreuzberg configuration, now facing into the block and set askew to the street, or as a fragment of a former courtyard structure. Siza's construction is detached from, yet congruent with, the existing street-front building. The proposed building responds to its double orientation with through access on the

street side and a portico that extends around the building in an interplay between front and back. The rear façade presents another front to the interior of the block with a regular façade that is excavated to form a shallow parabolic niche. The classical hemicyclical niche is employed here to center the new construction within the heterogeneous order of the block's interior.

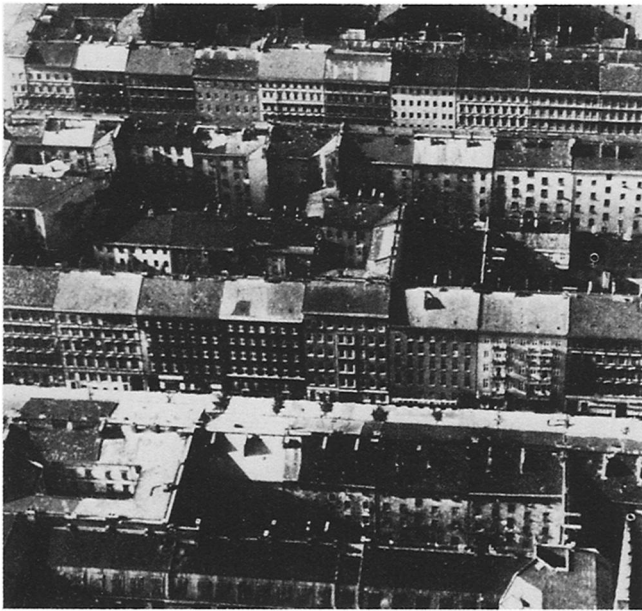
In this construction the relation between a public front and a private back may appear to be inverted, yet on closer examination, it is apparent that the street side remains dominant in this and all of Siza's proposals. However, the interplay between front and back, street and block acknowledges that inner block constructions today exist as fragments cut off from a continuous system of enclosed courtyards. Large blocks such as Frankelufer demand a reinterpretation of a once unified and coherent system. Siza accepts the contemporary ambiguous condition and develops a dual reading in his buildings. This may be further illustrated by considering the plan organization. The wing perpendicular to the existing street-front building is organized in a traditional way, with its rooms facing into the "courtyard," its corner *Berliner Zimmer*,⁵ and its blind party wall allowing for later contiguous development. The adjacent wing may, however, be read in two ways. The street side is still dominant in terms of the location of public rooms, yet the living spaces of the dwelling units may be oriented either toward the street side or toward the block side. This two-sidedness is most apparent in the end unit where living and dining spaces run through the depth of the building.

In Siza's building for Frankelufer a conventional form is transformed through a shift in the relations of building to block, a shift that consciously detaches this form from the domain of strict tradition. In this simple and carefully calculated gesture, Siza inserts one world into another, establishing a dialogue that resonates throughout this work.

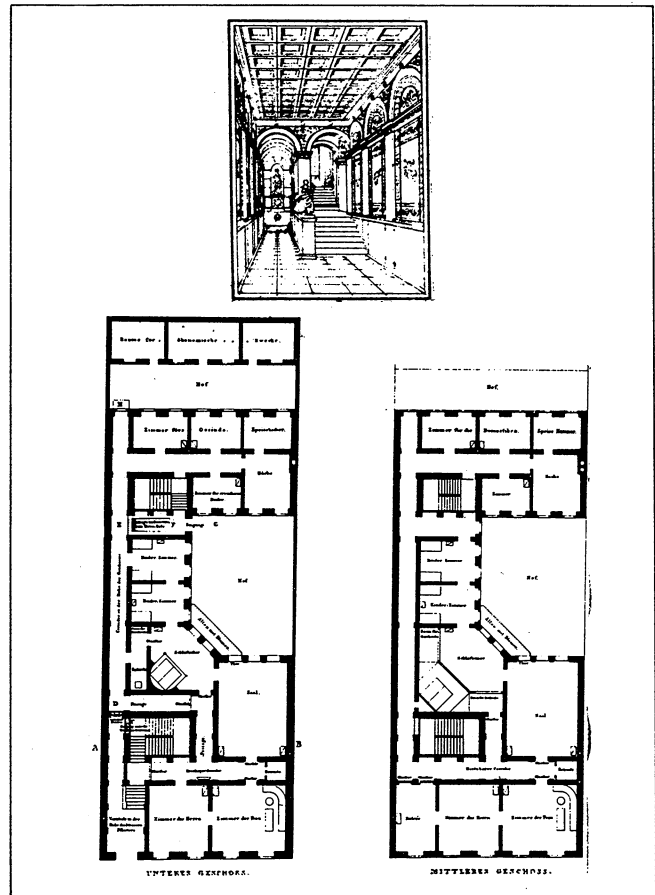
The interventions Siza proposed for this block do not create a new condition but simply interpret a latent possibility within the urban structure of Berlin. The devastation of the war wrenched open the block structure. The resulting fragmentation has combined with postwar speculation, changes in the urban economy, and demography to trans-

