

A Sacred Space – a new church for the parish St. Elisabeth in the city district Zellerau

Area data

St. Elisabeth, plot area (ground register No. 641/9):	6.039 m ²
Built-up area:	2.380,6 m ²

Planning subject

Ever since, man has designed places to try to get in touch with the gods to commemorate his rites. Starting with the Greek temples to gothic cathedrals and Le Corbusier's Ronchamp, the design of sacred spaces created masterpieces of architecture wherein man laid his utmost skills and techniques of the time.

The task of the 9th International Architecture Workshop is to design a new church for 100 believers. The parish St. Elisabeth in the city district Zellerau plans to demolish the existing church from the 1950ies which comprises 600 people, and build a new and smaller one. The new church should both respond to new liturgy developments and to energy efficient building requirements. Due to its importance for the city district Zellerau the new church is to be a contemporary architectural example.

The remaining plot of land is to be used for new housing as nowadays the continuously shrinking parishes are forced to find strategies for economical autarchy.

A church hall, a recently built day nursery, a kindergarten, an after-school care club and the parsonage which are situated next to the existing church, should be preserved for the time being. But as a second step of development it is planned to restructure the whole plot of land. All the buildings except for the new day nursery are more than 30 years old and in need of a renovation or a new development.

Historical Development

Traces of first settlements on the wide river meadow can be found as early as the neolithic time (around 4,000 B.C.) where the Zellerau is now. In the middle ages several monasteries were founded here which influenced the character of the meadows over the next centuries with farmland and vineyards. From the 18th century onwards agricultural estates formed the appearance of the Zellerau area. Until the beginning of the 20th century these estates had been popular day destinations for the citizens of Würzburg.

Until the 19th century there were only two major roads leading through the area of today's Zellerau: the county road to Zell which has become the „Frankfurter Straße“ today (the old Imperial road from Frankfurt to Nürnberg), and the Höchberger Straße. After the „Alte Mainbrücke“ (the old bridge over the river Main) the Zellerau got a second direct access to the city centre when the „Luitpoldbrücke“, now called „Friedensbrücke“ (bridge of peace) was built in 1888.

After the foundation of the German Empire the Zellerau became an important military garrison, and several military barracks were built there at the end of the 19th century.

In 1897 the Zellerau officially became a new town quarter of Würzburg and the development of new infrastructure became necessary. After getting connected to the town's water supply and sewage system the Zellerau became part of the tram network in 1900.

The enormous increase of the population and the shortage of housing after the First World War made it necessary to build new housing estates. With these huge public building campaigns the Zellerau which had been characterized by trade and military until then, changed into a living quarter during the 20th century.

While the population of the Zellerau as a whole had been quite heterogeneous the „lower Zellerau“, north of the Frankfurter Straße, had already got a bad reputation after the building of an asylum for the homeless and blocks of reasonably priced apartments in the thirties. This reputation still exists today.

In 2007 the Zellerau has qualified for the Federal and State governments' joint town development funding programme for „Quarters with a particular need of development – The Social City“. The current situation of the Zellerau as a whole has been assessed with respect to problems and potentials regarding town planning and social aspects. The objectives and measures developed from this analysis have been summarized in the integrated concept of actions and the plan of measures.

Location – Planning Context

The Zellerau is situated north-west of the City centre of Würzburg on the left bank of the river Main on a slip-off slope. On the southern end the quarter is bordered by the Marienberg hill with the fortress of Würzburg.

The parish of St. Elisabeth is embedded into a housing area in the southern part of Zellerau. In the West allotment gardens are bordering. The plot of land of the parish is pending; there's an approximately 11 m height difference between the southern and the northern border of the plot.

Results

All designs have to be presented in DIN A1 oblong size and have to be numbered according to their order of succession (4 panels as a maximum):

- Planning concept
- Ground plans, sections, views
- Model
- Rough calculation of area
- Text with sketches as an explanation of the basic idea and the strategy of development (in English); minimum of 1 DIN A4 page, maximum of 2 DIN A 4 pages.

The scale may be chosen according to the requirements of the design.

Personal talk and presentation will be of great importance. For a better explanation of the design a PowerPoint presentation may be used for the interim and final presentations, although it will not be compulsory. Films and other forms of

visualization will only be accepted if the design or concept will also be explained in person.

After the end of the workshop its results (designs and models) will be presented to the public in the lobby of the City Hall for a period of two weeks. For a quick documentation of the workshop in a printed brochure the designs will have to be standardized.

Additional programme

The course will be accompanied by an introduction into Roman Catholic liturgy, an excursion to recent buildings of the diocese of Würzburg, a guided city tour through Würzburg's city centre, probably a climbing event in the Zellerau climbing centre, a visit of the museum of the cathedral and at the end of the workshop a visit of the wine vaults from the 18th century underneath the residence with a wine tasting.