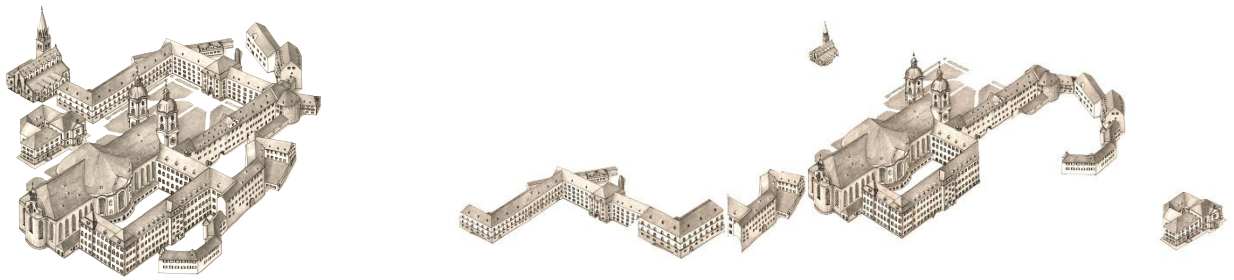


Abbey in RE major



St Gallen

The form of the city originates from a dense urban core surrounding the Abbey of St. Gallen (719), which later expanded linearly along the valley between the mountains, parallel to the railway tracks that divide the city into two.

Over time, the growing demand for housing has led to the spread of low-density single-family homes climbing up the hillside. Our project proposes to reconnect the concept of dwelling with the city's foundational origins, now physically and symbolically linked to nature, with minimal impact on the soil. The creation of a new hub of urban and programmatic diversity will ease the current centrality of the city and forge a connection between the citizens daily life and the natural landscape.

At the entrance of our plot from Oberstrasse, we are faced with a large rail yard, making no connection to the green spaces on the opposite side. In a future phase of the project, a partial covering of the tracks could be considered, allowing nature to reconnect the splitted city, using the existing water network as a connective force sewing the city through the existing green corridors of Ruckhalde.

Ruckhalde

The Ruckhalde hill, known for once featuring the world's tightest railway curve, is located at the junction of two of St. Gallen's main connective arteries: Oberstrasse and Teufenerstrasse. The lack of connectivity due to the unfinished Langweidstrasse is resolved by extending it across the site in the least invasive way possible, without affecting the historic railway line, now repurposed as an important natural hiking trail.

LANGWEIDSTRASSE - This new road becomes the main vehicular access to the new project, providing direct entry to the Familiengarten (also accessible from a newly proposed street further south, which connects to the remaining garden plots). The extended Langweidstrasse also enables access from the upper slope of the mountain, linking the road to the neighbourhood via a system of 'follies' elevated structures equipped with lifts and staircases that provide accessible connections to the greenway and the project site, either on foot, by car or by bus.

NEW BUS LINE - The proposal includes the creation of a new urban bus line running along Langweidstrasse. In addition to linking Oberstrasse and Teufenerstrasse at the highest elevation of the project, the new line is envisioned to extend toward the Lattich

area, thus connecting the 'new abbey' to the vibrant Lattich cultural hub and to the historic centre of St. Gallen.

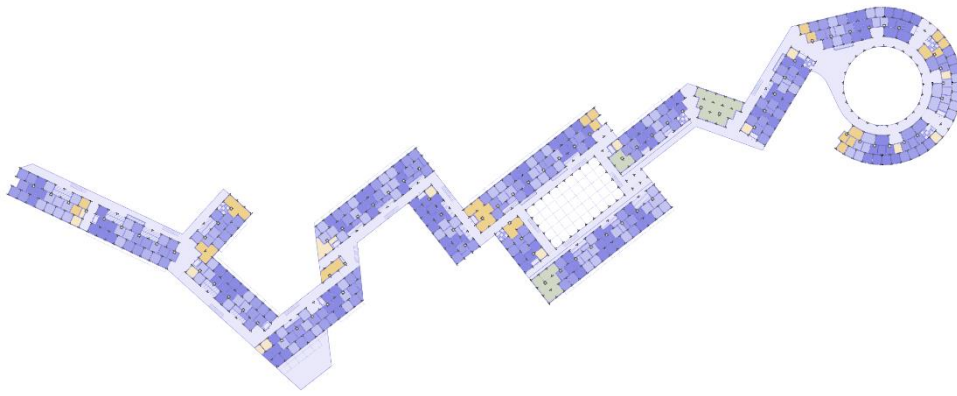
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - The presence of wild nature at the doorstep of the project is welcomed through a network of paths that build upon the existing ones, most of which are preserved. These paths not only traverse the natural landscape and the allotment gardens but are also humanized through the introduction of urban furniture, small plazas, and vegetation that offers shade and shelter from the sun.

