

Workshop: Infrastructure

Dominique Peck, 2018

COLUMN A

An employee of the Department of Social Space Management invites the teaching and research program for 19.2.2016, 6pm to the workshop “technical infrastructure Poppenbüttel 43” at the District Office Wandsbek, conference room Rahlstedt. The list of those present serves to contextualize the setting: Employees of a transport and urban planning office whose three drafts are to be presented and negotiated, three employees of the Department of Urban and Landscape Planning, two co-workers of the owner (f und w fördern und wohnen), representatives of the political parties FDP (liberal democrats), the Green Party, SPD (social democrats), CDU (conservative party) and PDS (the left party), as well as three members of registered associations who are nominally engaged with “good integration”.

The employee of the Department of Social Space Management had invited us so that all “players” can get to know each other. This takes place about three months after the first contact with one of the two associations via a three-page project outline. The paragraphs in the section “About Column A” are quotes from my notes.

ABOUT COLUMN A

Everyone finds themselves in the dingy room with standard furniture, carpeting and office partition walls. There are unusable plans hanging on the office partition walls: first the parceling, around which a red line marks the project area, and a street plan with elevation marks. Both seem to be simply taken out of the ALKIS database. None of the data is represented in a way that would allow one to work with. I will not comment on that. The colleagues from the Department of Urban and Landscape Planning are at the end of their rope anyway. There is no coffee, no drinks or biscuits. The ceiling height is low. The heating is set too high. Most of the people have red heads, nobody takes off their sweater. Some even keep their winter jackets on. So really nobody seems to know what’s happening.

The results of the workshop are recorded in index cards. Photo by Dominique Peck. CC BY-SA 4.0

Members of both associations interrupt the introduction to the traffic study given by one of the two managing directors of the Hamburg transport and urban planning office after about ten minutes. Their questions address the foundations of the three drafts presented. The study on traffic volume was carried out using video cameras positioned at the corresponding nodes; no information is given about the numbers and duration of the individual studies. The reduction of mobility to the motorized private transport is criticized. At Ohlendieck there is a lot of bicycle and pedestrian traffic, mainly during school hours, but also to and from the nearby recreation area and leisure facilities. Criticism is also levelled at the already scarce parking areas in public spaces. How and in what form parking facilities will be available in the new development area is not yet clear.

Underground garages are under discussion. The initiative notes that housing is being planned to a high urban and architectural standard. and only people who usually have two cars when they live in Poppenbüttel can afford that. Even refugees in public housing with a perspective of staying (planned in the permanent buildings; building plots 3-8) would have to organize cars as soon as possible. The builder says there will be 60% families. In the vicinity of the development area there are currently several settlement construction measures, which have severely impaired the moving and stationary traffic. A canal is to be piped along the Ohlendieck. This would provide more space for all road users.

It is also unclear whether a second day-care center can be built in the development area. The 150 places in the already planned new kindergarten are not sufficient. The district authorities have checked whether the day care facilities in the surrounding area can accommodate the possible increase in the number of children. For various reasons this is not possible. In the press, other residents have already complained about the scarce resources in the sports clubs.

With regards to the functions of the ground floor zones the two employees of the construction company explain the need to decide now whether, and if so, where the ground floor zones will be reserved for gastronomic uses. This would have implications for the height of the ceilings. For a grease separator or other necessary installations, extra surfaces on the ground floor would need to be reserved. This is a question of calculation. A subsequent installation of grease separators or similar on the outer walls is not desired. The current plan does not include gastronomy. With reference to Ingrid Breckner and Dieter Läßle, I should add that ground floor areas in the area are important for the development of small businesses and service providers, which is why they are called "wohnerleichternde Nutzungen", services that support residing in the area. Members of the initiative add that they have long hoped for a restaurant to open in the area. The employee of the specialized office for town and landscape planning writes this on a file card.

It turns out in the discussion of the construction schedule that there are delays in the construction of the modular buildings on construction sites 1 and 2. According to the current status, these will not be completed until the end of July or August. The completion of the permanent buildings on the other construction sites is planned for the end of the year 2016. This leads to the question arising whether it is sensible to erect modular buildings for just four to six months only to replace them with permanent buildings and thus complete the entire construction project. This cannot be answered by the construction company in charge of the project.