form both the use and the meaning of the interior spaces of the city. The resulting porous quality is today typical of Berlin streets where structures situated within the block have a changed status, now participating in the street life. In these spaces we find the prewar use of gardens, out-buildings, workshops, and tenements combined with a new tendency to build in the interior of the largest blocks. In proposing to build residential structures in the block of Frankelufer, both on the perimeter and within the block, Siza is not inventing a new pattern of occupation but consolidating and giving form to a preexisting order and an emergent informal one.⁶ What is exceptional in Siza's proposals is that he maintains voids in the perimeter and appears to elevate the everyday life world of the interior of the block back to its public status in the city. In so doing Siza questions our notions of propriety, inherited from the nineteenth century, and the articulations between society and the space it inhabits. This is not effected by imposing an abstract order on the existing situation but by acknowledging a reality of use, which Siza seeks to adopt positively. In the block of Frankelufer, Siza does not simply disregard nineteenth-century urban conventions, but insists on the copresence of another less defined and informal set of relations. In this process we might suggest that Siza is seeking to rebuild the nineteenth-century system of Kreuzberg by bringing older conventions into alignment with changed social and material conditions.

The ideological implications of this operation are complex and highly charged because a certain social stigma is attached to the interior of the blocks of Kreuzberg. The street side traditionally has been assumed to be a privileged domain, while the back and interior courtyards and spaces have been associated with tenements, servants' quarters, workshops, and small industrial enterprises. The *Bürgerhäuser* (bourgeois house type) designed around 1825 by Schinkel provides a simple illustration of some of the social biases associated with this system. Schinkel's house type follows a basic pattern common to the urban houses in wealthier districts, which, in contrast to the Berlin apartment houses, did not provide through access to the yard or interior of the block. Schinkel's design is insular and disallows the use of the site for production facilities. In addition, the kitchen and servants' quarters are located at

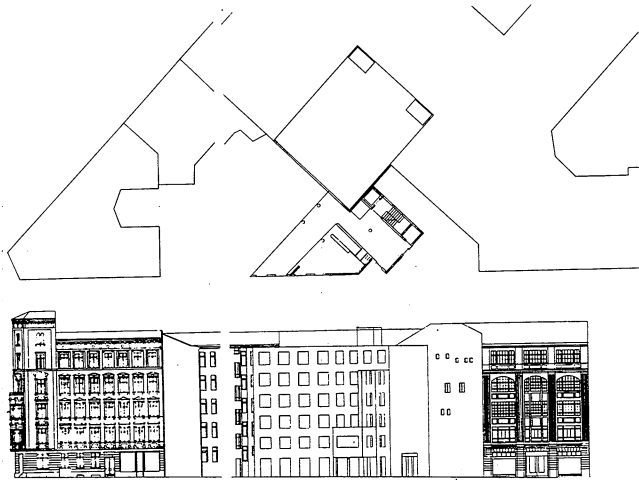


13. Kreuzberg district, Berlin, circa 1920, aerial view



14. Karl Friedrich Schinkel, project for bourgeois house type, 1825, interior perspective, ground-floor plan, and upper-floor plan