FACILITIES - This infrastructure provides comfort and support to those who use the paths, while activating the landscape with programmed elements such as playgrounds and small mobile facilities like 'Hofladen', mobile libraries, kiosks, or similar installations. The project also envisions a strong presence of playground areas along the paths and within the natural landscape, conceived primarily as outdoor extensions of the neighbourhood facilities located nearby.

NEW PARKING LOTS - Although the project is conceived with a car-less city approach, mobility and accessibility considerations require the inclusion of approximately 700 new parking spaces. These are distributed between two principal areas: one located beneath the project's 'agora', directly accessible from the main entrance square via Ruhbergstrasse; and another at the Oberstrasse access point, connected to the rest of the project by a panoramic lift.

FAMILIENGARTEN - Today, the Ruckhalde Familiengarten stands as one of the most important green and productive landscapes in the southern part of St Gallen. This project not only preserves the current surface area of vegetable gardens but increases it to 13.000m². Two access roads cross the site, improving vehicular accessibility despite the slope, which is planned to be gently terraced within the various plots.

These new gardens are conceived not merely as productive green spaces, but as part of a network of pathways creating multiple itineraries, some of them accessible for walking and contemplating nature. The design includes small plazas, sheltered areas defined by local vegetation, and urban furniture self-built by residents through participatory workshops.



