

Housing estate Arkadien Asperg near Stuttgart



Western Europe is starting to see a trend in property development, away from mass quantity and towards quality and environmentally responsible construction. This is not through altruism on the part of development companies, but rather recognition of a market demand. Arkadien Asperg is an urban village nestled within the congested conurbation of Stuttgart, and responds to this increasing demand for high quality, individual living space. Commissioned by the property developer Strenger, the architectural concept was conceived by Eble Architects. As a harmonious compliment to the warm and consciously Mediterranean architecture, Atelier Dreiseitl designed an ensemble of outdoor spaces which significantly contribute to a healthy and pleasant living environment and the overall sustainability of the development. The project has been such a success that Arkadien Asperg was awarded the 2003 German Real Estate Award for housing.

Within the spatially tight confines of 2 hectares, space was found for a central village plaza by locating parking in an underground garage. Through paving details and reduced traffic speeds, pedestrians are given right of way over cars. A fountain on the central square is like a fireside 'hearth', used by neighbours to meet there informally in the evenings and kids who hang out after school. The plaza itself is used for street parties and other village events.

A diversity of semi-public and private spaces harmonizes a wide variety of passive housing types. A stream meanders through semi-private community spaces. It has a natural bank, and at more public points play elements: a stainless steel weir and Archimedes Screw. The stream is fed with rainwater and is an enjoyable highlight of the extensive stormwater management system. Rainwater is also harvested from individual house roofs and collected in 14 decentralized cisterns. The water is

recycled for irrigation, toilet flushing and washing machines. Other stormwater run-off is collected in surface drainage details which contour roads and sidewalks. The planted dry stone walls, use of natural stone, wooden structures and generous informal planting accompany the stormwater features throughout and are part of the vocabulary of green detailing which lends a 'garden city' flair to the housing estate.

A stream, accompanied by a small footpath, is a characteristic feature of the central green area.



The squares and pockets of public green are spaces for winding down and creative play for adults and children.

Because of the high housing density, there is little space for surface retention and infiltration of the site stormwater. Consequently, rainwater is collected in cisterns under the houses and re-used for washing, toilet flushing and garden watering.

