Roland Rainer’s House
in St. Margarethen

In addition to working as an architect and town planner Roland Rainer (1910–2004) also travelled, photographed, and wrote. In his books about Iran and China, as well as his *Anonymes Bauen: Nordburgenland*, which he published in 1961, that is three years before Bernard Rudofsky’s *Architecture without Architects*, Rainer studied traditional typologies of high-density building of the kind he encountered in houses in the Orient or in village structures in Burgenland.

Rainer repeatedly voiced his unease about the rampant growth of developments of free-standing single-family houses which reduce the area of open landscape and cover the cultivated landscape. He vehemently criticized the open building system that was standard in eastern Austria and called for increased density as a strategy to counteract sprawl. He regarded the closed building pattern as ideal for housing and recognised the potential of the courtyard as an intimate outdoor space that can offer the highest quality of life: site and garden are minimised, the private and the public realms clearly separated. The comparatively small outdoor space requires little maintenance, yet still offers the advantages of a life in direct contact with the seasons. This concept was implemented at a larger scale in his project for the garden city Puchenau, a 1960s urban expansion project from the 1960s on the periphery of Linz that was carried out in several stages. This was followed by projects on the outskirts of Vienna.