15. Alvaro Siza, project for a residential building on Kottbuserstrasse, 1980, ground-floor plan and street elevation



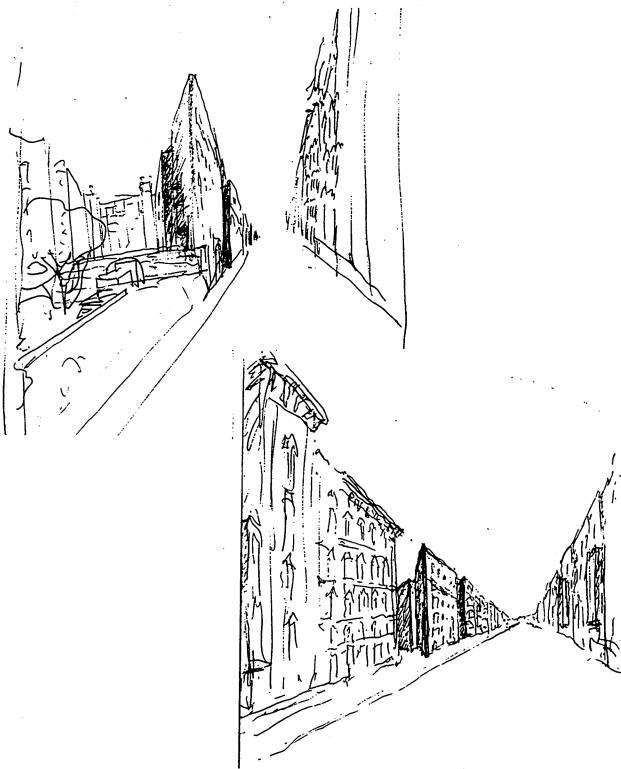
the extremity of the building. Such social distinctions are programmatic in almost every aspect of the spatial organization, interior layout, and vertical distribution in the buildings of the district. In adopting and transgressing the “nineteenth-century system” Siza is engaging not simply in formal manipulations but in the structuring and restructuring of social space, its use, and its meaning.

Kottbuserstrasse: Siza’s Modernism

If an analysis of the block of Frankelufer allows us to establish the major characteristics of Siza’s proposals at the urban level, the small residential building on Kottbuserstrasse suggests the manner in which these intentions are synthesized into a single building. Along the street front of Kottbuserstrasse a highly irregular void has developed, exposing the backs and sides of existing buildings to the street. Siza suggests the continuity of the street wall by inserting a planar façade more or less in the center of the open lot. The body of the building, however, develops by interaction with the adjacent buildings, assuming their alignments even as it asserts itself volumetrically as a free-standing object. Siza’s building appears to be constructed and deconstructed through a dialogue that sustains itself on the tension between the interior and exterior of the block and between the individual building and the city. Here, as in all of Siza’s interventions in Kreuzberg, complementary and conflicting aspects of urban space, building, and dwelling are set in motion. From this perspective, the formal articulation of each building reflects a search for an architectural figure capable of holding these conflicting worlds together.

While multiple and opposed conceptions of the city make up the space of Kreuzberg today, we might also understand Siza’s operations in terms of the confrontation of pre-modern and modern categories and conventions of urban building and architecture. The excavation of the Kottbuserstrasse façade implies the copresence of front, back, and side, but may also be understood in terms of a syncretism of the frontality associated with the classical tradition and the oblique multifaceted forms characteristic of modernism. This conceptual cleft — which breaks the regular window-pattern and shatters the overlapping and extended

16. Siza, project for Kottbuserstrasse, 1980, sketches



cubic volume of the first floor — introduces the three-dimensional nature of modern architecture into the traditional, continuous street wall. On several levels, Siza converts supposedly incompatible phenomena into copresences in a tense relation that values and establishes differences rather than resolves them.

Siza's construction merges with its setting yet proposes that we view these same surroundings in a new way. The grey, blind walls of adjoining structures are veiled or partially exposed, extending our sensibilities and inducing us to become more acutely aware of our surroundings. Without any nostalgia for the past, this work points to the aesthetic richness already present in an environment that here becomes the architectural experience. In this small example we may begin to understand Siza's projects for Kreuzberg in terms of modern and premodern worldviews critically examined and interlocked. This interpretation leads us beyond the simple opposition of two urban realms in which this operation finds its rationale. It may illuminate both the manner in which Siza rationalizes formal decisions involved in this work, and the underlying modernism of his architectural research program.

