

## An MIT professor is transforming an abandoned WWII military village into a futuristic commune

Leanna Garfield | 07.02.2017



*Carlo Ratti Associati*

A former US military village in Heidelberg, Germany will soon get a makeover.

Following World War II in 1947, Patrick Henry Village was founded as a military base with housing, schools, shops, a library, medical clinics, and restaurants. In 2013, the US Army abandoned the area, but it hasn't been completely deserted. In 2015, a small portion of Patrick Henry Village was converted into a temporary shelter for refugees from North Africa and the Middle East.

Within the next decade, it will get an even bigger overhaul.

Design firm Carlo Ratti Associati wants to turn Patrick Henry Village into a futuristic commune that will feature shared homes, kitchens, and cars.

Carlo Ratti, the director of MIT's Senseable City Lab and founding partner of Carlo Ratti Associati, tells Business Insider that the city of Heidelberg has approved the proposal. Currently, the team is designing the 240-acre site, and construction will be complete within the next five to 10 years.

Check out the plans below.

**Patrick Henry Village (PHV) opened in 1947 as the US Army's European headquarters after WWII. Here's an aerial view, taken in 2009, of the 240-acre site.**



*Google/Screenshot*

American families with relatives who worked on the base lived in apartment housing pictured below.



*patrickhenryvillage.wordpress.com*

*Source: Patrick Henry Village Blog*



