



### **La Borda and the conversion of a wine storage into housing, winners of the first edition of the European Collective Housing Award**

- The jury, chaired by architect and Pritzker 2021 winner Anne Lacaton, announced its decision today after meeting at the Basque Country Architecture Institute in San Sebastian.
- The conversion of a former wine warehouse in Basel, Switzerland, has been selected as 'Best Collective Housing Development' in the renovation category for “demonstrating that transforming the existing creates a new and unexpected housing quality that defies standard typologies”.
- La Borda, in Barcelona, Spain's tallest timber-framed building, has been chosen in the new construction category for “being an outstanding example of collective housing development at all stages of the process”.
- The inaugural edition of the award attracted a high level of participation: a total of 171 entries were received from 19 European countries, with the jury deciding between 18 finalists.
- In addition to the winning entries, the jury awarded special mentions to Ekko by Duncan Lewis (Bordeaux, France) in the new construction category, and to Phase 2 of the Park Hill redevelopment (Sheffield, UK) by Mikhail Riches studio.

### **31 May 2024**

The jury of the European Collective Housing Award has announced today in San Sebastian the two winning developments of its inaugural edition: the conversion of a former wine warehouse in Basel, Switzerland, which has been selected as ‘Best Collective Housing Development’ in the renovation category, and La Borda, a housing cooperative in Barcelona, as the winner in the new construction category. The award is committed to projects that have a positive impact on communities and contribute to sustainable urban development, while promoting quality architecture.

The award is jointly promoted by the Basque Country Architecture Institute (San Sebastian) and arc en rêve centre d'architecture (Bordeaux), in collaboration with the Department of Territorial Planning, Housing and Transport of the Basque Government. The international jury met this Friday at the Basque Country Architecture Institute to make its decision from among the 18 finalists, taking as its starting point the importance of housing as a fundamental human need and social asset, as well as the promotion of

innovation, inclusion and environmental responsibility in the design of collective housing.

### **The conversion of a wine storage into housing, best Collective Housing Development in the Renovation category**

This work by Esch Sintzel Architekten was completed in 2023 in Basel (Switzerland). It consisted of the conversion of a wine storage building into 64 apartments, café-bar, commercial space, joker and guest rooms, collective space, roof terrace, music rehearsal rooms, parking and bicycle parking.

The main protagonists are the pre-existing columns of the former Coop wine warehouse which, according to the studio, “tell the story of the building in an impressive way”. “They are the most striking elements of the existing structure and form an important starting point of the design. In order to keep their effect tangible despite the small-scale nature of the new residential use, they are exposed and staged in various ways: in the apartments, which span the width of the building, their bulky monumentality is an experience in itself; in the two internal streets, that run lengthwise through the building, they appear as a sequence”.

The columns also form the starting point for the internal organization of the house: the actual urban development is defined by the existing building, but along the internal streets, a city within the house takes shape. This internal system not only provides access to the stairwells, the communal rooms, and the laundry rooms, they also enable a variety of apartment typologies for all generations and lifestyles. On the mezzanine floor, the domestic sphere links up with the urban one: here the inner street opens into the transverse entrance halls and invites one into the house via stairs and ramps. The commercial spaces and the café are located at ground level at the heads of the building, directly addressing the city. The network of paths finds its end in the community room and the collective roof terrace.

In addition to the design-defining expressiveness of the existing columns, ecological sustainability also motivates the careful treatment of the existing structure. In this case, 42% of the building’s grey energy was saved by continuing to use the old structure. The photovoltaic system and the groundwater heat pump make the building two-thirds self-sufficient in terms of total energy consumption.

“The project demonstrates that ordinary, utilitarian buildings have value and can support new creative projects that bring something positive to the neighborhood and the city. It brings not only quality, but additional life. It is sustainable thanks to the reuse of the existing concrete structure, which absolutely must be taken into account in the carbon balance. This existing structure is complemented by a new construction that densifies and gives a new identity and new life to the site. In terms of architecture, it shows a new way of living and the imagination needed to reinvent an existing structure. It demonstrates that transforming the existing creates a new and unexpected quality of housing that defies standard typologies. In terms of the building's collective infrastructure, it has collective spaces that celebrate and facilitate communal living”, the jury assessed.

In the Renovation category, in addition to the winner, the following were selected as finalists: the conversion of the Felix Platter Hospital (Basel, Switzerland), by Müller Sigrist Architekten; Qville (Essen, Belgium) by B-architecten; Nekkersput (Ghent, Belgium) by DBLV architecten; La commune (Liège, Belgium) by he-architectes; social housing in Rua da Vitória (Porto, Portugal) by MAVAA architects; Phase 2 of the Park Hill redevelopment (Sheffield, UK) by Mikhail Riches studio, with special mention; the renovation of a 1970s social housing complex (Trento, Italy) by Campomarzio+Studio Bombasaro; and SchloR – Schöner Leben ohne Raiffeisen (Vienna, Austria)

by Gabu Heindl, Elena Mali, Lisa Schönböck, Hannah Niemand, Stana Marjanovic, Fabian Liszt, Petko Grablij, Maura Schmitt, Anne Altmeyer, Sebastian Christiansen and Lucas Bogunovic.

### **La Borda, Best Collective Housing Development in the New Construction category**

La Borda is a housing cooperative that forms part of Barcelona's social housing stock. The Lacol team and the La Borda cooperative prioritised making a building with the minimum environmental impact, both in its construction and in its useful life, while minimising the risk of energy poverty for its inhabitants. Completed in 2018, it is a wooden construction with 28 dwellings plus communal spaces, where corridors and circulations become spaces to stay, relax and socialise. In fact, La Borda is currently the tallest building constructed with a wooden structure in Spain.

