

The tenants of the house community

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Sale of the apartment building of Donaustraße 5 Milieu protection area (Milieuschutzgebiet): Flughafenstraße/Donaustraße

Dear Berliners*,

we are from Donaustraße 5.

On 08.12.2020 we were informed by our old owners that our house was sold. We were shocked and sad. The house has been owned by the family of the old owner for several generations. None of the residents expected this. The district office of Neukölln is examining the option of the right of first refusal (Vorkaufsrecht) in the milieu protection area. The deadline for it to be enforced is 15.02.2021.

The old owner repeatedly assured us that we don't need to worry. However we did some research and as a result we are frightened and shocked.

Behind the new owner is an investor who is already known from another sale of an apartment building in Berlin, the one at Hobrechtstraße 59.

The right of first refusal (Vorkaufsrecht) could be enforced, since the new owner shows hardly any interest in an averting agreement (Abwendungsvereinbarung).

Our new owner is an internationally operating GmbH & Co. KG, which also operates in Warsaw and Paris, and their interest is clearly defined on their website: luxurious renovations. They are also known in the media.

After we found out the purchase price and had the new property management answering really cautiously to concrete questions, it became clear to the residents of Donaustraße 5 that our house is a speculative project, and their aim is to convert it into profitable property.

As tenants of the 31 residential units + commercial spaces, we are very concerned about what the sale means for our housing situation. The housing market in Berlin and especially in Neukölln shows a significant structural change, which leads us to assume that our house will also be a speculative object of the private real estate industry.

The distinctive thing about our house community is that during the last weeks, we have searched collectively and with solidarity for solutions. We all agree on a common goal.

We have written to numerous cooperatives, foundations and the Mietshaussyndikat to get them interested in our apartment building as a potential third party buyer. It is a difficult task. The high purchase price makes it very difficult to refinance the house. And we are not the only house community looking for a potential third party buyer - as we found out via the Kietzversammlung⁴⁴, there are three other houses in Berlin-Neukölln that were either sold shortly before Christmas or have potential buyers.

In Donaustraße 5 the residents are old and young people, small and large families, new parents, several generations – one tenant has lived here his entire life. The oldest resident lives here since the early 70s. We are teachers, pedagogues and scientists, we work in nursing, journalism and social work, as architects, midwives, nursing mothers or technicians. Some live here with their parents, siblings and grandparents, others have recently joined us. We would like to keep our home in this house community.

Our demands:

We want to continue living in a district which is not determined by real estate speculation and eviction, but which stays diverse.

We are against the sell-out of the city!

We demand the enforcement of the right of first refusal (Vorkaufsrecht)!

Senate, buy your houses!

We demand long-term solutions for affordable housing for all!

We are happy to see with today's rally that there is a great interest of Berliners in preventing the sell-out of the city, and we want to act together against evictions and against speculation.

We want to thank Hermannstraße 48, for making this rally possible and for giving us the chance to present our situation!

There are only a few weeks left before the deadline for the right of first refusal! However, we will use these weeks to continue to draw attention to the devastating situation in Berlin, and show that we will not tolerate the sale of any of our houses!

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