**At its peak, an estimated 16,000 Americans lived there.**



*patrickhenryvillage.wordpress.com*

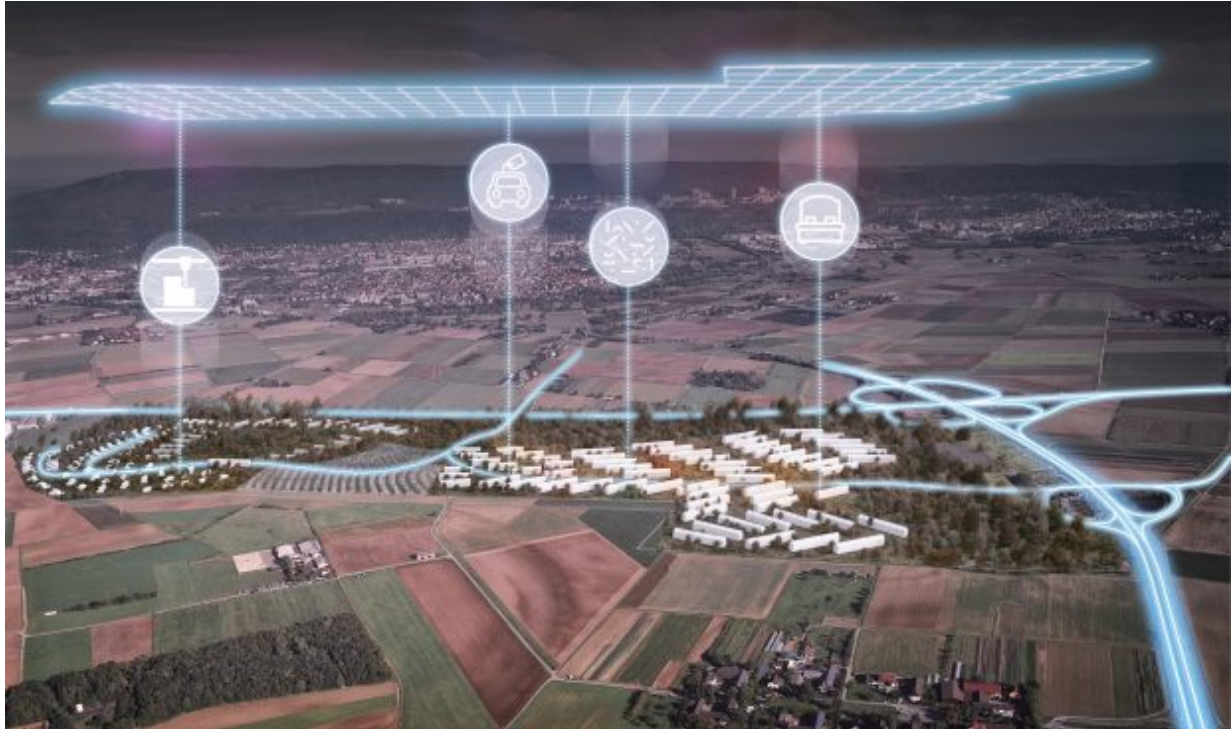
*Source: Patrick Henry Village Blog*

**Many of the original buildings still survive today. Here's a recent photo of PHV buildings that used to serve as housing.**



*Facebook*

**Carlo Ratti Associati wants to redevelop the area into a commune for up to 4,000 people, including students, families, researchers, and entrepreneurs. It will be renamed the Patrick Henry Commune.**



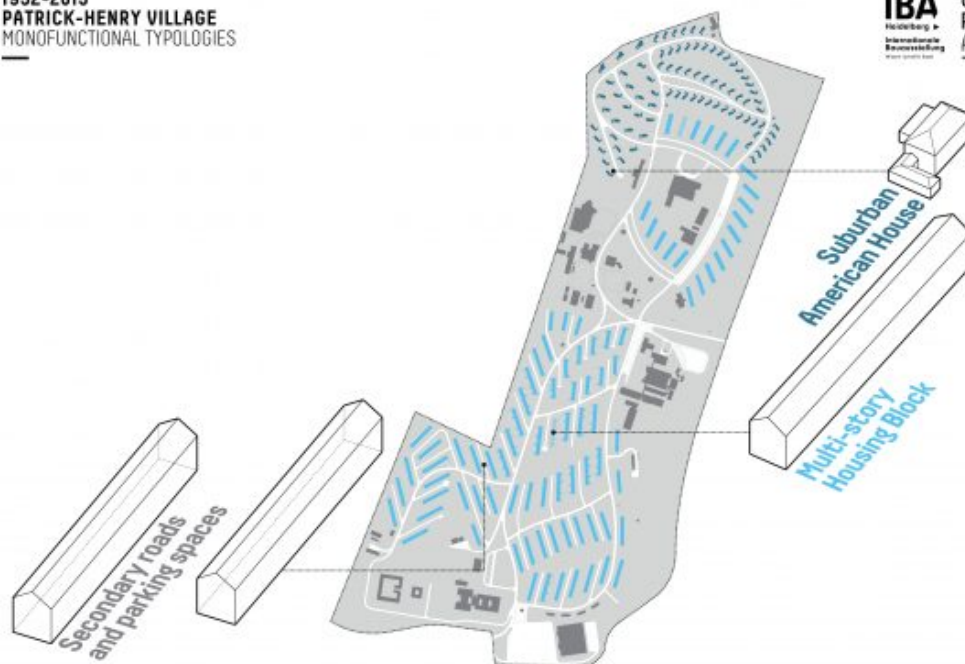
*Carlo Ratti Associati*

**Embraces the sharing economy, the self-sufficient commune will feature three-story “co-living blocks:” buildings that include spaces for living, working, shopping, and farming.**

1952-2015  
PATRICK-HENRY VILLAGE  
MONOFUNCTIONAL TYPOLOGIES

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*Carlo Ratti Associati*



**A giant maker space, which will include areas for making music and other art, will sit at the center of the commune.**



*Carlo Ratti Associati*

**30% to 40% of the commune will be shared spaces. Pictured below is a communal dining area with shared kitchens. The development will also launch a car-sharing service and shuttles that connect to Heidelberg's center.**



*Carlo Ratti Associati*

**In addition to the co-living blocks, there will also be garage-like spaces like the one below, which could be used as homes, workspaces, or shops. Ratti says there is already a waitlist for people who want to live in the commune.**



*Carlo Ratti Associati*