According to Lacol, “La Borda's community model, as opposed to more traditional public or private promotions, has made it possible to overcome some major limitations imposed on collective housing architectural projects. In the public sector, the fear of the future user, who is totally unknown, prevents the introduction of changes that could affect the normalised way of living. In the case of private developers, market logics are imposed, impoverishing housing in order to facilitate its assimilation as an object of consumption. The innovation of the urbanisation process has been key to working with architecture beyond its formalisation. We identified five characteristics of this model that have a direct response in the project: self-promotion, right of use, community life, sustainability and affordability”.

The 28 dwellings have 40, 60 or 75m<sup>2</sup> and communal spaces that allow the fact of living to move from the private to the public space, enhancing community life. They are articulated around a central courtyard, kitchen-dining room, laundry, multipurpose space, space for guests, health and care space, storage in each plant, and exterior and semi-exterior spaces such as the patio and roofs. “The participation of the future users in the process (design, construction and use) was the most important and differential variable of the project, generating the opportunity to know and plan with them their specific needs”, Lacol added.

In addition, the building sought from the outset to reduce energy demand by optimising the program, renouncing the underground car park, grouping services and reducing the surface area of the dwellings. The six-storey structure is made of cross-laminated timber, a lightweight, high-quality and renewable material. Passive bioclimatic strategies were also developed to achieve almost zero energy consumption and, therefore, comfort in the dwellings at the lowest associated cost, including covering the courtyard with a greenhouse to capture solar radiation in winter and have a chimney effect for ventilation in summer, and a centralised biomass boiler to optimise the energy production infrastructure and improve the performance and technology at the service of the entire building.

“This is an outstanding example of collective housing development in the city at all stages of the process. The ambition goes beyond the scale of the building, being part of a bottom-up process of regeneration of the whole neighborhood. The housing concept brings a new imagination of living and cohabitation. It is about successful cohabitation between individuals, communal living and public engagement. The architecture brings generosity and demonstrates that the transformation of the limits of contemporary living turns technical challenges into resources, which together with sustainability can be approached in another way, prioritizing quality of life. The introduction of the cooperative system as an alternative model to housing production combines affordability and quality in the right way”, the jury emphasized.

In the New Construction category, the following entries were also finalists: La Chalmeta (Barcelona, Spain), by Vivas Arquitectos; Maierhof (Bludenz, Austria), by feld72; Ekko (Bordeaux, France), by Duncan Lewis, with special mention; Spiegelfabrik (Fürth, Germany), by Verena von Beckerath and Tim Heide; Kuppe Estate (Horgen, Switzerland), by Esch Sintzel Architekten; A House For Artists (London, United Kingdom) by Apparata Architects; eight public rental housing units in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, developed and built by a team from the Balearic Housing Institute; and Zollhaus Kalkbreite (Zurich, Switzerland) by Enzmann Fischer Architekten.

The decision was made by renowned figures from different disciplines: Anne Lacaton (France), architect and winner of the Pritzker Prize in 2021, who chaired the jury; Kristiaan Borret, professor of urban design at Ghent University and maître architecte (BMA) of the Brussels Capital Region (Belgium); Emanuele Coccia (Italy), associate professor at EHESS (Paris, France), author and visionary thinker; Fernanda Canales (Mexico), architect and founder of Fernanda Canales Arquitectura; and Christian Hadaller (Germany), architect and co-founder of KOOPERATIVE GROSSSTADT eG.

### **High participation in the inaugural edition**

The organisations behind the award have valued the «great participation in this first edition, which shows that Europe is not only the stage for socially and environmentally responsible architecture, but also has professionals with great capacity and innovative vision to face the challenges that lie ahead». In total, 171 entries were received from 19 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom.

Thus, representatives from the Basque Country Architecture Institute, arc en rêve centre d'architecture and the Department of Territorial Planning, Housing and Transport of the Basque Government have considered that the objective of the Prize to generate debate between agents and citizens on the architectural part of housing, its quality and its impact, in all its angles, has been fulfilled.

The Director of Housing, Land and Architecture of the Basque Government, Pablo García Astrain, thanked the international jury for their work, and emphasised «the complex task they have faced, as the bulk of the candidatures received stand out for their high technical quality and, in turn, reflect the diversity and plurality of alternatives to respond to the housing problem».

«The applications received have more than met our expectations. The level of the proposals in terms of typological richness, re-reading of the collective condition of housing and constructive quality has been exceptional», highlighted the Director of the Basque Country Architecture Institute, José Ángel Medina.

The Director of arc en rêve, Fabrizio Gallanti, underlined that «the variety of attitudes and architectural solutions allows us to read the intention, on the one hand, of clients and, on the other hand, of architecture professionals to explore innovative solutions on different topics, such as the attention to ecological issues, the integration of people from non-European backgrounds or the questioning of the current family model».

The awards ceremony will be held on 20 June at the arc en rêve headquarters in Bordeaux. Both the finalist and winning entries will be displayed in an exhibition, which will be installed in autumn at the Basque Country Architecture Institute and will then travel to arc en rêve.

More information:

Alba Díaz de Sarralde  
659 59 35 62  
contact@eai.eus



LURRALDE PLANGINTZA,  
ETxebizitza  
ETA GARRAIO SAILA  
DEPARTAMENTO DE PLANIFICACION  
TERRITORIAL, VIVIENDA  
Y TRANSPORTES