In an effort to gauge Siza's departure from both the nineteenth-century architecture of Kreuzberg and an orthodox modern architecture, it is useful to contrast Siza's proposals for Kreuzberg with Van Doesburg's seminal statement concerning the formal assertions of the "new architecture." In 1924, in *De Stijl*, Van Doesburg wrote:

The new architecture is formless . . . it does not recognize fundamental and unchanging patterns, it shuns symmetry and the frontal approach developing its many-sided plastic nature in space . . . and it does not distinguish a front from a rear, right or left, and if possible even up or down.⁷

In the building on Kottbuserstrasse, as in all his proposals for Kreuzberg, Siza draws distinctions between front, back, and side, as well as up and down, yet we find simultaneously the presence of architecture's "many-sided plastic nature in space." Moreover, Siza does seem to recognize what Van Doesburg terms "fundamental and unchanging patterns." While it may be argued that Siza understands the structure of Kreuzberg as a conventional system rather than as a set of immutable rules, it must also be seen that

these conventions refer to *fundamental* patterns that underlie the city as an urban construct, forming a set of relations whose formal antecedents reach back beyond the nineteenth century, structuring the space of the city in terms of blocks, streets, and squares. By reinforcing the block structure where it is weakest, particularly at the corners that define urban squares, and by suggesting a relative continuity of the street wall, Siza reasserts this fundamental pattern of city building. Nevertheless, within Siza's heterodox approach these fundamental patterns do not appear as fixed and unchanging. The proposals for Kreuzberg address the need for both historical continuity and change.

In Siza's hybrid constructions of modern and premodern categories confronting one another, it is not surprising that we may sense parallels with Adolf Loos's architecture and urban buildings for Vienna. The correspondences between Siza's proposals for Kreuzberg and Loos's work, such as the proposal for the Allgemeine Verkehrs Bank of 1904 or the well-known Michaelerhaus of 1909–11, are not superficial. For example, despite its apparently dissonant architectural vocabulary the Michaelerhaus, too, is grounded in the transformation of known types and conventions. It is a construction that develops multiple relations with all the elements in its setting, inflecting toward the square on which it is situated. Both Siza and Loos are concerned with establishing a relational structure for architecture, and we may find in Loos a precursor for an operation that seeks to recover the thread of historical continuity while acknowledging changing cultural and material conditions. Both architects are consciously constructing new worldviews out of old ones.

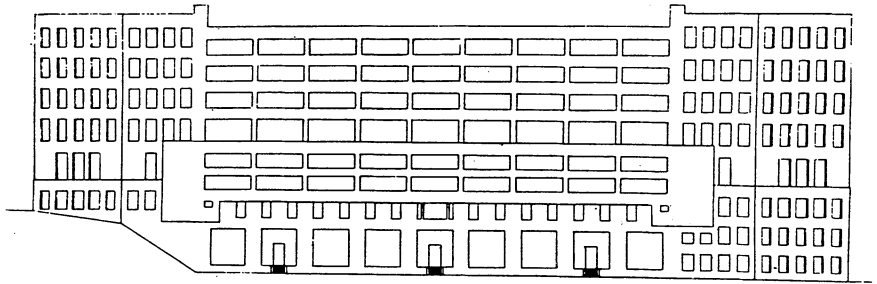
The worlds to which they refer, however, are different, and the nature of this difference is found in Siza's acceptance of incompleteness in urban space and in the forms of his architecture. Loos's project for the Schwarzwaldschule of 1911–12 provides a limited but nevertheless revealing comparison. In contradistinction to Siza's proposal for Kottbuserstrasse, the easily comprehensible form of Loos's project appears more clearly as a mutation of classicism. While we find a striking similarity in the elimination of figurative elements, in the combination of rectangular, square, and horizontal openings, and in the use of three-dimensional



