

## Kinderbauernhof Mauerplatz

<b>District:</b>	Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg
<b>Size:</b>	1 ha
<b>Previous uses:</b>	garden area (before 1860's) Multiple dwelling (1860-1945)
<b>Contemporary use:</b>	city farm
<b>Time of realisation:</b>	1981 (squatting of open space) 1985-87 (central adobe building)
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### Background information

The area where Kinderbauernhof Mauerplatz is now located used to be a piece of derelict land right next to the former Berlin Wall (Mauer). Before World War II it used to be one of the most densely populated housing blocks inhabited by more than five thousand people also hosting over one hundred smaller and medium size enterprises. It was bombed out on its northern and northeastern part opening some 10.000m<sup>2</sup> of open space.

City reconstruction plans of the 60's envisioned the demolition of all buildings in the neighbourhood, modern concrete settlements and a city highway nearby. Due to these plans the buildings were left for decay by house owners and most of the original population left to suburban dwellings, while waves of immigrants started to settle down in inner city areas.

By the late 70's architectural debates and city planning had shifted from complete knock down to participatory "gentle" city reconstruction. Immigrants, students and military objectors formed a new blend of neighbours from which a vivid squatting movement arose, occupying some 200 empty houses.

Among inhabitants of the neighboring squats the idea of a children's city farm was developed leading to the foundation of the farm on 21<sup>st</sup> march 1981. The place was emptied from rubbish, trees were planted and stables set up for the first goats. Small robust horses followed soon, making the farm a favourite hangout for all children in the neighbourhood.

During the first years a group of mothers took charge of daily work. A non-for-profit organisation was founded, but failed again and again to gain permanent financial support due to politically conflicting interest. At one point the eviction of part of the area was carried out under heavy police force implementation. However a mixture of steady resistance and broad support even from abroad helped to save the farm again and again. In 2005 the farm was finally granted a formal land use contract. Due to cuts in social spending however no permanent financial contract could be achieved.

Kinderbauernhof Mauerplatz is one of a few examples of city farms run as a authentic neighbourhood non-for-profit-enterprise. Most major construction work and planting was done on the base of volunteer work as well as international work camps. Student groups of architects, landscape planning and social work were involved in developing plans and participatory schemes. Donations are always welcome.