There is also still no concrete concept for the allocation and transfer of the individual refugees to the modular and permanent buildings. The subsequent accommodation is divided into modular buildings = temporary public accommodation and permanent buildings = public accommodation with the perspective of staying. Before the construction site is set up, there are still a number of necessary measures to undertake, such as the archaeological investigation and waste water analysis. These tasks are taken over by third parties. As a general contractor, one has only limited influence on these tasks. When installing a construction site, it is imperative to plan a construction site road, which has to meet certain parameters. In Poppenbüttel, it was not possible to use the future central access road, This could not be the later central access road, but one had to approach all construction sites from behind like a bar. Each construction site gets two (or one; I am not sure) cranes. The buildings will have balconies and loggias according to the altered design. One is with the architects in phase 3 design planning. In terms of urban development, it is not yet clear whether there will be three linear blocks or "open courtyards" on the northern border of the area. The architect prefers the open courtyards, the linear blocks do not fit Poppenbüttel because they are not permeable and the visual relations to the surroundings are a characteristic factor in the area. The building application was to be submitted on 11.3. The construction site is to be set up in mid-April. The buildings are to be completed by 31.12.2016. Each building will have an elevator shaft. Only one building per construction site will actually have an elevator. The buildings that will serve as accommodation with perspective dwelling differ from social housing and social rental housing only with regard to the finishing standards. Thus, each house has a shaft for an elevator, but most of them remain empty. This of course holds the opportunity to build in elevators in the future. The client says that plans and views will be brought into a public discussion at the beginning of April. The initiative countered that this was too late. It is almost 20.00 o'clock, the air is so thick it could be cut. That's it for today.

After the workshop in the district office I and some members of the association go to a nearby steak house. A few days ago, we sent a first brochure with a rough projection and now we want to talk about it.

All right, order a small beer, so I don't have to eat. That's annoying, as I'm hungry. Hopefully no more beer will be ordered, or I will be drunk. Remember for the next time: bring snacks and drinks. The chairman of the association begins: They understand the envisioned process and the idea to combine the building development with opportunities for integration. The brochure represents just what they had imagined. It is likely that the HASPA will give us an appointment with 70 philanthropists to ask for sponsorship for the planned community building. It remains somewhat unclear who 'us' refers to – the association or the project and its stakeholders. For this date they would like to have one great picture of the project. In the discussion we agree to add some pictures of reference projects to the current presentations. For the acquisition of funding, one needs a calculation that approximates what people give money for. Donations in kind are also welcome. The two Otto brothers (ECE) have already promised support, Olaf Scholz has taken over the patronage. It emerges that everything seems to be planned and that philanthropy is the way forward to realize their community building plans.

As to the question how to realize these plans, a new consortium consisting of HCU, the association, the builder, the industrial trade school Gewerbeschule 19 and other institutions needs to be formed in some way. We also need a campaign to involve local people in the project.

The cover of the first project brochure with notes from the first meeting with the registered association. Photo by Dominique Peck. CC BY-SA 4.0

The teaching format intercultural practice in the coming semester could do such preliminary work or planning. A campaign could be developed that also addresses neighbors and residents. An essential part of the project should be a café on a slope. A member of the association has heard that the containers at Billbrook (Entenwerder 1) seem to have recently been closed. Perhaps they could be taken over directly? I don't think that's true, but I think it's good that this is the reference, I also like to go there when my parents come to visit me from a suburban area in Eastern Austria. I'm just thinking, not saying it out loud.

Actually, everything is clear, we are supposed to do a rendering. The members of the association want to send reference pictures to me. Everything sounds as if the association has all the strings in their hand: they know people with money who want to donate at a gala event. The members of the association have to go home, one beer is enough. They all have families and now there will be dinner soon. I get a kebab at the Döner snack bar in the subway station, sit on a bench at the bus stop and eat. In the subway I write down notes. I am at home at 21:30.