17. Adolf Loos, project for All-gemeine Verkehrs Bank, 1904, photomontage

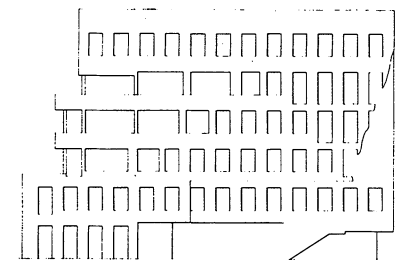
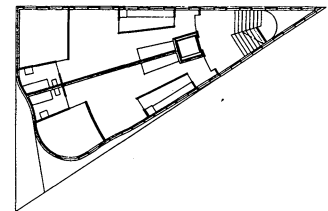
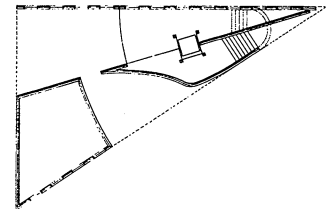
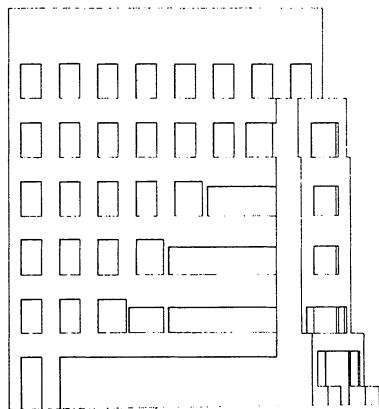
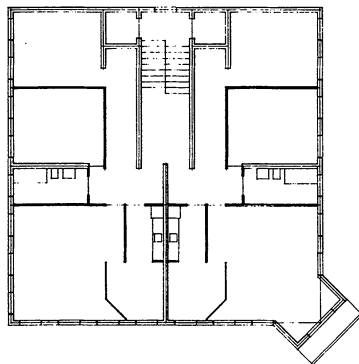


18. Loos, Michaelerhaus, Michaelerplatz, Vienna, 1909-11



19. Loos, project for Schwarzwaldschule, 1911-12

20. Alvaro Siza, project for Frankeluffer block, corner building, 1979, plan of typical floor and elevation



21. Siza, project for Kohlfurter block, Kreuzberg district, corner building, 1979, plan of typical floor and elevation

projections beyond a planar façade, the incomplete form of Siza's project represents a far more complex condition. The interplay between a static symmetrical and frontal architecture, and a dynamic asymmetrical and oblique formal expression, is carried much further in Siza's project, which is not only radically asymmetrical, but also fragmented. Unlike Loos's project this construction cannot be understood all at once, and it is not immediately evident how it has been derived. While Siza does not fully remove a conventional identity from this form, he nevertheless suggests an unstable and fluctuating relationship with its surroundings and with the tradition that disallows such a relationship.

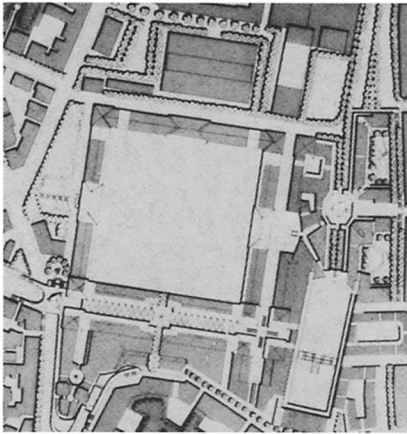
While it might appear that Siza and Loos are here mirroring each other in forward and backward projections, other significant differences exist both on the level of their approach to a preexisting urban structure and the manner in which their architecture develops spatially and plastically. Where the corner building on the Frankelufer block in its superposition of cubic forms may appear Loosian, the dynamic and plastic forms of the corner buildings for Kohlfurter recall the work of Hans Scharoun and Eric Mendelsohn. The expressive flair of these constructions and the differentiation of forms throughout Siza's proposals for Kreuzberg suggest a strategy of "particularized composition" that is the hallmark of expressionism. But while it is true that Siza treats each site differently, his proposals are not simply a collection of individual gestures nor a strategy in which the unique incident or unrepeatable site condition is emphasized over any notion of continuity. In the proposals for Kreuzberg the "incidents" acquire meaning only within a larger framework to which they consciously and constantly refer. By the adoption of a basic theme found in the repetition of simple volumes and a limited set of elements that are inflected in response to their particular circumstances, Siza's proposals harbor a degree of rationalization antithetical to the subjectivism and stylistic inventions of an expressionist architecture. The significant parallel between Siza and Scharoun or Mendelsohn is rather to be found in their common attempt to form exterior space through the juxtaposition of plastic and incomplete forms in opposition to the unifying compositions of

nineteenth-century urbanism with its assumptions of harmony, unity, and closure.