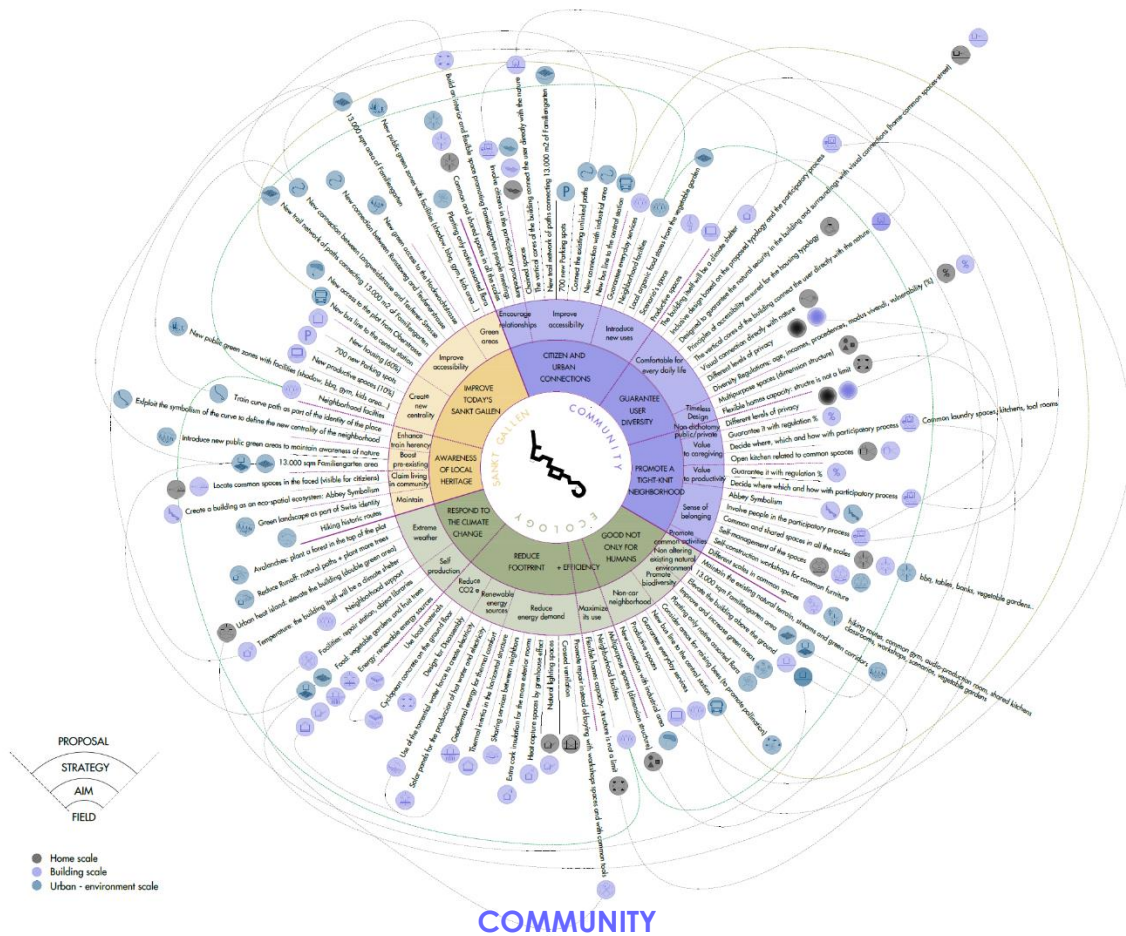
The new abbey

The buildings are organized to form a sequence of recognizable spaces, providing public and appropriable areas at different scales: urban-scale plazas and shelters, communal meeting spaces and multipurpose areas within the folds of the blocks, and spaces of appropriation along the elevated walkways, conceived as further extensions of the various gradients of privacy designed to dissolve the strict dichotomy between public and private.

DEVELOPMENT - The different blocks/plots will be developed by independent developers, following the sequence established in the masterplan and maintaining the proposed distribution typology. The architects responsible for the various blocks and corridor-passages will have compositional freedom in designing the façades, as long as they respect the proposed structural modules. Although the designers will have freedom of choice in terms of materiality, they must use natural, prefabricated, and local materials or/and re-used materials ensuring a low footprint.

DWELLING ORGANISATION - Within the blocks, the organization will follow the proposed modular structure, and uses will be arranged in the spaces initially defined, while remaining open to modifications resulting from participatory decision-making processes involving residents. The housing units will be laid out with a spatial sequence that flows from less to more private, starting from the walkways, to foster encounters among inhabitants and the relationships that emerge from them. Possible extensions of the most private units may be considered all-in-one or even in posterior phases.

PUBLIC CLIMATIC SHELTERS - The whole neighbourhood itself works as a huge climatic shelter. Its corridors and the interior spaces as streets (with diverse levels of privacy) and interior climatic plazas in moments of extreme weather nowadays and for future possible worse situations. The openable glass facade of the corridors becomes a thermal buffer between interior dwelling climate and open-air temperature. The AGORA functions as a climatized square, protected from climate extreme conditions, acting as the core of the neighbourhood, and permitting quality social exterior life in all seasons of the year.



Ensuring the well-being and happiness of future residents, as well as their coexistence with nature, is one of the central aims of this proposal. Encouraging inhabitants to build a network of mutual relationships promote a vibrant and healing neighbourhood, where care for others becomes part of the spatial logic. As a result, the district becomes safer, more inclusive, and emotionally sustainable.

Through participatory decision-making, partial self-construction, and systems of self-management, residents are empowered to take ownership of their living environment, strengthening their sense of belonging within the new complex.

This collective involvement not only shapes the built space but also cultivates a culture of shared responsibility and resilience. Walkways and public shelters become everyday spaces for encounter and informal care; multipurpose areas allow for evolving uses and seasonal programs; and flexible housing typologies support diverse modes of living. Over time, these strategies contribute to the emergence of a self-sustained, care-centered community, capable of adapting to social and environmental change.