

The Kreuzberg district of Berlin

The Kreuzberg district consists of two subareas:

- 1) Luisenstadt, a planned 19th century extension designed to accommodate a mix of housing and industry along a canal filled-in in 1926. Development stretched at first along the streets and was limited to the perimeters of the blocks. Densification occurred by progressive infilling of the blocks and heightening of the older structures.

Between 1880 and 1900 the area evolved into a working class neighborhood with light industry and a mix of dense housing where tenements predominated.

It suffered little damage during World War II, but was subsequently threatened with major dislocation by the planned alignments of new highway networks in the 50's which crossed it.

- 2) Süd-Ost 36, is a dense area dating back to the turn of the century with inadequate infrastructure and amenities. The original layout sought to reduce the cost of access roads by creating large deep blocks, reducing open space to the minimum. Low cost tenements were built by real estate companies and speculators to house the influx of migrants from Silesia. The area was fully developed by 1915 and was considered one of the most overcrowded and deprived districts in the city.

The division of the city by the wall in 1912 further marginalized Kreuzberg relegating it to the edge of West Berlin and cutting off its connection to employment and amenities in the city center and the south-east. The area was slated for urban renewal to accommodate industry along the new highways and high rise blocks behind.

Public redevelopment corporations and private developers started to buy the neglected deteriorating structures which were demolished and replaced by large housing blocks. Better off residents moved out seeking higher quality accommodations elsewhere in the city. The old and the poor were left behind soon to be joined by an increasing influx of migrant workers, predominantly turkish, who were allowed to settle as "interim tenants" in the vacant buildings.

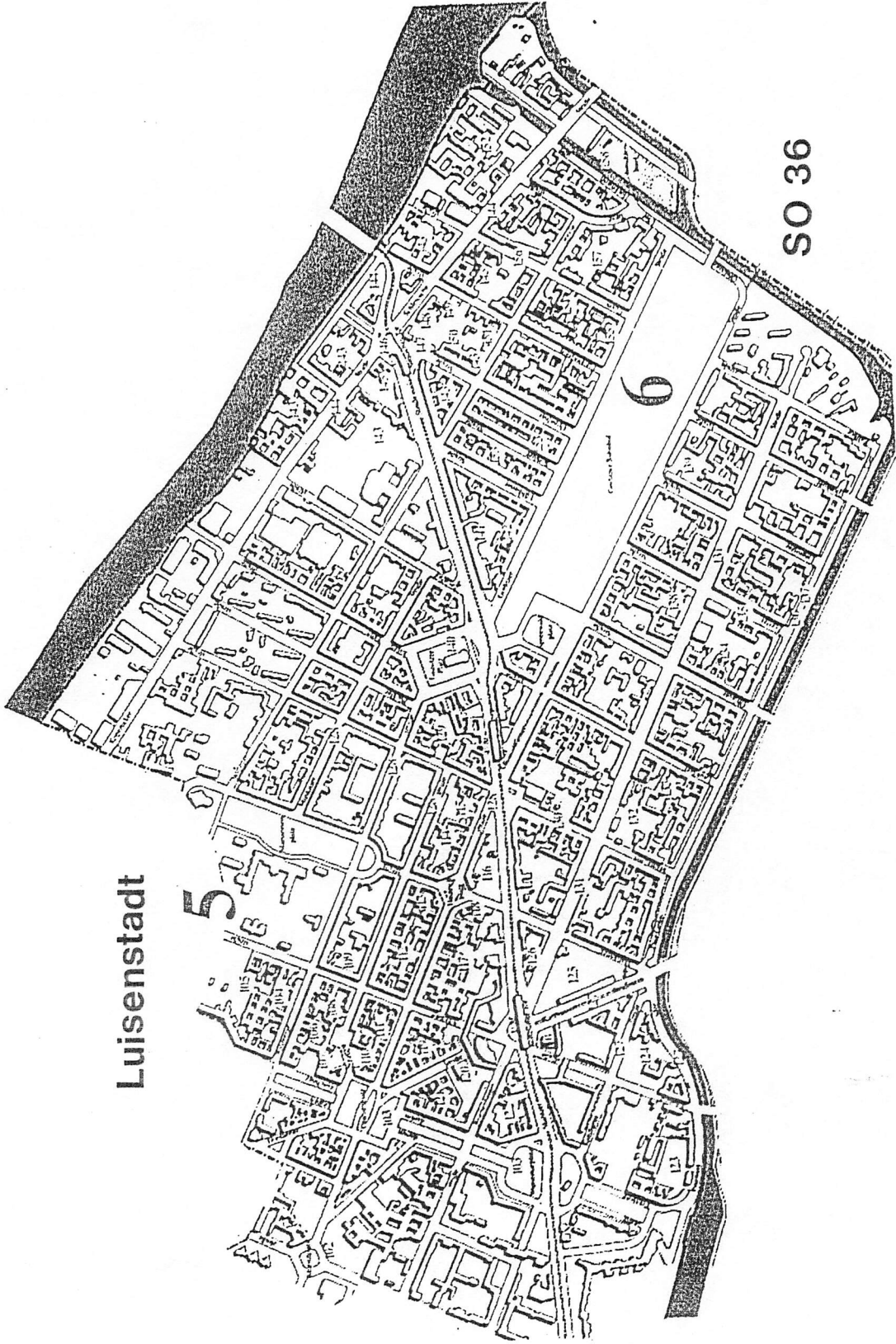
During the 70's growing resistance to forced displacement and attempts to preserve the integrity of street facades slowed somewhat the renewal process. However radical renovation still entailed the displacement of residents.