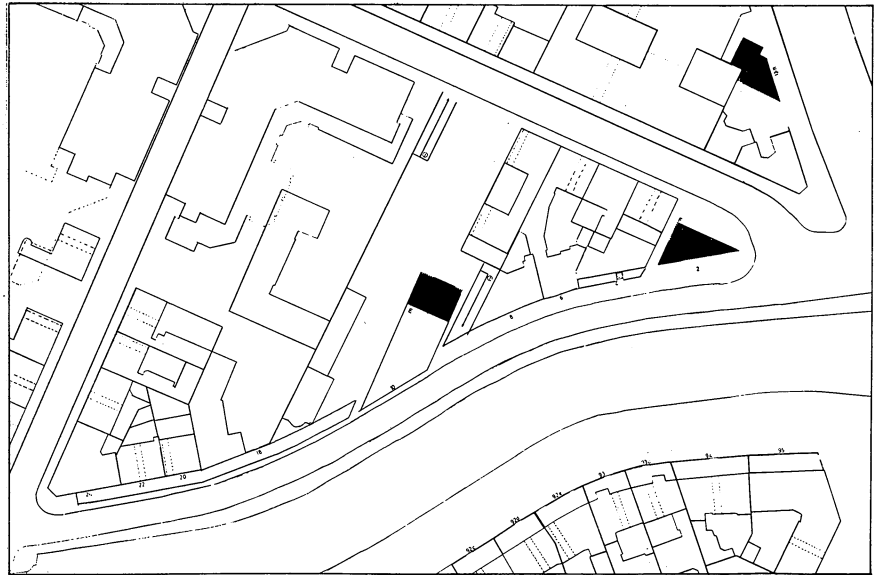
An unstable condition emerges from Siza's insistence on accepting both the nineteenth-century urban system of Kreuzberg and the disaggregated and heterogeneous order of postwar Berlin as the bases for his projects. By pursuing the contradictions inherent in this condition, Siza introduces a degree of relativism into the process of urban construction that was foreign to nineteenth-century urbanism. For example, within Siza's proposals only the corner buildings of the perimeter block form an unchanging pattern; we are not provided with an absolute measure of openings into the block. In contrast to the nineteenth-century system, which ensured a relatively uniform standard in the public domain of the street and provided rules requiring just a limited degree of interpretation, Siza only provides principles and no clear set of rules. Siza's proposed interventions do develop a clear set of elements and do find support in former and existing spatial and social configurations, yet these have been substantially manipulated by the architect; preexisting conditions are not seen as determinants. This process is most evident within the block where former conventions pertaining to the street space do not prevail and where a heterogeneous order is presented that varies greatly from block to block. It would appear that in Siza's interpretations the emergent nature of this inner block language disallows a simple and definitive solution. In this way Siza's proposals for spatial organization remain suggestively schematic and open to further development.

Conclusion

Divergent readings of the city emerge and various architectural traditions, including the conflicting drives within German modernism, find themselves face to face within a synthesis that everywhere reveals its own contradictions. Clearly such a dialectical approach to urban construction is distant from the unifying and absolutist order underlying modern urbanism associated with CIAM's theories of the city. Siza's approach also appeals to a different understanding of architecture and contemporary urban problems than the so-called contextual proposals of the 1970s, as put



22. Robert Krier, project for the reconstruction of Stuttgart, 1973



23. Alvaro Siza, project for Kohlfurter block, 1979-80



24. Siza, project for Kottbuserstrasse, 1980, sketch

forward by architects like Rob Krier. We might contrast Siza's Berlin works with Rob Krier's proposals for the reconstruction of Stuttgart of the early 1970s, which offer the image of the integral city, accomplished by piecing together fragments of the city and by subordinating each element to the overall structure. An examination of Krier's project reveals a striking absence of the contradiction and conflict that characterizes the true beginning condition of any site in the contemporary city. In contrast to architects such as Krier, Siza does not cover up the conflicts between diverse architectural traditions and between the values of the past and the values of the present. The transformations of the urban space of Kreuzberg are no longer those of the historical avant-garde, but neither are they based on an ahistorical conception of a closed and finite body of architectural knowledge.

