



HCU

HafenCity Universität  
Hamburg

# Urban trans\_ formations and meta\_ morphoses

## HCU International Summer School 17.08.-28.08.2009

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with Andrey Vaytens Jorg Siewecke, Joachim Schultz, Jean-Philippe Vassal, Rainer Johann, Martin Kohler, Benjamin Becker, Ellen Fiedelmeier, Kerstin Schäfer

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Students from 5 different countries will live and work under the same roof for two weeks. In mixed teams they will work on designs for the future. Visiting the **UdN** Universität der Nachbarschaften ("Neighbourhood University") in Wilhelmsburg, they will engage with the development of Wilhelmsburg's livability and its public realm.

The **UdN** is a temporary and residual conversion of the former Local Health Authority Wilhelmsburg, which concerns itself with the experimental development of contemporary, novel forms of education between culture and science.

The **UdN** in Wilhelmsburg is a joint project of the **HCU** and the **IBA Hamburg 2013**. Its main task is to engage with current questions of urban research, the future needs of urban centres and connect this to its teaching activities. Promising findings will subsequently be tried out on site and put to a reality check. In doing so, the **UdN** aims at working together with the neighbourhood rather than staying a disconnected and alien entity. In its work the **UdN** will also try to assess contemporary practices of urban design and planning as well as the contents of today's university programmes in this field.

## **Insite\_out – oversight\_in**

In this context the international summer school will look into topics that are currently being under discussion in Wilhelmsburg and discuss them from an urban planning angle. The outside view, which the participants of the summer school will bring into the equation, will generate fresh ideas, new looks on old problems and hopefully make visible previously undetected potentials.

## **Existing resources**

During the first international summer school architects, landscape designers and urban planners will analyse the potentials of selected open (green) spaces and housing areas. In looking at these spaces possibilities of public engagement will have to be explored as a precondition, because the local people's knowledge about their everyday lives it makes it possible to understand specific local practices or spatial arrangements which will then allow to develop bespoke strategies for change. During the summer school we will make visible the specific character connected to actual open (green) spaces. We will explore and assess the potential of these spaces and relate our findings to the imminent transformation of the urban fabric. It is also expected that some suggestions for the further development of the housing stock will be developed.

## **Wilhelmsburger living\_and open\_spaces or right in the centre and still marginal?**

Wilhelmsburg is full of spaces which have the structure of contemporary urban spaces but with a density much lower than that of other inner-urban neighbourhoods. The multi-cultural composition of the population reminds us of metropolitan areas such as Berlin Kreuzberg, the East End of London or Brooklyn New York – but it is housed in a very different built environment. In Wilhelmsburg we find many typologies dating from the 1960s and 1970s and typical for suburban areas, which then clash with a multitude of other structures. The perimeter blocks of the Reihertstiegviertel sit next to the remainders of former villages, which after a few meters make space for 1950s zeilenbau mixed with brick built working class tenements from the 1920s. Further south we find a strange mix of light industrial uses and harbour related industries and eventually open green land and agricultural uses, cut by heavily frequented traffic arteries. In the west we encounter a similarly absurd mix: worker's settlements, the 1970s Berta-Kröger-Platz, detached family homes, the historic village of Alt-Kirchdorf and the high rise social housing of Kirchdorf Süd.

Just as the build up areas, the open and green spaces in Wilhelmsburg are extremely diverse. Nature reserves, agricultural areas and disused industrial sites are examples for Wilhelmsburg's natural, rural, urban and industrial open spaces and urban wildernesses. The underlying potentials of these spaces are shown off, when stressing their function for recreation and supplies.

## **Notations**

### **Idiosyncrasies**

We will approach Wilhelmsburg's different structures from two angles: housing and green spaces. We will select certain, typical areas to analyse Wilhelmsburg's green and housing structures and define their potential for future development. Housing as well as green spaces can be found in a multitude of incarnations and border onto each other without any identifiable rational connection. In the same way as monstrous housing estates are situated next to romantic villages allotments border onto forests and forests onto industrial brownfield sites. This idiosyncratic assemblage is part of the specific character of Wilhelmsburg.

### **Diversity**

The distinctive elements of this diversity of spaces have to be distinguished and to be extended: What are its specific character and properties? Which potentials do they provide? What are the means and strategies to make use of these and create an intelligent and forward oriented urban realm?

### **Bespoke strategies for transformation**

The knowledge generated through research and analysis will be transformed into actual design projects, which will exemplify useful urban strategies. In this process the existing urban fabric should be treated with care and be enhanced in the development process. Which qualities are already there? How and in which way can uses be added or strengthened? What are people's needs and wishes? How can the local residents become part of the transformation process?

## **Elements**

### **Green spaces**

- one semi-public green space
  - one public park
  - allotment gardens in private use
  - waste land with ruderals
- properties - functionalities – potentials – usability – overlap

Start with green spaces and then move on to look into housing structures

### **Housing**

- perimeter block: closed, hermetical
  - suburban structures (single family homes)
  - zeilenbau (1960s)
  - large scale social housing
- properties - functionalities – potentials – usability – overlap

## **Work\_shop**

We will work on site and thus be visible in the neighbourhood. One important aim is to cooperate among each other and with the neighbourhood. International and intercultural cooperation is an important underlying rationale of the project. With the outside view of the participants and their international experience we want to develop multiple development strategies for Wilhelmsburg, visualise them and present them in a way that will not exclude laypersons.

## **Last but not least**

The HCU summerschool might be a little step in the transformation of ones owns professional views and perhaps a little step, too, in gaining a new understanding of how our profession might have to modify their self image to start solving the contemporary problems cities are faced with.

The HCU summer school is part of the Hamburg Architektursommer.  
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**21.08.** Intermediate Presentation, 16:00 h, UdN

**24.08. Jean-Philippe Vassal, Lacaton Vassal, Paris, 19:00 h**

Lecture, Hamburg Museum, Holstenwall 24, 20355 Hamburg

**28.08. Endpresentation, 10:00 h, UdN**  
ab 15:00 h **Nachbarschaftsfest**

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