In the 80's, the district started to attract a mix of young people seeking inexpensive premises to live, work or start a small business. The predominance of artists among this group had led to the emergence of cultural activities.

In 1981 the Berlin city government halted the forced eviction of tenants and provided funds to cover the rent gap caused by renovation activities. In 1982/83 a new renewal policy was adopted to take effect in 1985. Its objective is to take into consideration the needs of current residents and preserve appropriately priced housing. Renovation of existing buildings, improvement of infrastructure, provision of amenities and community participation and development are the hallmark of the new approach. This implies a long process of incremental rehabilitation and modernization referred to as step by step. It was developed as an outcome of the work of the professional team preparing the International Building Exhibition (IBA) of 1987 in Berlin on the theme of "The inner city as a place to live" which demonstrated how deteriorated areas could be revitalized. A non-profit organization S.T.E.R.N. with representation from Kreuzberg district and Berlin city was created in 1986 to implement the program covering 83 blocks in Kreuzberg.



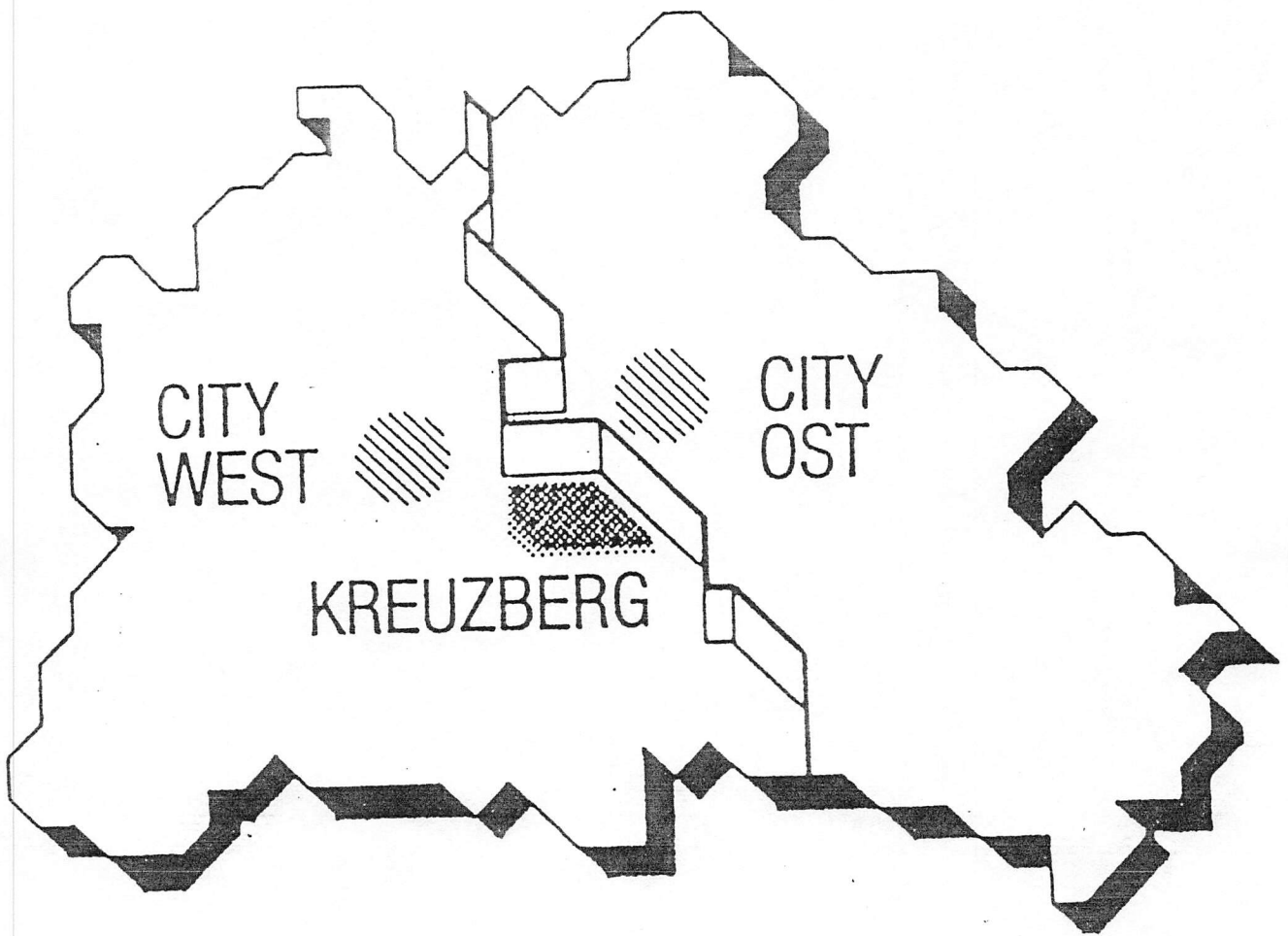
Luisenstadt



SO 36

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


















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KREUZBERG

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Blocks and parts of blocks improved by the IHA and its cover company S.T.E.R.N.