Contradiction, ambiguity, superposition, and clashing are not seen as values in themselves. Siza's work does not represent the normative projection of some new style, and does not simply accept the fragmentary state of the city as a permanent or even desirable condition. It is appropriate to reconsider Siza's statements cited at the outset of this discussion: "We are obliged to slip our projects between new fragments and old fragments which never complement each other, which may never be reduced to a unity, but which exist as parallel realities." Siza thus acknowledges the contemporaneous and disjunctive nature of the city of Berlin. Yet he also writes that he "sought to assemble these fragments without hiding their reality, and to bring them

closer to other fragments.” This statement qualifies the previous one, reflecting a basic contradiction in the intention of bringing fragments closer together without denying the separateness that characterizes their fragmentation. This positive contradiction may be somewhat clarified by considering yet another statement made a few years earlier, in 1977, in reference to the same issue:

It is an essential problem to be capable of tying together dissimilar things, as the city today is in reality made up of very diverse fragments. In a city the problem is to form a whole with ruins, buildings of different periods, fragments. . . . The city is not necessarily continuous, but much more complex. Searching to make of its pieces a whole is necessary to develop our methodology. . . .⁸

The tension between the idea of “searching to make of its pieces a whole” and the conviction that the city “may never be reduced to a unity” condenses Siza’s understanding of the city as an artifact formed by superpositions and transformations through processes of construction and destruction. This understanding underlies the proposals for Kreuzberg but also provides the artistic impulse found in Siza’s work. In this view, architecture is about both differences and continuities developed through an open formal system capable of engendering multiple relations.

In seeking to rationalize his formal decisions Siza establishes a “meta-game,” which develops its own immanent logic, constructed in response to a philosophy of intervention and derived from a global analysis of Berlin as well as from the architect’s personal beliefs and preferences. Set within this matrix of facts and ideas, the architectural choices are also directed by a set of principles and aesthetic norms that are the result of historical and cultural accumulation and not simply the inventions of the architect. The “meta-game” Siza develops mirrors the conflicting and plural aspects of our environment but also allows us to begin to comprehend the nature of the conventions by which we structure our reality. From this perspective, Siza’s works for Berlin, a center from which modern architecture developed, attain an anticipatory character, a hope in the cultural dialectic of architectural practice.

Notes

This article forms part of a book-length study on the work of Alvaro Siza undertaken with the support of the Graham Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The author wishes to thank Stanford Anderson, Kurt Forster, Sherri Geldersma, and Wolfgang Rudolf for their assistance and critical review of earlier drafts of this paper.

1. Bernard Strecker, *Internationale Bauausstellung, Berlin*.
2. Alvaro Siza, “Un Immeuble d’Angle a Berlin,” *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* (AMC), ser. 2, 2 (1983): 16–21.
3. *Ibid.*
4. A more detailed description and documentation of the urban system of Kreuzberg is found in J. F. Giest, *Das Berliner Mietshaus, 1862–1945* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1984).
5. In the Berlin apartment houses, the *Berliner Zimmer*, located in the corner formed by the street front and rear wings, generally served as a dining room.
6. Siza was also commissioned to develop proposals for a smaller and less fragmented block in another part of Kreuzberg, where he proposed the insertion of a primary school and workshops in the interior of the block. In this case, residential structures were limited to perimeter sites.
7. Theo Van Doesburg, “De architectur als synthese der nieuwe beelding,” *De Stijl* 6–7 (1924).
8. Alvaro Siza, “Entretien avec Alvaro Siza,” *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* (AMC) 44 (1978): 33–41.

Figure Credits

All sketches and drawings by Alvaro Siza courtesy of the architect.

- 3, 13. R. Wolters, *Stadtmitte Berlin* (Wurberg: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth Tubingen, 1978).
- 4–6, 14. D. Rentschler and W. Schirmer, *Berlin und Seine Bauten*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Ernst und Sohn, 1974).
8. IBA photograph, International Building Exhibition of the city of West Berlin.
9. Courtesy of Alvaro Siza.
- 17–19. B. Rukschcio and R. Schachel, *Adolf Loos* (Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 1982).
22. Robert Krier, *Urban Space* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979).