

# Baukultur Compact



# Baukultur & Quality of Life

High quality building culture raises living standards and strengthens the Austrian economy. To achieve this, the renovation and operation of existing structures and the undertaking of new building projects must integrate certain factors – above all functionality, beauty, longevity, and economic efficiency.

## Good building culture ...

is adaptive  
is of high quality  
is beautiful is accessible & gender-equitable  
creates identity connects people  
promotes health is sustainable  
conserves resources  
is practical

# What Is Baukultur?

**Baukultur, or building culture, affects us all:** At its most successful, it creates places where people are able to shape their environment according to high quality standards. This includes buildings and developments, towns and villages, landscapes, roads, and utility buildings—and it ties into zoning and architecture, spatial planning and regional policy, economics, and infrastructure.

In places where building culture is most pronounced, we see the built environment as worth living in; these are the places where we feel at home. When baukultur is not integrated into the planning and implementation of projects, then development deserts take over, asphalt proliferates, town centers are abandoned, and unwelcoming spaces emerge, places where people do not want to live or spend their time.

**In order to continue developing baukultur going forward, it is important to:**

- ... Raise awareness of building culture and promote suitable structures.
- ... Strengthen the common good.
- ... Plan holistically, innovatively, and sustainably.
- ... Use land and other resources judiciously.
- ... Link public funding to quality standards.

# Land of mountains\*

## Space as a Resource

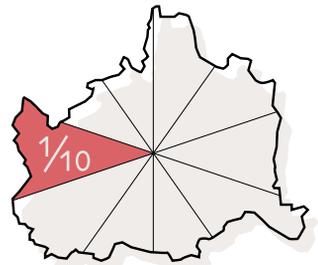
Austria's diverse landscapes are treasured by locals and visitors alike. The rich natural landscape is characterized by biodiversity, varied topography, and suitability for small-scale farming, but less positive features also exist: Commercial zones and monotonous farmland crisscrossed by motorways, power lines, and thoroughfares. In relation to its population, Austria has the most extensive traffic network in Europe.

The dream of home ownership also continues to drive the consumption of available land. Each day, the cultural landscapes of Austria lose 12 hectares of land to construction and traffic—another peak value among European nations, and one which, in light of the limited resources available, must be curbed. Almost two-thirds of Austria's surface area is alpine, leaving only 37% for agriculture, construction, and transport.

In the Federal Guidelines for Building Culture, the Government of Austria commits to preserving livable cultural landscapes and valuable cultural assets by developing sites and infrastructure while conserving resources. This will make it possible for everyone who visits or lives in Austria to enjoy its landscapes well into the future.

### Did you know ...

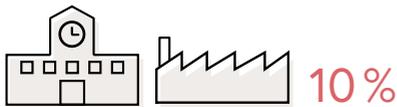
... that more than 4,300 hectares of land are built over each year in Austria? That is around one-tenth the size of Vienna.



# Land of fields, land of cathedrals\* City and Country

Single-family housing developments, shopping centers, and commercial zones blur the borders between developed areas, and consequently the boundaries between city and country. Cities and villages built for cars no longer provide spaces for personal interaction; many historic town centers and their architectural treasures have been deserted. When much-needed local employers and businesses are located only on the city's outskirts, those without a car are at a disadvantage.

The consequences: In Austria, as elsewhere, more and more people are moving from rural regions to larger metropolitan areas. The Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture thus prioritize the strengthening of village and town centers, and the preservation of their buildings, as crucial goals. Economical and compact settlement development is a particularly important political task.



## Did you know ...

... that there are 2.2 million buildings in Austria? 90% are residential buildings, while 79% are one- and two-family homes.

# Bravely towards the new ages\*

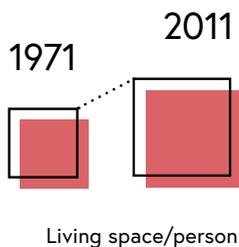
## Affordable Living

In Austria and around the world, almost no issue is more critical than that of affordable and high-quality housing. Many countries are greatly interested in Austria's successful housing policies and the way it synthesizes residential construction subsidies, the public interest, and tenant protections. However, this model is being stressed on multiples levels: use pressure in the cities, shrinking rural areas, rising property costs, high real estate demand, and growing technical requirements. Particularly in cities, there is a need for more affordable housing, as prices have increased significantly in recent years.

In the Guidelines for Building Culture, the Austrian government announces its intention to stimulate the production of sustainable, high-quality, and affordable housing. Tax incentives, land policy decisions, and the responsible development of government real estate will act as a means to this end.

### Did you know ...

... that average living space per person has risen from 22.9 m<sup>2</sup> in 1971 to 43.7 m<sup>2</sup> in 2011?



... that, on average, housing costs account for around 20% of all household expenditures, with the figure rising to over 40% for poorer households? Overall, housing cost ratios are on the rise.

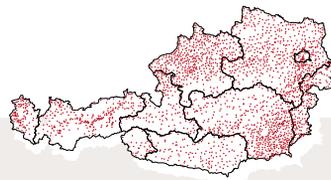
# Graced with a sense of beauty\*

## Public and Private Buildings

Architecture and urban planning are two defining elements of Austria, a nation rich in culture. Austria's architectural heritage must be carefully maintained and carried into the future by contemporary, sustainable, and appealing buildings. Raising awareness, providing education, and offering training in the skills of baukultur lay the foundation for responsible decision-making.

The public and private sectors are equally important in following the Austrian Building Culture Guidelines, which include upholding the principle of accessibility, tendering architectural competitions, and ensuring the separation of planning and execution.

Planning and design advisory boards have proven themselves an excellent instrument for reconciling public, private, and baukultur interests. In many cities and smaller municipalities, such independent committees advise project applicants and make final decisions on the design of construction projects. Experts often bring in innovative suggestions for improvement, thus supporting municipal building heads in successfully completing projects.



### Did you know ...

... that there are 2,100 municipalities in Austria, including 25 towns with populations over 20,000? These municipalities are responsible for a total of around 60,000 buildings, in addition to a great number of motorways and farm roads.

\* Translation of the Austrian national anthem.

# How do we want to live?

## Public Responsibility for Baukultur

Both in Austria and in Europe, the public sector is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities for promoting baukultur. Adopted by the Austrian Council of Ministers in 2017, the **Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture** lay out the federal government's voluntary commitment to act in the public interest and provide the basis for a collaborative approach among all groups involved in designing the built environment.

The **Third Austrian Building Culture Report**, submitted to Parliament in 2018, postulates several scenarios of how Austria could look in the year 2050. This report offers new perspectives on opportunities and risks with the aim of identifying strategies for ensuring that Austria remains a desirable place to live in the years to come.

Baukultur is also an increasing topic at the European level: In early 2018, the European Ministers of Culture adopted the **Davos Declaration** and agreed on several concepts and strategies to ensure the continued prioritization of high-quality building culture throughout Europe.

### Order or download:

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